6. The Case Study Area: Location, Economy, Population, Civil Society and Administration

6.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the case study area and sets a background for Chapter Seven, which analyses the involvement of informal settlement communities in policy-making at city-level. It seeks to highlight the area’s socio-economic and political characteristics and the pattern of civil society, which underpin its relevance to the context of the whole city. In addition to this introduction, the chapter comprises six sections. Section 6.2 briefly looks at the location of the study area and its institutional history, which explains how the different parts of the study area were transformed from apartheid’s racially-based local administration, to being part of the Johannesburg metropolitan area. Section 6.3 discusses how rapid economic growth led to a fast population increase and burgeoning of informal settlements in the area. Section 6.4 elaborates on the socio-economic and political realities of the three parts that constitute the study area, namely the Ivory Park Township, Midrand and its surroundings, and Kyalami and its surroundings. Section 6.5 describes the pattern of civil society organisations, which play the role of representing the voices of the respective communities in public participation fora designed to facilitate public involvement in city-level policy-making. Section 6.6 describes the governance and administration arrangements of the study area, most notably the regional administration’s support to, and management of, public participation activities in the area.
6.2 The strategic location of the study area and its institutional history

The study area of this thesis (Region 2 - Midrand and Ivory Park) was one of the 11 administrative regions of the City of Johannesburg between 2002 and 2006, which was the period of fieldwork for this thesis. As shown on the map below (Figure 6.1), the study area occupies the north-eastern part of the City of Johannesburg. It is strategically located along the main route between the largest two economic hubs of the Gauteng Province: Johannesburg and Tshwane (formerly known as Pretoria).

Figure 6.1: Location of the study area within the Gauteng Province. Source: redrawn by the author after the City of Johannesburg (2001b)

3 After the 2006 municipal elections, the City of Johannesburg reduced its 11 administrative regions to seven. Region 1 and Region 2 are combined to form Region A.
Prior to the end of the apartheid rule, the study area had not been under one single local administration. However, since the 1980s, the area, like many other parts of today’s Johannesburg metropolitan municipality, underwent significant processes of institutional integration. The Midrand area grew from two urban complexes namely, Halfway House and Olifantsfontein, which were joined under a single local administration in the early 1980s (Roelofse, 2003.). During the early stages of South Africa’s local government transition to democracy (see section 5.4), Midrand and the Ivory Park Township were amalgamated in 1993 to form the Midrand Town Council, which was incorporated into the former Kyalami Metropolitan Council and became one of its local councils (*ibid.*). The Kyalami Metropolitan Council was later annexed to the City of Johannesburg in 2002 and became one of the city’s 11 administrative regions known as Region 2 -Midrand and Ivory Park (City of Johannesburg, 2003).

Although the study area was the last to be incorporated under Johannesburg’s municipal jurisdiction, its institutional history was similar to the institutional histories of the other parts of the City. Before November 1994, the rest of the Johannesburg metropolitan area was under 13 different local authorities created by the apartheid government along racial lines. As a result of the local government negotiations which took place in the Johannesburg Local Negotiating Forum in 1993/94, these local authorities were combined under the Johannesburg Transitional Metropolitan Council, with seven local councils (see section 5.4). In mid-1995, the local councils of the Johannesburg Metropolitan Council were reduced to four and finally abolished prior to the 2000 municipal elections.

**6.3 The economy, population and informal settlements of the study area**

The strategic location of the study area has significantly contributed to its rapid economic growth and population increase. The Midrand part of the study area in particular, which stretches along the N1 highway, has been regarded as one of the
fastest growing economic centres in South Africa during the last two decades (Tomlinson, 2003). Midrand emerged as a focal point of high-technology enterprises and an important decentralised office node in post-apartheid South Africa (Roelofse, 2003). This economic growth led to a significant population increase in the entire area of Region, especially during the first decade that followed the end of the apartheid rule. In 1996, the total population of the area that later became Region 2 was 129 176: 70% of them were black Africans; 18% were whites and the rest were Indian and coloured (Statistics South Africa, 2003). Five years later, the population of the region increased by 69% to reach 218 510 in 2001: 82.2% were black Africans, 13.5% were whites and the remaining were Indians and coloureds (ibid.). This racial composition was slightly different to the city of Johannesburg’s racial mix. In the same year, Johannesburg comprised 73.5% black Africans, 16% whites and 10.5% coloureds and Indians (ibid.). The fast population growth of the study area was mainly caused by an intensive immigration wave of job-seekers from other parts of the country, as well as some neighbouring countries (Tomlinson, 2003).

