5. Johannesburg: From Racial Segregation and Discrimination to a Pursuit of Integration, Efficiency and Inclusion

5.1 Introduction

In Part One of this thesis, I reviewed literature about the notion of participation with a special focus on the participation of the poor sectors of society in policy-making. The reviewed literature included theoretical perspectives, which underscore a firm belief that involving citizens, particularly the poor, directly in processes of governance yields ‘better citizens, better decisions, and better government’ (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007: 4). However, the concept of participation has always meant different things to different people at different times. While some scholars and policy-makers limit the practice of participation to the involvement of a target population in project implementation and/or management, others insist that the practice of participation can only be meaningful if it involves taking part in making policy decisions. The literature suggests that poor people participate in policy-making processes in order to achieve political empowerment and access to the basic services they need. In addition, the literature points to a key role, which civil society organisations play in achieving participation. This part of the thesis also looked at scholarly debates on the concept of urban management and the relationship between citizens and urban authorities within three of its well-developed contemporary approaches: the traditional, market-based, and participatory models. There is also a recent confluence of key ideas from the different models resulting in an emerging urban management model associated with the ‘Third Way’ politics. Overall, the reviewed literature demonstrates that the different models of urban management have developed in response to prevailing contextual conditions.

This chapter begins Part Two of the thesis, which deals broadly with the policy and practice of public participation in Johannesburg, with a special focus on the
involvement of communities residing in informal settlements in governance processes. The chapter provides a contextual background for the study of the informal settlement communities’ participation in city-level policy-making processes by analysing Johannesburg’s first century of municipal history. It seeks to understand the relationship between the city authorities and its disenfranchised ‘native’ residents in general, and those living in ‘squatter camps’/informal settlements in particular, before and during the apartheid era. The chapter also looks at the post-apartheid municipal transformation processes and the city’s hybrid governance approach during the period covered by the study: 2003-2005.

This chapter comprises seven sections. Following this introduction, I explore, in four separate sections, the city’s governance approaches and the relationships between the city’s authorities and its ‘squatters’/informal settlement communities during its pre-apartheid, apartheid, transition to democracy and post-apartheid eras. Section 5.6 outlines the mechanisms of public participation in the city during 2003-05. Section 5.7, which concludes this chapter, highlights the main features of these eras.

5.2 The pre-apartheid era: beginning of urban segregation in Johannesburg

During the early decades of its existence, Johannesburg grew significantly in terms of its population size and economic position in the country. Ten years after the discovery of gold in the area, Johannesburg grew from a village with a few hundred people to a town with about 120 000 inhabitants, and reached nearly a million inhabitants in the subsequent 40 years (Leyds, 1964). Within 60 years of its foundation, Johannesburg became the largest and most powerful financial and commercial city in Africa, south of the equator (Beavon, 1997). However, despite (and perhaps because of) the city’s impressive economic growth, the 1940s witnessed the first proliferation of ‘squatter camps’ on its peripheries, which very soon became the target of racial segregation campaigns by the authorities.
The course of Johannesburg’s early development was interrupted in 1900 by a war that changed the political trajectory of South Africa and divided Johannesburg’s municipal history into two distinct phases. Before 1900, Johannesburg had very limited self government with the national government assuming responsibility for appointing authorities to run the city’s affairs (Leyds, 1964). At its very beginning, the town was administered by a ‘mining commissioner’ who was an official appointed by the central government, and a ‘diggers committee’, which was an advisory body to the mining commissioner elected by the mine diggers (ibid.). Very soon after its foundation, the sanitary situation worsened in the town, particularly in the slum areas, prompting the authorities to set up a sanitary board in 1887 as an organ of local self-government. It was responsible for providing and managing sanitation services to the residents (Gaule, 2005). Other basic services such as water, electricity and gas were provided through concessions granted to the sanitary board by the provincial administration (Leyds, 1964).

After 1900, a local authority along the lines of the British model of local government was established (Maud, 1938). Following the beginning of the Anglo-Boer war, the British troops entered Johannesburg and its municipal administration was passed on to the hands of a military governor (Green, 1957). A year later, a transitional municipal council was established for the town. In December 1903, a wholly ‘elected’ body of 30 councillors replaced the appointed transitional council (Maud, 1938), marking the beginning of a civic administration for Johannesburg, which was locally representative of, and accountable to white residents only (ibid.). The main features of this administration included an elected council for three years, which had authority to elect a mayor; a system of standing portfolio committees and 15 executive departments including a town clerk; the council also had the authority to raise large loans; and the responsibility of providing citizens with public utility services, and vague powers to supervise ‘native locations’ and Asiatic bazaars (Green, 1957). This local government system served Johannesburg for the next 50
years, facing challenges brought about by the city’s fast population growth and increased economic activities, as well as changes in national urban policies. One of the challenges that faced Johannesburg’s newly established council was that of the ‘squatter camps’. Following the outbreak of a bubonic plague in Johannesburg in March 1904, the town council decided to relocate these ‘squatter camps’, which had established themselves in the area from Brickfields to Klipspruit; the nucleus of present day Soweto (Gaule, 2005).

Although the removal of the ‘squatters’ from the town was justified by concerns for public health as Harrison (1992) points out, Huchzermeyer (2004) argues that the real aim of the move was segregation of the urban sphere. Segregation in Johannesburg was further entrenched by implementing measures introduced by national policies to deal with the large numbers of ‘native’ black Africans in urban areas (Parnell and Pirie, 1991). These measures constituted the early foundation of urban segregation in South Africa as they formally began the disenfranchisement of black Africans, and created separate racially based localities (Carr, 1990). A key piece of legislation in this regard was the Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923, which imposed restrictions on the employment of Africans in urban areas, and required white local authorities to remove black Africans from areas designated for whites, to specified places on the urban peripheries (ibid.). The segregation of black Africans was strongly supported by the attitude of ‘white’ residents of Johannesburg at that time, who believed that:

The town [Johannesburg] was created by the white man, belongs to him and to him alone. Natives are needed for unskilled work, but any in excess of the number so needed are redundant and must be prevented or removed by the authorities. They can be given no vote in the administration or in any elections. The Natives are not capable of supporting white civilisation, and therefore their wives and children must, if possible, be prevented from coming to the Rand (Leyds, 1964:291-92).

The attitude of the white residents towards their ‘native’ counterparts was prevalent not only in Johannesburg but across the country (ibid.).
Racial segregation in Johannesburg was further deepened with the establishment of separate locations for its black African residents. In 1931, the new African township of Orlando was established. This move was consolidated later after World War II when Johannesburg authorities facilitated a rapid expansion in housing provision for black Africans in the city’s south-western areas of Moroka, Mofolo, Central Western Jabavu, Meadowlands, Dube, and Diepkloof, which collectively gave birth to the township of ‘Soweto’ in 1963 (Mandy, 1984). There was also a similar pattern of removals of other races, which created separate racial localities for Indians and coloureds in Lenasia and Eldorado Park respectively (Seedat, 2001).

The industrial boom during the years of World War II forced the apartheid government to adopt a policy of ‘economic realism’ (Huchzermeyer, 2004). Consequently, the operation of pass laws, introduced by the Native Urban Areas Act of 1923, was temporarily relaxed allowing unprecedented urbanisation levels in Johannesburg (ibid.). A number of ‘squatter’ settlements sprung up on the south-western peripheries of Johannesburg, where land had been purchased by the municipality for the establishment of townships for black Africans (Parnell and Pirie, 1991 - cited in Huchzermeyer, 2004:95). The camps included Ntoi, Bhaduz, Mpanza, Komo, and Monogoaha (see Figure 5.1). By the end of 1946, there were about 63 000 people living in those ‘squatter camps’ (Bonner, 1990).

