



Call for Papers  
Open House International

## Housing Affordability, Quality, and Life Style Theories

Special  
Theme  
Issue

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The issue of housing affordability is widespread worldwide. Governments have responded to this issue through ways of cost reductions in order to make homes available at a price that a user is able to pay. However, this area of concern has been a permanent preoccupation of housing technocrats consumed in the quality and location of the housing unit, often overlooking other socio-cultural and psychological dimensions adhered to it. Housing quality is a composite good with a variety of attributes, including: structural condition, standard of services, amenities, location, usable space and occupancy standards. It can, at the same time be laden with physical, economic and cultural dimensions. The user assigns a pattern of preferences (spatial, social and visual) to the housing unit that corresponds to the degree of acceptability which are set within the context of housing quality and life-style preferences. Houses are, thus not only art forms or machines to live in but also goods with immense economic and social value. People purposively (or un-purposively) use the externally defined meanings of 'housing' to situate themselves with others who share their values and life-styles in asserting their social status and identity. Understanding how these issues of affordability may relate to people's preferences and lifestyles mandates an understanding of housing quality and lifestyle theories.

Traditionally, the terms affordable housing, design and the life-style preferences of the low income population have been seen at best, in isolation and at worst, contradicting each other. In essence, measures to provide affordable housing ignores the fundamental principle that housing comes with the standard bundle of services and underappreciates the lifestyle and cultural values of the targeted population. Recognition of the impact of life style theories on housing quality and affordability is therefore an emerging phenomenon that deserves a considerable research and a critical conceptualisation. Increasingly in developing world, this has manifested in the suburban development in major cities through developers selling the 'western dream' that embodies a new set of housing quality, housing design and life-style preferences and albeit the cost. This rides on the notion that housing today signifies a unique expression of the chosen life-style, one's pride and sensibilities. The advent of globalisation accompanied by expanding middle class has accentuated this form of 'western-romanticism' which is increasingly defining the new 'cultural preferences' of people that need not necessarily align with local preferences on spaces, materials and built-form or people's affordability level. Such processes are altering the historical and semiotic way we viewed the issue of housing affordability. Affordability as a concept has thus become more complex now than ever and challenges the way affordability was seen and defined solely through quantifiable numbers or the cost cutting exercise. Perhaps 'Affordability' has to be seen more holistically combining housing production process, the product and the cultural adherence and expressions of the users. The worsening housing affordability problems over the years in tandem with failure of government policies makes it imperative that alternative approaches and possibilities are explored. It is a complex, interdisciplinary query that needs an interdisciplinary approach to answer.

### Key Dates

Interested scholars, academics, and practitioners are invited to submit expression of interest to the guest editors.

**February 15, 2010**

Call for Papers

**April 30, 2010:**

Expression of Interest and Submission of Extended Abstracts.

**May 30, 2010**

Notification of Selected Papers for Possible Inclusion

**September 15, 2010**

Submission of Full Papers

**October 30, 2010**

Notification of the Refereeing Process

**January 15, 2011**

Submission of Final Revised Papers

**September 1, 2011**

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