SELF-HELP HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA: PARADIGMS, POLICY AND PRACTICE

Lejone John Ntema

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by

Lejone John Ntema

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis submitted for the Philosophiae Doctor degree at the University of the Free State is my own, independent work and has not been submitted by me to any other university/faculty.

I furthermore cede copyright of the thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

LJ Ntema

Bloemfontein

May 2011

TO PULANE

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
BNG	Breaking New Ground
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IDP	Integrated Development Plan
IDT	Independent Development Trust
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NHBRC	National Home Builders Registration Council
PHP	People's Housing Process
PHPT	People's Housing Partnership Trust
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SEBRA	Support Empower Bridge Reconstruction Account
UNCHS	United Nations Centre for Human Settlements
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

CHAPTER ONE:

SETTING THE SCENE

1.1 Background and problem statement

Although the role of the state in housing provision in developing countries has varied considerably since World War II, Harris (1998; 2003) asserts that the state has, in general, continued to play a significant role in the provision of low-income housing. In turn, the role of the state – as embodied in its various policies, paradigms and practices – has become the subject of debate among academics, scholars, researchers and policy makers. Despite the fact that self-help housing is as old as humankind itself (Pugh, 2001), and that it was practised in different parts of the world before World War II (Harms, 1992; Harris, 2003; Parnell & Hart, 1999; Ward, 1982), it has since received varied institutional backing (Harris, 2003) and even more prominently since the early 1970s because of the World Bank's influence in this regard (Pugh, 1992). From literature it is evident that one can distinguish between three different forms of self-help, namely laissez-faire self-help (virtually without any state involvement), state aided self-help (site-and-services schemes) and institutionalised self-help (cases where the state actively supports self-help through housing institutions) (more detailed definitions follow in Section 1.1.2). Various forms of self-help housing have long been one of the most prevalent housing options in the world since World War II (see for example Dingle, 1999; Harris, 1998; Ward, 1982). The theoretical notion of self-help in the context of developing countries is commonly attributed to JFC Turner (Turner, 1976). Yet, it should be admitted that aided self-help in particular was both lobbied for, and practised, long before the rise of Turner's ideas in the 1960s and 1970s (see Harris, 1998; 1999b). Furthermore, Turner's work, along with its practical consequences, is closely associated with the site-and-services and neo-liberal policies promoted by the World Bank (Pugh, 1992).

At the same time, aided self-help and the renewed emphasis on this approach in developing countries in the late 1960s and the early 1970s cannot be considered in isolation from the drive for government involvement in housing. In fact, aided self-help was largely a reaction to policies promoting government-provided housing. Although there are indications of government involvement in housing before World War II, the demolition/destruction of urban

settlements during that war provided a further impetus for direct state involvement in housing in Europe during the post-war period. This conventional wisdom soon spread to the developing countries. However, state-provided housing did not solve the housing problem, and informal settlements mushroomed in many developing countries. In these circumstances aided self-help became a logical response to address the informal settlements developments. Further interesting about aided self-help or site-and-services is the fact that, despite its neo-liberal connotation, this type of self-help has been practised in open-market economies and also in socialist economies such as Cuba and India (before 1990) (Harris, 1999b).

As already pointed out, scholarly writings have indicated that Turner was certainly not the first person to lobby for self-help, and that self-help had been conventional wisdom in some parts of Latin America before Turner committed his ideas to writing (Harris, 1998; 2003). Yet, Turner's views changed the low-income policy landscape and he is by far the most frequently cited author on self-help (Harris, 2003). The practical implication of Turner's work is that governments should not provide those aspects of housing that people can provide for themselves. Consequently, Turner was a proponent of site-and-services schemes (commonly referred to as "aided self-help" schemes) in terms of which governments had to assume responsibility for the provision of basic services, and individual households – through dweller control – were themselves responsible for the construction of the individual housing units (Pugh, 2001). Yet, as argued by Harris (2003), Turner's noble idea of dweller control (by means of which dwellers had to control the actual housing construction processes) was, in practice, probably the one that received the least attention. The state's continued involvement and control in the provision of housing had to a large extent undermined the autonomy of self-help, which resulted in a situation where many self-help projects compromised the key principle of dweller control.

Regarding the state's involvement in various low-income housing programmes, particularly self-help housing, South Africa is certainly no exception. In the South African context, self-help is officially called the People's Housing Process (PHP). Before turning to a more detailed description of this programme (PHP), two observations are worth mentioning: self-help was part of South African housing policy for more than a century under both the colonial and the apartheid governments (Parnell & Hart, 1999) – a fact commonly ignored in existing

literature, and, self-help is to some extent entrenched in mainstream low-income housing policy and in its subsidy instrument, the purpose of the subsidy being to provide recipients with a site and basic services, coupled, that is, with a nuclear (starter) home that can be extended over time. Theoretically, self-help is thus entrenched in South African housing policy. However, South Africa's low-income housing policy is commonly criticised for being neo-liberal (Jones & Datta, 2000) and, consequently, for providing a housing product that was too small (Tomlinson, 2006) – a consequence of self-help principles being entrenched in policy.

Furthermore, the small houses produced commonly resulted from macro-economic motivations (national budget constraints, savings on labour costs), and were seldom related to the concepts of housing satisfaction and dweller control, which could have been achieved through self-help and the later expansion of the core housing unit. Though the original White Paper on Housing 1994 did not specify any housing size, there was constant pressure from the implementers at the provincial government level to set a minimum housing size (Charlton, 2006). The required housing size was set at $30m^2$ by National Government in 1999 (Huchzermeyer, 2001), while other mechanisms were also introduced to increase housing size. The Free State Province even deviated further in the sense that, as far back as 1994, a minimum housing size of $40m^2$ was strongly advised/advocated (Marais & Wessels, 2005). Guided by national norms and standards, the currently acceptable minimum housing size in the Free State Province is however $50m^2$ (Department of Human Settlements, 2010).

Against the national and historical backgrounds outlined above, the PHP was implemented in South Africa from 1998. Similar to the international concept of self-help co-operatives, PHP was effectively implemented through housing support centres. However, initial delivery using the PHP process was slow and limited in extent. A second wave of interest in PHP developed in 2003, when serious concern was voiced about the existing contractor-driven approach. The Department of Housing, in an attempt to address the inherently contradictory principles of the PHP, introduced some interventions in its Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements, dubbed, 'Breaking New Ground' (BNG). These interventions included a redefining of the PHP, new funding mechanisms for PHP, and institutional restructuring (Department of Housing, 2004: 17).

But, as Baumann (2003b: 7) points out, "[T]he 'rediscovery' of the PHP is perhaps driven more by the failures of the latter paradigm than a belief in its potential to deliver good housing at scale".

PHP was regarded both as a means of channelling private investment into housing (since the formal banking sector had been less successful in this regard), and also of meeting the need for a larger degree of beneficiary commitment. It was viewed in terms of 'sweat equity' for those who could not afford a cash contribution towards their housing (Bay Research and Consultancy Services, 2003). Thus, the renewed interest in the PHP had little to do with any belief in the acceptance, in principle, of self-help – rather, the PHP was seen as a way of solving the problem regarding the contractor-driven approach.

Against the above-outlined background of problems associated with the state tendencies (nationally and internationally) actively to control state-funded low-income housing programmes, questions that have guided the research in this thesis include:

- To what extent has Turner's idea of dweller-control been operationalised in general low-income housing and more specifically in the South African version of self-help called PHP?
- To what extent did self-help groups (Housing Support Centres and Co-operatives) become mechanisms of state control rather than institutions by means of which dweller control could be fostered?
- Are the principles of self-help, which were entrenched in the original housing policy being applied across housing programmes in South Africa?
- What are the consequences of state involvement in and control of low-income housing programmes in particular and specifically of self-help housing?

1.1.1 Research aim and objectives

The aim of this research has been to evaluate the application of dweller control and self-help principles in self-help housing policy and practice in South Africa by means of three case studies. In order to achieve this aim the following objectives were set:

- To analyse the origin and development of low-income housing policies in developing countries, with specific reference to self-help housing policy.
- To assess (against the international theoretical background) the development and application of low-income housing policies in post-apartheid South Africa, with specific reference to self-help housing.
- To evaluate (through case studies) three types of self-help housing in the South African context in terms of housing outcomes, beneficiaries' satisfaction, the role and responsibilities of the state and beneficiaries against policy and against Turner's ideas on self-help housing.
- To make a number of recommendations with regard to the possible roles that the state and the beneficiaries could play towards the successful implementation of self help housing policy.

1.1.2 Conceptualisation

Before proceeding with the research details, a number of key concepts used in the text must be defined so as to avoid misinterpretation of concepts and to clarify possible ambiguities. Where necessary, some further clarification will be provided in the remainder of the text. The following key concepts will be defined: housing, self-help housing, people's housing process, state-aided self-help housing, laissez-faire self-help housing, institutionalised self-help housing, housing co-operatives, housing support centres, dweller control, sweat equity.

For the purposes of this thesis, the researcher use the definition of the term **housing** advanced by Khurana (2001), which defines housing as a package of services: land, public facilities, access to employment and other social services, and also the dwelling structure itself. Yet it should be admitted that the main emphasis in the thesis is on the dwelling structure and on the processes related to the construction of the unit.

From a low-income housing perspective, the concept **self-help housing** can be defined as practices in which low-income groups solve their housing needs primarily through their own resources – both in terms of labour and finance (Zhang, Zhao & Tian, 2003).

Dewar, Andrew & Watson (1981), favouring a slightly different emphasis, proclaim that self-help housing is a housing process in which individuals and communities are in control of the major decisions about dwellings and environments – regardless of who does the actual building. For this thesis, self-help housing is defined as a housing process that allows poor communities to act as key decision makers in project planning, design, management and implementation while the state provides only the initial project funding, training on project management and oversight during project implementation.

People's housing process can be defined as a housing-delivery mechanism whereby beneficiary households build or organizes, among themselves, the building of their own homes, make 'sweat equity' contributions through their labour, and exercise a greater choice in the application of their housing subsidy through their direct involvement in the entire process (Department of Housing, 2005). Showing links with the original concept of *self-help housing*, Khan and Thring (2003) define the people's housing process as a state-assisted self-help housing programme, in which individuals, families or groups are supported by the state to take the initiative to organise the planning, the designing and the building of, or actually building, their own homes. Going beyond the mere provision of own housing units, Baumann (2003b) defines the people's housing process as a phrase that is used to describe the self-provision of shelter and basic services by the poorest members of societies in the developing world. Similar to self-help, for this thesis, the people's housing process is defined as a housing process that allows poor communities to act as key decision makers in project planning, design, management and implementation, while the state provides only the initial project funding, training on project management and oversight during project implementation.

In this thesis (as indicated earlier), three distinct forms of self-help housing are critically important for both analysis and discussion. **Institutionalised self-help housing** refers to implementation of self-help housing through community-based institutions such as co-operatives or self-help groups. At the international level, these self-help groups are referred to as *housing co-operatives* while in the South African context they are referred to as *housing support centres.* Chapter Four evaluates this form of self-help in greater detail by means of a range of case studies.

Laissez-faire self-help housing is commonly defined as a process of self-help in which the state does not play any role. It could well be self-help housing in either middle- or high-income households or in informal settlements where the state does not provide any assistance (Duncan & Rowe, 1993; Hardy & Ward, 1984; Harris, 1991). In the context of this study, laissez-faire self-help refers to the deviation from national policy in Welkom (see Chapter Five), where homeowners received building materials subsidised by government but were in full control of the housing-construction process. The main deviation from national policy (*aided self-help* as explained above) is that, unlike the process where a contractor builds the core house, the household are in full control of decisions pertaining to the construction process. In Turner's paradigm, this would amount to dweller control. It should be noted that this example can also qualify as aided self-help but – for the purposes of this study and for the fact that the dwellers were in control of the construction process – this project is used as an example of a laissez-faire self-help project.

Aided self-help housing that can be defined as a programme (Pugh, 2001; Skinner & Rodell, 1983) in which site-and-services schemes usually play a crucial role, with the state being responsible for the provision of basic services and individual households assuming responsibility for the construction of their own housing units. In the South African context, aided self-help includes the construction of a core house – funded by the state. The self-help principle entrenched in this approach is that the further extension of the house becomes the responsibility of the homeowner. In the context of this study, and when applied to the South African situation, aided self-help thus refers to mainstream housing policy which intended to provide a core house that the owners had to extend at their own cost. It should be noted that the issue of whether the subsidy should include a house and what the size of that house should be was central to many debates in finalising the housing subsidy policy (Rust & Rubenstein, 1996). The Freedom Square case study, which forms the backbone of Chapter Six, is the practical example of aided self-help that is used in this study.

Housing co-operative is defined as a legally incorporated group of persons, generally of limited means, pursuing the same cause of meeting the common need for housing or its improvement, based on mutual assistance (Khurana, 2001).

Housing support centre is defined as a facility or office staffed during normal office hours and at agreed times during weekends by members of community appointed by beneficiaries themselves for technical and administrative assistance and support during housing construction (Department of Housing, 2005).

Dweller control can be defined as a practice in housing provision where processes of planning, design and construction are entirely left to be managed and controlled by the homeowners themselves (Payne, 1984; Ward, 1982). In broad terms, Turner (1976) referred to dweller control as an exercise, in any housing process, which permits and makes provision for residents to make basic decisions about their own housing environment.

Sweat equity can be defined as a practice in the housing process where the beneficiaries contribute their labour because of either their inability to afford hiring builders or because they intend to save money in the construction process (Harris, 2003). The term is largely used in an economic sense.

1.2 Research methodology and study area

Before research methods and the study area are discussed, it is important that a brief discussion of the philosophical assumptions that have informed the study is given.

1.2.1 Philosophical assumptions of the study

Reflections on housing policy and practice commonly originated from political-economy foundations. Although such reflections are not without merit, they commonly result in binary interpretations or an acceptance of basic neo-liberal trends or in a critical stance influenced by socialist or neo-Marxist perspectives. Recent research in Europe has argued that housing studies could benefit from much closer ties with social theory – as opposed to political-economy and urban studies theories (Venter, 2010).

Given the above background, the present study is strongly influenced and guided by Turner's theory on self-help, but then with a specific emphasis on his notion of dweller control. In essence, Turner's theory emphasises the individual's right and ability to make fundamental decisions about housing design and construction. Turner is of the view that while dwellers should be allowed to play a key role, the overall success of any housing process should be measured in terms of the extent to which these individuals were able to, amongst others, practise dweller control, and freedom to build. Attainment of these principles – as argued by Turner (1976) – is largely dependent on the state's willingness to recognise a shack as a house-in-process, and thus, to provide a supportive rather than a dominant role in helping squatters incrementally to improve their housing conditions. Such a changed state role would in turn promote what Turner refers to as housing by people rather than the state's mass housing. Other than being widely considered to have influenced low-income housing policy in the developing countries and also that of the World Bank, Turner's ideas have also sparked criticism from the adherents of the neo-Marxist school of thought (see Chapter Two). Furthermore, it should also be acknowledged that, though Turner's ideas and theory on self-help have strongly influenced and guided this study, the study attempts to reflect critically on some of Turner's ideas (see Chapter Seven).

1.2.2 Research methods and the study area

To collect the necessary data for this research, different methods were applied: a literature review was conducted on the origin and development of self-help housing policy in developing countries, this was followed by an analysis of South African literature on the development and practice of low-income housing policies with specific reference to self-help

housing. A diversity of literature (books, academic journals, theses, media, conference papers, Internet) dealing with both national and international experiences of self-help housing policy and practice were consulted. The primary aim of the literature review is to paint a truthful picture of the national and international emergence and development of self-help housing policy and its theoretical assumptions.

The second methodological dimension of the research project involved two quantitative surveys (site-and-services and laissez-faire self-help projects) and a qualitative approach (focus-group meetings and in-depth interviews) in five case studies of institutionalised self-help housing projects in the Free State Province of South Africa. As shown in Figure 1.1, cities and towns in the Free State Province, which were chosen for these various self-help housing case studies, include Mangaung (Bloemfontein), Thabong (Welkom), Kgotsong (Bothaville), Kutlwanong (Odendaalsrus), Meloding (Virginia), Tumahole (Parys) and Phahameng (Bultfontein). Next is a discussion of specific research methods and the criteria that were followed in choosing the towns for the case studies and carrying out the study in each of the above areas.

The five case studies on institutionalised self-help projects qualitatively assessed the application of institutional self-help through the housing support centres (a concept similar to housing co-operatives) in the Free State. In the process, one focus group was conducted (comprising an average of ten to thirteen participants) in each of the five chosen housing projects (see Annexure A). Participants were beneficiaries of PHP subsidies and had fully-completed houses. In-depth interviews were also conducted with all the local project managers and trustees in these five projects (see Annexure B), while one in-depth interview was conducted with a senior provincial administrator of PHP in the Free State Province (see Annexure C). In this context, a project manager would usually be any community member – preferably someone with an outstanding and sound background in the construction industry, trustees would generally be community members who were also beneficiaries of a PHP project. The five chosen projects included the Ikgwantlelleng Housing Support Centre in Bultfontein, the Kgotsong Housing Support Centre in Bothaville, the Kutlwanong Housing Support Centre in Odendaalsrus, the Iketsetseng Housing Support Centre in Virginia, and the Retshepeng Housing Support Centre in Parys.

In terms of the criteria for choosing these five project areas or centres, the following process was followed: with the assistance of a senior PHP administrator in the Free State, five of the fourteen housing support centres existing in the province in 2008 were chosen. Based on the record of performance of the individual housing support centres, the official helped me to identify the two best-performing housing support centres (in this case those of Retshepeng and Kgotsong), two poorly performing housing support centres (in this case those of Kutlwanong and Iketsetseng), and one centre with average performance (Ikgwantlelleng Housing Support Centre). For the five chosen housing projects or centres, five project managers and seven trustees – with Kgotsong and Retshepeng housing support centres each having two instead of one trustee – who were interviewed. While permission to disclose the names of the participants in any of my research output was granted by project managers, trustees and the senior provincial PHP administrator as agreed in a signed letter of consent (see Annexure D), the agreement with beneficiaries was to use their focus-group numbers to ensure confidentiality. The overall aim of these interviews was to determine whether the original principles of self-help as advanced by JFC Turner and moreover stipulated in the PHP policy document had been adhered to in practice.

Furthermore, one case study on site-and-services schemes was chosen for a quantitative survey of interviewees who were beneficiaries of an aided self-help housing project in Freedom Square in Mangaung, Bloemfontein. This case study involved 200 interviews with beneficiaries of the programme (see Annexure E). In addition to these interviews, two focus-group meetings (comprising on average ten to thirteen participants) were held with beneficiaries to gain a more in-depth understanding of the situation (see Annexure F). For sampling purposes, a systematic random sampling process was followed. One key criterion in selecting the mentioned interviewees was that such individuals had to be the rightful owners of the state subsidy house. The overall aim of this case study was to determine the extent to which aided self-help had assisted community members in their housing endeavours. The value of this case study is that it provides a longitudinal overview of similar surveys conducted over the past eighteen years (1990, 1993, 1997, 1999). It is probably the only case in South Africa in which such information has covered such a lengthy period of time. What further makes this case unique is that during all of the numerous prior studies there was no attempt to provide a long-term systematic and consistent understanding of longitudinal changes in the housing development in this area. For example, Marais, Van Rensburg and

Botes (2003); Stewart, 2001 concluded during a one-off study of an upgrading project in Mangaung and Thabong that there were large-scale advantages attached to self-help housing and the accompanying dweller control according to Turner. Since then, there has never been a consistent application of systematic follow-up studies. A more detailed overview of the specific comparisons is provided in Chapter Six.

Another case study on a laissez-faire self-help housing project was chosen for another quantitative survey of interviewees who were beneficiaries of a laissez-faire self-help housing project in Thabong, Welkom. A similar research methodology to the one in Freedom Square was followed. The study involved 200 interviews with beneficiaries (see Annexure E). Two focus-group meetings (comprising an average of ten to thirteen participants) were held with beneficiaries to gain a more in-depth understanding (see Annexure F). The participants, all rightful owners of state subsidies, were identified by means of systematic random sampling. The study (2008) is also compared with a similar study done in the area in 1999. What should be noted is that there are few methodological differences between the two studies conducted in Thabong. Two points however need to be made in this regard: the 1999 sample size was only 75, while the sample size in 2008 was 200, and whereas the 1999 sample focused on completed houses only, the 2008 survey included a representative random sample. A more detailed overview of the different sources will be provided in Chapter Five.

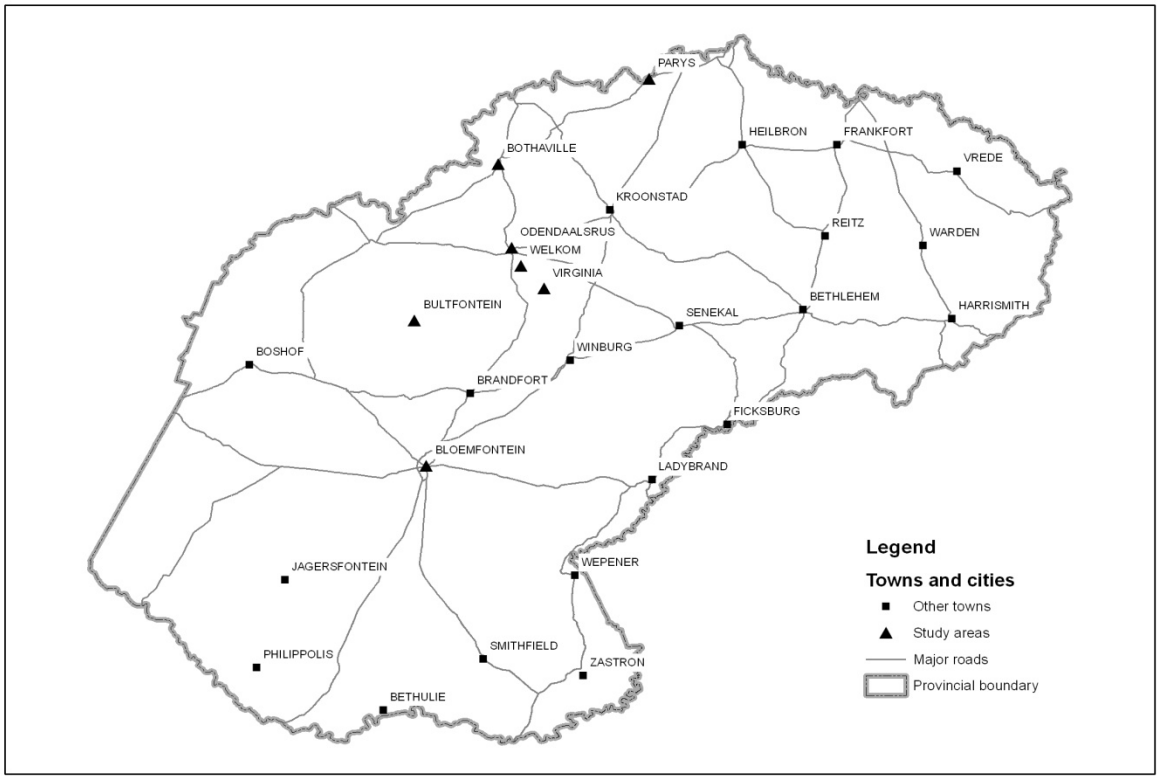

Figure 1.1: Free State Map

1.3 Research agenda

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the study layout (see Figure 1.2). In order to address the research problem in this thesis, the following structure is utilised: **Chapter Two (Self-help housing policies in developing countries)** sketches the history of state-driven provision of low-income housing in developing countries. The initial focus in this chapter is on the state's direct involvement in the provision of low-income housing following, in particular, the demolition of urban settlements in various developing countries during World War II.

Chapter Two:

Self-help housing policies in developing countries

Chapter Three:

Low-income housing policies in South Africa: a place for self-help housing?

Chapter Four:

Institutionalised self-help housing in South Africa: case studies from the Free State

Chapter Five:

Laissez-faire self-help housing in South Africa: case study of Thabong, Welkom

Chapter Six:

State-aided self-help housing in South Africa: case study of Freedom Square in Mangaung, Bloemfontein

Chapter Seven:

Principal findings and recommendations in respect of the application of self-help housing policy and programmes in South Africa

Figure 1.2: Outline of chapters

This discussion on post-war state-driven housing provision is followed by a discussion on the origin and development of self-help housing in developing countries. The development of self-help housing was sparked specifically by a need to have an alternative to the state-driven

housing mechanism. Advocacy of self-help by Turner had in turn led to a critical response to self-help from neo-Marxists, which was later instrumental in laying the foundations of the World Bank's policies in respect of funding – in particular, site-and-services schemes in developing countries. Following the neo-Marxist criticism of Turner's self-help theory and his (Turner's) influence on World Bank policies for funding site-and-services schemes, there is a critical analysis of the neo-Marxist perspective on self-help housing. This is followed by an analysis of World Bank policies in relation to Turner's initial ideas of self-help housing. Finally, the chapter deal with the application of different forms of self-help housing in developing countries.

After an analysis of the international literature on the history of the provision of low-income housing in developing countries, **Chapter Three (Low-income housing policies in South Africa: a place for self-help housing?)** provide an assessment (against an international theoretical background) of the development and application of low-income housing policies in post-apartheid South Africa, with specific reference to self-help housing policy. The said assessment focuses specifically on determining the extent to which the key principles of self-help housing as advanced by JFC Turner are enshrined in the three main policy documents on housing: White Paper on Housing 1994, BNG 2004, and the PHP Policy Document 1998.

Following international and national analyses and assessments of low-income housing policies, **Chapter Four (Institutionalised self-help housing in South Africa: case studies from the Free State)** critically assesses the people's perceptions with regard to their experiences of actual practice in institutional self-help in South Africa by considering five case studies from the Free State Province. This assessment is also done with the intent of determining the extent to which the practice of institutionalised self-help housing in the Free State has conformed with the fundamental ideas advocated by JFC Turner and with the policy principles as stipulated in the PHP Policy Document of 1998.

Similar to the assessment of institutionalised self-help housing done in Chapter Four, in **Chapter Five (Laissez-faire self-help housing in South Africa: case study of Thabong)** the focus of my assessment shifts to the activities of a case study of a laissez-faire self-help housing project in Thabong, Welkom. Central to the assessment are two key issues: the extent to which the application of this project has contributed to housing development in this area

over the past decade (1999–2008), and, the extent to which the application of this project conforms specifically to JFC Turner's fundamental ideas on self-help housing.

Continuing the focus of a long-term assessment in housing development, **Chapter Six (State-aided self-help housing in South Africa: case study of Freedom Square in Mangaung, Bloemfontein)** assesses the impact of a state-aided self-help housing project in housing development in Freedom Square in Mangaung, Bloemfontein over the past decade (1999–2008). Key aspects of the project that are to be assessed include the extent to which the application of this project has contributed to housing development in this area over the past decade (1999–2008), then it seeks to determine how closely the application of this project has conformed particularly with the fundamental ideas of JFC Turner on self-help housing, lastly, it seeks to determine how this project compares with the laissez-faire self-help housing project in Thabong in respect of housing outcomes.

Finally, **Chapter Seven (Principal findings and recommendations in respect of the application of self-help housing policy and programmes in South Africa)** attempts to conceptualise the main findings of the thesis in an integrated and coherent manner so as to provide a framework that can be used to inform both the future practice of self-help housing and also further policy developments.

CHAPTER TWO:

SELF-HELP HOUSING POLICIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Literature indicates that there probably is a direct link between the ever-increasing rate of squatter settlements in different parts of the world, especially in developing countries and people's inability to afford conventional housing (Skinner & Rodell, 1983). In order to address the increasing growth in informal settlements, many governments turned to a state-driven method of housing delivery in the 1950s and 1960s. Yet, many housing agencies in the Third World soon realised that they had neither the necessary funds nor – to some extent – the know-how, to house all the poor families at the standards adopted as part of the conventional state-driven approach (Ward, 1982). Consequently, by the 1970s, housing policies emphasising construction programmes sponsored by the public sector providing finished dwelling units to poor urban families were severely criticised in many developing countries. The inevitable outcome of this mismatch between demand and supply was the further growth of squatter settlements, owner-built housing, increased densities in existing low-income areas and the general rise of the self-help paradigm since the 1960s (Abrams, 1964; Payne, 1984). It should however be acknowledged that self-help has over centuries not only been a conventional housing process for humankind, but it was moreover also commonly practised in urban areas in the 1930s and 1940s (Harris, 2003).

Against the above background, this chapter aims critically to assess international low-income housing policies with specific reference to self-help housing policies. The main argument in this chapter is that there is an ideological mismatch between the initial proponents of self-help and how it has since been institutionalised in practice. In order to develop this argument, the chapter evolves as follows: a brief history of state-driven low-income housing provision in developing countries is provided. The history is then followed by a discussion on the origin and development of self-help housing, with specific reference to developing countries. Next there is a brief outline of neo-Marxist perspectives on self-help housing. This is followed by a comparison of World Bank policies and Turner's initial ideas on self-help housing, which is then followed by an overview of application of different forms of self-help housing in

developing countries. Then, the concluding paragraphs provide a summary of the chapter.

2.1 The state-housing paradigm

This section provides a brief overview of the state-driven housing paradigm. State-driven housing entails a direct role for the state as developer, financier and/or contractor in the housing-development process. Although there are indications of government involvement in housing before the Second World War (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997) in Europe, the demolition of urban settlements during the Second World War further spurred direct state involvement in the post-war period.

Yet, international literature suggests that very few countries have actually managed to address their housing problems by means of state-driven approaches (Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997). Government-driven housing delivery was commonly criticised for being unaffordable to the urban poor (Skinner and Rodell, 1983), and located far from both social and economic opportunities (Gilbert, 1997), for being supply driven rather than demand driven in nature (Ward, 1982), and for the lack of cost-recovery for maintenance (Gilbert & Gugler, 1992). Other factors that feature prominently in literature are the lack of adequate and affordable land, too high building standards and the lack of locally available materials (Awotona, 1999; Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Harris, 1999a; Harris & Giles, 2003; Rondinelli, 1990). State-driven housing was not only unaffordable to the beneficiaries but state-driven housing meant large subsidies from the state, which in the long run proved not to be viable (Awotona, 1999; Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Payne, 1984; Tipple, 1994). Countries in Latin America and Africa (Payne, 1984; Purdy & Kwak, 2007) experienced the problem of too high housing subsidies, which meant that it had a negative impact on the available state finance (Awotona, 1999; Harris, 1997).

As already mentioned, the consequence of housing delivery driven by the public sector was the extraordinary growth in informal settlements. International literature suggests that because of poor housing and homelessness in developing countries, between 600 and 850 million urban dwellers in Latin America, Africa and Asia live in urban slums usually known

for their cramped, overcrowded dwellings and cheap boarding houses or shelters built on illegally occupied or subdivided land

(Alan, 2000; Ferguson & Navarrete, 2003; Mitlin, 2001; Stewart & Balchin, 2002). According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS), 64.0% of the housing stock in low-income countries, and up to 85.0% of new housing are unauthorised (Berner & Phillips, 2003). Against this reality, Keivani and Werna (2001) argue that direct public housing programmes in developing countries have been a failure, with direct public housing contributing only to approximately 10.0% of the total housing stock in general. Despite the general failures of such programmes observed in most developing countries, there were exceptions. These exceptions were the low-income housing programmes implemented by governments in Singapore (where 85.0% of the population are housed by means of government housing provision), Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia (Berner, 2001; Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Keivani & Werna, 2001; Potter & Lloyd-Evans, 1998). In Hong Kong, the primary goal of government – through provision of low-income housing – was to ensure that no land would be occupied by informal settlers, but, instead, by profitable development. However, this programme, while meeting the set development goals has to some extent failed to recognise and meet the needs of low-income households (Dwyer, 1975; Yeh, 1990).

The successes of Singapore and Saudi Arabia can be ascribed to a number of factors (Berner, 2001; Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997; Keivani & Werna, 2001; Marais, 2003). Over a considerable period of time Singapore as a country has constantly succeeded in realising uninterrupted economic growth. At the core of such growth lay both the citizens' decreased dependency on state resources and a low population growth rate, especially amongst young adults. This therefore made it possible for the state to increase expenditure to fund its effort to provide the poor with housing (Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997).

Unlike in most developing countries where the land is still in the hands of the private owners, large portions of land in Singapore are owned by the state. This implies that in this country, the government does not budget for land costs during housing development (Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997; Marais, 2003).

Central to the successful delivery of low-income housing in Saudi Arabia is that that country generated much profit from its trade in oil. A large portion of that profit was channelled into sustaining government's effort to provide the urban poor with housing (Berner, 2001; Gilbert & Gugler, 1992; Hardoy & Satterthwaite, 1997; Keivani & Werna, 2001).

Despite this small number of successful state-driven housing models, many governments in developing countries have recognised that they can neither build sufficient numbers of houses for the growing urban population, nor can they permit totally uncontrolled settlements. Thus, as a compromise, governments in these countries shifted their approach to one of low-income housing delivery, the idea of self-help enjoying much attention as a feasible solution to the housing needs of the urban poor while the developing countries were struggling to eradicate the problem of squatter settlements (Berner, 2001; Buckley, Faulk & Olajide, 1993; Harris & Giles, 2003; Midgley, Hall, Hardiman & Narine, 1986; Mitlin, 2001; Zhang *et al*., 2003).

Thus, despite the good intentions behind state-driven housing, there can be little doubt that this approach did not manage to alleviate the housing shortage in most of the developing world.

2.2 Self-help housing

International literature indicates that self-help was a conventional wisdom long before the 'emergence' of the concept in the late 1960s – and long before Turner formulated his ideas in this regard (Harms, 1992; Parnell & Hart, 1999; Ward, 1982). Harris (1998; 2003) cites the examples of Puerto Rico and India in the late 1930s and 1940s to illustrate the fact that self-help was already practised and supported by governments before the Second World War. In the next section the focus falls on the history and development of self-help.

2.2.1 The origin of self-help

Although self-help in the housing environment became an important paradigm in housing delivery since the 1960s (mainly as a consequence of inadequate government-driven housing), it has been with humankind for centuries (Pugh, 2001). There is evidence that self-help housing was commonly practised before the introduction of formal town planning, but also in urban areas as early as the beginning of the 1900s and thus before the commonly accepted notion in the 1960s that Turner spurred self-help housing (Harris, 1998). According to Mathey (1992) and Tait (1997), the history of self-help housing schemes, particularly in developing countries, dates from the 1930s and 1940s when US-agencies like the 'Housing and Home Finance Administration' and later the 'International Cooperation Administration' introduced pilot projects to specific Latin American countries such as Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Chile. Keivani and Werna (2001) support this view in arguing that in different parts of the African continent people living in urban areas – especially the poor – have almost always been housed under conditions to which we today refer as self-help schemes. It might therefore be appropriate to agree with Harris (1998) that the application of self-help housing in the developing world was initiated in the 1930s and not, as is commonly held, with the start of the ideas of Turner in the mid-1960s.

During the pre-Second World War period the most pronounced advocate of the theory and practice of self-help housing was Jacob L. Crane (Harris, 1998). Through his writings on self-help housing, Crane elaborated on the logic behind the theory of self-help housing and further helped to initiate certain self-help housing projects (Harris, 1998). Although Crane published extensively (Crane, 1944; 1949; Crane & Foster, 1953; Crane & McCabe, 1950 as cited in Harris, 1998) his works were soon overlooked and forgotten.

The increasing adoption of self-help housing policies in developing countries since the 1960s is therefore by no means without historical precedent (as discussed above). Despite evidence that self-help was practised long before the 1960s, it is commonly accepted that Turner's thinking during the 1960s was instrumental in initiating self-help housing. It seems as if two specific factors resulted in the development of the self-help approach in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Harris (2003), experts from the United Nations played a crucial role in this

respect. This knowledge accumulated as experts from the United Nations provided advice to governments in the aftermath of the Second World War. Research institutions, through their researchers, also played a crucial role (Abrams, 1964; Manging, 1967; Turner, 1976). Hence today most researchers believe that it was specifically the writings of John F.C. Turner (1966; 1972) that produced a surge of interest in self-help housing in the 1960s and early 1970s (Harris, 1998; Turner, 1976), which was crucial in institutionalising self-help. Yet, it may be wrong to conclude that Turner was the sole thinker within the self-help school despite the need to acknowledge the fact that his work had high-level impact on the debate on self-help as a topic (see also Bromley, 2003; Marais, 2003). The pioneering work of Turner (1976) on housing in Latin America paved the way for the rise of self-help housing strategies in both the 1960s and the 1970s (Harris, 1998). Through his ground-breaking work in the late 1960s, Turner succeeded in changing the world's perception about self-help housing programmes as an alternative means of low-income housing provision (Harris, 2003).

Building on Turner's ideas, other advocates of self-help who viewed self-help mechanisms as a possible alternative to the failing government-driven low-income housing programme have strongly argued in favour of self-help housing.

Three main arguments are worth mentioning here. Proponents of self-help argue that government resources for housing are very limited (Ward, 1982). Consequently, the housing shortage amongst the urban poor continues to grow because there is insufficient funding for housing construction. The squatters should be viewed as capable sources of housing growth rather than as representing a social problem. The kind of completed housing units supplied by the State do not usually either take into account or meet the diverse cultural, social and economic needs and priorities of the intended target groups. Implicitly, at least, all three arguments include the recommendation that housing authorities should change their perception of their own role in low-income housing provision to one of supporting the process of self-help housing. Turner's ideas did not only influence the theoretical writings on self-help amongst the proponents of self-help but to a certain extent they even influenced the practice of self-help.

2.2.2 Turner's key concepts and ideas: state control versus dweller control

Turner's ideas came as a response to the 'general failure' of the public sector's housing provision in most developing countries. Turner located the origins of the housing problem in the operations of a bureaucratically and technologically top-heavy system rather than in the operation of a specific housing programme (Ward, 1982). Turner advocated and advanced a number of concepts that influenced and changed thinking on low-income housing during the 1960s and the 1970s. Seven of Turner's concepts are crucially important to this study.

According to Turner, any housing programme may be capable of successfully delivering, provided it allows dweller control – i.e. permits residents to make basic decisions about their own housing environment. Through dweller control the housing programme is freed from the bureaucratic (top-down) approach – usually adopted by governments in delivering low-income housing.

Complementary to dweller control, Turner uses concepts such as 'freedom to build', which he defines as the issue of 'who decides'. Turner's argument is that "the best results are obtained by the user who is in full control of the design, construction and management (dweller control) of his/her own home", while it is of secondary importance whether or not he/she personally builds it with his/her own hands (sweat equity), unless he/she is very poor (Harris, 2003:248). According to Turner, when beneficiaries are able to make major decisions (dweller control) about the construction process of their houses, they will usually construct dwellings of types and qualities corresponding to their economic capacity, social circumstances and cultural habits (Marcussen, 1990). Thus, when Turner cautions not to separate sweat equity from the dweller control notion, the intention is to ensure that sweat equity is not necessarily automatically equated to self-construction as seems generally to have been the case (Turner, 1976).

Turner states that within an autonomous system government's role should not be to dictate terms and conditions for people willing and able to build their own housing. What is therefore required is a changed role of government in the low-income housing process. According to Turner, governments should (through their supportive role) provide those aspects of housing that people are not always able to provide for themselves, for example, land, laws, tools,

credit, know-how and land tenure (Payne, 1984; Ward, 1982), while leaving the entire process of construction to be managed and controlled by people themselves, thus, promoting, in Turner's terms, 'dweller control'. Dweller control would ensure that housing becomes cheaper and more affordable to both the government and households and therefore a different role for the state would actually be more cost effective. To illustrate this view, Turner's argument is that a squatter with suitable building plot and secure land tenure can build a house at under half the cost of a government agency house (Harris, 2003). Although in the early years of development these (squatter) settlements may appear to be disorganised and inadequate, they express their own logic and will be improved over time if the family finances allow (Turner, 1976). To this, Turner further attaches concepts like "housing as a process" and "progressive development" (Harris, 2003; Turner, 1976).

Turner regards a shack to be a house in process. Provided that, as already mentioned, family finances permit, and that the correct environment is created, the house will be consolidated over time. Turner's view is also echoed by Pugh (2001:402) when the latter states that "[H]ouseholds are able to improve their housing incrementally, using better materials and adding space over a period of some fifteen years or so". Users will be able to consolidate or incrementally improve their housing provided (as argued by Turner) two issues are considered. One is the creation of an enabling environment that embraces the use of local resources and skills in housing delivery (Stein, 1991). The other is tasking the state with protecting and providing scarce resources, i.e. improving the service infrastructure which will enable and stimulate local housing provision (Stein, 1991).

In Turner's view, self-help housing is to be viewed in terms of deep human aspirations, articulated in phraseology such as 'housing by people', and 'housing is a verb' (Harris, 2003). With regard to the use of the concept 'housing is a verb', Turner maintains that in view of the extended process by which homes are framed, adapted, and used by their occupants, – that housing should be viewed not as a noun but as a verb – a phrase that others have since echoed (Harris, 2003).

With ‘housing by people’, Turner’s argument is that housing ‘by the masses’ denote that there is active participation by beneficiaries, and that it is much more viable than ‘mass housing’ in which the government usually owns and controls the construction process (Midgley *et al*., 1986). Turner implies that attainment of affordable and compatible housing is possible where people are allowed to build independently at their own pace and according to the availability of both finances and locally produced resources. Thus, Turner presumes that builders are owner-occupiers, who should be given maximum latitude for taking care of their own interests and therefore government should leave people to solve their own problems progressively by working along with [existing] forces, accepting existing values and priorities wherever these coincide with the logic and demands of the situation. From this experience, it is Turner’s contention that urban squatters in the developing world know exactly what they need and how their housing needs are to be met (Marcussen, 1990). Hence the type of settlements that squatters usually create are better fitted to their immediate needs and circumstances than are those that any government could devise (Harris, 2003).

According to Turner, the value of a house lies in its function rather than in the type of material used to build it. With this he emphasises the importance of ensuring that there is a close relationship and match between buildings, their use and the lives of the people using them. Turner maintains that buildings should be produced for their ‘use value’ rather than for their ‘exchange-value’ in the market, since that would help to ensure better architectural results (Mathey, 1992). Turner thus views housing in terms of the purpose it serves in the lives of its inhabitants (what it does), or the effects of dwellings units on the lifestyle of the residents, while paying no attention to the standards of the dwellings (what they are), and their impact on the well-being of both people and physical environment (Midgley *et al*., 1986; Soliman, 2004). For that reason, the same quality of self-built housing would be cheaper and more affordable than commercially built units. Thus Turner treats housing as a product to be consumed only as a use value, an output of people’s efforts in the form of self-help building by consuming their time in the construction process (Soliman, 2004).

2.2.3 The influence of Turner's work and ideas

The value of Turner's work was that, almost for the first time, the inhabitants of informal settlements were seen as normal residents of the city in terms of their needs, their ambitions and their determination to achieve these (Smith, 1987). As a result, informal settlements began to be looked upon much more positively by policy makers as being normal, even healthy, manifestations of urban growth in the Third World. The emphasis now was on finding ways to integrate informal settlements into the broader framework of urban planning. This assumption has formed the basis for many housing schemes – especially in developing countries (Smith, 1987), even if, admittedly, self-help has seldom formally been part of housing policies world-wide. In reality, Turner did not promote absolute isolation of any key stakeholder (including the state), he did not justify poor living conditions through slum conditions, and, later in his career, he accepted that housing could play a crucial role in community development. Yet Turner's critic (Burgess) from the Marxist school of thought has remained adamant that Turner's ideas have no basis and are less than realistic.

2.3 Neo-Marxist perspectives on self-help housing

Burgess has been one of the most influential proponents of the neo-Marxist ideology with regard to housing. According to Soliman (2004), Burgess's ideas are based mainly on his bias towards the Marxist approach, and his extensive reading of literature on the said approach and also on his immense support of the socialist system. Burgess (1977; 1978) therefore provides a comprehensive and thoroughly discussed theoretical analysis of the nature of self-help housing, arguing that generally housing, but also especially in underdeveloped countries is not only a process that produces use values – as Turner would seem to propose – but also one that produces exchange values (Stein, 1991).

