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The participation of informal settlement communities in city-level policy-making processes in Johannesburg

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1. Introduction

This chapter of the thesis introduces the study of informal settlement communities' participation in city-level policy-making processes. The context of this study is the city of Johannesburg; South Africa's largest city in terms of population size and economic contribution. The post-apartheid institutional design of the municipality (City of Johannesburg) embodies a combination of the three key ideas contained in South Africa's local government policy framework: integration; efficiency and participatory governance. The aim of the study is to explore the complexity of the actual involvement of communities living in Johannesburg's informal settlements in policy-making at city-level, with the ultimate goal of contributing to the advancement of citizenship rights of these communities. This thesis focusses on the question of how Johannesburg's emerging model of urban management shapes the participation of the poor in policy-making processes.

The chapter begins with a brief discussion on a recent re-surfacing of participation in public decision-making processes in development and political science literature. It then explains why informal settlement communities need to be involved in policy-making at city-level and the relevance of the study to South Africa. The chapter then outlines the study's aim, research questions and research approach before it concludes with a summary and an outline of the study chapters.

1.1 The rise of participatory urban management

In recent years, the practice of public participation in making public policy has made a strong comeback. While just over a decade ago, the international literature emphasised limited opportunities for public involvement (see, for example, Murno-Clarke, 1992; Webber & Crooks, 1996), more recent literature has portrayed participation as having become a central feature of making and implementing public policies (Souza, 1999;

Vigoda, 2002; Lane, 2005). Van Driesche and Lane (2002) point out that a new political culture has emerged in which many policy-makers and intellectuals do not place much faith in solutions imposed from above. Instead, there is an increasing reliance on new ways of decision-making that link government, citizens and their organisations across different scales (*ibid*).

This comeback of the practice of public participation, particularly in the developing countries, was prompted by a convergence of development and democratisation agendas, which have brought citizen engagement in governance to centre stage (*ibid*). Decentralisation policies promoted in the 1990s sought to bring governance closer to the people (Ackerman, 2004). Governance reforms instigated and promoted by lending agencies and multilateral donors in the developing countries, created a plethora of sites in which citizens came to be recruited to enhance accountability and state responsiveness (Bickerstaff, 2005). A decade of experimentation with participatory methodologies and efforts to 'scale up' participation within development bureaucracies led to a late 1990s turn to questions of participatory governance (Gaventa, 2004). At the same time, the deliberative turn in debates on democracy and on the politics of public policy reflects a growing interest in the potential of deliberative institutions (Cornwall and Coelho, 2007) and practices for democratic renewal in the global North (the developed countries) and democratisation of state-society relations in the global South (the developing countries) (Manor, 2004).

Urban management is one public sphere, where the practice of participation has made significant inroads. The term urban management refers to a holistic concept that denotes managing the totality of activities that take place within an urban area (Cheema and Shabbir, 1993; Devas and Rakodi, 1993; McGill, 1998). It is about taking comprehensive and sustained responsibility for public actions with the aim of improving human life in urban settlements (UNDP, 1991). This responsibility mainly involves making and implementing policies, as well as fostering relationships with other government levels/spheres and managing the city's assets and services (Cheema and Shabbir, 1993;

Devas and Rakodi, 1993). Other actors involved in urban management, besides government institutions, include residents and their associations, civil society organisations, and the business community. The role of each one of these actors in the processes of urban policy-making as the key function of urban management varies according to the model of local governance adopted.

The strong return of the participation discourse has marked a shift from a traditional view of governance, which primarily associates urban management with a bureaucratic mode of government, to a view which articulates a broader governance approach that brings to the forefront the role that citizens and their organisations can play (Wekwete, 1997). Vigoda (2002) captures this shift in understanding urban management in an evolutionary continuum of the roles of citizens and government, and their reciprocal interaction. Within the traditional approach to urban management, Vigoda characterises citizens as voters delegating power to elected politicians (trustees) to govern their city on their behalf. This relationship changes within the context of participatory urban management to that of collaboration between both citizens and government as partners. Participatory urban management, therefore, has been seen by many as part of the struggle for democratic governance of the city, and a key strategy in combating poverty and exclusion in urban areas (see Martin, 1997; Abers, 2000; Baiocchi, 2001; Pieterse, 2002; Souza, 2003).

This thesis seeks to extend our understanding of the practice of participation by focussing on the participation of people living in informal settlements, in city-level policy-making. This is different from other studies that focus on the involvement of these communities in project management (e.g. Abbott, 1996) or project implementation (e.g. Imparato and Ruster, 2003). I explain the rationale for the focus of the thesis in the following section.

