

**WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING AND LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the study **WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA** hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Master of Development, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

Signature:

TEBOGO MATOANE

Date:

DEDICATION

To all women grappling with decision-making and leadership positions at the various government institutions, thus modelling and paving a future for women's empowerment and gender equality for the benefit of future generations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My utmost and sincere gratitude to the Lord Almighty, for the care, guidance, protection, wisdom and strength throughout the days of my life,

My daughter Rebotile Matoane and son Abongiwe Reabetswe Mkhize, who have made motherhood an honour and humbling experience, you are the reason I strive to push my limits, thank you for the motivation

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AGDI: African Gender and Development Index (AGDI, 2011)

ANC: African National Congress

BPFA: Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA, 1995)

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1995)

CGE: Commission on Gender Equality

EEA: Employment Equity Act (1998)

ED: Executive Director

EEPs: Employment Equity Plans

ELM: Emalahleni Local Municipality (Witbank)

EMLM: EMakhazeni Local Municipality (Belfast)

GAD: Gender and Development

IDP: Integrated Development Plans

IEC: Information, Education and Communications

HODs: Head of Departments

JSMLM: Dr JS Moroka Local Municipality

LEDFs: Local Economic Development Forums

LLFs: Local Labour Forums

M-APTF: Mtintso's Access Participation Transformation Framework

MDGs: Millennium Development Goals

MMCs: Members of the Mayoral Committee

MM: Municipal Manager

NDM: Nkangala District Municipality

NGM: National Gender Machinery

OECD: Organizations for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSW: Office on the Status of Women

PhD: Pull her Down (syndrome)

PhU: Pull her Up (syndrome)

SADC: Southern African Developing Countries

SALGA: South African Local Government Association

SOEs: State Owned Enterprises

SMMEs: Small Medium Micro Enterprises

STLM: Steve Tshwete Local Municipality

THLM: Thembisile Hani Local Municipality

WC and PD: South African Ministry of Women, Children and People with Disabilities

WEGE: Women Empowerment and Gender Equality (Bill)

WID: Women in Development

WLEM: Women's Leadership Empowerment Model

WSPs: Workplace Skills Plans

VKLM: Victor Khanye Local Municipality (Delmas)

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

ABSTRACT

The study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the gender dynamics which promote or retard the full participation of women in decision-making and leadership positions in the Nkangala District Municipality (NDM), Mpumalanga. Local Government, through municipalities, is the most strategic sphere of government. This is so because municipalities are the institutions of government that are closest to the people. Municipalities, through the various services provided, present critical service delivery institutions for women to actively participate in and influence decisions. Therefore the study contends that these institutions of local government are gendered. Against this backdrop, an analysis of gender representation of women and men in decision-making and leadership positions in the NDM was conducted. The aim was to assess the state of gender equality in the NDM. Further, the study explored this gender representation in relation to how it translates to women's authority and influence in decision-making and leadership.

This qualitative research study triangulated data collection using questionnaires, interviews and observation. The study focused on both the administrative and political components of local government. In the administrative component; interviews were conducted with Municipal Managers (MMs), Executive Directors (EDs) and Managers. In the political component, interviews were conducted with Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Members of the Mayoral Committees (MMCs). These constitute the decision-making and leadership positions in municipalities as institutions of local government.

The study revealed that amidst the national and international policy and legislative provisions on women's empowerment and gender equality, women continue to be confronted with institutional gendered challenges. Amongst others, the study revealed that there are pervasive gender dynamics, stereotypes, attitudes and perceptions towards women in decision-making and leadership positions in these institutions. Also, that there are minimum institutional mechanisms and strategies that encourage and support women's participation in decision-making and leadership positions. The provincial and national gender machineries' roles and responsibilities with regard to municipalities' monitoring, oversight and overall support is not as vibrant. Drawing from the findings, the study concludes with a proposal for a Women's Leadership Empowerment Model

(WLEM). A comprehensive model that will comprise of professional capacity-building and training, on-the-job coaching and mentorship, regular peer assessment and review fora to continuously support women in and into decision-making and leadership positions.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of women's participation in decision-making and leadership positions occupies a central place in debates on the gender dimensions of nation building in South Africa. Gender Equality is entrenched in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. In order to entrench and realise women's rights to equal treatment, the government introduced several policies and legislation such as the National Policy Guidelines on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000), the Affirmative Action Policy, the Employment Equity Act, 55 of (1998). The study focuses specifically on Local Government and therefore the Local Government Gender Policy Framework (2006) and the Women and Gender Equality Bill (2011) are directly relevant in this exploration.

The South African government has ratified without reservations, international human rights instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1995), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA, 1995), the SADC Gender Protocol (1997) amended in (2008) for which South Africa also deposited its instruments, the African Gender and Development Index (AGDI, 2011). Against this supposedly progressive policy and legislative framework with regard to strengthening advocacy interventions for women's empowerment and gender equality, the reality is however, that gender inequality persists in different forms and at different levels in the country and elsewhere. As highlighted in the South Africa SADC Gender Barometer of 2013 henceforth referred to as the (Barometer, 2013) there seems to be some contradictions in what this research study would refer to as the "gender gains". This is so because albeit the progressive legislative environment, gender inequality persists as attested to by the recent (Barometer,2013) that discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes in employment, in schooling, in access to resources and opportunities, participation in the economy, including decision-making and leadership in both the private and the public sectors, remain.

The focus of the study is on the perceived gender inequality in decision-making and leadership positions within local government with a specific focus on the municipalities under the jurisdiction of the Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) in Mpumalanga. In her 2012 address to the Dialogue on the role of Women in State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) Leadership, the South African Minister of Women, Children and People with Disabilities

(Ministry of WC and PD), Ms Lulu Xingwana reflected and acknowledged the fact that “...indeed, there is consensus across the board that South Africa has some of the most progressive policies that are aimed at advancing women empowerment and gender equality. However, the challenge remains the capacity to translate such policies into implementation” (Xingwana, 2012). The same view was stated a year earlier, (2011) by the Chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), Commissioner Beatrice Ngcobo in Barclay, (2011) that “...there are women in Parliament and good laws to protect women, but ... when it comes to implementation, people at the frontline are mostly men. They won't give up power so easily”.

The above reflections and acknowledgements by two important institutions of government whose core existence is that of advancing, driving and institutionalising the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda namely; (the Ministry of WC&PD and the CGE) signals a need for exploration. These institutions are invariably relevant to the focus of this study. As indicated in the CGE's Gender Barometer (CGE, 2009), it is worrying that local municipalities exhibit inadequate representation of women in leadership positions. The said inadequate representation of women is an issue of interest for this study including a further exploration of women's influence and full participation in these positions in the event that they eventually occupy them.

Underpinning this discussion therefore is the fact that by implication, government is entrusted as the lead agency in women empowerment and gender equality. It is therefore imperative that government should be seen to be vigorously driving the agenda at all levels (political and administrative) within its different institutions, one of which is local government. This sphere of government is strategic and intimate because of its location as the sphere of government closest to the people. Through municipalities, local government becomes the first port of call for communities on various service delivery aspects on a daily basis and thus, presents critical service delivery institutions. Furthermore, this study maintains that all services that are at the core of municipalities' functioning and operations directly affect women. Among those that are considered critical in the lives of women are housing beneficiation, basic services such as water, sanitation, sewer, waste management and roads and other infrastructure development services. These services lie at the very core of municipalities and thus affirm earlier assertions that the local governments, through municipalities, are both strategic and intimate institutions of government with daily direct engagements and interactions with communities. It is therefore against this

backdrop that the researcher contends that irrespective of the broader compelling legislative provisions on women's empowerment and gender equality, the nature of services, functions and operations at this sphere directly affects the improvement of the status and quality of women's lives and in the main, reasons why women should be in the forefront and assume decision-making and leadership positions in this sphere of government. Moreover, the study argues that women's occupation of these positions should not only be quantitative but rather be in the form of meaningful impact and substantive contributions towards gender transformation in these institutions. It is, therefore, questionable that according to the Southern African Gender Protocol Barometer on South Africa (2013), henceforth referred to as the Barometer, representation of women in local government experienced a decline, that is a decrease from 48% to 38% in the 2006 and 2011 South African Local Government Elections respectively (Barometer, 2013). This decrease will be relevant to the study in that it will seek to critically analyse factors that directly or indirectly contribute to the decrease, and further delve deeper into the full participation of women in decision-making and leadership positions in the institutions of local government, municipalities, in an attempt to build understanding of the gender dynamics in this sphere of government.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Mpumalanga Province of South Africa is one of those provinces which are generally considered as vast and predominantly rural. The province is comprised of three district municipalities namely; eHlanzeni, Gert Sibande, and Nkangala. The said districts straddle along the provincial borders of Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo and Gauteng. Further, the districts are within close proximity of country borders of Mozambique and Swaziland. The Nkangala District, henceforth referred to as NDM is centered around the Belfast, Middleburg, Witbank through to Pretoria as two municipalities in the District are located within a 60kms radius of Pretoria (**refer to Map: 1 in the next page**).



Map: 1 Mpumalanga Province of South Africa (MP). Source: <http://www.rainbow.com>, 2014.

The NDM of the Province, which is the focus of this study, is comprised of six (06) local municipalities, namely; eMalahleni, eMakhazeni, Steve Tshwete, Thembisile Hani, Dr. J.S. Moroka and Victor Khanye, (**refer to Map:2 in the next page**) which provides a graphic illustration of the NDM and the municipalities under study . These geographic presentations by way of maps are not only meant to provide background information of the area under study but are also meant to serve as reference points throughout the study. It is also important to highlight that Witbank is also referred to as Emalahleni, Belfast as EMakhazeni.



Map: 2 Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) and municipalities under its jurisdiction, source: <http://ndm.gov.za>.2014.

The NDM is known as South Africa's energy hub and stands as the largest coal supplier in the country as the district is a high-capacity mining area, boosting some of the big mines internationally, for example, BHP Billiton, Anglo-American, Xstrata, and others. Accordingly, the district's economy is dominated by electricity, manufacturing and mining. These sectors are followed by community services, trade, finance, transport, agriculture and construction. The relatively large economies of Steve Tshwete (Middelburg) and Emalahleni (Witbank) which are two big municipalities under the jurisdiction of NDM sustain the economy of the District with a heavy reliance on the mining and steel manufacturing industries (NDM profile on www.ndm.gov.za, 2011). Furthermore, NDM is considered one of the largest in the province by geographical demographics and population.

After the South African local government elections on the 18th May 2011, a new political leadership was ushered into different municipalities. This study looks particularly into the political and administrative decision-making and leadership positions that were allocated

to women at the time. In the context of municipalities, key strategic and influential political decision-making and leadership positions are that of the Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips as well as Members of the Mayoral Committee. Of the six local municipalities under the NDM, deployment of political leadership in, for example executive mayors' positions as political heads, can generally be seen as equitable with three women and four men as executive mayors. This includes the district (NDM) itself as revealed study of the different documents and websites from the respective municipalities.

The table below shows gender representations with positions and the actual incumbents and their accompanying gender (**Table: 1 below**). It is, however, important to note that there are rapid changes on these positions as some are acting in them (positions) and the final appointment would, in most instances, change the representation.

Municipality	Executive Mayor	Speaker	Chief Whip	Municipal Manager	Members of the Mayoral Committee	Executive Managers/ Directors
NDM	Male	Male	Female	Male	3males 3females	2males 2females
eMalahleni	Female	Female	Male	Male	3males 3females	3Males1Female
eMakhazeni	Male	Male	Female	Female	2females 1male	3males 2females
Steve Tshwete	Male	Male	Female	Male	3males 3females	1male 3females
Thembisile Hani	Male	Male	Male	Male	3females 3males	3males 1female
Dr JS Moroka	Female	Male	Male	Male	3males 2females	
Victor Khanye	Female	Male	Male	Female	2females 1male	2females 2males

Table 1: NDM and feeder municipalities decision-making and leadership positions by gender breakdown. Sources: NDM municipalities' documents and websites, confirmed through researcher's field visits and interviews.

In some municipalities, gender representation appears to be equitable. It however, remains an area of keen investigation, to find out how this assumedly gender representation plays itself out in the actual decision-making processes. Thus a closer scrutiny into gender dynamics, which are in most instances saliently hidden behind and can only, be revealed through robust research into some of the institutional procedures, process and other such related aspects. That for instance, exploring whether or not equal gender representation is not another compliance undertaking, which translates to being given “responsibility without authority” as (Gasa, 2002) contends. CGE (2009) states that, whilst institutional mechanisms and strategies for ensuring gender equality have become stronger and more coordinated over the years, there is a need for rigorous interventions towards strengthening substantive women’s participation.

Municipal managers were also appointed as heads of administration with the advent of the local government dispensation of May 2011. They serve as the ultimate accounting officer as referred to in all the legislative prescripts in local government. The researcher is aware of the fact that at the beginning of this study (June 2012), out of the six municipalities under NDM, only one municipality (Victor Khanye) had appointed a female Municipal Manager (**table.1**) above. As the study progressed (March 2014), the number of female Municipal Managers increased as eMakhazeni and the NDM itself appointed female Municipal Managers after the former male incumbents had completed respective terms of office. These new appointments change the numbers to three (03) female Municipal Managers and four (04) male Municipal Managers in all seven (07) municipalities (including the NDM). This marks an almost equitable number of women at this level of leadership. In order to demonstrate how this gender representation rapidly changed, one female municipal manager had resigned at the completion of this study (2014). Notwithstanding the fact that as mentioned earlier in the study, political offices such as executive mayors, speakers and chief whips are also strategic and influential with regard to shaping the development agenda and direction of these institutions. The rapid changes in gender representation, especially with regard to women, either due to resignation other reasons, are amongst the gender dynamics this study sort to investigate against the backdrop of the policy and legislative frameworks and provisions.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study argues that there is a disjuncture between the policy and legislative environment, and the real, practical, day-to-day experiences with regard to gender

transformation at the local sphere of government. In the case of NDM as the focus in this study, the research study further contends that in view of the fact that the district is predominantly rural and has a deep cultural character of majority Ndebele, followed by Swati, Pedi and Zulu, these cultures could spill over into local government institutions to shape and inform communally-held, deep-rooted patriarchal gender stereotypes, values and norms influenced by perceptions of women's insubordinate position and men's superiority in society. Local government, as the sphere of government closest to the people is inclined, by its location, to filter and entrench these patriarchal values and norms in the core components of the institutions, those are, as alluded in (Sadler, 1996) the structure, systems, procedures and processes as well as the culture. More so as (Sadler, 1996) maintains that the workplace is a social institution and a reflection of the communities and society it operates in. Sadler further states that human beings bring their whole selves to work. In other words, they shape and inform the workplace life and ethos. Bekker (1996) believes that cultural values strongly influence the nature of relationships in organisation and consequent organisational life.

The study interprets the above statements in (Sadler, 1996) and (Bekker, 1996) to mean that commonly-held gender attitudes, beliefs, and related stereotypes are most likely to be intrinsically entrenched as part of the workplace life and ethos. This study, therefore, argues that the above-mentioned patriarchal notions, norms and values could serve as a barrier for women's entry into decision-making and leadership positions. Ely and Meyerson (2000) highlights the fact that because most cultures and traditions are patriarchal, (created by and for men), practices within organisations tend to reflect and support men's experiences and life situations. Rutherford (2001) maintains that these cultures constitute "closing-off areas" for women managers. As argued in Bekker (1996), "organisational culture poses one of the most difficult and complex challenges with which local government managers will have to deal with in managing transformation". Especially because organisational cultures breeds and are closely intertwined to organisational behaviours, confirming the fact that organisations influences and are influenced by individual within it as (Griffin, 2010) argues. This study therefore explores the extent to which women's presence advances the women empowerment ideals. In cases where women are sufficiently represented at decision-making and leadership positions, attention has to be put on how they influence decisions and related processes to the benefit of the broader women's cadreship. This research attempts to establish the debates on whether or not women take advantage of the empowerment opportunities presented to them and or

those they find themselves in and use those for accelerating their personal and professional development as well as empower other women.

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding into gender dynamics which promote or retard full participation of women in decision-making and leadership positions within the local government level in the NDM.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study, albeit focusing only on the NDM, are thus to:

- analyse the gender representation of women in leadership positions in the NDM and how that translates to women's authority and influence in decision-making platforms and forums at these institutions
- analyse the impact of gender dynamics such as patriarchal values and stereotypes, attitudes and perceptions influence cultural norms and attitudes as well as disparities in access to resources between women and men,
- determine gender equality or inequality in the participation of women and men in decision-making and leadership.
- assess institutional mechanisms and strategies put in place to encourage and support women's active participation, that is, the level of institutional readiness with regard to practices, policies and structures that support women's access to decision-making and leadership positions.

1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study poses some critical questions in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the gender dynamics which are at play in the local government workplace (municipalities), dynamics which shape the extent and nature of women's participation in decision-making and leadership positions. Those critical questions that will guide the research are:

- From a gender perspective, what is the nature of women's participation in local government at the level of senior and executive management?

- What are the social, cultural, economic and political dimensions of these gender dynamics? For example, male dominance, patriarchal stereotypes, attitudes and perceptions that shape and inform the extent and level of women's participation in general as stated by (Richardson and Robinson, 2008).
- How are such dynamics changing overtime (if they have been changing) within the context of the existing institutional and legislative frameworks established to harness and promote women's participation? And how do these changes influence women's participation?
- What is the nature and attitudes of women in leadership as far as empowering other women to ensure maturity and sustainability of women's participation into the future?

1. 7 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

As stated by Gasa (2002), whatever rights and legal protection, including national and international conventions and declarations with respect to upholding women's empowerment and gender equality, vulnerability of women and their positions in society makes it difficult for them to make their own choices and decisions including those of taking leadership roles and responsibilities in institutions such as those of local government. The researcher contends that the struggle for gender transformation within these institutions remains a mammoth undertaking because gender stereotypes have been systematically entrenched and further legitimised by some institutional policies, procedures and practices.

An important reality is that services offered by this sphere of government mostly affect majority of women in the majority. Issues of poverty, unemployment, basic services such as access to water, electricity, roads and related development infrastructure are brought to reality at this sphere of government. Whilst these, as Gasa (2002), argues, are not a preserve for women, the burden of these socially, economically is more severe on women than it is on men because of the social construction of the gender roles and responsibilities. It is against this backdrop that local government remains the most important vehicle for service delivery in communities, the custodian of the delivery of basic services that directly impact on the lives of mainly women. Consequently, local government presents a critical platform for women to influence and shape these

development decisions. One of the strategic ways that this could be achieved is through women's active participation in decision-making and leadership positions in this sphere of government. However, there is a perception that women's movement into the higher echelons of decision-making and leadership in local government is marred with a myriad of gendered challenges such as traditionally-held discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards women as leaders. Further that the environment is not as receptive as promoted by available South African and world policy and legislative frameworks as institutions and organisations are battling to ensure effective implementation of these frameworks.

The state of readiness of all institutions and organisations to receive women as equal co-workers has received attention in the study. The occupation of decision-making and leadership positions by women in a previously formalised patriarchal set-up (Kabeer,2003), such as local government, remains and will be amongst the critical areas of discussion and focus in this study. It is therefore important to understand the underlying factors with the hope that the findings of the study will positively contribute towards future solutions.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is of significance largely in the context of the constitutionally entrenched and nationally adopted developmental goal of women's empowerment and gender equality (Goal 3 of the Millennium Development Goals), and the subsequent commitment that the country has made at regional level Southern African Developing Communities (SADC) and internationally through critical protocols and declarations. Notwithstanding the fact that women's empowerment is the third Millennium Development Goal as espoused in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2020 (Kabeer, 2003). In some of these international commitments, declarations and protocols, the country has committed percentages of women's representation. The representation of women in government decision-making and leadership positions, including local government is one of those areas that the South African government has pledged commitment to.

The study therefore is significant in that it will contribute (albeit in a localised context) towards an evaluation of the extent to which the country is achieving its constitutionally entrenched and nationally adopted development goal of women's empowerment and gender equality, with specific reference to local government. Further, the study will assess the effectiveness of policy and legislation on the actual implementation. Lastly the study

will explore the lived experiences and challenges that hinders if any, the full realisation of gender equality. In a way the study will reveal the strengths and the weakness on the delivery of the country's commitments made in terms of international conventions such as CEDAW and the SADC Gender Protocol as outlined in (1.1 of this study). The study should be useful to policy makers in terms of identifying existing gaps in terms of policy design and implementation on matters of women's empowerment and gender equality. Whilst it would be significant to investigate gender transformation in government as a whole, the study will limit itself to local government and more specifically, NDM.

1.9 RESEARCH, METHODOLOGY AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The design of the study is qualitative. Holliday (2007) states that qualitative research addresses qualitative areas in social life, such as broader social perceptions, (gendered perceptions for this study) of women in leadership. Qualitative research as Holliday contends, attempts to investigate uncontrollable social variables instead of reducing their effect. The study discusses gender issues and would be premised on feminist views. Alvesson and Billing (2009) and Ribbens and Edwards (1998) argue that there are often dilemmas confronting feminist qualitative research and those are among others, researching in an environment where theoretical, conceptual and formal traditions are predominantly public and male-dominated which is the case with this study. The study is also based on, to some extent, principles of evolving critical theory and research as reflected by (Kincheloe and McLaren in Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). They argue that with evolving criticality entails "...detectives of new theoretical insights, perpetually searching for new and interconnected ways of understanding power and oppression and the way they shape everyday life and human experience". It, therefore, means that an analysis of such a complex phenomenon as gender dynamics cannot be easily and effectively achieved through a quantitative study which pre-empts the kind of variables which constitute gender dynamics. Furthermore, analysing gender dynamics in the context of an organisation such as local government has its own intricacies and complexities which may not be readily captured by numerical methods. For instance, gender dynamics are more salient, usually hidden behind individuals' attitudes, behaviours and practices in organisations. Thus, a more qualitative approach which is deeply rooted in induction would be more appropriate.

1.9.1 RESEARCH POPULATION

The population of this study is women in leadership positions within local government thus make it mainly bias towards women. The inclusion of men would help in the understanding of the gender dynamics which, by implication, would probe into men's attitudes, views and perceptions of women in decision-making and leadership positions. It is also premised on the notion that "gender "refers to both women and men. The primary population of the study consists of women and men in decision-making and leadership positions in the NDM, Mpumalanga. The researcher also believes that women would, in their reflections, refer to their male counterparts. Engaging men would serve to validate data collected from the women participants and/or bring a new dimension that would serve to inform future women's empowerment and gender equality discourse and to strengthen related interventions. The population consists of at least between 70-80 research participants from the administration and political leadership, namely, the Municipal Managers who are Heads of Administration and the ultimate custodians of administration, their Executive Directors who are part of the municipalities' Executive Management on the officials component and the Mayors and/or MMCs who are the political leadership and custodians of the political oversight function.

1.9.2 RESEARCH SAMPLE

For the purpose of locating the study's debate within a broader context of municipal functioning, the administrative and the political input is vital. The interdependence thereof goes a long way in informing and shaping key management and operational decisions and priorities. The research sample comprised of purposive sampling of at least between 70 to 80 women and men in political and administrative decision-making and leadership positions in municipalities. Those ranged from councilors serving as Executive Mayors, Speakers, and Chief Whips or as Members of the Mayoral Committees (MMCs) and Directors and/or Managers in the respective municipalities in NDM to ensure that a much more comprehensive account of the gendered voices, views and opinions are captured.

Denzin & Lincoln (2000) maintain that in qualitative research where purposive sampling is used, the researcher must explain the criteria used for selection. To this effect, the explanation for the selected sample is based on the fact that of the municipalities under study, some are considered smaller and some bigger. Some of the distinguishing features, as detailed in the annual reports, are for example in the case of eMalahleni, which has 34

wards, 64 councillors, six (06) members of the mayoral committee, five (05) administrative directorates, five (05) executive directors, and over a thousand (1000) employees. On the contrary, Victor Khanye has nine (09) wards, eighteen (18) councillors, three members of the mayoral committee, three administrative directorates, three executive directors and just over a hundred (100) employees.

The breakdown of the sample, drawn from all the municipalities under the NDM jurisdiction, is as follows;

Municipality	Executive Mayor	Speaker	Chief Whip	Members of the Mayoral Committee	Municipal Manager	Directors	Totals
Dr JS Moroka	01	01	01	03	01	03	10
eMalahleni	01	01	01	06	01	05	15
eMakhazeni	01	01	01	03	01	03	10
Steve Tshwete	01	01	01	04	01	04	12
Thembisile Hani	01	01	01	03	01	03	10
Victor Khanye	01	01	01	03	01	03	10
NDM	01	01	01	05	01	03	12

Table:2 Research sample by respective municipalities' composition (numbers representation) as gathered by the researcher during initial field visits to respective municipalities.

1.9.3 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The research collected data using the following methods: document analysis, face-to-face individual and group interviews and observations. The methods combined resulted in triangulation, which is useful for validation of findings to improve validity, reliability and authenticity of the study as important ethical considerations. A brief description of each of the methods is provided herewith:

Secondary sources

The researcher will conduct document analysis. The documents that were used are the municipalities' IDP document as the main master plan with communities' inputs, annual reports, spatial development frameworks, gender policies and related such publications, most of which are readily available on the various municipalities' websites as required by legislation.

Primary sources

- Individual face to face as well as group interviews with the Municipal Managers and some councilors that serves as Members of the Mayoral Committee in respective municipalities using interview schedules
- Observations of the crucial municipal proceedings and forums such the Council sitting, the IDP and Budget Indabas, the Mayoral Imbizos (Outreach Programmes), and related others

As indicated above, characteristics of these municipalities under study vary especially with regard to numbers. Some municipalities are small and consequently the constitution of the Council and councillors is relatively small and that goes to the administrative functions wherein directorates would be equally small. In contrast, some municipalities are larger and so is the constitution of the Council and councilors as well as the administrative component. For this reason, the researcher interviewed as many of the target population as possible in small municipalities to optimise data collection and as many of the target population as possible in the larger municipalities so as to make-up for the smaller ones and for validation purposes. In this case the interviews were qualitative in-depth interviews (Kvale, 2007).

Another method of data collection was non-participant observation. The researcher visited several municipalities and observe some critical meetings such as the mayoral community outreach (imbizos), the Council sittings, the IDP and Budget Indabas. These are meetings wherein the political and administration interface with the community and other important stakeholders such as business, churches.

The combination of data collection methods make for triangulation in an attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena that is under investigation (Denzin and

Lincoln, 2000). The advantage of triangulation is mainly that of optimising validity and reliability of the data collected in the study.

1.9.4 DATA ANALYSIS

As indicated in (Flick, 2007), the researcher applied qualitative data analysis which is as ((Marshall and Rossman, 2006) “a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes; it builds grounded theory.” The analysis was done through coding and categorisation by searching relevant parts of data, analysing and comparing these with other data and subsequently naming and classifying them to obtain a structure that assisted in providing “...a comprehensive understanding of the issue” as stated in (Flick, 2007). Furthermore, the study also applied document analysis using extensive literature comparisons in an effort to avoid over-generalisation. Marshall and Rossman (2006) emphasises that constant comparative data analysis helps in the development of grounded theories on particular phenomena. That is what is referred to by (Welman and Kruger, 2001) as content analysis. Premised on this guidance, the study ensured preserving data and meanings and combining the transcripts with preliminary analysis for increased data efficiency (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Culture: the things people believe in and the way they do them as acquired and learned from the environment they grow up in. Those include language, beliefs, attitudes, norms and values (Le Compte and Schensul, 2010)

Commission on Gender Equality (CGE): an established non-aligned constitutional institution tasked to promote respect for, advance and promote gender equality (RSA Constitution, 1996 and CGE, 2011 - 2014)

Feminism: challenges, counteracts or changes the *status quo* which disadvantages or devalues women (Chafez in Alvesson and Billing, 2009)

Gender: Is about what is socially constructed and considered to be male or masculine and what is considered to be female or feminine (Emmott in Porter, Smyth and Sweetman, 1999)

Gender Bias: refers to any act that advantages or perpetuates an existing advantage of one gender over the other (Bennett, 2006)

Gendered Division of Labour: presumes that social roles are differentiated along the lines of sex and/or gender. For example, certain roles, responsibilities and tasks are seen as men's work and others are seen as women's work. (Hollows, 2008)

Gender Dynamics: refers to the gender inequalities caused by a myriad of structural and institutional discriminatory and oppressive attitudes, beliefs, values, norms and practices resulting in detrimental developmental impact on one sex over the other (MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997)

Gender Discrimination: means treating a person or a group of persons differently or failing to recognise material differences in a manner that ensures that women and men benefit equitably from the available resources and opportunities (CGE, 2009)

Gender Equality: refers to the equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms by women and men including *de jure and de facto* equality and also equality of outcomes between women and men. It entails the absence of direct or indirect unfair discrimination on the basis of gender (Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act – PEPUDA, 2000)

Gender Identities: refers to understanding people's experience at work, how their subjectivities are being shaped and how gender divisions and other gendered phenomena in organisations are formed (Alvesson and Billing, 2009)

Gender Mainstreaming: is a deliberate action of integrating gender equality considerations in all policy, laws, plans, programmes, administrative and financial activities, organisational procedures, processes and decision-making, in order to effect profound organisational and ultimately, societal transformation (CGE,2009)

Gender responsiveness: is the equal relevance to or ability to address the needs of women and men (Itzin and Newman, 1995)

Glass-ceiling: An invisible upper limit in organisations above which it is difficult or impossible for women to rise in the ranks, the informal barrier that keeps women out of the upper management echelons in organisations (Lewis, 2014)

Glass-cliff: refers to instances where women are more likely to rise to positions of organizational leadership in times of crisis OR (Ryan, 2005 and Bruckmuller, 2010)

Local Government: a decentralised, representative institution with general and specific devolved upon it and delegated to it by the national or provincial government, in respect of a restricted geographical area within a nation or state, and in the exercise of which it is locally responsible and may to a certain degree act autonomously (van der Walt, 2007)

Leadership: is a process used by an individual to influence group members towards the achievement of group goals in which the group members view the influence as legitimate (Howell and Cstley, 2006)

Masculinity: understood to be the values, experiences and meanings that are culturally interpreted as masculine and typical feel natural to or ascribed to men in a particular cultural context (Alvesson and Billing, 2009)

Municipality(ies): the organisational units of local government (van der Walt, 2007)

National Gender Machinery: is the network of coordinated structures within and outside government which operate cooperatively in facilitating political, social, economic and other forms of transformation to dismantle systemic gender inequality and promote equality between women and men (CGE, 2009)

Women's Empowerment: are the positive measures that promote equality between women and men with regard to personal autonomy, access to and control over resources, participation in decision-making and enjoyment of all human rights and freedoms (National Policy Guidelines on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 2000).