The relationship between the ‘squatter’ communities and the Johannesburg Town Council during this period was characterised by defiance from the ‘squatters’ on the one hand, and repressive measures from the city authorities on the other. The ‘squatters’ practised self-rule by building, running and protecting their camps. Well-documented examples in this regard include the ‘squatter’ movement led by James Mpanza, the leader of the ‘Sofasonke Party’, who orchestrated an invasion of a vacant land near Orlando and set up a self-administered informal settlement in 1944 (Harrison, 1992). Other examples of ‘squatter’ movements during this time included those led by individuals such as Edward Khumalo and Abel Ntoi near Orlando in
1946, and by Oriel Monongoaha, Samuel Kgoma, and Schreiner Baduza (ibid.). These ‘squatter’ communities developed their own ways of running their affairs outside the ambit of the state. Their leaders regulated scarce resources such as water and food, and some of them even attempted to provide basic services in a similar manner to those provided by the official municipalities (Bonner, 1990). The leaders also responded to the social problems within their camps, such as crime, uncontrolled youth, and social disorder by means of a rudimentary criminal justice system (ibid.). The leader of the Mpanza squatter camp, for example, employed police, set up his own courts and carried out punishments in the Orlando ‘squatter camp’ (Harrison, 1992).

Figure 5.1: Location of ‘squatter camps’ in the vicinity of the emerging Soweto in the 1940s. Source: drawn by the author after consulting Beavon (2004:124).
The ‘squatters’” defiance did not go without a response from the Johannesburg Town Council. Initially, the Council’s policy was to destroy the ‘squatter camps’; a policy that failed due to effective tactics used by the ‘squatters’ themselves. Oriel Monongoaha, a ‘squatter’ leader, described the failure of the Johannesburg authorities to destroy their camps by saying:

The Government was like a man who has a cornfield which is invaded by birds. He chases the birds from one part of the field and they alight in another part…we squatters are the birds…we will see whether it is the farmer or the birds who gets tired first (Western, 1981 - cited in Harrison, 1992:15)

The ‘squatter’ leaders were also able to command legal services to protect their ‘illegal’ camps (Bonner, 1990). The leader of the Mpanza ‘squatter camp’ used a test case in 1926, in which the court ruled that ‘people employed in the city could not be removed if they had no alternative housing’ (ibid.), to galvanise his movement. Some ‘squatters’ even had their own legal teams of lawyers advising them on where to ‘squat’ (ibid.). These tactics ‘stalled the council for sufficiently long to secure the de facto acknowledgement of the ‘squatters’, and the ultimate provision of ‘controlled squatter camp’ (ibid.).

Eventually, the Johannesburg Town Council recognised the failure of its attempts to eradicate informal settlements and adopted a policy of ‘controlled squatting’, and established Moroka as the first major site-and-service scheme in the country, where 50 000 people could live within an officially sanctioned informal settlement (Harrison, 1992). Nevertheless, the sentiment of the whites towards black Africans continued and eventually led to the election of the National Party in 1948, on the basis of a manifesto that made clear the party’s ‘commitment to compulsory urban segregation’ (Mabin, 1992:419). I discuss the implication of this development on the system of local administration of the city and the relationship with its ‘native’ population, especially the ‘squatters’, in the next section.
5.3 Johannesburg under the apartheid rule

In 1948, a watershed national parliamentary election in South Africa brought the conservative National Party (NP) to power, ushering in an era of consolidated and ‘legalised racial segregation’ and discrimination against black Africans in Johannesburg, and the country as a whole (Beavon, 2004). During the election campaigns, the NP devised the term *apartheid*, which means ‘separateness’. This was in opposition to the ruling United Party, which also had practised racial segregation, as discussed in the previous section. The key element of NP’s ideology was that ‘segregation should be made retroactive for everyone…implying that people should be deprived of tenurial rights and bodily moved out of any mixed areas they occupied’ (Mabin, 1992:420). The nationalist *apartheid* ideology appealed to white voters who gave the NP a mandate to apply strict measures of segregation and separate development for the different racial groups. In implementing the ideology of separate development for the different races, the government adopted three measures at the local level: intensified segregation of the different races; effective control of movement into the urban areas; and reduced financial burden of urban black people on the central government and white local authorities (Beavon, 2004). These measures were realised during the four decades that apartheid rule lasted in South Africa. I discuss these in the following paragraphs.

The 1950s witnessed the intensification of racial segregation and legalised discrimination against Johannesburg’s non-white residents in general, and the ‘squatters’ in particular (Huchzermeyer, 2004). The national government enacted the notorious Group Areas Act of 1950, which imposed restrictions on interracial property transactions and interracial changes occupation of property (Lemon, 1976). The Johannesburg municipal authorities used the Act to forcefully remove about 58,000 black Africans from the ‘squatter camps’, which were established on its peripheries, to low-cost housing projects in the areas of Meadowlands and Diepkloof (Parnell and Pirie, 1991). However, the number of migrants from rural areas in search of jobs in the city continued, and the council was unable to cope with their housing
and other needs (Shorten, 1970). As Johannesburg was perceived to be on the verge of an urban crisis, policy-makers in the national government regarded the solution to the looming crisis to be the removal of black Africans to their homelands (Mandy, 1984). Consequently, finance for building new houses in the city was stopped and a new law (the Native Resettlement Act of 1951) which authorised forceful removal of ‘squatters’, was enacted in 1951 (Parnell and Pirie, 1991).

The 1960s was the second stage of apartheid, which represented a continuation of white control over other races ‘through the concept of racial self-determination or separate development’ (Huchzermeyer, 2004:98). In response to the unrelenting influx of black Africans from rural areas to urban centres, the national government introduced the Urban Black Councils Act (1961), which was aimed at lifting the ‘burden’ of black people from the shoulders of white authorities. The Act provided for the white local authorities to establish, under prescribed conditions, urban black councils for black residential areas within their areas of jurisdiction (Cloete, 1989). Soweto, for example, was divided into several administrative areas run by an appointed white superintendent and ‘elected’ Bantu (black) advisory boards. Representatives from all the black advisory boards regularly met the management of the city’s Non-European Affairs Department and the Council’s Non-European Affairs Committee, to discuss major policy issues and new regulations before they were implemented (Shorten, 1970). The coloured and Indian communities were administered by a separate section of the Non-European Affairs Department. Later, the coloured community in Johannesburg had a special management committee, which exercised executive powers and had been consulted on local government matters that related to its jurisdiction (ibid.).

The black people who resorted to living in ‘squatter camps’ on white-owned farms near Johannesburg, were brutally displaced to black homelands (Shorten, 1970). The defiance of the ‘squatters’ and their attempts at self-government during the 1940s, had subsided. The apartheid government continued to regard ‘squatter camps’ as
visible manifestations of a lack of state control, and started a brutal campaign to eliminate all shantytowns and slums (Harrison, 1992). In addition, a repressive urban policy emerged that aimed to reverse the flow of blacks into urban areas, and restore social control (ibid.). As a result, the areas of Sophiatown and Newclare in Johannesburg were destroyed. This was also accompanied by a major construction programme, during which the black township of Soweto was built. By the mid 1960s, informal settlements in and around Johannesburg had largely been eliminated (Harrison, 1992).

