

Analysing Impediments to the Effective Distribution of Low-income Housing in South Africa: The Case of the Delft Symphony Community in Cape Town

<https://doi.org/10.36369/2616-9045/2022/v11i2a3>

Online ISSN: 2616-9045. Print ISSN: 2218-5615

THEMBELANI TYHOTYHOLO

Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

tembelani208@gmail.com

MSUTHUKAZI MAKIVA

Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences

University of the Western Cape

mmakiva@uwc.ac.za

GREGORY DAVIDS

Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences

University of the Western Cape

gjdavids@uwc.ac.za

BONGANI NCUBE

Faculty of Engineering & the Built Environment

Cape Peninsula University of Technology

ncubeb@cput.ac.za

Abstract

One of the dilemmas facing the post-Apartheid government in South Africa is the shortage of housing, often expressing itself in the rapid increase of informal settlements, especially in urban townships. The primary purpose of this qualitative study was to examine key impediments to the effective distribution of low-income housing with the Delft Symphony community in Cape Town used as its contextual focus. To achieve this, content and cross-analytical approaches were used to analyse some crucial insights from the Theory of Justice, the self-help housing model and the empirical findings from 28 key informants was done to gain better insights into various housing dynamics in the Delft Symphony

community. Subsequently, poor planning and lack of suitable land for housing, particularly in urban spaces, were identified as key impediments to the effective implementation of low-income housing. This study submits that this situation demands a timeous response from authorities because an increase in population means a high demand for land. Pending short-and-long term solutions, the city will experience land invasions, which might even occur in the areas reserved for other developmental purposes. Therefore, there is a need for collective action to fast-track the processes of land approval for low-income housing in the likes of the Delft Symphony community.

Keywords: Challenges, Delft Symphony Community, Housing Delivery, Informal Settlements, Low-income Housing

Introduction

One of the serious challenges facing the post-Apartheid government in South Africa is the critical shortage of housing expressing itself in the swift increase of informal settlements, especially in urban townships such as the Delft Symphony (DS) community in Cape Town (Williams, Charlton, Coelho, Mahadevia & Meth, 2022). The housing challenge in South African urban areas has been associated with various governance factors, including the failure of public policy implementation. The primary purpose of this article was to examine the impediments to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South African urban townships with specific reference to the DS community in Cape Town. The researcher drew critical insights from the Theory of Justice and the self-help housing model to analyse the challenges to the effective distribution of low-income housing in urban South Africa. This study provided the trajectory of the low-income housing challenge in South Africa since the dawn of democracy in 1994. The article proceeded from a global analytical perspective of the evolution of urban housing challenges to a conceptualisation of the nature of urban low-income housing policy in South Africa. It also reflected on the nature and characteristics of the low-income housing challenge and housing policies in South Africa, buttressed by empirical research. Prior to the discussion of the theoretical framework underpinning this study, the next section provides an overview of the persistent housing challenge from an international perspective to the South African context.

An Overview of the Housing Challenges in South Africa

Alongside political instability, one of the serious problems facing humankind globally is the critical shortage of low-income housing which manifests in homelessness (Coelho, Mahadevia & Williams, 2021). In the 21st Century, the low-income housing challenge has been characterised by a weak governmental capacity to effectively distribute housing to



the urban poor (Williams & Zacheous, 2022). The shortage of low-income housing is a social problem that compels poor ordinary citizens around the world to live in informal settlements typified by poor living conditions. In the global arena, the struggles for low-income housing have been marked by contestations and tensions among different actors, such as poor citizens, political parties and the government (Odoyi & Riekkinen, 2022). Low-income housing delivery is pressurised mainly by the high movement of people to urban areas in search of a better livelihood. The inference is that the high cost of living in urban areas may not be affordable, especially for the working class. In this regard, the working class competes with scarce resources that can be affordable in urban peripheral areas, where low-cost housing is also available (Williams & Zacheous, 2022). However, the shortage of low-income housing seems to persist worldwide, particularly in Africa. Scholars such as Windapo, Omopariola, Olugboyega & Moghayedi (2021) contend that the low-income housing problem seems to be critical in Africa compared to the rest of the world. In the sub-Saharan African context, low-income housing activities are mainly executed by obtaining land through social mobilisation and buying processes. In such circumstances, owning a house depends on one's economic status (Williams & Zacheous, 2022). Since most countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including South Africa, are faced with the problem of unemployment, buying a house ultimately becomes impossible for the poor and marginalised citizens. Furthermore, reports indicate that housing affordability is problematic as housing prices are high, and the unemployed and ordinary citizens are consistently marginalised (Windapo et al., 2021). In the context of South Africa, any attempt to understand the recent challenges to the effective distribution of low-income housing should consider the country's historical developments.

In the quest for understanding efforts towards the effective distribution of low-income housing, mention must be made of the controversy surrounding the land issue in South Africa. This is because the availability of land is essential for low-income housing distribution, especially in urban areas. Land reform programmes such as Land Restitution and Redistribution have not effectively addressed the challenge of land access, particularly for the urban poor (Shackleton & Gwedla, 2021). As a result, the issue of land and housing in South Africa has been characterised by contestations and conflict between the government, the private sector, political parties and ordinary citizens. The struggle for low-income housing has manifested in illegal land invasions by the urban poor in South African peripheral urban areas, including the DS community (Shackleton & Gwedla, 2021). In response, the government has consistently used its powers and apparatus, such as law enforcement agencies, to dismantle informal settlements constructed on government land in urban townships. Alongside the problem of land and housing, one of the South African government's biggest challenges is rapid urbanisation. As more people move to urban areas, the housing demand has increased and exceeded the supply capacity of the government. As the population seems to grow exponentially in urban areas, the number of people needing housing has also increased (Odoyi & Riekkinen, 2022). This is because



most of the urban population in South Africa is either unemployed or belongs to the low-income group. Subsequently, most of them cannot afford to buy their dwellings due to their financial status. Thus, proper planning needs to be in place to address the needs of the poor urban population, especially regarding low-income housing provision.

