

# USER PREFERENCES IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION TO CONTEMPORARY HOUSING FROM TRADITIONAL HOUSING: THE SOMALIA CASE

Gelenekselden Çağdaş Konutlara Geçiş Sürecinde Kullanıcı Tercihleri: Somali Örneği

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## ABSTRACT

In today's housing, that is being standardized and shaped according to the requirements of contemporary life, some problems are arising due to lack of consideration of basic factors regarding the use and residents. In the process of transition to contemporary from traditional, the pressures of technology and urbanization are coming to the fore, and human factor is being left behind in the development of new settlements and living spaces. Based on this problem in new housing practices, in the study, it was intended to draw attention to "the importance of addressing the process of transition from traditional housing culture to new housing designs in the direction of the preferences of residents". This process was addressed in terms of Somalia pursuant to the scope of the research. It is being thought that this subject is also important for all other developing countries. In the article, initially information was provided regarding Somalia, and the daily habits and cultural characteristics of local community, and traditional housing architecture. Plan and function schemes of traditional and new houses were explained and interpreted by visual data. And in the section forming the main construct of the study, the preferences of Somali residents in the process of transition from traditional housing to new housing were evaluated by survey studies. In conclusion, suggestions were made regarding the planning process of future housing in Somalia. The importance of contemporary space designer's ability to read culture layers that vary among different societies was emphasized in the context of ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability.

**Key Words:** Somali Housing, Traditional Housing, Traditional Culture, Sustainability.

## ÖZET

Çağdaş yaşamın gereksinimlerine göre standartlaştırılan ve şekillenen günümüz konutlarında kullanıma ve kullanıcıya yönelik temel unsurların dikkate alınmaması nedeniyle bazı sorunlar ortaya çıkmaktadır. Gelenekselden çağdaş geçiş sürecinde, yeni yerleşim ve yaşam alanlarının geliştirilmesinde teknoloji ve şehirleşme baskıları ön plana çıkarak insan faktörü unutulmaktadır. Yeni konut uygulamalarındaki bu problemten hareketle çalışmada; 'geleneksel konut kültürü ile yeni konut tasarımları arasındaki geçiş sürecinin kullanıcı tercihleri doğrultusunda ele alınmasının önemi' ne dikkat çekmek istenmiştir. Bu süreç araştırmanın kapsamı gereği Somali özelinde ele alınmıştır. Konunun gelişmekte olan tüm diğer ülkeler için de önem arz ettiği düşünülmektedir. Makalede ilk olarak, Somali ve yerel halkın günlük yaşam alışkanlıkları, kültürel özellikleri ve geleneksel konut mimarisi hakkında bilgi aktarımı yapılmıştır. Geleneksel ve yeni konutlara ait plan ve fonksiyon şemaları görsel verilerle açıklanarak yorumlanmıştır. Çalışmanın ana kurgusunu oluşturan bölümde ise, Somalili kullanıcılarının geleneksel konutlardan yeni konutlara geçiş sürecine yönelik tercihleri anket çalışmaları ile değerlendirilmiştir. Sonuçta, gelecekteki Somali konutlarının planlama sürecine yönelik öneriler getirilmiştir. Çağdaş mekân tasarımcılarının farklı toplumlara göre değişkenlik gösteren kültürel katmanları okuyabilmesinin önemi; ekolojik, ekonomik, sosyal ve kültürel sürdürülebilirlik bağlamında vurgulanmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Somali Konutu, Geleneksel Konut, Geleneksel Kültür, Sürdürülebilirlik

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Architecture, the art of organizing living spaces, plays a role in the formation of a favorable environment considering the relationships between human and their surrounding. This field of art, which has great importance for life and for the society, is gradually turning to a standard and technical practice of design today, and this circumstance is especially affecting the housing architecture. In this practice, where main objective is to serve people, it is a must to concentrate on people while generating new solutions due to change even if such generation is a necessity of the current time. Traditional housing architecture may be defined as an architectural product arising as the result of solutions proposed for meeting the sheltering need in the direction of society's culture of life, and environmental factors. Such housing, that emerge depending on the society's common beliefs and life styles as the result of relations of human, culture and nature, has been developed not by the professional designers and constructors, but by the local owners and masters. The process of change in traditional housing arises depending on various factors. While innovations due to new technologies in materials and construction systems are the foremost among these, the differentiation of users' demands by the change of social structure is also another factor affecting the process of change. Today, the positive and negative aspects of this process are being discussed by both the users, and the designers and the practitioners as in each change, and they are being the subjects of current literature. It is emphasized by Bilgiç (2008) that this process of change, faced by each developing society, is directing the life styles through affecting the individuals of the relevant society by different accelerations, and that the qualitative change of housing is causing loss of architectural identity. In a different study, it is said that intense development due to urbanization effaces the genuine and local character of present patterns, and besides that the connection of new settlement styles with the environment and human psychology is very low (Aytis & Polatkan, 2010). If we extend the subject a bit more, and address it in terms of sustainability, the modern concept of today, it is specified by Kohler (1999) that a sustainable design is required to be defined by its ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability dimensions. In this context, it can be said the strategies in housing design, which ensure human health and comfort, and which endeavor for the preservation of social and cultural values, may contribute to the principle of sustainability.