1. 2 The need for involving informal settlement communities in city-level policy-making processes in South Africa

The significance of involving informal settlement communities in city-level policy-making processes arises from the increasing marginalisation of these communities due to shifts in urban economies from the primary and secondary sectors, which involved activities such as mining and manufacturing, to the tertiary sector, which includes economic activities such as financial, retail, and ICT services. In the past, according to Friedman, Hlela and Thulare (2003), the urban poor were able to influence policy decisions in a way, which prompted pro-poor development and growth. They point out that:

> Poor people were, in the main, concentrated in mass production factories in which organisation for collective action was easier and bargaining power greater – the inter-dependence of capital and labour in the workplace provided the working poor with a platform from which to claim a voice in the framing of policy (*ibid*.:4).

Although these conditions never existed in many parts of the global south, Friedman *et al.* (2003:4) argue that 'they could be found, to a significant degree, only in South Africa and, to a lesser degree, in a few other states'. However, in contemporary urban economies such as that of Johannesburg in this thesis, although the interdependence of capital and labour in the workplace still exits, changes in the labour market have led to a growing 'casualisation and informalisation of the workforce' (*ibid*.). As a result, increasing numbers of poor people find themselves outside the factories, struggling with poverty and with no real mechanism to make their voices heard on policy matters. These people are often relegated to slums and informal settlements on the fringes of our cities.

Informal settlements are defined by their unauthorised occupation of land, and lack of compliance with planning or land-use zoning regulations and standards in the construction of shelter (Huchzermeyer, 2002). These settlements represent one of the most important components of the slum housing stock, which accommodate 31.6% of the

world's urban population (UN-Habitat, 2003). English terms used to describe these settlements include spontaneous settlements, 'squatter' settlements/camps, and 'shanty towns' (UNDP, 2003). Terms in other languages include *favela* in Portuguese, *bidonville* in French, *geckondus* in Turkish and *mudun-safih* or *aashwa'i* in Arabic. Due to their unauthorised status, local governments tend to ignore the service and infrastructure needs of the communities living in these settlements. They often experience a severe lack of basic services and public facilities such as water, sanitation, electricity, roads, drainage, schools, health centres, market places, etc. Water supply, for example, to households in informal settlements may be absent completely, or available only from very few public or community standpipes (*ibid*.).

In addition to depriving communities living in informal settlements of adequate access to basic urban services and amenities, the informal nature of these settlements negatively affects the political rights of their residents. The 'illegality' of the informal settlements often limits the political representation of their residents and affects their influence on the political processes in the city (Balbo, 1993). In South Africa, Huchzermeyer (2004b) notes that local ward councillors who have the official role of representing communities in their entire ward (including formal and informal areas) 'tend to originate from formal settlements' (p. 314). Even where councillors are residents of informal settlements, they often tend to adhere to 'the formal, technically driven system of resource allocation and service delivery' (*ibid*.), rather than looking for effective ways to address the social realities in informal settlements. The lack of full political representation of communities living in informal settlements and the 'exploitation enabled through informality' (*ibid*.), render these communities vulnerable, powerless and voiceless (World Bank, 2001), and result in them having little or no protection against the infringement of their citizenship rights (Huchzermeyer, 2004b).

Powerlessness of dwellers of informal settlements in the face of the neglect of local government officials opens up opportunities for political exploitation (Huchzermeyer, 1999). Across cities in various developing countries, it has been observed that in their daily struggle to access entitlements, acquire better services and avoid evictions, people

living in informal settlements 'often have no accountable government institutions and frequently face only clientelist politicians and bribe-seeking public employees' (Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2004:4). Informal settlement communities may always be involved with different degrees of intensity at project or neighbourhood levels (Imparato and Ruster, 2003), but, their involvement in making policies that shape the future of their cities remains weak and largely unexplored.

Post-apartheid South Africa presents a useful context for this study. Almost all of the country's 'non-white' population was historically excluded by the apartheid regime from the economic benefits of the country's cities, and deprived of their political rights. Prior to 1994, black Africans were marginalised into 'under-serviced ghettos' on the edges of South African cities, where they were 'geographically, materially and psychologically distanced from the opportunities and advantages' that are associated with life in cities (South African Cities Network, 2004:12). By the end of the apartheid regime, the key feature of most of the big cities in the country was inequality (*ibid*.). This was both evidenced and further exacerbated by the increasing proliferation of informal settlements on the fringes of the major cities and towns.

