

Journal of African Elections

Special Issue
Women and Local Government Elections

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HOUSEKEEPING NOTES

As I write these notes, the results of the Angolan election are trickling in. This election is interesting in itself, of course, but it is just another in the spate of elections that have taken place on the continent this year. All who are interested in promoting democracy in Africa must applaud these developments. But for those, like we who are involved in this journal, elections increase the demands on limited resources and person power. Keeping track of African elections, as our colleagues in EISA do, is one thing, finding experts and authorities to write about them in this journal is another. The long-term challenge is twofold.

The first is that the *JAЕ* needs to reach beyond its regular contributors to authorities (or even interested and informed) layfolk who can write about elections on the continent. Where are we to find this expertise? Not only is this important, it is urgent. In addition, the fact that the *JAЕ* is an accredited academic journal – which is a good thing – complicates our lives. This is because each article is subjected to a peer review process, which means that it must be read both by myself, as the editor, and by other experts. The problem is where to find these experts. Currently, we're busy looking into our peer review lists and would very much appreciate adding to the list of those who help with this important work.

The other problem is both a new and a very old one and is best understood in the form of a question – what constitutes the field of electoral studies? The razzmatazz of the successive American presidential conventions, which were also taking place as these notes were being written, reminds one that electoral studies, like so much in the study of politics, has its origins in the United States.

In that country, electoral studies now looks beyond the simple reporting and analysis of elections themselves. The field encompasses bordering concerns in the form of cultural, sociological and economic issues – and, of course, many others besides. I suspect that if electoral studies is to survive in Africa – and survive it must, if democracy is to thrive – then here, too, it must become both more adventurous and more imaginative. This reminds one that the field itself must be the subject of intense intellectual scrutiny. Like other areas of knowledge, electoral studies must be probed and prodded, turned over and under, and constantly called into question. This alone will make the field robust enough to stand up to the questions that will most certainly come from politicians.

In any field, the responsibility of a serious journal is to cover the subject matter at hand with open-mindedness and candour, and to nurture the academic field that gives it life. To succeed in these tasks, the *JAЕ* needs contributors, peer reviewers and the like. Electoral studies as a field of study in Africa must grow because elections matter to Africa's future. So, if you are interested in helping the cause of African elections and have expertise in the field, please write for us, or offer your services as a peer reviewer.

Peter Vale
Editor

OPEN FORUM

Advocate Pansy Tlakula, former Chief Electoral Officer of the Independent Electoral Commission, was appointed chairperson of the commission in November 2011. She has a BProc from the University of the North, an LLB from the University of the Witwatersrand and an LLM from Harvard University. Prior to joining the IEC she was a commissioner at the South African Human Rights Commission and was a member of the team that developed the commission's mission, vision, organisational structure and systems. As National Commissioner for Equal Opportunities, she was responsible for projects and programmes relating to racism and racial discrimination. In 2005 she was appointed a member of the African Commission for Human and People's Rights. Here she answers some questions about the IEC, about women in politics and about issues of local government.

What is your philosophy about the idea of democracy? And how does this mesh with the work you are doing at the IEC?

Democracy, as the government of the people by the people, requires the active participation of citizens. Elections, although important, play only a small role; on their own they cannot be the sum total of what constitutes democracy.

Your academic background is in the law, was this a good preparation for your current position?

It comes in very handy. The conduct of elections is highly regulated in law and if one has a background in law it helps one to navigate through any legal challenges that may be raised.

Surely, though, the law is only one aspect of the electoral process. What other aspects are important and how does the IEC deal with these?

It is very important to cultivate a good working relationship with all stakeholders and we try to do this. As far as political parties are concerned we have party liaison committees which assist us greatly, so we interact with the parties all the time.

This issue of the *Journal of African Elections* deals with women and local government elections. Do you think the mixed electoral system at local government level (proportional representation lists and wards) contributes to the election of more women to local government? If not, what should be done to get more women into local government?

While the mixed system has its advantages, I don't think it facilitates the participation of women in the same way as a pure proportional representation system would do. The local government system includes a constituency base where, although candidates are competing under the banner of a political party, they still

have to campaign as individuals on a first-past-the-post (FPTP) basis. The FPTP system has been shown to disadvantage women. I think it's a mindset that has to do with socialisation. In the 2011 local government elections only 38.5% of the councillors elected were women.

Would legislated quotas be the answer to putting more women onto lists and into positions of power?

I think we have left it to the goodwill of political parties to put women on their lists and this hasn't worked as well as it should have, so I'm inclined to agree with those who are advocating for legislated quotas. This applies not just to the representation of women in politics but, more specifically, to the representation of women in the private sector. Quotas should apply across the board in our land. I'm inclined to the idea of introducing a law to impose quotas. Even at the IEC we haven't escaped the problem, in fact, we have, unfortunately, taken a few steps backwards. When we began, both the chair and the deputy chair were women. Now the deputy is a man. That is not of our making, it's the history in this organisation, where people in senior management are men, so succession is along those lines.

Perhaps it is not the electoral system that is responsible for the low numbers of women in local government but the hostile environment women experience there. What should be done to make local government more friendly for women?

The issues are difficult at local government level because politics at that level are at the coalface, with people expecting service delivery. Because of the problems we have had with service delivery there is confrontation and women, as time goes on, will feel this is a difficult space to operate in and won't make themselves available. Until we've dealt effectively with the backlog of service delivery it's going to be harder for women to stand for election. For instance, soon after the 2011 elections the house of a former councillor, who happened to be a woman, was burnt down. Those kinds of incidents will make it more difficult for women.

Why do parties pay so little attention to women's issues in their campaigns?

Parties don't campaign specifically on women's issues and even when, in 2009, we had a women's party, it won very few votes and is not represented at any level of government. I think we need to contextualise the fact that we are just emerging from our liberation struggle and there are many issues that have to be dealt with – issues of poverty, inequality, illiteracy – so women's issues tend to be subsumed under the broader issues that parties campaign on. Some parties will talk about the feminisation of poverty, others won't, but because of the many

challenges we face the focus on women tends to be limited to women's month and during campaigns you hear very little about it. People talk about gender mainstreaming but I'd prefer issues like poverty and inequality to receive more prominence because women bear the brunt of those and it's women who must make a plan.

Is sufficient energy going into alerting women to the importance of elections, especially at the local level? Can this be improved? How?

Women don't have to be alerted, they participate at all levels. The statistics show that more women than men vote in elections.

Local government elections are sometimes seen to be in a minor league when set against national elections. How do you personally rate local elections? And can you tell us what special issues the IEC has to deal with when it comes to local elections?

For the last local government election the turnout was unprecedented, both nationally and internationally, so it appears that more and more people appreciate the importance of local government elections and take them seriously. From an election management point of view they are far more difficult to organise and manage. A national election is a walk in the park by comparison. When it comes to local elections there are thousands of different elections, making it difficult and more competitive because competition is at ward level. Also, because of the degree of unemployment people tend to see political office as providing them with an opportunity for employment so contestation, at times, becomes ugly.

INTRODUCTION

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With this special edition of the *Journal of African Elections* we attempt to show the importance of women to local government, both as councillors and as consumers of services. There is a substantive amount of literature dealing with local government elections, yet most of it is completely gender blind (see, eg, *Hologram*), meaning that it does not use gender as an independent variable to analyse election results, but neither does it use it as a dependent variable to engage in research from the starting point of women's lives.

This dearth of research about local government elections from a gender perspective was evident in our search for articles for this special edition. The result is that there are four articles on the South African local government political context, one on Zimbabwe and one on Lesotho. A second call for papers did not improve the situation. It may be the case that the right authors in African countries other than South Africa were not reached, but it could also be the case that very few scholars who do research on local government do it from a gender perspective. For this very reason this special issue attempts to fill this gap and to encourage others who do research on local government elections to take cognisance of research done from a gender perspective and to include gender as a variable.

While local government is the level of government closest to citizens with regard to service delivery and engagement around basic needs and the one in which women often participate more than at other government levels, it is the sphere of government in which women have found sexism and androcentric values deeply entrenched.

As Hassim & Smith (2012, p 265) point out in a recent article, women councillors lack influence and men are hostile and dismissive, only taking women seriously when they address 'mainstream' rather than gender issues. The lack of the fulfilment of basic needs such as the delivery of water, electricity and sanitation affects women disproportionately negatively, since they are the biggest consumers of local government services (Coetzee & Naidoo 2002, p 182).

In South Africa bad service delivery has led to numerous and ongoing protests. Between 2004 and 2005, for instance, there were 5 085 legal service

delivery protests and 881 illegal protests (Atkinson 2007, p 58). In the years since then the numbers have increased, with many women spearheading the protests out of frustration with non-delivery.

Traditional leaders in South Africa, as in other African countries, may have a disproportionate influence on local government in rural areas. As recent serious objections to the Traditional Courts Bill, which will completely marginalise women's access to courts, have shown, traditional leaders are very patriarchal and pay scant attention to women's rights as protected by the South African Constitution (see Gouws 2012). The only governmental jurisdictions to which rural women are really exposed are local government and traditional leadership. If women are not involved in local government in the rural areas this can have a detrimental effect on their access to human rights.

THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM

The choice of electoral system plays a crucial role in getting women into local government. Research has shown that a proportional list system is the most effective system in this regard but only if women's names are high on the list. In majoritarian systems where they compete directly with men fewer women are elected. A quota system can improve women's representation in government.

At local government level, South Africa uses a 'mixed' representational system, with 50% of representatives elected in ward elections and 50% from a closed list. The African National Congress is the only party that has introduced a voluntary 50% quota for women's representation.

Local government elections in South Africa have shown that more women are elected from the list than in ward elections. But ward councillors seem to have greater legitimacy and are viewed as the 'true representatives' of the people, giving male councillors the edge (Mbatha 2003, p 206).

In other countries, Uganda, for example, the 'add on' system of electing women councillors to reserved seats in a special election has not contributed to increasing women's legitimacy and has also not managed to challenge the problem of the preference of voters for male candidates (Ahikire 2003, p 221). Women have been concentrated in the lower tiers of local government in Uganda.

Sofonea Shale's article in this issue looks at the introduction of the legal framework that establishes a quota for women in local government in Lesotho. He comes to the conclusion, given the experience of Lesotho, that if a quota system is not properly institutionalised it will make no difference to women's representation in local government. He blames the failure of the quotas to increase women in local government on insufficient dialogue among government, women and civil society.

David Mandiyanike analyses the lack of women's participation in local government in Zimbabwe, where a mere 13.25% of councillors elected in 2008 were women. Corrective measures to address women's representation have not been very successful. One of the big challenges in Zimbabwe is the violence that surrounds elections, which presents an obstacle to women's participation and voting.

CAMPAIGNS

The challenge of electing women to local government starts with the parties' local government election campaigns. Exactly how sincere political parties are about getting women into government is reflected in the issues they single out for their campaigns and party manifestos are frequently a reflection of male centredness and male interests.

Two articles in this issue, analysing the party campaigns in South Africa during the 2011 local government election, show how gender blind the campaigns were.

Vetten & Leisegang argue that elections give parties an opportunity to put forward their proposals for improving women and men's lives and conditions. Party manifestos thus provide important insights into those issues parties think are (un)important to the electorate, as well as their particular understanding of the problems identified, their causes and solutions and the impact they have on women. Focusing on the gender based violence that is one of the biggest challenges for South African society, Vetten & Leisegang show that parties paid no attention to this issue, although the election provided them with a valuable opportunity to do so.

Drawing on research done by the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), Hicks & Buccus show that gender mainstreaming was absent from party manifestos and the integrated development plans of municipalities. They single out the gendered aspects of poverty, inequality and local social and economic development.

The CGE's research underscores the poor representation of women in positions of leadership. There is a gender blindness and a lack of gender transformation within political parties and inadequate internal policies and programmes to promote and support women in male dominated institutional cultures in relation to issues of, for example, sexual harassment. The article supports the demand for a legislated 50% quota to compel parties to enact measures to encourage and promote women's participation and leadership and ensure their equitable representation on party lists (see also Hassim & Smith, 2012, pp 269-73).

EFFECTIVENESS

Even though an appropriate electoral system may facilitate the entry of women into local government it cannot guarantee their effectiveness or participation in decision making. The question that needs to be asked is: 'what happens to women once they enter local government?'. Participation is determined by the conditions, created by internal and external factors, that women face when entering government. Among these are cultural norms, expectations of women's role, the nature of local government hierarchies, women's skills levels and the openness of debate in the council (Mbatha 2003, p 201). Expectations of women's cultural role as mothers in the household create the impression that women are present in the public sphere at the expense of their caregiving duties. In performing their duties as councillors, women are hampered by the reality of the lack of childcare facilities and are very often used by men as 'tea ladies'.

Women often fail to participate in the discussions in council because of the dominant and subordinating attitudes men adopt towards them (Mbatha 2003, p 202). What compounds this problem is the fact that both men and women councillors may lack training to do the work required for local government. Male bias and a lack of skills may prevent women from putting women's issues on the agenda and changing them into issues worthy of policy consideration.

Research has shown that, at local government level, women tend to approach women councillors about their needs in relation to issues such as domestic violence, HIV / Aids, rape, infrastructure and employment, but, as Hassim & Smith (2012, p 264) point out, apart from these issues it is difficult to discern whether women councillors make a difference.

In literature on local government in developed democracies (in the West) there is an assumption that decentralised government (to local level) will improve accountability because it is 'closer' to the people; that those in local government will have better knowledge of local conditions and needs and that local government has a more immediate effect on most people than national decision making. These assumptions, however, do not hold true for developing countries because traditional patriarchies are more intense and immediate in their effect on women's public participation and the capacity of women's movements to support women is limited (Goetz & Hassim 2003, pp 20-21).

In their article, Roberts, Struwig & Grossberg show that there are more similarities than differences between women and men in their perceptions about their intention to vote for local government. Political efficacy, political interest and a history of voting were common significant determinants for men and women, indicating their intention to vote in municipal elections, but for women a sense of duty about voting, satisfaction with service delivery and political knowledge

were more important. The results of their study reinforce the importance of civic education initiatives and the improved responsiveness of elected officials in meeting the needs of both women and men.

Carla Ackerman's article, drawing on research on gender equality and women's empowerment programmes in local governments in South Africa prior to the 2011 election, shows the scant attention that is paid to women's interests and needs, even though gender equality is a mandate of developmental local government and should be a developmental priority. Ackerman shows how difficult it is to get municipalities to incorporate women's issues in mainstream service delivery. She makes recommendations about ways to put women back on 'centre stage'. While the results of this survey were available to the municipalities before the election, it does not seem that they took the recommendations to heart.

This special issue highlights the lack of concern about gender issues in local government elections and its knock-on effect with regard to women's representation and participation in local government, leading to gender blind policies and their implementation. We hope that scholars who read this issue will consider researching this topic and will also encourage advocacy to get more women into local government.

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A VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

Gender Differences in Attitudes to Electoral Participation and Experience in South Africa¹

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ABSTRACT

Despite a sizeable body of literature on the extent and nature of gender differences in electoral participation in developed countries there is limited evidence for developing countries such as South Africa. This study employs data from two nationally representative surveys, namely the 2010 Voter Participation Survey and the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey, to investigate the relative importance of factors associated with voting decisions among men and women. The article specifically considers cultural modernisation and rational choice accounts of voter turnout. On average, we find more similarity than difference between women and men. Multivariate analysis shows that political efficacy, political interest and a history of voting were common significant determinants of intention to vote in municipal elections, though a sense of a duty to vote, satisfaction with service delivery and political knowledge were important for women exclusively. Political orientation emerges as more important for electoral

¹ The authors acknowledge the support of the Electoral Commission of South Africa in commissioning the research as well as the encouragement and constructive comments provided by Ms Shameme Manjoo and Dr Kealeboga Maphunye during the research process. The views expressed in this paper are the authors' own and do not, in any way, represent those of the Electoral Commission of South Africa.

abstinence than administrative and other individual barriers, again with little discernible gender variation. The results highlight the importance of civic education initiatives and improved responsiveness of elected officials in meeting the needs of women and men. Continued investment is also required to consolidate recent gains in electoral administration and ensure that the benefits of voting continue to outweigh the costs. Sustained turnout levels in future municipal elections are likely to be determined by the success of such interventions.

INTRODUCTION

On the eve of South Africa's second democratic local government election – in 2000, Van Donk (2000, p 4) argued persuasively that local government in South Africa needed to become 'a strategic site of struggle for gender equity', especially since women represent the primary consumers of municipal services due to their gender roles. Given their developmental mandate and critical role in basic service delivery, municipalities thus have the potential to produce significant improvements in women's quality of life. From a political participation and accountability perspective electoral turnout is considered fundamental in ensuring legitimacy of the elected government and the accommodation of the needs of constituencies in planning processes.

Although there are numerous ways in which the public can exert an influence over politics, the electoral connection still represents the primary means of influence or control available to citizens in representative democracies, since it determines who manages government, develops policies and plans and makes daily decisions that affect them (Dalton 2006, p 127).

In this paper we set out to provide a preliminary examination of the extent and nature of gender differences in turnout in the context of the 2011 local government election. While much scholarly attention has been devoted to the representation of women in South African politics, especially in Parliament and Cabinet and increasingly at provincial and local government levels, considerably less is known about the gender dimensions of electoral participation in the country. This dearth of evidence is particularly pronounced in relation to election-related behaviour at local government level.

Available evidence of gender gaps in electoral participation derives mainly from the USA and Western Europe, which raises questions about the relevance of explanations for such gender differences in developing democracies like South Africa (Coffe & Bolzendahl 2011).

This study compares and evaluates two broad conceptual traditions relating to turnout. The first of these is the rational choice approach, which is an

influential model initially elaborated by Downs (1957) and amended by Riker & Ordeshook (1968) and Norris (2004, p 15) and considers the rational decisions that the electorate makes in weighing up the costs and benefits of voting. From an electoral management perspective the emphasis would be on trying to reduce the costs of registering and voting by making procedures more efficient and effective and thereby increase turnout.

The basic idea is that people vote when expected benefits are higher than expected costs, and abstain otherwise. In terms of rational choice theories, Norris (2004) suggests that the primary incentives for citizens to vote in elections relate to the costs of registering and voting, time and effort required to register and vote, the party choices available to voters and the degree to which casting a ballot determines the composition of Parliament and government. The electorate would weigh up aspects such as the registration process, accessibility of voting stations, ease of voting procedures, voter safety, supportive electoral staff, domestic issues, child care while voting and provision for voters with special needs (Norris 2004, p 15).

The cultural modernisation approach differs in emphasis on the primary motivational factors influencing human behaviour. The theory suggests that the electorate is influenced more by socio-economic status and political attitudes, beliefs and values which produce behavioural patterns of participation. The emphasis is on the civic duty to vote, experience of successive elections, knowledge of and beliefs about the state and political leaders, political efficacy and evaluations of the political process (eg, institutional trust, satisfaction with government performance).

According to Norris (2004, p 16), cultural theories emphasise that habits of civic commitment are engrained from an early age and through experience in successive elections. The tendency to participate or abstain from voting is acquired through early and successive voting experience. This voting experience is associated with related civic attitudes and values, including an interest in public affairs, a belief in a civic duty to vote and a need to express support for a particular party or to express disapproval of performance. Norris argues that civic education is one of the most important mechanisms available for encouraging political engagement and suggests that children should learn about democracy and citizenship from an early age.

What does international research suggest we might expect about gender differences in electoral behaviour and its determinants? In terms of the gender differences in voter turnout, analyses of participation in established democracies have tended to show that women either equal or surpass men (Welch 1977; Wirls 1986; Beckwith 1986; Schlozman, Burns, Verba & Donahue 1995). Even the recent examination by Coffe & Bolzendahl (2011) of gender gaps in political participation

in sub-Saharan Africa found that in South Africa there was no significant gender gap in the probability of registering to vote, with this conclusion remaining unchanged even after socio-economic characteristics and political attitudes between men and women had been controlled for using multivariate modelling. We would therefore anticipate that our findings will show little variation between women and men in electoral participation. Because of this we intend to explore whether different determinants assume greater or lesser importance in explaining why women and men vote or abstain, drawing on the two conceptual explanations outlined above.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows: We begin by providing a methodological overview, describing the two sources of survey data employed for the analysis as well as our analytical approach. This leads into a discussion of the political mood preceding the 2011 local election, focusing particularly on levels of political support and the psychological involvement in politics displayed by voting-age women and men. After this descriptive analysis we turn to multivariate analysis of the extent to which intention to vote in municipal elections can be explained by socio-economic and attitudinal attributes conventionally associated with the cultural modernisation account of turnout behaviour and whether such characteristics assume differential importance in motivating voting decisions among women and men.

The relative contribution of institutional or rational choice factors and cultural, motivational factors in informing abstention is then investigated and discussed. Using data collected at voting stations on election day we explore the electoral experiences of voters and again determine whether any gender gaps exist. We conclude by reviewing the main findings and reflecting on the implications for our understanding of electoral participation and efforts directed at improving voter turnout in future.

METHODOLOGY

The data we employ to examine gender differences in self-reported preferences for and determinants of electoral participation, as well as election day experience, derive from two nationally representative surveys conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (the authors) on behalf of the Electoral Commission of South Africa (IEC). Firstly, the 2010 Voter Participation Survey (VPS) was a study of 3 214 South African citizens aged 16 years or older living in private households. Fieldwork was undertaken in November and December 2010, six months prior to the 2011 local government elections.

The primary objective of this study was to inform and guide the commission in its plans, policies and practices. More specifically, the study evaluated voting

behaviour in South Africa, levels of interest in and perceptions of the forthcoming local government elections, the performance of municipal government, the electoral and political involvement of specific groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities and, finally, public confidence in the IEC. Population census enumerator areas (EAs), 500 of which were selected throughout South Africa, formed the primary sampling unit (PSU). In each of these areas seven households were randomly selected for interviewing, followed by the random selection of one age-eligible member in each household. Questionnaires were administered using face-to-face interviewing in the respondent's language of choice. A small qualitative component consisting of focus group discussions with special interest groups was also carried out, though these results are not reported.

The second data source used is the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey (ESS), which was conducted on election day (18 May 2011) with the aim of determining the perceptions and experiences of voters and election observers alike concerning the freeness and fairness of the electoral process. The study also focused on assessing the operational efficiency of the IEC in managing the municipal elections.

A complex sample design was used in drawing the sample of voting stations. The design included stratification and a multi-stage sampling procedure. The database of voting stations obtained from the IEC was merged with that of the EAs. Voting stations were sampled proportionally to the dominant race type, geo-type and the number of voting stations in a given province. This was to ensure that a nationally representative sample of voting stations was selected and the results of the survey could be properly weighted to the population of eligible voters in the country.

At the voting stations fieldworkers selected voters using random sampling, to ensure a fair representation in terms of gender, race, age, and disability status. A sample of 300 voting stations countrywide was selected. At each voting station 50 voters were interviewed during the course of the day. The day was divided into four time slots to ensure a fair spread of interviews at different times, when different dynamics might have been in operation. Voters were requested to comment on various issues pertaining to the voting day.

Analytical strategy

In the analysis that follows we begin by providing an overview of the political context in which the 2011 municipal elections were conducted. This is achieved by examining and comparing the political attitudes of women and men using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey. This is important since it imparts a sense of

the mood of the nation ahead of the elections and also serves as the basis for the subsequent assessment of the influence that these attitudinal indicators, such as institutional trust, political interest and political efficacy, have on voting intention. More specifically, the pre-election data are used to produce two stepwise logistic regression models of intention to vote in the 2011 municipal elections for women and men independently. We initially include a model that controls for socio-economic factors, after which a second model contains both socio-economic and political attitude control variables.

The modelling provides a clear indication of the importance of select cultural modernisation factors in determining the decision of South African women and men about whether or not to exercise their vote. Basic descriptive analysis is then undertaken to better understand motivations provided for intended electoral abstinence. The emphasis is again on the relative contribution of different considerations that dissuade or impede age-eligible citizens from voting.

The second component of our analysis uses the Election Satisfaction Survey conducted on election day to reflect more narrowly on the experiences of those women and men who eventually cast their vote. Recognising that perceptions of electoral procedures, and electoral freeness and fairness more generally, may exert an influence on future decision-making processes regarding individual electoral participation it is important to ascertain aspects of the electoral experience that receive broad approval ratings and those that are a source of concern and warrant attention.

POLITICAL MOOD AHEAD OF THE 2011 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

In the classic election study, *The American Voter*, by Campbell, Converse, Miller & Stokes (1960, pp 101-102), it is contended that electoral turnout behaviour relates to what the authors termed the 'individual's psychological involvement in politics'. Similarly, Almond & Verba's influential *Civic Culture* (1963) stresses that certain civic attitudes may serve to motivate political participation, most especially certain cognitive, affective and evaluative orientations of the potential voter.

Cognitive orientations include knowledge of and beliefs about the state, political leadership and policy concerns. Affective orientations typically comprise a sense of internal and external political efficacy, a sense of duty to vote, as well as political interest, while evaluative orientations focus on traits such as personal assessments of electoral and government performance.

Cultural modernisation accounts of electoral participation tend to argue that such political attitudes are critical to understanding the decisions of the voting age population to vote or abstain. Therefore, recognising the potential salience

of civic attitudes and values in determining electoral behaviour, this section examines briefly select political attitudes using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey data in order to convey a general sense of the political mood of both female and male members of the electorate in the months prior to the 2011 local government elections. Firstly, we find a sense of underlying support for the political system by examining cognitive and evaluative elements such as satisfaction with democracy, with political leadership and municipal performance, together with measures of confidence in political and other key institutions in the country. We then direct attention to more affective attitudinal indicators, namely interest in politics, a sense of duty to vote and political efficacy. The link between such attitudes and electoral participation is addressed in a subsequent section on self-reported intention to vote.

Support for the political system

Satisfaction with democracy is one of the most common indicators of political support employed in survey research. It is generally regarded as a straightforward, reasonable but nonetheless imperfect means of assessing levels of support for the way the democratic regime is working in practice (Norris 1999a,b; Canache, Mondak & Seligson 2001; Anderson 2002; Linde & Ekman 2003; Dalton 2004; Blais & Gélinau 2007; Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005; Davids & Hadland 2008).

The 2010 survey asked South African citizens whether they were satisfied, neutral or dissatisfied with the way democracy works in the country, with responses captured on a five-point satisfaction rating scale. From the results we found that equal shares of women were satisfied and dissatisfied (both 41%) while men were moderately more satisfied (46% satisfied and 36% dissatisfied) (Table 1). Comparing mean satisfaction scores by sex reveals that both men and women generally were relatively critical of the functioning of democracy in the country a matter of months before the election, with voting-age women on average significantly less contented than voting-age men.

This rather negative appraisal is mirrored in other indicators of political support. One such example concerns approval of elected officials. When asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with the current political leaders in the country, only 35% of women and 38% of men nationally were very or fairly satisfied, compared with slightly more than two-fifths of both sexes who were very or fairly dissatisfied with the performance of political leaders. A virtually indistinguishable pattern is evident regarding the perceived performance of municipalities in meeting the needs of residents, which is a fundamental measure ahead of local government elections. On aggregate, 39% of women and 38% of men

were satisfied with current municipal performance, while more than two-fifths again registered dissatisfaction. Unlike satisfaction with democracy, statistical tests indicate that gender differences in mean performance ratings of both political leaders and municipalities were not significant, suggesting that male and female members of the electorate expressed equivalent levels of discontent in the months prior to election day.

