“Service Delivery in Unequal Societies – The Limits to Equity and Inclusion: A Case Study from Cape Town, South Africa”

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Abstract

The effective and equitable delivery of public services remains a challenge for all countries but it is especially problematic in developing states with highly diverse and unequal populations. The design of more inclusive administrative systems in such states is all too often underpinned by ideals of international best practice and, implicitly, the notion of a universal citizenship which homogenizes the needs of citizens, regardless of their socio-economic standing. This paper looks at systems aimed at improving service delivery to the diverse population of Cape Town in South Africa and, in particular, the introduction of a corporate works management system established to record and channel citizen concerns about public services. The case study illustrate that the model introduced has failed to take into account the different needs of different segments of the community and has served to exclude the poor who are most in
need of assistance. The paper also points to the pitfalls that confront states attempting to import international best practices into administrative systems without rigorous review of the context in which they proved successful elsewhere.

Introduction

All democratic states aspire, at least formally, to deliver services to all their citizens in an equitable manner irrespective of their socio-economic status. The achievement of this goal is a challenge for economically advanced and relatively homogenous countries but it is especially problematic for emerging economies with heterogeneous and unequal populations. Such states typically confront two seemingly contradictory objectives: the first, in conformity with constitutional mandates, is to treat all their citizens as equals and the second is to design service delivery systems which address the needs of the different segments of their citizenry. This latter objective is especially challenging in view of the tendency of state bureaucracies to pursue a Weberian symmetry in the design and implementation of administrative systems. Further compounding this process in developing states is the seeming imperative to strive for modernity, however vaguely defined, and the normative dimensions of administrative best practice which this generally entails. Linked to the understanding of modernity is the need to pursue efficiency, equity and, a corollary of the later, citizen participation in the delivery of public services. Unstated, but implicit, in this formulation is that we live in an increasingly homogenised world and that this has led to the emergence of a universal citizenship.
The notion of a universal citizenship occupying what Andersen has termed 'homogenous empty time' (Andersen, 1980:31), however, is not merely an analytical conceit. The materiality of the idea is everyday apparent in the way in which states interact with their citizens and, in particular, the parameters which they set for public participation both in policy making and in influencing the quality and quantity of the public services which they receive. It is also apparent in the administrative systems designed to give effect to these policies. To that extent, the ways in which states interact with their citizens are conditioned by their understandings of citizenship and understandings of the needs of the society at large. The disconnect that that so often ensues between states and citizens in this context, 'the antimony', as Charterjee describes it, 'between the lofty political imaginary of popular sovereignty and the mundane administrative reality of governmentality,' (Chatterjee, 2003:36) frequently fuels frustration and alienation leading to withdrawal or social unrest.

Gaventa has pointed out that within the literature three understandings of citizenship are discernable, namely the liberal, communitarian and civic republican traditions (Gaventa; 2000:4). In the context of many transitional democracies, however, it is questionable whether any one theoretical formulation is capable of encapsulating the varied forms of individual and social identity which might constitute the component parts of citizenship. In societies which have historically been fragmented by race, ethnicity, class, and religion, there is frequently more than one form of citizenship and this ensemble is both dynamic and mediated by a variety of different social and political factors. These different forms of
citizenship, moreover, are invariably associated with specific socio-economic strata with
distinctive needs and with different capacities to engage with the state, both to articulate
their needs and to influence policy processes which affect their welfare. Whilst the need to
balance the interests of all segments of a society is a complex process in all states, the
equitable delivery of public services is especially challenging in highly dualistic societies.

By far the majority of writing on the equitable delivery of public services is based on
Northern experience and much of this has focused on equity-efficiency trade-offs (the ratio
of service outputs to service inputs) and on the design of models to ensure better spatial
distribution or more cost-effective systems for the distribution of public goods (Mandell;
1991; Lowery, 2000; Neutens et al, 2010). However, whilst the construction of allocative
efficiency models has undoubted value for budgeting and financial forecasting, a number of
authors have raised concerns that any idea of a trade-off between equity and efficiency
represents a false dichotomy. As Le Grand (1990) has pointed out, efficiency can only be
defined in terms of the ability of administrative systems and practices to deliver primary
objectives. As equity, at least formally, is one of those primary objectives it is
meaningless to speak of trade-offs between equity and efficiency. “Efficiency”, he maintains,
“is not an objective in the sense that equity is an objective; rather, it is a secondary
objective that only acquires meaning with reference to primary objectives such as equity.”
(Le Grand; 1990:560)

