

Chapter 2

The Impact of Women's Political Leadership on Democracy and Development in South Africa

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This whole thing of empowerment of women is really not a 'cute' thing as sometimes people make it out. It is fundamental for survival of normal society. *I cannot imagine a government without women* – Phumuzile Mlambo-NGcuka, former (and first woman) Deputy President of South Africa

Abstract

In less than 20 years South African women leaders have contributed to radical changes in laws, policies and service delivery that have resulted in far greater gender awareness and responsiveness in South Africa's governance than ever before. These changes reflect in new institutional norms and discourse; sea changes in the lives of women previously excluded from the corridors of power; and in the 'new men' emerging to champion gender causes. They also reflect in the lives of 'ordinary women' now claiming access to land, mineral resources, finance and other means of production with which to enhance their livelihoods and those of their families. Even so, women remain the majority of the poor, the dispossessed, those living with HIV and AIDS, and daily violated as a result of high levels of gender violence. Women's names do not feature in ongoing power struggles for the top leadership of the African National Congress (ANC), although the opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) has three women at the helm. In the countdown to 2015 – the deadline for the 28 targets of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development and of Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3: promoting gender equality and empowering women – South Africa needs to redouble its efforts to ensure the achievement of gender parity in all areas of decision-making. South Africa also needs to ensure that this translates into real changes in the lives of the majority of women.

2.1 Introduction

In a country where politics has historically been pale and male, South Africa's Ambassador to Italy and former Deputy Secretary-General (DSG) of the ANC, Thenjiwe Mtintso, defies every stereotype. 'I did not choose politics; politics chose me', she says. 'It chose me because I was born of a poor African woman, a domestic worker', in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa.

Taken at a young age to live with her aunt, who was pawned off to a brother-in-law when her uncle died, economic forces led to Mtintso dropping out of school, becoming a factory worker and later a disciple of Steve Biko's Black Consciousness Movement. Arrested, tortured and imprisoned, she suffered, 'not because of my activism alone, but because I dared as a woman, a black woman, to challenge the system'. The experience propelled her into a lifelong struggle for freedom from oppression, including gender oppression.

'The system was such that the white male could take being confronted by a male species even if it was black; they could deal with that. But they could not deal with a female African species', she reflects. But going into exile for nearly two decades, she encountered patriarchy, 'within the liberation movement. It's not a constitutional issue. But it's an undertone, a nuance that you are a woman, and if you are in a meeting with men and there is tea to be served, they look at you automatically.'

Defying the odds once more Mtintso went on to become a commander of Umkhonto we Sizwe, the ANC's military wing based in Uganda. Following South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, Mtintso became a Member of Parliament. In 1998, she became the founding chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality, moving from there to Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC, the sixth most powerful post in the party, before taking up posts as Ambassador to Cuba and then Italy. In every one of these positions, Mtintso says she has sought to put gender at the centre of the governance agenda:

'I had to make a statement right off from day one - to say that gender is going to be one of the things that we do and women are going to be at the centre... In Rome, my number two is a white male and he knows that when he speaks under the flag of South Africa that is held by a woman, he just has to throw in a sentence on women, wherever he might be.'

Mtintso's story reflects the sea change in women's role in public life in South Africa since the advent of democracy in 1994, when women's representation in parliament shot up from 2.7 per cent to 27 per cent, and has continued to rise to its current level of 44 per cent (Mtintso 1999b). According to the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disability, Lulu Xingwana, 'When women came into politics in 1994, we decided we had to make a difference. We organised ourselves into a woman's caucus, and infiltrated every committee. Women were expected to fail, so we came together to form a multiparty women's caucus to speak with one voice, for example on violence against women, HIV and AIDS, peace and stability, education'.

This chapter draws on research conducted by Gender Links in two seminal studies, *Ringling up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics* (2004), and *At the Coalface: Gender in Local Government in Southern Africa* (2007) as well as more recent desktop research and interviews with key informants. It explores the barriers to women's political participation in South Africa, as well as why

women's inclusion and participation is so crucial to democracy. Drawing on Mtintso's access-participation and transformation framework, the chapter explores the mechanisms that have been used to radically increase women's representation and participation at the local, provincial and national levels, as well as what difference this is making. The chapter concludes with a brief analysis of challenges and next steps.

2.2 What keeps women out of politics?

2.2.1 Social and cultural factors

Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs has said that the only truly non-racial institution in South Africa is patriarchy (Sachs 1990). Social and cultural factors are the single most important barrier to women's access to decision-making. They often continue to hamper the effectiveness of women, even when they have a foot in the door. This is reflected in the dual burdens of home and work that women in politics continue to bear; the open hostility in some public spaces towards women in decision-making (especially at the local level); and the difficult relationship that women in politics frequently have with the media.

2.2.2 The private–public dichotomy

No matter how gender sensitive decision-making structures have become, many women still find that there is a mismatch between the freedom they have found or created in the work place, and the patriarchal regimes at home.

In South Africa, Britton found that women are likely to move with their male politician husbands to Cape Town, but the reverse is not true for women politicians (Britton 1997). In her study of women in the South African parliament, Mtintso discovered that most women found 'political fulfilment at the expense of personal fulfilment'. They said even relatives, and especially in-laws, found it difficult to accept the idea of women going into parliament. They complained that marriages were breaking up, friends and children feeling abandoned. One woman had separated from her husband after he started to abuse her physically, and accuse her of having extra marital relations in Cape Town (Mtintso 1999a).

Former South African speaker of parliament, now the ANC's national chairperson, Baleka Mbete¹, says, 'it will take decades until women can sit back and say, "I should not worry; my husband is at home, he will take care of making sure that the groceries are there, that there is food for all". It's just a reality'.

2.2.3 Public scepticism and hostility

Although South Africa is becoming more accustomed to women in decision-making, public scepticism and hostility still surface in some quarters, and may

be undermining for women decision-makers. According to former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka:

'I actually distinctly remember sitting in a board meeting with one investment banker of one of our top banks and talking about the Mining Charter, and the different elements in it. And I mean he literally laughed 'ha ha ha', and I was like you know, I come from a mining background, I know a lot about mining, more than you will ever know.'

2.2.4 The media

Women's views and voices continue to be at best under-represented in the media, at worst ridiculed and distorted. Research conducted by Gender Links shows that women constituted a mere 24 per cent of news sources in election coverage in 2009; this was up from 10 per cent in 1999, but similar to the 23 per cent achieved in 2004. This shows that women's views and voices are still marginalised in elections (Lowe Morna et al. 2009). Describing her experience with the media, Mtintso recalls:

'My favourite is what I call "the roving microphone". I was part again of a group of men that were being interviewed in some decision-making structure, and I was almost in the middle. But the microphones were moving from my left to the right and I was just watching them as they moved from the left to the right, and to the left, to the right. And I think 30 minutes later watching these microphones, nobody was directing any questions to me, or the men next to me themselves were not allowing me to respond to any questions. There was an understanding amongst the journalists, women and men that these questions were meant for the men around me. On the last question then one of the female journalists brought the microphone to me and said, "Miss Mtintso, in your new responsibility, what are you going to do for women?"'

Gender Links' analysis of the 2009 elections reflected a host of subtle stereotypes. Examples include 'COPE's eager new girl on the block' (Lynda Odendaal) in *The Sunday Independent* (Ngalwa 2008); 'Woman with her heels on the ground' (Wendy Luhabe) in *The Sunday Independent* (Forde 2008); 'On campaign with superwoman' (Helen Zille) in the *Saturday Star* (Warby 2009) and 'Die-hard had to eat her words' (former Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka) in *The Sunday Independent* (Forde 2009).