Table 1
Indicators of political support by sex (percentages and mean scores)

	Women	Men
Satisfaction with democracy		
Satisfied	41	46
Neutral	18	18
Dissatisfied	41	39
Total	100	100
Mean score ¹	2.93	3.05*
Satisfaction with current political leaders		
Satisfied	35	38
Neutral	19	19
Dissatisfied	46	43
Total	100	100
Mean score ¹	2.77	2.84 ^{n.s.}
Satisfaction with municipal performance		
Satisfied	39	38
Neutral	17	18
Dissatisfied	45	44
Total	100	100
Mean score ¹	2.83	2.81 ^{n.s.}
Institutional trust		
National government (% strongly trust/trust)	51	56
Provincial government (% strongly trust/trust)	45	47
Your local government (% strongly trust/trust)	37	39
Politicians (% strongly trust/trust)	26	29
Political parties (% strongly trust/trust)	28	31
Index of confidence in the political system (0-100) ²	57	59 *
Index of confidence in other institutions (0-100) ²	69	71 *
Index of confidence in all institutions (0-100) ²	63	65 *

Source: authors' calculations based on the HSRC's IEC Voter Participation Survey 2010 data, which were collected in November/December 2010.

Note: ¹ Mean of a five-point Likert scale, where 1=very dissatisfied, 2=dissatisfied, 3=neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4=satisfied and 5=very satisfied. ^{n.s.} means that the mean scores are not statistically significant based on ANOVA testing, while * indicates that the mean scores are significant different ($p<0.05$). ² The index of confidence in the political system includes: national, provincial and local government, politicians and political parties. The index of confidence in other institutions includes religious organisations, the SABC, the IEC, courts and the police. These indices have been transformed into scales ranging from 0 (no confidence) to 100 (complete confidence).

As for more specific indicators of political support, we investigated public confidence in political institutions, which has become a variable of increasing interest in studies of democratic performance in recent decades. (Norris 1999c, 2011; Dalton 2004; Bäck & Kestilä 2009; Bratton, Mattes & Gyimah-Boadi 2005). Political trust is viewed as important, since declining trust is broadly perceived as dysfunctional to democracy in that it may adversely affect the implementation of government policies and the willingness of citizens to comply with the rule of law (Citrin & Muste 1993, p 465; Dalton 2004, p 12; Schyns & Koop 2010, p145; Askvik 2008).

The 2010 Voter Participation Survey included a set of items with which to evaluate various political and social institutions. Specifically, the electorate was asked to indicate its level of satisfaction with the performance of the institutions on a five-point satisfaction scale. In relation to the political system, only national government received a positive rating from more than half the adult population, with provincial government following closely behind. The relatively low trust vested in local government, political parties and politicians by men and women alike is rather sobering. Combining these items into an index of political trust we found that, in the South African context, women appeared on average to express slightly less confidence than men in the political system. The same pattern emerged in relation to other social and political institutions.

Taken together, these results suggest that, ahead of the 2011 municipal elections, the public tended to display a considerable level of concern about the supply of democracy in the country and the quality of governance, as reflected in perceptions about the performance of the democratic regime and elected officials. In most instances there was no disparity in perceptions on the basis of sex and, where gender gaps were discernible, as was the case with satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions, women were only moderately more solemn than men in outlook. The less than favourable assessment of political support offered by voting-age women and men raises questions about the implications for other attitudes that are conventionally seen as correlates of voting behaviour, such as political interest, a well-developed sense of political efficacy and a conviction that it is one's civic duty to vote. Attention will now be directed to profiling such attitudes and the extent to which they vary by sex.

Psychological involvement in politics

Politically interested people have been shown in a number of studies, particularly in the United States and Western Europe, to exhibit greater political knowledge, as well as a greater likelihood of voting and participating in other forms of non-electoral politics (see, eg, Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996; Verba, Schlozman & Brady

1995; Powell 1986; Luskin 1990; Aarts & Semetko 2003; Blais 2007; Prior 2010; Bratton, Alderfer & Simutanyi 1997; Mattes & Southall 2004).

Two main measures of political interest were included in the 2010 Voter Participation Survey. Firstly, respondents were asked, 'How interested would you say you personally are in politics?', with responses captured on a four-point scale, namely: very interested, fairly interested, not very interested, not at all interested. A follow-up question was also asked: 'When you get together with your friends, relatives or fellow workers, how often do you discuss politics?'. From the results in Table 2 it is apparent that South African citizens tend to demonstrate middling levels of interest in politics. Overall, in late 2010, 38% of women and 46% of men described themselves as having fair or high interest, while the majority professed that they were not very or not at all interested in politics.

Similar results are found for the measure of frequency of political discussion. Replying to the question, 38% of women and 46% of men stated they engaged 'often' or 'sometimes' in political discussion, with greater shares indicated that they rarely or never do so. These questions were transformed into a 0-100 score and, in both instances, significance tests on differences in mean scores suggested that female citizens exhibit less political interest than their male counterparts.

In spite of the moderate levels of political support and political interest among the voting age public there was a robust belief in the duty of citizens to vote, which is indicative of the value that many South African men and women place on the right to vote in free and fair elections as the most fundamental democratic right (Blais 2000, p 93). Almost eight in ten of the electorate agreed that it was their duty to vote, with no significant sex-based differences. Also, for the most part, measures of political efficacy included in the study provided a consistent perspective, showing that the electorate still had some confidence in the political system. Internal efficacy relates to the belief that one is able to understand and effectively participate in and influence politics (Craig, Niemi & Silver 1990; Cho 2010).

About three-quarters of men and women believed their vote makes a difference, while two-thirds felt their vote would ensure that they received quality social services. More ambivalence was evident in the ability to understand politics, with women significantly more likely to struggle than men. There was an essentially favourable assessment with regard to external efficacy, which refers to perceptions of responsiveness of elected officials and politicians to public demands (Semetko & Valkenburg 1998; Cho 2010). Slightly more than one-third of respondents (38% of women, 35% of men) believed that the party they voted for did not serve their interests, with a slightly lower share (30% of women, 29% of men) expressing the view that the post-election behaviour of political parties diminishes the effectiveness of the vote.

Table 2
Political interest, citizen duty to vote and political efficacy ahead of the 2011 municipal election (percentages and mean scores)

		Women	Men
(A)	Political interest		
(1)	Interested in politics (%)		
	Very / fairly interested	38	46
	Not very / not at all interested	62	54
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	38	45 *
(2)	Discusses political matters (%)		
	Often / sometimes	38	46
	Rarely / never	63	54
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	36	44 *
(B)	Duty of citizens to vote		
	Agree	78	78
	Neutral	11	10
	Disagree	12	12
	Total	100	100
	Mean score (0-100)	73	73 ^{n.s.}
(C)	Sense of political efficacy		
	<i>Internal political efficacy</i>		
(1)	My vote makes a difference		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	72	74
	Mean score (0-100)	68	70 ^{n.s.}
(2)	My vote will ensure I get quality services		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	65	67
	Mean score (0-100)	65	66 ^{n.s.}
(3)	Politics is too complicated to understand		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	41	36
	Mean score (0-100)	48	53 *
	<i>External political efficacy</i>		
(1)	Voting is pointless as all parties are the same after being elected		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	30	29
	Mean score (0-100)	57	59 ^{n.s.}
(2)	The party that I voted for did not protect my interests		
	Strongly agree / agree (%)	38	35
	Mean score (0-100)	50	52 *

Source: authors' calculations based on the HSRC's *IEC Voter Participation Survey 2010* data, which were collected in November / December 2010.

Note: For the purpose of mean score analysis the scales associated with the two political interest items, the civic duty measure, as well as the first two internal political efficacy items, were reversed and transformed into 0-100 scores so that larger numbers represent greater political interest and belief in the duty to vote. The third internal political efficacy item and two external efficacy items were not reverse scaled, though they were transformed into 0-100 scores. On these measures, higher mean scores again represent a great sense of political efficacy. ^{n.s.} means that the mean scores are not statistically significant based on ANOVA testing, while * indicates that the mean scores are significant different ($p < 0.05$). Due to rounding off, column percentages may not add up to exactly 100%.

What can we deduce from the analysis in this section about the prevailing political climate mere months before the 2011 municipal elections? The data suggest that the electorate exhibited considerable concern about the functioning of democracy in South Africa and was unimpressed with the performance of municipalities, political leaders, politicians and political parties, resulting in disquietingly low levels of confidence in political institutions. Voting age women were marginally more critical in this orientation than their male counterparts. Yet, in the face of such dissatisfaction, South African women and men demonstrate substantial resilience. Rather than disengaging from conventional politics there is a resolute belief in the duty to vote and a largely optimistic view of both internal and external political efficacy. If the latter attributes are indeed integral to enhancing electoral participation, in accordance with international literature on cultural modernisation theory, this bodes well for electoral turnout. Nonetheless, the empirical evidence based on the determinants of voting behaviour in South Africa remains rather circumscribed. The following section aims to contribute to establishing what encourages and dissuades women and men from casting their vote in local government elections in the country.

INTENTION TO VOTE IN MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

The common purpose of surveys conducted prior to election day is to measure voting intentions and attitudes to a variety of election-related issues (Scheuren & Alvey 2008). The 2010 IEC Voter Participation Survey similarly examined views on electoral participation by asking respondents the following: 'If local government elections were to be held tomorrow, would you vote?'. Approximately eight in ten (79%) of those age-eligible to vote favoured turnout, 15% indicated they would prefer to abstain, with the remainder either uncertain or unwilling to say. An estimated 81% of female respondents indicated they would choose to vote, with 14% abstaining, while among male respondents 77% opted for electoral engagement and 17% preferred to withhold their vote.

For those familiar with South African election turnout statistics these percentages seem somewhat inflated.² Nonetheless, this is not an atypical finding, since, according to Belli, Traugott, Young & McGonagle (1999), over-reporting of voting behaviour is one of the most frequently observed survey measurement errors. Recognising this, in predicting voting intention we undertake regression

2 It is, however, interesting to note that the share declaring an intention to vote in municipal elections is similar to the share of the voting-age population that eventually registered for the 2011 municipal elections. Combining the IEC's voters' roll data and StatsSA's mid-year population estimates, approximately 75% of the voting-age population registered for the election, with 78% of voting-age women and 71% of voting-age men ultimately registering. On election day 58% of those who registered and an estimated 43% of the voting-age population cast their vote.

analysis instead of focusing on basic descriptive statistics to explore the role of select socio-demographic attributes and political attitudes of the women and men surveyed.

Since the voting intention outcome we are attempting to model is a discrete choice between a 'yes or no' decision rather than a continuous measure of activity, use was made of logistic regression models. A step-wise approach was used for the modelling, in which a set of step-wise logistic regression analyses were conducted to examine with more precision the relationship between political variables and the voting intention measure (Appendix Table 1).

Four regressions were conducted. In the first instance, voting intention was regressed exclusively on a set of demographic and socio-economic variables for women and men separately (Models I and III). Thereafter, the voting intention measure was regressed on the same demographic and socio-economic variables, together with the following set of political attitudes and behaviour variables (Models II and IV):

- *Support for the political system*, including satisfaction with democracy, satisfaction with the current political leadership and the trust in institutions index.
- *Political efficacy and civic duty*, which comprised three items on internal political efficacy, two items on external political efficacy and one item on the duty to vote.
- *Government responsiveness*, as measured by a general municipal performance variable, and the Service Delivery Index.
- *Political engagement and knowledge*, which included the 0-100 point scales on interest in politics, discussion of political matters, following politics in the media, an item on interest in municipal elections, as well as the local government knowledge index.
- *Political participation*, which consisted of indicators of whether respondents were registered voters and had voted in previous elections, in addition to the group membership index, political participation index and political activism index.
- *Issue salience*, as measured by the composite index (0-100 scale) of the importance attached to public policy issues in voting decisions.

This modelling method enables researchers to ascertain the additional power of the political variables in explaining the intention to vote among the survey respondents. In presenting the regression results only those variables that had a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on the voting intention indicator were retained.

A comparison of Models I and III reveals that a number of the demographic and household socio-economic variables were statistically significant predictors of voting intention for both women and men. Age was shown to be positively related to the intention to vote in municipal elections for both, suggesting that older women and men are more inclined to want to vote than younger citizens. Indian women and white men were less inclined to want to vote than their African counterparts, with no significant difference between other population groups with regard to voting intention.

Educational attainment, religious affiliation and disability status were all statistically insignificant determinants of voting intention. The only exception was in the case of women, where those with a tertiary education were more likely to express an intention to vote than women with no formal education. As for household characteristics, household size and living standard levels do not emerge as significant predictors in the base models for men and women. Geographic location also does not play a strong role.

For women, rural/urban residence does not have a bearing on voting intention, while only those living in the Free State are less inclined to vote than those in the Eastern Cape. For men, those in formal urban areas are less likely to express an intention to vote in municipal elections than their counterparts in rural, traditional authority areas. Additionally, men based in the Free State are less inclined to vote relative to those in the Eastern Cape, while those in Limpopo are more predisposed towards electoral participation.

Turning now to the models that introduce a variety of political variables alongside the full range of respondent characteristics to better understand the specific effects on voting decisions (Models II and IV), a number of salient findings emerge. In these models, indicators of *support for the political system* are not significantly associated with voting intention for men and women, controlling for other political and social-demographic variables. Nonetheless, it is apparent that *political efficacy* matters in choosing whether or not to cast one's vote in municipal elections. One of the three internal political efficacy measures ('my vote makes a difference') has a significant, positive regression coefficient for women and men alike, while for men another internal efficacy item ('vote will ensure I receive quality services') was also a significant predictor. This means that a belief in the power of the vote to influence political outcomes is an important factor in electoral choice.

For women exclusively, external political efficacy is also important to some degree, with those who believe the party they voted for looked after their interests generally appearing to be more inclined to electoral participation. Similarly, a belief that it is one's duty to vote also increases the odds that women (but not men) will vote in municipal elections.

As for the contribution of evaluations of *state responsiveness* to voter decisions, none of the three indicators included was statistically significant in the case of men, controlling for all other variables. For women, the more positively they rated the performance of government's service delivery efforts the greater was the chance that they would vote. This seems to suggest that it is the contented rather than the discontented who are more likely to express an intention to vote, a phenomenon referred to by the economist J K Galbraith (1992) in relation to voting behaviour in the United States as the 'culture of contentment'.

Political engagement also appears to matter to both female and male citizens, with those who are more interested in municipal elections generally following through and expressing the intention to vote. The interest in politics scale, discussion of politics scale and follow political media scale are all insignificant, at the 5% level. However, if each of the political engagement indicators is included in regressions individually (results not shown) all emerge as significant predictors of voting intention. Therefore, being engaged politically, whether by being interested in and discussing political events, by following political developments in the media, or by being interested in local government elections, clearly exerts an influence over whether one decides to turn out on election day. So, too, does awareness of one's ward committee, councillor or candidates. Awareness of ward committees and councillors in one's area is also a predictor of intention to vote among women, though it does not emerge as a significant factor for men.

Participation in politics exerts a strong influence on voter decisions, with those who have previously participated in an election significantly more likely to declare an intention to vote in municipal elections than those who have not. Women who have voted in past elections are 5.7 times more inclined to vote than women who have not yet participated in a post-1994 election, while men with a history of electoral participation are 6.2 times more likely to vote than those who have never voted. The political participation index is also a significant indicator when included in the regression model. Therefore participation in electoral and non-electoral politics is also a notable determinant of municipal turnout.

In sum, the decision whether or not to vote in municipal elections is related to various factors. Yet it would seem that the most critical components are the belief in the power of one's vote in determining electoral and other political decisions, a conviction that the political system is responsive to change through individual or collective action, whether one is interested in politics or not, whether one feels it is one's civic or moral obligation to vote and whether one has a personal history of casting one's vote in a democratic South Africa.

This finding augurs well for voter turnout, given the cultural modernisation theory, which proclaims that voter turnout is related to civic attitudes and values, interest in public affairs, a belief in a civic duty to vote and habits of

civic commitment through experiences in successive elections. This finding is of immediate relevance for voter education initiatives undertaken by the IEC and other stakeholders, especially in promoting messages about the power of voting in making a difference, the importance of exercising one's right to vote, as well as strengthening programmes aimed at instilling a culture of voting by getting young South Africans interested in, discussing and following political events.

Abstention

As the 2011 local government elections approached there were a number of media reports of incidents of discontented citizens expressing the intention to deliberately abstain from casting their vote on election day as a form of protest. In order to gain greater insight into the role played by different rational choice and cultural modernisation factors in driving voter abstention this section examines the principal reasons for abstention given by those respondents to the 2010 Voter Participation Survey who indicated that they would not vote if local government elections were to be held tomorrow.

Among those age-eligible to vote who specified they would abstain, the largest cluster of reasons by a considerable margin related to a lack of interest and disillusionment (66% for women, 65% for men) (Table 3). Chief among the explanations offered within this grouping is general lack of interest (38%), while lack of interest in political parties accounts for another 7%. Disillusionment with politics is cited by 8%, while 11% mention that casting a vote would not make a difference. These reasons all relate to the cultural modernisation account of electoral behaviour. Only nominal differences exist between self-declared female and male abstainers in the shares citing different aspects of disillusionment and lack of interest.

Turning to reasons that would typically be categorised as part of a rational choice account of voting we find that only 18% of self-reported abstainers cited administrative barriers as a reason. Of these barriers, not being registered and lack of the documentation required to register predominate. When analysed by the sex of the respondent it was clear that possession of the necessary documents presented more of a barrier for women than for men. Other barriers, such as polling stations being too far away or queues being too long, were, surprisingly, not an issue for women. Obstacles such as intimidation or personal reasons such as ill health, migrancy or illiteracy account for nominal shares.

A review of the justifications provided by respondents for their intended abstention from municipal elections therefore indicates that at this juncture in South Africa's democracy the barriers to participating in elections are primarily associated with factors related to cultural modernisation theory. By contrast,

rational choice barriers serve as a disincentive to voting in municipal elections for approximately a fifth of cases for women and men alike. This is a salient finding, since, in electoral management operations over the last decade, much emphasis has been placed on improving registration processes, access to voting stations, accommodating the special needs of women, the aged and disabled, easing voting procedures and strengthening safety and security measures. Arguably, the subsidiary position of rational choice factors underlying abstention may – at least to some extent – reflect a history of efficient management by the IEC of previous elections as well as the laudable strides the IEC has made in addressing such logistical challenges in recent elections.

Table 3
Reasons for not intending to vote (column%)

	Reasons why I would not vote if there was a municipal election tomorrow	Women	Men	All
(A)	Cultural Modernisation Explanations			
	Lack of interest and disillusionment	66	65	65
	Not interested	38	38	38
	My vote would not make a difference	11	11	11
	Disillusioned with politics	9	6	8
	Not interested in any of the existing political parties	7	8	7
	Too much effort required	0	2	1
	Only one party could win	1	0	0
(B)	Rational Choice Factors			
	Administrative barriers	18	18	18
	Not registered as a voter	10	11	11
	Do not possess necessary documents to register	7	4	5
	Polling station too far away	0	1	1
	Very long queues	0	1	1
	Lack of transport	0	0	0
	No assistance is given to persons with disabilities	0	0	0
	Do not know where to vote	0	0	0
	Intimidation	1	2	2
	My employer would not allow me to vote	1	2	2
	My spouse or partner would not allow me to vote	0	0	0
	Fear of intimidation or violence	0	0	0
	Individual barriers	3	2	2
	Health reasons or sick	1	1	1
	I am away from home	1	1	1
	I do not know how to read and write	1	0	0
(C)	Other	12	13	13
	Total	100	100	100
	Unweighted N	261	233	494

Source: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Voter Participation Survey, Nov/Dec 2010*

Note: Due to rounding off, row percentages may not add up to exactly 100%

The results may also be seen to contain a cautionary message about the potential downward pressure that political disillusionment, reduced political interest and loss of a sense of internal political efficacy could begin to impose on voter turnout in future elections.

While political support and psychological involvement in politics appear to matter to participating and abstaining in South African elections, rational choice theorists would assert that a voter's actual experience on election day is likely to shape the cost-benefit equation that plays a role in influencing decisions about whether or not she decides to participate in successive elections. Accordingly, while positive experiences are likely to encourage future voting, it could be contended that difficulties in accessibility, or incidences of long queues or intimidation at voting stations could possibly deter electoral turnout. With this in mind we now turn to data from the Election Satisfaction Survey (henceforth 2011 ESS) in order to better determine the nature of the experiences of female and male voters on election day.³

ELECTION DAY EXPERIENCE

From an electoral politics perspective the fourth local government elections, held on 18 May 2011, were notable for the record number of South African voters registered (23.7-million, or 75% of the voting-age population) and for a higher than anticipated level of turnout (58% of registered voters and 44% of the voting-age population). Schulz-Herzenberg (2011) has shown how this represents an improvement on all indicators relative to the 2000 and 2006 local elections.

In terms of sex differences in voter participation 78% of voting-age women compared to 71% of voting-age men registered. As for turnout, 62% of registered women and 53% of registered men voted.⁴ This translates into an estimated 43% of voting-age women and 38% of voting-age men.⁵ In this section we use the 2011 ESS data to examine levels of satisfaction recorded by those who made it to the ballot box with specific dimensions of their experience on election day as well as their overall evaluation.

3 The Election Satisfaction Survey is, in many respects, similar in design to an exit poll, though the principal difference is that it does not explicitly ask respondents which party they voted for. This is due to the fact that the IEC commissioned the study as an input into determining whether elections were free and fair as well as to assist in identifying areas warranting attention as part of future electoral management efforts. The intention was never to predict election results before official results were made available, as is common with exit polls.

4 The shares of registered men and women who voted are official statistics obtained from the IEC.

5 The share of voting-age men and women who voted was calculated by taking IEC voting statistics and dividing by StatsSA's mid-year population estimates. For this reason the results are to be considered indicative rather than definitive because of a likely margin of error in the population estimates.

Specifically, we examine voter ratings of voting station accessibility, voting procedures, safety and secrecy of the vote and performance of electoral staff. We then examine the extent to which male and female voters perceived the elections as free and fair. It should be remembered that we are reporting here exclusively on the experiences of those who made it to their voting stations and cast their vote in May 2011. Considerable numbers of both registered voters and the voting-age public abstained from voting and their views are thus not accounted for here. The motives for abstention were explored in the preceding section, using the 2010 Voter Participation Survey data.

Accessibility

The IEC places a strong emphasis on progressively widening access to voters. In order to ensure this, the commission has committed itself to continuous innovation, informed by research. Recognising that long queues and travelling distance are barriers to voter participation the IEC established 20 859 voting stations around the country for the 2011 municipal elections – an increase of 1 133 compared to the 2009 national elections. The 2011 municipal elections also marked the first time that special voting was available for voters. This implied that voters who were eligible to vote and whose name appeared on the voters' roll but who could not vote on election day at the specific voting station qualified for a special vote. Special arrangements were also made for the physically infirm or disabled.

With regard to access to voting stations, men and women reported similar experiences. On average, it took 17 minutes to reach the voting station (regardless of the mode of transport), with only a third indicating that it took them longer than 15 minutes. In terms of actual queuing, voters waited on average 23 minutes to cast their vote. Almost all (97%) of both male and female voters were satisfied with the instructions and signs at voting stations.

Ease of voting procedures

In terms of electoral processes there was near universal agreement (98%) that the procedures inside the voting station – which include names being checked on the voters' roll, identity documents being stamped and thumbs inked, being issued with ballot papers, going to the voting booth and placing the ballot in the ballot box – were 'very' or 'somewhat' easy to understand. Again, no significant differences were found between male and female voters. In terms of groups with special needs, both male and female participants agreed that they were highly satisfied with provisions made (Table 4).

Table 4
Satisfaction with IEC's provisions for people with special needs
(percentages and mean scores)

	All		Male		Female	
	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)	% responding to 'a great' or 'some' extent	Mean (0-100 scale)
The elderly	90	89	90	89	90	89
Persons with disabilities	80	83	80	83	81	84
The partially sighted	70	81	70	81	71	81
The blind	66	79	66	79	66	80
Women	84	86	83	86	85	86
Women with babies	78	85	77	85	79	84

Source: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Election Satisfaction Survey*, 18 May

Note: Mean scores are based on a four-point scale where 1=To a great extent, 2=To some extent, 3=To a minor extent and 4=Not at all. The scale was reversed and transformed into a 0-100 score, with 0 representing Not at all and 100 representing To a great extent. Do not know values were omitted from consideration.

A substantial majority of voters recognised these efforts and acknowledged that voting procedures on election day considered to 'a great' or 'some' extent the needs of the elderly (90%), women (84%), persons with disabilities (80%), women with babies (78%), the partially sighted (70%) and the blind (66%). The lower levels of agreement reported in the cases of the blind and partially sighted are attributable to a relatively high level of voter uncertainty. None of the mean score differences between male and female voters presented in Table 4 is statistically significant, suggesting a consensual (and favourable) position on the IEC's performance in accommodating the requirements of special needs groups.

Voter safety and secrecy of the vote

Ensuring the secrecy of the vote is an integral component of the electoral process and, ultimately, of the credibility of elections, in accordance with the IEC's guiding principle that 'Your vote is your secret'. Votes are cast in booths where voters are alone to make their mark on ballot papers that are subsequently placed in sealed ballot boxes. With nearly all voters (97%) happy about the secrecy of their vote – 76% 'very satisfied' and 21% 'somewhat satisfied' – it seems a fair assertion that a convincing job has been done in respect of this aspect of the electoral process. No

significant differences were found between the experiences of male and female voters.

Satisfaction with electoral staff

For the 2011 municipal elections the IEC appointed approximately 215 000 officials (presiding officers, deputy presiding officers and voting officers) from various sectors of society to manage election activities at voting stations and ensure the efficient operation of voting and counting procedures. Recognising the importance of properly skilled, competent and impartial electoral staff to the overall success of election activities at voting station level as well as nationally, the IEC places considerable importance on recruitment and training procedures. Therefore, voter evaluations of the performance of IEC officials on election day are, to a considerable degree, a reflection of the rigour of the recruitment process and the quality of the training approach and materials as well as the trainers themselves. On aggregate, 97% of voters were 'very' or 'somewhat' satisfied with the quality of service rendered by IEC officials on election day, which is a tremendous compliment to the systems established by the IEC as well as to the dedication and commitment of electoral staff. No significant differences were found between the experiences of male and female voters.

Overall evaluations of electoral freeness and fairness

The delivery of free and fair elections not only represents a core component of the IEC's constitutional mandate, it also stands at the heart of the organisation's vision and mission statement. It is thus testimony to the electoral management performance of the IEC that the voting public was overwhelmingly confident that the 2011 municipal elections were both free and fair (95% and 94% respectively) with problems being reported in only a minority of cases (Table 5). No statistically significant differences were evident on the basis of the sex of voters.

A fundamental component in determining whether elections are free and fair is the absence or presence of coercion and intimidation (UNGA 1999). Recognising this, the ESS asked voters the following question: 'Did anyone try to force you to vote for a certain political party?'. On aggregate, 94% of the voting public reported that no one tried to force them to vote for a certain political party. The remaining 6% declared that they *had* experienced coercion – 5% prior to arriving at their voting station and 1% while waiting in a queue to vote. Of those who had experienced coercion, political parties and family members or friends were the most commonly mentioned perpetrators, followed, to a much lesser extent, by other voters and election officials. No statistical difference was noted in the

reported experience of coercion to vote for a specific political party by sex or disability status.

