

## **-1.0 Chap I: Introduction -Presentation of the topic and its context**

### ***1.1: Presentation of the topic***

Self-Help Housing (SHH), or “Self-build”, is generally regarded as the alternative to conventional public housing, and is considered as “the non-conventional housing policies” (Ramirez et al, 1992: 101). It is acknowledged that such a policy is the expression of the inability of the government to provide adequate housing to all its citizens. For Marcuse, “Self-help emerges as government policy where redistribution and social equity are low priorities” (Marcuse, 1992: 21). It may be argued that if housing is a need (Fordham et al, 1998) that must be met, in the incapacity of the government, especially in developing countries, to provide housing to all its citizens<sup>1</sup> (Eugen, 2001), poor people do not have any other alternative than to satisfy their housing need alone. Indeed, as Schutz observes, “hundreds of thousands of families in the Third World are building shelter for themselves with their own hands” (Schutz, 1992: 235).

It appears that SHH is a tool or a strategy that poor people, especially in developing countries, utilize for solving their housing need. In other words, rich people throughout the World do not face the same difficulty as poor people to solve their housing need. In fact, “rich people in any society can afford choices in space provision, material and finishes, levels of services and utilities, and all the other components of housing” (Tipple et al, 1992: 283). In addition, Angel (2000b) agrees with this issue when he advocates that the housing problem is more specific to poor people, as rich people do not experience a housing problem at the level of basic needs.

Given what is said above, SHH strategy is a manifestation of the situation of a housing crisis. For Harms, SHH policies “have always emerged in situations of economic and political crisis within capitalism” (quoted in Fiori et al, 1992:

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<sup>1</sup> The right to everyone to access to adequate shelter is recognized Chapter XI of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, UNCHS Habitat II (1996) and all the democratic constitutions including South Africa (Chap II section 26).

24). This research report pursues the SHH debate and seeks to identify the main causes of the failure of SHH in South Africa, adopted in the form of People's Housing Process (PHP). Indeed, like other developing countries, South Africa faces a severe housing crisis. An important number of South Africans, especially those living in townships, either live in bad housing conditions or do not have shelter at all. This is well documented in Olufemi (2000: 224) who points out that "in South Africa there are about 3 million homeless people and about 8 million people who are shack dwellers". In addition, the greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council estimates that there are about 12 000 homeless people in Johannesburg (Shibambu, 1996 quoted in Olufemi, 2000: 224).

It is arguable that in South Africa, the failure of conventional housing policy and the housing shortage, observed in the extension of informal settlements do not stimulate the implementation of SHH. This is in contrast to developed countries after the first and the Second World War on which such policies are modeled. This research seeks to establish the main causes of the unsuccessful implementation of PHP in South African Urban areas. In addition, through the literature review which offers abundant cases of successful<sup>2</sup> implementation of SHH strategies throughout the world, I will sketch the criteria for a successful implementation of SHH.

The research shows that there are two main actors in the process of a successful implantation of SHH: Government and community as the beneficiaries. The effective combination of these two actors can provide a sustainable development which is defined as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987: 43). Development obtained without community participation is likely to fail. Indeed, such development only produces economic growth and does not adequately focus on the improvement of communities living conditions. This

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<sup>2</sup> SHH is defined in this research as successful, if it provides an important number of adequate houses to poor households in comparison with conventional programme, allows social inclusion of poor, etc. In a few words, I define SHH as successful, if it allows empowering poor households.

kind of development was initiated by the advocates of the theory of modernization and currently by the neo-liberals. As a result, this development creates and deepens inequalities in the society in building a considerable gap between rich people and poor people.

In South Africa for example, where neo-liberal policies are adopted through GEAR<sup>3</sup> (Growth Employment and Redistribution), the country continues to have one of the highest Gini coefficients. In terms of income, the “gap is vast with household subsistence levels situated at less than \$200/month. This results in a situation where the poorest 20% of households (equivalent to 27% of the population), account for less than 3% of total income levels, whilst the richest 20% of households, (equivalent to less than 3% of the population) account for 65% of total income production” (Wits University Graduate School of Public and Development Management).

In turn development which seeks to ignore the major role of the government will only produce the expansion of informality and illegality. This means that a sustainable development must result from the interaction and collaboration between the government and the community. This is well-documented in Giddens (1984) who seeks to establish the way a given society should work. In his theory of structuration, he argues that we cannot understand the dynamic of life by looking at the individuals only, which he calls “micro-level activity”. Likewise, we cannot explain the social life in only focusing on the structures of the society that he names “macro-level”. There is, according to Giddens, a relationship between individuals and institution and such a relationship is situated in a given space and precise time.

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<sup>3</sup> This is a programme adopted by the South African government related to neo-liberal policies. This programme comprises 4 objectives, namely: “a competitive fast growing economy which creates jobs for all work-seekers, a redistribution of income and opportunities geared towards the poor, a society in which sound health, education and other services are available to all and an environment in which homes are secure and places of work are productive” (Stavrou, 2001)

Although there are many forms of SHH (see chapter III), this research will more specifically focus on the mode of SHH that involves the government efforts and the participation of the community or the beneficiaries. This kind of SHH is acknowledged under the appellation of “State SHH”. SHH which was adopted as policy by the World Bank around 1970s for solving housing conditions of poor people in developing countries, is defended by neo-liberals of whom Turner and Mathey are the main supporters, and criticized by Marxists view of whom Burgess is the main pioneer,

## ***1.2: Rationale and Problem Statement***

This research report deals with three problems identified which, in principle, should foster the expansion or the widespread use of SHH if they are overcome. These problems are the following:

- a) Twelve years after the adoption of housing policy, a significant number of South Africans are either in bad housing conditions or do not have shelter (Olufemi, 2000);
- b) The houses delivered by RDP<sup>4</sup> (Reconstruction Development Programme) lack quality and are badly located<sup>5</sup>.
- c) The incapacity of the government alone to provide adequate solutions to people’s housing needs (Mthembi-Mahanyele, 1996).

Given these problems identified above, it is our concern, through research, to find out the main reasons which prevent the expansion or the widespread use of SHH in South Africa and in turn contribute the improvement of low-income housing conditions.

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<sup>4</sup> The reconstruction Development programme (RDP) initiated in 1994 by the Post-Apartheid government aims to correct the unjust system, especially the access to basic needs created by the Apartheid regime. For Urban Development Framework (1987), RDP seeks to help poor South Africans to meet their basic needs and a sustainable development.

<sup>5</sup> Many authors have shown that it deepens the segregation created and planned under the apartheid regime and reinforces the vulnerabilities of poor people as they are isolated from the centre of economic activities (Huchzermeyer, 2002a and 2003a; Baumann, 2003).

## **1.3: Research questions**

### **1.3.1 The main research question**

Why do the failure of low-cost housing (often identified with low-quality) and the housing shortage in South Africa not stimulate a widespread use of aided or assisted Self-Help Housing?

### **1.3.2. Sub-research questions**

- Is SHH possible in South Africa?
  
- Is SHH desirable in South Africa?
  
- How can a successful form of SHH be attained?

## **1.4: Aims and objectives**

- a) To analyze the reasons why the failure of the implementation of low-cost housing does not boost a legalized SHH known as PHP in South Africa, specifically in urban areas.
  
- b) To inform policy-makers so that they can properly address the real problems characterizing South African housing policy in order to provide adequate responses.
  
- c) To develop an approach for a successful PHP (See Mathey, 1992; Schulist, 2002; Dingle, 1999, etc.).
  
- d) To use successful cases of SHH to analyze the dismal failure of PHP in Tembisa, one of the South African townships.
  
- e) To understand perceptions of SHH by beneficiaries of low-cost housing in South Africa.

## ***1.5: Hypothesis***

An important number of authors agree that the successful SHH can be attained with the support of government and the active participation of the community. Harvey (1989) suggests that the government must become entrepreneur. This means that the government must “forge dreams that have little to do with their available resources” (Lamberti, 2002). In becoming entrepreneur, the government should essentially provide real services such as education, viable and accessible housing finance system, make sure that the access to land is not over complicated, etc.

Referring to Harvey (1989) the main hypothesis formulated in this research is that with finance and technical assistance, almost everyone may be able to build his or her own house (see Schulist, 2002).

## ***1.6: Research Methodologies***

### **1.6.1. Theoretical Review**

Regarding theoretical review, in this research, I firstly explore liberal and neo-liberalist thoughts (Chapter II) which welcome SHH practice (Rawls, 1972; Turner, 1972). In addition, it will also bring into question the understanding of some concepts such as “need”, “poverty” and “social inequality” which give rise to SHH practice. Secondly, in Chapter III, I will be analyzing a range of literature (articles and chapters) related to the broad concept of SHH. This is, on the one hand, for the purpose of addressing a definition of SHH (Burgess, 1985; Harms, 1992); on the other hand to examine critiques formulated against SHH (See Burgess, 1985 and 1992; Marcuse, 1992); the last element explored is some successful case studies of SHH. These serve to analyze (see Chapter IV) the failure of PHP in Tembisa and to propose some solutions (in chapter V) for a successful PHP in South Africa.

### **1.6.2. Theoretical Framework**

As theoretical framework, in this research I understand SHH, particularly State SHH, as the result of People’s self-determination and the government efforts to assist people to meet their housing need. This research has for its starting point the interaction of the government and the community as the key

components of a successful SHH. Despite government efforts to avoid illegality and informality, I consider in this research beneficiaries as the main or the principal actor in SHH. This is well documented in Marcuse:

“God helps those that help themselves. They are efficient: people work better, harder, when they work for themselves. They are economical: people use their own resources, and do not call on those of government. They are aesthetic: people can express themselves in their housing, and diversity flowers. They contribute to economic development: Skills learned and investments made can be translated into outside income and economic opportunity. They foster freedom, self-expression, self-confidence, control over one’s own environment: neither the heavy hand of government nor the light hand of the market dictates how people will live. They are flexible and promote innovation: nothing stops individual experimentation. They are democratic: decisions are made directly by those most affected. They can even lead to an expansion of democracy and economic growth in other areas: what people learn in building for themselves can be applied in politics and business too” (Marcuse, 1992: 15).

### ***1.7: Case Study: The failure of the implementation of PHP in Tembisa and its justification***

The practical part of this research deals with the failure of PHP in Tembisa, one of South Africa’s Townships (see chapter IV). There are two main reasons that have motivated the choice of Tembisa. On the one hand, Tembisa is among the largest Townships in South Africa<sup>6</sup>. On the other hand, Tembisa is one of the sites where PHP was initiated but did not succeed (see chapter IV). In this sense, the choice of Tembisa is motivated by the desire to know the reasons that contribute to the failure of implementing SHH policy in South Africa in general and in urban areas particularly.

### ***1.8: Analysis of SHH in Tembisa***

Some authors such as Marais et al have analyzed success cases of SHH in South Africa, particularly in Bloemfontein (see Marais et al, 2003). This was for the purpose of emphasizing the personal satisfaction of the beneficiaries in comparison with houses built by the government alone. However, many

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<sup>6</sup> This is especially in terms of the population which is about a half a million of people.

researchers fail to analyze unsuccessful cases of implementation of SHH of which Tembisa is one.

In Tembisa, SHH project was initiated under the term “**Vukuzenzele**” which means, “stand-up and do it your self”. Nevertheless, the implementation of this project failed and currently, local authorities only deal with informal settlements and the slow housing delivery through RDP. Chapter four of this research will aim at analyzing the main reasons which explain the failure of the execution of SHH in Tembisa. The findings of this research are obtained through open, deep and ended interviews with local authorities<sup>7</sup>, inhabitants of informal settlements and beneficiaries of RDP houses.

### **1.9: Scope and limitations**

- a) This research is well documented in Kosta Mathey, especially in his book “Beyond Self-Help Housing” which is a compilation of articles regarding SHH. This book presents theoretical propositions about SHH, tested in the National context. It also presents some case studies which provide a deeper understanding of the broad concept of SHH and the criteria for successful implementation of SHH policy.
- b) The understanding of the concept of SHH and the criteria for successful implementation of SHH combined with field research and other interviews give us the opportunity to analyze the failure of the implementation of PHP in Tembisa and to propose solutions for successful implementation of PHP in South Africa.
- c) As I have defined the framework of this research as having two actors: the government and the community or the beneficiaries, I am only concerned in this research with the degree of government involvement and the communities’ participation. It will not however analyze the importance of private sector and NGOs.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Authorities interviewed are two of the councilors of Tembisa.

## **2.0 Chapter II: Concepts which give rise to Self-Help Housing.**

### ***2.1: Introduction of the chapter***

This chapter argues that liberalism, neo-liberalism, poverty, inequality and the need for housing constitute the intellectual basis of SHH. It is acknowledged that individual freedom is the key concept of liberalism and neo-liberalism. In the situation of poverty and inequality associated with the concept of housing need, households, especially in developing countries where governments are unable to provide adequate housing for all citizens, do not have another alternative than to solve their housing need themselves. The aim of this chapter is to outline the main characteristics of liberalism; neo-liberalism; poverty and its associated inequalities; and the concept of housing need; to see how they favour the promotion of SHH.

The assumption in only presenting in this chapter liberalist and neo-liberalist principles is not to deny other existing movement of thought such as Marxism and socialism in South Africa or to neglect their importance. It may be noticed that although the 1994 constitution which currently leads the country is elaborated on liberal and neo-liberal basis, especially the consecration of individuals' freedom and the protection of private property, housing policy and more specifically housing subsidy is elaborated according to socialist basis. This is to say that other movements of thought also influence South African policy-makers in terms of housing. However, as this research focus on the issue of SHH, it is worth noticing that although some socialist countries such as Cuba has adopted SHH as policy, liberalism and neo-liberalist policies may be considered as the more usual promoters of SHH in developing countries.

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<sup>8</sup> Although this research does not widely focus on the importance of private sector and NGOs, it however considers partnership between the public and the private sector as one of the criteria for implementing successfully SHH.

## ***2.2: Liberalism: Principles, strengths and weaknesses***

### **2.2.1: Principles of liberalism**

All the advocates of liberalism such as Kant, Rawls, Nozick, Turner, Hayek, etc. believe that freedom or liberty is the main characteristic and the value that every citizen must enjoy. In his first principle of justice, Rawls argues that “each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others” (Rawls, 1972: 60). Alongside freedom which may be taken as the foundation of liberalism; individualism, property rights, a free market economy, equality of opportunity, and a limited State are also of great importance (Gerber, 1993). For attaining the key role of liberalism, which is freedom for all citizens, proponents of liberalism assign a limited role to the State. Another movement of thought named “libertarianism” which may be considered as a branch of liberalism with focus on property rights, and of which Nozick is the main defender, goes further in arguing that the government must disappear or play a minimal role. In doing so, the citizens can fully exercise their rights of freedom and attain the goal they pursue without any coercion or interference. This means that liberals assign an important role to individuals and reduce the role or the importance of the State. In relation to individuals and State, liberalism may be defined as a:

“search for principles of political justice that will command rational assent among persons with different conceptions of the good life and different views of the world. The conception of human nature which liberalism expresses is the end of a distillation of the modern experience of variety and conflict in moral life: it is the conception of man as being with the moral capacity of forming a conception of the good life and the intellectual capacity of articulating that conception in a systematic form” (Gray, 1986: 91).

The main principles of liberalism are well-documented in Martinez and Garcia (2005) and those directly related to State and individuals may be summarized as following:

- Freedom or liberty is the basis of liberalism; and principles should be focused and based on it. This is why Martinez and Garcia affirm that freedom may even be taken as liberalism itself.

- A liberal State should not elaborate a plan that every citizen must follow in the society. In other words, the government, according to liberals, must not enforce a conception of good<sup>9</sup> that every citizen must follow. However, the government should rather leave to everyone living in the society the responsibility to determine what is good for him/her.

Through these two principles presented above, it may be noticed that freedom and the rejection of paternalism appearing in the rejection of conformism and conception of good are essential to liberalism; and the diminished role of State is its logical consequence. Liberal principles presented above raise questions of the role of State in general and in relation with housing in particular.

### **2.2.2 The role of the State according to liberal thought**

According to classical liberals, such as Rawls, the State should not be directly concerned with the people's welfare. It must, however, seek to create a workable society founded on principles of justice. This is to say that "liberal government cannot be other than limited government, since all strands within the liberal tradition confer upon person's rights or claims in justice which government must acknowledge and respect and which, indeed may be invoked against government" (Gray, 1986: 73).

Also, the diminished role of government actually appears in democratic constitutions. In fact, in all democratic constitutions, prerogatives of government are well defined and consequently it limits the role of government so that the government can act in a well defined framework that avoids arbitrary and unreasonable policies (Hopkins, 2003). Other advocates of liberalism argue that the role of the State is to serve the interests of all the people, and not a just single class or group (Gerber, 1983). This means that the goal of the liberal State is to create justice which guarantees the freedom

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<sup>9</sup> The conception of good is considered as a view of the best way to live. This conception of good also takes in its account happiness, welfare, virtue, piety, meaning, or intrinsic value.

of all citizens. The freedom is considered as a framework in which every citizen has to pursue his goal. It may be argued that a liberal state is a “society of largely free or ungoverned or only self-governed, independent individuals, living together under and jointly supporting a small, simple, inexpensive government having only a quite limited sphere of authority or a few quite limited powers and functions” (Taylor, 1960: 7). The State intervention in a liberal State must be as little as possible and coercion should be used if and only if other freedoms are violated. This liberal conception of State is associated with the concept of “laissez-faire” which is defended by Adam Smith (Gray, 1986).

Turner (1972) espouses liberal thought when he argues that the role of the State is to help people to be the main actors of housing process. In sum, the role of the State according to liberal thought may be summarized as a search for:

“a legal order or system of law or legal justice which should impartially protect or enforce the equal and reciprocal rights and duties among all and prevent, with the minimal or most humane, sufficient, deterrent penalties, all commissions by anyone or advancing special interests in ways involving injustices or injuries to others or the common welfare” (Taylor, 1960: 96-97).