In addition to discrimination and exclusion that the poor in South Africa experienced during apartheid rule, those living in informal settlements, in particular, have continued to experience hardship and exclusion. During the 18 months that preceded the 2006 local government elections in South Africa, local governments were faced with visible evidence of community unhappiness expressed through violent protests that erupted across the country. According to the former Minister of Safety and Security, there were 5800 legal public protests and 881 illegal protests in the 2004/05 financial year alone (Cape Argus, 13 October 2005). Poor service delivery and lack of political engagement with communities were seen by many as the primary cause of most of the demonstrations (Bond, 2006; Harrison, Todes and Watson, 2008). The violent protests of 2004/05 were understood to be a symptom of not only economic marginalisation or poor service

delivery, but also a serious communication breakdown between disadvantaged communities and political leaders in the local government sphere.

Many have argued that lack of political engagement and inclusion in the processes of local governance, has impacted negatively on the performance of the local government system in South Africa and led to the frustration that ignited the violent protests (Bond, 2006; Friedman, 2006; Mathekga and Buccus, 2006). The most significant acknowledgment of the lack of political engagement with local communities came from the former President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, during the run-up to the municipal elections of 2006. Contrary to mainstream thinking within government over the past few years that the lack of capacity was to blame for the local government crisis (Mathekga and Buccus, 2006; Harrison, *et al*., 2007), the president blamed the local protests on the failure of ANC (African National Congress) branches. According to President Mbeki, '[ANC branches] must radically improve their contact with the people in the wards in which they are based' (cited in Friedman, 2006: 6). Friedman (2006) argues that by blaming his party's branches rather than municipal officials, the former president acknowledged that the problem with local government is political, not technical. Blaming party branches for local government failures suggests that municipalities can only work in a way that satisfies local communities if they engage their communities in a meaningful way (*ibid*.).

The leadership of the ANC supported the President's sentiment. In a statement issued at the end of its January 2006 *Lekgotla* (a Sotho word meaning a strategic gathering of political leaders), the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the ruling party emphasised that 'a key area of work for the ANC and the broader democratic movement is the deepening of democracy' (ANC, 2006:2). The NEC also reaffirmed the central responsibility of the branches and cadres of the party 'to mobilise communities to participate more meaningfully in the identification of local priorities and programmes' (*ibid*.). This statement reflects a desire by the ruling party for the affected communities

to be involved in policy-making, because identification of development priorities and programmes is an important part of policy decisions.

Statements made by the former president and the leadership of the ruling party beg the question: To what extent is 'meaningful participation' possible, particularly for the informal settlement communities from whom most of the protestors were mobilised? This thesis sets out to contribute to the understanding of the intricacy of factors that facilitate or hinder the involvement of informal settlement communities in city-level/municipal-level policy-making.

1.3 Research aim and key questions

The aim of this study is to explore the complexity of participatory policy-making in cities with deep socio-economic inequalities exemplified by the existence of informal settlements, as the cases of Johannesburg and São Paulo in this study. Participative management of cities with informal settlements is about facilitating adequate participation of informal settlement communities in policy-making, at city levels. The study, therefore, seeks to add to various contributions over the past few years, to understanding the phenomenon of informal settlements in our cities (see, for example, Huchzermeyer, 2004; Mitlin and Satterthwaite, 2004; Huchzermeyer and Karam, 2006; Kramer, 2006), participation in urban management (see Abers, 2000; Imparato, 2003; Mahiteme, 2008), and theorising urban practices in the South African city (see, for example, Watson, 2002; Simone, 2005; Pillay *et al*., 2006; Harrison *et al*., 2007; Van Donk *et al*., 2008).

The main research question that this thesis deals with is: how do informal settlement communities in Johannesburg actually participate in city-level policy processes, and what are the key factors that influence their involvement in those processes? To answer this question, the main body of the study addresses a set of secondary questions about participation in policy making of the poor sectors of society living in informal

settlements, the position and depth of participation of those poor sectors within various urban management models, and the relationship between city governments and informal settlement communities in South Africa. The first secondary question pertains to how various theoretical perspectives on participation address the involvement of disadvantaged communities, particularly residents of informal settlements, in policy-making processes at city level. Participatory urban management is about the advancement and realisation of citizens' rights to take part in the formulation of policy interventions aimed at addressing their local developmental needs and the needs of the entire city. Influential contemporary discourses about state, citizenship and participation are firmly rooted in Western political and social theory, and strongly emphasise the individual citizen as the basic unit of society that can be conceptualised and defined independently from society. However, this study analyses participation of communities and not individuals, as the literature reviewed in this study about participation in the developing countries emphasises the significance of community involvement, as opposed to the involvement of individual citizens (see Subsection 2.5.2).

The second set of secondary questions revolves around the possibilities for involving the informal settlement communities in the complex processes of policy-making in the large cities of the developing world. The critical questions here are: Can these communities meaningfully participate? What are the key factors that make the participation of the informal settlement communities possible?

