A Case for Co-ops:
Best Practices for Encouraging Cooperative Housing as an Affordable Housing Solution

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Abstract

The current direction of affordable housing policy in the United States is ineffective at achieving long term solvency and sustainability in the housing market. Market-based and tenant-based subsidy programs directed by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are inadequate in addressing systemic affordability issues in the housing market. Cooperative housing is a viable affordable housing strategy that is largely ignored in the United States context and may offer a better alternative to traditional affordable housing policies. The cooperative housing is a proven model that offers permanent affordability, independence from market forces, and a number of socio-culturally sustainable benefits in comparison to traditional affordable housing policies deployed in the United States.

This paper analyses the promise and challenges associated with introducing limited equity cooperative housing as a possible solution to address issues of housing affordability and promote a sustainable housing model in the United States. This analysis deploys a holistic sustainability framework, addressing the social, economic, and environmental impacts of the wider adoption of cooperative housing as an affordable housing strategy. Informal interviews were given to residents of Gainesville’s only housing cooperative, the Cooperative Living Organization (CLO), to better understand the lived experience of residents in cooperatives and to synthesize best practices in the operation of cooperatives using a local case study.
Introduction

The Role of Housing in Sustainability

In 1948, the United Nations established that housing is a basic human right. Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, 1948) states,

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”.

The UN further defined adequate housing to concern legal security of tenure; availability of accessible services, facilities and infrastructure; habitability; accessibility (e.g. access to employment, health services, schools, etc.); cultural adequacy; and affordability. Sustainable housing is achieved when access to housing is established as a right, is properly supplied to all people, equitably and fairly priced, socially appropriate and conducive to the formation of community, promotes connectedness, and is environmentally responsible.

The inclusion of housing alongside food, clothing, and other necessities is apt; housing exists at the foundation of the hierarchy of needs, allowing a person to achieve employment, self-sufficiency, and self-actualization. Housing is crucial in the practice of
sustainability; how, where, and at what cost a person is housed is foundational to the outcomes of that person’s life. A person’s health, wealth, ability to act and achieve are all predicated on the quality and form that their housing takes.

**Defining Sustainability**

Sustainability is most commonly thought of in terms of the definition provided by the 1987 Brundtland Commission’s report “Our Common Future”. This definition defines sustainability as actions “that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987) The Brundtland report also developed a common framework for assessing sustainability, defining the “three pillars” of sustainability to contain economic, environmental, and social considerations. Sustainability however, has a variety of different meaning in a variety of unique contexts. A single definition of sustainability is not sufficient enough to define a concept that has a near endless amount of applications. For the considerations of this paper, it is important to further define the conceptualization of each “pillar” of sustainability given in the Brundtland Report.

The concept of “Social Sustainability” in context of this report can be defined as “development (and/or growth) that is compatible with harmonious evolution of civil society, fostering an environment conducive to the compatible cohabitation of culturally and socially diverse groups while at the same time encouraging social integration, with improvements in the quality of life for all segments of the population.” (McKinzie, 2004). Social sustainability aims to achieve more equitable, diverse, democratic
societies and systems, where costs and benefits are equitably distributed to all
segments of society, insofar as it is possible.

Economic sustainability can be defined as “practices that support long-term
economic growth without negatively impacting social, environmental, and cultural
aspects of the community.” (University of Mary Washington, n.d.). Achieving economic
sustainability includes economic systems and practices that ensure adequate and
equitable access to jobs, respect labor and worker’s rights, are non-exploitative of
people or the environment, and promote an equitable and fair share of wealth.

Environmental sustainability can be defined as “meeting the resource and
services needs of current and future generations without compromising the health of the
ecosystems that provide them, …and more specifically, as a condition of balance,
resilience, and interconnectedness that allows human society to satisfy its needs while
neither exceeding the capacity of its supporting ecosystems to continue to regenerate
the services necessary to meet those needs nor by our actions diminishing biological
diversity.” (Morelli, 2011)

It is important to note the intersectionality of these sub definitions in the
consideration of sustainability generally. The definition of sustainability is incomplete if
any one of these pillars is not applied, “sustainable” actions or systems cannot satisfy
one “pillar” and infringe upon another. The purpose of this paper is primarily addressing
issues of social and economic sustainability in the United States’ housing model and
offering cooperative housing as an alternative aimed at addressing these issues.
Environmental sustainability is addressed, but is not of primary concern to this work.
Background

State of Housing Affordability in the United States

Housing in the United States has been historically been conceptualized as a privilege and a commodity. This is reflective of American ideals of free enterprise, individualism, and privacy. The commodification of housing has led to a market that fails to accommodate the housing needs of the entire population. The American housing market exacerbates issues of homelessness, social disconnection and isolation, and the disastrous environmental impacts of low density sprawl, among many others. One of the most pressing barriers to achieving sustainability in the United States housing model, as discussed in this paper, is housing affordability.

Housing affordability has profound implications for sustainability in the built environment. In terms of equity, a lack of affordable housing across the geographies of cities, often segregates cities by socio-economic status. This spatial segregation has negative outcomes for all people, as it effects overall diversity and the socio-cultural experience of the city. Concentrated areas of low income individuals often have poor access to resources like healthcare, good schools, transportation, and fresh food. Economically, the high fixed costs of housing and instability experienced by low income
people often cements them in the cycle of poverty and limits their ability to spend money elsewhere (i.e. education, healthy food, etc.) This contributes to poor health outcomes for low income people. Housing instability experienced by cost burdened low-income people increases their rates of mental illness, hospitalization, exposure to environmental toxins like lead, and overall levels of stress compared to their peers in federally assisted housing programs. Children in particular are victimized by housing instability. Children who are raised in cost-burdened low income households spend less time with their parents, exhibit lower educational attainment, and go on to earn less money compared to peers in stable housing. (Sandra J. Newman, 2015) Providing access to affordable housing for all people is crucial in promoting a sustainable built environment that effectively provides for the well-being of all people and an equitable and just society.