The population growth led to a mushrooming of informal settlements in the area, particularly in and around the Ivory Park township. At the time of conducting the fieldwork for this study in March and April 2006, Region 2 had 40 relatively newly established informal settlements on public land invaded during the transition from apartheid in the early 1990s. These informal settlements accommodate about one-fifth of the region’s population (City of Johannesburg, 2004a; Gauteng Department of Housing, 2005). Table 6.1 below shows the dates of establishment, number of shacks and households of the major informal settlements in Region 2.

Table 6.1 shows that all informal settlements in the study area (Region 2) were established in the 1990s, and were similar to those in the other parts of Johannesburg, apart from some settlements in the southern parts of the city, particularly in and around the areas of Soweto, Ennerdale and Orange Farm, which were formed in the 1980s (City of Johannesburg, 2004a).
Table 6.1: Informal settlements in the study area (2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of settlement</th>
<th>Date of establishment</th>
<th>Number of shacks</th>
<th>Number of households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chris Hani</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>770</td>
<td>1088</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block M</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goniwe</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>236</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lindukuhle Extension</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>874</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mabena</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>548</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriting</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>675</td>
<td>690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mopedi</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relihlahla</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ivory Park Stadium</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>729</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophiatown</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>782</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafelandawonye 1</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafelandawonye 2</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mafelandawonye 3</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokyo Sexwale</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sakhile</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steve Biko</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K60</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zone 1</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>1023</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 smaller pockets</td>
<td>Between 1993 and 1998</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scattered in the region</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (Region 2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 043</td>
<td>11 168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Gauteng Department of Housing (2003), Department of Housing - City of Johannesburg (2004), and personal communications.

By March 2006, when the fieldwork for this study was carried out, most of these settlements had been in existence for only one decade. Consequently, communities living in these settlements had a shorter period of time to form strong organisations and perhaps were not politically shaped by the early activism of the civic movement in the 1980s. However, as I show in subsection 6.5.2, the informal settlements of Region 2 have community structures, which are similar to civic committees.

It is worth noting that the national census data of 2001 shows almost 40% of the 26 796 households of Region 2 as living in ‘informal dwellings’ (Statistics South Africa, 2003). This higher number was a result of the broad definition of the phrase ‘informal dwelling’ used by Statistics South Africa, which combines shacks in informal
settlements and shacks on serviced sites (Huchzermeyer et al., 2004). Between 1991 and 1994, large portions of the Ivory Park Township were developed as site-and-services settlement under the Independent Development Trust (IDT) and many of these sites are still regarded as ‘informal dwellings’ and have not been consolidated into formal settlements. The scope of this study only covers shacks in informal settlements.

Figure 6.2: Ward demarcations and locations of major informal settlements in the study area (Region 2). Source: redrawn by the author based on information from the City of Johannesburg’s Corporate GIS (2006) Internet, http://ims.joburg.org.za/joburg/viewer.aspx

6.4 The socio-economic diversity of the study area

Despite ongoing processes since the 1980s, which were aimed at institutionally integrating the different parts of the area that became known as Region 2 under a
single local authority, the area remained socio-economically and politically segregated. On one hand, the eastern part of the area (Ivory Park and its surroundings) has been characterised by a concentration of poverty as manifested by high levels of unemployment, low annual household income, inadequate access to housing and basic services, and the proliferation of informal settlements. On the other hand, the western part of the study area (Kyalami and its surroundings), has been characterised by high levels of household income, high levels of formal employment, and access to formal housing and adequate services. In the middle are the Midrand area and its surroundings, which show a mixture of the socio-economic characteristics of the two other parts of the study area.

In the following subsections, I discuss the development patterns and the socio-economic and political characteristics of the three parts of the study area: Ivory Park; Kyalami; and Midrand and their surroundings.

6.4.1 The Ivory Park Township and its surroundings (Wards 77 - 80)

The Ivory Park Township emerged in 1991 as a site-and-service development to accommodate informal settlers and backyard shack dwellers from the nearby townships of Tembisa and Alexandra (Omenya, 2006). As a result, the densely populated township (see Figure 6.3) is dominated by poor, black Africans who represent 97% of the township’s population, while the rest are Indians and coloureds (Statistics South Africa, 2003). Between 1996 and 2001, the population of the Ivory Park area grew by 64% to reach 135,528 people, which represented 62% of the region’s population in the same year (ibid.). This rapid population growth was caused by the migration of job seekers and manifested in the many informal settlements in the area.

