

Evaluating the Ownership Spirit Displayed by the Golf Course Reconstruction and Development (RDP) Housing Programme Beneficiaries with Evidence Emanating from the 2011-2013 Research Case Study

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ABSTRACT This study sought to evaluate the spirit of the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) housing programme ownership by the dwellers with a case study of Golf Course RDP houses, Eastern Cape Province. The study adopted mixed methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect data; with the qualitative approach assuming a dominant approach while the quantitative approach was less dominant. The quantitative approach took the form of a mini survey while the qualitative approach took the form of a case study. The findings from this study revealed increasingly lowered ownership spirit through: some beneficiaries selling or renting the RDP houses; some abandoning them giving thieves an opportunity to vandalize them; while some beneficiaries were not occupying the houses at all as they had other alternative shelter; and lack of sanitary and hygiene environment with lack of clean water being acute; and the beneficiaries not showing interest to improve them. However, close to half of the beneficiaries showed a significant appreciation of the houses and had some sizeable ownership spirit. The researchers recommended that: the current RDP housing programme be re-organized afresh towards ensuring that the RDP houses have access to safe and clean water and sanitary and social amenities are available; an investigation be carried out on the status of the occupants in those RDP houses whether they are beneficiaries or not. These measures can go a long way in ensuring that the spirit of the RDP housing dwellers is stirred towards owning the programme.

INTRODUCTION

Incontrovertibly, the Apartheid regime in South Africa was characterized by a spell of harsh discriminative programmes and legislations against the Black South Africans (Mwakikagile 2008). Some of these programmes such as the Land Act of 1930 were racially driven and discriminated against the Blacks. The Blacks got disinherited of their land and were driven to live in poor agricultural land and in improper housing structures (Thomas-Slayter 2003). To say the least, the Blacks were disadvantaged in virtually all areas of social life. They were neither involved in any decision making processes, nor consulted in crafting policies pertaining to their life. They were regarded as second or third class citizens (Patel 2005). This background, therefore, provoked the Post-Apartheid government to introduce developmental programmes that were people-centered and driven with the goal of eradicating poverty and other social miseries among the Black South Africans (Republic of South Africa 1994). Some of the policies that were introduced include the Reconstruction and

Development Programme (RDP) of 1994, Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) of 1996 among others (Mafukidze and Hoosen 2009; Chakuwamba 2010). These programmes such as the RDP housing programme were crafted to turn around the immense social imbalances in many aspects of social life such as ensuring that the poor and the needy South Africans got qualitative houses. It was important that people were to enjoy good shelter as both a human and basic right. This was to strongly ensure the fulfillment of the bottommost rung of the Maslow hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1999). This was also to ensure that the poor and the needy achieved some degree of the spirit of ownership of the housing dwelling that the government had embarked to construct for them. The expectation is, however, in line with the international housing norms that indicate that the dwellings should be humane with ample social and hygiene facilities around them (UN Habitat 2009). It is, however, disturbing that although these programmes are commendable in theory, but in practice many complaints have been leveled against their quality resulting in the gradu-

al loss of ownership spirit by the dwellers (Manomano 2013). Most of the beneficiaries have reached the verge of giving up these houses through selling or renting them and in some cases abandoning them altogether. This is because the workmanship of most of these houses has been deplorable. For example, in Thabo Mbeki RDP houses of Lephalale Township in Limpopo Province, 100 of the houses built had cracked because they were built on wetlands. Some of the owners of the RDP houses have not even occupied the houses for years whilst some have been rented out (Matlala 2011). Moreover, in Buffalo City Municipality, most beneficiaries are selling these RDP houses illegally because they feel they are unfit for their habitation whilst some sentiments indicate that most of the beneficiaries selling these RDP houses do not want to stay in these houses. They indicate that the houses are not qualitative and lack proper hygiene and sanitation facilities around them (Pro-poerty 24 2011). Furthermore, Northam and Raphuti RDP housing beneficiaries from Limpopo province have frequently raised complaints about the poor quality of these houses. Due to dissatisfaction pertaining to these houses, beneficiaries turn them into tuck-shops, while some become shacks and shanties (Thabazimbi 2013). This paper, therefore, invests in evaluating the spirit of RDP housing ownership by the RDP Housing dwellers in Golf Course RDP Estate. This may also reveal whether the government has been failing or it is the people that have been letting the government down in the process.