Where attention has focused specifically on the attainment of equity in the delivery of
services this has followed a decidedly normative path. Thus, Lucy et al. (1977), propose
three tests for equity to be applied by local administrators in the delivery of services: the first is that equal treatment should be the norm, the second is that any deviation from the norm should be specifically justified and, thirdly, that there should, in any event, be a minimum level of service below which quality and quantity should not dip (Lucy et al.; 1977: 688). Implicit in this approach is that there is an ideal type citizen, a universal citizen if you will, against whose public service needs (the minimum in terms of quantity and quality) the needs of all other citizens may be benchmarked. Linked to this is the understanding that the equity norm will be based on equality of access rather than on equal use (Lucy et al.; 1977: 689). In this formulation, those citizens who require special treatment (for example in the form of additional services to redress past inequalities) represent a deviation from the norm and an exception to the rule. In states which have a relatively homogenous population or where a sizeable majority are of similar socio-economic status, this principle might hold. However, in highly unequal societies, as shall be seen, a normative approach can lead to distortions in the design and implementation of administrative systems. This limitation is latent in the adoption of systems of administrative best practice which are often benchmarked against the norms of economically advanced states in the North and which, virtually by default, become oriented to the needs of an affluent minority in the developing countries in which they are introduced.

There is, in many respects, a disjuncture between the ambitions of those advancing best practice and the real needs of the poor in developing states. This is because, the appeal of technocratic efficiency aside, the systems of best practice imported into these states, are
never value free and their design and intent has generally be based on an entirely different socio-economic reality. This difference might be in levels of access to and comprehension of modern communication technology, but it might also be evident in basic priorities, and in trust of government amongst others. As a consequence of these differences, there is frequently an inversion of the order in which the design and adoption of administrative systems might logically be expected to unfold. Rather that designing new systems to address the concerns of different segments of society, the poor are often expected by state officials to adapt to models which have been designed elsewhere and for different target communities.

A number of studies have shown that the poor are disadvantaged in competitive politics and, by association, policy formulation processes (which typically manifest a distinct elite bias), and that they consciously withdraw from systems which offer them no obvious rewards. At the same time, it is also evident that the state bureaucracy itself can serve to undermine the development of democratic politics, which in turn inhibits the redistribution of resources to the poor. As Luckham et al. point out, 'Responsiveness to the needs of the poor often requires changes in a range of administrative and political institutions in order to promote the participation of the poor, which can include efforts to enhance their capacity to articulate and promote their needs and interests, given that the poor face special obstacles to interest articulation and aggregation because of problems of exclusion, isolation and immiseration' (Luckham et al; 2000: 36). No matter how well intentioned and seemingly egalitarian policies might be, where there is a lack of sensitivity to the particular needs of the poor and marginalised (who themselves are not homogenous) their exclusion from the process of
governance is probable. In the context of limited resources, balancing the demands of different segments of society is a complex and challenging process, and experience has shown that, in the absence a strong civil society, the interests of the wealthy and powerful will invariably prevail. This may be ascribed to a lack of political will, to corruption and to a variety of other factors, but it is also certain, as shall be seen in the case study which follows, that the technical design of administrative systems can exacerbate these tendencies.

A widely espoused principle of governance best practice, which incidentally is consonant with the idea of a homogenous citizenry, is the expressed need to promote citizen participation in decision making processes which affect their welfare. The idea of participatory governance, and by extension participatory development, was brought into the mainstream of developing thinking from the 1980s onwards as part of a neo-liberalist paradigm. (Hickey and Mohan; 2004) The approach which, inter alia, envisaged a diminution of the state and a strengthening of the role of civil society was seen both as a means to empower ordinary citizens, and the poor in particular, and to promote more sustainable forms of development. (Jennings; 2000:1) According to a World Bank resource book, ‘Participation is a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and the decisions and resources which affect them’ (World Bank; 1998:3). In this formulation, participatory development was seen to be inherently good in the potential it held to empower local communities and to promote greater efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of development programmes; for its advocates, furthermore, its virtues were perceived to be self-evident and incontestable. The participatory approach has not been without its critics who have expressed concerns about
its often mechanistic approach to complex social process and the fact that is vulnerable to elite capture (Cooke and Kothari; 2001; Platteau and Abraham; 2002). Adding to these inherent challenges is the fact that even where participatory policies are in place, imported administrative systems frequently foreclose the possibility for ordinary citizens (and the poor in particular) to have a say in their design and implementation.