As the result of rapid population increase in the world, the settlements, and accordingly the concepts of traditional housing, contemporary housing, or social housing are coming to the fore gradually more often especially in developing countries. In the new housing practices, examples that transform the traditional housing culture, which arise by the experience and knowledge of years, to a culture of shelter are emerging. The social dimensions of problems to be caused by such housing with regards to different beliefs, customs and traditions are being ignored. In the development of new settlements and living spaces, the pressures of technology and urbanization are coming to the fore, and human factor is being left behind. This study was actualized with the purpose of questioning the insensible relationships between traditional housing culture and the new housing designs, and revealing the importance of addressing the housing problem in the world in this transition process by its qualitative dimensions as well as its quantitative dimensions. This process was discussed as being addressed in terms of Somalia pursuant to the scope of the research. It is being thought that this subject is also important for all other developing countries.

Just like in each community, a traditional house is more than a house for the Somalis. It represents themselves, their culture, their beliefs, their social lives, and many other aspects of their cultural values. For Somalis, some traditional houses symbolize their identity as a whole, like the "Aqal", a nomadic domed portable house. Although they are a conservative society which resists changes in traditional culture, they seem to be sharing the same fate with the other societies when it comes to architecture. In cities such as Mogadishu, the capital city of the Country, and Kismayo, Hargeisa, and Garowe, new housing projects with contemporary designs recently started to be built. Although such projects improved the old way of building a house, the new building materials and technology as well as architectural design are being imported. For the sake of modernization, such projects left no space for the traditional Somali way of construction.

The country is trying to develop despite facing a severe negative economic condition, and the people of Somalia are struggling for owning a house as other societies of developed and developing countries. As Coolen (2015:74) said, *“A house is by far the most expensive item of consumption for many people, and the decision of opting a particular dwelling is the most crucial budget allocation for many households.”*

The aim of this study can be summarized under three main headings as “determining the preferences of Somali residents regarding the traditional Somali housing and the new contemporary housing”, “determining the important features and factors affecting their preferences”, and “obtaining information that can be used in making an effective housing plan for the future generation”.

### 1.1.Methodology

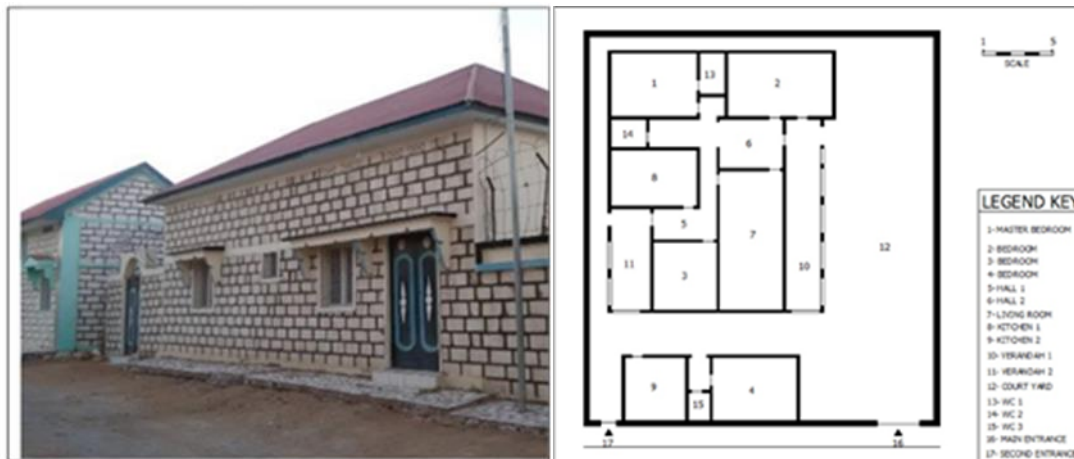
In this research, for having a reliable and effective data, it was interviewed with 50 Somalis consisting of 32 women, and 18 men. It is important to note that the participants were selected randomly. They were of different age groups, different educational levels, and different income levels. For having reliable results, initially, the objective of the interview was clearly explained to each participant. And in order to make sure that each question was being fully understood, the questions were translated to the participants' language of Somali, and architectural floor plans covering images were shown to facilitate the understanding of each question by the participants. The questions of the survey were predetermined by structured response choices (yes/no). First, questions regarding the determination of the participants' levels of satisfaction from traditional housing, and regarding the determination of factors affecting the same were asked, and secondly, questions on the participants' opinions with respect to contemporary housing were asked. And in the final question, it was asked for them to make a clear selection between the two housing groups. The measurement of numerical data, obtained by each question, was clarified by percentage graphs. The results were discussed, and suggestions were made.

