University of the Western Cape

Faculty of Economic & Management Sciences

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“THE DESIGN OF INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS IN HIGHLY DIVERSE SOCIETIES: A CASE STUDY ON THE USAGE OF THE C3 NOTIFICATION SYSTEM IN LANGA, CAPE TOWN.”

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A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Public Administration in the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape

Supervisor: Prof. Chris Tapscott
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KEY WORDS

C3 notification system
Citizen involvement
City of Cape Town
Inclusion
Participatory systems
Policy design
Policy implementation
Service delivery
Social exclusion
System
ABSTRACT

In recent years the concept of public participation has been embraced by governments around the world to promote citizen involvement in decision making processes both to deepen local democracy and to ensure greater effectiveness in the delivery of public services. Implementing effective participatory systems, however, has proven to be especially challenging in highly diverse societies. Despite the best intentions of policy makers, the issue of exclusion, in particular, remains problematic as participatory systems frequently fail to address the concerns of poor communities who may not even be aware of their existence. Taking as a case study the C3 notification system introduced by the City of Cape Town to facilitate citizen reporting on faulty public services, this study examined the extent to which the design and implementation of a participatory model is of benefit to poor communities in the township of Langa.

Based on a qualitative methodology, which included a series of interviews with municipal officials and office bearers as well as residents of Langa, the research examined the extent to which the notification system is used by local communities and to what effect. Viewed through the lens of social exclusion theory, the findings point to the fact that the C3 system was not only based on a best-practice model imported from an advanced Western nation, but it was oriented to the needs of more affluent citizens and, as such, it failed to take into account the specific needs of poor households who frequently lack even basic services and hence have nothing to report on. As a consequence, what was intended as a mechanism for promoting greater citizen participation in service delivery processes has effectively excluded a significant proportion of the most poor and vulnerable.
DECLARATION

I, Carolyne Nafula Masafu declare that this study on ‘The Design of Inclusive Participatory Systems in Highly Diverse Societies: A Case Study on the Usage of the C3 Notification System in Langa, Cape Town’ is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university and that all the sources I have used have been acknowledged by complete references.

Full name .................................

Signed ..................................

Date ......................................
DEDICATION

In loving memory of my late father,

Capt. Francis Milimo Masafu
Several people have supported my career journey as a student in so many ways. Foremost, I express my gratitude to God for making all this possible for me.

My sincere gratitude goes to my supervisor Prof. Chris Tapscott for his continuous advice and support throughout my MPA study and research. I am grateful for his instrumental comments, patience and immense knowledge that helped me to finish this research.

Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank Ms. Pamela Tsolekile for her timely guidance, support and counsel during the data collection process and beyond.

I am indebted to my best friend and husband Dr. Ken W. Irari for his love, support and encouragement to me throughout my study career in my life. I am also grateful to my lovely daughter Corinne Waithera for being my motivation in finishing this paper. I am also grateful to my classmate and friend Ms. Scholastica Ntoyanto for being a wonderful study partner, and for making my life in Cape Town memorable.

Lastly, I am grateful to my family; my mother, Mrs Emeldah Masafu for her love and inspiration. My parents in law and siblings for their prayers and support.
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Figure 1: Sherry Arnstein’s ladder of citizen participation

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1. CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Across the globe, more and more governments are developing administrative systems which are designed to promote citizen participation both as a means to deepen democracy and to promote greater efficiency in the delivery of public services. According to the British government’s Department for International Development (DFID): “Participation in decision-making is central to enabling people to claim their rights. Effective participation requires that the voices and interests of the poor are taken into account when decisions are made and that poor people are empowered to hold policy makers accountable” (DFID 2000; 24). A similar view is expressed by the OECD which states that “Active participation means that citizens themselves take a role in the exchange on policy-making, for instance by proposing policy-options. At the same time, the responsibility for policy formulation and final decision rests with the government. Engaging citizens in policy-making is an advanced two-way relation between government and citizens based on the principle of partnership (OECD 2001:16).

Despite the seemingly self-evident virtues of citizen participation, however, a number of authors have pointed to the very real challenges which are faced in trying to implement participatory systems in a meaningful way (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Cleaver, 1999). These include the problems of elite capture and, concomitantly, the exclusion of those members of society who are poor, less educated, and more
vulnerable. The design of more inclusive systems of citizen participation is a challenge which faces governments all over the world but it is especially challenging in countries, such as South Africa, which have highly diverse populations segmented by race, ethnicity and social class. A failure to design effective participatory systems often leads to forms of social exclusion.

Fraser (2011:453) and Muthukrishna (2003:2) state that there are various types of exclusion that impact upon the poor in society. The poor may face social marginalization as a consequence of a lack of justice, the improper distribution of resources, a lack of recognition and under representation in public decision making processes. Their exclusion is also likely to be aggravated due to a lack of knowledge about the workings of the state on the part of those excluded. While Muthukrishna (2003:1) maintains that “the inclusion debate is all about who is in and who is out”, and ultimately exclusion relates to fact that the poor are not afforded the opportunity to participate in decision making processes and this ultimately leads to a denial of the basic human rights which are enshrined in constitutions throughout the democratic world (Humpage 2006:225; Murie and Musterd 2004:1441).

Exclusion also comes about when governments in heterogeneous societies fail to recognise that different communities have different social circumstances and different needs, and that a failure to take this into consideration can end up distorting the relationship between the state and the citizens (Mackintosh; 1998:77). The design of policy in such contexts is critical. As a consequence, it is argued that when formulating policy, governments need to take into consideration such factors as who
are likely to be the primary beneficiaries of an intervention, what will be its cost, and what challenges might be faced in its implementation (Schneider and Sydney 2009:104). What this calls for is careful consideration of the needs of different sectors of society and an assessment of the impact which a policy might have on their wellbeing (Hisschemoler and Hoppe; 1995:43).

Despite the fact that the incoming democratic government in South Africa introduced a plethora of laws and policies promoting citizen participation when into came into power (commencing with the 1996 Constitution), the participatory systems introduced since 1994 have yet to become meaningful for a large proportion of the population. This is due to a multiplicity of factors which include the fact that there are considerable disparities in the socio-economic status of citizens and in the environments in which they live, as well as in their capacity to make use of the participatory systems in place. In 2009 the Gini-coefficient of equality in South Africa was 0.679 making the country one of the most unequal in the world (The Presidency; 2009:24). Reflective of this inequality, according to the 2011 census, 13% of the population of Western Cape Province live in informal settlements (HDA 2013:12). The census data further reveals that 13% of the population of the City of Cape Town live in shacks while 7% live in backyard dwellings (HDA 2013:15). The access which people living in poor neighbourhoods have to municipal services is variable and often limited. However, even when they do receive services their ability to voice concerns about the quality of these services is often minimal. This is especially so in the case of backyard dwellers as they receive services indirectly
through their landlords who, in paying the bills, interact directly with the municipality.

In an attempt to improve its responsiveness to the needs of its citizens, in 2007 the City of Cape Town introduced what it called the C3 Notification System, which is designed to facilitate citizen reporting on service delivery problems throughout the municipality. Channelled through a central call centre, reported problems and complaints are directed to the relevant municipal department for action. The system is based on a model derived from the City of New York and it has won awards for its innovatory approach (City of Cape Town; 2010). However, despite evidence that the system has improved municipal response times in addressing service problems which have been reported, it is also evident that it only works well for certain sectors of society and in its design it serves to exclude a significant proportion of the city’s population (City of Cape Town; 2012). This is due to several factors which include the fact that the system is better suited to the needs of communities which have a full range of municipal services, that it is not easily accessible to the poor, and that it has been poorly publicised.