The decade of the 1970s saw direct involvement by the national government in the administration of the black Africans in urban areas. In 1971, the national parliament passed the Black Affairs Administration Act, which provided for the establishment of regional administrative boards that took over the responsibility for the administration of black urban areas from white municipalities. According to the provisions of the Act, the West Rand Administration Board was established in 1973, and became responsible for the black townships in the area of Johannesburg (Mandy, 1984). Once the administrative control of Soweto was removed from the Johannesburg City Council, the fiscal base of the township was undermined. Traditionally, the Johannesburg Council had subsidised the Soweto Native Revenue Account, and without this support the domestic rent and service charges were not sufficient to finance the maintenance and upgrading of services and infrastructure in Soweto (Bekker and Humphries, 1985 - cited in Parnell and Pirie, 1991:137). Increased rentals levied by the West Rand Administration Board and its successor the Soweto Council, were met with hostility and active opposition (Parnell and Pirie, 1991).

The hostility and resistance of the black Africans, which was growing during the 1950s and 1960s against the apartheid rule, increased with the eruption of the Soweto uprising. On 16 June 1976, the police fired on thousands of black school children marching against a decision by government to introduce Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. This event led to waves of riots in Greater Soweto
as well as many other black townships around the country (Mandy, 1984). The government responded by appointing a commission of enquiry into the riots. The commission identified many grounds for the dissatisfaction among black people that contributed to the mood of anger and revolt. Among these were the failures of the Black Advisory Boards, the Urban Bantu Councils and the Regional Administration Boards, to satisfy the black population (Mandy, 1984). Consequently, in 1977 the government introduced the Community Councils Act, which repealed the Urban Black Councils Act of 1961 and conferred limited powers of self-government on black townships (Mandy, 1984). The Community Councils Act gave the minister of black affairs the power to identify and establish black community councils for black urban residential areas (ibid.). Black residents who had the ‘prescribed qualifications’ were given the right to elect the members of these councils. As a result, community councils were established for the black areas of Soweto, Diepmeadow and Dobsonville (ibid.).

The first recognition of the permanence of black residence next to the ‘white’ cities came during the 1980s, when the national Parliament passed the Black Local Authorities Act in 1982. The Act provided for the replacement of the community councils established in the 1970s by black municipal authorities comparable to those of white municipalities (Cloete, 1989). In Johannesburg, the provisions of the Black Local Authorities Act were translated in the formation of town councils (Black Local Authorities) for the areas of Soweto, Diepmeadow, Dobsonville and Alexandra (ibid.). A slightly different arrangement was pursued for the coloured and Indian areas, where the administration of areas such as Lenasia, Eldorado Park, and the cluster of coloured townships in the west (Newclare, Westbury, Bosmont etc.) continued under the authority of the Johannesburg City Council (see Figure 5.2). However, consultative committees and at a later stage management committees, with delegated powers, were set up (Cloete, 1989).
Although the creation of black local authorities has been seen as an ‘acknowledgement that the old policies of influx control as a way of regulating black urbanisation had failed’ (Tomlinson et al., 2003:8), it sparked widespread contention in black townships which had previously been administered by white officials (Huchzermeyer, 2004). Elections of councillors for the new black local authorities were severely boycotted by contesting constituencies, such as the township-based civic movement, which emerged after the events of the police brutality in 1976 (ibid.). The civic movement mobilised community activism around local issues such
as housing and transportation, and more important, issues of local governance (*ibid.*). The movement was also involved in boycott campaigns against the elections of the Black Local Authorities and later against the increase of rent and service charges (Tomlinson, 1999). The campaigns crippled the black local authorities and led to more defiance by the black African population against the state by adopting measures such as boycotting white businesses, boycotting police stations and taking disputes to ‘people’s courts’, and attempts at peoples’ education associated with the boycotting of government schools (Boraine, 1988 - cited in Huchzermeier, 2004).

The boycott was led by the Soweto Civic Association, which was at the centre of an influential network of neighbourhood structures (Tomlinson, 1999) ushering in a whole new era of mobilisation against the apartheid state. Eventually, those from the black communities who were prepared to serve in the black local authorities became unable to provide acceptable services to their communities, and allowed popular leaders who had strong grassroots support, to be at the front of the opposition to the black local authorities (Beavon, 1997). By the end of the 1980s, the skewed logic of apartheid was clearly manifested in the racial divisions that characterised the area, which later became the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality (see Figure 5.2). There were 13 local authorities presiding over communities that were racially divided into white, black African, Indian and coloured groups (City of Johannesburg, 2001). Areas of high taxable development and concentrations of relatively wealthy white residents were ringed by municipal boundaries, while poorer ‘non-white’ residents were forced to remain in areas with limited rates income - outside the boundaries and excluded from the budgets of increasingly wealthier white local authorities. Towards the late 1980s, the Soweto rent boycott escalated and led to negotiations between the Soweto People’s Delegation and the Transvaal Provincial Administration (Tomlinson, 1999). The negotiation resulted in the signing of the Soweto Accord on 24 September 1990 which, arguably, represented a turning point in the history of local government in Johannesburg.
5.4 Johannesburg’s transition to democracy: a search for integration and efficiency

The signing of the Soweto Accord in September 1990 paved the way for the transition of Johannesburg from the rule of apartheid to democracy. The transition involved dealing with the institutional fragmentation, which was inherited from apartheid, addressing the service delivery crisis that hit local governments in the area of Johannesburg, and the boycott campaigns, as well as new challenges that emanated from the transition process. In dealing with these challenges, policies that emphasised the ‘Third Way’ ideas of institutional integration and efficient service delivery were introduced. While the approach to dealing with the transition challenges of the early 1990s in the city was inclusive, the late 1990s witnessed a shift back to a technocratic, top-down approach in dealing with challenges of transformation.

5.4.1 Negotiating the integration of the city

According to the provisions of the Soweto Accord, which was signed in September 1990, the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber was established in April 1991. This was designed as a mechanism for crisis management and conflict-resolution, and as a forum for urban policy debate to tackle the complex, multifaceted local problems of Johannesburg, in an integrated and participatory manner (Wooldridge, 1996). Initially, the membership of the Chamber comprised representatives of the Transvaal Provincial Administration, the 13 local government authorities in the Greater Johannesburg area, and civic associations (Tomlison, 1999). Later on, the membership of the Chamber grew and eventually included representatives of 53 organisations; all relevant local authorities, civic associations, white ratepayers and residents associations, the newly unbanned ANC and other political parties (ibid.).

In addition, there were many observer bodies such as trade unions, educational institutions, and organised business (Seedat, 2001). Over the next two years of its existence, the Central Witwatersrand Chamber made a number of noteworthy
advances such as the introduction of the notion of local level negotiations; the actual experience of negotiating for the parties concerned; and the formulation of future urban policy options (Abrahams, 1998).

At the time of Johannesburg’s local negotiation in the Central Witwatersrand Chamber, national negotiations on the transition of local government were taking place in the Local Government Negotiating Forum (see subsection 3.7.1). The national negotiations led to the promulgation of the Local Government Transition Act of 1993, which laid out the path for transforming local government in the country. In accordance with the provisions of the Transition Act, the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber was restructured in 1993 to become the Greater Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum (Tomlinson, 1999). Unlike the broad agenda of the Chamber, the Forum was focused on specific tasks laid down in the Transition Act: to select a model of local government for the City of Johannesburg; define boundaries; allocate powers and functions for a transitional metropolitan council and its substructures, and appoint a transitional metropolitan council to govern the city until local government elections in 1995 (Seedat, 2001).

