Feminism in the City

A study of the participation of women in the planning processes of public bureaucracies, using the City of Cape Town as a case study

Joy Watson

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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I, (*name of candidate*)

Jay Watson

of (address of candidate)

12 County Club Rd, Kenilworth, 7708.

do hereby declare that I empower the University of Cape Town to produce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation entitled

in any manner whatsoever.

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ABSTRACT

This study addresses the question as to whether or not feminists should be located on the inside of public bureaucracies to effect social transformation that will serve to enhance the quality of women's lives and work towards dissipating systemic gender inequity. It explores the concept of women's voice and how this is heard or not heard in relation to service delivery in the public sector. It focuses on the ways in which public bureaucracies, at a systemic level, develop structures and mechanisms for involving women in designing, planning and executing service delivery interventions that are aimed at eradicating gender inequity and the extent to which feminists on the inside of state structures can facilitate the development of such interventions.

The research question which this study seeks to address is twofold: To what extent do the public participation methodologies pursued by public bureaucracies provide a meaningful space for women to both articulate their voices and be heard? Secondly, should feminists locate themselves on the inside of state structures to facilitate the enhanced participation of women in civil society in bureaucratic decision-making processes?

The research design for this project comprises two research techniques. The first of these is interviews, which were conducted with a sample of thirty-one local government councillors. The purpose of this was to gain insight into their understanding of gender-sensitive service delivery and how they incorporated women's service delivery needs into their planning processes. A qualitative process, that entailed the use of semi-structured interviews to get participants to share their experiences in the planning process, and how they address women's service delivery needs, was used.

The second research technique utilised was an analysis of my experiences of working as a feminist on the City of Cape Town's safety audit project. This involved experimening with ways of working with women and including them in

the planning of service delivery initiatives. The data analysed for the purposes of this study are the records of my thoughts and feelings as a feminist working within a public bureaucracy. These reflections are used to gain insight into a feminist experience of doing transformatory work from within a public bureaucracy.

The interviews with the councillors reveal a number of dominant discursive frameworks in the organisation. These include an "official" organisational discourse that strives to be "politically correct" within a broader legislative context that supports the eradication of gender inequity. Secondly, the interviews also show a dormant discourse that can be described as being essentially conservative in nature. This discourse generally tends to emerge only after careful probing and those who use it seem to have some sense of the fact that it is not a politically correct discourse to appropriate. Thirdly, the data showed that there is what can be described as an "empathetic" discourse in the City Council, appropriated predominantly by the women councillors interviewed. This discourse is one that is sensitive to women's needs and interests, probably because of personal experience.

The safety audit project illustrates how feminist bureaucrats are able to make inroads in securing organisational support for work aimed at enhancing the lives of women when the political context dictates that this is politically correct. The manner in which feminist bureaucrats opt to take up women's issues is eventually constrained by those in senior political and management positions, who on the whole, do not have an in-depth understanding of how to engage in gender analyses and how to transform the quality of women's lives in meaningful ways. The manner in which gender sensitive service delivery initiatives are taken on, is therefore selective and dependent upon the extent to which the politicians and senior management are prepared to challenge the status quo.

The study concludes that it is critical that women's interests are institutionalised

in the state and that feminists establish a strategic presence in policy-making. Inasmuch as feminists need to resist oppressive state practices, it is strategic to ensure that feminist interests are articulated in state bureaucracies. Concerted efforts to introduce processes of articulating and aggregating women's interests in important political arenas are therefore critical. The study shows that when feminist voices are absent in the bureaucratic arena, support for gender-related initiatives may be withdrawn and eventually terminated.

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CHAPTER ONE: RATIONALE FOR STUDY

A. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study addresses the question as to whether or not feminists[1] should be located on the inside of public bureaucracies to effect social transformation that will serve to enhance the quality of women's lives and work towards dissipating systemic gender inequity. It further seeks to engage with whether or not the presence of feminists in public bureaucracies is strategic in responding to women's service delivery needs in post apartheid South Africa. It explores the concept of women's voice and how this is heard or not heard in relation to service delivery in the public sector. It focuses on the ways in which public bureaucracies, at a systemic level, develop structures and mechanisms for involving women in designing, planning and executing service delivery interventions that are aimed at eradicating gender inequity and the extent to which feminists on the inside of state structures can facilitate the development of such interventions.

This project has been inspired by a series of questions posed by Jane Bennett in her article "Some Reflections on Voicelessness" (AGI Newsletter, 1999). She argues that in the African context, states are now engaging with the issue of public participation in state structures as a question integral to the meaning of democracy. The past twenty-five years has entailed debate around questions of gender relations and the implications of gender justice in postcolonial contexts. Confronting the challenges relating to the participation of women has been part of this process. Women's voices – actual, textual and virtual – have galvanised much of this energy. She argues that the debate around women's voices should not be addressing the issue of women's voicelessness, but should move towards addressing postcolonial, patriarchal 'deafness'. This debate gives rise to a number of attendant questions relevant to the South African context in the post-1994 period: Firstly, what are the processes that are required by state structures to develop and sustain efficient deafness? Secondly, how and when is deafness hidden in the guise of being a disability as opposed to

[1] For the purposes of this study, feminists are defined as people who, informed by a consciousness of wanting to break down the systemic inequity between women and men, work in active ways to

being a choice or a preferred condition? Thirdly, what would be the consequences of a newly acquired ability to hear? Lastly, where deafness has been a key strategy in the implementation of various political and economic standpoints, what forms of redistribution would be essential to a deepened transformation (Bennett, 1999). The notion of "voice", in this context, is not used in a linguistic sense. It is meant to invoke the ideological and discursive power struggles that ensue in the political decision-making arena to pursue various political agendas. Within this context, it refers to whose agendas are given the space to be articulated and pursued and whose are silenced and obliterated.

My interest in the questions raised by Bennett relates to their relevance in public bureaucracies, which now seek to involve women in planning, implementing and assessing how women's needs are addressed at a systemic level. Public bureaucracies have attempted to address public participation by creating formal opportunities for increased engagement such as hosting public meetings, community outreach/ consultation visits, receiving written submissions etc to elicit public opinion. There are, however, also a host of more informal methods of articulating voice that exist outside of the formal bureaucratic domain such as caucusing with policy makers, conducting research, marches, petitions and other forms of social mobilisation. These are all devices used to elicit the public "voice" or "voices". My interest, for the purposes of this study, is in the formal methods employed by public bureaucracies to elicit women's voices such as public meetings/ consultation exercises and the ways in which these are set up to facilitate/ undermine meaningful engagement.

This project is further inspired by my own experiences in working as a feminist for both the City of Cape Town and the South African Parliament. I first identified as a feminist about ten years ago in my early twenties. In my first formal job, I worked for a non-profit organisation that worked towards building democracy in South Africa. In the course of my work, I increasingly tried to incorporate a focus on women's needs and interests and eventually became the informal "gender person" in the

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eradicate the systemic power imbalances between women and men.

organisation. This reached a point where I gradually focussed less on what I had initially been employed to do and worked almost exclusively on gender-related issues. Because this was politically relevant at the time, it was tolerated and even supported by the organisation. My work to promote an understanding of women's rights and to transform the gendered social order, included training; organising public debates on gendered issues such as the campaign to introduce abortion legislation, the setting up of the gender machinery, access to pornography etc. An important angle of my work came to include research on the gendered repercussions of policy and legislation. I worked in close collaboration with other non-profit organisations doing similar work such as the Gender Advocacy Project[2]

I eventually opted to work in local government in the belief that this is a strategic site of intervention and that it would afford me invaluable opportunities to transform the culture and mode of operation of public bureaucratic structures from the inside. My experiences in this regard are discussed in greater detail in Chapter Five. The important point to make here is that these experiences entailed inner struggles that have been personally challenging. It is because of the effects of this, that I have had to re-engage with the question as to whether or not it is strategic for feminists to attempt to do gender work on the inside of state structures.

This dissertation therefore attempts to engage with these questions by using local government as a case study and exploring how it sought to involve women in meeting their service delivery-related needs. My work at the City of Cape Town[3] in promoting public safety will be used as a case study to address the research question. I have opted to use this as a case study because it provides practical examples of a public bureaucracy's attempts to work with women and make them an integral part of its planning processes and of the role played by feminists on the inside of the City in seeking to facilitate and enhance women's participation.

[2] The Gender Advocacy Project is an NGO based in Cape Town that works towards eradicating systemic gender inequity. It conducts related research, offers training and engages in lobby and advocacy work. Some of the areas of their programmatic work include Local Government, Governance and Social Policy, Domestic Violence and Gender and Health.
[3] Henceforth the 'City'

B. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This Chapter focuses on two key areas. The first reflects on women's involvement in political decision-making processes in the South African context in the post 1994 period. The way in which the political landscape has shifted to facilitate women's involvement in decision-making processes is broadly sketched. The second relates to local government's role in considering social crime prevention. The role of local authorities in social crime prevention is relatively new and many local authorities are still grappling to define how to give effect to it. This is followed by a consideration of why it is necessary for local authorities to play a role in combating violence against women and a broad consideration of the kinds of strategies that can be employed. This is then followed with the research question and an overview of the research methodology.

C. BACKGROUND TO WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

For a long time in the history of political engagement, women have been excluded from the participating in public life in meaningful ways. The histories of many democracies globally have, therefore, almost invariably entailed the struggle of suffrage movements to enfranchise women, campaigns for the representation of women in public office and social advocacy for the articulation of their practical and strategic gender needs in public spaces.[4] In the post-colonial African context, the struggle for the right of women to participate in political processes has been inextricably linked to the anti-colonial struggles for self-determination and liberation in many countries.

The establishment of democratic systems of governance and the enfranchising of women has, however, not necessarily correlated with the increased representation of women in political decision-making positions or with the enhanced participation of

4 Molyneux's distinction between practical and strategic gender interests is used here. Practical gender needs are defined as needs of a practical nature such as the provision of houses, water, electricity etc. Strategic gender needs are the needs that relate to challenging gender imbalances at a systemic level such as the representation of women in Parliament. Addressing strategic gender needs shifts the power imbalances between men and women.

women from civil society in political life. In fact, it has been argued that whilst the political playing field in each country has its own particular characteristics, one feature that remains common to all is that the political environment, in practice, is not conducive to women's participation. This is attributed to the fact that the political, cultural and social environment is often unfriendly and sometimes even hostile to women (Shvedova 2002). This works against the formulation of policies and laws that adequately reflect the variety of views and interests of any given society. If policy decisions and laws have to be made for the benefit of all members of society, then the extent to which the decision-making bodies are able to take into account the experiences of the broadest possible spectrum of that society will be the gauge of the degree to which its decisions will be appropriate and meet the needs of the entire society, rather than those of a particular group or groups (Ginwala 2002).

In order to explore women's participation in political processes, it is necessary to highlight briefly some of the key impediments that hinder their participation in political life in general. Historically, women have been assigned apolitical roles. In practice, women have often transcended this boundary to enter into political roles, mostly at the level of informal, community-based politics (where they are often instrumental in mobilising and advocating for basic needs such as access to food, water, shelter, primary health care etc.) that are largely voluntary and therefore not rewarded in monetary terms. This contrasts with the way in which men engage in politics at community level, which is more likely to be at a more formalised level where work is compensated in monetary terms, such as being a local government councillor. Multiple responsibilities impact upon the time available to women to engage with the state. The intersection of gender, socio-economic status, race and spatial location also impacts on levels of participation. In South Africa, rural black women with little or no education at the lower end of the spectrum in terms of their economic positions are therefore particularly precluded from participating. The masculine norms that underpin engagement in the 'public sphere' and political arena have also been instrumental in alienating women.

A study commissioned in 1999 that focussed on the experiences of women in South African legislatures, found that gendered preference systems that benefit men are deeply embedded in the 'norms, structures and practices' of legislatures (Budlender et al 1999). What is interesting and inspiring is that despite these obstacles, women in the South African context have transcended these hindrances and found ways to engage with the political system.

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

In South Africa, since the transition to democratic governance, the promotion of gender equity is supposed to be a key factor in the process of drafting legislation and government policy and in determining developmental strategies. The South African Constitution enshrines the right to gender equality and it is within this framework that legislators and policy makers are obliged to consider the gendered implications of government policy, national laws, provincial ordinances and municipal bylaws. This is no easy challenge, given South Africa's legacy of sexist laws and policies.

The six sites identified by Walby (1990) as being important manifestations of patriarchal practices[5] have all been mechanisms through which gender inequity have been perpetuated in the South African context. The legacy of apartheid has served to contribute towards the enhancement of this inequity. The manifestation of inequity in the lives of black women in systematic ways has entrenched their position of subordination in society. Within the context of the apartheid legacy of entrenched patriarchy, it is going to take many years before the repercussions of the systemic power imbalances between women and men are undone.

South Africa's transition to democratic governance has contributed towards providing an enabling environment within which gender inequity can begin to be addressed. In the post-1994 period, the political landscape has been fundamentally altered and spaces have been created for contesting voices to articulate themselves in legislative and policy processes. Women have played an integral role in creating and shaping the post-1994 political environment. Some of the key aspects of the enabling political

5 Namely modes of production, gender relations in paid work, relationships vis-a-vis the state, male

environment that has been created within which women can engage and articulate their concerns are:

Constitution and legislation

The South African Constitution (Act 108, 1996) lays the foundation for the promotion of gender equity. The equality clause in Chapter Two provides the legal framework within which gender equality is enshrined and prohibits the state from discriminating against anyone on, *inter alia*, the grounds of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, sexual orientation and ethnic or social origin. The Constitution therefore laid the basis for the repealing of many pieces of discriminatory legislation and for the introduction of progressive, rights-based legislation, that takes cognisance of gendered realities.

Representation of women in decision-making structures

Since 1994, the participation of women in the public sphere has been greatly enhanced. The representation of women in the South African Parliament compares well with the rest of the world - South Africa is ranked twelfth on a global scale. The South African Cabinet currently comprises 41.2% women, whilst 32.8% of the Members of the National Assembly and 35.2% of the permanent delegates of the National Council of Provinces are women (Watson, 2004). The key position of Speaker of the National Assembly is filled by a woman.

The high level of representation of women at national level has, however, not filtered down to local level. Statistics at local government level for 2003, show that women constituted 28% of councillors. This figure is below the required 30% target, but marks a significant shift from the past, when the representation of women was dismally low. In 2002, there were 1639 women on the party lists. This increased to 5587 in 2003. Even though the numbers of women on party lists have increased significantly, men still make up 66.3% of the candidates nominated on party lists. At an administrative level, women comprise only 9.5% of municipal managers.6 South Africa has a mixed municipal electoral system where

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violence, relations in sexuality and relations in cultural institutions.

[6] Draft Report on Women in Political and Decision-Making Positions, Office on the Status of Women,

40% of councillors are elected via a proportional representation system and 60% are elected via a ward system.

The design of electoral systems plays a critical role in determining the extent to which women will be represented in political decision-making positions. Studies of gender and voting behaviour have shown that the absence of women in electoral office is not primarily the result of voting patterns in general elections, but can largely be attributed to nomination practices. Political parties therefore play a critical role in increasing women's representation, given that they are the conduits for women to enter into elected office. Political parties around the world have generally been resistant to fronting female candidates or to championing a feminist policy platform. [7] The limited role of women in parties and in party executive committees serves as an indicator of the difficulties women have in gaining access to political power.

Because there is often a voter bias towards male candidates, women tend to fare better in a proportional representation system than when they stand as ward candidates. In a proportional representation election, the attention focuses more on the political party than the individual candidate. The proportional representation (PR) system with closed lists where parties have adopted quotas for women candidates, combined with institutionalised party systems that have formal, central rules for candidate selection (such as South Africa, the Scandinavian countries and France) have proved to be more effective in yielding a 30% target of women in national legislatures.[8]

There are two types of quotas designed to facilitate women's access to elective office and senior posts in politics, namely those established by national legislation and those established by political parties. Quotas introduced by a political party may entail measures to ensure that women occupy a proportion of the parliamentary seats won by the party at an election or measures that guarantee

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The Presidency, Republic of South
7 Goetz and Hassim, 2003
8 Ibid

that the internal decision-making structures include women. In the South African context, quotas for women are not legislated. The representation of women depends on the commitment of the political parties to furthering gender equity. In this respect, the ANC fared relatively well in that it made use of a quota system as part of its internal decision-making structure.

National gender machinery

The concept of national gender machinery was fought for and developed by the Women's National Coalition. National gender machinery refers to the structures that are put in place by the state to take responsibility for the periodic reviewing of changing conditions of women's lives and for eradicating the factors that perpetuate women's position of subordination. Its purpose is to 'create a political, economic, legislative and judicial environment that enables women to enjoy, exercise and defend all their economic, social and political rights on an equal basis with men' (Albertyn, 1995). The national gender machinery comprises "the Office on the Status of Women (OSW), the Gender Focal Points in the government departments, the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), as well as the Joint Monitoring Committee on Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women".[9]

CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action

South Africa has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This places an obligation on government to commit to a broad spectrum of measures to bridge the gender divides between men and women, to take 'all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men' (Article 4, CEDAW). South Africa is also a signatory to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) that was developed at the World Conference on Women in 1995. The BPA is instrumental

[9] South Africa's Report to the African Union on the Implementation of the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in South Africa, produced by the Office on the Status of Women, The Presidency, June 2005.

in creating the context within which CEDAW can be applied as it contains priority actions within twelve critical areas of concern that governments need to address within a five-year period to give substance to gender equality. These twelve areas are women and poverty, the education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for advancing women, women and human rights, women and the media, women and the environment and the girl child.

National Policy Framework

Through the Office on the Status of Women located in the Presidency, South Africa introduced a National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (henceforth the "Gender Policy Framework") in 2000. This framework outlines South Africa's vision for gender equality and how it intends to realise this ideal. The Gender Policy Framework is a generic policy document that is meant to be trans-sectoral. It sets out the overarching principles that should be integrated by sectors into their sectoral policies, practices and programmes. The gender policy framework contains guidelines on:

- Vision and principles for gender equality.
- The institutional framework for attaining gender equality.
- Proposed inter-sectoral co-ordination framework and process for gender mainstreaming.

Remaining Challenges

Notwithstanding the shifts in the political environment and the ways in which it has changed to facilitate their enhanced participation, women are still often not heard by state structures. This becomes evident when considering the gap that exists between women's high level of political achievement and their developmental status. This gap comes to the fore when looking at women's positions in terms of the United Nations Gender-Related Development Index (GDI) and Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). Because development is an integrated, holistic process that needs to meet

social, political, economic, cultural and environmental needs, the concept of human development is measured according to economic indicators such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), health (life expectancy) and education (literacy and enrolment). These indicators constitute the basis of the UNDP's Human Development index, which is used to rank countries across the globe in relation to these indicators (Taylor, 1998). On the GEM scale, which measures women's degree of participation in economic and political decision-making, South Africa ranks twenty-third in the world. On the GDI scale, which measures the achievements of a country in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and GDP per capita disaggregated by gender, South Africa fairs relatively poorly at 74 (Hassim and Gouws, 1998). This indicates that despite political achievements, much work still needs to be done in bridging gender-related divides.

In a study conducted in 2002 (Watson and Rhoda, 2002) with eighteen organisations nationally that engage in advocacy work to improve the quality of women's lives, seven key themes emerged as critical impediments to the participation of women in political decision-making processes. These are: a lack of information (in terms of how the policy process is structured and where the strategic points of intervention are); complicated procedures and processes for participation; the physical distance between the sites of power and decision-making and women who want to engage; the lack of accessibility of policy makers (e.g. it is very hard to make contact with them); the political dynamics between policy makers and civil society; the lack of resources for advocacy work and the absence of a unified women's movement. All the organisations that participated in this study felt that there was still a long way to go to secure the maximum participation of women in political decision-making processes.

Social transformation is therefore yet to bring about significant practical changes in the lives of many women who continue to be treated as second- class citizens within the realm of the home, their places of work, their communities and society at large. As Viviene Taylor notes, we continuously need to ask:

> Has the lot of grassroots women changed qualitatively, are they able to see a concrete difference in their everyday lives, in how they relate within the home, how they engage in the community, how they are perceived and locate themselves in broader society? Has an enabling environment been established through the collective efforts of civil society organisations, government and the private sector to promote the empowerment of women and gender equality? Depending on who you speak to, you could get different responses, since women are not a homogenous group (Taylor, 1997:3).

Despite the fact that there have been some progressive developments within political life in South Africa, many strategic and practical gender needs are yet to be addressed.

D. BACKGROUND TO THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN FACILITATING GENDER SENSITIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

In exploring the terrain of feminist engagement with public bureaucracies, this study will draw on my own experiences in working for the City of Cape Town to set up its Safer Cities Programme as a case study. For this reason, some contextual information on the role of the City in facilitating gender sensitive service delivery and in applying this in the setting up of its safety programme, will be considered.

The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) highlights the following with respect to the participation of women in the decision-making processes of local authorities:

> "Local Government is the sphere of government closest to the people and the one that impacts most on women's lives. It is best placed to analyse and respond to the needs of different women. To date, local government has lacked a coherent approach and the necessary tools to advance gender equality and not much attention has been given to this issue in discussions on national machinery" (SALGA, Gender and Development – A Handbook for Councillors and Officials, 1998, in

South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Office on the Status of Women:33).

The South African Gender Policy states that local government is responsible for the delivery of basic services, including local economic development; environmental protection; electricity; health; housing; library services; licensing; parks and recreation; planning; produce markets; roads; sewage; traffic; transport and water. Gender sensitive policies, procedures and practices are therefore crucial in ensuring that these services are rendered in a manner that is cognisant of women's needs and interests. The role of organisations of civil society in working with local authorities is therefore critical. Clear consultation and communication strategies should be set up to ensure that local government remains relevant and responsive to the needs of women. The institutional machinery should result in an effective gender programme that will significantly enhance progress towards gender equality (South Africa's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality, Office on the Status of Women, 2000). This is the policy context within which local authorities should be working with women on their developmental and service delivery needs. As the case study on the City of Cape Town's initiatives in working with women on their safety needs will show, this has not always translated into practical success stories.

E. THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPING GENDER SENSITIVE SOCIAL CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES

Local government has only recently been given the role of promoting public safety through social crime prevention. In the past, social crime prevention had been national and provincial government competencies. Recent policy shifts, such as the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996), the White Paper on Local Government (1998) and the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) have now accorded local government a role in social crime prevention. Municipalities are currently grappling with the challenge of giving effect to this role. The hypothesis of this study is that the gendered implications of local government service delivery are not properly understood and taken into account. The ways in which the safety needs and issues

of men and women in the city are differentiated is a case in point. This study will therefore engage with and explore how the City gives effect to its political rhetoric of promoting gender equity in service delivery through its public safety initiatives.

Both locally and internationally, the role of cities in crime reduction has only gained impetus in the last few years. In 1994, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development brought together, for the first time, delegates from twenty seven different countries to discuss the theme of "Women and Cities: Housing, Facilities and Urban Environment". In Europe, the publication of the 'European Charter on Women in Cities' in 1995, led to one of the first real attempts to seriously consider women's safety in cities and villages and generated debate on the concepts of "citizenship", "cities" and "public safety". The United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) in 1996 marked an important turning point in locating women's safety within the role of city governance. The City Summit of Habitat II placed great emphasis on women's concerns around their safety in cities, leading to a series of commitments by national governments within the framework of the Habitat Programme (Smaoun, 2000). On the African continent, the municipalities that have set up Safer Cities Programmes[10] have periodically met over the course of the past few years to link up and share information on work related to promoting public safety in their respective cities.

