Article Type: Article

The Scalability of the Shack/Slum Dwellers International Methodology: Context and Constraint in Cape Town

Richard Tomlinson¹

Abstract

Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) was created by the Indian Alliance and South African partners. SDI has affiliates in 33 countries and is probably the world's largest network of community peer-to-peer knowledge exchange in the area of slum/informal settlement upgrading. Common to the Indian Alliance's 'Federation Model' and the SDI methodology are a commitment to community organization and community-led upgrading that is undertaken in partnership with local government. In a context where it is projected that there will be two billion slum dwellers by 2030, the ambition is to enable tens of millions of households to obtain upgraded housing and services. This article questions the scalability and universality of the SDI methodology in Cape Town, where the SDI Secretariat is located.

Keywords

Scalability, informal settlement upgrading, Indian Alliance, South African Alliance, SDI methodology, Cape Town

¹ Professor in Urban Planning, Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, University of Melbourne (rht@unimelb.edu.au). I am indebted to Aditya Kumar of CORC, Benjamin Bradlow (at the time of SDI) and Joel Bolnick of SDI and Andy Bolnick of iKhayalami in assisting me with this research. The assistance of Aditya Kumar and iKhayalami staff during visits to sites of reblocking was most helpful. I am especially indebted to Sheela Patel of SPARC for her contributions over the years. I thank all the interviewees. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Rockefeller Foundation for my residency at the Bellagio Center. This research was supported with sabbatical funding by the University of Melbourne. [The comments on drafts by Mojgan Taheri-Tafti, Kim Dovey, Joel Bolnick, Benjamin Bradlow, Aditya Kumar, Walter Fieuw and Louis van der Walt helped to correct two errors, suggested where greater clarity was needed and introduced lively debate regarding my interpretation of policies.](#)

This is the author manuscript accepted for publication and has undergone full peer review but has not been through the copyediting, typesetting, pagination and proofreading process, which may lead to differences between this version and the [Version of Record](#). Please cite this article as [doi: 10.1111/dpr.12203](https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12203)

1 Introduction

The purpose of this article is to consider whether the application of the Shack/Slum Dwellers International (SDI) methodology or ‘rituals’² to informal settlement upgrading in Cape Town informs the replicability and scalability of the methodology. The SDI Secretariat is located in Cape Town and provides administrative and financial support to a network of community-based organization (CBOs) affiliates in 33 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The South African affiliate is referred to as the South African Alliance. A review based on the South African Alliance and the application of the SDI methodology in Cape Town does not allow generalization, but it does allow contextual questions regarding the replicability of the SDI methodology that is based on ‘... tools – mobilization and savings, exchanges, enumerations, mapping, and community-led implementation – [that] are a *shared set of rituals that all federations affiliated to ... SDI ... practice*’ (CORC et al., 2014, emphasis added).

The context for the article is that the SDI was formed in 1996 by the Indian Alliance together with South African partners who were the forerunners of the South African Alliance. The Indian Alliance ‘Federation Model’³ (Model) and the SDI methodology are the same and are intended to position ‘the urban poor ... at the center of strategies for urban development’.⁴ The relevance of the question regarding replicability and scalability arises from the projection that there will be two billion slum dwellers by 2030 (UN-HABITAT, 2003: xxv) and the ambition of the Indian Alliance and the SDI is to provide a methodology for the community-led upgrading of tens of millions of shack dwellers. This adds significance to the concern whether the context of the Indian Alliance and application of the Model correctly shapes the intended role of the South African Alliance and the application of the SDI methodology. Do the Indian and South African Alliances share a methodology or principles concerning the relationships between governments and organized urban poor communities?⁵ The answer to this question informs the wider application of the SDI methodology.

The article suggests that the complexity of South Africa’s housing policy and implementation processes limits the ability of the City of Cape Town (City) to work with the

² Reference to the SDI methodology on the SDI website has now changed to ‘rituals’, but the interpretation of this word can be misleading. I have retained reference to methodology. http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SASDI_Alliance-Diagramme.jpg (accessed 27 July 2015)

³ See the core activities as set out at <http://www.sparcindia.org/Federation-model.php>.

⁴ See the SASDI Alliance organizational diagram at http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/SASDI_Alliance-Diagramme.jpg.

⁵ This sentence was amended to include Bradlow’s comment and wording.

South African Alliance to scale up informal settlement upgrading. It is further suggested that characteristics of the Model and the Indian Alliance differ markedly from the context within which the South African Alliance seeks to employ the SDI methodology in Cape Town and that, while adhering to shared principles, local adaptation is both constrained and necessary.

The article has three parts. The first part introduces the Indian and South African Alliances, which enables me to describe my research methodology and then to present the Model and the SDI methodology. The second part presents South Africa's housing policy and processes, the tensions created by these processes for the City's working with the South African Alliance, data relevant to housing needs in Cape Town and the City's housing policy. This part also includes the reblocking precedent (see below), which is an example of the South African Alliance's role in housing delivery and policy advocacy in Cape Town. The third part identifies contextual differences between circumstances in Mumbai and Cape Town and the Indian and South African Alliances that are relevant to the application of the SDI methodology in Cape Town. The conclusion is that the SDI methodology represents a constraint and should be reconsidered in the context of a changed role for the South African Alliance based on 'militant dialogue' (interviewee 17) and policy advocacy.

However, before proceeding, the word 'scalability' requires attention. Miraftab (2003: 230, emphasis in original) has written that

a great deal of confusion surrounds the term *scaling up*. The term lends itself to an unfortunate interpretation implying a quantitative purpose for these [community] strategies. Scaling up is not a question of size or magnitude of delivery but of a qualitative change in how agencies see their roles, responsibilities, power, objectives, and procedures and of how well prepared they are for changes (intraorganizational and interorganizational) in their power structures ... Such qualitative change is necessary for there to be any possibility of scaling up, that is, increasing the impact of participatory processes.