Blatant gender stereotypes included the prominent coverage given to the leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance, Helen Zille, admitting that she used Botox (Huisman et al. 2008); and references to Zille as the 'poster girl'. During the swearing-in ceremony after the elections, the then Minister of Defence (now Minister of Public Service and Administration) Lindiwe Sisulu was said to have added 'a touch of glamour to the proceedings' (Smith 2009).

2.2.5 Institutional factors

Institutions can enhance the individuals that work in them, or marginalise them even further. Male-dominated political decision-making structures are often intimidating to women. They do not change overnight because women have arrived. Research at the national and local levels reveals several barriers to women's participation in parliament and councils. These range from formal (i.e. meeting times, language and lack of translation) to informal (i.e. sexist comments and innuendo, the way meetings are chaired and agendas set).

2.2.6 Lack of support from political parties

Some of the key internal factors that can help or hinder the effectiveness of women politicians include: democracy and democratic practices within the party, such as election processes for leadership, the style of leadership and who sits in leadership structures; exercise of power and power relations; the existence of a gender policy; and the history of the party, its culture, values, traditions, norms, programme and activities.

2.2.7 Political party allegiance

All politicians face dilemmas at one time or another over divergences between political party positions and their own convictions. Women in politics often feel these tensions more acutely because of the expectation that they 'represent women'. In South Africa, the Inkatha Freedom Party's Sue Vos wrote that:

'There is no doubt that the PR list system ensures that all politicians must remain popular with (mostly male) party bosses to survive. Male leadership also invariably selects which women are promoted within which party structures and within parliament. They decide who sits on what committee and who gets speaking time in the house, on what and when survival instincts triumph men are the game, they control the game' (Vos 1999: 108-109).

2.3 Why should women be in politics?

2.3.1 Equity

The United Nations Charter for Human Rights, the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) and other international instruments conclude that it is unjust to exclude women from politics, which in turn is central to decision-making. The Commonwealth Secretariat promotes gender equality as a human right and fundamental principle of the Commonwealth. It is also critical to Commonwealth goals of eradicating poverty, building resilient economies, harmonious communities and promoting sustainable development'.

During Gender Links' local government research, a ward committee member in the Emakhazeni District Council of Mpumalanga, South Africa, noted: 'We have come a long way from being oppressed as black people by the apartheid regime. We speak of living in a democratic society, but it appears as though this democracy is only for the benefit of men. Women are now being oppressed by their own men, who do not believe that we are capable of contributing meaningfully to the society in more ways than being child bearers'.

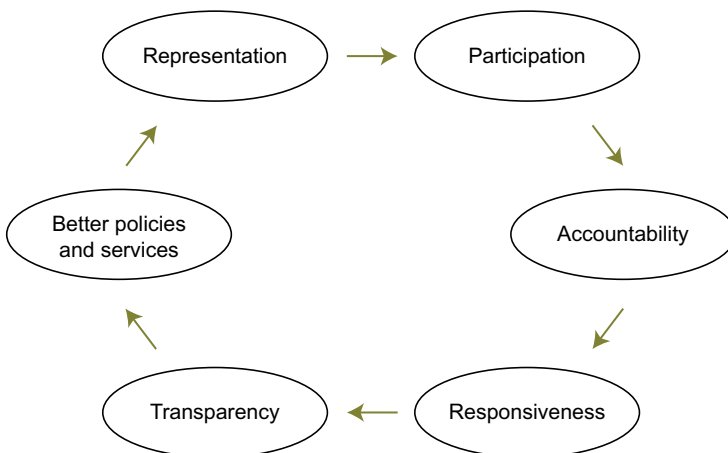
2.3.2 Efficacy

The BPfA argues: 'Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Achieving the goal of equal participation of women and men in decision-making will provide a balance that more accurately reflects the composition of society and is needed in order to strengthen democracy and promote its proper functioning' (United Nations 1995: paragraph 181).

The International Union of Local Authorities (IULA 1998) states that: 'Systematic integration of women augments the democratic basis, the efficiency and quality of the activities of local government. If local government is to meet the needs of both women and men, it must build on the experiences of both women and men'.

In a study on women in the South African legislature, Albertyn et al. (2002: 24-51) noted: 'Most international research has tended to concentrate on the mechanisms for getting women into parliament and on the barriers to full and equal participation faced by women within the institution. Less work has been done on the actual impact of women on the nature and work of legislated bodies. Not surprisingly, most of the research has been carried out in those countries with high numbers of women in parliament. Generally, it is suggested that greater numbers of women in legislative bodies have resulted

Figure 2.1 Cycle of Political Accountability



in increased attention to laws and policies dealing with families, women and children (Reynolds 1999; Lovenduski and Karam 1998). There is also some support for the idea that women can impact on the nature of the institution itself once they have a critical mass. Karam and Lovenduski (1998) note that women in Scandinavian legislatures at the national and local levels have influenced the nature of politics in a number of ways, including a greater prioritisation of family obligations and more accessible laws and debates'.

Their research began from the premise that 'in South Africa, the question is no longer whether women make a difference, but how much difference women can make' (Albertyn et al. 2002: 50). The research concluded that: 'The representation of women is not only politically and theoretically justifiable, but the evidence available about the working of parliament after 1994 suggests that a more representative parliament is a more effective institution' (Albertyn et al. 2002: 25).

As South Africa's Minister of Home Affairs, Naledi Pandor (then a Member of Parliament) put it when she launched the 50/50 campaign in Cape Town in 2002: 'The question is not whether women make a difference, but rather if society is democratic. If the answer is yes, then there should be women in all spectrums of society'.

2.4 Conceptual framework

This chapter builds on, and is informed by the conceptual framework first put forward by Mtintso (1999b: 35–52; 1999c: 33–51). This framework, which has been elaborated for the purposes of this chapter, is illustrated in Figure 2.2.

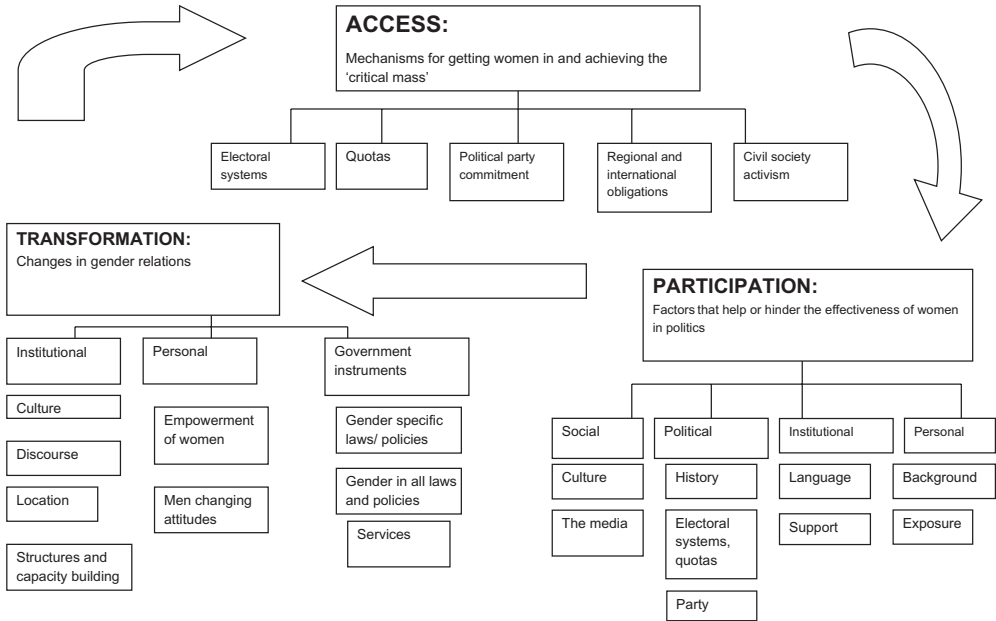
The crux of Mtintso's argument is that access and numbers are a prerequisite for, but do not guarantee, transformation. She argues that once women have entered political decision-making, it is necessary to remove the barriers to their effective participation. Only when women are present in significant numbers, and are able to participate effectively, are they likely to start 'ringing up the changes'.