1.11 DELIMITATIONS

As (O'Leary, 2004) cautions, all aspects of the research process need to be considered in light of the assumptions and biases of the researcher. This is indeed true for this study and should be mentioned as a possible delimitation. The researcher is the Director: Administration and Resources Management at eMalahleni Local Municipality in the NDM and was, during the period of research of this study, Acting Municipal Manager at the same municipality for approximately ten months. This makes her one of those women in decision-making and leadership positions which is the focus of the study. Her exposure, knowledge and experience might feature some assumptions (rightly or wrongly) and biases and would thus be crucial to ensure that her judgments are suspended as best as possible (O'Leary, 2004). At the same time it is important to acknowledge the fact that this study is a human and social science research study. O'Leary (2004) further argues that

with social science, the society is under the microscope and the researcher is a product, I add, also a part of that very society. In which case then, the ability to be objective becomes problematic because the researcher is value-bound and the research involves analysis of particular value systems (O’Leary, 2004).

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Permission for participation of all respondents was secured through the submission of formal letters of requests to the NDM (see **addendum: 1**) as the coordinating municipality so as to ensure informed consent (Gubrium & Holstein, 2002). Further, all respondents participated voluntarily with the understanding that all information gathered was to be held in confidence. The identity of respondents was protected throughout the study. As (O’Leary, 2004) highlights, considerable attention will be given to sensitivity to race, class, culture and gender (especially because both women and men) were drawn in data collection. The researcher was also cautious of “hearing the dominant voice” as (O’Leary, 2004) warns. Whilst women in decision-making and leadership positions were the main focus, the men in the same position were considered as an important variable. The research had to guard against dichotomisation and double standards as the said focus of study can easily fall on that trap. Importantly, the researcher aimed at respecting language as a powerful tool of communicating the required information. Whilst English was used as the medium of communication, participants were allowed to reflect thoughts or interpretations in languages they felt best capture their contributions. It was the duty of the researcher to find appropriate translation if the language used in the data collection process was outside her comprehension. Lastly, the researcher also objectively drew from her own views, opinions and experiences emanating from the fact that she serves a woman in decision-making and leadership in a municipality which will also be studied as a municipality under the NDM jurisdiction. For this reason, the researcher, for the sake of not compromising the validity, reliability and authenticity of the study, excluded observations and relied on information gathered through interviews and documents study in eMalahleni. This means taking into consideration a caution by (Welman and Kruger, 2001:185) about the “possible dilemma” between the roles of the participant and the observer and becoming engrossed in one over the other.

1.13 SUMMARY

In summary, this study is an attempt to unpack the meaning of the positive and negative gender dynamics, premising it on a feminist perspective. Feminists' viewpoint argues that, positive gender dynamics are those that advance the empowerment of women and negative are those that impede such advancement and should be understood as such throughout this study. The fundamental issue is to explain some of the aspects that continue to serve as barriers. These are often, salient and hidden but severely hindering women's empowerment and gender equality. Gender equality is mentioned in South Africa as one of the cornerstones of our constitutional democracy (Act 106, 1996). Hence as argued in (Perrons, 2005), that gender equality broadly forms an integral part of government priority agenda as opposed to a narrow feminist driven agenda and demand. The study is therefore conceptually grounded on the broader transformation imperatives, emphasising women's empowerment and gender equality for gender transformation, as expressed through governments' policies and programmes through to structural interventions (Beall, 2005).

1.14 OUTLINE OF CHAPTERS

Chapter One presents the background and context of the study. The brief background entails gender in local government as well as some geographical and socio-economic information of the NDM, the municipal district under study. The chapter further articulates the problem statement, further detailing the study's aim, objectives, rationale, significance and the main questions of the study. The chapter also provides an outline of definition of key concepts. Chapter Two is the literature review that serves to theoretically ground the study and some of the eminent arguments that would guide the study. Further, the review provides a detailed account of gender issues in South Africa in the context of women in leadership and management. It explains the theoretical framework which guides the study and describes the evidence from a number of studies on issues of gender dynamics in the workplace. Finally it identifies gaps in the literature and uses these to locate the study. Chapter Three deliberates of the research methodology thereby explaining which methodology has been adopted for this research study and the motivation thereof. The chapter further outlines the research population and associated methods and instruments for data collection and analysis as well as ethical considerations. Chapter Four consists of an in-depth critical analysis and synthesis as revealed by the data collected in the research and Chapter Five concludes the research with recommendations, key areas for

women's empowerment and gender equality programmes' implementation and identified areas for future research studies.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature review attempts to locate the current situation with regards to women's participation within some gendered theories that help with the unpacking and understanding of gender dynamics. These gender dynamics are among others, sexuality, patriarchal domination, gender stereotypes. The review will broadly explore the South African gender transformation agenda, but more specifically in local government with regard to legislative framework and the implementation thereof. The study, and consequently the literature review, is grounded on a feminists' viewpoint with regard to women's inclusion and exclusion from institutions and positions of power. It critically reflects on what is pointed out in (Lovenduski, 2005), that is, whether the subsequent inclusion and presence provides for a means of articulating women's perspective. Perhaps pointing to the argument in (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003) that employment is not neutral but is gendered. This chapter will attempt to unpack the debate on women's inclusion and exclusion in positions of power in the workplace. It also reflects on issues of socio-cultural and economic backgrounds that (pre)determine the roles and responsibilities of women and men in society. It further taps into the historical background of local government as traditionally male-dominated environments (Lovenduski, 2005).

Evolving roles of culture, political power, participation, for example, in shaping the nature and extent of women's participation in this "man's world" with particular emphasis on decision-making and leadership positions in local government institutions is also explored (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). It therefore situates gender inequalities in their nature, essence and multi-dimensionality by making a point through demonstrating that gender inequalities cannot be reduced to some single and universally agreed set of priorities (Percy-Smith, 2000).

Baker and LeTendre (2005) state that, institutions are active creators of cognitive realities through rules, roles, and meanings and these in turn influences individual and organisational behaviours. Griffin and Moorhead (2010) argue that organisations influence and are influenced by the individuals and that these individuals-organisations influences are in turn relationships that ultimately shape the adoption of a variety of roles and/or identities. The study argues that by implication, individuals' socially-inherited gendered realities are transferred into institutions. That is, institutions mirror the societies within

which it operates. These discussions are based on the national, regional and international policies and legislative frameworks on women's empowerment and gender equality. It is the reason for this study to begin with the policy and legislative provisions as they give a legal backing of all debates and discussions that follow.

2.2 AN OVERVIEW: NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY

In the South African post-democracy era, the government's efforts towards advancing women's empowerment and gender equality has been heralded as a beacon of good practice across the world (CGE,2011). This is because of the strong political will demonstrated by the establishment of institutions such as the CGE, the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) located in the presidency and other institutional components, referred to as the national gender machinery. These institutions, the national gender machinery have been established to address the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality. Another step in the advancement of women's empowerment and gender equality is that of the adoption and enactment of important policies and legislation. Among those are, (the National policy guidelines on women's empowerment and gender equality, 2000), the (Local Gender Policy Framework, 2006) the (Employment Equity Act, 1996) with the affirmative action policy and most recently the (Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill, 2011) which is currently in the public participation phase. In the event that this Bill is passed into Law as an Act, it would detail punitive sanctions to be faced by any private or public body failing to comply with prohibitions on gender discrimination. It would also make affirmative action mandatory for employers as a strategy to achieve gender equality.

South Africa has acceded to and ratified several other regional and international conventions and declarations such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA, 1995), the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development ratified in 1997 and amended in 2008, referred to as the (SADC Addendum,1997 and 2008 as amended). The SADC Addendum, as amended, commits all member states to ensuring "the equal representation of women and men in the decision making of member states and SADC structures at all levels, and binding the country to attain the adopted "50/50" gender parity principle and thus the country's pressure to comply. In the protocol, South Africa and the other SADC countries have committed to 50 % of the representation of women in management and decision-making by the year 2012. Coincidentally, the research for this study commenced in the

same year (2012).South Africa's progress on this regional compliance is an area of interest which should be explored. The said commitment is applicable across all spheres and sectors including local government.

The South African Local Government is constitutionally bound by and operates under this richly resourced institutional and legislative framework. However, the reality of women's experience in South Africa, especially at local government level, has been much more complex and casts doubt on the country's celebrated gender achievements (Gasela, 2007). The said complexities are what are referred in this study as gender dynamics that exist at this level of government. Haywood and Mac an Ghail (2003) regard these as "hidden assumptions" that shape the gendered organisation of reproduction and production.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) recognises the right to equal access of men and women to power, decision-making and leadership at all levels as a necessary precondition for proper functioning of democracy (UDHR,). Since the BPFA was adopted in 1995, the global average for women's participation in national politics has gradually increased from 11.3 per cent to almost 17 per cent in 2006. Nineteen countries, half of them in developing countries, have met the 30% target set in Beijing (Sharma, 2012). The study explores the increase in women's participation, and whether or not it translates into effective gendered influence over institutional policies, procedures, culture and so forth. It furthermore attempts to reveal whether or not institutions such as local government have positively embraced the increase in women's participation with its successes and challenges.

2.3 A FEMINIST VIEWPOINT: THE STUDY IN CONTEXT

The study is premised on feminist theoretical views and therefore the analysis of data will be informed and shaped by this viewpoint. This position has also informed the study's data analysis processes. The researcher is black middle-aged female, and is affiliated to the feminist movement by virtue of her passion and quest for the emancipation of women from all forms of oppression, including in the workplace. She holds a senior management position at eMalahleni Local Municipality as the Director: Administration and Resources Management after an eleven (11) months stint as a Municipal Manager in the same municipality. The researcher is therefore, not entirely divorced from the issues that the research focuses on. This includes the study's frame of reference, namely; women in

decision-making and leadership positions within local government. This background information is important. Bailey, Leo-Rhynie and Morris (2000) argue that the feminist analysis goes beyond the researcher being an objective, non-aligned voice. It places the researcher in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, hereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the research results. Bailey, *et.al*(2000) further contend that the class, race, culture and gender assumptions, beliefs and behaviours of the researcher must be placed within the frame of the picture the researcher is attempting to paint. Emphasis with this kind of research is that the researcher should not pretend to be neutral and “invisible and thus seek to be entirely objective as though that will compromise the research results. Instead, the researcher should make such an admission that is, the researcher’s background providing for a critical analysis (Bennett, 2006). The background assists in the questions that frame the research and should in no way manipulate both responses and the findings.

2.3.1 AN OVERVIEW FEMINIST AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES

Whilst there are numerous definitions of feminism, the research study aligns more with the definition provided in (Bennett, 2006) that feminism “ is the political theory and practice to free all women irrespective of colour, race, class, education, status, ...” An important assertion emanating from this definition is that feminism has the emancipation of women as a priority on its agenda. Flowing from that is the acknowledgement that women are different in their diversity. This diversity difference as pointed out is fundamental to feminism, and important in that as (Bennett, 2006) states, the “...the articulation of difference leads to a greater understanding, better coalitions, and a more stronger unified but not unitary category of women.” Feminism should celebrate and embrace women’s diversity and use that to strengthen its interventions.

There are indeed different types of feminists and feminist theories. For the purpose of this study, the post-modernist feminists’ theory outlined in (Bailey, *et.al*, 2000) is adopted. The post-modernist feminist theory supports the investigation of women’s experiences and knowledge-base as the basis for creating new feminist-informed knowledge and thus appreciates and acknowledges women’s multiple experiences and realities (Bailey, *et.al*, 2000). It is with contextualising the theory in this study that there will be possible to translate and tap into the experiences and realities of women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government by documenting those and contribute to building new feminist-informed knowledge in this area of women’s development. Feminism, as a

women's movement seeks in its way, to advance the agenda for equality between women and men. The movement is driven by the quest to ensure that women can equally and equitably benefit from the broader sustainable development agenda, its processes, opportunities and resources. It is against this background that issues of gender discrimination and (in) equality surface. That creates a need to dig deeper into understanding what shapes and/or informs these gender discrimination and (in) - equalities across the different spheres of life including the workplace for this study.

2.3.2 FEMINISM AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE WOMEN'S AGENDA AND VOICES

Studies such as this one, is an attempt at ensuring that women's issues are part of the development agenda and that their voices are heard. It is an effort directed at locating the gender discourse in the broader development debates and discussions. The study is also an acknowledgement of the contributions of the feminist movement for successfully laying a foundation that brought women's issues to the fore. Feminism focuses on women's equality and rights within society (Staggenborg in Levitt, 2010) and (Dahlerup, 2010). It would have been difficult to advance women's agenda, voices and concerns "...without the backing of the strong new feminist movement of the 1970s and 1980s, it would not have been possible to break through the walls of male tradition ..." (Dahlerup, 2010). It is with this understanding that the prominence and focus on women's empowerment and gender equality emanates from these earlier feminists' struggles.

The struggle for gender equality traces its origins from feminism advocacy and has evolved overtime. Levitt (2010) maintains that from a movement that aims to eradicate gendered oppression and discrimination into the celebration of women. With development and the need to align to changes in the environment, the neo-feminism emerged with an improved approach to feminism which is to ensure continuity and sustainability in the sense that neo-feminism invented a "watchdog" perspective to women's issues as Levitt refers. The focus leaned towards ensuring that emerging generations are granted the same opportunities as women who have benefited from feminist movements. Neo-feminists further promote pro-feminist agendas, including the support of women as public leaders in society and my addition, influential public institutions such as local government (Levitt, 2010). There should, therefore, be adequate consideration given to the empowerment of women that would lead to empowerment to participate in the array of opportunities across all spheres of life.

The researcher avers that because this study is more a policy input study. The appropriate should be decision-makers and the objective should be that of integrating women's concerns' and consideration into the mainstream development agenda (Oxford, 2002). The quest for women's empowerment brought about significant changes to the approaches that were employed at the time. For instance, feminists had advocated for the Women in Development (WID) which focused narrowly on women's issues. They moved onto the Women and Development (WAD) that advocated for women's development. And then moved onto the more robust, broader approach informed by transformation imperatives and that is the Gender and Development (GAD) approach that not only focuses on women but on both women and men. The emphasis of GAD is the need for a paradigm shift wherein men also takes part in the quest of gender transformation. A brief discussion on these approaches would be valuable in order to give background to the evolution of the struggle for women's empowerment and gender equality for gender transformation.

2.3.3 A PARADIGM SHIFT: FROM WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID) TO GENDER (GAD)

There is truth in the contestation by feminist scholars such as Debusscher & der Vleuten (2012) is that the narrow focus on women in the WID approach, the "add women and stir" approach as they refer to it, has proven to be ineffective overtime. That is the reason they state the need for an improvement in intervention that came with the GAD approach and promised to fast-track gender transformation. Another credit for the GAD approach is that the approach also embraced the gender mainstreaming strategy. Further it is considered innovative as it focused on gender without compromising the centrality of women as the main subject and instead recognised and affirmed the importance of improving women's status through an in-depth analysis of the relations between women and men (Subrahmanian, 2007). The former approach (WID) as argued in Debusscher and der Vleuten (2012) ignored underlying societal problems, such as women's time poverty, imbalanced and unequal gender relations and the socially ascribed gendered roles and responsibilities.

Drawing from the preceding discussions the need to change the women's empowerment and gender transformation approach to the GAD approach with its inherent gender mainstreaming strategy. Gender mainstreaming would widen the scope from add-on, small-scale projects for women. It would extend to the integration of a gender equality

perspective into all policies, programmes and interventions (Johnsson-Latham, 2010). Gender mainstreaming strategy follows below. It is only mentioned here in the context of GAD as the current preferred approach to women's empowerment and gender equality. Up to this point, it is clear that there is some kind of relation between feminism and gender. Having provided an overview of feminism and some of its perspectives, the researcher suggests that feminism has built itself overtime to be an institution. It is opportune to also reflect on gender and the fact that it has occupied a major place in development debates and discussion, which have made it an institution.

2.4 GENDER AS AN INSTITUTION

Baker and LeTendre(2005) agree that gender is an institution and that the shapes and forms of the relationships among gender my addition, institutions and society, are not static. They are ever-changing as determined by broader societal and economic dynamics. This study draws from the assertion that in essence gender is an evolving institution and what informs and shapes it evolves with times. Indicating that that gender is an institution Baker and LeTendre (2005) further argue, gender has always been used as a major defining characteristic across cultures, my addition, also a source of identity. Gender remains a rich source of identity (Baker and LeTendre, 2005). It is rare that any individual across cultures and nations would describe themselves outside their gender realm. Unfortunately, the fact that the feminist movement has been viewed over time as a women's rights movement continuously challenging gender inequality has had a negative impact on the term "gender". It has become misconstrued in society that the term "gender" is synonymous with women. It can only be because the term was used mainly by feminist women activists and at the top of their agenda was the fight against gender discrimination and inequality.

2.4.1 UNDERSTANDING GENDERED DISCRIMINATION AND INEQUALITIES

It is true that in most instances, exclusions are because of the traditionally-held patriarchal dominant views such as those for example, those that perpetuate a view that women do not belong to the public sphere. This view emanates from the hidden assumptions between the public and the private sphere that somehow shape and inform the gendered organisation of reproduction and production. These hidden assumptions are sometimes not openly pronounced though they inherently allocate roles and responsibilities to women and men, girls and boys(Haywood & Mac an Ghail, 2003). It is these traditionally-held

stereotypes that has entrenched the unfounded gendered views of “the women’s place is in the kitchen” thus effectively limiting and reducing women’s abilities and capacities to the domestic sphere as stated in (Nkwana, 2011). In instances where women get into the public sphere, they dominate occupations that extend their domestic roles and responsibilities of caring and nurturing in the main such as teaching, nursing, and so forth. Even where no written policies or laws exist to specifically exclude women, unwritten rules operate that achieve the same goal (Justice Unity Dow, 2001).

The foundation of gender discrimination is a socio-economic exclusion, which is the exclusion from a range of goods, services and activities which are widely considered to be important for individual and collective fulfillment (Percy-Smith, 2000). Therefore an argument raised in this instance is that women are first, by virtue of their gender, assigned the duties of being domestic nurturers and care-givers. These social roles occupy a large component of their existence in families and extended into the communities. In other words, women are social principals across these spheres. However, society generally expects women to perform these duties at no cost but where these duties starts to show signs of potential income, then women are excluded. For example, the number of female councilors decreased by 10% between the 2006 and the 2011 municipal elections which signals considerable inequity (Barometer, 2013). Thus besides the fact that majority women carry out community caring and nurturing duties on a daily basis. It is therefore important to briefly discuss patriarchy and its influences on the societal expectations and perceptions as it dominates discussion in this study, especially in so far as shaping and informing women’s position in society and consequently, women’s access to decision-making and leadership positions.

2.4.2 PATRIARCHY AND ITS DOMINANCE, VALUES, NORMS AND INFLUENCES ON THE WOMEN’S POSITIONS IN SOCIETY

According to Johnson (2001) patriarchy promotes male-centredness, privilege, dominance and identification with an obsession of control as one of its key components, assumedly, control over amongst others women, resources, and opportunities. It has a very long history and is thus deeply entrenched in society and as it has bestowed benefit and privilege to the male species, from generation to generation. The world is seen only from the male perspective, what refer to as “patriarchal mirroring”(Johnson, 2001). As the dominant species, men are spoilt for choice and define almost many aspects of life, the language, the culture and so forth, they set the cultural standards and all other standards

of living. Foucault (1990) and (Sawicki, 1990) states that patriarchal domination is an ethics for men, an ethics thought, written, and taught by men, and addressed to men and to free men. In this so-called ethics code, the author further laments that women are regarded only as objects or, at most, as partners that men had to best train, educate, and watch over when one had them under one's power, but stay away from when they were under the power of someone else who can be another man (father, husband, tutor). Flowing from this view are multiple notions but glaringly, oppression of women and vast amounts of authority to men, male superiority and female inferiority. Explicitly stated is the fact that women are expected to be perpetual minors, subordinate and thus the "dominated and controlled species" with inherent powers vested upon their male counterparts. This notion of "women being controlled and dominated over" by men is the origin of unequal power relations that also perpetuates women's subordinate status and men's superior status in community, society and spills over to all other societal institutions of influence (Foucault, 1990). The said patriarchal dominance as indicated earlier gives credence to sexism which affirms and emphasises the inferiority status of the female gender in relation to the superior status of the male gender. The issue of power is central in this discussion in that it is one which generally revolves around two opposite poles which are composed of two categories. These categories are the dominant and the-dominated. And because patriarchy has laid solid grounds the power balance remain skewed and continues to determine the extent and levels of access to and participation in decision-making and leadership positions (Foucault, 1990).

2.5 WOMEN'S SUBORDINATE POSITION IN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

It is important to understand that patriarchy is centred on women's oppression and men's authority, power and control. The status of women is devalued; they are only viewed as objects of sexual desire (Johnson, 2001). Societies in general expect of women to care and the nurture men, the family, and the society with no compensation and sometimes, my addition no appreciation. Women's role, therefore, becomes that of perpetual insubordination. Unfortunately, local politics impact directly on the lives of women as they carry disproportionate responsibility for social reproduction. Goods and services provided by local government have a direct bearing on their lives for example, issues of water, sanitation and so forth. Gasela (2007) contends that women, cast as caregivers and guardians of household nutrition and health, are the main users of basic municipal

services. Pottie and Ford, (2001) concur that in South Africa, women should be in a position to claim additional interest in the service delivery areas for which local government is responsible. As workers, caregivers and mothers and as community leaders, women have long been in the forefront of basic development demands among South Africa's poor especially in the context of the government's emphasis on building a vision of developmental local government. They should ideally be in the forefront of local electoral politics and that their input into municipal decision-making and policy is, therefore, critical (Pottie, 2000). Local government is obliged to ensure the full presence and participation of women in various municipal structures from strategic community-based structures such as ward committees to the most strategic decision-making structures such as the mayoral committees. However, Gasela (2007) warns against the assumption that more women in local government will necessarily lead to a stronger voice for gender equality. That is, it is not guaranteed that getting more women in local government will ensure that the women's voices are heard. There might be a need for more focused intervention to translate what the researcher terms "gender presence to gender gains". This argument presents opportunity to on the South African's state of affairs with regard to women in local government, both at administrative and political decision-making and leadership levels.

2.5.1 AN OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AND CIVIC MATTERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

A political perspective as explained by Pottie and Ford (2001), women's performance as elected councillors prior to the 2000 elections did not live up to expectations. Women comprised only 19% of total councillors, 28% of councillors elected on PR lists, and only 11% of ward councillors. Given the fact that socio-cultural issues are, in most instances, key to gender dynamics and debates, it is important to have a closer look at the participation of women in the recent South African Local Government Elections of (May, 2011) and look at how these improvements play out across all provinces. The research draws attention to the Mpumalanga Province as it is the focus of this study.

There were, however, some drastic improvements in the South African local elections of 2000. There was a fairly strong women's representation due to a quota system that was used by some of the mainstream parties, a large proportion of which was the current ruling party, the ANC. The following diagrammatic presentation adopted from the Independent Electoral Commission, serves to demonstrate these improvements

Gender	2000		2006		2011	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Women	8 562	28.46	15 718	34.78	19 731	36.81
Men	21 519	71.54	29 471	65.22	33 865	63.19
Total	30 081	100.00	45 189	100.00	53 596	100.00

Table 3 Local candidate gender trends 2000-2011, Source: Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa, 2011.

Given the fact that socio-cultural stereotypes are, in most instances, key to gender dynamics and debates, it is important to have a closer look at the participation of women in the recent local government elections (May, 2011) and look at how these improvements plays out across all provinces as illustrated in the table below. The researcher would like to draw attention to the Mpumalanga Province as it is the focus of this study.

Table 4. Province-specific gendered candidates lists, May 2011 adapted from the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa

Province	Candidates					
	Total		Women		Men	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Eastern Cape	7 220	13.47	2 743	37.99	4 477	62.01
Free State	3 282	6.12	1 167	35.56	2 115	64.44
Gauteng	9 054	16.89	3 571	39.44	5 483	60.56
KwaZulu-Natal	10 390	19.39	3 554	34.21	6 836	65.79
Limpopo	6 688	12.48	2 593	38.77	4 095	61.23

Mpumalanga	4 368	8.15	1 571	35.97	2 797	64.03
North West	4 036	7.53	1 608	39.84	2 428	60.16
Northern Cape	1 600	2.99	649	40.56	951	59.44
Western Cape	6 958	12.98	2 275	32.70	4 683	67.30
Total	53 596	100.00	19 731	36.81	33 865	63.19

2.5.2 WOMEN IN SENIOR MANAGEMENT IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The gender dynamics underlying women and leadership position in local government presents an opportunity to ask fundamental questions such as why there is still unequal and skewed gender representation in senior managerial positions and what are the differences with respect to managerial abilities and styles between women and men? The debates and discussions in this study are, to some extent, advancing a feminist agenda because feminism is intrinsically connected to the struggle for women's economic, social and political independence (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). Participation of women in local government matters and their occupation of leadership positions present their quest for independence across these critical spheres of life the study argues. However, whilst this feminist approach prevail, the researcher seeks to expand from what could be perceived as liberal feminism to include an analysis of other aspects of society that work directly to negatively influence women and their opportunities(Chafetz in Alvesson and Billing, 2009).

According to (Walker, 1999), organisations are a public domain from which women have been intentionally excluded from. Their entry alone is bound to arouse mixed reactions and perceptions. Porter, Smyth and Sweetman (1999) contend that the inclusion of women is not easy as it suggests a fundamental institutional/organisational rearrangement that might not be as acceptable and as comfortable with the already existing majority men as it should be. The continued struggle for gender equality, which advocates for women to take leadership positions, especially in the male-dominated local government challenges holistic institutional transformation to include culture, policies, and procedures. Their entry does not guarantee influence and even recognition in the policy formulations, decision-making and related influential forums and platforms.

This study seeks to reveal the challenges in gendered institutional transformation with regard to women in senior management in local government. The reality is that the number of female Executive Directors and Municipal Managers is disturbingly low, only two (2, 22%) out of a total of 45 municipal managers as stated in (Gasela, 2007). The study argues that the same dismal performance with regard to gender representation at senior management level, that is, Directors and Municipal Managers is the case in a number of other provinces in South Africa including the NDM in Mpumalanga Province which is the focus of this study.

2.5.3 GENDER DISCRIMINATION: WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC EXCLUSIONS

A study that was conducted using selected countries as reference countries with regard to women's paid and unpaid labour revealed that women spend more time than men with domestic tasks and childcare, and they have less spare time than men. This is the situation in most countries wherein roles and responsibilities of women and men are socially constructed to relegate domestic and childcare to the women (Minguez, 2012). This research asserts that South Africa is also a patriarchal-dominant country. According to the study, South Africa, the value of unpaid care work in the economy is higher than the value of paid care work (Minguez, 2012). This demonstrates gender discrimination which brings about a case of conflicting ideals. Women have to choose to be professionals and get recognition and payment at the risk of being "bad and absent mothers" neglecting their domestic and childcare responsibilities which the researcher views as more cumbersome and taxing in time, physically, emotionally and financially (Minguez, 2012).

With the contesting ideals brought about by the discriminatory gender division of labour, women find themselves in a disadvantaged position. The apparent lack of career advancement and development is attributed to the lack and/or less relevant education and qualified work experience (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). This study attempts to draw attention to what is termed "relevant education" and "qualified experience" and how it plays itself out in decision-making and leadership positions as some of the distinctions alluded to in (Alvesson and Billing, 2009).

According to Percy-Smith(2000) key features of poverty and social exclusion are, for example, lack of opportunities to work, to acquire education and skills, childhood deprivation, disrupted families, inequalities in health, poor housing, fear of crime and barriers to older people living active, fulfilling and healthy lives. All these deprivations are

women's daily encounters in their families and communities. An important argument therefore is that social exclusion cannot be reduced to economic factors as economic factors are a key aspect of social exclusion. These economic factors are not taken as only encompassing poverty but include lack of adequate income and exclusion from the labour market which include as the study contends, the exclusion from decision-making and leadership positions (Percy-Smith, 2000). Another critical aspect is political exclusion which is the disempowerment of socially excluded groups and individuals which then result in them claiming to have their social and economic needs met not being voiced, not being heard or not being acted upon (Percy-Smith, 2000).

Johnson (2001) states that patriarchy comes with privilege. The definition of privilege "...as an unearned advantage over another...systematically denying others...placing credibility to others than the next" (Johnson, 2001). Male privilege is the root cause of gender discrimination. It only systematically disadvantages and excludes women across the different spheres such as (in economic activities, wherein earning power would escalate their status in societies). This economic exclusion as (Johnson, 2001) contends, has overtime ensured that positions of authority, whether or not in the political, economic, and all others spheres are a special reserve for male. This exclusion does not only end at the expectations and standards are set according to the male preferences and reservations and thus making it almost impossible for women to thrive in those environments (Johnson, 2001). Local government is a historically male-dominant environment. Community meetings, mayoral imbizos, council sittings are a major component of this institutions' function. It is important to critique the environment and the accompanying expectations and standards and the extent to which these would encourage or discourage women's participation as councilors and managers.

