Adaptation of Housing Design to Culture Change in Syria: Concepts and Practices in the City of Lattakia

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ABSTRACT

Rapid cultural change in contemporary life is affecting housing use and design in Syria, with these becoming more 'out of line'. This study investigates the nature of cultural change and its impact on housing use in general as a way to explore to what extent it is affecting the appropriateness of housing design in Syria.

The study is theoretically based on a social constructionist approach due to the complexity and multidimensionality of the study, especially in understanding how people interpret their housing use and cultural identity. The academic literature review focuses on the links between culture and housing design and reviews the changing nature of these in Syria in the face of modernization, westernization and globalization. Based on a case study approach, the research focuses on one of the cities in Syria most affected by such changes (the coastal tourist city of Lattakia). The research investigates the contextual nature of cultural issues in relation to built environment in the city, drawing on qualitative research methods at both macro and micro levels considering the holistic yet individual implications of the subject of study.

Empirical investigations were conducted with appropriate samples of representative households in two formal 'generically designed' housing areas - i.e. those not designed for a specific client and not self-designed/built, but designed by either government or private sector architects for a general population. The first housing area was developed by the state with subsidised housing (Youth Housing), which represents a lower middle class group. The second area was the university area (Tishreen University Area), which represents a middle class group with houses designed speculatively by the private sector. In these two areas, research methods included: 39 household interviews using face-to-face questionnaires, photographic documentation, analysis of documented licensed housing design plans, and direct observation. Semi-structured interviews with 11 actors involved in generic housing design (academic architects, professional architects and developers) were also conducted.

Two key housing use/design issues were chosen to be investigated as key cultural indicators in housing and also very changeable in the pre-war Syrian context: concepts

and practices of privacy in the home (family privacy, intra-family privacy, and women's privacy) and trends in food preparation and consumption. The study provides detailed social and cultural information on actual house use and residents' aspirations on a number of implications arising from these factors, as yet unavailable for Syria. One outcome of this research is to recommend design approaches more attuned to current cultural change through a deeper understanding of inhabitants' actual social patterns and needs - through e.g. guidelines for bigger kitchens with dining space, which reflects the change in food preparation and consumption, increasing the number of bedrooms to provide more intra-family privacy, and providing study/work space in the dwellings.

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Glossary

BCR: Best Country Reports

CBS: Central Bureau of Statistics

CBSSYR: Central Bureau of Statistics of Syria

FYP: Five-Year Plan, it is plan in Syria which is evaluated every 5 years and improved.

GCEC: General Company for Engineering and Consulting

GDP: gross domestic product

H: Husband

HH: Household

HOH: Head Of the Household

M.W.G.: Modernization, Westernization, and Globalization

PEH: Public Establishment Housing, it represents the public sector in Syria of housing.

SES: Socioeconomic Status

SMES: Small and medium sized enterprise

SPC: the State Planning Commission of Syria

SYP: Syrian Pound (lira). 100 SYP = £1 in 2008; £1.5 in 2010; ~ £ 0.4 in 2013

TUA: Tishreen University Area

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

W: Wife

WTP: World Trade Press

YHP: Youth Housing Project

Chapter 1:   Introduction

1.1   Background and justification of the research

Residential buildings are a key architectural unit in the city which needs more attention from architects as it is a shelter for the basic cell of society, namely the household, as opposed to monumental buildings which have always been more of a focus for architects (Rapoport, 1969; Robinson 2006). Residential buildings have existed for much longer, responding to the basic needs of their inhabitants to fulfil their physical, psychological, social, and cultural wants. By grouping residential buildings and their growth around a yard or street, early human settlement was formed, including individual and group activities which were in harmony with social needs and aspirations, and in accord with beliefs, norms, rituals, and traditions, namely culture. This type of built environment can be called vernacular architecture. Thereafter, this spontaneous consistency and similarity of vernacular form gradually became a prototype of traditional dwellings which remained largely similar across time (Rapoport, 1984). Eventually, in the recent past and in contemporary life, technical and economic change and associated rapid urban development have created an increasing variety of social groups especially in multi-cultural societies, which has resulted in changes in housing form and housing use which can become 'out of line' with changing societies and culture. In the Middle East region, this mismatching seems to be influencing the city urban identity as Shami (2005, p.3) noted in his study 'Amman is not a city': 'the view from Amman alerts us that the vast majority of contemporary cities in the region are not those of the Orientalist imaginary or of European modernity'. Other researchers such as Daiob and Hussien (2009) in their study 'Contemporary residential architecture in the Syrian coast: Towards Local and Gentle Architecture' suggested that in order to develop a modern architecture in Syria, architects need to focus on adhering to 'Arab identity' and to the traditional architecture and traditional culture; and on integrating these into a modern and innovative design which takes the natural environment considerably in consideration.

However, this does not mean that all Arab cities in the Middle East are experiencing the same cultural change and associated change in the built environment. For example Elsheshawy argues in his book 'Planning the Middle Eastern Cities' that cities in the region are diverse and range from traditional centres such as Cairo, Tunis, and Bagdad to fringe cities such as Sana'a and Algiers to oil-rich Gulf cities such as Dubai. 'Cities

within the Arab world are too diverse to be plumed together under one 'arbitrary' category' (Elsheshtawy, 2004, p.1).

Traditionally the relation between the reality of everyday socio-cultural life and housing design was close and reciprocal and thus in the light of social and cultural changes, people slowly altered housing design to fit their changing needs. However in situations of rapid social and cultural change – and in the context of state or market provision of housing - a chasm can open up between people's needs, wants, and aspirations and what those who provide housing want or continue to provide. In other words, in such situations, while housing design ought to reflect changes in cultural and social life of the inhabitants, it often fails to do this for a variety of reasons.

Before Rapoport's book '*House form and culture*' (1969), it was thought that built environment was primarily influenced by physical environment. Kent (2000, p.262) noted:

> 'It was generally thought that climate, available building materials, and local topography were the most influential factors shaping architecture. Instrumental in challenging this deterministic and non-cultural view of the build environment, Rapoport demonstrated that people are not passive slaves to their environment. Instead, humans used culture and architecture to modify their physical environment, rather than the other way around'

In the last few decades, after Rapoport's position, scholars, researchers, anthropologists, and social scientists in developed countries throughout the world, have been focusing attention on incorporation of social and cultural issues in housing design and production processes, although planners and architects generally remained oblivious to this theme, which has led to forms of alienation from 'formal' architecture and planning. Moore (2000, p.1) noted that 'In archaeology, where one would expect the connection between culture and architecture to be taken for granted, the cultural implications of architecture went largely ignored until only a couple of decades ago'. Kent (2000, p.272) noted that 'Rapoport ideas had a greater impact on studies in the built environment in anthropology/ archaeology, his adopted discipline, than in architecture'. She suggests that 'architects of the twenty-first century need to incorporate the study of culture and cross-cultural inquiry in all facets of their research' (kent, 2000, p.275)

In developing countries, housing processes also need to be seen in the light of socio-cultural needs especially concerning the rapid change in housing supply systems that such countries have developed in terms of modernization, westernization, and globalization. This needs to be a central focus of researchers as much as in developed world. Elsheshtawy (2004, p.6) demonstrates how the gap exists in the literature on spatial structure in the Middle Eastern cities when it comes to the influences of contemporary trends –namely globalization.

The three interlocked forces of modernization, westernization and globalization tend to create quite a noticeable chasm between traditions and modern life in countries emerging from more 'traditional' situations such as Syria, as this study evidences. 'Traditional readings of the Middle Eastern city dominate, showing it as an isolated entity somehow disconnected from developments occurring elsewhere in civilized world' (Elsheshtawy, 2004, p.3). The nature of the rapid change in Syrian social and cultural life is perhaps most notable in the capital and the coastal cities, which had become international tourist destinations before the current conflict. In such areas (Lattakia is an example of a coastal tourist city) lower middle class and middle class groups of people strive to change their houses, lifestyle, and areas to live in certain districts. This manifests changes in people' aspirations in relation to modernization, westernization and globalization – which are thus, an informative indicator of how people perceive change in their culture and how this is expressed in behaviour and lifestyle – including in housing. In effect these issues underpin the difference between a house (which can be provided by various methods) and a home (which entails social and cultural embedding).

1.2   Need for this study

Since the literature and records about current domestic architecture in relation to culture and society are very limited in Syria, as also noted by Mikhael (1998), this study is important to mainly build up a database and information which is essential for better understanding and analysing housing and cultural links in Syria. This lack of information is partly a result of the dominant concern of architects in the country for monumental buildings as material culture more than domestic architecture. However, it is also because of the difficulties in conducting research within a domestic space such as a family's private domain, especially those studies that relate to human behaviour

within such private space. Seen in this light, this thesis is important as it generates new information and references relevant to contemporary domestic architecture in relation to the current social and cultural context. It thus draws on a more generic analytical framework and applies it to new situations through a careful research design.

In the light of the above general overview, the core concern of this research is that current 'formal' housing design (i.e. designed by architects) is not fitting with contemporary culture change in Syria. There was already a shift in the 'match' between house form and culture in the transition from traditionally designed and provided houses to current 'formally' designed and provided housing – e.g. from the traditional courtyard house to medium to high-rise multi-dwelling buildings. This is not the focus of this research. Rather, this research looks at the continuing and recent cultural change taking place in Syria (prior to the conflict), particularly in Lattakia, and the mismatch with change in formally designed and provided housing, which in some ways still harks back to changes stemming from the abandonment of traditional housing forms. The following research aim, objectives and questions are proposed as the means to investigate this position.

1.3 Research Aim

The overall aim of this research is to explore the impact of socio-cultural changes in contemporary life on 'formal' housing and housing use in Syria, and to show to what extent housing design in Syria is or is not adapting to culture change and inhabitants' needs, wants and aspirations. This study requires the enquiry into three main concepts: culture, housing/architectural design and house use/adaptation. The co-relations between these factors were investigated and applied in Syria (figure 1.1). This country, where the researcher is from, is an example of a developing country and a traditional society currently affected by the universal modernization, Westernization, and globalization.
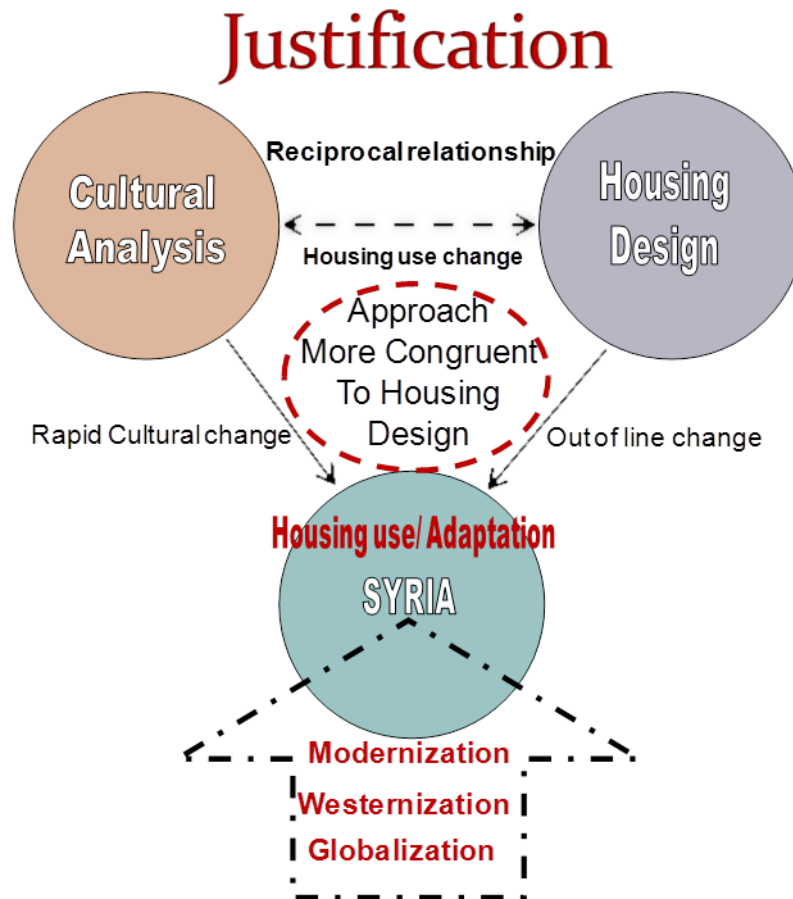
Figure 1.1 the integrating of main concepts of this research

1.4   Research Objectives

This general research aim is broken down into more specific research objectives and questions as follows.

A. Understand the nature and rules of culture in Syria with a special focus on home environments.

B. Investigate cultural change in cities in Syria which are most affected by modernization, westernization and globalization, focussing on tourist cities on the coast.

C.   Examine how this cultural change affects house design and the use of housing in such a case study city.

D. Identify the sources of different new housing design in Syria through the case study.

E. Identify design issues to improve cultural relevance in housing design through analysis.

F. Recommend design approaches which are more attuned to current cultural change.

1.5   Research Questions

1) How are culture and the structure of the society perceived in Syria?

2) How are modernization, westernization, and globalization affecting the above and where does this have most impact?

3) What impact is this having on housing-use and provision of new housing?

4) What are the main sources of housing design in such areas?

5) Does current new housing design in these areas fit the changing culture?

6) What are key design issues that need attention in the context of the above?

7) How can these be better approached?

These and other inquiries in the above context can be investigated based on the following theoretical perspectives and research methodology informing the proper research methods.

1.6   Methodology of this research

The study is theoretically based on a social constructionist approach due to the complexity and multidimensionality of the study - especially in understanding how people perceive their housing use and interpret their cultural identity. The academic literature review focuses on how culture and housing are perceived and the link between culture and housing design - and reviews the changing nature of these in Syria. Based on a case study approach, the research focuses on the city in Syria most affected by modernization, westernization and globalization: the coastal tourist city of Lattakia. The research investigates the contextual nature of cultural issues in relation to built environment, drawing on qualitative research methods at both macro and micro levels as described in detail in the methodology chapter (4).

A summary of the theoretical perspective and methodological approach which was used throughout this research is shown in Table 1.1.

	Theoretical elements of this study	Justification	Sources of data	
Epistemology	Constructionism	Complexity and multi dimensionality of culture and housing study	Literature on the concepts of culture and housing and the correlation between these both narrowing the focus down into two cultural aspects significantly relevant to housing use (privacy and food preparation and consumption	
Theoretical perspectives	Interpretivism	Differences in people perceive of culture and housing	Samples from 2 different socioeconomic classes	
Methodology	Case study approach	Contextuality of this study	Syria a country study, Lattakia as a tourist city, 2 housing areas generically designed	
Methods	Qualitative research methods	Different techniques with certain samples	Informal interviews	4 academic architects, 6 households' visits
			face-to-face questionnaires	39 households(12 in Area1, 27 in Area2)
			Semi-structure interviews with key informants	11 generic housing designers (academic& professional architects and developers)
			Documented licensed housing design plans	9 licensed house design plans (4 plans in Area1, 5 plans in Area2)
			Photographic documentation	Photos 13of housing buildings and internal photos of 36 flats (at least of the kitchen, dining and living room)
			Direct observation, Notes, and sketches	Several of the households describe their aspired house and was sketched by the researcher

Table 1.1 Theoretical perspective and methodology of this study

This above framework for research informs the qualitative approach of the inquiry of the proposed research as explained below.

Objective A was addressed through an academic literature review which provides better understanding of cultural studies in relation to built environment and in particular to home environment and through review of culture and housing in the Syrian context. Narrowing this down to two chosen cultural aspects permitted the investigation of objective E.

Objective B was addressed through the literature review, which identified the factors of cultural change and in particular modernization, westernization and globalization (MWG). The context of culture change and housing in Syria suggested focusing on the city of Lattakia as one of the most affected by the aforementioned factors- MWG- where rapid physical and even cultural change is prominent, and thus Lattakia was chosen as a case study which may indicate future trends.

Objective C was mainly addressed through empirical study – i.e. through face-to-face questionnaires conducted with households, which provide a clearer picture of the household daily life and the actual use for home space in accordance with current cultural change. It was also examined through semi-structured interviews with actors in generic housing design, which presented a clearer idea about designers' proactive role and the change they can provide in housing design in the light of current cultural change.

Objective D was addressed through the Syrian context of housing and houses (including physical analysis based on plans and photographs as well as direct observation) and also through the semi-structured interviews with actors in generic housing design which showed different sources of new housing design and the actual process of the final housing design in the city of Lattakia.

Objective E was addressed through the analysis of both households' responses and the feedback of actors in housing design enhancing these with physical evidences through analysing photographic documentation and housing plans which were collected while conducting the fieldwork in Lattakia and these together identified design issues which may improve cultural relevance to housing design.

To address the final objective F, the triangulation data analysis and synthesis together with the literature review and the context of Syria were all integrated in order to recommend better informed design approaches and to suggest design guidelines for future housing design more attuned with cultural change in Lattakia as an indicating case study.

A summary addressing the research objectives and their related research methods is presented in Table 1.2.

Research Objectives	Research Methods					
	Academic Literature Review	Context of Syria Archival documents	Informal Interviews& direct observation	Semi-structured Interviews	Face-to-face questionnaires	Direct Observations Photographic documentation and licensed design plans
Understand the nature of culture and social structure of Syria with special focus on home environment	✓	✓	✓			
Investigate cultural changes in city/ies in Syria which are most affected by M,W,G	✓	✓	✓			
Examine how cultural change affects housing use and design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Identify the sources of new housing design & provision of new houses in Syria		✓	✓	✓		
Identify key design Issues to improve cultural relevance to housing design	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Recommend better design approaches to be more attuned to cultural change in Syria	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 1.2: Research Objectives and the conducted methods

1.7 Summary of conducted empirical work

Empirical investigations were conducted with appropriate samples of representative households in two formal 'generically designed' housing areas in Lattakia – i.e. those not designed for a specific client and not self-designed/built, but designed by either government or private sector architects for a general population. The first housing area was developed by the state with subsidised housing (Youth Housing), which represents a lower middle class group. The second area was the university area (Tishreen University Area) which represents a middle class group with houses designed speculatively by the private sector. In these two areas, research methods included: 39 households interviews using face-to-face questionnaires, photographic documentation, analysis of documented licensed housing design plans, and direct observation. Semi-structured interviews with actors involved in generic housing design (academic architects, professional architects and developers) were also conducted.

Two key housing use/design issues were chosen to be investigated as key cultural indicators in housing, and also very changeable in the Syrian context: concepts and practices of privacy in the home (family privacy, intra-family privacy, and women's privacy) and trends in food preparation and consumption.

1.8 Thesis structure

The thesis is divided into eight chapters including this chapter, the introduction, which provides a brief justification of this study, the main aim, objectives and questions of the research and also introduces the summary of conducted methods.

Chapter two presents a general review of literature on concepts of culture and housing and the link between these two concepts highlighting cultural change in contemporary life and the impact of this on housing design and use. This chapter concludes the main cultural aspects most relevant to housing use and design on which the chosen key design issues of this study were based.

Chapter three provides a general background of Syria and the context of Syrian society, with special focus on culture and housing and the correlation between these two concepts in the Syrian context pointing out the cultural aspects, which seem to be the most changeable and relevant to housing use and design in Syria.

Chapter four proposes the methodology and research approaches which are appropriate for such research with reference to the obstacles which may face the researcher in Syria as a developing country. It also sets an analytical framework which was used throughout this research and also the research methods which were conducted to address the research objectives. This chapter also proposes key points as the basis of fieldwork research design drawing on the literature review in chapter 2, the context of Syria in chapter 3 and the research methodology in chapter 4, justifying the city of Lattakia as a case study which may indicate future trends. It addresses the representative nature of this study and the major constrains which may affect these such as the limited time of an individual doctoral study

Chapter five analyses the data collected in the actual fieldwork in the city of Lattakia where face-to-face questionnaires were conducted with middle and lower middle class households living in the two areas chosen as shown in chapter 4.

Chapter six analyses the semi-structured interviews conducted with actors in public and private sectors of generic housing design (academic architects, professional architects and developers). It also presents physical evidences provided in the housing design plans and photographic documentation.

Chapter seven presents the triangulation of data across households' responses, the feedback from actors in housing design and the physical housing design plans.

Chapter eight summarizes the main findings of this study; addresses the research questions and concludes recommendations to improve design approaches more attuned with current cultural change.

1.9   Challenges and limitations to the study

The unrest in Syria started just after the researcher had finished the first fieldwork of this study, and this may have impacted on the potential to implement findings and recommendations – as well as having presented difficulties to the undertaking of such a study far from home in such a time of crisis. It had initially been planned to have a second fieldtrip for participant observation but this was impossible – however, the significant quantity and quality of the data collected in the first fieldtrip for primary data collection was an adequate basis for a full analysis.

Chapter 2:   Literature review on culture and housing

2.1   Introduction

In this chapter, a general review of literature on concepts of culture and housing highlights the links between these two concepts underlying the cultural changes in contemporary life as a result of different factors such as modernization, westernization, and globalization.   Thereafter, this text illustrates how these cultural changes are affecting housing design and use and examines the different types of housing according to who is involved in their design, to find out what types of housing could be more representative of local/popular culture, since architecture plays an essential role in presenting culture: 'architecture is a medium of culture' (Robinson, 2006, P. 11). While cultural change occurs through different levels of awareness – that is unconscious, semi-conscious and conscious – the impact of this on architecture emphasises the need for designers to undertake a proactive role in cultural change responding to people's needs and for them to be aware of consequent change in housing use and design.   A clear understanding of the concept of home as a cultural aspect integrated with physical characteristics of housing is needed for better cultural analysis.   In order to investigate the overlapping relation between culture change and housing design and use, particular cultural attributes in housing design and use are focused on in this research.   These are the concepts of privacy and food preparation/consumption as essentially relevant to housing design and use.

2.2   Concepts of culture and their relation with housing

Concepts of both culture and housing are presented in this research focusing on the relationship between these, drawing upon several studies in Environment-Behaviour Studies (EBS). In the last three decades there has been a special focus on culture and its links with housing after the landmark text '*House form and culture',* in which Amos Rapoport highlighted the primary role of culture in the house form and the secondary role of physical, economic and other factors. Rapoport underlined culture-environment studies as a central focus of environment-behaviour research (Low and Chambers, 1989)

2.2.1 *Definition of Culture*

Culture is an intricate and controversial word since this concept does not stand for a particular independent object world. It is a '*mobile signifier*' that allows distinct and divergent ways of illustrating human activities for a variety of purposes (Barker, 2004). Culture denotes the core of humanity and this is what sociologists and anthropologists agree about, so that they have given culture a range of definitions (Rapoport, 1984). Authors group these definitions into three major categories. The first suggests culture as a way of life typical of a group; secondly, as a system of schemata transmitted symbolically; thirdly, as adaptive strategies to cope with ecological settings (Rapoport, 1984; Low and Chambers, 1989). The last of the aforementioned categories was ignored in Rapoport's cultural study in relation to built environment, linked to his argument around the secondary role of physical factors in built environment and particularly house form (Rapoport, 1969).

Drawing on the first two definitions above, culture can be seen as a shared, learned, symbolic system of values, beliefs and attitudes that shapes and influences perception and behaviour - an abstract "mental blueprint" or "mental code" (Kluckhohn, 1959) or what other sociologists named '*cognitive schemata*' (Robinson, 2006; Low and Chambers, 1989). Culture is learned, as one does not inherit genetically his/her culture, and this process of learning one's culture is called *enculturation*. Since enculturation is a prolonged process and needs society as a context for learning, it is considered shared and sometimes it is even seen as synonymous with *socialization*. This social definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, conveys specific meaning and values and sees culture not only in art or learning but also in institutions and ordinary behaviour.

It is possible to understand culture indirectly through behaviour, customs, language, and material culture such as artefacts, technology, implements and so on. Sociologists, anthropologists and other social scientists define culture as 'the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular Culture' (Williams, 2006, p.25).

Culture can only be understood through observable social structural patterns of human behaviour and it is, thus, often studied through observations of people's behaviour. It is also defined as cognitive structures or *cognitive schemata* and in this case the researcher

needs to study the '*emic*' – i.e. the native point of view – using interviews. In addition to these conservative definitions of culture as behaviour or as cognition, two other definitions emphasise changing and reflexive qualities of culture: culture as a symbolic process and as an interpretive process. Other authors emphasise the symbolic view of culture such as Anthony P. Cohen, who illustrates the role of symbols that social actors hold and practise within a particular context and thus give a meaning to these symbols and reproduce them with personal meanings and that what he called "symbolic gloss". These symbols provide the limits of cultured thought and frame social actors' ideas and expressions in comprehensible terms (Kroeber et al., 1952; Cohen, 1985). Culture as an interpretive process is a recent definition of culture that emphasizes that 'culture is as rapidly changing set of meanings and ideas for a specific group of people, a political and economic context and a historical period' (Low and Chambers, 1989, p 6). From this point of view, culture can be studied through direct and participant observations. In *Housing, Culture and Design,* the contributors suggest from different perspectives that the way people behave, what they think, believe, value, and how they understand the world will be reflected in their shelter and housing environment (Low and Chambers, 1989). Anthropologists understand culture as ' a whole and distinctive way of life' and they believe that *'life form and its usage and meanings continue to change'* (Barker, 2004, p. 44). Culture change is inevitable, with the process varying in different societies and being affected by myriad factors and forces.

2.2.2 *Cultural change*

Culture has been rapidly changing in the last decades and thus, people's beliefs, values, world views, life style and other symbolic meanings of life are also changing. This has led to great conflicts between traditional (old) and modern (new) ways of life. Although in the present context *modernization* and *development* are conceived as equivalents to culture change (Tipple and Willis, 1991), the latter is affected by these factors but is not limited to them. Culture is changing in most societies, if not all, all over the world due to several changes and movements in recent life such as modernization, westernization, and globalization. These latter affect cultures differently and thus people have greatly varied in responding or preserving, interacting or conflicting. This change is composed of long parallel processes of acculturation which are due, mainly, to contact, interaction, and conflict between different cultures, subcultures, social worlds and other social groups.

Cultural change always exists, but in the past it has taken place at a much slower pace than the recent rapid changes which are all attributed to new inventions, technologies and demographic changes. For instance, mass media such as newspapers, magazines, television and the most recent worldwide web, '*the internet',* allow vast interactions between people all over the world (Barker, 2004). Although this latter reaches back to 1960s, its international usage, participation, and popularization became significant and widespread in the mid-1990s and developed to become an immense economic and social network for countless of participants in current human life. The internet, digital media and other international cyber networking have accelerated human interactions of different cultures and societies and thus stimulated cultural changes in all societies through different ways, according to the conditions and the context of each society. It is a crucial factor of transformation from secondary (industries) to tertiary (services) production. This cultural change occurs at the micro and macro level, i.e. the structure of the society influences human behaviour and human agents also are capable of making a difference and change the social structure they inhabit (Giddens, 1984) – this is called structuration as explained in appendix 2.1. To understand the impact of this change on culture, identification of and differentiation between modernization, westernization, and globalization are discussed in the following text.

Modernization is defined as a process of human development through which economic development plays an essential role in triggering cultural changes (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). Inglehart and Welzel (2005) have emphasized that cultural change is a predictable consequence of socioeconomic development but it is also path dependent, as cultural heritage continues to form and direct the predominant values and beliefs. For instance, changes in social structure, family formations, belonging, affiliations, morality, and kinship ties are affecting the political and economic systems in different levels within societies and vice-versa. Although it is widely believed among theorists that the relationship is reciprocal between socioeconomic development and cultural changes, the stronger causal factor seems to be the socioeconomic development (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005; Ritzer, 2007).

> '*Modernization is usually used as a term in reference to processes of change in societies that are characterized by advanced industrial technology. Science and technology are seen to guide societies from traditional, preindustrial social institutions to complex, internally differentiated ones' (Ritzer, 2007, p.1599).*

In Social Science, modernization refers to the transition from pre-modern or *traditional* to modern society, which often refers to more complex society in terms of political, economic and social issues. For example, changing from tribal or village authority to political parties and civil service bureaucracy, and from illiteracy to education which can provide plenty of economically productive skills (Ritzer, 2007), and socially moving from solidarity based on kinship to one where the nuclear family becomes more central and significant. Therefore, individualisation is often referred to as a key element of modernization. Although some theorists argue that secular and rational values are only associated with the industrial phase, the rise of secular and rational values strongly refers to a cultural aspect of modernization. Transformations and social changes of people occur differently in different cultural contexts within different societies (Brugger and Hannan, 1983) in spite of the wide belief that as societies modernized, they would resemble each other, thinking and behaving the same more and more over time and that they might lose their unique culture (Ritzer, 2007, p 1599). From *Western[1]* societies, westernization spread as a specific western way of modernization.

Westernization can be defined as spreading the assimilation of Western culture; and the social process of becoming familiar with or converting to the customs and practices of Western civilizations. '*Westernization is the influencing of customs and practices of westernized societies on non-Western civilizations. Westernization includes the process of assimilating dominated societies into Western cultures'* (Sullivan, 2009, P.542). According to the 'Encyclopaedia of Black Studies': Westernization stands for the spreading of the western culture to the other part of the world (Mazama, 2005). It also refers to a specific type of modernization in Western societies '*Westernization is closely associated with western modernity, as it emerged during the European Enlightenment period'* (Mazama, 2005, p.476). Western societies and Western culture formerly defined European culture and society whereas, later (after the Second World War) this term connotes Western Europe, their genealogical, colonial, philosophical descendants, and also those countries whose the dominant culture derives from the European one. Eastern Europe is, arguably, considered part of the West even though it does not have the same traditional economic and living-standard criteria that are usually associated with the West. Currently, western culture includes Europe, United States, Canada,

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[1] Western societies usually refer to Western Europe, and later were expanded to United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand differentiated from Eastern societies, Asia, Middle East and others.

Mexico, Australia, and New Zealand, Greenland, and most countries of South America and central Europe (Thompson and Hickey, 2010; Sullivan, 2009).

Nowadays, the Western world refers also to the *developed countries*[2] in Asia such as Japan, Singapore, Taiwan, and South Korea, which have strong economic and political ties to Western Europe although they have their different and distinctive cultures. Although it is common to use the term *Western World* as interchangeable with the term *First World* and as opposed to the *Third World,* the West is included in the First World but not limited by it. The term First World was used before the fall of the Soviet Union (during the Cold War period) to refer to the United States and its allies; Second World refers to Soviet Union and its allies; Third World refers to non-aligned and neutral countries (Gregory et al., 2009).

Sociologists approach western culture as those cultures that are directly derived from European culture which, in modern life, tend to secularism although the majority of European countries have Christianity as the predominant religion within their culture. Western countries also share fundamental ideologies such as liberal democracy, rule of law, human rights, and high degree of gender equality, which underpin similar and homogeneous cultures and backgrounds. As noted above, Westernization also refers to the spread of the culture of Western Europe to other parts of the World. Succinctly it relies upon rationalism and empiricism, emphasizing the epistemological superiority of science, and emphasises individualistic and materialistic values (Mazama, 2005). Westernization, nowadays, still manifests itself in different ways through globalization, which entails the loosening of trade barriers through capitalistic ventures and promotion of democratization, which are values of the western World (Sullivan, 2009, p.542).

Globalization is often defined as the integration of economic, political and social cultures worldwide, is closely related to the spreading of modernization throughout the world and is usually closely associated with Westernization. It theorizes the development of a global economy in the sense that the world is moving in the direction of one economic and cultural society.

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[2] The term '*developed countries*', is also referred to with other terms such as economically developed countries, industrialized countries, etc.

Globalization, economically, is not a new concept, since people, for millennia, have been trading with each other over long distances such as the *Silk Road,* which linked China to Europe across the Middle East during the Middle Ages until the outbreak of the First World War (Institute, 2007). Robbie Robertson (2003) sees that, in the past five hundred years, there have been three waves of globalization. The first that began around 1500 consisted of trade networks and the efforts of countries to reach out to others. In this early global transformation regional networks led by China were globalized. After 1800, the industrial revolution was the motor of globalization and then the third wave was triggered by the international institutions established after the Second World War to initiate a new world order'. Robertson believes that none of these waves was produced by one country alone and each wave encompasses many cultures and civilizations although not necessarily as equals. In the last few decades, technological developments have helped and greatly speeded up international trade, investments, migration and several other transactional processes worldwide. Thomas Friedman has described globalization today as a farther, faster, cheaper, and deeper process (Institute, 2007).

At the turn of the 20th century, globalization started to be deeply controversial, as its proponents argue that it helps poor countries to economically develop and to provide better standard of living to their citizens, whereas opponents of globalization see that the free international market benefits multinational corporations of the western world at the expense of local enterprises, companies, and local cultures. Some authors argued that it is a process designed to benefit the world's rich at the expense of the world's poor; 'Globalization is a project of domination by the *North* over the *South*, by corporations over citizens' (Holton, 2005, p 4).

The term globalization is most often used to refer to economic globalization, that is integration of national economies into the international capitalist economy through trade, foreign direct investments, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology (Bhagwati, 2004). However this process is a combination of economic, technological, socio-cultural and political forces (Croucher, 2003). Not only has technology, particularly advances in information technology, dramatically transformed the economic feature (Institute, 2007), but also has thoroughly driven political and cultural life in the world. This, with a great regard of the human actors' role in making, un-making, and/or remaking globalization, indicates the contextual nature of the globalization process and

the different action and interaction with it which depends on each society and culture. Holton rejects in his text '*Making globalization*' the thought that globalization happens, under the control of markets and technology, ignoring human actors who can only do their best to adjust (2005). However, social changes that have come to be called globalization are actively made by human actors (agents) rather than being merely the result of crucial forces or structural processes of societies that are out of control. In other words, globalization is an outcome of human actors and at the same time a context for human actions and activities (Holton, 2005). Globalization is, therefore, produced and reproduced on the holistic and also individual level and, thus, it can be analysed using the *structuration approach* (see appendix 2.1) which equally considers the influences of structure and agency (Giddens, 1984) on social and cultural processes that need to occur, a space, time and changeable context.

These three main factors – modernization, westernization, and globalization – constitute a changeable and influential context for culture to communicate with, and then cultural changes occur as a result of interactions or conflicts. Hence, many cultural components such as values, beliefs, world views, activities, and lifestyle may change and according to these transformations new needs and aspirations emerge and require appropriate environments – including built environments – to accommodate people's current behaviours and activities well. Since culture is a contextual and complex concept, providing an absolutely culturally appropriate housing design is very difficult. In order to achieve housing design better attuned to a particular culture, the cultural context of people and its relation to housing design ought to be clearly understood.

2.2.3   *Culture and its relation with housing*

Why should culture be studied in relation to housing? From Amos Rapoport's point of view, in any Environment-Behaviour Studies (EBS) framework, culture ought to play the main role as this makes humans human, and culture is what distinguishes groups among our single species (Low and Chambers, 1989). Anthropologists profoundly believe that culture is at the centre of defining humanity (Rapoport, 1984). 'The design and use of houses reflects certain cultural and social values and ideas' (Lawrence, 1987, p.77). This principle came to the fore after Rapoport's *House form and culture* (Lawrence, 1987; Rapoport, 1969). Housing types as artefacts are essential determinants of cultural traits which are in turn, highly influential in configuring these types. They are therefore cultural artefacts and creator of culture.

In the recent past, most studies of housing design have ignored the emotional meaning and cultural implications of spatial relations, room shape, and the position of the rooms and also have neglected the psychological or sociological meaning of spatial arrangement within the house (Lawrence, 1987). In contrast, Amos Rapoport focuses on both physical and socio-cultural needs and considers the latter as rational concepts to perceive the dwelling as a house instead of as a shelter of the primitive man. Rapoport's basic hypothesis is therefore that the physical forces or any temporary factors are not the cause of the house form, but it is influenced by a whole range of socio-cultural factors in their widest extent. In relation to the house form, physical factors hinder some house features and motivate others. In this sense, Rapoport considers the climatic conditions and other physical environments as modifying or secondary forces and socio-cultural features as primary forces. Regarding the above, people use available tools, materials, technology and construction as modifying factors to achieve their ideals, values and beliefs to the furthest extent. Physical factors may be similar in many countries, even though the type of settlement and the house form are completely different. For example, people who live in a cold country might desire to use circular houses, and other people in the same climatic conditions prefer to use a rectangular shape for their house. In other cases, the same people who use a specific form in their original country or region try to use their own form in other countries which have completely different weather. People throughout the world have different cultures and symbolic beliefs and always try to adapt their house form in any built environment and any region of the world to their own cultural and social needs. Rapoport (1969) shows this symbolic nature of house in several different cultures and so many immigrants bring their home architecture with them, and insist on using their architecture even if it is neither suitable nor reasonable. For this reason 'one must find the 'flavour' of a culture's true meaning and belief before one can understand its houses' (Rapoport, 1969).

To understand the housing within a society, it is fundamental to know how different groups made cultural choices, organized themselves, defined their ideological commitments and then acted 'within a context of technological, material, and socio-political opportunities and constraints' (Robbins, 1989, p 57). It is important to distinguish between the meaning and concern with houses and the meaning and concern with housing.

2.3   Houses and housing

A house is a product of housing processes: 'Whereas houses are cultural and social objects and consumables, housing is a cultural process and a social activity' (Robbins, 1989, p 58). The word housing can be used as a noun or as a verb 'to house', i.e. the process or activity of housing. Housing is a production of a "cultural practice" such as policies and activities which, in turn, generate the house which is a "cultural artefact" (Robbins, 1989).

House form is still neglected as a product in relation to housing processes of low-income people as if there is an implicit assumption that these people merely aspire to achieve the basic needs and have no interest in comfort or aesthetic values. House form as a product needs to fulfil people's needs, wants, and aspirations not only providing a shelter. In other words, there is a need to involve laypeople in the process of housing to achieve a convenient product which in this case can be derived from their own cultural values and perception (Walker, 2001; Rapoport, 1969; Robinson, 2006).

2.3.1   *Houses and housing: example of Great Britain*

This section draws on Burnett (1986), as an example of the links between cultural change and transformations in housing in a given national context. Although this is based on a text that is nearly 30 years old, it shows similar pathways and changes in houses and housing, which have been happening in the more recent past in Syria (the country of study).

One of the basic issues in housing is demographic change, (i.e. the relationship between the number of houses and the number of people to be housed). Essential demographic changes have occurred in the recent past such as the change in the household structure, which has been more rapid than the growth in the number of individuals. For instance, in Britain the number of households had increased by 20 percent between 1961 and 1981 whereas the population rose only by 7 percent. Likewise, a series of complex changes such as an increase in the number of people married, earlier marriages, greater expectations of life, and smaller family size have led to a greater number of households and smaller size than in the past (Burnett, 1986). In spite of the crucial demographic changes, the response of the housing market has been slow to the fact that more than

half of the households in Britain consist of one or two persons. Therefore 'the housing stock, which is usually represented by three bed-roomed and five-person houses, is increasingly out of line with household needs' (Burnett, 1986, p 280).

Other social demographic trends profoundly affected housing need and use. For example, the sharp decrease of domestic servants and their virtual disappearance from middle-class homes in Britain played a significant role in changing the need and use of domestic space. Gradually, the number of households that had resident servants fell between 1951 and the 1980s. This therefore affected house size and planning, that is the separate provision for resident servants stopped or was reused for other functions. This, in turn, led the housewives to be cooking, washing, and cleaning instead of being in the drawing-room or dining-room and also to spend most of their time in kitchens which had been planned and prepared only for servants and were not convenient for household activities. Servant-less house caused the alteration from the cheerless Victorian scullery to the kitchen being the centre of household activities, skilfully planned, and equipped with labour-saving appliances, and also furnished as a room where at least some family meals are normally taken. As a result, larger kitchens including areas for breakfast or dining became the common form of provision for eating (Burnett, 1986).

Another demographic trend that was influential in housing design and use was the employment of married women outside the home. This was unusual in working-class households and almost unknown in the middle class before the last war. Wives who spend all or part of the working day outside the home tend to rationalize household duties, to put high priority on appliances, automatic central heating, and easily-cleaned surfaces and so on. And also increasing their economic sources made possible a larger expenditure on home aids and consumer durables generally. Working wives, thus, reduced the time spent on household tasks (Burnett, 1986).

There are a set of economic and social changes closely related to these demographic trends which deeply affected the patterns of living. English people probably were more prosperous, achieved higher living standard, better housing leisure and more materials possessions between 1945 and 1975 than they had before. Working classes were markedly improved.

Housing tenure is a highly significant factor in the housing field; it caused for instance, the most important change in the housing history in Britain, that is, since 1945 there was a major change and a great increase in home ownership. By 1983, home-ownership had become widely diffused over social classes though more common among employers and managers. Later on, home ownership was extended among lower income levels (Burnett, 1986).

Social changes since 1945 were described as revolutionary by the Parker Morris Report of 1961. Growth of household appliances was a central focus in that report and also rapidly increasing in a phenomenon of affluent society. In 1961, the majority of private households in Britain had a television, and a vacuum cleaner, while half of them had a washing machine, and refrigerator. This ownership of such devices had significantly narrowed down the gap between professional and manual workers. Standard furnishing, fittings, and decoration undoubtedly rose for almost all social groups in the fifties and sixties, and the highest proportion of furnishing expenditure gradually shifted from the bedroom in favour of the kitchen and the living-room (Burnett, 1986).

The revolution in tenures was a substantial fact of post-war housing, which partly granted democratic housing ownership i.e. no longer elitist. A variety of housing types, size, age, from different era types such Victorian villas and post-war town houses all together represented post-war housing. The different types of housing were not occupied by particular social class. Post-war housing did not represent a particular type of house or particular social class of occupier. Although rapid growth of house ownership narrowed the gap between different social classes and also between private housing and council housing in England after the last war, the house continued to have a central role as a status symbol and 'a symbol of a self' and displayed to the world the owner's character, taste, interests, wealth, plans and aspirations. And also the occupier was still able to personalize the external appearance and to demonstrate social status by more advanced and expensive equipment within the home for instance, lighting, cleaning and cooking appliances of fashionable type (Burnett, 1986).

Housing process and production have been and still are going through different steps and phases and these are deeply varied according to the actors involved in the entire procedure. These actors are myriad and changeable relying on cultural and socio-political orientations of a society and also related to the period of time. Housing can be

controlled by different directions, policy, and actors. For instance, the second stage of the low-cost housing programme in Sri Lanka showed that direct access to local actors would be more socially and institutionally appropriate and also would reduce the number of brokers between the managers and the local settlement (Robbins, 1989). Depending on the government orientations, housing process can be controlled by, for instance, popular or local actors or by national and possibly international actors. A change in the government orientations can also affect the housing policy, actors, and roles. For example, in Sri Lanka, Robbins (1989) refers to the shift from a policy oriented to developing social and economic fairness to one of encouraging the housing market and supporting the various actors in tandem with a change from socialist to more market-oriented government. The shift to a different style of government most likely results in a change in the housing policy, actors, and roles, i.e. how, when, and where to plan, design, and perform housing and houses. Actors, who are directly involved in housing design, differ among designer, builder, and user and those in turn affect the type of the house, as is explained in the following subsection. However, there seems to be a need to rethink and observe the housing world in a context of cultural and socio-political orientations and to develop a way to learn from each experience without universalizing the outcome or model of practice. It is important to provide possibilities, not outcomes and to obtain experience while acting, not acting on what we think we already know (Robbins, 1989).

In summary, referring to housing as a product, this is affected by different factors: demographic change such as number of households to be housed, number of married people, expectations of life, family size, number of domestic servants, employment women outside the home, expenditure on home aids and the use of labour-saving appliances, etc.; economic and social change such as higher prosperity of people, higher living standard and housing leisure, materials possessions, marked improvement in working class and narrowing the gap between profession and manual workers; housing tenure change, number of home ownership and the diffusion of this over social classes, standard furniture, fittings and decoration for all social groups, etc. Housing as a process depends on the need to provide houses for people, government orientations, policy, political directions and actors who are involved in this process.

2.3.2 *Types of housing according to who is involved in their design*

The production of houses falls into one of three major types of housing that are categorized according to the actors who are responsible for/performing housing design, building and/or using the product: traditional vernacular building, popular, and erudite designed building[3]. Housing policy can promote and support different balances of these three types.

2.3.3 *Traditional vernacular building, popular building, and erudite architecture*

Housing types have been altering over time aligned with socio-cultural changes. According to the relation designer-builder-user and who are involved and playing roles in the housing process and production, types of housing can be classified in terms of process – how it comes to be – as follows:

Traditional[4] **vernacular[5] architecture**: this type includes self-built traditional architecture which is designed and built by the users and sometimes with help from their neighbours – i.e. it is designed and built directly by the users without architects. Users are usually the owners in this type of architecture. Vernacular architecture also includes self-designed traditional buildings which are designed by users but built by traditional builders. The house is 'the most typically vernacular building type' as it represents the bulk of the built environment and closely related to the culture of the majority 'yet it is still frequently ignored' (Rapoport, 1969, p.1).

Popular architecture or modern vernacular: this type includes self–designed professionally-built buildings. It encompasses popular traditional building and popular modern building. Users choose their building design from popular designs and ready modern models such as those in magazines, and journals. The other type of popular architecture is non-architect designed models which are designed by non-architect designers such as developers, builders, and intermediates and built by professional

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[3] This classification arose in the discussion with my supervisor Paul Jenkins in 2010.

[4] Traditional building is a model resulting from collaboration of many people over many generations and it is also a result of collaboration between the makers and users of buildings.

[5] Vernacular means "native, indigenous, not of foreign origin or of learned formation" of architecture: concerned with domestic and functional rather than public (Concise Oxford Dictionary).

builders. This type is what Rapoport suggests to call modern vernacular (Rapoport, 1969).

Erudite Architecture: these buildings are highly designed by architects and built by professional builders. This type is associated with a greater complexity and greater specialization and thus can lead to a huge gap between designers and users. This type ranges from individually professionally designed houses, generally for middle to higher income clients, to mass produced housing developed by volume builders in private sector or in the public sector.

Vernacular architecture as a process, not as product, is important for what it can provide in terms of man-environment interaction and the relationship between culture and form (Rapoport, 1984). The form of vernacular architecture is a product of a particular socio-cultural context and therefore can be best understood in this sense (Oliver, 1987). 'Vernacular environments are culture-specific and thus have a close link to the culture in which they occur' (Rapoport, 1984, p.286). As noted above, the bulk of the built environment seems to be the popular architecture –modern vernacular housing. Modern vernacular housing develops in both informal and formal housing areas in many developing countries with different proportions. The following present a distinction between the informal housing and the formal housing which generally includes informal practices and building contraventions.

2.3.4 *Modern vernacular building in the context of informal and formal settlement*

This section is based on Walker's (2001) work on the informal housing production in Mexico. Informal housing is often called self-help, self-produced or irregular housing and this manifestation has been mainly noticeable in the growing cities of developing countries. Since these informal houses are produced by millions of individual producers, understanding of the built form of these houses is a valuable contribution to understand the producers' intentions and thus their underlying aspirations, desires and motivations. Furthermore, this may help to provide basic quality thresholds in relation to housing and inhabitants' needs and requirements. Such thresholds cannot be absolute but rely on the society and relations between house form and social and cultural context. He argues that the literature on informal housing tends to focus on the process of housing rather than to explore the product of housing processes. The concentration on the macro-level of study such as relationships between social and spatial structure and

macroeconomic level of study indicates the importance given to housing processes rather than product as it is happening in housing sector, as King (1984) notes.

Inhabitants of the informal housing in Mexico City are often immigrants from other parts of the country. In many other cities people also move from other part of the city or from the countryside to the informal settlement. They build their houses according to their varied culture patterns, using the alternatives they have, and thus, informal settlements often represent a microcosm of the cultural diversity of a country. The informal house is constructed using the cheapest materials available in the area or from the suppliers; and using the easiest ways to build an affordable house for low-income population and thus the house usually occupies the whole plot to maximize the use of the plot. Houses in informal settlements tend to be in different stages of completion such as having a flat roof in order to build the next floor when the inhabitants are better-off (Walker, 2001). The typology of self-built houses varies based on: the land on which the house is built (land might never be regularized or might be designated for large infrastructural project); the stage of the process (number of elements of the house form); and based on the durability of the materials used in building, roofing and finishing of the house. The gradual progress of all types of informal houses is attributed to the changes in the family's size and economic status. Although this is the case in Mexico and experience worldwide varies, in general terms it is indicative of houses as a product in informal settlement worldwide. Informal settlement can be self-designed or designed by non-architect designer, such as developers, and even also by architects and built by professionals such as the case of part of the private housing sector in Syria, which is often associated with scarcity of lands (see chapters 3, 5, and 6).

The above characteristics are not limited to the houses in the informal settlements. They can be also applied to formal houses in a country such as Syria where the possibility to make illegal modifications, transformations and changes in housing design (through building contraventions) leads to results which are similar to an extent, in many respects, to those of informal houses, as is explained later in the empirical study of this thesis.

> 'Just as the sheer ubiquity and scale of squatting in the 1960s led writers and officials to argue that something had to be done to allow, regularize and improve such development, we can argue that one part of the case for

transformation is its widespread popularity among residents. It is so popular that it may be reasonable to ask whether transformation is universal phenomenon wherever it is allowed either actively or passively. Our experience is that it certainly seems to be very widespread throughout the developing countries' (Tipple, 2000, p.121) .

In the developing world, many public housing project residents own their homes, and undertake significant home improvements. Tipple (2000) focuses in his work 'Extending themselves: user-initiated transformations of government-built housing in developing countries' on these transformations. He reports that residents either individually or in cooperation with neighbours undertake significant modifications to units and buildings to mainly increase habitable space by converting balconies or verandas into rooms and adding major extensions by "*breaking out of the original building envelop through extensions*" (Tipple, 2000, p.33).

New Gourna in Egypt was a case study of users' transformations of government-built housing in developing counties. It is a new village designed and built (1945-1948) by Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900-1989). Fathy aimed to revive traditional adobe construction of housing focusing on the courtyard, domes, vaults and arches as important elements and symbols of Islamic buildings, and other values such as privacy as he considered building and spaces to be graded from public to private. He encouraged locals to be involved in building the house and gain skills. However, only in the 1960s people started to live in Gourna. They modified some spaces such as concealing the vaulted ceiling with flat one, infilling arched doorways to have rectilinear shapes, reducing the size of the windows and doors openings and in some cases users even filled in the openings and closed off rooms. They made interior spaces darker and more private and they altered the functions of rooms to suit social and farming needs. This study highlighted that users modify the given houses because: 1) there is a difference between architect's ideals and the people ideals, 2) users look for practicalities and traditions of farming needs, religious beliefs, social behaviours and climatic response, cultural and traditional patterns etc.

By and large, Tipple's study proposed a positive view of transformers as providers of valuable housing. He indicates that "consumers/users of housing became producers and have changed their relatively monotonous estates into places of variety, self-expression

and even whimsy". Tipple concludes that: "the validity of residents' desires for change should be accepted as a normal part of the estate life. Thus flexibility and compromise are important watchwords for designers and development controllers respectively" (Tipple, 2000, pp. 162-163). It seems important to learn from the actual use of the space and the real experience of house users as Le Corbusier commented in response to the changes *"You Know, it is always life that is right and the architect who is wrong"* (Gans, 2006, p.133).

Seeing the above, considering the role of end-users of housing has become essential encouraging them to express themselves and encode their daily life and culture in their building and architecture and transformers of given houses provide a way of expressing their life and culture in vernacular architecture which, in the future, will present the culture of its inhabitants.

2.4 Architecture as a medium of culture

This section is based extensively on Robinson (2006), as very few authors deal with this topic.

Architecture is an essential medium of culture as it is consistently communicating culture (Robinson, 2006). Architecture translates the thoughts and ideas of culture to concrete descriptions, as mnemonics for important value systems (Rapoport, 1984). It comprises, in its spatial configuration, the backdrop of people's daily life. This, as such, gives individuals their building experience which, in its turn, guides individuals' unconscious behavior. As Rapoport indicates, those physical settings remind people how to behave and help them to behave properly and differently in disjunct built environments. For instance, it is not expected for a person to sleep in the kitchen as it is known from past experiences that the kitchen is used as a place for cooking, eating, and/or washing dishes.

Robinson sees that there is a close relation between the built environment and the activities that occur within it and those that are affected by previous experiences with similar places and social context. 'The interpretations of the character of the setting, and the social context of the experience mediate the behavioral outcome of the environment' (Robinson, 2006, p 16). Physical characters of a place, thus, limit or encourage possible activities and hence supply '*affordances*', but they cannot determine such activities. Affordance is defined as a quality of an object, or an environment

which allows an individual to perform an action. James J. Gibson (1977) describes it as all the actions that are physically possible. Donald Norman (2002) defined affordances as perceived action possibilities, namely action possibilities of which the actor is aware and those which are readily perceivable by an actor.

Particular activities can be socially designated by architecture providing power, status, privacy and non-verbal information, and in the process, establishing individual and group identity. That is what Rapoport called the cultural purpose of the built environment (Rapoport, 1984). Moreover, buildings provide essential signals to the behavioral prototypes which produce a culture and are, in turn, produced by this culture, that is layers of individual and social experience of physical settings are accumulated by acting and interacting between social behavior and buildings. This, therefore, is a primary cultural role of buildings, and indirectly conveys a social context message, as social context presents in architectural form unconsciously cueing the memory of previous experience. 'Architecture, in cueing a role, also taps the associated behavioral expectations' (Robinson, 2006, p 17). Architecture has an implicit effect on forming roles and behavioral expectations which are then taken for granted (Robinson, 2006). There is therefore a concrete relation between built places and activities. This combination has been called "behavior setting" by Barker and Wright (1967) in their research on Midwestern American towns. While these researchers use this term to couple human behavior with the built environment, others separate them neglecting the role of the physical environment in prompting social behavior. Robinson has used instead the concept of ''cultural setting'' as she believes that the physical environment of a culture, perceived, conceived and inhabited, still keeps its significance as spatial configuration, and architecture features with symbolic connotation which an acculturated individual creates and perceives within particular interpretive communities (2006). Architecture thus, transcribes a cultural message which in turn, provides meaning and significance for architecture as physical settings.

Within different cultures, similar or identical physical contexts might be differently perceived and can sometimes be completely misinterpreted as cultural setting is contextual and thus intelligible in a particular cultural context. Therefore, the context – such as social, temporal, and spatial settings – affects and controls the meaning and interpretation of cultural settings. Likewise, social position such as social class, ethnicity, and gender channels the ways a particular environment is understood. In any

social and cultural context, information of past experience is embedded in the form of the building which accumulates very rich cultural knowledge of a social community. Building features are understood not as single parts but as an entire of complex parts and experiences according to *gestalt* epistemology, that is '*the whole is more than the sum of its parts*'. Single elements might exist within different settings and thus have distinct meaning with a particular combination of components and this, within a specific cultural context, creates a unique cultural setting. There is consistent communication between culture and architectural form present directly through environment encoded with information, which refers to the previous individual experience of settings, cueing certain behavior and indirectly through engendered behavioral patterns which make up a culture (Robinson, 2006). That is to say, the environment may directly affect the users' behavior by their own layers of experience of settings, or indirectly by other users' behavior (imitating others or being verbally instructed) in the same or similar settings. Architects emphasize the importance of physical setting being often oblivious to its critical effects on human behavior in which cognition, cultural intentions, and overt social action are embedded. By and large, buildings, with their fundamental character as a whole complex of parts, embody important messages that individuals are consciously and unconsciously able to decode. An intensive amount of information is transferred via buildings and often unconsciously perceived by human memory. As Robinson illustrates, 'Physiological memories, vast and complex, remain unconscious because the conscious memory can not contain all the details' (2006, p 23).

Building types seem to form and reform unconsciously, in our minds, patterns of thinking and then to structure our own subsequent thought. These former types become mental 'schemata' when they encompass a group of elements having a mental image and name. In a great variety of schemata, personal and socially shared schemata are needed to identify cultural schemata. Personal schemata are very particular, based on the structure of physiological memory, essentially serve the individual and, thus, usually are not shared. However cultural schemata are shared and frequently used in social engagement and, therefore, essential for communication to self and others as they provide familiarity and predictability. Cultural schemata, which are linked to spaces and names in the case of built environments, start to be formed in a more mature stage of an individual being more conscious of cultural cues, whereas in an early childhood stage, physiological perception dominates and is mainly linked to physical and geometric cues. For instance, Martin Krampen found that young children describe

buildings using geometric shapes and sizes, whereas older children use cultural symbols such as religious ones or window types (1985).

Architecture serves as a communicator of cultural roles giving a series of silent messages through spatial structure, whereas social life assigns roles to these. Foucault (1979), for example, argued that environments have an instrumental effect of discipline which cues the explicit expected behaviour and roles. Individuals follow this discipline themselves under the power of society. These cultural roles, thus, are not directly embedded in architectural form per se, but are communicated by them. For instance, in the traditional dining room, the rectangular table evokes the implied hierarchical position at its head. This is not related to architecture assigning the head position to the male and the side position to the female, these cultural roles are attributed to social expectations, not to architecture per se, yet the latter is playing an essential role as a vehicle of communication. It is, thus, extremely important when considering architecture as a vehicle for certain cultural change to be aware of architectural changes which can be effective in a certain context of a particular culture.

Lay people's views (i.e. not professionals) express the reality of cultural context and their views are represented in traditional societies quite clearly in their buildings. Here the ordinary person's view of the building coincides largely with that of the designer or builder. In modern societies or modernizing ones, the gap between lay people and professional is wider, that is the latter understand the building as different classificatory schemata such as history, materials, building systems, and other disciplines, and they also represent physical forms first and human issues second. In contrast, lay people continue to primarily use their personal social and cultural experience to understand buildings which thus represent human issues first and physical forms second. In this vein, Robinson uses *emic* [6] for lay people or the general cultural perspective (native point of view) and *etic* [7] for architect's professional perspective (professional point of view). Designers are challenged to bring together both ways of understanding and thus these fundamentally different approaches need to be investigated and understood so as to allow designers to better engage with the emic view. This huge gap makes lay people often refuse the innovative design with unfamiliar physical presence. As a result, it is

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[6] Emic: used from linguistic term *phonemic* for a language as spoken by native speaker.

[7]Etic: used from p*honetic* the abstract description of a language.

very important to link the lay person's understanding of buildings to the professional's so that communication is improved (Robinson, 2006). This goes beyond engaging with individual "clients" or "users" to understanding entire cultural values.

In all of this, architecture provides a concrete reference for cultural expression that is outside the self. It is, therefore, an essential vehicle for cultural analysis of societies. Cultural analysis, in the anthropologists' point of view, needs investigators to act in a role as cultural outsider and at the same time attempt to be as much an insider as possible. Anthropologists indicate two kinds of cultural studies: examining a foreign culture in which unconscious structures of culture are all new to the researcher and these structures are consciously learned and also nothing is taken for granted; and that where "natives" examine their own culture, in this case they need to understand the structures of cultural knowledge in order to identify key elements, and here challenge perception of the latent structures sufficiently to be able to critique their own personal understanding. The latter approach is followed in this research, which looks at the new housing design and its appropriateness to current cultural change in Syria, to allow the researcher to evolve a perspective in the light of new and challenging information. It is seemingly, a research into the obvious to interpret one's own culture, yet it is a surprising challenge to reform and critique one's own deeply embedded views.

Although architecture provides opportunity to know cultural and social values at a particular time and place, studying culture and cultural change through architecture needs to take into account the paradox embedded within the relationship between architectural intentions (i.e. social economic reasons for which the building is erected), the architectural outcomes and the final social and cultural performance of the built form. 'The particular circumstances existing at the time and place of construction and subsequently during use, create great differences between the abstract intended idea and the concrete reality' (Robinson, 2006, p 22). However, when the concrete manifestation is accepted as sufficiently close to the expectations, the corrections and adjustments are not made between intentions and architecture when possible or in newer buildings. For instance, buildings frequently constructed with no means to help disabled people to enter indicate that ablebodiedness is accepted as a societal norm. In this vein, the operation of communication and the congruence of the architectural forms and societal aspirations are critical and fundamental. By such investigation, it is possible to better

understand how to produce settings more compatible to current culture and to represent people's ideals instead of their history (Robinson, 2006).

As argued above, culture is a mental construction that is shared by a group of people, expressed directly in behavior and indirectly by artifacts and other means. Culture is an evolving construction because of people's change in response to given circumstances. Cultural contradictions emerged from different individuals and sub-cultural groups lead to regular changes which are not easily or fully controlled by a person or a group. Architects and designers of built environment must understand and identify cultural ideas to embody and present them in the architecture and also they should be aware of the cultural messages conveyed through architecture.

In brief, the proposition that architecture is a cultural medium entails several ideas. First, cultural expression which is embodied in architecture as understood by all people of a society needs to be considered in the design process. Second, aesthetic evaluation is based, at least partly, on daily life and experience of wider society. Third, architects have potentially a key role in expressing societal ideas and values in formal architectural forms. Architects therefore, need to find ways to know how audiences receive architectural forms and which values and norms they can use to evaluate the success of reception of these or new forms.

2.5   Architecture and proactive role of the architect/ designer in culture change

Architects are supposedly the building designers in the case of erudite designed building or, at least, they play the primary role in the intended building design in cases such as the case of popular architecture or modern vernacular buildings when non-architect designers are involved[8]. As such, they potentially play a critical role in constructing, perpetuating, and transforming cultural ideas into concrete product as explained above and they therefore, can profoundly participate in cultural change. Culture is continuously, consciously and unconsciously produced and reproduced not only by people who perform it, but also by those who ignore it, those who break its rules, and those who use new rules. They all continuously re-form culture consciously and

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[8] In Syria, non-architect designers/developers, in many cases, control all the designing and building process and gain a signature from any professional architect and make it legal and licensed. In some cases, they might even bribe the personnel to gain the building permit.

unconsciously. It is possible in cultural interpretation to propose a new possibility and ability to break the rules and adopt new ones, and this, in turn, is a critical step towards conscious cultural change and to a proactive role in this change. Designers and architects can play a proactive role in cultural change through producing new built forms more attuned to current cultural change and trends. For building design to appropriately accommodate cultural trends, designers have to profoundly understand the users' needs, aspirations and cultural trends.

Architecture is a building design discipline and the purpose of it is to serve the society within which it is implemented by constructing built environments. Architecture as a social attempt is an architectural artifact and a social construction. As a discipline, architecture is a plan for the future and thus it provides a possibility of implicit continuity or change. It is thus both a social product and social vehicle and as such is a medium of cultural permanence or change. Robinson (2006) sees that the concept of architecture as a discipline with a cultural nature ought to be strongly related to, and reinforcing, the idea that architecture is a medium of culture.

Although decisions about producing buildings are structured culturally and culture is changing over the time, cultural conventions such as methods of construction develop very slowly including in this long process a sequence of trial and error experiences to find and form the best solution to achieve the "correct" pattern. Through this long process, cultural schemata usually keep conventional and cultural practices and details that are no longer relevant but merely associated with the pattern or to parts of it. Culture as a combination of values and perceived needs is changing over time, whereas architectural forms are hardly questioned and remain unchanged or partially altered as it is expensive to undertake large scale change and usually there is resistance from people to accept new things, which results in a long-term consistency. It is therefore, imprecise to assume that architectural forms represent current beliefs and ideas of a society and culture (Robinson, 2006). Regarding the discussion above, the researcher questions the consistency between cultural changes and architectural form changes in Syria (the country study) and the possible lack of congruence of these two patterns, as the country undergoes rapid 'modernization, westernization and globalization'.

The consistency between cultural patterns and architectural forms is probably reciprocally empowered, yet their interaction may result in instability and ambiguity.

Change in cultural ideas does not necessarily need a change in built form. For instance, changing the habit of having family meals in the dining room, and having it instead in the kitchen where the latter is large enough, there is no need to relocate the interior walls. On the other hand, changes in built forms may result in modification in the cultural expectations. For instance, having a smaller size kitchen creates a need for another place destined for eating. Changing in cultural attitudes may be followed by altering spatial use, such as formal eating becoming more unfashionable at home causing abandonment of the dining room, which is one of the most decorated rooms in Syrian homes regardless the need and/or use of it.

Since architects and designers are responsible for creating new possible built patterns with social implications, they may be cultural critics and proponents of cultural change and therefore they can play a proactive role in cultural change. In some modernized societies such as America, building designers probably attempt to make these changes in architectural form with a concern to consciously take into account the associated and/or consequent social changes, but because of the complex and intertwined relationship between cultural patterns and built form they cannot predict the cultural outcomes. In traditional societies and cultures, however, unconscious or vernacular processes of design are used. Here, culture as an integral part of architecture is unconsciously cueing building designers' thoughts and designs and the changes are additive or adaptive and usually not noticeable, as the relationship between building types and activities that occur or are expected to occur in these building are generally stabilized (Robinson, 2006; Rapoport, 1969).

Despite the extensive theoretical discussion about the cultural content of buildings and its effects on behaviour by such writers as Rapoport, Lang, and Broadbent, this has not been systematically yet put in practice or education (Rapoport, 1969; Broadbent, 1973; Lang, 1987). Also historians such as Kostof, Markus, etc. have highly appraised cultural messages embedded in architectural form (Kostof, 1985; Markus, 1993). Architects and designers, therefore, need to be aware of the cultural content of their designs which is usually dealt with unconsciously as an integral part of their design, so they can play a potential role in cultural reflection and constructive change (Robinson, 2006). While architects perform a professional role within a set of form-making architectural rules, the clients (who are often members of the powerful financial class) represent cultural content, purposes, attitudes, and the values they hold, and also control

manifestation of the final design. By and large, however, client's norms are enhanced and expressed in the design (Robinson, 2006, p.44) and not the norms of the building user as the former is a part of socio economic elite and thus tend to continue its role as the only cultural representative. Even when architects seek to take into account the user's cultural ideas, it is probably difficult to apply them, due to factors such as taking a long period of time and facing ideas different and/or contradictory to the client's views. Moreover, there are perhaps no reliable methods in the normative design procedure to incorporate the user's ideas as Robinson (2006) urges.

 Clients who want innovative buildings are often not concerned with investigating real social change, but look for a building that appears physically distinctive and unique. Most other clients seek buildings which are not expensive to design or construct.   Lay people's needs therefore are not taken into account in the process of design although they are the bulk of buildings' users and real representatives of culture and cultural change. Many of the foremost designers fail to achieve appropriate design which empowers patterns of daily life to fulfill the needs of ordinary citizens (Robinson, 2006).   For instance, the grand design tradition which refers to the construction of monumental-buildings built to impress the populace or other designers, represents eventually the culture of the elite (Alexander, 1964; Rapoport, 1969).   In contrast to this, Rapoport points to the process of construction of buildings which are not architect-designed such as 'folk tradition which is direct and unself-conscious translation into physical form of a culture, its needs, values – as well as the desires, dreams and passion of people'(Rapoport, 1969, p.2). The folk tradition thus is closely related to the culture and daily life of the majority (Rapoport, 1969).

These different purposes of the process of design engender different relations, implications, and outcomes as the professional is generally interested in making a built form which appears unique relying consciously to a great extent on theoretical, historical and aesthetic principles. Lay people, on the other hand, are concerned with using built form and are unconsciously basing this on previous experience. Robinson criticizes the normal architectural design process, as being isolated from the realm of ordinary people and starting from 'an attitude of designing for people rather than with them' (Robinson, 2006, p.45). She relies in her aforementioned argument upon a 'reception theory' where the built environment should be canonized by lay people

depending on their reception and also by architectural critics obliging architects to be aware of the culture for which they are intending to design.

Reception theory proposes that any product has to respond to its social function, and its cultural reception and influence, and must not achieve merely the aesthetic role of representation in its production. In architecture, this means that what lay people know, think, and desire needs to be addressed in the professional and theoretical norms. That is, experts can learn from ordinary people as much as from institutionalized/elite knowledge, and thus experts such as architects ought not to hide information from lay people or to try to control the decision making process as seems to happen predominantly today. Cooperation with user-clients has taken many forms such as working directly with community groups sponsored by government or private sector, giving instructions and guidelines for self-build, using a large structure (open construction) designed to accommodate individual units, anticipatory designing relying on research and observation to predict user needs and desires (the latter approach is used in this study), and sequenced approach using successive research building and evaluation (Robinson, 2006). Architectural reception theory is oriented, as indicated in Robinson's research, toward the notion of conscious cultural change. Despite traditional architecture not leading per se to cultural change, it can play an essential supporting role as it reflects shared cultural ideas including those of change.

Cultural change can be sorted into different levels of awareness: firstly, unconscious, unintentional cultural change which happens without a conscious objective to change cultural patterns and results in inadvertent outcomes. For instance, enlarging the kitchen for aesthetic purposes ended up with a new life style such as abandonment of eating in the dining room and of the formality of meals. Secondly, semi conscious cultural change which occurs intentionally with a plan to change and to produce particular outcomes without observing the process of change and without evaluating its success. For instance, several architectural changes were planned to accomplish better living such as high-rise residential building but this resulted in other side effects such as changing the residents' life style. Thirdly, conscious cultural change which occurs when this is intentional and evaluation of the process of change and its success are included in an iterative process. This conscious awareness is essential to practice architectural reception theory and for architectural design to emerge in a conscious and proactive role in a wider culture change.

2.6   Architectural understanding and knowledge of culture

Architects nowadays are starting to become more aware of the need to understand and gain sufficient knowledge of culture and its influence on house form and design. Here lay people arguably can give the clearest image of culture (Rapoport, 1969; Lawrence, 2000) even though architects habitually value their own professional perspective and depreciate lay people's ideas within which the cultural ideas and their spatial implications are embedded. Architects need, therefore, to investigate the connotations of lay people's thoughts and ideas which are derived from their culture and also contribute to their cultural knowledge. That does not mean that the importance of architects is any less as the authority of architects lies in their capacity to transmit specialized knowledge to others at a suitable time and in an appropriate form, which best expresses key identified interests and aspirations. It is also not correct to think that architects are no more essential in design processes as particular architectural theorists argue such as Christopher Alexander (1964), because lay people do not have as wide knowledge about the building process as specialists. Furthermore, it could be far from the users' concerns, needs and aspirations if commercial builders became the leaders of the building process, as the latter are mainly interested in the profit and work for the sake of investment and are even less likely to investigate deeper social and cultural values. Being attuned to lay people's perspectives does not mean to ignore the traditional way of teaching the architectural knowledge base; it is strongly meant to enhance it with clear understanding of culture, awareness of cultural context, and contribution of this to the design and building process.

Robinson recommends methods by which architects can deal with cultural contexts. For instance, as acculturated members of a society architects can re-employ their lay experience and tap into such lay perspectives. They can understand cultural issues through analytical research studying the culture they deal with and finding out shared and unshared aspirations and values of groups in a particular culture. Architects can also be involved in cultural ideas by contributing in decision-making which engages users.   In these ways architects can reflect cultural thought in the building especially in domestic ones as has been the case in vernacular architecture. Vernacular form of domestic settings emerged from the ideas that habitation and community have evolved over a long period of time. Domestic settings are defined by different items such as dwelling, house and home and these expressions might have similar meaning in

economy or housing policy, whereas these have arguable implicit meaning in socio-cultural and psychological studies which usually define the inhabitant's relation to the place they live in over time.

2.7 Home and house

Some authors define home and house as the same concept. Robinson states that in American society, it seems that house has become 'the transcript of the ideal domesticity, the idea of home'(2006, p.68). Others differentiate between them as these concepts have distinctive connotations, home as a place to express inhabitation and residence's *identity, order, and connectedness* and house as a dwelling type (Robinson, 2006, p.69). People consider their dwelling units to be their own home regardless of the building type whether it is an apartment, house, or single family house. Beyond the limitations of the building, the word "home" also refers to their own nation, city, and landscape to which they are related. Far from the building forms that represent a physical idea of home, a single room can be a home, where the owner can return to, to find their things in the same order they left them in over a period of time (Robinson, 2006).

This leads to the discussion by Kim Dovey (1985) about the properties of home: home as identity, home as order, and home as connectedness. She links these properties to such aspects as spatial, temporal, or what ties individuals to others who share their intimate life at home. The emotional ties to home are what give home its value in society. Home is the inherent ideas, image, belongings and feelings people conceive, construct, and use in their dwellings. It is the strong intimate attachment to the place where the people we like and love exist, and as such are essentially both a lived and symbolic construct. These three properties Dovey focuses on are quite important to understand home image in relation to its physical characteristics. Home has an essential role in creating, preserving and representing identity of the individual and family in a larger societal context. Seen in this light, home has a powerful, symbolic role in society and thus individuals and families represent their public identity through the exterior appearance of their houses (Boudon, 1972). Nowadays, adults seek to move out of their childhood and maybe adulthood home to establish their own single family home maintaining in mind the symbolic image of home. However, representing their identity through the exterior manifestation seems to be quite difficult in different cases such as speculatively designed houses in a country such as Syria. On the other hand, changing

and adapting the interior design to represent their identity seems to be more likely to occur in such cases, as shown later on in this study.

Individuals and households present their identity through furnishing and decoration of the house. By using these personal and symbolic objects such as photographs, paintings, books, sculptures and furniture, they create a comfortable inhabited place and provide a silent communication with others who enter the home. Rybczynski (1988) indicates that the comfort and ease of living at home are essential elements in the design process. Individuals can present their identity in their own bedroom, whereas the family's identity is embodied in the shared domain such as living room, dining room and kitchen, which are accessible to all members and controlled by all of them to a certain extent. The former discussion might be more concerned about the spatial order of spaces such as kitchen, dining room and living room, as these are shared between all members and thus need to be carefully formed to fulfill every member's needs, wants and aspirations.

The order in the home, as Robinson states, is expressed by the distribution of power among its members. In contemporary house, distribution of power is ideal in the arrangement where each member has his/her own room and thus has an individual control. On the other hand, the communal spaces such as living room, dining room and kitchen are under shared control of all members and thus there is a balance between the power of the individual and that of family community in the family residence. The design of the house, however, allows flexible change in the power of members responding to given circumstances, and also this spatial structure does not strictly impose particular control relations.

Roles of family members, however, are generally expressed in the spatial structure of the house, whether these roles are assigned always to the same members or distributed to different participants – for example the person who cooks is not necessarily the same every day. Spaces, therefore, are distributed or integrated relying on the hierarchical intimacy of the house (Hillier and Hanson, 1984). For instance, individual realms such as bedroom are usually deeper in arrangement, more separated, managed and therefore more private. Although gender roles cue the organization of the family community, the structure of spaces is not always in tandem with these roles. For example, locating the kitchen at the centre of a traditional house with great accessibility and visibility does not

assure the typical role of the housewife nor does it hinder the husband or any member of the family from taking on the homemaking duty. The order and identity are expressed in a way that provides a possibility for significant change (Robinson, 2006).

Affiliation to an intimate community denotes the connectedness and, as such it is reflected within the household through the ability to assimilate and work with other members of the community. On a larger scale, dwelling has links to the community where it is sited and that connect residents to the society expressing their identity to the outsiders and exterior world and representing individual and family status. Architects need to know the definition of the cultural stereotypes of home in architectural terms; to understand the image that people hold in their minds of home; to define and describe the architectural elements that form home; and to perceive the values that home represent (Robinson, 2006).

2.8   Concept of home and methodological approaches for analyzing the home

2.8.1   *Concept of home*

Home can be defined as a spatial and emotional structure in which the individual establishes his/her identity and maintains mementos and memories, and comfortably practices a personal way of daily life. There is an obvious confusion surrounding the term home, although in the last few years the academic journals and books have highlighted the importance of home and addressed its special issues. Home is a place, a site where we live, it is furthermore an idea and an imaginary imbued with series of feelings and attachment such as belongings, desires, intimacy. Home therefore, is much more than a house or a household; it is a mixture of physical and incorporeal layers established with cultural meanings over a period of time. Seen in this light, house and household are components of home but never comprise the meaning of home nor the socio-spatial relations and emotions embodied in the concept of home. One can live in a house yet might not feel at home (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

Home, in a Marxism-inspired theoretical framework, is not important as it focuses on labour, production, workers' reproduction and the spaces which contain social reproduction. In contrast to humanistic geographers who focus on home in their analysis, Marxists marginalized or considered home as an obstacle in the process of social change. Home within Marxism was 'either marginalized or deemed a hindrance to progressive social change' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.11).

Humanist geographers consider home as an essential sphere to establish human identity, as a sanctuary from society and a refuge from work. Yet feminist thought criticizes the notion of home as a haven as being masculinist as it is based on the experience of men rather than women. The notion of haven describes the lives of men and neglects women's experiences at home as a workplace, not as a harbour from society and/or work. Home, therefore, is as likely to be a place of violence and oppression as to be a harbour (Rose, 1993). Criticizing Marxist notions which support capitalism and patriarchy and thus inequality, socialist feminists show the importance of considering the gendered nature in the domestic sphere to understanding home. Feminists underline home as a workplace for women where all domestic labour occurs such as cleaning, cooking and nurturing, not merely a place within which social reproduction is developed.

From a phenomenological perspective, Lynne Manzo (2003) has moved beyond the simple image of home as a positive relationship between people and their place to a dynamic and changeable relationship between these elements within a larger socio-economic and political background. She illustrates the philosophical standpoint about people-place relationships considering the ontological nature of humanity as an integral part of existence interlocked with environment in one structure. She also proposes the phenomenological methodology, with its descriptive and qualitative analysis of this contextual structure.

Authors have been trying to link the emotional and affective "home-space" to material cultures of home providing conscious meanings for this intertwined structure and the domestic life imbued with personal experience and interaction with household memories of home. Several authors have highlighted the idea of home being a material and imaginative conception. Home is not only a shelter or storage that includes material items (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). As Roberta Rubenstein (2001, p.1) asserts 'Home is not merely a physical structure or a geographical location but an always emotional space'. Home is a material dwelling in a location and a complex of emotions and meanings which belong to this affective space. Home can be better understood as a relation between material and imaginative realms and processes. The physical form of home depends on the conceived image of home, and imaginaries of home are influenced

by the material form of dwellings. It is a mixture of feeling at home, comfortable, and belonging to a particular place (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

The material culture of home reflects changing social life and relationships between its residents and expresses all the complexities, contradictions and adjustments included in the process of creating a home (Daniels, 2001). The material structure of dwelling embodies values, meanings and rules of home and this former is produced and reproduced drawing upon selected, organized, maintained and changed values through daily life practices. As Doreen Massey (2001) states, places are formed by different social groups and different individuals who are placed in distinct ways in relation to social relation, connection, interaction and continuum adjusting and changing in spatial arrangement of individuals' everyday life. Massey enriches the concept of home with social intersection and affective nature. She highlights that home has a 'power geometry' whereby every person is positioned and experiences home differently. For instance women, from feminists' point of view, feel isolated at home more than men. Home places are often a house or a dwelling but they can also be a suburb, neighbourhood, nation or a world. Furthermore, imaginaries of home occur and construct in other scales. That is, sense of belonging and relations with others can be linked to a neighbourhood, a nation or transnational space or located on a park bench. Thus imaginaries of home and home-making processes may play a role in constructing home as occurring in and through other scales (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

Home is thus perceived as a whole more than a collection of its elements including spatial and emotional aspects and imbued with cultural and personal meanings. The complex syntax of home encompasses an interlocked structure of connotations of material and symbolic ties to subjective and contextual circumstances (Miller, 2001). Building is not dwelling, even though they 'stand in a circular relation'. 'We dwell by making the places and things that structure and house our activities' (Young, 1997, p.136). Dwelling as an active "process" not only a passive "product", establishes relations among places and things, between these and dwellers and between dwellers and the surrounding environment (Young, 1997). The act of dwelling is intimately linked to creation of "home" in a cultural sense, with symbolic and daily performance. Hominess is not neatness; otherwise, people would have an exact daily life, use, and arrangement within an identical spatial place as such might look impersonal, non-inhabited as in an interior-design photographs or architectural magazines. In these

photographs there is always something important missing which gives the space identity, intimacy, and domesticity, namely the indications of human occupation (Rybczynski, 1988). Rybczynski illustrates the specific connotation of comfort within one's own home. 'There is comfort in this confusion; only when a chapter is finished, and my desk is once again immaculately empty, do I feel a sense of unease. Like a blank page, neat desk can intimidate' (Rybczynski, 1988, p 17). The imprint of inhabitants' existence and their everyday lives denotes the human touch. Perhaps, the concept of comfort at home was conceived differently a few centuries ago.

Likewise, privacy has not always been seen as an essential human need as it is nowadays. For instance, in the sixteenth century, as Rybczynski (1988) explains, it was unusual for a person to have his own room. Each room, or maybe only one room, was used as multifunctional space, and it was a public place and thus, it was not easy for an individual to retreat to a private place. Houses were full of people, incomparable to household size today. In several cases, the shared room was used as a dining room at noon, the table was set and householders had their meal. In the evening they used the same table as a bench to sit, then they disassemble this table at night and it was used as a bedroom. A stronger sense of privacy has evolved more recently as is discussed later in this chapter.

There are diverse methods and sources to study home and life stories of home ranging from interviews, ethnographic research to textual, visual, and statistical analysis. The meaning of home might be better understood if these studies are conducted within a political, social, and cultural context considering personal experiences and daily life (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). Life stories include different types of study such as using people's own words in text, for example diaries, memoirs, letters and autobiographies, or in person such as interviews, focus group discussion, reminiscence and ethnography (Blunt, 2003). Such oral history interviews allow the researcher to collect particular aspects and subjective meanings of lived experiences at home such as personal relations, domestic work, and family life, which is difficult, if not impossible, to gather via other methods (Perks and Thomson, 1998). Oral histories of home can be conducted as primary and/or secondary sources. That is, researchers can conduct the interviews themselves or by using previously recorded ones. Furthermore, oral history interviews show how domestic life and home change over the time, illustrating for example domestic work, domestic technologies, household structure, relationships and feelings.

Interviews conducted within the home itself are not only conversations but also tours of the home through which the researcher can study home and family, domestic material and visual cultures (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

Ethnography as a descriptive and analytical technique and perspective is an appropriate method to write about a way of life such as domestic life and use of space. Ethnographic research includes detailed observation, in-depth interviews and or other participatory methods. In other words, the researchers engage themselves effectively and emotionally with people's lived experiences to fully understand senses and details that make the life at home (Herbert, 2000). The central focus of ethnography, as Gurney explains, 'is not to generate a research with validity for a wider universe, but to construct an internally coherent case study that discovers the variables that have explanatory value in specific cultural contexts' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.43). It can be conducted in different places and cultures or close to home. A number of anthropologists write about conducting the fieldwork at home as a place whereby familiarity is expected for an insider or native researcher but it is surprisingly the research at home which might involve finding out and learning very different rather than familiar ways of life and home-making practices (Gilbert, 1994). Another ethnographic approach is for the researcher to live within households conducting observations for details, everyday life, practices, and perceptions at home, namely, who does what, and how inhabitants feel (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

Visual study is important as well as textual, to show the visual and material cultures at home, such as the architectural plans and interior designs which are essential sources for analysing home. 'Domestic architecture and design are inscribed with meanings, values and beliefs that both reflect and reproduce ideas about gender, class...etc' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p 57). There are, however, obviously links and detachments between idealized design and the practices of daily life at home in reality. That is what several studies have shown in particular places at home, especially the kitchen. Kitchen design is a key issue for architects. For example, modern architects proposed that the kitchen ought to be an efficient space as a machine for cooking in. But a small kitchen with efficient space, which may be ideal for architects, does not always fulfil residents' needs such as the case of British working-class households where a third of the residents eat in the kitchen even if not suitable as they prefer to keep the living room for best (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). People, therefore, do not always live in their home as intended in the

'ideal' design and they are likely to behave differently from what the domestic architecture was designed for. On the other hand, drawing on oral history and interviews, Inga Bryden (2004) shows the connections between domestic design and embodied practice in a particular residence such as the traditional courtyard house '*haveli*' in India, where the reality of spiritual practices and family activities – such as cooking facing east which related to their beliefs – are closely linked to the idealized design. Bryden explains that 'by defining the dimensions and orientations of the house and the direction of the household activities' the principles of their beliefs 'connects the body of individual with the spaces of the home and with the cosmological' (Bryden, 2004). By and large, both visual sources – such as architectural plans and interior designs – and oral depictions – such as oral history and interviews – are important for analysing the home to better illustrate the connections and disconnections between the idealized designs and the embodied practices of real life at home.

2.8.2 *Home and domestic material cultures*

'The home is a rich site and subject for research on material cultures' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p.74). Researchers and authors, therefore, have studied domestic material culture in relation to particular objects within the home and how the use and meanings of these change over time. On the other hand, researchers have tried to explore in which way material culture can be understood on a wider scale, within the broader process of economic and cultural globalization. Material culture within one's own home displays appropriation of his/her larger world and representation of this within their private sphere (Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

A wide range of methods have been used to study domestic material cultures such as archival analysis, object biographies, interviews and ethnographic observation research. Joy Parr (1999), for example, as Blunt and Dowling (2006) have explained, illustrates the methods she used in her research about the domestic material cultures, as she analyses a wide range of archival sources and interviews with designers and women. In these interviews with women, Parr tried to collect details about their daily life in relation to their own household and home. For instance, date of marriage, dates of birth of children, places and residences they have lived in after marriage, descriptions of their accommodation and the change of this latter. She also focused on objects and furniture within the home. Not only are interviews conducted in ethnographic research, but also participant observation is intensively used to better investigate domestic material

culture. Daniels explains in her ethnographic research through two case studies of two households, how material cultures of the home reflect the change in social relationships of its inhabitants. She illustrates the complexity, conflicts, and compromises which are also involved in producing home. She also investigates the ways in which objects are tied up with individual and household identity (Daniels, 2001; Blunt and Dowling, 2006).

Although the imaginary, affective and emotional concepts of home cannot be measured nor quantified, quantitative sources may provide a clearer image of the context of home and can be employed to study and analyse a wealth of information about housing and household demography and finances, and also their temporal, spatial, and social issues. This all can enrich qualitative research on house and home and verify other findings for this research.

Different factors such as respondent selection bias, specific interviews protocols, question wording, and the definitions of household, affect the data sets. And also the ways in which these data sets are categorized, presented and analysed. By and large, however, census is important in household and home's study, particularly demographic change and household structure through which social relationships, roles, and powers and other relevant themes can be contextually understood.

Authors, therefore, emphasise the importance to distinguish between 'family' and 'household', and also between 'home' and household' (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p 80). Family was defined in cultural anthropology as: 'two or more people related by blood, marriage, or adaptation. Family may take different forms, ranging from a single parent with one child or more to married couple or polygamous spouses with or without offspring, to several generations of parents and their children' (Haviland et al., 2010, p.227). On the other hand, household is defined as 'a basic residential unit where economic production, consumption, inheritance, childrearing and shelter are organized and carried out'. Home, however, is a house and household and the relation between these two.

2.9 Cultural aspects most relevant to housing use

Amos Rapoport (1969) highlighted the cultural basic needs – such as breathing, eating, sleeping, cooking, etc. – which are critical vis-a-vis house form.

'What is important with regard to built form is the culturally defined way in which these basic needs are handled. It is not whether there is a window or door, but their form, placement, and orientation which are important; it is not whether one cooks or eats, but where and how' (Rapoport, 1969, p.61).

Rapoport, in his *House form and culture,* highlighted five of the more important aspects of the *genre de vie*[9] as mostly affecting the built form. These determinants of house form are: 1) some basic needs; 2) family; 3) position of women; 4) privacy; and 5) social intercourse

1) **Some basic needs.** These may provide for simple things such as sitting, breathing, eating etc. but looking at these from the cultural perspective, can help to understand the importance of the basic needs in the house form. For example, sitting is a basic need but some cultures rest by squatting, as is common in Asia, or sitting on a chair. Religious sanctions can affect eating and cooking habits. For example, rules of caste in India influence eating and habits and architecture.

2) **Family.** Family structure can greatly differ and it affects the house form. For example, the extended family group can lead to a cluster courtyard house of the Kabylie, or the longhouse of the Iroquois and so on.

3) **Position of women**. This is an aspect of the family system, and thus an important factor which affects the house form. The Mediterranean area contains two types of houses, the courtyard house and the two storey stone house with an outside stair found on the coasts and islands from Syria to Catalonia and the Balkans. These types were found in the same area. The courtyard house was very similar in Greece, North Africa and Latin America which suggested that the latter is related to social factors, such as the extreme need for privacy for women who are segregated.

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[9] The term *genre de vie* used by Max Sorre, includes all the cultural, spiritual, material and social aspects which affect form (Rapoport, 1969, p. 47).

4) **The need for privacy.** Privacy is at least partly affected by the position of women and thus there is a wide variation in the definitions of privacy and various ways for this to be achieved. This can be related to the cultural attitudes towards sex, shame and also the feelings of personal worth, territoriality, and the place of the individual may affect the attitudes towards privacy. The latter factor may decide whether a communal house is left open or is divided. The desire for privacy may also affect the house form; whether it faces inwards such as the Indian and Syrian court house or outwards such as the Anglo-American house.

5) **Social intercourse.** The meeting of people is a basic need for human beings as they are defined as social animals, but what is culturally important here and affects the house form is where people meet, whether in the house, the café, the public bath, or in the street. In China people meet in the wide part of the main street; in North Africa, it may be the café for men and the well for women; in Turkey people meet in the coffee shop; in France they meet in a café or bistro and never in the house, but this changed later and the house was used more for guest visits, which affected the house form and the city (Rapoport, 1969).

Two of the aforementioned cultural aspects were focused on in this study: privacy, which is partly affected by the position of women, and this latter was already investigated by other researchers (Al-Kodmany, 1995); and the practices of food preparation/consumption as an example of the basic needs and because of the lack of research and studies, if any, about the practices of food preparation and consumption in relation to the housing design, which partly affect social intercourse and where they meet. Therefore, the researcher focused on this as a new and important area of study. However, although not all the five aspects were chosen for this study, all of them were indirectly investigated because of the strong relationship between them. These two key housing use/design issues were chosen as key cultural indicators in housing and rapidly changing in the context of Syria as was evidenced later in the empirical study.

2.10 Privacy: a conceptual discussion

2.10.1 *Concept of privacy*

Privacy is not a simple concept or a self-evident notion but it is more complicated and needs a conceptual and empirical investigation to be fully understood. It is a complex

of multi-dimensional aspects addressed by various disciplines. Privacy is a cultural and contextual perception, therefore it has different conceptions within different cultures and societies. It is considered in many societies with different cultures as a human need to obtain satisfactory life, regardless of the ethics or values in which people believe or cultural perception of privacy (Rapoport, 1969). A conceptual concern with privacy has been growing since the 1960s in a wide range of disciplines including anthropology, sociology, psychology, social psychology, architecture and other professional design disciplines. However, a review of literature on privacy shows a lack of phenomenological approaches to understand the nature of privacy and its implications (Al-Kodmany, 1995). This lack of empirical studies, especially in relation to the home and domestic life may be attributed to the difficulty of dealing with, and conducting, this kind of research in a private realm of individuals.

One clue to the relativity of the concept of privacy is that the English noun 'Privacy', with all its rich associations, does not have an equivalent in other major European languages. For instance in French '*intimite*' means intimate as a best translation and '*prive*' means individual or personal. Both words are implied in the meaning of privacy but they are still very inadequate to express the ideas and connotation embedded in the English term 'privacy'. The German word, '*privatleben*' literally means 'private life' which is also related to the meaning of privacy but limited. Italian has imported the English word with deficiency in its connotations (Ward, 1999). Altman describes privacy as a regulation process whereby people control their interaction with others and therefore use different patterns of behavioural mechanisms. By regulating people's accessibility/ inaccessibility or openness/ closeness they can control acting and interaction with others in tandem with his/her personal desires and intimacy of relationship (Altman and Chemers, 1984).

Privacy might be understood as boundaries or lines separating personal from public realms – i.e. to have a personal zone within material barriers such as a wall, fence etc, or incorporeal such as feeling comfortable being not observed by strangers. Privacy is often understood as isolation, or it has close meaning to seclusion, and thus might give a negative connotation to this concept. Ward (1999) argues that there is proximity between these two concepts and it is not simple to separate them or to recognize the clear difference. From another viewpoint, Altman and Chemers (1984) define privacy as mechanisms which determine limits and boundaries of the self, and the ability to

control contact with others, but not through inclusion or exclusion of others. In other words, 'privacy is freedom from social contact and observation when these are not desired, and solitude is the lack of desired social contact' (Paul, 1952, p.102). It is 'the ability to control interaction, i.e. to avoid unwanted interaction' (Rapoport, 1977, p.203). Privacy is a universal concept but its regulations and mechanisms are different from place to place, and time to time.

2.10.2 *Privacy and culture*

Privacy seems to be a culturally determined norm which affects social behaviour – i.e. where, when and how to behave, dress, eat, interact with others, and how to manage the time and lifestyle, and thus privacy soundly influences the built environment (Al-Kodmany, 1995). Perception of privacy is different from one culture to another, although it has the same level of importance everywhere in the world. It is culturally and contextually perceived and thus culture and/or subculture determine what is considered as private and to what extent. The level of social interaction seems to be strongly connected to culture, i.e. there are open cultures with open houses and high level of social interaction and closed cultures with opposite characteristics (Rapoport, 1977). For instance, in some cultures it is not acceptable to avoid social contact and interaction whereas in other cultures, frequent social contact might be considered as interfering and intruding into others' life or 'private life'(Al-Kodmany, 1995). Since culture is unique, it must be understood in its own right, not just by imposed values and ways of thinking of the observers of a given culture (Altman and Chemers, 1984). Within one culture, privacy requirements differ according to socio-economic status, lifestyle, family background and values. These also are individually varied in relation to age, sex and other personal variables. Rapoport states that role, status, and prestige can also affect privacy needs (Al-Kodmany, 1995).

2.10.3 *Change in conceptions of privacy*

The concept of privacy is also changeable in different societies and it has been variable throughout history depending on various factors such as political, economic, socio-cultural and demographic variables. These changes in attitudes towards privacy over time, affected by a range of circumstances, have influenced the transformation from the communal life of people to the more private life of individual. Changes in privacy norms, as many authors have noted, have been associated with modification of

architectural design over a long period of time (Al-Kodmany, 1995). For instance, the present internal layout of dwellings which may be sanctioned by society, is a relatively recent event as, for example, the traditional arrangement of space within houses in Europe in the Middle Ages to early modern time consisted of interconnected rooms, so that to enter a particular room required to pass through another or other rooms and that hindered inhabitants from having perhaps a personal physical privacy as it is understood today. In the nineteenth century this layout was substituted by the corridor plan, which provided separate rooms and privacy for individuals from other family members (Al-Kodmany, 1995). The corridor plan has become an important consideration in housing design and this sorts out the spatial arrangement in the dwellings into two general types of space, occupied rooms and uninhabited circulation spaces. 'This corridor, thus, allows necessary interactions and reduces unnecessary or incidental contact' (Al-Kodmany, 1995, p.141).

The tendency towards individualism in modernized societies, leads to be more concerned about individual values and thus to stress the study of individuals. As noted earlier, Modernization and Westernization are essential factors in steering society towards individualization. Some writers note the growth of individual desire for privacy in modern societies more than in traditional ones because of the decline in group face-to-face contact, intimate family contact, relatives and close friends. Privacy, however, is perhaps not less desired in traditional societies but it has a focus on different kinds of privacy and different conceptions from modernized societies. For example, Al-Kodmany (1995), has detailed "visual privacy" as an important type of privacy in more traditional societies than in modernized societies. He also emphasises the need to address other types of privacy which, in a wider range, are classified into seven categories: personal privacy, intra-family privacy, family privacy, neighbourhood privacy, visual privacy, auditory privacy, and urban privacy. In traditional life style, people are more likely to be family-oriented rather than to be individual-oriented and to be more interacting with their kin, and these usually are the opposite in modern life style. For example, it is common in extended family for people to live and eat all together and to grant high priority to the group and often at the expense of the individual and to encourage self-sacrifice for the sake of the group (Al-Kodmany, 1995).

Privacy, however, is a controversial topic in sociological literature. For instance there is a conflict about the optimal level of privacy and to what extent it can be attained, that is,

one side decries the lack of privacy nowadays, whereas others seek to limit extreme privacy as a factor fostering isolation from others and society. Some scholars argue that modern life encourages and increases privacy. For example, science and industrial revolution produced the technology enhanced physical privacy; and secularization of government led to diversifications of beliefs and values which all effectively resulted in a tendency towards the nuclear family and emphasise superiority of individualism and individual privacy. In the contrast, other scholars see that the technology led to the invasion of privacy rather than protection (Al-Kodmany, 1995).

'Design can help control the levels of actual interaction and information levels for any given number of people per unit area by providing physical barriers, space, considering rules and manners, time control, psychological withdrawal, role separation and so on − all of which control and reduce information flows. It can also do it by manipulating the sensory cues which indicate potential interaction level' (Rapoport, 1977, p.206). For example, less noise and fewer smells reduce the information and hence increase privacy.

2.11 Food preparation/ consumption

2.11.1 *Food and culture*

Not only is privacy better understood within the culture and social context through which it is established, but so is food preparation/consumption. Foodways[10] are culturally interpreted, that is, cooking and eating are a great indicator of culture and its elements. Although mankind is able to survive on several categories and wide range of foods, the choices, to a great extent, are made from 'subjective values and preferences based on cultural, physiological and psychological aspects'. And thus, meal is seen 'as identity and social generator' (Fisker and Olsen, 2008, p.71). According to Holm, cited in Fisker and Olsen (2008, p.71): 'The meal moves beyond the frame of digestion and physiology, and instead enrols itself into a cultural and social context where the food we choose to eat or serve to our guests communicates who we are and which social affiliations we represent'.

Based on Rapoport's work (1969) , which drew attention on how religions, rituals, beliefs, and customs affect eating and cooking habits − who, what, where and how to

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[10] Foodways: in social science foodways are the cultural, social, and economic practices relating to the production and consumption of food.

cook and eat – and consequently, how these habits affect house form, this research focuses on the cultural practice of food preparation and consumption in the domestic environment. On this point, Rapoport suggests that the need of eating is not the main concern, it is the manner of how and where eating and cooking are done and how it affects the house form. He considers the manner towards eating, for instance, and its impact on the house form, whether the household has an informal or formal family meal, in a separate dining room or in the kitchen, everyone whenever s/he wants or at the same time together and so on. 'Cuisine requires not just a style of cooking, but an awareness about how the food is prepared and consumed' (Civitello, 2008, p.3).

There has always been, and still is, a strong connection of food preparation and consumption to social rituals and faiths, and thus to culture as these former are essential components of culture, as it is discussed earlier in this chapter. Food preparation is a human basic need and it is, indeed, universal, inevitable and practiced in all societies regardless of the way they perform, which is greatly varied across different cultures and subcultures. Food preparation and consumption as a cultural and domestic activities need much profounder research and direct study to explore its impact on the built environment. The following discussion describes the importance of food preparation and consumption in social and cultural life and therefore the determinant role of this in housing use and thus the need to be reflected in housing design.

Fire was the turning point in human life as this led to cooking activities that distinguished humans from animals (Civitello, 2008; Davey, 2007). In the same manner, culinary lifestyle may distinguish human groups from each other to be one of the strongest features of a group culture. How they cook, where, when, and with whom they eat and cook, are all significant behaviours to understand a group culture, as Rapoport emphasises in his *House Forms and Culture*, showing his concern about the impact of this manner on house form (1969).

Everything about how humans cook and eat has meaning: who is allowed to fish for it, farm it, mill it, or kill it; what vessels and utensils are used in the preparation; what time of day the meal is eaten; who sits where at the table (if eating at a table), how close to an important person, a certain food, the salt, a person of another gender, race, or class; what order the food is served in; who serves it; whether it is hot or cold, cooked in water or by direct fire. For instance, in European and American cultures, serving a whole

boiled chicken at an important occasion would be an insult, while in Taiwan, it is the centrepiece of a banquet (Civitello, 2008). For this, many nationals, countries, ethnic and other groups give their name to their own cuisine such as French cuisine, Italian cuisine, Mediterranean cuisine, Levant cuisine, Turkish, Iranian and etc. Nevertheless, there are very limited studies about food and its bound relation to culture, such as *Food in History*, which was first published in 1973 (Civitello, 2008).