In November 2002, political control of the City of Cape Town shifted from the Democratic Alliance (DA) to a coalition between the New National Party (NNP) and the African National Congress (ANC). This coalition developed a policy framework for developmental and participatory local government that subscribed to a ten-point strategy for the city. Within this, poverty reduction, economic development, employment creation and improving safety and security were accorded priority status. The status of safety and security was therefore elevated; it had not been accorded priority status under the DA-headed city council. The City of Cape Town's vision therefore currently includes a commitment to building a safe and caring city. However, the City's commitment to creating a safe city is located in a context where

[10] UN Habitat sponsored programmes set up in cities to take responsibility for co-ordinating social

the role of South African cities in social crime prevention is a relatively recent one and where there has been much debate on the role of local government in reducing crime in the city. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) makes provision for cities to play a pivotal role in providing a decent quality of life for all communities, to focus on the economic development of the city, to promote spatial integration and to work towards inclusive, sustainable development. The White Paper requires that local authorities develop an Integrated Development Plan (IDP), which is essentially a vision of the desirable quality of life for all communities and concrete plans and budgets for this. Activities related to public safety are meant to form a constituent part of this plan.

Notwithstanding these policy guidelines, the exact responsibilities of local government in promoting public safety and in social crime prevention in particular, have remained vague and dissipated. Louw et al have categorised three key areas within which local government in South Africa has started becoming involved in crime reduction. The first is in metropolitan and municipal police services. The second area where local government is beginning to be involved is in aligning its resources and objectives within a crime prevention framework. Thirdly, some local authorities have begun to initiate targeted crime prevention programmes (Louw et al, 1998). These areas form a broad framework within which individual local authorities have devised their public safety strategies. These strategies differ amongst the respective municipalities. The level of intensity with which municipalities operate within this framework depends on the commitment of individual municipalities and the resources appropriated. Given a national context within which there is a lack of clarity on the exact role of local authorities in promoting public safety, and the differentiated manner in which respective municipalities are giving effect to this role, the gendered implications of this role have remained at the periphery of municipal priorities. I will use the Louw framework (i.e. targeted crime prevention, municipal policing and alignment of resources within a crime prevention framework) to elaborate on the role that local authorities have been playing in promoting public safety.

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crime prevention at city level.

Metropolitan /municipal policing

One of the key responsibilities of local authorities in promoting public safety as defined by the Louw framework is that of metropolitan/ municipal policing. The Cape Town City Police was established on 1 December 2001 in terms of the Provincial Gazette (Number 5786, 2001). In terms of the South African Police Services Amendment Act (Act No 83, 1998), the municipal police service is responsible for crime prevention, the enforcement of by-laws and traffic rule enforcement. Metropolitan/ municipal police structures are not able to investigate crime, their role is merely to provide a policing service in high density urban areas.

The Cape Town City Police Directorate currently comprises the city police officers, the traffic department, the law enforcement unit, the closed circuit television staff and some officials from the former 'rent a cop' scheme.[11] The city police currently number 860 officers, who are allocated to work in one of eight divisions. Currently, only four of these divisions have been populated, namely Mitchells Plain, Nyanga, Manenberg and the city centre/ atlantic seaboard areas. Of these, only Nyanga is fully populated, with 270 officers allocated to it.

In terms of the South African Police Amendment Act, the City Police Chief must develop an annual plan that sets out the priorities and objectives of the police service for the following financial year. In the case of the City of Cape Town, the 2002/2003 plan was considered at a full council meeting in July 2002. The plan contains essentially two key objectives. The first is dealing with all alcohol and substance related offences. The second is the finalisation of previous law enforcement action taken (City of Cape Town, Annual Police Plan 2002/2003). Each functional area within the City Police Directorate contributed their individual functional specific plans to constitute part of the annual plan for the directorate as a whole. The Safer Cities projects constitute part of this plan.

At the time that the annual plan was considered by council, the ANC placed on record a number of concerns. Firstly, it was felt that the plan could not be adopted

[11] The "rent a cop" scheme allowed citizens to make contributions towards financing additional civic

because it could not be accommodated within the proposed council budget. Secondly, it was felt that the lack of integration between the different law enforcement agencies within the City Police Directorate, was a cause for concern. The ANC argued that the city police was focussing largely on traffic offences, thereby duplicating the role of the traffic officials to a large extent, at a great financial expense to the City. The ANC also raised that there appeared to have been a lack of coherent integration between the City Police Service and the SAPS. Lastly, there did not appear to be any proper co-ordination amongst the different spheres of government in dealing with crime prevention.

In a study conducted by Ingrid Palmary in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan area, local government officials were interviewed about their feelings about municipal policing in the metropolitan area. Many voiced that they did not understand the rationale for the new municipal police service. It was felt that cities were under political pressure from other levels of government to develop municipal police services and that the option of local government applying its resources to supplement the work of SAPs had not been sufficiently considered (Palmary, 2002). This alternative would have been more financially expedient, as the creation of a completely new service has proved to be very expensive. This raises the question as to whether the resources allocated to municipal policing could not have been better utilised to deal with social and developmental issues in the city such as poverty and unemployment, housing and the provision of electricity, water and primary health care facilities.

Targeted crime prevention programmes

The second role of local authorities in promoting public safety as defined by the Louw framework, relates to the initiation of targeted crime prevention programmes. Such initiatives are designed very specifically around the need to reduce crime. They are to be distinguished from the mainstreaming of crime reduction into the work of all municipal departments. Initially, most cities grappled with taking on this role as it meant that a municipal department had to take responsibility for this and it was not

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protection services. This scheme was utilised largely by businesses.

always clear as to where this responsibility should be located. In the post 1994 period, the United Nations Habitat Safer Cities Programme negotiated with a few of the better-resourced cities to establish Safer Cities Programmes (SCPs) with seed funding donated by the UN Habitat. Johannesburg, followed by Cape Town and Durban then proceeded to set up SCPs as the structural mechanism through which the municipality would develop and implement targeted crime prevention programmes and play a co-ordinating role in synchronising the municipality's attempts to mainstream crime reduction in all its areas of competency. The concept of a Safer Cities Programme was based on the formation of partnerships between local government, the police, NGOs and community groups.

The City of Cape Town's Safer Cities Programme

Because the case study used for the purposes of this study pertains to the City's work with women on their safety in public spaces, its attempts to set up targeted crime prevention programmes will be explored in some detail. The City's public safety programmes are all located with the Safer Cities Programme (SCP), which was established in 1999. The SCP currently falls within the City Police Directorate, which in turn is located in the Community Services Executive Directorate. It is currently staffed by two project facilitators. Since the ANC/ NP coalition took political control of the City, the work of the SCP was given greater priority and a decision was subsequently taken to employ additional staff.[12] Approximately fifteen projects were identified for implementation in the 2002/ 2003 financial year. At the time of writing, an estimated R 396 000 had been spent on these and an additional R 2 million had been allocated to crime prevention initiatives. I have selected a few of the Safer Cities projects that encapsulate the kind of work that is currently being done.[13] These are as follows:

'Get Real' Gender Violence Conference

[12] This had not yet transpired at the time of writing.

[13] All the information relating to the Safer Cities projects has been extracted from a document entitled "Social Crime Prevention – Summary of Projects", dated 14 May 2003 and from an interview conducted with the City Police Chief in May 2003.

This conference aimed to raise awareness of gender based violence in Mitchells Plain. It further strived to explore strategies, interventions and support and empowerment-related initiatives for victims of such violence.

Children at Risk Awareness Campaign – National Day of Prayer for Missing/ Murdered Children

This initiative comprised an awareness campaign, which aimed to assist and support the families of missing children and to bring to the public's attention information pertinent to children who have gone missing. It further aimed to provide the public with information to prevent 'trauma and crimes being committed against a lost child' (City Police, Social Crime Prevention- Summary of Projects, 14 May 2003). The campaign was conducted over the course of a month and commenced with a day of prayer for the missing children. It also comprised roadshows that aimed at interacting with the public and disseminating information on 'child safety tips' and the 'critical steps to follow if a child is feared to be missing'.

Masifunde Project

The Masifunde Project is essentially a youth empowerment programme aimed at imparting life skills to young people from poverty stricken communities. The project targets youth in the age group 12- 16 years who have been identified by their schools as being a 'worst case scenario' or prone to social delinquency and engaging in criminal activity. The programme is implemented by the Peninsula Association of Youth Clubs on behalf of the City in the form of camps and environmental outings that aim to enhance knowledge about drugs, sexual awareness, anger management, decision making skills, the impact of poverty and gangsterism.

Domestic Violence Training for Primary Health Care and Community Workers

This project is a personal favourite as it is the only one to remain from the time that I was employed to assist in setting up the SCP. Based on the premise that the first point of medical access for impoverished communities is the primary health care facility i.e. the local clinic, the programme aims to equip primary health care and community workers to assist and provider a better, more empathetic service to women who are victims of gender-based violence, focussing on domestic violence in particular. The programme aims to provide health care and community workers with the skills to better understand and respond to women who are victims of gender-based violence. The training also imparts an understanding of the contents of the Domestic Violence Act.

Tafelsig Cultural Week

This week-long youth development project targeted young people in the Tafelsig area. The project aimed to engage young people in activities that would inculcate a good value system and a sense of self-esteem. This was done by offering them dance classes in preparation for a community concert and talent competition.

Silent Witness Project

The Silent Witness Project aimed to involve learners in an interactive, creative initiative designed to enhance their understanding of violence in intimate relationships and raise awareness of the available services and resources in place to assist victims of domestic violence. The project was implemented at seven schools in the Mitchells Plain area with grade nine learners. Learners were encouraged to make 'silent witness' statues to symbolise women who have been killed by their partners. These then became part of an exhibition of similar work.

City Police Christmas Tree Project

The purpose of this project was to 'create an awareness around moral regeneration in our society and the protection of our children against abuse'. The project further aimed to build a sense of trust between the City Police and

communities. Children were afforded an opportunity to participate in a Christmas celebration, based on the premise that committed religious beliefs play an important role in strengthening family values. The opportunity was used to impart information on safety tips around the home and child abuse awareness. Children targeted came from impoverished communities.

Critique of the SCP Projects

The main problem with the projects listed above is that they are not linked to an informed analysis of the causes of crime, the different ways in which crime and violence are manifested and the ways in which this is related to social development in general. This should be the critical first step in designing appropriate crime prevention interventions. A second important step would be to link this knowledge to what is feasible, cost effective and achievable for local government in relation to what other roleplayers such as SAPS and civil society organisations are doing. Thirdly, the projects appear to exist in isolation. There is no linkage to a holistic framework where the different components of a whole strategy are linked like pieces in a puzzle, to constitute a broader picture. The projects do not seem to fit into a long-term vision that is clearly defined so that each project constitutes a stepping-stone towards a predetermined vision for the City. The conceptualisation that informs the design of the projects does not seem to have been constructed around a sound process of developing and building strategic interventions. All the projects are short term in nature, many of them lacking in penetrative depth and not much thought has been put into clearly defining the related objectives, developing appropriate methodologies to accomplish these and forecasting the anticipated impact of these methodologies. The projects are also not grounded in a well thought-out evaluation mechanism that can serve to assess impact and inform the adaptation of project methodologies.

Aligning resources and objectives in crime prevention framework

The Louw framework defines the third key role of local government in crime reduction as being the alignment of the resources of the municipality as a whole within a crime prevention framework. There are two key issues to consider here. The first is the alignment of the city's resources within an overall internal vision and plan for

reducing crime and the second (not articulated in the Louw framework) is the strategic alignment of resources within the broader context of what other stakeholders in the city are doing to combat crime.

In relation to the alignment of resources within an overarching internal plan, local government has the capacity to make a significant contribution to the reduction of crime if the safety-related activities of the various municipal departments are co-ordinated and form part of an organisational vision. An inter-departmental approach that locates and synergises the work, for example, of municipal departments such as planning, local economic development, community services, municipal policing, safer cities programmes, housing, social work services, health, sports and recreation, within a clearly defined plan for crime reduction, is bound to have some impact on reducing levels of crime in the long term. For crime reduction strategies to be effective, it is imperative that they are located within a multi-disciplinary approach where the roles of each of the stakeholders are very clearly defined. Multi-agency approaches to crime reduction have been reputed to impact significantly on crime. In France, for example, it is estimated that a multi-agency approach at municipal level reduced crime by 15% in some areas (Louw, et al, 1998).

The City of Town experimented with this approach at the inception of the Safer Cities Programme when a safer cities task team that comprised senior managers of all the different departments, was established. This task team was meant to meet periodically to ensure that safety in the city was approached in an integrated manner and that the work of the various line departments synchronised with each other. In my experience, the task team did not, unfortunately, succeed in attaining this goal. The main reason for this is that the meetings of the task team were used as a space to report on the isolated initiatives of the various departments, as opposed to planning in a more integrated manner. As time went by, managers tended to delegate officials who did not have any decision-making capacity to attend the meetings. The work of the municipality in creating a safer city therefore remained compartmentalised and at the discretion of each departmental manager. This experience is similar to the conclusions of another study where it has been argued

that crime prevention both in South Africa and elsewhere is often considered to be an add-on to the line function local government activities and that Safer Cities Programmes are politically attractive and run the danger of being nothing more than window dressing (Louw et al, 1998).

The second issue to be considered in allocating resources to crime reduction, which is not identified in the Louw framework, relates to sketching a well-researched picture of what other stakeholders working in the city are doing. This would include stakeholders at provincial and national government level, SAPs and the work of NGOs and community based organisations. It would further entail the collation of all the related research initiatives that have been carried out on crime and violence in the city. This knowledge should then be used to develop a sound problem analysis that prevents the duplication of interventions and ensures that resources are used effectively. This knowledge should be used to inform the development of partnerships between local government and related organisations in civil society. The study conducted by Ingrid Palmary found that there was little knowledge amongst officials working for the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Council about organisations engaged in crime reduction in the metropolitan area (Palmary, 2000). This is a serious indictment on local government as it has critical repercussions for the way in which public resources are utilised.

The importance of linking crime prevention within a social development context

Having worked through the Louw framework, the role of local authorities in linking crime prevention with social development will now be touched on. This is important because the role of local government in promoting public safety needs to be anchored within the broader context of its role in social development. Social crime prevention programmes are meant to be pivotal to and integrated into the developmental initiatives of all local government directorates and departments. The White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) defines social crime prevention as 'anything that (strives to) reduce the social, economic and environmental factors conducive to particular types of crime'. This means that departments such as

community services, health, social work services, planning and economic development, aids centres, housing, cleansing, development facilitation units, parks and recreation should all play a role in mainstreaming social crime prevention into their social development work. Palmary, however, points out that on the whole, social crime prevention has not been well conceptualised or integrated into the development activities of cities in South Africa. At times, the crime reduction potential of the functions of certain municipal departments is not even acknowledged (Palmary, 2002).

Vetten notes that, on the whole, the governmental response to dealing with violence against women to date has been to enact new laws, the training of law enforcement agents, developing victims' charters, imposing stiffer sentences and opposing bail applications. She points out, however, that violence cannot just be counselled, guidelined, policed or legislated out of existence (Vetten, 2000). This critique has relevance for local government's role in preventing and reducing gender-based crime and highlights the need for dealing with the societal causes for crime and linking crime reduction to its broader social context. This has not been a popular approach to crime prevention and reduction.

In a victim survey conducted by the Institute for Security Studies in 1998, questions were posed to participants on how they thought that crime could be more effectively dealt with. The study showed that participants felt that an effective criminal justice system, combined with effective law enforcement were the answers to the problem. Harsher penalties (such as the reintroducing the death penalty) and better policing were cited as ways of reducing crime. Only 11% of participants felt that social development had a role to play in crime reduction (Louw et al, 1998). Similarly, in the study done in the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Area, it emerged that crime prevention is conceptualised as meaning high visibility police patrols and responses to reports of crime and public complaints (Palmary, 2002). Social crime prevention generally does not factor into this conceptualisation. This is because crime prevention and reduction and violence against women in particular, have not been conceptualised as requiring solutions that transform social relations, the gendered

social order and relations between citizen and state. The problem remains characterised as a problem of 'law and order' (Vetten, 2000). The City of Cape Town's Police Chief also acknowledges this problem. In a paper presented at a conference in 2003, he argued that despite the National Crime Prevention Strategy and the White Paper on Safety and Security, crime prevention initiatives have met with limited success throughout the country and more specifically, in the City of Cape Town. This can largely be attributed to the fact that much of the policing agency's attention has been focussed on reactive as well as situational crime prevention. He argues that the attraction of criminal justice and situational interventions such as police crackdowns, building new prisons and installing CCTV cameras in public places, lies in the fact that they produce visible results. However, such interventions often serve merely to 'stem the tide of crime and force it to gush out elsewhere', commonly referred to as displacement phenomenon in policing circles (Sangster, paper delivered at the 'Security Today Conference', March 2003).

It is imperative that the broader social context within which crime is located is factored into our conceptualisation and understanding of urban crime. This would entail locating the issue within this country's social, cultural, political and economic history, exploring the effects of colonialisation and systemic racial discrimination and the ways in which power dynamics such as gender, race and class operate and manifest themselves in society. The apartheid history of South African cities is a critical factor in understanding and dealing with urban crime. A victimisation study conducted by the Greater Johannesburg Municipality, for example has revealed that the victims of crime are predominantly black (http://www.unchs.org). This can partially be attributed to the economic vulnerability of black people in South Africa. The effects of many years of systemic racial discrimination, has resulted in a socio-economic status, where the gap between the rich and poor is vast. South Africa is reputed to have one of the highest gini coefficients in the world.[14] The impact of widespread poverty is a critical factor, which should be inextricably linked to strategies to combat crime and insecurity. This is partly because it has been shown that crime is considerably higher in poorer parts of the world and that it is particularly

[14] The gini coefficient is used to measure the gaps in the economic status between the rich and poor

high in countries undergoing transition from authoritarian rule to democracy where there is pronounced economic inequality (Louw et al, 1998). The apartheid legacy has imprinted on the South African reality so that the majority of the poor is black. The impact of HIV/ Aids on the economy has been significant. Because women constitute the majority of the poor, they are rendered particularly vulnerable to crime. The White Paper on Local Government (1998) makes provision for cities to exercise their powers and functions in such a way that they have the maximum effect on the social development of communities, particularly in meeting the needs of the poor and on the growth of the local economy. The White Paper on Safety and Security (1998) also defines social crime prevention as including a focus on reducing the economic factors that are conducive to the proliferation of criminal activity. The links between crime and local economic stability and poverty reduction therefore dictate that local authorities embed their crime reduction initiatives within a broader social context, despite the lack of popularity in this approach.

An example of how the apartheid legacy has impacted upon levels of crime and violence is illustrated in an argument made by Lisa Vetten. She holds that coupled with the South African experience of forced removals, states of emergency, the creation of artificial 'homelands', the effects of urbanisation, the codification of customary law and modernisation, there have been many challenges to men's traditional authority and to patriarchy in general. The apartheid era of militarisation and the usage of violent repression and armed reaction have resulted in entire generations of 'lost' and violent men, where violence is seen as a legitimate means of conflict resolution. Vetten argues that the transition to democratic governance has not therefore automatically resulted in the evaporation of this acquired mode of resolving conflict. This violence, in the context of democratic governance, has not dissipated but can be seen as having been displaced and having to find new outlets and ways of manifesting itself (Vetten, 2000).

I have attempted to demonstrate that there is a strong and significant link between urban crime reduction and the broader social context within which it is located. Even though, at a policy level, the political will to take this link seriously clearly exists, it is

often not properly understood at an administrative level and is consequently ignored to a large extent. Even where local authorities have articulated a commitment to locating the promotion of public safety within its social context, in practice, the attempts to do so are dissipated and compartmentalised, lacking in a cohesive strategy in which the different municipal departments work together in a co-ordinated manner. Often it seems that the political pressure to be seen to be doing something results in projects and initiatives that are not properly conceptualised and are not linked to an informed problem analysis and a holistic strategy at an organisational level. This is exacerbated by the fact that the link between crime prevention and its broader social context is understood in superficial terms at best. This lacunae at a conceptual level and the general lack of skills of municipal staff in undertaking informed needs assessments and problem analyses, has negatively affected the designing of co-ordinated crime reduction initiatives. Given that all of this is taking place in an organisational context where many local authorities are still grappling to define their role, it is not surprising that local authorities have had a limited impact on reducing and preventing urban crime.

Within this context, addressing the particular needs of women in relation to their experiences of crime and violence, has hardly even been factored into this area of the City's work and therefore seemed worth pursuing.

F. THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES PLAYING A ROLE IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

My experiences in trying to define a role for the City of Cape Town in addressing violence against women as a social issue, were located in a situation where social crime prevention has only recently become a local government area of competency and where the gendered implications of this area of work have not received priority attention.

The definition of gender-based violence used for the purposes of this study is the one used by Tanzer et al (2000). This comprises "any acts of abuse, intended or unintended, of verbal, emotional, psychological, sexual or physical form which results

in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or deprivation of liberty". This includes but is not limited to:

- Physical, sexual and psychological violence in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children, dowry-related violence, marital rape, female circumcision and femicide.
- Physical, sexual and psychological violence outside the family, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in educational institutions, witch burning, trafficking in women, forced prostitution, jack-rolling, certain types of pornography and femicide.
- Any form of violence against women perpetrated or condoned by the state.

Gender-based violence perpetrated against women is so widespread that it constitutes a global epidemic in its own right and cuts across geographic, race, class and cultural boundaries. The Global Report on Women's Rights argues that domestic violence is one of the leading causes of injury amongst women in almost every country in the world and is typically ignored by the state or only erratically punished.[15] It has been argued that violence against women has become so pervasive and systemic that it has become entrenched within many societies and is generally tolerated by institutions of the state. Fedler and Tanzer (2000) argue that the failure of many states to repeal oppressive laws, the non-enforcement of constitutional rights, and the role played by abusive government officials in condoning the levels of violence experienced by women, all contribute to the creation of an enabling environment within which violence against women thrives. Levinson suggests that there are four factors that, based on the extent to which they exist in conjunction with each other, determine the prevalence of violence in a society. These factors are the economic inequality between men and women, the level to which violence is used as a conflict-resolving mechanism, male authority and control of decision making and restrictions on women's ability to leave the home (1989, quoted in Bunch et al 1998).

[15] Sourced from Mail and Guardian, September 1995: R Wright, "Beijing '95: Strike the women...."

In South Africa, as a consequence of systemic power imbalances that have favoured the economic enrichment of men, women have come to constitute the majority of the poor. A patriarchal culture which has led to the systematic oppression of women in many practical ways i.e. ostracism from political, social and economic power, has also tended to exacerbate gender-based violence. Violence against women in South Africa must therefore be located within its broader social, cultural and political context. It must be looked at, for example, in the framework of the effects of colonialisation and apartheid and the social impact of these ideologies. South Africa is a particularly violent country where men often resort to violence as a conflict resolution strategy. The statistics for femicide in the country are indicative of this. A recent study conducted by the Medical Research Council and Centre for Violence and Reconciliation, estimates that a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six hours in South Africa. This study collected data on female homicides. Data was collected from a sample of twenty-five mortuaries and cases were followed up via their police case number to the investigating officer and docket. The findings estimate that approximately nine out of every 100 000 women are victims of femicide. This amounts to approximately four women being killed every day by an intimate partner. The findings of the study are alarming, particularly in a global context where this is reputed to be the highest femicide rate ever reported in research anywhere in the world (Mathews et al, 2004).

