

The Effect of Benefits and Barriers of Affordable Housing on the Perceptions of Homeowners in Community Land Trust Program in St Minver, & Brambleside St Teath in Cornwall, England

Mina Elsie Louis Udom

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Rivers State University

Abstract: This study investigated the effect of the benefits and barriers of affordable housing on the perceptions of homeowners in St Minver and Brambleside Community Land Trust, Cornwall, England. The methodology adopted was the qualitative methodology. The study addressed the barriers as well as the benefitsevident in affordable housing in the Community Land Trust (CLT) and the extent to which it impacted on the perceptions of homeowners. In-depth interviews were carried out on homeowners of the community. Findings revealed economic benefits such as increased economic improved living standard, and economic barriers such the costs associated with the program; social benefits such as increased openness to social opportunities,, and social barriers such as poor communication and understanding between the council and other regulatory bodies and the members of the community, environmental benefits such as strategic location and the access it affords community members relevant socio-economic set-ups, and environmental barriers such as geographical space limitations. In conclusion it was stated that the housing affordability program offers a mix of advantages with regards to employment, mutual support, collaboration and site location, and each also offers a mix of disadvantages with respect to poor funding, prices of the sites, geographical space boundaries and also poor communication and conflicts of interest

Keywords: Housing affordability, Community Land Trust, benefits, barriers, homeowners

Date of Submission: 06-07-2019

Date of acceptance: 23-07-2019

I. Introduction

Housing is seen as an integral part of providing shelter, safety and self-worth; it's an issue viewed as important the world over with a primary goal and focus in ensuring that everyone is deserving of a decent home and a suitable living environment(Sohmer, 2010).The challenge for affordability in the UK is regarded by Whitehead (2011)as a result of rural gentrification, and central focus of housing development within the urban centers. In contrast, this is seen as reflection of income shortage, attributable to rise in housing costs at a rate higher than income growth levels(Davis, 1997). The different discourse on affordability is further reflected in the role of urban planning, identified as the tool for securing affordable housing (Whitehead, 2011); but, in reality , the exclusionary zoning planning regulations as applied in the US planning system are seen as a threat to low income households, where developments are beneficial to high income earners through low density housing typologies, creating the need for inclusionary zoning regulations where housing developments are to include some amount of affordable housing(Whitehead, 2011).

Community Land Trusts are regarded as key vehicles in local communities that support affordable housing delivery by bridging the gap in housing shortages (Lubell 2007), which in turn helps to reduce homelessness.This is a critical issue perceived as the consequence of housing market dynamics, housing and welfare policy(Rossi, 1992) characterized by lack of decent homes, a restricted access to legal rights to homes, high house prices, and high mortgage deposits in home purchase, thus making housing out of reach for low and middle income families(Shelter England 2016).Extant literature (Dunn, 2009) explored the view of lack of affordable housing, being a contributor to social exclusion and lack of community cohesion.

Recently, Moore (2014) highlighted the need for preserving housing affordability by CLTs, through resale or re-let of affordable homes. He focused as a point of further research, on the experiences of CLTs owners and tenants over time whose wealth creation is limited by resale restrictions, for the true test ofclaims to affordability is not at the outset of schemes but in years as homes are exchanged between buyers and sellers and CLTs re-lets(Moore, 2014). This study extends the position of previous research by examining the effect of benefits and barriers (economic, social and environmental) of affordable housing on the perceptions of homeowners in community land trusts, in St Minver, & Brambleside St Teath in Cornwall, England. The study is intended to generate data on the unique experiences of homeowners and the extent to which they consider and interpret the outcomes of affordable house in the community land trust program.

Theoretical Framework (Sustainable Economic Development)

The perceptions of the barriers to affordable housing provision in Community Land Trusts are looked at within the context of the sustainable economic development theory. Sustainable economic development, a subject of many debates, is grounded on the basic principles of Environment, Social, and Economic concerns (Satsangi, 2009). For Grodach (2011), the focus of sustainable economic development is not simply on increasing jobs and tax revenues, but involves the creation and implementation of programs and strategies that balances the issues of social equity, environmental preservation and economic growth. Going a step further, Grodach (2011) is of the opinion that the development of human capital may be enhanced through sustainable development efforts which involve human capital strategies such as occupational training, entrepreneurship, and other employment programs, which could tackle socioeconomic inequality in marginalized populations.