In other words, the specific role that liberals assign to the State is to seek the general interest of the whole society (Burgess, 1985).

Despite the limited role that the State must play, advocates of liberalism argue that the State must “have certain wholly positive functions as part of the task of maintaining a free order” (Gray, 1986: 80). In relation to housing, a liberal State may play the role of facilitator through organizing and planning.

### **2.2.2.a The State organizing housing activities**

In a liberal State, the role of organizing housing activities is especially done through laws which must be elaborated according to the principles of justice

(see Rawls, 1972 especially in his principles of justice)<sup>10</sup>. This role may be operated by the State in providing real services such as education which allows citizens to know the laws ruling housing issues. Real services also include housing finance which must be accessible to every citizen, especially low-income people. Likewise, if the State wants to properly play its role of organizing housing activities, it should also facilitate the access to land so that the low-income, like other income groups, can easily access land (Payne, 1999). The State may successfully organize housing activities in accordance with liberal thought if it creates a comprehensive and just framework which allows every one without any discrimination (race, sex, religion, etc) in the country to fairly exercise his housing right.

### **2.2.2.b The State in the role of planning housing activities**

It must be acknowledged that for the advocates of liberal thoughts, the State plays the role of planning especially as facilitator and not as the main actor. This role of the State is well documented in Nientied et al (1988: 11). These authors argue that “the government has to provide, and actively protect, access to the elements of housing process for users. These elements include land, laws, building materials, tools, credit, know-how, etc.” The principle of fair opportunities should guide the planning of housing process. This principle States that: “Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged<sup>11</sup> so that they are both: (a) to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle, and (b) attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity” (Rawls, 1972: 60).

Referring to this principle, successful planning should not become a tool of discrimination or segregation as it was during apartheid regime in South Africa (see Huchzermayer, 2003a; Schlongonyne et al, 2004; Mabin, 1995, etc)

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<sup>10</sup> Rawls has elaborated two main principles of justice. The first is in relation to freedom which every citizen must enjoy and the second is about the fair opportunities of chance. The second principle has, according to Rawls, the aim of avoiding discrimination and inequalities in the society.

<sup>11</sup> Rawls does not ignore in some cases the existence of inequality within the society. This may look contradictory to main principles of liberalism to which he belongs. However, Rawls' innovation is his second principle of justice which is that inequality, if it happens, should allow poor people to acquire what he calls basic needs. This is why Rawls is considered as egalitarian.

which deliberately sought to dominate black people in locating them in the poor land and separate them from the centre of economic activities. As Younge (1999: 3) put it:

“Urban planning during the apartheid era suffered from ‘top down’ planning processes, aimed at segregation settlements, at disempowering certain racial groups economically, and at rigid control over land use in order to protect White residential areas from incursion by commercial and industrial uses”.

In a few words, successful planning which is based on Rawls’ second principle of justice seeks to empower everybody living in the city in allowing him/her to perform politically, economically and socially. It should especially aim at allowing social inclusion. Principles of liberalism in relation to the role of the State present strengths and weaknesses as well. The purpose of the analysis below is to focus on strengths and weaknesses of liberalism.

### **2.2.3. Strengths of liberal thought**

The merit of liberal thought is to place the individual at the centre of their debate. The interest for the human being in general, and for his freedom in particular, is sacrosanct. It has given rise to what humanity holds as the bill of human rights, adopted in all democratic constitutions. Liberal thought empowers individuals and in turn gives them a sense of responsibility so that they can be the main actors of their destiny. Likewise, liberalism brought the concept of participation which is taken as the key component of development success and without which any sustainable or integrated development is impossible.

Related to the housing process, liberal principles and thought are explained in Lankatilleke who argues that: “housing is an activity of the people and not of governments and therefore people should be at the centre of the decision making process” (Lankatilleke, 1990: 24). The reason of why people should be at the centre of decision making may be found in the philosophical concept of individuals. Indeed, for the advocates of liberalism, especially Kant, the individual is conceived as a rational being, capable of pursuing his or her goals, without being coerced, and making good choices for his or her

happiness. This liberal conception of the individual appears in Lankatilleke's (1990: 24) argument when he affirms that "People are resourceful, rich in initiative and creativity and need recognition, encouragement and support. Solutions to problems are found in the hands of the people and not with technocrats, bureaucrats or experts". Friedman (1998) expresses almost the same views as Lankatilleke when he argues that the planner must not only work for people but he/she should work with them.

In sum, liberal thought restores the value of the human being and finds out that a human being cannot be excluded or ignored from the processes concerning him/her. Related to housing process, it has been shown that when people are at the centre of the housing process, they express personal satisfaction and accomplish their housing needs (Turner, 1972 and Marais et al, 2003).

However, the question that arises from liberal thought is whether every citizen living in a society is able, on his/her own, to adequately address his/her housing need without being helped. In addition, one may ask whether personal satisfaction is always in conformity with the satisfaction of the whole community. The merit of liberal thought (personal satisfaction) which gives rise to the practice of SHH constitutes at the same time the main weakness or limits of liberal thought.

#### **2.2.4. Weaknesses of liberal thought**

According to advocates of liberalism, the individual is able by him/herself to define what is good for him/her and finds a better way to attain it. This means that the direct intervention of neighbours or of the society is considered to be useless or unnecessary as the State must create space for individuals through justice and make sure that every citizen is able to attain his/her goal. It appears that "liberalism advocates the free choice of life-style, but it forgets that the choice is to a large extent preempted by the social environment in which people grow up and live" (Ellen, 1986: 98).

Despite the merits of liberal thought enumerated above, liberalism is not directly concerned with people's welfare and looks at only the society as a whole in which all citizens are treated equally. Osborne (1991: 142) criticizes liberalism in averring that it is utopian to claim that "we should all be treated the same". Indeed, "the right to equal treatment before the law will not translate into legal equality, for the laws incorporates the privileges of property, while those with money can ensure more favourable terms".

Most attacks against liberalism come from conservatism and socialism which argue that liberalism, although allowing widespread industrialism, brought "collapse in popular living standards" (Gray, 1986: 84). For Gerber (1983) the limit of liberalism may be situated in the disagreement about precise limits of government's role in the nation's economic life. He points out that although it is a highly developed country, the United States of America (which may be taken as model of liberalism) still faces "high degree of inequality and injustice so long as a relatively small number of American were allowed to claim the rights of private ownerships over the nation's key wealth producing" (Gerber, 1983: 346).

The principal critique which may be formulated against liberal thought is the place of poor people in a liberal society. Indeed, in focusing only on principles that must govern the society, only powerful and rich people are likely to perform effectively and poor people will grow poorer. Although rich in initiative and creativity (see Lankatilleke, 1990 cited above), poor people are unlikely to attain their ends. This is because every citizen living in the community is not able by his/herself to adequately determine him/her goal and attain it. This inability for every citizen to attain his/her goal explains the growing gap observed in liberal society between poor and rich people.

To this critique, the advocates of liberalism would certainly answer in saying that the State should redistribute the wealth in order to give poor people access to basic needs. Besides, as poverty is seen by liberal view as the lack of income, the solution could be to increase the income of workers. These

responses look unsatisfactory and do not address the issues of poverty and inequalities which developing countries face. Indeed, in redistributing the wealth of country to poor people and as everybody must enjoy his freedom (see Rawls' first principle of justice); the State cannot control how beneficiaries use the wealth redistributed. It may happen that poor people use the wealth redistributed for other ends than what for which it was initially allocated. In relation to the second response, developing countries in general, and South Africa in particular, experience a high rate of unemployment and lack of education. This means that in increasing income of the workers, the government will only improve living conditions of some individuals and therefore will deepen and reinforce the gap between poor and rich people. From a Marxist view, the liberal proposal which aims at reducing poverty cannot work and is likely to fail as the liberal view does not identify capitalism as the root of poverty and under-development, and in turn the main cause of inequalities in the society.

In relation to the housing issue, the debate about weaknesses, especially the insignificant place accorded to poor people shows that the housing problem is not specific to housing only. It is rooted in poverty and inequalities (see Angel, 2000b). It may be argued that poor housing conditions is a complex issue and may find a definitive solution only if it is associated with other policies such as poverty alleviation, education, job creation, etc. This amply explains the dismal failure of RDP. In fact, through this policy, South African post-apartheid authorities were more concerned with distributing houses to poor households than providing them with the capacity to maintain their houses and to face other issues such as HIV, jobs, education, etc. As a result, a significant number of beneficiaries of RDP either had sold their houses or had abandoned them (Huchzermeyer, 2003a).

Like liberalism, neo-liberalist policy is another movement of thought which welcomes SHH. The debate below will analyze its main principles and will identify its strengths and weaknesses. This debate will also analyze the role of a neo-liberal State and the place of individuals with particular reference to the housing process.

## **2.3: Neo-liberal thought: Principles, weaknesses and strengths**

### **2.3.1 The main principles of neo-liberalist thought**

This movement of thought may be considered as the application of liberal principles in the economic life of a society. Alongside freedom which is the key concept of liberalism, neo-liberalism stresses the concept of free-market or free trade. The concept of **free-market**, essential to neo-liberalism is in fact “an application in the sphere of economic life of the conviction that human society is likely to do best when men are left free to enact plans of life unconstrained except by the rule of law” ( Gray, 1986). The principles of neo-liberal thought may be summarized as following:

- The market, which is the central element of neo-liberalism, should be free. It is therefore defined as “a mechanism which allows people to trade, normally governed by the theory of supply and demand, so allocating resources through a price mechanism and bid-and-ask matching so that those willing to pay a price for something meet those willing to sell for it” (Hall and Lieberman, 2004) . This means that the regularization should not be subject to any interference and it obeys only its own rules of supply and demand.
- In contrast to the liberalist view which claims a limited role for the State, neo-liberalism advocates the non-interference of the government in the economic sphere. Privatization is the main consequence of this principle. Indeed, neo-liberalists believe that the “privatization of State production and some service provision would increase efficiency and output growth” (Colclough, 1991: 19).
- The competition which characterizes the market should bring creativity, good quality of products presented within the market and the opportunity for every body to bring his or her goods and services into the market.

- Development should not be based on poverty alleviation. It should, however, focus on economic growth which in turn will result in poverty eradication (see Colclough, 1991).

The main principles of neo-liberalism presented above may be summarized in these words:

“Neo-liberalism is a philosophy in which the existence and operation of a market are valued in themselves, separately from any previous relationship with the production of goods and services and without any attempt to justify them in terms of their effect on the production of goods and services; and where the operation of a market or market-like structure is seen as an ethic in itself, capable of acting as a guide for all human action, substituting for all previously existing ethical beliefs” (Martinez, 2004).

Referring to the housing process, neo-liberalism with its belief in the non-interference of the government would support SHH. However, the non-interference of the government in economic activities raises the question of the specific role of the neo-liberal State in general and the role of the State in the housing process in particular.

### **2.3.2: The role of the neo-liberal State**

The role of neo-liberal State is not very different from a liberal State. Both liberalism and neo-liberalism have, as a starting point, the freedom that every citizen must enjoy and the concept of the individual conceived as a rational being capable of making right choices and finding the best way to attain his/her goals. Given the role attributed to individuals, liberals argue that there is no alternative for the State than to play a limited role in social life. If the advocates of liberalism recognize a limited role for the State, those who defend neo-liberalism declare that the State must not intervene in economic life at all. Does this mean that the government should completely disappear, as some liberals such as Nozick advocate? If the government completely disappears, it may result in a state of anarchy or we can go back to what

philosophers call the “*state of nature*”<sup>12</sup>.

Some defenders of neo-liberalism argue that the State should not disappear and they assign to the State the role of referee. This is well explained in Turner (1972) when he argues that the State must allow households to solve their housing problems themselves. The argument which may be advanced to support Turner’s statement or the role that the neo-liberals attribute to the State is that no one knows better real needs or concerns of individuals than individuals themselves.

Hayek (1949), one of the advocates of neo-liberalism, claims that the State is desirable only if it protects individuals’ interests. It clearly appears that the main role of the neo-liberal State is to create laws in which every individual can realize his or her dreams. In relation to the market, the central element of neo-liberalism, the government must make the market work better. Carruthers and Babb (2000: 164) summarise the role of the liberal State in these terms: “governments make laws for governing the market, provide regulatory agencies and courts for enforcing rules and adjudicating conflicts, and penalize those who violate the rules”. Moreover, the government must support competition and enforces laws which protect individuals’ rights and avoid fraud. The role of the State is reduced to protecting individuals’ rights and allowing competition in the society. This limited State role is often called “*laissez-faire*”.

Referring to the housing process, neo-liberal proponents will assign to the State the role of organizing the housing process, not as the main actor but as facilitator. The process of land acquisition, housing finances, construction, etc., should be opened to the market. Likewise, the neo-liberal State will encourage individuals without coercing them and forcing them to create better

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<sup>12</sup> The state of nature is considered by some philosophers such as Rousseau, Locke and Hobbes as before the existence of authority. If Rousseau presents the state of nature as the state where human being is not corrupted by private property, Hobbes considered this state as the state of anarchy in which there are no rules to protect human beings. Thus, the state of nature is for Hobbes the worst state that all rational human beings must necessarily avoid.

housing conditions for themselves. This limited role of the State or laissez-faire presents some advantages and weaknesses as well.

### **2.3.3 Strengths of neo-liberalism**

As the intervention of government in economic sphere is seen by advocates of neo-liberalism as the main cause of underdevelopment (Colclough, 1991), and as they propose the reduction of government intervention in education, health and social services (Kaber et al, 1991) it may be supposed that the government may well play the role of referee. In addition, the non intervention of government in the economic sphere may also allow the investment in hard infrastructure such as its communication system, airport, etc. In a few words, the non direct intervention of government is understood, according to neo-liberal advocates, as the main prerequisite of economic growth. In developing countries where the economic growth is imperceptible neo-liberals believe that “the state is doing too much, that public expenditures must be reduced if growth is to accelerate” (Colclough, 1991: 16).

It may also be argued that neo-liberal strategies about laissez-faire economy may find moral basis. In fact, as Marcuse (1992: 15) argues, “God helps those that help themselves”. Neo-liberals would encourage individuals to be main actors of development, to be creative and initiators of development projects. Competition is the term used and the reality which explains that in the neo-liberal State individuals are free to undertake development projects, to present their goods and services. If the competition is reliable, it will stimulate individuals to get specialized skills in order to better respond to the criteria of competition. The main advantage of competition is that it fosters individuals to give the best of themselves. In addition, it avoids mediocrity and inefficiency in the society. As remarks Gerber (1983), the stimulation of the elite has permitted the United States of America to become the most economically powerful country in the World. It may be argued that neo-liberalist policies stimulate real economic growth. However, neo-liberalist policies do not go without serious critiques. The discourse below will emphasize the weaknesses of neo-liberalist ideology.

### **2.3.4 Weaknesses of neo-liberalist principles**

The main critique that I would like to formulate against neo-liberal policy is the justification of inequality and the growing poverty in developing countries. It may be observed in neo-liberal States that only the elite are likely to perform and markets of good jobs and opportunities are not opened to those who are not competitive. The response to the question of why there are inequalities and poverty in societies, including developed countries such as USA, becomes simple and obvious. Individuals who constitute the elite or those who are skilled, rich and powerful are competitive and in fact, may bring into the market their goods, services or qualified skills. In turn, some individuals are poor, weak and lack influence because they cannot bring something consistent or significant into the market. As a result, they will grow poorer. This means that neo-liberals judge individuals under the criteria of competence and power. In other words, an individual is appreciated and considered in the society insofar as he/she is able to compete in the market

Alongside the justification of inequalities and poverty the conception of economic growth which in turn, according to neo-liberals, should bring poverty alleviation does not go without being challenged. In practice this principle is not applied. Nowadays we observe throughout the world that neo-liberalism with its belief in economic growth did not succeed. On the contrary the number of poor people in developing countries where neo-liberal policy is implemented is increasing. Only competitive people may profit from economic growth. As Bauman (1998: 4) observes, “the direct benefits of economic growth have tended to be distributed in favour of the already excessively wealthy members of the community and as a result ‘the poor get poorer, the very rich... get richer still’”(quoted in Smart, 2003: 44). In contrast, poor people who are supposed to be the beneficiaries of development growth become the victims of neo-liberalist policy. This explains the shift by the World Bank around 1970s in instituting the implementation of Local Economic Development and in announcing that “the development record should be

judged not by economic growth but by the extent to which poverty was reduced in the world” (Colclough, 1991: 5).

The last critique that I would like to stress in this debate regarding neo-liberalism is the place or the future of poor people in the neo-liberal State. Neo-liberals believe that poor people will improve their living conditions once economic growth is attained. Indeed, according to neo-liberals, economic growth will automatically bring investors and in turn will attract capital flow. This is partially true. Nevertheless, most poor people in developing countries are unskilled as they do not improve their education for one reason or another. It may be observed in developing countries that “schooling is too costly to expand coverage to all who need it, resources are inefficiently used and benefits are disproportionately captured by the richer group in society” (Colclough, 1991b: 210). In a neo-liberal State poor people are unlikely to find a good job. Indeed, as Baumann (2003) argues, it is almost impossible for an enterprise to employ uneducated people. In sum, poor people do not have a better future in a neo-liberal State, unless they improve their level of education and become competitive. This is because in a neo-liberal State, good education is a function of a good job.

Related to housing, in a neo-liberal State where the State must reduce its intervention in social services and keep a distance from economic activities, poor people who cannot compete in the market do not have another alternative than practicing spontaneous SHH. As poor people suffer from the lack of education (see the argumentation above), they will be likely to violate State laws in, for example, invading public or private land for the purpose of housing. This violation of land has happened in South Africa (see Huchzermeyer, 2003b). The question which arises from this debate related to neo-liberal policy is whether or not poverty alleviation and adequate housing solutions for poor households may be achieved without the intervention of the State. This debate has shown that without State intervention only richer and more powerful groups can attain their ends. This explains my interest in State aided SHH. Indeed, a successful aided SHH combines the participation of the State and the involvement of beneficiaries. This process may bring about

personal satisfaction of individuals and adequate housing solutions for poor people.