Because the state and government structures place considerable emphasis on the use of quantitative information to inform policy priorities and how resources are appropriated, it is worth reflecting on the use of statistics as a tool for determining the policy emphasis placed on violence against women as a social problem. In order to determine the extent of its policy interventions, the state estimates the levels of violence perpetrated against women by analysing available statistics. This, however, is fraught with attendant problems. The extent of violence against women is currently based largely on police statistics, victim surveys and the estimates of NGOs working in the field. The South African Police Services (SAPS) collates statistics on the number of rape cases reported nationally and some information exists on women who are murdered by their partners. Information in this regard is not very reliable

given that SAPS does not have a legacy of capturing this information in disciplined ways.[16] It is estimated that an overwhelming majority of women who are victims of violent crime do not report cases of violence perpetrated against them, as they are often not comfortable with discussing such violations and do not feel that there is an enabling environment within which to do so. This, coupled with the fact that when domestic violence and rape are reported, perpetrators frequently go unpunished, serves as a disincentive for reporting. In South Africa, only 9% of rape cases reported to the police in 1998 resulted in convictions (SAPS Crime Information Analysis Centre, 1998).

It is important to note that no statistics are kept on incidents of domestic violence. SAPS does not collate these statistics as domestic violence is categorised as a crime of 'assault'. As a result, it is virtually impossible to collate reliable statistical information pertaining to violence against women in the domestic arena and to do anything other than speculate about these levels of violence. Having said this, it can be argued with some certainty, that rape in South Africa is one of the few crimes that has increased in occurrence over the past few years. This increase is estimated at an average of 7% per year between 1994 and 1997. When South African crime ratios were compared with those of eighty-nine Interpol members using 1996 statistics, South Africa was shown to have the highest ratio of reported rape cases per 100 000 people in the world (SAPS Quarterly Report 2/96). The point of emphasis is that even though available statistics are inaccurate, there has been an increase in violent crimes committed against women and that when reported rape statistics are compared with other countries across the globe, South Africa emerges as one of the most violent societies for women to reside in.17 It is also important to point out that the repercussions of rape and violent crime against women are multifold. One of these is that it does not only affect the women concerned in very significant ways, but

[16] A case in point is when a man tried to break into my home after watching me in my back garden. After being scared off, he escaped and the police tried to persuade me to not lay a charge, given that they saw no point in so doing. If this is the practice, then there are clearly no reliable statistics for attempted burglaries, rapes and the like.

[17] Oganisations doing gender-related work recently raised concern with President Mbeki's statement that rape statistics are inaccurate. The concern was based on the fact that rape statistics are likely to be too low, given the narrow definition of rape. It is also felt that the issue should not be reduced to the accuracy of numbers, as this serves to detract from the fact that rape is a human rights issue.

all women who read and hear about such violence because the fear associated with becoming a victim of gender-based violent crime is internalised and affects the way in which many women live their lives. Fedler et al (2000) therefore argue that women are not only governed by violence, but by the constant threat of violence and will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid violence, which often results in a limiting of life choices. Another potential consequence of rape is HIV infection. This is particularly concerning in a context where South Africa has one of the fastest growing rates of HIV infection in the world.

G. APPROACHES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

The safety audit sought to address violence against women perpetrated in the public arena. The reason for this is that the safety audit was a project of the City of Cape Town. The context within which the implementation of the project took place was one where the City was grappling to define its role in relation to social crime prevention as a newly acquired area of competence. The gendered implications of this role was therefore not a strategic priority and in order to get the City to support an initiative that explored women's safety, it became necessary to link it directly to areas of local government competency that were not subject to dispute. The angle in on the project was therefore urban design and planning, given that this is undisputedly a local government area of responsibility. As a feminist working within this context, I opted to make inroads into safety initiatives that focused on women by linking non-contested areas of responsibility of the municipality defined as part of its 'core business', to the promotion of women's safety. By so doing, I hoped to do two things. The first was to begin to conscientise people internally to the gendered implications of the work of the Safer Cities Programme and the second was to secure resources for initiatives that would focus on enhancing women's safety. The rationale for the safety audit was therefore linked to changing the city's physical environment in order to make it safer for women. This focus included paying attention to the need to make public spaces such as streets, parks and car parks safer and more accessible, the need to promote women's safety on public transport networks, the provision of adequate street lighting and an analysis of land use patterns and the maintenance of public facilities from women's perspectives.

Having noted that the approach of the safety audit involved focusing on urban design and planning from a local government perspective, it needs to be said that no one approach adopted by agencies of government or civil society can adequately address violence against women. This is because all the accumulated evidence indicates that it is a complex issue that requires multi-faceted approaches that encompass progressive legislation and policies, public awareness and education initiatives, related research, community-based initiatives, appropriate public sector planning and service delivery. Furthermore feminist analyses of violence against women argue that intervention initiatives should be centred on prevention strategies. Traditionally, societal approaches have been reactive, focusing on responding to such violence. Because violence does not constitute an isolated event but rather affects the entire context of women's lives, there is a great need to prioritise proactive strategies. In this way, violence against women would be dealt with at its root. It is important that the social context within which violence is allowed to thrive is examined. Questions therefore need to be asked about the normative masculinities and femininities constructed by society that create an enabling environment for violence against women to thrive. By so doing, violence against women is linked to patriarchy and social constructions of the power dynamics between women and men. Ultimately, only an approach that strives to deal with violence against women at its roots within its broader social, cultural and historical contexts is likely to have long-term benefits.

The responsibility for addressing violence against women must also be shifted from being an issue that is taken on by women, to an issue that is owned and taken up by the state and by men. Located within a human rights framework, addressing violence against women should not be left to the benevolence of the state, but should be seen as being integral to giving substance to basic human rights. Given that addressing violence against women is intricately related to processes of social change, which are essentially long-term in nature, the challenge is to develop longer-term strategies that deal with the issue at its core and to measure shifts in social change over periods of time.

Within this context, the approach of the safety audit's focus on urban design and planning, has limitations as an approach in isolation. However, were it to be located within a broader framework of various other multi-faceted initiatives to address violence against women more holistically, then it would have the potential to be a useful tool for creating urban spaces which are sensitive to women's needs and which can enhance their safety and their feelings of security in the urban environment. The survey conducted by Bollen et al (1999) with women who have survived incidents of violence, shows that most women (79%) felt unsafe in public areas, compared with 21% who felt unsafe in 'private areas'. Louw et al (1998) similarly argue that the proportion of rapes committed by strangers in public areas in Johannesburg is significantly large. They argue that the circumstances in which these incidents occur, present opportunities for preventative action by local authorities. This study showed that almost one quarter of the rapes committed occurred on open ground and most related to commuting patterns and evening social activities. This is not to suggest that the emphasis of intervention strategies should not be with preventative work, but to argue that in the broader framework of intervention strategies, urban design and planning that strives to deal with women's feelings of insecurity and which aims to reduce the potential for rape to occur in public spaces, does have a contribution to make within the broader picture of intervention strategies. This argument must not, however, detract from the fact that violence against women should be seen more holistically where domestic violence is a critical social problem that local authorities also have a social responsibility to combat. It should also not detract from the fact that tinkering with the built environment can only ever serve as a deterrent to violence perpetrated in the public arena and will never serve to eradicate violence against women, which involves long term conceptual and attitudinal shifts in society.

H. THE GENDERED NATURE OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Robinson (1992) argues that whilst the racial implications of South Africa's cities are relatively well known, the considerations of the gendered nature of urban development and the relationships between patriarchal power and gendered spatial divisions between spheres of reproduction and production are, to a large extent, absent. For example, the South African Cities Network reports that a number of

South African cities have done surveys of their residents' subjective sense of their quality of life. These reflect on the perceived quality of life of different race groups over the past decade (State of the Cities Report, 2004). No mention is, however, made of women's subjective experience of the city and its impact on their quality of life. This neglect of women's experiences of urban development has long been a feature of urban design and planning.

Gwagwa and Todes (1994) argue that women's reproductive tasks are directly affected by the adequacy of urban infrastructure and urban development initiatives. South African cities have generally not been developed in ways that are sensitive to women's multiple roles. Land use patterns that divide urban spaces into residential, commercial and industrial areas tend to reflect patriarchal power relations and the gendered nature of urban space. Women generally juggle productive, reproductive and community-related responsibilities. Poor infrastructure and a lack of social facilities compound difficulties in combining women's work. Given the fact that they face the constant threat of violence, a planning practice that separates home, work, services and commercial areas exacerbates women's workload and increases their exposure to the potential of violence as it means that women are forced to travel longer distances in an unsafe urban environment. Studies18 show that a close home-work relationship allows women to negotiate their various activities more easily and a mixed land-use development is therefore more appropriate to women's needs. Locally, studies in Mitchells Plain and Khayelitsha show the stresses associated with the extended split between home and work. Housework done on top of long home-work journeys, shopping and fetching children, serve to intensify women's workload and exacerbate their exposure to potentially violent circumstances (Report produced by the Foundation for Contemporary Research "Women, Safety and Local Government", 1993). Spatial analysis in the urban context therefore reflects the inequality inherent in South African society. Increasing numbers of residents are taking up occupancy in informal settlements on the margins of cities, far from work opportunities. The statistics for 2001 show that 36.8% of South African City Network city residents travel to work/school on foot. Twenty-five percent make use of buses/

[18] Such as Gwagwa and Todes (1994), "Women, Safety and Local Government " (Foundation for

mini-bus taxis. This data has not been disaggregated by gender, but a large proportion of this is probably women. Traditional forms of zoning on which city planning is based have therefore been severely critiqued from a gender perspective.

I. RESEARCH QUESTION

The research question which this study seeks to address is twofold: To what extent do the public participation methodologies pursued by public bureaucracies provide a meaningful space for women to both articulate their voices and be heard? Secondly, should feminists locate themselves on the inside of state structures to facilitate the enhanced participation of women in civil society in bureaucratic decision-making processes?

J. OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for this project is discussed in further detail in Chapter Three. An overview of the methodology is presented here. Its two main components are an exploration of the culture and ethos of the City that informs policy-making and a retrospective analysis of a particular project that strived to include women integrally in its planning processes.

Exploring the institutional culture and ethos that informs policy-making

Because I wanted to understand something about the culture and ethos of the broader organisation and the value it accorded to addressing women's service delivery needs and working with women in this process, I conducted interviews with a sample of local government councillors. One of my primary interests here related to how politicians consider gender as an analytic category in their planning processes and how women are included in planning processes. The purpose of this was to elicit information on the extent to which councillors incorporated gender sensitive planning into the organisation's mainstream planning processes and to explore the tensions which appear to exist between political rhetoric relating to giving to furthering gender equity and adequate understandings of how to effect this in practice. A qualitative process, that entailed the use of semi-structured interviews to get participants to

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Contemporary Research, 1993), Mc Carthy (1992)

share their experiences in the planning process, and how women's service delivery needs are taken into account, was used.

Tracking and analysis of a particular project

This study draws on a retrospective analysis of attempts to work with women on a particular project in a public bureaucracy. In the period, 1998-2000, I was employed to kickstart a number of social development projects/ programmes that aimed to promote safety at community level. No mandate was given to differentiate between the safety needs of men and women. I will draw upon my experiences on the safety audit project for the SCP as a case study for reflecting on the prevailing institutional practices, with a view to developing better strategies for the City to plan and work with women in communities in addressing their service delivery needs.

This project taught me invaluable lessons about working with women and including them in planning processes to meet their developmental needs. The safety audit project was located in the City's Safer Cities Programme and entailed the development of participatory processes for planning and working with women so as to address their service delivery needs with respect to making their community safer for them.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to explore the theoretical and conceptual issues that underpin this study. This will be done by broadly discussing the intellectual interests at its core. One of the reasons for embarking on this project included an intellectual interest in two key areas. The literature review will explore these and the ways in which they intersect with each other.

One of my interests concerns the ongoing debate on whether or not feminists should be located on the inside of state structures and on the inside of public bureaucracies in particular. It is something that I still spend much energy thinking about in my current role as a researcher to the South African Parliament's Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life and Status of Women and the Select Committee on Labour and Public Enterprises. This study therefore attempts to make a contribution to the broader debate in feminist circles as to whether or not feminist energies located on the inside of public bureaucracies are strategically located or whether they end up being dissipated as a consequence of the fact that bureaucracies were not designed to accommodate liberatory agendas.

Secondly and following on from this, this work concerns itself with the notion of public participation, specifically the participation of women in the decision-making processes of public bureaucracies. Noam Chomsky (2003) argues that the arena for public participation has been greatly diminished and that public participation processes have been reduced to strategies to engineer the consent of the public when critical decisions need to be taken. He argues that states are therefore engaged in a massive public relations industry, designed to manipulate people into thinking what has already been predetermined. I am interested in the extent to which this is true in the South African context. I am further interested in how such participation is accommodated in public sector planning processes, the structural mechanisms for giving effect to this, particularly as it relates to the participation of women, and whether the location of feminists on the inside of public bureaucracies

facilitates the increased participation of women on the outside. The concept of women's voices, how they are heard, how they are not heard and how women's voices are silenced in the planning processes of public bureaucracies, despite their claims of being "participatory" and "consultative" are also pivotal to this study. [19] This project also focuses on the conditions under which women have a voice to articulate and pursue their developmental needs and interests, and how bureaucracies can capacitate themselves to listen and respond to women's needs. Much of the work in this genre has tended to focus on the conditions within which women's voices can be heard and how to create enabling environments for women's voices to be heard. Not much conceptual work has gone into thinking about what happens once women have voiced their concerns, or to the role of bureaucrats and public representatives in hearing, discussing, collating, analysing and acting upon what they have heard, i.e. the process of *hearing and taking action* as a whole. In my experience, processes that deal with discussing and analysing issues raised as a consequence of participatory processes are often unstructured and haphazard and leave much to be desired. Politicians and public officials often go through the motions of holding public consultation sessions at great financial expense, but the manner in which they discuss and analyse what transpires at these sessions is largely unstructured and directionless. At times, there are processes to elicit women's voices, but this does then not necessarily mean that women's voices are heard and acted upon.

This chapter is structured as follows:

- It starts by exploring ways of conceptualising the state and its relationship with civil society and the manner in which the state and civil society tend to engage with each other. The purpose of this is to sketch the political terrain within which women participate in political decision-making processes. This is followed by a reflection on the South African experience in terms of the relationship between the state and civil society and the spaces that are created for the participation of women in decision-making processes.

[19] The usage of the term 'women's voices' is not intended to create the impression that women speak with one, unified voice. The diversity amongst women and the fact that there are multiple 'women's voices' is acknowledged.

- The concept "bureaucracy" is then discussed in some detail, as the key structural mechanism of institutions of the state. The Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy is discussed because this model still permeates modern conceptualisations of how bureaucracies should function. The feminist response to bureaucracy is then discussed in relation to the attendant problems associated with bureaucratisation and the ways in which this then facilitates/impedes the participation of women in political decision-making processes.

- This is followed by an examination of some of the literature on whether or not feminists should locate themselves on the inside of bureaucracies. This is explored in relation to whether or not the presence of feminists on the inside of bureaucracies facilitates the participation of women in civil society in political decision-making processes.

B. CONCEPTUALISING THE STATE

The recent past has seen the emergence of invigorating theoretical work in the field of women, politics and the state, produced by African scholars. Studies of women and their relationship to the state include both women's access to power in the state and women's role in governance, policy- making and political participation. The work of Tamale (2003), Lazreg (2004), Mama (2000) and Hassim and Gouws (2003), for example, all grapple with the implications of state policy for women in a number of countries. Initially, scholarship on women and the state tended to focus on the impact of the colonial and post-colonial state on women's lives. Studies of women's participation in the crafting of public policy and in governance issues, emerged later. Since the mid 1990s, there has been a significant increase in studies of women and statecraft, which has come to constitute a growing field in the last 5 years or so (Gouws, 2004). The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in September 1995, culminated with the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Beijing Platform for Action includes agreements aimed at enhancing the participation of women in power and decision-making and the creation

of institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women. Both these critical areas of concern relate directly to women's relationship with the state. Yet, Tsikata (1997) has shown that state action is often both gender blind and gender biased and that relying solely on the state to outlaw gender discrimination is fraught with attendant problems. She outlines the dilemma that faces feminists in that the state is an inherently patriarchal institution and yet women appeal to it and depend on it for resolving gender inequity.

The role of the state, simplistically put, is to govern, make laws and deliver services in the interest of the collective well-being. Public administration theory in the 1960s conceptualised the role of the state in terms of acting in the collective interest through processes of assimilating and acting upon inputs into the political system made by civil society. David Easton's systems theory (1965), for example, provides a conceptual framework of the political system whereby the development of public policy is seen as process of receiving policy inputs from the 'environment', mediated through input channels such as the media, political parties and interest groups in civil society. These demands on the political system are then, through a process of negotiation, transformed into political outputs that are manifested in the form of policy. Systems theory is therefore used to describe conceptual frameworks and methodologies for understanding how the political system responds to changes in the environment. It views political outputs, which are the decisions and actions of state authorities, as a logical consequence to processed inputs. This model is essentially structuralist in its outlook and does not adequately convey the complexities of the policy process, particularly as it relates to how power dynamics operates within this system. It does, however, provide a departure point for conceptualising the role of civil society in the political system. This role is essentially to define and articulate political interests and to place pressure on the political system so as to effect social change. This means that at times it is expedient for different members of civil society to work in collaboration with the state when appropriate and at other times, an adversarial position needs to be assumed. The nature of the relationship is context dependent and depends on which strategy is likely to be most effective in achieving the agenda at hand.

In considering the role of the state, it is necessary to explore the concepts of "citizenship" and "civil society" and their relationship to the state. These terms have become somewhat elusive in that they are contested terms. They are socially constructed and their meanings are politically contingent on the meanings ascribed by a particular society at a given point in time. Citizenship has traditionally been defined in terms of three categories of rights, namely, civil rights, political rights and social rights (Marshall, 1965). One of the key problems associated with traditional definitions of citizenship is that they are essentially universalist in nature and are based on the assumption that when all members of a society have formal equality rights, they are in fact equal. It is, however, important to consider how the social and economic conditions of people impact upon the ability to utilise civil rights and opportunities such as participating in democratic processes. It is therefore necessary to take cognisance of the asymmetrical power relations that exist between people in terms of sex, race, class, geographical location and the like and the ways in which this asymmetry impacts upon the ability to exert political power. Social inclusion and participation in democratic institutions is therefore influenced by socio-economic status. Those who are unable to meet their basic human needs, such as access to food, water, shelter and primary health care, are caught up in a daily battle for survival. This effectively marginalises them from political, social and economic power. This, in turn, serves to perpetuate their disadvantaged socio-economic status, because they are not able to exert the political influence necessary to improve their quality of life (Liebenberg, 1999). This is particularly relevant in the South African context where women constitute the majority of the poor and their participation in public life is impacted upon by their socio-economic positions.

In most conceptualisations of the role of the state in relation to civil society, the state has been associated with wielding substantive social and political power primarily because of the vast amount of resources it controls. Some theorists, however, caution against simplified theories of power residing with the state. Foucault (1980), for example, writes within a context where the state was beginning to be seen as not

possessing power, but as constructing a range of relations which position people in ways that make the political system work. For him, power is omnipresent and is produced in every social relationship and exercised rather than possessed by individuals and groups:

> Overvaluing the problem of the state is one which is paradoxical because apparently reductionist: it is a form of analysis that consists in reducing the state to a certain number of functions, such as the development of productive forces of the reproduction of relations of production, and yet this reductionist vision of the relative importance of the state's role nevertheless invariably renders it absolutely essential as a target needing to be attacked and a privileged position needing to be occupied. But the state, no more probably than at any time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor to speak frankly, this importance: maybe after all, the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicised abstraction, whose importance is a lot more limited than any of us think (Foucault in Mills, 2003: 48).

Foucault points out that some theorists attach a solidity, permanence and importance to the state that is disproportionate to what exists in temporal reality. Power permeates all relationships in society and should be conceptualised as something that is performed as opposed to something that is possessed. This enables an analysis of the ordinary ways in which power is enacted and contested and in which individuals are active agents and not just passive recipients in relation to it. Power must therefore be conceptualised as "....something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain.....individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application".

Many feminists have cautioned against reductionist theories of the state. Watson and Pringle (1990), for example, argue that the tendency in many previous writings is to pose the state as a unitary, monolithic and intentional actor, which acts according to a fixed set of interests. They argue that it is instead more useful to avoid

conceptualising the state as an institution, but to rather view it as an arena and a collection of practices, which are historically produced and not structurally 'given'. Mies (1996) also cautions against drawing over-simplistic generalisations about the state always operating from a position of patriarchy and only serving men's interests. She argues that a feminist analysis of the state will run into the same difficulties as Marxist functionalists if gender is substituted for class and it is argued that the state is a general patriarch defending male interests. This portrayal presents the state as a homogenous, passive tool that serves a monolithic larger interest. This serves to underestimate the complexity of the state and the fact that it comprises many different organisations with conflicting interests that offer different prospects for feminist incursions. Mies argues further that such reductionist arguments serve to obscure the histories of women's struggles and are incapable of explaining genuine victories achieved in furthering women's interests. The state and masculine domination do not therefore have a single source of power and the state's control of its subjects is "unsystematic, multi-dimensional and generally sub-conscious" (Gouws, 2004). Following a similar train of thought, Naidoo (2003) cautions against simplistic theories that associate the state with being "intrinsically bad" and civil society with being "intrinsically good". Civil society has also been notorious for perpetuating practices that discriminate against women and at times, women have needed to turn to the state to challenge gender discrimination in civil society (Tsikata, 2000). This means that women's organisations need to negotiate their way through complex and shifting allegiances between the two sets of institutions.

Whilst acknowledging that the state is not a unitary, monolithic entity with a monopoly on social power, for the purposes of this study, the state will be conceptualised as a bureaucratic institution and the debate as to whether feminists can be located in such an environment is located in this context. The state is seen as wielding a significant amount of social power because of the resources it has at its disposal, because it holds the key to economic and social development and because it has the ability to modify the behaviour of its citizens. Throughout history, it has also played a critical role in maintaining and reinforcing the existing power dynamics in social relations. Hassim (2000) offers a useful departure point for thinking about women's relationship

with the state. She argues that given women's contradictory experiences of the state as both benevolent and regulating, feminists may need to consider the post-structural notion of the dispersal of power. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, drawing from post structural analyses of the state, the state is conceptualised in complex terms as having multiple identities and values, which at times come into conflict with each other. The state also comprises different structural entities or a series of different arenas, each of which have their own identities and values and are made up of individuals who contribute to the collective identity and value system. In each of these arenas, political interests are formed. Watson (1990) sees the state as having a 'plurality of discursive forms', which is a useful departure point for conceptualising the complex identity of the state. The state can therefore be conceptualised as a site of power that regulates discourse where unequal distributions of discursive power come into play. Policy outcomes are dependent upon the interests that are constituted within the state. If groups are to share in policy outcomes, then their interests need to be articulated and maintained within the state (Gouws, 2004).

