

The Preponderance of Evidentiality Enlightenment in Homeownership

Abstract

In this chapter, I deliberate the ethical issues of the homeowners' mortgage foreclosure phenomenon in society, stemming in part from social and business relationships. The motive of this qualitative study is relevant as to the preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment in homeownership and how well these microstoria anti-narratives fit well into the realm of the Quantum Storytelling discourse. Transitioning these homeowners' stories to evidentiality is essential to the ethical awakenings of enlightenment to homeownership. Moreover, I wanted to know if these homeowners' ethical and moral practices in their decision to purchase a home were influenced by coercion, duress, and mistaken evidence, which ultimately led to the unraveling of many hurricane-like turbulences. Does the decision of six homeowners represent the preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment? Do the discovered core factors influence their decision to purchase a home, even when they know they cannot afford it, provide space for consideration? Does telling their story alter the way others perceive their reasoning for falling prey on their mortgage loan? I will discuss this apropos concept of Coppedge's Consentology: Ethical and Moral Acceptance. Firsthand facts have steered the research. I interviewed four males and two females from surrounding communities who have previously gone through a mortgage foreclosure crisis. Their viewpoints shaped my understanding of the effects of evidentiality enlightenment through ethical awakenings from the menaces in homeownership. Whereas theoretically formulating the interviews of the interviewees within the context of fear and embarrassment of sharing their stories, I depended on the homeowners' "willingness to relive, discuss, and share their painful experiences in a one-on-one setting privately with the feelings of confidentiality, trust, honesty, loyalty, and openness from both the researcher and the participants."

Keywords: Homeownership, Evidentiality, Consentology, Ethics, Morals, Quantum Storytelling

The Preponderance of Evidentiality Enlightenment in Homeownership

During my dissertation research study (2012), “An Ontological Storytelling Inquiry into Homeowners’ Socioeconomic Ethics in Mortgage Foreclosure,” homeowners came to the realization of their spiraling downward hurricanic turbulences by realizing that the reason they actually suffered a mortgage foreclosure was because of their sole decision to purchase a home without having sustainable knowledge as a homeowner. During this study, homeowners graduated from the notion of “It’s someone else’s fault that I lost my home” to the highest level of an “ethical awakening” finally embracing the notion of “ethical and moral acceptance” that their homes were lost because of the own lack of knowledge and appreciation of “consentology” (Coppedge, 2010, 2011, 2012). In general, from my dissertation research, I aimed to investigate the quantum hindrances’ of these homeowners’ dilemmas by furthering my research into the awareness of “The preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment in homeownership.

For the purposes of this chapter, the preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment in homeownership ensures reasonable consequences of drawing valid conclusions from the experiences of the quantum physics storytelling. Ideally, this is where the energy of the dramatic dynamic forces of foreclosure becomes relevant in a negative (-) way to homeowners’ interactions with outside influences regarding their once-in-a-lifetime investment of home purchasing. Furthermore, these realized decisions are the determining factors as to whether the participants’ stories would determine if their decision-making processes would have been influenced towards a more enlightened position for purchasing a home if they had been better educated about homeownership. Homeowners’ lack of relevant knowledge or information pertaining to homeownership and financial management is an ethical social and business issue derived from the unethical influences of a third party. From the interviews, I discovered that the homeowners failed to consider that deciding to purchase their dream homes without sound financial planning might violate their conscience’s integrity. Instead of making their own moral and ethical choices, participants listened without verification to others who claimed an ethical and moral standing, and therefore they fell prey to the painful experience of mortgage foreclosure by coercion, mistaken evidence, and duress, all of which are crucial mistakes in their moral decision-making processes.

These influential factors, indeed, led to their unfortunate journeys to mortgage foreclosure. Upon investigating the participants’ “quantum storytellings” (Boje, 2012), in their behaviors, I found they had many personal deficiencies as a homeowner. Under these conditions were deficiencies based on information from the false premises of others.

In consideration of the preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment in homeownership, it appears that the participants’ ethical decisions and moral positions were doomed to fail from the beginning. Answerability, responsibility, and virtuality are concepts that cannot be misrepresented in contractual affairs or considerations because many consequences can result from an invalid decision leading to the failure to meet one’s obligation to pay the mortgage debt. Ethics of consentology and moral behavior are a matter of conscious honesty and spiritual conviction. This study’s main concern was to produce a reasonably fair, accurate, and valid record of what happened to these homeowners’ ability to maintain their mortgage debt in the past, and what occurrences from their hurricanic turbulence events actually transpired that

caused them to lose their “*dream home*” to a mortgage foreclosure by enabling them to tell their quantum story (Helmstadter, 1970, pg. 41).

Factualities of Analysis and Interpretations

As a genuinely unique approach, my own idealistic presupposition that I believe allows individuals to draw from certain conclusions towards quantum-leaping storytelling evidence, which must be presented in a clear, concise, convincing, non-coercive, and complete manner, enables hearers of the quantum storytelling to internally evaluate the truthfulness of any participatory conglomerative narrative in this instance through microstoria-anti-narratives. Therefore, the homeowners, in sharing their stories, share factualities that reveal fact-finding liberations as the homeowners painted a vivid picture of what they went through as homeowners during their crises from the first time they were unable to make their mortgage payment to how it felt to receive numerous phone calls from the mortgage companies and debt collectors and the Act 91 document (which says that your home is about to enter mortgage foreclosure), to how they hoped and prayed for some sort of help, solution, or direction. The participants expressed the devastation, pain, and fear they felt when the sheriff showed up at their front door with a Writ of Possession from the court, which says that the court, bank, and sheriff now have possession of their home. All of these consequences, however, resulted from the homeowners’ providing consent at some point.

