

## Exploring the People's Housing Process: An application of the 1986 Rhodes Policy Network model

*Peer reviewed*

### **Abstract**

A formal policy supporting the People's Housing Process (PHP) was released in 1998. This policy and subsequent support measures in many ways mandates a policy implementation network. The South African Department of Housing's (DOH) interpretation of self-built housing as expressed in the PHP should, however, be regarded as a response to and reflection of survival strategies that had already been employed by communities prior to 1998. The researcher therefore turned to the policy network literature to explore PHP project characteristics. The central research question was whether the 1986 Rhodes Policy Network model is a useful heuristic device for exploring PHP project characteristics. This was done by first subsuming network characteristics as contained within the 1986 Rhodes model under appropriate network dimensions. Using case studies, indicators were then developed for the presence of various network characteristics.

**Keywords:** Policy networks, People's Housing Process, self-built housing, heuristic model

### **Abstrak**

'n Formele beleid wat die People's Housing Process (PHP) ondersteun is in 1998 bekendgestel. Hierdie beleid en daaropvolgende ondersteuningsmaatreëls het op verskeie wyses 'n beleidsimplementeringnetwerk vereis. Die manier waarop die Suid-Afrikaanse Departement van Behuising selfboubehuising geïnterpreteer het, moet egter as 'n reaksie tot en weerspieëling van bestaande oorlewingstrategieë gesien word wat voor 1998 deur gemeenskappe gebruik was. Die navorser het dus beleidsnetwerkliteratuur bestudeer om PHP projekkenmerke te ondersoek. Die sentrale navorsingsvraag van die studie was om te bepaal of die 1986 Rhodes beleidsnetwerkmodel 'n toepaslike heuristiese model is om PHP projekkenmerke te ondersoek. Hierdie vraag was benader deur die netwerkenmerke wat binne die 1986 Rhodes beleidsnetwerkmodel voorkom onder toepaslike dimensies te plaas. Deur die gebruik van gevallestudies is aanwysers vir die teenwoordigheid van verskeie projekkenmerke ontwikkel.

**Sleutelwoorde:** Beleidsnetwerke, People's Housing Process, selfboubehuising, heuristiese model

## 1. Introduction

It has been argued that long-established institutions such as municipalities and housing development contractors find it difficult to respond to informality (Marais, Van Rensburg & Botes, 2003: 350). As noted by Jenkins, communities have therefore depended on the idea of "counting on one's own resources" since before 1998 when the PHP strategy was introduced (Jenkins, 1999: 444). In 1994, the newly democratically elected government had to develop policies that allowed the broader population access to services. The issue of 'housing for all' received particular attention for a number of reasons. One of these reasons was that historically the struggle for access to housing was a rallying point for a number of community protests. The second reason is related to the apartheid government's failure to appropriately address increasing urbanisation in South Africa. The choice of separate development as a reaction to this urbanisation process created a backlog of impoverished households seeking housing. The post-apartheid state would later introduce the PHP as a housing programme intended to make inroads into this backlog.

This article will explore the PHP as it was implemented by the DOH<sup>1</sup> before being replaced as a housing programme by the enhanced PHP in April 2009. The PHP "is a housing delivery mechanism whereby beneficiary households build, or organise between themselves, the building of their own homes" (DOH, 2005: 7). It will be argued that PHP projects are in many ways mandated policy networks, given that the network characteristics of these projects are derived from prescriptions contained within national policies and implementation guides. The researcher therefore turned to the policy network literature to explore PHP projects. There was a need to ensure that the study could achieve theoretical complementarity between PHP projects and what the literature refers to as networks. To this end, Borzel's definition of a policy network will be used as a generic definition of what a policy network is. Borzel's definition regards policy networks as 'a set of relatively stable relationships which are non-hierarchical and independent in nature linking a variety of actors who share common interests and who exchange resources to pursue shared interests acknowledging that co-operation is the best way to achieve common goals' (Borzel, 1998: 2). The policy network literature will therefore be reviewed to examine whether the literature can provide existing models for exploring PHP projects.

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1 The Department of Housing was renamed the Department of Human Settlements in 2009. This article will however refer to the former as was done in case studies on which the research draws.

The objective of the study is to contribute to the limited field of policy network literature in South Africa and to gain a better understanding of the implementation of the PHP. The 1986 Rhodes model was amongst other models developed during the inception of policy network literature. Such earlier models are not able to explain why certain network characteristics result in particular network outcomes and these models can at best identify the presence or absence of certain network characteristics. For the introduction of policy networks to the South African and PHP context, this descriptive ability is considered to be sufficient.