Within this context of conceptualising the state as a site of power that regulates policy discourse, the state becomes an important arena within which feminists have to engage. Lister (1997) provides a useful departure point for conceptualising the relationship between the state and civil society. She distinguishes between citizenship as status and citizenship as agency. Citizenship as status refers to the notion of citizens as bearers of rights, whilst agency refers to active participation in civil society, often through grassroots activity. Lister's conceptualisation of citizenship therefore includes a focus on the relationship between the rights pertaining to citizenship and participation in the development of public policy. It is this conceptualisation of citizenship that this study seeks to engage with, namely the role of women as citizens who actively participate in public policy processes and engage with the state, and the ways in which they seek to impact upon policy outcomes through community politics and grassroots activity.

In the South African context, the post 1994 period has seen the integration of many of the women who were instrumental in fighting the apartheid regime into key political

and bureaucratic positions. Many of these women were instrumental in advocating for gender equity, in establishing the Women's National Coalition[20], in framing the Women's Charter for Effective Equality and in designing and campaigning for the structural means to give effect to the eradication of gender inequity such as the establishment of the national gender machinery. Many of them have consistently espoused the political will to create spaces for women in civil society to engage with the state and machineries of governance. The national gender machinery (the Commission for Gender Equality, the Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women, the Office on the Status of Women) and the Gender Focal Points is a space where many state feminists have located themselves. Gouws (2004) argues that the notion of national machinery has become an important site for women's political intervention in Africa. Yet, positioned between the state bureaucracy and civil society, the national machinery offers extremely slippery terrain for progressive women's movements in Africa. It is therefore not surprising that notwithstanding the increased numbers of feminists working for the state, something has gone awry in both according women the space to articulate their needs and interests in the public arena and in addressing their service delivery-related needs. Notwithstanding the existence of the national machinery, several studies of women's politics in South Africa, such as Watson and Rhoda (2003) have attested to the difficulties of organising women politically and of sustaining women's participation over time.

One of the consequences of the fact that many feminist activists have migrated from the realm of civil society to be incorporated into state structures, is the fact that the state has increasingly been viewed as the site through which gender equity will come about. For this reason, Gouws (2004) argues that the emergence of "state feminism" has in turn resulted in a shift of women's activism to the state arena, the demobilisation of civil society and an over-reliance on government to change the quality of women's lives. Yet, because the state has failed to fundamentally alter the quality of many women's lives and to include them in critical decision-making

[20] The Women's National Coalition was launched in 1992 with a number of affiliate organisations, representing diverse interests and political groups, with a commitment to advancing women's rights in the creation of a democratic South Africa.

processes, Muthwa (2004) argues that there is a need to re-ignite civil society activism. She argues that gender pressure groups and NGOs in South Africa have had limited impact because of the disjointedness of their efforts. She argues further that women in government need external political pressure to keep them focussed and responsive to gender concerns and that one of the critical challenges for activists working in civil society is to engage with their counterparts in government.

BUREAUCRACY AS THE STRUCTURAL MECHANISM OF STATE INSTITUTIONS

> "Former activists who could spot a bureaucrat a thousand miles away are unable to recognise the bureaucrat in themselves. This is not because they are conceptually unable to do so, but because the pressure to deliver tends to suck them into a kind of tunnel vision" (Njabulo Ndebele, 2004:16).

Because bureaucracy is the key structural mechanism of state institutions, its mode of operation and structure will be considered in some detail. The relationship between feminists and bureaucracy, particularly as this pertains to public participation in bureaucratic structures, will also be explored. In trying to understand the impact of bureaucracy on society, it is important to locate bureaucracy in its historical context and to note how bureaucratisation and its associated institutional forms and practices have progressively come to permeate most aspects of life in general. Ferguson (1984) argues that the bureaucratisation of public life is related to changes in the economic and technological spheres, such as the centralisation and specialisation of labour, the growth in the scale and complexity of organisations and the reworking of the relationship between "private" and "public" life as remunerated work moved outside of the home and into the factory and the office. The bureaucratisation of public life is also linked to the rise of large-scale service industries and service agencies of the state to supply and regulate activities formerly conducted from within the home.

Because the bureaucratic organisation of public life directly controls the work of women who hold jobs outside of the home and generally impacts upon society in a way that is antithetical to the goals of feminist theory and practice, it is a critical target of feminist concern. In order for feminists to construct adequate theories of domination and liberation, bureaucratic modes of power must be deconstructed and analysed. Feminist analysis of bureaucracy has an important contribution to make in shedding light on the patterns of dominance and subordination that exist between women and men and in comprehending the subtleties of power and control within bureaucracies (Ferguson, 1984).

The Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy

It seems that a logical place to begin a discussion on feminism and bureaucracy is to start with Max Weber's theories of bureaucracy given that these are still at the heart of modern, mainstream thinking about organisations and optimal performance and productivity. Weber, Taylor, Urwick and Gantt all argue different versions of the same theory and most textbooks on organisational behaviour still adopt this framework, which has had widespread impact on the structure and manner in which modern organisations operate.

Weber (1971), following Parsons (1951) and Miller and Rice (1967), argued that organisations exist in order to fulfil certain primary tasks, which require systems for internal differentiation, decision-making and the need for rules. Weber was also influenced by the scientific management school of thought. He therefore described the 'ideal' prototype bureaucracy as being an apolitical administrative service with clearly demarcated roles and areas of competency, structured along hierarchical lines and governed by a prescribed set of rules and regulations. In terms of this conceptualisation, bureaucrats exercise control on the basis of their knowledge as trained professionals with specialised skills. This knowledge is linked to the acquisition of a certain amount of power as it places bureaucracies in a position of 'knowing' as opposed to those on the outside of bureaucracies, who do not have similar access to information. Weber also believed that bureaucracies should be impersonal and operate in a utilitarian manner to ensure the welfare and equal

treatment of all under its authority. He felt that this system of administration was the most rational, efficient way for organisations to conduct their business. He claimed that "experience tends to show that the purely bureaucratic type of administrative organisation is, from a purely technical point of view, capable of attaining the highest degree of efficiency.....it is superior to any other form in precision, in stability, in the stringency of its discipline, and in its reliability" (Beetham, 1987). Weber argued that this efficiency makes possible a particularly high degree of calculability of results for the heads of the organisation and for those acting in relation to it:

> "..... however much people may complain about the evils of bureaucracy, it would be sheer illusion to think for a moment that continuous administrative work can be carried out in any field except by means of officials working in offices. The whole pattern of everyday life is cut to fit this framework. For bureaucratic administration is, other things being equal, always, from a formal, technical point of view, the most rational type" (Weber, 1971:24).

He maintained that the closer an organisation approximated to his prototype model, the more efficient it was likely to be; and that it was the superior efficiency of bureaucratic administration that accounted for its general expansion within modern society.

Separation between the "administrative" and the "political"

Weber (1971) drew a clear distinction between bureaucracy, which he saw as being an apolitical system of administration, and the political governing body to which it accounts. The governing body is generally elected to represent the constituency that it serves and this is usually for a pre-determined period of time. In Weber's view, the governing body is responsible for the development of policy and the provision of funds for its administration, whilst the bureaucracies take responsibility for the implementation of policy and for administering the resources allocated.

Weber argued that one of the general social consequences of bureaucratic control is the dominance of a spirit of formalistic impersonality on the part of bureaucrats. In his

view, this meant that bureaucrats are able to exercise their duties "without hatred or passion and hence without affection or enthusiasm". The official therefore conducts his office without regard to personal considerations and everyone is subject to formal equality of treatment; that is, everyone is in the same empirical situation. He argued that officials therefore tend to treat their official function from what is "substantively a utilitarian point of view in the interest of the welfare of those under their authority" (Weber, 1971). Weber reasoned that bureaucratic impersonality was imperative to govern operations without "interference from personal considerations" and that a detached approach must prevail within the organisation, especially towards clients. It was thought that the exclusion of personal considerations from official business is a prerequisite for impartiality as well as for efficiency. Weber surmised that the very factors that make a government bureaucrat unpopular with his clients i.e. an aloof attitude and a lack of genuine concern with them as human beings, serves in fact to benefit these clients.

The separation between the administrative service and the political governing body is one of the classic tenets of public administration theory. This thinking is based on the argument that whilst the tenure of the governing body is limited to a fixed timeframe, the bureaucracy and the administrative staff it employs exist on a permanent basis and should therefore possess the capability of serving whoever is in political power. By claiming to be the non-ideological instrument of technical progress, bureaucracy clothes itself in the guise of science and renders itself ideologically invisible (Ferguson, 1984). Weber's portrayal of bureaucracy as being ideologically neutral and devoid of the social and political context within which it is located, is a myth that is still perpetuated within modern bureaucracies. Yet, despite its façade of neutrality, bureaucracies are political arenas that are impacted upon by the political environments within which they operate and the ideologies and positionalities of the bureaucrats who staff them. They are essentially oligarchical in nature and struggles for power, status, personal values and/or survival are endemic within them.

The main conceptual flaw with the notion of ideological neutrality is that bureaucrats are human beings with thoughts, value systems, feelings and opinions on what is

right and what is wrong, what they support and what they are opposed to, and in practice, their cognitive view of the world at large is not something that can just be cast aside so that they can assume a professional role of bureaucratic neutrality. Weber's theories on bureaucratic impersonality, i.e. the belief that bureaucracies are populated with officials who can separate themselves from their ideological beliefs, value systems and their feelings in general to act with benevolence and the collective well-being of everyone whom they serve at heart, is a similarly problematic assumption. Dorothy Smith (1987:54) argues:

> The bureaucrat's knowledge of the nature of the world, how it is known to him,21 the conditions of its existence or his relation to it are not called into question. He fits this information back into a framework of entities and organisational processes which he takes for granted as known, without asking how it is that he knows them or what are the social processes by which the phenomena which correspond to or provide the empirical events, acts, decisions etc of that world may be recognised. But like everyone else, he also exists in the body in the plane in which it is. This is also then the place of his sensory organisation of immediate experience, the place where his co-ordinates of here and now, before and after, are organised around himself as centre, the place where he confronts people face to face in the physical mode in which he expresses himself to them and they to him as more than either speak.

Smith raises a number of issues that challenge the theories that underpin the Weberian ideal-type. First, she raises the question as to how we know what we know, what are the conceptual and social processes by which we come to know, who are the people who influence us in getting to this point of knowing and what are the ideological beliefs that underpin their knowing. Secondly, the art of 'knowing' is always organised around one's sense of self as the central datum of everything that is perceived and experienced. One's own experiences, value systems and ideologies invariably influence what is 'known'. For this reason, there cannot be a single

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knowledge, but only different ways of seeing and interpreting. Thirdly, as much as individual identities and narratives constitute an important part of moulding organisations, there is also a point at which these merge and inform the broader, collective narrative and identity.

Ramsay and Parker (1992) argue that organisations appear as webs of meaning that are constructed through the everyday practices of actors. Dress, language, symbolism etc become the unrecognised material out of which the organisation is built. This collective narrative and identity has generally tended to portray itself as operating from a position of gender neutrality. Staudt (1998) has also argued that bureaucrats have been reluctant to respond to women's work in its rich productive and reproductive dimensions. She ascribes this to the dominant ideologies in bureaucratic institutions. The point to be emphasised here is that, not only are these ideologies generally patriarchal in nature, but they present themselves in the guise of gender-neutrality. This façade of institutional gender neutrality has been so convincing that if we are to begin to understand how social difference and inequalities in roles, responsibilities, claims and power are produced and reinforced through institutions, then it is critical that we move beyond the assumption of bureaucratic neutrality to uncover the core values and assumptions that underpin what bureaucracies do and what they fail to do. It is therefore important that the processes of bureaucracy must be located within their social context where social relations between classes, races, and sexes are fundamentally unequal. The role of bureaucracy has traditionally been to maintain this status quo and to reinforce the existing power dynamics in social relationships. Bureaucracy therefore often serves as a filter for various forms of domination and projects this into the institutional arena that both rationalises and maintains them.

Bureaucracy and capitalism

Weber further believed that the ideology that underpins capitalism as an economic system, has 'undeniably' played a role in the development of bureaucracy and that conversely, capitalism is the most rational economic basis for bureaucratic administration and enables it to develop in the most rational form. Linking this to his

argument that bureaucracy is "superior in knowledge of the concrete facts within its own sphere of interest"; he further argues that these interests are usually "confined to the interests of a private business – a capitalist enterprise". The knowledge that resides within bureaucracy creates a situation whereby "all the rest of the population, with the exception of the capitalist entrepreneur, are inevitably subject to bureaucratic control" (Weber, 1971).

The increasing bureaucratisation of work at all levels of organisations has related consequences for class and gender relations, particularly at the points where gender and class intersect. The impact of bureaucratisation on the lives of poor women has generally been to maintain their positions of economic and social subordination. Bureaucratic theory has served to mystify the class-based authority relations between workers and managers by disguising the adversarial nature of these relations in the language of administration (Ferguson 1984).

Weber's linkages between bureaucracy as the ideal administrative system with capitalism and the so called "free" market economy as the most rational form of economic organisation, is problematic in its underlying assumptions. The assumption that market pursuits should be centred around profit maximisation fails to take cognisance of the role of institutions in ensuring the production, reinforcement and reproduction of social relationships that are premised upon social difference and social inequality. The role of bureaucracy in creating and reproducing social inequalities is rendered invisible. Weber's argument that "all the rest of the population, with the exception of the capitalist entrepreneur, are inevitably subject to bureaucratic control", serves to rationalise elitist control and defence of their positions of economic power at the expense of socially vulnerable groups.

Bureaucratic control on the basis of knowledge

Weber defines "bureaucratic administration" as the 'exercise of control on the basis of knowledge', which renders bureaucratic structures 'rational'. He argues that bureaucratic organisations or the holders of power have the "tendency to increase their power still further by the knowledge emerging from their experience in the

service, because they acquire through the conduct of their office, special knowledge of facts and have available a store of documentary material peculiar to themselves" (Weber, 1971). He links this acquisition of knowledge to the concept of 'political secrets', which becomes a product of striving for power.

Weber's theory relating to bureaucratic control on the basis of knowledge is a potentially dangerous one in so far as it relates to notions of public participation, and the participation of socially vulnerable groups in particular, in bureaucratic processes. Weber justifies the exercise of 'bureaucratic control' by bureaucrats on the basis that bureaucrats are in possession of requisite knowledge and have certain competencies as trained professionals. He also relates such control to the increase of bureaucratic power and portrays this as a good and desirable situation. The problem with this argument is that it is essentially a very elitist one and makes it very easy to invalidate conflicting voices which are in opposition to the bureaucratic stance and to then render them 'irrational' and 'lacking knowledge/ignorant'. In this context, the concept of 'benevolent' bureaucratic control needs to be approached with caution as it cedes too much power to bureaucracies.

Bureaucracies as hierarchical structures

One of the key features of Weber's ideal bureaucracy is that the business or regular activities of the organisation is broken down into manageable, repetitive areas of work, which translate into the official duties of the various bureaucrats. Weber believed that this division of labour makes it possible to employ 'only specialised experts' in each particular position and employment is therefore based on technical qualifications (Blau, 1956). Weber emphasised the importance of the principles of hierarchical organisational structure in the ideal-type bureaucracy. Officials employed by the bureaucracy therefore not only take responsibility for a defined area of work, but are organised in such a way that they account to a superior who in turn accounts to someone else. Hierarchical structures are therefore used to ensure that there are co-ordination mechanisms in place, with the most senior officials located at the apex of the organisational organogram. Remuneration and the status attached to each area of competence increase higher up in the hierarchy. Weber argued that work in

bureaucracies is conducted according to prescribed rules, without arbitrariness or favouritism. All operations are therefore governed by this 'consistent system of abstract rules' (Weber, 1971). The rules and regulations define the responsibilities of each member of the organisation and the relationships among them.

Weber's argument that the co-ordination mechanism of bureaucracy needs to be hierarchically structured, has significant gendered power implications in that those located at the apex of the structure wield power whilst those at the lower echelons lack it. The gendered reality of this has been that men have been located at the apex and the proverbial 'glass ceiling' has kept women from positioning themselves similarly. Weber's contention relating to the division of labour has also taken on a gendered nature that accords men more power than women. Roles in the organisational arena are defined along gendered lines and the positions that men traditionally occupy are accorded more value, both in terms of status and monetary rewards. Generally speaking, the roles that organisations tend to associate with women, have tended to be an extension of their reproductive role in caring and nurturing (e.g. women in secretarial and administrative roles where they have to 'care' for male decision-makers). Kabeer (1999) argues that it is critical to ask the questions "who does what, who gets what and who can claim what" in organisations. Tasks are attached to certain social groups such as the association of women in caring for the young, elderly and sick and the hierarchy of rewards attached to tasks reinforces the inequalities.

Ramsay and Parker (1992) argue that the hierarchical systems of bureaucracies reflect patriarchal and capitalist assumptions. They argue that there is no logical reason why those who play a co-ordination role should be given a higher status and reward position within the organisation and that they should simply be seen as a another part of the organisation, no more or less functional than other parts. Many other feminist theorists and activists have critiqued hierarchical structures and advocated anti-hierarchical orientations that aim at narrowing the breach between private and public life that reject bureaucratic organisational forms in favour of a different vision of individual and collective life. It is important that the emphasis of

alternative models of bureaucratic structure reside with participatory organisational forms.

Critique of the Weberian ideal-type bureaucracy

Even though the bureaucracy that Weber described was meant to be an 'ideal-type' or a model as to what bureaucracies should aspire towards 'all things being equal', it is argued here that in reality, this ideal-type is not feasible because it makes a number of problematic assumptions. It is further argued, that from a feminist perspective, there are a number of critical reasons why the ideal-type bureaucracy is not desirable, even if it were feasible in practice. Given that the structure and mode of operation of many modern bureaucracies approximate the Weberian model, it is not surprising that they have failed dismally on the whole, to serve women's needs and interests.

One of the main problems with bureaucracies is that they are not in fact neutral, they tend to be male dominated and inequitable in the way that they engage with/ on behalf of women. Goetz (1992) identifies the problem of 'the persistent failure of public service delivery agencies to include women equitably among the publics they ostensibly serve'. This is grounded in the lived reality of many women who continue to grapple with insensitive bureaucracies incapable of listening and responding to them. Public administration systems have generally produced gendered outcomes and have served to maintain a status quo whereby social, economic and political power resides by and large with men. Foucault (1977), Ferguson (1984) and Levy (1996) argue that bureaucracy can be seen as a web of power which controls even those who use it to serve their own purposes. The feminist interest in bureaucracy is linked to these arguments. It is because bureaucracy is a site of power, because it controls vast amounts of public resources and because it has the capacity to fundamentally impact on how we live our lives, that it is strategic to invest energies into thinking and writing about it, because, in the words of Staudt (1996), "political decisions are rarely, if ever, made in the context of power balance". So in the same spirit that Roy (2004) writes that, "the theme of much that I write about is the relationship between power and powerlessness and the endless, circular conflict

they're engaged in", the pivotal interest of this study on bureaucracy and how feminists should engage with it, stems from an interest in circumventing and subverting the current power relationships because these serve to perpetuate men's domination of the public sphere.

Bureaucracies and women's voices

Bureaucracies play a significant role in eliciting public opinion through public participation exercises in the South African context. They are therefore mandated to act upon women's voices. Yet, Staudt (1998) argues that unless directed or held accountable to outside political forces, bureaucracies begin to pursue their own agenda and this agenda is often reduced to maintaining and enhancing their own authority, resources and staff. This has led to a situation where bureaucracies are not structured to listen or respond to outside political forces. Ferguson (1984) argues that bureaucracy's inherent lack of a need to "explain itself to itself" renders real communication out of place in the bureaucratic environment. Bureaucratic discourse is largely one-directional in that it is difficult to "talk back" to bureaucracies and it is acausal in that it is difficult to find out where directives originated and who is responsible for them. Bureaucratic discourse generally entails a language of "technics" where the linguistic tendencies of a technocratic society suppress the processes of open conflict and compromise that constitute meaningful dialogue. The linguistic dimension of depersonalisation renders both bureaucrats and clients mute about themselves and their contexts, divesting them of the self-articulation that is fundamental to conceiving and pursuing political articulation. The incompleteness of bureaucratic discourse and its total inability to absorb conflict, plays an important role in silencing women's voices.

Going back to my interest in the links between the public participation processes of state structures and women's voicelessness in relation to these, it is important to note that women have historically been excluded from public life and still occupy largely peripheral and powerless positions when they do enter that realm. For this reason, women have developed a different voice, which Ferguson describes as a "submerged discourse". This submergence has rendered women's experiences both

inaccessible and distorted by experiences of systemic subordination. The aim of feminist discourse is to move beyond this dilemma, to penetrate the constraints and limitations of bureaucratic discourse and seek out all submerged discourses. This will serve to render visible women's lived realities which are largely not spoken about in the "public" arena because of the disenabling environment created within which women can articulate their individual and collective narratives.

C. SHOULD FEMINISTS LOCATE THEMSELVES ON THE INSIDE OF PUBLIC BUREAUCRACIES?

At this point, the question as to whether or not feminists should locate themselves on the inside of public bureaucracies will be considered. Feminist critics differ in their assessment of the role of femocrats. There are also different conceptualisations of the term "femocrat". Some schools of thought define femocrats as feminist bureaucrats who work from within state arenas to effect social transformation that strives to narrow the power imbalances between men and women. For example, Einsenstein, Miller and Razavi, define femocrats as role-players who work from within state structures to articulate and work with the agenda of progressive women's movements. The rationale for such engagement is that it is thought that it is strategic for feminists to locate themselves within bureaucratic arenas to act as pressure points for change given the role and resources the state has at its disposal and its potential to impact on the quality of women's lives. Mama (1995, 1999), on the other hand, draws attention to the extent to which women may become complicit with autocratic regimes. Her work is located in the context of women's experiences of engaging with the Nigerian state and she focuses on the extent to which a women-led oligarchy has worked to support a masculinist military dictatorship whilst also serving the interests of a small elite group of women. Mama cautions against assuming that the visibility of women in the state apparatus correlates with better quality lives for women. She further cautions against assuming that states that appropriate the rhetoric and language of gender politics, are necessarily working to improve the quality of women's lives.

There is no one pattern as to how feminists have negotiated their positions of political and bureaucratic power or lack thereof within bureaucratic contexts. Neither is there a distinctive category of femocrat. There has, however, been much debate as to whether or not it is a waste of feminist energy to work on the inside of bureaucratic structures which are by nature not designed to accommodate the kind of transformatory thinking that underpins feminism. The emergence and evolution of state feminism[22] has therefore led to vigorous debate on the merits of promoting women's rights from within the state. This debate has drawn in feminists working as bureaucrats, academics and activists and has seen the birth of sophisticated theoretical work and innovative policy initiatives (Watson, 1992).