The quest for a homogenous citizenship, with all its attendant challenges is implicit in the case of South Africa, which attained democracy in 1994 after nearly 350 years of white minority rule. The new South African constitution not only prescribes ‘a common South African citizenship’ and asserts that all citizens are ‘equally entitled to the rights, privileges and benefits of citizenship’, but also maintains that they are ‘equally subject to the duties and responsibilities of citizenship.’ (Republic of South Africa; 1996: section 3) In this context, it is assumed that the majority of the country’s inhabitants not only have a clear understanding of the rights, privileges and benefits to which they are entitled, that they also have equal access to these rights. This is despite the fact that, as a legacy of Apartheid rule, South Africa remains a highly unequal society. In 2009 the Gini-coefficient of equality was 0.679, making South Africa one of the most unequal countries in the world. Reflective of this fact, in 2008 the richest 10% of the population earned 53.1% of the income. In contrast, 80% of the population earn just 30% of the national income, with the poorest 20% earning just 1.8% of income. (The Presidency, 2009:24) Poverty is also racially distributed with the bulk of the poor to be found amongst the African population.
Notwithstanding, the reality that different citizens face markedly different needs, there is a strong tendency to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach in public policy formulation in South Africa. This practice is influenced by three different factors: the first is a genuine desire to build a democratic, non-racial society where all citizens are treated equally; the second is that state bureaucracies are generally predisposed towards the development of symmetrical systems since they are easier to cost and administrate; and the third is that the political leadership of the country has aspirations to develop a modern state, modelled on those of advanced economies in the West. In pursuit of this goal, the incoming African National Congress (ANC) government has sought to adopt ostensibly best practices in many of its attempts to deliver services.

The government has never attempted to disguise its interest in adopting western practices in the public sector. Thus, the Department for Public Service and Administration’s White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service is explicit in its intent to invite international expertise and explore the adoption of international best practices: “Significant international support, both moral and material, has been pledged for the processes of reconciliation, reconstruction and development in general, and for the process of administrative transformation in particular. In addition to direct financial aid, a number of valuable partnership schemes are being actively explored and developed.” (DPSA; 1995)

The South African Management Development Institute (SAMDI) then the government’s official public sector training institution, likewise asserts that it “continuously engages its international counterparts in its capacity-building programmes to offer world-class interventions that encompass the latest and best practices” (GCIS; 2003:366).
Partly in response to the policies of the previous Apartheid order, which actively excluded the majority of South Africans from all meaningful decision making, but predominantly due to a commitment to create a democratic state, the ANC government has placed strong emphasis on the need to develop participatory processes and practices in the delivery of all state services. This is evident in a succession of legislation and policy in all three levels of the governing hierarchy. Despite this commitment, however, the practicalities of implementing participatory systems of service delivery have frequently rendered the process meaningless for ordinary citizens and especially the poor (Tapscott and Thompson; 2012 forthcoming).

The South African case aptly demonstrates that the transposition of models of governance and administration, in un-adapted form, into social settings which have developed differently from the West, is an inherently problematic process. This is because the discourses on which these imported models are based are generally premised on the assumption that a specific form and level of associational life is in place, that this has given rise to a relatively homogenous citizenry and that a pattern of trust relations has developed amongst them which will permit effective citizen engagement.

This paper, which is of an exploratory nature, looks at three dimensions of the service delivery problematic: these relate to the symmetrical delivery of public services (the homogenized citizen), to the idea of citizen participation and, relatedly, to the quest for best practices. In so doing, it looks at the challenges posed in introducing service delivery
systems across unequal strata of society. The discussion is based on ongoing research in the City of Cape Town\textsuperscript{1}, which, in its efforts to deliver a uniformly high standard of services, appears to be failing in its efforts to understand and address the different needs of different segments of its community.