The democratic South African government, led by the African National Congress (ANC) since 1994, has embarked on several low-income housing delivery initiatives. One of these was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), whose fundamental objective was to bring about community transformation by providing low-income housing to South African citizens, especially the previously disadvantaged. However, the RDP was seemingly not effective enough to eradicate the demands for low-income housing in South Africa. In the DS community, for example, only a few residents benefitted from the RDP programme. According to Windapo et al (2021), despite the implementation of the RDP in 1994, an estimated 1.2 million South African citizens continued to live in informal settlements by 2001 along the urban peripheral areas. Due to this anomaly, there was an urgent need to devise new strategies to bring about the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa. Owing to the failure of the RDP, the Breaking New Ground (BNG) policy was formulated in 2004 as a new measure to bring about social integration and community transformation, especially for previously disadvantaged communities. The BNG policy introduced a broad perspective to low-income housing delivery by focusing on community development at large. The primary objective of the BNG policy was to eradicate all informal settlements in South Africa by the 2014/15 financial year (Windapo et al, 2021). Nonetheless, in the DS area, only a few people benefitted from this programme. According to the BNG policy, the South African government aimed to improve living conditions in each province with a target of 103 000 households in informal settlements in each province set to benefit. Guided by this programme, the Western Cape government assured to deliver 11 094 low-income houses in the Western Cape Province between 2020 and 2021. However, in 2020, only 10 212 units had been delivered (WCDHS, 2020). Furthermore, StatsSA (2021:22) reports that an estimated number of “about 320 000 households are either living in over-crowded or informal conditions in Cape Town”. This means that presently, there is a major low-income housing crisis in Cape Town due to the failure of the government to provide low-income housing to citizens.

Commenting on this glaring housing challenge, Williams and Zacheous (2022:113) contend that “to address the backlog in a 10-15-year period, approximately 30 000 low-income houses need to be supplied annually in Cape Town. Unfortunately, this is currently not the case, as only 8 000-10 000 formal houses are being delivered every year. About half of these are government-subsidised houses and the other half are delivered by the formal market. This delivery represents 0.8-1% of the total households in the city. However, household growth is increasing at between 1.5-2% per annum, resulting in an increasing shortfall”. Instead of witnessing the effective distribution of low-income housing, the



erection of informal settlements has been burgeoning. In Cape Town, currently, there is an axiomatic increase of shacks in areas such as the DS community and this situation lent impetus to this study. Considering the foregoing, this article examines the impediments to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa, with specific reference to the DS community in Cape Town.

Literature Review and Theoretical Underpinnings

This study was mainly guided by assumptions drawn from the two theories, namely, the theory of Justice and the Self-help Housing theory. The former insists that the distribution of low-income housing should serve as a government strategy to promote justice and equality. The latter contends that citizens have a fundamental role to play in the quest for the effective distribution of low-income housing. However, Gramsci (1999 cited in Ciobanu, 2022:151), argues that the nexus between theoretical framework and practical situations may sometimes turn out to be contradictory. This is because practical circumstances are predominantly complex and incoherent (Ciobanu, 2022). Thus, not everything theoretical can apply to practical situations, particularly in cosmopolitan countries such as South Africa. Nevertheless, the theories of Justice and Self-help Housing have given important insight into understanding the low-income housing phenomenon.

The Theory of Justice

The Theory of Justice was coined in 1971 by the British architect John Rawls (Jamnik, 2022). The Theory of Justice departs from the premise that societal structures such as government institutions need to be arranged to promote democracy and equality (Said & Nurhayati, 2021). This theory considers the government as an important structure in a special position to promote citizens' basic human rights. In the Theory of Justice, Rawls insists that freedom and equality incorporated into the notion of justice are the basis for a better society. The principles of freedom and equality in Rawls' theory imply that citizens should have the freedom to own low-income housing facilities and equal basic rights (Said & Nurhayati, 2021). This implies that public services such as low-income housing must be distributed in the context of promoting the general welfare of society. In this regard, the distribution of low-income housing in South Africa should aim at promoting social justice by providing adequate low-income housing, especially to previously disadvantaged citizens.

The Theory of Justice is appropriately encapsulated by Jamnik (2022:144) in two principles. Firstly, an equal right is endowed to every person in society and the core value of equal rights is to embody the whole system of equal basic liberties which are adaptable with a similar system of liberty for all. Secondly, inequalities from social and economic dimensions are to be organised. Therefore, the government should promote equal opportunities in terms of low-income housing distribution so that the least advantaged in society can



benefit. Taking into consideration the history of South Africa, particularly racial segregation regarding low-income housing, the principle of equal rights is imperative. In terms of examining the existing government institutions that are meant for enabling the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa, the principles of the Theory of Justice are considered useful.

