LSE Research Online

Article (refereed)

[Jo Beall](#)

Decentralizing government and decentering gender: lessons from local government reform in South Africa

Decentralizing Government and De-centering Gender: Lessons from Local Government Reform in South Africa

Jo Beall

Biographical Sketch

Jo Beall (J.Beall@lse.ac.uk) is Director of the Development Studies Institute (DESTIN) at the London School of Economics. Her academic interests include local governance and urban and social development as well as women and gender in development. She has conducted research in South Asia (India and Pakistan) and in East and Southern Africa (Uganda, South Africa and Zambia). Her current research within the Crisis States Research Centre at DESTIN involves a study of local governance in situations of conflict and 'post'-conflict in South Africa and Northeast India, with a particular focus on the role of traditional authorities. She is co-author with Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell of *Uniting a Divided City, Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (2002) and author of *Funding Local Governance, Small Grants for Development and Democracy* (forthcoming 2005).

Keywords:

decentralisation, local governance, traditional authorities, gender, South Africa

Abstract

Localization and decentralization are frequently presented as good for women. However, the reality is not so clear-cut. Local government is the tier that is closest to people but relationships, structures and processes of local governance can both limit

the space for women's participation and the policy potential for addressing gender issues. The experience of democratic reform in South Africa is invariably held up as an example of good practice in advancing gender equity in governance. Critically drawing on this experience, the article points up some of the paradoxes for women and gender equity of decentralisation strategies and governance at the local level.

Decentralising Government and De-centering Gender: Lessons from Local Government Reform in South Africa

Introduction

Localisation and decentralisation are often presented as good for women, particularly when they are linked to democratisation. However, local government can often prove to be an ambiguous arena for state society relations. It is that part of the state closest to people and as such has the *potential* to engage more effectively with women and to address their interests. Nevertheless, however circumscribed, competing interests remain clustered around power and resources at local government level in ways that exclude women. Informal systems and relationships cut across local governance, limiting the space for women's participation and for taking up issues important to them. When the impulse for decentralisation is efficiency rather than equity, gender interests are less likely to be addressed. These conclusions are drawn from a study of local government reform and decentralisation in South Africa following the first national non-racial democratic elections in 1994.

Since South Africa's transition to a liberal democracy, government efforts to advance gender equity have been held up as a beacon of good practice across the world. However, experience of democratic reform has demonstrated that local government poses particular challenges for advancing gender equity in policy and increasing women's representation in politics. It was at local level that women in civil society organised most vigorously and effectively during certain moments of opportunity during the anti-apartheid struggle. However, this has been difficult to sustain in the

post-apartheid era and the article seeks to explain why. Two sets of issues are particularly highlighted. The first relates to the entrenchment of local relationships and power structures, particularly traditional authorities and their role in the conduct of local governance. The second relates to the nature of decentralisation in South Africa and the fact that policies addressing women's gender interests, developed in the early 1990s on the assumption of a strongly egalitarian and interventionist state, are at odds with the neo-liberal framework that has characterised decentralisation policy in South Africa since the late 1990s. Both sets of issues are closely related to a development agenda that is being pursued largely at the expense of an engendered local democracy. Given the careful attention paid to women's representation in terms of national structures and policy, this article considers why the egalitarian and participatory model adopted at national level has not taken root in local governance. On the contrary, local government seems to be more responsive to the interests of conservative groups. Second, it is characterised by the model of a contracting state that is more likely to pursue partnership with private firms and developers than with citizens, and this at the expense of a thoroughly democratic form of decentralisation.

Problems of engendering local governance lie not only with the state. Women's participation and representation in organisations within society is by no means guaranteed. While women in community and local level organisations mobilised vigorously and effectively at certain opportune moments during the anti-apartheid struggle, this has been difficult to sustain in the post-apartheid era. This is despite the fact that women are galvanised by the delivery of local services important to them and other issues falling within the remit of local government. Here problems of joining up and scaling up diverse activities at community level pertain, as does the tendency of

broad-scale social movements to capitalise on women's organisation without addressing their gender interests. Critically drawing on the South African experience, the analysis points to some of the paradoxes for women of decentralisation policies and how contrary to conventional thinking, women face greater obstacles to political engagement at the local than the national level.

Decentralisation and Engendering Democracy

From the mid-1980s countries throughout the world began experimenting with some form of decentralisation, early examples in sub-Saharan Africa being Ghana, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia.[1] By the mid-1990s, 80 per cent of countries, all with very different political dispensations, were engaged in some form of decentralisation[2] Whether understood in an administrative sense,[3] as a policy framework 'in which public goods and services are provided primarily through the revealed preferences of individuals by market mechanisms'[4] or in relation to an explicit democratising function[5] decentralisation has become one of the core components of political conditionality in international development cooperation.[6] While the decentralisation agenda has been heavily donor-driven, disenchantment with bloated central bureaucracies and kleptocratic national states has not been confined to international development agencies. Democrats have also turned to decentralisation as a favoured as a mechanism for improving accountability and transparency and state society relations.[7] In other words, strengthening local government has been justified both as a means of making government more efficient and effective (weak decentralisation) and as a way of increasing democratic participation (strong decentralisation).

Decentralisation nevertheless has its sceptics. Heller points out that there are no *a priori* reasons why more localized forms of governance are necessarily democratic and suggests that under some contexts decentralised authority can be quite pernicious.[8] The most obvious example of this is indirect rule under colonialism, when local despots in the service of an imperial power exercised decentralized authority. This is pertinent to the contemporary South African situation where it can be argued that traditional authorities are providing local government on the cheap on behalf of central government in a system that shares some parallels with indirect rule. Localised forms of governance have the potential for elite capture, can tend towards pork-barrel politics and offer no improvement on central government when bureaucratic control is unreasonable. More immediately, when decentralisation is accompanied by policies promoting the marketization of public services this leads to problems of affordability for low-income people and in turn local government is often deprived of the human or financial resources to cope with the demands made upon it by decentralisation.[9] In the event, it has been argued that there is little empirical evidence to support or refute the efficacy of decentralisation.[10]

As with decentralisation, the term governance can be used in either a technical or political sense. At its simplest it refers to the relationship between government and citizen but there are two ways in which the concept is used to describe this relationship. The first understands governance as sound administration and management of public resources, weak governance if you will. The second and broader definition sees governance not so much as a set of functions as an expression of power between state and civil society, understood as two sides of the same coin,

implying a much stronger form of governance. Stoker[11] argues that the 'essence of governance is the interactive relationship between and within government and non-governmental forces'. Both perspectives inform the arguments of those who see local governance as important arena for advancing women's participation and representation. For example, the International Union of Local Authorities[12] has argued in their position paper on women in local government that:

> From a gender perspective local government is the closest and is the most accessible level of government to women. Local governments traditionally provide services utilized by individual households such as electricity, waste disposal, public transport, water, schools, health clinics and other social services. The decisions of local governments therefore have a direct impact on the private lives of women, because they are traditionally responsible for providing for and caring for the family and the home in many countries. Women also have important and unique contributions to make to the development and appropriate management of these services. They must be fully part of the local democratic system and have full access to the decision making structure. Until the interests of women have been represented at the local level, the system is not fully democratic.