\textbf{The Homogenous Citizen and Best Practice in the City of Cape Town}

The City of Cape Town, which has a population of some 3.7 million inhabitants, is the oldest urban settlement in South Africa, having been established in 1652 as a refreshment station for ships of the Dutch East India Company sailing from Europe to the East. As a sea port, Cape Town has always exhibited a more metropolitan character than other cities in the country, with a heterogeneous mix of people of European, African (black), Asian and mixed race Coloured people. It has nevertheless also always been geographically divided by race and, to a less obvious extent, by class. As a legacy of Apartheid, categories of race and class still tend to coincide. As a consequence of the rigid policies of racial segregation that were in place less than two decades ago, and notwithstanding the emergence of a black middle class, the majority of Cape Town’s citizens still live in racially homogeneous suburbs. In keeping with the demography of the country as a whole, the poor are predominantly drawn from the African and Coloured populations and many live in sprawling informal settlements with only rudimentary services, including communal water stands and toilets. In 2010 25\% of the working age population was reported to be unemployed (Statistics

\textsuperscript{1}The research was based predominantly on key informant interviews and focus group discussions with both city officials and citizens.
The wealthier, and predominantly white, suburbs in contrast, maintain standards which are comparable with those in economically advanced states in the West.

South Africa has a three tiered system of government (national, provincial and local) which assigns responsibility for basic service delivery (public housing, electricity, water, roads etc.) to the municipal level. For the City of Cape Town, catering for an extremely diverse population inevitably presents challenges in both the design and delivery of public programmes. Whilst there is undoubtedly an appreciation on the part of policy makers in the municipality of the different needs of citizens with regard to access to housing, water, electricity etc., the homogenizing tendencies of an administration with ambitions of becoming what has been portrayed as a “world class city” are readily apparent. This is evident in the design and implementation of a sophisticated service complaints system aimed at making the City more responsive to the needs of its citizens.

The statement of intent in the City’s Integrated Development Plan for the period 2012 to 2017 is to base future service delivery on five key pillars: the opportunity city; the safe city; the caring city; the inclusive city and the well-run or efficient city. According to the Plan:

“(The) 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. 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” (City of Cape Town, 2012:13).

Derived from the Notify NYC model in operation in the city of New York², the C3 Notification System is a corporate works management system which records and manages incoming requests and complaints and channels them through an elaborate work flow process (evidenced in Diagram 1) to technical teams assigned to different parts of the City.

The system is designed to be as user friendly as possible and citizens may make use of a variety of media to communicate with call centres including phone calls, text messages, emails, fax or by calling in person at what are called ‘citizen touch points’, located in decentralized sub-council offices. The C3 system is well subscribed to and a total of 828 945 calls were lodged between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011 with an average turn-around time of 5 days for resolution of problems reported (City of Cape Town; 2012: 22).

All information is captured on a GIS system and data can be presented cartographically providing invaluable data for policy makers and planners within the City.

At face value, the C3 Notifications system has all the hallmarks of a highly effective works management process which gives effect to the idea of responsive government.

²Personal Communication, Dave Beretti, former Executive Director of Corporate Services, City of Cape Town, 15 August 2011. The Notify NYC is an emergency notification system which had its origins in the security concerns which arose in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks but which has since been expanded into a more general communication network. See https://a858-nyconotify.nyc.gov/notifynyc/About.aspx
Shortcomings in the design of the system only become apparent, however, when considering it’s usefulness for the poorest segments of the City which currently make up between 30% and 40% of the population but whose numbers are growing rapidly due to an influx of work seekers from the rural areas. It is likely that an ensemble of factors is limiting the extent to which the poor express their concerns and lodge service complaints.

**Best practice versus exclusion**

The first challenge facing the City officials relates to the extent to which the inhabitants of poorer communities are even aware of the C3 system. Although quantitative data is not available, 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. Whilst City officials interviewed reported that there had been marketing of the system, it is evident that this has not reached 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. Most poor household have no landline telephone, no fax machine and no access to e-mail. In a seeming paradox, however, a large proportion of household do possess mobile phones and yet they appear not to use them to lodge complaints. In part this might be ascribed to the fact that the City does not have a
call-free-number and as air time is used judiciously by the poor there is reluctance to make what is perceived to be a wasted call.