In contrast (Hopwood, 2005), is of the view that humanity whether in an industrialized or a rural subsistence society, depends on the environment for security and basic existence. The general view shared by both authors are that humanity relies on the environment for its needs and social wellbeing, and where the environment is threatened, people's health, livelihoods, lives and future are affected and can be at risk. The premise of this is based on the fact that current models of growth focuses on world trade and industry which has increased the rate of poverty, widened the gap between the rich and poor, and resulted in environmental degradation. Thus, there is a need for change in the quality of growth that meets essential needs, merges the environment and economics in decision making, creating an emphasis on human development, encourages participation in decisions and provides equity in benefits. A balanced development that will eradicate poverty, meet human needs and ensure that all get a fair share of resources. Supporting this view, Hopwood (2005) argues that social justice today and in the future is a crucial component of the concept of sustainable development.

However, the differing views shared by other major organizations such as the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCD), sees no conflict existing between business growth and environmental stability. For the OECD, globalization does not weaken social and environmental protection. In addition, the UK Department of Environment, Transport and Region, is of the view that for sustainable development, more growth is needed; this is a view also shared by the UK Department For Environment and Rural affairs, which stated in its letter on definitions of Sustainability, as quoted in policy paper of February 2011, that sustainability:

An Overview of Community Land Trusts (CLT)

The general view held on CLT is that as articulated by Robert Swan and other civil rights activists based on the success of the Jewish National Fund where acquired land was leased to communities and co-operatives in 1968, providing them with a training ground on the models of mixed ownership and long-term leasing (Davis, 2014). The first CLT was thus established in the US near Albany, Georgia in 1970 (Community-Wealth.Org). Swan is regarded as instrumental to originating the term "Community" with Slater king and CB king by the propagation of the practice of open membership to all residents in the area of a CLT, advocating a broad participation by the town or community (Davis, 2014).

With the firm establishment of the model in Georgia, United States, CLTs have grown tremendously over the decade from Georgia to other states across the united states, the largest being the Champlain Housing trust in 1984, by the city of Burlington in Vermont with the aim of providing affordable housing in three counties (Manzi, 2010). It is believed there are presently 250 CLTs across the United States with 242 in operation as at March 2011 based on the results of a 2011 comprehensive CLT survey (Thaden, 2012). Within the first half of the 20th Century, countries such as Israel and Australia inspired by Henry George's land leasing idea were engaged in the development and promotion of CLTs. For Australia, this was reflected through parliamentary legislation on the country's capital where land was to be leased and not to be sold to property owners (Davis, 2014). Over in Europe, Belgium and France, CLTs are supported by the government and parliament.

Community Land Trusts in UK

CLTs are regarded as being in existence prior to the present time due to the garden cities project of Letchworth and Welyn (Davis, 2014; Dunn, 2009), which sought to convert urban areas into planned environments due to the chaos in urban areas. The emergence of CLTs in Scotland is based on a land ownership system long in existence, and promoted due to lack of investment in housing, and a reluctance of land sale to individuals for development by the feudal landowners. The Scottish land reforms Act in 2003 was a boost to the CLT as it gave community the right to purchase land (Mckee, 2012). One of the positives of this model in Scotland is the increase in community assets acquisition over the last 25 years and a widespread support for the community in land ownership (Allison Elliott, 2014).

Another significant positive is the empowerment it provides on land management to the communities through job opportunities and affordable housing (Murray, 2013); equally noted by Murray, (2013) is the

economic build up and private enterprise development on land for projects such as renewable energy schemes, infrastructure development and affordable housing especially in communities with declining populations, such as the North Harris Trust with an ownership of 62,000 acres of the west coast of Scotland (Murray, 2013).

The Regeneration and Housing Bill of 2008, (DCLG, 2010) recognizes the creation of CLTs, as means of ensuring community development, accountability and governance with its primary objectives being in permanent affordable housing provision to low- and medium-income groups by owning and holding land in perpetuity (McKee, 2012; Dunn, 2009). For the government, CLTs are vehicles in preserving affordable housing, at a time when housing shortages, cuts in spending had stretched local authorities' capacity for funding. In addition, the community right to buy in the localism bill now gives powers to local communities to explore opportunities for affordable housing (DCLG, 2011).

