

**Dishgamu Humboldt:
The Community Land Trust as a Manifestation of Indigenous LandBack Initiatives**

Introduction

Community land trusts (CLTs) are shared equity models of permanently affordable housing development. Since their Civil Rights-era origins in rural Georgia, CLTs have proven to be particularly effective in preserving long-term affordable housing and neighborhood stability for People of Color, seniors, women-led households, low-income households, immigrants, and systemically marginalized households (Choi et al., 2018). Yet to-date there is only one tribally affiliated CLT, the Wiyot Tribe's Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust along the Northern California coast. There also remains a dearth of research on the CLT model in relation to Indigenous communities and households. Furthermore, as Cahen et al. (2022) note, much of the available research on CLTs cites their unique structure as that which "mechanically enables positive outcomes" (396). But how might the literature's over-emphasis on the CLT *form* obscure other factors in the model's success?

Cahen et al. (2022) propose that "care for place, land, and communities" is another of the "defining features of CLTs" (397). If this is true, how might Indigenous histories, values, and world-views align with the CLT approach to recommend the care-based model as an affordable housing practice that is particularly effective in tribal communities? Could community land trusts function as a manifestation of the Indigenous LandBack movement? This paper offers a sociological case study of the Wiyot Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust and its context within the history of land use policies and Indigenous peoples, as well as an examination of the Wiyot CLT as an intentional vehicle for LandBack activism. The Wiyot Tribe created their Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust in direct response to the harms caused by the Dawes Act, allotment, termination, and related U.S. land use policies directed at Native Americans. Dishgamu Humboldt is

also “designed to facilitate the return of Wiyot ancestral lands to Wiyot stewardship, putting land in trust for the purposes of affordable housing creation” (Wiyot, n.d.). Using the Wiyot example, this case study will suggest that the CLT model is distinctly aligned with Indigenous community design and LandBack planning practices that seek to center intergenerational stewardship, restorative economies, and the “sacred interconnectedness between people and place” (Droz, 2021; Wiyot, n.d.).

What is a Community Land Trust?

A community land trust—not to be confused with the concept of a land trust—is a form of shared equity homeownership. Shared equity homeownership models “are non-speculative, resale-restricted, ideally democratically governed, owner-occupied housing models premised on the mission of providing affordable and sustainable homeownership opportunities to low- and moderate-income households” (Hackett et al., 2019). Shared equity homeownership approaches are better-positioned “to provide housing security and stability that disrupt patterns of race, gender, and class inequality in housing access and outcomes because they treat housing and land as a collective, or social, matter rather than a private, economic one” (Schneider et al., 2022). In the community land trust model, land is treated as a public asset and not a private good. By permanently transferring land from the speculative market to a trust—which is typically controlled by a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization—land is in turn permanently insulated from market pressures, ensuring perpetually under-market rates for homes sold within the trust (DeFilippis et al., 2018). Community land trusts are subsidy-efficient producers of affordable housing because they retain the affordability subsidy in the land [itself]” (DeFilippis et al., 2018, 756).

The very first CLT, New Communities, Inc., was founded in 1969 in rural Albany, Georgia by Black farmers. New Communities, Inc. was intended primarily as an agricultural model to give the Black farmers autonomy and access to their basic rights as citizens. At the time, Black sharecroppers were being punished by white land-owning farmers if the sharecroppers participated in any Civil

Rights-era activism, including when the sharecroppers tried to exercise their right to vote. Some of the New Communities, Inc. founders, notably Robert (Bob) Swann, would go on to collaboratively publish *The Community Land Trust: A Guide to a New Model for Land Tenure in America* (1972). In this now-seminal text, the authors note the original intention of the CLT model was to “help marginalized people gain control of the development processes in their own neighborhoods” (Swann et al., 1972, p. vii). Today, CLTs continue to be used to preserve long-term affordable housing and neighborhood stability, in part by reducing excessive speculative investment in their neighborhoods, enhancing neighborhood stability (Choi et al., 2018). Today, there are more than 225 community land trusts in the U.S. across 45 states, as well as dozens in the U.K., Australia, Canada, and other nations (GroundedSolutions.org., Choi et al., 2018). There are also nearly as many variations on the model as there are CLTs themselves. Some are run as nonprofits, while others are operated as city- or county-led initiatives, private-public partnerships, programs within larger affordable housing organizations, informal communal agreements, or — as we shall explore — as units within an Indigenous tribe.