The third set of secondary questions deals with issues of the policy and practice of participatory urban management. The city of Johannesburg, which is South Africa's main economic hub and biggest city in terms of population size, remains a relevant place to examine policy and practice of post-apartheid urban governance, which incorporate a particular mould of participatory urban management. The city's model of urban management during the period covered by this study (see Chapter Five) is an example of the Third Way ideas contained in South Africa's urban policy framework. Therefore, the third and last set of secondary questions is: How has the City of Johannesburg operationalised the country's legal and policy requirement of participation into specific

mechanisms? To what extent have these mechanisms succeeded (or not) in involving the city's informal settlement communities in policy-making processes? To answer this set of three questions, a qualitative research approach was taken. The following section first locates and then describes in more detail the chosen research approach.

1.4 Research approach and methods

This research uses a critical postmodern lens, which is first located, briefly, within contemporary sociology before it is expanded on in the following subsection. In the field of social sciences, research does not happen in vacuum. Research is based on assumptions about how the world is perceived (ontology), how researchers can best come to understand the perceived world (epistemology), and the particular practices used to obtain that understanding (methodology) (Burrel and Morgan, 1979; Krauss, 2005). Morgan and Smircich (1980) propose a framework that provides a general overview of the relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology in contemporary social science.

Table 1.1 captures the key elements of Morgan and Smircich's (1980) framework, which shows how ontological assumptions define different epistemological and methodological positions. The framework provides a broad typology for thinking about the various views that different social scientists hold about human beings and their world. Ontological assumptions and the different worldviews they reflect imply different grounds for knowledge about the social world. The nature of what constitutes adequate knowledge changes as we move from one assumption to another across the subjective-objective continuum. The transition from one perspective to another is a gradual one, and often the advocates of any given position may attempt to incorporate insights from others. (Morgan and Smircich, 1980)

Table 1. 1: Ontology, epistemology and methodology in contemporary social sciences

Aspect	Subjectivist approaches to social science	←	Critical post-modernism	→	Objectivist approaches to social science
Core ontological assumptions	Reality as a projection of human imagination	Reality as a social construction	Reality as a contextual field of information	Reality as a concrete process	Reality as a concrete structure
Basic epistemological stance	To obtain phenomenological insight, revelation	To understand how social reality is constructed	To map contexts	To study systems, process, change,	To construct a positivist science
Research methods	Exploration of pure subjectivity	Hemeneutics	Contextual analysis	Historical analysis	Lab experiments, surveys

Source: adapted from (Morgan and Smircich, 1980:492)

Within the context of contemporary social sciences, there are many schools of philosophy: positivism and post-positivism; interpretivism; and critical postmodernism, among others. They all fall along a subjective-objective continuum as shown in Table 1.1. On the far right of the continuum, there is the positivist (objectivist) school of thought, which assumes the existence of an objective world that scientific methods can more or less represent and measure. On the far left end of the continuum, however, there is the interpretivist (subjectivist) school, which assumes that knowledge and meaning are acts of interpretation, hence, that there is no objective knowledge that is independent from thinking human beings (*ibid*.).

Interpretive research, therefore, is concerned with meaning and seeks to understand the definition of a situation by individuals, groups or organisations (Schwandt, 1994). Post-positivism is consistent with positivism in that they both assume the existence of an objective world, but post-positivism assumes that world might not be seized and that variable relations or facts might be only 'probabilistic, but not deterministic' (Gephart, 1999). Critical postmodernist thinking, which falls in the objective half of the subjective-objective continuum (see Table 1.1), assumes the existence of a material world of structured contradictions and/or exploitation that can be objectively known only by removing implicit ideological biases (*ibid*.). Research within critical postmodernism,

therefore, seeks 'to deconstruct discourse to reveal hidden structures of domination (*ibid*.:5).

Having broadly outlined the main contemporary schools of thought that influence research in social science, the remainder of this section describes the research approach used in this study. This includes research paradigm, research strategy, data collection and analysis methods, and the limitations of the study.

1.4.1 Research paradigm: critical postmodernism

This thesis uses a critical postmodernist lens because it simultaneously challenges the value neutral nature of positivism and the relativist nature of interpretive research paradigms. It also challenges normal positivist science by displaying that 'particularistic' and elite interests are served by, and embedded in, positivist knowledge, hence positivism serves to reproduce structures of inequality and oppression (Gephart, 1999). Critical postmodernism, as used in this thesis, combines two different worldviews: critical and postmodern theories.