2.6 TOWARDS WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The crux of the feminists' perspectives is the need to empower women towards gender equality. First, it is important to clarify what is implied by 'empowerment' in the context of the above-detailed discussions of patriarchal dominance, sexism and feminism. Kabeer (2005) points out that power should be contextualised and understood in terms of the ability to make choices. Kabeer further argues that "...to be disempowered means to be denied choice, while empowerment refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability" (Kabeer, 2005). People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not

empowered, because they were never disempowered in the first place. Empowered and disempowered is yet another demonstration of unequal power relations between women and men as detailed in (2.2.3 of this study) wherein I draw on the dominant and the dominated.

Kabeer (2005) provides valuable insight into understanding the process of empowerment with applicable conditions which can help an individual to make choices. Empowerment is conditional and such conditions (Kabeer, 2005) states are that;

- There must be alternatives – the ability to have chosen differently. This study attempts to gain insight into the extent and levels of choice, meaningful choices that is, and the availability of alternatives with regard to decision-making and leadership positions. This is so because local government has overtime been a predominantly male environment and this characterised by deeply-rooted patriarchal dominance (Nkwana, 2011).

- Alternatives must not only exist, they must also be seen to exist. Power relations are most effective when they are not perceived as such. Gender issues often operate through the unquestioned acceptance of power. This is another important area of analysis in this study as a male dominated environment might inevitably lead to questioned acceptance of power on the part of women.

2.6.1 EMPOWERMENT AND ITS INTERRELATED DIMENSIONS: AGENCY, RESOURCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Kabeer (2005) explores the following three closely interrelated dimensions of empowerment which are: agency, resources, and achievements. Kabeer defines agency as representing the processes by which these choices characterizing empowerment are made and put into effect. Resources are explained as the medium through which agency is exercised; and achievements which refer to the outcomes of agency – of the processes.

Kabeer is correct to say that institutional bias can constrain people's ability to make strategic and meaningful life choices which include access to participation in decision-making and leadership positions. This is due to the fact that cultural and ideological norms may either deny that those inequalities of power exist or that such inequalities are unjust. The dominated, subordinate groups are likely to accept this *status quo* is influenced by fear of being chastised and or isolated. I particularly like Kabeer notion of agency as it puts emphasis on two distinct features which are, self and process. Kabeer asserts that the

process of empowerment often begins from within. It encompasses not only “decision making” and other forms of observable action but also meaning, motivation, and purpose that individuals bring to their actions. Notwithstanding that resources and achievements are equally important features, the agency is the thrust that begins the journey to empowerment for individuals. The agency is a figurative foundation on which the empowerment house is erected. Flowing from this figurative illustration would be the fact that every house is as strong as the foundation it is laid on. One dimension affects the other and success in one would add as success to the other and could logically lead to changes in others.

2.7 FACTORS FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION ACROSS THE DIFFERENT SPHERES OF LIFE

Access to and participation in decision-making and leadership positions is strategic and meaningful life choices accompanying empowerment. At this point, the research interrogates participation. A requirement that women are represented at these, I add, decision-making and leadership positions or consulted is necessary but not sufficient because it raises questions of whether their voices are actually heard and acted upon (Moser and Moser in Kabeer, 2005). Debusscher and van der Vleuten (2005) argue that a prerequisite to transforming the development agenda is to give women who are affected by development interventions a voice to shape the objectives, priorities and strategies of development. It is critical that provision is made to ensure that policy changes are implemented in ways that allow women to actively participate, to monitor, and to hold policy-makers and relevant actors accountable for their actions as participation of women in other spheres of life may be hindered. This assertion forms part of the exploration of full participation of women in local government decision-making and leadership positions.

Representation and consultation of women in local government decision-making and leadership roles should inform local government policy changes to ensure relevance, identification of gender transformation objectives, priorities and strategies, monitoring and future accountability. The possibilities of presence versus representation cannot be ignored. Presence does not necessarily translate into impact in the same way as numbers does not necessarily result in influence. For example, the presence of women is drawn from a narrow elite who have been invited rather than elected and thus have no grassroots constituency to represent and to account, such presence is in essence tokenism and would not contribute significantly to the broader women’s empowerment initiatives

(Kabeer, 2005) . This brings into the issues of access and full participation in contrast with presence and representation.

2.7.1 ISSUES OF WOMEN’S ACCESS AND FULL PARTICIPATION: Mtintso’s Access Participation Transformation Framework (APTF)

With the preceding discussion (2.5 of this study above) the researcher does not downplay the importance of presence and representation but argues for full and substantive access and participation for real tangible impact.

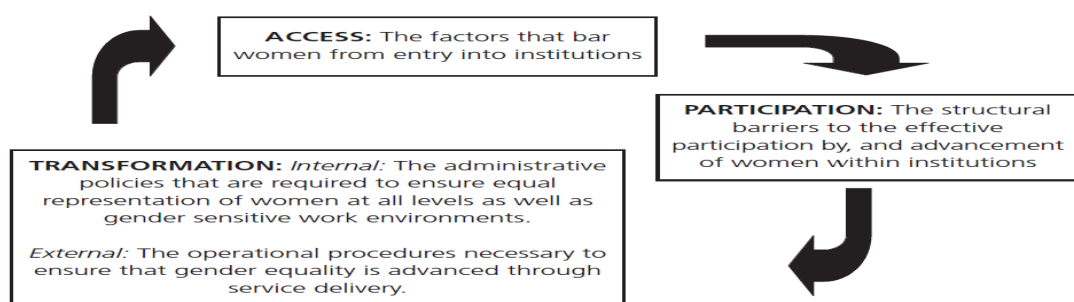


Figure 1: Mtintso’s Access Participation Framework adapted from Gender Links Training Module (2003).

The framework above shows that the entry of women and their stay in the higher echelons of workplaces has significant spin-offs. Whilst it brings a balanced gender perspective in the broad boardroom agendas, it also has a potential of breaking the glass-ceiling and gendering policies, procedures, and related organisational aspects. Thus, women’s increased managerial representation can shape all workers’ perceptions and beliefs around women leaders. Women’s access to organisational power structures matters in organisations. This is because, as a significant source of internal pressure, the characteristics of leaders can shape organisational adaptation and strongly influence workplace inequality (Mittman and Newman, 1991; Hultin and Szulkin, 1999; Hirsh, 2009) in (Huffman, Cohen and Pearlman, 2010). Numbers are important because there is “strength in-numbers” Mtintso’s Access, Participation and Transformation Framework (M-APTF). Further, as the Kanter theory argues that increasing women’s representation improves their organisational standing and reduces inequality. Kanter further maintains that the presence of top-level female managers facilitates workplace equality by alleviating negative effects of token status. Kanter’s work highlights the role of “homosocial

reproduction which is,” the tendency for individuals to prefer to work alongside similar individuals (Ely, 1994 & Elliott and Smith, 2004).

2.7.2 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION, INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES AND PRACTICES

The challenge for women’s access and participation is gendering institutional cultures, practices, policies, procedures and ethics. These components are at the heart of institutional functioning. Beginning with institutional culture, it is regarded as the accumulated shared learning represented by common basic assumptions about how an organisation solves its problems of coordination, cooperation and adaptation to its environment (Howell and Costley, 2006). Appreciating that change is a cumbersome process, gendering the institution could call for a gradual introduction, a multi-phased approach that would target key institutional aspects such as culture, practices, policies, procedures and ethics. This continuous and or incremental change would entail ongoing modifications in these work processes and social interactions, and with small but continuous adjustments, accumulatively create substantial organisational change (Howell and Costley, 2006).

Institutional culture is an important aspect and is one of those loaded with the gender dynamics confronting women in leadership positions across all sectors. It is true that, that efforts towards gendering organisations and institutions should view “...culture as the ultimate target for gender interventions”(MacDonald, Sprenger and Dubel, 1997). Carson in Porter, Smyth & Sweetman (1999) states that efforts towards creating gender aware and responsive environments wherein women can fully participate should be legitimised by the change in organisational culture, systems and procedures. The reality is that there are organisational challenges with regard to creating gender aware and responsive environments in the workplaces. There are in most organisations, commonly-held attitudes, perceptions and expectations which are influential features of this organisational culture. For example, the issue of women’s performance especially those who assume decision-making and leadership positions, placing insurmountable pressure placed on them to outperform their male counterparts with sometimes unreasonable and unrealistic standards.

There is usually high levels of over-expectation and to some extent, to command respect, it is expected that they (women) drop their feminine selves to join the masculine “boys club” (Levitt, 2010). Levitt further maintains that these women, are wary of being perceived

as having a separatist attitude, tacitly agree to "play the game," whose rules were made by the men. Moreover, these men typically held the power, and attempt to get ahead professionally by following the traditionally male-oriented routes to success. Other women are likely to feel marginalised by this perspective and fear that they will not be able to get ahead without sacrificing family, relationships, or their personal well-being.

Notwithstanding the fact that many men are faced with an even greater challenge of upholding the masculine gender role expectations. These masculine gender role expectations are career-driven and success-oriented. Whilst on the contrary they may prefer to spend more time with family, friends, and generally nurturing themselves and their relationships (Staggenborg, 1998) in (Levitt, 2010). Through historical examples, role models, and traditional mentorship relations, women may receive the message that assuming leadership means they must sacrifice in other areas of their life (Levitt, 2010).

2.7.3 GENDERING INSTITUTIONS THROUGH PLANNED CHANGE IMPLEMENTATION

Another important aspect in gendering organisational culture and broader organisational development is the planned infusion of change, what I would term as "gendered change" and the associated "gendered realities" (Schein in Itzin and Newman, 1995). To this end, the Schein's planned change theory makes it clear that change involves unlearning deep-rooted, inherited attitudes, values, self-images and is thus painful and threatening (Schein in Itzin and Newman, 1995). Schein suggests that consideration should also be given to the fact that change is a process and that in a case of organisational change and development, all those involved should take ownership of the process. Itzin and Newman, 1995 indicates the importance of mediating change through an intense focus on individual changes. An important reflection on this issue is the individual focus to effect organisational change, in this case gendering organisations should be as White in Itzin and Newman (1995) reflects whether or not women's entry into leadership positions will potentially make them (women) gender change agents that they become champions and pioneers for gendering these organisations and institutions.

Women's entry into the workplace brings some issues for change. For example, their (women) uncertainty with regard to how to behave and what to expect. The said uncertainty prevails not only to men but even more to women themselves (Alvesson and Billing, 2009). In principle, the argument by (Walker in Porter, Smyth and Sweetman, 1999) that both the "written and "unwritten" rules in institutions should be thoroughly

examined to introduce a gender perspective is necessary. Alternative and progressive model of implementing change in organisations is that of learning organisations by Peter Senge. The model is credited due to the unique feature of allowing organisations to be able to continuously diagnose environmental needs and implement whatever changes are appropriate (Howell and Costley, 2006).

In the quest for gendering organisation and institutions, critical and strategic decision-making and participation forums and platforms should be targeted and for the municipalities they are the organisational strategic planning and reviews, policy development and reviews, integrated development planning (IDP) with communities as well as monitoring and evaluation forums.

2.7.4 WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION AND CONTESTING SOCIAL ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The fact that this is a South African study makes it be influenced by African values and norms. Having also stated that the study is informed and shaped by feminists' viewpoints, African feminists emphasise the importance of understanding the historical roles of men and women in traditional African societies to fully understand contemporary gender relations. Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) maintain that "... if gender is a social construction then we must examine the various cultural architectural sites where it constructed..." Flowing from this assertion is the emphasis on uniquely African women's gendered experiences though mindful "not to build walls between women" (Bennett, 2006).

What is particularly insightful for this study is the meso-level approach to understanding participation and these contesting social roles and responsibilities. The meso - level approach includes the unique socio – historical, political, economic and cultural content of Africa, which incorporate the individual, organisational and societal levels (Nkomo and Ngambi, 2009). Of importance in meso-level approach is the role of the organisation which is local government in this study, and the role played by the society in shaping gender roles and responsibilities. Nkomo and Ngambi (2009) aver that attention should be focused on the unique African socio-historical, political, cultural and economic contexts. The meso-level approach on the organisational level highlights the importance of influencing of institutional practices, policies, structures and systems to accommodate and appreciate the experiences of African female managers and leaders deriving from their

upbringing in families and societies which is also very relevant to women in decision-making and leadership in local government as an institution.

Lastly, the individual level is equally important, according to Nkomo and Ngambi,(2009) referring to the personal characteristics of women, which is their attitudes, behaviors, cultures as well as gender identity are critical. Further proclaiming the popular slogan that “empowerment begins with the self”. There is a need to harmonise the roles and responsibilities commonly considered to be women-specific and the society’s demands and expectations. That is empowering women to challenge their oppression and emancipate themselves whilst also challenging the *status quo* in broader society and thus making steady advancement into the institutions.

2.8 GENDER TRANSFORMATION THROUGH GENDER MAINSTREAMING

After the adoption of the GAD approach as a promising approach to women’s empowerment and gender equality, what followed was the widely used concept of gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming is defined as “... the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making”(Council of Europe, 1998:13) stated in (Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2005) and (Verloo, 2005). The study aligns with this definition as it reflects an “integrationist agenda” as the authors contend. It is comprehensive and all-encompassing to make up for effective mainstreaming, targeting the policy development processes as the origins of discriminatory practices and tendencies through to programmatic interventions (Debusscher and van der Vleuten, 2005).

On the one hand, gender mainstreaming should not be considered as the sole panacea to the gender discrimination and inequalities attitudes and practices without interrogating its attributes. Walby (2005) agrees that gender mainstreaming is a contested concept and strategy because it suggests in its very nature, a total overhaul, which encompasses the reinvention, restructuring and rebranding a key component of the feminist agenda that informed, for example, the WID approach to a more integrationist approach adapted by the GAD approach the researcher argues.

On the other hand, it is essential to take note of some of the gender mainstreaming issues raised. Squires (2005) that mainstreaming gender in development policies as a transformative strategy is best placed to respond to the increasing demands of diversity

but that it should (gender mainstreaming) be augmented by resources, emphasis is put on “deliberate mechanisms” to ensure its efficiency and effectiveness. Therefore, a transformative agenda not only ‘implies transformation and reorientation of existing policy paradigms’ Walby (2005a), but also ‘requires efforts to create constituencies that demand change’ (Mukhopadhyay, 2007). This condition is reflected in Kabeer’s idea of transformative agency which was discussed above (2.3.2). It entails the greater ability on the part of poor women to question, analyse and act on the structures of patriarchal constraint in their lives (Kabeer, 2005). These are some of the “deliberate mechanisms” referred to in (Squires,2005).

The concept of gender mainstreaming, as a transformative strategy, involves the naming and challenging the existing gender and power relations through policy interventions. In these policy interventions deliberate mechanisms of citizens’ forums are constituted for example, by formerly disempowered women and their organisations participate in questioning, analysing and acting upon the gendered world (Debusscher and van der Vleuten 2012 and Squires, 2005).

2.8.1 GENDER MAINSTREAMING AND MEN’S ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT

With GAD approach, emphasis on gender mainstreaming for fast-tracking gender transformation suggested an active involvement of men as partners. Debusscher and van der Vleuten (2012) states that the participation and commitment of men was thus recognised as fundamental to changing the position of women. The inequality patterns between girls and boys, women and men are learnt and starts early on in life, in schools, family and communities, are further nurtured throughout childhood into adulthood, making it difficult to undo or unlearn these deeply entrenched attitudes and behaviour patterns (Seidler, 2006). It is true that men’s participation demands drastic and gradual changes to the social, economic and political patterns of gender inequality that has portrayed women’s participation in these spheres as a threat. This is so because as masculine cultures created in the workplace haven’t taken women into consideration (Haywood and Mac an Ghail, 2003). These include policies, procedures, institutional language and related such other institutional aspects.

Fundamentally challenging would also be changing men’s mind-set in acknowledging and accepting women in what used to be regarded as their space, the workplace. The entry of women brings changes with it. For instance, changes in women’s roles and responsibilities

in these spaces would differ from traditionally-held stereotypes. In these spaces (the workplaces), women might be entrusted with authority in the case that they occupy decision-making and leadership positions. Drawing from the discussion on men's participation, gender mainstreaming would be a best-placed intervention strategy to drive and effect changes in the critical areas such as institutional policies, procedures, programmes and so forth that are in essence at the core of the strategy.

2.9 PERSPECTIVES ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Eagly (2007) asserts that in the United States, women compared to men are increasingly considered as having excellent skills for leadership which contribute to enhanced performance. On the contrary, an observation is that irrespective of women's excellent skills as leaders, (Eagly, 2007) states that most employees continue to prefer male to female bosses. A qualitative study on women's leadership conducted on eight female leaders suggested that women's leadership attributes and behaviors are actually an interaction between personal, interpersonal, and professional domains (Black and Magnuson, 2005). They further highlight the authenticity, compassion, and vision, respectively, with the three domains they identified as inherently women attributes. It might even be suggested that the traditional hierarchical model of leadership, challenged by feminist efforts to equalise runs counter to the actual lived experience of women's leadership power (Humble et al., 2006). An individual's leadership style reflects a unique combination of personality traits and professional goals and vision (Black and Magnuson, 2005).

Levitt (2010) further argues that leadership is a social process that is dependent on social networks of influence. Furthermore Levitt (2010) argues, that the concepts associated with leadership are not gender, power, or sex neutral but instead are rooted in a set of social interactions in which "doing gender," "doing power," and "doing leadership" are linked. This is amongst the critical issues that this research focuses on: "doing gender, power and leadership" for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. The purpose is to explore these dynamics in the context of theories of leadership that fail to consider gender and/or power implications of social interactions and networks of influence. Moreover because this may lead to the cooptation of the leadership models, resulting in their being brought into the mainstream discourse in a way that silences their radical challenge to current work practices, structures, and norms (Levitt, 2010).

Leadership is a process used by an individual to influence group members towards the achievement of group goals in which the group members view the influence as legitimate (Howell and Costley, 2006). The authors' further states that stepping into a leadership role can be a means of exerting power over traditionally oppressed groups. This may conversely be a means of reacting to one's own history of oppression and thereby exerting one's first experience with power (Howell & Costley, 2006). Leadership, by implication, suggests power. Yet, power comes in many different forms and, historically, addresses issues of oppression. Dimensions of race, gender, and class have been conduits of oppression. Gender has not been fully explored within the context of oppression and may have a place in discussions of hierarchy and power (Murray, 2006).

Alvesson and Billing (2009) argue that most work is not "gender neutral" and therefore women's occupation of leadership positions in general, and specifically in local government is attributed to and boxed in the forms of gendered identities. These gender identities take form of femininities – that which is attributed and generally accepted to "being female and a woman" and masculinities – that attributed to and generally accepted as "being male and a man" as society has boxed these gender identities. It is somewhat difficult to behave in contrast to the commonly-held boxed identities.

Most gender inequalities emanate from these boxed identities, which portray men as superior and women as inferior beings across all sphered of communal life. With the evolutions brought by policy and legislative frameworks, this space is now a contested terrain with those benefitting vigorously defending the status quo (Woodward, Hayes and Minkley, 2002). There are important social institutions that have and continue to entrench these oppressive notions of gender identities such as educational institutions (schools, and others). The argument is, therefore, that these oppressive gender identities are used to shape and inform areas of women's participation. The research further argues that in view of the inferior status given to women by society, it is unfortunate that decision-making and leadership remain far-fetched and indeed a "contested terrain" as articulated by (Woodward, Hayes and Minkley, 2002).

2.10 WOMEN PROGRESSION: THE GLASS-CEILING AND GLASS-CLIFF PERSPECTIVE

Research into gender and leadership has tended to focus on the inequalities that women encounter while trying to climb the corporate ladder, with particular emphasis on the role

played by the so-called glass ceiling. However, recent archival evidence has identified an additional hurdle that women must often overcome once they are in leadership positions, namely; the glass cliff (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). There is evidence that women are over-represented in precarious leadership positions. It is therefore important to explore the dynamics surrounding women's appointment to these precarious leadership positions (Ryan and Haslam, 2005). This refers to the phenomenon whereby women are more likely than men to be appointed to leadership positions associated with increased risk of failure and criticism than men because these positions usually involve management of organisational units that are in crisis.

Taking this glass cliff phenomenon to test, three experimental studies on the notion were undertaken. In these, management graduates (Study 1), high-school students (Study 2) or business leaders (Study 3) selected a leader for a hypothetical organisation whose performance was either improving or declining. Consistent with predictions, results indicate that the likelihood of a female candidate being selected ahead of an equally qualified male candidate increased when the organisation's performance was declining rather than improving. Study 3 also provided evidence that glass cliff appointments are associated with beliefs that they (a) suit the distinctive leadership abilities of women, (b) provide women with good leadership opportunities and (c) are particularly stressful for women (Ryan and Haslam, 2007). These findings define an important agenda for future research and will be interesting to explore in local government.

With the rise of service delivery protests countrywide, which has seen the reprioritisation of development issues in local government, the study seeks to explore how this change in focus has affected women's empowerment and gender equality in the NDM. Could it be that women will be deployed in decision-making and leadership positions in municipalities that has challenges or in a crisis as entailed in the glass cliff phenomenon? This remains an area of keen interest in the study. Furthermore the researcher thinks that where women are deservedly holding powerful positions, the institutional policies, procedures, culture are usually unfriendly and non-responsive to ensure that these women function optimally. There are usually pockets of resistance by both women and men that when not attended to will undermine and sabotage these deserving women in decision-making and leadership positions.

2.11 CONCLUSION

The literature review illustrates a long history of debates and discussions on a range of gendered issues such as gender inequality, patriarchy, societal expectations determined by culture and tradition, and gender discrimination broadly. It therefore provides a solid theoretical foundation and context for which to premise gender dynamics with regard to women in leadership positions in institutions.

Dahlerup (2010) points out that, consideration of how both domestic responsibilities and current organisational cultures differentially impact on women and men in their journey to top leadership positions is critical in understanding the obstacles faced by women in powerful positions. The focus then should shift to examining how stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination contribute to women's under-representation and perceived failure in leadership roles. It should further focus on how these serve to discourage other women from aspiring to move into these positions whilst at the same time discouraging those that are in these positions to pursue their stay.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY, DESIGN AND RATIONALE

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is an account of the research methodology and design applied in the study. It provides the rationale that informs the chosen research approach. It further unpacks all the steps undertaken in data collection, the important issues of research validity and reliability as well as the critical ethical considerations. The chapter concludes by highlighting some of the limitations experienced in the data collection process as well as the research study's intended use and value.

3.2 THE RESEARCH PLAN AND PROCESS

Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that one of the fundamental challenges in conducting research is, amongst others planning a design that is systematic, flexible and manageable. Accordingly, as stated in Marshall and Rossman, it is important to consider the fact that in conducting research, planning and related processes such as the choice of the design of the study and the applicable methods should be among the fundamental first steps. Research studies are, in the main, sparked by an interest of some kind in a particular phenomenon. That area of interest would thus shape and inform the research question which would in turn give guidance to the plan that the researcher should embark upon to satisfy the identified knowledge gap and processes that should unfold. O'Leary (2004) research is both a creative and strategic process that involves assessment and making decisions about the best possible means of obtaining data, processing it, analysing it so as to draw credible conclusions. It acknowledges that research is a process is indeed important especially in this study wherein the emphasis is on a phenomenon that is mostly met with resistance "gender dynamics".

Resistance emanates from the inherent patriarchal dominance of male superiority and female subordination that has in most societies, been a normality for decades. This research process would, therefore entail engaging with some of those traditionally engrained gender stereotypes held by both women and men, and the notions of women in decision-making and leadership positions as well as self-reflections of women themselves on decision-making and leadership. To that effect, there is a need to thoroughly think through the appropriate methods that are suitable for that phenomenon under study, and further that those are "open enough to allow an understanding of a process", in planning the research process (Flick, 2007). The researcher also adds that the issue of basing the

said plan and processes on a particular knowledge framework is pertinent right at the beginning. This is done so that the research study can, upfront, assert its basis and appropriately choose requisite methodology and design. Research studies consists of two major sections; the conceptual framework as well as the design and research methods and further that for purposes of the research credibility, both sections requires a solid rationale(Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.3 EPISTEMOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The study is a cross-breed with regard to conceptual knowledge framework in that it affiliates to both constructivism and interpretivism paradigms in its nature. First it is constructivist in that it claims that meaning (those gendered meanings in this case) do not exist in their own right but are constructed by human beings as they interact and engage in interpretation (O’Leary,2004). Second, it is interpretivist in nature because it acknowledges and explores the (gendered) cultural and historical interpretations of the social world (O’Leary, 2004). Further, its ethical inclination is that of a critical feminist perspective pointed to by (Ackerly and True, 2010). The said feminist ethic is as the authors argue, “ ...a methodological commitment to any set of research practices that reflect on the power of epistemology, boundaries, relationships, and the multiple dimensions of the researcher’s location throughout the entirety of the research process and to a normative commitment to transforming the social order to promote gender justice.” The thrust of this study bears relevance to the referred “normative commitment to transforming gender justice through an exploration of the gender dynamics as will be reflected by women in decision-making and leadership positions. It is essential that through the conceptual framework, the linkage between the research questions, the larger theoretical constructs and/or policy issues and illumination of larger issues connects to demonstrate significance and relevance of the research study (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research study. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self. In this study,

qualitative research involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in the natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them”(Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This definition best captures key elements entailed in this study and hence the choice of a qualitative methodology. Further qualitative research addresses qualitative areas in social life such as for example broader social perceptions (as gendered perceptions) of women in leadership which is the focus in this study (Holliday, 2007).

Qualitative research attempts to investigate uncontrollable social variables instead of reducing their effect. In the case of this study, these uncontrollable variables that were investigated, without altering them, were gender dynamics. This study states at this point that whenever gender issues are discussed, it is often difficult if not totally impossible to silence feminism and feminists views on gender. It is the same for this study. Having consulted feminism theories through literature review in (Chapter two) of this study, the researcher was inclined to align and base some discussions on feminism. This is done because qualitative research is to a greater extent premised on a moral discourse, it should continuously pursue and have a “moral commission to take the side of the under-privileged, of minorities...”(Flick, 2007). Qualitative research is that it “is explicitly political and intends to transform the world with its practices”, an inherent transformation agenda (Flick, 2007). This is important for the as it explores a complex phenomenon such as gender dynamics, and gender transformation is considered amongst South Africa’s national development priority.

3.4.1 A CASE FOR FEMINIST-ORIENTED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Alvesson and Billing (2009) and Ribbens and Edwards (1998), there are often dilemmas confronting feminist- oriented qualitative research and those are, among others, researching in an environment wherein the theoretical, conceptual and formal traditions are predominantly public and male-dominated, which is the case with this study. The study also uses to some extent, principles of evolving critical theory and research (Kincheloe and McLaren). The authors argue that the evolving criticality entails “...detectives of new theoretical insights, perpetually searching for new and interconnected ways of understanding power and oppression and the way they shape everyday life and human experience”(Kincheloe and McLaren). This study makes a case for a feminist-oriented qualitative study because an analysis of such a complex phenomenon as gender

dynamics cannot be easily and effectively achieved through a quantitative study which pre-empt the kind of variables that should constitute gender dynamics. Analysis of gender dynamics in the context of an organisation such as local government has its own intricacies and complexities which may not be readily captured by numerical methods. Thus, a more qualitative approach which is deeply rooted in induction would be appropriate in an attempt to reveal perspectives of participants, in everyday practices and everyday knowledge (Flick, 2007).

Having discussed the feminist research ethic that underlie the study, it is important to capture and study what (Ackerly and True, 2010) refer to as “the silences and absences in familiar institutions and of studying marginalised and excluded peoples’ experiences...” for an in-depth and clearer understanding of these oppressions and gaining insight into the conditions, processes and institutions that cause and sustain them. The researcher has blended qualitative research methodology with a feminist ethic that enable the researcher to consider and pay attention to the power of knowledge, and more profoundly, of epistemology, boundaries, marginalisation, silences, and intersections; relationships and their power differentials; and the researcher’s own sociopolitical location for “situatedness” (Ackerly and True, 2010). These factors are fundamental in understanding a complex phenomenon such as the one being studied, gender dynamics.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport, (2011) argues that research design encompasses some of the decisions that the researcher makes when planning for the study. The one such decision that the researcher made is that the study is inherently feminist-oriented. The design is intended to ensure that the research study is “self-reflective, critical, political, and versed in multiple theoretical frameworks in order to enable the researcher to “see” those people and processes lost in gaps, silences, margins and peripheries” (Ackerly and True, 2010). As feminist-informed study, it “centres and makes problematic women’s diverse situations as well as in the institutions that frame those situations” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

This is in acknowledgement of what (De Vos, et.al., 2011) maintains, that qualitative research paradigm requires the design to be more than a set of “worked-out formulas”. The researcher is concerned with developing a much in-depth and clearer understanding of the gender dynamics rather than providing a mere explanation. Also important in the

qualitative research design is the researcher's personal interest and curiosity which is the case in this research study (De Vos,et.al., 2011).The researcher serves as a woman in decision-making and leadership position in local government who is interested in gaining more in-depth understanding the gender dynamics confronting women in decision-making and leadership positions and diversify her knowledge on gendered issues and situations confronting other women in similar positions and environments elsewhere, thus attempting to also satisfy her curiosity in the area of study.