Thus, under a capitalist social dispensation, several issues related to the commodity status of housing can help to determine the various aspects of the housing problem:

housing as a commodity needs to be analysed based on the fundamental social process usually associated with its production, exchange and consumption, housing should be

considered only in terms of its relation to the interests of the different people and their socio-economic class (Stein, 1991). Emphasising this view, Stein (1991) argues that, self-help programmes must be analysed in terms of how they relate to the commodity process and to the interests associated with it and not in terms of the use value they posses. Another aspect that qualifies housing as a commodity (as per Burgess's views) is the fact that a house is usually made up of commercially supplied products (such as cement, roofing material, etc.). These, according to Soliman (2004), already have an exchange value that is derived from the labour-time spent on their manufacture, and the final output is a commodity. Arguing in favour of this point, Burgess (1977) raises a twofold argument: he maintains that it is always difficult to isolate and separate funded self-help programmes from the interests of those fractions of capital tied to state housing provision, furthermore, his contention is that what usually makes self-help housing programmes cheaper, is not removal or absence of profits, but rather the involvement of the unpaid labour (sweat equity) of the future users (Stein, 1991). With this, Burgess here advances the view that sweat equity should be seen not as a mechanism to make housing cheaper and more affordable but rather a mechanism to relieve the government of some of its fundamental responsibilities at the expense of the poor. Having been integrated with capitalism, Burgess emphasises that, at a structural level, both the state and the self-help housing policies are being used as tools to promote the values and principles of capitalistic ideology (Stein, 1991).

The underlying ideological differences between Burgess and Turner are reflected in a number of issues. Burgess claims that Turner misunderstood the relationship between utility (use value) and market value (exchange value) and that he thus denied the commodity status of self-help housing. According to Gough (1996) and Soliman (2004), Burgess's claim stemmed from Turner's failure to consider, amongst others, the different purposes for which different people can use housing, including their ability to satisfy their financial needs by selling their housing.

Burgess with his Marxist criticism of self-help housing further points out two of Turner's shortcomings. As mentioned by Gugler (1997), in Burgess's opinion, Turner's individualistic view of self-help housing is not sufficiently inclusive. It views and portrays self-help housing as a process exclusive of the immediate socio-political context in which it takes place.

Furthermore, the innocently praised ‘freedom to build’ is in fact very restricted in practice, and moreover conditioned by the conflicting interests of owners and tenants, builders, financing agencies, politicians and other social groups, each with their own vested interests. Thus, the state and the private sector’s involvement in housing provision would remain key to the successful delivery of low-income housing, self-help included.

Burgess further maintains that self-help housing, whether assisted or not, is never really autonomous but must be subjected to the influence and the interests (either financial or political) of those in power (Dewar *et al*., 1981). This view is also shared by (Mathey, 1992) in suggesting that the absence of such autonomy, especially amongst the low-income people, can be attributed to a lack of most of the freedoms to which rich people usually have access. Consequently, low-income people are financially dependent on either the government or the financial agencies in order to finance their construction process. The same observation is made by Harms (1976) who additionally criticises Turner for the approach and method he followed in learning and writing about self-help housing. Turner based his views on what he observed and what he worked with, specifically while in Latin America. Harms (1976) argues that selected case studies may be utilised to illustrate a point, but there can be no guarantee, as would appear to be the case with Turner’s views, that they will be replicable as a general model elsewhere (see Mathey, 1992).

Burgess also criticised Turner’s views and also his subsequent failure both to recognise certain key stakeholders in the construction industry and the deteriorating building standards usually associated with self-help housing schemes. For instance, Turner’s ideas regarding his emphasis on certain stakeholders (especially beneficiaries) in terms of their key roles, may lead to a possible exclusion of other key stakeholders, such as government and private sector, in housing construction. Thus, the role of the state in particular in respect of the provision of low-income housing should not (as it indeed seemed to be advocated by Turner) be underestimated (Harms, 1976).

Turner’s emphasis on the use of locally produced resources and networks may potentially constitute a legitimisation of slums and squatter settlements, which could in turn lead to

inferior housing (Midgley *et al*., 1986). Hence Smith (1987) discourages recognition of squatter or slum settlements as 'normal' manifestations of urban growth. In reality, such housing is a reflection of unequal access to urban resources, while aided self-help programmes merely serve to perpetuate these inequalities.

2.4 World Bank policies and Turner's ideas on self-help housing

The World Bank became actively involved in financing low-income housing development in the 1970s. Though the basis for World Bank involvement in the delivery of low-income housing can be related to the influence of Turner (Midgley *et al*., 1986; Pugh, 2001; Werlin, 1999; Zanetta, 2001), in practice the implementation of the World Bank's low-income housing policies has deviated significantly from Turner's initial ideas. The World Bank managed to economise Turner's ideas (Jones & Ward, 1994; Pugh, 1992) and consequently the World Bank housing policies emphasises the concepts of affordability and cost-recovery that were generated by self-help (Jones & Ward, 1994; Pugh, 1992; World Bank, 1993). The practical implications of affordability and cost recovery are twofold.

The World Bank's intent is to encourage the widespread adoption of housing loans instead of government subsidies (Midgley *et al*., 1986; Pugh, 2001). The main reason for this decision is to make housing delivery more affordable to government, while markedly shifting financial responsibility to donors and financial institutions (Marais, 2003; Pugh, 1994). The emphasis on housing loans rather than state subsidies should also be seen as a strategy employed by the World Bank to ensure that low-income housing plays a role at the broader macroeconomic level and contributes to economic growth (Alan, 2000; Pugh, 1994).

The World Bank's intention is to encourage these governments and their lending institutions (banks, etc.) to develop efficient programmes and mechanisms that will ensure successful cost-recovery (Jones & Ward, 1994; Pugh, 1992). Significant about this policy shift away from Turner's ideas by the World Bank, is the World Bank's intention to hold dwellers and not the state accountable/liable for cost arrangements pertaining to their own housing provision. In this regard, the World Bank emphasises individualism and user-pay principles

(Marais, 2003). In a nutshell, the World Bank's housing programmes and policies expect governments to ensure that housing is affordable and does not become a burden on the state's limited fiscal resources.

The above discussion alluded to the fact that Turner influenced the World Bank but also that there are fundamental differences. A few more points should be made in respect of these differences.

Contrary to the World Bank's emphasis on the economic aspects of the self-help model, Turner's advocacy in respect of self-help housing is based on its potential as an alternative to the rigid and oppressive government-driven low-income housing policies, while also providing opportunities for individual and community development (Choguill, 1999; Pugh, 1994; Zanetta, 2001). Turner emphasises the need to promote housing delivery that will accommodate the financial circumstances of the dwellers while government plays a supporting role instead of dictating the housing process (Turner, 1976).

According to Turner, self-help housing develops a personal sense of achievement in housing amongst the dwellers (i.e. 'housing is a verb') (see Pugh, 1994). Turner initially narrowed down the emphasis to the use value of small-scale housing projects, as compared with the World Bank's projects that had usually placed the housing projects under the countries' overall economic plans, which were relatively large in scale (Chan, Yao & Zhao, 2003).

It was not long before self-help housing was labelled 'neo-liberal' in nature and seen as a capitalist way of reducing the responsibility of the state, while the cost-recovery principles shifted the financial obligations to the low-income households.

The remainder of this chapter investigates examples of self-help implementation and addresses the question as to whether self-help is necessarily a neo-liberal concept.

2.5 Overview in application of self-help housing in the developing countries

Having considered the rise of self-help, its neo-liberal routes and the ideological criticism in the preceding section, this section raises the question as to how self-help was practised. The available literature suggests that it is possible to distinguish between three types of self-help, namely laissez-faire self-help, aided self-help and institutionalised self-help. The three concepts are being defined in Chapter One. Since the primary focus of this study is on housing programmes for the provision of low-income housing, the focus is on both aided and institutionalised self-help.

Against the above background, the following sections provide a brief assessment of countries that were successful in providing their people with the necessary accommodation by means both of aided and institutionalised self-help housing programmes.

2.5.1 Aided self-help housing

In aided self-help housing initiatives, governments remain responsible for providing some of housing aspects that the poor cannot afford to provide for themselves – mainly along the lines of both Turner and World Bank's thinking. Thus, while allowing individual or collective initiatives by households to house themselves, the role of government is to support such initiatives by providing inexpensive land, security of tenure, and basic services such as water, sewerage and electricity. Out of these ideas, the site-and-services concept was born (Payne, 1984). Many of these programmes have been sponsored by international aid agencies such as the World Bank (Mayo & Gross, 1987). However, before proceeding with an overview of the benefits of site-and-services schemes, it is important in the light of the background outlined above regarding these schemes, to briefly indicate the extent to which the site-and-services concept differs from the state's conventional housing concept. Apart from government's involvement in these schemes (which was also applicable in conventional housing), Skinner and Rodell (1983) argue that the site-and-services principle differs from conventional housing in two ways: families who move into a site-and-services neighbourhood receive only incomplete housing known as a 'core housing' (usually built by the state) to be extended over

time. Alternatively, such households may receive only land and water in a minimal project, or the latter two with other utilities and core houses in an expensive project, through site-and-services schemes beneficiaries become investors in property in which they make the basic decisions and produce the final product. However, as indicated earlier on in the discussion, it should also be noted that in some schemes known to be 'expensive projects', government also constructs the core of each house, leaving dwellers responsible for the finishing and extension of such houses. This, as argued before, then becomes government's strategy to remain (in a way) in control of housing delivery to the poor.

2.5.1.1 Advantages of aided self-help housing

The available literature indicates two main advantages pertaining to aided self-help or site and services. Aided self-help or site-and-services schemes have the potential of spreading limited funds as widely as possible, using them for investments best undertaken on a large scale, and leaving individuals free to do those things that they can do for themselves (O'Connor, 1983). This renders site-and-service schemes attractive not only to governments but also to non-governmental organisations such as the World Bank and to the beneficiaries themselves (O'Connor, 1983). Payne (1984) thus argues that, for low-income households, they often provide the only legal alternative to squatting or other informal development, while theoretically allowing them to determine their expenditure on different aspects and according to different stages of the housing construction process.

Furthermore, not only do beneficiaries benefit from these schemes, but there are also significant benefits to governments. By means of these schemes governments particularly in poor countries with histories of inadequate housing delivery, are relieved of heavy and unsustainable financial obligations to finance the construction of housing for the poor (Payne, 1984). Soliman (2004) therefore states that by supporting site-and-services schemes, governments in developing countries are able to save large amounts of the public budget by providing serviced plots while leaving the rest to be completed by the poor themselves (see also Skinner & Rodell, 1983). Consequently, it is argued that Turner's ideas and proposals on aided self-help housing have been supported by both professionals and the state in developing countries, for the main reason that they appear to be feasible and attainable and include the

possibility that large savings can be made on public funds budgeted for housing construction (Soliman, 2004).

In a nutshell, site-and-services projects, according to Mukhija (2004) and also Skinner and Rodell (1983) signify not only construction over a long period of time (housing as a process), at a pace and costs relevant to the beneficiaries, but, more importantly, that housing is occupied before it is complete. Apart from these benefits to low-income housing in developing countries as contributed by site-and-services schemes, such schemes are not (from a self-help perspective) beyond some criticism.

2.5.1.2 Criticism of aided self-help housing

Despite the progress made in respect of housing poor people through site-and-services schemes, this form of housing delivery could not escape criticism (Marais, 2003). A number of authors have alluded to the fact that aided self-help through site-and-services schemes generally proved to be ineffective as a strategy for low-income housing provision (Burgess, 1992; Keivani & Werna, 2001; Stewart & Balchin, 2002; Werlin, 1999). A number of comments should be made in this regard. Literature indicates that though shortage of materials plagued site-and-services projects virtually everywhere, Africa was most severely affected (Skinner & Rodell, 1983).

For instance, Robertson (1978) estimated that Zambian stocks of roofing sheets were enough for only one-quarter of all new houses planned in the urban areas during the mid- and late-1970s. Cost-recovery in low-income housing over history remains a major source of concern and site-and-services projects have been no exception in this regard. Consequently, Payne (1984) maintains that although the intention was, by means of site-and-services schemes, to make housing delivery affordable to both governments and beneficiaries, repayments have been beyond the means of many households. In addition to the inability to recover costs, governments in general struggled to perform the basic administrative functions related to aided self-help. This problem was probably also attributable to what seemed to have been poor administration by governments. Such poor administration included, amongst others,

inadequate debt collection machinery, the inability of some residents to pay even had they wanted to, poor maintenance of the services by authorities, non-delivery of certain services that had been promised, a lack of continued community education, and ineffective sanctions against defaulters (Payne, 1984). Thus, despite weaknesses of governments, site-and-services schemes have often proved to be too costly both for their target populations and for the governments in the developing world – similar to the case of public housing.

In some urban areas, site-and-services schemes became unrealistic because the government had to acquire expensive land from private owners (Soliman, 2004). Thus, where the land was not owned by the state, much of the funding was spent on land costs rather than on the actual construction or on infrastructure investment, which further made these schemes expensive to the state. The evidence shows that supply continued to be far less than the actual demand for housing. For instance, between 1972 and 1981, nine million people in developing countries had been reached through site-and-services schemes, while, at the same time, an annual production rate of 8.7 million units was required to address the housing shortage backlog of the low-income population. The duration of programmes was also problematic and, in general, took much longer than anticipated at the start of the projects. The administrative and managerial issues of these projects required extra time for monitoring and control and most governments found it difficult to sustain or afford the infrastructure and personnel resources that usually come at extra costs. Hence, many site-and-services projects thus took between eight and ten years from inception to completion. The problems associated with cost recovery also led to these programmes not necessarily reaching the poor as had been expected. In many cases, middle-income groups became the ultimate beneficiaries (Keivana & Werna, 2001). There are cases where the project impacted negatively on the social cohesion in communities, especially when residents from different backgrounds and locations were given official sites in these schemes. In most cases this practice seems to have eroded the strong social bond these people had had in their previous neighbourhood, especially the squatter settlements (Skinner & Rodell, 1983). Consequently, it would be impossible to recreate the processes that, in many squatter settlements, eventually led to good, affordable housing.

Finally, it seems that while aided self-help housing initiatives of the site-and-service scheme type were practically the consequence of Turner's work and ideas, they could still not escape both the state and other agencies' interference in their activities (Gugler, 1997). Skinner and Rodell (1983) argue that the failure of most government-designed and implemented site-and-services projects to provide for the involvement of target communities and populations in appropriate areas constitutes a clear deliberate divergence (by state) from the initial fundamental concept of site-and-services as conceived and advocated by Turner.

2.5.2 Institutionalised self-help housing

Internationally, self-help housing has commonly been implemented through institutional organisations. This has involved the establishment of self-help groups often called 'housing cooperatives' (Gonzalez Corzo, 2005; Keivani & Werna, 2001; Khurana, 2001). According to Khurana (2001), housing cooperatives can be described as a legally incorporated group of persons – generally of limited means – pursuing the same cause of meeting the common need for housing or its improvement based on mutual assistance. Keivana and Werna (2001) also mention that such groups are able to negotiate on behalf of its members to acquire land from the government or on the private market, apply for and receive credit or mortgage loans from the government and from formal-sector institutions, receiving building materials and commissioning contractors (where members are not physically building) to build the housing units. What is further unique about housing cooperatives is that their membership is voluntary, control is democratic, and members make an approximately equal contribution to the capital required (Khurana, 2001).

However, government's role, either directly or indirectly, in the activities of these institutions remains the main concern. This is further to be analysed in the next sections of this study. It would thus be well within the scope of this study, in the next section, to give an overview of countries in the developing world that have used institutionalised self-help (housing cooperatives) as an alternative mechanism for the provision of low-income housing. Furthermore, the role of different stakeholders in the operationalisation of these institutions is also analysed. That is finally followed by a discussion of the successes and challenges faced by the housing cooperatives.

2.5.2.1 The scale of institutionalised self-help housing in developing countries

Several countries have used self-help housing cooperatives as an alternative to housing low-income groups (Khurana, 2001). Many developing countries may have, given their historical inability to provide adequate and affordable housing, seen housing cooperatives as a mechanism for stimulating the necessary capital formation and of improving the quantity and quality of affordable housing for the poor in their major urban centres (Gonzalez Corzo, 2005).

Thus, as argued by Sukumar (2001), in these countries self-help housing cooperatives were considered useful vehicles with which low-income households could control their environment and improve the quality of their lives while accessing affordable housing. Literature indicates that among the countries that have effectively promoted housing cooperatives are India, Jordan, Bangladash, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Thailand, Iran, Cuba, Pereira, Egypt, Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia, (Gonzalez Corzo, 2005; Gough, 1996; Harris, 1997; Keivani & Werna, 2001; Kerr & Kwele, 2000; Khurana, 2001; Midgley *et al*., 1986; Sukumar, 2001). In terms of the scale of application, a number of points should be noted. The Malaysian government managed to build approximately 40 000 low-income housing units and there currently are about 47 housing cooperatives in this country with a membership of about 27 864 persons (Khurana, 2001).

In Pakistan, these housing cooperatives, when they were introduced in 1948, immediately constructed about 2 500 houses, while their current total stands at 2 152 registered housing cooperatives with a total membership of 888 289 persons between them (Khurana, 2001). Housing cooperatives in India have, since their adoption in early 1947, steadily proliferated nationwide. Regional differences do however exist (Sukumar, 2001). The number of housing cooperatives increased from 5 564 in 1959-60, to 72 040 in 1993-94. Estimates reveal that housing cooperatives in India contributed about 10.8% of the annual housing stock between 1991 and 1995 (Sukumar, 2001). In Iran, self-help housing cooperatives were, since their introduction in 1985, responsible for about 6.0% of the total investment in housing (Keivana & Werna, 2001). In Jordan, housing cooperatives were initiated at the beginning of the 1970s

and at present there are about 80 housing cooperatives with a membership of more than 6 500 between them (Khurana, 2001). The first housing co-operative in Thailand, known as the Bangkok Co-operative was registered in June 1966 (Khurana, 2001). At present there are ten housing cooperatives in the country. Egyptian housing cooperatives started in the town of Helwan near Cairo. The country has 1 500 registered housing cooperatives meant to cater for households with limited income (Khurana, 2001). Through Chawama self-help in Kafue (Zambia) 228 families were encouraged to join in constructing houses with reasonable security of tenure (Midgley *et al*., 1986; Skinner & Rodell, 1983). In Mombasa (Dar es Salaam), through application of self-help initiative schemes, 6 000 to 7 000 plots a year were provided in the early 1970s (O'Connor, 1983).

2.5.2.2 Institutionalised self-help in socialist economies

Despite the neo-liberal connotations of self-help as advocated by the World Bank and Turner, self-help has also been commonly used in socialist economies and in liberal economies (Harris, 1999b). For example, socialist states such as the Soviet Union, India (before its liberal approach of the past decade or two) and Cuba have implemented self-help. This begs the question why this is so. This section briefly reflects on the Cuban example.

Historically, the Cuban government had assumed responsibility for satisfying basic needs such as housing, food, good education and health care (Ramirez, 2005). Two reasons led to this approach by the Cuban government.

It was in line with the country's macroeconomic policy. The socialist nature of their marcoeconomic approach had always made it the Cuban government's priority and obligation to redistribute the country's wealth to the poor. The emphasis on a state-driven model can be related to the successful growth in Cuba's economy prior to the global economic decline in the early 1990s (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Ramirez, 2005).

However, with the worldwide economic decline in the early 1990s, Cuba had to declare an economic state of emergency (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003). The downturn in Cuba was even more severe following the fact that their main trading partners' (Soviet Union and Eastern

Bloc countries) communist ideology collapsed (Kapur & Smith 2002). The Cuban Gross Domestic Products consequently fell by 35.0%. The economic turmoil resulted in a sudden stoppage in foreign supply of energy, and the country's ability to produce the necessary building materials was also seriously compromised. The state had to cut back on its supply of basic goods, particularly in respect of housing. Literature indicates that direct public housing construction by the Cuban state has considerably slowed down or even stopped since the 1980s (Coyula & Hamberg, 2003; Kapur & Smith, 2002; Purdy & Kwak, 2007; Ramirez, 2005). Despite the Cuban government's attempt to save the situation by adopting strict economic policies and by instituting several reforms, the government further needed viable alternative programmes/strategies that would help to produce new housing in a period marked by shortages of material and by government's inability to afford the costs of importing building materials.

These economic realities prompted the government to shift to self-help housing through a system of 'micro-bridges' (concept similar to self-help groups) of volunteer labour for extensive public housing (Kapur & Smith, 2002; Mathey, 1989; Pleyan, 2001; Stirling, 2003). The establishment of 'micro-bridges' was seen as an effective means of supporting government housing initiatives, even if Kapur and Smith (2002) argue that the introduction of 'micro-bridges' was a consequence of the state's inability to manage and pay for a centralised housing delivery. With the Cuban government advocating socialism – usually known to be founded on principles of Marxist's ideology – it may be hard to imagine how the Cuban government could have adopted a system (self-help through micro-bridges) that promoted unpaid labour in housing delivery. From a Marxist perspective, Burgess has criticised and labelled such a practice as an unfair government mechanism to save costs while exploiting the poor households (see Burgess, 1977). It might therefore be appropriate to argue that, following the economic crisis resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Bloc trade and aid (due to Special Period) to Cuba in the 1990s, the Cuban government was left with no option but to formalise and popularise previously ignored informal community initiatives such as self-help housing, while compromising itself on some of the fundamental principles.

It should however be noted that despite institutionalised self-help housing promoting a people-driven approach to housing, thus requiring a changed government role once the

approach has been adopted, the Cuban government has, to a large extent, also failed to view it in that light. The Cuban government has instead seen it as a fitting alternative mechanism that could still foster both government's ideas and control while allowing users also to play a limited role. Thus, in the light of the above, as argued by Ramirez (2005), the incorporation of micro-bridges in the Building 63 Houses Community Project in Pogolloti, was used as a strategy (by government) to remove control and powers from the community institutions in running this project and to transfer these to the public institutions. In the process, residents' participation was reduced to providing the information required to design the houses, and to helping with some of the finishing tasks (unpaid labour), such as painting walls, while the rest of the key decision-making powers/functions resided with the public institutions (Ramirez, 2005).

2.5.2.3 A justification for housing cooperatives in self-help housing

A number of reasons can be advanced for why institutional self-help was commonly practised. Housing cooperatives ensured a larger degree of participation, assisted groups to build decent housing and to use their savings for housing purposes (Khurana, 2001). Gonzalez Corzo (2005) argues that, historically, housing cooperatives have been used to stimulate capital generation and to improve the quantity and quality of affordable housing in major urban centres of the world. For instance, about 30.0% to 40.0% of all the investments made in house construction under housing cooperatives were from government and from private savings by individuals and the rest came from loans granted by financing agencies.

It is thus possible to serve two purposes by means of such housing cooperatives: as model for savings institutions for the poor to house themselves, as agencies for the construction of decent, affordable low-income housing (Khurana, 2001). This begs the question: How, in practice, did housing cooperatives operate?

The housing cooperatives generally adopt two methods in their construction programmes. According to Khurana (2001), they either construct the houses and upon completion hand them over to the rightful owners, or they advance loans to individual members who in turn construct their own houses. In Cairo (Egypt), for example, housing-cooperative schemes, using this construction method, would build the complete external framework and one room

and a water closet inside the housing unit. Owners would then, as part of progressive housing, be responsible for completion of the internal components based on their personal financial circumstances (Khurana, 2001). This house is called the ‘nucleus house’.

Furthermore, in an effort to save costs, particularly on materials, users would collectively remain responsible (using their skills) for the local production of materials. Thus, low-income households were encouraged to establish building centres within their communities. These centres were also established in other countries such as Zimbabwe (Harare), Zambia (Kafue), India (Mumbai, New Delhi) and Pereira/Colombia (2 500 Lotes) (Daily Sun, 2007:17; Gough, 1996; Keivana & Werna, 2001; Skinner & Rodell, 1983). For instance, as argued by Gough (1996), a building centre was established in 2 500 Lotes in August 1986, organised by the state-run Fondo de Vivienda Popular Pereira. The Fondo de Vivienda Popular Pereira encouraged the on-site production of building materials by the self-help builders themselves. Other than the example above, there are two more cases of this nature in Pereira where building materials were manufactured by self-help builders (Gough, 1996). For instance, the community Sinai in 2 500 Lotes decided to produce their own concrete blocks using the Cinva-Ram, while, the community of Byron Gaviria in 2 500 Lotes made a prefabricated system of cement-based blocks, tiles and slabs (Gough, 1996).

In a similar approach by Cotton Printers Co-operative in Harare (Zimbabwe), the institutionalised self-help housing builders have through their building centre manufactured some of the building components such as doors, window frames and bricks and moulded concrete parts to reduce construction costs (Keivana & Werna, 2001). According to Daily Sun (2007:17), about 400 building centres have been opened across India to help poor people to obtain the right materials and expertise to build their own houses and create employment. At these centres, more than 55 000 artisans-masons, plumbers, carpenters and electricians were trained to help their local communities build suitable houses and contain costs. Furthermore, the Chawama Institutionalised Self-help Housing Project in Kafue (Zambia) developed one of the more successful uses of innovative building systems in which self-help played a role both in the production of materials and in building. Self-help housing incorporates the use of local materials in conjunction with construction techniques that have been proven over a long period of time, so in this project too, costs were saved for cement by

using stabilised soil blocks for walls (Skinner & Rodell, 1983). Therefore, while state organisations in these and other developing countries did not restrict institutionalised self-help builders in their choice of building materials, they would however ensure that they introduced a range of programmes aimed at reducing the cost of building materials meant for the self-help builders (Gough, 1996).

2.5.2.4 Self-help housing institutions and state control

The above discussion highlighted the extent to which housing cooperatives are not only people-driven but also autonomous enterprises. However, their activities never completely escaped state interference. There were two ways in which the state could interfere with the activities of these self-help housing institutions: it could interfere directly through the legislation/policies and provision of certain key resources such as finances, technical advice, etc., and, it could interfere indirectly through the lending institutions such as commercial banks.

With regard to the first form of state interference, both positive and negative outcomes have been reported. For example, on the positive side, literature argues that, in Colombia/Pereira, in a city called 2 500 Lotes, the government provided loans that could be split between the purchase of building materials and the hiring of labour (Gough, 1996). Through this programme, self-help builders were divided into twenty communities so that each community would purchase building materials in bulk, and collectively construct their houses. Other than that, in India, the government would provide fiscal concessions, carry out legal and regulating reforms and create an enabling environment (Khurana, 2001). As part of creating an enabling environment, the government would, on the one hand, provide soft loans to voluntary agencies that organised poor households into housing cooperatives (Sukumar, 2001), on the other hand, they would create cooperative training centres that were tasked with ensuring the provision of information, education, and training relating to various facets of cooperatives – e.g. accounting, management, law, etc. (Khurana, 2001). Thus, in the liberal policy environment of Mumbai, housing cooperatives have been used by both public agencies and non-governmental organisations to foster collective action, collective self-help and informal group credit. Similar to the practice in India, the government of Bangladesh set up the

Bangladesh Co-operative Housing Federation with the aim of extending financial support, supervision and coordination of activities only to affiliated housing cooperatives (Khurana, 2001).

In Bogota, Colombia, the housing-subsidy policy introduced by the government in 1990 was intended both to improve the general housing situation and to help the poor directly. As a result, the state would no longer provide houses for the poor but would grant one-off housing subsidies to low-income families (Alan, 2000). This scheme, in incorporating the principles of housing cooperatives, required families wishing to obtain subsidies, to have saved a cash deposit of at least 5.0% of the value of the unit and then also to be prepared to form organised groups to provide their own solutions through institutionalised self-help programmes (Alan, 2000). In 1951, the Pakistani government also facilitated the establishment of the Improvement Trust, which was later amalgamated with the Karachi Development Authority (Khurana, 2001). This Authority ensured that while government did not become the sole provider of low-income housing, construction of these units was properly supervised and the allotment of house sites took place (Khurana, 2001).

Further demonstrating cases of successful government involvement in self-housing cooperatives, Skinner and Rodell (1983) maintain that one major reason behind the success of the Chawama Institutionalised Self-help Project in Kafue (Zambia) was that the government granted the land, provided part of the office space and administration, procured grants and low-interest loans from central government, while non-governmental organisations donated money and equipment and paid for professional staff who designed the houses and played a role in managing construction.

In response to the development of informal settlements, the government of Botswana has, over the past twenty years, instituted several land policies and implemented a number of programmes at both the national and the local levels to deal with this problem, with institutionalised self-help housing being one such programme (Mosha, 1996). The squatters were encouraged to improve their shelter on a self-help basis with technical advice and capital costs coming from donors and the respective government authorities (Mosha, 1996).

Other than having to create an enabling environment for beneficiaries, governments in the developing countries are also faced with the challenge of winning the confidence of especially the commercial banks in order to get them to invest in low-income housing programmes. Historically, banks in the developing countries in particular have been reluctant to invest in low-income housing programmes. There is evidence that some countries have succeeded in persuading banks to finance government initiatives to deliver housing to the poor through cooperatives. It is argued in the literature that the involvement of commercial banks (which historically seemed to have neither come more easily nor more cheaply) in the financing of self-help housing cooperatives (in some developing countries) could potentially suggest several key possibilities. One, unaffordable housing especially to those members likely to default on their loan repayments, two, a compromise on the financial independence of these housing cooperatives, three, housing becoming a profit-making commodity rather than a tool for community empowerment and development. This could further raise the question as to what could have encouraged banks in those countries to participate actively in investing in low-income housing delivery through the self-help housing mechanism. A relevant answer to this might be found in the argument advanced by Khurana (2001) on specifically the Indonesian government. He (Khurana, 2001) argues that, the Indonesian Government put in place strategies to minimise the risks that would always discourage the active involvement of commercial banks in low-income housing. To win the confidence of banks, government usually provides guarantees for bank loans borrowed by the housing cooperatives. This, in a way, could be seen as government's twofold attempt: to ensure banks of potential gains rather than losses, and, to ensure that government remains a key responsible partner through its 'supportive' role in housing delivery to the urban poor. Thus, following this and other, similar, government practices, the effective participation of commercial banks in self-housing cooperatives in countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Thailand (Khurana, 2001) certainly came as no surprise. A government's financial and administrative assistance should therefore be viewed as a boost to poor households' efforts to house themselves. In turn, such government assistance also justifies Turner's argument that there is a need for government to provide only the resources (finance and know-how being some of them) that are usually beyond the means of poor households (Khurana, 2001).

On the negative side, it is argued in the literature that the state's involvement (whether financial or administrative) in self-help housing programmes has to a large extent

compromised the nature of self-help groups or cooperatives: far from being people-driven enterprises, they are now state-driven enterprises. One example could be India. Jain and Coelho, (1996:61) argue that self-control of housing cooperatives in India during its British colonial rule, was "rarely fostered by the policies of the State". After independence, cooperatives "began to be adopted by the new national leaders as key institutional instruments in the development of the economy and transformation of the society towards a more equitable, democratic, and socialistic model" (Jain & Coelho, 1996:39). As a result, state control over cooperatives became so prevalent that it clouded the daily activities of the latter. One of the strategies used to enforce state control was the government's use of the colonial heritage of administrative control vested in the 'paternalistic' Registrars of Cooperatives (Jain & Coelho, 1996; Sukumar, 2001). On numerous occasions Registrars of Cooperatives could impose their unilateral decisions on any form of cooperative – including those for housing delivery. This practice by the state was commonly encountered in Chennai, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu (Sukumar, 2001).

In concluding the above discussion on the practice of institutionalised self-help housing and the role played by both the state and the beneficiaries, it would be appropriate to indicate that the implementation of self-help housing by means of self-help groups – such as housing cooperatives – in the different parts of the world, reflects a state mechanism aiming not only to control housing but also to erode the autonomy of such groups. As such, it is far removed from Turner's initial idea of dweller control. Although housing cooperatives were intended to act as independent, community-driven, self-reliant economic entities, because of state influence they were (as seen in the above discussion) hardly that. The reason for this, as argued by Sukumar (2001), is that the evolution of cooperatives is usually embedded in the external institutional frameworks that form the incentive structure within which cooperatives are to operate. A point further emphasised by Shah (1996) is that state sponsorship (either directly to beneficiaries or indirectly through banks) stifles the autonomy of cooperatives, thus impeding their independence and growth in the long term, while retaining ultimate control by the state as the key funder.

2.5.2.5 Advantages of self-help housing institutions

Based on the discussion above, it is evident (see Turner & Fichter, 1972) that self-help housing cooperative methods, if properly applied, have the potential to increase housing production, decrease costs to the user and to the public, and contribute to the elimination of the symptoms and causes of poverty.

Other merits attached to programmes of this kind are that they promote owner-occupancy, which many believed would in turn encourage social stability, give people pride in their homes and a stake in society, while also promoting savings and investment (Harris, 1999a; Harris & Giles, 2003).

Further than that, and as argued by Gough (1996), Keivana and Werna (2001) and Sukumar (2001), housing cooperatives have collective advantages for low-income households on at least three fronts. Collective pooling of resources usually helps to lower the individual housing costs that each household would otherwise incur. Depending on the skills of the individuals in that collaboration, certain individuals could, for example, be assigned responsibilities including manufacturing of building materials, construction, maintenance, and management costs as part of project management (Gough, 1996; Sukumar, 2001). They promote community organisation and meaningful participation among low-income households. Despite low-income households having typically little access to formal housing finance due to their having unreliable and unstable sources of income, by means of housing cooperatives, the credit worthiness and collective asset value of low-income households are increased and rise because of the collective pooling of (limited) resources (Sukumar, 2001). These housing cooperatives also help to stimulate investment and capital formation by providing prospective homeowners and investors with powerful economic incentives, tax advantages, and the potential of future capital gains (Gonzalez Corzo, 2005; Gough, 1996). Literature further indicates that such cooperatives are capable of creating positive economic externalities through the creation of additional employment opportunities, higher tax revenues for the municipal governments, and the multiplier effect associated with increased investment and consumption (Gonzalez Corzo, 2005).

Other advantages of such schemes, as mentioned by Khurana (2001), Rodriguez and Astrand (1996) and Rondinelli (1990), include: their ability to prioritise the elimination of any form of economic exploitation of the beneficiaries in that they are non-profit making, the ability of such schemes to be used as tools to foster dweller control. Contrary to the case with public housing, housing cooperatives empower beneficiaries to own and control all the stages of the construction process. More importantly, though, even maintenance of the estate is also in the hands of members, which leads to better and less expensive maintenance, these institutions encourage participation that usually leads to high levels of satisfaction amongst the beneficiaries. A high degree of meaningful participation by beneficiaries in all the stages of the process furthermore helps to ensure that fundamental aspects of housing such as quality, quantity and the relevancy of the structures to the needs of the future dwellers are properly met, they usually promote and encourage inclusive housing. Literature has indicated that these programmes may potentially produce integrated urban communities with a better, improved standard of living through the supply of basic services and facilities and promoting employment and education opportunities, they have the potential to encourage mutual bonds and relations amongst the beneficiaries. Cooperative housing creates collective systems of financing and repayment and reduces the dangers of default by instilling principles of mutual responsibility in their members, and, they can potentially be used as tools to facilitate the empowerment and the inclusion of previously marginalised groups in housing, in that when men and women, adults and children, work together in cooperative housing, gender awareness can be increased. According to Midgley *et al*. (1986), the fact that women became representatives (as was the case in Kafue, Lusaka's institutionalised self-help projects) of construction groups created venues for expression and eventually de-emphasised the distinctions between men's work and women's work.

2.5.2.6 Challenges confronting self-help housing institutions

Generally, self-help housing cooperatives – despite their being supported by the governments of developing countries and their general success – have serious challenges. Building centres in many countries have not been as efficient and effective as one would have expected. A number of issues compromise the effectiveness of these institutions. This section will discuss six key challenges confronting self-help housing institutions.

Gough (1996) maintains that in most centres there was no real incentive for producers of building materials to supply the centres directly, since they already had an efficient distribution network for their building materials. By selling directly to self-help builders, the producers were not necessarily expanding their market but were just reaching it in a different way. Literature also indicates that the producers who were actually co-operating with the projects were charging exorbitant prices (Gough, 1996). The merchants selling building materials objected to the building-material centres, because the latter attempted to bypass the existing retailing system. The large building-materials merchants, who operated as wholesalers to the small merchants, also objected to being bypassed and in some cases had the power to prevent producers from supplying building centres. There was also the fundamental problem of different people building at different rates and hence, requiring different materials at different times (Gough, 1996), which in turn rendered an economically sound practice difficult to put into actual practice. For instance, in Botswana beneficiaries would put up dwellings at varying intervals, thereby leaving large patches of land undeveloped (Seretse, 2007). Related to the above situation is the fact that families' participation has to some extent been influenced by their different backgrounds. As argued by Mathey (1992), while younger families with at least two adult people seemed to be able to make the best use of self-help housing cooperatives, single-parent families and the elderly seemed to find actively participation in the construction process difficult. Gough (1996) furthermore maintains that one of the main problems faced by the community in the production of concrete blocks was a shortage of time, with most members attending to their jobs (be they informal or formal), they usually had weekends in which to engage practically in either the construction of their houses or any related activity (Gough, 1996). By manufacturing their own materials and also building their houses, the households were inevitably slowing down an already slow process (Gough, 1996).

There was also a problem of lack of trust among community members as they were often not a 'community' as such, but a group of strangers who had one thing in common – a desire to own a house (Gough, 1996). Hence Midgley *et al*. (1986) point out that group members were not homogeneous, they did not speak the same language nor did they share the same cultural affiliation. According to Khurana (2001), scarcity of developed land, increases in the construction costs, and the non-availability of building materials – like cement, bricks, steel, etc.– also played a negative role in the application of self-help housing cooperatives.

Literature indicates that in Jordan, housing cooperatives could not make much progress on account of escalation in the prices of land, lack of finance and restrictions regarding allotment of crown land to housing cooperatives by the government agencies (Khurana, 2001). With regard to construction costs, the rise in the prices of building materials and the wage rates of building labour were somewhat phenomenal.

Increasing the loan amount will on the other hand render it unaffordable to segments of the target group at the bottom levels of the low-income spectrum, while longer payment periods and reduced rates of interest could mitigate this effect (Seretse, 2007). The other problems, as identified in Botswana but not limited to this country, include the tendency to keep the costs down, which has resulted in the production of aesthetically unpleasant, unattractive structures, which are not only eyesores but moreover have the effect of depressing property values in adjacent neighbourhoods.

2.6 Conclusion

International literature indicates that the delivery of public housing to low-income households has over time never been a viable nor sustainable solution to the housing crisis faced by particularly the developing countries. Contributing factors to this could, amongst others, be unaffordable both to governments and the intended beneficiaries, this resulting from the high costs and standards usually associated with public housing programmes. Consequently, following this historical decline in the housing output of the public housing system, the concept of self-help in housing sphere gained popularity in the mid-1960s and was widely adopted as an alternative housing delivery system. However, despite self-help being founded on principles and values such as dweller control, housing by people and freedom to build, the literature indicates that state involvement seems to have continued to remain central to this concept (self-help housing) and even all its associated processes. Ironically, neo-liberal arguments are commonly being used to justify self-help housing, and yet, in practice, state control is the norm. It could therefore, finally, be appropriate to conclude that it is an oversimplification automatically to equate self-help with neo-liberalism. Table 2.1 below further provides – from a neo-liberal perspective – a summary of the application of key concepts regarding the practice of self-help housing as advanced by Turner.

Table 2.1: Comparison of applications of Turner's key concepts by proponents of self-help and Marxist ideologies

Concepts	State housing provision	Neo-Marxist	Turner	World Bank	Aided self-help	Institutionalised self-help
Dweller control	not mentioned – not very high on the priority list	subject to the state's responsibility in respect of providing low-income mass housing	Users are key decision makers during the design, planning and construction processes	Users as key decision makers during construction to direct housing responsibility to individuals	Users to decide on the type of housing end product	Project management by users – communal needs could take precedence over individual dweller control
State control	State to act as developer, financier and or contractor	State as key role player in housing provision	State to provide housing aspects (infrastructure and resources) beyond the means of poor households.	State to play an enabling role	State to create enabling environment – site-and-services	State to create enabling environment in the form of fiscal concessions
Sweat equity	Mechanism by state to save costs – not regarded as an important aspect	Mechanism to exploit poor households	Not compulsory except for households who cannot afford to hire builders	Important in the housing construction process as this is left to the households.	Important in the housing construction process as this is left to the households	Applicable where households cannot afford hiring builders
Use of local resources	Procured from external suppliers	Leads to inferior and poorly built housing	Mobilisation of local resources and skills	Mobilisation of local resources and skills	Mobilisation of local resources and skills	Users buying or manufacturing local products
Housing costs	State subsidies that are not viable	State as a financier	Both state and users to bear costs	Housing loans more viable than subsidies	State and users to bear costs	Individual or collective savings by users and some degree of state funding to sustain institutions
Definition of a house	Formal housing	Housing is the social responsibility of the state		Core housing	Core housing	Progressive housing

The available South African literature indicates that, similar to international practice in self-help housing as outlined in the above discussion, the state locally also tends to undermine inter alia dweller control as one of the fundamental principles advanced by Turner in the 1960s. This deviation by the South African government from some of Turner's key concepts and initial ideas in self-help will form the basis of the discussion in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:

LOW-INCOME HOUSING POLICIES IN SOUTH AFRICA: A PLACE FOR SELF-HELP HOUSING?

Chapter Two provided an overview of the basic principles of self-help housing within the international context. It was argued that a great deal of self-help has been either directly or indirectly influenced by state involvement. In this chapter the focus turns to an assessment of self-help in South African policy and practice.

The aim of this chapter is therefore twofold: to analyse the extent to which post-apartheid housing policy has considered the principle of self-help, to analyse critically the self-help housing approach that is officially called PHP in South Africa. These two aspects are assessed against the theoretical background on self-help provided in Chapter Two. Three main arguments are forwarded in this chapter: the South African policy portrays a range of self-help principles, although there is space for self-help in the post-apartheid housing policy there has been limited support for self-help in either policy or in practice, and, the operationalisation and institutionalisation of PHP (through aided self-help and institutionalised self-help) have seldom conformed to the initial principles of PHP or to the basic principles of self-help analysed in Chapter Two. It would seem that the dominant role by government – as opposed to community-driven housing delivery – influenced self-help programmes in a post-apartheid South Africa. Thus, the practice of self-help housing through PHP is far removed from Turner's initial idea of dweller control (discussed in Chapter Two).

To achieve the above, this chapter is structured as follows: a brief overview of housing policies during apartheid is provided. The overview is then followed by discussion and analysis of post-apartheid housing policies (the White Paper, BNG, and PHP) in relation to the key principles of self-help housing discussed in Chapter Two. The discussion and analysis is followed by a conclusion.

3.1 History of black housing and self-help in South Africa

The intention in this section is not to provide an extensive overview of colonial and apartheid low-income housing policies. Yet, assessing policy and application in the delivery of low-income housing and specifically of self-help housing in a post-apartheid era will be incomplete if it is not situated in relation to the South African historical context. Thus, this section starts off with a brief assessment of the overall policy under both colonial and apartheid rule, followed by a specific section dealing with self-help under apartheid.

3.1.1 Historical overview of the development of low-income housing policy in South Africa

Wessels (1989) identifies three distinct phases in the development of housing policy for black housing in urban South Africa. Without going into more detail, this section intends to provide a brief overview of the housing scenario during these phases.

Phase 1: 1920–1970s

The first phase identified by Wessels (1989) is the period from the 1920s to the early 1970s. Three distinct characteristics of housing during this period are worth mentioning in this section. Some reference should be made regarding the type of housing. During this period, housing for urban Africans came in two dominant forms (although others also existed), namely state rental housing and hostels (Goodlad, 1996). Linked to the type of housing, specific tenure arrangements were also applicable. In order to prevent the permanency of black people in the main urban areas of South Africa, black people were mostly forbidden to have title (Gilbert & Crankshaw, 1999). The choice for African migrants in the urban areas had therefore, in the main, been reduced to either renting a council house (family house) or to staying in a hostel room (usually single-sex male hostels). In this way Africans were in effect not legally part of the South African urban fabric (Goodlad, 1996). There was also a distinct spatial intent in housing policy during this period. As a control measure and a strategy to discourage Africans from moving into urban areas, housing needs of black communities in urban areas were neglected while development through, among others, housing provision, was channelled to homelands (Wessels, 1989). Ironically this approach was neither able to

stop African migration nor to provide a solution to housing shortages in urban areas (Bailey, 1995; Goodlad, 1996).