The main theme that dominated the local negotiations in both the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber and its successor the Greater Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum, was the slogan ‘One city, One tax-base’, which emerged during the township boycott campaigns of the 1980s (Tomlinson, 1999). The aim was to create a functionally integrated metropolitan region consisting of a common area of economic activity and a logical frame of reference for co-ordinated planning. To achieve this, the model of local government for the city had to be underpinned by a single unified tax-base, with no barriers against revenues raised in one area being spent in another (ibid.). The rationale for this position was that all residents of Johannesburg had contributed to its economic growth, but were forced into separate municipal jurisdictions, thus excluding the majority from its benefits (City of Johannesburg, 2001). In November 1994, the negotiations in the Greater...
Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum resulted in a proclamation, which dissolved the 13 former apartheid local authorities in the area of Johannesburg; established a two-tier local authority for Johannesburg consisting of a Transitional Metropolitan Council (TMC) and seven metropolitan local councils; and provided for all powers and functions of the dissolved councils to be vested in the TMC (ibid.).

The Johannesburg TMC and its seven councils were inaugurated in December 1994 and were given a mandate to prepare for the local government elections scheduled for November 1995 (Johannesburg City Council, 2001). This arrangement, which established the TMC with its seven metropolitan local municipalities for Johannesburg, was short-lived. An intervention by the Gauteng provincial government in mid-1995 reduced the number of substructures from seven to four local municipalities, re-demarcated the substructure boundaries, and allocated powers and duties for the new local government structures (Tomlinson, 1999; City of Johannesburg, 2001). The intervention by the Gauteng provincial government was, arguably, the beginning of a trend of moving away from negotiated responses to challenges of governance in Johannesburg by societal partners, as demonstrated in the Central Witwatersrand Metropolitan Chamber and its successor, the Greater Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum, to a top-down approach; a shift that would have far-reaching consequences for the city. This trend of imposing top-down solutions to the city’s governance problems was further entrenched in the late 1990s as the city faced its financial crisis, which I discuss later in this section.

In November 1995, the first democratic local government election was held, marking the beginning of an interim phase of the local government’s transition process throughout the entire country. After the elections, the focus of debate shifted from boundaries, powers and functions, to the complete transformation of local government. The priority of the newly established Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council (GJMC) was to build a non-racial and a democratic system of local governance in the city by consolidating the previously racially fragmented local
entities into new local government political and institutional structures (Seedat pers. com., 2005). Practically, the challenge facing the metropolitan council was to re-organise the former racially based entities into the newly established GJMC and its four sub-metropolitan councils. This involved clarifying the powers and functions of the councils, establishing an interim industrial council, appointing five chief executive officers, and designing new institutional structures. Following that was the process of deploying each of the approximately 28 000 staff members to their respective municipalities and posts. (Seedat, 2001)

5.4.2 Financial crisis and the turn towards efficiency

While dealing with the challenges of institutional reorganisation, the GJMC actively sought to extend basic services and infrastructure to the historically disadvantaged communities in the Greater Johannesburg area. This involved the formulation of land development objectives (LDOs) as required by the Development Facilitation Act of 1995 and Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) (Seedat, 2001). It also involved the establishment of an intra-metropolitan fiscal system that would ensure cross-subsidisation between the metropolitan council and its sub-metropolitan councils (ibid.). By mid-1997, the city began to face a financial crisis as spending increased dramatically and led to a serious cash flow problem in the GJMC (Tomlinson et. al., 2003). The city’s credit rating had been drastically reduced on the basis of its financial indicators and poor confidence in its ability to manage its financial affairs (ibid.). The GJMC failed to pay its creditors for three months and the city’s budget deficit reached R314 million (ibid.).

This situation prompted an investigation that highlighted what had been considered the immediate and long-term causes. These included: unaffordable and unrealistic structures of the five councils; the transfer of responsibility for billing to the local councils, which affected the integrated cash management system; the local councils’ use of collected cash to pay their own debts, rather than paying overdue water and electricity debts to the metropolitan council; the effect of the Sandton rates boycott;
the difficulty in securing long-term capital finance; a ‘culture of abundance’, believing that taxes could be raised to pay for planned expenditure; a lack of performance management and accountability, and a ‘culture of non-payment’ for rates and services charges, and the lack of effective credit-control policies and practices. (City of Johannesburg, 2001b)

The GJMC concluded that the financial crisis was a symptom of a deep underlying organisational crisis (Seedat, 2001; Tomlinson et. al., 2003). This conclusion formed the basis of an intervention by the Gauteng Provincial Government, which established a 10-member committee, known as the ‘Committee of Ten’. This comprised two councillors from the GJMC and two from each of the four substructures, and the appointment of external consultants (City of Johannesburg, 2001b). The terms of reference of the Committee of Ten and the consultants included: the creation of a working capital reserve; reduction of the capital budget to contractually committed projects only; and reduction of the operating budget (ibid.). Seven months after its establishment, the Committee of Ten was extended to the Committee of Fifteen by including five members from opposition parties, and the mandate of the committee was widened to include a budget review, the preparation of a number of non-core services for privatisation, and the finalisation of an organisational review (ibid.).

Towards the end of 1998, the GJMC conducted another assessment, which found that the city was facing a set of critical problems, and that the interventions made so far only took the city halfway towards a lasting solution. It also established that curtailing expenditure was not a sustainable answer in itself. The focus of the interventions on financial stabilisation was seen to be driving Johannesburg back into crisis, as critical infrastructure investments were neglected for the sake of achieving a balanced budget (City of Johannesburg, 2001b). The assessment further identified institutional problems associated with the model of governance in the city that needed attention. First, the existing two-tier system of political governance (i.e. the metropolitan council and the four metropolitan local councils) created a situation where local
interests served by a local council often competed, and even conflicted, with the priorities of the city as a whole. Second, the political and institutional fragmentation and competition between the five councils made it difficult to develop a cohesive political and redistribution agenda for the city. Third, the lack of separation between policy, regulation and operations made it difficult for elected representatives to measure performance, and to hold specific staff members responsible for their non-delivery. Fourth, the city’s financial situation was characterised by fragmented revenue and expenditure arrangements, consistent overspending, low payment levels, growing arrears and negligible capital expenditure. (GJMC, 2000)

The GJMC reached a conclusion that Johannesburg’s financial problems were attributable to poor political governance structures and institutional arrangements, inadequate financial management, and a lack of management capacity and performance appraisal - all of which resulted in a service delivery crisis in the city (City of Johannesburg, 2001b). Therefore, it was decided that a further forum would be set up to continue and complete the processes started by the Committee of Ten and the Committee of Fifteen. Accordingly, the five councils agreed in early 1999 to establish the ‘Transformation Lekgotla’ as an entity with a slightly broader mandate and a longer time frame than the previous two committees to ensure stability (ibid.).

The Transformation Lekgotla appointed a management team headed by a consultant (Mr. Ketso Gordhan) for a period of two years, to meet a set of specific goals. These included carrying out ‘a targeted programme of cutbacks, corporatisation, and selling off of municipal assets’ which changed the face of the City (Pape and McDonald, 2002:6). In addition, the Transformation Lekgotla carried out the task of transforming the institutional design of the Johannesburg Metro and its substructures and building a new administration (City of Johannesburg, 2001b).