3.5.1 AN ADVOCACY, PARTICIPATORY AND PHENOMENOLOGICAL APPROACH.

This research design is advocacy-oriented, participatory and phenomenological. Cresswell (2009) maintains that gender dynamics are largely political, change and empowerment-oriented. An additional characteristic of this worldview is that whilst the inquiry is intertwined with political agenda for reform, specific issues of social importance such as inequality, oppression, domination, suppression and alienation are dealt with (Cresswell, 2009). Cresswell, (2007; 2009) regards phenomenological study as that which describes the meaning of the lived experiences of a phenomenon or concept for several individuals. Gender dynamics as a complex phenomenon fits well into this description. De Vos, et.al., (2011) further explains that at the root of phenomenology is the intent to understand the phenomena under study (gender dynamics in relation to women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government) on their own terms and therefore to provide a thick description of human experience as it is experienced by the subjects. The product of the research is a careful description of the conscious everyday experiences and social action of subjects (De Vos,et.al., 2011). The warning that researchers must be able to distance themselves from their judgments and preconceptions about the nature and essence of experiences and events in the everyday world is important (De Vos,et.al., 2011). The researcher, therefore, excluded observation in eMalahleni local municipality where she is employed in an executive position as Director: Administration and Resources Management. She has relied on interviews only in this municipality. This is intentionally done to ensure that as best as possible, the researcher distances herself from judgments and preconceptions that would be difficult to isolate based on pre-knowledge but would be better handled through interviews as that would be captured as gathered from the participants themselves. Observation would be easily misinterpreted if there is prior knowledge but interviews cannot be misrepresented as they are entirely data provided by the participants themselves. In all other municipalities in NDM, the researcher has no prior

knowledge or information and thus, the observations have objectively captured what has been observed with no judgments and preconceptions.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF ENTRY AND ACCESS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

De Vos,et.al., (2011) warns that qualitative research is not as linear a process as quantitative research and thus provides no definite plan, fixed design or recipe to follow. Qualitative researchers are therefore urged to device research strategy (ies) best suited for the chosen research. De Vos,et.al (2011) further maintains that qualitative researchers should early in the process, prepare themselves emotionally and intellectually to undertake fieldwork.

Permission to enter should be obtained from the gatekeepers with clear plans of data management. In this study, the Nkangala District Municipality (NDM) which serves as the gatekeeper was approached for permission (Addendum 1). Permission granted through the NDM as the District coordinating municipality would translate into permission for entry into all the local municipalities under its jurisdiction. A meeting with the District Executive Mayor took place to explain the research study, what it seeks to achieve, and all related processes. It was well received. A subsequent letter to consolidate the discussions was sent to the Executive Mayor's Office (Addendum1). Parallel to this process was that a meeting with the Municipal Manager at the District took place, facilitated through the Executive Mayor's office. In the same way, a subsequent letter to this effect was sent through to confirm the granted access and entry (Addendum 2). The permission letter was forwarded to all municipalities under NDM, and thus facilitated easy entry (Addendum 3). It serves as a sample of an internal communique stating the researcher's visit and purpose. Gaining access through these identified gatekeepers is as important as positive relationships, agreements and cooperation from the research participants, which the researcher successfully strived at.

3.7 RESEARCH POPULATION

The population of this study is women in leadership positions within local government. The inclusion of men would, however, give substance to understanding the gender dynamics which, by implication, would probe into men's attitudes, views and perceptions of women in decision-making and leadership and also premised on the notion that "gender "refers to both women and men. The primary population of the study consist of women in decision-

making and leadership positions in NDM local government, though does not entirely exclude men in decision-making and leadership positions in the NDM because inevitably women would in their reflections, refer to their male counterparts. Engaging men serve to validate the data collected from the women participants and/or bring a new dimension that serve to inform future women's empowerment and gender equality discourse and to strengthen related interventions into the future.

The research population consists of at least between 70 -80 research participants from the administration and political leadership components, namely, the Municipal Managers and Executive Directors who are in the administrative decision-making and leadership and the ultimate custodians with regard to administration. Also the Mayors and/or MMCs who are the political decision-making and leadership anchors and custodians of the political oversight function.

3.7.1 A SYNOPSIS OF SAMPLING IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Unlike in the case of quantitative research where sampling is used to pursue the logic of statistical generalisation sampling in qualitative research is a way of managing diversity so that the variation and variety on the phenomenon under study captures as much as possible of the empirical material (Flick, 2007). In qualitative studies, sampling can also follow different logics, some formalised, some purposive and flexible. Marshall and Rossman (2011) reiterate the fact that in justifying a sample, the researcher should "know the universe of the possible population and its variability and then sample according to all of the relevant variables". The authors also highlight that from the sample population the size depends on a variety of complex factors. This is perceived as a way of setting up a collection of deliberately selected cases, materials or events; women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government in this instance, for constructing a corpus of empirical examples for studying the phenomenon of interest (Flick, 2007).

3.7.2 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE RESEARCH POPULATION

For the purpose of locating the study's debate within a broader context of municipal functioning, both the administrative and the political inputs are vital. The interdependence thereof goes a long way in informing and shaping key management and operational decisions and priorities, hence focus on ensuring that the population is as representative as possible of the administrative and the political components. The process was carefully thought-out by being mindful of the complexities associated with the phenomenon under

study, the target population and the prevailing political environment. Issues of funding and time constraints have a direct impact on the sampling and were considered (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). This study was undertaken at the same time as the ANC's, which the ruling party in South Africa and thus the majority in national parliament, provincial legislatures and local municipalities were preparing itself for their 53rd Congress. Nominations for ANC's national leadership were underway and thus local government, as the sphere closest to the people, where the party branches that nominate this national leadership are located. The main focus was on this process and the accompanying contestations which were disruptive with regard to the availability of women in decision-making and leadership in the political component of local government.

Mixed sampling as referred to by (Flick, 2007) as putting multiple interests and needs into concrete terms in one sample proves viable for this study. For instance, understanding gender dynamics for women in decision-making and leadership positions features multiple interests and needs. These gender dynamics are as reflected by women of themselves and their roles, by men, institutional policies and procedures. The researcher was however mindful of the caution raised in (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) that with the required flexibility from the researcher (3.5.1 above), it is important to consider the fact that "the sample plans are often subject to change, given the realities of the field research". That would be a mix between stratified purposeful and to a lesser extent, snowball sampling (Welman and Kruger, 2001). The researcher chose stratified purposeful as the study comprise of purposive sampling of women and men councilors serving as Mayors or as Members of the Mayoral Committees (MMCs), Executive Managers (Directors) in the respective municipalities in NDM to ensure that the gendered voices, views and opinions are captured. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) maintain that, in qualitative research where purposive sampling is used, the researcher must clearly explain the criteria used for the selection.

The sample size is based on the size of the municipalities. Some of the municipalities under study are comparatively small in terms of population. This is according to the municipality demarcation board. Some are thus bigger on the same basis. For example, in NDM, eMalahleni and Steve Tshwete Local Municipalities are considered big and commonly referred to as nodal municipalities whereas Victor Khanye and Emakhazeni are the smallest. The size of the municipality is also derived from the number of wards and consequently the number of councilors that constitutes the respective municipality's

council as well as the number of administrative operations' directorates and executive directors and officials. Thus, those municipalities that are smaller in size would have a small number of the research population and the bigger ones have a bigger representation of the sample population. The researcher has opted to interview all in both. The breakdown of the sample, drawn from all the municipalities under the NDM jurisdiction is as presented in (Chapter 1, table: 1) of this study.

3.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In the data collection process, the study has adopted triangulation, that is, collected data using different methods because this approach is useful for the validation of findings. These are:

3.8.1 SECONDARY RESOURCES: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

The secondary sources comprised of the municipalities' official and archival documents such as, the respective municipalities' IDP documents as the main master plans with communities' inputs, annual reports, spatial development frameworks, gender policies and related such publications.

3.8.2 PRIMARY RESOURCES:INDIVIDUAL AND GROUP INTERVIEWS AND OBSERVATIONS

Marshall and Rossman (2011) states that interviews as a method of data collection have significant benefits in that they yield data in quantity quicker. Immediate follow-ups and clarifications are possible and when paired with observation and questionnaires (which the researcher details below), they allow the researcher to gain insight and understanding of the meanings that everyday activities hold for the participants. The researcher is mindful of and also acknowledges the limitations of interviews in that they are dependent on trust. The researcher has trust relationships with participants, based on guidance that these trust relationships are time-bound and at their worst, the participants' might be unwilling or uncomfortable to share all of what the interviewer intends to explore(Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.8.2.1 PHENOMENOLOGICAL INTERVIEWS

The researcher employed individual face to face phenomenological interviews with the Municipal Managers, Executive Directors, Executive Mayors, Speakers and Chief Whips in

the respective municipalities. Explained by (Marshall and Rossman, 2011), phenomenological interviews are three-pronged, namely; first focus on past experience with the phenomenon of interest, second focus on the present experience, and the third linking the first two to describe the individual's essential experience on the phenomenon.

The selection of in-depth individual interviews with prospective participants is based on the seniority of these individuals' in a municipality. It is not appropriate to interview the Executive Mayor in front of her/his Mayoral Committee Members (MMCs), or the Municipal Manager in front of her/his Executive Directors. This is, in respect of municipalities' protocol. Therefore, separating them provides a rather conducive environment with some level of honesty and openness whilst at the same time respecting the positions these individuals hold in these institutions. By implication, interviewing this group of participants constitute what (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) refers to as "interviewing elites –individuals in positions of power and influence". The advantage of this type of interviews is that valuable information can be attained from these participants because of the positions they hold in social, political, financial or organisational realms (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

Marshall and Rossman (2011) indicates that these individuals are able to discuss organisational policies, histories, plans and are familiar with the legal and related provisions. An interview protocol (Cresswell,2009) or an interview guide (Marshall and Rossman,2011) was used and the engagement and/or interaction was recorded both by means of taking written notes and audio-tapes' recording as part of data management for transcription. These interviews were based on semi-structured, open-ended questions. According to (Cresswell, 2009) they should be few in number intended to elicit views and opinions from the participants. Marshall and Rossman (2011) advise that with guided interviews the researcher should explore general topics, in this case, on gender dynamics with regard to women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. Further that she should respect the way the participants frame and structure their responses. Emphasis should be on the fundamental qualitative research assumption that the participant's perspective on the phenomena under study should be allowed to unfold as the participant views, what is termed the emic perspective (Marshall and Rossman, 2011).

3.8.2.2 OBSERVATIONS

Observations are fundamental and highly important method of data collection in qualitative inquiries (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Observations are used to discover complex interactions in natural settings even in instances wherein in-depth interviews are conducted. They continue to play an important role. With observation, the researcher is able to capture those silent gestures that are loaded with useful data that is highly relevant to the issue discussed. Marshall and Ross (2011) explains, "...the interview partners' body language and affect, tone of voice, and other paralinguistic messages". According to (Cresswell, 2009) observation is that which the researcher takes field notes of, on the behavior and activities of individuals at the research site. Cresswell further states that qualitative researchers may also engage in roles varying from a non-participant to complete participant using qualitative observations.

In this study, the qualitative observations were conducted in important forums such as the mayoral imbizos on the IDP and Budget which are consultative forums with all members of the community wherein the Executive Mayor gives a report back on service delivery progress and receives further feedback from the community and council sittings wherein the matters of community and service delivery importance are discussed and decisions are taken. The researcher was a non-participant observer using observation protocol for recording information while observing (Cresswell, 2009). The observation protocol was in the form of a recording sheet separating descriptive notes that are portraits of the participants, reconstruction of dialogue, descriptions of the physical setting, accounts of particular events or activities) from reflective notes which are the (researcher's personal thoughts, such as speculation, feelings, problems, ideas, impressions and so forth) (Cresswell,2009).

The researcher used focused observations at these forums. These were considered as "planful and reflective" observations that will be compiled as full field notes for analysis (Marshall and Rossman, 2011). Municipal characteristics vary with regard to numbers. Some municipalities are small and consequently the constitution of the Council and councilors is relatively small. The same applies to the administrative functions wherein directorates are small as well. In contrast, some municipalities are larger and so is the constitution of the Council and councilors as well as the administrative component. For this reason, the researcher interviewed as many of the target population as possible in small municipalities to optimise data collection as well as many of the target population as

possible in the larger municipalities so as to make up for the smaller ones and for validation purposes. In this case, interviews were qualitative in-depth interviews (Kvale, 2007).

Another method used for data collection was participant observation. The researcher visited several municipalities and observed some critical meetings such as the mayoral community outreach (imbizos), the Council sittings, the IDP and Budget Indabas. These are meetings wherein the political and administration interface with the community and other important stakeholders such as business, churches. A combination of data collection methods make for triangulation in an attempt to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena that is under investigation (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION AND PRESENTATION

According to (De Vos, et.al., 2011) entails “bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data”. The research study used qualitative data analysis as a process of “inductive reasoning, thinking and theorising” (De Vos, et.al., 2011). Further, (Flick, 2007), agrees with (Marshall and Rossman, 2006) a search for general statements about relationships and underlying themes builds grounded theory. An analysis will be done through coding and categorisation by searching relevant parts of data, analysing and comparing these with other data and subsequently naming and classifying them to obtain a structure that will assist in providing “...a comprehensive understanding of the issue”(Flick, 2007).The study applied document analysis using extensive literature comparisons in an effort to avoid over-generalisation. Marshall and Rossman (2006) emphasises that constant comparative data analysis helps in the development of grounded theories on particular phenomena. That is what is referred to by (Welman and Kruger, 2001) as content analysis. Premised on this guidance, are preserving data and meanings and combining the transcripts with preliminary analysis for increased data efficiency (Marshall and Rossman, 2006).

De Vos, et.al. (2011) advises on the need for testing emergent understanding and searching for alternative explanations which is a process that entails evaluating how things that are not in the data could be important. Such a process is meant to evaluate the data for its usefulness and centrality (De Vos, et.al., 2011), and further reveal negative evidence that might be worth exploring. Some of those might be events that the research

population intentionally seeks to hide such as effects of the researchers preconceived notions and conscious non-reporting to mention a few (De Vos, et.al., 2011).

According to (De Vos, et.al., 2011), interpretation entails making sense of collected data and further developing typologies. De Vos, et.al., further mentions two approaches of interpretation: the emic, first-order and the etic, second-order approach to interpretation. Both these approaches were used in this study. With regard to the emic, first-order approach, the researcher interprets the data by finding out how people being studied see the world, how they define the situation, or what it means to them. Indeed this interpretation is relevant to gender dynamics with regards to women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. It also looks into how they define their situation or what their situation means to them. The second-order typology is as useful in that it allows the researcher to elicit the underlying sense of meaning of the data at hand (De Vos, et.al., 2011). The researcher wishes to acknowledge the possible emergence of “indigenous typology” referred to in (De Vos, et.al., 2011) in that gender dynamics are a complex phenomenon and thus susceptible to such emergence.

The researcher presented data by emphasising quality of the end product. The key factors for consideration were those alluded to by (De Vos, et.al., 2011) namely; credibility or authenticity, for which case, the study adopted triangulation of different methods. Transferability is another factor which means that the study can be transferred from a specific case to another. The researcher referred back to the original theoretical framework to show how data collection and analysis was guided by concepts and models (De Vos, et.al., 2011). Another factor is dependability and conformability which was adequately integrated in the final presentation. The study was guided by the analytical procedure with the suggested seven phases detailed in (Marshall and Rossman, 2011) namely; organising data, immersion in the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, offering interpretations through analytic memos, searching for alternative understandings and lastly presenting the report. Of importance is that each of these phases entailed data reduction at which the reams of collected data are compacted into manageable chunks and data interpretation wherein the researcher brings meaning and insight into the words and acts of participants (Marshall and Rossman,2011).

3.10 RELIABILITY, VALIDITY AND GENERALISATION

The researcher has applied validity procedures suggested by (Cresswell, 2009) and those are; ensuring that transcripts do not contain obvious mistakes, cross-checking the codes for consistency and thus ensuring that a different coder would arrive at the same codes used for the same passage “intercoder agreement” as Cresswell refers to this reliability aspect.

Creswell (2009) further identifies validity as one of the strengths of qualitative research, the accuracy of the findings is central. This means that the participant, the researcher and an external reader of the account must be convinced about the accuracy of the findings. To this effect, the researcher has triangulated different data sources and used that data to build a coherent justification of the themes (Cresswell, 2009). The use of rich, thick descriptions to convey the findings were employed to attempt to give readers a glimpse into the real setting.

At the beginning of the study and at various points in the study, the researcher provides an honest and open account of her inherent views and opinions (her biases) owing to the position she holds at the municipality. It is as a result of this that she recuses herself from observations at the municipality she is employed in. This is in an effort to, as (Cresswell,2011) encourages, make for a good qualitative research wherein the researcher can comment on the interpretation of the findings and how they are shaped and influenced by the researchers’ gender, culture, history and so forth. Furthermore, to ensure validity the researcher gave a comprehensive account of the research which

includes the negative, contrary information that might emerge. Last, because the researcher, by virtue of her employment at a municipality is exposed to prolonged time at the research setting, she spent extended period of time at different municipalities in order adequately reflect and ensure added advantage to the validity of the study.

3.11 CONCLUSION

Cresswell (2009) states that generalisability is the hallmark of qualitative research. The researcher argues that gendered experiences of women in decision-making and leadership positions are not homogenous. That they are defined by a number of varying socio-economic and political factors such the geographical location of urban and rural, the levels of education and experience, among others. These factors are not static but evolve

over time. As Cresswell states, qualitative research occurs in natural settings where human behaviour and events take place where occur focus is the participants' perceptions and experiences. The researcher therefore, used this background to argue that qualitative research cannot be generalised as the natural settings, the human behaviour and events as well as the perceptions and experiences are amenable to change and difference. This study is, therefore, more particular given the specificity of the target population, the geographical location, and other related factors such as the political environment within which local government operate in.

CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Presentation, analysis and interpretation of findings have adopted a narrative approach that detail data collected and triangulated through desktop research, interviews and observations. This is done due to the fact that this study is a qualitative investigation. The focus of the study was gender dynamics in the context of women in decision-making and leadership positions within local government. It is perhaps important to state that whilst the study aimed to limit its data gathering to women in decision-making and leadership within local government, it became almost natural to include interviews with other women and men in the system based on referrals and observations. For example, in the observation of a mayoral Imbizo, an announcement of the researcher's presence and purpose was made. Some ordinary community women and men became keen to meet the researcher and comment on their views of women in leadership, proceedings of the meeting, and related matters. The task was for the researcher to sift through these information-sharing encounters and draw important aspects of relevance to the study.

Another example, the researcher would have requested an interview with a female director, but she would recommend a group interview with other women in middle management. The benefit of such a recommendation is that it brought more information, time-saving and the easy and enhanced flow of information as a result of comfort brought by women sharing same experiences. The gender dynamics that have been revealed through the data gathering processes proved to be of both positive and negative nature and impact.

4.2 OVERVIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS' PROFILES

In Chapter 1 (table 2) a detailed breakdown of the research participants has been provided. However, an important addition is first, that women in middle management were drawn in by their respective seniors. For example, in cases where the positions of decision-making and leadership were held by men, they recommended that the researcher at least interact with their female junior managers. In some cases, female managers would equally recommend that women in middle management should be included. Second, the inclusion of union shop stewards was another factor. The reason was that according to labour relations, any matters affecting employees should be communicated with the union as the employees' representatives and permission granted. These positions constitute

decision-making and leadership in the municipalities. Third, the educational and work experience of those interviewed.

Local government and municipalities were used interchangeably in the study as municipalities are institutions of local government. There are two components in these institutions namely; political and administrative. Women and men in decision-making and leadership positions who were interviewed were from both components. The political component's decision-making and leadership positions comprises of Executive Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips and Councillors who are appointed to serve as full-time and thus Members of the Mayoral Committee (MMCs). There are no minimum educational requirements as these are political deployment positions. The requirements are that one should belong to and actively serve in the structures of that political party. As a result, the educational qualifications vary from not having acquired matric to having acquired some formal qualifications. In essence there are those councillors that are holding senior decision-making and leadership positions with little or no formal education whilst others are qualified professionals who are politically active and thus deployed to these positions.

The administrative component is constituted of the Municipal Manager and the Executive Managers or Directors. These people constituted the research participants in this study together with middle managers and shop stewards. The minimum requirement for middle managers in most municipalities is at least a formal higher education qualification and in the case of Executive Managers a formal higher education qualification and an added demand for a post-graduate qualification. For shop stewards, it depends on the position and levels that respective individual holds in the organisation. These union officials are elected by employees and the requirement is that they are members of the union and willing to assume leadership. It would have been useful to also interview members of the South African National Civic Association (SANCO) because they are important stakeholder as well. Future research should fill this research gap.

4.3 ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL DOCUMENTS

All the documents stated in (Chapter 3 of this study) about the six municipalities were readily available on request and therefore documents from all the municipalities were studied. Most of the municipalities visited were cooperative enough to provide electronic versions of all the required documents to the researcher which made analysis efficient. Because these documents are mandatory, the format and outline (provided by the

provincial department) is the same across all municipalities, differing only in detail of the actual information which made the analysis easier. The critique is also relevant in that whilst it is limited to the NDM municipalities, all documents derive from provincial, national and international priorities thus providing reasonable insight into those levels as well. For instance, all municipalities' IDPs and Budget Plans are premised on the constitution, the municipal legislations, Provincial Growth and Development Strategies (PGDS), MDGs with the Vision 2014.

4.3.1. GENDERED SHORTFALLS IN MUNICIPALITIES' IDPs AND BUDGET PLANS

According to legislation, IDPs and Budget Plans are mandatory planning and budgeting tools in municipalities as detailed in the (Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000) flowing from the objects of local government as outlined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 106 of 1996). These documents are considered amongst the most important documents of local government in that they are legislatively binding. They are important documents because with and through them, communities have a direct input into key institutional priority development areas. They also provide for an interface between communities and institutions (municipalities) which is done through mandatory consultative forums. The documents are also important in that it is legislatively mandatory that they are paired (the IDP accompanied by the budget). They provide financial accountability of the institutions to the communities they serve in that the budget should reflect the same priority/ies (as if the key priority areas are for example infrastructure development, then there should adequate budget allocation in that direction). At the same time they encourage revenue collections (services' payments) as communities are able to see anticipated collections rates which are tied to service delivery. The said documents are valuable as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This is so because as they are five-year plans which are reviewed annually, they make it possible for the communities to trace progress with regard to the state of progress on the agreed priority/areas juxtaposed with budget collections and expenditures.

The study revealed that there are serious deficiencies with regard to the inclusion of issues pertaining to women's empowerment and gender equality in the IDPs and Budget Plans. In view of the fact that most of the municipalities in South Africa are generally marred by community service delivery protests, Mpumalanga included, priority areas in most municipalities in NDM is more skewed, leaning more towards infrastructure development (the provision of water and sanitation, roads, electricity and such related

aspects). By implication, the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda is viewed in generic terms that majority of women benefit from the provision of these infrastructure services. This assertion is premised on the fact that women are primary users of services rendered by municipalities. In a failed attempt to locate the glaringly absent issues of women in decision-making and leadership in these documents, the research sought clarity through interviews with some of the participants. There were no programmes specifically targeted at empowering these women in one way or another as they are considered as "soft issues", not directly affecting service delivery in communities and can thus afford to take a backseat.

The approach that prioritises service delivery issues is disturbing and sabotaging to the broader gender transformation agenda. If there are no concrete mechanisms to empower and support women in decision-making and leadership positions (included and budgeted for in the documents mentioned herein), they (women) will be adversely affected, which is a gender dynamic on its own. The research could conclude that the absence of such programmes is used as a disadvantage and as barrier for women's access to decision-making and leadership positions. By implication, women will remain disadvantaged, disempowered and therefore, rendered incapable to make meaningful impact in these positions. It is however useful to mention the absence in line with a discussion on the two documents, the IDPs and the Budget. That is particularly so because the rules of the IDP and the Budget is that what is not included should not be entertained until the review period. To this end, the research studied archived IDPs and Budget Plans of these municipalities to see if at any annual review forum, programmes for women in decision-making and leadership were included and perhaps reprioritised and the result was negative. The conclusion is that women who are in decision-making and leadership positions are not considered as an integral part of institutional functioning and operations and therefore have only themselves to rely on. As local government is predominantly male environment, the absence of gender transformation programmes in these important documents entrenches the *status quo*. The study argues that in order to ensure access to and the sustainability of women in decision-making and leadership positions, institutions should decisively include gender transformation as a key priority area coupled with systems, mechanisms and budgets for implementation. The IDPs and Budget Plans are such critical mechanisms.

4.3.2 GENDERED INADEQUACIES IN THE LEDs AND SDFs

Documents such as the LED and the SDF are of a strategic nature in the quest for advancing and sustaining women into decision-making and leadership positions in the local government. The LED strategy for example, requires the establishment of a multi-stakeholder LED forum wherein all local businesses, small to medium and large companies engage with the respective local municipalities. That is a strategic point for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local municipalities because LED is among the core functions of the municipality.

The LED forums are strategic grooming forums for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government as they provide knowledge and skills sharing, and transfer platform with great potential for career progression. However, lack of adequate institutional support for these forums in municipalities and the identified stakeholders' presents a gender dynamic. As revealed in the interviews, LED like Infrastructure development portfolios are from both the municipalities' and the stakeholders mostly headed by male officials. The gender dynamic is the subtle institutional negligence of making sure that these forums, that are core to the municipalities' functioning, have in their ranks women managers and leaders. Further, that they (LED forums) are used as platform to drive the empowerment of women in decision-making and leadership positions. Gendered questions that should be posed to these institutions are for example; would an increased attention to the LED strategies and forums reveal the hidden aspects of male-dominance and its consequences for women in decision-making and leadership positions?

It important emphasise that NDM is considered as the economic hub of the Mpumalanga province. The NDM is home to large mining houses such as Anglo-Coal, BHP Billington, Extrata Coal, Exxaro. Future gender and development research studies should detail the number of these mining houses by breaking down exactly how many collieries each have in NDM, and their contributions to the women's development agenda. More especially with regard to advancing women into decision-making and leadership positions. Whilst not confirmed, a LED coordinator in one municipality indicated that one mining house has more than (22) collieries, all of them in NDM. Using this information, it is therefore distressing that LED forums in NDM are not as vibrant as the economy itself. Furthermore, that women in decision-making and leadership are denied strategic decision-making and leadership platform.

From a gendered perspective, the absence of large entities in these forums means the absence of critical human resources which women (who are already in the employ of the municipality and those that are from different community structures) would tap into with regard to human capital that serve as building block for skills, knowledge and expertise – sharing thus a capacity-building opportunity for decision-making and leadership. The salient gender dynamic is that of women in decision-making positions in local government are disadvantaged and denied of a critical platform of input and growth. The platform is very important in the bigger scheme of development-oriented issues affecting women in local government.

Last on this aspect, the research revealed another policy and implementation lag. Most municipalities have comprehensive LED strategies, well-written and packaged documents but the issue of building a cadre of women in decision-making and leadership is often overlooked at the expense of SMME development. Focus is limited to making sure that women enter the fray as entrepreneurs, and thus issues such as fast-tracking business registrations, access to business financing, and related business support services occupy prominence in these documents. Whilst this is an important focus and contribution to women's empowerment, it is limited. The fact that the LED forums are in the main, male-driven explains why the LED strategies have the above-mentioned short-comings with regard to women's programmes. The research found out that in four of the six municipalities in NDM, the LED coordinators were male. A future study is recommended to interrogate processes of input into the LED strategies and the levels of women's participation in these.

4.4 ISSUES IN MAYORAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS, COUNCIL CAUCUS AND SITTINGS

Municipalities are made up of two components, namely; the administration component that is the implementation thrust of service delivery and the political wing which is in the main the legislative oversight component. In some municipalities, the researcher was granted permission to attend institutional forums for observation, with strict confidentiality instructions. These forums are on the political component, the highest decision-making forums. In the Mayoral Committee meetings, all operational items are included in the agenda for discussion and decision by the committee and subsequently passed through to council for approval.

The researcher further observed that gender dynamics were definitely at play at these forums. It was at these meetings that issues of power and power relations, boys' network, male superiority could be seen in action. Depending on which item was of interest to which gender group, notable gender power played out. Because of the inherent patriarchal notions of male superiority at these settings, instead of the Executive Mayor, Speaker as the decision-makers and leaders on the political component should command influence and power, male superiority took over. According to the researcher, men had power and influence in these settings. They would have lobbied their "boys networks" to ensure presence at these settings, and from other various factors such as influencing even women colleagues to take their side, thus presenting a women to women opposition and strategically siding with the one of these women, who takes up their course, who supports their agenda and thus disempowering the others.

In one municipality for example, there was an issue (an agenda item as referred to in the institutions' terms) that dealt with the resignation of a Municipal Manager and the subsequent appointment of an Acting Municipal Manager. The outgoing Municipal Manager was a female who would be replaced, amidst on an acting capacity by a male. The male colleagues would overpower the female Executive Mayor who would be against that replacement. Her insistence in this case was that a female candidate should be replaced by another female candidate. Unfortunately, the boys network coupled with other women were lobbied to support the male candidate and they won. In such instances, which were observed in a number of municipalities, women would sell-out fellow women colleagues in a quest for gaining male approval for future career prospects. The bigger picture of unity amongst women, which is to forge what the researcher would refer to as a "strong womanhood bond" which is aimed at supporting one another is heartbreakingly invisible.

On the contrary, when the item interests women, they still rely on men's buy-in for the item to get favourable approval. Salient aspects such as body postures, language - mostly male authoritative and overall articulation somewhat affirms male authority and superiority. As one participant mentioned "men are not shy...they argue their point home...actually they force it home plus they have the support of other men...if even they are wrong they are still supported...women with their powerful positions follow as lame ducks...they know they will need the same men sometime". Another participant added that "...on items especially...women would know that a male, so and so...has interest on this item...even

intentions...and they will not even care to stand together and oppose the men...even if in numbers if they were to vote the women are many...the men would have already influenced other women to sway the vote into their direction...women are sell-outs...they don't like each other...that is why they are always fighting among each...imagine...at such high levels”.

At the caucus level, the situation is made worse by the fact that the ruling majority political party is directly involved. It plays a briefing role, a “mandate” to all its councilors, including the Executive Mayor, Speaker and MMCs. The mandate might be working against other women, for instance, recalling a mayor or a speaker, such a mandate is not questioned and most instances it is carried out by men. It is important to highlight that perhaps future research should deliberate on the composition of office-bearers in political parties and how those translates into municipal functions. This is precisely because eventually those have direct bearing on these caucuses at the municipalities. For example, in an attempt to gain insight into this area, the researcher conducted a brief enquiry that revealed that out of the five top positions of the Regional Executive Committee (REC) of the ANC as the majority party in all the municipalities under study, there is only one female who serves as a deputy secretary. Whilst this is a key position, it comes after the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Secretary and the Treasurer all of whom are male. This is where the power to brief caucuses is located. This can be a subject for a national and provincial enquiry as the *status quo* is the same at both these levels that are under the ANC majority.