As it stands, the United States is in an affordability crisis with no clear direction forward. The current state of housing affordability is grim; nationwide, nearly half (47.4%) of all renters and nearly a third (31.5%) of all homeowners are cost-burdened, spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs. (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2019) The rental market has been particularly hostile, further trending towards providing primarily for those who can afford it. Rents have increased nationwide for since the nation emerged out of the housing crisis in 2011. While rents have increased, low and middle income workers across have not seen meaningful wage increases for the past 50 years. (Congressional Research Service, 2019) Affordability issues are not just isolated to cities, every single county in the United States, as of 2017, fails to provide affordable rents to their low income residents, even with HUD assistance. (Figure 1, Figure 2)
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Figure 1.1 (Urban Institute, 2017)

This map shows the supply of affordable housing without federal assistance as a proportion of number of affordable units available to the number of income eligible families in each US County. Light colors indicate less need met, dark colors indicate more demand met.

Figure 2 (Urban Institute, 2017)

This map shows the supply of affordable housing with federal assistance as a proportion of number of affordable units available to the number of income eligible families in each US County. Light colors indicate less need met, dark colors indicate more demand met.
A lack of supply is the primary problem. The most recent study conducted in 2015 found that for every 100 low income renters, 28 could afford to live in their rental housing. (Leopold, et.al., 2015) Vacancy rates are at 6.8% nationwide; for low cost units, the vacancy rate is even lower, at 4.9%. (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2020) Consistently high demand and chronically short supply means the housing market is extremely competitive and expensive across all price points. Lower income people are disproportionately affected by the low supply of affordable housing. While middle and high-income persons have the money and resources to search for housing elsewhere or settle for a cheaper unit, low supply and limited resources often force low income renters into expensive, untenable housing situations. The minimum cost of housing in this market, even with subsidy, is simply not fulfilling the housing needs of America’s poorest people.

To compound the issue, an influx of demand from high-income renters has shifted increases in supply towards high-cost units and away from the construction of affordable ones. Those making $75,000 or more now make up the largest share of renters, at 26.5%, and is continuing to grow. From 2012 to 2017, the share of units listed for under $600 fell from 33% to 25% of the total national rental stock. During this period, the share of units listing for $1000 or more grew from roughly 30% to 40%. (Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, 2020) Middle to low income individuals, those making less than $45,000 a year, are being pushed out and left behind by the macroeconomic forces of the private market.
Overview of Federal Housing Policy

Federal housing policy has not responded adequately to the severity of the crisis. The HUD’s affordable housing policy toolkit consists of tenant subsidy and supply-side incentives, although they heavily favor the former. On the supply side, the HUD primarily utilizes two programs: the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). These programs aim to increase the supply of affordable housing through developer incentive. The LIHTC increases the stock of affordable housing by roughly 100,000 units annually. (US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2019) The LIHTC accounts for roughly $8 billion dollars and the CDBG accounts for $3.4 billion. The HUD also directly provides government owned public housing, although new construction of public housing is extremely low. Only 17% of public housing units were constructed after 1997. This program provides for 1,067,387 units for 2,156,625 low-income individuals. (Popkin, 2020)

The United States Department of Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) current agenda is focused heavily on tenant based subsidy programs, which give direct rent subsidy to low-income renters. The HUD, starting with the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, pivoted from the direct construction and provision of public housing in favor of the newly introduced housing choice voucher program (Section 8).

Families receiving Section 8 assistance pay 30% of their income towards rental in the private market and HUD will pay the difference between that 30% and the calculated cost of the area’s fair market rate (FMR), the maximum the HUD will let the
landlord charge to receive subsidy, to the landlord. Although less popular with the HUD, Section 8 also includes provisions for project-based rent subsidies, which stay applied to particular units, rather than moving with the tenant. Project based subsidies provide assistance for 1.2 million low income families. (US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2020)

The housing choice voucher program (Section 8), while it meaningfully provides rental assistance to low income families, has profound issues. The program is extremely expensive, the HUD budgeted $22.2 billion dollars for the Housing Choice Voucher program this fiscal year. The total budget for the HUD in 2020 was $44.1 billion dollars. That money served roughly 2.3 million families, which while significant, is only a fourth of the total of income-eligible families in the United States. (US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2019) That gap means there is high demand for assistance, as such, there are often month to year-long waitlists for applicants. Even if assistance is given, landlords are legally allowed to refuse acceptance of tenants who receive section 8 vouchers. While the supply of affordable units is limited, finding a landlord who will accept vouchers can be difficult. The application process for section 8 rental assistance can also take months to years. Section 8 housing also tends to be clustered in low-income areas, perpetuating concentrated poverty. Economic mobility for low income families remains limited, even with assistance. As rents continue to increase nationwide, an increasing number of families are dependent on federal assistance with little to no opportunity to improve their economic standing. Despite the poor outlook of the rental market, the HUD recently cut section 8 funding by $5 billion dollars for the proposed 2021 budget. (US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 2020) Although tenant-
based subsidy programs are HUD’s go-to affordable housing policy, it does little to increase overall affordability in the housing market and is untenable in the long term.

**Housing Cooperatives**

Cooperative housing offers an alternative affordable housing model that addresses systemic issues associated with traditional market based solutions employed by the United States department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). A cooperative organization is by definition, “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common needs through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.” (International Cooperative Alliance, n.d.) Cooperative organizations are directed by 7 core principles: 1) Voluntary and Open Membership, 2) Democratic Member Control, 3) Member Economic Participation, 4) Autonomy and Independence, 5) Education, Training, and Information, 6) Cooperation Amongst Cooperatives, and 7) Concern for Community. Cooperatives by nature value democracy, connectedness, independence, and self-determination.

Similar to how a corporation is beholden to profit for shareholders, cooperative’s value the investments of their residents and democratically act on the behalf of all members. Cooperative housing is housing owned and democratically managed by residents, who are shareholders in a larger non-profit leasing company managing the building, rather than simply being tenants/renters. Opposed to having a larger property manager or leasing company, members of a cooperative group-own property through a cooperative housing corporation, freeing residents from the traditional for-profit tenant/landlord relationship.
Housing cooperatives generally take the form of multifamily apartment buildings with certain shared amenities like kitchens and meeting spaces. Many cooperatives promote the pooling of resources, many encourage sharing food preparation duties, child-care services, and group recreational activities.