Table 5
South African perceptions of electoral freeness and fairness

	All	Male	Female
<i>Do you think that the election procedures were free?</i>			
Yes, completely free	95	94	95
Yes, with minor problems	2	2	2
Not at all free	1	1	1
Don't know	2	3	2
<i>Do you think that the election procedures were fair?</i>			
Yes, completely fair	94	94	94
Yes, with minor problems	2	2	2
Not at all fair	1	1	1
Don't know	3	3	3
<i>Did anyone try to force you to vote for a certain political party?</i>			
Yes, before coming to the voting station	5	5	5
Yes, while waiting to vote	1	1	1
No, not at all	94	94	94

Sources: HSRC. 2011. *IEC Election Satisfaction Survey*, 18 May

The analysis of the 2011 ESS data reveals that female and male voters were uniformly and overwhelmingly satisfied with different aspects of their election day experience. This is a reassuring result in that it signals that most of the voters are unlikely to have experienced difficulties or irregularities that will adversely influence future turnout decisions. The implication, however, is that we need to focus again on the reasons and barriers that prevented those members of the voting age population (both registered and unregistered) from participating in the elections. As observed in the previous section, these motivating factors relate principally to political attitudes associated with cultural modernisation, coupled, to a lesser extent, with some lingering administrative barriers.

CONCLUSION

Steadily declining patterns of voter turnout in established democracies have been a matter of concern and controversy among political scientists for several decades (Blais 2007). Researchers have long sought to understand the reasons for participation in elections and the differentials in voter turnout. High voter turnouts are often considered desirable as they are generally seen as evidence of the legitimacy of the system in place.

This article has focused on analysing recent empirical evidence from South Africa to reflect on turnout in local government elections. In so doing we have attempted to better understand how turnout in the country relates to two conceptual accounts of participation in elections, namely rational choice and cultural modernisation (Norris 2004). The rational choice approach focuses on the behavioural decisions the electorate makes based on weighing up the costs and benefits of voting, with people deciding to vote in instances where the benefits (opportunity to vote) exceed the costs (institutional and physical barriers) and abstaining where the converse applies.

In this context, costs would include the monetary and time considerations involved in registering to vote, proximity to voting stations, ease of voting procedures and the quality of general electoral management. Cultural accounts differ in that they emphasise that people vote or abstain based upon deeply embedded habits that are reinforced with each electoral experience and which are informed by motivational political attitudes such as political interest, political efficacy and a sense of duty to vote, in addition to facilitative factors such as individual socio-economic status and resource availability (Blais 2007; Bühlmann & Freitag 2006).

Using data collected six months prior to the 2011 local elections we found that the voting-age population was reasonably critical in its level of support for the political system, based on core indicators such as satisfaction with democracy, political leaders and municipalities and confidence in political institutions. However, these concerns, together with moderate levels of political interest, have not resulted in apathy and electoral disengagement, as the South African electorate continues to display a resilient belief in the civic duty to vote and an entrenched sense of internal and external political efficacy. To some degree these findings are reflected in our multivariate analysis of voting intention.

Political support variables were not significant predictors of voting among women, while, for men, only satisfaction with political leaders achieved statistical significance. Instead, for both women and men, a belief in the power of one's vote (internal efficacy), a conviction about the responsiveness of the political system (external efficacy), political interest, and a history of voting in previous elections were salient determinants of the intention to vote in municipal elections.

In other instances there are notable sex-based differences in the determinants of electoral behaviour. Interestingly, a civic or moral obligation to vote was only a significant predictor of electoral behaviour for voting-age women, as was satisfaction with services provided by the government and knowledge about local government. Additional descriptive analysis of the motives for abstaining suggests that, irrespective of sex, cultural factors predominate, especially a lack of political interest and the loss of a sense of internal political efficacy, while rational

choice factors such as concerns about registration and voting procedures were cited in barely a fifth of cases.

The results of the 2011 Election Satisfaction Survey demonstrated that both female and male voters were overwhelmingly positive about their election day experiences. Such evaluations suggest that the IEC has performed well in its efforts to address rational choice barriers associated with registration and voting by promoting accessibility of voting stations, improving procedures to better accommodate the needs of special groups (including women), holding the election on a public holiday, as well as ensuring the secrecy of the vote and the impartiality of electoral staff. Indeed, this is reflected in the considerable gains in public confidence vested in the IEC in the past decade (Struwig, Roberts, Pillay, Rule & Vivier 2011a).

Based on cross-national analysis, Norris (2004) concluded that rather than advocating for a polarised view of rational choice versus cultural theories of participation in elections we should be recognising the contributory role each set of factors plays in influencing and explaining political participation. We would argue that the South African case offers some confirmatory evidence for this assertion.

Admittedly, this preliminary investigation of turnout in local government elections using two nationally representative datasets demonstrates that cultural factors appear to play a central role in influencing who votes and who abstains in the country. Yet the fact that factors associated with rational choice theory are cited by an estimated fifth of self-declared abstainers means that this account still matters if we are to achieve a more holistic and dynamic understanding of electoral turnout and craft an appropriate and differentiated set of interventions to encourage engagement in future elections.

In recent years attention has been devoted primarily to making registration and voting procedures easier and more effective. The IEC will need in the future to consolidate the gains it has made in this regard to ensure that the benefits of electoral participation continue to surpass the costs for most members of the electorate. The importance of civic orientation in motivating participatory behaviour signifies that civic and democracy education both in classrooms and within community settings requires prioritisation in coming years, as does the need for elected officials to demonstrate political accountability to the voting public.

The well-established sense of duty to vote and the political efficacy that exists among the voting-age population must be recognised as an encouraging sign for turnout in local elections. Even so, there is an inherent risk that these values might, over time, be increasingly challenged and eroded by rising disaffection about the supply of democracy and performance of political institutions in the

country, alongside middling levels of political interest, with adverse consequences for conventional forms of political participation such as voting.

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APPENDIX

Table 1
Stepwise logistic regressions of intention to vote in municipal elections on demographic and political variables

	Intention to vote in municipal elections (yes=1; no=0)							
	Women				Men			
Model:	I		II		III		IV	
<i>Explanatory variables in equation</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>
(A) Respondent's characteristics								
Age (years)	0.099	1.104	a	a	0.030	1.030	a	a
Age sq.	-0.001	0.999	a	a	a	a	a	a
Race: coloured	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Race: Indian	-1.259	0.284	-0.797	0.450	a	a	a	a
Race: white	a	a	0.805	2.236	-0.591	0.554	a	a
Education: Primary	a	a	1.044	2.841	a	a	a	a
Education: Grades 8-11 or equivalent	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Education: Matric or equivalent	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Education: Tertiary	0.528	1.695	a	a	a	a	a	a
Religious affiliation	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Persons with disabilities	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
(B) Household characteristics								
Household size	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Medium living standards	a	a	-0.969	0.380	a	a	a	a
High living standards	a	a	-0.918	0.399	a	a	a	a
Formal urban area	a	a	a	a	-0.586	0.557	-0.827	0.437
Informal urban settlement	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Rural farmworker households	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a

Western Cape	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Northern Cape	a	a	-1.223	0.294	a	a	a	a
Free State	-1.079	0.340	-2.087	0.124	-0.932	0.394	-1.525	0.218
KwaZulu-Natal	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
North West	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Gauteng	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Mpumalanga	a	a	a	a	a	a	a	a
Limpopo	a	a	a	a	0.835	2.305	a	a
(C) Political variables								
<i>(C1) Support for the political system</i>								
Satisfaction with democracy	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Satisfaction with current political leadership	...	...	a	a	...	...	0.273	1.314
Institutional trust index (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
<i>(C2) Political efficacy</i>								
My vote makes a difference	...	...	0.020	1.020	...	...	0.010	1.010
Politics is too complicated	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
My vote will ensure I get quality services	...	...	a	a	...	...	0.015	1.015
Voting is pointless as all parties are the same after being elected	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Party I voted for did not protect my interests	...	...	0.011	1.011	...	...	a	a
<i>(C3) Civic duty</i>								
Duty to vote	...	...	0.019	1.019	...	...	a	a
<i>(C4) Government responsiveness</i>								
Municipal performance	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Service delivery index (0-100)	...	...	0.018	1.018	...	...	a	a

	Women				Men			
Model:	I		II		III		IV	
<i>Explanatory variables in equation</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Coeff</i>	<i>O.R.</i>
(C5) Political engagement								
Interested in politics (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Discuss political matters (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Follow politics in media index (0-100)	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Interested in municipal elections	...	...	0.642	1.900	...	...	0.663	1.941
(C6) Political knowledge								
Local government knowledge index	...	...	0.222	1.249	...	...	a	a
(C7) Participation in politics								
Registered as voter	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Voted in previous elections	...	...	1.734	5.665	...	...	1.864	6.450
Group membership index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Political participation index	...	...	-0.018	0.982	...	...	a	a
Political activism index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
(C8) Opinion on public policy issues								
Issue salience index	...	...	a	a	...	...	a	a
Constant	-0.7738		-4.389		0.5879		-3.452	
Pseudo R-squared	0.050		0.341		0.069		0.280	
Number of observations	1 632		1 336		1 299		1 046	

Reference variables are: African (race), no schooling (education level), low living standards (LSM), rural traditional authority area (location) and Eastern Cape (province). The symbol 'a' means that the variable is not in the equation as it did not have a statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on the voting intention indicator, while '...' indicates that the item set was not included in the model. Estimates are logit coefficients, while O.R. signifies the Odds Ratios from the logistic model.

GENDER EQUALITY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Gender mainstreaming, party manifestos, party lists and municipal planning

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ABSTRACT

Women's representation and participation in political parties and governance processes require examination. South Africa is a signatory of the 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which commits member states to put in place measures to bring about 50% representation for women in decision-making positions by 2015. This article draws on research findings and interventions undertaken by the South African Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) to raise issues relating to gender equality, women's political representation and municipal gender mainstreaming and service delivery in relation to the May 2011 local government elections in South Africa. CGE research findings include an analysis of political party lists in terms of women's representation, the gender mainstreaming in a sample of political party manifestos and an analysis of gender mainstreaming in a sample of municipal integrated development plans (IDPs). The CGE enquiry focuses on the extent to which the gendered needs of communities, and constitutional and legislative prescripts, inform and are prioritised in these IDPs. The CGE's interest centres on the gendered aspects of poverty, inequality and local social and economic development. CGE research points to poor representation of women in positions of leadership, despite the country's commitment to the 2015 protocol. In addition, there is evidence of gender insensitivity and a lack of gender transformation within political parties and inadequate internal policies and programmes to promote and support

women and address issues such as sexual harassment. Recommendations point to the need for legislation on the 50% quota to compel parties to enact measures to encourage and promote women's participation and leadership and ensure their equitable representation on party lists.

INTRODUCTION

Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) findings on trends in women's political participation and representation in South Africa's national and provincial elections are revealing. With women comprising the majority of South Africa's population as well as the majority of registered voters it is disturbing to note that this has not translated into equal representation as party candidates and public representatives. IEC statistics after the 2011 local government elections reveal that women comprise a mere 38.5% of all municipal councillors.

Immediately prior to the local elections women comprised 36.81% of proportional representation candidates on party lists submitted to the IEC. The final outcome of 38.5% reflects a marginal increase in women's representation at the local level, particularly since the 2006 local government elections, when women comprised 36.5% of all councillors. However, it must be remembered that for the 2006 elections the African National Congress (ANC) had implemented a 30% quota system for women. With the ANC raising this quota to 50% with effect from the 2009 national elections, analysts were anticipating that women's representation in local government would increase dramatically after the 2011 elections.

It is significant that despite the ANC's implementation of its 50% quota system the fact that the party has lost ground to parties which have very poor representation of women on their party lists has resulted in a considerably lower level of women's representation than was anticipated. This has worrying implications for women's political representation at national and provincial levels – should the ANC's support at the polls continue to decline and other political parties refuse to adopt a voluntary quota system, this means that the apparent gain in women's representation in these spheres is under threat.

The CGE is concerned that parties are failing to comply with the provision of the Municipal Structures Act (MSA) that they should seek to ensure that women are equally represented on – and distributed across – their proportional representation lists. They are also clearly not taking adequate steps to enable women's full political participation, within the context of a deeply patriarchal society. This results in fewer women standing for nomination and fewer women being nominated by parties to contest wards, and prevents women and men from supporting female candidates. Clearly, now more than ever the urgent need for

the introduction of a legislated quota system is apparent as policy guidelines and voluntary quota systems are not having the desired impact.

Very few municipalities appear to realise the importance of mainstreaming gender in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes. Few consider gender in their operational plans, noting, for instance, how the particular needs of vulnerable groups, and women in particular, will be addressed through the provision of services such as electricity, water and sanitation. In the main, integrated development plans (IDPs) do not address gender mainstreaming in service delivery planning, do not refer to the National Gender Policy Framework, the Gender Policy Framework for local government, or any municipal gender policy, and do not refer to gender equality or women's empowerment. Targets set and data captured are not gender disaggregated. For example, in one district, no targets are set for the number of households and beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, who are set to benefit from poverty alleviation interventions, making monitoring and evaluation difficult.

THE SOCIOPOLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE 2011 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

Given the realities of persistent poverty in poor communities and inadequate access to basic services it is understandable that all political parties participating in the elections structured their manifestos with special emphasis on service delivery. All were careful to articulate the responsibilities of all spheres of government with regard to service delivery and promised to ensure the constitutional rights of every citizen to dignity, respect, accountability and transparency associated with the functions and structures of municipal governance.

It needs to be said that the elections took place within a context of high levels of popular dissatisfaction. This was evident in research indicating that a number of violent and other 'service delivery protests' that took place prior to the local government elections were the result of the disillusionment of communities with local government, which was described as corrupt, nepotistic, inefficient and factionalist (Idasa 2011; Alexander 2010).

Analysis of these protests reveals the proliferation of independent candidates as well as calls from civil society organisations for boycotts of the elections throughout the country, including the ANC's stronghold of KwaZulu-Natal, where the slogan 'No Houses, No Land, No Vote' adopted by Abahlali BasemJondolo (Shack Dwellers Association) and its affiliates, as far back as 2004, was resuscitated.

Given the ANC's financial and organisational superiority over other parties as well as its nationally based infrastructure and sophisticated mobilisation it

was no surprise that it won seven of the eight metropolitan councils and 198 municipal councils and 64% of the vote (2% less than its previous record). In different circumstances this victory would have been hailed as resounding, but the ruling party's campaign was distracted by in-fighting, visible factionalism and voter abstention. Major ANC victories were, however, recorded in most previously Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)-dominated municipalities, in some instances further assisted by competition from the newly formed breakaway grouping from the IFP, the National Freedom Party. The IFP now controls only five municipalities, down from 33 won in the previous local government elections (Mantzaris 2007).

The ANC was, however, resoundingly defeated in the Western Cape, where the Democratic Alliance (DA) won an outright majority in Cape Town, increasing its percentage of the vote from 43% in 2006 to 61% and its voter support from 15% in 2006, when it controlled seven local councils, to 24%, with control over 18 councils (Independent Electoral Commission 2012).

In order to comprehend fully the electoral dynamics from the perspective of women's political participation and representation additional comparative gender-based parameters must be considered. Noting that women in their multiple societal duties and responsibilities as mothers, workers, caregivers and community members have been in the forefront of the country's developmental efforts at the local level, the implication is that they should, as expounded eloquently by Pottie & Ford (2001), be at the forefront of local electoral policies.

Initially, women comprised only 19% of local councillors, with this figure improving in the 2000 local elections, where they attained 28.2% representation. The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (now the Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa – EISA) produced the following tables drawing on IEC candidate statistics:

Table 1
Local candidate gender trends 2000-2011

Gender	2000		2006		2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Women	8 562	28.46	15 718	34.78	19 731	36.81
Men	21 519	71.54	29 471	65.22	33 865	63.19

Table 2
Candidates in 2011

Province	Candidates					
	Total		Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	7 220	13.47	2 743	37.99	4 477	62.01
Free State	3 282	6.12	1 167	35.56	2 115	64.44
Gauteng	9 054	16.89	3 571	39.44	5 483	60.56
KwaZulu-Natal	10 390	19.39	3 554	34.21	6 836	65.79
Limpopo	6 688	12.48	2 593	38.77	4 095	61.23
Mpumalanga	4 368	8.15	1 571	35.97	2 797	64.03
North West	4 036	7.53	1 608	39.84	2 428	60.16
Northern Cape	1 600	2.99	649	40.56	951	59.44
Western Cape	6 958	12.98	2 275	32.70	4 683	67.30
Total	53 596	100.00	19 731	36.81	33 865	63.19

This reflects a decline in women's representation in comparative terms, despite the fact that the percentage of women candidates had increased in the same period, in direct conflict with the principle and implementation of gender parity, as Lowe-Morna & Mbadlanyana (2011) of Gender Links noted in their electoral analysis. An analysis of gender outcomes of the 2011 local elections indicates that women fared better at the proportional representation as opposed to the ward level, as a result of entrenched patriarchal views about women's political representation.

Table 3
Overview of the gender outcomes of the 2011 SA local government elections

	Women Councillors	Men Councillors	Total	% of Women Councillors
PR	2 086	2 727	4 813	43%
Ward	1 408	2 869	4 277	33%
Total	3 494	5 596	9 090	38%

Such realities demonstrate that a legislative quota for gender representation is required if South Africa is to meet its 2015 obligations, as leaving parity in representation to political parties alone is not addressing the problem.

GENDER ANALYSIS OF PARTY MANIFESTOS

This section highlights the 2011 local election manifestos of six dominant political parties as represented in the National Assembly: the African Christian Democratic Party (ACDP), the African National Congress (ANC); Congress of the People (Cope); the Democratic Alliance (DA); the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM), in comparison with their 2009 manifestos, to track the extent to which commitment to gender equality has improved or deteriorated.

Party political manifestos during an election period are structured in such a way as to sell the party's policies and programmes. A study of the 2009 manifestos indicates that all the parties undertook to improve the lives of citizens in the fields of health, security, agriculture, infrastructure, education, housing, justice and crime. However, in general, the manifestos fell short of mainstreaming gender, the promotion of gender equality and the enhancement of the status of women.

There was little reference to the promotion of gender equality or to the participation of women in leadership positions. Political parties that mentioned gender did so in a vague way, while others did not feature gender at all in their manifestos. Below is a summarised analysis of gender representation in the 2009 manifestos of the above-mentioned parties:

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
ANC	Committed to 50% women on the party list, Parliament and government	Upscale the prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV / Aids to 95% in all districts.	Non-sexism a guiding principle throughout the manifesto.
		Combat violence and crimes against women and children by increasing capacity of the criminal justice system to deal with such violence.	Massive expanded public works programme linked to home-based care, crèches, school cleaning, renovation, tree planting and school feeding.

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
ANC		Vigorously implement broad-based economic empowerment and affirmative action policies and adjust them to ensure that they benefit broader sections of the people, especially workers, youth, women and people with disabilities.	
Cope	No quota	Clause 7: Respect for the values of the principles of the South African people (respect for the dignity of women, protect the innocence of children).	Not mainstreamed
		Clause 12: Broaden people's participation in the economy; measures to strengthen the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (affirmative action) and broad-based black economic empowerment.	
		Establish a Women's Development Fund to fund and assist women to engage in productive economic activity.	
DA	No quota	No specific women's projects.	Gender not mainstreamed in the manifesto.
		Only mentions women in its introduction.	The manifesto is issue based but is not specific about the beneficiaries. It dwells on the detail of how the DA will run government.

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
DA		Men, women and children living anywhere in the country should be able to go about their daily business in their communities knowing that they are safe from criminals; that their local government provides basic services quickly, efficiently and affordably; that the public transport system allows them to move around quickly and safely.	
IFP	No quota	Moral challenge (crime). Most morally repugnant crimes such as murder, violent assault, and crimes against children, women and the aged.	No gender mainstreaming in all thematic areas.
UDM	No quota	Create jobs for all South Africans; quality education for all; safety and justice for all South Africans (violent crimes, as well as crimes against women and children, are of particular concern).	No gender mainstreaming. Talks in general terms about creating jobs, offering quality, safety and justice, for all South Africans.
ACDP	No quota	Extend the rollout of antiretroviral treatment and the prevention of mother to child transmission programmes.	Gender is not mainstreamed. The manifesto only talks about issues in general terms without specifically mentioning who the beneficiaries will be. For example, under housing, the ACDP says it will 'incrementally provide access to adequate housing for all'.
		The role of women as mothers of the country's children is an essential building block for a healthy society.	

ACDP		Supports measures aimed at protecting women and children as vulnerable citizens against abuse.	
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Source: Extracted from Gender Links 2009, pp 14-15¹

The following synthesis provides an overview of the extent to which the same parties addressed issues of gender equality in their 2011 local government election manifestos.

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
ANC	Committed to 50/50 gender representivity after the 2011 elections.	Manifesto based on the principles of equality, non-racialism and non-sexism, as set out in the Constitution.	Local government is working hard to achieve gender equality. ANC is set to achieve 50/50 by 2011, which shows compliance with Goal 3 of the Millennium Development goals on gender equality and women's empowerment.
		Women are represented in local government, with 42% of councillors being women; a gender equality policy with clear quotas; sex disaggregated quotas represented.	National Health Insurance to be introduced.
		The level of poverty and unemployment will be halved by 2014, especially for child- and single-headed households, which will benefit the majority of single mothers, who are unemployed.	Create child and family friendly facilities.

1 The CGE made this presentation in partnership with Gender Links during the 2009 national summit.

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
ANC		Provide services to single- and child-headed households.	Youth participation in job creation, skills development and national youth service programmes. These will be attained through the Expanded Public Works Programme, the Industrial Development Corporation and infrastructure programmes.
		Establish support for safe houses and shelters in each community that will provide temporary but potentially lifesaving support for abused women and children, and provide social workers in school districts.	
		Municipalities to ensure that there is equal access to employment and skills development for women and youth.	
DA	No quotas	A wide range of suggestions for reducing poverty through growth and jobs, service delivery programmes and governance issues, but no mention of how these will be attained through gender equality.	Issues of service delivery and caring for the poor and dealing with infectious and lifestyle diseases and skills development are widely addressed, but not from a gender perspective.
		An open society is founded on the Bill of Rights, the rule of law, democratic decision-making, transparency, accountability and tolerance.	
		People living in poverty need a caring, helpful government that ensures they live with dignity and access to opportunities.	

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
DA		Provide rebates for the poor, disabled and pensioners based on a combination of property values and level of household income and introduce an indigent policy to provide relief for residents who are unable to afford basic services.	
		Focus on key burdens of disease, including infectious diseases like HIV and TB and lifestyle diseases like hypertension and heart disease and establish primary health care facilities in municipalities.	
		Offer vulnerable people a hand up out of poverty by assisting them with skills development.	
Cope	No quotas	The interests of children, persons with disabilities, youth, women and older persons in every ward will receive priority.	The issue of service delivery is widely addressed but not in a gender sensitive way.
		The transformation of South African society must continue so that greater equity can prevail; to deal with crime local government must maximise the role of community policing forums.	The only clause that addresses gender stipulates: 'Promote the interests of women and children, persons with disability, youth, women and older people in every ward by ensuring that ward committees have sub-committees to cater for each of the above group.'
		Young people must be involved in economic activities soon after receiving their tertiary education and skills training.	

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
IFP	No quotas	No mention of gender equality and the empowerment of women.	No gender mainstreaming
UDM	No quotas	Stakeholders, including representatives from the community, councillors, and key state departments, traditional healers and youth, women and people with disabilities must be properly represented in ward committees.	The UDM fell short of addressing gender equality in the staff composition of the council.
		The poorest must receive free basic services and any apartheid era arrears will be scrapped.	No targets set for women-specific training to empower women to compete fairly for senior management positions.
		A skills audit will be undertaken for municipal staff and training and education programmes initiated for all council staff.	No change in strategy in relation to gender mainstreaming. Simply mentioning the inclusion of women without any quota system or targets set is too generic. The party promises, for example, to ensure skills development in the councils, proper financial management systems, access to water and sanitation, decent housing and rural development, without mentioning how this would be attained from a gender perspective.
ACDP	No quotas	Support community initiatives to help prevent teen pregnancy, provide young mothers with information about the risks of abortion and the options available to them and provide assistance for young mothers.	Reference to infrastructure development programmes with no indication of how they will benefit men and women equitably.

PARTY	APPLICATION OF QUOTA SYSTEM	GENDER-SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
ACDP		Stimulate and improve home-based care programmes, with particular emphasis on the elderly and those affected by HIV, Aids and TB.	Implement more developmental programmes with an emphasis on entrepreneurship and skills and job creation in order to reduce long-term dependence on social grants. This is mentioned without any gender specificity.
		Prioritise efforts to increase the safety and well-being of women and children.	Intention to support and assist schools in their struggle against gangsterism and substance (drug and alcohol) abuse, with no indication of how to attain this for both boys and girls.
		Prioritise initiatives to prevent and deal with the consequences of drug abuse.	No gender mainstreaming in housing, traffic and infrastructure development programmes.

The 2011 manifestos mirror the 2009 manifestos, with the ANC the only party that commits itself to a quota system and to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The analysis indicates that in all other parties nuances of gender equality have to be assumed to be embedded in the manifestos as, in the main, parties have not mainstreamed gender in their proposed interventions. The focus of most manifestos is on service delivery issues, but no gender lens has been applied to these, or specific reference made to their proposed impact on women.

A more detailed analysis reveals that parties identify a number of strategic issues and planned interventions which, in most instances, depend primarily on the availability of material resources. The ANC's manifesto identifies it as a 'broad church' and, in a few sentences, attempts to capture the attention and vote of all classes and categories of women, with brief reference to 'historically ideological'

as well as practical issues, such as non-sexism, non-racialism, equality and quotas; this despite the stark distinction between the needs of middle-class women who have access to technological and other material goods and those of poor rural women, who still walk kilometres to fetch water from rivers.

The manifesto demonstrates a brief integration of gender in relation to key service delivery issues such as halving the levels of poverty, especially among single mothers and child-headed households, putting in place support mechanisms for victims of abuse such as women and children, and the role of municipalities in ensuring equal access for women and the youth to employment opportunities.

The DA's manifesto, on the other hand, pays scant attention to matters of gender equality and, in the main, addresses matters of greater concern to the middle classes and to urban-based women voters rather than the rural poor, who do not own property and receive free medicine provided by government for diseases such as HIV and tuberculosis. The party steadfastly refuses to implement a quota system for women's representation, which is reflected in the leadership structures and positions allocated by the party. The DA, however, used three of its most senior women leaders (Helen Zille, Patricia de Lille and Lindiwe Mazibuko) as its leadership profile in the elections.

Although the party did not cover the hundreds of rural constituencies covered by the ANC, its pre-election itinerary took it all over the country and was seemingly instrumental in raising the party's profile and votes, ultimately cementing it as the official opposition and the only alternative to the ANC's dominance, beyond the Western Cape.

The short gender section in the Cope manifesto targeted the middle classes more specifically, emphasising, for instance, the strengthening and implementation of the Employment Equity Act (affirmative action). Its proposed establishment of a Women's Development Fund, however, would presumably be intended as a tool to open up broad-based black economic empowerment to support women's economic activity.

The IFP's manifesto revealed no intended target audience among women, with no mention of gender equality or the empowerment of women. The ACDP document concentrates on identifying tangible Christian solutions to real problems such as the risks of abortion and the options available to women with unwanted pregnancies, such as providing assistance for young mothers. There is also reference to improved home-based care programmes, with particular emphasis on the elderly and those affected by HIV, Aids and tuberculosis. The UDM's manifesto is replete with generalisations, with hardly a specific and tangible mention of women's issues.

In a further interrogation of party election manifestos in relation to gender equality, as part of a collaborative intervention together with Sonke Gender Justice, the CGE and People Opposed to Women Abuse, Tshwaranang, a local non-governmental organisation that focuses on gender-based violence, undertook an analysis of the extent to which parties addressed gender-based violence and HIV and Aids in their manifestos, as two key issues which have the greatest impact on women.

Tshwaranang refers to practical measures that could be undertaken at municipal level to address these issues, including prevention and awareness-raising measures, improved access to treatment and services, and improved public safety and support – all of which are suggested in the apparently neglected local government Gender Policy Framework adopted in 2007.