This view is supported by Fujii (2016) who identifies CLTs potential in creating diverse communities which are of help in distressed neighbourhoods, by collaboration with land banks. Both are seen to share similarities in terms of affordable housing provision; however, the difference being the make-up, board constitution, and operation. The latter are non-profit public authorities with political appointees as board members and a primary purpose of re-purposing properties in distressed neighbourhoods where there are low- and medium-income households (Fujii, 2016). Such collaboration would lead to a more robust affordable housing provision. The resale restrictions operated by CLTs are seen as fundamental in retaining affordability through analysis of CLT homes resold between 1998 and 2008 in USA, (McKee, 2012), but there is insufficient data on a broader scale to determine its success. However, Miller (2015) is of the view that there is no one formula for determining the resale price of housing.

This view is in contrast to CLTs in England, where the focus is seen not only on affordability but on allocation (McKee, 2012). An issue that is contested, due to criticisms arising in terms of potential exclusion of minority groups, non-indigenous people in the rural CLTs, a lack of understanding by CLTs on what is housing need, as well as an abuse of discretionary powers from CLTs not registered as charities. McKee further argued that due to the subjective nature of housing affordability, as evidenced in US where some homes were sold above the median income, the allocation processes deserves further scrutiny for England where the concept of CLTs are still in their birthing stages, due to limited evidence on the demographics of CLT homes occupants (McKee, 2012). However, a contrary view held by (McKee 2012) is that CLTs are run mainly by locals, volunteers, who lack capacity, funds and are therefore threats to affordable housing preservation. In addition, protecting and growing the equity acquired are identified as key issues in the CLTs on affordable housing (Community Finance Solutions).

On the other hand, Lubell (2007) insists there are strategies for the preservation of affordable housing such as subsidy retention, under the Shared Equity home ownership, while McKee, (2012) is of the view that lack of evidence on the governance of CLTs, residents participation, and decision making processes are likely to affect the provision of affordable housing by CLTs and fears that the absence of financial and technical support could result in issues of equitability. This view is supported by Moulart (2013), that the intricate legal framework and institutional design of the CLT poses a challenge requiring community commitment and effective leadership for guaranteed success. Still, another contrary view is held by Thaden (2015) that CLTs promote the life cycle of engagement by tailoring resident betterment strategies to the life cycle of residents, therefore encouraging community control and development. Incidentally, the authors unanimously conclude that finding the right balance between pushing for meaningful change and not compromising on CLTs objective is key for effective engagement.

Research Questions

McMoran (2014) argues that there are still challenges of community cohesion, conflicts between conservation and community development, governance, partnerships, based on the perceptions and interpretations of the homeowners in the CLT program (McMoran, 2014; Bailey, 2010). Thus, this research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do the economic benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?
- How do the social benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?
- How do the environmental benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?

II. Methodology

Research Design: This study is designed as a case study as it focuses on Community Land Trusts in St Minver and St. Teath, Brambleside communities in Cornwall. The study adopts the qualitative (idiographic) methodology in its investigation of the perceptions of homeowners with regards to the barriers to affordable

housing in community land trusts. This is premised on the nature of the study which draws significantly from the highly subjective feelings and experiences of the target respondents and their unique as well as conscious constructions and interpretations of their life world. This examination therefore utilized in-depth interviews as its primary data collection instrument (Patton, 2002).

Sample Area: The area of case study is the Community Land Trusts in St Minver and St. Teath, Brambleside communities in Cornwall, England; for the purpose of data gathering and analysis, in addition, is the local authority, the Cornwall Council, the Cornwall Rural Housing Association as well as the Cornwall Community Land Trusts.

Respondents: The choice of respondents was based on the identification of home owners within the CLT program. A minimum number of 25 respondents were considered as threshold in the assessment of data saturation and covered a variety of respondents from the identified category of home owners of St Minver and Brambleside.

III. Data Results

This section presents the results for the analysis on the data of the study. It presents a detailed description of the various stages of data, sorting and coding followed by the report.

