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Actors in Transfer

Title of the paper

Governance and “slum” upgrading in cities in the South: best practice knowledge transfer, community organisation and knowledge generation, and Google

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Abstract

This paper proposes the conception of knowledge products in a policy supply chain, through case studies comments on three methods of knowledge transfer or exchange, and deliberates the circumstances under which the knowledge is adopted or adapted. The case studies are knowledge transfer, focusing on the World Bank and USAID and a South African case study of municipal service delivery; Google and knowledge transfer, focusing on the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance and representations of best practice; and community organisation and the Indian Alliance/SDI slum upgrading knowledge generation and exchange model, focusing on the application of the model by SPARC in Mumbai and CORC in Cape Town.

Keywords

Knowledge transfer, knowledge exchange, international organizations, consultants, NGOs

Note

The panel title and associated text refer to 'policy transfer'. The decision to refer to 'knowledge' rather than 'policy' is based on (1) reference to 'knowledge transfer' being more common than 'policy transfer' when considering the World Bank, urban governance and slum upgrading; (2) reference to 'knowledge products' increasing sharply in the early 1990s (which will be seen to be relevant); and (3) due to the conception of 'knowledge products' serving as elements in a policy supply chain. Annexure 1 briefly describes differences in the words 'policy' and 'knowledge' when used in association with the World Bank, urban governance and slum upgrading. 'Policy transfer' has currency among academics when considering urban governance, but in all other respects the more common reference is to 'knowledge transfer'.

Introduction

In the 'Call for Papers' papers are invited that address the role of consultants, NGOs, multi-level and unusual techniques of policy transfer. This paper provides case studies of these topics and concludes with an assessment more of knowledge than policy transfer.

This paper proposes the conception of knowledge products in a policy supply chain, through case studies comments on three methods of knowledge transfer or exchange, and deliberates the circumstances under which the knowledge is adopted or adapted. The knowledge in question concerns urban governance and slum upgrading. The sources and intended destinations of knowledge transfer or exchange are:

- *from* multi and bilateral international organisations (IOs) such as the World Bank and USAID *to* country and city governments;
- *from* consultants and academics consulting to IOs *to* country and city governments;
- *from* consultants and academics directly *to* country and city governments;
- *on* the Web *to* us all; and
- *from* community-based organisations (CBOs) and NGOs *to* organised communities, CBOs and NGOs through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange visits, and also to governments, IOs and others.

The paper is based, respectively, on an experiential account drawn from consulting practice, innovation in teaching, and on academic research. The experiential account draws from my consulting to the post-apartheid South African government and to IOs on municipal services and urban governance (Tomlinson, 2002). The teaching commentary originates in my, for

about a decade, allowing students to use only Google and social media for class projects, requiring students to identify best practice urban governance and slum upgrading policies and case studies, which always identified the policies of the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance, and then to seek alternative, pro-poor, policies and practices (Tomlinson, 2010, 2013). Reference to the Web might seem integral to researching the influence of IOs, but not so. In *Fast Policy*, Peck and Theodore (2015) do not consider the fastest of all methods of knowledge transfer, namely the Web and social media. The research concerned how to scale slum upgrading and how organised communities employ a model of knowledge generation, ‘precedent setting’ and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. The inquiry is based on the work of SPARC (Society for the Promotion of Area Resource Centers), the NSDF (National Slum Dwellers Federation) and the Indian Alliance; CORC (Community Organisation Resource Centre) in South Africa; and SDI (Shack/Slum Dwellers International) (Tomlinson, 2015, 2017).

The paper has five parts. Somewhat in repetition, the paper first comments on what is meant by knowledge products. The paper next considers:

- knowledge transfer, focusing on the World Bank and USAID and on a South African case study of municipal service delivery and urban governance;
- Google and knowledge transfer, focusing on the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance and representations of best practice; and
- community organisation and the Indian Alliance/SDI slum upgrading model, focusing on the application of the model by SPARC in Mumbai and CORC in Cape Town.

The paper then proceeds to my deliberating the circumstances under which that knowledge is adopted or adapted.

Knowledge products

The use of the words expressions ‘knowledge transfer’, ‘knowledge product’, ‘knowledge market’, ‘best practice’ and ‘googling’ increased sharply in the early or mid-1990s, with the same being true for ‘knowledge exchange’ in the late 1990s.¹ The sharp increase in the early to mid-1990s is also true for ‘neoliberalism’ and ‘governance’, and for ‘new public management’ that provided a theoretical grounding for the ‘global trend’² of public sector decentralisation since the 1990s. The backdrop to this change was the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991; the absence of an alternative to neoliberalism that ‘removed the breaks’ on the 1980s policies of the Thatcher and Reagan era – see Fukuyama’s (1992) *End of History*; and, in the 1990s, the practicability of using the Web for marketing knowledge products (Tomlinson et al., 2010, 2013). ‘[I]t was not until the early 1990s that a genuine post-Keynesian, neoliberalized global rule-regime was consolidated’ (Brenner et al., 2010: 338).

From the point of view of a politician, city manager, a consultant, or a CBO or NGO, knowledge that is useful to urban governance and slum upgrading explains the causes of an

¹ Claims regarding a word or best practice increasing sharply are based on Google Ngram Viewer. ‘Google Ngram Viewer is ‘an online graphing tool which charts annual counts of words or sentences as found in the largest available corpus of digitalized books’ (Roth, 2014: 34). That is, Google is seeking to digitise all books ever published. The initial five collaborating libraries were the Harvard, Michigan, Stanford, Oxford university libraries and the New York Public Library. Google Ngram Viewer refers to books published, not searches for those books, and identifies the mention of words or phrases in books ‘in American English, British English, French, German, Spanish, Russian, Hebrew, and Chinese’, while statistically adjusting for the fact that more books are published now than hitherto’ (Tomlinson and Harrison, 2017).