CLTs as a model are not free from critique. Since the 1990s, emerging CLTs have increasingly narrowed their missions from that of New Communities, Inc. to focus specifically on affordable housing. These younger organizations downplay the historical CLTs’ insistence on community control and hyper-local political action, in turn moving away from their roots as “powerful acts of community empowerment and mobilization” (DeFilippis et al., 2018). DeFilippis et al. (2018) argue that this trend, in turn, “leads to the continued disempowerment of” the very communities the CLTs intend to serve. Cahen et al. (2022) also cite other criticisms of the model:

“[The CLT] can fail to question the political economic forces that normalise precarity to begin with. If the aim of CLTs is to enact a caring society, to move ‘against’ and ‘beyond’ (Holloway, 2015, p. 3) existing injustice, shouldn’t they also offer an explicit critique of speculative private property markets?... Might CLTs gain more by explicitly challenging the

speculative development that gives rise to a need for affordable housing in the first place?" (403, 407).

In other words, CLTs work and innovate within (and thereby may perpetuate) existing structures. By design, CLTs limit the amount of equity a homeowner can earn during their tenure as a resident. CLTs also allow homeowners to build financial equity in their homes but — both because the land is owned in trust and because of deed restrictions during the home sale itself — CLT homeowner equity growth is typically capped below market-rate averages. As we have seen, CLTs overwhelmingly serve systemically housing-insecure and otherwise marginalized communities. While these populations may struggle to access affordable homeownership outside of a CLT, the model nevertheless constrains the amount of financial equity these populations can accrue, perpetuating systemic financial inequities that disproportionately impact People of Color, single mothers, disabled people, and the elderly.

Positionality and Theoretical Frameworks

My approach to this case study is informed in part by the critical self-reflection in DeLancey (2023). Like DeLancey, I am a non-Indigenous settler scholar and have been influenced by settler perspectives “that prioritiz[e] Western scientific methods and outcomes” at the expense of “Indigenous knowledge, values, and ways of knowing” (173). I was born and raised on the lands of the Anishinabewaki and Mississauga nations, and I currently reside on the lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, the Piate, and the Klamath peoples. I strive to practice socially constructivist scholarship in the mode of Charmaz (2005, 2006, as cited in Creswell, 2013) that is inevitably “suggestive and incomplete” (88). In this paper, I will attempt not merely to apply a “Western postpositivist” evaluation of a CLT that is “culturally responsive,” but also to listen to and document the Wiyot voices and narratives that ground their self-determined evaluation of their own CLT in Indigenous values, epistemology, and methods (DeLancey, 2023, 176). As Jojola (2013)

notes, “there is very little written about the ethical, methodological, and epistemological approaches to community design and planning by Indigenous communities,” with professions and researchers instead favoring “Euro-Western practices” (457). This case study is my settler-scholar’s documentation of a vibrant example of Indigenous housing policies within the framework of the LandBack movement. It is also intended to gesture at the absence of published academic literature on this topic written by Indigenous scholars and to encourage the intentional publication of more Indigenous researchers’ evaluations of Indigenous housing programs, including but not limited to CLTs.

I am also influenced by the concept of care put forward by Cahen et al. (2022) wherein the authors define CLTs as manifestations of Gibson-Graham et al.’s (2019) “matters of care” (Cahen et al., 2022, 395). According to Gibson-Graham et al., matters of care are “organizations that respond to place-based crises through experimentation, the nurturing of supportive community ties, and expansive networks that repair local environments and open up the life chances of individual households” (408). Cahen et al. employ the lens of matters of care in their case study of two CLTs. They do so in order to “complicate” the research that treats CLTs merely “as ‘housing models’ [or]... ‘legal tools’ whose “dual-ownership, shared-equity *structure*...enables positive outcome[s]” (396, emphasis mine). Cahen et al. argue that CLTs are also successful because the model prioritizes “care for place and people-in-place” by “responding to crises, fostering community ties, and improving local environments” (405, 408). As such, *care* is “a useful framework for CLT scholarship” and for “community development practitioners” (409). I will similarly employ a matters-of-care framework in this case study of the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust.