The rest of the debate in this chapter will look at inequalities, poverty and the concept of need which, like liberalism and neo-liberalism, welcome the practice of SHH.

## ***2.4: Inequalities***

### **2.4.1 Definitions and overview**

Inequality is the reality that our communities, cities, countries, world face. In relation to the housing issue, it is the situation that explains why some households are living in poor housing conditions while others live in good housing conditions. As Okun (1980: 15) asserts, "inequality is very easy to recognize". Inequality may be generally understood as the differences existing between individuals, cities, communities, countries, etc. It is not only a local reality but also a global phenomenon. It may be observed that some differences existing among individuals are natural (sex, race, etc) and some others are intentionally created in order to dominate or to exclude other individuals from the economic and political life of the society. The vibrant example may be found in South Africa where apartheid was institutionalized as a political system for the purpose of dominating Black people. My concern in discussing this issue is to see how inequalities between individuals may stimulate the practice of SHH.

Inequality is a controversial reality. Indeed, there are two main positions related to this matter. On the one hand, inequality or differences between individuals are necessary and inevitable. As Hurst (1995) argues, society needs sometimes certain kinds of tasks which are useful for the advancement or progress of society. So, the society should encourage those who may perform those special tasks. In this sense, the attempt to eradicate inequalities between individuals living in the society may jeopardize the advancement or the progress of the society. This is a modern explanation of inequality, developed through the theory of functionalism or stratification. This

argument is supported by Tawney (1980) when he argues that the United States of America (USA) is economically the super power in the world because of encouraging people with specialized tasks. Furthermore, Nozick (1974) argues that the attempt by a State to reduce or to eradicate inequalities between individuals cannot be justified morally. In other words, according to Nozick, the State should not intervene to improve housing conditions of poor households in taxing rich people for example. Nozick draws this conclusion from his theory of entitlement<sup>13</sup> which explains how individuals can fairly acquire their properties.

On the other hand some theorists argue that social, political and economic inequalities are not created by differences in individual talents. These are especially the results of an unfair system. As Hurst (1995: 4) argues, "it is the characteristics of the political economy, and the firms and labour market within it, that are primary determinants of differences in income and wealth". In this sense, neo-liberalism which stresses the market as the determinant element may be one of the causes of economic inequalities. Referring to this group of theorists who argue that inequalities are not a result of natural facts but of structures created by individuals for dominating or controlling other individuals, inequalities should be undesirable and therefore the State must seek to reduce or to eradicate them. In South Africa for example, where the level of inequality is high, the post-apartheid government has sought to combat this issue through the implementation of the RDP programme. In sum, for proponents of neo-liberalism, inequality is essential and useful for the progress of society and for others inequality is a consequence of an unjust system: thus, the State should combat it.

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<sup>13</sup> In his theory of entitlement, Nozick explains how individual may obtain his property fairly. The first principle argues that a given property may be acquired if it was not owned before. The second principle starts that individual may also acquire a property through exchange. The third and last principle announces that only through the first and the second principles an individual may fairly obtain a property. These principles constitute the bases of libertarianism, a movement of thought of which Nozick is the main proponent (See Robert Nozick, quoted in Pojman and Westmoreland, 1997: 257).

Tawney (1980) defines a framework in which we need to seek a desirable equality which in fact does not endanger the progress of society. Besides, he also describes unjustifiable inequalities, created by social, political and economic environment and which need to be reduced or eradicated. He proposes the focus on our common humanity as a solution to redress inequalities instead of emphasizing factors which divide individuals such as class, skills, etc. The author understands the desirable equality not as “equality of capacity or attainment, but of circumstances, institutions and manner of life”. In addition, the undesirable and unjustifiable inequality “is not inequality of personal gifts, but of the social and economic environment”. The ideal of society would be that “social institutions - property rights, and the organization of industry, and the system of public health and education - should be planned, as far as is possible, to emphasize and strengthen, not the class differences which divide, but the common humanity which unites them” (Tawney, 1980: 12).

It may be observed that inequality is a complex reality as it is defended by some theorists as necessary for the progress of society and seen by others as a result of unfair structure. This unfair structure aims at favouring some individuals or a group of individuals while leaving others in miserable situations. In addition, the complexity of inequality may also be explained by the fact that it is not only a local reality but also a global phenomenon which should in fact concern humanity in general. The following section will seek to understand inequality at the global level.

#### **2.4.2 Inequality at the Global level**

Inequality is not only a reality concerning individuals within the community or city or country. It is also a global reality (Bradshaw and Wallace, 1996). These authors define our World which indeed is more and more global or unified as an unequal world. In fact, in the world, some countries are rich and give their citizens the opportunity to properly plan their future while some countries are poor and do not provide to their citizens assurance for having a peaceful future. These authors point out some forms of inequalities between poor and rich countries. Firstly, it may be observed throughout the world that the Gross

National Product (GNP) is higher in developed countries than in developing countries. In referring to the World Bank, Woolard (2002) observes that in South Africa, which is a developing country, “7% of the population were living on less than \$ 1 a day in 2000, and ten million people, 23% of the population, on less than \$ 2 a day” (quoted in Gelb, 2004: 2-3). The second form of inequality is population expansion. It is found that the population of developing countries grows faster than the population of developed countries. Although this phenomenon is seen by some authors as the need for urbanization and to correspond to social change<sup>14</sup> (see Tait, 1997), it creates in developing countries some serious issues such as unemployment, migration from rural to urban areas which in turn exacerbate the problem of housing and also poverty (United Nations Human Settlement programme, 2003). The third form of inequality that the authors acknowledge is life expectancy. As it is observed, in poor countries the quality of life is lower than in developed countries. The fourth form of inequality may be found in educational achievement. Here again, poor countries offer fewer opportunities for their citizens to achieve good education through good university and colleges than developed countries. In South Africa for example, as Nelson Mandela, the former president pointed out on the day of local elections (1 March, 2005), lack of education and unemployment remain the main challenges that the country is facing. In addition, Baumaan (2003) notes that in South Africa there is not only the shortage of enterprises but also of qualified skills.

Likewise, Bradshaw et al (1996) also point out political opportunities and freedom as element of inequality between poor and rich countries. According to them, developed countries offer political opportunities and freedom to their citizens through democracy. However, in developing countries there is a tendency for the presidents to remain as long as possible in power and the restriction of fundamental freedoms for their citizens. Finally these authors recognize that some forms of inequalities may not be easily quantified or enumerated. They note for example the ability for the developed countries to deal with new diseases or viruses while in poor countries the lack of

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<sup>14</sup> See for this purpose defenders of the theory of modernization and also the Marxist view about the growing population.

resources and advanced technology do not allow them to intervene as quickly as developed countries. As a result, poor countries must wait for assistance from developed countries.

These forms of inequalities presented above allow us to understand inequalities at the global level and require in turn an effort to create at the global level better environments and chances for every citizen in the world. It may be argued that the recognition for every citizen to have access to adequate housing may be considered as global fight at the global level. However, in looking at inequalities at the global level, there is a risk to go away from inequalities experienced within our concrete living spaces of our cities or our communities. The following section will focus on inequalities within South Africa

### **2.4.3 Inequalities at the local level (in South Africa)**

It may be said that inequality is a serious matter as it affects the life of people in reducing their chance of living in better environment or of having access to adequate shelter (Hurst, 1985). At the local level, Hurst enumerates five kinds of inequality which are: economic; status; gender; racial; and political. South Africa, as Huchzermeyer (2002b) notes, is a developing country which displays a high degree of inequality. The most remarkable among five forms of inequalities enumerated above is racial inequality instituted by the apartheid regime. How did apartheid operate in South Africa and what were the main consequences related to housing?

#### **2.4.3.1 South Africa and racial inequality**

Racial inequality or difference may be objectively considered as a biological or natural phenomenon which explains that some people are black and some others are white or yellow, etc. In this sense, racial difference can be acknowledged and cannot be removed. What is deplorable is that one race considers itself as superior to another race or races. This is the case of South Africa in the past. Apartheid which is the legislated form of racial inequality was adopted as political system in 1948. It was understood as:

“a system of segregation which keeps blacks and whites separate. Blacks were required to live in certain areas and be deprived of formal political rights. As earlier in the American South with Jim Crow laws, Blacks and whites have their own facilities so that contact between the races can be minimized. On the job, Whites typically earn more than 15 times what Blacks earn” (Schaefer, 1988 quoted in Hurst, 1995: 151).

This is an example of income inequalities. In this sense, apartheid may be considered as the fundamental or the main cause of other forms of inequalities observed in South Africa such as social class, status, etc.

In addition, during apartheid time, there was legislation preventing black people from becoming artisans in urban areas. Indeed, Bantu Building Workers Act<sup>15</sup>, Act no 27 of 1951, although allowing black people to be trained as artisans in the building trade, it did not however permit black people to perform any skilled work in urban areas except in those designated for black occupation. To perform in urban areas was considered by apartheid regime as a criminal offence. As a result of this act related to housing, black people could not have access to decent housing in urban areas. Furthermore, as urban areas are seen as centres of politic, economic, social and cultural opportunities, skilled Black people were unlikely to properly develop their skills.

On ethical grounds, apartheid is unjustifiable as it is based on the superiority of white over black, the creation of structure or ideology which aims at supporting White to the detriment of Black. In addition, it does not support the argument of the defenders of inequalities as it does not allow the progress or the advancement of the whole society. It however favoured the White minority and created unhappiness and poverty among the black majority. As Huchzermeyer (2002b) argues, apartheid in South Africa was created and maintained for the purpose of domination or racial control. Although formally ended in 1994 with the election of the African National Congress (ANC) and the establishment of democracy, the consequences of Apartheid are still visible. For the government of the ANC, challenges that currently South Africa

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<sup>15</sup> For the main act of Apartheid , see African History, Apartheid Legislation in South Africa, in <http://africanhistory.about.com/library/bl/blsalaws.htm>

faces such as poverty, unemployment, lack of education, high rate of HIV, issue of housing are merely the relics of apartheid (see Baumann, 2003).

Among the consequences which are still visible: high poverty among black people living in townships and lack of education, I will emphasize those related to housing. There are several factors which do not allow the access to adequate housing for all South African citizens, especially Black South Africans: Difficult access to housing finance, lack of capacity at the level of housing delivery, difficult access to urban land, etc. Are all those factors connected to the consequences of apartheid? This issue will not be discussed in this research. However, it may be argued from data that the access to urban land for poor is one of the consequences of apartheid regime. Chapter Four which is the case study will analyze the issue of accessing to urban land for poor in South Africa.

How does inequality link to the issue of SHH? The last part related to the issue of inequality seeks to establish a relationship between inequality and the rise of SHH practice.

#### **2.4.4: The relationship between inequality and the rise of Self-Help Housing**

As it may be argued, inequality is the cause of the existence of poor housing condition. Huchzermeyer (2002b) has established a closer relationship between inequalities in South Africa and the expansion of informal settlement which is one of the forms of SHH (see Chapter Three). With the lack of adequate housing finance for the poor (Rust, 2002), which is a form of inequality in South Africa and the inability of the government to provide housing for all South Africans, poor people are likely to seek to solve their housing needs themselves. As some authors have argued, SHH is the expression of economic and political crisis or, more explicitly, the expression of inequality. Indeed, in Tembisa, data gathered shows that up to fifteen thousand households, especially poor are on the housing waiting list. This means that if the government cannot find enough finance to subsidize housing in this part of the country, households concerned will either find the way to

solve their housing need or they will simply become homeless. In short, only victims of inequalities, which in South Africa are especially Black, lack enough resources to adequately access housing finance. And the most concerned with this issue are poor households.

It derives that poverty and inequalities go hand in hand. As Huchzermeyer (2002b) argues, informal settlement draws attention to poverty. It may also be argued that poverty is a result and great manifestation of inequality. The following part will analyze the issue of poverty and in turn its relation with the expansion of SHH.

## **2.5: Poverty**

### **2.5.1 Definitions and overview**

Poverty is a broad concept which implies several understandings. It may be considered as the contradiction existing in our cities, countries or world. While some people are living in good housing conditions, some others do not have access to adequate housing or are purely homeless. It is also a vibrant expression of inequality in our living space. Like inequality, poverty is easy to recognize. In South Africa, especially in townships, living conditions of residents reveal a high degree of poverty. According to the World Bank, "Poverty is hunger. Poverty is lack of shelter. Poverty is being sick and not being able to see a doctor. Poverty is not having access to school and not knowing how to read. Poverty is not having a job, is fear for the future, living one day at a time. Poverty is losing a child to illness brought about by unclean water. Poverty is powerlessness, lack of representation and freedom" (<http://web.worldbank.org>). Some schools of thought have established a closer relationship between poverty and underdevelopment<sup>16</sup>.

From liberal view, poverty is understood as the lack of income. In other words, people are poor because they do not earn enough income. This definition is true but it seems incomplete and reductive. In this sense, poverty may be

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<sup>16</sup> The closer relationship between poverty and developing countries does not mean that they are no poor people in developed countries.

quantified and measured through Gross Domestic Product (GDP) or GNP. However, Baumann (2003) shows that in South Africa an important number of citizens do not work in the formal sector but they earn income in exploiting assets which are in their disposition (see fig 5 and 6 in appendix). This means that poverty is more than lack of formal income.

According to the Marxist view, poverty is understood in relation to production. This means that poverty is the result of capitalism. The advantage of this position is that the causes of poverty or underdevelopment are internal and must be found in the process of production. This position regarding poverty completely differs from “dependency theory” which compares developed (rich) countries and undeveloped (poor) countries. According to this theory, poverty, which brings bad housing conditions, is the result of exploitation and imperialism from western countries. The causes of poverty and underdevelopment should, according to dependency theory<sup>17</sup> be found in western countries. Regarding bad housing conditions, proponents of dependency theory would say that its causes in developing countries are external, created by western countries.

The concept of dependency does not go without being criticized. Dependency implies unconsciously the concept of autonomous. Referring to the theory of dependency, in the relation between underdeveloped and developed countries, underdeveloped countries are dependent and developed countries are autonomous. This concept is as ambiguous and complex as the concept of development. Is it possible to be quite dependent or entirely autonomous? As it can be argued, no country in the world is totally autonomous. All countries are interconnected and interlinked. We can perhaps talk about the degree of dependency and say for example that the underdeveloped

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<sup>17</sup> The dependency theory which originates in Latin America in 1960 situates the underdeveloped countries in comparison with the developed countries and focuses on the relation between rich and poor countries. The goal or the purpose of dependency theory is to identify the main causes of underdevelopment or the “development of underdevelopment” of the third world. According to dependency theory, the dependent countries or third world are underdeveloped because of imperialism, capitalism, and inequality in exchange that means that underdeveloped countries are exploited especially in relation to the developed countries. In other words, the causes of underdevelopment are external.

countries are more dependent than autonomous; and developed countries are more autonomous than dependent.

Another critique comes from Bradshaw et al (1996) which argue that in focusing on external causes of poverty, poor countries can forget real issues such as debt, migration, population growth, etc.

Finally, modernization theory also provides an explanation of poverty and underdevelopment.<sup>18</sup> According to this school of thought, some countries are poor because they lack modern economies, modern psychological traits, modern cultures, and modern institutions (see Bradshaw et al, 1996). Like dependency theory, some critiques challenge modernization assumptions. One of these critiques is that modernization theory understands development as a linear process derived from a western model. In other words, western countries are to be congratulated and developed countries should be blamed. In addition, modernization theory brought economic growth, but did not necessarily allow poverty alleviation and housing solution for poor households (Burgess, 1992).

In sum, poverty is a controversial issue and reveals that there is a need for our cities to fight for more equality and improvement of living conditions. How does poverty, understood also as lack of shelter give rise to the practice of SHH? This is the issue which will be the subject of the following discussion.

### **2.5.2 Poverty and the rise of SHH**

Poverty is essentially the incapacity for individuals to satisfy their basic needs which also includes housing. Poor people are those who are not able to access adequate housing by their own effort. They need for this matter State

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<sup>18</sup> Modernization theory has as its aim the suppression of traditional society represented by culture which is considered as an obstacle to development and the consecration of modernity represented by rationality. The application of modernization theory in the process of development brings improvement of quality of life and economic growth especially by industrialization and introduction of new and advanced technology.

intervention or the intervention of other people. This is why UNCHS (1996) in announcing the right for everyone to have access to adequate shelter emphasize at the same time the role of government. In developing countries where the States lack sufficient funds, it is not easy for the States to properly accomplish their role. This creates the proliferation of informal settlements as in South Africa and also the invasion of land. If housing is taken as a basic need, poor people should be helped as they cannot enter the formal market. In South Africa, the State tries through the RDP to provide adequate housing to low income people. However, the effort of government should be increased given the population growth and the number of homeless. In sum, if the government cannot properly provide adequate housing for poor households, the only alternative which remains for them is either to seek by their own effort to satisfy their housing need or to become homeless. The main difficulty for the State in leaving poor people to satisfy their housing need alone may conflict with the need for having an integrated city and may give rise to informality.

The last element of this chapter seeks to establish a linkage between movements of thought presented above, inequalities, poverty and the rise of SHH. The element which establishes this linkage is essentially the concept of need.

## ***2.6. The concept of need***

Referring to findings in psychology a need is something that must necessarily be satisfied in order to avoid frustration. Among the meanings set to the concept of need, I will for the purpose of this dissertation consider need as the reason which motivates a given action. And I will not look at the hierarchy of needs but I will focus on “***psychological needs***” and “***basic needs***”. Basic needs such as the need to eat, need for water, need for housing, etc, are necessary and indispensable for all human beings. If people cannot satisfy their need for housing for one reason or another, they are likely to become homeless and may be susceptible to other vulnerabilities linked to homelessness (see Olufemi, 2000). The main characteristic of need is that once satisfied, it disappears.