The reasons why local politics are thought to be easier for women are well rehearsed. Evertzen sites then as follows:[13]

> … because eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It can be the first level that women can break into and as

such it may serve as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences. Likewise local politics can be more interesting to women as they are well acquainted with their community, being the major users of space and services in the local community (water, electricity, waste disposal, health clinics, and other social services). They also participate actively in organisations in their neighbourhood, and it's easier to involve these organisations in formal political decision making at the local level.

These same factors have been marshalled in support of decentralisation as a route towards enhancing gender equity. For example, there are expectations that decentralisation will make service delivery more gender sensitive through the proximity of locally elected representatives to their constituents. The latter in turn is thought to ensure better understanding of the gender dimensions of service requirements and community needs. Efficiency arguments also point to the efficacy of women's community level engagement, where their contribution is seen as an asset in ensuring effective local planning and management.

While the ideal of democratic decentralisation does hold out promise to women, ideal conditions rarely prevail. Manor has pointed out that the limited evidence available on the impact of democratic decentralisation on women 'offers only modest encouragement' as prejudices against women are often more strongly held at local than at higher levels.[14] One of the reasons for the disappointment of local government for women is that it is particularly responsive to informal institutions, systems and relations of power, rather than formal rules and procedures. This serves

to advantage men because women's historical exclusion from local government means that they do not have access to the same kinds of networks and are less experienced and adept than men at developing them. Thus one of the reasons advanced as to why local government is less productive for advancing women's rights than is often expected is because the informal institutions in which local governments are often embedded are hostile to women. This is demonstrated and confirmed by the experience of South Africa particularly in relation to traditional authority systems, which remain deeply antithetical towards women and yet are centrally implicated in the exercise of local governance.

Local Government Reform in South Africa

The end of apartheid changed the face of South African local government irrevocably. However, democratising sub-national tiers of government was bound to be awkward given South Africa's history as a country divided spatially along racial and ethnic lines and the fact that these divisions were most obviously and keenly felt at local level. At the time of the negotiated settlement in South Africa the attention of all parties was firmly focused on control of the central state and the nature of provincial government so that local government was at first neglected. Chapter 10 of the Interim Constitution dealt with local government and as Spitz (2000:183) has observed, '[I]ts most striking characteristic was its sparseness', doing little more than creating a loose framework for how it was to operate. At the central level a fierce battle ensued between the forces of reaction that hoped for a federalist or consociational solution and the African Nation Congress, which wanted majority rule in a strong central state, concentrating on securing national jurisdiction and rationalising the multiple

provincial and Bantustan administrations into a single South African system of sub-national government.[15] Local government thus became a residual category in relation to which the African National Congress made a number of initial concessions. For example, elements of consociational government, having been denied nationally, were ensured at local level, meaning that significant decisions could not be taken without the consensus of minority residents.[16] Although this was later overturned, as Robinson has observed, local government became the site on which existing privilege was most robustly defended.[17]

The Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993) defined a three-stage process for the restructuring of local government. First, elections were held for transitional local councils in 1995/6,[18] allowing for some continuity of delivery until the second phase of local government reform was in place. Second, the establishment of the Municipal Demarcation Board followed in 1998 in order to redraw municipal boundaries across the country.[19] Although presented as a technical exercise, the demarcation process was also an intensely political one. Concerned in part with overcoming the legacies of apartheid planning and racially skewed resource distribution, it brought the ruling party into contestation with traditional leaders who saw the process as disregarding the boundaries of traditional authority areas in a process that reduced the number of municipalities from 843 to 284.[20] The third stage of fully-fledged democratic local government followed the local elections in 2000. By the time of the second local government elections in 2000 the autonomy of local government was ensured and could only be withdrawn at the risk of infuriating the thousands of ANC local councillors who had vested interests in protecting the powers of local government, a good proportion of whom were women.

Nevertheless, the setting up of structures and procedures proved to be complicated, given the absence of any effective local government in South Africa outside of the former white areas during the apartheid era. In urban areas the Black Local Authorities set up in the late 1970s were not sustainable, having lost legitimacy and virtually collapsed. In rural areas local government functions remained largely in the hands of traditional leaders who worked within and alongside apartheid structures, in a system not dissimilar to indirect rule inherited from the colonial era. Through this traditional authorities had amassed considerable local level power and they were keen not to see this dissipate under a new dispensation. The Local Government Transition Act provided little guidance on how local government councils in rural areas should be constituted and it was left to provincial government to decide on the form rural local government should take. The result was that traditional leaders were able to entrench their powers over a relatively lengthy period of transition and this was to bode ill for women's representation and influence over the longer term.[21]

Women and Local Government in South Africa

Shortly after coming to power in 1994 the ruling African National Congress adopted a non-sexist constitution and a strategy for setting in place South Africa's celebrated national machinery for advancing gender equality. [22] This placed South Africa at the cutting edge of experience in state initiated gender policies and structures.[23] As a result South Africa is heralded internationally as having one of the most progressive policy frameworks for improving the condition and representation of women.[24] Nevertheless, South Africa's structures and processes for achieving gender equity still

merit critical scrutiny particularly when viewed from the bottom up.[25] During the early transitional period government strategies in relation to women's representation in politics were sorely neglectful of the local level.[26] One factor inhibiting women from taking their rightful place in a process of democratic consolidation has been a preoccupation with technocratic structures and procedures for engendering governance. According to Manicom this has served to depoliticise the goal of a non-sexist democracy:

> There is no question that this 'gender offensive' has resulted in a profound shift in the norms, structures, and practices of national and supranational institutions of governance. But there are questions about the application of 'gender' in governance …. Systematic 'engendering' risks standing in for feminist/gender activism.[27]

Moreover, as transition loomed activists turned to electoral strategies to advance the position of women and inevitably began focusing at the national level.[28]

Along with others involved in the negotiation process, women also woke up late to the strategic importance of the local level for advancing gender equity because the broader effort during the negotiated transition was at the national and provincial levels. The movement of women towards securing the national project also left local leadership depleted. Indeed, it was only the repeated lobbying on the part of one small Cape Town based advocacy organisation, the Gender Advocacy Programme, which led the Commission on Gender Equality to eventually take up the importance of women's representation in local government. Following the poor showing of women

in the 1995/6 elections the Gender Advocacy Programme began to organise around local government representation.[29] In the run up to the 2000 local government elections the Commission for Gender Equality also embarked on a campaign to increase the representation of women in local government and to ensure that government became more responsive to women's interests and demands.