Critical theory, on the one hand, is a tradition developed by the Frankfurt School in Germany that was founded on Marxist orthodoxy on many issues but 'maintained a focus on the changing nature of capitalism and the forms of domination, injustice and subjugation capitalism produced' (*ibid*.:6). A basic assumption of the critical tradition is that the material world we encounter is both real and produced by and through capitalist models of production (*ibid*.). Capitalism contains basic inequalities and contradictions, which are masked by ideology; 'a publicly disseminated theory of everyday life events which people use to explain or make sense of events and which encourages people to accept the status quo structures of society as natural, unalterable givens' (*ibid*.). Postmodernism, on the other hand, is a form of scholarship that emerged in part through the work of French intellectuals such as Lyotard, Derrida and Foucault. These scholars were well acquainted with critical thought and sensed fundamental limits in critical

thought related to changes in the nature and logic of capitalism (Aylesworth, 2005). Proponents of postmodernism emphasise the significance of two key changes in the contemporary world: the loss of 'grand narratives' and the changing nature of social conditions (*ibid*.). However, Rosenau (1993) argues that postmodernism's anti-theoretical position is a theoretical stand in itself. He further points out that postmodernists criticise modernists for inconsistency but refuse to be held to norms of consistency themselves (*ibid*.).

Critical postmodern research, therefore, has often focused on discourse at the micro level, in contrast to a rather macro level focus in critical theory research. It frequently investigates discourse that constructs hidden dichotomies of power and allows social categorisation to operate as a hidden mechanism of control that reproduces domination (*ibid*.). This study, therefore, applies a critical postmodern approach to examine the micro-dynamics of informal settlement communities' participation, in participation mechanisms established by the city for public involvement in policy-making. The aim is to unearth the factors that influence the actual involvement of these communities in policy-making processes.

Understood as the redistribution of power (Arnstein, 1969), participation enables individuals and communities currently excluded from political and economic processes in cities such as informal settlement communities, to be deliberately included in the future of those cities. Thus, participation in policy-making could be, as argued by Arnstein (1969), an effective strategy by which communities living in informal settlements take part in determining how development goals are set, resources are allocated, and programmes are designed and operated. Ultimately, participation becomes a means by which disadvantaged citizens can bring about significant social change that enables them to share the benefits of society.

Critical scholarship is an appropriate lens for this kind of study, because it transcends the taken-for-granted beliefs, values and social structures of capitalism by making these structures and the problems they produce, visible. This thesis manages this by examining the involvement of one of the most disadvantaged sectors of our contemporary cities of the Third World in city-level policy-making. Critical scholarship encourages self-conscious criticism and contributes to the development of emancipatory consciousness in scholars and social groups in general (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). The main idea advanced in the understanding of the notion of participation is the redistribution of decision-making power to include disadvantaged groups in defining the urban future.

1.4.2 Research strategy: exploratory enquiry through a case study

In this thesis, exploratory enquiry seeks to understand how people living in informal settlements are involved in city-level policy processes, what meaning they give to their involvement, and what issues concern them. The thesis deals with a single case study: the participation of the informal settlement communities of one of Johannesburg's administrative regions, namely Region 2 (Midrand and Ivory Park) in policy-making at city-level. The purpose of this case study is to explore the actual participation of the informal settlement communities in the mechanisms of city-level policy-making processes in Johannesburg. Region 2 was selected as a case study because it generally reflects the main characteristics of the entire city. Unlike the southern regions of the city, which also contain informal settlements, Region 2 has almost the same socio-economic characteristics and development profile as the City of Johannesburg as a whole (see Chapters Five and Six). The region also has a diversified population structure that allows for comparability in terms of racial and income groups. It is made up of six electoral wards: four wards entirely populated by low-income households, including those living in informal settlements; one ward populated by low-income households but also middle- and high-income households; and one ward populated almost entirely by wealthy households. The contrast between adjoining wards and the extreme contrasts within one of the wards, are indicative of the spatial segregation that continues to characterise South African cities and poses an important structural challenge to participatory urban management.

Robert Yin (1994) places case studies within a broader methodological context that also includes experiments, surveys, archival analysis and histories (see Table 1.2). He further highlights the significance of three conditions in deciding on the strategy to use. These conditions include: 'a) the type of research questions posed, b) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioural events, and c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events' (*ibid*.: 4). Overall, Yin dismisses the hierarchical view that case studies are only suitable for the exploratory phase of an investigation. He argues that case studies can be used all three purposes of investigation and there may be exploratory case studies, descriptive case studies or explanatory case studies (*ibid*). In this thesis, the case study is used to serve the exploratory purpose as indicated at the beginning of this subsection.