Similar to a deed restricted community, cooperatives democratically set rules on what behaviors are allowed and who is allowed to live in the community (generally by income or profession). Operation of the cooperative is democratically managed by its members, with members/residents taking voluntary management positions. Cooperatives are governed by democratically set by-laws, which dictate how the cooperative operates, the requirement for membership, and the democratic processes of voting and meeting, among others. Members also have a say in allowing new applicants into the cooperative. Since the housing is collectively owned, housing cooperatives are typically not for profit. As an alternative to rent, members of a cooperative pay a “carrying charge” democratically set by members that covers costs of maintenance, the shared mortgage, if any, and other fixed operational costs like utilities.

Housing cooperatives come in three different forms: 1) Limited Equity Housing Cooperatives (LEHC), 2) Market Rate Housing Cooperative, 3) Leasing Housing Cooperatives. A limited equity cooperative restricts prices of shares, generally only allowing low income persons to participate in the cooperative. They also limit the equity gained through selling a share in the cooperative, the price associated with selling the share is set to the price of buying the share. This removes profit and equity out of the picture and keeps the cost of participation permanently affordable. Market rate cooperatives allow members to sell their shares based on the market value. This allows
equity to be gained from membership in the cooperative while maintaining the
democratic decisions made by the larger cooperative (like by-laws, carrying costs, etc.).
Leasing cooperatives are privately owned buildings leased to a housing corporation,
typically as a tax benefit to the property owner. The cooperative are not owners of the
property and the lease is typically temporary.

**History of Housing Cooperatives in the United States**

Housing cooperatives are an incredibly niche market in the United States, and
have always been. There are 1,200,000 units of cooperative housing available in the
United States, roughly 1% of the total 138,450,000 dwelling units nationwide.
(International Cooperative Alliance, n.d.) Of that 1%, vast majority are clustered in New
York City, with smaller clusters in other large metros like Seattle, Chicago, and San
Francisco. The lack of popularity in the United States is not matched globally. The
cooperative housing model is proven to be much more popular in Europe, where it
represents 12% of the total housing stock in EU affiliated countries. (Vanicek, 2012)
There has been a long tradition of cooperative development in Europe and the EU has
continually reaffirmed its position as a crucial affordable housing policy option.

Cooperative housing has consistently made up a small proportion of the United
States housing stock everywhere outside of New York City. Housing cooperatives first
started in the 1920s and 30s as a means for labor unions to provide affordable housing
to their workers. This tradition cemented the position of cooperative housing as an
affordable alternative to private housing. Historically, housing cooperatives are popular
amongst labor unions, students, and artists who use the model as a means to keep
housing costs low in a housing market that is otherwise too expensive and volatile for
their economic conditions. Due to their independence from private market forces, affordable housing cooperatives have also seen increased popularity in times of economic constraint. The private housing market is dependent on the flow of private capital, but due to the nature of cooperative housing, as long as financing is available (private or governmentally-insured), the model can be permanently affordable, even in times of economic recession.

The history of development of housing cooperatives is responsive to the historical development of federal housing policy. Prior to 1950, housing cooperatives were dependent on the ability of tenants or sponsors to secure private capital, which limited their development. 1950 marked the passing of the National Housing Act, which extended federally insured mortgages to cooperatives, which spurred their development due to the increased availability of capital. Many cooperatives were built in the time period between 1950 and 1974 and somewhat extended their popularity in urban markets outside of New York City. With the passing of the Housing Act of 1974, the United States federal housing policy shifted towards tenant based subsidy programs with the introduction of the Housing Choice Voucher or “Section 8” rent subsidies. Tenant-based subsidy programming is less successful in encouraging the development of housing cooperatives, and growth decreased during this period. The policy and financial ecosystem that encouraged the development of cooperatives still exists, but has become lost in the wider agenda of tenant-based subsidy programming by the federal government since 1974. Many of the housing cooperatives developed after 1974 are sponsored by non-profits or local housing authorities, not by an organization of
independent tenants, due to the agenda setting of the federal government and the popularity of other tenant-subsidy programs. (National Cooperative Law Center, 2017)

Research Questions and Methodology

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the opportunity and challenges for the larger adoption of cooperative housing as a sustainable affordable housing policy. Fully assessing this topic requires an understanding of costs/benefits, feasibility, best practices, existing opportunities/barriers, and implications. The overall research question breaks down into the following sub-questions:

1) What are the benefits and challenges of cooperative housing compared to existing policy?

2) What barriers, culturally, economically, and politically, exist to the adoption of cooperative housing as widespread affordable housing policy?

3) What are the best practices for promoting the development of cooperative housing in the United States?

4) What opportunities exist for integration of cooperative housing with traditional forms of affordable housing policy?

This framework serves the purpose of directing the focus of the literature review and broadens opportunities for more robust integration of the in-person interviews into the synthesis of best practices and recommendations.

Literature Review

What are the benefits of cooperative housing compared to existing policy?
The cooperative housing model presents a viable solution to many of the issues pervasive in traditional models of affordable housing. The main selling point of cooperatives as an alternative to traditional tenant based subsidy programs is long term affordability. Limited equity housing cooperatives sustain the availability of units at below the market value to income-restricted individuals without the need for tenant-based subsidy altogether. Limited equity housing cooperatives keep cost lows through a number of mechanisms. Collectivized mortgages or “blanket” mortgages allow for the entire building to secure a low-interest mortgage for the purchasing of property or the renovation of an existing building. This secures a low interest rate for the entire membership of the cooperative and keeps costs down for low income individuals who would not have access to low-interest financing otherwise. Along with limits restricting the price of resale and the easy accessibility of loans for the initial purchasing of shares to all income levels (through federally insured “share loans”), the cost of entry into a cooperative is kept permanently affordable to low income individuals. The collectivization of overall fixed costs like maintenance and paying the mortgage across the entire member base also means costs are kept lower than if they were applied at an individual basis. Studies have shown that the scaling up of fixed costs results in carrying charges for cooperatives costing an average of 15-20% lower than the rent of a similar private market rental unit. (Northcounty Cooperative Development Fund) In contrast to the tenant-based subsidy model of affordable housing policy taken by the HUD, cooperative housing offers perpetual, self-sustaining affordability. Tenant-based subsidy are sunk costs – the savings of rent subsidies is entirely within the voucher itself, the program adds no additional value or units to the housing supply. The spending on
tenant-based subsidy does not work to reduce future demand for spending on those subsidies. In the limited equity cooperative model, subsidy is converted into real value – the subsidy spent reduces the need for further subsidy, as the model sustains itself after initial construction. A 2010 case study from the Urban Institute found that cooperative housing can become increasingly affordable over time and work to generate increases in economic mobility for low income members. It also found that the model is economically stable; not a single resident over the tenure of the studied housing cooperative had been delinquent on their month carrying fees. (Urban Institute, 2010)

Existing research has also shown that the permanence of cooperatives can also combat pressures of gentrification. Cooperatives’ self-management and independence from considerations of profit insulate residents from being displaced through rent-increases driven by increases in demand or property value. When equity is taken out of the housing model, as it is in the case of limited equity cooperatives, individual members have no profit-driven incentive to sell. The model is resistant to market pressures both financially and culturally. A study looking the effects of gentrification on cooperatives found that the values of democracy and overall co-dependence of cooperative members translates into tangible community solidarity when pressures to dissolve and sell the cooperative are high. (Saegert, et al.)