Miraftab refers to scaling up as both changing roles and power relationships and as 'increasing the impact': in other words, scaling up qualitatively is necessary in order to scale up quantitatively. Qualitative changes in the roles and relationships between community organizations and government are central to the Model and the SDI methodology. As a result, the word 'scale' in this article refers to quantitative increases in the number of housing and services relative to the need for housing and services.

2 The Alliance, research methodology and the SDI methodology

2.1 Indian and South African Alliances

The Indian Alliance⁶ was formed in 1984 and comprises:

- Mahila Milan (Women Together), a ‘decentralised network of credit and savings groups’ that increases financial assets, creates financial capacity and builds trust. Mahila Milan moves women into the public sphere where they can ‘put pressure on government to secure changes they need in order to advance their livelihoods and establish their place in the city’ (Mitlin and Patel, 2004: 239);
- NSDF (National Slums Dwellers Federation), ‘a national organization of community groups and leaders who live in slums/informal settlements across India’, which has about 750,000 members, and seeks to articulate and give effect to the ‘solutions’ they identify (SPARC, n.d.); and
- SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centres), a non-governmental organization (NGO) that works ‘on housing and infrastructure issues for the urban poor’ and is guided by Mahila Milan and the NSDF and the commitment to *community-led* processes. SPARC has a non-profit construction and financial arm, Samudaya Nirman Sahayak.

When the SDI was formed, Jockin Arputham, president of the NSDF, became the president of SDI, and Sheela Patel, founding director of SPARC, became the chair of the board of SDI. SDI has become ‘probably the world’s biggest and most effective network for south-south exchange among poor people, inspired by the co-operative models and peaceful forms of protest that Jockin pioneered in Mumbai’ (Perry, 2014).

The members of the South African Alliance are:⁷

⁶ See <http://www.sparcindia.org>. The SPARC website provides information for the NSDF and Mahila Milan. The text shown as quotes, but not cited, comes from this website.

⁷ With a view to clarity and simplicity of presentation, the text in the four bullet points mixes paraphrasing and copying from <http://sasdialliance.org.za/> from the relevant ‘Partners’ Web pages.

- FEDUP (Federation of the Urban and Rural Poor) assists communities to start savings schemes, develop their own knowledge and capacities, build houses and acquire land;
- ISN (Informal Settlement Network) engages leadership in informal settlements with a view to mobilizing community-led development planning, with the ideal that communities acquire the knowledge and scale needed to influence citywide and national policy agendas;
- CORC (Community Organisation Resource Centre) is a NGO that provides the services of development professionals for shack dwellers who are mobilized around land evictions, upgrading housing and basic services, and women's savings collectives;
- uTshani Fund ('grassroots fund') was established in 1995 by the South African Homeless Peoples Federation and 'is a revolving fund providing low-cost housing finance directly to the savings groups affiliated to the FEDUP' (uTshani Fund, 2010: 2). (FEDUP was formed in 2006 following a split in the Federation.)

iKhayalami ('my home') was, but is no longer, a member of the South African Alliance. iKhayalami, together with the ISN and the community of the Joe Slovo informal settlement, and the City, formulated what was to become known as the reblocking precedent. Reblocking is explained by iKhayalami (n.d.: 3) as:

a design and implementation process that is driven by the community and involves the reconfiguration of a settlement layout into one that is more rationalized allowing for the creation of demarcated pathways or roads, public and semi public spaces all of which opens access for emergency vehicles, the provision of infrastructure and basic services which were not previously taken into account. Shacks get dismantled and upgraded ... in-situ.

The Joe Slovo reblocking *precedent* is described on YouTube,⁸ but reblocking is more clearly described in the case of Mtshini Wam⁹ and Flamingo Crescent.¹⁰ Reblocking is now undertaken by the ISN and CORC in partnership with the City.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JujIQww0td8> (accessed 26 July 2015).

⁹ <http://vimeo.com/52466961> (accessed 26 July 2015),
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfAQ7RfM9eA#t=21> (accessed 26 July 2015).

¹⁰ <http://vimeo.com/103700821> (accessed 26 July 2015).

2.2 Research methodology

The methodology and research follow from teaching, as follows. In 2007/2008, at Columbia University, I taught a course on the policy and governance aspects of slum upgrading, which included classes on India and South Africa and Dharavi and Johannesburg. In 2010, at the University of Melbourne, I started a course on 'Cities Without Slums'¹¹ and slum upgrading in Mumbai and the role of the Indian Alliance were central. Sheela Patel twice contributed to the course. In 2012, a colleague and I took students to Mumbai where, with the assistance of SPARC and the NSDF, they researched and sought to recommend planning and design features of slum upgrading in Dharavi. In 2013 I took students to Cape Town where, with the assistance of CORC and ISN, they worked with communities on upgrading in two informal settlements, Mtshini Wam and Shukushukuma, and on one potential housing project, Ruo Emoh. Finally, we had a number of discussions with City officials and consultants in Cape Town. The 2012 and 2013 travelling studios shaped the 2014 comparative research on which this article is based.

In the case of the 2014 research undertaken in Cape Town for this article, I set out to answer questions surrounding the scalability of the Model and the SDI methodology in the City. This was based on extensive review of government and NGO documents and websites and related policy statements, academic publications, field trips and 23 semi-structured interviews and other ad hoc interviews. Ethnographic discussions occurred during field trips. In the case of field trips, CORC and iKhayalami arranged site visits to instances of reblocking, including the Joe Slovo reblocking precedent and other projects in Sheffield Road, Khayelitsha and Kuku Town. The research was informed by workshops and discussion at the University of Cape Town and the University of the Witwatersrand.

2.3 The Federation Model and the SDI methodology

The Model and methodology are grounded in community organization. The community questions the right of government to determine its future. The community seldom

¹¹ The expression, 'Cities Without Slums' derives from the Cities Alliance website, which is titled 'Cities Alliance: Cities Without Slums', <http://www.citiesalliance.org/about-cities-alliance> (accessed 14 December 2015). The Cities Alliance was created by the World Bank and UN-HABITAT and the Cities Alliance proposed Millennium Development Goal 7 Target 11: 'By 2020, to have achieved a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.'

chooses to engage in confrontation. 'The main strategy is a constructive dialogue with government towards community-driven development ...' (CORC, 2012). While projects matter, the future capacity and confidence of an organized urban poor to engage in the development process is the desired outcome.