This policy went hand in hand with strategies, such as influx control, forced removals and a moratorium on the provision of rental housing in the early 1970s (Bailey, 1995; Goodlad, 1996; Hart & Hardie, 1987). The above policy was further also supplemented by the establishment, in the 1970s, of township-based structures called Development Boards (Wessels, 1989). Despite the mandate for such Development Boards having been to ensure oversight of Natives' affairs – particularly housing – state funding for them (Development Boards) was non-existent. The funding sources of these Boards were limited to funds raised and generated from sources, such as house rentals, service charges and profit from sorghum beer sales in townships (Wessels, 1989). As argued by Hart and Hardie (1987), it was not long before these boards found themselves unable to continue funding housing for the Africans, which in turn led to a widening of the gap between urban housing demands and supply, while it further also sparked growing political tension in the country.

Phase 2: late 1970s–1980s

The second phase, according to Wessels (1989), followed the Soweto uprisings of 1976. Two distinct developments regarding the administration of black communities and housing should be mentioned. There was a transition from Development Boards to Black Local Authorities. The government was also forced by circumstances to recognise and work closely with the Urban Foundation. The Urban Foundation was a Section 21 (not for profit) company established in December 1976 (Smit, 1992). The primary task of the Urban Foundation was to raise the socio-economic circumstances of the black population across a wide spectrum of areas, such as housing, education, health, welfare, community development and many others (Goodlad, 1996; Smit, 1992). This period also saw government's acceptance in 1975 of the 30-year leasehold and in 1978 of the 99-year leasehold (Smit, 1992), while its role in housing provision was being reduced to that of a 'supporting role' (Gilbert & Crankshaw, 1999; Goodlad, 1996). Yet, despite these developments in the late 1970s, the mid-1980s experienced a wide-spread mushrooming of shack settlements mainly on peripheral land in many urban areas (Gusler, 2000; Hilary, 1992). Consequently, the reality of growing informal settlements required a more differentiated approach than a mere focus on prevention and eradication strategies. So, following reforms on its housing policy in the mid-1980s,

government's role in housing provision changed (Gusler, 2000). There can be little doubt that the international shifts advocated by the World Bank – and based on Turner's ideas – were instrumental in also influencing South Africa (see Chapter Two).

It was thus within that context that the White Paper of 1986 further scaled down government's role in housing provision from one of being the provider, to a private-sector-based approach. In reality, government withdrew from the direct provision of housing (Gusler, 2000). In the same year, realising that it could not contain the masses of Africans migrating to the country's urban centres, government passed the Abolition of Influx Control Act of 1986, but replaced it with a policy of 'orderly urbanization' (Bailey, 1995; Goodlad, 1996; Gusler, 2000). As part of its notion of 'orderly urbanisation' government attempted to experiment with the introduction of site-and-services schemes (aided self-help), while the private sector and individuals were also encouraged to take a leading role in housing construction (Goodlad, 1996; Phillips, 1995; Tomlinson, 1999).

Contrary to the World Bank's efforts during the 1970s to promote site and services as an alternative strategy for the provision of adequate and affordable housing to poor households in developing countries (Pugh, 1992; World Bank, 1993), the South African government concentrated on middle-class black people as beneficiaries of this programme. In practice, this meant that government was providing middle-income earners with serviced plots to initiate their own construction. Consequently, middle-income households as opposed to low-income households became the main beneficiaries of this policy shift. By means of this policy, the South African government used housing provision as a tool not only to retain and further its political control but also to deprive poorer households of access to housing through site-and-services schemes (Goodlad, 1996; Tomlinson, 1999). At the same time, cities remained closed to lower-income people in that no stands were made available in terms of the policy of orderly urbanisation (Gilbert & Crankshaw, 1999). Moreover, in a desperate attempt to promote home ownership, government passed legislation allowing the selling of rented state houses at a large-scale discount to their respective occupants. Because of the low prices involved, this exercise was dubbed the 'Big Sale" or the 'Sale of the Century' (Wessels, 1989). To some extent this privatisation process also initiated processes of self-help because those who could afford to do so started to upgrade and expand such units.

While government on a very limited scale incorporated the upgrading approach in respect of squatter developments, a common and wide-practised strategy during this period was to relocate squatters to site-and-services schemes. Despite such strategic relocation programmes, the late 1980s continued to experience a marked degree of mobility among shack dwellers not only from the homelands and rural areas, but also from backyard people who all illegally continued to occupy areas targeted for site-and-services schemes (Gusler, 2000; Hilary, 1992).

Phase 3: early 1990s

This phase saw an increasing amount of pressure from the mushrooming of informal settlements in many urban areas of South Africa. The situation prompted a need for action by the government. Thus, in 1990, following the approval by the then State President (FW de Klerk), the De Loor Commission was appointed (Gusler, 2000). Central to the commission was government's intention to enquire specifically into the state of housing in black communities. One of the key findings of this commission was the existence of vast mismatch between the rate of housing supply and actual housing demand (see Gusler, 2000). These were found to be possible threats to government's programme of promoting home ownership. The De Loor Report prompted government to establish an independent structure called the Independent Development Trust (IDT) (to be briefly discussed later). To promote the concepts 'supporting role', 'orderly urbanisation' and 'home ownership' (as referred to in the discussion above), a new approach was then adopted by government towards housing. The state withdrew its active direct housing provision and limited its role to a 'support role'. With government playing a supporting role, the process was thus led by the IDT, with government being responsible for the funding of IDT programmes. Guided and informed by the contents of the De Loor Report, the IDT developed and adopted a programme of servicing sites through capital subsidies (Tomlinson, 1999). However, despite the positive intent, the IDT programme was also severely criticised. With many of these serviced stands being located on the urban periphery, Bailey (1995) and Phillips (1995) argued that site-and-services schemes were used by government to confine squatters to peripheral locations in spite of the fact that the state had accepted the responsibility to upgrade the living conditions in squatter camps.

However, there were also exceptions in this respect. Marais (1994) notes that, in Bloemfontein, the location of the IDT upgrading project directly challenged the apartheid racial zoning plans. Furthermore, IDT also recognised the role of different stakeholders previously not recognised by government programmes. These included communities themselves, Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and the private sector (Goodlad, 1996). Despite government's roll-out of site-and-services schemes, the role of the private sector in housing and individual initiatives by communities to house themselves, housing supply continued to fail to match the rate of black urbanisation, with squatting being the order of the day.

3.1.2 Self-help housing and the apartheid period

Apart from the housing provision at the macro level as described above, Parnell and Hart (1999) argue that self-help housing, though not fully recognised or consistently applied, has in fact been part of the South African housing policy for more than a century – first under colonial rule and subsequently under the apartheid government. To a large extent this argument that self-help has been practised widely reiterates the claim regarding the long history of self-help housing as described in Chapter Two where it was be indicated that both Harris (1998; 2003) and Pugh (2001) maintain that self-help has been a conventional housing process in developing countries.

However, central to the discussion in this study is the argument that, contrary to the fundamental principles of self-help as conceptualised by proponents of the self-help school of thought – such as Crane and Turner (see also Chapter Two) – self-help was mainly supported on the basis of government's perceived political and economic advantages of the process, and not principally as a response to a shortage of affordable housing among the poor (Parnell & Hart, 1999; Smit, 1992). Scholars argue that the application of self-help as a concept in South Africa during the colonial era and in the late 1980s and early 1990s was used to advance the policy of establishing segregated locations for indigenous peoples on the periphery of urban areas (Gilbert & Crankshaw, 1999; Omenya, 2002; Parnell & Hart, 1999). Such strategic and deliberate deviation by government from the fundamental principles of self-help (as argued in the literature), can be demonstrated in two ways:

the then Minister of Native Affairs, Verwoerd, would ensure that all self-help projects (site and services) undertaken by government were moulded such that they finally conformed with the then government's political agenda – particularly its divide-and-rule approach; Parnell and Hart (1999:367) argue that the "exploration of the practice of self-help housing practices (site and services) in Johannesburg suggests that owner construction is a prevailing method of social engineering, the acceptance or rejection of which reflects perceived political and economic advantages for the state and the private sector, and is not a simple response to a shortage of affordable shelter among the poor". Building on this argument, they use the examples of self-help housing programmes (site and services) that were part of government strategy to relocate blacks in both Constantia (Kroonstad) and Inanda (Newtown) respectively in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Two further comments should be mentioned from the work of Hart and Hardie (1987). He states that "the emphasis of the state self-help initiative has been that of getting houses built in a suitably orderly fashion". Other than that, "national and local controls on participation, and supply, standards, tenanting, [and] small-scale building activity, have negated much of the development potential of the self-help housing process" (Hart & Hardie, 1987:368). Thus, as argued in Chapter Two, it seems that during this period, self-help in South Africa – as elsewhere in the developing world – was mainly structured around state control rather than around dweller control. It should however still be acknowledged that, despite such deviation by government from self-help principles, its practice (restricted though it may have been) allowed some African families to become home- owners through self-help housing and additionally allowing occupants of backyard shacks to escape from conditions of severe overcrowding by establishing their own independent shelters. Yet, while black people were completely excluded or sidelined from the mainstream housing policy in their segregated homelands, the practice of self-help housing remained part of black people's housing delivery.

3.2 Low-income housing policies in the post-apartheid era

South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy ushered in a period in which the foundations were laid to eradicate the legacy of the past housing policies and their delivery systems (as outlined in previous discussion). Thus, the establishment of democratic government in South Africa, in April 1994, had as a priority the provision of houses to the previously disadvantaged (Adlard, 2007; Baumann, 2000). To achieve its goal in housing provision, government formulated a number of policy documents. These include the White Paper on Housing in 1994, PHP policy in 1998, and the Comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements in 2004 (commonly known as "BNG") (Department of Housing, 2004; Housing Indaba, 2005). It is thus within the scope of this section not only briefly to discuss each of these policy documents and then to identify the forms of self-help entrenched in them, but also to attempt to indicate the shortfalls of each on fundamental principles of PHP.

3.2.1 White Paper on Housing

The post-apartheid South African housing policy was announced in 1994, when the First White Paper on Housing in a democratic South Africa was released. Yet, the policy was developed during the Transitional Phase (1992-1994) and was negotiated at the National Housing Forum (Rust & Rubenstein, 1996). A target of one million housing units was set for the first five years (Jenkins, 1999). Although this target was not achieved in the above-mentioned timeframe, nearly 2.6 million units were facilitated between 1994 and 2008 (Motlanthe, 2009; Special Raporteur, 2008; Zuma, 2009).

The national housing vision of the White Paper on Housing 1994 is stated to be that: "government strives for the establishment of viable, socially and economically integrated communities, situated in areas of allowing convenient access to opportunities as well as health, educational and social amenities, within which all South Africa's people will have access on a progressive basis to:

- A permanent residential structure with secure tenure, ensuring privacy and providing adequate protection against the elements, and

- Potable water, adequate sanitary facilities including waste disposal and domestic electricity supply" (Department of Housing, 1994:19).

On a more pragmatic level (Department of Housing, 1994), eight approaches to housing were considered important at that stage:

- Stabilising the housing environment;
- Supporting the housing process;
- Mobilising housing credit;
- Mobilising savings;
- Subsidisation, to alleviate affordability constraints;
- Institutional arrangements;
- Land; and
- The coordination of development efforts and fund allocation.

With the evolution of the White Paper on Housing 1994, the concept of community-driven housing initiatives was to some extent entrenched in this policy document. A number of examples will be provided to prove this. More specifically in terms of its vision, the White Paper on Housing 1994 suggests that "the right to housing will be realised progressively" (Department of Housing, 1994:20). This emphasis on the progressive aspect of housing provision on the one hand, concurs with Turner's contextualisation of the concept 'housing as a process', while on the other it confirms that, to a large extent, the South African housing policy can be described as a policy of aided self-help.

Other concepts that could be associated with self-help include *people-centred development* and *freedom of choice* in housing provision (Department of Housing, 1994). With regard to the concept of *people-centred development* the Department of Housing (1994:21) states that "Government is committed to a development process driven from within communities". Thus, similar to this concept ("*people-centred development*") the literature (see Chapter Two) indicates that Turner advocated concepts such as *housing by people* and *dweller control* in his attempt to promote a people-centred housing delivery. However, despite linking the above concept of *people-centred development* with principles of self-help, it is also important to

indicate that the context within which this concept was used in 1994 was more about government's intentions to move away from the former practice of imposing development on people, to a more democratic practice of consulting with people before carrying out developments on their behalf. It was thus not necessarily an indication of microlevel self-help in the sense envisaged by Turner, yet could well include it.

The White Paper on Housing 1994 specifically refers to the concept of *freedom of choice*. With regard to this concept, the White Paper (see Department of Housing, 1994:21) states that "[T]he right of the individual to freedom of choice in the process of satisfying his or her own housing needs is recognised, and that the state should promote both the right of the individual to choose and encourage collective efforts (where applicable) by people to improve their housing circumstances". Thus, with the concept *freedom of choice* the natural expectation, from the self-help point of view, would be a process that allows beneficiaries to exercise, amongst others, full control over their end product through practices such as choice of design, materials, and selection of builders where they themselves cannot personally build.

Practice of *freedom of choice* may have the potential to lead into what Turner called 'good housing' or 'best results' as a result of the practice of *freedom to build*. Literature indicates (as discussed in Chapter Two) that, it is Turner's view that where people are 'free' to make major decisions and choices about their housing, they would produce the type of housing best suited to their needs and circumstances. Thus, similar to the White Paper's concept of *freedom of choice*, Turner has over time advanced concepts such as *freedom to build*, and *dweller control* (see also Harris, 2003: 248; Midgley *et al*., 1986 Soliman, 2004).

At the same time, government intent also negated some of the self-help principles. The White Paper on Housing 1994 (Department of Housing, 1994:21) emphasises that "[I]t is incumbent on the state to assist particularly the poor to enable them to be adequately housed whilst the state at second or third tier government can, through appropriate structures, act as deliverer". The important point about this statement was that although government committed itself to the democratic processes of consultation with communities, the actual delivery of all housing developmental needs – as they shall have collectively been identified in the consultation

process – will always remain an important responsibility of government. Reflected by the above statement could be the fact that, while the policy seemed to be making reference to community-driven housing (self-help approach), it was still largely reiterating the notion that adequate and affordable housing should be the state's responsibility.

It is therefore evident from the above discussion that, to a certain extent, principles of self-help are being entrenched in the South African housing policy.

3.2.2 Breaking New Ground (BNG)

The new revised national housing policy framework, 'BNG', aimed at creating integrated communities instead of just housing areas, was adopted in 2004 (Roux, 2007; Rust, 2006). Significantly the revised policy document did not alter the fundamental principles (Department of Local Government, 2005; Housing Indaba, 2005; Ndinda, 2006; Rust, 2006). Having said that, it is imperative first to provide a brief background of BNG and how it both retained and changed some of the fundamental concepts of the White Paper on Housing 1994. Following that will be a more critical analysis of self-help principles entrenched in this programme (BNG).

3.2.2.1 Policy shifts in BNG

While retaining use of capital subsidy, few reforms are proposed by BNG with regard to the structuring and management of government subsidies. It seems that the White Paper on Housing 1994 successfully set goals for the housing sector but ran short of an outline of sufficient relevant means and strategies to achieve the said goals (Department of Housing, 1994). Thus, with the same goals, BNG attempts, without reinventing the wheel, to refocus and rechannel the existing strategies and mechanisms. The difference between the two policy documents (White Paper and BNG) can be illustrated by referring to a number of concepts and specific approaches.

According to Department of Local Government and Housing (2005), the White Paper focuses exclusively on the overall housing system and its complex dimensions and modalities, while ignoring the contextual specificities. Thus, the White Paper on Housing 1994 (see Department of Housing, 1994) clearly articulates the objective of developing sustainable human settlements, but the original housing subsidy instruments (as a means to achieve) failed to give effect to this objective (State of The Cities Report, 2006). In an attempt both to address the delivery challenges and its own failure to respond to policy initiatives, BNG reformulates some of the previous policy approaches and concepts. Thus, expanding the narrow focus of the White Paper on *supply-driven delivery* only, BNG advocates *demand-driven delivery* (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

With the demand-driven delivery approach BNG, unlike the White Paper, seems to intend to ensure that government's housing-delivery plans and programmes would adopt (while making reference to the available state resources) a more bottom-up (community-determined) than a top-down (externally-prescribed) approach. Central to this concept (demand-driven delivery) could also be the intent to ensure that government's programmes on low-income housing delivery would be able to shift from a supply-side delivery model (as envisaged in the White Paper), one in which new housing projects would be the only vehicle of mass housing delivery, to a more demand-side, individual subsidy model that would allow individual households to purchase properties on an individual basis (Department of Housing, 2004).

Instead of *housing units* to be key deliverables, BNG promotes delivery of *human settlements*. With *human settlements* as a concept, BNG implies government's attempt to shift the focus of its delivery towards attaining a more inclusive and dignified housing that would provide access to social amenities, such as water and sanitation, clinics, schools, job opportunities and transport as opposed to exclusively delivering housing as advocated by the White Paper on Housing 1994 (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

While the White Paper on Housing 1994 advocates provision of *adequate housing*, BNG refers to *dignified size of house*, which would in turn boost the morality of communities and of society (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

Instead of using the broadly phrased *progressive access to housing*, as used in the White Paper, BNG opts for the more specific and goal-orientated concept of *progressive informal-settlement eradication* through a phased in-situ upgrading programme in the desired locations (as first option) coupled with the relocation (as second option) in undesirable locations (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

To minimise the challenge usually posed by the unavailability of suitable land for low-income housing development, the White Paper on Housing 1994 promotes negotiated settlement of land acquisition by government for housing development, while BNG promotes both negotiated settlement and provision for land-expropriation by government where negotiations with private land owners fails ((Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

Other than what seems to be simply administrative responsibilities for municipalities in housing delivery – as stated in the White Paper – BNG emphasises the need to extend responsibilities of this sphere of government and that, thus, “accreditation of municipalities” seems to be a means to achieve this (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004).

3.2.2.2 Principles of self-help entrenched in BNG

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate the extent to which the BNG policy document can be aligned to some of the self-help principles. A number of concepts will be provided to support this.

As one of the mechanisms to achieve BNG's key objectives, the policy document advocates "progressive eradication of informal settlements" through a phased in-situ upgrading programme (Department of Housing, 2005). Central to this concept is a consultative, phased process that intends to involve the community in determining, amongst key issues, their preferred housing typologies. From a self-help perspective, while this process supports the notion of community-driven housing process, it also provides communities with an opportunity to exercise what Turner called 'freedom to build' over a particular period of time (see also Chapter Two). Furthermore, from the self-help housing point of view, (as discussed in Chapter Two), entrenched in this concept (progressive informal-settlement eradication) could be Turner's use of concepts like *housing as a process* and *progressive development* (Harris, 2003; Turner, 1976). With the concepts *housing as a process* and *progressive development* being at the centre of his housing theory, Turner argued that informal settlements should not be viewed as representing or adding to the housing crisis but rather more as part of a progressive solution to the housing crisis. Thus, tantamount to "progressive and consultative phased in-situ upgrading process", could be the argument Turner made in the literature (see Chapter Two) that, where beneficiaries are empowered and allowed (through effective engagement in all the different stages of project management) to make major decisions (dweller control and freedom to build) about the construction of their preferred housing typologies, they would usually, over a period of time (progressively), construct dwellings of types and qualities corresponding to their economic capacity, social circumstances and cultural habits (see Marcussen, 1990).

As a way to further embrace the idea of community involvement – BNG encourages support and protection of traditional technologies and indigenous knowledge being used by communities to construct houses. Concurring further with BNG in this argument, the literature (see Chapter Two) indicates that Turner encouraged mobilisation and the use of locally produced technology, skills and resources. Turner argued that good housing was more common where it was locally produced through networks structures and decentralising technologies and managed by people themselves (Stein, 1991). Thus, from a self-help point of view, *effective engagement of community* in housing delivery could possibly be a strategy to ensure that, while government works with people, people are allowed to build (using their own local resources and know-how) for themselves, rather than the situation where government works with people to build for people.

3.2.3 The People's Housing Process (PHP)

Having provided an overview of the evaluation and contents of post-apartheid housing policy, the focus now turns specifically to the implementation of self-help housing in South Africa. The above overview reflected on the fact that aided self-help is an essential part of the South African housing policy. This section turns to the PHP approach that reflects an institutional response towards self-help.

3.2.3.1 Overview of implementation systems

The National Policy for Supporting the PHP as a housing-delivery mechanism was approved and implemented in 1998 (Department of Housing, 2005). However, Huchzermeyer (2001) and Napier (2003) argue that it is not clear whether the motivation for implementing PHP is to be found in the international donors' pressure or in internal pressure from community-based organisations, as both aspects, according to them, have played a role in developing the approach to self-help through PHP in South Africa (see Bauman, 2003b). These pressures led to the establishment of the People's Housing Partnership Trust in 1997 and culminated in the National Policy for the Supporting of the PHP in 1998. Thus, pressure for self-help by the community-based organisations came from the Homeless People's Federation, which had strong working relationships with international bodies such as UN-HABITAT and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (Huchzermeyer, 2001). Overall, the PHP Programme can be seen as an institutional self-help response.

Through the PHP mechanism, government used the housing subsidy scheme to implement an institutional self-help process in South Africa (Local Government Housing News Letter, 2006; Lizarralde & Massyn, 2007; Omenya, 2002). In practice it meant the appointment of community-based organisations called support organisations, by the qualifying beneficiaries and respective provincial departments (Department of Housing, 2005). According to Department of Housing (2005), such support organisations, in full consultation with the affected community should then establish self-help groups (similar to housing co-operatives)

known as housing support centres that would then be responsible for the daily project management of PHP.

As part of the project management, the Housing Code of 2000 (Department of Housing, 2000a) stipulates that housing support centres shall provide technical advice and develop co-operative arrangements to purchase materials in addition to helping in manufacturing materials locally (see Mackay, 1999). Furthermore, they shall also be responsible for selecting and supporting housing beneficiaries, supporting emerging local contractors, providing information on building regulations, methods and materials, providing a meeting and training venue, and for promoting ecological approaches (Baumann, 2003b; Baumann & Mitlin, 2003; Department of Housing, 2005; Housing Report, 2001; Roux, 2007). The policy guideline stipulates that such self-help groups (housing support centres) should comprise of a project manager, accounts administrator, certifier, technical advisor, members of the beneficiaries' committee, and the beneficiaries themselves (Department of Housing, 2005).

In practice, two types of housing support centres are operational: some Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) working in the housing environment are able to function as housing support centres; in areas where relevant NGOs are not present, CBOs are being established by government to form new housing support centres (Department of Housing, 2000b). For the financial survival of these self-help groups (housing support centres), it is expected of government to provide project funding. As stipulated in the PHP policy guidelines, funding for the housing support centres and their projects is to be made available through two main sources, namely various state capital subsidies and state grants. Examples of capital subsidies include consolidation subsidies, project-linked subsidies, institutional subsidies and rural subsidies, while examples of state grants include facilitation grants and establishment grants (Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005).

What makes the PHP mechanism unique is that, while the quality is not compromised, all the PHP projects are set to be exempted from quality control by the National Home Builders Registration Council (NHBRC). Thus, as stipulated in the PHP policy guidelines (Department of Housing, 2005), use of recycled material, as may be preferred by the

beneficiaries, is being encouraged. This having been said, it would be within the scope of this study to indicate in the next section the extent to which Turner's ideas on the fundamental principles of self-help housing (as discussed in Chapter Two) are entrenched in the PHP policy document.

3.2.3.2 The People's Housing Process and Turner's ideas on self-help

The aim of PHP policy with its inception in 1998 – from a self-help point of view (as discussed in Chapter Two) – was to shift the focus of housing delivery in the South African context from that of a state-driven (top-down) approach to a more people-driven approach (Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005). In order to transform housing delivery to a more people-driven approach, the policy advocates a number of concepts that could to some extent be tied up with the initial principles of self-help housing as discussed in Chapter Two. For example, from a self-help point of view, the following concepts entrenched in the PHP policy guidelines should be considered:

- Sweat equity;
- People-driven housing process;
- Community empowerment;
- Partnerships in housing delivery;
- Transfer of skills through housing;
- Greater choice by beneficiaries in how they want to use their subsidies;
- Direct involvement of beneficiaries in the entire housing process;
- The use of recycled material;
- Increased beneficiary input;
- Housing support centres;
- Positive housing outcomes; and
- Adequate housing (Baumann, 2003b; Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005; Local Government Housing News letter, 2006).

One could argue that, through concepts such as *recycled materials*, *partnerships with communities*, *transfer of skills*, PHP policy seems to have the intent to achieve what Turner called *locally produced housing* when he suggested and emphasised the use of local resources

and skills by communities. For example, it is stated in the PHP policy guidelines that, amongst key responsibilities of the support organisations in consultation with the beneficiaries, is to help them (beneficiaries) either to acquire training on building skills or to identify small builders from their immediate communities to carry out construction, and, to mobilise and encourage them (beneficiaries) to use, wherever possible, the recycled materials (Department of Housing, 2005). Where possible, the policy also encourages the self-manufacturing of materials by the communities themselves. For example, available literature on PHP indicates that in Mpumalanga Province, the community in Nkomazi Local Municipality-Tonga East, organised themselves in the PHP project and that the bricks used for building the houses were made by local people (Housing Report, 2001). A brick factory was established nearer to the project so that people from the community could be employed. As a result, 35 people were employed to make bricks for a period of six months (Housing Report, 2001). Roux (2007) reports that in Galeshewe near Kimberley, housing support centres assisted small entrepreneurs to produce building materials, such as cement blocks, lintels, pavement bricks and roof trusses. In Khayelitsha (Cape Town) for instance, an emerging local contractor (Marnol) was initially hired as the materials supplier by both Homeless and Squatters Housing Project and the Masithembane PHP project (Adlard, 2007; Development Action Group, 2007). At a later stage, in Homeless and Squatters Housing Project's case, the project developed its own block yard, while also contracting Marnol for the rest of its supplies. All the above scenarios could possibly (as Turner argued) promote the practice of the concept of using local resources and skills, which usually becomes possible through increased beneficiaries' input or community involvement.

In promoting what Turner called *housing by people* through the practice of *dweller control* and *freedom to build,* the policy emphasised the concepts of *direct involvement of beneficiaries*, *greater choice*, and *increased beneficiary input* in the entire building process and in the use of their subsidies. One aspect of such community involvement is to ensure that beneficiaries participate in all aspects of the PHP process. Thus, for their coordinated *direct involvement* and *increased beneficiary input*, the policy suggests that they (beneficiaries) appoint their preferred support organisations (a concept similar to housing co-operatives), which would then together with housing support committee identify and carry out their collective housing needs. Related to the concepts of *dweller control* and *freedom to build*, the PHP policy guidelines states that "[S]upport Organisations should (through a series of

workshops) assist beneficiaries in the preparation and approval of their preferred house building plans" (Department of Housing, 2005:12). This emphasises the need for the beneficiaries to practice their right to make their 'inputs' in any decision-making process regarding their housing before they finally, either collectively or individually, propose and adopt their own 'chosen' designs and house plans.

Towards achieving what Turner called an *enabling environment*, the policy suggests that the National Department of Housing should ensure that sufficient funding (capital subsidies and grants) are made available while the local governments would (in consultation with housing support committee and support organisation) ensure that suitable land is collectively identified for PHP development (Department of Housing, 2005).

However, despite the above-mentioned self-help principles entrenched in the PHP policy, initial delivery through the PHP mechanism could not escape criticism regarding non-compliance to some of fundamental principles of self-help housing. Thus, the next section will focus on areas where PHP seemed to have deviated from Turner's ideas on the initial principles of self-help housing.

3.2.3.3 People's Housing Process and state control: some criticism

Some critics suggest that the renewed interest in the PHP process had little to do with any belief in the acceptance, in principle, of self-help, rather, the PHP was seen as a way of solving the problem in respect of the contractor-driven approach adopted in South Africa in 1994 by the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Baumann, 2003a; Baumann & Mitlin, 2003; Ogunfiditimi & Twala, 2007). Contrary to the attainment (as suggested by Turner) of an autonomous housing system through self-help, PHP policy seems to be promoting a more state-dependent housing delivery system. Hence, central to the criticism in this section is the argument that institutionalised self-help has become a means by which government can intervene in the housing process – something Turner did not propose. A number of examples will be given of instances where the principles of self-help through the PHP mechanism were compromised in favour of state control of the PHP process.

While literature (see Chapter Two) indicates that housing co-operatives (a concept similar to housing support centres) were a mechanism to promote (both economically and administratively) autonomous housing delivery, the opposite seems to be the case with housing support centres. The state compromised and reduced particularly the economic autonomy of these institutions (housing support centres) in two ways. By emphasising (through PHP policy) the state's housing subsidies and grants without equal emphasis (as expressed in the case of housing co-operatives) on the use of 'own savings' generated by the beneficiaries (Department of Housing, 2005).

Since the abolishment of the compulsory down payment of R2 479.00 by the beneficiaries in 2003, no mechanism whatsoever has been suggested – either in policy or in practice to encourage the practice of affordable and realistic contributions by the beneficiaries towards their housing (see Chapter Four). This, in turn, encouraged complete financial dependency on government of the beneficiaries and their respective housing support centres, thus subjecting the beneficiaries to state control through the state's rigid and conditional subsidy funding model (see Chapter Four).

The other way in which the state both compromised and reduced the autonomy of the housing support centres was by centralisation of the procurement process through state agencies in some provinces, example in this regard being the Support Empower Bridge Reconstruction Account (SEBRA) state agency in the Free State Province (Ntema & Hoosen, 2008; see Chapter Four). Consequently, the PHP mechanism – like all other government housing programmes – seems to be no different in respect of advocating the idea of the state as the sole deliverer of adequate and affordable housing. Supporting the above argument further, in her appeal to homeless people to be patient with government housing programmes, the Minister of Housing (Ms Lindiwe Sisulu) said: "We will give a house to all who are eligible … please co-operate with us" (Pretoria News, 2008:3).

Furthermore, literature on PHP indicates that state interference with PHP has further compromised the beneficiaries' ability to make choices regarding their diverse preferred

architectural design. Giving effect to that, the policy document (Department of Housing, 2005:35) states that "when designing the house, attention by the builders and housing support centres must be given to National Minimum Norms and Standards in respect of Permanent Residential Structures as prescribed". While on the other hand the Department of Housing (2005:11) states that "... Support Organisations would advise beneficiaries about the minimum norms and standards applicable". To enforce the prescribed norms and standards, (Department of Housing, 2000a), the guidelines on housing support centres stress the ability of such organisations to comply with technical requirements and further that they should satisfy the relevant authorities in terms of capacity. The important conclusion from this is that one of the main reasons for the establishment of housing support centres relates to the fact that houses should be technically 'sound' as decided by government and not as decided (or controlled) by dwellers. Contrary to the principles of self-help discussed in Chapter Two, such emphasis on the one hand, eliminates any possibility for the practice (as stipulated in the PHP policy document) of either "increased input" or "greater choice" by beneficiaries in how they would want to use their subsidies. This approach further subjects PHP programmes to practices similar to those applicable to the state-driven housing approach. Such emphasis by the state on minimum norms and standards seems, apart from being in direct conflict with the principles of *dweller control* and *freedom to build* (as advocated by Turner), further to reinforce the neo-Marxist idea of housing as a product of a "bureaucratically and technologically top-down heavy system" approach (Ward, 1982). This goes even against the stated exemption of PHP from the quality checks by the NHBRC**.** Thus, these organisations (housing support centres) seem (as opposed to housing co-operatives) to be more of government's vehicles to impose its unilateral decision on beneficiaries in terms both of the technical and the economic aspects of their PHP houses. Huchzermeyer (2006:51) supports this argument by asserting that PHP rules "have become hostile to development driven by grassroots communities".

It is argued in the literature that "[t]he steps being taken by the provincial and local governments to impose control over the PHP are leading to a reduction of beneficiary choice to unpaid labour (sweat equity) (Bay Research and Consultancy Services 2003:iii). Considering the emphasis on sweat equity by PHP, it should be noted that Turner did not (as discussed in Chapter Two) equate self-construction with dweller-control. The reduction of beneficiaries' choice to unpaid labour, and, generally, the state's control of the PHP process

to a large extent compromised what Turner called *housing by people* in that people could not participate in any decision-making process regarding their housing save through their physical involvement in the construction process.

While self-help (as discussed in Chapter Two) emphasises 'process' rather than housing outcomes, 'positive housing outcomes rather than the process of achieving such outcomes are central to PHP (De Lille, 2007; Omenya, 2002). Emphasising 'positive housing outcomes' instead of the processes to be followed, the Housing Code of 2000 justifies the PHP approach in the following words: "Experience has proved that if beneficiaries are given the chance either to build houses themselves or to organise the building of houses themselves, they can build better houses for less money" (Department of Housing, 2000a:12), while the Minister of Housing in 1998, Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele, stated: "Self-building through the PHP [has] proved to be one of the most effective strategies in producing quality housing. Most of the … houses built through this process were of better quality and bigger than those delivered through pure subsidy grants" (Gauteng News, 2001:5). More recently, the newly appointed Minister of Housing, Tokyo Sexwale expressed similar sentiments when he said: "We are pleased to report that the homes being built at present are of a larger size and better quality, with more houses of 40 to 45 square metres being constructed" (Sexwale, 2009:2). Evident from the above statements is the fact that, other than an emphasis on self-construction (sweat equity), there is also an expectation of receiving something better, larger or cheaper.

Thus, the emphasis (as argued above) is largely on the end product (size, quality) and not on the process itself. Moreover, to a large degree, the state approach to housing delivery outlined above seems (contrary to the principles of self-help discussed in Chapter Two), currently to be reinforcing the idea of the state as a deliverer of services and houses, and of community members as recipients, and the implicit premise is that the state *might* decide to give people a chance to build for themselves. Baumann (2003a:10) summarises this emphasis on state control in the following words: "Relationships have not changed: the state defines and retains control over the process, and the interface between it and beneficiaries continues to be a layer of state-approved, formal institutions". One could thus argue that continued state control and interference in the activities of PHP programmes over history today manifests itself in a number of challenges to both the actual implementation and the implementers of the policy.

Thus, in the next section, the focus will be on administrative issues that seem to have hindered the implementation and thus, the ability of PHP programmes to deliver at scale.

3.2.3.4 Operational issues hampering the implementation of PHP programmes

Other than the state's deliberate deviation from PHP policy and the fundamental principles of self-help (see previous Section), a number of other factors have impacted negatively on the operation of PHP programmes. Subsequent to the impacts of these factors, PHP programmes have been criticised amongst others for being a failure and/or a slow housing-delivery mode. In this section, a number of operational issues that seem to have impeded effective and efficient application of PHP policy and programmes are discussed.

Literature indicates that the implementation of PHP programmes seems to have been hamstrung by a number of factors. Amongst these factors is a general lack of the necessary capacity and skills to implement PHP programmes at both the provincial and the municipal levels. Equally affected by the capacity issue are the community members who are the beneficiaries, the NGOs, and the local PHP institutions (Khan & Thring, 2003). From a capacity-building perspective (as argued by Khan & Thring, 2003), the implementation of PHP programmes could further be thwarted by government's failure to strike a balance between time taken to mobilise communities to write project proposals and the time taken to capacitate communities and their support organisations for the day-to-day running of PHP activities.

There has been an over-elaboration of the proposal-writing process at the expense of the capacity-building process. Other than the communities and NGOs appointed as support organisations, municipal authorities are also already faced with immense capacity problems that force them to appoint well-established building contractors instead of emerging local contractors to work with beneficiaries for construction. Historically, the much favoured contractor-driven public housing delivery is being criticised for, amongst others, poor workmanship and uncompleted projects (City Press, 2007:1; Sunday Times, 2007:3).

Other than shoddy work by contractors, it could be argued that lack of capacity building at the local level (municipal officials, beneficiaries, appointed NGOs and support organisations) can potentially turn what was supposed to be a cost-saving process into a prolonged expensive exercise, which, at times, requires external instead of local resources, technologies and skills. Therefore, it comes as no surprise (see Khan & Thring, 2003) that the most commonly cited reason for local authorities not to pursue the PHP option is that they lack the capacity to do so, despite their belief in seeing people helping themselves. Part of the capacity issue (at both the municipal and the provincial levels) could also be a problem of inefficiency in the processing of the required documents of beneficiaries before the finalisation of their applications at the provincial level. The process is usually more complex and much slower than anticipated and is moreover characterised by the complicated and lengthy screening process of beneficiaries (Community Consultations, 2007; Roux, 2007).

The available literature on PHP indicates that the institutional home of the PHP in government – the People's Housing Partnership Trust (PHPT) – is also faced with a range of challenges. These include being under-resourced, poorly capacitated, and politically marginalised (Baumann, 2003b).

The other key obstacle, particularly at the local level, is the release of land for low-income housing generally and, to a much greater extent, land for the PHP initiatives (Bua News, 2006:1; Khan & Thring, 2003; Manie, 2004; Public Service Commission, 2003; Sunday Times, 2007:3). This, in turn, prevents PHP initiatives from starting to occur at scale. Literature indicates that the other factor restricting PHP programmes from delivering at scale could be a lack of alternative sources of funding for the PHP mechanism (Khan & Thring, 2003; Manie, 2004).

Besides state subsidies and grants, there seem to be no other reliable sources of finance for the PHP initiatives and programmes. Yet, despite many years of negotiation, wider negotiations with the formal banking sector around making loans available to poor people at preferential rates have yielded nothing tangible (Bua News, 2006:2).

Banks perceive the low-income housing market to be a more complex process and a high-risk sector, accordingly, they tend to offer only conventional products (Bua News, 2006:2).

The historically slow delivery of PHP programmes could further have been caused by the compulsory down payment of R2 479.00 that beneficiaries were, until 2002, expected to contribute prior the commencement of a housing project (Department of Housing, 2005). As most of the beneficiaries were unable to afford this amount, this not only denied them their constitutional right to housing but it has also, amongst others, affected the rate of delivery through PHP programmes.

From the discussion above, it could therefore be concluded that, while PHP as a mode of housing delivery tends to have clear, specific objectives, two fundamental issues are central to the programme's inability to deliver housing at scale: lack of capacity and skills at the administrative and the project levels, and limited resources. There is further also evidence of overlapping concepts in the three main housing-policy documents discussed above. Although there are several concepts that are limited to a specific policy discourse, it should also be acknowledged that there are a number of concepts that seem to run through the three policy discourses (White Paper, PHP, and BNG). Such overlapping of concepts, in turn, could be ascribed to a common shared vision for the Department of Human Settlements since 1994. The three main PHP policy issues that are central to both the housing white paper and the PHP are freedom of choice, adequate housing and people-driven housing. Figure 3.1 summarises these key common concepts as well as differences between the three different main housing-policy documents in South Africa.

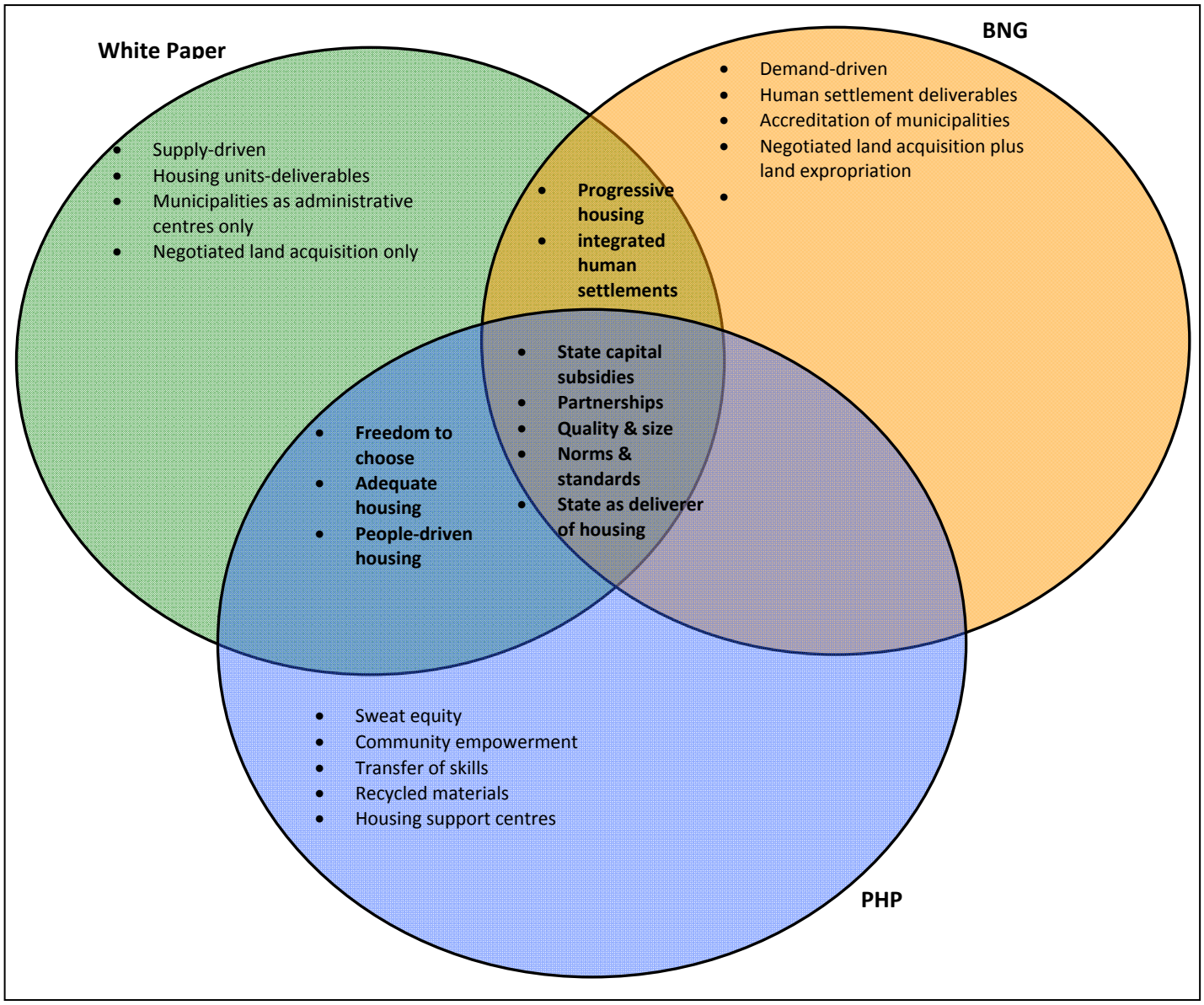

Figure 3.1: A comparison of policies on low-income housing in South Africa

3.3 Conclusion

Evidence from the literature review indicates that self help principles are to a certain extent entrenched in the three main South African policy documents on low income housing. Furthermore, South African literature on the topic indicates that the founding of self-help through the PHP mechanism in housing delivery is also based on principles similar to those advanced by Turner. When Turner argued in defence of self-help, he maintained that self-help should be viewed as a mechanism for achieving what he called 'people-driven housing delivery'. Yet, the practice of self-help housing in South Africa has to a large extent failed to

conform either to the set principles as stipulated in PHP policy guidelines or to the key principles – specifically dweller control – as advanced by Turner. The literature review makes it clear that self-help in South Africa, as indeed the rest of the world has since 1994 been structured mainly around state control and not around dweller control, thus in many ways similar to how self-help was conducted prior to 1994. Overall, the intent of policy is neo-liberal, whereas the practice contains numerous elements of welfarism and of the state control associated with welfarism. It could thus be appropriate, based on the above discussion to conclude that, in the absence of dweller control or greater choice by beneficiaries in their housing process, households are being reduced to beneficiaries of an externally designed and controlled process.