The study concludes therefore that these forums are hostile and could potentially discourage and dissuade women from occupying positions of decision-making and leadership as those would inevitably put them in these forums. The researcher is also of the view that it is not sufficient to have women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government if the inherent gender dynamics impedes power and influence that come with occupying these positions. As indicated in the preceding paragraph, the study could not delve deeper into some of these aspects as they qualify for an in-depth study in the future.

4.5 ISSUES OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY MEETINGS AND MAYORAL IMBIZOS

In the data collection phase of the study, the researcher attended several community meetings, especially IDP and Budget consultative forums as well as Mayoral *Imbizos* in

the municipalities under study. The aim was to observe the women in decision-making and leadership positions in action, at work. It is indeed encouraging to note that women are taking these forums seriously and thus attend in their numbers. In the interviews, the issue of women's active involvement and participation came out strongly. At this point, the research study would limit the analysis only to the observations at the said public participation forums. It is important to also highlight that both the administrative and political wings of municipalities interfaced in giving feedback on implementation progress and gathering community further input and feedback. Both the political and administrative decision-makers and leaders were directly involved; they actually were at the forefront of these forums in planning, convening and facilitating them. The Mayors, Speakers, Chief Whips with the MMCs and the Municipal Manager and all the Directors joined forces at these forums. It was indeed an advantageous and insightful platform as it brought to surface live interactions between the women themselves, between them and their male counterparts, between them and the community.

The research study limited observations only to as far observing gender dynamics with respect to women in decision-making and leadership positions is concerned. On a general scale though, there were fascinating observations with regard to public participation in local government, development broadly as perceived by communities, that should be taken up for future research.

Despite the fact that women were in the majority in all the public forums the researcher attended, the male superiority and female insubordination patterns continued to show. For example, there were different ways in which community members would address the female leaders (both political and administrative) and their male counterparts. When addressing female leaders, there would be undertones of disrespect, fuelled by the lack of service delivery as a common challenge in most communities. However, with the same challenges, when addressing men, there would be a sense of respect and understanding. In actual fact, male councilors and managers were the ones that would call for order and respected whereas women counterparts would be howled at or regularly disrupted.

The distinction was clear that in one meeting, feeling severe pressure of disrespect, the mayor walked out of the community meeting and threatened immediate resignation. In another meeting, a group of disruptive, mostly male community members would render the meetings ungovernable with threats of violence only when the female mayor was scheduled to address the community. The group would go as far as influencing the

community to stay away from such meetings or to join in the disruption against the female mayor. These forums took place under heavy police presence. When the mayor decided not to attend those meetings and deployed a male colleague, the meetings ran as planned. That is if by luck, that deployed male colleague decides not to disregard the deployment usually stating valid but convenient reasons (for example sickness, family funeral). Such observations revealed the amount of challenges and frustrations that women in leadership endure as well as the stress and hostility of the environment they operate in.

The same gendered hostility was brewed between women to women, wherein if they both occupy decision-making position, they are pitted against each other. These meetings are therefore used to illustrate the other women's inefficiencies. For example, between the Mayor and the Speaker, the Mayor accounts mainly for service delivery and the speaker for public participation. Issues of service delivery are therefore emphasised to show the mayor's failures outside the fact that as a council, all councilors are accountable to oversee service delivery. The female Mayor would have to bear the brunt of community attack and ridicule and if the Municipal Manager is female, she would offload the blame on administration and direct it to the Municipal Manager which meant opening her up for criticism. This is sad because in the case where it is a male in the same situation, they protect him, they would stand with one another and cover-up for one another at all costs. There were salient gendered messages that were communicated by these forums, that decision-making and leadership positions in local government is not a female terrain, and on a larger perspective, that local government is not a field of occupation for women. In essence, this hostility silently kill ambitions and aspirations of young women who attend these meetings who would otherwise wish to enter local government in the future. This is not an expression that women in decision-making and leadership positions should be treated differently or as other participants stated with kids' gloves. The point made is that the attitudes, the behaviours and the general reception are hostile to women as opposed to men. The hostility carries with it a message that women must unfortunately conform to the masculine-oriented character and nature, "develop a thick skin" and be "as rude as they are" as exclaimed by one participant in the community meeting (a young woman from the community) who sat next to the researcher during an aggressive exchange. Furthermore, because local government has been a predominantly male entrenched environment, the feminine characteristics and qualities are seen as not fitting, hence the expectation that women should conform.

4.6 ANALYSIS OF INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES AND POLICIES FOR WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY.

In the above critique (4.2), the research in-depthly studied institutional documents that are public in nature, most of which are mandatory according to relevant local government legislation. In this part of the study, the research looks at the internal structures that have a direct bearing on women's empowerment and gender equality and thus consequently for women in decision-making and leadership positions in these institutions. Those that the research considered vital in understanding internal programmes with regard to women that are in decision-making and leadership are; organisational structures, workplace skills plans (WSPs), employment equity plans (EEPs) and gender policies and/or strategies.

4.6.1 WEAKNESSES AND STRENGTHS IN ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES OF THE DIFFERENT MUNICIPALITIES

It is important to highlight the fact that because these municipalities are in the same district (NDM) and the same Province, their functional operations are the same as they are centrally coordinated by the NDM. The researcher would like to credit the said coordination, and note that it demonstrated the need for district municipalities as coordinating institutions. As was the case with NDM, it played an effective role that promotes uniformity whilst taking cognisance of the differences especially those brought about mostly by the rurality of other municipalities. Coordination was so effective that in all the municipalities that were visited, they had more or less the same priority, depending on the community needs, and with regard to the organisational structures, all municipalities attested to the fact that they were convened by the district to present respective organisational structures (old and reviewed versions) and collectively (with input from sister municipalities) corrected. All these municipalities were given a mandate to include the revised structures in the respective IDPs, budget and implement changes in phases by setting priorities according to respective growth and human capital needs. The manner in which coordination took place, the knowledge and expertise shared among the municipalities and contributed to the coherence in the district.

Weaknesses are the inequities between women and men across all levels in the organisational structures. Analysis was done in a way that looks at the positions, the levels, and the incumbents (in female and male distinction). A closer look at most municipalities' organisational structures revealed that women were in their majority at the

lower levels of the structures (as cleaners, waste removal officers, litter pickers, street sweepers, general assistants, administration clerks, secretaries and receptionists). Men were in the majority (refuse removal tipper and water-tank truck drivers, law enforcement officers, tractor drivers, sewer plant operators, mechanics) which are also considered lower levels in the municipalities. Technically therefore, at first glance, if lower levels are studied the general agreement would be that women and men are equally placed. However, from a gender lenses, there were gender disparities and inequalities especially those that entrench stereotypes about women and men's occupations.

The study further, maintains that strategically, there are inequalities of privilege; men's lower positions are prestigious and skills-based. For example, a driver must possess a driver's license and internally in all municipalities, there are advanced driver tests and trainings conducted regularly in compliance with occupational health and safety legislation. These tests and trainings relate to skills development that advances one's career progress and prospects. On the contrary, women are concentrated in the positions of cleaning which is an extension of their home chores. This perpetuates gender stereotypes. As cleaners, street sweepers, litter pickers and there are no skills required. In actual fact the gender stereotypes referred to earlier serves as a requirement (women clean better). The same can be said about receptionist, secretaries, and administration clerks. Their career progression and prospects are through to the very next junior position. For example, in one municipality, the secretary of the Head of Department (HOD) was a receptionist and promoted to being a secretary and another woman who fortunately studied whilst she was a street sweeper and managed to get her matric is now promoted to being the receptionist.

Women's promotions rotate in the same levels whereas with male drivers, the next level is supervisor which signals an entry into middle management. For this research a key issue to ponder on in this regard is how organisational structures are used to reinforce organisational gender stereotypes between men and women's occupations which strategically hinder and or block women's entry into decision-making and leadership. Those organisational structures have also been neglected as a powerful advocacy and lobbying tool for effecting institutional gendered changes to benefit and sustain women into decision-making and leadership positions. For example, in the case where an organisational structure depicts glaring gender under-representation, there are no plans or

programmes at recruitment and selection levels to correct the situation as the research gathered.

In order for women to improve their promotional prospects they must put in an extra effort mostly through studying, which is on its own an added burden to balancing child-rearing, caring for the family, other community roles and work. In hindsight, whilst the study acknowledges that the lower level occupations for both women and men mentioned carry significant health hazards, namely; heavy trucks, stop-and start-driving in the case of refuse collection through the day, the same can be said with litter picking and street sweeping which means standing the whole working day. However, a close comparison would reveal that women, and in this example, litter pickers and street sweepers, bear the harshest working conditions exacerbated by for example the weather. In winter, the weather is cold and in summer it is hot, heavy rains and harsh winds. Another worrying factor is that from the observations, the researcher could not readily access restrooms.

At the levels of Sectional Managers, Heads of Departments (HODs), Directors (sometimes referred to as Senior Managers), gender inequalities are equally blurred. Supervisors and Sectional Managers constitute middle managers and the HODs and Directors together with the Municipal Managers constitute senior (executive) management of the respective municipalities. Again, analysis was conducted in the same manner as with lower levels above, that is, studying the positions, levels of the incumbent (female or male distinction) on the organisational structures. At a glance, organisational structures could be misleading with regard to gender equality. Because all these levels are at management, at face value it appears as though females and males are equally placed.

It is with a gender lens synthesis that it was noted that supervisors and sectional heads are middle managers which is where females are in majority. The HODs, Directors and Municipal Managers, are in the majority, males. Furthermore, there is a direct political influence and a decision is taken by the (majority political party) on who is “deployed” into these positions of senior management that are said to be strategic positions. This is one reason why there are majority males than females in these positions which case qualifications, experience, expertise and knowledge unfortunately do not matter. The suggestion is that the incumbents in the senior management positions should somehow have connections and affiliations to the majority political party in order to be able to garner the necessary support for incumbency into these positions. As one participant whispered for fear of being heard “...they mustn’t lie...we don’t even bother to apply for this positions

as before as they are advertised no matter how qualified one is, we already know who will be appointed so why waste your time...” There was an agreement from other participants that “...most of those deployees get her at we have to teach them work...they are political heavyweights...are friends with so...and so but fact is they do not have a clue of their position and what is expected of them”.

Of relevance to this study drawing from these responses is that again mostly male (REC as stated in 4.2) which is key in deployments is likely (and has in most instances) deployed other men. This is done without regard for the national gender transformation agenda. That is ensuring women’s access to decision-making and leadership is given effect and that it should cascade down to local government levels.

There are salient gender dynamics in these deployments because in cases where women have been deployed, they were not put there on merit. If this was the case, then and that those women were equally incompetent as their male counterparts. As one participant boldly stated “...the women that come to these positions are as clueless...they slept their way here...or are related to so and so who is a friend to so...and so...in their political circles”. In addition “...unfortunately if you don’t want to pay in kind, through sex and relationships and you also don’t have connected friends, brothers or sisters...you will remain in this position until you retire or die”. The researcher thought that issues pertaining to sexual advances, favours and harassment deserve to be discussed separately and have been detailed below. For this part of the study however, it is important to highlight that the organisational structures analysis confirmed that women managers are relatively low in numbers. There is however one municipality in the NDM that has a female Municipal Manager, Mayor and two Directors with only one male director (the CFO) which is impressive. Unfortunately, at the time of completing this study, the researcher went back to the same municipality and was informed that the Municipal Manager abruptly resigned.

Organisational structures are an important tool of advancing women into decision-making and leadership positions within local government institutions and should not be overlooked, especially the salient gender dynamics contained therein that makes them appear gender-sensitive and responsive at face value but falling short of a gendered analysis. To this end, the research study has gathered some recommendations drawn from participants that would be outlined in the next (Chapter 5).

4.6.2 SHORTFALLS AND SUCCESSES IN WSPs, GENDER POLICIES AND EEP

The WSP and the EEPs are mandatory as required by the Department of Labour. Gender policies in local, provincial and national government are set out in the (National Policy Guidelines on Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, 2000) which are not are not mandatory. Some of the challenges stem from the lack of mandatory enforcement by the policy guidelines.

In the all municipalities in South Africa, including those in NDM, the WSP and the EEPs are vital documents to addressing some of the gender dynamics facing women in decision-making and leadership positions across all spheres of government and in the private sector. The internal processes governing the submissions of these documents are of significance. This is so because before submissions, these documents undergo rigorous internal consultation processes that are; departmental management, union-employer working groups, local labour forum (LLFs) prior to their approval and submission. Active involvement of the unions in these documents is laudable because in all municipalities, the researcher noted that the unions were vibrant.

There were however, challenges with regard to the regularity of the sittings of the LLFs which would, on their own, require focused studies on women's active involvement and participation. This is so because like LED forums, the LLFs provide an even more strategic platform for women to influence key decisions that cuts across the whole municipality functioning and operations. It could also very well serve as a training platform for women into decision-making and leadership as this is a decision-making forum wherein the employer and employees, through representation by the various active unions in respective municipalities regularly meet (once a month). Critical issues such as organisational structures, conditions of work, employment and transfer policies are discussed and agreed upon in these meetings for processing through council. Unfortunately, in the LLF only members of Senior Management (HODs and Directors) represent the employer and shop stewards represents their respective unions.

Having argued above in (4.6.1) on women's absence in senior management and the consequences, those majority women who are in middle management will not get exposure and experience gained at these strategic forums by virtue of their levels and location in the organisational structures. The same can be said about senior management meetings which are the core administrative decision-making forums in municipalities. If

women are not well represented as senior managers, key strategic organisational decisions are taken by men, to the detriment of women. More especially those women that would be otherwise prepared in these forums for future decision-making and leadership positions. Furthermore, the absence of women as shop stewards in unions is also a sore point.

It is important to reinstate the fact that this is a feminist research where the researcher is able to reflect on his/her experiences. Having mentioned earlier in the research that the researcher is herself a Director (see chapter 1), she found it interesting that at her very first meeting of the LLF in her municipality, there were only two women (one Director and one shop steward) surrounded by a group of more than twenty male colleagues among them were, shop stewards, HODs and Directors. The LLF is a direct competency of the Director (Administration – Corporate Services as usually referred to). In this meeting, there was an item for discussion on grey areas, which was people who were promoted but their salaries and levels not adjusted. This became which a highly contested area on the union's side. The issue was that the budget for those adjustments could only be included in the IDP reviews of the next year. This was the point of dissatisfaction.

As a new employee in the institution, and a woman in the midst of so many men, yet the main player with such a sensitive matter on the agenda, demonstrated for the purpose of the study, the need to for women to participate in these forums. This is so to facilitate skills acquisition, education and experience but also ensure the critical mass to make the environment receptive. The study doesn't imply that women would support her, but should rather provide at least, the sense of belonging. Of importance were the gender dynamics, the word was out that there was a new female. Director and the forum would be used to assess and test her strengths, knowledge and expertise and thus gauge future engagements and interactions. Drawing from the researcher's experience, the question is, would it be the same with a male director? The researcher argues that most likely not. Instead there would be some understanding among the men that he is new and should be given a briefing. Men would have already formed alliances to support him.

The study intentionally chose to illustrate and highlight gender dynamics inherent in these strategic forums, decision-making and leadership building and capacitation potential as well as the future career progression and prospects they present prior to focusing on the WSPs and the EEPs. The said intention is motivated by the fact that the processes are the

ones loaded with gender dynamics. Processes for adopting decisions would, in the same manner be in management meetings that are predominantly male.

Women and men's experiences in life in the home, family and community which includes the workplace are different. These experiences shape and inform how and what they bring in formal places such as the workplace and other settings. The underlying gender dynamics, for example power relations, language and postures in these meetings, could largely be intimidating to women more than the issues (the documents and in this case the WSPs and EEPs) that are supposed to be discussed at these forums. The fact that the unions are active with inputs from employees makes most of the WSPs and EEPs appear as women's empowerment and gender equality driven. The popularly expressed challenge is with the implementation as echoed by most participants was the view that "...the documents have good intentions but year in year out we see the same things...due to lack of implementation on the part of the employer and ...we suggest that Labour must now put penalties on non-implementation". There is, therefore, a disjuncture in what is outlined in the documents and that which is the state of affairs. A future study could attempt to explore the link between the WSPs, EEPs and how they shape and inform the reviews of Organisational Structures from a gendered perspective. Gender dynamics are embedded in the processes than in the actual documents.

All municipalities did not have a council adopted gender strategies and/or policies. In municipalities where there was an attempt, the documents were still at drafts, and had been so for a number of years. This is extremely distressing, considering that all women's empowerment and gender equality programmes, including the renowned gender mainstreaming programme would soon receive endorsement and consequent budget allocations.

4.7 INCREASED WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Contrary to the claim that women have neglected active participation in local government (Van Donk, 2000), women have heeded the call to make local government an area of high interest. Women continue intensify advocacy and lobbying for women's active involvement and participation in local government, with specific gendered objectives of course. The participants logically pointed out that active involvement and participation strategically facilitates entry. Participants further stated that it was with entry that progression into

decision-making and leadership positions follows. Generally, there is an agreement among participants that women's involvement and participation in local government has visibly increased at both community and institutional levels. First, participants' cited the increase in the number of women in ward committees, community development workers who operate on a provincial mandate (Department of Social Development) but operate on a day-to-day basis directly with and from the municipalities. The insistence on pushing for women to occupy these positions was because these positions are considered important in facilitating entry in municipalities. That is breaking past male-dominance in the local government sector. In their view, regular interactions with the municipalities as required by these positions provide relevant experience and insight that could be useful for future career prospects. Second, participants also pointed out to an increase in women managers, women councilors and that in some instances women occupy important decision-making and leadership positions both politically as Executive Mayors, Speakers and administratively as Managers, Directors and Municipal Managers.

The researcher also conducted interviews with most of the Gender and Transversal Coordinators in all the six municipalities under NDM. These coordinators are what the researcher would refer to as operational custodians and gate-keepers of all women's empowerment and gender equality related matters in these institutions. The Gender and Transversal Coordinators, in all the municipalities the researcher interacted with, held a common view that women's involvement and participation in local government affairs was at an all-time high. According to the participants, "...women are very active in the municipalities...as entrepreneurs they tender from catering for official functions by the municipality and visiting provincial departments through to sub-contracting under big companies for roads and buildings constructions and other infrastructure development that are relatively large scale..." The sentiments were the same in both rural and peri-urban municipalities, but in the rural municipalities, participants added the fact that "...women take active interest in the municipalities' affairs because most of the men here are not around, they work in distance places and only come home month –end". There was however, caution about challenges that come with women's active involvement and participation in municipalities' affairs some of which are covered below as important data categories in the analysis. Women's involvement and participation is contextualised to present a strategic foundation for women's entry and subsequent progression into decision-making and leadership positions as it is the focus of this study.

The general consensus among participants, however, is that it is of critical importance that women take an active interest in local government as it provides them with an entry point into a territory where, decisions directly affected women were naturally taken by male. Such involvement and participation also provides an opportunity to input and influence the development direction the municipalities' should take, thus influencing decisions on the institutions' priorities.

Impressive elements of collectively-shared advocacy and lobbying strategy that seemed to be common in most of the municipalities were revealed during the study. The strategy is to encourage women's active involvement and participation at elementary levels of municipalities in order to facilitate entry as stepping stones towards decision-making and leadership. Also indicated by the participants, decision-making and leadership were not stereotypically limited to holding the positions as suggested by the study. Decision-making and leadership were rather viewed in the context of influencing decisions, through active involvement and participation in any of the municipalities' forums through ensuring that their interests and input are registered. One participant said that "...most women councillors started off with active participation at community meetings...it improved their status in the community...they started being regarded as potential councillors as they seemed to voice out community issues better and their candidacy was then supported..." A more synthetic analysis of this statement is that participation in the lower structures is fundamentally important to grooming women leaders.

4.8 WOMEN MANAGERS AND LEADERS' CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

Participants highlighted the fact that women's entry into decision-making and leadership positions would significantly contribute to a large extent on improving service delivery albeit with challenges. Aspects that stood out in this category were those that linked women's traditional roles and responsibilities with the municipalities' core services and directly affected women in the majority. Women in decision-making and leadership positions in the municipalities is not an issue viewed in the narrow sense of making sure that women are represented in the higher echelons. Rather, women's entry into these positions is viewed in the broader beneficial perspective of ensuring that service delivery is improved as women would better understand service delivery priorities that would subsequently improve the quality of life of women in communities. One participant retorted "...we have water problems here, we go for days without water and there is no

communication from the municipalities as to when water will be cut and when it will be reconnected...as women we have school children uniform to wash...we have to cook...we must clean...only women understands our work with water is huge and that women must be councillors...to tell this to the municipality...” This is a good example ensuring women’s active involvement in matters directly affecting them. That is acknowledging that women have important and unique contributions to make in the development and appropriate management of the services rendered by municipalities (IULA).

Women’s into decision-making leadership positions (especially councillors as community representative and leaders) within local government is viewed as potentially putting women’s service delivery priorities on the agenda. There is also an acknowledgement that some women gets into these positions and sabotage the good intentions. Such women use the platform to pursue their own selfish interest. One participant stated that “some women councillors fail us...they get there and misuse their status, they enrich themselves and forget completely about women in the communities that have put them there...they sell stands illegally, demand bribe for giving jobs and these stands, they do all sorts of illegal things to enrich themselves...”.

4.8.1 CHALLENGES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

According to Evertzen in (Krook,2010) women must fully take part in the local democratic system and have full access to decision-making structures. The researcher encourages them that eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent and can serve as the first level. The researcher adds that local government is an orientation level, for women to serve in and acquaint themselves with formal legislative environments that can help them build capacities and gain valuable experiences. The researcher further states that this exposure will help springboard women through to national politics. Participants, however, held the view that women’s access to decision-making and leadership positions is marred with serious challenges that compromises the women’s empowerment and broader gender transformation agenda. An interesting aspect is that both the women in political and administrative decision-making and leadership positions agreed that there were challenges, and some hard choices that they were confronted with daily in their work situations that could discourage women’s access into these positions. For instance as one participant stated that “...honestly it is challenging to occupy these positions...it is a good thing that they are contractual...one hopes to only serve her five year term and never

return...the challenges are daunting and what is even more difficult is that one has to be quiet ...you don't ask some of the things that are obviously wrong but you are silenced as you will face undesirable consequences..." The same sentiments were repeated albeit with a different emphasis" that it is a political environment so women are expected to behave in a certain way, be quiet...like Barbie dolls...we are silenced..." These statements signals high levels of discontentment and deeper probing led to the following;

4.8.1.1 DAUNTING GENDERED EXPECTATIONS AND SILENCES

Kronsell (2005) argues that studying silences remains a difficult methodological challenge in that analysis of what is not said is a crucial part of feminist research. Also described in (Youngs, 2004) describes these silences as going "behind the appearance [to] examine how differentiated and gendered power constructs the social relations that form reality". Challenges might be daunting but a lot about the said challenges goes unsaid. According to the researcher's observation, fear of being isolated, or rather of facing consequences is so intense that even when presented with an opportunity to express these challenges, women in these positions remain vulnerable and overwhelmed. In attempt to read through these silences by using simple probing questions such as "what are these expectations of women that participants kept repeating", the researcher could only conclude that it is "behaving like a woman and being quiet, not challenging anything and leaving it for the men to decide". Which then points to the fact that presence doesn't necessary translate to influence. The said gendered expectation has tokenism connotations to it. It is almost as though women were done a favour by occupying the positions that they are in and therefore, should be somewhat grateful by keeping quiet. One male participant said "...had it not been for the demands of 50/50 gender balance women wouldn't be here, we expect them to toe the line or just shut up" which indicated stereotypical views of women. In instances where women are the decision-makers and leaders, for instance wherein they are the Executive Mayors, Speakers, Directors and Municipal Managers gender dynamics rear their ugly heads. The said gendered expectations continue to play a big role in that, it is expected of these women to extensively consult and source buy-in from male colleagues if they are to be supported.

On the contrary, males occupying the same positions feel that they should be supported by the other male and expect women to naturally support them as they do not have a choice. This is also an unfortunate connotation that the workplace is an extension of the family and the community and that in those spaces; males are the heads who are

entrusted with decision-making powers. For the researcher, this is very sad that despite the hype of gender transformation advocacy, education and training activities, programmes and related interventions, such skewed gender expectations persist in institutions such as local government. It also brings forth the importance of thoroughly engaging with the nexus brought about by the broader societies' culture, tradition and the human rights culture that drives the gender transformation agenda.

4.8.1.2 GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND SILENCES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Municipalities are political institutions in which it is believed that both women and men who enter decision-making and leadership positions do so because of the political party they represent and not in their personal capacities. This therefore means that the individual is forever indebted to that political party that can “recall” or “redeploy” them as and when the need arises. Individuals who are in these positions, therefore, tend to be silent for fear of being labelled as “anti-revolutionary” and suffer the consequences. These silences are highly prevalent and a disturbing phenomenon in these institutions. The argument is that these silences are loaded with potentially damaging examples for the future generations who aspire to enter local government at both political and administrative levels. For example, if tokenism is allowed to entrench itself, it blurs the line for revealing women’s capabilities, expertise and experiences acquired in their terms of office as they are expected to keep quiet whilst men display the same and gain recognition which leads to career advancement. Moreover, the said silences are loaded with fear of victimisation such as sexual harassment. Some participants revealed that there are numerous incidences of both sexual advancement and harassment in some municipalities in the NDM. The researcher intentionally mentions advancement and harassment to denote the differentiation that participants pointed out. With regard to sexual advancement, the participant alludes to the fact that there might be mutual agreement where the male employees advances and is accepted. In the words of one participant “...there are many such relationships...some are genuine, whilst some are meant for protection and favours” On sexual harassment, it is when intimidation, threats, and force are used when the advancement is not welcomed but the recipient is forced to be silent for fear of further victimisation. Whilst these were said to be minimal, they exist and because of fear of humiliation, they go unreported. One senior manager adds “one senior politician told me to my face that I will not last so long I think I am better...I refuse his advance...he tries very

hard to negatively influence everyone to find fault in my work...how do I tell everyone that it is because I refuse his advances..." These are the daunting gendered silences.

4.9 GENDERED NEXUS: CULTURE, TRADITION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There was emphasis on the related yet at times opposing link between culture, tradition and human rights from the responses by participants. When the researcher compared this emphasis from both the rural and the peri-urban municipalities that the research took place in, there were similar expressions centred on this nexus. McEwan (2000) and the Women's Charter for Effective Equality (WCEE, 1992) indicate that some of the challenges present today in institutions such as local government are that democracy and human rights have been defined and interpreted in terms of men's experiences. One may contend that perhaps democracy and human rights came at the time wherein men commanded authority and thus manipulated these to reflect their own masculine agendas. Unfortunately though is that for democracy and human rights to be meaningful for women, space must be created for women to participate in, and shape the nature and form of the country's democracy (McEwan, 2000).

There was emphasis on the rural municipalities which was attributed to the fact that culture and tradition are highly regarded in these in the responses by participants. In these settings, gender transformation is, mentioned by one participant "...taken with a pinch of salt...issues of gender equality is at the backseat..." This is so in most of these rural areas where traditional authorities highly respected institutions.

The views of participants were that in these areas culture and tradition define how women should behave, their roles and responsibilities in the community and that most of the development decisions are made by men. Gouws (2008) argues that the conflict among culture, tradition, and universal human rights as embodied in the South African Constitution (Act 106, 1996) is such that customary law protects the positions of men in traditional communities to the detriment of women. There are still significant levels of gender discrimination and oppression in these areas which result in disadvantaging women when it comes to into decision-making positions in local government. Ndashe (2005) and (Gouws, 2008) states that women experience multilayered forms of oppression in the home, the community, the workplace. That which is referred to as the triple oppression (Ndashe, 2005). These realities would if understood in the context of the participants above, not be entertained in the mainstream institutional discourses because

they are the salient gender dynamics. These are the expectations and silences that are intentionally left out of gender transformation discourses. The challenges therefore, are in reforming customary law and aligning it with institutional human rights discourse that would serve to advance gender transformation as an institutional priority area (Gouws, 2008),.

4.10 WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS AND CHALLENGING HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES.

Kronsell (2005) mentions hegemonic masculinity which refers to a particular set of masculine norms and practices that have become dominant in specific institutions of social control. To become hegemonic, cultural norms must be supported by institutional power Kronsell maintains. With the research, there was affirmation that it is true as (Kronsell, 2005) maintains that when a woman, whether feminist or not, becomes part of an all-male organisation, her presence challenges masculine-defined and determined norms and values. As pointed out by most participants, local government has been and continues to be a predominantly male environment. Therefore, women's entry into it is continuously viewed as a "mission", a continuous and daunting task of undoing and challenging this male dominance and the accompanying masculine norms and values.

The researcher found it useful to use this unit of analysis and draw similarities with those used in (Kronsell, 2005) which deal with the military and defense organisations as male and masculine organisations. Participants contended that despite women's entry and subsequent progression into decision-making and leadership positions, the male dominance is perceived as the ultimate norm. Kronsell (2005) says that the military and defense institutions which are the hegemonic masculinity tend to represent and validate specific notions of masculinity in ways that make it the norm. Kronsell advises that such institutions could best be approached through a feminist methodology. With Kronsell's advice in mind the researcher used critical analysis to delve deeper into what appears to be 'normal' in institutional practice and by "listening to the voices of women" and developing a "feminist standpoint perspective" in daily institutional practices (Kronsell, 2005).