The Model and methodology have five core activities.¹²

Community organization and capacity is based on savings groups and enumeration, surveys and mapping. Women's savings groups are organized by FEDUP with a view to increasing financial assets, creating financial capacity and building trust. Savings are viewed as a 'ritual' that is central to the SDI methodology. 'FEDUP has since 1992 organised more than 24,517 savers in 401 active women-led savings groups across 45 towns.'¹³

Enumeration, surveys and mapping are undertaken by residents of informal settlements together with ISN and, in recent years, the Global Positioning System (GPS) has been employed by trained members of the community to map the settlement and to undertake a census and a survey of the settlement. There is a clear political intent to these tasks (Appadurai, 2012). Aside from the fact that the tasks enhance community organization, communities own credible data that enables them to negotiate development alternatives with government.

Precedent setting such as reblocking emerges from community-led knowledge generation processes and challenge existing programmes, either 'tweaking aspects of them or changing some elements fundamentally'. Precedents are used to convince communities, officials and others who might be involved – 'change needs evidence'.¹⁴ Once precedents work in one locality, they provide the basis for horizontal knowledge exchange visits and can scale in the same location, through exchange visits in other locations, and also provide the basis for policy advocacy.

Knowledge exchange refers to a community group visiting a precedent and speaking to community members who were involved in setting the precedent. The logic is that

¹² My presentation of the methodology is based on many sources, including the SPARC, SDI and SA Alliance websites, academic publications and innumerable discussions. Where there is potential for inadvertently duplicating bits of text or repeating points from conversations, I acknowledge the Federation Model website, <http://www.sparcindia.org/Federation-model.php>, the SDI Alliance website and videos <http://sasdialliance.org.za/>, the SPARC 'Housing Projects' website, <http://www.sparcindia.org/housing.aspx>, the SDI methodology website <http://www.sdinet.org/method-inclusive-cities/> (accessed 13 May 2014), and conversations with Sheela Patel.

¹³ <http://sasdialliance.org.za/what-we-do/savings/> (accessed 14 December 2014).

¹⁴ The two quotes are from discussions with Sheela Patel conducted in 2013.

exchanges between peers provide a greater learning opportunity than being spoken to/at, by NGOs, officials and technical experts.

Partnerships are essential as governments shoulder responsibility for ensuring that residents have access to housing and services, both of which are decidedly on the government's political agenda. What the CBOs within the South African Alliance seek to provide is the capacity, when in partnership with local government, to manage the scaling up of shack upgrading. This capacity can be compromised when, as in Cape Town, there are a number of low-density projects in dispersed locations.

Policy advocacy is made possible once the scaling up of a precedent proves successful. Policy advocacy takes many forms, for example, demonstrating the reblocking precedent to the City and gaining approval for a precedent that is now included in the City's housing policy despite its not conforming to planning and building regulations,¹⁵ and demonstrating the precedent to other communities, governments and visitors from other countries.

3 Housing Policy and complexity: South Africa and Cape Town

Cape Town's policy for, and the provision of housing for low-income residents and informal settlement upgrading, are delimited by South Africa's housing policy, processes and the funding made available for housing and municipal services. The description of Cape Town's policy necessarily begins with the constraints imposed by South Africa's housing policy and processes.

3.1 South Africa's housing policy and processes

Housing is included in the Bill of Rights in South Africa's constitution (South Africa, 1996).

(1) Everyone has the right to have access to adequate housing.

(2) The state must take reasonable legislative and other measures, within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of this right.

¹⁵ For example, for incremental housing the minimum building lines included in Cape Town's (2012a: 41) *Zoning Scheme Regulations* preclude the densities in informal settlement upgrades and reblocking.

The South African government is required to deliver housing at scale, taking fiscal constraints into account. In 1994 it was determined that every qualifying household earning less than 3,500 South African Rand (R) per month (about 1,000 US dollars (\$) in 1994) is entitled to a free house. Between 1994 and 2010 the government delivered over three million free houses to qualifying low-income households (Shisaka, 2011: 18).

Scale was achieved by providing a housing subsidy and the delivery of 'RDP'¹⁶ housing, first by private developers and then by local governments, with the housing in both instances being criticised for poor quality and for being located on the urban fringe where land is cheap (Charlton and Kihato, 2006). There are other housing programmes, but compared to the number of RDP houses, the number of other houses delivered has been negligible.

Despite delivery at scale, the 'housing backlog' increased from 1.5 million households to over 2.1 million households (South African Cities Network, 2011: 70) and the number of informal settlements rose from 300 to 2,628 in 2010 (Financial and Fiscal Commission, 2012: 19). There is no prospect of government overcoming the increasing backlog.

The current human settlement budget allocation is R17 billion and it will increase to R19 billion on 1 April 2015. The backlog is estimated as 2,3 million houses. New households are forming at a rate of over 300,000 per annum and mostly live in shacks or backyards rental accommodation. The DHS is delivering, at best, some 120,000 new houses each year. The cost of seeking to address the *present* backlog with the present cost of delivery will be of the order of R370 billion and will take approximately 15 years. *The backlog will never be eliminated.*¹⁷

This stark conclusion would be even more pronounced had the level of household income of R3,500 per month (about \$290 in May 2015) increased with the rate of inflation. The failure to increase this level has given rise to a policy for 'gap housing', which affects about 600,000 households (DHS, 2012: 192). It is expected that banks will provide mortgages to households with a secure monthly income in excess of R15,000 (about \$1,233 in June

¹⁶ RDP refers to the Reconstruction and Development Programme that initially funded the housing subsidy and also to the type of housing, namely rows of free-standing small houses.