Despite the fact that the Theory of Justice has provided key insight into understanding the challenges to the effective distribution of low-income housing in this paper, some objections to this theory are just inescapable. Said & Nurhayati (2021) state that while the principles of justice advocate for the distribution of property, services and benefits equally among the citizens, it is difficult to interpret and understand the notion of justice for all citizens because communities are in constant flux and change is the only future of the society. Thus, the promotion of justice in the context of low-income housing in South Africa cannot be an easy task. Nonetheless, the Theory of Justice has provided important insight into the investigation of the challenges to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa and in the DS community in particular.

Self-help Housing Theory

The Theory of Self-help Housing is attributed to the work of John Turner around 1976 (Dafeamekpor, Adjei-Kumi, Nani & Kissi, 2022). Self-help housing can be described as a concept that emphasises the role of ordinary citizens in the delivery of low-income housing (Ebekozi, 2021). The theory of self-help housing emanates from the understanding that the state-driven low-income housing model has not been effective in addressing the housing challenge, especially for the urban poor. As a result of this anomaly, in the Theory of Self-help Housing, John Turner formulates a citizen-driven approach to the distribution of low-income housing. The Self-help Housing Theory emphasises the importance of citizen participation in low-income housing delivery processes (Ebekozi, 2021). Thus, while the Theory of Justice of Rawls emphasises the role of government in the delivery of low-income housing, the Self-help Housing Theory suggests that citizens should rather play a leading role. Due to limited resources such as funds, the government cannot be the sole actor in the provision of low-income housing (Ebekozi, 2021). This is due to complex economic, social, political and cultural diversity in different communities. The government-driven low-income housing processes are insufficient for addressing these heterogeneous demands. Thus, the role of different low-income housing stakeholders is imperative. In this regard, Turner's Theory of Self-help Housing is perceived as fundamental to driving the low-income housing model which is mostly influenced by the elite groups (Williams & Zacheous, 2022). Turner's ideas around self-help housing imply that informal settlements should be considered as foundations for low-income housing improvement. The theory emphasises the importance of viewing informal settlements as potential future low-income houses not as a societal problem.



Despite the convincing elements of the Theory of Self-help Housing such as community involvement in low-income housing, some scholars, including Odoyi and Riekkinen (2022), argue that this theory is costly and unrealistic because the government has to acquire expensive land from private owners. Thus, where the land is not State-owned, much of the funding is spent on land costs rather than on the actual construction or on infrastructure investment, which further makes self-help housing schemes expensive for the State. Resultantly, the supply of low-income housing under this model continues to be far less than the actual demand for housing (Dafeamekpor et al. 2022). The implementation of self-help housing can be time-consuming as the government has to first engage with various stakeholders prior to the commencement of any low-income housing project. However, to understand the challenges to the effective distribution of low-income housing, this article has drawn some fundamentals from the Theory of Self-help Housing.

Legislation and Policy Framework for Low-income Housing in South Africa

The fall of the Apartheid regime and the dawn of democracy in South Africa in 1994 was a turning point that paved the way for new democratic low-income housing legislations, policies, strategies and programmes (Coelho et al., 2021). In 1994, the South African government prioritised redressing the social injustices inherited from the colonial and Apartheid regime through developing various housing development legislations. The provision of low-cost housing was among the key focus areas that the democratic government of South Africa, through its legislative framework, sought to address. According to Meyer and Overen (2021), the mode in which constitutional rights are defined and elucidated is political and therefore housing as a social phenomenon demands citizen mobilisation at a grassroots level to influence government policies. The South African Constitution, the supreme law of the country, is discussed next.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996)

As the supreme law of the country, the Constitution of South Africa places a fundamental obligation on the government to ensure progressive housing delivery to South African citizens (Marais & de Lange, 2021). Section 26 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa establishes that citizens' rights to adequate housing are incontrovertible. To achieve this, the government must put in place legislative frameworks and other efforts within the government's resource capacity, to ensure the attainment of this right. The right to adequate housing is enshrined in the Constitution. The Constitution demarcates the roles and responsibilities of the three spheres of government in ensuring that adequate delivery of houses to South African citizens is achieved (Meyer & Overen, 2021). The Constitution authorises the Department of Human Settlements to formulate and implement various housing policies and strategies in line with the national Constitution.



The White Paper on Housing (1994)

In 1994, the new democratically elected government led by the ANC had to come up with new legislation and policies for the transformation of the country and its communities. According to Marais and de Lange (2021), the White Paper on Housing was formulated in the middle of the transitional era in South Africa (1992-1994), with political influence, social struggles, contestations and tensions playing a very significant role in the development of the policy. The White Paper on Housing served as the principal guideline for housing provision. Within the context of housing under the Apartheid government, the White Paper on Housing fundamentally accentuated the importance of the right to adequate housing, especially for the poor and previously disadvantaged South Africans (Coelho et al., 2021). After the demise of the Apartheid regime, the White Paper on Housing was a stepping-stone towards new housing policies and strategies to bring about human settlement integration in a democratic South Africa.