Both the Australian and Canadian models of state feminism offer interesting insights into both the merits and shortcomings of feminist work located on the inside of state structures. In Canada, the existence of a formal institutionalised relationship between women's organisations and bureaucratic structures began in 1954 with the establishment of the Women's Bureau within the federal Department of Labour to focus attention on the position of women in the paid work force. The initial structures of state feminism in Canada were, however, not located anywhere near the core policy-making process. The Women's Bureau further failed to provide women's organisations and groups with a structural mechanism through which they could advance women's views. This, coupled with the fact that the Bureau did not possess the requisite women-centred policy expertise to adequately respond to women's demands, meant that it did not have the capacity to make meaningful interventions in enhancing the quality of women's lives (Rankin and Vickers, 2001).

In New Zealand and Australia, a strong process of engagement emerged between women's movements and government structures staffed with feminist advisors and feminist bureaucrats. This can be traced to the 1970s where a relationship between Australian women's movements and the Whitlam Labour government began to emerge. This relationship became known as the femocrat strategy and this version of state feminism eventually came to be integrated into policy-making structures at the

[22] State feminism is defined as the activities of government structures that work to further women's

centre of government. The Australian scenario offers an interesting perspective on how feminist bureaucrats working in state structures managed to act as spokespersons for and remain accountable to the women's movement. This can partially be attributed to the fact that the feminists involved in the femocrat units were often recruited directly from women's organisations or had feminist credentials and so enjoyed a fair amount of legitimacy. The network of femocrat structures in Australia is currently growing at both the state and Commonwealth levels. This includes a network of femocrats around the country who remain within the femocrat services, (either moving from state to state or between the state and Commonwealth) who consider themselves the "voice of the women's movement" (Rankin and Vickers, 2001).

Notwithstanding some of the successes of the Australian model, it is important to note that there are still significant problems associated with feminists being absorbed into state structures. These are explored further on.

THE ROLE OF STATE FEMINISM

There are two key reasons why state feminism is critical in the broader scheme of feminist strategies to effect social transformation. The first relates to the fact that it is strategic for feminists to have a presence in policy making, in the critical decisions made by state structures and in the allocation of state resources to initiatives that benefit women and serve to eradicate gender inequity. The numbers of feminists in state structures is therefore important as the lack of a feminist presence will invariably have detrimental effects on securing women's interests in the making of critical decisions, the drafting of public policy and in allocating resources to service delivery.

The second and related factor in support of the need for state feminism, relates to ensuring that feminist interests and consciousness are represented at the level of the state. If feminist interests are not represented in the policy-making arena, then the likelihood of state policy being oblivious to our interests is increased. The feminist

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status and rights (Stetson and Mazur, 1995).

political impact is therefore likely to be limited if interests are not taken up in the public/ political arena. Watson (1992) invokes the Australian model in support of femocracy and argues that Australia offers a stark political and discursive contrast to states that have shied away from feminist engagement on the inside of state structures. She argues that in the Australian context, the interests represented and policy initiatives that benefit women can often be traced to the political concerns of the femocrat involved, her work, political history and feminist constituency. This is not to deny the equal importance of feminist pressure groups and networks on the outside of state structures. In the Australian context, the impact of feminist bureaucrats has been evident in policy reforms, changes within the bureaucracy, legislative changes and in the growth of women's services in the non-governmental sector. Staudt (1998) argues that femocrats in such contexts have played an important role in securing funding for a range of women's services and in giving voice to the interests of women in civil society.

KEY CHALLENGES FACING FEMINIST BUREAUCRATS

The literature on state feminism has highlighted many of the pressures faced by feminist bureaucrats who choose to work on the inside of state structures. This pressure can be seen as coming from both internal sources, i.e. from within state institutions and from external sources, particularly from feminists in civil society. Some of these key internal and external pressures will be explored.

The need for collective work

One of the key internal tensions entailed in working as a feminist bureaucrat is the sense of isolation, of working alone and contending with consistently trying to win over allies to pursue various agendas. This marginalisation and lack of a support system in the immediate working environment can be demoralising and the need to refocus and recoup energies in the face of a lack of institutional support is a constant challenge. Watson (1992) argues that feminist bureaucrats can find themselves marginalised in ways that accords them very little power to impact on economic and social policy. Because of this, it becomes necessary to adopt different strategies at different times in different places and uneasy alliances may need to be made and

broken when required. Even though on the whole most feminist bureaucrats may not be in a position to influence social and economic policy, the power that can reside with effecting change, albeit in a constrained context, must not be underestimated. For example, when located at the Safer Cities Programme, I was able to convince middle and senior management of the need to analyse the gendered implications of safety in the city and to appropriate resources for programmes that targeted women, even though much of this work dissipated when I left. Similarly, at Parliament, I was able to conceptualise and secure funding for a number of public education programmes that targeted women and rural women in particular as well as bring into being a number of public meetings with women to discuss the implementation of legislation that impacted upon their lives such as the Domestic Violence Act (Act No 116, 1998), Maintenance Act (Act No 99, 1998) and the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (Act No 120, 1998).

Problems entailed in accounting to a feminist constituency

Issues relating to the constituency that the feminist bureaucrat serves and accountability in this regard have been a critical part of the broader debate as to whether or not feminists should be located on the inside of state structures. This is one of the most important pressure points emanating from sources external to the institution itself. Watson points out that feminist bureaucrats have been continually reminded of the constituency from which many of them come and of the women at whom their work is directed. Notions of the needs of the 'real woman out there' are invoked and contested. Representation and accountability remain critical issues in determining whose interests the feminist bureaucrat is representing and what are the parameters within which they are responsible to this constituency. Goetz (1995) argues that interest articulation and aggregation are processes, which ideally insert organised preferences into political systems and institutional contexts. The processes by which feminist bureaucrats come to identify such interests and the repercussions for not taking these up are, however, not clear and deserve more research.

Feminists in patriarchal institutions

Mention has been made of the internal institutional pressure that feminist bureaucrats have to contend with in their work environments. A host of internal institutional issues serve to place pressure on feminist bureaucrats that has to be negotiated through. These range from organisational culture and the prevalence of patriarchal ideologies and value systems, to vehement resistance to the pursuit of feminist agendas. Goetz (1995) argues that confronting institutionalised masculinism in these contexts is risky, especially when women are in a minority and lack structured external support such as might come from women's organisations. She argues, somewhat controversially, that one of the repercussions of the intense pressures faced by women in public institutions is an increasing conformity to more masculine and elitist interests. Similarly, in a study of gender relations in organisations in the United Kingdom, Cockburn found that men argue that "if you want to join men as equals in the public sphere, you must leave behind womanly things, you must be indistinguishable from a man, you must in short, assimilate" (Cockburn, 1991).

In my experience of drawing the lines of battle in public institutions, it is in fact possible to not conform to masculine interests or to assimilate male values and behaviours. This, however, requires that one has to be prepared to sometimes make enemies and to risk becoming unpopular, which comes with the turf of non-conformism. There are however, also ways of standing one's ground and being strategic and choosing which battles are worth fighting and which are not. Franzway (1985) argues that workers in institutions of state inevitably have to negotiate a path of contradictions, conflicts and dilemmas. In negotiating this path, it is possible to stand tall in the strength of one's convictions and to remain ethically responsible about pursuing feminist agendas.

Bureaucratic co-option of feminist bureaucrats

Much of the literature on femocracy raises the issue of the eventual co-option of feminists who work on the inside of state structures. Lynch (1984) considers the

notion that in most instances, feminist bureaucrats have been co-opted or have "sold-out" the women's movement. She attributes this, in part, to the fact that many feminist bureaucrats are resistant to discussing their work, their claims that they are unable to tell the "real story", their high salaries and the pressure placed on them which serve to undermine their capacity to function as feminists. There are essentially two issues here. The first is that because of the pressures placed on them, feminist bureaucrats may at times find it easier to toe the bureaucratic line than to stand the feminist ground. Given the power imbalances in such contexts between the feminist and the bureaucratic institution, there is no doubt that there may well be instances where it has been easier to submit to pressures than to hold the moral higher ground. The second scenario, is however, probably the one which transpires more frequently in practice. This relates to a context where in order to argue a feminist viewpoint and further specific objectives, it becomes necessary to negotiate, to compromise and to trade off potential victories against potential losses. In my experience, where one is committed to the feminist cause, this is generally the route pursued and it is one that is often plagued with tension and conflict. It is, however, one that can yield significant results if one is relentless. Staudt (1998) argues similarly that such institutional work can involve compromises, accommodations or even co-option, all of which occur in the interests of engagement and sustained dialogue and this raises the critical question as to whether bridges should be built or the lines be strengthened and reinforced.

D. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, some still argue that bureaucratic means are incompatible with feminist ends and that state structures, rooted as they are in patriarchal traditions and cultures, cannot accommodate or respond to women. One of the main criticisms is that the technicality, control and hierarchy of bureaucracy render it and its processes incompatible with women's everyday experiences. These views raise the question as to what extent feminist bureaucrats should work within bureaucratic hierarchies in order to achieve outcomes that would undermine the hierarchy and whether the means and ends are fundamentally incompatible. However, the incremental increases in the numbers of gender-conscious women inside state

structures, has resulted in a rich accumulation of experience that enables us to identify and work towards addressing some of the challenges. My project is located within this context, where it seeks to produce knowledge that will inform understanding of feminist experiences in bureaucratic settings and ways in which the related challenges associated with such experiences can be addressed.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter presents the methodological aims of this study and discusses its key methodological concerns. The research methods are then discussed and reflected on, followed by a summary of the methods used for analysing the data.

B. METHODOLOGICAL AIMS

The methodological approach for this project is informed by feminist epistemological concerns. Epistemology in this sense refers to the issues related to the development of adequate theories of knowledge, where the goal of feminist epistemology is to provide women with explanations of social phenomena that they want and need (Harding, 1987). My interest in doing this dissertation from a feminist perspective relates to a broader political motivation to produce knowledge about women and their lives that can be used to effect social change. I am interested in the linkages between the production of transformative knowledge and research as activism, particularly as it relates to how the knowledge that feminist researchers produce can be used to support social change. This area of interest includes the ways in which research questions are decided upon and framed, the methods used in feminist research, the ways in which data is collected, collated, analysed and used to paint a picture that it used to inform our understanding of how to make social, political and economic interventions that will transform women's lives.

The methodological aims of this particular project are as follows:

- To explore the conceptual understanding of local government councillors with regard to gender sensitive service delivery and how they deal with this in planning and policy-making policy processes.

- To reflect on my experiences as a feminist working in a bureaucratic environment, particularly with regard to facilitating the participation of women in civil society in the execution of a municipal social development project. My work on the safety audit project,[23] was therefore used as a case study to this end.

C. KEY METHODOLOGICAL CONCERNS

Feminists have invested much energy into challenging the theoretical assumptions that underpin social science pedagogy and epistemology. Broadly speaking, these theoretical assumptions have tended to operate from masculine paradigms and serve essentially androcentric interests. Feminists have argued that research theories and methods, in tandem with what is happening in society at large, have obliterated women and failed to take account of their points of view. The consequence of traditional social science has therefore been the production of knowledge that is skewed in that it encapsulates andocentric perspectives and serves to maintain systemic power imbalances. Harding argues that at any moment in history, there are many 'subjugated knowledges' that conflict with and are never reflected in the dominant stories a culture tells about social life. Feminist research therefore strives to reflect the many stories that different women tell about the different knowledge they have. The goal of feminist research is therefore to provide explanations of social phenomena for women that they want and need (Harding, 1987).

Within this broader context of trying to produce knowledge in relation to women's concerns about gender insensitive service delivery from state institutions, this study had the following methodological concerns:

- Providing adequate spaces for the articulation of women's voices in the research process.
- Consideration of the role of researcher reflexivity in relation to the research process.
- Using feminist research to raise consciousness.

FEMINIST RESEARCH METHODS AND WOMEN'S VOICES

One of the goals of feminist enquiry is to listen to, hear and convey women's voices in a manner that does justice to what is being articulated. The challenge in so doing is to acknowledge that how we listen and what we hear is often influenced by our own terms of reference, who we are and what we know. The difficulty of adequately giving voice to those whose lives are being researched is encapsulated in the following extract:

> If we begin from the world as we actually experience it, it is at least possible to see that we are located and that what we know of the other is conditional upon that location as part of a relation comprehending the other's location also. There are and must be different experiences of the world and different bases of experience. We must not do away with them by taking advantage of our privileged speaking to construct a sociological version which we then impose on them as their reality. We may not rewrite the other's world or impose upon it a conceptual framework, which extracts from it what fit ours. Our conceptual procedures should be capable of explicating and analysing the properties of their experienced world rather than administering it. Their reality, their varieties of experience must be an unconditional datum (Smith, 1987:59).

Smith summarises the challenge of trying to listen to and hear the voices of those being researched in ways that require the transcending of the researcher's own

[23] The safety audit project will be clarified in further detail further on.

terms of reference and conceptual and cognitive frameworks. Such attempts to open up cognitive frameworks to listen to and reflect the voices of women's life experiences are one of the primary goals of feminist research. The challenge entailed in the research process is to, notwithstanding our own contexts, to not inflict our realities on those who are being researched, but to capture their voices in a manner that adequately conveys what is being articulated. Acker et al (1991) argue that "....as researchers, we must not impose our definitions of reality on those researched. Our intention is to minimise the tendency in all research to transform those researched into objects of scrutiny and manipulation. In the ideal case, we want to create conditions in which the object of research enters into the process as an active subject". Feminist research therefore recognises that both the researcher and the researched are active participants in the research process and both mould the way findings are conceptualised and presented. The participatory goal of feminist research would be furthered if research participants were somehow involved in the analysis and final writing up of findings. In practice, this is not always possible though.

In relation to my own project, I tried to create spaces for the articulation of voices in three ways. The interview with councillors were semi-structured and the questions posed were mainly open-ended so as to open up opportunities for the councillors to define what they wanted to talk about, to some extent, and to decide how they wanted to approach the subject matter. Secondly, the safety audit process was designed so as to ensure that women in civil society were an integral part of project planning and implementation from beginning to end and that their viewpoints were an important part of framing how the project was implemented. Lastly, I have allocated space for the articulation of my own voice in using my experiences as a feminist working for a state bureaucracy as a case study.

THE ROLE OF REFLEXIVITY

Many feminists writers have argued that theoretical reconstruction must be able to account for the investigator as well those investigated so that the research process is reflexive and transparent in a manner that does not obscure the inherently social

nature of research processes. Acker et al, for example, argue that the researcher must be located in the social structure and that the social relations that produced the research must be accounted for. So, for example, the theorising process should entail a reflection on what makes it possible to raise the research problem at a particular point in time, at a particular place and in a particular society. It should entail some reflection on the processes that have resulted in the researched and researchers coming together in a particular kind of social relationship. Such a reconstruction should be possible in principle, although it is not imperative that every research report spells this out (Acker et al, 1991).

This process of reflexivity entails the process of reflecting on the research experience and acknowledges the importance of the subjective and the personal in the research process. Mies (1991) argues that if we do not want to consent to our own scientific non-being, then we must have a basis from which we stand, from which we can be sure of reality and from which we can judge theories opposed to our own. As a point of departure, this basis is none other than our subjective experience and our own critical self-reflection on it. She argues further that this denotes more than a specific momentary individual involvement, but the sum of the processes which individuals or groups have gone through in the production of their lives, their realities and histories. Mies therefore highlights how individual, subjective experiences are important, particularly as they begin to merge to become the experiences of a collective entity with areas of commonality and where they begin to point to structural and systemic factors which underpin the reasons for these experiences.

Where, interviewing is used as a research technique, as is the case for this project, the process of reflexivity entails introspection on the context of the interviews. This would entail, for example, an analysis of the social context of the researcher, the feelings of both the researcher and the researched on the interview process and the experiences of the interviewer-interviewee interaction. Oakley (1981) analyses how prevailing theories on interviewing techniques emanate from masculine paradigms and how they are not suited to feminist ends. She points out how Kahn and Cannell (1957), Goode and Hatt (1952), Moser (1958), Sjoberg and Nett (1968) amongst

others, have portrayed the interview as a mechanical process, a specialist pattern of verbal interaction that is focused on a specific purpose and consequently eliminates extraneous material. The behaviour of the respondent is also expected to be such that no questions are asked back to the interviewer. Research methodology techniques have even been designed to provide the interviewer with strategies for avoiding such questions.

The interviewing process, as prescribed by dominant paradigms of social science thinking, entails power dynamics and a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and those researched. The researcher occupies a position of authority as the person with whom knowledge resides. Those researched are, in a sense, reduced to being guinea pigs in a laboratory in that what they have to say has very little relevance outside of fulfilling a role of answering predetermined questions. Very little value is placed on their contribution to the research process in more substantive ways where, for example, they are able to engage with the researcher on the subject matter at hand, ask questions back to the researcher and through a process of dialogue, share information. Acker et al argue that ideally, the gaps between the researcher and those researched should be narrowed. The would then entail the research process becoming a dialogue between the researcher and those researched, an effort to explore; clarify and expand understanding where both role-players are assumed to be individuals who reflect upon their experience and who can communicate those reflections (Acker et al, 1991).

Traditional research has held that the research process must be a sanitary one in the sense that the key objective is to collect data that is 'pure' and uncontaminated. In order to do this, the role of the researcher is to be a passive participant in the research process, to remain unobtrusive and is to be restricted to the recording of data in as objective a manner as possible. The researcher therefore has to cast aside her/his subjectivity and focus on the collecting and recording of information, without divulging information in return. The objectivity of the research process is perceived to be enhanced when there are no emotive responses to the research process and no relationships are formed with research participants. The researcher

is therefore meant to be devoid of context, feelings, thoughts and opinions and remains distanced from research participants.

There is a wide variety of feminist literature that contests traditional research methodology paradigms. Feminist contributions in this regard have shown the value and necessity of bringing the researcher's context in terms of her background, experiences and relation to the subject matter into research process. Harding (1987), for example, has argued that:

> Feminist enquiry insists that the enquirer be placed in the same critical plane as the overt subject matter, thereby recovering the entire research process for scrutiny in the results of the research. That is, the class, race, culture and gender assumptions must be placed in the frame of the picture that he/she attempts to paint. The purpose is that the researcher appears not as an invisible, anonymous voice of authority but as a real, historical individual with concrete, specific desires and interests. There is a need to avoid the objectivist stance that attempts to make the researcher's cultural beliefs and practices invisible whilst simultaneously skewering the research objects' beliefs and practices to the display board. The beliefs and behaviours of the researcher are part of the empirical evidence for (or against) the claims advanced in the results of research. Introducing this subjective element into the analysis in fact increases the objectivity of the research and decreases the objectivism which hides this kind of evidence from the public.

The point of emphasis here is that bringing the researcher and her context into the analysis does not detract from, but on the contrary, enhances the objectivity of the research. The researcher's social context, views and feelings with respect to the subject matter at hand, are an integral part of the research process.

FEMINIST RESEARCH AND EMOTIONAL INVOLVEMENT

The positivist approach to research does not hold the prevalence of emotions in the research process in high esteem. Emotional entanglement in any aspect of the

research process is seen to undermine and compromise the desired ideal of objectivity and is believed to distort the research findings. In the same way that researchers are expected to decontextualise themselves, they are also required to discard their emotions in the interests of conducting research in as scientific and objective a manner as possible. Feminist research epistemology has brought back the emotional realm of the research process into the field of enquiry. Fonow and Cook have argued that there is a need to rescue emotions from its discarded role in the production of knowledge. They argue that emotions can serve as a source of insight or a signal of rupture in social reality and that a sense of emotional intimacy can lead to reciprocity between the researcher and researched. One of benefits of this is the higher quality of information possible as a result of mutual disclosure (Fonow and Cook, 1991). Stanley and Wise similarly argue that emotional involvements cannot be controlled and if they did, the effects of such control would constitute an important factor in the research process. Because the researched are actively involved in the research at hand, they may "like, dislike, sexually desire or despise the researcher". They will invariably construct their own theory about both the research topic and the theory held by the researcher. They may seek to "preserve face" or present themselves differently to the researcher than to others. The feelings of the researched to the researcher form the basis of the research (Stanley and Wise, 1991). The emotions of the researcher and the researched are therefore inextricably linked to the study. Attempts to eliminate these from scrutiny and render them non-existent have the potential to detract from the integrity of the findings of the study. The emotional attachment of the researcher to the research project at hand also has significant implications for the enthusiasm with which the project is pursued and the potential for its findings to be translated into action that effects social or political change.

In relation to my own project, my experiences as a black woman working within public bureaucratic structures has strongly influenced my interest in the power dynamics and dominant discursive frameworks that operate in public institutional settings. This has therefore served to impact upon how I framed the research question and research methods. Defining myself as a feminist means that I feel

strongly about women's social, economic and political liberation and this informs how I approach the subject matter. My anger in relation to institutionalised sexism, informed by some of my own experiences, impacts upon my cognitive framework, how I see the world around me and how I interpret and make sense of relationships in organisational contexts. Similarly, my commitment to contributing in some way to transforming South African society in the post 1994 context, informed my decision to locate myself in the public sector and work towards making a positive contribution to society from this vantage point. My opinion that women are often sidelined in bureaucratic planning processes impacted upon wanting to implement a social development project where women's voices were taken seriously in decision-making processes. Similarly, once I gathered that councillors seemed to have a very limited understanding of how to integrate gender into municipal planning processes, I was prompted to test the extent to which this is true or not.

FEMINIST RESEARCH AND ACTIVISM

Feminist epistemology has drawn linkages between research, consciousness- raising and political action or advocacy. Feminist research often aligns itself with prevalent social needs in seeking to better understand women's lives and how social change that will improve upon their lives can be effected. There are a number of ways in which feminist research can be activist. It can, for example, be a call to action or to inform action or it can simply seek to be/ initiate change processes in itself. One example of a theoretical approach to activist feminist research is put forward by Mies (1991) who calls for the reunification of life and thought, action and knowledge and change and research. She argues that in contrast to dominant science, feminist theory work is not an end in itself, but remains linked with the social movement for the liberation of women. She argues that if feminist research is located within the historical movement out of which it has emerged, then it is impossible to cling to the dichotomy between thought and action, science and politics. She argues further that in order to understand the content, form and consequences of patriarchy, the researcher must be actively involved in the fight against it. It is important to note that traditional social science epistemology has cautioned against this method of pursuing

research, arguing that when research is linked to political motives or movements, then this contextualisation invariably impacts upon its ability to be objective.

D. Research Design: Interviews with councillors

The research design for this project comprises two research techniques and the study is therefore informed by two primary sources. The first of these is interviews conducted with a sample of local government councillors who have the capacity to influence the planning and implementation of social development projects. The purpose of this was to gain insight into their understanding of gender-sensitive service delivery and how they incorporated women's service delivery needs into their planning processes. This was done so as to elicit information on the extent to which gender sensitive planning was incorporated into the organisation's mainstream planning processes. This information was used to form a baseline of sorts in understanding the broader organisational context.

A total of thirty-one councillors were interviewed, of which seven were women. Particular effort was required to increase the number of interviews conducted with women. However, this proved challenging given that there were many more male councillors. The fact that most respondents were male provides for an interesting analysis of male discourse and understandings of women's service delivery issues. In a context where men dominate at both the political level and in senior administrative positions, it is not inappropriate to look at men to see how male-dominated institutions respond to women's needs. A qualitative process, that entailed the use of semi-structured interviews to get participants to share their experiences in the planning process, and how they address women's service delivery needs, was used. Participants were asked open-ended questions on their understanding of key concepts such as gender, gender equity, and being gender sensitive when planning and developing public policy. The interviews were also designed to bring to the fore the trends within the planning process and the perceived needs with respect to formulating gender sensitive policies and service delivery initiatives.