Data Preparation and Properties: A total of six (6) initial codes were generated for the study. These codes were used to reduce and categorize the observed themes and relevant responses to the interviews. Thereafter these codes are further linked through the utilization of three (3) axial codes which served as parent codes for the categories of the initial codes. The three (3) axial codes are priori in nature and reflect the research questions of the study. This was done with the intent of maintaining focus on the primary variables and issues of the study (Creswell, 2007).

Table 1: Coding process (initial and axial)

Initial codes	Axial codes	Research questions
i. Economic barriers i. Economic benefits	Economic	How do the economic benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?
i. Social barriers i. Social benefits	Social	How do the social benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT programme?
i. Environmental benefits i. Environmental barriers	Environment	How do the environmental benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT programme?

Table 1 illustrates the categorization process from initial codes to axial codes based on the theme of the research questions. Each initial code provides a category which represents observed threads on an issue with regards to the interview questions. While the axial codes represent priori labels which serve to link and group the initial codes with regards to the research questions of the study.

Data Reporting

The data reporting for the study is based on the research questions which provide the primary framework within which the data is structured. Each research question is treated according based on the arguments and opinions of the respondents.

How do the economic benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?

The first research question addressed the economic benefits as well as barriers experienced with regards to the housing program. Given the wide variety of identified economic benefits and barriers, the initial codes utilized the umbrella themes of both economic benefits and economic barriers to represent the various advantages and observed benefits of the program (economic benefit) as well as its various economic challenges and barriers (economic barrier). Evidence from the analysis of the data suggests that with regards to economic benefits, most of the respondents believe that the housing project has impacted on their lives and that of their family. Some even noted that apart from the affordability of shelter, it further contributed in several ways, some of which include employment and various partnerships with food and vegetable providers:

With regards to the economic barriers of the housing project program, most of the respondents affirm that factors such as funding for the program, the cost of materials and the lack of skilled manpower posed as major economic barriers to the program. The result from the analysis suggests that there is substantial evidence of economic benefits as well as economic barriers as experienced by the respondents. Although there exists a variety of economic barriers, just as economic benefits, however, the evidence from the analysis reveals that funding is a major factor and economic barrier in the housing program

How do the social benefits and barriers of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?

The second research question addressed the social benefits and barriers experienced by the owners of properties within the housing program. Two initial codes were developed with respect to this question, the social benefits and social barriers. The social benefits category was used to label the various references to benefits premised on interpersonal relationships, social and community life development as well as collaboration. While the social barriers category was a reflection of the challenges and barriers experienced on what can be considered a social platform such as lack of cooperation between workers or the lack of required skilled personnel.

The analysis revealed that with regards the social benefits of the housing program, there was strong evidence of collaboration, mutual support and enhanced interactions between homeowners. In examining the social barriers inherent in the housing program, it was observed that majority of the respondents affirmed to instances of disagreement and conflict with some of the regulatory bodies and other relevant parties. The results emphasize on the social benefits with regards to collaboration and mutual support between homeowners while for social barriers, the evidence reveals it still stems from the poor level of communication and relationship between the council and other relevant authorities and the homeowners.

How do the environmental benefits of affordable housing affect the perception of owners of properties within the CLT program?

The third research questions addressed environmental factors (benefits and barriers) of the housing program. The initial codes generated for these are similar to those generated for the fourth and fifth research question. These are the environmental benefits – which reflects opinions and ideas related to benefits accruing from the advantages tied to the environment and location of the housing program, while the environmental barriers – reflected ideas and opinions with regards to the disadvantages and issues experienced with location and the siting of the housing program.

In examining the position of respondents on the prevailing environmental benefits and environmental barriers of the housing program, it was observed that most of the respondents regarded the location as conducive and good, making reference to its strategic location. The analysis reveals evidence which connects respondent's experiences of environmental benefits to the strategic location of the housing program, allowing for the ease of access to other relevant socio-economic areas. Similarly, with respect to the environmental barriers, most respondents view the issue of limited space boundaries as a major environmental barrier factor.