Historical Context: Indigenous Peoples and U.S. Federal Land Use Policies

In addition to centuries of colonization, there have been countless other catastrophically harmful land use policies wielded by the U.S. government against North American Indigenous tribes.

Within the scope of this paper, I will focus on three specific policies that are relevant to the lived experiences of the Wiyot Tribe: forced relocation via reservations, allotment, and termination. I will then explore both the specific events and the impacts of these policies on the Wiyot.

The newly formed United States of America inherited the concept of reservations from their British colonial forebearers. As early as the 1640s, British colonial officials had agreements "restricting Indians to a reserved area" (Fixico, 2013, 19). By the late nineteenth century, the US government had forcibly moved more than three dozen tribes with homelands east of the Mississippi River to the West, and then subsequently incentivized non-Indigenous colonizers to settle in these same Western lands. The government "employed three methods to establish reservations: executive order of the president, congressional legislation, and treaty (the most common method)" (20). Of more than 370 ratified treaties that the government made with sovereign tribal nations, "229 agreements involved ceding land, and 99 addressed establishing reservations" (18). But reservations were not simply a physical confinement for their Indigenous inhabitants. Within the reservations, tribes were forced to cede sovereignty and self-determination to the U.S. government and its agents. The reservations disconnected many tribes from their sacred sites (and thus from important cultural and religious practices connected to the land). Native communities also "found themselves having to adjust to their oppressors' ways, and this included observing and learning white societal values. They became the subaltern in their homelands, with Indian agents and superintendents in control" (23). The grievous impacts of relocation and reservation policies on Native communities have been intergenerational. As Haalboom and Natcher (2013) note, "rather than benefiting through relocation initiatives, many [North American] Indigenous communities experienced extreme hardships, including famine, disease, inadequate housing, and social disorder among others (Dickason and McNab 2009). They also continue [today] to struggle with the consequences of externally controlled administrations that often undermine Indigenous autonomy and decision-making authority".

On February 8, 1887, the Dawes Act was approved by the forty-ninth Congress of the United States. Officially described as the “Act to Provide for the Allotment of Lands in Severalty to Indians on the Various Reservations,” the Dawes Act called for “the treatment of Native Americans as individuals rather than as members of tribes” (National Archives, n.d.). The new law represented a change to the legal status of lands within reservations and “authorized the President to break up reservation land, which was [previously] held in common by the members of a tribe, into small allotments to be parceled out to individuals” (ibid.). In an interview with NPR's *Throughline* podcast, Ojibwe historian and professor Brenda Child notes that in the late nineteenth century, there was “tremendous pressure put on Indian people” to assimilate into white culture (Steinberg et al., 2023). As the podcast producers report, “allotment was seen as a way to accelerate that process of Americanization... The idea was that Native families would own their own land. They could farm it and build generational wealth just like white Americans” (ibid.). But, Child shares, the allotment process was flawed and even corrupt from the start. After 1887, individual states subsequently passed their own allotment laws to explicitly ensure “the most valuable land would be auctioned off or sold to [white] settlers. The law also made it so that tribal members would eventually have to pay property taxes on their own land... Politicians and [private] companies and banks... conspired with one another to dispossess Indians of their land” (ibid.). Furthermore, Native individuals did not own their allotted land with the same rights as those of white landowners; instead, the U.S. government held the land “in trust for the sole use and benefit of the Indian” and could make decisions about how to use, retain, lease, or sell the land (National Archives, n.d.). Allotment stripped Native communities of self-determination and autonomy in their own lands.

Unsurprisingly, allotment policies have also had long-term impacts on Native housing. In their examination of two different Minnesota American Indian reservations over time, Akee (2020) found that Minnesota’s allotment law, the Nelson Act of 1889, had “a dramatic reduction in home ownership...for [Native] households that were treated to the land-titling program as compared to

those households that were not treated” (123). Traditionally, in the pre-allotment era of common ownership of the lands, “no one in a community was homeless. Indeed, vernacular solutions were infinitely more adapted to the environment and the provision of housing was often borne by the collective with little or no cost for the individual” (Jojola, 2013, 467). Yet once allotments were set in motion, Natives were often dispossessed of their land through legal loopholes and overt theft. This left many members of tribal communities homeless, and subsequently spurred a vast, decades-long migration of former reservation residents to urban centers. There, due to racism and bias, displaced “Natives had no choice but to seek out the worst housing in impoverished neighborhoods” (Fixico, 2013, 129).