A further constraint to the effective use of the C3 Notifications relates to the fact that the system as a whole is not attuned to the needs of the poor. 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. (Tapscott, 2011) This need is followed by the imperative to find employment and income and, finally, in a crime ridden environment, a desire for personal safety. Confirming this trend, the City’s own 2011 Customer Satisfaction Survey reveals that residents’ top development priorities were jobs (74%), preventing crime (54%) and housing (38%) (City of Cape Town; 2011b:22). What this implies is that the concerns of those living at the margins are significantly different from those of middle class people living in communities which already have a developed infrastructure and a generally secure supply of basic services. This reality is evident in the Table 1. which depicts the most frequent service requests channeled through the C3 system.

From Table 1. it is evident that the requests, in the main, relate to power cuts, blocked sewers, street lighting, and leaking water meters, but they also include concerns about potholes and water supply. As indicated, these concerns are typically those of the wealthier segments of the city, since the poor generally lack such amenities in the first instance. This
view is supported by the findings of an independent assessment of the C3 system conducted in 2011, which revealed what might be one of its major limitations for the poor, namely the fact that it is reactive rather than proactive in its approach to service delivery (Rivett et al; 2011:26). 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.

Limited utilisation of the C3 system by the poor may also be ascribed to what might be termed their limited civic identity. New entrants to the urban areas move frequently, both out of necessity (for example because rental is too high) or simply to improve their circumstances by moving into better accommodation. As a consequence, many of the poor lack a common identity and with that, a collective responsibility to report faulty street lights (where these exist), potholes or blocked drainage (Lemanski; 2008). Linked to the low level of associational life, is the very low level of trust which poor communities display towards government and local government in particular. The causes of this lack of trust are multiple but at heart they relate to the high expectations that accompanied the ending of Apartheid rule and the disappointment and frustration that ensued from the subsequent slow delivery of services. Table 2 reveals that the residents of the poorer districts of Cape Town, such as Khayelitsha, Mitchells Plain and Klipfontein, display considerably lower
levels of trust in the municipality than the more affluent Eastern, Northern and Tygerberg districts. Significantly, whilst levels of trust appear to be going up in these latter districts, in the poorer districts they are static or declining.

Whilst as yet untested empirically, this lack of trust is likely to be a further contributor to citizens’ reluctance to engage with the local state and to take advantage of the C3 system as might have been anticipated, namely to routinely report their dissatisfaction with a range of basic services. A sense that they have been ignored and neglected is pervasive amongst poor communities and this perception has been aggravated not only by unfulfilled political promises (particularly those pertaining to jobs and housing), but also by the fact that municipal officials do sometimes avoid carrying out routine repairs in poorer areas due to concerns about crime. This has become something of a vicious circle: the more citizens perceive they are not being fairly treated, the more they distrust municipal authorities, the more they withdraw from participatory processes and the less their views are heard and taken into consideration in policy making exercises. This tendency is evident in Table 3, which reveals, once again, that poorer communities, such as those in Khayelitsha, Western, Mitchells Plain and Klipfontein districts believe that the city is failing as a service provider to its citizens.

**Best Practice and Participation**
The City of Cape Town is both obligated (in terms of legislative fiat) and politically committed to the process of community participation in policy formulation and planning. However, there is no evidence that there was any engagement with the population at large either in introducing the C3 system or in adapting it to their varied needs. Whilst more will be said of this below, it is evident that the implementation of participatory processes are generally challenging in diverse communities were generalised trust in authority is low. This is evident in the process of drawing up an Integrated Development Plan (IDP) which the municipality is mandated to produce in consultation with its citizens. Consultation in the drawing up of the 2012-2017 IDP was proclaimed to have involved “the most extensive public participation process undertaken by the city.. (whereby) (c)itizens across the metro were canvassed through numerous mediums, from public meetings, to newspaper inserts, to information brochures, to websites and to social media” (City of Cape Town, 2012:9). The singular ineffectiveness of this process, however, is apparent in fact that 91% of those interviewed in the City’s 2011 Customer Satisfaction Survey had never heard of the IDP (City of Cape Town; 2011: 57).

The low levels of civic engagement might be due to a variety of factors including citizen apathy and distrust in the process of participation but it might also be due to the ineffectiveness of the channels used to communicate with the population on municipal matters. Thus the Customer Satisfaction Survey reported that 49% of respondents found out about what the municipality was doing through reading a community newspaper (a feature of middle class areas), 45% reported that they found out through word of mouth a

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3This level of unawareness has remained constant over the past four years with 90% reporting that they had no knowledge of the IDP in 2007.
characteristic of poorer communities) (City of Cape Town; 2011: 58). Notably, only 5% made use of a municipal call centre.