Breaking New Grounds (BNG) of 2004

In 2004, the government had to revise its housing policy as a strategic plan to achieve integrated communities in terms of housing. As a result, the government introduced a new strategy to guide and direct the development of housing for five years, starting in 2004 (Leckie, 2021). This strategy was developed to remedy the shortfalls and bridge the gaps in the existing housing strategy. The new strategy was termed Breaking New Grounds (BNG) and its main objective was to “redirect and enhance existing mechanisms to move towards more responsive and effective delivery” and strive to “promote the achievement of a non-racial, integrated society through the development of sustainable housing settlements and quality housing” (Marais & de Lange, 2021:54). The BNG underscores the importance of collaboration between government and the private sector in ensuring effective low-income housing distribution in South Africa. In formulating the BNG policy, the government acknowledged and encouraged the important role of the private sector in low-income housing.

National Development Plan (NDP)

In 2011, the South African government adopted the National Development Plan (NDP) as a blueprint for dealing with societal challenges, including the shortage of housing, particularly for the low-income group (Meyer & Overen, 2021). The NDP was approved by the government as a long-term vision and plan for South Africa. One of the key objectives of the NDP is to ensure effective social development characterised by adequate human settlements in South African communities, especially the previously disadvantaged such as the DS community in Cape Town. According to Shambare, Simuja and Olayinka (2022:121), the NDP outlines a new vision for South Africa for the year 2030, with goals to "eradicate poverty and reduce inequality by building an inclusive economy" and to "improve and change society in numerous sectors to create a better and fair living for all." The NDP serves as a guideline for the coordination of the three spheres of government in the



provisioning of the basic services of housing, water and sanitation. However, the reality is that despite the implementation of the NDP by the South African government, existential circumstances suggest that housing remains one of the persistent challenges. This means that many South African citizens, especially the poor, continue to live in informal settlements typified by squalid living conditions in urban townships like the DS community in Cape Town.

Research Methodology

This qualitative study focused on the nature and context of the low-income housing distribution in South Africa, with specific reference to the DS community. According to Mey (2022), the qualitative research approach allows the researcher to capture the world view of participants about a specific phenomenon and this was the case in understanding the low-income housing challenges in the DS community. Using qualitative methods, this study discovered diverse and unpredictable views about the phenomenon under investigation (Roestenburg, Strydom & Fouché, 2021). The target population for this study was the DS community residents, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements (WCDHS) and the City of Cape Town managers. Purposive and snowball sampling was employed to draw and select research participants for the study. These techniques were used by the researcher to select research participants in a predisposed way justified by the fact that the researcher considers the identified research participants as key informants with regard to the phenomenon under study (Roestenburg et al., 2021). Subsequently, to collect the necessary information for the study, the researcher used in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews and reviewed documents. Table 1 shows the interviewees for this study, by category.

Table 1: Research participants by category

Category	Number
DS Community residents	15
DS Community leaders	8
City of Cape Town	2
Department of Human Settlements	2
Ward Councillor	1
Total number of research participants	28

Source: Researcher's own construct (2022)

In conducting the interviews with the key informants depicted in the above table, it is important to note that the interviews were conducted at the interviewee's place of



preference. This, according to Roestenburg et al. (2021), allows for interviewee comfort and the researcher is likely to get more information from the interview. Content and thematic analysis were used to analyse qualitative data with the aid of the *atlas.ti* software. The next section presents the key findings of the study.

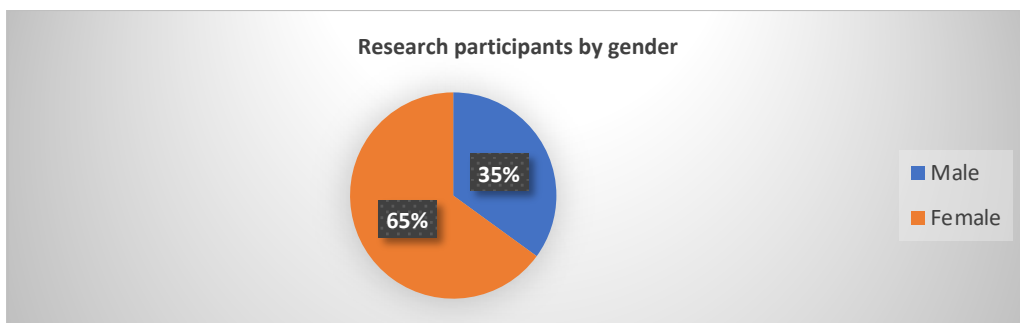
Research Findings and Discussion

In South Africa, the right to housing is enshrined in the Constitution. Housing is considered a basic human right and the government has a clear mandate to make housing progressively accessible to South African citizens, especially the poor. However, there are some key hindrances that seem to exist to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa (Leckie, 2021). Prior to the presentation of the major impediments to low-income housing distribution, the following section provides a characterisation of research participants.

Characterisation of Research Participants

The researcher interviewed key informants from the DS community, the Western Cape Department of Human Settlements, and the City of Cape Town, to achieve the objectives of the study. The researcher sought to understand the gender dynamics characterising the distribution of low-income housing and to obtain the perspectives of both genders regarding the challenges to effective distribution of low-income housing. The study also sought to understand if participants were beneficiaries of low-cost housing or not. Research participants were asked to indicate their gender, including ownership of low-cost housing. Figure 1 below displays the research participants by gender.