The main drawbacks of the current research may be summarized in two categories: The first one was the inability of access to genuine sources with respect to Somalia and Somalia architecture due to damage of archive records as the result of civil war that occurred in 1991 in the country. Therefore, there was the possibility of unreliability of sources in which the data was generalized, or interpreted incorrectly. As specified in the annual report of UN-Habitat (2008: 21) *“...some statistics continue to be widely quoted even when they are substantially out of date or their reliability is otherwise dubious...”*. The other main drawback of this research was that all the participants of the research were living in traditional houses since the contemporary houses were new to the country. Only a few of the participants had the experience of living in contemporary houses for a short period.

## 2. THE SOMALI HOUSES

### 2.1. The Traditional Somali House

In the field of architecture, housing has always played an important role in terms of defining the cultural values and beliefs, and providing a sense of belonging and self-esteem. For Somalis, their houses play a very important role in their lives, and in addition, the Somali people consider home as an oasis far from the outside world, and as a place where families are free in living as they wish. Both interiors, and exterior spaces of Somali traditional houses reflect and support their family structures, statuses, social relations, culture, traditions, religion, and their sense of self, namely their identity (Hadjiyanni, 2007: 23). Since each society's traditional houses have peculiar characteristics, in the case of Somali traditional houses, the house is an oasis that is isolated from the outside world. It is a place where families can freed from the interruptions of strangers. This concept of a Somali house is reflected architecturally by means of enhancing the perceptions of enclosure, sanctuary, and security through interior spaces that resemble the safety of a womb (Hadjiyanni, 2007: 25). (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** The Traditional Somali House; Exterior Façade - Floor Plan. (Author, 2019).

The traditional Somali housing consists of vernacular architecture constructed in line with the climate of the relevant region. All these houses have common characteristics. These characteristics are all interconnected and complementing each other, and they collectively form the Somali consideration of a home as an oasis, and if one of the four fundamental factors is missing, the context and the idea of a “Somali house” would be disrupted. The fundamental factors considered in Somali houses may be listed as privacy, separation of genders, security, and cultural aesthetics.

**Privacy** is the first and main factor of traditional Somali houses. For instance, home is the main and the primary place of social, religion and cultural practices of women in Somali culture. The issue of “privacy” has a central and sacred role for them. Somali women cover themselves by veil both within the house and outside the house against strangers and men. And for men, privacy is important for protecting the elements being under their responsibility such as the whole family since they are the leaders of their families.

**Separation of genders** is the second main fundamental factor of the traditional Somali houses. It is directly affected from the culture, tradition, and above all, religion, which is Islam in their case. Children are separated from each other as they reach the age of six (6), and this circumstance creates a need for more rooms. The rooms of traditional Somali houses are divided as a room for male children, a room for female children, a room for male guests, a room for female guests, and the master room. This makes it mandatory to have up to five (5) rooms in traditional Somali houses.

**Security** is the third main fundamental factor of the traditional Somali houses. When the historical development of the country is examined, we can express that the security need is the consequence of two factors. The first one is that the country has always been in conflict with neighboring countries and other countries in the historical process due to its strategic and geographical location. In 1960, the country obtained its independence after being freed from colonial system, and 30 years later in 1991, it faced an everlasting civil war as the result of central government’s collapse. It can be said that spatial security need arose due to that unstable status. The second factor is the cross-cultural conflicts that the people of Somalia experience among themselves. For instance, in rural life, the “pastoralists are known as great warriors (Arnoldi, 1984; 28)”. They kill other pastoralists, or their herds when there is a dispute. The Somali people have faced security problems throughout their history, and this has been directly reflected on their architecture. Due to such reasons, darker interiors, and higher courtyard walls don’t just create a private space, but also creates spaces where one may feel secure. Courtyard is the main element of the plan schemes in traditional housing. The exterior surfaces of courtyard walls, of about 3 meters high bonded with stone, are coated with a slippery material for preventing the climbing of strangers, and measure is taken against exogenous threats by laying wire fence on top of the walls (Figure 1).

**Cultural aesthetics** is among the basic characteristics of interiors of traditional Somalia style housing. In general, the phenomenon of cultural aesthetics is interpreted as follows by Berleant (1991);



*“The cultural aesthetic is the characteristic sensory, conceptual, and ideational matrix that constitutes the perceptual environment of a culture. It encompasses the typical qualities and configurations of color, sound, texture, light, movement, smell, taste, pattern, space, temporal sensibility, and size in juxtaposition with the human body, and the influence of customary patterns of belief and practice on the creation and apprehension of these qualities.”*