2.4.1 Access and 'critical mass'

Of all the areas of decision-making, politics is the most public of spaces and among the most hostile for women to access. The world over, the only way in which this first and most basic barrier to women's political participation has ever been overcome is through special measures of some description, usually voluntary or legislated quotas.

A question that frequently arises in quota debates is the extent to which women have to be represented in specific numbers in order to make a difference. The 'critical mass' debate traces back to research by Danish political scientist, Drude Dahlerup, who declared: 'Don't expect us to make too much difference as long as we are only a few women in politics. It takes a critical mass of women to make a fundamental change in politics' (Dahlerup 1991: 10).

Figure 2.2 Conceptual framework



Initially, the Commonwealth, SADC and others set a 30 per cent target as the basic minimum required for women to make a difference. The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development calls on governments to strive for gender parity in *all* areas of decision-making by 2015.

2.4.2 Measuring women's access to decision-making in South Africa

South Africa does not have legislated or constitutional quotas. The ANC adopted a voluntary 30 per cent quota for women in 2002. Five years later in December 2007, the ANC took a decision to raise this to 50 per cent at both the national and local levels. Mtintso recalls: 'In 2002, [ANC women] lost the "not less than 50 per cent" debate. We then came back and got the "not less than 50 per cent" in 2007. So you can see the gains that were made the more we increased our numbers. By 1999 [women] had made strong contributions, including the body of the legislation that came out'.

Xingwana adds: 'While men (in the ANC) opposed the 30 per cent quota, we had a much easier ride with the 50 per cent in 2007. Men in the ANC and other political parties had no leg to stand on'.

Table 2.1 shows that, at 30 per cent, women are least well represented in the foreign service. Across political decision-making in South Africa, the 50 per cent target has only been achieved at the level of provincial premiers, followed by deputy ministers with 45 per cent women. However, in parliament, local government, cabinet, provincial cabinets and among chairs of portfolio committees, women now constitute 38 per cent to 44 per cent of the total.

Table 2.1 Gender and decision-making in South Africa

Area of political decision-making	% of women	% of men
Parliament	44	56
Premiers	55	45
Ministers	35	65
Deputy ministers	45	55
Members of the Executive Council (MEC)	40	60
Local government	38	62
Chairpersons of portfolio committees of the National Assembly	30	70
Foreign service (ambassadors)	30	70

Source: www.gov.za (accessed 19 February 2013)

2.4.3 Electoral systems

In South Africa, national elections are conducted on a simple PR basis, while local elections are conducted on a mixed system that involves both the PR and the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) systems. The mixed PR and FPTP system in South Africa is designed to harness the best of both electoral systems (with the PR system more friendly to women and minorities and the FPTP enhancing individual accountability) (Box 2.1).

The 2009 elections witnessed South Africa edge closer to the target set by the SADC Gender Protocol for achieving gender parity in all areas of decision-making by 2015. As a result of the combination of the PR system and the ANC's 50 per cent quota, women's representation in parliament increased from 33 per cent to 44 per cent.

Box 2.1 Proportional Representation versus First-Past-the-Post

In the **Proportional Representation** (PR) or 'list system' citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list. In an **open list system**, voters determine where candidates sit on the list. In a **closed list system**, the party determines where candidates sit on the list, although this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.

In the constituency or **First-Past-the-Post** (FPTP) system, citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament because in this system 'the winner takes all'.

A breakdown of the 2009 election results by party shows that the proportion of women in the ANC increased from 37 per cent in 2004 to 48 per cent in 2009. The main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA), led by a woman (Helen Zille), remained fiercely opposed to quotas, stating that it believed in 'fitness for purpose'. However, the proportion of DA women increased from 21 per cent to 30 per cent in what has sometimes been referred to as the 'snowball' effect of the ANC quota. Zille came under heavy fire from the media and gender activists for failing to appoint any women to the provincial cabinet of the Western Cape – the only province won by the opposition in the last elections. This added credence to those calling for a legislated quota on the basis that gender equality in decision-making is a constitutional principle that cannot be left to the whims of political parties.

The local elections in 2011, in which women's representation slipped back from 40 per cent to 38 per cent as a result of the ANC's overall majority declining, added momentum to this call. Table 2.2 summarises gender and local government election results over the four municipal elections since 1995. The table shows steady progress in the first three elections, with women's representation increasing from 19 per cent in 1995 to 29 per cent in 2000, and then up further to 40 per cent after the ANC adopted a 50/50 quota in 2006. Of particular significance, in 2006 women's representation increased in ward seats (where women traditionally do not do as well as in PR seats) from 17 per cent in 2000 to 37 per cent in 2006. The decline in women's representation in ward seats from 37 per cent in 2006 to 33 per cent in 2011, and the corresponding overall decline of women's representation by two percentage points is a blow for the 50/50 campaign.

What is interesting, and in keeping with the DA's argument that women in the party are accorded seats on merit rather than through quotas, is that the DA achieved a higher proportion (36%) women in ward seats than the ANC (34%). The local elections witnessed Patricia de Lille (formerly leader of the Independent Democrats) joining the DA, resulting in two women being the face of the opposition party. However, the local elections again witnessed a war of words between Zille and the ANC over her having an all-male cabinet in the Western Cape, where she is premier, after de Lille moved from the provincial cabinet to become mayor of Cape Town.

Table 2.2 Gender and local government in South Africa

Year	% women (ward)	% women (PR)	% women (overall)
1995	11	28	19
2000	17	38	29
2006	37	42	40
2011	33	43	38

Source: Gender Links 2011:4

While gender did not feature prominently in the campaigns, it did feature in the 'mud-slinging' that followed the local elections. Referring to the DA's female leadership but lack of women in the Western Cape provincial cabinet, the ANC said that the DA saw women as only fit to be 'poster girls'. Zille hit back by saying: 'I am a woman, so is the mayor of Cape Town. So is the DA's national spokesperson. So are many of our top shadow ministers. So is half the mayoral committee in the City of Cape Town' (Phakathi 2012). She noted that the ANC had never had a woman leader and had failed to put up women mayoral candidates.

2.4.4 Pressure for a legislated quota

With confidence in the commitment of political parties to ensuring women's equal participation in decision-making waning, a strong alliance for legislated quotas is gaining momentum in South Africa. This group of activists and independent bodies argues that gender equality is too important to be left in the hands of warring political parties that place their self-interest before fundamental cornerstones of the constitution.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) strategised on how to push forward the campaign for 50/50 quotas in South African electoral laws during a roundtable discussion on International Women's Day on 8 March 2012.

The campaign has recently received renewed interest after the Independent Electoral Commission's Chair, Pansy Tlakula, spoke out about the need for a legislated quota system to achieve parity in women's representation in the country. The Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disability also addressed the issue in green paper discussions, which led to the drafting of a Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (see section 2.6 on transformation).

The Local Government Municipal Structures Act, 1998 (Act 117 of 1998) makes provision for the equal representation of women and men in political party lists and ward committees; however, the act does not make this mandatory. The Electoral Act, 1998 (Act 73 of 1998) requires every registered party and candidate to respect the rights of women and to communicate freely with parties and candidates, facilitate full and equal participation of women in political activities, ensure free access for women to all public political meetings, marches, demonstrations, rallies and other public political events. Yet the act falls short of legislating a quota.

The South African Women's Legal Centre (WLC) tabled compelling legal research indicating that the principle of equality and positive discrimination is firmly established in the country's constitution. In addition, it noted that the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act imposes a positive obligation on the state to enact equality legislation – and on political

parties to develop equity plans. The WLC tabled specific recommendations for amendments to the Electoral Act, Municipal Electoral Act and Municipal Structures Act, including provisions and sanctions for non-compliance.