Figure 1: Overall research participants by gender



Source: Researcher's own construct based on fieldwork (2022)

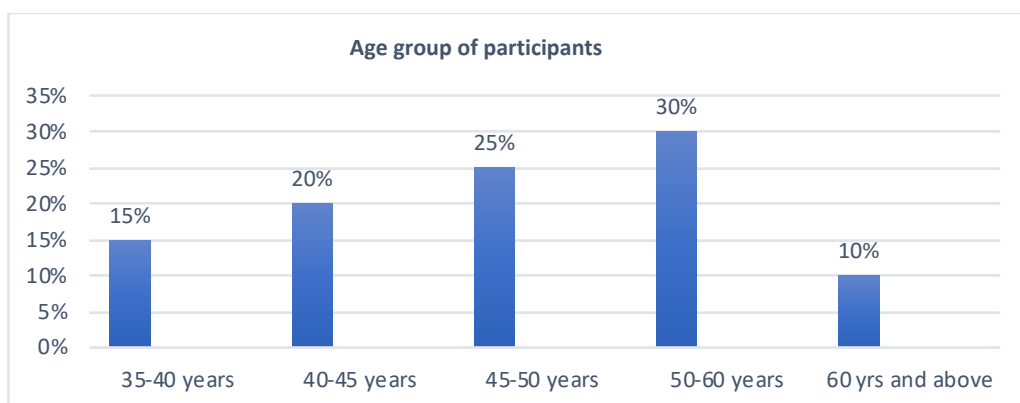
Figure 1 above displays that the majority (65%) of the research participants who were beneficiaries of low-cost housing in the DS community were females, and 35% were males. According to Statistics South Africa (StatsSA)(2021), there are about 191,668 households



that are living in informal settlements in the Western Cape Province, of which 60% are headed by women. Furthermore, StatsSA (2021) infers that in the Western Cape Province the low-income housing beneficiaries from 2020 to 2021 were women who constituted 70%, and males 30% of the beneficiaries. In supporting this claim, the WCDHS (2022) argues that between 2020 and 2021, about 10,212 low-income houses were delivered in the Western Cape of which 6,896 were allocated to women, particularly in the DS community.

Therefore, it is reasonable to argue that most of the households in the DS community are headed by women. These residents have benefited from the distribution of low-income housing and their lives have improved as compared to their previous living conditions. This observation aligns with the Theory of Justice discussed earlier, which suggests that there is a need for government developmental initiatives, including low-income housing, to improve the lives of the citizens. However, according to Williams and Zacheous (2022) the progression in the distribution of low-income housing cannot be measured merely based on assessing gender dynamics. Rather, one needs to consider factors such as age group and economic status in general.

Figure 2: Outline of participants' age groups



Source: Researcher's own construct from fieldwork (2022)

As shown in Figure 2 above, research participants from the DS community were mostly between the ages of 50-60 years. StatsSA (2021) indicates that the population of Cape Town in terms of age groups remains predominantly the age of 60 years (48% in 2020, 51% in 2021). This means that most of the residents in Cape Town were born during the Apartheid regime in South Africa. From Figure 3, it can be observed that the majority of residents interviewed in the DS community are between the ages of 50-60, followed by 45-50 years. The smallest age group of the research participants in the DS community as displayed in Figure 2 above is 60 years and above, followed by residents between the ages

of 35-40 years. One of the key factors that characterise the challenge of housing in South Africa is the lack of formal education which contributes to unemployment and a shortage of appropriate skills (Dafeamekpor et al., 2022). As a result, it was important to determine the level of formal education of the research participants. Table 2 below depicts the formal education of the research participants.

Table 2: Formal education of the research participants

Category	Formal education	Role in the community
DS Community leaders	Out of eight community leaders that were interviewed only three had completed their Matric (Grade 12) while the other five do not have a Matric certificate.	To act as the link between the government and the people in the community. To ensure social order and stability in their community.
DS Community residents	Of the 15 community residents, only four of them have a Matric certificate; the other 11 do not have Grade 12.	Low-income residents. Some have benefited from the government housing initiatives while others are still waiting for housing delivery.
Government officials	Of the four government officials that participated in the study, one of them has a tertiary qualification (National Diploma in Public Management), two have a Matric certificate, while the other one does not have a Matric (Grade 12) certificate.	Responsible for the implementation of low-income housing policies and strategies.

Source: Researcher's own construct based on fieldwork (2022)

As displayed in Table 2 above, most of the research participants do not have any formal education qualification. There seems to be a relationship between the lack of formal education and the persistent challenge of housing in South Africa. The fact that some government officials do not have any academic qualification raises concerns about the technical capacity of the government to formulate and implement low-income housing policies and strategies. Furthermore, the lack of formal education of residents and community leaders can be associated with the problem of unemployment and the inability to buy their own houses. Fouche (2021) argues that in South Africa, the lack of formal education contributes to unemployment and this means most people cannot afford to buy their own dwellings. This puts more pressure on the government to provide adequate housing, particularly to the urban poor.

Some Key Challenges to Low-income Housing

This study found that the problems associated with the provision of houses are the complicated bureaucratic administrative system and institutional framework inherited



from the colonial and Apartheid government, and the inability to develop a user-friendly and efficient model to serve the housing needs of all South African people. This study employed the Theory of Justice as a theoretical approach that informed the study. The Theory of Justice holds that the government should ensure that the basic human rights of citizens, particularly the poor, are promoted. In practice, this means that low-income housing as a basic human right stipulated in the South African Constitution should be accessible, especially to poor citizens. However, this is seemingly not happening as most residents in the DS community are still living in informal settlements characterised by poor living conditions. Key informants from the WCDHS and the City of Cape Town attributed the delays in the effective delivery of low-income housing to the government's internal bureaucratic procedures as they tend to prolong the processes involved in housing delivery. Similarly, the WCDHS (2021) attributed the sluggish distribution of low-income housing in the Western Cape to the bureaucratic administrative processes that need to be followed before the implementation of a certain housing programme.