For the people of Somalia, who are very attached to their culture, the elements that remind their own culture, traditions and beliefs are very important. Hadjiyanni, among the ones making researches with respect to housing in Somalia, draws attention to “the use of shadow and darkness, smell, and decorative objects” while defining the interiors. While creating private spaces in these houses, separating the spaces only with walls is not enough, and controlling the light that enters through the openings like doors and windows is also very important. These openings are covered with layers of curtains, so that a shaded interior space is created for maintaining the privacy of the inner space. “Unsi”, which is extensively being used by the people of Somalia, reflects cultural aesthetics in terms of smell, and women burn it to announce their presence at home, and the diasporas burn it to let visitors know that Somali people are living there. Unsi is a good symbol of Somali traditional houses in terms of smell, and burning it gives a sense of connectedness. The use of decorative objects is very common in Somali houses as stated in Hadjiyanni’s article:

*“All of the families we visited had similar decorative themes to adorn walls and tabletops. Prominent objects were handicrafts from Somalia, such as milk containers, wedding baskets, drums, baskets, combs, and rugs. Another theme included religious items, like framed excerpts of the Koran and metal plates engraved with Islamic poetry and verses. As visible and tangible reminders of the past and of difference, these objects were teaching tools that could be used to transfer the value of lost places to children. Meanwhile, for adult Somalis, physical manifestations of difference help them form identity and connectedness” (Hadjiyanni, 2007; 20).*

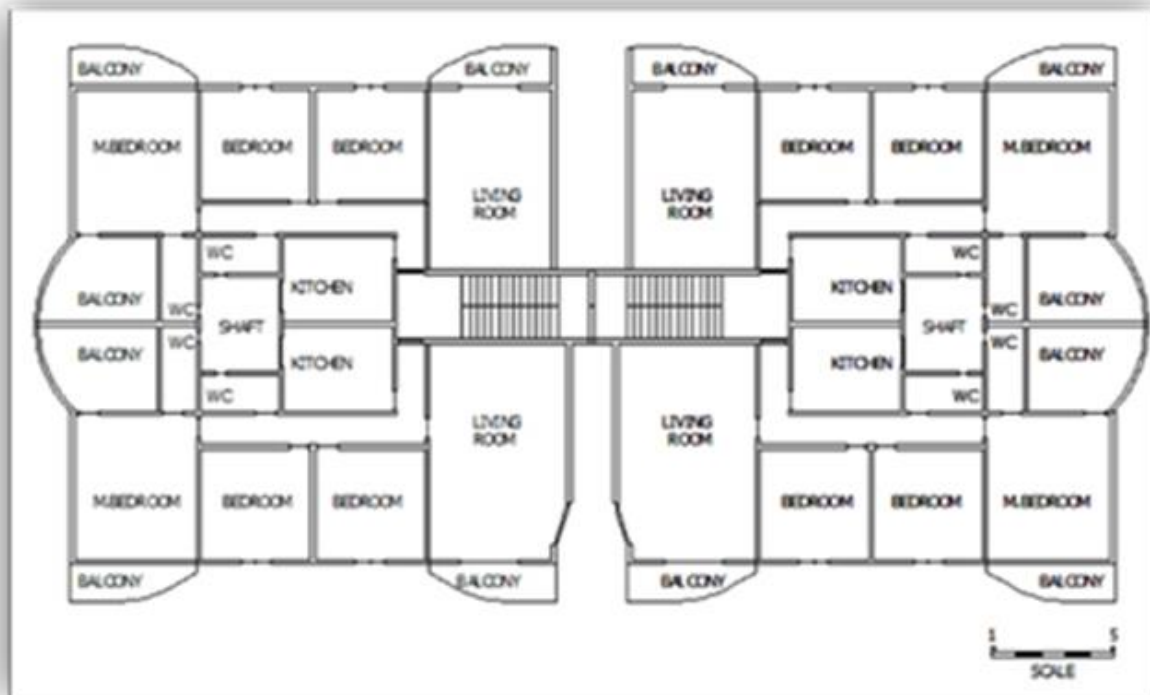
“All the traditional Somali houses we visited were adorned mainly with handicrafts from Somalia, such as milk containers, wedding baskets, drums, baskets, combs, and rugs, and with religious themed items such as framed excerpts of the Koran and metal plates engraved with Islamic poetry and verses. These were being used to remind the children the value of lost places while reminding the adults their identity, and making them connected.

## 2.2. The Contemporary Houses

Somalia’s construction environment constantly experienced new kinds of architecture along its history. And as one goes through the history of Somalia; Arab, Indian, Chinese, and European architectural influences can be read in the buildings of its large urban historic areas such as Shangani, and Xamar-Weyne districts of Mogadishu. Although the modern movement in architecture evolved in Europe around World War I, the idea of new was always present in each era of Europe’s history. Later on, the countries of the world got close to each other, and the phenomenon of globalization was born. The world became interconnected, and for Somalia, the outside world was constantly evolving and was in a rapid change, and it had a direct effect on the society of Somalia which was previously self-sufficient. Apart from the construction environment, globalization affected everything from the utensils used in the rural areas to the food culture of the society in general.

