THE EFFECTS OF HOUSING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN THE GAUTENG PROVINCE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

• Since 1994 when the democratic political dispensation commenced in South Africa – and even now, years later – policy interventions intended to mitigate poor housing provision are yet to yield sufficient positive outcomes.

• In this article the relevant literature as well as the legislative/historical and administrative framework of housing policy in South Africa is reviewed. The design and methodology of the research that was undertaken are outlined to justify the methodological trajectory pertaining to data collection and sampling.

• After the results and discussions emanating from primary data, recommendations are put forward.
Global approaches in developing national public housing policies

- The literature reveals that affordable housing is less popular than private housing in developed countries, probably because low-income households are usually in the minority. On the contrary, South Africa's public housing structure is more popular than private housing, even in urban townships and informal settlements. Affordable housing is provided to low-income households, which (these households) form the majority. Government intervention in South Africa differs from that in the United States of America (USA). In the USA there is less involvement on the part of government in the provision of public housing while in South Africa government intervention is more intense as the provision of public housing in its entirety is centralised (Mackay, 1999).
LITERATURE REVIEW AND LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK...

- In the USA, one of the most positive trends of housing provision during the period 1970-2000 was the decentralisation of housing construction to municipalities and the deracialisation of the housing policy approach, which increased the provision of public housing (Fuerst, 1974; Urban Foundation, 1993; Banks and Banks, 2004).
- In Great Britain, government intervention in public housing provision has been an important part of the British housing policy. Innovative approaches to providing housing, including those of banks and building societies, are also regarded as 21st century measures for reducing homelessness. However, Great Britain still requires two million houses, which means about 240 000 new dwelling units per annum between 1991 and 2011 (Balchin, 1996; Malpaas & Means, 1996; Malpaas and Murie, 1999; Malpaas, 2005).
In Brazil, the number of households in *favelas* (informal settlements) since the 1950s increased gradually, especially in cities such as Rio de Janeiro, to about 25 per cent of households in the population. In 1964 the National Housing Bank (BNH) was developed to facilitate and promote home ownership among low-income households.

Reiff and Barbosa (2002: 257) argue that in order to enhance the public housing policy, the project called ‘Estimates of the stock of capital and wealth of Brazil (1970-1999) and applications in the analysis of public and regional policies’ were initiated. The project was intended to estimate the value of the capital stock and wealth in Brazil according to categories (residential, non-residential, machinery and equipment, domestic and imported), productive sectors (industry, agriculture and infrastructure), property (government, government-owned enterprises and private companies and families) and location (states and municipalities).
• In Zambia, during the period 1963-1970, the Lusaka City Council provided low-cost council housing in high-income areas to high-income households. This approach excluded households in squatter settlements in that they remained outside the network of city infrastructure. The housing conditions in Zambia remain a factor for concern since the last effort to build houses was during the early and mid-1970s. The government does not provide or build houses and therefore poor families (who are in the majority) are unable to afford houses at market value or market prices (Rodgerson, 1990; Mulenga, 2003).
In South Africa, various mechanisms have been proposed since 1910 to tackle the public housing issue. The South African model in public housing has come to be distinguished by its emphasis on strengthening housing development as a solution to the housing problems of the country caused by the segregation policy that was developed at a national and provincial level of government after 1948.

Since 1994, the Gauteng housing policy has been shaped by the national housing policy, or else it would be regarded as unconstitutional. According to the policy approach adopted in 1994 more houses were built, but the poor quality of workmanship caused the government more problems. Subsequently, the quality-driven approach was adopted instead (Rodgers, 1980; Morris, 1981; De Loor, 1992).
A popular trend influencing public housing policy in all countries is the urbanisation which normally causes regional imbalances for both urban and rural areas. In urban areas, there are usually massive migrations from rural areas (and from other neighbouring countries in the case of Gauteng) which often lead to overpopulation where the public housing supply does not match the rapid growth in households needing accommodation.

These conditions make it difficult for the Gauteng provincial government to formulate a public housing policy that could successfully address pertinent problems since situations such as urbanisation are social, complex and unpredictable.
Legislative/historical guidelines and strategies of public housing policy

- Changes observed in history are essential in providing the evolution of the public housing policy approaches from 1948 until 2010. For the purposes of this article, it was necessary to observe changes in history in order to suggest necessary interventions to address public housing problems. In this respect Jacobs (1987:132) states that an examination of historical archive documents such as policy papers and internal reports are the richest sources of data for the housing policy researcher. This argument is supported by the Housing Act 107 of 1997 which mentions the examination and repealing of certain laws (such as the Housing Act 4 of 1966, the Slums Act 76 of 1949 and the Development and Housing Act 103 of 1985 by Section 20 of the Housing Act 107 of 1997) either partly or completely.
Administrative framework for the implementation of the national public housing policy in the post-1994 political dispensation

- The administrative reforms between 1994 and 2010 for addressing the constraints impeding public housing development are considered. Some of the observed shifts include the adoption of a quality approach rather than a quantity-driven approach.
- The government’s Breaking New Ground (BNG) initiative is considered to be mainly a broadened agenda but not a new approach to public housing delivery.
- With regard to the institutional framework, both the national Department of Human Settlements and the Gauteng Department of Human Settlements structures are criticised as outdated. The DoHS should not only address housing matters but also water, roads and transport, health, etc. We know this is not the case now.
A qualitative research approach was followed. In this domain several tools, such as exploratory research, grounded theory, semi-structured personal interviews, and focus group discussions, can be used. These aspects are discussed below, together with the sampling approach.