Table 3.1 below provides a summary of the literature findings regarding the policies on low-income housing and particularly on the policy and practice of self-help in South Africa. It also reflects the extent to which the South African Government – like governments of other developing countries (see Chapter Two) – has, over time, failed to comply with some of the fundamental principles and policies on self-help.

Table 3.1: Comparison of the application of Turner's key concepts during different phases in the development of low-income housing policies in South Africa

Concepts	**Phase 1: Colonial and apartheid era, 1920-1990**	**Phase 2: Democratic era, 1994-2004**		
	White Paper	**White Paper**	**BNG**	**PHP**
Dweller control	Middle-income households initiating their own housing construction on serviced plots	Emphasis on housing development processes driven from within communities	Emphasis on effective community engagement in housing delivery rather than merely on people-centred housing development	Emphasis on people-driven housing process-beneficiaries leading project planning and initiation processes
State control	State to act as a sole funder and/or provider of public housing: site-and-services and rental and hostel accommodation	State to deliver services and adequate and affordable RDP housing	State to determine guidelines and provide housing of dignified size	State to play an advisory and assisting role in housing process
Sweat equity	Middle-income households to build or be involved in building their homes: site-and-services	Silent on sweat equity	Silent on sweat equity	Beneficiaries to build or be involved in building their homes
Use of local resources	Only for middle-income households	Silent on local resources	Emphasis on protection and use of traditional technologies and indigenous knowledge in the construction of housing	Permit use of either recycled, purchased or locally manufactured materials
Housing costs	State's capital-subsidy system	State's rigid capital-subsidy system	State's flexible capital-subsidy system	State's capital subsidies and grants
Definition of housing	No specific definition	Promoting adequate housing	Promoting housing of dignified size	Promoting technically sound housing

The literature review in this chapter has thus established that there has been a widespread deviation from both the policy guidelines and from Turner's initial ideas on self-help. In Chapter Four, case studies on the activities of institutionalised self-help in the Free State will be used to confirm and advance this argument.

CHAPTER FOUR:

INSTITUTIONALISED SELF-HELP HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA: CASE STUDIES FROM THE FREE STATE

Chapter Three provided an analysis of self-help housing and its practice within the South African context based on the available literature. This chapter focuses on assessing the institutionalised model of self-help housing through housing support centres in South Africa with specific reference to the Free State (it should be noted that Chapter Five and Chapter Six evaluate two other forms of self-help programmes). As elsewhere in South Africa, the PHP in the Free State is also implemented mainly through housing support centres (similar to the international concept of housing cooperatives discussed in Chapter Two). Against this background, the chapter attempts to answer the following three main questions:

- To what extent does the PHP in the Free State adhere to principles of dweller control?
- To what extent has the PHP in the Free State been dominated by government?
- To what extent have policy and policy principles been adhered to in the Free State?

To provide possible answers to these questions, the chapter attempts to assess the nature of institutional self-help in South Africa critically by considering five case studies from the Free State Province (see Chapter One for a detailed assessment of the methods used in this regard). The activities of five housing support centres are scrutinised for the purposes of this assessment, namely Ikgwantlelleng Housing Support Centre in Bultfontein (Tswelopele Local Municipality), Kgotsong Housing Support Centre in Bothaville (Nala Local Municipality), Retshepeng Housing Support Centre in Parys (Ngwathe Local Municipality), Iketsetseng Housing Support Centre in Virginia and Kutlwanong Housing Support Centre in Odendaalsrus (both in Matjhabeng Local Municipality). The main argument of this chapter is that the evidence from the five case studies (a brief profile of the said case studies is provided in Chapter One) supports the conclusion in Chapter Three that too much government involvement has inhibited the basic principles that underpin self-help.

To discuss this in more detail, this chapter is structured as follows: there is an historical overview of the management of the housing support centres in the Free State, which is followed by a discussion of the different stakeholders and their roles in the initiation and management of the PHP projects in the Free State. The rest of the chapter is devoted to an overview of the role of PHP programmes in empowering and developing poor communities in the province. The concluding paragraphs provide a summary of the chapter.

4.1 Housing Support Centres in the Free State

The objective of the South African government with the implementation of the PHP programme through the housing support centres was twofold (Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005). It was government's strategy to bring about an inclusive housing-delivery mechanism, it emphasised a housing-delivery mechanism based on the principles of a community-driven process. In order to achieve a community-driven housing-delivery process (as discussed in Chapter Three), the policy promotes the establishment of community-based structures such, as beneficiaries committees called Housing Support Committees, and Housing Support Centres. As discussed in Chapter Three, members of the Housing Support Committee and their appointed support organisation would then work together to conduct their daily activities in a facility or office structure called a Housing Support Centre (Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005). 'Beneficiaries' are supposed to be involved from the project-proposal or the planning stage (through a series of workshops organised by members of the housing support centre) (Department of Housing, 2005). This section provides an historical overview of the PHP programme in the Free State in terms of two phases, namely pre-2006 and post-2006.

4.1.1 Housing Support Centres before 2006

By 2003 there were 46 active housing support centres in the Free State (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2004). During the first phase, housing support centres were viewed as independent community structures with which the Provincial Department of Housing entered into a partnership in terms of a specific agreement. The irony is that this view of housing support centres as independent community structures came about, despite the

provincial government itself having been instrumental in helping to set up these structures (an aspect to return to later in the discussion).

On an administrative level, housing support centres were held responsible by the Provincial Housing Department for the management of their allocated budgets (Ndlovu, 2008; Ngonelo, 2008). The provincial government would, upon approval of lists of beneficiaries submitted by housing support centres, transfer the approved total budget for all the qualifying beneficiaries, per project, directly into the account of the responsible housing support centre. The housing support centre would then independently choose the preferred local suppliers and purchase materials from them. Once materials had been purchased, the housing support centre would then be responsible for the appointment of contractors or bricklayers of their choice (Mabala, 2008; Mafatlhe, 2008; Makafane, 2008). However, the inability of the housing support centres to manage their own finances became one of the most obvious problems. At the end of the 2003/2004 financial year, more than 90.0% of housing support centres received qualified audit reports (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2004). More alarmingly, financial mismanagement led to a range of delays in project completion and, at times, to uncompleted projects. Evidence of the failure by most of the housing support centres to complete their allocated projects successfully is the fact that, for the 2003/2004 financial year, only three of the total allocation of 46 projects were successfully completed (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2004).

Technical delays were also common, and incompetence amongst the housing support centres resulted in either slow delivery of PHP programmes or total non-delivery due to uncompleted projects (Biko, 2008a; Ndlovu, 2008). This was confirmed by the fact that, for the 2003/2004 financial year, only 1 210 units were successfully completed out of a total of 4 000 units originally allocated to the 46 provincial housing support centres in the Free State (Department of Local Government and Housing, 2004). Delays in the construction process resulted in construction inflation catching up on a number of projects because material prices escalated beyond the allocated budgets[1]. Following all the above-mentioned setbacks, and the

[1] It should be noted that inflation in the construction industry was considerably higher than normal inflation for the years 2003 - 2007. Some estimates suggested that construction inflation was in the vicinity of 7% per annum

general non-performance owing to poor project administration and management in most of the housing support centres, the Provincial Housing Department was left with no option but to review the status of all of the 46 housing support centres.

Such review necessitated the disbandment of the majority of the non-performing housing support centres, an exercise that led to the 46 housing support centres being trimmed to the current number of fourteen housing support centres (Ndlovu, 2008).

4.1.2 Housing support centres in the post-2006 period

As a result particularly of delays in both project completion and the purchasing of materials, a lack of financial accountability and poor management by most of the housing support centres in the province (Ndlovu, 2008; Ntema & Hoosen, 2008), a twofold resolution by the Provincial Housing Department was taken in 2006.

A resolution was taken to reduce the number of housing support centres from 46 to the current number of 14 and to ensure the increased accountability and control of projects amongst the current remaining fourteen housing support centres (Biko, 2008a; Maduna, 2008; Ndlovu, 2008; Ntema & Hoosen, 2008), the Provincial Housing Department took a resolution to the effect that they would appoint a financial state agency called Support Empower Bridge Reconstruction Account (SEBRA). Thus, administration of the budgets allocated to different housing support centres and the purchase of building material for the housing support centres became key issues and central to the responsibilities of SEBRA. Following the introduction of SEBRA, the general responsibilities of housing support centres were significantly reduced. Currently housing support centres are responsible only for compiling and submitting, through local municipalities, a list of beneficiaries applying for the subsidy to the Provincial Housing Department (Makafane, 2008; Marametsi, 2008). Once subsidies have been approved, the housing support centres' responsibility further involves assisting beneficiaries to organise themselves to work together to undertake the PHP project

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between 2003-2007 while the consumer price index for that same period grew by approximately 4% per annum (STOP NCAR, 2007).

and then appoint builders and carry out construction (Ntema & Hoosen, 2008). Other than that, housing support centres are also responsible for the processing and administration of the payment of contractors or bricklayers they have appointed on behalf of the beneficiaries for the actual construction (see below). Once lists of the qualifying beneficiaries and the total budget for each housing support centre are finalised by the Provincial Housing Department, they are sent to SEBRA. It is then the responsibility of SEBRA independently to identify one supplier of building materials for all of the fourteen provincial housing support centres. Although SEBRA requests names of the local suppliers from housing support centres for consideration, it has emerged that SEBRA mostly appoints its own preferred supplier – a different one than those proposed by different housing support centres (Maqosha, 2008; Ngonelo, 2008). Considering the past history of projects, this might well be the most appropriate administrative response. Yet this decision has certainly taken away a significant degree of independence in terms of decision making.

Once a supplier has been identified and agreement reached, SEBRA then releases the required funds from its central account directly to the supplier who will then, upon receipt of the money, deliver materials to the respective housing support centres. On receiving materials, housing support centres are responsible for the appointment of contractors or bricklayers. Upon completion of each significant milestone (foundations, wall plates, roofing, etc.) it is the responsibility of each housing support centre to compile a report to SEBRA. The receipt of such a report will then be followed by a physical site visit by SEBRA monitors, and SEBRA then releases funds directly into the account of an housing support centre for the payments of the contractors or builders (Biko, 2008a). Both SEBRA and the Provincial Housing Department then have to ensure (through monitoring) that the projects are successfully completed – within the stipulated period. Upon project completion, each housing support centre is expected to provide SEBRA with a fully comprehensive project report (Biko, 2008a).

4.2 Beneficiaries' views on the People's Housing Process (PHP)

Following the above overview of the managerial aspects of PHP, this section considers five aspects from the beneficiaries' point of view. After assessing the role of the Provincial

Housing Department, the focus then shifts to a reflection regarding the role of housing support centres. Next, an analysis of the role of SEBRA is undertaken. This is followed by an assessment of the role of the beneficiaries in the design and planning of their houses. An overview of other technical issues related to the PHP programmes then follows.

4.2.1 The role of the Provincial Housing Department

Central to all the responsibilities of the Provincial Housing Department, is the expectation that the PHP policy (as determined by National Housing Department) is fully implemented and that none of its principles and values are compromised – particularly, its principle of being a people-driven process. Despite such an expectation, the literature review in Chapter Two and Chapter Three indicated that, like elsewhere in the developing world, the South African government has to a large extent deviated from key principles of its self-help housing plan. In this section, four distinct arguments are put forward in respect of the role of the Provincial Housing Department in the activities of the PHP mechanism.

Despite the availability of implementation guidelines, the Free State Provincial Housing Department has failed to follow policy guidelines in ensuring that correct procedures are followed when housing support centres are established, there is evidence that the Provincial Housing Department has mostly failed to uphold the principle of community involvement in project initiation (design and planning), a practice that has eliminated ‘dweller control’ as a fundamental concept in institutionalised self-help, furthermore, the over-emphasis on housing quantity in a programme that is supposed to place the emphasis on the housing process should be noted (see Chapter Three), there is evidence that the Provincial Housing Department has – contrary to the policy guidelines – failed to provide the necessary resources and funding for the initiation of PHP projects.

Considering the first main argument of this section, namely the failure of the Provincial Housing Department to adhere to the basic guidelines in appointing housing support centres, a number of comments need to be made based on the experiences of local people. It should be noted that, according to the PHP policy guidelines, the establishment of housing support

centres is the responsibility of the beneficiaries, the final approval, however, is the responsibility of the Provincial Housing Department. The literature review in Chapter Three has already alluded to the fact that the establishment of housing support centres was mainly a top-down process that seldom allowed people to bring their own ideas to the table. The dominance of the Provincial Housing Department was common. For example, beneficiaries from all of the five chosen projects suggested that project managers and trustees just pitched up one day and told them they were going to be helped with application for subsidies for PHP housing. One respondent confirmed this in saying: "***We found Mr Maduna and his colleagues already working in another project which was nearing its completion … after that project they grouped us and tell us that they are going to help us build Masakhane houses"*** (Focus Group Two, 09/09/2008b-Bothaville). Another "beneficiary" from another project expressed the same sentiments: ***"We just heard that Mr Biko is building houses … with time he came to us to inform us about his projects and requested that we submit our names on his list of applicants for the Masakhane subsidies"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys). The dominance of the Provincial Housing Department is reflected in the fact that beneficiaries from the five projects did not know who had appointed the project managers. The following confirms this conclusion: ***"Mr Chaka and Mangosha came to us in one of the community meetings already appointed and told us about their work … not sure who appointed them"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). The dominance of the Provincial Housing Department is further seen in the fact that beneficiaries' contribution during the initiation process was in many cases limited to having personally to complete the housing application forms. One senses the beneficiaries' bewilderment in the following response in a focus group session: "***We just saw Mum Winnie and her colleague helping us with filling forms and later with construction … not sure who appointed them"*** (Focus Group Four, 12/09/2008b-Virginia).

Other than the above statements by the beneficiaries, some of the remarks made by both the project managers and trustees during the interviews further confirm state interference in the appointment of support organisations in the Free State Province. One project manager mentioned that they ***"... called the Provincial Office to enquire about the possibility of starting a PHP project, they then send someone to come and advise us … he then urged us to group ourselves and find 50 people to be our beneficiaries, that is how we started"*** (Ngonelo, 2008). The implication of the above quote is that some of the support organisations

were approved by the state long before they were even able to mobilise the communities to buy into the idea of the institutionalised self-help mechanism. Thus, instead of beneficiaries identifying their preferred support organisations, the support organisations were found to be the ones identifying and approaching the qualifying homeless members of their communities. Other than that, evidence exists to prove that, at times, the government officials would go out of their way to headhunt individuals perceived to be capable of initiating sustainable and successful support organisations and appoint these persons as project managers. Confirming this could be the two similar responses: ***"I started working under Thusanong Supporting Centre and later due to the influence and advise by the officials from Provincial Housing Department, I started my own Trust called Kgotsong Housing Support Centre in 2000"*** (Maduna, 2008), and "***Having worked under Dr Van Niekerk, I then begun interaction with some officials from Bloemfontein … they advised me on how to become independent and mobilize qualifying homeless people. I followed their advise then applied for allocation from the Provincial Housing Department … a year later I was called and told that we qualified for 100 units"*** (Biko, 2008a). This runs contrary to PHP policy and its stance on the procedures to be followed when support organisations are identified. PHP policy guidelines stipulate that the initiative should be taken by the beneficiaries of identifying and recommending the support organisation of their choice to the state for approval. Yet, as seen in all the above quotes and in the literature (Chapter Three), government had more control and influence than did beneficiaries in respect of the identification and approval of support organisations.

Several comments can be made with regard to the second main argument of this section, namely that the Provincial Housing Department failed to uphold the principle of community involvement in project initiation. Despite the requirement by the policy guidelines that "Support Organisations should assist beneficiaries in the preparation and approval of house building plans" (Department of Housing, 2005:12), and the senior PHP administrator having claimed during the interview that ***"[F]or drawing plans, the Provincial Housing Department together with beneficiaries, the support organisation and technical people sit together and listen to the voice and inputs from beneficiaries in terms of the design they want … then people's needs are used to inform the type of house plans to be drawn by our Cuban engineers"*** (Ndlovu, 2008), sufficient evidence exists that not much of the above is actually being upheld by the Provincial Housing Department. It should be noted that house designs

(plans) are imposed – as a final product of a unilateral decision by the Provincial Housing Department – on both the housing support centres and the beneficiaries. A number of examples serve to substantiate the above. Beneficiaries from all five projects indicated (during focus-group discussions) that the government officials came to them having already decided on their behalf on the size and design of a house suitable for everyone – regardless of the beneficiaries' individual circumstances and preferences. The following response encapsulates the situation: ***"Mum Winnie told us that the plan came just like that from Bloemfontein ... we could not change it despite us wanting to increase the size of the kitchen by excluding the inside toilet"*** (Focus Group Four, 12/09/2008b-Virginia). In similar vein, another person remarked that ***"[W]e could not change their house plans ... I asked them to instead of having 3 windows in one side have only two and move the other window on the other side of the house. They refused"*** (Focus Group One, 09/09/2008b-Bultfontein).

The marginalisation of beneficiaries by preventing them from participating in a key decision-making process during the project initiation is also evident from the number of beneficiaries who, in their responses, implied that they did not see any need to have a second flushing toilet while their children were without enough space to sleep and play: ***"We could not change their house plan ... I requested that since I have a flushing toilet outside, they should not include an inside toilet structure, instead include a third bedroom for my big family. They told me they cannot change their plan to suit me"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). The marginalisation of users during project initiation is seen in the fact that some of the beneficiaries suggested that they were denied their right to use their subsidies to supplement the personal initiatives already undertaken through, inter alia, 'own savings' to house themselves: ***"There were people already with their own foundations on site like Reverend Leboya who wanted to use their subsidies to complete them, that was opposed by the housing support centre ... they had to destroy them and put new foundations according to the house plans given by Mr Biko"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys). This approach is in direct opposition to what Turner meant by *housing as a process*. Similar views regarding the marginalisation of beneficiaries by the Provincial Housing Department were also expressed by the different project managers and trustees during the interviews. Project managers and trustees from the five projects indicated that the Provincial Housing Department expected the housing support centres not to interfere with their final decision but just to implement them. One trustee reflected upon this in the

following words: ***"Government gives us their plan that consist of a 50 meter square unit, and instruct us to strictly adhere to this plan which also include a structure for an inside toilet"*** (Hlole, 2008). Similarly, one of the project managers remarked: ***"The house plan is non-negotiable with beneficiaries, the province has stated it clearly that their plan should stand as given to us ... whether they (beneficiaries) want the inside toilet or not, it should be there….when coming to the house plan beneficiaries do not have a say"*** (Mafatlhe, 2008). Some of the project managers and trustees seemed to have gone out of their way to use their own misinformed or wrong interpretation of the policy guidelines to defend the views of prominent individual politicians at the expense of the beneficiaries' rights. The following comment provides more detail in this respect: ***"Other beneficiaries did not want inside toilets but the law says toilets must be included in the plan, as instructed by the MEC, it is a matter of must to include them"*** (Maduna, 2008).

The project managers and trustees displayed not only a lack of insight into the policy document but also a lack of knowledge of some of their responsibilities. Some of the project managers and trustees did not even know that it was their responsibility and not that of the Provincial Housing Department to work with beneficiaries (during project initiation) in drawing house plans to be submitted to the Provincial Housing Department: ***"The Provincial Housing Department would always as part of their prescriptions to housing support centres come with their layout and say to us … "this house must be a 50 metre square, it must have a structure for inside toilet. I personally think if we could be given a privilege of drawing our own plans, South African PHP would be one of the best in the world"*** (Maqosha, 2008). The above responses make it evident that, although concepts such as 'greater choice' and 'beneficiary input' are central to PHP policy guidelines, these were, in practice, (as argued in Chapter Three) seldom experienced by the beneficiaries as a result of the state's interference in the activities of the housing support centres.

A few comments need to be made regarding the third argument in this section, the one in respect of the failure by the Provincial Housing Department to emphasise the key processes involved in housing delivery instead of the quantity of housing delivered. It is worth mentioning that Khan and Pieterse (2004) have already stated that a government in pursuit of delivery objectives tends to violate key fundamental PHP principles, limiting the choice of

the beneficiaries to unpaid labour. The deliberate intentions of the Provincial Housing Department to prioritise housing delivery at the expense of some of the key fundamental housing processes – such as consultation and inclusion of dwellers from project initiation (planning stage) – was seen in a number of examples. This was found to be common practice in the Free State Province despite the commitment made by the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party that, "encouraging people to build their houses based on their own plans and choices" would remain key in the government's efforts to increase people's access to secure and decent housing (ANC Today, 2009: 2).

Some of the project managers and trustees in housing support centres indicated that theirs was not to enter into discussion with beneficiaries regarding the house plan supplied by the Provincial Housing Department but to implement it without any alteration or further delays. The following response confirms this conclusion: ***"Beneficiaries could not suggest nor change the given plan … we asked about such possibility in one of our meetings with the Provincial Housing Department officials, they crushed it saying accommodating individual households' needs would cause unnecessary delays and prolong construction period"*** (Biko, 2008b). Project managers and trustees further suggested that, with their performance being measured in terms of the number of units delivered rather than in terms of the process followed, they could not risk losing sight of their primary target – and thus their honour – by accommodating the less valued opinions and views of the beneficiaries. One of the trustees explained: ***"To avoid delays, we would ensure that at the beginning of our project we call all our beneficiaries to a meeting and make it clear to them that our plan is final with no provision for further amendments"*** (Chaka, 2008).

A number of comments should be made in respect of the failure by the Provincial Housing Department to provide the necessary resources and funding for project initiation. One of the key requirements of the policy guidelines on PHP is that the Provincial Housing Department should, prior to project implementation, make available, amongst others, the Establishment Grant to all the housing support centres as a source of funding for the initial process of identifying and establishing a "resourced and accessible facility or office called Housing Support Centre" (Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005). However, project managers and trustees in four of the five visited housing support centres indicated that

establishing a fully fledged facility called an housing support centre still remained a pipe dream and was likely to remain so until such time as the Provincial Housing Department realises the need to honour its obligation to invest in this aspect of project initiation. Despite government's failure to execute its responsibility, project managers and trustees seemed to be fully aware of the violation of their rights by the government. One of the project managers remarked that ***"[P]resently we have an office not a centre due to non-availability of some of grants in particular facilitation grant, that by law, were supposed to have been made available to us by the Department"*** (Ngonelo, 2008). A violation of policy guidelines in terms of its expectation that the Provincial Housing Department would fund the creation of a safe and secure facility for the building material is also seen in the shifting of this responsibility by the Provincial Housing Department to the underresourced and underfunded housing support centres. Thus, the project managers and trustees suggested that they were being unfairly treated by the provincial government, especially with its unrealistic expectations to perform miracles in respect of safeguarding the delivered materials. One of the project managers expressed this sentiment: ***"One of our challenges is that we do not have a storage place for the building materials despite the Provincial Housing Department's expectation that we should ensure the safety of this material … without proper centres, how do you expect us to ensure safety of material"*** (Mafatlhe, 2008). Apart from the above quotes, experience and observation during a visit to the five chosen housing support centres also served to confirm the above argument. There was a total lack of the facilities and resources necessary for the successful implementation of PHP projects in most of the visited housing support centres. A personal observations was that, except in Parys and Bultfontein, project managers and trustees in all of the other three projects were at the time using their own houses – either a lounge or bedroom – to store their project files and documents.

The lack of convenient facilities was demonstrated by the fact that interviews and focus groups in some of these towns were held in the lounges of project managers' houses (Kgotsong near Bothaville and Meloding near Virginia) and public libraries (Kutlwanong near Odendaalsrus). To avoid theft of the delivered materials, project managers would ensure that material suppliers immediately dropped them with respective beneficiaries, the problem however being that even the beneficiaries did not have secure and safe places to store the delivered material, since most of them were living in one- or two-room shacks.

In conclusion, as opposed to the process Turner called “owner-design management”, which is key to “housing by people” (see Chapter Two), both the literature reviewed in Chapter Three and the above arguments indicate a deliberate deviation – on the part of the South African Government (both at the national and the provincial levels) – from a fundamental principle of self-help regarding “freedom to build” by using housing support centres to impose government’s own unilateral decisions on the beneficiaries.

Further evident from all the above responses of both the beneficiaries and the project officials is the confirmation of the argument made by Manie (2004:10) that “[I]n cases where local authorities work with support organisations, a procurement policy is in place for government to regulate and appoint support organisations’ of its own choice”.

4.2.2 The role of housing support centres

Chapter Three discussed the fact that, similar to the international concept of housing co-operatives, the South African government has adopted self-help institutions called housing support centres. The literature reviewed in Chapter Two indicated that one of the key tasks of housing co-operatives is to promote what Turner called “autonomous people-driven housing delivery” through a self-help mechanism. It is further argued in both Chapter Two and Chapter Three, that following the state’s interference with the autonomy of both housing co-operatives and housing support centres, these self-help institutions seldom became autonomous in practice. As part of the project planning and initiation phase, the policy guidelines require the housing support centres to take the responsibility for organising the six compulsory/mandatory workshops for the beneficiaries and to advise them concerning their initiative of identifying and appointing the construction teams or bricklayers of their preference (see Department of Housing, 2005).

Contrary both to the above policy requirements (also discussed in Chapter Three) and the self-help principles (discussed in Chapter Two), this section raises three clear arguments. The housing support centres unilaterally appointed their preferred construction teams without

involving the beneficiaries, housing support centres failed to organise the six mandatory preparatory and planning workshops that were/are also meant to serve as a platform for the housing support centres to facilitate consumer education for the beneficiaries, and housing support centres' financial dependency on the Provincial Housing Department severely compromised their autonomy.

A few comments can be made with regard to the failure of the housing support centres to involve the beneficiaries in the appointment of the construction teams. The policy guidelines on PHP stipulate that the "Housing Support Centres only advise beneficiaries on who to appoint for construction in terms of the required skills and capability as determined by the Provincial Housing Department" (see Department of Housing, 2005:12). The failure of the housing support centres to allow the beneficiaries to exercise their right to appoint their preferred construction teams may be seen in a number of examples. Beneficiaries from the five projects suggested that the first time they saw their bricklayers was on the day they pitched in, already carrying their equipment and ready to commence construction, and not knowing how they had been appointed. One person in a focus group confirmed this: "***Mr Maduna brought his own builders and urged us to help them with mixing mortar and bringing bricks closer and cleaning walls ...***" (Focus Group Two, 09/09/2008b-Bothaville). Other beneficiaries indicated that despite consistent enquiry on their part regarding their role in appointing bricklayers, project managers insisted that the beneficiaries' main concern should be when to occupy their completed houses and to trust the project manager(s) to appoint competent bricklayers. ***"Our houses were built by builders appointed by the support organisation … Mum Winnie told us that it would be their responsibility to appoint builders, we should not make that our problem"*** (Focus Group Four, 12/09/2008b-Virginia). Where beneficiaries insisted on appointing their own preferred bricklayers, such bricklayers never got the approval of the project managers: ***"Initially, 'Thumbo' urged us to bring our own builders, later on he changed his mind and told us that they would bring their own builders, forcing us to abandoned our preferred builders … I refused and was called names"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus).

In what could be seen as endorsement of their failure to involve beneficiaries in appointing construction teams, the project managers and trustees suggested no wrongdoing in their own

conduct. One of the trustees suggested that beneficiaries were only capable and competent to help bricklayers with actual construction and not with the process of identifying the right people for the job: ***"As management we look for skilled bricklayers who then get help from beneficiaries … beneficiaries help them with mixing mortar, bringing bricks closer during construction"*** (Makafane, 2008). Another trustee implied that beneficiaries could not be given the responsibility of taking major decisions such as who was to build, but should be entrusted with less important responsibilities: ***"As a trust we appoint builders and ask beneficiaries to help them with other minor tasks"*** (Mokone, 2008). It is also important to indicate that the general impression felt during the interaction with the beneficiaries during and after the focus groups was that although not opposed to the contractors or bricklayers appointed by the housing support centres, the beneficiaries however indicated that their housing support centres did not appoint the familiar and well-known local bricklayers they would have chosen to do the work. Such practice has become the norm amongst the housing support centres in the province despite the claim by the senior Provincial Administrator that ***"[A]s required by the policy, the appointment of both the support organisations and teams of bricklayers is the responsibility of the beneficiaries themselves"*** (Ndlovu, 2008).

Even though the project managers and trustees were adamant that all their chosen and appointed construction teams were competent, several complaints were nevertheless made by the beneficiaries with regard to the quality of the work done. Fuelling that may have been the absence (amongst the beneficiaries) of a sense of ownership of the appointed builders (see quotes above).

Registering their disappointment about the poor quality of work done by the builders on their houses, some of the beneficiaries from Kutlwanong and Bultfontein indicated that their problem was not with the quality of the materials but with the incompetent builders who had been imposed on them by the project managers: ***"The problem is not the material used but the incompetent builders … our houses leaks due to their poor roofing, walls cracks and peels off the plastering due to poor mixing, windows does not close unless your child press it from outside … nonetheless we are happy about these houses"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). Another beneficiary concurred: ***"These houses are plastered poorly, walls are peeling off … when [it] is windy windows are shaking with their frames***

looking like falling anytime … when it rains water come through window sills and walls causing swamps and cracks … but despite all these, our houses are beautiful and spacious and we are proud of them" (Focus Group One, 09/09/2008b-Bultfontein). Following all the claims of poor work by the beneficiaries and the differing views of the project managers in these two areas, it was important to visit a number of houses in order to confirm or disprove these opposing claims. Upon the visiting and inspecting of several houses, visible structural defects (as claimed by beneficiaries) ranging from plaster and paint peeling off walls, dysfunctional doors and windows, to badly cracked walls could clearly be seen. In one of these houses in Kutlwanong the door could not open from the outside, and as a result, the child had to force it open from the inside. Thus, from the above discussion it is evident (as already argued in Chapter Three) that central to the role of housing support centres was the mandate to impose and implement (on beneficiaries) all the state bureaucratic processes at the expense of people-driven housing delivery. It is therefore not at all strange that people experience work of substandard quality and blame others for their situation.

The following comments should be made regarding the second main argument in this section, namely the failure by the housing support centres to organise the six mandatory preparatory and planning workshops (consumer education) for beneficiaries: In Section 4.2.1 mention has been made of the fact that the Provincial Housing Department deliberately withheld the funds that were supposed to have been used for organising and establishing safe, secure and well-resourced housing support centres. Linked to this was the subsequent release of funding for the organisation and facilitation of the six compulsory planning and preparation workshops between the housing support centres and their respective beneficiaries.

The non-execution of the six compulsory/mandatory preparatory and planning workshops by the housing support centres resulting from the non-release of funds by the Provincial Housing Department seriously compromised the beneficiaries' rights in respect of input regarding the design and planning process of the houses and also the appointment of construction teams (see quotes in Section 4.2.1 above). To a certain extent this also deprived beneficiaries of the opportunity of being taught and of knowing their rights and responsibilities in respect of project implementation. A few examples will suffice to support the above argument. There is evidence that project managers and trustees in all of the five visited projects took advantage

of the beneficiaries' lack of knowledge of their roles and rights in a PHP mechanism and used this lack to misinform then and to impose unilateral decisions on them. Though the beneficiaries in all of the five visited projects seemed to know the total amount for their individual capital subsidies (R42 000.00), they nevertheless allowed their respective housing support centres to dictate not only how (as seen previously in the discussions) the materials were to be used, but also how surplus materials were to be distributed and used. Beneficiaries in Kutlwanong (Odendaalsrus), Tumahole (Parys) and Meloding (Virginia) claimed that they had been told (by their respective housing support centres) that building materials were for the entire project and not for the individual households. This implied that the housing support centres were thus entitled to retrieve all the surplus materials from the individual households with newly completed housing and could either use such surplus materials for other beneficiaries' houses or even in other, new projects. As a result, there was no way that beneficiaries could relate the quantity of the materials used in the construction of their houses to their total subsidy of R42 000.00. In one incident, some of the beneficiaries suggested that they had seldom been part of the process of project breakdown and costing, something that rendered them powerless to question even patently questionable acts by the project managers. One of the beneficiaries remarked: ***"We don't know and [have] never been told as to out of our R42 000 subsidy, how much did our material actually cost and how much was left if any … because at one stage we were asked to pay people – who were hired to dig foundations – out of our own pockets"*** (Focus Group Two, 09/09/2008b-Bothaville). Retrieving surplus materials from project managers was, in some projects, never easy for the beneficiaries. One beneficiary implied (in her response) that they had had to risk being called names by the project managers by being stubborn in order to get what was rightfully due to them. She further confirmed that ***[I]nitially they (housing support centre) told us that all the surplus material would be ours, but later they changed [their minds] and said every surplus material belongs to the housing support centre ... .although they build my house with material they took from other people. I refused to give them [the] surplus bricks"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). Further attesting to the unfair treatment of beneficiaries by their project managers, one of the beneficiaries mentioned that ***"[W]e were strictly instructed that when there are material left after construction, only Mr Biko would come and collect them … initially some people wanted to argue they are entitled to the surplus material, but ultimately that was resolved"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys).

Although the above situation could, on the one hand, be attributed to a general lack of knowledge amongst the beneficiaries, it would, on the other, also be possible to attribute the situation to the fact that beneficiaries in all of the five projects (as observed during focus-group discussions), seemed to believe that questioning such issues while guaranteed to receive complete houses would make them appear less grateful. They also felt that qualifying for a PHP house was more of a privilege than a constitutional right. Thus, being less grateful could result in government withdrawing such a privilege or favour at any time. Yet, such observations further raised some doubts regarding the effectiveness or impact of the consumer education that both the provincial and project officials claimed to have organised for these beneficiaries prior to the project implementation.

With regard to the third main argument of this section, i.e. the one related to failure by the housing support centres specifically to be financially independent of the Provincial Housing Department in respect of funding, the following comments should be made: In Chapter Three it was argued that, contrary to the concept of housing cooperatives (see Chapter Two), the housing support centres relied solely on state funding, with complete elimination of the practice of beneficiaries' 'own savings'. During the interaction with both the beneficiaries and the project managers, it was evident that none of the five visited housing support centres in the Free State had either, from the onset, encouraged or adopted a practice of 'own savings' amongst the beneficiaries to supplement the state's capital subsidy.

People solely relied on and confined their construction needs within the limit of the R42 000 capital subsidy (Focus Group One, 09/09/2008b-Bultfontein; Focus Group Two, 09/09/2008b-Bothaville; Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys). This indicates the rigid and goal-oriented approach for which the Provincial Housing Department, through housing support centres, decided to opt towards controlling the activities of PHP projects in the Free State Province.

4.2.3 The role of SEBRA

As already noted, the Provincial Housing Department appointed SEBRA to become its financial agency in 2006 (Ndlovu, 2008). It is important first to indicate that central to SEBRA's responsibilities was the duty to ensure that the government's initial mandate on housing people through the PHP mechanism be fulfilled timeously with no deviation from government's plans and programmes. There is evidence to prove that, in the period since SEBRA's appointment, there has in comparison with the pre-2006 period been a significant improvement in the standard of project management and administration by the housing support centres in the province (see Section 4.1.2 above). There are two key issues that can be attributed to improved and efficient project management by the housing support centres: the introduction of skills development programmes by SEBRA for the project managers and trustees, and effective and efficient project monitoring and control by SEBRA.

A number of comments can be made with regard to the first aspect, namely the initiative by SEBRA to introduce and run the skills improvement programmes for project managers and trustees. All the interviewed project managers and trustees, including the senior Provincial PHP Administrator, confirmed that with each new project, project managers and trustees from all the housing support centres would (under the watchful eye of SEBRA) attend compulsory in-service training (Ndlovu, 2008). For the in-service training, the Provincial Housing Department in partnership with both Umsobomvu (as the funder) and the Department of Labour (as the service provider), organised compulsory workshops for the project managers and trustees (Biko, 2008b; Ndlovu, 2008; Ngonelo, 2008). The focus in these workshops was mainly on issues of project management, financial management, the house-construction process, customer care and the PHP policy document (Biko, 2008a & 2008b; Chaka, 2008; Hlole, 2008; Mabala, 2008; Maduna, 2008; Mafatlhe, 2008; Makafane, 2008; Maqosha, 2008; Marametsi, 2008; Mokone, 2008). These training sessions and workshops have helped to improve the rate of timeous completion of projects by the housing support centres.

It was confirmed during the interviews with the project managers, trustees and a senior PHP administrator that, since the appointment of SEBRA and the reduction of housing support

centres to only fourteen, there has been an improved rate of projects that have been successfully completed long before their set deadline. For example, in Parys the project manager claimed that it took them less than six months to complete their 100 units (Biko, 2008a). This was considerably shorter than the historical evidence in this respect. However, despite the improvement in project management resulting from the intervention of SEBRA, the main challenge yet to be overcome is that of the shortage of proper facilities and delays in respect of delivering materials. During the interviews with the project managers, trustees and a senior PHP administrator, they all unanimously agreed that the general absence of well-equipped centres and the delayed delivery of materials by suppliers remain a challenge yet to be overcome. Apart from that, mention was also made of delays experienced during the project initiation stage resulting from the township registrars and conveyancers who usually took quite a long time to process the information in respect of their qualifying applicants (Maduna, 2008; Mafatlhe, 2008; Maqosha, 2008; Ndlovu, 2008). The MEC for the Provincial Housing Department in the Free State (Mr Mafereka) mentioned a further complicating factor in his 2007/08 budget speech, namely that ***"[T]he main constraints in housing delivery remain the non-availability of township registers and management of credible beneficiary lists"*** (Mafereka, 2007:3). Relating to the delays in allocation approval by the Provincial Housing Department, project officials from the five housing support centres strongly expressed their frustration at the unaccounted-for delays experienced in respect of authorisation by the Provincial Housing Department of new housing projects. In their opinion, this lack of continuity in projects and construction usually broke the momentum of their commitment and also negatively affected their morale (Biko, 2008a; Ngonelo, 2008). Observations made on this issue are that in most of these housing support centres except few who had experience some delay, there was no actual construction of housing taking place despite their projects being successfully completed about six months ago.

With regard to the second aspect, namely improved project monitoring and control, the following comments can be made. There is evidence of an improved collective effort by all the stakeholders following SEBRA's requirement that each housing support centre submit a monthly reconciliation report (Biko, 2008a; Ndlovu, 2008). During interviews with project managers and trustees they suggested that they attempted to ensure that there was a balance between time taken for construction and the type of final housing output: ***"We regularly visit both builders and beneficiaries on sites to ensure that without delays they also not take just***

one day to complete a house" (Mabala, 2008). Another trustee indicated that working closely with the beneficiaries helped to reinforce project monitoring and eliminate delays usually caused by theft of material: ***"Our project manager, Mr Maduna and his site monitor regularly visit our sites … we also encourage beneficiaries to monitor and supervise the work and use of their material"*** (Hlole, 2008).

Expressing similar sentiments, the senior provincial official suggested that the introduction of SEBRA and the reduction of housing support centres to only fourteen had helped to improve the efficiency of their monitoring strategy: ***"We usually ensure that we receive monthly reconciliation reports from both SEBRA and the support organisations … to further verify, we make follow-ups by physically visiting construction sites"*** (Ndlovu, 2008). In a nutshell, following the appointment of SEBRA as a state financial agency in 2006, there was a significant improvement in the performance of housing support centres in terms of both financial and project management. Project managers in these housing support centres were capacitated through workshops organised by the Provincial Housing Department in collaboration with SEBRA. The appointment of SEBRA also minimised delays in both the delivery of materials and project completion by housing support centres. Constant monitoring of the housing support centres by SEBRA officials also helped to improve accountability amongst local project officials in these housing support centres.

However, the appointment of SEBRA could not (from a institutionalised self-help perspective) be without some criticism. Similar to the argument raised in the literature regarding state interference in institutionalised self-help activities, the appointment of SEBRA could be seen as a deliberate strategy by the Free State Provincial Government to effectuate its control of PHP activities. While the Provincial Housing Department imposed – through their appointed housing support centres – their own house plans, SEBRA was being instrumental in marginalising both the beneficiaries and housing support centres from participating in the choice of building material. Confirming this, some of the project managers suggested that they had often been made to feel that nothing (either in material or ideas) of a good standing or quality was likely to come from themselves as project managers or from their local communities. One of the project managers confirmed this: ***"We would usually submit our quotations from our locally preferred emerging suppliers to SEBRA for***

consideration and possibly approval … always to our disappointment, SEBRA would choose their own 'well established' supplier for all the housing support centres in the province, none of our recommended suppliers would be considered (Chaka, 2008). Another project manager implied that despite SEBRA having invested so much in their skills, they were still not being trusted to take sole responsibility for some of the basics in project management in respect of which they had been trained. He stated that ***"[P]ersonally I think, as part of empowerment, housing support centres should be allowed to run and manage their funds and [the] procurement of their material directly from their preferred local suppliers than to depend on SEBRA"*** (Ngonelo, 2008).

With SEBRA taking sole responsibility for appointing materials suppliers and making a final choice regarding the types of material to be used – without any input by either the beneficiaries or the housing support centres – that could be seen as a deliberate strategy by government to impose its unilateral decision on the beneficiaries and the housing support centres. It could also be argued that, central to the marginalisation of housing support centres and beneficiaries in key decision-making processes may be government's attempt (through SEBRA) to ensure speedy housing delivery 'using quality materials' as supplied by suppliers perceived to be of good standing. SEBRA may also be seen to be a state tool to eliminate the practice of what Turner referred to as the use of locally produced resources or materials by appointing its own preferred external materials supplier for all the provincial housing support centres. The added disadvantage of using SEBRA to choose both the materials and the suppliers could be a contradiction of the self-help spirit of encouraging 'diversity' in resources mobilised by the dwellers when building their houses. For example, in all of the five projects visited, there was evidence that similar building materials (wooden doors and bricks) supplied by one central supplier were being used. Also, SEBRA's appointment it being known for marginalisation of housing support centres when negotiating deals with suppliers and also for constant neglect of the emerging local suppliers who had worked with housing support centres prior to SEBRA's appointment in 2006 (Chaka, 2008, Makafane, 2008), may be found to be against the spirit both of local economic development and community empowerment (Ntema & Hoosen, 2008).

In conclusion, it is evident from the above discussion that while SEBRA has helped to improve specifically financial accountability and also the rate of speedy completion of projects, management of PHP programmes has shifted from local control by the beneficiaries and housing support centres to a centrally controlled programme run by the Provincial Government through the state agency called SEBRA.

For a diagrammatic representation of the decidedly centralised management and governance of PHP programmes in the Free State, see Figure 4.1 below. The figure demonstrates how, in practice, the entire PHP process usually unfolds once a group of qualifying beneficiaries has been identified locally. It should be noted that the community structures are located in the centre, while government and other support organisations are situated on the periphery.