² See Mildred Warner (Cornell University) website on *Restructuring Local Government*. <http://www.mildredwarner.org/restructuring> (Accessed 29 January 2016).

issue and how the issues might best be addressed. The latter combines policies and programs and how they are (or should be) formulated, and also how the programs might (or should) be financed and implemented. Useful knowledge will often take the form of “packaged” knowledge products. For example, I have previously demonstrated that a World Bank search for ‘slum upgrading’ provides hyperlinks to ‘urban land markets’, ‘public private partnerships’ and the Public Private Infrastructure Advisory Facility that, together, provide detailed explanations of why there are slums, the policies that might best be employed to upgrade slums, appropriate programmes and how these might be financed (Tomlinson et al., 2010).

The adoption or adaptation of knowledge products with a view to formulating and implementing a policy typically involves some combination of:

- legislation;
- program preparation;
- an illustrative regulatory framework for city governments;
- guidelines for city government project preparation and implementation;
- guidelines for city governments regarding budgetary options that include funding (taxes, user charges) and financing (e.g. municipal bonds, investment by private sector partners);
- if relevant, negotiations with the private sector regarding investment targets, service delivery standards, services monitoring and so on, and for which local governments might need technical support; and
- possibly also negotiations, or some lesser form of interaction, with communities, CBOs and NGOs.

This list is based on my experience with South Africa's Municipal Infrastructure Finance Facility (MIIF) and the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit that was established to assist local governments negotiate PPPs. Anticipating that the reader may think the list excessive, an additional example was the UN-UMP promotion of participatory budgeting.

In the case of the UN-UMP the detail included:

a digital library ... on participatory practices; the codification and circulation of a "set of tools" for policy-makers concerned with those practical and technical instruments, policy routines, and laws and regulations deemed useful in the implementation of PB; and the creation of a directory of "resource people," featuring the pre-eminent organic intellectuals of the PB movement, academic advocates, ... and "approved" (and therefore trusted) consultants, as well as contacts at the administrative and political levels in a number of cities that had pioneered the latest wave of participatory approaches. These efforts were accompanied by a weighty "conceptual framework" paper, which sought not only to articulate but to deepen the intellectual and political rationale for PB programming, and a handbook in the UN-Habitat Urban Governance Toolkit series (Peck and Theodore, 2015: 175, 176).

The details included in the above list and in the UN-UMP handbook may be conceptualised as knowledge products, the elements of a supply chain needed for formulating a policy and program(s). With this detail as a backdrop, contrary opinions, commentary and scholarship may be interesting, but they are not useful if they do not provide credible, detailed 'how best to proceed' alternatives for one or more of the knowledge products listed above.

In the case of IOs, the detail – interweaving of knowledge products – is possible in a context of ‘epistemic communities [that] can shed light on the nature of complex interlinkages ...’ (Haas, 1992: 15). In a more contested policy environment, the knowledge products become more contingent and are subject to negotiation.

Rather obviously, the IOs seek to promote the adoption of knowledge they certify. The knowledge is freely available on the Web, transferred at conferences involving IOs, in research and publications they fund, and by IO ‘missions’ visiting countries and cities. The words used by the IOs serve the purpose of standardising the keywords used when searching the Web. This is essential if the IOs are to command the first few results pages of a Google search.

The ability to represent knowledge products as best practice presumes that the source passes the test of ‘credibility, authority, relevance and currency’ (Head and Eisenberg, 2009, 2), with credibility being essential because a ‘message is effective only if [...] the messenger is reliable and identifiable’ (Castells, 2009, 2). This ability is apparent in IOs; global consulting firms such as the McKinsey Global Institute and the Research Triangle Institute; individual consultants when working for, or are approved by, the IOs; academics working as consultants, especially when linked to a highly regarded university; and, espousing alternative, pro-poor policies, globally influential NGOs such as SPARC and the SDI.

A defining issue of knowledge products is that when certified as best practices they acquire a prescriptive character, with policy makers coming to think that ‘there is only one viable

perspective on policy'.³ As Keynes (1936: 157–58) noted, 'it is better for reputation to fail conventionally than to succeed unconventionally'. How is an administrator or a consultant to withstand the threat to her/his reputation when best practice is viewed as inappropriate in local circumstances, or simply as wrong, but when that information has been certified by institutions such as those listed above and who may be existing or prospective clients?

Knowledge transfer

When the African National Congress was elected in 1994 it inherited not only a contested policy environment, but also statistics that were manipulated to reflect earlier apartheid policies. The consequence was that the ANC did not have clarity regarding:

- the number of households that lived in urban areas;
- household services levels (e.g. water-borne sanitation, pit latrines and other alternatives);
- the capital and operating costs of alternative services levels;
- household incomes and the ability of households to afford alternative services levels;
- local government ability to afford alternative services levels;
- how improvements in services levels might best be funded (taxes, user charges) and financed (e.g. municipal bonds, PPPs); and
- how the services might best be delivered (e.g. public, private, PPP, other).

³ Comment by Robert Buckley in 1998 on a draft of Tomlinson et al (2002). At the time Buckley was a Managing Director of the Rockefeller Foundation and formerly a Lead Economist at The World Bank (email 27 May 2008).

In 1995 the Ministry in the Office of the President appointed a team whose purpose was to provide best estimates and recommendations and that later would be updated with future census data and in the light of changing policy. The team, at the outset, and once only, worked with a World Bank urban mission. I was appointed to manage a team of four people comprising, in addition to myself, a civil engineer, a municipal finance expert and an urban planner. The World Bank mission comprised 12 persons (if I remember correctly), including some eminent academics; and USAID added four municipal finance experts, all eminent academics.