Food, cooking and eating are undoubtedly a junction of any national and international discussion. It is an inescapable topic in any informal and probably formal meeting, among friends, relatives, acquaintances, colleagues, mates, and other social groups whether they have the same or different cultures and backgrounds. Food preparation is often an attractive way to present one's identity. '*It is very nearly topic number one*' (Mintz and Bios, 2002, p 99). Laypeople and professionals, educated people and illiterates, youths and elders, all have their parts in this conversation. Food preparation, serving and eating are common features of all human societies. Culinary practices are, therefore, firmly related to culture and can express and transfer a clear cultural message. Anthropologists, of course, have greatly focused on food for a long time in a variety of contexts, in relation to cultural components such as rituals, religions, social behaviours, social structure, organization and hierarchy (Mintz and Bios, 2002). Such anthropologists as Mary Douglas is concerned about and describes food, and foodways as cultural practices occur differently in different times, places and occasions (Douglas, 1992). Douglas formerly made significant contributions to a structuralist vision of food and eating (Mintz and Bios, 2002, p 100). Thereafter Jack Goody (1982), in his wake, marked a turning point in anthropologist study on food and eating in his *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class: A Study in comparative Sociology.* He emphasised the importance of dimensions of culinary and other cultural differences which emerged in class societies (Mintz and Bios, 2002; Goody, 1982) meanwhile, social researchers, scholars and architects remain largely oblivious to the crucial impact of cooking and eating habits on architecture and particularly on housing use and design, and also to the effective role of rapid change of customs and rituals of food preparation and consumption on housing design alteration (Hodgson and Toyka, 2007; Rapoport, 1969).

2.11.2 *Foodways as cultural practices vis-a-vis architecture*

'What is really cooking and what is the connection with architecture?' This is yet an ambiguous question since it is an everyday practice and seems quite self-evident and

trivial to be a central discussion. Although food has been a focal point in anthropological study and social science, it is still very shallow in architectural research, overlooking the great meaning in socio-cultural life and the impact of this on domestic architecture and housing design. Preparing food means constructing food, assembling and composing. 'Cooking is process of construction just like architecture' (Hodgson and Toyka, 2007, p.100)

Architecture and food are both fashioned from raw materials into a cultural product (Castle, 2002). Food and architecture are seen as 'frames around the formation of social relations' and thus there is the need 'for an understanding of the inherited relations between the fields of architectural design and culinary arts' (Fisker and Olsen, 2008, pp.63,71). Cooking is humankind's oldest art form and much earlier than architecture and thus expresses a civilization's world view. In fact the food people are brought up with forms a crucial part of a person's identity, his home. Like the mother tongue, *mother foods* have a vocabulary which remains stored for a lifetime. Simply, dishes canonized over countries, are true works of art – without claiming to be art. People's values, perceptions and taste sensations are essentially created by memories of their own personal life and the collective cultural experience embedded deep in memories of social rituals in earlier days. Dwellings and cooking fundamentally affect people's rituals, tradition and taste memory and these, in turn, affect people's current thinking. Dwelling and cooking are deeply human activities with close and intense correlation. Cooking is thus a cultural activity just as architecture is, and both present a world view and cultural message (Hodgson and Toyka, 2007; Robinson, 2006). Food preparation is an essential element of cultural activities of dwelling which contributes to consolidating human dwelling. This latter is the centre of the world of its inhabitants; they emerge to the world from it and regard it as a refuge from the world. Where family members meet around the laid dining table or in the kitchen, crystallize and bring their social life together, and thus improve and fix emotional and social establishment of human home. This argument perhaps shows the idea of Hodgson: 'This laid table symbolising the centre of life' (Hodgson and Toyka, 2007, p.9).

2.11.3 *Food preparation locations in changing times*

This section is based on work of Peter Davey (2007) *Hearth and Home: food preparation location in changing times*. Fire, in most cultures, was and has remained the centre of family social life and the focus of the dwelling. The central fire was the

source of food, light, warmth and companionship, as happened in Viking huts and the huts of Puglia in southern Italy.

In the cities of the Roman Empires and the Middle East, a much more complex pattern of food preparation emerged. In some cities such as Pompeii and other similar cities, the poor were living in insulae, dense multi-storey blocks of flats where individual dwellings had no kitchens. The inhabitants probably cooked at home using portable charcoal-fuel-led stoves. 'Almost certainly people would bring their own food: pies, pasties, and roasts to cook in the baker's oven, as they did in many European countries well into the 20th century' (Davey, 2007, p.100). Davey also assumed that the poor must have patronised the many fast-food shops located in the ground floors of the insulae. For the rich, life was very different, slaves prepared the food, and domestic stoves were common. Stoves were masonry or clay platforms on which charcoal was burned and pots were fitted in holes in or on top of platforms as they were in fast-food shops. In many cases, stoves were in special rooms, at that time the domestic kitchen was emerging, and from the beginning it was an indicator of wealth and privilege (Davey, 2007).

In masonry houses, chimneys were evolved in northern Italy in the 13th century. Initially, chimneys were made of wood, wattle and daub or wicker, formed in hood over the fire place. Then chimneys were made of stone and later brick, where the materials were available and owners were rich. These had many merits such as getting rid of smoke, heating, and also cooking – meat and fish were preserved by being hung and smoked. Chimneys were also used for ventilation in summer time in Mediterranean countries, whereas kitchens were separate in castles and monasteries (Davey, 2007).

Hearths and cooking places were often detached from the main part of the house in a separate structure, where heating is not needed or desirable as in the case of hot-climate countries such as in the tropics. Cooking facilities were usually in an open area and sometimes in a separate and rather flimsy structure. This tradition was continued until recently in the Australian outback, taking it from India, so as to reduce fire risk and undesired artificial heating.

The place of cooking moves around according to season within areas that have great annual variation in temperature. For example, in Baltistan and Kashmir the cooking

place varies from an insulated, windowless winter chamber usually underground or surrounded by fodder, through increasingly open places, to a corner of a veranda in summer time. Elsewhere, there were no separate kitchens, cooking was usually in the living room over an open fire, on spits, or on cauldrons, kettles, pots supported on tripods or fire crane providing flexibility in raising and lowering food containers. Food was stored in well-ventilated roofs or huts (Davey, 2007).

Food preparation and consumption was kept apart from the main dwellings in hotter countries, and the separation was often horizontal, but in houses for richer people they were vertically divided so as to give it greatness in appearance and healthiness for different floors. In this case, an underground floor was allocated for servants' work room, kitchen, servants' dining room and other similar service places, so the kitchen was identified as a separated room. Provision of cooking arrangements usually varied with the wealth of the occupants and with the development of cooking and heating technology.

Kitchens, more perhaps than other spaces in houses, were and still are altering in accord with the technological revolutions starting from the renaissance. For example, many new designs and technological apparatus for cooking appeared, particularly in Britain in the late 18th century, where the industrial Revolution started (Davey, 2007). In English gentlemen's houses, kitchens were often distant from dining and breakfast rooms, and comparing families of different incomes, it was clear that further kitchens from the family table were associated with richer owners of houses. The great houses therefore, were provided with a separate circulation system so food could be invisibly brought by servants to a smaller service places which had facilities to keep food hot before serving to the table.

At the turn of the 19th century and at the other end of the social scale, design for flats and small houses were developed for the poor by architects such as Barry Parker. These houses included small separate kitchens; by this time the range was included in the family living room and cooking with gas was becoming common. In the 20th century, kitchens were considerably transformed, using gas and electric range kitchens which can easily be separated from the living rooms, even in small houses or poor households when it is needed.

Communal kitchens serving a block of flats became common in European and American cities before the First World War as a practical way of reducing the price of individual dwellings and time and effort needed for cooking and washing for each family, and thereafter community cooking emerged in tandem with the increasing power of the Soviet Union and decrying of domestic slavery of women in traditional families. The idea of communal kitchens continued in some countries such as Scandinavia, but it has often failed elsewhere as perhaps a result of provision of readymade food by plenty of supermarkets, especially in prosperous countries.

The Frankfurt kitchen, a milestone in domestic architecture, which was designed by Margarete Schutte-Lihotzky in 1926, was created to minimize movements needed for food preparation and washing up within a little separate room connected to the living room by a sliding hatch. This is so as to give separate places for different functions, one for living and relaxing and the other for working (i.e. cooking, washing etc.). But this kitchen was too small, providing only a space for the cook as cooking was often done by women and the idea of separating mother and children, wife and husband was common.

Labour-saving machines and new technologies such as refrigeration, freezing, micro-wave, and washing-up machines have substantially altered cooking techniques and have taken on the role of servants in developed economics, particularly in middle-class houses, which was performed before the Second World War. These new techniques have altered the ways and rituals of food preparation and consumption of the households, for instance becoming possible for any member of the family to prepare the meal, or each member to have different fast meals at perhaps different times. This, in turn, has affected the housing design and use, particularly the kitchen and its relation to dining and living room in relation to the functions performed within these spaces – single or multifunction, timing of use, certain or random time, separation or connectedness, transparency or opacity – and also in relation to the level of privacy, private, semi private, or common for all family member. American breakfast bars emerged in the 1940s to provide quick meals for people either standing or sitting on high stools. These bars have been adapted for domestic environments and can be also used as space-dividers between food preparation and food consumption areas.

2.12   Conclusions

The literature provides several generic analytical frameworks for culture and housing studies, and examples of how these concepts can be better understood through contextual and qualitative research methods, which are drown on in this study, (see chapter 4).

The above review provides several definitions of 'culture' as a complex, multi-dimensional and controversial concept with special focus on the reciprocal relations between culture and housing. The review highlights that cultural change always exists but through a much slower pace than the current rapid change as a result of modernization, westernization and globalization. Various authors, as shown above, differentiate between housing as a cultural process and house as a cultural object, and more specifically they distinguish between the house as a physical product and 'the home' as cultural product. The literature discussed in this chapter shows the important role of the 'home' as a domestic material culture, which entails social and cultural embedding. Several studies articulated how focusing on particular objects such as the kitchen appliances or cultural aspects such as privacy in the home and how they change overtime can indicate a significant change in the culture. In the same vein, household' activities in the home and how they change over time can embed decisive cultural indications. The review shows that the concepts and practices of privacy and foodways are cultural indicators and tightly relevant to the domestic environment and households' daily activities.

The above review concludes that concepts and practices of privacy and food preparation/ consumption are cultural indicators tightly bound up with the home environment and therefore, they have been focused on in this study, as shown later on in chapter 5, 6 and 7, to provide a better understanding of the actual use of the home space and the user's needs, wants and aspirations.

The literature shows how these relate to architectural design. It shows the important role of domestic architecture as 'material culture' which reflects the culture of a society during a particular period of time and vice-versa, i.e. how important it is to fully understand the culture of a society to provide appropriate housing design. The literature also defines the house as a physical product and 'the home' as a place which entails social and cultural embedding.

In the light of the above review, the key issues for this study are, as shown later on, on privacy and food preparation and consumption (see figure 2:1) as the most notable and changeable cultural indicators in the home in Syria, and particularly in the city of Lattakia, and how this is affecting the provision of the new housing design and the actual use of the home.

Drawing on the above review addressing the research objective A of this study, as noted earlier on in chapter 2, the following chapter provides a general background to Syria and a brief introduction to its social and cultural context, with special focus on the home environment. It also shows how culture is inevitably and rapidly changing in the contemporary life in developing countries under the unavoidable impact of modernization, westernization and globalization, and thus this was investigated in the city of Lattakia as one of most affected cities, as justified in chapters 3 and 4, addressing objective B.
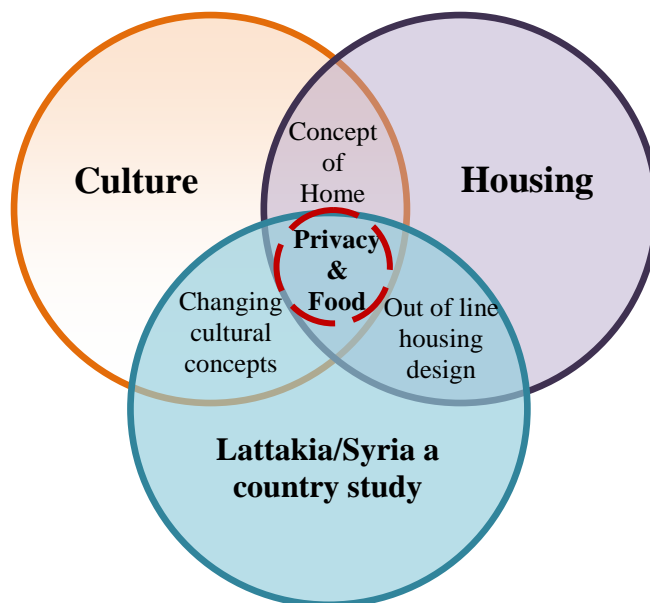
Figure 2.1: Key Issues for the Study

Chapter 3:   Culture and Housing in Syrian Society

3.1   Introduction

In this chapter, a general background of Syria and the context of its society, prior to the current conflict, and a general review of literature on culture and housing highlight the nature of the relation between these two concepts in this country. It also underscores the cultural change in the contemporary life in Syria and how factors such as modernization, westernization, and globalization, discussed in chapter 2, affect culture in Syria. In order to clearly understand this transformation and its implications on spatial use in the home, cultural attributes closely relevant to housing design in Syria are required to be contextually understood and observed, such as privacy and food preparation and consumption, as demonstrated in the prior chapter and evidenced in later chapters. Hence, what the importance of these cultural aspects within the home in the context of Syrian society is, and how these affect housing use by Syrians, are briefly discussed in this chapter and delved into in more detail in later chapters. Bearing in mind that it is important to probe to what extent users are involved, if they are at all, in the housing design process and/or decision-making, the researcher clarified housing delivery, and in chapters 5-7, investigated the types of housing in Syria vis-a-vis the participation of the user, builder and designer in the housing design process. These types were categorized in the prior chapter as vernacular buildings, popular buildings and erudite buildings.

Salwa Mikhael (1998) argues that socio-cultural change in Syria and associated changes in the built environment have led to a need to replace 'traditional' patterns by those that are borrowed from industrialized and western countries as a pretext of progress and modernization. She claimed that these changes resulted in a new 'modern' built environment which affected the social and cultural context of society. However, to understand the relation between social and cultural values and contemporary demands and needs for progression and to determine whether the cultural changes affect the built environment or vice-versa, as Rapoport emphasises in his landmark book *House form and culture* (1969), it is important to rely upon a wider level of understanding and awareness of socio-cultural context and real inhabitants' requirements of today.

The core thesis of this research is that current housing design is not fitting with cultural change in Syria, which is mainly a result of modernization, westernization and

globalization. These three interlinked forces tend to create quite a noticeable chasm between traditions and modern life in countries emerging from a more 'traditional' background such as Syria.

To understand the context of Syrian society and the nature and rules of culture in Syria and its relation to the built environment, this chapter first provides a brief historical, geographic, and demographic background, and then in more detail focuses on the housing process and products through a review of the last two Five-Year Plans (FYP) of the State Planning Commission- Syria. It then focuses on housing types, privacy and food preparation and consumption in Syria.

3.2   Historical, geographic and demographic background of Syria

3.2.1   *Historical background-evolution of Syria*

Syria is officially called the Syrian Arab Republic. It is located in western Asia, bordering Lebanon, the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea and the island of Cyprus to the west, Palestine to the southwest, Jordan to the south, Iraq to the east, and Turkey to the north. The modern state of Syria is only a portion of an ancient geographical Syrian land or "Greater Syria" which included, in the post-Ottoman era, modern Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, the island of Cyprus, parts of Southern Turkey and parts of Iraq which were especially claimed by the Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP)[11] since 1932 (Pipes, 1992). Syria's roots can be traced to the fourth millennium BC. Its capital city, Damascus, is considered one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It was the seat of the Umayyad Empire and a provincial capital of the Mamluk Empire in 1250-1516. Historically, Syria's face on the Mediterranean Sea has been very important to the country's history. It has provided Syrians with a "window on the world." Syrians have taken advantage of this window since ancient times. For several thousand years, the Phoenicians were among the world's most experienced and travelled seamen. Some evidence exists that they travelled as far as the Americas and East Asia. By 600 BC., Phoenicians travelling

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[11] The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) has had a profound political importance in the 20th Century and was most active in Lebanon and Syria (Pipes, 1992)

under the directions of Egyptian king Necho sailed around Africa and successfully returned to the Mediterranean Basin (Phillips, 2010, pp.18-19).

Modern Syria was created after the Second World War as a French mandate and attained independence in 1946. In post-independence Syria witnessed a large number of military coups until political stability was achieved in 1970. Syria as a Mediterranean country in the Middle East has undergone several regional and cultural conflicts as it is situated in a strategic location linking the African and Asian continents as well as European Mediterranean countries (see figure 3.1) – and as such it has been a key site for cultural interactions and transaction. In this it has been controlled by different religions and socio-political rules and has strong sets of different cultures as detailed below.

Figure 3.1: Strategic Location of Syria

Source: Adapted by the researcher based on GeographicMaps.com (2010)

Brief overview of historical cultures and powers controlling Syria

Culture in present-day Syria is the result of a mixture of several successive cultures as it has undergone several struggles among indigenous groups and invasions from foreigners since 2400 B.C., starting with the Ebla Empire which controlled an immense commercial network between Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Aegean and Syrian coasts. The Language of Ebla, which was recently found, is considered the oldest of the Semitic languages of Syria, which are believed to be the oldest in the world (Collelo, 1988). Thereafter, as shown in figures (3.2 and 3.3), Akaddians, Egyptians, Canaanites, Phoenicians, Hebrews, Aramaeans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Seleucids, and subsequently Romans – who witnessed the advent of Christianity in Syria, which remained at the centre of the new Christian religion – then Nabataeans, Byzantines, Muslim Arabs, European Christian Crusaders, Ottoman Turks, Western Allied forces, and French all successively occupied Syria because of its important political, economic strategic continental location. Christianity was founded in Syria[12] in the first century and was spreading quickly at the turn of the millennium, mainly due to St. Paul's conversion to Christianity. He converted from Judaism to Christianity while he was on his way to Damascus in a mission to persecute Christians in Damascus. His conversion led to the spread of Christianity in many areas of eastern Mediterranean (Phillips, 2010, p.28). Muslim Arabs conquered the area in 635 (Phillips, 2010). The Ottoman Empire controlled the area from 1516 until 1916 under Islam rules; then the French mandate controlled Syria until 1946 (see Table 3.1).

Thereafter Syria underwent several countercoups until the rise of the 'Baath' Party revolution in 1963. Since the Six-Day War of 1967, Israel occupied the Golan Heights in the southern part of Syria (CIA, 2008). Syria's current President is Bashar Al-Assad, son of Hafez Al-Assad, who held office from 1970 until his death in 2000, when he was succeeded by his son. 'The contradictory legacies of Syria's location have presented Syria with many challenges and opportunities' (Phillips, 2010, p.31). Despite the political turmoil in this region over the centuries, this resulted in cultural enrichment and great contributions to civilization, and Syria as such is known as a cradle of

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[12] "Syria" indicates in the text modern Syria, i.e. present-day Syria.

civilizations. Moreover, this produced a massive process of *acculturation*[13] and a great cultural heritage in Syria (Federal Research Division, 2005; Shoup, 2008). Socialism was initiated in the political system after the Ba'ath Party[14] Revolution in 1963, and then under President Hafiz Al-Assad resulted in significant social, political, and economic changes in Syria. Since the start of the socialist transformation, industrialization has emerged in Syria and the impact of modernization came to the fore, and a movement towards secularization started.

Douglas Phillips stated that 'Syria, however, frequently suffered at the hands of outside powers that had superior militaries and technology. Syria's pattern of being conquered and influenced would continue for many centuries' (2010, p.31). In March 2011, the current conflict started and still is continuing at present (2014), with diverse causes, political turmoil, sectarian strife, and outside powers involvement in the conflict. Overtly the conflict was described as being sectarian in nature between government forces and anti-government armed groups, although both opposition and government denied that (OHCHR, 2012, p.3). 'The impact of the Syrian crisis on the development gains in the region spans at least a decade. The ongoing armed conflict has led to a high loss of human life and massive population displacement both within and outside of Syria and has destroyed social, economic and political fabrics of the country' (UNDP, 2013, p.3).

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[13] Acculturation is the exchange of cultural features that results when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first hand contact; the original cultural patterns of either or both groups may be altered, but the groups remain distinct (Kottak 2007).

[14] Al- Ba'ath (Party): the ruling party of Syria since 1963 whose ideology combines Arab nationalism, Arab unity, and socialism. The word "Ba'ath" means Renaissance in Arabic and the word was a symbol of the connection between the party's ideologies with the writings of the Arab nationalists of the Arab Awakening before World War I. The Ba'ath party appealed to the educated among especially the lower middle class, such as school teachers and other lower level government employees (Shoup, 2008, p.29).
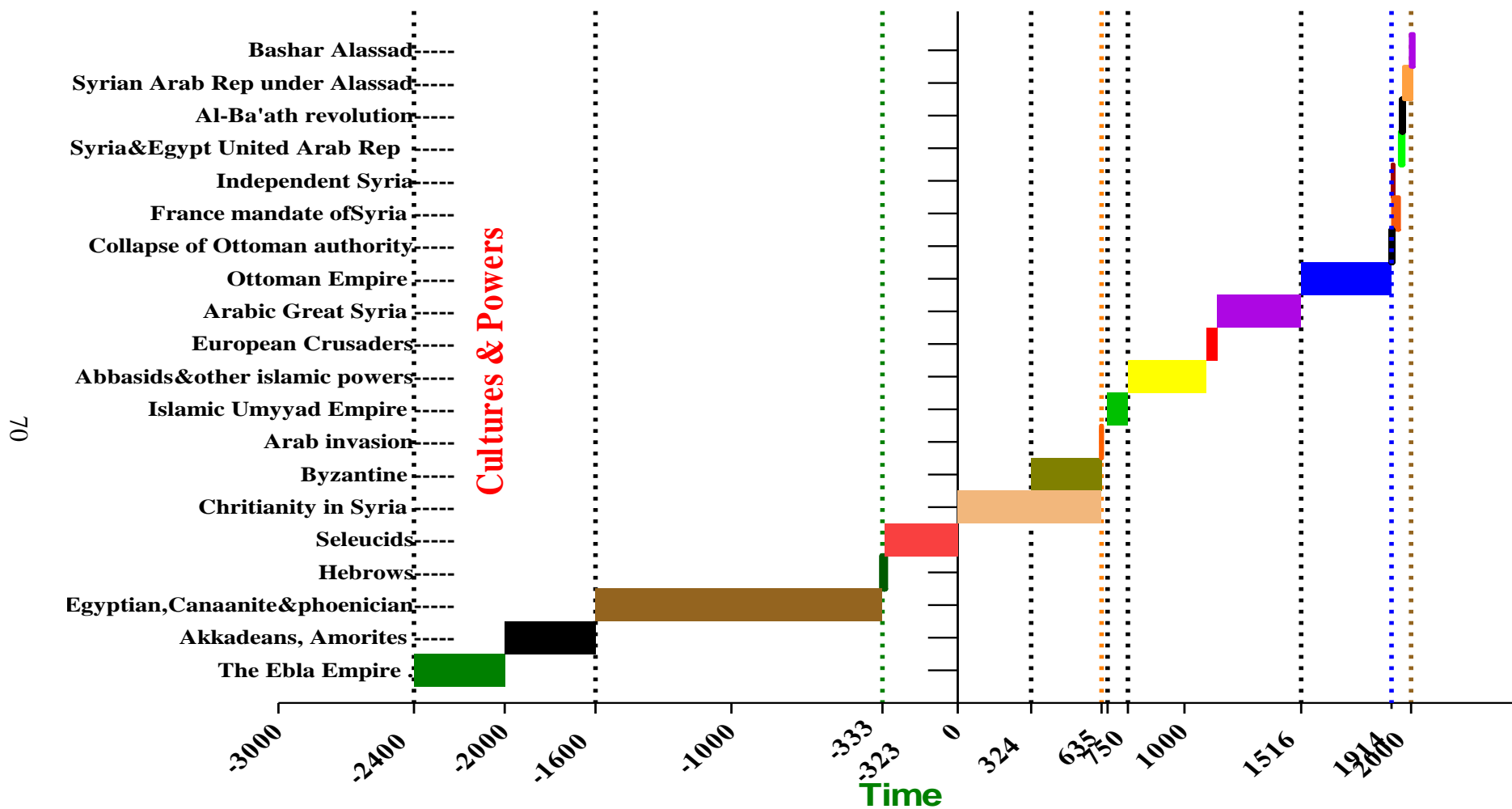
Figure 3.2: Cultures and powers in Syria

Sources: The researcher, based on information from Antoun and Quataert (1991), Pipes (1992), Phillips (2010).

Brief Chronology of Modern Syrian History	
1516	Ottoman conquest of Syria
1799	Unsuccessful invasion of Syria by Napoleon Bonaparte
1833	Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt occupies Syria
1839	Ottomans resume control
1839	Hatt-i Sherif of Gulhane reform decree
1856	Hatt-i Humayun reform
1908	Young Turk revolution and restoration of 1876 Ottoman constitution
1914	Ottoman declare war on Britain and France
1917	Collapse of Ottoman authority in Syria
1920	Independent Arab State of Syria declared but defeated by France and
1922	Formal mandate for Syria and Lebanon held by France begins
1925	Insurrection of the Druze
1936	French-Syria agreement to end Mandate in three years
1939	France enters World War II and delays end of Mandate
1941	Syria formally becomes an independent nation
1946	Syria actually becomes an independent nation with French withdrawal
1958-1961	Syria part of abortive United Arab Republic with Egypt
1970-2000	Hafiz Al-Assad becomes president of Syria
2000	Bashar Al-Assad rises to the presidency of Syria

Figure 3.3: Brief Chronology of Modern Syrian History
Source: from Antoun and Quataert (1991)

3.2.2 *Geographic background of Syria*

Climate

Syria's climate is divided into two distinct zones, the seaside and desert. Three quarters of the country are occupied by a semiarid steppe which is located between the humid Mediterranean coast in the west and the desert regions to the south and east (see figure 3.4). The annual precipitation in the steppe area ranges between 750 and 1,000 millimetres, mostly falling between November and May. Annual mean temperature ranges from 7.2°C in January to 26.6° C in August. On the other hand, precipitation averages less than 200 millimetres a year and temperatures range from 4.4° C in January to 37.7° C in July and August in the area east of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, including

Damascus (FRD, 2005). Annual mean temperature in the coastal area ranges from 12°C in January to 27°C in August (World Meteorological Organization, 2010).

Figure 3.4: Geographic Map of Syria
Source: Worldatlas.com (Worldatlas, 2010)

Natural Resources

Syria has a very rich subsoil - apart from petroleum and natural gas sources, a variety of minerals are exploited, such as phosphates; chrome, iron, and manganese ore, as well as rock salt, marble and gypsum. Many other minerals are found in enough quantities for profitable mining. Phosphates are used to make fertilizer and sandstone is used to manufacture glass. Other minerals are found in mountain areas but less plentiful and not enough for mining project such as gold, lead, coal, etc. Although the operation of

Syria's Euphrates Dam has been disrupted by Turkey's diversion of water from the upper Euphrates, Syria relies in part on its hydropower resources for energy (CIA, 2008; Federal Research Division LOC, 2005).

Economy

The agriculture and petroleum sectors produce half of the Syria's gross domestic product[15] (GDP) which was 44.49 billion U.S. dollars in 2008 (Phillips, 2010, p.78). Agriculture is vital to Syria's economy. The Euphrates River − the longest river crossing Syria − and its tributaries, the Orontes, and the Barrada are very important in supporting Syria's agricultural industry. The crops Syria produces are varied such as wheat and barley, which are the major grains in the country. Cotton, sugar beets, grapes, olives, citrus fruit, lentils, chickpeas and a variety of vegetables are produced in Syria along with the animal products such as eggs, beef, mutton, poultry, milk, chevon (goat meat). Cotton was the most important export in the country until the 1970s, when it was replaced by petroleum. Oil was discovered in northeast Syria in the 1950s and the industry boomed in the 1970s. Syria's production of oil started to decrease by the mid-1990s. In addition to petroleum, Syria produces natural gas, with reserves ranked forty second in the world in 2008 (Phillips, 2010, p.81). Tourism is also a growing industry, increasing economic opportunity in Syria with its rich historical sites and cultures. For example, the sites of Damascus, Aleppo, and Bosra, and the ancient ruins of Palmyra are listed in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage sites. Tourist numbers increased by 19% between 2008 and 2009 due mostly to Arab tourists who visit religious sites in Syria. European tourists also increased by 54% with many new visitors from Germany and Italy. Revenue from tourism produced 1.1 billion U.S dollars in the first four months in 2009 (Phillips, 2010, p.82). This however has been thwarted by the current conflict.

There are also a variety of manufacturing industries and a number of services such as banking, and government jobs, etc. Government employment comprised more than 25% of the jobs in the country in 2010. Manufacturing produces around 13% of Syria's economy. Although this area has not been a traditional strength, it contributes to diversifying the country's economy. Textile, food, sugar, beverages, tobacco, car

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[15] A country's gross domestic product (GDP) is the total value of the goods and services produced within a country in a year.

assembly, chemicals, steel, cement, and building materials are all major industries besides petroleum. Banking and financial services were controlled by the government until 2001, when private banking was legalized and then the industry has grown rapidly. Nevertheless, foreign investment was limited mainly to Arab investors and remains slightly inefficient, with difficulty to obtain outside investments. Private money exchangers were permitted in 2007 and the first stock market was opened in 2009.

3.2.3   *Demographic background of Syria*

The population of Syria in 2009 was 20,367,000. Of this, the male population was 10,408,000 (51.1%) and the female population was 9,959,000 (48.9%). This does not include Syrians who live abroad, nor the Palestinian population who live in Syria (467,596) (Central Bureau of Statistics Syria, 2010). In 2011, the population of Syria was estimated at 20,766,000. As such, the average population density in Syria varies between cities due to the disproportionate distribution of the population throughout Syrian lands. However, the overall general population density across Syria was 109.98 people per km^2 in 2009 and 112.1 per Km^2 in 2011 (Central Bureau of Statistics Syria, 2010; United Nations statistics Division, 2011).

Syria's population is growing at a rate somewhat higher than the world average (1.17% in 2009), in that the Syrian's population growth rate was 2.7% in 2000, but this has decreased in recent years to 2.3% in 2006, and 1.7 in 2010 and the total fertility rate has declined from 3.58 in 2004 to 2.73 children born/woman in 2007 (Central Bureau of Statistics Syria, 2010). Life expectancy at birth in Syria was slightly higher than the world average as this was 73.6 in 2004 (UNDP, 2005) and increased to 77.7 for female and 74.5 for male in 2010 – i.e. before the conflict began – (United Nations statistics Division, 2011). At the beginning of the 21st century, Syria's population was thus quite young, in that more than two-thirds of Syrians are under the age of 30. The median age of the Syrian population was 20.6 in 2005 (United Nations, 2007).   Half of the population is concentrated in urban areas and the highest population density is in northwest and southwest Syria (see map of population density and distribution in Figures 3.5 and 3.6. The lowest population is in the desert and its oases. Regional conflict and the creation of the state of Israel have resulted in noticeable migration within and into Syria; for instance, most of Golan Heights' population was expelled to other cities of Syria. Palestinian Arabs immigrated to Syria as refugees in 1948. They were over 400,000 in 2009, which was 3 percent of Syrian population. In 2003 more

than one million Iraqi Arab refugees also moved to Syria because of the Iraq war (Britannica, 2009).

Major cities in Syria are Damascus, the capital, Aleppo, Lattakia, and Homs. Other minor cities in Syria are Al-Hasakah, Deir ez-Zor, Ar-Raqqah, Idlib, Dara'a, As-Suwayda, Tartus and Hama. The total land area of Syria is 185,180 km^2. The coast line, which includes the cities of Lattakia, Tartus, Baniyas, and Jablah, is 193 km long at the Mediterranean Sea. Syria's main ports are Lattakia, Tartus, Baniyas and also Jablah.

Due to its history and location as noted above, there are various ethnic groups and religions in Syria. The main ethnic groups are: Arabs approximately 90%, Kurds 9%, Armenians, Circassians, Turkmans around 1% (Federal Research Division LOC, 2005). According to Federal Research Division (2005), religious groups are estimated as following: Sunni Muslims account for 74% of the population; Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects represent 16% and the various Christian sects are around 10%. Christians are divided into several groups: Orthodox (Greek Orthodox) makes up 50–55% of the Christian population and the Catholics and other sects comprise the rest. There are also small Jewish communities in Damascus, Al Qamishli, and Aleppo. The languages used are: Arabic which is the official language of Syria and the mother tongue of 90% of the population; Kurdish, Armenian, Aramaic, Circassian are spoken by part of the population; and English and French are widely understood by educated people (CIA, 2008; Shoup, 2008; Phillips, 2010).
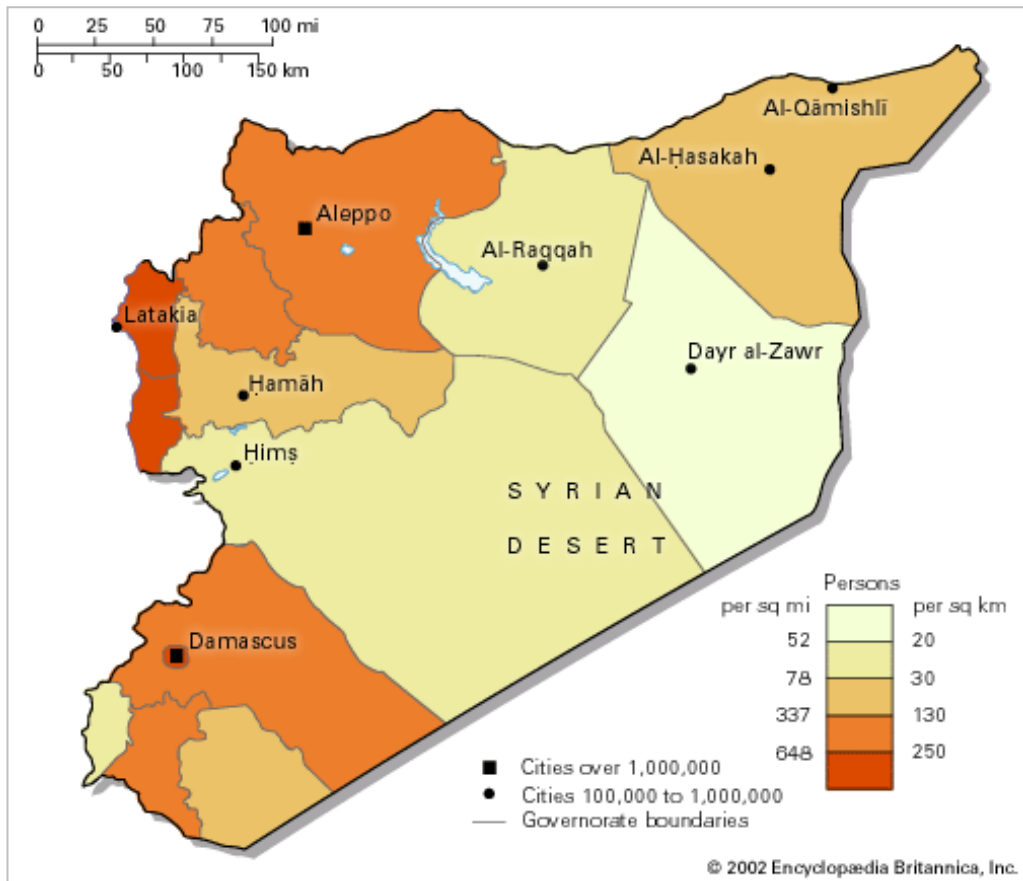
Figure 3.5: Population Density in the Governorates of Syria

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica (2002)
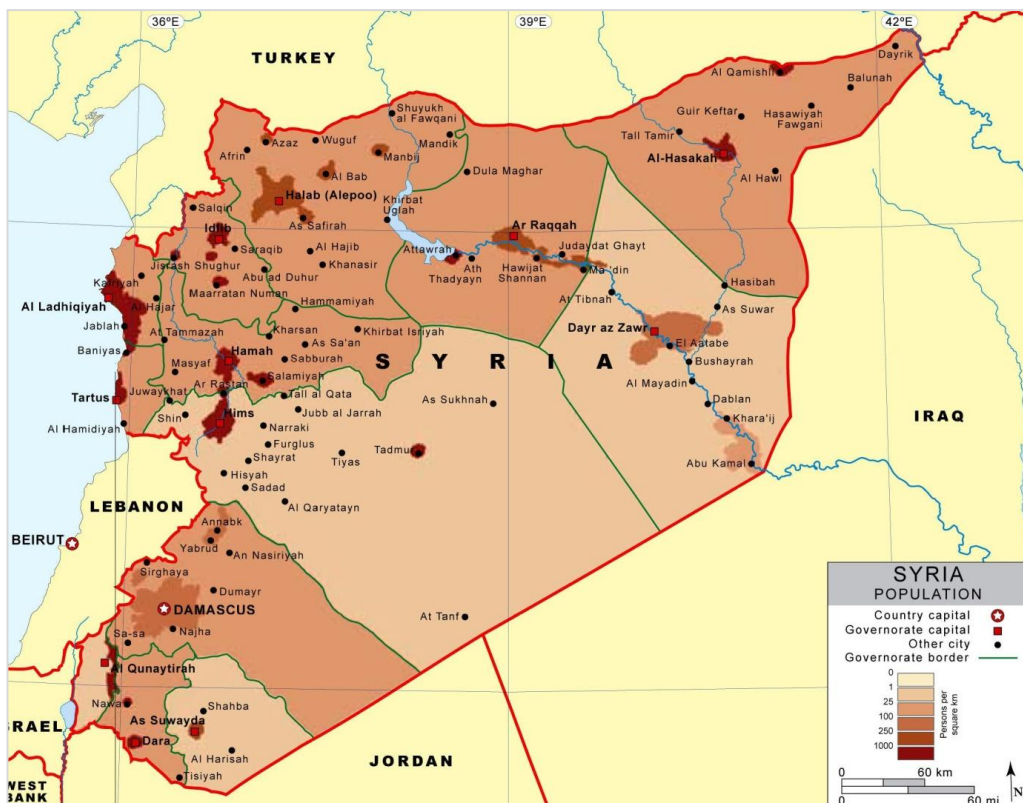
Figure 3.6: Population distribution and Density of Syria 2007

Source: World Trade Press (2007)

3.2.4   *Socioeconomic structure of Syrian society*

The socio-economic structure of the society in Syria seems to be not officially documented yet nor are the criteria of its stratification defined. *'There were shortcomings on the part of official statistics institutions, and a near total absence of socio-economic research institutions concerned with this subject'* (Sara, 2011, p.6). This seems to be political orientations of the government towards classless society. Therefore, this study is based mainly on the economic structure of the society as the criteria which are used in this research – education, occupation, possession, and the area of living – are strongly correlated with the economic level as explained in chapter 4.

Although there is no official or academic classification of Syrian society, people tends to socialize with their own social class, especially in relation to marriage issues. Before the revolution in 1963 the social division in Syria was based traditionally on different factors: 1) economic norms between landlords and tenants, 2) regional standards between urban dwellers and rural peasants, and 3) religious bases among a Sunni Muslim majority and other minority groups (Collelo, 1988). The social structure has been realigned in relation to different criteria, such as regional, socioeconomic, and cultural. People increasingly have become more concerned about upgrading their status to a higher social class by virtue of technical and higher education and thus a new upper middle class has been rising since Al-Ba'ath revolution's adopted policy towards secularization and nationalization, instead of religious, tribal, and regional intolerance. "The ruling Ba'ath Party has even supported punitive, discriminatory actions against open display of religious affiliation, such as veiling by government employees" (Shoup, 2008, p.122). Social stratification has been evolving, but not been completed to date, based on two main categories as follows.

Socioeconomic stratification (albeit very limited)[16] based on work and secular higher education which divided the society into: 1) *Working class,* which consists of wage-earning workers. Although Syrian society lacks a developed industry, this class was 12 % by 1980. 2) *Traditional middle class* includes artisans and handcrafters in addition to proprietors, tradesmen, and white collar employees. This was approximately 30 percent

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[16] Very limited information has been found by the researcher, however, this will be used only as indication in this study.

of the population in Syria in 1980. And 3) *Upper-middle class* encompasses teachers, scientists, technocrats, lawyers, doctors, civil servants and others professional, for which no percentage was found by the researcher (Mortimer and Division, 2004).

Ecological division, based on the ecological nature of the area of settlement and people lifestyle, categorizes Syrian society into three groups : 1) Townspeople who live and work in an urban area, which in 2006 represented more than 53 percent of the Syrian population, with this percentage increasing rapidly as peasants migrate to town for work, study, and settlement. 2) Peasants, who live in villages, were in 2006 less than 47 percent of the whole population in Syria. However, many families and households return to live temporarily in a village during the Summer time. 3) Tribes people, who were less than 7 percent of the population in 1980 and as the government has been attempting to encourage them to settle in a sedentary houses, they became very few nowadays in the Syrian Desert – probably much less than 1% as this was not even mentioned in the official statistics of 2006.

In terms of income levels, Syria is a middle-income country and has a lot of potential (Gilbert, 2009; ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005). The majority of the population is most likely to be middle-income as explained below. Based on a UN study in 2004, people in Syria were categorized into poor (30%) and non-poor (70%). Poor people were estimated at around (11.4%) of Syria's population in 2004 using the lower poverty line and at around (30%) using the upper poverty line (UNDP, 2004). In this study, people who are under the lower poverty line are considered very poor whereas people who are above the lower poverty line and under the upper poverty line are considered as slightly poor at (18.6%). However, the majority (65%) of the slightly poor (18.6) – i.e. 12% of the total population — are clustered just below the upper poverty line and thus slight improvement in the macroeconomic policy might move them up to the non-poor group (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005) and most probably they would move to lower middle class – non poor. Although inequality has risen in Syria as a whole during the 1996-2004 period, a large increase in per capita expenditures outweighed the effect of this worsening distribution (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005) and thus poverty slightly decreased as shown in figure 3.7 It is, therefore highly likely for a slightly poor group (12% of total population) to move to the lower middle class.
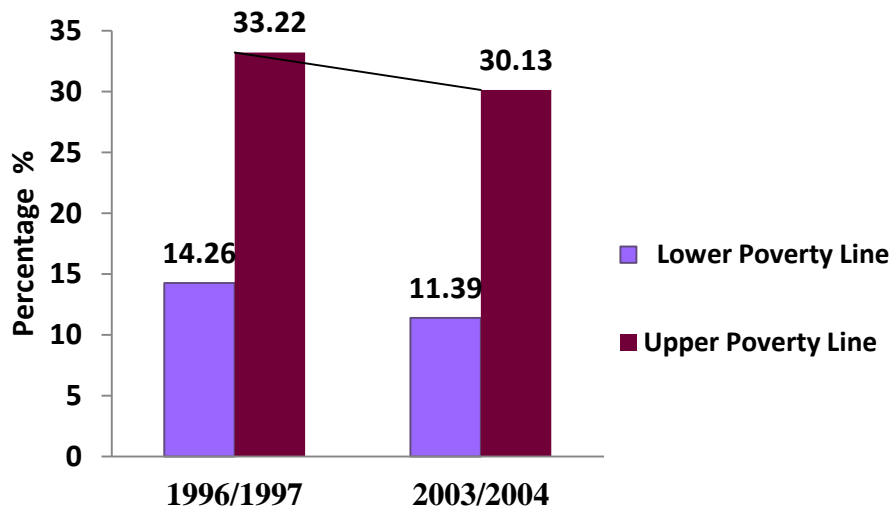
Figure 3.7: Poverty in Syria 1996-2004, using lower and upper poverty line
Source: (UNDP, 2004)

Non poor population includes upper class and middle class groups but very limited and old data was possible to find by the research. According to the Federal Research Division, Library of Congress in Collelo (1988), in 1980, middle class was estimated at 40%, with 30% of traditional middle class[17] and 10% of the new middle class[18]. The upper middle class and upper class groups seem to be approximately 30% of the total population in 1980. However, the figures are used in this study only as general indications, given the lack of data. Seeing the above, the majority (58.6%) of the inhabitants in Syria seems to be middle class (see figure 3.8).

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[17] The traditional middle class encompasses artisans, handicrafters who produce basic commodities such as textiles, soap, and shoes in small cottage industries, small proprietors, tradesmen, and white-collar employees (Collelo, 1988, p.55).

[18] The new middle class of education and expertise which live a completely different way of life, this group seems to value scientific rather than traditional knowledge Mortimer in Syria a case study , modernity rather than tradition, individual initiative rather than family solidarity and etc (Collelo, 1988, p.57).

Estimated Economic Structure of Syrian Society
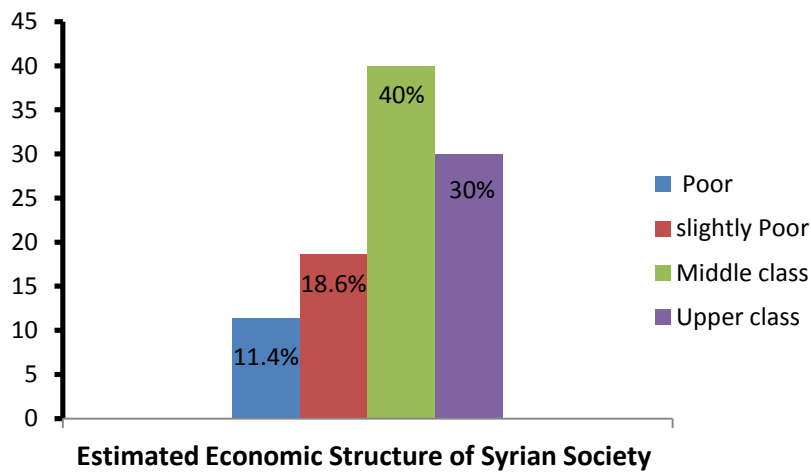
Figure 3.8: Estimated Economic Structure of Syrian Society in 2004

Sources: Adapted by the researcher based on United Nations of Developing Programme (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005) and (Collelo, 1988)

According to a study of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) about poverty in Syria, the percentage of poverty in the urban areas is proportionally less than the poverty in rural areas, as shown in figure 3.9, and that also makes the possibility of change higher in the urban areas.

Regional poverty in Syria of individuals 2003-2004
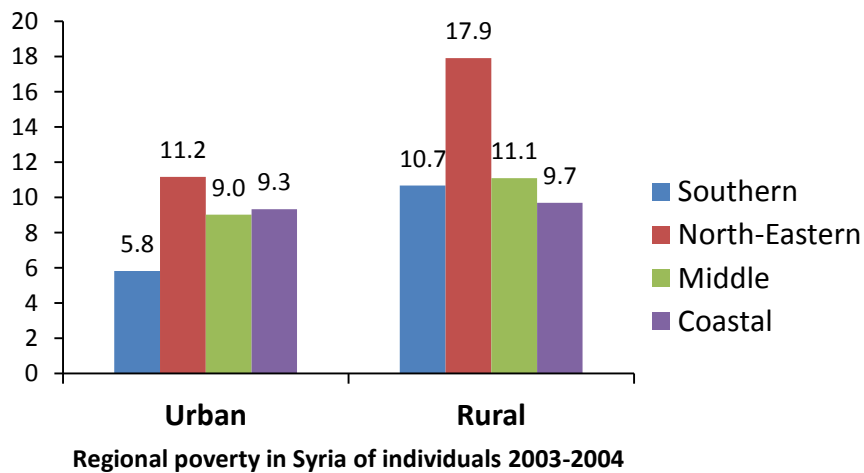
Figure 3.9: Percentage of individuals' poverty in Syria, Rural and Urban areas
Source: (UNDP 2004)

Although the poverty in the coastal region is almost the same in the urban and rural area, the coast has the lowest percentage of poverty among Syrian areas, as shown in figure 3.9 and 3.10 (UNDP, 2005).

Regional distribution of poor households in urban Syria

■	Southern
■	Norh-Eastern
■	Middle
■	Coastal
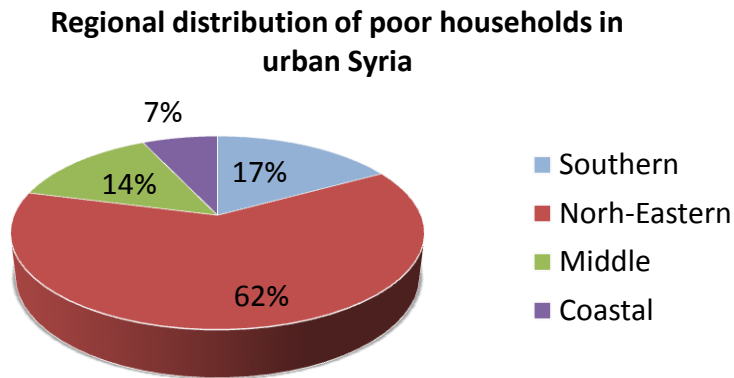
Figure 3.10: Regional Distribution of Poor Households in Urban Syria
Source: (UNDP 2004)

For this reason, the coastal region can be an appropriate area for this study. Middle and lower middle-income groups are the target of this study as they can afford to make modifications or changes in housing design if needed/wanted, as was noted earlier. They usually occupy formal housing (pre-planned or expansion) areas, while the poor often occupy the informal settlements. Formal housing areas usually consist of a general housing design which is done formally by designers for unknown clients, in contrast to the individual housing design in which users are involved and decide their own house design – this probably being related to upper class and upper middle class groups. This is what was categorized as an *erudite architecture* as it was noted in chapter 2. This type of architecture does not reflect the dominant culture of the Syrian society and thus it is not the target group of this study.

3.3   Culture and cultural change in Syria

"The foundation of Syrian culture is thousands of years old, but it is not unchanging. New elements are added, and influences have come from the many invaders and traders that came through the country in generations past. This means that the Romans, Ottoman Turks, Arabs, French, and many others have all left their fingerprints on the people and culture of Syria" (Phillips, 2010, p.49-50).

Cultures tend to both accept and resist change, depending on people and culture traits. Therefore, in the same society, there might be people who desire the new culture and others who refuse novelty and attempt to preserve their culture. For instance, most

people in Syria do not have lunch in their work place even if they spend a long time there, as they prefer to have it with their family. In recent times, almost all European employees spend the whole day out of the home in their job, hence they allocate time to have lunch in their work place and then go back to continue their work. Yet this situation rarely exists in some other societies and cultures – such as Syrians' – as they adhere to family rituals such as having lunch and spending time together at home and discussing family issues. However, changes in some Syrians' life style, especially in terms of food's rituals, has arguably led to neglect the sophisticated, decorated dining room in some subcultures of Syrian society, while other social groups try to maintain it at least as a symbol.

Many kinds of influence cause changes in culture. The most important ones are: forces at work within a society, contact between different societies and cultures, changes in the natural environment, inventions which may be technological or ideological (O'Neil, 2006). In many cultures men and women have complementary roles. One gender might desire changes which give them positive chances and affect negatively the other, as happened in the second half of the 20th century in western cultures. Forces at work within the society of Syria have changed by integrating the women workers in the work environment out of the home, which was the only domain of women. A significant change in Syrian culture occurred particularly in the last decades influenced by subcultures and international cultures contact. For example, the drought in the north-eastern part of Syria in the last decade has led many people of the region to move to other cities, especially Damascus, to work and settle there, which has led to more contact and interaction between different social groups. Furthermore, inventions and other technological changes have made a great difference in the world and also in Syria. Other internal changes have also influenced the culture in Syria. For example, demography of Syria undergoes significant transformation which influenced the social structure on different levels: individual, family and societal. Syrian society, as that in many Arab countries, is witnessing an apparent clash of cultures as traditional individuals, families, groups, cultures, buildings, streets and communities are opposed by modernized and borrowed western patterns.

As seen in this chapter, Syria is a culturally diverse country which has emerged from a traditional society and a considerable percentage of the population still preserves strong moral, ethical and traditional values re-presented in family order, religious doctrines,

customs, social and academic education, hospitality, courtesy, and self-discipline (Phillips, 2010). The former conservative groups of Syrians greatly value tradition and social norms and try to preserve their cultural identity both at home and abroad. It is, therefore, normal to find Syrian families all over the world who still live their lives as if they were back in their own country. Since the rise of Al-Baath party to power in the 1960s, Syrians have been driven in two directions: Secularism and Conservatism. Secularism – Al-Baath Party's policy – opposes the conservative traditional groups whether Muslims or Christians. This policy has led to a slight tension within the Syrian society (Shoup, 2008, p.127).

In the last decades, Syrian society has not been precisely traditional, as it has undergone a rapid cultural change. This was a result of an extensive communication between different cultures in many countries over the world via different means such as mass media, TV, internet, and international tourism. The influence of the educational system in Syria during recent decades (1990s - 2010) has played an essential role in the sharp current change, especially among women. This is when women obtained their right to work, and the lifestyle of the Syrian family significantly changed – women stopped being only concerned about their houses, which used formerly to be the woman's "ivory tower". Through the modernization process, the status of women in Arab societies in the Middle East has dramatically changed and the fundamental traditional values such as social roles of women have been changing (Al-Kodmany, 1995, p. 62).

The Syrian perception of women was strongly related to the Islamic elite's views of female privacy – i.e. women should stay at home caring after their children and domestic chores and thus they often do not go either to school or to work, especially when education was limited to affluent families. However, in the recent past the number of educated women has noticeably increased in Syria, as shown in Table 3.1. It shows that while the number of female students was approximately 70% of the number of males in 1985, the number of female students became equal to the number of male students in 2004 (Syria, 2004). This percentage of educated people was formerly much lower, especially among females, who were used to be in contact with very few people who are mainly relatives in a private and limited environment, namely their own houses. Therefore, it was very important to arrange comfortable spaces with several elements within the house where women spent most of their time, to include indoor and outdoor activities – for instance, the courtyard, which is an open space in the middle of the

house surrounded by other house rooms, so as to keep the occupants in contact with the natural atmosphere and provide an appropriate open space which is also a family's private domain to entertain, communicate and practice other activities such as cooking, eating, spending leisure time and other home chores at the same time as achieving the family's privacy and specifically women's privacy. Nowadays educated women workers are achieving their demands of communication and interaction with the outside communities and wider social worlds. More and more people are experiencing living in different societies and that gives them the necessary confidence to choose the best fit of lifestyle rather than live a single typical life within a small domain – i.e. the house.

Student of high school stage by gender 1985-2004			
YEARS	**Female**	**Male**	**F/M**
1985	88182	122912	~ 0.7
2004	139913	139720	~ 1

Table 3.1: The increase in the number of educated females comparing to males

Source**:** *8/TABLE 19/11 the Central Bureau of Statistics, Syrian Arab Republic 2004

Rapid evolutions and modernization movements in the late 20th and early 21st centuries are causing many socio-political, economic, cultural changes and conflicts in Syria. Therefore, housing process and product are undergoing consequent changes. In the beginning of the 20th century, changes arose with the extension of the capitalists' mode of production, change of the functions within the family structure, and decline in the unity of the family resulting in weakened family relationships and a lesser importance in role of the father as a head of the family. Married boys left the traditional family house or divided the house and built barriers that changed the traditional structure and function considerably (Mikhael, 1998, p.121). Thereafter, over the last decade, globalization has played the major role in cultural change in the society of Syria.

In the light of this, it is essential to understand the cultural context of Syrian society via the people's way of life – i.e. how they think, believe, react, behave, dress, eat, prepare their food and how their life style is and also how this changes over time considering different groups and subcultures. The differences among townsmen, peasants (farmers) and tribesmen (Bedouins) are expressed in clothing, behaviour, preparation and eating of food, homes and furnishings, accent, and customs. Cultural distance grew between these classes in the late nineteenth and in the twentieth centuries as a result of

Westernization. Western ideas, techniques, language, behaviour, and lifestyle influenced people in cities motivating them to change their culture while people in the villages tended to preserve theirs, thus increasing the social distance (Mortimer and Division, 2004). However, in recent years many factors have eliminated the social chasm between urban and rural people such as:

Technology: TV, satellite, media, and the internet, which increases communication among different cultures in the society and in other societies.

Prevalence of transportation: provides more probability for communication, interaction, transaction, and information exchange.

Prevalence of education: primary and secondary school are compulsory and free, high school and state universities are free.

Tourism and foreign investment: Arabic and international funding, scholarships and so on, all widened the transaction and interaction with other cultures.

The nature of the rapid change in Syrian social and cultural life seems to be most notable in the capital and the coastal cities in Syria, which have become international tourist destinations. In such areas (Lattakia being an example of a tourist coastal city), middle class groups of people strive to change their houses, lifestyle, and areas to live in higher class districts. This manifested evolution of people's aspirations is an informative indicator that people tend to change their culture, which is expressed in behaviour and life style.

The skill and ingenuity of Syrian women are reflected in the traditional costumes and food arts. Both food arts and costumes are mainly the work of women though men take part of these tasks. This realm, however, is predominantly that of women and through their art the richness of Syrian culture is well presented (Shoup, 2008, p.112). After Syrian independence, governmental policies encouraged and pursued gender equality in general and in education and employment in specific. Quite a good percentage of the women took advantage of these policies. Nevertheless, Syria is still a conservative country with strong family's ties and kinship which seems to impose indirect control on the individuals' decisions and behaviour. Although parental control is less nowadays, sons and daughters rarely choose their own job and parents make their choices or apply a great influence and often pressure on their opinion. However, parental control is much higher on girls' decisions and lives than on boys.

Nowadays girls have more freedom and can make decisions and go out of the house much more easily than in the past, although they need their parents' approval about where to go and whom to speak to. Professions which once were seen as appropriate for men are now open to women. For instance, there are women ministers of state, in the parliament, military, police, and in other professions such as medicine, engineering, and law.

Most working women are 20 to 24 year-olds as they are studying at school or university before getting to their 20s, and after 24 they are most probably married. Once they are married they may quit their jobs or change to a part-time job. While law may encourage women employees to stay in their jobs, they may be passed over for promotion because it is expected that they will leave their jobs once they are married as a result of life family and duties interfering (Shoup, 2008). Not only are women's education, work, role and lifestyle changing in the modern life, but also the way of cooking and eating and many food rituals. These play an important role in culture and social life in Syria as well as all over the world. 'Things are changing but it will be a long time before many of the conservative attitudes of people change whether Christian or Muslim, Arab or Kurd' (Shoup, 2008, p.125).

3.4 The relationship between culture and housing design in Syria

Traditional house design, as several studies discussed, seems to appropriately reflect the culture and social life of Syrian society in the past, when the traditional courtyard house was the dominant type, mainly influenced by Islamic Law. In contemporary life, culture is influenced by a wide variety of factors and sources as discussed earlier in this chapter and in section 2.2.2. The question that arises here is: does the new housing design in Syria appropriately reflect current cultural change? And if culture is shaping the form of the house, how is it taking place in current housing design in Syria? This is discussed in detail in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Discussion of the social and cultural impact on the form of the house became considerably important in the whole process of housing particularly after Rapoport's '*House form and culture*'. As was noted in chapter 2, Rapoport illustrated that physical factors – climatic, economic and technological factors – which had been considered as primary factors in housing process, are actually merely modifying factors and thus they are secondary factors in shaping the house form in any built environment, whereas

culture is the primary factor of house form (Rapoport, 1969). Inside the dwelling, Rapoport also illustrates the existence of a particular distribution of symbolic spaces in a universal scale. For instance, in the Arab tent, there is always ritual space configuration and this differs among tribes. For example, in the Touareg tent, which is one of the Arab tents, the entry is to the south and the east side of the tent is designated for men, whereas the west side is designated for women. "This ritual space distribution is found in the houses in India, in Lapland, and among the northwest Indians" (Rapoport, 1969, p.55). Rapoport's position that social and cultural factors are influential and fundamental in shaping the house form has led him to emphasize social transformations and cultural changes as the main reason to adjust, modify or/and change the spatial arrangement and housing use and design.

In Syria, social relationships, structure and cultural concepts have been recently changing; however, in the last few decades housing design has developed out of cync with current cultural change. Arguably this has sometimes changed to unsuitable forms in relation to new social behaviour and cultural needs, and this is what leads the relation culture-housing to be inconsistent in Syria in contemporary life. Since there is no official communication between laypeople – inhabitants – as end users of the house and the legislators who give the licences and guidelines of housing design to the designers and developers, a huge chasm between culture and housing design is widening. Multi-story building is the predominant housing type in Syria, which is designed generically speculatively by designers or developers regardless of users, as is evidenced in chapters 5, 6 and 7. Moreover, while uncontrollable expansion of informal settlement areas in Syria might be built by people's desire and choice, this occurs under unsuitable circumstances as it is an illegal process which forces them predominantly to implement cheap buildings regardless of real cultural needs.

Traditionally it was widely believed in Syrian cities within traditional groups that it was taboo for women with Islamic background to appear without a veil – a special scarf women use to cover their heads – in the presence of men. Hence there was a fundamental need to arrange the house with two separate places – a result of the widespread influence of Islamic traditional house – one allocated to women called *Haramlek* and usually located on the first floor, and another part allocated to men called *Salamlek* and usually located on the ground floor. That does not mean that there was only this style of living in Syria, but there are limited different styles of living and many

forms of the special arrangement inside Syrian houses are due to the variety of existing religions and sects.

In the past, the cluster form of settlement was the main type of urban design in Syria and due to the Islamic influence the outside façades of the whole residential settlement were quite similar and simple following the humbleness, simplicity and egalitarianism principle in Islamic doctrines. In contrast, the public buildings were different and designed as distinctive and symbolic edifices and were used as a landmark of the city. However, inside the houses there was completely different decoration and varied type of sophisticated architecture and furniture.

Although the dominant type of settlement was the cluster buildings, there was another type of residential settlement on the Syrian coast – the individual type with surrounding farm – which could be seen especially in rural areas. The house forms which existed are classified into two groups: courtyard house and stone house with outside stair (Rapoport, 1969). A possible explanation for this division lies in the existence of slightly different cultures within Syria as it was noted earlier. However, in recent years, many new types of settlements and house configurations have been developed and introduced in Syria. In this sense, Syrian cities are indistinguishable, as there is no clear metropolitan architectural identity.

Although Syria is categorized as a secular country, the majority of the population are Muslims, and therefore Islamic doctrines have a dominant influence on culture and thus on traditional housing design. Family sanctity and privacy – especially women privacy – have a high priority in Islam and thus in traditional Syrian society. Islamic Law has even detailed buildings instruction such as the placement of windows and the heights of adjacent buildings, and also regulated the responsibility of neighbours to each other to meet religious requirements and to protect the private life of family and neighbours. The courtyard house has traditionally prevailed in Syria, as in other Arabic and Islamic countries, and strongly reflected the Syrian culture and family life at home at its time. Family sanctity and privacy were strongly emphasised in traditional housing design by separating private life from public one and by segregation of women to fulfil their privacy. Since the home in traditional life of Syrian society was the only domain of women, the courtyard/s was essential in almost all traditional houses providing an open space where they could do all the housework, activities, occasions and social life

without being seen by any non-family members. Privacy was significantly reflected in the traditional house design in several ways such as the placement of doors alternately on the sides of the street not facing each other to avoid outsiders' vision into the home; outwards windows on the street side were treated in special architectural way to provide visual privacy such as placing them above the sight line of passers-by and using '*Mashrabiya*[19]' or lattice window, which provides a view of the street without being seen by the passers-by; very small and grilled openings on the ground floor were also used to avoid the vision of passers-by.

3.5   Housing and houses in Syria

This section provides a brief of a general background about housing in Syria as a product and as a process. It includes the general characteristics of housing settlements; housing tenures, which usually affect the tendency to perform modification in housing design; the general housing policy, which is based on regular 5-year plans of the State Planning Commission of Syria; the production of housing by the public, cooperative, and the private sectors; housing type as a product, including traditional houses with a special focus on the stone courtyard house, and the current multi-story concrete residential building.

3.5.1   *Characteristics of housing settlement in Syria*

Housing in urban areas of Syria consists of three main residential area typologies: 1) master planned (pre-planned) areas, 2) expansion areas which are legally expanded after completing the implementation of the master plan to cover unexpected housing demand, and 3) the informal settlement areas[20], as shown in Table 3.2.

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[19] Mashrabiya is an element of traditional Arabic architecture used since the Middle Age up to the mid-20th century. It is a type of projecting oriel window enclosed with carved wood latticework located in first storey or higher. It is mostly used on the street side of the building or in the courtyard side i.e. the internal space in the middle of the building.

[20] The term "informal settlement areas" in Syria refers to the houses built contrary to urban planning or building regulations. However, these areas have basic services (drinking water, electricity, telephone, sanitation, etc.) at reasonable levels and a fair number of these buildings have sound structure – completely different from the "tin houses/cities" found in other counties (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006, p.1).

City	Master plan area (hectare)	Expansion area (hectare)	Informal settlement area (hectare)	Total areas (hectare)	Percentage of the informal area %
Damascus	10625(admin)[21]/35000[22]	1900[23]	1270 (admin)	13795[24]	9.2
Aleppo	17000	1416	3043	21459	14.18
Lattakia	3500	1500	722	5722	12.61
Syria	60159/84534	14443	10614.5	85216.5/109591.5	12.455

Table 3.2: Housing areas in Syria 2005

Source: adapted by researcher based on State Planning Commission 9th and 10th FYPs (2006)

Outside of larger city areas such as Damascus, Lattakia, Aleppo or Homs, residential areas are often clustered in smaller villages. The buildings themselves are often quite old (perhaps even a few hundred years old), passed down to family members over several generations. Residential construction of rough concrete and block work is usually unpainted, and the palette of a Syrian village is therefore simple tones of greys and browns.

Regarding the construction methods in urban areas, the predominant housing type in Syria nowadays is multi-storeys of dual system – reinforced concrete frame with concrete block shear walls[25] (Awad et al., 2003) – in contrast to the traditional construction methods which basically rely on stone for two or three-storey housing types. Multi-storey residence is a need nowadays as a result of the scarcity of land for housing in Syria, especially in urban areas, and the need for more green areas and agricultural lands. The official housing census in Syria shows that the proportion of housing built with cement (concrete) was 78.1 % in 2006, whereas only 15.5% of

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[21] Within Administrative Boundaries
[22] Within Damascus region
[23] 1450 hectares in Kudsaya district appropriated on behalf of the Public Establishment for housing (PEH) and 450 hectares in Artouz Asaad City
[24] This area includes only settlements within the administrative boundaries of the city.
[25] Shear walls: are the main vertical structural elements in the building with a dual role of resisting gravity and lateral loads. The thickness of these walls varied from 14 to 50 cm depending on the number of stories, building age, and thermal insulation requirements.

housing was built with stone and 6.6% with adobe (clay) and other materials (Central Bureau of Statistics- Syria, 2010).   In the City of Lattakia, traditional houses are no longer preserved and a very small percentage of these houses has survived.   In 2006 there were only (13.3% traditional houses-*Dar-Arabi*[26]) in Lattakia, as shown in table 3.3.   On the other hand, traditional houses in the old cities of Damascus, Aleppo and other Syrian cities are preserved. Within such areas, the living quarters are traditionally arranged around one or more courtyards, typically with a fountain in the middle supplied by spring water, and decorated with citrus trees, grape vines, and flowers.

Housing Types and indications in Syria 2006					
Proportion of dwelling types	**Syria**	**Southern**	**Northern east**	**Middle**	**Coastal**
		Damascus	**Aleppo**	**Homs**	**Lattakia**
Villa (house)	3.2 %	**3.9**	**1.4**	**2.2**	**7.2**
Multi-storeys (apartment)	**40.4%**	**45.3**	**35.6**	**48.5**	<u>**73.9**</u>
Dar-Arabi (traditional house)	**56.1%**	**50.8**	**63.0**	**49.3**	**13.3**

Table 3.3: Housing types in different governorates across Syria - including informal areas
Source: Adapted from *Central Bureau of Statistic, Damascus, Syria (2010)*

3.5.2   *Home-ownership and tenancy in Syria*

There are different types of ownership or occupancy of residence in Syria: rent, outright ownership, owned with debt (mortgage or other), long-term lease, and other types of ownership such as by heritage (Awad et al., 2003).   These types, however, can be grouped in two main forms of housing tenure: owner occupancy and tenant occupancy, which is covered by long-term lease – namely, indefinite term contracts before 2001. In 2006, more than 88% of the houses in Syria were owned, and only 11.5% were rented (Central Bureau of Statistics- Syria, 2010), with this ratio remaining almost stable since 1994. Tens of thousands of owned houses were empty[27] as a result of the previous rent

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[26] Dar-Arabi: this means an Arabic house and this might be with a central courtyard or a house with private garden and surrounding wall.

[27] Empty houses were estimated at 500,000 before the rent law No. 6/2001

law[28] in Syria until 2001, and then the new rent law No. 6 of 2001, which amends the relationship between the tenant and the landlord, started to affect this and the rate of empty houses decreased from 15.7 to 13.9% of total housing stock (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006). This was partly a result of the Fixed Term Contract, 1-2 year's contracts in contrast to the *Old Contracts* which were all *Indefinite Term Contracts*[29].

3.5.3 *Housing policies in Syria*

This subsection and subsection 3.5.4 are extensively based on 9th and 10th Five-Year Plans (FYP) in Housing Sector of Syria - chapter 14 - issued by the State Planning Commission of Syria (SPC) (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006).

The Syrian Arab Republic was among the first Arab countries to include housing issues in government policies since the 1950s. The Public Establishment for Housing (PEH) was created in 1961 and was assigned the roles of securing land to set up housing areas and to provide their utilities, selling and distributing plots in addition to constructing, selling and utilizing housing units whether in-house or by subcontractors. With regard to long term objectives, the housing strategy was focusing until the 1970s on the social role of the state, providing housing for low income groups with exemptions and long term instalments which suit their incomes. By the year 2000, the government had gradually reduced this intervention by issuing several business-oriented legislations without prioritizing the social aspects (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006, p.1). The government focused during the 9th Five-Year plan (FYP) (2000-2005) on developing a better integration between social and economic aspects. However, these policies were limited to directives, procedures and plans, and have never been developed into established strategies with goals. Even clear directives have not been accompanied with specified implementation requirements.

The 9th FYP constituted an essential transformation in the role and methodology of planning. The first indicative plan was introduced despite the fact that the institutional

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[28] Old rent Law in Syria: the annual rent is fixed by law at 5% of the value of real estate in the market if the purpose of rent is residential and at 7% if the purpose is commercial (Global property Guide 2010).

[29] Indefinite Term Contracts: contracts entered into before Law No. 6 of 2001 came into force were all concluded for indefinite periods because the previous socialist laws did not allow for the conclusion of Fixed Term Contracts.

and legislative structures were not yet complete in order to make policies as the main guide to achieve the 9th FYP goals. Moreover, the aforementioned indicative plan did not receive enough approval and backing from the private sector, which was not convinced that there was an enabling environment and state of certitude necessary to extensively take part, which resulted in poor participation in regard to formulating the 9th FYP goals and orientations (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006).

The 9th FYP had general objectives, which were achieved with different results. The first objective of 9th FYP was to meet part of the demand for houses which was accumulated from the previous years through facilitating the occupation of the empty houses and completing the houses which are under construction. The second objective was to build new houses by public, cooperative and private sectors with an economical surface area (80 square metres). The third objective of the 9th FYP was to consider vertical building expansion, particularly in major and high density cities. The fourth objective was to increase the participation of the public sector along with supporting the cooperative sector and activating the private sector to cover the housing needs of limited income groups. PEH (representing the public sector) was the focus of the 9th FYP and continued to be in the 10th FYP (2006-2010), to be empowered to provide affordable houses associated with social aspects to groups with limited income, e.g. through the Youth Housing Project (YHP).

The wider objectives of the 9th FYP focus on many points which make sense towards the housing sector such as improving the standard of living of the population; encouraging income-generating SMEs[30] which extensively absorb the workforce; shaping up and adopting a population strategy for 2001-2020; and protecting the environment and achieving sustainable utilization of resources.

The housing sector in Syria is facing many difficulties such as the lack of housing databases, weak connection between the housing sector and comprehensive planning, weak connection between the housing sector and economic and social development concepts, and weakness in the legislation that secures land ready for housing development. These have led to a significant number of contraventions of building regulations and highly increased the presence of collective informal settlements, which

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[30] SMEs: Small and Medium Enterprises

covered 12.45% of the total housing areas in 2005 across all Syrian governorates; limited the participation of the public and cooperative sectors in housing delivery; and the lack of clear directive frameworks for the private sector that could ensure its active participation in a housing supply system. The main problem is that a high number of Syrian citizens, especially those with limited income, cannot afford formally planned and designed houses due to the high cost, which is affected by the speculative activities controlled by the private sector.

One of the main objectives of the 10th FYP[31] was to focus on the public sector to ensure the provision of economical houses associated with social needs. And therefore to expand Public Establishment for Housing (PEH) projects that are directed towards limited and low income groups (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006). In order to enable limited income groups to possess houses (ownership/tenancy), the 10th FYP strategy proposed to: (1) define limited income groups who are believed to be the main reason for informal settlement areas; (2) find proper frameworks to guide private investments to focus on low cost economical housing (perhaps by facilities and exemptions); (3) enable PEH to implement its plans by providing required lands; (4) support and finance the social housing for limited income groups. Activating the cooperative sector is also in the plan, to be provided with elements and tools to meet its plans. The private sector is seen as playing an essential role in housing activities that needs to be supported by facilitating its development process in term of financing and executing.

3.5.4 *Production of housing in Syria*

Housing providers in Syria are classified into three groups: public sector, cooperative sector, and private sector. The public housing sector is represented by the Public Establishment of Housing (PEH), which should have, according to the 9th FYP, produced 17% of the total planned houses in Syria and provided housing for limited income groups. Drawing on this, part of the financing has been covered for PEH by granting interest-free loans from the Public Debt Fund (PDF). PEH focused on wider and more comprehensive housing concepts, through creating integrated urban communities with enough attractions and growth potential including all necessary services (commercial, cultural, social and recreational facilities). On the other hand,

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[31] 10th FYP: the 10th Five Year Plan lasted from 2006 to 2010.

according to the 9th FYP, the cooperative sector should produce 25% yet, in fact, it provides only around 10%. This sector was shaken due to malpractices by some co-ops, and the activities in this sector are restricted to merely completing previous projects. Due to this situation, it has become necessary to amend and develop the law governing cooperative housing, in order to re-activate this important sector.

In contrast to these, the private sector effectively comprises more than 75% of housing activities, although the 9th FYP assigned to it 58% of the implementation plan. This, however, was not supported with the required regulatory framework to organize more effective private sector participation (developers, development companies) – see table 3.4. Furthermore, no lands were formally tendered to the private sector and publically identified for development, which made the latter focus on *informal settlement* rather than on the social housing needs of limited income groups or general housing requirements. The private sector also focused on real estate speculation, which caused prices to increase (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006).

The 10th FYP, therefore, needed to cover the deficits of previous plans and also to provide for new needs and requirements, therefore it was planned to build and deliver 483,000 housing units during the 10th FYP. These were assigned to the different providers within the housing sector as follows: 10.3% to be provided by the public sector represented by PEH at 9.1% and Occupational Housing (OH) at 1.2%; the cooperative sector was assigned to provide 12.4%; and the private sector assigned to provide 77.3%, represented by individuals, real estate investment companies, and real estate developers who can obtain investing permission in accordance with the Development and Real estate Investment law (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006).

One of the most important objectives of the 9th FYP in Syria was to provide new houses to be built by public, cooperative and private sectors, at economical floor areas (around 80 m^2). Therefore in 2002, PEH launched the Youth Housing Project. The number of total applicants was about 60,000 units in different governorates requesting apartments of 60-80 m^2. The total cost was to be around £0.5 billion, 30% of which was funded by the government free of interest. Beneficiaries were expected to pay back in 25 years with monthly instalments not exceeding 30% of the average income in Syria. The apartments were to be delivered over stages (5-7-10 year phase). The first

group was due for delivery early 2006[32]. The high number of subscribers with the easy payment conditions reflected the viability of this policy in terms of economic and social aspects; taking into consideration that this group (limited income) is the main source of informal settlement expansion.

While the public sector, represented by the PEH, met its commitments via the Youth Housing Project and other projects (Labour Housing, Savings Housing, and Popular Housing), the cooperative sector could not meet its commitments due to many difficulties, including the scarcity of land needed to implement its plans. Instead the cooperative sector has continued its focus on medium and large apartments (over 120 m^2) with higher prices. The private sector, until the end of the 9th FYP, had not made any contribution or commitment towards approved housing policies and plans. This is mainly due to lack of legal frameworks that organize or promote such contribution. Market indicators and cost variables are the motivators for this sector, and they still favour expensive and spacious apartments for high-income groups (State Planning Commission of Syria, 2006).

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[32] Part of these units in a few governorates was delivered two, three or four years earlier than the assigned date.

	Housing sectors' participation in Syria						
Sector	9th FYP proposed percentage of total housing delivery	Actual Implementation percentage	Typical implemented Unit Area M^2	Actual Target group	Represented by	The Result	10th FYP proposed percentage of total housing delivery
Public	17	15	60-80	Low and limited income	PEH included Youth Housing Project Labour, saving, & public housing	Relatively successful projects	10.3
Cooperative	25	10	120 or more	Medium income	Malpractice (lack of land)	It was restricted to complete previous projects	12.4
Private	58	75	spacious >120 m^2	Higher income in the formal areas/different income levels in the informal areas	Developers, development companies	Informal housing rather than meeting the housing needs of limited income population	77.3

Table 3.4: Housing sectors' participation in Syria and housing delivery
Sources: Adapted from *State Commission Planning of Syria* (2008)

Table 3.5 indicates a decrease in the average family members between 1994 and 2004 from 6.25 to 5.55 people per family – i.e. it has declined approximately 11% during 10 years. While the number of housing units increased 44%, the housing average area per capita has increased from 14.4 sq. m to 17.9 sq m. Not only the decrease in average family size but also the increase in the number of housing units– especially with the rise of multi-storey buildings – have influenced the housing average area per capita.

Housing sector indicators Comparison between 1994 census and preliminary results of 2004 census		
	1994	2004
No. Of housing units	2566 K	3701 K
No. of families	2205 K	3207 K
Occupied housing units	2055 K	3024 K
Vacant housing units	402 K	513 K
Houses, under construction	109 K	164 K
% houses connected to public sanitation network	62%	73.8%
% houses connected to water network	74%	88.3%
% houses connected to electricity network	96%	98.5%
Average family size	6.25 persons	5.55 persons
Average persons per house	6.7	5.8
Average area per person (occupied houses)	14.4 sq. m	17.9 Sq. m
Annual population growth rate	3.7	2.58

Table 3.5: Housing sector indicators 1994 vs. 2004

Source: Central Bureau of Statistic' from Housing Indicators in 10th FYP, State commission planning of Syria (2008)

The main discussion about increasing the housing average area per capita recently achieved in Syria, leads to query whether this accomplishment is theoretical or real. Actually the number of households in Syria in 2004 was 3.207 million whereas the number of houses was 3.701 million. Consequently each household could theoretically possess 1.15 houses. Yet, in fact, a great number of vacant houses is owned by a few people, hence not all households possess a house even as a basic need due to the unbalanced distribution of houses among the population. This might be one of the essential factors which have led people to look for a house regardless of its form or position.

3.5.5 *Housing types in Syria*

Building types in Syria can vary according to the region and people's lifestyles. However, two main lifestyles produce a major difference of construction and dwelling: nomadic and sedentary. Nomadic life and its tent[33] dwelling are disappearing[34] and only exist in the eastern areas of Syria and near the banks of the Euphrates River. Sedentary lifestyle is usually related to both cities and the countryside. The types of houses in the city and the countryside also differ according to the geographic location (seaside, mountain, valley, etc) (Levant, 2004c).

The Socialist orientation of the government since the 1960s emphasizes public housing which is large, multi-storeyed housing blocs with no distinctive features. Public buildings are equally plain and built in gray concrete. On the other hand, inside an apartment or a house, the grace and elegance of the Syrian home is prominent. Many apartments have two salons; one with typical Syrian inlaid wooden furniture and the other salon furnished with overstuffed sofas[35] – so-called European furniture (Shoup, 2008, p.89).

Concrete is also used in the villages with a general similar look. Most newer houses are one-story square form and more like a box. Most of these are left with columns of concrete and reinforced iron set up above the roof for a future plan to build a second storey to the house. However, concrete seems not to be an appropriate building material as it makes the house cold in the winter and hot in the summer, and families need sometimes to sleep on the roof. The newer houses sometimes have a back garden surrounded by a wall and this is used, the same as the courtyards in older village homes, to grow several fruit or nut trees. Village houses generally include one traditional sitting/guest room where usually guest are received and welcomed. The village elite may have two sitting rooms, the Syrian or Arab room and the other is the European room which is furnished the same way as the houses in urban areas (Shoup, 2008, p.89).

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[33] Arabic tent is a nomads' dwelling, made of flexible and portable materials mainly woven goat hair and can be packed and ready to move within an hour. The tent is very well adapted to desert life as it is waterproof, warm in the cold desert night and a good shelter from the wind.

[34] This type of dwelling was much less than 7% of the total housing in Syria in 1980 (Collelo, 1988),

[35] Overstuffed furniture means having the entire frame covered by stuffing and upholstery, so that only decorative woodwork or the like is exposed.

The contemporary housing types in Syria are three: *villa,* which is a detached family house; *multi-storey building residences* which consist of several families living in apartments with a shared entrance and setbacks; and also the *traditional house* or *Dar-Arabi.*[36] These types are located in different places in the urban areas – regulatory or pre-planned housing, expansion housing, and informal settlement residences – and in rural areas. The prevailing type of urban housing is apartments in multi-stories, as high-rise building is rapidly increasing as shown in table 3.6. Traditional housing, nowadays, is rarely used for residential purpose in urban and rural areas, and is predominately re-used and converted for commercial purposes such as museum, restaurant, hostel and other tourist functions.

Housing Types trends in Syria		
Proportion of dwelling types	**2004**	**2006**
Villa (house)	4.2	3.2
Multi-storeys (apartment)	28.7	40.4
Dar-Arabi (traditional house)	67.1	56.1

Table 3.6: Housing types in Syria urban and rural

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics of Syria (2010)

3.5.6 *Traditional residence in Syria*

The urban fabric in most of the Syrian cities that lived, flourished, and developed in the past is still very much alive today, distinguishing itself through its intimacy and density. It plays with space and volume, shade and light, accessible and blocked roads, providing the desired environment and social needs of the inhabitants. Roads wind between residences, narrowing as they shift from public to private areas. Private spaces open onto an inside courtyard, allowing for a restrained amount of sun to come in, ensuring the right amount of ventilation in hot summers. In the villages where lands stretch outwards, the house extends horizontally. However, sub cultural groups in Syria played an essential role in forming the traditional housing design with slight differences between inland and coastal areas.

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[36] Dar Arabi means Arabic house and this differ from region to another in Syria such as central-courtyard house or front, back garden or courtyard.

The urban fabric in Damascus, Aleppo and Bosra – inland Syria – is registered on list of World Heritage Sites, acknowledging the importance of traditional residential architecture. It has been recently recognized as an equal to historical monuments, which shows the concern about popular architectural heritage. This urban fabric is in the immediate surroundings of historical monuments, blending to create a harmonized conglomeration of culture. Other towns and villages also have their own particular and characteristic residential architecture, made by simple people to serve daily needs. These builders and users have exploited the locally available building materials and the construction techniques they inherited from thousands of years of civilization (Levant, 2004b).

The Mediterranean area is distinguished by a similar traditional residential architecture throughout its vast territories, telling the long story of the cultural intermingling that has forged the area since antiquity. Similar environments, climates and social conditions played a crucial role, affecting architecture, making it a direct and clear consequence, a testimony of their roots. From an artistic and cultural point of view, this residential architecture, which may seem modest and simple, is worthy of praise and admiration. It must be registered and acknowledged to secure its conservation, and transmitted to the generations to come.

3.5.7 *Courtyard houses of Syria*

Traditional courtyard houses date back to the beginning of the third millennium before Christianity, when it appeared in the buildings of Al-Sham[37] and those between the two rivers: the Tigris and the Euphrates. Arab nomads used a similar form to the courtyard by erecting their tents around central open space to protect their cattle (Edwards et al., 2006). The courtyard is mainly built of stone and prevailed in Arab Islamic Architecture as a fundamental symbolic housing type. In Arabic culture, the sky is a symbolic place of the God and thus inspires meditation. Through the interior courtyard, the sky's clearness and sacredness dominate and the sunlight permeates the house bringing spiritual, social, functional and climatic benefits to domestic desert life (Wadah, 2006, p.220).

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[37] Al Sham can be used as a general name of the whole Levant or Greater Syria region. It also refers to the city of Damascus.

The courtyard house is seen as a sustainable type as it was appropriate in ancient times and seems to be so in modern times and in many different regions including various cultures. It exists in both simple and sophisticated communities such as in peasant houses as well as in great palaces. The adaptability of the courtyard house to different climates and cultures was and still is an essential advantage. The courtyard house had reached its peak of sophistication and ingenuity in the thirteenth century in the main cities of Islamic culture such as Cordova, Granada, Toledo and others (Edwards et al., 2006). Several researchers have suggested improving and adapting the courtyard type to modern housing design. Several authors have spurred the adaption of the courtyard to new housing design such as multi-storey building – as Peter Land (2006, p.328) has noted 'It is difficult, though possible, to insert the traditional features of the courtyard house, such as the compact courtyard and garden, in a multi-level apartment structure'.

There are differences between the traditional city house and the traditional countryside house: for instance the former house is characterized by stone constructions with different types and colours and a great variety of building typologies. It essentially consists in main inner courtyard/courtyards surrounded by rooms for daily and/or evening activities, as figure 3.11 shows. The courtyard in the countryside house is usually used more as a private garden of the house, partly surrounded on one side or more by rooms, while the rest is bordered by a wall. Seasonal vegetables are usually grown in this garden. In some cases the internal partition splits the countryside house into two areas: one for the inhabitants and another for animals. (Levant, 2004c).
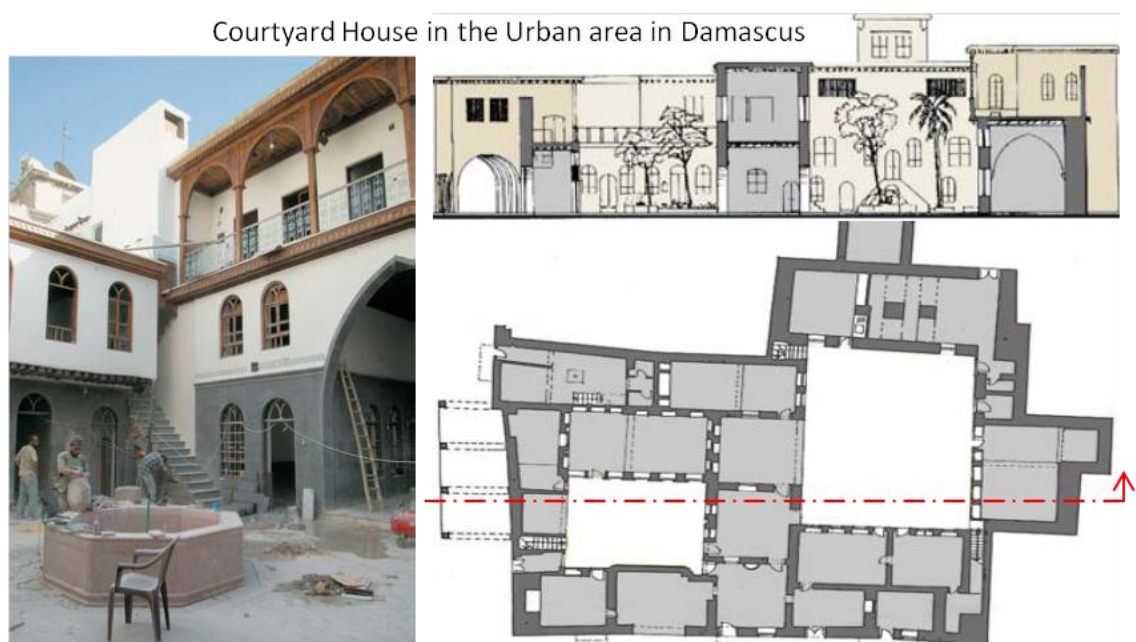
Figure 3.11: Courtyard House in the urban area in Damascus
Source: Traditional Syrian Architecture (Levant, 2004a)

3.6 Privacy in houses in Syria

The traditional house provided a high level of privacy of each family by physical constructions and social conventions which were influenced mainly by the Islamic Law (Mikhael, 1998). Entrances to residences were as far from the markets or main streets as possible to maintain residential privacy by separating the public and private spaces. In case where the entrance has to be constructed facing the street, the residences are carefully constructed to deal with this to preserve family privacy. The courtyard, which is the core of traditional house, is separated from the street by an entrance hall which is usually curved to block a direct view from the street to courtyard. Privacy was highly provided through the interior courtyard where domestic work, most family activities and occasions and religious feasts were usually held without exposure to outsiders. The segregation of females from males provided a maximum privacy through double circulation systems with two courtyards, one designated for women and the other for men. The heights of the buildings were unified so no courtyard can be overviewed from the roof of the neighbours. Furthermore, the social convention was crucial to preserving residential privacy. For instance only women can use the roof for some activities such as drying clothes or food, whereas men can only go to the roof after informing the neighbours. However, regarding women's privacy nowadays, the tendency of women to hide in inner spaces is less and depends on the desire of each family (Mikhael, 1998). The evolving concepts of women's privacy seem to be less related to veiling or hiding women in inner spaces for many families, as it is explained later in the analysis in chapter 5 and 6.

The location of housing elements and their linkage to other parts of the house and also the users of these elements are very important to present the level of privacy as noted in Salwa Mikhael (1998). She considered the entrance, in the traditional house, as a public space, as it is the exterior part of the house and can be seen and used by passers-by, and the courtyard as a semi-public space as it is an intermediate zone connecting the exterior and interior world. The guest room was also considered as a semi-public space which is used by people not necessarily from the family and it has direct linkage with the entry hall and not integrated with other spaces of the house. Bedrooms are usually on the second floor, used only by family members (private space) and have extremely private character. The service area, which includes, kitchen, toilet and bathroom, is used only by family members (private place) and placed far from the entrance.

Figure 3.12 presents the changes in house design elements from traditional to modern and the relationship between spaces in dominant types of residential units in Damascus as explained in Salwa Michael's study (1998). The main change in the design elements from tradition to modern house, is the fact that the courtyard disappeared and was replaced by a corridor/s and part of service area – mainly the kitchen – became closer to the entrance and thus a less private space in the house. The living room was grouped with the guest room and became semi-public instead of semi-private and etc. Newer house design is a 'closed house' directed outwards by many windows which mean less privacy. Residents control their houses to achieve the different levels of privacy such as using the nearest room to the entrance as a guest room and thus keeping the semi-public space as far as possible from the private sleeping parts.
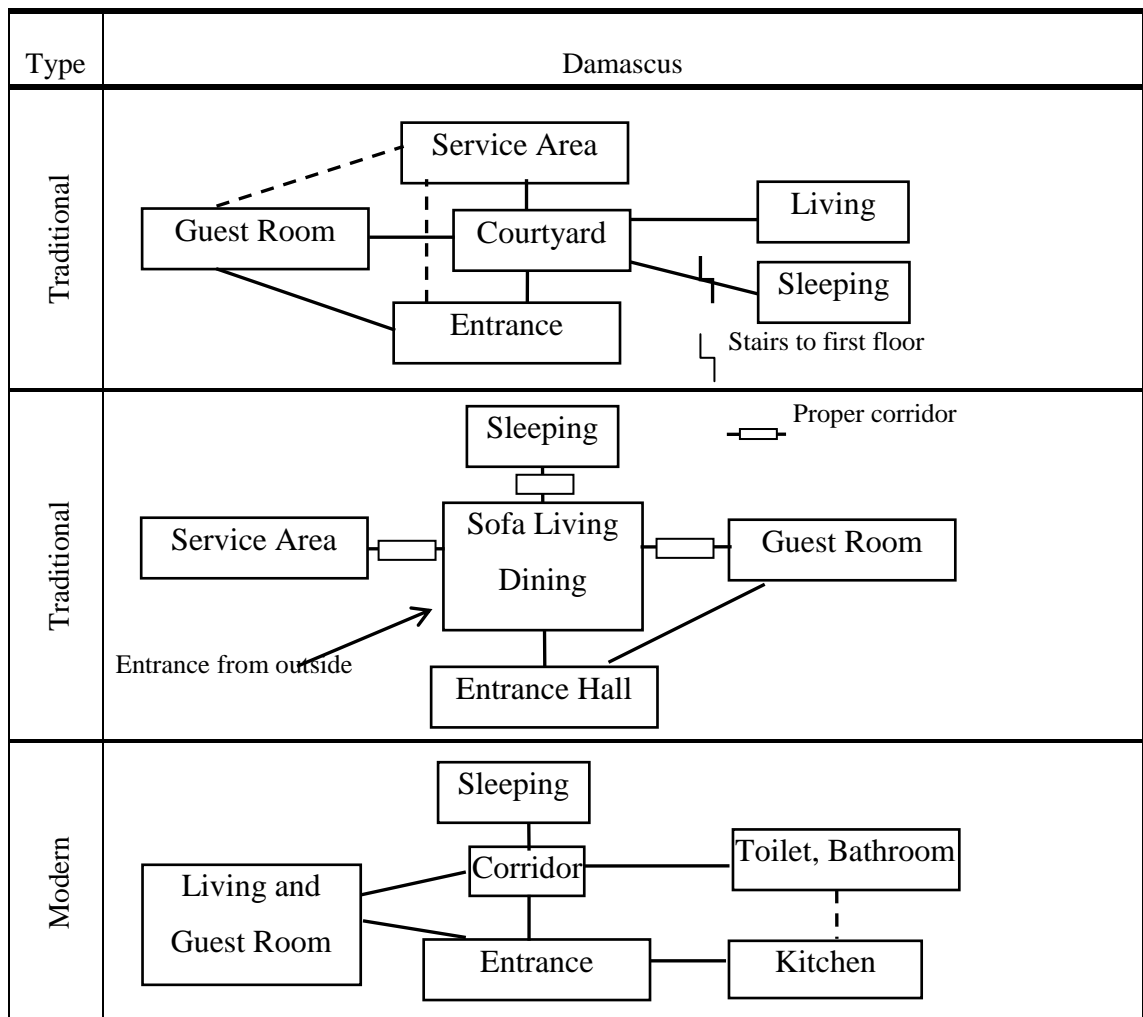
Figure 3.12: Comparative study and changes in Housing Design Elements from traditional to Modern in Damascus, from (Mikhael, 1998)

Al-Kodmany (1995, p.iii) suggested that 'these cultural changes and the sharp differences in the two environments (the inwardly traditional as opposed to the

outwardly modern) raised important questions. Which residential environment best fit residents' desire for privacy, particularly that of women? And how can contemporary design respond to cultural changes, again in relation to women's desire for privacy'? Yet he did not undertake analysis of other kinds of privacy which are classified into seven categories: personal privacy, intra-family privacy, family privacy, neighbourhood privacy, visual privacy, auditory privacy, and urban privacy, as noted in previous chapter. He suggested the aforementioned privacy types as further research.

3.7   Food in Syria and Syrian cuisine[38]

Understanding the culture of Syrian society and in particular the cultural use of space in the home, needs a clearer idea about Syrian cuisine and a comprehensive view of food preparation and consumption and then, as it is noted in the previous chapter in the general literature, a contextual perception of foodways and the correlation with housing design in Syria.

'Much of life in Syria revolves around the pleasure Syrians find in food and meals. Friends and family are often entertained around meals featuring local delights. The generosity of the host is often measured with the amount of food placed on the table for the guest' (Phillips, 2010, pp.52-53). 'Syria's rich cultural heritage is well represented in both its cuisine and costume' (Shoup, 2008,p.112).

Syria's food, like its arts and architecture, includes both sophisticated urban traditions as it was mentioned earlier in this text, as well as those of its rural peoples (Shoup, 2008). Food is valued as one of ways humans express themselves as civilised and it is widely believed that identity – religious, national, ethnic – is intensively linked to food (Civitello, 2008). Syrian food is famous throughout the Arab world as being one of the finest cuisines in the Middle East. It is the dominant type of the eastern Mediterranean and differs little from the foods of Lebanon. Syria exercises a cultural influence even today over Jordanian and Palestinian foods and is a rival of Turkish and Greek cuisines. These former cuisines, however, are predominantly known as The Levant[39] cuisine. It is often a matter of national pride for different countries in the Eastern Mediterranean (Levant) to claim to be the original home of a large number of shared dishes. Civitello

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[38] Historian Michael Freeman's definition of cuisine is 'a self-conscious tradition of cooking and eating . . . with a set of attitudes about food and its place in the life of man' (Civitello, 2008, P. 3).
[39] The Levant: Arabic *Bilad EL-Shaam*, traditionally, the Eastern Mediterranean at large, The Levant includes Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine, occasionally, Cyprus, Sinai, Iraq

(2008, p.xiv) sees this also a matter for every nation: 'Every group represents itself as special and exceptional and uses food to show it'. Many of these foods have ancient origins and due to the extensive trade between peoples of the Mediterranean, it is hard today to define where a particular dish may have been invented. Nonetheless, the kitchens in Damascus, Aleppo and other cities of Syria are deservedly famous for their fine cuisine (Shoup, 2008, p. 99).

Syria's climate gives it a wide variety of natural agricultural produce for its basic food stuffs; encourages a number of fruit and nut trees to flourish and their produce are part of the taste experience in Syrian cuisine and part of their food rituals and traditions. For instance, a great variety of fruits makes a colourful fruit dish part of the table decoration, not only after or before meals but often during the whole day, especially in summer time when the fruits are greater in variety. A fruit bowl as an essential snack meal, in summer time, takes place predominantly in the courtyard in the urban traditional house, in the front, backyard, and terrace in rural houses or on the balcony in coastal houses. It can also take place in any of these housing types in the living room while watching television or in the guest room when they have visitors. Fruits, sweets and other light food can be after meals and/or at any time during the day or at an evening gathering, with family members or with friends. Syrian culture can be perhaps considered as a food culture as food is a significant social activity, and this might be comparable with the European drink culture, as in European culture, drink can often take place before, after, and during the meals or any other different time. The main meals in Syria are three: breakfast and lunch are more important than dinner, and this is presented in a well-known Syrian proverb[40]: ''have your breakfast as a king, your lunch as a prince but have your dinner as a poor person''.

The traditional Syrian breakfast is considered very healthy as it emphasizes fresh products. It generally includes one or more types of fresh bread dipped into different kind of dips. These dips can be dairy product such as cheese, dry yogurt, fresh milk, and eggs, and also can be beans such as chick peas, broad beans, associated with different kind of homemade marmalade. Vegetables such as tomato, cucumber, spring onion, radish and olive are also a part of the breakfast.

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[40] This proverb also exists in other cultures such as Spanish but it is hard to know the origin of it. However it is well-know and predominantly practiced in Syrian society.

The Syrian lunch can be a massive affair and includes meat, poultry, or fish in addition to salads, dips, and yogurt dishes, vegetables, pickles and also rice, cracked wheat (*Bulgur)* with a great variety of dishes. Lunch is when *mazzah*[41] are served, especially if there are guests and the host wants to demonstrate the hospitality and generosity of the house. In addition, mazzah, traditionally, provide the women of the house an opportunity to display their talents in the wide variety of choices available in addition to the individual taste of each dish (Shoup, 2008, p. 102). Setting the table is an important matter for Syrians at lunch time, especially in relation to the household meeting, whereas this might be less important at dinner time, unless they have visitors.