Ironically, as South Africa prepared for the 2011 local elections, the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities, Lulu Xingwana, was putting the finishing touches to the Gender Equality Bill, which would result in punitive measures for companies and individuals who do not meet the government's gender equality targets. 'The bill on gender equality [which was due to be enacted by March 2013] will enforce the 50/50. We will have to amend the electoral act', Xingwana said. Asked what response this has received in parliament, she responded: 'Political parties did not speak up [against the bill] as we debated. They all want to look good, so they are not fighting it openly'.

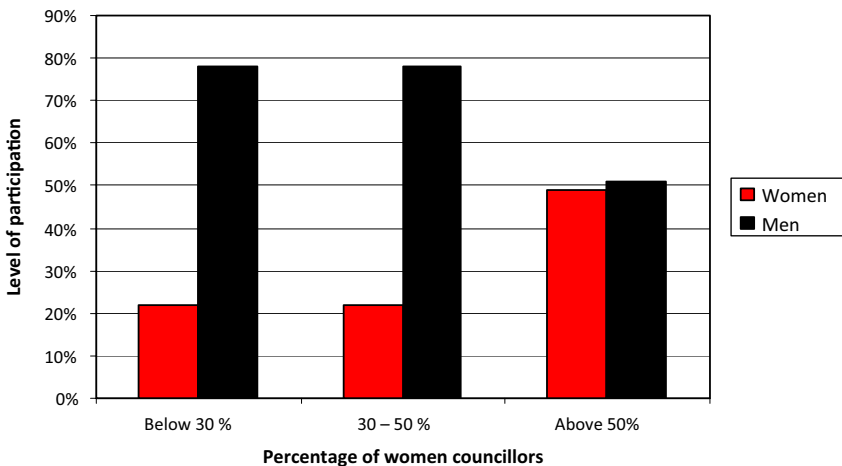
2.5 Participation

Beyond gender parity by 2015, the SADC Gender Protocol calls on governments to devise policies, strategies and programmes to enhance women's effective participation in decision-making. This section explores the importance of the 'critical mass' in giving a voice to women, and the importance of women occupying leadership positions within decision-making structures and claiming new spaces in previously male-dominated structures.

2.5.1 Numbers matter!

Figure 2.3, taken from the Gender Links study *At the Coalface: Gender and Local Government in Southern Africa*, shows that where women constituted below 30 per cent of the councillors in a quantitative survey of who spoke, women

Figure 2.3 Level of participation versus percentage of women in councils



Source: Lowe Morna and Tolmay (2007)

spoke 21 per cent of the time. Where women constituted 30 per cent to 50 per cent of councillors, they spoke 22 per cent of the time (not much different to when they constituted below 30%). However, when women constituted more than half of the participants, they spoke almost as much as men. The conclusion drawn from this finding is that the 'critical mass' is indeed not 30 per cent but gender parity (Morna and Tolmay 2007: 144).

Council meeting observations in Johannesburg, which has achieved gender parity both in the council and mayoral committee, reflected high levels of participation by women. More women than men attended the meeting observed in the City of Johannesburg, one of the few that provides interpreters. The agenda included the budget and street names.

Street names are a source of concern for women, who have found that in emergencies they are not able to direct emergency services because of the absence of streets names – especially in the former black townships. Compared to many of the other meetings observed, the researchers noted the confidence with which women participated and the substantive nature of the debates in Johannesburg. The fact that more women than men attended the meeting (suggesting quite a few absentee male councillors) also suggested a higher level of commitment on the part of the women councillors (Morna and Tolmay 2006: 144).

2.5.2 Positions occupied by women within political decision-making

In research on women in Western European parliaments, Lovenduski found that: 'When gatekeepers are forced to admit women, they may still manage to keep them at the bottom of hierarchies once they are admitted. This, it appears, is what happened in Europe. A generally higher proportion of women in legislatures, which has failed to be reproduced in executive bodies, are an indicator of such a pattern' (Lovenduski 1986: 241).

2.5.3 Political parties

Table 2.3 shows that following the ANC's Mangaung Congress in December 2012, women still only occupy a third of the top party positions, even though the party has a 50 per cent quota for women in decision-making. Women do not occupy either of these top posts. The ANC boasts many senior women with

Table 2.3 Women and men in top party structures in South Africa

Party	Head		2nd top position		3rd top position		4th top position		5th top position		6th top position		Total (women)	Total (men)	% women	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F				
ANC	1		1			1	1			1			1	2	4	33
DA		1		1	1		1			1			1	3	3	50

Source: ANC and DA websites (accessed 19 February 2013)

impeccable credentials, such as former Minister of Home Affairs, Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, who now heads the African Union and two former women Deputy Presidents, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka (now Executive Director, UN Women International) and Baleka Mbete (now ANC national chairperson). Yet none of these women have ever been seriously touted for the top posts in the party. At the Mangaung conference, the ANC Women's League backed the incumbent President Jacob Zuma, a polygamist whose gender credentials fall far short of his rival in the party elections, Kgalema Montlanthe, who garnered only 25 per cent of the vote.

Ironically the DA, which is opposed to quotas, has 50 per cent women in its top structures including the party leader Hellen Zille, re-elected at her party congress in December 2012. The DA has formed an alliance with the Independent Democrats, also led by a woman – Patricia de Lille. Asked how she felt about this as an ANC stalwart, Mtintso responded: 'It is very embarrassing! I was driving in the Eastern Cape a while ago, and I saw the three photos [of the DA leaders]. They were so beautiful! Whoever is doing their PR just knows how to do it. ANC men call them "the Margaret Thatchers", but that sidesteps the issue. It is the death of the politics, especially gender politics in the ANC. It should not be that our society is defined by three conservative women. Where is the ANC, with its supposedly progressive policies? We have men and women that are equally capable. I have said to the ANC that personally I will know that we have reached equality when I see as many stupid women as there are stupid men in the leadership!'

2.5.4 Top leadership

During the second term of former President Thabo Mbeki (2004–08), Mlambo-Ngcuka became the first woman to hold the post of Deputy President. Under the brief caretaker presidency of Kgalema Montlanthe in 2008–09, Mbete served as the Deputy President of South Africa. Prior to this position, she served as the speaker of parliament. Pundits speculated that President Jacob Zuma would apply the 50/50 principle and appoint Baleka Mbete as Deputy President. On the contrary, he opted for Kgalema Motlanthe. Says Women's Minister, Xingwana: 'Women are ready for the top positions. It is men who are not ready. If we can produce a Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma, surely this is evidence enough that we are ready for top office'.

2.5.5 Parliament

According to Mtintso, 'Another disappointing area concerns the leadership of parliament. The past two speakers were women. There is now (for the first time) a male speaker, Max Sisulu, who joked that he is likely to be referred to from time to time as Madame Speaker! The ANC has retained the chairman of the National Council of Provinces (NCoP) Mniwa Mahlangu, a man, [who] took over from a long line of women leaders. All the leaders of the 13 parties that secured seats in parliament, except for the Independent Democrat's Patricia de

Lille, are men. This leaves Deputy Speaker, Nomaindia Mfeketo, as the only woman in the top hierarchy of parliament. It also places challenges on this key institution to be mindful of gender parity considerations in the choice of leadership for portfolio committees'.

2.5.6 Diplomacy

Women now comprise about 30 per cent of all South Africa's ambassadors. Although this is still well below parity, this places South Africa among the top ten globally, where diplomacy is still very much a 'men's club'. According to Mtintso, the major change came about during Dlamini-Zuma's tenure as minister of foreign affairs from 1999 to 2009: 'She made the push for women to enter politics. The conditions of diplomats are very difficult for women, especially married women, and then it becomes a revolving door – they come in, they stay for the four years – then they go out and they don't come back – and there is no consistent approach to make sure that when you lose one you also put another one in'.