The strategy for drawing a sample of councillors for the interviews entailed sending out requests for interviews to all councillors via written correspondence. Attempts were made to telephonically follow-up on the written request, but access to councillors proved to be very difficult. Interviews were therefore, to a large extent, conducted with those who I was able to access and those who responded to the correspondence initiatives.

E. Reflections on the interviews with councillors

The primary purpose of the interviews was to examine the discourse of local government councillors with respect to how gender is incorporated as an analytic category into local government planning and policy development processes. Given that the research question for this study relates to my experiences of state feminism as a feminist located at the City of Cape Town, the purpose of the interviews in relation to the study as a whole, is to provide some insight into the broader organisational context with regard to furthering gender equity and enhancing the quality of women's lives in particular. The interviews therefore aim to gain insight into the discourse of councillors with respect to furthering gender equity and the ways in which councillors understand and address women's service delivery needs. The interviews are intended to provide insight into the institutional environment in terms of the values and attitudes towards gender equity amongst functionaries.

In reflecting on the interviewing process, the first thing that needs to be said is that there were underlying power dynamics at play in most of the research interviews conducted with the male councillors. Most of those interviewed were men, some of whom occupied very senior, prominent political positions. It became apparent to me that many of them believed themselves to be progressive with respect to furthering gender equity and were consequently keen to be interviewed to prove this point. I am of the impression that some of the councillors were possibly expecting someone of greater status and I consequently felt that many of them were disappointed. These dynamics were

constantly at play during the interviews. For example, in some of the interviews, I felt that councillors appeared to be dismissive of some of the questions posed to them, as if though they were inconsequential, trivial and generally beneath them. This dynamic manifested itself particularly when questions of a more technical nature were posed to them such as "Describe how you engage in a gender analysis" or "Define what you mean by gender equity". In the context of asking follow-up questions to vague responses, I often witnessed a display of irritation.

At times I also felt that I was being perceived in terms of my sexuality. In one instance the councillor in question made no attempt to hide his attempts of looking me up and down and staring at my legs and proceeded to offer me a job. I also felt belittled in some of the interviews and felt that I was being tolerated and treated like a child. At times, this manifested itself in the use of diminutives and endearments. Given these underlying dynamics, my experience of most of the interviews was that there was very little space for an open dialogue with male councillors. The male politicians interviewed asserted their authority by claiming much of the available space to talk. It was very difficult to interject in this context. The interviews therefore constituted less of a conversation and more of a "councillors-having-the-stage-to-talk-to-me" scenario. Of interest, is the juxtapositioning of the way in which councillors responded to opinion-related questions as opposed to questions of a slightly more 'technical' nature. When asked questions relating to matters of opinion, what they felt about certain things and the like, much space was taken to provide lengthy responses. Yet, when councillors were asked to define certain concepts, explain how they engaged in a gender analysis and so on, they responded with what I perceived to be a certain amount of discomfort, some showed irritation, and they generally tended to occupy less talking space. In many instances, responses provided in this regard are short and lacking substance.

Given the context outlined above, I tried to assert my authority in a number of ways in the course of the interviewing process. Some of these were not engaged in as a conscious exercise at the time, but emerged in retrospect and upon reflection. I

consciously made attempts to draw the attention of councillors to the subject matter at hand as there were numerous attempts to wander significantly off course. I tried to entertain some of this, but given the power dynamics at play and how the male councillors took up space to talk, I chose, at times, to draw parameters as to what I was prepared to listen to. Secondly, as difficult as it was to interject on the whole, I made a principled point of trying to challenge blatantly sexist views. Given that I had opted for an interviewing style that was non-argumentative and more facilitative, I tried to do this in subtle ways, which often took the form of providing alternative perspectives through the use of challenging questions. I tried to balance this stance with creating an ambience of trust where the participants could feel that they were safe enough to express their thoughts and viewpoints.

In retrospect, I realised that I also tried to assert my authority through my attire. I therefore abandoned my usual attire for clothes that fitted into a more "orthodox" business-oriented context. I also opted for clothes that would not make me feel exposed in any way and that would serve to ward off any sexual dynamics.

It is interesting to note that my experience of the interviews with the women were very different. The power dynamics did not operate in the same way. I did find that with the older women, I was treated in what could be described as being almost maternal. Even though this encompassed the power dynamics of the old speaking to the young, I was not made to feel offended by the way that this manifested itself. On the whole, the interviews with the women were collegial in the sensethat they felt that I was doing something important that could make a positive contribution and they often chose to identify with the initiative by making suggestions that would facilitate its progress. In some instances, this manifested itself almost as being a conspiracy between them and me. For example, once the interview had been completed, they would often suggest ways of using the findings, recommend people that I should speak with etc.

F. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO ANALYSING THE VERBAL DATA

The method for analysing the interview transcripts was to engage in a content analysis of the discourse of the councillors. The verbal data is used to produce knowledge about the organisational context of the City of Cape Town. The discourse of councillors is therefore linked to the local government context in a socialist constructionist manner. The limitations of the attempts of language to organise and explain reality are acknowledged and the guiding assumption for working with the data was that there is no simple relationship between discourse and reality. In line with the thinking behind Foucauldian discourse analysis, it is acknowledged that discourse does not simply translate reality into language but rather that it should be seen as a system which structures the way that we perceive reality and constrains our perceptions (Foucault, 1981).

The discourse of councillors comprises the utterances made by councillors, including the rules by which these utterances are formed, the processes whereby they are circulated and other utterances are not. The discourse is explored in a manner that tries to engage with when discursive frameworks come into conflict with each other. In other words, attempts are made to analyse the pressures which operate across a social body and which interact with each other and condition how people think, know and write (Foucault, 1981). Attempts are therefore made to not look at language in a vacuum, given that sentences do not exist by themselves, free of context. It is important to point out that I use the term 'discourse analysis' in a very broad sense. My attempts to analyse the discourse of councillors are confined to an examination of the content of their utterances and the social context within which these are being made. It excludes, for example, a linguistic focus.

I have made use of Foucault's conceptualisation of the relationship between discourse and power to reflect on the how language gives insight into broader social relationships of power:

> "Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and

> unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it" (Foucault, 1981: 100-101).

Of particular significance in the above extract, is Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse as both the means of oppression and the means of resistance. Foucault argues that dominant discourses privilege those versions of social reality that legitimate existing power relations and social structures. For this reason, the relationship between discourses and institutions is of particular significance. He uses the term "discursive formation" to refer to the regular associations and groupings of statements which are associated with particular institutions or sites of power and have the capacity to affect individuals and their thinking. These are not static in nature and are subject to change, given changes in the broader social context. In the context of the relationship between discourse, power and institutions, Foucault raises questions about the relationship between discourse and how people think and feel, what they may do in practice and the material conditions within which such experiences may take place.

In the summary of findings at the end of Chapter Four, the discursive frameworks of the councillors interviewed are also used to ask the question "what is the language doing" in a manner that transcends the language of reference. Creswell (1998) argues that from a discourse analytic point of view, people's speech is understood as social action and is analysed in terms of what it accomplishes in a social context. Instead of just asking what the data reveals about the attitudes, beliefs and thoughts of participants, there is a need to therefore ask the question "what is this discourse doing?" In this sense, discourse analysis can be described as a particular way of reading, as reading for orientation (focusing on what the text is doing) rather than simply reading for meaning (focusing on what the text is saying). This therefore moves the analysis into the terrain of focusing on text as social action.

CONTENT ANALYSIS PROCESS

Within the context of the theoretical approach to working with the data outlined above, the following process was pursued to engage with the narrative material:

SELECTION OF SUBTEXT

Given that I was interested in exploring the discourse of councillors with respect to gender and policy development and how gender is incorporated as an analytic category into planning processes, the relevant sections of the text were marked and assembled to form a subtext which may be seen as the content universe or an analytic template of the discourses studied.

DEFINITION OF CONTENT CATEGORIES/ DISCOURSES

Various themes that incorporate similar perspectives that cut across the selected subtext were then identified. I started with a few codes to guide the analysis. These were derived from the key question areas used to guide the interview process. Thematic coding evolved as I became more familiar with the text and spent more time working with the data. The narrative material was then split up into these themes where possible.

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESULTS

Utterances in each category were then ordered by frequency and used to describe and elicit trends and tensions in the dominant discursive frameworks of the councillors. All the codes occurring in the transcript were listed. At times, I used parallel coding of some of the text where the same text was classified within two or more categories. Even though I decided to work with the frequency with which the various codes appear in the analytic template, I acknowledge the caution around placing too much emphasis on such a quantitative approach and that the frequencies of codes does not automatically correlate with meaningful differences within or between texts.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Finally, the interview findings are presented and discussed. This is done by adopting a social action approach and focusing on the broader question of "what does the text ultimately do?"

G. RESEARCH DESIGN: FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF A PROJECT PROCESS

The second research technique utilised was an analysis of my experiences of working as a feminist on the City of Cape Town's safety audit project, to experiment with ways of working with women and including them in the planning of service delivery initiatives. This project aimed to develop a framework within which the City could plan and engage with women in communities on their safety needs from an urban design/ planning perspective. The safety audit therefore entailed a participatory process for women to work with the municipality to assess and make recommendations for improving the built environment in their community from a safety perspective. It was decided that the project focus on urban design and planning as these were accepted as being local government competencies and a project linked to these municipal functions therefore easily received management support.

The data that will be analysed for the purposes of this study are the records of my thoughts and feelings as a feminist working within a public bureaucracy. Throughout the course of the project, I kept a log of my thoughts about working on the project. These reflections will be used to gain insight into a feminist experience of working in a public bureaucracy.

H. REFLECTIONS ON THE SAFETY AUDIT

In relation to the safety audit project, there were two sets of data that I had wanted to work with. Initially, I had intended to use the data pertaining to the Nyanga women's assessment of urban design and planning to elicit a sense of the extent to which urban planning took into account women's experiences of violence and feelings about their safety in the design of the City. In this way, I had hoped to produce

knowledge that would assist the City in inculcating sensitivity to women's needs in its urban design and planning approach. Because I was also interested in the extent to which feminist bureaucrats created and facilitated participatory processes for women in civil society to become active participants in social development initiatives, it soon became clear that I was dealing with two very different data sets, both of which were useful, but which offered analytical insight into very different research questions. Had I opted to include both data sets, the scope of the project would have broadened considerably in ways that seemed a bit unmanageable. As much as I was reluctant to, I had to focus on a specific research question and work only with the data that pertained to that question. I opted then to not engage with the data on women's experiences of the urban environment and focus solely on the relationship between the feminist bureaucrats and women in civil society whilst working on the project. The data for this was then narrowed down to the journal of my thoughts about this relationship whilst working on the project and the independent interviews done with the women involved on their experiences of working with me and the other feminists involved. This worked well on the whole, but it would have been useful if I had narrowed down my research question from the outset. This would have eliminated the consequent dilemma about which data I should work with and which research question was more pivotal.

I. APPROACH TO ANALYSING CASE STUDY DATA

The approach to using the safety audit data entailed pulling out related extracts from my journal (kept whilst working on the project) and overall feedback from interviews conducted with the women involved on their experiences of working on the initiative, to construct a narrative of our work on the project. I have opted not to use the data verbatim, but to retell this story by weaving it together to give a holistic sense of experiences whilst working on the project. In using extracts from my journal to retell this story, I have created a subjective account of a story about work from within a bureaucracy to transform women's lives.

J. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, The primary objective of the research interviews was to gain insight into the understanding of councillors in relation to gender sensitive service delivery and how they incorporated women's service delivery needs into their planning processes. This was used to paint a picture of the organisational context within which the City strived to incorporate gender as a variable into its modes of operating. On the whole, the interviews served this purpose and gave some insight into the webs of meaning constructed into the organisational identity of the City as an organisation and the dominant discursive frameworks that operate within it. In retrospect, I would have liked to have interviewed more women councillors and a larger spectrum of people across racial lines to further explore the tensions in discourse along racial and gender lines.

The safety audit data also proved useful in presenting a case study of the ways in which feminist bureaucrats engage with women in civil society to include them in the planning and implementation processes of a municipal project. It is also a useful case study of how broader organisational contexts affect the work of such initiatives.

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS WITH COUNCILLORS

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

This chapter analyses the interviews conducted with councillors at the City of Cape Town. Its starts by clarifying the approach to the interviews and is followed by an analysis of the data. It closes with a reflection on the implications of the discursive framework that emerges.

B. APPROACH TO THE INTERVIEWS

The questions posed to councillors were designed to fit into one of three broad areas of enquiry. The first relates to gauging their attitudes towards gender issues in relation to policy development. The second sought to explore trends in public sector planning processes. The third aimed to shed light on how councillors understood concepts such as 'gender', and 'being gender sensitive in the policy process.' It is important to note that the role of local government councillors is to serve on municipal committees such as housing, economic development, finance etc and it is through committee work that they develop and oversee the implementation of local government policies and by-laws. Councillors are also responsible for determining how municipal resources are allocated and spent. They are instrumental in determining the vision, business plan and strategic objectives of the City.

At this point, something needs to be said about the rationale behind using the discourse of 'gender' as opposed to 'women' or 'feminism' in the interviews with councillors. This was a conscious decision on my part and is based on my experience of engaging on women's issues in the local government context. This experience has generally been one of antagonism towards feminist issues. I have found that even though the discourse of 'gender' tends to detract from a focus on women per se, it is a term that is more readily accepted. So even though my project is a feminist one in that it is essentially interested in how women's service delivery needs are dealt with in institutional policy and planning processes, I use the discourse of 'gender' to get councillors to engage with me. The responses of the councillors

to feminism are explored in the interview process and will be discussed further on in the chapter.

C. ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

UNDERSTANDING OF KEY CONCEPTS

Participants were asked to explain their understanding of the following concepts: 'gender' and `being gender sensitive when planning public policy.' The purpose of this was to gauge the conceptual understanding of councillors with respect to gender and planning, given that conceptual understanding informs practice. The aim was therefore to ascertain whether councillors had a sound enough grasp of conceptual issues relating to gender and planning.

Understanding of 'gender'

The table below reflects the categories of responses to the question on "Please explain what you understand by the term gender".

Men's understandings of 'gender'

Gender as meaning 'men and women'	7
Gender as the differences between men and women	8 (one respondent mentioned that there needs to be sensitivity to the differences, one respondent added that it is also about talking about the roles of women and men in society).
Gender as the biological differences between men and women	3
Gender as equality between men and Women	2
Gender as the differences experienced by the sexes in social and economic activities	1
Gender as women needing to improve	1

their 'position'	
Gender as reconciliation between women and men	1
Gender does not mean man and woman but masculine and feminine gender	1

Women's understandings of 'gender'

Gender as meaning 'men and women'	3
Gender as the differences between men and women	2
Gender as all issues that concern men and women	1
Can't explain	1

Councillors faired dismally at trying to articulate their understanding of gender as a social construct which refers to the relationships between women and men and the power dynamics endemic in these relationships. Some of the ways in which 'gender' was defined are reflected below:

First Extract:

Joy: "How would you define the term 'gender'?"

M6:[24] "Gender is a matter of perception to me. It refers to male and female persons".

Joy: "Does the term mean anything more to you?"

[24] The interviews were conducted on the basis of confidentiality. The number used here denotes the number given to the questionnaire. The letter "M" denotes man and "W" denotes woman.

M6: "Gender refers to the sexes, that is male and female. It refers also to Morphies' promotion of the rights of women. I understand it as a woman and a man where women do things different to men. For example, women have children when men don't. But, in thinking about it, I don't think that this needs to be kept intact. We need to get rid of these lines."

Second Extract:

Joy: "What do you understand by the term 'gender'?"

M23: "It refers to different people, for example, a man and his wife".

Joy: "Does the term mean anything more to you?"

M23: "I think that it is also the difference between men and women as a species. There was a time when I thought there was a difference between men and women, but now I treat them the same".

Third Extract:

Joy: "How would you define the term 'gender'?"

M3: "Gender is the biological distinction between human beings, which has nothing to do with capabilities, but to do with certain things".

Joy: "What are the 'things' that you refer to?"

M3: "It is a male and female which have different sexual organs that separate one to another".

Both the women and men councillors appear to be unable to define gender adequately. Part of the reason for asking the conceptual questions, was to

explore how councillors understood certain key concepts which are part of the feminist discourse. The rationale for doing this relates to the link between how the concepts are understood at a theoretical level and the ability to effect, in practice, service delivery that is cognisant of women's needs and that strives to reduce the systemic power imbalances between women and men. Councillors, on the whole, revealed that their conceptual understanding of critical theoretical issues related to women and development, left much to be desired.

Understanding of 'being gender sensitive when planning public policy'

Councillors were asked what they understood by the phrase 'being gender sensitive when planning public policy'. The tables below reflect the responses to this question.

Explain what you understand by 'being gender sensitive when planning public policy':

Women's responses

Category	Number of participants
Having gender desks and gender commissions at all 3 levels of government	1
Ensuring that women are involved in the policy-making process	1
Looking at how women and men have been prejudiced and being sensitive to this	1
Ensuring that the policy applies to both women And men	1
Treating men and women equally	1
Can't answer because "I am not involved in planning public policy"	1
Can't answer because 'you first have to explain to Me what gender means'	1

Explain what you understand by 'being gender sensitive when planning public policy': Men's responses

Category	Number
Ensuring that there is no discrimination by men and women	4
Looking at the factors that affect men and women's ability to compete in the workplace	1
Consideration of both men and women's needs in the planning process	1
Looking at staff composition in terms of the numbers of men and women	1
Being sensitive by not excluding the other gender	1
Consultations with women/ listening to their views	3
Ensuring that women are represented in decision-making structures	6
Awareness of the rights of women	1
Ensuring that the policy does not advantage one gender	1
Ensuring that thinking flows from the gender bill of rights	1
By taking women into equal partnership with men	1
By trying to understand each other	1
By acknowledging women's role	1
By being aware of gender issues	1
By ensuring that in the planning process, one takes into account where a certain gender can make the best contribution	1

From the above, it can be seen that there is a broad range of responses relating to how councillors are gender sensitive when planning public policy. This seems to signify that this is not something that exists or is understood at a collective, organisational level. If this were the case, then responses would show more areas of commonality. On the contrary, the variance in the responses given suggest that how one is gender sensitive is largely a subjective matter, left to the individual to decide whether or not to be sensitive and how to manifest this in practical ways.

The response category that elicited the most responses relates to ensuring that women are represented in decision-making structures. As emerged with previous questions, issues of promoting gender equity are again equated with a focus on the numbers of women in political positions. The second largest response category is the one that relates to ensuring that there is no discrimination in the planning process. What is interesting here is that the men do not identify the discrimination of women in particular as a cause for concern, they identify the potential discrimination of both women and men as being a cause for concern. Given that systemic power imbalances have disadvantaged women, it is interesting that most of the men appear not to acknowledge this in their responses. Three of the male participants identify the need to consult with women as part of the planning process. An example of one such response is reflected below:

> "We ensure that the opinions of women in this instance had been consulted and lobbied and that their ideas and suggestions are included in any policy document. Also, we look at the fair representation of women on any committee, organisation or leadership position. This should not be for show but because they are respected as competent individuals who can make a contribution".

On the whole, the comments made in response to this question are very short and lacking in substance. A lot is left unsaid about the process for engaging with gender issues in the planning process. Some questions were evaded, neatly side-stepped or dismissed. This suggests discomfort with the questions and is significant because it suggests that respondents are unable to answer them, but will not admit to this. An example of one response lacking in substance is as follows:

Joy: "What do you understand by 'being gender sensitive when planning public policy'?"

M22: "We will take into account the historical and current factors which affect one or other sexe's ability to compete effectively in the workplace and in civil society".

Joy: "So, for example, when you are in the process of planning public policy, how would you be gender sensitive?"

M22: "We need to be sensitive to not exclude the other gender"

Of particular concern is the fact that a number of discriminatory utterances are made in response to the question. Some of these are overtly discriminatory; others are more subtle in the way that they are framed. Examples of these are:

First Extract:

Joy: "We have almost come to the end of the interview. I just would like to ask you what you understand by being gender sensitive when planning public policy?"

M11: "When I look at the composition of staff, I will look at the ratio of the different sectors and will always try to keep a healthy balance. I believe that 6:4, men to women is a healthy balance because men are generally your breadwinners, they don't tend to stay at home. Therefore, if you hire a woman, you hire an individual, if you hire a man, you hire a family".

Joy: "This is actually a bit worrying. I think that most children today are actually living in contexts where they are dependent upon women as breadwinners. The whole notion of a nuclear family with a husband, wife and children is being challenged because this is not the reality of most South African families".

Second Extract:

Joy: "What do you think it means to be gender sensitive when planning public policy?"

M4: "The ANC represents 50% men and 50% women. Being gender sensitive when planning public policy means respecting each other when we speak to each other. It is equality in terms of numbers when electing people on to committees. The problem is that women are not confident enough to stand for positions. I think that black women should also be given more of a chance than white women as they were more oppressed".

Third Extract:

Joy: "What does it mean to you to be gender sensitive when planning public policy?"

M6: "For a very long time, the scale weighed against women but we are now becoming over-sensitive. One should weigh up policy and how it should benefit a particular gender, but the policy must be based on equality".

Joy: "Do you think that policies these days are not based on equality?"

M6: "I just think that people must be made aware of gender issues but they don't need to be obsessed about gender issues".

Fourth Extract:

Joy: "What does it mean, to you, to be gender conscious when planning public policy?"

M35: "It is very important to be conscious. Women have a role to play in the upbringing of children and the upliftment of the community. Women have an important role because they play a role that men don't have time for".

The responses to this question show, on the whole, that councillors tend to have very superficial ways of engaging in an analysis of the gendered implications of their policy and planning-related work. The responses that are indicative of both subtle and overt forms of discrimination, are very much in the minority. This, however, does not detract from the fact that they are a serious cause for concern. The councillors interviewed are responsible for critical decision making, for spending public resources in the collective public interest and there should be no room for any kind of discriminatory utterance from anyone who yields this kind of power.

Responses to feminism

In order to explore councillors' views on feminism, I posed the question "Do you consider yourself to be a feminist?" to them. Eight of the men responded that they were and an equal number said that they were not. Nine men said that they were unable to respond to this question. Of the women, six said that they were not feminists and one said that she could not say. This question was then followed up by asking participants for the reasons for their responses. Those who disassociated themselves from the term 'feminist' articulate discomfort with the term itself and its connotations. The women tended to preface their sentiments on feminism by saying that they believed in equality between women and men. This was then generally followed by their reservations with feminism. Interestingly, what emerged in the women's responses is the association between feminism and women being treated as a minority group and a related discomfort with this. The sense that is derived from this is that the term is almost offensive in that it makes women seem less important than men and consequently as not being equal to men. This is possibly indicative of a misunderstanding of the term and what it entails.

