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Overcrowding and Adequate Housing: The Potential of Adaptability

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Abstract : Adequate housing has been a widely discussed theme in academic circles related to low-cost housing, whereas its physical features are easy to deal with, overcrowding (related to social, cultural and economic aspects) is still ambiguous, particularly regarding the set of indicators that can accurately reflect and measure it. This paper develops research on low-cost housing models for developing countries and what is the best method to embed overcrowding as an important parameter for adaptability. A critical review of international overcrowding indicators and their application in two developing countries, Cape Verde and Angola, is presented. The several rationales and the constraints for an accurate assessment of overcrowding are considered, namely baseline data (statistics), which can induce misjudgments, as well as social and cultural factors (such as personal choices of residents). This paper proposes a way to tackle overcrowding through housing adaptability, considering factors such as physical flexibility, functional ambiguity, and incremental expansion schemes. Moreover, a case-study is presented to establish a framework for the theoretical application of the proposed approach.

Keywords : adaptive housing, low cost housing, overcrowding, housing model
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