Ivory Park is characterised by a high level of unemployment, low household income and inadequate access to formal housing and basic services. In 2001, the recorded level of formal unemployment in the area was very high (53%) compared to a
moderate 29% throughout the entire region and a very low 5% for the Kyalami area and its surroundings (Statistics South Africa, 2003). In the same year, 89% of Ivory Park’s households were earning between R0 and R38,400 per annum and; 10% were earning between R38,401 and R614,400 (ibid.). In terms of housing and basic services, 60% of Ivory Park’s households were living in shacks and only 10% of the families had running water inside their dwellings.

The dire situation in Ivory Park prompted government interventions to address the extreme level of poverty in the township, by providing housing and basic services. Between 1996 and 2001, there were a myriad of government interventions to address the key needs of the poor communities living in the Ivory Park township, particularly, improving their access to adequate housing basic services. There were many housing projects that led to significant improvements of housing conditions in the Ivory Park area, despite the staggering numbers of households living in shacks in the township.

Figure 6.3: Aerial Photograph of part of the Ivory Park township. It shows the very dense pattern of residential developments in the area into which pockets of informal (highlighted) settlement are inserted. Source: Google Earth (2007).
During that period, the number of households living in ‘formal dwellings’ in the township increased by 66%, while the continuous migration of job-seekers to the area and the natural growth of households also led to a 63% increase in the number of ‘informal dwellings’ (Statistics South Africa 2003). In 2006, 90% of the households living in Ivory Park’s ‘informal dwellings’ were registered on the waiting list of the government’s housing subsidy (Shongwe, pers. com., 2006). This was a result of the absence of upgrading programmes since 2004 for the informal settlements of the area.

In addition to the housing programmes in the area, there were other government interventions aimed at providing basic services to the people living in Ivory Park. The City of Johannesburg has put in place measures to implement a national policy that requires all households to be provided with a package of free basic services (City of Johannesburg, 2005). The package typically includes water and sanitation, electricity, waste removal, community roads and rainwater drainage (ibid.). The result of these interventions was improvement in the access of households to better levels of some basic services in 2001, compared to 1996 as shown on Table 6.2.

Overall, there was an increase in the number of households accessing more hygienic sanitation facilities and better refuse removal, as well as a reduction in the number of households using less hygienic sanitation facilities, and improved hazardous waste management (Statistics South Africa, 2003). However, the number of households in the area accessing a better level of water supply in the form of piped water in their dwellings, decreased over the same period by 27% (ibid.). The reason for this setback was the inability of the households to afford the cost of that level of water provision, which led to their disconnection (Roelofse, 2003). This, in addition to the increase in households living in informal settlements in the late 1990s (see Table 6.1), led to increasing numbers of households accessing water from community stands and using candles as source of energy for lighting.
In terms of local party politics, Ivory Park is, perhaps not surprisingly, a stronghold of the ruling ANC. The party overwhelmingly won the four ward seats of the Ivory Park area in the 2000 municipal elections. Other political parties active in the area, but with far fewer supporters than the ANC, are the Democratic Alliance (DA), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania (PAC), and the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Indicators: number of households</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water</strong></td>
<td>With access to piped water in the dwelling</td>
<td>5 879</td>
<td>4 287</td>
<td>−27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With access to piped water inside the yard</td>
<td>7 821</td>
<td>32 846</td>
<td>317%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With access to water from community stand</td>
<td>7 932</td>
<td>12 960</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With access to water from community stand over 200 meters</td>
<td>No data</td>
<td>3 936</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sanitation</strong></td>
<td>Use flush toilet</td>
<td>6 810</td>
<td>32 181</td>
<td>373%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use pit latrine</td>
<td>8 060</td>
<td>3 966</td>
<td>−51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use bucket latrine</td>
<td>4 847</td>
<td>2 898</td>
<td>−40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refuse</strong></td>
<td>With access to municipal weekly removal</td>
<td>8 879</td>
<td>38 298</td>
<td>331%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That uses communal dump</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>406</td>
<td>−54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong></td>
<td>Use electricity as source of energy for lighting</td>
<td>18 581</td>
<td>33 216</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use candles as source of energy for lighting</td>
<td>4 468</td>
<td>10 696</td>
<td>139%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by the author based on data from Statistics South Africa (2003).
6.4.2 Kyalami and its surroundings (Ward 94)