If reservation policies restricted Native lands and allotment policies privatized them, then termination policies sought to seize and eliminate Native lands entirely. The U.S. Congress first implemented termination policy in 1953 with House Concurrent Resolution 108 (Bloom, 2023). For over two decades and once again under the guise of encouraging assimilation, more than one hundred tribes lost their status under federal termination policies. During this time, “the U.S. government dissolved treaties, dismantled tribal governments and eliminated reservations, seizing more than a million acres of Indigenous land” (ibid.). Termination “ended the federal recognition of [many] tribal nations, as well as the social services that had accompanied that recognition. It also removed protections from reservation lands, allowing the Federal government to sell the lands to private (largely non-Native) owners” (ibid). Termination policies were not repealed until the 1970s, and there are still many tribes today who have not yet won back their federal recognition.

Contemporary Context: The LandBack Movement

“The LandBack movement is... born from work that has been done for centuries, and originated with our ancestors fighting to remain within their territories, and maintaining the right to hunt, fish, and gather... It also involves the protection of our sacred sites and homelands from contamination and desecration by industry. The LandBack movement also includes Indigenous values-based governance

of lands... and Indigenous-led work to untangle the conflicting legalities resulting from colonization that restrict self-determination on reservation land. Justice and healing can emerge in powerful ways when Indigenous lands are in Indigenous hands” (Droz, 2021).

With a more nuanced understanding of the history of several oppressive policies that forced the loss of Indigenous lands, we can begin to examine the myriad Indigenous efforts to recover these lands today. LandBack is the name of the movement at the center of such efforts to reclaim ancestral lands. The phrase “has been used increasingly in recent years as a simple but powerful” term to denote all direct and legal action intended to return “Indigenous lands back into Indigenous hands and achieve justice for Indigenous people” (DeLancey, 2023, 178). Aaron Tailfeathers, a member of the Kainai Tribe of the Blackfeet Confederacy of Canada, launched the LandBack movement in 2018. But as Goodluck (2023) argues, LandBack “is more than a vast real estate transfer scheme... It's also about dismantling the systems that made it possible” to commodify and privatize land ownership, displace tribal nations, dismantle communities, and undermine Indigenous sovereignty. LandBack is “part activist campaign, part culture-jamming meme, part restorative justice effort, [and] has become a central element of Indigenous politics in recent years” (Goodluck, 2023). On Indigenous Peoples’ Day 2020, the NDN Collective launched a multi-pronged LANDBACK campaign to recover Indigenous land ownership, empower Indigenous people, restore the ecological health of Indigenous lands, and thereby “dismantle white supremacy and achieve justice for Indigenous people” (NDN Collective, n.d.). Landback advocates seek to create “a state of Indigenous sovereignty where there are no pre-set terms and conditions imposed by colonial powers on Indigenous control over lands and resources” (DeLancey, 2023, 178).

In reality, there are real barriers to Indigenous communities regaining both their lands and true self-determination upon them. Bloom (2023) reminds us that “Indigenous groups often get land returned with all kinds of [legal, financial, and ecological] strings attached.” Tribes “are often burdened with a lack of capital, exorbitant land costs, and the whims of a seller's market. They may

face local or regional opposition from neighboring non-Native governments, special interest groups, or land owners” (Goodluck, 2023). On the other hand, non-Native land donors are incentivized because they “can receive a tax deduction for donating land or selling at below-market value to an indigenous-led organization” (Bloom, 2023). This leads to lands being returned that are environmentally contaminated by generations of non-Native occupants and industries. Cutcha Risling Baldy, department chair of Native American Studies at Cal Poly Humboldt, notes that “in a lot of the cases... [Indigenous] people are returned lands that they have to restore and bring up to compliance with current environmental laws and policies,” which can in turn create “heavy financial burdens for the tribe” (Bloom, 2023). Yet when lands do return to Indigenous stewardship through LandBack actions, they are overwhelmingly used for the purposes of “affordable housing creation, workforce development, and environmental and cultural restoration,” not just for the Indigenous inhabitants but also for all people residing upon and accessing these lands (Wiyot, n.d.).