Dinners traditionally are not as large as lunches, as noted above. Dinners include a number of different stews usually served with rice and bread. In winter, soups may also be part of both lunch and dinner along with salads. Before refrigeration was common, dinner stews and soups were a good way of dealing with leftovers from lunch. Today this is not a problem as many technical appliances are provided such as refrigerator and freezer in many and different sizes, and also dinner has come to resemble more a European three-course meal for many Syrian families. Nevertheless, lunch has continued to be the main meal and family meeting and conversation. Lifestyle of Syrian families vis-a-vis the meals rituals might be related to the employees working hours during weekdays, which often starts at seven or eight and finishes at two or three o'clock in the afternoon, or even earlier in some kind of jobs. This might provide a better opportunity to have a proper meal in the afternoon as a contrast to European work lifestyle that predominantly finishes at five o'clock or later.

Syria's Christians have developed a large number of vegetable main dishes for the Lent fasts required by their faith. Eastern Orthodox Christians have over 100 days in a year when they have food restrictions, such as no meat and/or no dairy products. Many of these dishes are based on high protein substitutes such as lentils and chickpeas and may include eggs when not forbidden by the rules of a particular fast. Other ingredients include aubergine, fava beans, cabbage, okra, green beans, and cauliflower. For flavour, garlic, onion, cumin, and lemon are the most commonly used to spice meatless dishes (Shoup, 2008, pp 104).

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[41] *Mazzah: is a* large Number of dips, salads and other appetizers served before a major meal and usually as starters and as side dishes at the same time, and this can varied up to 90 dishes.

Syrian desserts are justly famous for being among the best in the Mediterranean. While many pastries are associated with holidays and festivals such as Ramadan, 'Id al-Fitr, Christmas, or Easter, most are available all year long from Syria's numerous pastry shops. Syria may be the original home of ice cream and one of the oldest ice cream parlours in the world is located along the famous Hamidiyah Suq in Damascus. Traditional Syrian ice cream, or buzah, is pounded into a paste with large wooden pestles. It is not hard to believe that ice cream could have been invented in Syria given that sharbat, or flavoured ice, dates back into the early Islamic period if not before (Shoup, 2008, p.105).

Any discussion of foods in Syria must include coffee. Coffee is a social affair in Syria as it is in the rest of the Arab world. There are two main types of coffee: Turkish coffee that is found in the cities and coffeehouses, and Arabic coffee that is found in the rural areas, though more among the Bedouin, which is usually made in a special copper or brass pot with a long handle called a *raqwa*. The size of the pot depends on the number of cups to be made from 1 up to 10. The coffee is boiled for long and then it is ready to be served in a small demitasse cup. For the Bedouin, all major meals should end with several rounds of Arabic coffee, which is believed to help with digestion (Shoup, 2008, p.105). Syria has also a long tradition of street foods but the most well-known is no doubt the hot sandwich called *Shawarmah* (Shoup, 2008, p.101).

Food preparation is a great concern for Syrian families, with this variety and cultural importance, and this used to be even greater in the past to the extent that the kitchen or the space for cooking was as a small busy factory. The Syrian kitchen is where the housewife used to work and to spend most of her day cooking and preparing the meal whereas other family members rarely went there or might never see this work space. This is similar to a client who sees the product only when it is ready. This is also applied to the guest who might never know where the kitchen is located.

The kitchen in traditional houses in Syria is usually located in the service area with the toilet and bathroom, however, far from entrance and guest area as it is moist with strong odours. Yet it is reached from a courtyard and in many traditional houses there is a second door from the back to the service area to keep it away from guests' view, as many Syrian believe it is better not to show their ability to spend money, i.e. being humble is seen as a valuable trait (Mikhael, 1998).

The kitchen has a less important location in the traditional house than the guest room or living rooms, which are widely directed towards the courtyard and usually highly decorated. The kitchen is equipped with a fireplace for cooking provided with a chimney, and it is also supplied with a water body such as fountains or a well. A storage space is often adjoined to the kitchen and it is sometimes located in the basement for cooling, especially in the hot season. The kitchen, in traditional society, is used only by family members, whether this is single or multiple families, and there are even houses with several kitchens (Mikhael, 1998).

The cuisine of Syria, as well as Syrian culture, is rich, diverse, wide and colourful. It is beyond a doubt that the tastes in Syrian cuisine are the result of its strategic location on the spices trade for millennia. Syrians came to appreciate the subtlety in tastes spices can produce and learned what combinations can create a better dish (Shoup, 2008). It deeply influences the use of the space within the home, in particular, the kitchen, dining and the living room and also their link to other partitions of the house space.

However, this has been changing, especially in the last 2 decades, as a result of contemporary interactions with other societies besides other factors mentioned earlier – see sections 2.2.2 and 3.3 – which enrich Syrian cuisine even further and affect food preparation and consumption. Changing in women's role in the home and out of the home in contemporary life, new technology, new kitchen appliances, and several factors influenced food rituals, preparation and consumptions. These latter, in turn, affect housing design and use and led the end users to adapt their houses to fulfil their current needs as is evidenced in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

3.8 Conclusion

The general background of Syria as a country study, and the review of culture and housing in Syrian society provide contextual dimensions for better understanding. It shows the cultural, religious, ethnic diversity and richness of Syrian society as a result of the many indigenous controllers, outside invaders, and traders, who left their influences. Therefore, it is a changing culture despite the strong conservative direction of some sub-cultural groups. Modernization facilitates the interactions among subculture groups in the Syrian society, and westernization and globalization encourage interactions and transactions between Syrian culture and other cultures all over the world, which led to cultural change. The review also shows that there is no official or

academic social stratification of Syrian society, and there seems to be a governmental tendency towards classless society but people tends to socialize with their own social class.   The information and discussion in this chapter, led the researcher to propose socio-economic criteria of Syrian society, which is presented in chapter 4.   The review shows that Syria is a middle income country, and the discussion concludes that a slight majority (~60%) of Syrian population seems to be middle and lower middle income classes.   The review on housing highlights the three types of housing settlement which are: the pre-planned formal housing area, the expanded formal area as a response to the unanticipated housing need, and the informal settlement area. It shows that a high majority of the households in Syria own the house they occupy and this provides a higher possibility for them to make modifications or changes in the house design.   The review highlighted the main objectives of the Five-Year plans, which represent the housing policy in Syria.   These objectives aimed mainly to: define the limited income group as it is seen as a main source of informal settlement; encourage PEH, which represents the public sector, to provide economical houses for the limited income group; provide the required land to PEH; encourage the private sector, which is seen as an essential player in housing activities, to focus on low coast economical housing; etc. The aforementioned objectives are considered in this research, as is explained in chapter 4. This chapter also shows that among the three types of houses – Vilas, multi-story residential buildings, and the traditional houses – the multi-story, which is seen as a modern type, seems to be rapidly increasing (40% in 2006), and thus it is in the central focus of this study, as is explained in chapter 4.   The traditional courtyard house was discussed in this chapter because it is seen as an appropriate housing type for the users' culture on its time.   It shows strong communication and reciprocal relationship between the house environment of the former type and the culture of the users, focusing on particular cultural aspects, i.e. practices of privacy and food preparation and consumption which seems are rapidly changing in Syria.

Chapter 4:   Methodology

4.1   Introduction

Different methods are used in housing analysis ranging from intuitive perceptions on the part of the analyst to very complex physical and socio-economic measurements. This range of methods reflects the variety of disciplines and fields of knowledge that are relevant to housing research, as is noted by Tipple and Willis (1991, p.9):

> 'Housing analysis has a potentially important role in improving the quality of life at all levels and in every country. The methods used in the analysis of housing have originated in many different fields. As they are scattered throughout the literature on subjects as diverse as economics, sociology, anthropology, statistics, architecture, and management…'

Housing analysis in relation to culture change studies, as in the case of this research, needs to be conducted through (1) social research methodologies to cover social and cultural disciplines, (2) architectural methods, and (3) those methods which in practical terms are or can be used in developing countries due to several limitations and restrictions which may impede the process of data collection in this kind of context.

The process of culture change and associated built environment changes is dynamic, therefore it is important to identify persisting traditional elements, as well as disappearing elements, changing and new elements, and thus any approach attempts to obtain such information will be longitudinal or historical (Rapoport and Hardie, 1991, p.42). Cultural changes are perceived as 'Modernization' and 'development' since the changes seem to be due to intercultural processes between traditional and modern culture (interaction or conflicts).   The influence of culture change on the built environment ought to be some form of syncretism between the components of traditional culture and valued elements of the new (Rapoport 1983a:255). Appropriate design is taken to be cultural specific – group specific – providing their values, lifestyle, and preferences.   The cultural diversity of users makes generalizing, even for one country, very difficult if at all possible.

> "Given the great cultural diversity of user groups, one cannot generalize even for any one country. Even single cities clearly contain a great variety of subgroups

that are potentially relevant for planning and design" (Rapoport and Hardie, 1991, p.37).

Architectural research has been conducted throughout the history of architecture but it was more about specific building projects and was mainly the outcome of trial and error as is noted by Groat and Wang (2002, p.6):

'The development of particular structural form and building materials over the centuries is the outcome of trial and error experimentation, systematic observation and application of such building principles to other building projects'.

Architectural research has recently started to cover a much wider range of topic areas such as socio-behavioural issues, design methods, and energy conservation. Likewise, 'the research in architectural history has over the years moved from an almost exclusively art historical model into a more conceptually expansive terrain that includes design 'theory' and criticism' (Groat and Wang, 2002, p.6).

Architectural research nowadays provides a much better understanding of the human relationships with the built forms and the multiple connections between human experience and built forms. The success of a particular built environment is not only because of its physical characteristics but also because of many human considerations including subjective preferences, memory, physical comfort, and one's social roles and so on. Seeing these multiple connections between human experiences and built form, it is essential to consider a wide range of research methodologies. Seven strategies were addressed in Groat and Wang (2002): interpretive-historical research, qualitative research, correlational research, experimental research, simulation research, logical argumentation, and case study/ mixed methods. These strategies offer a variety of perspective from a historical perspective, to social-cultural interpretative, to stimulation studies.

'In developing countries, designing western environments or trying to copy forms should be avoided' (Rapoport and Hardie, 1991, p.36). With relevance to undertaking research in a developing country context, researchers often work with minimal support from references, difficult access to data and lack of contact with other researchers. This scarcity of professionals and facilities, poor communications, and limited chances to

consult with others, leads to intuitive mode – mode six – which is very common in the research undertaken in developing countries (Tipple and Willis, 1991).

This chapter provides an initial overview of theoretical approaches to knowledge and the relevant research methodologies and techniques in order to explain and justify the social constructionist approach taken, as well as the qualitative methods that have been selected. Against this background, the design of the research is described, covering the specific research methods that are used, and justifying and introducing the case studies.

4.2 Theoretical reflections on research methodology appropriate to cultural change and housing analysis

Any research process needs, according to Michael Crotty (1998), four basic elements. Firstly, epistemology, which is defined as a theory of knowledge embedded in the theoretical perspective and thus in the methodology, or how to 'know the knowledge' (Creswell, 2002). Theoretical perspective is the second element of the research process, which is the philosophical stance informing the methodology and providing the context of the process. The third element is methodology, which is the strategy, process, or design that guides the choice and use of particular methods. Finally, the methods, which are a set of techniques used in practical procedures of data collection and analyses (Crotty, 1998).

Creswell (2002) considers three elements of research design: 1) knowledge claims including theoretical perspectives – these claims might be called paradigms, epistemology philosophical assumptions and ontology, i.e. what is knowledge; 2) strategies of inquiry or methodologies including general procedures; and 3) the methods including detailed procedure. Figure 4.1 shows the basic elements of a research design which inform one another according to Michael Crotty versus the elements according to John Creswell.
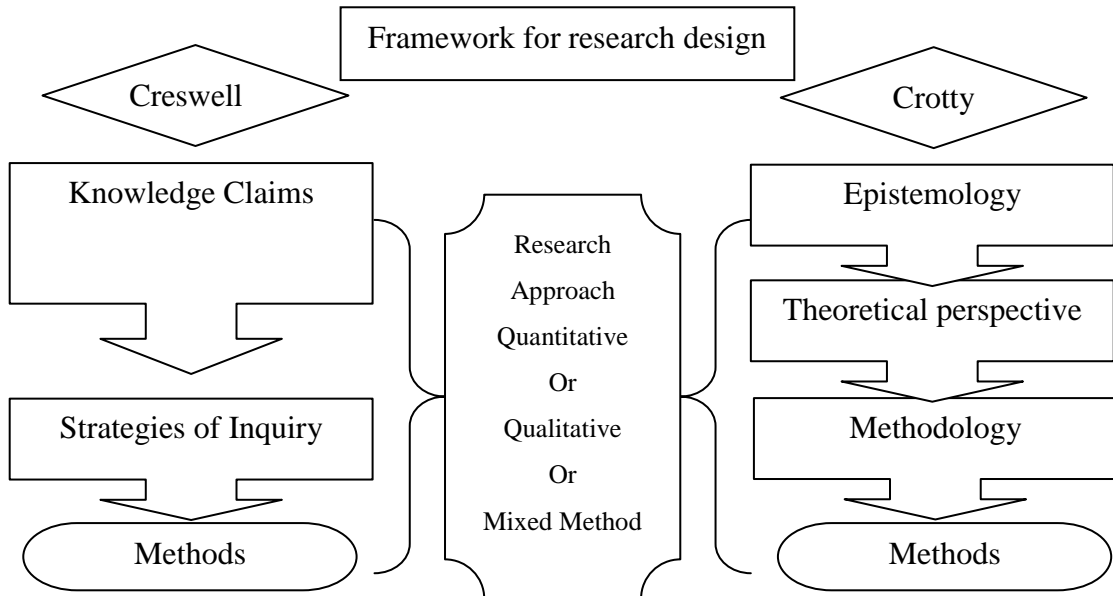
Figure 4.1: Framework for the research design

Sources: Adapted from Creswell 2002, and Crotty 1998

Epistemology	theoretical perspective	methodology	methods
Objectivism	Positivism & post-positivism	Experimental research Survey research	sampling Measurement & Scaling Questionnaires
Constructionism	Interpretivism symbolic interactionism phenomenology hermeneutic	Ethnography Phenomenological research Grounded theory	Observation Participant non participant Interview Focus group Case study Etc.
Subjectivism	Critical inquiry Feminism Postmodernism	Heuristic inquiry Action research Feminist standpoint research Etc.	Interpretive methods Narrative Life history Data reduction Theme identification Cognitive mapping Documents analysis Etc.

Table 4.1: Different epistemological positions, theoretical perspectives and methodologies

Source: Adapted from Crotty, 1998

By and large, several epistemological positions inform a number of theoretical stances, many methodologies and a large number of methods as shown in Table 4.1. Each epistemology usually informs particular theoretical perspectives, for example objectivism commonly informs positivism or post-positivism and these in turn inform experimental or survey research as a methodology, which guides many quantitative methods such as statistical analysis or sampling. On the other hand, constructionism as a research epistemology usually informs symbolic interactionism as a theoretical stance, and ethnography as a methodology which lies behind the choice and use of qualitative methods such as participant observation or non-participant observation, etc.

4.2.1 *Research epistemology – social Constructionism*

All epistemological positions and their inherent methodologies hold a view about the social reality. This in turn will define what can be considered as logical and legitimate knowledge. In regard to the theoretical attitudes to the nature of social reality, the three most common epistemologies are identified as follows:

Objectivism: this epistemology holds that the existence of social phenomena and their meanings do not depend on social actors. They are facts and have independent existence (Walliman, 2006).

Social Constructionism holds that there is no meaning without mind, and meanings are socially constructed, not discovered. People, therefore, may construct meanings in different ways even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty 1998).

> 'Constructionism is the belief that social phenomena are in a constant state of change because they are totally reliant on social interactions as they take place. Even the account of researchers is subject to these interactions therefore social knowledge can only be inter-determinate' (Walliman, 2006, p.15).

Constructionism has several assumptions: the basic generation of meanings is always social, arising in and out of interaction with human community; meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with their world and then perceive and interpret it based on their historical and social perspectives; researchers recognize that their own background shapes their interpretation, and they 'position themselves' in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their own personal, cultural and historical experiences; participants can construct the meanings of a

situation, meanings typically forged in discussions or interactions with other people (Crotty, 1998).

Subjectivism holds that the 'meaning does not come out of the interplay between subject and object but it is imposed on the object. Here object makes no contribution to the generation of the meaning' (Crotty, 1998, p.8). There is a tendency to say that while the meaning in Constructionism is constructed out of something (the object), meaning in subjectivism is created out of nothing. This exceeds the human creativity as meaning has to be made out of something, which may come from dreams, religious beliefs or from collective unconscious, etc (Crotty, 1998).

In this research, a social constructionist approach is chosen as human values and beliefs, which direct behaviour, are the main concern of the researcher. Behaviour of specific groups of people is influenced by their particular world views, values, and beliefs, namely, their own culture. The research process thus focuses on meanings of the built environment from its inhabitants' viewpoints and their interpretations by which meaning is constructed.

4.2.2 *Theoretical perspectives – Interpretivism*

There has been an intellectual opposition to positivism from the 1960s onwards which emerged from various interpretative sociologies, such as phenomenology and ethno-methodology and others (Brewer 2000). The humanistic model of social research or what is also called interpretative or hermeneutic methodology (Hughes; Berger 1963; and Bruyn 1966), is concerned with the study of social life in reality, with naturally occurring settings orienting the researcher toward experimenting, observing, describing, understanding and interpreting.

The theoretical perspective considered in this research is Interpretivism, in an attempt to understand and explain human and social reality. Whereas positivism is the paradigm on which natural science is based, interpretivism is currently the basis for much social research. Positivism is based on the understanding that: the objective world is independent from our existence, or our perception of it; using the standard scientific procedure, bias can be avoided and the world can be understood based on deduction; researcher and phenomena are understood to be completely independent. Interpretive approaches, contrary to positivist, look for culturally derived and historically situated

interpretations of the life-world. They are based on the position that the social world is different from the natural world because the subject matter (people) is unpredictable. In other words: people attach meanings to their behaviour and do not always respond to stimuli in patterned ways. Researchers themselves are part of the world they are studying and cannot be totally objective; social facts are no more than social constructs and that research should aim at a more in-depth understanding of human behaviour. Qualitative techniques should mainly be used in such an approach since these allow the researcher to understand the meaning which people attach to their behaviour (Crotty, 1998).

An interpretivist theoretical perspective is therefore more appropriate to understanding how people perceive and interpret their cultural identity, considering the holistic influence of culture at the 'macro level' and the individual role in making cultural change at 'micro level'. This has resonance with the theoretical approach to the structure of society put forward by 'structuration theory', which was linked to understanding of cultural change in Chapter 2.

4.2.3 *Methodology or Strategy of inquiry—Ethnography*

Cultures are irreducible and incomparable. Culture, therefore, is to be observed as closely as possible putting the observer's self in the place of those within the culture and find out the insider's perspective. A particular culture can be best understood in its context through ethnography, using participant observation and/or interviewing informants. Ethnography was thus undertaken as a research methodology informed by the interpretivist perspective of this study.

> 'Ethnography is a form of research in which the social settings to be studied, however familiar to the researcher, must be treated as anthropologically strange; and the task is to document the culture – the perspectives and practices – of the people in these setting. The aim is to 'get inside' the way each group of people sees the world' Hammersley cited in Crotty (1998, p.76).

John D. Brewer (2000) has defined it as a study of people in their naturally occurring settings or field, using different methods to capture real social meanings through a direct participation of the researcher in these settings and/or activities, without being

influenced by external meaning. According to Hammersley, as noted in Brewer (2000), ethnography is research with the following tenets:

- People's behaviour has to be studied in their natural and daily life, not under the experimental conditions provided by researcher.
- Different methods and various techniques can be used for data collection but mainly by means of observation.
- To avoid imposed meanings on people's behaviour and talking, data collection is unstructured and flexible.
- Small-scale research is conducted on a single field or group.
- Meanings of human behaviour and actions are described and explained as a contribution in the data analysis.

Ethnography and participant observation

"Ethnography and participant observation entail the extended involvement of the researcher in the social life of those he or she studies" (Bryman, 2012, p.431). The ethnographer and participant observer immerses him/herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to conversation between both others and with the researcher, and asking questions (Bryman, 2012).

Participant observation implies just observation although a practical observer does more than merely observe, whereas ethnography entails a wide range of methods of data collection and sources. Ethnography is sometimes taken as a study in which observation is the main research method with a specific focus on the culture of the group in which the ethnographer is immersed.

Ethnography as a research method often requires from researcher to be immersed in a social setting for an extended period of time; regularly observe the behaviour of people within that particular context and also to listen to and engage in conversations; interview informants in issues that are not amenable to observations or not easy for ethnographer to clearly understand; collect documents about the group if needed; develop an understanding of culture within which ethnographer is immersed and people's behaviour within the context of culture and write up the details of the setting. Although ethnographic research usually entails a long period of time in the field, it may

be possible, in the case of short time research, to conduct a form of *micro-ethnography* (Wolcott 1990), thus a relatively short period of time (from a couple of weeks to a few months) can be spent in the field in full-time or part-time. Narrowing the focus into a defined aspect of topic may help in achieving the needed data in such a short period of time (Bryman, 2012).

Gaining access to a social setting that is relevant to the research problem is yet one of the most difficult steps in ethnographic research. This social setting is either a relatively open one (public setting) or a closed one (non public) such as firms, schools, cults, social movements and so on. In this study social setting is closed – non public – in households' domestic spaces, observing their daily behaviour.

The ethnographer can play an overt or, in very few cases, a covert role to carry out observation in a defined social setting, and that relies upon the difficulty to access to this setting. Both covert and overt researchers have typically full membership of the studied group and possibly work as paid employees for the group – if the research is, for example, in a working environment — but the first is unknown as a researcher. The ethnographer can be a participating observer, partially participating observer, minimally participating observer, or non-participating observer (Bryman, 2012, pp.442-444). Participating observers, with all degrees of participation, take part in the studied group's core activities but not as a full member.

Nonparticipating observer with interaction observes (sometimes minimally) but does not participate in the group's core activities. He/she interacts with group members often through interviews and documents, which both tend to be the main source of data. In this study, as culture is the main concept to investigate, micro ethnography and non-participant observation is partly used as research methods to better understand the behavioural reflection of culture change in relation to housing use and design.

However, in most types of ethnographic, participant and non-participant observations methods, the researcher's positionality influences the receptiveness of research participants and the nature of data obtained.

 Positionality

The researcher must especially take account of their own *position* in relation to the research participants and research setting. In particular, the reconstructing of insider/outsider status in terms of one's positionality in respect of education, class, race gender, culture, and other factors, offer us better tools for understanding the dynamics of researching within and across one's culture. Positionality is often used as an exploration of the investigator's reflection on one's own placement within the many contexts, layers, power structures, identities, and subjectivities of the of the view point (Rose, 1997; England, 1994; Merriam et al., 2001). England (1994) argues that fieldwork is personal and based intensely on the positionality – i.e. position based on class, race, gender, etc. – which plays an essential role in the research process and in the final text. Positionality provides a narrative placement for researcher objectivity and subjectivity, and this often helps to inform a research study rather than to invalidate it as biased or contaminated by personal perspectives and social or political viewpoints.

4.3   Research Methods

'Research methods are the techniques or procedures used to gather or analyze data related to some research question or hypothesis' (Crotty, 1998, p.3). They are certain activities we engage in so as to gather or analyze our data. These methods have to be described as specifically as possible. For example, if interviews are used as research methods, what type of interviews they are, and in what type of setting the interviews are conducted, etc. (Crotty, 1998).

 Natural reality and social reality are different on the ontological and epistemological level, and combining them can result in coupling incompatible methodological positions. However, at a technical level it is acceptable and sometimes necessary to combine different methods. Many writers find it helpful to distinguish between quantitative and qualitative research, although some writers claim that the state of distinction is no longer useful or even simply false (Bryman, 2012).

4.3.1   *Quantitative versus qualitative research*

 There are two distinctive clusters of research approaches of conducting social research methods as follows:

1) **Quantitative research** which relies on quantification of the collection and analysis of data; this generally entails a deductive approach between theory and research, in that theory guides the research and then subsequent testing of this theory – see Table 4.2. It incorporates the practices and norms of natural scientific models – i.e. positivism; and also embodies a view of social reality as an external objective reality – i.e. objectivism (Creswell, 2002; Bryman, 2012). Two main strategies of inquiry commonly associated with quantitative approach: experiments and survey (Creswell, 2002)

2) **Qualitative research** tends to be concerned with words rather than numbers, it emphasizes an inductive approach, in that theory is often generated from the research – see Table 4.2 – and it underlines the way in which individuals interpret their social world; embodying a view of social reality as a changing emergent property of individual's creation – i.e. social constructionism. Qualitative research is more informed by epistemology and theoretical perspective than quantitative research is, and thus more complex and offers more variations (Creswell, 2002; Crotty, 1998). There are several strategies (Creswell, 2002) or methodologies (Crotty, 1998) associated with qualitative research: ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenological research and narrative research.

However, it is possible to use qualitative methods or quantitative methods or both to serve the purpose of the research whether it is objectivist, constructionist or subjectivist research (Crotty, 1998). David Silverman (2013, p.11) noted: 'Methods should be our servants not our rules. Methods are properly used as tools when they are needed, not because they seem 'too qualitative' or 'too quantitative'. Study of social phenomena, and in particular, cultural themes is very much contextual and out of quantitative control as of natural studies –positivist research. This, therefore, strongly guides the researcher to the view of constructionist and interpretivist paradigms and thus mainly follows qualitative research methods drawing on different ethnographical techniques and research methods.

Assumption	Question	Quantitative	Qualitative
Ontological assumption	What is the nature of reality	Reality is objective, singular, apart from the researcher	Reality is subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study
Epistemological assumption	What is the relationship of the researcher to that being researched	Researcher is independent from that being researched	Researcher is interacted with that being researched
Methodological assumption	What is the process of the research	Deductive process cause and effect	Inductive process mutual simultaneous shaping of factors

Table 4.2: Quantitative and qualitative paradigm assumptions

Source: Adapted from John Creswell 2002

4.3.2   *Data Collection Methods*

The methods used in data collection in this research are mainly informed by qualitative approach at a small scale to examine the housing use and spatial structure under the culture change influences in Syria. As culture has an abstract nature, it needs to be researched through its impacts on elements such as lifestyle, behaviour, and world view (Robbins, 1989). These elements were thus possible to be investigated through observation, interviewing and other ethnographic methods. The specific methods that were conducted in the data collection are as follow: literature reviews, case study/studies,   semi-structured   interviews   (in-depth   interviews),   face-to-face questionnaires; minimal participant and non-participant observation and direct observation, document analysis (maps, housing design plans), and photographic documentation – seen as largely ethnographic in focus (Creswell, 2002; Yin, 2003; Bryman, 2012).

Literature review

Literature review as an exploratory system is defined as "a body of information, existing in a wide variety of stored formats, that has conceptual relevance for a particular topic of inquiry" (Groat and Wang, 2002, p.46). The literature review should only be undertaken after the general materials have been arranged into a rational system

and customized to fit the research question. This research requires an enquiry into multidisciplinary sources which are mainly within social science, and thus information was collected from anthropology, ethnography, psychology and architectural studies. A general review of literature on cultural change and housing design was presented in chapter 2 addressing the relation between these two concepts and defining cultural aspects relevant to housing design and use. Narrowing this down, two cultural aspects were chosen and investigated: 1) concepts and practices of privacy and 2) food preparation and consumption.

The literature review is a very important part of the research process; it is essential not only at the beginning of the process but also throughout it. The information coming out of it should have the following attributes: 1) the information should address a specific topic of inquiry with concise sentences and paragraphs; 2) the research results should contribute to the larger body of relevant literature; 3) the research results should be able to stand on their own for other users (Groat and Wang, 2002). It is a certain cyclical process in that a researcher has to be informed about the existing literature his/her research is drawn from, and the outcome should extend that body of literature which in turn can be used by the next researcher. A literature review can be organized in terms of facts or ideas. Facts are quantifiable and certifiable pieces of information. Ideas tend to have more of an illustrative or interpretive role. A literature review can include primary and/or secondary sources. Primary sources are original sources that are relative to topic. There are many sources of literature such as the internet as a powerful identifier, the library which is still a primary source, archives as distinct from libraries, organizations, agencies and the popular media.

Different sources were used in this research. Libraries and the internet were mainly used to collect a general review of literature on housing and culture change which is available in the UK libraries in fields such as sociology, anthropology, ethnography, architecture, and planning. Literature on culture change in relation to housing design in Syria is extremely limited in English, and thus part of it was translated from Arabic, though this was also very limited. Official sites and documents on Syria that were accessible were used to build up a background about Syria.

Case Study

Case study is often a kind of conceptual container. It can be used at a strategy level and thus it can be used to contain one or more other research approaches, or at a tactic level and thus it can be used as one of several devices under the umbrella of a single research design (Groat and Wang, 2002). This research depends on case study at both a strategic level and a tactic level to achieve an in-depth look at housing and culture, to understand the complexity of the relation between inner space arrangement and change of culture concepts in a particular milieu in order to provide housing design that is more congruent with households' cultural needs. 'Case studies are valuable because they provide great detail that helps to understand the complexities of human behaviour' Mark's (1996). Yin (2003) noted that case studies are the preferred strategy when:

- How and why questions are being posed.

- The investigator has little control over the events.

- The focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context.

The case study method allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Many social scientists deeply believe that case studies are only appropriate for exploratory phase of an investigation. The more appropriate view of case study strategy is an inclusive and pluralistic one as it can be used for three purposes: exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. The case study relies on many of the same techniques as a conventional historical study, but it differs when direct observation of events are conducted and interviews of the persons involved in the events. The case study strategy has unique strength, in its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence − documents, artefacts, interviews, and observations − which are more than what is available in the conventional historical study (Yin, 2003). It is desirable to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; it is therefore used to cover contextual conditions. In this research, two housing areas were used as case studies in Syria as a country study, investigation rapid culture change in contemporary life in relation to current housing design.

Pilot study

The term 'pilot studies' refers to mini versions of a full scale study (feasibility study) as well as pre-testing of a particular research instruments such as a questionnaire or interview schedule. Pilot study does not guarantee success in the main study but it

increases its likelihood. The main advantage of pilot study is that it can give advance warning about where the main research project could fail and which research instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. There are also a range of different reasons to conduct pilot studies such as: developing research questions and designing research protocols; assessing the feasibility of the full scale study/research developing and testing adequacy of research instruments; collecting preliminary data; determining what resources are needed for a planned study; etc. (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001; Polit et al., 2001).

Interviews in qualitative research

The interview is probably the most widely conducted method in qualitative research. Ethnography usually involves a substantial amount of interviewing because of the flexibility of the interview. Ethnography needs an extended period of participant observation and thus is usually very disruptive for the researchers' family life and/or work. The interview, therefore, is a very attractive method for researchers. Even though interviewing, transcriptions of interviews and analysis of transcripts is time-consuming, it is more flexible and easily accommodated into the researcher life (Bryman, 2012).

The main types of interviews associated with qualitative research are the unstructured interview and the semi-structured interview. There is a tendency for these types of interviews to be referred to as in-depth interviews or as qualitative interviews, as in both types interviewer does not strictly follow a schedule as is done in quantitative research interviewing. In the unstructured interview, the researcher uses an aide-memoire which prompts the researcher to focus on a certain range of topics. Unstructured interview can be only one question in which the interviewee can respond freely and the interviewer can select the relevant topics to his/her research and emphasize them in the interview. An unstructured interview is usually similar to a conversation (Bryman, 2012). In a semi-structured interview, the researcher has a list of questions or an *interview guide* which addresses rather specific topics to be covered in the interview. The questions do not necessarily have to be followed as scheduled and the interviewee can, to some extent, freely respond. However, all questions have to be eventually asked using similar wording to all interviewees. New questions may be also asked when the interviewer notices interesting things in the interviewee response. If the researcher starts the

investigation with a fairly clear focus rather than a general idea of a research on a topic, s/he is likely to favour a semi-structured interview so the specific issues can be addressed. Semi-structured interview is likely to be followed if the researcher is doing a multiple-case study, as this needs some structure to ensure cross-case comparability (Bryman, 2012).

Recording and transcription

In qualitative research, the interview is usually audio-recorded and transcribed whenever possible. That is, qualitative researchers are interested in what people say and the way they say it. Although interview transcription is time consuming – usually every hour of speech needs five to six hours for transcription, and yields a vast amount of paper which needs to be waded through when analysing the data, it has many advantages. It helps to correct the natural limitations of our memories and of the intuitive glosses we might place on what people say in interviews; allows more thorough examination of what people say and how; it permits repeated examinations of interviewees' answers; it can be used as secondary data by other researchers, etc.

Face-to-face questionnaires

In a face-to-face questionnaire, an interviewer is physically present to help the respondents to answer the questions. This questionnaire delivery mode has many advantages over mail or telephone surveys in term of quality and complexity of the collected data (Doyle, 2005). Although this delivery mode has potential sources of response bias and possible increase of logistical costs, it is ideal for respondents who have difficulty answering mail or telephone survey such as poor reading or writing skills. Face-to-face questionnaire can be significantly longer than other types of survey. Most people allow the interviewer to stay in their living room longer than an hour, whereas respondents usually cannot bear a telephone interview which last longer than half an hour or a mail questionnaire which needs more than 15-20 minutes of effort. This additional time allows the researcher to ask more questions, and to make them longer, more detailed, more open-ended questions and more complicated. "If the respondent finds a question to be confusing or ambiguous, the interviewer can immediately clarify it. Similarly, the respondent can be asked to clarify any answers that

the interviewer cannot interpret' (Doyle, 2005, p.3). Face-to-face questionnaire offer the highest response rate obtainable (90% in some cases) (Doyle, 2005).

Sampling in qualitative research – non-probability sampling

There are different types of non-probability sampling techniques in qualitative research such as snowball sampling, convenience sampling, opportunistic sampling, purposive sampling, etc.

Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling that is simply available to the researcher by virtue of its accessibility. This type is highly desirable to pilot a research instrument before using it in an investigation – such as developing a battery of questions (Bryman, 2012).

Snowball sampling is a form of convenience sample, but with approach to sampling the researcher makes initial contact with a small group of people who are relevant to the research topic and then uses this to establish contact to others (Bryman, 2012).

Quota sampling aims to produce a sample that reflects a population in terms of the relative proportions of people in different categories, such as gender, ethnicity, age groups, socio-economic groups, and region of residence, and in combinations of these categories. Since the final selection is made by the interviewer, the sampling of individuals is not carried out randomly (Bryman, 2012).

Purposive sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which the researcher takes the decisions regarding the individuals included in the sample based on a variety of criteria which may include the specialist knowledge related to the research issues, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (Oliver, 2006, pp.244-245). Purposive sampling seems to be the most conducted sampling in qualitative research, as this is essentially strategic and entails an attempt to establish a good correspondence between research questions and sampling. The researcher defines samples which allow him/her to interview people who are relevant to research questions (Bryman, 2012). Sampling size mainly depends on available time and sources and on obtaining the adequate answers of the research questions.

Direct observation, minimal participant and non-participant observation

Direct observation provides an opportunity for researchers to observe directly what is happening in the social setting, interact with participants and participate in activities. Direct observation may be referred to by other terms such as participant observation, site visits, field work, etc (Wiebe, 2010).

Minimally participating observer observes but participates minimally in groups' core activities. Observer interacts with group members but observation may or may not be the main source of data. Interviews and documents play a prominent role when observation is not the main source of data. Non-participating observer with interaction observes (sometimes minimally) but does not participate in group's core activities. Interaction with group members occurs but often through interviews and documents which are the main sources of data in such method.

Research-driven visual images: photographs

In recent years, there is a significant increase in the use of the visual materials in social research. A distinction can be made between the use of visual materials that are extant and those that are produced exclusively for the purposes of research. Research driven photographs maybe taken either by the researcher or the participants themselves (Bryman, 2012). In this study, all photographs were taken by the researcher for the purpose of research. There are several ways in which photographs have been employed by qualitative researchers: as an *aide-memoire* in the course of fieldwork*,* in which context photos essentially become components of the ethnographer's field notes; as sources of data in their own right not as adjuncts to the ethnographer's field notes, and/or as prompts for discussion by research participants (Bryman, 2012, p.457). In this study, photographs were used as an *aide memoire* in the fieldwork and as sources of data in their own right.

4.3.3   *Data analysis*

Clear-cut rules about how qualitative data analysis should be carried out have not been developed yet. Two general strategies of qualitative analysis are commonly used: 1) analytic induction and 2) grounded theory which is probably the most prominent of the general approaches of qualitative data analysis (Bryman, 2012). However, both are

inductive and iterative processes of data analysis. Data analysis generally consists of three main procedures as suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994):

1) Data reduction: This refers of the process whereby the vast amount of qualitative data obtained – interview transcripts, field notes, sketches, observations, etc. are reduced and organised, for example, coding, writing summaries, discarding irrelevant data, etc. It is important to have an access to discard data later on as further analysis and/or data re-examining may be required.

2) Data display: this is to draw conclusions from the mass data and display it in a form of tables, charts, networks and other graphical formats through a continual process.

3) Conclusions drawing/verification: this allows the researcher to develop conclusions regarding the research enquiry and then verify them and examine through reference to the existing field notes or further data collection.

Coding and turning data into fragments

Coding is a starting point for most of qualitative data analysis. Several considerations in developing codes can be borne in mind such as: of what general category this item is an instance; what does this item of data present; of what topic is this item of data an instance; what question about a topic does this item of data suggest; what sort of answer to a question about a topic this item of data imply; etc.? (Lofland cited in Bryman, 2012, p.408). Coding is an important part of data analysis, a mechanism for thinking about the meaning of the collected data and reducing the vast amount of this (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Coding of interview transcripts typically entails writing marginal notes on them and gradually refining those notes into codes and thus a portions of transcripts are linked to particular names or labels (Bryman, 2012).

4.4   Research design justifications

Drawing on the literature review on culture and housing design (concerning key issues for research) and the context concerning culture and housing in Syria in chapter 3, this section highlights key points as the basis for fieldwork research design. In line with the overall study objectives of better understanding of cultural change in Syria and how this affects recent use of housing space and the proposed need to produce more appropriate housing design, key issues addressed here are: a) the representative nature of the study;

and b) the nature of the conducted fieldwork. Two major constraints affect these: i) the limited data available in the public domain in general in Syria – affecting wider 'universes' for sampling; and ii) the limited resources (mainly time) of an individual doctoral study. The main themes discussed in this section are as follows:

a) Study of a representative sample:

- Focus on urban areas
- Focus on mainly one city and areas within it
- Focus on most relevant social economic groups
- Focus on one part of housing delivery system

b) The methods which were used in the fieldwork

- Focus on key issues manifest in the link between culture and housing

Particular fieldwork methods were used in this research

4.4.1 *Urban area*

Chapter 3 has argued that cultural change in Syria is significantly faster and greater in the urban areas than the rural or desert areas due to the prevalence of poverty and limited international contact in the rural areas. This mainly affects the North-East more than other regions of Syria, as discussed in chapter 3. This has led the chosen scope of this study to be focused on urban areas.

4.4.2 *Lattakia versus Damascus*

Most Syrian cities are witnessing rapid development and cultural change, as noted in chapter 3, but some cities seem to undergo faster and greater change, such as the capital city Damascus and the coastal city Lattakia – both with considerable international contact. Damascus has both the representatives of the international world as well as considerable tourism and Lattakia has the country's main port and also is a key national and international tourist destination. However, the city of Damascus seems to have significant differences between its areas in terms of change, with this ranging from very slow changing areas to other areas where change is faster and greater. Such differences seem relatively less significant in Lattakia where cultural change seems more evenly distributed. In addition, in cities such as Damascus, Aleppo and Bosra – as historic centres with world heritage sites (Levant, 2004b) – there is much more reluctance from

different people, especially conservative groups, to cultural change, with a strong focus on preservation of culture. Many such buildings are still inhabited with an emphasis, nowadays, on preserving these and helping inhabitants to maintain their residence. The incidence of traditional building in Lattakia is much rarer than Damascus (or Syria as a whole), as shown in Table 4.3.

Percentage of housing types in governorates of Syria 2006				
Proportion of dwelling types	**Syria**	**Damascus**	**Lattakia**	**City of Lattakia**
Villa (house)	3.2%	3.9%	7.2%	2.32%
Multi-storeys (apartment)	40.4%	45.3%	73.9%	69.14%
Dar-Arabi (traditional house)	56.1%	50.8%	13.3%	3.56%
Others	0.3	0.00	5.6	24.98%

Table 4.3: Housing types in Syria, Governorate of Damascus and Governorate of Lattakia
Source: Central Bureau of Statistic, Damascus, Syria (CBSSYR, 2010)

As evidence for this, table 4.3 shows that Lattakia has one of the highest rates of multi-storey apartment house types. This is considered as a new type, embedding modernization and change, as opposed to the traditional single family house (Dar-Arabi). The alternative (villas) represents only a small proportion of the housing stock in all of Syria, including Damascus and Lattakia, (although twice as important in Lattakia). As can be seen in Table 4.3, the proportion of apartment houses in Lattakia is nearly 6 times that of traditional houses, whereas this proportion in Damascus and Syria as a whole is even slightly lower.[42] Based on this, as well as the familiarity of the researcher with the city, Lattakia has been chosen as the main urban focus for the study.

4.4.3 *Socio-economic groups*

Drawing on the (albeit limited) socioeconomic stratification in Syria (see section 3.2.4), the focus of this study is on the lower middle class and middle class groups, as these two groups seem to represent a slight majority (58.6%) of Syria's population with a tendency to increase. In addition, these socioeconomic groups predominantly have

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[42] These figures seem to be based on the city regions, which means that some rural areas are included in the statistics, which may distort the proportion of traditional houses; however the comparison stands in general.

access to houses generically designed by architects – or at least architects are involved in designing the houses of the aforementioned groups. They normally do not have houses individually designed by architects as the upper middle class does. On the other hand, they are able to adapt the houses to their social and cultural needs, unlike the very poor group, who are not able to do so due to their low income.

The focus on Lattakia lower middle and middle income groups is important in terms of the city's population, but it might not be representative of Syria's cities overall – let alone rural areas. This study assumes that there is a link between income level and cultural change – which does not mean it assumes a causative link, in that not all higher income groups will be experiencing the same form of cultural change and the poor will also be undergoing change. However, concerning housing, access to generically-designed housing is most likely to be the case for the ~59% targeted group described above and in coastal urban areas such as Lattakia.   This however needs to be seen not as a typical case study, but a case study which may indicate future trends – which is what the study aims to influence.

Although the lowest percentage of individual poverty is in the southern region of Syria (see fig. 4.3) (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005), the percentage of household poverty – the focus of this study is more on households than individuals – is lowest in the coastal region – see figure 4.4 – where Lattakia is located, taking into account the sharing factor of durable and non-food expenditure, and comparing to other regions of Syria as shown in figure 4.2 (UNDP, 2005) .
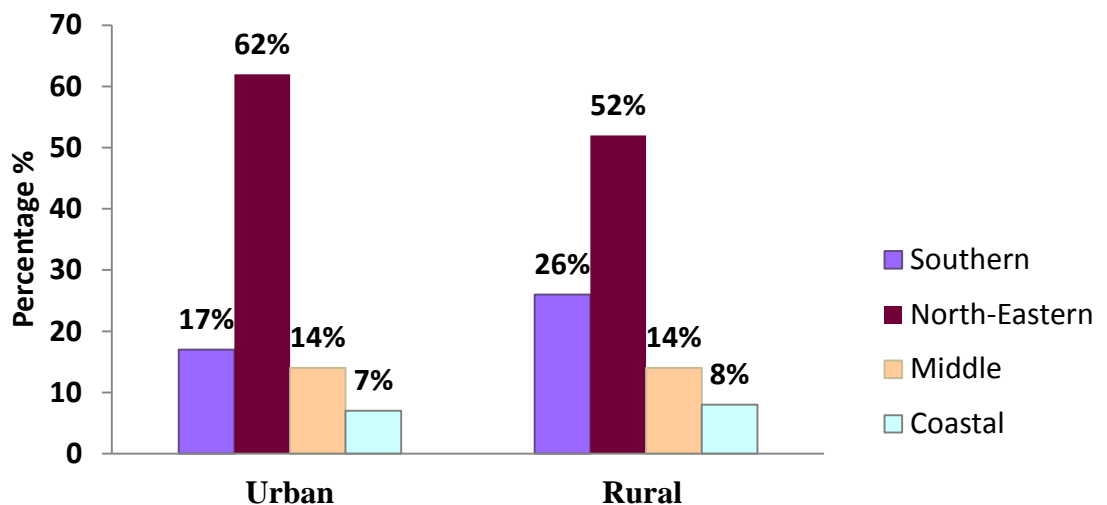
Figure 4.2: The percentage of households under poverty in the regions of Syria 2003-2004
Sources: (UNDP 2004)
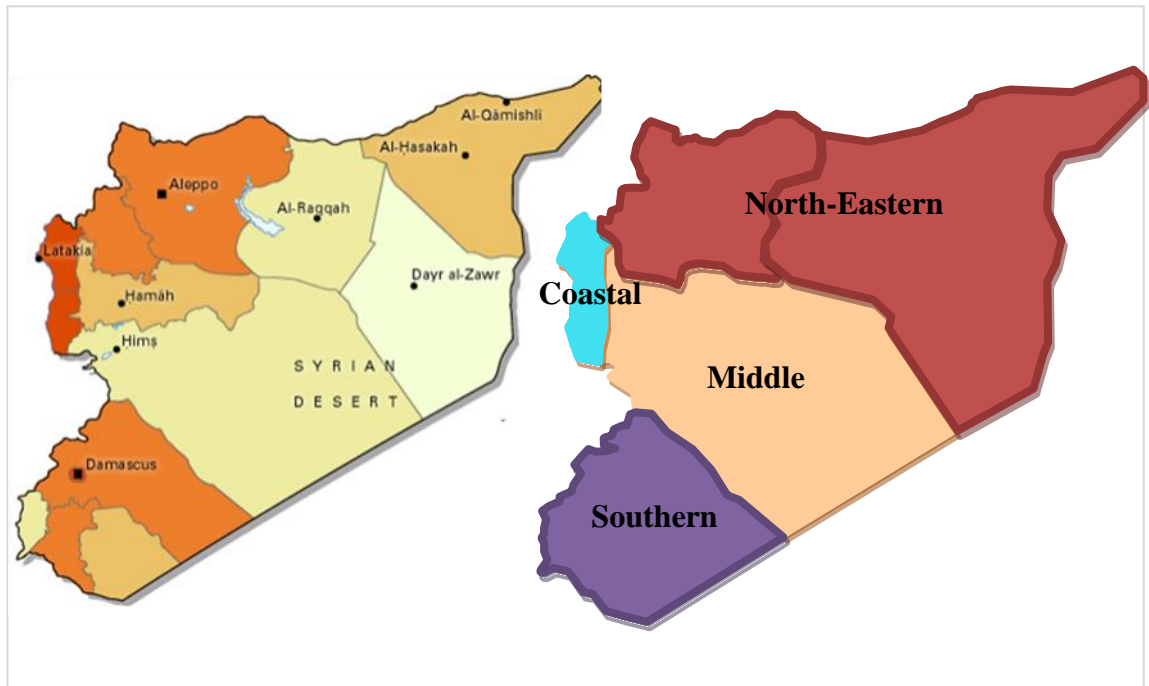
Figure 4.3: the division of the regions of Syria

 Source: Adapted from UNDP 2004

Another key identifier for a target group is educational level. Education is the strongest factor correlated to poverty risk in Syria, as the UNDP study in Syria shows that 'poverty was inversely correlated to educational attainment' and poverty was highest, deepest and most severe for illiterate individuals (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005, p.1). In this vein, education was chosen to be one of the criteria of socioeconomic stratification to define the socioeconomic level of target households. In addition, occupation is correlated to household living standard, as the UNDP study shows that informal employment is closely correlated to poverty (see figure 4.4).
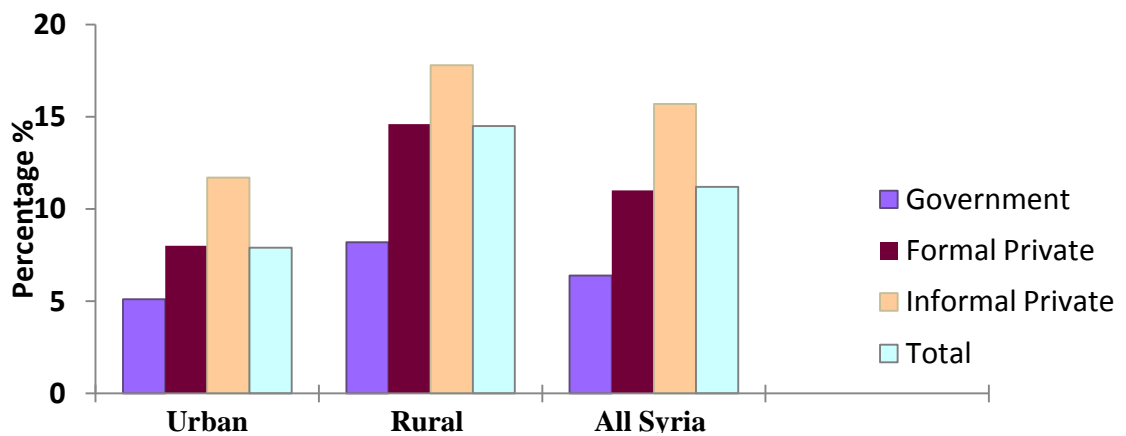
Figure 4.4: Incidence of poverty by sector of employment

Source: Poverty in Syria 1996-2004 (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005)

Figure 4.4 shows that employment in government or government-owned (public sector) corporations is associated with better economic level, whereas poverty is correlated with people informally self-employed (informal private sector), and less with people formally self-employed[43] (formally private sector)   (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005). Informal private sector seems to be the only sector which provides employment to uneducated and unskilled people, who are proportionally the poor in Syria (ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005; Next Page Foundation, 2007).

Socioeconomic status (SES) is generally defined as an economic and sociological combined measure of a person's work experience and individual's or family's economic and social position relative to others based on *income, education, and occupation*. As there is no official socioeconomic stratification of Syrian society, as noted earlier in section 3.2.4, the researcher, therefore, combined four criteria drawing on the UNDP study of poverty in developing countries as a basic measure of socioeconomic status. This was proposed in order to classify the targeted households of this study into approximate socioeconomic groups. These criteria are: the occupation of the head/s of the household, their educational level, their typical housing location and the household's possessions as explained in the following and in Table 4.4.

1) Occupation of the head of the household[44], which is a significant indicator and an effective factor in the housing standard and household's lifestyle.

2) Education, which is an important indicator of the income level in Syria, as this provides better job opportunities and thus has a significant role in the previous factor. Education has become a stronger indicator of status in Syria after the rise to power of the Al-B'ath Party and subsequent increasing of secularization[45].

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[43] In private sector, only people who are self-employed seem to be considered in the UNDP study of poverty in Syria because in others private sectors people are better-off or they are employees, i.e. they are not poor.

[44] The head of the household is the member of the family who leads and manages the family's affairs, expenditures, income etc, and this might be one of the parents or both, not necessarily the father (Central Bureau of Statistics Syria, 2010).

[45] *'Even before the revolution of 1963, secular education had become a criterion of status among many ordinary Syrians, especially as higher education ensured a virtually automatic entry into admired and*

3) The area where they live, including the amenities and utilities provided, as generally speaking people try to live in a better serviced and higher class area when they are better off or they upgrade to a higher social class.

4) The level /type of possession the household owns. Possessions in this study refer to mainly durable goods and services which are easy to notice by others such as house/s, car/s, etc.

It is stressed that this was a provisional categorization to aid the research until either further more detailed statistics were found in Syria or – alternatively – this categorization was confirmed or amended through interviews with key informants in Syria. This categorization was confirmed, after the data analysis, with very slight amendment, as it is explained later in chapter 5.

Class	Criteria			
	Occupation	**Education**	**District, area of living**	**Possession**
A	Public administration, formal private management	Bachelor or more	Urban, city centre, good services.	Household possessions and house appliance: For instance, real estate, house, apartment, car, TV, satellite, and other kitchen appliance such as microwave, dishwasher, ...
B	Middle level administration	Finished high[46] school or more	Suburb, Rural good services	
C	Junior white collar	Finish secondary school or more	Suburb, Rural average services	
D	Blue collar, servant	Primary school or more	Suburb, rural, informal area, bad services	
F-Z	Unemployed	Illiterate	Informal area, bad services	

Table 4.4: Proposed criteria of social stratification in Syria by researcher

Sources: Adapted from Next Page Foundation (2007); and ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail (2005)

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well−paying occupations. The importance of education in this context will probably grow.' (Mortimer and Division, 2004, p.55)

[46] The school system in Syria is divided into basic and secondary education levels: primary education level consists of 1st to 6th grade; lower secondary education level from 7th to 9th grade; and upper secondary education level[46] from 10th to 12th, which is equivalent to high school. Secondary school stage ranges from age 11/12 to 13/14, and high school stage ranges from 14/15 to 16/17 years old.

Illiteracy in Lattakia was less than the average of illiteracy across Syria in 2006, as shown in table 4.5. The education level of the majority (~73%) of Lattakia's population over age 15 ranges between primary school and high school. This range of education is categorized as middle and lower middle class in the aforementioned proposed criteria.

Percentage of population in terms of level of education in Syria 2006					
Level of education over age 15	**Illiterate**	**primary school**	**Finished secondary school or more**	**Finished high school or more**	**Bachelor Or more**
Lattakia	12.4%	34.5%	20.3%	18.0%	14.6%
Damascus	5.9%	37.0%	25.0	17.4%	14.6%
Syria	14.8%	46.9%	17.8%	11.5%	8.7%

Table 4.5: The percentage of people in the Governorate of Lattakia, Damascus and in Syria as a whole according to education level

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Damascus, Syria (CBSSYR, 2010)

Table 4.6 shows that around half of the population (47.6%) in the Governorate of Lattakia, works in governmental employment, which is high comparing to Damascus at 29.7 % and Syria as a whole at 28%. The UNDP study findings show that poverty is less among people that have governmental employment comparing to others whose jobs are with informal private sector. This arguably presents 47.6% of Lattakia population as not being in poverty and also with a high possibility of being middle or lower middle class.

Percentage of population in terms of level of education in Syria 2006			
Type of sector	**Governmental**	**Private**	**Cooperative**
Lattakia	47.6%	52.3%	0.2%
Damascus	29.7%	69.9%	0.4%
Syria	27.9%	71.8%	0.4%

Table 4.6: The percentage of the people in the governorates of Lattakia, Damascus and in Syria as a whole according to occupation

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics, Damascus, Syria (CBSSYR, 2010)

4.4.4   *Housing delivery system*

The main focus of this research is on architect-produced but typically multiple-produced dwelling forms, as this is where the individual client has limited input to the design. What in fact tends to happen is that in this situation the changes in the use of space due to cultural change lead to either physical or social adaptations after design – which this study aims to incorporate more adequately in the design process.

This generic housing design, which is often done by designers and architects speculatively for unknown clients is, thus, not *erudite architecture* as discussed in chapter 2 – i.e. in contrast to the individual housing design in which users are known and/or involved and can decide their own house design. In generic housing design in Syria, architects officially are responsible for the final design, which has to be licensed and permitted by the local municipal for implementation. However, the real practice is different, as a result of corruption, as some architects sign documents of housing design plans, which are designed by non-qualified architects, as evidenced by this research.

Concerning the form of housing production

The 9th and 10th Five-year plans FYP in Syria for housing provision show that the public sector was successful and accomplished the planned purpose to provide housing for low and limited income groups, and this consists of 17 percent of the total housing provision as shown in chapter 3 in table 3.4. Not only does the public sector use formal real estate but also it provides houses generically designed by architects.   Nevertheless, this housing design targets a particular socioeconomic group, namely limited income groups as noted in the literature review in chapter 3. For this, this study will focus on the public sector represented by the Youth Housing Project (YHP) as the foremost in the Public Establishment of Housing (PEH) oriented to low and limited income groups. YHP is a prominent project of the public housing sector among other public housing projects such as Saving Housing, Labour Housing, and Popular Housing. YHP has a clear forthcoming plan as it is the most important and biggest housing project to provide houses in different Syrian governorates (60,000 units). See Figure 4.7 which shows the planned housing areas of the Youth Housing project to be completed in the next FYPs in the Lattakia, and the implemented housing area which was inhabited in the end of 2010 –the latter area was studied in this research.

The co-operative sector will not be the focus of this research as this has been restricted after malpractices because of the land shortage. Moreover, this sector has been focusing on larger size houses and is thus less affordable for the social group targeted in the research.

Although the activity of the private sector is in both informal settlements and formal real estate speculation because of the lack of tendered lands, it provides a significant proportion of housing in Syria at 75 percent (formal and informal) of the total housing provision as noted in chapter 3 (see Table 3.4). Therefore, formal houses provided by the private sector can be also a focus of this study.

In the light of the discussion above, this study will focus firstly, on middle and lower middle class houses that are located in the formal urban areas of Lattakia, secondly on housing designed by architects as a generic design as opposed to individual design. These areas are located in the suburban areas of the city, whereas residential with commercial buildings are located in the city centre and thus are very expensive. Although the city centre of Lattakia has different types of multi-storey buildings which, generally speaking, are the modern type, traditional houses (Dar Arabi) still exist in this area and probably not in other suburban areas.

4.5   Key issues manifest in the link between culture and housing design

Drawing on the international literature review in chapter 2 and literature review on Syria in chapter 3, the chosen cultural aspects which link to housing use and design are: the concepts and practices of privacy, and food preparation and consumption. In terms of privacy, it is particularly the concepts of privacy in domestic space, and in this study it is intra-family privacy, continuing other research such as Al-Kodmany study about *women's privacy in traditional and modern Damascus*. The results of his study showed that women, vis-a-vis privacy, preferred traditional homes to modern ones and on the other hand, they preferred modern neighborhoods to traditional ones (Al-Kodmany, 1995). The results of Al-Kodmany's study are from 16 years prior to this study in the context of Damascus, the capital of Syria, whereas this study is investigating the cultural change in the recent past and more specifically in the period of time between 1995 and 2011 – which witnessed significant changes in different levels in Syria affected by modernization, westernization, and globalization, as discussed in chapters 2 and 3. The focus of this study is the household and its domestic space, as discussed in

the text above, and thus intra-family privacy was specifically investigated along with food preparation and consumption in the field trip as illustrated later. The key aspects investigated within each of these issues are set out in the following subsections.

4.5.1 *Privacy*

Privacy is a cultural concept strongly related to the house design as noted in chapter 3 and thus it is very important to investigate how this concept is perceived and practiced in a particular culture, to understand the link between this and housing use and design in a given context – i.e. households in their own houses.

There are different types of privacy vis-a-vis people's involvement such as individual privacy, intra-family privacy, family privacy, neighbourhood privacy, urban privacy, and also visual privacy and auditory privacy. The study focuses on the privacy within the house and thus this includes family privacy and intra-family privacy with a reference to women's privacy. Women's privacy was added while conducting the questionnaire because of the high percentage of respondents mentioning it, although women's privacy was already studied by Al-Kodmany (1995) in the context of Damascus. The key issues therefore addressed in relation to privacy in the case studies are:

Change in conceptions of privacy: as noted in the literature review in chapter 2, there has been a growing concern about individual privacy rather than group or family privacy in modern life, and this change is more noticeable in modern society than in the traditional one; however both societies are moving toward more personal privacy. The change in the conceptions of privacy as Syrian households perceive it is considered in this study.

Family and intra-family privacy: since the focus on final objective of this study is to propose more appropriate internal house design to fulfill the recent cultural needs of a household, the chosen kind of privacy was mainly proposed to be intra-family and family privacy, which seems to significantly influence the use of space and internal housing design.

Desired privacy and family privacy satisfaction: socioeconomic status influences people's desire for privacy as well as this does with achieved privacy. "It has been

found that socioeconomic differences influence the need for privacy" (Al-Kodmany, 1995, p.74). Norms of privacy for poor groups with large size family and crowded living conditions are much less than those of affluent people, as these have extreme privacy demands which are not necessarily based on cultural norms. It is therefore more appropriate to consider the differences in the desired privacy among households from different socioeconomic levels. This information was collected in detail in the field work bearing it in mind while conducting the questionnaire survey with the households.

Change in the level of privacy: the change in the level of privacy was considered based on Salwa Michael's study (1998) which focused on the changes in housing design elements between traditional and modern housing types in Damascus, as seen in chapter 3, and how the degree of privacy of different parts of the house is changing among low, middle and high degree of privacy. Several questions were asked in this study to show the level of privacy which is achieved/ desired in each element of the house – is the element used by the individual, other households members or by relatives and guests.

4.5.2 *Food preparation and consumption*

Drawing on the literature review in the previous two chapters, food preparation and consumption seemed to be significantly relevant to the use of home space and affected by the rapid cultural change. In Syria food is seen as an important social and cultural activity and it affects the use of space as noted in chapter 3. Therefore food preparation and consumption is another key issue of this study. The key issues addressed vis-à-vis food practices are:

Change in the practices of food preparation: it was investigated in this study how food preparation is changing – i.e. who is cooking, how and where the cooking is taking place in the home, considering the labour-saving devices in the home.

Change in the food rituals and consumptions: it was investigated through the questionnaire: where and when the meals are currently taking place – whether outside the home such as at a restaurant or inside the home and in which elements of the home; and who of the household members, family members and/or guests eat together at the dining table.

4.6   Lattakia: A case study

As seen in the above discussion, the city of Lattakia was chosen as a case study which may indicate future trends across Syria.

4.6.1   *A brief introduction to Lattakia*

Lattakia is the main port city and the busiest seaport in Syria, located in the northwest coast at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. The nature of Lattakia is distinct with varied topography which includes the sea coast, plain, mountains, and valleys. The official population of Lattakia was 975,000 in 2009 and of this, the female population was 483,000 and the male population was 492,000 (Central Bureau of Statistics Syria, 2010). In terms of religion, Lattakian society consists of different sects of Islam and Christianity such as Greek Orthodox Christians. Lattakia is not only the principal port but also the manufacturing (packaging, preserving, marketing, etc.) centre of the agriculture produced from the surrounding towns and villages, and it is a tourist city with its coasts and mountains. Its history goes back three millennia (Phillips, 2010). Ugarit was an ancient port city at the *Ras Shamra*[47] headland north of modern-day Lattakia. Its roots can be traced back to the second millennium BC when the Ugarit alphabet, which is one of the first alphabets in the world, was in use (1500-1300 BC) and Ugarit was at the centre of the literate world among Egypt, Cyprus, Crete, Antolia and Mesopotamia. Ugarit has a connection to the Hittite Empire; the city reached its heyday between 1800 and 1200 BC when it ruled a trade-based coastal kingdom, trading with Egypt, Cyprus, the Aegean, other parts of Syria, the Hittites and much of the eastern Mediterranean (Pardee, 2007).

Lattakia is a busy, alive and culturally varied city. Its past has been influenced and controlled at times by the Phoenicians, Canaanites, Romans, Seleucids, Byzantines, Arabs, Seljuks, Crusaders, Mamluks, and the Ottoman Turks.

> 'The city is even mentioned in the Bible in Revelations and in Paul's letter to the Colossians. Thus, the multiple influences of trade, religion, and foreign invaders make the city a holder of many stories. The city's natural port

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[47] *Ras Shamra* literally means the Cape Fennal. Ras Shamra headland lies on the mediterrnean coast 7miles north of Lattakia.

provides a solid foundation for the local economy. Many containers move through the port as agricultural products from inland are exported. It may seem that this port has been used continuously for more than 3,000 years. An additional important source of income is the money that expatriates send back to relatives living in the city. Tourism is of rising importance to Lattakia. Many resorts have sprung up along the coast and tempt visitors to retreat to the warm, sandy Mediterranean beaches. Many visitors also come to participate in Lattakia Flower Festival each year in April and the Festival of Love and Peace in early August' (Phillips, 2010, p.94).

Lattakia, as most coastal cities in the world, is more open to other cultures and societies, and it has a wider communication with other cultures and societies from different nations and countries. This is perhaps what makes it faster in the modern acculturation process compared to other Syrian cities in the middle or the east of the country, except Damascus the capital.

'Because of the frequent contact with foreigners through trade and tourism, Latakia has become one of Syria's most liberal places. These outside influences have kept the city and its residents looking outward and forward in many ways' (Phillips, 2010, p.94) For example, many young women wear jeans and colorful tops instead of more traditional Muslim attire.

4.6.2   *Housing in Lattakia*

Housing areas in Lattakia, as elsewhere in Syria, are divided into three main areas: a housing area within master plan boundaries which is 3500 hectares (61.18% of the total housing area), housing in the expansion area which is 1500 hectares (26.21%), and housing in informal settlement areas[48] (12.61%). The map in figures 4.5 and 4.6 shows the informal area that will not be included in this study, as this area is mostly inhabited by poor or/and relatively poor group who are less able to choose their own house design, or modify it or change it due to economic status.

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[48] Officially recorded contravention of building regulations: this includes only the building violations where their owners apply for a building conciliation so as to be recorded and documented for the government and for which they must pay a conciliation fee. Recorded Building contraventions include adding, removing, closing or opening parts of formal – legal – buildings. However people attempt to conciliate with the government so as not to have their buildings or part of them demolished. This suggests that actual informal areas are probably larger including those not officially recorded yet.

Master plan boundaries of Lattakia	
Boundaries of informal area	
Tishreen University	
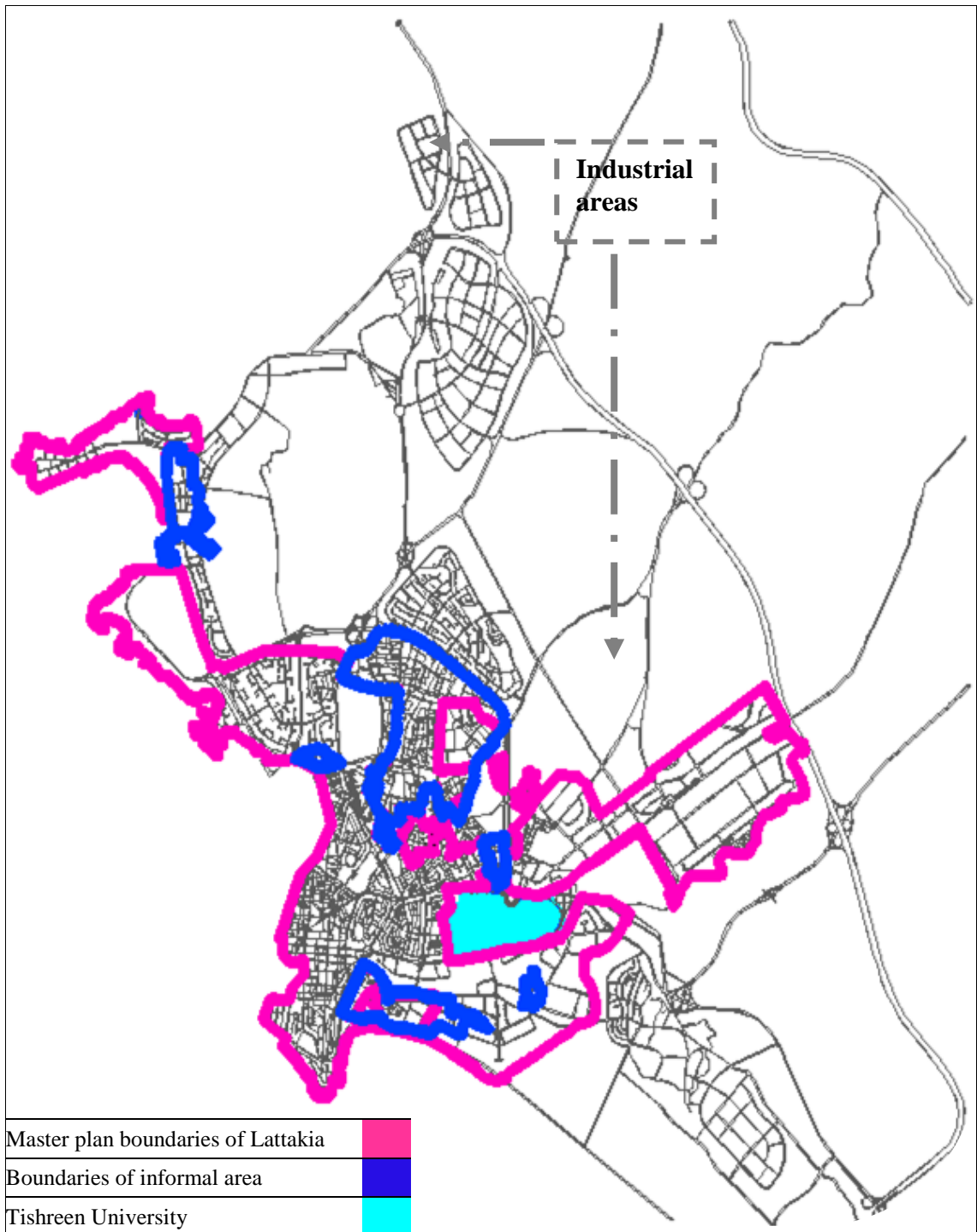
Figure 4.5: Master planned area of Lattakia, its boundaries and the recorded informal settlement area

Source: GCEC (2011)
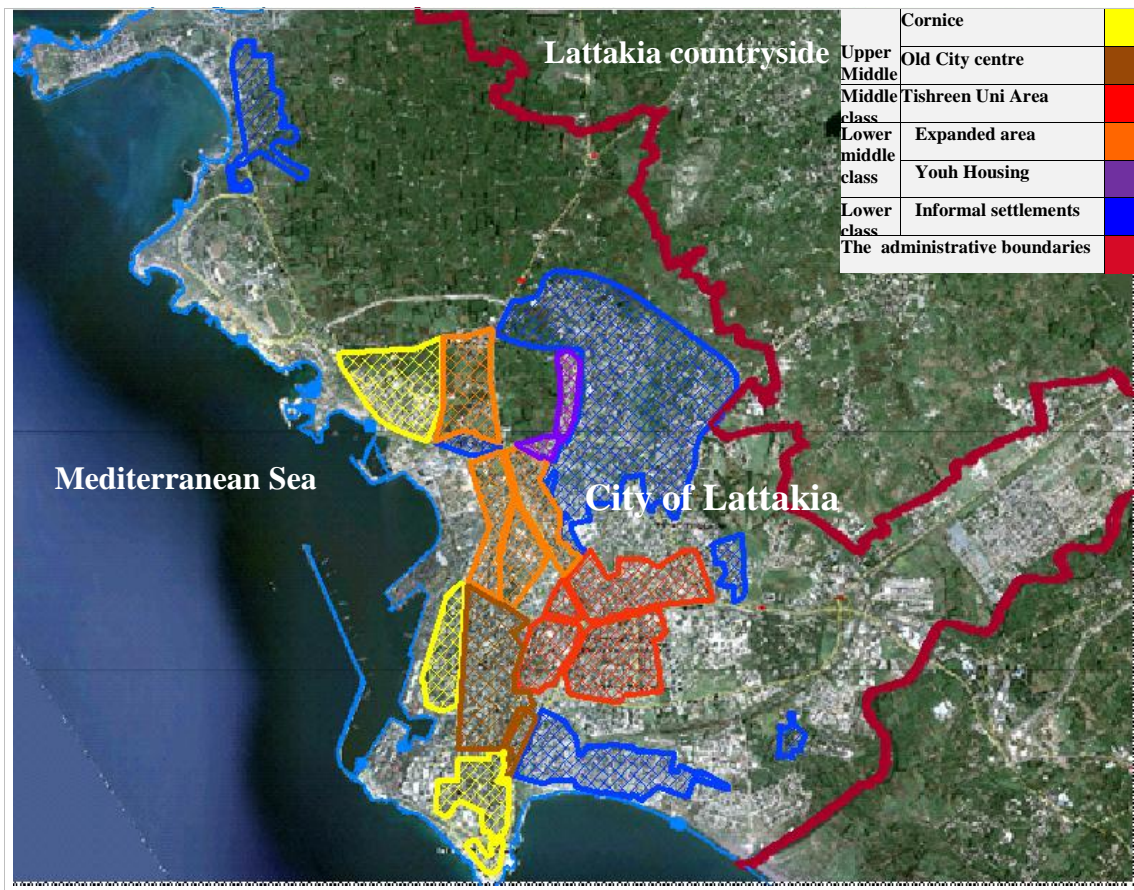
Figure 4.6   Residential areas in Lattakia and estimated socioeconomic division of the inhabitants

Sources: Adapted from draft plans provided by *the General Company of Engineering and Consulting,* researcher's own obserrvations and Google Earth 2011

Housing types in the city of Lattakia include, as in most Syrian cities, three main categories: villa, traditional house (*dar-arabi),* and multi-storeys residence (apartment). As table 4.3 shows, the dominant type of housing in Lattakia is multi-storeys.

Figure 4.6 shows an estimated division of housing areas of the city of Lattakia based on the socio-economic level of their inhabitants. This division was constructed based mainly on the researcher's direct observation and her familiarity with the city complemented by data from the General Company of Engineering and Consulting related to some of these areas.
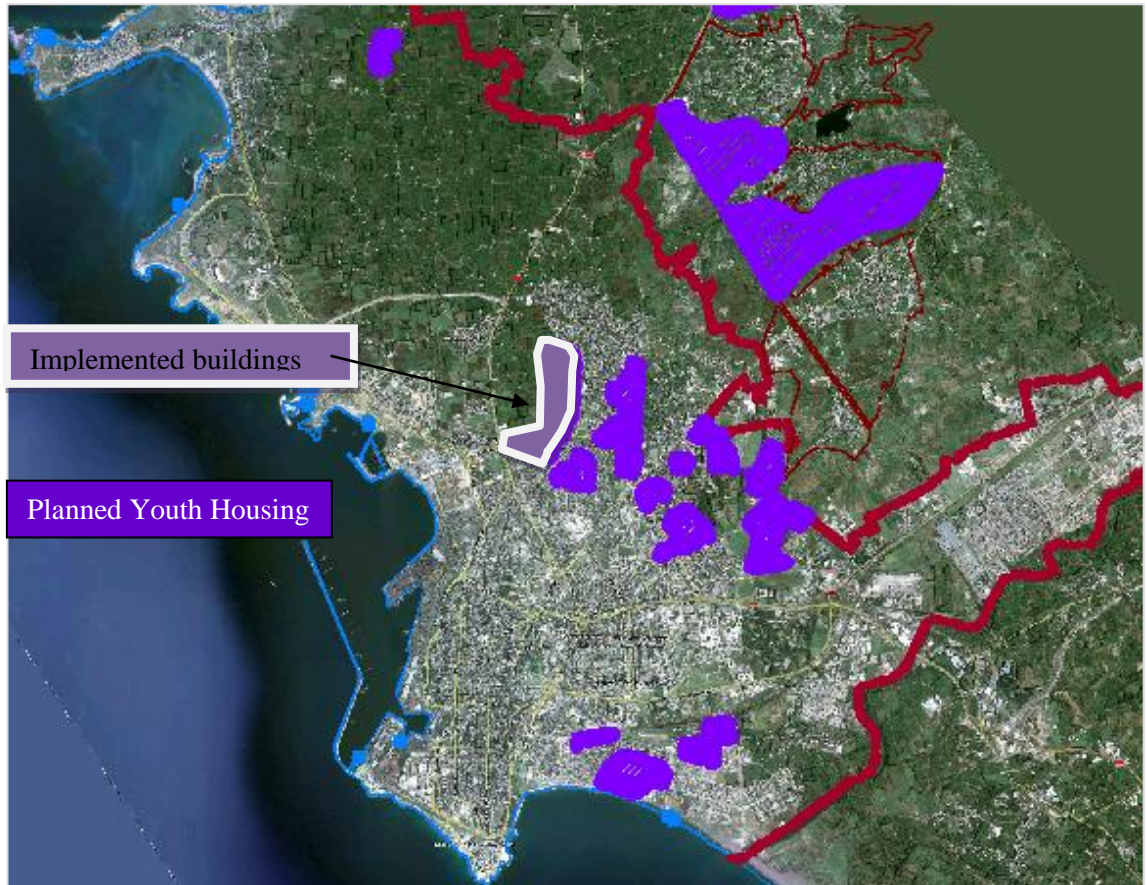
Figure 4.7: Different areas for the implemented and planned Youth Housing Project

Sources: Google Earth (22 Nov 2010) and the General Company for Engineering and Consulting in the City of Lattakia

4.6.3 *Case study areas in the city of Lattakia for administering questionnaire to households*

Two areas were chosen to administer the designed questionnaire – as explained below – to sampled households: the Youth Housing Project (Area 1) representing lower middle class and Tishreen University (Area 2) representing middle class (see figure 4.8). These areas are not located in the city centre where buildings seem to be relatively expensive and traditional houses (Dar Arabi) mainly exist.

Area 1 is a recently built housing area by Youth Housing Project (YHP) which represents the public sector. Figure 4.7 shows that there were several areas where YHP is planned to be implemented at the time this research was being carried out, therefore it seemed to be important to appraise the appropriateness of these houses to the inhabitants' cultural change. These houses were built for lower middle class or, as named in the Syrian context, 'limited income group' although in practical terms this might not be fully used by lower middle class as it was originally assigned for. The chosen part of YHP is located in a suburban area north of the city centre (see Figure 4.8) and includes 3 different floor areas (60 m^2, 70m^2 and 80m^2) with 5 different types of design in, as noted in chapter 3 (see also Figure 4.9). Therefore, three households from each different design were targeted for this study to show how different households may use the domestic space for the same type of housing design.

Area 2 is considered one of the new areas of Lattakia which started to be inhabited in the late 1970s and has many new buildings less than 10 years old (at the time of conducting the fieldtrip in 2011). This area is named Tishreen University Area (TUA) It is located around the university and was built a few years after the university was established in 1971. TUA is located in the suburban area of Lattakia to the east of the city centre near the university, and it is inhabited by middle class groups and mostly built by the private sector with a wide range of housing types and floor areas. Figure 4.10, shows the location of the chosen buildings for this study.
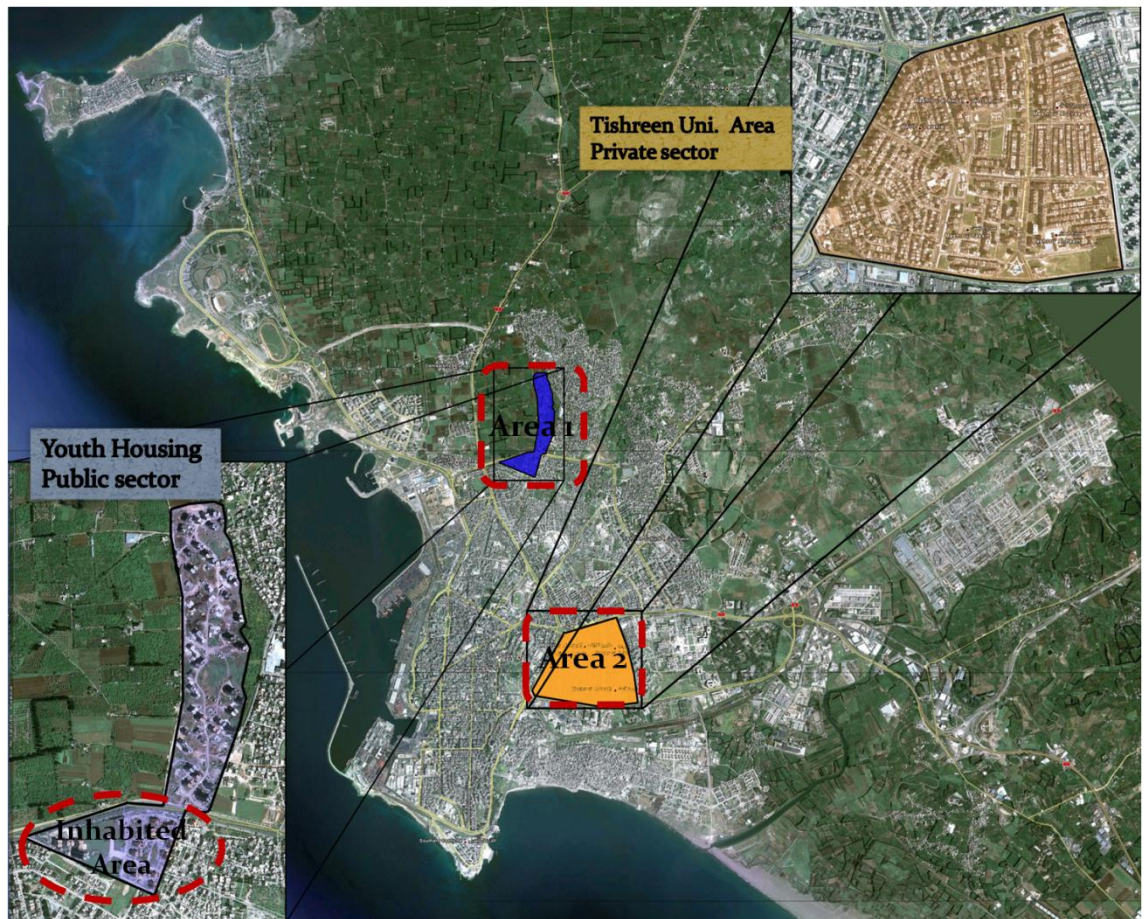
Figure 4.8: Two chosen areas for investigation – Area1 (Youth Housing –Public sector), and Area 2 (Tishreen University Area – Developer Private sector)

Figure 4.9 Sampled buildings in Area1 for administering face-to-face questionnaire to households
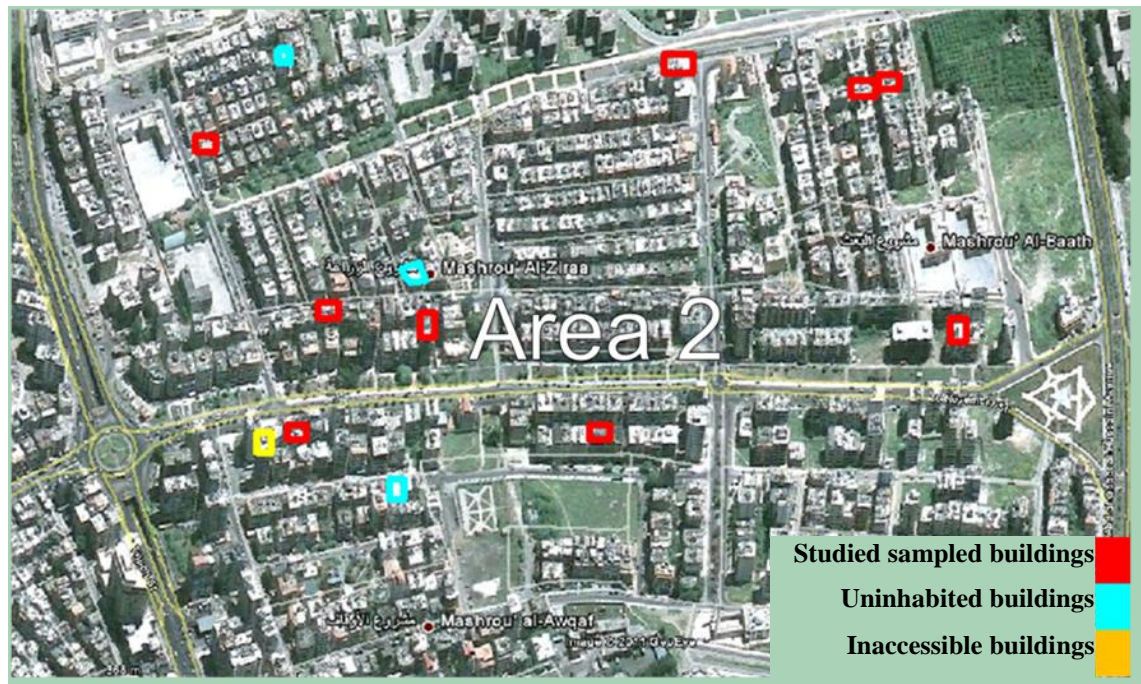
Figure 4.10 Sampled buildings in Area 2 for administering face-to-face questionnaire to the households

In the two chosen areas for this study, which were inhabited by middle class and lower middle class and built by private or public sector as justified in earlier in this chapter, buildings were purposively sampled by the researcher to obtain relevant data which can assist to answer the research questions. Therefore, new built buildings – less than 10 years old – were chosen. Purposive sampling was also used according to the accessibility of the buildings and the availability of the licensed design plans in the official archives (see 5.1 for more detail on sampling of households).

4.7 The research methods conducted in the field trip

The primary data on the case study households in Lattakia was planned to be collected through two field trips. The first field trip was initially designed to focus on face-to-face questionnaires and interviews with households, and semi-structured interviews with generic housing designers. Ethnographic data collection was initially planned to be followed in a second fieldtrip to Syria, but the crisis impeded the research from doing so, as noted in chapter 1. The original intention of conducting ethnographic research was to choose 6 to 9 households from those interviewed in the first fieldtrip, to spend most of the day with them for a few weeks as explained below – the expected period of time of the second field trip was 9 to 12 weeks maximum between June and August 2011. However, due to the fact that the process of collecting information from

households during the first field trip led to longer stays with all the households than anticipated, usually going up to several hours, which allowed some direct observation and some extent of participation in their activities, the lack of opportunity for more in-depth ethnographic observation in a second field trip did not have a significantly adverse effect on the data collection. The outcome was therefore a single field trip of five weeks, during which the following data collection techniques were used: collection of documentary evidence of housing design such as licenses, plans, etc; questionnaires/interviews administered to households; direct observation of household activity; and semi-structured interviews with housing designers. This built on background data collected during prior visits to Lattakia in the early stages of the research, which gathered information on housing in the city through direct observation of the urban environment, meetings with academics and conversations with households focused on their dwelling environment.

4.7.1 *Direct observations of housing in Lattakia and a pilot study prior to the primary fieldtrip*

In early stages of this research, the researcher conducted direct observations of the following issues: different housing typologies, heights (number of storeys), ages, etc. in the city of Lattakia; modifications on the outside of the residential buildings such as enclosed balconies, loggias and other open spaces in the building and how these were associated with subculture of different areas; services and other amenities which are available for different housing areas. During the pilot study, visits to 6 households from different areas and different standards of living were conducted with the purpose of observing the physical changes the households made inside the house such as changing a separate kitchen to an open plan with the living area or changing the balcony into a bedroom or a study room. Informal discussions/ interviews with 4 academics in the Faculty of Architecture were also conducted without prearrangement. Snowball sampling was used in this early stage based on key informants to arrange visits to households, and a purposive and convenience sampling was used to interview academics, who were lecturers in the university where the researcher completed her undergraduate study. The researcher attended seminars in the Faculty of Architecture to obtain an opportunity to meet certain academics. This pilot study was conducted to develop the research questions, protocols, and the research instruments, etc. and to collect preliminary data.

4.7.2 *Gathering of documentary evidence of housing design*

The key documentary evidence of housing design that was collected consisted of dwelling plans. Three key sources were used for this: the Municipality of the City of Lattakia, housing designers/architects and interviewed households. In the latter case, some households provided copies of the plans of their homes as designed and constructed, and in other cases the researcher drew up a plan based on a quick survey of the property. In several cases, the researcher drew up the original and the new plans after changes which were made by the households after moving in and/or living there for a period of time. In a few cases, the interviewed households explained how they would like their current house to be if this was possible and the plans were also drawn by the researcher (see appendix 4.7). Other maps, documents, and urban plans were also gathered from the city council and/or the municipality of Lattakia, such as the administrative division of the city of Lattakia and the urban plans of Youth Housing Projects that were intended to be constructed in the near future.

4.7.3 *Questionnaires administered to households*

Face-to-face questionnaires were conducted with households in two areas defined by the researcher to be representative of middle and lower middle class in formal urban area in Lattakia as noted earlier in this chapter. A written questionnaire was personally conducted door to door as people in Syria are not accustomed to being mailed or emailed questionnaires, especially since the internet is mainly used among young people, whereas a small number of people over 45 who are high educated or specialist in IT might use the internet for such issues. In addition, it was thought that respondents might take this task more seriously in the presence of the researcher and give them a chance to ask in case of doubt, especially given that people in Syria are not much used to filling in questionnaires for such studies. The researcher was accompanied all the time by friend/s who had already agreed to do so, for safety reasons.

The percentage of the households that are headed by female is still low in Lattakia, as the Central Bureau of Statistics in Syria indicated that only 10.8% of the total Lattakia's households was female-headed in 2006, although this slightly higher than that of Syria as a whole at 8.9%. However, the researcher targeted mainly the housewives for the

questionnaire as they seem to be more available at home than men, regardless of their type of jobs.

Since this study focuses on household members' behaviour, and action and interaction within the home space under recent cultural change, neither single-member households nor childless couples were included in this study – i.e. three-member household is the smallest size considered appropriate for this study. In addition, nowadays, the typical family, generally speaking, in Syria is not yet single-member, nor is it cluster any more as Al-Kodmany shows in his study (1995). As it was noted in chapter 3, the average household size across Syria was 5.5 in 2004 and this latter was slightly smaller (4.56 members) in the city of Lattakia[49]. Therefore, the appropriate household size of this study can range from 3 to 7 members. This, in turn, allows some minimal interaction and at the same time acceptable privacy consideration among household members.

The first field trip was planned to be only 5 weeks because of limited time. 3 weeks were assigned for conducting face-to-face questionnaires with 51households in 17 sampled buildings in two chosen areas as detailed below. The researcher was able to administer the questionnaire to only 39 households in 13 different buildings, 3 in each sampled building. The interview duration was planned to be up to an hour long for each household, yet fortunately the researcher was allowed to stay longer and to collect more information than was anticipated – in some cases it lasted for a few hours.

In Area 1(YHP), 5 different housing types in total were implemented but only 4 types were inhabited. Therefore, questionnaires were administered in 4 housing types to 3 households in each building and thus to 12 households in Area 1.

In Area 2 (TUA), 12 buildings with different typology were chosen based on the age of the building, which was planned to be less than 10 years, but it was possible to access only 9 buildings and to obtain their plans and documents within the limited time assigned for the questionnaires. The questionnaire was also administered to 3 different households in each building and thus 27 households within Area 2.

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[49] The population of the city of Lattakia was 424,392 and the number of families was 92,871 in 2004 (CBS, 2010) so the average family size in the city of Lattakia was 4.56 members in 2004.

The questionnaire was planned to be for face-to-face interviews and to be administered in two ways, based on the interviewees' preference. Either the interviewer would ask the questions one by one noting down the answers or the interviewees would go over the questionnaires themselves and ask the interviewer to explain when needed, then the researcher would review the answers and commence a discussion about specific topics. In case of an inconvenient time for households to conduct the interviews, the researcher could leave the questionnaires and come back when the interviewee preferred. However, when questionnaire was administered the researcher asked the questions one by one and explained some of them to the interviewees. Only one household asked the researcher to come back later, and another household asked to continue the questionnaire a day after.

In the initial fieldtrips, four informal interviews and convenience sampling of six households were the basis to develop questionnaires which were used in the primary field trip. The information that the first questionnaire was designed to collect, covered the following topics: (1) characterizing the targeted socioeconomic group; (2) information about the dwelling; (3) current concepts and practices of privacy in the home; and (4) who is the house maker and who is involved in the housework. The questionnaires used are provided in Appendix 4.1.

A particular point relevant to the first topic in the questionnaire – characterizing the socio-economic group – is that with family's income being difficult to measure as a result of its great fluctuation and family reluctance to reveal its income, the researcher resorted to family's expenditures in that people are more likely to accept to reveal their consumptions and expenditures rather than their income, as the UNDP report about poverty in Syria (2005) shows. Moreover, the family income does not indicate welfare or well-being in developing countries, as not all income is consumed nor all the consumption expenses financed by income (Next Page Foundation, 2007; ElLaithy and Abu-Ismail, 2005). For instance, several families are still living in old traditional houses and old areas not well serviced such as some parts of the old city centre of Lattakia, although these houses are very precious and expensive – a price of such house is equal to a price of 10 new spacious houses and even more. It is arguably easier to measure household's expenditure – especially the expenses for non-food and durable goods and services to define well-being and good standard of life than to measure its

income. This was called the household's possessions in this study, although it is different from expenditure given that legal salaries are approximately known.

4.7.4 *Ethnography and minimal participant observation in the sampled households' houses*

Although the questionnaire was conducted door-to-door without appointment for a visit, the households were very welcoming and allowed the researcher to stay in their house for a few hours. This therefore gave the researcher the opportunity to observe the spatial arrangement, home environment, the real and normal daily life of the households and to obtain photographic documentation and also to conduct other unstructured data collection methods when possible – although this was not in the original intention of the conducting questionnaires. This helped the researcher to find out within which of these households it was convenient to do further research and which of these houses had attractive elements or interesting events to be a base for sampling of 6-9 households for ethnographic study which was supposed to follow this field work. Many of the studied households allowed the researcher to stay for a few hours and to minimally participate and observe their daily activities. The unarranged and unexpected visits provided a spontaneous and natural way of households welcoming the researcher and offering to join them in the activities they were already involved in when the researcher had arrived such as lunch, dinner, drinks, smoking shisha, watching TV, and sometimes participating in a discussion with their children, especially when they considered the researcher as a successful and ideal figure for their children. This shows that the households felt comfortable to the researcher – in several cases they explicitly express their feeling – and thus they continue their activities. Being accompanied by a structural engineer, gave households an opportunity to talk about the fittings and finishing problems in the building – particularly the ones in the Youth housing project – which in turn gave a great opportunity and time to the researcher to draw sketches and take notes and photographs. The researcher offered simple gifts and souvenirs from the UK to the sampled households, during the visit, which acknowledged their contribution to the work and helped establish a rapport.

The research's positionality seemed to have an influence on the research participants' receptiveness and the nature/depth of the data obtained in the fieldwork. For example, the gender of the researcher assisted and facilitated the access to the households' private domain although they did not know the researcher before. The researcher gave a careful

attention to her appearance[50], behaviour, language, etc. when trying to approach the sampled households and especially when knocking at the door of people she did not know. She intentionally introduced herself to the approached household, as soon as they opened the door, as a PhD researcher in the UK, and as a resident in the City of Lattakia presenting her ID and contacts details. It seems that the position of the researcher had a great influence on the receptiveness of the participants. Most of the time the researcher was accompanied by a male friend who is a structural engineer as it was planned and agreed before starting the fieldwork, but in a few cases he was not available and thus the researcher was alternatively accompanied by another male friend who was a professional architect in two cases and by a female companion in five cases. The gender of the researcher companion seems to have somewhat influenced the depth and nature of the data obtained for the participants. For example, in one case the male companion had to leave in the middle of the interview and then the female respondent (the wife) started to be more open, giving more details to the researcher such as being separate from her husband but not divorced because they did not want people to know about this. On the other hand, one of the female respondents became more reluctant to give details when she discovered that she shared some mutual acquaintances with the researcher's female companion.

4.7.5   *Interviews with housing designer*

Semi-structured interviews were administered to different actors in generic housing design to investigate two key issues. The first was to identify the main sources of different new housing design in Lattakia which presents the same process of housing design production across Syria. The second issue was to investigate the designers' understanding of the end users' real social and cultural needs affected by current changes; the level of end users' involvement in the process of housing design, and where and when this took place if it did. Actors in generic housing design in public and/or private housing sectors in the formal areas were targeted to administer the semi-structured interview. Three different types of actors in housing design were targeted: 1) academic architects, 2) professional housing designers, and 3) developers and other nonqualified designers.

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[50] The researcher intentionally wore cheerful, colourful and decent clothes which seemed to be influencing the receptiveness of research participants.

This interview was meant, on the one hand, to support the other parts of data that were collected via questionnaires with the sampled households, and on the other hand to collect further information vis-a-vis the process of housing production and housing design. A series of questions derived from the general form of the research objectives was included in the interview covering the following areas: 1) cultural change in Syria; 2) cultural change and housing in Syria; 3) cultural change and the housing design process; 4) cultural change and end users' needs and their involvement in house design; 5) post completion change to housing due to cultural change. The interview also covered information about the interviewees and also final issues regarding their wills to participate further in this study if needed. The questions of the interview are provided in appendix 4.2.

Interviewees

The targeted number of interviewees was 15, but only 9 interviews were administered to 11 interviewees according to their availability, especially women, as is explained in chapter 6. The interviewees were from 3 different domains, including but not limited to actors from the case study projects, as follows (see chapter 6 for more detail):

Academics in the university: architects teaching in the Faculty of Architectural Engineering who are predominantly working as professional architects or in charge of designing projects or at least as leaders of architectural education. These were to be administered in private and state universities but limited time of the research impeded the researcher to travel to other cities where the private universities were located.

Professionals in public housing sector: architects and other designers in the General Company of Engineering and Consultancy in Lattakia which Studied and implemented the Housing Youth Project for limited income group in Lattakia governorate and the Syndicate of engineers which also include architects.

Professionals in private sector: architects, developers, and development companies.

4.8   Research data analysis methods

Qualitative data analysis was mainly used concerning the contextual nature of this cultural study and thus it was based on an iterative strategy for data collection and

analysis. The main strategies for data analysis in this research followed Miles and Huberman's (1994) three main procedures.

For questionnaires, this was applied as follows:

1) Data reduction: through: (a) Categorizing; (b) Coding; (c) Sorting, which was used for primary data analysis after categorizing and coding the collected data from the questionnaires with households; and (d) some degree of Cross-tabulation, which was used for further analysis as to multivariate data from the questionnaires, especially in case of reciprocal cultural aspects.

2) Data display: through use of tables, charts and diagrams to display relevant results from the above analysis according to subcategories and specific research questions.

3) Conclusions drawing and verification: through (a) reflecting on the above analysis and connecting to the research questions; and (b) linking to results from other types of data – see below.

For key informant interviews, the key difference with the above procedure was that data analysis focused on text-to-text analysis, which needed translation and transcription of the recorded interviews as the respondents used Arabic as it their mother tongue. Categorizing the answers into key topics, subtopics and coding was also essential, especially for the open and semi-open answers.

Analysis of graphic information included: (a) conceptual analysis of floor plans showing relationships between types of spaces; and (b) use of internal and external photographs of homes and their changes, in combination with floor plans.

An important part of the analysis was the triangulation of the three sets of data, which is presented in chapter 7. More details on the analysis of the primary data from the questionnaires are provided as follows, focusing on the data reduction stage.