In the former goal at least they were successful. Following the 1995/96 local government elections only 19 per cent of councillors were women, resulting in heavily male dominated local councils. However, after the local government elections in 2000 elections women constituted 28.2 per cent of all local government councillors.[30] One crucial explanatory factor was that by the time of the second local government elections proportional representation was matched by a ward system on a fifty-fifty basis at local level,[31] changing the gender balance of local councillors.[32] The Municipal Structures Act of 1998, which included guidelines stating that 'every party must seek to ensure that 50 per cent of the candidates on the party list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed through the list', largely promoted this.[33] Legislation also provided that there should be equal representation between women and men on the Ward Committees, something fought for by the Gender Advocacy Programme among others and rightly considered to be a significant victory at the time. While these were guidelines rather than statutory requirement the African National Congress nevertheless increased its quota of women to 46 per cent at local level.[34] Significantly, a number of the increased proportion of women local councillors were elected as ward candidates and did not only enter local government through the proportional representation system, showing that women

political representatives are coming to be accepted at local level in South Africa although performance across the country was patchy.

The deficiencies of the ward system for women were particularly apparent in the statistics for KwaZulu-Natal where traditional authorities remain strong. Here, while 34.3 per cent of seats for women were achieved through the party list women occupied only 12 per cent of ward seats.[35] Although the proportional representation system works in favour of women, a mature democracy should be able to field elected women candidates at ward level as well. After all, being accountable to a generic constituency of women 'out there' is different from being directly accountable to actual women constituents on the ground. In this the local level is in advance of other tiers of government in terms of ensuring women's real political presence. The ward committees are also proving to be a key route for civil society participation, alongside considerable increases in women's representation. A critical question is the extent to which this translates into a system of engendered democratic decentralisation in which gender interests are addressed.

Weak and Strong Decentralisation in South Africa

In 1998 the Local Government White Paper advanced the concept of 'developmental local government' and determined that municipalities pursue integrated development planning in a context of inter-sectoral partnerships that required the active involvement of communities, alongside other vested interest groups, through both

public and private investment.[361] From the outset the African National Congress saw developmental local government as a vehicle for national development. Local government was given constitutional protection alongside a constitutional claim to the powers necessary to provide services for its residents, including fiscal capability. While provincial government is financed mainly through transfers from the centre, local government is responsible for raising over 90 per cent of its own revenue.

Local governments have a number of sources of revenue, the main ones being rates on property and surcharges on fees for services provided by or on behalf of the municipality. Other sources of revenue are allowed but explicitly exclude income tax, value-added tax, general sales tax and customs duties.[37] Although decentralisation has meant that local government is responsible for some basic service delivery, this is also the responsibility of both provincial and local governments, with local government as the junior partner in the intergovernmental fiscal system.[38] However, there is considerable variation between at one end of the spectrum the large metropolitan municipalities that achieve a level of financial autonomy and at the other, small rural councils with scant fiscal capacity and a heavy dependence on national government transfers through a system known as the 'equitable share'. This has to temper the view that the relative financial autonomy of local government is an indicator of strong decentralisation. National government became enchanted with the managerial potential of decentralisation, giving rise to a plethora of technocratic procedures that were institutionalised without sufficiently sustained attention being paid to local level representation and participation. Moreover, as McDonald and Pape have argued, decentralisation was accompanied by cutbacks in central government

---

[1] Policy frameworks predicated upon the constitutional principles of inter-governmental cooperation include infrastructural support programmes, planning guidelines, service partnerships and a range of local economic development initiatives.

allocation to local authorities, rendering the market logic more pressing.[39] If developmental local government simply means central government shifting responsibility for service delivery to the local level through a series of unfunded mandates, decentralisation in South Africa can be characterised as weak.

Following the April 2004 national elections the government signalled a shift towards increased pro-poor spending given that the macro-economy had now been stabilised. However, limited resources and expanded responsibilities of local government for service delivery have made cost recovery almost inevitable. The impact on many poor urban residents has been devastating. Cut-offs have been employed both in respect of individual households that cannot afford services and as a more widespread strategy to punish whole communities for non-payment. In some cases this has even extended to service providers ripping out infrastructure.[40] Under such circumstances not only are decentralisation strategies potentially dangerous for local governments, with their constitutional responsibility for the social and economic development of communities, but also for communities and citizens.

There is another side to developmental local government that points towards democratic decentralisation, that being constitutional commitment to popular participation in local government, including women as a distinct constituency. Local authorities are required to undertake medium-term Integrated Development Plans that are linked to municipal responsibilities and budgets and that should reflect priorities identified by communities. There have been problems related to implementation. For example, those who have been around longer often exclude newcomers to an area and despite initial energy during the first round both officials and community

representatives subsequently tired in what is a time-consuming exercise. [41] Even in an assessment of the first Integrated Development Plans, the city of Johannesburg stated that 'incorporating residents' contributions to policy, programmes and projects is far from satisfactory'. [42] Another problem with integrated development planning is that municipalities find it difficult to incorporate the multiple and often contradictory views that citizens express.

Early experiences show that gender issues tended to get lost as multiple local priorities were aggregated upwards into a plan. For this not to happen requires something of a 'technical fix' in that capacity within local authorities needs to be raised so that officials understand the gender dimensions of local government responsibilities and services and are encouraged by incentive structures that encourage good practice on their part. However, while the imperative of participatory planning is now legally inscribed in the legislative code of local development in South Africa, [43] in a country where strong central control is retained, for the technical dimensions of decentralisation to feed democratic decentralisation requires not only responsive government but strong commitment on the part of organised civil society to women's involvement and impact on local development processes and outcomes.[44] This is difficult when civil society organisations are increasingly perceived as partners in the development process and consequently as responsible for sharing in the cost of service delivery. Research conducted in Cato Manor in Durban[45] and Greater Soweto, Johannesburg suggests that this cost is largely born by women in households and communities. [46]

Democratising and Engendering Decentralisation

South Africa has two of the key ingredients for successful democratic decentralisation. First, decentralisation within the context of a weak state is unlikely to succeed and South Africa has a strong national state and robust inter-governmental coordination. Second, decentralisation works best when it encounters a vibrant and well-organised civil society that can identify and engage effectively with policy makers, which South Africa can also boast. Despite this, national government in South Africa is not unusual in tending to see political control as a zero-sum game, with more power to the local level being equated with less for the centre. This has been exacerbated more recently by a tendency towards centralised control within the ruling African National Congress and increasingly vociferous social movements that in the wake of transition have regrouped and found their confidence, voice and constituencies. Trade unions such as the South African Municipal Workers Union and the Anti-privatisation Forum have challenged the government's managerial and technocratic approach to decentralisation that falls short of genuine democratisation and stretches to the limit the resources of those who cannot afford service charges or who survive without services only with difficulty.