Other than economic concerns, the cooperative housing model also encourages a number of beneficial social outcomes that the current housing market fails to provide. The communal values and do-it-yourself attitude at the center of cooperative living promote the social enrichment of its members. One study analyzed the cooperatives as a self-contained “civil society” and gains in social capital made by the development of
cooperative members. The study found that practice of democracy and participatory engagement by residents in their own cooperative community had spill-over effects into volunteerism and political engagement with electoral politics at the local, state, and federal levels. The study concluded that “participation in skill-sharing arrangements and services exchanges likely provided opportunities to hone formalized skills and to build confidence and a sense of efficacy. Social activities and events also have a place in the literature as drivers of community building and civic engagement, and as precursors to political involvement.” (Land & Novy, 2011) One study found that cooperative housing functions as a civil society “en miniature”, fostering internal democratic and community relations though the shared responsibilities of cooperative management. (Suter & Gmur, 2018). In comparison to traditional low income or public housing, cooperatives are more responsive and better at self-enforcing community solidarity and cohesion. Cooperatives are quicker to evict bad actors due to the active participation of members and the necessity of all members to ensure the proper operation of the cooperative. (Sazama & Wilcox, 1995)

Public housing and affordable units in the private market also fail to promote an environment of stewardship. As a result, low income housing developments both private and public are often conductive to crime and decay. Alternatively, limited equity housing cooperatives overcome the tenant-landlord mentality of the private housing market that reduces individual feelings of ownership and agency. While cooperative ownership is not the same as homeownership, it tends to function as the next best thing and fosters similar feelings of agency and responsibility as actual property ownership. As a result, housing cooperatives are often cared for by their residents and of better quality over the
lifetime of the building compared to similar private housing units in their adjacent geographical areas.

The US population is becoming increasingly old. Seniors, those aged 65 and older, are projected to be 20% or more of the total population by 2030. (US Census Bureau, 2014) Cooperative housing offers a more viable housing model for promoting aging-in-place than traditional forms of affordable housing. The mix of sustained affordability along with an emphasis on cooperation and community support creates a more stable and supportive environment for people to age-in-place. A case study of one housing cooperative in Pennsylvania demonstrated that cooperatives are often responsive to the needs of elderly population, and are capable of incorporating support services to allow elderly residents to age-in-place. (Lawler, 2001) Cooperatives also benefit from intergenerational diversity; older cooperative members often provide technical or operational support, younger members often look after and check in on the well-being of older residents. Older people are also dependent on the maintaining of social ties and activity, which cooperative housing promotes. (Sustainable Economies Law Center, n.d.)

What barriers, culturally, economically, and politically, exist to the adoption of cooperative housing as widespread affordable housing policy?

The landscape of limited equity cooperatives in the US is dominated by cooperatives organized and developed by the third sector— non-profits and local government housing authorities. Cooperatives are rarely organized through individual residents and are dependent on the organizational and financial support of outside resources. Individuals lack the financial resources to effectively navigate the
bureaucratic ecosystem of cooperative development. There are few mechanisms to grow the development of limited equity housing cooperatives that are not also extended the private development of other affordable housing models. (Bratt, Rosenthal, & Wiener, 2016) The non-profits that work to develop affordable cooperative housing have to compete on equal terms with the private sector to secure property, which is not conducive to the growth of development. HUD tenant-based subsidy also reduces the incentive for the private side construction of new affordable housing, as private developers can build market rate housing and can later accept tenant rent subsidies without restricting price points across all units.

Construction costs for new development are also at an extreme high. This presents a barrier to overall affordability of cooperatives. Limited equity housing cooperatives accomplish affordability through their ability to secure cheap mortgages for the entire building. High construction costs work to counteract the savings limited equity cooperatives find through the use of these cheap blanket mortgages. Blanket mortgages become more expensive, lending markets become tighter, and outside funding stretches shorter when construction costs are high. New limited equity housing cooperatives, however, are typically developed through the retrofit and conversion of existing buildings, which provide an opportunity to avoid the barrier altogether.

Culturally, a major barrier to the success of widespread adoption of cooperative housing is the lack of tradition and education outside of New York City. Due to the high bureaucratic and legal intensity of cooperative development, local expertise and tradition is crucial to the development of cooperative housing. Cooperative housing begets more cooperative housing, as proven in the case of New York City. Many of the
studies reviewed express the importance of educational support in the success and development of affordable cooperative housing. (Sazama, 2000) (NCB Capital Impact)

The notion of the American Dream is still alive and well, the idealization of homeownership may prove to be a barrier for the widespread adoption of affordable cooperative housing. Even as demographics change and homeownership becomes more expensive, American’s aspirations and commitment to the American Dream remains unwavering. (Goodman & Mayer, 2018) Americans have also bought into the notion of housing as a commodity. Much of the appeal of homeownership still rests in the notion of housing as a commodity. Housing is still considered a commodity and an investment for many Americans. The restrictions on equity gain by limited equity housing cooperatives may not appeal to an American public that has conceptualized housing as a way to build wealth.