### **2.6.1 The dynamic of need and desire**

Another concept related to need is “*desire*”. The difference between a desire and a need is that a need is clear and may be satisfied whereas desire expresses the dynamic of human life. This means that the desire cannot be completely satisfied. Once satisfied, it appears in another form. Applying the concept of need in housing, housing may be considered as a “*fixed product*” (see Burgess 1985). And the notion of desire in housing may explain the notion such as “*housing process*” or “*housing as a verb*” which is advocated by Turner (1972) and “*cycle housing*” which introduces the notion of priorities in housing. Between need and desire the priority should be given to the need. This does not mean that in prioritizing need over desire I neglect the importance of desire or I affirm the superiority of need to desire. I only mean that the need is clearly expressed therefore easy to be satisfied whereas the desire is not visibly expressed and cannot be completely satisfied. A good understanding of the dynamic of need and desire, may in turn allow a deep understanding of the need for housing. This implies a static and global definition of for example “adequate housing”, which is not the case in this research.

### **2.6.2 The need for housing and the rise of SHH**

The concept of need allows us to understand the dynamic that rules the practice of SHH in general and informal settlement in particular. In the absence of government assistance through housing subsidy, or difficult access to housing finance or slow delivery of housing, households especially of the poorest of the poor do not have another alternative than to address the issue of housing themselves. In South Africa, the need for housing and adequate shelter is real and may be observed in the housing waiting lists and in the expansion of informal settlements. The rise of SHH is a logical reaction motivated by the need for housing. It may be concluded that if the need for housing is adequately satisfied or if there is no housing crisis, we cannot experience the rise of SHH. As Henderson (1999) argues, neither the State

nor interest groups may recommend the practice of SHH when the economy of the country is healthy<sup>19</sup>.

However, in South Africa, the situation looks different insofar as there is not expansion of SHH despite the presence of elements analyzed and presented above which should give rise to the practice of SHH. Before analyzing the reasons why there is not expansion of SHH in South Africa, I would first, in the following chapter focus on SHH in the literature review.

### **3.0. Chap 3: Self-Help Housing literature review**

#### ***3.1: Introduction of the chapter***

In the preceding chapter, I tried to demonstrate that SHH which emerges from the situation of economic crisis and the need of having shelter is a result of poverty and inequalities. Indeed, with liberalism and neo-liberalism which stress individual freedom and free-market and which recommend the reduction or the suppression of State intervention on public services, SHH seems to be suitable.

SHH may be considered amongst the well-documented topics in the literature on housing and “the oldest and most primitive form of producing shelter” (Mathey, 1992: 201). In addition, as observed by Turner, “the traditional order was such that individuals (people) who already existed in particular geographical contexts (land) marshalled their resources to construct dwelling units for themselves” (Turner, 1986: 8). This is because, since the beginning of humanity, people have always sought to solve the shelter issue. The argument that explains this reality comes from philosophy which shows that the government or the submission of will to a given authority is a result of

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<sup>19</sup> It is obvious that this assumption depends on a definition of SHH as some rich people commission their own housing or do housing improvements with their own labour. However, rich people may undertake housing activities with their own hands not because of lack of money as they can afford to pay a contractor but they can do it as a hobby to keep themselves busy.

contract. Indeed, the government finds its existence with the social contract<sup>20</sup>. Referring to philosophical background related to social contract, SHH seems to be the oldest housing practice in the World.

The aim of this chapter is to “describe, summarize, evaluate and clarify” (<http://www.library.cqu.edu.au>) the concept of SHH. The starting point of this chapter is primarily to define and to clarify different forms of SHH. The second section of this chapter will seek to understand the international and the South African experience of SHH. In concrete, this chapter seeks, through the literature review, to extract different forms and the definition of SHH, to enumerate strengths and weaknesses of SHH and to elaborate the criteria for successful SHH.

### ***3.2: The different forms and definition of SHH***

From the literature review, we can determine four different forms of SHH. Referring to Burgess, SHH may also be called self-building. In this sense:

“Self-help building is distinguished from other systems of construction in that the family who lives in the house participates in the construction process by making different contributions (finance, labour-power, administration, etc.) be this in an autonomous form or in a form organized by an institution”(Valenzuela and Kierdrowski, quoted in Burgess, 1985: 272-273).

From this definition, two kinds of SHH may be derived: The autonomous form and the assisted or aided form. In addition, Kerr and Kwele (2000: 1315) observe that “this definition is sufficiently broad to incorporate all Self-Help Housing building activities that occur in squatter settlements as well as those that take place with State finance and promotion. It also suggests that Self-Help is not necessarily ‘self-build’ and can cover both individual and collective efforts”.

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<sup>20</sup> For the social contract, see the philosophers such as Rousseau, Locke, Hobbes and also Rawls. Even though their position about social contract is not the same, all of them agree that the social contract is the justification of the existence of government

According to Rodell and Skinner (1983: 4), “Self-Help Housing meant houses low-income families constructed with their own, unpaid labour”. From this definition, we may retain that the focus is on the poor families and houses are produced by low-income households themselves.

Referring to Harms (1992), there are three kinds of SHH: unaided SHH, State supported SHH and state initiated SHH. The first form of SHH is identified through the literature review as the *autonomous or spontaneous form*

### **3.2.1 Autonomous or Spontaneous form of SHH**

There is abundant literature on autonomous or spontaneous form of SHH. All authors agree that the development of this kind of SHH explains the inability of a given government through housing programmes to supply adequate and affordable housing for its citizens (Rodell, 1983 and Brian and Raminder, 1988). As a result, people, especially the poorest of the poor or the worst off who are below the poverty line, seek to solve their housing need in squatting as they cannot afford to pay rent or services in formal settlements. This creates in many underdeveloped countries, including South Africa, informal settlements. According to Angel (2000a), informal sector housing is more perceivable in developing countries where the economic development does not permit the majority of population to own “decent housing either through mass public housing construction or through the formal private sector” (Angel, 2000a: 320). Huchzermeyer (2002b) argues that informal settlement draws attention to poverty. Besides, Abrams (1964) goes on to argue that “the slums exist because no nation is able to produce adequate housing, at a cost the workers can afford” (quoted in Obudho et al, 1988: 8). For the World Bank, informal settlement or squatter settlement indicates “housing that is either the result of illegal occupation or has been developed in an unauthorized fashion” (World Bank, 1992).

Obudho et al (1988) argue that in developing countries, squatter settlements are the manifestation of normal urban growth. For Huchzermeyer (2003b), autonomous or spontaneous SHH, called sometimes unaided SHH may be the result of an individual or a group of individuals who occupy land illegally

for the purpose of having shelter. In a few words, the autonomous form of SHH which gives rise to informal settlements, squatter settlements or slums is “caused by poverty and inadequate housing responses, which are mutually reinforcing, to some extent” (United Nations Human Settlement Programme 2003:28).

The main cause of failure to provide adequate human settlements in developing countries including South Africa results, as Erguden (2001) argues, in the existing gap between the formulated housing policy and its implementation. According to him, this inadequacy or failure may be experienced in the lack of effective implementation strategies, poor promotion of security of tenure, inadequate supply of affordable land and infrastructure, inadequacy of housing finance systems, poor utilization of local building materials and technologies, lack of support to small-scale construction activities, inappropriate standards and legislation, inadequate participation of communities in shelter development process and support to Self-help, lack of focused research and experimental project, and poor utilization of research findings.

Some governments of developing countries seek to properly address the issue of informal settlement. In South Africa for example, the government reaction related to that issue is explained by the current Minister of Housing. The South African objective consists of the eradication of informal settlements by 2014 (Sisulu, 2005a).

### **3.2.1.1 Possible reactions of a given government regarding the issue of informal settlement**

The literature on informal settlements indicates two possible kinds of reaction from legal authorities in relation with the issue of informal settlement. The first reaction is to demolish the informal settlements and to evict households in order to plan for their relocation. This is what Rodell and Skinner (1983) name the universal formula for housing policy adopted in developing countries during the 1950s and 1960s. The idea behind this conventional housing policy is that “the enormous growth of slum and squatter housing stemmed from

people's inability to pay for conventional housing and furthermore government would solve the problem by building and subsidizing the necessary units" (Rodell and Sinner, 1983:1). This especially happened in South Africa, China, etc. This kind of dealing with informal settlement is severely criticized by Turner (1972) and seeks to solve poor households' need for housing without consulting them. This practice has shown its inefficiency, especially in South Africa, in not considering real needs of poor households. Indeed, as Lankatilleke (1990: 24) asserts, "People should be at the centre of decision making". Besides, Rodell et al (1983) note the failure of this kind of dealing with the expansion of informal settlements in affirming that "programmes to house many people, suggested that governments would not or could not mobilize enough resources to make it work. The resulting absence of public housing leaves families no choices beyond renting in slums or building houses on their own, as and when they can" (Rodell and Skinner, 1983: 1).

In South Africa, the 1994 WP on housing policy takes largely into account what Rodell and Skinner describes as the universal formula for housing policy. The result produced by the South African housing policy does not differ from that criticized and elaborated by these authors. Khan (2003) and Bond and Tait (1997) widely criticized the current South African policy, especially the issue of relocation. Regarding relocation, which is the first way to deal with the issue of informal settlement, Khan observes that it creates economic reconstitutions of communities, the changes to the status of housing assets, the limitations on freedom of movement. Furthermore, Khan notes again in the issue of relocation the reduction of saving capacity and the disruption of social networks. Relocation, according to the same author increases insecurity and vulnerability to crime. The South African housing authority (Department of Housing) does not ignore the issue of relocation or the failure of the current Housing policy which is essentially based on subsidized housing delivery. In 2004 through "**Breaking New Ground** - A comprehensive Plan for the Development of Sustainable Human Settlements", the South African Department of Housing initiated a programme of informal settlement upgrading which aims at poverty eradication; reducing vulnerability; and promoting social inclusion.

In sum, the failure of current South African Housing Policy (Bond and Tait, 1997) suggests that the demolishing of informal settlements for possible relocation does not constitute a durable solution. In fact, this practice does not answer my original question: “why do people establish informal settlements?” Without properly addressing this question, people may return to the informal settlement after their relocation. It appears that the autonomous or the spontaneous SHH is a complex issue. This is acknowledged by the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (2003) when they advocate that:

“Slums and poverty are closely related and mutually reinforcing, but the relationship is not always direct or simple. On the one hand, slum dwellers are not a homogenous population, and some people of reasonable incomes choose to live within, or on, the edges of slum communities. Even though most slum dwellers work in the informal economy, it is not unusual for them to have incomes that exceed the earnings of formal sector employees. On the other hand, in many cities, there are more poor outside slum areas than within them. Slums are designated areas where it is easier to see poor people in the highest concentrations and the worst conditions; but even the most exclusive and expensive areas will have some low-income people” (United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 2003: 28).

The analysis of UN Human Settlement Programme related to informal settlements or slum settlements shows that it is not easy to deal with the issue of informal settlement and the State intervention in this field cannot be successful without people participation. For Crankshaw (2000), any intervention regarding the improvement of informal settlement should not overlook the existence of migrants and urbanites. The author observes that while the migrants who are in the informal settlement for the purpose of employment seek a temporary residence in order to reduce the costs of accommodation and to keep contact with the rural area where they are from, the urbanised squatters will seek a permanent residence. This is to say that the reasons for staying in informal settlements differ from one squatter to another and; therefore the heterogeneity of squatter settlements complicates the intervention in this sector.

The attempt to upgrade informal settlements which manifests the failure of the current housing policy, gives rise to a new approach regarding housing policy. Rodell and Skinner (1983) name it “the new policy formula”. They affirm that this new policy consists of asking “government to supply the missing elements and, in effect, to incorporate SHH into public Housing programmes” (Rodell and Skinner, 1983:1). The main advantage of this policy is that “governments might reduce their investments per families and so reach a larger number of families, thus helping to overcome the main deficiency – low access which resulted from conventional housing policy” (Rodell and skinner, 1983: pp 1-2).

This way of reacting related to informal settlement, largely observed in Latino-America and timidly in South Africa, constitutes the second form of SHH identified in the literature review as ***State Supported SHH***.

### **3.2.2 State supported SHH**

This second form of SHH, sometimes called upgrading programmes, as described by Harms (1992), is not very different from the spontaneous or autonomous form. It essentially exists where the State recognizes or legalizes the effort produced by the users in order to house themselves. In that sense, State assisted SHH is the legalization by the State of spontaneous or autonomous SHH. As Martin (1983: 53) argues, “upgrading solves the housing problem by transforming ‘illegal’ dwellings into ‘legal’ ones, thus improving the housing statistics”. It deals with the actions such as “infrastructure provision, technical assistance, funds for upgrading, supervised credits ...” (Harms, 1992: 35). This form of SHH is analyzed and defended by Turner (1972) who claims that the role of the State is to help users to be responsible in the process related to their housing. In South Africa, the second form of SHH will protect the inhabitants of informal settlements from eviction as happened at Grootboom, Alexandra and Bredell (Huchzermeyer, 2003b). Besides, the second form of SHH provides to residents of informal settlements the security of tenure. This is, according to Martin (1983), one of the reasons for upgrading programmes.

Martin (1983: 53) outlines some advantages of the second form of SHH. He notes that:

- It preserves existing economic systems and opportunities for those in need, the urban poor.
- It preserves a low-cost housing system, usually at advantageous locations, thus enabling the inhabitants to retain the maximum disposable income.
- It preserves a community which has internal linkages to safeguard the interests of the individual family and the group.

Referring to Martin, the main advantages of this SHH is that it recognizes the effort of households which seek to solve their needs for housing (Turner, 1972). Besides, it does not destroy some households' assets such as networks which exist between tenants and which may allow them to generate income in being self employers.

If one of the purposes of upgrading programmes seeks to transform illegal dwellings into legal ones, as Martin argued, the main weakness of this form of SHH is that in providing the security of tenure to residents of informal settlements, the State legalizes illegality and informality. In this sense, this form of SHH can allow the perception that illegality is the way to accede to legality and may encourage other households who are in need of housing to invade land.

The key success of this approach remains, according to Martin, the active participation of the beneficiaries and the true dialogue between implementers of the project which is the government and beneficiaries of the project (the low-income families). In analyzing the advantages of participation, Martin (1983) points out that it helps to meet the needs of the beneficiaries. The participants who are involved in the upgrading project are likely to support the project and, if the project fails, the users may easily accept the results.

The literature on State Supported SHH or upgrading programmes, only focuses on improving housing conditions (Harms, 1992) or the transformation of illegal dweller to legal dweller (Martin, 1983) through granting security of tenure to residents. However, these authors fail at the same time to stress the issue of empowering low-income families in providing them with economic opportunities and allowing their social inclusion within the whole society (University of the Witwatersrand Research Team (2004).

In sum, the second form of SHH is the situation in which the initiative, although poor, inadequate and weak, of solving housing need comes from the beneficiaries. And, instead of bulldozing the informal housing, the State complements the households' efforts in providing them opportunities to improve their housing conditions. Another form of SHH is the situation in which the plan to solve the housing need of the citizens comes from the government and the households have only to participate in such projects. This form of SHH is identified in the literature review as ***the State initiated SHH***.

### **3.2.3 The State initiated SHH**

The third form of SHH, called the "State initiated self-help housing" or aided SHH, looks very different from the forms cited above. In this form, the State takes responsibility and initiative to plan, to organize and to finance, and requires the participation of beneficiaries, especially in terms of labour. For Harris (1999), Aided SHH refers to the situation where governments have developed programmes of assistance specifically for owner-builders. In addition, this form of SHH refers to the housing built with State assistance by families for their own use. This form of SHH, sometimes called State SHH is practiced in Jamaica (Klak, 1997) and Cuba (Mathey, 1992).

This kind of SHH was observed and developed where there was a severe shortage of housing stock, especially in developed countries after the World War II (see Schulist at al, 2002; Mathey, 1997; Wakeman, 1999; Dingle 1999; Parnell and Hart, 1999; and Harris 1999). In developing countries, this form of SHH is adopted as policy for facing the rapid urbanization and population growth that these countries face (Dwyer, 1975; United Nations Human

Settlement Programme 2003). As this form of SHH emanates from the government, it may be observed that the successful State SHH demonstrates the situation where the government takes its responsibility to supply housing for poor people and also its ability to associate beneficiaries of housing projects to the solutions related to their good. The main difference between this form of SHH and the South African current Housing Policy is that the State involves the beneficiaries at the phase of execution while the South African Housing policy considers the beneficiaries as mere recipients. In comparison with the second form of SHH presented above, in State initiated SHH the attempt at solving housing need of low-income families comes from the government whereas in State Supported SHH the State adds the low-income families' efforts to improve their housing conditions. In this sense, State SHH indicates that the housing project comes from the top or outside the community and the implementation is negotiated between the designer or planners and beneficiaries.

This third form of SHH is challenged in the literature by Burgess (1985 and 1992) who argues that SHH deepens social inequalities and vulnerability of poor families. He also asserts that poor people for whom the SHH project is initiated are not always the beneficiaries as they cannot afford to pay fees related to land and construction materials. Amis (1995) points out that this form of SHH overlooks the main causes of poverty. Kerr and Kwell (2000) who analyze housing conditions in Botswana argue that SHH ignores the main causes of poverty in capitalist societies; thus, it legitimizes poverty.