¹⁷ Interviewee 11. The text has been paraphrased at the request of the interviewee. Emphasis added.

2015). Through various means government seeks to enable gap households to enter the formal land and housing markets and policy seeks to enable access to households earning between R3,500 and R15,000 per month.

Housing policy has evolved since its launch in 1994. Most relevant are *Breaking New Ground: A comprehensive plan for the development of sustainable human settlements* (BNG) (2004) and the *Upgrading of Informal Settlements Programme* (2009). Not included here is the *Enhanced Peoples Housing Process* (2009), which has had little take up and appears to be irrelevant to the South African Alliance insofar as, in CORC's 2013/2014 Annual Report, 1,556 PHP units are listed, 736 units have been completed and none are located in Cape Town.

Nominally, South Africa's housing policy now seeks to build sustainable human settlements; it has shifted from RDP housing to better located and better built BNG housing and onwards to informal settlement upgrading; and focuses not so much on the building of houses as on housing processes (DHS, 2009: 7). However, BNG housing, effectively RDP housing renamed (Cape Town, 2014a: 70), remains the predominant form of housing delivery, noting that a location closer to jobs, services and transport services is listed by the City as its foremost challenge (Cape Town, 2014a: 6). The UISP is viewed by the City (Cape Town, 2014a: 17, 35) as a 'site and service' programme that provides '(i) basic services (water, standpipes and toilet facilities), (ii) permanent services, and (iii) houses to existing informal settlement areas, wherever possible (including in situ upgrades)', but does not include formal tenure. '[W]hile the UISP does provide a rationale for in situ upgrading, it does not represent a deviation from the basic nature of a housing policy that has single-minded focus on the physical house itself' (Bradlow, 2013: 80).

3.2 Complexity and the role of the South African Alliance

Their rigidities and complexities are defining features of South Africa's housing policies. For example, in the case of informal settlement upgrading, the housing is required to meet three sets of building standards: South African Bureau of Standards, the requirements of the National Home Builders Registration Council and local government regulations (Interviewee 12). Not commenting on the prescriptive character and complexity of national policies and the National Housing Code, focusing on local governments, Tomlinson (2011) presents the housing process in relation to planning, procurement, project management and housing allocation ('beneficiary management').

In the case of planning, all local government is required to prepare an Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is a detailed five-year policy, programme, project and budget plan for a city. In regard to housing, Cape Town's IDP is based on, inter alia, an Integrated Human Settlements Five-Year Strategic Plan, a Spatial Development Framework, an Integrated Transport Plan and the City's Budget. Nominally, the IDP will have been formulated through a process of active public participation, but the need to comply with the relevant policies and regulations limits the potential for participation. Indeed, the South African government warns that 'the participatory processes must not become an obstacle to development ... It is important for municipalities to find ways of structuring participation which enhance, rather than impede, the delivery process' (South Africa, 1998, s. 1.3). The IDP contains a five-year housing project pipeline and budget, listing projects under construction and projects planned.

In the case of procurement, the City is required to adhere to the Local Government: Municipal Financial Management Act (No. 56 of 2003) and the Preferential Procurement Framework Act (No. 5 of 2000). The City is obliged to follow a Supply Chain Management system that creates rules for tender specification, evaluation and adjudication.

In the case of project management, this includes 'project preparation, managing and enforcing contracts, setting timelines for delivery, and carrying out inspection processes and linking them to payment systems' and the accountability of project managers (Tomlinson, 2011: 422). Project management that includes communities in the delivery processes creates risks for City officials and, despite patronising comments in government documents about officials needing to change their 'mindset', the politically-derived context for officials remains that of delivery at scale – 'quantitative delivery targets and performance measurement' (Ley, 2009: 30–1).

The complexity and regulations within which cities operate inevitably lead to tensions with NGOs and CBOs. For example, the effect is to position, say, CORC or the ISN as contractors bidding for projects in competition with other CBOs and NGOs and the private sector. Whereas the South African Alliance views its client as the community concerned, the fundamental contradiction is that, in the case of projects funded by the City, the City decidedly considers itself the client (Interviewee 1), which is as required by the Municipal Financial Management Act.

The complexity underlies complaints that the South African Alliance does not know how the system works and the constraints within which officials operate (Interviewees 1, 3, 16, 19). The fundamental rift here is the pressure on politicians and officials on meeting

project deadlines and housing targets (Interviewees 1, 12) and their view that the involvement of South African Alliance will slow progress; and the South African Alliance view that while this may be true for some projects, scale can, over time, be achieved through increasing the number of community-led projects.

The South African Alliance view is the correct view. The existing housing policies and the national housing budget will never resolve the housing backlog. Further, the housing subsidy circumscribes the housing targets and imagination of cities. Opportunities for low-income housing are viewed through the lens of the number of subsidies available and not in terms of the potential for savings groups and incremental upgrading of shacks. From the point of view of the Indian and South African Alliances, the ‘gamble [is] that ... governments can be persuaded that the poor are the best drivers of shared solutions to the problems of poverty’ (Appadurai, 2001: 41). Even were the City to be persuaded, the processes and regulations governing the uses of housing subsidies circumscribe what cities believe they can do.

3.3 Empirical backdrop to housing policy in Cape Town

It is an unfortunate feature of South Africa’s past and present that one has to provide race-based data for Cape Town. The reason for this is that, while the economics of South Africa are better understood in terms of class, the politics of South Africa are better understood in terms of race (Seekings and Nattrass, 2008). Further, in Cape Town, the majority of Whites and Coloureds¹⁸ vote for the Democratic Alliance and the majority of Black Africans vote for the African National Congress (Millstein, 2010; Kersting, 2009), which informs subsequent discussion regarding housing policy.

Table 1 provides a comparison between South Africa as a whole and Cape Town, and reveals sharp racial differences that shape the politics of Cape Town, the only metropolitan area that has elected an opposition party and, as will be seen, where politics has also shaped housing policy and budgets.

