

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Community Participation in the Redevelopment Planning of Nairobi: A Case of Muthurwa and Kaloleni Estates

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Abstract:

A history of neglect by past and current city governments, an influx of Nairobi's population in recent years and obscurity of tenure occasioned by colonial master plans have led to the dilapidation and degradation of Nairobi's inner city estates. Now ripe for redevelopment, the County Government of Nairobi has been making redevelopment plans since cabinet approval in May 2012. On the other hand, inner city resident associations are spearheading resistance to redevelopment, attributing it to unreconciled compensation claims and the lack of proper participatory processes. In recent years, however, the Nairobi County Government has made efforts towards participatory planning, focusing on resident associations. One of the aims of this study, therefore was to examine the inclusivity of resident associations through examining the socio-economic factors influencing community participation in the redevelopment planning of Nairobi's inner city estates in context of Muthurwa and Kaloleni estates. The target population was 1768 household representatives, with a sample size of 177. Probability sampling techniques were administered; purposive sampling and stratified random sampling methods were employed. Purposive sampling was selected due to the specificity of the context, then stratified random sampling was used to ensure input across different age groups and genders. Questionnaires and key interview schedules (for key informants) were the main data collection tools. Data was analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 21 where it was coded and used to summarize research findings in tables and figures and presented in frequencies and percentages. Recommendations extrapolated from the study findings reveal inequalities in redevelopment planning processes. They demonstrate a need for resident association leadership working towards attaining adequate participation from all age groups, both genders, a wide array of income groups, people of different education levels and social standing, and ensuring that residents who have stayed in these communities longer than others give a platform to those who have lived in these communities for shorter periods. This study has potential to aid urban planners and developers design better participatory planning tools and methods to encourage community participation in development projects.

Keywords: Nairobi Inner City, Urban Renewal, Urban Redevelopment, Community Participation, Urban Planning, Redevelopment planning

Introduction

The socio-economic conditions of people determine their participation in project planning and implementation (Kakumba & Nsingo, 2008). For instance, poorer sections of the population are associated with low levels of education, and often excluded from consultations, and thus obstructing their civic competence. Studies reveal that community participation is essential for development and that participatory approaches have been widely incorporated into the policies of development actors (Blackburn & Holland, 1998; Dalai- Clayton et al., 2003; Holmes, 2001; Kumar, 2002; White, 1996). Contemporary development scholars have been advocating the inclusion of people's participation in development projects. Their major argument has been that the goal of any project cannot be fully achieved unless people meaningfully participate in it, and as per Stone's (1989) argument, people's participation in development projects may help bring about effective social change.

In recognition of the above, community participation does not just happen neither is it an idle principle, rather it needs some form of strategy and planned approach, resources, time allocation and commitment to the course (Burns *et al.*, 2004). Samah and Aref (2009) observe that participation in community development activities means individuals are not only involved in initiating, deciding, planning, implementing and managing development processes and its activities but they are also subjects in meeting their collective needs and expectations to overcome their common development challenges. Communities that have chosen to participate in development discourses not only derive more satisfaction from the joy that comes from involvement but also achieve more results, more rapidly, and with greater benefit to the community as a whole. Communities which participate in development initiatives report better success than those that only pay lip service to this important principle (Reid, 2000).

As for urban redevelopment planning, community participation is a theme recurrent in its successes and failures globally. Werlin (1999) argues that without effective participation, urban redevelopment is made more challenging, if not impossible to achieve. Complex urban environments often develop more formal avenues and infrastructures through which citizen involvement is mediated and realized (Bracht, 1990). Both studies refer mostly to cities in North America and Europe. However, similar experiences have been recorded in Asia and South America. Singapore's urban redevelopment program for example is considered one of the most successful redevelopment projects of our time. In Singapore, policymakers have continuously deliberated how to include the community in designing public housing estates since the 1990s (Sik & Križnik, 2017). It may be argued that this is the main reason behind its overall success.

At the regional context, African cities are beginning to consider redevelopment. South Africa's Alexandria project for example was designed for a population of 70,000 during South Africa's colonial era. Rural-Urban migration has seen it swell to about 350,000, living within 1.6 square Kilometers. These cramped conditions led to social, environmental and health problems among the residents (Thwala, 2009). The Alexandra Redevelopment Project by the South African

Government's Integrated Sustainable Rural Development and Urban Redevelopment Program oversaw the building of approximately 3,000 houses.

Thwala (2009) found that one of the most important contributions of the Johannesburg Alexandra Urban redevelopment project is that it has resulted in an improved awareness of the role that must be played by the Alexandra community in the development process. In the past, the community of Alexandra rejected developmental projects because they were not properly involved during the project's initiation stages.