The dominant theme in the men's responses is the negative connotations of feminism. The same issues emerge in most of the men's responses. These issues do not appear in any of the women's responses. These relate to feminism as a form of discrimination, feminism as advocating for special treatment (this one is particularly common), feminism as a radical ideology and feminism as women who are too assertive. The rejection of feminism is predominantly linked to the fact that it is perceived as furthering a cause that will lead to inequality between women and men. These sentiments are encapsulated in the responses quoted below:

> "I don't believe in fighting specifically for the rights of women. I believe rather in fighting for the rights of all people. I don't believe that women should be given special treatment because then they will not learn to be independent".

> "We are women and men working together. We should not therefore pick out males or females or any other category. This is really not on. We are all people".

Given that many of the men see feminism as the promotion of inequality between women and men in a manner that will disadvantage men, it is clear that feminism is not understood and that men fear losing their bases of power.

A rather large number of participants, i.e. ten in total, voiced that they could not say whether they are feminist or not. Feminism is essentially a political movement, which entails subscribing to a certain core set of values. It is therefore more probable than not that if one aligns one's self with this movement and one subscribes to its underlying values, one would know whether one is feminist or not. The argument put forward here is therefore that those who are not sure whether they are feminist or not, are in all likelihood, probably not. Participants, who indicated that they were not sure or could not say whether they were or were not, cited the negative connotations of the term as the primary

reason. Many responded by saying that it depended on how feminism was defined and the context within which it was used. Many therefore emphasised that they believed in equality between women and men, but did not like the negative connotations of the word 'feminism'. A few participants responded by saying that they were not sure, but their responses revealed that they blatantly were not feminist and were hiding behind the guise of not being sure. Examples of these responses are:

> "I don't think that women should lose their femininity, but I am a great believer of women's rights and that they should start their own businesses. But I do admit that I have been held back by my male chauvinism. But now I believe that women should be allowed opportunities".

> "I am generally an open-minded person, but I will not allow gender to influence me. I give a woman her duty[25] as I see that she is capable of doing things, but not because she is a woman or he is a man".

> "I don't like categories. I believe that the only difference between the sexes should be at the level of competence and the ability to work hard. In South Africa, women have voluntarily given the leadership to men. They have willingly accepted their role as mothers and left the major decision-making and decisions in the workplace to men. This was never legislated, it is just how it is".

The responses above differ sharply from the response of the one woman who said that she was not sure:

> "There is nothing which makes me a feminist at the moment. I am not yet fighting for women's rights as I think that I should be doing. I think that a feminist is someone who fights for women's rights but to the extreme. I mean a radical".

[25] sic

Even though the councillor above appears to have certain reservations about the term 'feminist', she alludes to positive social action that feminists have embarked upon and makes a critical reflection on her own lack of contribution in this regard.

It is interesting to note that so many men chose to describe themselves as being feminist, particularly in light of the fact that none of the women chose to describe themselves in this way. I had not anticipated this. This therefore led me to wonder about whether they were being honest in their responses or whether they were just saying what they surmised that I wanted to hear. This question cannot be answered with any certainty. However, I did try and explore what the utterances in this regard were implying in terms of linkages between the spoken word and actions. On the whole, they appear to be indicative of a stance of wanting to do positive things. There does therefore appear to be a potential link between what is being said and possible positive social action. The following motivation is indicative of this possible link between utterance and potentially positive social action:

> "It is important that the role of women in society be recognised, acknowledged, encouraged and supported. Women have historically been disqualified for being women by society. It is important that the status quo be reversed and a balance established and maintained".

It must, however, be said that none of the motivations given for identification with the term 'feminist' are particularly inspiring, which could mean that the resultant social action to emerge from any good intentions reflected in the discursive frameworks used, would probably have limitations. Some councillors, notwithstanding their identification with the term, even make some problematic assumptions about the role of women or portray them in stereotypical roles. An example of this is reflected below:

"Everybody is equal. I think that a woman brings a different perspective to a problem and a challenge. They also have an ability to deal with things with empathy and they are concerned for the public in general".

In the example cited above, women are constructed in terms of a stereotype where they are supposed to be gentle people who radiate empathy and concern. This construction has associations with societal expectations that women must be maternal, caring and nurturing beings.

ATTITUDES TOWARDS GENDER AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The need for special policies that benefit women

Participants were asked the question "In your opinion, do you think that there is a need for special policies which benefit women?" Twenty-four of the thirty-two participants felt that there was a need for such policies. The reasons given for this generally tend to fall into one of three broad categories. On the whole, motivations given reveal a very superficial understanding of gender imbalances and injustice. The reasons fit more or less into the following categories: that women have been disadvantaged in the past, that there is a need for women to be represented in decision making structures and that there is a need for women to be 'empowered' and to acquire the necessary skills to participate in such processes. An example of such a response is:

Joy: "So do you think that there is a need for special policies that benefit women"?

M27[26]:"Oh yes, I would definitely say so".

Joy: "Why do you think that this need exists?"

[26] The interviews were conducted on the basis of confidentiality. The number used to here denotes the number given to the questionnaire. The letter "M" denotes man and "W" denotes woman.

M27: "Because we need to liberate women socially, economically, politically and psychologically".

Joy: "I see. So what would this mean in practical terms?"

M27: "The thing is that I am not clear. But policies that women can take part and policies that women can be equal, that means equality.

As the above response to this question shows, participants on the whole could not frame their responses in a manner that demonstrated an in-depth understanding of why special policies are needed to address systemic power imbalances between men and women. Participants tend to pick up on catch phrases such as 'women are disadvantaged', 'women need to be empowered' and the like, but they appear to have a very superficial understanding of why this is so. Seven participants could not articulate a reason which made any kind of sense at all. Three of the seven came across as not really thinking that there was a need for special policies that benefited women, but seemed obliged to answer the question in this way.

The reasons given by the women participants differ from those of the men. A close look at the responses of the women show that they feel that special policies are required because women have been left out of decision-making structures and that this has intensified their systemic discrimination. Some of the women, for example, talk about the need for women to be represented in senior political decision-making positions and make mention of the need for more women to be represented in Parliament. One of the women talks about the need for women to be involved in determining public sector budgets. The sense that one gets from these responses is that women have been excluded from strategic positions of power and there are links between this and power imbalances. At times, however, women also buy into the dominant paradigm that the main reason why women are not in key political decisions is because they lack the necessary skills and therefore focus on women's perceived incapacity as the problem rather than systemic power imbalances. One such response is reflected below:

Joy: "So why do you think that there is a need for special policies that benefit women?"

W14: "Because for many years, women's place has been in the kitchen. We need more workshops to empower women. Most women have low self esteems in most areas. We need to uplift the standard of women. Women need to be given skills so that they are independent. We need more women in Parliament".

The men, on the whole, give different reasons for the need for special policies that benefit women. Six of the men argue that they are needed because of the fact that women have been disadvantaged. The reasons for this and the ways in which this is manifested are not elaborated upon. Four of the men attribute the need for special policies to the fact that women lack education, training and skills. The need for policies that benefit women is therefore not linked to the fact that women are disadvantaged in any way, but to their perceived deficiencies. An example of such a response is captured below

Joy: "Well, why do you think that there is a need for special policies that benefit women?"

M24: "Women should be trained and get skills. They need to participate in the three levels of government and everything should be done according to the law as written in the Constitution of South Africa".

Joy: "So if I understand you correctly, then most women currently lack the skills and expertise required to effectively participate in governance and we need special policies to address this situation?"

M24: "That is exactly right yes".

Ten of the men, a rather alarming number, do not appear to be able to articulate a response that makes sense or respond in an extremely vague manner, suggesting that men actually have no idea at all as to why special policies are needed. Examples of these responses are:

Joy: "You say that there is a need for special policies that benefit women. Why do you say so?

M2: "Because the Equality Clause in the Constitution, the Metro Conditions of Service Negotiations, the Charter of Women in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act are steps in the right direction but more women should be included in the drafting process".

Joy: "Are you saying that women should be included more in the drafting of policies in general?"

M2: "Yes".

Joy: "And why do you think that there is a need for this?"

M2: "Because of our historical background".

Some of the responses hint at a discriminatory stance or the fact that they are, in reality, not supportive of such policies, despite the fact that they responded by saying that special policies were necessary. This seems to imply that they were pre-empting what they thought that I wanted them to say or what they thought the politically correct thing to say was. Examples of such responses are:

First Example:

Joy: "Can we talk a bit about why you think that there is a need for special

policies that benefit women?"

M11: "Look, women have issues which men don't have in the workplace and policies are therefore needed. We must therefore identify with the special needs of women. If women want more rights than men, then they consider themselves more than equal. We need special provisions for women, but women by asking for special treatment, recognise that they are different from men and therefore not equal. Do women encourage us to have white male secretaries? (*Note that respondent has a white male secretary*) These jobs are reserved for females, which is part of our *custom* and heritage. But then even these jobs should have equal access".

Joy: "Do you think that women are asking for more rights than men?"

M11: "I think that if you look at the trends, this is exactly what is happening."

Second Example:

Joy: "Why do you say that there is a need for special policies that benefit women?"

M21: "But the policies must have the political backing. If policies are put there, the political will underwrite the enforcement thereof. This is a critical question. But can we really legislate in this? Legislation can be counter-productive in this sense."

Joy: "So you don't think that there is a need for a legislative framework which provides the backdrop against which policies are developed?"

M21: "No, as I said, it would be counter-productive. Policies benefiting women should be put in place incrementally, there is no need to hasten them. Yes,

gender balance should be reflected, but it should not be rushed through".

Why are special policies not needed?

Seven participants felt that there was no need for special policies that benefited women. Of this, six (all men) justify their stance by arguing that it would amount to treating women differently from men and that this would then result in discrimination and inequality. An example of this response-type is reflected below:

Joy: "Why do you think that there should not be special policies that benefit women?"

M28: "There must be one policy that covers both genders and if any special policy is made for women then it will be discriminatory and it can even be a precedent that will lead to males demanding theirs".

Joy: "So you are arguing that special polices will not narrow inequalities but will create them?"

M28: "Very definitely. This cannot be avoided".

Special policies for women are therefore equated with special privileges, which are perceived as being unfair. This type of conceptualisation does not allow for recognition of the fact that because women have been treated differently in the past, they need to be treated differently now to narrow the gaps in systemic power imbalances in order to level the playing fields. One of the seven who argued against the need for special policies is a woman. Her motivation, however, stands in stark contrast to the reasoning of the men. Her rationale is not linked to the fact that men will be disadvantaged by such policies, she argues rather that "...women do not need to be treated as a minority, we are quite capable of making it on our own".

Which types of policies should benefit women?

Participants were asked to reflect on which types of policies were needed to enhance the quality of women's lives. The responses to this question are reflected in the table below:

Women and men combined

Type of policy	No of participants who identified it
Affirmative action policies	8
Education related	5
Labour related	4
Life skills/ training related	2
Welfare related	1
Maintenance	1
Family related	1
Gender policy	1
Property related	1
All policies	1
Could not/ did not respond	2

The responses of the women vary, so it was not possible to draw any patterns here. This is probably attributed to the fact that so few women were interviewed. Some interesting patterns emerge in the responses of the men though. Five of the men identify the need for policies relating to education for women and a further two identify the need for policies relating to life skills and training. In total, seven men therefore identify the need to educate, train and equip women with skills, in a sense, problematising women. The sense one gets from this is that special policies are not needed to address power imbalances, but to 'educate' and 'train' women, alluding to the fact that women are not as educated and trained as men and that this is one of the most important stumbling blocks in addressing systemic power imbalances between women and men. A large number of participants identify affirmative action. This could be attributed to one of two reasons. The first is that the participants in question genuinely feel that the need for women to be represented in decision-making positions is one of the top priority policy issues. The second is that some or all of the participants are unable to see

how gender permeates all issues and that they are therefore only able to understand the promotion of gender equity in terms of quantitative exercises to put women into positions of authority. In this scenario, they would be unable to identify the relationship between gender and issues that transcend numbers of women in positions and are therefore only capable of identifying affirmative action policies. So, for example, the ways in which issues such as agriculture, land, safety and security, public enterprises, public finances etc are gendered, is not conceptualised.

What is the greatest obstacle to formulating policy that is gender sensitive?

Participants were asked to identify the greatest obstacle to formulating policy that is gender sensitive. The majority of the men identified attitudinal problems as the most critical impediment to the formulation of gender sensitive policies. This once again reveals that the men demonstrate an inability to locate gender equity within its broader context of systemic power imbalances at a social, political and economic level. They do not see gender inequity in terms of systemic oppression, but as a problem confined to the attitudes of certain individuals. This type of conceptualisation serves to obscure the magnitude of gender inequity. Of the nineteen men who identified attitudinal problems, only five of these identified the attitudes of men in particular. Five identified the attitudes of men and women; four identified women as being the problem; three identified the attitudes of the previous regime, institutions and officials; three identified the attitudes of white people; two identified the attitudes of political parties and four identified cultural and religious attitudes as being the greatest obstacle to formulating gender sensitive policy. One of the responses that identifies the attitudes of women as being the source of the problem reads as follows:

Joy: "What would you say is the single greatest obstacle in formulating policy that is gender sensitive?"

M11: "I would have to say the availability and assertiveness of women. You find that women are not assertive enough in South Africa. When I advertise a job, you find that 80% of the applications will be men and 80% of this will be good quality applications. You therefore can't have a policy if you cannot implement it, without reducing the effectiveness of government. The big problem is that women must convince themselves that they can compete with men. There are also not enough pressure groups for women. I doubt that the ones that do exist have the backing of all women. I say this because our women come from diverse cultural backgrounds. Many of the pressure groups for women claim to speak on behalf of women, but most of the women they claim to speak on behalf of are not interested in occupying positions that men occupy".

Apart from the shortcomings of perceiving attitudinal problems as the most critical impediment, the men tend to locate the blame for these attitudes outside of themselves. They do not appear to therefore own the problematic attitudes and responsibility for such attitudes is located elsewhere. The responses of the men differ from those of the women who link the lack of women-sensitive policies to their exclusion from decision-making processes. The men, interestingly enough, do not raise this at all. The responses of the women to this question differ from those of the men:

First Extract:

Joy: "What do you think is the most critical obstacle to formulating policy that is gender sensitive?"

W20: "I think the fact that the majority of those in decision-making positions are men and they would rather tell you what to do than ask you what you want".

Joy: "Is this your experience of the policy making process?"

W20: "Yes it is"

Second Extract:

Joy: "What, in your experience, is the greatest obstacle to developing policy that is gender sensitive?"

W11: "The officials are mostly male and they are not able to think along female lines and therefore almost never take women into account. Women are not involved and are not given a platform to share their views".

What emerges in relation to the women's voices is that they have been excluded from key political positions, that men are incapable of thinking as women would and that the exclusion of women from the policy process is the most critical obstacle to developing gender sensitive policy.

TRENDS WITHIN THE PLANNING PROCESS

The second broad field of enquiry that the interviews tried to elicit information on relates to understanding how planning processes in the municipality are structured, the underlying dynamics at play and how gender as an analytic category is accommodated within these processes.

Gender consciousness during the planning process

The councillors were asked whether, in the scope of their work as policy makers, they were conscious of gender issues when planning. Twenty-eight councillors said that they were conscious of gender issues when planning and only four admitted to not being gender conscious. Of those who are not conscious, one is a woman. The councillors were then asked to elaborate on how their consciousnesses manifested itself and were encouraged to provide practical examples of this. The tables below reflect the categories of responses most frequently cited:

How are you gender conscious in the planning process? Women's responses

Does not answer the question	4
By ensuring that women are elected/ appointed onto decision-making structures	1
By raising gender issues in policy-making processes	1

How are you gender conscious in the planning process? Men's responses

Does not answer the question	14
By ensuring that women are elected/ appointed onto decision-making structures	5 (includes one who says that his party ensured that women are represented on standing committees)
When advertising jobs	1
By identifying problem policy areas	1
Through just being aware of gender	1

Most of the respondents, both men and women, answered the question but their responses did not relate to the question posed. The question was essentially a 'how' question, which meant that participants were required to focus on how they went about manifesting their gender consciousness in practical ways. Most, however, did not do this. Examples of these evasive responses are:

First Extract:

Joy: "So you say that you are gender conscious in the municipal planning processes that you are involved in, particularly in your committee work. Can you describe to me how you manifest this gender consciousness. You may use an example to explain, if you like."

M18: "You know, even my wife at home, I see her as my equal partner. The same applies to females at work. I was one of the people who wanted women to be given a higher position at work and this was adopted".

Joy: "I see. But coming back to your work as a councillor when planning, how are you gender conscious in practical ways?"

M18: "I realise that certain jobs lend themselves more to a woman doing a job than a man. If a job requires much traveling a lot and not nice conditions, for example, a one star hotel in a little town, I would not send a woman. This is because I have too much respect for a woman. I would not want her to leave her family. The nature of a man is more competent here".

Joy: "I would be cautious about generalising in this way. I mean, I am a woman and I enjoy traveling. I think that I would not be happy if my male colleagues were given all the opportunities to travel. Because travel can also be an opportunity for one's growth and development. It is generally safer to ask women what they want and need rather than to make assumptions".

M18: "Well you may be the exception. Most women are wives and mothers and would probably not be too keen to up and go all the time".

Joy : "Well, I would still suggest that you ask the women that you work with".

Second Extract:

Joy: "Could you please explain to me how you are gender conscious in the planning processes of the committees that you serve on?"

M27: "We need to look at men and women when planning. The tendency is that women are treated as not equal to men. But I believe that mentally women are very capable and they can do anything they want if they put their minds to it. This is a difficult question, but one needs to remember that there is another gender other than one's own".

Joy: "Ok. But, how, in practical terms would you say that you are conscious. Can

you think of examples of times that you were conscious?"

M27: "I am drawing up the contracts of employment with regard to the housing policy. In all these contracts and policies I am involved in gender, which is not an issue".

Third Extract

Joy: "How would you say that you are gender conscious when you are engaged in the planning-related work of the committees that you serve on?

M9: "My wife is an achiever in her own right. I always believe that women of ability must be recognised. Women must be recognised for their ability and not for their gender. One should adjust one's mind not to prejudice. Though I believe that people should be treated on merit, I also think that women should be given special preference and should also be trained."

As can be seen from the above, the responses given generally do not directly respond to the question posed. In two of the examples cited, the councillors concerned had to resort to invoking their wives to respond to the question. One of two things can be inferred from the fact that most respondents did not answer the question put to them. The first is that the question was posed in such a way that it was not understood and the second is that the councillors were unable to answer the question and did not want to admit to this. I am of the opinion that most councillors were taken aback with this question and were unable to answer because they are not conscious of gender as an analytic category in the planning process in ways that translated into practical initiatives. They were reluctant to acknowledge this because the previous question had asked whether they were conscious of gender in the planning process and most had answered that they were. Some of them may well genuinely believe that they are cognisant of the gendered dynamics of the planning process, but this does not necessarily translate into practical attempts to take up gender issues. The

councillors appear to be aware of the fact that they should appear to be gender conscious because this is the politically correct thing to be, but not unpacking what this really means.

The second largest category of responses to this question related to ensuring that there were adequate numbers of women appointed to structures, delegations and the like that are established. Yet again, this seems to imply that policy makers primarily understand gender issues in terms of the numerical representation of women in positions of authority and seem to have difficulty in conceptualising how gender issues permeate every aspect of life. The types of responses that are therefore completely absent would include, inter alia, conducting a gender analysis of issues discussed in the planning process by looking, for example, at the impact of potential decisions on women and the effects on the quality of their lives. Also absent are reflections on how decisions taken during the planning process strive to narrow the systemic power imbalances between women and men. No mention is made of distinguishing between the internal, organisational gender-related issues and the external, service delivery related gender issues. The usage of gender-disaggregated data in the planning process is not raised, as is the examining of public sector budgets in terms of their gender implications. No mention is made of analysing the employment of women by the City, where they are placed, who staffs critical projects and initiatives etc. Attempts to generate information about societal issues that helps us understand how to best improve the quality of women's lives (such as accessing related existing research) were not raised at all. None of the councillors spoke about identifying how existing organisational and service delivery initiatives entrench existing gender imbalances and the potentially negative repercussions of policy and service delivery initiatives on women. The responses that are given lack substance and demonstrate great ignorance of how to deal with gender as an analytical variable in the planning process.

In order to further gauge how an analysis of gender is incorporated into policy-making processes, a series of questions was posed to councillors to

demystify what happens in the course of such processes. They were asked to explain the process, in their experience, for formulating new policies. They were then asked whether a gender analysis constituted a subsidiary part of this process. Those who responded that it was, were then asked to explain how the gender analysis was done.

I decided to analyse the responses of women and men to the question on the process for the policy development together, because no significant differences in responses could be detected. The responses of both the women and men appeared to be vague and confused and both seemed to have some difficulty in articulating the process. This could be attributed to a number of different reasons. One of these is that there appears to be different conceptualisations of what policy is. Some of the councillors seem to understand policy as being by-laws, some understand it as national legislation enacted by Parliament, some understand it as being specific policies adopted by the municipality such as on local economic development and some understand it more broadly to encompass both the organisation's formal and informal stance on issues pertaining to its mandate. Even though the question asked participants to focus on their personal experiences of the policy process, some spoke about the development of white papers, green papers and bills. Where this was done, much of the information provided is a technically incorrect version of how government policy and legislation at a national level is formulated. An example of one such response is given below:

Joy: "Could you please explain to me the process, in your experience, for policy-making."

M2: "All stakeholders and interest groups are invited to pool their opinion, there is therefore a public participation process. This will be forwarded to a task team who will in turn forward this issue to the committee after scrutinising it. The committee will forward their presentation to Exco who will make their recommendation to Council. The matter will then go to

the legislator for proper drafting and then to Cabinet and then to Parliament for approval".

One respondent seemed to think that the officials are the policy makers and therefore draws a distinction between policy makers and politicians:

> "Normally, it is that policy makers make recommendations and politicians accepted them. Now, however, it has changed to various units composed of politicians, policy makers, civil society and labour forums that discuss and formulate policy".

The following trends emerge from the responses given and are a cause for some concern:

- There seems to be no clear, common understanding amongst the policy makers interviewed of what 'policy' is.
- There are very different accounts of what the policy-making process entails.

It was not easy to extract patterns to the responses to this question as they were so varied. Part of the problem here relates to the interviewing process. Vague responses were not followed up on, they were accepted as such. Three broad areas of commonality do, however, emerge from the responses. These are as follows: Firstly, many participants said that the policy process commences with the development of a draft policy and this seems to undergo various processes which are described in such different ways that it is not possible to construct a common view of what this entails. Secondly, most participants identified public participation processes or some form of consultation with relevant stakeholders as integral to the policy development process. The following is an example of this:

Joy: "What, in your experience, is the process for developing new policies?"

M23: "I make a questionnaire and a separate draft plan. Then I take the questionnaire to the public to solicit its views. I compile the views with my own draft and it then is used to serve as a guide to formulating policy".

Joy: "So you develop a draft version of the policy and embark on a public participation process first. What happens following this?"

M23: "We get all the stakeholders to make submissions. Because all policies should be a partnership between Council, the community and the private sector. We then workshop the submissions received to decide on final drafts".

Thirdly, some participants felt the need to articulate something about how the process is gender cognisant, possibly pre-empting questions in this regard from me. The following are examples of this:

First Extract:

Joy: "Could you please describe to me your experience of the policy making process?"