Contrary to the socio-economic and political conditions of the Ivory Park township are the social and political characteristics of Kyalami and its surroundings (Ward 94) on the western part of Region 2 (Figure 6.5). This part of the study area has a higher concentration of affluent white residents who are also richer and have access to better levels of basic services than their counterparts in the eastern parts of the study area. According to the 2001 national census, 55% of the ward’s 30,763 people were whites, 41% of them were black Africans and the rest were Indians and coloureds (Statistics South Africa, 2003). In the same year, white residents constituted only 13.5% of the population of Region 2 and 16% of the city’s population (ibid.). On average, the residents of Ward 94 were also richer and received better services than the rest of...
those living in Region 2. In 2001, 56% of the ward’s 10,197 households were earning between R38,401 and R614,400 per annum and another 11% were earning more than R614 400 compared to the region’s overall figure of 26% and 2%, who were earning between R38,401 and R614,400, and more than R614 400 per annum respectively. In addition, almost all the households of Ward 94 were living in formal dwellings, receiving weekly municipal refuse collection and using electricity as source of energy for lighting, compared to about 70% of the region’s households who were enjoying the same level of services. The ward had no informal settlements and only 1% of its households were living in backyards in the areas outside the urban boundary (ibid.).

Some parts of Ward 94, such as Blue Hills Extensions 8 and 9 fall outside Johannesburg’s urban boundary⁴ and represent an interface with the rural areas. They are characterised by very low residential density, large agricultural holdings and open spaces (see Figure 6.6).

![Figure 6.6: Aerial photograph of the area of Blue Hills Extensions 8 and 9 (Ward 94). It shows the pattern of residential developments as well as parcels of agricultural vacant land. Source: Google Earth (2007).](image)

In terms of local party politics, the community of this area strongly supports the DA, the official opposition in the City of Johannesburg and the country as a whole. The municipal election of 2000 saw the DA winning with 88% of the votes, followed by

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⁴ Urban boundary is a demarcated line that serves to direct and control the outer limit of urban expansion in Johannesburg.
the PAC with 7.7% and the IFP with 2.8%. The ANC did not contest this ward in that municipal election.

6.4.3 Midrand and its surroundings (Ward 93)

The area of Midrand and its surroundings (Ward 93) is strategically located along the N1 highway up to the border with the City of Tshwane to the north (see Figure 6.7). This part of the study area is different from, and represents a transition between, the poor area of the Ivory Park township in the east and the affluent area of Kyalami and its surroundings in the west. With its mixed development, the Midrand area is regarded as the focal point of the ‘vibrant economic growth of a group of a dynamic information technology and high technology manufacturing activities’ (Rogerson, 2003). As one of the fastest growing economic hubs in South Africa, Midrand attracts numerous investments in commerce and industry. The corridor between the N1 highway and the Old Pretoria Road (to the east of N1) (see Figures 6.7 and 6.8) hosts businesses in the information technology, communications, biotechnology, electronics, defence and aerospace sectors (City of Johannesburg, 2001b).

The Midrand area (Ward 93) is not only a different part from the rest of the study area, but also very diverse in its own right. It reflects the legacies of apartheid’s social engineering with the existence of stark spatial, social and economic divides. The formerly white suburbs of Sunninghill, Paulshof and Halfway House all show signs of affluence, with large plots of land interspersed with cluster and townhouse developments (Rogerson, 2003). By contrast, there are low-income site-and-service developments in Ebony Park and Kaalfontein beside the Meriting informal settlement near the ward’s border with the Ivory Park township, where the poor households of the study area concentrate. The population of this ward consisted of 68.7% black Africans concentrated in the areas of Kaalfontein, Ebony Park and the Meriting informal settlement; 23.4% whites concentrated in the affluent areas of Buccleugh, Sunninghill and Midrand and small percentage of Indians and coloureds (Statistics South Africa, 2003).
Although living conditions in the Midrand area are lower than those of the Kyalami area, they are still better than those of the neighbouring Ivory Park township and Region 2 as a whole. In 2001, the unemployment rate in Ward 93 was at 23% compared to the region’s 29% and Ivory Park’s soaring 53% (Statistics South Africa, 2003). The average household income level was also higher in the area. In 2001, almost half the families living in this ward were earning between R38,401 and R614,400, and another 4% were earning even more than R614,400 (ibid.). The ward’s households also have better overall access to housing and basic services: 95% of them were living in formal dwellings, 95% were using electricity as a source of energy for
lighting, 89% were using flush toilets and 77% had access to piped water inside their dwellings (ibid.)

Figure 6.8: Aerial photograph of part of the Midrand high-technology corridor along the N1 highway and between Allandale and Summit roads. The photograph also shows the Grand Central Airport in the neighbouring Ward 92 and the residential developments in the suburb of Halfway House. Source: Google Earth (2007).