By the end of the first quarter of 1999, the consultant and his management team finalised a three-year institutional transformation plan, called iGoli 2002. The plan sought to consolidate the early steps towards institutional integration, which were
taken at the local negotiations in the early 1990s, and introduced new ideas to achieve efficiency in government processes (Tomlinson et al., 2003). In sharp contrast to the earlier fiscal stabilisation measures taken by the Committee of Ten and Committee of Fifteen, the iGoli 2002 plan was focused on institutional arrangements of the city’s financial and service delivery challenges (ibid.). The aim was to ensure enhanced and more cost-effective service delivery through reduction of institutional fragmentation, elimination of duplication, improvement of accountability, increasing focus on human resource development, and the provision of incentives for performance (City of Johannesburg, 2001b). A critical component of the iGoli 2002 plan was the shift from a two-tier governance system to a single-tier unicity system with regional administrations. In the former arrangement, both the metropolitan council and its local municipalities had original powers and functions, while in the new arrangement the metropolitan council retained all original municipal powers and functions but could delegate or decentralise powers and functions to the regional administrations (ibid.).

Overall, the iGoli 2002 plan envisaged the City of Johannesburg to function efficiently and in an integrated manner through a combination of political structures, a core administration, regional administration, and utilities, agencies, and corporatised entities. I return to these components in further details in the next section.

5.4.3 Opposition to the iGoli 2002 institutional reforms

Contrary to the inclusive, negotiated agreements of the early phase of Johannesburg’s transition to democracy, dealing with the financial crisis of the late 1990s and the introduction of the iGoli 2002 institutional reforms were carried out in a top-down fashion and were heavily influenced by consultants. Social actors in the city, such as civic and ratepayer associations and trade unions, were excluded from the process of the developing the plan. Not surprisingly, a number of those groups, particularly labour unions, staged active opposition to the iGoli 2002 plan (Seedat, 2001). The
South African Municipal Workers Union (SAMWU) and the Independent Municipal and Allied Trade Unions (IMATU), the two biggest unions in local government in South Africa with over 30 000 members in Johannesburg, forged an alliance against the iGoli plan, despite their traditional differences (ibid.). Their opposition hinged on issues related to the specifics of the transformation agenda, such as the three-year job guarantee offered to their members, lack of consultation in the design of the new system, and the ideas associated with the new organisation of the city, such as privatisation and ‘commodification’ of essential services (City of Johannesburg, 2001b; Seedat, 2001; UN-HABITAT, 2002).

Another opposition to the iGoli 2002 plan came from a group of NGOs and academics structured under a broad banner called the Anti-privatisation Forum, which sought to resist privatisation and cost-efficiency driven institutional restructuring in Johannesburg and other parts of the country during 1999 and 2000. Within the ANC, the ruling party in the City of Johannesburg, there was an added area of opposition to the iGoli 2002 plan. Trevor Ngwane, an ANC councillor from Pimville in Soweto, led an opposition that created a heated debate within the party and occasionally spilled out to the public domain. Ngwane was eventually dismissed from the ANC and in 2000 formed the Soweto Electricity Crisis Committee, a social movement that opposed the disconnection of electricity in poor households in Soweto (City of Johannesburg, 2001b). Despite the vocal opposition, government officials insisted that a range of stakeholders in the city had supported the iGoli 2002 plan. These included the national and provincial governments, political parties across the board, business groups, and community-based organisations (Seedat, pers. com., 2005).

In this section, I have sought to show the significant involvement of the previously disadvantaged black communities, through civic organisations, in the negotiated transition of Johannesburg, as well as in opposing the iGoli 2002 reforms. However, there is no evidence of directly involving the city’s informal settlement communities in these processes. One of the reasons for this absence is the fact that apartheid’s
repressive measures had forcefully removed ‘squatter camps’ from the area of Johannesburg. During the 1990s, most of the city’s current informal settlements were either being set up or had just been formed, as I explain in the next section. Therefore, the communities living in these settlements were not able to engage in the policy processes in the city.

### 5.5 Johannesburg under the democratic dispensation

A decade after the advent of democracy in South Africa, Johannesburg continued to grow both in population size and economic significance. Despite the ending of legalised racial segregation and discrimination against the non-white population, the city continued to endure deep socio-economic inequalities between the different racial groups perpetuated by post-apartheid economic forces and policies. During this period, the new institutional design for the city, which was introduced during the 1990s, was consolidated in a way that sought to achieve the objectives of integration, efficiency and participation as espoused by the national policy-framework on local government (see section 3.7). In the following subsections, I look in detail at the socio-economic profile and governance system of Johannesburg during the period covered in this study.

#### 5.5.1 Informal settlements in Johannesburg

As from its early beginning, migration remained the main driver of Johannesburg’s population growth. With the increasing prospects of better job opportunities in the fastest growing economic centre in the country, migrant black Africans continued moving into the city after the end of the apartheid rule. In 2001, the population of Johannesburg increased by 22% from 1995 to reach 3.2 million (Statistics South Africa, 2001). The city’s total number of households in 2001 was 1 006 932; 38.2% more than the number of households in 1996 (City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, 2006). However, the average size of the household in 2001 dropped to 3.2 members compared to 3.7 members in 1995 due to an increase in number of
households with one member from 16% of the total households in 1995 to 24% in 2001 (ibid.). The City Council estimates that in 2005, the total number of households reached 1.3 million and predicts that it will reach more than two million households in 2012 (ibid.). The population of the peripheral areas in the northern parts of city such as Diepsloot and Ivory Park, which are in close proximity to job opportunities in the Midrand corridor, grew sharply between 1996 and 2001, by 179% and 69%, respectively. Conversely, during the same period, the areas of Diepkloof and Soweto in the south of the city, which lack job opportunities and are situated far away from the city’s job market, grew by only 1% and 14% respectively (Statistics South Africa, 2001).

Most of the immigrants in Johannesburg during the late 1980s and the early 1990s were accommodated in informal settlements on the southern and northern peripheries of the city. An audit of informal settlements in Johannesburg by the Gauteng provincial housing department (Gauteng Department of Housing, 2005) revealed that in 2005 the city had 124 informal settlements, with 147 248 shacks accommodating 157 903 households, representing 12% of the city’s population. Ninety-three percent of the residents of the enumerated informal settlements are South African citizens and the rest are foreigners; mostly from neighbouring countries (ibid.). In addition, the provincial audit found that 55% of the city’s shacks are in the southern areas Soweto, Diepkloof/Meadowlands and Ennerdale/Orange Farm/Lenasia); 45% in the northern parts, which include Ivory Park, Diepsloot and Alexandra; and the rest are smaller pockets of shacks spread in the different parts of the city (ibid.). With the exception of the informal settlements in and around Soweto, Ennerdale and Orange Farm on the southern peripheries of the city, which have only 11% of the total number of shacks, the majority of the city’s informal settlements were built during the period of transition to democracy in the early 1990s. (City of Johannesburg, 2004a)
Households living in Johannesburg’s informal settlements are predominantly unemployed poor. In 2005, only 15% of the households in the city’s informal settlements were earning R 1 000 or more and less than 1% were earning more than R
3 500 per month (Gauteng Department of Housing, 2005). Despite the absence of credible data on unemployment rates in the city’s informal settlements, there indications that unemployment rates are very high. In 2001, unemployment rate in Ivory Park in the north of the city was at 53% (Statistics South Africa, 2003). Although this figure includes people living in both ‘formal’ and informal parts of the township, it still shows that areas riddled with informal settlements have higher rates of unemployment from the overall rate of the city, which was at 37.3% in 2001 (ibid.)

However, Johannesburg’s inadequate housing is not limited to shacks in informal settlements, but also includes other forms such as backyard shacks and shacks on serviced sites. In 2004, the City of Johannesburg estimated that 14% of the households in the city live in backyard shacks and another 4% in shacks in serviced sites (City of Johannesburg Council, 2004c). This puts the total number of households living in some form of informality in the city at 30%, raising significant questions about their representation and voice in fora of city-level policy formulation processes. I deal with this in detail in Chapter 7.