As for Kenya, there have been several small scale slum upgrading initiatives. Redevelopment plans for Kaloleni and Muthurwa are contextualized within the Eastlands Urban Redevelopment Project (EURP). The EURP is a large scale project targeting formal settlements and is one of the major projects outlined in the Nairobi Integrated Urban Development Plan (NIUDP), unveiled on March 5th, 2015. Its purpose is to provide a guiding framework to manage urban development in Nairobi City County from 2014-2030, integrate all urban development sectors and realize the goals of Kenya Vision 2030 for the city county of Nairobi. Residents, however have not embraced these plans. A review of the report on a workshop for consultation on the NIUDP held in Jericho Social Hall on 6th February 2015 reveals that the residents' concerns go beyond financial compensation. Issues such as poor infrastructure and service provision, unemployment, failed leadership, lack of social amenities and council relations were recorded. As per Bamberger's 1996 study, active community participation in project planning and implementation may help improve project design through the use of local knowledge; increased project acceptability; promotion of local resource mobilization; and helped ensure project sustainability. On the other hand, community participation may also entail delays in project start-up; necessary staff increases; and pressure to raise the level or range of services. Participatory approaches may also be riskier than bureaucratic/technical management as there is a danger of the cooption of the project by certain groups, the creation of conflicts, or losses of efficiency due to inexperience with the participatory approaches (Bamberger, 1996).

In lieu of the above, we may come to the conclusion that communities living in city estates are against redevelopment without proper consideration, compensation and participation. For instance, in Muthurwa there has been forced evictions and court battles (Kituo Cha Sheria, 2015). The disruption and delays affirm the fact that development cannot be a top-down approach, as it was at the inception of the city. Urban communities must be involved and considered for effective redevelopment to take place. Very little attention has been focused on the relationship between socio-economic factors and participation in urban development, urban renewal and urban redevelopment planning. The Kenya participatory poverty assessments suggest that income poverty is not necessarily the aspect of most significance to poor households. Lack of access to productive assets such as land and exclusion from economic, social and political processes that affect poor people's lives may be of much more significance (Government of Kenya, 2000). Thus, the study intended to examine the socio-economic factors influencing community participation in the redevelopment planning of Nairobi's inner city estates in context of Kaloleni and Muthurwa estates.

Methodology

The study used a case study design. The researcher used case study because it is open to use of other approaches of analysis including both qualitative and quantitative approaches that the study intended to use. Yin (2003) observed that a case study research can accommodate both qualitative and quantitative approaches, thus allowing the researcher to get a rich mix of data for the study. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) ascribe 10% of the population as an appropriate sample for descriptive studies. The study targeted one household head in every of 1120 households in Muthurwa and 648 households in Kaloleni Estates (KNBS, 2013). This makes a total of 1768 household heads. The study sample was 177 (10% of total household heads). Purposive sampling was used to select the study sample. Probability sampling techniques were administered; purposive sampling and stratified random sampling methods were employed. Purposive sampling was selected due to the specificity of the context, where only active members of residents' associations formed the larger population. The study had to contend with purposive sampling despite its non-representative nature, because only active members were aware of the urban regeneration plans and had been in active involvement with the Nairobi County Government. Within this population, stratified random sampling was used to ensure input across different age groups and genders

A questionnaire with both open ended and close ended items was used to collect data from the study respondents. To test for reliability of the tool, the researcher piloted 15% of the sample and that was not included in the real study. Split half method was used where a Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 was obtained thus qualifying the tool as reliable and acceptable. On the other hand, content validity was used to validate the data collection tool. All filled questionnaires were collected for data analysis. By the help of statistical package of social science (SPSS) version 21, data from the questionnaire was input into the statistical package, coded and used to summarize research in tables and figures and presented in frequencies and percentages. Further, the researcher observed legal and ethical issues in research throughout the whole research process.

Results

Demographic characteristics

The study sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the study participants. Data captured included the gender, age bracket and employment status. From the study analysis, 60% of the respondents were male and the other 40% were female, thus, a good gender representation. When the respondents were asked to indicate their age bracket, 49% of them were within 18-35 years of age, 31% were within 36-55 years and the rest 21% were 56 years and above. This shows that majority of the respondents were at youthful age. Additionally, the study participants were required to indicate their employment status. Majority (64%) of them were unemployed, 21% of them were self-employed and the remaining 15% of them were employed. This implies that only a small number of the respondents had formal jobs, thus, majority of them have low

socio-economic status, which may explain exclusion in redevelopment planning resistance to the EURP.

Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Community Participation in Redevelopment Planning

The study respondents were asked to rate the items in the Table basing on individuals' opinion on the socio-economic factors influencing influencing community participation in redevelopment planning. The rating categories included: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree. The researcher aimed to measure the perception of the respondents on the influence of socio-economic factors on community participation in redevelopment planning.