Table 1.2: Relevant situations for Different Research Strategies

Strategy	Form of research question	Requires control over behavioural events?	Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	how, why	yes	yes
Survey	who, what, where, how many, how much	no	yes
Archival analysis	who, what, where, how many, how much	No	yes/no
History	how, why	No	no
Case study	how, why	No	yes

Source: COSMOS Corporation cited in Yin (1994: 6)

Case studies are seen as providing little basis for scientific generalisation and therefore less desirable form of enquiry compared to experiments and surveys. Yin (1994) refutes this critique arguing that 'case studies, like experiments, are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes' (p. 10). In this study, the Midrand area does not represent a sample and the goal to make analytic generalization and 'not to enumerate frequencies' (*ibid*.)

The period from 2003 to 2005 was particularly significant for the study of public participation in the City of Johannesburg. Although the implementation of new municipal systems in South Africa started in 2001, it was only at the beginning of 2003 that the City of Johannesburg had a set of mechanisms for public participation in place, in accordance with the requirements of the national legislation and policy framework. These mechanisms include the City's ward committee system, the IDP/Budget Community Outreach Programme, ward public meetings and the mayoral road show, which is explained in Chapter Five and examined in Chapter Seven.

Following the March 2006 municipal elections, the organisational structure of the City was changed. The 11 administrative regions of the City were reduced to seven. Region 2 has been combined with its neighbouring Region 1 to form Region A. The motivation for this change, according to the City Council, was to enhance service delivery and improve lines of accountability and co-ordination (City of Johannesburg, 2006). As a result, Region 2, which is the case study in this thesis, has ceased to exist as an administrative entity.

The literature review in Chapter Three points, in particular, to the significance of the 'alternative urban planning and management in Brazil' (Souza, 2003), which includes a set of emerging city-wide participatory practices such as 'participatory budgeting', sectoral popular councils, and public debates for city master plans. Seeking to draw on the Brazilian approach in understanding the possibilities and limitations of participatory policy-making processes in cities with informal settlements, I examine the experiences of the City of São Paulo during the 2001-2004 municipal term. The study of São Paulo's experiences involved a visit to the city in 2005, which focussed on key informant interviews. This is not intended as a Brazil-South Africa comparative study; rather, it serves to deepen the broader literature review that informs the case study analysis.

Research strategies are not mutually exclusive. Case studies as a way of organising social, political and economic data and looking holistically at the object to be studied, allow for a thorough and detailed investigation of all aspects of a particular case (Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995). However, there is always a possibility for using a survey within a case study in any given research project, because surveys allow the collection of information on a wide range of cases, but do not focus on the diverse aspects of a single case (Yin, 1994; Bless and Higson-Smith, 1995). The data used to construct the case study in this thesis were gathered through a review of public documents and officially commissioned reports, as well as qualitative interviews with various interviewees representing a variety of institutions, and through surveys.

1.4.3 Data collection and analysis

The key sources of data used in this study include a review of published academic literature, government documents and commissioned reports, and collection and analysis of primary data through interviews and surveys.

Review of academic literature, government documents and reports

Literature review was a critical component for this thesis in that it helped in the formulation of a conceptual understanding of the theoretical roots and application of the concept of participation, in contexts of poverty and informality. The review, which comprises Chapters Two and Three, also examined how the notion of participation found expression in contemporary approaches to urban governance, and pointed to the importance of the Brazilian example. Although accessible literature on urban governance in Brazil points to varying successes of the participatory practices in São Paulo, very little has been written about the involvement of the city's disadvantaged and marginalised communities, such as those living in informal settlements (*favelas*). To counter this limitation and acquire a better understanding the limits of the participation of informal settlement (*favela*) communities in policy making, a field study was conducted in the city of São Paulo during February/March 2005, where grey literature was sourced and key informant interviews were conducted. The findings of this study are presented in Chapter Four of the thesis.

Furthermore, the literature review presented in Chapter Five also traced Johannesburg's continuous search for an appropriate management model during the various eras of the South African history, but mainly during the transition to democracy. In particular, the literature review on the evolution of Johannesburg's model of city management, sought to understand the relationship between the city and its informal settlement communities during these eras. Ultimately, the theoretical analysis enabled the development of a conceptual understanding for the analytical aspect of the thesis. The key elements of the conceptual framework for this study include competency of the city relating to the priority needs of its informal settlement communities, roles of government, civil society and community organisations, and design of participation mechanisms.

The review and analysis of official documents and commissioned reports were also important components of this study, especially in constructing and providing background to the case study. This involved a review and analysis of various national policy documents, pieces of legislation, guidelines, and reports. It also covered reviewing the City of Johannesburg's policies, by-laws, Integrated Development Plans, mayoral reports and council minutes. Various documents prepared by the regional administration of Region 2 were also reviewed.

In addition to the theoretical analysis derived from published and grey literature, facts and perceptions about public participation in general, and the participation of the Region's informal settlement communities in particular, were captured and analysed. The facts and perceptions were acquired through in-depth qualitative interviews of key informants involved in community participation in São Paulo and Johannesburg, and two surveys of informal settlement community leaders and the public in the former Region 2 of Johannesburg.