5.5.2 Johannesburg’s governance system

The design of Johannesburg’s governance system during the period covered in this study (from the beginning of 2003 to the end of 2005) was a direct result of the processes and forces of the transition to democracy (sections 5.4 and 5.5). The city’s institutional architecture consisted of two branches: the political and the administrative (bureaucratic). The political branch (see Figure 5.4) is a complex web of political formations that are mainly responsible for city-level policy formulation and legislation in the city. It comprised the city council, the city’s executive mayor, the mayoral committee, section 79 and section 80 committees, and ward committees.

Johannesburg’s city council, which consisted of 217 councillors (109 directly elected from the city’s wards and 108 elected by a system of proportional representation), is vested with municipal legislative and executive powers (Joburg, 2003; Republic of
South Africa, 1998b). The city council also elects the city’s executive mayor from among its members, who is automatically delegated all the powers of the city council, except the final approval of the city’s IDP and budget, which remain vested with the council (City of Johannesburg, 2005). The executive mayor takes the leading role in city-level policy processes that include: identifying the priority needs of the city; recommending intervention strategies and approaches to address those needs; and reporting back to the council on the progress made in addressing those needs (City of Johannesburg, 2001b).

The executive mayor also leads a 10-member mayoral committee, which functions as a city-level cabinet with each member having executive responsibility for his/her portfolio (ibid.). There are also mayoral sub-committees, the functions of which are to ensure integration of the council’s work across the various portfolios and departments. The executive mayor appoints members of the mayoral committee to serve as members of one of the three mayoral sub-committees: human development; economic development; and housing, infrastructure and services (Joburg, 2003; City of Johannesburg, 2003).
Other political organs of the city council, which are involved in city-level policy decisions but to a lesser degree, include Section 79 and Section 80 committees and ward committees. Section 79 committees are established by the council from among its members and may include members who are non-councillors. The council determines the functions of each of these committees and may delegate some of its powers to it. One of these committees is the Petitions and Public Participation Committee, which is chaired by the Speaker of the city council and tasked with overseeing public participation in the City. Section 80 committees are also established by the council from its members to assist the executive mayor, who appoints a chairperson from the mayoral committee and may delegate powers and duties to each committee. The function of the various Section 80 committees is to consider and approve reports and policies and forward them to the mayoral
committee for consideration, before referring to the council for approval. Ward committees are the formal vehicles of public participation and are considered in detail in Chapter Seven.

While legislation and policy formulation are the responsibility of the political branch, management and implementation of bylaws and policies, and co-ordination of all council activities, are the responsibility of the city’s administrative (bureaucratic) branch. The city’s administrative branch (see Figure 5.5) comprises a core administration, 11 regional administrations, and 12 council-owned companies known as utilities, agencies and corporatised units (UACs). The city’s core administration represents a strong managerial spine and is headed by a city manager. It consists of central distribution departments that deliver direct services, such as the departments of development planning, finance, metropolitan police, and emergency management services. The core administration also includes departments that are based on the idea of the separation between policy, monitoring and evaluation on the one hand, and operations on the other such, as the contract management unit for UAC, health, housing, and social development. In addition, there are departments which provide internal support services such as the Department of Corporate Services (City of Johannesburg, 2003a)

The 11 regional administrations were responsible for managing the municipal activities in the city’s 11 subdivisions (see Figure 5.5). These regional administrations were responsible for providing social services, such as primary healthcare, social services, housing, libraries, and sport and recreation to local communities. The regional administrations also operate ‘peoples’ centres’, which are built to facilitate direct access by local communities to information and customer queries. Each region has its own management team and is headed by a regional director. (City of Johannesburg, 2001b; City of Johannesburg, 2003a)
The UACs are autonomous companies established in terms of the Companies Act to deliver a variety of municipal services. The overall responsibility of each company was vested in its board of directors, with a managing director charged with the day-to-day operational responsibility. Both the board of directors and the managing directors of these entities are responsible for developing business plans for running the companies. The council retains responsibility as a sole shareholder and a regulator of the services provided by these companies, particularly financial matters such as tariffs and capital expenditure; human resources; delivery targets in terms of
maintenance of assets and addressing backlogs; and standards for customer care. (City of Johannesburg, 2001b)

### 5.6 Mechanisms of public participation in Johannesburg

This section expands the discussion on public participation in local government in South Africa, which I introduced in Chapter Three section 3.5. There, I explained the centrality of community involvement in local government in the country. In particular, the law defines a municipality as an entity consisting of the local community beside the political and the administrative structures. It requires municipal councils to consult their local communities on issues of service delivery, and emphasises the right of local communities to be included in decision-making processes (Republic of South Africa, 2000). The law prescribes mechanisms and processes of community participation, which include a ward committee system and public consultations on the IDP and budget, but also encourages local authorities to develop other innovative ways that facilitate the deliberate inclusion of their communities (ibid.).

Seeking to give a local expression to the objectives of the national policy and legislation on participation, the City of Johannesburg adopted a policy on public participation, which emphasises the need for city governments to work with its citizens and citizen groups to find sustainable ways to meet local needs (City of Johannesburg, 2002b). Johannesburg’s policy on public participation was based on the notion of ‘structured participation’, which requires community participation to take place through formal political structures for participation (ibid.). The policy’s stated aim was to create points of access and interaction between the council, the city’s communities and other stakeholders in order to ‘harness their commitment’ to work collectively ‘to achieve the vision of council and to realise the strategic objectives of council’ (ibid.: 1).
The stated values that underpin Johannesburg’s policy on public participation include the accountability of councillors to communities, transparency and the transformation of society. In an attempt to enhance the transparency of political processes and accountability through public oversight in the city, the policy provides that all city council meetings and the meetings of all committees, except the mayoral committee, be open to the public to attend, without speaking or voting rights. In addition, all council agendas/minutes are regarded as public documents and are therefore made available in the local government library located at the headquarters of city. In addition, the city set up Peoples’ Centres throughout its 11 administrative regions to operate as additional mechanisms to improve access to information for the public. A call centre (Joburg Connect) and the council’s website provide information to those who have access to the Internet (City of Johannesburg, 2003a; 2002b; undated). While all these measures appear useful to the residents of the ‘formal’ parts of the city who have the means and can afford to attend meetings at the Civic Centre (city hall) or access these information resources, informal settlement communities may not benefit as much. Considering the socio-economic conditions of these settlements, it seems unlikely for them to take advantage of these opportunities.

The city’s policy on public participation specifies five mechanisms for public participation, namely: ward committees, ward public meetings, IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme, Mayoral Road Show, and a Petitions Management System (City of Johannesburg, 2002b). The responsibility for the management and co-ordination of public participation activities in the city was assigned to the office of the council’s Speaker, which directly oversees the activities of the city’s 109 ward committees and liaises with the office of the city manager and relevant departments on the IDP outreach programme and the Mayoral Road Show (ibid.). In the following subsections, I briefly explain the five mechanisms of public participation with particular reference to their relevance to city-level policy-making.
5.6.1 The ward committee system

Ward committees are created in terms of the provisions of the Municipal Structures Act of 1998 to enhance participatory democracy in local governance (Republic of South Africa, 1998b). The central role of ward committees involves ‘the facilitation of local community participation in decisions, which affect the local community, the articulation of local community interests and the representation of these interests within the government system’ (DPLG, 2005:5). Ward committees, therefore, play a critical role in the preparation and review of a municipality’s integrated development plan (IDP), budget and performance management system (ibid.). Ward committees are also intended to be mechanisms for inclusion by deliberately enabling the local community, particularly the disadvantaged sectors, to take part in making decisions that affect their lives (Republic of South Africa, 1998b). The national guidelines on the composition of ward committees require them to be formed in a way that represents communities, community organisations and citizens of the ward in the municipal matters (DPLG and DTZ South Africa, 2005).