## **2. The People's Housing Process support measures**

The purpose of this section is not to provide a critical analysis of PHP support measures; the intent is to highlight policy prescriptions that create network characteristics as defined by Borzel. The 1994 *White Paper: A New Housing Policy and Strategy for South Africa* recognised self-help processes but did not identify a self-build housing approach as an immediate housing strategy (Marais, Ntema & Venter, 2008: 7). In the years following the 1994 White Paper there appeared to be a growing realisation that the process of delivering 'housing for all' would not happen as fast as envisioned. This arguably contributed towards the development of the 1998 *National Policy: Supporting the People's Housing Process*. The PHP is intended for beneficiaries who already qualify to access the housing subsidy scheme (DOH, 2005: 20). This policy's intent is to support communities in need of housing by assisting them in accessing land, services and technical assistance (DOH, 1998: 1). This support was formalised into two programmes, the first of these being accessing housing subsidies and the second being accessing technical, financial, logistical and administrative support to ensure project sustainability (DOH, 1998: 1).

The 2004 *Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlement*, commonly referred to as *Breaking New Ground (BNG)* is the DOH's delivery manifesto. This document deemed 'Supporting Urban Renewal and Inner City Regeneration' important in meeting housing objectives. As a starting point for such support, *BNG* highlighted the contradictory way in which the PHP was being implemented, especially during informal settlement upgrading. Rather than maximising on the benefits of beneficiary involvement throughout all the phases of the project, beneficiary involvement was often relegated to the final, construction phase (DOH, 2004: 17).

The 2000 *Housing Code* elaborates on the requirements set out in the 1998 *National Policy: Supporting the PHP*. Chapter 3.4 of the 2000 *Housing Code* introduced the 1998 *National Policy: Supporting the People's Housing Process* as one of seven housing strategies.<sup>2</sup> The prescriptions contained within the *Housing Code* emphasised self-built requirements above other requirements such as community participation. For this reason the PHP was regarded as a self-built strategy that focused on the completion of the top structure (PlanAct, 2009: 3). Beyond this emphasis, it has, however, been argued that the prescriptions contained within the code were too vague and consequently the original intent behind the policy was contradicted (DOH, 2005: 4). Consequently, in 2005 the DOH released the *Policy Framework and Implementation Guidelines for the Peoples Housing Process Delivery Mechanism* to provide the needed clarification. The years following the publication of the 2005 policy framework saw the continuation of advocacy from the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) sector. This advocacy was driven by arguments that the PHP should be about more than just the housing product being delivered (DOH, 2009: 3). This advocacy and other contributory factors led to the development of the Enhanced PHP as introduced in April 2009. The prescriptions contained within this Enhanced PHP are, however, beyond the scope of this article and focus will remain on the PHP as introduced in 1998.

The PHP can be used by already eligible beneficiaries to access a consolidation, project-linked, institutional or rural subsidy (individual subsidies may not be accessed via the PHP). Facilitation and establishment grants are made available over and above the capital subsidy which is reserved for services and the top structures. The facilitation grant is made available to initiate a new 'support organisation' or allow a current 'support organisation' to complete the project application process (DOH, 2000: 8.2.1.1). It may also be used for preparation work that forms part of the project application phase, culminating in the submission of a project proposal to the Provincial Housing Development Board (PHDB). It includes payment for the community workshops undertaken during this period. The establishment grant is used to enable the 'support organisation' to provide technical, financial, logistical and administrative support to the project. The approval of both the facilitation and establishment grants is at the discretion of the PHDB.

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2 The remaining strategies are Stabilising the Housing Environment Mobilising Housing Credit Providing Subsidy Assistance Rationalising Institutional Capacity Facilitating Speedy Release and Servicing of Land Co-ordinating State Investment in development.

The project-based requirements of the PHP make it clear that such an approach can only be considered for communities where at least a minimal level of trust and co-operation already exists or can be created between beneficiaries. The PHP can be considered an agreement between possible beneficiaries that they will pool their resources (including subsidies and labour) to create a housing project (CCT, 2006). PHP projects provide a network for linking households with a common interest that recognises that co-operation within a project (as opposed to an individual subsidy) is more beneficial. The facilitation and establishment grants, which allow capacity-building and empowerment, therefore contribute to creating an enabling environment.

One of the aims of the programme is to “foster partnerships between all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and other players” (DOH, 1998: 3). The inclusion of all levels of actors highlights the policy's intent to implement the PHP through non-hierarchical relationships. The focus on partnerships is also in recognition of the fact that co-operation between actors is the most beneficial approach to implementing the PHP. Support measures list the range of organisations allowed to provide assistance to projects. This includes provincial and local authorities, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, religious bodies, development corporations, private sector developers, employers, building-material corporations and private-sector developers (DOH, 2000). This is in recognition of all the actors who share a common interest in housing provision and the fact that the PHP can provide a network for linking these actors.