Excel spreadsheets were mainly used in the preparation process for data analysis which was collected in the primary fieldwork. The first spreadsheet was categorized into main topics which were aligned with the research questions as follows: introductory section of sampled households' characteristics, households' socioeconomic status (SES), housing issues of sampled households, general cultural changes, cultural change

affecting housing use – with special focus on privacy, cultural change affecting housing use – food preparation and consumption and the final question regarding the interviewee's further participation in the research (see figure 4.11). Subtopics and questions were then put under the related main topics.
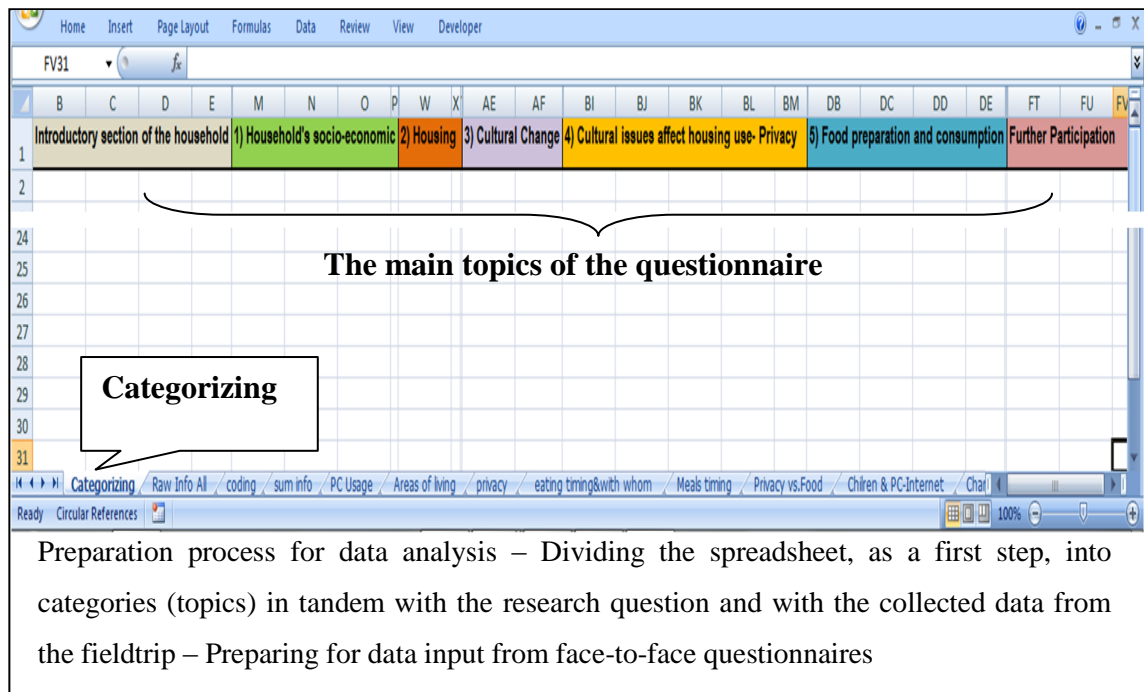
Figure 4.11: Categorizing of collected data from face-to-face questionnaire into main topics

Translating and organizing were the next step in the data analysis process through which the researcher put all pieces of collected data under the related questions. Although the questionnaire was written in English, in the fieldwork, the researcher, sometimes, wrote comments in Arabic – i.e. the respondents' language – to use the exact expression of the interviewees and to make the process faster (see Appendix 4.7). However, most of the answers and comments which were written in Arabic were carefully translated to English and used to fill in the questions which were not ticked. The photos which were taken in the domestic space of the households helped the researcher to a great extent to complete the remaining unfilled questions such as the labour-saving apparatuses, number of TVs, etc. The resulting spreadsheet has a vast amount of information collected from different sources such as the direct and indirect answers from respondents, from photographs, sketches, etc. and was named by the researcher as 'raw info'.

Data reduction, summarizing, coding, labelling and sorting the vast amount of collected data process was a prominent step in data analysis, which prepare for the data display,

and was named by researcher as 'sum info' (see figure 4.12). However, while summarizing the data, the researcher added excel comments to most of the summarized cells to go back to when needed for other questions or to cite the interviewees' responses (see figures 4.13 and 4.14).

Data display of the data collected from the questionnaire was the resulting charts and tables form the sum up of the similar answers of each question including all answers; and the tables resulting from tabulation between related variables such as the head of household and the education level of one or both parents (see chapter 5). In the informants interviews, limited number of tables were displayed as the text discussion, presenting the similar and different viewpoints of the interviewees was the main data analysis methods (see chapter 6).
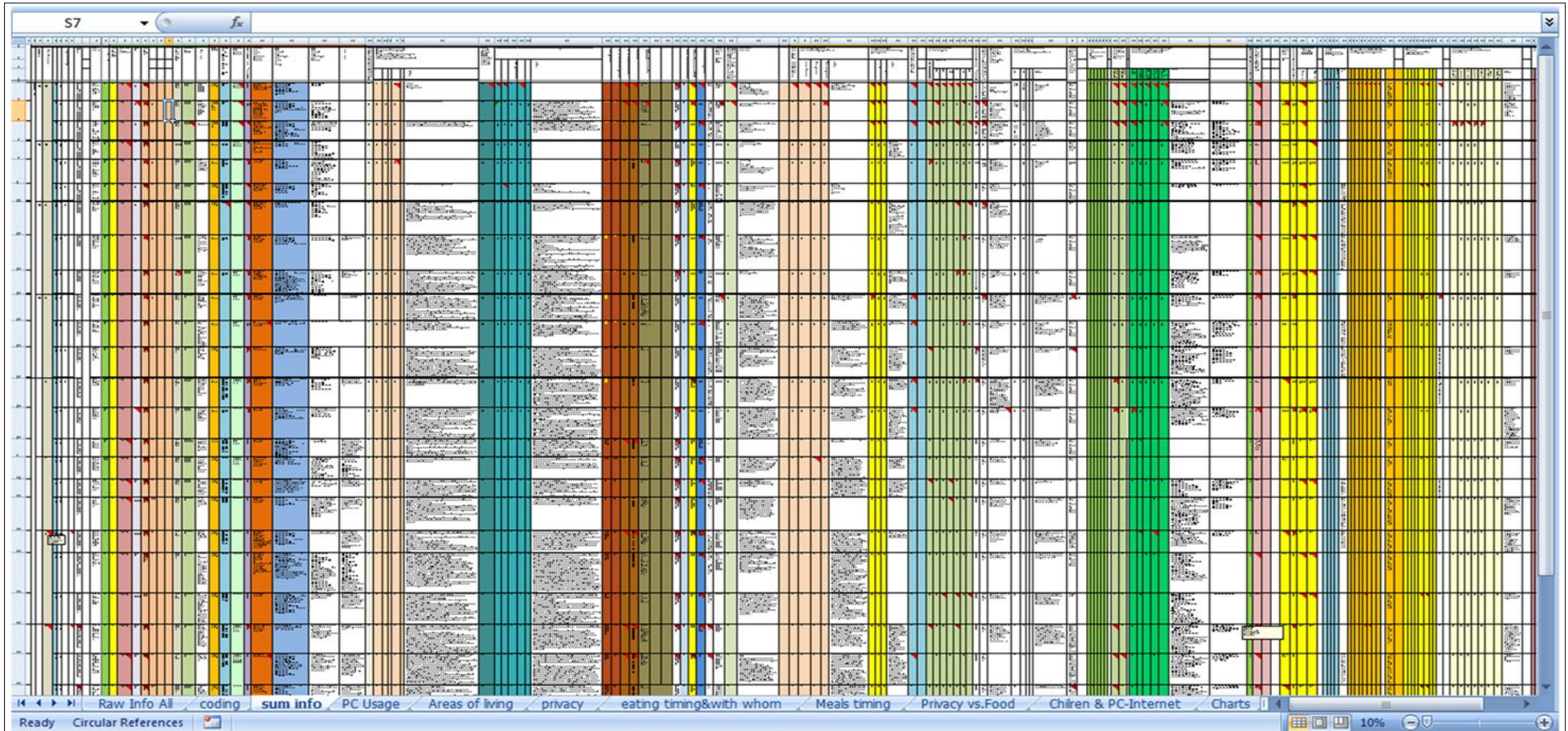
Coding and Analysing for gathered data from administered face-to-face questionnaire to sampled households. Households' characteristics and cultural aspects relevant to the domestic environment with special focus on privacy and food preparation and consumption.

Figure 4.12: Coding and sorting of collected data from face-to-face questionnaires

Figure 4.13: Detailed example of coding and sorting of the collected data from face-to-face questionnaires

Part of one of the excel spreadsheets which were used for coding and analysing gathered data from face-to-face questionnaires. This part includes the areas where sampled households lived before moving to their current house in the case study areas. Different colours of cell were used to differentiate area of living.

Figure 4.14: Detailed example of coding and sorting of collected data from face-to-face questionnaires

4.9   Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the theoretical perspective, methodology and methods for data collection which were used in this research.   Social Constructionism was determined as most appropriate epistemology for such cultural study, informing an interpretivist approach which, in turn, informed ethnography as a methodology to guide the qualitative methods of data collection of this research.   Lattakia was chosen as a case study which may indicate future trends. Two formal generically designed housing areas were chosen in the city of Lattakia. The first area was the Youth housing area, which represents lower middle class (limited income group) and was developed by the public sector. The second area was Tishreen University Area, which is generally inhabited by the middle class group, where houses are developed by private sector. In these two areas, 39 households were interviewed using face-to-face questionnaires, photographic documentation, documented licensed housing design plans, and direct observation.   Semi-structured interviews with 11 actors involved in generic housing design (academic architects, professional architects and developers) were also explained in this chapter. The analysis of the collected information and results of the data analysis is presented in the next chapters.

Chapter 5:   Households and their experience of cultural change and the associated adaptations of housing use and design

5.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses mainly on addressing objectives 3, 5, and 6 from the end-users' perspective, and also contributes to objectives 1 and 2. Regarding objective 3, this chapter addresses housing use rather than provision. This chapter provides findings on: social and physical characteristics of the sampled households and their houses, socioeconomic and demographic structure, possessions and tenure history, which contribute to question 1; the nature of cultural change in Syria as perceived by the sampled households, which addresses questions 1 and 2; and cultural issues affecting housing use with special focus on privacy and food preparation and consumption, and the adaptations of housing design which were made by the request of the users to meet their cultural change, which addresses question 3, 5, and 6.

The data described and analyzed in this chapter was collected in the fieldwork in Syria as a part of the research which was conducted in two formal generically designed housing areas in the city of Lattakia: Youth Housing Project which was provided by PEH and designed by the General Company for Engineering and Consulting (GCEC), representing the public sector and accessed by limited income young residents; and Tishreen University area, representing housing designed by private developers and accessed by all residents but most likely middle income residents. This latter area includes three neighbourhoods: Al-Zeeraa, Al-Awkaf, and Al-Ba'ath Neighbourhood (NBRH).

Different housing types were chosen in these areas based on a sample of buildings that were built in the recent past, specifically less than 10 years old; this was with the purpose of presenting the period of most rapid cultural change. The selection also depended on the availability of a licensed building plan; however, in the event several documents were not available in the city council digital archive. In addition, in some cases it was clear that the buildings were still empty and these were thus not included. Accessibility to the building and to the household also played an essential role in choosing the sample and conducting the research survey.

Taking in consideration the previous criteria focused on in this research and above constraints which confronted the researcher, it was possible to conduct 39 face-to-face questionnaires within 13 different housing types – 3 questionnaires in each building – in multi-storey residential buildings: four housing types were studied in Area 1 (Youth Housing) out of five types which had been implemented (as one type was not inhabited yet) – i.e. 12 households were interviewed in Area 1– and 9 house types were studied in Area 2 (Tishreen University area)[51] – i.e. 27 households were interviewed in Area 2. The face-to-face questionnaires were conducted door-to-door based on the households' availability and accessibility, selecting only the most typical types of Syrian household, which consist of both parents and children – as noted in chapter 4, single-member household was very limited, and cluster-family household was vanishing at the time of the questionnaire. Three-member household was the smallest household size included in this study as to ensure a minimal level of intra-family privacy consideration. However, in the event, only one of the samples was a couple household with no children, and was thus not included in this research.

This questionnaire contained closed questions, semi-open questions, and a few more open questions. This included introductory and identification questions for the household, five question areas covering the key pre-identified research areas and issues, which were developed from the initial visits and fieldtrips prior to the primary fieldtrip, and also a final question regarding further participation if any was needed later on. The five main question areas covered the household's socio-economic classification based on head of the household's educational, occupational and economic status; housing issues including house tenure, surface area, height, location and area etc.; cultural change concerning the most changeable cultural aspects and the factors which affects this changing from inhabitants' perceptions and interpretations in addition to a few indicator questions. The last two questions focused on the two key cultural issues identified in the literature as most relevant to housing use and seen as highly changeable in Syrian household in the last decade and from the pilot study (informal interviews, and households visits) in the initial fieldtrips, which are privacy concepts and practices of

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[51] Youth Housing can be accessed by only youth residents who have no house in addition to other conditions as evidence that they are limited income people. Tishreen University area can be accessed by any resident.

food preparation and consumption. These two questions investigated both actual housing use and the family members' satisfaction with the current house, and how they would prefer to use it.

5.2 Characterization of the sampled households

This section provides an introduction to the sampled households as an illustration of the changing demographic structure and socioeconomic structure of Syrian society as discussed in chapter 3.

5.2.1 *Key social and physical characteristics of sampled households and their homes*

A full presentation of the social and physical characteristics of the sampled households and their homes is provided in Appendix 5.1. The key features of these are as follows. A slight majority **(56%)** of interviewed households was considered by the respondents to be headed by the fathers, with almost as many being seen as headed by both spouses **(41%),** while one household was headed by a mother who was divorced and the children had chosen to live with their mother. A third **(33%)** of the sampled households in Area 1 and **(44 %)** in Area 2 was headed by both parents, according to the respondents. The households ranged in size from **3 to 7** members with an average size of **4**p/hh. The sampled buildings varied in the number of floors between **5 to 10** storeys, **85%** of those consisted of **5 or 6** storeys, including the ground floor which is sometimes partly used as a shop or clinic. All sampled buildings in Area **1** consisted of **5** storeys. High-rise buildings were less accessible because most of them were provided with an electric lock at the main entrance and their inhabitants were less approachable. Most of the chosen interviewed households (**69%**) lived in second, third or fourth floor flats. The ground floor was in various cases used as a shop or clinic etc., which reduces the number of interviewed households on this floor. The number of interviewed households in high floors (higher than 4th floor) was relatively limited as in several cases these flats were not inhabited yet[52]. The size of sampled flats in Area 1 ranges

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[52] In the building regulation in the city of Lattakia, it is not a must to install an elevator if the building is lower than 6 storeys including the ground floor. Flats above the 4th storey in buildings without elevators tend to be the least favoured by prospective occupants because of their lower accessibility.

between **65** to **90 sq m,** whereas in Area 2 this ranges between **80 to 225 sq m,** and this includes the surface of the building services such as the staircase and the elevator well if exists. The highest percentage of sampled flats' size was **160 sq m** with **18%**, followed by flats' size **105 sq m** with **15%.** The interviewees were mainly wives alone **(56%),** due to their availability at home and perhaps the idea that inside the house is mainly their responsibility, and with their husbands **(30%)**. Dependent children also had an opportunity to express themselves and/or participate in questions, especially those related to them such as computer and internet use (see appendix 5.1 for more detail on characteristics of households and their houses).

5.2.2   *Demographic structure of sampled households*

Appendix 5.2 provides full details on the demographic structure of the sampled households. The key features of these are as follows. The majority (**64%**) of sampled households has **1** or **2** children and the average number of children was **2** per household. Although the number of children is **2** per household, there seems to be still a slight tendency to have at least a male child even if this meant having **4 or 5** children, as one of the respondents in Area 1 noted. Among children's age groups, the **0-14** age group accounts for **35.1%** of the total sampled households' members (**89** children and **77** parents) and this percentage was almost equal to the national percentage **(35.2%)** in Syria. Also, it seems that children stay until a late age in their parents' home, as **28%** of the sampled children were over **20** years old whereas female children were less in the **(25-29)** cohort, probably because it is not preferable in the Syrian society to stay longer without getting married. In regard to parents' age groups, the above illustration shows that the wives age range was **24-55** years old whereas the husbands' **35-65 years old** and thus there seems to be still a tendency to the cultural norm for the man to marry younger women, as the average age difference between sampled husbands and wives was around **5.5** years. It was also shown that women are not getting married as early as they used to a decade ago or more. The highest percentage **(43%)** of the spouses in Area 2 was in the (**46-55**) cohort whereas the highest percentage **(38%)** of spouses in Area 1 was in the (**25-35**) cohorts. This shows that spouses in Area 1 were younger than the ones in Area **2.** The educational level of a slight majority **(54%)** of spouses in Area 1 was high school and middle institution and none of them had a master or PhD degrees, whereas in Area 2 the majority **(61%)** had finished high school or university and **20%** of them had a master and/or a PhD degree. The majority of husbands **(67%)**

and a slight majority of wives **(54%)** were in the white collar occupation. Middle level administration was the occupation of **18%** of husbands and **5%** of the wives. A third of the wives were unemployed, which can be an indication of wives having no obligation to contribute in the household income. Wives in Area 2 had a higher occupational level than those in Area 1, as **7%** of the former worked in middle administration and none of the wives in Area 1 did so**.** Also**, 50%** of wives in Area 1 were not employed and half of this in Area 2. Cross tabulation shows a relationship between the educational level of parents and who the head of the household in the studied areas is. Parents with higher level of education (one or both parents) tend to share the responsibility of the households' affairs, decision making and/or income (see appendix 5.2 for more detail on demographic structure of sampled households).

5.2.3   *Household possessions and tenure history*

Full details of household possessions and tenure history are provided in Appendix 5.3. The key features of these are as follows. Concerning house tenure, **85%** of the sampled houses were owned by the occupant and only **15%** were rented, and this percentage is almost the same in both areas. **49%** of sampled households own only **one** house, **41%** own **2** houses or more and **10%** of households did not own any house. A large majority **(83%)** of households in Area **1** has no major assets other than the house they occupy, which was rented in **2** cases, whereas **82%** of households in Area **2** have other major assets such as a car, clinic, office, shop, company, chalet (holiday house) and land. This shows that households in Area **2** are of a higher socioeconomic class than those in Area **1**. The sampled houses in Area **1** were occupied by the current residents for up to two years prior to the interview (2011) and houses in Area **2** were inhabited for different periods of time which ranged from one to **10** years. The nature of households' moves prior to current house was slightly different between Area **1** and Area **2**. For instance, **67%** of households in Area **1** and **48%** in Area **2** mentioned that they moved from house to anther seeking better services and **a third** (**33%**) of households in Area **1** and only **11%** in Area **2** moved to new houses to change the tenure from tenancy to ownership of their houses. Households in Area **2** seem to have a few different priorities such as social class upgrading as **44%** of households mentioned**,** availability of required house – e.g. bigger and better housing design – as **41%** of households were looking for, and better social life – socializing – **(26%)**. The aforementioned discussion shows that

households in Area **1** were looking for basic needs whereas households in Area **2** were looking more for higher standard of life.

5.3   Cultural change in the last decade (2000-2011)

This section contributes to addressing questions 1 and 2 from the users' perspectives. Figure 5.1 represents the sampled households' opinion concerning the cultural change in Lattakia in particular, and other cities in Syria in general, especially in the last decade. Those households who answered that the culture has been strongly and rapidly changing, especially in the last decade, represented **97%** of the total households. Only one household believes that culture is moderately changing with a tendency to individuality.

Cultural change in the Last decade 2000-2011
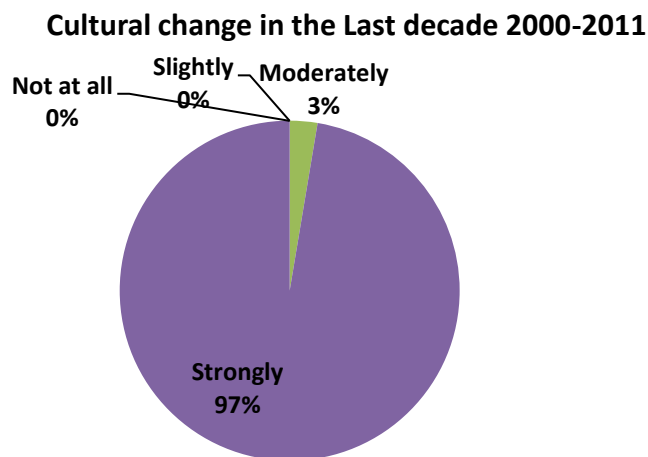
Figure 5.1: Level of cultural change as perceived by sampled households

5.3.1   *Change in cultural concepts*

This section based on a semi-open question: '***If you believe that culture is changing, what do you believe is changing? And how much these cultural aspects have been changing in the last decade?'*** However, a general guidance were used when needed and a further comment at the end of this question.

The interviewees' answers varied regarding the cultural aspects which have been strongly and rapidly changing in the last decade in Lattakia (see fig. 5.2). The majority **(95%)** believes that **family structure** has been strongly changing in the last decade as household size is becoming smaller; affiliation and loyalty to extended family and kinship becoming narrower and dominantly limited to the nuclear family (household);

and the head of the household is also changing from dominantly male-headed household to often sharing-headed[53] household, and rarely female-headed household. Although Syrian law does not oblige the wife to share in household income – i.e. husband is responsible for his wife and children affairs and must pay them at least the basic needs – , women nowadays often share in the household income and decision making.

The position of women in society seems to be strongly changing in Lattakia as **95%,** of the respondents noted. Women in Syria have more rights nowadays, especially in Lattakia and Damascus regarding jobs, education, and political and governmental position. In social norms, women also have significantly stronger status nowadays for example, as was mentioned by a few respondents: '*10 years ago it was not socially acceptable, as it is nowadays, for a woman to drive a car or work in a shop or any other place whereby a woman seemed to be displayed more than working. Nowadays, women are driving, working in different fields, displaying her beauty, sitting in café shops and sometimes serving in shops'*. All respondents in Area **2** emphasized that the position of women in society has been strongly changing in the last decade.

Privacy, nowadays, is a great concern for households in Lattakia as the majority of respondents (**85%)** pointed to the significant change in the concepts of privacy and the increase in the need for all types of privacy. Those who considered that concepts of privacy have been moderately changing represented only **15%** of the total sampled households.

Food preparation and consumption took a high proportion of the interviewees' discussion regarding cultural concepts, considering culinary and eating customs as essential to clearly and deeply understand a culture. They emphasized these changes in the way of cooking, who is cooking and for whom, and also who is eating at the same table, when and where. Mentioning the numerous restaurants which have been opened in the last decade, respondents indirectly pointed out the impact of these and the tendency of people to eat out more nowadays. The respondents who believed that food preparation and consumption have strongly changed represented **80%** of the total

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[53] Sharing-headed household: the head of the household is sharing between mother and father of a nuclear family, and thus both parents are responsible for the family expenses and decision-making etc.

sampled households, whereas respondents who believe that food customs have moderately changed represented **18%** of the total sampled households. Less than **3%** answered that food traditions are only slightly changing.

Social interaction seems to have been strongly changing, as the majority (**90%**) of the sampled households emphasized in the interviews. All the households (**100%**) in Area **2** agreed that social interaction has been strongly changing in the last decade, stressing that gaining and saving money is taking priority over all other principles and values. Also, very limited time is now spent for live social meetings or activities, and there is much less social solidarity between neighbours and sometimes even between siblings. The respondents who believed that social interactions moderately changed represented **8%,** and those who believe that this aspect is only slightly changing, represented around **3%** of the total sampled household in both areas.
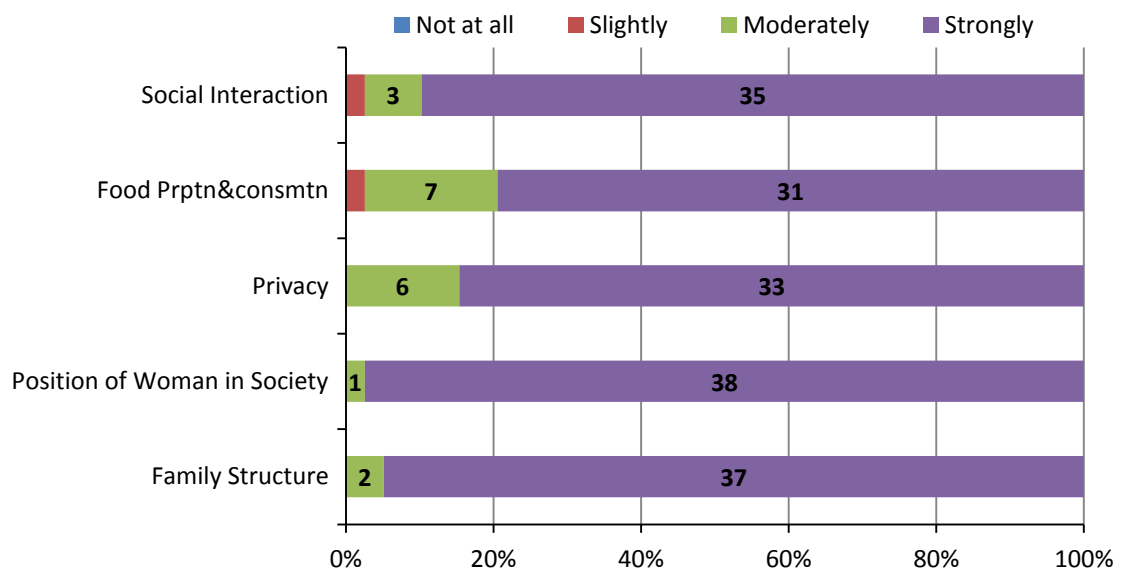
Figure 5.2: Changes in cultural concepts as perceived by households in both sampled areas

Figures 5.3 and 5.4 present the respondents' answers in Area **1** versus Area **2** regarding the changes in cultural concepts. As seen in figure 5.3, **92%** (n=11 out of 12) of the households in Area **1** believed that the position of women in the society and family structure have been strongly changing in the last decade. **96%** (n=26 of 27) in Area **2** believed that family structure has been strongly changing and all of the respondents in Area **2** emphasized that the position of woman in society has been strongly changing.

67% (n=8) of households in Area **1** and **85%** (n=23) in Area **2** believed that food preparation and consumption have been strongly changing. **25%** (n=3) of households in Area **1** and **15%** in Area **2** (n=4) believed that the former is moderately changing and only **8%** (n=1) in Area **1** and none in Area **2** believed that food preparation have been only slightly changing in the last decade. Concepts of privacy seemed to be also strongly changing in the last decade, as **89%** (n=24) of the respondents in Area **2** and **75%** (n=9) in Area **1** mentioned.
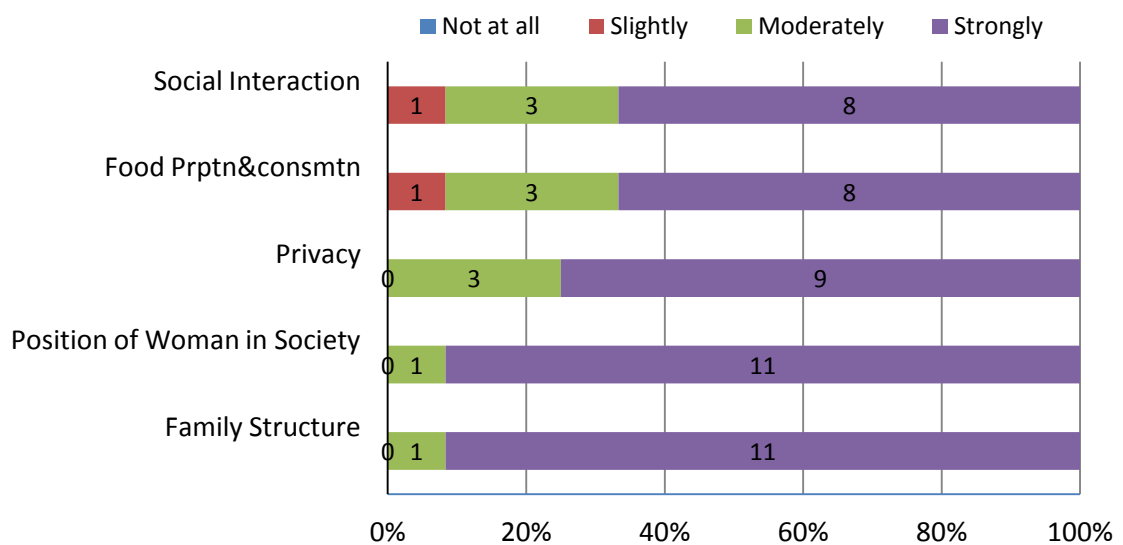
Figure 5.3: Cultural concepts change as perceived by households in Area 1
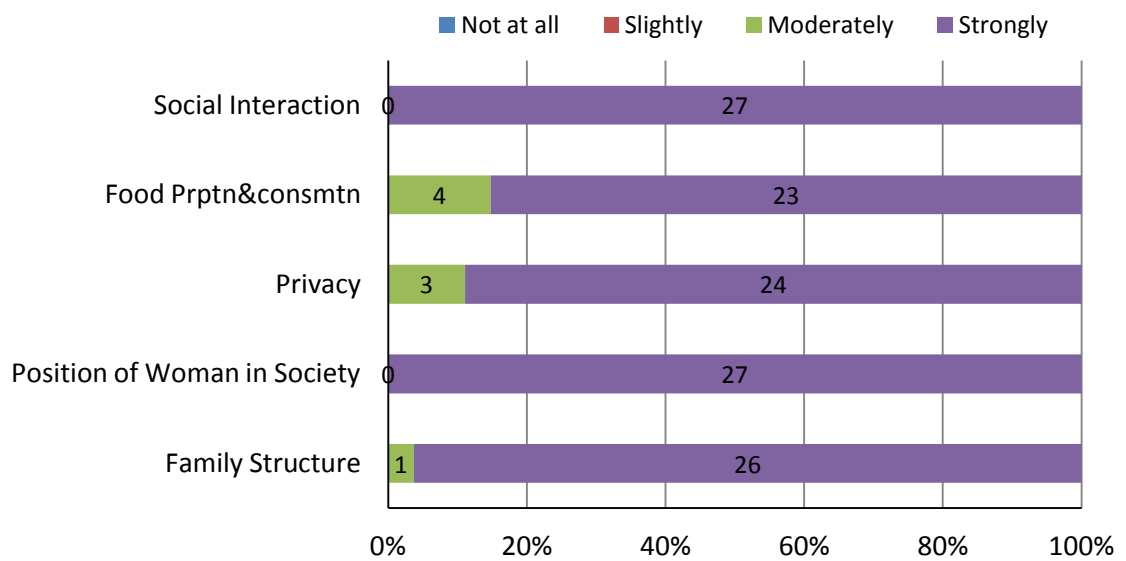
Figure 5.4: Cultural concepts change as perceived by households in Area 2

While the majority of respondents in Area **1** – lower middle class – considered that the concepts of privacy and food preparation and consumption have been strongly changing in the last decade, the respondents in Area **2** – middle class – emphasized this in a higher percentage as shown in figure. 5.5.
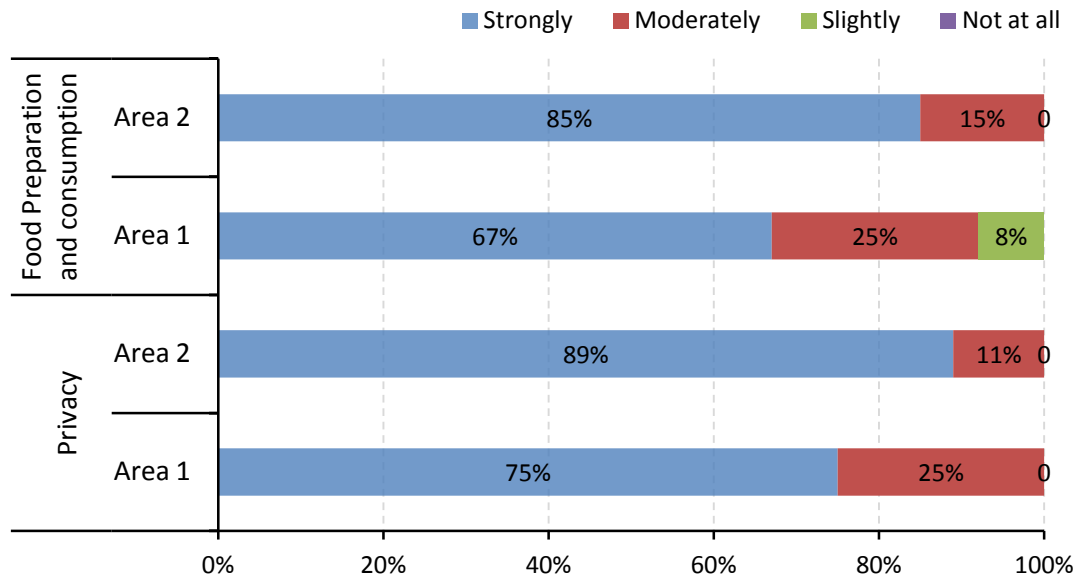
Figure 5.5: Change in the concepts of privacy and food preparation and consumption as perceived in Area 1 versus Area 2

5.3.2 *The Impact of modernization, westernization and globalization on culture in Syria*

The majority of the sampled households **(92%, n=36)** believed that modernization, westernization and globalization (MWG) have been strongly and rapidly affecting culture in Syria in the last decade. Those who believe that these factors are only moderately affecting culture represented only **8% (n=3)** of the total households (see fig.5.6).
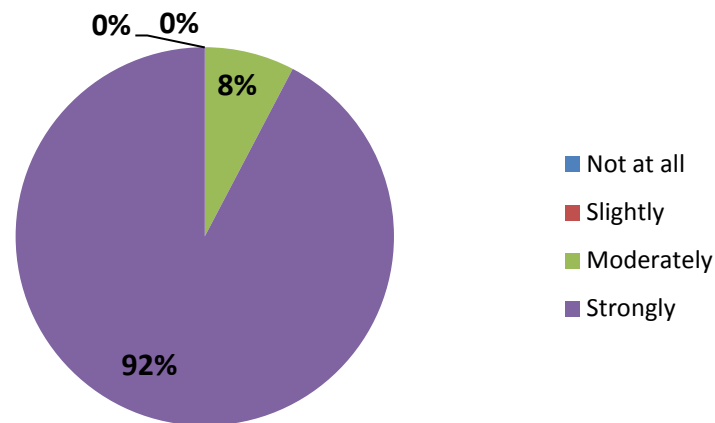
Figure 5.6: The impact of MWG on cultural change in Syria as perceived by sampled households

5.3.3 *The main factors which have been affecting culture in Lattakia, Syria*

Figure 5.7 represents the main factors which have been affecting the culture in Lattakia and the strength of each factor according to the respondents. The majority of sampled households **(92%)** believed that TVs, satellite dishes, and wider Western media are strongly and rapidly affecting culture in Syria in general and particularly in Lattakia. **87%** of the total sampled households believed that new inventions and modern appliances are strongly affecting culture and leading to significant cultural change. Respondents who believe that internet and international cyber social networking is one of the factors which strongly contributed to culture change in Lattakia and other Syrian cities, represented (**80%**) of the total sampled households. Computerization has been and still is an important factor contributing to culture change, as **69%** of the total respondents answered that computerization is strongly affecting culture in Syria. International face-to-face interactions such as studying and training scholarships and more open investments, such as Arabic and foreign investments, seem to be the least influential factor on culture change as only **46%** of the total respondents answered that it is strongly affecting culture, **28%** responded that it is moderately affecting whereas **21%** believed that it is only slightly affecting culture**.** Only **3%** of the respondents commented that foreign investments are not affecting culture at all due to the limitation and restriction on this, especially as this factor is limited to a small group confined to investors, researchers, tourists and a few other actors and it is not related to all groups of Syrian society.
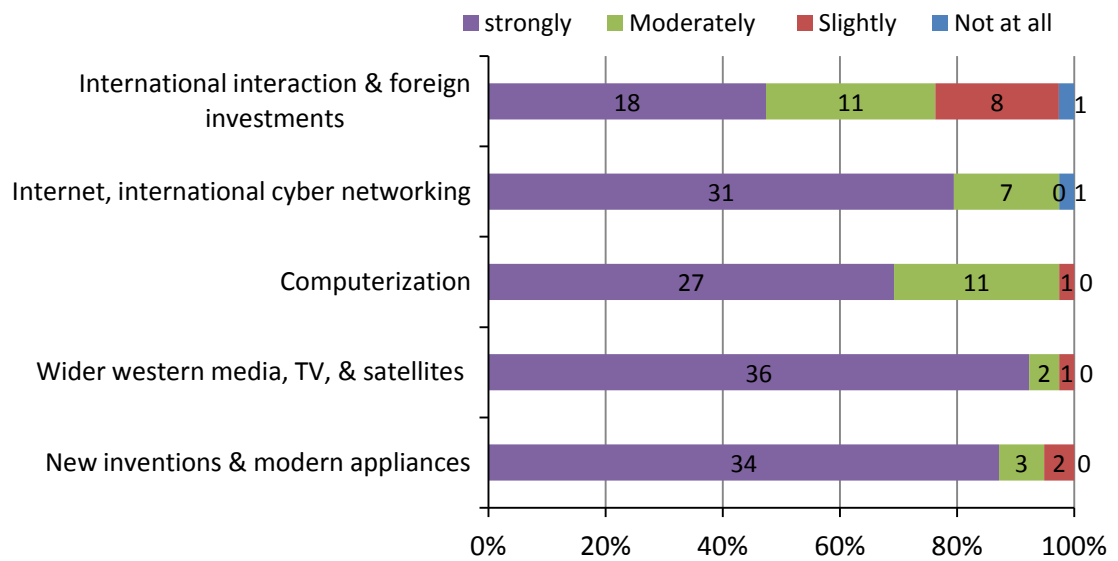
Figure 5.7: Factors affecting culture in Lattakia as perceived by sampled households

Figures 5.8 and 5.9 show that all respondents **(100%)** in Area **2** agreed that the TVs, satellite dishes, and wider Western media have been strongly affecting culture in Lattakia and other cities in Syria and that it contributed to culture change in the last decade, whereas in Area **1** a smaller majority of households **75% (n=9)** believe so. Also, a large majority **(96%, n=26)** in Area **2,** and a smaller majority **(67%, n=8)** in Area **1,** believed that new inventions and modern appliances are playing an important role in the process of culture change. In the same vein, a high percentage **(89%, n=24)** of households in Area **2,** and slight majority **(58%)** in Area **1** emphasized that internet and international cyber networking, and also computerization with **(70%)** in Area **2** and **(67%)** in Area **1,** are affecting the culture.
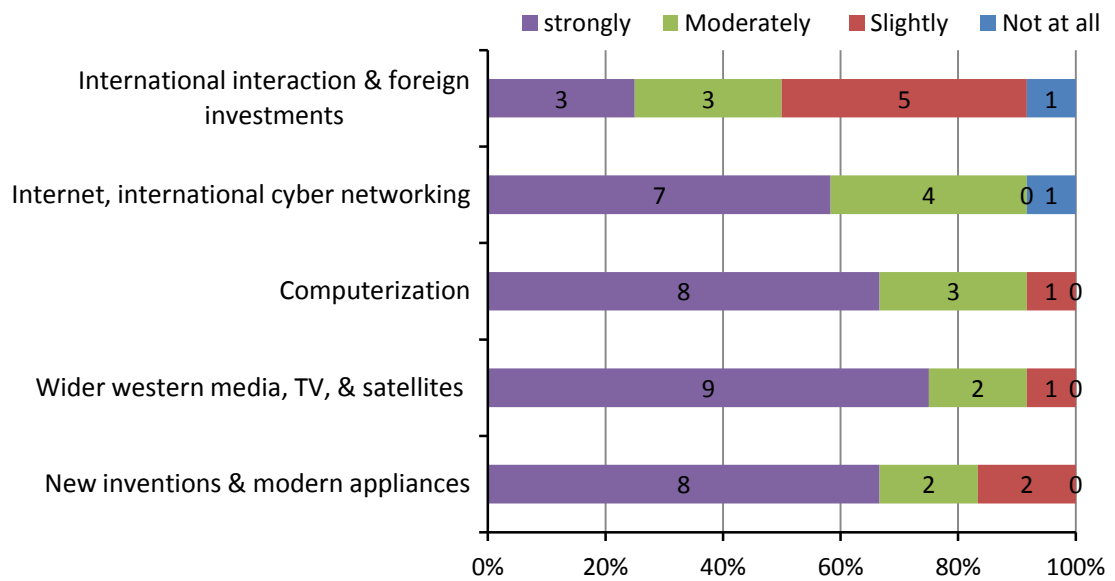
Figure 5.8: Factors affecting culture in Syria as perceived by households in Area 1
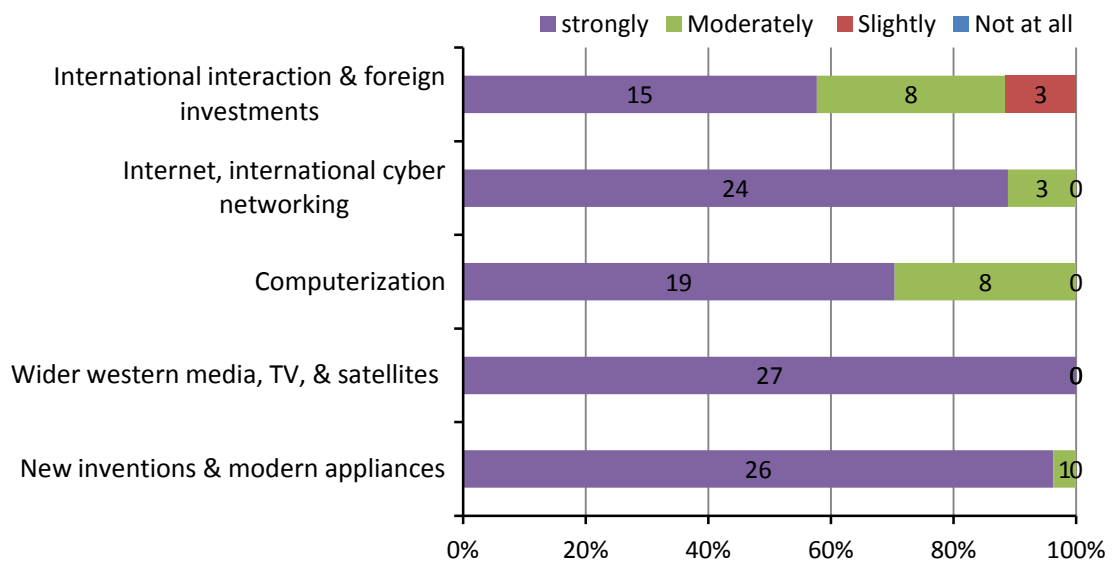
Figure 5.9: Factors affecting culture in Syria as perceived by households in Area 2

The above text and table 5.1 show that middle and upper-middle socioeconomic classes are probably more affected by cultural change because they probably have higher opportunity to be in contact with the aforementioned factors which are driving the cultural changes.

Factors	Both areas	Area 1	Area 2
TVs and media	92%	75%	100%
New appliances	87%	67%	96%
Internet and cyber networking	80%	58%	89%
Computerization	69%	67%	70%
International investments	46%	25%	56%

Table 5.1: Factors affecting culture in Syria as perceived in Area 1 Vs. Area 2

A few respondents perceived new and high technology as a negative factor affecting their social life and reducing face to face interaction, intimacy, solidarity and other human natural behavior. Whereas others perceived it as a positive factor for the modern life regardless of the negative side effects, as illustrated in the following interviewees' open answers about cultural change:

In questionnaire Qnr. 9 Area 1, the husband said: '*technology is badly affecting social life cancelling the temporal and spatial effect differences; much less intimacy…, I really like to meet my friends face to face*'

In Qnr. 10, Area 1, the wife said: '*mobile phone, internet, car etc. they cannot be rejected with their pros and cons. my children are insisting to buy them LCD TV but our economic status impose sometimes our needs. Media is really good and it teach us a lot, information, methods how to deal with problems etc. Computer is very important for every household; we have only one PC with additional PC hard driver. Internet has pros & cons but we still don't have good internet services. Now after the trade openness, foreign goods are available in the market especially Turkish &Chinese and thus much less monopoly, people can buy everything they need*'.

5.3.4 *Internet usage by households in the sampled areas*

Figures 5.10 and 5.11 present the usage of internet and computer by the households in both sampled areas considering a household using these if any of its members does so. The charts show that the highest percentage **(44%, n=17)** of the sampled households had started using the internet **one to 5 years** prior to the interview (Jan 2011). **23% (n=9)** had been using the internet for **6 to 10** years prior to the interview. Only **10%**

(n=4) of the sampled households have been using the internet for **11 years or more**. While **77%** of the sampled households used the internet by the time of the interview, **23%** had never used it.

Referring to the text above, internet usage seemed to have been dramatically increasing in the last **10** years prior to the interviews, which probably coincided with the rapid cultural change witnessed in the society.
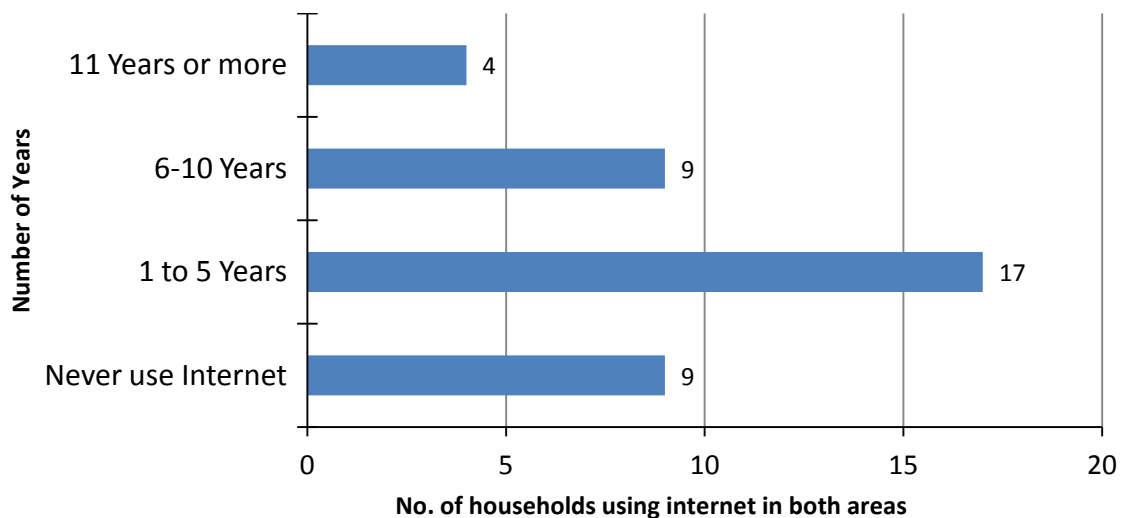
Figure 5.10: Internet usage by sampled households in both areas

Figure 5.11 shows that **11** years or more prior to the interview**, 36% (n=14)** of the households in the sampled areas had been using the computer whereas in the last **5** years prior to the interview a large majority **90% (n=35)** of the households had used the computer. However, only 2 respondents, who lived in Area 2, mentioned that they first started using the computer **25** years ago – one has a PhD degree in Building Construction, and the other was a civil engineer. The latter (Qnr. 22, Area 2) commented: '*I and my husband used the computer more than 24 years ago when it was very basic & has to be connected to the TV*'.
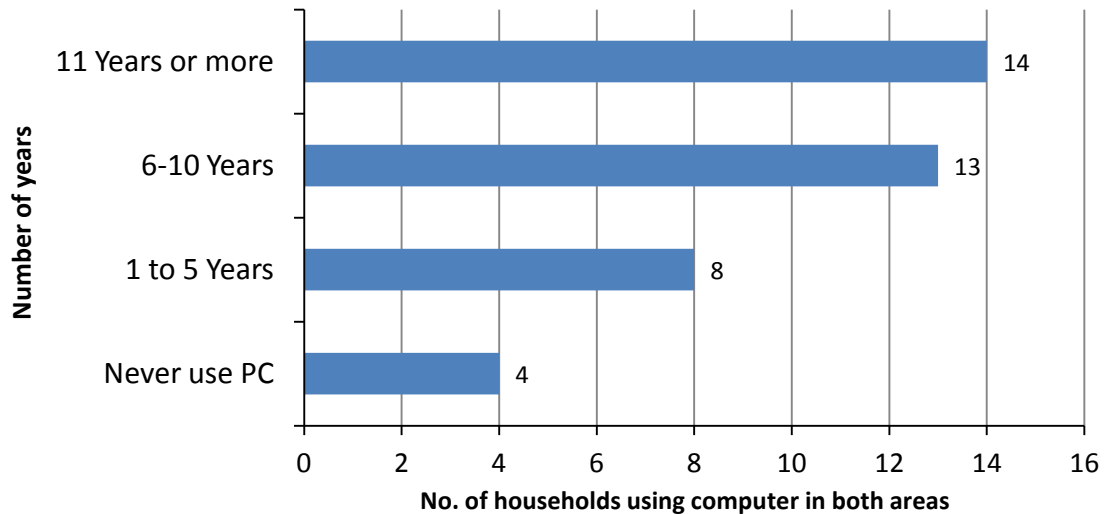
Figure 5.11: Computer usage by sampled households in both areas

Figure 5.12 represents the change in the percentage of wives versus husbands who use the computer in the sampled households during the last 2 decades. This chart shows that **16 years** ago or more the number of husbands **(8%, n=3)** who had used computers were more than the number of wives **(3%, n=1),** whereas the number of husbands **(21%, n=8)** was equal to the number of wives who had been using the computer for **11 or 15** years by the time of the interview. In the last decade, it seems that the number of wives who were using the computer became higher than the husbands'. **26% (n=10)** of husbands and **15% (n=6)** of wives in the sampled households had never used a computer by the time of the interview. However, only one wife and 3 husbands had used the computer more than **16** years prior to the interview whereas a high percentage (**62%)** of wives and **46%** of husbands in the sampled households started using computers in the last decade.

Computerization seemed to be linked to an increase in women's power in society as this provides socially and physically acceptable jobs for women and at the same time does not affect the feminine traits in the conception of Syrian society. As a result women seem to be more interested in using computers probably to upgrade their jobs and position in society and to have better curriculum vitae (CV).

In total **74%** of husbands and **85%** of wives in the sampled households said that they use computers and considered it as an essential device at home, especially in the near future, as it has been involved in the educational curriculum since the end of the last decade and also in all office jobs and several other fields.

Figure 5.12 shows that none of the husbands and wives in Area **1** had used the computer **16** years or more and only one wife and one husband in Area **1** had used the computer **11 to 15** years prior to the interview. A third **(33%, n=4)** of the total number of wives and the same of husbands in Area **1** had never used the computer prior to the interview, whereas only **7% (n=2)** of the wives and **22% (n=6)** of the husbands in Area **2** had not used it then. The above also shows that women in Area **2** have higher opportunity to use the computer and thus higher opportunity to get office jobs.
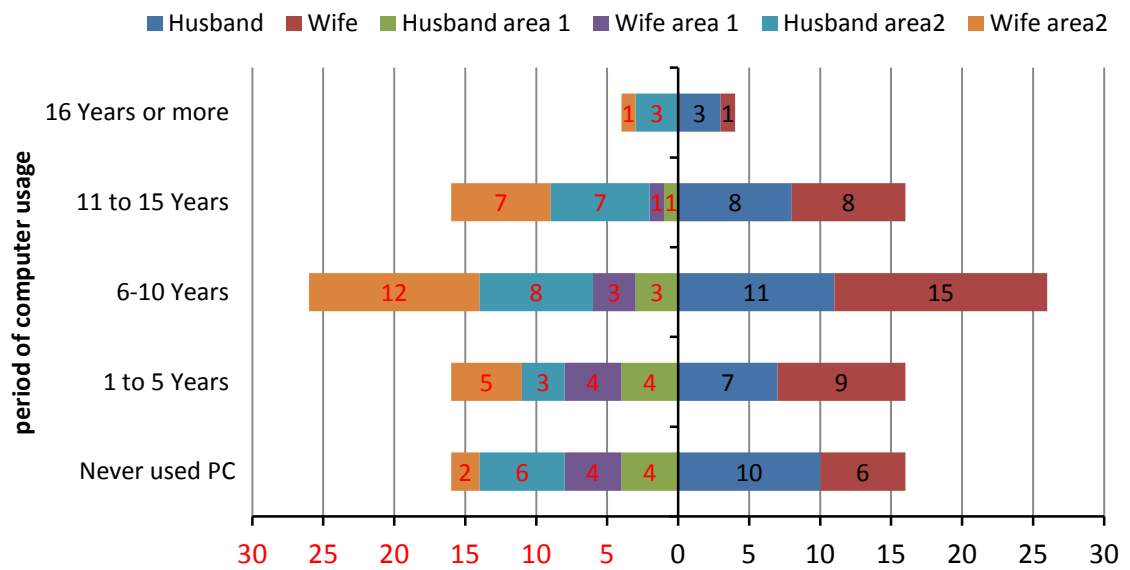
Figure 5.12: Computer usage by husbands vs. wives in Area 1 vs. Area 2

Computer usage by children in sampled households

Table 5.3 and figure 5.13 represent the number of children who use computers and the internet in the sampled households according to their age groups and gender. Taking into account that first age-group children (0-4years old) cannot usually use the computer, and also using the computer has been added to the secondary school to be taught starting at age 11/12 since 2002 in Syria.
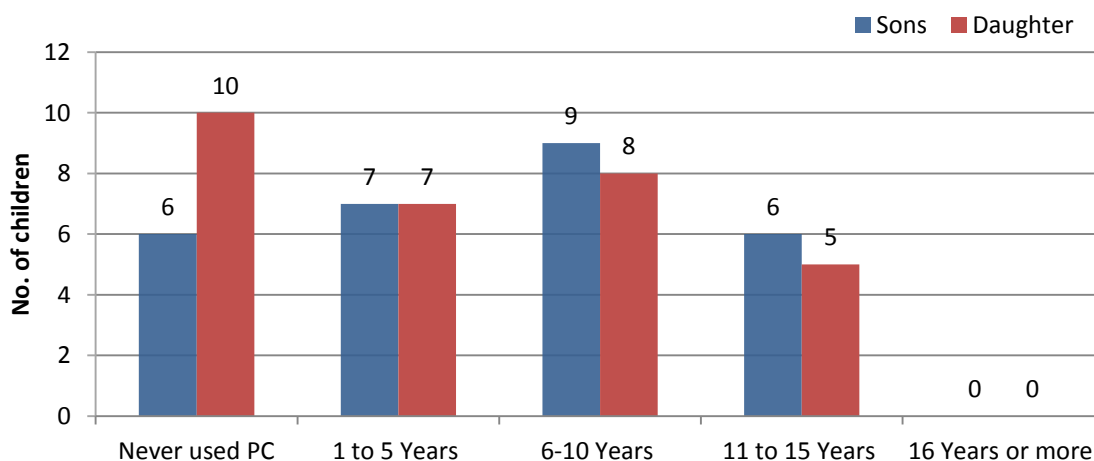
Figure 5.13: Computer usage by male vs. female children in sampled households in both areas

Table 5.2 shows that none of the children aged 4 years and younger (~**16%** of the total) use the computer yet. Only **37.5%** (N=6 of 16) of children aged **5 to 9** uses the computer and **12.5%** (N=2 of16) uses the internet. **85%** of children aged between **10 to 14** uses the computer and **73%** uses the internet. All children aged between **15 to 29** years old use the computer and almost all of them **(97%)** use also the internet. **78%** (n=31of 40) of male children and **59%** (n=29of49) of female children in the sampled households use computers, whereas **73%** male children and **47%** of female children use the internet.

Age groups	No. of Children	% of total children	Male Children			Female Children		
			No. of male	PC Usage	Internet Usage	No. of female	PC Usage	Internet Usage
0-4	14	16%	6	0	0	8	0	0
5-9	16	18%	5	4	2	11	2	0
10-14	26	29%	11	10	10	15	12	9
15-19	8	9%	3	3	3	5	5	4
20-24	16	18%	9	9	8	7	7	7
25-29	9	10%	6	6	6	3	3	3
Total	89	100%	40	31	29	49	29	23

Table 5.2: Computer and internet usage by male vs. female children in sampled households

One of the relevant questions to computer and internet usage was as follows:

Where do you use the internet service?

Figure 5.14 presents the places where the members of sampled households use the internet service. Sometimes the respondents gave unclear or not precise answer. For instance, a particular family was reluctant to mention that they use internet perhaps to show that they are a conservative and/or traditional family and adherent to social norms, or perhaps because they hide such activities from other members of the household as they believed that internet produces only bad ideas. **23%** of sampled households answered that they do not use internet at all, whereas other answers that they use internet in two places at least, which are the home and in the internet café. **51%** of sampled households answered that they use internet at home or at least they have it at home and might not use it because it used to be very slow. The most prominent response (**28%** of the total responses) was that their children started using the internet service on the mobile phone a few years ago whereas none of the parents seems to be intending to use it in this way in the near future.

Figure 5.14 also presents the internet usage by households in Area **1** versus Area **2.** This shows that **42%** in Area **1** and a slight majority **(55%)** in Area **2** use the internet at home. Only **8%** (n=1 of 12) of the households in Area **1** use the internet at work whereas almost half **(48%,** n=13 of 27**)** of households in Area **2** do so. This can be an indication that a considerable percentage of households in Area **2** work in the office place in contrast to those in Area **1**. Using the internet via mobile seemed to be more spread in Area **2 (37%)** than Area **1 (17%),** probably because this service is still costly. A high percentage **(52%)** of households in Area **2** uses the internet café whereas only **17%** in Area **1** do so. This is probably, as a few of the respondents commented, because the parents are more conservative in Area **1** and they try to monitor their children when they use the internet**.**
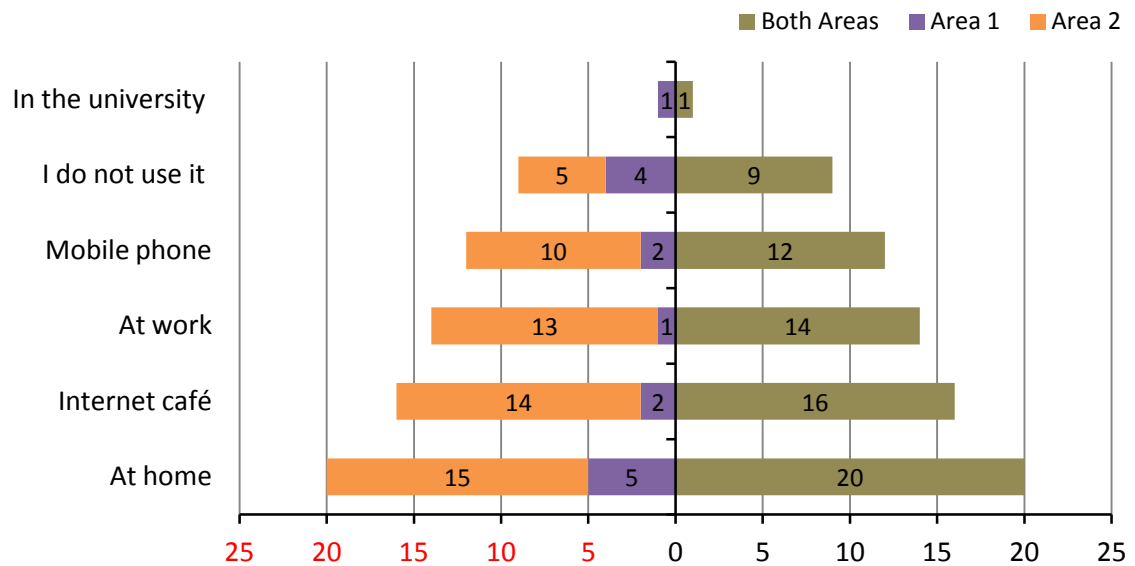
Figure 5.14: Places where sampled households' members use the internet service in Area 1 vs. Area 2

5.3.5 *Television usage by sampled households*

Bearing in mind that TV is one the most influential media affecting cultural change in Syria, as it was shown earlier in this chapter, the main questions relevant to TV usage were: how many TVs do you have/use at home; where do you mainly watch TV; where would you locate the TV in case of having only one; where are actually the TVs located in your house; how much do you think that international TV channels are affecting you and your household members? The answers to these questions are illustrated in the following.

How many TVs do you use/have at home?

Figure 5.15 represents the number of televisions which were used by each sampled household in both areas and in Area 1 vs. Area 2. It shows that **51%** of sampled households use only one TV, which is located in the living room as a separate room or as an open space such as a guest-living room, guest-living-dining room, or living-dining room. It shows that **31%** of the sampled households have **2** TVs, whereas **18%** of the total households have **3 to 5** TVs and the latter households live in Area **2**.
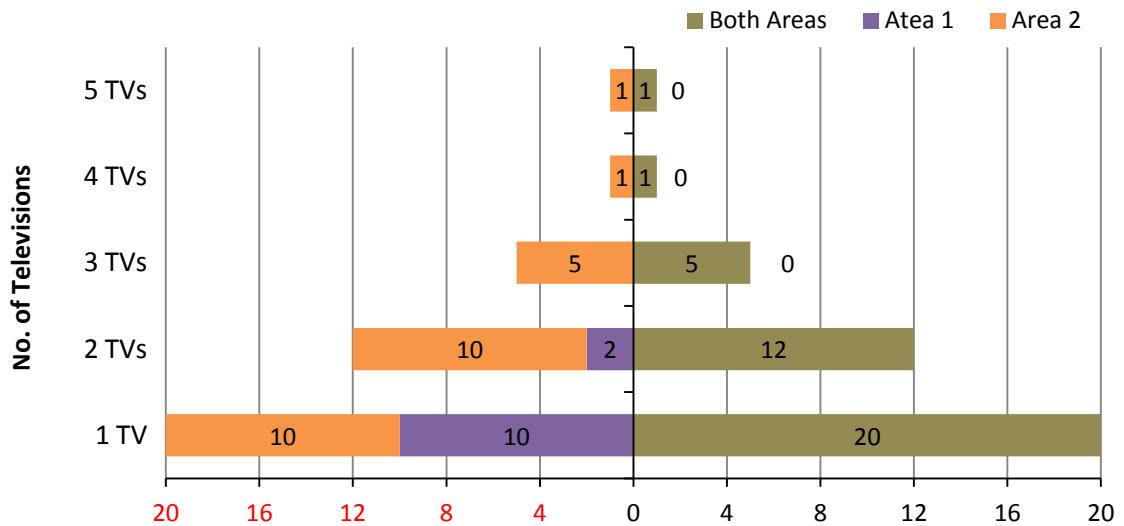
Figure 5.15: Number of TVs used by households in Area 1 vs. Area 2 (Total No. Households 39)

Where do you usually watch television?

In cases where they had only one TV, it seems that the living room is the common place to locate the TV in the home. As noted earlier (fig. 5.15), **20** households had only one TV, and none of these households has put the TV in the kitchen or bedroom. All sampled households have a TV in the living room, whether it is separate or open space. A few respondents have noted that the TV used to be placed in the guest room and was used for limited and specific hours as channels and programmes were very limited. They also mentioned that in the past TV was not as available for everybody as it is nowadays and thus it was somewhat of a prestigious thing to have it, and people therefore isolated it in the guest room as a masterpiece and usually watched it only when they had a guest visiting their home (see fig. 5.16).
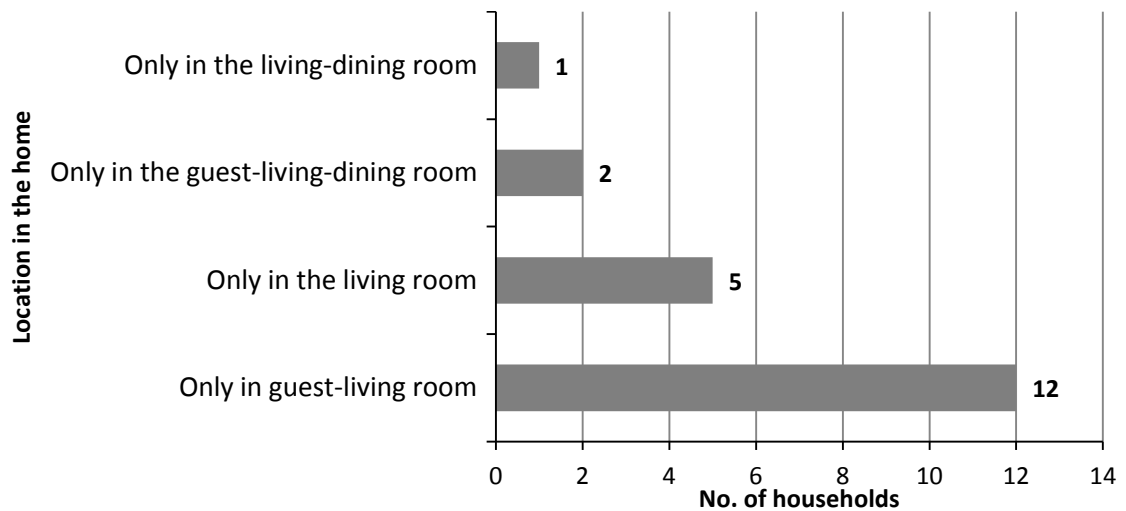
Figure 5.16: Location of the TV in home of households who have only one TV (Total No. households have one TV. 20)

Figure 5.17 shows that **33%** of households have another TV in the parents' bedroom and **10%** have a TV in children's bedrooms. **23% (n=9)** of the households has a TV in the kitchen and kitchen-dining room. Most of the respondents have mentioned a reason why they have more than one TV, as explained in the following examples:

Qnr. 21, Area **2**: *'I prefer to put a TV in the kitchen because I am a smoker; I smoke in the kitchen especially in the winter to avoid spreading the smell in the living or guestroom. I don't like TV in the guestroom because I prefer to enjoy my time with my guest, not with TV'*

Qnr. 23, Area **2**: *'I put a TV in my bedroom just because my son likes sometimes to study in the salon'*

Qnr. 29, Area **2**: *'I watch TV in the bedroom before sleeping'*
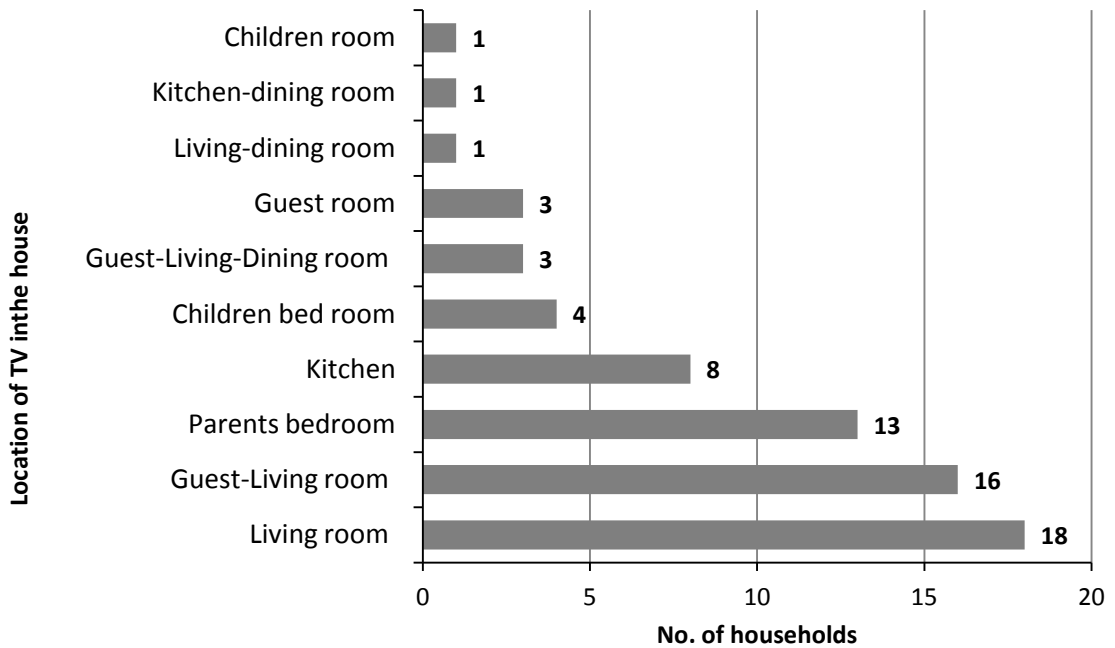
Figure 5.17: Location of TVs in the house of sampled households (Total No. households: 39)

5.3.6   *International TV channels (media) impact on culture*

Another question regarding the impact of the TV and media on culture as perceived by sampled households was asked as follows:

'How much do you think international TV channels are affecting you or your family culture, world views, values and life style?'

A large majority **(92%, n=36 of 39)** of the sampled households answered that international TV channels are strongly affecting culture (see fig. 5.18). Whereas a small percentage **(5%)** answered that international TV channels and other media are moderately affecting culture and only **3%** believed that the aforementioned factors are not affecting culture at all, especially their families. The latter respondents mentioned that people around them are changing quickly but they are not and will not do so. Other respondents appear to believe that they and their family members are changing but others are not, so they try to hide their changing views and beliefs. One of the respondents (Qnr. 35, Area 2), who believes that international channels have strongly affected his way of thinking and also his family's, said:

> '*When I was a teenager I used to regularly watch English and other foreign movies but now I rarely watch them. Their life is very different from ours' and their ever-changing thoughts are alien to our society. It is better for me to live & integrate with our culture. Education, thoughts, schools started in Moscow, passed across Paris and landed in London; we are far from such contribution*

Another respondent, who initially stated that her household's culture is not changing at all and is not affected by international TV channels or other media then appeared to be meaning that she is trying and hoping not to change her culture, said:

> '*Foreign TV channels and other new technology such as mobile phone are strongly affecting Syrians' behaviour; even children have their own mobile phone now. It sharply decreased peoples' visits and live social interactions*'.
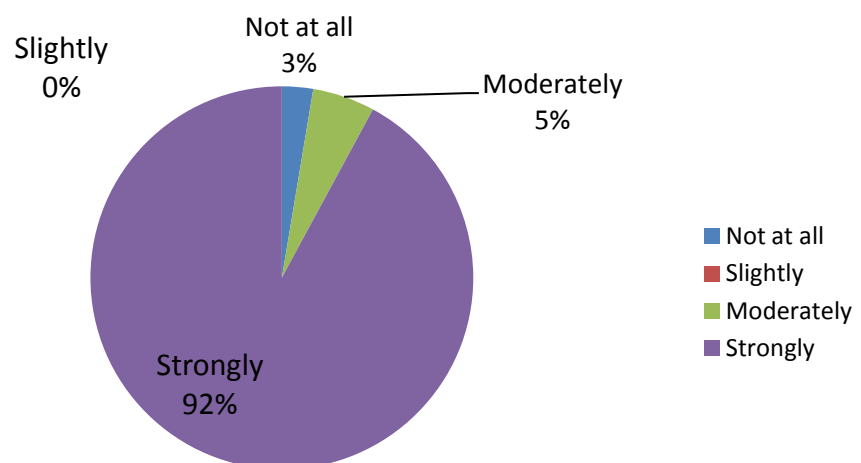
Figure 5.18: The impact of international TV channels on the interviewed household's culture based on their perception

5.3.7 *Summary and reflection*

Referring to the discussion above, a large majority of respondents emphasized that culture is strongly and rapidly changing in Lattakia and other cities in Syria. They focused on the following cultural concepts as prominently changing in the last decade: first, family structure, as the household size is becoming smaller, family kinship (extended family) is becoming weaker, tendency towards nuclear family is increasing, and the tendency towards sharing-headed household by the mother and the father both contributing to the household income and decision making is also increasing; secondly,

position of the women in society, as this was seen by the respondents as strongly changing, especially in Lattakia and Damascus regarding jobs, education, and authority; third, privacy, as the majority emphasized the change in the concepts and practice of privacy and the increase in the need for privacy of all types, especially intra-family privacy, family privacy and woman privacy; fourth, food preparation and consumption, as these were seen as an essential concept to deeply understand the culture of a society; fifth, social interaction, this was also highlighted as a strongly changing cultural concept having considerably less face-to-face socializing and less solidarity in society and sometimes even in the same family. The aforementioned cultural concepts were considered as strongly changing in the last decade by a larger majority of respondents in Area **2** than of the ones in Area **1,** i.e. culture was seen changing in the middle and upper middle class households more than in the lower middle class.

The respondents have highlighted the following factors as main motivations of cultural change in the society of Syria in the last decade: first, TVs, satellites dishes and media; second, new inventions and modern appliances; third, the internet and international cyber networking; fourth, computerization; fifth, international face-to-face interaction such as studying and training scholarships and Arabic and foreign investments. This latter factor seems to be less influential on culture change as it is limited and related to a small group of the society such as investors, researchers and tourists. These factors were considered as strongly affecting cultural change by a larger percentage of respondents in Area **2** than of the one in Area **1**.

5.4   Cultural issues affecting housing use

This section focuses on research questions 3, 5, and 6 from the users' perspective. This section focuses on privacy and food preparation and consumptions as cultural issues most relevant to housing use and design. It also discusses the modifications to housing design which were arranged by the end users to meet their social cultural change.

5.4.1   *Privacy: family privacy, intra-family privacy and women's privacy*

Figure 5.19 presents the changing in the concepts and practices of privacy in general and of particular types of privacy which are strongly related to housing use from the households' perspective. It shows that the majority (97%) of sampled households believed that the concepts and practices of privacy have been strongly changing in the

last decades. In several cases, when the researcher asked about the concept of privacy, the first answers from the respondents were related to women's privacy only. The researcher then explained different types of privacy and particularly the ones which are strongly related to the spatial use of domestic environment. In other cases, the researcher extracted/interpreted the answers of this question from the interviewees' comments or answers to different questions. For example, a few respondents commented that nowadays children do not accept to share a bedroom with their siblings, and this was interpreted as a need for intra-family privacy. Figure 5.19 shows that a great majority of sampled households believed that family privacy (95%) and intra-family privacy (92%) have been strongly changing in the last decades. A smaller majority (77%) of sampled households believed that women's privacy has been strongly changing.
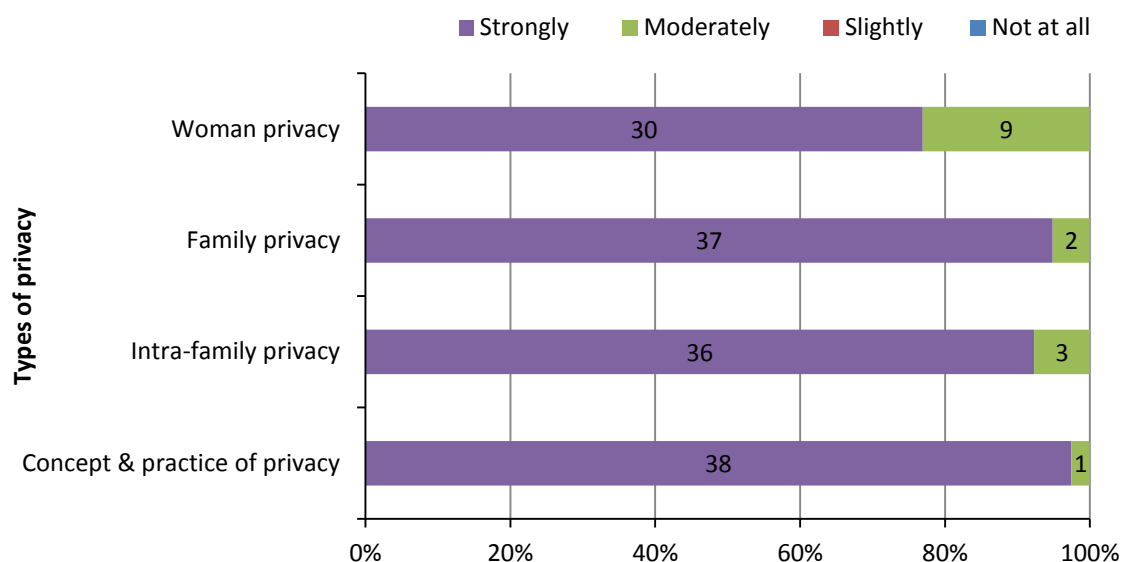
Figure 5.19: Changing in the concepts and practices of privacy and food preparation and consumption as seen by respondents

The current tendency of sampled households towards privacy

Privacy can be represented in different types as was noted in the literature earlier in chapter 2. This research focused on three types of privacy which are most relevant to household's domestic life. These types are intra-family privacy, family privacy and women's privacy. The tendency towards privacy was interpreted through the main question concerning the respondent's desire for privacy (see fig. 5.20). The respondents in general gave two answers, one related to their own desire for privacy and the other related to society in general. The first one was considered here (see fig. 5.20). In some

cases the researcher received different opinions from household members. For instance, in Qnr. 2, Area 1, the wife said: *'I would like to have more privacy at home'* whereas the husband did not like his wife's answer. He commented while laughing *'do you mean to ask my wife if she regretted getting married to me???'* Then everybody laughed in order to disguise his discomfort.

Figure 5.20 presents the main respondent's desire for three types of privacy: intra-family privacy, which considers the privacy among the members of the household at home; family privacy, which considers household's privacy as a nuclear family among other relatives, neighbouring households and strangers – these were considered as guests[54] in this study; and also woman's privacy, which considers protection of women from exposure to strange men as a key cultural trait. In some cases wives indicated their desire for more personal privacy within their own family and sometimes towards even their husbands. As shown in figure 5.20, **49%** (n=19) of the sampled households were satisfied with the level achieved of women's privacy and **28%** (n=11) desired more women's privacy at home whereas **23%** (n=9) desired much more women's privacy.

Concerning family privacy, **46%** (n=18) of sampled households were satisfied with the level of achieved family privacy, **20%** (n=8) of households desired more family privacy, and **31%** (n=12) desired much more family privacy whereas only **3%** (n=1) preferred less family privacy as they believed that family privacy increased estrangement between siblings, relatives, extended family, and neighbours and thus resulted in weak social relations and less solidarity. Regarding family privacy, different types of guests such as male or female, young or old, extended family members or acquaintances have different spatial and behavioural implications in the home. For example, female guests seemed to use the kitchen more than male guests if they actually use it; and children guests use also the bedroom for some activities such as playing or using the computer, etc, but adults don't usually use the bedroom. However, as the studied areas are less conservative than other areas in Lattakia, which is also a less

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[54] Guest is defined in this study as a person who usually does not sleep on a regular base in the home and does not have an allocated bed/place to sleep. Sometimes, adult children when they get married and move to their own house are treated, to some extent, as guests.

conservative city than other Syrian cities, the spatial and behavioural implications of different types of guests were found not to be very noticeable.

Looking at the answers given, intra-family privacy was satisfactory for **44%** (n=17) of sampled households, whereas **28%** (n=11) desired to achieve higher level of intra-family privacy and **28%** desired much more privacy within their own nuclear family.
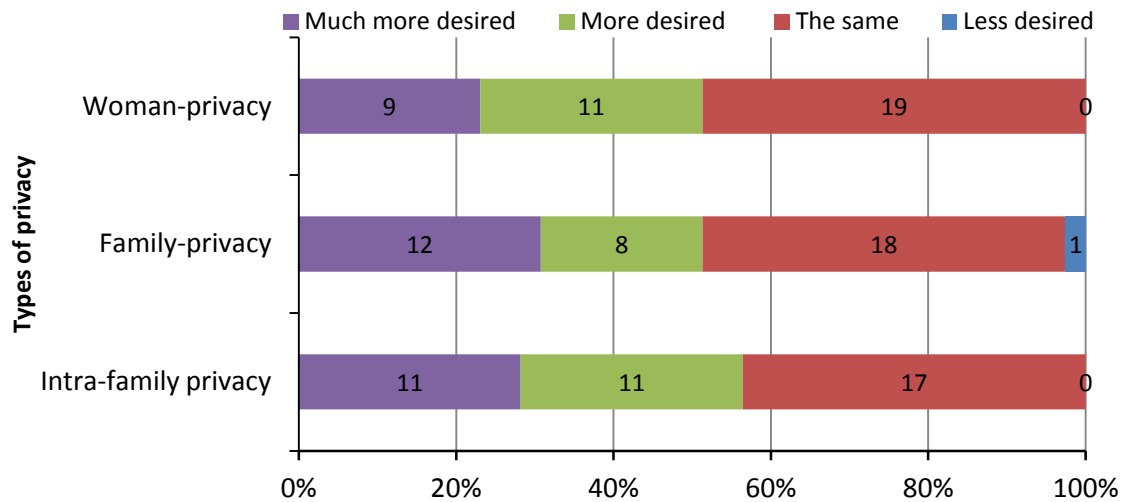
Figure 5.20: Current tendency towards privacy as seen by respondents in both Areas

Figure 5.21 represents the tendency towards privacy in Area **1**. It shows that **33%** (n=4) of sampled households in Area **1** are satisfied with the level achieved of women's privacy at their current home, and the same percentage (**33%)** desired more women's privacy and also **33%** desired much more women's privacy. Almost 2 thirds (**67%, n=8)** of sampled households in Area **1** were satisfied with the level achieved of family privacy at home and **8%** (n=1) desired to have more privacy and **17%** (n=2) desired much more family privacy, whereas **8%** preferred less family privacy for the reason mentioned earlier.

Regarding intra-family privacy, **33%** (n=4) of sampled households in Area **1** are satisfied with the level achieved of privacy at home, **50%** (n=6) desired to achieve more intra-family privacy and **17%** (n=2) desired to achieve much more privacy for each family member within the home.
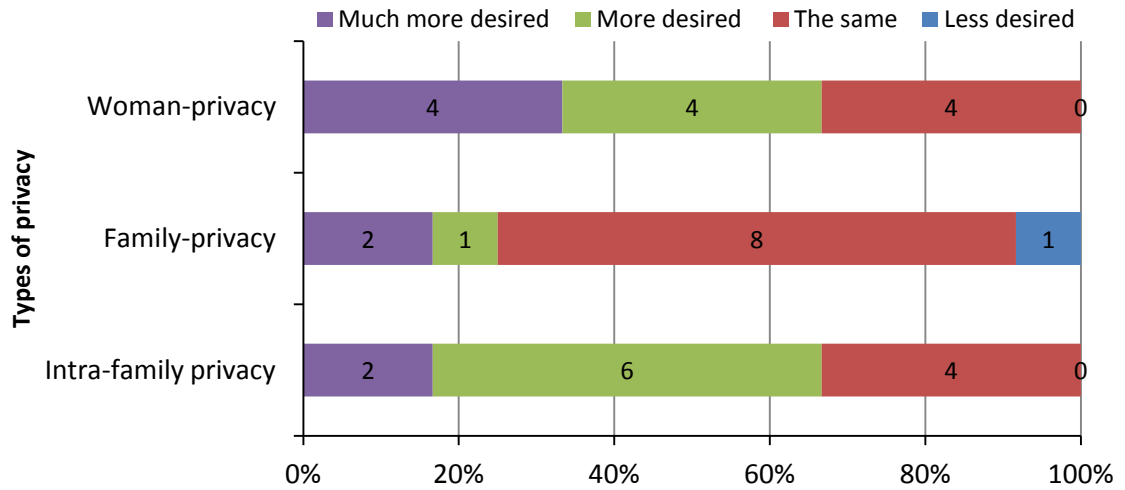
Figure 5.21: Tendency towards privacy in Area 1

Figures 5.20, 5.21 and, 5.22 and table 5.3 show that intra-family privacy was more or much more desired to be increased by a slight majority **(56%)** of the total households in both sampled areas. Family privacy seems to be more or much more desired by **63%** of sampled households in Area **2** whereas only **25%** of households in Area **1** were concerned about achieving higher level of family privacy. This is probably because households in Area **1** are more conservative and adhered to family kinship and solidarity in the extended-family and social relationship with neighbours than the ones in Area **2**. Also, the majority **(67%)** of the sampled households in Area **1** had more or much more desire to have higher level of women's privacy than the ones in Area **2,** where **44%** of respondents answered that they desire a higher level of women's privacy.
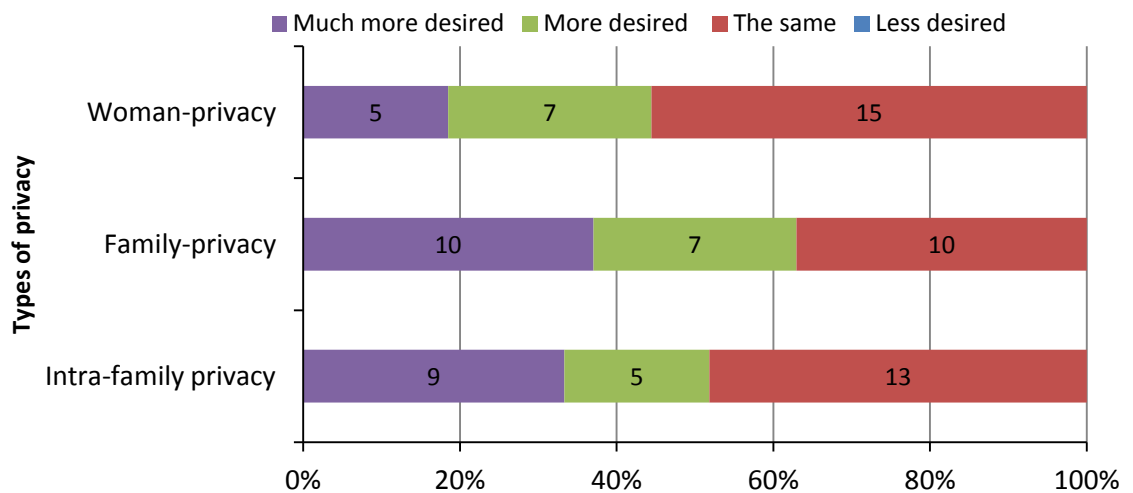
Figure 5.22: Tendency towards privacy in Area 2 (TUA)

Type of Privacy	Woman privacy			Family privacy			Intra-family privacy		
	Less desired	The Same	More desired	Less desired	The Same	More desired	Less desired	The Same	More desired
Area 1	0%	33	67	8%	67	25	0%	50	50
Area2	0%	56	44	0%	37	63	0%	48	52
Both areas	0%	49	51	3%	46	51	0%	44	56%

Table 5.3: Comparison between tendencies of different types of privacy in Area 1 vs. Area 2

Changing in housing use at the request of users to fulfill their current social needs

Because of the significant rapid cultural changes, as was shown earlier where **97%** of total respondents agreed that this is happening, several households tend to change housing use and when possible to modify their house so as to fulfill their social needs.

The following question "*how much do cultural changes affect housing use, if it does at all*" was meant to be answered by: not at all, slightly, moderately or strongly. **82%** of respondents answered that cultural change is strongly affecting housing use and **18%** believed that it is moderately affecting housing use, as shown in figure 5.23.
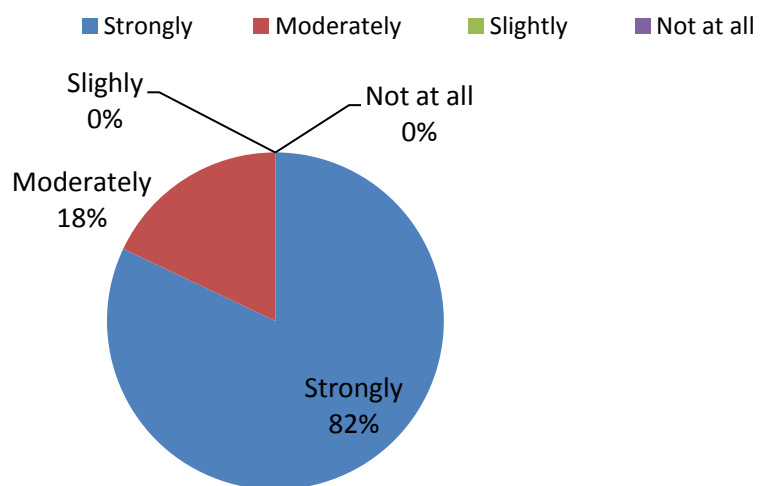
Figure 5.23: The impact of cultural change on housing use

Typical responses regarding changes in housing use and design here included:

In Qnr. 13 (Area 2), the husband said: "*the architect imposes his/her design most of the time without caring about the inhabitants' needs. We can only put curtains for more privacy from outsiders*"

In Qnr. 14 (Area 2), the wife said: "*Nowadays if we have a guest who is not a relative we meet her/him outside, not at home, to provide privacy to my household. This would have considered a shame and disrespect, a decade ago*"

In Qnr. 23 (Area 2), the wife said: "*I sometimes watch TV in the bedroom to provide privacy for all my children while studying- one of my sons studies in the salon*"

In Qnr. 25 (Area 2), the wife said: "*very few people visit me at home, so as to provide the needed privacy for my family & myself. We go out much more nowadays to meet our friends & relatives. I don't like unexpected or imposed visitors. I look for and prioritize my comfort*"

In Qnr. 28 (Area 2), the wife said: "*the need for privacy imposed on us to change our house to a bigger one as we needed more bedrooms & each room has all appliances & furniture such as computer, desk wardrobe, etc.*"

In Qnr. 31 (Area 2), the wife said: "*it affects & increases the number of bedrooms and bathrooms and thus each member has his own room. It also leads to eating in the kitchen instead of a proper dining table at which all the family was used to eat together with relatives, now we have different meal times & rituals from the past*"

In Qnr. 32 (Area 2), the husband said: "*More bedrooms are needed to provide privacy and less use for the sharing areas at home is clearly taking place nowadays*"

In Qnr. 37(Area 2), the wife said: *"Nowadays, nobody considers the guest's bedroom as before, as this custom is not valuable anymore. Having a guest overnight limited the households' privacy. Frequency and availability of transportation nowadays has helped to reduce this tradition"*

Changing housing use to fulfill more privacy towards guests (relatives, friends, and strangers)

Figure 5.24 shows that households meet their neighbours not only in the guest rooms, but also in the living room, kitchen and on the balcony and sometime in the bedrooms. A large majority **(97%, n=38)** of the respondents answered that they meet their guests in the living room and the typical comment was '*most of people who visit us at home are close friends or relatives so we meet them in the living room where it is cozy and comfortable*'. **(92%, n=36)** answered that they meet their visitors in the guest room because in many cases the guest room and living room are in one space or actually just the same with probably two types of armchairs and/or sofas. In the case of having a separate guest room, a few mentioned that it is rarely used and remains most of the time closed. A high majority highlighted that their guests are mainly relatives, close friends or neighbours in the same buildings, so it is acceptable to meet them in the kitchen or on the balcony and sometimes even in the bedroom, especially children's friends. A high percentage **(64%, n=25)** of the households meet their guests in the kitchen, especially the mother when having her close friends or the neighbours in the same building. As a few wives mentioned, '*I like to meet my neighbours and relatives such as my sisters in the kitchen, especially while preparing food or cooking*'.

A considerable percentage **(58%, n=23)** of sampled households meet their guests, acquaintances and sometimes even close friends out of the home to provide, as they frequently mentioned, a better level of family privacy at home. **18%** (n=7) of respondents mentioned that the children and mainly daughters meet their friends in the bedroom so as to give them some privacy: '*girls usually are shy and prefer to meet their friends alone, especially if there are guys in the house*'. Another respondent mentioned '*each of my sons and daughters meet their friends mainly in the bedroom using laptops, internet, and musical instruments and sometimes watching TV – I do not know, I think they, to some extent, have their privacy*'. On the other hand, a few respondents did not like using the bedroom for having friends

> '*I allocated a living room for my children because I do not like using the bedroom for other purposes, the bedroom is only for sleeping*'.

Although **26%** (n=10) of respondents mentioned that they meet guests in the dining room, most of them also commented that they use it only on specific occasions and believe that it is not really needed because they can meet them out of home, in restaurants for instance. '*The restaurants nowadays are very well prepared and equipped for different occasions and it is rather affordable'*. In many cases the dining room was a part of the reception space (guest-living and dining space) and sometimes merely a dining table in a corner used as a piece of decoration, piled with souvenirs, vases and other random pieces.

The balcony seemed to be an essential element for the respondents, particularly in summer time, as **58%** (n=23) mentioned that they also use the balcony to meet guests and friends: '*yes, sure I have my guests on the balcony in summer time, actually whenever it is sunny and breezy if they ask for it'*. Another respondent noted: '*I smoke and my wife also smokes shisha[55] so we prefer to meet friends on the balcony'*. One of the respondents also commented:

> '*If my visitors want to smoke[56] I indirectly ask them if they prefer to sit on the balcony so as to avoid making the house smelly or bother my family members'*.

The balcony was also highlighted as a solution to provide privacy for the household members as a respondent commented: '*my sons usually meet their friends, if not out of home, on the balcony so other family members move comfortably inside the home'*.

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[55] Shisha is a new widespread activity in Lattakia, especially among women, who were not supposed, as a social norm, to smoke in public areas. Although smoking shisha is socially acceptable nowadays in Lattakia, smoking cigarettes is not acceptable for women, particularly in public areas.

[56] Smoking is usually acceptable at home in Lattakia, especially for guests and the host will be embarassed to ask the guest not to smoke.
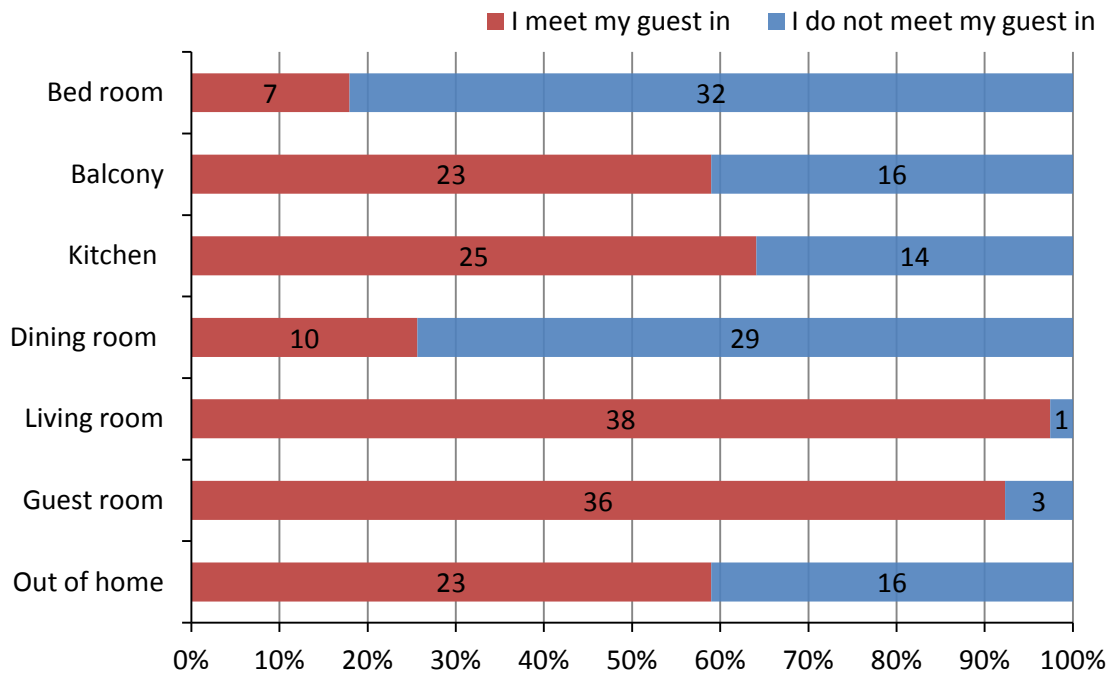
Figure 5.24: House elements where households meet their guests

Household satisfaction with privacy at home regarding guests versus family's privacy

Around **31%** (n=12) of sampled households said they are dissatisfied or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the achieved family privacy and **28%** (n=11) with intra-family privacy in their home. Most of the respondents who said '*neither*' sounded slightly dissatisfied but probably they said neither trying to be content with what they already had. However, respondents seemed to be slightly more satisfied with intra-family privacy than with family privacy (see fig. 5.25).
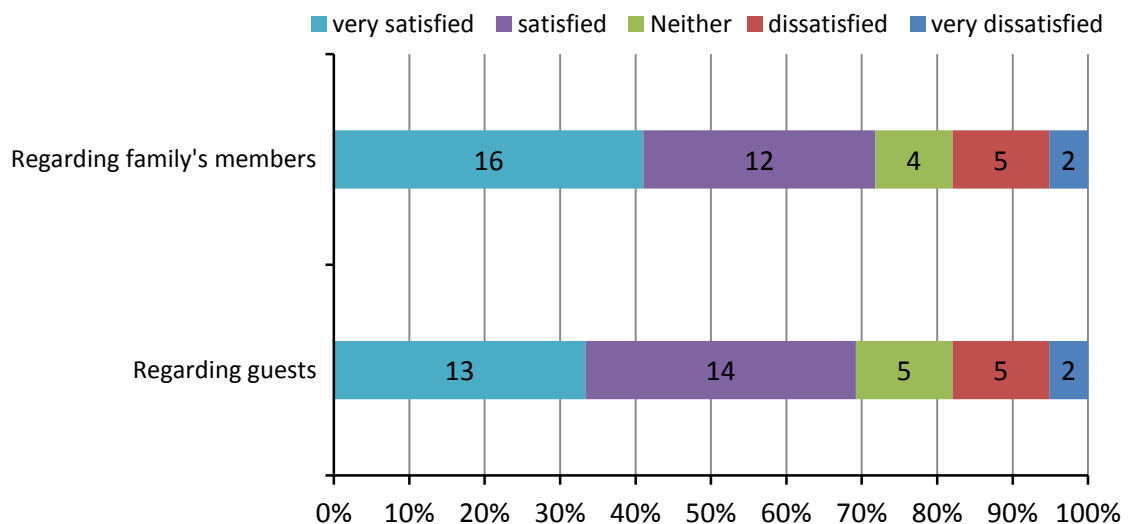
Figure 5.25: Households satisfaction with privacy in their home

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Figure 5.26 shows that **42%** (n=5) of the households in Area **1** are not satisfied with the intra-family privacy and the same percentage (42%) are not satisfied with family privacy towards guests. Whereas only **7%** (n=2) of sampled households in Area **2** were not satisfied with intra-family privacy at home and the same percentage **(7%)** were not satisfied with family privacy towards guests.
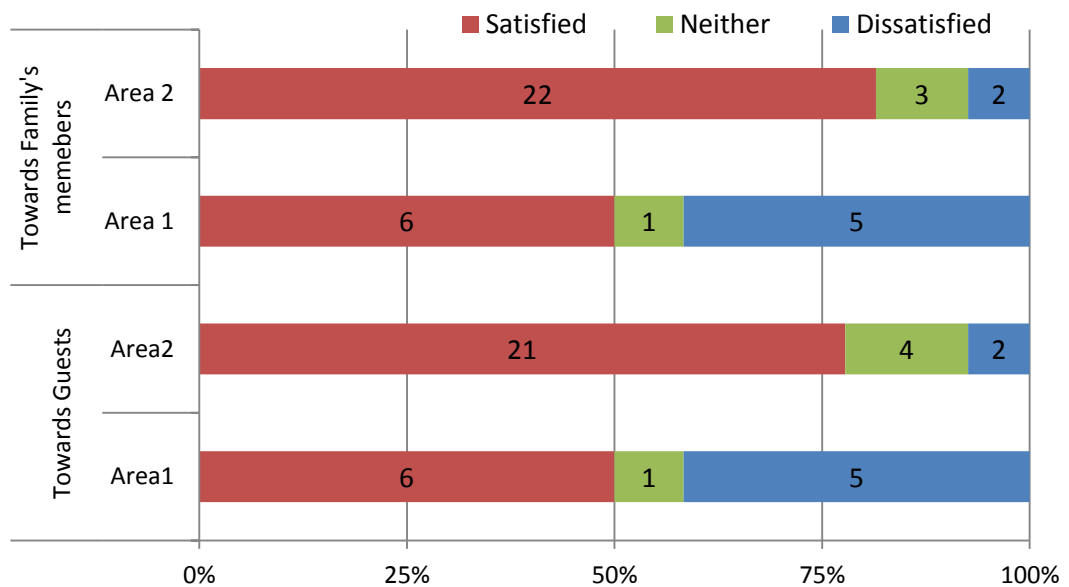
Figure 5.26: Households satisfaction in the home in Area 1 vs. Area 2

Changes in housing design which were made or would be made by sampled households to satisfy their need for privacy

The households were asked what they had changed or they would change in their current house if it was possible to fulfill and satisfy their privacy needs. The answers were varied among number, size and locations of rooms, space configuration and the hierarchy and level of privacy of different house elements. There were open question answers and comments after answering these 5 categories. The majority of households **69%** (n=27) responses focused on number and size of the rooms as they preferred more and bigger bedrooms. **54%** (N=21) of sampled households focused on the hierarchy and level of privacy at home and **44%** (n=17) of households changed or would prefer to change the space configuration from open plan design to closed one or vice-versa. **33%** (N=13) changed or would prefer to change the location of rooms, mainly to change the level of privacy such as placing the kitchen closer to the house entrance, as it is now becoming less private in relation to guests(see fig. 5.27).