Tshwaranang found that, generally, the ANC, DA and UDM outline measures to deal with HIV and Aids, while Cope does not refer to this specifically, but deals with health broadly. Both the ANC and the DA aim to raise public awareness around HIV and Aids. The ANC, Cope, DA and the UDM propose various measures to combat crime, such as increased visibility, distribution and training of South African Police Service officers, the initiation of street and neighbourhood interventions and the provision of safe houses and shelters for survivors of gender-based violence.

It is both revealing and disheartening that, in a country where women are in the majority, most of the leading parties pay scant attention to gender issues, both in terms of the economic and social realities facing women and, more especially, the social and public policy challenges and imperatives emanating from women's location within a very unequal society and economy.

Women are the most affected by – and, ironically, at the forefront of combating – poverty, exclusion, disease, malnutrition and deprivation. They are the most frequent victims of violent crime, support their families, and constitute the foundation of their communities and society, yet their struggles are rewarded by political parties with generalities and few undertakings geared to specifically addressing these realities.

Having examined briefly the positioning of gender issues in the main political parties' manifestos, the CGE then assessed the extent to which party commitments to gender equality in the 2009 elections had been infused into municipal planning by the 2011 local government elections and the extent to which, at local level, politicians were leading a process of gender mainstreaming within municipal IDPs and ensuring the participation of ordinary women in their formulation. A synthesis of these findings is set out below.

GENDER, ELECTIONS AND MUNICIPAL INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In terms of the Municipal Systems Act the municipal IDP is identified as the principal strategic planning and budgeting instrument, which guides and informs all municipal planning and developmental initiatives and serves as a blueprint for local service delivery, over a five-year period. With the intended focus of IDPs on service delivery, local economic development and job creation, environmental and health issues and land use and urban integration, the IDP is a critical tool for addressing issues whose predominant impact is on poor women. The IDP formulation process comprises a local situation analysis, the development of future visions, the formulation of development strategies and programmes of action and the implementation of monitoring and evaluation methods, with public participation throughout this process.

In addition, the concept of developmental local government envisaged by the White Paper on Local Government requires municipalities to promote social and economic development. Accordingly, several key international commitments undertaken by the state, through obligations outlined in the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Beijing Platform for Action, have a direct implication for municipalities. For example, the following gendered aspects of MDG targets should be addressed in municipal IDPs: the provision of energy, access to safe drinking water and sanitation and improvements in the lives of those living in informal settlements.

With political parties' manifestos relating directly to increased local service delivery, the gender nuances and obligations in this regard should translate into meeting the needs of women, particularly the rural poor, providing that IDPs acknowledge and reflect the gendered impact of struggles to access these resources and ensure that plans are accordingly responsive. The link between party electoral promises and local planning and service delivery requires such examination if elections are to bring about any change in the quality of life of women.

According to Todes, Sithole & Williamson (2007a), the 2001/02 round of IDP formulation was preceded by a series of major training sessions aimed at municipal managers, councillors and officials. The intention was to include gender in this training process. However, as trainers found that participants' knowledge of even the basics of local government was lacking, issues like gender – which were seen as luxuries – went out of the window (Todes, Sithole & Williamson 2007b).

As part of its 2011 local government elections interventions the CGE embarked on an analysis of a sample of IDPs in five of South Africa's provinces, to assess to what extent these have been gender mainstreamed, serve to give effect

to constitutional and international obligations relating to gender equality and address the socio-economic issues that have an impact predominantly on poor women. They were further assessed to determine the extent to which promises outlined in 2009 party manifestos in relation to gender equality had been taken up at local government level. The starting point, however, was to determine whether local government planning processes were being informed by the Gender Policy Framework for local government, which guides the gender mainstreaming of local planning.

Implementation of the Gender Policy Framework for Local Government

Against this backdrop it is worth considering what initiatives have been implemented in recognition of women's under-representation and participation in local governance in South Africa and in engendering local development planning and service delivery. As a positive step, largely addressing this latter component, the former Department of Provincial and Local Governance (DPLG) launched its Gender Policy Framework for Local Government 'to provide guidance and support to the sector around gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment' (DPLG 2007, foreword).

This policy framework outlines a comprehensive institutional arrangement to address gender, in accordance with a detailed gender management system that includes a women's caucus as an empowering forum for women councillors, as well as a gender equality committee, also at council level, to provide political oversight of municipal gender mainstreaming processes.

An internal gender forum would coordinate gender awareness training, programmes and policy interventions within each municipality. The mainstreaming process itself would be driven by gender focal points within key departments, to influence decision making in this regard. Significantly, the function of gender mainstreaming is envisaged as being included in the performance agreements of all senior managers (DPLG 2007).

However, research reveals that within municipalities, despite the creation of this elaborate gender machinery and provision of guidelines for mainstreaming gender within IDPs, these are largely not followed and gender remains a 'side issue'. The extent to which this picture has changed, allowing for meaningful implementation of this policy framework, would need to be assessed.

It is apparent that although many of the 'everyday needs' of women may be met through IDP and service delivery these tend to be considered 'in a gender-blind manner, and attention is needed to ensure that they are implemented in a gender-aware way' (Todes, Sithole & Williamson 2007a, p5). This failure to understand and implement gender mainstreaming in needs analysis, policy

and budget formulation and programme implementation is the key barrier to the systematic engendering of the municipal processes envisaged by the policy framework. This is further undermined by the state's failure to locate GFPs at sufficiently senior level to influence policy and budget processes; they are merely add-on responsibilities for junior staff.

In addition, development agencies, which are increasingly given the task of implementing services,

... are not, on the whole, generally aware of arguments for a gender-sensitive approach to project implementation, nor do they necessarily have the skills to respond in this way. And women are not sufficiently organised at the local level in most communities to make this a real possibility. These issues will affect the prospects for the development of programmes which empower women, but they may also affect the choices that are made in communities regarding priorities for the development of particular services and facilities.

Todes 1995, p 333

It is apparent that municipalities have not implemented adequate interventions to bring about gender transformation. The lack of adequate monitoring and evaluation systems, coupled with the failure to disaggregate data on the basis of sex has an impact on the state's ability to track and assess whether policies and systems designed to benefit and empower women are having any impact, with primary interventions appearing to be limited to addressing issues of representation:

... the focus has been limited mainly to the representation of women as councilors and within management, rather than on informing and transforming the work of municipalities ... Even when women are represented in a council or are part of the management, they do not necessarily take gender issues forward. Structures to deal with the needs of vulnerable groups, including women, have been established in some local governments, but for the most part they are marginal and have little impact

Todes, Sithole & Williamson 2007a, p 5

In addressing the quest to engender local planning and service delivery processes one suggestion that emerges is that a 'specific gender planning procedure' be convened, which might 'provide a more systematic approach to the identification of needs. The specific requirements of particular groups of women – for example,

the aged – and the different experiences of women across race and class could be highlighted through such a process (Todes 1995, p 335). Other positive spin-offs would include raising awareness of gender issues among officials and development agencies and bringing more women's organisations into the planning process.

*Ministry of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs
engagements on Gender Policy Framework*

As part of its local government elections research interventions the CGE engaged with the Ministry of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), seeking a detailed report on measures put in place to ensure the effective implementation of the Gender Policy Framework and any challenges experienced in this regard.

From a meeting with COGTA officials it emerged that during the transition from DPLG to COGTA a restructuring process took place. DPLG had an established fully-fledged local government and gender function – falling under equity and development – headed by a chief director. This dealt with policies and programmes, was responsible for cascading the 2007 policy and worked with municipalities on gender mainstreaming in service delivery.

Apparently at that stage agreement was reached with the then newly appointed minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities to hand over this gender unit to the ministry, and staff were accordingly relocated. With the appointment of a new minister the process was put on hold and the transfer of this function reconsidered. The new minister is, apparently, not in favour of absorbing this function, believing, correctly, that COGTA should implement its own programmes at municipal level.

COGTA is now reconsidering how best to address gender – whether to re-establish its original equity and development function to drive the implementation of the Gender Policy Framework and undertake monitoring and evaluation. However, at present, there would appear to be no functioning unit responsible for implementing this policy, nor any budget allocation.

COGTA subsequently submitted a report to the CGE on its implementation of the Gender Policy Framework in the period ending July 2011. The CGE's analysis of this response reveals that:

- The report is gender blind. There is no evidence of compliance with the National Gender Policy Framework because throughout the report, the notion of 'gender equality' is equated with 'women empowerment'.
- The department has not appointed a dedicated gender focal person, but the

incumbent, who was located in the equity chief directorate, focused on both gender and disability; and the other officer focused on youth development issues and HIV and Aids.

- The National Gender Policy Framework stipulates that government departments should collect and use gender disaggregated data in order to track progress towards the attainment of gender equality. The report refers to several management and decision-making structures for gender mainstreaming. These are the Strategic Management Committee (SMC), the Departmental Executive Management Committee (DEXCOM), the Human Capital Management and Administration Chief Directorate, the Departmental Gender Equality Forum (GEF) and the Equity and Development Chief Directorate, which was disbanded in 2009/10. The report fails to address, however, how effective these structures have been in collecting gender data and measuring progress.
- Before the Equity and Development Chief Directorate was disbanded it consisted of a chief director, an administrator and a directorate on gender equity and disability, the latter comprising a director, a deputy director and an administrative assistant. There were three deputy directors and an administrative assistant who were assigned a secretariat function to focus on the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children campaign. This is the only intervention reported on, reinforcing the notion that the department's response to gender equality and mainstreaming is limited to the convening of events.
- The report reveals that the budget allocation for the unit responsible for external equity mainstreaming was increased threefold between 2004 and 2009/10, from R3.4-million to about R9.6-million. There is no indication how this budget was utilised, apart from the 16 Days of Activism event. The report mentions special programmes, however these have not been identified as gender equality or women specific programmes or programmes targeting both men and women.
- The report further reveals that as part of its work on women's empowerment it co-hosted (with the South African Local Government Association) annual women in provincial and local government summits from 2002 to 2009. The summits targeted women in management and decision-making positions in provincial and local government, deliberating on issues affecting them and their work and how best to address them.
- It is difficult to measure the extent to which the 2007 Gender Policy Framework for Local Government has been attained because even though the policy refers to free basic water services there is no reference to the extent to which single-headed female households or child-headed households are

receiving these services. This aspect will be revealed by the 2010/11 study the CGE is conducting.

- In terms of capacity building in the department, the report reveals that training sessions were held with municipal gender equality and special programmes practitioners on the implementation of the framework. However, there is no supporting gender disaggregated data indicating who has been trained or the impact of the training.

CGE analysis of municipal IDPs

In the main, the CGE's findings reveal that, like political parties, very few municipalities appear to realise the importance of mainstreaming gender in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes. Few consider gender in their operational plans, noting, for instance, how the particular needs of vulnerable groups and women in particular will be addressed through the provision of electricity, water and sanitation.

Overall, IDPs do not address gender mainstreaming in service delivery planning, do not refer to the National Gender Policy Framework, the Gender Policy Framework for local government, or any municipal gender policy, and do not refer to gender equality or women's empowerment.

Targets set and data captured are not gender disaggregated – for example, no targets are set for the number of households and beneficiaries, disaggregated by gender, targeted for district poverty alleviation interventions, making monitoring and evaluation of these interventions difficult. There appear to be few programmes and little budget for gender equality awareness raising at municipal level, while some districts report dysfunctional gender structures.

On the positive side, some districts give priority to the recruitment and selection of women and people with disabilities in addressing municipalities' own employment equity, and have special programmes for women, youth and people with disabilities. Some districts have developed district gender policy and strategies, while there is some evidence of district plans to address issues of women in all strategic objectives and programmes such as education, skills transfer and capacity building.

Some districts note the importance of prioritising the needs of women, youth and people with disabilities, and have budgeted for this. A few municipalities have shown some commitment to addressing issues that have an impact on women, youth and people with disabilities and mention their involvement in programming. Others recognise that certain categories of people should receive priority for certain services, but assumptions must be made about the extent to which these are mainstreamed into programme implementation processes.

The research findings question the opportunities for and impact of the input of community women on municipal IDP formulation and the ability of existing public participation processes to enable their meaningful participation. There is also a clear need for municipal stakeholders to be trained in gender mainstreaming, understanding and applying the local government gender policy framework, relevant commitments to international and regional protocols and conventions and ensuring the development of gender disaggregated targets and data collection.

Enabling ordinary women's participation

While politicians may speak at election time of participatory development governance it is apparent from the above that strengthening women's participation and addressing gender equality in local governance beyond the ballot box requires three components that should receive the attention of political parties and find their way into party electoral manifestos: increasing women's representation in political and bureaucratic structures, engendering developmental planning and implementation processes and increasing women's direct participation in planning and decision-making processes.

This latter component appears to have been neglected by the Gender Policy Framework and current practice and requires examination. The question that emerges is: how can women be brought into these processes in a more equitable and empowered manner that enables them to articulate and engage with policy choices and deliberations?

Such mobilisation could place pressure on the gender mainstreaming architecture and project of municipalities to ensure that development planning and service delivery respond directly to and address developmental needs from a gendered perspective. Significantly, if supported by tailored capacity building interventions this could build women's skills and confidence in engaging with local governance processes.

A possible further consequence could be a resulting increased willingness on the part of women to be more active in this arena, to stand for election at the local level, volunteer to assume leadership roles in community development forums or take up positions within municipalities and development agencies. As research reveals, 'it can be argued that the participation of women in public affairs in the rural areas is a necessary step towards the realization of their citizenship' (Hemson 2001, p 19).

Authors have noted that in local development processes 'participation by women is variable and even where women dominate in numbers they are not necessarily able to achieve a "voice" due to power relations within institutions' (Beall & Todes 2004, p 304). It is clear that there is a need to develop alternative

models to facilitate citizen participation in municipal planning processes. More creative, accessible and empowering mechanisms are required to provide women with platforms to overcome inherently discriminatory power relations and influence local planning.

Analysis of existing participation mechanisms reveals that considerable intervention is required at the level of design of participation mechanisms to ensure that these enable women's participation. The current design and operation of ward committees, as well as municipal IDP and budget *izimbizo*, do not enable meaningful deliberation of developmental and planning issues, let alone women's full participation in this sphere.

What participation literature reveals is that greater community consultation results in better service delivery and higher levels of community satisfaction. This can only lead to improved quality of life and enhanced social capital. Positive spin-offs for women as a result of their more direct and significant participation include the potential to reduce the domestic burden and to address myriad development needs through more responsive policy, planning and service delivery. Not least is the recognition of women's input in and knowledge about ways of addressing the challenges of poverty and development, and growing women's agency and citizenry through practice.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above analysis pinpoints a number of crucial aspects associated with political and social delivery with regard to gender issues. Despite the fact that women constitute the majority in our country and that progressive legislation has been enacted to address particular forms of discrimination and areas of vulnerability, neither political parties nor most municipalities have prioritised issues of gender equality as axes of societal and economic development. This reality poses social and public policy challenges that have an impact on the vast potential of women at all levels of society and there is an appalling lack of concrete mechanisms to rectify them.

The task for political parties is clear: to demonstrate their commitment to addressing women's political representation and participation and issues that have an impact on women. We need to see a transformation of party candidate lists and leadership structures, challenging patriarchal attitudes and resistance to women's political leadership. Parties need to pay greater attention to addressing gender in their manifestos and to outlining how they propose to promote gender equality, address gendered needs and enhance the lives of women.

Election candidates should be grilled on these issues by members of the public and, when successful, should be held to account for delivering substantively on

their commitments. In addition, parties need to identify and address obstacles to women's political representation and implement programmes to encourage them to participate in political processes and support them with capacity building and access to finances and by addressing the discriminatory attitudes and mindsets that prevail in political parties and communities.

Particular measures are required to ensure that women with disabilities are enabled to participate fully, and parties should ensure that women are appointed to key positions within municipalities, such as mayor and speaker, and chair portfolios such as infrastructure and finance, to counter prevailing perceptions relating to women's leadership abilities. The CGE is engaging with legislative processes and political parties to address these issues and bring about parity in women's political representation.

Municipalities and COGTA need to address the evident shortcomings in gender mainstreaming of IDPs and poor implementation of the gender policy framework. This will require a range of measures to ensure compliance and accountability, capacity building and awareness, the creation of engendered targets and data collection, and monitoring and evaluation systems to track these.

There is also a need for greater awareness of the implications of international instruments and the gendered obligations imposed on municipalities relating to service provision, which ought to be addressed in municipal IDPs and budgets. Related to this, COGTA should take immediate steps to establish a gender directorate to oversee implementation of the Gender Policy Framework and coordinate monitoring and evaluation of departmental and municipal gender equality interventions.

It is further clear that interventions are required at participation, policy design and implementation levels to create channels for active engagement between women's lived experience and knowledge and municipal policy and programmatic responses. COGTA should take immediate steps to finalise its national policy framework for public participation, to ensure accountability for effective public participation within the performance agreements of municipal managers and to work with municipalities to develop appropriate mechanisms and guidelines to enable women's effective participation.

The CGE will campaign for the adoption of 50/50 legislation to ensure women's equal representation, as it is evident that legislative recommendations and voluntary quota systems are not having the desired impact and that South Africa will not meet the SADC 2015 target. Based on the findings and recommendations of its local government elections interventions the CGE will also engage with political parties and COGTA to address the gaps in manifestos and municipal planning and the failure to ensure implementation of the Gender Policy Framework.

Women's equal representation and participation in the political arena is essential to changing the patriarchal nature of political and governance structures and approaches to policy formulation and to enabling diverse views and solutions to the many challenges besetting democracy and development in South Africa. These keep women on the margins of decision-making processes, at the receiving end of 'empowerment' programmes and locked into unequal power relations that determine access to resources and the achievement of human dignity.

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PARTYING ALONG IN SILENCE

Violence against Women and South African Political Party Manifestos for the Local Government Elections of May 2011

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ABSTRACT

The high incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, as well as its serious consequences, makes such violence a matter of central policy concern to women. Local government programmes provide ample scope for intervening in GBV. But to what extent do political parties recognise this local-level role? To explore this question the authors analysed the manifestos of seven political parties released prior to South Africa's 2011 local government elections, finding that, overall, parties offered few concrete and specific proposals for addressing GBV. The thinness of the manifestos, it is argued, illustrates the fact that the mere presence of women in political parties does not, in and of itself, automatically result in policies with gender content. In this context, mandating quotas only ensures that large numbers of female politicians are now championing gender-blind policies. Ultimately, attention must be paid both to parties' policies and to their quota of women politicians if meaningful change to women's lives is to be effected.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2011, in the wake of numerous service delivery protests, South Africa held its fourth local government elections since 1994. These were easily the most-contested elections in years, with the official opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA), threatening to take decisive control of the Western Cape, as well as to make

significant inroads into another large metropolitan area, Nelson Mandela Bay, in the African National Congress (ANC)'s stronghold of the Eastern Cape. The provision of services, amenities and facilities – and toilets in particular – became central to these battles. Gender, too, surfaced in the run-up to the elections, with the debate focusing broadly on two issues – women's political representation and the policy proposals parties were putting forward to address women's assumed needs and interests.

The use of quotas to increase and ensure women's political representation is advocated in both the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3. The ANC is, however, the only political party in South Africa to accept the use of quotas to ensure women's representation. The DA, by contrast, has argued that women's representation will increase as their socio-economic conditions improve (Hassim 2003, p 86). While the 2006 local government elections had resulted in women occupying 40% of council positions because of a mixed electoral system where 50% of councillors are elected through a closed list PR system and 50% directly from wards, the 2009 national elections resulted in 44.5% of parliamentarians being women, due to the ANC's adoption of a 50% quota.

The 2011 elections thus provided an opportunity to increase the proportion of female local councillors, with Pansy Tlakula of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) even calling for the legislation of quotas (*Times Live*, 6 May 2011). However, the value and purpose of quotas are far from clear-cut and our article begins by examining in greater detail the various arguments around their application.

Elections are not confined to questions of representation alone, being an opportunity for parties to put forward their proposals for improving women and men's lives and conditions. Party manifestos thus provide important insights into those issues parties think are (un)important to the electorate, as well as their particular understanding of the problems identified, their causes and solutions. Taking one particular manifestation of gender inequality, gender-based violence (GBV), as its example, the article examines critically the policy proposals proffered by parties in this regard.

QUOTAS AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Approaches to increasing women's political representation may be described as either slow or fast track. The *slow track* option followed by the Nordic countries is characterised by 'incremental changes, coinciding with greater participation in the labour force and educational opportunities' (Dahlerup 2004, p 14). The *fast track* option is a feature of newer democracies, like South Africa, and relies

on electoral gender quotas to achieve its aim (Dahlerup 2004; Bauer 2008). The fast track option has been made possible within the context of a particular set of conditions: transition from a struggle or conflict situation, releasing an available cadre of capable women candidates to stand for public office, as well as participate in the drafting of new constitutions and laws; a strong women's movement able to advocate for women's increased political representation and exposure to a global women's movement, as well as the existence of international protocols on women's representation, such as the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action (Bauer 2008; Ballington 2004; Lowe-Morna 2004).

The two most common forms of quota system have been voluntary party-based quotas and 'reserved' or 'special' seats for women (Tripp 2004, p 73; Bauer 2008, p 348). The former has worked well within South Africa's closed list proportional representation (PR) electoral system. Ballington (1998, p 78) argues that PR systems 'correlate strongly with greater women's representation' as they 'lead to women being better represented among the party's candidates on party lists'. This is particularly effective if the dominant party chooses to adopt a party list quota, as the ANC has done.

Elections at local level are somewhat different in that two systems are in place: the PR system and the first-past-the-post (FPTP, winner-takes-all) system used for ward councillors. The latter system means that the candidate with the most votes wins the ward, so citizens can vote directly for a candidate. This also allows for the development of accountability to specific constituencies, which is not possible under the PR system. Lowe-Morna & Mbadlanyana (2011, p 6) have stated that the FPTP system initially 'disadvantaged women, as they performed worse than men in the ward seats'. This was evident in the initial disparity between the percentage of women who were elected to ward posts and those who were elected through the PR system.

In 1995 and 2000 only 11% and 17% respectively of ward posts went to women. By contrast, 28% of PR seats went to women in 1995 and 38% in 2000. In 2006, 37% of ward seats and 42% of PR seats went to women (Lowe-Morna & Mbadlanyana 2011). While the gap between the number of women ward councillors and women PR councillors has narrowed, it is clear that, without the help of a PR system and party quota, fewer women would be elected to political office because they fare worse where they have to compete directly with men in the wards.

Arguments in favour of quotas typically take one of three forms: normative, consequentialist and symbolic. The normative argument states that 'fairness and equality require that women be present in decision-making structures' (Vincent 2004, p 72), while the consequentialist argument is rooted in the idea that more

women in political structures will 'result in different policy outcomes to reflect women's concerns better' (Vincent 2004, p 73). The third argument suggests that:

... quotas are a public demonstration of a society's commitment to equality, they place women in positions of power and this makes other women feel that they have role models, that they are not excluded, that the political process is legitimate.

Vincent 2004, p 74

A normative approach thus makes women's representation an end in and of itself, while the consequentialist and symbolic approaches treat women's representation as a means to particular ends.

Building upon the consequentialist argument critical mass theory has sought to establish the threshold at which women representatives begin to tip the scales in favour of better policy outcomes for women. O'Regan (1998, cited in Britton 2005), for example, states that women must control at least 30% of government to affect employment and wage policies and 40% to influence social policies. Britton (2005) casts doubt on critical mass theory and, like other writers, suggests that a range of factors, among them the political system, the nature of civil society and the state, influences women's political effectiveness (Goetz & Hassim 2003, pp 5-7).

Krook (2006, p 111) adds another dimension to the discussion by stating that the quotas currently being applied are 'not feminist quotas but rather gender quotas – and more properly speaking sex quotas'. As such, they seek to increase the number of women rather than to improve the level of women's issues within public policy. She argues that most research into and analysis of quotas does not pay adequate attention to gender, which '... replaces exclusive concern with women in politics and public policy with careful attention to the impact of masculinities and femininities, as well as relations between men and women, on political inputs and outcomes' (Krook 2010, p 233).

Thus, a move towards the gender/feminist dimensions of quotas and political representation allows for an understanding of the impact of power relations between men and women on policy decisions and also explains how quotas often result in descriptive, rather than substantive, representation.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The high incidence of gender-based violence (GBV) in South Africa, as well as its serious consequences for individual women, their families and communities,

makes GBV a policy matter of central concern to women. While much of this policy, and its attendant legislation, is located within national government there is a role for local government in combating such violence.

According to s 152 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (108 of 1996) the objects of local government are to provide democratic and accountable government for local communities, ensure the provision of sustainable services, promote social and economic development as well as a safe and healthy environment and encourage the involvement of communities and community organisations in local government matters. Chapter 5 of the Municipal Structures Act 1998 further details the facilities and amenities for which local government is responsible. These include, among others, electricity delivery, water for household use, sewage and sanitation, refuse removal and fire fighting services. Of particular relevance to GBV are municipal health services, public transport, parks and recreational facilities, childcare facilities and the provision of housing, either through building or renting. This latter set of responsibilities provides a series of important entry points into a strategy to combat GBV.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL CONTRIBUTING TO GBV

Degraded, under-serviced and inadequate living environments are an enduring feature of apartheid's legacy. Through the Group Areas Act black¹ women and men were either located on the periphery of cities or, in the case of many black Africans, relocated to 'homelands'. This spatial dislocation created long and costly commuting patterns for many black South Africans, which endure to this day. Spatial fragmentation was further enforced through buffer zones, usually vacant lots of land, which also served to maintain the separation of communities. The accompanying residential segregation also entailed inferior housing and services to black townships. While designed to discriminate on the basis of race, these apartheid measures and their legacies have also created further hardship for poor black women in particular, including placing them at risk of violence.

Urban planners have recognised the importance of designing human settlements in ways that promote their inhabitants' safety. These include providing good street lighting, avoiding the creation of deserted areas or spaces that are not peopled for parts of the day, avoiding the creation of places where women may be easily trapped, such as tunnels and alleyways, and designing parks and public spaces that are open to surveillance and do not provide hiding places for attackers. Indeed, a manual commissioned in 2001 from the CSIR's Building

1 Unless distinguished as black African, 'black' includes all those people who, by virtue of their skin colour, were systematically dispossessed and disenfranchised (although to varying degrees) by the National Party government. This includes those groups classified as 'black', 'coloured' and 'Indian'.

and Construction Technology programme by the South African Police Service Social Crime Prevention Division even provides a series of guidelines for crime prevention through planning and design (Kruger, Landman & Liebermann 2001).

Studies examining where rapes take place illustrate the need to take such concerns into account when developing and designing settlements. One study, analysing 162 gang rapes reported at six inner-city Johannesburg police stations in 1999, found that 31% occurred in open spaces like parks, stretches of veld and parking areas. A further 11% took place along roads or alleyways, while 8% were perpetrated at transport nodes such as bus stops, taxi ranks and train stations. Another 2% of rapes were committed in public toilets. In 29% of these gang rape scenarios women were walking to or from particular destinations when they were forced into cars (often at gunpoint) and driven to another spot where the rape took place (Vetten & Haffeejee 2005). These data illuminate how neglected public environments and the absence of public transport, as well as unguarded public transport zones, provide opportunities for rape.

Rural environments are not necessarily safer for women either. Research conducted among rural women in the Qakeni (Flagstaff) and Port St Johns districts of the Eastern Cape has highlighted the dangers faced by women collecting both firewood and water, as well as travelling to the fields to harvest their crops. To reduce the number of trips they made each day, many women also bathed in the same spot as they collected water. However, being raped and assaulted while using public places for bathing, or walking to collect firewood and water or to work in their fields, was a real concern – if not an actual experience – for the women interviewed. Stretches of tall grass provided hiding places for rapists and robbers who attacked women when they were carrying heavy loads and were thus less able to defend themselves. Walking was therefore not a safe mode of travel for women in these districts (Potgieter, Pillay & Rama 2006, p 19).