The options for the formation of 'support organisations' are set out in Section 8.2.1 of the *Housing Code*. A 'support organisation' has to be a legal entity such as a company incorporated in terms of the *Section 21 Companies Act 1972* (Act No. 16 of 1972), a trust, voluntary association or a co-operative under the *Co-operatives Act* (Act No. 91 of 1981) (DOH, 2000: 299). Setting the parameters for the legal status of the support organisation as well as the prescriptions for the contents of the project proposal and the subsidy agreement provides the basis for relatively stable relationships. All the benefits of a PHP approach would be difficult, if possible, to reach without the recognition that it requires an enabling environment that fosters partnerships built through co-operation. The main financial support mechanisms, namely the facilitation and establishment grants as well as the housing subsidies, recognise the necessity for resource exchanges between these actors. The state is willing to provide

these resources in anticipation of outcomes in which communities are more capacitated and therefore more resilient.

### **3. Policy network models**

The development of the literature on policy networks was driven by political science scholars who wished to capture the realities of policy processes (Skogstad, 2005: 1). Initial work was a critique against pluralist and corporatist models of interest intermediation (Blom-Hansen, 1997: 670; Borzel, 1998: 4). These contributions arguably began with Freeman's work (cited in Homeshaw, 1995) in the 1950s which focused primarily on the main actors within formal and informal institutions to which he referred as subsystems. Also referring to subsystems during the same time period, Truman (1951) (cited in Almond, 1997: 222) mentioned dispersed leadership across and outside government spheres. In the absence of policy network literature, Truman's work, like other academic writing on a similar subject matter, was, however, categorised as pluralist. In critiquing his American counterparts, Lowi (1972) (cited in Besussi, 2006: 3) used the concept of iron triangles to challenge erstwhile dominant pluralist accounts of the policy process. His work emerged from his study on the relations between congress, administrative agencies and lobbying groups. The policy network literature would later go beyond the elitist iron triangle approach to include a broader range of actors and types of relationships between these actors. Heclo (1978) (cited in Kenis & Schneider, 1991: 29) was the first academic to refer to these broader relationships as issue networks.

British contributions to the policy network literature emerged shortly after Heclo's conceptualisation of issue networks. This occurred by way of Richardson & Jordon's (1979) (cited in Homeshaw, 1995) attempt to bring together pluralist theories with that of the roles of different actors in policy-making. These authors viewed the policy process as being more about co-option and consensus than about the enforcement of party lines through manifestos and parliamentary influences. These authors are credited with first introducing the idea of a policy community, defining it as "a relationship which involves a community of departments and groups" (Kaboyakgosi & Mpule, 2008: 305). This relationship was said to include co-operative and consensual forms of interest intermediation (Kaboyakgosi & Mpule, 2008: 305). Another British academic, Rhodes (1981), developed a power dependency model to explain the dependency different members have on each other. He subsequently built on this model of interest intermediation and developed a typology of networks that are on a continuum ranging from issue networks to policy

communities. According to this 1986 model, 'issue networks' are characterised by the absence of stability, a large number of members and limited vertical interdependence. Within such networks there are no central points around which actors bargain for resources. This is the least integrated of all the networks in the model (Rhodes, 1997: 38; Rhodes, 1991: 204).

The second type of network, 'producer networks', is characterised by the dominant role the economic interests of both the public and private sector play in policy-making. This network has fluctuating membership and exhibits dependence on industrial organisations for the delivery of desired goods and expertise. In addition, there is limited vertical interdependence among the network and others with economic interests (Rhodes, 1997: 38).

'Intergovernmental networks', the third type of network, is based on representative organisations of local authorities and explicitly excludes public sector unions (Rhodes, 1991: 205). This network has extensive horizontal articulation in that it is able to penetrate other networks of interest (Rhodes, 1991: 205). Dominant interests within this network are exclusively informed by those responsible for the provision of local authority services. This network is also characterised by limited vertical interdependence because the members have no shared service delivery responsibilities with members in other networks (Rhodes, 1997: 38).

'Professional networks' have a highly restricted membership and exhibit stability. The network is dominated by the interests of professionals over whom there are limited, if any, constraints. This network is characterised by vertical interdependence with other networks. Finally, the network exhibits limited horizontal articulation in that it is able to insulate itself from other networks (Rhodes, 1991: 204).

The final network is referred to as a 'Policy Community network' and is characterised by stability. It also exhibits vertical interdependence which is based on shared service delivery responsibilities. This network has a highly restricted membership and is based on the functional interests of government. Such networks are also tightly integrated but exhibit limited horizontal articulation as they are able to insulate themselves from both other networks and the public (Rhodes, 1991: 304; Rhodes, 1997: 38).

Subsequent models (e.g. Wright, 1988; Coleman & Skogstad, 1990; Rhodes & Marsh, 1992) were developed after the particular researchers found that existing models did not capture the reality of

policy processes within the contexts in which they were interested. Rhodes & Marsh (1992) have, for example, further developed the 1986 Rhodes model by developing network dimensions to differentiate between policy communities and issue networks (Rhodes & Marsh, 1992). By selecting the earlier model and developing network dimensions, the same approach was used for this study. The policy network literature, beyond descriptive models, has continued to endeavour to develop theories about how network characteristics influence policy outcomes. This included empirical studies using policy network models as analytical tools in analysing various networks (e.g. Daguerre, 1999; Kaboyakgosi & Mpule, 2008; Howlett, 2002).