Furthermore, it is procedural that prior to effecting any housing project, Environmental Impact Assessments are conducted. This is the case since town planners are required to scrutinise suitable land zones and a certificate of approval from the Department of Environmental Affairs must be obtained, a process that normally takes about two years (HDA, 2020). The other contributing factor to the delays in the delivery of low-income housing is that not all payments to service providers such as contractors are processed within the minimum reasonable period of 30 days with the issuing of title deeds to beneficiaries taking about 20 to 24 months (WCDHS, 2021:23). This study found that these and other bureaucratic processes such as the approval of suitable land for human settlements prolong the implementation of low-income housing programmes and projects in areas such as the DS community. This is supported by scholars such as Dafeamekpor et al (2022) who maintained that the unavailability of suitable land for low-income housing contributes to the sluggish delivery of low-income housing, especially in South African urban areas.

Impediments to Low-income Housing Application

Starting from an understanding of the premise that transparency is a principle emphasised in various pieces of service delivery charts in South Africa, such as the Bantu Pele principles, it is recommended that the government should embrace transparency in low-income housing distribution. The processes of low-income housing are expected to incorporate the principle of transparency to ensure that citizens fully understand all the low-income housing delivery processes (Coelho et al., 2021). However, drawing from the views of the DS community residents, one can argue that low-income housing processes in South Africa seem to be covert as citizens are not aware of the processes involved in the distribution of low-income housing. All of the interviewed DS community residents maintained that there is a lack of transparency in low-income housing distribution processes. This is supported



by the fact that residents have no idea of where and how to follow up on their low-income housing applications. Commenting on the problem of transparency in low-income housing, Participant X2, a woman aged 45, maintained that:

Residents are not even aware that they are supposed to be engaged and have a say in low-income housing processes, as low-income housing beneficiaries what we only know is that we are supposed to apply for houses by submitting and signing the required documents, nothing else.

From the above extract, it can be observed that the lack of transparency continues to be a challenge that hinders the process of low-income housing in the DS community. The DS community leaders further highlighted the problem of transparency in the processes of low-income housing distribution. According to them, the low-income housing waiting list is controlled and manipulated by political leaders. In this regard, low-income houses are not duly allocated to deserving beneficiaries. Explaining the ambiguities in low-income housing allocation, participant X3, male aged 55, in the DS community insisted that:

There was a problematic case of a resident who was erroneously given a low-income house in DS community. It was found after some time that the house did not belong to the resident. Later, the house was reallocated to the right individual. Very astonishingly the resident was given another house and the case disappeared (Participant X3, male aged 55).

Based on the above claim, it can be argued that the low-income housing processes in the DS community are seemingly influenced by political contestations, especially between the Democratic Alliance (DA) and the ANC. While the ANC is the ruling political party in South Africa, in the Western Cape province it is the opposition party, the DA. The Western Cape is the only province under the political leadership of the DA in South Africa. The interaction between these two political parties in the distribution of low-income housing has been marked by contestations for political power more than coordination (Williams et al., 2022). From the above extract, it can be argued that the lack of transparency in low-income housing distribution contributes to fraud and corruption. In this regard, Williams et al. (2022) state that the processes of low-income housing in South Africa have been marked by inconsistencies and fraud mainly associated with abuse of political power and lack of transparency.

When the processes of low-income housing are not transparent to citizens, it becomes an opportunity for those in positions of power to manipulate the processes to suit their own interests (Odoyi & Riekkinen, 2022). Indeed, the low-income housing process in the DS community is seemingly controlled and influenced by those in positions of power, as the study revealed. This is supported by Odoyi and Riekkinen (2022) who found that power dynamics and factors such as a lack of political will to eradicate the housing backlog in



South Africa are the main challenges to urban housing in South Africa. The low-income housing strategies and policies are merely formulated by the elite and thereafter imposed on the DS community. This in turn results in poor implementation and failure of such low-income housing strategies and projects in the community, which is because the plight of the community regarding low-income housing is not incorporated in such policies and projects. One of the key elements of the self-help housing theory is the active involvement of citizens in low-income housing processes. However, the South African government adopts a top-down approach to housing and this undermines the fundamental role of the community in low-income housing.

Title Deeds and Ownership of Low-income Houses in the DS Community

A title deed is the most crucial aspect in the distribution of low-income housing because a title deed is legal confirmation of the ownership of the house. As such, in practical cases, low-income housing beneficiaries are expected to have a document confirming their ownership of the house (the title deed). In cases where “a financial institution holds a mortgage over the property, the title deed should rest with the financial institution” (HAD, 2020:38). However, the issuance of title deeds to housing beneficiaries seems to be a key challenge that delays the ownership of low-income houses in the DS community. While 70% of low-income housing beneficiaries that were interviewed in the DS community had received their title deeds, 30% of the residents were still waiting for their title deeds to declare them the legal owners of the houses.