This brings me to the evidentialities of the items in Table 3, “Consentology: Ethical and Moral Acceptance Table.” Here are the findings that I summarized according to the six types of journeys that I analyzed after each interview. I contrasted the six individual journeys by their answerability, virtue ethics, and moral responsibility based on philosophical consentology. Philosophical consentology is defined as a matter of conscious choice toward an action; one makes a decision and acts upon it as a matter of conscious thought, but one can ignore what is ethically and morally right or wrong based on the knowledge understood for the moment. During the interviews, each of the homeowners experienced an “ethical awakening” (Coppedge, 2012) through the sudden shock of awareness. This shock of sudden awareness of truth and justice derived from Bakhtinian ethical answerability, Kantian moral responsibility, and Aristotelian virtue ethics of a renewed conscious mind uncovered through the ontological storytelling of their microstoria antenarrative.

I designed Table 3 to compare ethical subthemes and theories as supporting evidence suspected in the conflicts of interests surrounding the participants’ homeownership decisions. The chart provides themes I identified for the interviewees’ unethical consentology agreements based on insufficient awareness of how to avoid foreclosures: coercion, self-infliction (mistaken-evidence), and duress. To identify these themes, I studied the stories of interviewees’ consentology journeys; the underlying themes and supporting factors in their stories; and the evidence of ethical answerability, moral responsibility, and virtue ethics in their stories.

Table 3 also reflects the intrinsic decision-making processes that homeowners were willing to share concerning their now-realized unethical and ethical elements of consentology. In sharing their personal and ontological perspectives of their Being without reservation or evasion of embarrassing issues, each participant admitted during the interview how his or her

behaviors and decision-making were unethical. Therefore, I organized Table 3 on homeowners' ethical awakenings of their conscious minds and themes through their ontological storytelling. Table 3 illustrates the participants' misfortunes based on their confessed unethical judgments.

As they journeyed from the beginning of their foreclosure crises and began to lean more towards their realization of their unethical behaviors in decision-making, each homeowner accepted responsibility for becoming ethically answerable as a home-owning citizen. Chapter 2 of my dissertation is where I discuss ethics (codes of conduct) that do not work well. Instead of these faulty codes of conduct, Aristotle (trans. 2004) supported ontological virtue ethics as a more significant ethical response to individual circumstances. During the second round of interviews with participants, I found evidence that they had developed a sense of virtue ethics. My goal during the second round of interviews was to understand the central causes of, and suggested solutions from, the homeowners for resolving their foreclosure crisis (Peters, 2004).

I did not limit the unraveling of the homeowners' confused emotions and body languages to their tearful and sometimes verbally loud expressions; instead, I honed deeply into the preponderance of evidentiality enlightenment in the homeowners' homeownership abilities. I also considered the unfolding of their personal convictions, which were aspects of data that I used to develop Table 3. Each of the six interviewees' unethical journeys appeared similar when I addressed the sovereign movement in their stories. The sovereign movement consists of individuals proclaiming their beliefs to be their inherited God-given civil rights. Another similarity among these homeowners' unethical journeys of mortgage foreclosure is confusion of purpose and unethical decisions based on poor advice (Coppedge, 2012).

Consentology

Consentology means consent and, in the context of this study, is solely the Aristotelian ethical responsibility and Bakhtinian ethical answerability of the homeowners through their verbal or written consent to contracts. Consentology also means consenting to a consentology trek from its beginning to its end. Consentology therefore requires consent based on sufficient knowledge of the moment. The informed accuracy of this consent when dealing with contracts and decisions may not always be relevant or understood at the time the consent is granted, but is publicized more so from the understanding and knowledge of the preponderances of homeowners' factual evidentialities in homeownership. However, as more knowledge and information becomes available at a later time, it may be possible to theorize consentology due to more concise information.

Therefore, the universal thread I see in this chapter is the human value system. The ethical, religious, and social systems that affect humanity play an important role in the decisions that affect our overall culture. Bakhtin (1993) said that we make these decisions in basic moments of human existence, and "these basic moments mostly consist of I-for-myself, the other-for-me, and I-for-the-other..." A part of consentology's theory is that all values of actual life and culture are arranged around the basic architectonic points of the actual world of performed acts or deeds" (p. 54). I used Bakhtin's philosophy to enlighten my analysis of evidentiality in homeownership through the ontological journeys that these six homeowners' experienced during their paths to mortgage foreclosure. These journeys involved internal

turmoil, which the participants were willing to share, no matter how difficult, in telling their personal stories about their crises in mortgage foreclosure.

Participants' Profiles

Each participant's unethical path led to these homeowners' ethical and moral awakenings. During the second round of interviews, I listened attentively and observed the behaviors and body languages of the interviewees. It was amazing to witness how each of these individuals originally (and even until the end) wanted to blame someone else for their misfortunes—and for good reasons. All of the individuals seemed to suddenly come into a personal awakening that the foreclosure they experienced was their own fault. They actually accepted the ethics and moral responsibility of being ethically answerable. However, they had good reason to be angry about the manufactured problem of mortgage foreclosure because of subprime mortgage default swaps, which caused a rapid depreciation of housing values in the United States (Gerardi et al., 2007). When the participants' saw the bigger picture of their experiences, they were able to analyze their ontological storytelling and realize that credit rating agencies were one of the root causes of their failure. Participating homeowners discovered that employees of the credit agencies were pressured into overlooking normal standard procedures in accurately judging credit ratings. This notion is discussed in detail in Chapter 6 of my dissertation.