Reflecting on women's daily lived experiences in relation to their experiences in their positions of influence and power, participants revealed that male dominance in local government remains the *status quo* and that it would remain so for a very long time. They

attributed this to the lack of whole commitment. When probed further, the participants stated “partial commitment”. One participant said “...women are a good to have as everybody talks about women...just so we are seen to be addressing gender equality as a country...in the institution itself...the men rule...we can’t do much”. This highlights the fact that gender equality and gender transformation are superficial in the sense that the institutions (municipalities in local government) remain male-oriented, masculine in nature and form where women have to conform if they are to survive in them. With further probing, participants referred to the fact that at different levels of government, starting from national, provincial through to local government, the reality was that men continue to be in the forefront as far as taking up influential decision-making positions is concerned. That, according to the participants, has a “trickle down” effect and, reiterates the fact that women’s entry into these institutions struggles with freeing themselves from the masculine shackles that have a strong grip in these male-dominant institutions.

The researcher acknowledges that women’s experiences are different from men in that as women managers and leaders they have to “change modes in a flash...at home I take instructions...I submit to my husband and at work somehow these men must submit to me...” She chooses to refer to this challenge as “double gender jeopardy” in that; on one hand women have to affirm their position, and still not lose their femininity while on the other hand they breakdown the hegemonic masculinities which men are so over-protective of. Kronsell (2005) agrees that “...institutions largely governed by men have produced and recreated norms and practices associated with masculinity and heterosexuality... not explicitly expressed, in some of these institutions hegemonic masculinity has become the norm”.

4.11 WOMEN LEADERS’ STRUGGLES WITH INSTITUTIONAL GENDERED POWER AND POWER RELATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

It is true that not only are gender relations seen to be ‘institutional’, but they are ‘institutionalised’ (Kenney, 1996 and Connell, 2002). These authors further state that gender relations are embedded in particular political institutions, (local government), and thus constrain and shape social interactions in these institutions.

Male dominance in these institutions of government translates to a tussle of power and power relations as well as male-oriented institutional cultures between females and males at both political and administrative levels. Male colleagues are considered to be powerful

and that power usually has connotations of a command for respect. That is drawn from statements such as the one by a woman leader who said "...so and so, referring to a male colleague, is powerful and well respected...even by the executive mayor...what he says goes...no doubt". And the fact that "if as you are to be respected as a woman in leadership...you must identify powerful males as your sidekicks...so that they can protect you". These statements affirm what (Mackay, Kenny and Chappell, 2010, Hawkesworth, 2005) say that gender should be understood as a constitutive element of social relations based upon perceived (socially constructed and culturally variable) differences between women and men, and as a primary way of signifying (and naturalising) relationships of power and hierarchy. Gender, therefore, operates at the interpersonal subjective level through which individuals identify themselves and organise their relations with others.

Flowing from participants' responses is that first, women in leadership positions still feel the need for male approval or alliance to be recognised because men's presence and input are considered meaningful. Second, women still over-rely on male colleagues than female ones. It is astonishing to realise that, as the researcher observed, that women continue not to rely upon one another in an environment where such a reliance "women to women" should serve as a buffer for the said "male power". The research argues that women could be united to make themselves one another's support structure and overpower the male power. Furthermore, the study points that with this male reliance, women are themselves legitimising male power and thus give credence to male-oriented power relations. One male participant mentioned that "unfortunately women like to accept things they can't stand for... they are not ready for leadership so they are irritating in this positions...they want to be baby sited throughout". The issue of networks and support structure came out strongly and thus deserved a detailed discussion of its own below.

The study validates the view held by (Collinson, 2003) that a closer scrutiny of subjectivity and its insecurities (women's male reliance is perceived as but one aspect of these insecurities) can be of assistance in enhancing the understanding of the ways that organisational power relations are reproduced, rationalised, resisted and sometimes even transformed within the workplace. The researcher believes that future research studies in this area would add value to feminist studies of women in decision-making positions.

4.12 GENDERED INSTITUTIONAL CULTURES AS DETERRENTS FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP

Participants referred to a number of other aspects that have a negative influence on institutional culture in local government. Those aspects are among others, male-dominance, institutional power and power relations which build towards a gendered institutional culture though favouring, owing to the history, masculine-defined cultures. Daly (2005) argues that there is a need to delve deeper into understanding the relationship between issues of gender and societal change. The author implies that the challenge is more in the societal cultures and traditions within which these institutions are located in. This provides a framework of reference which translates into these institutions. The researcher considered it valuable to have some discussions on gendered institutional cultures, and how the build-up aspects mentioned above contributes to deterring women's decision-making and leadership positions. It is fundamentally important to take note of the fact that in a diverse workforce such local government, inevitably people from different cultural or social groups would constantly interact, bringing with own cultural identities, assumptions, perceptions of each other to such workplace settings (Ayman and Korabik, 2010).

Whilst most women participants felt strongly that there are evil, unwelcoming and male-bias institutional cultures in municipalities, male participants felt that "women want to change institutions and that "...unfortunately this is local government...dog eats dog...if you don't hit first they will hit you hard...kill you". On the contrary, women participants were of the view that for one to survive in decision-making and leadership in this institution "you have to be evil...that is a culture of not caring...always on the lookout as your position is forever under threat...so the institution's culture is horrible to say the least, would not advice any women to aspire for this position...no peace". These hostile institutional cultures that are built upon and defined in masculine terms of not caring, not nurturing and so forth is an immediate hindrances to women's leadership.

Eagly (2007) notes that leadership has historically been depicted primarily in masculine terms, and many theories of leadership have focused on stereotypically masculine qualities. As highlighted by participants, feminine-defined workplace culture would or should be receptive and welcoming. It must "encourage us as women to not change who we are as caring, loving and warm...human beings". Hostility continues to rob women of an important part of their existence which is an extension of their family and community

character of caring and nurturing. This serves as an immediate hindrance for women to occupy or stay in decision-making and leadership positions.

Eagly, 2007 further observes that, situational theorists of leadership contend that the appropriateness of leadership behaviours depends on the contextual factors such as societal values, the culture of organisations. In this case societal values which are built on patriarchal dominance collude with long-standing masculine-oriented organisational cultures to make the organisational culture unbearable for women. These values demand from them that they should "...change who you are, feminine leadership behaviours and style and portray that of a "tough cookie" to earn respect and recognition, participants indicated. Eagly (2007) argues, moreover, that women still suffer, first, disadvantage in access to leadership positions and second, prejudice and resistance when they occupy these roles. As gathered in this study, some meetings were intentionally shifted to coincide with women leaders' absence one participant retorted, "... so that they are intentionally some decisions are taken without your input".

4.12.1 HIGH EXIT RATES OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A study of Italian municipalities, conducted between the years 1993 – 2003, found that in municipalities headed by female mayors, the probability of early termination of their tenure is higher. Furthermore, the study revealed that the likelihood of a female mayor to survive until the end of her term is lowest when the council is entirely male and in regions with less favourable attitudes towards working women (Gagliarducci and Paserman, 2011). It is interesting to observe that the Italian situation is also reflected in the South African context.

Female participants pointed out that eight out of ten women who were in the interview on the day, would definitely not return to the positions they held and even to the institutions. On the contrary, male participants were almost certain to return to the same or higher positions. They (participants) further enumerated terms of office, aligned to women leaders. In this countdown, no woman leader, especially the Mayor, Speaker, Chief Whip, Municipal Managers and Directors in these municipalities served two terms in the same positions. There was some stay amongst only MMCs politically and HODs administratively, though they were shifted around in different portfolios. Thus, the lower the level in management the better chances of retention and the higher the level, the less

likely the chances of retention. That is so the higher the level in management the more decision-making and influencing powers and hence the tussle. Another aspect expressed in this enumeration was that of the high number of women in these positions that did not finish their term of office due to different reasons. The point made was that "...you can be how good but if the powers that be have decided...they will find a way to dismiss you, recall you, force you to resign...whatever the case might be".

The situation is that it is common that women Mayors, Speakers and Chief Whips as the leadership positions on the political component are most unlikely to finish their term of office. The term used is "recalled" as one participant indicated that "men refuse to be led by a woman...they do it so saliently but so effective...that women are always targets for being recalled". Another one said that "even when they deploy you as a woman in this positions you should not be excited...we know they will make your life a living hell...you will resign on your own or will be forced out..."The other participant counted up to three former Mayors and Speakers that were ousted before the end of their terms and added that if they had completed their term, it would usually be under seriously difficult circumstances but unlike men, it would be made sure that they don't get elected for the second term. The names and municipalities have been withheld for confidentiality and related ethical issues. The same situation prevails in the administrative wing of municipalities.

The bottom-line from the responses clearly is that women prematurely exit the positions and in some instances the local government system. That is a greater threat to the broader local government gender transformation agenda because of the following reasons: women's exit from these positions and the local government system sends a very strong and negative message to other women which discourage them from wishing to work in local government. The human capital invested in these women, through exposure, experience, trainings and overall knowledge built overtime is also lost. Institutions of local government remain the same male-dominated, masculine-defined with regard to gender discriminatory cultures, practices. Furthermore the state of affairs accounts for why issues of women in decision-making and leadership positions will always have challenges: basically they lack continuity and sustainability as a result of these high exit rates. Gagliarducci and Paserman (2011) note that on one level the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions is, amongst other reasons, because they leave their positions and the institutions prematurely due to the intolerable prejudice, resistance and

discriminatory practices. On another level, that those that leave prematurely, take with them this bitter experiences and lessons learnt and shares them with other women who then decide (even if capable) not to enter leadership positions.

4.12.2 NEGATIVE GENDERED ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS TOWARDS WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The results of a survey done by the CGE (CGE, 2005) in South Africa indicate that more than 30 percent of the respondents stated that women are too emotional to handle high-level leadership positions (Hunt, 2007 and Gouws, 2008). Whilst acknowledging that there are exceptions, the general attitude are that women in leadership positions should downplay their femininity. The “stereotypical feminine qualities” of nurturing, compromising are negatively construed to mean that women cannot lead effectively. The research study agrees with (Hunt, 2007) that those feminine traits are vital in the workplace, especially when engaging with issues of maximising performance. They should not be downplayed as there is good brought about in employees’ performances emanating from feeling cared and valued.

4.12.3 ISSUES FOR GENDER REPRESENTATION AND QUOTAS OF WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hunt (2007) argues that in most countries, South Africa included, male political party gatekeepers determine candidate lists, because the order of candidates on the lists is a fundamental factor in determining who goes to parliament (national), legislature (provincial) or council (local government) in the case of South African government structures. The researcher gathered that these male political gatekeepers are, in most instances themselves not neutral; they equally have an interest in making it into these institutions of power. This means that they will advance their own interest and agenda prior attending issues of gender representation. Participants highlighted the fact that whilst most parties have clear gender policies, there are usually tussles at implementation especially where gender representation and or quota favours women to occupy decision-making and leadership positions. One particular example cited by participants is that of senior members of the political deployment committee who also hold the decision-making and leadership positions in local government. The situation is that of “a referee and a player at the same time” which consequently make impartiality almost impossible. The recent post-election political developments reinforced this situation but also demonstrated that it

is a common phenomenon in government. The ANC's appointment of seven male and one female premier after the national elections 2014 presents a case in point to this respect. A closer study of these reveals that almost all of them hold senior positions in their respective political parties and were directly involved in lists compilation. For example, the Premier of the Free State is also the Provincial Chairperson, the same with Limpopo and the North West. The same scenarios are prevalent in the local government. For example, the Chairperson of the ANC in the NDM region is the Executive Mayor of the NDM. One participant attested that "...a whole lot of negotiations, compromises takes place...it is not cast in stone that because the party's gender policy says this therefore it will be like that...in most cases women concede to a lower position just to be safe and maintain male support".

The African National Congress (ANC) is the only party that has committed itself in its gender policy on a 50/50 gender representation albeit challenges. Whilst there is a satisfactory move towards effective implementation of this policy, there are issues on a broader scale from a gendered perspective. For instance, the NDM REC had one female representation in the top five positions. Then to cover that, at additional members' positions, women would be equally represented or even allowed to slightly outnumber men in those positions to camouflage policy provisions. The truth, however, remains that power and influence is with the top five positions and those can easily divide the majority women additional members in times of voting.

There are municipalities in the NDM, where only the Mayor is female and all other positions are dominated by men. Furthermore, there are municipalities wherein strategic positions are held by men and women are given "insignificant but leadership positions" (Researcher's own findings during interviews). For example, in two or three municipalities in the NDM, the Mayor and the Speaker are male, and the Chief Whip is a woman. The constitution of mayoral committees also experiences the same challenges where strategic portfolios of local economic development, land, infrastructure development are usually held by men. The same situation prevails at the administrative wing; if the Municipal Manager is female with the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and majority Directors being male. There is, however, a good showing of good practice model municipalities, one or two wherein women are satisfactorily represented. For example, there is one municipality in NDM where the Municipal Manager, the Mayor, the two Directors are women. However,

mindful of point made in (Eagly, 2007) that there is a mixed reaction on the issues of women in decision-making and leadership.

4.12.4 PRESENCE AND IMPACT: A CONTESTED TERRAIN

It is not an obvious case that women's presence in decision-making and leadership positions would translate into impact and gender transformation. Access does not guarantee participation and transformation as the key components of the Mtintso's APT framework. Hunt (2007) contends that greater female participation could bring significant rewards for the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda. That is the "the critical mass" as referred to in the (Mtintso's APT framework).

Whilst the study revealed the fact that there are still hindrances and challenges, women are, however, represented in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. There are issues with regard of impact that women make in these institutions. Put forth in (Lovenduski and Karam, 2002), women are now looking beyond the numbers to focus on what they can actually do while in parliament (local government) that is, how they can make an impact.

Lovenduski and Karam(2002) agrees that the critical mass is important in that it upsets gender boundaries, linking women presence with changing gender attitudes and behaviours (4.5.2). The authors' states that the presence of even one woman alters male behaviour and the presence of several women will alter it even further(Lovenduski and Karam, 2002). The study argues that with regard to altering men's attitudes and behaviours, progress is on an unequal scale especially in the NDM given the some of the stated differences between peri-urban and rural municipalities. There has been a significant progress even though it is not as satisfactory as it should be and there is still a reasonable amount of deep-rooted challenges that would require focused attention. For example, if the deep-rooted culture and traditions premised on patriarchal dominance are deeply-entrenched and embedded in the rural municipalities as most participants affirmed, the need for a critical mass. The challenge is that in rural municipalities, the quotas system and any effort that advances increased gender representation in decision-making and leadership positions will not take effect. Taking into consideration that the rejection would come from women themselves, for fear of community isolation.

4.13 THE INEFFICIENCIES OF THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL GENDER MACHINERIES AND THE IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S GENDER TRANSFORMATION AGENDA

The gender coordination desk at SALGA, which is the municipalities' coordination body, has been disbanded. The non-existence of the gender desk, which presented a more direct coordination and facilitative platform, has serious repercussions for the overall gender programme within municipalities, including those in the NDM. Some of the issues raised in this study, such as the implementation of the local government women's empowerment and gender equality framework, the development of gender policies and strategies have been compromised. Motivation for the disbandment was the result of the establishment of the WC and PD Ministry as it was anticipated that it would play the same role for municipalities. The Ministry also, to some extent, absorbed the Provincial OSWs which had the same functions. There is also the Provincial Offices of the CGE for monitoring and oversight functions which would also include local municipalities. Unfortunately, with the specific and elaborate institutional framework (the national machinery) that has been created to ensure the inclusion of gender equality concerns in policy formulation across all public and private institutions, the challenges espoused in this study remains. Hassim (2003) observes, that these benevolent institutions and national machineries have revealed themselves as "historically constructed frameworks" that create bureaucratic representation for elite groups of women but fail to act as institutional openings for addressing inequalities in power. The collapse of the machinery therefore translates to the fact that municipalities have to rely on their own creativity as to how to incorporate gender concerns across its functions and operations. The result is the disjuncture in implementation is to the disadvantage of women.

4.13.1 THE COLLAPSE OF GRASSROOTS WOMEN'S STRUCTURES AND MOBILISATION

Participants pointed out that grassroots women's movement as well as the mobilisation for the movement has virtually collapsed. The result is lack of appropriate support structures for women in decision-making and leadership positions from fellow women in the communities they serve. Most women managers and leaders served and/or are products of these grassroots mobilisation structures. Hassim (2003) states that , there was a large-scale movement of women leaders from the women's organisations into the different spheres of government and that had a negative impact on the women's movement and the

broader women's emancipation agenda. Participants mentioned that they are so pre-occupied with making a mark in the positions they hold that they will not have time to resuscitate these valuable structures that were, according to them "each one teach one" forums. What was revealed is that advocacy for women's empowerment and gender equality in the workplace is largely influenced by what transpires within the society. The collapse of women's movement in South Africa has silenced the once loud voices of gender injustice and inequality. The results are visible in the workplace such as local government which is more society-inclined.

4.14 WOMEN LEADERS' BURDENS OF BALANCING THE TRIPLE ROLES

Irrespective of the positions women occupy in their workplace, they in local government decision-making and leadership positions, find the balancing the work, family and community commitments, triple roles as other authors states, are not only challenging but also burdensome, complicated and at times conflictual. This applies to those serving in both administrative and political wings of the municipalities. For example, by virtue of being in the positions that they hold, they are employees who have mandatory service provision roles and responsibilities. They politically have mandatory community leadership roles in the same communities that they live in, which are the same communities that are in turn constituted by the same families they are members of (own and extended families). At each point of interaction, it is expected that these women should change their attitudes and behaviours not only to suit that particular interaction but to also satisfy expectations. These expectations are similar, differing only in intensity based on rural and peri-urban locations. Participants stated that balancing duties/roles is burdensome in that it is physically tiring to have to juggle one's roles and responsibilities across these three areas.

The following real life scenario is an attempt at demonstrating the burdens, complications and conflicts that women must negotiate pursuant to balancing the triple roles. The case study derives from several different but similar emphasis narrations, utterances and statements by participants. These were then consolidated in order those to present a scenario of *"a day in the life of women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government"*.

Figure: 2 A day in the life of a woman manager or leader in a municipality (Real life scenario drawn from research participants)

Mrs YZ is a mayor or director at XX municipality. Her day starts at 4, so that she can be able to have everyone in the household ready for work and school by 6h30. At 4, she prays, this is important for her as that is the only time she gets to be alone and that is how she draws strength to pull through the day, then irons her husband's clothes for the day (this is a strict order from the husband after the helper made several mistakes like burning with iron one of his favourite shirts). Thanks to the services of the helper who will at the time be busy with the children's uniforms. Whilst she prepares her husband's lunchbox, the helper is also doing the same for the children at which point it is now time to wake everyone up and the morning rush begins. She runs the bath for her husband whilst preparing breakfast for, the helper doing the same for the children. Initially she would have to drive the kids to school as the husband works at a different direction to the children's schools but has since found a scholar transport. At 6h30, the scholar transport hoods for the children, they go off, then her husband starts the car and is off for work as he reports at 7. She reports at the municipality at 7h30 which means it is immediately time for her to prepare for work, 45minutes to be exact. She hardly gets time to have breakfast herself and will take a lunchbox and some fruits to snack in her 20minutes drive to work.

Whilst her day is usually crammed, she tries to schedule her first appointment for 8 to give herself time to prepare for the day's commitments. The day's commitments run through with hardly any break as at the municipality there is always one crisis after another or one priority after another. The province wants this report, premier wants that other report, community representatives have water issues, and the list goes on. This means the day planned as it may be, unforeseen emergencies and priorities largely disrupt the plans. The last commitment will be at 20h00 as the political party that deployed her has called on all its deployees in municipalities.

After her meeting at 18h00, she rushes home to prepare supper (again it is a strict order after a divorce threat where her family was summoned as the husband had laid a complaint that she neglects her family). The family sits for supper at 19h30 and after seeking permission from the husband to attend the 20h00 meeting, and that he helps children with homework, she drives out to the meeting for which she is 20minutes late and apologises. The meeting runs until 22h00 which is normal as others during conferences

last up to the early hours. She is home at 22h30 to her husband who is angry as usual. There are the realities of conjugal rights between married couples which are legal grounds for a marriage breakdown. She has brought some important work documents that she must read in preparation for the first meeting the next day which means extending her night and can only get to bed at 1, three hours before she wakes up again and the routine starts. She wants to further her studies but realises it will not be possible as long as she holds the position in which she is. Sadly, when compared to male counterparts, there are drastic differences. They are taken care of by their spouses/partners and sometimes ridicule us, they boast about it. As one male commented that "...I will not allow my wife to be in these positions...they are demanding and before you know it you will have married your domestic helper not your wife...", cynically referring to that the domestic helper would be doing for the husband that which should be done by the wife as she is unable to due to the work of the position she holds.

There are important lessons to be learnt from the above scenario. The life of women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government is first, these women are burdened by the socially determined traditional roles of women in families and communities. The absence of continued and intensified gender equality advocacy and lobbying at community levels continues to entrench acceptable gender stereotypes that prove difficult to break thus creating a circle of gender oppression.

Second, decision-making and leadership for women is made complicated in a manner that is different from their male counterparts. This is because of the hard choices women have to make that somehow affect their very own identity and esteem. For women to balance the need to be what the family and community regard as a "good mother, a good wife, a good daughter-in-law" and "a competent employee, a powerful manager or leader" without compromising one aspect over the other is a complicated matter. It challenges the core of womanhood with respect to self-appreciation, identity and esteem.

Last the scenario highlights in more practical ways, the time poverty issues that confront women in their quest for making a mark in a predominantly male environment. It is with time poverty issues that eventually women, in these positions, are considered incapable and incompetent. For example, a woman will occasionally arrive late or request a briefing on matters as she could not find time to read the documents provided. That presents an opportunity for her male counterparts to demonstrate how in control they are by being on

time and having thorough knowledge of the documents. Unfortunately, what that means is that these environments remain shaped and informed by masculine terms and preferences, the insistence of late meetings as just but one example which if it were taking gender concerns into account, it would have been rearranged to suit both women and men.

Participants reiterated that in rural areas, culture and tradition reign supreme. The attitudes and behaviours towards women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government are said to be negative and that they draw strength from the families and the communities. Women who hold decision-making and leadership positions are, at times ridiculed or (their partners, spouses) would bear the ridicule. To illustrate this point, one participant shared a personal experience with the researcher that even led to a divorce, where she had to choose between her career and her family. In her words "...at work when I gave instructions to male counterparts I was said to be disrespectful and somehow my husband would know and hold me accountable...that I make him a laughing stock amongst men...he would use that against me in the home...remind me all the time that unlike my workplace...he wears pants and won't be told what to do by a woman...in the community during funerals I would be an outcast amongst other women...the disrespectful woman...". These attitudes are multi-pronged, coming from both women and men in the workplace, the family and the community. The interviews confirmed the persistent power of gender hierarchies in the home and community, which makes it difficult for women to share ideas with their husbands (Mills, 2003). Krook (2010) observes that women's triple roles balancing stresses' are compounded by social norms that frame 'women's public activism as a 'transgression' such that women who spend too much time away from their families are considered to be acting selfishly by pursuing their individual interests over those of their families. Krook states furthermore, that these gendered norms and judgments drastically reduce the available supply of both female aspirants, and experienced ones.

4.15 ABSENCE OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROGRAMMES

A convincing and distinct feature of gender mainstreaming is that it seeks to institutionalise gender equality by embedding gender-sensitive practices, norms, in the structures, processes and environments (Daly, 2005). However, in the municipalities under study, the absence of gender policies and or strategies imply the absence of a gender mainstreaming programme which has an adverse impact on both women in decision-

making and leadership positions in these institutions as well as for the broader gender transformation agenda at local government level.

The gender policies and or strategies would have included gender mainstreaming programme as one of the key policy strategy objectives and further outlined key deliverables with anticipated outcomes. Such an objective would have made it compulsory that a dedicated budget is allocated to effect implementation. One of the deliverables, would have been to address institutional gender insensitive practices and norms which would in turn address issues of late meetings that not only make it difficult for women to fulfil their other roles but also expose women to potential gender-based violence. Women that are not married for example, usually fall prey to unwanted admirers who target these meetings in order sexually harass by them, married women included. In which case as one participant retorted "...men use these late night meetings to sideline women...they know it is difficult to get permission from husbands then they will use your absence to exclude you even in future deployments". Another one agreed that "...if they make sexual advances or even harass you...you cannot tell your husband or boyfriend...they are against you holding the position at any rate for fear of such, so the best is to keep quiet and fight for yourself". These gender-insensitive norms and practices increase women's vulnerability to intentional career sabotages and gender-based violence. Irrespective of the fact that gender mainstreaming is renowned as the best strategy that could fast-track the attainment of gender equality, Perrons (2005) states that gender equality remains elusive due to institutional barriers and resistance.

Other important benefits of a gender mainstreaming programme that majority women and women in decision-making and leadership positions are denied are the objectives in the line of training and education. These would be included as policy objectives and would significantly contribute to women's capacity-building and enhance their management and leadership skills and expertise, thus building a future corps of competent and experienced women managers and leaders. There are salient gender dynamics hidden behind the absence of gender policies and strategies as well as the absence of gender mainstreaming programmes. Majority beneficiaries in these programmes are usually women. It is, therefore, not surprising that these programmes are not prioritised as they will empower and advance women. This is a threat to the male-dominated and defined institutions.

It is a general practice that if a programme is a priority in the municipality, it will be included in the IDP and consequently allocated a budget. The research noted that in most municipalities' IDPs and Budget Plans, comprehensive gender programmes are not included. Where mention of women is made, it is women in the communities. Such exclusion is detrimental to internal interventions that would address some of the issues affecting women in decision-making and leadership positions in these institutions. Gender mainstreaming applicable across the core functions of municipalities in that it ensures a gendered analysis and critique. It seeks to induce gender considerations at all planning and implementation phases of municipal functions and operations for enhanced gendered impact. Important issues such as leave (study, maternity and paternity leaves) for women in decision-making would be detailed in the gender mainstreaming programme.

4.15.1 OVER-EMPHASIS AND RELIANCE ON GENDER CALENDER EVENTS

The study also found out that in most municipalities, there is an over-emphasis and over-reliance on the gender calendar of events as the main programme of intervention. This is because of the absence of comprehensive gender programmes that would be detailed through extensive consultations (with women and men in these institutions, including those that are in decision-making and leadership positions). Gender mainstreaming was supposed to have been included in the programmes. The gender calendar events are, for instance activities centred on, to mention a few; sixteen days of no violence against women and children, world aids day, disability and women's month, international women's day, and child protection week. During these calendar events, municipalities embark upon a hype of awareness-raising, training and education events. These events serve to insufficiently fill the comprehensive gender programmes' void. Further, the flaws in such activities are first, their limited scope with respect to intensity and sustainability. In the case of the sixteen days of no violence against women and children, limited focus is on gender-based violence and the duration of that activity is usually sixteen days because during this period there are all different kinds of media advertisements talks, and community outreach events.

When men were asked about gender programmes in the interviews, they always refer to these calendar events with an attitude that "...why are there no such days for men...and after sixteen days we are allowed to abuse them more as it lasts just for sixteen days". This is a confirmation of the researcher's contention that these events are fire-fighting activities with no lasting impact. The same can be said of all these events. They are

limited in their attempt to be all-encompassing, such that HIV/AIDS events try to include gender-based violence for all women. Not taking into consideration the fact that for example, issues of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence take a different form and shape for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government specifically. The study is by no means discouraging integration. However, it wishes to point out the fact that more focused, intense and well-timed programmes would pitch the same programme to different target groups with differentiated scope and relevance rather than a “one-size fits all approach” which is currently practised in these calendar events.

Over-emphasis and reliance on these programmes, therefore serves to further alienate the inclusion of issues of women in decision-making and leadership position into the mainstream institutional processes. The researcher was particularly touched by one woman leader who said “these events do not help us...sometimes I am even asked to motivate women at these internal events...I must say to these women don’t allow abuse when in my own home my husband doesn’t talk to me that day as arrived home unacceptably late from a work meeting at which one male counterpart made sexual advances that I didn’t even report but say to the women ...report sexual harassment in the workplace and insight I am personally breaking apart”.

4.16 LEGITIMACY QUESTIONS OF AND ABOUT WOMEN’S DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP

It is unfortunate that years into the South African democracy, women’s legitimacy as decision-makers and leaders continues to be questioned in local government, and in other spheres of government. Women in these positions of influence and power are constantly put to test, having to prove themselves whether or not they are able and capable of delivering on their positions. These tests range from not being briefed on matters that one is expected to make decisions on, or given minimal information to expose one’s incompetency through to intentional sabotages. For instance, as one Mayor narrated that there was high contestation and dissatisfaction on her appointment as the Mayor as other long-serving counterparts who held the view that they were more deserving than her. In retaliation, she got no handover briefing from the outgoing male mayor. But unfortunately the same person was included as an (MMC) together with the other begrudged councilors. She narrated that in her early days in office, they would have “valid reasons” not to report for duty so as to spite her.

Another Director shared her experience with the researcher that upon resumption of duties as Director, there was an issue with employees from a predominantly male section (electrical). These employees overtime wasn't paid. The former acting male director knew that the said employees are prone to violence especially when it is issues pertaining to money. He provided no briefing and but left new female director to deal with the matter. In that meeting with the angry employees, the new female Director was almost assaulted. Police were called in to calm the situation. The underlying purpose is to test the woman incumbent and assess her abilities and capabilities. The test is as the woman decision-maker or leader in that position can and how do you handle pressure? Do you have enough knowledge and experience in relation to position? And how do you articulate yourself? Unfortunately, no male participants had the same test experiences because they are considered as legitimate decision-makers and leaders with high level of confidence. Rowley, Hossain and Barry, (2010) notes that male subordinates are less respectful towards female leadership and male senior managers are prone to place female leaders, intentionally in high risk posts.

4.17 INEQUALITIES IN THE LEVELS OF EDUCATION BETWEEN WOMEN AND MEN

Though it is now considered a cliché, the historical gendered educational disparities between women and men continues to breed gender inequalities in the workplace. Participants attested to the fact that having to complete their studies through correspondence and multi-tasking as mentioned earlier, made it even more difficult. Some indicated that it took them longer than expected to complete and some are still pursuing their studies. Their academic endeavours are made difficult by the positions they now hold. The researcher is impressed with the importance most of the women in decision-making and leadership attached to furthering their studies. As one participant indicated "...it is a struggle each one of us as women must fight and win, to be educated is very important...it empowers you...and it opens your eyes". It is unfortunate that even with the enthusiasm and courage to empower themselves educationally, absence of important policies such as the gender policy means there are no gender and other considerations regulating leave days for these women. Their empowerment and educational advancement is not receiving any support from the institutions. It is self-driven amidst the pressures that come with the positions they hold.