The new buildings are now present only in large urban areas, especially where wealthy people live. These buildings seem to be the dream of everyone in the society, and as it is hard for everyone to afford them, it is being expected for them to be used extensively in future. For this reason, it seems like they will be effective on the future construction environment. These kinds of houses are new, and they are present at more concentrated urban areas of the country. Mogadishu made them visible in the beginning since it is the most concentrated and largest city of the country. These buildings may have only one positive impact for Somali society which is their ability to prevent the city sprawl, and to have the population concentrated at one area. These buildings are bold by their big, fancy and empty balconies that no one uses, and by their wide and transparent doors and windows that do not support the cultural privacy. These buildings are discouraging the Somali way of neighborhood, and kinship

relations by blocking everyone into their small zones separated from the rest of the society. The architecture has been imported directly without considering its effects. And it has a negative impact on the culture and tradition. These houses are not the kind of houses that may be deemed as “home” by the Somali people. They are forcing the culture to change by changing the architecture that a society is used to. In the new multi-storey buildings, dining room is an open space that is located between the kitchen and the living room as connecting the two spaces together without separation. And this has no place in the Somali culture as men eat together in the living room, and as women go to their rooms when there is a guest in the house. The presence of these mid-spaces for the family to eat together is a direct violation of the social hierarchy (Figure 2).



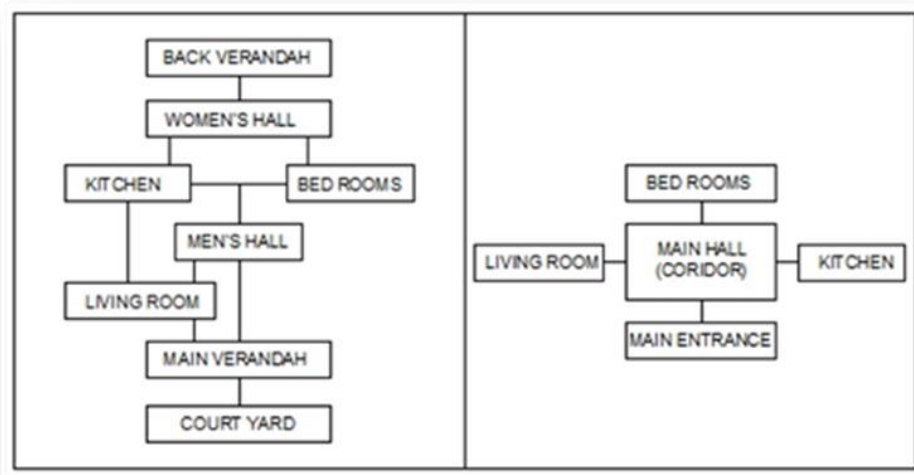
**Figure 2.** The New Contemporary House - Floor Plan. (Author, 2019).

These buildings also introduce transparent façades, transparent wide doors and windows. Large open balconies are designed for socializing with an intention of replacing the function of courtyards. But such transparency, and balconies violate three of the four main factors considered in the “home” perception of Somali people. They violate the factors of privacy, security, and the separation of genders. Another issue regarding these buildings is the lack of adaptation to the climate of the country.

### 3. COMPARISON of THE TRADITIONAL and THE CONTEMPORARY HOUSING

In the function scheme in Fig. 3.A, the interrelation of volumes in traditional housing is seen. Accordingly, it can be said that living spaces are being designed as reflecting the culture, belief and traditions of the family, and that characteristics such as security and privacy, shaping the Somali housing architecture, are able to be read from the scheme.

In Fig. 3.B, the function scheme of new housing is seen, and adherence to traditional pattern is little if any. In the plan scheme, it wasn't concerned about reflecting the characteristics of traditional housing on the new plan scheme.



**Figure 3.** A. Function Scheme of The Traditional House.

B. Function Scheme of The Contemporary House.

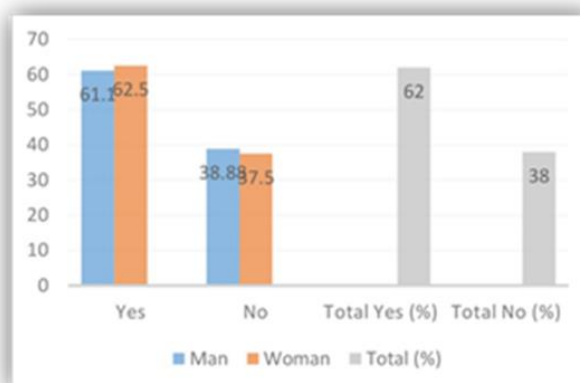
However, generation of new solutions, to be introduced in the process of transition from traditional to contemporary, by making “preliminary studies” considering the cultures, acts and preferences of residents, with a comprehension that can be adapted, should be deemed required and significant. For this reason, survey, intending to reveal the housing usage preferences of people of Somalia, was conducted in the study.