Prior to the arrival of the mission I had caucused widely within government regarding what South Africa wanted from the World Bank visit. When I presented this it was flatly rejected. Years later I was informed that this was because all World Bank country reports have to have the same format. In addition, it was immediately apparent that most mission members had not prepared for the visit. Backlog and cost data were to be collected during two frantic weeks in South Africa and to be fed into a financial model which delivered outputs according to the prescribed format and best practice. If there were data gaps the Bank employed data from other countries deemed to be comparable to South Africa. While McCann (2011: 111) rejects the notion of a 'literalist trap' – best practices being 'moved around like ... jars on a shelf', this was the impression the World Bank created.

Implicit within the model were an understanding of the service delivery problem and appropriate policies, international best practice, and also the equivalence of conditions in different countries, which goes some way towards explaining why the Bank mission did not require prior knowledge of the local policy environment (Tomlinson, 2013: 381).

We went ahead with preparing a document according to the World Bank format, with the South African team writing one chapter and it being edited by the World Bank, and vice versa. Nominally a transparent process, the chapter on how services might best be delivered was completed early in the morning that the final document was due, and due to the time required for printing and binding the chapter was not edited. It contained a “rave” for privatisation that led to a threat by the South African Municipal Workers Union of a national strike. I rewrote the chapter, with the question of public, private, or partnership service delivery becoming a locally negotiated decision. Later the strike threat was resurrected when the World Bank flew reporters to Washington DC and gave them a copy of the original document, which was considerably out of date. When asked for an explanation the response was ‘we did not think that you guys had the capacity’.

The financial model made available by the World Bank, corrected for a few errors and later revised, represented the engine room of the MIIF. The model and the assumptions implicit in the model represented far-reaching knowledge transfer. The model was periodically updated with the latest census and in relation to policy developments, most notably the introduction of a policy of free basic services, with households entitled to 6000 litres (or 60kl) of clean water and 50kWh of electricity per household per month, waste removal and a rates rebate.

The MIIF constituted a tool to provide national government departments with indicators for policy alternatives, and municipal governments with an indication of the cost implications, both to households and themselves, of decisions surrounding services levels and forms of service delivery. Whereas, at the outset, the MIIF reflected discussion and occasionally intense negotiations between national ministries; by the time I was fired (for insisting that the

MIIF had to incorporate HIV/AIDS needs and projections) the MIIF was less a product of negotiation than relevant to coordination among consultant teams of a couple of Ministries.

[However the] difficulty with the MIIF ... was that it enunciated policy at a high level of abstraction. The implementation of the MIIF required the policies, legislation, regulations, guidelines and institutional support needed to sustain an enabling role for government, for local governments in particular. It was at this stage that the [government] approached USAID to provide technical assistance with the creation of a municipal bond market and [municipal services partnerships] that, together, were intended to ameliorate the debt and institutional constraints confronting most local governments (Tomlinson, 2013: 382).

USAID funded the Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit to provide technical assistance to municipalities considering PPPs, most especially with a view to levelling the playing field when municipalities negotiated contracts with multinational corporations (DeAngelis and Tomlinson, 2000).⁴

The MIIF contained one fundamental error and later rigidity arising from President Thabo Mbeki's HIV/AIDS denialism. The error arose from the preconception of a household embodied in the housing policy that was negotiated in 1992-1994 at the National Housing Forum (and to which IOs competed to contribute).⁵ The mythical Western nuclear family was the building block for the MIIF and, later, for the anticipated consumption levels of

⁴ Unit members also contributed to the drafting of national legislation pertaining to PPPs and service delivery.

⁵ With democracy on its way and with the aura of Nelson Mandela attracting IOs to South Africa, it was a time when IOs marketed their services. These comments are possible because I contributed to policy formulation at the National Housing Forum and later was involved in negotiations with bilateral development agencies regarding who do what and where.

water and electricity and the services levels that should be provided for free. In fact, the somewhat larger African household consumed more services than was projected, and many households have backyard shacks that rely on the same services connections and that may constitute additional households who are eligible for free basic services. The consumption levels and the value of the subsidy for free basic services are premised on an incorrect understanding of household size and also on the number of households.

As regards Mbeki's HIV/AIDS denialism, later iterations of the MIIF did not take account of the water consumption levels for home-based care needed for HIV/AIDS purposes. With diarrhoea, for example, being a common consequence of a compromised immune system, the ability to clean the patient, clothing, surfaces used for cooking and so on considerably exceeded the free services levels. When consumption levels above free basic services lead to termination of the service, the result is considerable hardship, especially as the ill family member is typically a breadwinner (15-45 age group) (Tomlinson, 2008).

It is my impression that in the early 1990s the World Bank sought to create a market for loans for metro-scale bulk infrastructure projects for, for example, water and sanitation. The MIIF represented a R60 billion (then \$12 billion) infrastructure investment program. At the time the South African government rejected loans from the World Bank that, coincidentally, at the same time was recasting itself as a knowledge bank (see below). The World Bank revised its role in South Africa as that of knowledge transfer and technical assistance from the Bank and its consultants was incorporated into South Africa's municipal service delivery and finance policies.

In sum, in my experience as a consultant, the task specified by government typically was to identify international best practice and to recommend how the government department(s) might implement it. The issues were complex and a range of expertise, domestic and sometimes international, would be assembled in consulting teams. In the years immediately prior to the 1994 democratic elections, which saw, inter alia, the preparation of South Africa's housing policy, and in the first few years after the 1994 elections, the policy process involved intense negotiations within and among government departments, the private sector and civil society. Perhaps most often the urban consultant teams were financed by IOs. The shaping of a post-apartheid South Africa underlay the negotiations. Consultants were present during the debates, were called upon for data and insights and, on occasion, participated directly in the debates. Coinciding more or less with the end of Nelson Mandela's presidency, policy formulation was delegated to senior officials and consulting became more of a technical exercise reporting to a client.