Local party politics in Ward 93 also manifests in terms of the segregated nature of its communities. At the time of conducting the fieldwork for this study, political power in the ward was delicately balanced between the ANC, the ruling party in the City of Johannesburg and the main opposition party, the DA. In the 2000 municipal elections, Ward 93 was closely contested between the two parties. Despite the fact that the ward had a majority black population providing strong support to the ANC, the DA won the ward seat in the City Council with 52.2% of the votes. The reason for
this seemingly surprising election outcome was low voter registration as most of the black Africans who moved into the area shortly before the elections were not registered (Roelofse, 2003).

To conclude this section, it is clear that study area broadly consists of three socio-economically and politically different areas. While the divergent characteristics of the three parts of the study area resemble the diversity of the City of Johannesburg, they also underpin the various patterns of civil society organisations as observed in the next section of this chapter, and the range of public participation practices as discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.5 Civil society organisations in the study area

The sphere of civil society in the study area is broadly populated by community-based structures, membership-based interest groups, and advocacy and service NGOs. The geographic spread of these organisations largely follows the socio-economic and political layers of community divisions in the region, as discussed in the above sections. In the Ivory Park township, as well as in the neighbouring suburbs of Ebony Park and Kaalfontein, the realm of civil society is generally populated by the South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) and non-affiliated civic structures known as ‘sectional committees’. The prevalent community organisations in the affluent areas of Midrand, Kyalami and their surroundings are ratepayer/resident associations. In addition, there are interest-based organisations, business associations and NGOs that are spread throughout Region 2. I describe these organisations in the following sub-sections

6.5.1 The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO)

SANCO appears to be the most dominant organisation, which has provincial and national structures in the informal settlements of the study area. More than 80% of the respondents in the ‘informal settlement community leaders’ survey’ identified
SANCO as the organisation with the most active branches in their settlements. This was also the view of the general public in the Ivory Park area. More than 50% of the respondents in the general public survey from Wards 77 - 80 identified SANCO as the most active organisation in the area. SANCO has active branches at ward level in the entire area of the Ivory Park Township as well as Ebony Park and Kaalfontein (Makgoba, pers. com., 2006; Shongwe, pers. com., 2006). Despite its strong presence in the study area, SANCO’s credibility in representing the voice of the poor, including those living in informal settlements, in public fora has been questioned by, among others, Seekings (1997), Mayekiso (2003) and Zuren, (2004).

Building on the success of civics in mobilising grassroots in black townships against the apartheid rule in the 1980s, SANCO was established in March 1992 as a ‘non-partisan’ structure, which ‘would play the role of a watchdog over local government and development’ (Zuren, 2004:6). Soon after its launch, SANCO faced new challenges posed by the political dispensation of the post-apartheid period in South Africa (Mayekiso, 2003:59). The civic organisation needed to change ‘not only [its] organisational structure, but [its] political and ideological assessment of the new local state’ (ibid.). Critics highlight a range of organisational and political problems that faced SANCO (Seekings, 1997; Mayekiso, 2003; Bond, 2004a; Zuren, 2006). Its close relationship with the ruling alliance in the country and in the City of Johannesburg presents a key dilemma for the leadership of civic structure. While SANCO’s local leadership see their organisation as a ‘whistle blower’ and representative of popular views within the ruling alliance (Gaompotsi, pers. com., 2006), its national leadership is perceived as co-opting and channelling such representation (Zuren, 2006). The relationship with local government is another thorny challenge to SANCO. The boundaries between the two has been described as ‘porous, elusive and contextual’ (ibid.: 198). However, Zuren (2006:196)

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5 The ruling alliance comprises the ANC (African National Congress), the SACP (the South African Communist Party) and COSATU (the Congress of South African Trade Unions).
optimistically argues that ‘where local SANCO leaders can effectively manage the contradictions they face, they can potentially help both the government and the poor’.

In the study area, SANCO’s leadership often tends to defend government’s policies in a way that appears to have jeopardised its credibility among the poor (Shongwe, pers. com., 2006; Zitha, pers. com., 2006). This is evinced by the extensive presence of other civic structures, which are not affiliated to SANCO such as ‘sectional committees’ in the same areas where SANCO has active branches. This type of community organisation and a similar community structure in the affluent areas of the study area, are explained in the following two subsections.

