NAVIGATING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY BETWEEN TRANS-DISCIPLINARITY AND LIFE STYLE THEORIES: THE CASE OF THE GULF STATES

Ashraf M. Salama

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Abstract
The typical approach of affordable housing research and practice views cost reduction as one single determinant. Other crucial factors such as lifestyles of the targeted populations, people satisfaction of their current houses and residential environments, and their aspirations and preferences in future houses are always oversimplified or superficially addressed. Therefore, the objective of this paper is to argue for a comprehensive approach for affordable housing practices in the Gulf States. The approach is based on a new paradigm of research: trans-disciplinarity; a form of inquiry that crosses the boundaries of different disciplines. Brief notes to highlight affordable housing issues in the Gulf States are outlined.

An argument on the impact of trans-disciplinary thinking on understanding affordable housing is developed, then is placed within the perspective of how lifestyle theories and their underlying concepts including place attachment, appropriation, visual preferences, and people satisfaction, can be integrated into a comprehensive investigatory process. In turn, a framework of inquiry is developed while reflected on affordable housing knowledge types. A translation of the framework into a survey tool is conceptualized. The tool is introduced in the form of a questionnaire to be implemented in the context of the Gulf States. The testing of the questionnaire—in the context of the city of Jeddah— as a tool of inquiry reveals its validity, corroborates the value of integrating different knowledge types into affordable housing practices, and accents the value of incorporating lifestyle theories as a new form of transdisciplinary knowledge necessary for affordable housing research and practice.

Keywords
Lifestyle theories; trans-disciplinarity; Gulf States; affordable housing

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