Kohlberg (1971), a moral philosopher, supports the willingness to objectively investigate the events of these six homeowners. Kohlberg suggested that the fear of eviction or punishment impacts moral decisions because of the pressure to conform to what is believed to be a proper alternate path but what is, in fact, a dead end as a consequence of defaults and payments. Kohlberg based his philosophical perspective on Bakhtinian theories of ethical answerability (1990, 1993), Kantian moral responsibility (1785/1993), and Aristotelian virtue ethics (trans. 2004), all of which I have included in Table 3. I used the ethics of answerability, responsibility, and virtue in this study to confirm that individuals realize justice in homeownership and save their homes from foreclosure proceedings by correcting payment problems and by changing unethical personal practices that stem from making hasty decisions.

Each interviewee wrestled individually and collectively with some form of political justice or injustice. Participants fought for their ethical awakenings on common ground: misunderstanding the reality of fraud, deceit, greed, and theft and the problems with good-faith dealings. Participants' misunderstanding of what was happening to them stemmed from a lack of knowledge and training about political justice, leading to their demise in foreclosure. According to Boje (2012a), Aristotle believed that "justice in action" is a virtue of desire to volunteer and do good (p. 128). Boje (2012a) described justice in action as a spiral of virtue toward happiness, which includes fairness and equality for all.

My Personal Quantum Storytelling



This Could Have Been Me!

As I think about the true evidence of my near-foreclosure experience, I realize that each day, thousands of foreclosures are happening all over America. Reports show that when people lose their homes to foreclosure, they are forced to live in tents in parks, in cars, in RVs, or wherever they can to survive (Hubpage, 2012). Each homeowner who has experienced foreclosure has a quantum story to tell. Although each homeowner's foreclosure situation is unique, all homeowners who have experienced foreclosure express similar emotions of sadness, pain, and oppression due to their lack of knowledge. However, homeowners need to know that hope is available through education and the restoration of homeownership. Healing the American housing industry depends on homeowners of various races and creeds who suffered foreclosure telling their quantum stories. These ontological quantum stories are untold, but need to be heard. Stories like those shared in this study awaken the human spirit of the masses to become alive again so that homeowners learn to act, to take responsibility, and to become answerable for themselves based on virtue ethics.



So Many Fell Victim to Mortgage Foreclosure

I am passionate about helping homeowners tell their foreclosure stories because I once faced mortgage foreclosure on my own home. In my case, I did not know that I was facing foreclosure until it was almost too late to do anything about it. One night while relaxing after work and sitting on the couch watching *The Cosby Show*, my phone rang and my foreclosure drama began with the following disturbing conversation:

- Krissy: Hello, good evening.*
- Caller: Yes, good evening. May I speak with Mrs. Rush?
- Krissy: Who's calling?*
- Caller: I'm calling you from GMAC, your mortgage company.
- Krissy: It's late; why are you calling me at 9:30 p.m.?*
- Caller: Well, ma'am, we've been calling and calling, and we sent you several notices, so we decided to catch you later in the evening hoping to get to the bottom of this issue.
- Krissy: Issue? What's the issue?*
- Caller: Well, the issue is you are six months behind in your mortgage payment, and we were wondering if you would like to bring your account current.
- Krissy: What? Six months behind! My mortgage is never late, and it's always paid on time and in full.*
- Caller: Ma'am, your mortgage has not been paid in six months, and you must immediately pay \$10,000 no later than the 21st of this month. Otherwise, this home is scheduled to be boarded up and all belongings moved out and put in storage until you are able to settle this debt.
- Krissy: Wait, WAIT! I don't know anything about this. What have you sent me in the mail? I never got anything in the mail from you or the mortgage company.*
- Caller: You should have received the Act 91 document telling you that you were being sued in court because of your unpaid mortgage payments and that your house is being foreclosed.
- Krissy: FORECLOSED! What is that?*
- Caller: That means that the attorneys through the courts on behalf of the mortgage company have issued a Writ of Possession for your home.
- Krissy: WAIT, WAIT, and WAIT! I don't even know what a mortgage foreclosure is, and I was not aware of any documents being sent to my home, and I didn't know that my mortgage was so far in the arrears. Is there anything I can do to save my home? I have a small child, and my husband and I are in an unexpected separation, probably headed to divorce. What can you do to help me, sir?*

Caller: Right now, ma'am, if you are not able to settle this account tonight, I'm sorry, but there is nothing I will be able to do for you because we have been following proper procedures by notifying you by mail and calling you every day. So, if you are unable to handle this debt, I'm sorry, but unfortunately, there is nothing we can do at this point.

Krissy: *(Shaken, crying, and devastated) Okay, sir, thank you, but I will see what I can do before the 21st. Can I get back with you in a couple days to tell you what I will be able to do?*

Caller: Yes, but as I said, right now with this account being unsettled tonight, I will have to move forward with the foreclosure and the eviction scheduled for the 21st of June.

Krissy: *(Crying and still shaken) Okay, thank you, sir. I understand.*

I was young and inexperienced as a homeowner. This was my first time being a homeowner, and I had never heard of a mortgage foreclosure and home eviction. I assumed that only renters were evicted from their apartments but that homeowners were not evicted from homes they were buying. I was totally in the dark and not knowledgeable about homeownership. Like some of the homeowners I interviewed in this study, I was dependent on someone else to handle all of the household finances responsibly; unfortunately, such was not the case, and as a result, I suddenly became very ill, depressed, and stressed out when I learned that I was facing foreclosure. However, a day or so after I learned what was going on, I knew I had to do something. I had to find a way to save my home from being taken just like that from my child and me. Every day for a week, I constantly wondered where we would go if the mortgage company took our home. The sickness, the shaking, and the crying had to go; I had to figure out a way to keep my home.

Once I knew what was happening with my mortgage loan, I had to assume responsibility for whatever happened next. The following dialogue will give you a brief overview of what I had to endure from those whom I had to ask for help:

Krissy: *Hi, Mr. Martin, how are you? It's me, Krissy.*

Mr. Martin: I'm doing okay. How are you doing?