- The proportion of Cape Town’s population that is Black African is less than a half that for South Africa and, in Cape Town, is less than the Coloured population;
- The proportion of Cape Town’s population that is Coloured is close to five times

¹⁸ The term ‘Coloured’ is in common usage in South Africa and is used in the 2011 census and in assessments of economic and social circumstances.

that for the nation; and

- The proportion of Cape Town's population that is White is almost double that for the nation.

Table 1. Population of South African and Cape Town according to race, 2011

	South Africa	Cape Town
Black African	79.2 %	38.6%
Coloured	8.9%	42.4%
Indian/Asian	2.5%	1.4%
White	8.9%	15.7%
Other	0.5%	1.9%

Source: Statistics South Africa, 2012 and Cape Town, 2012b.

The reasons for these differences are that 'At the time of colonial settlement in Cape Town in the seventeenth century ... Bantu-language-speaking "African" people had not migrated into the Western Cape' (Muyeba and Seekings, 2010: 4). Since the turn of the 20th century there have, in one form or another, been restrictions on the migration of Black Africans to the City, and Cape Town was part of a Coloured Labour Preference Area with job reservation for Coloureds. 'Only if coloured labour was not available could a permit be obtained to employ African workers. ... [Further] facilities for skill acquisition for African labour were deliberately not provided in the region' (Maree, 1989: 129). The prevention of migration of Black Africans to the City and job reservation helps to explain the Tables and the links between migration, race, location in informal settlements and poverty. Most notably, the breakdown of apartheid controls during the mid-1980s and the rapid migration of Black Africans to the Cape explain why informal settlements are almost exclusively occupied by Black Africans.

Referring to Table 2, in 2011 Cape Town's metropolitan population was 3.74 million, comprising 1.07 million households. The 29.3% increase in population between the 2001 and 2011 censuses is exceeded by the increase in the number of households, 37.5%, due to declining household size. The actual increase during the ten-year period of 847,782 persons is projected to halve over the 20-year period to 2031 (Cape Town, 2014a: 14), reflecting the context of slow population growth and a national population that is over 60% urban.

Table 2. Population and household number and change, 2001, 2011

	2001	2011	% increase
Population	2,892,243	3,740,025	29.3
Households	777,389	1,068,572	37.5
Household size	3.72	3.50	

Source: City of Cape Town – 2011 Census – Cape Town, December 2012: 1.¹⁹

Referring to Table 3, in 2011 about 13.5% of Cape Town's population, or about half a million people, lived in 223 informal settlements (Cape Town, 2013: 93) and another 7% lived in shacks in the back and front yards of formal housing. Notably, while the *number* of people living in informal settlements is increasing, the *proportion* of the City's population living in informal settlements is declining. Also worth noting is that the majority of residents in informal settlements have access to municipal services; with the caveat that claims regarding services installed will exceed services maintained and functional (Social Justice Coalition, 2014).

Between 2001 and 2011 the increase in the number of shack dwellers was largely made up of the Black African population. During the same period the increase in shack dwellers divided equally between informal settlements and shacks in the backyards of invariably better located formal dwellings. In regard to 'backyarders', 'most' backyarders are family, 'many' are not poor and '41 500 backyard structures are currently attached to City rental stock, and 34 000 to privately owned houses' (Cape Town, 2012: 38). 'Backyard dwellings lack the mass visibility and collective force of an informal settlement, being instead merged into existing residential areas ...' (Lemanski, 2009: 473).

Table 3. Proportion of households living in dwelling types in Cape Town, 2001, 2011

	Dwelling types (%)	% occupied by Black Africans
Formal dwelling in 2011 – 837,533		
2001	78.9	18.2
2011	78.4	29.9

¹⁹ Compiled by Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, City of Cape Town.

Informal dwelling in backyard of formal housing in 2011 – 74,958		
2001	4.3	63.4
2011	7.0	72.7
Informal dwelling not in backyard (informal settlement) in 2011 – 143,823		
2001	14.4	94.4
2011	13.5	93.8
Other in 2011 – 12,261		
2001	2.2	44.1
2011	1.1	37.6

Source: City of Cape Town – 2011 Census – Cape Town December 2012b; Trends and Change – 10 years: Census 2001 – Census 2011: 11, 12.

The proportion of households living in informal settlements is not a measure of poverty. In a country that so emphasises the workings of, and access to, the urban land market, the reason why so many households live in informal settlements is because they cannot enter the market for formal housing. Close to half the City's households, 47%, live on less than R3,200 per month²⁰ (about \$300 in 2011). This included 69% of the Black African population and 41% of the Coloured population. It is apparent that poverty considerably exceeds the lack of formal housing.

3.4 Housing policy in Cape Town

The key objective [of Cape Town's (2014a: iv) *Integrated Human Settlements Five-Year Strategic Plan*] is a people-centred and partnership-based service delivery process, which will address the essential issues of safety and security, tenure restoration and protection, meaningful stakeholder relations and the effective provision and maintenance of basic services.

Annexure 5 of the Plan lists 12 housing programmes, including BNG housing, assistance for gap households, the sale to tenants of rental housing, services for the UISP, PHP housing and social housing. Additional upgrading programmes listed in the Plan and 2013/14 IDP Review (Cape Town, 2014b) are the upgrading of dilapidated public rental

²⁰ R3,200 is the closest census measure to R3,500.

housing and the delivery of water and sanitation services to backyard shacks and to informal settlements.

There is not a singular focus on new housing; the deliverables are more differentiated, reportedly with a view to serving the Coloured constituency (Interviewee 22). For example, in a context where 44% of Black African households and 9% of Coloured households lack formal housing (Cape Town, 2012b: 11), Cape Town's mayor explains that 'Where once there was a heavy focus on the provision of free [RDP/BNG] homes, there has in the past few years been an ever-increasing focus on the need for Gap Housing' (De Lille, 2012). The City's 'target group are people with an income above the subsidy eligibility but who cannot access credit' (Ley, 2009: 133). Further, backyard shacks 'continue to take precedent over the shack settlements' (Interviewee 3). There is reason to persist with the view that expenditure is shaped by the constituency served.