In 2001, the City of Johannesburg developed detailed guidelines on the establishment and maintenance of its ward committees which address, among other things, questions of the composition, election processes and activities of ward committees in Johannesburg (City of Johannesburg, 2001c). The guidelines identify 10 sectors for representation in the ward committees of the city: women; NGO and CBO (community-based organisation); education; business; health; religion groupings; youth; sports and culture; civics and ratepayers; and labour (ibid.). However, the policy notes that parts of the city may differ and that it will not always be possible to represent all the identified sectors in the ward committees of some areas (ibid.). The assumption was that most of these sectors cut across class boundaries and the ‘formal-informal’ divide in the city.

The city’s guidelines prescribe eligibility criteria for the membership of ward committees and the processes of electing the members. The guidelines stipulate that
for a person to be elected a member of a ward committee he/she must be of sound mind and a registered voter in the ward (ibid.). According to the Electoral Act of 1998, to be a registered voter in South Africa a person has to be a citizen of the country, 18 years old or older, and in possession of an identity document (Republic of South Africa, 1998c). Voter Registration in informal settlements appears to be a problem. In 2005, the Parliament’s standing committee on home affairs expressed a concern that voter registration in informal settlements is often met with challenges such as lack of proper addresses and ongoing movement of people (Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs, 2005). A national survey by the Human Sciences Research Council undertaken prior to the 2006 municipal elections found that 14% of eligible voters in urban informal settlements were not registered in districts where they were residing or not registered at all (HSRC, 2006).

In terms of the election processes of ward committee members, the city prescribes two phases. The first phase involves a process of nomination of representatives by community structures and organised interest groups to stand for election (City of Johannesburg, 2001c). Ward councillors are required to put out notices in the local media (local newspapers, local radio stations, pamphlets) explaining the brief of a ward committee and calling on organisations to nominate candidates for the 10 sectoral seats of the ward committee (ibid.). In the second phase of the election, ward councillors are required to call for community meetings to elect the members from among the nominations received from the various sectors (ibid.).

Furthermore, the guidelines also require ward committees to meet at least once every month and stipulate that ward councillors may call for extraordinary meetings as and when they are deemed necessary (ibid.). In these meetings, the committees are supposed to discuss matters included in the agenda whether by the ward councillor or the members of the ward committee. The city, however, is silent about how the members of a ward committee should engage their broader sectors which nominated them, but many ward committees in the city have locally developed approaches to
engaging their sector constituencies. I discuss these approaches in further detail in Chapter seven.

5.6.2 The IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme

Following the introduction of the notion of integrated development planning in South Africa in 2001, the City of Johannesburg developed what it calls the IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme: a strategy for community involvement in the IDP processes (City of Johannesburg, 2005). The strategy consists of involving the public at three key stages of preparing the city’s IDP: the identification of development priorities, the development of intervention strategies, and the adoption of the IDP document. Figure 5.6 summarises the platforms for public involvement in the three phases of preparing the IDP.

Figure 5.6: Outline of the City of Johannesburg’s key moments of IDP consultation. Source: Mohamed (2006:42)
The platforms for public involvement include ward public meetings, regional stakeholder fora, city-wide sectoral fora, and the Johannesburg stakeholder fora (City of Johannesburg, 2005). I briefly explain these below except for ward public meetings, which I explain separately in subsection 5.6.3.

Regional stakeholder and the city-wide sectoral fora are workshops or consultation sessions organised by the City to facilitate the inputs of those involved into the IDP proposals (City of Johannesburg, 2005). These fora are involved in two of the three phases of preparing the city’s IDP: the identification of development priorities and the development of intervention strategies (ibid.). Participants in the regional stakeholder fora are mainly members of the ward committees in the region as well as active regional role-players, such as business associations and NGOs (ibid.). In the city-wide sectoral fora, participants represent the interests of the organised groups represented in the Johannesburg Business Forum, the Women’s Forum, Trade Unions Forum and the NGO/CBO Forum (ibid.).

Regional and city-wide sectoral fora allow for deliberation and often make valuable inputs into the IDP proposals. Each of the fora is focused either on an area (regional stakeholder fora) or an issue (city-wide sectoral fora). The number of people involved in each form, the time available and the facilitation approach enable participants in these fora to engage more intensely with the city officials and their presentations. However, the degree of involving informal settlement communities in these fora depends on the level of representation of these communities in the active stakeholders and ward committees in each region or the organised groups of each sector. I examine these dimensions in Chapters Six and Seven.

The Johannesburg Stakeholders’ Forum was conceived as an advisory body that would make recommendations to the city council on matters relating to the vision and the strategies included in the IDP. It consists of representatives of the city’s 109 ward committees, civic bodies, labour organisations, education bodies, residents and
ratepayers associations, NGOs, CBOs, religious organisations, government departments, and councillors. The Forum is convened annually at the beginning of each financial year as a ‘grand finale’ of the IDP/Budget Outreach Programme (City of Johannesburg, 2004). Although about 70% of the participants in the Forum are often from informal settlements and low-income areas of the city (Nhlapo, pers. com., 2006), the forum plays more of a ceremonial role in the process of the IDP.

In general, the IDP/Budget consultations have made a significant improvement in the level of community involvement in city-level policies and in getting away from a consultant-driven approach to planning and policy-making. As Adam and Oranje (2002:38) observe, these consultations have achieved ‘more public participation in municipal planning than ever before in the history of the country [South Africa]’. Nevertheless, critics argue that the IDP processes are still far from achieving full community involvement in policy-making as stipulated in the legislation. Friedman and others (2003) argue that the processes remain very much top-down, and in most of the cases, communities are called upon to comment on proposals developed by city officials rather than being invited to contribute to the content before its drafting.

5.6.3 Ward public meetings

Ward public meetings are open mass meetings officially organised at ward level and function as platforms for informing the residents of the ward and/or soliciting their views on matters of public concern in the ward, the region or the city as a whole (City of Johannesburg, 2002b). These platforms are used for public consultation particularly on the city’s annual reviews of IDP and budget. According to the officials in charge of corporate planning and public participation in the City of Johannesburg, the city’s annual IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme (see section 5.6.2) involves engaging local communities through ward public meetings at three key stages (Nhlapo, pers. com., 2005; Seedat, pers. com., 2005). In the first phase of the IDP/Budget process, which takes place in October every year and focuses on strategic evaluation of the previous year’s achievements and challenges, ward public meetings
are held to review service delivery progress and weaknesses in the ward (ibid.). In the second phase, which takes place in March and April, the city presents its responses to the most common concerns and needs raised during the first phase, to the ward public meetings (ibid.). In the third and last phase, the city gives feedback to ward communities on the final planning and service delivery decisions reflected in the IDP and budget (ibid.). Clearly, the IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme creates opportunities for community input into the first and second phases of the IDP/Budget processes, while the third phase is for information only.

In addition to consultation on the city’s IDP and budget, Johannesburg’s policy on public participation envisages ward public meetings as a mechanism for consulting ward communities on matters of public concern that the ward councillor or the ward committee deem necessary (City of Johannesburg, 2002b). Unlike the outcomes of the IDP/Budget public meetings, which are taken through the IDP institutional structures that also give feedback to the involved communities, the responsibility of ensuring the outcome of these public meetings being considered at city-level rests with the ward councillor. The extent to which the outcome of this type of public meeting can influence city-level policy decisions depends on the role of councillors in such decisions. I discuss this in further detail in Chapter Seven.