Women's struggle for advancing themselves educationally was, however, not voluntary for many. It was through experience and exposure, wherein they could see that lack of

education puts them at a disadvantage as compared to men. Knowing that majority of women do not have higher levels of education, decision-making and leadership positions would be pitched at minimum requirements of higher education. In the case of administration, experience would not stand in their favour, except if it is coupled with education. In view of the fact that women have identified this gap and have gone to study through correspondence and acquired the qualifications, the bar has been set much higher. In fact, there are more dynamics introduced. The said dynamics, that the researcher argues are gendered, are that the minimum requirements are factored in line with those of the candidate that is earmarked, male in most instances. The minimum requirements are inconsistently increased or decreased to suit the earmarked incumbent. For instance, the position's minimum requirement will be raised from a bachelor's degree to also include a post-graduate diploma or equivalent in order to advantage a male candidate.

A mandatory treasury programme for all managers and leaders at local government (CPMD/MFMA) was introduced. The content of the programme focused on the municipalities' functions and operations. What stood out for the researcher was that participants felt that the said programmes were unfortunately not incorporating issues of gender transformation in the context of women empowerment and gender equality in local government. This is, for the researcher, a missed opportunity for both women and men in these positions and the institutions they serve. This happens mainly because issues of gender transformation are not viewed in the same serious light as those of for example, supply chain management which is extensively covered in these programmes.

The other issue is that these programmes are offered on block release basis, that is, a week's attendance each month. Further, that they are centrally facilitated in distant universities (prominent ones being Universities of Pretoria, Witwatersrand and Limpopo) all of which are geographically far from NDM. The challenges they have raised in balancing the triple roles above once more surfaced. In order to attend these mandatory programmes, participants have to stay away from both work and home for a week in a month. That is beside the point that there are other forums convened by the province for which attendance is compulsory, in that they also demand them to stay away from work and home for a number of days. This continued absence creates unbearable pressures both in the work and home fronts. On the home front, the pressure of an ever-absent mother leads to divorces and separations. Some participants attested that they either

divorced or separated out of the frustrations of having to choose between work and home, because of these long periods of absence. For some, especially single parents, children took advantage of their absence and engaged in the misuse of drugs, alcohol, and premature sexual encounters. The study argues it that these are serious gender dynamics confronting women in decision-making and leadership positions. The study also highlights the fact that these dynamics are cross-cutting and interconnected. Whilst they bring with the burdens of choice, they also affect personal career development and progression. Lack of mentorship and coaching programmes for these women makes matters worse.

4.18 INFORMAL BUT INFLUENTIAL NETWORKS AND CONSEQUENCES FOR WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

From the participants, both women and men agreed that there are informal networks, which most are predominantly male and take place after hours over some drinks. They also agreed that these informal networks are highly regarded amongst the male managers and decision-makers as they have proved overtime that informal as they are, they are the most influential in all spheres of municipalities' functions and operations. These networks determine many issues which range from who should be employed, who should be sidelined and ultimately ousted, through to who should get which tender and the plans of carrying out those determinations.

Unfortunately for women participants, these networks takes place at the time that they are expected to be fulfilling their other family roles and responsibilities. Women bear a disproportionate share of responsibility of unpaid care work within the household and the community. This is explained by the unequal power relations between women and men within the household and society in general. This bias in the gender division of labour in the household also disadvantages those women who happen to be employed and even more, those in decision-making and leadership positions. As one participant angrily stated, "it is the fate of women that is decided in these chauvinist malicious networks".

The research also gathered that in order for women to survive in these conditions, they must have allies and boyfriends who should somehow serve to protect them or even source useful information. Some of these allies and boyfriends are genuine, with genuine interest but others have demands in sexual and other favours in the future. The analysis reveals the need for women to also have the same networks, albeit taking into considerations their ever-competing priorities and balancing roles. For instance, some

women managers indicated that "...it is interesting to realise that we all go through the same things, same experiences, in the same space but we never share, we actually never sit and meet like in this group interview..." Another participant added that "...even worse we share the same as women in local government but debriefing and empowerment forums such as women's summits died a natural death...we are on our own...men decided that those were the first in cost-curtailment measures." In such interactions, it would be proper to interview middle management women because they are the next in line to assume decision-making and leadership positions. Their views and opinions on institutional preparedness serve to confirm some of the gender dynamics revealed by those that are already in leadership.

4.19 PERVASIVE PULL HER DOWN SYNDROME (PhD)

On the other aspect raised by majority of women in decision-making and leadership positions, in both the political and the administrative wings in local government is that of "PhD". The study has shown that women are opposing one another on matters of leadership. This scenario is orchestrated by external forces with the intention of breaking the "womanhood or sisterhood" chain and maintain it that way for a very long time whilst using that to advance personal agendas. What is surprising is that participants can see the strategy which is mainly used by men. Nevertheless the still fall prey to it. It is women who will help men to pull the other women down. Even in instances where they (other women) see that there is unreasonable and undue pressure, they will not move in to protect and support one of their. Instead they will keep a distance because of fear of association.

The said situation is so bad that there are women in decision-making and leadership positions within the municipalities, either in the same municipality or in another, who have deep hatred for one another. The cause of the problem is petty squabbles such for example between a political head and a director one did not support a particular submission that would have given the other's work some credit and recognition. Instead of talking to each other in order to clear the air and find common ground, they would ignore each other and allow that incident to slowly drift them apart. Some of the serious fights are caused by competitions for positions and status. There would be sharp criticism critique of conduct, such as having dated the same man in the same circle, or having been preferred for decision-making and leadership position at the expense of the other who sees herself as more deserving. Hatred of this nature serves as a fertile ground for male counterparts to further divide women. These internal fights and politics deter focus on the broader and

bigger issues for women in decision-making and leadership. The “PhD” syndrome is an indication that while the gender agenda tends to view women as victims rather than perpetrators of gender-based oppression, women are not a homogenous group and have differences in personalities, status, position, wealth which may lead to inequality within themselves. It demonstrates the multidimensionality of the gender discourse and its related complexities (Hollows, 2008).

4.20 CONCLUSION

This study indicated that gender dynamics for women in decision-making and leadership in local government remains a huge challenge. The common thread in the findings, is that most of the gender dynamics are subtle and yet deep-rooted in these institutions. These institutions appear to be embracing women’s empowerment and gender equality and thus advancing the issues of women in decision-making and leadership positions only at face value. On the contrary, the realities and the actual lived experiences of women in decision-making and leadership positions in these institutions suggest the need for intensified interventions in this regard. Kenny (2007) recommends that the analysis of these institutions should be conducted through a ‘gendered’ lens. Kenny further states that the application of a gendered lens perspective provides important insights into how gender norms operate within institutions, and, therefore, offers a greater understanding of the interaction between institutions and institutional actors. Kenny(2007) furthermore states that a gendered approach to the study of institutions should make power a central analytical focus. While power is generally underplayed in the new institutionalist literature, feminist research should be concerned with gendered power dynamics.

This study recommends that municipalities must adopt the Gender Responsive Governance (GRG) processes and programmes as suggested in (Kar, 2013). The GRG is a comprehensive framework, with measures that draws together women and men at the different levels of governance as stakeholders. The purpose is to foster attitudes and practices that promote women’s empowerment and gender equality for socio-economic justice. The GRG purposefully seek to promote and sustain women’s abilities to fully participate in the governance and development processes, through an emphasis on their ability to raise critical questions about inequity and collectivise without fear and pressure (Kar, 2013). This paves way for incorporating changes needed to transform municipalities into spaces that are gender responsive. Added to this would be a tailored capacity-building for women in decision-making and leadership positions. Such capacity-building would

incrementally draw on men in decision-making and leadership position in order to build a common cause of promoting women's empowerment and gender equality. It provides a building block for gender mainstreaming which will be discussed as a recommendation in the next chapter (Chapter 5). The GRG calls for a systematic review of the local government women's empowerment and gender equality mandate which is derived from international, national and provincial policy and legislative prescripts and cascades that to the level of local government institutions thus, providing the basis for gender mainstreaming.

CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The data gathering process indicates that it is difficult to isolate gender dynamics with regard to women in decision-making and leadership in local government from foundational issues such as women's active involvement and participation through the ranks in this historically male-dominant environment. Research findings reveal inherent gender biases in these local government institutions. The research study emphasises on women's active involvement and participation across all ranks because if this is not given adequate focus, feminists run the risk of experiencing serious backtracks on the feminists-driven women's empowerment and gender equality gains. Women's active involvement and participation is significant in building the understanding of the manifestations of these gender biases across the ranks and thus helping to point out critical areas of intervention early. Houge and Lord (2007) caution that one of the issues that complicates the understanding of gender bias in leadership is that this phenomenon involves processes which occur at multiple levels. It is worsened by the nature of interdependent relationships in these complex systems of governance.

The main umbrella recommendation of this study is that future feminist studies should focus on filtrating the broader political framework that local government operates in. This would be agreeing with Bauer (2012) that the broader political framework should be the focus on quieting dissent which is whether women's presence in decision-making and leadership positions is "symbolic or substantive" and consequently that women's ability to participate effectively in the key institutions of governance, such as municipalities, is constrained or facilitated in these frameworks.

The research has, through various engagements and interactions with the institutions of local government, interrogated possible remedial actions as suggested by the research participants. Those engagements and interactions have thus been largely used to arrive at the recommendations detailed here and to map out possible way-forward. Recommendations are, therefore, tailored from the participants, confident that if implemented, they will be supported and would constitute the beginning of real and tangible gender transformation that will benefit women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government.

5.2 SUMMARY OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

A gendered approach to the study of institutions such as this study should explore in more detail the gendered power dynamic is necessary (Kenny, 2007). The key findings in this study suggests that women's occupations, especially those in decision-making and leadership positions in local government continue to be difficult and sidelined as a result of persistent gendered power dynamics and gender discrimination. Patriarchal dominance and stereotypes features significantly in local government amidst the camouflage by way of gender representation in a quest for legislative compliance. There is a cosmetic value at face value which is misleading when compared to the actual dynamics in these institutions of local government.

5.2.1 PATRIARCHY AND MALE DOMINANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT'S DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The local government environment remains largely masculine, as the study revealed. It is with this masculine-centredness that power and control are in the hands of the majority male. There is a need to break this unevenly gendered power-base. This study has revealed that women in decision-making and leadership positions are powerless irrespective of the seniority of the positions they hold as they, from time to time, have to rope in male support for endorsement of their decisions. On the contrary the power over (chapter 4) is the most recognisable power in local government institutions that the research has interacted with which explains women's positions of power as tokens of influence and power.

5.2.2 PERSISTENT GENDER POWER IMBALANCES AND THE NEED FOR WOMEN'S CRITICAL MASS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The power imbalances which are skewed towards male superiority in local government decision-making and leadership positions constitute gender orders and regimes that are, according to Connell (2006), developed patterns of gendered relations among women and men separately, and between women and men. The underlying factors in these relations are issues of power, culture, patriarchal dominance, societal expectations of women and men's roles and responsibilities and related such aspects. These aspects have significantly contributed to the glass ceiling in many institutions. One critical disadvantage to the gender power biases is brought about by gender imbalances especially with regard to gender representation in decision-making and leadership positions within local

government. Whilst there appears to be an adequate gender representation in local government, the reality is that the higher the positions the lesser the gender representation. For example, in this study, there are municipalities wherein there is only one woman in the higher echelons of the institutions both at administration and political levels (refer to table: 2 of gender representations of the municipalities in this study). In such cases, the issue of a critical mass as detailed in the (Mtintso's APTF in chapter 2) becomes important in that it ensures that women ascend to decision-making and leadership positions within local government in large numbers. Whilst that does not guarantee influence, it definitely will articulate women's voices and somehow begin to shape the respective institutions' environment towards gender responsiveness.

5.2.3 WOMEN'S CHALLENGES AND COMPETING GENDERED PRIORITIES

Through this study, the triple roles that women have to fulfil have proved that the balancing act brings with it more domestic and professional challenges for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. In (chapter 4 of this study), a case study titled "the day in the life of a woman manager/leader in local government" is used to outline women's struggles with balancing the domestic, workplace and the community's demands. All these three competing priorities are fundamentally important for women irrespective of their level of seniority in the workplace. The study has outlined (5.3 below) some of the critical interventions recommended in an effort to address this challenge which limits or totally discourages women's active involvement and participation in decision-making and leadership positions.

5.2.4 DISJUNCTURE IN POLICY, LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS AND ACTUAL IMPLEMENTATION

Whilst the study appreciates that as a country, South Africa has a good and progressive policy and legislative environment in support of women's empowerment and gender equality, there are flaws that hinder the desired progress in this regard. One of those hindrances is the state of functionality of the South African gender machineries. The non-functionality of some components of the national and provincial machineries, together with the lack of coordinated efforts to cascade some of the policy and legislative provisions through to local government had severe implications for gender transformation in this sphere of government.

5.2.5 ABSENCE OF GENDER POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN MUNICIPALITIES

The absence of endorsed gender policies and strategies cripples all efforts towards, first ensuring that women's access to decision-making and leadership positions and second, institutional mechanisms on capacity-building and empowerment for those women that are in these positions and those that have such future aspirations. Last, on a broader institutional level the absence of gender policies and strategies silences gender advocacy and lobbying and thereby reduce issues of women's empowerment and gender equality to non-significance as there is no framework for reference that would have otherwise been provided for by these documents. Absence of gender policies and gender strategies within municipalities has had an adverse impact on several other related programmes which affect women's empowerment and gender equality in municipalities. For example, the absence of these gender policies and strategies has resulted in the uncoordinated institutional mechanisms of implementing gender programmes. That is the reason there is over-reliance on the calendar of events as the main gender programmatic interventions which lack detail and intensity in all municipalities interviewed.

5.2.6 WOMEN'S NEGLECT OF GRASSROOTS STRUCTURES' PARTICIPATION

The study revealed that the fundamental mistake that women's empowerment and gender equality sector has committed is of neglecting active involvement and participation in the lower structures of relevance. It is acknowledged from the research participants that most women in decision-making and leadership owe their emergence from lower structures. It is a fact that these structures provide a breeding ground for women in decision-making and leadership positions. Negligence is, however on ensuring continuity with regard to women's active involvement and participation. After a number of women passes through and are elevated to higher positions through involvement and participation in these structures, what follows is a lull on the part of women's involvement and participation follows. This creates serious challenges for the critical mass mentioned above in (5.2.2 of this study), given the fact that local government for example is a highly politicised environment where numbers and influence play an important role. For example, these structures play a critical role and are an influential lobbying ground for the adoption of the IDP, the budget, and so forth. Most members of these structures are also active in political parties' branch levels, a point which gives an added advantage.

5.2.7 INADEQUATE INSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION FOR GENDER AND TRANSVERSAL COORDINATION UNITS

Gender and Transversal Services units in most of the municipalities studied are running on only one official. Worse still, in some municipalities the one official is at a junior level and under-qualified. These units are, in most municipalities, located in the Mayor's office, which as indicated earlier, is a political office. The advice, as gathered from the participants' responses, is that these units should undergo organisational work-study processes in order to properly align functions and the needed capacity. Further, that their location should be at the administrative level as sub-units or units, or departments or sections as the terms used in other municipalities (depending on the size of the municipality). That will ensure that they are regarded as amongst the core organisational components rather than as political functionaries as it is the case presently. Mayors' terms of office are political and therefore, not permanent. They can be recalled or redeployed at any time. For example, there is a municipality for example that had three different mayors in one term of office (five-year term). Such rapid changes have a negative impact on continuity and sustainability of gender and transversal issues in these institutions.

5.2.8 ABSENCE OF GENDER TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

The on-going gender training and education programmes as majority participants highlighted, have faded away in almost of these institutions without any concrete reason. The only reason that most participants indicated is that perhaps the focus had shifted to service delivery in view of the heightened countrywide service delivery protests. It is however unfortunate that the diverted focus, which maybe the reason for gender training and education to be suspended in these institutions of local government, caused a setback. Gender training and education is an on-going mechanism of building institutional gender awareness and expertise. As stated in the Organizations for Cooperative Economic and Development (OECD), continuous gender training and education in institutions would facilitate implementation of intensive gender mainstreaming programme for example. The OECD states that such intense gender programmes require sound knowledge, which is gender expertise in the way in which differences between men and women's power positions manifest themselves in society. Gender expertise further enhances knowledge of these differences, which are not only caused by cultural and historical factors, but may also be affected temporarily by current events such as patriarchal dominance in local government.

5.2.9 RAPID DISRUPTIONS AND NON-COMPLETION OF WOMEN'S TENURE IN DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

The study revealed that it is highly unlikely that women in decision-making and leadership positions complete their office tenure. The situation applies to both political and administrative components of the municipalities in this study. Whilst competing gendered priorities stated in (5.2.3 above) account for some of the disruptions, particularly resignations, there are some concerning challenges in the broader political framework within which local government operates. In some cases, there would be two changes in decision-making and leadership positions in one term of office. The reason is usually that the completion of term of office, for women is highly unlikely as compared to their male counterparts.

It is a common trend that a woman will be replaced by a man, though a man is usually replaced by another man. The so-called recalling and redeployment, officiated through the respective political parties in these positions of power is usually to the benefit of men. The same issues are applicable in the administrative component with respect to Executive Managers or Directors and Municipal Managers' positions. In one municipality, there were four changes to the Municipal Manager position in a period of two-years. In those changes, there was an acting female Municipal Manager who took over the reins from a male but was subsequently replaced by two males. These rapid changes are notwithstanding the fact that these are five-year performance-based contracts. The changes, mostly influenced by power struggles, are so rapid that there would be interesting changes of note should the same municipalities be revisited after a short period of time.

5.3 AN OUTLINE OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The UN Women (2007) pointed out that in promoting women in political leadership, and any other decision-making and leadership positions calls for a two-pronged approach. First, the focus should be on making institutions of governance, planning and related such services sensitive to issues that concern women including; domestic, violence, sexual harassment and other forms of abuse. Second, the training and enhancement of women's capacities whilst also reaching out to male leaders in these institutions (Kar, 2013). This two-pronged approach is relevant to the local government sphere and would go a long

way in driving empowerment of women in decision-making and leadership positions in these governance institutions.

5.3.1 DISMANTLING THE MASCULINE HEGEMONIES AND ASSOCIATED POWER DYNAMICS

The research recommends that it is important to understand the types of power as one of the main gender dynamics. The said understanding would subsequently point to the direction that the said dismantling should target. Fennell (1999) in (Grisoni and Beeby (2007) mentions that there are three types of power: power over, power through and 'power with. The authors' states that power over is conservative and masculine with traditional views of power as domination, command, control, individualism and hierarchy. Then, power through which is facilitative power that involves enabling, negotiating and empowering and supports the creativity and autonomy of team members when addressing complex problems. Power with, which involves forming close relationships to create the energy needed to exercise leadership. It embodies the notions of power together, power in connection, relational power and mutual power. Fennell (1999) in (Grisoni and Beeby (2007) suggests that women identify more with and actively exercise all these different forms of power. In the local government environment, the "power through and with" do not necessarily exist other than as a *façade* when confronted with legislative compliance and public accountability.

The research study indicates that it is high time that women should learn to combine and exercise all these types of powers when circumstances call for such an approach. In essence, they should employ "power over" when and where necessary and deface its conservative and masculine characteristic. This is called "feminisation of power". The recommendation does not suggest that women must be masculine or that they must abandon their transformational, negotiated power strategies in their leadership. But they should reassert their power through command, control "power over" characteristics when confronted with situations that call for such an approach.

The study is premised on the belief that such an attitude and approach amongst women in decision-making and leadership positions would break stereotypes of expectations. The reason is that it seems as if "power over" amongst men has found acceptance in these environments. Women fear to be unpopular and to be labelled as "bitches" which is common in the event where a woman leader is decisive and in control. It is unfortunate

that if these women are not willing to risk exploring the “power over” territory, the “cycle of expectations” will continue to entrench themselves in these institutions Fennell (1999) in (Grisoni and Beeby (2007). This research argues for an attitudinal and behavioural change amongst women in decision-making and leadership positions in ways that would assert their power and influence and entrench recognition of the power and influence in the positions they hold. This is putting their positions to both work and test as that will either contribute to an overall change and breaking down of the masculinities or unravelling even further gendered resistance that could have otherwise been hidden by the masculine acceptance.

5.3.2 INCREASED EFFORTS AT BREAKING THE GLASS-CEILING: DISMANTLING GENDER ORDERS AND REGIMES

The challenge for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government to change attitudes and behaviours. Emphasis should be focused on how they apply and use power and influence that comes with the positions they hold. They should be motivated by the need to break down gender orders and regimes (Connell, 2006). Traditional stereotypes and prejudices against women in authoritative positions persist. Breaking the glass-ceiling, that is, gendered unequal access to the top, influenced by gender discrimination should be challenged (Connell, 2006). The recommendation is that there should be increased effort at breaking these traditional stereotypes and prejudices that make women’s ascension and stay at the positions of authority difficult. Accordingly, breaking down the patriarchal and post-structuralist conceptions of power through an embodiment of a gendered perspective would not only add to and enrich new institutionalism, but could also transform it thereby challenging the gendered foundations of mainstream institutional theory (Kenny, 2007). Breaking down these gender orders and regimes would inevitably lead to the breaking down of institutional cultures that perpetuate the glass ceiling through the masculine-defined orders and the regimes. An important phenomenon that the research recommends for local government is that of gender neutrality in environments (Connell, 2006). There is a commonly used terminology that entrenches these orders and regimes which serves as the best platform to infuse neutrality. For example, a common practice in most municipalities is “Chief” when referring to male leaders and “Madam” when it’s a female leader. Perhaps the safest would be to refer to the title of the position they hold, for example, (Executive Mayor,

Speaker, and Director). It is in this way that gender neutrality can be promoted with no hidden connotations of power and recognition.

The study is aware that there might be criticism of gender neutrality as it is increasingly becoming important to acknowledge women in these roles and perhaps, “madam” in this example could serve as one way of changing stereotypes. Society has, against its patriarchal dominance, created more respectful titles for men which are usually used to the disadvantage of women. The insistence on gender neutrality would put the spotlight on the position irrespective of who holds it. The research argues that it is important for institutions to start afresh by tackling small but meaningful institutional aspects on the gender neutrality and incrementally broadening the scope.

5.3.3 ENHANCEMENT OF THE CRITICAL MASS: INCREASED WOMEN’S INCREASED INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Emphasis of building women’s power-base through active involvement and participation of women through all the ranks and structures of local government is valid and important to note. The research recommends that women should take advantage opportunity of public participation forums in communities and elsewhere, and use those to serve as women’s entry into local government in order to enhance the critical mass. The role numbers play with regard to gender representation cannot be downplayed. Local government is a highly politicised environment where voting for decisions is the order of the day. The therefore argues that the unequal number of women and men in decision-making and leadership positions in local government works against the women’s empowerment and gender equality agenda.

However, the study acknowledges the fact that the critical mass is but a stepping stone, a beneficial passage of women’s entry in previously male-dominated spheres (Childs and Krook, 2008). Critical mass is riddled with its own set of challenges which are, among others, the fact that increased women’s representation does not necessarily assure increased influence and that those that are already in the system will prepare the ground for other women to enter. Critical mass does not automatically accelerate women’s active involvement and participation, instead, it is the beginning of the hard work, that of creating an enabling, conducive and receptive environment for women (Studlar and McAllister, 2002). This research maintains that it should be a conscious strategy employed, that women are encouraged to actively participate in all forums and structures of local

government. The government through its policies should ensure that with women's active involvement and participation in all the programmes, they become critical actors as opposed to bulging numbers of critical mass (Childs and Krook, 2009). This caters for both the strategic and practical gender needs; that is the everyday service delivery-oriented issues affecting women whilst strategically also advancing women by engaging and influencing the transformation agenda of these institutions from those levels.

The research raises issues pertaining to the practical and strategic gender needs in the context of the emphasis from participants on the critical mass. Participants perceived critical mass as beneficial for women in that first, it is viewed more in the context that if more women ascend to decision-making and leadership positions in local government, they will be able to better push for and influence favourable decisions on service delivery issues that directly affect such as water, electricity and sanitation. Second, that women's critical mass serves to dispel notions of gender stereotypes that entrench male superiority in these institutions. Third, that critical mass would ensure that there is sufficient number of women to support each other which is not always the case. It is against this background that active involvement and participation of women across all ranks is vital. This will motivate women to appreciate those in decision-making and leadership positions as they themselves in different participation forums and structures will experience the discrimination, resistance and biases. That will also encourage them to want to enter local government in large numbers in with the aim of helping those who are already in.

5.3.4 ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTIONAL WOMEN'S NETWORKING AND INFORMATION-SHARING PLATFORMS

The recommendation for the above-mentioned sub-heading is that PhD negative energies should be converted into positive chains of encouragement and support. In all the municipalities in which the research was conducted, there was none with a formal networking and information-sharing platform for women in decision-making and leadership positions. It was raised by a number of participants that they experience the same challenges, some in the same building, and others in the same District but do not have a platform to share and develop best-practices amongst themselves. The above-mentioned platforms are recommended in line with offering women in decision-making and leadership positions an opportunity in (Brass, Galaskiewicz, Greve, and Tsai, 2004) to explore and build upon their interconnected social relationships. In order to address this common gap, the research recommends that outside of the formal gender mainstreaming processes and

programmes, there needs to be a formal platform convened by and for women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. These platforms should be sacred spaces for these women to share experiences and information on the daily challenges in their line of duty and strategise on possible interventions.

Mehra, Kilduff and Brass (1998), point out that those under-represented groups such as women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government use their distinctiveness to form groups with shared identity and social interaction. The study asserts that such platforms would not take away the fact that there might be challenges in the groups but that the existence of the platform would, from a feminists-perspective, present a platform for reflection on women's shared identity and affirm the need to use that to advance women empowerment.

It is these interventions that would be incorporated into the institutional gender mainstreaming programme. As expressed through various interactions with women in decision-making and leadership positions, there is a need for a collective private space, collective in that they wish to be together in such a platform, but private in that it would only be them in that space. This normally creates a safe haven for their engagement and interactions. It is a space in which they can share professional and personal challenges, and successes whilst letting their hair down and escaping the trappings of being expected to behave in a particular way owing to the positions they hold which is not the same expectations as their male counterparts. The researcher further recommends that it would be best when such platforms are convened and facilitated by these women. The reason is that they would best know and understand their time pressures and conflicting priorities and can thus make appropriate and suitable arrangements.

5.3.5 LOCALISING PROVINCIAL AND NATIONAL GENDER MACHINERIES' IMPACT AND SUPPORT

The resuscitation of the Gender Desk at SALGA, the municipalities' coordinating body in South Africa is extremely urgent. The gender desk was an important port of reference for women's empowerment and gender equality, and provided the much needed structural support and guidance with regard to interventions. Resuscitation of gender desk at SALGA would revive broader local government's gender programmes. Municipalities which have these desks as mentioned (gender and transversal coordination desk) but have fallen flat on functioning due to the absence of a more coordinated, uniform

approach to programmes. The researcher further recommends that other machinery institutions such as the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), the Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities should firstly have a local government (municipalities) specific focus programmes and projects and use those to intensify their respective oversight functions with regard to implementation, monitoring, evaluation and enforcement. It is important that these machinery institutions overcome their structural problems and personalised politics, and focus on ensuring that they are effective and can deliver on their mandate. There are serious repercussions that the women's sector would suffer from at the rate at which these machineries dysfunctionality is going (Gouws, 2006).

At the time of compiling this research for example, South Africa had just emerged from its fifth national democratic elections (SA national elections, 2013) which saw the election of seven male premiers out of nine, with only two women. This is a setback for the hard-fought 50/50 feminist-driven women's empowerment and gender equality agenda. Unfortunately, with weak machinery at local government level, the same might be experienced as the country gears itself up for the upcoming 2016 local government elections. The role of the national and provincial gender machinery should be to ensure that the neglected role of ensuring that gender machinery acts as an effective point of access for women across all sectors (Hassim, 2003). An important aspect in localised gender machinery is that it serves as a platform for civil society participation thereby ensuring those civil rights groups' voices are included in the mainstream agenda of these institutions of governance, thereby providing a vital and valuable interface between public and private spheres (Walby, 2006).

5.3.6 INCLUSION OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND GENDER EQUALITY IN KEY MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

In the event that the national and provincial gender machineries are vibrant, they will be able to assist the local machinery, the SALGA gender together with the Gender and Transversal Coordination Units in their interventions. One key area of these interventions would be the inclusion of women's empowerment and gender programmes in key mandatory documents of local government institutions such as the IDP. The said inclusion would add accountability component in that during report back sessions, these institutions will be obliged to report back on women's empowerment and gender equality programmes. Furthermore, this inclusion makes the programme a nodal area, a key

deliverable that will be guaranteed some consideration in the mainstream institutional functions and operations.

It remains important to hold those in power accountable for policy and legislative provisions on women's empowerment and gender equality. This is so because too often, policy reforms to promote women's empowerment and gender equality result in very little impact in public service institutions due to poor implementation and ineffective monitoring and accountability systems (UN, 2007) states. It is, therefore, important to develop more effective and transparent tools and instruments. The research proposes a mandatory inclusion of a key priority area on women's empowerment and gender equality in the IDP and budget in the municipalities that have been studied and more broadly in all municipalities. This will address the lip-service and camouflage of women's empowerment and gender equality as it will constitute part of what the institutions would have to report back on to the public in line with legislative compliance.

5.3.7 GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETORY ALLOCATIONS

Klatzer, Schratzenstaller, Buchinger and Schaffer (2010) state that budgets constitutes a central element of any political action. This is so because budgets reflect social and political power relations which are inherently gendered. The political action in this study is centred on gender transformation. Preceding discussions reveal that efforts that seeks to drive the attainment of gender equality in the municipalities studied are, to a large extent thwarted, by the lack of financial resources that would have been included in the institution's comprehensive budgets.