The Web and knowledge transfer

Discussion of the Web is based on class exercises at Columbia University (Tomlinson, 2010) and at the University of Melbourne (Tomlinson, 2013, 2015). The first premise underlying the exercises was that, five years hence, as policy professionals, in order to remain up-to-date the students would not turn to academic publications, but rather would search Google and use Wikipedia and social media. The second premise was that conceptions of best practice would emerge that, based on search engine optimisation and the identification of 'important' and 'relevant' institutions, would steer the searcher to the knowledge products of prominent IOs. The third premise was that, through hyperlinks within and among important and relevant

institutions, knowledge products would take of the form of a supply chain integrated into knowledge packages.

In the case of urban governance and slum upgrading, the foremost IOs were the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance. The foremost consultant was MIT that had prepared a manual for the Cities Alliance: ‘What is urban Upgrading? Reference for administrators, policy-makers and decision-makers’.⁶ Searches for ‘barrio upgrading’ and ‘favela upgrading’ identified the same IOs, MIT and projects supported by the IOs.

Table 1 helps to explain how hyperlinks make knowledge packages possible. The Table begins with the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance and then, for illustrative purposes, includes arbitrarily selected bilateral agencies, a global consultancy and two eminent research universities. (There are few links with the SPARC and CORC websites.) The Table is based on searching, for example, for ‘<http://www.worldbank.org> site:adamsmithinternational.com “slum upgrading”’. This means that one is searching for page links from the World Bank to DfID that include the words “slum upgrading”.

⁶ <http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/whatis/index.html> (accessed 9 May 2017)

Table 1. Multilateral, bilateral, consultancy and academic page links that include “slum upgrading”⁷

<i>From/To</i>	<i>World Bank</i>	<i>UN Habitat</i>	<i>Cities Alliance</i>	<i>USAID</i>	<i>DfID</i>	<i>CIDA</i>	<i>SIDA</i>	<i>RTI</i>	<i>MIT</i>	<i>UCL</i>
<i>World Bank</i>	66,300									
<i>UN Habitat</i>	49,700	109,000								
<i>Cities Alliance</i>	17,200	17,000	15,400							
<i>USAID</i>	19,100	14,500	4,920	26,200						
<i>DfID</i>	11,100	14,600	5,010	10,100	10,400					
<i>CIDA</i>	3,900	2,240	707	1,840	1,820	19,600				
<i>SIDA</i> ⁸	5,070	4,210	1,590	2,840	1,680	551	7,330 ⁹ / 413			
<i>RTI</i>	3,670	1,620	506	956	934	470	244	4,920		
<i>MIT</i>	15,700	11,900	3,520	5,390	5,250	1,190	1,510	1,730	28,500	
<i>UCL</i>	6,190	3,870	1,860	2,870	6,390	459	457	337	3,510	24,100

CIDA – Canadian International Development Agency

DfID – Department for International Development, United Kingdom

MIT – Massachusetts Institute of Technology

RTI – Research Triangle Institute (global consultancy)

SIDA – Swedish International Development Agency

UCL – University College London

It can be seen that there are many page links within and between the webpages of the World Bank, UN Habitat and the Cities Alliance; with the bilateral development agencies of the United States and the United Kingdom and less so the smaller Canadian and Swedish

⁷ Search conducted 18 May 2017

⁸ The searches are conducted for www.sida.se/English

⁹ The result arises when the search does not include English i.e. www.sida.se

development agencies, and with MIT and UCL. A global consulting firm, RTI, also uses the same keywords. Links among such important and relevant institutions authenticate and reinforce the information being provided, with the result that the policy professional becomes ‘more likely to rely on conventional ideas and solutions rather than challenging them with original lines of thought’ (Carr, 2010: 140). ‘Unlike footnotes, hyperlinks don’t merely point to related works; they propel you toward them’ (Carr, 2008, no page no.).

It is arguable that an additional role performed by hyperlinks between, say, the Cities Alliance and a MIT manual, is to enhance the credibility of the policy advocated by the Cities Alliance, for which the manual was prepared. Dobbin et al. (2007: 456) comment that ‘The fact that [policies] are endorsed by a powerful actor is seldom enough; ... well-developed connections between the policy world and various research nodes are unduly influential in the framing of policy discussions’. Their commentary concerns ‘hegemonic ideas’. None of this is a surprise.

In 1996 James D. Wolfensohn recast the World Bank as a ‘knowledge bank’ that would provide city managers and other urban professionals ‘with the right kinds of knowledge’. In 1999 he wrote that the Bank should support ‘[p]roactive knowledge management’, with the apprehension that poor access to the Web will lead to ‘knowledge gaps’. (The Web is central since knowledge gaps can be filled by googling a policy issue.) Employing hyperlinks, the World Bank provides ‘over 3,000 cities’ with explanations of the causes of urban governance issues, the policies that will best address the issues and how programs and projects can be financed and delivered (Tomlinson and Harrison, 2017, draft).

It was in this context that the students were then tasked with using the Web to identify alternative, useful pro-poor knowledge products. Generally, they were unable to do so.

When I presented the above three premises and the significance of the Web to William Cobbett, manager of the Cities Alliance, he agreed that due to the low visibility of competing knowledge products on the Web, policy professionals come to think there is a 'default position'.¹⁰ However he expressed doubt regarding the reach of the Web due slow download speeds in smaller cities, where most people live. Subsequently, in Tarawa, the capital of Kiribati, where download speeds are exceptionally slow, I discussed this constraint with a consulting team reporting to the Kiribati Government and paid for by the Asian Development Bank. It transpired that a slow download speed did not prevent the use of the Web to access best practice. A member of the consulting team explained that they were proceeding with a twenty-or-so-page World Bank conceptual paper and with related World Bank specialist documents; further, that in the event that there are knowledge gaps, 'we google'. The constraint of a slow download speed was overcome with a spare computer on a spare desk and a prayer that there was not an electricity outage (Tomlinson, 2013).