5.6.4 The Mayoral Road Show

The Mayoral Road Show was initiated by the city’s Executive Mayor, Councillor Amos Masondo,² in a bid to entrench a new practice in the city that enabled the city’s leadership to regularly interact with communities, to listen and respond to the concerns and grievances of ordinary people (City of Johannesburg, 2002c). The idea of Mayoral Road Show was implemented in the form of regular visits to the city’s 11 administrative regions to launch new development initiatives, inspect existing

² Following the second democratic municipal elections in South Africa (December 2000), Councillor Masondo was elected by the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council as the city’s executive mayor. Councillor Masondo was re-elected to the same position after the third democratic municipal elections (March 2006).
projects and meet local communities (ibid.). To achieve its objectives, each Mayoral Road Show has a clear structure. First, the executive mayor and his/her delegation meet the regional administration at the regional offices, where the regional director and his/her management team brief the visitors on the profile of the region (Nhlapo, pers. com., 2005). Second, the mayoral delegation visits selected communities and priority projects in the region to get a better understanding of matters on the ground (ibid.). Third, the visitors meet residents of the region in a public meeting at an appropriate venue, where a significant amount of time is set aside for community representatives and individuals to articulate their concerns to the leadership of the City (ibid.).

The relevance of Mayoral Road Shows to city-level policy-making stems from two key aspects. First, each Mayoral Road Show involves the highest level of political leadership and top administrators, who are also the main drivers of policy processes in the city, including the executive mayor, all members of the mayoral committee, councillors of the visited region and senior officials of the administration (City of Johannesburg, 2002c). During the visit, these top officials seek to gain insights on how to effectively address the key development issues that concern the residents of the visited region (ibid.). Second, drawing on lessons learnt over the years, the Mayoral Road Show has evolved to become a mechanism of a more meaningful engagement with the public. In the first rounds of the Mayoral Road Show, which started in 2001, there was no system in place to record and follow-up on matters raised by the public (City of Johannesburg, 2005). The next visits to these communities saw residents pointing out that they raised concerns in the previous visits, but that nothing had been done (ibid.).

This led to the introduction of a system, which documents the discussions in the meetings with the residents by capturing the issues raised, and the names and contact details of the people who raised them (ibid.). To ensure effective follow-up of the concerns raised by the public, the executive mayor immediately assigns any issue
In addition, the evolution of the Mayoral Road Show to become a mechanism for meaningful engagement involved allowing adequate time to the public meeting with the residents of the visited region. Up until 2004, the practice was to carry out all the three parts of the Road Show (meeting the regional administration, launching/inspecting projects and meeting the community) in each region on one day. Experience proved that one day was not enough, particularly to give ample time for community meetings. In 2005, the Mayoral Road Show was split across two days, although they were not necessarily consecutive: on the first day the executive mayor and his delegation meet the regional administration and inspect/launch projects while the second day is dedicated entirely to meeting the community. (Nhlapo, pers. com., 2005)

5.6.5 Petitions management system

Johannesburg’s Petitions Management System was established in terms of the provisions of the Municipal Systems Act (Republic of South Africa, 2000), which requires municipalities to establish appropriate mechanisms, processes and procedures that enable local communities to petition. In October 2001, the Johannesburg Council adopted a policy document (Petition Management System for the City of Johannesburg) that sets up a system for petitions management to ensure that all petitions to the council are received, and efficiently dealt with (City of Johannesburg Council, 2001a). The stated functions of the system include providing information and knowledge to the public on how to interact with council in a transparent manner, efficiently addressing all written public requests and grievances timeously, and increasing access of marginalised sectors of community to the council (ibid.). Any written petition to the City goes through four stages. First, receiving, registering and validating the petition. Second, referring the petition with a
preliminary report on the matter it raises to the Petitions Management Committee, where a decision is made as whether to respond directly to the petitioner(s) with an outcome, request further investigation around the petition or route it to an organ of the City. Third, if a petition is referred to an organ of the City, it will be studied and a report will be send to the Petitions Management Committee. Fourth, reporting back to the petitioners through, depending on the nature of the content and where the petition came from, either verbally in a meeting or in writing (ibid.).

The Petition System also sets time frames for dealing with petitions. Assuming that the Petition Management Committee meets at least once every month and fortnightly when necessary, the policy stipulates 10 weeks to finalise the matter and report back to the petitioner(s). This means that the longest time a petition can take is 10 weeks. It can be much shorter if it does not get referred to an organ of the council that meets less frequently. Petitions, according to this system, address grievances and matters related to the actual delivery of services by the city departments. As such, petitions are very much about implementation rather than policy issues.

5.7 Conclusion

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Johannesburg started as a small mining town with a white-dominated population. During the twentieth century, the city continued to grow economically and in population size, but was also shaped by the policies of racial segregation and discrimination, especially against the ‘native’ black Africans. After 120 years of existence, Johannesburg remains the most important economic centre and populous city in South Africa, dominated by black Africans. However, the majority of them were poor and a substantial proportion resided in informal settlements, a visible sign of continuing deep inequality.

Managing Johannesburg during its first century of existence was characterised by spatial and racial segregation, exclusion and deprivation of its non-white residents. The city’s management style mainly followed the traditional approach (see section
3.3), which emphasises technocratic policy-making and limits citizen involvement to participation in seasonal elections. In Johannesburg, even the right to participate in municipal elections was limited to whites and was only extended to other races as part of desperate reforms in the face of intensified pressures, both domestically and internationally, during the late years of apartheid. The relationship between the city authorities and communities living in its ‘squatter camps’/informal settlements throughout its first century of existence was characterised by state control, discrimination, forced removals and at times relocation to low-income housing schemes built by government. The response from these communities, especially during the 1940s, was radical in the form of defiance to official orders and attempts at self-governing. After the introduction of the apartheid policies, the government took harsh measures against the ‘squatters’, which cleared the area of Johannesburg from ‘squatter camps’ except a few of them in the southern areas of the city.

Following the end of apartheid, policy-makers and other role-players including civil society organisations engaged in negotiation processes to establish a new system of governance for Johannesburg that overcomes the legacy of apartheid and transforms the city. The aim was to create Johannesburg as spatially and institutionally integrated, efficient and inclusive city. The result was an institutional design for the city that seeks to involve local communities, particularly the historically disadvantaged groups, in making integrated policies for the city. To this end, the city provided four mechanisms for public participation: the ward committee system, the IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme, Mayoral Road Show and ward public meetings. The operation of these mechanisms is orchestrated at the city level.

Community voices in the negotiations during the transition from apartheid to democracy in the 1990s, were generally represented by ratepayer and civic associations. Civic associations were particularly active in the few informal settlements that existed in the Greater Johannesburg area since the 1980s and had strong civic structures. The majority of the informal settlements in Johannesburg
during the period covered by this study were established during the 1990s and therefore had no community structures in place to engage in the transition negotiations. However, as from 2002 when the City of Johannesburg adopted a policy on public participation, those living in the city’s old and new informal settlements are presumed to have had the opportunity to become involved in city-level policy processes. In Chapter Seven, I explore in detail the involvement of informal settlement communities in one of the city’s administrative regions in city-level policy-making through the four mechanisms provided by the city, and other non-statutory initiatives developed by local councillors. But before that, I look closely at the context of the case study area to understand its socio-economic and political characteristics, pattern of existing civil society organisations and its administration in Chapter Six.