Women's advocacy in relation to local government in South Africa has been very influenced by debates on the politics of collective consumption.[47] This has manifested itself in a preference for organised struggles around housing and living conditions, infrastructure and services, hardly surprising given that this approach influenced much of the early gender and development literature focused on local and urban development more generally and reflected the real concerns of many disadvantaged

women.[48] This influence can be seen in early[49] and more recent thinking[50] about gender and local development in South Africa. Here, given the obviously superior investment in infrastructure and services in former white middle class areas and the equally obvious need to extend delivery by investing in former black townships and informal settlements, it was to be expected that infrastructure and services would be a critical focus in the post-apartheid era. By continuing to press for affordable housing, sanitation, waste collection and water and electricity connections, contemporary civic organisations explicitly inserted a distributive agenda into local politics, to some effect.[51]

According to official government statistics the proportion of households that have access to clean water has increased from 60 per cent in 1996 to 85 per cent in 2001.[52] Electricity connections over the same have period increased from 32 per cent to 70 per cent. Between 1994 and 2003 nearly two million housing subsidies were approved and almost half a million houses built in the apartheid era were transferred to their occupants through a discount benefit scheme. Almost half of all subsidies approved were granted to women.[53] Nevertheless, some local authorities have met the challenges of poverty reduction and service delivery better than others and there are significant differences between rural and urban areas, as well as across different services and different levels of service. Moreover, although the number of serviced households has increased across the board, access to some services and levels of services has declined in absolute terms. This is usually in cities with the fastest growth in population and in the number of households, where municipalities have found it difficult to keep pace with need.[54]

In terms of the impact on women, in its review of the first ten years of democracy the South African Government had to admit that 'Housing, land redistribution and other services … show significant improvements in gender bias, although the majority still go to male-headed households'.[55] Moreover, managerial decentralisation has put local government in the unique position of what Samson calls 'dumping on women'.[56]

The implications of inadequate services for women are considerable. When a household's services are cut off because of non-payment it is women of the household who have to cope with the consequences. When services are shared in common, for example communal taps or toilets, it is usually women who take responsibility for their maintenance and cleaning. Indeed, in Johannesburg it was found that struggles over shared services proved to be the single most important factor in propelling people out of accommodation in backyard shacks in formal township houses and into the more difficult physical conditions of informal settlements.[57] Moreover, research in a Durban informal settlement suggests that the importance of formal housing in well-serviced areas as a means towards alleviating the burden of domestic chores cannot be over-estimated.[58]

Among the strategies for engaging local government on services have been the campaigns of the Anti-Privatization Forum such as Operation Khanyisa whereby electricity once disconnected is then illegally reconnected; and Operation Vulamanzi, which involved the breaking of prepaid water meters, allowing water to flow freely. The Forum does not advocate illegal activities or non-payment for services but

recognizes them as an inevitable consequence of their members simply being unable to afford them. Moreover, non-payment of services is a hardy perennial within the repertoire of South African collective action, dating back to the heady days of anti-apartheid opposition in the 1980s and early 1990s. However, cut-offs of water and electricity constitutes a draconian response for a democracy that prides itself on its human rights record and one that is particularly hard on women, inevitably impacting on their role in social reproduction. A debate is ensuing currently in South Africa about the extent to which cut-offs have actually been employed. However, what is abundantly clear is that women constitute the bulk of the membership of the Anti-Privatization Forum.

From late 2002 the Anti-Privatization Forum saw its women members beginning to meet as women and they ran a number of workshops on gender issues. However, although the commitment remains among the female membership the momentum has been difficult to sustain. According to one Forum activist interviewed in relation to activities in Johannesburg, this is because 'we have been caught up in other things as an organization, and as activists have been spread very thinly'. Others are less optimistic, arguing that the post-1994 social movements in South Africa tend to use women and have 'very often relied on the mobilization of women on the basis of their practical needs – for example, for electricity, land and housing – but have rarely linked these to issues of the pernicious gender division of labour.'[59] The major difference between local organization during the apartheid era and transition and the situation since is that in the earlier period there was the hope and expectation that women's involvement and organization could be scaled up and that it would amount to something for women. This is no longer the case as Hassim has pointed out:[60]

One of the most notable changes in the landscape of the women's movement in the post-1994 period was the fragmentation and stratification of women's organizations in civil society. The political centre of the Women's National Coalition did not survive as the layer of the top leadership of women's organizations shifted into positions in the state and bureaucracy. The new stratifications which emerged reflected a disaggregation of the movement into a diversity of arenas, some of which - such as those closely tied to policy making processes - were strengthened by new approaches to civil society within the state, whereas other levels reverted to the more familiar community-based forms of organisations.

Thus under apartheid women were successfully organised at the community level around issues important to them such as high rents and service charges but this has been less the case in what has become known as South Africa's 'first decade of freedom'.

Moesoetsa confirms that women continue to be organised at community level and that they are animated by issues related to service delivery.[61] She paints a bleak picture of poverty and unemployment driving people into the confines of the home where they rely only on family support and reciprocity within the confines of small and trusted social networks. However, she points to important sites of collective action, such as church groups, savings clubs and burial societies[62] and argues that they have helped in the face of what she characterises as a crisis of representation spanning both the political sphere, for example mistrust of political parties, as well as civil society, for

example disappointment in trade unions that are perceived to have let people down in the face of factory closures, unemployment and poverty. Under these conditions and arising out of mutual support activities Mosoetsa observes a stirring among women in response to inadequate service delivery or affordability issues related to water supply and electricity. For example, a new alliance was formed in 2000 in response to the installation of water metres in the township, leading to community marches and the disconnection of water metres when the metropolitan council refused their offer to pay £10 a month,[63] which is what they said each household could afford. For Mosoetsa, this engagement with metropolitan government, largely on the part of women, points to a revitalised site of organisation and emerging citizenship. Nevertheless, women have a long way to go, not least in scaling up and asserting their agendas in broader organisations of civil society.

One of the arenas through which women have sought to hold government to account and that offered a degree of promise was through a 'watchdog' role in relation to revenue and expenditure. Inspired by the experience of women in Australia, South Africa was one of the first countries to take gender budgeting seriously and during the 1990s the Women's Budget Initiative was established during the 1990s.[64] Gender Responsive Budgets are mechanisms by which governments, in dialogue with other sectors, can integrate gender analysis into public expenditure policies and budgets. This does not imply a separate budget for women but rather the political will to disaggregate expenditure according to its differential impact on women and men.[65] In South Africa as elsewhere, gender analysis of local government budgets is not as advanced as efforts at the national level. However, in the halcyon days of gender budgeting, women organising around local government issues in South Africa teamed

up with the Women's Budget Initiative in their watchdog role.[66] As Hassim has
pointed out:

> The project had real possibilities to raise fundamental questions about
> spending priorities and to highlight the ways in which women were benefiting
> (or not) from particular policy approaches. However, within a few years the
> Ministry of Finance, which had initially embraced the Women's Budget
> Initiative, downgraded the project and it is now virtually moribund at the
> national level.[67]

She is swift to point out that this conclusion should not be read as meaning that
engaging the state is misguided but rather to consider *how* the state should be engaged
and how to build a grassroots women's movement that is sufficiently mobilised to
support a critical engagement with the state. In the meantime she stresses the
importance of consolidating the political gains made for women at the national level.