Community organisation and knowledge generation and exchange

This section of the paper is based on the work of the Indian Alliance, SPARC, CORC and the SDI and, one hastens to add, organised communities. No claims are made regarding urban governance and slum upgrading best practice. The commitment is to a process of community organisation, knowledge generation and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange. The Indian Alliance and SDI model is viewed as replicable throughout the South and as scalable. In a

¹⁰ William Cobbett, manager of the Cities Alliance. Email 12 May 2012.

context where UN-Habitat (2003: xxv) projects that there will be two billion slum dwellers by 2030, I have not been contradicted in discussion with members of the above organisations when saying that their ambition is that the model will benefit tens of millions of households. Replicability and scalability are the lenses for the ensuing discussion of the conditions under which the model has been successful in Mumbai and much less so in Cape Town, where the SDI offices are located.

The model asserts ‘the primacy of the poor in driving their own politics, however much others may help them to do so’ (Appadurai, 2001: 32). The community questions the right of government to determine its future and seeks partnerships with government and others. 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 of knowledge generation and exchange involves community organization and capacity, precedent setting, knowledge exchange, partnerships and policy advocacy.¹¹

- Community organization and capacity

Community organization and capacity is based on women’s savings groups and community enumeration, surveys and mapping. Savings groups build trust and the confidence to participate in 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). ‘Seen by [the Alliance] as something akin to a spiritual

¹¹ The description of the methodology, edited in places, is taken directly from Tomlinson (2017).

practice, daily savings – and its spread – are conceived as the key to the local and global success of the federation model’ (Appadurai, 2001: 33).

The tasks of enumeration, surveys and mapping similarly contribute to community organization and provide communities with detailed, credible data and maps; enabling community organisations to negotiate with government and with property developers and IOs (Bradlow, 2015).

- Precedent setting

Precedents such as how best to design, construct, finance and operate community toilet blocks (CTBs) emerge from community-led experimentation, working with NGOs and collaborating professionals. Precedents challenge existing policies, programs and projects, either tweaking aspects of them or changing some elements fundamentally. Precedents are used to convince communities, officials and others as ‘change needs evidence’.

- Knowledge exchange

Once precedents work in one locality, they provide the basis for knowledge exchange visits and provide the basis for policy advocacy. Knowledge exchange begins with a community group visiting a precedent and speaking to community members who were involved in setting the precedent. The logic is that exchanges between peers provide a greater learning opportunity than being advised by NGOs or spoken to by technical experts. With the model involving partnership with government, government officials and politicians are invited to examine the precedents and to speak to community members. The CTBs considered in this

paper also attracted visits from governments from other countries, other Indian and international CBOs and NGOs, academics and consultants, IOs and international foundations.

- Partnerships

Governments shoulder the responsibility for ensuring that residents have access to services and are adequately housed, but most often they are unable to deliver services and housing. What CBOs and NGOs bring to partnerships is the capacity to manage slum upgrading among the urban poor. The underlying agenda of community-government partnerships is that they change the knowledge and power relationships and the development process itself (Burra et al., 2003).

- Policy advocacy

The scaling up of a precedent in one or more locations provides the basis for policy advocacy. For example, the Pune CTB precedent was used to convince both the Mumbai government and the World Bank to include the Slum Sanitation Program as part of the World Bank-financed Mumbai Sewage Disposal Project, and later to be included in India's National Urban Sanitation Policy.

In practice, the precedent I researched was based on experiments with the design, construction and maintenance of CTBs that were funded by the International Housing Coalition; participation of CBOs and NGOs and like-minded professionals; partnership with government based on government providing the capital costs of CTBs and organised communities providing the operating costs; city managers who are committed to upgrading

slums and support the precedent; and inspirational leadership of CBOs and NGOs able to influence government and IOs. In conversation, Sunder Burra referred to overlapping champions: organised community, NGO capacity and support from the city manager.

In effect, replicability requires:

- organised communities;
- CBOs and NGOs with a commitment to community-led knowledge generation and exchange processes;
- NGOs who can call on the services of like-minded professionals;
- insightful and dynamic leadership among CBOs and NGOs;
- governments that are willing to enter into a partnership;
- visibility and credibility to engage in policy advocacy; and
- funding for knowledge exchange visits.

These are demanding requirements. Unlike best practices that ‘...seem to be built for travel, there is much that cannot be so easily bottled for export, including charismatic leadership, propitious local circumstances, and the presence of supportive partners’ (Peck and Theodore, 2015: xvii). The model has not found propitious local circumstances and supportive partners in Cape Town. Counterintuitively, the essential local problem is that access to housing and municipal services are rights enshrined in South Africa’s constitution. Government is obliged to deliver housing and services and has done so at scale. Most low-income households, knowing that they have a right to a house, see no reason to organise, save for housing purposes and to upgrade their housing (Ley, 2009). This is unfortunate since while government has delivered at scale, the housing backlog is increasing.

Also relevant to communities organising is that unlike in India, where slums are often located on high land value areas attractive to property developers, in South Africa the norm is informal settlements (the politically acceptable wording in South Africa) are located on the fringes of cities. Slum dwellers in cities in India often have to organise to protect themselves from, and to be able to negotiate with, developers. There is no equivalent in South Africa. Instead, citing the CORC Newsletter January - April 2017:

Post Habitat III, this is key for us: continuing to build a strong, organised grassroots presence of urban poor residents, who collectively impact the practice and policies of different tiers of government. In this [CORC] newsletter, we reflect on some key highlights of 2017 so far and what it means to build organised, urban poor social movements.¹²

The emphasis on the role of organised communities steers this paper to two additional features of scale. In Mumbai 54% of Greater Mumbai's population of 11.5 million (in 2000) live in slums (Water and Sanitation Program et al., 2006). It is apparent that an organised urban poor represents a formidable electoral constituency who could, if they chose to, engage in social disruption. In contrast, Cape Town's informal settlement population is about 13.5% of the city's total population of 3.74 million (2011 Census) and they cannot threaten equivalent social disruption; indeed they are not a relevant electoral constituency (Tomlinson, 2017). When CORC writes that 'The main strategy is a constructive dialogue with government towards community-driven development ...' (CORC, 2012), one can credit this

¹² <http://mailchi.mp/a3cd3df25d2a/sa-sdi-alliance-jan-march-2017-newsletter> (accessed 17 May 2017)

objective only insofar as the development is limited in scale, as for an upgrading project sanctioned by the City.