Aims and Objectives

This paper has been derived from a broad research study whose main aim and objective was to explore the perceptions of the RDP housing beneficiaries on the extent to which the project meets their housing needs in South Africa with a case study of Golf Course Estate in Alice Town, Eastern Cape Province in South Africa. Hence the main aim and objective of this paper was to evaluate the spirit of RDP housing programme ownership by the dwellers of the RDP houses.

Problem Statement

The endemic levels of poverty felt all over South Africa during apartheid compelled the

Post Apartheid government to pursue programmes such as the RDP housing programme to ensure that its needy and vulnerable people have access to adequate and qualitative shelter. It is, however, disappointing to discover that multiple lamentations and outcries have been made regarding the quality of the RDP houses generally in various corners of the country. Definitely, the phenomenon is hypothesized to have a bearing towards the satisfaction and the spirit of the RDP housing beneficiaries' ownership. If so, then the RDP housing programme may be losing out in fulfilling some of its core objectives of providing humane and quality housing to its needy citizens in order to redress some of the imbalances bequeathed by the apartheid regime. In many cases of dissatisfactions raised on RDP houses, lack of attending to sanitary and hygiene issues, lack of clean water, poor infrastructure and increased rate of crime have been very frequent. These are factors that could be affecting the ownership spirit of these houses. This paper, therefore, justifies delving into the state of ownership that the Golf Course RDP housing beneficiaries displays. Perhaps the results could prompt the government through the RDP administrators to change the way these RDP houses are run, with the hope of improving the quality that will hopefully raise the spirit of ownership and general satisfaction of these houses.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This study used mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Further, the qualitative approach was dominant; while the quantitative approach was less dominant. The qualitative approach was especially useful to collect the perceptions, feelings, views and attitudes of the beneficiaries towards the spirit of ownership on the RDP housing programme among other things (Creswell 1994 as cited by Kang'ethe 2010). The quantitative approach on the other hand was especially useful to collect the quantified magnitude of the perceptive levels of the participants on the same matter (Neuman 2006). The use of mixed methods was especially important for this study because it served the purpose of confirming and corroborating the findings as well as increasing result reliability

and validity (Barbour 2008; De Vos 2005). The design was explanatory, descriptive and exploratory in nature.

Instruments

This study utilized both an interview guide and a questionnaire as data collection instruments. An interview guide had unstructured questions to facilitate in-depth interviews with the social worker; one RDP housing Administrator and the 22 RDP housing beneficiaries of the RDP houses. A likert scale designed questionnaire was also used to collect the perceptible levels of 50 participants residing in those houses. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher himself.

Methods of Data Collection

The qualitative data collection was made possible through the use of a one-on-one in-depth interview; while the quantitative data collection was sought through a likert scale designed questionnaire interview that was administered by the researcher himself.

Units of Analysis

The qualitative part of the study involved 22 RDP housing beneficiaries; one social worker and one RDP housing administrator that were subjected to a one-on-one in-depth interview; while 50 residents were subjected to a questionnaire interview with the researcher.

Sample Selection

Both probability and non probability sampling methodologies were utilized in selecting the samples for the study. Probability sampling methodology entailed the use of stratified and simple random sampling for quantitative inquiry; while non-probability sampling methodologies entailed the use of purposive sampling technique for qualitative enquiry. Purposive sampling is especially useful because it enables the researcher to select the samples that carry the specific characteristics of the desired research attributes; while the random sampling techniques are important because they increase generalizability and representation as well as decrease the probability error (Moule and Goodman 2009; Babbie 2007).