2.5.7 Premierships

The one area of top leadership that shows gender parity is possible is the premiership of the nine South African provinces. South Africa has five female premiers and four male premiers. The victorious ANC, which won eight out of nine provinces during the April 2009 elections, applied the 50/50 principle to this area of decision-making. The DA won the Western Cape, and Helen Zille subsequently became the leader of the province.

2.5.8 Gender benders in parliament and cabinet

In addition to where women sit within the hierarchy of decision-making structures, an important consideration is in which areas of decision-making they are to be found. Globally, women tend to predominate in the 'soft' committees of parliament, councils and cabinet. Women are scarce in the 'hard' areas like finance, economics, security and defence. There is a debate on the implications of this gender division of labour across the different sectors of governance. One view is that it is important to have women in the 'hard' areas. Others argue that the distinction itself cannot be justified. Norwegian analysts have made the point that describing the areas in which women predominate as 'soft' devalues these important areas, like education, health and social expenditure, which in fact account for the bulk of expenditure (Karam and Lovenduski 1998: 136).

Table 2.4, on the distribution of women in the parliamentary committees of South Africa, shows that women lead 11 of the 31 portfolio committees of the National Assembly (this excludes the portfolio committees of the National Council of Provinces and the Joint Portfolio Committees). At about 30 per cent, the proportion of committees led by women falls short of parity. However 7 out of 11 (63%) of these committees (marked in italics in Table 2.4) comprise

Table 2.4 Portfolio committees in the South African parliament led by women

Portfolio committee	Chairperson of committee
Arts and Culture	Thandile Babalwa Sunduza
Basic Education	Hope Helene Malgas
<i>Economic Development</i>	<i>Elsie Mmathulare Coleman</i>
<i>Home Affairs</i>	<i>Maggie Margaret Maunye</i>
Human Settlements	Beauty Nomhle Dambuza
<i>Public Service and Administration</i>	<i>Joyce Clementine Moloi-Moropa</i>
<i>Public Works</i>	<i>Manana Catherine Mabuza</i>
<i>Trade and Industry</i>	<i>Joanmariae Louise Fubbs</i>
<i>Transport</i>	<i>Nozabelo Ruth Bhengu</i>
<i>Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs</i>	<i>Dumisile Goodness Mhelengethwa</i>
Women, Youth, Children, Disabilities	Dorothy Mapula Ramodibe

Source: http://www.parliament.gov.za/live/content.php?Item_ID=137 (accessed December 2012)

traditionally male dominated areas, showing that women are no longer just confined to arts, culture, basic education and women's affairs. Their voices extend to economic development, home affairs, public service administration, public works, trade and industry, transport, co-operative governance and traditional affairs.

Following cabinet reshuffles after the 2009 elections, women have dropped from 40 per cent to 35 per cent of cabinet. However, of the 13 women ministers, at least 10 (76%, marked in italics in Table 2.5) head ministries that are heavily male dominated in other parts of the world. These include agriculture, communications, defence, energy, home affairs, foreign affairs, labour, mineral resources, public services and water. Following the storm over her

Table 2.5 Ministries led by women in South Africa

Ministry portfolio	Minister
<i>Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</i>	<i>Ms T Joemat Pettersson</i>
Basic Education	Ms M A Totshekgwa
<i>Communications</i>	<i>Ms D Pule</i>
<i>Defence and Military Veterans</i>	<i>Ms N N Mapisa Nqakula</i>
<i>Energy</i>	<i>Ms E D Peters</i>
<i>Home Affairs</i>	<i>Ms G N M Pandor</i>
<i>International Relations and Cooperation</i>	<i>Ms M E Nkoana-Mashabane</i>
<i>Labour</i>	<i>Ms M Oliphant</i>
<i>Mineral Resources</i>	<i>Ms S Shabungu</i>
<i>Public Service and Administration</i>	<i>Dr L N Sisulu</i>
Social Development	Ms B O Dlamini
<i>Water and Environmental Affairs</i>	<i>Ms B E Molewa</i>
Women, Children and People with Disabilities	Ms L Xingwana

Source: www.gov.za (accessed December 2012)

provincial cabinet, Zille announced a shadow cabinet with 9 out of 32 (28%) women, with a similar proportion of shadow deputy ministers. Five of the nine women shadow ministers work in non-traditional areas including home affairs, justice and constitutional development, police, public enterprises, science and technology. The overall proportion of DA women in the shadow cabinet is, however, considerably below that of the ANC.

2.5.9 Support structures

Support structures play a key role in enhancing women's participation in decision-making. These may be informal, such as women's caucuses within and or across parties, or formal, such as portfolio committees on women. South African women formed a Parliamentary Women's Group (PWG) soon after the 1994 elections. The name itself is significant: opposition parties did not want the body to be called a caucus, as their male colleagues would see this as 'selling out' party interests. According to Xingwana, this played an important role in the early days as women sought to navigate new corridors of power. However the PWG soon broke up into women's caucuses within parties. While South Africa had an Office on the Status of Women in the President's Office, it had a Joint Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women in parliament. With the creation of a stand-alone ministry, there is now a portfolio committee on Women, Children and People with Disabilities.

2.5.10 Effective participation: women finding their voice

In her 1999 study, Mtintso found that some women Members of Parliament (MPs) she interviewed in 1995, who rarely participated and said they found parliament overwhelming, stated in 1999 that they enjoyed their work and had become more involved in parliamentary activities. The reasons they cited boiled down to demystifying the institution, feeling valued, feeling that they knew and felt strongly about issues such as gender and the plight of women in rural areas, as well as the fact that they had proprietary knowledge (Mtintso 1995; 1999a).

In 1995 Lydia Kompe, an ANC MP with roots in the Rural Women's Movement and who served two terms in parliament, told Mtintso: 'This place gives me the creeps. It is unfriendly and unwelcoming. It was meant to make people feel the power even in the building itself. I feel overwhelmed and completely disempowered. I cannot see myself making any input never mind impact here. I feel lost. I do not think I will even finish the term of office' (Mtintso 1995). However, in follow up research in 1998 Kompe reflected: 'When I came here I felt out of place, isolated, with no education and I was just bombarded by everything. I could not participate. I was completely powerless, despite the fact that I was in a powerful institution. I only started to grasp most of the things in 1996. I had also chosen committees where I was at least comfortable and which were not that technical. Now I can stand up and challenge any one, and especially the opposition, with confidence. I realise that the lack of confidence

had shackled me for a long time, made me withdraw and made me bitter against those who were privileged with the know-how. All that resentment that built up has now disappeared with the confidence that I have' (Mtintso 1999a).

During the research study, *Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics*, Gender Links followed Mum Lydia, as she is fondly known to her constituency. Attesting to her effectiveness on the ground, one of her women constituents said: 'like Moses who delivered the Israelites to Canaan, she is taking us to a new land'.

Councillor Sinah Gwebu has been a ward councillor in the City of Johannesburg since 2000. When she started she set herself a target, 'To prove to the male councillors and others that I could deliver'. During Gender Links' study, *At the Coalface: Gender in Local Government*, she said that she is more confident because of the support offered to her by the Multi-party Women's Caucus (MWC) and a unique capacity building project that she participated in, the Gender, Local Government and Communications pilot project, undertaken with Gender Links and the University of Witwatersrand from October 2004 to May 2005.

'I am more networked than before; I know more NGOs, more government departments and their various roles that all these stakeholders play in society. Also I have learned more about policy-making and implementation and the processes that are involved in coming up with policies. Personally I have gained knowledge that nobody can take away from me. I now have experience in how to deal with my own issues as an individual.'