6.5.2 Sectional committees

Sectional committees are non-partisan, democratically elected, area-based committees that play very important social and political roles in the lives of black Africans in South African townships. They play a powerful role in informing and mobilising ordinary people on the ground around social and political issues. The idea of sectional committees goes back to the days of the struggle of black Africans against the apartheid regime, where the leaders of the anti-apartheid movement used these structures as effective mechanisms of political mobilisation (Zitha, pers. com., 2006). In addition, these committees also play an important social role for local communities, assisting with funeral arrangements and fighting crime (Shongwe, pers. com., 2006). In the democratic South Africa, sectional committees began to play a monitoring role at a community level through observing the actual delivery of basic services to the people on the ground, and reporting back to the councillors. A ward councillor in Region 2 described this role by saying:

If there is a problem in water supply, street lighting, or anything like this, the sectional committees are the ones who report and follow-up with me as a councillor (Mahlanga, pers. com., 2006).
In the Ivory Park Township, each ward is divided into a number of sections. Each section has a sectional committee of between 10 and 20 members directly elected by the residents of that section (Huchzermeyer, 2004a) to serve for one year on a voluntary basis (Shongwe, pers. com., 2006). The members of a sectional committee include a chairperson, a deputy chairperson, a secretary, a deputy secretary, a treasurer, a deputy treasurer and members without portfolio. At the time of conducting the fieldwork for this study, there were 38 active sectional committees in the four wards of the Ivory Park area: 10 committees in Ward 77; nine committees in Ward 78; 10 committees in Ward 79 and nine in Ward 80.

Informal settlements in these wards are often informally demarcated as part of these sections. For example, the four informal settlements of Ward 79 are demarcated into separate sections as shown in Figure 6.9. The informal settlements of

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6 A section is a number of residential blocks
Mafelandawonye.3, Mafelandawonye.2, Mafelandawonye.1, and Ivory Park Stadium are incorporated as parts of the Angola, Tokyo, Jacob Zuma, and Zwelitsha sections, respectively. Communities living in these informal settlements had strong representation in the committees of these sections (Maluleke, pers. com., 2006)

A significant weakness of sectional committees as a means of representing the the poor in policy-making fora is the absence of any body that co-ordinates their activities and represents them at the administrative regional and city levels. However, sectional committees play a supportive role to the local government through their close co-operation with ward councillors, especially in channelling information to ordinary people on the ground and identifying the needs of their communities. Most importantly, some sectional committees play significant roles in enabling the participation of informal settlement communities in policy-making processes, as I demonstrate in Chapter 7.

6.5.3 Ratepayer associations

Ratepayer associations are non-partisan, area-based community associations prevalent in affluent neighbourhoods. The aim of these associations is to protect the interests of their members, particularly with regards to issues such as service delivery, property rights and the local environment. These associations also seek to promote the involvement of their members in public fora that discuss municipal matters. Within the study area, ratepayer associations are prevalent in the affluent areas of Wards 93 and 94. At the time of conducting the fieldwork for this study, there were 18 active ratepayer associations. In Ward 94, there were 13 of these associations in the areas of Barbeque and Plooyville; Beaulieu; Blue Hills, Kyalami Estate; Keroa; Helderfontein Estate; Paulshof; Sun Valley; Treesbank; Vorna Valley; Lonehill (ibid.) In Ward 93, there were five active associations in the areas of Midrand Hockey Club, Sunninghill, President Park, Randjesfontein and Gara (Mogotse, pers. com., 2006).
According to city officials, these associations are very active in that they meet weekly and maintain strong ties with their members as well as city officials, especially ward councillors (Mendelsohn, pers. com., 2006; Spiers, pers. com., 2006). Unlike SANCO and the sectional committee, which are active in the studied informal settlements, ratepayer associations, by their very nature, do not exist in these settlements. Nevertheless, these associations remain important civil society players in the region as they represent the interests of the affluent suburbs.

6.5.4 The Midrand Youth Council

The Midrand Youth Council (MYC) is an umbrella organisation that supports youth clubs and organisations throughout Region 2 (the study area). The MYC manages the Midrand Youth Centre, which is located in the vicinity of the Lord Khanyile Community Hall in Ivory Park (see Figure 6.3). It is involved in managing the provision of a variety of services directed at the youth of the area, such as HIV/AIDS-related programmes, young women empowerment, youth development programmes and youth small, medium and micro enterprises (SMMEs). Through its support to the local youth clubs and organisations in the Ivory Park area, which are prevalent in the informal settlements of the area, the MYC has a strong presence in these settlements. Eighty percent of the respondents to the informal settlement community leaders’ survey identified the MYC along with SANCO, as the only organisations that have active branches in the informal settlements of the area. This is significant in the context of this study as the youth sector is one of the 10 sectors identified by the City of Johannesburg’s policy on public participation for representation in the city’s ward committee system. In Chapter Seven, I look closely at the role of the youth sector in involving the informal settlement communities in policy-making processes at city level.