While public spaces may indeed be dangerous for women, private spaces, or their homes, are not necessarily safer options. Interviews with women living in a squatter area in Cato Manor, Durban, point to how the informality of homes made from cardboard, metal sheeting and scrap plastics makes women vulnerable to violence in ways not experienced by those in formal housing:

We are all very afraid of the criminals, as we are staying in the shacks made of boards, we feel very much insecure, anybody can set our shacks alight easily, or just tear up the boards and take all our possessions. We feel helpless.

cited in Meth 2003, p 324

As Meth (2003, p 324) points out, women living in such circumstances 'cannot slam the door, lock someone out, or secure the windows' to keep themselves safe.

The design of houses and housing settlements also plays an important role in addressing violence against women and increasing their sense of personal safety. Interviews with women in Gauteng about their experiences of public housing highlighted the need for houses to be designed with two doors instead of one. Women pointed out that it was more difficult to flee an abusive partner when only one door served as both exit and entrance. A settlement layout focused on creating safe communal spaces onto which houses face, rather than the standard linear grid design, would also ensure greater safety for women and children (CASE/GDoH 2000).

Domestic violence literally makes some women homeless. However, the extent of abused women's particular homelessness is often disguised. While women are more likely to move among family, friends and shelters in search of accommodation, some do literally end up sleeping on the streets. This, too, places women at risk of violence. In their interviews with 28 homeless women living in transitional housing schemes and the various abandoned buildings dotting inner-city Johannesburg, Dladla, Hargreaves, Greenberg & Vetten (2004) found that some women had entered into relationships specifically to secure accommodation, as well as their personal safety. While some of these women had been moderately and even severely injured by their partners, they nonetheless saw their partners as protecting them from other men in the homeless community.

Local government is also responsible for the metropolitan police and in 2006 the SAPS National Instruction for dealing with domestic violence was specifically revised to include the metropolitan police services. The possibilities (and risks) of this role have, however, barely been explored.

Better documented is the metropolitan police's harassment and intimidation of sex workers, frequently through the use of municipal by-laws dealing with loitering, drunken behaviour and soliciting for the purposes of prostitution. In 2009 the Cape Town High Court ordered the SAPS and the SA Cape Metropolitan area police to stop arresting sex workers for any purpose other than prosecution and, in particular, doing so knowing that no prosecution would follow (*The Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force v The Minister of Safety and Security and others*). The Sex Worker Education and Advocacy Task Force (SWEAT) had applied for the order to prevent law enforcement officers from arresting sex workers when they had no intention of prosecuting them in court and from arresting them in order to harass, punish and intimidate them or for any other ulterior purpose not sanctioned by law.

GENDER POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

At least some of these interventions are contained in the *Gender Policy Framework for Local Government* (GPFLG) released in August 2007 by the then Department of Provincial and Local Government. Among the key performance areas highlighted by the GPFLG is safety, including safety from GBV (Department of Provincial and Local Government 2007, p 16). A number of recommendations are put forward to promote women's safety, including: organising public awareness campaigns, strengthening services and responses to violence and establishing further safe houses and promoting intersectoral co-ordination. The framework also includes questions to guide municipalities in monitoring interventions intended to promote safety and security. It highlights the fact that, as a preventive measure, safety should be improved in public spaces such as transport termini and parks.

PARTY MANIFESTOS: ADDRESSING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

As the discussion above has highlighted, there is ample scope for a local government response to GBV. Drawing on the analysis set out above we now examine the extent to which parties focused on these issues in their manifestos, as well as whether or not the gender dimensions of these issues were recognised.

The following party manifestos were reviewed:

- African National Congress (ANC)
- Democratic Alliance (DA)
- Congress of the People (Cope)
- Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)
- United Democratic Movement (UDM)
- Azanian People's Organisation (AZAPO)
- National Freedom Party (NFP)

The main issues for all parties (except the IFP, whose manifesto contained little of substance) were service delivery, economic development and community building. Most of the opposition parties also aimed to fight corruption and mismanagement of funds (also acknowledged to some degree by the ANC). While all parties placed a strong emphasis on improving infrastructure and creating economic opportunities, their proposals were gender blind and women's needs were not addressed directly. In fact, the word 'women' was barely used in the manifestos.

Only the ANC made reference to women's representation in local decision making. The party stated that it was set to achieve 50:50 gender equality after

the 2011 elections and attributed the increase in women's representation at local government level to its gender equality policy.

Cope also looked at the inclusion of women in decision making, but from a very different perspective. The party aimed to create subcommittees within ward committees for specific groups such as children, persons with disabilities, youth, women and older people, to allow for greater participation and to provide a space for these groups to voice their concerns. The UDM had a similar plan to allow for women's voices to be heard through sustainable development councils, which would be representative of the community.

None of the parties addressed gender-based violence specifically, referring instead to crime generally. All parties, with the exception of the IFP, aimed to improve crime-fighting measures by working with communities and targeting crime-infested areas. The ANC planned to increase the visibility of SAPS personnel at police station level with focused patrolling in cities and on highways, as well as extending the distribution of police stations (ANC, March 2011). It also maintained that it would promote 'the formation of street committees and village committees as part of community efforts to combat crime, and through partnership with the private sector, community groups and municipalities' (ANC, March 2011).

The DA also referred to community policing and aimed to improve municipal policing services through training. It was the only party that offered a concrete violence prevention programme, which it planned to expand to other areas. According to the DA the Violence Prevention through Urban Upgrading programme has been shown to be effective in combating violent crime in underdeveloped areas by improving local infrastructure such as parks, schools, walkways, clinics and so on. The DA claimed that implementation of this programme in Khayelitsha had reduced the murder rate by 33% (Democratic Alliance, April 2011). The programme also included the establishment of a gender-based violence satellite office (Impumelelo 2010).

Cope, too, recognised the need to address the spatial inequalities of apartheid and proposed dealing with this legacy by creating mixed-use zones so that business and residential areas were no longer separated.

Cope's community policing strategy was aimed at providing each community with 'knowledge, responsibilities and resources to play a role in combating crime in its locality'. Monthly forums were proposed to analyse crime statistics and incidents (Cope, March 2011). The UDM looked at bringing satellite police stations closer to communities. This is an important aspect, as women often have to travel great distances to get to their nearest police station. Municipal police services were also addressed by Azapo, which aimed to set up municipal policing in areas which could afford them and to improve co-operation among the SAPS, municipal police services and the community. The NFP also

mentioned improving co-operation among these structures to combat crime and enforce by-laws.

The DA was the only party which mentioned the need for improved access to antiretrovirals for rape survivors (as well as for expectant mothers).

There was very little substantive discussion of housing and no mention of women's particular needs in this regard. Cope nonetheless recognised the need for the community to be involved in planning housing on the basis that a 'one size fits all' approach (Cope, March 2011) does not meet the unique needs of individual communities. Both the DA and the ANC also discussed bringing human settlements closer to employment opportunities. Importantly, the ANC mentioned the need for more support for safe houses and shelters used by women and children affected by GBV. However, there was no recognition of women's medium- to long-term housing needs after they left shelters.

Overall, the manifestos offered little that promoted gender equality or addressed those forms of violence that affect women disproportionately. This is indicative of political representatives' limited ability to apply a gendered lens to the world and translate this analysis into substantive policy proposals.

WOMEN IN POWER: WHAT NEXT?

The following points can be made on the basis of this analysis: firstly, while all political parties have women members, with both the DA and NFP being led by women, this does not necessarily guarantee a strong focus on women's interests in the policies put forward by parties. The manifestos illustrate this. Much the same point can be made about the representation of women in political office.

Following the 2011 elections the number of women in ward seats declined by 4% to 33%, while the proportion in PR seats increased by 1% to 43%. Overall, there was a 2% decline in the proportion of women representatives from 40% in the 2006 elections to 38% in 2011. But it is doubtful that an increase in the number of women representatives would have benefited the women electorate greatly; the gender content of the manifestos is simply too thin to mount a significant attack on GBV. And if women were not able to influence the content of the manifestos substantially it is not very likely that they will be able to bring a more gendered perspective to those manifestos once they are in office.

Arguably, there needs to be a shift in focus from a pure emphasis on the presence (or number) of women in political structures to an analysis and understanding of women's *effect* on those structures and processes. It is no service to the cause of gender equality when the presence of women is delinked from the content of policy and women politicians' influence upon those policies. It is clear that in the future the argument for gender / feminist quotas needs to be articulated more strongly if policies are to promote gender equality effectively.

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THE MARGINALISED MAJORITY

Zimbabwe's Women in Rural Local Government

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about gender and the involvement of women in politics, and convention upon convention has been written to address gender inequalities. But hitherto, in Africa, it has all been much ado about nothing. In Zimbabwe, and indeed many other countries, local government elections are open for all to vote and be voted into office, but the superstructure militates against the free participation of women in these elections. This article examines the limited participation of women in local government elections and decision making, as evidenced by the fact that only 2.76% of councillors elected in 1998 were women and 13.25% in the 2008 local council elections. Sadly, the upper echelons of political power have remained a remarkably resilient bastion of male exclusivity and efforts undertaken to redress the gender imbalance have been superficial. This article juxtaposes these efforts with Zimbabwe's Rural District Councils Capacity Building Programme (RDCCBP), which used a holistic approach to institutional development but failed to address the unequal gender relations in the rural district councils (RDCs). As the major targets of RDC policies, women were coerced into submission. The article argues that where women constitute more than half of the voting population it is in the interests of democratic and egalitarian principles that they should be represented in proportion to their numbers (that is, descriptive representation). Women have a stake and an interest in politics. The political violence seen during the elections strongly militates against the free participation of women. Using the case of Zimbabwe's RDCs I argue that peaceful elections and the unequal gender relations should be at the heart of any capacity-building effort for meaningful and sustainable institutions.

¹ I want to express my profound appreciation to Norbert Musekiwa and anonymous reviewers for helpful and valuable comments on earlier drafts. I remain responsible for any errors.

INTRODUCTION

If a country can eliminate the tsetsefly, it can get an equal number of men and women on its politburo.

Molyneux 1985

Women's entry into positions of power within formal institutional politics has everywhere been fraught with difficulty (Molyneux 1998). Gender inequalities surround us in most of our daily activities (Plowman 2003; Kabeer 1994). Local authorities have a mandate to make decisions about how public resources will be spent on a broad range of local services. Women, who are the majority and, indeed, the major consumers of local authority policies, are relatively under-represented in decision-making bodies and concomitant processes. The relatively low number of women in politics and in local government, whether in terms of problems of recruitment or under representation, has been apparent throughout the 20th century, not only in Zimbabwe but throughout the world.² In Africa the mean percentage of seats occupied by women parliamentarians was 12.8 in 2002, giving weight to arguments about women's invisibility in post-colonial African politics (Lindberg 2004).

While numbers have been increasing, a variety of explanations, though debatable, have been suggested for this state of affairs, including, among others, discrimination by voters, failure on the part of women to present themselves for election and the barriers that discourage women from standing for election (Bochel & Bochel 2000; *Mid-Week Sun* 2008). Because of this limited participation in elections women lost out, 'as only those who sat at the table would get a slice of the cake' (Bochel & Bochel 2000). Sadly, the upper echelons of political power have remained a remarkably resilient bastion of male exclusivity (Molyneux 1998).

Zimbabwe attained its independence in 1980 after a protracted liberation struggle in which women participated alongside men. At independence the fruits of the struggle, in the form of leadership positions, were not equally shared between men and women. Men dominated all positions, even at local government level, which is closest to women's daily activities.

Over the years the political and economic situation has declined progressively, leading to what is now dubbed 'the Zimbabwe crisis'. Elections – the hallmark of any democracy – have increasingly been characterised by serious violence and, as a result, women have backed away from standing. Amid the 'head bashing', political parties have been reluctant to promote women candidates because they

2 *Mid-Week Sun* (2008) cites Festus Mogae, a former president of Botswana, speaking at a ceremony in Gaborone at which he received the Taylor and Francis Award in July 2008. He expressed disappointment in the inability of women to vote each other into public office, even though they are the majority.

cannot afford them the security and assurance they need to take up leadership positions – a strong deterrent to women's participation in elections and in politics in general.

This article examines the limited participation of women in local government decision making, as evidenced by the election of a mere 2.76% of women councillors in 1998 and 13.25% councillors in 2008. The article argues that participation in elections and political institutions should be viewed as a smokescreen shielding arrangements which were, in themselves, repressive.

EARLY DEBATES ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

The worldwide calls for increased women's participation in public life have a long history. Conferences on women, organised by the United Nations, have been held in Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi 1985 and Beijing in 1995 (IULA 1998; Stubbs 2001). At regional and national levels, local government representatives have worked together to implement resolutions passed at these world conferences on women. IULA (1998, p 8) cites related legal instruments also intended to increase the participation of women in local government, like the 1997 Declaration on Democracy and Equality between Women and Men, based on the 1986 Resolution of the Committee for Equality between Women and Men of the Council of Europe on Women's Participation in Local and Regional Democratic Life. Such legal instruments still exist, but with little or no increase in the number of women participating in local government.

Women still need to be involved; they cannot be mere bystanders in the governance process. As political actors, women bring to their struggles practices, strategies and certain gender-specific qualities of their location as carers responsible for the domestic sphere and social reproduction (Molyneux 1998). Ntseane & Sentsho (2005) argue that where women constitute more than half of the voting population it is in the interests of democratic and egalitarian principles that they should be represented in proportion to their numbers. Women have a stake and interest in politics. Maxine Molyneux (1998; 1985) acknowledges and persuasively engages gender interests in politics and decision making, conceptualising 'practical gender interests' and 'strategic interests'. 'Practical gender interests' based on the satisfaction of needs arising from women's placement within the sexual division of labour and 'strategic interests' involve claims to transform social relations in order to enhance women's position and to secure a more lasting repositioning of women within the gender order and within society at large.

Tong (1998, p 2) contends that female subordination is rooted in a set of customary and legal constraints blocking women's entrance to and success in the public world. Following a similar line of enquiry, Plowman (2003, p 108)

confirms the unequal relations rooted in the different roles and responsibilities society prescribes for men and women. She cites Caroline Moser's 24-hour-day exercise,³ developed as step one of a gender-planning framework. These disparities can also be mirrored in the external context. Within this scenario, the 1970s saw the formulation of the women in development (WID) approach, which viewed women as an untapped resource in the economy and targeted this aspect of their lives for change, but as an 'add on' to already existing projects.

Plowman (2003, p 107) argues that this analytical framework does nothing to shift the position of women in relation to men. Thus, in response to the limitations of WID, there was a conceptual shift to gender and development (GAD). Plowman (2003, p 107) contends that in order really to empower women their position must be understood in relation to that of men. Thus, the GAD framework engages the power structure so as to promote the redistribution of power in the hope of eradicating gender inequality. The GAD approach was first used in relation to development planning premised on the notion that the major issue is one of the subordination and inequality of indigenous populations and women.

From a gender perspective local government is the level of government that is closest and most accessible to women, particularly since it traditionally provides services utilised by individual households, such as water, schools, clinics and other social services (IULA 1998).⁴ Roche (1998, p 176) argues that gender is a vehicle for understanding the two-way relationship between an organisation and the society in which it is embedded. Roche adds that this explains how one set of interests (in this case male interests) is institutionalised. Plowman (2003, p 105) contends that a gender analysis of an organisation's organogram would look at where women were in relation to men in terms of access to information, decision making and power. It is also a stubborn fact that these inequalities are not natural but are constructed and perpetuated by society. Plowman (2003, p 105) attributes this construction to powerful forces like culture, tradition and religion.

WOMEN IN POLITICS AND DECISION MAKING IN ZIMBABWE

In a captivating study on the involvement of women in the liberation war in Zimbabwe, Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000, p152) succinctly refuted the misconception that women were involved in the liberation struggle as equals with men and argued that 'the sex based prejudices of the pre-war period survived the war'. She argues that women were a useful campaigning tool and that the

3 The exercise entails analysing what a wife and husband do in the course of 24 hours and, in the process, the stark differences between the roles and responsibilities of men and women are exposed.

4 Roche (1998, p 176) and Anne Marie Goetz (1996) advise that it is often simpler to start by identifying the outcomes or products of an organisation and how these affect men and women differently.

top administrative structures of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (Zanu-PF) during the war largely excluded women. Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000, p 133) looked back at the independence scenario (1980) during which time only five of 57 Zanu-PF parliamentary seats were held by women, a mere 8% of parliamentarians, though women comprise 52% of the total population of Zimbabwe. Of these women members of Parliament (MPs), three were given Cabinet posts, though Zanu-PF appointed six men to the senate to qualify them for Cabinet posts (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000, p 103) but failed to do the same for women.

Nhongo-Simbanegavi (2000, p 103) analyses Teurai Ropa's⁵ appointment to the first Cabinet as Minister of Youth, Sport and Recreation, describing the appointment as 'contrived', placing her as it did in what Zanu-PF leaders viewed as women's area of specialisation – child care – and reflecting the fact that women did not share the spoils of the war (Nhongo-Simbanegavi 2000, p 152). Chronicling some of the superficial legislative changes that have been made, she argues that much has still to be done.

Even two decades after independence, at the National Workshop on Political Empowerment of Women in Local Governance (28 April 1998) the then Minister of National Affairs, Employment Creation and Co-operatives, the late Tenjiwe Lesabe, confirmed that Zimbabwe had ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). Lesabe noted that Article 7 of CEDAW prohibited discrimination against women in political and public life and outlined the facts about Zimbabwe shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Composition of public organisations in Zimbabwe

Organisation	No of women	No of men	Total
Zanu-PF politburo	4	21	25
Zanu-PF central committee	30	155	185
Parliament	21	129	150
Cabinet	3	21	24
Permanent secretary	2	21	23
Mayor	0	16	16
Rural district councillors	38	1 339	1 377
Total	98	1 702	1 800

Source: Adapted from Tenjiwe Lesabe's speech at the National Workshop on Political Empowerment of Women in Local Governance (28 April 1998).

5 *Nom de guerre* of Joyce Mujuru, one of the vice-presidents of Zimbabwe since 2002.

Table 1 shows clearly the skewed distribution of women in influential political positions. For example, 100% of all mayors were male and women constituted a paltry 2.84% of members of rural district councils (RDCs). In the total number of organisations examined women constituted a mere 5.4%. The March 2008 harmonised general and council elections showed a similarly disappointing trend, with only 13.25% of women councillors elected. One would think that the first sector women should break into would be local government and politics since they are closest to them in terms of policies and service consumption.

This position resonates with the sentiments of Solomon Chikate, the then chief executive officer of the Association of Rural District Councils (ARDC), when he reiterated, in an address to delegates to the same workshop, the government's proposal at a Zanu-PF National Consultative Assembly that the RDC Act should be amended to accommodate a quota system for women (Chikate 1996). The ARDC developed a gender framework to chart the course of women's participation in RDCs, thereby aiming to increase the number of women in councils by 2000 (Mozhenty, Tsanga & Mashingaidze 1998).

As part of this gender framework the ARDC introduced a Gender Awareness and Mainstreaming Programme, which operated from 2001 to 2003 but ended due to lack of funding. However, this programme was only put in place after the Rural District Councils Capacity Building Programme (RDCCBP) had officially closed down in 2001 in the wake of the political, governance and economic crisis dubbed 'Zimbabwe's plunge'.

International media attention and political utterances all point to the dismal socio-economic and political situation in Zimbabwe under which the country's local authorities have been reeling (Wallechinsky 2002; www.newszimbabwe.com 2005; 2009). The year 2000 was a turning point for the politicisation of the local state.

SYNOPSIS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN ZIMBABWE

Until independence in 1980 local government in Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia) was divided racially in terms of a 'separate development' policy, a Rhodesian formulation of apartheid, which benefited whites to the detriment of blacks. The pre-independence local government units (LGUs) were harmonised and amalgamated into RDCs in 1988.

Datta (1987, p 29) divides the local authority system into 'detached' and 'attached'. In terms of the 'detached' system there were different types of urban councils, all with differing levels of autonomy. Datta (1987, p 30) argues that under the 'attached' system there were district councils in communal areas. She contended that district councils were, in fact, school districts for the communal

areas and that the most vital local functions in these areas, like road maintenance, water supply, and cattle-dipping, were provided directly by a central organisation called the District Development Fund (DDF), set up by the central government.

The district councils, which were attached to central field administration in an organic sense, were weak, fragmented and politically discredited. The white commercial farmers who had managed to settle in the remote/rural areas had separate administrative arrangements called rural councils, which were given considerable power and had access to all the necessary basic infrastructure and essential services such as roads, clean water and habitable climatic conditions.

Efforts to eliminate this dual system included transforming the 220 African councils into 55 district councils in 1980 and combining all local government under the jurisdiction of one parent ministry, the Ministry of Local Government, Rural and Urban Development. Continued moves towards this process culminated in the formal merging in July 1993 of the rural and district councils, creating RDCs.

The transition to the new dispensation was fraught with considerable resistance from the contenders and haggling among the members of staff. Musekiwa (2001) posits that amalgamation was a political decision intended to remove one of the last vestiges of colonial rule; what Munro (1998) and McGregor (2002) called de-racialisation of local government. In my view, amalgamation resulted in a (forced) marriage of convenience between the former foes.

Another initiative by the government was the introduction of RDC capacity building programmes (CBPs) to improve the ability of RDCs to take up the new challenges. In propagating the capacity building programmes RDCs were found to lack the skills and resources required to shoulder these added responsibilities. The challenge for the Zimbabwe government was thus to link and tailor capacity building to access to resources in order to establish the strategic areas on which a responsible programme of decentralisation should focus. In turn, these efforts at the local level would feed into the national consensus-building process in order for the transfer of central responsibilities and resources to be carried out in a way that would lead to more equitable and sustained development.

Mandiyani (2006) contends that another, unstated, reason for implementing RDCCBP was the pressure generated by the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) on which the government had embarked in 1991. Because ESAP demanded less government intervention it enabled the government to 'hive off' responsibility to local authorities, thus RDCCBP was a 'face-saver'.⁶

The objective of the RDCCBP was to develop the abilities of all RDCs to plan, implement and manage their own district development programmes and

6 The government could live with a clear conscience, having prepared the RDCs to take over the added responsibilities.

the sustainable delivery of essential services. To achieve this, the CB programme was three pronged: institutional development, capital development and human resources development (HRD). Gender was a crosscutting theme. Within the human resources development component there was an aspect of civic participation where women were to be trained to engage in RDC activities as councillors and as an engaged citizenry.

ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Elections for both rural and urban councils in Zimbabwe were, until 2008, when they were harmonised, held separately from the national parliamentary and presidential elections. Before harmonisation council elections were held every four years, with intermittent by-elections to fill vacancies as and when they occurred. Presidential elections were held every six years and parliamentary elections every five years.

The Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA 2008) observed that in the past, four different bodies had been involved in running and managing the electoral process in Zimbabwe. These were the Delimitation Commission, the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC), the Election Directorate and the Registrar General. EISA (2008) noted that this situation undermined the effective and efficient management of elections and that power and authority with regard to election management were dispersed among all these institutions and it was not clear where the buck stopped. In a bid to correct this anomalous situation, the above institutions were abolished with the establishment of the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). Under the enabling legislation, everyone is free to vote or be voted into office in Zimbabwe's local government elections if they meet the eligibility criteria. In terms of the Electoral Act, chapter 2:13, s 119(1): 'Any person who is a citizen of Zimbabwe; has attained the age of twenty-one years; is enrolled on the voters roll for the council area concerned; and is not disqualified in terms of subsection (2)'⁷ is qualified to be elected as a councillor. The first-past-the-post system is used. Once the council has been elected the councillors choose office bearers (council chairperson and members of committees) from among their members.

⁷ There are a number of grounds for disqualification, *inter alia*, default with the payment of any levy, rate, charge or tax due and payable to the council concerned; conviction of an offence involving dishonesty; holding an office of profit under the state and being a member of Parliament or a member of another local authority

The Zimbabwe Electoral Support Network (ZESN) (2011) advised that when choosing the electoral system of representation people should first decide what criteria the system should fulfil. ZESN (2011) identified the common system as creating a representative assembly and holding the elected members accountable to the voters. In this case, gender representation and representation of other groups is of primary interest. However, the Rural District Councils Act and the Electoral Act are silent on this. ZESN contends that politicians tend to support a system of representation which they believe will benefit their party. However, such tactical considerations are legitimate, but myopic. There is always the temptation to trust that the system that once brought a party to power will magically repeat itself. Instead, there can be a number of shocking surprises.

ZESN (2011) advocated an electoral system that can represent the voters along gender or ethnic lines and can represent minorities. ZESN acknowledged that since a party may need only a few percent more voters to gain an extra seat every vote counts.

Within any democratic polity cardinal features like participation and contestations are indispensable. ZESN (2011) states that contestation presumes the legitimacy of opposition, the right to challenge incumbents and their ideological predispositions and socio-economic policies as well as guaranteeing the twin freedoms of expression and association. It also involves engagement in free and fair elections. In a similar vein, ZESN contends that participation, which forms the pinnacle of this article, captures the idea of popular sovereignty and the protection of the right to vote as well as the right to be voted for. It is critical at this stage to highlight that the explanations given for both contestation and participation are apparently gender neutral in that they assume that there are equal opportunities for both men and women to participate in democratic processes and take part in contests for seats in governing bodies (ZESN 2011).

WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN SELECTED RDCS, 1993 TO 2003

In the sections above I chronicled the general history of women's involvement in local government and politics in general. In this section I discuss the involvement of Zimbabwe's women in local government elections during three terms of office (see Table 2). The figures are drawn from case studies of eight selected RDCs.⁸

8 To make findings that can be generalised, Zimbabwe was divided into four quadrants, with two RDCs selected from each quadrant.

Table 2
Women Councillors in the Sampled RDCs: 1993 to 2003

RDC	Total no of councillors	Women councillors in Term 1	Women councillors in Term 2	Women councillors in Term 3
Mazowe	29	2	3	2
Bindura	18	0	1	0
Mutasa	27	1	1	3
Makoni	35	6	6	7
Gwanda	23	2	2	2
Umzingwane	18	2	2	4
Chirumhanzi	19	0	0	4
Gokwe South	30	1	1	3
Total	199	14	16	25

Source: Mandiyanike (2006)

In Table 2, Term 1 refers to the term of the first full council (after amalgamation), from July 1993 to August 1998.⁹ Term 2 refers to the term of the second full council, from September 1998 to September 2002. Term 3 pertains to the term of the full council from October 2002 to October 2007. The total number of women councillors may not vary over the three terms because in some RDCs certain women councillors held office for more than one term with some having 'alderwoman'¹⁰ status conferred on them. For example, in the Gokwe South RDC one woman councillor had been in office since the 1980s. Hence the total number of women councillors there (five) includes the same councillor in all three terms.

The longevity in office of women councillors can be explained in terms of the individual's idiosyncrasies and ability to withstand a hostile political environment. Most of these long-term women councillors are local notables. For example, they run successful businesses and command a lot of political respect. It was a sad reality that no woman chaired an RDC during the period, although a few served as committee chairpersons. In the eight selected councils there was a total of 14 women (7.03%) in term 1; 16 (8.04%) in term 2 and 25 (12.56%) in term 3.

⁹ The councillors' terms were supposed to be four years, but in some cases the Minister of Local Government delayed calling for new elections.

¹⁰ An alderman (alderwoman) is a councillor who has served more than two terms consecutively. This is significant in that it is an honorary status for seniority within council.