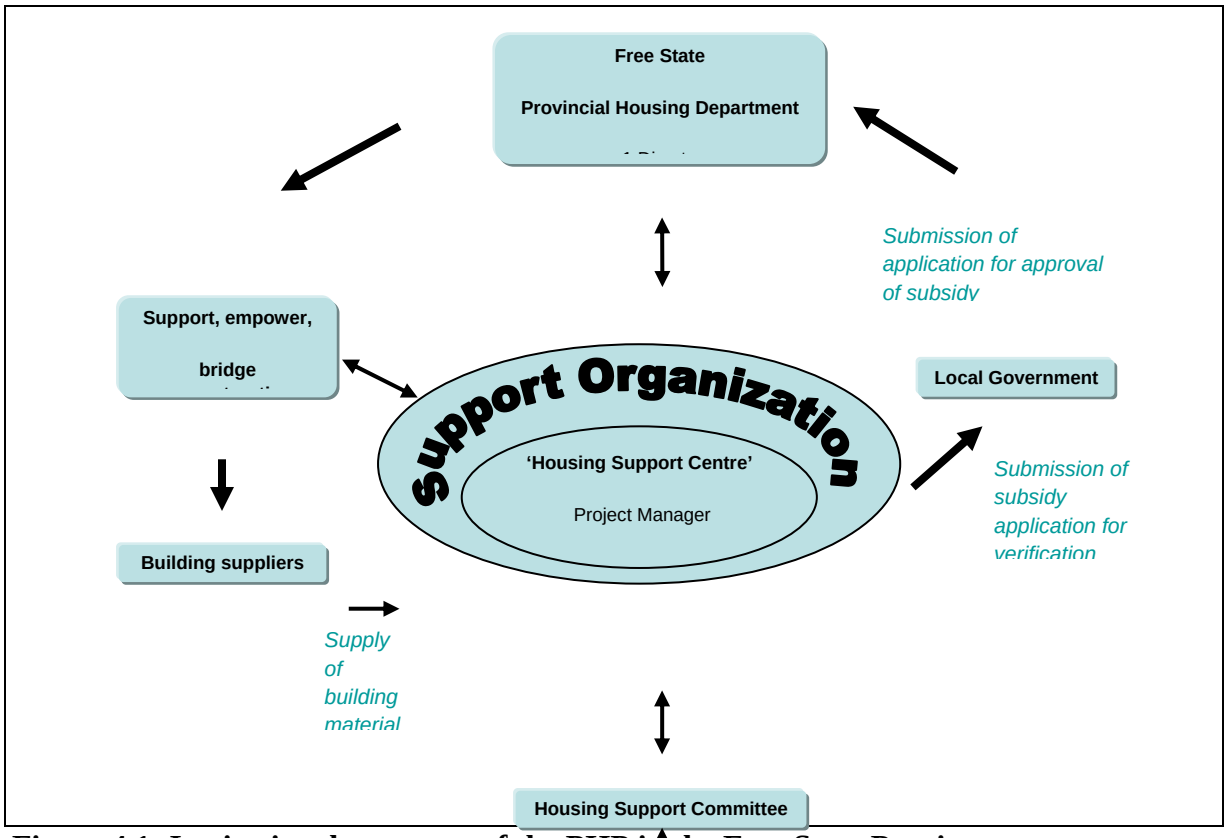

Figure 4.1: Institutional structure of the PHP in the Free State Province

(Source: Ntema and Hoosen, 2008)

4.2.4 Housing design and planning

According to the PHP policy guidelines (as discussed in Chapter Three), beneficiaries have a twofold role: at the level of the key decision-making process during project planning and initiation phases, through their elected housing support committee, and at the level of the actual construction, through their sweat equity (Department of Housing, 2000a). However, despite Turner's view that sweat equity should not be equated with self-construction, available literature on PHP (see Chapter Three) has indicated that the role of beneficiaries is now, in most cases, being reduced and limited to sweat equity only. In this section, one main argument can be forwarded in respect of the role of the beneficiaries: it seems that the role of beneficiaries is being reduced to that of only physically helping their appointed bricklayers with the construction process (sweat equity).

Yet one of the emphases of the policy guidelines is the recognition and upholding (by all the role players) of some of the key principles of PHP, such as 'greater choice' and 'increased input' by the beneficiaries in using their subsidies (Department of Housing, 2005). The failure of the housing support centres and the Provincial Housing Department to allow the beneficiaries to exercise their right to participate in and influence the initial process of house design and planning has manifest itself in two visible ways: beneficiaries were seldom part of any decision-making process when house plans and designs were discussed and finalised. Some of the beneficiaries who were also members of the housing support committee suggested that their appointment had been done mainly to satisfy the policy requirement and not the requirements of the actual implementation process. They felt they were being used as window dressings by the Provincial Housing Department and the housing support centres. One chairperson described their predicament: ***"They said we must elect a committee but I can't remember when did we last have a meeting with them (support organisation) until the project was complete … we were never part of their decisions. We were treated like all other ordinary beneficiaries"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). Another chairperson suggested that, at times (as committee members), they were caught unawares by some of the major developments as these unfolded during the construction process and by project managers' capability of often withholding information and thus to sideline them: ***"We did not even know that our houses [plans] were going to have a front veranda. We only for the first time saw it as it happened"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys).

Other than the committee members, ordinary beneficiaries from all of the five projects suggested that they had been completely sidelined from influencing the key decision processes on design and planning (see the quotes in Section 4.2.1 above). They (beneficiaries) indicated that their role had been reduced to one of ensuring the safety and supervision of the use of their materials during the construction: ***"We would sign for the incoming and outgoing material such as cement … always ensure that material issued to the builders is used accordingly"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys). Other than that, they were expected to contribute their sweat equity: ***"We would help with mixing the mortar, jointing and bringing bricks closer for the builders"*** (Focus Group One, 09/09/2008b-Bultfontein). In confirming the exclusion of the beneficiaries from participating in project-initiation processes, project managers and trustees implied that their illegitimate practice resulted from either ignorance or deliberate effort to undermine the policy guidelines. One of the trustees confirmed this when she quoted the policy out of context: ***"We appoint builders and ask beneficiaries, as the policy requires, to assist them with other minor construction tasks"*** (Mokone, 2008).

Furthermore, marginalisation of beneficiaries from participating in the planning stages of the project has manifest itself in the lack of diversity in the design and planning of houses built in terms of the PHP mechanism in the province. From a institutionalised self-help perspective and given the context of a policy in which dweller-control is central, it would be reasonable to expect housing design and planning of diverse nature in that dweller-control will likely result in different people building in different ways (see Chapter Three). Yet –as argued in Chapter Three – and as alleged by the beneficiaries during the focus-group discussions, government appointed state agencies (e.g. SEBRA) and its own preferred housing support centres to impose its decisions on beneficiaries to construct houses of its own choice and using builders and materials that were unilaterally chosen by the housing support centres and SEBRA respectively. Beneficiaries suggested that the Provincial Housing Department had denied them the opportunity of using their housing design and plans to express their different needs and preferences: ***"Our houses looks the same because of the plan given to us … none of us beneficiaries could change it … I personally wanted to have my door next to the toilet but they refused"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus).

Some of the beneficiaries indicated that, given the nature of some of the explanations by the government officials, they were under the impression that their projects were more like pilot projects that would help the Provincial Housing Department to experiment with what was likely to be best for the people's needs on the ground in the future: ***"Our houses looks the same because of the plan made by Mr Mafereka (Provincial MEC for Housing) in Bloemfontein … Mr Tshwene came and told us that they chose us to test whether their new house plan would work"*** (Focus Group Four, 12/09/2008b-Virginia). Also confirming lack of diversity in the house design and planning as a result of the non-participation of the beneficiaries, some of the project managers suggested that nobody seems to have had the courage to question the authority of politicians – even if it meant carrying out illegitimate activities. One of the project managers confirmed that the houses looked ***" ... the same because of the instruction from the MEC to apply without changing their original plan … MEC gave us a plan that include structure for inside toilet"*** (Chaka, 2008). One of the trustees echoed this opinion: ***"Our houses look the same because of the plan from government … neither us nor the beneficiaries could deviate from that binding plan"*** (Biko, 2008b). Although evidence is being given to prove all the above arguments, the Provincial Housing Department is still in denial of any deviation from the policy guidelines.

The senior PHP administrator implied (during an interview) that had they deviated from the policy there would have been serious resistance and objection to any attempt by the Provincial Housing Department to impose its house plans, designs and programmes on the beneficiaries. Instead he suggested that the very same master plan for all the PHP houses was the product of an intensive process of consultation with the beneficiaries: ***"Remember, in PHP the last word is that of the beneficiaries; they have a powerful voice when coming to designs and construction of their houses … they have a final say in how their houses should look like … if they want this type of a plan or a house we should just do that"*** (Ndlovu, 2008).

In conclusion, it can thus be said that the provincial government seems directly and indirectly to have controlled the implementation of PHP programmes in the Free Sate. While the provincial government had directly marginalised beneficiaries by not allowing them to participate in the decision-making process regarding issues of planning and design, it also indirectly, through the housing support centres and SEBRA, marginalised beneficiaries by

denying them the right of appointing and choosing their own preferred construction teams and materials.

This seems to have been a common practice despite concepts such as ‘greater choice’ and ‘increased input’ by the beneficiaries in their housing being at the centre of PHP policy guidelines. In turn, the marginalisation of the beneficiaries particularly from the decision-making process has further eroded a sense of ownership and belonging amongst the beneficiaries. This was reflected in the beneficiaries’ constant general use, during focus-group meetings, of the word ‘***their’*** instead of ***“our”*** in reference to house plans, building materials used and construction teams appointed.

4.2.5 Other related technical issues

The literature review in Chapter Three has indicated that the attainment of ‘positive housing outcomes’ is central to the PHP policy guidelines (Department of Housing, 2000a). It is in respect of ‘positive housing outcomes’ that government is being criticised for prioritising its standardised norms and standards that should at all times be observed by the housing support centres when constructing PHP houses (see Chapter Three). The Housing Code stresses the aspect of technical support, linking it to housing support centres in the following words: “Technical assistance and support in this process is, however, critical. Consequently, a crucial imperative of the PHP approach is the requirement to establish a Support Organisation” (Department of Housing, 2000a). Baumann (2003b) argues that despite the PHP process having been exempted from registering with the Home Builders Registration Council, other norms and standards did however still apply. For example, the literature on PHP suggests that the houses are generally much bigger than those provided through normal mechanisms (Huchzermeyer, 2002). In some provinces including the Free State Province, a minimum housing size was set for the PHP (see discussion in Section 4.2.1 above). The irony is that, in many projects, it was probably not possible to offer individual households the alternative option of constructing a smaller house with higher levels of internal finishes. In addition to size, Baumann (2003b) also cites the use of planning guidelines, in terms of which the intent is municipal control rather than a process that assists in self-help (see Huchzermeyer, 2006). In many projects, the quality of building materials was regulated and set standards were

implemented to determine what percentage of the available money could be used for specific aspects of development (for example, infrastructure versus housing construction).

In this section, one distinct main argument can be forwarded in respect of the technical aspects that need to be observed when constructing houses through the PHP mechanism in the Free State Province. There is evidence (as argued in the literature) that there is much emphasis by the Free State Provincial Housing Department on quality and bigger sizes in the houses delivered through the PHP mechanism than normally required by the fundamental processes of this housing mechanism. The successful mobilisation of the state through housing support centres to promote a focus on quality and size amongst the key stakeholders and especially the beneficiaries in the Free State Province is demonstrated in different ways/scenarios. Beneficiaries from the five projects, when asked to indicate what was remarkable about their housing, implied that justification of the success of their housing process lay not in the process followed, but more in the quality and type of material and size of the house they built. One of the beneficiaries confirmed this aspect: ***"I am so happy, our house has big windows, wood doors … Mr Biko did not use noisy steel doors like those in RDP houses, even our rooms are not as small as those of the RDP … they are better, you are able to put in your double bed, wardrobe and dressing table"*** (Focus Group Five, 28/10/2008-Parys). Another person concurred: ***"These houses are bigger than any government houses ever built in this township, they satisfy us with bricks and sand of high quality used to build them … they have wood doors not noisy steel doors"*** (Focus Group Three, 11/09/2008b-Odendaalsrus). Even project managers and trustees expressed sentiments similar to those of the beneficiaries. One of the trustees suggested that only the differences in terms of size and the nature of the materials used for the PHP housing in comparison with the RDP houses is what made them believe that they had succeeded in giving poor people exactly what they needed from their housing process: ***"Our PHP house is a 50 square metre [house] while that of the RDP here in Kgotsong is 40 square metre … our roofing is made of tiles not corrugated iron like the RDP, our wood doors differ from the steel doors used in the RDP, while our big windows make our beneficiaries to enjoy these houses"*** (Marametsi, 2008). Another trustee expressed a similar sentiment: ***"Most of the RDP houses uses poor quality grey bricks, steel doors and small unattractive windows, while we use quality bricks, wood doors and smart big windows for our PHP houses"*** (Biko, 2008b). What is interesting from all the above responses is the fact that, while size of a house and quality of material are

equally emphasised by both beneficiaries and project managers as indicators of successful housing delivery, none seem to have emphasised the 'process' that was supposed to have been followed.

Yet, this does not come as a surprise considering the fact that, other than the statement made by the former Minister of Housing (Minister Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele) in 1998 in which she emphasised the success of PHP programmes in attaining bigger and better quality housing as compared with the contractor-driven approach (see Chapter Three), the MEC of Housing (Mr Mafereka) in the Free State Province also emphasised the need for PHP programmes to prioritise 'quality'. In his 2007/08 budget speech Mr Mafereka stated that ***"[W]e will deploy recently recruited Cuban professionals to improve the quality of houses built through the People's Housing Process"*** (Mafereka, 2007:6). Thus, as argued in the literature review, it further becomes evident that based on the above quotes, it does not seem as if the concept of dweller-control features in any significant way in either policy or practice. Therefore, it would finally be appropriate – based on the above responses – to conclude that one of the main reasons for the establishment of housing support centres and the subsequent appointment of SEBRA in 2006 relates to the fact that houses should be technically 'sound' as determined by the government, and not as determined (or controlled) by dwellers.

4.3 Community empowerment and development

In Chapter Two reference was made to Turner's view that the end results (success) of any housing process should be measured not only in terms of the physical structures (actual houses) but also in terms of attainment of both community empowerment and development (see Turner, 1976). From a housing perspective (as argued by Turner), one cannot simply speak of community development in total isolation of self-help housing (Harris, 2003). Therefore, the community can achieve development only when they are empowered to participate effectively and to take major decisions regarding particularly their individual and collective socio-economic needs as these relate to their housing process. With the concept of *people-driven housing process* at the centre of PHP projects, it may also be appropriate to suggest that other than housing, the overall performance of the PHP mechanism should largely be measured through their ability to attain both people empowerment and

development. In this section, there are three key areas that can be used to indicate some of the successes of the PHP mechanism in terms of community empowerment and development in the Free State Province.

There is evidence that the PHP mechanism in the province has to a certain extent succeeded in creating job opportunities for the local people, there is further evidence that through being encouraged to work together during the construction process, communities were encouraged to improve previously strained human relations amongst themselves, lastly, there is evidence that, through PHP programmes, the Provincial Housing Department has succeeded in empowering the previously marginalised groups in the construction industry, particularly women and people with disabilities.

The following comments can be made regarding the first area of empowering the community, namely the provision of jobs by the PHP mechanism. In order to create job opportunities through construction, project officials have indicated that they usually appointed subcontractors who then come with their employees to complete different phases of the construction process. Thus, different subcontractors are appointed in different phases for different tasks in the construction process (Biko, 2008a). What should also be highlighted in this section is the fact that where housing support centres are fully resourced as in the case of Retshepeng Housing Support Centre (Parys), where there is a fully fledged facility, permanent jobs are being created for the locals. In Retshepeng Housing Support Centre, there were ten youths (mixture of able and disabled) who were being trained to manufacture window and door frames for the housing support centre on a permanent basis (Ntema & Hoosen, 2008). Table 4.1, which reflects the employment statistics of Retshepeng Housing Support Centre in Tumahole, Parys, serves to demonstrate statistically the success achieved by some of these housing support centres. Between October 2007 and March 2008, this housing support centre completed 100 housing units. According to the provincial rankings in terms of performance, this housing support centre is one of the top performers in the Free State. Confirming the outstanding performance of this housing support centre are a number of trophies and awards from both the provincial and the national housing departments (Ntema & Hoosen, 2008).

Table 4.1: Employment statistics of the Retshepeng Disabled Trust Housing Support Centre, 2008

Category of work done	Number of contractors appointed	Number of employees
Superstructure	10	66
Plastering	7	28
Roofing	2	6
Carpentry	4	4
Cleansing	2	7
Manufacturing window & door frames	None	10
Total:		**123**

Source: Ntema and Hoosen, 2008

It should be noted that the above statistics represent one project, which, according to the project manager, came to completion in March 2008. Although the researcher did not have specific questions regarding the employment statistics it should be mentioned that a similar approach of appointing contractors was followed by all the housing support centres in the province.

Regarding the second key area of community empowerment and development, namely the ability of the PHP mechanism to improve and enhance personal relations amongst the beneficiaries, it can be said that in all five the visited housing support centres, beneficiaries seemed to have endorsed the PHP mechanism as a tool for reconciliation and nation building. Having to work towards a common goal, community members had to put aside their past differences and work as a collective. Reflecting on the spirit of teamwork and togetherness that usually prevails during construction, beneficiaries referred to their houses as ‘masakhane

houses' (which means *building houses together*) and not as 'PHP houses'. Some of the beneficiaries suggested that had it not been for the PHP project, most of them would still not be talking to one another because of past conflicts.

This was confirmed by one of the beneficiaries during the focus group meetings: ***"Prior [to] these masakhane houses, we would not be greeting each other due to our past differences but as per the requirements of the project we had no other option but to put our differences aside and start to help each other … that helped to heal our strain[ed] past relationships"*** (Focus Group One, 09/09/2008b-Bultfontein). Another beneficiary indicated that the PHP project in their area had helped them to reclaim their pride in that they found personal fulfilment in helping others to succeed: ***"Because of this project, we learned to care and support each other"*** (Focus Group Two, 09/09/2008b-Bothaville). Thus, evident from the above quotes is the fact that not only houses were developed but human relations were also improved and strengthened during the process of housing delivery. Yet, building and subsequently sustaining these improved human relations were not without challenges. The lack of cooperation demonstrated by some of the beneficiaries not only had the potential to destroy the spirit of togetherness that these PHP projects usually attempt to achieve, but also led to unnecessary delays in respect of project completion.

Project managers and trustees spoke of frustrations usually caused by the dishonesty demonstrated by some of the beneficiaries. According to the project managers, some beneficiaries within a group of approximately five members would actively participate in the construction until their individual houses had been completed, and would then start to give problems during the completion of the remaining houses for other group members (Mafatlhe, 2008; Ngonelo, 2008). At times such behaviour results in the project managers spending much more time resolving such issues than working on the actual construction process.

With regard to the last mentioned key area of community empowerment and development, namely the ability of the PHP projects towards successfully promoting the effective involvement of both the disabled and women in the construction industry, the following needs to be mentioned: There is evidence to prove that significant progress was made in

achieving equity in the composition of the PHP programme project teams in the province. In terms of gender and disability issues, the five visited housing support centres seemed to have made some significant progress. It was interesting to see, for example, that the most successful housing support centre in the province (Retshepeng Housing Support Centre) was managed by a team consisting of managers of the disabled project. What further deserves to be mentioned is that all members of the project team in the Meloding Housing Support Centre were females. The two above examples indicate the success of the PHP mechanism in terms of eliminating a historical myth that the construction industry is for men and not for either the disabled or for women.

4.4 Conclusion

Similar specifically to Turner's view of 'dweller control', the PHP policy guidelines advocate concepts such as 'greater choice' and 'increased input' by the beneficiaries in terms of their housing (see Department of Housing, 2000a; Department of Housing, 2005).The primary intention of the PHP policy guidelines with these concepts is to transfer power in decision making *from* the state *to* the beneficiaries. Yet, contrary to Turner's views (as discussed in Chapter Two), and also to PHP policy guidelines (as outlined in Chapter Three), all the discussions and the participants' responses in this chapter indicate that the overall decision-making process in the PHP mechanism in the Free State were at the time of this research still following a top-down approach. The provincial government still dictated, amongst others, the housing process and imposed its decisions in terms of the type of housing (design and planning) to be built, and who (housing support centres) was to be appointed for the project management. Thus, if all the responses quoted in this chapter are anything to go by, it would then be fair to conclude that, theoretically (as argued in the literature) and practically (as seen in the above responses), the practice of institutionalised self-help through housing support centres in South Africa – as elsewhere in other developing countries – has severely compromised and eliminated amongst others, Turner's key principles of 'dweller control' and 'housing by people', while in fact endorsing the concept of state-driven housing delivery. Drawing from Turner's key ideas, Table 4.2 below further compares the institutionalised self-help concept through the PHP mechanism in terms of policy and practice in the Free State Province.

Table 4.2: Comparison of policy and practice in institutionalised self-help in the Free State and Turner's key concepts in self-help practice

Key concepts	PHP policy	PHP practice in the Free State
Dweller control	Emphasis on people-driven housing process; beneficiaries leading project planning and initiation processes	Beneficiaries' participation limited to self-completion of subsidy application forms
State control	State to play an advisory and assisting role in housing process	State being solely responsible for project planning, design and initiation
Sweat equity	Beneficiaries to build or be involved in building their homes	Mechanisms to limit beneficiaries' role to supervise construction process and materials
Use of local resources	Permit use of either recycled, locally purchased or locally manufactured materials	Recycled materials not allowed; government centralising purchase of materials
Housing costs	Government providing project funding through capital subsidies and grants	Government failing to provide facilitation and establishment grants while discouraging use of beneficiaries' 'own savings'.
Definition of a house	Houses should be technically sound and be a product of a bottom-up approach	Housing becoming a product of bureaucratically and technologically top-down approach

The state's involvement in the planning and management of self-help programmes in especially the Free State seemed to have been evident in more than just one type of self-help programme, in this case not only institutionalised self-help as seen in this chapter. Other forms of self-help, too, never escaped deliberate state involvement. In the next chapter the discussion focuses on the extent to which the Free State Government interfered with the activities of laissez- faire self-help in the Thabong (Welkom) area.

CHAPTER FIVE:

LAISSEZ-FAIRE SELF-HELP HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA: CASE STUDY OF THABONG (WELKOM)

In Chapter Two it was argued that state involvement in self-help housing has globally been the common practice. In Chapter Three the argument was further pursued by using existing literature to show that currently in South Africa there are high levels of government involvement in self-help housing. Chapter Four provided further evidence of state involvement in institutionalised self-help housing with particular reference to the application of the PHP as applied in the Free State Province. This begs the question whether one can have a housing process without any state involvement in both the processes of key decision making and the actual construction – a process in which government provides only the funding and the subsequent oversight of the utilisation of such state funding.

Against this background, the present chapter evaluates a laissez-faire self-help housing programme in Thabong, Welkom. In this project the state subsidy only provided the basic building materials while building advice was additionally available. Yet, the state did not initiate any construction processes as is normally the case in the state subsidy system available in South Africa. A study conducted by Marais *et al*. (2003) indicated that the Thabong case study had much better housing outcomes than did a state-initiated housing programme (state-aided self-help) in Freedom Square, Bloemfontein (see Stewart, 2001 and Chapter Six). However, the fieldwork for that particular study was conducted in 1999 and focused exclusively on completed formal houses only while the project was still in process. This left an opportunity for a new investigation to fully compare and evaluate the Thabong project over a decade. Though longitudinal studies in the housing environment have been limited, this chapter will attempt to benefit from just such a methodological approach. Central to this chapter is the fact that the Free State Goldfields have suffered renewed economic decline (see Marais & Van der Walt, 2010), which also makes this case study interesting in that continued housing processes should also be understood against the background of economic growth and decline.

It is further worth mentioning that the major difference between the two studies lies in the size of the samples. On the one hand, only 75 interviewees with complete formal houses were interviewed for the 1999 study, on the other, for the 2008 study, 200 interviewees who received materials, irrespective of the stage of construction or of the type of housing they were at the time occupying, were interviewed. Five main arguments are forwarded in this chapter: despite the project being labelled as laissez-faire self-help, it did not escape state interference, the economic reality in the Free State Goldfields negatively influenced the continued housing process (laissez-faire self-help) in the area, the laissez-faire self-help housing mechanism may to a certain extent assume settlement informality, housing developments should be assessed continuously through systematic longitudinal studies as opposed to one-off or short-term studies, and, laissez-faire self-help housing may result in conflict amongst its beneficiaries, which suggests that there was indeed some degree of romanticism in Turner's perspectives. Thus, while the major focus of this study is on the findings of the 2008 survey, comparisons are also made with the 1999 survey (see Stewart, 2001). Against the above background, the following notes are made in respect of the comparison with the 1999 data:

- The data originating from Stewart (2001) and Marais *et al.* (2003) are from the same survey conducted in 1999. As the original data set is not available, data had to be searched from these two texts. Thus, in some cases the data for 1999 originate from Marais *et al*. (2003) and in other cases, from Stewart (2001).
- The focus of the longitudinal comparison is mainly on satisfaction levels as the study's focus is on Turner's theory of self-help and is close to his concept of dweller control. Other comparisons were dependent on the availability of data and on attempting to show that very few significant socio-economic changes have taken place. Consequently, the conclusions reached can be attributed to the housing processes and not other attributes. Where data are not available it will be indicated as such in tables and where data are incomplete this will also be indicated.

Given the above background, the chapter is structured as follows: after supplying a brief historical background in respect of Thabong, a discussion centres on the origin and implementation of the Thabong Housing Project. Following this discussion, is analysis of a socio-economic profile of the interviewees in the Thabong Housing Project, followed by an

assessment of the current state of housing and of the construction processes over the past decade of the project. Then follows an analysis of interviewees' perceptions and their levels of satisfaction regarding their housing outcomes in the Thabong Project. Following this, an analysis of state's interference in the processes of housing design and planning in the Thabong Project is conducted. Next, an analysis is done of interviewees' perceptions regarding the standard of living generally enjoyed in the Thabong area. Finally, a number of conclusions are reached.

5.1 Welkom/Thabong's historical background

Thabong is Welkom's former black township that, in line with apartheid planning, is situated approximately five kilometres north-east of the Welkom Central Business District. Following the discovery of gold in the 1940s, the area became a focal point of growth (Botes, Lenka, Marais, Matebesi & Sigenu, 2007; Marais & Van der Walt, 2010). The application of migrant labour in line with apartheid legislation meant that people from across Southern Africa eagerly flocked to the area in search of employment in the mines. Consequently, the area was characterised by a high rate of urbanisation between the 1950s and the late 1980s.

The 1951 Census data recorded the Welkom/Thabong population at approximately 26 000, and by 1996 there were just over 250 000 people (see Marais & Van der Walt, 2010). However, the first mining retrenchments starting in the early 1990s resulted in a considerable decline in population by 2001 (see Krige, 1995; Marais & Pelser, 2006; Marais & Van der Walt, 2010). By 2001, the population had decreased to approximately 186 000, this resulting specifically from retrenchments in the mining sector. Unemployment in this area increased from 26.8% in 1996, to 39.9% in 2004 (Matjhabeng Draft IDP Document, 2007/2011).

Although a large number of retrenched mineworkers may have returned to their area of origin, it is argued in the HSRC Review (2009) that not all the unemployed former hostel dwellers and migrant mineworkers had permanently left the area. There is evidence that some had resettled in large informal settlements around the large urban nodes of the Welkom area (HSRC Review, 2009; Marais & Venter, 2006). The resettlement of former hostel dwellers

and migrant mineworkers in informal settlements has created a new demand for land and housing, this leading to a possible expansion of stands in Thabong. The growing demand for land and housing is demonstrated by the fact that, during several consultation community meetings held by different ward councillors in the Thabong area in November 2006, residents complained mainly of serious shortages in respect both of housing and employment in Matjhabeng municipal area, and more specifically in the Thabong area (Matjhabeng Draft IDP Document, 2007/2011). Thus, providing accommodation to these former hostel dwellers and other members of the community in general, presented a challenge to both the municipality and the Provincial Government. Amongst others, one of the government strategies in response to the challenge was by means of the laissez-faire self-help housing mechanism in the late 1990s.

5.2 The origin of the Thabong Housing Project and the role of the Provincial Housing Department

Three phases are distinguishable in the development of the project area, namely the informal settlement phase, the site-and-services phase and the project-implementation phase. Each of these phases will now be discussed in more detail.

Phase 1: The informal settlement phase

The first phase was the settlement of informal settlers in Mandela Square in Thabong. The 2008 survey findings indicate that more than 90.0% of the interviewees in the Thabong laissez-faire self-help housing project were former inhabitants of an informal settlement (Mandela Square) in the Thabong area. It should be noted that the original settlement at Mandela Square and the present settlement are not in the same location.

In their responses during the interviews and in the focus-group meetings, interviewees suggested that both the origin and development of Mandela Square were historically no exception to other similar land invasions in other parts of the country then **(**see Botes, Krige & Wessels, 1991; Marais & Krige, 1997).

Phase 2: The sites-and-services phase

By 1992, a large number of informal Mandela Square residents were resettled to their current location in Ward 16 and Ward 17. Their relocation followed the funding by the IDT for a site-and-services project in the Greenfields development. The site-and-services project ensured that the inhabitants had access to secure tenure (ownership), electricity, sanitation, tap water on site, and mass street lights (see Stewart, 2001). The initial housing landscape was characterised by shacks. Although the shacks initially dominated the project area, a number of residents had begun erecting formal structures by utilising their own resources (Stewart, 2001). This reality made it difficult to apply the state subsidy programme in this respect. Stewart (2001) argues that the mixed-structure types rendered the mass housing-delivery option virtually impossible and that this reality left government with only one possible and feasible option: to implement an owner-managed housing process (laissez-faire self-help).

Phase 3: Implementation of the laissez-faire self-help housing project

One of the key principles of laissez-faire self-help (as briefly discussed in Chapter Two), is that it leaves limited scope for government to play a role. In some cases, support from government might come in the form of provision of necessary funding and training. Essentially, the housing-construction process remains the responsibility of the dwellers themselves. Evidence from the Thabong Housing Project indicates that, other than sites and services, the Free State Provincial Government provided the beneficiaries with materials, while further also making provision for training in construction (Stewart, 2001). For the training programme and management activities, the Provincial Government appointed the New Housing Company (see Stewart, 2001). The housing process in this project provided beneficiaries with opportunities of developing their own house plans and of appointing their own builders.

Against this background, three searching/well-considered/important questions can be asked:

- To what extent has this project escaped state interference?

- What impact did the economic hardships of the mid-1990s have on this housing project?
- Did the project change the housing morphology of the area significantly and is there a diversified housing morphology?

5.3 Socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries in Thabong

The main focus of this section is to provide a socio-economic profile of the interviewees in the laissez-faire self-help project in Thabong. The section starts off with a discussion of the biographical details followed by a discussion of the income profile of interviewees. This will be done by means of a comparative analysis of the survey findings of both the 1999 and 2008 studies undertaken in this area.

5.3.1 Biographical and household details

Table 5.1 below contains selected biographical details of the interviewees collected in two separate studies in 1999 and in 2008 respectively. It should be noted that not all the variables were available for the 1999 study as the original data set for the 1999 study was not available.

Table 5.1: Biographical profile of the beneficiaries of laissez-faire self-help housing in Thabong, 1999 and 2008

Criteria	1999	2008
Percentage of interviewees who settled here before 1996	n.a	97.4%
Interviewees who had never before owned a house	n.a	98.0%
Percentage of female interviewees	55.3%	53.4%
Average age of interviewees	46.0	53.0
Percentage of interviewees with secondary education	n.a	39.5%
Percentage of interviewees with only primary education	n.a	36.4%
Percentage of married interviewees	n.a	17.8%
Percentage of interviewees with no education	n.a	15.6%
Average household size	4.5	3.9

Based on Table 5.1, one could argue that 97.4% of interviewees officially occupied their sites in this area before 1996. This is probably a reflection of their removal from the informal settlement. It is also evident that 98.0% of interviewees had never owned a house before settling in this area, which thus confirms the informal settlement history of the residents. Furthermore, a significant number of households in this area seem to have been headed by females (55.3% in 1999 and 53.4% in 2008) – in contrast to conventional wisdom in mining areas (Marais & Van der Walt, 2010) – but it is probably understandable that it is the women who would have gone in search of family housing. The average age of interviewees also increased from 46 to 53 years between 1999 and 2008.

At the same time, average household size decreased from 4.5 to 3.9 between 1999 and 2008. This declining size of households was a national trend and comes as no surprise. Napier (2003) has already noted it and largely related this trend to the splitting of extended families in order to access housing. Also, the negative economic conditions prevailing in the area probably led to an exodus of residents from the area (as noted earlier). While the average

household size in Thabong of 3.9 in 2008 seems to have declined, it remains slightly higher than the Free State average (3.5) but equal to the national average (Statistics South Africa, 2007). It should also be noted that the available literature suggests that household size is one of those contributing factors that usually determine the ultimate size of housing (see Maishoane, 2000; Marais, Sefika & Cloete, 2009) and is therefore an important consideration.

5.3.2 Income and employment status of beneficiaries

This section presents a brief overview of the income and employment status of interviewees. Such a profile will provide a base from which to compare basic housing outcomes (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries of laissez-faire self-help housing in Thabong, 2008

Statements	2008
Average household income of interviewees	R1611.5
Percentage of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years, who are unemployed and not looking for work	32.5%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years who though unemployed are looking for work	34.0%
Total percentage of unemployment amongst interviewees between 18 years and 60 years (rough estimates inclusive of both narrow and broad definitions of unemployment)	66.5%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years who are in full-time employment	15.7%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years who are in part-time employment	10.2%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years who are informally employed	7.6%
Total percentage of employment amongst interviewees between 18 years and 60 years (rough estimates inclusive of full-time, part-time and informal employment)	33.5%
Households' main source of income:	**%**
Grants	65.8%
Employment	24.9%
Others	7.4%
Money from family/elsewhere	1.9%

The following comments need to be made with regard to Table 5.2. The high levels of unemployment are evident from this table. The evidence from the 2008 survey suggests that the unemployment rate of interviewees between 18 years and 60 years was 66.5%. It should rate within this age group of beneficiaries (specifically those unemployed but looking for work) from 14.5% in 1999 (see Marais & Pelser, 2006), to 34.0% in 2008. The increased

unemployment rate since 1999 is probably largely ascribable to the massive collapse of and decrease (since mid-1990s) in mining activities in the Free State Goldfields. Directly or indirectly linked to these statistics on unemployment rates is the large percentage of interviewees (65.8%) who were dependent on government grants as their main source of income. From a housing point of view, the above findings on employment statistics probably suggest that the general maintenance of and improvements to housing were likely to be difficult for a significant percentage of interviewees. This brief overview of both the demographic and economic realities of interviewees (as outlined in the above discussion) will be used in the remainder of the text further to analyse housing processes and outcomes in the Thabong Housing Project.

5.4 The current nature and state of housing in the Thabong Housing Project

In this section, the focus of the discussion will fall on the analysis and evaluation of various housing aspects, the intent being to describe the current state of housing in Thabong. Where possible and relevant, a comparative analysis of the data for 1999 and 2008 is provided.

5.4.1 Type of housing

The aim of this section is to describe the state of housing current in the Thabong Project in 2008 in terms of the type of building material the state and/or beneficiaries chose for the construction of their housing. Table 5.3 provides an overview in this respect.

Table 5.3: Types of housing and the building materials used in Thabong, 1999 and 2008

Type of house	1999[2]	2008
Corrugated iron/shack	0.0%	15.0%
Conventional brick	90.8%	83.0%
Mix of corrugated iron and bricks	0.0%	1.0%
Face brick	9.2%	1.0%

The following comments can be made in respect of Table 5.3 above. The 2008 results indicate that most (83.0%) of the interviewees opted for conventional brick, while only 1.0% of them could afford to use face brick. This represents both a considerable decline in the use of face bricks – from 9.2% in 1999 to 1.0% in 2008 – and an increase in the percentage of informal units. In a narrow sense, this change can be ascribed to the methodological differences between the two studies, which have already been noted. Two points need to be made in this regard: the sample in 1999 was only 75 compared with the sample of 200 in 2008, the 1999 sample focused on completed houses only, while the 2008 survey included a representative random sample. However, the decline in the number of face brick houses coupled with an increase in the number of informal units can probably also be linked to the decline in the mining industry. Thus, the implication of the findings in the above table could be that the housing landscape in the Thabong Project is at the moment characterised by more or less 16.0% of shacks or informal structures and approximately 84.0% formal structures built predominantly of conventional bricks. One could thus rightfully argue that, to a certain extent, the Thabong Project was unable to eradicate informality completely – as was initially intended that it should do. In fact, one could further argue that one of the consequences of laissez-faire self-help is the fact that informality should be accepted.

[2] It should be noted that for 1999, the sample involved only households with completed formal housing, this information is obtained from hard copies of work done by Marais *et al.* (2003) as well as Stewart, 2001.

5.4.2 Size of houses

This section will focus on the analysis of the size of housing in terms of the number of rooms per unit and how the housing size differs from one housing type to the next (see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4: Type of housing and number of rooms per unit in the Thabong Housing Project, 1999 and 2008

Size of house	1999[3]		2008[4]	
	n	%	n	%
Total sample: up to two rooms	n.a	n.a	68	34.5
Total sample: more than two rooms	n.a	n.a	129	65.5
Formal houses: up to two rooms	15	19.8	55	34.0
Formal houses: three rooms or more	60	80.2	107	66.0

In terms of the size of housing, the 2008 study indicates that 34.5% of interviewees who had received state subsidies (regardless of housing type) were living in houses with up to two rooms, while a significant percentage (65.5%) of them were living in housing with more than two rooms. The data would suggest that there was an increase in the number of households residing in houses with up to two rooms (from 19.8% to 34.0%) and a subsequent decrease in the percentage residing in houses of three or more rooms (from 80.2% to 66.0%). Not much should be read into this as the methodological discrepancy between the 1999 survey (focusing only on formally completed houses) and the 2008 survey (focusing on both informally and formally completed/uncompleted) houses is probably largely responsible for these differences.

[3] It should be noted that for 1999, the sample involved only households with completed formal housing.
[4]For the total sample in 2008, there were three missing cases; thus the total added up to 197, instead of original sample of 200. Furthermore, an exclusive focus on formal housing led to the current total of 162, instead of the original inclusive figure of 200.

A number of interesting reasons emerge when one investigates the relationship between housing size and a number of other variables. The 2008 research findings provide preliminary indications that beneficiaries with smaller houses (up to two rooms) were mainly those who relied on sources of income other than employment and grants, while those with larger housing units (more than two rooms) were mainly those with sustainable sources of income, such as employment, followed by those who received grants. For example, 84.0% of the households of which the interviewees held employment were living in houses with more than two rooms. Conversely, only 56.8% of the households of which interviewees were unemployed lived in houses with more than two rooms.

Yet, the effect that grants seem to have had on housing development should also not go unnoticed. In this regard, 68.8% of interviewees who were recipients of grants were at the time of the survey living in houses with more than two rooms. By comparison, 56.8% of interviewees who were neither grants recipients nor employed were then living in houses with more than two rooms. It would thus from the above discussion be reasonable to assume that there is a link between the size of housing and the interviewees' sources of income, with bigger housing size being common amongst interviewees deriving their income from employment, while the same cannot be said of those without income.

5.4.3 A description of the housing construction process for the initial housing

The current state of housing in the Thabong Project can also be described in terms of the construction processes that were followed and (as discussed in Section 5.4.1) quality of the materials used during the construction of the initial housing.

It is important to note that the self-help housing mechanism neither restricts dwellers to any single, specific method of construction and/nor any specific type of material. As argued in the literature review, dwellers could either personally build (self-construction) or appoint their preferred builders while using their preferred locally produced material. Regardless of construction method and the materials that owners decide to choose, central to such a choice (individual or collective) – as argued by Turner (1976) – should be a recognition of 'dweller control', one of the fundamental principles of self-help, which would ensure that dwellers are

able to control and influence key decisions regarding the construction of their housing. Thus, from a 'dweller-control' perspective, evidence from the Thabong Housing Project indicates the threefold role of beneficiaries during the construction process.

Beneficiaries could determine who should be appointed to do the construction. Beneficiaries could to a certain extent (as seen in Section 5.4.1) determine the type of material that was to be used for construction. Thus, they (beneficiaries) could supplement their subsidised material with their recycled materials. Beneficiaries could appoint their own local people to draw up house plans (a point to which the study will return later). Table 5.5 provides details of the housing construction process.

Table 5.5: People responsible for the construction of initial houses in Thabong, 1999 and 2008

Statements	1999[5]	2008
Builder from within the community	56.6%	60.8%
Contractor company from outside	11.9%	22.9%
Other family members	3.9%	4.8%
My husband/wife	n.a	4.8%
Myself	n.a	3.6%
Other/Do not know	n.a	3.1%

The following comments can be made in respect of Table 5.5 above: although construction by builders from within the community seems generally to have been the most preferred method of construction over the past decade, there has also been significant growth in the numbers of interviewees opting for the appointment of contractors. Research findings show increases – from 56.6% in 1999 to 60.8% in 2008, and from 11.9% in 1999 to 22.9% in 2008 – in the numbers of interviewees who respectively appointed builders and contractor

[5] The fact that the original data set was not available has led to the reality that the data for 1999 do not add up to 100%. The data was retrieved from the paper by Marais *et al.* (2003).

companies for construction. The above trend is probably attributable to three main aspects: own savings (mostly from severance packages) by interviewees have been prominent in this respect, employment as a reliable source of income has also played a significant role, and, the previous experience of interviewees in respect of appointing builders for construction has also played a role. These three aspects are discussed in more detail below.

With regard to the possible role of own savings (mostly from severance packages), research findings in 2008 indicated that 30.8% of interviewees who were unemployed and not looking for work appointed contractors, while a mere 4.3% of those who held employment opted for the same construction method. Thus, explaining this scenario could, to a large extent, be the availability of immediate cash in the form of own savings and/or severance packages amongst interviewees who were former mine workers – a point already made by Marais and Wessels (2005) in respect of housing processes in Thabong.

A number of points should be made in connection with the role of income. Research findings indicate that 78.3% of interviewees who were at that time employed and thus had a reliable monthly income seemed to have appointed a builder from the community, while 52.9% of interviewees then unemployed seemed to have done the same. To a certain extent, this is probably an indication that there was a higher rate of affordability amongst the employed than amongst the unemployed interviewees. Other than the type of local skill they could employ, the difference between the employed and the unemployed interviewees is also apparent from the numbers of beneficiaries who themselves undertook construction of their housing. Overall, 11.8% of the unemployed interviewees as compared with 4.3% of those who were employed seem to have been directly involved in their housing process in a self-build capacity. Yet, despite attempts by a few unemployed interviewees physically to build their houses themselves, there was generally an insignificant percentage (3.6%) of the total percentage of interviewees who were able to employ their own construction skills to further minimise construction costs. Contributing to such low levels of self-construction could possibly have been a general lack of construction skills or training – despite the opportunity to acquire such skills through the training organised by the state-appointed project manager, the New Housing Company. According to 2008 research findings, more than 80.0% of interviewees were found to lack construction skills.

The 2008 results show an increase in the numbers of interviewees who opted for the appointment of contractors (from 11.9% to 22.9%). Subsequent to that, the 2008 survey further indicates wide-spread dissatisfaction amongst interviewees regarding the poor work previously done by builders (see the discussion following Figure 5.4). Thus, from a laissez-faire self-help perspective, despite the assumption that a larger degree of dweller control is applicable in this process, there is some preliminary evidence that the construction process performed by the appointed builders did not necessarily result in dweller control. Confirming a possible lack of decisiveness as part of dweller control by beneficiaries, one of the interviewees remarked: ***"I would always give builders instructions as to how I would like them to build my house ... they will hardly listen to me and do things their own way"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom).

It could further be argued that the insufficient materials that beneficiaries received from the Provincial Government may also have affected the construction process. There is evidence to prove that the construction process may have been either delayed or slowed down by the inability of the largely unemployed beneficiaries to supplement the insufficient and what they perceived to be poor-quality state materials. Some of interviewees made remarks to highlight their then current incomplete housing-construction processes, which they largely blamed on their poor economic background that made it difficult to top up the insufficient and poor-quality state materials: ***"We were told that material that we were going to receive will be sufficient to complete at least a four-room house … like the show house shown to us ... but the material was not even enough to complete a decent two-room house … the reason why you even see some of us still living in incomplete houses"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom)**.** Another person suggested that other than insufficient state materials, poverty might have been responsible for their then current incomplete construction process: ***"I am one of those people who did not have money to supplement government's inadequate materials and decided to sell some and use others to extend my shack"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). Observations support the above quotes.