Interviews

Key informant interviewing, as a direct way of collecting information, was applied both to fieldwork in São Paulo and more extensively in Johannesburg. I used broadly structured, open-ended questions for in-depth interviews relating to the functioning of the respective cities' participation mechanisms and processes in general, and in the context of informal settlements in particular. In total, 21 in-depth interviews were conducted: nine in São Paulo in 2005 and 12 in Johannesburg in 2006. The respondents in these interviews were selected because they were knowledgeable about the actual operation of the public participation mechanisms and processes in the two cities in general, and Region 2 in the city of Johannesburg in particular. Respondents in São Paulo included five academics and urban specialists, two community leaders, and two municipal councillors. In Johannesburg, respondents included two City officials (the head of the Planning Unit and the Director of Public Participation); two regional administrators responsible for public participation in Region 2 (Midrand and Ivory Park); four councillors representing wards in the study area; and four ward committee members who represented different community sectors in different ward committees. I conducted all the interviews, which were done in English.

The information obtained through the interviews was mainly qualitative in nature: it described in detail how the processes of participation unfolded during the period covered by this thesis, as well as the perceptions of the key informants regarding certain aspects of the processes. However, the thesis also set out to analyse detailed and comparable information about the actual involvement of the informal settlement communities in the public participation activities in Region 2. One way of doing this was through triangulation, which is defined as the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon (Jick, 1979). The use of triangulation in social sciences research is seen as a way of validation. The effectiveness of triangulation, as explained by Jick (1979:604) and more recently by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), is based on the premise that the weaknesses in each single method will be compensated for 'by the counter-balancing strengths of another' (p. 604). The assumption here is that multiple and independent

measures do not share the same weaknesses or potential for bias. Therefore, the qualitative information of the thesis was complemented by quantitative data obtained through two surveys, which I explain below.

Surveys

Two separate surveys in Region 2 of Johannesburg provided information for this study: the informal settlement community leaders' survey, which was the main survey and the general public survey, which was a supplementary survey. The informal settlement community leaders' survey used a structured questionnaire with a set of eleven questions and multiple answers (see Annexure A). The questionnaire sought to gather information from the respondents about:

- The extent of the active participation of the informal settlement communities through their leaders in the study area in policy-making consultations;
- The experiences of these community leaders with regard to the logistics of public consultation meetings (the main mechanism of grassroots consultation in the City of Johannesburg);
- The views of the informal settlement community leaders regarding the issues being, or which should be, discussed in the public meetings; and
- The views of the informal settlement community leaders regarding the usefulness of the mechanisms and processes designed by the City for public participation.

The respondents of the main survey were selected using a purposive sampling technique. To ensure that responses to the survey questionnaire were obtained from people who have the understanding of the actual experience of communities in the participation process, the survey targeted the leaders of the informal settlement communities in the area, who were either chairpersons or members of residents committees in their respective communities. This could not be guaranteed if techniques of probability sampling were used. A total of 90 community leaders from 10 informal settlements in the study area (13 chairpersons and 77 members of various residents committees) responded to the questionnaire. Table 1.3 provides a summary of the respondents in the main survey. The

variation in the number of respondents between the informal settlements was mainly due to the availability of the leaders during the period of the survey.

Table 1.3: Respondents of the community leaders' survey by settlement, ward and dates of interviews

Name of Informal settlement	Ward number	Number of respondents	Dates of interviews
Chris Hani	77	5	02.04.2006
Ekurhuleni	80	10	25.03.2006
Ivory Park Stadium	79	10	20 - 21.03.2006
K60	80	10	25.03.2006
Mafelandawonye1	79	10	20.03.2006
Mafelandawonye3	79	10	19.03.2006
Meriting	93	10	24.03.2006
Sakhile	78	9	23.03.2006
Sisonke	77	5	01.04.2006
Steve Biko	78	11	23.03.2006

Source: Author

The informal settlement community leaders' survey was administered by an experienced research assistant from the area. He was recommended by three councillors, as well as the administrators of the City's regional office in the area, as he was respected by the community leaders and had adequate knowledge of the area. Knowledge of the study area and local languages, and acceptability by local leaders, were critical aspects to ensure accessibility to the area by the research assistant. This, in turn, was a key factor for the success of the survey. The assistant was trained by me, and undertook a pilot survey of 15 questionnaires, which I assessed before commissioning him to administer the community leaders' survey. While the research assistant administered the entire survey, I visited three informal settlements with him and was present during 13 interviews.