A different aspect of scale is that NSDF is a large CBO in India. Jockin Arputham, who founded and leads the NSDF, and who is probably correctly described as leading the foundation of the SDI, of which he is president, was together with the SDI nominated for the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize. SPARC is referred to as a 'giant NGO' (Sharma and Bhide, 2005) with considerable influence in Mumbai and throughout the South, and also with IOs. At the time of writing, Sheela Patel, founding director of SPARC, was a member of the eight person High Level Panel selected by the UN Secretary General to review the functioning of UN Habitat as part of an overall review of the UN. In contrast, the City of Cape Town views CORC as one among four NGOs competing for slum upgrading projects. Whereas SPARC can credibly claim that its constituency is organised communities, the City views itself as CORC's client. While CORC rejects this, it is not a large NGO that overshadows other NGOs in Cape Town.

In sum, replicability and scalability are not the same thing. SPARC has provided assistance with upgrading or housing for about a million households (Tomlinson, 2015). Scaling up is occurring, but largely within the Mumbai metropolitan region and Pune. Referring specifically to the CTB precedent, knowledge exchange and replicability can be demonstrated through reference to the Langrug informal settlement in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The CTB precedent was adopted in Langrug following a knowledge exchange visit by the Informal Sector Network (like CORC, a member of the South African Alliance) and government officials to Kampala, Uganda, from where there had been an earlier exchange visit to Pune and Mumbai. The Langrug CTB precedent was subsequently adopted in Cape Town

following visits by government officials that were arranged by CORC. The Stellenbosch government sought to scale the provision of CTBs, but community disunity and opposition from councillors prevented this happening. The precedent was replicable, but was not scalable in Stellenbosch. In Cape Town there is no need to scale the CTB precedent. It is being used for a few upgrading projects. While clearly a precedent can be replicable, its replication does not imply scale at any one location. However, replicability can imply scalability, even if limited in scale in any one location, provided that the precedent gains traction in many locations; with the probability that it will be scalable at some locations.

Knowledge adoption or adaptation

This paper is concerned with knowledge transfer and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, and with the adoption or adaptation of the knowledge. This section of the paper consists of observations arising from the three case studies, with a few digressions where they inform the topic being discussed. While each policy transfer or exchange process is assessed, there is no attempt to rank the processes. Each is appropriate to its context

Knowledge transfer

- International organisations

The academic literature on policy transfer often includes ‘voluntary’ or ‘coercive’ and ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ knowledge transfer or equivalent wording (e.g. Brenson and Jordan, 2011). The wording is problematical for particular instances of knowledge transfer. The broader context in South Africa was one of negotiations to end apartheid and the dissolution of the Soviet

Union. ‘ANC leaders [sought] to comply with world economic orthodoxy at a time their prior Moscow sponsors had given up the ghost’ (Bond, 2016). ‘[F]ormal negotiations ... were accompanied by parallel, informal, economic negotiations with corporate South Africa ... These informal negotiations led to concessions by the ANC on the inevitability of a neoliberal growth path for South Africa’ and the protection of property rights (Duncan, 2011: 2).

These negotiations set the scene for the process of knowledge transfer that occurred during the preparation of the MIIF. The “hard yards” had already been undertaken. The South African government sought knowledge transfer. In my view a contributing element was the prescriptive character of best practice. When it is claimed that a best practice is based on ‘what works’ and has been ‘proven’, the official feels more secure in her/his adopting the policy and also is better able to shift the blame if matters go awry. For the World Bank South Africa hung on the low branches of the knowledge transfer tree.

Best practices, however, have a particular failing. They change. At the time that South Africa’s housing policy was being negotiated, the World Bank (1993) published *Housing: Enabling Markets to Work*. This was an influential paper fronted by the author, Steve Mayo, who was an exceptionally decent person and an extraordinary knowledge ambassador. The document contained *29 Do’s and 21 Don’ts* of housing policy. These are now, in part, disavowed (Buckley and Kalarickal, 2006). Further to the point, my follow-up questions led to a World Bank official telling me that Mayo had, at times, taken liberties with the data. Market-led ideology held sway, but is now recognized as having been over-emphasized relative to urban governance and the role of the public sector.

- Academics

This paragraph is based on personal observations at universities in the USA, South Africa and Australia. An academic's job description includes raising funds for research. Bilateral and multilateral IOs fund research, albeit often in the form of a consulting service. Often this research funding creates opportunities for graduate students and this is highly valued. Further, academics who serve as consultants research the knowledge products in which they have and sell expertise and incorporate the knowledge products into their teaching. Especially at prominent universities their students will come from all over the world and they take the knowledge products with them when they graduate. Many of these students aim to work for IOs and, in the global market for top students, universities market possible access to the IOs. For example, the LSE provides advice to its students on how to get into IOs.¹³ It is no surprise that during a conference address in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 2013 a MIT academic boasted about the number of his students working for the World Bank.

The claim is that there is an incentive to academics to research and teach the knowledge products employed by IOs and to use the same keywords. In the event that other academics critique the knowledge products, perversely they are further embedding the keywords on the Web. Effectively, academics assist the IOs to 'name' and 'frame' what is considered to be knowledge.

