E-PARCC
COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE INITIATIVE
Syracuse University
Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration

A Place to Call Home

Teaching Notes

Overview:
This case deals with the evolution of homeless services in Dublin, Ireland – spanning a period of about 20 years (1990 to 2010) and focusing on the complex policy and organizational issues over time. The main 'actor' in the case is Mary Higgins, currently an independent consultant, but who was a key player from 1995 to 2005 as Director of both the *Homeless Initiative* and its successor, the *Homeless Agency* during that time. The challenge for students is to assess the challenges and what options are open to policy makers, government agencies and service organisations as they strive to meet the objective of ending homelessness.

Target Audience, Learning Objectives and Use:
The case is most effective with relatively mature students and/or experienced practitioners, as it deals with a broad range of individual, organisational and political issues. While it has been taught to 4th year undergraduates, a rich discussion of the issues and possible interventions and outcomes is more likely with students familiar with the complexities of working in public service networks with multiple stakeholders, competing policy imperatives and changing social and economic conditions.

This case was a first place winner in E-PARCC's 2012-13 "Collaborative Public Management, Collaborative Governance, and Collaborative Problem Solving" teaching case and simulation competition. It was double-blind peer reviewed by a committee of academics and practitioners. It was written by Mary Lee Rhodes and Gemma Donnelly-Cox of Trinity College, Dublin and Ann Torres of the National University of Ireland, Galway. This case is intended for classroom discussion and is not intended to suggest either effective or ineffective handling of the situation depicted. It is brought to you by E-PARCC, part of the Maxwell School of Syracuse University's Collaborative Governance Initiative, a subset of the Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC). This material may be copied as many times as needed as long as the authors are given full credit for their work.

The learning in the case is expected to be in the upper levels of pedagogical objectives, and those familiar with Fink's (2003)[1] taxonomy of learning will recognise opportunities to address each of the higher level objectives of: application, integration, human dimension, caring and learning how to learn.[2] In particular, students will need to be able to assess the various relationships among stakeholders, understand individual and organisational objectives and how these influence decisions, select from various analytic models relating to network management, collaboration, leadership, policy development and implementation, and apply these to the case to develop their ideas.

The case is probably best used towards the end of a module on managing non-profits or managing public services, which are part of either a Masters in Public Administration or MSc in Management. Given the issue being addressed is a systemic one, it could also be used in a public policy course in a module addressing policy implementation and/or the interplay between policy development and delivery.

Additional Readings:
There are numerous documents in the bibliography that provide details about the case that are available online at www.homelessagency.ie. The article by Rhodes & Brooke (2010) provides an overview of the changing policy and practice in homeless services, with a focus on the impact of evaluation in this period.

An article by Eoin O'Sullivan (2008) provides an additional historical perspective on homelessness in Ireland over the period of the case, which may enhance students' understanding of the salient facts and point them to additional data sources.

For those wishing to focus on the network management aspects of the case, Koppenjan & Klijn (2004) is particularly relevant (see answer guidelines below).

[1] Fink, L.D. (2003) *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
[2] For an excellent summary of Fink's taxonomy see the table in **Appendix 1** taken from Naumes, W. & Naumes, M. (2006 – 2nd Ed.*) The Art & Craft of Case Writing*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Other Readings Mentioned in the Answer Guidelines:

Ferlie, E., Fitzgerald, L., McGivern, G., Dopson, S. and Bennet, C. (2011) "Public Policy Networks and 'Wicked Problems': A nascent solution?" *Public Administration*, 89(2), pp. 304-324.

Koopenjan, J. and Klijn, E-H (2004) *Managing Uncertainties in Networks*, New York, NY: Routledge .

O'Sullivan, E. (2008) "Sustainable Solutions to Homelessness: The Irish case", *European Journal of Homelessness*, 2, pp. 205-233.

Pfeffer, J. and G.R. Salancik (1978) *The External Control of Organizations: A Resource Dependence Perspective*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.