### 3.1 Interview About Somali Residents' Housing Preferences

#### 3.1.1. Questions and findings about the current houses.

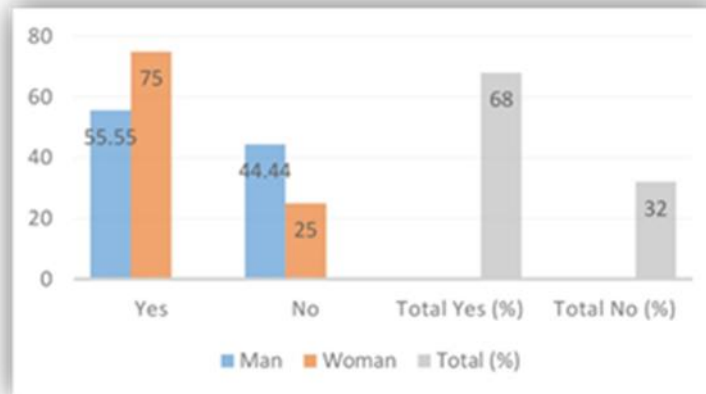
In the first section of the survey, questions were directed to 50 participants regarding the current housing. By the first question, their general level of satisfaction was questioned, and then, sufficiency of characteristics of security and privacy, shaping the Somali housing architecture, within the scope of current housing was asked. “It was interviewed with 50 Somalis consisting of 32 women and 18 men, and all these participants were living in the traditional houses provided in the function scheme in Figure 3.A.”

•Satisfaction from current houses: The participants of the interview were asked whether they are satisfied with their current houses, or not: 11 men out of 18, and 20 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 7 men out of 18, and 12 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. While 31 participants out of 50 specified that they were satisfied with the current housing through the response of “yes”, 19 participants out of 50 specified their dissatisfaction through the response of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 4).



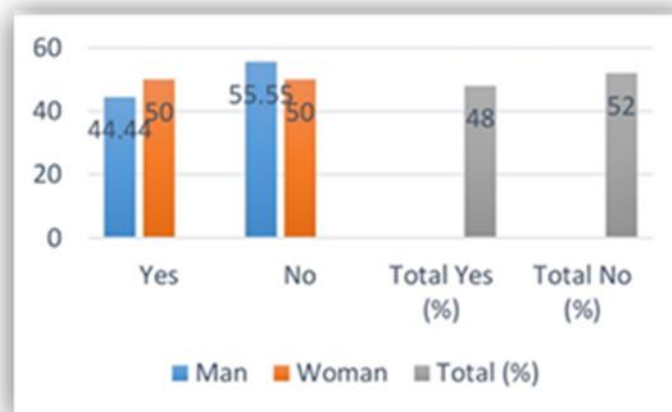
**Figure 4.** Current House Satisfaction (%).

•Security, and Current Houses: The participants of the interview were asked whether they deem their current houses as sufficiently secure, or not: 10 men out of 18, and 24 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 8 men out of 18, and 8 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. While 34 participants out of 50 specified that they were satisfied with the security in their current houses through the response of “yes”, 16 participants out of 50 specified that they were not satisfied with the security in their current houses through the response of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 5).



**Figure 5.** Security, and Current (Traditional) Houses (%).

•Family Privacy, and Current Houses: The participants of the interview were asked whether their current house is supporting their family privacy, or not: 8 men out of 18, and 16 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 10 men out of 18, and 16 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. While 24 participants out of 50 specified that they were satisfied with the privacy in their current houses through the response of “yes”, 16 participants out of 50 specified that they were not satisfied with the privacy in their current houses through the response of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Privacy, and Current (Traditional) Houses (%).

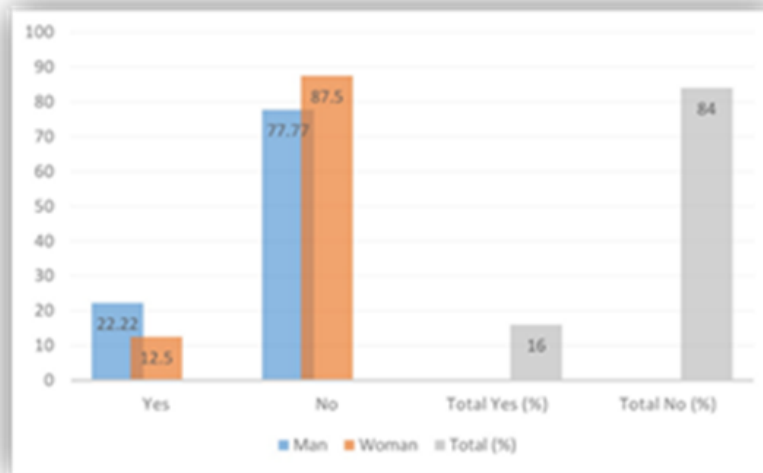
### 3.1.2. Questions and findings about the contemporary (new) houses.