If this strategy is to be paralleled at the local level then the issue of taxation is one that
needs to be persistently pursued, not least on the grounds that as payers of rates and
service charges, women have a right to make demands on local governments and to
hold them accountable. Some progress has been made in South Africa towards raising
awareness about the impact of local government revenue and expenditure on women.
This has involved informing women about local government expenditures and
revenues and advocating on resource allocations that promote gender equality.[68] The

focus on local government budgets has had an interesting impact on gender budgeting itself, shifting the bias on expenditure towards greater concentration on how revenue is raised. Budlender has argued that not only are the revenue sources of local government more diverse than for national or provincial government - including alongside inter-governmental transfers, property taxes, licence fees, tariffs for services and user charges for basic services - but also they can have a particularly adverse affect on women. [69] This is the case, for example with user charges, which often become women's responsibility within households. Coopoo notes in the case of South African local government that user charges account for over half of operating budget income, although as with all sources of revenue there are enormous differences between municipalities.[70] If local authorities are primarily dependent on cost recovery as a revenue source then problems are likely to get worse rather than better for low-income women.

There are also more informal areas of local revenue collection that particularly affect low-income women. In urban areas there are licences and site fees for street traders, which Skinner notes in respect of women street traders in Durban, constitute a significant proportion of most traders' incomes even if they seem low in absolute terms.[71] Coopoo highlights the range of local taxes that poor women and men have to pay in rural areas, including in some parts of KwaZulu-Natal where a compulsory levy is paid to the king, often without understanding why or ever seeing any benefit. In urban areas in South Africa, women are more likely to be seen as taxpayers and to see themselves as such and here the role of civil society organisations such as the Gender Advocacy Programme and women's initiatives such as the Women's Budget

Initiative have been important. In rural areas the challenge is greater. Customary law and traditional practice has not seen women as taxpayers in their own right and efforts on behalf of or by women to ensure that revenue streams are collected and spent efficiently, equitably and in gender sensitive ways proves to be that much more difficult.

In evaluating whether localisation and decentralisation are good for women, the evidence is mixed. Clearly, the key route for civil society participation is through the ward committees and interestingly this is the forum that has seen considerably increases in women's representation, particularly in urban areas. For example, a recent study of women's involvement in local governance and development in an area based development project in Cato Manor, an informal settlement in Durban, demonstrates not only the importance of women in civil society organisation but also their exercise of voice on their own account:

> Women leaders were particularly adept at negotiating this organisational terrain [competition for development resources within a political volatile area] and gained enhanced credence with the CMDA [Cato Manor Development Association responsible for development and delivery at the time]. Their legitimacy among supporters derived from a long history of involvement in land invasions, community organisation and progressive politics. Not averse to carrying weapons themselves, they were as strident as any male leader in the area. In the rank and file of organisational life, women were at the heart of the informal networks that characterised the squatter invasions in the late 1980s and 1990s.[72]

Moreover, through the ward committees, the integrated planning process and in negotiations with the Cato Manor Development Association, women undoubtedly influenced planning outcomes in ways that spoke to their gender interests – for example in the nature of public space and amenities such as the situating of parks and street lighting. This is not to say that patronage and clientalism were absent or that the female leadership represented all women. Nevertheless, women at the community level did have an impact on issues that affected their lives.

Importantly, however, the success that women had in Cato Manor would not have been possible without enabling legislation and policies at national level, which influenced and were implemented by the Cato Manor Development Association. This confirms that local politics and decentralisation policies are most likely to work in the context of a strong central state and robust inter-governmental coordination and the same can be said of women's politics and engendering policy and practice at the local level. That said the reach of central government in South Africa is limited. Cato Manor is a vibrant urban settlement in a metropolitan centre that is relatively well resourced both financially and in human resource terms and that is closely linked to African National Congress state and party structures. The same cannot be said of remote and even not so remote rural areas. It is important, therefore, to consider in more detail the experience of rural local governance and decentralisation for women and here it is impossible to escape the role and impact of traditional authorities.

Women, Rural Local Governance and the Long Shadow of Tradition

Important in understanding rural local government is that the institutional reach of the post-apartheid state was limited by the legacy of apartheid policies. In its recent publication *Towards a Ten Year Review,* the South African Government stated that 'the needs of local government are most critical, with the majority of municipalities not having the capacity … to perform their delivery functions'.[73] This points to the importance of traditional authorities at the local level. Administratively they are seen as indispensable to developmental local government in the rural areas because under apartheid rural local government functions in African areas lay largely in the hands of traditional leaders and few alternatives are yet in place. As such they provide local government on the cheap. Politically their perceived importance for delivering rural constituencies to the African National Congress makes them difficult to alienate. Continuing with the status quo has meant that central government has not had to take on traditional leaders who having amassed for themselves considerable local power and who have been resilient in their opposition to any local government reform that stood to undermine their influence. As hereditary rather than democratically elected leaders, government legislation insists that traditional authorities work together with democratically elected bodies within the principles of the Constitution, while transforming themselves to become more democratic.

However, representatives of chieftaincy have shown themselves prepared to stop at nothing short of constitutional protection of their customary rights and responsibilities.[74] Between the first and second local government elections, in 1995/6 and 2000 respectively, they succeeded in delaying the announcement of the election date three times until they extracted an undertaking from President Thabo Mbeki to

act on proposals to preserve their powers and functions in the new local government structures.[75] Mbeki did not give into their demand for 50 per cent representation on elected local councils because this would have irked those within the African National Congress and opposition parties such as the Democratic Alliance, who believed that hereditary leaders should not be allowed to hold a democratically elected government to ransom. Nevertheless, he did increase their participation in local councils from ten to 20 per cent, despite the implications for local democracy, as well as the tensions this created between constitutional commitments towards gender equity and discrimination against women on the part of traditional structures and patterns of governance.