Naming and framing in policy are enormously powerful. It influences what is seen in relation to a particular policy problem. Once an area has been labelled and a

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<http://www.lse.ac.uk/intranet/CareersAndVacancies/careersService/EmploymentSectors/DevelopmentInternationalOrgsAndNGOs/InternationalDevelopment/HowToGetIntoDevelopment.aspx>

boundary has been drawn around what will and will not be discussed, certain things become visible and others are hidden, and beliefs are created about what policy can change and what it cannot touch. (Lewis, 2013: 8)

- Consultants

In the context where consultants work for IOs, they forever confront the difficulty that their market is more the IOs than the countries and cities in which they are working. In the case of the World Bank urban mission and the preparation of the MIIF, the Bank's consultants worked as members of a team with deliverables specified by the client. Here deviation from best practice was impractical as, within two weeks, there was specific deliverable. In less pressured circumstances, where the consultant is on her/his own and has time to deliberate, if the IO has certified knowledge products as best practice, the consultant has the setting for considering how the best practice(s) may be adapted to fit local circumstances, but is not in a position to reject the knowledge product.

IOs can also influence which consultant is appointed by a country or city. Often when I was contracted by the South African government, the project was funded by an IO. Funding the consultant enabled the IO to be in a position to, formally or informally, select the consultant. IO funding enabled the government to circumvent lengthy procurement procedures. The desire to circumvent procurement procedures also reflected the officials wanting the same consultant, or one among a few consultants, and to not be obliged by procurement procedures to employ someone else.

Alternatively, when the consultant's market is a country or city with appointment and payment made by the country or city, there is frequent reference in the literature to policy entrepreneurs (see Mintrom and Norman, 2009). The context is not consultants competing to sell much the same service, for example, rezoning a property. Instead the reference is to an academic or consultant who is selling both a knowledge product and knowledge of, and expertise in implementing, that knowledge product. Participatory budgeting is an example of a knowledge product that originated in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and then travelled the world with tail winds provided by consultants (Peck and Theodore, 2015).

Again reflecting on personal experience, policy entrepreneurship included trying to build both a research and a consulting market for an issue not yet recognised to be an issue, as in the case of HIV/AIDS and housing and municipal services (e.g. Tomlinson, 2001, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2008); or for which action was needed, as in finding an African pathway for the post-corporate disinvestment Johannesburg inner-city (e.g. Tomlinson, 1998, 1999a, 2001). In order to build this market the author published in the media and academically, with his being informed that the media publications led directly to consulting jobs from government, IOs and NGOs. The impression created was that the primary role of academic publications was to build credibility, with it seemingly seldom being the case that academic publications were read.

Google and knowledge transfer

Google seeks to create a search algorithm that provides 'the facts', the 'only answer', even 'the truth' (Levy, 2011). Larry Page, co-founder of Google, has held that 'You can't argue with facts. You're not entitled to your own facts' (Levy, 2011, 348l). However, fearful of

writing this in the Trump era, facts are negotiable. When facilitating policy negotiations I have found that agreeing on what counts as facts is a necessary step in the negotiation process.

From the point of view of knowledge products and purported facts, it is claimed that the Web diminishes critical thinking. Brabazon (2007) holds that it leads to lazy and compliant thinking. If this is the case, one despairs somewhat of the prospect for critical thinking when policy professionals are called upon to evaluate:

- ‘international best practice’ and ‘evidence-based best practice’ ‘based on policy that works’;
- ‘global knowledge products’, ‘knowledge banks’, ‘knowledge storage’ and ‘knowledge management’;
- the prevention of ‘knowledge leakage’ and the repetition of ‘knowledge mistakes’; and
- when these claims emanate from the websites of the World Bank, UN-HABITAT, the Cities Alliance, MIT and one’s own professional associations?

One cannot assume that critical thinking has much bearing on the circumstances in which policy professionals actually obtain and process knowledge. Carr (2010) is emphatic on the topic. Web-based knowledge has replaced ‘deep thinking’ and ‘tends to serve as amplifiers of popularity, quickly establishing and then continually reinforcing a consensus about what [knowledge] is “important”’ (Carr, 2010, 217). Arguably if needed information is not available on the Web, the probability of its being used, let alone ‘discovered’, plummets. It ‘may as well not have existed’ (Levy, 2011: 60).

Access to knowledge leads to a loss of expert authority. Nicholson (2006: 3) explains that along with Google ‘becoming a verb’, ‘the agents we have relied upon traditionally to filter and manage information, and to broker formal knowledge – agents like research universities, the serious media, and highly trained experts of all kinds – are less trusted as intermediaries than they once were.’ Clients, those affected by policies and projects and others all have access to claims regarding how an issue might best be resolved.

For policy professionals, times have changed. Best practice implies what can and should be done. The consequence, it has been suggested, is risk aversion when it comes to policy formulation. Knowledge transfer requires dominating the results page of a Google search.

Community organisation and knowledge generation and exchange

- Community organisation

As already noted, community organisation within the NSDF and the Indian Alliance is founded on women’s savings groups. I argued that savings groups have been less successful in South Africa. Perhaps a reflection of constraints to savings groups in some countries or cities, the SDI global campaign focuses on the ‘Know Your City’: ‘A global campaign for gathering citywide data on slums as the basis for inclusive partnerships between the urban poor and local governments’.¹⁴ Whether through savings groups or enumeration, surveys and mapping, from the point of view of slum upgrading it is community organisation that gives the urban poor the confidence to engage government in development processes.

¹⁴ <http://www.sdinetherlands.org/contact/42.html> (accessed 23 May 2017)

- Knowledge generation

It seems clearly to be the case that the design specifications for CTBs were community-led, with the assistance of SPARC and like-minded professionals. Precedent setting through the Pune CTB gave the community not just the confidence, but also the capacity, to engage in development processes. Knowledge generation should be understood to include not just design specifications, but also the respective roles of CBOs and local government in regard to financing and maintaining the CTBs.