These authors, especially Burgess, who criticize State SHH, argue that it cannot adequately constitute a durable solution for low-income households in developing countries. These critiques stand. However, these authors fail to propose an efficient alternative and to recognize that this policy is adapted to the deficient economy of developing countries. In fact, as Henderson (1999) advocates, no country or development agency may adopt SHH for facing the issue of severe housing shortage created by urban population growth. These authors could not propose conventional housing policy as this type of programme failed in many developing countries including South Africa to

decently house poor households. A just and fair critique regarding SHH should recognize the complexity of the housing issue as it is correlated to other issues. In that sense, housing solutions should include economic, political and ideological aspects. This is to say that developing countries would not find a durable housing solution, as long as political and economic instability exist: This is what authors who criticize SHH fail to admit.

The fourth form of SHH looks very different from three forms described above. In fact, it is the situation where the individual without operating in illegality or informality solves his/her housing need alone (see fig 2 in Appendix). This form of SHH is identified in the literature review, as “***the market Self-Help Housing***”. It is also named “***the market-driven***”

#### **3.2.4. The Market SHH**

This form of SHH is the objective of neo-liberal policy. Indeed, with the focus on the market, neo-liberals argue that an individual may find everything that he/she needs. He/She can purchase land, the materials of construction and the all necessary materials in the market. This kind of SHH may be qualified as the most successful SHH as it is the expression of Turner’s dream (the full appropriation of housing process by an individual) without acting illegally. It may be recommended where the economic situation provides opportunities to everyone to determine his/her ends and to find ways to attain it. In comparison to the third form of SHH described above, this fourth form of SHH called sometimes “market driven” (see South African Housing White paper) explains the situation of economic stability while the second and the third form of SHH is the manifestation of economic crisis. In this sense, as the main objective of neo-liberalist policies is to help developing countries to stabilize their macro-economy through economy growth (Colclough, 1991a), the market SHH is the expression of liberalism and neo-liberalism.

However, it may be said that this kind of SHH is appropriate for rich people and is welcomed in capitalist societies. Besides, it reinforces the gap existing between poor people and rich people. If the State cannot support those who are unable to adequately solve their housing need, the fourth form of SHH

may force low-income families to develop squatter settlements or to find their own way of solving their housing need. As a result, the poorest of the poor will not have another alternative than to resort to illegality and informality.

Consequently, this SHH will only favour a specific group, more specifically in poor countries and penalize others, especially those with great differences in household income, for example in a country with a high GINI co-efficient. It may be said that this kind of SHH is not appropriate as policy for developing countries. Indeed, it requires economic stability, high level of education and the ability of people to perform in the market. Nevertheless, developing countries including South Africa, which may be considered as one of the most advanced developing countries, do not yet attain this level. In sum, the fourth form of SHH is not appropriate for developing countries which still struggle for economic growth and macro economic stability.

In the description of the different forms of SHH, it is acknowledged that each form presents strengths and weaknesses as well. The section below will emphasize strengths and weaknesses of SHH.

### ***3.3 The strengths and weaknesses of SHH***

#### **3.3.1 The strengths**

The main strength of SHH practice is that beneficiaries are not excluded from the housing project. Instead, they are among the actors, even the main actors of the housing project<sup>21</sup>. Before discussing the strengths of SHH, it seems important to acknowledge that, in most forms, SHH is a project that requires a group of individuals or a community<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> For this assumption, see the second form of SHH named State supported SHH in this research. Indeed, this form of SHH presented the beneficiaries as the main actors of SHH insofar as they have started to solve their housing need themselves and the State legalizes their efforts.

<sup>22</sup> Community which may be understood as “a geographically defined set of people who are enough in number for direct democracy...” (SANCO, 1994 quoted in Chipkin, 1996: 218) is one of the ambiguous and contested concepts in the literature review. For Chipkin (1996) who has written “Contesting community. The limits of Democratic Development”, the difficulties related to this concept occur when the representatives of community need to be chosen .

Some advantages of SHH are widely discussed in the literature review such as: SHH has the “ability to provide access for thousands of families where conventional housing could only reach hundreds” (Rodell and Skinner, 1983: 3). According to Turner, when the community is in control of their housing process, the environment produced stimulates individual and social well-being. In addition, in South Africa, the empirical evidence shows that the houses built by the community itself through SHH Programmes are bigger and cheaper than those delivered by government through mass housing (Marais et al, 2003). These advantages focus on the economic aspect. However, there are also social and cultural aspects in community self-building projects.

One of the recommendations of the UN Habitat II (1996) is to promote solidarity among people living in the city. SHH is one of the ways which facilitates the promotion of solidarity among people through engaging in the construction of their own houses. People working together develop among themselves attitudes such as “mutual trust”. The community engaged in a SHH project works as a mutual scheme. Every member of the co-operative receives from it and in turn must do his best in order to allow the co-operative to work adequately. This relationship between the co-operative, comprised as an ensemble of community members, and the individual belonging to the community gives rise to the “mutual trust”, a necessary element for the promotion of solidarity. This trust obtained while working in a housing project may be exploited for other projects regarding development in other sectors. This means that housing activities may be a useful tool for putting people together. In sum, a community engaged in a SHH project has also social advantage such as the development of networks.

In that sense, community SHH contributes, to some extent, to reinforcing social linkages between people working together. Alongside the social aspect, the community SHH project reinforces cultural linkages as well.

Diversity of cultures is one of the characteristics of our communities living in urban areas (UN Habitat II, 1996). Spiegel et al (1996) go further in arguing that recognizing diversity should be the main concern of policy makers and

planners. SHH projects have the merit of associating in the same site, people from different cultures and background. This may have the advantage of consolidating their cultures, to complement each other, to collaborate and also to accept differences existing among them. As Friedman (1988) asserts, the failure to recognize the difference existing among human beings, especially those living in the same community, may produce fatal consequences such as civil war, genocide, apartheid, etc. This is to say that the failure to recognize that we are different with respect to our background, cultures, education, income, etc, may create an authoritarian attitude and disharmony in our society. However, once people accept that they are different, they become able to work together and to complement each other for the good of the entire community: SHH projects can facilitate this process.

SHH projects do not only present advantages. This approach is also challenged by some scholars, especially by the advocates of Marxism.

### **3.3.2 Weaknesses of SHH**

The main critiques of SHH come from a Marxist viewpoint. Burgess, inspired by Althusser (1977) and Poulantzas (1973), advocates that the limits of State SHH should be situated at the economic, ideological and political levels. At the economic level for example, Burgess shows the limit of State SHH in the acquisition and development of land, in the provision of construction materials and in the system of administration. He refers to the illegal nature of the artisanal form<sup>23</sup>. As the artisanal form is generally involved in “invasion or illegal purchase of land, absence of service costs, non payment of taxes, etc”, it does not fill the criteria of State SHH. As notes Burgess, land is developed specifically for the purposes of exchange. This is not the case for the artisanal form. Furthermore, Burgess states that in State SHH, there is a gap between the housing need and the housing supply. Therefore, SHH cannot be a

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<sup>23</sup> Regarding the housing issue, Burgess (1985) understands the artisanal form as the form “where housing is produced at much lower level of circulation of capital”(Burgess, 1985: 276). Referring to Burgess, the artisanal form of housing is no different from informal settlement. Again, in referring to Pradilla (1974); Molina (1976); Burgess (1978); and Portes and Walton (1981); Burgess argues that “the artisanal form performs an important function within the general workings of the capitalist mode of production by providing cheaply the basic housing necessary for the labour force and the industrial reserve army of labour installed in the cities” (Burgess, 19985: 276).

solution to the housing problem in less developed countries. The main proposition of Burgess is that State SHH will create additional charges that poor people cannot afford and therefore, State SHH will deepen poor people's vulnerabilities.

Marcuse (1992)<sup>24</sup> summarizes the main critiques against SHH which may be found in the literature review. He presents ten weaknesses. Primarily, SHH cannot be a substitute for resources indispensable for housing provision. Secondly, Marcuse argues that SHH deals with the host of problems that require centralized decision-making; it violates sound and necessary planning principles. The third weakness is that SHH is likely to produce only temporary solutions to immediate housing problems. Fourthly, SHH provides no evaluative mechanism, no way of building in the future on the accomplishments and lessons of the past. The fifth weakness appears to be the result of all critiques: Marcuse advocates that SHH is inefficient. Sixthly, SHH is economically regressive; it does nothing to redistribute social resources in accordance with need. The seventh critique states that SHH results in a lowering of housing standards. Eighthly, SHH can be politically reactionary. Ninthly, SHH can be socially divisive and finally, SHH exploits the labour of its participants.

I would like to comment on the third weakness which states that SHH is likely to produce only temporary solutions to immediate housing problems. Indeed, this critique shows that poor housing conditions or severe shortage of housing stock are not only specific to housing. In fact, as the South African Department of Housing (2005) observes:

“The challenge of informal settlements upgrading must be approached from a pragmatic perspective in the face of changing realities and many uncertainties. Informal settlements should also not be viewed as merely a ‘housing problem’, requiring a ‘housing solution’ but rather as a manifestation of structural social change, the resolution of which

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<sup>24</sup> For the development of all the 10 critiques of Self-Help Housing enumerated, see Peter Marcuse (1992, 16-21pp). Some of these critiques may also be found in Burgess (1992) and Tait (1997).

requires [a] multi-sectoral partnership, long-term commitment and political endurance (Department of Housing, 2005: 4-5).

In Chapter II, I showed that poverty and inequalities are among the main causes of bad housing conditions and therefore the stimulus of SHH. Implementation of SHH in developing countries as solution to severe housing shortage resulted from urban population growth, without looking simultaneously at poverty and inequalities, issues created by unjust political and social systems. This often results in poor housing conditions being isolated from other matters.

Referring to South Africa, despite the critiques enumerated above, it may be noticed that the rate of unemployment and number of underemployed people are very high. This means that in executing SHH, we extract the housing market from the building industry. Therefore, we employ unskilled people while there are qualified people who can more be effective. In her study on "low-income housing in Alexandra, Johannesburg, Empowerment, Skills Development and Job creation", Fitchett (2001: 26) observes that the statistic provided by the Department of Labour indicates that "the building contracting field was continuing to suffer the decline dating from the 1970s both in number of companies and operatives in the industry and in the under capacity of those still in business". This is to say that the execution of SHH in South Africa may deepen and accelerate the decline that building industries face. Although SHH helps some people to get building skills, it does not solve the unemployment issue in the short term. It only prepares those who are involved in for the long run where they can be useful for the construction industry.

Despite the main critiques formulated against SHH, such as that it deepens social inequalities and welcomes the capitalist system, Mathey (1992) argues that these critiques do not always stand. He advocates that we may not generalize. Indeed, he argues that these critiques stand if we analyze SHH as it is applied in capitalist countries. He proposes to analyze also SHH in socialist countries for a complete approach. From the study of SHH in Cuba

which is a socialist State, Mathey concludes that SHH is efficient and may constitute the solution for housing crisis which most developing countries face.

Mathey's counter arguments related to weaknesses of SHH would stand if housing problems were not linked to other issues such as poverty, inequalities, unemployment, etc. Nevertheless, as the South African Department of Housing (2005) observes, we need a global solution if we need a durable solution regarding the housing crisis. In South African vocabulary, the housing solution should be integrated<sup>25</sup>. SHH, however, only seeks to tackle the issue of severe housing shortage which derives from urban population growth. As it will be shown in the fourth chapter, a significant number of poor people in South Africa expect the government to create jobs for them. This is to say that although housing, defined by the parliament of South Africa as: adequate shelter which fulfils a basic human need; a product and a process; a vital part of integrated developmental planning; a key sector of the national economy; and vital to the socio-economic well-being of the nation (Housing Act of 1997), low-income families are concerned about having access to adequate shelter and to find a job as well. If SHH prepares low-income families to get construction skills which may help them in the future to be useful for the construction industry, it does not however, in the case of South Africa, answer the issue of unemployment which the country faces.

The following section will analyze the international experience of SHH in general; and the successful SHH in Cuba, one of the developing countries and in Canada, one of the developed countries. Both cases may be considered as the most successful implementation described in the literature on SHH.

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<sup>25</sup> The conclusion assuming that the solution of housing crisis should be integrated derives from the concept of housing defined by the Department of Housing, more specifically in Housing Act of 1997. These concepts are enumerated above.

### **3.4. *The international experience of SHH***

The international experience of SHH, especially the assisted or the aided form, reveals that this policy was adopted to tackle the economic crisis and the severe housing shortage, especially after the first and the second World War (Harris, 1999; Dingle, 1999; Henderson, 1999; Wakeman, 1999, etc). In this sense, Aided SHH confirms that this policy explains the inability of government to provide adequate shelter for all citizens. In addition, it supports the neo-liberalist policy which recommends that the government should reduce social expenditure in order to promote economic growth. As Omenya asserts “the World Bank promotes self-help housing for the sake of economic efficiency. Its concept of enablement revolves around making the housing markets function efficiently” (Omenya, 2002: 3).

In analyzing the experience of SHH in Germany, Henderson (1999) affirms that:

From the late 19th century until well after the Second World War, Germany suffered from a persistent and politically dangerous housing shortage (Bullock & Read, 1985; Miller-Lane, 1985). Efforts to assuage the housing problem produced major initiatives throughout the period and culminated in the achievements of the Weimar Republic, a period renowned in the field of housing design and settlement planning. Among the many experimental programmes launched to cope with the housing shortage, the self-build approach, advocating that settlers build their own housing, was a last resort supported only in times of dire economic crisis. Two such crises bounded the Weimar Republic, the hyperinflation years from 1919 through to 1924, and the onset of the world depression in 1930. Faced with the virtual collapse of its housing effort, the State enacted emergency aided self-build programmes in both instances (Henderson, 1999: 311).

Like Germany, other European countries such as France also suffered from the housing crisis that resulted from the Second World War. As Wakeman (1999: 355) observes, in France:

“Over three-quarters of the country was struck by the war. Cities and towns were in ruins. Over 2 million buildings, a quarter of the housing stock, was destroyed or damaged (Croize, 1991, pp. 253-257). A

million families were left homeless. Millions of others lived in temporary shelters and run-down apartments without access to basic services. This tragic situation made the housing crisis--that is finding a place of live--one of the most serious and explosive post-war domestic issues in France, as it was all over Europe. One way the crisis was addressed was for men and women to build their own homes...”

The second element that the international experience of SHH illustrates is that it has significantly contributed to increasing housing stock of countries which were severely facing a housing shortage<sup>26</sup>. However, the augmentation of housing stock is not necessarily linked with the quality of houses, which directly depends on the budget allocated for the project, the technical assistance that builders receive from the designers and also from construction skills of the builders<sup>27</sup>. Examples of Cuba and Canada provide two successful case studies of Aided SHH which may be found in the literature on Aided SHH in terms of number of houses built and the quality of houses produced.

The following section will analyze the Aided SHH in Cuba and in Canada. From this analysis it may be possible to draw the criteria for successful Aided SHH and the framework for analysing the failure of the implementation of SHH in Tembisa, the location of my case study.

### **3.4.1 Analysis of Aided SHH in Cuba**

Mathey (1992) describes SHH in Cuba as a model of housing provision which may be presented as alternative to other systems of housing provision applied in the Caribbean region. Before the revolution brought by Fidel Castro<sup>28</sup>, the author observes the existence of poor housing conditions in Cuba, characterized by a significant number of squatter settlements. After the revolution, the government first adopted the socialist plan which consisted of

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<sup>26</sup> In Cuba for example, “by the year 1978, more than 1100 teams has been formed by some 30,000 brigadistas, and had completed 82,000 dwellings” (See Mathey, 1992: 186). In Canada, the number of houses built over thirty years under the SHH programme exceeded 30 000. This was almost double the number built under the Stockholm plan between 1927 and 1990 (see Shulist et al, 2002, 346)

<sup>27</sup> This is applicable only for the second and the third form of SHH where the beneficiaries are at the same time the builders. Thus, it does not apply for the fourth form of SHH which describes the situation where the individual is engaged in the solution of his housing need without necessarily being the builder of his/her house.

<sup>28</sup> Fidel Castro is the current President of Cuba since January 1959, who introduced SHH in Cuba in 1970s.

providing housing according to needs of the beneficiaries, and later the government opted for SHH.

The interesting case of SHH is what the author names “the microbrigade movement” which is “a mixture between Self-help and State-provided housing” (Mathey, 1997: 170). The objective of the microbrigade, initiated by Castro in 1970, was to give the workers the opportunity to build houses for themselves and for their colleagues. Despite some critiques, such as the exclusion from the project of the unqualified (such as people without employment, pensioners, and single mothers, etc,) and the lack of quality of the product and productivity due to the lack of skilled labour force, the microbrigade system offered the opportunity for the population, especially workers, to have an adequate housing with adequate facilities. Besides, after the first experience of microbrigade in 1970, some years later, (in 1986), the project was revitalized and improved through avoiding the “selective distribution of microbrigade flats” (Mathey, 1992: 188). Indeed, as Mathey (1992) observes, the new microbrigade which is also a social microbrigade did not build or renovate housing for the benefit of their own work centre but also for other inhabitants who were in serious housing need. This explains the term “social microbrigade”. The question which should be asked is: what made SHH in Cuba successful. Mathey answers in saying that:

“The social microbrigades have several functions at a time: apart from addressing the housing problem and maintaining the urban fabric, they also provide jobs for the increasing number of mostly young unemployed. A guaranteed income, improved housing opportunities, and the social control of the neighbourhood are incentives to accept the inconveniences of hard physical work and regular working hours. As a supplementary benefit it has also been pointed out that the residents may take greater care of the houses they live in, and that they will be better equipped to carry out future maintenance jobs by themselves once they have participated in renovating or rebuilding a house” (Mathey, 1992: 194).

In sum, apart from the reasons advanced above by Mathey which witness the success of SHH in Cuba, it may also be noted the easy involvement in the

project of the beneficiaries (in Cuban case, the brigadistas) and the support of the government presented by the president Fidel Castro<sup>29</sup>. Is the Canadian SHH practice different from the Cuban experience? What make the Canadian SHH a successful case? The following section will analyze the case of Canada.