Krissy: *Well, I'm facing a terrible crisis right now; a crisis I didn't know existed until I received a call the other night from my mortgage company.*

Mr. Martin: So, what's going on, Krissy?

Krissy: *I am about to lose my home to a mortgage foreclosure. I thought my husband was paying the bill, but I found out recently that he hasn't paid the mortgage in six months.*

Mr. Martin: Well, they should have been sending you notices or something before it got this far. How much do they want for you to keep your home?

Krissy: They were sending me notices and calling, but I ignored them because my husband told me not to pay them any attention and that our mortgage payments were current. So I ignored all the mail and the calls until the other night when I decided to answer the phone and speak with the people. I figured if they are calling me morning, noon, and night, it must be something more serious than I thought, so I answered and learned that on the 21st of this month, they are evicting me and boarding up my home. I won't have any place to go. So, I was wondering if you could help me until I get my income tax check, and when I get it, I can pay it all back to you then.

Mr. Martin: So, how much do you need from me?

Krissy: Mr. Martin, I need \$8,000, but I promise you, I can pay it all back with my income tax return.

Mr. Martin: **So, you were irresponsible in your finances it seems, and you guys really got yourself into something you really couldn't handle. Why didn't you just rent an apartment?**

Krissy: Mr. Martin, I wasn't being irresponsible. I have never had to worry about paying my mortgage because that was my husband's responsibility. He takes care of the mortgage, and I take care of the utilities, and we both take care of the food and the child's day care.

Mr. Martin: (With so much more to say) Okay, I'll help you this time, **but you better get it together. You all want to live high on the hog like the Joneses, knowing you can't afford the home in the first place.** Come by tomorrow, and I will have the bank check ready for you after work.

Krissy: Thank you so much, Mr. Martin.

Although he placed all the blame on me without asking what *really* happened, Mr. Martin helped me to keep my home. I felt terribly embarrassed having to ask my neighbor for that amount of money, even though he had it to spare because his wife had just passed away and left him \$120,000. In my mind, I would have preferred that he had not given me the money but asked me what really happened and listened to my story from the beginning. Instead, he only saw one side of the situation—a side in which I was in the wrong. After everything was over and my mortgage payment was out of the arrears, Mr. Martin and I had the opportunity to sit down, and I was able to tell him the story from the beginning to the end. He felt bad that he did not listen to me or at least give me the opportunity to talk before judging me as a young homeowner. Mr. Martin never believed that young people should own homes, but he was happy that I owned my home in the end.

Though Mr. Martin seemed harsh at the time, he eventually listened to me and sympathized with my side of the story, unlike the second person to whom I turned to for help:

Krissy: Good morning, Jeff.

Jeff: Good morning, Krissy. How are you?

Krissy: Not well. I'm in trouble, and I need to ask you for a favor right away.

Jeff: What is it, Krissy?

Krissy: I am about to lose my home to a mortgage foreclosure. I thought my husband was paying the mortgage, but I found out recently that he hasn't paid the mortgage in six months.

Jeff: **What? Lose your house? This is awful. Why would you buy a home you knew you could not afford? You signed for a mortgage you knew you couldn't afford anyway. Instead of buying all those shoes and clothes, you should have been making your mortgage payment. Now, you need somebody's help. Don't you think you were irresponsible buying a home you could not afford?**

Krissy: Jeff, it has nothing to do with that! My husband suddenly left me. I came home from work, and all his things were moved out of the home. I didn't know we were having marital problems until now.

Jeff: **So what did you do to cause him to leave you like that? I know you did something.**

Krissy: But Jeff, you don't know me that well to make a comment like that.

Jeff: I know you well enough. **ALL WOMEN ARE THE SAME!**

Krissy: (In tears, hangs up phone. Phone rings.)

Jeff: **Here you are calling me asking me for my money, and I am giving you constructive criticism, and you hang up on me. That's what I'm talking about. If you are facing mortgage foreclosure, it's because of your own stupidity, and it's your own fault because you never should have bought that house in the first place.**

Krissy: (Hangs up again. Phone rings again.)

Jeff: Okay, now that I've gotten that off of my chest, how much do you need from me?

- Krissy:* *Two thousand dollars by tomorrow.*
- Jeff: I'll lend it to you, but I really don't want to. **If it wasn't for that child, I would say no because this happened because of your own neglect. You should have known that your mortgage was in danger when you started getting all the notices and getting all those calls.**
- Krissy:* *I would have, but first, I never got notices. He's home before I am, and he gets all the mail and was taking the calls. A couple times, I asked him about it, and he said everything was fine and for me not to worry about it, and this is where I am now.*
- Jeff: Oh, I see, **but I still see this as being your fault.** You can pick up the money tomorrow evening.
- Krissy:* *Thank you, Jeff. I'll be sure to pay it back when I get my income tax refund.*

Jeff did reach into his pockets and bail me out, but not without some harsh remarks. Jeff was tough to deal with, and several times I wanted to hang up and never answer his calls again. However, I was not the only one involved in this crisis, so I had to suffer his painful, humiliating, devastating scorn! Jeff did not really know my problems, and he did not care to know. He still felt that I was incompetent and irresponsible in my finances.

During my foreclosure crisis, I wished I had found someone to whom I could tell my story and who would actually listen and try to understand. Being allowed to tell my story would have perhaps helped me to better understand and receive criticism. Instead, having to ask for help from people who did not care enough to listen to me or hear my side made me resentful as a homeowner toward the attorneys, banks, mortgage companies, and realtors, so much so that I never wanted to purchase another home. However, I did manage to stay in my home for seven more years until I moved and became a homeowner elsewhere.