The above shows that households' desire to have a higher number of bedrooms, though **65% (n=25)** of sampled households have only one or two children, which shows the tendency to increase intra-family privacy.
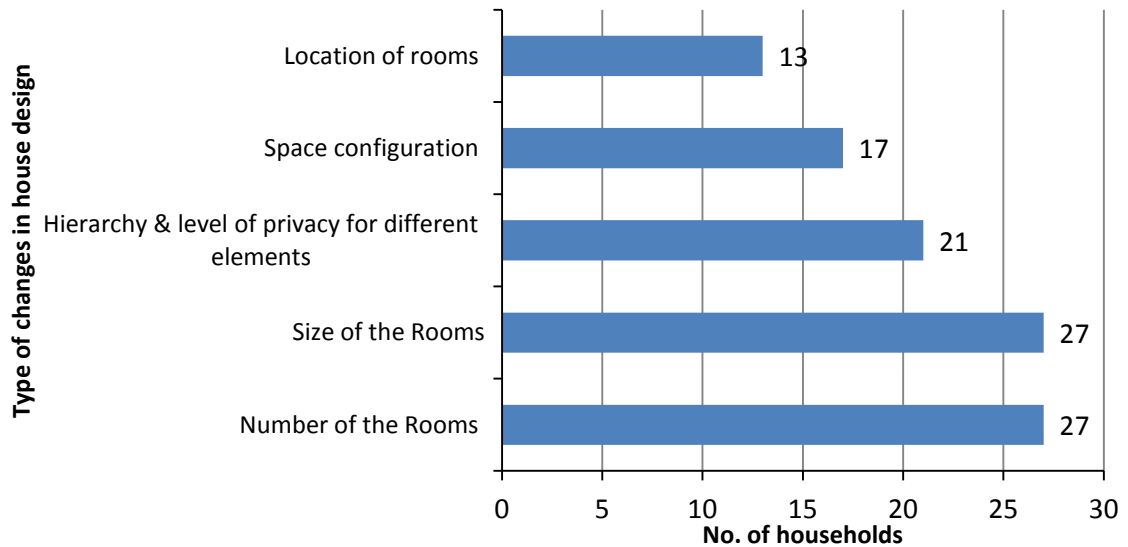
Figure 5.27: Changes in housing design suggested by households to attune privacy needs

Intra-family privacy and sharing spaces at home

Figure 5.28 presents the places where the household members often meet and have a chat, showing the family-sharing spaces at home. This chart shows that household members most often meet in the living room as **90%** (n=35) of sampled households responded, **36%** (n=14) meet in the kitchen and **21%** (n=8) meet and have a chat on the balcony, especially in summer time. There is **13%** (n=5) who meet also in the bedroom having most often a person-to-person chat. A high percentage **(54%,** n=21**)** of the households responded that they cannot have a chat in the dining room because most of sampled houses, especially in Area **1,** have neither a separate dining room nor a corner for a proper dining table in the living or guest space. The households instead have meals in the living-guest space or in the kitchen if possible. In some cases, respondents mentioned that they cannot have breakfast together because the kitchen is very small to accommodate all the household members and thus there is less opportunity for all-together meeting and chatting.
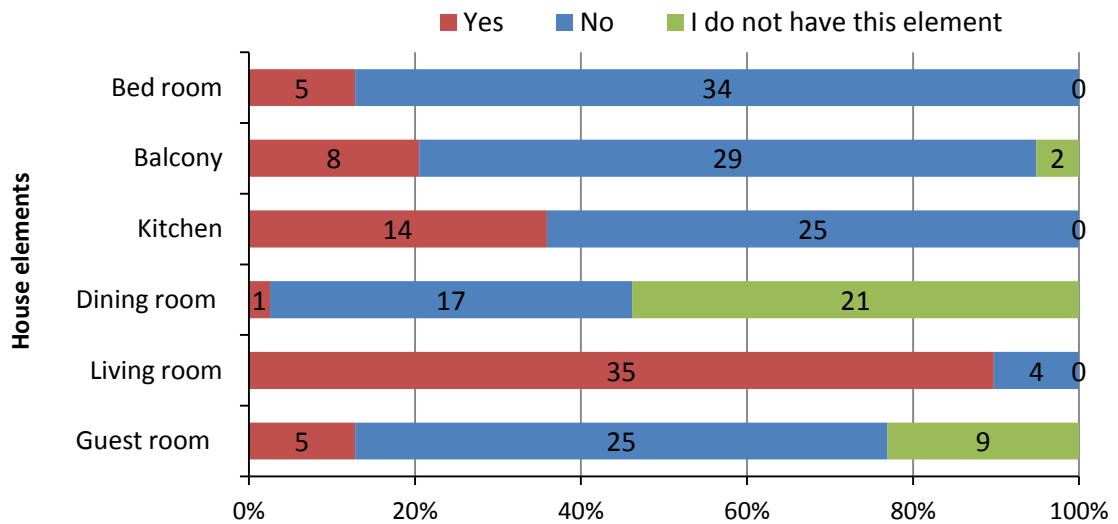
Figure 5.28: Common places for households' meeting and chatting in the home

Figure 5.29 shows that all respondents in Area **1** and most of respondents (**85%,** n=23 of 27) in Area **2** gather and have a household's conversation in the living room. **44%** (n=12 of 27) of the households in Area **2** meet also in the kitchen whereas only **17%** (n=2) of households in Area **1** meet for household conversation in the kitchen as a few of the respondents emphasized that the kitchen is very small to gather in it with all the household members or even a few of them. The chart also shows that none of the sampled houses in Area **1** have a dining room and **33%** (n=9) in Area **2** answered that they do not have a dining room, although a few of them have a dining table in the living-guest space, but they rarely use it and in a few cases do not use it at all. Only **17%** (n=2) of the sampled households in Area **1** do not have a balcony and another **17%** (n=2) meet on the balcony for family conversation, whereas all houses in Area **2** have balcony/ies and **22%** (n=6) meet on the balcony for family chats. **50%** (n=6) of the respondents answered that they do not have a separate guest room and instead they have one space for guests and living room together, as one of the interviewees commented: '*Well you can see yourself it is a small space for all activities, watching TV using computer, eating, welcoming guests, reading and sometimes for also studying so I cannot call it a guest room'.* He added*: As we spend most of the time in this space, we have a family conversation here when we do not have guests'.* **11%** in Area **2** responded that they do not have a guest room and this seems to be when they have a small space for both guest and living room whereas they consider it a guest room when the space is big and the configuration gives a feeling of separation.
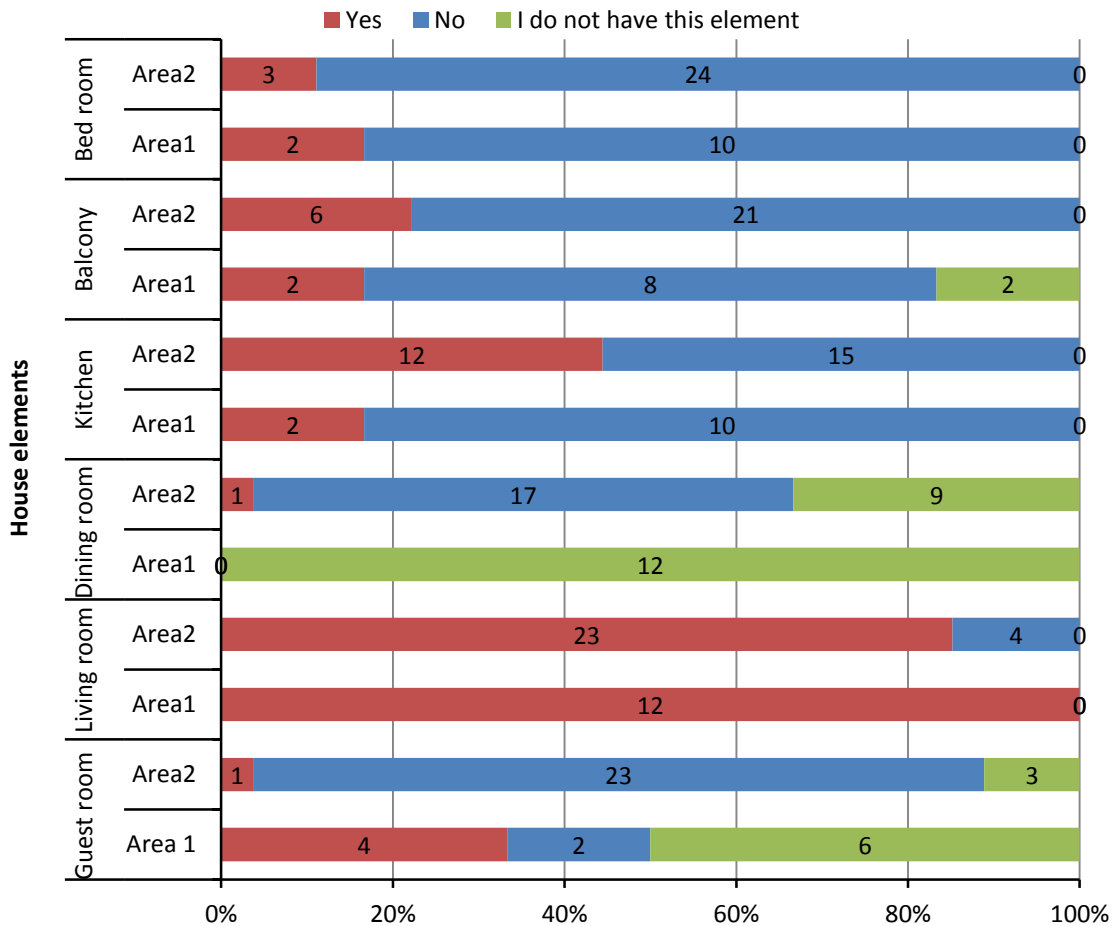
Figure 5.29: Places where household members usually meet and chat

5.4.2 *Food preparation and consumption*

This section investigates the practice of food preparation and consumption, for example, who is responsible for cooking, who helps in cooking, how often the household usually cooks, how often the household orders takeaway or any ready food and how often they eat in a restaurant; where food preparation and consumption take place; what kind of appliances the household has regarding food preparation and other kitchen appliances. Since food preparation and consumption, as two different human activities, used to take place in two different and separate rooms at Syrian home, a decade ago, the researcher put them in two different questions to attain more details about each activity.

Food preparation

The respondents in all sampled households answered that the wife is mainly responsible for cooking at home, although she might get some help from household members. Figure 5.30 shows that **28%** (n=11) of the total sampled households depend completely on the wife to prepare their food, whereas **56%** (n=22) of the wives got some help from

their husbands. Within only **15%** (n=6) of the total households, the wives get help from their daughter/s or daughter-in-law and **10%** (n=4) of the total wives mentioned that they sometimes get help from their sons. Housemaids were only mentioned by **5% (n=2)** of the total wives, stating that they help them at least twice a week.

Examples of respondents' comments regarding helping in cooking included the following:

In Qnr. 2 (Area 1), the wife said: '*My husband helps me in cooking but very rarely, BBQ is always his job at home and sometimes he prepares breakfast*'

In Qnr. 3 (Area 1), the wife commented: '*no one helps me in cooking but I like to teach my male children how to cook when they become adults*'

Qnr. 9 (Area 1), the husband commented*: 'It depends on my mood and time. When I have time, I enjoy cooking whether with my wife or not. I am very good in cooking and I like to cook*'

Qnr. 10 (Area 1): '*My husband had never helped me in cooking and used to feel offended if I asked him to do so... well we are divorced now*'.

Qnr. 23 (Area 2), the husband commented*:' I help in cooking whenever I have time. In general I cook in the weekend*'.

A few wives in Area **2** responded that they do not like any one to help them in cooking: '*I do not like any one to help me in cooking. I like to cook alone*' '*I do not mind them to help me in setting up the table but not in cooking*'.

Another wife commented: '*My daughter used to help me before she got married and now my daughter in-law; men never cook in my family*'.

Qnr. 29 (Area 2)*: 'My husband likes to help me in cooking, he is a good cook, but I do not like him to cook because others will criticize me how I let my man do the women's work*'.

Qnr. 33 (Area 2): '*We use ready food most of the time. My husband always helps in cooking. He is not demanding about food, unlike other Syrian men. I also hire a house assistant to help me once per week for a few hours*'.
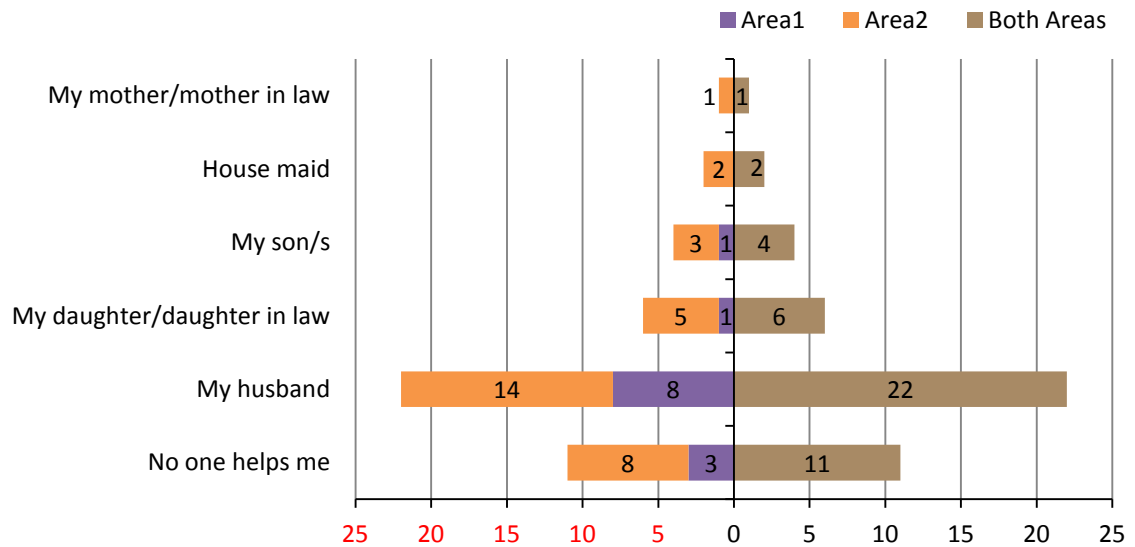
Figure 5.30: Household members who help in food preparation and cooking in both Areas and Area 1 vs. Area 2

Figure 5.30 shows that **67%** (n=8) of the husbands in Area **1** and **52%** (n=14 of 27) in Area **2** help their wives in food preparation and cooking. Perhaps the percentage of husbands who help their wives is higher in Area **1** because the couples are younger and more used to the sharing modern life than the older couples in Area **2,** who probably still prefer the traditional way of women working at home and men out of the home. On the other hand, households in Area **2** are better-off than those in Area **1**, as shown earlier in this chapter, and thus they go more often to the restaurant, as it is evidenced in this chapter, or they get help from housemaid. Therefore, the wife in Area **2** does not need as much help as the wife in Area **1** from her husband.

Household meals: homemade, delivered, and/or meals in a restaurant

Figure 5.31 represents the households' practice of food preparation, whether they have the meals in the restaurants, order ready food, or cook at home and the frequency of these practices. The chart shows that **41%** (n=16) of sampled households have their meals **1** or **2** times per week in the restaurant in summer time and **33%** (n=13) go also in the winter once or twice a week to have their meals in the restaurant. Only one

respondent mentioned that they go to the restaurant **3 or 4** times a week. On the other hand, **13%** (n=5) responded that they do not have their meals in the restaurant at all. One of the households answered that they order meals from restaurants or take away shops **5** or **6** times per week and **2** households order takeaway or ready food **3** or **4** times per week. **33%** of households order food **1** or **2** times per week whereas the majority of households **(64%,** n=25**)** said that they rarely or very rarely order food from restaurants or shops. Regarding cooking at home, only one household mentioned that they cook once or twice per week and **2** households (5%) of the total cook sometimes twice a day. **17%** (n=7) of households cook everyday and **36%** (n=14) cook **5 or 6** times per week whereas **38%** (n=15) of sampled households cook **3 or 4** times a week.
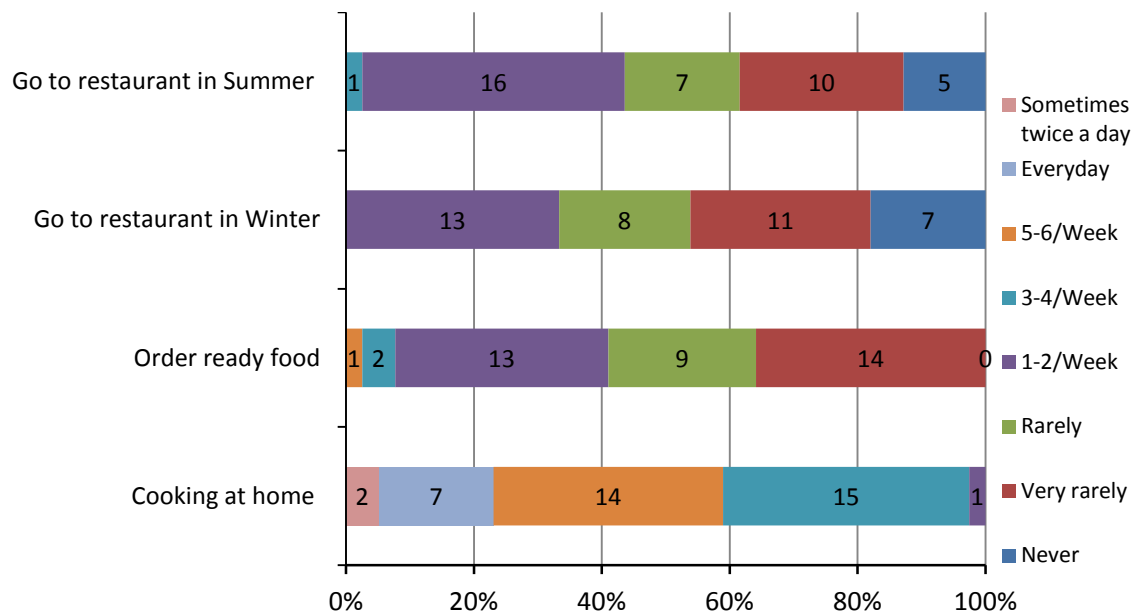
Figure 5.31: Frequency of cooking, ordering ready meals and/or going to restaurants

Figure 5.31 presents the frequency of food preparation when most household members eat together. It shows that 3 quarters **(74%)** of sampled households cook at home 3 to 6 times per week. However, cooking does not mean all household members eat at home. In several cases, they mentioned that at least one of the members, especially adult children, eat out with their friends.

Figure 5.32 shows that a slight majority **(56%,** n=15 of 27**)** of households in Area **2** go to the restaurant **1** or **2** times per week in summer time whereas only 1 household in Area **1** do so. Also, **46%** (n=13) of households in Area **2** go **1**or **2** times per week to the restaurant in winter and none does so in Area **1. A third** of households in Area **1** do not

go to the restaurant at all whereas only one household in Area **2** does not go to the restaurant in summer time**.** In Area **2,** one household mentioned that they order meals from a restaurant or a shop **5-6** times per week, another household order **3-4 times** per week and **10** households **(37%)** order **1**or **2** times per week. In Area 1, only one household mentioned that they order meals **3-4** times per week and **3** households **(25%)** order **1-2** times per week. The majority of households (**75%,** n=9) in Area **1** mentioned that they approximately cook **3-4** times a week, **1** household cooks everyday and **2** households cook **5-6** times per week. In Area **2** one household mentioned that they cook **1-2** times per week, **22%** (n=6) of households cook **3-4** times per week and **44%** (n=1**2)** cook **1-2** times a week. There were also cases (2 households) where the households cook twice a day in Area **2** because, as they mentioned, they have different times of work and different taste so they sometimes cook in the afternoon and also at night.
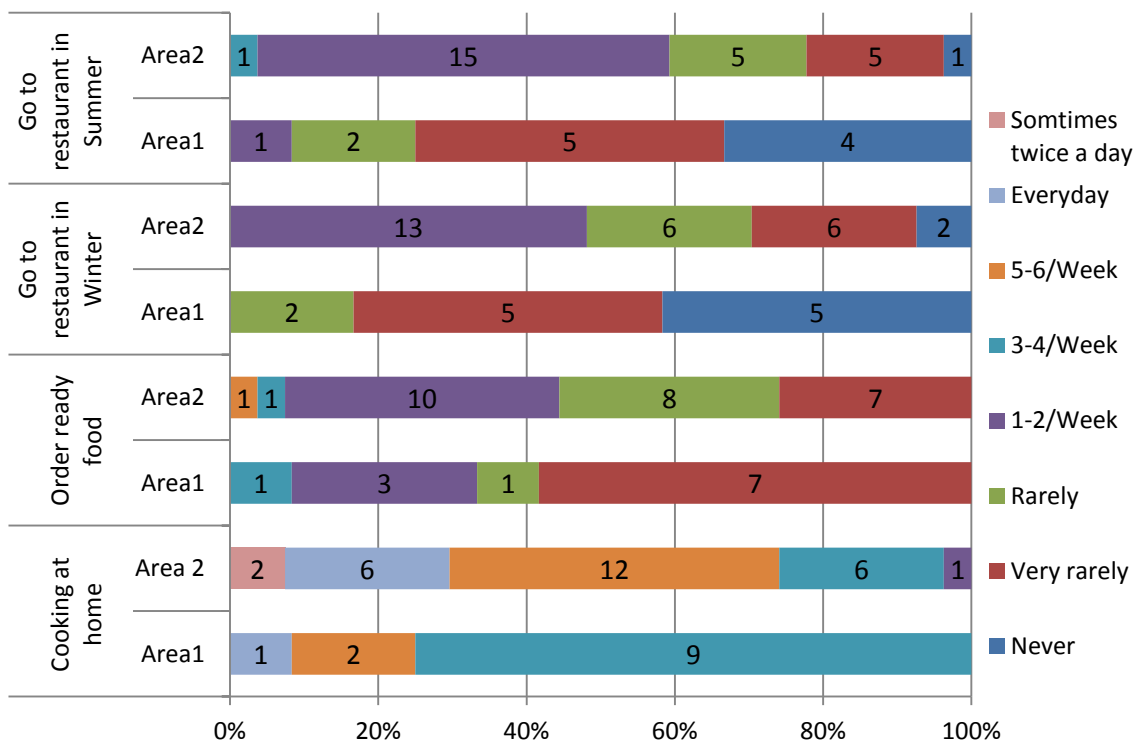
Figure 5.32: Frequency of cooking, ordering ready meals and go to restaurant in Area 1 vs. Area 2

Referring to the text above, it seems that the households in Area **1** do not go to restaurant as often as households in Area **2,** probably because it is not as affordable for them as it is for Area **2.** Ordering meals from a restaurant or a shop seems to be affordable for a few of the households in Area **1**. One of the wives in Area **2**

commented regarding the ready food and take away: '*my children used to be very eager to have snacks, sandwiches, and ready meals such as burgers, chicken Kebabs, chicken and Shawarma.etc, but I now can prepare these all at home as I take any recipe from the internet and prepare it better than the shops and it is also cleaner and healthier.*' Another wife in Area **2** commented: '*going to the restaurant, for me, is not a substitute for cooking and having meals at home, it is mainly going out, changing the routine, entertainment, and sometimes an urgent solution when we cannot or have no time to cook*'.

House elements where food preparation takes place

While the research was conducted, a few wives were preparing the lunch, which is usually after 14:00, and that took place partly in the living room, such as peeling and chopping the vegetables and other preparation which does not need water or heat. Figure 5.33 shows that **62%** of the interviewed wives mentioned that they do part of food preparation in the living room as they can have a seat while preparing it, especially when the meal needs a relatively long time before starting using the oven or washing raw food. Only **5%** of wives mentioned that they do so in the dining room and the same percentage on the balcony, taking into account that **54%** (n=21) of the sampled houses do not have a proper, separate room or allocated space for dining.
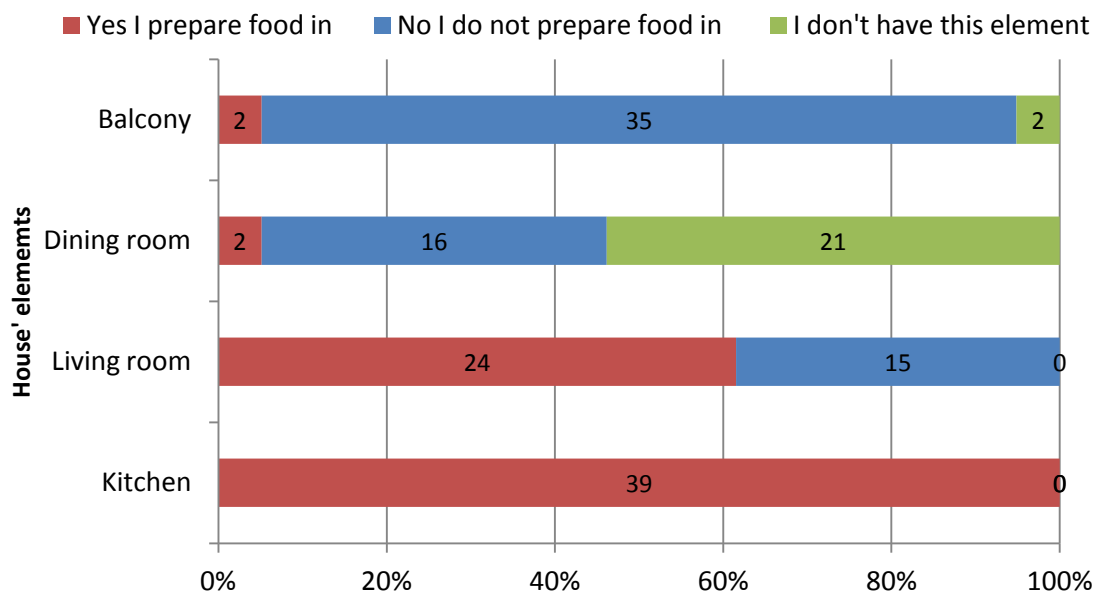
Figure 5.33: House elements where food preparation takes place

Typical comments of the respondents are included as follows:

Qnr. 2 (Area **1**), the wife commented: '*I prepare everything in the kitchen although it is very small and not proper for food preparation*'

Qnr. 7 (Area **1**): '*I would prefer a bigger kitchen with a proper dining table and wider worktop so as to prepare food only in the kitchen, given that most of our meals need a long time to be prepared and it is not easy to stand all the time while doing so.*'

Qnr. 8 (Area **1**): '*I like to have a TV and table for eating in the kitchen, but do not like open-plan kitchen to the living room. It makes the living room smelly and it is difficult to clean the furniture there*'.

Qnr. 11 (Area **1**): '*The living room in this house is for everything, I would prefer to have a separate guestroom, and then I can prepare the food in the living room*'.

Qnr. 17 (Area **2**): '*There is a TV, sofa and big dining table in the kitchen; I prepare everything in the kitchen, only in the kitchen*'.

Qnr. 18 (Area **2**): '*There is a table in the Kitchen so I can prepare the food in the kitchen; we also eat in the kitchen. There is no need to use and eat in other parts of the house.*'

Qnr. 23 (Area **2**): '*I like every space to have one and clear function: the kitchen for cooking, the dining room for having proper meals and gathering with the household members*'.

*Qnr. 33 (*Area **2**)*: 'I do not have time for cooking at all, everyone has different taste & meal & they do not eat home meals, nowadays we can buy any type of food even the traditional ones' 'I will change my house design to an open-plan one in the summer*'

Figure 5.34 illustrates the house elements where food preparation takes place in Area 1 versus Area **2**. It shows that all households in both areas use mainly the kitchen for food preparation. None of households in Area **1** has a dining room whereas only 2 households **(~7 %)** in Area **2** use the dining room for food preparation although two thirds (**67%,** n=18) of households has a dining room or corner. Almost all households (**92%,** n=11) in Area **1** use the living room for food preparation, whereas only around

half of households (**48%,** n=13) in Area **2** use the living room for food preparation. Only one household in Area **1** and one in Area **2** use also the balcony for food preparation.
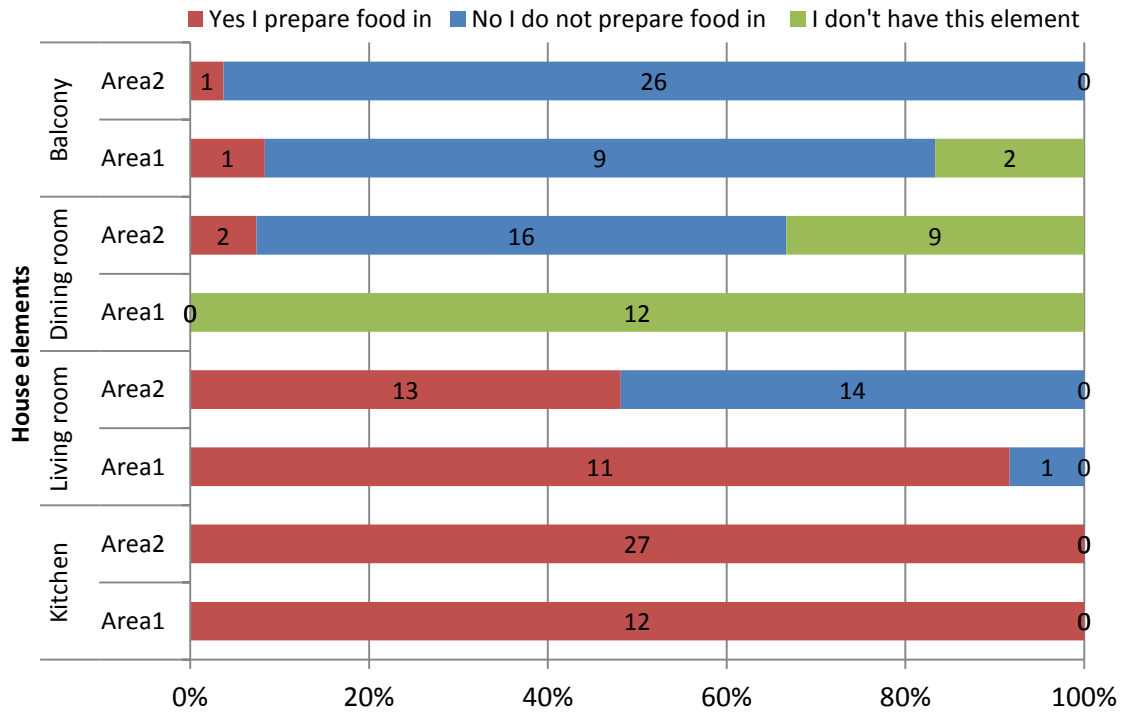
Figure 5.34: House elements where food preparation takes place in Area 1 vs. Area 2

Food preparation and kitchen appliances used by the interviewed households

Kitchen appliances have a significant role in the space configurations, size of the kitchen and thus in the frequency and intensity of using this space which affects, in its turn, the users' lifestyle. Therefore, the researcher asked the interviewees directly or found out by observing what kind of appliances the households had, and also asked them which of those are essential for them nowadays. Comments were added by the respondents mentioning other appliances in addition to what the researcher had noted.

Figure 5.35 shows that an oven, fridge with small freezer, and a washing machine were available in all sampled houses. Bigger freezers were available in **67%** of the total sampled households and **5%** have 2 freezers, one integrated in the fridge and another separate freezer. Most of the households mentioned that there is no need for the separate freezer as all types of foods are available in the supermarket and also frozen foods. **15%** (n=6 HHs.) have dishwashers, **46%** have micro wave and **49%** have

toasters. Regarding electric kettle, **31%** (n=12) of the households have it though a few of them mentioned that they do not use it and it is not needed.
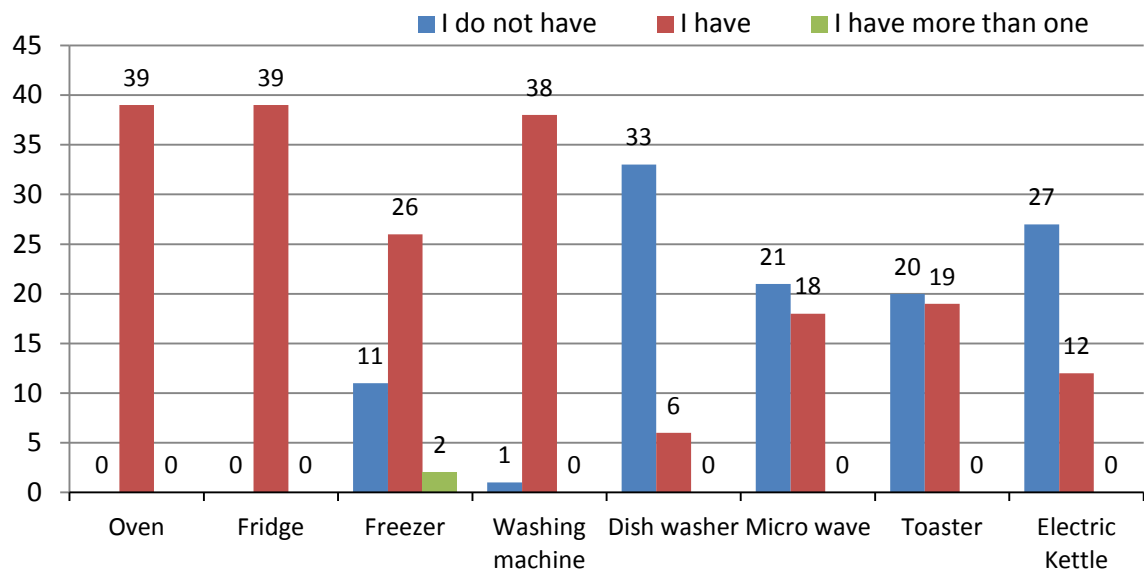
Figure 5.35: Kitchen appliances in sampled houses

Other kitchen appliances were mentioned as frequently used in the household's daily life such as the water dispenser[57], fruit blender, meat grinder, and water filter etc., as it is shown in figure 5.36.
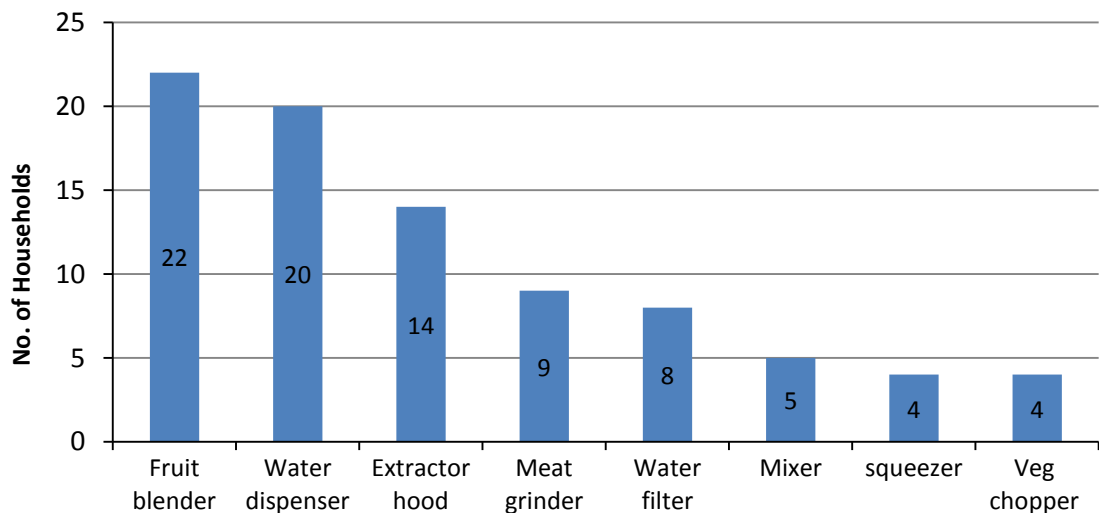
Figure 5.36: Other kitchen appliances in sampled houses

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[57] Water dispenser: or water cooler dispenser has cold and cool water and some have cold and hot water. It is often used in Lattakia because the water is impure and has high percentage of limestone.

The importance of the kitchen appliances nowadays

Figure 5.37 presents the importance of kitchen appliances based on households' opinion. **41%** (n=16) of sampled households believe that a dishwasher and electric kettle are not essential at all and only **5%** (n=2) answered that dishwasher is essential although **15%** of the households have dishwashers as shown in figure 5.78. Only **8%** (n=3) answered that electric kettle is essential though **31%** have it.
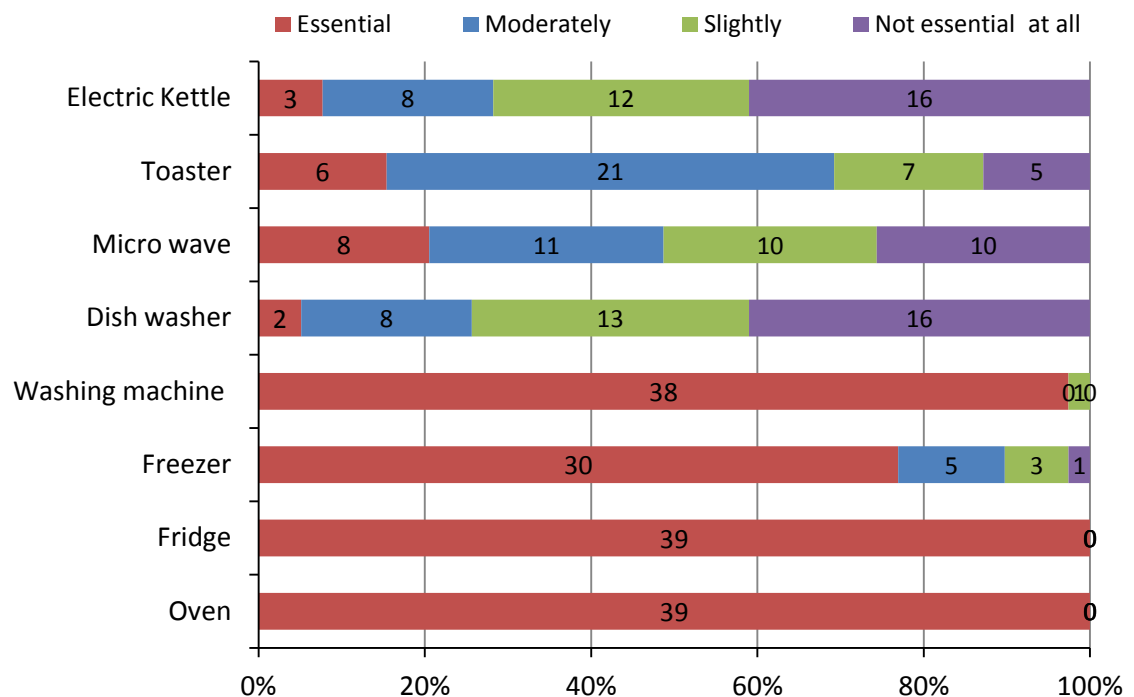
Figure 5.37: The importance of kitchen appliances nowadays

Figure 5.38 represents the reasons and purposes of using the new kitchen appliances by the sampled households. These reasons were proposed in the questionnaires and an open question comment was added. The respondents' gave several reasons prioritizing one to another. The answers were mainly about saving time and efforts so the wife has more time to spend with her family, especially if she works out of the home; making it easier to household members to prepare food and drinks, especially when the wife is busy; and also as prestige and welfare for the households and to adapt to modern trends. A few respondents believe that using some of these appliances is only to imitate others such as friends and relatives, regardless of whether they need them or not. One of them added that health issues were the main reason for using these appliances. However, all of the respondents answered that these appliances provide comfort, especially to the

wife, and a high percentage **(95 %)** of the interviewees appreciate the time the wife can save to spend it with her family.
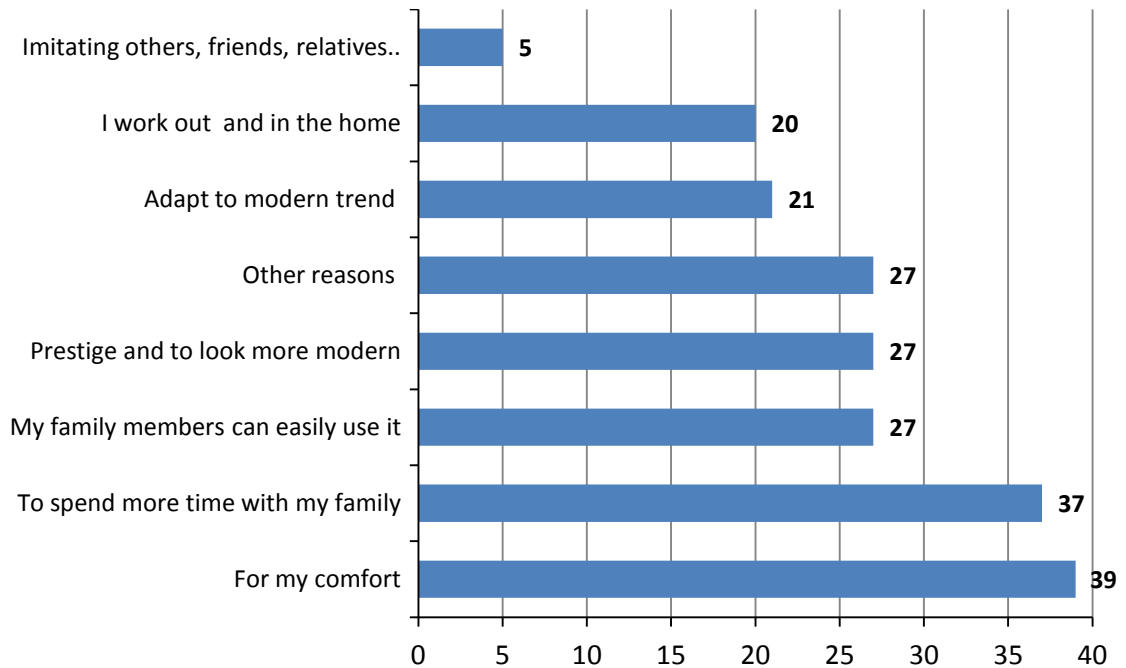
Figure 5.38: Reasons or purposes of using new kitchen appliances (Total No. households 39)

Typical answers regarding the new appliances are included in the following:

Qnr. 1, Area **1**: '*These appliances are essential, not merely a luxury; I prefer to have them even if I am not working out of the home, I have a health problem and I need them for my comfort; none of my household's members use these devices. House chores are all my duty.*'

Qnr. 8, Area **1**: '*We like to try everything; technology is to make life easier*'

Qnr. 14, Area **2**, the wife commented: '*Dishwasher is really good especially when you have an occasion with many visitors. My parents had it a long time ago. Many people use a dishwasher only as prestige or imitating their neighbours, even if they do not use it*'.

Qnr. 15, Area **2**: '*Some of these appliances are only for luxury and not really needed*'.

Qnr. 18, Area **2**, the wife commented: *'I appreciate technology and I like to use it for my comfort; I would like to use a dishwasher but there was no place in the kitchen to put one'*

Qnr. 19, Area **2**: *'These appliances are needed, saving too much effort and time; my children use the electric kettle in their bedroom to drink Matha*[58] *when they are studying'.*

Qnr. 21, Area **2**, the wife *commented: 'I do not like technology in general but I use it'.*

Qnr. 22, Area **2**, commented: *'it is comfortable, it saves me much routine of housework which is not useful & wastes too much time. I do not care who does this work, a machine or an assistant'.*

Qnr. 24, Area **2**: *'Some of these appliances are not needed & I regretted that I bought them'.*

Qnr. 33, Area **2***: 'I use frozen food a lot, all kinds of vegetables & fruits also meat. I only use what I need & what is necessary; I have enough time to do all the home work with some help from a housemaid sometimes'.*

Qnr. 35, Area **2***: 'I do not like blind imitation of others; I use only the devices I need, not the ones my neighbours need'. Many people buy these appliances such as micro-wave just because their neighbours have them, although they always cook using the hob and oven and never need to use it, not even to heat up leftover food.*

Food consumption

Food consumption and its relation to housing design was also investigated in this study to find out the change in food consumption habits and rituals as an indication of cultural

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[58] Matha is a caffeinated herbal drink, which is very popular in a few cities in Syria such as Lattakia and other coastal cities, also mentioned in chapter 3. Half to 2 thirds of a small glass usually is filled of Matha and then hot water frequently poured on top of the Matha and thus the pot needs to be frequently heated. Many Syrians nowadays use the kettle for this purpose.

change, as noted in chapters 2 and 3. Questions were asked regarding the places in the house where food consumption normally takes place and with whom and where the household members prefer to have their meals.

House elements where food consumption takes place

Figure 5.39 represents the most and least used spaces for food consumption at home. The chart shows that no sampled households eat in the bedroom, although a few of them mentioned that their children might have a sandwich or a cup of tea or Matha in the bedroom while studying or using the computer. The balcony was also not a common place to eat as **82%** (n=32) of the total households answered that they do not eat on the balcony, **10%** (n=4) eat sometimes on the balcony, especially in summer time or when it is sunny in winter time, whereas **8%** (n=3) do not have a balcony or they cannot use it. **72%** (n=28) of households do not eat at all in the guest room and **18%** (n=7) do not have a guest room, whereas **10%** (n=4) eat in the guest room probably because it is also used as a living room.

The living room was the most used space at home for eating, as **85%** (n=30) of sampled households eat in the living room, whereas the other **15%** (n=6) of households do not eat in the living room as they do not like to do so. **54 %** (N=21) of households do not have a dining room and **20%** (n=8) do not like to eat in the dining room, whereas **26%** eat in the dining room. Concerning the kitchen, which was not used earlier as a place for eating, this study shows a great tendency to use the kitchen not only for cooking but also for eating, as **67%** (n=26) of households eat in the kitchen and only **2%** (n=1) do not like to eat in the kitchen, whereas **31%** (n=12) of sampled households cannot eat in the kitchen either because it is not prepared for this purpose or it is very small to accommodate a table to eat in the kitchen.
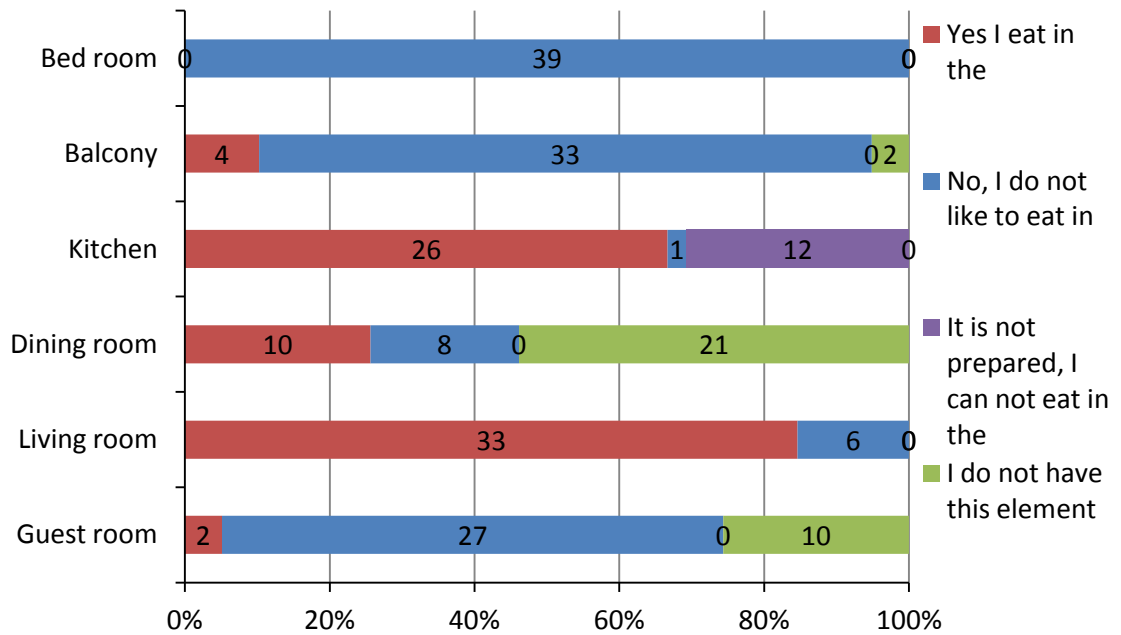
Figure 5.39: House elements where food consumption takes place

Preferable places to eat at home

Figure 5.40 presents the places which sampled households referred to as the comfortable and preferable place to eat in. Some households referred to only one place and some referred to two or three places to eat in such as kitchen, living and dining room. Most of the sampled households **95%** (n=37) prefer to eat in the kitchen and thus to have a bigger kitchen with sitting corner and dining table within the kitchen. **21%** (n=8) like to eat also in the living room. Only **8%** (n=3) like to have meals in the dining or kitchen-dining room.
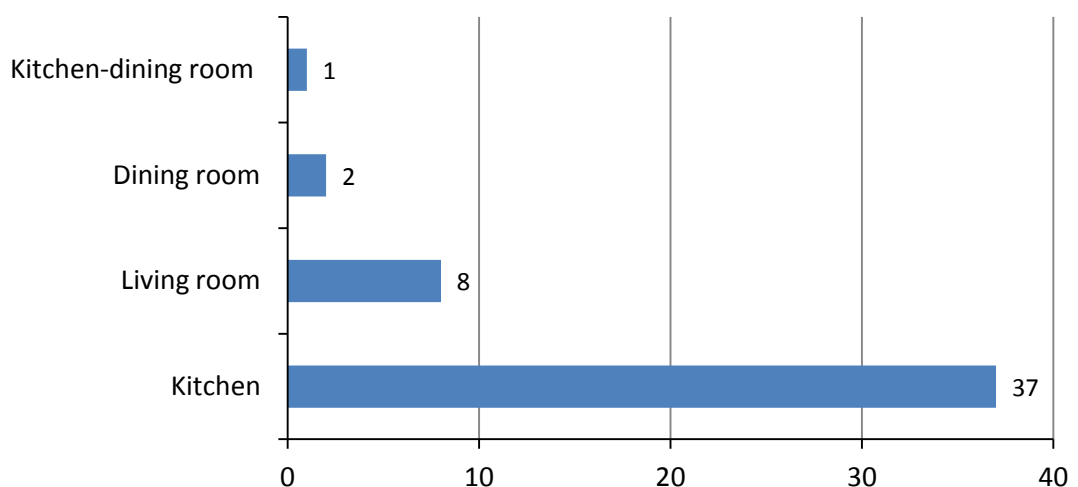
Figure 5.40: Places at home where sampled households prefer to eat

Household members who most often eat together

Figure 5.41 presents the members who most often eat together and whether they eat only with household members or with extended family members and/or with friends. The chart includes more than one answer from each respondent. The chart shows that in Area **1 25%** (N=3) of respondents sometimes eat with friends in the home and **50%** (N=6 of 12) of respondents eat with members of their nuclear and extended family such as a grandmother, grandfather, aunts and/or uncles. Only one respondent mentioned that each member of the household eats alone and at a different time. In Area **2**, only **2** households (~7%) mentioned that they eat with members of their extended family whereas **81%** (n=22) eat mainly with members of their nuclear family. In questionnaire 35, the respondent said: *'We always eat together at all meals, it is very important for us to maintain family solidarity'.* Two of the interviewed wives have responded that they often eat with their children especially at breakfast and lunch time, when the husband is at work. One of the wives in Area **2** (Qnr 27) commented: *'I always eat with my children as my husband is always out at work'.*
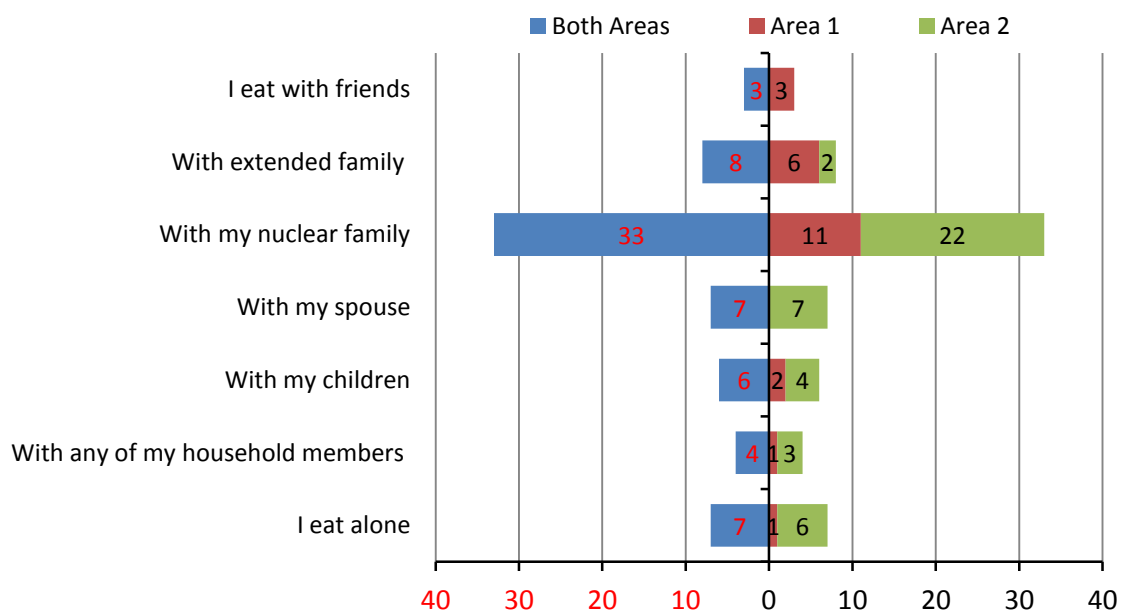
Figure 5.41: Households' members who eat together (Total No. households 39)

Qnr. 1 (Area 1) commented*: 'job is affecting meal times especially lunch. Most employees finish their job at 14. Meals & family's conversation are not associated as they were in the past, so it is not needed to eat in the living room. Family privacy and independency also affects the people we eat with from extended to nuclear family'.*

Qnr. 9, Area 1: *'Meal timing is really messy nowadays. Most Syrians prefer to eat in the kitchen or while watching TV. The size of the kitchen plays an essential role in this, if it is big enough people will eat there'.* **22% (n=6)** of respondents in Area **2** mentioned that they often eat alone for different reasons such as different timing of their jobs, school or university.

5.4.3   *Adapting the kitchen space and elements by the sampled households to fulfill their current social needs*

Most of the households had adapted the kitchen space to fit their social needs by extending the space or opening the kitchen to other parts of the house or by adding furniture such as foldable pieces if the space is very small and not possible to extend it. In several cases they had extended the space of the kitchen by closing (blocking) a balcony and adding it to the kitchen and/or by adding parts of other house elements. Different types of furniture were frequently added and used in the available kitchen space such as folding dining table, butterfly folding table, wall-mounted folding table or by using a small table for eating when the number of members is small. When there is not enough space in the kitchen, they usually eat in the living room, especially when the family size is big and all household members are eating together. The other main reason for the family members to eat in the living room is the TV, as most of them like to watch TV while eating and therefore in several cases a TV was placed also in the kitchen as noted earlier. Some parents believe that it is not healthy and is negative for family solidarity, as this reduces the time of discussion between family members, especially if the overlapping time is limited at home during the day.

The size of the family nowadays plays an essential role in households' tendency to eat in the kitchen rather than in the dining or living room. For instance, in QR.8, Area 1 (Youth Housing) the wife said*:*

> *'I would prefer to eat in the kitchen as it is easier to clean, closer to utilities & cutlery and it is not visible to guests, but our kitchen is small and not a proper place for eating.. My family is small and does not need a large space to eat, not as it used to be with a large number of family members in the past.'*

In the case of having a dining room or dining area, most of the households have their meal in the dining room usually when they have guests joining them.

In Qnr.18 (Area 2), the wife said: '*If I am eating alone, which often happens, I eat in the kitchen. If with my husband we eat in the living room, as he likes to watch TV while eating. If we have guests we eat in the dining area which is part of the guest-living space*".

Figure 5.42 presents the furniture and devices which were added to the kitchen space by the sampled households to fulfill their current social needs, bearing in mind that it was very rare, if at all, to have such elements in the kitchen two decades ago. Figure 5.85 shows that **21% (n=8)** of sampled households added a TV to the kitchen, **18% (n=7)** added a sofa and **56 % (n=22)** added a dining table to the kitchen space. The former changes, make the kitchen a place for food consumption, not only for cooking.
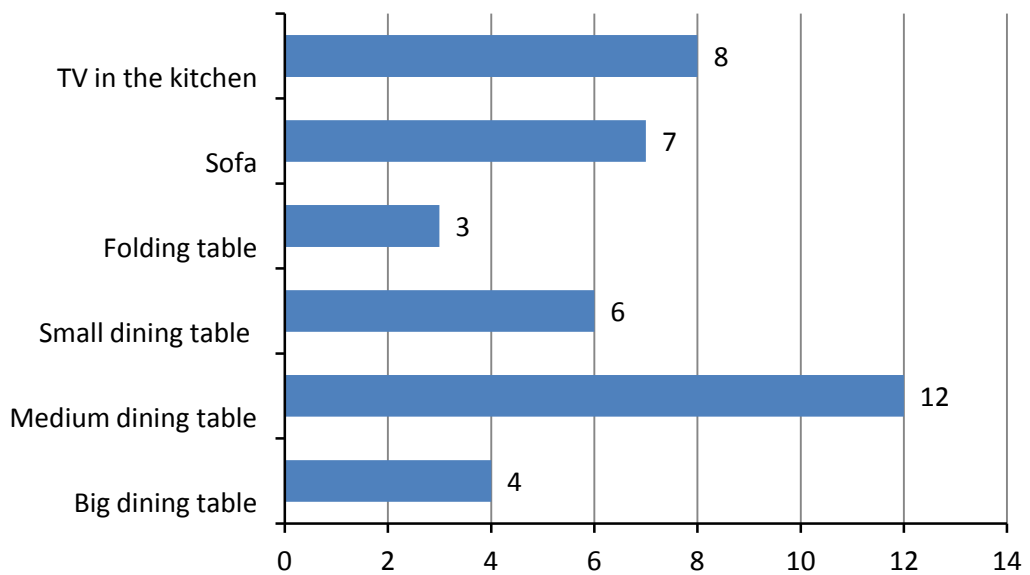
Figure 5.42: Furniture added to the kitchen to fulfil the current households' social needs

5.4.4   *Summary and reflections*

In summary, referring to cultural issues which are most relevant to housing use and design, the two cultural issues proposed in this research – privacy and food preparation and consumption – were considered strongly and rapidly changing in the current life by the majority of the respondents. Three types of privacy were asked about: intra-family privacy which was desired, with **44%** of the households being satisfied with this at home and the others desiring more or much more intra-family privacy; **46%** of sampled

households were satisfied with the level of achieved family privacy, and the others desired more or much more family-privacy, and in regard to women privacy, **49%** of the sampled households were satisfied with the level achieved of women's privacy whereas the others were looking for more or much more women's privacy.

The text above shows that: 1) more bedrooms are needed, regardless of the size of each room, to provide higher level of intra-family privacy. 2) The guest room is not as important as it used to be in the recent past, mainly as a result of weakening relationship with the extended family. 3) The dining room is much less important nowadays, particularly after the significant increase in the number of restaurants which provide a space for big numbers of people to have meals and parties and other occasions, instead of having these in the home. 4) The kitchen is no longer a space for only one member of the family (the wife) and not merely a work space; it is nowadays a space for preparing food, cooking, eating and socializing. As such, this makes the need of having a bigger space with a sitting corner at least or perhaps having a dining table in the kitchen. 5) The living room is accommodating some of the kitchen functions when the kitchen space is small such as preparing food and having a meal or meals. Nowadays, having meals with extended family in the home is much less common for many households but it is still a strong food ritual for the nuclear family to have at least a daily meal all together in the home. When all or most of household members have a meal in the home, it is most likely to take place in the living room if the kitchen is small and there is no proper dining room in the house.

5.5   Conclusion

This chapter addressed questions 1,2,3,5, and 6 from the users' perspectives. It shows from the users' perspectives that there have been rapid cultural changes in the last decades and these were mainly affected by modernization, westernization and globalization. It also showed that privacy and food preparation and consumptions as cultural issues are strongly relevant to housing use and design which have been recently changing and leading to modifications in the house by the users to adapt it to their current cultural change. The next chapter (6) addresses these issues from the designers' perspectives.

Chapter 6:   Housing designers' view and housing design in Lattakia

6.1   Introduction

This chapter focuses mainly on addressing objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6 from the designers' perspective, and also contributes to objectives 1, 2 and 7. This chapter provides findings on the nature of cultural change in Syria and the main factors motivating/ driving such change as perceived by the interviewed designers, which contribute to addressing questions 1 and 2. It also provides findings on cultural issues affecting housing use with special focus on privacy and food preparation and consumption, and the most changing elements of the house and the adaptations of housing design which were frequently requested by the end-users, which addresses question 3, 5, and 6. It then discusses the designers' proactive role in providing housing design under the current cultural change and the design process in generic housing design, which addresses question 4; and suggestions from the interviewed designers for a better approach to the housing design process to provide housing design which is more attuned with the current culture, which addresses questions 6 and 7. This chapter also provides physical evidence of the provision of new housing design by the public sector versus private sector, and illustrates matching and mismatching of these with current cultural change, which addresses question 5 and contributes to questions 3 and 6.

The intended interviewees were male and female actors in housing design but the researcher succeeded in interviewing only male participants from the public and private sectors, architects, civil engineers and developers as qualified and unqualified designers, from different educational and experiential background. This probably was due to male designers being more available whereas female designers are intensively busy in and out of the home. For instance, an identified female interviewee had repeatedly apologized for not being able to attend the interview as she had to supervise on-site projects and to manage childcare at home. Having only male interviewees, probably, does not affect the results of the interviews, since the majority of developers in Syria are men, though women constitute a high percentage of architects who generally participate in the designing stage, not in implementation. In other words, the majority of people who work in practical fields are probably male.

The average of the interview duration was longer than one and a half hours (~90 minutes) with a maximum of 180 minutes and a minimum of 45minutes. The

interviews were conducted in different places and times according to the interviewees' availability and comfort. Two interviews were conducted in a domestic environment, 1 interview with 3 interviewees took place in the Syndicate of Engineers (public office), 3 interviews were in the interviewees' private office, one in the interviewee's private consultancy company, one in a private office of another interviewee, and one interview in a restaurant (public place). Most of the interviews were out of working hours at lunch or dinner time and thus the interruption was limited and the time of the interviews was sufficient and not affected by work pressure. The interviewees' positions in the housing design domain were varied and thus the responses were sufficient and covered most of the intended research topics, though the focus of their answers differs according to their position and experience as shown in appendix 6.1. All interviewed actors in housing design stated that they did not mind revealing their names and a few of them, especially the academics, encouraged the researcher to disclose their names.

6.2   Cultural change in Syria in the last decade

All 11 interviewees agreed that culture in Syria has been witnessing a rapid and strong change in the last decade, pointing at various factors, as interviewee I indicated: '*Global change has not been gradually happening, which made it quite difficult to effectively interact with local culture and thus was unevenly perceived by different sub-cultural groups*'. This latter was highly matched with statements from the household interviewees as end users. For instance, Interviewee **C** (an architect developer working in private sector) even highlights the importance of casting a light on the cultural dimensions of housing use and households' daily life within the home. '*This study is urgently needed, especially in the contemporary increased globalization and its effect on our culture and housing use and design*'. He also emphasized the role of this study in bridging the gap between designers and users: '*The lack of cultural housing information has widened the gap between housing designers and end users*'. This section therefore presents the nature of recent cultural change in Syria as identified by the interviewed housing designers through an open question, ranging from values and principles to changes in housing use and design. The following sections (6.3 onwards) then present the findings from more guided questions exploring the reasons for these changes and specific issues that were pre-identified in the interview topic guides.

6.2.1 *Values and principles*

The prominent cultural change was perceived to be in beliefs, values and principles in Syrian society, as three of the interviewees pointed out:

'*People, nowadays, value money more than morals, appearance more than essence, individual life more than collective life, technological communication more than actual social communication, global product more than local and unique product...etc*'.

This was also reflected in the majority of the households' responses in this study, as shown in chapter 5. Interviewee **G** also emphasized that there is a significant change in values and principles in Syrian society and thus in its culture and sub-cultures.

6.2.2 *Social communication milieu*

Interviewee **K** (Architect, part-time teaching assistant, a member of the Association of Architects), and interviewee **J** (civil engineer, structural designer) assured that the actual community spirit is rapidly decreasing in our society as a result of the current wide spread of virtual communities including all types of online, media and social media networks. Interviewee **K** said: *'My daughter and my son spend several hours using the internet social network, and a few minutes – if any – chatting with me or their mother'*.

6.2.3 *Economic status and stratification*

Three other interviewees believe that the economic factor is the main reason for current cultural changes. Interviewee **D** (Lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture) emphasized the increased socio-economic class differences in society in the last decade as one of the main factors in the current cultural change, in addition to the ideological and religious differences in accordance with different physical communities (modern versus conservative). This is expressed in different ways of using the space as it is explored further later in this chapter, in housing elements use such as balconies which indicate the lifestyle and thus the ideology of users even from outside of the house. Interviewee **F** (Architects consultant in a private company) indicated that economic downturn and economic inequality are the main factors in cultural change, housing design and in households' lifestyle: '*in the past*, *people were generally equal except a*

very limited number of very well-off people'. This had resulted in the dominance of a similar housing typology, at least from outside, as interviewee **J** noted: '*The poor's house and the landlord's house, in the past, had the same simplicity; they differed in the size only'.*

6.2.4   *The effect of cultural change on household life*

It should be noted that it would be important to consider different sub-groups or sub-cultures in Syrian society as different communities according to their ideologies, doctrines and thus lifestyles. Ideally, it would be illuminating to differentiate between these communities vis-a-vis their perceptions and conceptions of current change and thus their different reactions. However, this research focused only on a particular sample of recently built housing in Lattakia, and consideration on different communities would required a wider range of case studies, but also in the context of this presentation of the views from designers, it is worth noting that views on differences between different communities did not feature strongly among the interviewees with a few exceptions (interviewees D and E).

Differentiation between communities

Interviewee **D** underlined the great effect of the rapid change in the way of thinking on people's behaviours: '*Cultural change was reflected in the lifestyle, clothing, eating, and other behaviours and thus housing design and use'.* He also indicated that the reactions to the current rapid changes extremely differ between people from different backgrounds – as subgroups:

> '*This is noticeable between different localities, in sense that extremist groups are isolating themselves in specific areas, rejecting others and staying reluctant to any differences and changes, on the other hand, the extremist liberal and modern groups very rarely accept to interact with the former.'*

Forms of socialization

Seven interviewees out of eleven insisted that the household's shared time has sharply decreased in the last decade, as well as the system of kinship, especially the extended family relationship, which had become weaker than ever before. As shown in interviewee **F'**s comment: '*Children, nowadays, very rarely gather with their parents or with other members of the extended family to watch TV at home or have a chat as*

they used to do often in the past'. 'New technological environment (milieu) made a gap and conflict between the youths and parents (cultural discrepancy)'. Interviewee **B** also highlighted the change in the family's and the household's relationships:

> '*Social relationship is weakening even the relationship between extended family members, and household members, spending a long time with technology and the internet but very short time with family, friends and society'.*

Changing from family relationship to the internet, media and international networks is a prominent change in Syrian society, and particularly in Lattakia. The majority of interviewees mentioned the sharp change in households' priorities from visitors and extended family to the nuclear family. Interviewee **E** commented: '*Syrian households were used to prioritizing guests and visitors over their children and the family's comfort, but now the nuclear family comfort has come to the fore and everything else comes next'.*

Places of socialization

There is a significant change in the places where individuals and groups gather, as these have been transferred from private to public places i.e. from home, with a large reception or open courtyard, to out of home in public buildings and facilities. Interviewee **K** drew attention to the great change in the places where large scale social family activities used to occur, such as wedding parties and funerals.

> '*In the past, the home was the place for most of the family activities including big gatherings for the joys and/or sorrows such as wedding parties, feasts, funeral ceremonies and thus they had needed considerably vast and spacious reception area or guests' hall, whereas nowadays, they book a reception in a hotel, church Hall, a huge restaurant, or a wedding hall*[59] *for wedding parties.*

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[59] Weddings Hall: is generally a separate building on the outskirts of the city or on the way to villages, far away from housing settlements where they can play loud music without disturbing people at night. The wedding parties last for many hours generally between **7** pm and 5am.

> *Funeral ceremonies sometimes take place in the mosque, church, or in temporary shelters[60] for men whereas at home or church for women'.*

The other two interviewees in the same interview agreed with interviewee **J** regarding the change in the individual and group social activities that they are moving towards public spaces instead of private spaces inside the home**.** Interviewee **C** also pointed to the high increase in the public spaces where people can gather: '*increasing the number of restaurants, cafés, internet cafés. Many restaurants are provided with popular singers (not professionals), Shisha (Hubble bubble) which is a dominant street culture in Lattakia nowadays.*'

6.2.5   *Household's lifestyle and house use*

Cultural change is affecting directly and indirectly the household's lifestyle and thus housing use, and this in its turn results in repeated modifications of house elements which reflect the general social needs and demands of the end-users. For example interviewee A said:

> *'Family members, in contemporary life, spend most of their time – when they are at home – in the kitchen and in many cases they put a TV in it. This and other modifications are attributed to the change in their mentality, social needs, lifestyles and thus they are modifying their houses and guiding indirectly the change in housing design',*

Interviewee **A** indicated the above based on his extensive experience in housing design and frequent modifications required by his clients, as it is explored further later in this chapter.

6.2.6   *Change in housing use and housing design*

Interviewee **A** underlined the most common changes in housing use in the last decade. He mainly emphasized the change in the kitchen use becoming more of a family use,

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[60] Temporary shelter: is erected (assembled) for a few days – generally 3 or 7 – for consolation, it is often made of strong and thick linen such as flax or canvas.

which led to extend its space and the bedroom use becoming more of an individual use, which led to increase the number of bedrooms:

> '*The living room is gradually moving to the kitchen or at least using the kitchen as also a living room. Family members spend most of their time in the kitchen and in many cases they put a TV in it, they therefore, expand the kitchen whenever possible to fit their current needs and furnish it properly with a sitting area and TV. Nowadays people prefer to eat in the kitchen as this is easier and more practical for family members*'. He added: '*Using the house's elements is currently different from the past, for instance the bedroom is now used by only one member,*'

Interviewee **B** summarized the current change in housing use by trying to categorize the house's spaces to individual family members private use, family private use, and visitors less private use: '*there is a significant reduction in using the visitors' parts – spaces – and limited use of household shared spaces at home such as the living-room – each member stays most of the time in his bedroom studying, chatting on the internet and sleeping.*'

Interviewee **C** believed that the physical change had been very slow in architecture comparing to other Arabic countries such as Dubai. He stated that changes in housing are limited to the internal design:

> '*There was no clear physical change in Syria and particularly in Lattakia for a long time, perhaps 30 years, and this is regarding housing and also other themes, i.e. the external design, layout, facades and other architectural features did not change much, but the internal design has been slightly changing. For instance, the traditional house in Lattakia was as much as in the inner cities of Syria: a central salon – reception area – which is open to the sky and surrounded by rooms, whereas this type is no longer used nowadays.*

He also indicated that this type is not practical and not proper for the current lifestyle in Lattakia, whereas the academic[61] type which is taught in the architecture faculty nowadays might be still appropriate for a considerable percentage of Syrian families: *'in the past, the academic type in architecture was dominant, which is based on a clear separation between nocturnal and diurnal parts of the house by corridors and doors.'*

Interviewee **D** emphasised the same point that the main corridor which separates the diurnal from nocturnal parts is gradually disappearing. He attributed this to the current social needs of more open groups for more open and 'modern' space: *'more open households tend to have the kitchen and the living room in one space, which leads to have less corridors and more open space, but this is not necessarily to be an American kitchen style.'* He justified the need for open space as a reflection of lifestyle change and new function of the house's elements:

> *'The kitchen is increasingly becoming a place for all household members' activities, not only a work place for women. Moreover, the new home appliances such as extractor hood, microwave, dishwasher and other clean and neat novel appliances all help to integrate the kitchen into the living room and in many cases to guests space. This makes the kitchen a displaying place instead of being only a work place'.*

He also commented that some kitchen appliances are considered essential nowadays, even if they are not used, such as Microwave. This reflected widespread fashion of modern kitchen appliances in contemporary life and it being essential to consider this in the current housing design. Other interviewees also underlined this statement, for instance interviewee **I** commented: *'The kitchen is more tidy and organized than ever before by using modern appliances and cupboards, and it is highly likely to have most of the meals in the kitchen when it is applicable with enough space, otherwise having food would take place in the living room.'*

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[61] Academic housing design which was taught in the faculty Lof architecture in Lattakia in the last 30 years or more based on several rules, one of which was to separate diurnal parts from nocturnal parts of the flat via corridors or halls, especially the guests room, which has sometimes a separate door from outside.

Since the washing machine in the recent past was considered one of the kitchen appliances in Syria, Interviewee **D** highlighted people's current tendency to separate the space for laundry from the kitchen, as this has been recently placed in or near the bathroom:

> '*One of the noticeable changes regarding the kitchen appliances is moving the place of washing machine from the kitchen to the bathroom or near-by the bathroom – if not in a specific place for washing clothes – although it is still often located in the kitchen.*'

Interviewee **E** had quite a similar opinion to the former vis-a-vis the tendency to open-plan kitchen: '*Nowadays, most of Lattakian clients prefer the open-plan kitchen or what is called "American kitchen" in Syria.*' Pointing at the significant decrease in dining-room use in the current life in Lattakia and probably in other cities of Syria, he added: '*The dining room is only used for special guests and for food feast, which is very rarely practiced nowadays and I think it is somewhat for boasting, showing off and extravagance.*' He attributed the different ways and places of hosting visitors to the economic status: '*I strongly believe that economic status is directing the way and the place of hosting the guests, whether at home or out of home.*' He detailed the former showing the different practice between well-off and limited-income households:

> '*Well-off households invite their guests out of home to restaurants, saving the housewife's effort and time, whereas limited-income households invite their guests to the home to save money*'.

Contrary to his previous statements he commented: '*On the other hand, people would invite their guests out of the home if their house is not well furnished and nicely displayed.*' This interviewee seemed to imply that better-off people are able to afford bigger houses and thus provide enough space for family privacy, which makes it possible to have also a separate space for guests. Interviewee **E** also commented:

> '*people in Lattakia, in general, do not meet much their guests, friends, and sometimes not even relatives at home, concerning the family privacy, and thus do not need to have a guest room. Instead they need a living room.*'

Interviewee **G** emphasized that new lifestyle is greatly affecting household social needs at home and thus housing use: '*New lifestyle creates a need for new spaces in the house, such as an office for the computer or a particular space in the bedroom for a laptop.*' He also pointed at the increasing need for intra-family privacy at home: '*there is an urgent need to provide a bedroom for each member and another room for studying and reading*'.

The former statement by interviewee **E** was also highlighted by interviewee **H** vis-a-vis prioritizing a reception area for display over family comfort at home: '*boasting and pretending are part of our culture now and thus people over care about the reception area in the house, whereas they pay less attention to other parts of the house where guests do not enter or see.*' This response was not precise and quite different from households' answers, which show that limited income as well as well-off households prefer and often meet their guests or friends outdoors to provide privacy for the nuclear family's members regardless of their economic status. The difference lies probably in the level of the public places the different economic classes go to.

Interviewee **I** commented: '*Middle-class households still, to some extent, have concern about the salon (guests and living room) although guest rooms are generally closed and sometimes locked.*' Showing that the guest room is rarely used nowadays although users still demand to have them, interviewee **K** also underlined that a '*spacious hall is used now only for prestige, not for a need as there is a great gap between people's needs and demands nowadays*'. He attributed this to a great change in lifestyle, especially the forms of socialization as mentioned in the text above: '*Home is no longer used for big gatherings such as wedding parties, feasts, and funeral ceremonies and thus there is no need for spacious reception area or guest hall*'.

Some interviewees highlighted the decrease in dining-room use, for instance interviewee **J** commented: '*the use of dining room is very limited now and does not exceed once a month and even less*'. He also commented: '*nowadays, the dining room is integrated with guest and/or living room in an open or semi-open space using curtains, accordion doors or other type of separators*'. This implies that the dining room is no longer a separate space as it is becoming increasingly less important in housing design.

In their joint interview, interviewees **I, J** and **K** summed up the argument that the dominant house elements provided for middle-class households are: guest or reception space, living room, 2-3 bedrooms, toilet, and bathroom with flush toilet in a surface area average of 100-120 sq m. Interviewee **I** also commented in more detail about the house elements:

> '*It is highly unlikely to provide a single bedroom for each member of a middle-class household, and perhaps there is no bathroom in the master (parents') bedroom and there are a separate Arabic toilet, which is usually used by guests and family members, and another flush toilet in the bathroom used only by family members.*

A few of the interviewees indicated that housing design has been inappropriately changing and generally becoming out of line with the current cultural change. For instance, interviewee **F** underlined the improper change in the architecture in Lattakia: '*The architecture in Lattakia has been witnessing regression and distortion since 1960, and also the housing types, and it is currently intensively changing out of line with cultural change.*' He attributed this regression to a few factors such as economic downturn and also economic inequality, high population growth, lack of land, weak urban planning especially in the roads hierarchy and the most important reason is the absence of architects' role for long period of time. He also pointed at the rapid increase in the number of floors in residential buildings as a result of the factors mentioned above:

> '*In the 1960s all buildings were 2-3 storeys except public buildings, which were 4 storeys. In the 1970s, building storeys increased to 5 because of the high population density and the increase in number of households. In the 1980s, 6-7 storey buildings dominated in the city of Lattakia.*'

On the other hand, interviewee **H** pointed at the horizontal building expansion: '*Syria has been witnessing a large housing building expansion, not only formal but also informal settlement*'. He asserted that this expansion was a result of an urgent need to house a rapid and highly increased population in the city of Lattakia, especially with the increase in the number of smaller-size households.

Interviewee **J** argued with the other two interviewees (during their joint interview) that the architecture of Lattakia is currently missing its distinctive simplicity and similarity, which disguised class inequality if it existed.

Interviewee **I** commented that housing design change – *practically the change in housing design does not reflect the current cultural change* – is reflecting the chaotic situation of current architecture in general and housing design in particular. He also mentioned that the change in housing design has been somewhat limited to interior decoration: '*In Lattakia, although there are some changes in the decoration ways and materials in some types of houses, the interior space configuration is still the same*'.

6.2.7   *Summary and reflection*

Referring to cultural change in the last decade, overall, most of the interviewees emphasized the strong effect of recent rapid cultural change – especially the change in social values and principles, social communication milieu, and economic status and stratification – on the family life and household social needs in the home, which in turn, affected housing use and design. Therefore, the need for this study was highlighted to assist in bridging the gap between the designers and the end users. Places of socialization have been transferred from private to public spaces, i.e. from home to out of the home. Therefore, the guest area at home has been decreasingly used in the last decade as a result of current households' tendency to meet their guests out of the home, which indicated the need for a higher level of family privacy. Therefore, guest space is likely to become an inessential element in housing use and thus housing design. Despite the decreasing use of guest space at home, there is still a concern about it as an indicator of status of the household, as a few interviewees noted. Another prominent change in households housing use is the significant increase in the use of the kitchen by all or most of household members as a place for different family activities, and particularly as a place for food preparation and consumption in addition to other activities which are usually practiced in the living room. There is a clear tendency of household members towards individual use of bedrooms even if this leads to a smaller size bedroom. The bedroom seems to be used not only for sleeping but also for studying, internet use and sometimes a place for the children to meet their friends. Regarding housing design change, from the designers' point of view, it is still slow and out of line with cultural change in the city of Lattakia, and the dominant change seems to be in the density of houses, in the vertical and horizontal expansion as a result of the

rapid population growth and the increase in the number of smaller households. It was also claimed that the change in the home is limited to decoration. It was pointed that the economic downturn and inequality, in addition to the weak urban planning and marginalized role of architects, led to a clear regression in the architecture of the city of Lattakia, with no distinctive architectural identity.

6.3 Motivations of current cultural change

All interviewees, as shown in the text above, illustrated the change in housing use and in the priority of house elements referring to cultural change as a main driver, and the majority demonstrated how and why these changes have been occurring vis-a-vis current cultural change highlighting several factors of this change as follow.

6.3.1 *Modernization and high technology*

Most of the interviewees emphasized how essential modernization and high technology have been driving cultural change and housing use. For instance, interviewee **A** commented: '*Modernity and highly technical equipments affected culture and thus housing use, such as cooking devices, which strongly changed the kitchen use*'. Interviewee **C** commented: '*there is no way to ignore the great role of information technology and the internet in changing people's job types and working time, which leads to the change in lifestyle and culture*'. On the other hand, interviewee **H** criticized moving towards modernization as he believed that it is 'fake': '*Our society is moving to a fake and superficial modernization, tending towards materialism, money and prioritizing these over essence and morals*'.

6.3.2 *Westernization*

Interviewee **D**, as a few other interviewees, referred to westernization as a prominent factor in driving lifestyle and cultural change and thus changing in housing use: '*...changing in lifestyle which became a mix of local and western cultures, for instance nowadays both man and woman work out of the home,*'. Interviewee **E** also commented: '*The main change is based on imitating westerners: freedom, fashion, using high tech. The openness has strongly affected the rapid cultural change in the last 10 years*'. In the same vein interviewee **K** commented: '*We are superficially affected by westerners. Westerners take what they need from modernity; we take whatever is available in the market.*'

6.3.3 *Globalization*

Interviewee **C**, who runs his business in several countries around the world, drew attention to the effect of globalization on cultural change. '*Globalization is coming to the fore as business, knowledge, and culture are no longer limited to boundaries of one country; technological and digital revolutions all are supportive means for globalization.*' Interviewee **F** also commented: '*The Internet, Arabic and international investments strongly affected the culture of Syrians'.* He added:

> '*The idea of the restaurant started in France – I think – and then it became a global business and culture and now also fast food and online delivery and so on start to influence our culture, which in turn affects housing use and design such as having all the big family gatherings out of the home, which would have been considered rudeness in the past or in a traditional family.*'

6.3.4 *Economy*

A few interviewees claimed that people's economic status is the main reason for cultural change and housing use and design. For instance, interviewee **E** commented: '*Economic status improvement and the recent monetary liquidity intensively affected the lifestyle'.* He also commented: '*Economic independence from parents reduces the parents' or grand parents' control over the family'.* Interviewee **A** also believed that economic status has played a significant role in cultural change and housing use, as he commented:

> '*I think the economic status has also been strongly affecting this change. Nowadays people are better off and economic status is better in general in all Syria, which let them give more attention to the housing design in relation to socio-cultural needs'.*

Interviewee **I** also believed that economic status has an essential role in cultural change*:* '*economic status determines the level and degree of cultural change. Well-off people are the first affected and recipients of the new cultural change stage.*' On the other hand, interviewee **F** argued the economic status from different point of view, as he believed that the economic downturn, economic inequality, population growth, and lack of land are the main factors of housing design and thus housing use, and this, as he said,

leads the cultural change. Figure 6.1 essentially shows two different points of view about the relation between economic status and housing design and cultural change.
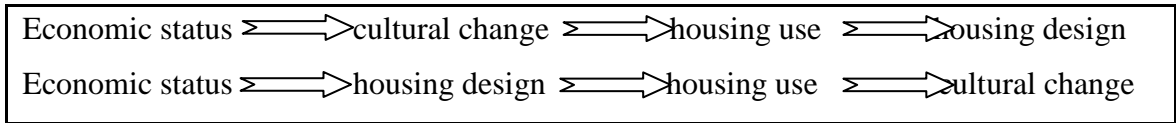
Economic status ⇒ cultural change ⇒ housing use ⇒ housing design

Economic status ⇒ housing design ⇒ housing use ⇒ cultural change

Figure 6.1: The relation between economic status and housing design and cultural change based on the designers' responses

The strong correlation and the reciprocal impact of economic and culture change slightly disguise the relation between 'wills and means'. As shown in the literature review in chapter 2, Rapoport emphasized the physical factors as a secondary reason, and culture as primary factor in housing use and design.

6.3.5 *Demography*

A few of the interviewees pointed at the great increase in the population of Lattakia and its impact on culture and housing design, as interviewee **F** commented:

> '*In 1920 (French mandate) the population in Lattakia was approx 15000; in 1945(independence) it was 35000 and now (2011) it is around 1,000,000. Rapid population growth as well as the scarcity of land have resulted in smaller-size houses and even moving from houses to apartments*'.

Interviewee **E** underlined the direct effect of high population on lifestyle and the way of socializing: '*it is quite difficult to host guests at home nowadays with the increase in the number of people you know in a wide social network.*' He added: '*you cannot meet all people you know at home; otherwise your home will be like a restaurant or café shop. This is not bearable nowadays, especially in the case of working wives.*'

Family structure and kinship ties

The majority of interviewees pointed at the significant change in family structure and kinship ties noting that society is moving from solidarity based on extended family to the one based on the nuclear family, which in turn, is becoming smaller. For instance, interviewee **H** specified it as moving towards individualism: '*Nowadays the collective lifestyle is disappearing, lifestyle is moving towards individualism*'. Interviewee **A**

considered the change in household size and its relation to relatives as a great transformation in our society and with a significant effect on lifestyle and housing design:

> '*Household has fewer members and far fewer guests, especially those relatives who sleep for a night or a few nights regardless of whether that is convenient for the host or not. This change is a rational result of the new technology, especially transportation, which is now available everywhere and all villages have frequent trips to and from city so no need for relatives to stay overnight. Telephones and mobile phones also reduced unexpected visitors.*'

Another important point he and another interviewee mentioned, is the high and rapid increase in the number of restaurants and cafe shops over the last 10 years, which in his opinion provide public places for people gathering not only at home, and makes the housewife's life easier and gives higher level of family privacy.

Parents-children relationship

All interviewees pointed at the change in parents-children relationship as children are becoming slightly out of parents' control and parents are becoming gradually more permissive, as interviewee **F** mentioned: *'The control and power of parents have significantly diminished over the last 10 years; Parents became less strict and more permissive, especially in the newly-rich households '*. They referred to the economic independence from parents as a main reason for children being less controlled by parents, as interviewee **E** commented: '*Economic independence from the parents reduces the parents' or grand parents' control over the family'*. He explained in more detail: *'If I had been economically dependent on my parents they would have not let me chose my wife, especially given that she is from a different city and a different religious sect'*. Other interviewees believed that new technology, especially computers, the internet and mobile phones gave new generations more power over their parents. As for instance interviewee **B** commented:

> '*My children are more familiar with new technology than I am. I often ask them for help in fixing my mobile settings, computer, and the internet; this gives them a feeling of power over me and their mother.*'

6.3.6   *International communication*

Interviewee **D** and **G** stated that access to different cultures through the internet and international media plays an essential role in cultural change.   Interviewee **H** highlighted the role of different cultures' and sub-cultures' interaction in current cultural change in Syria and Lattakia in particular*: 'high technology, developed transportation services and fast communication means facilitate higher level of cultural communication on the national and international scales.'* Interviewee **I** also commented:

> *'Way of thinking, beliefs, and lifestyle and thus culture have been changing in the last decade because of the interaction with recent diverse cultural variables. The new generation is extremely affected because of the availability of computers, accessibility to the internet and international media and thus easy international interaction'.*

The majority of interviewed designers' responses matched the households' responses in the sense of the great effect of new digital technology in facilitating a wide range of cultural interaction between diverse societies and social groups which play an important role in current cultural change.

6.3.7   *Women's role in household and society*

Working women, especially wives, had a central focus in the answers of a few interviewees, considering this an important reason for cultural change as this affects, in their opinion, the household's lifestyle, housing use and design.   For instance, interviewee **D** highlighted the importance of women's changing role in society and especially in the household:

> *'Having a high percentage of working women in the society reflects the tendency towards liberty and openness, where men and women practise most of the activities in the same space, sometimes out of the home, and at home, such as cooking, eating, and chatting and also having their guests in shared areas. Women nowadays spend a long time working out of the home, which generated a need to put the children in the nursery or with grandmother, nanny or*

> *nursemaid and therefore parents are no longer the only source of education and then when they grow up the internet is a wide range of education'.*

In other words, the house is no longer the 'ivory tower' of woman or children where they have to spend all their day and night, and then there is less need to have the traditional elements such as courtyard, gardens, fountain etc which provided more and differentiated indoor spaces.

In summary, several factors have been motivating and driving cultural change in Syrian society as seen by the interviewed designers, and these in turn affect housing use and design. The following factors were frequently, directly and/or indirectly, referred to: modernization as they see the society moving to high technology, novel equipments, nuclear family, individualism and less solidarity; westernization seeing the current culture as a mix between local and western cultures, moving towards openness, western modernity, freedom and fashions; and globalization, as knowledge, business, and cultures have exceeded the geographic boundaries of different countries. Other indicators of the former factors were also emphasized in the key informants' feedback such as the economic status change, especially economic inequality, downturn, and monetary liquidity; demography including population increase, family structure moving from solidarity based on extended family towards nuclear family, and also parents-children relationship moving from totally parental control to more permissive relation; and women's role in society, which move them from the home to the outside, sharing men in most other working domains.

6.4   Cultural concepts most relevant to housing use

As noted above, the majority of the interviewees emphasized family privacy and particularly intra-family privacy as the most important cultural concept which is driving the change in housing use and design. They believe that food habits (preparation and consumption) come next, as for instance interviewee **D** commented: *'privacy and social relationships come first, and then food preparation and consumption, in changing and affecting housing use and design'.* Although he prioritized social relationships, he often specified privacy towards guests first, then between household members (intra-family privacy).

A few interviewees underlined the significant role of family structure, such as household size, as a cultural concept that is most relevant to housing use, as interviewee **G** commented: *'family structure, higher need for privacy, and food habits and rituals changes, all strongly affected housing use and changed household priorities'.* Whereas interviewee **F** believed that food preparation has a prominent cultural role in changing housing design, explaining how people in the recent past used to have a major care about food production and preparation[62] which used to take place in open space:

> *'For instance, in June, all people used to start making apricot jam and dry it on the house roof; in July, they used to make the vermicelli (wicks of pasta) and also dry it on the roof when the sun is very strong. In July, when the tomato is available and cheap, they used to squeeze the tomato and dry it (tomato paste). In September and October, Sorki[63] and olives and several types of juices such as lime, lemon, sour grapes, and the red pepper paste used to be prepared mainly in the open spaces such as courtyard, sofa or balcony'.*

He added: *this distinctive phenomenon of food rituals are disappearing nowadays.* He emphasized that the courtyard, roof, and spacious balconies are no longer needed for food production and preparation.

6.4.1 *Privacy*

Family privacy and intra-family privacy was a central focus of the interviewees as fundamental factors in changing housing use, and most of them illustrated in detail the direct change in housing design as a need to achieve a higher level of privacy. For instance, interviewee **A** emphasized the urgent need for intra-family privacy as people frequently asked for more bedrooms no matter how small they were: *'bedroom is more likely to be used by one household member as the need for intra-family privacy is urgently increasing'.* He attributed this to the different interests of household members: *'Every member wants his/her own computer or laptop, musical instrument if s/he plays*

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[62] Ten years ago, Syrian used to have specific times in the year when all households would be busy with food production and preservation, which is nowadays far less as these now available in the markets.

[63] *Sorki (shankeesh), is a type of aged sun-dried cheese, usually formed into fist sized balls covered with Zataar (thyme). It is produced in Syria and Lebanon.*

any'. He also emphasized that they seek an individual bedroom regardless of its size: *'Every member is looking for his privacy within the house even if the room becomes smaller and smaller, the most important part is to practise their intra-family privacy'.* One of the interviewees noted the need for privacy even towards parents:

> *'Youths try to purchase a house whenever it is possible and affordable to leave their parents' house, as it is a social need nowadays, but most of the time they cannot afford it'.*

Family privacy towards guests was reflected by limiting the number of guests at home, and/or separating the reception guests' room by a corridor when possible. For example, interviewee **D** illustrated: *'The number of visits and visitors at home is considerably smaller than ever before, especially for lunch or dinner. They often dine out of the home with their guests. .*

6.4.2 *Food preparation and consumption*

Interviewee **A** highlighted the change in food preparation and consumption from a heavy, time consuming, and large meal for a large number of family and extended family members to a lighter, quicker and smaller meal for only a nuclear family, given that the extended family living in the same house is very limited now in Syria in general and Lattakia in particular.

> *The change is noticeable in cooking and eating habits and sometimes rituals, as a high percentage of Syrian households now depend partly on ready meals, especially employees. If wife and husband are working out of the home, then they often take ready meals from restaurants'.*

Interviewee **E** also underlined the great change in food preparation and consumption: *'Sandwiches, fast food, ready meals, food deliveries, eating in cafeterias, restaurants, gardens and even eating while walking are all prominent practices in contemporary life.'*

Not only food preparation and consumption but also all practices relating to foodways play a role in housing use and design, as interviewee **F** emphasized *'food production, preparation and consumption, are very important in housing design, especially in the*

Mediterranean architecture'. He drew attention to the great change in the production of food being mainly produced at home in the past, whereas in contemporary life it is generally ready:

> '*Food production and preparation rituals at home made a very distinctive and unique social environment in Lattakia, like in other cities of Syria. Food is a rich part of Syrian societal heritage and culture. The front courtyard used to be a very essential element in the house to prepare the provisions'.*

Interviewee **G** referred to the women working out of the home as one of the reasons for food rituals change: *'the wife's job type crucially affects the food preparation and consumption. If she is working out of the home, the family usually depends on ready and fast food most of the weekdays'.* He added: *'Current lifestyle led to have a later lunch and lighter dinner, mostly fruits'.*

Interviewee **I** highlighted the difference between classes in the society in this process of cultural change, as he believed that the practice of privacy has changed and been changing in well-off households, not in lower classes, whereas food rituals have changed in the society regardless of the economic level or socioeconomic class of the household: *'There is a significant change in food rituals (preparation, consumption, meanings, and values) in all social classes as a result of the busy and rapid pace of temporary life, especially among individuals of new generations, who have a clear tendency towards individualism.'*

Interviewee **K** went into more detail. He said*: 'I believe that less than **20%** of the households in Lattakia have lunch together nowadays, whereas approximately **80%** often have dinner together.'* He attributed this to the change in job types: *'The work day starts later than it used to be, which led to a late breakfast and having the lunch at work'.*

6.5   Most changing elements of the house

Interviewee **A** believed that the main changing element in housing design is the bedroom '*I strongly believe that the prominent change in housing use and thus design is increasing the number of bedrooms with smaller size'.*

Cultural concept	Housing use	Required design modifications
Intra-family privacy	• More use of individual space • Less use of family sharing space	• More bedrooms • Less living, dining space
Family-privacy	• Less frequent guests at home • Less visitors dining with family members	• Less guest space • Smaller dining table and space
Foodways	• Less home-made food, less odour • Less drying and producing food on open spaces such as balconies and loggias • Kitchen novel appliances • Novel appliances easier and safer to be used by all family members • More use of ready food and take away • Tidy kitchen and novel appliances	• Less isolated kitchen • Less balconies – number & space • Bigger size kitchen with proper configuration for the new appliances • Larger kitchen to accommodate a higher number of family members • Possible open-plan kitchen
Working woman	• More members using the kitchen • Wife using the TV in the kitchen while cooking • Wife cooking less often, having ready meals and going out more often to restaurant • Fewer visitors in the home, especially during official working hours	• Bigger size kitchen • Considering a place for a TV in the kitchen • Less need for a dining room and replacing it with a dining table in the kitchen • Prioritizing other house elements over the guest room
Family structure	• Nuclear family (fewer members) • Smaller-size household (4-5 members) • Fewer members in a bedroom • Extended family members rarely stay over night	• Smaller-size flat • Possible to accommodate a dining table in the kitchen • Possible smaller-size bedrooms • Guests bedroom no longer is needed • Smaller dining table and space

Table 6.1: Impact of cultural concepts on housing use and the modifications required in housing design according to key informants

Most interviewees emphasized the great change in kitchen use and design, as interviewee **D** stated (see his comment in 2.6.2) that the kitchen is becoming more in the centre of the house, integrating to the living and/guest space, and the kitchen nowadays is used by all households members for different activities, not only by the wives for cooking*:* He seemed to be referring to higher -class households regarding the end-users tendency towards an open plan kitchen to the guest space, as his view differs to some extents from the interviewed households, who frequently mentioned that they prefer the kitchen to be separate from the guest space.

Although the interviewees mentioned a few cultural concepts as relevant to housing use such as family structure, woman's role, and social relationships, the majority considered privacy (family privacy and intra-family privacy) and food preparation as the most relevant to housing use and design. The impacts, therefore, are mainly on bedrooms and kitchens (see Table 6.1).

6.6 The proactive role of designers in housing design in the light of current cultural change

Some of the interviewees stated that they highly consider current cultural change when undertaking housing design, in accordance with the building design regulations, and some of them said that they try to consider it but they often cannot do so, as housing design in general is controlled by developers. Interviewee **A** commented in this sense:

> *'I carefully consider these new cultural and social residents' needs when I design, but according to the building codes and regulations. When I design speculatively for public population and unknown clients I try to provide different types and sizes to fulfil different social needs and for different economic classes.'*

Interviewee **C**, as a developer, commented: *'I imposed on many of my clients to have an open-plan kitchen, which is dominantly called "American kitchen", to integrate the kitchen with the rest of the house'.* He believed that this type of kitchen-plan is appropriate for current cultural change, which is in tandem with contemporary busy life, especially a working woman's life and her current position in the society. He claimed that the majority of households prefer an open-plan kitchen to a closed and isolated one,

especially after using it in practice. He also insisted that this way would let the housewife spend longer time with her family:

> *'Demolishing this wall can take the woman out of the isolated territory (kitchen or cooking area) to the heart of the house, especially as the Syrian woman spends quite a long time in the kitchen.'*.

Interviewee **E** emphasized his consideration for cultural change and differences between different neighbourhoods: *'if the area is open and modern such as Alzeeraa I consider putting the kitchen adjoining the living and guest room so they can easily modify it and open it to the salon'*. His latter comment shows his power as a developer to control housing design and also shows his consideration for the differences in cultural change between different areas. He also highlighted the frequent modifications which are made by end-users after moving into the house and his high consideration for these changes and modifications in his new housing designs. He gave an example of a change he made in his strategy in housing design according to current cultural change and social needs:

> *'I used to put the kitchen closer to the nocturnal part (bedrooms) but the clients often ask to have it closer to the salon'*. He added: *'I used to complete the finishing work of my own buildings and then put them on market, but in Lattakia this strategy does not work as the majority of people are middle or lower middle class and thus they cannot afford a finished house.'*

Some of the interviewees believe that the change in housing use has been only slightly taken into account in the official housing design process. A few interviewees think that it is not taken into account, such as interviewee **H,** who commented**:** *'Most of the buildings are not appropriate for the end-users, which lead them to try to modify their houses whenever they have the opportunity to do so'*. Interviewee **B** also commented:

> *'It is partly taken into account but without a proper study or discussion between architects/ building designers and the end users, as this process predominantly occurs according to the building owner's will and benefit'*.

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Privacy and food preparation in designers' strategy

Most of the interviewees claimed that they try to take the current cultural change into account in their housing design strategy, although most of them appear to design according to their own benefits, not the clients' needs, especially when they speculatively design. However, intra-family privacy took a central focus in their responses as a crucial social need in contemporary life. For instance, interviewee **C** commented: '*I mainly focus on the functions of house elements, I do not allocate a room to be used only for guests or dining as clients nowadays prefer to have more bedrooms rather than a guest room to achieve a higher level of intra-family privacy*'.