Not-in-my-backyard-ism (NIMBY-ism) is also incredibly prevalent and influential in the landscape of the United States housing market. NIMBY-ism is resistance to new development characterized “by specific fears, including increased crime, poverty, and service and education costs, coupled with decreased property values and open space preservation.” (Scally, 2012) Affordable housing is often stigmatized by well to do community members and see it as undesirable to the makeup of the community. Public and affordable housing developments are often wrongly associated with high rates of crime and poverty. These stereotypes are often rooted in a racism. (Motley & Perry, 2013) Cooperative housing must garner community support and build resistance to NIMBY-ism to find success in the United States.
The political landscape for cooperative development is hazy at best. Although current political frameworks allow for the development of cooperatives, it surely does not encourage it. Cooperatives require a high degree of legal and bureaucratic intensity that pose a barrier for entry in markets that do not previously have a history or culture of cooperative development. The rough process for cooperative development is as follows:

1) Bring together development team and members, 2) Conceptual planning, 3) Site selection, 4) Financial planning, 5) Property acquisition, 6) Operation of the cooperative.

The entire process from start to finish is expected to take at minimum two years and is often much longer. Step one entails bringing together a diverse team including a sponsor, project manager, financial planners, attorneys, an architect, engineers, a marketer, and resident trainers. This can be an extremely lengthy process and typically requires each member to have prior experience in the cooperative development process, which may be hard to come by outside of traditional cooperative markets. Step two entails outlining stakeholders in the community and going through local approval processes. Step three, site selection, can often take a year or more, as it’s dependent on the availability of cheap, vacant, properly zoned land or suitable multifamily property for sale. Cooperatives often look to locate in areas of subsidy, like community redevelopment districts or enterprise zones, which is often competitive and difficult.

Step four, financial planning, is particularly lengthy for the development of limited equity cooperatives. The process of securing funding includes applying for federal and local subsidies, applying for non-profit grants, and securing private or federally insured financing. This requires prior experience with the ecosystem of cooperative financing, as there are many avenues and deadlines to navigate. This step itself can take years to
complete and is dependent on the timing of federal funding cycles. After all these steps are completed, the cooperative can then begin construction. Even after construction, there are still steps needed to develop the social and democratic aspects of the cooperative, such as the formation of by-laws and the assembling and organization of its members. (NCB Capital Impact)

Overall, cooperatives have a number of extra hoops to jump through to successfully develop. Most of the additional time in the development process of cooperatives in comparison to typical multifamily housing comes from the length it takes to secure subsidy, which can often take a year or longer. Finding the right development team can also be an incredibly difficult process in places that do not have a prior history of cooperative development. Extending the educational base for cooperative development to places outside of traditional markets is crucial to promoting the model nationwide. Cutting down on red-tape and streamlining the process for applying for and receiving funding can help reduce the time and overall barriers to entry for cooperative development.

What are the best practices for promoting the development of cooperative housing in the United States?

The widespread adoption of cooperative housing in the United States has currently only been accomplished in New York City and a small number of other large cities. Understanding where cooperatives are successful and exporting the policies that incubate their growth is crucial for extending their adoption outside of typical markets.

In New York City, the Mitchell-Lama program is the best example of policy for incubating the construction of limited equity cooperative housing. Under the Mitchell-
Lama Housing Program, the City utilizes eminent domain to acquire properties which are then leased back to cooperatives or other housing corporations with a cap on rents and limitations on profit. Its first adoption in 1955 kept the property in the hands of the government, but was later amended to allow tenants to buy out their property and convert it to private property after 25 years. The program was entirely funded by city or state bonds in combination with the down payments of residents. The program has been incredibly successful in developing long term affordable housing and spurring the development of housing cooperatives. The program has successfully accounted for 105,000 units of affordable housing in its lifetime, 45,000 that are currently still part of the program, two-thirds of which are limited equity cooperatives. (Kamping-Cardner, 2018) The program, while currently running, is not taking on new units and the city is gradually phasing it out in favor of other affordable housing policies like rent control. However, the program has been historically successful in incubation of limited equity cooperatives that have been permanently affordable over their lifetimes.

The Tenant Opportunity to Purchase act (TOPA) in Washington DC also offers a policy that encourages the development of cooperatives. TOPA was originally developed as a way for residents to resist pressures of displacement after their building sells to a new owner. Under TOPA, tenants are given the first right to purchase the building if the owner decides to sell as long as they form tenant organizations and pledge to form a cooperative or condominium association. The City encourages tenants to form cooperatives through the provision of technical and financial support. When a tenant association expresses interest in forming a cooperative, the city connects them with community development block grant or other local affordable housing funding.
specifically designated for funding TOPA projects as well as legal and educational assistance. The program has developed about 96 LECs accounting for 4,000 units in its 40 year history. (Howell, PhD, Brutton, PhD, & Clemens, 2020) It’s a great example of effective local government sponsorship of cooperative housing as an anti-gentrification and affordable housing policy that ought to be adopted more widely. TOPA provides an effective mechanism to connect tenants to the cooperative model without the need for third party intervention. Like New York City’s Mitchell-Lama, TOPA explicitly names cooperatives as a desired outcome and utilizes existing affordable housing finance to specifically develop cooperatives.

**What opportunities exist for integration of cooperative housing with traditional forms of affordable housing policy?**

Although the affordable housing policy ecosystem of the United States is not hospitable to cooperative development, there is ample opportunity for integration and restructuring. There are opportunities for both localities and the federal government to apply existing affordable housing policies for the development of cooperative housing.

One of the most promising avenues for cooperative development is the integration of the model into community land trusts (CLTs). A community land trust is a limited equity housing model similar to limited equity cooperatives, it just operates on a different scale. Community land trusts are non-profit, community led organizations that own land and develop housing. Community land trusts lease homes to individuals at affordable rates by removing the equity of the owned land from the price of the housing. CLT’s use public or private financing to develop housing units on the land they own. CLT’s then lease to income qualified individuals and restrict the sale price of the
housing, taking equity gain out of the equation and ensuring perpetual affordability. Essentially, community land trusts practice the same affordability mechanisms found in limited equity cooperatives (removal of equity, community and democratic control, leveraging of group financing/public financing). Community land trusts often develop single family housing, but are able to develop multifamily buildings. Community land trusts share similar benefits to limited equity housing cooperatives, including permanent affordability, resistance to economic recession, and resistance to gentrification. (Ehlenz, 2014)

The main advantage of merging the two models is the ability of the community land trust to provide the necessary technical and financial support for the development of cooperatives. The process for developing community land trusts requires the same expertise in financing, property development, and must be well staffed to manage the existing properties. This prior experience and non-profit structure provides the prerequisite expertise for navigating the legal and financial processes of cooperative development. All of the pieces for cooperative development have already been previously established in the community land trust model. This means they can offer a crucial first point of contact for independent tenant organizations to begin the process of cooperative conversion.