There was no woman chief executive officer in any RDC, although there were a number of women executive officers, assistant executive officers and clerks.¹¹

As indicated above, the general and council elections of March 2008 did not change the picture in any way. Chakaipa (2010) observed that during the harmonised general and council elections of 2008, 1 958 wards were contested in all the RDCs. The Kubatana website¹² contained the names of all the councillors elected to the respective RDCs in 1 497 wards (due to a paucity of data at the time the Kubatana website did not include the names of all councillors in Matebeleland South).

Chakaipa (2010) gives the results by political party affiliation and does not show the gender disparity in the composition of the councils. This paper fills this gap by providing a gender disaggregated data¹³ analysis drawn from the councillors' names on the Kubatana website. My gender disaggregated data analysis showed that only 174 women were elected as councillors while there were 1 313 men. Women comprised only 13.25%.

Councillors are the policy makers, while the executive officers are salaried and manage the day-to-day business of the council and, although they are not elected, contribute significantly to the policy-making process. Examination of the involvement of women in managerial positions in the RDCs, however, shows that they have limited input into decision making, although when political violence flares up, women are equally affected.

During field research I had the opportunity to interact with members of staff at the Makoni RDC. At lunchtime the women members of staff cooked the food, served it to their male counterparts and cleared the dishes. This scenario indicates clearly that even women at administrative / professional levels are expected to do their usual domestic chores. Table 3 shows the position of heads of department (HoDs) in the sampled RDCs.

11 Ofei-Aboagye (2000, p 4) observes the similarly discomfiting nature of gender relations in local government in Ghana. She cites startling figures showing that of 110 CEOs only 12 were women, while women constituted 32% of the entire civil service, 24% of them in local government, mostly in secretarial and clerical positions. Among the efforts to include women in local government was a directive that reserved 30% of the appointed positions in assemblies for women, building the capacity of women to aspire to positions of influence and encouraging stakeholder institutions to provide appropriate support to women's concerns, creating an enabling environment for their participation.

12 An NGO network alliance project that provides online community support for Zimbabwean activists. The website seeks to improve the accessibility of human rights and civic information in Zimbabwe.

13 Essentially entails classifying information on the basis of gender. This will provide vital indicators of gender needs.

Table 3
Women HoDs in the sampled RDCs in Term 3¹⁴

RDC	EO admin	EO finance	EO projects	EO CS	Internal audit	Total
Mazowe	0	0	0	1(a)*	0	1
Bindura	0	1	0	0	1	2
Makoni	1	0	0	1	0	2
Mutasa	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gwanda	0	0	0	1	0	1
Umzingwane	0	1	0	1	0	2
Chirumhanzi	1	0	0	0	0	1
Gokwe South	0	0	0	1	1	2

Source: D Mandiyanike (2006)

* (a) Denotes acting capacity

As can be seen from Table 3, four of the RDCs had two women HoDs, the other four had one each. The position in Mazowe was even more disconcerting, with one woman HoD, who was in an acting capacity and was not assured of securing the position substantively. This is even more revealing in the light of the fact that of the 29 councillors in Mazowe only three (at most) were women at any point during the period studied.

THE AGONY OF WOMEN'S LOW PARTICIPATION

Tables 1, 2 and 3 show a very worrying picture of women's participation in politics and public office in Zimbabwe in general and in RDCs in particular. Plowman (2003, p 104) queries this anomalous situation, asking how one can develop an organisational change process that has gender inequality at its heart. Plowman argues that organisational change has traditionally been 'gender blind'. In a discussion, the ARDC Gender Officer (November 2003) spoke of a number of barriers women face in their quest for public life. Among these were:¹⁵

¹⁴ As alluded to above, it was difficult to trace the position of the different officeholders over the ten-year period. I thus give the most recent position.

¹⁵ IULA (1998, p 10) and Ofei-Aboagye (2000, p 4) refer to similar problems in various political systems, depending on the country and culture.

A weak and undeveloped democracy at the local level, the nature of the electoral system, lack of legislative equality, outright discrimination *by the men folk* [own emphasis], reluctance, poor support / assistance from political parties,¹⁶ the existence of discriminatory informal networks – the ‘old boy network’ that excludes women’s participation, male domineering [sic] and sexist behaviour from male colleagues and the exhausting triple workday – with multiple roles as wives, mothers, daughters, community workers and income generators.

In the case of Zimbabwe I would add another barrier (the mainstay of this paper) that has gained increasing prominence – entrenched violence in the political system. Bochel & Bochel (2000) also point to the aggression and ‘head-banging’ which mainstream parties accept as a routine way to treat politicians both in other parties and in their own.

Several writers and organisations in Zimbabwe allude to the deliberately orchestrated violence carried out at the behest of the state and its agencies (Alexander, McGregor & Ranger 2000; Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum 2002 and 2003; Makumbe & Compagnon 2000; Hammar & Rouftopolous 2003). In a discussion a council official in Gwanda intimated that in view of the rampant political violence, the political playing field, hitherto uneven, had become so violent and ‘macho’ that women were scared off and found it difficult to participate in local politics.

The 2008 elections, which were harmonised for the first time so that the elections for the president, Parliament and local authorities were held simultaneously, were severely marred by violence. The presidential election was closely fought between Robert Mugabe and Morgan Tsvangirai and the results showed that there was no outright winner. A second election, a ‘run-off’, was held in June 2008. For Mugabe and his party this was an election that had to be won at all costs. Several reports have been compiled on the electoral violence. It is notable that ss 133 and 134 of the Electoral Act set out penalties for intimidatory practices, corruption, preventing a political party or candidate from campaigning and exerting undue influence on voters. However, these are just rhetorical legal provisions wrapped in fine legal jargon. The following paragraph chronicles some of the blatant transgressions of these provisions.

Makombe (2008) relates the case of Rosemary White, who admitted that ‘I didn’t know this election would be so difficult, but I won’t go backwards’. Ms White campaigned using her own money and with support from the ‘Women Can

16 Ofei-Aboagye (2000, p 3) posits that women have been constrained from entering local level politics by a lack of finance for campaigning, time constraints and the widely held perception that politics is a ‘dirty’ game and is not for decent women.

Do It' campaign. After she was threatened with violence by Zanu-PF supporters she was forced to flee her home, leaving behind her husband and children, and sought refuge at the rural homestead of her grandmother. The Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP 2008, p 1) reported that

since 2 May 2008, there has been a phenomenal escalation of election violence with May recording 6 288 cases up from April's 4 375. By end of May, the record of murder cases had almost doubled to 47 from the April level of 26. By 20 June, 35 new murder cases had been recorded. Cases of harassment shot up to 4 288, a figure that is almost four times the April recording of 1 484.

The ZPP (2008, p 4) said that while cases of involvement by the Movement for Democratic Change in acts of violence had also increased, the main perpetrators came from the ruling party, with many cases allegedly involving war veterans, Zanu-PF youth, militia, Zanu-PF councillors and traditional leaders. There were also 4 288 cases of harassment, 704 cases of assault, 670 cases of displacement, 214 cases of malicious damage to property, and 85 cases of kidnappings/abductions recorded – a pattern that was largely consistent with the April trends.

There were bizarre incidents in which victims were allegedly beaten with logs and axes, hard pipes, sjamboks with diamond wire; beaten under the feet; beaten on the buttocks; handcuffed; made to roll in gravel; attacked with bicycle chains on their hands; burnt with hot plastics on the legs, mouth and body; forced to denounce their parties and assaulted with fists and booted feet. The ZPP carried out a Gender Victims-Perpetrator Analysis in which they established that the number of MDC female victims was three times higher than that of Zanu-PF male victims and eight times higher than that of Zanu-PF female victims.

Idasa (2010) states that political violence against women is common in Zimbabwe. The perpetrators are usually non-state agents, reported to be Zanu-PF supporters, Zanu-PF youth, and war veterans, but there are also large numbers of reports involving state agents such as the Zimbabwe Republic Police and the Zimbabwe National Army. According to Idasa it is well documented that violence in Zimbabwe increases during election years and that rural women are more likely than urban women to report the destruction of property, displacement, politically-motivated rape¹⁷ and torture, while urban women more frequently report assault, unlawful detention and death threats. The victims indicated that

17 The term 'politically-motivated rape' was used to mean rape that involved some political element such as an indication that the rape was committed as a punishment for a party political affiliation, the affiliation of a spouse or family member, or occurred at a 'base' or political meeting (Idasa 2010).

they did not report the violations to the police because of the fear of reprisals and because the police were frequently involved in the violence.

Thus, evidence from Zimbabwe's RDCs has shown that women have been excluded from participating in the public domain for various reasons. Stubbs (2001, p 348) alerts us to the fact that these stumbling blocks are insurmountable. Plowman (2003, p 106) argues that 'just as society has constructed gender inequalities, so they can also be dismantled, they are not set in stone and they can be changed'.

CONCLUSION

The Zimbabwe government, like most other governments, has ratified conventions and international treaties on women's rights. These have, however, not been translated into concrete deliverables for local government participation and representation. Political violence, the reluctance of political parties to promote women candidates, cultural stereotyping, patriarchal attitudes and practices and male networks from which women are excluded continue to frustrate the movement of women from what Clarke & Brunell (1995) aptly call 'masculinised institutions'. Indeed, the upper echelons of political power have remained a remarkably resilient bastion of male exclusivity.

The RDCCBP opened a window of opportunity that could have made a significant difference in supporting the leadership positions of women but the Zimbabwean government 'hived off' responsibility to local authorities and the RDCCBP merely became a 'face-saver' – the government could live with a clear conscience that it had prepared the RDCs to take over the additional responsibilities.

As an institutional development tool the RDCCBP did not address gender inequalities or pave the way for women to play a meaningful role in development. It was 'gender blind' and did not incorporate gender as a critical variable in strengthening RDCs. Capacity building does not lie merely in training people or strengthening organisations, it also deals with complex, somewhat intangible aspects, among them political participation, women's involvement, norms, values, political culture, social capital and incentives for change (Mandiyanike 2006). This article has explored the discomfiting nature of local government elections, gender relations and political violence.

The results have revealed how, despite being in the majority, few women made it into RDC offices. Those who were elected councillors were backbenchers and those who were employed in executive positions were all below the level of CEO. Equally damning is the realisation that some women members of staff in RDCs were expected to engage in cooking and related chores to service men.

This points strongly to the fact that even when women reach high positions, mechanisms are found to keep them 'in their place'.

It is a sad reality that Zimbabwe's women remain marginalised and continue to face discrimination at all levels. The harsh political climate militates against efforts to incorporate them in decision making through the ballot box.

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TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S ROLE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN LESOTHO THROUGH A WOMEN'S QUOTA

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ABSTRACT

Lesotho introduced a quota for women in local government in 2005 amid different interpretations of the concept and the general preparations for elections. The phase II era of decentralisation, after the quota for women was introduced, was marked by the October 2011 local government elections. In both instances a deliberate effort was made to reserve one-third representation for women, though each time in a different way. This article analyses the way in which the government's efforts to use a legal framework to challenge traditional and patriarchal tendencies have evolved. It argues that while the introduction of a quota is a good development it was not properly institutionalised in 2005, nor have the changes introduced in 2011 improved the situation. The article argues that insufficient dialogue has led the government and civil society to miss a valuable opportunity to use a women's quota in local government to change women's political, social and economic status.

INTRODUCTION

The post-colonial state in Africa, itself a product of authoritarianism, exploitation and oppression, has been struggling to find a power-sharing formula in polarised and fragmented societies. Although democracy was expected to replace the colonial state as well as oppressive customary and patriarchal rule with a Bill of Rights guaranteeing rights to every citizen, the new dispensation seems to have built upon existing disparities.

After half a century of decolonisation African countries are still battling over electoral democracy. The battle is normally defined in terms of electoral

management and procedural issues, yet, according to Ndlovu-Gatsheni (2003, p 22) the post-colonial state is incapable of mediating among contending forces in society and has been unable to find acceptable power-sharing formulae, thus failing to translate fairly votes into representation. When decentralisation of power was introduced in many countries the driving objective was service delivery and the success of the system was determined by the extent to which the central government was willing to let go of power. The inclusion of traditionally excluded sectors of society in decision making is becoming significant, hence it is a fairly new concept to have a women's quota not only in local government but in other spheres of government as well.

The re-introduction of local government in Lesotho, 2005 after 40 years of highly centralised political administration had a mixed reception from government, civil society organisations, development partners, traditional leaders (chiefs), political parties and the people, mainly because of its *affirmative action* orientation towards women. Amid resistance from opposition parties and alternative proposals from civil society organisations the government of Lesotho went ahead with reserving at least one-third of the seats for women in a way that barred men from contesting seats in some electoral divisions. After elections in which 56% of those chosen as councillors were women, there was little cooperation among stakeholders.

Insufficient management of the diversity of views created considerable suspicion and negative conflict about an otherwise significant initiative. The much needed solidarity of leadership, which was missing at the beginning of the process, has left a significant mark on the performance of local government in general, and women councillors, in particular. Women councillors had very little, if any, impact on changing the situation of women. The appraisal of their performance is similar to that of the other councillors. Even in the electoral divisions earmarked for women voters judged them primarily on their overall performance as councillors and only secondly on how they performed on women's issues. This suggests that *affirmative action* which provides quotas for disadvantaged groups may not, without necessary institutional transformation, deliver the desired change. Participation of women in the 2011 local government elections, which led to the election of 47% women councillors, a 9% decline from the previous position, raises the question of whether the quota should be time bound? Originally it was intended that it be used only for three phases of local government elections

This article examines the extent to which the structural as well as the institutional arrangement within local government in Lesotho facilitates or curtails women's empowerment. Does the structure, for example, create a situation in which 56% or 47% of women can bring about significant change for rural women?

DEMOCRACY, REPRESENTATION AND ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Lesotho is a democratic kingdom (Constitution 1993, p 1) with a hybrid political system that espouses civil liberties while at the same time sympathising with customary practices, making progressive affirmative policy choices, such as a women's quota, contentious. Though there has been a considerable change in its legal framework Lesotho remains a highly patriarchal society in which male dominance and women's subordination are entrenched in norms and practices that make such imbalance a way of life. Because patriarchal societies invest in the people's mindset, their continuity also tends to define their culture and identity.

Molomo (2006, p 8) defines democracy as a process of electing leaders in an open and transparent manner and holding them accountable. The notion that it cannot, however, be limited to elections is corroborated by Mutisi (2007, p 5), who argues that 'democracy is a system of governance that seeks to represent people by inculcating the values of equality and justice'. Representative democracy demands that people have control over decision makers who act on their behalf as well as over the decision-making processes.

Of the two types of democracy, direct and indirect (representative), the latter is preferred mainly because of the impracticality of the former in growing populations: because it may not be practical for millions of people to participate directly in the running of their affairs some represent others and carry out certain duties on their behalf. Elections have been found to be the most accepted form of identifying those who can hold office on behalf of others.

African countries, Lesotho in particular, have, however, not found stability in the electoral system and, hence, in representative democracy. Matashane-Marite, Mapetla & Monyake (2007, p 2) argue, for example, that the aftermath of general elections in Lesotho has been characterised by turmoil and conflict. This view is shared by Kabemba (2003, p 5), who points out that in its four decades of independence Lesotho has experienced violence directly linked to elections. The main actors, namely the political parties, have not accepted the outcome of the elections. Mohau (1998, p 98) contends that losers in Lesotho's elections have proved to be unable to accept defeat maturely or to see their own weaknesses, maintaining instead that the chicanery of others is the cause of their defeat.

Similarly, Gill (1998, p 480) indicates that none of the main opposition parties – the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) in 1965, the Basotho National Party (BNP) in 1970 and 1993 and the BCP and BNP in 1998 – accepted defeat with grace. In searching for a solution to the protracted post-election disputes in the kingdom the electoral model rather than the management of the process was identified as the probable cause. Shale (2007, p 1) contends that

it took decades for the Basotho to recognise that disputes over elections related not as much to management as to the system. Earlier Mahao (1998, p 78) had argued that although the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral model used in Lesotho produced a strong government it did so at the expense of the whole political system.

According to Heywood's definition (Heywood 2002, pp 206-210), there are four categories of representation, namely, the trustee, delegate, mandate and resemblance models. The *trustee* model entitles a representative to use mature judgement and conscience; in terms of the *delegate* model a representative serves as a conduit for transmitting the ideas and views of those represented; in terms of the *mandate* model it is the organisation that is elected on the basis of its programme or popularity and the *resemblance* model relates to the extent to which representatives resemble the people they claim to represent.

These models have both good and bad qualities, hence they may not be equally suitable for all electorates. For example, the qualities of a representative and the moral duty inherent in the trustee model and loyalty in the delegate model are necessary ingredients in a modern representation. Although the mandate model is, to all intents and purposes, modern, it lacks the qualities necessary in the individual in the trustee model and the moral obligation of the delegate model. The resemblance model contains the progressive element of recognition of various sectors of society, but this is not what politics is about; people unite not only in relation to sectarian tendencies but also in relation to political ideologies.

It therefore follows, logically, that the electoral model in Lesotho is the result of debate and trade-offs in search of the proper form of representation, which, like other socially constructed concepts, is not insulated from paternalistic monopoly over public discourse. The electoral system, according to Heywood (1997, p 232), is a set of rules governing the conduct of elections. Beyond managerial issues an electoral model is a mechanism through which votes are translated into parliamentary seats.

The crux of the matter and, indeed, an entry point into the contention of this article is the argument Molomo (2006, p 27) advances that 'a system is said to be representative if it accurately translates votes cast into a corresponding number of seats'. If party A receives 20% of the support in an election, the ability of the system to convert that into 20% of seats in the house of representatives is what qualifies the system as truly representative. A proportional representation system is, therefore, fairer than a FPTP system.

Representation is, therefore, a relationship through which an individual or group stands for or acts on behalf of a larger body of people (Heywood 2002, p 224). Comparatively speaking, FPTP is more hostile to women than

proportional representation (PR) because in a FPTP system women have to compete directly against men. Mahao (1998, p 72) argues that FPTP exaggerates the lead of the largest party over others and promotes a two-party if not a one-party system instead of a multiparty system. Lowe-Morna & Tolmay (2009, p 11) argue that although PR is more conducive to the election of women than FPTP it subjects women to further domination by political parties. Lowe-Morna (2006, p 41) argues that because in a PR system party leaders put together the final lists and the order of the names on the lists, women who achieve their positions through a party list system are primarily accountable to the political parties they represent and only secondarily to women.

If democracy is defined as government for the people by the people, Lowe-Morna (2006, p 35) argues, given the levels of women's representation in their parliaments no country in the world can claim to be a democracy. Since the conventional approaches to democracy and elections have not delivered solutions to the cultural stereotypes that bar women from participation, affirmative action, particularly quotas, is key to changing the situation. This is significant because, as Mutasah (2006, p 51) argues, through elections people choose representatives who will represent their interests. In this way, representation also refers to the extent to which representatives deliver on the expectations of those they represent.

The progressive debate over representative models that increase the number of women in political leadership is, therefore, challenging the established norms. Affirmative action is a deliberate way of increasing women's representation in significant positions. Akiyode-Afolabi & Arogundade (2003, p 23) define affirmative action as a broad term encompassing a host of policies that seek to support excluded groups in society.

Guided by a number of international agreements the government of Lesotho has developed a Gender and Development Policy in which clearly identifiable affirmative action can be discerned. The establishment of a quota for at least one-third of the seats for women in local government is an example of that. Local government, being the closest sphere of governance to the people, plays a critical role in reversing the injustices of the past. As Molomo (2006, p 26) argues, elections are not about putting people in power for their enrichment, but are a process to improve people's lives. The question is whether the quota that puts women in power, can, alone, achieve such a desired improvement for women. The use of affirmative action to reverse the under representation of women should therefore not only be aimed at changing the numbers but also their material well-being. Put differently, affirmative action and quotas may serve to transform male oriented representation systems into equality platforms that can be used to change the cultural stereotypes that limit women's developmental capacity.

THE POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN LESOTHO

Lesotho aspires to equal opportunities for and participation by women and men in development, education, economic resources, politics and decision making (Gender and Development Policy, 2003, p 7). Several legislative measures have resulted from this policy pronouncement. By introducing progressive measures, such as relaxing evidence procedures, the Sexual Offences Act (2003) empowers vulnerable groups to resist sexual abuse. The Act, for instance, does not contain a condition about the length of time that elapses between the incident and its being reported, which, particularly in the case of rape, has, in the past, been a reason for dismissing a claim. The marital power that placed women in the custody of men has been reversed by the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act (2008), which gives women access to credit and to other key decision-making powers. The Land Act (2010) gives women the right to own land and the Companies Act (2011) allows them to be directors of companies, making women's legal position more progressive and conducive to a meaningful contribution to the economy.

Lesotho thus aspires to fulfil its international commitments, as set out in The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), The Fourth World Conference on Women 1995, the Beijing Platform of Action, the African Union (AU) Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa 2004, the AU Gender Policy 2009 and the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development 2008, to name a few conventions to which Lesotho is party.

Despite this commendable progress and the fact that discrimination is unconstitutional in Lesotho, s 18(4) (b) and (c) of the Constitution makes the non-discrimination principle ineffective when customary law is applied with respect to adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property, death, or other matters which fall within provisions of personal law (Constitution 1993). The position of the government of Lesotho on this issue was made clear in 1995 by its reservations about Article 2 of CEDAW:

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho does not consider itself bound by Article 2 to the extent that it conflicts with Lesotho's constitutional stipulation relative to succession to the Throne of the kingdom of Lesotho and the law relating to chieftainship. The Lesotho government's ratification is subject to the understanding that none of its obligations under the convention especially in Article 2(c) shall be treated as extending to the affairs of religious denominations.

Furthermore, the Lesotho government declares that it shall not take any legislative measures under the Convention where those measures would be incompatible with the Constitution of Lesotho.

Lesotho CEDAW Report 2011, pp 10-11

The reservation was, however, altered in 2004, and now exists only to the extent that it affects the succession to the throne and chieftainship. Some women's groups are calling for the repeal of s 18(4). Although the same report justifies this situation as a manifestation of a democratic government introducing changes at a pace that does not harm the electorate, the then ruling party launched a debate on this issue.

Addressing the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) Women's League National Conference, the party's then leader and Lesotho's prime minister, Pakalitha Mosisili, urged women to take up the debate on barriers to women becoming heirs to the chieftainship (Mosisili 2011). These debates demonstrate that Lesotho is taking a more consistent route towards women's empowerment. A word of caution should, however, be added – more could be achieved by opening avenues of public participation in the debate. This would require a departure from the conventional practice where civil servants not only channel discussions but also control the participation mechanisms. Greater participation should be fostered through civil society organisations.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AT GLANCE

Men make up 48.6% of Lesotho's population while women constitute 51.4% (census 2006). In terms of the situation at the time of the 2011 local government elections and shortly before the 2012 national elections women's representation can be divided into the following categories: ministers, 33%; assistant ministers, 60%; members of Parliament in the Senate, 26% and in the National Assembly, 24% and local government, 52.8%. The overall representation of women in politics is 49.6% (Lesotho CEDAW Report, 2010, p 33).

This picture is, however, misleading. Women's representation, particularly in local government, still reflects serious gaps, which existed prior to the 2011 local government elections. Of the 128 community council chairs only 17% were held by women, while no women chaired district councils (Lesotho APRM 2010, p xviii), yet women constituted 56% of the total membership of the district councils. While the majority of assistant ministers were women, these were inferior positions. It can therefore be argued that they held a majority of the junior positions. Since the 2011 Local Government Elections and the 2012 National Assembly Elections the situation has improved, with 30% of both district chairpersons and deputy

chairpersons being women (IEC 2011). Women make up 23% of the 22 ministers in the Cabinet and 43% of the six deputy ministers (Government of Lesotho, 2012).

The question that should occupy the minds of those who are concerned about women's development should be: given the large numbers of women and the fact that so many of them vote, why is their representation not commensurate with their numbers? The women's quota system alone cannot change this situation in a patriarchal society. There should be institutional transformation to deal with entrenched attitudes and belief systems.

LESOTHO'S ELECTORAL MODEL AND THE QUOTA IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

As argued above, electoral and quota systems should be seen in a particular historical context. In Lesotho the development of an electoral model is the result of both practical imperatives and the influence of internationally agreed conventions. Lesotho uses a mixed member proportional system (MMP) at the national level and a parallel system at the local level. Because the focus of this article is local government, the national electoral model will be discussed briefly, while the local system will receive more attention.

Instability has followed every election in Lesotho since independence in 1965 and, in the wake of the political turmoil resulting from the national election results in 1998, a situation that led to South African military intervention in an operation that was later defined as a SADC exercise, the electoral model was changed from FPTP to MMP in an attempt to make the system more democratic, inclusive and representative. The National Assembly now comprises 80 constituency seats and 40 proportional representation seats. The final allocation is based on the principle of proportional representation, although parties are allowed to retain the constituency seats they have won. This means that if a party, in proportional terms, deserves 20 seats but has only won 18 in the constituencies, it will receive two PR seats to make up the 20. If it has more constituency seats than it deserves proportionally it retains them, but receives no PR seats.

Although it was believed that the MMP system would facilitate greater women's representation because parties would include significant numbers in their lists, only 17% of those elected in 2002, when the model was first applied, were women and 26% in 2007, when it was applied for the second time (Maraisane 2009, p 35). These figures are far below the 50/50 ratio required by the AU and SADC. They are even lower than SADC's original 30 %. This confirms that even a PR system can still perpetuate structural inequalities by maintaining an asymmetrical power balance between men and women, particularly when the

decision is up to the parties. Political party executives determining the lists are male dominated and the process is not informed by dialogue with women.

The discontent that followed the 2007 general elections related to the appropriateness of the application of the model in allocating seats to parties, not to women's representation, another indication of priorities with regard to electoral issues. However, after almost four years of dialogue, originally brokered by SADC and later led by Lesotho's civil society and religious sector, the system of women's representation was improved.

Each contesting party draws up a list of candidates to occupy the seats the party wins on the PR list. This list follows the 'zebra system', by which the names of men and women alternate (National Assembly Elections Act 2011). This improvement, which had the support of the Lesotho government, was a response to the decision by SADC and the AU that the goal should be 50/50 representation. Zebra lists are now a permanent part of the system. This means that should the ongoing, though subtle argument that Lesotho should use a full proportional representation system be won, it is possible that there will be 50/50 representation.

Of the 15 SADC countries Lesotho now has the sixth-highest representation of women in the legislature and is ranked 35 of 134 countries in the world (Lowe-Morna & Tolmay 2009, p 9). The discourse on women's representation challenges those features of structural inequality in representative politics which have become normative. With regard to local government, the system will be explained in the context of the analysis of the institutional arrangements within which the quota is applied. Decentralisation in Lesotho is introduced by the Constitution (1993, s 106), which provides that

[P]arliament shall establish such local authorities as it deems necessary to enable urban and rural communities to determine their affairs and to develop themselves. Such authorities shall perform such functions as may be conferred by an Act of Parliament.

The latter part of the constitutional provision is very significant because it bestows on Parliament the power to determine the nature of local government.

The Local Government Act, No 6 of 1997 is, itself, the result of the country-wide and expert led consultations through a white paper. In order to accommodate the women's quota this Act was amended twice, first by the Local Government (Amendment) Act No 5 of 2004 and then by the Local Government (Amendment) Act No 2 of 2011. Since the quota was effected through elections, the Local Government Elections Act No 42 of 1998 was also amended, first by the Local Government Elections (Amendment) Act No 75 of 2004 and then by the Local Government Elections (Amendment) Act No 4 of 2011.