It can therefore be argued that the process of low-income housing for such residents is not yet complete. From those residents who have received their title deeds, it emerged that some of them had to wait for more than two years before getting them. In this regard, Odoi and Riekkinen (2022:24) argue that the main challenge in the distribution of low-income housing is “perhaps in the issuing of title deeds, which is lagging, and which means that people’s ownership of a house cannot be established legally, leaving them unable to use it as an asset or as security for a loan”. Thus, the problem of low-income housing ownership and title deeds in the Western Cape Province and in the DS community, is associated with discrepancies in the Deeds Register offices. Participant X4, a male aged 53, commented:

The local and provincial government officials and their service providers do not prepare applications correctly. This creates unnecessary delays in the registration of title deeds because now the documents are consistently referred to municipalities for correction and this backwards and forwards between the Deeds office, the attorneys and the municipalities.

Based on the above extract, it can be argued that the problem of low-income housing ownership and title deeds seems to emanate from internal government processes enforced through legislation. The justification for these government processes would be



the elimination of possible fraud and corruption in the distribution of low-income housing. To the government, this is important to ensure that the title deeds are correctly assigned to the correct beneficiaries. According to Windapo et al (2021), unethical behaviour in the public sector has resulted in fraud and corruption in the distribution of low-income housing, particularly in South Africa. This undermines the supremacy of the South African Constitution and makes it difficult for poor citizens who do not have connections with public office bearers, such as the ward councillor, to benefit from low-income housing distribution processes. As Williams and Zacheous (2022) argue, this confirms that corruption is one of the key impediments to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South African townships such as the DS community in Cape Town. Thus, one can contend that ordinary citizens, who because of their economic status deserve to benefit from low-income housing, are not consistently considered in the housing allocation process.

Low-income Housing Distribution Trends in the Western Cape from 2000-2021

It is paramount that low-income housing delivery trends in the Western Cape Province during the years from 2000 to 2021 are explained. The niche of this research has been to narrate the low-income housing trajectory in South Africa using the DS community in the Western Cape Province. The premise is that the low-income housing challenge in the Western Cape seems to persist, as already indicated. The following table shows that between the years 2000-2021 the low-income housing problem in the Western Cape Province has been characterised by the mismatch between the housing demand and supply.

Table 2: Western Cape Province Low-income Housing Distribution Trends from 2000-2021

Year	Target	Actual Delivery	Housing Backlog
2000/2001	19, 524	17, 730	310,000
2002/2003	16, 647	12, 795	320, 000
2004/2005	16,854	14, 524	40, 000
2006/2007	18, 412	16,042	410,000
2008/2009	16,541	15,491	409, 827
2010/2011	18, 000	11, 141	426, 711
2012/2013	15, 567	13, 128	426, 710
2014/2015	10, 357	18, 817	500, 000
2016/2017	11 134	11 283	546, 254
2018/2019	9 467	7 828	554, 542
2020/2021	14 853	12 764	568, 932

Source: Researcher's construct based on the WCDHS annual reports (2000-2021)



Table 2 above shows that in the Western Cape Province, the low-income housing backlog has been gradually increasing from 2000 to 2021. This means that the Western Cape government has not been effective in the distribution of low-income housing to the urban poor. This study found that the sluggish distribution of low-income housing in South Africa, particularly in the Western Cape, is associated with various factors including the weak technical and financial capacity of both provincial and local governments to shelter the urban poor. Windapo et al. (2021) contend that the challenge of low-income housing in South Africa has been characterised by a lack of funds to speed up the implementation of housing programmes in urban townships. The government is struggling to deliver low-income housing to South African citizens, especially in urban peripheral areas such as the DS community. In Cape Town, this housing challenge has manifested in the rapid increase of informal settlements and active demonstrations for low-income housing, particularly in the Cape flats.

Recommendations

Empirical evidence demonstrates that there is ineffectiveness in the distribution of low-income housing as reflected by the proliferation of informal settlements in peripheral urban areas, particularly in the DS community. The following section provides pragmatic recommendations based on the findings of the study.

The Establishment of Effective Community Communication Platforms

Communication between different stakeholders in the distribution of low-income housing is imperative. The government must establish and clearly define the channels of communication for the effective distribution of low-income housing. This means that the government must consistently consult with ordinary citizens, such as Community Development Workers, and create awareness of existing communication systems for low-income housing distribution. There is also the need to strengthen effective communication between local political leaders particularly ward councillors and the community so that the low-income housing process is inclusive and well-coordinated.

Increasing Budgetary Support towards Low-income Housing delivery

The government should increase the budget for low-income housing provision. Insufficient financial support for low-income housing has emerged as a key challenge that contributes to the slow delivery of low-income housing in Cape Town's poor areas. Thus, a budget increase for low-income housing will capacitate the provincial government and local municipalities to improve the distribution of low-income housing in poor communities. The government should consider reallocating unused funds from various departments and institutions to invest in low-income housing distribution. Considering this, the Department of Human Settlements under the Ministry of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation in South Africa must ensure that the funds allocated for low-income housing are used in



compliance with the existing financial regulations such as the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA).

Formulating Robust Cost Recovery Methods for Low-income Housing

Cost recovery methods are crucial in enabling the government to generate more funds for progressive low-income housing delivery. Instead of focusing only on state-driven low-income housing, the government should consider supporting low-income groups to access housing by promoting pro-poor financial schemes. These financial schemes need to be organised considering the economic status of the low-income groups in South Africa. The rationale behind these pro-poor financial schemes should be to assist low-income households in paying for their houses. This is an essential measure for recovering the cost of the distribution of low-income housing and ensuring sustainable community development.