#### 4. Methodology and data analysis

The central research question was whether the 1986 Rhodes Policy Network model is a useful heuristic device for exploring PHP project characteristics. The reader has already been introduced to the 1986 Rhodes model and the characteristics assigned to each type of network. Each of these characteristics was subsumed under appropriate network dimensions to produce Table 1.

Table 1: 1986 Rhodes model network characteristics subsumed under network dimensions

|                   | Stability                    | Integration         | Membership              | Vertical interdependence  | Dominant interest  | Relationship with other networks |
|-------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---|--|----------------------------------|
| Issue networks    | Absence of network stability | Limited integration | Large number of members | Limited vertical interdependence  | Absence of bargaining platform at which dominant interests can be mediated |                                  |
| Producer networks |                              |                     | Fluctuating membership  | Limited vertical interdependence among network and other economic interests       | Both public and private sectors play a dominant role in policy-making      |                                  |
|                   |                              |                     |                         | Dependent on industrial organisations for delivery of desired goods and expertise |  |                                  |



|                             | Stability             | Integration        | Membership   | Vertical interdependence  | Dominant interest   | Relationship with other networks                                     |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Inter-governmental networks |                       |                    | Based on representative organisations of local authorities | Interdependence on account of the absence of shared service delivery responsibilities among members | Exclusively informed by those responsible for the provision of local authority services | Extensive ability to penetrate other networks                        |
|                             |                       |                    | Explicitly excludes public sector unions                   |   |   |  |
| Professional networks       | Presence of stability |                    | Access to network is highly restricted                     | Network exhibits vertical interdependence   | Informed by functional interest of government   | Network possess the ability to insulate itself from other networks   |
| Policy community networks   | Presence of stability | Tightly integrated | Membership highly restricted                               | Network exhibits vertical interdependence   | Informed by functional interest of government   | Network possesses the ability to insulate itself from other networks |
|                             |                       |                    |  | Based on shared service delivery responsibilities   |   |  |

To operationalise the amended model, the researcher drew on secondary data to seek indicators pointing to the presence of particular network characteristics. Convenience sampling was used in locating and selecting the case studies. Such a sampling method is appropriate for the motivations behind explorative studies (Johnson & Reynolds, 2005: 254). The case studies involve three organisations, namely the South African DOH, the Development Action Group<sup>3</sup>

3 The Development Action Group is a non-profit organisation which provides support to communities attempting to secure adequate housing. This support includes among others research lobbying and assisting communities during People's Housing Process projects.

(DAG) and Impumelelo Social Innovations Centre.<sup>4</sup> These institutions provided eleven case studies as the basis for selecting the possible indicators.

The selected case study projects are all located within lower income areas and involve communities who already had historical experiences of collective action aimed at securing shelter, before the PHP was initiated in that particular area. The historical experience of community action increased the prospects that trust and reciprocation, the basis for network structures, would most likely be present within the project case studies. A comprehensive project context for each case study is not warranted as the study does not aim to link project characteristics (which are related to project context) to project outcomes. Brief characteristics of the case study projects are, however, provided as examples of historical community action.

Table 2: Brief case study project characteristics

| <i>Project area</i>  | <i>Project characteristics</i>   |
|--|--|
| Ocean View<br>Cape Town<br>Western Cape                                      | The Ocean View settlement was developed on a hillside on the South Peninsula region of Cape Town where forcibly removed Coloured households had to settle in homes and flats in the early 1960s. From this time until 1995 no further housing was provided and consequently an informal settlement Atlantic Heights was established by residents as a response to prevailing overcrowded conditions (Impulelelo 2004b: 27).  |
| Tintown<br>Gamalakhe<br>Kwazulu-Natal  | Gamalakhe is located 15km inland from the KwaZulu-Natal coast. Most residents who now live here were forcibly removed from the Margate area on the coast. Several thousands of these households had to settle in Gamalakhe. Approximately a thousand of these households were not accommodated in the formal rental houses provided. They were placed in what was then intended to be only an emergency transit camp. These households however remained on this un-serviced site from 1960 until 1992 (Impulelelo 2004a: 18).  |
| Kwanubuhle<br>Uitenhage<br>Nelson<br>Mandela<br>Metropolitan<br>Municipality | Kwanubuhle is a black township within the Uitenhage municipality (now part of the Nelson Mandela metropolitan area). In 1996 the Uitenhage Transitional Local Council (UTLC) was given the permission to develop and facilitate housing developments. As early as 1996 the UTLC requested the CSIR (Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research) to undertake research into a community-driven approach to housing delivery. Subsequently Kwanubuhle has been provided with standard township services including tarred roads water and electricity points (DAG 2003a: 3). |

4 The Impumelelo Social Innovations Centre is a non-profit organisation that identifies rewards and promotes innovative public private projects. These projects are assessed based on the extent to which they improve the quality of life of the poor in South Africa.