Food preparation and consumption seem to be less important in their design strategy, apart from the new kitchen appliances, which are already integrated and highly considered in the new housing design such as allocating spaces for extractor hood, dishwasher, and microwave, as interviewee **B** commented: '*food preparation is taken in consideration to some degree in new housing design, at least in terms of new kitchen appliances.*'

Most of the interviewees believe that physical needs are the main concern of developers as these guarantee their interests, whereas social needs are not appropriately taken into account in housing design. Interviewee **A** commented: '*People are not satisfied with what is on the housing market as it does not fulfil their needs, especially the social ones*'. He added: '*however, proper places for larger oven, washing machine, larger refrigerator with integrated freezer, and in many cases a separate freezer, are strongly considered in the new kitchen design*'. The majority of the interviewees believed that only physical factors and needs are taken into account whereas end-users' social needs are the last to be thought about. Even end-users do not prioritize social needs when they buy a house; instead they look for cheapest price house, which can be affordable for them as interviewee **H** noted:

In summary, it seems that it is the housing designers' intention to provide new housing design, which is more appropriate for current cultural change and for recently generated end users' social needs. Two main factors, as they frequently mentioned, impede them from providing more appropriate design: firstly, housing design regulations which restrict their ideas and designs; and secondly, the overall control of developers and landlords over housing designs, as a few actors in housing design have noted. Although

architects often have to speculatively design generic housing, they, as a few noted, try to provide different types of housing design to fulfil social needs for different cultural and socioeconomic classes. On the other hand, developers who are also designers believed that they impose a novel design on the clients which is, as they mentioned, in line with current social needs, such as open-plan kitchen, which they associated with the working woman whose socialising time with her family is limited. In some cases, the developers/designers claimed that they consider the clients tendency towards making modifications to the house elements and/or configurations after using it, such as locating the kitchen adjoining the living room so as to be easier to change the design to an open-plan kitchen-living room if they want to. The interviewed designers assured that intra-family privacy is one of their main concerns, as they considered it a crucial social need in contemporary life, and they claimed that they try to consider it, if possible, when undertaking housing design by increasing the number of bedrooms at the expense of guest space. Concerning the foodways, they pay less attention to this in housing design, except the high consideration given for new kitchen appliances.

6.7 The design process in generic housing design

This section focuses on the interviewed designers' perspective regarding the final decision in generic housing design and the end-users' involvement in their house design.

6.7.1 *The final decision in generic housing design*

The responses varied vis-a-vis the final decision-maker in generic housing design, given that there is a difference between the formal and informal process adopted in reality as, for instance, interviewee **A** showed in his comment:

> '*The municipality is officially responsible for the last decision about the housing design as they give the building permit. On the other hand, developers nowadays influence and often impose on architects to design the building with more flats and smaller surface area so as to sell them quickly, as the economic factor is controlling this. The local municipality is responsible to approve and authorize the building or construction permit; they also inspect the construction during the implementation and after completion to ensure compliance with building codes and regulations*'.

He ensured that the basic shell, construction specifications and the outside layout predominantly complied with the building codes and regulations as this is difficult to hide or disguise. Whereas the interior space is difficult to follow up on because of the privacy of the household, given that users can move into the house before completing the finishing works, especially the internal finishing such as painting.

A few of the interviewees claimed that prioritizing the end-users' social needs in housing design is out of their control as interviewee **B** emphasized: '*Building design regulations imposes the house design. Neither the architect, owner nor the user does so*'. He also believed that building design regulations control the final decision of housing design and often impede architects' creativity: *These regulations were set long time ago and are no longer appropriate for new design although several amendments were applied from time to time* '

Other interviewees imputed this to the lack of communication between designers and end-users. Interviewee **D** commented: '*no communication with the end users unless they are the owners of the building*'. He also emphasised: '*Generic housing design still depends on the viewpoint and taste of architects, designers, or developers but not on the end-users' needs*'. Interviewee **E** had a different point of view, as he believed that housing design is a product of cooperation between designers and developers, as he commented: '*The design decision-makers in my own buildings are both the architect and myself (as a developer), but at the end I am the final decision-maker as I am the owner.*'

'*The owner opinion is the decisive factor and money is the main power nowadays*'. This was interviewee **F**'s opinion. Whereas interviewee **G** commented: '*As a structural engineer I only give my opinion and discuss the housing design with the architect, but I have the final decision in the structure study of building, and sometimes this forces the architect to make some changes in the design*'. Interviewee **H** had a bold opinion referring to the corruption which adversely affected the whole design process

> '*Building developers are powerful even in defining building design regulations, manipulating and/or breaching the law, especially in the informal areas. Economic status is controlling housing design, whereas social needs come much later.*'

Interviewee **I** enhanced the previous opinion as he commented: '*Architects are the official decision-makers, whereas building owners are actually driving the housing design, and thus end users are very rarely involved in the beginning of design processes*'. On the other hand, he believed that although housing design is mostly controlled by developers, it still partly fulfils the general demands of end-users, their *common trend and essential needs*.

6.7.2 *End-users' involvement in their own housing design*

Most of the interviewees emphasized that end-users, to some extent, are informally involved in the housing design process, as shown for instance in interviewee **A**'s comment: '*users are informally able to change the interior design after the basic shell is built and the interior walls are in place, which are often temporarily built to obtain the building permit. The user has an opinion only if they own the real estate and this is generally possible in the village*'. Interviewee **D** also noted that the end-users are rarely and informally involved in their housing design. He said '*Housing design process still does not take the end-users' social and cultural needs officially into account*'. Interviewee **F** illustrated:

> '*If the owner is the end-user, I discuss in detail about his/her desired housing design. In the case of designing generic housing for commercial purposes (for sale or renting out) we are dealing with unknown clients and anonymous end-users, and thus all users will be treated as if they are all the same regardless of their different physical and social needs*'.

Highlighting the decline of end-users involvement in current housing design, interviewee **H** commented: '*In the past, residents knew how to best design, build and use their house, whereas nowadays the design is imposed on the end-users*'. He imputed the regression in housing design to the power of well-off nonprofessional and unqualified developers: '*nowadays, any person, regardless of his/her education degree, can be a developer if they can fund the building project*'. He added: '*Even middle-class end-users cannot live the way they want in their own house*'. Enhancing the previous point, interviewee **I** said: '*end-users are not officially involved in their own design, and in many cases it is imposed on them according to the availability and affordability in the housing market.*'

A few interviewees pointed at the stages at which end-users can be generally involved in as interviewee **J** mentioned: '*end-users are only involved in the finishing work, cladding, flooring, and painting but not in the configuration or interior division*'. This opportunity is a result of selling the houses before completing the interior and sometimes exterior finishing works.

In contrast to the previous responses, interviewee **K** commented: '*I think 90% of inhabitants are indirectly involved in the design of their houses, as the developers or buildings merchants impose the demanded design on architects and housing designers*'. This can be interpreted as meaning that developers are highly concerned about popular clients' demands and on the other hand they impose these demands on architects and housing designers. However, this claim seems to be incorrect, as a high percentage of the interviewed households were not satisfied with their houses, ascribing this to the insufficiency in the housing market, as was shown in the previous chapter.

6.7.3 *Marginalization of end-users in housing design*

All the interviewees emphasized that end-users are far from the decision-making process of housing design for different reasons such as: '*Lack of public awareness in housing design and lack of public participation, make it currently difficult to integrate end-users in this process*', as interviewee **A** said. Interviewee **D** emphasized the same point but for a different reason:

> '*It is not applicable yet to integrate the current social needs of households in the official design process, especially given that the tendency towards openness and modern life is not dominant comparing to people who are becoming more closed, isolated and religiously conservative*'.

Interviewee **F** imputed the weak role of end-users in housing design to the lack of nongovernmental organizations and community-based housing delivery mechanisms. Interviewee **H** believed that misapplication of law and rules is the main reason of marginalizing end-uses: '*Corruptions, bribes, under qualified personnel, rapid deterioration in ethics, morals and values are the main factors for having no communication between architects as house designers and the residents as end-users.*'

6.7.4 *End-users' reaction to fulfilment of social needs in their home*

The majority of respondents believed that end-users try to meet their socio-cultural needs – if possible – through modifications, which they informally perform at different stages of the building process. '*These modifications are predominantly informal and end users do not even ask an architect for adaptation as an official or paid work, but only as a friend or acquaintance*', as interviewee **B** said. He added: '*how can I convince them, especially if they are close friends, that this is an office not a charity?*'

These modifications predominantly take place after finishing the structural basic shell of the building and the initial internal division and prior to the interior finishing works floor, wall, ceiling finishing, etc. Most generic housing buildings are purchased while they are still at a structural stage (basic shell) when the internal space is divided, but not yet coated, nor floored. This gives an opportunity to the end-users to change or modify the design with less cost. As for instance, interviewee **A** noted: '*most clients change in the design after buying the house and before the completion of finishing works, and more than **50%** of the clients change the design after moving into the house.*'

Interviewee **A** noted: '*the internal division is more flexible and users can informally change the location of the rooms and/or the internal walls. Users usually try to change these after building design approval and before the implementation and thus they save time, money and material whenever it is possible.* Interviewee **B** also emphasised: '*whenever they are better off they try to re-divide the internal space and enclose open spaces (balconies or loggias)*'.

Interviewee **D** illustrated this in detail estimating the percentage of modification in each building design stage: '**55%** *change the interior space after it is built and before starting the finishing works, **40%** change in the pre-construction phase when it is still on the plan (buying off plan) and only **5%** change after finishing works as this is very costly.*' Interviewee **H** also enhanced that the flats which were built but not finished yet (serviced shell), were predominantly modified, as they are easier and much less expensive to change or modify than the finished ones. He added: '*Developers ask me to modify after attaining the building approval and in some cases after completing the building and the finishing works*'. It seems that developers are aware of the current end-users' demands, which are often not allowed in building design regulations, and thus they apply the modifications on the design after attaining the building approval

from the municipality. Interviewee **F** estimated the different percentages of the modifications performed at each stage of building process as shown in his response:

'*The modification in housing design after the structural implementation (basic shell) occurs merely in decoration, cosmetic and patching process. **70% of the end-users who make modification in their housing design, do it after the construction implementation (basic-serviced shell), 30% modify the housing design while it is still on the layout plan (selling off plan).*

Interviewee **E** had, as an unqualified developer and owner of several buildings, a different point of view as shown in his comment:

'*Clients ask for modifications and thus are involved in the design process after purchasing the house whether it is already built or not. For example, I sold **95%** of my buildings, this year, before they are even built, as the clients bought it off plan. Although they had agreed with the design, they asked me to do more and/or different modifications after completing the interior division, flooring, coating and other finishing works*.

Whereas interviewee **I** had an opposite opinion to the previous one: '*the percentage of the clients who purchase the house while it is still on plan (buying off plan) is very low*'. Figure 6.2 shows the common end-users' modifications stages along with housing design and implementation process according to the interviewed housing designers and developers.
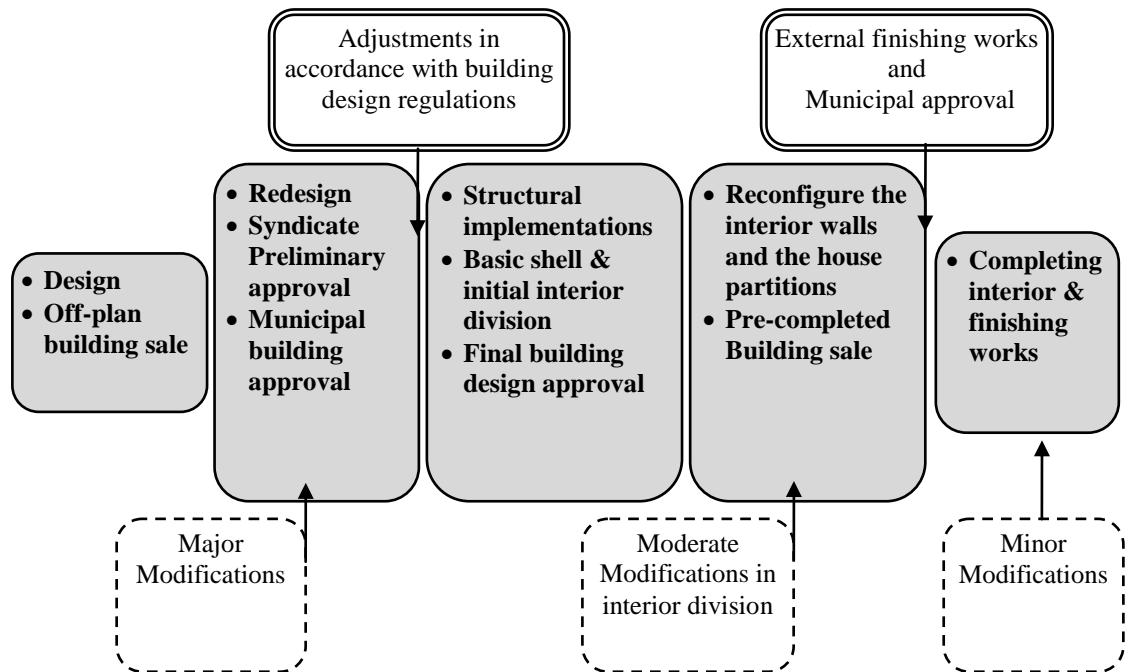
Figure 6.2: End-users modifications stages along with housing design and implementation process according to interviewed housing designers and developers

In summary, the majority of the interviewed actors in housing design emphasised that the municipality is officially responsible for the final decision in housing design, which is predominantly proposed by architects. In reality, and as a result of the widespread corruption in the state institutions, developers and/or the building owners have the real power and the decisive role in housing design and they therefore impose their will following their interests. Architects can only impose their design when they are also the developers of the building they are designing. The end users can be informally involved in their housing design in two different stages of design process in accordance with the building ownership. If the building is owned by the end-users, they can be involved in the beginning of the housing design and they can, to some extent, impose their opinion, whereas they can be involved only slightly and in an advanced stage of the design process, and most likely in the construction stage, if they are potential clients. However, neither form of involvement is based on a structured approach or appropriate study.

All the interviewed designers emphasized that end-users are marginalized in the decision-making process of housing design. And this is, as they mentioned in their responses, due to different reasons. Firstly, the lack of public awareness in housing design and thus the lack of public participation in the housing design process; secondly,

the lack of the non-governmental organizations; thirdly, the lack of communication between end-users and housing designers and architects; fourthly, misapplication of law and rules especially corruption, bribes, unqualified personnel, rapid deterioration in morals and values and thus increase in the power and control of capital; and lastly, neglecting this area of study, which may empower the role of end-users in housing design process.

6.8   Adaptations to housing design

6.8.1   *Type of adaptations interviewed housing designers have been asked for in the last decade*

Interviewee **A** illustrated a few types of adaptations end-users have frequently asked him for: '*The most noticeable modification in house design is increasing the number of bedrooms to provide intra-family privacy, especially in the case of having male and female children when they become teenagers'.* Regarding the family privacy he commented: '*Inhabitants seek to link the kitchen to the nocturnal house elements to provide more privacy towards guests'.* He added: '*they also often ask to expand the kitchen to accommodate the new kitchen appliances and a breakfast or dining table if possible'.* He believed that an open plan kitchen is still not appropriate for the majority of Syrian households because of their cooking habits, as he commented: '*A limited number of inhabitants ask to open the kitchen to the rest of the house as our meals are still large and heavy and thus it is difficult to control or to get rid of the food odour'.* He re-emphasized:

> '*New technical appliances are becoming a great concern in kitchen design modifications at the users and designer's level'.*

On the other hand, interviewees **B** and **G** highlighted the change in the balconies: '*most of the changes that are occurring are converting balconies and loggias, which consist of 35% of the house area, to enclosed spaces, and also re-dividing the internal space, such as extending the kitchen, salon or bedrooms…'.* He added: '*smaller space is allocated for guests, for instance, a bedroom for guests is no longer allocated in current housing design'.* Interviewee **G** believed that enclosing open space is not ideal in Lattakia as a tourist coastal city: '*they enclose open spaces although balconies are healthy in the coastal area, but it is seen as 'luxury' more than an essential need'.* Interviewee **C** summarized that the modifications the end-users asked for, indicate their

need for a more practical house design, as he said: '*People have been predominantly asking for practical (functional) houses, i.e. more bedrooms and smaller spaces for guests* '

In contrast to interviewee **A**, interviewee **D** focused on the open-plan kitchen as an essential change and modification in housing design: '*considerable percentage of households or clients asked for open kitchen-cum-living plan.*'   He also emphasized that end-users often ask to increase the number of the bedrooms, especially for young households.   On the other hand, he said that in some cases they ask to reduce the number of bedrooms and join them to the salon, especially when the parents become old and live alone. He added: '*in some cases, clients ask to add a bathroom to the master bedroom (parents' bedroom)'.*   Interviewees **I** and **K** also emphasized that there is a tendency to have more bedrooms. Interviewee I added:

> '*When households become bigger they try to have more bedrooms (normally they can add only one room) and in very limited cases, when son/s and/or daughter/s get married, they reduce the bedrooms number and often join them to the guests/reception area'.*

Interviewee **E** emphasized that a high percentage of households in Lattakia are frequently changing their house interior division and decoration, which he believed is only for the sake of changing, not for a real need. He added: '*I was frequently asked to open the kitchen to the living room where the flats do not exceed 140 sq m, or to the salon in the case of having fashionable and technical appliances (such as huge separate freezer, dishwasher, microwave etc) so as to display them'.*   Interviewee **K** also commented: '*the kitchen is gradually converted to semi-living room having a TV, couch, dining table, and this is happening regardless of the size of the kitchen no matter how small it is'.*

Table 6.2 shows the prominent adaptations the end-users have been asking the interviewed designers for, in the last decade. A few interviewees mentioned different cases which have not been included in this table as they seem to be very limited and do not represent the majority of the households in Lattakia. For instance, converting the space of a bedroom and adding it to the salon to enlarge the reception space, after the children leave the parents' house especially after getting married.

Interviewee No.	Bedroom	Balconies	Guest-Space	Kitchen				Dining space	corridor
	Increasing number of bedrooms	Converting balconies/loggia to enclosed spaces	decrease the area of Guests-Space	Open-plan kitchen	Living-kitchen space	Increase size of Kitchen	Dining table in the kitchen	End allocating a separate dining room	Decreasing number & size of corridors
1A	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2B	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		
3C	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓	✓
4D	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓
5E			✓	✓	✓	✓			
6F		✓	✓						
7G	✓	✓				✓			
8H									
9I	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓	
9J				✓	✓			✓	
9K	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		
11	**7**	**4**	**7**	**4**	**5**	7	4	4	3

Table 6.2: Adaptations in housing design which were frequently required by users based on interviewed designers responses

As seen in the table above, the majority of the interviewed designers (N=7 of 11) answered that increasing the number of bedrooms, increasing the size of the kitchen and decreasing the space for guests are the most frequent and essential adaptations in current housing design. Five out of eleven interviewees stated that adapting the kitchen to be a kitchen-living space is a frequent change in housing use and also in the design when possible. Moreover, four interviewees emphasised that an open-plan kitchen was frequently requested from end users in the last decade. Four of the interviewees considered adding a dining table in the kitchen space as a predominant change in housing use in contemporary life, and also four more believed that a separate dining room is unnecessary and no longer needed in the current housing design. Although most of the previously mentioned adaptations are occurring by converting the balconies and loggias to enclosed spaces, only four of the interviewees mentioned these as frequent adaptations in housing design. Only three interviewees mentioned decreasing the corridors in the current housing design though, this is a result of changing the interior design to kitchen-living-guest open plan.

6.8.2 *Current housing adaptations vis-à-vis privacy and food preparation and consumption*

Based on the interviewed designers there seemed to be a pattern in the design modifications. Table 6.3 shows the social needs which reflect the change in cultural concepts focused on in this study and it shows the associated modifications in the housing use and design.

Cultural concepts	The social needs	Modification performed or needed
Intra-family Privacy	Private space for each member Reduction in the use of shared spaces such as living room	Increase the number of bedrooms Enlarge the space of bedrooms comparing to family sharing spaces such as living room
Family Privacy	Limiting the number of guests at home Limiting the contact between family members and the guests of other family members	Decrease the spaces allocated for guests (guests' bedroom is no longer allocated in the current design) Reuse the guest reception space as a family living room, especially if it is closed or locked most of the time Separate the guest reception from other house elements when possible
Foodways	Coping with modernity using the novel kitchen appliances for food preparation and cooking Fewer members at the dining table Less effort cleaning the kitchen than the separate dining room Watching TV while preparing or having meals	Enlarge the kitchen space to accommodate the new kitchen appliances Smaller dining table to be accommodated in the kitchen and remove or reuse the separate dining room Add a place for TV, and couch and thus extend the kitchen

Table 6.3: Modification in housing design needed to achieve privacy and foodways according to housing designers and developers

Interviewee **A** emphasized that the current housing adaptations requested by end-users are to provide first intra-family privacy, second family privacy and third to make the house more appropriate for current food habits (food preparing, cooking and consumption. Interviewee **B** commented:

> '*Higher level of family privacy leads to having fewer visitors at home, especially those who sleep over night. There is, therefore, no need for a guests' bedroom and probably less need for spacious or multi reception areas for guests'.*

Interviewee *I* emphasised*: 'increasing the number of bedrooms is definitely to provide higher level of intra-family privacy'.* A few spaces used to be allocated for visitors or guests such as guests' bedroom, guests reception, and guests' dining table, and also in traditional houses there used to be a male guests space and another one for females. Interviewee **B** added:

'Smaller size family led to a smaller dining table and a smaller eating space. This gives possibility to accommodate a dining table in the extended kitchen and perhaps reuse the separate dining room for another function'.

6.8.3 *Socio-economic groups that have been adapting and making alteration in their housing design*

Interviewee **B** believed that there is no official social stratification in Syrian society, as he commented: '*I do not think that our society is socially classified. However, I do not deal with rich people as they do not need me anyway'.* This probably indicates that people are aware that there is no official or academic social stratification of society in Syria (see 3.2.4), and it also indicates that well-off end-users probably do not need to modify their houses, as they can afford bigger or more appropriate house when needed. Interviewees **D** and **K** emphasized that middle socio-economic class households mainly ask for modification and change of their housing design, and they identify this group as educated, enlightened and open-minded households which are also able to afford the modification expenses. Whereas interviewee **A** believed that middle class and sometimes lower middle class are the main groups who are making adaptations in their housing design. From a different point of view, interviewee **E** believed that all

socioeconomic classes are changing their houses' interior design but in different ways. He illustrated that:

> '*for example, well-off households change the design depending on architects; middle class households change and modify it themselves depending on what they see on TVs, magazines, or friends' houses; lower middle class and lower class try to change their house design by imitating higher classes*'.

6.8.4   *Areas in which these adaptations were mostly occurring*

Interviewee **E** distinguished between two types of neighbourhoods according to the socio-cultural groups who inhabit these areas, as he said: '*Each area or neighbourhood has its particular culture, social environment and lifestyle, which is not difficult to notice.   For example Alzeeraa, Alawkaf, and el'aashair are mixed neighbourhoods (have different sects and religions) whereas other areas such as Elramel, Demsarkho have only one sect and one type of lifestyle..'*.   He added: '*in mixed areas there is a high possibility to change the design to open plan kitchen, where the people are more open-minded'*.   In the light of his comment, people tend to change their housing design to an open-plan in the formal area such as Azeeraa, which is part of the study area in this research.   Interviewee **B** noted that he only worked in the formal areas and thus he does not know to which extent these changes are happening in informal areas.

In summary, the majority of the interviewees emphasized that there are frequent modifications in the current housing design and these are mainly to provide higher level of intra-family privacy by increasing the number of bedrooms, and sometimes by adding a bathroom to the parents' bedroom; increasing family privacy by reducing and sometimes isolating the spaces of guests in the home such as the guests' bedroom, which no longer exists in the current housing design, and the guests' dining room which is, if it exists, integrated into the living room; and also to provide bigger kitchen space to easily fit the new kitchen appliances in and to add a dining table, sometimes integrating the living room into the kitchen.   These modifications seem to be performed by converting the balconies and loggias into other enclosed elements of the house.

The interviewees were not specific with regards to the areas of the city in which these adaptations are more common, which is an indication that they are probably occurring all-over the city, though one of the interviewees mentioned three neighbourhoods in

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which people have a tendency to convert the design to an open-plan space, and these neighbourhoods are formal and classified in this study as middle and upper-middle class areas. A few of the interviewed designers emphasized that though it is sometimes noticed in lower class households' houses, these modifications are mainly requested by middle and lower middle class households.

6.9 Further comments and suggestions from the interviewed designers

Interviewee **A** supported excluding the end-users from the design process as he believed that they do not have enough knowledge to effectively participate in it. He suggested:

> '*I personally prefer, as an architect, to design the building and completely implement it, including the finishing works before the client even sees it. Clients, sometimes, know nothing about housing design even though they interfere in the architects' job, and then if this goes wrong they blame the architect. Architects' design is based on the building codes and regulations of the area. Building codes and regulations need to be revised and modified adapting this to the current changes of housing use*'.

Regarding the building design regulations, he explained in detail: '*room dimensions are no longer suitable such as rooms with **260*220**, which is coded as an office or studying, or bookcase room and then used as a bedroom. The legal area surface for a bedroom is **12.50** square metres or **2** bedrooms with total area of **25** sq m for both, given that the room must not be smaller than **11** sq. m*'. He added: '*11 sq. m, I believe, is not acceptable, especially since it is very common to have **2** members in each bedroom. Having 3 rooms at home in case of small size family makes this slightly acceptable as each person, I believe, needs **10** sq. m in the case of single bedroom whereas a bedroom for 2 people should not be smaller than **15-16** sq. m, as they might have some shared belongings. Another article which needs to be adapted in the Building codes and regulations is the minimum dimensions of the bathroom (**1.4m*1.4m**). I believe it should not be smaller than **1.8*200** sq. m so as to be properly furnished. The ceiling height is also limited to **2.7-2.8m** the space between the slabs and 3m including the slab.*

He believed that higher ceiling has to be considered in the house space as he said: *High ceiling gives comfort for inhabitants providing plenty of air, light and sunshine in*

addition to the psychological comfort. The building setback is not properly studied in relation to the new high buildings; for example attached buildings are not safe especially in the event of a natural crisis such as an earthquake would cause potential danger. In my opinion, there is a need to have higher buildings with wider building setback so as to save agricultural lands and to have a minimum standard of green areas in the city. I think up to **10** floors residential building is still acceptable as a human and home use, especially in the case of lack of lands as the case in the city of Lattakia.'

Interviewee **B** underlined the people's tendency to change their housing design for the sake of changing even if this is not needed: '*people, from while to while, need to change their house as changing is a need for human beings, and this leads architects to seek to use flexible materials (light hollow block, wooden assemble wall etc.) and methods for easy change of the internal design'.* He imputed this tendency to change housing design, to the fact that people in Syrian society are easily and intensively driven by others' opinion: '*people in our society are easily driven by others' opinion even in choosing the life-long partner, and thus they also change their house according to others, then after using it they might find it not the best for their needs and thus change it again and again.'*

Interviewee **C** ascribed all these inappropriate current housing designs to the small-size flat, which is in turn a result of the lack of land in Lattakia and a few other cities in Syria. He believed that the only solution to this lies in the high-rise building, which is still restricted and very limited: '*High-rise building is the only solution for the land shortage, which is an intractable problem in Lattakia'.* Interviewee **E** enhanced this point as he commented: '*we need to change all housing buildings to high-rise buildings (**11-12** storeys) providing elevators and high level of maintenance and services. High-rise building can solve the lack of land and thus the housing problem in Lattakia'.* In contrast to the previous opinion, interviewee **D** insisted that: '*residential buildings should range between 3to 6 floors, not more, especially for our society, we are still sociable.'*

Interviewee **D** emphasized that laypeople participation in the housing design process is the only solution to bridge the chasm between housing designers and end-users as shown in his comment: '*It is very important to increase the awareness of laypeople's participation in housing design, as they are the end-users and have to hear their voice,*

and afterward, the participation might result in useful outcomes.' He also highlighted the importance of efficient housing design to mitigate the effect of smaller-size flats on Syrian households, as shown in his comment: '*I believe that approximately 20 sq.m/person is enough for housing design in our country and society, but the problem is that most of housing design types are not efficient, which makes them look small or not adequate'.* He also emphasized that housing design regulations sometimes restrict flexibility in the design for instance, as he comments: '*In the housing design regulations, a house with 2 bedrooms must have a separate toilet (for guests) and bathroom with a toilet (for family), though the end-users might not need a separate toilet and prefer to use it for another function'.* He also went into detail regarding the balconies in the design regulations: '*for example a balcony with 10 m length and 1-1.2 m width is not efficient and residents do not use more than 3m length of it, and thus they predominantly close the other 7m and join it to interior space. This problem is a result of design regulations which determine the width of the balcony in such a tourist city where people spend time on the balcony more than they do inside. These regulations are not based on an academic study, so sometimes it is a 10th of the street width and sometimes according to the area. Sometimes it is allowed to be 1m and other times 2.4m'.*

Interviewee **F** attributed the widespread irresponsible, illegal and improper changing in housing design, and even in the standard building material specifications, to the misapplications of law and the weak strategies of the municipality: '*The municipalities do not have housing strategies and thus they have been tolerant with breaches of building design regulations such as closing the balconies or setting up illegal buildings (informal buildings). This is because of widespread corruption, favouritisms and bribes'.*

Interviewee **G** highlighted the lack of safety in most of the applied modifications: '*I wish we could reduce the percentage of balconies in the residential building, as people are predominantly changing the function of it to be used as a closed room with heavy walls, which thus has to be studied in different way for earthquakes resistance'.* In contrast to the previous point of view, Interviewee **H** mentioned that the minimum width of balconies has to be increased*: 'the association of architects is discussing the modification of the building regulations, especially in relation to the percentage and width of balconies as it is not acceptable to impose the maximum width of the balcony*

with 125 cm in tourist mountainous areas such as Slunfieh, though the percentage of balconies' area is up to 35% of the built area of the flat'. He added: '*Balconies in such areas are sometimes used 14 hours out of 24, having most of the household's activities: eating, chatting hosting friends etc'.*

Interviewee **H** noted that large-size flats are less required because these are not affordable for a high percentage of Syrian households, especially in Lattakia, as he commented: '*Small-size flats are required more than the large one as a result of the economic factor, especially for youths and newly married couples'.* He used as an example a four-member household estimating the minimum flat-size adequate for it: 'a *four-member household needs 70 sq. m flat as a minimum size without balconies'.*

Interviewee **I** commented: '*two prominent types of design processes are now available in the market: one is commercial and does not give attention to the end-users' needs, without even a superficial dialogue with end-users, and this type is covering more than 70% of the housing design process. The second type is professional, as the main concern is the quality and appropriateness of housing design to the inhabitants or end-users' needs'.*

Interviewee **J** emphasized the importance of this type of study to enhance the end-users real social needs and as a crucial step to integrate them in the design process, as he said: '*We are in urgent need for this kind of survey as it is very limited and generally is not based on scientific criteria or measurement, especially given that people in our society look better-off than they actually are'.*

In summary, in their final comments and suggestions, the interviewed designers mainly focused on the building design regulations which, they believe, need to be modified in accordance with the current physical and social needs of the end-users. They therefore, suggested that this needs to be enhanced by appropriate research and studies and it is essential to raise the end-users awareness of housing design especially vis-a-vis their actual social needs. This in turn would enable them to participate in the housing design process and would probably lead to more appropriate and efficient designs.

6.10 Analysis of public sector versus private sector housing design vis-a-vis household's privacy and foodways

This section shows the differences between housing designs in public sector and private sector, as provided prior to any modifications made by the users, especially in relation to household's privacy and food preparation and consumption. The text below mainly focuses on the elements of the house and the link between these which shows the privacy level of the house. This is partially based on Hillier and Hanson's (1984) interior criteria of privacy in their landmark *The social logic of space*. On the other hand, the following text shows the links between kitchen, dining and living room vis-a-vis food preparation and consumption.

6.10.1 *Housing design in the public sector*

The new housing in the public sector case study is designed in five-storey buildings. On each floor there are 4 small-size flats which range between 65 and 90 sq m.,, as shown in table 6.4. Housing elements of these flats are also similar, as each flat consists of 1 or 2 bedrooms at most, kitchen, guest-living space[64], bathroom, toilet, and one balcony. No separate guest, living or dining room is provided. The prominent feature in YHP buildings is that it is difficult to perform alteration or modification in the design as a result of the small surface area of the flats, which include only the essential housing elements. Four types of buildings in the Youth housing neighbourhood, which were designed by the public sector, were studied in this research, as was illustrated in chapters 3 and 4. These types are as follows:

1) Youth Housing Neighbourhood Plan types A1 and A2:

Building of types A1 and A2 consist of 5 storeys, 4 flats on each floor; each flat in A1 is 70 sq m and in A2 is 80 sq. m. Each of A1 and A2 building types has the following elements: 2 bedrooms, kitchen, a space for guests and a living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and one balcony. Figure 6.3 shows the configuration of building types A1 and A2.

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[64] The guest room is to welcome visitors for short visits not for sleeping as it used to be in the past.

2)   Youth Housing Neighbourhood Plan type B

Building type B consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats on each floor; each flat is 65 sq m and has the following elements: 2 bedrooms, kitchen, a space for guests and a living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and one balcony (see fig. 6.4).

3)   Youth Housing Neighbourhood plan Type C

Building type C also consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats on each floor; each flat is 85 or 90 sq m and has the following elements: 1 bedroom, kitchen, a space for guests and a living room, one bathroom includes flush toilet, and one balcony (see fig. 6.5)**.**
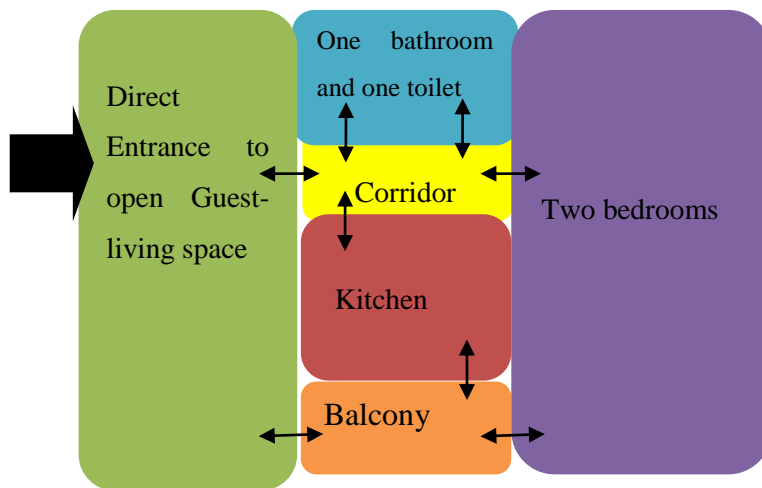
Figure 6.3: Space configuration of public housing design types A1& A2
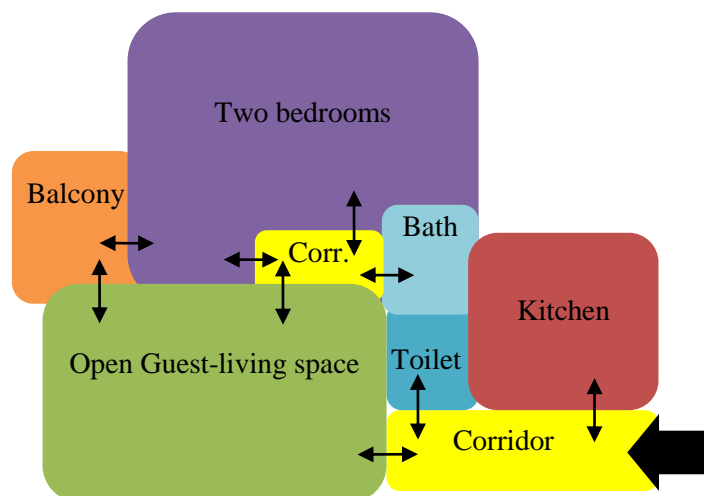
Figure 6.4: The configuration of public housing design, type B
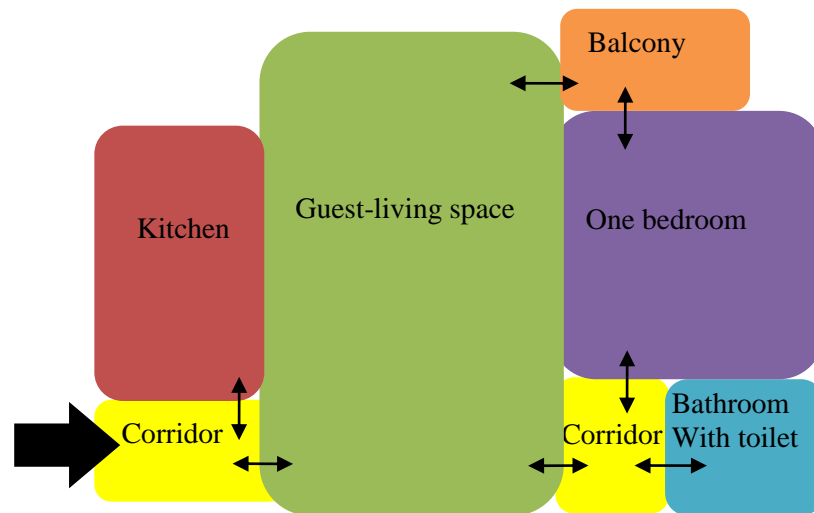
Figure 6.5: Space configuration of public housing design type C

Housing design in the public sector (Youth Housing Neighbourhood), Area 1											
Design type	Surface area sq m.	Bedroom	Kitchen	Separate guest room	Separate living room	Separate dining room	Guest-Living open space	Bath-room	Toilet	Balcony	Flats layout
A1	70	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
A2	80-85	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
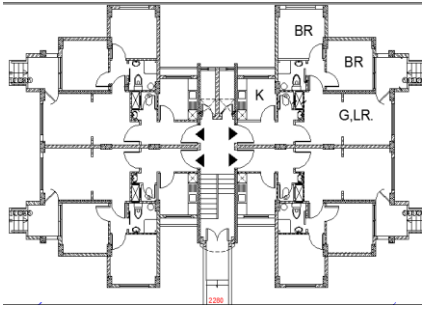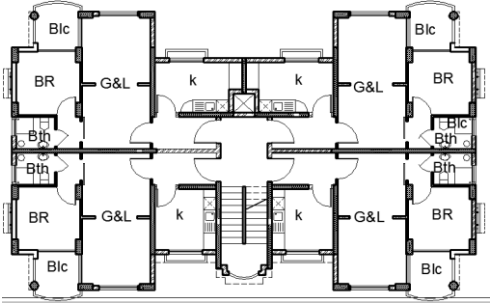
Housing design in the public sector (Youth Housing Neighbourhood), Area 1											
Design type	Surface area sq m.	Bedroom	Kitchen	Separate guest room	Separate living room	Separate dining room	Guest-Living open space	Bath-room	Toilet	Balcony	Flats layout
B	65	2	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
C	85-90	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	

Table 6.4: Different types of Youth Housing design as an example of the public sector design

6.10.2 *Housing design in the private sector*

Different types of buildings which are designed by the private sector were studied in this research. Housing designs in the private sector varied in surface area of the flats from 90 to 225 sq m and the number of the storeys from 5 to 10 floors. Each floor has one or two flats at most, which increases the level of privacy.

The house elements of these types were a large kitchen with possibility to add at least a table for breakfast, open guest-living space and dining table in most of the sampled flats, 2 or 3 bedrooms, 2 to 4 balconies/loggias, Arabic or flush toilet, 1 or 2 bathrooms with or without flush toilet. Figure 6.6 shows of the general configuration of some example of houses in private sector (see also table 6.5).
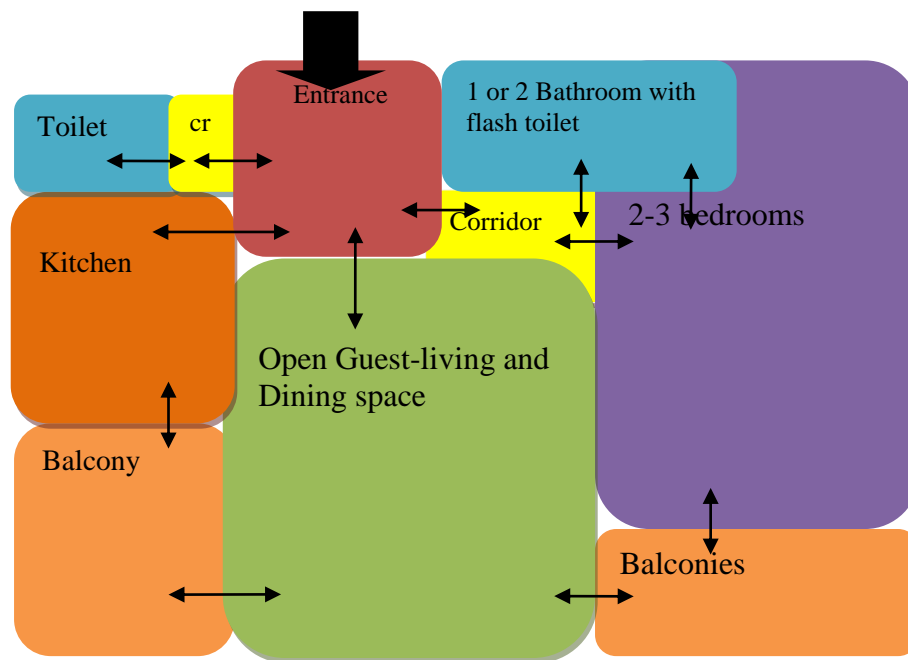
Figure 6.6: An example of space configuration of houses designed by private sector

Housing design in the Private sector (Alzeeraa-Awkaf neighbourhood) Area 2											
Design type	Surface area sq m	Bedroom	Kitchen	Kitchen-Dining space	Separate guest room	Separate living room	Separate dining room	Guest-Living open space	Bath-room	toilet	balcony	Flat layout
A	225	3	1		0	0	0	1	2	1	3	
B1	170	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	
B2	160	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	
C1	200	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	2	1	2	
C2	160	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	

Table 6.5: Housing design in the Private sector (Alzeeraa-Awkaf neighbourhood)
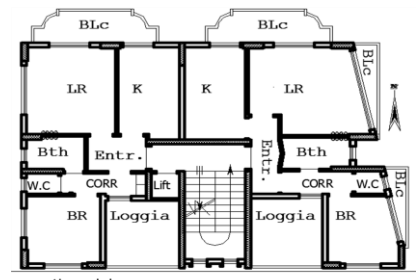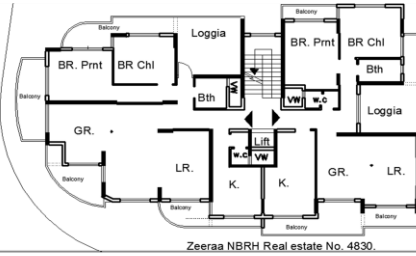
Housing design in the Private sector (Alzeeraa neighbourhood) Area 2											
Design type	Surface area sq m.	Bedroom	Kitchen	Kitchen-Dining space	Separate guest room	Separate living room	Separate dining room	Guest-Living open space	Bath-room	toilet	Balcony/loggia	Flat layout
D1	80	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3/1	
D2	80	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	
F1	225	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3/1	
F2	160	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	3/1	

Table 6.6: Housing design in the private sector (house elements) before any modification

	The element of the house	Public housing design	Level of privacy	Private housing design	Level of privacy
1	Stair landing	**4** four flats on each floor	Low	**(1-2)** One or two flats on each floor	High
2	Stairs	Semi-private used by the inhabitants of the building	Moderate	Semi-private used by the inhabitants of the building	Moderate
1	Entrance	Semi-private, used by household members and their guests, opens directly to one or more house elements	Moderate	Semi-private used by household members and their guests, open to a corridor/s	Moderate
3	Guest room	Open or Semi-open to the house elements	Low	Semi-open to the house elements or separated by a corridor	High
4	Availability of adequate number of bedrooms	Less than the needed number of bedrooms	Low	The same or one less than the needed number of bedrooms	High
5	Availability of toilet for guests	Often used by both family members and guests	Low	Rarely used by family members	High
6	Bathrooms	One bathroom and sometimes including a flush toilet	Low	One or two bathrooms Different from toilet space	High
	Overall		Low		High

Table 6.7: Level of privacy in the sampled houses' elements (spaces)

6.10.3 *Family and intra-family privacy in public housing design versus private housing design*

Table 6.7 shows the level of family and intra-family privacy in each of public and private housing design. This is based on the usage possibility of each element of the house, and particularly who and how many people are usually use the space. The level of privacy in each element is considered high, in this study, if only one member or a limited number of the household members are generally possible to use this element. It is considered medium if it is usually used by all or most of the household members and low when it is used also by household guests or other people such as the neighbours in the same building. For instance, in the public building design, there are four flats on each floor and thus four households are using the stair landing which leads to the main door of the flat. In the private housing design there are one or two flats on each floor and thus one or two households are using the stair landing. Therefore, private houses provided a higher level of family privacy than the public sector houses. On the other hand, the number of bedrooms in the public housing design is limited to one or two, whereas this number is higher in private housing design. Therefore the number of bedroom users in private housing design is in average less than in public housing and thus a higher level of intra-family privacy is provided in houses designed by the private sector.

One of the public design types has one bathroom which includes a flush toilet without having a separate toilet. Guests, therefore, have to use the family toilet and this significantly reduces the level of family privacy. This is not the case in the sampled private housing design, in which one separate toilet and one or two bathrooms with flush toilets are provided and this increases the level of family privacy.

6.10.4 *Food preparation and consumption in public versus private housing design*

Figure 6.7 shows the location of the kitchen in the house and the link between the kitchen and the other house elements, where food consumption might take place. It also shows the differences of these in public versus private housing design. The prominent change in the kitchen location seems to be that the kitchen, in both public and private design, is located close to the main entrance, more integrated with other house elements than in traditional houses, and seems to be a part of the living area of the house and in general it is not close to the bedrooms. This can be an indication that the kitchen is

becoming an element with a lower level of family privacy, as it can be visible to the guests. A higher number of members is now using the kitchen, with easier access and shorter distance from the main flat entrance, in both the public and private house design. The space of the kitchen in the public sector house design is smaller than the space of the kitchen in the private one and there is not enough space, for instance, for a breakfast or a dining table in the generic public housing design. On the other hand, in the private house design the kitchen is more spacious and it is possible to have at least a breakfast table. The kitchen, therefore, is probably still designed as a place only for cooking and food preparation in public sector houses, whereas it seems possible to use the kitchen more as a place for food preparation and consumption and perhaps for other family day activities in most sampled privately designed houses. In some cases, especially in the private sector houses, the kitchen are located adjoining the living area, which provide a possibility to open the kitchen to the living space and/or to provide higher accessibility between the kitchen and the living area.

Figure 6.7 shows the location of the kitchen in the sampled houses in public housing sector versus private housing sector. The kitchen in two types of the state-designed houses (Area 1- A1, and Area 1- A2) is located in the centre of the house, and can be accessed through two spaces (the guest-living space and then a corridor) – i.e. it is in level 3 of privacy – Depth of the kitchen is 3 (see fig. 6.8). On the other hand, the kitchen in these types is connected to the bedrooms with no need to go the reception to move between the kitchen and bedrooms, which provide a higher level of family privacy towards guests. In housing types Area 1- B, and Area 1- C, the kitchen is located close to the entrance and can be accessed through one space (a corridor) which is open also to the guest-living space – i.e.it is in level 2 of privacy. In these types, there is no direct connection between the kitchen and the bedrooms.

The kitchen in 4 types (A, D1, C1, and F1) of privately designed houses in Area 2, is located close to the entrance with access through one space (a corridor), i.e. level 2 of privacy – Depth of the kitchen is 2 (see fig. 6.9). The kitchens in these types are connected by corridors with no need to enter the guest-living space, which provides a higher level of family privacy towards the guests (see table 6.8).

Type	Lattakia
Public Youth housing design (Area 1)	**A1 & A2** Bathroom, Bedrooms, Kitchen, Balcony, Toilet, Guest-living space, Entrance / **B** Bedrooms, Balcony, Bathroo, Guest-living Space, Corridor, Toilet, Kitchen, Entrance, Corridor / **C** Bathroom with Toilet, Bedrooms, Balcony, Guest-Living Space, Corridor, Kitchen, Entrance
Private housing design (Area 2)	**A** Balcony, Guest-Living-Dining Space, Balcony, Bedrooms, Kitchen, Corridor, Bathroom, Toilet, Entrance / **D1** Toilet, Bath-room, Guest-Living space, Balcony, Bed-rooms, Balcony &loggia, Corridor, Kitchen, Entrance / **C1** Living room, Guest Room, Balcony, Bath-room, Kitchen, Corridor, Bed-rooms, Toilet, Entrance / **F1** Balcony &loggia, Guest-Living-Dining Space, Bath-room, Balcony, Bed-rooms, Toilet, Corridor, Kitchen & Dining, Entrance

Figure 6.7: The location of the kitchen in the sampled housing design

YHP Type A1

MD= 2.5

YHP Type A2

YHP Type B

MD= 2.77

YHP Type C

MD= 2.71

Level of privacy and circulation between spaces in a sampled house in relation to the entrance
Depth (Space syntax)

1= Least private level	E= Entrance	C= corridor	MD= Mean depth
	G= Guest room	BL= Balcony	
	L= Living room	BH= Bathroom	
5= Most Private level	K=Kitchen	WC= Toilet	
	G.L= Guest &living room	B= Bedroom	
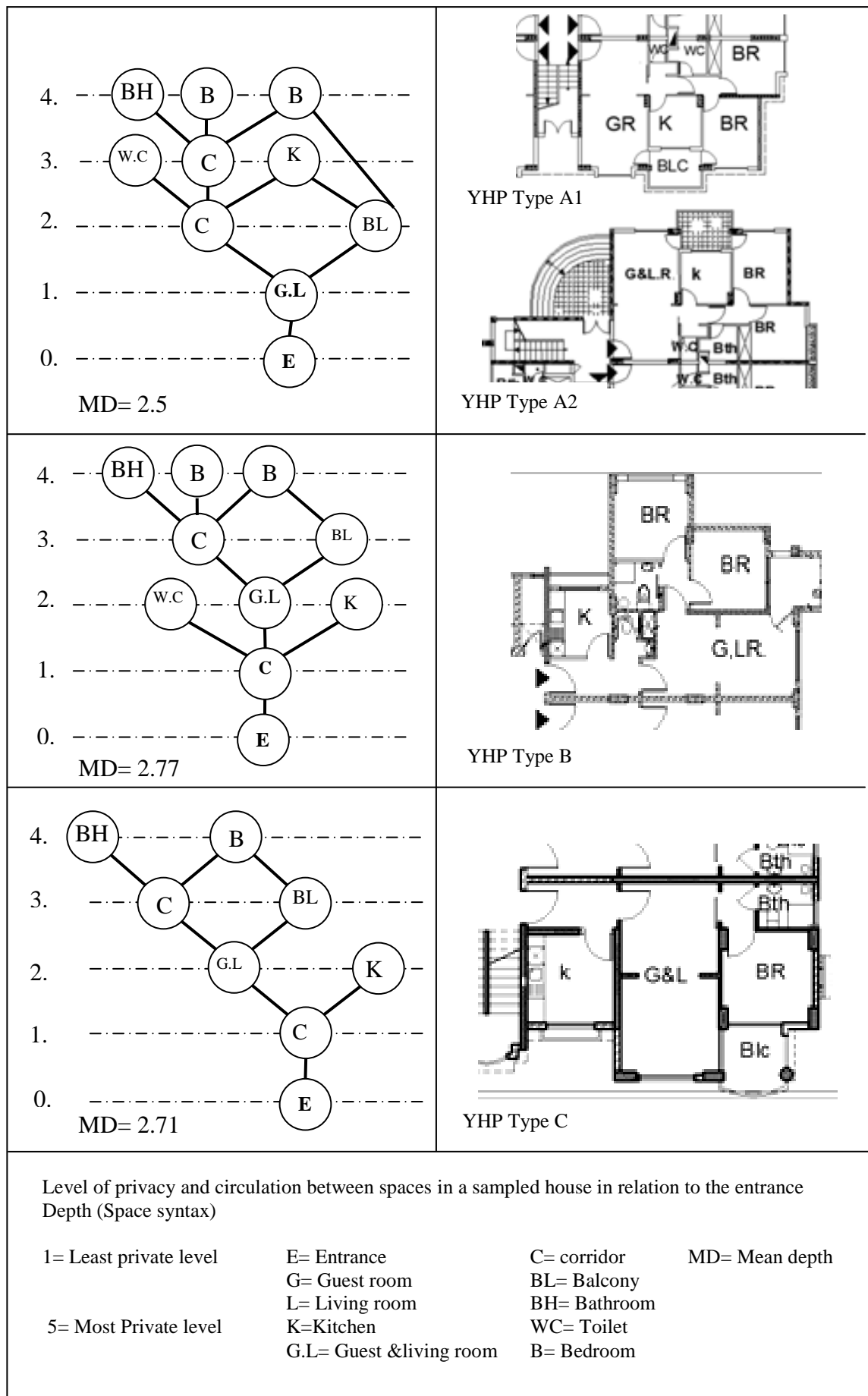
Figure 6.8: Level of privacy - Depth of spaces in public housing design (YHP)

Level of privacy and circulation between spaces in a sampled house in relation to the entrance Depth (Space syntax)

1= Least private level	E= Entrance	C= corridor	MD= Mean depth
	G= Guest room	BL= Balcony	
	L= Living room	BH= Bathroom	
5= Most Private level	K=Kitchen	WC= Toilet	
	G.L= Guest &living room	B= Bedroom	
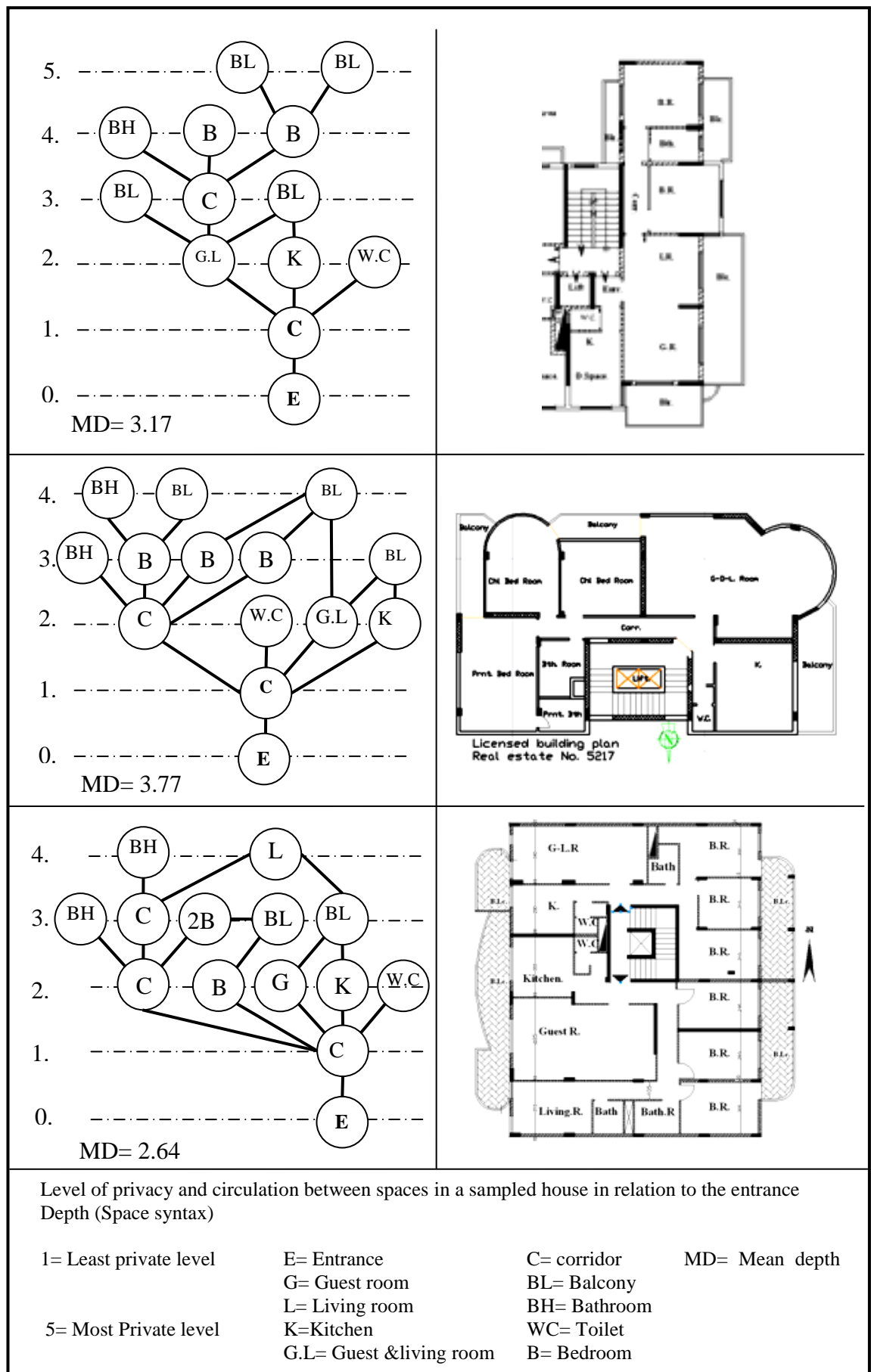
Figure 6.9: Privacy level - Depth of spaces in relation to the entrance in private housing design

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Kitchen	Public housing design	Private housing design
Location of the kitchen	• Close to the entrance and adjoining the guest-living space (in 2 housing types). • In the centre of the house adjoining the guest-living room, and the bedroom (in 2 other types). • Separate from other house elements.	• Close to the entrance. • Adjoining the guest-dining-living space. • Separate from other house elements.
Connection between the kitchen and house elements	• Has an access through entry corridor with no connection to the bedrooms (in 2 types). • Has an access through 2 spaces (a corridor & the guest-living space) with connection to the bedrooms through a corridor from one side and a balcony from the other side in (2 other types).	• Has an access through entry corridor or lobby, with connection to the bedrooms through a corridor branched from the entrance corridor • No need to entre to the guest-living space to move between the kitchen and the bedrooms (In many sampled houses in Area 2)
Food Preparation	• Limited worktop areas in the kitchen. • Not enough space to add a seat & a table, foldable table added.	• Sufficient worktop areas in the kitchen. • There is a seat and a table or enough space to add one.
Food Consumption	• Not enough space for a table in the kitchen, • 2 parts in an open or semi-open space, for living and guest or dining place • Eating probably takes place in the living room or in a corner within the living room	• Enough space for breakfast table and in several cases for dining table. • There are 3 parts in one open or semi-open space and these seems to be for guest, living and dining room. • Possibility of having food in both kitchen and dining room

Table 6.8: Planned places for food preparation and consumption

In summary, a higher level of family privacy seems to be provided in private housing design than that provided in the public one, based on a few physical differences. Firstly, the stair landing in public sector houses is shared among four flats, whereas this is shared between two flats at most in the private housing design, as the layouts show. Secondly, half of public housing layouts show that the guest room, which is also a living room in the sampled houses, is accessed directly from the flat entrance, which would reduce the level of family privacy. In contrast to public housing, most private housing layouts show that the guest room is separated by a corridor although guest and living rooms are predominantly located in one open or semi-open space. This separation between guest and living room on one side and other house elements on other side provides a higher level of family privacy. Thirdly, there is higher number of bathrooms and bedrooms in private housing designs comparing with the public ones, and therefore higher level of privacy is provided in the private housing design. Comparing to the kitchen in the traditional house, where only cooking takes place, (see subsection 3.5.7 and section 3.7), the kitchen in the current housing design is meant to be essentially a place for cooking and food preparation in both public and private housing sectors, but also highly likely to be a place also for partial food consumption in the private sector. In addition, the kitchen in private housing seems to be designed to accommodate other household activities and to be easily modified to be an open-plan kitchen with the living room, as these elements are generally adjoined in the current housing design. Moreover, comparing to the kitchen in the traditional house (see figure 3.12), the level of privacy in the kitchen seems to be lower in the current design as it is closer to the entrance and guest room than to the nocturnal part of the house.

6.11 Summary and reflections

In summary, cultural change, as seen by the interviewed designers, was rapid, and sudden in the last decade in Syria, driven by modernization, westernization and globalization. Cultural change affected the household life and social needs in the home, which, in turn, affected housing use and design. For instance, a few interviewees highlighted that the places of socialization have been transferred from private to public spaces, i.e. from home to out of the home, as a result of current households' tendency to a higher level of family privacy, and thus the need and the use of the guest space at home has been decreasing in the last decade. However, the guest space at home is still an indicator of household status, as a few interviewees noted. Another prominent

change in housing use is the significant increase in the kitchen use by all or most household members, rather than only the wife, for different activities such as cooking, food preparation and consumption, and other activities, which were usually practiced in the living room. Most interviewees emphasized the tendency of household members to individual use of bedrooms, not only for sleeping but also for studying, internet use and sometimes a place for the children to meet their friends. Regarding changes in formal housing design, the interviewed designers emphasized that it is still slow and out of line with cultural change in the city of Lattakia, and changes are mostly in the density of houses, and in the vertical and horizontal expansion as a result of the rapid population growth and the increase in the number of smaller sized households.

The interviewed designers frequently stated that their intention was to provide new housing design, which is more appropriate for current cultural change and the end-users' needs, but building design regulations restrict their ideas and designs; and the developers and landlords control housing designs through their financial power. Although architects often have to speculatively design generic housing, they, as a few noted, try to provide different types of housing design to fulfil social needs for different cultural and socioeconomic classes. On the other hand, developers who are also designers believe that they impose a novel design on the clients which is, as they claimed, in line with current change. The developers/designers claimed that they are aware of the clients' tendency towards making modifications and/or configurations after moving into their houses, and that they consider these in both the design and the structural study of the residential building when possible. The interviewed architects assured that they considered intra-family privacy as a crucial social need in contemporary life, in housing design, by increasing the number of bedrooms when it is possible. It seems that they pay less attention to foodways in housing design, except the high consideration given to new kitchen appliances, as they noted.

All interviewees emphasised that the municipality is officially responsible for the final decision in housing design, which is proposed by architects. However, because of the widespread corruption in the state institutions, developers and/or the building owners have the real power and the decisive role in housing design, where they impose their opinion following their interests. Architects can only impose their design when they are also the developers of the building they are designing. End-users can be involved in their housing design when they are the owners of the building.

The interviewed designers emphasized that end-users are marginalized in the decision-making process of generic housing design. And this is because of the lack of public awareness and public participation in housing design; lack of non-governmental organizations; lack of communication between end-users and housing designers/ architects; and because of the institutional corruption which increases the power and control of capital over rules; and lastly, lack of research and academic studies which may empower the role of end-users in the housing design process.

The frequent modifications in the current housing design, as interviewed designers frequently stated, are mainly by: increasing the number of bedrooms, and sometimes adding a bathroom to the parents' bedroom to provide higher level of intra-family privacy; reducing the guest space area such as removing the guest bedroom from the current housing design, and also the guests' dining room which is, if it exists, integrated into the living room; isolating the guest space to provide a higher level of family privacy; and also enlarging the kitchen space to easily fit the new kitchen appliances in and to add a dining table, sometimes integrating the living room into the kitchen. These modifications seem to be performed by converting the balconies and loggias into other enclosed elements of the house. A few interviewed designers emphasized that the aforementioned modifications are mainly requested by middle and lower middle socioeconomic households, though it is sometimes noticed in lower socioeconomic households.

Regarding the physical designs, a higher level of family privacy and intra-family privacy seemed to be provided in the private sector houses than that in the public sector, based on a few physical differences. First, in privately designed houses only one or two flats are provided on each floor, whereas four flats are on each floor in public sector houses; most sampled private sector houses are designed with a corridor which provide separation between the guest-living space and the other house elements; and a higher number of bedrooms and bathrooms is provided in private sector houses than that provided in public sector. Regarding the kitchen, in both housing designs, it is located close to the entrance with more visibility and accessibility than that in the traditional houses. However, in private sector houses, kitchen is larger than that in public sector, which provides a higher possibility to accommodate other family activities such as food consumption, not just cooking and/or food preparation.

Chapter 7: Triangulation of households' answers, designers' feedback and physical design

7.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses mainly on addressing objectives 6 and 7 through the triangulation of information across households' perspectives, designers' perspectives, and the physical design which includes house design plans and photographic documentation of the same sampled households of this study; and also contributes to objectives 1 to 5. This chapter provides findings on the prominent and distinctive themes found across the individual parts of analysis presented in the previous chapters as an attempt to provide a complementary and comprehensive picture of what is happening (see fig. 7.1).
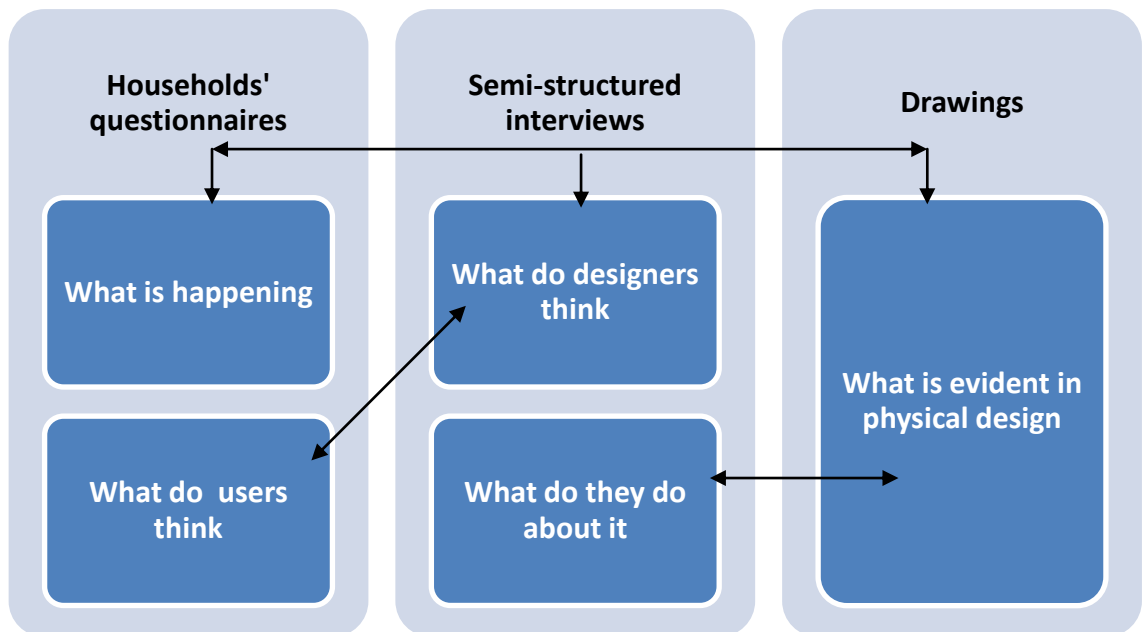
Figure 7.1: Overall collected data in this study which is triangulated in this chapter

The issues discussed in this chapter are based on the literature review structure and the overlapping topics across the households' responses and design actors' feedback, so as to answer the research questions (see chapter 1). As such, they are discussed in the same order as was used throughout the previous chapters, starting with the cultural change in Syria in the last decade and people's perception of this change. The chapter then discusses a few issues with relevance to housing design and use based on both

households' and designers' responses. A few of these are highlighted because they were frequently raised in the responses even though they had not been directly addressed in the questions included in the questionnaires and interview topic guides, such as the size of the flat as an essential part in housing design. The chapter then focuses on key changes to housing layouts undertaken by users with relevance to privacy and foodways, and ends with more detailed exploration of the latter, looking at food preparation and consumption separately, and in relation to wider cultural change.

7.2 Cultural change in Syrian society in the last decade

All the interviewed actors who work or worked in generic housing design agreed that culture in Syria has been witnessing a rapid and strong change in the last decade, pointing at various factors seen as motivating the cultural change. The factors were mainly: modernization, westernization, globalization, demographic change, economic change, national and international communication and women's role in society. This was highly matched with the statements in the household's responses, though they sometimes expressed this in simpler ways which can be used as indications of the factors mentioned above. The researcher interpreted and categorized households' responses into the most relevant factors. For instance, a high percentage of husbands mentioned that nowadays they do not make a decision related to the household without discussing this with their wife, and also often with their children, and most likely they do not involve their parents in the decision. This is because wives are now working out of home and participate in household income and husbands have independent business from their parents. One of the respondents mentioned: '*I could choose my partner and marry her because I was independent from my father and grandfather's business*'. This can be an indication that the power and control in the household are no longer in the hands of the father or the grandfather. It is instead a shared responsibility of both the husband and the wife, and also children sometimes participate in household affairs. This therefore can be interpreted as a change in the family structure moving towards a nuclear family, decreasing the central father or grandfather power in the extended family, increasingly involving women in decision making in the household and also in society at a larger scale.

It was also emphasized by the interviewed designers that global changes were rapidly and arbitrarily received and thus unevenly and differently perceived by different cultural groups, as was commented by one of the interviewees: '*Global change has not been gradually happening, which made it quite difficult to effectively interact with local culture and is thus unevenly perceived by different sub-cultural groups*'.

The interviewed households have also illustrated the different perception of cultural change between different groups, as they often emphasized that different groups have different attitudes towards cultural change: '*there are people who see this change as an improvement whereas others see it as deterioration and decadence, especially regarding the morals, principles and social values*'.

In summary, as noted above, the designers seem to be aware of rapid cultural change in the Syrian society in the last decade and therefore they are aware of the inevitable generated changing social needs of the house end-users. Both designers and end-users see differences between societal groups in perceiving and adding on current cultural changes.

7.3   Cultural change and housing design

The actors in generic housing design particularly emphasized that the rapid global change also affected Syria society rapidly, and not at a gradual pace, and this was the main reason for culture change and housing design to become slightly out of line with each other , as a few of the interviewees mentioned. Two of the interviewed developers emphasized that they have been adapting the design of the new buildings to the general demands of laypeople, whereas a few architects noted that building design regulations control and define the house elements and even the dimensions of each element per se. Likewise, the majority (92%) of the interviewed households believed that modernization, westernization and globalization have been strongly affecting housing use, especially in the last decade, whereas housing design is still, to some extent, out of line with current cultural change, and that they as end users consider modifications in the house design when applicable.

7.4   The sufficient size of the apartment

Starting with the designers' perspective**:** three of those interviewed (A, C&H) emphasized that less than **65 sq m** is not sufficient for a **3-member** household, as is the case exist in some of Youth Housing flats. One of the designer/developers commented: '(**65 sq m**) *is barely adequate for an elderly couple after their children leave the house but not under any circumstances for a **3-members** household'.* Two interviewed designers (A&D) recommended that **20 sq m/person** is the minimum needed area excluding the balcony/ies area.

 All the interviewees who work in housing design assured that allowance of **35%** of floor space as **balconies** has to be considerably reduced, and the reduction to be added to the closed building area. For instance, one of the interviewed architects commented: '*Most balconies which are **2*6 metres** were closed by users by half and converted to a bedroom, or added to a bedroom or other elements*.'   A few of the interviewed designers suggested reducing the percentage of the open space (balcony & loggia) to be up to **15%** of the allowed built area. One of the interviewed structural engineers (G) emphasized that open elements are predominantly converted to closed elements and integrated to other parts of the house: '*Developers ask the structural engineers to consider in the structural study that balconies will be closed after the municipal inspection of the subdivision plan, although it is illegal, abusing the weaknesses in the law as it is easily abused for bribes and corruption.'*

From the **households** perspective: the majority of the interviewed households assured that private housing developers are eager to add the whole **35% balconies** area to raise the price of the house and earn more money, though they are quite aware that this percentage of balconies is not all needed. This argument was not an issue in the state-organization designed houses, as the state developers are not interested in increasing the surface area, whereas private developers try to add every square centimetre**,** allowing them to sell them at a higher price.

Referring to the **physical housing design**, the sampled flat-size range is between **65** and **90** sq m in the sampled state-organization designed houses and between **90 to 225 sq m** in the privately designed houses.

According to the interviewees' (A & D) suggestion that **20** sq m is the minimum surface area needed for each person, and considering the average size of the household in the City of Lattakia which is four members (~**4 members/hh**), as shown in chapter **5**, **80 sq m** would therefore be a minimum area for a four-member household, and adding **15%** of this for balconies, the needed total house area could be **90-95 sq m** for a **4-member household.** This shows that the area of sampled state-designed houses in the Youth housing neighbourhood, which ranged from **65 to 90** sq m, is not sufficient for the average-size households in Lattakia according to above designers' criteria, whereas privately designed houses provide more than needed. As shown in chapter 5, around **60%** of the sampled private sector flats in Area 2 ranged between **160 to 225** sq m, with 160 sq m being considered sufficient for a seven-member household.

Figures 7.2 and 7.3 show the difference in the percentage of the balconies to the closed built area between the privately designed flats and the state-organization designed flats. In state-organization designed houses the designer allocates a low percentage of the building for balconies as shown in figure 7.3, as the balcony area is only **4** out of 65 sq m (~**6%** of the enclosed area).
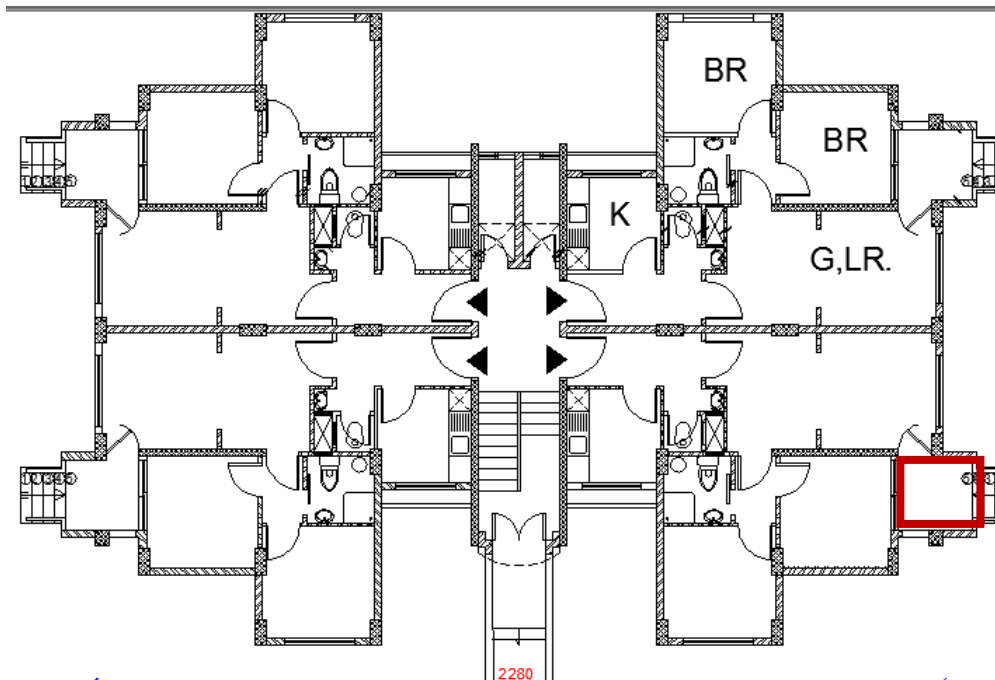
Figure 7.2: State-organization designed house type

The house design plan in figure 7.3 show the portions of the closed built area and the open area such as balconies and loggias in the state-organization designed houses.

According to the building design regulations, it is allowed to build up to **35%** of the closed built areas as balconies or loggias. For instance, in plan in figure 7.3, the enclosed built area across the whole floor is **262 sq m** and the open area (loggias and balconies) is **91 sq m (35% of closed area),** and thus the total floor area of the building is **353 sq m** for a given floor. The designer used all the allowed area of balconies and loggias though it is not all needed, as was assured by the end users of this building. For example, one of the interviewed households mentioned that the flat is quite larger than what they need, as the wife commented: '***225 sq m is larger than what we actually need, it is only adding more housework, maintenance cost and is less cosy and less family gathering'.*** The other flat in the same building was smaller with **160 sq m,** and two interviewed households who live in such flats were quite satisfied with the size of it as they commented: '*I actually could choose the other flat in this building but I think it is large and I prefer a smaller-size flat'.*

Total floor area = 353.7 (135%)
Total closed area = 262 (100%)
Total open area = 91.7 (35%)
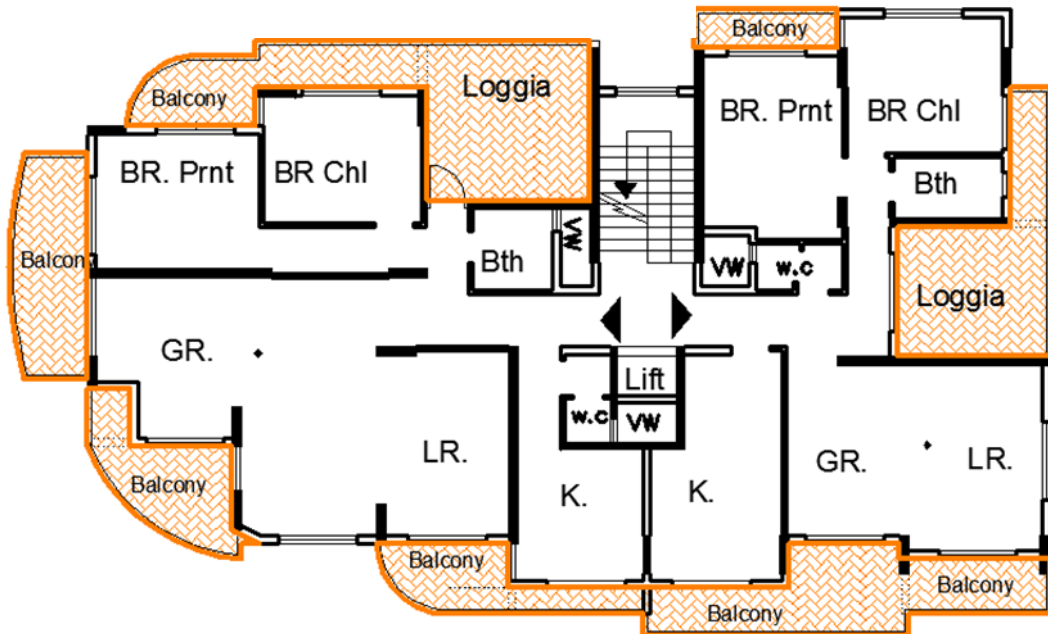
Figure 7.3: Licensed plan of privately designed house

In fact, the implemented open area before the end users moved into the building **(51sqm, 19.5%)** was less than the planned open area **(91sqm, 35%)** as percentage of the total floor enclosed built area, as shown in figure 7.4. After the end users moved into the building a few of them enclosed additional open area. This plan shows how the designer tried to maximize the total area of the building to earn more money regardless of the need of the end users.
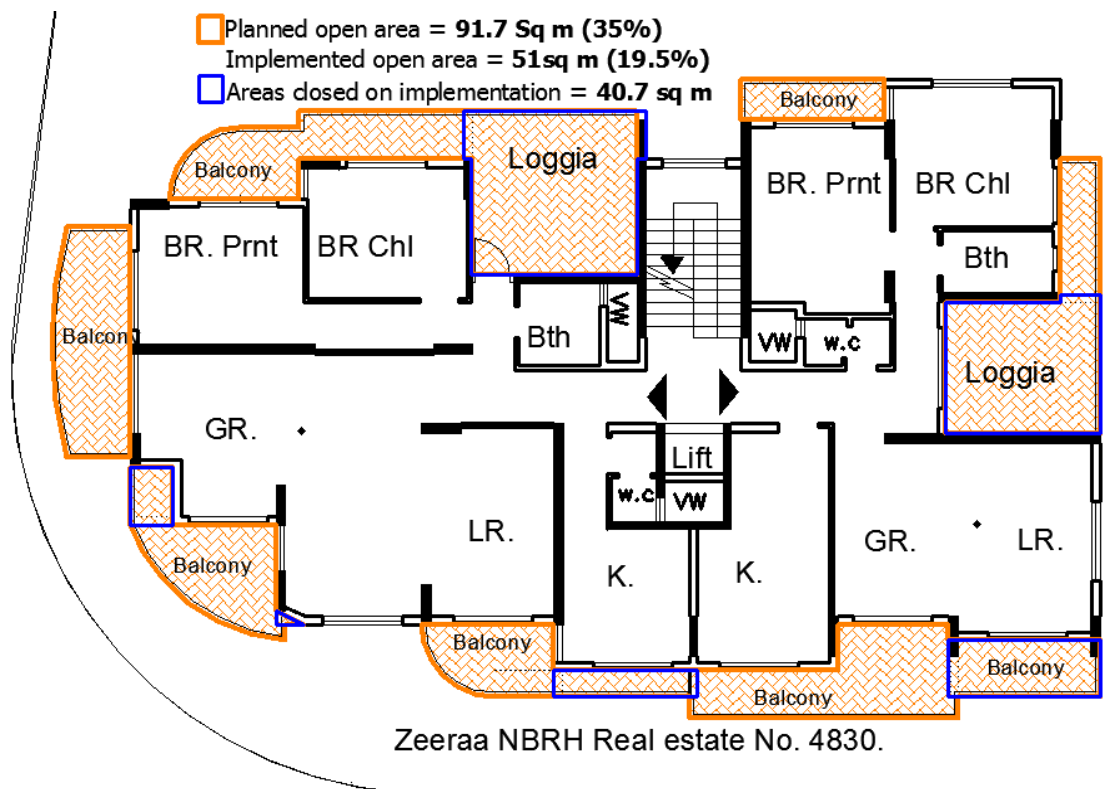
Figure 7.4: Housing design plan in Area 2 showing the enclosed areas after the users moved into it
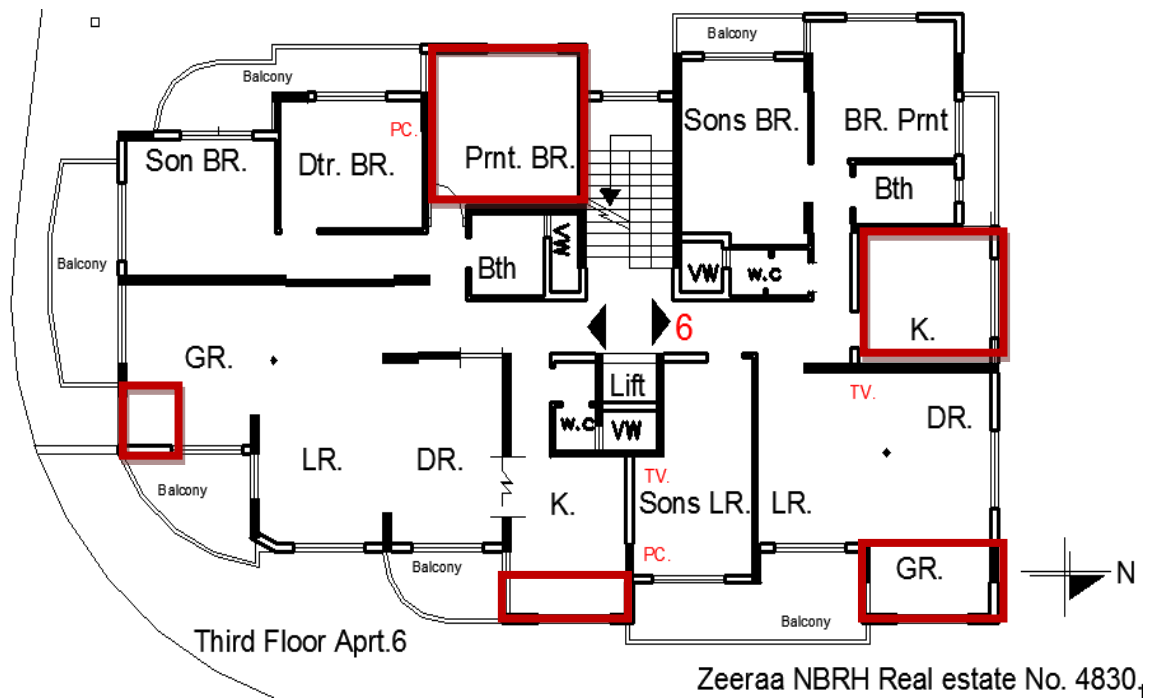
Figure 7.5: Implemented design in Area 2: show the final layout after converting loggias and balconies to enclosed spaces

As a result of an unneeded area of balconies and loggias, the end-users demanded to convert part of the open areas into enclosed areas such as bedrooms after the main construction was completed (the basic shell) and before completing the finishing work as shown in figure 7.5.

Although the designer discussed the design with the end-users of this building, and designed and implemented it according to their agreement as he emphasized, a few further modifications were made to the building by individual owners after completing all the finishing work, as for example enclosing more area of balconies as seen in figure 7.6. and 7.7.
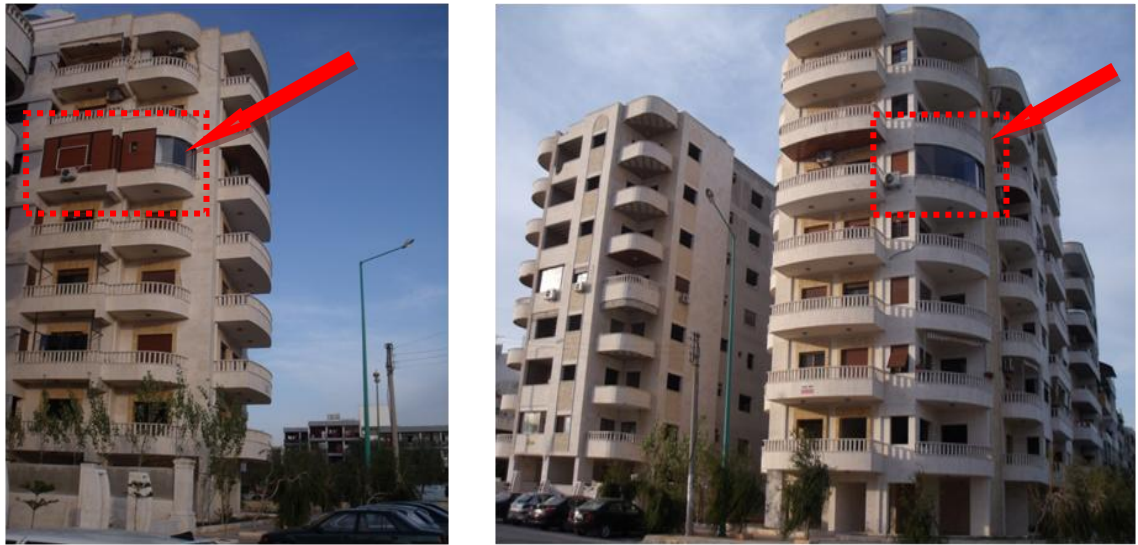
Figure 7.6: Converting the balconies to enclosed spaces in real estate No. 4830 in Area 2
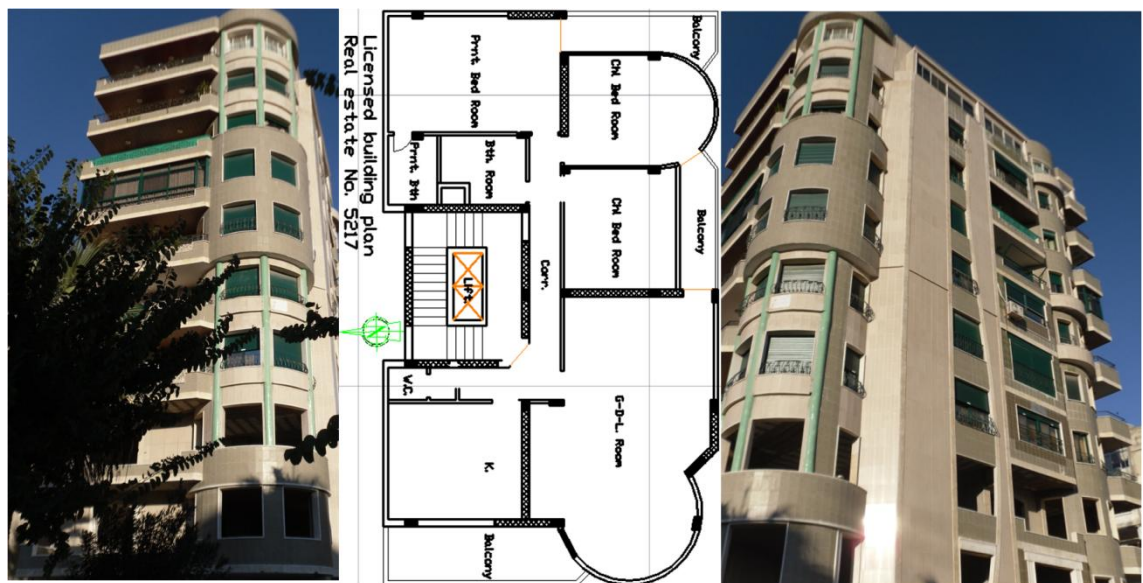
Figure 7.7: Converting balconies/loggia to enclosed spaces in real estate No. 5217

7.5   The house elements into which the balconies and loggias were converted

The balconies and loggias were mainly converted into a bedroom or an extension to the kitchen, as shown in the example above (figure 7.6). In the larger-size flat a bedroom was added so as to have a bedroom for each child (as the mother commented) to provide higher level of intra-family privacy, as they have two children, and another part of a balcony was added to the kitchen. This modification was already agreed with the designer, as he and the households mentioned.

The designer commented: '*although all the end-users in this building agreed with the modifications and bought it off plan, two of them had enclosed more parts of the balconies to the bedrooms and to the guest-living area.* He added '*they distorted the appearance of the building though I did my best to design it as they requested*'.

In the smaller-size flat, one of the households had swapped the location of the kitchen with the sons' living-room – different from their bedroom, where they often gather with their friends, although they chose the design they want off plan (as the mother emphasized). The mother commented regarding the sons' living room: '*we put the living room close to the main entrance as my sons always watch TV and play music with their friends, so there is no longer a need to let their friends into the private part of the house and also my husband and I do not hear their noise… the house is also quieter this way.*' She added '*I do not like them to use their bedrooms for other activities; I prefer to use each element as it is designed for*'. The sons' living room was, as they mentioned, used for different day activities such as studying, using the computer, internet, playing music, and reading and also as a place for the sons to meet their friends (see figure 7.8). She also mentioned that this room is used only by her sons and their friends, and that she and her husband never use it as they have another TV in the main guest-living area (see fig. 7.9).

The designer of this building commented, referring to the aforementioned flat, that: '*one of the end-users has changed the location of the kitchen although it was designed and extended, before the finishing completion, exactly as they requested*'. He added: '*this is not really good for the building, especially because the slabs are made of reinforced concrete and thus it is difficult for the sewage and plumbing works*'

Figure 7.8: Sons' living room and the different activities practiced in it, Area 2

Figure 7.9: Guest-living area, Area 2

7.6 Changes in housing use relevant to family privacy and food preparation and consumption

Both households and designers emphasized that the recent change in housing use was mainly to increase the level of family and intra-family privacy by increasing the use of individually used spaces and decreasing the use of the shared spaces at home, especially the ones used by guests. The households frequently mentioned that they rarely use the guest space (guests' reception and dining table), whereas the guest-bedroom has already disappeared, as they meet them out of the home in the restaurants for example. An interviewed architect commented regarding the guests bedroom: '*higher family privacy leads to fewer visitors who sleep overnight, therefore the visitor bedroom vanishes*'.

One of the interviewed mothers in the Youth Housing households (Area 1) emphasized that she often sleeps in the living room so as to provide slightly higher privacy for her children. On the other hand, one of the interviewed designers commented: '*Privacy can be provided by educating and practicing, not by separating spaces or rooms; my children do not need to have separate rooms to have or practise their privacy, especially because I provide reasonable range of freedom.*'

7.6.1 *Number and location of the TVs in the house*

The number of **TVs** per house seems to be an indication of households' tendency to individualism and thus the need for higher level of intra-family privacy, as the **TV** used to be one of the main sharing activities of family members. One of the interviewed architects commented: '*Nowadays every household needs at least 2 TVs, so different generations (parents vs. children) can watch the programmes they prefer. Parents cannot bear what their children like to watch and vice-versa. One of the TVs is predominantly located in the living-room, the other in a bedroom or sometimes in the kitchen, but this is generally only for display, not for using.*' He continued while laughing: '*If the housewife watches TV in the kitchen she will burn the food*'. On the other hand, interviewee **K** commented: '*TV in the kitchen? No one puts TV there and if so it is very rare*'. He was surprised when the researcher informed him that the sampled households' survey showed that 23% of them have TV in the kitchen and a few more ensured that they would put a TV there if or when they have a larger kitchen.

The majority of the interviewed households **(63%)** in Area **2** seems to have more than one TV (see fig. 5.15). In Area **1**, only **20%** of sampled households have **2** TVs because, as a few households mentioned, there is not enough space or it is not a priority for them and they might have another **TV** later. On the other hand, **3** households in Area 1 insisted that it is not appropriate to have more than one **TV** at home, especially if you have children, so as to monitor what they watch and to direct them to useful and educational programmes. These 3 households also believed that having one TV in the home might strengthen the household's solidarity as this can increase the sharing time spent between the household members. Low income might be another reason not to be able to have more than one TV but they were probably embarrassed to say so. Figures 7.10, 7.11 and 7.12 show the location of the TVs in two of sampled houses that had a higher than average number of TVs.
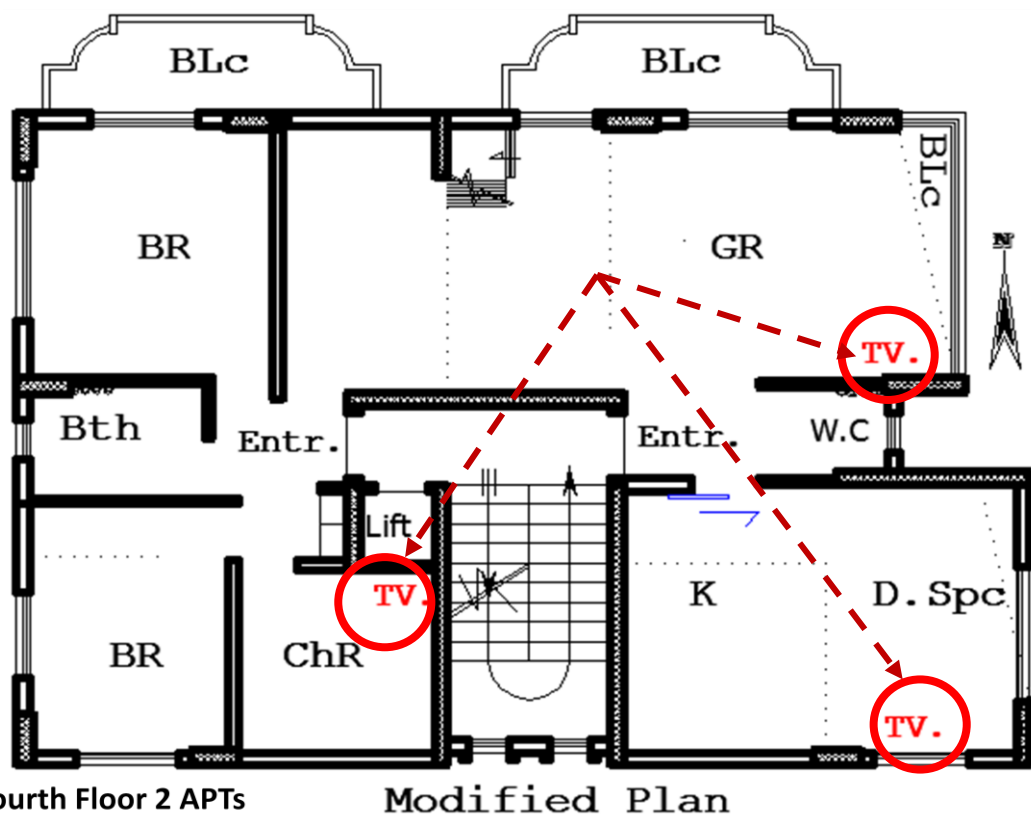
Figure 7.10: Location of the TVs in a sampled house, Area 2

Guest reception space   Living room

Figure 7.11: Area 2 TVs in Guest reception and living room
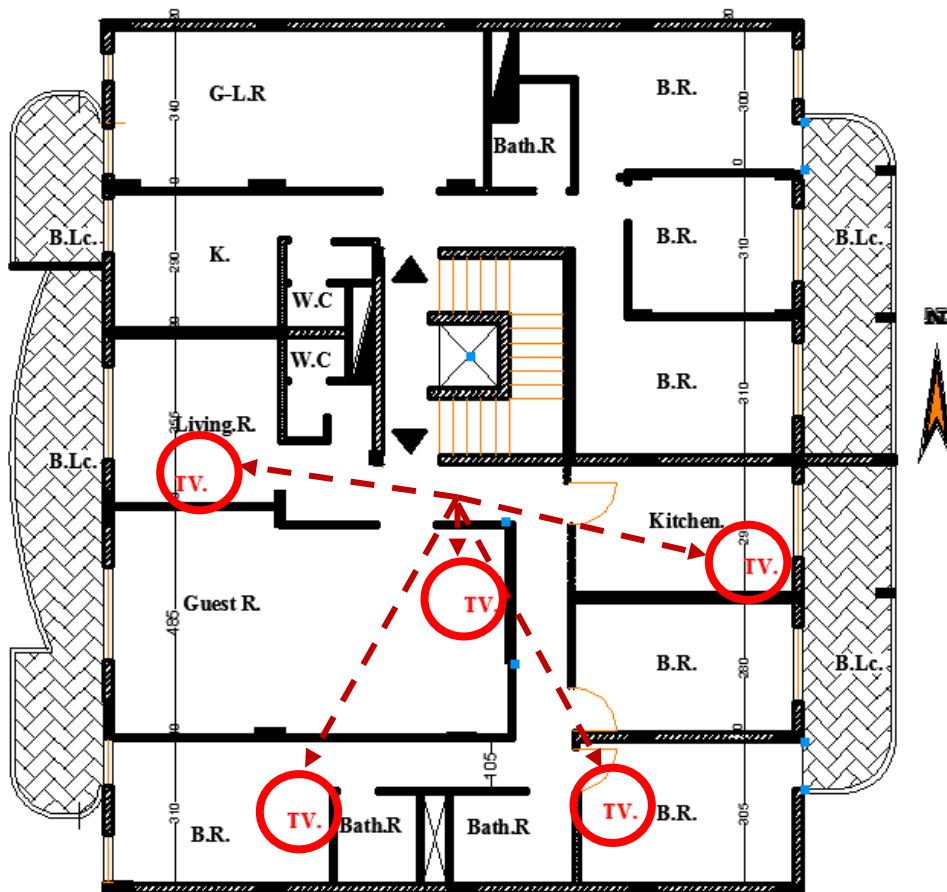
Figure 7.12:, The location of the TVs in sampled house, Area 2

7.6.2   *Changing the location of the kitchen and connectedness to other parts of the house*

One of the interviewed architects commented regarding the family privacy: *'occupants seek to* **link the kitchen to the nocturnal house elements** *to provide more privacy towards guests (e.g. some housewives, especially conservative ones, stay in the kitchen when there is an unexpected guest at home and thus use other parts only when they leave).'*

The house design plan in figure 7.13 shows that the household has changed the location of the kitchen, living room and one bedroom as they put the living room closer to the main entrance while still adjoining the guests-reception and dining room. They put instead a bedroom far from the entrance and the guests' space, providing more privacy for family members towards guests.   The kitchen was also put closer to bedrooms and at the same time not far from the guest room, living room and the main entrance. As the wife commented: *'if I or any of my family members have guests, I can use the kitchen without them (the guests) knowing that we are even at home'*.