A male focus group in the Alexandra township of Johannesburg spoke warmly about their interaction with ward councillor Gwebu: 'She has proven to us that women are capable in the same way as men. It is from that perspective that I believe that as a community we need to learn to be respectful and accommodative as well as open minded with regards to the participation of women in local government', said one of the men (Lowe Morna and Tolmay 2007: 162).

2.6 Transformation

Representation and participation in decision-making allows for the full spectrum of voices to be heard, experiences and values to be centred, and for citizens to take responsibility for and change their own lives. Once citizens who had previously been reduced to non-citizens bring 'other' views, paradigms begin to change. Those who had always spoken on behalf of the others, assuming they know what the others feel, are challenged. Various myths are exploded and a new understanding begins.

Thus when women enter decision-making, the concept, content and form of politics and governance, and the way that they are practised, begin to change. Power relations shift. Outcomes begin to be informed by the new paradigm.

Yet there is a constant struggle, because the very same institutions bringing about change also need to be transformed.

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, the transformation in gender relations can be measured in three areas: institutional change; personal change (for women and men); and the extent to which gender is integrated into key tools of government including laws, policies and services.

2.6.1 Institutional change

Being able to transform society demands that women start by being able to transform the institutions of power that they find themselves in. Former South African Speaker, Baleka Mbete, says: 'Before you can even start talking about transformation, you have to redesign the tool for doing so, because the tool is not suitable. It would be a lot easier if women had originally been part of constructing parliaments. Some of these are everyday things like the family unfriendly hours that parliament sits, which became a habit when women did not even feature in the minds of decision-makers'. In South Africa, the sitting times of parliament have been changed and the parliamentary calendar aligned to school holidays. There is an effort to ensure that meetings do not extend beyond 6pm.

2.6.2 Women's agency

A key indicator of change is the extent to which women begin to 'flex their muscles' within decision-making structures. For example, Thenjiwe Mtintso recalled how, when she served as Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC, she had to call local branch officials to inform them that she was changing their lists as they had not complied with the ANC's 'zebra' requirement for women on party lists in the 2002 local government elections. Had she not occupied this post, she believes it is unlikely the party would have translated this principle into practice (Box 2.2).

2.6.3 Men taking up gender causes

An important measure of change is the extent to which men begin to champion gender causes as result of a 'critical' mass of women being in decision-making. Both Mtintso and Xingwana recall the fierce battles within the ANC to get the 30 per cent quota adopted. Yet by the time the fight for the 50 per cent quota got underway in 2007, the difficult arguments had been won: 'No one could really speak up against the principle', Xingwana said. What is important, according to Mtintso, is that in the course of the debates ANC men challenged their own deeply ingrained patriarchal values.

During the research study, *Ringling up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics*, the late Kader Asmal said the quota debate in the ANC in 1991 caused him to stand back and think about why women are so under-represented in public life. A constitutional lawyer who played an important role in drafting South Africa's constitution and went on to become Minister of Education,

Box 2.2 When you have the power, use it

Former Deputy President of South Africa, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, recalls the night-time game drive on the back of a pickup truck in the Kruger National Park, after a meeting of the President's Business Advisory Council. 'If I got mauled', she asked a former aide, 'what would I tell my mother in KwaZulu-Natal? That Phumzile got attacked searching for lions in the middle of the night!?' ... 'There are enough lions in politics', reasoned South Africa's pragmatic second-in-command, 'without having to go to the Kruger Park to look for more!'

When President Thabo Mbeki appointed her to be his deputy in June 2005, following the dismissal of former Deputy President, Jacob Zuma, Mlambo-Ngcuka stepped into the inner lion's den of South African politics. Conspiracy theories hung heavily in the air, with some alleging that this formed part of a game plan that began with Mlambo-Ngcuka's husband, Bulelani, then director of the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) and investigating a case of corruption that eventually led to Zuma being charged.

Mlambo-Ngcuka served as Deputy President of South Africa from 2005 to 2008. She was the first woman to hold the position and at that point the highest-ranking woman in the history of South Africa.

When President Nelson Mandela first asked her to serve as deputy minister of trade and industry in 1994 she responded: 'I don't know anything about that! I asked him to give me a day to gather my thoughts. I believed that much as we should make ourselves available to govern, we should also not be reckless and risk the reputation of the institution you are supposed to advance. I did not want to be over confident. I have never regarded myself as being capable of being a token. So I had to ask myself honestly: can I do this? I said, I don't think I know enough about this, but what I do know is that I have the capacity to learn, and learn fast'.

With her motto, 'If you have the power, use it', Mlambo-Ngcuka left a gender footprint in all her portfolios. As deputy minister of trade and industry, she started the South African Women Entrepreneurs Network (SAWEN) and Technology for Women in Business (TWIB) Forum. As minister of mines, she championed the Mining Charter, which sets targets and dates for achieving a quarter ownership by blacks and 10 per cent ownership by women. As Deputy President, Mlambo-Ngcuka reached out to women with her 'shared economic growth' agenda, which she called a 'Paradigm shift, so that we all begin to see that contributing to the development of South Africa makes business sense'.

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Those who worked closely with Mlambo-Ngcuka confirm that she did not regard the empowerment of women as a mere frill. CEO of Mujoli Resources, Nonkqubela Mazwai, who worked as a consultant at the Ministry of Minerals and Energy, verifying that the requirements of the Mining Charter were being met, says Mlambo-Ngcuka never compromised on the 10 per cent stake for women. She recalls a case in which a businessman asked the then minister what she expected him to do: bring in a busload of women, with no skills or experience, and add them to his company? Looking back at him with a straight face, but exuding her usual charm, Mlambo-Ngcuka responded: 'I am sure we can make a plan'.

Mlambo-Ngcuka resigned as Deputy President following the recall of President Mbeki by the ANC in 2008. Today, she is the Executive Director of UN Women International and an accomplished businesswoman. Asked to reflect on her 14 years in public office she responded, 'This whole thing of empowerment of women is really not a "cute" thing as sometimes people make it out. It is fundamental for survival of normal society. I cannot imagine a government without women!'

Asmal said: 'There are three core values of the constitution: equality, freedom and dignity. There is no space in that for denying women a place. The very nature of democracy requires that equal opportunities be created for all. Strategies for redressing imbalances are vital. I have come to understand that gender equality is a form of emancipation for men'.

Councillor Richard Vusi Lukhele from Umjindi in the Mpumalanga province of South Africa believes that there are two kinds of male councillors: 'There are men who in their homes are used to women playing the submissive and sometimes complacent roles. These men have a difficulty in accepting women as their peers and as their superiors, in committee's for example. On the other hand you have got your men who live with women whom they view as key partners in decision-making at home. These men in my experience have not had a problem with accepting the concept of women's empowerment and participation in the workplace'.

An interesting development over the last few years according to Xingwana is that men are now organising their own forums. For example, the South African Police Service has a men's forum whose slogan is 'not in our names'. There are also several examples of men championing key pieces of gender-related legislation (Box 2.3).

2.7 Changes in policies and laws

Table 2.6 summarises the broad range of constitutional, legal, regional and international commitments that South Africa has made to gender equality

Box 2.3 The man who championed South Africa's Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act²

One of the most hotly debated pieces of legislation in the first post-apartheid parliament, the South African Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act (CPTA) is also one of the world's most liberal abortion laws.

Key provisions of the act are that:

- abortion should be available to all women, upon request, up to 14 weeks;
- from 14 to 24 weeks, abortion should be available under certain conditions; and
- the state should provide information on abortion, pre- and post-counselling.

A divisive bill that came about as a result of some women in parliament and civil society lobbying and advocating for its passage, it was actually a man – Dr Abe Nkomo, then Chair of the Portfolio Committee on Health who championed the bill.

Nkomo attributes his commitment to two factors: as a medical practitioner, he saw 'young women at the prime of their lives decimated by the effects of back street interventions'; the party had also taken a position recognising the right of women to make reproductive choices.