In this section of the survey, questions with respect to the security and privacy of contemporary (new) housing were directed to the participants. And then, “Participants were asked whether they would choose to live forever in contemporary (new) houses, or not”

•Security, and Contemporary Houses: Participants were asked whether they deem the new houses as secure enough, or not. 4 men out of 18, and 4 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 14 men out of 18, and 28 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. While 8 participants out of 50 specified that they were satisfied with the security in the new housing through the response of

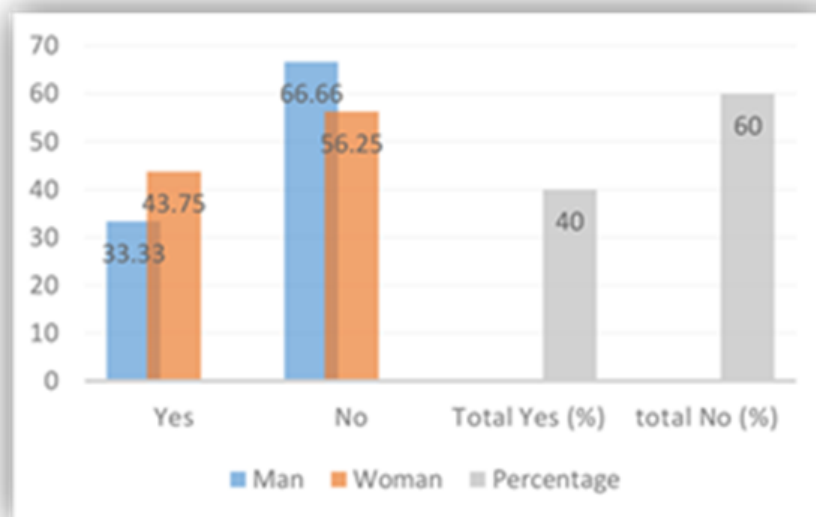


“yes”, 42 participants out of 50 specified that they were not satisfied with the security in the new housing through the response of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 7).



**Figure 7.** Security, and Contemporary (New) Houses (%).

•Family Privacy, and Contemporary Houses: Participants were asked whether the contemporary houses are supporting their family privacy, or not. 6 men out of 18, and 14 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 12 men out of 18, and 18 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. While 20 participants out of 50 specified that they were satisfied with the family privacy in the new housing through the response of “yes”, 30 participants out of 50 specified that they were not satisfied with the family privacy in the new housing through the response of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 8).



**Figure 8.** Family Privacy, and Contemporary (New) Houses (%)

•Desire to Live in Contemporary Houses: Participants were asked whether they would choose to live forever in the contemporary houses, or not. 5 men out of 18, and 6 women out of 32 answered this question as “yes”, and 13 men out of 18, and 26 women out of 32 answered this question as “no”. In total, 11 out of 50 provided the answer of “yes”, and 39 out of 50 provided the answer of “no”. The percentage rates of numerical results are seen in the following graph (Figure 9).

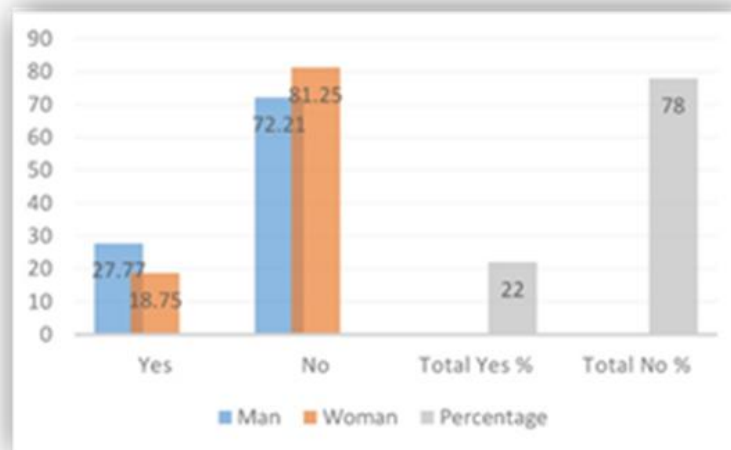


Figure 9. Desire to Live in The Contemporary (New) Houses (%).

### 3.1.3. Question about the preferences of the Somali residents regarding traditional housing, and the new housing.

With the purpose of having the participants clearly reveal their preferences, it was asked, as a final question, in which type of housing they would have wanted to live the most.

•Preferred Type of House: Participants were asked which type of house they would love to live in. As seen in Figure 10, more than 75% of the people of Somalia specified that they would have wanted to live in traditional houses.

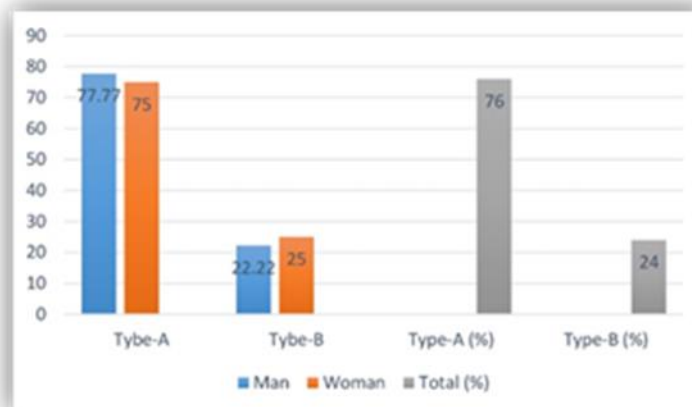


Figure 10. Preferred Type of House (%).