Representatives of women and traditional leaders first came into conflict during the constitution-making period when some traditional leaders opposed the principle of gender equity. In the event the constitution validated both gender equality and cultural autonomy, 'while placing equality as the 'trump' criterion in cases where both came into conflict'.[76] However, while women's organisations have continued to challenge chieftaincy they are often urban based and such opposition is more difficult for rural women who are customarily denied participation in traditional male-dominated decision-making structures and processes. Their well-being also rests with traditional leaders in very material ways. Customary law, which was upheld under apartheid, discriminates against women who could not own land or property in their own right and who lost any such rights on the death of their husbands. This was on a principle of male primogeniture that required that property be passed on to the nearest male relative. The Supreme Court of Appeal upheld this principle as recently as 2000[77] even though under the new Constitution principles of gender equity are supposed to

prevail over the exercise of customary law. Traditional authorities also control access to communal land, to which women have restricted access, with most traditional leaders continuing to refuse to allocate land to women.[78]

The influence of traditional leaders has most recently been seen in the passing of the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (TLGFA) in 2004. This Act validates the role of chieftaincy in local government and clarifies the position of traditional councils that must now operate within and alongside other local government structures. Section Three of the Act states that 'traditional communities' must establish these councils, which in turn must comprise 'traditional leaders and members of the traditional community selected by the principal traditional leader concerned in terms of custom'. Where the old tribal authorities exist, established in terms of the Bantu Authorities Act of 1951, they will simply be converted into traditional councils. This significantly entrenches the authority of traditional leaders and means in effect that legislation introduced in the 21st Century will give perpetual life to a system of 'indirect rule' dating back to the colonial era.[79]

The involvement of traditional authorities in developmental local government constitutes an administrative approach to decentralisation, albeit one that has the added advantage of no alienating potential political opponents. For example, being added to existing traditional councils and tribal courts are new government sponsored traditional development centres, dubbed 'traditional' because they are set up under the aegis of local chieftaincies and in coordination with traditional structures of governance. Some of these are already underway and are functioning as one-stop shops, serving as pension payout points, satellite offices for the Department of Home

Affairs, sites for mobile clinics, providers of HIV/AIDS awareness services and small business development advice. At the launch of the Mpumuza Traditional Development Centre, in KwaZulu-Natal the Provincial Traditional Affairs Member of the Executive Committee *Inkosi* Nyanga Ngubane said that the traditional development centres represented a shift in the way traditional communities related to local government and a transformation of local governance structures so that they were 'more accessible to a greater number of people in the traditional authority areas'.[80]

While taking information, communication and services to people in deep rural areas is undoubtedly a good thing and of potential benefit to women, it is ironic that primarily male non-elected appointees dominate the level of government closest to the people. Indeed, the elevation of hereditary chieftainship to a privileged and protected position within local governance seriously compromises rural women's access to and influence on local government. In the name of modernising if not democratising traditional structures, the Traditional Leadership Act insists that one third of the 'traditional community' must be women and that of this one third, 25 per cent have to be elected by the community. However, this is in a context where 40 per cent of council members are elected, the remaining 60 per cent comprising traditional leaders and members of the traditional community selected by elders in terms of custom.[81] The Act states that all traditional councils must adhere to this within the space of four years but there are no clear provisions or safeguards as to how women should be elected and no sanctions if there is a failure to comply.

Nowhere has government failed women more than in relation to land and women's rights over its allocation and use. Initially it was proposed that land remain a national government competence and did not devolve to local government, although legislation would cater for a variety of different forms of land and property rights. Traditional leaders ferociously opposed this and the proposed legislation was shelved until after the 1999 elections when in April 2001 the new Minister of Land Affairs, Thoko Didiza, announced the introduction of a land rights bill. The bill emphasised communities rather than individuals and reinforced the power of traditional leaders. The Communal Land Rights Act was finally passed in late 2003, stating that land administration functions and powers – including the power to own, administer allocate and register land rights – must be performed by 'traditional councils' where they exist (Section 22(2)). The Communal Land Rights Act needs to be viewed in conjunction with the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, which went through parliament at the same time, immediately preceding the April 2004 national elections. Clearly winning over traditional leaders was perceived as a greater political imperative than upholding the liberal democratic principles of the Constitution.

This legislation was dogged by controversy and was opposed, not least by women's organisations. Given the inevitable negative impact on women of these two Acts in combination, there may be some weight to the argument that the joint effect of the bills is anti-constitutional. Despite speculation that women's organisations may take the government to the Constitutional Court on this issue, this has not yet materialised. Rural women were consulted by organisations involved in land issues such as the

Programme for Land and Agricultural Studies and their views and position represented and the Commission on Gender Equality also highlighted women's concerns. However, they are not been well organised beyond the community level. In terms of civil society organisations, historically the Rural Women's Movement helped ensure that distributive issues such as access to and control over land have been kept at the forefront of rural women's political agenda, for example in relation to the constitution-making process. However, as Hassim has argued, 'by the time the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework and Communal Land Rights bills were introduced, the Rural Women's Movement was a virtually defunct organisation'.[82] Ultimately women's influence in this arena has been scant and the issue of women's land rights remains unresolved.[83]

The situation of rural women stands in stark contrast to the scenario of local government envisaged by the Gender Advocacy Programme in its commentary on the White Paper on Local Government:

> Local Government is the level of government closest to the people. It has particular importance for women, because of its responsibility for the delivery of goods and services that impact directly on the necessities of social reproduction, a sphere in which women have disproportionate responsibility. Its direct interface with the community puts Local Government in a unique position to understand the contextual dynamics that shape and regulate women's lives. Through its location Local Government has the potential to contribute to greater gender equity.[84]

On the contrary, to the insult of a desultory performance in ensuring rural women's representation in local government has been added the injury of reducing their influence on the institutions that stand between them and access to critical resources such as land. Women's access to resources remains elusive and is prevented above all by that level of government that is 'closest to the people'.

Conclusions

Local government is the tier of government closest to civil society and as such really does hold opportunities for locally organised women. However, the co-location of government and civil society organisations at the local level can lead to ambiguous outcomes, with access to resources and decision-making being retained by existing power holders at the expense of the advancement of women's participation. In South Africa, the intersection of the formal organisations of local government with socially embedded institutions, such as patterns of male dominance in collective action and customary practices by traditional authorities, have a negative impact on women's prospects for democracy. Worse, these informal institutions appear to becoming increasingly entrenched in the formal organisation of local government and in law. This stands to undermine the hard-won rights of citizens and especially women who are prejudiced by practices and procedures of local governance in all quarters and now additionally by legislation. The extent to which local government and decentralisation are embedded in asymmetrical social relations and informal institutional practice, helps explain why local governance rarely proves to be a magic bullet for increasing women's access to and presence in government as well as their

influence over it. Efforts towards the institutionalisation of gender in South Africa were made at the same time as the impact of neo-liberal policies was deepening in South Africa. The extension of services to historically disadvantaged populations came with a price tag in the form of cost recovery and women especially have acutely felt its social impact. It is at local level that the carbuncles of any political system are most apparent and in South Africa it is women who feel them most painfully.

South African women so far do not have as secure a footing in local government structures as in other tiers of government. It could be argued that the vacuum left by the movement of a substantial number of women's leaders into national and provincial government since 1994 has been necessary and indeed, there have been considerable pay-offs from this participation in terms of enabling legislation and policies. However, this now needs to mature into greater congruence between higher and lower spheres of government. Moreover, it is also at the local level that women can often organise most effectively. Their involvement in movements opposed to privatisation and cost recovery in service delivery is testimony to this. What appears to be missing is the space, ability or leadership for women to organise against decentralisation policies where they adversely affect their gender interests. Structures and processes do exist and can be taken advantage of by women's and gendered organisations wishing to work alongside or with local government and these are constitutionally protected. Women taking effective advantage of these opportunities appear a long way off.