Asking for help was difficult, but once my mortgage was out of default, I paid everyone back for helping me to save my home. Because they judged me without hearing my story, I had a horrifying and bitter feeling toward the people who helped me financially, yet at the same time, I was thankful for their help. The bitter feeling about the people who helped me came from their brutal opinions about my situation when they did not have all the facts. Neither Mr. Martin nor Jeff heard what I said when I told them that, at the time, my husband was responsible for paying the mortgage and that when I asked him about the mortgage, how he would say everything was fine.

After my mortgage foreclosure crisis passed, I had an ethical awakening: to a certain extent, both Mr. Martin and Jeff were right. I understood that the near-loss of my home would have been my fault based on my consentology that I am also a responsible party from the inception of the mortgage loan by my consent. In other words, I said without knowing, "Okay, if you make the mortgage payments, I won't get involved in that area. I will just focus on the

monthly utility bills and the other bills that we share together.” This was an awful mistake, and I did fall short of my responsibility.

When you sign for a mortgage loan and your name appears on the documents, you become as equally responsible for that mortgage loan as the other people who sign with you. Regardless of what my ex-husband did or did not do, I was as responsible as he was for our mortgage payment. It was my responsibility to look at the payment stub every month; to check the bank account to make sure the mortgage payment was sent; and to be responsive to any notices, letters, or phone calls that we received. Mortgage companies do not care who pays the mortgage as long as they receive payment. My ex-husband and I had established that he—not I—was supposed to pay the mortgage, but that does not mean that I was off the hook. It was still my responsibility to ensure that payment was made each month.

My ethical awakening was that I should have been mindful enough about my own safety, security, well-being, and happiness to step up and be ready to take charge of my mortgage responsibilities. People make mistakes, but when homeowners make mistakes, they must be able to step up and take charge of their affairs in order to avoid forthcoming humiliations, embarrassments, evictions, and mortgage foreclosures. If you react to your mortgage foreclosure in a timely manner, you can find help!

Now, that I have had the opportunity to share the story of my own foreclosure crisis, I would like to help other homeowners to tell their stories regardless of how painful they may be or have been. In order to do this, I examined homeowners’ socioeconomic ethics in mortgage foreclosure. I strove to achieve a balance in describing past, present, and future outcomes for homeowners who signed loan agreements they could barely afford and who then defaulted. I implemented the ontological storytelling concept to help six homeowner begin to understand and possibly prevent the phenomenon of future foreclosures.

Background of this Study

There are three specific causes of the mortgage foreclosure crisis: (1) the federal government failed to repeal the Commodity Futures Modernization Act (CFMA) of 2000, which fueled the foreclosure crisis by removing penalties for fraud; (2) financiers have promoted and made huge profits from mortgage default swaps, subprime lending, and derivatives based on side-bet predictions of mortgage failure; and (3) individuals have failed to understand their mortgage responsibilities and to know their credit limits and borrowing capacities, thus violating the ethical principles of borrowing.

The Federal Government's Responsibility

Homeownership has always been part of the American dream. Before the start of World War II in 1939, employment was readily available, and community members helped one another build homes. People owned their homes free and clear. After World War II, financiers gave families the opportunity to purchase homes with affordable loans and encouraged some homeowners that refinancing their homes would not be a bad idea. As courts began to uphold community integration rulings during the Civil Rights Movement, homeowners began losing their homes after having paid for them, and many homeowners wanted to sell their homes to avoid integration (Szylyan, 2004). After the passage of the Civil Rights Laws in 1983, homeowners who did not want to integrate sold their homes and bought elsewhere. Unfortunately, opportunities for better interest rates and employment were less available than they had been in established communities.

The topic of mortgage foreclosure cuts to the core of immorality, of government supporting laws that it passed to ensure that mortgage lending failed. The influence of Wall Street to create "legal gambling" with default swaps, derivatives, and other obstacles to the mortgage market allowed Main Street to pursue its goals by overturning laws to stop credit default swaps and derivatives (Friedman, 2008). The CFMA of 2000 was signed by Former President Clinton and opened the door for many homeowners to face foreclosure problems. Primarily, this bailout was to aid Wall Street, not Main Street. Nonetheless, the powerful few exerted their leadership influences upon the weak majority more so under a democratic rather than republican rule of law, which appears to be another root cause of today's mortgage foreclosure crisis. A renewed sense of ethics and morality in management is essential for homeowners' recovery.

Financiers' Responsibility

The meltdown of the housing market also stemmed from the suspected greed of Wall Street brokers and some bankers, lenders, and financiers. Some financiers took advantage of homeowners through unethical and immoral behaviors, including mortgage default swaps and predictions of mortgage failures. For example, some lenders repackaged shaky mortgages with other mortgages and resold them from banks to other mortgage institutions. Financial institutions interfered with the sustainability of homeownership through special interests groups, such as rating agencies (e.g., Fitch Agency and Standard's & Poor's [S&P]). Officials at these financial institutions realized that the housing market was a favorable paradise for financial gamblers, from the inner city to Wall Street. Prosperity for financiers contributed to the mortgage foreclosure crisis.

Financiers also contributed to the mortgage crises by promoting subprime lending for less-than-qualified borrowers whose credit histories were less than satisfactory. Immergluck and Smith (2005) discussed the overall effects that subprime lending has had on homeowners and the mortgage crisis in America. They described serious consequences for borrowers who signed up for subprime loans. They also argued that some homeowners who had above-average credit scores qualified for prime loans with better interest rates and therefore it was unlikely that these homeowners would face foreclosure. However, such is not the case when financial institutions

approve loans for subprime borrowers whose credit ratings are substandard and whose interest rates are higher than they can afford. The unethical practices of subprime lending are, in fact, the primary cause of the mortgage crisis.