As regards the City's reblocking policy, 'The prioritisation of the reblocking initiative forms part of a partnership cooperation agreement with the Office of the Mayor, the Informal Settlements Network and the Community Organisation Resource Centre' (Cape Town, 2014a: 72). The City's *Housing Strategy* pipeline includes 2,814 reblocking units (Cape Town, 2014a: 31), but the number indicates that reblocking will not occur at scale and that the partnership will have little impact.

4 Context and constraint

4.1 'Increasing majority'

The Model and the SDI methodology aim to enhance community organization and capacity, set precedents, promote knowledge exchange, form partnerships with government, engage in policy advocacy and promote scaling up. The underlying premise is that 'There can be no inclusive or equitable development planning and investment, nor effective city governance if the increasing majority of the residents of informal settlements remain unaccounted for' (Bradlow, 2014: 12).

This premise does not hold in Cape Town as there is no 'increasing majority'. Whereas in Mumbai more than a half of the City's population of 12.9 million persons 'live in

some 2,000 densely populated slum settlements' (Sarkar et al., 2006: 8);²¹ in Cape Town about 13.5% of the population live in informal settlements and another 7% in backyard shacks. The potential role of an alliance and a methodology that is based on community-led upgrading of informal settlements is constrained when the proportion of the population living in informal settlements is limited, when it is decreasing as a proportion of the total population and when those in informal settlements are disinclined to organize and form saving groups due to being entitled to a free house (Ley, 2009).

There is a disconnect between the number and proportion of households living in informal settlements and the role anticipated for the South African Alliance in implementing the SDI methodology. The disconnection arises from:

- The scale and proportion of residents in slums and informal settlements (already mentioned);
- The capacity and influence of the Indian and South African Alliances; and
- Housing policies and the motivation for community organization.

4.2 NGO and CBO scale, capacity and influence

The NSDF, SPARC and Mahila Milan were formed in Mumbai and have their origins in community organization in the absence of housing rights, in more dire housing circumstances and in the midst of displacement of slum dwellers. This forms the backdrop for the formulation of the Model. The situation now is that it is the NSDF that chooses not to engage in conflict and that seeks to work in partnership with government. Scale is also evident in SPARC, which has been described as a 'giant NGO' with a capacity that far exceeds other NGOs in Mumbai (Sharma and Bhide, 2005). Adding to the significance of scale is that the NSDF and SPARC have 'elite connections' (Appadurai, 2001: 28) within government and with donors.

The South African Alliance has no comparable scale and capacity and influence in Cape Town, due to the relatively small proportion of households living in informal settlements and due to there being three other NGOs that fulfil the role of CORC (Interviewees 1, 22). CORC is viewed as, and arguably acts as, one among a number of

²¹ Greater Mumbai is a part of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region that in 2011 had a population of 20.9 million persons.

consultant NGOs competing for upgrading and other projects. While CORC has a partnership with the City for reblocking, there is little possibility of partnering with the City to address informal settlement upgrading at scale. This is despite the City's commitment 'To promote and ensure meaningful partnerships with business and community-based stakeholders' (Cape Town, 2014a: iv). The language of partnerships is in fashion. Partnership or not, when the relationship involves the ISN and CORC having a contract with the City, the City views ISN and CORC as consultants that report to the City (Interviewee 1).

Nonetheless, the SDI is not without influence. The former Director General of what was then the Department of Housing, and who at the time of writing is head of the Cities Alliance, has long supported the Indian and South African Alliances, and the SDI is on the board of the Cities Alliance. Further, Lindiwe Sisulu, the Minister of the Department of Housing between 2004 and 2009, and now returning to the post as Minister of the renamed Department of Human Settlements, maintains a close relationship with the Indian Alliance and SDI. At the October 2014 Department of Human Settlements 'Indaba & Exhibition' Jockin Arputham and Rose Molokoane, national co-ordinator of FEDUP, were invited speakers. The Indian Alliance and SDI may have influence at the national level, but the same cannot be assumed for Cape Town.

4.3 Housing policy and the motivation to organize

Just as scale, capacity and influence differ markedly, so too do the origins of housing policy. Housing is not a right included in India's constitution. The process of slum redevelopment in Mumbai arises from high land values and is driven by the Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority's delegated Slum Rehabilitation Authority that, with property developers, prepared the Slum Rehabilitation Scheme and the Dharavi Redevelopment Project (KRVIA and SPARC, 2010). The motivating force for this redevelopment for developers is profits and, for slum dwellers, the prospect of a 21m² free dwelling. Through obtaining the right to develop the land and through obtaining Transferable Development Rights, property developers obtain a sufficient profit to be able to provide free housing for all qualifying households (on the electoral roll in 2000) and to displace the rest (Anand and Rademacher, 2011); and it is within this policy context that communities have organized.

An important feature of the redevelopment process in Mumbai is that 'one or two slums alone rarely form associations and if they did, government authorities would not take

them seriously. Federating slum communities is a more effective way for slums to have a platform to voice out their needs and engage in negotiations with both the [Slum Rehabilitation Authority] and private developers' (Ardhanari, n.d.: 9). Communities have a good reason for organizing to protect their slum and, if they agree to development, to negotiate the form taken by development.

One comment on this article was that the ISN also negotiates collectively, just like the NSDF. However, the point being made is that few communities in South Africa perceive the need to organize due to government's free housing and the location of informal settlements not attracting the attention of, and the need to be defended against, property developers.

Housing policy has much the same effect on the formation of savings groups. Jockin Arputham and the Indian Alliance view the formation of savings groups 'as the key to the local and *global* success of the federation model' (Appadurai, 2001: 33, emphasis added). The need for savings groups is an article of faith within the Indian and South African Alliance. While in South Africa free housing has proved slow in coming and shack dwellers are well advised not to expect a free house, the expectations created by a right to a free house and a sense of entitlement counter both the perceived need for savings groups and for community organization for housing (Lemanski, 2008; Ley, 2009). The upshot of these observations is that there is good reason for community organization and savings in Mumbai and less reason for community organization and savings in Cape Town.