The supplementary survey (Appendix B for a detailed description) was conducted by the 2006 first-year students studying for a master of science in the development planning programme in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand. This survey doubled up as a requirement for a course in research methods taught by one of the co-supervisors of this thesis, Dr Karam, and was designed to cover the area of study for this thesis.

All data sets obtained through reviews, interviews and surveys were analysed and used to construct the eight chapters of the thesis. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the features of the quantitative data obtained through the two surveys, which are presented in tables and simple graphics. The data obtained from books, articles, official documents and in-depth interviews, were analysed using conventional content analysis. Hsieh and Shannon (2005) define content analysis as a method for interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes and patterns. The aim of this approach in this thesis was to provide knowledge and understanding of participation of informal settlement communities in city-wide policy-making processes. Therefore, both the qualitative and quantitative data sets were thematically interpreted and used to develop arguments, not only in the case study chapters but also throughout the thesis.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The focus of the study is on understanding the way in which informal settlement communities participate in policy-making processes in Johannesburg and the factors that affect this involvement. This research does not include the participation of these communities in local development interventions such as local project design, project management or project implementation. The study also does not look at the gains of local participation for these communities. Instead, in response to a gap in the literature which was identified in section 1.2, this study investigates the involvement of these

communities in the processes and mechanisms of policy-making in Johannesburg, primarily, the ward committee system, and the consultation processes of the city's Integrated Development Plans. According to the City of Johannesburg's notion of 'structured participation', the ward committees are the key mechanisms for involving local communities in policy debates at regional and city levels. Although the City includes, as part of its public participation mechanisms, the City's Petition Management System and the mayoral road shows (*imbizo*), these have not been included in the study because they are not directly linked to policy-making processes in the city.

1.6 Summary and structure of the thesis

This chapter (Chapter One) provides a background to the study by locating it within debates on the rise of public participation. It also outlined and explained the choice of the research approach. The remainder of the study loosely falls into two parts and a concluding chapter. Part One focuses on the theoretical aspects of the study and spans three chapters. Part Two, which also spans three chapters, examines the policy and practice of public participation in Johannesburg, with a focus on the involvement of informal settlement communities in city-wide policy-making processes

Part One begins in Chapter Two and looks at the theoretical aspects and the application of participation in contexts of urban poverty, inequality and informality. It also explores the position of informal settlement communities' participation in policy-making through the perspectives of two influential approaches: the rights-based and the communicative perspectives. The chapter also examines the role of civil society organisations in facilitating the participation of the urban poor communities and concludes by developing an analytical framework for the participation of these communities in policy-making.

Chapter Three then broadly explains the notion of urban management and, more specifically, four contemporary approaches to city management. This chapter also examines the position of participation of the poor in these approaches and concludes that participatory and Third Way approaches to urban management provide supportive

environments for the participation of informal settlement communities in city-level policy-making processes. This review points to a relevant experience within the rights-based approach in Brazil, which is explained in a more depth in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four, which concludes Part One then explores the possibilities and limitations of informal settlement communities' participation in policy-making in the big cities of the developing world (the global south). The chapter draws on the experiences of the Municipality of São Paulo (Brazil) in particular, under the administration of the Workers Party (PT) from 2001 to 2004. It examines the actual participation of São Paulo's *favela* communities in three city-level policy processes in São Paulo: the housing policy (2001); the participatory budgeting cycles during 2001, 2002, 2003; and the process of developing a master plan for the city in 2002/03.

Part Two of the thesis, which spans the next three chapters, shifts discussion from theoretical perspectives to the policy and practice of participation in the City of Johannesburg. This part begins with Chapter Five, which provides a contextual background by analyszing Johannesburg's municipal history. It seeks to understand the relationship between the city authorities and the city's disenfranchised 'native' residents in general, and those living in 'squatter camps'/informal settlements in particular, before and during the apartheid era. Chapter Five also looks at the post-apartheid municipal transformation processes and how they informed the city's governance approach during the period covered by the study: 2003-2005. The main characteristics of Johannesburg's post-apartheid institutional model and its public participation framework during the first decade of democracy, are examined in this chapter.

Chapter Six introduces the case study area and sets a background for the next chapter. It highlights the socio-economic, political and civil society patterns of the study area, which underpin its representivity of the whole city. Chapter Seven empirically looks at the actual participation of communities living in 10 informal settlements in Region 2 of

Johannesburg in the mechanisms of public participation developed by the City. In particular, Chapter Seven explores the involvement of these communities in city-level policy processes through the ward committee system, ward public meetings, mayoral road show, as well as non-statutory mechanisms of participation adopted by ward councillors.

Chapter Eight concludes the study. It pulls together the threads of discussion in the two parts of the thesis towards understanding the complexity of involving informal settlement communities in city-level policy-making processes.