A Case Study: the Wiyot Tribe's Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust

*“As Wiyot tribal chair Ted Hernandez says, ‘We understood our role as caretakers’”
(Vassel and Cobb, 2021).*

Situated within the historical impacts of forced relocation, allotment, and termination policies, and envisioned by its founders as a “vehicle for Land Back initiatives happening in real time,” the Wiyot Tribe’s Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust suggests that the CLT model of care is particularly aligned with restorative Indigenous community design and planning practices (Nonko, 2023). The traditional homelands of the Wiyot are in the Humboldt Bay region of the Northern California coast, near what is now the town of Eureka. The Wiyot Tribe have lived on these lands for thousands of years. In the middle of Humboldt Bay is Tuluwat, an island that “sits in the center of Wiyot ancestral lands, and [is] the spiritual center of the universe for the tribe” (Bloom, 2023). Tuluwat is also “the site of the annual World Renewal Ceremony, performed by members of the Wiyot, Hupa, Yurok, Karuk, and Chilula tribal nations. The ceremony lasts seven to 10 days and

aims to bring the world into balance” (Vassel and Cobb, 2021). In February 1860, following the sixth day of the World Renewal Ceremony, most of the men from the Wiyot community paddled from Tuluwat to the mainland to replenish supplies for the next day’s rituals, leaving women, children, and elders to sleep. A group of white men, armed with knives and hatchets, snuck onto the island and massacred nearly all of the remaining Wiyot (estimates range from 80 - 250 victims). Over the days that followed, the white mob perpetuated additional murderous raids against local Indigenous communities. The attackers were never tried nor prosecuted for their crimes (ibid; Wiyot, n.d.). Vassel and Cobb (2021) report that “some [Wiyot] survivors were imprisoned at Fort Humboldt, where over half of them died. Wiyot people were [later] relocated to Hoopa, Smith River, and then Covelo [reservations]”. Tuluwat and other Wiyot ancestral lands were subsequently parceled, allotted, and sold — entirely to non-Native buyers: “Tuluwat Island hadn’t exactly landed in responsible hands in 1860. Its white owners let a company build a dry dock and shipyard so that over the next century, the island became a toxic wasteland” (Bloom, 2023). By the early 21st century, half of the island was in the mudflats and “about 245 acres of its 280 acres were owned by the city of Eureka, and the rest by private landowners” (ibid.). Tuluwat had also become a federally declared environmental disaster site (Vassal and Cobb, 2021).

The Wiyot Tribe faced further threats to their existence under U.S. termination policies; in 1961, the California Rancheria Act terminated the legal status of the tribe (Wiyot, n.d.). Despite their lack of recognized status, the Tuwalat massacre survivors and their children began to slowly return to their ancestral Wiyot lands in the late twentieth century. One of these children, “Albert James, the son of Jerry James, a survivor of the massacre, had a dream of returning to [Tuluwat] island” (Droz, 2021). In the 1970s, Albert James proposed to the city of Eureka that it return Tuluwat to the Wiyot people, but the city ignored his request (ibid). Following the federal repeal of termination policy, the Wiyot Tribe “spent six years fighting a lawsuit against the federal government to win its federal recognition back,” finally succeeding in 1981 (Bloom, 2023). By then, other survivors and their

descendants “began hosting open prayer vigils to honor what was lost and to rebuild the heart and power of Wiyot people on the island” (Droz, 2021). These vigils would prove to be the first direct action in the Wiyot’s LandBack efforts.

In 1999, 1.5 acres on Tuluwat came up for sale for \$200,000. But because of forced relocation and termination policies, the Wiyot tribe did not have access to leverageable capital for such a purchase. Instead, over nearly three years, “the tribe raised \$200,000 to purchase the land by having bake sales, concerts, art auctions, and more” (Bloom 2023). In 2002, the Wiyot bought the 1.5 acres on Tuluwat — and began a fifteen year environmental cleanup process of the entire island.

“At first, it was mostly just Wiyot families and volunteers taking down two decrepit buildings and a water tower, then filling barges with more than 60 tons of iron and steel. But as the cleanup wore on, it was impossible for Eureka not to notice what was happening on Tuluwat, an area most non-indigenous locals used to call ‘Indian Island’” (Bloom, 2023).