6.5.5 Business associations

In addition to SANCO, sectional committees and ratepayer associations, there are also active business associations in the study area. These associations = vary
according to the patterns of economic activities in the different parts of the area. While the rich Midrand and Kyalami areas are dominated by an influential business organisation (the Midrand Chamber of Commerce and Industry), the Ivory Park township has a variety of smaller business organisations. The Midrand Chamber of Commerce and Industry is an independent, non-political organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting the interests of businesses in the Midrand and surrounding areas (MCCI, 2007). The membership of the Chamber is made up of about 100 companies, which are mainly based in Ward 93, but also in Wards 94 and 92 in the neighbouring Region 3. The activities of these companies range from financial services to information and communication technologies (ICT), and from construction and property development to retail and hospitality services (ibid.).

The pattern of business activities in the low-income area of Ivory Park is different from that of Midrand and Kyalami and therefore has a different pattern of business associations. Common business activities in Ivory Park include small construction companies, taxi operators, spaza shops7, liquor stores SMMEs, resulting in different type of business associations. At the time of carrying out the fieldwork for this study in March 2006, the most visible organisations that promoted the interests of those businesses were Ivory Park Taxi Association, as well as smaller associations for the owners of the small construction companies, spaza shops and SMMEs in the area (Mogotse, pers. com., 2006; Shongwe, pers. com., 2006).

6.5.6 NGOs and other organisations

There are various NGOs (non-governmental organisations), which are mostly involved in fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS in the area of Ivory Park, in particular by providing HIV/AIDS-related educational programmes, counselling to individuals and families, care to orphans and managing various support groups. Some the most prominent NGOs in the informal settlements of the area include the Philani Support
Group, the Ipholoseng Youth Group, the Midrand Association for Home-based Care and Thlokomellang Sechaba. In addition, there are also other local community structures which are involved in development. More than 40% of the respondents in the general public survey identified community policing fora (CPF) and community development fora (CDF) as active community structures in the area. However, none of the respondents in the ‘informal settlement community leaders’ survey’ mentioned these fora. This indicates either their absence or lack of activities in the informal settlements of the region.

To conclude this section, it is worth mentioning that all the types of civil society organisations identified in the study area also exist in the other parts of Johannesburg (see, e.g. Bond, 2004a; 2006). However, during the fieldwork in the study area, I did not come across any of the ‘new social movements’. Many of the protest movements, such as the Anti-privatisation Forum, the Concerned Citizens Forum, the Landless People’s Movement, and the Homeless People’s Alliance, do exist in other parts of the city and are particularly active in the townships and informal settlements of the southern parts of Johannesburg (Ballard, Habib and Valodia, 2006).

6.6 Governance and administration of the study area

The incorporation of the former Kyalami Metropolitan area that became known as Region 2, into the City of Johannesburg, came after the introduction of the iGoli 2002 Plan, which brought about a major shift in the city’s institutional structure (see Chapter Five, section 5.4). The newly annexed area into the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality was designated as one of the city’s 11 decentralised administrative regions with six ward committees. The structure of the region’s governance and administration was, therefore, part and parcel of the city’s governance and administrative institutional design. The region’s structure consisted

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7 Spaza shops are informal businesses in South Africa usually run from home. They serve as convenience shops and sell small everyday household items. These shops grew as a result of sprawling
of ward committees as the political branch and a regional administration as the administrative/bureaucratic branch. I explain these two branches in the following subsections.

6.6.1 Ward committees

Prior to the 2000 municipal elections, the area of Region 2, which was then known as the Kyalami Metropolitan Municipality, was demarcated into six electoral wards, which remained until the March 2006 municipal elections. Four of the wards were in the Ivory Park township (Wards 77, 78, 79, and 80), one ward spanned across Ivory Park and Midrand (Ward 93), and one ward covered the affluent area of Kyalami and its surroundings (Ward 94). Figure 6.2 shows the boundaries and locations of the region’s six wards from 2000 to 2006, as well as the major informal settlements. In terms of the population characteristics, all the region’s electoral wards, except for Ward 93, had almost the same population size of between 35,000 and 38,000 people (Statistics South Africa, 2003).

