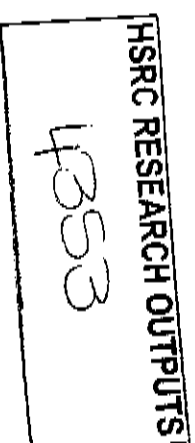


Colloquium «2010 and the Life of the City»  
CUBES, WISER, HSRC and the Goethe Institute  
Johannesburg: Wits University, 4-6 September 2006

## **In the shadow of 2010**

Greater Ellis Park Development, decision-making and the poor in inner city Johannesburg

Claire Bénit-Gbaffou  
PhD, Urban geography



Human Sciences Research Council:  
Urban, Rural and Economic Development

## **No place for the poor in Ellis Park?**

*«We need to remove these people, allocate them somewhere else. In the city we only need people who are able to pay. When we develop the city we'll make it expensive. There is no other way.*

***You cannot stay in the city if you are not working.***

*You have people who are not doing anything in my ward. They're just going to sleep every day. About those people you need to get RDP houses and put them there.*

*When the City removes them, they'll get ownership of their house. I am happy because they'll get ownership: here they are only renting. That is good if they get removed.»*

A local councillor in Greater Ellis Park, 2006

## **The unemployed, potential criminals?**

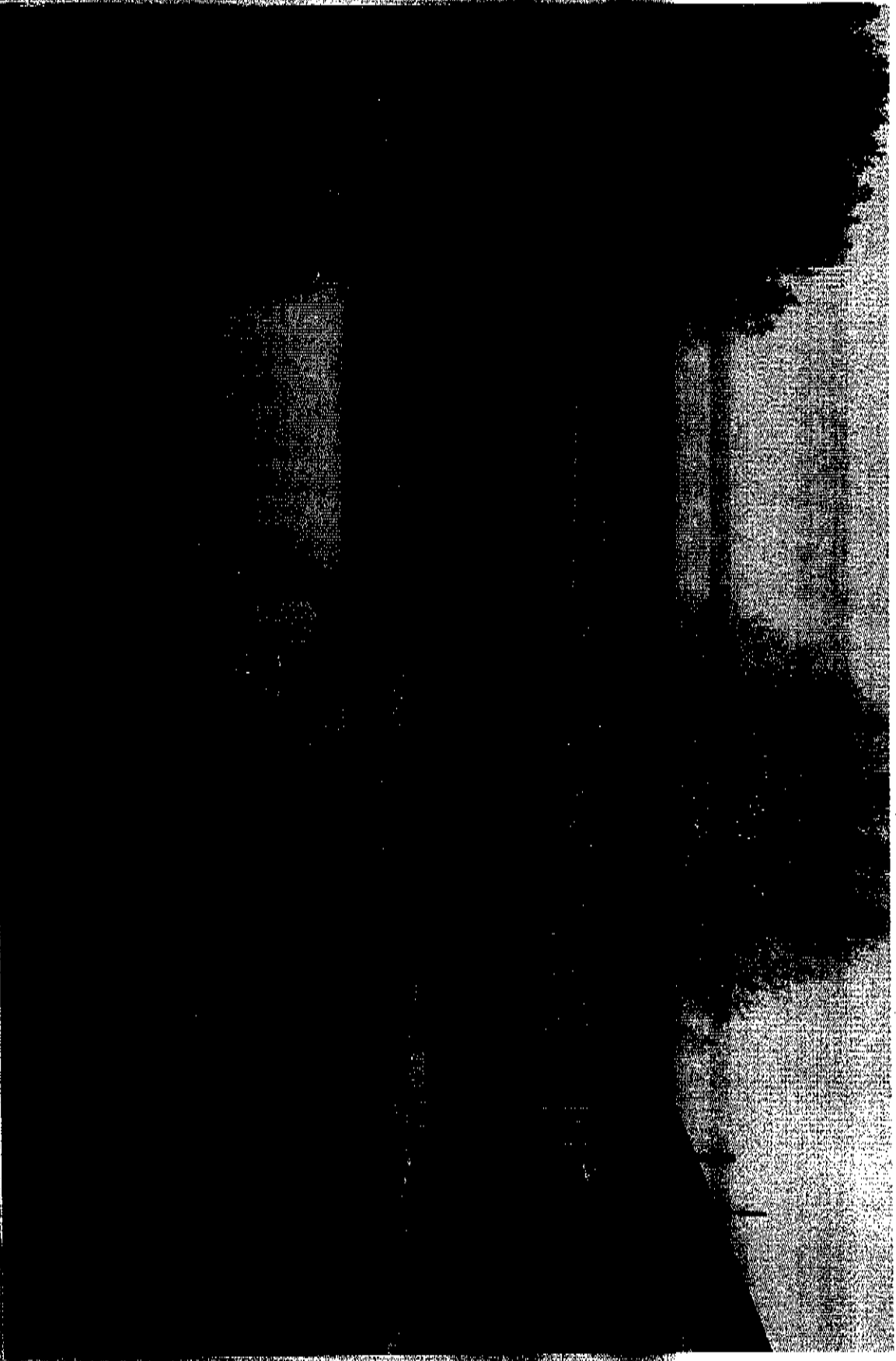
«... Tackling so-called petty by-law contraventions would include the identification of roadway-sidewalk nuisance activities:

- commuter taxis;
- illegal vendors;
- **unemployed persons**

*'pan-handling' at intersections, begging, 'squeegee men' who not only have an **intimidatory effect** on the public, ... but who often provide **cover for armed robbers**»*

Consultant report for City Safety Strategy, 2005

**Former evictees from inner city bad buildings**



# **A research in progress, a policy in process**

1. What place for the poor in Greater Ellis Park urban renewal project ?

The city for whom?, or : How to conciliate a World Class City facility with deprived inner city neighbourhoods?

2. How do the residents voice their needs and concerns on the eve of 2010 ?

When does community involvement become 'political'?

# 1 - No public strategy for the poor / local residents ?

City of Johannesburg: not a regulator of market forces  
main objective: make the area attractive for private investors (do not need it?)

## Example: Better Building Programme

**Massive public subsidy to private developer**

Scrapping off the water & electricity arrears

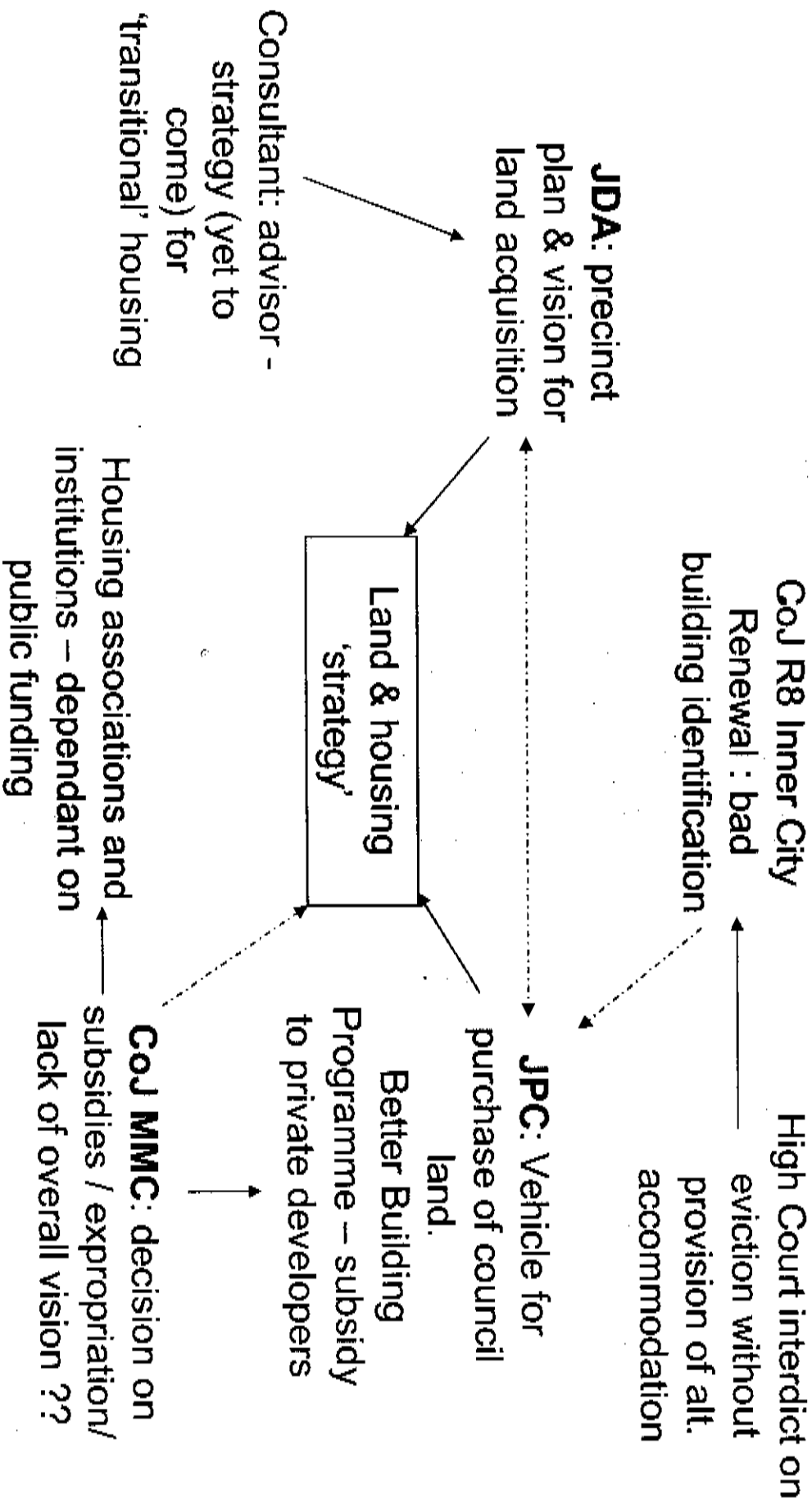
**What public benefit? What private counter-part?**