There is a parallel between subprime mortgages and a kind of carnival-huckster pitch from financiers. For example, one day while at a carnival, I was invited to come into the funhouse. The carnival huckster promised the kids and me a good time and free gifts. I refused, walked away, and thought this could be how financiers enticed homeowners with unwise mortgages. Financiers offered homeowners illusionary opportunities with subprime lending and opened the doors of credit for everyone, with little or no supporting documents, which enabled homebuyers to get just about whatever they wanted. Buyers were told to buy now and pay later. Financiers promoted the illusion that homebuyers should not be like your parents who worried about losing their jobs tomorrow and bought only what they could afford. Rather, financiers pressured homebuyers to be like the Jones family next door and down the street: wealthy and living the good life and the America dream.

Individuals' responsibility

Financiers encouraged subprime borrowers to sign for loans that the former knew the latter could barely afford, and the borrowers should have rejected the subprime loans, knowing that the payment obligations were above their means and could lead to mortgage foreclosure. "Don't worry about today," these homebuyers might have thought, "because we will probably get a promotion tomorrow. So let the good times roll." However, potential homeowners did not have to accept subprime offers just because financiers opened the door of credit and presented inviting opportunities. Potential homeowners could have simply walked away and not gone into debt without counting the cost of what they were doing. They might have considered the possibility of foreclosure and losing everything.

Since World War II, homeowners have increasingly replaced the old-school way of spending with caution and thoughtfulness with a method for spending with extravagance, greed, and covetousness. When homeowners changed their spending habits, they began to lose their homes to foreclosures because of job loss, lack of planning for future catastrophes, and other unforeseen tragedies. Even though the cards of mortgage lending were dealt in favor of financial institutions, homeowners were predestined to be dealt the losing hand because they failed to recognize the cautionary signs about which they should have been fully aware (Szylyvian, 2004).

Statement of the Problem

In America, homeownership is very important for the stability of the economy and provides incentives for community care, involvement, and participation. Mortgage foreclosures threaten the stability of American economy and communities. Many complexities prevented homeowners from securing their homes from foreclosures: unemployment, loss of income, separation, divorce, illness, and death. These complexities may be rooted in the ideology of a deficient education and, more specifically, in a lack of understanding of the ethics involved in signing for home mortgages.

First, homeowners who have lost their homes to mortgage foreclosures have never been given the opportunity to explain their sides of their stories, especially if the homeowners are considered economically disadvantaged. Poverty tends to silence the voices of economically disadvantaged individuals. Because there are no significant studies about homeowners' foreclosure stories, "there is no consistent evidence" of a theoretical, clinical, or practical significance enforcing or driving the need for immediate change in homeownership practices (Glatthorn & Joyner, 2005).

However, the foreclosure rate continues to increase, and homeowners are continuing to lose their homes all around the country; this suggests a need for an immediate change in homeownership practices, a change that could be brought about by allowing homeowners to tell their foreclosure stories. Second, homeowners whose education did not include concepts relating to personal finance and consentology may have deficient learning about these cultural (instrumental) values for survival in a world of commerce.

This tragic flaw in education fails to instruct homeowners in their answerability and consentology in intervening and controlling their personal finances. Therefore, homeowners need to be educated about the preventable causes of mortgage foreclosure.

Purpose of this Study

The rise in homeowners losing their homes beginning in 2008 was a huge problem. I conducted extensive research to find if others had carried out such a study or if someone else had already solved the mortgage crisis problem (Helmstadter, 1970, pg. 43). Upon the completion of my research, I felt compelled to proceed with studying such a phenomenon. In drawing this conclusion, I found that a huge problem in our society pertaining to sustainable homeownership desperately needs to be resolved. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the meaning of the Beingness of foreclosure problems by using an innovative, qualitative, ontological-storytelling approach to research potential homeowners' socioeconomic ethics with regard to purchasing homes. In looking through contrasting ethical perspectives (i.e., utilitarian, virtue, and answerability) of the mortgage foreclosure crisis, I examined the homeownership problem of mortgage foreclosures, why potential devastations from these foreclosures were ignored or unforeseen by all responsible parties, and what could prevent such failures in the future.

Specifically, I explored the ethical practices of potential homebuyers who are deciding whether or not to purchase homes. Many researchers have provided information about the responsibilities of Wall Street brokers, lenders, bankers, and financiers regarding the mortgage foreclosure crisis. However, few researchers have exclusively studied homeowners' responsibilities, virtues, answerabilities, and categorical and utilitarian ethics regarding their understanding of causes that lead to foreclosure and of preventive strategies for avoiding foreclosure. For this reason, I used this qualitative study to uncover underlying ethical factors that caused homeowners to lose their homes to mortgage foreclosure.

In conducting this research, I wanted to understand, interpret, and analyze the decisions of some home buyers when purchasing homes by allowing these individuals to share their stories of how, when, and why they fell victim to mortgage foreclosure. It is apparent that research about homeowners' points of view of what and how they felt during and after their foreclosure crises has been overlooked in the body of knowledge about mortgage foreclosures. Bringing such critical issues to light adds new insight about direct external, indirect external and internal influences that lead homeowners to succumb to unsecure mortgage loans. I aimed to provide new insights from a socioeconomic and ethical standpoint into what influences homeowners' decisions about purchasing home mortgages.

Using an ontological-storytelling approach, I wanted to start the process of self-reflection for homeowners who suffered foreclosures, helping them to assume their personal answerability for their mortgage outcomes. Following the socioeconomic approach of Buono and Savall (2007), I designed my research dissertation in a way to provide greater insight into the social and economic aspects of the process of making mortgages (including foreclosure risks) and to assess individuals' understanding of their personal answerability. Ultimately, I intended to uncover deeper levels of ethical and instrumental answerability, virtue, and the categorical aspects of homeowners' complicity in their mortgage foreclosure crises.