1.2. Problem Statement

Inclusive systems of public participation are crucial in enhancing good governance and democracy in all countries but especially in those with diverse populations. Equitable access to public services by all sectors of a society is seen as a key aspect of a democratic state and so too is their capacity to influence administrative decisions which might affect their welfare (World Bank; 1998). Linked to this is the ability of
citizens to hold the state accountable by both reporting on deficiencies in service delivery systems and in seeing swift and tangible responses to their concerns. The successes of such forms of citizen participation, however, depend on the extent to which the systems introduced are accessible to all and are easy to use. In contexts where there is considerable variance in the socio-economic characteristics of the population, the design of inclusive systems becomes complex and policy makers and administrators frequently fail to factor in the needs of all sectors of society and particularly the needs of the poor. As a consequence, systems which are intended to promote greater citizen participation and to enhance state responsiveness may end up excluding the most vulnerable.

The aim of this research was to investigate how the introduction of the C3 notification system has been implemented in a poor locality in the municipality of Cape Town, the extent to which it has been used by the residents of this area, and the extent to which they believe it has both empowered them and improved the quality of the public services which they receive. The theoretical framework which will guide the study will be derived from the literature on social exclusion. It will also make use of the extensive literature on citizen participation and, in particular, on the debates on the extent to which citizens make use of the ‘created spaces’ (Cornwall and Coelho; 2007) for participation which are set up by the state.

1.3. Research Objectives

Based on the above problem statement, the broad objectives of this thesis are as follows:
• To determine the extent to which the residents of Langa interact with the municipality about service delivery problems.

• To assess the channels they use to raise concerns, if at all.

• To identify the factors that influence the usage of the C3 notification system in the township.

• To investigate if there is a relationship between the design of the system and the extent to which citizens make use of it.

1.4. Significance of the Study

Over the course of the past two decades the South African government has placed considerable emphasis on the need for public participation and particularly at the level of the local state. However, it is acknowledged that the building of effective participatory systems has not been particularly effective and citizens have turned to social mobilisation and protest as alternative methods of engaging with the state (Mohanty et al, 2010). The significance of this study lies in the fact that it will examine the ways in which a system intended to enhance citizen participation and oversight has been designed and implemented in a metropolitan setting; in so doing, it will aim to examine the factors which appear to have impacted on the effectiveness of the system introduced.

1.5. Research Questions

The research for this thesis was directed by the following questions:
What was the objective behind the design of the C3 notification system in the municipality?

How effective is the system in addressing the service delivery concerns of poor communities such as those in Langa?

What factors influence the differential usage of the C3 system in different sectors of society?

Is there a significant relationship between the system design and levels of citizen participation?

How might a more inclusive notification system be designed and implemented by the City of Cape Town?

1.6. Methodology

The research conducted for this thesis was based on a case study approach using qualitative methods. In view of the limited scope of the research, a qualitative approach was considered the most suitable since it held the potential to provide insights into the opinions and behaviour of respondents in the case study area (Babbie and Mouton 2002:280). The township of Langa in metropolitan Cape Town was selected as the case study area for the investigation due to its relative ease of access to the researcher and the fact that it includes a significant number of poor households. Information was generated through individual interviews with respondents over the age of 18 residing in both the formal and informal sectors of the locality. Municipal officials from the City of Cape Town’s Participation Unit were also interviewed in order to understand the thinking behind the development of the C3 notification
system. The interview data was augmented with quantitative data from the African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (ACCEDE) at the University of the Western Cape.

1.7. Thesis Outline

The thesis is organised into five chapters as follows:

Chapter one

This chapter serves to introduce the thesis topic. It provides a background to the study, including the topic to be investigated and the key research questions to be addressed. It also discusses the theoretical framework which will be adopted together with the research methodology to be applied.

Chapter two

This chapter provides a review of the literature on public participation and social exclusion and outlines the theoretical framework which will guide the study.

Chapter three

This chapter provides a background to existing systems of citizen participation Cape Town, and to the policy process that led to the design of the C3 notification system.
Chapter four

This chapter provides an overview of the methodology to be followed in the research and a background to the case study area. It also presents the findings qualitative research conducted in Langa.

Chapter five

This chapter provides a summary of the research findings and reflects on the extent to which the C3 notification system is succeeding in addressing the needs of all citizens in Cape Town. It also reflects on the extent to which the findings confirm or challenge the literature on participation and social exclusion. It will also make some recommendations as to how the system might be strengthened in future.

The chapter which follows provides an overview of the literature on public participation and, in particular, on the literature of social exclusion. It also looks at the ways in which systems designed to promote citizen participation may, in practice, end up excluding the poor and vulnerable from engagement in decision making processes.
2. CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

According to the conventions of good governance, citizens are key stakeholders in issues regarding public service, especially since they are the recipients of the services delivered to them by government (OECD; 1997). The promotion of citizen participation is generally seen to have three key objectives. The first is to deepen democracy, particularly at the local level, by moving beyond representative democracy (exercised through formal electoral processes) to more direct forms of engagement with the state aimed at influencing policy making processes (Roberts; 2004). The second is to ensure that the services delivered matched the needs and expectations of local communities, and the third is to enable citizens to exercise oversight over the activities of government. The achievement of these objectives is challenging to all governments but, as indicated, they are particularly challenging in countries which have very diverse and unequal societies. The chapter which follows provides an overview of the literature on citizen participation and the process of social exclusion which may result from poorly designed and implemented participatory systems.

2.2. Citizen Participation

According to Agree (2000:9) “participation is the process whereby stakeholders exercise influence over public policy decisions and share control over resources and institutions that affect their lives thereby providing a check on the power of their
government”. Bishop and Davis (2002:14) similarly assert that “participation is the expectation that citizens have a voice in policy choices.” In that respect, participation is seen to represent the idea of a sharing of influence between the ‘governed’ and the ‘government’.

Swanepoel and de Beer (2012: xviii) also give a view that participation can also be “something given to the poor by authority…working for the alleviation of poverty”.

Effective citizen participation is seen as crucial in enhancing the governance of any state and, according to Haus and Heinelt (2005), this can only be achieved if ordinary citizens are involved in decision making processes together with state officials. Community participation refers to the ways in which people become involved in issues which affect their welfare and especially in relation to their oversight over the performance of their government. Effective community participation also helps to foster trust between citizens and their governments and other social and political groupings in the country (Agere 2000:10).

Reflective of this approach, in the early 1900s Brazil introduced a system of participatory budgeting (PB). In this system citizens are involved in the budget process at local level and are provided an opportunity to present their opinions to their municipal leaders on an annual basis. This practice has demonstrated that the active involvement of citizens can lead to an inclusive process and the effective prioritizing of municipal resources. According to Melgar (2014:129) “Through the PB, grassroots communities began increasingly to exercise their ‘voice’ in budget allocation, in the process shifting public goods to some of the city’s poorest communities”. The
participatory budgeting system illustrates how direct involvement by citizens in government matters can lead to more effective service delivery and to greater social inclusion.