| <i>Project area</i>  | <i>Project characteristics</i>   |
|--|--|
| Zola and Ivanlew<br>Tsolwa Municipality<br>Tarkastad Administration Area | A PHP project was started in Tarkastad and included both Zola and Ivanlew which were created under the apartheid group areas act. This project was initiated by engineers in 1998 who were able to access project-linked subsidies to provide a housing development plan for Tarkastad (DAG 2003b: 4). Since the initiation of the project there has however not been beneficiary involvement in the projects. Community involvement only happened by way of training local builders and interested persons through an artisan-training course (DAG 2003b: 6).                       |
| Ivory Park<br>Midrand<br>Gauteng   | The PHP was developed for Masisizane which is located in one of three wards within Ivory Park. Before the PHP project was initiated this community built their shelter from poles and plastic sheeting. They chose these materials because it allowed them to quickly dismantle their shelters when they were threatened with eviction. The area's geo-technical condition makes it susceptible to floods and the drowning of one child created further impetus for the initiation of a PHP project (DAG 2003c: 2).  |
| Sebokeng<br>Vereeniging<br>Gauteng                                       | The Kanana PHP project is located in Sebokeng Extension 12. In 1994 this land which was earmarked for industrial development was invaded by 1500 shack dwellers. These shack dwellers later joined the Homeless People's Federation and the construction of some houses started. As in Masizane in the previous project area there are adverse geo-technical conditions which the project has had to overcome. At the time that the project was initiated the area contained 2570 sites which had been serviced with gravel roads water electricity and sanitation (DAG 2003d: 2-6). |
| Dukathole<br>Aliwal North<br>Eastern Cape                                | The Dukathole township is situated adjacent to the Orange River in the Eastern Cape. The township came into existence in 1914 and since then both long-term and migrant residents from nearby farms have settled here. The housing stock in Dukathole included municipal stock houses and houses built by community members as part of job-creation programmes. At the time that the particular development was initiated the township included about 1 190 shacks (DOH 2002: 2).  |
| Duncan Village<br>East London<br>EasternCape                             | Situated in Duncun Village Mdantsane was established in 1964 where the area was earmarked as a relocation site for forcibly removed families. The area has already undergone various types and levels of housing development which started with the 1991-1992 proposal of the provision of 368 residential sites. The top structure provision was however delayed for five years even though infrastructure provision was completed (DOH 2002: 2-4).   |
| Smuts<br>Ngonyama<br>Village<br>East London<br>Eastern Cape              | The Smuts Ngonyama village is located within Mdantsane in the City of East London in the Eastern Cape province. Before the PHP process was started in the area potential beneficiaries visited another PHP project in Uitenhage which convinced them that this was a desirable approach to securing housing for themselves (DOH 2002: 2).  |
| Alphendale<br>East London<br>Eastern Cape                                | Alphendale informal settlement is located adjacent to an area which is occupied by prime residential houses. This settlement is home to 600 families who settled here towards the end of 1992. The development of affordable low-cost housing had already been in the planning phase since the early 1990s under the then East London Transitional Council. It was however only in 1996 that 356 project-linked subsidies were awarded to beneficiaries in this area (DOH 2002: 2-6).  |

| <i>Project area</i>                       | <i>Project characteristics</i>   |
|---|--|
| Masithembane<br>Cape Town<br>Western Cape | Masithembane is located within Site C of the Khayelitsha informal settlement in Cape Town. When the project started in 1997 a mass meeting was held during which community members were chosen who would act as a steering committee in mobilising the development. At the time of the study 200 beneficiaries had already completed the construction of their houses with an additional 750 households to be included in phase two (DOH 2002: 2-4). |

The 1986 Rhodes model provides network characteristics for each of the dimensions namely stability, integration, membership, vertical interdependence, dominant interest, and relationship with other networks. Using a split-half method more than one indicator was sought for each network dimension (Babbie & Mouton, 2005: 121). The amended model requires one to be able to differentiate between both the presence and the absence of the particular network characteristic. This study will, however, not be able to provide indicators for the absence of a particular characteristic. This is related to the shortcoming of using secondary data for analysis as researchers doing the initial research might not have captured other indicators of the presence of a particular network characteristic.

#### **4.1 Stability**

The characteristics within the amended model necessitate a differentiation between instability and stability. The first range of indicators for stability is related to membership stability. In one PHP project, peer pressure was identified as being important for membership stability. The project members stated that peer pressure guaranteed member buy-in from beneficiaries as it provided both a "carrot" and a "stick" for continued participation (DAG, 2003c: 7). It has also been said explicitly that a community that gives their buy-in to the project is more likely to agree to abide by the rules and regulations they "draw up" collectively as contained within non-legal documents (DAG, 2003c: 8). Such members are also more likely to attend a range of required meetings and workshops (DAG, 2003a: 7; DOH, 2002: 6).