5.5 Beneficiary satisfaction level with current housing in the Thabong Housing Project

Two aspects should be discussed in more detail considering the realities of dweller control. A higher degree of dweller control is likely to create a sense of 'ownership' amongst beneficiaries. Ownership, in this sense, refers to the emotional attachment that the beneficiaries have toward their housing and not to the fact that they have a title deed. Dweller control supposes a higher rate of satisfaction in respect of housing outcomes. Hence, Turner argued that housing 'by the masses', in which there is active participation by beneficiaries, is much more viable than 'mass housing' in which either the government or developers usually own and control the construction process (Midgley *et al*., 1986; Turner, 1976). Thus, from a dweller-control perspective, the aim of this section is to determine beneficiaries' sense of 'ownership' of the housing processes and the extent to which that could be tied up with their levels of satisfaction regarding various housing aspects. For this purpose, the research findings of the 1999 and the 2008 surveys are utilised. However, as noted earlier the comparison would be only on formal housing since the 1999 study did not include the informal housing.

5.5.1 Number of rooms

In this section, the focus falls on determining the extent to which beneficiaries of the Thabong Housing Project (when compared with the 1999 study) were satisfied with the number of rooms their houses currently had (see Figure 5.1). Because of the methodological discrepancy between the 1999 and 2008 surveys, the results also reflect the opinion for formal houses while the relationship between the number of rooms and the satisfaction levels is presented.

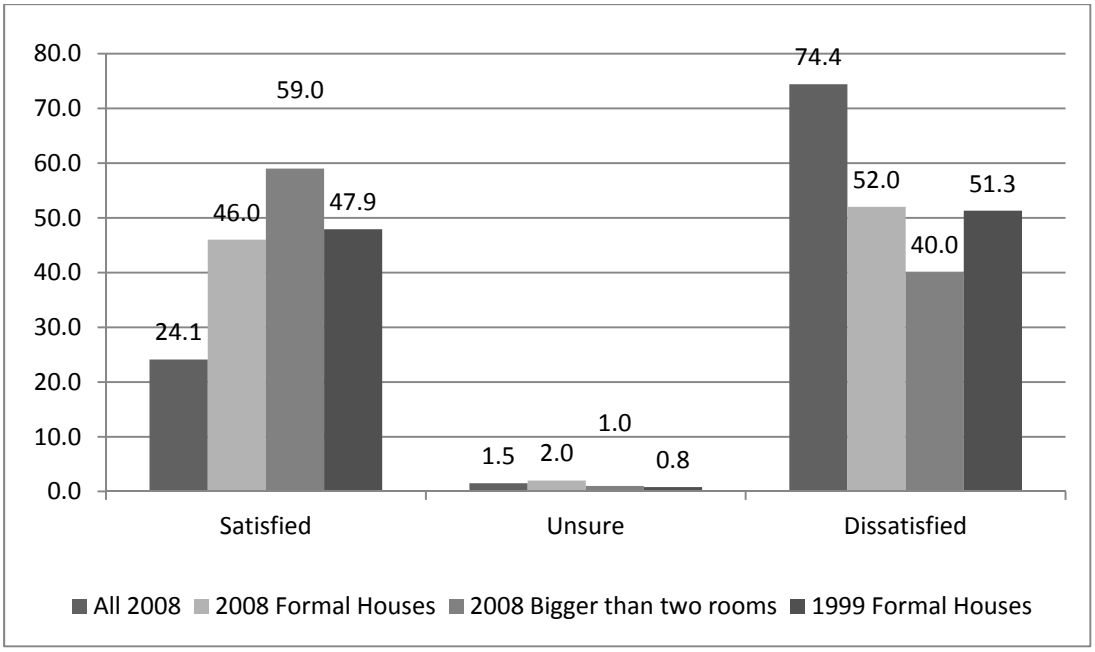

Figure 5.1: Number of rooms and the levels of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Thabong Project, 1999 and 2008

Figure 5.1 seems to indicate that the majority of interviewees (regardless of the type of housing) are dissatisfied with the current number of rooms in their houses (2008 survey). In 2008, 74.4% of interviewees in the housing project expressed dissatisfaction with regard to the number of rooms in their individual houses. Such dissatisfaction regarding the insufficient number of rooms is probably attributable to two factors: interviewees' financial inability further to improve their housing because of retrenchments in mines (see Section 5.3.2) probably played a significant role in this respect. One interviewee stated: ***"I am one of many unemployed people who do not have money to supplement government's subsidy material, I then decided to sell things like cement and use other material to extend my shack"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). The state's alleged failure to provide beneficiaries with the full packages of the subsidised materials initially promised them (see Section 5.4.3). Expressing dissatisfaction regarding the state's failure to deliver on its promises, one interviewee complained: ***"Our house plans are of the same size as the state's show house, but due to insufficient material we received from government … most of us are still living in a big one room (hall like) ... few in two and three rooms"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). Another interviewee stated the following: ***"They never gave full packages of subsidy material they promised us; they would ask that we choose between doors and window frames or cement bags and bricks ... I am now living in a hall-like house***

... it is a one room divided with curtains ... no privacy for me and children and don't have money to further supplement the given material" (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom).

Two more comments need to be made in respect of Figure 5.1. There is not much difference between the satisfaction levels with the formal houses in 1999 and those in 2008. This comparison is pivotal in that the 1999 study only covered formal houses. In 2008, the satisfaction regarding formal housing was 46.0% – slightly down from the nearly 48.0% in 1999. As can be expected, the largest degree of satisfaction was recorded in respect of houses with more than two rooms. The 2008 survey indicated that interviewees residing in houses with more than two rooms had a satisfaction level of 59.0% – considerably more than the sample average (see Annexure G). This suggests that housing size does play a significant role when it comes to housing satisfaction. Furthermore, interviewees with employment seem to have been more satisfied with larger houses than were those who had no employment.

5.5.2 Quality of building materials

In this section, the focus now shifts to an analysis of the link between the standard or quality of building materials and the level of satisfaction expressed by beneficiaries regarding this aspect of their housing (see Figure 5.2).

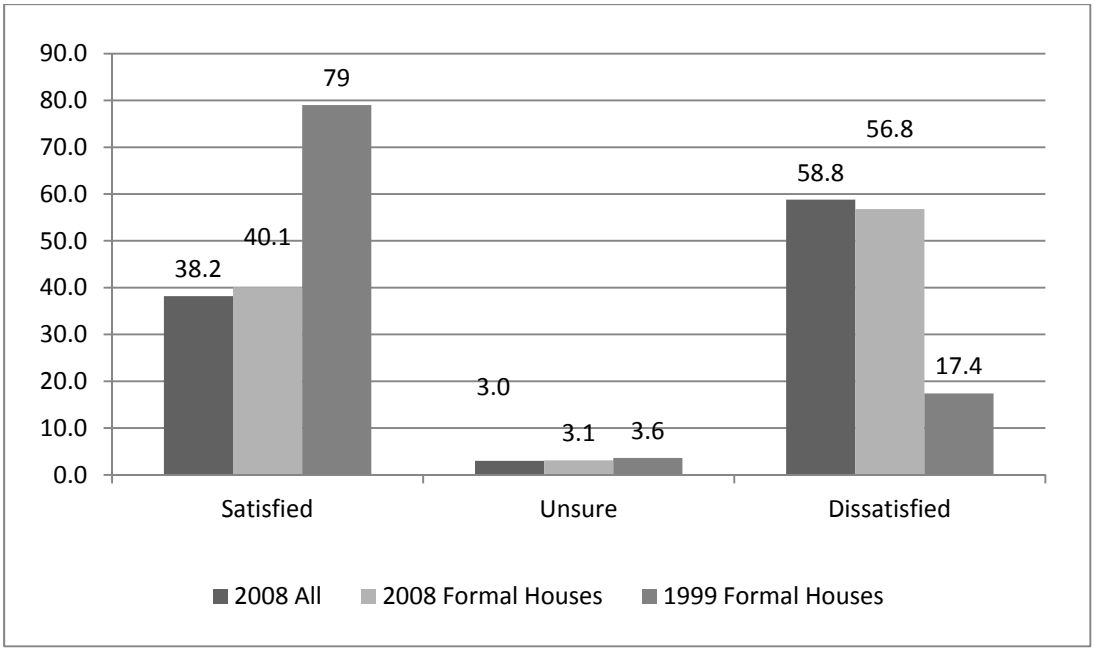

Figure 5.2: Quality of building materials and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Thabong Project, 1999 and 2008

The 2008 research findings indicate a general dissatisfaction amongst interviewees with regard to the quality of the building materials used to construct their housing. According to the research findings, 58.8% of the interviewees (across all housing types) in this project were dissatisfied with the quality of their building materials.

Two factors may have contributed to this general dissatisfaction amongst interviewees regarding the quality of building materials: financial constraints on interviewees' choices and (un)affordability of the preferred materials because of the high rate of unemployment in this area could probably have played a role, as could the state's alleged imposition of subsidy materials on interviewees. In respect of the possible limitations caused by financial constraints in acquiring the preferred materials, one could argue (given the high rate of unemployment amongst interviewees) that the majority of interviewees may have been unable to afford materials of their first choice. In turn, these circumstances could probably have forced them to settle for what – under normal circumstances – would have been their second or even third choice of materials. Other than that, but also linked to the possible effect of unemployment, the 2008 research findings indicate a further increase in dissatisfaction levels both among the employed interviewees and those who were unemployed. While lower

levels of dissatisfaction (44.0%) were recorded amongst interviewees with employment, slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction (65.1% and 54.1% respectively) were apparent among unemployed interviewees who were dependent on either state grants or handouts (see Annexure G).

Further contributing to the general dissatisfaction regarding the quality of building materials (as was widely alleged by interviewees) could have been the state's unilateral decision (through the New Housing Company) to purchase what these interviewees perceived to be poor-quality material. Marginalisation of beneficiaries from participating in decision-making processes regarding the choice of the type and the quality of building materials seems to have robbed the (beneficiaries) of a sense of pride and ownership of such materials. Expressing disappointment about the perceived poor quality of the materials imposed on them by the Provincial Government, one of the interviewees remarked: ***"I was given two different sets of bricks, the one with quality and the other with no quality ... I then used the poor-quality bricks for the inside walls"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). Another interviewee further alleged that ***"[T]he cement given to us by government officials was of poor quality … it expired quickly"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). The repeated use by the interviewees of the words "were given" in these two quotes further confirms non-participation of beneficiaries in choosing either suppliers or the preferred type of materials. More than anything else, these findings could probably largely confirm the fact that the laissez-faire self-help housing project could, to a certain extent, also be characterised by the state's tendency to compromise the practice of dweller control (see Turner, 1976). As regards formal houses only, the evidence shows a significant decline in satisfaction levels from 79.0% in 1999 to 40.0% in 2008. Thus, the high 'satisfied' response in the 1999 survey in respect of this housing aspect (quality of materials) could be ascribable to the early stage of the project at that time, with houses having just been completed in the past few years. As time passed, structural defects that may have been difficult to detect immediately at the time, started to make their appearance. Thus, in 2008, both during the interviews and the focus-group meetings, interviewees complained of houses that had developed structural defects such as cracks, plaster peeling off walls, rising damp and leaking roofs. Interviewees blamed all of these structural defects on the poor quality of the materials (see discussion in the next section) and the poor work done by their builders. Perhaps the most important finding to emerge from the above discussion is that studies like this one (a longitudinal study) should

continuously be used to assess housing developments and that they should not be one-off exercises.

5.5.3 Layout of the house

One other area in which beneficiaries' role should not be underestimated is in the decision making regarding their housing design. This section will focus on an analysis of the extent to which beneficiaries of the Thabong Project were satisfied with the layout or design of their housing (see Figure 5.3).

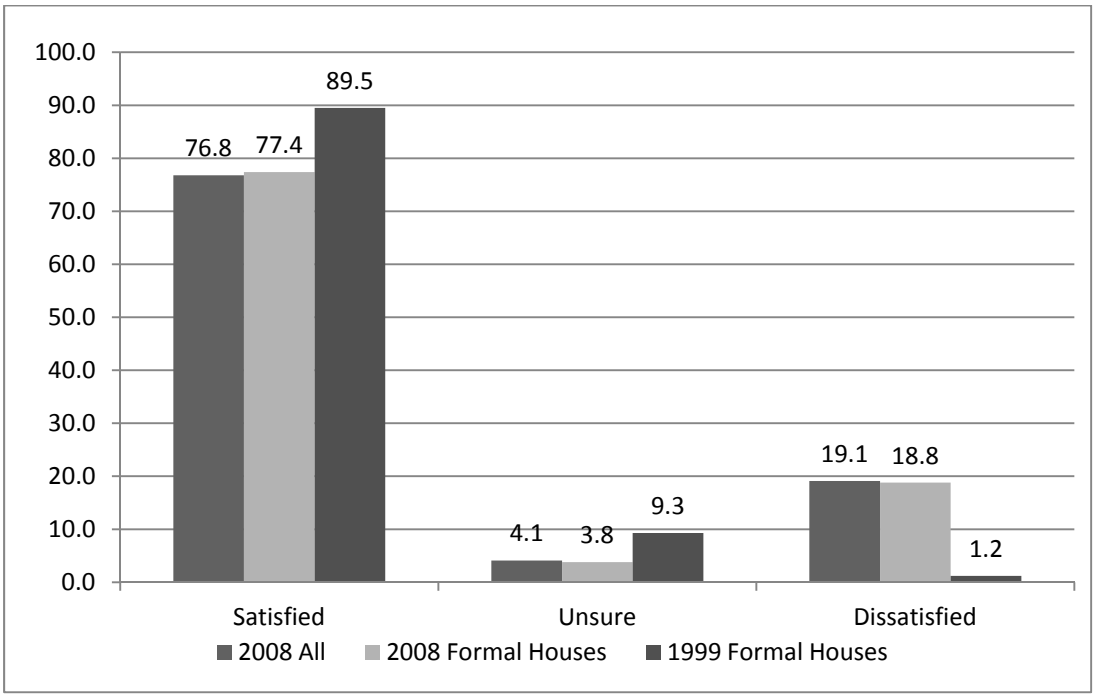

Figure 5.3: Layout of the house and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Thabong Project, 1999 and 2008

The following observations can be made in respect of the data contained in Figure 5.3. According to the 2008 study, the majority (76.8%) of interviewees across all types of housing (completed and partly-completed formal housing) were generally satisfied with the layout of their housing. This general satisfaction could possibly have resulted from the active role interviewees were able independently (as a collective) or individually to play in appointing a

local person of their choice to draw house plans for them – this personal decision making stands in contrast to the fact that similar decision-making levels were not possible in respect of building materials. However, even in this process, the influence of government through the New Housing Company should not be overlooked. This process was influenced by government's expectation (following their display of show houses) for the beneficiaries to come up with a house plan not exceeding a certain number of rooms and square metres (see discussion in Section 5.6). Another factor that possibly contributed to the high satisfaction rate was that interviewees had had the liberty of deciding on the actual spot on their sites of where and how to place or construct their houses (this also applied to interviewees then living in shacks).

Interviewees across different types of housing and housing sizes seem to have expressed equal/similar satisfaction regarding the layout of their housing. Yet it is worth noting that slight differences amongst beneficiaries of exclusively formal housing in 1999 and those living in formal housing in 2008. Explaining the slightly higher (89.5%) level of satisfaction in 1999 as compared with the 77.4% attained in 2008 could be both the increase in the unemployment rate from 26.8% in 1996, to 66.5% in 2008 and also the methodological reasons suggested earlier (see Marais *et al.*, 2003). This might have influenced the (un)affordability to the beneficiaries of their individualised house plans, which forced a couple of them to adopt a collective 'one-size-fits-all' approach in respect of house designs.

5.5.4 Quality of building work

In this section, the focus falls on analysing factors likely to be responsible for satisfaction rates amongst beneficiaries with regard to the quality of the work done (see Figure 5.4).

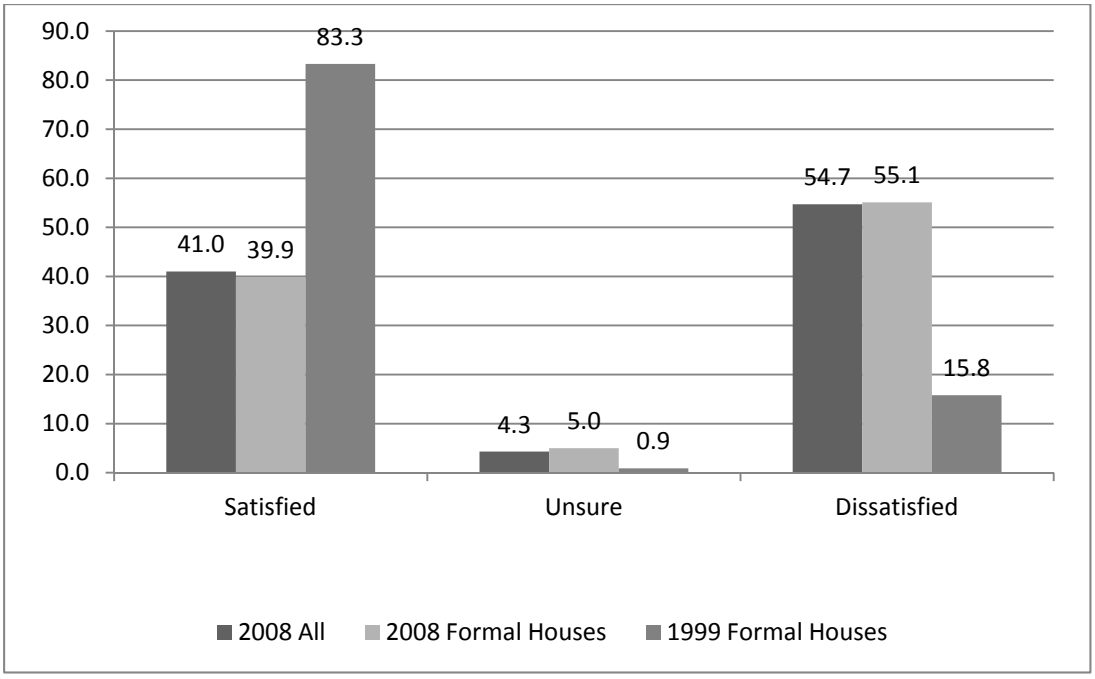

Figure 5.4: Quality of building work and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Thabong Project, 1999 and 2008

Despite the beneficiaries having been solely responsible for the appointment of builders and contractors of their choice (see discussion under Section 5.4.3), more than half (54.7%) of the interviewees in 2008, across different housing types and sizes, were dissatisfied with the quality of the work done by the very same local builders they themselves had appointed. This may be attributable to the influence of high unemployment figures, which made it difficult for these interviewees to appoint some of the prominent individual local builders as their first choice. For instance, the 2008 findings indicate that while 59.1% of the employed interviewees seemed to have been satisfied with the quality of work done by the builders appointed by themselves, only 35.1% of the unemployed interviewees held the same opinion of the builders they had appointed (see Annexure G). The following assessment of the poor quality of building processes came from one of the interviewees: ***"Builders that we hired were not competent enough, the construction of our houses is of poor standard ... most of us complained of common problems such as poorly mixed cement and sand"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). The possibility thus exist that while the poor, unemployed interviewees were forced by their financial situation perhaps to base their choice of much cheaper local builders on trust rather than on competence, the poor but employed interviewees seemed likely to have had the financial means to contract the services of

affordable and competent local builders. Across different types of builders (contractors vs. local builders), the 2008 survey indicates higher rates of satisfaction amongst interviewees who had generally appointed contractors than did those who had appointed builders from the community. On a rating scale of between 1 and 5, interviewees gave a slightly higher average rating of 3.5 to contractors, while builders from the community received an average rating of 2.8.

It is further noteworthy that there was a significant decline in the satisfaction levels amongst interviewees living exclusively in formal housing: levels of satisfaction declined from 83.3% in 1999 to 39.9% in 2008. A possible explanation for this could possibly amongst others be that the project was in its early stages in 1999, and consequently it took some time for poor quality to be exposed. Thus, the early stages of the project itself, rather than specifically the quality of work done in 1999 could have been the most influential factor in the high rates of satisfaction expressed by interviewees then living in formal housing. This finding further confirms the necessity that housing developments be assessed continuously by means of studies like this one (a longitudinal study) rather than in one-off exercises.

5.6 Housing design and planning in the Thabong Project: evidence of state interference

In both the literature review (Chapter Two and Chapter Three) and in the empirical findings (Chapter Four), it is argued that because of the state's control of self-help housing projects – nationally and internationally – the principle of dweller control has, to a large extent, been eliminated. In this section, there is the further argument that the type of housing built in the Thabong Housing Project demonstrates two issues: architectural aspects such as housing design and the building materials of houses constructed in this project may to a certain extent be the products of a housing process dominated by state influence rather than by dweller control, the architectural aspects of houses in this project further demonstrate the limitations and influence that the economic hardships of the interviewees have had on their ability to diversify their housing in terms of design and material.

As elsewhere, both in the country (see Chapter Three and Chapter Four) and in other developing countries (see Chapter Two), the Free State Provincial Government seems here to have interfered with the laissez-faire self-help housing process. There are two experiences from the Thabong Housing Project to confirm the above argument. The adopted housing design and, the chosen building materials played a significant role. During the focus-group meetings held with the beneficiaries, the latter indicated that, prior to receipt of their materials, they were called to a meeting at which they were shown a 'show house' by the officials from both the Provincial Government and the New Housing Company. Interviewees claimed that at that meeting the government officials and also the representatives of the New Housing Company had pleaded with them to try as much as they could if possible to adopt the plan of a state-designed 'show house'. They were told that the show house resembled a type of housing outcome that could finally be built with the quantity of materials they were to receive from the state. One of the interviewees articulated this in one of the focus-group meetings: ***"They told us that if we want complete and adequate housing out of their material, we [should] rather adopt their four-room house plan as it looks through show house … because we don't have money for different plans which would have required additional material. Most of us adopted their plan"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). Another interviewee implied/suggested that to the poor, unemployed beneficiaries, government's recommendation and the suggested house plan came more like a compulsory option, while to the better-off households that was likely not to have been the case. Said one interviewee: ***"Before they gave us material, they explain how much and what type of material we are going to receive and then encouraged us to avoid [the] disappointment of not getting a complete house by adopting the plan of their four-room show house … to the unemployed like myself, there was no other option but to take their advice while others developed their own individual plans"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). One could then argue that, although this may be interpreted as mere state advice rather than imposition, to the poorest of the poor who usually have limited means and resources, such advice could on a psychological level represent the only available and feasible option.

Psychologically, the message to these poor and generally unemployed beneficiaries could have been interpreted as "the more you adhere to the suggestion, the better chance you stand to have a complete shelter, while deviating from the suggestion could possibly mean taking the risk of having an incomplete shelter at the end of the day". This may furthermore have created the impression amongst the beneficiaries that, in order for them to avoid other extra

unaffordable costs while they were in the process of ensuring adequate housing for themselves, they should, as far as possible, stick to the tried and tested state suggestion.

Regarding the choice of building materials and their suppliers, is argued in Chapter Four that the state, through the appointment of SEBRA, has deliberately sidelined beneficiaries from the process of choosing their preferred materials and suppliers. In a similar practice, the state-appointed company (the New Housing Company) in the Thabong Housing Project has further marginalised beneficiaries from participating in the decision-making process regarding the choice of materials and of suppliers (see Stewart, 2001). Both the suppliers and the type of materials given to beneficiaries were solely determined and chosen by the state through the New Housing Company. In turn (as is discussed in Section 5.5.2) that seemed to have robbed the beneficiaries of a sense of ownership of such materials. Evident of this could be the high level of dissatisfaction voiced by the interviewees regarding the type and quality of materials used to build their housing (see Figure 5.2).

From an economic point of view, use of similar house designs in particular may also be attributed to the economic hardships that the beneficiaries of the Thabong Project were being subjected to following the collapse of the mining industry in the Goldfields region. The high rate of unemployment in the Goldfields area imposed certain financial constraints in respect both of housing construction and improvement. To minimise costs on house plans, poor beneficiaries in particular had to form groups of ten households with each family contributing R100 and then appointing a local student from Leseding Technical School to draw one master plan for all of these families. His reasonable fee seemed to have encouraged almost all the groups to acquire the services of one person. This (as was generally observed by the researcher) seemed in turn to have encouraged construction of very similar housing units. A practice that, to a large extent, may have encouraged the adoption of a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach. It is thus evident that the houses in this project are not only similar in terms of the materials used but also in terms of the design that was largely determined by both the financial constraints and state’s influence on the housing process. Government strategically limited people’s own choice of house design and the materials they used to build them.

From a laissez-faire self-help point of view, it could thus be appropriate to conclude that the practice of dweller control by the beneficiaries in the Thabong Housing Project seemed to have been limited solely to their being able to decide independently as to whom they wished to appoint as their preferred bricklayers. Yet both their decision and their choice were largely affected by their poor economic circumstances, which in most cases made it difficult for them to appoint local contractors instead of builders as their first choice.

5.7 General life experience of beneficiaries in the Thabong Housing Project

Central to both the White Paper of 1994 on Housing and the BNG of 2004 are concepts such as "access to adequate housing" and "sustainable human settlements" to which every housing development should conform. Amongst others, the primary intention with these concepts seems to be the attainment of housing delivery that enhances dweller access to basic human needs and particularly access to socio-economic needs, such as job opportunities, transport facilities, water, electricity, schools, etc. (Department of Housing, 1994; Department of Housing, 2004**)**. Against this background, the aim of this section is to analyse beneficiaries' perceptions with regard to the extent to which their housing in the Thabong Project provided them with access to various socio-economic amenities.

5.7.1 Human relations and the existing social amenities in the Thabong area: beneficiaries' perceptions

Beneficiaries' perceptions were solicited through open-ended questions regarding the existing social relations and the standard of various amenities within their neighbourhood. Table 5.6 reflects some of the beneficiaries' perceptions.

Table 5.6: Positive aspects related to living in Thabong, 2008

Statements	2008
Nothing better	53.6%
Good municipal services	19.3%
Good neighbourhood	8.3%
Others	6.3%
People are cooperative	5.2%
Great social life	3.7%
Being close to work/job	3.6%
Total	**100.0%**

The following comments need to be made in respect of Table 5.6. The majority of interviewees seemed generally to have been unimpressed by the general living standard and conditions in Thabong. According to the 2008 survey findings, 53.6% of the inhabitants interviewed there generally found nothing to be better in Thabong than before. The above perception amongst more than half of interviewees may be attributable to their failure to access some of the basic human needs – specifically failure to access employment opportunities. Following the increasing unemployment rate over the past decade (1999-2008) in Thabong, it is not surprising that there was a decline from 23.4% in 1999 (see Marais *et al.,* 2003), to 3.6% in 2008 amongst interviewees who felt that their housing was providing them with access (closer) to their places of work. It could also be important to note the perceptions of interviewees regarding the standard of municipal services. Although such perceptions are not that significant, about 19.3% of interviewees expressed their appreciation of the standard of municipal services rendered in their area. One could specifically ascribe this to the fact that they now have access to services, such as mass street lights, taps and electricity in each yard. Previously, in the informal squatter settlement they had none of these services. This could thus, more than anything else, be a recognition by these interviewees of the fact that their housing has given them access to these basic human needs.

With regard to the low percentages of interviewees in the 2008 survey who cited presence of good neighbourhood (8.3%) and presence of cooperative people in their area (5.2%), this may be attributed to two factors: to conflicts during construction caused particularly by absence of binding legal agreements between interviewees when they exchanged and borrowed subsidy materials from one another. In this regard, one of the interviewees had the following to say: ***"Some of us today do not speak to our neighbours [to] whom we borrowed [lent] our material with the agreement that once ready to build [we] would get them back ... today they know nothing about such agreements"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). Another interviewee echoed similar sentiments: ***"I borrowed [lent] my material to my neighbour who, after completing her house, died, today her children are saying they can't be responsible for what they don't know unless I prove my case"*** (Focus Group Two, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). There is the failure by dweller-appointed builders from within the community to perform as expected by the beneficiaries and according to their verbal agreements. Confirming this, one interviewee remarked: ***"I would always give builders instructions and leave for work ... these builders would do things their own way, claiming to know their work"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom). The small number of interviewees mentioned earlier who reported that there was good neighbouring and co-operative people, and the confirming remarks to this effect, seem to run counter to Turner's stance on self-help housing.

Contrary to Turner's representation of self-help as a conflict-free process that allows the poor collectively to pool their resources to address their housing challenges and as a potential tool for community empowerment and development, the above evidence suggests that there is an element of counter-productive conflict created by laissez-faire self-help housing in this area.

5.7.2 Factors responsible for the generally poor quality of life in the Thabong area: beneficiaries' perceptions

This section aims to compare the Thabong Project beneficiaries' initial personal expectations with their current, lived experiences. For such comparison and discussion, beneficiaries' responses reflected in Table 5.7 below are of crucial importance.

Table 5.7: Beneficiaries who believe their lives are not as good as or much worse than they thought it would be in Thabong, 2008

Statements	n[6]	%
Reasons for actual quality of life not coming up to initial expectations:		
Poor quality of the house	24	41.4%
Lack of employment	23	39.7%
Nothing good/better	4	6.9%
Poor municipal service delivery	2	3.4%
Insufficient subsidy from government	2	3.4%
Others	2	3.5%
High crime rate	1	1.7%
Total	**58**	**100.0%**
Reasons for quality of life being worse than expected:		
Poor quality of my house	16	34.8%
Lack of employment	16	34.8%
Loss of support as a result of death	5	10.9%
Others	4	8.7%
Insufficient subsidy by government	3	6.5%
High crime rate	2	4.3%
Total	**46**	**100.0%**

The following observations need to be made in respect of Table 5.7 above. Two major issues were of great concern to the beneficiaries in the Thabong Housing Project. The majority (41.4%) of the interviewees expressed their concern regarding the poor standard of their housing. Lack of employment remained a concern to many of the interviewees (39.7%). Mention was earlier made of the poor quality of houses, which was due specifically to two

[6] It should be noted that the total number of responses will not add up to 200 as the answers to this question were dependent on a filter process from question F8 in Annexure E.

factors. The poor work done by builders, possibly as a result of their incompetence, and, the economic hardships as reflected through high unemployment that could, in turn, have made the purchase of quality material and the appointment of more competent local builders a prohibitively expensive exercise. The other issue that seemed to cause concern among the interviewees was being without support as a result of death – probably that of a breadwinner. This concern was expressed by 10.9% of the interviewees. Making life more difficult in particular for especially widows was the high rate of unemployment. Confirming the impact of both unemployment and loss of support resulting from death on their expectations regarding their housing, one interviewee had the following to say: ***"I am an unemployed widow, despite having received the material, I am still living in a shack ... no money to hire builders or supplement my subsidy"*** (Focus Group One, 17/04/2008a-Welkom).

5.7.3 Factors responsible for a generally improved quality of life in the Thabong area: beneficiaries' perceptions

Beneficiaries were asked (in an open-ended question) to indicate various issues within their neighbourhood that might have contributed towards improving their lives since they had acquired a state housing subsidy. Table 5.8 below reflects some of the responses commonly received from beneficiaries.

Table 5.8: Beneficiaries who believe their lives are exactly as expected or even better than expected to be in Thabong, 2008

Statements	n[7]	%
Reasons for life being exactly as expected:		
I have my own house	16	69.6%
I have my own stand	2	8.7%
Sustainable income	2	8.7%
Others	2	8.7%
Job opportunities	1	4.3%
Total	**23**	**100.0%**
Reasons for life being even better than expected:		
I have my own house	20	50.0%
Others	8	20.0%
Job opportunities	6	15.0%
I have my own stand	5	12.5%
Sustainable income	1	2.5%
Total	**40**	**100.0%**

According to the findings in Table 5.8 above, about 69.6% of interviewees considered ownership (not used in the sense that there is security of tenure) of housing to be responsible for what they regarded to be exactly as expected or even a much better quality of life than expected when they first moved into the housing project.

This can probably – despite a high recorded dissatisfaction level in respect of the standard and conditions of housing (see Figure 5.4) – be attributed to two possible factors. The fact that these interviewees were prepared to accept responsibility for the poor state of their houses and thus 69.1% of them were willing to take financial responsibility by either doing the work themselves or by contracting a local builder to repair structural defects and do

[7] It should be noted that the total number of responses will not add up to 200 as the answers to this question were dependent on a filter process from question F8 in Annexure E.

general house repairs. It is probably attributable to their previous status as people who lived in shacks and in other informal structures while still in Mandela Square. Though other priorities may have driven them into this area – such as job opportunities and the possibility of owning serviced stands – owning a house seems to have been the main priority. The 1999 survey findings (see Stewart, 2001) indicate that 47.4% of these interviewees cited the possibility of owning a house as their main reason for their move from Mandela Squatter Camp and other areas in Thabong to this specific area. However, job opportunities were still a major area of concern to the majority of the interviewees. According to the findings reflected in Table 5.8 above, only 4.3% of these interviewees remained convinced that their lives were better due to the availability of job opportunities in Thabong. In general, while nothing seems really to have impressed the interviewees, it can safely be argued that only their access to housing and basic services (water, electricity, sanitation) seem to have brought about a marked improvement in their lives.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has assessed the housing processes and the overall impact of the laissez-faire self-help project in housing development in the Thabong area. Some interesting differences in terms of the findings of the 2008 and 1999 studies have been highlighted in this chapter. These differences to a large extent demonstrate the need for housing studies and research to promote and encourage the adoption of long-term rather than short-term assessments of housing outcomes by means of a longitudinal study approach. Thus, longitudinal studies should become one of the key central concepts or approaches in the field of housing studies and research.

It seems as if the perceived standard of housing in the Thabong Housing Project continued to decline over the decade between 1999 and 2008. Evidence from statistics of interviewees dissatisfied with the standard and the conditions of the housing in the Thabong Project indicates significant growth between 1999 and 2008. Three critical findings related to the above two issues have emerged from this chapter. Non-participation of interviewees in certain key decisions regarding the housing process was found to be an issue. The Provincial Government and the state-appointed agency (the New House Company) respectively directly

and indirectly marginalised beneficiaries from participating in key decision making, such as planning, and the design processes. The recommended four-room show house and the unilaterally chosen materials are some of the supporting evidence regarding the participants' non-participation and the dominance of state control and influence (directly and indirectly) in the housing process in the Thabong Project.

There were the economic hardships to which many interviewees were subject after mining activities in the Goldfields region had collapsed. To the majority of the unemployed interviewees maintenance and the further improvement of their housing remained an expensive exercise and this negatively influenced both the general housing development and the construction processes. A 14.0% decline between 1999 and 2008 in the number of interviewees living in formal housing with three rooms or more probably adequately serves to support the notion that there was a general decline (of which housing size is an aspect) in housing development in the Thabong Housing Project.

Further partly linked both with dissatisfaction and declining housing development in the Thabong Project, it was found that some degree of informality had been involved. The study established that despite their having benefited from the state subsidy in 1996, it was a distinct reality that a number of interviewees continued to live in informal housing (in terms of housing type). The question can thus be asked whether laissez-faire self-help in its purest form does not accept a degree of informality.

Turner to some extent represented self-help housing as a romantic idea with only positive outcomes. One of the key findings in this chapter is that there is evidence to suggest that laissez-faire self-help housing has resulted in a degree of conflict amongst its beneficiaries. As evidence of the notion that there was conflict amongst the project beneficiaries in Thabong, one could cite the smaller percentages (8.2% and 5.2%) of interviewees who respectively felt that it was a good neighbourhood or that there were co-operative people in their area. The insignificant percentages were attributed to a conflict arising from the failure (following verbal agreements to exchange and borrow materials) of some of the beneficiaries specifically to return the materials borrowed from their neighbours.

Table 5.9 below further compares the practices of laissez-faire self-help in the Thabong area (Free State Province) and Turner's key fundamental concepts and ideas in self-help.

Table 5.9: Comparison of the practice of laissez-faire self-help in the Thabong area and Turner's key concepts in self-help practice

Key concepts	**Laissez-faire self-help practice in Thabong**
Dweller control	Beneficiaries could appoint their preferred local builders, draw up their own house plans and could to a certain extent determine the type of material that was to be used for construction.
State control	State unilaterally appointed suppliers of materials and types of material – in respect of which beneficiaries could exercise their choice. The state indirectly influenced the housing design in that it displayed a four-room show house.
Sweat equity	Beneficiaries had a choice either to appoint their preferred builders and then supervise them, or physically to build their houses.
Use of local resources	Beneficiaries could supplement their subsidised? materials with their recycled materials. They could also use locally appointed builders.
Housing costs	Both the state funds and beneficiaries' own savings played a role.
Definition of a house	Housing to a large extent became a product of a bottom-up approach.

CHAPTER SIX:

STATE-AIDED SELF-HELP HOUSING IN SOUTH AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF FREEDOM SQUARE IN MANGAUNG (BLOEMFONTEIN)

The existing literature on self-help housing, as argued in both Chapter Two and Chapter Three, indicate that the practice of self-help as a housing-delivery mechanism globally and in the South African context, has seldom been free of state interference. In Chapter Four and Chapter Five it was further argued, with reference specifically to the Free State Province, that state interference (either direct or indirect) is a reality in self-help housing. Despite the state's interference and the impact of economic decline on housing development in Thabong (Welkom), Marais et al. (2003) and Stewart (2001) argue that the Thabong case study (laissez-faire self-help) had much better housing outcomes and displayed higher satisfaction levels than did a state-initiated housing programme (state-aided self-help) in Freedom Square (Mangaung), Bloemfontein. Against this background, the present chapter evaluates a state-aided self-help housing project in Freedom Square, Mangaung by means of a follow-up survey conducted in 2008. The two essential questions addressed in this respect are, whether state-aided self-help housing has better housing outcomes than do the other forms of self-help already discussed in this thesis – more specifically the Thabong case, for which the same methods were used, and, what are the consequences of state involvement and its control of a state-aided self-help housing project? In the Freedom Square Project, the individual qualifying households were provided with state subsidies that included the construction of a core housing unit by 1998 (Van Rensburg, Botes & de Wet, 2001), which they could then later extend to suit their needs. The housing-construction phase succeeded a phase of the *in situ* upgrading of infrastructure between 1992 and 1994, which was funded by the IDT (Independent Development Trust, 1992).

Against the above background, the main aim of the chapter is to evaluate the housing outcomes in Freedom Square as an example of aided self-help. The chapter advances four main arguments: while contractor-driven housing delivery seems to have given beneficiaries in Freedom Square access to a starter house, evidence from this case study indicates that over a decade, the housing outcomes have been somewhat disappointing. Consequently, it is

concluded that sites and services (aided self-help) with core housing by the state do not automatically promote incremental housing. The level of housing satisfaction amongst beneficiaries seems to be low and continually deteriorating. It is argued that this increasing level of dissatisfaction is largely attributable to state involvement in and control of the housing process. The 2008 survey partly confirms the 1999 results in that the laissez-faire self-help housing project in Thabong probably has better housing outcomes and higher satisfaction levels than that in a state-aided self-help housing project in Freedom Square. Similar to the finding in Chapter Five, it is argued in this Chapter that housing developments should be assessed continuously by means of systematic longitudinal studies as opposed to one-off or short-term studies.

Thus, while the major focus of this study is on the findings of the 2008 survey, comparisons are also made with previous similar studies and surveys. Against the above background, the following notes are made in respect of the comparison with previous data:

- The 1990 data reflect on a report by Botes *et al*. (1991)
- The 1993 data refer to work conducted by Marais (1994) and Marais and Krige (1997)
- The 1999 data originate from Marais *et al.* (2003)

The focus of the longitudinal comparison is mainly on the satisfaction levels as the study's focus is on Turner's theory of self-help and is close to his concept of dweller control. Other comparisons were dependent on the availability of data and on attempting to show that very few significant socio-economic changes have taken place. Consequently, conclusions reached can be attributed to housing processes and not other attributes. Where data are not available it will be indicated as such in tables and where data from previous surveys are incomplete, this will also be indicated.

Against the above background, the chapter is structured in the following way: a brief historical background is provided of Freedom Square and the origins of the housing project, the historical overview is followed by an exposition of the socio-economic profile of interviewees, the discussion on the socio-economic profile is then followed by an analysis of the current state of housing and of the construction process in the Freedom Square Project, next, an analysis is provided of beneficiaries' perceptions and satisfaction regarding their

housing outcomes and of the general quality of life in the Freedom Square area, then, a number of conclusions.

6.1 Historical background on Freedom Square and the origins of the housing project

The history of Freedom Square and the origins of the housing project are discussed in terms of three phases, namely the informal settlement phase, the site-and-services phase, and the project-implementation phase.

Phase 1: Informal settlement (1989–1990)

Freedom Square is one of several former informal settlements that came into existence following the 1990 national political resistance that engulfed particularly the former black townships of South Africa (Botes, *et al*., 1991; Swilling, Humphries & Shubane, 1991). Working in close collaboration with the ANC (shortly after its unbanning in 1990), the Mangaung Civic Association played a central role in establishing Freedom Square in Mangaung (Bloemfontein) (Botes *et al*., 1991; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). The support base from which the Mangaung Civic Association successfully mobilised its support seem to have been mainly the homeless backyard dwellers in Mangaung and a limited number of residents from Botshabelo (Botes *et al*., 1991; Marais & Krige, 1997). This is evident from the fact that 93.0% of the original informal settlers resided in informal structures built, amongst others, with corrugated iron, plastic, wood, asbestos, etc. (see Botes *et al*., 1991; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). Hence, it could be appropriate to argue that such illegal land occupation was an attempt to express the need amongst invaders for stands and proper houses with basic services – such as water, electricity and roads – something that was prohibited both by influx control until 1986 and the policy of orderly urbanisation between 1986 and 1991 (see Bailey, 1995; Goodlad, 1996; Gusler, 2000). Furthermore, the findings from the studies by Botes *et al*. (1991) and Van Rensburg *et al*. (2001) respectively indicate that in 1990 approximately 76.0% of the residents of Freedom Square cited wanting to obtain a place of their own as a reason for their invasion of the land, while similar findings were also made in 1997, when roughly 89.0% of residents in the Freedom Square settlement cited a linkage between their improved situation and their ownership (probably contextualised in terms of secure tenure) of a formal house with water and sanitation on site.

As elsewhere in South Africa, the founding of Freedom Square is probably attributable to three main reasons. A prominent reason lies in the political gains associated with the development of informal settlements particularly by the civic organisations that were working in close co-operation with the ANC (Botes *et al*., 1991; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). The land invasion had the ultimate aim of achieving access to basic services (water, electricity, sanitation) and possibly the provision of housing to the former backyard dwellers and families lodging in and around the Mangaung Township (see Botes *et al*., 1991; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). It was also a direct challenging of the race-based spatial planning that characterised apartheid planning, in that the area of illegal invasion was earmarked for "coloured" development (Marais & Krige, 1999).

Phase 2: Site-and-services scheme (1991–1995)

The existence of Freedom Square and several other informal settlements around Mangaung had by early 1990s become a reality unlikely to be reversed by the apartheid government. In turn, that left the then apartheid government with no other option than to formalise the Freedom Square informal settlement. Thus, in 1991, developing specific relevant guidelines that would help to facilitate the government developmental programme for this settlement became a priority. At the time, the regional office of the Urban Foundation commissioned a research project to identify certain guidelines for the upgrading and development of Freedom Square and Namibia Square in Mangaung (see Botes *et al*., 1991). Following this particular research and a range of other considerations, the Urban Foundation, in close partnership with the Mangaung Civic Association, then successfully mobilised funds from the IDT in early 1991 to upgrade stands in Freedom Square and Namibia Square (Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). To manage that upgrading project with a total value of R31 million, a community trust – under the watchful eye of the Urban Foundation and later the New Housing Company as project managers – was appointed to act as developer (Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). The initial upgrading project was only a site-and-services scheme and the housing construction was left to the individual owners.

Phase 3: Implementation of the aided self-help housing project (1996–1998)

In the aftermath of the initial site-and-services upgrading project, the Free State Housing Council approved a proposal to the amount of R29 million for the construction of core housing units (called *consolidation subsidies*, which meant that only 50.0% of the formal housing subsidy amount was available per household) (Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). By means of this project undertaken in 1996, residents of Freedom Square had (despite the few who had already initiated construction on their formal housing), experienced their first ever construction of state subsidised houses (Van Rensburg *et al.,* 2001). Thus the project represents a typical example of aided self-help using a site-and-services approach but also including the core housing structure built by a contractor and solely funded by the state.