By 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency certified Tuluwat clean. The Wiyot were finally able to return to Tuluwat “and complete the ceremony that had been interrupted in 1860” (ibid). In 2019, “the Eureka City Council voted to relinquish the deed to their remaining... acres on the island,” becoming the first municipality in U.S. history to voluntarily return land to a tribe without restrictions on how they can use it” (Nonko, 2023). Nearly 160 years after the massacre on Tuluwat, the Wiyot finally reclaimed the entire island and the spiritual center of their tribal universe. Tuluwat was the first of Wiyot’s LandBack successes. All lands that are returned to the Wiyot — including Tuluwat — are placed into the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust.

Dishgamu is the word for “love” in Soulatluk, the Wiyot language (Nonko, 2023). Notably, the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust includes all non-reservation lands returned to the Wiyot. It is not run as a separate non-profit organization but instead is “a unit of the Wiyot tribe, with the tribal council serving as [four of the seven] board of directors” (ibid.). Describing why the tribe chose the community land trust model for their LandBack efforts, “Wiyot tribal chair Ted Hernandez

says, “We understood our role as caretakers” (Vassel and Cobb, 2021). In the Wiyot's words, Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust is "an opportunity for place-based healing that is multi-generational, with benefits that are both immediate and looking ahead to the next 500+ years" and which is “designed to facilitate the return of Wiyot ancestral lands to Wiyot stewardship” (Wiyot, n.d.). The tribe intends for the land trust to achieve three goals that honor the sacred interconnectedness of people and place: affordable housing creation, workforce development, and environmental and cultural restoration (ibid). This case study focuses on just one of these three goals; however, it is important to note that the goals are intentionally and irrevocably interconnected.

Why is affordable housing creation one of the Wiyot tribe’s central goals, and how does the CLT model help them to achieve it? The Wiyot LandBack efforts call for healing the imbalance in the lands that have been removed from their stewardship for many generations. The Wiyot observe that “a key symptom of this imbalance is the lack of access to affordable, safe, and healthy housing. This not only impacts the ability of Wiyot people to remain in their homeland, but threatens the ability of the entire community to thrive in right relationship to the land” (Wiyot, n.d.). The state of California requires all counties to conduct a Regional Housing Needs Assessment. In Humboldt County’s self-assessment, the county found that it has an “acute housing shortage” and “must produce 3390 new units by 2027. The vast majority of these are either assigned to or likely to be built within Wiyot Ancestral Territory” (Wiyot, n.d.). To create more affordable housing in their territory, the Wiyot need their lands returned — and they need funding. In 2022, “two private landowners returned a 60- and a two-acre plot of forested land outside Eureka” (Nonko, 2023). In 2023, “another private owner returned a smaller parcel within [Eureka] city limits” (ibid.). The Wiyot tribe and the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust were also awarded a \$14 million California state HomeKey grant in April of 2023 “to purchase, convert and operate an office building and two single-family Victorian-style homes [in north Eureka] into 39 interim and permanent units serving homeless youth” (Wiyot, n.d.). In addition, “Full Spectrum Capital Partners, an organization supporting

undercapitalized communities access funding for restorative and regenerative projects, became a collaborative partner to help secure additional funds” (Nonko, 2023). Through a combination of private donations, public grants, and non-profit awards, the Wiyot are manifesting their vision of “land restoration, eco-villages, cooperative home ownership opportunities, low-income housing, worker-owned cooperatives,” and youth housing (ibid).

I cannot separate my settler perspective from the conclusions I draw in this case study; however, I can — drawing on DeLancey’s (2023) example — ask questions that try to prioritize and center “Indigenous knowledge, values, and ways of knowing” (173). Might an Indigenous CLT (like Dishgamu Humboldt) that is established as a unit within a particular tribe be more successful in addressing some of the central critiques of the CLT model? How could Indigenous ways of forming and operating a CLT improve the model where it has formerly been found lacking? For example, DeFilippis et al. (2018) have argued that the newest (non-Native) CLTs “downplay the historical CLTs’ insistence on community control and hyper-local political action”. Yet the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust has built both self-determination and sustained direct action into its mission and operations. “‘We’re looking at a different way of doing things,’ says Michelle Vassel, tribal administrator for the Wiyot Tribe. ‘A tribally-owned community land trust is new... we are really thinking of this in terms of self-governance, sovereignty, and the ability to keep this tribally controlled over thousands of years’” (Nonko, 2023). What else may the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust and the first CLT, New Communities, Inc., have in common that makes each effective in its mission?