Data Collection and Analysis

The researcher was assisted by a research assistant who was a social work student from the University of Fort Hare. He also doubled as a language interpreter from IsiXhosa to English and vice versa. The researcher utilized an audio tape recorder to record the interviews which were transcribed later on after the interviews. Notes were also taken by the researcher to complement the data that was recorded on the tape recorder. Qualitative data was then analyzed using the content thematic analysis where data was organized, rearranged and categorized into themes from the emergent views of the participants. The quantitative data on the other hand was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and that data was presented in tables and graphs for clearer meaning.

Research Domain

The data for this study was collected in Golf Course RDP housing project in Alice Town in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa in November 2012 and analyzed in December 2012 and January 2013. There were 1233 houses constructed in Golf Course. This location was chosen by these researchers because Eastern Cape is considered to be one of the poorer provinces in South Africa and since the RDP houses are meant for the needy and vulnerable, it was also timely and appropriate for these researchers to evaluate the spirit of ownership from this province.

FINDINGS

Profile

The findings from this study indicated that 88% of the participants were Black South Africans while 12% were colored. The findings also revealed that 62% of the participants were females; whereas 38% of the participants were males (see Table 1). These findings indicate that there were many female headed households in these RDP Houses which could also mean increased feminization of poverty in South Africa, generally. It is important therefore that the government foster and promote affirmative action projects that could economically assist these people. This may in turn reduce the impact of

Table 1: Gender of the study participants

S. No.	Ethnic group	Frequency	%	No.	Gender	Frequency	%
1	Black	44	88.0	1	Male	19	38.0
2	Coloured	6	12.0	2	Female	31	62.0
3	Total	50	100.0	3	Total	50	100.0

poverty in South Africa. The findings also indicated that Blacks outnumbered Colored beneficiaries and this also agrees with the statistics that indicate that there are more black people in South Africa than any other race (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2010). These researchers therefore advocate for the Government to continue to expand Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) initiatives, the Umsobomvu fund as well as increasing poor people's funding of services such as education. Widening the operational scope of funding bodies such as Zuma funds is critical. This will go a long way in developing the social and economic dynamics of people nationally.

The findings from this study indicated that 60% of the study participants were single; 28% were married; 6% were widowed, while those that were either divorced, widowed or separated constituted 2% each respectively (see Table 2). These findings indicate that most people who were heading these houses were single people. These findings may also indicate that there is a need to assist single people with income generating projects. Perhaps also availing psychosocial services such as marital counseling and advice could help solve some of the apparently increasing marital problems in South Africa such as divorce and separation. It is these researchers' thinking that maintaining family stability may have a bearing towards solving most of the social challenges such as drinking, crime etc.

Socio-economic Status

The findings from this study indicated that 52% of the study participants were unemployed;

Table 2: Marital status

S. No.	Marital status	Frequency	Percentage
1	Single	30	60.0
2	Married	14	28.0
3	Divorced	1	2.0
4	Widowed	3	6.0
5	Widowed	1	2.0
6	Separated	1	2.0
7	Total	50	100.0

32% were employed; 6% were casual laborers; 2% were self employed; while 8% of the participants were students (see Table 3). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

"Its very painful to stay here without a job because life is very difficult; my desire is to have our government secure us some jobs."

These perceptions indicate that the rate of unemployment was unfortunately biting the housing beneficiaries very hard. The government may therefore consider carrying out an investigation to assess the skills that these people possess as well as resources that are at their disposal. This can be an alternative path of implementing a programme that will provide employment opportunities that also addresses their expectations as well as their skills.

Table 3: Occupation of study participants

S. No.	Occupation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Employed	16	32.0
2	Unemployed	26	52.0
3	Casual	3	6.0
4	Self	1	2.0
5	Student	4	8.0
6	Total	50	100.0

Many People Still Cherish the RDP Houses

The findings from this study revealed that 48% of the residents were beneficiaries; 16% were tenants; 34% were accommodated while 2% were in the other category (see Table 4). This indicates that almost half the population of the beneficiaries had stuck to the houses. These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

"I would not want to lie because some people staying here are the owners of the houses. This is because some of us had no house to call our own except these shacks and as such we cherish and embrace them dearly".