Summary of the Findings

The following summaries are premised on the evidence presented by the results of the analysis on the study of the perceptions of the benefits and barriers to Affordable Housing in Community Land Trusts as it specifically affects the perceptions of Home Owners in St Minver, England:

- i. The economic benefits of the program are hinged on its affordability, increased economic partnership opportunities and improved living standard of the community members, while the economic barriers experienced relate more to the scarcity of funds and the costs associated with the program
- ii. The social benefits of the program are premised on its increased openness to social opportunities, collaboration between members of the community and mutual support, while the social barriers are based on poor communication and understanding between the council and other regulatory bodies and the members of the community.
- iii. The environmental benefits of the program stem primarily from its strategic location and the access it affords community members to schools, shops and other relevant socio-economic set-ups, while the environmental barriers are premised on the observed geographical space limitations and boundaries which streamline and confine the activities of the program.

IV. Discussion and Conclusion

Furthermore, homeowners also identified several benefits as well as barriers stemming from the economic, environmental and social platforms of the housing program. This is as evidence from the analysis reveals that apart from several advantages which could be considered as economic (employment, partnerships with producers etc.), environmental (strategic location of community sites) and social (mutual support, collaboration etc.), there were observed barriers and set-backs which emanated from the same factors (economic, environmental and social). This is as evidence indicates that economic factors such as funding and the high pricing of the sale of sites significantly affected the activities of the program, social factors such as conflicts of interest and poor communication between homeowners and regulating authorities also posed a major problem (Moulaert, 2013) and environmental factors such as the lack of space which significantly affected the program.

In conclusion, the findings of the study provide a basis and premise for the assertions that the benefits of the housing program as well as their barriers can be considered as stemming from three main platforms, namely, the economic, environmental and the social. Each platform offers a mix of advantages with regards to employment, mutual support, collaboration and site location, and each also offers a mix of disadvantages with respect to poor funding, prices of the sites, geographical space boundaries and also poor communication and conflicts of interest.

References

- [1]. Bagdol, A. (2013). Property Taxes and Community Land Trusts: A Middle Ground*. *Texas Law Review*, 939-959.
- [2]. Davis, S. (1997). *Architecture of Affordable Housing*. Berkely and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press.
- [3]. DCLG. (2011). 2011-2015 Affordable Homes Programme- Framework. Retrieved May 23rd, 2016, from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/371817/affordable-homes-framework.pdf
- [4]. DeFilippis, J. (1999). Alternatives to the "New Urban Politics": finding locality and autonomy in local economic development. *Political Geogrraphy*, 18(8), 973-990. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0962629899000311>
- [5]. Dunn, E. P. (2009). Perspectives on utilising Community Land Trusts as a vehicle for affordable housing provision. *Local Environment*, 749-764.
- [6]. Inside Housing. (2011). Between a Rock and a Hard Place. Retrieved February 19th, 2016, from <http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place/6514345.article>
- [7]. Lubell, R. J. (2007, April). Preservation of Affordable Home Ownership: A continuum of Strategies. Retrieved February 19th, 2016, from <http://cltnetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/2007-Preservation-of-Affordable-Homeownership.pdf>
- [8]. Mckee, T. M. (2012). Empowering Local Communities? An International Review of Community Land Trusts. *Housing Studies*, 27(No. 2), 280-290.
- [9]. Megbolugbe, P. L. (1997). Housing affordability: Myth or Reality? *Sage*, 369-392.
- [10]. Moore, D. T. (2014). affordable homes for local communities: The effects and prospects of Community land trusts in England. Centre for Housing Research.
- [11]. Rossi, A. B. (1992). Social Science Research and Contemporary Studies of Homelessness. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 129-160.
- [12]. Shelter England. (2016). Tackling Homelessness. Retrieved May 23rd, 2016, from http://england.shelter.org.uk/campaigns/_why_we_campaign/tackling_homelessness/what_is_homelessness
- [13]. Sohmer, R. E. (2010). Legacy of the Housing Act of 1949: The Past, Present, and Future of Federal Housing and Urban Policy. *Housing Policy debate*, 291-298.
- [14]. Whitehead, C. M. (1991). From Need to Affordability: an analysis of UK Housing Objectives. *Sage*, 871-887.
- [15]. Whitehead, N. G. (2011). Planning and Affordable Housing in Australia and the UK: A Comparative Perspective. *housing Studies*, 1193-1214.

Mina Elsie Louis Udom" The Effect of Benefits and Barriers of Affordable Housing on the Perceptions of Homeowners in Community Land Trust Program in St Minver, & Brambleside St Teath in Cornwall, England" *IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)*, Vol. 21, No. 7, 2019, pp. -.16-21.