Limited equity cooperatives also provide added benefits to the community land trust model. Limited equity cooperatives offer an option to extend the ability of community land trusts to offer affordable housing to more people. Community land trust portfolios are often restricted to single family homes, which leaves out many people who cannot afford a home or are not looking to own. Limited equity cooperatives offer an option to
extend the affordability of the community land trust model to single people, the elderly, or young professionals, who all demand affordable housing, but typically are not looking for a single family home. Cooperatives also reduce the managerial and staffing intensity typically necessary of their traditionally single-family properties. Cooperatives are independent and self-sufficient once established, meaning the community land trust can safely transfer property management responsibilities over to the cooperative.

Community land trusts offer support to housing cooperatives, but do not need to directly manage them like they do typically with single family homes.

The current affordable housing toolkit utilized by local governments can also be tweaked to promote the development of limited equity cooperatives. Typical policies employed by local governments applicable to cooperative development include: 1) Tax increment financing, 2) Inclusionary zoning, 3) Tax and fee abatements, 4) Zoning deregulation.

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a policy used by local governments to divert existing and raise new tax revenue to fund specific redevelopment projects. The point of TIF is to utilize local revenues to add value to the built environment, which returns additional revenue and well-being to the city long term. The policy has typically been used to fund infrastructure improvements in particular areas or the construction of special projects like schools, sports stadiums, or urban revitalization efforts. However, certain localities in the United States have utilized TIF for the construction of affordable housing. This policy could potentially be extended to specifically finance local cooperative housing development funds. This could extend another financing option for the development of cooperatives and reduce the dependence of the model on federal or non-profit funding.
This process could allow localities to add value to the built environment, both culturally and economically, while effectively increasing their supply of affordable housing in perpetuity.

Inclusionary zoning is a policy used by local governments to ensure the development of affordable housing in new private development. Inclusionary zoning sets minimums on the number of affordable units offered in new construction, forcing (or incentivizing) developers to include affordable units in new development. Setting mandatory minimums on the number and/or incentivizing the construction of affordable units in new developments may increase the appeal of the limited equity cooperative model to new developers. While inclusionary zoning can offer a disincentive to private developers, it may offer the opportunity for non-profit developers to step in and fill the void due to reduced competition for land and/or existing property.

Tax and fee abatements are a policy used by local governments to incentivize the development of affordable housing and offer them additional affordability during their lifetimes. Localities can waive property taxes, development fees, or infrastructure costs for cooperative housing to ensure additional affordability and create additional incentives for development.

Zoning deregulation is a policy used by local government to change existing land usage to include higher density developments. Changing zoning codes to include higher density development may free up additional or cheaper land for the development of cooperatives. Including housing cooperatives as use by right in appropriate areas of single-family zoning may also be a lucrative method of incubating their development. Allowing cooperatives to have the option of developing on the typically cheap and freely
available land of single family residential areas may incentivize their growth while also increasing density in those areas. Since cooperatives emphasize community involvement and connection, they may offer a more compatible fit with single-family residential neighborhoods than typical private multifamily apartment complexes. It might be beneficial for localities to shift single family types on the fringes of higher intensity usages to a mixed use zone that includes single family and cooperatives by-right.

The federal landscape of affordable housing policy of primarily tenant based subsidy is unsustainable and must inevitably return to an emphasis on increasing the stock of affordable housing. The status quo of the tenant-based subsidy agenda is doing little to reduce the demand for affordable housing subsidy in the long term. The government should be more involved in the actual construction of additional affordable housing units. The development of cooperatives provides a way for the federal government to increase the stock of permanently affordable housing without repeating mistakes made in previous public housing developments. Cooperatives allow the federal government to construct permanently affordable housing without being directly involved with the management or maintenance of the property. Once a limited equity cooperative is developed, it is self-sustaining and affordable in perpetuity. The government could gradually shift funding from tenant based subsidy programs towards the public housing fund and specifically designate funding for the construction of limited equity cooperatives as a form of public housing. The federal government has the existing frameworks for the direct construction of public housing and prior to 1974, did so. Returning to the direct construction of affordable housing and doing so using the
limited equity cooperative model may be a better and more sustainable affordable housing agenda in the long term.

**Interviews**

To further enrich the research, I looked to a local cooperative, Gainesville's Cooperative Living Organization, for additional information on the lived experience of residences in a limited equity housing cooperative. I conducted short, informal interviews with the president and one additional resident of the Cooperative Living Organization. My aim for conducting interviews primarily to supplement findings in the literature with qualitative information on the lived experience of a cooperative. I aimed to understand 1) the internal best practice of cooperative management, 2) the strengths, challenges, and appeal of cooperative housing to particular demographics, 3) how the cooperative model is marketed to prospective members, and 4) the internal culture and overall experience of living in the cooperative. The interviews were conducted over the phone, as residents had mostly moved out and/or were practicing social distancing in response to the spread of COVID-19. This limited my ability to record responses verbatim, and this study relies on summarized responses based on detailed notes. This methodology, while not my desired medium, serves the purpose of the study well and does not detract from the purpose of the interviews to begin with.

These interviews were guided by 8 key questions:

1) What is your position and applicable responsibilities in the cooperative?

2) How did you find out about the CLO? Were you previously familiar with the cooperative housing model?
3) In your opinion, what separates the experience of living in a cooperative from other forms of housing?

4) How are the responsibilities of operation managed in the cooperative? How do you ensure cooperation amongst members?

5) In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the cooperative? Are there any challenges with living in a cooperative? Are there areas to improve upon?

6) Are you likely to seek out housing cooperatives in the future?

7) What are the interactions amongst neighbors like? What is the culture within the cooperative like?

8) Who do you think the cooperative housing model works best for? Do you think it can work for all demographics?