It is noteworthy that City officials are aware of the fact that the C3 notification is “currently predominantly used by more affluent areas” (City of Cape Town, 2012:76). However, the measures the municipality is planning to introduce to make the service more accessible to disadvantaged communities reflect no appreciation of the reasons why might be under-utilised by the poor. As a consequence, the improvements proposed are predominantly oriented towards greater cost-efficiency and technical improvements in the system. “The C3 system”, it is stated, “is not just about logging and responding to calls. It is also aimed at implementing a comprehensive Service Management system, which will allow the tracking and measuring of internal efficiencies. This will have a significant impact on quality and cost of service delivery” (City of Cape Town, 2012:76). Illustrative of this orientation, the Draft IDP speaks of the need, inter alia, to measure the cost and quality of work delivered for service requests by monitoring the re-occurrence of requests, to develop service standards for service requests, to enable specific system functionality to enhance service delivery, to develop informative management performance reports; and to lay a foundation for a proper costing of services (City of Cape Town, 2012:77). Apart from an expressed need to install free-call lines, there is little evidence of any analysis or understanding of the reasons why there has been so little use of the notification system in poor communities.

Conclusion
The findings of this paper point to the real challenges faced in attempting to design service delivery programmes in highly differentiated and unequal societies. They also point to the fact that in their intent to promote a more homogenous citizenry, 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, as indicated, 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.

The case study also points to the need broaden understandings of equity in highly diverse societies. It cannot, as Lucy et al have suggested, refer merely to equality of access rather than equal use (Lucy et al.; 1977: 689), since there are contexts where some citizens have little or no opportunity ever to become users without state support. As Gosling points out “Equity involves recognising that people are different and need different support and resources to ensure their rights are realised. To ensure fairness, measures must often be taken to compensate for specific discrimination and disadvantages.” (Gosling; 2010: 6) At a local level, she maintains, this should entails analysis of the relative disadvantages within communities, understanding the barriers faced by disadvantaged people in accessing services, and developing ways to overcome these barriers. Inclusion in this context is not just about improving access to services but it also involves supporting the disadvantaged to engage in processes which recognise their needs and rights. In that respect, the paper draws attention to the pitfalls that confront states attempting to import best practices into
administrative systems without a rigorous review of the context in which they proved successful. Such a review would also require a critical assessment of the socio-economic realities that prevail across communities in a locality. This will require a move away from the one-size-fits-all approach in the design of public programmes to more asymmetrical models that into account the varied needs of different segments of a society.

The case study also demonstrates that not only should equity be an objective of policy making but that the process of decision-making itself should be equitable, promoting participation and informed choice by all within society (Gilson; 1998:1894). “The involvement of the public, rather than just a technical elite, within the processes of decision-making”, Gilson maintains, “is also increasingly seen as vital in ensuring the effective implementation of policies (Gilson; 1998:1894).” The C3 notification system, in contrast, was conceived and implemented in largely technical fashion. Whilst it is perfectly reasonable, as Reinhardt points out, to separate considerations of equity from considerations of purely technical efficiency in policy processes, it is essential that the meaning of the term efficiency is precise and it is not elevated above considerations such as equity (Reinhardt; 1992:312). Whatever the gains in technical efficiency that might have been achieved in this process by municipal officials in Cape Town, these have been outweighed by the exclusion of significant portions of the population.

References


Diagram 1: The Corporate Works Management Process C3 Notifications Service Delivery Process

City of Cape Town, (2011a)

Table 1: Most Frequent Service Requests

City of Cape Town, (2011a)
Table 2: Trust in the City of Cape Town

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Mean 2007/8</th>
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<td>Klipfontein District</td>
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(City of Cape Town; 2011: 11)

Table 3: The City of Cape Town’s fulfilment of its role as public service provider

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<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Mean 2007/8</th>
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<td>2.4</td>
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<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khayelitsha District</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitchells Plain</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klipfontein District</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(City of Cape Town; 2011: 12)

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4 It must be noted the five point scale used to score customer satisfaction is biased in favour of good performance, ranking 1 as poor, 2 as fair, 3 as good, 4 as very good, and 5 as excellent.