“We thank our government for giving us these houses. We love and cherish them because we did not have any. We are now owners of the houses”

These findings revealed that although not all the RDP houses are occupied by the beneficiaries, but at least close to half of all the study participants were the beneficiaries of the houses. Some were previously occupying unpleasant shacks which cannot be compared with the RDP built brick houses. Therefore, the spirit of ownership was deeply embedded in RDP housing beneficiaries.

Table 4: Status of ownership of the RDP houses

S. No.	Status of ownership	Frequency	Percentage
1	Beneficiary	24	48.0
2	Tenant	8	16.0
3	Accommodated	17	34.0
4	Other	1	2.0
5	Total	50	100.0

Beneficiaries Selling and Renting the RDP Houses

The findings from this study indicated that most of these RDP houses are being sold or rented to other people by the beneficiaries. This is an indication of slackened spirit of ownership of these houses. These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to the following qualitative sentiments:

“Some of the beneficiaries of these houses are selling these houses because they did not deserve to have them in the first place”

“These houses are of poor quality such that some end up selling them to other people in need of the houses. You can see how bad the roofs are. The size of the houses is very small”.

These perceptions indicate that some of these RDP houses were allocated to people who did not deserve and as such they did not know the value of these houses. If these people were in need of these houses, they would not have sold or rented them but would have been attached to them. Some of the beneficiaries owing to dissatisfactions with the poor quality of these RDP houses were selling them in preference of looking for other satisfying shelter. The situation espoused a low spirit of ownership.

Some Houses are Either Unoccupied or Abandoned

The findings from this study revealed that most beneficiaries had houses elsewhere and their spirit of ownership was low. This explained the fact that some houses were left unoccupied and apparently abandoned. This could indicate that some of these beneficiaries are either not pleased with these houses or were no longer in need of the houses. This attracted thieves to vandalize them with hope of getting any valuable asset inside. This position of the houses heralds a low spirit of attachment and ownership. These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

“Some of the houses are just locked and in disuse. Apparently some appear abandoned for long. Some are vandalized by the thieves. Perhaps the quality of houses has discouraged the owners from occupying them”

It could therefore be timely for the government to consider conducting a nationwide assessment of the occupancy of these houses. This could perhaps help the government to validate the satisfaction levels of the beneficiaries. Perhaps the assessment could also help address quality challenges associated with the houses. This could perhaps strengthen government’s commitment to improve the quality of these houses and possibly renew the spirit of ownership among the RDP housing beneficiaries.

Most Houses Not Improved

The findings from this study indicated that many of these houses had no fencing. Although lack of capital could be an explanation, it also heralded neglect or lack of commitment to improve the houses. These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

“Only a few people have fenced their houses. This could mean neglect and lack of interest in improving the welfare of the houses. Perhaps the quality of these houses has slackened the spirit of investing in these houses”.

Lack of fencing showed lack of interest in these houses. Apparently in these researchers’ mind, these beneficiaries should have consid-

ered even cutting sticks to show that they have a sense of ownership. It could be that the poor quality of these houses has dampened the spirit of ownership among these beneficiaries.

Dissatisfied with Poor Sanitation and Amenities

This study indicated that lack of sanitation and social amenities discouraged some beneficiaries from occupying these houses while those who occupied were always dissatisfied with the state of sanitation and lack of amenities. For example 92% of the beneficiaries had no access to clean water services (see Table 5). These findings were corroborated with the following qualitative sentiments from the beneficiaries who were subjected to a one-on-one interview:

“These houses have no access to clean water and we wonder how we will continue staying in these houses”

“Lack of water to flush out the toilets is something that we loathe in these houses. If one has a better alternative, he/she will take it”

These findings revealed that the beneficiaries were not happy and even worried because they did not have clean water around their houses for domestic and sanitary use. Poor sanitation, hygiene and lack of social amenities could be contributing to lowering the spirit of ownership of these RDP houses.