### **3.4.2 The Canadian experience of Self-Help Housing**

The Canadian experience of aided SHH is documented in Schulist and Harris (2002). They analyse aided SHH in the period 1940 to 1975. These authors emphasize the government assistance in the success of aided SHH in Canada. Indeed, they advocate that with finance and technical assistance, every citizen may be able to build his own shelter.

These authors show that the success of Canadian experience of aided SHH has been made possible from the real services that the Government has provided. They point out that, "Amateurs built well because they received good guidance: well informed, firm on essentials, but otherwise flexible" (Shulist et al, 2002: 359).

The criteria which have contributed to the success of this programme are: provision of land which was not over complicated, finance mechanism which was also accessible to poor households (in the Canadian case, the poor household heads were veterans), the technical assistance that beneficiaries or self builders have received from the government and also the quality of administration.

Regarding the government assistance, the authors affirm that "the Administration offered five types of assistance: free legal service, house plans, construction courses, supervision and financing" (Shulist et al, 2002:

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<sup>29</sup> In 1970 for example, as Mathey observes, it was more than 1100 teams formed by some 30,000 brigadistas (the members of a micro-brigade). In addition, by November 1988 the number of brigadistas has risen to 38,000. This number of participants may witness the interest of the beneficiaries for the project. Regarding the government support, Castro was the initiator of the project in 1970 and it is also he who introduced the revitalizing project which extends the distribution of housing to those who were in serious housing need; hence the use of the term social microbrigade.

352). It may be observed that the authors stress the role of government more than the participation of the beneficiaries.

Despite some weaknesses of the Canadian SHH programme such as the promotion of scattered development, these authors argue that “over three decades, it helped thousands of families to acquire well-built homes by investing sweat equity. It saved families a great deal while costing the public much less” (Shulist et al, 2002: 366). In sum, the Canadian experience of SHH shows that the role of government in the success of SHH needs to be taken seriously.

Before addressing the criteria for successful SHH, I would like to analyze the emergence and the experience of SHH in South Africa as presented in the literature.

### ***3.5 The South African experience of SHH***

The South African experience of SHH as policy for dealing with housing shortage and urban population growth is recent; however, the application of SHH itself is an older practice in South Africa. Apart from rural areas where SHH is the most common practice of building shelter (Mathey, 1992), it has been observed that during the apartheid regime, what may be called de facto SHH occurred. In fact, the segregated planning of the apartheid regime, which consisted of isolating black people from centres of economic activities and creating locations for indigenous people on the periphery, may be considered as de facto SHH initiative for the urban poor (Saunders, 1960 quoted in Parnell and Hart, 1999).

Parnell and Hart (1999) analyze the practice of SHH in South Africa in the twentieth century. They notice that during the colonial era, the SHH was the strategy adopted by urban poor people to meet their housing needs. As Posel (1991) asserts, “owner building was briefly endorsed as part of the post world war reconstruction initiative, only rejected once apartheid ideologies gained full control of urban planning and influx controls in the late 1950s” (quoted in Parnell and Hart, 1999: 368). According to the same authors, SHH saw its

revival again in 1970s given the urban crisis with the severe housing shortage.

It may be concluded that in South Africa, before and during apartheid system, poor households have always practiced SHH when they were facing housing crisis and urban population growth. As Parnell and Hart (1999: 385) put it, “experience from South Africa, from colonial times to the present non-racial democratic government of Nelson Mandela, shows that adoption of SHH strategies always interfaces with the wider political and economic realities, though not in uniform or predictable ways”. It may also be acknowledged that SHH strategies occur with and without the government support. As Omenya (2002) argues, “People will always do something about their housing situation, whether or not they are assisted”.

The current emphasis on SHH in South Africa is legitimized in Housing policy and other policy documents. The 1994 South African White Paper on housing gives space to SHH. It especially States that:

“The right of the individual to freedom of choice in the process of satisfying his or her own housing needs is recognised. At the same time it is recognised that people should be able to access and leverage resources on a collective basis. The State should promote both the right of the individual to choose and encourage collective efforts (where appropriate) by people to improve their housing circumstances” (1994, Housing White Paper).

In addition, Sankie Mthembi-Mahanyele (1996), the former Minister of Housing in Northern Cape, acknowledged the necessity of fostering SHH in South-Africa. The former Housing Minister firmly believed that SHH could make a significant contribution in the provision to housing in South Africa. Her belief in SHH is based on international experience. She has affirmed that:

“People throughout the world are the main producers of housing and they have proved in many innovative ways that they are willing and able to contribute in meeting their own housing needs. In South Africa, things are not different. Such is the importance that we set by this process that my department has set up a framework to support this and we call it the People’s Housing Process.” (Mthembi-Mahanyele, 1996)

In addition, the 1994 WP on Housing states that, “International experience indicates a large degree of resilience, ingenuity and ability in households to look after their own housing needs with appropriate institutional support and financial assistance from government”.

The Department of Housing (1997) through its “Urban Development Framework” defines PHP as “where individuals, families, or groups take the initiative to organize the planning, design and building of, or actually build their houses”. The main idea which guides this policy document through the implementation of PHP is the appropriation by households of their housing process. This clearly appears when the Housing Department (1997) affirms that “in such a process, people are in control of important decisions such as how the house is designed, how resources are used, where and how they can obtain affordable building materials and how the house will be built”.

The SHH which the South African Housing WP encourages is what I named above the “market Self-Help Housing”<sup>30</sup>. Like the World Bank, South African Housing policy has sought to solve housing crisis at the supply level (Omenya, 2002). This means that the aim of the South African government in developing the Housing WP was to ensure that the housing market provided enough possibilities for everyone to choose the mode of housing delivery which suits him/her but did not offer enough possibilities for individuals to afford housing provided by the market. For Spiegel et al (1994), “Housing white paper is oriented on ‘supply side’ rather than ‘demand side’ considerations” (quoted in Spiegel et al, 1996).

Despite the objectives defined by the Housing WP of enabling the housing market with the possibility of choices, one may ask whether the post-apartheid government succeeds in attaining this goal. The response is negative: neither the housing supply side, nor the demand side allow better housing conditions for the low-income poor. Indeed, many authors have criticized the current South African Housing Policy and have pointed out its ineffectiveness. Khan

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<sup>30</sup> This is one of housing modes of delivery promoted by the Housing WP. In addition, the same policy document encourages the State to grant housing subsidy to poor households who earn less than R 3500.

(2003) observes that the post-apartheid housing policy contained in the 1994 Housing WP is extremely problematic, especially in terms of sustainable human settlement development, employment creation and poverty eradication. As main obstacles for post-apartheid housing policy to improve informal settlements and to create employment, there are, according to the author, continuation of peripheral development with poor infrastructure and planning frameworks and also the absence of any coherent programme to deal with vested interests in the land market. In addition, the author points out that the post-apartheid housing construction deals with small informal contractors with little experience and capacity. Furthermore, the author notes the lack of capacity and skills of public authorities to design and implement integrated development plans. These criticisms show that South Africa needs to elaborate a new housing policy.

Omenya (2002) distrusts the recent gusto for SHH in South Africa in challenging its desirability and its capacity to tackle the issue of lack of quality observed in the delivery of housing through the RDP.

Moser (1992) also recommends the participation of women in SHH. She founds her argumentation in enumerating the roles of women. In fact, she bestows three main roles to women. Firstly, alongside the reproductive role assigned to women, the author points out the production role of women in rural and urban areas as primary or secondary income earners. She observes that in rural areas the women are the most involved in agriculture and in urban areas they participate in the informal sector. Secondly, the author affirms that women are very involved in community management work. In the absence of the government provision related to housing, water, electricity, women, as the most affected, seek to ensure the survival of their households. Finally, in referring to Barrig and Fort, (1987); Moser, (1987); Cole, (1987); Sharma et al., (1985) the author asserts that women are effective in the role of organizing local-level protest groups. The author concludes that "because of the Self-Help Housing nature of so many settlements and housing policies in the Third World, the discussion of stereotype housing target groups must also

include the issue of women's participation in Self-Help housing projects” (Moser, 1992: 58)

This analysis introduces us to the criteria for successful implementation of SHH in South Africa. The last section of this chapter aims at elaborating criteria for a better implementation of SHH in South Africa.

### ***3.6: The criteria for successful implementation of SHH in South Africa***

The successful experience of SHH at international level and some recommendations of Omenya (2002) may constitute a framework for the criteria of a successful implementation of SHH.

The first criterion for a successful implementation of SHH is the capacity of the community to organize itself without the government or the development agencies' takeover. This is why Conway et al (1997) doubt the possibility for the government to organize a community. This means that poor people must organize themselves and be able to work together as community. A SHH project can only produce maximal success if it is adopted in an organized community<sup>31</sup>. In addition, the community should be able to manage resources: government subsidies or community resources. The fact is that without viable finance the community cannot conduct any development project, including housing.

The second criterion is the homogeneity of needs. For ensuring the participation of all members and to keep them motivated in a given project such as housing, it is important that every participant manifests an interest in the project. This requires the existence of the common interests among participants who are involved in a project. This is important in order to avoid sterile discussions and misunderstanding through the community while working together. The Cuban experience of SHH shows the interest of

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<sup>31</sup> I have already defined the concept of community. I mean by organized community, a community whose representatives seek to address needs of all community members, especially those of poor people. In South Africa this role is devoted to Local Government. (White Paper on Local Economic Development).

participants in SHH project. The homogeneity of needs is required as it is not unexpected to find among poor household that owning housing is not a priority of everyone living in the community (Adler 2002). As SHH is based on ownership, it may be useful to practice what I call “**positive discrimination**” in the choice of participants for the effectiveness of the project. I mean by positive discrimination choosing for the project only those who can take ownership option and are able to work together, share the same goals and also participate financially. This is to say that every community cannot participate in all projects related to the community<sup>32</sup>.

Positive discrimination in the choice of participants in SHH project may look contradictory to the extent that it does not promote solidarity within the community. To some extent it is true, and the only way to correct what I have named positive discrimination is to introduce in the given project the notion of proportionality. Indeed, it is difficult and almost impossible to have a homogeneous community. Diversity is one of the characteristics of communities, especially in urban areas. Spiegel et al (1996) argue that policy makers should deal with this issue if they desire to elaborate rational policies<sup>33</sup>. Indeed, our communities are heterogeneous; this means that the urban communities are fashioned from people with different cultures, different backgrounds, different income, different needs, etc (Human Habitat II, 1996). Applying the notion of proportionality in a project regarding the community means that for involving every member in a given project such as housing, we should not impose a uniform form of participation. Households should participate in a SHH project according each one’s capacity. For example, some participants, especially those without job, may work more hours than those who are employed. Some participants may contribute more than others in term or finance. The notion of proportionality has the advantage of allowing

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<sup>32</sup> Obviously, this option discriminates against some poor households such as those who have no “able bodied” members, elderly, disabled, and now the growing number of Child-headed households (AID orphans), etc. However, the notion of proportionality presented below, which does not impose a uniform form of participation, solves this issue. In addition, it is the role of the State, through Social grants to cover this category of poor households.

<sup>33</sup> Rational policy may be understood as policy that people understand and which seek their general interest (see Hopkins, 2003).

the participation of weak people or very poor households in a given project. Referring to the Cuban example of SHH in its form of social micro-brigades, beneficiaries were not only participants but also people who were in real housing need. Another advantage of the notion of proportionality is that, although unable to participate in the sites, disabled people may benefit from the SHH project<sup>34</sup>.

The first two criteria enumerated above are related to the responsibility of participants from low-income households. It may be argued that SHH will present limited success if its beneficiaries are not consulted or if it is imposed to them. Given what is argued above, it may be drawn as assumption at this step that SHH may not constitute an ideal solution for all low-income households in developing countries. This observation is drawn by some authors such as Burgess (1985). Whereas Burgess emphasizes economic, political and ideological levels to criticize State SHH, it should also be noticed that alongside these limits, every low-income household is not able to participate in the construction of his or her own shelter. Some may have health problems and be unable to participate in hard work required for SHH; and some others may not be interested in an ownership option (Adler, 2002) and prefer the rental option, for example. Here the role of the State intervenes. This role of the State, according to liberal policy, should seek and guarantee general interests, social cohesion and freedom of choice for every citizen. This means that the State, although acting for legality, should leave to every low-income household the possibility to choose the housing mode of delivery which suits his or her interest. In South Africa, Housing WP and other policy documents such as the Urban Development Framework of 1997 offer, in theory, many options of housing delivery to the low-income beneficiaries. In addition, the recent introduction of a rental option through Social Housing confirms the commitment to diversity of choices in housing mode of delivery. However, in practice, given the failure to recognize diversity (Spiegel et al, 1996) in the process of policy elaboration, lack of capacity and skills observed

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<sup>34</sup> A special mode of participation should be found for this category of poor households. They can for example participate in advising those who actively participate in the SHH project.

in authorities in charge of housing (Khan, 2003) and other constraints related to land issues and the difficulty of access to finance for low-income households (Rust, 2002), low cost housing through the RDP remains the only option of housing mode of delivery in many urban areas, including Tembisa.

The role of the State, which constitutes the third criterion of a successful SHH, is clearly outlined in the Canadian SHH experience analyzed above. This experience shows that the State facilitates the easy access to urban land for low income, beneficiaries of the SHH project. Besides, the State makes finance available for low-income households through the mechanism of access which does not discriminate against poor people. Finally, this experience also shows the availability of State through the third sector (Non-Government Organizations or Community based organizations) to technically assist owner builders. The role of State should be to initiate and encourage rather than enforce a SHH project.

The framework proposed by the Turner model of SHH confers to the State the role of enabling participants to be responsible. It seeks the entire appropriation of SHH by participants themselves. The difference between Turner's framework for a successful implementation of SHH and the Canadian experience is that Turner insists on the overall responsibility of the beneficiaries while the Canadian experience focuses only on the flexibility of the government about the design. Both frameworks acknowledge the involvement of State in the implementation of SHH.

The flexibility of governments in the SHH process is important. In fact, it indirectly introduces the notion of dialogue between the initiator, in this case the State, and beneficiaries (low-income households). If the dialogue between the State and low-income people succeeds, the latter may also initiate projects and propose designs and in turn be supported by the State in term of finance and technical assistance (see Canadian experience of SHH ). In South Africa, the lack of competence and capacity observed in authorities in charge of housing delivery (Khan, 2003) and the high level of uneducated people (Baumann, 2003) do not make possible the true dialogue between the

State and the participants of SHH project. This requires the existence of a third sector which has the role of mediator between the government and beneficiaries, discussed below.

The fourth criterion for a successful implementation of SHH is the involvement of NGOs or CBOs in the SHH project. For Friedman (1998)<sup>35</sup>, NGOs and CBOs must play the role of mediator between the government and the population. According to the 1994 Housing WP, the involvement of private sector, NGOs and CBOs is seen as a prerequisite for a sustained delivery of housing. In the Canadian experience presented above, the role of the third sector appears in ensuring building technical assistance to the owner builders. This third sector has the role of facilitating the dialogue between the government and the participants of SHH. This requires them to acquire the capacity to understand government resources and low-income people's needs. They should play a neutral role and only seek the improvement of housing conditions of low-income households rather than to take the government's side or to seek their personal interests. This mediator role looks intricate in South Africa. Indeed, the government has limited resources to satisfy people's housing needs (Mthembi-Mahanyele, 1996). In the meanwhile, many poor households are badly housed. The role of a third sector in South Africa should not, like in Canadian SHH experience, be limited to technical assistance. It should also try to help actors involved (government and builders) to understand each other.

The last criterion which should be enumerated is the partnership between the government and the private sector. The 1994 Housing WP and other policy documents cited above consider partnership between the government and private sector as a prerequisite for a success housing delivery. In developing countries and elsewhere, government alone cannot afford to solve housing needs of poor people alone. Another argument for partnership may be found in the access of urban land for poor people. In South Africa the partnership

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<sup>35</sup> Friedman (1998) does not talk directly about NGOs and CBOs. Rather, he analyzes the role of civil society which in some extent comprises NGOs and CBOs. In fact he defines civil society as a mass movement which is different from government.

between public and private sector looks necessary as the available land for developing housing project belongs to the private sector<sup>36</sup>. As Payne (1999) argues, the partnership between the public sector and the private sector constitutes a better and durable solution for resolving the difficult access to urban land, generated by the development of urban population, for low income people. In general, land is seen as source of secure and profitable investment. It may be argued that, “improving access to land markets is therefore a prerequisite for improving housing situation and economic prospects for low-income population” (Payne, 1999: 2). Another argument for partnership comes from the advocates of neo-liberalism which note that currently, the world economy is favorable to partnership and considers it as a useful opportunity to influence urban land markets.

The assumptions made in this chapter may be summarized as following:

- Although SHH is considered by some governments of developing countries, like South Africa<sup>37</sup>, as a strategy or a tool to tackle severe housing shortage associated with economic crisis (Henderson, 1999 and Mathey, 1992) this practice should not be imposed on low-income households (Omenya, 2002). Clearly, there is a need for the initiator of SHH (the State) to consult the participants. The notion used to illustrate this assumption is flexibility (Schulist, 2002).
- The second assumption is that the government should not consider poor households as mere beneficiaries (Mthembi-Mahanyele, 1996). They are participants and rich in initiative (Lankatilleke, 1990). Dialogue should be considered as indispensable means for bridging the gap between the State and the beneficiaries and also for

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<sup>36</sup> In urban areas, much unused or under-used land such as parks, Land-fill sites, etc, belongs to the government. However, this land is not always appropriate for developing a housing project. Using such land for the purpose of housing project can sometimes compromise some aspects of the city life.

<sup>37</sup> Although South African government adopted Self-Help Housing practice under the term “People’s Housing Process” for solving housing crisis brought by urban growth, it is observed that this practice did not receive great audience. This is properly speaking the object of this research.

understanding the real needs of poor households (Friedman, 1998). Currently, the notion which also explains the importance of households is “participation”. As I argued above, the mode of participation should not be uniform. It should consider the situation of every participant. I used the term of positive discrimination and also proportionality to argue that the mode of participation must be diversified according to builders’ availability.