Nkomo added: 'Gender cannot be the sole preserve of women. It is the responsibility of the whole society, with women as champions assisted by men who are committed to the cause'.

since 1994. Albertyn, Hassim and Meintjes observed: 'It seems that women's presence in committees may play a crucial watchdog function, serving to maintain a consciousness of gender issues, even if no real analysis emanates from the committee.... In South Africa the question is no longer whether women can make a difference to Parliament, but rather how much difference they can make' (Albertyn et al. 2002: 50).

According to Xingwana: 'We have passed a plethora of laws – [on] domestic violence, the Maintenance Act, Choice of Termination of Pregnancy, boxing and sports. These would not have seen the light of day if women had not been there'.

The Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Draft Bill, championed by Xingwana, seeks to consolidate these gains through a legislative framework for the empowerment of women embodying the values of human dignity, the advancement of human rights and freedoms, non-racialism and non-sexism.

Table 2.6 South Africa's commitments to gender equality

The constitution	
Gender mentioned	Section 1, non sexism; Section 9 prohibits discrimination based on sex, pregnancy, marital status; Section 12, bodily integrity; Section 27, reproductive health
Provides for affirmative action	YES
Customary law	Section 15 (3) customary and religious provisions consistent with constitution
CEDAW	
Ratification – no reservations	YES
SADC Gender Protocol	
Signed and ratified	YES, August 2008 and August 2010
Employment	
Affirmative action	Employment Equity Act
Maternity	Covered by Basic Conditions of Employment Code under Labour Relations and Employment Equity Act
Sexual harassment	
Gender violence	
Domestic violence act	Domestic Violence Act 1998
Sexual Offences Act	YES
Rape in marriage	YES
AZT to survivors of rape	YES
Sexual and reproductive rights	
Abortion	Choice of Termination of Pregnancy Act: based on a woman's right to choose
Family law	
Marriage	Recognition of Customary Marriages
Inheritance	Amendment to Customary Law of Succession

The act provides for women's empowerment and gender mainstreaming in the public sector, private sector and civil society.

The Gender Equality Bill aims for, 'substantive gender equality' as opposed to just 'gender equality'. The latter is defined as: equal recognition, enjoyment or exercise by a person, regardless of his or her gender, of human fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil and any other aspect of life. The former is defined as: gender equality in practise (de facto) and in law (de jure).

In an excellent example of the SADC Gender Protocol at work, the draft bill has a 50 per cent target for women in all areas of decision-making, as provided in the protocol. If the Draft Gender Equality Bill becomes law, the minister

will be able to issue a directive to ensure that the 50 per cent target is met by requiring that all entities:

- set targets for such representation and participation;
- build women's capacity to participate;
- develop support mechanisms for women;
- show progress towards the elimination of discrimination against women;
- adopt measures, including special measures, as envisaged in section 9(2) of the constitution to encourage, improve and reward women empowerment; and
- disaggregate gender-, age- and disability-related data on women's empowerment.

The bill reinforces the rights of sexual minorities and recognises the human rights abuses and violations they face because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. South Africa is the only country in SADC that recognises the rights of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender/transsexual (LGBT) and intersexed community.

There are specifications around procedural issues and a list of 18 applicable pieces of legislation that the bill affects ranging from the Labour Relations Act, Schools Act, Employment Equity, Recognition of Customary Marriages and Electoral Acts, among others. Until gender equality is achieved in a particular sector, the bill states that it is not unfair discrimination to implement special measures to eliminate discrimination against, or to empower, women, pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding – especially those who have been directly or indirectly disadvantaged, such those who live in rural areas or informal settlements.

2.8 Changing lives through service delivery

Lulu Xingwana insists however that, 'It doesn't matter how many women we have in parliament, how many women we have in cabinet, as long as our women in the rural areas, and our women in the informal settlements remain poor, we cannot say we have achieved. South Africa is two worlds in one. The majority of our women have high levels of illiteracy. They do not have access to resources. They have been left out of Black Economic Empowerment initiatives.' Xingwana has personally sought to make the link between policy and practice in her various portfolios (Box 2.4).

2.9 Challenges

South Africa has come a long way since 1994, both in bringing women into decision-making and promoting gender-responsive governance. There are, however, still several concerns with regard to sustainability. A report on

Box 2.4 From the margins to the mainstream

It's 10 December 2012, the closing day of the Sixteen Days of Activism campaign in South Africa. Maureen Magubane and Zandile Sibiyi are busy farmers and senior executives in the Women in Rural Development (WARD) network in KwaZulu-Natal, but they would not miss this day for anything – to support the Minister of Women, Children and People with Disability, Lulu Xingwana, as she launches South Africa's first National Gender-Based Violence Council.

In her former role as Minister of Agriculture, Xingwana 'found' these two women and many like them, pulling them in from the margins into mainstream economic life in South Africa.

Once a farm hand, Magubane now co-ordinates a co-operative of 40 families on a 853 hectare former-white farm in the most rural of South Africa's provinces. In 2009, she won the national female Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Sibiyi has risen from a teacher earning 65,000 rand (R) a year to a sugar farmer running a family business with a R7 million a year turnover.

WARD – Xingwana's brainchild – has a membership of more than 8,000 in the province. Commenting on the minister's initiative, which has brought sea changes to the lives of many women in the province, Sibiyi says: 'I have never seen such a person with the passion to work with women, especially rural women: that love and support'.

Magubane adds: 'If you see where I come from you would not believe this is me. I come from the deep rural areas, where there is no newspaper. [Minister Xingwana] got me from there. Without women like her we would never be where we are today. I am very proud of her. I would like her to be the President!'

Both women are beneficiaries of South Africa's carefully considered land resettlement scheme run on a 'willing buyer, willing seller' basis, and of a Ministry of Agriculture that has made it a point to ensure that women benefit. Before Xingwana became Minister of Agriculture, Thoko Didiza, a strong women's rights activist, held the post. Tina Joemat-Petterson, also a woman, is currently Minister of Agriculture.

For Magubane, who has gone from being farm worker to farm manager, this proved a tumultuous experience: the former white owner of the farm left with reluctance and disdain for those being resettled, the poor farm workers who had served him in the past. 'It was a long fight. We were in all the newspapers', she says. Sibiyi, on the other hand, had an empathetic transition. The government provided a deposit and soft loan, and the former owner, 'served as a mentor; he was very keen to help with skills transfer'.

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Both women have embraced new learning. In 2008, Magubane went on a government-sponsored tour to Japan where she learned about the One Village, One Product initiative. She started the One Home, One Garden project on the farm. 'From farm worker to farm manager – what can I say? As a manager, I have had to learn to do a lot of paperwork. I knew the job, but now see the other side, the business side'. Recently, the co-operative successfully tendered to provide schools with indigenous chickens and baked goods. 'I have never doubted my own ability', reflects Magubane, 'I have always believed that as a woman I will make it'.

Sibiya started off with a 163-hectare farm, which she runs with her family. This has since grown to 193 hectares. Government advice and extension services have made it possible for her to join the predominantly white and male sugar barons in the province. In addition to technical skills, she says she has 'gained the confidence and skills to negotiate, to express myself in such a way that the next person can understand'.

women in South Africa's parliament noted: 'Our study points to the need for a formal methodology to be adopted by parliament for integrating gender issues into the legislative process. A methodology of this nature would seek to ensure the specific impact of all policies and laws on women are considered in a consistent and structured way in parliament. The centrality of gender and race requires that they be dealt with in a systematic fashion by parliament' (Serote et al. 1996).

The National Treasury dropped the Women's Budget Initiative (WBI) when the two-year Commonwealth pilot project came to an end. Disagreements about defence spending in the era of HIV and AIDS led to Pregs Govender, former Chair of the Joint Committee on the Quality of Life and Status of Women, abstaining from voting on allocations for a controversial arms deal. She later resigned from parliament.