Within stable networks, members are able to resolve dissatisfaction and continue to sign off on legally binding documents such as the constitution and the subsidy agreement signed with the support organisation (DOH, 2002: 6; DOH, 2002: 5). Stability is also indicated by members, specifically beneficiaries, who continue as network members even after the completion of their houses (DAG, 2003a: 8).

Another indicator of stability is that there is only one support organisation undertaking support activities. In some instances, more than one support organisation during a particular phase has, however, been cited as a strategic decision taken by the beneficiaries (DOH, 2002: 52). The Masithembane Housing Association, for example, used DAG during the initial mobilisation, preparation and approval phase but thought that an experienced developer would be more suitable for the implementation phase (DOH, 2002: 2). What this, however, meant for this particular project was that DAG was not part of the project during the time they would have provided home-owner education on issues such as dealing with patent defects, inspection and maintenance (DOH, 2002: 10).

The next range of indicators for stability is related to the availability of resources within the network. Within stable networks members have enough resources to complete the construction of their houses. This is in contrast to some projects where members have had to sell their building materials, and houses were left incomplete (DOH, 2002: 7; DAG, 2003a: 21). Also connected to the availability of resources is that compatible payment methods are evidence of stability within projects. This is in contrast to one project which had to deal with suppliers requiring up front or 'on delivery' payment while the DOH has to first be in possession of invoices before monies are released (DOH, 2002: 31; DOH, 2002: 55). This also results in delays in the construction phase which, in turn, demoralises members and leads to price increases (DOH, 2002: 56).

Within stable networks, members also honour verbal agreements. One such example is a project where there was an agreement that project workers would not receive a normal salary. One can therefore infer that when beneficiaries choose or are forced to renege on such agreements, it is also related to the non-availability of beneficiary resources (DOH, 2002: 48). Within stable networks sufficient resources (including information) are available to allow more or less accurate anticipation of the time lag between the project approval and construction phase as well as more or less accurate anticipation of the duration of the construction period (DAG, 2003b: 6). Where this has not happened projects have experienced deterioration of infrastructure (DOH, 2002: 43). Stability is also evidenced by the presence of quality control mechanisms such that mistakes are avoided and related material wastage is reduced (DOH, 2002: 9). Stability is also evidenced by the presence of formal handing over and induction procedures between old and new members of the network (DAG, 2003a: 10). Proper induction will assist in ensuring that

incoming members understand the principles of a PHP approach to housing delivery.

## **4.2 Integration**

The characteristics contained within the amended model require one to be able to differentiate between when there is limited, as opposed to tight, integration. The case studies highlighted that joint decision-making, arranging regular meetings, and effective communication measures are indicators for integration. The first set of indicators for tight integration is related to joint decision-making. In case studies member involvement and transparency in decision-making processes have been cited by primarily beneficiaries as being important for member integration (DAG, 2003a: 8). In fact, project committees have explicitly raised a lack of transparency and consultation as a reason why support organisations are replaced (DOH, 2002: 52; DOH, 2002: 36; DOH, 2002: 43). Further research should consider whether the lack of transparency, consultation and joint decision-making is reserved for certain aspects of the project. Having members involved in choosing the colour of the houses, for example, might only be window dressing while more substantial decisions are taken by one cohort of people.

One of the case studies detailed how the beneficiaries in one project decided that they would install full in-house services (e.g. taps, higher voltage electricity), even if this meant less money for the top structure. This trade-off was, however, only made after the beneficiaries agreed that individuals could always make extensions to the starter house later (Impulelelo, 2004a: 19). Consequently, trade-offs are also regarded as a form of joint decision-making. Trade-offs enable members to make decisions which they might otherwise not have agreed to because they were not knowledgeable about the difficulties involved in providing government-subsidised housing (Impulelelo, 2004a: 18).

Regular report back, progress and monitoring meetings can be regarded as the second set of indicators related to integration. These meetings should not only be held in preparation for important events or during a crisis period. Further research should identify the range (one project had general, progress and site meetings) and the nature (e.g. bargaining as opposed to consultation) of meetings held by members (DOH, 2002: 35). Finally, research should be undertaken to assess the optimal frequency and length of meetings to balance joint decision-making and demands on the members' time.

The third set of indicators for integration is related to the presence of effective communication measures. In this regard a community liaison officer who effectively relays information between network members is evidence of integration (DOH, 2002: 4). An operational housing support centre should also be considered evidence of integration as all members may access information from these "one-stop" housing centres (Impulelelo, 2004b: 26).

### **4.3 Membership**

The characteristics contained within the Rhodes model require one to be able to differentiate between when network membership is large, fluctuating and/or restricted. The membership dimensions with regard to stability have been explored in the previous section. There is subsequently a need to make a clear distinction between member instability and member fluctuation. The case studies highlighted the presence of members in networks who are not part of the project for the entire phase but whose presence should not be interpreted as evidence of instability but rather as evidence of fluctuating membership.