The responsibility of constructing their own houses beyond the core provided by government finance then lay with the individual owners. The approach in this project was thus significantly different from the institutionalised self-help project (as discussed in Chapter Four), in that locally established cooperatives (self-help groups) instead of external developers/contractors were responsible for the project management, but it was also different from the laissez-faire approach to self-help (as discussed in Chapter Five) that allowed beneficiaries to appoint their own local builders or emerging contractors, in that it was the state's sole responsibility to appoint their preferred contractors, and their centralisation of the purchase of building materials. Furthermore, the state was solely responsible for the project planning, design and initiation. In turn, beneficiaries' role was limited to only the completion of application forms for the state's subsidy and the safeguarding of their subsidy material.

6.2 Socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries in Freedom Square

The aim of this section is briefly to discuss the socio-economic profile of the beneficiaries in the Freedom Square state-aided self-help project. The section starts off with a discussion both of the biographical details and the employment and income profiles of interviewees.

6.2.1 Biographical and household details

The discussion and analysis of the findings on the biographical details of interviewees will be based on the two tables below, namely Table 6.1 and Table 6.2.

Table 6.1: Biographical profile of the beneficiaries of aided self-help housing in Freedom Square, 1999 and 2008

Criteria	1999	2008
Percentage of interviewees who settled here before 1996	n.a	74.7%
Interviewees who had never before owned a house	n.a	94.5%
Percentage of interviewees who are females	50.0%	42.8%
Average age of interviewees	44.0	48.6
Average household size	3.9	3.9

According to the 2008 survey, it would seem that the majority (74.7%) of the interviewees had for the first time lived in this area before 1996. This is probably attributable to a rapid land invasion that started in 1990 with the former homeless and landless backyard dwellers in and around Mangaung township, who after having been mobilised by the Mangaung Civic Association, had illegally occupied this area (see Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). Thus, unsurprisingly, 94.5% of the interviewees in the Freedom Square indicated in the 2008 survey that they had never owned a house before coming to reside in this area. Furthermore, 42.0% of households were headed by females. What does seem strange is that a decline in this regard was reported since 1999, which went somewhat against the overall trend current in South Africa at the time. It is most likely that some methodological difference between the two studies probably contributed to the decrease in the percentage of female-headed households. With regard to the average household size, there was a marginal increase from 3.8 in 1990, to 3.9 people in both 1999 and 2008 (see Botes *et al*., 1991; Marais *et al*., 2003). Though decidedly marginal, the 0.1 growth in household size between 1990 and 1999 could, in part, be attributed to the fact that the original invasion in the early 1990s was characterised by small core families. The 2008 average household size of 3.9 in Freedom Square however

compares fairly well with the national average of 3.9 in 2007, while it outnumbered the provincial average household of 3.5 in 2007 (Statistics South Africa, 2007).

6.2.2 Income and employment status of beneficiaries

The focus in this section is on the monthly income of interviewees and their employment status. The discussion will provide a basis for a more in-depth analysis of these aspects and of their role as possible determinants in housing development in Freedom Square (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Socio-economic background of the beneficiaries of aided self-help housing in Freedom Square, 1999 and 2008

Statements	**1999**[8]	**2008**
Average household income	**R617.0**	**R1854.0**
Percentage of interviewees between 18 and 60 years who are unemployed and not looking for work	30.0%	17.7%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 and 60 years who are unemployed but looking for work	6.0%	38.8%
Total percentage of unemployment amongst interviewees between 18 and 60 years (rough estimates inclusive of both narrow and broad definitions of unemployment)	36.0%	56.5%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 and 60 years in full-time employment	n.a	32.5%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 and 60 years in part-time employment	n.a	9.7%
Percentage of interviewees between 18 and 60 years in informal employment	n.a	1.3%
Total percentage of employment amongst interviewees between 18 and 60 years (rough estimates inclusive of full-time, part-time and informal employment)	64.0%	43.5%
Households main source of income:	n.a	**%**
Grants	n.a	54.6%
Employment	n.a	40.1%
Money from family/elsewhere	n.a	3.0%
Others	n.a	2.3%

A number of comments need to be made regarding the results reflected in Table 6.2 above. It seems evident from the 2008 survey findings that unemployment remains a challenge amongst interviewees in the Freedom Square Project in that 56.5% interviewees were unemployed in 2008. If this figure is compared with the earlier figure of 36.0% in 1999, it represents a significant increase. Two further related points need to be made in respect of the increasing percentage of unemployment. It probably contributed to increased dependence on

[8] It should be noted that for 1999, data were obtained from hard copies of work by Marais *et al.* (2003), as the original data set was not available and some of variables could thus not be compared with 2008.

the state. In this context, it is thus not surprising to find that 54.6% of interviewees in 2008 depended on state grants as their main source of income. From a housing perspective, an increase in unemployment rates of this magnitude could mean that general housing maintenance and development in the Freedom Square area might over a decade have remained largely unaffordable to the majority of these interviewees. Further proof of this reality lies in an increase – from 6.0% in 1999, to 38.8% in 2008 – of interviewees who actively continued to seek employment. Furthermore, despite growth in unemployment figures since 1999, these interviewees seem generally to have enjoyed a constant increase in household income from R440 in 1990, to R617 in 1999, and to R1 854 in 2008. If inflation is considered as from R440 in 1990, the 2008 value is R1 660 – lower than the actual amount recorded in the survey. This can probably be ascribed to the role of social grants.

6.3 The current nature and state of housing in Freedom Square

This section describes the current state of housing in the Freedom Square Project. Where relevant data from previous studies in 1990, 1993 and 1999 exist, there is an attempt to longitudinally compare the findings in order to describe trends and the current state of housing development in Freedom Square.

6.3.1 Type of housing

The description of the current state of housing outcomes in the Freedom Square Project, in terms both of the types of building material and the processes chosen by the state and/or users for the construction of beneficiaries' housing is central to this section. Figure 6.1 provides an overview in this respect.

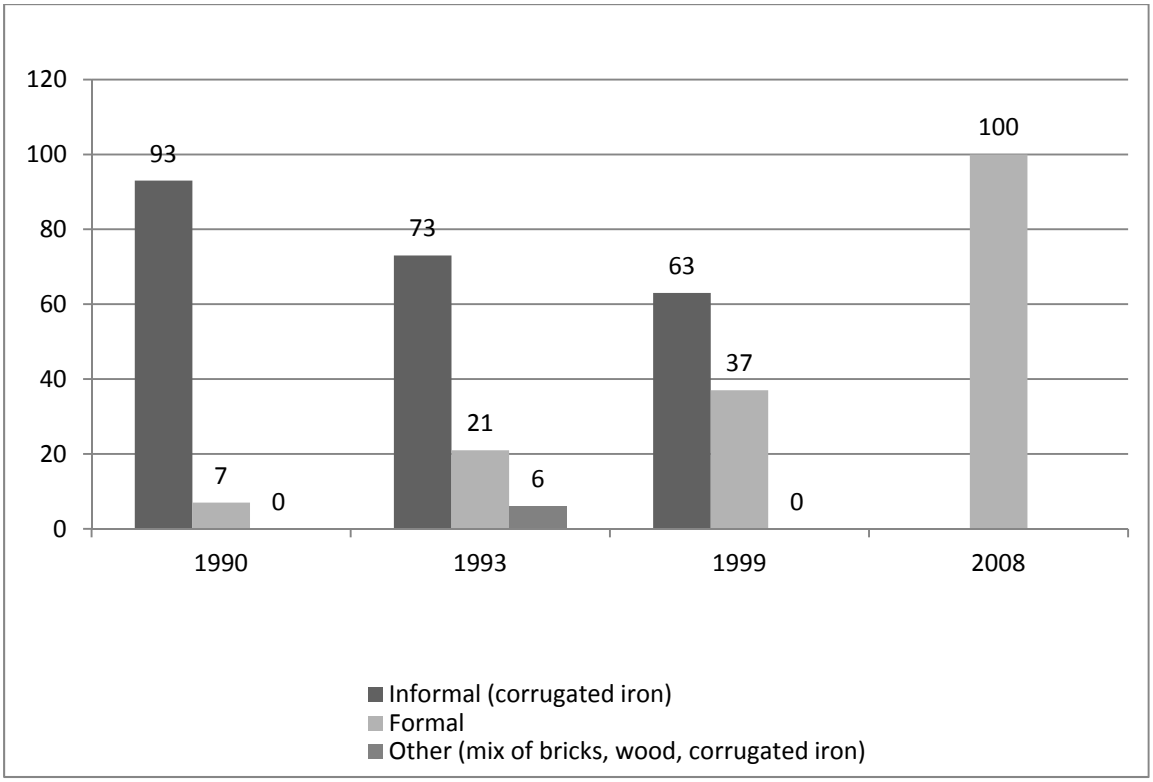

Figure 6.1: Type of housing and building materials in Freedom Square, 1990–2008

Sources: Botes *et al*., 1991; Marais, 1994; Marais, *et al*., 2003; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001

The data in Figure 6.1 above require that the following comments be made: The Freedom Square Housing Project seems, over a number of years, to have increased the delivery rate of formal houses. While in 1990 about 93.0% of beneficiaries of the housing project lived in corrugated iron structures, that number was reduced to 73.0% and 63.0% in 1993 and 1999 respectively. By 2008, all interviewees had a formal housing structure – provided by a state subsidy. Not only did the project progressively lead to the eradication of the informal corrugated iron structures, but also provided these interviewees with a base in which they could incrementally invest, in their housing by using materials of their choice. It should be noted that, despite the formal houses provided by means of the state subsidy, there is in reality a blend of formality and informality in that housing extensions are in many cases informal. Of further note should be the fact that for the construction of the initial core housing, the state used conventional cement bricks.

Yet, for those beneficiaries who undertook further extension of these initial houses, the 2008 study indicates their widespread preference for cement blocks in preference to conventional bricks. According to the 2008 study, 69.0% of interviewees seemed to have used cement blocks to extend their initial core housing built by the state. More than anything else, interviewees' intent (given the high unemployment rate and their dependence on state grants) to keep the housing process and the costs within their economic realities and capabilities may possibly have played a critical role in their choice of cement blocks rather than any other type of brick. Most importantly, such a shift by interviewees from conventional bricks to cement blocks should in turn be seen in the light of their ability to practice dweller control, which had not been possible in respect of the initial contractor-driven construction.

6.3.2 Current number of rooms

The focus in this section is on an analysis of the current size of housing in terms of the number of rooms and how the housing size differed over a number of years after 1990. Figure 6.2 provides an overview in this respect.

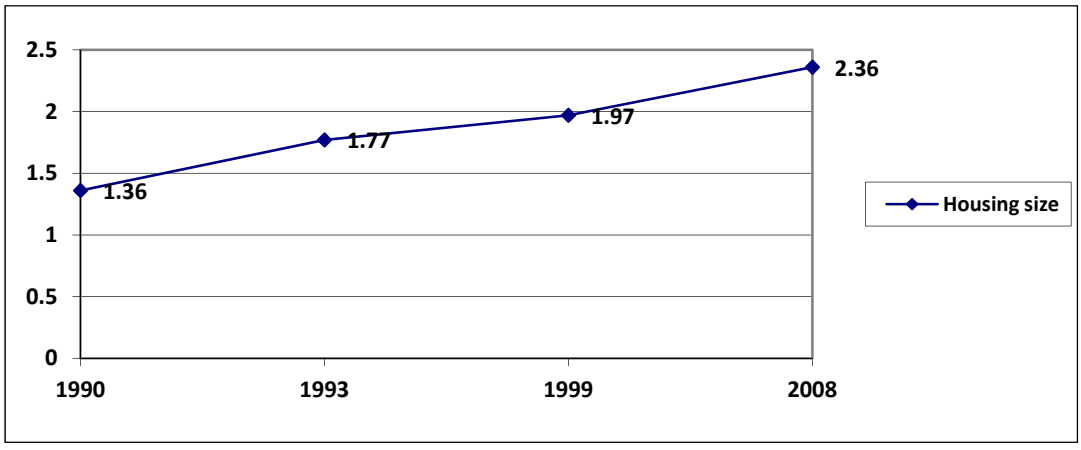

Figure 6.2: The number of rooms for houses in Freedom Square, 1990–2008

Source: Botes *et al.*, 1991; Marais, 1994; Marais, *et al.*, 2003; Van Rensburg, *et al.*, 2001

Evidence from Figure 6.2 indicates that there was a considerable general improvement in the number of rooms per house from 1.36 in 1990, to 2.36 in 2008. However, from a housing-

typology perspective, the figure indicates that there were three phases. Phase I (1990–1995) represents self-built informal shacks – using corrugated iron or plastic. – These structures were built by the interviewees without any state assistance (see Botes *et al*., 1991; Marais, 1994; Van Rensburg *et al*., 2001). Phase II (1996–2000) saw project implementation of the construction of two-room formal housing (core house), utilising state funding (see Marais *et al*., 2003). Phase III (post 2000), represents incremental housing improvement by beneficiaries. Thus, despite the generally significant improvement in respect of the number of rooms across all three phases, one could nevertheless argue that the implementation of the project during the second phase (1996–2000) seems to have brought with it a relatively slow increase (1.97 to 2.36) in the number of rooms per house – especially compared with the increases in the previous nine years (between 1990 and 1999). Further evidence of this relatively slow increase since the project implementation phase (1996–2000), is that only 17.6% of all the interviewees undertook incremental housing during the post-2000 phase. Yet, as reflected in Figure 6.1, the transformation from 93.0% informality in 1990, to a possible 100% formality amongst these interviewees in 2008, by this project should be acknowledged and relates directly to the state-funded housing project introduced during Phase 2 (1996–2000). Despite some improvement in the nature of housing and also the size of the housing units, the slow progress largely also confirms the argument advanced earlier on, namely that sites and services with core housing supplied by the state does not automatically promote incremental housing. The above findings also indicate the value of longitudinal studies in the long-term assessment of housing development in order to understand housing processes.

6.3.3 A description of construction processes for initial and extended housing

Before it is possible to discuss and compare the construction processes for initial and further extended housing in the Freedom Square Project, is important first to indicate how many interviewees have/do not have extended housing. Findings from the 2008 survey indicate that over the past decade (1999–2008) only 17.6% of interviewees seem to have added a few extra rooms to their initial two-room core housing. This followed the government-aided housing construction phase between 1996 and 1998 (Marais *et al*., 2003). As can be expected, the 2008 survey findings suggest a shift from using contractors to utilising friends and family members in the construction of extended housing. In 2008, 43.6% of the interviewees who

extended their housing units indicated that they had utilised the services of either friends or family members, while 29.1% had continued to utilise contractors (though this time entirely by contractors of their own choice) for further extensions to their initial housing. Three possible issues could have influenced beneficiaries in shifting from contractors to friends and family members as builders of extensions to their houses.

A first issue relates to homeowners' perceptions of contractors as being more expensive and logistically formal than their own friends and family members. Possibly, the usual binding formalities and other associated processes and protocols to be followed when striking deals with contractors may have discouraged the interviewees from further approaching contractors. On the other hand, less complex and informal processes that are commonly followed when interviewees deal with either friends, family members or builders within their communities, may have appealed to them as the most convenient and cheapest options. A possible second reason could be that interviewees had previously experienced what they perceived to be poor building work done by state-imposed contractors who had built their core housing (see discussion in Section 6.5). Lastly, the shift could have been due to interviewees' ability now to practise what Turner called 'freedom to build' and 'dweller control' – options not open to them during the construction of their initial housing. In a nutshell: evidence indicates that it was the economic circumstances of the interviewees in the Freedom Square Project rather than being able to influence the construction process in terms of the type of builder and contractor they could personally appoint – specifically during the extension phase – that seemed mainly to have been interviewees' previous experience of the perceived poor-quality building work formerly done by state-imposed contractors.

6.4 Beneficiaries' satisfaction with current housing in the Freedom Square Project

The literature review and the empirical findings in both Chapter Four and Chapter Five indicated the need to consider the role of dweller satisfaction in the assessment and evaluation of any housing process. Furthermore, Turner's argument should be borne in mind that high satisfaction levels are more likely to be attained when dwellers perceive to have been in control of certain aspects of their housing process than would be the case if they were merely recipients of housing. In this section, the prime focus is on the assessment of

beneficiaries' opinions regarding the housing processes and outcomes and the extent to which they (beneficiaries) were satisfied. Central to the discussion and assessment of beneficiaries' satisfaction are four main housing aspects: number of rooms per unit, quality of the building materials, quality of the building work done, and the layout of the house. Other than these four key housing aspects, the section later provides an analysis of beneficiaries' perceptions with regard to other general social issues in their area. In order to profile the history of housing development and further to link it to the satisfaction levels amongst dwellers in the Freedom Square area over the past decade, the findings made in the 2008 study (where similar data exist) are compared longitudinally and analysed against the findings made during the 1993 and 1999 studies in the Freedom Square area.

6.4.1 Number of rooms

This section determines the extent to which beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Project (in comparison with the 1999 study) are satisfied with the number of rooms their houses currently have (see Figure 6.3).

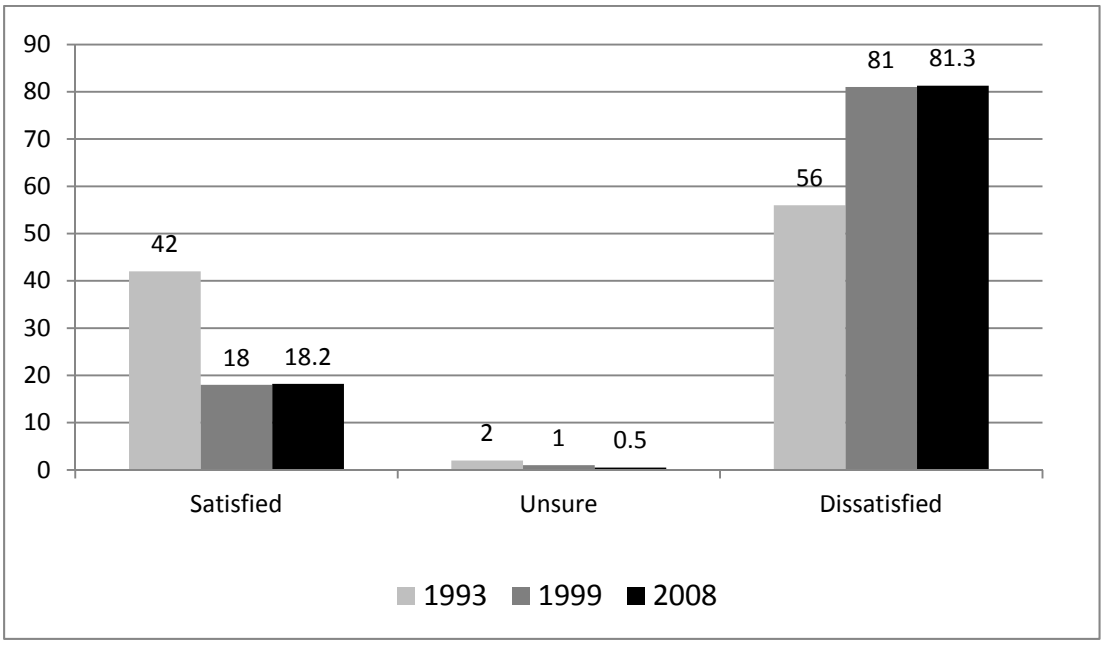

Figure 6.3: Number of rooms and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Freedom Square Project, 1993, 1999 and 2008

The results revealed in Figure 6.3 calls for some comment. The 2008 survey indicated that a significant percentage (81.3%) of interviewees were dissatisfied with the number of rooms in their houses at the time and this figure is no different from the 81.0% recorded in 1999. The figure for 2008 (81.3%) regarding dissatisfaction with the number of rooms can to a large extent probably be linked to the general lack of housing development as shown by 82.4% of interviewees who continued to live in two or fewer rooms in 2008. Thus, the high levels of dissatisfaction expressed in 1999 and 2008 could specifically have resulted from the non-participation (lack of dweller control) by these interviewees in the project planning and management (consultative processes in which the issue of housing design, etc. are finalised). Despite the more than general dissatisfaction expressed by interviewees, the 2008 study indicated higher satisfaction levels amongst interviewees who could (in the post-project implementation phase) mobilise their individual resources to undertake extensions to their initial core housing. The interviewees who did not extend their houses appear to have been less satisfied. The fact that 52.9% of the interviewees with extended initial core housing were satisfied with the number of rooms serves to prove this point. In comparison, only 11.0% of those interviewees who did not extend the original core house voiced satisfaction (see Annexure G). It seems reasonable to conclude that where beneficiaries are able to practice dweller control, and where they have larger houses following their individual initiatives to undertake incremental housing, they are likely to express high levels of satisfaction.

The context of fairly high levels of dissatisfaction amongst residents in 1999 and 2008 should also be related to the relatively high levels of satisfaction in 1993. It should be noted that the 1993 study was conducted two years before the implementation of the housing project, which effectively means that beneficiaries were still, during the 1993 study, predominantly living in their informal shacks. On the one hand, these results suggest a higher degree of satisfaction with the number of rooms in a predominantly informal housing environment, which in Turner's view could be related to dweller control. Yet it could also be interpreted against the fact that, in 1993, beneficiaries gave positive ratings to attempt to convince the authorities to formalise the area.

6.4.2 Quality of building materials

In this section, the focus of the analysis falls on the relationship between the quality of the building materials and the levels of satisfaction expressed by beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Project regarding this aspect of their housing (see Figure 6.4).

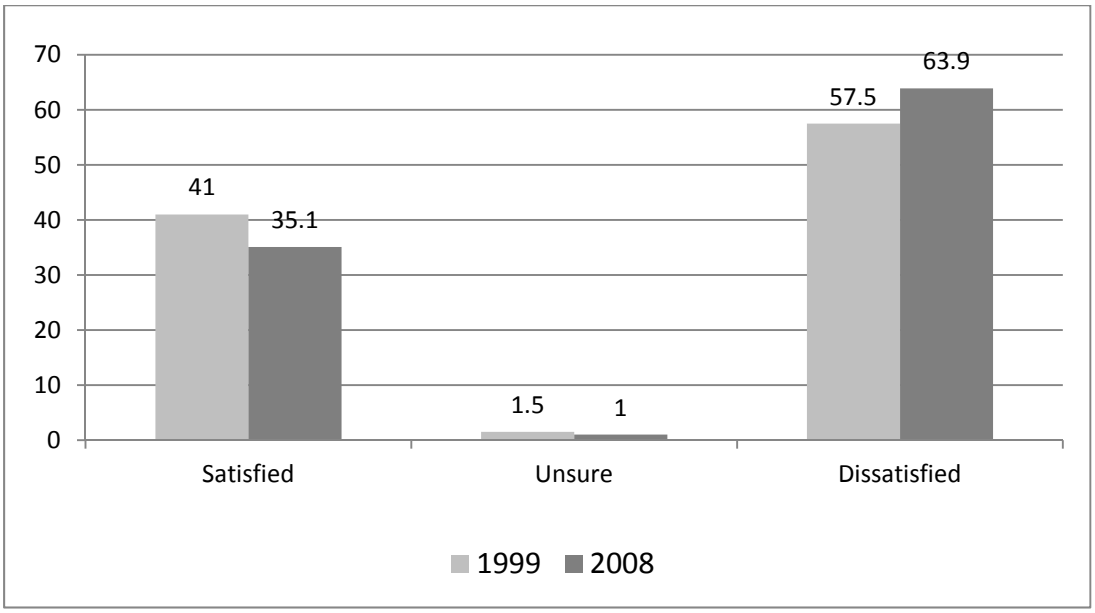

Figure 6.4: The quality of the building materials and the levels of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Freedom Square Project, 1999 and 2008

The percentage of interviewees who expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of the building materials increased from 57.5% in 1999, to 63.9% in 2008. The dissatisfaction expressed by interviewees during this period (1999–2008) could, in particular, have resulted from the imposition, by the state, of building materials for the core houses. Beneficiaries were marginalised by the state-funded project from participating in choosing either the building materials or the suppliers of materials. Expressing concerns regarding their non-participation when decisions were made on the type of material to be used, one of interviewees stated: ***"From the onset we rejected the use of asbestos in this house … go and check now "Daddy" that asbestos could not withstand summer heat, it has now cracked beyond repair and also smell[s] very badly"*** (Focus Group Four, 18/04/2008a-Bloemfontein). Expressing similar sentiments in respect of the type and quality of materials used, one other interviewee said: ***"If we had an opportunity to choose for ourselves, I don't think we would have***

chosen these poor quality doors. When it rains, they absorb rain water and expand … once filled with rain water, it requires two people to force it open" (Focus Group Three, 18/04/2008a-Bloemfontein).

There is also evidence that a bigger percentage of interviewees who had extended their houses subsequent to the state-funded project were satisfied with the type of building materials. Satisfaction with building materials was expressed by 47.1% of the interviewees who had extended their houses since 1999. The comparative figure for those who did not extend their houses was 32.5% (see Annexure G). Thus, lack of dweller control in respect of the type and especially before and during construction of core housing appears, more than anything else, to have been responsible for the high rates of dissatisfaction expressed by interviewees in respect of the quality of the building materials used.

6.4.3 Quality of building work

Central to this section is the discussion and analysis of factors likely to have influenced both the perceptions and satisfaction rates amongst beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Project with regard to the quality of building work. Figure 6.5 provides an overview in this regard.

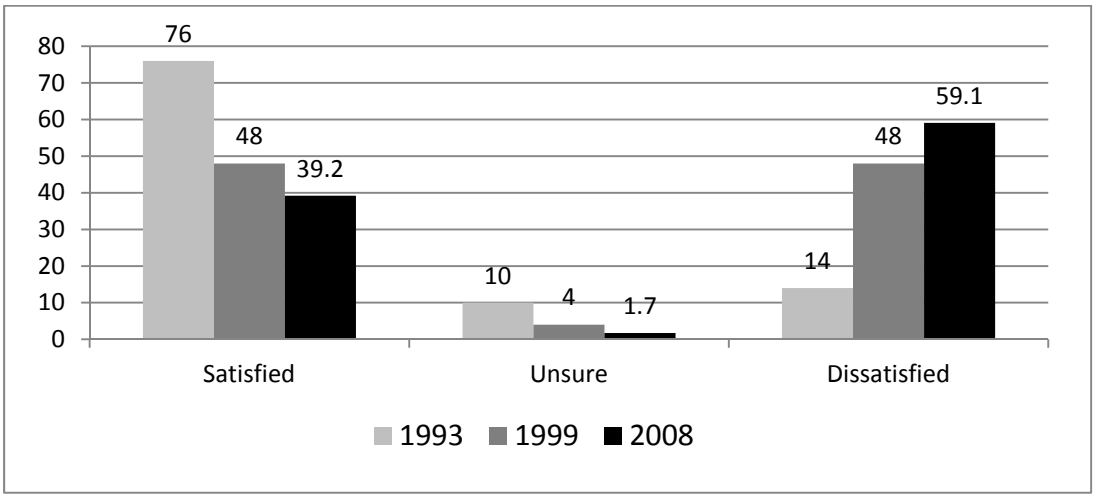

Figure 6.5: Quality of building work and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Freedom Square Project, 1993, 1999 and 2008

The 1999 survey indicated that close to half (48.0%) of interviewees in the Freedom Square Project had expressed dissatisfaction concerning the quality of building work. A decade later in 2008, the percentage increased to 59.1%. The high satisfaction levels (76.0%) expressed by interviewees in 1993 with regard to this housing aspect are significant. However, this response was expressed two years before the housing project and was thus based mainly on residents' opinions about the informal structures they had built themselves shortly after they had invaded this area. The continued growth in dissatisfaction specifically amongst the interviewees between 1999 and 2008 could have resulted from their non-participation in the housing processes: they could neither participate in the appointment of contractors nor in the construction process in that the state-controlled the entire initial housing process. While their non-participation led to dissatisfaction as expressed in Figure 6.5, it in turn seems also to have deprived them of a sense of ownership or of responsibility for any eventualities in the housing processes and outcomes. Linked with the growing dissatisfaction (1999–2008) amongst interviewees following, in particular, their marginalisation by the state as regards the appointment of contractors, one of interviewees remarked: ***"Government and their contractors have poorly built our housing … every time when the wind blow[s], the entire roofing and walls literally get shaken let alone leaking during rainy periods, cold wind and dust coming through cracks on the walls … our furniture get damaged by both leaking water and the falling [of] big stones we have put on top to prevent [the] roofing from being blown away"*** (Focus Group Three, 18/04/2008a-Bloemfontein). Another interviewee further complained: ***"Contractors who were appointed by government to build our houses were not appointed on merits but simply because they had connections with certain government officials … That is why they could not be held accountable for their shoddy workmanship"*** (Focus Group Four, 18/04/2008a-Bloemfontein).

The levels of dissatisfaction of those interviewees who had extended their houses beyond the core house funded by the state were somewhat lower than those who had not extended their houses. For example, 60.7% of the interviewees with no extensions were dissatisfied with the quality of the work originally done, while 51.5% of those with extended housing were dissatisfied with the quality of work (see Annexure G).

6.4.4 Layout of the house

The focus in this section is on an analysis of the extent to which beneficiaries of contractor-driven housing in the Freedom Square area were satisfied with the layout or design of their housing (see Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6: Layout of the house and the level of satisfaction amongst beneficiaries in the Freedom Square Project, 2008

The following comments need to be made with regard to the findings reflected in Figure 6.6 above. According to the 2008 study, the majority (83.4%) of interviewees in the Freedom Square Project registered satisfaction with the layout of their housing. This was probably attributable to the role beneficiaries had been allowed to play (dweller control) in determining the exact spot on site where they wanted their housing to be placed. What is further interesting about this particular finding is that, compared with findings in the 2008 study on the three other housing aspects, interviewees registered high satisfaction regarding only the layout of the house. This could therefore imply that there usually is a possibility of high levels of satisfaction regarding any housing aspect(s) of which the owners feel they have been in control. Because no previous studies had been done on these specific aspects, no similar data were available for purposes of comparison.

6.5 General life experience of residents in the Freedom Square Housing Project

Government's constitutional mandate to provide citizens, especially the poorest of the poor, with adequate housing refers to a situation where people are able to access more than just physical housing (see Department of Housing, 1994). Thus, central to the function of any housing development is its ability to provide dwellers with both shelter and access to basic human needs, specifically services and other social amenities. In this section, the focus is on an analysis of perceptions of beneficiaries in the Freedom Square Housing Project regarding the ability of their housing to provide them with access to various socio-economic amenities. Where similar data exist, the section will undertake a longitudinal comparative analysis using findings from previous studies, particularly those of 1999.

6.5.1 Factors responsible for the generally poor quality of life in the Freedom Square area: beneficiaries' perceptions

When former backyard dwellers from Mangaung and surrounding areas first moved into the Freedom Square informal settlement, they had a number of expectations. In this section beneficiaries' expectations are analysed against their practical experience regarding their life, generally, in the Freedom Square area. The section focuses specifically on issues that were perceived by the beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Housing Project to be responsible for the poor general quality of their lives. Table 6.3 provides an overview of their perceptions in this regard.

Table 6.3: Beneficiaries believing their lives not to be as good or much worse than hoped for in Freedom Square, 2008

Statements	2008
Reasons for lives not being good:	
Poor quality of my house	23.8%
Poor municipal service delivery	23.8%
High crime rate	23.8%
Others	14.3%
Lack of employment	9.5%
Nothing good/better	4.8%
Total	**100.0%**
Reasons for lives being worse than hoped for:	
Poor municipal service delivery posing a health threat	31.6%
High crime rate	23.8%
Poor quality of my house	15.8%
Lack of employment	15.8%
Loss of support as a result of death	10.5%
Others	2.5%
Total	**100.0%**

Contrary to the interviewees' prior expectations of the in-situ upgrading of their former informal settlement, they considered four key issues to have contributed to the perceived poor quality of their lives: the poor quality of their housing, the poor municipal service delivery , the high rate of crime in their area, and, the high rate of unemployment.

The poor quality of the housing seems to have been a major concern to interviewees for a number of years. Over a decade, the percentage of residents who cited the poor quality of their housing as one of their setbacks increased from 6.0% in 1999, to 23.8% in 2008. In this

chapter is argued that the lack of dweller control in the housing processes during construction of the initial core housing by state-appointed contractors was instrumental in this respect (see discussion in Sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.3).

While 31.6% of the interviewees cited poor municipal service delivery, it should however be mentioned that the problem seems to have related more to the poor maintenance of the existing infrastructure than actual lack of access to the services themselves, such as water, sanitation and electricity. A significant number of interviewees complained about sewerage pipes that were either constantly bursting or blocking, which ultimately caused sewage to spill into their streets, thereby posing a health hazard. The interviewees alleged that, despite their efforts to report such problems immediately, municipal officials would usually take a long time before they would repair the reported leakages. Following a rise in the unemployment rate from 36.0% in 1999, to 56.0% in 2008, comes as no surprise that a fairly significant percentage (15.8%) of interviewees blamed their perceived poor general quality of life on unemployment. Nor does it surprise one that crime is one of the possible consequences of unemployment cited by these interviewees as yet another setback in their lives and their area.

6.5.2 Factors responsible for perceived improved general quality of life in the Freedom Square area: beneficiaries' perceptions

In this section, the aim is to provide a critical analysis of beneficiaries' perceptions regarding those issues they perceived to have been responsible for the improved general quality of life in the Freedom Square area. Table 6.4 below is a list of selected issues.

Table 6.4: Beneficiaries who believe their lives to be exactly the same or even better than hoped for in Freedom Square, 2008

Statements	2008[9]
Reasons for quality of life being exactly as hoped for:	
I have my own house/stand	26.5%
We receive good municipal service delivery	14.7%
Live in peace with neighbours	11.8%
Closer and cheaper to get to town	5.9%
Reasons for quality of life being even better than hoped for:	
We received good municipal service delivery	39.8%
I have my own house/stand	27.6%
Live in peace with neighbours	8.2%

Regarding Table 6.4, it should be noted that interviewees considered two key factors, especially, to have contributed to their improved quality of life since the formalisation of this area. The first of these was that these beneficiaries had enjoyed access to basic municipal services – probably the most prominent reason, the second was the transition from landlessness and homelessness to becoming the rightful owners of housing in an area with secure tenure. What is significant about the above-mentioned two factors should be the fact that these are the perceptions of people who, prior to being project beneficiaries, had first lived as backyard dwellers and then later (between 1990 and 1991) as informal settlers. Marais *et al*. (2003) and Van Rensburg *et al*. (2001) maintain that 94.5% of these beneficiaries had first lived as backyard dwellers in different parts of Mangaung Township and later as informal settlers following the 1990 land invasion of the area today known as Freedom Square. It is thus possible that their past settlement history, more than anything else, had informed both interviewees' perceptions and judgment of their general living conditions in Freedom Square at the time of the survey.

[9]It should be noted that the total percentage of responses will not add up to 100%, as the answers to this question were dependent on a filter process from question F8 in Annexure E

Their history seems therefore to have played a key role in the acknowledgement and recognition of their housing in terms of the role it played in providing them with access to security of tenure, shelter, and particularly basic services they had never before had. Further expressing acknowledgement of the value their housing seems to have added to their lives despite certain setbacks, one of the interviewees in the Freedom Square mentioned that ***"[A]lthough we still experience lot of problems with these houses – sometimes worse than those we would experience in our shacks – at least for a change we now live in a formal brick house"*** (Focus Group Four, 18/04/2008a-Bloemfontein). In a nutshell: while the quality and standard of both basic municipal services and their housing seemed generally to have been sources of major concern amongst the interviewees in the Freedom Square Project (see discussion in Section 6.5.1), the majority of these interviewees could, however, neither deny nor overlook the fact that access to these fundamental resources had greatly improved the general quality of their lives.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has evaluated the role of a state-aided self-help housing project in housing development in the Freedom Square area. Over the past decade (1999–2008), the chapter indicates expression (by beneficiaries) of a constant increase in dissatisfaction as regards various housing aspects that include, amongst others, the housing processes, and also the general standard and the conditions of their housing outcomes.

The chapter has further indicated a possible link between the increasing dissatisfaction relating to various housing aspects and state involvement, on the one hand, and the absence of dweller control in the Freedom Square Project, on the other. The housing process in this project was dominated by state control at the expense of dweller control. The state, through its project manager, unilaterally (amongst others) imposed a contractor to construct houses for beneficiaries. Some supporting evidence for their disapproval at not being allowed to participate in the appointment of a contractor is probably reflected in the increase from 48.0% in 1999, to 59.0% in 2008 of beneficiaries who expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of building work done by this state-imposed contractor. Similar constant increases in

dissatisfaction have also been recorded in respect of other aspects of state-controlled housing, for example, dissatisfaction concerning housing size and the type and quality of materials used. There is a possibility that had they (beneficiaries) had control in respect of these issues, dissatisfaction levels would have been much lower. This was also proven in Chapter Five, where it was found that, because they had been partly in control of housing construction, the Thabong beneficiaries registered somewhat lower dissatisfaction than was the case in the Freedom Square Project.

The chapter indicated a growing decline between 1999 and 2008 in housing development in the Freedom Square Project. There is evidence to suggest that the growing decline in housing development over a decade can possibly be attributed to the inability by the majority of these beneficiaries to undertake self-initiated housing extensions. Some of the supporting evidence in respect of declining housing development and beneficiaries' inability to initiate and undertake housing extension could be the significant percentage (82.4%) of beneficiaries who continued to live in housing units of two or fewer than two rooms. Over and above the disappointing housing outcomes, this finding further indicates that sites and services with core housing by the state does not automatically promote incremental housing.

This chapter has showcased some interesting differences between the findings of the 2008 study and those of other, similar studies (1990, 1993, 1999). It would thus be reasonable to conclude that there is a need to promote and encourage the consistent use of longitudinal studies in housing studies and research for the assessment of housing development over the longer term. As shown in various studies in the Freedom Square and Thabong housing projects (see Chapter Five), there is a possible danger involved in undertaking either short-term or a one-off assessments of housing development.

The chapter has shown that despite there being evidence of some degree of informality in the Thabong laissez-faire self-help housing project, this project has over a decade (1999–2008) resulted in relatively better housing outcomes and has consistently registered higher satisfaction levels on different housing aspects than has been the case in the Freedom Square state-aided self-help housing project: Whereas 65.5% of the beneficiaries of the Thabong

Project live in a house with more than two rooms, this can be said of only 17.6% of the beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Project.

Table 6.5 below further compares the practices of aided self-help in the Freedom Square area (Free State Province) and Turner's key fundamental concepts and ideas in self-help.

Table 6.5: Comparison of the practice of aided self-help in the Freedom Square area and Turner's key concepts in self-help practice

Key concepts	**Aided self-help practice in Freedom Square**
Dweller control	Beneficiaries' participation limited to self-completion of subsidy application forms
State control	State solely responsible for project planning, design and initiation
Sweat equity	Beneficiaries responsible for safeguarding building materials
Use of local resources	State's sole responsibility to appoint their preferred contractors, and their centralisation of the purchase of building materials
Housing costs	State as sole financier
Definition of a house	Housing became a product of a bureaucratically and technologically top-down approach in the form of core housing.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF THE APPLICATION OF SELF-HELP HOUSING POLICY AND PROGRAMMES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Central to this study has been the scrutiny of two issues: the extent to which Turner's fundamental concept of *dweller control* has been incorporated into South African self-help policy and, how South African self-help programmes have in practice conformed both to policy and to Turner's key idea of dweller control. In this final chapter, the primary intention is to provide an overview of the main findings of the thesis. The key findings from each chapter are then used to justify each of these recommendations. Finally, the focus of discussion in this chapter shifts to the value of the research and future research areas.

7.1 An overview of the main findings

A number of key findings have emerged from this study. These have made it evident that the practice of self-help housing in South Africa (see Chapter Three, Chapter Four, Chapter Five, and Chapter Six) and in other developing countries (see Chapter Two) does not conform to Turner's key theoretical concepts on self-help. In essence self-help projects are in many places a means for governments to intervene in housing processes. Against this background, the main findings of the study are outlined below.

7.1.1 The practice of self-help in developing countries (including South Africa) is dominated by state control rather than by dweller control

There is enough evidence from this thesis that the concept of dweller control has not been prominent and that, in many cases, state domination in the housing environment has been common practice. It has been shown in this study that the implementation of self-help by means of self-help groups globally (see Chapter Two), and specifically in South Africa (see Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five), reflects a state mechanism to control housing and that it has deviated from Turner's initial idea of dweller-control. Confirming the

theoretical arguments advanced in Chapter Two and Chapter Three, the empirical evidence presented in Chapter Four, Chapter Five, and Chapter Six indicates that poor communities have continued to be the recipients of housing products largely designed and planned by the state and then delivered through state-appointed self-help groups or contractors. For example, none of the beneficiaries of any of the three different types of self-help projects visited in the Free State (i.e. five case studies on institutionalised self-help, a case study on laissez-faire self-help and an aided self-help case study) were able fundamentally to influence the choices regarding the types of material used in their respective projects. Furthermore, the planning and design of their housing units were also largely state driven (with the Thabong case being exceptional in that beneficiaries could deviate from the design and the plan the state had attempted to impose psychologically by means of a show house). The appointment through state mechanisms of either contractors or builders further contributed to a degree of state control – although, to some extent, the Thabong case was once more an exception in this regard.

7.1.2 Turner's novel idea of dweller control is being misconstrued and limited in practice to self-construction and sweat equity contributed by beneficiaries

The literature and empirical evidence from this thesis indicate that in practice self-help is commonly equated with self-construction and sweat equity but seldom with dweller control. In many cases sweat equity has been imposed by governments as a prerequisite for self-help – but without the freedom entrenched in the concept of dweller control. Turner cautioned against the notion that sweat equity and dweller control could either be equated with each other or separated – to a large extent these aspects are opposite sides of the same coin. The five case studies on institutionalised self-help in the Free State (Chapter Four) demonstrate the presence of sweat equity and the absence of dweller control. In Chapter Four, it was shown how, during the construction process, the beneficiaries' choice was limited to providing only a helping hand to local contractors appointed on their behalf by support organisations without the beneficiaries themselves having had any say in the design, planning and construction of the housing. Yet, by self-help Turner (see Harris, 2003:248) has always meant not only the investment of sweat equity by owners in their homes but also the processes of owner-design and owner-management.

7.1.3 Laissez-faire self-help projects seem to have both better housing outcomes and satisfaction levels than do aided self-help (i.e. contractor-driven) housing projects

Turner maintained that, through dweller control, home owners would progressively extend their units more so than in the absence thereof, while they would also be significantly more satisfied with their units. Available South African literature seems to be in agreement that the houses in PHP projects are generally much bigger than those provided by means of conventional contractor-driven mechanisms (Huchzermeyer, 2002). The comparison between the laissez-faire self-help project discussed in Chapter Five (Thabong) and the aided self-help project discussed in Chapter Six (Freedom Square), which used a contractor-driven approach confirms that better housing outcomes resulted from the laissez-faire self-help example (larger houses, more extension activity). The Thabong case study also indicates the presence of a greater sense of belonging and thus, higher satisfaction levels amongst dwellers compared with the Freedom Square case study (see Chapter Four and Chapter Five). This more positive evaluation in the Thabong case study comes despite there being a certain degree of informal housing units in this particular project. Some supporting evidence in respect of the Thabong project is that 65.5% of beneficiaries were living in a house with more than two rooms, while only 17.6% of the beneficiaries of the Freedom Square Project were living in housing size of comparable layout.

7.1.4 The presence of dweller control outweighs the negative impacts of economic hardship

It is Turner's view that where family finances permit, households are able to improve their housing incrementally, using better materials and adding space over time (see Pugh, 2001). The role of household finances in the housing process is also confirmed in this study (see Chapter Five). However, the 2008 study findings further indicate that the practice of dweller control by beneficiaries could to a certain extent play a dominant role in the process and thus supersede households' economic status. Evidence from Chapter Five indicates that while the economic decline in Thabong was more prominent than in Freedom Square, the housing outcomes in Thabong have been better. It is my contention in this thesis, that although economic conditions do play a role in respect of housing consolidation processes, other factors such as dweller control are also important. Evidence of this could be the fact that, while over a decade only 17.6% of the relatively employed beneficiaries in the Freedom

Square Project seem to have incrementally improved their housing beyond two rooms, the comparative figure in this regard for the unemployment-stricken Thabong area was 65.5% for the same period.