No rent control  
No investment in public facilities or amenities  
Building rehabilitation / bringing « decent citizens who now pay their rents and taxes »

→ **A public subsidy without conditions**  
City has a power on investors that is does not exert (lack of will? lack of thought?)

→ **No land/property public strategy**  
- No control nor constraint on private speculation  
- No public land reserve for affordable housing & cross-subsidization

# Governance system on land and housing 'strategy' – lack of clear and coordinated vision



## 2 - Who speaks for the poor / local residents in the Greater Ellis Park Development strategy (1)?

### 1 - City, Agencies, JDA?

- Come back to market dynamics
- Attract private investment
- Brand a new city image
- Hope: pragmatism of JDA?

### 2 - Region 8 Administration?

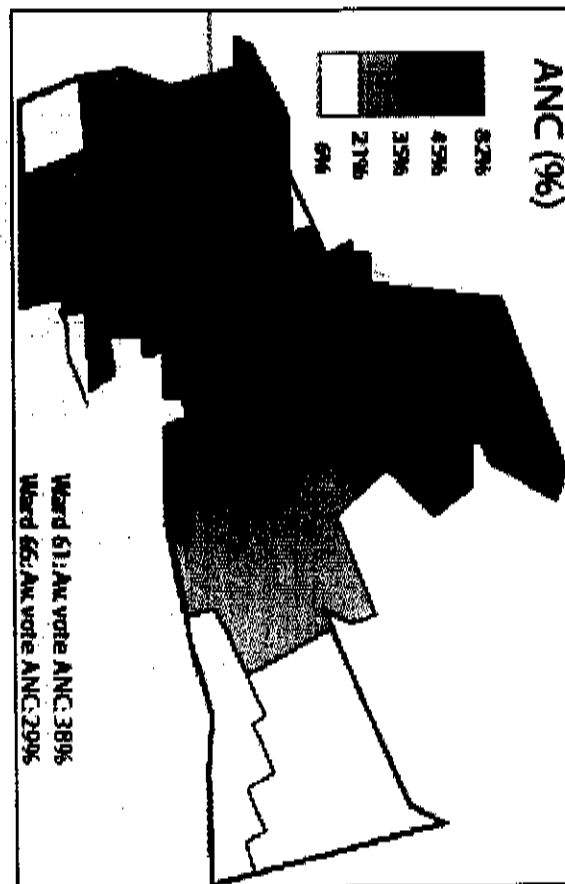
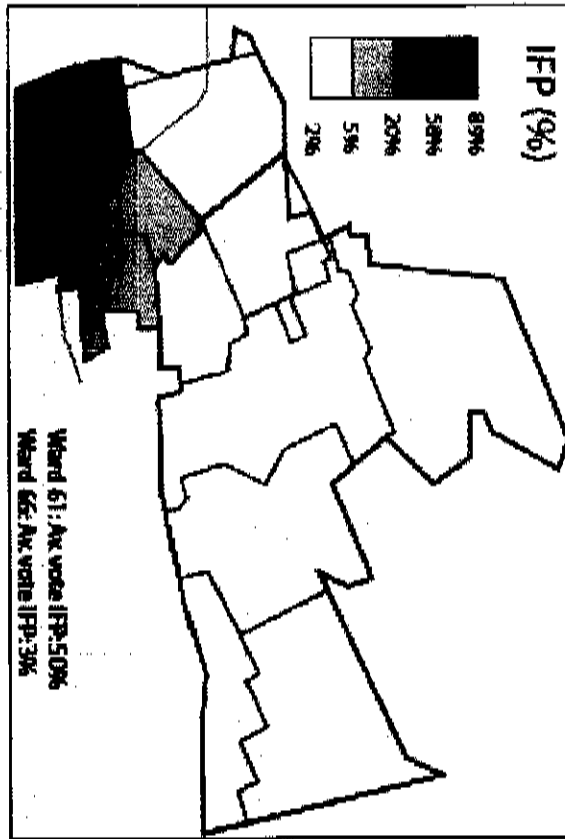
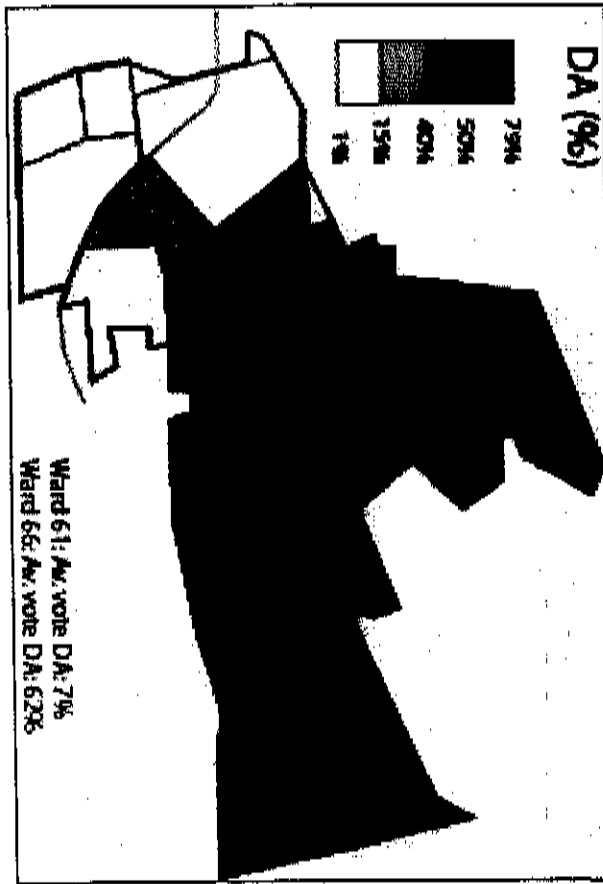
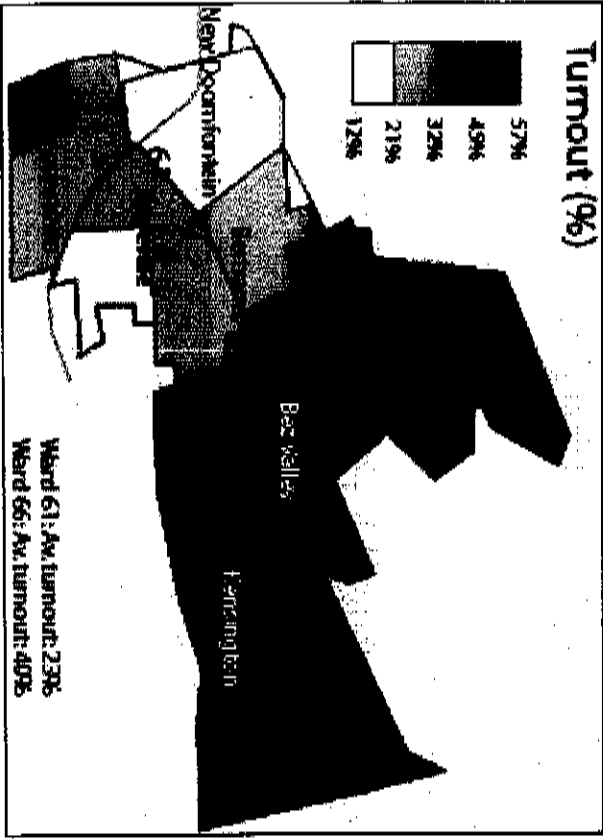
- Cope with daily social problems
- Limited accessibility and flexibility
- No decision-making power
- Restructuring (broader Region F: end of an inner city region?)