5 Conclusion: a common methodology or shared principles?

This article began with the question of the relevance of the SDI methodology to the Cape Town context, understanding that if its relevance is questioned then the replicability of the SDI methodology can be questioned. In addition to funding projects, the greater goal of the SDI methodology is one of an organized urban poor able to advance their interests citywide. The extent of this ambition exceeds the influence of the South African Alliance and the relevance of the SDI methodology. This led to my assessing some of the contextual features of the methodology that may be inapplicable in Cape Town. The most dramatic example of this difference concerns the centrality of women's saving groups to the SDI methodology. The SDI methodology is asserted without regard to the 'evidence', for surely organizing 24,517 savers throughout South Africa since 1992 is indicative of the inability of the South African Alliance to scale up. The use of the word 'ritual' to refer to savings

reinforces the sense of questioning that which should not be questioned if one wants to remain in the congregation.

In comments received on this article it was held that the ‘problem is not scale in numbers, but scale as in the capacity to translate these numbers into coherent political action whether it be collaborative and confrontational – and there is a need for both’ (Interviewee 17). This takes us back to Miraftab’s (2003: 230) interpretation of scaling up as ‘a qualitative change in how agencies see their roles, responsibilities, power, objectives, and procedures ...’ and a quantitative change in impact. Without the ability of the South African Alliance to contribute to scaling up quantitatively, its prospective role appears to consist more of championing changing policies and power relationships embedded in existing housing policy and processes; in effect, scaling up qualitatively without prescribing all features of the SDI methodology.

It is apparent that the notion of a set of rituals shared by all SDI affiliates does not hold. It was observed to me that the SDI methodology and rituals ‘actively constrain’ the South Africa Alliance (Interviewee 17). ‘[P]ragmatic adaptation’ to local circumstances is necessary. This wording arises from a discussion some years ago with Sheela Patel where she endorsed adaptation ‘as long as one does not lose the plot’. I understood this as a commitment to the principle that the urban poor, women in particular, acquire the organizational strength, capacity and confidence to operate in the public sphere. This, surely, is a principle that all SDI affiliates hold dear.

first submitted July 2015

final revision accepted December 2015

References

Anand, N. and Rademacher, A. (2011) ‘Housing in the Urban Age: Inequality and aspiration in Mumbai’, *Antipode* 43(5): 1748–72.

Appadurai, A. (2012) ‘Why Enumeration Counts’, *Environment and Urbanization* 24(2): 639–41.

Appadurai, A. (2001) ‘Deep Democracy: Urban governmentality and the horizon of politics’, *Environment and Urbanisation* 13(2): 22–43.

Ardhanari, M. (n.d.) 'A Comprehensive Analysis of the Slum Redevelopment Market in Mumbai', Unpublished paper. Available at http://www.academia.edu/5831831/A_Comprehensive_Analysis_of_the_Slum_Redevelopment_Market_in_Mumbai (accessed 23 November 2014).

Bradlow, B. (2014) 'Knowing Your City: Providing access to urban land and infrastructure through grassroots data collection'. Paper presented at the 2014 World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, 24–27 March, Washington, DC.

Bradlow, B. (2013) *Quiet Conflict: Social movements, institutional change, and upgrading informal settlements in South Africa*. Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in City Planning at MIT.

Cape Town, City of (2014a) *Integrated Human Settlements Five-Year Strategic Plan, 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2017: 2013/14 Review*.

Cape Town, City of (2014b) *Five Year Plan for Cape Town 2012-2017. Integrated Development Plan (IDP) 2013/14 Review*.

Cape Town, City of (2014c) *Budget 2014/15 – 2016/17*.

Cape Town, City of (2013) *Five-Year Plan for Cape Town 2012-2017, Integrated Development Plan (IDP), 2012/13 Review*.

Cape Town, City of (2012a) *City of Cape Town Zoning Scheme Regulations: A component of the policy-driven land use management system*. Cape Town: Planning & Building Development Management.

Cape Town, City of (2012b) *City of Cape Town – 2011 Census – Cape Town December 2012*. Cape Town: Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, and Statistics South Africa.

Cape Town, City of (2011) *Trends and Change - 10 years: Census 2001 – Census 2011*. Cape Town: Strategic Development Information and GIS Department, and Statistics South Africa

Charlton, S. and Kihato, C. (2006) 'Reaching the Poor? An analysis of the influences on the evolution of South Africa's housing programme', in U. Pillay, R. Tomlinson and J. Du Toit (eds) *Democracy and Delivery: Urban policy in South Africa*. Cape Town: HSRC Press.

Cities Alliance (2014) 'Cities Alliance in Action. Upgrading South Africa's Housing Policy', <http://www.citiesalliance.org/node/2964> (accessed 30 November 2014).

CORC (2014) *Annual Report 2013/2014, Building Inclusive Cities*. <http://sasdialliance.org.za/corc-annual-report-20132014/> (accessed 22 January 2015).

CORC (2013) *Annual Report 2012/2013, upgrading lives, building the nation*. <http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/CORC-2012-13-Annual-Report.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2014).

CORC (2012) Mtshini Wam Household Enumeration Report, Milnerton, Cape Town, May. <http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/docs/reports/Mtshini%20Wami%20Final%20Rep.pdf> (accessed 30 November 2014).

CORC, FEDUP, ISN (2014) 'FEDUP and ISN Leadership Retreat 2014'. SDI South African Alliance, 26 August <http://sasdialliance.org.za/fedup-and-isn-leadership-retreat-2014> (accessed 26 July 2015) fcr

Crankshaw, O. (2012) 'Deindustrialization, Professionalization and Racial Inequality in Cape Town', *Urban Affairs Review* 48(6): 836–62.