According to Roberts, participation may take two forms: ‘direct citizen participation and indirect citizen participation.’ Direct citizen participation is described as “the fulfilment of one’s legal rights and duties as specified in the constitution or alternatively active involvement in substantive issues of government and community.” On the other hand, indirect citizen participation can be referred to as a form of “representative democracy” characterised by participation in elections (Roberts, 2004:315). In a further conceptualisation of the forms of citizen engagement with the state, Cornwall distinguishes between what she terms the “invited” and “created” spaces for public participation (Cornwall; 2002). The former relate to the structures and systems established by the state to promote citizen participation (these might include local councils, citizen forums, ward committees etc.), whilst the latter refers to the types of organisation and engagement which are created by citizens themselves (these would include social movements, civil society organisations, and various forms of protest).

2.3. Levels of citizen participation

Citizen participation may take place at different levels and with different effects. This is seen in what Arnstein has conceptualised as a “citizen participation ladder”, which identifies eight levels of participation which reflect the status quo in society and the degrees of influence that citizens are able to exercise over public affairs (Arnstein
Arnstein argues that his ladder of citizen participation illustrates the struggle for power between the ‘cans’ and ‘can nots’ and their respective ability to respond to relevant policy makers or government agencies. It also refers to the extent to which different segments of society are able to ensure that government policies work to their best interests (Titter and McCallum 2006: 158; Maer 2001: 709). In the case of South Africa, the process of public participation is based on a ‘top-down’ approach. Decisions and policies are made and implemented with very little input from the common citizens (Theron, Ceaser and Davids 2007:3; De Beer 1996:67). Yet it is these very citizens who should be involved in addressing issues of social exclusion. This is especially because they understand the underlying dynamics of the local community much better than the outsourced professionals. It is for this reason, Moyonjo and Theron argue, that governments should embrace a “bottom-up” method of public participation which will empower citizens (Moyonjo and Theron 2002:504).

The figure below presents Arnstein’s ladder and what he perceives to be the different levels of citizen participation. The first two levels in the ladder are described as non-participatory and include the manipulation of citizens and their placation through therapy. The next three levels, which are described as tokenistic forms of participation, involve informing, consulting, and placating citizens. The top three levels of participation which are characterised as citizen power involve partnerships, delegated power and citizen control. It is worth noting that this model of involvement places a significant emphasis on the need for citizen power in public participation.
Arnstein; 1969

Although this model has been widely discussed in the literature, Tritter and McCallum (2006: 158) maintain that it fails to acknowledge that even where they are receptive to the idea of citizen power, policy makers seldom understand or appreciate the difficulties that citizen’s face in using the invented modes of participation which are presented to them. Michaels and Graaf (2010:710) further maintain that the model also simplifies the relation between citizen’s and the state and the fact that this is generally a contentious one and that, in most democratic states, there is a constant
power struggle over decision making processes. As a consequence, notwithstanding
the seemingly obvious and positive dimensions of participation, the policies and
practices in place to promote citizen engagement do not necessarily lead to greater
inclusion. Coelho (2007:33) for instance points out that despite the existence of
participatory systems, not all citizens might be in a position to benefit from them and
many may, in fact, be excluded.

It is for this reason that Moyonjo and Theron (2002:502) suggest that a ‘people-
centered approach’ should be used in the area of citizen engagement. This is through
embracing the significance of nationality and social equality. Here, the people are
involved in working with their municipalities and in this way they are able to be part
of the advancement of the whole state, thus minimizing exclusion.

2.4. Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a phenomenon which is influenced by a variety of factors and,
consequently, it can be defined in many ways. Moyonjo and Theron (2002:492), for
instance, define social exclusion as the drawbacks that most citizens in under
developed societies face. This also means that because they lack ‘basic human needs’
they are not motivated to participate in the public affairs which affect them.
Swanepoel and de Beer (2012: 6) also state that exclusion will mostly affect the very
poor in society and those with low educational backgrounds and with “limited access
to information, services, opportunities and policy makers”. This, consequently, leads
to the segregation and isolation of these poor people due to the fact that they do not
have an impact on the policy and financial affairs of society, and in this way they become vulnerable to societal exploitation.

Fraser (2011:453) and Muthukrishna (2003:2) maintain that there are several ways in which the poor may be excluded from effective participation in public affairs. This may be due to their marginalised status in society (which stems from various forms of social and political inequality) and to elite capture, but it may also be due to the failure of the state to ensure that their constitutionally enshrined rights to participate are respected and supported (Humpage 2006:225; Murie and Musterd 2004:1441).

According to the British Department for International Development (DFID) social exclusion causes poverty and gets in the way of poverty reduction. It hurts excluded groups materially “making them poor in terms of income, health or education by causing them to be denied access to resources, markets and public services. It can also hurt them emotionally, by shutting them out of the life of their community. Socially excluded people are often denied the opportunities available to others to increase their income and escape from poverty by their own efforts. So, even though the economy may grow and general income levels may rise, excluded people are likely to be left behind, and make up an increasing proportion of those who remain in poverty.” (DFID, 2005:5).

Whilst the extent to which the poor and marginalised citizens are able to participate is often reflective of power relations in society, it is also certain that it is influenced by the way in which policies are formulated. Thus, although, the causes of exclusion are multiple and contextually determined, DFID assert that “People are excluded by
institutions and behaviour that reflect, enforce and reproduce prevailing social attitudes and values, particularly those of powerful groups in society. Sometimes this is open and deliberate, such as when state institutions deliberately discriminate in their laws, policies or programmes. More often, institutions perpetuate exclusion unofficially” (DFID, 2005:3).

According to Beale and Piron (2005:9) “Social exclusion is a process and a state that prevents individuals or groups from full participation in social, economic and political life and from asserting their rights. It derives from exclusionary relationships based on power”. These three spheres of development are represented in Figure 2 below. Beale and Piron also argue that “Social exclusion from full participation in economic life is shown in the top circle” whilst “The left bottom circle represents those aspects that denote exclusion from full participation in social life. They include exclusion from access to infrastructure and services, social security and protection, public safety and social cohesion”. The circle on the right hand “depicts exclusion from political life through restricted access to organisation, decision-making and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship” whilst “the box in the middle depicts the axes of exclusion, the dynamics of which operate through social relations and social, political and economic institutions based on power” (Beall and Piron; 2005:9). For the purposes of this investigation, the focus is on the first of these three spheres of social exclusion, namely that related to exclusion from social participation.
2.5. The Impact of Policy Design on Social Exclusion

Whilst there are multiple forces within a society which contribute to processes of social exclusion, it is also certain that governments themselves can either contribute to or minimise the marginalisation of poor and vulnerable communities in the policies which they formulate. The design and implementation of public policy presents
challenges to governments the world over due to the varying interests of different segments of society (Birkland, 2010; Kraft and Furlong; 2010). Governments attempt to meet this challenge through consultation processes aimed at eliciting the views of the population as a whole. However, the design of policies that address the needs of all citizens is particularly challenging in highly unequal societies where the needs of more affluent communities differ extensively from those of the poor. This problem is aggravated by differences in levels of education, since the voices of the more educated members of society are likely to be those that are taken into consideration by policy makers in the design of new policies, leading to the exclusion of less articulate members of society. In order to overcome this state of affairs, it is necessary for governments to identify the challenges facing different strata in society and to formulate policies specifically to address their needs. In terms of the precepts of participation theory, a government can only begin to address the needs of all sectors of society, and particularly those of the poor, if it consults with them about the types of policy interventions which would best serve their needs.