Mtintso comments: 'In my view, we have been lacking in government a coherent gender policy that runs across. It has tended to be a hit and miss. The advantage of having women is that in most cases where there are women located we get more hits – but not in all places. The advantage of having many women is that you are likely to have more hits'.

Xingwana adds: 'Most ministries have a gender focal point and they make an effort to mainstream gender. The problem is allocation of resources. We need to work much harder on gender-responsive budgeting'.

A particular concern going forward is the weak state of the national gender machinery. Previously the Office on the Status of Women resided in the presidency, where it could perform a cross-cutting function. Following his

election in 2009, President Jacob Zuma announced a Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Disability, on par with other line functions.

Says Xingwana: 'We have done well on the legal and policy fronts. But it is still a patriarchal world. The challenge is implementation and lack of co-ordination of programmes. We have NGOs and government departments doing their own thing. Most of the time they do not speak to each other'. On December 10 - Human Rights Day - 2012, the ministry launched the National Council on Gender Violence. 'The aim is to bring together government departments - justice, the police, social development, health and leading NGOs, as well as traditional leaders to fight this scourge with one voice,' said Xingwana.

The conversion of the Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Affairs to the Ministry of Co-operative Governance and Traditional Affairs, following President Zuma's election, and the Traditional Authorities Bill that contradicts the Gender Equality Bill in key areas, have fuelled further concerns that progressive gender gains in South Africa are under threat. 'If you've got a President that really carries the flag seriously, and is committed (on gender), you are likely to go far', says Mtintso. 'But if the President himself is not driven on gender, no matter how well the organisation works, you are not likely to go far. The role of the President and those that are in leadership is critical. When we negotiated the constitution, the question of gender, especially the question of polygamy, was discussed. The compromise we [gender activists] accepted was that the constitution would protect the woman who is already in a polygamous relationship, who has no rights, especially when it comes to inheritance. There was never a thought that we would be *promoting* polygamy!'

Mtintso decries the muting of progressive gender voices within the ANC over the last few years, especially the ANC Women's League: 'Many of us, men and women in the ANC, are looking to the ANC and to government to give us employment which we call deployment. You cannot bite the hand that feeds you, and therefore we would not like as women in the ANC to be seen to be challenging the incumbent. The politics of the ANC are generally that incumbents are not usually challenged unless they themselves say "I'm not available". We don't have a culture of many people running for President. That is why up to this day we do not have a serious woman contender for President in the ANC'.

2.10 Lessons for the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 seeks to strengthen democracy among member countries, particularly through the promotion of the minimum 30 per cent target for women's participation and representation in government and decision-making processes. Very few countries have achieved this target. The few that have include Guyana, Mozambique, New Zealand, Rwanda Seychelles, South Africa and Tanzania - all (except for New Zealand) newer Commonwealth countries. This reflects the fact that older established democracies in the Commonwealth have much

to learn from the more recent democracies, such as South Africa. It is also interesting that of the seven countries that have achieved the 30 per cent target, three (Mozambique, Rwanda and South Africa) recently emerged from conflict. There is a strong correlation globally between post-conflict countries and higher levels of women's representation. While conflict can have devastating consequences, it also shatters the status quo and may open a new discourse on women's emancipation, as happened in the case of South Africa.

Of the 54 countries in the Commonwealth, 21 have a quota system of some kind while 33 countries do not have any quota systems. Table 2.7 shows that within the Commonwealth, quotas are not necessarily a precondition for the higher representation of women in politics. For example, Seychelles and New Zealand have more than 30 per cent women in parliament, but do not have quotas. These countries all have relatively small parliaments and strong matriarchal cultures or traditions around promoting gender equality. However, a high proportion of countries with very low representations of women among the 33 countries have no quota systems. Indeed, three countries in this category (and among Commonwealth member countries) have no women at all in their parliaments.

Table 2.8 provides an analysis of the countries in the Commonwealth that have a quota system according to electoral system. The analysis reflects a global truth: that the highest representations of women are in countries with a Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system, like South Africa, and where there is a legislated quota (like Rwanda, the only country in the Commonwealth to surpass the gender parity target).

The most important lesson emerging from South Africa for the rest of the Commonwealth is that the PR system and political will play a key role in advancing women's political participation. However, such an important pillar of democracy should not be left to chance.

2.11 Conclusions

Concerted action is needed if South Africa is to honour the commitment that it has made by signing the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls for gender parity at all levels and in all areas of decision-making by 2015. Despite the tremendous strides made over the last two decades, there are still gender gaps in almost all areas of political decision-making. These require deliberate measures, as outlined in the Gender Equality Bill, to ensure that gender equality is not left to the vicissitudes of politics and political leaders, but is raised to the level of importance that is called for by the constitution.

The protocol also outlines specific measures to ensure women's full participation, so that the end result is not just gender equality for a small elite of decision-makers, but for the whole nation. Following the 'who-feels-it-knows-it-principle', experience to date shows that women are more likely to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of other women. However, this cannot be left to

Table 2.7 Commonwealth countries with no quota

Country	% women in national parliament
Seychelles	43.8
New Zealand	32.2
Trinidad and Tobago	28.6
Singapore	23.5
Malawi	22.3
Mauritius	18.8
St Vincent and the Grenadines	17.4
St Lucia	16.7
Swaziland	13.6
Grenada	13.3
The Bahamas	13.2
Sierra Leone	12.9
Jamaica	12.7
Zambia	11.5
Antigua and Barbuda	10.5
Malaysia	10.4
Barbados	10
Kiribati	8.7
Malta	8.7
The Gambia	7.5
Nigeria	6.8
St Kitts and Nevis	6.7
Tuvalu	6.7
Maldives	6.5
Sri Lanka	5.8
Tonga	3.6
Belize	3.1
Solomon Islands	2
Nauru	0
Vanuatu	0
Brunei Darussalam	0
Fiji	0

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2013)

chance or to individuals. Gender needs to be embedded in institutional culture and practice, including budgeting and the allocation of resources.

Ultimately, the test of whether gender equality has been achieved or not is whether men take up gender issues with equal ease. To quote the former speaker of the Swedish parliament: 'The most interesting aspect of the Swedish parliament is not that we have 45 per cent representation of women, but that the majority of women and men bring relevant social experience to the business of parliament. This is what makes the difference. Men bring with them experience of real life issues, of raising children, of running a home... And women are

Table 2.8 Types of quotas in Commonwealth countries

First-Past-the-Post		PR		Other (AV, Parallel)	
Country	% Women	Country	% Women	Country	% Women
Voluntary party quota					
Botswana	7.9	Cyprus	10.7	Australia	24.7
United Kingdom	22	Mozambique	39.2	Cameroon	13.9
Canada	24.7	South Africa	44.5		
		Namibia	24.4		
Legislated quotas					
Kenya	9.8	Rwanda	56.3	Pakistan	22.2
India	10.8	Dominican Republic	20.8	Lesotho	25.8
Bangladesh	18.6				
Uganda	34.9				
Tanzania	36				

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (2013)

allowed to be what we are, and to act according to our own unique personality. Neither men nor women have to conform to a traditional role' (quoted in Lowe Morna 2004, chapter 6). Against this measure, South Africa has come a long way, but it still has a long way to go!

Interviews

Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, former Deputy President of South Africa

Thenjiwe Mtintso, Ambassador to Italy, former Chair of the Commission on Gender Equality and Deputy Secretary-General of the ANC

Lulu Xingwana, Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities

Maureen Magubane and Zandile Sibiyi, officials of Women in Rural Development, KwaZulu-Natal

Notes

- 1 Baleka Mbete briefly served as Deputy President, from September 2008 through to May 2009, and following the fallout after the ANC's decision to recall former President Thabo Mbeki.
- 2 This case study draws on Albertyn 1999.

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