UN (2007) maintains that gender responsive budgeting measures have positive impact on gender responsive governance. The researcher, therefore, recommends that municipalities embark on an intensive gender budgeting processes that would eventually see to the inclusion of gender programmes in the institutions' IDPs. This should be so because IDPs present an important public accountability platform that could ensure that these institutions are held accountable by their constituencies.

On municipalities' gender budgeting, the researcher recommends that gender budgeting processes should detail spending patterns on women (internal and external) and a further breakdown on spending on each of the levels of governance. This is done in order see the expenditure patterns in relation to women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government. It is unfortunate that Gender and Transversal Coordination Units within

municipalities are under-resourced to lead gender budgeting processes through a comprehensive gender mainstreaming process. That would cut out the common calendar-driven interventions as is the case in most municipalities. The study considers the inclusion of gender programmes in the municipalities' IDPs important. Moreover, as this would also ensure that these programmes are mandatory as compared to the current lip-service. The inclusion of the gender programmes in IDPs and budgets will ensure that gender is not viewed as a "nice-to-have" but that it demands commitments across all levels of governance.

Klatzer, Schratzenstaller, Buchinger and Schaffer (2010) affirms that the integration of gender budgets in public budgets will improve gender equality in institutions, advance the country's compliance and obligations with regard to its commitments on the national and international conventions and declarations on gender equality, promote good governance. The study recommends municipalities' benchmarking exercises on both gender mainstreaming and gender budgeting with countries that have since implemented these programmes for best-practice sharing and enhancement institutional implementation.

5.3.8 WOMEN'S STRATEGIC FORUMS IN THE MUNICIPALITIES

There are strategic forums and documents such as the municipalities' LED forums and strategies that are important in the quest to advance women into decision-making and leadership positions in municipalities. The study argues that women should be drawn in to participate in these forums and that issues of women empowerment and gender equality, especially on the aspect of decision-making and leadership should be included in these forums. An approach of this nature will provide a strategic integration platform, in which women are empowered on the institutional aspects of LED through engagements and interactions with other stakeholders such as big mining houses in the NDM. This will also help them gain broader experience and expertise in the economic development sector. It is with these strategic initiatives and interventions that women will be able to navigate the previously male-dominated sectors in most municipalities such as LED.

5.3.9 DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

The study recommends that the municipalities embark on consultative forums amongst women and men through the Gender and Transversal Coordination units. These should be according to the researcher parallel processes, perhaps coordinated from the District, to inform relevant gender programmes and gender budgeting as suggested above. It

should also include issues pertaining to women in decision-making and leadership positions in these institutions of governance. Moser and Moser (2005) indicate is that the incorporation of gender awareness and gender sensitivity in all gender mainstreaming policies and strategies is beneficial and the fact that not all the institutions have these results in implementation challenges. The study further emphasise the need for vigilance in both the policy development processes as well as policy implementation processes as these policies would constitute a solid base for gender programmes. The policies are likely to be met with resistance at both development and implementation phases. Further, after the policies are developed and adopted, the Gender and Transversal Coordinators should ensure that they should not “evaporate from the patriarchal cooking pot” (Longwe, 1997) as they threaten the internal patriarchal traditions within institutions.

5.3.10 INTENSIFICATION OF COMMUNITY-BASED GENDER INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATIONS (IEC) STRATEGIES

The pernicious assumptions that are prevalent in the post-feminist and post-racial world are untrue as there are continued ideological and structural barriers, and continuing struggles for gender equality and social justice worldwide (Hawkesworth, 2014). The findings of this study are sufficient evidence which indicates that the feminists continue to struggle for total emancipation of. In order to counter these assumptions, the old-times advocacy and lobbying should be resuscitated. The best way to do this is through robust IEC campaigns among women and men in communities. The research further agrees with (Kar, 2013) that they need to intensify focus on IEC campaigns. The researcher would also importantly recommend that in view of the fact that local government is a highly political and patriarchal environment, advocacy and lobbying should start at the branch levels of political parties. In essence, those women should begin through IEC campaigns to transform power and gender relations at these levels prior entering institutions. Kar, (2013) maintain that bringing about substantive political change requires building more effective grassroots constituencies focused on women’s issues, to influence legislative agendas in advance.

5.3.11 GENDERING ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOURS AND CULTURES

The recommendation in this respect is to effect continuous and incremental change which entails ongoing modifications in work processes or social interactions as those will create

substantial organisational change in behaviours and cultures and ultimately lead to gendered organisational development (Howell and Costley, 2006).

There is truth in the fact that critical mass enhance fundamental gender acceptance and change (Kramer, Konrad, Erkut and Hooper, 2006). However, this critical mass alone is not sufficient and will not be sustained if internal structural issues are not adequately addressed. The range of internal structural issues that should receive priority would entail not be limited to: the ranks, location and composition of gender transversal coordinators and units in municipalities' organograms for effective gender mainstreaming and resources' allocation, gendering organisational structures, gendering organisational recruitment and selection processes as well continuous gender training and development to enhance awareness and organisational behaviours and development. These internal structural issues have a potential of entrenching gender considerations amongst competing interests that remain clustered around power and resources at the local government level in ways that exclude women (Beall, 2005).

5.3.12 POSITIONS OF GENDER AND TRANSVERSAL COORDINATORS AND UNITS

As champions and custodians of gender programmes in these institutions, the coordinators' ranks, qualifications and levels in the in the organisations should be elevated. The Gender and Transversal Coordinators should be in the management echelons within these institutions so as to infuse gender at critical organisational programmes at the level of decision-making and leadership. It is not proper that a junior official, as most of them are, who does not sit in any of the management structures, to be expected to articulate issues for women who are her/his bosses. The research has shown that the experiences of women in decision-making and leadership positions at both administration and political wings of local government are the same. The advice is to elevate the gender and transversal coordinators to provide a strategic platform for elevating the gender transversal issues. If the coordinators are at higher levels of management, gender issues would make it into the mainstream decision-making and management level of the institutions and would consequently be considered amongst the priority areas. The composition of these units and their location within these institutions is an important area that requires careful consideration.

5.3.13 GENDERING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES AND THEIR REVIEW PROCESSES

Development and reviews of organisational structures in municipalities should be viewed as critical instruments towards addressing some of the internal structural deficits that have been revealed by the research. Organisational structures in municipalities and other government entities should be able to identify, from the onset, positions and levels that should be filled by women and men as would be revealed by their respective current state. For instance, if the majority of the refuse removal truck drivers are male, the consequence is that on promotions to decision-making and leadership positions (middle management in this case) women will not be represented. Organisational structure, internal recruitment and selection processes should be used as instruments to drive gender transformation through fair discrimination which is permitted by all labour and equity related legislation.

5.3.14 CONTINUOUS GENDER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The recommendation is that there should be an urgent re-focus and intensification of gender training and development, which could be driven by properly located and resourced gender and transversal coordinators. This type of training and development would significantly enhance gender awareness, address resistance and facilitate organisational behaviours and development changes and impact positively on gendered cultures. Thus, both gender and culture matter because they can affect a leader's style, behaviour, emergence, and effectiveness in many complex ways. For example, gender and culture matter because leaders' gender role, identities and cultural values can affect the choices they make about the manner in which they will lead (Ayman and Korabik, 2010). The categorisation of these gender training and development programmes should allow those that focus on women in decision-making and leadership positions as they need them.

5.3.15 CREATING WOMEN-FRIENDLY INSTITUTIONS OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The need to balance the triple roles unfortunately constitutes one amongst the many strong forces that seek to exclude women from political leadership, and broader decision-making and leadership positions and hence the need to make comprehensive efforts that could bring about change (Hunt, 2007). At the most basic level, the research proposes that governments, and in this instance local government, should implement initiatives such family-friendly policies, facilities and plans, which include straight-forward measures such

as easy access to daycare, flexible office hours, and limits to evening meetings(Hunt, 2007). Metcalfe (2011) avers that the purpose of initiatives of this nature is to create cultures in organisations which encourage and support the realisation of human potential by valuing contributions of their employees. The study maintains that when employees are provided with adequate support irrespective of gender, background, or any individual difference, their commitment to the institution is enhanced. Such facilities would equally benefit men but will importantly serve as motivation for women aspiring to be future decision-makers and leaders.

5.3.16 FEMINISATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: CHANGE FROM WOMEN IN POLITICS TO GENDER IN POLITICS

In view of the inherent political environment in local government, the research proposes that together with all the above-mentioned interventions, there is a need to entrench the move from women in politics to gender in politics (Kenny, 2007). This is so because the narrow focus on women, important as it is, conceals men's attitudes and behaviours towards women in general and more specifically towards women in decision-making and leadership positions. A gendered focus shifts the emphasis from women to gendering of political institutions, highlighting the ways in which political institutions reflect, structure and reinforce gendered patterns of power (Kenney, 1996) in (Kenny, 2007). This change in focus would be beneficial to gender transformation in institutions. This recommendation for shifting focus does not suggest the neglect for intensified focus on women as a previously disadvantaged and marginalised group. It is, however, premised on the need to zoom into gender relations in these institutions as most of the other issues emanate from them. The said shift would actively engage and interact with men in these institutions. This is a sound and sustainable base for infusing gender change management. Kenny (2007) maintains, that gender relations are inevitably power relations, and are, therefore, political. That they extend beyond formal public structures such as institutions of local government in the form of municipalities and paid work to include private' structures such as the family which falls under the ambit of women's triple roles.

5.3.17 ACCOUNTABILITY FOR DELIVERING ON A WOMEN'S MANDATE: FROM PhD TO PhU

The extent of women's impact in decision-making and leadership positions in local government will depend on their activism and passion for the feminist cause of women

empowerment and gender equality. It is this feminist activism that will motivate them to represent women's issues and concerns. It is, however, crucial that through the women's movement, women's activism is revived from grassroots community structures through to the highest echelons of institutions. This, together with creating women's accountability forums and networks, would ensure that women in decision-making and leadership positions are continuously held accountable by their counterparts. The researcher further recommends that the same forums and networks should be used to deal with issues of the PhD syndrome by exploring PhU alternatives. These robust engagements should seek to answer some of the questions such as; how can women maximise their impact on the political processes in local government? What strategies are most useful in increasing their effectiveness? What lessons can women in local government decision-making and leadership positions share with those aspiring to enter the field? (Burnet, 2011).

These PhU alternatives should be informed by sustainable strategies of ensuring representation through women's critical mass in these decision-making and leadership positions whilst also pushing for substantive participation in order to promote and put women's issues and concerns on the mainstream institutional agendas and discussions. Burnet (2011) points out that the PhU approach would not only increase women's chances of their own success, but they will also pave the way for a new generation of women to enter into decision-making and leadership positions. The researcher believes that an intense exploration of the PhU alternatives will further sharpen and strengthen women's mandate in these positions of influence and power, which will somewhat merge the strength of the women's critical mass and the dire need for women's substantive participation.

5.3.18 DEVELOPMENT OF A WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP EMPOWERMENT MODEL (WLEM): A PROPOSAL

Gender dynamics that still persist in decision-making and leadership positions in local government as revealed through this study point to a need for an all-encompassing women's leadership empowerment model. The proposed model should focus on decision-making and leadership positions within local government at both administrative and political levels. The model's beneficiaries should strictly be women in these positions or those that aspire for them. The researcher recommends that it should be a thoroughly researched model. Drawing from the participants' responses, it should take form of an intense education and training programme over a set period of time and must have all the

relevant components. It must not be structured in the same way as the CPMD/MFMP programmes whose main focus is on municipalities' core functions. The model should instead encompass life skills, decision-making, emotional intelligence, municipalities' core functions, diversity training which should include issues of resistance and effective use of networks. Such a programme should attempt to balance the theory and practice.

5.4 AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Rapid changes and/or disruptions of the term of office of women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government at both administrative and political components presents an important areas of future research. A further suggestion in this regard is that the future study should be a comparative analysis between female and male counterparts and broaden the focus to include concluding term of office, serving second terms, premature terminations.

Another important area for future studies is the extent to which women's access to positions of power and influence facilitates participation and consequently transformation. Hassim (2003) indicates that there has been little research into the extent to which increased representation has translated into real gains in reducing gender inequalities. Furthermore, a critique of women's critical mass in institutions, specifically in positions of influence and power, and how it sharpens or strengthens the women's empowerment mandate.

How does women's physical and biological make-up, for example, child-bearing impact on their prospects of ascending to decision-making and leadership positions in local government and perhaps across all spheres of government as the custodian for women's empowerment and gender equality. In addition to this question should also be an inquiry into the working conditions of women in lower levels, aligned to interrogation of organisational interventions and contingency plans.

Another are of research would be the study of networks, their impact on organisational functioning in the context of women in the workplace, and how these can be used to assist their rapid entry into the mainstream. The research encourages future feminist research in the development of a comprehensive framework that should include women's coaching and mentorship in effort to address the PhD in ways that will benefit future generations of women in decision-making and leadership positions.

5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The study has exposed the interlinkages between gender, development and governance. This is a relatively under-studied interlink, the gendered component of governance in developmental issues. A more poignant question that should be asked is for the development community, what types of development policies and strategies can be introduced to promote gender equality and foster more development(Mason and Kim, 2001) Such a question points to the need for exploring possibilities of more sharpened, more strengthened public-private partnerships. For instance, government and academic institutions' partnership projects on the development of centres of excellence for women in decision-making and leadership can be established. These will be of help to mainly women who are in decision-making and leadership positions in local government and other critical institutions of government. The suggested partnerships would bring together academic research capacities which will enhance government implementation capacities.

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ANNEXURE: 1

PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER TO NDM: EXECUTIVE MAYORS

P.O. Box 834

Sundra

2200

Mpumalanga

The Executive Mayor,

Cc: Acting Municipal Manager

Nkangala District Municipality

Middelburg

Request for permission: scholarly research (Tebogo Matoane, Student number: 009332427)

Sirs,

I hereby request permission to conduct a scholarly research in partial fulfillment of the Degree, Masters in Development Studies, for which I have been registered with the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership) since the academic year 2012. The title of my research study, supervised by Dr T. Moyo, is **“WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE”**. I am a final year student, having successfully completed my coursework which is the first component of these studies and expected to complete the second and final component which is the said research at the end of the 2013 academic year.

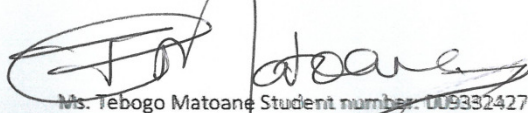
This being a mixed methodology study of both qualitative and quantitative nature, the requested permission is for access to all six (06) municipalities that constitute Nkangala District Municipality. The process will entail interviews, both one on one and group interviews of councilors and officials in decision-making and leadership positions in respective municipalities, observations of various mayoral and council sittings, the distribution of questionnaires for completion by participants, as

well as an analysis of key documents such as the IDP, Budget, Spatial Development Framework, Annual Reports and Plans, Mayoral State of the Municipalities and the District Addresses, as well as any other useful resources.

The student researcher, Tebogo Matoane will personally conduct the research and is bound by mandatory ethical standards of first and foremost, voluntary participation, confidentiality in all aspects, maintaining high levels of integrity, respect and sensitivity for participants, accurate and meaningful reporting, non-biasness, no harm in any manner to participants, open and frank communication, availing the complete research report to participants, the respective participant municipalities, and the NDM.

In order to ensure that all required information is collected and timeously analyzed and packaged for presentation and submission of the mini-dissertation, it is anticipated that the data collection process should commence from the 27th May until the 27th August 2013 (03months), and the analysis, September and October 2013 (two months) and the final submission in November 2013. I therefore sincerely appeal for your cooperation in assisting me with regard to obtaining maximum data and meeting the timeframes as it is my believe that the anticipated research report will be of great value to future policy and programmes interventions pursuant to the national development priority of gender transformation.

Anticipating a positive response,



Ms. Tebogo Matoane Student number: 009332427

Student: University of Limpopo

Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL)



ANNEXURE: 2

PERMISSION REQUEST LETTER TO NDM: MUNICIPAL MANAGER

P.O. Box 834

Sundra

2200

Mpumalanga

The Acting Municipal Manager,

Cc: Executive Mayor

Nkangala District Municipality

Middelburg

Request for permission: scholarly research (Tebogo Matoane, Student number: 009332427)

Sirs,

I hereby request permission to conduct a scholarly research in partial fulfillment of the Degree, Masters in Development Studies, for which I have been registered with the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership) since the academic year 2012. The title of my research study, supervised by Dr T. Moyo, is **“WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE”**. I am a final year student, having successfully completed my coursework which is the first component of these studies and expected to complete the second and final component which is the said research at the end of the 2013 academic year.

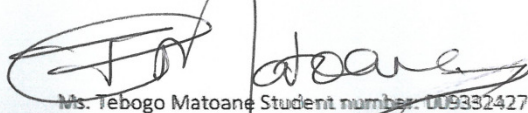
This being a mixed methodology study of both qualitative and quantitative nature, the requested permission is for access to all six (06) municipalities that constitute Nkangala District Municipality. The process will entail interviews, both one on one and group interviews of councilors and officials in decision-making and leadership positions in respective municipalities, observations of various mayoral and council sittings, the distribution of questionnaires for completion by participants, as

well as an analysis of key documents such as the IDP, Budget, Spatial Development Framework, Annual Reports and Plans, Mayoral State of the Municipalities and the District Addresses, as well as any other useful resources.

The student researcher, Tebogo Matoane will personally conduct the research and is bound by mandatory ethical standards of first and foremost, voluntary participation, confidentiality in all aspects, maintaining high levels of integrity, respect and sensitivity for participants, accurate and meaningful reporting, non-biasness, no harm in any manner to participants, open and frank communication, availing the complete research report to participants, the respective participant municipalities, and the NDM.

In order to ensure that all required information is collected and timeously analyzed and packaged for presentation and submission of the mini-dissertation, it is anticipated that the data collection process should commence from the 27th May until the 27th August 2013 (03months), and the analysis, September and October 2013 (two months) and the final submission in November 2013. I therefore sincerely appeal for your cooperation in assisting me with regard to obtaining maximum data and meeting the timeframes as it is my believe that the anticipated research report will be of great value to future policy and programmes interventions pursuant to the national development priority of gender transformation.

Anticipating a positive response,



Ms. Tebogo Matoane Student number: 009332427

Student: University of Limpopo

Turfloop Graduate School of Leadership (TGSL)



ANNEXURE: 3

PERMISSION GRANTING LETTER FROM NDM

PLEASE REFER TO NEXT PAGE



NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY
DISTRKSMUNISIPALITEIT NKANGALA

☎ 013-249-2000

✉ 437 or 2032

Middelburg 1050

www.nkangaladm.gov.za

FAX 013-249-2087 (Corporate Services)

FAX 013-249-2114 (Finance)

FAX 013-249-2145 (Technical Services)

FAX 013-249-2136 (Social Services)

My Verw./My Ref: (Mohlala L/nem)

U Verw./Your Ref: 21 May 2014

Ms T Matoane
82 2nd Avenue
Sundra
RIETKOL
2200

Madam,

APPROVAL OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS: ACADEMIC RESEARCH AS WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Your request to conduct interviews on academic research on women leadership in Local Government is hereby acknowledged.

Nkangala District Municipality hereby approves your request with the belief that, your research on Women in Leadership in Local Government will assist, not only Nkangala District Municipality but the whole of Mpumalanga in understanding the importance of gender dynamics facing Women in Leadership positions in Local Government.

The approval that is granted for you to conduct interviews with senior female employees and full time female councillors as per your request.

We are granting this approval on condition that, you will at all times be bound by ethical standards of confidentiality, respect and sensitivity for participants.

Nkangala District Municipality would like to wish you well in your studies, and we are willing to be of assistance to you in acquiring the information to conduct your research for the duration of your data collection through interviews from the 04 June 2014 to 05 June 2014.

Be advised that you need to do prior arrangements with Corporate Services for the venue and the timeous notification of the managers and councillors to be interviewed.

Yours faithfully

MM SKOSANA
MUNICIPAL MANAGER

ANNEXURE: 4

(SAMPLE) EMAIL INFORMING PARTICIPANTS OF RESEARCHER'S VISIT

PLEASE REFER TO NEXT PAGE



Compose

- Inbox (2245)**
- Drafts (33)
- Sent
- Spam (33)
- Trash (43)

Smart Views

- Unread
- Starred
- People
- Social
- Travel
- Shopping
- Finance
- > Folders
- > Recent

Sponsored



Facebook
 Facebook® Account Sign Up.
 Join for Free Today!

Search results
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⌵
⌶
⌷

● Request for a meeting on Friday with Ms Tebogo Matoane(4) ★

● **Gift Ngobeni** Feb 10, 2014 ★

To vusib@victorkhanyelm.gov.za, zuluz@victorkhanyelm.gov.za, 'okamageba2',
 spononom@victorkhanyelm.gov.za
 CC me

Good Morning Colleagues,

Please note that Ms Tebogo Matoane would appreciate your commitment to meet with her for not more than 15 Minutes for an interview in pursuit of her Masters Degree in Public Administrations' Dissertation.

She proposed Friday the 14th February.

Should you require more information, please feel free to contact her at the above-mentioned email address.

Hope you find all in order.

Kind Regards.

Gift Ngobeni
Executive Director Corporate Services
Victor Khanye Local Municipality
Tel: (013) 665 6004
Fax: (013) 665 2913
Cell: (083) 286 1372

Reply, Reply All or Forward | More

● **me** Dear Sista, Thank uou very much, I can see that the email has been : Feb 11, 2014 ★

● **Gift Ngobeni** Hi sisi, I think they will be fine regarding time, as Fridays v 📧 Feb 11, 2014 ★

● **me** Hi my sista, Thanks for the documents and your ever so spot-on res Feb 13, 2014 ★

Click to reply all

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facebook

Create a facebook profile

Sign up for free and connect to the world.

Sign Up

ANNEXURE: 5

INTERVIEW CONSCENT FORM

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

Note: All participants are requested to sign the consent form before the interview.

TITLE OF STUDY: WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.

STUDY INVESTIGATOR(S): TEBOGO MATOANE (MS)

STUDENT NUMBER: 009332427 **DEGREE:** MASTERS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

INSTITUTION: UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO, TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP.

Invitation to Participate & Study Description

You are hereby invited to participate in the above-mentioned research study. The study focusses on women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government (municipalities as institutions of local government). Drawing from the fact that local government is historically a male-dominated environment; the study seeks to investigate the gender dynamics in this sphere of government especially with regard to women in decision-making and leadership positions.

It is anticipated that the study will help in building a much more in-depth understanding of gender transformation in the local government sector, the challenges, successes and lessons. These lessons should establish a fundamental basis that will be valuable for future policy directives and programmatic interventions in an effort to concretize gender transformation in public institutions.

The interview will take place at a venue and time jointly agreed upon by (yourself/ves) the participant/s and the researcher. Each interview will take about an hour to complete and will be recorded both in audio (tape recorder) and manually (notes-taking) for thorough analysis.

This study does not involve any harm or risk; you will be asked to answer questions in relation to your career, workplace and community. The complete report emanating from

the study will be made available to participants and participating institutions (municipalities), as well as other relevant stakeholders of interest such as the Commission on Gender Equality, Provincial Office on the Status of Women for example, as key institutions in policy and programmes development.

The researcher is bound by **ethical conduct** and to this effect, among others, the following aspects will be considered;

Confidentiality: information provided will be kept strictly confidential. To protect your privacy, you will be allocated a number, and your responses to the interview questions will only be identified with a code number, and at no point your name will be mentioned in the responses.

Use of information obtained: the researcher might use some information flowing from this study for article (s) that might be published in scientific journals and presented at seminars, summits, and other professional meetings. However your identity will not be revealed.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw: The decision to participate in this research project is entirely at your own free will. You are also at liberty to not answer some questions or parts thereof.

Right to Ask Questions: You have the right to ask questions about this study and to have those questions answered by the student researcher before, during or after the research.

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to participate voluntarily in this study and that you have read and understood the information provided above. You will be given a copy of this form to keep.

Participant Full Names: _____ Date : _____

Participant Signatures: _____

ANNEXURE: 6 INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

**STUDENT RESEARCHER: TEBOGO MATOANE
9332427**

STUDENT NUMBER:

UNIVERSITY OF THE NORTH, TURFLOOP GRADUATE SCHOOL OF LEADERSHIP

TOPIC

**WOMEN IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKING AND LEADERSHIP
POSITIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER DYNAMICS IN THE NKANGALA DISTRICT
MUNICIPALITY, MPUMALANGA PROVINCE.**

Preamble: The research is a scholarly research, a mini-dissertation in partial fulfillment of the Degree, Masters in Development Studies. With this process of data collection through interviews, the researcher is bound by the following ethical conduct; Permission to record will be sort from participants and all participants will be duly acknowledged.

PART 1: STANDARD PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

GENDER:.....

AGE:.....

PLACE OF
ORIGIN:.....
.....

CULTURE:.....

HOME LANGUAGE:.....

HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL
ATTAINMENT:.....

CURRENT
STUDIES:.....

FUTURE CAREER DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS/PLANS:.....
.....

ANY OTHER ASPECT OF YOURSELF YOU WISH TO
SHARE:.....

PART 2: PREVIOUS JOB/OCCUPATION BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCES

- What was your previous occupation/job?

- For how long were you occupied with the above?
- What are some of the most useful and valuable lessons that you have learnt from your previous job/occupation?
- What are some of the least useful and valuable lessons you have learnt from your previous job/occupation?
- What are some of those unique issues that stood out for you in your previous job/occupation?
- How would you say these will or have influenced your career progression?
- Any other aspect of your previous job/occupation would you wish to share?

PART 3: CURRENT JOB/OCCUPATION

- What is the name of your municipality?
- What is your job title?
- How long have you been with the municipality?
- Which positions have you held over the period?
- What have been your main job roles and responsibilities over the period?
- What are your current job roles and responsibilities?
- How long have you been in your current job/position?
- What are some of the most useful and valuable lessons that you have learnt and continue to learn in your current position?
- What are some of the least useful and valuable lessons you have learnt from your current position?
- What are some of those unique issues that stood out for you in your current position?
- How would you say these will or have influenced your career progression?
- Any other aspect of your current position would you wish to share?

PART 4: COMMUNITY ACTIVISM, INVOLVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

- In which structures, if any, were you active in prior your entry into local government?
- What position/s, if any, did you hold within those structures?
- What were your main roles and responsibilities in those structures?

- What are some of the useful and valuable lessons that you have learnt from your involvement in these structures?
- What are some of the least useful and valuable lessons that you have learnt from your involvement in these structures?
- How would you say these lessons, experiences and participation will/have shaped your future community activism?
- Any other aspect of your community involvement you would want to share?

PART 4: ISSUES AND IDEOLOGIES

- What is your own broad understanding of Gender?
- What is your own understanding of the difference between women's empowerment and gender equality?
- What is overall reflection of both women's empowerment and gender equality in South Africa currently?
- What would you say about overall women's empowerment and gender equality policy and legislative frameworks in South Africa currently?
- Would you say there is a coherent and progressive women's movement in South Africa currently?
- If yes, what would you say (views and opinions) about the women's movement in South Africa today?
- Would you say there is a coherent and progressive men's movement in South Africa today?
- If yes, what would you say (views and opinions) about the men's movement in South Africa today?
- In what ways do you think the women's movement would or have positively or negatively contributed to the gender transformation agenda in South Africa today?
- In what ways do you think the men's movement would or have contributed positively or negatively to the gender transformation agenda in South Africa today?
- What are your ideas of the role of women and men respectively in the women's empowerment and gender equality agenda – the gender transformation agenda perhaps?
- Any other aspect you wish to share on overall women's empowerment and gender equality in South Africa today?

PART 5: WORKPLACE ISSUES & IDEOLOGIES (LOCAL GOVERNMENT SPECIFIC)

In view of your broad understanding, views and opinions above, focusing on your workplace, local government;

- What do you believe are the main, glaring gender issues affecting women specifically?
- What do you think are the main, glaring gender issues affecting men specifically?
- Would you be able to select at least one case in point, demonstrate and explain in details some of the said gender issues?
- What is your view/opinion of women in decision-making and leadership positions in your workplace
- What is your view/opinion of women in decision-making and leadership positions in local government in general?
- What is your view/opinion of men in decision-making and leadership positions in local government in general?
- Explain your observation and experiences of the (i) women-to-women relations , (ii) women –to-men relations, (iii) and men-to-women relations (iv) men – to -men relations in your workplace
- What is your view/opinion of men in decision-making and leadership positions in your workplace?

PART 6: INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING

- How would you describe your organizational culture in relation to gender?
- Is there a gender unit/department in your workplace?
- What is the staff complement at this unit/department in your workplace?
- What is the post level of the head of the unit/department in the workplace (middle or senior management)?
- What is her/his main job functions?
- What is the budget allocated to this unit/department in your workplace?
- Is there a workplace women's forum at your workplace?
- Is there a workplace men's forum at your workplace?
- Is there any coaching and mentorship programme at your workplace?
- Is there a workplace gender policy in your workplace?

- What are any other gender transformation related programmes at your workplace?

PART 7: CONCLUDING CONFIRMATORY QUESTIONS

- Would you say there exist barriers for achieving women's empowerment and gender equality in your workplace?
- If yes, what would you point to as the main barriers to achieving gender transformation in your workplace?
- What are some of the suggestions you think should be implemented and would contribute towards the attainment of women's empowerment and gender equality in your workplace?
- Which roles and responsibilities would you wish to assume as your own personal contribution towards gender transformation in your workplace?
- Do you think entrenching women's empowerment and gender equality in community structures and forums is important? If yes, why?"
- Any suggestions of how community structures and forums could drive gender transformation through to municipalities/local government?

Thank you very much for taking part in this interview, your time and input is highly appreciated,

Tebogo Matoane

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