The 2004 amendments to both Acts introduced the reservation of at least one-third of the seats in local councils for women, while the second amendments, in 2011, modified this. This meant that male candidates were barred from standing in the selected electoral divisions. There was a mixed reaction to the lead-up to the local government elections of 2005, with opposition parties believing that they should have been given more time to prepare. Although the opposition parties did not have a discrete body of complaints, many of the issues they raised emanated from the disharmony between the then recently overhauled National Assembly Elections Act (2001) and the Local Government Elections Act (1998), which remained unchanged.

The way in which these disputes were handled was a reversal of the gains of mature political dialogue that had led to the tranquil general election of 2002. The Ministry of Local Government, the opposition parties and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), however, converged in a forum organised by the Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations (LCN) a few weeks before the polls. This forum eased tensions and thereafter opposition parties declared officially that they would allow their members to participate in the elections.

More interesting was the dispute over the application of the quota itself. The robust debate over electoral politics generated by the transition from FPTP to MMP was replaced when the women's quota was introduced in local government by populist slogan shouting, which perverted the political landscape.

Civil society organisations, particularly those coordinated by the LCN, took divergent positions on the implementation of the women's quota. Two of its sectoral commissions, the Democracy and Human Rights Commission (DHRC) and the Women and Children's Commission (WCC), were embroiled in 'friendly fire' after the DHRC endorsed the quota for women but questioned the wisdom of implementing it by reserving territories instead of seats, while the WCC was tricked into speaking in public against its sister commission. The DHRC proposed an alternative that was presented to the Minister of Local Government at a meeting attended by Gender Links's Colleen Lowe-Morna, who contributed useful insights. Two alternative models were proposed:

- That after determination of the number of seats that should be allocated to a community council one-third of that number of seats would be reserved while the rest would be assigned to electoral divisions. Both men and women would contest the electoral divisions, while the reserved seats would be contested by women only.

Or

- Electoral divisions should be abolished and one-third of the seats

reserved for women, while the rest would be contested by both men and women.

DPE 2009, p 5

Perhaps because of the political environment that then prevailed these issues were not genuinely explored and instead the LCN was demonised. The WCC, on the other hand, was mobilising women organisations to 'defend' what was referred to as a call for women. In the internal debate on these positions the WCC sympathised with the argument presented by the DHRC but acted with government. What the WCC could not convincingly respond to in the civil society discourse was the question why the women's quota could not be implemented without discrimination, particularly when civil society had such options?

One aspiring male local government candidate, Ntate Molefi Tšepe, barred from competing because his electoral division was reserved for women, challenged his exclusion in court, asking the court to

[declare] unconstitutional, the provisions of Section 26 (1) A (a) and (b) of the Local Government Elections Amendment Act to the extent that they authorise the exclusion of the applicant from participating as a candidate in the electoral division, litjotjela, 05 on the basis of his sex, in contravention of Section 18 (1) (2) and (3) of the Lesotho Constitution.

Judgement in *Molefi Tšepe*, p 2

This case was interesting because the applicant demonstrated in his papers that he was not opposed to the advancement of women through a quota, but to the implementation of the quota, which disqualified him on the basis of his sex. The respondents admitted the discriminatory nature of the quota, but argued that it was *reasonably justifiable in a democratic society*, hence it was not unconstitutional. In confirmation of what the LCN anticipated when it sought ways of becoming a friend of the court (an attempt that failed), Justice Nomngcngo (2005, pp 20-22) admits that it was hard to comprehend various electoral model options, which, in any event, would yield the same results.

In the judgement, with which Justice Kelello Guni concurred, Justice Nomngcngo (2005, p 22) said: 'Taking all these considerations into account we have come to the conclusion that the limitation that the Section 26 (1) A (a) & (b) imposes on the applicant's rights in so far as it does is reasonably justifiable in a free and democratic society' and is therefore not unconstitutional. Having heard the appellant and engaged with the issues raised, the Appeal Court dismissed the application and confirmed the decision of the High Court (Judgement in *Court of*

Appeal, Molefi Tšepe 2005, p 23). In the event, women won 56% of the seats in the local government election of 2005, the highest percentage on the continent.

Confirming the position advanced by the LCN in 2004-2005, however, when the time came for phase two of the use of the women's quota in local government elections, political parties and the government agreed to defer the polls in order to amend the Local Government Act of 1997 and the Local Government Elections Act of 1998 to consider affirmative action. One of the outcomes of this move was a change in the manner in which the women's quota was implemented in 2005. The review resulted in a change in the way in which seats are reserved for women in local government – this is now done without necessarily preventing men from contesting any electoral division. On this issue Shale (2011, p 4) wrote:

the changes made to the 2005 system are applauded for giving space for women and men to participate in elections equally. This is crowned by retaining the reservation for women. This conceptual cohabitation of affirmative action for women and principle of universal suffrage demonstrated in the new dispensation was not only denied in 2005; those who argued it was possible were not engaged on what they said but who they are!

This feature is important because it communicates clearly the intention of the quota: *to advance women, not to block men*. The new local government electoral model is a parallel system in which voters have two ballot papers – the first for the candidate to represent the electoral division and the second for the political party. One-third of the seats in each community/urban/municipal council are reserved for women. They are referred to as special seats for women and are shared among political parties on the basis of proportional representation.

The explanation derived from the local government elections legal framework (2011) is that once council boundaries have been decided by the Ministry of Local Government, the IEC, guided by population and other socio-economic considerations, will demarcate electoral divisions (each of which must return one candidate to represent it in the council) within every community/urban/municipal council. Further, the IEC will determine the number of special seats for women by dividing the number of electoral divisions by three. Each political party contesting the elections in a particular council and intending to field candidates for the special seats for women will draw up a list of women [in order of preference]. The number of names on the list must not be lower than the number of special seats and not higher than the total number of electoral divisions for that council.

The first vote is for the representative of the electoral division in the council, to be determined by a simple majority, the second is for the party. Although all

the votes are counted at the voting stations their effect in terms of representation is only determined when the results from all the voting stations have been added up, to establish the total number of votes for each political party in the whole council. The allocation of special seats for women is then calculated by means of the formula:

$$\frac{\text{Number of votes cast (for political parties)}}{\text{Number of special seats for women}} = \text{Quota}$$

The votes for each party are divided separately by the quota to determine the number of special seats each deserves. The figures below demonstrate the practical application of the concept. If the Nkau Community Council has 15 electoral divisions, three political parties contesting special seats for women and the total number of people who vote for parties in the second ballot is 2 050:

- i) Determination of number of special seats for women: $\frac{15}{3} = 5$
- ii) Determination of quota: $\frac{2\,050}{5} = 410$
- iii) Total votes for each party:
- | | | |
|--------------|---|--------------|
| Party Blue | = | 1 300 |
| Party White | = | 500 |
| Party Yellow | = | 250 |
| | | <u>2 050</u> |
- iv) Determination of special seats for each party:
- | | | |
|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Party Blue | = | $\frac{1\,300}{410} = 3.17$ |
| Party White | = | $\frac{500}{410} = 1.22$ |
| Party Yellow | = | $\frac{250}{410} = 0.60$ |

The final allocation will be Party Blue 3, Party White 1 and Party Yellow 1. The last gets a seat because, according to the formula, if all the available seats are not allocated, the first of the remaining seats will be allocated to the party with the highest decimal fraction until all seats are allocated.

In the 2011 local government elections the proportion of women dropped from 56% to 47% (author's calculation from IEC figures 2011).

WOMEN'S QUOTA: MERE STATISTIC OR A PLATFORM FOR ACTION?

There is no direct link between local government programming and the activism of women in community development. As indicated, it is Parliament that determines what local government should be, and that has been articulated in the Local Government Act. The community councils, where, between 2005 and 2010, women held 56% of positions and, after the 2011 local government elections, 47%, are mandated by the Local Government Act of 1997 to administer:

- natural resources and environmental protection;
- land / site allocation;
- minor roads (also bridle-paths);
- grazing control;
- water supply to villages (maintenance);
- markets (provision and regulation);
- burial grounds.

District councils (made up of representative community councils in the district), urban and municipal councils are mandated to take care of:

- all the functions of the community council;
- public health (eg, food inspection, refuse collection and disposal);
- physical planning, promotion of economic development (eg, attracting investment);
- streets and public places;
- parks and gardens;
- control of building permits;
- fire;
- education;
- recreation and culture;
- roads and traffic;
- water resources;
- fencing

The meaning of the women's quota in this situation, therefore, is that more women are needed to deal with these priorities. Because the Constitution stipulates that local government will perform such functions as shall be determined by

Parliament, it cannot perform functions that have not been prescribed. This is the first barrier against women using local government to change their situation for the better.

The priorities have been set for local government within a male dominated context and this important level of government does not reflect women's issues in relation to development and advancement. While the stipulated priorities are relevant to women as well, it is a male defined development agenda and therefore lacks gender sensitivity. Had women been given the opportunity to use their numbers to determine the work of local government surely those preoccupations of women in community development, such as vegetable production, home-based care for Aids patients, burials and similar concerns, would have featured prominently. Without proper institutional transformation, as is the case in Lesotho, a quota for women merely brings in more women to advance an otherwise male dominated development agenda, it does not give them the opportunity to advance their own agenda.

Women's representation was an issue during the local government elections of 2005 and 2011 but women's development was less of a priority for the councils between 2005 and 2010. One male councillor argued that all councillors were equally empowered and equipped to perform their general duties as members of the councils and that the role of women councillors was no different from that of men. He also lamented women councillors' lack of skills (interview Rapholo 2011).

The minimum educational qualification for council membership is literacy in Sesotho (Local Government Elections Act 1998). Given the porous verification measures, several councillors can read and write nothing except their names. One such example is given in the report of the local government by-election monitors, produced by Development for Peace Education (IEC 2008, pp 25-31). Though this may need to be confirmed by research, it appears that many of the illiterate councillors are men. Should this prove to be so it would not be justifiable to characterise women councillors as incapable simply because they are women.

Although women chaired 21.7% of the 25 councils studied by Selinyane and Setšabi there was, in terms of performance, no observable difference between councils chaired by women and those chaired by men (Selinyane & Setšabi 2008, p 12). This finding is corroborated by Matlaleng Hlalele, who argues that her role as chair empowered her and boosted her confidence in public affairs. On the other hand, she noted that some men believe that women councillors are not authoritative enough to hold positions of leadership.

She cites a situation when, on behalf of the council, she instructed a construction company to stop quarrying in the jurisdiction of her council because it did not have permission to do so. 'While they understood what I was

saying one could read and sense that they do not expect to be told to stop and follow instructions by a woman. Nevertheless, they did as advised,' she recalled (interview Hlalele 2011). Incidents like this could explain the submission that even though women make up more than half the total number of district and community councillors many report feeling unable to influence decisions by local government without the support of a man (Moran, Wolfson, Sello & Lerotholi 2009, p 76).

Although women have claimed a few key leadership positions this feeling of disempowerment is unlikely to change materially between now and the next local council elections, in 2016. This has nothing to do with women's abilities as leaders, it is attributable to the context within which they operate, namely the institutional arrangement. It would therefore be necessary to ensure that affirmative programming does not merely increase numbers but gives institutional support to women to bring about change.

The women's quota applied to the current institutional and structural arrangements of local governments prohibits women from using local government as a platform from which to advance progressive policies and laws. The vision of local government playing an important role in the response to HIV and Aids (Kimaryo, Okpaku, Githuku-Shongwe & Feeney 2004, p 33) is not accommodated in the legal framework of local government in Lesotho. Although the Guidelines for Scaling up the Fight against HIV / Aids (2005, pp 12-13) assign to the local government councils roles such as establishing community council Aids committees, consolidating HIV and Aids action plans, approving and allocating resources for HIV and Aids activities, appraising proposals from local NGOs, community based organisations and faith based organisations, these contradict the spirit of the Constitution, which limits the functions of local government to the prescriptions of the Local Government Act of 1997, which stipulates in schedules A and B what functions the councils will perform. The HIV and Aids activities undertaken by the councils fall short, therefore, of being legal.

In addition to the limitations imposed by its legal mandate local government in Lesotho faces other challenges, including the problems of the line ministries in decentralising some of their responsibilities. This has led to the situation where the work of some ministries which have officials in the communities, such as the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Marketing and Co-operatives, Ministry of Home Affairs, Public Safety and Parliamentary Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources, for example, is not coordinated by the community councils. The ministries of Public Works and of Health and Social Welfare have now completed the categorisation of activities within their mandates that will be decentralised and transferred to local government, a scheme that has been officially launched by the prime minister.

While this is commendable, the challenge is that by law, community councils may not exercise control over some of the so-called functions (Shale 2011).

Further, the level of autonomy of the councils is still constrained. The Ministry of Local Government still holds power and must approve decisions of councils to open bank accounts. The majority of councils do not have bank accounts because the ministry has not approved them, yet the law requires the councils to produce regular audited financial reports. These and other challenges show that unless a quota for women is implemented with necessary institutional transformation, women are only relevant as statistics.

The changes in the application of the reservation of seats for women retained the principle without necessarily preventing men from contesting the seats. This improvement is important, because it obviates unnecessary resistance and garners much-needed support for women's causes.

ENHANCING THE WOMEN'S QUOTA THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION

The Local Government Act of 1997 and the Local Government Elections Act of 1998, together with the amendments referred to above, remain institutional obstacles to the realisation of the true benefits of the women's quota they introduce and facilitate. Several calls have been made for the Local Government Act to be reviewed. The African Peer Review Mechanism Programme of Action 2009 stipulates, under Democracy and Political Governance Theme Objective II, that '[c]onstitutional democracy, including periodic political competition and opportunity for choice, the rule of law, a Bill of Rights and the Supremacy of the Constitution are firmly established in the Constitution' and that decentralisation and, in particular, the Local Government Act should be revised (APRM 2010, p 263). It is further indicated in the First Annual Progress Report (2010, p 23) that the review process of the Local Government Act is on course and the inter-ministerial working group has been established. Surely such a process will be a wasted opportunity if it remains exclusionist, elitist and dominated by the ministry. It will actually be defeating the purpose of the APRM Action Plan, which includes civil society, community based organisations, community councils, chiefs and other ministries and the Independent Electoral Commission.

The institutional transformation needed to make the women's quota in local government meaningful must meet certain requirements: it must be informed by the contemporary gender and governance discourse, it must be people driven and it must recognise and use civil society.

In order to make the women's quota meaningful to women's empowerment in local government in Lesotho restricted jurisdiction of the councils in the form

of schedules of what they may do should be abandoned, council activities must be aligned to national policies and council members must be allocated gender sensitive portfolios. Finally, it is these changes that should inform the law reform process.

In the new dispensation each member of the community / municipal / urban council should have a portfolio making her or him responsible for a specific sector / issue. These portfolios should be determined by the council in line with national priorities and should then be allocated to members during the early meetings of the council.

The one-third of seats reserved for women should be allocated to fixed portfolios, for example, gender, political and governance affairs, gender, economic and entrepreneurial affairs and gender, social and cultural affairs. If there are more reserved seats in a council the gender specific seats could be increased in line with challenges for women, for example, politics and governance could be split into legal and participation portfolios. This means that women contesting these seats should compete and be directly elected.

This will enhance the women's cause in many respects. It will bring women's issues into the election debate, provide women with the opportunity to have their suitability tested by the public and, finally, elect the best of the best. The mandates of these portfolios could be prescribed to ensure that in the activities of all the other portfolios issues of women's empowerment are mainstreamed in line with the Gender and Development Policy and other policies and laws which seek to change women's political, economic and social status. These portfolios should be linked systematically to the national government ministries relevant to their mandate for necessary support and policy coordination.

The need to commit adequate financial resources to capacitating local government (APRM 2010, p 67) should also mean full fiscal decentralisation. Allocating funds to councils would empower them to determine their own budgets within the available resources. While the estimates for different portfolios would be informed by the rich debate and exchanges led by the responsible portfolio holders, there should be a financial quota for the gender portfolios, with at least one-third of the total council budget allocated to them.

In order to ensure that the community council planning is participatory, the holder of each portfolio should consult with the people about budget planning. This means that the community council's annual plans and budgets should reflect community voices. All portfolio holders should submit their proposals for scrutiny by the holders of the gender portfolios in order to ensure that they promote alternative, gender sensitive development approaches. In this institutional arrangement local government servants will provide technical expertise to the portfolios relevant to their skills. Community members should

be encouraged to attend the sessions during which councils deliberate on their budgets.

The role of civil society organisations in relation to local government cannot be over emphasised. The Transformation Resource Centre, LCN, Development for Peace Education (DPE), Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Church, Women and Law in Southern Africa, Rural Self Help Development Association, Federation of Women Lawyers, Young Christian Students, Lesotho Youth Federation, Survivors of Lesotho Dams, Lesotho National Federation of the Disabled, Lesotho Network of People Living with HIV / Aids, Bosele, Khathang Tema and several others interact constantly with the community and district councils.

Coordinated by the DPE the first three, in collaboration with the Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, are running a Conflict Transformation Programme which promotes dialogue among local government stakeholders in the districts of Maseru, Berea, Mohale's Hoek and Quthing. Further, the DPE has, in recent years, used its popular Community Parliament strategy to amplify community voices in the national budgeting processes. The wealth of experience should be harnessed for the general development of local government and to change the position of women through the quota.

THE POLITICAL AND LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE STATUS QUO

The current situation in local government not only makes a mockery of the women's quota, it also compels the Ministry of Local Government and other public institutions to act *ultra vires* the Local Government Act. It is becoming increasingly strategic for community development oriented agencies to recognise local government structures in their efforts. The challenge is that this acceptance of the political call to empower the local processes is not supported by the legal framework.

The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship launched a massive countrywide HIV and Aids Gateway Approach, appealing to all those involved in working on HIV and Aids issues to take local councils on board. The political idea behind this approach was excellent, because councils are the competent development authority close to the people. After all, among the activities identified as women's domains in community development, this area is one of the most popular. In support of this approach, development agencies, notably the United Nations Fund for Population Activities and UNAIDS, the joint UN programme on HIV / Aids, supported the programme, known as the Essential Services Package. This was a compilation of key interventions in relation to HIV and Aids, among which councils would set their own priorities. In support of this, the National

Aids Commission has awarded funds in the amount of M30 000 to each of the 128 councils to implement their priorities.

The Local Government Act read together with the Constitution, as referred to above, limits the functions, mandate and jurisdiction of the councils, which differ at community and district/urban/municipal levels. The Act provides for the formation of sub-committees in the councils even beyond those that are mandatory. Almost all the councils have social welfare sub-committees which deal with issues that affect communities, but their functions extend beyond the mandate of the councils provided for in the law. The sub-committees should advance the mandate of the councils and nothing beyond, but this is not happening.

Institutional transformation has the potential to ensure that women and girls are protected against gender-based violence, including sexual violence (National HIV and Aids Policy 2006, p 23), not only within the legal framework, but also within the political environment that informs the campaign messages for the proposed gender portfolios.

If local government continues as it is it will be at the expense of principles of good governance. As indicated, the government has committed to a review of the Local Government Act. Not to do this and to continue to use local government for political convenience will point to a weakness of the political will not only to make local government a platform for women's empowerment but also to realise the objectives of initiatives like the APRM and the Millennium Development Goals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The women's quota will not bear fruit unless it is in place within an institutional framework that is informed by progressive political thinking. This article encourages further debate and engagement in search of the perfect match between ideas and the institutions that can nurture and uphold them. In essence, people have the potential to use political institutions to achieve their goals – a departure from the growing belief that in so-called democracies people may not even fantasise about a political alternative.

If political representation of women is advanced through a quota it is not for the sake of statistics but to place women strategically in decision-making positions so they can inform political decision making. If the quota does not present its beneficiaries with an opportunity to question the adequacy of the framework within which they operate it is bound to produce results contrary to the intentions behind its introduction. It is on this basis, therefore, that the current women's quota in local government in Lesotho is interrogated. What this article has done is to advance a particular point of view as a contribution to the realisation of the goals the women's quota seeks to achieve.

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THE RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

Putting Women (back) in the Centre of Attention

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ABSTRACT

A telephone survey of municipalities throughout South Africa undertaken in May 2010 by the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) produced a baseline of the status quo with regard to local government responses to gender equality and women's empowerment across six key municipal indicators: capacity, policy, strategies or plans, integrated development plans (IDPs), service delivery and budget implementation plans (SDBIPs) and performance management (PM). The article poses three key questions relating to the findings:

- *Against the backdrop of developmental local government, what is the mandate of local government as far as gender equality and women's empowerment are concerned?*
- *Taking into account the survey results, what does a rights-based approach to local government mean?*
- *If local government does not, at present, adequately address the gender equality concerns of women as a group, what do we need to do differently to see different results?*

¹ Carla Ackerman and Pauli Weideman (InstratConsult CC) undertook the survey on behalf of Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The author acknowledges Pauli Weideman's valued input and feedback in writing the paper.

INTRODUCTION

In May 2010 the South African Local Government Association (SALGA), in partnership with the Strengthening Local Governance Programme (SLGP) funded by Die Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) undertook a telephone survey to produce a baseline of the status quo with regard to local government responses to gender equality and women's empowerment.

The survey aimed to establish the situation in a sample of the country's 283 municipalities with regard to six key indicators of municipal responses: capacity, policy, strategies or plans, integrated development plans (IDPs), service delivery and budget implementation plans (SDBIPs) and performance management (PM). In total, 76 of the 88 municipalities sampled responded to the request for information – a response rate of 86%. Almost a third (27%) of the municipalities in the country were surveyed (76 of 283).

At the time, the upcoming local government elections provided a window of opportunity for addressing gender concerns in a number of ways. The lead up to the elections provided a platform for raising the level of debate and general awareness about the politics of gender equality and women's empowerment. Civil society development role players (and communities in general) could have used this period to stimulate debate and to ask critical questions in order to include such concerns in pre-election deliberations on the role of local government.

Ordinary South Africans were about to choose the people they wanted to lead their municipalities, raising questions about what they expected of them as far as these issues are concerned. It was an opportune time to confront local government candidates positively and probe them about the inclusion of women, who are still often excluded from local development and governance. Leaders who understand that development and improved service delivery must include gender concerns and who are willing to engage with such issues are much needed. It is only such leaders who can ensure that gender considerations are part and parcel of the development direction that local government will take following the elections. Leadership is crucial for engaging with these challenges within the alternative paradigm offered by a rights-based approach.

The time before the local government elections afforded the opportunity to ask critical questions about the support available to local government (for both councillors and officials) to help it deal effectively with gender considerations. Is the current support sufficient? Is it in the best possible format? Do we need to rethink and reposition the support that is provided? Do we not, perhaps, need alternative methodologies to address development challenges that remain part of our local government landscape?

Such questions need to be asked not only of government institutions such as SALGA and the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), who are tasked with building the capacity of local government, but also of development practitioners in the private sector, civil society and funding agencies. How can development practitioners from across this spectrum combine their efforts more efficiently to ensure sustainable, context-specific support to local government with regard to gender equality and women's empowerment?

How do we (as development practitioners from across the spectrum) ensure that we build the capacity of our local communities, as the citizens tasked with choosing their local representatives, to play their democratic role as rights holders effectively? How do we ensure that in future local government elections women, as part of 'the people', will have the ability to engage meaningfully with their potential leaders so as to ensure that equality concerns are taken to heart and integrated into mainstream municipal processes?

THE MANDATE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN TERMS OF GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

It is not my intention in this article to analyse developmental local government in any detail. Suffice to say that, at a minimum, developmental local government implies:

- engagement with the broad public (public participation);
- participatory processes;
- the involvement of organised groups (stakeholder consultation);
- finding sustainable solutions to communities' needs;
- improvement of the quality of life as an end result;
- a human-rights-centred outlook;
- the empowerment of communities;
- a specific focus on the inclusion in society of people who are vulnerable, marginalised and usually socially excluded;
- building local democracy as 'government closest to the people'.

Ministry of Provincial Affairs and Constitutional Development 1998

A number of characteristics of developmental local government are linked directly to the need to mainstream the concerns of women into the core development and service delivery mandate of local government, namely: maximising the impact of municipal powers and functions on social development and economic growth, democratising development, building social capital by providing community

leadership and vision, and seeking to empower marginalised and excluded groups.

Similarly, the main methodologies for municipalities to become more developmental are the same as those that local government should use to address women's concerns, that is, integrated development planning and budgeting, performance management (as stipulated in the 2000 Local Government: Municipal Systems Act) and working together with local communities and other development partners (*inter alia* via ward committees, as stipulated in the 1998 Local Government: Municipal Structures Act).

Finally, the outcomes of developmental local government are similar to the broad-based outcomes expected as a result of the inclusion of gender equality and women's empowerment in mainstream municipal practice and processes, that is, the provision of household infrastructure and services, the creation of liveable, integrated cities, towns and rural areas, local economic development and community empowerment and redistribution.

Keeping developmental local government in mind, what, then, is the mandate of local government with reference to gender equality, and women as a specific group? It must be remembered that the mandate of local government is directly linked to various national, regional and international prescripts. Whatever the specific mandate of any local municipality, as described in a policy, strategy or plan, that mandate is directed by the overarching national, regional and international resolutions. Since there is a multitude of such conventions, only the most important ones that direct local government's mandate will be singled out.²

Nationally, as an overreaching guideline for the mandate of municipalities to address, *inter alia*, the needs of women as a group, *Batho Pele* outlines eight principles to serve as a policy and legislative framework for service delivery in all spheres of the public service: regularly consult with customers, set service standards, increase access to services, ensure higher levels of courtesy, provide more and better information about services, increase openness and transparency about services, remedy failures and mistakes and give the best possible value for money (Department of Public Service and Administration 1997).

The specific national mandate for gender equality and women's empowerment takes the form of *South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality* (2000), which specifically addresses gender mainstreaming. *A Strategic Framework for Gender Equality within the Public Service (2006-2015)* is aimed at achieving women's empowerment and gender equality

2 With acknowledgment to the final draft of the Department of Cooperative Governance. 2008. *Guidebook for Mainstreaming Equity Considerations in Local Government*.

in the public sector as workplace and ensuring a better quality of life for all women through improved and accelerated service delivery by the entire public service.

At a regional level, the New Partnership For Africa's Development (Nepad), adopted by the African Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in 2001 (including the South African government as one of the founders) and ratified by the African Union (AU), which replaced the OAU in 2002, gives a wide-ranging mandate that is arguably also applicable to local government.

One of the primary objectives of Nepad is to eradicate poverty and to accelerate the empowerment of women, and among its priority sectors are governance and capacity and gender development. To achieve these objectives, African leaders – including local government political leaders, in the form of councillors – should, among other things, take joint responsibility for promoting the role of women in social and economic development by reinforcing their capacity in the domains of education and training. They should also ensure women's participation in the political and economic life of African countries (article 49). A long-term objective is the promotion of the role of women in all activities (article 67) and, as a specific poverty reduction objective, give attention to reducing poverty among women (article 115)(OAU 2001).

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also referred to as the Maputo Protocol (2003), signed and ratified by the South African government in 2004, mandates signatories to address women's economic and social welfare rights (article 13), their right to sustainable development (article 19) and the special protection of women with disabilities (article 23) (AU 2003). In addition, the African Union Heads of States Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (2004), to which South Africa, as a member of the AU, must adhere, mandates signatories to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and accelerate the implementation of gender specific economic, social, and legal measures aimed at combating the HIV/Aids pandemic.

Local government's mandate specifically to address the development of young women is regionally reinforced by South Africa's commitment to the African Youth Charter (2006), which commits African governments to ensuring that issues affecting girls and young women as a specific vulnerable category of young people are addressed (AU 2006).

Several international instruments affect local government's obligation to address women's concerns. These include South Africa's commitment to achieving the United Nations's Millennium Development Goals (2000), eight benchmarks for tackling extreme poverty, including full and productive employment and

decent work for all, including women. (Goal 1: Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger and Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women (UN 2000).