In sum, engendering democratic decentralisation on a number of factors, not least the nature of macro-economic policy in South Africa and how this articulates with issues of access and affordability, which affect all low-income people but particularly women and notably rural women. In part it depends on whether central government and the African National Congress with its resounding majority following the 2004 national elections, remains open and responsive to challenge from civil society and whether civil society in turn is able to represent women and promote gender justice. At present, Manor's assessment in relation to India that decentralisation 'offers only modest encouragement' to women appears as much the case for South Africa.[85] As such, decentralisation and local government remain a real litmus test of South Africa's ability to engender its new democracy.

[1] Diana Conyers, "Decentralization: The Latest Fashion in Development Administration?" *Public Administration and Development* 3, (1983): 97-109.

[2] Richard Crook and James Manor, "Democratic Decentralization," *Operations Evaluation Department Working Paper* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, June 2000).

[3] Dennis Rondinelli, Shabir Cheema and John R. Nellis, "Decentralization in Developing Countries: A Review of Recent Experience," *World Bank Staff Working Paper No. 581* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1983).

[4] Dennis Rondinelli, James McCullough and Ronald W. Johnson, "Analysing Decentralization Policies in Developing Countries: A Political-Economy Framework," *Development and Change,* 20 (1989): 59.

[5] James Manor, *The Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization* (Washington D.C.: World Bank, 1999), 5.

[6] World Bank, *World Development Report: The State in a Changing World* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[7] Patrick Heller, "Moving the State: The Politics of Democratic Decentralization in Kerala, South Africa and Porto Alegre," *Politics and Society* 29, no. 1 (2001): 131-163.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Joel Samoff, "Decentralization: The Politics of Interventionism," *Development and Change* 21, (1990): 513-530; Frans J. Schuurman, "The Decentralisation Discourse: Post-Fordist Paradigm or Neo-liberal Cul-de-Sac?" *European Journal of Development Research* 9, no. 1 (1997): 150-166; David Slater, "Territorial Power and the Peripheral State: The Issue of Decentralization." *Development and Change* 20 (1989): 501-531.

[10] Jean Paul Faguet, "Does Decentralisation Increase Government Responsiveness to Local Needs? Evidence from Bolivia," *Journal of Public Economics* 88 (2004): 867-893; Manor, *Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization*.

[11] Gerry Stoker, "Public-Private Partnerships and Urban Governance, " in J. Pierre, ed., *Partnership in Urban Governance: European and American Experience* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998), 38.

[12] International Union of Local Authorities (IULA), *Policy Paper on Women in Local Government* (New York: IULA, 1998), 1.

[13] Annette Evertzen*, Gender and Local Governance* (Amsterdam: Netherlands Development Organisation [SNV], April, 2001),3.

http://www.kit.nl/gcg/assets/images/Gender_and_Local_Governance.doc

[14] Manor, *Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization,* 97.

[15] Richard Spitz with Matthew Chaskalson, *The Politics of Transition: A Hidden History of South Africa's Negotiated Settlement* (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2000), 123.

[16] Ibid., 183.

[17] Jennifer Robinson, *The Power of Apartheid: State, Power and Space in South African Cities* (London: Heinemann, 1996), 211.

[18] The first round of local government elections took place in two stages because the contestation over municipal boundaries and the form of local government was so fierce and protracted in KwaZulu-Natal that the process was delayed in that province by a year.

[19] It was set up under the Municipal Demarcation Act (Act No. 27 of 1998).

[20] Cheryl Goodenough, *Traditional Leaders, A KwaZulu-Natal Study 1999 to 2001* (Durban: Independent Projects Trust, 2002), 40.

[21] Likhapha Mbatha, "Democratising Local Government: Problems and Opportunities in the Advancement of Gender Equality in South Africa, " in Anne Marie Goetz and Shireen Hassim (eds.), *No Shortcuts to Power, African Women in Politics and Policy Making* (London: Zed Books, 2003), 191.

[22] This is the official umbrella term used in South Africa for the various structures set up to advance the interests of women, including those within government such as the Office for the Status of Women, those at arm's length from government such as the Commission for Gender Equality, as well as organizations of civil society representing women.

[23] Anne Marie Goetz and Shireen Hassim, eds., *No Shortcuts to Power, African Women in Politics and Policy Making* (London: Zed Books, 2003).

[24] Catherine Albertyn, "National Machinery for Ensuring Gender Equality," in S. Liebenberg, ed., *The Constitution of South Africa from a Gender Perspective* (Cape Town: David Philip), 9-22; Jo Beall, "Trickle Down or Rising Tide? Lessons on Mainstreaming Gender Policy from Colombia and South Africa," *Social Policy and Administration* 32, no. 5 (December, 1998): 513-534.

[25] Jo Beall, "Doing Gender from Top to Bottom? The South African Case," *Women: A Cultural Review* 12, no. 2 (2001): 135-146.

[26] Jennifer Robinson, "Act of Omission: Gender and Local Government in the Transition," *Agenda – Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 26 (1995): 7-18.

[27] Linzi Manicom, "Globalising 'gender' in – or as – Governance? Questioning the Terms of Local Translations," *Agenda,* 48 (2001): 11.

[28] Shireen Hassim, "'A conspiracy of women': The women's movement in South Africa's transition to democracy," *Social Research*, 69, no.2 (Fall, 2002): 693-732; Shireen Hassim, "Representation, Participation and Democratic Effectiveness; Feminist Challenges to Representative Democracy in South Africa," in Anne Marie Goetz and Shireen Hassim eds., *No Shortcuts to Power, African Women in Politics and Policy Making* (London, Zed Books, 2003), pp. 81-109.

[29] Mbatha, "Democratising Local Government"; Mirjam Van Donk, "Local Government: A Strategic Site of Struggle for Gender Equity," *Agenda – Empowering Women for Gender Equity* 45 (2000): 4-12.

[30] In South Africa the proportion of women in the national parliament stood at 30 per cent until the recent elections in 2004 when it went up to 32.8 per cent, putting South Africa ahead of other Southern African countries and ranking it eleventh in global league tables. Thirty per cent representation of women in political positions and decision-making structures is deemed necessary in order to achieve enough of a critical mass of women to make a difference.

[31] Werner Zybrands, "Local Government," in Albert Venter, ed., *Government and Politics in the New South Africa* (second edition) (Pretoria: van Schaik Publishers*,* 2001), 208.

[32] This dual system only operates at the local level. At national and provincial government the African National Congress has reserved a third of its electoral list for women under the proportional representation system operating levels since 1994.

[33] Item 11(3) of the Municipal Structures Act No. 117 of 1998, cited in Mbatha, "Democratising Local Government,"194.

[34] David Pottie, "Women and Local Government: By the Numbers," *Update* 9 (Johannesburg, Electoral Institute of Southern Africa, 12 April 2001), 3.

[35] Ibid., 5.