De Lille, P. (2012) 'We Need Partnerships to Eradicate Housing Backlog', Address by Executive Mayor. Alderman Patricia De Lille, at the International Housing Solutions conference on 24 February 2012. Media Release. <http://www.capetown.gov.za/en/MediaReleases/Pages/Weneedpartnershtoeradhousingbacklo>

[g.aspx](#) (accessed 23 January 2015).

DHS (2012) *Pocket Guide to South Africa 2011/12*. Pretoria: Department of Human Settlements.

DHS (2009) *The National Housing Code. Enhanced people's housing process*. Pretoria: Department of Human Settlements.

DHS (2004) *Breaking New Ground: A comprehensive plan for the development of sustainable human settlements*. Pretoria: Department of Human Settlements.

Financial and Fiscal Commission (2012) *Building an Inclusionary Housing Market: Shifting the paradigm for housing delivery in South Africa*. Midrand: Financial and Fiscal Commission.

iKhayalami (n.d.) 'Affordable homes and technologies for all', <http://www.Ikhayalami.org/activities/blocking-out> (accessed 29 April 2015).

Kersting, N. (2009) 'Voting Behaviour in the 2009 South African Election', *Africa Spectrum* 44(2): 125–33.

KRVIA (Kamla Raheja Vidyanidi Institute for Architecture) and SPARC (2010) *Reinterpreting, Reimagining, Redeveloping Dharavi*. Mumbai: KRVIA and SPARC.

Lemanski, C. (2009) 'Augmented Informality: South Africa's backyard dwellings as a by-product of formal housing policies', *Habitat International* 33(4): 472–84.

Lemanski, C. (2008) 'Houses Without Community: Problems of community (in)capacity in Cape Town, South Africa', *Environment & Urbanization* 20(2): 393–410.

Ley, A. (2009) 'Housing as Governance: Interfaces between local government and civil society organisations in Cape Town, South Africa'. PhD dissertation. Technische Universität Berlin.

Lizarralde, G. and Massyn, M. (2008) 'Unexpected Negative Outcomes of Community Participation in Low-Cost Housing Projects in South Africa', *Habitat International* 32(1): 1–14.

Maree, J. (1989) 'The General Workers Union, 1973 to 1986', in W. James and M. Simons (eds), *Class, Caste and Color: A social and economic history of the South African Western Cape*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Muyeba, S. and Seekings, J. (2010) *Inter-racial Attitudes and Interactions in Racially-mixed Low-income Neighbourhoods in Cape Town, South Africa*. CSSR Working Paper No. 275. Cape Town: Centre for Social Science Research, University of Cape Town.

Millstein, M. (2010) *Limits to Local Democracy: The politics of urban governance transformations in Cape Town*. Working Paper No. 2. Stockholm: Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (Sida).

Miraftab, F. (2003) 'The Perils of Participatory Discourse: Housing policy in Postapartheid South Africa', *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 22(3): 226–39.

Mitlin, D. and S. Patel (2004) 'Grassroots-driven Development: The Alliance of SPARC, the National Slum Dwellers Federation and *Mahila Milan*', in Mitlin, D. and D. Satterthwaite (eds) *Empowering Squatter Citizen: Local Government, Civil Society, and Urban Poverty Reduction*, (pp. 216-241). London: Eathscan.

Perry, J. (2014) 'The Houses Were Made of Cardboard', *London Review of Books*, 11 June. <http://www.lrb.co.uk/blog/2014/06/11/john-perry/the-houses-were-made-of-cardboard/> (accessed 23 January 2015).

Sarkar, S., Moulik, S.G. and Sen, S. (2006) *The Mumbai Slum Sanitation Program: Partnering with slum communities for sustainable sanitation in a megalopolis*. Washington, DC: World Bank.

Seekings, J. and Nattrass, N. (2008) *Class, Race, and Inequality in South Africa*. Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Sharma, R.N. and Bhide, A. (2005) 'World Bank Funded Slum Sanitation Programme in Mumbai: Participatory approach and lessons learnt', *Economic and Political Weekly* 40(17): 1784–9.

Shisaka (2011) *Housing Subsidy Assets: Exploring the performance of government subsidised housing in South Africa*. Johannesburg: FinMark Trust.

Social Justice Coalition (2014) *Our Toilets Are Dirty. Report of the social audit into the janitorial service for communal flush toilets in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. 14th–19th July 2014*. Cape Town: Social Justice Coalition.

South Africa (1998) *The White Paper on Local Government*. Pretoria: White Paper Working Committee.

South Africa (1996) *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996* (Act No. 108 of 1996) Pretoria.

South African Cities Network (2011) *State of the Cities Report: Towards resilient cities. A reflection on the first decade of a democratic and transformed local government in South Africa 2001–2010*. Johannesburg: South African Cities Network.

SPARC (n.d.) 'Housing' Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers
<http://www.sparcindia.org/housing.php> (accessed 26 July 2015)

Statistics South Africa (2012). *Census 2011*.

Tomlinson, M.R. (2011) 'Managing the Risk in Housing Delivery: Local government in South Africa', *Habitat International* 35(3): 419–25.

UN-HABITAT (2003) *The Challenge of Slums: Global report on human settlements, 2003*. London: Earthscan.

uTshani Fund (2010) *Annual Report 2010*. <http://sasdialliance.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/CORC-Annual-Report-2013-2014.pdf> (accessed 23 January 2015).

Author Manuscript

Minerva Access is the Institutional Repository of The University of Melbourne

Author/s:

Tomlinson, R

Title:

The Scalability of the Shack/Slum Dwellers International Methodology: Context and Constraint in Cape Town

Date:

2017-01-01

Citation:

Tomlinson, R. (2017). The Scalability of the Shack/Slum Dwellers International Methodology: Context and Constraint in Cape Town. DEVELOPMENT POLICY REVIEW, 35 (1), pp.115-133. <https://doi.org/10.1111/dpr.12203>.

Persistent Link:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11343/292147>