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), to which the South Africa government committed itself, remains a valid international mandate as an agenda for women's empowerment that addresses, inter alia, women and poverty and the human rights of women (UN 1995). Similarly, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW 1979), which South Africa signed in 1993 and ratified in 1995, is an international bill of rights for women that is also binding on the South African government. Among the areas it addresses are economic and social benefits for women (article 13) and, specifically, the concerns of rural women (article 14) (UN 1979).

The specific concerns of girls and young women are addressed via two other primary international frameworks to which South Africa must adhere: the World Programme of Action for Youth (2000 and beyond) (UN 1996) and the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007-2015) (Commonwealth Youth Programme 2006).

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), which South Africa signed and ratified in 2007, addresses specific aspects related to women with disabilities (UN 2006).

The Political Declaration on HIV/Aids (UN 2006), a follow-up to the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/Aids (2001), succeeded the review, in 2006, of the progress achieved in realising the targets set out in the 2001 commitment, which South Africa signed and ratified in 2001. Specific attention is paid to women by addressing such aspects as women, poverty and development in relation to HIV and Aids, empowering women as an essential part of reducing vulnerability, and alleviating the social and economic impact of HIV and Aids by investing in social development and monitoring (UN 2001).

Taking into account the above and looking at the summary provided in Appendix 1 (a comparison between the ideals of developmental local government and the local government mandate to deal with gender equality and women's empowerment) it is evident that (a) local government has an irrefutable mandate to deal with such concerns and (b) there is a strong link between the ideals of developmental local government (the ideals adopted by South Africa as a developmental state) and local government's obligations to women.

SURVEY RESULTS: MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS?

The question now becomes: can we see in the survey results evidence of municipalities fulfilling their mandate towards women, as would be expected, with developmental local government?

The first section of the survey assessed the capacity of municipalities to deal with gender considerations. Local government mostly uses so-called special programme officers (SPOs) who deal with gender equality (among other things). At the time of the survey positions were filled in 61 of 76 municipalities (80%) (SALGA 2010, p 32). SPOs, at least on paper, are responsible for gender equality, youth development and disability. In reality though, it seems that they tend to concentrate on HIV and Aids, with gender equality and youth development in second place, and disability bringing up the rear.

The low post levels of SPOs – mostly level 3 – place a question mark behind the seriousness with which municipalities regard these concerns. Awareness raising, advocacy and lobbying, policy and strategy development are key to dealing with gender equality. How do you establish credibility? How do you influence senior management and political leadership? How do you ‘sell’ the importance of these concerns and how do you make an impact on decision making, planning, policy, and so on when you are on level 3? The short answer is: you cannot do so. The reason why HIV and Aids is dealt with better than gender concerns (as is evident in the survey results) is because of the national importance accorded to it. It says as much about how gender equality is absent as a national development priority as it does about its absence as a local government development priority. It also clearly illustrates the lack of understanding of the integrated nature of concerns as development priorities.

The second section of the survey dealt with gender equality in terms of external policies (focused on service delivery) and internal policies (focused on municipal officials). Only 19 of 76 municipalities (25%) had gender equality policies focused on external service delivery (SALGA 2010, p 37). It is clear that most local government service delivery takes place in the absence of policies that specifically address gender equality and/or women’s empowerment. It is, therefore, possible to conclude that local government does not make a link between service delivery and women’s concerns. At the time, most municipalities that *did not* have gender equality policies that were externally focused on service delivery were in the process of developing such policies.

In view of the lack of service delivery reflecting the concerns of women it comes as no surprise that only 25% (19 of 76 municipalities or 1 in 4 municipalities) had internal gender equality policies focused on the gender related concerns of employees (SALGA 2010, p 44). One can conclude that most municipalities do not understand the importance of employee-wellness concerns, especially gender equality, nor do they seem to understand the link between gender and women’s empowerment as *equality concerns* and *employment equity* regulations that have to be adhered to. The lack of both external and internal policies exposes the link between the lack of integrated, inclusive service delivery and the lack of internal

organisational transformation. Where there is substantial internal organisational transformation, that is, women are visible as municipal officials, this inevitably spills over into questions being raised about the external service delivery to the same groups of people as the end users, the clients local government is mandated to serve.

As with externally focused policies, most municipalities that *did not* have internally focused gender equality policies were in the process of developing such policies.

The third survey area analysed the extent to which municipalities had strategies or plans in place to deal with gender equality and women's empowerment considerations. Most municipalities (63 of 76, or 83%) *did not* have gender equality strategies or plans (SALGA 2010, p 56). These results reinforce the abovementioned findings regarding the external and internal policies. What is clear is that the absence of policies results in an absence of strategies or plans to deal with gender equality and women's empowerment. If there is no clear guiding policy how can these concerns be addressed via strategies or plans? Either they are not addressed at all or are tackled by means of unstrategic efforts such as so-called 'special projects', or a quick-fix programme as part of celebrations on commemorative days. Local government cannot deal with these concerns in a sustainable, integrated, mainstreamed, development-focused manner in the absence of either strategies or plans flowing from policies.

This raises the question why, despite a plethora of national policies, plans and guiding strategies (as well as various binding international and regional instruments), local government does not address gender equality and women's empowerment as an integral part of its development priorities? How is it possible that local government cannot see the necessity to deal with these concerns as an integral part of service delivery? I will continue to grapple with this problem when I address the question of what a rights-based approach means for local government service delivery.

As was the case with policies, most municipalities that *did not* have gender equality and women's empowerment strategies or plans were in the process of developing them. Survey sections 4 and 5 produced anomalies when they were compared with the preceding three. Survey area 4 analysed how municipalities dealt with gender considerations and women's empowerment as objectives in their IDPs and/or in sector plans, strategies and projects. Overall, these considerations were well taken into account in 46 of 76 municipalities (61%) (SALGA 2010, p 63).

Survey area 5 analysed how municipalities dealt with gender concerns in their SDBIPs. The results show that they dealt more effectively with these considerations in their IDPs than in their SDBIPs: 50 of 76 municipal SDBIPs (66%)

included gender equality and women's empowerment considerations (SALGA 2010, p 65).

Although the results are positive, the discrepancies are obvious: how can gender concerns be included in IDPs and SDBIPs without corresponding policies, strategies or plans? Nor is there a policy that addresses external service delivery from the point of view of women? This raises the possibility that municipalities deal with gender equality because they are pressurised to do so for public participation and stakeholder consultation reasons. In other words, they include such groups in order to adhere to the minimum expectations of public participation guidelines, to 'go through the motions', so to speak, but do not attempt to address service delivery to women in a focused manner.

In survey area 6, the ways in which municipalities dealt with gender concerns in their performance management systems (PMSs) by means of objectives with indicators and targets in organisational and departmental scorecards were analysed. More than half the municipalities (40 of 76, or 53%) *did not* include gender equality in their scorecards (SALGA 2010, p 69).

In comparison to the results for IDPs and SDBIPs, the results for PMSs indicate that, more often than not, municipalities do not measure their progress vis-à-vis gender equality and women's empowerment via their PMSs. How, then, do they track progress in these spheres?

It can be concluded that municipalities do not understand the integral nature of gender equality and women's empowerment to their local government service delivery and development mandate. The results show that, by and large, they deal with these considerations in isolation from one another. This lack of understanding is further demonstrated by the fact that gender considerations largely tend to be addressed on an *ad hoc* basis, as once-off events determined by commemorative days such as Women's Day, or as so-called 'special programmes' (that are events driven), separate from the main thrust of municipal practice. In order for local government to address gender equality and women's empowerment seriously they have to be included in coherent, sustainable mainstream municipal programmes and interventions. They must be an integral part of mainstream local government processes and practices such as the IDP and SDBIP, policy and strategy development, as well as ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

There seems to be a common lack of understanding of the logical, interconnected flow among the different aspects that were surveyed (that is, capacity, policy, strategy or plan, IDP, SDBIP and PMS) and their impact on the implementation of gender equality and women's empowerment. The results show clearly that, in the main, municipalities deal better with the concerns as part of their IDPs and SDBIPs than in their policies and strategies or plans. The question is, what, then, drives their inclusion in IDPs and SDBIPs if they are not clearly visible

in policies and strategies or plans? The lack of consistency among municipalities in addressing them in terms of IDPs and SDBIPs and their reflection in PMSs, is also noticeable. It suggests that, quite possibly, municipalities deal with these considerations rather randomly, without paying careful enough attention to the cycle of policy that leads to strategies or plans, which finds implementation via the IDP and SDBIP, and which is then measured (by monitoring and evaluation) through PMSs.

The results point to the need to build a strong monitoring and evaluation process into municipal functioning, capable of tracking the progress made with gender equality and women's empowerment throughout all municipal processes. Indicators should be developed to track IDP implementation and the addressing of the concerns as part of the IDP and other municipal processes, which could feed into national IDP assessments. Overall, accountability should be more strictly enforced and linked directly to PMSs.

THE MEANING OF A RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The results of the survey indicate disjointed efforts across the survey areas that, in turn, point to fragmented municipal processes. What is the alternative?

It is proposed that the biggest challenge faced by local government (indeed, by government overall) is to adjust the way it views *people* in relation to *development* and *service delivery*. The political euphoria of 1994 was characterised by a profound person- or people-centred approach to the development challenges of our country. The Constitution and the national legislation and policies that followed were characterised by an unapologetic emphasis on people – *ordinary people, the broad public* – as the rightful beneficiaries of, and participants in, the new political dispensation. We truly believed that 'the people shall govern'.

We therefore, through our freely elected representatives, adopt this Constitution as the supreme law of the Republic so as to –

Heal the divisions of the past and *establish a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights*; lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law; *improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person*; and build a united and democratic South Africa able to take its rightful place as a sovereign state in the family of nations.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996, p 1

[author's emphasis]

But somewhere along the line this unwavering commitment to the development of 'the people' – including the vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded in our society – became diluted and directionless. The broad community of development practitioners, inside and outside of government, needs to help restore that sense of direction and purpose. We need to reclaim the earlier commitments made by our predecessors, who formulated the original pledge to restore the human dignity of all the people of our land.

It is suggested that the rights-based approach could provide the new impetus that is required to redirect local government's development and service delivery efforts to include the concerns of women as one of the vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups.

A rights-based approach understands poverty and under development as the result of, among other factors, *disempowerment* and *social exclusion*. *Social exclusion* refers to wider deprivation than just inadequate material resources such as employment and income. It includes aspects of deprivation which prevent particular groups of people (such as women) from participating in social activities or using public and private services. It examines and confronts the actors and processes (such as local government) that perpetuate exclusion, inequality and exploitative power relations. However, *social inclusion* extends beyond the provision of material resources through service delivery, to building the capacity of groups to become more active citizens and to exercise their human agency as rights holders (Theis 2003).

The main purpose of a rights-based approach is to address the human rights concerns of women by focusing on disparity, discrimination, inequality, poverty, unjust, exploitative power relations and exclusion from participation.

A rights-based approach promotes three main principles in the achievement of its purpose:

- The accountability of duty bearers (that is, at local government level, councillors and municipal officials).
- The participation and empowerment of rights holders (that is, the broad community).
- Equity, equality and non-discrimination.

The relationship between duty bearers and rights holders can be illustrated as follows in Figure 1 (United Nations Population Fund).

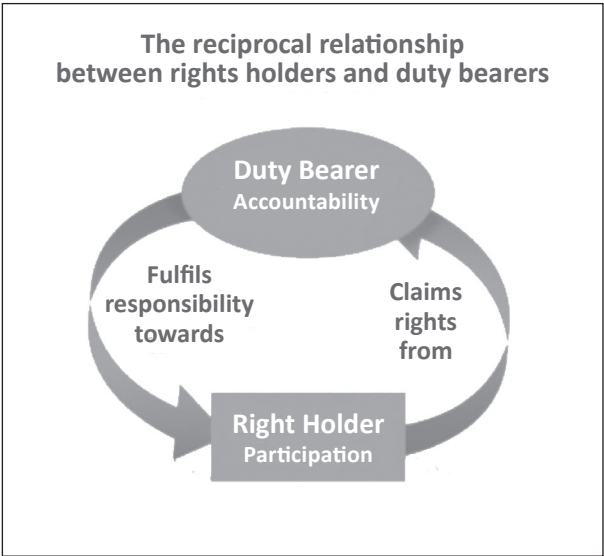
Councillors (as political duty bearers) and municipal officials (as administrative duty bearers) are accountable to the broad public, in general, as rights holders. They have very specific constitutional and legal responsibilities (as outlined in various pieces of local government legislation) to fulfil towards the

public as the rights holders. They are accountable for giving effect to the constitutional ideals of establishing a society based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights, building a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people, improving the quality of life of all citizens and freeing the potential of each person.

What does this mean? It means, among other things, that local government has the responsibility to ensure that the *entire* community that it serves, including women: is able to participate, influence decision making, make an impact on development priorities and direction and have access to opportunities and resources.

The way in which the public, as rights holders, claims its rights from the municipality, as duty bearer, is determined by the extent to which it has been empowered by the municipality to do so appropriately. In other words, the municipality has a responsibility as duty bearer to empower the members of the public to claim their rights as responsible citizens so that they do not clash with the development and service delivery mandate of the municipality. The public must be empowered to claim its rights in a manner equally responsible to that of the municipality, as duty bearer.

Figure 1
Duty bearers vs rights holders



The rights-based approach places people at the centre of development and service delivery in a people- or person-centred approach that requires:³

- the *focus of attention* of local government to include the socially constructed relations between groups of people, as well as the subordinate, disempowered position of women in society;
- a recognition that part of the *core problem* is the unequal power relationships between people, for example, women and men;
- a *goal* that must include equitable and sustainable development, as well as equal participation and decision making by *all* people;
- that the *development solution* includes empowerment and social change that can lead to equality, inclusion, non-discrimination, equal participation and equal decision making;
- that the *main strategies* must include rethinking development and service delivery from a rights-based approach, addressing the interests of women as part of the mainstream of service delivery, and using mainstreaming as an implementation strategy to give effect to a rights-based approach.

Working with a rights-based approach necessarily requires certain organisational adjustments. This is a complex change process that needs to be facilitated in order to ensure that a municipality can successfully make the transition from business as usual to a rights-based approach. The successful introduction of a rights-based approach means actively facilitating organisational change. Change is a process, and real change has only occurred when it becomes visible in the way people act. In other words, change is demonstrated in behaviour and, in the case of a municipality, it should be visible in core processes such as the IDP, SDBIP and PMS.

It is very difficult to impose change that is at odds with organisational culture, and leadership is critical to effective organisational change because it dictates the climate and culture. The most useful leadership tool for effecting change is to create a constructive or facilitative organisational climate or culture. In order to deliver effectively on a rights-based approach through the practical systems, structures and processes at local government level, the change that takes place will need to encompass all the above levels for actual behavioural shift to occur and for a genuine partnership to grow between communities and their municipality.

3 Adapted from the gender and development approach (United Nations Development Programme 2001, p 79).

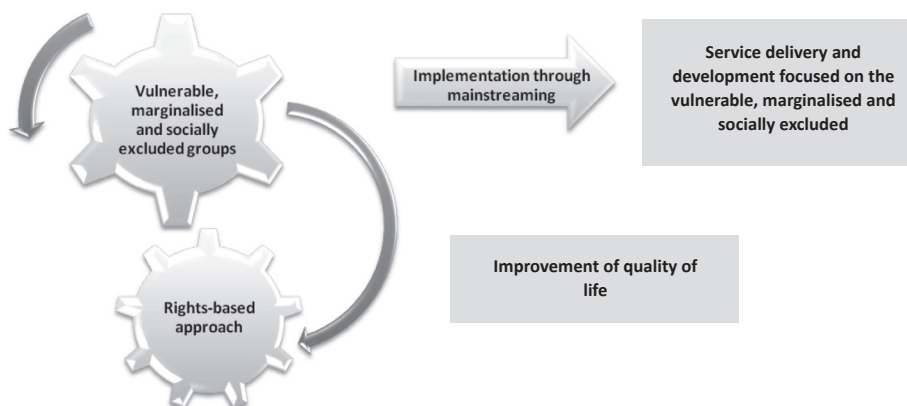
If we look at the survey results through a rights-based lens, what do we see? It is suggested that the results would have looked different had municipalities (a) made a direct link among women, gender equality, poverty and under development and (b) understood the situation in terms of disempowerment and social exclusion. To what extent, for example, do municipalities unwittingly make it difficult for women to participate in public participation processes? Or to what extent are there municipal practices or processes that perpetuate exclusion, inequality and exploitative power relations?

On the positive side, do municipalities really do enough to build the capacity of women to become more active citizens and to exercise their human agency as rights holders? If municipalities were to engage with their IDPs and SDBIPs from a rights-based perspective, the concerns of women would be reflected in such processes (and not be largely absent, as is currently the case). It would also be evident that such processes specifically take cognisance of and try to address disparity, discrimination, inequality, poverty, unjust and exploitative power relations and exclusion from participation.

HOW TO ACHIEVE IMPROVED RESULTS FOR WOMEN

An alternative approach is needed to give effect to the ideals of developmental local government. We need to establish a clear link and interaction among a rights-based approach, mainstreaming as an implementation strategy, service delivery focused on vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups (that include women) and local development as outputs, with the improvement of quality of life as process outcomes, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2
An alternative approach to give effect to developmental local government



A better understanding of local government

Part of addressing the problem is the need to have a more in-depth understanding of the state of local government, through further qualitative inquiry. The nature of the study, which was a rapid telephonic survey, did not allow for in-depth probing. Consequently, many of the findings could be better understood if a process of further face-to-face dialogue were to take place. In order to change behaviour (improve the way in which municipalities work with the various equality concerns) the current neglect of the concerns must be understood within the specific context of municipal structures, systems and processes.

Developing a rights-based approach for local government

The development and implementation of a rights-based approach for local government can result in equality concerns being dealt with as part and parcel of municipal structures, systems and processes. This could lead to greater inclusion of, especially, women in mainstream service delivery and development priorities.

A rights-based approach (using mainstreaming as an implementation strategy) could address a number of key aspects to ensure greater commitment from municipalities to deal with the various concerns. It could combine the necessity for strengthening various equality considerations with municipalities' constitutional responsibility for service delivery and local development. In addition, it could create an understanding of the interrelatedness of the various concerns and break down their compartmentalisation. It could also create an understanding of the use of municipal structures, systems and processes, with reference to working with the equality concerns in an integrated and mainstreamed rather than ad hoc manner.

Furthermore, a rights-based approach could acknowledge the critical role of organisational leadership (both political and administrative). It could not only provide such leadership with the wherewithal to understand why strengthening the various equality concerns is important in terms of enhanced service delivery and development, but also show it how to direct the inclusion of the concerns into mainstream municipal structures, systems and processes.

Adopting mainstreaming as an implementation strategy⁴

Mainstreaming – as an implementation strategy for a rights-based approach to ensure the full inclusion of all equality concerns throughout *all* municipal

⁴ With acknowledgement to the final draft of the Department of Cooperative Governance. 2008. *Guidebook for mainstreaming equity considerations in local government*.

processes, systems and structures, at *all* levels – should be further developed for the local government sphere. This includes assessing critically the current structures responsible for the various concerns. Mainstreaming should be the responsibility of each and every municipal official and councillor and not only of an individual located at a so-called ‘desk’ or ‘focal point’.

Mainstreaming is not an ‘add on’ to existing municipal work, it is a different way of working, to ensure that local government delivers services more efficiently. Mainstreaming the various equality concerns into the day-to-day operations of local government is like looking at the world through a special pair of glasses and seeing it from the point of view of the various groups concerned. The key question for all municipal councillors and officials is: ‘if I look at the world through this special pair of glasses, what do I see? What does the service delivery and development of my municipality look like for women?’ Efforts to improve the situation of women through separate initiatives and special projects mean that these interests are often not reflected in the overall objectives and activities of municipalities. The result is that women, as a group, continue to be bypassed in the allocation of most development resources, and opportunities and initiatives have little, if any, impact on the structure of inequalities among different groups of people. Adopting mainstreaming as a strategy directs attention to ensuring that the core activities of municipalities are structured to provide an equitable distribution of opportunities and benefits to women.

The focus on women by way of separate initiatives and special projects often includes activities as an end in themselves (for instance, the activities associated with commemorative days) and is not related either to the broader municipal service delivery context or to development priorities. Implementing a mainstreaming strategy as a way to give effect to a rights-based approach will result in a shift in focus to equality as an objective. That means taking a closer look at specific development initiatives aimed at women to assess whether they contribute to equality and non-discrimination. An important aspect that needs more attention, in light of the recognition of equality as a strategic objective of developmental local government, is the identification of opportunities to reduce inequalities and support progress toward more equal relations. A mainstreaming strategy will facilitate this and will enable local government to move beyond responding to dividing differences, instead focusing on the unique development requirements of women.

Piloting a rights-based approach

A concrete way to explore a rights-based approach and mainstreaming as an implementation strategy at local government level is to pilot the approach in

selected municipalities. Such a pilot intervention should ideally bring together at least the following key aspects:

- Capacity building and training – by providing the hand-on skills to work with a rights-based approach and mainstreaming as an implementation strategy.
- Follow-up with implementation and intensive coaching – by providing hands-on support with practical implementation.
- A specific focus on organisational leadership (political and administrative) – by providing hands-on support to leaders to direct and monitor implementation.

Focus on leadership

Changing the entry point into local government for the various equality concerns by focusing on the role of leaders should increase the importance accorded to women's concerns. Instead of focusing primarily on low-level officials tasked with working with the various concerns (as is the current practice) rather ensure the buy-in and commitment of political and administrative leaders by focusing on creating an understanding among them of why dealing with the equality concerns of women is important, and highlighting the connection among the various considerations, local government service delivery and development.

The buy-in and commitment of leaders to an alternative approach could further be enhanced by building the skills of political and administrative leaders on three fronts, namely:

- to direct the mainstreaming of the equality concerns into the normal, day-to-day local government service delivery and development priorities;
- to monitor and evaluate compliance with giving effect to the various considerations in service delivery;
- to measure the impact on communities.

Address monitoring, evaluation and accountability

Specifically addressing monitoring, evaluation and accountability for the equality concerns throughout all performance management systems will go a long way to ensuring vastly improved results for women. The survey results point to the need to build a strong monitoring and evaluation process into municipal functioning that is capable of tracking progress made with the various equality considerations

throughout all municipal processes. Indicators should be developed to track implementation as part of all processes. Overall, accountability for the concerns should be more strictly enforced and directly linked back to PMSs, and should also be addressed in performance contracts as part of the key performance areas of senior officials.

CONCLUSION

There can be no doubt that the intention of developmental local government is to include women. Similarly, local government has a clear mandate to address such concerns as part of its development priorities and service delivery. As summarised in Appendix 1, the correlation between the ideals of developmental local government and local government's mandate to address gender equality and women's empowerment is irrefutable.

However, the survey results show limited evidence of local government's commitment to these concerns and highlight huge difficulties with their incorporation into mainstream service delivery. A rights-based approach to local government (as summarised in Appendix 2) could provide a much-needed alternative way of dealing with gender concerns, to ensure that they are mainstreamed into the day-to-day practices and processes of local government.

Lastly, a number of practical interventions are available that could bring about visible medium- to long-term change and the upcoming local government elections provide an immediate opportunity to engage critically with the current situation as reflected in the survey results.

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Appendix 1

A comparison between the ideals of developmental local government and the local government mandate to deal with gender equality and women's empowerment

Ideals of developmental local government	Local government mandate re women	Source of mandate
Public participation/ participatory processes	• Women's participation	• Nepad (regional mandate)
Sustainable solutions/ development	• Women's rights to sustainable development	• Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (regional mandate)
Improvement of quality of life	• Better quality of life for all women	• A Strategic Framework for Gender Equality Within the Public Service (2006-2015) (national mandate)
Human rights centred and equality focused	• Gender equality	• South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (national mandate)
		• A Strategic Framework for Gender Equality Within the Public Service (2006-2015) (national mandate)
		• African Union Heads of States Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (regional mandate)
	• Women's economic and social rights	• Millennium Development Goals (international mandate)
	• Human rights of women	• Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (regional mandate)
		• Beijing Platform for Action (international mandate)
		• Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (international mandate)
		• Integrated national disability strategy white paper (national mandate)

Ideals of developmental local government	Local government mandate re women	Source of mandate
Community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability / equality agenda for women with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (regional mandate) • Convention on the rights of Persons With Disabilities (international mandate)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young women and men 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commonwealth Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (2007–2015) (international mandate)
Community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (national mandate) • A Strategic Framework for Gender Equality Within the Public Service (2006-2015) (national mandate) • Nepad (regional mandate) • African Union Heads of States Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (regional mandate) • Millennium Development Goals (international mandate) • Beijing Platform for Action (international mandate) • Political Declaration on HIV / AIDS (2006), a follow-up to the declaration of commitment on HIV / AIDS (2001) (international mandate)
Inclusion of vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV and Aids (gender specific) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political Declaration on HIV / AIDS (2006) a follow-up to the declaration of commitment on HIV / AIDS (2001) (international mandate)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Girls and young women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African Union Heads of States Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (regional mandate) • African youth charter (regional mandate) • World Programme of Action for Youth (2000 and beyond) (international mandate)

Ideals of developmental local government	Local government mandate re women	Source of mandate
Building local democracy / democratising development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governance, capacity development / gender development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepad (regional mandate)
Social development and economic growth (including infrastructure and service delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 Batho Pele principles • Improved service delivery (for women) • Eradication of poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Batho Pele (national mandate) • A Strategic Framework for Gender Equality Within the Public Service (2006-2015) (national mandate) • Nepad (regional mandate) • African Youth Charter (regional mandate) • Millennium Development Goals (international mandate) • World Programme of Action for Youth (2000 and beyond) (international mandate) • Beijing Platform for Action (international mandate) • HIV / AIDS (2006) a follow-up to the declaration of commitment on HIV / AIDS (2001) (international mandate) • Nepad (regional mandate) • Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (international mandate) • African Youth Charter (regional mandate) • South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (national mandate)
Integration / mainstreaming (implied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainstreaming (as specific implementation strategy) 	

Appendix 2

A comparison between the ideals of developmental local government and the local government mandate to deal with gender equality and women's empowerment and a rights-based approach to local government as an alternative methodology

Ideals of developmental local government	Local government mandate re vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups (from Appendix 1)	A rights-based approach to local government
Public participation / participatory processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • inclusion in participation • equal participation • empowerment of rights holders • equal decision making
Sustainable solutions / development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable development / livelihoods 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disempowerment and social exclusion • development priorities and direction • opportunities and resources • socially constructed unequal power relations • equitable sustainable development
Improvement of quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better quality of life for all 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • equal participation • empowerment of rights holders • equal decision making • opportunities and resources • equitable sustainable development • people- or person-centered • part of mainstream service delivery and development efforts
Human rights-centered and equality focused	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality • Economic and social rights • Human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disparity • discrimination – non-discrimination • inequality – equality • equity • unjust, exploitative power relations
Community empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowerment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unjust, exploitative power relations • subordinate, disempowered positions • organisational change (complex change process)
Inclusion of vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women's empowerment and gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • people at centre of development • people- or person-centered approach

Ideals of developmental local government	Local government mandate re vulnerable, marginalised and socially excluded groups (from Appendix 1)	A rights-based approach to local government
Building local democracy / democratising development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governance• Capacity development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• accountability of duty bearers• participation and empowerment of rights holders• organisational change (complex change process)
Social development and economic growth (including infrastructure and service delivery)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved and accelerated service delivery• Eradication of poverty• Social and economic development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• disempowerment and social exclusion• poverty• rights-based development and service delivery
Integration / mainstreaming (implied)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainstreaming (as a specific implementation strategy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• women part of mainstream service delivery and development• mainstreaming as implementation strategy• organisational change (complex change process)

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