Conclusion

This study examined the major impediments to the effective distribution of low-income housing in South Africa, particularly in the DS community of Cape Town. In principle, the government plays a transformative role in ensuring the effective distribution of low-income housing to poor citizens. There is evidence of social change in the DS community, manifested in the distribution of low-income housing to ordinary citizens. Nevertheless, in South Africa, the low-income housing challenge continues to express itself in the weak financial capacity of the government to provide low-income housing to urban townships such as the DS community. Insufficient funding for low-income housing is seemingly a major challenge contributing to the ineffective distribution of low-income housing. Both the provincial government and local authorities are facing financial instability that culminates in poor service delivery in South African urban areas. There is a mismatch between housing demand and the delivery capacity of the government due to the exponentially growing population in most of South Africa's communities, including the DS community. Low-income housing does not happen in a vacuum but needs the availability of suitable land. The processes of land approval in South Africa are seemingly time-consuming and this contributes to the delay in the implementation of low-income housing programmes and projects as shown in this study. As one of the poor urban townships in the Western Cape Province, the DS community is characterised by the rapid increase of informal settlements with squalid living conditions. The sluggish provision of low-income housing in the DS community has contributed to land invasions by the urban poor, resulting in them unlawfully occupying land that was reserved for other developmental purposes.



References

- Ciobanu, M. (2022). Antonio Gramsci: The roots of Italian communism. *Political Studies Forum*, 3(1), 65-92. Editura Universității de Vest.
- Coelho, K., Mahadevia, D., & Williams, G. (2021). Outsiders in the periphery: Studies of the peripheralisation of low income housing in Ahmedabad and Chennai, India. *International Journal of Housing Policy*, 1-27.
- Dafeamekpor, C. A., Adjei-Kumi, T., Nani, G., & Kissi, E. (2022). Criteria for assessing self-help housing projects affordability: A critical literature review. *Journal of Real Estate Literature*, 1-31.
- Department of Human Settlements. (2019). *Western Cape Province annual report*. Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Government.
- Department of Human Settlements. (2020). *Western Cape Province annual report*. Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Government.
- Department of Human Settlements. (2021). *Western Cape Province annual report*. Cape Town: Western Cape Provincial Government.
- Ebekozien, A. (2021). Homeownership in a sub-Saharan Africa city: Exploring self-help via qualitative insight to achieve sustainable housing. In *Housing and SDGs in Urban Africa* (pp. 219-235). Springer.
- Housing Development Agency. (2020). *Western Cape: Informal settlements Status*. Johannesburg: Housing Development Agency.
- Jamnik, A. (2022). Rawls' Theory of Justice as fairness as foundation and challenge for local self-government. *Lex Localis-Journal of Local Self-Government*, 20(3).
- Leckie, S. (Ed.). (2021). *Returning home: Housing and property restitution rights for refugees and displaced persons*. BRILL.
- Marais, L., & de Lange, A. (2021). Anticipating and planning for mine closure in South Africa. *Futures*, 125, 102669.
- Mey, G. (2022). Qualitative methodology. In *International Handbook of Psychology Learning and Teaching* (pp. 1-26). Springer International Publishing.
- Meyer, E. L., & Overen, O. K. (2021). Towards a sustainable rural electrification scheme in South Africa: Analysis of the status quo. *Energy Reports*, 7, 4273-4287.
- Odoyi, E. J., & Riekkinen, K. (2022). Housing policy: An analysis of public housing policy strategies for low-income earners in Nigeria. *Sustainability*, 14(4), 22-58.
- Roestenburg, W. J. H., Strydom, H., & Fouché, C. B. (Eds.). (2021). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human services professions*. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Said, M. Y., & Nurhayati, Y., (2021). A review on Rawls Theory of Justice. *International Journal of Law, Environment, and Natural Resources*, 1(1), 29-36.
- Shackleton, C. M., & Gwedla, N. (2021). The legacy effects of colonial and apartheid imprints on urban greening in South Africa: Spaces, species, and suitability. *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*, 8, 579-813.
- Shambare, B., Simuja, C., & Olayinka, T.A. (2022). Educational technologies as pedagogical tools: Perspectives from teachers in rural marginalised secondary schools in South Africa. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)*,

18(1), 1-15.

- Statistics South Africa (Stats SA). (2021). *General Household Survey 2019*. Johannesburg: Department of Statistics South Africa. 1-174.
- Tamuka Moyo, H. T., Zuidegeest, M., & van Delden, H. (2021). Lessons learned from applying an integrated land use transport planning model to address issues of social and economic exclusion of marginalised groups: The case of Cape Town, South Africa. *Urban Science*, 5(1), 10.
- Vivek, R. (2022). Ethics in qualitative study in social work: Systematic review. *Social Work and Education*, 9(2), 298-304.
- Williams, G., Charlton, S., Coelho, K., Mahadevia, D., & Meth, P. (2022). (Im)mobility at the margins: low-income households' experiences of peripheral resettlement in India and South Africa. *Housing Studies*, 37(6), 910-931.
- Williams, J. J., & Zacheous, A. A. (2022). An evaluation of urbanisation challenges experienced in the low-income areas of Khayelitsha, Cape Town, South Africa.
- Windapo, A., Omopariola, E. D., Olugboyega, O., & Moghayedi, A. (2021). Use and performance of conventional and sustainable building technologies in low-income housing. *Sustainable Cities and Society*, 65, 102-606.