My strongest desire for this research was that, for the first time, homeowners will begin to understand their mortgage foreclosure crises. Some people have negative opinions about homeowners who have experienced foreclosure, believing that homeowners who lost their homes to mortgage foreclosure did so because of greed, because of wanting to be like their neighbors, or because of signing for loans that they knew they could not afford. I chose the design of this dissertation to eliminate those judgments by focusing more specifically on homeowners' own stories about their experience and their decisions.

Participant-identified dysfunctions in the home-buying process might reveal examples of hidden costs that affected homeowners' abilities to pay their mortgages, including loss of jobs, lack of income, divorce, depression, illnesses, alcoholism, and other costs. Participating in this study might help homeowners understand the possible reasons why hidden costs were hidden. Is it really true that participants were unaware of the potential dangers of owning a home because of their lack of understanding, education, or training? Previous research has revealed that a foundation in financial resource stability is the key to owning and keeping one's home during the unfortunate housing crisis that many Americans face today (Bonnet & Cristallini, 2002).

Rationale

I chose the quantum storytelling approach for my dissertation because the primordial future is an ideal perspective from which to study both the personal immediate present of a living story and the narrative of a past experience of a decision that ended badly (i.e., in foreclosure). The ordinary temporal orientation of storytelling (i.e., past-present-future) would only allow researchers to inquire about narratives and choices from the hindsight of retrospective sense-making. Instead, I chose ontological storytelling of anti-narratives of the future-past-present to analyze the ways in which anticipation and resoluteness of a future influence the past and present (Boje, 2012a). Considering the research problem of the underlying unethical factors (negative

input) of homeowners who lost their homes to foreclosure, I used this storytelling method to explore factors that lead to more answerable behaviors in the socioeconomic situation of mortgage agreements, behaviors that were readily known to homeowners but that still happened with their consent (Edmondson & McManus, 2007).

Research Question

The research question of this study is as follows:

RQ₁: What are the underlying ethical and socioeconomic practices that homeowners face in their ontological stories, including the stories that are complicit in putting families at high risk for losing their homes?

Significance of the Study

Anyone may experience unfortunate situations and may be classified or characterized as unsuccessful in society because of these situations. Being negatively labeled by others can profoundly impact our lives for a long time unless we are able to find a quick solution to fix the problem. Oftentimes, people are misjudged and never given a fair opportunity to express themselves as to they really are. People want to shine in front of others or at least look like they are doing well in society in front of others, especially if they are surrounded with people who always seem to be prosperous. Who wants to be seen as nonproductive or nonprosperous when everyone else is flourishing around them?

This study is significant because the ontological-storytelling approach of this research allowed homeowners to share their stories firsthand. Many homeowners who have lost their homes to mortgage foreclosure have been branded as people who were careless with their mortgages or who jumped into mortgages that they could not afford. Being labeled without knowing the facts of their situations and their never having the chance to tell their side of the stories is rather painful for homeowners who have faced foreclosure; it is even worse when others do not want to hear homeowners' stories, but feel that homeowners should not lose their homes for any reason. If homeowners' foreclosure stories are told, they are told by mortgage companies, banks, attorneys, lenders, notices left on front doors by county sheriffs, and unexpected visits to homes by sheriffs. These people tell their own stories to all who witness their actions against homeowners before the homeowners are able to tell or share their personal stories with anyone.

Organization of the Remainder of the Study

In summary, the purpose of this study was to understand the forces and rationales behind mortgage foreclosures, an understanding that is intended in the near future to vastly reveal the implications ascribed to the nature of this study. As the background section of this study revealed, foreclosures in America continue to increase at an alarming rate, and Americans are finding that even today, it is still difficult to recover from the recession (Brennan, 2012). The statement of the problem of this study is that foreclosures result from major upheavals in unemployment that continue to increase due to layoffs, downsizing, outsourcing, and a lack of

confidence among the American people. These forces continue to undermine the assumption that things are going to get better and continue to unsettle America's economy.

Other factors that affect homeowners' responsibility and recovery in homeownership and that engage homeowners with unforeseen problems include children, education, and excessive debt from student loans. These factors impact homeownership and foreclosure because of stressed personal budgets and overspending coupled with other overwhelming problems associated with rising food prices and utility and fuel costs.

In the remainder of this study, I delve deeper into the continuation of homeowners' ontological storytelling to better assist them in realizing their decision-making processes. I also use this study to encourage self-reassurance and to motivate truths, factors, ethics, and morals about participating homeowners' levels of responsibility and answerability in what really happened during their mortgage foreclosure experiences and what core factors played a significant role in their experiences. It is hoped that participating in this research will help homeowners transform the negative impacts that they went through into positive strategic plans of action to prevent future hardships for everyone, and that they would want to give homeownership a second chance.

Conclusion

First, during my research for my dissertation, I discussed homeowners' ontological ethical and moral positions about their foreclosures through the preponderance of evidentiality in homeownership. During the second round of interviews, I asked homeowners questions about their foreclosure liability based on their ethical consentology and decision-making processes towards homeownership. I anticipated that in answering my questions, each interviewee would provide sound evidence after realizing and accepting that amazing and blazing feeling of personal ethical awakening in his or her conscious mind about his or her responsibility, answerability, and virtue ethics of homeownership consentology. Each homeowner was successful in doing so.

Second, during the second round of interviews, participating homeowners told their stories from very different points of view. Some homeowners believed that the banks, lenders, mortgage companies, and financiers were responsible for their foreclosures. Others believed that no matter how things turned out, they—as the homeowners—were responsible for their foreclosures. Whether they admitted it or not, the homeowners themselves were responsible for their unfortunate circumstances. One similarity among the participants is that everyone was either coerced, under duress, or given mistaken evidence from third-party individuals. In other words, most of these homeowners (except Smitty) were influenced to purchase homes against their own will. Smitty, however, was simply discontented with what he had and wanted more. The fact that only Smitty was not influenced by outside opinions demonstrates something telling about homeowners' abilities to think independently—they can!