### 3 - Local councillors?

- Limited decision-making powers
- Daily management of the ward
- GEP area: not their main 'constituencies'



# Local politics in the Greater Ellis Park area (Municipal elections 2006 – wards 61&66)



# Who speaks for the poor / local residents in the Greater Ellis Park Development strategy (2)?

## 4. ANC branch / SANCO branch?

- Huge internal divisions / competition for power
- Clientelist practices (fragmented view)
- Little political challenge to gvt

## 5. Private stakeholders? E.g. Ellis Park World of Sport (EPWOS)

- Not a 'social institution' but
- Pragmatism: need to build safety & local pride?
- Local partnerships?

## 6. NGOs / CBOs?

- Fragmentation
- Small scale vision
- Depending on public funding

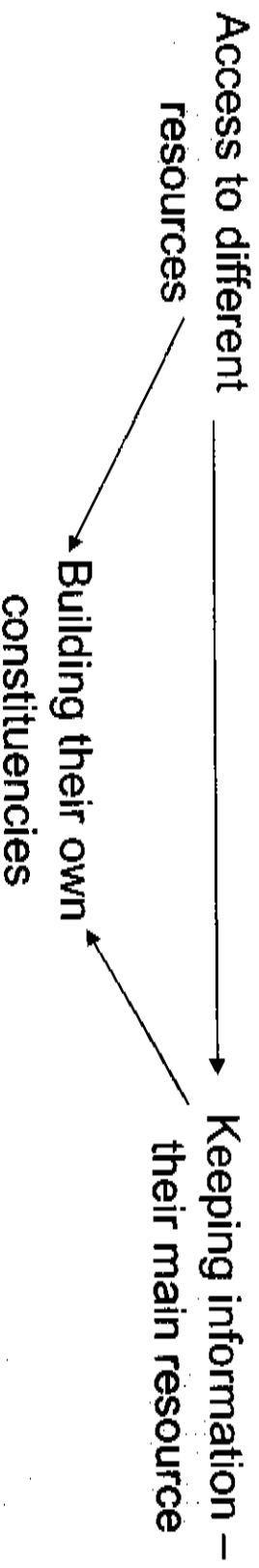
## 7. One voice for the poor – the judicial system?

- **High court interdict** (March 2006): no further evictions without provision of alternative accommodation
- **What impact on urban policies?** 'transitional' or 'social' housing strategy?
  - Ignorance of law & rights - Daily **violations of basic rights** ('by-law infringement' – by whom?): no access to services / slumlords & criminal elements

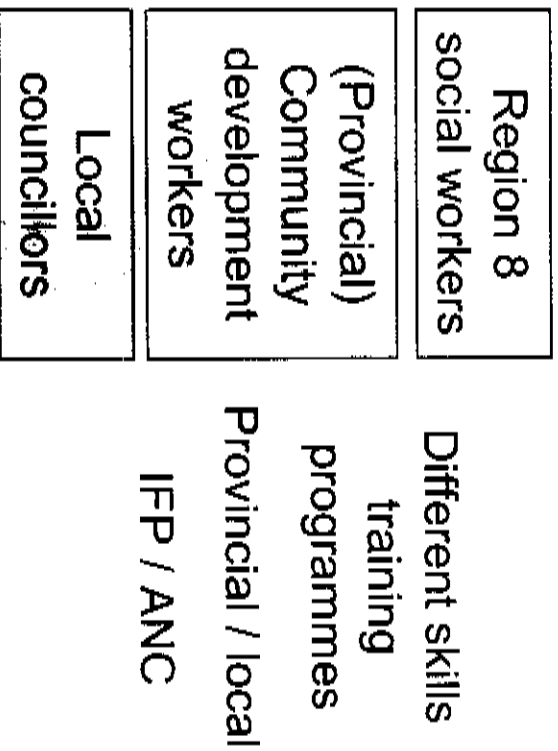
### 3 - Can local residents' voice be built from the bottom?