Table 5: Access to clean water services in RDP houses

S. No.	Access to clean water services	Frequency	Percentage
1	Provided	4	8.0
2	Not provided	46	92.0
3	Total	50	100.0

DISCUSSION

These findings revealed a state of gender discrepancy as there were more females than males heading the RDP houses. This generally agrees with the statistics in South Africa that indicate that there are more females in South Africa than males (Statistics South Africa (SSA) 2010). The findings also indicated that there were more blacks as compared to coloureds and this agrees with numerous literatures that indicate

that there are more black South Africans than the colored and also that it is Blacks who are mostly affected by poverty. This largely explains the Blacks preponderance to these houses (Woolard 2002 as cited by Duncan et al. 2007). These findings also revealed that most people residing in these houses were single people as compared to those that were married, divorced, widowed, windowed, or separated. These findings also seem to agree with some researchers that pin point that single people are mostly affected by poverty more than any other population group in the country (Rodgers 2006 as cited by Manomano 2013). It is critical, therefore, that government considers affirmative strategies to empower the single people in the country. Apparently, since it is also single people who appear to succumb to other social vices such as crime and HIV/AIDS, this makes national concern and attention to their plight even more appealing (Barnett and Whiteside 2006). On the state of employment, most beneficiaries indicated that they were unemployed which also confirms the high level of unemployment especially among the majority Blacks (Strydom 2006). It is therefore in these researchers' thinking that the country despite being the biggest economic house in the continent has not been able to come up with policies and programmes to avert the ever burgeoning cases of unemployment. It could therefore be a time for the Government to take introspection and reflection to facilitate the formulation of interventions to turn around the endemic states of unemployment waves in the country (Strydom 2006). This has unfortunately made South Africa one of the unequal societies in the world. In these researchers' reflection, calling the country a middle economy does not make sense while thousands of its population has no houses, children are malnourished, and so many without knowing where they will get the meal for the day.

The findings indicated that some of the beneficiaries were renting and or even selling those houses. This was a very disappointing state of affairs given the fact that this project is meant for people without houses. This is a pointer to malpractices employed during the allocation process. This needs to be investigated so that the government can pride in providing houses to only those targeted by the RDP policy (Manomano 2013). This scenario of the beneficiaries selling their RDP houses cuts across many

RDP house programmes in the country. This has prompted a lot of condemnation from the leaders of various caliber. For example in Free State, the act has attracted the wrath of the mayor condemning both the sellers and the buyers. Undeniably, renting and selling RDP houses by the beneficiaries is a sheer lack of ownership spirit of these houses. Succinctly, this defeats the spirit of RDP government programme of settling the houseless and the deprived (<http://theweekly.co.za> 2013). It therefore paints a bleak picture and dwindled spirit of ownership of this housing programme. Regrettably, some have been able to buy the houses at only R 10 000 (<http://theweekly.co.za> 2013). It therefore brings into light the fact that the RDP administrators through their malpractices of allocating these houses to beneficiaries who are not house-needy are damaging the spirit of ownership of the RDP housing programme. This is an issue that should attract national concern and investigation. Corruption in areas surrounding empowering the vulnerable, the disadvantaged, the oppressed and unemployed should not be allowed to rear its ugly head in South Africa. This is because the country is probably one of the most unequal in terms of economics and that government has always promised to work towards redressing the state (Manomano 2013). Subjective information from the research participants and respondents supported by one of these researchers form evidence that in most RDP houses in Eastern Cape Province alone, many houses are unoccupied, abandoned, vandalized or standing idle without the owners (Manomano 2013), indicating that the spirit of ownership on the part of the beneficiaries is in serious jeopardy. Of course the research participants indicated a lot of corruption surrounding their allocation (Manomano 2013).