Kant's (1785/1993) teachings focused on categorical imperatives as the crossroads of separating morality from duty. Kant's doctrine of conviction and responsibility in ethics may be a problem for the modern business community, which separates ethics of conviction from ethics of responsibility or answerability to make a greater profit by avoiding standardized business ethics. In other words, most modern businesspeople avoid doing business honestly. Homeowners should therefore never depend on the ethics and morality of others to do the right thing on their behalf.

Boje (2012a) recognized the imbalance of ethics and power in business. Boje (2012a) based his opinions on Aristotle's feelings and thoughts about business owners' actions toward the possibility of balancing the difference between deficiencies and excesses in the marketplace, which create an extreme imbalance of wealth in the economy. As foreclosure rates continue to increase daily without restraint, homeowners must change their actions and think for themselves.

In Figure 3, Boje's (2012b) virtue spiral represents humanity's aspiring personal growth toward purity of mind and spirit without animosity, cruelty, or injustice blocking the energy spiraling upward and outward to benefit all people. The homeowners who participated in this study would have been more successful in their business dealings with others if they had kept in mind that greed and deception block the energy spiraling upward within human nature. One can only trust one's self to accept the higher virtues of self-reliance and to practice beneficial principles.

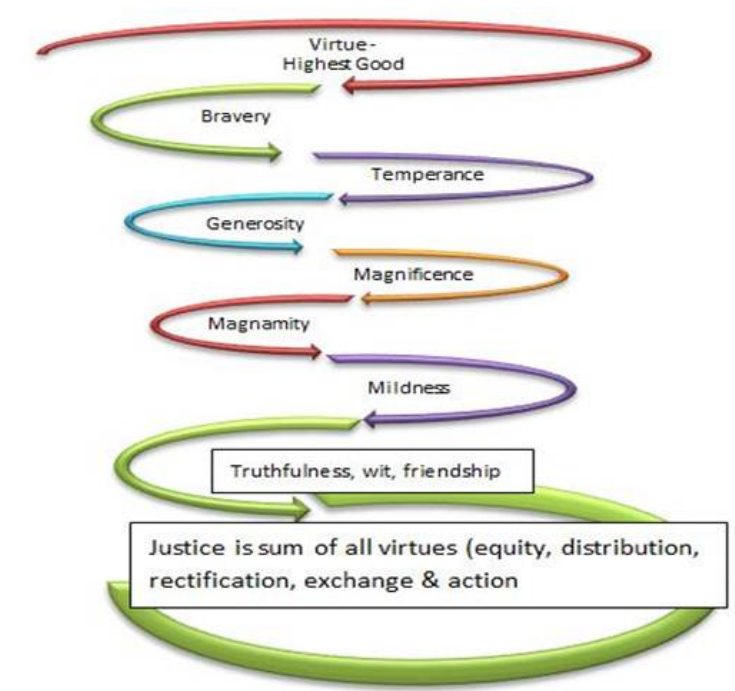


Figure 3. The virtue spiral.

Note: Adapted from "Quantum Storytelling," by D. M. Boje, 2012b, Rev. ed. Retrieved from <http://business.nmsu.edu/~dboje/448/The%20Quantum%20Physics%20of%20Storytelling%20in%20book%20format%20Jan%202011%20Boje.pdf>

Boje's (2012b) virtue spiral can be used to explain the participants' willingness to share their painful stories, which is an example of bravery spiraling upward toward the highest good: virtue. I used the virtue spiral to understand homeowners' consentology themes and ethical awakenings about their painful decisions in regards to homeownership. Homeowners who were moving upwards on the virtue spiral were seeking truth, rather than consequences, about their actions by examining their troubling decisions in their consentology journeys.

Boje's contribution brings a "♥-of-Care" to ontology in place, time, and materiality with storytelling all together, in what he call "ontological storytelling inquiry." He exclaims how Heidegger's later philosophical work develops the inner heart-space, which he also calls here, the "♥-of-Care" which is what Heidegger (1971 PLT: p. 128) calls moving away from "calculating consciousness towards the inner space of the heart." Thus quantum storytelling is attunement.

In conjunction with Boje's (2012) contribution that brings a "♥-of-Care," my contribution based on the preponderance of evidentiality in homeownership spins a new wheel known as "NEW-BIRTH." This new concept is developed upon revisiting homeowners' past events and have provided me with "fruitful generalizations" (i.e., keeping it simple) (Helmstadter, 1970, pg. 43), from the homeowners' past experiences involving their decisions-making practices and how they managed their personal financial affairs. These past experiences are pertinent to homeownership from prior experiences.

These experiences deserves a revisable path that would be more sustainable for their present situation of feeling less than worthless, hopeless, shameful, and doomed. Even foreclosed-upon homeowners deserve a second chance. So, my contribution consents to a "NEW-BIRTH." This NEW-BIRTH concept plunges into the consciousness of homeowners through ethical behavior and consentologyness through a "♥-of-Care" and NEW-BIRTH rehabilitation approaches. It rejuvenates homeowners' self-worth, confidence, trust, and a new beginning with a second chance to homeownership. Now, they can live life to its fullest once again.

"NEW-BIRTH" in this content is defined as re-establishing individual happiness by recapturing the spirit of the homeowner's upside down (meaning: they are under water, for example: homeowners in mortgage foreclosure) turbulences through renewable philosophical decision making. This is necessary because some hearts of "♥-of-Care" have lost their way and "NEW-BIRTH" rehabilitation is welcoming.

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