Participatory systems, as indicated, may assume multiple forms including input into policy formulation processes as well as mechanisms permitting citizens to express their opinions about the quantity and quality of public services which are delivered to them. The latter are typified by call centres which allow citizens to channel their complaints to government officials. This involves what has been term ‘contacting’ which Luerhmann (2003:847) defines as “An institutionalised form of citizen participation with established rules and procedures as well as predictable patterns of behaviour.” In addition to facilitating public participation, such ‘contacting
institutions’ also provide feedback to the government and alert public officials to the concerns of local communities (Luerhmann 2003:847). Concurring with this view, Warwick and Ortolano (2007:238) state that “a secondary benefit of the complaints system is that it enhances government legitimacy by showing citizens that the government is focused on responding to the concerns of its citizens”. It is this context that the idea of E-Government has come to the fore, and amongst its key objectives is the enhancement of communication between the state and its citizens.

2.6. Participation through Information Technology

During the course of the past two decades advances in electronic technology have led to changes in the way in which governments conduct their business. The advent of Information Technology (IT) has led to managerial reforms and innovation in the design of administrative systems (Trotta et al.: 2011:25). IT systems act as a link between government and citizens and they are intended to speed up communication and, thereby, to improve service delivery. IT systems are also believed to lead to better decision making in the public sector and to greater accountability on the part of the state, since citizens are more easily able to monitor its performance (Trotta et al.: 2011:25). However, as with other aspects of citizen participation, the design of these systems is of critical importance if they are not to exclude those people who, for various reasons, are unable to access or make use of them.

Trotta, Scarozza, Hinna and Gnan (2011:25) state that managerial reforms have advanced with the advent of information systems. This has in turn given information systems a new role in the area of public administration, serving as a link between the
government and the citizens. The significance of this is that it facilitates service delivery to the public and enhances public participation in society. In addition, the use of IT systems in the public sector leads to more informed decision making and, optimally, to better accountability.

Notwithstanding the potential advantages of ICT as a mechanism to involve citizens in decision making, a number of studies have discussed the problems associated with what has come to be known as the digital divide “which refers to the divide between those with access and those without access to these digital technologies” (Van Audenhove and Fourie; 2014:145). The design and implementation of ICT systems intended to promote citizen participation, as Trotta, Scarozza, Hinna and Gnan, (2011:25) point out, can inadvertently, end up working to the benefit most influential and articulate members of society rather than the poor and less powerful. In this context Avgerou maintains, the transformative dimensions of ICT systems can become disruptive and can serve to entrench existing inequalities in society (Avgerou; 2010:6). This implies that states need to exercise considerable caution in the way in which they introduce new systems into the public domain if they are not to serve as another form of social exclusion (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010:399).

2.7. System design and citizen participation

A number of authors have commented that where participatory systems are “user friendly”, conceived in terms of accessibility, affordability, ease of use, convenience and effectiveness, citizens are like to embrace them and engage with the state in meaningful ways (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010). Conversely, Roberts
(2004:317) argues, a failure to design effect mechanisms to consult with and act upon the needs of different segments of society is likely to lead to a demotivated and alienated citizenry, who will resort to their own ‘created spaces’ of participation to engage with the state. In many societies these alternative forms of engagement with the state take the form of protest action and, sometimes, violence.

The design of a participatory system is thus crucial in determining levels of citizen participation. In order to design systems which minimise social exclusion in highly diverse societies, it is evident that governments need to take into account three different factors, namely the types of diversity, the mechanisms of participation to be used, and the extent to which these promote inclusion rather than exclusion. This is also necessary to ensure that the potential benefits of citizen participation, so widely acclaimed by development agencies, may be realised. In that regard, Michaels and Graaf maintain that participation has several functions in building a democracy:

“...The first is the educative function: citizens may increase their civic skills and become more competent if they participate in public decision-making. A second function of participatory democracy is the integrative function. Participation contributes to citizens’ feeling of being are public citizens, part of their community. As a consequence, they may also feel more responsible personally for public decisions. And thirdly, participatory democracy contributes to a greater legitimacy of decisions (Michaels and Graaf 2010:480).
2.8. Conclusion

This chapter provided a brief overview of the literature on citizen participation and social exclusion. It drew attention to the problems faced by policy makers in designing inclusive and effective participatory systems in societies which are highly diverse and unequal and the risks of exclusion which might rise as a consequence of this. The chapter which follows looks at the broad national framework for citizen participation which exists in South Africa and in the City of Cape Town in particular. It also looks at the C3 notification system which was designed to improve citizen participation across the municipality.
3. CHAPTER THREE: CITY OF CAPE TOWN PARTICIPATORY SYSTEMS

3.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at participatory policies in South Africa following the advent of democracy in 1994 and, in particular, at the participatory systems in place in the City of Cape Town. A particular focus of the discussion will be on the C3 notification system and on the extent to which it has contributed to development of a more inclusive City.

3.2. Citizen Participation and inclusion in South Africa

In an attempt to overcome the legacy of Apartheid which served to exclude large segments of the population from even basic public services, the incoming democratic government has placed considerable emphasis on the need for public participation in decision making processes. Commencing with 1996 Constitution, this commitment is evident in various public government policies such as the 1997 White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery which speaks of the need to listen to the concerns of citizens and to take “account of them in making decisions about what services should be provided” (DPSA; 1997: section 1.3.3). It is also evident in the 2008 Social Housing Act which asserts that the government must “consult with interested individuals, communities and financial institutions in all phases of social housing development” (Department of Housing; 2008: section 4.4.4.).

Local government, in particular, has been assigned a key role in promoting citizen participation. Thus the 1998 White Paper on Local Government stressed the need for
“inclusive approaches to fostering community participation, including strategies aimed at removing obstacles to, and actively encouraging, the participation of marginalized groups in the local community” (DCD; 1998: section 1.3). The Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000 similarly asserts that “A municipality must develop a culture of municipal governance that complements formal representative government with a system of participatory governance” (DCD, 2000: section 16.1).

Public participation is of specific importance to a country like South Africa because of the fact that it is a young democracy which has committed itself to promoting citizen participation in the governance processes. In addition, public participation has been used as a tool for defining and measuring the levels of democracy in the country and it should therefore be understood from the perspective of citizenship and democracy (Maphunye and Mafunisa 2008:463). According to these authors “public participation in South Africa essentially involves several steps such as negotiation, conflict resolution, peace building, reconciliation and debate among others which have become fashionable terms in the South African public participation discourse” (Maphunye and Mafunisa 2008:465).

In pursuit of the objective of public participation, provision is made in legislation (most notably the Local Government Municipal Structures Act of 2000 and the Local Government Municipal Systems Act of 2000) for the establishment of structures and systems intended to facilitate elicit citizens input in official decision making. Over
and above participation in local government elections and by-elections, citizens are encouraged to participate through sub-councils (in the case of metropolitan local government), through ward committees, and through the Integrated Development Planning (IDP) process. In some of the larger and more established municipalities, citizens are also invited to express their views through citizen satisfaction surveys and through complaints centres. According to Western Cape Provincial government’s policy on public participation, the principles which should guide engagement with citizens are as follows:

- Public participation is based on the belief that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public participation includes the promise that the public's contribution will promote sustainable decisions by recognizing and communicating the needs and interests of all participants, including decision makers.
- Public participation seeks out and facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Public participation seeks input from participants in designing how they participate.
- Public participation provides participants with the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.
- Public participation communicates to participants how their input affected the decision (Provincial Government of the Western Cape; 2010: section 2.3).
Despite an enabling framework for public engagement, however, it is evident from a number of surveys that the participatory systems established, the so-called ‘invited spaces’ for participation, are not functioning as intended and ordinary citizens are increasingly turning to their own ‘created spaces’ in their interaction with the state. This latter tendency is evident in the extensive protests which have become a feature of daily life in most municipalities. According to police statistics, a total of 12 399 crowd-related (an average of 34 incidents a day) occurred between April 2012 and March 2013 (Lancaster, 2014). What these protests demonstrate is the fact that the mechanisms in place to promote participation are not functioning as intended and, if anything, they appear to be leading to social exclusion and public anger. Whilst there are multiple factors which lead to protest action, it is evident that some of it may be attributed to the design and implementation of participatory systems which take little account of the diverse needs of the South African population. The needs of citizens vary from community to community but they are mostly linked to socio-economic status. What this calls for is participatory systems which can accommodate the needs of different segments of society and in that regard Govender and Reddy assert:

“South Africa has a comprehensive basis for adopting participation in local governance. However, there are particular complexities related to different stakeholders. Local government institutions in particular must not make the assumption that participation praxis is a one-size-fits-all approach” (Govender and Reddy, 2011; 73).
3.3. City of Cape Town’s public engagement policy

Following the framework set out in national legislation, the City of Cape Town has in place a number of measures to promote citizen participation. These include municipal sub-councils, ward committees and the integrated development planning process. In terms of the Municipal Systems Act, the formulation of IDPs is a process which must take place shortly after a new council has assumed office. According to the Act a municipality must “encourage, and create conditions for, the local community to participate in the affairs of the municipality, including in the preparation, implementation and review of its integrated development plan” (DCD, 2000: section 16.1). In that regard, the current IDP (covering the years 2012 to 2017) sets as one of its key performance areas, the establishment of what is termed an inclusive city. According to the IDP:

“(W)hat is key to an inclusive city is a government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens. That is, people must be able to know that their concerns are dealt with seriously and efficiently by the government. But it must go beyond that. Governments must have the tools in place to recognise weaknesses and address them in a systematic manner to improve overall performance. The City has the tools in place to address these needs over the next 5 years” (City of Cape Town, 2012:13).

The implementation of an IDP and the approved process of citizen involvement can be affected by several factors which in the case of the Western Cape Province include: the large size of the municipality which distances the municipal areas from
the citizens, the lack of tangible benefits of citizen participation which discourages participation in public affairs, the diversity of the population, the lack of a ‘culture’ of citizen participation, the perceived costs of public participation, and the limited involvement of disadvantaged groups such as the very poor and the homeless citizens (Maphunye and Mafunisa 2008:467).

The City has also established a Public Participation Unit to facilitate engagement with the public. According to the City’s web site the “Public Participation Unit (PPU) assists and supports political structures, departments, directorates and consultants within the City during each public participation process, and maintains a database of stakeholders. The PPU also acts as a link between line departments and sub-councils in planning and implementing administrative public engagement processes; as well as playing an important role in training stakeholders in how to hold successful public hearings; and co-ordinates and monitors public participation processes” (City of Cape Town, nd, accessed on 15 September 2015).

The activities of the Public Participation Unit are supported by a Public Engagement Policy which asserts that “Everyone will have the opportunity to influence how the Council functions through effective and meaningful public engagement processes, leading to more relevant policies in the governance of the City” The principles of the Engagement Policy affirm that the “Public engagement processes should be flexible, appropriate, informed, inclusive and responsive” (City of Cape Town, 2009: sections 2 & 3). However, it is evident that the Engagement Policy refers largely to the functioning and oversight of formal participatory structures, namely the sub-councils
and ward forums – in other words, it deals with the structured ‘invited spaces’ which have been shown not to deal with the day to concerns of poor people (Naidu, 2008).

It is also evident that the Public Participation Unit deals with matters which are unlikely to concern poor households. Thus, an annual report on the Unit activities in 2012 states that its engagement with public during the year included those on “Amendments to the Credit Control and Debt Collection By-law; Cape Town Spatial Development Framework; Cape Town Zoning Scheme; Early Childhood Development Policy; MyCiTi Routes and Services for Camps Bay, Sea Point and City Bowl; (and) Proposed street renaming” (City of Cape Town; 2012).

A further system established to better promote communication between the municipality and its citizens and to further the idea of an inclusive city, was the launch in 2007 of the C3 notification system. According to the City’s IPD document:

“Our C3 notification system allows for a central point where all complaints can be logged and then channelled to the relevant departments. Furthermore, this system allows for those complaints to be monitored until completion, maximising efficiency and accountability. The internal Service Management Programme (SMP) allows for their regulation and monitoring and ensures that effective systems are put in place within departments to avoid further occurrences of problems as much as possible” (City of Cape Town, 2012:13).

The C3 system, which conforms to the idea of a ‘contacting institution’, is in effective a sophisticated mechanism through which citizens can notify the municipality about
problems relating to the public services, be these faulty street lights, blocked drains or potholes on public roads. By phoning a central call office, complaints are logged in a central registry and then are channelled to the appropriate municipal department and to the unit charged with responsibility for services in a particular part of the City. According to a municipal report, “The system allows residents, politicians and officials to register service delivery faults online, where they are routed to the correct departments for action and tracked to resolution. At any time, a registered user can log on to the system and track the progress of their request” (City of Cape Town, 2014. The work flow process of the C3 system is set out in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 3: The C3 notification system-process**
The C3 system is seen by the City as a best practice and in 2010 it received an award from the Africa SAP User Group for Innovation in the Public Sector (City of Cape Town, 2010). In addition to a focus on speedy communication, it evident that the system is intended to improve cost efficiency, as is evident from the following comment from a municipal document:

“The key objective of the service and corporate works management process is to drive service delivery by creating a better administration that is results-orientated and provides value-for-money services” (City of Cape Town; 2014:2).

In focusing on greater cost efficiency as a means to increase the quantity and quality of services delivered, the C3 system is aligned to the objectives of the Batho Pele White Paper which amongst its eight principles of service delivery calls for consultation, access, information, openness and transparency, redress and value for money. According to the White Paper:

“We must live within the resources the nation can afford. That is why a key part of Batho Pele is a relentless search for increased efficiency and the reduction of wastage within the Public Service. Every Rand wasted in cumbersome, inefficient processes, in delays and duplication, is money which could be invested in improving services. The aim is to progressively raise standards of service, especially for those whose access to public services has been limited in the past and whose needs are greatest” (DPSA, 1997, p.2).
However, despite its apparent efficiency in recording and tracking the complaints logged by citizens and in address the concerns raised, Tapscott has argued that the system is not attuned to the needs of the poor. He maintains that:

“Many of those living in the informal settlements are immigrants from the rural areas who are young, poorly educated and unemployed. As recent surveys in a number of informal settlements in Cape Town have shown, the most immediate need of these people, not unexpectedly, is for shelter, typically in the form of wooden or corrugated iron shacks. This need is followed by the imperative to find employment and income and, finally, in a crime ridden environment, a desire for personal safety” (Tapscott, 2012:8).

Rather than focusing on these needs, he argues, the C3 system is oriented to the needs of more affluent citizens. Citing municipal data he maintains that the complaints lodged relate predominantly to electricity power cuts, blocked sewers, faulty street lights and leaking water meters. These concerns, he asserts are:

“typically those of the wealthier segments of the city, since the poor generally lack such amenities in the first instance… In other words, by its very nature, the notification system deals with the maintenance of already existing rather than new infrastructure, which is a primary need of the poor. Reflective of the limited degree to which poor households make use of the C3 system, during a five day period of heavy rain in June 2011, some 1 222 cases of blocked sewers were reported in the City as a whole, yet, surprisingly, just 26 of these cases were from
informal settlements which have notoriously poor sewerage and routinely suffer inundation in the winter months” (Tapscott; 2012: 9).