Rhodes, M.L., Norris, M. and Phelan, M. (2008) "Homeless services in Dublin: A study of network and game management". *The 20th European Network for Housing Research Conference: Shrinking Cities, Sprawling Suburbs Changing Countryside.* July 2008, Dublin, Ireland.

Rhodes, M.L. and Geoffrey MacKechnie (2003) "Understanding Public Service Systems: Is there a role for Complex Adaptive Systems Theory?", *Emergence*, 5(4), pp. 57-85.

Roberts, N.C. (2000) "Wicked Problems and Network Approaches to Resolution," *International Public Management Review*, 1(1), pp. 1-19.

Thompson, G., Frances, J., Levacic, R. and Mitchell, J. (eds)(1991) *Markets, Hierarchies & Networks: The Coordination of Social Life*, London: Sage Publications.

Additional Readings to Enhance Students' Understanding of Collaboration' or Leadership in Complex Non-profit/Public Management Environments

Beinecke, R.H. (2009) "Introduction: Leadership for Wicked Problems" *Innovation Journal,* 14(1), pp. 1-17.

Head, B.W. (2008) "Wicked Problems in Public Policy", *Public Policy*, 3(2), pp. 101-118.

Head, B.W. (2008.) "Assessing Network-based Collaborations: Effectiveness for Whom?" *Public Management Review*, 10(6), pp. 733-749.

Worrall, R. (2009) "Co-Creating Public Service Leadership Development in a new era of Collaboration, *Proceedings of the European Conference on Management, Leadership & Governance*, pp. 274-282.

Herzog, R.J. and Abel, C.F. (2009) "Rational Techniques as Myth-Based Rituals: The Role of Reflective Practitioners in Remunerative Justice", *Public Personnel Management,* 38(2), pp. 1-18.

Teaching Approach and Session Plan

The case should probably be taught in a 2 to 3 hour teaching seminar, in which students are well used to presenting their ideas and debating with peers around the main recommendations. The case should be handed out well in advance of the seminar and students should be encouraged to do individual research drawing on the reference list or other readings, as described above or in the module outline. It is probably best to assign particular questions to groups of students who are required to prepare answers the questions posed. The outline below assumes students have been assigned one question out of the first three and another question drawn from the last two. Students should be advised to prepare their answers in advance of the class to achieve maximum benefit.

Allocation of Class Time (3 hours)

0:00 – 0:15 Seminar leader reminds students of the key features of the case and the questions posed. Group students into pairs to discuss one of the first three questions they have been assigned and to prepare to present their answer.

0:15 – 0:40 Students work in pairs to prepare answer to present to class. While they are working, the seminar leader should select one pair of students to present a question and another pair to comment. If desired, students may be asked to prepare overheads or other presentation materials in this time to assist them and/or to be submitted at the end of class.

0:40 – 1:30 Students present their answers, with another pair asked to comment. All students may be invited, or called upon, to give their views. Each question should take about 15 to 20 minutes.

1:30 – 1:45	Seminar leader summarises the key points made in relation to each question and highlights main links to theory and/or practice as relevant, using answer slides provided, as is appropriate.
1:45 – 2:00	BREAK – students may also use this time to think about how the previous discussion might change their answer(s) to the last questions posed.
2:00 – 2:20	Facilitated discussion of Question 4 – using flip chart or projection media to capture recommendations.
2:20 – 2:30	Split students into ‘teams’ to debate the answer to the last question: those teams who believe it is possible to end homelessness and those who do not. Give teams 5 minutes to prepare their arguments.
2:30 – 2:50	Alternate the discussion by calling upon members of each team to tease out their views and get them to support these with specific examples and recommendations from the case, from the discussion and/or from their own experience.
2:50 – 3:00	Seminar leader summarises key points made and the links to theory and the learning objectives.

Answer Guidelines to Questions Posed

1) In the provision of services to people experiencing homelessness, how would you characterise the relationships among the various actors?