a. In the long term – access to state resource through clientelist networks

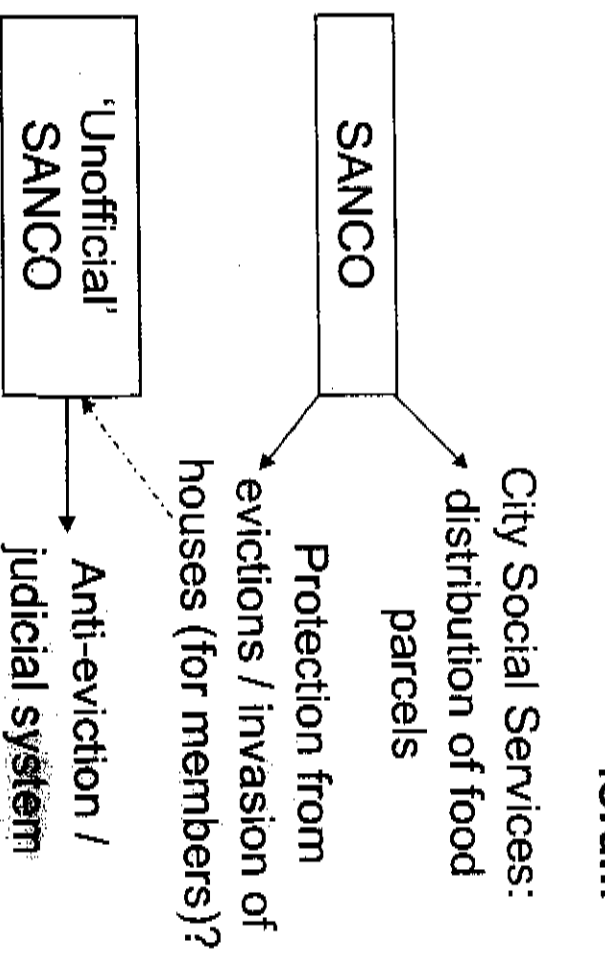
#### Several competing networks



**Example (1): no unified training programme**



**Example (2): no unified anti-eviction forum**



### 3 - Can local residents' voice be built from the bottom? (2)

b. In the short term – the participatory process: discontinuity, fragmentation and confusion

**Discontinuity** of engagement of public authorities with local communities:

- In time
- Instability of consultants driving the participatory process

**Fragmentation** of the participatory process

- Communities 'consulted' per precinct,
  - not per theme (housing, skills training, safety, etc.)
  - or per sector (schools, youth, religious sector, etc.)
- not conducive to empowerment and local organisation

**Confusion:** uncertainty, fear and abuse

- Opportunity for criminals to act (cf. building hijacking)
- Impediment to investment (in property, in community projects –cf. car guards)

## From partnership to privatisation

### Example: the car guards initiative – formalise or eradicate?

“These car guards started giving us a problem [recently]. They fight with one another, they will ask for R50 and intimidate you... it's like little mafia groups starting.

**We can't pull this into a formal structure. We'll just get rid of them. We'll redeploy our private security into the streets. Unfortunately! Right now we just want to try and eradicate them.”**

(Ellis Park Management, 2006)

→ **Difficult** to work with fragmented & deprived communities (fight over scarce resource) : a management issue

→ **A vicious circle** created by 2010?

Jeppie Police (officer withdrawing since 2005) : ‘no need to continue the programme since Ellis Park will hire private companies for 2010’ → collapse of the initiative → strengthen Ellis Park determination to get rid of it

→ **From partnership to privatisation**

Exclusion of local residents from possible benefits - **No organised training/** formalisation programme for local communities

## Conclusion

Contradictions need to be tackled, not ignored :

### **Coordinating the various stakeholders (competing interests)**

- Attracting necessary private capital (profit-making –little scope for social intervention – targeting a richer clientele)

&

- Giving a place and a role to local communities (not only 'nuisance', 'criminals', nor 'transitional' place in society...)

### **Time pressure versus 'legacy planning' (hierarchy of priorities)**

- Fast-tracked development for 2010 → privatisation, evictions, gating: hiding, not alleviating, poverty: politics of city image. The easiest route?

&

- Sustainable city in the longer term → a City for all? mixed housing strategy not exclusively market-driven. More complex State intervention