This perspective is confirmed in a community website in Mowbray, which is a middle-class suburb in Cape Town, which states that the C3 system is useful for reporting such problems as broken litter bins, the condition of parks, broken or missing traffic signs, fading street lines, potholes, trees growing into electricity lines, and weeds growing in the gutters (Lanham, nd).

Apart from the fact that the C3 system does not address their most immediate and pressing need, Tapscott states that a major reason why poor residents do not make use of the notification system, is due to the fact that they have never heard of it. “Although quantitative data is not available”, he maintains, “informal evidence suggests that a significant proportion of the poorer population have never heard of the system and hence have never availed themselves of the opportunity which it presents to both improve their personal circumstances as well as that of their community” (Tapscott, 2012:8). He attributes to the fact that there has not been sufficient marketing of the system in order to reach “the levels of awareness necessary for its extensive use in poor communities. There is also no evidence that the system was piloted in these communities and it is evidently not as user friendly and accessible as its designers might have anticipated” (ibid).

Tapscott attributes the shortcomings of the C3 system to the fact that designers had in mind the needs of what he call “a normative citizen”, that is a middle class citizen who owns a house which is full serviced, who has access to telephones or the internet,
and who has time to respond to service delivery problems in the surrounding community. “(I)n their intent to promote a more homogenous citizenry”, he maintains “such systems can serve to exclude those most in need of assistance. This is illustrated in the case of the C3 notification system which has proven to be largely irrelevant for a substantial proportion of the residents of Cape Town. This … was due to problems of design, which meant that it predominantly addresses the concerns of middle class households in well-resourced areas of the city” (Tapscott, 2012:12).

Tapscott further maintains that as poor communities generally display low levels of trust in the municipality, many have little faith in the fact that the complaints which they report will swiftly address. This lack of trust is evident in the City’s own “Community Satisfaction Survey 2013/14”, which reveals that trust levels in Mitchell’s Plain, Khayelitsha and Klipfontein, the poorest of the eight districts surveyed, were lower than in the more affluent parts of municipality (City of Cape Town; 2014:11).

3.4. Conclusion

It is evident from the discussion in this chapter that the South African government has set up the legislative and policy framework necessary to facilitate citizens’ engagement with the state. It is also evident that the City Cape Town has followed this framework in setting up its own participatory systems including the IDP process, sub-councils and ward committees. It has also established the C3 notification system which is intended to ensure better communication between the public and the City and to ensure that their concerns about service delivery are swiftly addressed. The
discussion also focused on the way in which the design of a participatory system can end up excluding segments of the population when it fails to take into consideration their specific needs, in terms of both of communication and in addressing their most pressing problems. The chapter which follows looks at the extent to which the C3 system is used by the residents of Langa, a township housing many poor households, and the extent to which it addresses their needs for improved service delivery.
4. CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter which follows presents the findings of the empirical research conducted in Langa in order to determine the extent to which poor households in the township are aware of the C3 notification system and the extent to which they make use of it as a platform for citizen participation. The chapter begins with a discussion of the research methodology employed in this thesis, including a description of the research design, the scope of the study, the data collection process and analysis that was used in the study.

4.2. Research Design

The research methodology adopted for this thesis was based on a case study using qualitative methods. In view of the limited scope of the research (conditioned by time and resources), a qualitative case study approach was considered the most suitable since it was felt that, notwithstanding the fact that the data generated could not be statistically verified or broadly generalised, it could provide insights into the opinions and behaviour of respondents in a limited locality (Babbie and Mouton 2002:280).

4.3. Scope of the study

The case study area selected for this research, as indicated, was the township of Langa in metropolitan Cape Town. Langa is one of the oldest townships in the City and it has a population of both low class and middle class in terms of the economic divide. The specific areas covered included Harlem Street, Washington Street and
Rubusana Street, which includes low cost housing with significant numbers of backyard dwellers. Interviews in the area were conducted with respondents over the age of 18 residing in both the formal and informal sectors of the area.

4.4. Data Capture

Data in the case study area were gathered through a series of face to face interviews using a structured interview schedule to ensure uniformity in the questions posed to respondents (see Appendix 1). The study used a snowball sampling method wherein respondents were selected on the basis of referrals by other respondents. According to Babbie and Mouton (2002:167) this is an effective method of purposely selecting appropriate respondents in non-probability sampling. It is cost effective and assists the researcher in identifying respondents according to particular categories (for example, those living in backyard dwellings, those who have lived in an area for an extended period of time etc.). The interactive nature of the approach allows for follow up questions and deeper probing of issues which arise in the course of the interview (Babbie and Mouton; 2002:289). The interview sessions were recorded with an audio recorder and written notes will also be taken.

Municipal officials from the city of Cape Town were also interviewed in order to understand the thinking behind the development of the C3 notification system. A total of 15 people were interviewed during the course of the investigation and these included a mix of people living in formal housing as well as backyard dwellers.
4.5. Data analysis

The fieldwork data generated was analysed as follows:

• The qualitative data generated from interviews in the field was transcribed and interviews which were conducted in the vernacular (predominantly isiXhosa) were translated into English.

• Recurring themes identified in the responses were grouped thematically.

• Where applicable a process of triangulation was applied, in order to assess the general validity of the information generated.

4.6. Ethics Statement

In conducting the fieldwork, the researcher adhered to the following ethical rules:

• Respondents were informed that their participation in the research study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw at any stage and for whatever reason.

• The purpose of the research was explained to participants in advance and their permission to make use of information gathered from them was secured in writing.

• Respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their and that fact that the identities and interests of all participants would be protected.
• An information sheet, which will include the researcher’s name and contact details and institutional affiliation, together will a brief overview of the research, was presented to each participant.

4.7. Langa

The township of Langa has a mix of formal and informal housing the latter of which only have access to rudimentary facilities such as pit latrines and communal standpipes. It also, as indicated, has a large number of people living in the backyards of formal low cost houses. A survey conducted by the African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (Accede) at the University of the Western Cape, reveals that the population of the area is predominantly poor with 44% reporting household incomes of R2000 a month or less and 66% less than R6000 a month (Thompson et al.; 2014:2). The fieldwork conducted in Langa aimed to establish the extent to which one particular poor community in Cape Town communicates with the municipality in order to express their dissatisfaction with the public services provided to them. The section which follows presents the findings of this investigation.

4.8. The Extent of Communication with the Municipality and Channels Used

All of the respondents interviewed in the survey reported that they had, from time to time, contacted the municipality to complain about service delivery in the area, indicating a level of civic awareness and an interest in influencing the way in which the City is administered. Contrary to Tapscott’s view on the matter, respondents did report on a range of service delivery problems. The complaints lodged included blocked drains, leaking roofs, rubbish collection, low water pressure, the need for
house repairs, blocked toilets, broken rubbish bin, sewerage and drainage problems, and water cuts.

4.9. Knowledge and Use of the C3 System

The study specifically sought to establish the knowledge and usage levels of the C3 notification system among the residents of Langa. The survey found that just under two thirds of those interviewed had never heard of the notification system. From this it is evident that in the seven years since the launch of the system the municipality has failed to effectively communicate information about the system and its possible benefits to the residents of Langa.