The findings also indicated that most of the beneficiaries were failing to improve some of the circumstances of their houses such as making a fence around their houses. This is despite subjective information on the ground that some could afford. Of course the gesture heralds a state of lowered state of housing ownership (Manomano 2013). Perhaps the lowered state of ownership could be exacerbated by the ever increasing state of dependency syndrome among the people of lower socio-economic ladder in South Africa (Kang'ethe 2013). This is a serious state of phenomenon in South Africa that threat-

ens the state of economic dispensation from this population segment. This, in these researchers' contention calls for a serious national investigation with the hope of coming up with approaches or strategies that will encourage a paradigm shift of these people's mindset, ideologies, and disposition that will make the people hunger and yearn to fend for themselves without expecting handouts (Kang'ethe 2013). This reminds one of these researchers a billboard message in Kanye village of Botswana that portrayed the perfidy of dependence syndrome. The message took the form of a proverb that says "*Mpha Mpha oa lapisa. Motho o kgonwa ke sa gagwe*" that literally says "It is tiring to ask or beg. One should eat from his sweat". Perhaps such messages in South Africa are timely to heal and face dependence syndrome. The spirit of dependence syndrome is deeply embedded with in some people that some of the housing beneficiaries even expect the government to buy pesticides for them to kill rats (Yengo 2006).

The findings also revealed dissatisfactions from the beneficiaries concerning the lack of access to clean water facilities, sanitary and requisite social amenities. This could probably be dampening the spirit of ownership of most of these beneficiaries as they find it very difficult to reside in an area where there is no access to clean water (Manomano 2013). In the RDP houses of Khayelisha township, for example, some RDP houses did not have clean water in their houses posing great questions as to whether the government is putting enough efforts to avail these requisite social amenities. This definitely could have an impact in dampening the beneficiaries' spirit of ownership of the houses (Leiter 2011).

Despite the above perfidious scenarios dampening the spirit of ownership of the RDP houses, the findings from this study revealed that close to 50% of the study respondents and participants appreciated and were satisfied with the gesture of being allocated the RDP houses. This is supported by statistics from Cape Town released by the Department of Human Settlements in the recent past that indicate that in the RDP houses in Philippi, Samora Machel area, close to a third of the houses were occupied by legal owners. This implies that the spirit of ownership of the RDP houses is still significant and that the policy of the government to build people houses is not a flop (Manomano 2013).

CONCLUSION

The RDP housing project as a low cost housing project is a commendable initiative that the government introduced in a bid to assist the homeless without houses. However, it is perturbing that the barrage of dissatisfactions has lowered the spirit of ownership of these houses making some beneficiaries abandon them, sell or rent them. However, the spirit of ownership could be lowered by the fact that many houses may have been allocated to people who are not needy who may have other alternative shelter to reside in. Moreover, the behaviour of beneficiaries and housing officials' needs monitoring and auditing to ensure that this housing programme serves the interests of the needy and vulnerable. It is believed by these researchers that considering improving these houses and ensuring that the dependence syndrome is reduced can go a long way in putting these RDP houses back on the tables of compliments and applause.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from this study have compelled these researchers to suggest the following recommendations:

The challenges facing the unemployed among others calls for alternative ways of mass training of the people towards market oriented jobs to enable these people to become independent and productive as well as enhance their survival skills. It could also end up contributing positively to the Country's GDP as well as reduce the pressure on social assistance. This is because poverty related issues need to be dealt with holistically. It is also recommended where possible to consider affirmative action to help the single people secure employment opportunities as a method of empowering them. This is because they are the ones mostly affected by poverty.

In light of the selling and renting of the RDP houses, it becomes pertinent for an investigation to be carried out to assess the residence status of the people residing in those houses. It could also give the government a chance to explore the perceptions of the beneficiaries leading to the abuse of those houses as well as instituting and enforcing tough measures to restrict and curb malpractices by the beneficiaries and the government officials as well. Even though

the current measure indicates that the beneficiary must not sell the houses before 8 years have passed, it is apparently taking place with the buyers and then sellers entering into a solid agreement, although the transfer would take place after 8 years. Importantly, the houses should also be given to be needy.

The provision of water, sanitation and other requisite social amenities need to be given preference as they make the houses highly uninhabitable and unsafe for these people. It is recommended that the government consider taking all possible appropriate measures such as dam construction. Ensuring the houses are served with requisite social amenities, sanitary and hygiene environments is critical towards raising and fostering the beneficiaries' state of housing ownership.

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