Context

The Cooperative Living Organization is Gainesville’s first and only housing cooperative. Its 80 member capacity is restricted to low-income University of Florida or Sante Fe College students as an affordable alternative to campus or private housing. The CLO was first founded in 1931 by a collective of University of Florida Students. It was previously sponsored and affiliated with the University of Florida, but has since become independently organized. The cooperative is entirely owned and operated by students. Alumni of the CLO make up members of board of trustees, acting as financial and legal support for the continuation of the cooperative. The carrying fees are currently $410 dollars a month, which includes the cost of utilities, maintenance, and meals. This price point makes it a less expensive alternative to student housing on and off campus.
The CLO prioritizes students exhibiting financial need and promotes a diversity of ethnic and national background in its admittance procedures.

**Responses**

**What is your position and applicable responsibilities in the cooperative?**

All interviewees stressed that all members of the cooperative have important roles in its operation. However, membership in leadership or administration is restricted to those who have lived there for at least two years. After 2 years of residency, cooperative members must pass an exam that covers the cooperative history and operations to apply for executive positions. The president detailed that there is a hierarchy of responsibilities based on voluntary participation and tenure of residency. The cooperative is governed by a democratically elected executive board of directors which consist of 5-7 cooperative members with tenures of at least 2 years. Under the board, there are managerial positions within the house such as chore checkers, maintenance specialists, and postmaster. Every resident has basic responsibilities to the cooperative that include general upkeep, maintenance, and custodial duties; all other responsibilities are completely voluntarily decided. The president also expressed that alumni play an important role as members of the board of trustees that provide education and legal backing of the cooperative as membership of the cooperative transition over time.

All interviewees expressed that there is an understanding amongst all members of the basic responsibilities they have to the cooperative. While there are chore checkers, interviewees expressed that there are generally no issues with enforcement
of the responsibilities. Members of the cooperative understand the dependency each member has on each other and willingly keep up with their chores and responsibilities.

How did you find out about the CLO? Were you previously familiar with the cooperative housing model?

Interviewees expressed that the majority of residents hear about the CLO through word of mouth. They either know people who lived there previously when they first moved in or had family members that were previously alumni. The president also expressed that the CLO is connected with high school guidance counselors in certain high schools to connect low-income prospective UF or Sante Fe students to affordable housing. The CLO is considered as a more affordable alternative to campus housing and less restrictive than scholarship housing, which addresses specific needs for low income freshman. Alumni and current residents are the first point of contact in spreading the word about the CLO.

In your opinion, what separates the experience of living in a cooperative from other forms of housing?

For the interviewees, affordability was the primary difference of the CLO over traditional forms of housing. At $410 per month ($1600 per semester) with food and utilities included, the CLO is about half the cost of campus housing. Interviewees expressed that the CLO was by far the cheapest housing they have come across in Gainesville, private, non-profit, and campus housing included.

Interviewees also stressed the social benefits of cooperative living as opposed to living in an apartment. One interviewee compared the CLO to their experience in a private apartment. They expressed that in private housing, meeting your neighbors or
other people in the building typically happens by chance. This is in contrast to the CLO, where residents are encouraged to interact and build relationships through shared responsibilities and social opportunities like meals, movie nights, or other social programming. Interviewees expressed that nearly all 80 members of the cooperative know each other in some capacity. They expressed feelings of real community; one interviewee stated that living in the cooperative is comparable to the experience of living in a fraternity house or a summer camp.

**How are the responsibilities of operation managed in the cooperative? How do you ensure cooperation amongst members?**

Interviewees expressed that cooperation is implied through the culture of the cooperative and there is rarely need for intervention or enforcement. When intervention is needed, there is an organizational structure to ensure that everyone is keeping up with their responsibilities. Public chore charts and designated administrative “chore checkers” ensures that no one is neglecting their responsibilities. However, interviewees expressed that feelings of ownership and meaningful participation in the operation of the cooperative compels people to willingly do their part. Interviewees expressed that they could not justify neglecting their responsibilities because they understood that everyone counts on each other for their own well-being. There is also a culture of sharing individual skills for the benefit of the larger cooperative. There are members who have more involved roles in the maintenance of the building, like fixing electrical systems, improving landscaping, or doing light DIY carpentry projects. These members willingly volunteer their skills and spread their practical knowledge to other members of the cooperative who are interested in learning.
In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of living in the cooperative? Are there any challenges with living in a cooperative? Are there areas to improve upon?

The main strengths of the cooperative as expressed by the interviewees are 1) extreme affordability, 2) community, 3) all-inclusiveness, 4) location, and 5) diversity of membership. The main weaknesses is a lack of private space. CLO units are dorm style with two people to a room and the building has little room for studying or privacy. Interviewees expressed that it’s constantly active and there is little opportunity to find time for yourself within the building itself. They expressed that this can be worked around however, as the close proximity to campus allows access to private and quiet study spaces. The main challenges faced by the cooperative is the overall lack of capacity. Membership is capped at 80 members and the cooperative often has a long waitlist of prospective residents. The CLO is in high demand and cannot expand their membership due to physical constraints of their building. The main opportunities for improvement of the cooperative as expressed by the interviewees are an expansion of the physical building and the creation of dedicated private spaces.

Are you likely to seek out housing cooperatives in the future?

Interviewees expressed that they were likely to explore cooperatives in the future. They expressed that they enjoyed the social structure and affordability provided by the cooperative. However, they qualified their statement by saying that cooperative living was not their first choice and most likely won’t be in future contexts. Many residents choose the CLO because they cannot afford to live in a private apartment.
While residents expressed that they enjoy living in the CLO, if they had the resources, they would rather live in a private apartment. They expressed that the structure of the cooperative, while beneficial to them, is not what compelled them to choose the CLO in the first place, rather it was the best option they could find at the price point that they could afford. They did express that if they needed an affordable place to live, finding a cooperative would be a priority, if available.

**What are the interactions amongst neighbors like?**

Interviewees expressed extreme pride for the culture of the cooperative. They valued the cooperative as a cornerstone of their college experience. All interviewees said that they had met some of their closest friends through meeting other members of the cooperative. The culture of the CLO was compared to an entire self-contained community; residents consider themselves CLO members as part of their local identity.