Those who knew of the system stated that they had heard about it either from a friend or had been told about it in the municipal offices. Significantly, however, not all respondents who knew about the C3 system reported actually making use of it. Amongst the reasons cited for not using the system was the fact that they believed that it would not be able to address their concerns or alternatively it was because they believed it would be a very slow process. Others felt that it would be expensive to you as they would have to spend money on a phone call to the municipality. Again, this suggests a lack of knowledge about the system and information gained through heresy. It is also reflective of a lack of trust in the invited space created by the municipality, more of which will be said below. Those who had made use of the C3 system, reported that they were satisfied with the way in which they concerns were
addressed; this applied in particular to issues such as blocked drains and refuse removal.

4.10. Alternative Channels of Reporting Complaints

It is evident that people in the area use a variety of channels to communicate their concerns to the municipality, the most frequently used of which are the local municipal rent offices. The reasons cited why residents prefer to use the rent offices as their channel of communication is because it is these are nearest municipal offices to them. Furthermore, as they pay their rent to these offices they expect concerns about service delivery to be addressed. They also reported the officials in the rent offices were generally quite helpful and effective in responding to the concerns of the residents. The service delivery problems reported using this channel include: house repairs, broken rubbish bins, blocked toilets and drainages, waste collection, electricity, sewerage problems, leaking roofs and floor repairs.

A further channel of complaint used was the municipal offices in central Cape Town. Respondents stated that the chose this channel because they believed that as this was the head office of the City they would receive quicker action. However, it was noted that concerns reported through the central municipal offices did not result in any quicker response to their concerns. This experience, in itself, is not surprising in that the C3 system is designed as an on-line service and complaints reported verbally to other municipal offices have to be redirected to the central call office. The complaints lodged through these offices typically related to the water service and blocked drains.
Other channels used to report service delivery channels were through the local councilor, the ward committee, and the street committee. Once again, as in the case of reporting to the municipal head office in Cape Town, these methods of reporting had mixed results and, in some cases, no results. This, it would appear, could be due to the fact that structures such as the ward committees or street committees failed to pass on the complaints or channeled to the wrong places. The lack of response to complaints lodged through these structures is also likely to further lower trust in the municipality as well as in the C3 system itself, should they have heard of it.

Some of the respondents interviewed were backyard dwellers and even if they knew about the C3 system, they felt that they were obliged to register their complaints through their landlords who might or might not lodge a case with the municipality. In other words, the backyard dwellers perceived themselves to have lesser rights that the landlords.

4.11. Reasons for Using Alternative Channels

It is clear that ease of access (in terms of proximity) and cost were key factors in the choice of the channels used to lodge complaints. In other words, residents made use of the rent offices because they went there on a fairly regular basis and were familiar with the officials who served them. As some of these people reside in the area, they are sympathetic to the issues which have been reported. Reporting problems to the rent office has a further advantage in that it provides an opportunity for people to
network with other residents and to hear about the service delivery problems which they are confronting.

It would appear, from the responses given, that many residents are used to, or prefer, face-to-face interactions with public officials. To citizens who are unfamiliar with e-technology or indeed with reporting complaints over the phone, the use of the one-stop-shop call centre is something they are not familiar with. For people used to a more direct and personal way of interacting with officials, the anonymity of a phone call can be intimidating, especially when it is combined with distrust of municipal officials. Being given a reference number rather than the name of a person to whom the compliant was made is also likely to be off-putting to people unused to the way of registering their concerns. As a consequence of this, a system which is intended to improve the quality of services delivered to them, can end up excluding them. In that regard, in a study of e-governance systems in the City of Cape Town Bagui and Bythway noted that:

“community members showed ignorance of regulations and ignorance of government structures, organisation and functioning. This might result in misinterpretation of government actions and initiatives. Thus, discomfort in using and poor knowledge of government initiatives including C3 system and the city website will, in the future, prevent individuals from accessing these available channels and content” (Bagui and Bythway; 2013).
In that regard Feldman and Khademian (2007:309) maintain in order to be inclusive participatory systems need to impart knowledge about the system and how to use and should also inspire the citizens to take advantage of the opportunities which it presents.

From the research it is evident that the concerns raised by community members predominantly relate to problems affecting their own dwellings and immediate surroundings. This was evident in respondents’ statements that they reported problems about block toilets or drains, low water pressure or leaking roofs. This appears to be different from the types of complaints by the residents of more affluent areas of Cape Town where there concerns raised dealt more with public goods and services such as faulty street lights and potholes in the road. This implies both lower levels of what Tapscott (2012: 9) has termed “civic identity”, meaning their commitment to the needs of the community as a whole, and a different set of priorities and needs.

In that regard, the findings of this research corroborate those of a survey conducted in Langa in 2013 by the African Centre for Citizenship and Democracy (Accede) in the University of the Western Cape. The survey found that the most significant problems identified by respondents in Langa were those relating to crime (52%), unemployment (35%), housing (19%) and poverty (16%). This is stark contrast to the most common problems reported through the C3 system across the municipality, which in 2010/11 focused on electricity technical complaints (23%); transport (13.8%); safety and security (11.9%); water (8.1%); valuations (5.7%), health (5.3%)
and property management (4.6%) (City of Cape Town, 2012:23). Perhaps as a consequence of their focus on the more pressing problems of crime, accommodation and poverty, the respondents in Langa paid little attention to these types of service delivery with just 3% reporting that street lighting was a problem, 2% that they experienced problems with blocked drains and none reporting problems with poor roads (Thompson et al.; 2014:6). In other words, the most pressing problems in the area are not ones which can be addressed through the C3 system.

The survey further found that 40% of all respondents were dissatisfied with service delivery in the area. Relatedly, 63% of respondents believed that the municipality managed consultation with the community badly or very badly, whilst 57% believed that the municipality was either bad or very at communicating its programmes to local residents (Thompson et al.; 2014:7-8). In response to the question how well the City had succeeded in showing that it cared about the community, 62% responded that it performed badly or very badly.

Reflective of the sense of social exclusion felt by citizens in Langa, 54% of respondents affirmed the statement “People like me do not have any influence over what the government does” (Thompson et al.; 2014:13). This sense of being ignored and neglected is also reflected in the low level of trust which respondents have in their local government, with 59% stating that they have little or no trust in the municipality. In that regard, Thompson et al assert that there is an “the urgent need for further local government engagement with communities and leaders on how participation in local governance processes could be re-envisioned to ensure that
citizens feel their participation and inputs make a difference. In the Western Cape, this is particularly important as there are high levels of dissatisfaction in the ability to engage in local participatory processes” (Thompson et al.; 2014:13).

4.12. Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of qualitative research conducted in Langa in order to determine the extent to which a sample of residents in the area had heard of or made use of the C3 notification system. It found that whilst some respondents had heard of the C3 systems the majority had not. Furthermore even amongst those who had heard of the system only a minority made use of it. This suggests that not only has the existence and objectives of the system been poorly communicated to local residents, but for the most parts it is not oriented to their most pressing needs.

The chapter which follows provides a summary of the findings of the research conducted for this thesis. It also revisits the research questions set out in chapter one and the discusses the extent to which these have been address, and the lessons which can be drawn about both the design and implementation of participatory system in South Africa, in general, and in the City of Cape Town in particular.
5. CHAPER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study focused on the topic of citizen participation which is recognised in the literature as well as by policy makers all over the world as a key element of good governance and as a key dimension of a democratic society. The investigation revealed that despite the apparent virtues of participation, many states struggle to implement participatory systems which are meaningful for poor citizens. It was seen that the design of participatory systems was especially challenging in highly diverse and unequal societies. Furthermore, in instances where these systems fail to take into consideration the needs of different segments of society they can end up excluding and further disadvantaging the poor (Hofisi; 2014:1126).