This question is extremely broad, but should elicit answers using one of several possible frameworks for analysing networks. It could also generate discussion of public service systems (see Rhodes & MacKechnie 2003), but would most likely end up in a network discussion anyway. If a broad overview were expected, then undertaking the analysis of the case in the context of the three main organising forms of markets, hierarchy and networks (Thompson et al., 1991) would be most effective.

The framework we have used in teaching the case is drawn from Koppenjan & Klijn (2004), which characterises actors' activities and relationships in networks as a '*policy game'*. A policy game incorporates the temporal, goal-oriented processes of decision-making in which multiple actors participate in pursuit of their individual and shared objectives. It is the overall process of interaction among participants in the network engaged in:

1) defining policy agendas, objectives and solutions,

2) taking strategic action, and

3) evaluating and responding to outcomes.

Managing the game entails establishing and/or facilitating the creation of the 'rules' of the game in which actors (i.e., 'players') participate. Note that Rhodes et al. (2008) provide a comprehensive answer to this question using the Koppenjan & Klijn (2004) framework and, hence, this article may be left off the reading list until after the seminar and used for the debrief or review.

Students may begin by describing the various actors in the homelessness services network over time. This discussion should encompass the key statutory agencies (i.e., local authorities and health boards), the non-profit organisations, government departments, and homeless households. Over the time frame of the case, new actors emerge including the: *Irish Council of Social Housing*, *The Homeless Initiative*, *The Homeless Agency* and the *Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency*. Students should be able to identify the role of each actor in the system (e.g., service provider, funding agency, network manager, policy maker, etc.) and when and why they entered the 'policy game'.

In analysing relationships, students would be well served by a resource-dependency analysis, such as that proposed by Pfeffer & Salancik (1978), Koppenjan & Klijn (2004) or Scharpf (1978). Resources should not be limited to financial ones, but should also include less tangible resources such as authority, legitimacy, mobilisation power, and so on. Complex problems such as homelessness generally require a combination of resources that are 'controlled' by different actors in the network. Hence, it results in mutual dependency among actors and a web of interrelationships that complicate the definition and achievement of objectives, even if those objectives are shared across agents.

Finally, students should make an attempt at assessing how the relationships evolve over time and how the network emerges and coalesces (or not). This process is the focus of the Rhodes et al. (2008, p. 1) analysis, which provides the following summary in the abstract:

> *This paper describes the emergence and management of a policy 'game' (Koppenjan & Klijn 2004) in a particular housing domain: namely homeless*

service provision in Dublin, Ireland. The focus is on how the amorphous group of homeless service providers in Dublin came together over the last 20 years, influenced, in part, by changing legislation and new funding programmes, but also by the dynamics of organisational change within individual organisations and in the network overall.

We describe how a period of 'go-it-alone' strategies by actors in an emerging network in the 1980s failed to deliver appropriate solutions and then was followed by intensive network formation and game management activities to agree objectives and improve co-ordination. Following this, a third phase of activity ushered in a more hierarchical and structured approach that increased funding efficiency and focused effectiveness, but may have constrained innovation and the network's ability to adapt and deal with variation.

Appendix 2 provides a diagram of policies, network formation phases and outcomes from Rhodes & Brooke (2010) that may also help students get to grips with the changing environment and the policy game.

2) "Partnership … is hard work and requires effort and constant attention (Morgan, 2011, p. 8)." This sentiment, that organisational collaboration is not easy, is especially resonant for non-profit organisations. What lessons might you draw from the case for improving collaboration among partner organisations?

