

Review of: "Maintaining Sustainable, Affordable, and Low-Cost Housing for Middle- and Low-Income Classes in Uganda"

Josué Mastrodi¹

¹ PUC Campinas

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

I would say, in the Introduction, that the crisis for affordable housing is not a crisis, but one of the outcomes of world-wide capitalism (many of those outcomes are referred to in the Introduction a few lines below, as “high and increasing youth unemployment challenge, urban poverty, and inequality which affects inclusiveness”). Therefore, it is not something that has happened in Uganda only, but spread across the whole planet, especially in underdeveloped countries.

In the second paragraph of the Introduction, it is said that detached houses, huts, and tenements take 21.5% and 18.4% respectively of the housing types. 3 types and 2 percentages, is that right?

A mortgage has been the legal way for granting financing for housing, in a way that each family owns its house using bank loans, and the bank charges interests in exchange. The interests are increasingly expensive, and the family will lose the house in case the mortgage is not paid. This is an individual/contractual way based on a legal and proprietary system. A system that benefits banks and constructors, but barely serves the people who need housing, no matter if the house belongs to them. It is time to think of granting housing without worrying about the title of property.

The final remarks in the introduction are fully accurate. I would like to suggest two authors who could help to deepen them, Samuel Stein (Capital City, Verso Books) and Richard Foglesong (Planning the Capitalist City, Princeton Press).

The first paragraph of section 2 repeats part of a paragraph of the Introduction.

The expression Affordable Housing is also used by the UN Committee on Social, Economic and Cultural Rights, especially in its General Comment n. 4 (<https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/cescr/1991/en/53157>). The New Urban Agenda (2016 Habitat III -- Quito Declaration) should also be considered.

When the authors inform about Uganda's population growth, they say that the growth “creates competition for land space.” It is true in our system. The international community, governments, and urban planners should switch the context of competition to a context based on collaboration. This, however, seems too utopic in a world where everything has a price instead of value.

Authors refer to “Uganda's Sustainable Goal 11.” Is this similar to SDG 11 of the UN's Agenda 2030?

In the part that authors refer to the different building materials used in Uganda, I start thinking about the internal divisions

of the house (if any...), about habitability (are they healthy to live in?). I also thought if they are linked to sanitation systems and furnished with electricity when they are built, and if they are built by their landowners or if they are part of a housing program. Do housing programs use which type of building materials?

When talking about “community involvement and participation,” how do authors suggest implementing a collaborative partnership that includes budgeting for housing programmes?