The case studies provide evidence of project members who work towards attaining the project outcomes but only for a specific aspect of the project. An example of this is demolition and building companies who provide beneficiaries with extra fill for construction (DAG, 2003a: 20). Another example is that of volunteers, with a number of these having only fluctuating membership to the housing projects. Some volunteers provide labour during the construction phase only while others provide child care for parents or guardians busy with the construction (DAG, 2003c:7; DOH, 2002:6). In addition, there are also Technicon students who volunteer on the project in order to complete internships and apprenticeships as required by the National Building Curriculum (DOH, 2002: 38). There is little expectation that these volunteers be included in substantive project decision-making while they are working there.

The range of actors involved is a good indicator of the size of the membership. Member types can be analysed by way of three important aspects: the project level at which they are present; which institutions or organisations they represent, and the nature of their linkage (e.g. voluntary, under mandate, or by contract) with the network. Consider, for example, a ward councillor who is a representative of both the local authority and a political party. As a representative of the local authority which is a support organisation, the nature of the linkage is contractual. As a representative of a

political party the nature of the linkage would be based on a mandate from a particular political party. Both entrance requirements and membership fluctuation are related to and influence the nature and form of linkages between members. The Gauteng Province, for example, had a directorate which dealt solely with PHP housing delivery (DAG, 2003c: 3). One can therefore expect their linkage with the project to be more sustained and valuable in gaining resources (including information). This is in contrast to one case study in which it was clearly stated that the material procurement and payment procedures of the local authority were not suitable for a PHP process (DAG, 2003c: 8). This is again an example of how the type of member influences membership linkage.

As far as the restriction placed on membership entry is concerned, there are three clear distinctions. Most importantly, beneficiary membership is based on their eligibility for housing subsidies. These restrictions, as contained within the national housing policy, form the basis on which the project proposal is submitted. In addition to the eligibility requirements, families are selected from the housing list based on need and family size (Impulelelo, 2004b: 26). A number of PHP projects are also connected to saving schemes which allow members to gather savings for the construction and extension of their houses. Consequently, one can argue that, in some instances, membership is indirectly restricted to those who have the capacity to save and become part of a savings club or scheme (DAG, 2003c: 2). The second distinction involves members on the various project committees, whose entrance and subsequent selection to serve on committees is dependent on them being known and active within the community. These members are also selected because they have already gained the trust and respect of community members (DAG, 2003a: 6). It has also been said that communities consider representation requirements when selecting committee members but this needs further research to uncover the community's understanding of representation (DOH, 2002:4). The third distinction concerns how suppliers are selected to provide services to the projects. Three aspects have been listed as deciding factors in this selection, namely whether the suppliers are known for quality materials, their track record in the provision of services, and their prices (DOH, 2002: 31).

#### **4.4 Vertical Interdependence**

The characteristics contained within the Rhodes model require one to be able to differentiate between strong and limited vertical interdependence. In the case studies, there was greater evidence



of the presence of dependence. The dependence of projects on the state is primarily related to subsidies, project approval and training. With regard to the state's dependence on other members within the network, it has been acknowledged that other members are able to augment the limited resources the state has at their disposal.

This limited interdependence can, however, not be explained by way of the 1986 Rhodes model which holds that limited vertical interdependence results from an absence of shared service delivery responsibilities between different networks. In South Africa the local authority can, as an agent of the national authority, undertake housing developments. In respect of project dependence on the different spheres of government, one can, however, infer that projects are more dependent on provincial authorities than on local authorities. This is illustrated by the fact that projects have been able to proceed despite not being approved by the local authority (DOH, 2002: 53; DOH, 2002: 41). The implication of this inference is that interdependence with local authorities will only occur when this authority has the capacity and/or political will to support the projects, either by giving their approval for the project application or as a support organisation (DOH, 2002: 37).

It was also found that projects display evidence of dependence on the Department of Labour, the PHP Trust (particularly as a funder for training) and the DOH for training (DOH, 2002: 54; DOH, 2002: 6). There is little evidence of interdependence in these relationships. Government's dependence on members within the networks is strongly related to the notion of social capital and sweat equity. This is acknowledged insofar as the DOH documents state that communities have access to resources (including social capital and sweat equity), without which housing development and PHP projects, in particular, would not be possible (DOH, 2000: 1).

In one case study the project displayed little if any dependence on state institutions. The Dukathole project had already built 300 houses depending only on their own resources and sweat equity, without having received a government subsidy. They operated on the basis of a revolving loan, supported by a local church, which allowed the community to build a limited number of houses each month (DOH, 2002: 17). It should, however, be pointed out that the fact that such achievements can be reached is in line with PHP support measure principles. According to these principles, the PHP has been put in place only to support communities when and where they are not able to complete a particular component of the project. This is

embodied in the phrase “minimum intervention, maximum support” (DOH, 2002: 3).