However, the electoral wards significantly differ in geographic size, residential patterns and socio-economic characteristics. In terms of geographic size, Wards 93 and 94 were larger than the other four wards in the Ivory Park area, due to large parcels of agricultural holdings in these two wards, which contributed to the spatial segregation of the ward. The geographic size of a ward has significant implications on the functioning of the ward committee as discussed in further detail Chapter Seven, subsection 7.3.3.

At the time of the fieldwork for this study, there were five active ward committees in Wards 77-80 and Ward 93. There was no ward committee in Ward 94 as the ward councillor was of the view that a ward committee was not a suitable mechanism for public participation in his ward. He adopted an Internet-based method for engaging the ward community. I discuss the role of ward committees in enabling the
townships, which made travelling to shopping centres difficult and/or expensive (Wikipedia, 2007).
participation of informal settlement communities in policy-making at city level in Chapter Seven, section 7.2.

6.6.2 The regional administration

The administration of the study area (Region 2 of the City of Johannesburg) consisted of a regional director and a team of six line directors in charge of sports and recreation, social development, housing, libraries, corporate support and strategic support (see Figure 6.10). Of special significance to this study was the strategic support directorate, which had three units responsible for public engagement in the region: the communication unit, the ward committee support unit, and the IDP consultation unit (Mogotse, pers. com., 2006; Shongwe, pers. com., 2006).

![Figure 6.10: Administrative Structure of Region 2 (2005). Source: compiled by the author based on information gathered through interviews in the region.](image)

The ward committee support unit, in particular, was responsible for providing administrative support to ward councillors with respect to the functioning of ward committees, and other public participation activities at ward level. At the time of my fieldwork for this study, this unit had two full-time officers: one officer providing administrative support to the councillors of Wards 77-79 and the officer supporting
the councillors of Ward 80 and Wards 93-94. In terms of the functioning of the ward committee, the unit’s role was carrying out logistical preparations for ward committee meetings, recording minutes, keeping records, and acting as a contact point for the members of the ward committees (Mogotse, pers. com., 2006; Shongwe, pers. com., 2006). With regard to the other participation activities, the administrative support involves providing assistance to ward councillors in organising ward public meetings. This is done by informing the communities, preparing meeting venues, taking minutes and keeping records, co-ordinating the involvement of the ward in regional stakeholder fora (in collaboration with the IDP consultation unit) as well as the Mayoral Road Shows, and compiling reports on public participation activities in the wards, which are sent to the Office of the Speaker through the regional director (ibid).

The regional administration was operating from a People’s Centre located in Ward 93 (see Figures 6.2 & 6.5). The function of the People’s Centre was to facilitate direct access to information and customer care services for the communities of the region. Considering the remoteness of the People’s Centre to Ivory Park, Ebony Park, and Rabie Ridge, where the majority of the region’s population lived, other satellite community centres that provide the same services offered at the People’s Centre were established: the Rabie Ridge Community Hall, the Ivory Park North Community Hall and Lord Khanyile Community Hall (Figure 6.3) were established for this purpose.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the case study area for this thesis is not a homogeneous part of Johannesburg—far from it. The study area consists of three locations that are socio-economically and politically very diverse. This diversity is reflected in the various needs of these communities. While those living in the poverty-stricken eastern part of the study area prioritise housing, job creation, and access to basic services such as water, sanitation, electricity and community roads,
those living in affluent the western part identify issues such as property rating, traffic, and environmental pollution as their top concerns. Overall, diversity of the case study area is generally similar to that of the city as a whole.

The chapter has also highlighted a myriad of civil society organisations that represent the interests of the communities living in the various parts of the study area, but also support them as in the case of the NGOs active in Ivory Park. These organisations range from community-based civic/ratepayer type of structures, to interest-driven membership-based organisations, and advocacy and service-oriented NGOs. The geographic spread of these organisations follows the pattern of the socio-economic characteristics of the communities. Of a particular interest to this study are the organisations that actively involve communities living in the informal settlements of Region 2, particularly SANCO, the MYC, sectional committees and the associations of SMMEs.

Governance and administration of the region replicate the main ideas reflected in the governance and administration arrangements at city level, within both political and bureaucratic branches. The political branch at the regional level consists of ward committees, which link with the city council through ward councillors. The regional bureaucratic branch consists of a management team and employees tasked with delivering municipal services to the residents, and also supporting and managing the mechanisms and processes of public participation in the region.

While this chapter has provided a backdrop to Chapter Seven, which explores the involvement of the informal settlement communities of the study area in policy-making at city level, it also raises a key question to be addressed in the next chapter. This question revolves around the extent to which the contextual differences between the various parts of the study area influence the actual practice of participation.