- The role of women should not be neglected given her role in the society and in development processes (Moser, 1992). Although the perception of women in developing countries has been changing especially in urban area, much still must be done.

Finally, SHH, although criticized, may produce great results if government and poor households, mains actors, are committed to tackling housing crisis.

The literature on SHH leads one to assume that the inability of the South African government to meet the housing need of all its citizens (manifested in the growing number of informal settlements and the significant number of homeless) should in principle foster a widespread SHH programme. Furthermore, concepts such as liberalism, neo-liberalism, poverty, inequalities and housing need which stimulate SHH are not unknown in South Africa but do not constitute a stimulus for successful SHH process. Are weaknesses of SHH summarized above the reason for the non-widespread use of SHH process in South Africa? Do other reasons which are not presented in the literature on SHH exist and which do not allow the implementation of widespread use of SHH in South Africa? These questions constitute the starting point of Chapter IV of this work which is a case study of Tembisa, one of the South African Townships. The aim of studying Tembisa is to identify reasons which do not allow a widespread execution of SHH in South Africa. In so doing, this case study will enrich the existing literature on SHH.

## **4.0: Chapter IV: Case Study in Tembisa**

### ***4.1. Introduction of the case Study***

In the earlier chapters, I argued that the severe housing shortage in South Africa and concepts of liberalism, neo-liberalism, poverty, inequality and housing as a need should in principle stimulate the widespread use of SHH adopted in South Africa as PHP. The literature on SHH demonstrates that SHH does not present only strengths; it also presents weaknesses. The findings of this research through the case study show that the failure of PHP in some areas of South Africa and the limited use of SHH is not directly linked to weaknesses of SHH. Instead, authorities in charge of Housing incorporated SHH in National Housing policy as they believed that it could bring effective housing solution. Among reasons which do not foster the widespread use of SHH, the analysis derived from the case study points out that the attitude of paternalism from the government and the dependency attitude that poor households have, do not favour a widespread use of SHH in South Africa in general and in Tembisa in particular.

Before presenting the main findings of this research, I will firstly present the geographical situation of Tembisa; secondly I describe Housing conditions in Tembisa. Finally, I will present findings obtained through deep and open ended interviews with households and officials, which will be followed by conclusion, recommendations for the government and perspectives for future research.

### ***4.2. Geographical situation of Tembisa***

**Tembisa**<sup>38</sup> is one of the largest townships in South Africa, more specifically around Johannesburg. It was established in 1957 when Africans were resettled from Alexandra and areas in Edenvale, Kempton Park, Midrand and Germiston. Presently, most people living there are from Pretoria, Eastern Cape, Transkei, etc. It is situated to the north of Kempton Park on the East Rand, Gauteng, South Africa; 17 kilometers from the Johannesburg

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<sup>38</sup> Tembisa come from a Nguni name which means 'Promise' or 'Hope'.

International Airport and 38 kilometers from Pretoria. Currently, its population is about a half a million people.

Like other South African townships, Tembisa has to respond to challenges such as unemployment, lack of education, housing backlog, crime and transport inadequacy as most poor people who live there work in Johannesburg and have to spend almost 20% of their income in transport and almost one hour by taxi before reaching the centre of Johannesburg.

### ***4.3. Housing conditions in Tembisa***

Like in other developing countries, housing conditions are not stable and constitute a sombre issue in South Africa. Thus, there are still housing backlogs. One of the housing problems in South Africa is the issue of informal settlements that authorities in charge of Housing seek to eradicate by 2014 (Sisulu, 2005a). Inadequate housing conditions that a significant number of poor households face should in theory fuel a widespread use of SHH. The housing statistics provided by the current Minister of Housing describe housing conditions as following:

“A total of approximately 2,4 million households lives in informal housing structures. From census data we know that of these households about 400,000 are living in some form of structure in the backyard of a property owned by someone else. About another 1 million live in a shack or informal structure on their ‘own’ stand – rented. About 740,000 of these 1, 4 million households are renting their dwelling – suggesting that of the 1 million or so living on their ‘own’ stand in informal settlements, about one third are renting the land and/or the dwelling. Of the 2, 4 million informally housed households; about 800,000 are on the approved housing subsidy list and still waiting for their homes. This suggests that there is about 1, 6 million households who are in some way not formally part of the programmes to access subsidies to obtain formal housing” (Sisulu, 2005b)

The housing situation described by the current Minister of Housing presents a dark situation to which it should be added that; there are still issues of quality, sustainable human settlement, affordability to poor households and low supply for affordable rental accommodation as for those who live in formal settlements

In Tembisa, housing conditions are no different from other South African townships which experience a severe housing shortage and poor housing conditions. Poor households who do not have access to marketable formal land often invade land for the purpose of building shacks. As a result, there is a multiplicity of shacks in eleven wards which comprise Tembisa. The delivery of houses through the RDP programme seems to be the only effective housing mode of delivery (see fig 1 in appendix). Other forms which are mentioned in National Housing policy and policy documents such as PHP and the form of SHH defined in this work as “market driven”, seem to be almost nonexistent. Although there are some dwellings obtained through bank credits (see fig 2 in appendix), housing stock in Tembisa is essentially constituted of RDP houses given the high rate of poor and unemployed people who represent the majority of its population.

#### **4.4. Findings of interviews**

##### **4.4.1 Categories of people interviewed**

Overall, ten people classified in three categories were interviewed. The first category is related to the inhabitants of informal settlements. The aim of selecting this category is to know why they do not apply for subsidy granted through PHP<sup>39</sup> or why they do not take steps to improve their housing situations themselves in for example saving for the purpose of upgrading. The second category is the residents of RDP houses. The objective of choosing this category is to know their viewpoints regarding SHH and also why they preferred RDP houses instead of PHP. The last category is legal authorities of Tembisa, in charge of Housing, which are represented by two councillors<sup>40</sup>. The age of people interviewed varies between 19 years and 48 years, and they have been staying in Tembisa from 4 to 11 years.

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<sup>39</sup> RDP house is not the only subsidy that exists in South Africa. In the internet site of the Department of Housing ([www.housing.gov.za](http://www.housing.gov.za)), it is mentioned that people of which income varies between O and R 3500 may also be granted subsidy for PHP.

<sup>40</sup> There are eleven councillors, one for each ward, but I could not talk to all of them; so I chose those who are in charge of the wards where households interviewed live.

#### **4.4.2. Description of People interviewed**

Among people interviewed, four people selected are residents of informal settlements, 4 others are inhabitants of RDP<sup>41</sup> houses and two are councilors of Tembisa. Only one woman is working in the formal sector, as cleaner in Auckland Park. She is a beneficiary of RDP house and her income is R 2500. Other people interviewed are surviving by means of informal sector activities such as street trading (see fig 5 and 6 in appendix) and part time jobs. One 48 years old respondent from an RDP house, said that she is surviving by means of government assistance granted to her children.

In addition, all people interviewed are migrants and have come to Tembisa for the purpose of finding a permanent job. To the question of: how long have you been staying in Tembisa and where were you staying before you reached Tembisa; the most recent respondent has been there for 4 years and the respondent who has lived there longest has been there for 11 years. They are from Transkei, Pretoria, Eastern Cape and East London.

#### **4.4.3 Reasons of the non-widespread use of SHH in Tembisa**

##### **4.4.3.a Land issue**

Difficult access to land as one of the causes which does not stimulate the implementation of a widespread use of SHH appeared in the response provided by one informal settlement resident. He noted that they would like to do something in order to improve their poor housing conditions but they cannot, given the risk of being evicted. The only thing that they can do for improving their housing conditions is to build more shacks<sup>42</sup>. For one of the councillors interviewed, currently it is difficult to implement PHP in Tembisa given the lack of public land. He added that, given land issue, the government has only opted for RDP houses as housing mode of delivery. This raises the issue of having access to land which is one of the prerequisites for

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<sup>41</sup> The ward selected for interviews is called extension eleven. The choice of this ward is the ease of access as it is near to the main road.

<sup>42</sup> It is worth noticing that the squatters interviewed in extension eleven (see fig 7 in appendix) did not only invade land for the purpose of building shacks. They pointed out that it was also the way to fight crime as the space invaded was being used by criminals for killing people.

implementing PHP. In fact, as it clearly appears in Urban Development Framework of 1997,

“Effective Self-Help programmes and incremental housing initiatives require well located serviced land, strengthening urban management, promoting education and training, improving basic services, increasing the availability of finance to the poor, increasing supply of building materials and flexible building standards.”

The easy access to land is among the criteria enumerated by Urban Development Framework for a successful implementation of SHH. However, in developing countries, including South Africa, Doebele (1987) observed that the record of governments in the effective management of land has been a discouraging one. In South Africa, a significant part of available land is privately owned and the government has to negotiate with them. As Huchzermeyer (2002a) observes, this issue is difficult to deal with. In fact, the South African constitution which is based on liberal and neo-liberal principles protects private properties. This means that the democratic way for the government to find land from the private sector is to negotiate with owners. Acting otherwise, for example expropriating, would result in being anti-constitutional.

#### **4.4.3.b Right to accessing adequate Shelter**

Among people interviewed, especially those living in shacks, no respondent is enjoying his housing conditions. They acknowledged their bad housing conditions, especially lack of services such as water, electricity, sanitation, etc. They do not see how they will solve their housing need if the government does not intervene positively for them. All of them have already applied for RDP houses a long time ago and are on the housing waiting list. The only advantage indicated by the inhabitants of informal settlement is the location as they are close to Johannesburg<sup>43</sup>. It may be observed among these residents the intention of being permanent in Tembisa. There is only one respondent, a single man, 28 years; who has Matric as level of education, he

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<sup>43</sup> Saying that they are close to Johannesburg is also questionable. In fact, people from Tembisa have to use a large part of their income for transport, 25% for those who are earning 2500 and 50% for those who earn 1500. They have also to spend almost one hour before reaching the centre of Johannesburg.

came from Pretoria and has been staying in Tembisa for 4 years who noted that his living in Tembisa is temporary for the purpose of searching for a Job. As Crankshaw (1996) observes, policy-makers should not ignore this issue while elaborating policies. Whereas it is urgent to find a durable solution for those who wish to remain in the areas in opting for ownership, some poor people prefer a temporary solution, in for example renting a unit. As Alder (2002) points out, ownership is not always a priority among the urban poor. In addition, it can also be argued that the ideal is to propose to poor people many housing delivery options so that they can themselves opt for the solution which suits them. Presenting or proposing only one option without consulting with low-income households seems to be a paternalistic attitude which I will widely focus on in the part below.

Do the weaknesses of SHH enumerated in Chapter III constitute the reasons for the limited use of SHH in South Africa? Although SHH is challenged by some academics such as Burgess, Kerr and Tait (see the preceding chapter), South African policy-makers seem to be favourable to SHH process (Mthembi-Mahanyele, 1996; and Sisulu, 2005). In addition, SHH is incorporated into National Housing policy through the 1994 Housing WP and other policy documents such as the Development Urban Framework of 1997, and the Housing Act of 1997. Given the promotion of SHH in policy documents, the lack of controlled SHH in some urban areas for tackling the housing crisis resulting from urban population growth seems to be paradoxical. The questionnaire of this research was elaborated for the purpose of finding the main reasons which explain this phenomenon in South Africa.

The support of government and poor households' participation in the search for solving housing need are taken as the framework for analyzing the reason for the failure to implement successful PHP

#### **4.4.3.c. The ignorance of the right to have access to adequate shelter**

The first observation which comes from interviews is that people do not know that housing is one of the human rights made clear in the covenant on

Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966, in Human Habitat II (1996), in 1994 Housing WP and in chapter II section 26 of the Democratic Constitution of South Africa. RDP houses are considered by their beneficiaries, and also by those who are on the waiting list, as a government gift, instead of a government duty to provide adequate shelter for its citizens. This appears in the responses provided to the question of: “how respondents find government efforts to provide adequate shelter to all South Africans”? All residents of RDP houses interviewed have acknowledged that government is doing a great job but the problem is the population growth which continues to rise. For the residents of informal settlements, government does not work very well because they applied for an RDP house and have been waiting for a long time without getting it. The appreciation of government depends on who gets and who does not get a house. It seems logical that those who have been allocated a house appreciate government actions and those who have not, criticize government efforts. But the common element of both residents of RDP houses and inhabitants of informal settlements is the ignorance of their right to adequate shelter.

Regarding SHH and more specifically PHP, both residents of RDP houses and inhabitants of informal settlements are unaware of the existence of this housing mode of delivery in South Africa. This observation is based on the response given to the question of which kinds of housing delivery they know. All respondents said “RDP houses”. This response looks logical from respondents insofar as they are not aware of their housing rights. Indeed, PHP is one of the ways for low-income households to enjoy their housing right. So, the ignorance of this right goes hand in hand with the ignorance of the existence of PHP.

The question which should be asked is whether or not the ignorance of the existing housing rights of people is related to the lack of education. The findings of this research reveal that even those who are educated, at least with Matric, do not know their housing rights. Do people with tertiary education know about their housing rights in South Africa? The question cannot be

answered in this case study as it did not focus on this issue<sup>44</sup>. Maybe research should be done in order to determine if people with tertiary education recognize their right to adequate shelter. Besides, in this case, which actor should take responsibility between low-income households and government? It could be argued that for the government, poor households are responsible for their lack of education and they wait for everything from the government and are lazy to undertake a development project. This position is held by one of councillors<sup>45</sup>. According to low-income households living in RDP houses, councillors do not meet their expectation and do not properly listen to them. It appears that for low-income households interviewed, local authorities in charge of housing delivery are incompetent, corrupt and do not properly address their different needs, more specifically, housing need. This is not a new reality in South Africa; some authors who have criticized South African Housing Policy did not miss to point this aspect out. Khan (2003) notes the lack of capacity and skill of public authorities to design and implement integrated development plans. Besides, Omenya (2002) observes that “there is a lack of attention to the peculiar needs of single people, migrant workers, the elderly, those in need of temporary housing and people unable to access land legally”. To this critique, Central government would argue that this lack of institutional capacity is a legacy of apartheid and not a failure of policy. This answer looks unsatisfactory. In fact, Baumann (2003) who has tried to understand the current South African economy, observes that the South African poverty is deeply structured. According to him, the ANC government view about poverty which advocates that the South African poverty is “basically a momentary phenomenon, a relic of apartheid” (Baumann, 2003: 1) is questionable. For Baumann, the ANC government strategies adapted for eradicating poverty are not adapted to the South African context. Indeed these strategies are inspired from Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and are based on “post-fordism”.

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<sup>44</sup> It would be interesting if there were some people among respondents who have tertiary education. Unfortunately, I did not find one in the ward that I have selected as sample. They are in other wards.

<sup>45</sup> Surely, this is not the publicly stated opinion of higher levels of government. Indeed, in promoting PHP as the dominant policy, authorities in charge of housing expect willingness and capacity from poor households to engage with the process.

The ignorance of the existence of PHP also explains the preference for RDP houses. However, some of the residents of RDP houses stated that they would choose SHH if it costs less than RDP houses and also if they were given the opportunity to learn how to build a house. This confirms Shulist's (2002) assumption which states that with finance and technical assistance almost everyone may build his own house.

In relation to the limited use of PHP observed in South Africa despite the housing shortage, respondents ascertain the responsibility at the level of both the government and poor households. It is observed at the level of poor households the attitude of "dependency"<sup>46</sup> which is manifested in waiting for everything from the government and also paternalistic<sup>47</sup> attitude which consists of government acting for the good of beneficiaries without their consent.

#### **4.4.3.d Attitude of dependency**

The attitude of dependency is witnessed among poor households interviewed, more specifically those living in informal settlements. This attitude does not suit the framework for a successful implementation of SHH which requires the active participation of beneficiaries. Potential beneficiaries of low-cost Housing consider themselves simply as recipients of government action, instead of participants. Thus, they marginalize themselves. People living in informal settlements do not think to improve their housing situations themselves or with government. They are waiting for houses from the government and they forget that the government does not have enough resources to solve housing need of all South Africans alone. As Mthembu-Mahanyele (1996), the former Minister of Housing put it, the government will

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<sup>46</sup> Attitude of dependency derives from the theory of dependency which is presented in Chapter II. Like the proponents of dependency theory who advocate that the causes of under development are external, the poor households in Tembisa believe that solutions to their problems, especially those related to housing issues, should come from the government.

<sup>47</sup> This concept comes from Latin '*Pater*' which means father. It is an analogy comparing the relation between a father and his son; in political sphere this analogy is taken when a given government is convinced that its policies or laws seek the good of its citizens even though its citizens did not consent to the elaboration of those laws. On ethical grounds, paternalism is criticized because it considers citizens or beneficiaries of policies or laws as children, thus, unable to choose what is good for themselves.

only help those who help themselves. Dependency attitude is revealed when one of the councillors interviewed affirmed that people are lazy to undertake hard work and initiatives. He said that you can sometimes be confronted by people who inform you that there have rats in their houses. The councillor was asking himself if in such case people are not able to pay for product to destroy rats. He added that people are only waiting for keys for occupying an RDP house. The councillor's viewpoints about the failure to implement People Housing Process in Tembisa seem to be confirmed by answers given by households interviewed. In fact, all people interviewed, especially those living in squatter settlements, respond to the question of: "what have you done so far in order to improve your housing situation?" that they have applied for RDP houses. To the question of if they were given an opportunity to choose between PHP and RDP house, which kind of housing delivery they will choose and why, most respondents said that they will choose RDP houses because RDP house is already finished. In addition another element which confirms the attitude of "dependency" observed at the level of beneficiaries is the responses provided to the question of what the government must do urgently in order to solve the issue of poor housing conditions. Most respondents, especially the residents of RDP houses said that the government must build more RDP houses.