#### **4.5 Dominant interest**

The characteristics contained within the Rhodes model require one to be able to identify which member interests dominate the network. One should also be able to recognise if a platform exists at which these dominant interests could bargain. From the case studies one can discern dominant interests. It was noted, in particular, that at times the primary goals of delivering houses are either fast-tracked or postponed in order to accommodate dominant interests.

The first type of dominant interest is related to the scale of the project. In these instances, the delivery of a larger amount of houses is fast-tracked at the expense of attaining other policy outcomes. This refers to the fact that professional and local authority members seem to take on a ‘delivery-driven’ interest in larger scale projects (DAG, 2003a: 12). Other project outcomes such as community capacity-building through training and joint decision-making are consequently not attained (DAG, 2003a: 1, 6). One example given is where beneficiaries could not design their own housing plans as it was advised that this would make planning, approval, construction and technical supervision more difficult to manage (DAG, 2003a: 20). Some of the hesitation from the technical professional community is that the PHP lowers established housing construction standards (Impulelelo, 2004a: 19). This had, however, been overcome in one project where one of the professionals, a civil engineer who was in good standing with other professionals, acted as an advocate for the principles underlying the PHP (Impulelelo, 2004a: 20).

Within the case studies, members have stated that profit was not tolerated as a dominant interest. Beneficiaries stated that they sought to minimise professional, especially contracted involvement because these members are viewed as being driven by profit-seeking behaviour (DAG, 2003a: 4). One project, for example, started with a block-making facility in order to supply the project with blocks when there was a demand. This was part of the community’s approach to keep money within the project rather than losing it to outside developers who would make the profit (Impulelelo, 2004b: 27). A dominant economic interest was also curbed by the fact that many developers find housing projects to be unprofitable (Impulelelo, 2004a: 18). The absence of a discussion of corrupt practices in PHP projects relates to the fact that the selected case studies are presented as good practice case studies. It is suspected that

this absence is by no means representative of PHP projects. Even in the good practice case studies there is, however, an example of beneficiaries secretly moving surveyor's pegs to increase their plot boundary (Impulelelo, 2004a: 19). In this case, the individual interest of households took precedence over community buy-in and commitment to the project.

It is not clear from the case studies whether the highest decision-making bodies also act as bargaining platforms. One case study did refer to the project implementation committee providing a networking platform (DAG, 2003a: 22). Another case study referred to a stakeholder's forum as the highest decision-making body. This forum provides for joint sessions that include, among others, the provincial DOH, the developer, the ward councillor, support organisation (including the manager, accounts administrator and certifier), the support committee (including two representatives from each area) and the Urban Upgrade and Renewal Programme representatives. Despite the absence of mention of bargaining platforms, there is evidence of bargaining as in the case where materials suppliers have agreed to fix prices for an agreed amount of time (DAG, 2003a: 20; DOH, 2002: 31). One can therefore infer that bargaining happens at a lower project level.

#### **4.6 Relationship with other networks**

The characteristics contained within the Rhodes model require one to be able to distinguish between network insulation and permeability. In the case studies only two other networks were identified in addition to the particular case study project. These two networks are other PHP projects and the Urban Development and Upgrade Programme. One particular project exhibited dependence on The Urban Development and Upgrade Programme (UDUP) for their "services and expertise" (DAG, 2003b: 13). This programme is funded by the state and provides basic level service to communities. The particular PHP project was very permeable to both resource linkages and influence from the UDUP programme (DOH, 2003b: 13). The relationship case study networks have with other PHP networks mainly included exchange visits to learn from successes and challenges of current projects (DOH, 2002:26; DAG, 2003a: 18). In one instance, the project committee has been approached to act as a support organisation to emerging projects (DOH, 2002: 37).

The case studies do not provide evidence of the extent to which PHP networks are able to insulate themselves from other networks. It would be of particular interest to explore the extent to which the

networks are able to insulate themselves from other networks, such as building suppliers in collusion or political formations that might have a negative impact on the project.

## 5. Conclusion

PHP support measures require PHP projects to follow prescribed steps and engage in specific relationships with prescribed partners. This mandated implementation of the PHP process lends itself to an exploration using a policy network approach. With this belief, the 1986 Rhodes policy network model was identified as being promising for exploring PHP project characteristics in South Africa. The 1986 Rhodes model was amended to provide greater conceptual clarity when undertaking data analysis. Each of the 1986 Rhodes model characteristics were subsumed under appropriate network dimensions. Using convenience sampling and secondary data collection, case studies were selected. These provided adequate, if limited indicators for the presence of network characteristics contained within the amended model. In doing so, the analysis also highlighted what the implications are for further studies wishing to refine the indicators presented. However, the qualitative sampling and data collection method creates a representation shortfall. Therefore, the finding of the study cannot be used to generalise about the broader population of PHP projects (Burnham, Gilland, Grant & Layton-Henry, 2004: 52). The research can, however, be used by other researchers interested in network characteristics as it provides them with indicators which can guide them in empirical research.

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