Licensed design plan, Area 2

K. Depth = 2   B. Depth = 2
L. Depth = 4   MD = 2.64

Modified design plan, Area 2

K. Depth = 2   B. Depth = 4
L. Depth = 2   MD= 2.64

Level of privacy and circulation between spaces in a sampled house in relation to the entrance
Depth (Space syntax)

1= Least private level	E= Entrance	C= corridor	MD= Mean depth
	G= Guest room	BL= Balcony	
	L= Living room	BH= Bathroom	
5= Most Private level	K=Kitchen	WC= Toilet	
	G.L= Guest &living room	B= Bedroom	

Figure 7.13: Changing the location of the kitchen in a sampled house, Area 2

In the following example (figure 7.14), which is a plan of the fourth floor of the same building above, the household put the kitchen in the furthest space from the main entrance and in the bedrooms part because, as the wife explained, most of the family members spend most of the time in the kitchen, as she commented: '*We eat, chat, watch TV, and use laptops and internet in the kitchen; my children also study sometimes in the kitchen'.* She added: '*I highly care about my children's privacy and study, I want them to be comfortable and successful in their education and actually they are'.*

The wife, in this household, seems to care about the family solidarity in addition of the individual privacy for her children. She mentioned that she tries to cook all types of food which are served in restaurants so her family members keep having meals at home. On the other hand, she commented that she likes to have a bedroom for each child so they can have a better environment to study in and practice their hobbies.

Area 2, Alawkaf NBRH, Building No. 5269 fourth floor
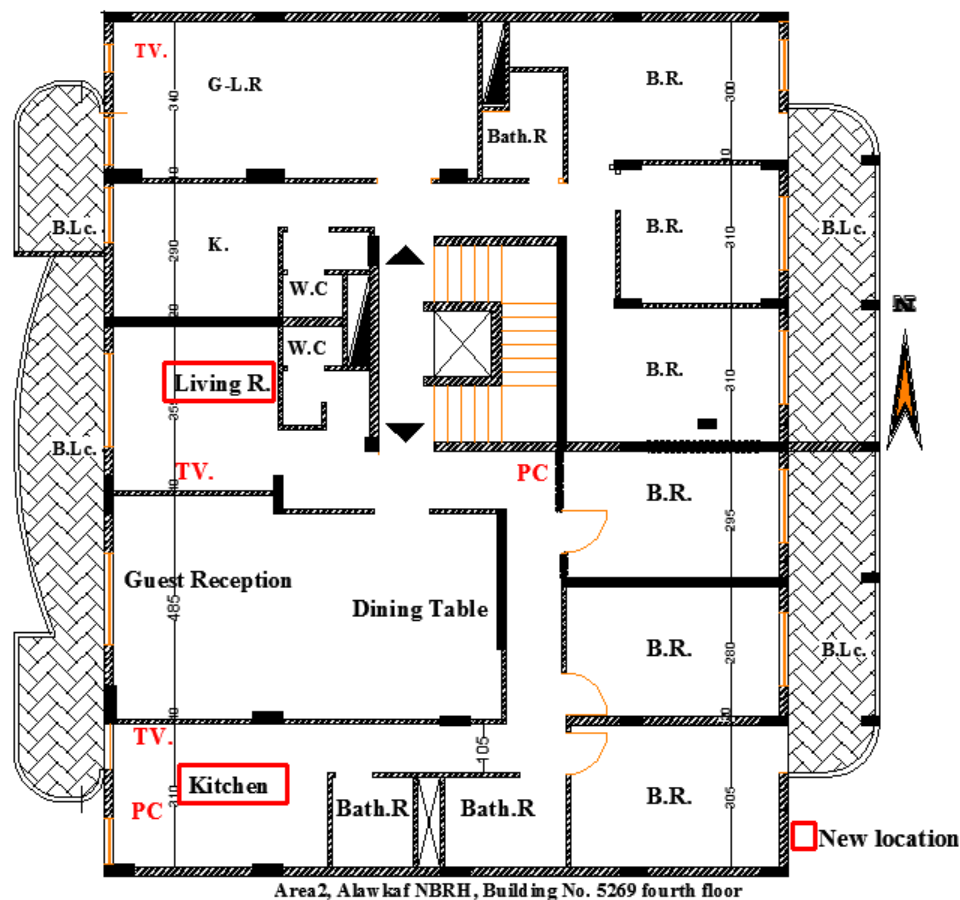
Figure 7.14: Changing the location of the kitchen in a sampled house, Area 2

7.6.3   *Enlarging or annexing the kitchen*

An important change in the kitchen seems to be enlarging it, as both designers and users emphasized, as a result of new equipment and furniture which are predominantly added to the kitchen, and the change in the family lifestyle. This enlarging seems to be happening by enclosing the balcony/loggia or part of the balcony to extend the kitchen (see fig. 7.15). The wife commented that although her house is spacious, she often have her coffee with a cigarette in this extended part of the kitchen.   One of the interviewed architects **B** commented:

'*Nowadays, household members eat alone, no longer with the extended family, therefore there is a possibility to add a small table to the kitchen and eat there*'

Figure 7.15: Extended kitchen to part of the balcony, Area 2

As a contrast to the majority of the respondents in Area 2, a few respondents in Area 1 (Youth Housing) highlighted the need of having indirect connection between the kitchen and the bedrooms or having the reception-guest room isolated or separate from the other parts of the house. For instance, in Area 1, a wife commented: '*whenever we have guest/s at home, I stay in the bedroom and I do not like to go to the kitchen* as *I need to change the comfy cloths which I wear at home*'. She commented that if it was possible she would have connected the kitchen to the bedrooms through a corridor or a balcony, see fig. 7.16).

Figure 7.16: Location of the kitchen at the entrance with no direct connection with the bedrooms

7.7 Food preparation: cooking, ordering ready meals, and/or going to restaurants

The majority of the interviewed housing design actors mentioned that food preparation and cooking habits have recently changed and tend towards easier and faster ways, as explained by one of the interviewed architects A: '*a high percentage of Syrian households depend now on ready meals, especially the employees. When the* **wife and husband are working out of the home** *they often take* **ready meals from restaurants or take away shops'.** Another architect **B** also commented*: 'the Housewife nowadays depends mainly on the ready and fast food as her lifestyle changed as she works in the home and out of the home.'*

Table 7.1 shows that a high percentage **(41%, N=16)** of the sampled households goes **once or twice a week** to the restaurant to have a meal/meals in summer time and **(33%, N=13)** goes with the same frequency **(1-2/week)** in winter time. Many respondents commented that they go to the restaurant not only to have a meal but also for entertainment and leisure out of the home and thus they go more often in summer time. A third (**33%**) of the sampled households orders ready meals **once or twice a week.** Respondents frequently commented that ordering food from the shops, especially sandwiches, is sometimes cheaper than cooking at home, and more delicious besides

being faster. One of the interviewed architects (**C**) emphasized that the rapid increase in the number of restaurants and food shops affected the lifestyle. He commented: '*eating in the restaurant was also a fashion in the last decade in Lattakia and, I think, in all Syrian cities, but now people started to avoid this and many went back to the old habit to eat at home with their family'.* He added: *'I personally try my best to change this new habit'.*

A high percentage of the sampled households (**38%, N=15**) cooks **3-4 times per week** and **33%** cooks **5-6** times per week. Many respondents commented that although they recently cook less than before and they now order food and eat in the restaurant, cooking at home is indispensable for them.

Frequency of food preparation practise	Food preparation practise			
	Go to restaurant		Ordering	Cooking at
	in summer	in winter	ready meals	home
Twice a day	0	0	0	5%
Every-day	0	0	0	18%
5-6 times/ week	0	0	3%	36%
3-4 times/ week	3%	0	5%	**38%**
1-2 times/ week	**41%**	33%	33%	3%
Rarely (~once/2ws)	18%	21%	23%	0
Very rarely	26%	28%	**36%**	0
Never	12%	18%	0	0

Table 7.1: Food preparation practice of the sampled households

As seen above, cooking at home is still the main practice in food preparation, cooking and consumption with less frequency than it used to be, as most respondents mentioned. The majority (**74 %**) of sampled households cooks between **3-6** times per week with average frequency **4.4** times per week. **44 %** of sampled households have a meal/s in the restaurant in the summer time **1-4** times per week with average frequency **1.6** per week. **44 %** of sampled households order cooked food from the shop or restaurant **1-6** times per week with average frequency **2** per week.

7.8   Food consumption

The house spaces where food consumption takes place, household members who often eat together and household meals timing seem to be affected by cultural changes, and thus are discussed in the following subsections.

7.8.1   *House spaces where food consumption takes place*

Although a few of the interviewed designers claimed that household members eat mainly in the dining room, others believed that this is no long important, as shown in the following comment of interviewee **B**: '*Regarding food rituals, this is becoming less important as there is no longer a need for a large table with a dozen chairs in a separate dining room for a large size family*'.

Most interviewed households stated that they prefer to have at least a small dining table in the kitchen, not only for food preparation but also for having a meal/s in the kitchen. All interviewed households who had tables in their kitchens mentioned that they have at least one meal in the kitchen (see fig. 7.17).

Medium dining table in the kitchen for five-member households in Area 2

Figure 7.17: Dining table in the kitchen, Alzeeraa, Area 2

In Area 2, a few respondents emphasized that if they had enough space they would have their meals more often in the kitchen, and that they use foldable table because the kitchen is very small (see fig. 7.18).

Youth Housing, Type B, Fourth Floor Kitchen- Qsnr.2

Figure 7.18: Small kitchen, household use a foldable table to eat sometimes in the kitchen, Youth Housing, Area 1

Another respondent (the wife) in Area 2 commented that they have their breakfast in the kitchen, and their lunch and/or dinner in the guest-living room. She added that the size of the kitchen is enough and they have a medium size dining table in the kitchen (see fig. 7.19)

Figure 7.19: Kitchen in Area 2, with enough space for a medium dining table (this kitchen was a loggia in the licensed design plan)

7.8.2   *Household members who often eat together*

Both interviewed housing design actors and sampled households emphasized that household members who eat together had changed for different reasons such as the job types, and the power and role of household members, as shown in the following comment by one of the interviewed architects (**B**): '*The husband, for example, might finish his job at 16:00 whereas the wife might finish her job at 14:00 and children finish school at 12:00, this affects the food preparation and consumption ways'.* He added: *'In the past, the father in many families used to eat first and the rest of the family members ate after he finished, as he was the breadwinner and the owner, whereas nowadays they cannot wait for him for too long and thus they predominantly eat before he arrives home'.*
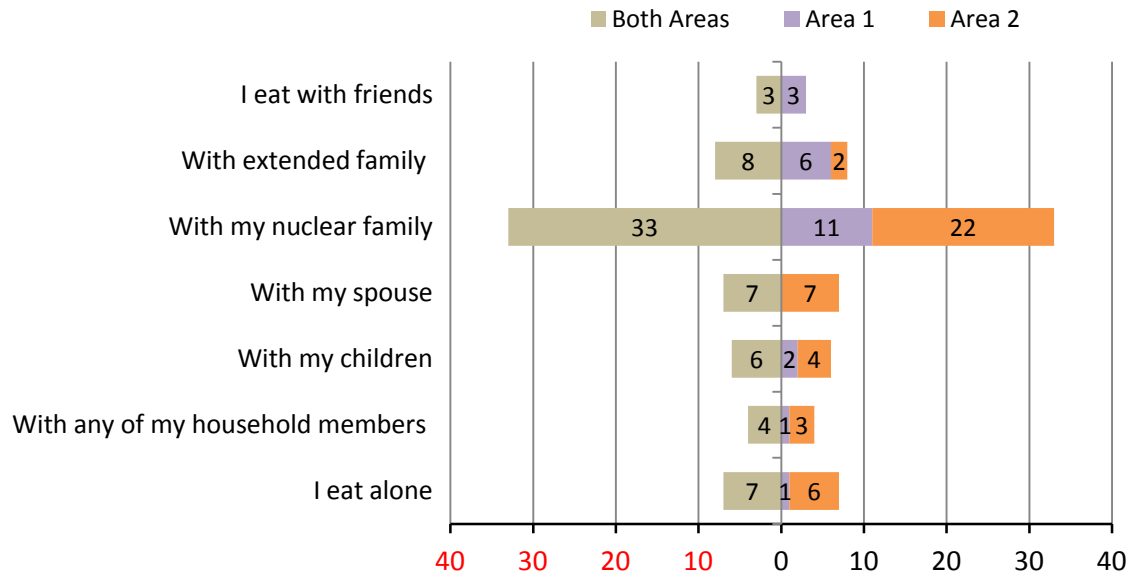
Figure 7.20: Household members who eat together one meal or more per day

He also emphasized: '*Nowadays, each household member eats alone and no longer with the extended family'*. Figure 7.20 shows that only **20% (n=8)** of the respondents in the sampled households eat with members of their extended family.

One of the household respondents in Area 2 commented: *'my husband has a sweets shop and spends most of his time there. It is difficult to have our meals together'*. Figure 7.20 shows that **15% (N=6)** of interviewed wives eats with their children as their husband are most of the time in their job. However, the majority (**~85%, N=33)** of sampled households mentioned that they have at least one meal with their nuclear family.

7.8.3   *Change in household meals timing*

Household meal times have become a few hours later than they used to be, as many respondents mentioned. A slight majority of the total sampled households (**64%, N=25)** mentioned that they have a late breakfast between **9 am to 12** midday, which might be at home, work, school, or university (see figure 7.21). The majority of sampled households **(82%, N=32 of 39)** have their lunch meal between **2-5 pm** as a result of the job timing, which predominantly finishes after **2 pm**. This meal seems to have become the main household meal, when most or all the family members get together around the dining table. As a result of the late lunch, almost half of the

households mentioned that they have late dinner at **9pm- 12** midnight. Dinner seems to be a lighter and a secondary meal, especially for wives, as a majority of the respondents mentioned.

A few households mentioned that they have **2** proper meals per day and have healthy snacks either early morning and/or late night. One of the respondents in Area 1 (Qnr8) commented: *'we rarely have breakfast, we generally have some light fruit or sandwiches and we have lunch/dinner early evening'*.

A few respondents highlighted the difference between winter (school time) and summer meals timing, as interviewee (Qnr8, Area1) commented: '*in summer time and holidays this is more regular and meal times are fixed: breakfast at* **9***, lunch at* **14:30***, dinner* **19**'. Another respondent (Qnr11, Area1) also commented: '*we have breakfast all together at the weekends and holidays; we do not set a table for dinner; we only have fruits, nuts, and drinks, specifically Matte[65] which we drink at any time'*. Qnr12 (Area1) also commented: *'we have different meal timing between school time and holidays and summer time; in school time everyone has breakfast at a different time'*.

Figure 7.21 presents the meal times of the sampled households and meals and times when all household members eat together around a table. It shows that in the highest percentage of households **(51%, N=20),** when all members eat together is at late lunch time between **2-5 pm.**   **18% (N=7)** of the households gather around the dining table for dinner between **5-9 pm** and **20% (N=8)** have late dinner all together between **9pm - 12midnight.** Breakfast time seems to be the least structured as every member has their breakfast at a different time according to their job, school, and /or university. Only **13% (N=5)** households mentioned that they most often have late breakfast all together **(9am-12noon)** and **5% (N=2)** have early breakfast together between **6-9 am.** One of the respondents (Qnr19) in Area2 commented: *'it is very rare to have breakfast all*

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[65] Matte drink (Mate): is a traditional drink in some countries in South America, especially in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Brazil. It is also common in parts of Chile, Lebanon and Syria. It is made of dried leaves of *Yerba Mate* and contains caffeine. It is usually drunk with friends and served by a hollow gourd (glass in Syria) and a metallic straw (traditionally made of silver) which has a sieve in the bottom.

together because of differences in work time, school and university; we set up a lunch table but we do not eat all together; we gather normally at dinner time'.
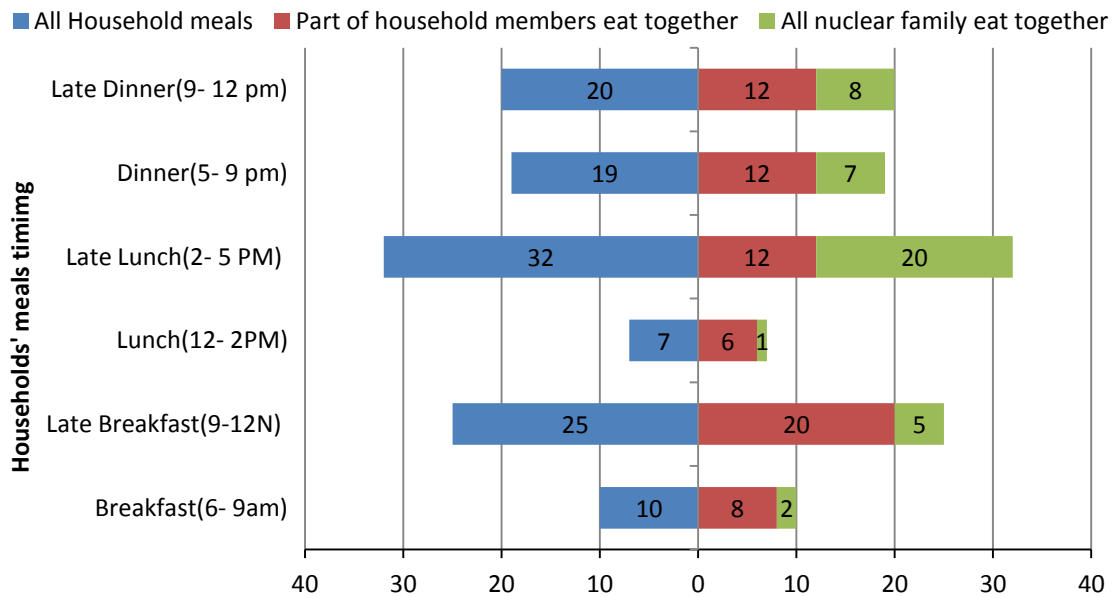
Figure 7.21: Household meals: times/members at the table

A few interviewees emphasized that having irregular household meals is a result of not only the current job types and times but also the change in the ideology, beliefs and lifestyles of the society. A considerable percentage of parents now believe that restrictions are no longer useful for the new generations, who currently have several educational resources and not merely the parents and household's rules and doctrines. For example, a respondent (Qnr.20) in Area 2 commented: '*my sons wake up late sometimes at lunch time, so they do not have breakfast with their parents; I do not like to force them as our parents had used to force us to eat with them even if we were not hungry'.* Another interviewee (Qnr28) in Area2 commented: '*I do not set up a breakfast table because everyone gets up at a different time; we usually have fruit, sandwiches and cake. Lunch is a fixed meal for all my family at fixed time. We have late dinner if we have any and not all of my household members join'.*

A few respondents commented that they do not set a dining table for dinner and they instead have light food, snacks such as fruits, sandwiches, nuts and/or different types of beverages. For example, one of the interviewed wives (Qnr4, Area1) commented:

'*Dinner is light, only sandwiches, no table and some of the household members do not have dinner*'.

7.9   Conclusion

In summary, referring to privacy, two types of privacy seems to be important for lower and middle-class households in the City of Lattakia: family privacy and intra-family privacy and these were reflected in the housing use and the modifications which were dominantly implemented by the users before or/and after moving into the house. On the other hand, the change in food preparation and consumption strongly affected the use of the kitchen and raised a need to enlarge the space of the kitchen.   Annexing the balcony to the kitchen and/or to the bedroom and/or converting the balcony to a bedroom seemed to be the prominent adaptation in the current houses.

Chapter 8:   Conclusion

This study focused on cultural change and housing use and design in contemporary life in Syria, as a country study, investigating these in Lattakia, which is one of the cities in Syria most affected by modernization, westernization and globalization. The researcher identified two cultural aspects most relevant to housing use and currently changing in Syrian society. These are family and intra-family privacy and food preparation and consumption.

The appropriateness of the new housing design to the current cultural change was investigated by administering face-to-face questionnaire to sampled households in two formal housing areas, inhabited by two different socio-economic classes in the City of Lattakia. Area 1 represents state-organization housing design, which is occupied by lower-middle-class households; and Area 2 represents private-organization housing design, which is occupied by middle-class households. The study was enhanced by interviews with housing design actors, analysis of physical housing design plans and photographic documentation.

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn from the analysis of the empirical findings in the previous chapters. It answers the research questions of this study. It addresses the overall aim of this research, its contribution to knowledge, research limitations and further research.

8.1   How are culture and the structure of the society perceived in Syria?

The literature review on Syria showed that culture in Syria is a mix of diverse subcultures. It has a traditional and conservative background, socially transmitted and learned from generation to another. It has traditionally been a collective culture and based on the extended family solidarity and relationships. Syrian culture is thousands of years old, but it is not unchanging. New elements have been added, combined and/or influenced the Syrian culture throughout history. Although Syrian society is not officially categorized as being divided into socio-economic stratifications and there was a state policy to build up a classless society and to disguise inequality among classes, there is a perception of de facto classes and Syrians tend to socialize with their own

social class. These perceptions of culture and society were largely confirmed by interviewees – both key informants and households.

Culture as an entire way of life has been changing in Syria in the last decade. This was shown in the responses of both interviewed groups in this study, according to whom worldview, values, norms, attitude, behaviour, lifestyle, symbolic system such as fashion and informal language and many other components of culture have been changing. There was a perception among interviewees that the structure of the society is becoming more superficial, fabricated and controlled by the power of money rather than morals and essence. Interviewees saw principal fundamental dilemma between following the morals and doctrines they were educated with or coping with the modern life style which values superficial and temporal manifestations.

8.2 How are modernization, westernization, and globalization affecting the above (culture and the structure of the society) and where does this have most impact?

Both users and design actors emphasized that there has been an important cultural change in the society of Lattakia and in other Syrian cites such as Damascus, the capital, particularly in the last decade. The majority of respondents perceived current cultural changes as an inevitable result of the modernization of the society and the impact of westernization and globalization – designers referred to modernization, westernization, and globalization directly, whereas the majority of households referred to these indirectly. The overall view of both designers and households shows that modernization is driving the society to solidarity based on the nuclear family rather than the extended family, to individualism rather than collectivism, and to materialism rather than morals in addition to high technology and novel equipments; westernization is changing the current culture to being more of a mix between local and western cultures, moving towards openness, western modernity, freedom and fashions; and globalization is introducing international products and, to some extent, devaluing the local ones, as knowledge, business, and cultures have exceeded the geographic boundaries of different countries.

Seeing these changes with pros and cons, part of the respondents seemed reluctant to interact with the changes, these being mostly conservative households; another group seemed to be wary of their changing process; and another one seemed to be welcoming these changes. They all, however, seemed to be affected by the modernization, westernization and globalization and interacted in different ways based on the recipients' sub-culture and their socioeconomic class. As evidenced in the household findings in chapter 5, the higher the socioeconomic class of a household, the faster their cultural change appears to be. Higher economic, educational and occupational level of the household facilitates its interaction with new inventions, technology, and new thoughts, and thus it provides a higher possibility of cultural change, as noted by interviewees. A significant number of the respondents showed worry and fear of the impact of these changes on the society, indicating that the sudden openness to the world led to superficial perceptions of other cultures and their modernization, and made it difficult to interact gradually and appropriately with the current changes.

Both key informants and households indicated that cultural change is affecting their thoughts, principles, values, way of life, and their activities out of the home and in the home. They indicated that household activities in the house and the use of domestic space have been changing, and this is slowly affecting the new housing design, directly and indirectly.

8.3   What impact is cultural change having on housing use and provision of new housing?

Both end users and housing design actors indicated that cultural change is affecting housing use, but with somewhat different focus. They both believed that current housing design and cultural changes are inconsistent because of the sudden and rapid change, and the resulting uneven perception of different sub-cultural groups. The provision of new housing seems to be affected only to some extent by the current cultural change as a result of the designers' awareness of such changes, whether through the direct demands of end-users or through the frequent adaptations which are made at the request of the end users after moving into the house and using it. However, the extent to which these changes are taking into consideration is limited because of the constraints of the building design regulations, as the majority of the interviewed

designers stated. Building design regulations are therefore seen as falling behind cultural change.

8.4   What are the main sources of housing design in Lattakia?

Formal housing design, at the time of the interviews, was officially provided by architects, who have to design in accordance with the Building Design Regulations, which restricts their design ideas and imposes rules and details which are no longer appropriate for the current housing design, as most interviewees stated. However, most generic housing design in the formal areas, such as the sampled ones, is speculatively designed, for unknown end-users. In the case of speculative design, architects decide the housing design in accordance with the building regulations, based on the developers' opinion, who are usually involved in the housing markets, and they have the financial power as the main and decisive factor in this process; and after following the aforementioned steps, they can draw on their academic or professional experience. End-users in this case choose from what is available on the housing markets. However, a few of the interviewed architects were also developers, and thus they had the power to determine the design and the price of the housing. They believed that architects can and have to provide new ideas in housing design and then the end users will accept the new ideas and become familiar with them, even if they do not like them at the beginning. Although they are playing a proactive role in cultural change by providing new or different design ideas to the market, they are, in many cases, providing these without considering the socio-economic class of the end users and their real social needs, which lead to an inappropriate design for them. For example, open plan kitchen-guest design was proposed as a modern or American style but this was frequently transformed at the users' request into a separate kitchen or semi separate by adding a separator such as an accordion door. In the case of individual design, when the end-user is usually the owner, the architect designs in accordance with the building design regulations and his/her viewpoint is based on the owner's opinion, which is the decisive factor here.

Magazines, journals, media, TV, and the internet can be sources to inspire architects with design ideas, besides their experience and other architects' designs. End users as owners usually choose their housing design influenced by the TV, and by relatives',

friends', and neighbours' houses, and also from types which are proposed to them by architects.

8.5 Does current new housing design in these areas fit the changing culture?

The licensed housing design and current changing culture in Syria seem to be out of line with each other, especially in the Youth housing (government-designed houses). Flats in the Youth housing neighbourhood were small and the surface area was less than the minimum needed area for an average size household, as most sampled households in Area 1 mentioned. Balconies/loggias in Youth houses were very small and thus it was difficult to make transformations, as interviewees mentioned. Flats in Area 2 (privately-designed houses) were larger than the ones in Area 1, and thus they were more appropriate for the households, and it was possible to make some transformations and adaptations in the housing design such as enclosing balconies or extending the kitchen. On the other hand, designers do not try to maximize the size of the flat in Area 1, as this will not change the payment they receive, whereas developers try to maximize the size so the flat price increases. The analysis of physical design plans showed the transformations which were made by the end-users after they bought or even moved into their houses, such as enclosing balconies and/or loggias and transforming these into a bedroom/s or study room, extending the kitchen or the living room. This shows that the licensed housing design plans were not appropriate for all the household needs.

8.6 What are key design issues that need attention in the context of the above?

Interviewed households largely emphasised that culture is rapidly changing and a large majority of interviewed households focused on the following prominently changing cultural aspects: the position of women in society, family structure, social interaction, privacy, and food preparation and consumption. Two of these cultural aspects were further investigated in this research:

1) Family privacy and intra-family privacy, with a reference to women's privacy. Women's privacy has already been studied in relation to housing design in Syria and it was at the core of any cultural study relating to housing design, whereas work on family privacy and intra-family privacy was very limited, if it existed at all, in housing design studies and thus they need more attention. This was

largely confirmed by most interviewees as they emphasised the urgent need to increase the number of bedrooms in new housing design and their own intention to increase this when possible to provide privacy for each member in the household, i.e. intra-family privacy. Family privacy was frequently raised by sampled households as an important reason for avoiding meeting people at home, or at least to decrease the number of visitors and their visits.

2) Practice of food preparation and consumption, which was initially chosen as a focus based on Rapoport's (1969) position that the basic needs, such as eating or cooking, as a cultural practice, affect house form – i.e. when, where, and how to eat and cook, not what to eat. On the other hand, food preparation and consumption are, as seen in chapter 3, very important activities in Syrian society; they are often considered as entertainments for friends and family, linked to the fact that Syrian cuisine is very rich and varied. Much of life in Syria revolves around the pleasure Syrians find in food and meals.

8.6.1   *Family and intra-family privacy and housing use*

Family privacy and intra-family privacy seemed to be important cultural aspects in the context of housing in Lattakia, as they affected spatial use in the house more than women's privacy might have been expected to or used to. Family privacy led to a decrease in the number of guests at home, and to a lower frequency of visits in the home from relatives, friends and neighbours. This in turn, decreased the need and concern about the guests' reception spaces at home and gave higher priority to the living-room than the guest room. A guest reception space is still preferred to be, to some extent, separate or sometimes even isolated from other household activities, regardless of the liberty and openness of the household. A few of the households indicated that they prefer to have a corridor which directly or indirectly connect the kitchen with the bedrooms so as to avoid meeting guests when they do not want to and they want to use the kitchen. Changing attitudes to family privacy are affecting who gathers at the table at meal times, with this increasingly being mainly nuclear family members.

Intra-family privacy seemed to be an urgent current cultural need of household members in Lattakia, and this is reflected in the tendency to increase the number of bedrooms

although the household members became fewer in the last decade. The use of shared spaces is less than it used to be in the past, and this in turn increased the number of a few devices that used to be shared such as TVs, computers and/or laptops.

8.6.2   *Food preparation and consumption*

The kitchen nowadays is used less for cooking and much more for other household activities and social life. It is now a space for all household member activities, not merely a workspace for women. Women, nowadays, are predominantly working out of the home as well as in the home and thus they spend less time cooking in the kitchen. The household members, therefore, depend more on ready meals, food delivery/takeaway, and also go out more often with their households to the restaurant for instance.

Job timing is affecting meal timing and the members who get together at dining table. Socializing and having a family conversation is less associated with family meals around the table and this has reduced the tendency to have meals in the living room.

8.7   **How can these be better approached?**

Drawing on the data analysis and synthesis, together with the overall literature review and the review of the context of culture and housing in Syria, better housing design approaches and design guidelines have been identified as the following.

Housing design could be more in tandem with current cultural change and, based on the designers' overall viewpoint, better approached by: increasing the end-users' awareness of the housing design process and the associated obstacles which usually face the designers to meet the users' needs; establishing communities-based housing delivery mechanism which may give the end-users the opportunity to be involved in the housing design process; revising and updating the Building Design Regulations, which were first used in 1952 and have continued to be used with limited modifications; and considering more flexibility and the possibility of transformations in housing design as an official process. The majority of the interviewed architects suggested decreasing the percentage of the allowed area of open spaces in the building, i.e. balconies and loggias. They also suggested changing the minimum dimensions for a few housing element such as the

bathroom. One of the interviewed architects suggested that designing freely within a defined building envelope would provide an opportunity to the architects to be creative and enable them to present their design identity.

The majority of interviewed households suggested increasing the size of the kitchen to accommodate an adequately sized dining table and to have direct or indirect links between the kitchen and the bedrooms in a way that allows household members not to have to enter the guest space; increasing the number of bedrooms; and decreasing the area of balconies.

Drawing on the literature review and the overall data analysis and synthesis, the researcher further suggests that housing design could be better approached, and the gap in understanding between housing designers and users could be bridged by: improving the architects' and other actors' awareness of the current cultural change of the end-users and the cultural aspects which are strongly relevant to housing use and design such as intra-family privacy and practices of foodways; and considering the end-users' involvement and laypeople participation in the official process, which may have a potential role in improving housing design to be more attuned with current cultural change.

8.8 Overall conclusion

Culture is rapidly changing in contemporary life in Syria, and this is strongly affecting housing use and design in the city of Lattakia, which is one of the cities in Syria most affected by the universal modernization, westernization, and globalization. Both housing designers and end-users seem to be partially aware of the current cultural change and its impact on the housing use and design, but from different points of view and not as equals. This study assists in building up a database and information to bridge the gap between the housing designers and the end-users, and it provides an overview of the adaptation of housing design to the current cultural change that takes place during different stages of the housing design process. These adaptations, as was evidenced in this study, were limited in the formal housing design process, and were frequent in the informal housing design process through transformations and modifications, which take place after the construction is finished or after inhabitants settle in the house.

8.9   Contribution to knowledge

8.9.1   *Theory*

The findings from this research support Rapoport's (1969) position that culture is the primary factor in house form and physical factors are used to meet cultural needs. This study showed how the sampled households expressed their cultural needs through the changes they made, formally or informally, in their house design. For example, this study illustrated that the kitchen, in several cases, was moved from an isolated location in the house, when the woman (wife) was the only user of the kitchen, to a central location in the house where it is more accessible by other household members, given that women nowadays work out of the home. Although balconies are climatically convenient for the city of Lattakia, as a coastal city, they were intentionally reduced by the end users by enclosing and reusing them as bedrooms or as an extension part to the kitchen even in the case of larger flats. This change in housing space was as a result of cultural change, not as a response to climate needs for example.

This research enhances Robinson's (2006) study, which emphasises the importance of increasing the architects' awareness of the cultural content of their design, which is usually dealt with unconsciously as an integral part of their design. Robinson (2006) argues that, therefore, they can play a potential conscious role in cultural reflection and constructive change which would match the real socio-cultural needs of the end users. According to her, understanding of the embedded cultural meaning in the architecture, which is in turn a cultural medium to convey a cultural message, can be achieved through the 'reception theory', by learning from lay people and addressing what end users know, think, desire, etc. in the professional and theoretical norms. Architects can learn from ordinary people as much as from institutionalized/ elite knowledge, and they should not hide information from lay people or try to control decision making processes. This study specifically identified among designers a self-perception of being culturally aware that was actually often disconnected from the culture of the users, going beyond finding a simple lack of awareness among designers, but rather a false sense of cultural awareness in some respects among some of them. This is a further strong reason to support Robinson's call for involving the end users in the design process.

This study shows that cultural practices of food preparation and consumption have a significant impact on the use of domestic space such as the change of the place of group social activities from a private domain in the house to a public space such as restaurants. The decrease in the ritual of family meals and the tendency of the new generations to have some meals with their friends has led to abandoning/minimizing the use of the dining room. This study therefore goes beyond the pre-existing studies of food rituals and space, such as Fisker & Olsen's (2008) study of food serving and presentation in public spaces (external and internal), and Hodgson & Toyka's (2007) study of the relationship between food and architecture as arts which entail cultural embedding and the similarity between their compositions and measurements.

The study shows that intra family privacy is an increasing cultural need and has an important impact on the use of domestic space and housing design. Although there are a few studies which touch on intra family privacy within the home, mostly in Western contexts and in terms of impacts of technology on the home (e.g. Shapiro, 2006) or within a historical account of privacy (Flaherty, 1972), this topic has not been researched to date within the context of the Middle East, as far as the researcher is aware. It is only looked at in terms of women's privacy, which is addressed in subsection 8.9.3 (as well as chapter 3).

This research presents the end-users' transformations of formal housing design after the building construction is finished and/or after inhabitants settle in the house, which seem to reflect the real current cultural and social needs of the end-users. This builds on Tipple's (2000) study on *Extending Themselves*, which focused on user-initiated transformations of governmental-built housing in developing countries, as a positive attitude towards transformations. Although the transformations in the state-designed houses were not physically as noticeable as in the privately-designed houses, the end users in the former adapted the use of the space to meet their socio-cultural needs, for example by as using the same space for different functions at different times.

8.9.2   *Methodology*

The social constructionist epistemology on which this research is based provided a better understanding of the contextual and multidimensional relationship between

culture and housing as a constructed structure not discovered. This entails the meaning of the home which is a result of the interaction between the physical object 'the house' and the subject 'the users' and their interpretation of this relationship.

Although the micro-ethnography methods used in this research, based on (Wolcott 1990), are not innovative, they proved extremely appropriate and useful in this study for two key reasons: (1) they were effective in providing in-depth data for the analysis of research topics which are contextual and multidimensional in nature, especially in a context of scarce existing secondary data; and (2) they allowed rapid collection of a substantial amount of relevant data in the limited time available for the fieldwork. The micro ethnography approach played an essential role in building up the significant lack of comprehensive sets of information about domestic life, especially in a country like Syria, where there are limited research-based resources. Although the limited time, resources and the constraints impeded the researcher to conduct a longitudinal in-depth ethnographical research, the unexpected accessibility to the targeted samples and approachability of the households were a great opportunity for a micro ethnographical research within their private domestic domain. This can probably be called 'an opportunistic micro-ethnography'.

Blunt and Dowling (2006) argue that both visual sources – such as architectural plans and interior designs – and oral depictions – such as interviews, which were used in this study, are important for analysing the home to better illustrate the connections and disconnections between the idealized designs and the embodied practices of real life at home.

Data triangulation across these different types of data proved to effectively work in such a case study, where there is lack of communication among providers, users and products. It allowed the researcher to address the research questions from different angles and perspectives and thus crystallized the core features of the research. Data triangulation played an essential role in this study in highlighting the lack of understanding among the different studied groups. It also illuminated the connections and disconnections among them.

Triangulation (of data, methods and theoretical approaches) allowed investigating a whole result/picture of this research, which was more than the sum of its parts that would have resulted from single data analysis methods and single perspectives. This study suggests/supports that triangulation can go beyond comprehensiveness to work in line with *gestalt* epistemology (see section 2.4).

Reflecting on the analytical methods used to process the qualitative data collected in the fieldwork, the experience showed that use of trademark Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) is not always necessarily the most appropriate approach. Initially the researcher intended to use NVivo, which has recently become a prominent software package in qualitative research. The researcher was aware that it would take time to learn and get familiarized with the software as this was the researcher's first experience of using NVivo, as well as to upload data to NVivo, which can be a time intensive process. With the data collection fresh in the researcher's mind, she decided to prioritise data input, preparation and analysis using software that she was already familiar with. Excel spreadsheets were used for data input, categorising, organizing, reducing, and coding, using different colours for different columns (topic or sub-topic), and cells (similar or distinctive answers); and then Excel Boolean were used. This technique turned out to be more practical for the researcher than NVivo, as the translated transcribed interviews were filled in the excel spreadsheet. On reflection, this experience suggests that although evolving software packages can offer advantages in data analysis, these may not always be necessarily the most appropriate techniques to deal with the collected data sets and to achieve what the research aims to extract from such data.

8.9.3   *Empirical knowledge*

As far as the researcher is aware, it is the first time this kind of data about cultural concepts within an actual domestic environment of a household has been collected, using observation and micro ethnographic methods, for an academic purpose in Syria. Given that this space is a private domain of the households, and usually difficult to gain access to for such documentary purpose in the city of Lattakia, this information assists in building up data about the actual use of domestic space by Syrian households. This study therefore is different from the aforementioned study of women's privacy in

Damascus, in which interviews with only housewives were conducted by a female researcher assistant (Al-Kodmany, 1995). The collected data from different sources – recorded interviews, questionnaires, photographs – provides a rich resource which has not been fully interrogated within this study and can be used to explore other research questions and produce further outputs, bearing in mind ethical considerations relevant to participants' consent.

The Youth Housing Project was a governmental attempt to house the newly married couples who have no other assets. This project was applied on a large scale in different cities in Syria as a continuous process, which makes its assessment valuable as an input for perhaps amendments or for future housing delivery initiatives, and considering the issues which were raised by the end-users. . This study increases the empirical data available on this project, beyond a previous more narrowly focused study on physical aspects and from the designers' point of view (Daiob & Hussein 2009).

The triangulation of information across the designers' thinking, end-users thinking and the real licensed design plans, the implemented plans and plans after the users' transformation, as documents and physical evidences in the city of Lattakia, provides a comprehensive study, which reflects an overview of housing design and use. The socioeconomic stratification criteria which were proposed in this study and applied to two different groups in Lattakia could provide a basis for other similar studies in Syria.

8.10 Limitations

The literature on culture and housing design in Syria was limited, especially in English, and the access to many web sites which were used for some data collection about Syria were limited, if at all possible, particularly after the conflict started, which made it difficult to update the information.

In methodological terms, the limited time of one researcher was one of main constraints of this research. The crisis in the country of study impeded further field work which was planned before the conflict started. It also impeded any further communication with the interviewees and sampled households, who became reluctant to give further information about their house, especially given that the researcher lives abroad. A

better quality camera could have been used if the research had known the households would allow her to take photos of their house, and that no further field work would be conducted. Three of the sampled housing licensed design plans the researcher could not gain from neither the municipality nor the households.

8.11 Further research

This research showed that westernization, westernization and globalization as universal factors affected, at a rapid pace, the culture of Syria as an example of a developing and traditional country, which resulted in uneven impact on different sub-cultural groups of the city of Lattakia, as an example of a relatively less conservative city compared to other Syrian cities. However, the approach developed in this research could be applied to other cities in Syria that have experienced less cultural change, as well as to the understanding of cultural change and housing use, design and adaptation elsewhere.
It was previously believed that women's privacy was the most important cultural aspect in housing design in a traditional county such as Syria, but this study has shown that this is currently not accurate as family privacy and intra-family privacy became more important in the last decade (before the 2011 crisis). This phenomenon can be also explored in different Syrian cities.

Food preparation and consumption as essential and international activities in the domestic environment, seems to be very limited in housing studies. This study shows its impact on spatial use and housing design, and thus its investigation in different countries and cities could yield useful insights.

The research findings support the end-users involvement in the housing design process in the early stage of decision making as well as at later stages of adaptation and transformations which could offer a higher possibility of housing design better attuned to current actual needs. Exploring the possibilities of the end-users involvement in early stages of housing design can be a useful research focus.

The research findings support a positive attitude towards user transformations of housing in developing countries. Syrian housing design and adaptation processes more widely offer the potential to investigate the possibility of proposing the recognition and

acceptance of these transformations as a valid activity in housing supply, and of exploring its support as a part of a country's housing policy in order to ensure that housing is better matched to cultural needs.

Appendix 2: Additional material to the literature review (Chapter 2)

Appendix 2.1   Structure and agency 'Structuration'

Structure and agency in human thought and behaviour is a focal point in the approach to contemporary sociology and social science developed by Anthony Giddens in 1984 known as 'structuration theory'. This developed from the contradictory argument between '*structure of society*' and '*agents*' positions. While structure refers to the overall structure of society as recurrent patterned managements influence or limit choices and opportunities which individuals possess, agency refers to the capacity of individuals to make their own choices and to work independently. This debate rises from the ontological query about cause and effect in the social world and questioning what made this social world, and whether social structures 'macro-level' determine an individual's behaviour or human agency 'micro-level' does (Barker, 2008).

Some theorists support the thought that social existence is determined by the overall structure of society, and the agency of individuals is mostly considered as the operation of this structure. There are a few theoretical systems associated with structure of society such as structuralism, forms of functionalism and Marxism (Barker, 2008). These are all forms of holism which de-centralizes human agents from the heart of inquiry (Parker, 2004). In contrast to the first position, other theoretical approaches stress the ability of individual 'agents' to construct and re construct their social world. This position is aligned with several theoretical systems such as methodological individualism, interactionism, social phenomenology, and ethno-methodology.

Structuration emerges as a prominent thought to achieve a balance point between these two previous positions and thus considers structure and agency as complementary forces (Barker, 2008). Structuration involves both structure and agency to understand social and cultural activity (Barker, 2004). As such, structure influences human behaviour and human agents also are capable to make difference and change the social structure they inhabit. Structuration, which is associated with Anthony Giddens, centers on the way agents produce and reproduce the social structure through their own actions and activities. Giddens argues that social order is constructed in and through everyday activities and relies on knowledgeable actors, and these actors draw on resources which are social in character (Barker, 2004). He argues that the regular patterns of activity or

social structure distribute resources' unequally between agents and then these regularities of social system operate to structure what an act is (see fig. A2. 1).

'Duality of structure' has been developed as a centre of structuration theory by Giddens and emerged from the idea that structures are both constraining and enabling (Giddens, 1984). 'While individual actors are constrained and determined by social forces that lie beyond them as individual subjects, it is those very same social structures that enable subjects to act'(Barker, 2004, p.191).
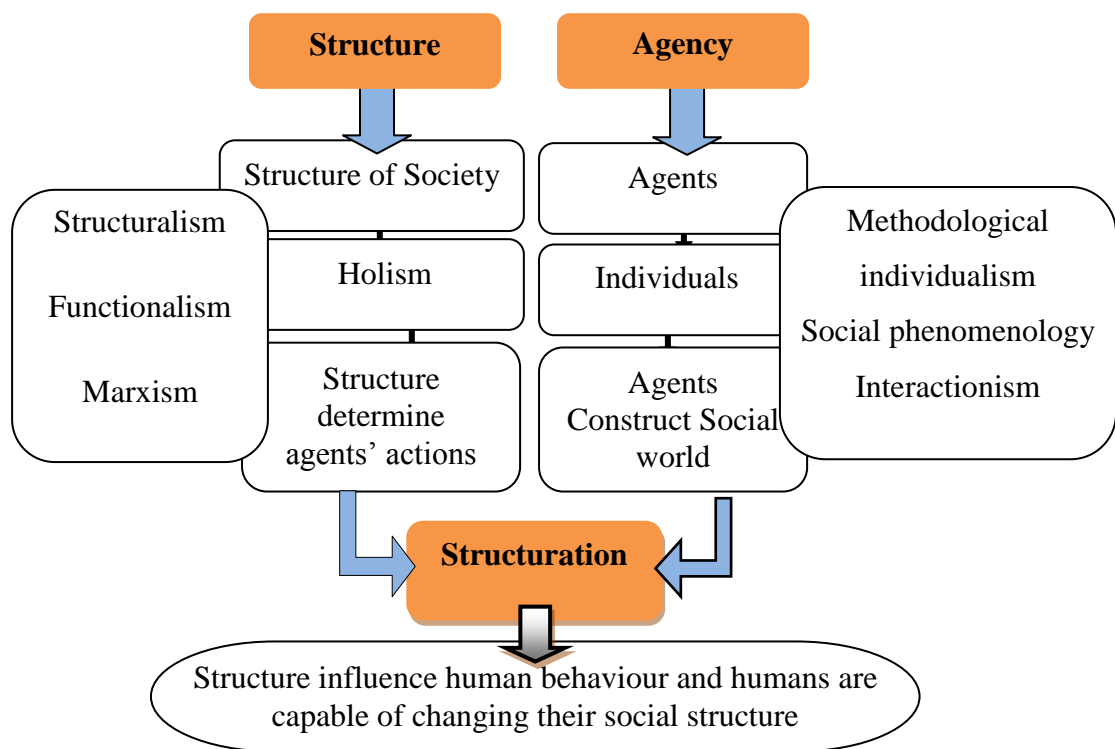
Figure A2. 1: Structuration as integration thought of structure and agency positions

Appendix 4: Research Design

Appendix 4.1: Questionnaires

This questionnaire is needed for PhD study in the School of the Built Environment in Heriot Watt University in the UK and sponsored by Syrian government. This questionnaire is administered in order to investigate the nature of cultural change and the reality of housing use in Lattakia as a case study in Syria and this as to understand the current cultural needs of inhabitants and thus to investigate the appropriateness of current housing design.

It would be grateful and much appreciated if you were willing to participate in this study. The information you would provide to the questionnaire is totally confidential and will be exclusively used for a research purpose especially any information which identifies the family.

Introductory section of the household

Neighbourhood:

Apartment block number:

Number of storeys:

Apartment floor:

Apartment number:

Family name:

Respondent's name and relationship to the head of the household:

Telephone number:

Questionnaire number:

Time interview began: _____ HR._____MIN.

Questionnaires

Household								
a)Size of the family	2 people	☐	3-5 p	☐	6-9 P	☐	10/more	☐
b) Number of children	Female	☐			Male	☐		
c) The head of the household	Female	☐			Male	☐		
d)His/her Age:	18-30	☐	31-45	☐	46-65	☐	Over 65	☐
e) Education level of the head of the household	Illiterate	☐	Secondary	☐	Institution	☐	Master	☐
	Primary	☐	High School	☐	University	☐	PhD	☐
f) Occupation of the head of the household	Unemployed	☐	Junior white collar	☐	Middle level admin.	☐	Public admin.	☐
	Blue collar	☐		☐		☐	Formal private management	☐

Housing								
a)House Tenure	Ownership	☐			Tenancy	☐		
b) How many houses do you possess	0	☐	1(well furnished)	☐	3	☐		
	1 (Not well Furnished)	☐	2	☐	Or more	☐		
c) Where did you live before	Always in the same house (Don't answer next question)	☐	My Parents' or any childhood house	☐	I used to live alone 'studying' or 'working'	☐	Another house/s in different area/s With my family	☐
d) When did you first move to this house	Very recent	☐	2-5 years ago	☐	6-9 years ago	☐	10-15 More	☐ ☐
e)Where was/were your previous house/houses	Different city/cities	☐	Area (1) *	☐	Area (2)*	☐	Area (3)* Area (4)*	☐ ☐
f) Why did/would you change your area of living	The new house we need is not available in it	☐	It is not properly serviced	☐	To attain better serviced area & amenities	☐	To upgrade social class level	☐
	Other							
g) Why did/would you change your house	No enough space, my family is larger now,	☐	For investment, rent out the old house	☐	Bad condition, Very old physically bad,	☐	My family life style changed, need more spaces	☐
	my children are adult now	☐	or purchase more than a house	☐	Illegal	☐		
	Other							

Cultural Change								
a)Do you think culture have been rapidly changing in the last	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, Moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐

decade									
b) If you think so, what do you believe is changing?	Family structure	☐	Position of women in society	☐	Concept and practice Privacy	☐	Food preparation and consumption		☐
	Social intercourse		☐	Other	☐				
c) How much these cultural aspects you believe has been changing in the last decade?	Family structure	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Position of women in society	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Privacy	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Food preparation and consumption	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Social intercourse	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
d) How much do you think modernization/ westernization/ & globalization affect the culture of Syrian society?		Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
f) If you think so how much do you believe the following factors affect culture in Syria?	New inventions and modern appliances	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Wider western medias, TV, & satellites	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Computerization	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Internet, international social network	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	International contact and open investment s	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Others								
g) When did you first use internet?	I do not use it	☐	Less than a year ago	☐	1-5 years ago	☐	6-10 yrs ago	☐	11 years or more	☐
h) Where do you use the internet?	internet Cafe	☐	At work	☐	At home	☐	Mobile phone	☐	others	☐
j) which TV channels do you normally watch	I do not like to watch TV	☐	I do not have time to watch TV	☐	Only Syrian channels	☐	Arabic TVs	☐	International TVs	☐
	others								
Where do you watch TV	Guest room	☐	Living room	☐	Dining room	☐	Kitchen	☐	Bed room	☐
	Others								
Where do you prefer to watch TV	Guest room	☐	Living room	☐	Dining room	☐	Kitchen	☐	Bed room	☐
	Others								
With whom do you normally watch TV	Alone	☐	With brothers/ sisters	☐	With parents	☐	All the family	☐	With friends	☐
	Others								
How often do you watch TV	I do not watch TV	☐	Very rarely	☐	Only in the weekend/ holidays	☐	Every day for less than an hour	☐	Every day for a few hours	☐
	The TV is	☐	Others	☐	Specify				

	on almost all the time we are at home								
Do you think this international TVs channel affecting you and/or your family world view, values, and life style	Not at all	☐	Yes, Slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	Strongly	☐	Very strongly ☐
	How, Other comment								

Cultural issues affects housing use

Privacy

a) Do you think the concept and practices of privacy has been changing in the last decade?	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐	☐
b) What kinds of privacy are most changing at home	Intra-family Privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly ☐	☐
	Family privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly ☐	☐
	Woman privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly ☐	☐
	Other								
c) How is the current tendency of the following type of privacy	Intra-family Privacy	Less desired	☐	The same	☐	More desired	☐	Much more desired ☐	☐
	Family privacy	Less desired	☐	The same	☐	More desired	☐	Much more desired ☐	☐
	Woman privacy	Less desired	☐	The same	☐	More desired	☐	Much more desired ☐	☐
d) Did these changes affect your housing use	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐	☐
e)Where do you like to meet your guests	Outside, restaurant, Cafe, or other		At home						
		☐	guest room	☐	living room	☐	kitchen	☐	Bed room ☐
f)How often do you meet your guest or friends	Very rarely	☐	Once/twice a month	☐	Thrice-four times a month	☐	Twice – thrice per week	☐	5 times or more per week ☐
g)Do you Know/meet or have a chat with your family members' guests	Not at all	☐	only my husband's/wife's	☐	Only my children's	☐	Only my sons'/daughters'	☐	Every guest ☐
h) When you have a guest of a member of your family, where do	I join the guests wherever they sit	☐	I join them for only a short time	☐	I move to another room	☐	I leave the home	☐	I continue my activity where I started ☐

you stay?	It depends on who the guest are	☐	other		☐					
i)How comfortable do you/your family members feel when there is guest/s at home	Yourself	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much ☐
	Partner	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much ☐
	Daughters	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much ☐
	Sons	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much ☐
	Other									
j)How often do you or your family members meet for family conversation	Very rarely	☐	Once/twice a month	☐	Once/ twice per week	☐	Every day	☐	They share most of their details	☐
k)Where do you most often meet and have a family chat	guest room	☐	living room	☐	Dining room	☐	kitchen	☐	Balcony	☐
	Bed room	☐	Other specify	☐						
l)How well are you satisfied with your privacy at home	Regarding guest	Very dissatisfied	☐	Dissatisfied	☐	Neither	☐	Satisfied	☐	Very satisfied ☐
	Family members	Very dissatisfied	☐	Dissatisfied	☐	Neither	☐	Satisfied	☐	Very satisfied ☐
m) what would you like to change in your housing design to better attune your privacy needs	Number of rooms	☐	Size of rooms	☐	Space configuration	☐	Location of rooms	☐	Hierarchy and level of privacy for different elements	☐
	Others Specify	☐								

Food preparation and consumption

a)Who is responsible for cooking	wife	☐	Husband	☐	Daughters	☐	Sons ☐	other	☐
	If others Specify								
b)Does your spouse/family members help in this task	wife	☐	Husband	☐	Daughters	☐	Sons ☐	other	☐
	If other specify								
c)How often do you cook	Never	☐	1-3 times per week	☐	4-6 times per week	☐	Every day	☐	Twice a day ☐
d)How often do you order take away food	Never	☐	Very rarely	☐	1-2 times per week	☐	3-5 times per week	☐	Every day ☐
e)How often	Never	☐	Very	☐	1-2 times per	☐	3-5 times per	☐	Every day ☐

do you go to the restaurant			rarely		week		week		
f) Where does the food preparation take place?	Kitchen	☐	Living room	☐	Dining room	☐	Balcony	☐	Others ☐
	If other Specify								
g)What kind of appliances do you have in the kitchen/food preparation space	Oven	☐	refrigerator	☐	Freezer ☐	Washing machine	☐	Dishwasher	☐
	Microwave	☐	Toaster	☐	Electric kettle	☐	Other labour-saving devices		

h)How much are these devices important nowadays in the kitchen								
	Oven	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essential ☐
	refrigerator	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Freezer	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Dishwasher	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Microwave	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Toaster	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Electric kettle	☐	Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately ☐	Essentially ☐
	Others	☐						

i) Why do/would you like to use new technical devices in your home									
	I don't have time for both outdoor &housework tasks	☐	to save my time for other tasks at home	☐	For my comfort	☐	My family can easily use these devices	☐	To be more modern ☐
	All my neighbours use these devices	☐	Coping with modernity	☐	Others	☐		☐	☐
	Comments								

j) where do you normally eat										
	Guest room	☐	Living room	☐	Dining room	☐	Kitchen	☐	Balcony ☐	Bed room ☐
	others									

With whom do you normally eat										
	Alone	☐	any of my family member	☐	my brother/ sisters	☐	my parents	☐	All my family ☐	With friends ☐
	It depends on the day/	☐	Depends On the time overlapping between family members	☐	Others	☐		☐	☐	☐
	Specify									

What is your main meal/s							
	Breakfast Before 10am		brunch10 am	Lunch After 12 midday		Supper4-7	Dinner After 7	Others
	specify						

How do you think the new life style has been affecting, the time, location, and the people who you eat with, in the last decade		
	Specify	
	Any other/ comments questions	
6)Further participation		

Would you mind to contribute further to this study?	No ☐	Yes ☐	How often would you accept to meet the research at your home					
			Once more for short time	☐	A few times	☐	A few hours for a week	☐
Would you mind to allow the research to observe your family daily life in summer time between June to August 2011	No	☐	Yes, please choose a week you think is convenient for you and your family			☐	June week 1	☐
							June week 2	☐
							June week 3	☐
							June week 4	☐
							July week 1	☐
							July week 2	☐
							July week 3	☐
							July week 4	☐
							August week 1	☐
							August week 2	☐
							August week 3	☐
							August week 4	☐

Many thanks for taking part of this research; your contribution is much appreciated

Time interview end: _____ HR._____MIN.

Appendix 4.2: Semi-structured interview questions

The purpose of these semi-structured-interviews is for data collection for PhD research in the School of the Built Environment in Heriot-Watt University under sponsorship of Syrian government. Interviews focus on generic housing design within public and private sectors so as to identify the sources of the different new housing designs and housing delivery system and their cultural relevance to the end users.

It would be much appreciated if you agree to participate in this study by answering the following questions. It is stressed that the interview is totally confidential and will be used only for the research purpose.

<u>Semi-structured interview questions</u>

<u>Interviewee identification</u>

This personal information will not be recorded nor reported as the focus of this study is not on any personal identification but on the perception and experience of the interviewees in relation to the subject. Identification purpose is only for the researcher's reference. In principal unless waived, anonymity is guaranteed to all respondents.

<u>Identification questions</u>

Interviewee name, phone number (in case of follow up):

Interviewee gender:

Interviewee age:

Interview location:

Interview time began:

Interview time end:

  a) What is your current position, which sector/s you worked or you are working with at the moment?
  b) How long have you been working/ had you been working in housing design/ or in relevant job to this?
  c) What is your responsibility in housing design process or delivery system?

Interview question areas:

1) **Cultural change in Syria**

   a) Syria has been witnessing a great cultural change in the last decade Do you agree with this statement? If NO, why? -If YES, how?

   b) How is this cultural change affecting family life?

   c) How is this cultural change affecting housing use?

   d) What is driving this change?

   e) From my study, key reasons for this change are because of modernization, westernization, and globalization- how do you see Syria in relation to these?

2) **Cultural change and housing**

   a) What are the main cultural concepts most relevant to housing use?

   b) What about privacy, is this relevant to housing use?

   c) What about food preparation and consumption are they essentially relevant to housing use?

   d) To what extent do you think these concepts have been changing for Syria family in the last decade?

   e) How do these factors affect new housing design in general and your strategy in particular, if you are a designer?

3) **Cultural change and the housing design process**

   a) Do you think as an actor in housing sector, this change in housing use is taken into account in housing design process? If No, why? If yes how?

   b) Do you consider concepts and practices of privacy in housing design process?

   c) What about the change in food preparation and consumption, are they taken into account in the new housing design?

4) **Cultural change and housing needs**

   a) Do you think the new housing design and typologies fulfil the end users' "inhabitants" social and cultural needs or only physical factors? If No, why? If Yes how and how do you know?

b) Who is responsible for the final decision in housing design you are involved in?

c) Are the end users involved in their own house design formally or informally?

If No:

- Why are they far away from decision-making process of housing design?

- How do they fulfil their physical and socio-cultural needs within their own home?

If Yes:

- How and in which stage are they involved?

- Is it a formal or informal process?

5)   Post completion change to housing due to cultural change

a) How often you have been asked to adapt existing housing design?

b) What type of adaptations do people ask for?

c) Which socio-economic groups that have been adapting and making alteration in their housing design? And in which areas this adaptation is most happening?

d) What are the most elements in the house that have been adapted in the last decade?

f) How are these adaptations related to privacy and food preparation and consumption?

6)   Final Issues

a) Do you have any further comments on the above issues or any questions?

b) If I need to contact you again for clarification or further information, would that be ok?

Many thanks for your participation and cooperation

Appendix 4.7: Examples of sketches drawn in the fieldwork

[Enclosed balcony and reused as a bedroom]

[The current design plan]

[The preferable house design describes by users]
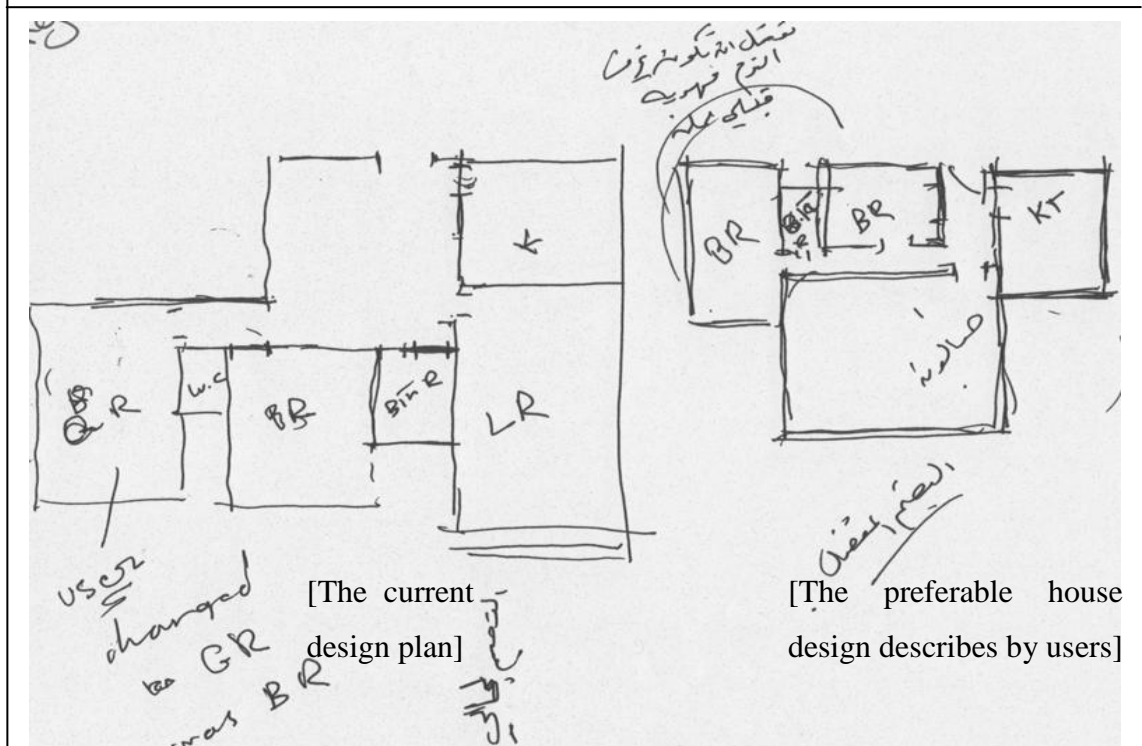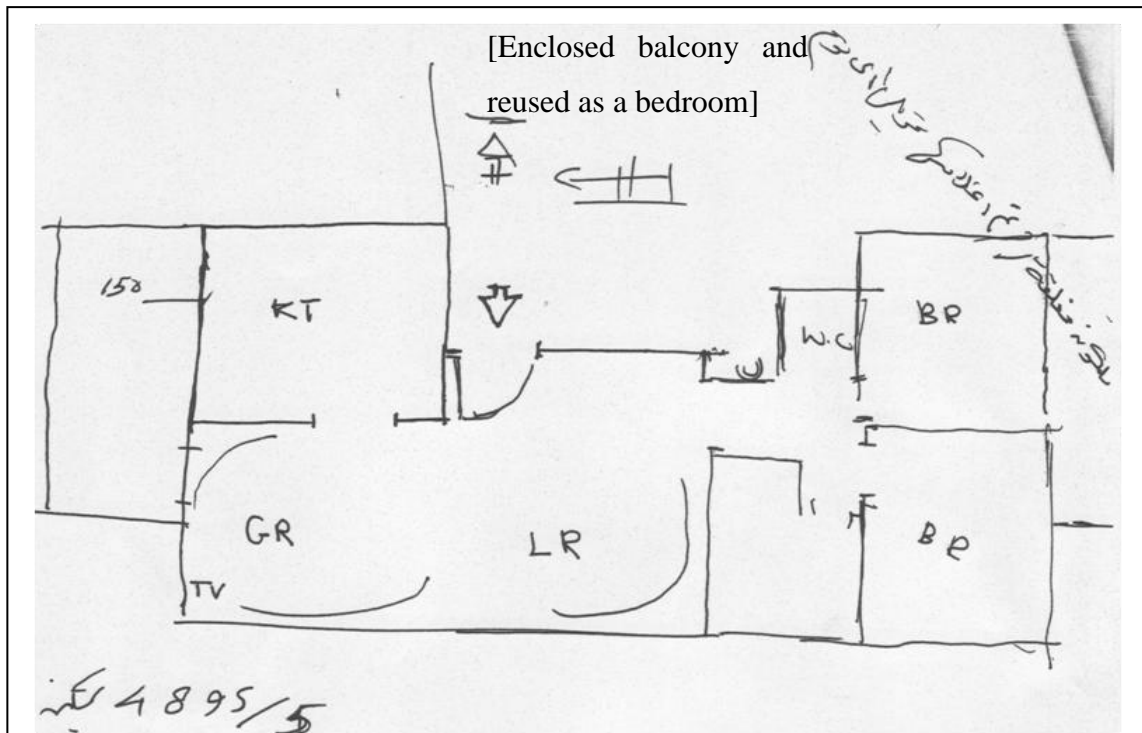
Questionnaire 27 – current versus preferable design

Sketches of the current design of a sampled house show the preferable house design as described by the users and drawn by the researcher while administering the questionnaire to household. [..]: translated to English

E

BR 3 / 2 Bths.

BTh Bth

BR

BR

N

BR

LR

Tv

w.c

oven

DR

KT

Fr

DR

GR

west

3rd Floor

5 217

لم يتم تغير مخطط البيت

[No change in the original design]

N

DR

GR

LR

Tv

LR

Questionnaire 35 – current design

N

KT

اغلقة الباب

BL

TBL

DR

BR

G

Tv

BR

BR

LR

BL \ l

[Doors were enclosed here]

تم اغلاق البلكونه

[Balcony was enclosed here]

Questionnaire 36 – transformation made after living in the house

Sketches drawn by the researcher in the fieldwork while administering the face-to-face questionnaire to sampled households – [..] translated to English

Example of filled in face-to-face questionnaire by the researcher in the fieldwork

Example of face-to-face questionnaire which was filled-in by the researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 1 – For confidentiality, text which includes information can identify the family is covered by dashed-outline text box.

Questionnaires

Handwritten annotations (Arabic and notes): 220 m² / حضانات 25 م²

3 غرف نوم

2 حمام + حمام الضيوف

G+L+D / صالة مفتوحة – مطبخ

خرشانة لسية دائماً تزار المرأة

1) Household

a) Size of the family	2 people	☐	3-5 p *5 ps*	☑	6-9 P	☐	10/more	☐
b) Number of children	Female	☐	2 *12 / 10*		Male	☐	1 *14 yrs*	
c) The head of the household	Female	☐	*موارد مائية*		Male *الجهاز المركزي للتعبئة*	☐	*جهاز استصلاح*	
d) His/her Age:	18-30	☐	31-45	☐	46-65 *W 47 / H 56*	☑	Over 65	☐
e) Education level of the head of the household	Illiterate		Secondary	☐	Institution		Master	
	Primary		High School	☐	University	☑	PhD	
f) Occupation of the head of the household	Unemployed	☐	Junior white collar	☑	Middle level admin.	☐	Public admin.	☐
	Blue collar	☐		☐		☐	Formal private management	☐

1) Housing

a) House Tenure	ownership	☑		Tenancy	☐	
b) How many houses do you possess	0 1 (Not well Furnished)	☐ ☐	1(well furnished) ☑ 2 ☐	3 Or more	☐ ☐	بيت في استمرار الزراعة ام تأجيره شاليه – سيارة
c) Where did you live before	Always in the same house (Don't answer next question)	☐	My Parents' or any childhood house ☐	I used to live alone 'studying' or 'working'	☐	Another house/s in different area/s With my family ☐
d) When did you first move to this house	Very recent *1.5 Yrs.*	☐	2-5 years ago ☐	6-9 years ago	☐	10-15 More ☐
e) Where was/were your previous house/houses	Different city/cities	☐	Area (1) * ☐	Area (2)* *الزراعة* *استثمار للبناء*	☐	Area (3)* Area (4)* ☐
f) Why did/would you change your area of living	The new house we need is not available in it	☐	It is not properly serviced ☐	To attain better serviced area & amenities	☐	To upgrade social class level ☑
	Other		*انتقلنا من البيت القديم لد ... منه ميني*			
g) Why did/would you change your house	No enough space, my family is larger now, ☑ my children are adult now ☑		For investment, rent out the old house ☑ or purchase more than a house		Bad condition, Very old physically bad, *كان مستأجر* ☐ Illegal ☐	My family life style changed, need more spaces ☑ *2*

الساكن 150 م² – أهيب السكان الحديدة أهب

تصميم

Example of the face-to-face questionnaire filled in by researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 2 – this part does not include information which can identify the interviewed household.

الصوص (ص) ما ل

ع ع حبه، رسم رد بدة السا م د د نليم

و جد امطانة

Questionnaires | 2010

لكل ولر غنت الاهمة اهب شلپ الاخومريه

يتشبد بهنداع ع م م / لكلاز د ي عاملى

ارغب بامتنخ علشا غرفة ري حق ل لطع متاسبة برام یا دينز

دمز رعاع الاوي

2) Cultural Change

a) Do you think culture have been rapidly changing in the last decade		Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, Moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☑
b) If you think so, what do you believe is changing?		Family structure	☐	Position of women in society	☐	Concept and practice Privacy	☐	Food preparation and consumption	☐
		Social intercourse	☐	Other					
c) How much these cultural aspects you believe has been changing in the last decade?	Family structure	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	Position of women in society	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	Privacy	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☑	strongly	☐
	Food preparation and consumption	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	Social intercourse	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
d) How much do you think modernization/ westernization/ & globalization affect the culture of Syrian society?		Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
f) If you think so how much do you believe the following factors affect culture in Syria?	New inventions and modern appliances	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Wider western medias, TV, & satellites	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	Computerization	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☐
	Internet, international social network	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	International contact and open investment s	Not at all	☐	slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	strongly	☑
	Others								

g) When did you first use internet?	I do not use it	☑	Less than a year ago	☐	1-5 years ago	☑	6-10 yrs ago	☐	11 years or more	☐
h) Where do you use the internet?	internet	☑ At work		At home	☐	Mobile phone	☑	others	☐
	Cafe								
j) which TV	I do not	☐	I do not have	☐	Only Syrian	☐	Arabic	☑	International	☑

PC. W: 1987 —

PC. H: 10yrs.

Sn: 10

DTRs 10

3

PC, W: 1987 – مشروع لتخرج

كا شريعة بتتة

لينزل / منشا كان جمل بالكلات

W: 1 yr
H
Sn 3-4 yrs.

الدنيا
المنار
new TV
Fox series.
Max
action

Example of face-to-face questionnaire filled in by the researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 3 – this part does not includes information can identify the interviewed households.

channels do you normally watch	like to watch TV		time to watch TV		channels		TVs		TVs	
	others									
Where do you watch TV	Guest room	☐	Living room	☑ Dining room مربعتم C A +D		Kitchen	☐	Bed room	☐	
	Others									
Where do you prefer to watch TV	Guest room	☐	Living room	☑ Dining room		Kitchen	☑	Bed room	☑	☑
	others		غرفة الندوة للنذر أقوم /بالطبخ طلع القوى الكبار حتى وجود TV بغرفة الضيوف / لأحب متابعة TV أثناء لطبخ							
With whom do you normally watch TV	Alone	☐	With brothers/ sisters	☐	With parents	☐	All the family	☑	With friends	☐
	others		أن شاهدويه/أنا أحيانا أجمع مع "السوري"							
How often do you watch TV	I do not watch TV	☐	Very rarely	☐	Only in the weekend/ holidays	☐	Every day for less than an hour	☐	Every day for a few hours	☐
	The TV is on almost all the time we are at home	☐	Others	☐	Specify		every day W: 2–3 hr H: 5 hrs			
							الخميس جزء لا انا بيرتلفزان			
Do you think this international TVs channel affecting you and/or your family world view, values, and life style	Not at all	☐	Yes, Slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	Strongly	☐	Very strongly	☐
	How, Other comment									
Cultural issues affects housing use										
3) Privacy										
a) Do you think the concept and practices of privacy has been changing in the last decade?	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☑		
			بالعكس أصبح اكثر صرامة للخصوصية المراقبة لا يمكن الرجل يدخل							
b) What kinds of privacy are most changing at home	Intra-family Privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐
	Family privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐
	Woman privacy	Not at all	☐	Yes, slightly	☐	Yes, moderately	☐	Yes, strongly	☐
	Other								
c) How is the current tendency of	Intra-family Privacy	Less desired	☐	The same	☑ More desired حالكي محتاز لا ازدريادك		Much more desired	☐
	Family	Less	☐	The same	☑ More desired		Much more	☐

المكان الذي شكله فيه يفرض علاقات فردية
الكارات التدخين ، لهوية تفرض تدخل

4

Example of face-to-face questionnaire filled in by the researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 4 – this part does not includes information can identify the interviewed households.

| the following type of privacy | privacy Woman privacy | desired Less desired | ☐ | The same | ☐ | More desired | ☐ | desired Much more desired | ☐ |
| d) Did these changes affect your housing use | Not at all | | ☐ | Yes, slightly | ☐ | Yes, moderately | ☐ | Yes, strongly | ☐ |

e)Where do you like to meet your guests عزيمة صديقة غذا في عناصر اكل لأرح	Outside, restaurant, Cafe, or other	☑					At home		
			guest room	☑ living room	الوقت ☑ kitchen رفيع لبناة وقاري	☑	Bed room	☐
f)How often do you meet your guest or friends سناوى ~ ثانة	Very rarely	☐	Once/twice a month	☐	Thrice-four times a month	☐	Twice – thrice per week	☐	5 times or more per week تقريباً كل يوم	☑
g)Do you Know/meet or have a chat with your family members' guests	Not at all	☐	only my husband's/wife's	☐	Only my children's	☐	Only my sons'/daughters'	☐	Every guest	☐
h) When you have a guest of a member of your family, where do you stay?	I join the guests wherever they sit احياناً إجراء عمل لا أجلس دونت طويل .	☐	I join them for only a short time	☑	I move to another room زوجي بستقبل الضيوف ينزل است	☑	I leave the home	☑	I continue my activity where I started اذا عند زوجتي ضيوف	☐
	It depends on who the guest are	☐	other الضيوف أحياناً يصارون بدون دعوتنا	☐						
i)How comfortable do you/your family members feel when there is guest/s at home	yourself مثلها	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much	☐
	Partner وقتها طبعها	Not at all	☐	Very little نفرتس بساء بالسط	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much	☐
	Daughters يحبون الاولاد، (صوت هدا	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much	☐
	Sons	Not at all	☐	Very little	☐	Little	☐	The same	☐	Much	☐
	Other كنت النفيد بالست القديم / أجمع خاص مر مرسي كنه، اكل بالصالة اطاع لوقت طول الانقاع									

j)How often do you or your family members meet for family conversation على رائلتان / الماء بعد لتحة / ح الاسا كل يوم) البقية دائقة / كبيروي مع انهم جير هكاد .	Very rarely	☐	Once/twice a month	☐	Once/twice per week	☐	Every day	☑	They share most of their details	☑
k)Where do you most often meet and have a family chat الطع ينه حمية طبعة هذا/ بالمطبخ او عن طاولة / اطبخ هلصة لغزاء .	guest room	☐	living room	☑	Dining room	☐	kitchen	☑	Balcony	☐
	Bed room	☐	Other specify	☐						
l)How well are	Regarding guest	Very dissatis	☐	Dissatisfied	☐	Neither	☐	Satisfied	☐	Very satisfied	☑

حبين جيد هبر/ دن هناك صالونة مستقل وجاهز دائماً لا استقبال الضيوف دون الافكر بالتنظف دائرتي عند قدم اي ضيف .

5

Example of face-to-face questionnaire filled in by the researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 5 – this part does not includes information can identify the interviewed households.

| you satisfied with your privacy at home | Family members | Very dissatisfied | ☐ | Dissatisfied | ☐ | Neither | ☐ | Satisfied | ☐ | Very satisfied | ☑ |

كنت ارغب بان يكون المطبخ اكبر وساعد على امكانية تهيئة خصوصية لو
ولكن لان هذه هي حالة المنزل الحالي لا استطيع توفير الخصوصية الكافية

| m) what would you like to change in your housing design to better attune your privacy needs | Number of rooms | ☐ | Size of rooms | ☐ | Space configuration | | Location of rooms | ☑ | Hierarchy and level of privacy for different elements | ☑ |

أفضل وجود غرفة مستقلة (Number of rooms) — مكبر او زيادة مساحته داخل بالطابع (Size of rooms) — مهم جدا (Space configuration) — مهم جدا، اهم هذا الترتيب هذا يحقق خصوصية (Location of rooms) — مهم جدا (Hierarchy)

| | Others Specify | ☐ |

تحسين البيت الذي له مزايا بعيدا عن الدار مع أبواب / غرفص

4) Food preparation and consumption

a) Who is responsible for cooking	wife	☑	Husband	☐	Daughters	☐	Sons	☐	other	☐
	If others Specify									
b) Does your spouse/family members help in this task	wife	☐	Husband	☐	Daughters	☐	Sons	☐	other	☐
	If other specify									

يخدم نفسه / اذا كنت نائمة يفطر لحاله.
المساعدة ستكون هي (لطبخ الاكلة التي تحتاج الى وقت) مثل الاسبوعي

| c) How often do you cook | Never | ☐ | 1-3 times per week | ☐ | 4-6 times per week | ☑ 5/w | Every day | | Twice a day | ☐ |

هذا عادة دورية

| d) How often do you order take away food | Never | ☐ | Very rarely | ☐ | 1-2 times per week | ☑ | 3-5 times per week | ☐ | Every day | ☐ |

1/w. بسيط جدا ولا اكثر

| e) How often do you go to the restaurant | Never | ☐ | Very rarely | ☐ | 1-2 times per week | ☑ | 3-5 times per week | ☐ | Every day | ☐ |

1/w

| f) Where does the food preparation take place? | Kitchen | ☑ | Living room | ☐ | Dining room | ☐ | Balcony | ☐ | Others | ☐ |

مطبخ – الباب

| | If other Specify | | | | | | | | | |
| g) What kind of appliances do you have in the kitchen/food preparation space | Oven | ☐ | refrigerator | ☑ | Freezer | ☑ | Washing machine | ☑ | Dishwasher | ☑ |

مطبخ فرنه شعلة

| | Microwave no – not healthy | ☐ | Toaster | ☑ | Electric kettle I dnt use it | ☑ | Other labour-saving devices | ☑ | | |

احب طبخ التقليدي — خلاط – فرنه كهربائية خلاط

h) How much are these devices important nowadays in the	Oven		Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	Essential	☑
	refrigerator		Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	Essentially	☑
	Freezer		Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately	☑	Essentially	☐
	Dishwasher		Not at all	☐	Slightly	☐	Moderately	☐	Essentially	☑

اجهزة مهمة مركزة جدا

6

Example of face-to-face questionnaire filled in by the researcher in the fieldwork – Questionnaire 34, page 6 – This part does not includes information can identify the interviewed households.

kitchen	Microwave		Not at all		☑ Slightly		Moderately		Essentially	
	Toaster		Not at all		Slightly		☑ Moderately		Essentially	
	Electric kettle		Not at all		Slightly		Moderately		Essentially	
	others									

MW غير محبب (handwritten top)

i) Why do/would you like to use new technical devices in your home	I don't have time for both outdoor &housework tasks		☑ to save my time for other tasks at home		☑ For my comfort		☑ My family can easily use these devices		To be more modern	☑
	All my neighbours use these devices		Coping with modernity		Others					
	Comments									

(handwritten Arabic)

j) where do you normally eat	Guest room		Living room		☑ Dining room		Kitchen		☑ Balcony		Bed room	
	others											
With whom do you normally eat	Alone		any of my family member		my brother / sisters		my parents		All my family		☑ With friends	
	It depends on the day/		Depends On the time overlapping between family members		Others							
	Specify											

What is your main meal/s	Breakfast Before 10am	brunch 10am	Lunch After 12 midday	Supper 4-7	Dinner After 7	Others
	specify					

(handwritten: 7, 7,15) ... 3-3,30 ... 8.3-9

How do you think the new life style has been affecting, the time, location, and the people who you eat with, in the last decade	Specify	
	Any other/ comments questions	

6) Further participation

Would you mind to contribute further to this study?	No		Yes	☑	How often would you accept to meet the research at your home		
					Once more for short time		A few times		A few hours for a week	
Would you mind to allow the research to observe your family daily life in summer					No		Yes, please choose a week		June week 1		time week 2	

time between June to August 2011		you think is convenient for you and your family	June week 3	
			June week 4	
			July week 1	
			July week 2	
			July week 3	
			July week 4	
			August week 1	
			August week 2	
			August week 3	
			August week 4	

(handwritten Arabic)

Many thanks for taking part of this research; your contribution is much appreciated

Time interview end: ___19___ HR. ___00___ MIN.

Questionnaire 34, pages 7 and 8 – This part does not include information can identify the interviewed households.

Appendix 5: Characteristics of sampled households, their homes, demographic structure, and house tenure history

Appendix 5.1: Physical characteristics of the sampled houses

The height of sampled buildings (number of floors)

Figure A5.1 presents the height (number of storeys) of the sampled buildings. These range between **5** and **10** storeys including the ground floor. Buildings with **5 storeys** consist of **54%** (n=7) of the total sampled buildings; **4** of those are in Area 1. Buildings with **6** storeys consist of **31%** (n=4) whereas buildings with **8** and **10** storeys were limited to **15%** (n=2). Many high rise residential buildings were either not inhabited or partly inhabited, and in many cases were not accessible nor were its inhabitants approachable as most of them had an electric lock for the building main entrance door. It seems in this study that high-rise building had somewhat affected the approachability of its inhabitants. This however did not distort the samples of this study as the percentage of existing high-rise buildings in Lattakia in general and in the chosen areas in particular is approximately the same as the percentage of this in the sampled buildings.
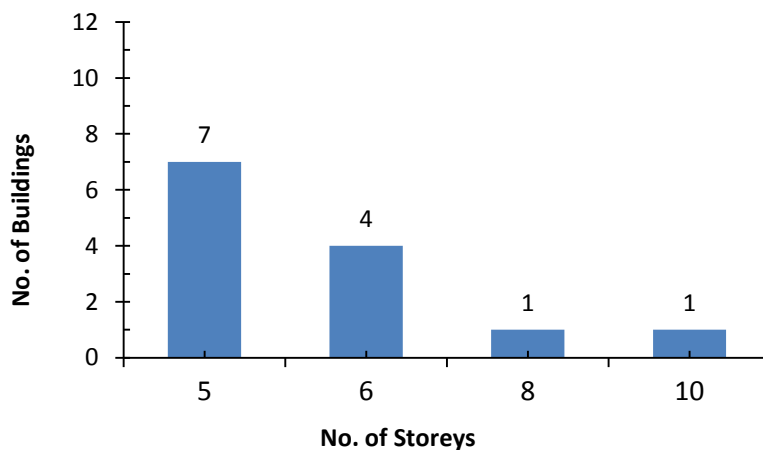
Figure A5. 1: The number of storeys in the sampled buildings (Total No. Buildings 13)

The apartment floors where the interviewed households live

Figure A5.2 presents the number of the interviewed households in each floor, and shows that the third floor was more available in this study which may have slightly affected the interviewees' answers especially concerning privacy as this is more fulfilled in higher floors whereas visual and audio privacy is much less on the ground floor for instance. On the other hand the number of interviewed households was relatively limited in high floors (higher than 4th floor) as in various cases these flats were not inhabited yet. Figure A5.3 shows that **28%** (n=11) of the interviewed households lived on the third floor, **23%** (n=9) lived on the fourth floor, **18%** (n=7) lived in second floor flats and **5 (13%)** lived on the first floor. Although the ground floor is more accessible and needs less effort to reach, the number of the interviewed households who lived on the ground floor was only **5 (13%).** This sometimes was intended by the researcher to have samples from various floors because in many cases ground floor flats have fewer elements such as balconies. Another reason for not interviewing households on the ground floor more often was that this floor was in various cases used as a shop or clinic etc.
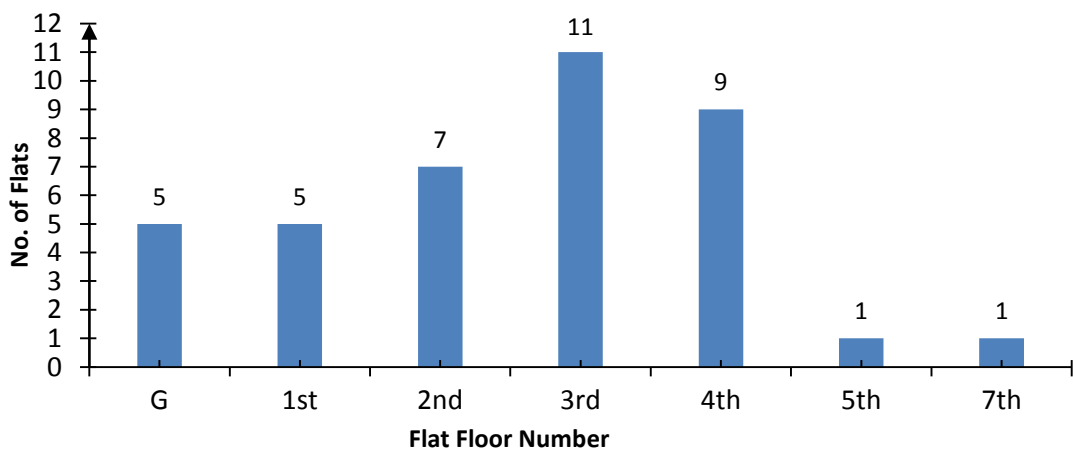
Figure A5. 2: Number of interviewed households on each floor of sampled buildings

Surface area of the flats in which interviewed households lived

Figure A5.3 shows that the surface area of sampled flats ranges between **65 to 225** square metres and this includes the surface area of the building services such as the staircase and elevator well[66] if it exists. It shows that the size of sampled flats in Area 1

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[66] In building regulations, it is not obligation to install elevator in the building if it is less than **6** floors.

ranges between **65** square metres (sq m) to **90** sq m**,** whereas in Area 2 this ranges between **80** to **225** sq m. The highest percentage of sampled flats' size was **160 sq m** with **18%** (n=7 of 39), followed by flats' size **105** sq m with **15%** (n=6). One of 160 sq m was a merged flat composed of two **80** sq m flats. Two of the sampled buildings consisted of two different flat sizes, the first consisted of **225** sq m and **160** sq m flats, the other building consisted of **200** sq m and **160** sq m flats.
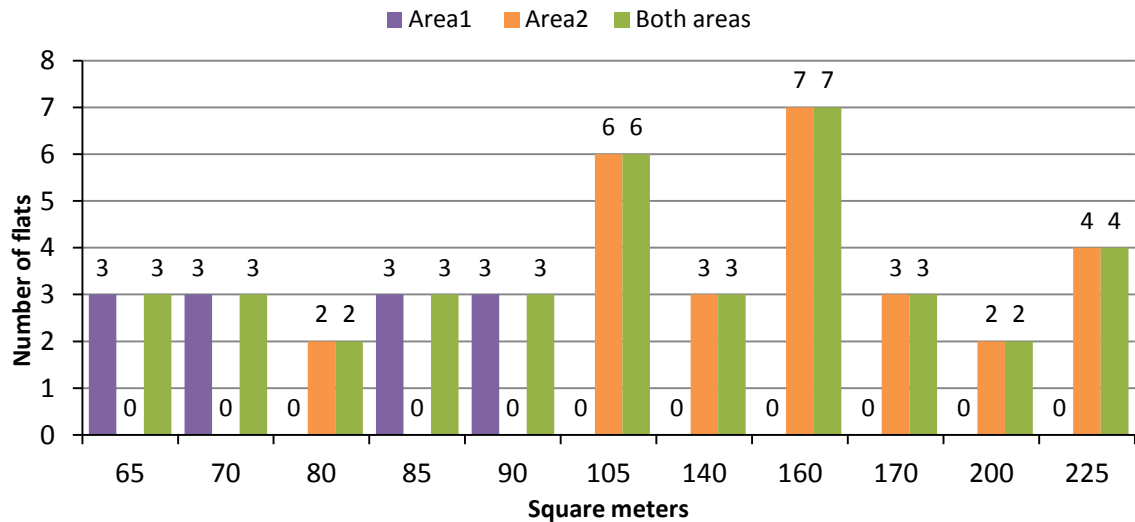
Figure A5. 3: Flats size (surface area) in Area 1 versus Area 2 (Total No. Flats 39)

Respondents to the interviews

Figure A5.4 presents the household members who participated in the interviews and this shows that the higher number of respondents **(56%,** n=22**)** were wives alone due to their availability at home and perhaps the idea that inside the house is mainly their responsibility. **30%** (n=12) of these interviews were with both husband and wife and this was probably because of the presence of an accompanying man with the researcher though in some cases the researcher was accompanied with a female and still in some cases the husbands participated in the interviews[67]. In two cases **(5%)** husbands answered almost all the questions though wives were there and these husbands seem to

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[67] The researcher was accompanied with another person for health and safety reasons. This was a helpful addition as it gave more comfort for the interviewees. For example, while the researcher was drawing or taking photos for the flat the interviewees were kept busy with interesting conversations started with the person accompanying the researcher.

be slightly dominating. In a few cases daughters and sons also participated occasionally, especially in terms of computer and internet use as they are more concerned with this than parents. The researcher put a side notes for all such answers although trying to limit the interview duration which was already long, and also in order to keep the focus on fewer respondents. However, when the member participation was very limited, he/she was not included as a respondent. Although in a few cases there were some conflicts in parents' desire and children's desire, the tendency to fulfil children's desire was strong as parents frequently mentioned

> "*This was what my children like although I am not quite convinced about it. This generation has very different interests from ours, they want to try everything*".
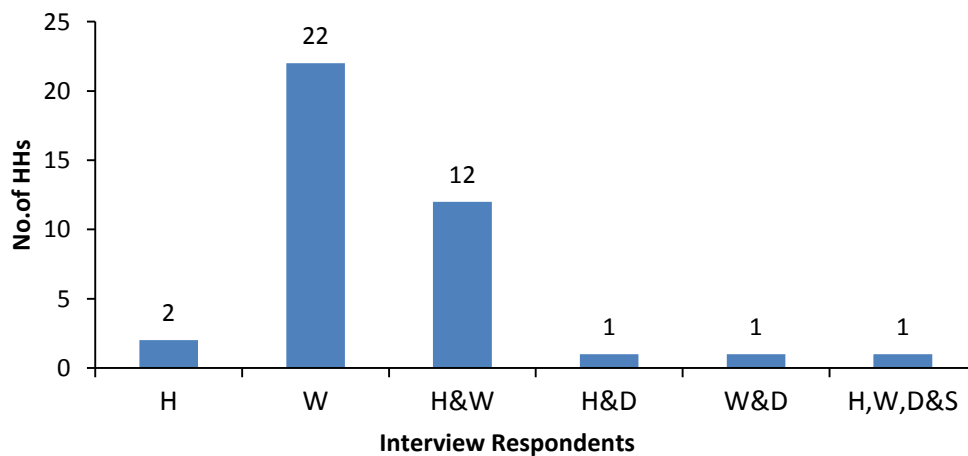
Figure A5. 4: Household members who participated in the interview

Appendix 5.2: Demographic structure of sampled households

This section presents the structure of the interviewed households covering the size of sampled households, the age and gender of the children, parents' ages, educational level and occupational position as follows:

The size of sampled households

As seen in figure A5.5, **15** households (around **38%** of the sampled households) consisted of **4** members, followed by **11** households **(28%)** consisting of **3** members and **23%** of sampled households with **5** members. The smallest population was of

households with **6** members and **7** members. This shows the dominant tendency in family size in Lattakia, which has been significantly decreasing lately and is currently around **4** persons per household[68]. In the round only one household was a couple with no children and this was excluded.
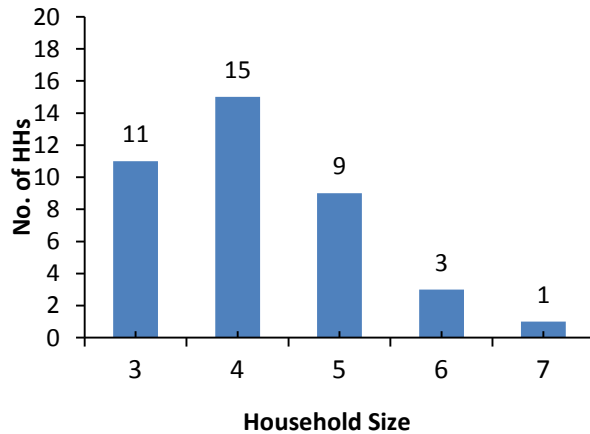
Figure A5. 5: The size of sampled households

Children's gender and number in sampled households

Figure A5.6 presents the number and gender of sampled households' children. Traditionally the tendency of households is to have a male child and traditional families often have a big family to have more male children, believing that females are more difficult to raise and protect, as a few respondents mentioned. Also, some parents believe that females are not treated equally to males in this society, and so they try to have only male children or as few female children as possible. Thus when they have male and no female children they happily stop having more children, whereas they keep having children until they get one male child at least.

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[68] Average size of the households: S=4.17 p/hh
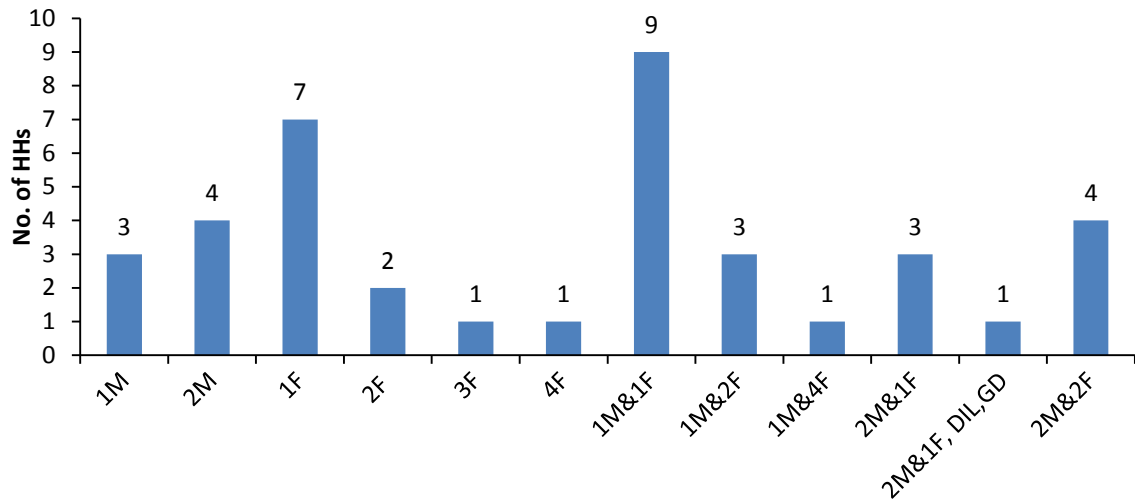
Figure A5. 6: The number and gender of sampled households' children

M: Male, F: Female, DIL: Daughter in law, GD: Granddaughter

Figure A5.7 shows that around **39%** (n=15) of sampled HHs have two children, one or both genders. Around **26%** (n=10) of HHs have only one male or female child. There is one household with four female children and another one with four female children and one male child. Husband in Qnr.12, Area 1 said that *'We have many children because we were hoping to have also a male child and we got him at the end*). In **11 of 39** households **(28%)** there were only female children (fig. A5.7). Two extended families were temporarily living in the same flat; one of them considered a middle class family who live together for safety reason and also not to live alone, as the husbands are travelling most of the time. The other family could be considered relatively poor and currently do not have another option. Overall the majority of households had 1 or 2 children (**64%, n=25 of 39**), and the average children number was 2.3 per households.
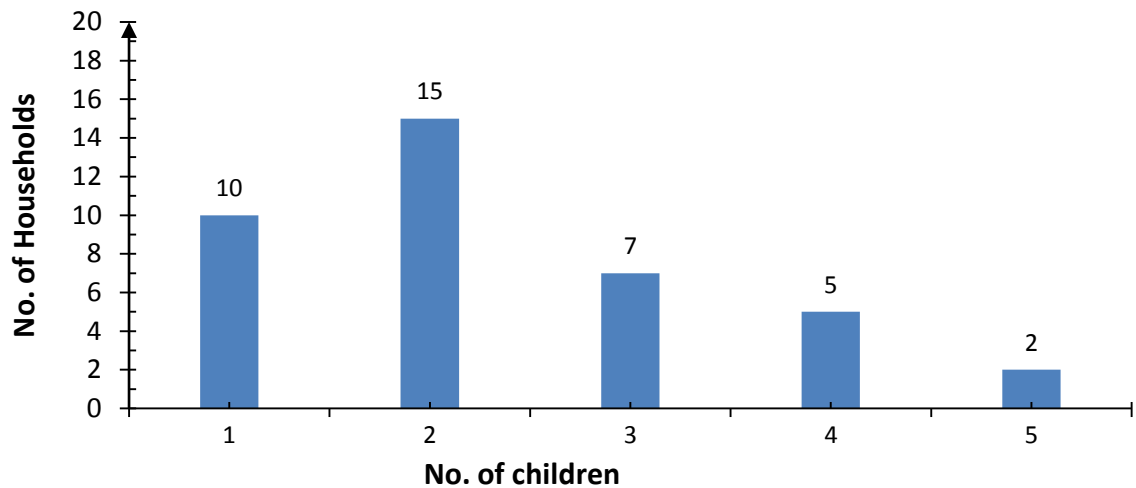
Figure A5. 7: The number of children for each sampled household

One daughter in law and one granddaughter were included

Children age groups of sampled households

Figure A5.8 presents the children age groups for each gender, and the number of male and female children. Figure A5.8 shows that children aged 10-14 years account for the highest percentage with 29% (n=26 of 89) of all children. It also shows that the number of children under 14 years-old account for 63% of all children and 35.1% of all households members including 89 children and 77 parents. This is almost equal to the national percentage of children aged 0-14 years, which is 35.2% of the total population, and this gives credibility of the research samples.