Like dependency attitude, Paternalistic attitude which may be the cause of the attitude of dependency also does not support an effective implementation of SHH programmes.

#### **4.4.3.e Paternalistic attitude**

From the government side, I observed paternalistic attitudes which consist in taking decisions for poor people without considering their viewpoints or associating them in the process of elaborating policies. Paternalism, likened to the relation between a father and a child, seeks to consider poor people as children, incapable of undertaking or initiating development projects themselves. Lankatilleke (1990) criticizes this process when he advocates that poor people are rich in initiatives and need to be encouraged and supported. Helping poor people who are in need of housing to own a decent

house has moral considerations and seeks the good or interests of poor households given the value that post-apartheid government confers to housing. However, this becomes reprehensible to the extent that poor people did not consent to policy development and its implantation.

Paternalistic attitude appears when, to the question of how can PHP be effective and produce great results, one respondent said that there is a need to ask people what they want instead of deciding in their place. This is the position held by Omenya (2002) when he argues that poor people must decide on what they want. The idea of consulting poor people is that durable solutions, and the way to attain them, are in the hands of beneficiaries. Besides, one respondent of an RDP house, 19 years old and the youngest of the people interviewed, criticises the government action of supplying RDP houses to poor people without working with them. According to her, government is responsible for the multiplicity of shacks. Indeed, she argued that poor people are waiting for RDP houses and even those who are able to solve their housing need alone, for example through renting in formal settlement or by building a decent house, prefer to stay in the shack and wait for RDP houses. This is to say that having a shack effectively becomes a housing waiting list. As a result, the number of shacks is getting higher and poor households are denied the possibility of innovating and also creating. In addition, they become unable to raise their problems alone. In this sense, the paternalistic attitude, observed also in socialist States is the main cause of dependency attitude among poor people.

The question which should be asked is whether this paternalistic attitude, adopted by the post apartheid government, consisting of supplying low-cost housing to poor households without consulting them, is bad at all. Paternalism can produce great results if the real needs of beneficiaries coincide with government actions realized for them. In the case of beneficiaries of RDP houses interviewed, no respondent is completely happy or did not complain about at least one of the weaknesses of RDP houses. Indeed, those who work complain about building materials used in RDP houses. Others complain about the size of the house which is too small for a big family. And some

others pointed out the security aspect as there is no fence and gives easy access to strangers. They attribute the responsibility of the failure of RDP houses to the government. However, if beneficiaries of RDP houses were involved in its implementation, they would probably accept the weaknesses presented by these houses. Indeed, one of the strengths of participation is, according to Martin (1983), that people can easily accept the failure of a given project<sup>48</sup>. This is to say that true dialogue between authorities and beneficiaries should be required before implementing any projects. This aspect appears in the question of: “what would you do if you were given opportunities to act as authority in charge of housing?”. One respondent of an RDP house said that she would try to listen to the communities’ members in trying to understand their problems, what they want to do, and also in trying to be honest as people are suffering. In addition, dialogue seems to be necessary for helping low-income households to understand the financial situation of the country which does not allow government to supply adequate shelter for every poor household. This element appeared when to the question of: do you not think that the government is limited in resources for building RDP houses for everyone who is in housing need, one respondent living in RDP house answered in saying that South African government has a lot of money that it perceives from different taxes we pay. This is true but the reality shows that in Tembisa, there are approximately up to 15 thousand<sup>49</sup> people who are on the housing waiting list. “If you multiply this number by the amount of subsidy for building one house, which amount will you have?” said one of the councillors of Tembisa. This is to say that true dialogue between the government and poor households can sometimes solve the issue of misunderstanding.

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<sup>48</sup>This raises the problematic of participation and failure. A broader view of participation is the positive reaction to the failure which is considered as inherent to human nature and in its giving opportunities to learn from one’s mistakes and limits and to become more aware for future projects. Failure is seen by some authors as more meaningful than success. Indeed, as Smiles argues, “it is a mistake to suppose that men succeed through success; they much oftener succeed through failures. Precept, study, advice, and example could never have taught them so well as failure has done” ([http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat\\_failure.html](http://www.wisdomquotes.com/cat_failure.html)). According to this author, community that participates in the project learns more in failing than in succeeding.

<sup>49</sup> If the population of Tembisa is estimated to be half a million of people, this means that a significant number of poor households in Tembisa is on the housing waiting list.

This issue of true dialogue also implies the issue of participation, the element without which development can only profit the minority as happens in neo-liberal countries. The question in this step is how participation can be fruitful and produce results expected. Does it mean that authorities should listen to everyone before implementing a given project? If this is the case, we can experience logistic and timing issues. The ideal would be to consult as significant a number as possible. Besides, dialogue may take different forms. People can participate directly in being themselves actors or they can participate indirectly in choosing their representatives. In all cases, beneficiaries should not feel external to the project related to them.

Paternalistic and dependency attitudes observed respectively from government and poor households do not contribute to the creation of an organized and strong community. Therefore, poor households marginalize themselves and do not seek to empower themselves in addressing alone their housing need. These attitudes: dependency and paternalism, weaken the existing community of poor people.

#### **4.4.3.f The evidence of a weak community**

Another aspect found in the interviews which does not allow the effective implementation of SHH or PHP in Tembisa is the inability to create an active or strong community<sup>50</sup>. According to one of the councillors of Tembisa, PHP was implemented in Tembisa before but did not produce the results expected. Among the reasons, the councillor pointed out that participants in the project were spending their time fighting and arguing. This was also confirmed by some respondents especially to the question of: “how is your relationship with your neighbours?” According to some respondents, their relationships are bad and they cannot interact easily. Others recognized that they can sometimes meet for discussing community matters but it is not easy to find an agreement,

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<sup>50</sup> I mean by active and strong community, a community that is able to define their main problems and to propose tentative solutions. This is to say, following Lankatilleke, that an active and a strong community have solutions to their problems in their hands. In turn, they need recognition, in term of finance, to solve their problems.

especially when it relates to money issues. Some others again indicated that there is no 'trust' between them. So, they cannot easily work together. Some poor households noted that they do not know other members of the community.

#### **4.4.3.g Priority of needs**

Alongside the reasons advanced for explaining the failure of PHP in Tembisa, there is the failure from implementers to recognize the existing diversity of cultures and background and the diversity of needs among the beneficiaries. This raises the question of whether housing constitutes the major priority in South Africa, more specifically in Tembisa. For the post-apartheid government, Housing seems to be very important<sup>51</sup>. This appears in policy documents such as 1994 Housing WP, etc. In addition, as Sisulu (2005b), the current Minister of Housing affirms:

“Through a house the poor have an opportunity to propel themselves out of poverty. There is now a truism that if you feed a man or woman, you stay his or her hunger for the day, but if you educate him or her you create an ability to stay his or her hunger for life. I would like to add that if you help give him or her a fundamental asset like a house not only do you empower him or her but you give him or her the kind of dignity whose value is incalculable.

The assumption raised in this research seems to answer negatively. In fact, this has appeared in the response provided to the question of: “what do you expect from the government?” All respondents answered that they urgently need a job. No respondent, however, mentioned housing as response. This response also appears from one of the residents of the informal settlement who works in a part time job with an average income of between R 1000 and R 2000. To the question of: “why do you stay in bad housing conditions while you can, with your income, rent a formal house where you can have basic services such as water, electricity, sanitation?” She answered that her job is temporary and she can be dismissed at any time. Therefore, she needs a

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<sup>51</sup> Although housing seems to be the major priority, budget speeches and Presidential “State of Nation” speeches give similar importance to health, education, employment, safety and security and economic growth. Actually, with the hosting of the 2010 Soccer World Cup, security issues will probably command great importance.

regular job which may allow her to properly look after her children. This looks logical because with a job, a household may be able to solve their housing need alone and stop displaying a dependency attitude.

Policy-makers do not adequately address the real problem raised by society members. Taking housing as a central priority of all poor people seems to be a mistake and can, instead of solving housing need, create other issues. Huchzermeyer (2003a) shows that some beneficiaries of low-cost housing in Cape Town were obliged to sell their RDP houses to allow them to take care of their children who were suffering from Aids. This is to say that while some poor people urgently need a house, others need cash money or a job or something else. It should also be noticed that priority is dynamic and not static. This element appears in the responses provided by the beneficiaries of RDP houses who have complained about the size of the house and need to extend their houses. It can be argued that when they were in informal settlements, their priority was to obtain a RDP house and actually as they become a big family they also need a big house<sup>52</sup>. This, properly speaking, manifests the problematic of need and desire discussed in chapter II of this research.

Finally, this case study which has focused on deep and open interviews made as significant assumptions that, on the one hand, the failure to implement SHH in some urban areas in South Africa, including Tembisa is not directly linked to weaknesses of SHH analyzed in the literature review. On the other hand, with the attitude of paternalism and dependency, it will be difficult and almost impossible to positively respond to the housing backlog observed in South Africa. Indeed, with paternalistic attitude, the main problem is that the government does not allocate enough funds to satisfy housing needs of all South African poor households. Furthermore, this attitude may, in the long run, endanger the decision to eradicate informal settlement by 2014 as the government does not have enough resources to supply adequate houses for all poor households whose income is less than R 3500 per month. Another

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<sup>52</sup> The dynamic of needs may also be explained by Maslow's "hierarchy of needs"

aspect that complicates the housing delivery is the incapacity of local authorities in charge of housing to adequately use the money that has been allocated for low-income housing. As Charlton et al (2003: 87) put it, “The financial and maintenance burden on municipalities caused by the delivery of housing projects is of major concern. Capital expenditure on housing delivery to date has translated into severe operating expenses for both local authorities and end users.”

Referring to dependency attitude, there is a risk for poor households in South Africa to remain marginalized and excluded from society as a whole. Even if the government were to find vital resources to satisfy the housing need of all South African poor households, it is not certain that poor households can take advantage of government intervention related to them. This is to say that without participation and dialogue, no durable solution<sup>53</sup> can be expected from the housing sector where there is still much to do.

## **5.0 Chapter V: Conclusion and recommendations**

### ***5.1 General considerations***

The debate concerning SHH has shown that this practice, although old in application, saw its revival as policy in developed countries after the first and the Second World War. It was adopted as policy to compensate the economy of scarcity and also to tackle the severe housing shortage. SHH has allowed many households to be housed while the conventional housing policy failed to solve the housing need of poor people. Cuban experience of SHH in a developing country and Canadian experience in a developed country have provided great examples of the way to respond to severe housing shortage. It appears that SHH is an alternative to conventional housing policy and a policy

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<sup>53</sup> Durable solution in South Africa related to housing issue is a solution which favours inclusion, avoids segregation of poor households and also seeks to empower poor households in considering them as actors of development and not as merely recipients of development projects.

of crisis. In developing countries, through the World Bank, SHH was adopted as housing policy to face the issue of housing crisis generated by urban and population growth.

Despite the main advantages of SHH such as to house a significant number of poor households and to consolidate networks among participants of SHH projects, this practice, especially the State initiated SHH (named in this research as the third form of SHH) was severely challenged by some academics of whom Burgess is the main proponent. Mathey who is one of the advocates of SHH points out that SHH is an effective policy and may produce great results. For him, criticism addressed against SHH is relevant only in capitalist countries. In analyzing SHH in Cuba, Mathey has shown that critiques related to SHH should not be generalized. His counter arguments stand if severe housing conditions were isolated from other issues. However, as it was argued, severe housing shortage which stimulates SHH is also linked with inequality, poverty and unemployment. Therefore, a housing solution should be integrated, and include other policies.

In South Africa, the policy adopted by the Housing Department as PHP received great audience from authorities; and policy documents give favourable space to this practice. However, in practice, PHP in some areas has failed to house a significant number of households, as happened in other countries, or has not been implemented given the difficult access to land. The assumption of this research was not to argue that SHH is an ideal housing solution. This may constitute a topic for appropriate future research. Instead, it sought to enumerate the main reasons which hamper the widespread use of SHH. Through open and deep interviews with residents from informal settlements, RDP houses and an official, this research has shown that in South Africa, the failure to implement widespread use of SHH does not result from the weaknesses of SHH. The findings of this research show that the difficult access to land, the ignorance from households of their right of having access to adequate shelter, the attitude of dependency evident in households, the paternalistic attitude from the government, the failure to constitute an

active community and the failure to establish real priorities of poor people are the main causes of limited use of SHH in South Africa.

Therefore, the main question that has constituted this research has been answered. This research also set out to discover whether SHH or PHP is possible and desirable in South African context. To the first question, this research responds positively. Indeed, the implementation of SHH is possible in South Africa insofar as the criteria defined in the framework for successful implementation of SHH are respected. In South Africa, the main difficulty for the authorities to properly execute SHH is to supply land for housing. To the question related to the desirability of SHH, the finding of this research has shown that there are two categories of poor households. According to the first category of poor households, SHH is not desirable because it requires hard work and to spend more time, while they do not work and would like to spend their time in making their livelihood. It is this category of poor household who witness dependency attitude towards the housing issue. For the second category of poor households, SHH is desirable to the extent that it costs less than the amount required for RDP houses and they would be given an opportunity to learn how to build a house. Finally, SHH cannot be imposed as solution to severe housing shortage on every poor household. They have to decide themselves the mode of housing delivery that best suits them

## ***5.2 Recommendations and perspectives for future research***

### **5.2.1 Recommendations**

It seems important at the end of this research related to the SHH debate to formulate some recommendations to the South African government in order to improve housing conditions of poor households. These recommendations are directly linked to the general issue of housing.

The first recommendation is to bridge the existing gap between the formulated housing policies and their implementation. In fact, the practice shows that

what is executed in term of housing is different from what is formulated. The National Housing Policy and policy documents give the option for poor households to choose the mode of housing delivery which suits them; however, in reality, poor households have only RDP as a viable mode of housing delivery.

Secondly, government has to promote education so that poor households can know their rights<sup>54</sup> and their duties. This has the advantage of making poor households responsible and empowering them. In addition, the acknowledgement of their rights may stimulate them to search for adequate solutions related to their housing need.

Thirdly, the government must reduce the attitude of dependency among poor households which results in disempowering poor households through transforming them into mere recipients. It is observed that the erection of shacks has become an effective housing waiting list or the way to be beneficiary of RDP house. The dependency attitude can be broken if poor households realize that the government does not have enough resources to supply houses for all poor households. True dialogue seems to be an effective tool for attaining this objective. Without breaking the dependency attitude, it will be difficult, almost impossible to eradicate informal settlement by 2010 or to solve the issue of the housing backlog.

Thirdly, the South African government must stop practicing paternalism. This implies a shift of housing policy. A new policy<sup>55</sup> should not be based on

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<sup>54</sup> By rights, I mean the right to have access to adequate shelter. In South Africa the Housing Acts and other policy documents related to housing are published in the Government Gazettes. The solution should be to make a large diffusion and accessibility of this journal to poor households.

<sup>55</sup> The elaboration of a new housing policy should constitute a topic of debate. In fact, is it a solution for addressing the housing issue in South Africa? It is true that South African Housing policy presents many weaknesses and the government already responded in publishing a document titled "Breaking new ground". Obviously, the new housing policy will rectify the weaknesses observed in the current housing policy but will not bridge the existing gap between what is formulated and what is implemented. The shift should also analyze what has not been implemented. In fact, the real issue is not to elaborate a new policy but to improve the housing conditions of 2,4 million of households living in informal settlements.

ownership as the only option, and should not presume to impose solutions on the beneficiaries; instead, a new policy should seek to invite beneficiaries to participate in its implementation.

Fourthly, the government should seek to strengthen communities in creating structures which allow community members to choose the representatives who seek to address the need of poor people. This is already mentioned in the WP on local government. In South Africa, with democracy, people elect according to their will and their interests. It can be said that authorities are not imposed but they are chosen. However, as most respondents observed, once they are in power, their representatives change, in that they no longer to address their needs. It should be pointed out that the representatives are the fruits of their community. So, if communities are not organized, they are likely to produce authorities who will not seek the good of all members.

Finally, government must seek to integrate the housing issue with other challenges such as, unemployment, lack of education, HIV and Aids, etc. It is clearly established that most poor households need jobs and believe that through this they are able to improve their poor housing conditions. Creating jobs may constitute one of the effective ways to empower poor households and to include them in the whole of society. This is to say that the South African policy makers must establish priorities which also meet poor households' needs.

### **5.2.2 Perspective for future researches**

Throughout this research, it comes out that some issues raised deserve proper research. Firstly, it is established that most people interviewed with Matric as level of education ignore their right of having access to adequate housing. However, this research did not focus on people with tertiary education. So, this deserves proper research<sup>56</sup>. Secondly, some residents of informal settlements interviewed have income which varies between R 1000

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<sup>56</sup> Surely, they are a few number of poor households who have members with tertiary education in Tembisa. However, in other wards that I did not choose as sample, you can find some people who are still schooling in University or other tertiary education.

and R 2000. It should also be interesting to find the way how those people can initiate saving in order to improve their poor housing conditions.

Thirdly, the approach of government with regard to housing is defined in this research as paternalistic attitude which is criticized on ethical grounds. However, this attitude may in some circumstances be useful, especially for the poorest of the poor who cannot find proper solution to their housing need by themselves. Research deserves to be conducted to determine the criteria in which paternalist attitude may constitute an effective housing solution for poor households.

It is also acknowledged that there is a need to elaborate a new housing policy which will not focus on ownership option only, but which will include other options such as rental and which will not deepen segregation. Another perspective may also be taken, which does not envisage the elaboration of a new housing policy but which examines keeping the current housing policy to see how it can be fully implemented. This deserves proper research insofar as it should focus on the way the implementation of current housing policy can respond to housing need of poor people.

Finally, this research pointed out the reasons which have prevented a widespread use of SHH but did not examine if SHH can bring social inclusion and job creation in South Africa. This is to say that research is needed to determine whether or not the current political, economic and social situations of South Africa welcome the SHH process.