A second critique in the literature of CLTs, as we have seen, is that the model “fail[s] to question the political economic forces that normalise precarity to begin with” (Cahen et al., 2022, 403). Does the inherent LandBack framework from which the Wiyot CLT operates present a more overt and explicit critique of the systems that “giv[e] rise to a need for affordable housing in the first place” (407)? According to reported interviews with Wiyot leaders, the tribe aims to build “a

visionary Indigenous-led *restorative economy* within Wiyot ancestral lands” (Droz, 2021, emphasis mine). If the Indigenous CLT is a tribal unit and not a separate non-profit, and if Indigenous lands in trust belong to the collective membership of the tribe — whether or not they are homeowners on Dishgamu Humboldt lands and thus subverting the history of allotment policies — how might Indigenous CLTs help to move the CLT model *beyond* simply working *within* the systems of speculative markets, systemic racism, and white supremacy? The LandBack movement is intentionally radical; perhaps Indigenous CLTs could help this particular affordable housing model become more radical as well.

Finally, let us examine how the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust embodies the defining features of Cahen et al.’s (2022) “communities of care”. To recap, Cahen et al. (2022) propose that prioritized “care for place, land, and communities” is another of the “defining features of CLTs” (397), and that the model is successful because it can respond to crises, foster community ties, and improve local environments” (405, 408). This definition of a community of care maps closely onto the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust’s three goals of “affordable housing creation, workforce development, and environmental and cultural restoration” (Wiyot, n.d.). Nonko (2023) reports,

“Crucially, the community land trust allows the tribe to be flexible, from receiving LandBack properties to responding to city requests for housing... It really gives the tribe choices... One arm of the [CLT] is about conserving land, and the other arm is about properties [the Wiyot] own and *take care of*, and environmentally and culturally *restore*”

(Nonko, 2023, emphasis mine).

As noted above, the Wiyot identify the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust as a “visionary Indigenous-led restorative economy” that is “rooted in *land stewardship, care work, equity, collaboration, and sacredness*” (Droz, 2021, emphasis mine). The Wiyot tribal chair, Ted Hernandez, said that because his people “understood our roles as caretakers,” they chose to pursue a CLT model

for their LandBack efforts (Vassel and Cobb, 2021). And in what is perhaps the most concentrated example of Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust as a community of care, the name literally means “love” in Soulatluk, the Wiyot language (Nonko, 2023). The Cahen et al. framework of communities of care is useful for helping to interpret the success of the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust; however, the Wiyot CLT also provides a rich, real-world example of the framework made manifest, of the Gibson-Graham et al. (2019) concept of responding to "place-based crises through experimentations" in care itself.

Conclusion

This case study of the Wiyot tribe’s Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust is rooted in constructivist awareness of its settler-scholar perspective and is informed by Cahen et al.'s (2022) communities of care interpretation of CLTs. I have attempted to seek possible answers to the questions of how Indigenous historical perspectives, intrinsic values, direct action, and world views might resonate with, inform, and improve the CLT model of affordable housing development. Could the CLT model also serve as a tangible — and successful — expression of the Indigenous LandBack movement? The answers I have explored above are both promising and suggestive of further lines of inquiry. For example, how is the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust disrupting, complicating, or transforming the CLT model itself, and what might we learn from Indigenous CLTs that could help inform and improve *all* community land trusts? The timeframe in which I needed to complete this case study (a single academic quarter) also prohibited my applying a participatory action framework. How might my scholarship be improved by collaborating directly with the staff, donors, funders, and homeowners of the Dishgamu Humboldt Community Land Trust, and with the Wiyot tribe more broadly? Finally, this incomplete study of the Wiyot CLT gestures towards a need for many more Indigenous academic perspectives on affordable housing models and policies (Indigenous or otherwise), and more Indigenous evaluations of their relative efficacy and success.

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