Socio-economic factors influencing community participation in redevelopment planning

Items	SD		D		N		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Gender Balance	89	54	28	17	7	4	4	2	37	23
Higher Income Earners participate more	16	10	34	21	19	11	33	20	63	38
Disabled are involved	23	14	23	14	10	5	33	20	77	47
Older residents have more say	8	5	5	3	47	28	30	18	75	45
Community can easily access information	10	6	22	13	31	19	29	16	73	44
Ethnic Balance	34	21	20	12	8	5	12	7	91	55
Social Status Determines participation	66	40	20	12	27	16	21	13	31	19
Education level determines participation	45	27	24	15	36	22	13	8	47	28

Key: SA-Strongly agree; D-Disagree; N-Neutral; A-Agree; SA-Strongly Agree; F-Frequency

As shown in the Table, the majority (71%) of the respondents were in opposition in regards to gender balance in participatory planning forums. However, 25% of them affirmed that there is gender balance in participatory planning forums, while 4% of them were undecided. On whether higher income earners participate more than low income earners, 31% of the respondents disagreed, more than half (58%) supported and the rest (11%) were neutral.

Two thirds (67%) of the respondents were in agreement with the statement that, "disabled persons are involved in redevelopment planning". Only 5% of them were undecided while the remaining 28% opposed the notion. The study also found that nearly two thirds (63%) of the study participants were in consensus that older residents have more to say on estates redevelopment project planning forums. On the same issue, only 8% of them were in disagreement.

The study was also interested in assessing whether the community can easily access information on community based projects. More than half (60%) of the respondents were positive that the community can easily access information. Another 19% of them were in a contrary opinion. Further, when the study respondents were asked to indicate their opinions on whether there is

ethnic balance participatory forum, nearly two thirds (62%) were in agreement. Out of the remaining proportion, 24% of the respondents declined that there is ethnic balance.

On the other hand, the research sought to reveal whether social status determines participation in redevelopment project planning. Slightly more than half (52%) of the study participants were of the opinion that social status does not determine participation in estates redevelopment planning. On the same item, nearly a third (32%) of the respondents gave positive responses. The respondents were also asked to give opinions on whether education level determines participation of community members in redevelopment project planning. 42% of them were of contrary opinion, 36% were in agreement and the remaining 22% were undecided.

Discussion

The study found that majority (71%) of the respondents reported that there is no gender balance in participatory redevelopment planning. The study finding is in agreement with UN Women (2014) who affirm that gender inequalities across economic, social and environmental dimensions remain widespread and persistent. Despite UNDP's (2016) assessment that women's political voice and leadership has been recognized as a key driver in advancing gender equality and women's political participation and being key indicators of the general level of public sector effectiveness and accountability in a country, many participatory approaches such as participatory assessments do not explicitly address issues of social relations including gender (Slocum et al, 1995). According to the World Bank (1996), gender biases in participatory development projects may exist in the form of customs, beliefs, and attitudes that confine women mostly to the domestic sphere.

On whether higher income earners participate in project redevelopment planning more than low income earners, more than half (58%) of the respondents agreed. The finding concurs with a study carried out by the National Aids Control council, (2008) that indicated, the participation of the poor and the marginalized in development projects has not increased significantly rather some intermediaries have enjoyed more access to those projects.

The study found that More than half (60%) of the respondents were in agreement that the community can easily access information regarding development projects. The results may be attributed to solely releasing information approaches by the Nairobi County Government, which does not encompass effective participation. A study by the Malawi Social Action Fund (MASAF) projects, Dulani (2003) concluded that the level of community participation was limited to being informed what had already been decided by other key players which implied passive participation by consultation. Oakley (1991) also cites an analysis of a rural water supply project in Tanzania, where he observes that participation had ranged from non-participation and manipulation over information and consultation to some degree of partnership and delegation of power.

Interestingly, more than half (52%) of the study participants were of the opinion that social status does not determine participation in redevelopment planning. This could be attributed to the fact that inner city Nairobi estates are cosmopolitan and homogenous in regards to social status. Mostly, it is the poor who live here. This may be considered a pro, as according to some FAO (1997) studies, small informal groups consisting of members from similar socio-economic backgrounds are better vehicles for participation in decision making and collective learning than heterogeneous, large scale and more formal organizations.

Conclusions

The county government of Nairobi needs to strengthen its presence in marginalized communities, and develop communication strategies as a way of awareness creation among the people from every part of the city as a way of involving them in County development project. This will gather project support and acceptance by community members. In addition, the government has to find ways to assure communities of its commitment to ensuring effective participatory planning. As for the second tier, the resident associations need to focus on the socio-economic factors influencing community participation. To ensure that there is adequate participation from all age groups, both genders, a wide array of income groups and people of different social standing. To enhance the participation of residents with low education levels, the resident association and its leadership should work towards translation of documents and getting more educated members of the community to facilitate participatory planning processes in a way that most community members understand. This would enable them to interact and give valuable input. Resident association leadership needs to work to ensure that residents who have stayed in these communities longer than others give a platform to those who have lived in these communities for shorter periods. County leadership should also demonstrate effective training, strengthen good communication in community engagement and enhance sufficient systematic gathering of information and analysis of community issues in order to ensure successful participatory planning.

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