**Who do you think the cooperative housing model works best for? Do you think it can work for all demographics?**

Interviewees expressed that the model can work for everyone, it depends more on individual attitudes and class differences rather than demographic markers like age or cultural backgrounds. One interviewee said that class differences can determine the participation of members in a cooperative. They expressed that feelings of gratitude stemming from the affordability and community the cooperative provides translates into effective participation and volunteerism within the cooperative. They stated that this is a common feeling within members of the cooperative; that members feel compelled to act on this gratitude and create a better condition for themselves and other residents. There are strong feelings of solidarity and community that come from the common class
experience of cooperative members. They expressed that part of the success of the cooperative is this shared experience. Interviewees also stated that it works extremely well for their needs as students. The emphasis on social programming and all-inclusiveness makes for a supportive experience for them. One respondent stated that this experience may translate well to working class people or the elderly as well. Sharing responsibilities, meals, and other resources means that each member can rely on each other for something, interviewees expressed that this can benefit everyone, but particularly people who don’t have the resources to pay for additional services that are provided by cooperation amongst members.

Discussion

The research provided in this paper has shown cooperative housing to be a promising method of affordable housing policy in the United States. The need for cooperative housing has never been larger, the current state of the affordable housing crisis necessitates immediate response. The status quo of tenant-based subsidy has proven itself to be ineffectual in reducing the root causes of the crisis itself. Cooperatives emphasis on permanent affordability and the building of social capital offers a more complete response to the affordable housing crisis than the status quo of traditional subsidy-based programming. Where traditional policies are weak in supporting economic mobility and better health and social outcomes for their beneficiaries, cooperative housing is strong, proving itself through an analysis of the literature, to be encouraging to the development of personal economic and social health of its residents. Cooperative housing successfully provides permanent affordable housing and has shown to provide for better social outcomes for its residents. The
findings from the interviews reinforce this position, demonstrating the additional affordability and social benefit provided by cooperatives through the lived experience of residents of Gainesville’s CLO.

There also seems to be ample opportunity for the expansion of the cooperative housing model. The existing political and financial frameworks can be amended to specifically encourage the development of limited equity cooperatives nationwide. Taking best practices from places like New York City and DC and connecting it to a national affordable housing agenda is politically viable, it just requires the impetus to name cooperative housing as part of the wider agenda and a larger public demand. All the tools necessary to encourage the development of cooperatives exist in current political and financial infrastructures, it’s simply not being currently utilized. Getting from where we are now to a wider adoption of cooperative housing rests on the expansion of education about the model both to individuals and to levels of government. People must know and demand cooperatives for policy to be more effectively utilized. There must also be supportive and knowledgeable governments and non-profits for cooperatives to successfully develop. This educational gap is the largest barrier for more widespread adoption.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this research, specific amendments to existing policy should be made to spur the development of cooperative housing as an affordable housing strategy. At the federal level, the HUD ought to shift funding away from generally ineffective tenant based subsidy towards the affordable housing fund and
following the success of programming in DC and New York City, specifically name cooperative housing as a desired outcome. Tenant based subsidy is doing little to effect the state of the affordable housing crisis. Becoming more involved in the direct construction and funding of affordable housing should be prioritized and limited equity cooperative housing offers a stable and proven model for the HUD to do so. The HUD can also provide important agenda setting through the naming of cooperative housing as a specific affordable housing strategy, rather than presenting it as an option among many different solutions.

While the federal government ought to shift policies, they have proven over the last 40 years that it is not interested in pursuing the construction of public housing. Therefore, localities must take the lead on cooperative development. Localities have tools necessary to practice cooperative development as an affordable housing policy. Utilizing policies like community land trusts, tax increment financing, and zoning regulations with cooperative housing as a desired outcome provides the opportunity for localities to permanently increase their stock of affordable housing. Learning from the example of New York City and DC, local policies are the best mechanism for supporting the development of cooperatives. These policies that have proven to be effective at producing limited equity cooperatives should be adopted more widely, or at the very least, in small pilot programs to test their effectiveness elsewhere. Local governments are best placed to develop cooperatives, as they have a better idea of the viability of the model in their community and are best suited for administering the educational and organizational support required in the development of cooperatives. The adoption of cooperatives will be most effective if it starts from the bottom up.
Conclusion

Limitations of the Study

This study briefly summarizes the advantages and challenges of limited equity cooperatives as an affordable housing solution. The research relies heavily on the synthesis of existing research. It serves primarily as an exploration of the potential of the cooperative housing model, rather than quantifying specific benefits. The collection of specific quantitative data is not within the purview of this study and so, the quality of the research is predicated on the sourcing of the information in the literature review. The qualitative data supplied by the interviews is only intended to reinforce findings of the literature review and due to limitations in data collection, cannot be considered the common experience of all cooperatives. Due to limitations brought by COVID-19, the sample size and quality of the interview data is limited. The interviews were intended to be more rigorous and wider in scope, but the ability to conduct in person interviews with recording devices was limited due to social distancing practices. Ideally, interview responses would have been recorded and transcripts provided.

Direction of Future Research

This research provides a number of entry points for additional research. The next step would be to conduct more interviews to better understand how cooperatives are operated and the sentiments that residents have towards the model. There is a lack of qualitative resources detailing the lived experience of residents in cooperative housing. This study ought to be expanded in scope to include a number of cooperatives containing different demographics and operating procedures.
There is also a need to quantify the effects of cooperative housing in terms of widespread housing affordability. There is a lack of resources detailing the effectiveness of cooperatives in providing affordable housing outside of New York City. Comparing rents of cooperatives across the nation compared to the average rents of units across regions would be beneficial in quantifying their impact. Pilot programs could be useful in allowing isolated studies of the effectiveness of cooperatives in specific markets.

There are also a number of additional intersections left unexplored. Cooperative housing could theoretically be beneficial to vulnerable populations like the mentally ill, addicted, or homeless. There is little existing research detailing the benefits cooperative housing might provide to these populations and may be worth exploring.

Final Word

In conclusion, the state of the affordable housing crisis in the United States and the ineffectiveness of traditional policies necessitates an immediate exploration of alternatives. Cooperative housing ought to be considered as a viable alternative to existing policy. Limited equity cooperatives provides a tested model for the provision of permanently affordable, socially beneficial affordable housing that fit in with existing political and financial frameworks. If we are to meet the housing needs of all people and return to guaranteeing housing as a human right, the development of cooperative housing may be a good place to begin.
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A Case for Co-ops: Best Practices for Encouraging Cooperative Housing as an Affordable Housing Solution