7.1.5 Self-help housing assumes a degree of informality

In Turner's opinion, squatters with a suitable building plot and secure land tenure would usually be able to build their own houses and, in the process, formalise informal settlements. There is also significant emphasis both in the South African literature and indeed in policy on self-help housing that the housing outcome should be a "dignified size housing" and/or "adequate housing". Yet, evidence in the study contrasts both with Turner's romantic ideas on self-help housing (see Chapter Two) and with the centrality of concepts such as "dignified size of house" and "adequate housing" in the housing policies (see Chapter Three). Evidence from the empirical findings in Chapter Five indicates that laissez-faire self-help projects do not always provide formalised housing solutions to the homelessness faced by poor communities. For example, despite there being evidence of relatively better housing outcomes and a constant increase (1999–2008) in satisfaction levels on different housing aspects in the Thabong laissez-faire self-help project than those reported in the Freedom Square state-aided self-help project, the Thabong laissez-faire self-help project has demonstrated a significant degree of informality. According to the 2008 study (see Chapter Five), 15.0% of the project beneficiaries had failed to build and were at the time of the study living in informal, corrugated iron structures. Thus, the Thabong case study has, to a certain extent, shown that Turner's romantic idea that households, if given the opportunity, will successfully manage the construction of their own housing units seems not to apply to every single self-help housing project. This reality furthermore challenges government's notion of "a dignified house".

7.1.6 The self-help housing mechanism may result in conflict amongst its beneficiaries

Turner – especially towards the latter part of his career – viewed self-help housing as a process that should, amongst others, advance principles of collective mobilisation and the pulling together of resources by beneficiaries and also of community empowerment and development. Turner's view was largely confirmed by findings in Chapter Four, which dealt

with the practice of institutionalised self-help in the Free State. Evidence from analyses of housing processes in the five chosen case studies on institutionalised self-help housing in the Free State (see Chapter Four), indicates that other than for satisfactory housing outcomes, beneficiaries in these projects also commended their projects for promoting a spirit of working as a collective. They claimed to have learned during the project the importance of burying their past differences and they now help and treat one another with respect (see qualitative remarks in Chapter Four). Yet, contrary both to Turner's view and the findings in Chapter Four, evidence from Chapter Five indicates that self-help housing may not necessarily always be a conflict-free process. Other than the qualitative remarks from beneficiaries (see Chapter Five), some supporting evidence for the conflict encountered amongst the beneficiaries of the laissez-faire self-help housing project in Thabong could be the lesser percentages (8.2% and 5.2%) of these beneficiaries who, respectively, felt that there was good-neighbourliness and that there were co-operative people in their area. These low percentages could, in particular, be attributable to the widespread complaints by beneficiaries of the failure by some of their neighbours to return (as verbally agreed) the materials borrowed during the construction process.

7.1.7 Aided self-help with core housing by the state does not automatically promote incremental housing

In Turner's opinion, aided self-help does not include the construction of a core housing unit (because he believed in dweller control during the construction period) but that the state aid had to be spent on the basic infrastructure. However, the main South African policy is based on aided self-help in which a core housing unit is funded by government. Beneficiaries are then expected to extend these houses over time. The Freedom Square case study concluded that the level of housing extensions in this example of aided self-help was fairly low and that the provision of a core house did not automatically promote incremental housing – which is contrary to expectations held by the state.

7.1.8 Measuring housing outcomes in the short term is dangerous, while longer-term assessments provide a more reliable understanding of housing outcomes

This study is one of the very few longitudinal studies undertaken in the field of low-income housing studies in the South African context. It is shown in this study that the danger associated with the trend prevalent among South African researchers and academics of undertaking one-off case studies on housing development is that such one-off case studies portray a specific situation at a specific point in time. Ironically, a large number of conclusions are drawn and, in some cases, policies are based on such conclusions. It is my contention in the thesis that one-off housing case studies are unable to consider changing trends – a fact that hampers consistent project assessment and also the long-term profiling of projects. The longitudinal methodology has not only assisted in understanding the Thabong Housing Project differently (within the broader sampling method), but also in respect of the possible impact of the economic decline in the area, something that was not very specifically mentioned in the results of the 1999 study. Thus, the key lesson to be learned from the two studies (1999 and 2008) in terms of their findings is that the success and impact of any housing development on the lives of previously homeless poor households should be assessed and measured continuously rather than just being a one-off activity. This finding to a large extent confirms Turner's view that housing should be seen as a "verb" rather than as a "noun", in other words that housing should be regarded as a *process*: thus, as housing takes place over time, so should its assessment process (Turner, 1976).

Table 7.1 summarises the main findings of this study and suggests possible recommendations, which are further discussed in detail in Section 7.2.

Table 7.1: An outline of the main findings of the study and recommendations

Main findings	Reference to Chapter	Key recommendations
• The practice of self-help in developing countries (including South Africa) is dominated by state control rather than by dweller control	• Chapters 2; 3; 4; 5	• Government officials should become facilitators rather than dominant role players in the application of self-help • Programmes on consumer education should be emphasised and used as means to enhance community participation and empowerment
• Turner's novel idea of dweller control is being misconstrued and limited in practice to self-construction and beneficiaries' sweat equity	• Chapters 2; 3; 4	• The emphasis on sweat equity in the self-help mechanism should be reconsidered
• Laissez-faire self-help projects seem to have better housing outcomes and satisfaction levels than do aided self-help-driven (contractor-driven) housing projects	• Chapters 5; 6	
• The presence of dweller control outweighs the negative impacts of economic hardship	• Chapters 5; 6	
• Self-help housing assumes a degree of informality	• Chapter 5	• The self-help mechanism inherently needs to accept a certain degree of informality
• The self-help housing mechanism may cause conflict amongst its beneficiaries	• Chapter 5	• Government should ensure accountability and oversight without necessarily controlling state-funded self-help housing projects
• Aided self-help with core housing by the state does not automatically promote incremental housing	• Chapter 6	• The emphasis in self-help should be on embracing housing as a process rather than a one-off activity
• Measuring housing outcomes in the short term is dangerous; longer-term assessments provide a more reliable understanding of housing outcomes	• Chapters 5; 6	• The emphasis in self-help should be on embracing housing as a process rather than as a one-off activity

7.2 Key recommendations

The aim of this section is to advance a number of recommendations in respect of the various key findings of the study as already discussed. The context within which these recommendations are made is one of initiating and stimulating debate amongst relevant stakeholders in housing studies (academics, researchers, policy makers, managers, politicians, and ordinary community members) on the application of low-income housing policies and

specifically of the PHP mechanism by local municipalities and by the Provincial Housing Department.

The purpose of the said recommendations should be seen in that context rather than as final policy proposals. To a large extent, these recommendations are informed by the need for policy makers and implementers to realign practice with policy. Below are a number of recommendations emanating from the study.

7.2.1 Government officials should become facilitators rather than dominant role players in the application of self-help

In Chapter Two and Chapter Three, it was argued that contrary to the current status quo, the role of the state in the self-help housing mechanism should be one of playing an advisory and supporting role in the form of fiscal concessions. Yet, evidence from Chapter Four and Chapter Five proves the converse to be true. In practice, the study indicates that despite fundamental principles of self-help such as 'greater choice and input' by beneficiaries (what Turner calls 'dweller control') being entrenched in the PHP policy document, housing processes in the Free State have continued to be controlled and micromanaged by the provincial PHP officials and administrators. This study has suggested that the roles and responsibilities both of government officials and of beneficiaries should – as explicitly mentioned in the PHP policy document (see Department of Housing, 2005) – be adhered to at all times. While beneficiaries (as stated in the PHP policy document) take sole responsibility for the project design, planning and management, the state, the housing agencies and appointed support organisations must at all times operate in a fashion that builds a supportive and enabling environment for community-driven housing development – even if this means going against what they perceive to be their immediate interests.

7.2.2 The emphasis on sweat equity in the self-help mechanism should be reconsidered

Contrary to Turner's view that sweat equity should not be equated with self-construction (see Chapter Two), evidence from Chapter Three and Chapter Four suggests that since the discontinuation of the compulsory down payment of R2 479 in 2003, beneficiaries of PHP

have been expected to contribute towards labour (sweat equity) during the housing-construction process. This is largely seen as a state strategy to ensure that labour costs are minimised, while the beneficiaries' role is limited to self-construction (sweat equity). It is therefore suggested that the Free State Provincial Government should treat sweat equity as an optional aspect of the housing process and that dweller control be advocated as a central and compulsory condition to any PHP programme. Through dweller control, beneficiaries are able to decide at the project-planning stage whether they will physically build their housing or delegate that responsibility to someone they trust.

7.2.3 Programmes on consumer education should be emphasised and used as means to enhance community participation and empowerment

Closely linked with dweller control is the concept of 'community development and empowerment' (see Chapter Two and Chapter Three). It is argued that the concept of 'community development and empowerment' could be attained provided self-help programmes allow full participation of community members in key decision-making processes during the project-planning, design and management phases. Appropriate decisions can only be made when decision makers (beneficiaries) are well informed about the processes and about their responsibilities in such processes. Evidence from Chapter Four indicates that none of beneficiaries from the five case studies seemed either to have known about or participated in any of the six compulsory community workshops that were supposed to have preceded the project-planning and design stages. It is consequently suggested that the Provincial Government itself should run these community workshops and use the outcomes of these to inform a collective approach to the next stages of project planning, design and management. It is further suggested that enough funding be set aside for the said educational programmes.

7.2.4 The emphasis in self-help should be on embracing housing as a process rather than a one-off activity

Evidence from Chapter Three, Chapter Four and Chapter Five indicates that limiting the participation of beneficiaries mainly to sweat equity is a direct result of the state's inclination towards measuring the success of self-help projects in terms of the actual numbers of housing

units completed rather than encouraging the process of producing and of then allowing beneficiaries to improve them incrementally. This is found to run counter both to Turner's definition of housing as a verb and to the promotion of the concept *progressive access to housing* contained in the South African housing policy. It is therefore suggested that emphasis be shifted from concepts such as *dignified size* housing to *people driven-housing* and *dweller control*. As part of the emphasis on *housing as a verb* and a *process*, it is further recommended that academics, policy makers and housing planners should through their actions, strive for a policy-review process informed by research conducted over a longer term rather than a one-off case study.

7.2.5 The self-help mechanism inherently needs to accede to a certain degree of informality

Contrary to Turner's view of self-help (see Chapter Two), evidence from the Thabong case study (Chapter Five) has shown that laissez-faire self-help housing processes are probably less romantic than the theoretical thoughts advanced by Turner. With almost 16.0% of the beneficiaries in the Thabong project still living in informal housing, it may be appropriate for the housing officials responsible for the implementation of self-help policies to accept the fact that self-help in particular laissez-faire self-help is not necessarily a recipe for success. There is a possibility of achieving either partly complete or complete informality instead of what Turner termed *best results* or *adequate and dignified size housing* as emphasised in policy documents. Inability to accept this reality might be one of the main reasons why self-help housing has not necessarily received adequate acceptance in the South African context.

7.2.6 Government should ensure accountability and oversight without necessarily controlling state-funded self-help housing projects

According to Turner, governments should (through their supportive role) provide those aspects of housing that people are not always able to provide for themselves, for example, land, laws, tools, credit, know-how and land tenure (Payne, 1984; Ward, 1982), while leaving the entire process of construction to be managed and controlled by people themselves, which, in turn, promotes, what Turner termed *dweller control*. Contrary to Turner's vision of a changed role for government, evidence from a laissez-faire self-help housing case study in

Thabong (see Chapter Five) has shown that a lack of advisory input by government officials may potentially have promoted a degree of conflict amongst beneficiaries. Despite materials having been purchased and beneficiaries having been trained by the state-appointed New Housing Company (see Stewart, 2001), the Free State Provincial Housing Department (as was widely alleged by beneficiaries), did not play a consistently supportive role in overseeing the construction process. In their attempt to promote a mutual and collective construction process, beneficiaries had in turn (allegedly due to lack of an advisory role by government), experienced what could be termed as the 'right intentions with negative consequences'. Because of their lack of legal know how and the subsequent failure by government to play an advisory role, beneficiaries claimed to have entered into verbal agreements to exchange and borrow materials from one another. One of the unintended consequences of such agreements was the current conflict (as alleged by affected beneficiaries) that has arisen from their neighbours' refusal to replace the borrowed material.

7.3 Value of the research results

The following points could serve to justify the value of the research:

- Despite a number of PhDs having since 1994 dealt with low-income housing (23 PhDs) this study is the first doctoral thesis on self-help housing as such within the South African context, which, though grounded in the pool of existing international and local literature, bases its main argument on empirical findings derived from people's actual practical experiences regarding the application and practice of self-help on the ground. Thus, primary evidence is being generated using, to a larger extent, a case-study approach. Such evidence can further, be used for constructive criticism, which could possibly influence future processes of policy review, practice and re-alignment.
- Attempts by Marais *et al*. (2003) and also by Landman & Napier (2009) to provide a comparative assessment of two types of self-help mechanism (aided and unaided self-help) are acknowledged by the present study. Yet, despite such earlier attempts, this particular study is to date one of the few that have academically evaluated a range of self-help housing types in South Africa – as applied in South Africa since 1994 – both against JFC Turner's theoretical principles of self-help and against existing policy guidelines in this regard. Furthermore, unlike the other comparative studies

mentioned above, this study has provided a more comprehensive comparative assessment of three, and not only of two different types of self-help mechanism (institutionalised self-help, site-and-services, and laissez-faire self-help) being utilised in post-apartheid South Africa. Central to the comparison conducted in this study are these programmes' performance, the dwellers' satisfaction, the standard of their housing outcomes and also the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders.

- The study is one of very few longitudinal studies in low-income housing development within the South African context. Furthermore, despite an ever-increasing body of literature on housing and housing policy in South Africa (Department of Housing, 2007), this study should be seen as a valuable contribution given the dearth of scholarly work, so far, on self-help-related work (exceptions include Huchzermeyer, 2006; Marais *et al*., 2003; Napier, 1998; Parnell & Hart, 1999). In fact, a search of the housing bibliography (2003–2007) of the National Department of Housing yielded only two references in respect both of PHP and self-help in South Africa. The longitudinal methodology employed in this study has not only promoted a changed understanding of specifically the Thabong Housing Project (within the broader sampling method), but also of the possible impact of economic decline in the area – something not very specifically mentioned in the results of the 1999 study.
- This study also suggests that informality should to a certain extent be seen as part of the laissez-faire self-help mechanism. Although one of Turner's self-help principles – namely that a shack is 'a house in process' – is considered to be central to his conceptualisation of self-help, he nevertheless rejected the fact that this should serve as a justification of squatting and inferior housing. Thus, the study has suggested that he (Turner) has a somewhat romantic view of self-help and that, in reality, self-help should not be seen as an automatic housing solution recipe.
- The study has also contributed to academic debate in that two peer-reviewed academic articles emanated from the research conducted for the study – one published (Ntema & Marais, 2010) and one in press (Ntema & Marais, 2011). The research findings have also been presented at various international and local academic and professional conferences and seminars (Marais, Ntema & Venter, 2008; Ntema, 2008; Ntema & Marais, 2009). The possibility exists that further papers and articles will emanate from the research findings.

- A number of research topics for possible future research have been generated by the study (see Section 7.4)

7.4 Future research topics

As stated in the aim of the study (Chapter One), central to this study has been an attempt to provide a critical analysis of the role of the state in the application and practice of different programmes of the self-help housing mechanism in developing countries, with particular reference to post-apartheid South Africa. During the research, a number of critical aspects were identified as potential areas for future research. The following aspects deserve to be mentioned:

- There is a possibility that some – if not all – provincial governments lack the political so as adequately to fund and embrace the self-help mechanism. This phenomenon should further be investigated. Despite PHP being one of the key programmes of the National Housing Policy, evidence from the (admittedly) limited available literature seems to suggest that most provinces might have disregarded it in favour of project-based, developer-driven housing delivery. Gauteng is one of the provinces to have shut down its PHP Directorate in favour of the conventional contractor-driven housing-delivery mechanism. Yet, in provinces like the Free State, for example (despite high levels of satisfaction amongst dwellers), though PHP directorates have been retained, PHP projects are neither regularly nor constantly approved and funded, while the conventional contractor-driven RDP projects are.
- Regarding the informality aspect of the self-help housing mechanism, evidence from the Thabong Project prompted a need for further research into the extent to which other projects, such as the Freedom Square Project in Bloemfontein might have experienced informality. This can, in turn, help researchers to gain a much deeper insight into the impact of such projects on the lives of such ordinary communities. Did their lives, over a certain period, since the inception of such projects change for better or for worse?
- Another aspect of self-help housing that requires further research is the role of self-help housing as a tool for community development and empowerment in

alleviating social ills such as poverty. As stipulated in the Comprehensive Housing Plan of 2004, the focus areas identified include the imperative to accelerate housing delivery as a key strategy towards poverty alleviation. Thus, drawing on both the literature review and the PHP policy document it was reasonable for this study to assume that such was indeed the case, but empirical evidence is however urgently required in this regard.

- The specifically longitudinal nature of the case studies in Thabong and Freedom Square should further be exploited in future long-term evaluations.

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ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE A

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS-GROUP MEETINGS WITH BENEFCIARIES OF INSTITUTIONALISED SELF-HELP (PHP) IN THE FREE STATE:

1. When did you start with your project?
2. When was it completed?
3. Did you attend any workshop or training prior to the inception of the project?
4. If YES, what was the focus of the workshop/training?
5. Who organised it?
6. How much was your individual subsidy?
7. What role did you play in appointing your Housing Support Centre?
8. What role did you play in appointing contractors/builders?
9. What role did you play in influencing decisions regarding the choice of materials, material suppliers and housing design?
10. What role did you play during the construction process?
11. Did you supplement your subsidies either with recycled materials or own savings? Explain your answer.
12. Do you think this project was a success? Explain your answer.
13. What makes your project different from conventional RDP projects?
14. Whose decisions (government, HSC, SO, beneficiaries) do you think drove and influenced the project from the inception stage to the completion stage? Why do you think this was so?
15. Do you think the HSC was capable of managing the project? Motivate your answer.
16. Other than housing, what else did you as a community benefit from the project?

ANNEXURE B

QUESTIONNAIRE ON ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES OF HOUSING SUPPORT CENTRES IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE

Name of the interviewer:……..

Name of the centre:……

Name of the interviewee:……..

Position occupied by the interviewee:……

Respondent's telephone: ……

A. BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

1. Nationality (specify a country):

……

2. Gender of respondent

Male	1	Female	2

3. Did members of the HSC in the past receive any form of skills transfer?

YES	1	NO	2

(If NO, go to Section B.)

3.1 Indicate the nature of the skills acquired by members.

……

……

3.2 How long was the training?.....years ..... (months)

3.3 How many people received such skills? ……..

B. CENTRE'S BACKGROUND

1. What type of legal entity is your HSC?

…….

2. Explain how the HSC developed.

……

……

3. Did the HSC develop because of the PHP process or did it develop by means of a different mechanism?

……

……

4. How long has the centre been in operation?.....years …….months
5. How long have you personally been involved in this Centre?

……years…….months

6. How many units did the HSC build?

……..

7. Were all the units identical?

YES	1	NO	2

Give reasons for your answer.

……

……

8. Who constructed these units: the homeowners themselves or people working on the project?

……

……

9. If someone wanted to design/construct a totally different unit, could that person do so?

YES	1	NO	2

(If your answer is NO, go to Question 10.)

10. Explain why this was not permitted.

……

……

11. Do some of the units crack?

YES	1	NO	2

Explain why.

……

……

12. How did you ensure quality control?

……

……

13. How were building materials purchased?

……

……

14. What building materials did the HSC manufacture on site?

……

……

15. Explain why you chose to manufacture them on site.

……

……

16. How did you manufacture them?

……

……

How many projects administered by your HSC were funded?

……

17. Give a cost breakdown of unit-construction costs in terms of the following:

17.1 Land fees……

17.2 Professional fees…….

17.3 Foundations…….

17.4 Walls…….

17.5 Roofs……..

17.6 Labour……

17.7 Other……..

18. Are there members of the Centre who since decided to leave the Centre?

YES	1	NO	2

(If NO, go to Question 19.3.)

18.1 If YES, how many?.....

18.2 In your opinion, what has been the main reasons why these members left the Centre?

……

……

18.3 Have you ever considered leaving the Centre?

YES	1	NO	2

18.4 Please give reasons for your answer in 19.3.

……

……

19. Which of the following are applicable to your Centre?

1. There is conflict amongst the centre's members, which impacts negatively on the viability of the Centre's projects.	1
2. There is conflict amongst the Centre's members, which **DOES NOT** impact negatively on the viability of the Centre's projects.	2
3. There is no conflict amongst the Centre's members.	3

(If your answer is 3, go to Question 21.)

20.1 If there is conflict, what is the main reason for the conflict?

……

……

20.2 How do you manage the conflict?

……

……

20. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem being faced by the Centre?

……

……

21. Do you think this HSC is a success?

YES	1	NO	2

Motivate your answer in Question 21 above.

……

……

22. Who make decisions regarding:

22.1 Size of the units you build……

22.2 Type of building materials to be used……

22.3 Approval of quality of work done……

22.4 The life-span of projects……

23. Do you think your projects are different from RDP projects?

YES	1	NO	2

24. Motivate your answer in 23 above:

……

……

25. Where do you think your projects to some extent share similar features with RDP projects?

……

……

C. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS : GOVERNMENT

1. What type of support does the Centre get from the Provincial Government?

……

……

2. Do you think you are being adequately empowered by the Provincial Government so as effectively to execute your duties?

YES	1	NO	2

3. Give reasons for your answer in Question 2 above.

……

……

4. Did you have to follow any prescriptions from the Provincial or local government?

YES	1	NO	2

(If your answer is 1, go to questions 5 and 6.)

5. Mention all the prescriptions.

……

……

6. How did these prescriptions influence your programme?

……

……

7. Which of the following is applicable to your Centre?

Government officials allow us to make independent decisions regarding how the Centre should operate.	1
Government officials most of the time interfere and oppose our views and decisions regarding how the Centre	2

should operate.	

8. Do you think PHP projects are sufficiently funded by the Provincial Government?

YES	1	NO	2

9. Do you think you both (the members of the Centre and government officials) share the same interpretation and understanding of how PHP projects should be operated?

YES	1	NO	2

(If your answer is 1, go to Question 11.)

10. If your answer in Question 7? is 2, where are the differences?

……

……

11. In general, do think PHP projects are a success in the Free State Province?

YES	1	NO	2

12. Motivate your answer in Question 11 above.

……

……

13. If you had the opportunity to manage such a programme and could design it the way you wanted, what would the key ingredients be and how would it differ from the current approach?

……

……

ANNEXURE C

QUESTIONNAIRE IN RESPECT OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF PHP IN THE FREE STATE: PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS FOR PHP

Name of the interviewer:……

Name of the interviewee:……..

Position occupied by interviewee:……..

Respondent's telephone:……..

A. BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

1. Nationality (specify a country):

……

2.

Male	1	Female	2

B. PHP TRACK RECORD

1. How long have you been involved in PHP programmes:

…….

2. Where were you placed prior to your appointment to the PHP Directorate?

…….

3. Do you think the Free State PHP Directorate has enough capacity to implement PHP policy and its programmes?

YES	1	NO	2

4. Motivate your answer to Question 3 above:

……

……

5. Do you think both the Provincial and the National Directorates of PHP share the same understanding/interpretation of PHP policy?

YES	1	NO	2

6. Motivate your answer to Question 5 above:

……

……

7. Is any specific minimum requirement set by the Province in terms of:

Size of a PHP unit	YES	1	NO	2
The minimum number of rooms each unit should have	YES	1	NO	2
Types of building material to be used	YES	1	NO	2

(If your answers are NO go to Question 9.)

8. Provide details regarding the requirements for:

8.1 Size of units

……

……

8.2 Number of rooms per unit

……

……

8.3 Building materials to be used

……

……

9. What strategies do you have in place to ensure value for money in these PHP projects?

……

……

10. In your opinion, what are the **THREE** main successes/achievements of PHP in the Free State?

……

……

In your opinion, what are the **THREE** main failures of PHP in the Free State?

……

……

11. To what extent did unit designs differ within the PHP projects?

……

……

12. What could have led to the above-outlined situation?

……

……

13. What are the key roles of provincial governments in PHP programmes?

……

……

14. What in your opinion is the biggest obstacle regarding the effective running of PHP programmes in the Free State Province?

……

……

15. What makes your PHP programme different from RDP programmes?

……

……

16. In which way(s), do you consider, PHP programmes to be similar to RDP programmes?

……

……

17. What is your opinion of PHP?

Good and fast process	YES	1	NO	2
Good but slow process	YES	1	NO	2

Process difficult to follow and implement	YES	1	NO	2
Process that unreasonably disempowers government in respect of controlling housing	YES	1	NO	2

18.1 Please explain your answer to each of the above aspects.
……
……

18. Do you think PHP projects conform to the principles of PHP policy?

YES	1	NO	2

19. Motivate your answer with examples.
……
……

C. PHP INSTITUTIONS:

1. Who appoint the Housing Support Centres?
……
……

2. Who is responsible for constituting Housing Support Centres?
……
……

3. What type of assistance does the Provincial Government provide to Housing Support Centres?
……
……

4. What is your opinion of the capacity, in general, of Housing Support Centres in order to carry out their responsibilities?

……
……

5. How do you control and monitor the work of Housing Support Centres?

……
……

6. In your opinion, what are the **TWO** biggest problems faced by Housing Support Centres?

……
……

7. In your opinion, what should be changed in respect of HSCs and PHP (community-driven housing)?

……
……

8. Give a cost breakdown of unit-construction costs in terms of the following:

8.1 Land fees ……

8.2 Professional fees ……..

8.3 Foundations …….

8.4 Walls ……

8.5 Roofs ……

8.6 Labour ……..

8.7 Other ……..

D. PHP BENEFICIARIES:

1. Do you think beneficiaries understand how PHP should work?

YES	1	NO	2

2. Mention any **TWO** problems that you usually experience in respect of beneficiaries.

……

……

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

ANNEXURE D

CONSENT BY THE PARTICIPANT

Following a comprehensive explanation of the purpose of the study by **Mr L.J Ntema** who is a PhD student at the Free State University, I …….. hereby agree to participate in research regarding PHP policy and implementation in the Free State Province. I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this interview at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project the purpose of which is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I understand that the findings of this study will be used mainly for academic and other related purposes by the researcher concerned.

I understand that, if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

……..

Signature of participant **Date**:……..

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study.

……..

Signature of participant **Date**:……..

ANNEXURE E

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC FEASIBILITY OF TWO MODELS OF LOW-INCOME HOUSING DELIVERY IN THE FREE STATE

Stand number _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

Name of the interviewer _

Respondents telephone number (must be the owner of the house) : _

A. BIOGRAPHICAL/DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

1. Location:

Freedom Square	1	Thabong	2

2. Gender:

Female	1	Male	2

3. Nationality (specify country):

_ _

4. How old are you? (in years)

_ _

5. Marital status:

Never married	1	Married	2
Divorced/separated	3	Widowed	4
Living with partner	5	Other (specify)	6

6. Highest academic qualification obtained:

Never attended school (none)	1
Sub A–Std 1/grades 1–3	2
Std 2–Std 5/grades 4–7	3
Std 6–Std 8/grades 8–10	4
Std 9/Grade 11	5
Std 10/Grade 12	6
Tertiary education (diploma, degree, etc.) Please specify: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _No of years _ _ _ _ _ _ _	7
Other (e.g. apprenticeships) Please specify: _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ No of years _ _ _ _ _ _ _	8

7. Did you receive any form of construction-skills training in the past?

Yes	1	No	2

(If NO, go to Question 8.)

7.1 Indicate the nature of the above construction-related training?

_____

_____

7.2 Duration of this training? _____ (months)

B MIGRATION

1. When did you first come to live in Freedom Square/Thabong?

Before 1989	1	1989	2
1990	3	1991	4
1992	5	1993	6
1994	7	1995	8
1996	9	1997	10
1998	11	1999	12
2000	13	2001	14
2002	15	2003	16
2004	17	2005	18
2006	19	2007	20
2008	21		

2. Where did you live immediately before you moved into the present house?

_ _

3. Where did you live before that?

_ _

_ _

4. Did you own the house there? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5. What was your **<u>main</u>** reason for moving to this area?

_ _

_ _

6. How long do you intend to stay here in this house?

_ _

_ _

If you stated that you going to move (If you are not going to move, go to C1):

7. Where will you be moving to?

_ _

_ _

8. What would your **main** reason for such a move be?

_ _

_ _

C. SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

1. How many people in your household receive the following?

1.1 Old-age pension	
1.2 Unemployment grant	
1.3 Child support-/child-maintenance grant	
1.4 Foster-care grant	
1.5 Disability grant	
1.6 Care-dependence grant/grant in aid	
1.9 War-veterans grant	

2. How many of the people living in this house contribute to the household income every month (yourself included)?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. What is the total sum of money this entire household receives every month (all persons included – after tax deductions and including grants)?

R_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

4. Where do you work most of the time?

At home	1
Away from home	2
Do not work at all	3

4.1 If you stated that you mostly work away from home, how far is this workplace from your house (in kilometres)?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ kilometres

5. How many PEOPLE sleep in this house every night (yourself included)?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

5.1 How many of the following ages sleep in this house every night (yourself included)?

0-17	
18-59	
60+	

D. DOING BUSINESS

1. Do you or another household member operate a business or render services for money from this house?

Yes	1
No	2

If NO, go to Question E1; if YES, answer D2.

2. Which of the following is/are being operated?

	Yes	No
2.1 Shebeen	1	2
2.2 Crèche	1	2
2.3 Spaza shop	1	2
2.4 Building contractor	1	2
2.5 Manufacturing of building materials	1	2
2.6 Beauty salon	1	2
2.7 Commercial sex	1	2
2.9 Other	1	2

E. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. How many completed rooms does your house currently have?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

2. How many completed rooms did your house have when you first moved in?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

3. Are you currently in the process of adding more rooms to the existing number?

Yes	1
No	2

If NO, go to Question E5; if YES, answer Question 4.

4. What type(s) of room(s) are you currently in the process of adding on:

_ _

_ _

What building materials are you using for:

4.2 The walls?

_ _

_ _

4.3 The floors?

_ _

_ _

4.4 The roof?

_ _

_ _

5. Do you plan to add more rooms to your house in the future?

Yes	1
No	2

If NO, go to Question 9.

6. How many rooms do you plan to add onto your house?

_ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

7. What kinds of room do you plan to add on to your house?

_ _

_ _

8. Indicate who of the following will be responsible for building the additional rooms:

	Yes	**No**
Myself	1	2
My husband/wife	1	2
Other family members	1	2
Builder from within my community	1	2
Contractor company	1	2
Friends/neighbours	1	2
Other (specify)	1	2

9. Who was **<u>mainly</u>** responsible for building the house in which you are living right now?

Myself	1
My husband/wife	2
Other family member/s	3
Builder from within my community	4
Contractor company	5
Friends/neighbours	6
Do not know	7

Other	8

10. How much money have you spent on your house in the past 10 years?

_____

10.1 On what have you spent the money?

	Yes	**No**
Building material	1	2
Labour	1	2
Interior of the house	1	2
Other (specify)	1	2

11. How satisfied are you with the following?

VS = Very satisfied

S = Satisfied

U = Unsure

D = Dissatisfied

VD = Very dissatisfied

	VS	S	U	D	VD
The number of rooms in your house	1	2	3	4	5
The size of the rooms in your house	1	2	3	4	5
Types of material used to build your house	1	2	3	4	5
The layout of your house (interviewer to explain)	1	2	3	4	5
The quality of the work done	1	2	3	4	5
The size of your stand	1	2	3	4	5

If you indicated *Dissatisfied* or *Very dissatisfied*, what would you change with regard to the:

11.1 Number of rooms?

_ _

_ _

11.2 Size of rooms?

_ _

_ _

11.3 Types of material?

_ _

_ _

11.4 Layout of house?

_ _

_ _

11.5 The quality of the work done?

_ _

_ _

11.6 Size of stand?

_ _

_ _

12. What will you do if your house starts to crack or leak? (Tick only one.)

Fix it yourself	1
Contact the builder	2
Contact the local government	3
Contact the municipality	4
Contact the developer	5

Other (specify)	6

13. Do you have

	Yes	No
13.1 A toilet inside your house?	1	2
13.2 Running water inside your house?	1	2
13.3 Electricity?	1	2
13.4 Burglar-proofing in front of your windows?	1	2
13.5 A lawn?	1	2
13.6 A vegetable garden?	1	2
13.7 Trees?	1	2
13.8 A flower garden?	1	2

GENERAL LIFE EXPERIENCE

Now that you have a house, water, sanitation and electricity, what are the two most important needs that you have?

1. Most important:

_ _

_ _

2. Second most important:

_ _

_ _

3. What is the **best** thing about living here in Freedom Square/Thabong?

_ _

_ _

4. What is the **worst** thing about living here in Freedom Square/Thabong?

_ _

_ _

5. If someone made you an offer of R20 000 to buy your stand and the house on it **today,** would you sell it (the house and stand together)?

Yes	1
No	2

If NO, go to Question 6; if YES, go to Question 5.1.

If Yes,

5.1 What would you do with the money?

_ _

_ _

6. For how much money **would** you be willing to sell it?

_ _

_ _

7. If you have indicated that you would sell your house, why would you do so?

_ _

_ _

8. Is your life here in Freedom Square/Thabong the way you expected it to be when you first came to live here?

It is exactly as I expected it would be.	1
It is even better than I expected it to be.	2
It is not as good as I expected it to be.	3
It is much worse than I expected it to be.	4
I have never really thought about it (do not know).	5

8.1 If you indicated that your life is not as good (3) **or** much worse (4) than you expected it to be, please motivate your answer:

_ _

_ _

8.2 If you indicated that your life is not as good (2) as you expected it would be, please motivate your answer:

_ _

_ _

ANNEXURE F

QUESTIONS FOR FOCUS-GROUP MEETINGS WITH BENEFCIARIES OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE AND AIDED-SELF-HELP HOUSING PROJECTS IN THABONG, WELKOM AND FREEDOM SQUARE, MANGAUNG:

1. Who informed you about this programme (self-help housing)?
2. Do you think you were fully and properly informed regarding the programme?
3. How much was the total subsidy for your house?
4. How did you supplement your subsidy?
5. Explain how you accessed your subsidy (things you had to do/processes that you had to follow).
6. How did you work together as a community to help one another? (List things that you shared as members of the same neighbourhood in the construction process, e.g. resources, knowledge, materials, etc.)
7. What do you consider the successes/advantages (from both an individual to a communal point of view) of the housing project in your area to have been?
8. Who chose the materials and the material suppliers for you?
9. Who did the main construction? Why? How happy were you?
10. What do you think the failures/problems of the programme to have been? Supply reasons for your answer(s).
11. Do you think this programme should be continued? Motivate your answer.
12. Do you think you were fully in control of the construction- and housing-design processes? If YES, explain your role; if not, explain fully what happened.
13. Are you satisfied with your housing (e.g. material, design, work done, etc.)? Explain your answer.

ANNEXURE G

Interviewees and their satisfaction level in respect of key variables:

1. Satisfaction level on the quality of work done (Thabong)	Unemployed interviewees		Employed interviewees	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	13	35.1%	13	59.1%
Dissatisfied	22	59.5%	8	36.4%
Unsure	2	5.4%	1	4.5%
2. Satisfaction level on the type of building material (Thabong)	Unemployed interviewees		Employed interviewees	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	17	45.9%	14	56.0%
Dissatisfied	20	54.1%	11	44.0%
Unsure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
3. Satisfaction level on the number of rooms (Thabong)	Interviewees with two or less rooms		Interviewees with more than two rooms	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	15	31.2%	31	59.0%
Dissatisfied	36	68.8%	18	41.0%
Unsure	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
4. Satisfaction level on the number of rooms (Freedom Square)	Interviewees with extended housing		Interviewees with un-extended housing	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	18	52.9%	18	11.0%
Dissatisfied	16	47.1%	145	88.4%
Unsure	0	0.0%	1	0.6%
5. Satisfaction level on the quality of building material (Freedom Square)	Interviewees with extended housing		Interviewees with un-extended housing	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	16	47.1%	52	32.5%
Dissatisfied	17	50.0%	107	66.9%
Unsure	1	2.9%	1	0.6%
6. Satisfaction level on the quality of work done (Freedom Square)	Interviewees with extended housing		Interviewees with un-extended housing	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**
Satisfied	13	39.4%	62	39.3%
Dissatisfied	17	51.5%	96	60.7%
Unsure	3	9.1%	0	0.0%

SUMMARY

Title: Self-help housing in South Africa: paradigms, policy and practice

Candidate: LJ Ntema

Promoter: Prof. JGL Marais

This thesis entitled *Self-help housing in South Africa: paradigms, policy and practice* was conducted as the first thorough evaluation of self-help housing policy in South Africa. Self-help housing policy and practice in both South Africa and globally are evaluated by means of Turner's concept of dweller control. The thesis starts off by analysing the origin and development of low-income housing policies in developing countries, with specific reference to self-help housing policy. It is pointed out that the discussion on the influence of Turner's theory and the role of the World Bank are central to the analysis of the origin and development of self-help housing policy in developing countries. Turner's theory played a crucial role in the acceptance of self-help housing as an alternative housing-delivery mechanism in the 1960s, while the World Bank provided the necessary funding for its implementation through site-and-services schemes by governments in developing countries in the early 1970s. Despite self-help housing commonly being associated with neo-liberal policy trends, the thesis shows that self-help is practised in both capitalist and socialist countries.

The international theoretical background on self-help housing is followed by an assessment of the development and application of various low-income housing policies in post-apartheid South Africa, with specific reference to self-help housing. South African policy on self-help is officially called the People's Housing Process (PHP) and is implemented through self-help groups called housing support centres. It has been found that though Turner's ideas and principles on self-help housing are entrenched in PHP policy, in practice this policy, to a large extent, neither conforms to Turner's ideas particularly those on dweller control nor to certain principles stipulated in the policy. Thus, a technocratic rather than a people-centred approach (envisaged in policy documents) dominates the PHP programmes in South Africa. The levels of the influence exerted by local people in project design, project implementation and housing design remain low, and the housing outcomes do not differ much from the

conventional project subsidy approach. This leads the author to conclude that self-help housing in South Africa is, in effect, dominated by the state. However, despite state control of the housing process, both the available South African literature on self-help housing and the empirical findings seem to be in agreement that the houses in PHP projects are generally much bigger than those provided by means of the conventional contractor-driven mechanism. The comparison between the laissez-faire self-help project and the aided self-help project using a contractor-driven approach confirms that better housing outcomes have resulted from the laissez-faire self-help example (larger houses, more extension activity).

Against this background, the thesis proposes that government officials should become facilitators rather than dominant role players in the application of self-help housing, programmes on consumer education should be emphasised and used as means to enhance community participation and empowerment, the emphasis on sweat equity in the self-help mechanism should be reconsidered, the self-help mechanism inherently needs to accept a certain degree of informality, government should ensure accountability and oversight without necessarily controlling state-funded self-help housing projects, and, the emphasis in self-help should be on embracing housing as a process rather than as a one-off activity.

Key words: self-help housing, people's housing process, low-income housing, housing support centres.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Selfhelpbehuising in Suid-Afrika: paradigmas, beleid en praktyk

Kandidaat: LJ Ntema

Promotor: Prof. JGL Marais

Hierdie proefskrif getiteld *Self-help housing in South Africa: paradigms, policy and practice* (*Selfhelpbehuising in Suid-Afrika: paradigmas, beleid en praktyk*) is onderneem as die eerste diepgaande evaluering van selfhelpbehuisingsbeleid in Suid-Afrika. Selfhelpbehuisingsbeleid en –praktyk in sowel Suid-Afrika as wêreldwyd word geëvalueer aan die hand van Turner se konsep *inwonerbeheer*. Ter aanvang word die oorsprong en ontwikkeling van lae-inkomstebehuisingsbeleide in ontwikkelende lande ontleed, met spesifieke verwysing na selfhelpbehuisingsbeleid. Daar word aangetoon dat die bespreking van die invloed van Turner se teorie en die rol van die Wêreldbank sentraal staan in die ontleding van die oorsprong en ontwikkeling van selfhelpbehuisingsbeleid in ontwikkelende lande. Turner se teorie het ’n deurslaggewende rol gespeel in die aanvaarding van selfhelpbehuising as ’n alternatiewe wyse van behuisingsvoorsiening in die 1960’s, terwyl die Wêreldbank vroeg in die 1970’s die vereiste befondsing vir die implementering daarvan deur middel van erf-en-diensskemas deur die regerings van ontwikkelende lande voorsien het. Ongeag die feit dat selfhelp behuising gewoonlik met neo-liberale politieke tendense vereenselwig word, dui die proefskrif aan dat selfhelp in sowel kapitalistiese as sosialistiese lande beoefen word.

Teen die agtergrond van die internasionale teorie oor selfhelpbehuising, volg ’n evaluering van die ontwikkeling en toepassing van verskillende lae-inkomste behuisingsbeleide in die postapartheidera in Suid-Afrika, met spesifieke verwysing na selfhelpbehuising. Die Suid-Afrikaanse selfhelpbeleid staan amptelik as die *People’s Housing Process (PHP)* bekend en word geïmplementeer by wyse van selfhelpgroepe genaamd *behuisingondersteuningsentra*. Daar is bevind dat alhoewel Turner se idees en beginsels van selfhelpbehuising in PHP-beleid veranker is, voldoen hierdie beleid in die praktyk grotendeels nóg aan Turner se idees veral dié ten opsigte van bewonerbeheer nóg aan sekere beginsels soos in die beleid gestipuleer. Aldus domineer ’n tegnokratiese eerder as ’n mens-gesentreerde benadering (soos in

beleidsdokumente beoog) die PHP-programme in Suid-Afrika. Die invloedspeil wat die plaaslike bevolking ten opsigte van projekontwerp, projekimplementering en behuisingsontwerp uitoefen, bly laag, terwyl die behuisingsresultate nie veel verskil van die konvensionele projeksubsidiebenadering nie. Die outeur kom dus tot die slotsom dat selfhelpbehuising in Suid-Afrika in werklikheid deur die staat gedomineer word. Ondanks staatsbeheer van die behuisingsproses is sowel die beskikbare Suid-Afrikaanse literatuur oor selfhelpbehuising en die empiriese bevindinge dit eens dat die huise in die PHP-projekte in die algemeen baie groter is as dié wat deur middel van die konvensionele kontrakteurgedrewe meganisme voorsien word. Die vergelyking van die laissezfaire selfhelpprojek en die ondersteunde selfhelpprojek wat ’n kontrakteurgedrewe benadering gebruik, bevestig dat beter behuisingsresultate verkry is in die geval van die laissezfaire selfhelp voorbeeld (groter huise, meer aanbou-aktiwiteite).

Teen hierdie agtergrond doen die proefskrif aan die hand dat regeringsamptenare fasiliteerders eerder as dominante rolspelers moet word in die toepassing van selfhelpbehuising, verbruikersopvoedingsprogramme moet beklemtoon en aangewend word as ’n middel om gemeenskapsdeelname en –bemagtiging te verhoog, die klem op die persoonlike arbeidsinset (*sweat equity*) in die selfhelpmeganisme moet heroorweeg word die selfhelpmeganisme moet inherent ’n sekere mate van informaliteit aanvaar, die regering moet verantwoordbaarheid en toesig verseker sonder om staatsgefinansierde selfhelpbehuisingsprojekte noodwendig te beheer, en die klem ten opsigte van selfhelp moet geplaas word op die aanvaarding van behuising as ’n proses eerder as ’n eenmalige aktiwiteit.

Sleutelterme: selfhelpbehuising, gemeenskapsbehuisingproses, lae-inkomstebehuising, behuisingsondersteuningsentra