We would expect that students will become aware, as they complete their network analysis, that there is a big difference between being embedded in a network and developing effective collaborative relationships within that network to achieve the 'partnership ideal'. Emphasising the challenges of collaborative work appears to resonate with non-profit organisations that perceive the pursuit of their mission as requiring an 'ourselves alone' orientation. Nonetheless, we also see, in the non-profit sphere, exemplar examples of productive collaboration and incentives to foster collaboration between non-profits. For example, in the US there is the Nonprofit Collaboration Database, a searchable database of 670 examples of collaboration models. See more at:
http://www.ssireview.org/blog/entry/sharing_nonprofit_collaboration_knowledge_and_experience#sthash.ZBt5t95L.dpuf

While this database emphasises collaborations between non-profits, the case illustrates the requirement to build collaborative relationships between and among non-profit, state and private providers of housing. The main driver for partnership approaches and collaborative working in the case is the state, and the *Homelessness Initiative* serves as the vehicle for encouraging and supporting collaborative efforts.

This question can be used to open up a broader discussion of the drivers for non-profit collaboration, and the various factors that help and hinder the collaboration agenda. A useful opening question for the discussion is to ask who and what is creating the drive and impetus for collaboration in the case. Class members are likely to address the *Homelessness Initiative* infrastructure, Mary Higgins' role in orienting disparate non-profit parties to *Homeless Initiative* goals, the successes in achieving agreed outcomes from the collaboration of the main stakeholders, and the limitations noted in the case in spite of partnership efforts. Ask the group to extrapolate from the case to their own experience of collaboration in non-profit settings. What works? What hinders collaboration? What do they perceive to be the main drivers of collaboration in their own settings?

The discussion can be brought back to networks as addressed in the first question by asking the class to consider what forms of organising are most suitable for effective collaborative relationships. Does it matter if the non-profit is entirely voluntary? What if it has a dual social/business mission; how will this duality impact on collaborative arrangements? The question could be developed further to look at a range of collaboration types. Indeed, class members may be engaged in intra-sectoral collaborations that are formalising into mergers, which are increasingly encouraged, if not driven, by funders.

3) What do you believe are the likely responses of non-profit organizations to the altered conditions of support?

There a couple of clues in the case relating to this question. The Leahy quote is a good one in representing some voices in the sector 'fighting back' against the professionalisation trajectory. Another response might be for the non-profits to generate more support through lobbying and/or going to the press with stories of the plight of homeless families and the potential for greater suffering in difficult economic times. Students could also suggest a return to voluntarism might occur, supported by the ideological claims about the importance of the volunteer/religious ethos, but perhaps more a practical shift to less costly resources.

The main issue on which students are likely to focus is the economic crisis and the consequent drying up of government funding. They could draw from the case, and standard micro-economic theory, to propose a decrease in funding will result in more competition, which is exacerbated by the role and approach of the *Homeless Agency*. They might suggest there will be more consolidation in the sector as non-profits seek to create economies of scale. Some might think the non-profits will be 'forced' to collaborate more effectively by sharing resources and/or focusing on their core competencies to become more productive. There is little evidence in the case that this scenario is likely to happen, but students may draw on other cases/theory to support this prediction.

While not a feature of the case, students in the non-profit space should wonder about the lack of active development of philanthropic funding. This lack of highly developed philanthropy is a feature of the Irish non-profit sector and students may see philanthropy as an area of significant opportunity.

4) If you were appointed as the 'special advisor' on homelessness, how would you counsel the Director of the newly established Housing & Sustainable Communities Agency?

If it is of interest, the nature of 'wicked problems' may be discussed here. Koppenjan & Klijn's (2004) analysis is aimed networks engaged with 'wicked problems' or problems that feature complexity, uncertainty and conflict. Students may be directed to an earlier article by Roberts (2000) that suggested there are three approaches to solving wicked problems: authoritative, competitive and collaborative, which are easily linked to the categories of hierarchy, markets and networks. A good summary of this article may be found in Wikipedia under 'Wicked Problem'. The link between wicked problems and networks, involving one or more of the approaches highlighted by Roberts, is widely discussed in the literature of public administration and policy; see Ferlie et al. (2011) for an overview.

Also, the article by O'Sullivan (2008) adopts another perspective that fits with the 'wicked problem' analysis, where incremental, collaborative and emergent approaches to solving these sorts of problems may be the most effective, if not the most dramatic, solutions.