[36] Susan Parnell and Edgar Pieterse "Developmental Local Government," in Susan Parnell, Edgar Pieterse, Mark Swilling and Dominique Wooldridge, eds., *Democratising Local Government, The South African Experiment* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002), 79-91.

[37] The fiscal capabilities of local government are far greater than those of provinces, which rest mainly on the power to impose taxes, levies and duties on gambling.

[38] Roy Bahl and Paul Smoke, eds., *Restructuring Local Government Finance in Developing Countries, Lessons from South Africa* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003), 8.

[39] David McDonald, and John Pape, *Cost Recovery and the Crisis of Service Delivery in South Africa* (London: Zed Books and Pretoria: HSRC Publishers, 2002), 5.

[40] David McDonald, "No Money, No Service," *Alternatives Journal* 28, no. 2 (2002): 16-20.

[41] Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell, *Uniting a Divided City, Governance and Social Exclusion in Johannesburg* (London: Earthscan, 2002), 129.

[42] Ibid., 82.

[43] Ibid., 85.

[44] Civil society is understood as the flip side of the state, without which it has no raison d'être.

[45] Jo Beall and Alison Todes, "Headlines and Head-space: Challenging Gender Planning Orthodoxy in Area-based Urban Development," *IDS Bulletin* 35, no. 4 (October, 2004): 43-50.

[46] Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell, "Social Differentiation and Urban Governance in Greater Soweto," in Richard Tomlinson, Robert Beauregard, Lindsay Bremner and Xolela Mangcu, eds., *Emerging Johannesburg, Perspectives on the Postapartheid City* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 197-214.

[47] Manuel Castells, *The Urban Question* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1976); Patrick Dunleavy, *Urban Political Analysis* (London: Macmillan, London, 1980).

[48] Caroline O. Moser, "Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs," *World Development* 17, no. 11 (1989): 1799-1825; Caroline O. Moser and Linda Peake, eds., *Women, Human Settlements and Housing* (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1987).

[49] Jo Beall, Shireen Hassim and Alison Todes, "'A Bit on the Side'?: Gender Struggles in the Politics of Transformation in South Africa," *Feminist Review* 33 (1989): 30-56.

[50] Mirjam Van Donk, "Local government's Role in Realising Gender Equality: From Policy to Practice," in Susan Parnell, Edgar Pieterse, Mark Swilling and Dominique Wooldridge, eds., *Democratising Local Government, The South African Experiment* (Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 2002), 204-218.

[51] Cynthia Cockburn, *The Local State* (London: Pluto Press, 1977); Robert A. Dahl, *Who Governs?* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1961).

[52] Republic of South Africa, *Towards a Ten Year Review. Synthesis Report on Implementation of Government Programmes,* (Pretoria: Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services, The Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 2003), 24.

[53] Ibid., 25.

[54] South African Cities Network, *The State of South African Cities – 2004* (Johannesburg: South African Cities Network, 2004), 80.

[55] Ibid., 83.

[56] Melanie Samson, *Dumping on Women: Gender and the Privatisation of Waste Management,* (Johannesburg: South African Municipal Workers' Union, 2003), see http://www.qsilver.queensu.ca/~mspadmin/

[57] Jo Beall, Owen Crankshaw and Susan Parnell, "Victims, Villains and Fixers: The Urban Environment and Johannesburg's Poor," *Journal of Southern African Studies* 26, no. 4 (2000): 803-855.

[58] Jo Beall and Alison Todes, "Gender and Integrated Area Development Projects: Lessons from Cato Manor, Durban," *Cities* 21 no. 4 (2004): 301-310.

[59] Shireen Hassim, "Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces: Reconfiguring the Women's Movement in Democratic South Africa," Paper prepared for the Social Movements Project (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal, Centre for Civil Society, 2004), 25, see www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs/social movements.

[60] Ibid., 16.

[61] Sarah Mosoetsa, "The Legacies of Apartheid and Implications of Economic Liberalisation: A Post-Apartheid Township," *Crisis States Working Paper Number 49* (London: Crisis States Research Centre, Development Studies Institute, London School of Economics, 2004).

[62] Burial societies are another form of savings association largely participated in by women, whereby they pool resources and assist in the arrangement of funerals, an increasingly important activity in the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa.

[63] Just over one US dollar.

[64] Deborah Budlender, *A Global Assessment of Gender Responsive Budget Initiatives* (London: Report for the Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001).

[65] Commonwealth Secretariat, *Gender Budgets Make Cents, Understanding Gender Responsive Budgets* (London: Commonwealth Secretariat, 2001), 1.

[66] Deborah Budlender, ed., *The Fourth Women's Budget* (Cape Town: Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), 1999a).

[67] Hassim, "Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces," 30.

[68] Sikhander Coopoo, *Women and Local Government Revenue* (unpublished mimeo, 2000).

[69] Deborah Budlender, "Women and the Local Government Budget," in Deborah Budlender, ed., *The Fourth Women's Budget* (Cape Town: Institute for Democracy in South Africa (Idasa), 1999b), 21.

[70] Coopoo, *Women and Local Government Revenue.*

[71] Caroline Skinner, "Local Government in Transition – A Gendered Analysis of Trends in Urban Policy and Practice Regarding Street Trading in Five South African Cities," *Centre for Social & Development Studies Research Report No 18*, (Durban: University of KwaZulu-Natal, May, 1999).

[72] Beall and Todes, "Headlines and Head-space," 48.

[73] Republic of South Africa, *Towards a Ten Year Review,* 108.

[74] At national level traditional authorities are represented by the Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa, while regionally they are also supported by ethnically based political parties.

[75] Goodenough, *Traditional Leaders,* 50-52.

[76] Shireen Hassim, "A virtuous circle? Gender equality and representation in South Africa," in John Daniel, Roger Southall and Jessica Lutchman, eds., *State of the Nation South Africa 2004-2005* (Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press), 16.

[77] Shireen Hassim, "A virtuous circle?"

[78] Hassim, "A virtuous circle?"

[79] Cherryl Walker, "The Limits to Land Reform: Reviewing 'The Land Question', " paper presented at the Workshop on Faultlines of Crisis and Sites of Stability in South Africa (Johannesburg: University of the Witwatersrand, July, 2003).

[80] *Natal Witness,* 28th August, 2003.

[81] Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act (3)(2)(b), 2004.

[82] Hassim, "A Virtuous Circle".

[83] Press statement by National Land Committee "South African Women Unite in Struggle for Land," (15th October 2001); *Sunday Times,* |(15th February 2004). See also Cherryl Walker, "Agrarian Change, Gender and Land Reform: A South African Case Study," *UNRISD Social Policy and Development Programme Paper Number 10* (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2003).

[84] Gender Advocacy Programme, *Local Government and Gender, Towards Engendering the White Paper* (Mowbray, Cape Town: Gender Advocacy Programme, 1997), 24.

[85] Manor, *Political Economy of Democratic Decentralization,* 97.