The research looked at the participatory system in South Africa and found that the country has in place a comprehensive framework of legislation and policy to support citizen participation. It is evident, however, that this system is not being implemented as intended and this is apparent in the multiple service delivery protest currently underway across the country.

The study further examined the mechanisms which the City of Cape Town is implementing in its attempts to promote citizen participation and establish an ‘inclusive city’. Here the particular focus was on the C3 notification system which was established to facilitate citizens reporting of service delivery problems across the municipality. Of particular interest was the extent to which the notification system
was designed to address the needs of the diverse population of Cape Town and particularly those of poor communities.

In order to examine the way the C3 system is used by poor communities in Cape Town, a limited qualitative survey was conducted amongst residents of Langa Township. A major focus of this research was to consider the objectives behind the design of the C3 notification system in the municipality and to establish how effective it has been in addressing the service delivery concerns of poor communities such as those in Langa. It also aimed to establish what factors influence the differential usage of the C3 system in different sectors of society and whether there is a significant relationship between the system design and levels of citizen participation. Based on these findings, it also considered how a more inclusive notification system might be designed and implemented by the City of Cape Town?

5.2 Empirical findings

Five research questions were proposed in order to give structure to the thesis and these, along with the empirical findings of the investigation, were as follows:

- What was the objective behind the design of the C3 notification system in the municipality?

It is evident from the City’s IDP and other official documents, that the C3 system was introduced in an attempt to improve the municipality communication with its citizens and to increase in responsiveness in dealing with service delivery problems. The notifications system, which was based on a best practice model, was intended to advance the idea of an inclusive and caring city as spelt out in the current IDP. It was
hoped that by introducing a call-center approach based on ICT, the municipalities capacity to resolve service delivery problems would be speeded up to the benefit of all its citizens.

- How effective is the system in addressing the service delivery concerns of poor communities such as those in Langa?

The survey found that nearly two thirds of those interviewed had never heard of the C3 system. Which suggest that the City has been ineffective in its attempts to communicate the benefits which it might hold for poor people. It follows that those who have never heard of the system will not be able to make use of it to address the concerns about service delivery. It was of further interest that not all of those who had heard of the system actually made use of it.

- What factors influence the differential usage of the C3 system in different sectors of society?

Over and above the fact that the existence and benefits of C3 had not been communicated to the respondents in this survey, it would appear that there are several factors which influence the way in which poor and wealthier members of society make use of the system. In additions to concerns about issues of access and cost, it is evident that the system is better suited to the needs of more affluent communities who are concerned with the standards of public good like roads, parks and street lighting. From the responses of those interviewed it is evident that their concerns are more about their own dwellings and their immediate surroundings that about public assets.
• Is there a significant relationship between the system design and levels of citizen participation?

From the findings of this investigation it would appear that the design of the C3 notification system has had a big influence on the level of citizen participation in Langa which appears to be lower than in more affluent areas of the City. This is due to the fact that the problems which it is capable of addressing are of lesser importance to the residents of Langa, who are more concerned with issues related to housing, unemployment and crime (Thompson et al.; 2014:6). It was also evident from the responses of informants that some members of the community have little trust in the C3 system and its ability to address their concerns. In other words, the design of the C3 system appears not to have taken the most pressing needs of the community into consideration.

• How might a more inclusive notification system be designed and implemented by the City of Cape Town?

It is evident that when designing a complaints system the municipality will need to take into account the fact that it is serving a very diverse society and that the needs of the rich and the poor are very different. This implies that it will not be able to design a one-size-fits-all system but rather one that is adaptable enough to be used by people with different levels of education and socio-economic status. This might entail the implementation of parallel systems, the one based on the current model, and the other
which is adapted to the local circumstances of poor townships or informal settlements.

5.3 Theoretical implications

The findings of this research appear to confirm the view in the literature that the mere existence of what has been termed invited spaces for participation does not guarantee effective participation of the poor. In that regard, when assessed in terms of Arnstein’s ladder of participation, the level of public participation in the design and usage of the C3 system in Langa could be classified as falling into the category of “tokenism”, which is characterized by informing, consulting and placating citizens rather than empowering them to take an active and meaningful part in municipal affairs.

It is also evident that by failing to take into consideration the needs of poor communities in the design of the C3 system, the municipality has contributed to their further exclusion. In that respect, Beall and Piron (2005:9) assert, exclusion from social participation can lead to the marginalization of the poor. It is also evident that systems that are designed to meet the needs of a normative citizen, which is generally not a poor citizen, will contribute to this process. In this way, as DFID have pointed out, state institutions may end up perpetuating exclusion unofficially (DFID, 2005:3).

5.4 Policy Implications

This findings of this investigation point to the fact that despite the reported achievements of the C3 notification system elsewhere in the City of Cape Town, it is
far less successful as a channel for engagement, and hence for citizen participation, in a poor township such as Langa. What this suggests is the need for a thorough evaluation of the extent to which poor communities in the municipality make use of the system (this information is currently not available to the public) and the reasons why this might be so.

This would entail an examination of the way in which poor communities prefer to communicate their concerns. From the research it would appear that some people prefer face-to-face engagements with public officials rather than the anonymity of a phone call. In that regard it will also be necessary to take into account the low levels of trust which many poor people have in the municipality and to factor this into the redesign of the notification system. This would, inevitably, include addressing their concerns about the availability of public housing, employment and crime.

Above all, there is a need for much better communication of the objectives of the C3 system through public announcements on the radio, through ward committees, street committees etc. Linked to this would need to be a concerted to demonstrate how use of the system will be of benefit to poor communities.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

This study had a number of limitations. The first related to the fact that the researcher does not speak isiXhosa which is the language most commonly spoken in Langa. Although a number of respondents were able to speak good English, it was necessary to make use of a translator following in conducting some interviews and in the process, some of the essence of what stated by respondents might have been lost.
A second limitation related to the time and budget available to the researcher. As the investigation was self-funded this limited the number of respondents interviewed in the survey. This meant that, all in-depth interviews were conducted, the findings have not statistical significance and they most only considered indicative of trends within a small proportion of the community of Langa.
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APPENDIX 1

Interview Questions for respondents from Langa

1. Do you ever lodge complaints to the municipality?

What kind of complaints have you ever lodged?

2. To whom did you lodge the complaint? And what was the result?

3. Do you participate in government or community related issues?

a) Yes

b) No. (Why don’t you participate in government/community issues?)

4. If so, how do you participate in this?

5. Do you know of the C3 notification system?

6. How did you know about it?

7. Do you use the system to report your service delivery problems?

a) Yes

b) No. If no, why don’t you use the service?

8. Does the system address your problems and concerns?

9. How do you ever report service delivery related problems (E.g.: burst sewer, lack garbage collection etc.)?
If yes, which problem have you reported?

10. What are the channels you use to report your concerns?

11. Which complaints system would you like best?
APPENDIX 2

Interview Questions for respondents CCT

1. What factors were considered when designing the system?

2. What is the data on the usage of the C3 notification system?

3. Has the system been effective in addressing the complaints of the residents in the City of Cape Town?

4. What other mechanisms are there for citizens to lodge their complaints?

5. Was the system piloted before being rolled out?

6. What was the motivation behind it?