### 3.2. Discussion About The Interview Results

While evaluating the results, initially it is required to have an opinion regarding the family structure, beliefs, cultures and traditions of Somali society for generalizing the answers of participants. For this reason, social characteristics were briefly addressed in the “Traditional Somali Housing” section of the study. In the results of the survey, despite the answers were evaluated separately for male and female participants, difference at an extent that might affect the results was not observed between the rates. For this reason, the results were addressed over the total percentage rates. First, the satisfaction of participants regarding their current houses was asked. When we address the results considering that all the participants were living at traditional houses as also specified previously, it is being observed that the participants were satisfied with their houses with a rate higher than 60%. On the other hand, when their desire to live in the new houses was asked, 22% of them provided the answer of “yes”. Accordingly, it may be concluded that possibility of opting for traditional houses rather than new houses was higher among the participants, but that they also wanted to experience the new

architecture, and that both genders were in consensus on this subject. In questions by which the suitability of houses for family privacy was questioned, while the participants were considering the traditional housing as suitable for family privacy with a rate of 48%, that rate decreased to 40% with respect to new housing. At this point, answers indicating the insufficiency of traditional housing in terms of family privacy draw attention to the importance attached to family privacy in Somali society. And considering the answers regarding security, while traditional housing was being deemed secure at a rate of 68%, that rate decreased to 16% in terms of new housing. It is being observed that new housing was being deemed insecure at a rate higher than 80%. In here, it is being thought that factors such as multi storey structure of new housing, elevator requirement, safety of children, earthquake etc. as well as the extravert spatial features of new housing were effective. With the purpose of having the participants of the survey clearly reveal their preferences, it was asked, as a final question, in which type of housing they would have wanted to live the most. By the answers, it is being observed that traditional housing was being preferred with a rate of 76%, and that new housing was being preferred with a rate of 24% due to the desire of experiencing it. This result is supporting the data obtained from the previous questions. The findings revealed that the people of Somalia may be willing for innovations, but in the process of transition to contemporary housing from traditional housing that it is required to revise the new plan schemes through arrangements conforming to the beliefs, culture and traditions of Somalis.

As the numeric findings obtained from this survey study are providing a general view regarding the housing usage preferences of Somalis, it seems possible to obtain more detailed results through different analyses to be made in the direction of age, profession, income etc. factors of participants.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

As the duty of architecture is to create livable structured environments for the humanity, it is required to question the factors dependant on the users' culture during the design of space, and to examine the design of space in the context of the relationship of human and environment. According to Harvey, the space has a social dimension which shapes the human, and which is being shaped by the human (Harvey,2003).

In this study, the emotions such as concern, indecision etc. experienced by the Somalis in the process of transition to new housing from traditional housing were evaluated and tried to be interpreted in the direction of findings obtained from the survey conducted on 50 citizens of Somalia. In here, the subject that is required to be overstressed is the importance of shaping of the space by the society as expressed by Harvey. The people of Somalia are not familiar with the new housing designed and constructed by a foreigner. However, traditional houses were constructed by masters who were familiar with the cultures and living habits of the residents. Interest of local public in new housing, but their concern regarding living such houses should be deemed as an extremely natural and humane behavior. Moreover, the subject of whether they will be able to adapt to such spaces or not when they begin to live in new houses by the pressure of their will against the unknown is also creating a question mark.

Based on the results of the survey, the participants were willing to adhere to their traditional spaces as well as willing to experience the contemporary architecture. In this direction, it seems obligatory to find an intersection point that will enable the people of Somalia maintain their habits arising from their living cultures instead of "standard housing plan schemes" introduced by the new architectural comprehension, in other words it seems obligatory for the new designs to reach to a conformity between traditional and contemporary. For this reason, it is required to carry out the transition process with a participatory approach through an organization in which the residents are also being included in the new design processes. This participatory process will clarify the emotions of curiosity, concern, indecision etc. of residents by strengthening the social dimension of the space required to be had. Moreover, in new architecture, use of a language which is able to communicate with the society will contribute to the maintenance of cultural values of the relevant society.

As adapting to contemporary systems and developing technologies seems to be inevitable in new constructions, when the subject is the design of living spaces, it is required for the designer to consider the social processes, in other words to be able to read the cultural layers that vary among different societies. In the processes of change and transformation, a house, which is not designed as to meet the different requirements of different societies, will be waste of both resources and manpower. According to today's contemporary design comprehension, a sustainable design is required to be defined with the ecological, economic, social and cultural sustainability dimensions.

In the context of this study, fundamental factors of traditional Somali housing are essential parts of their system of beliefs, social identity and culture. And it highlights the importance of addressing the relationship between cultural beliefs, behavior and design while considering the housing issues.

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