5) To what extent do you believe the end of homelessness is a real possibility? In your consideration, what would it take to eliminate homelessness in Dublin?

This question should spark some debate among students and this should be encouraged – even set up as suggested in the proposed class management outline above. This question gives students a chance to engage with and demonstrate a number of the higher level learning objectives and to explore their own social orientation in relation to homelessness.

A good answer will draw on examples of other jurisdictions and social policy initiatives aimed at homelessness to analyse the gap between policy and results in Dublin. It should be noted that the homeless population in Ireland is quite small, not only in absolute terms, but also relative to the population as a whole when compared to other jurisdictions.

Appendix 1: Learning Objectives based on Fink (2003)

Educational Objective	Use/Focus	Models/ Theories	Data/Length	Structure	Viewpoints
Foundation knowledge	Basic understanding of information, theories/models	Explicit	Primarily facts; short	Highlights relationships among data	None
Application	Skills; practical, critical, and/or creative thinking	Implicit in choice of data	Facts of varying degrees of relevance; length short to medium to long	Relationships not clearly drawn	May include explicit decision maker
Integration	Connecting ideas; realms of life	Multiple	Multidisciplinary; long	Relationships not clearly drawn	Multiple (implied)
Human Dimension	Understanding self and or others	Implicit	Information about specific people, including values, background; long	Relationships not clearly drawn	Explicit
Caring	Reader involvement	Reader determines	Enough to allow for multiple views; long	Ambiguity	Personal (values of reader)
Learning how to learn	Continued learning with greater effectiveness	Reader determines	Gaps and/or irrelevancies; length variable	Ambiguity	Personal

Source: Naumes, W., & Naumes, M. (2006) *The Art and Craft of Case Writing* (2nd ed.). Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, p. 26.

Appendix 2: Timeline of policies, network phases and outcomes

M.L. Rhodes, S. Brooke / Policy and Society 29 (2010) 149–160

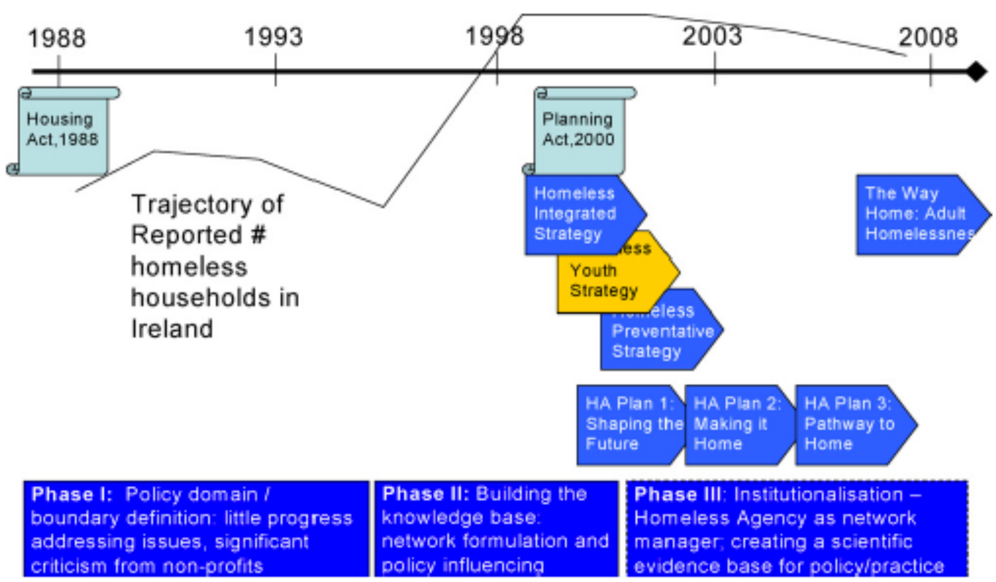

Fig. 2. Timeline of policies, implementation phases and outcomes.[3]