Qualitative research should be regarded as a multi-perspective approach to social interaction (using different qualitative techniques and data collection methods), aimed at describing and making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meaning that the subject attaches to it (Schurink, 1998).
• Babbie (2001) agrees that among other reasons for undertaking exploratory studies there is a need to satisfy the researcher’s curiosity and desire for better understanding.

• Grounded theory is a qualitative inquiry method that looks systematically at qualitative data aiming at the generation of theory that accounts for a pattern of behaviour that is relevant and problematic for those involved (Tavakol, Torabi and Zeinaloo, 2006).

• Semi-structured personal interviews were conducted to allow for interaction between the researcher and the respondents as well as for follow-up questions to be posed to respondents. Semi-structured personal interviews with senior officials, specialists and experts from the national Department of Human Settlements were arranged as well as with academics, and persons from non-governmental organisations to verify, interpret and clarify supplementary data.
• Focus group discussions (interviews) were used in this study to improve the data collected by other means. A discussion of the selection of the focus groups follows and is related to the entire population and the sample of the study on which this article is based.

• Snowball sampling was adopted in the research on which this article is based. This sampling method considers how research subjects are recruited and then asked to help recruit additional subjects. The advantage of this sampling method is that it can build up sample sizes quickly and identify subjects that are hard to locate (Ellis, 1994). This method was used during the facilitation of both the semi-structured personal interviews and the focus group discussions. Purposive sampling on the basis of knowledge of the population and the purpose of the study was also applied to complement the snowballing approach.
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Topic 1: The influence of international practices on the development and implementation of the national public housing policy in South Africa

- When the three focus groups responded to this question, they generally held similar views regarding whether the housing policy in South Africa should consider global experiences. Respondents also felt that if the experiences of other countries are considered in South Africa, more knowledge on what works and what does not could be shared.

- They were positive about considering the policies of other countries and felt it was necessary to learn about how a policy is adjusted to cater for the growing population. Some areas also included those policies that do not promote dependency on the state and a lack of responsibility on the part of communities.

- One respondent who cautiously opposed the general trend of the answers said, ‘I believe that the context approach is difficult to deal with because it needs to include budget constraints and policy appropriateness.’
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION...

Topic 2: Historical overview of the development and governance of national public housing policy on pre-1994

- The three focus group responses as summarised here indicate several challenges that were experienced before 1994 in South Africa. A myriad of problems were identified which included a lack of adequate housing provision suitable for urban dwellers. Other problems that were discussed were urban migration, the high unemployment rate and the apartheid city with skewed or segregated settlement patterns which are the problems of the apartheid policy that retained its legacy in post-1994 South Africa.

- The respondents’ discussion presented above indicates that the majority agreed on the current challenges that are similar to those in pre-1994 South Africa. This, situation articulates an imbalance in the manner in which housing provision was undertaken in the past.
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION...

**Topic 3: The guidelines and features of the national public housing policy**

- The focus group responses were generally congruent since they had been attending workshops and seminars to familiarise themselves as officials in the Gauteng province with the existing guidelines and policy frameworks. However, respondents cautioned that these workshops and seminars had not always translated into housing delivery, since the current public housing delivery rate had been sluggish.

- The above responses have highlighted the important issue that public officials are aware of the existence of policy frameworks, but do not necessarily take such frameworks into consideration during policy implementation processes. This situation prevails although officials attend workshops and seminars intended to create awareness of the existing policies and to enhance their skills.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

• Certain factors that limited the study should be taken into consideration.
• To understand areas of possible enhancement of the national housing policy in Gauteng, continuous engagement among the different government agencies implementing public housing policies is strongly recommended. This type of arrangement could also form platforms for information exchange and identify new trends, challenges and solutions.
• It is recommended that education and training activities form a key part of empowering public housing officials in Gauteng. For example, bursaries could be made available for housing officials to enrol with higher education institutions to acquire relevant housing-related qualifications, and regular workshops, retreats and awareness campaigns should be offered.
• Finally, emphasis should be placed on ensuring that public housing officials understand the policy imperatives that require implementation.
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SOCIAL HOUSING – “THE WAY FORWARD”