- Knowledge exchange visits

Through the story already told, from Pune to Mumbai to Kampala to Stellenbosch to Cape Town, the efficacy of peer-to-peer knowledge exchange visits is evident. Knowledge exchange visits also proceed vertically, as illustrated earlier in the case of the Pune CTB, the Mumbai Slum Sanitation Program and India's National Urban Sanitation Policy.

While I think that community-led knowledge generation and exchange visits matter, thinking this is not to be able to draw conclusions. Neither SPARC nor SDI have compiled and maintained a record of exchange visits to CTBs and other slum upgrading projects. While instances of visits and the adoption or adaptation of precedents are celebrated on the SDI website and blogs, the reporting is anecdotal. It is probably simple-minded to think that there is a metric(s) that will enable judgement; if, indeed, judgement is anything more than a distant academic posing insights.

It is perhaps best to let Sheela Patel conclude this section of the paper. ‘Strong leadership, ongoing and sustained, is critical to maintain the process. ... cities tend not to retain their commitment to the process once leaders and administrations move on. When a cause has no champions, it dies’ (Patel, 2015: 71).

Conclusion

In this paper I have referred to knowledge transfer and, in the case of the Indian Alliance and SDI, knowledge exchange. In the case of knowledge transfer, I proposed that knowledge products represent interlinked areas of expertise that form part of a policy supply chain, which aligns with Haas’ (1992) conceptualisation of ‘epistemic communities’.

Knowledge transfer was discussed through reference to two case studies. First, the South African case study demonstrated the influence of the World Bank on the formulation of the MIIF whose underlying principles survived at least until my departure from South Africa in 2009. Indeed, in 2014, when I was in Delhi during my research into the Indian Alliance model, I was informed that World Bank organised knowledge exchange visits back and forth between Delhi and Johannesburg to encourage Indian policy makers to copy Johannesburg’s arrangements for delivering and financing municipal services, with these arrangements being represented as ‘best practice’.¹⁵ In my view the World Bank failed in what I believe was its initial ambition, namely financing large municipal projects, but succeeded in the case of knowledge transfer. USAID should also be mentioned as having contributed to this knowledge transfer.

¹⁵ The arrangements and their history are described in Tomlinson (1999b, 2005). The relevance of the visits lies in India’s 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 that initiated a process of creating metropolitan governments.

The second case study of knowledge transfer concerned the role of the Web in transferring knowledge to cities in the South. The World Bank, UN-Habitat and the Cities Alliance dominate the results pages which, in part, they are able to do by naming and framing policy issues. The global standardisation of the words used to refer to policy issues mean that globally the same keywords are used when searching the Web. The ability of the IOs to exercise this dominance also reflects their engagement with leading universities that considerably strengthens the perceived validity of claims regarding what policies work. It was argued that best practice acquires a prescriptive character that limits consideration of alternatives by city managers, officials, academics and consultants.

The third case study reflected on the NSDF/SDI model of knowledge generation and exchange that is intended to benefit tens of millions of households and to enable an organised poor to participate in development processes. The comparison of the application of the model in Mumbai and Cape Town led to differing conclusions. While the model was viewed as replicable and scalable in Mumbai, the requirement of overlapping champions represents a demanding constraint. The model proved to be replicable, eventually travelling to Cape Town, but was not scalable in Cape Town and, with greater relevance, in Stellenbosch where there was an attempt to scale the CTB precedent. Determining features of constraints in Cape Town arise from the right to free housing, the relatively small proportion of the population living in informal settlements, competition amongst NGOs for influence, and the absence of a champion in city government who works with an organised urban poor. These features, especially the right to a house and a relatively small informal sector population, lead to conclusions less about the model than about different circumstances prevailing in Cape Town. Cape Town's beauty commends the location of the SDI offices in the city, but also

draws comparative studies to the city. Looking to cities and towns throughout the South, what the Indian Alliance and SDI offer is insight regarding the need for community organisation and (prescriptively) how this should occur, and then how the model can and has been used for knowledge generation and exchange. In sum, I find myself commenting from the point of view of considerable admiration and some misgivings, and this is an unacademic conclusion to a paper.

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Annexure 1. Googling policy transfer and knowledge transfer

The data in the Table are based on googling the expressions using "...". which identifies only results with the specified combination of words. It is apparent that reference to knowledge transfer is a multiple of references to policy transfer. However, this observation fails the Wikipedia criterion. After googling policy transfer, the first result was a Wikipedia definition of policy transfer with which most readers will probably agree. After googling knowledge transfer, the first result was again Wikipedia, but the explanation began with 'In organisational theory, ...' Knowledge transfer has many more applications than policy transfer. Nonetheless, persisting, to each search I added "World Bank", then "urban governance" and then "slum upgrading"; and then in addition I combined three sets of words, for example, "policy transfer" "World Bank" "urban governance". It is apparent that in every instance, except for "urban governance" when searching Google Scholar, 'knowledge transfer' is the commonly used expression. 'Policy transfer' has currency among academics

when considering urban governance, but in all other respects the more frequent reference is to ‘knowledge transfer’.

	<i>Google</i>	<i>Google Scholar</i>
“policy transfer”	173,000	23,000
“knowledge transfer”	4,750,00	469,000
“policy transfer” “World Bank”	23,800	6,090
“knowledge transfer” “World Bank”	233,000	26,900
“policy transfer” “urban governance”	12,500	1,200
“knowledge transfer” “urban governance”	799,000	1,220
“policy transfer” “slum upgrading”	476	41
“knowledge transfer” “slum upgrading”	20,300	137
“policy transfer” “World Bank” “urban governance”	3,860	324
“knowledge transfer” “World Bank” “urban governance”	9,420	412
“policy transfer” “World Bank” “slum upgrading”	298	34
“knowledge transfer” “World Bank” “slum upgrading”	5,380	101

Searches conducted 11 May 2017.