Figure A5.8 reflect the relation between parents and children and show that adult male and female children live with their parents until a late age. When they get married they most probably leave their parents' house but may stay temporarily with them until they manage to buy or rent their own house. While **72%** (n=64 of 89) of all children were younger than 20 years, **28%** (n=25) of children were over age 20 and they were still living with their parents, both male and female – the latter is less so in the 25-29 cohort which is probably a slightly late age of female marriage in Lattakia.
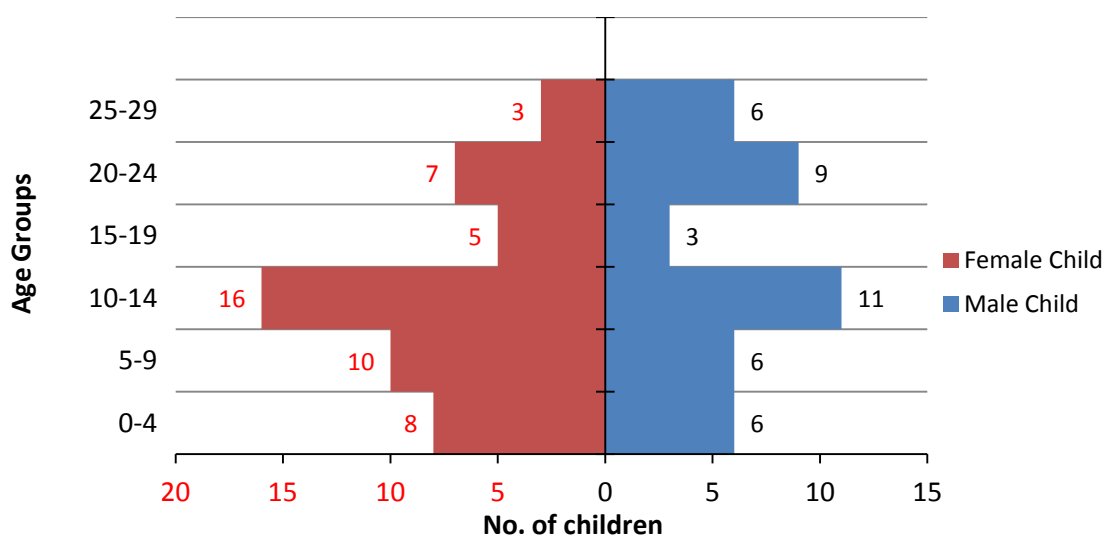
Figure A5. 8: Age cohorts and genders of sampled households' children (Total No. Female 49, Male 40)

The general demographic statistics of Syria shows that 48.8% are females and 51.2% are males, whereas in this sample the percentage of females among the children is higher (55%, N=49) than the general one. However, a few spouses mentioned that they were planning to have one or two more children later on or when they are better off, and this might change the percentage of male and female children. Qnr.13, Area 2 M.M said: *we might try to have one more child at most.* Respondent in Qnr.25 Area 2 said: *I would like to have one or two more children.* The other reason for this difference probably is that in one or two households, a few members had left the house after getting married or for work and were not included in this study.

Parents' age group in sampled households

Age groups in figures A5.9 and A5.10 are presented in **5** groups. The first group starts from age **18** as this is the marriageable age in Syria, although some people can be allowed to marry under this age with parental approval or judicial discretion for males of **15** and females of **13**. On the other hand the youngest spouse in the interviewed households was **23** years old.

In figures A5.9 and A5.11, three groups are presented, one where both spouses were in the same age group – i.e. number of couples with the same educational level, and the other two where only one of spouses was in an age group. Figure A5.9 shows that there

was only one wife aged less than 24 years old, and none of the wives in the studied households exceeded 55 years old, whereas only one husband was younger than 35 years old and 6 husbands **(15%)** were over 56 years old. This suggests a cultural norm for men to marry younger women, as is presented later. However, it also seems that women are not getting married as early as they used to a decade or more ago, taking into account that most of those young women who were interviewed were recently married – a few of them were married only a year or a few years prior to the interviews.
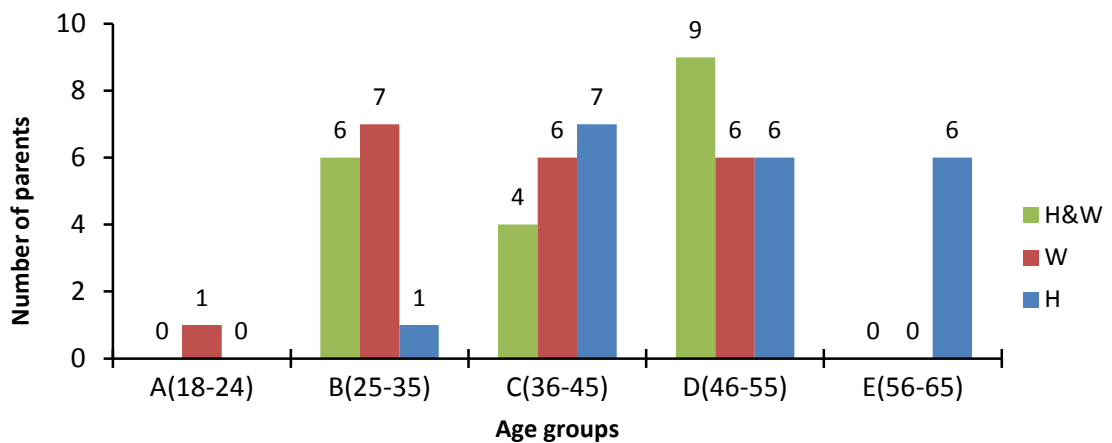
Figure A5. 9: Parents' age group of sampled Households

H&W: Both husband and wife are in the same age cohort – i.e. each one of "H&W" has two members

Figure A5.10 presents the difference between the husbands' and their wives' ages. It shows that **26%** (n=10 of 39) of husbands are **4-5** years older than their wives. **20% (N=8)** of the husbands were **6-7** years older than their wives. **18%** (n=7) were **8-9** years older than their wives and the same percentage were only **2-3** years older whereas there were **8%** (n=3) of spouses in the same age. **10%** (n=4) of husbands were **10-17** years older than their wives. The average age difference between husbands and wives is around **5.5** years.
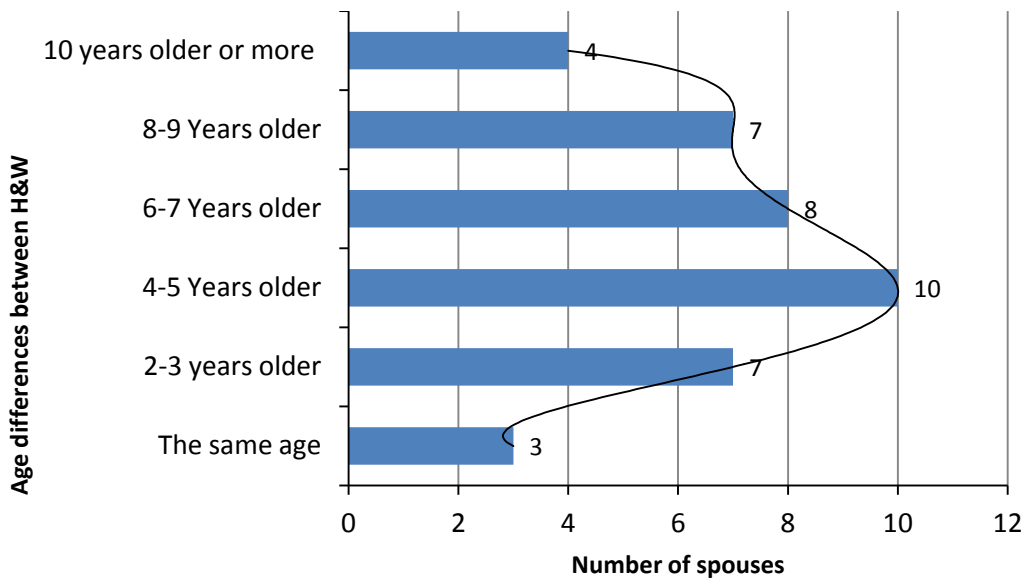
Figure A5. 10: The age difference between sampled spouses (Total No. Couples 39)

The age differences between spouses seem to have been decreasing in the recent past because women nowadays are contributing to the family income, although this is not a legal obligation on the wife. On the other hand women are more likely to finish their study in the university and/or sometimes higher education before getting married in some cities such as Lattakia. These latter also give women an opportunity to meet and choose their husband rather than getting married through only the family's friends or arranged marriage.

Qnr.8, Area 1wife said: *Women take high position in Syria, they share men in every field. This is not good for women; they are taking 2 roles as they work in and out of the home.*

Qnr.11 Area 1husband said*: Women in Syria are taking more than their rights, women are now nominated in high administrative position and they have authority.*

Age groups of parents Area 1

Figure 5.11 shows that the parents' ages in Area 1 range between **25** and **55.** . **50%** (n=6) of the wives and (**25%)** of husbands were between **25** and **35** years old and **33%** (n=4) of both parents belong to the **36-45** age group. **42%** of husbands were between **46 to 55** years old. This is due to the cultural aspect that the husband is responsible for the family affairs and thus needs longer time to be able and ready to get married. This

housing area is, as noted in an earlier chapter, provided to youth and young spouses with subsidies though subscription which was not directly related to the age. It was instead related to the subscriber's assets, as this house must be the only possessed house.

Age groups of parents in Area 2

Figure 5.11 shows that **22%** (n=6 of 27) of husbands in Area **2** are over **56** years old whereas none of the wives were in this age. **37%** (n=10) of husbands and **48%** (n=13) of wives are in the (**46-55**) age group. **26%** of husbands and **22%** of wives were in group C (**36-45**) years old. Only **15%** (n=4) of husbands were in group B (**25-35**) and none of them were in group A (**18-24**). **22%** of wives were in group B (**25-35**) and **4%** (n=1) were in group A (**18-24**).

Figure 5.11 shows that 3 couples (**25%**) in Area **1** are in the same age cohort (**25-35**); 2 couples (**17%**) are in the same age cohort (**45-55**) and 1 couple is the same age cohort (**36-45**). Whereas in Area **2** only **11%** of the total couples were in the same age group (**25-35**), 3 couples were in the same age cohort (**36-45**) and **7** couples (**26%**) were in the same group (**46-55**). None of the parents in Area 1 was in the age cohort (**56-65**) whereas **25%** of the husbands in Area 2 were in the age cohort (**56-65**). This thus shows that parents' age groups in Area 1 are around 10 years younger than those in Area 2.
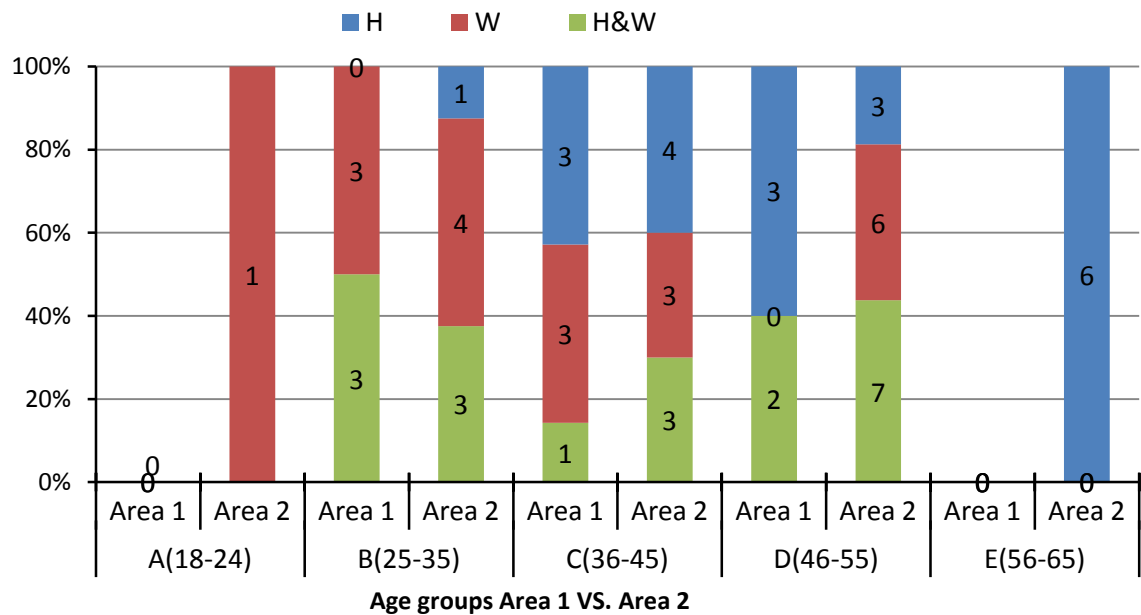
Figure A5. 11: Age groups of parents of sampled households in Area 1 versus Area 2

The head of the sampled households

Figure A5.12 presents the head of the households in Area 1 versus Area 2. It shows that **56%** (n=22 HHs) of the total of sampled households were considered by respondents to be headed by the father[69] (although the mother sometimes shares in decision making and in some cases contributes to family income), whereas **41%** (16 HHs) of the total of sampled households considered by the respondents to be headed by both parents. Only one household was headed by a mother who was divorced and had to be the responsible for her family as the children chose to live with their mother and this household was in Area 1. A third (33%) of the sampled households in Area 1 and (44 %) in Area 2 was headed by both parents as was considered by the respondents.
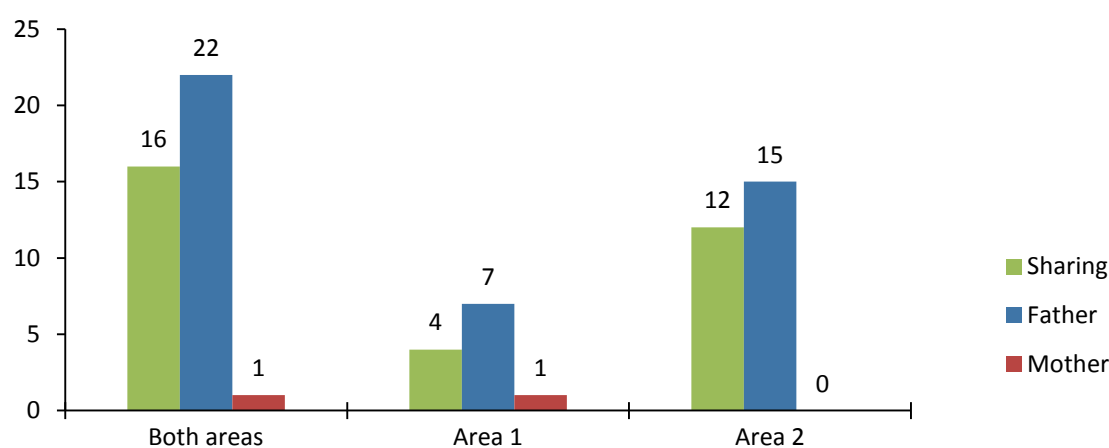
Figure A5. 12: The head of the households in Area 1 versus Area 2

Education level of sampled households

The school system in Syria is divided into basic and secondary educational levels: primary educational level consists of 1st to 6th grade; lower secondary educational level from 7th to 9th grade; and upper secondary educational level[70] from 10th to 12th, which is equivalent to high school. Post-secondary education includes: middle institutes 2 years (perhaps equivalent to further education institution in England (FE)), and university colleges 4-6 years (higher education, HE).

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[69] Household headed by the father does not mean a single father; it is only an indication that the father is the main decision maker in the household and most likely responsible for the family income.

[70] There is also, at the upper secondary level, schools for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with four specialisations, commercial, industrial, agricultural, and handicrafts.

Figure A5.13 represents the educational level of both parents highlighting the cases in which both parents achieved the same level of education. The majority of the wives (**82%,** n=32 of 39**)** ranged in their educational level between high school, further educational institution and university whereas **67%** of all husbands have this range of education. **26%** (n=10) of the interviewed wives studied in the middle institutes (further educational institution) as these last only 2-3 years at most aiming to finish early, or perhaps they did not achieve the sufficient marks for higher education. Whereas only **10%** (n=4) of husbands had studied at middle institutes (FE). Figure A5.13 also shows that **51%** (N=20) of the total couples were at the same level of education. This probably reflects the fact that they met each other through the educational environment and/or because people nowadays do care about having more or less the same level of education.
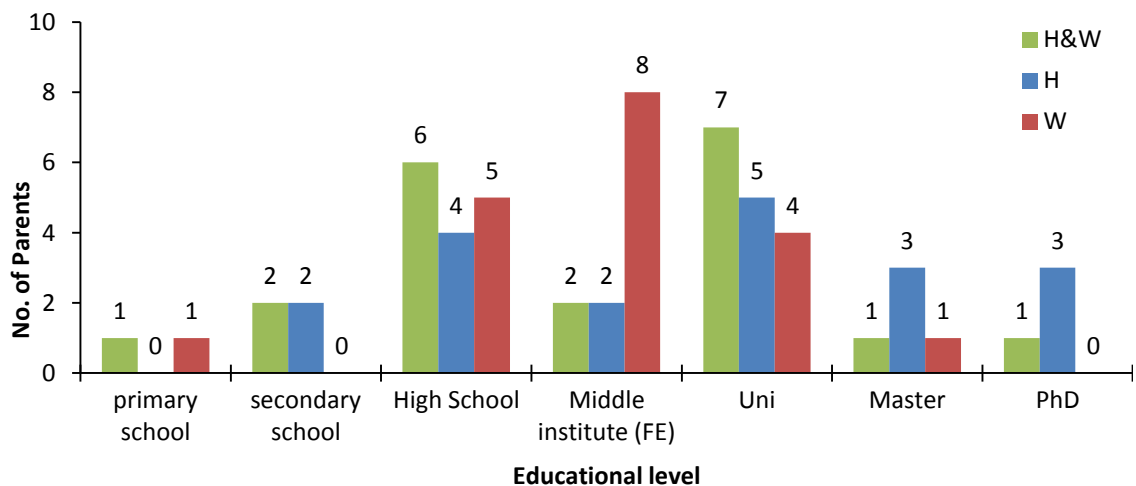
Figure A5. 13: Educational levels of parents in sampled households

Educational level	Primary School		Secondary School		High School		Middle institution		University		Master		PhD	
No. of parents in both areas	3	4%	6	7.5%	21	27%	14	18%	23	29%	6	7.5%	5	6%
Area 1(24p)	3	12.5%	3	12.5%	6	25%	7	29%	5	21%	0	-	0	-
Area 2(54p)	0	-	3	6%	15	28%	7	13%	18	33%	6	11%	5	9%

Table A5.1: Educational level of parents in Area 1 versus Area 2 – Total No. parents 78

In the sampled households in Area 1, none of the husbands or the wives has masters or PhDs degrees, and **17%** of fathers have only primary school level (see fig. A5.14). In Area 2, **30%** of fathers and **11%** of mothers have master or PhD degree and none of them has only primary school (see fig. A5.15). The difference in the education level between the two sampled areas (see table A5.1) probably reflects the difference in their economic status as the households in Area **2** are better off than households in Area **1**. This is because people with higher education can get better jobs and higher incomes.
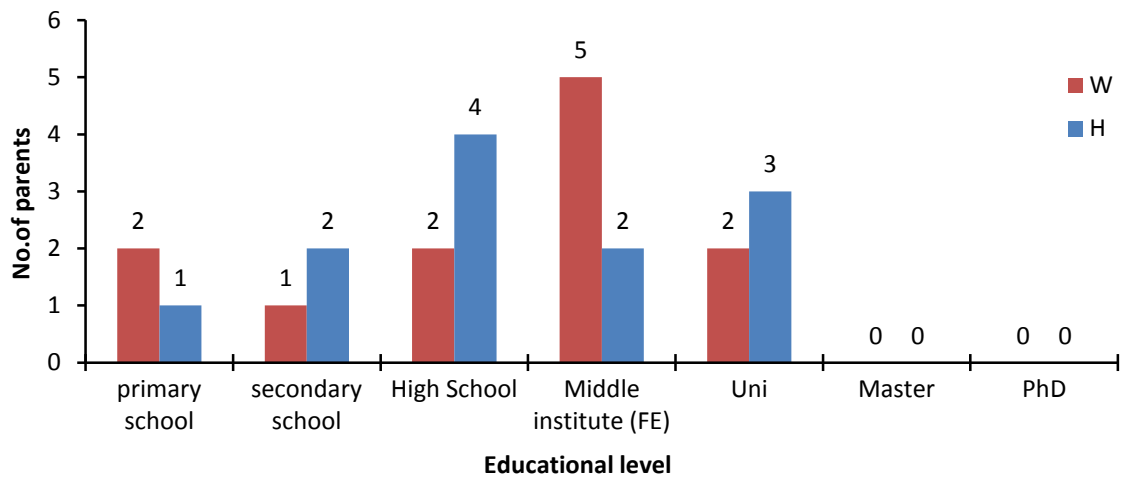
Figure A5. 14: Educational level of sampled households in Area 1
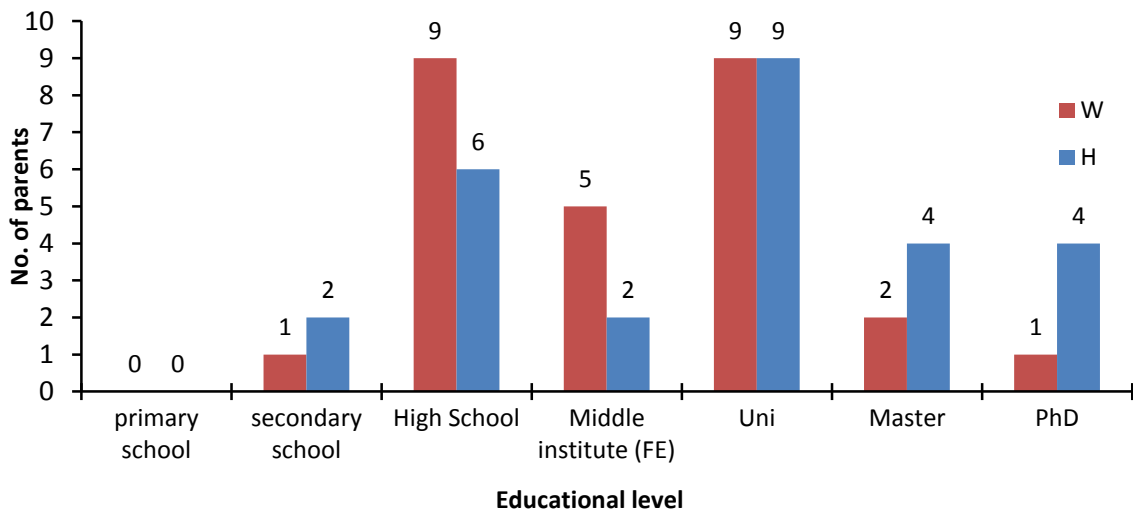
Figure A5. 15: Educational levels of sampled households in Area 2

Occupational position of the sampled households

Figure A5.16 shows that none of the fathers in the sampled households is unemployed, whereas **33%** of the mothers are unemployed. The majority of husbands (**67%**) and

354

wives (**54%)** belong to the junior white collar occupations[71]. **18%** of all husbands and **5%** of all wives belong to middle administrative occupations. This probably shows the position of the women in the society of Lattakia, where they have authority at work though not as many as the men. Having a third of the sampled households with unemployed wives can be an indication of women having much less responsibility for the household's income.
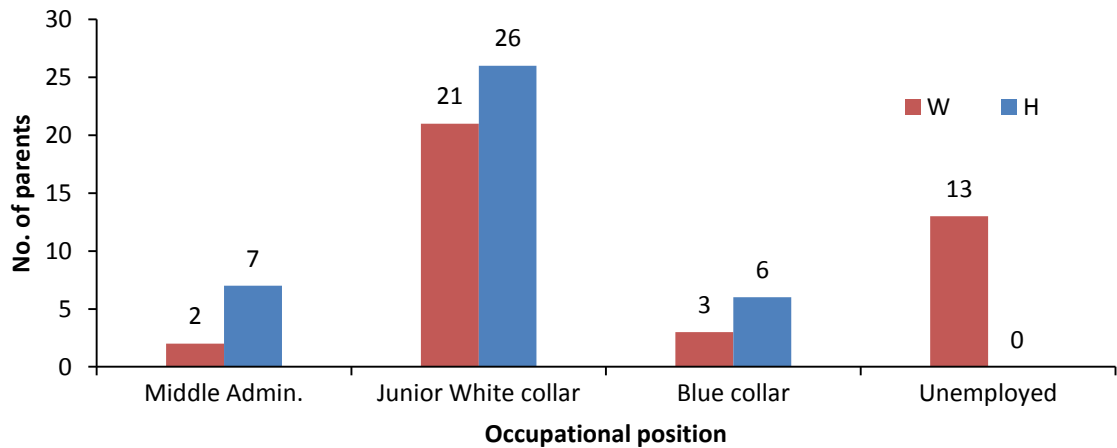
Figure A5. 16: Occupational positions of husbands versus wives of sampled households

50% of the wives in Area 1 are unemployed, whereas only **26%** of the wives in Area 2 are unemployed (see figs. A5.17 and A5.18). While **7%** of the wives in Area 2 work in the middle administrative sector, none of the wives does in Area 1. This probably shows that women in Area 2 are in a higher position in the society than those in Area 1 and also shows that their households have better income, as is explained further later in this chapter.

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[71] White collar mainly referred to occupations performed in an office setting as opposed to blue collar, which involved in manual labour. This was noted in earlier chapters (literature and research design).
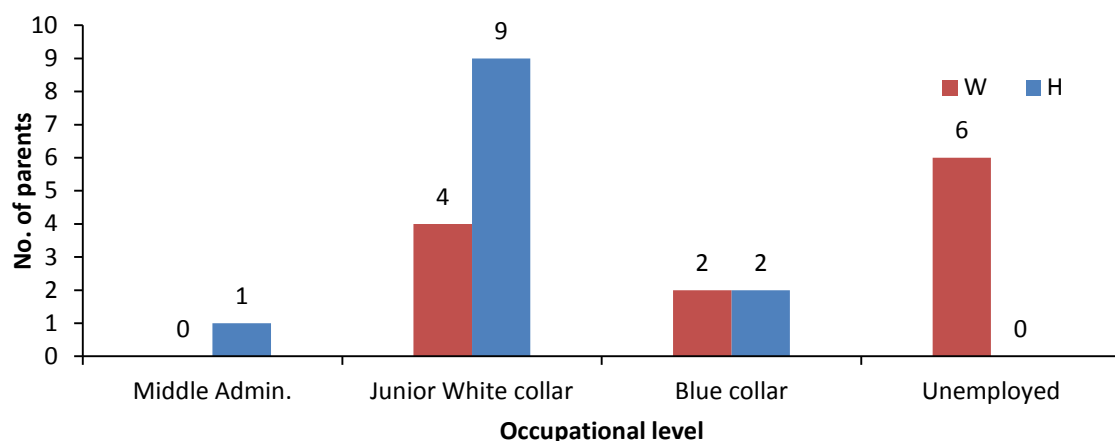
Figure A5.17: Occupational positions of husbands vs. wives of sampled households, Area 1
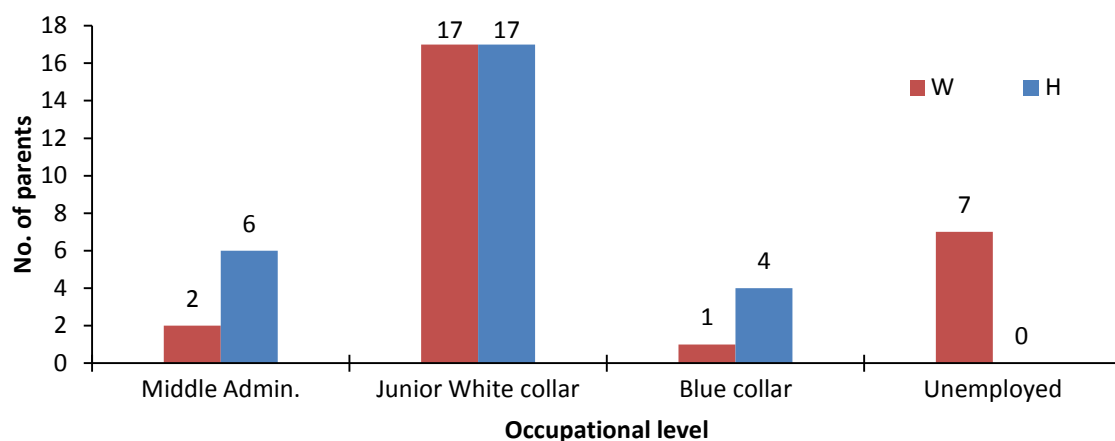
Figure A5.18: Occupational positions of husbands vs. wives of sampled households, Area 2

Table A5.2 and fig. A5.19 show that a higher percentage of parents in Area 1 (25%) than in Area 2 (13%) are unemployed and a higher percentage of parents in Area 2 work as administrative (15%). This probably is an indication that Area 2 can be classified as higher economic class comparing to inhabitants in Area **1.**

Occupations classifications	Area 1 (youths Housing)	Area 2 (Tishreen Uni)
Middle administration	4%	15%
White collar	54%	63%
Blue collar	17%	9%
Unemployed	25%	13%

Table A5.2 Occupational position of parents in Area 1 versus Area 2
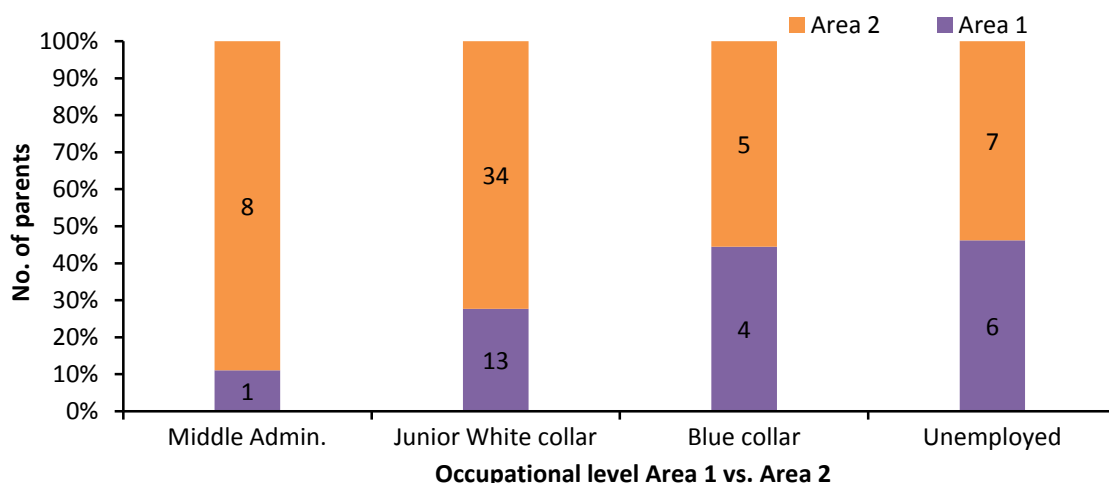
Figure A5. 19: Occupational positions of parents in Area 1 versus Area 2

Education level and the head of the household

Table A5.3 presents the correlation between the level of education of parents and the head of the household in the sampled areas. It shows that parents with higher level of education (one or both parents hold a PhD), tend to share the responsibility of the household's affairs making the decisions and/or being responsible for the household's income. On the other hand, households with less educated parents such as secondary or primary school seem to be headed by the father, probably because lower level of education allows much fewer job opportunities which are appropriate for women – manual work and other types of work such as waitress, public transportation driver are usually not appropriate for women in Syrian society – and thus they cannot contribute in the household's income and this probably gives them less decision power in the household.

HOH in relation to Education Level of the parents	Head of the household			
Ed. Level of one or both Parents	Father	Both parents	Mother	Total
Group1: PhD		4		4
Group2:Master	3	1		4
Group3: University	2	11		13
Group4: Middle institution	3	4	1	8
Group5: High School or less	8	2		10
Total	16	22	1	39

Table A5.3. The correlation between the level of education of parents and the head of the household in the sampled areas

Appendix 5.3: Households possessions and tenure history

Households' possessions

The researcher has focused on the house as an essential possession because it is perhaps the first aim for Syrian households to possess as for instance, in 2006 **88%** of the total houses in Syria were either owner-occupied or kept empty by their owner because of the rental laws, as shown earlier in the literature.

Houses Tenure in the sampled areas

Figure A5.20 shows that around **85%** of the sampled households own the house where they live whereas only **15%** of sampled houses were rented. This proportion is almost the same in both areas as it is **83%** ownership in Area 1 and **85%** ownership in Area 2.
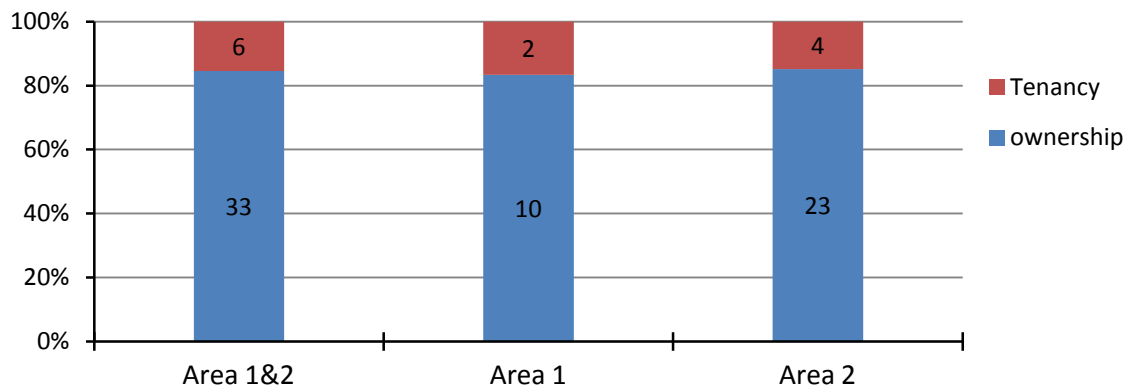
Figure A5. 20: House tenure of the sampled households in both areas

In both areas, 6 households were living in rental houses, but two of these households owned a house each in different area, which was in turn rented out. Their main purpose of renting a house was to move to a better social-class area rather than to make an investment as the rental fee was more expensive where they currently live than the one of their own house. Figure A5.20 also shows that only **15%** of the sampled households live in tenancy and the majority owns the house they occupy (house is owned with **25** years loan in the case of the Youth Housing project).

Figure A5.21 presents the number of houses which were owned by the sampled households as reported in the interviews. Half of the interviewed households (**49%, n=19**) owned one house and **36%** (n=14) owned **2** houses in the city. While **5%** (n=2) of the interviewed households have **3** houses, excluding the summer and holiday houses,

10% (n=4) did not own any house. Figure A5. 21 also shows that half of the sampled households **(50%)** in Area 1 and almost the same percentage as in Area 2 **(48%)** owned only one house. Although it was not allowed to have any other house in the conditions of subscribing in the YHP, as noted in chapter 3, a third of sampled households in Area 1 (**33%,** n=4) responded that they have **2** houses. This is probably because a few of them circumvented the law such as through transferring the title of the house they own to someone else or they bought the houses from original subscribers. However, there is still a significant difference in the economic level between Area 1 and Area 2, as seen in figure A5.21, with **7.5%** of households in Area 2 having **3** houses excluding the summer and holiday houses, whereas **17%** of households in Area 1 do not have any house, and none of households in Area 1 has more than 2 houses.
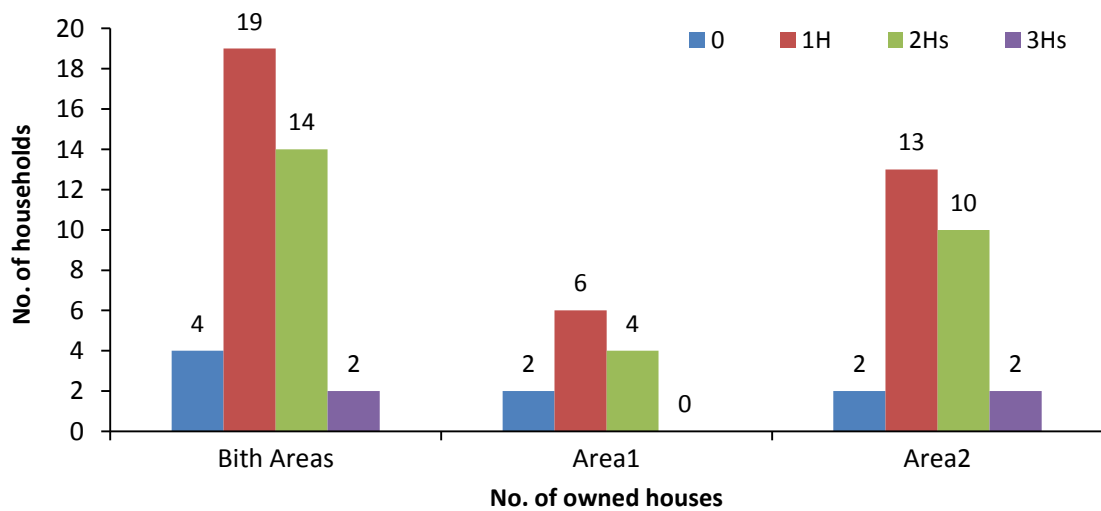
Figure A5. 21: Numbers of houses owned by sampled households in Area 1 Vs. Area 2

Other possessions of sampled households

Figure A5.22 shows the possessions or assets of sampled households which serve as a proxy for indicating the household income, as a factor of socioeconomic status as noted earlier in the literature. This chart shows that the majority (**83%,** n=10) of households in Area **1** do not have any possessions such as a car, shop, clinic etc. or they have only the house where they live. Whereas in Area **2**, only **18%** (n=5) do not have other assets. As such, this is another indication that the economic status of people in Area 1 is lower than in Area **2.**
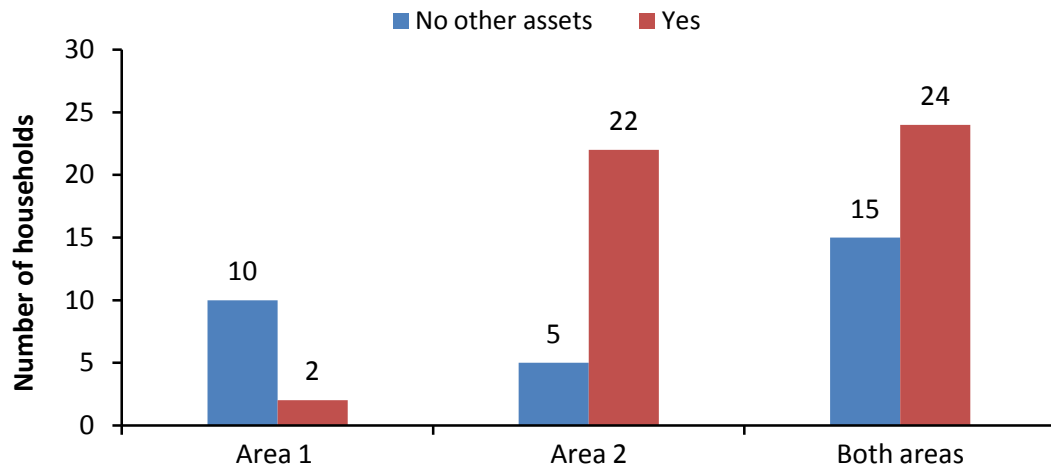
Figure A5. 22: Number of households who possess other assets in Area 1 versus Area 2

Figure A5. 23 shows that **8%** (n=3) of sampled households do not own any property and rent the house they occupy and **two** of those lived in Area **1**. There was only one household renting the house they occupy in Area 2 although they own a car and an office. **13%** (n=5) of the total sampled households have only one house with good furniture and equipment whereas **31%** (n=12) have one well furnished house with other major possessions such as a car, a shop, a clinic, chalet (a holiday house) and/or land.
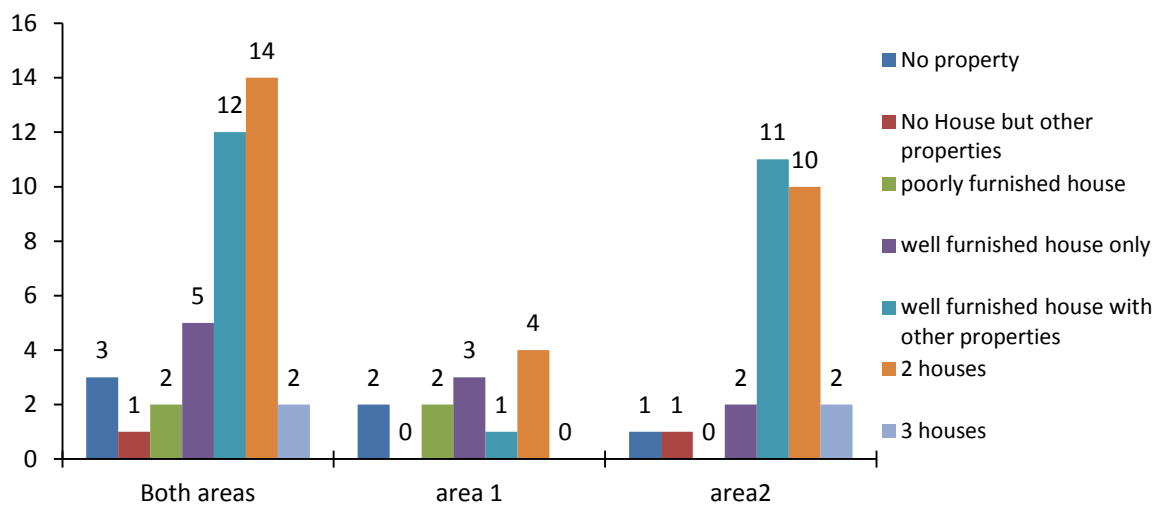
Figure A5. 23: Conditions of the flats where sampled households live and number of other houses they own (Total No. Flats 39)

Figure A5. 24 presents other household assets the respondents mentioned that they possess. It shows that only **25%** (n=3) of the households in Area 1 has assets different from the house they live in and in two cases they rented it. While the majority **(70%,**

n=19**)** in Area 2 has one car or more, only **17%** (n=2) of the sampled households in Area 1 has a car. In Area 2, a third **(33%,** n 6+3**)** of the sampled households possesses land or a holiday house. **48%** (n=13) of households in Area **2** has a place for work such as shop, clinic, office, and in one case they also have a company whereas in Area 1 they do not possess any of these assets.
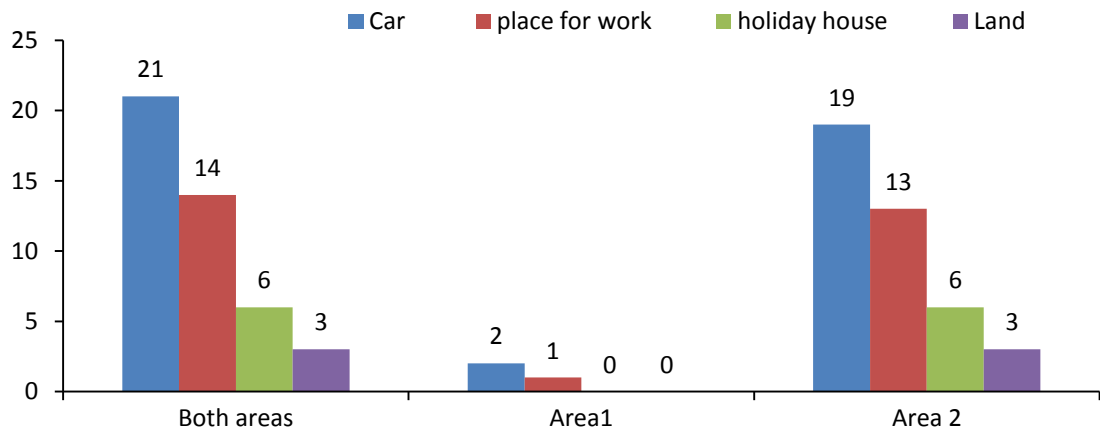

Figure A5. 24: Households' possessions apart from the house where they live

Length of household occupation of the current house

The length of occupation of the current house varied among the sampled households and ranged from a few months, especially in Area 1 as this was then recently occupied, up to **10** years as was intended in the research design (as noted in the research design in previous chapter). Figure A5.25 shows that households in Area 1 moved in to their current house a few months to 2 years prior to the data collection (January 2011), whereas households in Area 2 moved in varied times ranged from **one** to **10** years. The highest percentage in Area 2 is for the households who have been living in their current house for **3-5** years.
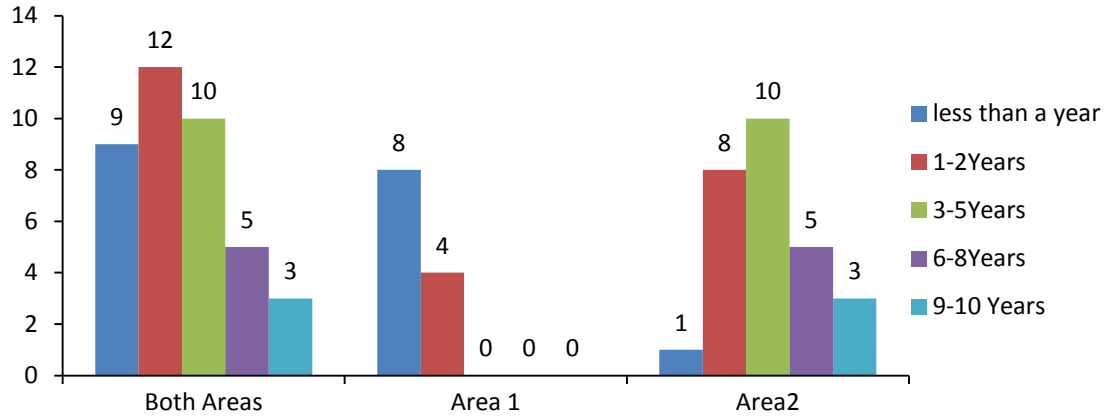
Figure A5. 25: The period of time the sampled households have been in their current house in Area 1 versus Area 2

The areas of the City of Lattakia

In order to best verify the reasons considered by respondents for changing their area of residence, the following describes the governmental division of the city of Lattakia.

City of Lattakia is divided into 5 areas or districts (see fig. A5. 26) by the municipal of Lattakia as the following:

- Area (*Manteka*) or district 1 is *Almadina Alkadima* – which means the Old Town – which includes 5 neighborhoods: Alsheikh Daher, Aleweena, Alslyba, Altabbiat, and Alkalaa.

- Area or district 2 is *Alzeeraa & Palestinian*. This district includes Alkods and Tishreen University neighborhoods.

- Area or district 3 is *Knenas and Bestan Alrihan*. This district includes Althawra, Albaath, Assaba mn Nissan (7th of April), and Tishreen neighborhoods.

- Area or district 4 is *Besnada and Aldaateer*, which includes Ugarit and Besnada neighborhoods.

- Area or district 5 is *Alramel and Demsarkho,* which includes Aljamhorieh and Alassad neighborhoods.

According to the municipal division of the City of Lattakia, the sampled areas in this study are located in districts 2 and 3. Area **1(Youth Housing)** is located in District 3 [72] and Area **2** (**Tishreen Uni Area**) is located in district 2.
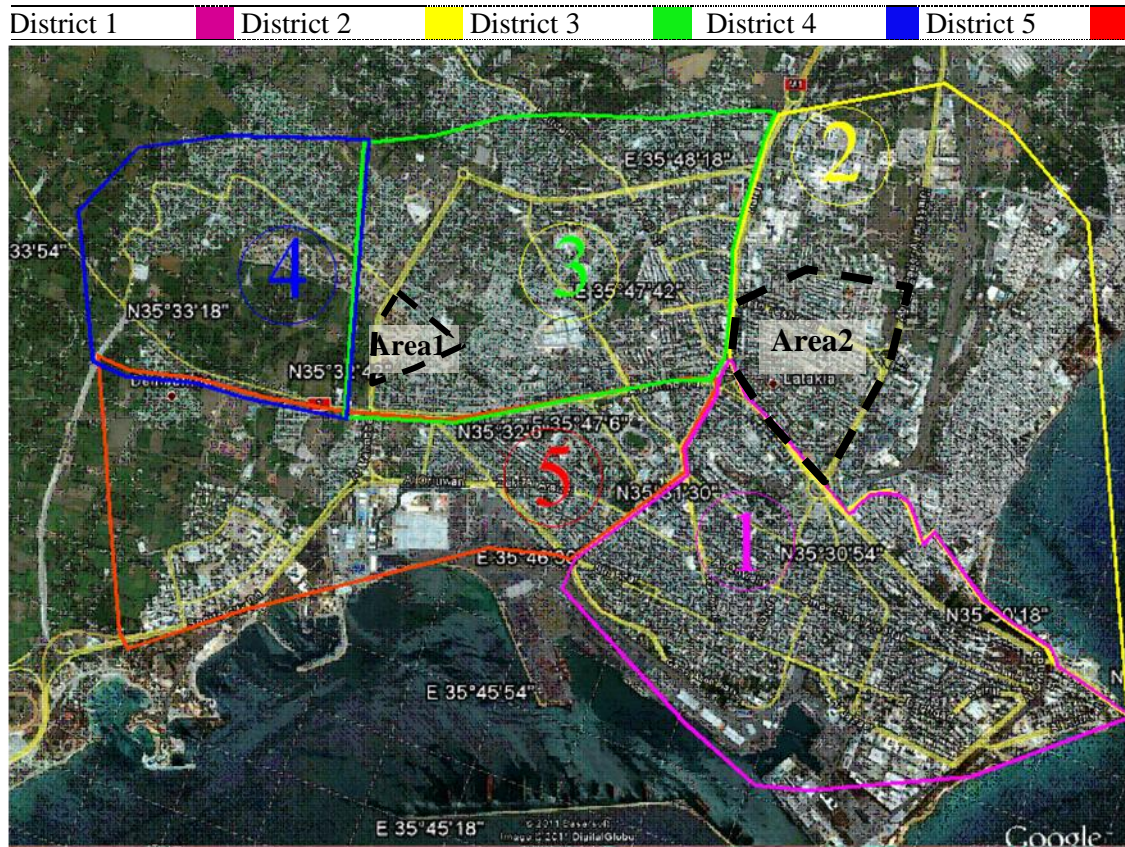

District 1		District 2		District 3		District 4		District 5	

Figure A5. 26: The districts of the city of Lattakia according to the municipal
Source: adapted from Google map and plans from the municipal of the city of Lattakia

Previous areas of residence

Figure A5. 27 presents the previous areas where the sampled households, in both areas, had lived after married – four houses at maximum. In several cases, the current house was the only one where the household lived in after married especially in case of young couples. Only **5%** (n=2) of households had lived abroad of the purpose of continuing higher education degree (PhD) and **10%** (n=4) had lived in the countryside as a first marital house before living in the current house. 4 households had lived in different

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[72] Youth Housing Project is located in several areas across the city of Lattakia and the same in other cities across Syrian. The implemented and inhabited area of YHP is located in district**1** as shown in gif. 5.34

city/ies of Syria as a first marital house, mainly for the purpose of doing a mission related to their jobs – two of the head of households were officers in the military. A high frequency of moving into district **2 (18 of 58** moves**)** and into district **3 (16 of 58** moves) are also shown in figures A5.27 and A5.28. This is probably an indication that the sampled households prefer the district they already lived in or and the areas meet their needs, and thus they move out only to attain better house.
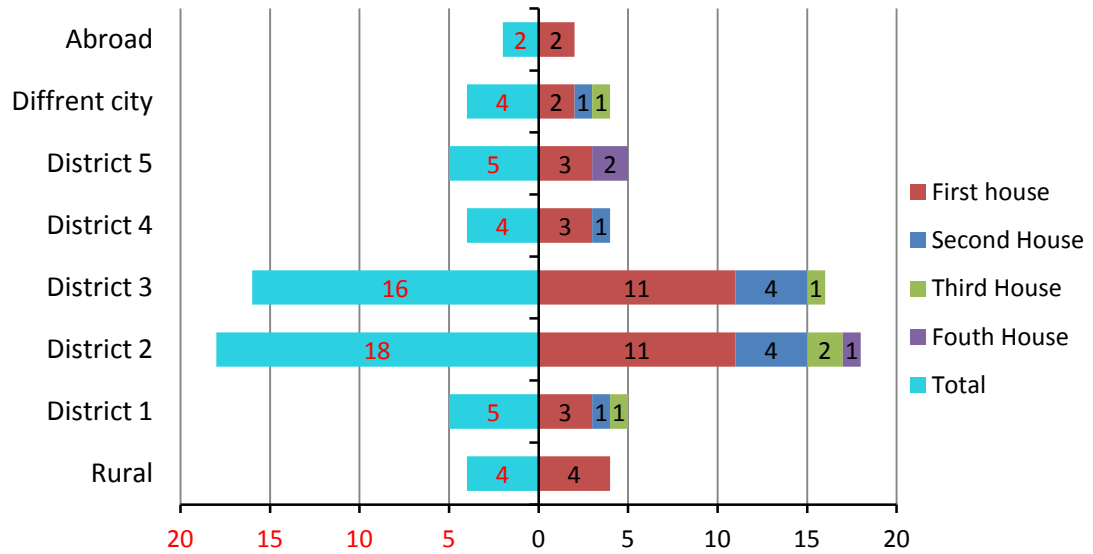
Figure A5. 27: Areas where sampled households had lived prior to the current one – Last four houses
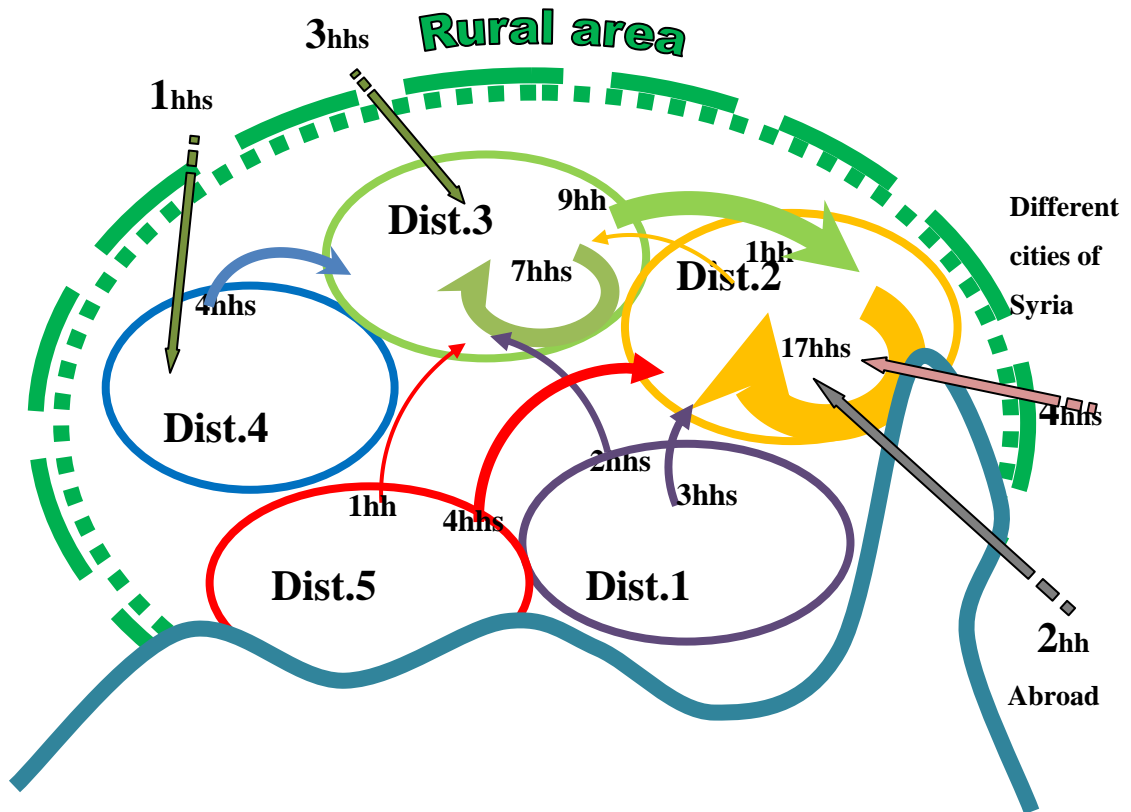
Figure A5. 28: The movements of sampled households between different areas in the city of Lattakia

Figure A5. 29 shows that none of the households in Area 2 had previously lived in District 4, and that the greatest households' movement is from district 3 to district 2.

It also shows that **25%** (n=3) of the households in Area **1** had lived in the village in the first marital house before moving to the current area (Youth Housing), whereas only one household in Area 2 had lived in village after getting married. The majority **58%** of households in Area **1** had lived in district **3** (see fig. A5.29) – where Area **1** is located – or in district **4,** which adjoins the rural area and district **3** (see fig. A5.26 and fig. A5.28)**.**
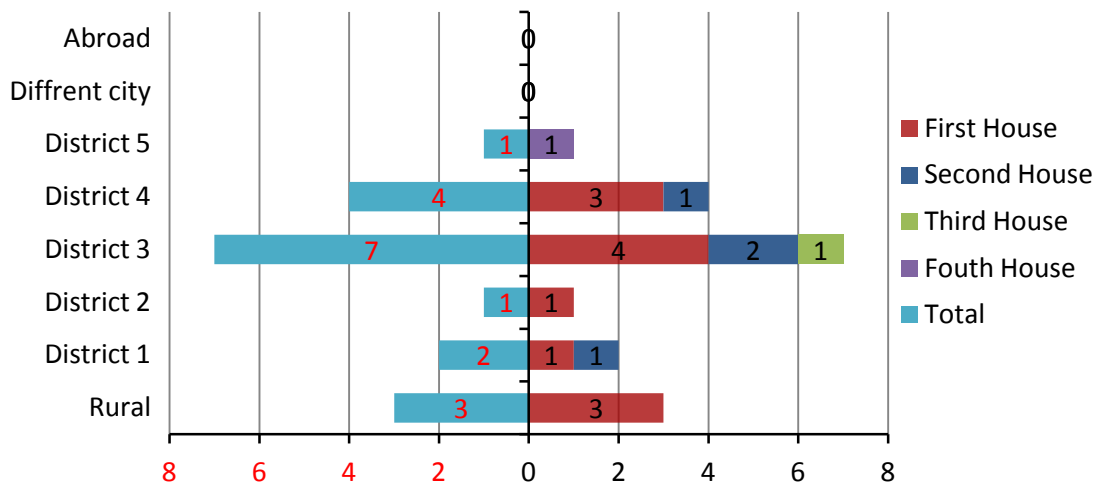
Figure A5. 29: Areas where sampled households in Area 1 had lived prior to the current house – Last four houses

Figure A5.30 shows that in Area 2, 2 households (7.4%) had lived abroad and 4 households had lived in different cities before moving into their current house. The majority of households (63%, n=17) in Area 2 had lived in the same district where they currently live. This shows that Area 2 is desired by higher-educated people, probably because it is the closest area to the university where they usually work, study and/or where their children study. It also shows that households who lived in Area 2 prefer to stay in the same area.
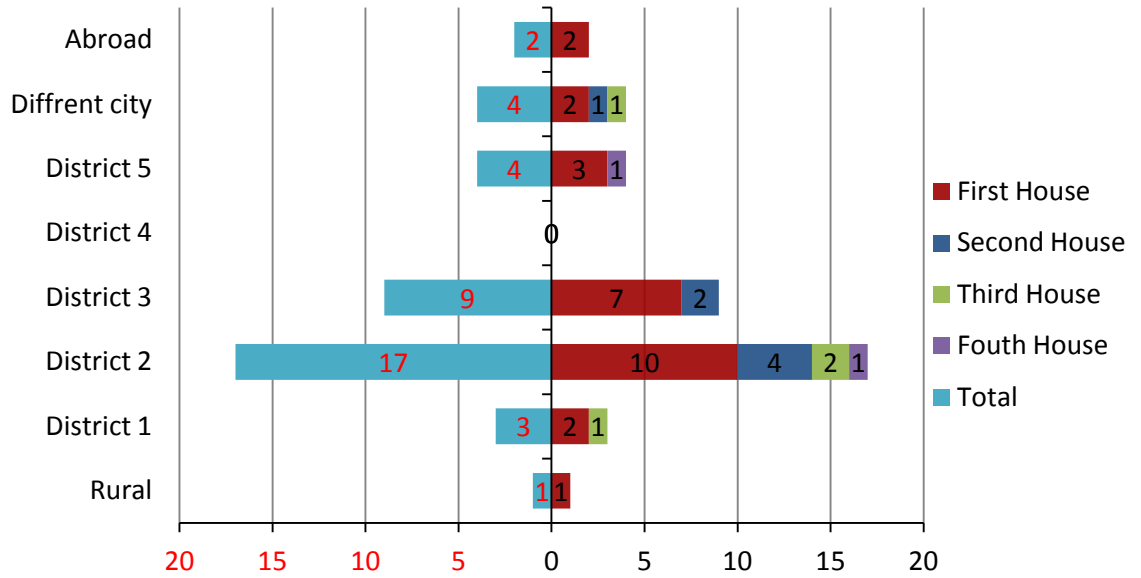
Figure A5. 30: Areas where sampled households in Area 2 had lived prior to the current house

Reasons for households' moving to the current area

The households responded to the following open question '***why did/would you change your area of living'*** in different ways and from different perspectives, and their responses were interpreted and categorized by the researcher. For instance, one of the responses was '*I moved to Autostrade Alzeeraa because the roads are wide and open with green area, which separates us from the noises and exhausts produced by motor vehicles; buildings are far enough from ours so we can use the balcony without being observed by the neighbours on the opposite side'*. This was interpreted and categorized as better urban plan and as higher urban and family privacy. In the same vein, all interviewees' answers were interpreted and categorized as shown in figure 5.39 for both sampled areas.
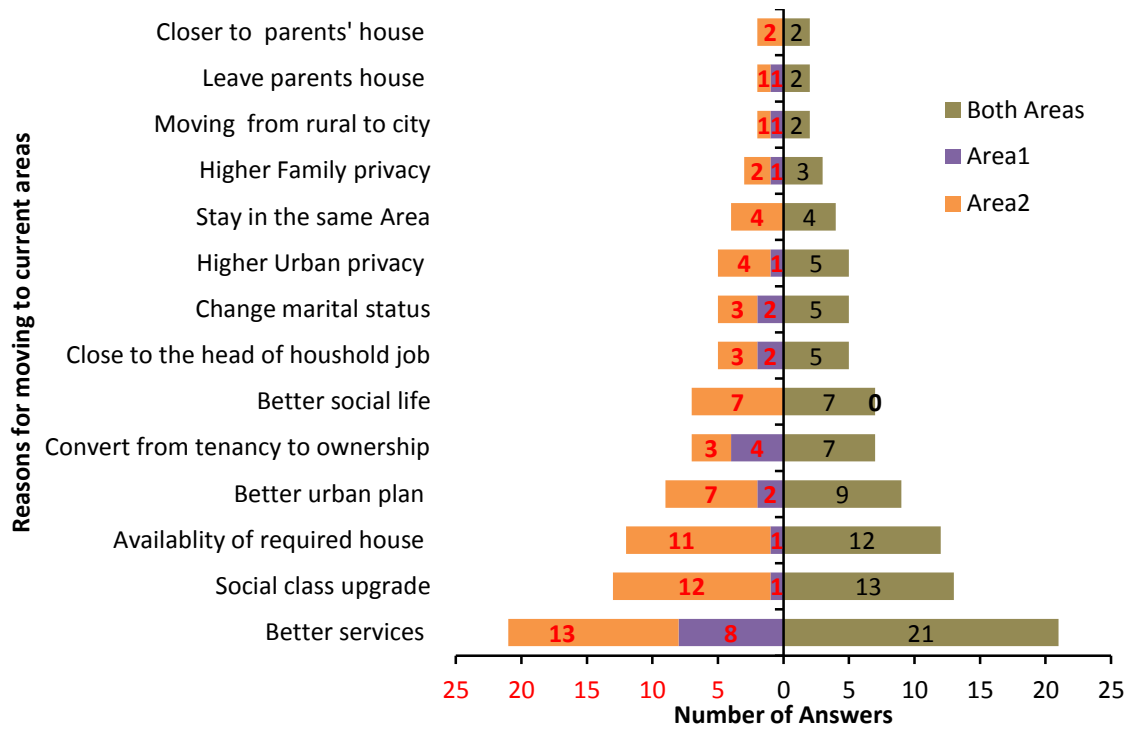
Figure A5. 31: Reasons for households moving to current area (Total No. of Households 39)

The reasons of moving into the current areas as cited by sampled households varied in both direction and priority as shown in figure A5. 31. **54%** (n=21) of sampled households considered public services and amenities one of the important reasons to motivate them to move into their current area of living, especially in Area **2** where the university is located in addition to schools for all education stages. **34%** (n=13) of sampled households have moved into the current area of residence, in particular, for social class upgrade especially in Area **2** as a few interviewees mentioned that this area (Alzeeraa) is considered an upper middle and middle class. **41%** (n=11 out of 27) of the total sampled households in Area **2** highlighted the availability of houses which are needed for particular households regarding surface area and affordability of the house, as a main reason for moving to Area **2** whereas only **one** of the households mentioned this reason in Area **1**. **33%** (n=4 of 12) of households in Area **1** and **11%** (n=3 of 27) considered converting from tenancy to ownership of their house as an important reason for moving to Area **1**. The sampled households reacted in different ways to express any dissatisfaction regarding the house they live in, the most common issues being move or improve. They either moved to another house or, when possible, improved, modified or redesigned.

Appendix 6: Additional material on interviewed designers and sampled houses

Appendix 6.1: Characteristics of the interviewed designers, positions, qualifications, ages, and the sectors they work for

Interviewees' positions in housing design

Interviewee **A** is a professional architectural designer and developer who had worked for 5 obligatory[73] years with the government as an estimator for house prices in the public sector and had been working for 16 years in his private office and registered in the Syndicate of Engineers, which also includes architects.

Interviewee **B** is a professional architectural designer and developer who had worked for 5 obligatory years with the government and had been working in his private office for 24 years and is registered with the Syndicate of Engineers.

Interviewee **C,** a professional architectural designer and developer, worked for 5 obligatory years with the government and had been working in his private office for 15 years, and is registered with the Syndicate of Engineers.

Interviewee **D** is an academic architect (lecturer in the Faculty of Architecture in public and private universities, has a PhD in urban planning from Poland, and consultant in an Engineering Unit of a state university) and unregistered[74] professional architectural designer.

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[73] Five-year obligatory employment with government was abolished since 2004 in Syria. The state's obligation to appoint graduates of all engineering disciplines immediately after graduation was valid since 1975 in accordance with the provisions of article II Act No. 49 of 1974 and legislative Decree No. 6 of 1975.

[74] Full-time lecturer in a state university is not allowed to have private office or designing projects under their name to avoid mixing personal and public benefit.

Interviewee **E** is an unqualified[75] designer, developer, who had worked as a developer in his private offices in Aleppo and then Lattakia for 18 years.

Interviewee **F,** an academic architects' consultant, (he has a PhD in Architecture from Germany) had worked in housing design for 40 years and is currently a consultant in his private company.

Interviewee **G** is a civil engineer, who worked in the public sector for 27 years (Kassioun Company for Construction, a branch of General Company of Roads and Bridges), is currently working in housing design as structural designer in his private office and registered with the Syndicate of Engineers.

Interviewee **H** is a professional architectural designer and developer who worked for 5 obligatory years with the government (the Company of Housing Military, in the implementation section), has been working in his private office for 22 years in housing design and is registered with the Syndicate of Engineers.

Interviewee **I** is a professional architectural designer, currently the Head of the Association of Architects. He worked in the public sector with the government for 15 years, has been working in his private office for 15 years and is registered with the Syndicate of Architects.

Interviewee **J** is a civil engineer who worked as a structural designer in the public sector[76].

Interviewee **K** is an architect (part-time academic teaching assistant in a state university and professional architectural designer). He is registered with the Syndicate of architects and a member in the association of architects.

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[75] Interviewee **E** finished high school, does not have any certificate in housing design but as a developer has acquired designing experience from different architects and people demands from housing market

[76] No more details were available about this interviewee

Interviewees' characterisation

Eight interviewees (**8 out of 11**) are qualified architectural designers and two interviewees (**2 out of 11**) are structural designers**,** whereas only one interviewee is an unqualified designer (finished high school) working as a developer. The reason for having the majority of interviews with qualified designers was that the researcher is an architect, which facilitated the contact with them, though this might not reflect the accurate percentage of the architects in generic housing design process (see fig. A6. 1).
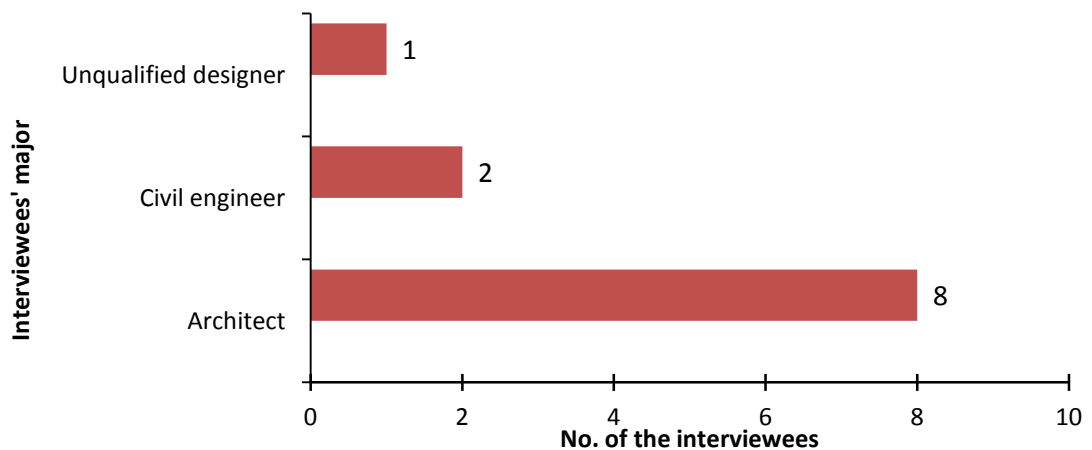
Figure A6. 1: Interviewees qualification

Interviewees' work sector

Since architects and engineers were obliged to work with the state for 5 years before choosing to either continue working in the public sector (state) or to launch their own private business, **4** interviewees were still working in the public sector and another **3** interviewees were working in both private and public sectors, whereas the other **4** interviewees work only in the private sector managing their own offices (see fig. A6.2). Being employed in the public sector and working with the government provides a secure job, salary and pension though payment is limited with very rare bonus or incentives. Therefore Governmental employees are generally reluctant to change the housing design and development process, avoiding extra work and any change in their routine. Interviewee **I** (the current Head of Association of Architects) pointed at the negative role of government-employed architects in the housing design process, as he claimed that they tend to impede ambitious architects in developing and building change process:

'*Governmental employees seek easy tasks no matter how inappropriate the results are and that makes them strongly reluctant to make any change even if they are completely sure that the change would result in successful outcomes.*'

The above interviewee claimed that architects in the private sector generally differ from those in the public sector to the extent that the latter become similar to civil engineers. This could be interpreted as meaning that governmental architects are similar to civil engineers in prioritizing constant economic and physical factors over changeable social needs such as comfort and aesthetics.
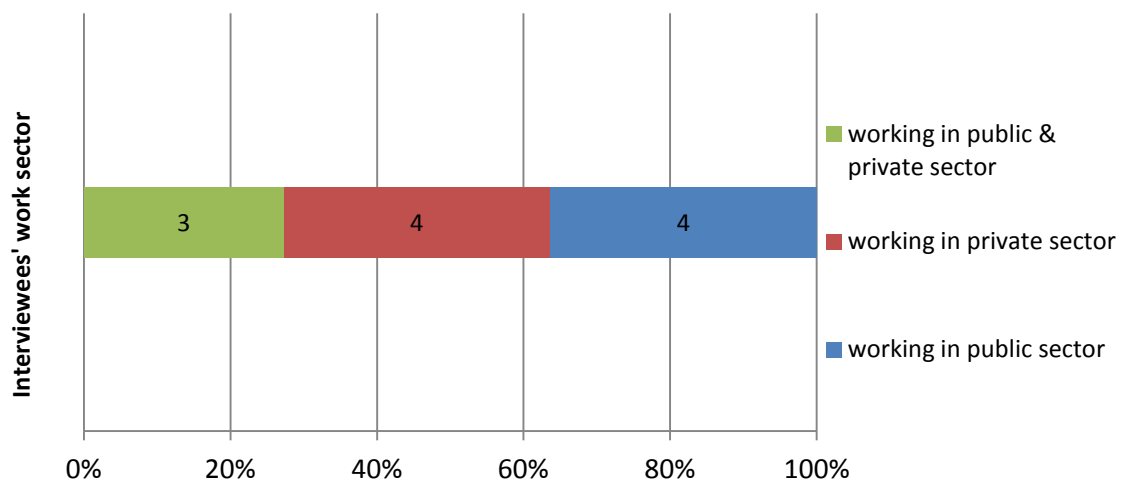
Figure A6. 2: Type of sectors where the interviewees work

Interviewees' ages

In relation to the research design, which sought respondents with experience, it is noted that the interviewees' age ranged between **41 to 60** years (see fig. A6. 3).
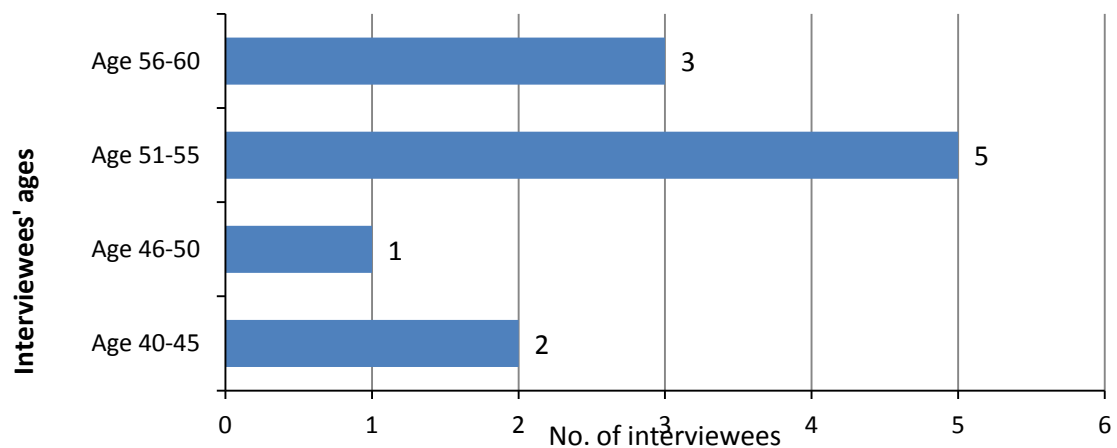
Figure A6. 3: Ages groups of the interviewed actors

Appendix 6.2 Youth Housing NBRH Area 1

Update site plan of Youth Housing Neighbourhood in 2011
Source: GCEC (2011)


Implemented buildings in Youth Housing Area, up to 2011

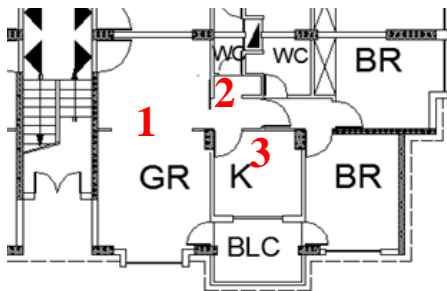**Figure A6. 4: Youth Housing Project plan and implemented part 2011**

Figure A6. 5: Youth Housing Project 2011

Youth Housing Neighbourhood Plan type A

Building type A (considered A1 in this study) consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats in each floor; each flat is (70 sq m) has the following elements: 2 bedrooms, kitchen, a space of guest and living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and a balcony.
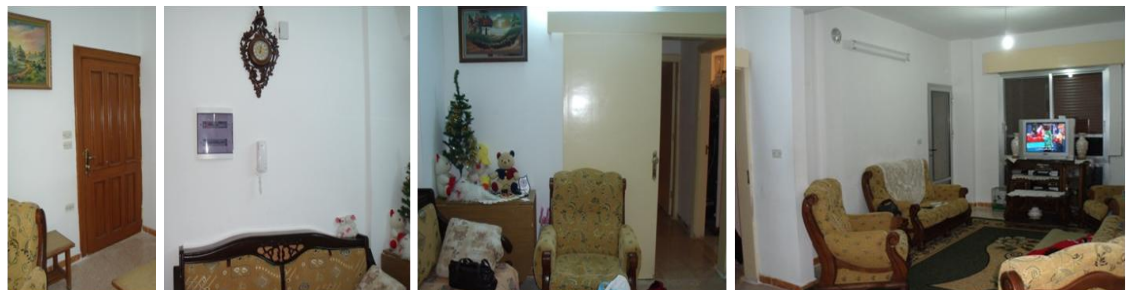
Guest-living space Pictures taken from position 1

YHP Type A First Floor

Corridor to the toilet, kitchen, & bedrooms from position

Figure A6. 6: Youth Housing Project, Type A/A1, Plan and domestic space

East and North Elevations

East Elevation

Youth Housing Type A

GR | K | BR
WC | WC | BR
BLC

West and south Elevations
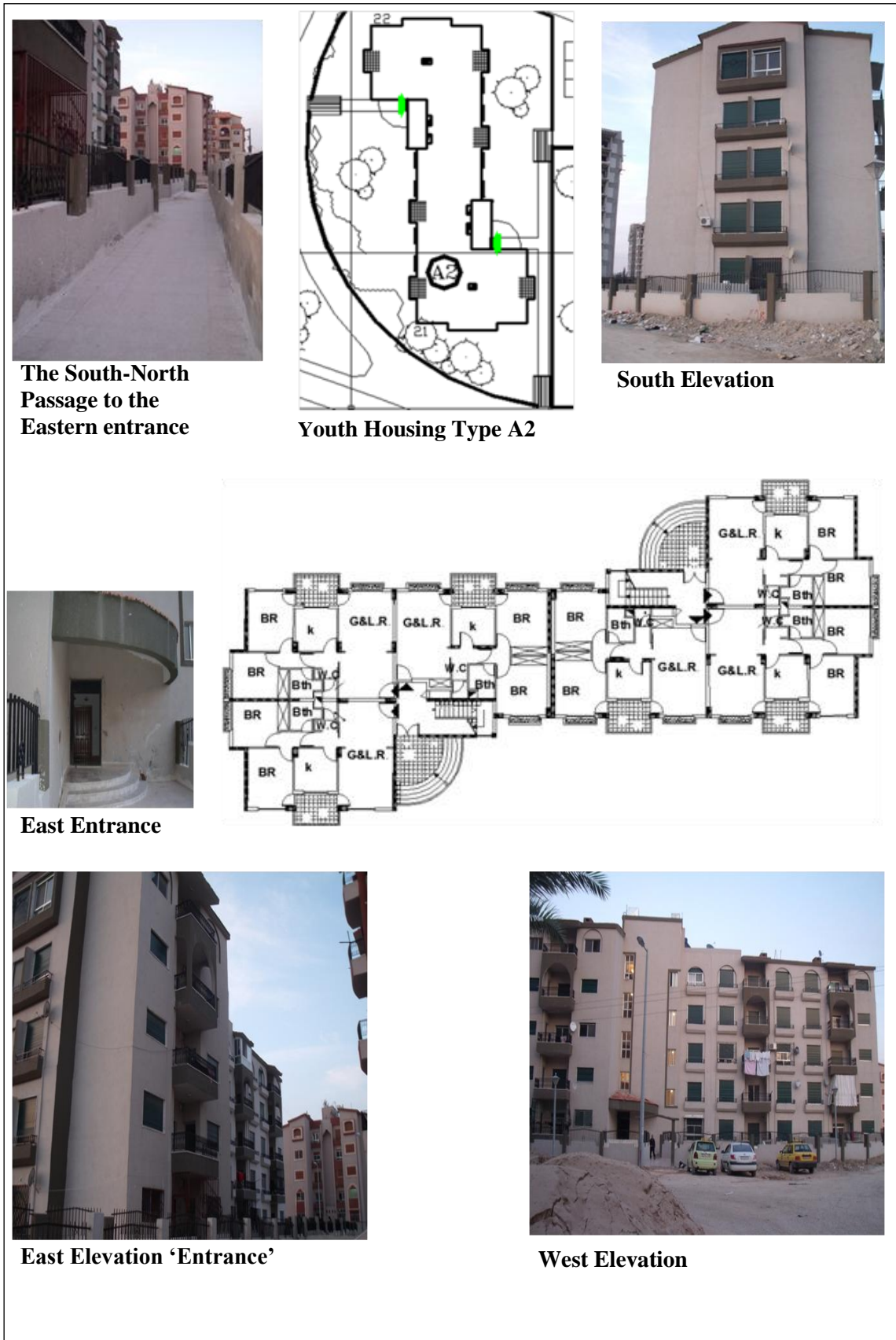
South Elevation 'Entrance'
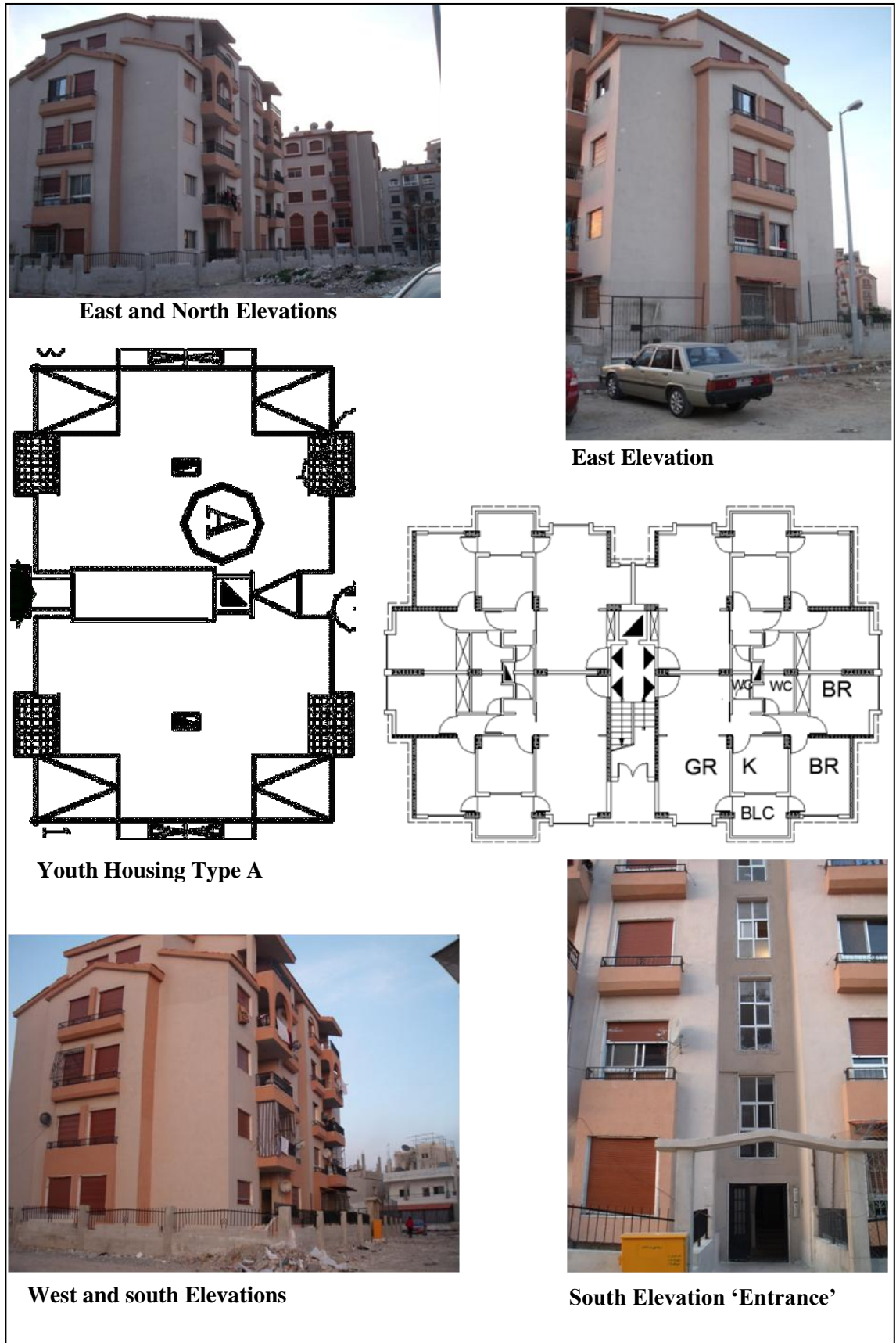
Figure A6. 7: Youth Housing Project – Building type A: site, design plan, elevations

Youth Housing Plan type A2

Building type A consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats in each floor; each flat is (80 or 85 sq m) has the following elements: 2 bedrooms, kitchen, a space of guest and living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and a balcony.

Youth housing Type A2 Ground floor

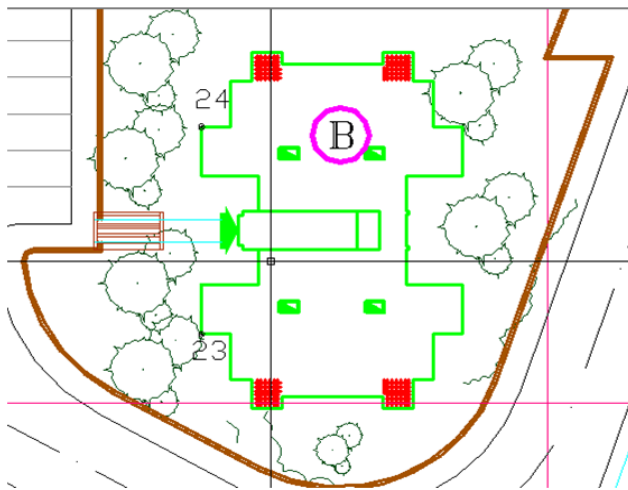**Figure A6. 8: Youth housing Type A2 Ground floor, plan and domestic space**

The South-North Passage to the Eastern entrance

Youth Housing Type A2

South Elevation

East Entrance

East Elevation 'Entrance'

West Elevation

Figure A6. 9: Youth Housing Project – Building type A2: site, design plan, elevations

Youth Housing Plan type B

Building type B consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats in each floor; each flat is (65 sq m) has the following elements: 2 bedrooms, kitchen, a space of guest and living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and a balcony.

Youth Housing Type B, site plan   **East Front**

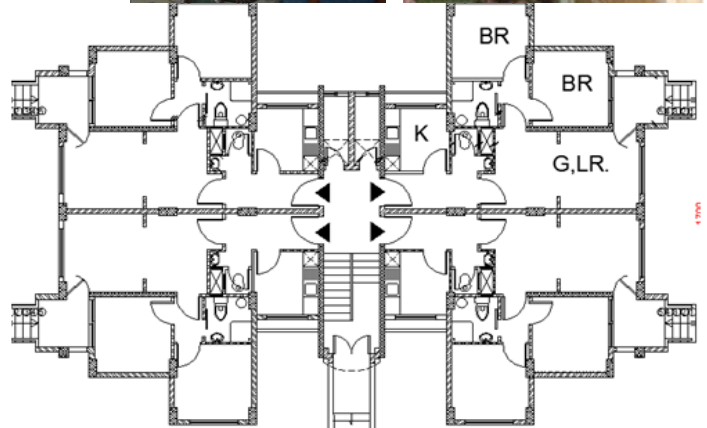**West Elevation 'Entrance'**   **South Elevation**

Figure A6. 10: Youth Housing Project – Type B: site and elevations

Type B Ground Floor

**Youth Housing Type B
Ground Floor**

Type B Fourth Floor

Figure A6. 11: Youth Housing Project Type B, design plan, and domestic space

Youth Housing plan Type C

Building type A consists of 5 storeys, 4 flats in each floor; each flat is (85 or 90 sq m) has the following elements: 1 bedrooms, kitchen, a space of guest and living room, one bathroom, 1 toilet, and a balcony.
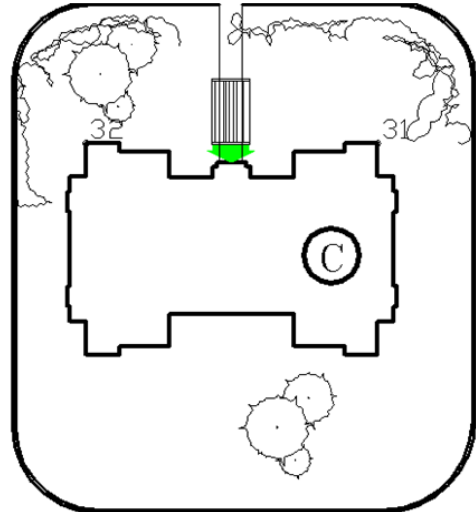

Youth Housing Type C
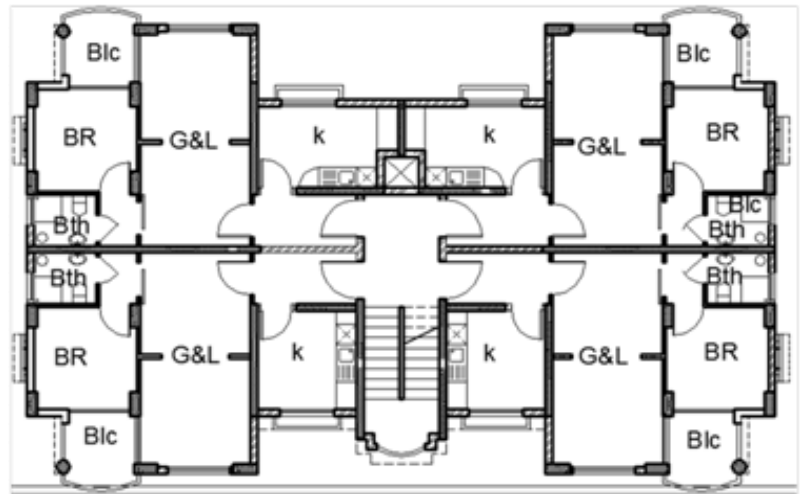
Figure A6. 12: Youth Housing Project – Building type C, site, design plan, elevations
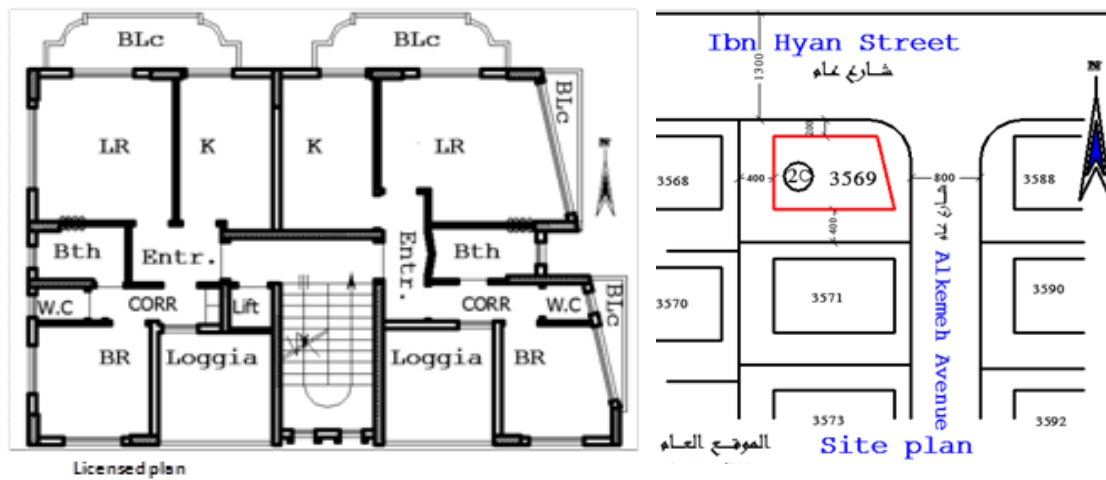
Youth Housing Type C, Second Floor

Figure A6. 13: Youth Housing Project Type C, design plan, and Domestic space

East Elevation   **West Elevation**   **North Elevation**
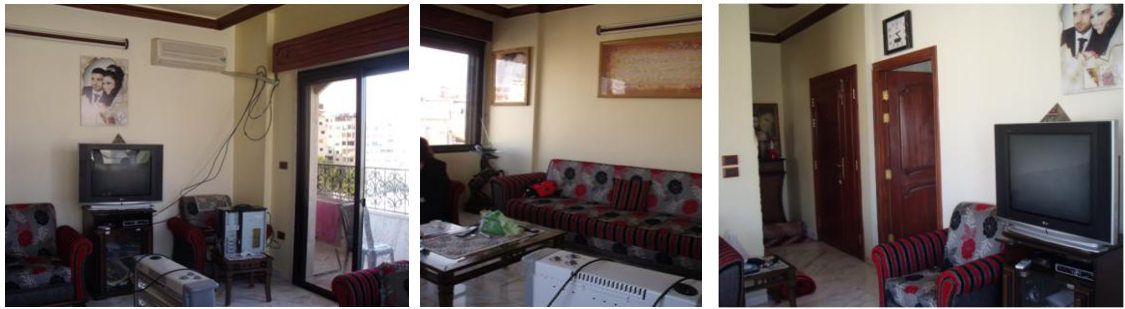

Licensed plan

Figure A6. 14: TUA, Area 2 – Building Type D

Appendix 6.3 Examples of housing in Area 2

Tishreen University NBRH Area 2

Figure A6. 15: Tishreen University Neighbourhood (Area 2) -- General site and perspective
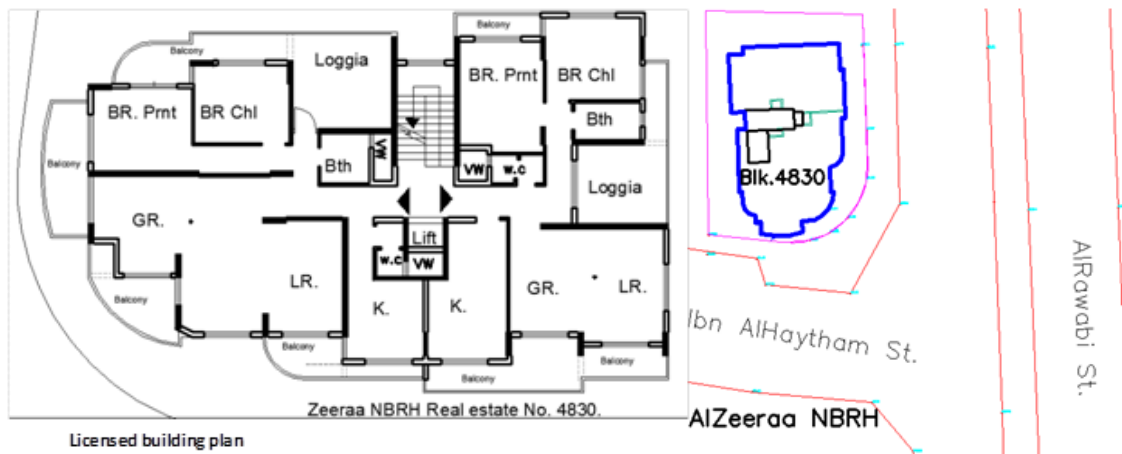
Small-sized space used as guest-living room

Figure A6. 16: Area 2 – Housing use: kitchen space with dining table

South Elevation   West Elevation   South East Elevation

Figure A6. 17: Area 2 – Building type F: site and elevations

Guest-living-dining Space

The Kitchen with dining table & TV

Figure A6. 18: Area 2 – Housing use: guest-living-dining – kitchen with dining table

Figure A6. 19: Area 2 – Building type B
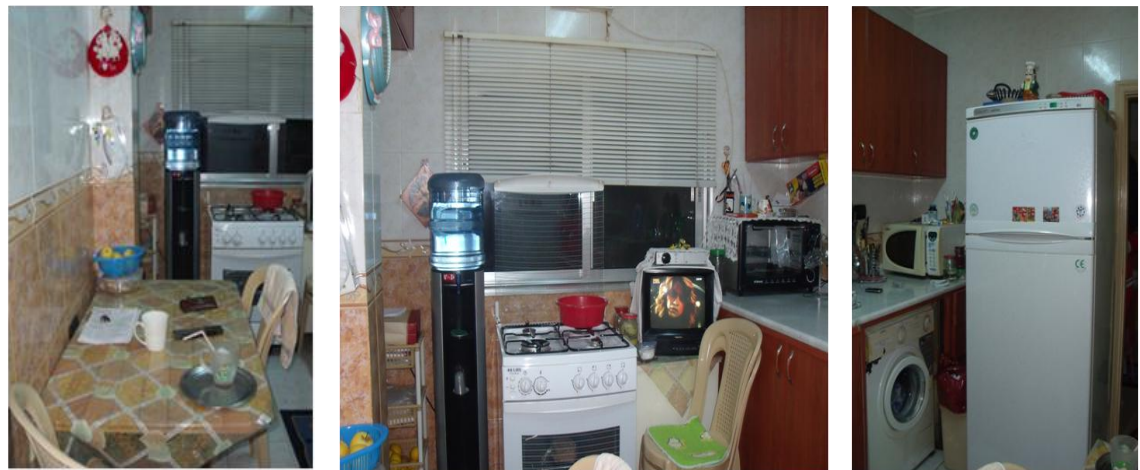
Guest-living-Dining

Figure A6. 20: Area 2 — Housing use and domestic space: kitchen with Table & TV

Appendix 7: Additional material to Chapter 7

Appendix 7.1 Example of food types and meals at different times the day of one of the Syrian households

Tables A7.1, A7.2, and A7.3, present typical meals at different times of the day in a typical Syrian household in Lattakia. These photographs were taken by a member of this household during one week at different meals of the day including snacks between meals. The participant member ensured that other members of his household knew only after all the photographs were taken so as to make it natural and in real everyday context. He then asked their permission to use these photographs in this research. However, the initial plan was to apply this method on 6-10 of the interviewed households, but the situation was unstable in the city of Lattakia at the time of conducting this, and it was difficult to contact the interviewed households who had agreed to participate in the second field work in the in-depth ethnographic observations, which were not conducted because of the unrest in Syria.

Tables A7.1, A7.2 and A7.3 show that the members of the sampled household have **2** main meals: breakfast **(9:15-10:30 AM)** and lunch **(2:30-3:30 PM);** and **3** light meals per day: pre-breakfast snacks (coffee, fruits and sweets), tea after lunch and snacks in the evening **(around 7 PM)** and sandwiches **(9-10 PM).**

	Breakfast or snack	Time	Illustration
Day 1	Coffee and Fruits	8:00 am	
	Fried eggs, black and green olives, butter, Makdous[77] (Pickled stuffed aubergines in pickled in olive oil), cheese (soft and feta); zattar[78](mixed herbs, grains, spices..)	10:30 am	
Day2	Coffee and fruits	8:00 am	
	Fatayer	9:15 am	
Day3	Coffee and fruits	8:00 am	
	Makdous, dry yogurt with olive oil, and tea	9:15am	
Day4	Coffee and fruits	8:00 am	
	Sandwiches	9:15am	

Table A7. 1: Typical meals in Syria at breakfast time, and/or snacks

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[77] Makdous: is a typical Syrian breakfast and snack dish. In autumn most Syrian households prepare it for the whole year. It is baby aubergines stuffed with walnuts, sun-dried red pepper and garlic then pickled in olive oil.

[78] Zaatar is a typical Syria breakfast, dinner and snack dish. It is served with olive oil. Zaatar is made of mixed herbs, spices and grains such as thyme, sumac, cumin, dried chick peas, sesame, salt, and sometimes pistachio is also added. Aleppo is the producer of this food.

Day No.	Lunch	Time	Illustration
Day1	Spaghetti with minced beef and tomato sauce, chicken with vegetables, chips, salad, yogurt, and bread	3:00 pm	
	Tea after lunch	3:30-4 pm	
Day2	Spaghetti and chicken with vegetables from the previous day, Fatayer (small pastry pie with various toppings), and green broad beans, yogurt and bread	2:30 pm	
	Tea after lunch	3-3:30 pm	
Day3	Tea after lunch	3:15 pm	
Day4	Rice with green broad beans, sautéed broad beans, and yogurt	3:30 pm	
	Tea after lunch		

Table A7. 2: Typical meals in Syria at lunch time and/or snacks

Day No.	Dinner	Time	Illustration
Day1	Fruits and sweets	7:00 pm	
	Sandwiches	9 pm	
Day2	Fruits or sweets	7:00 pm	
	Sandwiches	9:30 pm	
Day3	Fruits or sweets	7:00 pm	
	Makdous, cheese, salad and left over from lunch meal: courgette with cooked yogurt, vine leaves stuffed with minced beef and rice. And also tea	10:00 pm	
Day4	Sandwiches	9:30 pm	
	Fruits or sweets	7:00 pm	

Table A7. 3: Typical meals in Syria at dinner time and/or snacks

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