M28: "The process has women make their input in policy making and in ensuring that they are part of the decision-making body".

Joy: But the process as a whole, how is this structured?

M28: "When formulating new policies, we need firstly to look at or consider the question of gender in order to accommodate those who were left behind, such as women. For instance, for those in rural areas, it is difficult to

understand the terms and the government's need to visit those people in gender commissions and inform them about gender related issues".

Second Extract:

Joy: "What, in your experience, is the process for making new policies?"

M31: "We need to have workshops where we identify what women's needs are. Secondly, we need to co-ordinate all these needs and assess them. People's different needs, from all sectors of society i.e. urban, rural, business and others need to be put together. We move from here to formulate policies".

Joy: "So you start by assessing women's needs and this is followed by a more general needs assessment?"

M31: "Yes, this is how it is done".

Third Extract:

Joy: "How would you describe the process for developing new policies?"

M11: "Policy is constantly being adjusted to stay within the legal constraints. It is also determined by the financial resources available. If and when a policy determines a reduction in staff, it will always favour men unfortunately. The rationale for this being that a man works for his wife and children, whereas a woman works for herself. We have weekly meetings to discuss the work situation and to plan. Gender issues are not up for discussion here, because there really is nothing to discuss, because there isn't a big staff turnover. The other reason why it is not necessary to discuss gender, is because there are few vacancies".

There were also a total of six participants who did not answer the question on the policy making process at all, but respond in a manner that does not relate. A pattern emerges with these. The responses provided here make no sense in relation to the question posed. Instead of talking about the policy making process, they all talk about gender in one way or another. This could possibly be because the participants thought that they would talk about what they thought that I would want to hear and make political statements in this regard, regardless of what the question posed to them was. Examples of these responses are as follows:

Joy: "What, in your experience, is the process for how new policies are developed in the committees that you serve on?"

M4: "You see now, in Parliament, the ANC is headed by a woman, there is a woman as Speaker. Many women have been placed in Parliament. Ministries are headed by women and there are also ambassadors. Women are therefore coming forward. They are speaking out in terms of violence, battering and more rape cases are reported. Polices have been developed in these areas to show more sensitivity".

Joy: "Oh, so this is at national level. But in terms of the processes here at Council for developing new policies, how are these structured?"

M4: "In my Council, a resolution was recently passed supporting gender issues and a positive approach to employment policies. A gender workshop was held last week in order to develop a strategy on gender planning".

What is significant here is the absence of certain information. This includes an inability to articulate a clearly defined process for the development of policies. No information is provided on how the need for certain policies is identified, for example, is this done through structured needs assessments or is it only when problems arise or an issue becomes politically relevant? In the case of the latter, who defines what it politically relevant? The information provided also does not

articulate anything about how the views of differing stakeholders are dealt with, what is the process for discussing, assimilating and analysing different points of contention? How are the perspectives of political parties weighed up against public submissions and what is the process for taking final decisions in this regard? There is also no sense of who drafts the initial versions of policies, how the wording is decided on and what the process for rewording entails. No information is provided on whether or not an impact analysis of potential effects of the policy is conducted and how this is done. There is also no mention made of whether costs are projected by engaging in a structured cost analysis exercise. Given the silence on these issues, the processes entailed for engaging in a gender analysis do not appear to be very promising.

Gender analysis as part of the planning process

In order to establish how gender is dealt with as an analytical category in the planning process, participants were asked whether or not a gender analysis constituted a subsidiary part of planning processes in general. In total, twenty-four participants said that it did and five said that it did not. The responses of women and men are reflected in the table below:

Men

Yes	19
No	4
Don't know what a gender analysis is	1

Women

Yes	5
No	1
Don't understand what a gender analysis is	1

From this, it can be seen that most acknowledge that a gender analysis is a subsidiary part of the planning process. What is interesting in the context of the

fact that the councillors serve the same municipality, is that there are different views in this regard in that a total of five councillors argue that it is not a part of the process and two councillors do not know what it entails.

Following on from the question as to whether or not a gender analysis constitutes a part of the planning process, councillors were asked to describe how the gender analysis was done. This was the point where most councillors came undone at the seams. Only ten councillors opted to answer the question. Twenty-two were unable to respond and admitted to this in some way. Given the fact that twenty-four councillors had responded that a gender analysis was a part of the planning process, this is a significant contradiction. Of the ten who responded, five responses are vague, do not address the question posed or don't make much sense. Examples of these are as follows:

First Extract:

Joy: "So you say that a gender analysis constitutes a part of planning processes here at Council. Could you talk a bit about how this analysis is done?"

M30: "It is a conscious effort. There are gender policies in place via the Constitution".

Joy: "Yes, that it is true. But how do you do the gender analysis here. Say, for example, in the planning processes of the committees that you serve on. How is the analysis conducted?

M30: "My political party accepted 33% of women as part of government. And presently there are discussions around making it 50/50 in terms of men and women's representation in government structures".

Second Extract:

Joy: "You have indicated that a gender analysis is a subsidiary part of the planning process utilised by your committee. Could you please explain to me how this gender analysis is done?"

M10: "It can be analysed on the basis of sexual organs, that being male and female".

Joy: "I am not sure that I understand, do you mind to please explain a bit more."

M10: "How much longer is this going to take, because I am running late for another appointment".

Third Extract:

Joy: "So you say that a gender analysis is usually part of the planning process utilised by your committee. Could you talk a bit about how this gender analysis is conducted?"

M0: "I will answer as to how the gender analysis should be done in practice. It should address the women's mindset, which is very negative. That should be systematically replaced by positive type attitudes".

The five remaining responses are reflected in the table below:

How is the gender analysis done?

Discussing gender issues at meetings	1
Ensuring that women are represented in decision-making structures	1
Ensuring that women in civil society participate in the process	2

Ensuring that gender sensitive language is used and that women are conscientised	1

From the table above, it can be seen that one participant felt that merely discussing gender-related issues amounted to an analysis. This person also pointed out that much of the time most issues do not relate to gender, which means that gender is rarely discussed at the meetings in question. Three participants felt that merely ensuring the participation of women (both internally i.e. councillors and women from civil society) in planning processes meant that an analysis would be undertaken, the assumption being that the women would take responsibility for this. One person equated the usage of gender sensitive language to engaging in a gender analysis. This person also responded by saying that the gender analysis was further accomplished by ensuring that women were 'conscientised' to gender issues.

Clearly, none of the councillors have a sense of what a gender analysis entails. The assumption drawn from this is that this is because it is probably not happening in practice, despite the large number of councillors who responded that it does constitute part of the process. If such an analysis is being conducted, then it is clearly a process fraught with problems and is not being done at a collective or organisational level.

D. CONCLUSION

The interviews with councillors reveal a number of prevalent and dormant discourses in the City Council. I have used the text to identify three prevailing discourses that tend to dominate. Even though I discuss these as three different discourses, I acknowledge that this is an oversimplification of what exists in reality and that there may well be points at which the different discourses intersect and where different individuals use them interchangeably. It needs to be said that, on the whole, it seemed as if though the majority of councillors felt that they needed to portray themselves as being sensitised to gender issues even in instances where this was blatantly not the case. The majority of respondents

perceived themselves as being sensitised to gender issues and believed that they were making practical endeavours to this end. Careful probing revealed, however, that many did not have a concrete enough understanding of gender issues in general; and while many believed that they were working towards addressing gender inequity, few could actually substantiate how they went about doing so.

The first and most dominant discourse that I have identified is the "official" organisational discourse that strives to be "politically correct" within a broader legislative context that supports the eradication of gender inequity. This discourse is predominantly appropriated by black ANC councillors. This organisational discourse "talks the talk" of promoting gender equity and creates the semblance of a gender sensitive environment. Yet, in substance, it is a superficial discourse in that when one scratches beneath its surface, one finds that there is little or no conceptual understanding of why gender issues are important and how to go about undoing systemic gender inequity. For example, most councillors believed that there is a need for special policies that benefit women. They therefore "talk the talk" of the need for special policies for women. The motivations for why such policies are needed reveal, however, a superficial understanding of gender inequity and the power imbalances between men and women. Only the women councillors are able to link the need for special policies to women being left out of decision-making structures and to systemic discrimination. Also, when asked about the types of special policies needed to enhance the quality of women's lives, most councillors identified affirmative action. The second response type to emerge in terms of its frequency in the text was that of policies that would educate and train women. The responses to this question seem to indicate that participants are not able to understand how gender relations permeate all issues. Councillors appear to understand the relevance of gender relations primarily in relation to quantitative exercises to place women in positions of authority. The data further shows that, on the whole, none of the councillors have a firm grasp of what a gender analysis entails and of the conceptual understandings that underpin gender sensitive delivery. For example, both the women and men councillors appear to be unable to define

"gender" adequately in terms of a context of social relations which result in systemic power imbalances between men and women. On the whole, councillors therefore appear to demonstrate an inability to locate gender equity within its broader social context of systemic power imbalances at a social, political and economic level.

Secondly, the interviews also show a dormant discourse that can be described as being essentially conservative in nature, illustrated mainly in the transcripts of interviews with white and coloured councillors from the National Party. This discourse generally tends to emerge only after careful probing and those who use it seem to have some sense of the fact that it not a politically correct discourse to appropriate. There are various ways in which this discourse manifests itself and a wide range exists between those who are somewhat conservative to those who are extremely conservative in their views. For example, a few of the male councillors use discourse that reveals overtly sexist behaviour and a discriminatory stance that is indicative of wanting to maintain power relations that benefit men at the expense of women. For example, some councillors do not see the need for special policies that benefit women. The main reason given for this is that this would result in the preferential treatment of women and would consequently result in inequity between women and men. There are, however, also more subtle ways in which this conservatism manifests itself. For example, a large number of councillors were unsure as to whether or not they are feminist. This suggests that, in all likelihood, they are probably not feminist given that the discourse in its entirety does not seem to imply that many councillors are engaged in practical initiatives to effect social transformation that will contribute to reducing/ eradicating systemic gender inequity. Yet, the fact that they are uncomfortable with being forthright and admitting that they are not feminist is important. This seems to imply that they are being cautious about not wanting to be perceived as going against what is supposed to be the official organisational discourse of promoting gender equity. They are therefore concerned about being perceived to be politically incorrect. This stands in contrast to the responses of those who were more overtly conservative who opted not to describe themselves as being feminist and articulated discomfort with the term and its connotations. Those holding this view

tended to see feminism as being a radical ideology and a form of discrimination because of the fact that it advocates that "special treatment" should be accorded to women.

Thirdly, the data also showed that there is what can be described as an "empathetic" discourse in the City Council, appropriated predominantly by the women councillors interviewed. This discourse is one that is sensitive to women's needs and interests, probably because of personal experience. Even though this discourse is essentially empathetic in its nature, it lacks an informed understanding of the context of systemic subordination and uneven social relations between men and women. At times, notwithstanding the empathy to women's issues, there are even problematic conceptualisations about the role of women and what is needed to undo systemic subordination. So, for example, those who use this discourse are able to identify that there is a need for special policies that benefit women because women have been excluded from strategic positions of power and that there are links between this and power imbalances in society. Yet, the women who appropriate this discourse do not demonstrate a sound conceptual grasp of the gendered social order and its underlying power dynamics.

Lastly, it needs to be emphasised that the variance in the responses to the question on how councillors are gender sensitive when planning show that this is not something that is understood at a collective, institutional level. There is therefore no collective discourse on how gender is incorporated into planning processes. The variance in responses shows that the gender consciousness is very much left up to the individual and is therefore a subjective matter as opposed to an institutional one. The response category to elicit the most responses relates to ensuring that women are represented in decision-making structures. This once again indicates that issues of gender equity are equated with a focus on the number of women in decision-making positions. Responses to the question show that councillors tend to have very superficial ways of conducting an analysis of the gendered implications of their policy and planning related work. This is significant in that it illustrates a great need for the organisation to explore the implications of the lack of a discourse in this regard for gender sensitive service delivery. Clearly,

the City Council needs to explore ways of transforming the planning process so that gender is incorporated as an analytical category. By so doing, a collective discourse on women and planning will begin to emerge.

A few councillors exhibit patterns of thinking and perceiving that are overtly sexist and discriminatory towards women. Many more demonstrate problematic conceptualisations about issues such as the role of women, the context of their systemic subordination and the uneven social relations between men and women. The discourse of the majority of councillors therefore suggests serious conceptual gaps and flaws in their rationale and cognitive grasp of issues relating to women and their social contexts. This is of concern because if conceptualisations about women, power relations and how to address women's needs are fraught with problems, then it is likely to negatively impact upon addressing women's service delivery needs and enhancing the quality of their lives and narrowing systemic power imbalances in general. If women's needs and their social context is not properly understood and the attendant processes for being able to bring these to the fore are not in place, then it is likely that these issues will not be addressed in comprehensive ways. On the whole, the discourse of the councillors alludes to the fact that women's issues and gender relations are not important enough to warrant serious attention. At a more personal level, the impact of the discourse as a whole on me is to leave me feeling extremely concerned and not very hopeful of the ability of councillors to enhance women's lives in profound and substantive ways.

Within the context of the organisational culture outlined above, the implications for gender policy initiatives and projects are serious. The inability of councillors to conceptually comprehend gender issues means that at best, there will be haphazard, band-aid type initiatives that are not properly thought-out to address the social conditions of women. It also means that lip-service will be paid to such initiatives and they are likely to generate sufficient political support to create the semblance of the City being serious about addressing gender equity, without really receiving serious commitment and the required resources. The safety audit project, discussed in Chapter Five, is discussed within this context.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE SAFETY AUDIT

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The second research technique used was an analysis of my experiences of working on the safety audit project at the City of Cape Town. The purpose of this Chapter will be to reflect on this project in terms of my experiences as a feminist working in the context of a local government bureaucracy. These experiences are located in the broader organisational context sketched in the previous chapter.

The Chapter commences with a discussion of the safety audit concept and is followed with an outline of the process for initiating the City of Cape Town's project. The processes entailed in the project are then presented, followed by reflections on the safety audit. These encompass reflections on the efficacy of gender planning models, working with community women on the project team, responding to the contexts of the women involved in the project and creating enabling environments for communication between women on the team.

B. THE SAFETY AUDIT CONCEPT

The safety audit concept is based on the premise that safety should be seen as an important variable in urban planning and design processes. The safety audit therefore operates from the assumption that the physical/ built environment can be adapted so as to reduce the potential for the occurrence of criminal activity. The project aimed to identify the main aspects of insecurity and potential threats to the safety of women with respect to aspects of urban planning, design and land use within a defined geographical area. One of its goals was to work towards a situation where structured safety analyses become incorporated into mainstream urban planning and design processes.

The people who live in the city, the urban economic activities they are involved in and the social goods and services that they access, are spatially organised. This organisation of urban space gives rise to an 'urban form' or 'built environment' which

impacts upon the resources that sustains any settlement and makes its liveable. The underlying rationale of the safety audit pilot project was that because cities are primarily living environments, the architecture and design of our cities and its communities reflect the dominant societal culture, values and lifestyle (A City Tailored to Women, 1997). The design of urban space, infrastructure and activities takes cognisance of and gives physical manifestation to these values. The value system of an apartheid society that did not accord equal status to all its citizens is manifested in the planning and servicing of the City of Cape Town and its outlying township areas. The lack of proper and appropriate infrastructure in township communities stands as a monument to the scant resources invested in the design and building of these areas where sprawling, squalid dormitory townships of undifferentiated matchbox houses were poorly serviced in terms of infrastructure and urban amenities (State of the Cities Report, 2004).

The design of the City has been one that accords value to a patriarchal set of values. This can partly be attributed to the fact that in the past, local authority planners were predominantly male and planning processes were largely centred around the needs of men, based on the assumption that men and women have the same needs. Planning processes were generally not informed by gender-sensitive planning methodologies. The safety audit pilot constituted an attempt to address this situation through the use of analytical tools that take cognisance of the gendered implications of issues of crime and safety. It sought to acknowledge that women experience crime and violence in very specific, gendered ways. It was therefore guided by the principle that cities have a duty to acknowledge women's experiences of insecurity the city. The City needs to further engage women in the course of delivering its core business and remain cognisant of the gendered implications of issues of crime and safety and how it can respond to these in appropriate ways.

Given that the safety audit project dealt mainly with women's responses to the built environment and explored the role that local government can play in adapting this environment, it becomes necessary to point out some of the guiding assumptions that underpinned the project. One such assumption of this approach is that

environments should be designed, built and tailored from the assumption that men will rape. This can serve to entrench a standpoint that many men are violent, that they have the potential to rape women and that women are vulnerable in relation to this violence. The assumption that many men are violent and have the potential to rape women is based on rape statistics in South Africa and on the fact that women who participated in the audit all had experiences of violence (this incidentally had not been a precondition for participating) that made them feel vulnerable in relation to the built environment.

The safety audit methodology was based on a participatory approach, eliciting both the individual and collective experiences of women living in the urban environment. It was therefore envisaged that the safety audit would pilot the development of a mechanism by which women could be engaged to work with the municipality to plan and implement social development initiatives. Municipalities have in the past traditionally not placed much value on community participation in local governance. Although this situation has changed since 1994, many local authorities are still grappling with the challenge of finding practical ways of engaging with communities in service delivery. The gendered dynamics of such engagement are particularly important. For example, issues such as speaking in public, the times at which meetings are conducted, whether child-care facilities are provided or not etc, all impact on whether an enabling environment is created within which women can participate. The safety audit methodology attempted to make provision for local authorities to engage with women to determine their needs so as to inform the delivery of local government services. The audit methodology was gendered in the sense that women from both the municipality and from civil society designed and implemented the audit and were involved in all aspects of project planning. The methodology also took cognisance of women's needs and interests, with a view to devising interventions that would address these.[27]

[27] The audit methodology has since been adapted to lose its gendered dimension. The new "community safety audit" entails community involvement through a survey process conducted with men and women in the community and does not tap into the gendered experiences of women's experience of safety in the city.

C. THE PROCESS FOR INITIATING THE SAFETY AUDIT PROJECT

The safety audit concept was developed by the Women's Action Centre Against Violence in Ottawa and the Femmes et ville in Montreál. I had started work at the Safer Cities Programme in 1998 as a professional assistant to assist the SCP in conceptualising its work and to set up some of its programmatic work. In the same year, I met up with Anne Michaud, the Co-ordinator of the Femmes et ville in Montreál. This introduction to Anne was brought about by Soraya Smaoun, who works for the United Nations Safer Cities Programme and who has made significant gains in trying to link up feminists on the African continent to pursue the agenda of engendering the work of local government. Both these women have been engaged in feminist activism. Anne has extensive experience in developing initiatives aimed at combating violence against women perpetrated in public spaces. She inspired me to develop a local safety audit initiative. Soraya provided advice, encouragement and opportunities to engage with other feminists on the continent who could inform the development of the project. Because the Montreál model was not suited to our local context, I adapted the methodology substantively and also tried to pay particular attention to developing ways of involving and working with both women in organised civil society and women in communities in planning and implementing municipal projects. The questionnaire that was developed to collect the safety audit data took into account work done by the Femmes et ville in Montreál, the Daphne Programme (Daphne document, translated from Guide d' Enquete sur la Securite des Femmes et ville, published by the City of Montreal, 1996), the Women's Action Centre Against Violence (Women's Safety Audit Implementation Guide, 1996) and the work of Gerda Wekerle and Carolyn Whitzman (1995) on engendered urban design and planning.

Following the meetings with Anne Michaud and Soraya Smaoun, I developed a project proposal which set out the rationale for the safety audit, the proposed objectives and methodology and ways in which its implementation and outcomes could be monitored and assessed. This proposal was then submitted to and discussed with my immediate manager who was keen to take the initiative on as one of the flagship projects of the Safer Cities Programme, pursuant to approval from the management board. I then met up with Cathy Glover, a feminist located in the City's

Spatial Planning Department. We discussed the prospects of pursuing this as a joint initiative between the Safer Cities Programme and the Spatial Planning Department. Cathy then secured the support of her manager and we then decided that the project was more likely to receive support from the management board if we secured external funding. We submitted the project proposal to potential donors and received funding commitments from the United Nations Safer Cities Programme and the National Crime Prevention Strategy. I then accompanied my manager to present the project to the management board, where it was officially adopted as an initiative of the City. It is interesting to note that it was generally not the practice for junior officials to present to the management board, this was the prerogative of senior managers. I, however, had become accustomed to delivering presentations on initiatives that related to improved service delivery to women, possibly because the male managers felt intimidated by the prospect of contending with the potential questions that these presentations would elicit.

The support accorded to the safety audit project is likely to have been influenced by the national policy and political environment at the time. There are two critical aspects of this context that was likely to have swayed support in favour of the implementation of the project. The first of these is the fact that the South African Gender Policy stipulates that local government is responsible for gender sensitive service delivery, placing the dilemma upon the respective municipalities of finding practical ways of giving effect to this. The second aspect is the fact that recent policy shifts have given local government a role in social crime prevention, a role that most municipalities are still grappling with. Specific policy reference to the importance of safety as a variable in urban design and planning processes has also recently become one of the pillars of the National Crime Prevention Strategy (1996), where the high incidence of many forms of crime is linked to environments that are conducive to criminal activity. Local authorities are also identified as being instrumental in playing a critical role in adapting the built environment to reduce the potential for criminal activity. The political context was therefore expedient for the safety audit project to receive support from the management board. Of note, is the

fact that whilst this support was initially expressed, this did not come to translate into practical initiatives, as will be illustrated.

D. THE SAFETY AUDIT

To facilitate an understanding of the safety audit's related processes, the different phases of the project will be outlined. At the inception of the project, a reference team that comprised six stakeholders was constituted so that a range of related skills could inform the project. The reference team was tasked with developing the project methodology and advising on all aspects of project implementation. The team comprised both city officials and civil society organisations working in the field of women and safety. The City's Gender Forum[28] was asked to provide technical advice and support to the project. The process for selecting women in organised civil society was based on two things, the first being that the women concerned needed to have related skills and expertise that would add value to the project. Secondly, I opted to approach people that I had networked with and whom I knew would be prepared to contribute without being remunerated, as the project budget did not allow for this. These women are as follows: Shanaaz Mathews (Domestic Violence Project Co-ordinator at the Gender Advocacy Project), Jasmien Nordien (Women and Peace Co-ordinator at U Managing Conflict) and Xoliswa Hewu (Local Government Co-ordinator at the Institute for Democracy in South Africa).

The process for selecting the women from Nyanga entailed engaging with community-based structures, non-government organisations, community leaders and ward councillors to request advice on the process for identifying women from the community who would serve on the reference team. The South African National Civic Organisation (SANCO) was identified as the primary community structure to consult with. SANCO was then requested to market the project in the community and to facilitate a community process whereby one woman from each of the eight units in Nyanga was chosen to serve on the reference team. Briefings were then held with

[28] The City's Gender Forum was established in 1998 by a group of like-minded feminists who wanted to create a space for women working for the City to congregate and talk about and address gender-related issues of concern within the organisation. The Gender Forum no longer exists, as it disbanded when the women who were spearheading it left the employment of the City.

the women selected, followed by a workshop on the safety audit concept. The women from Nyanga who served on the reference team are: Cynthia Gebuza, Mrs Gxotelwa, Hadifeli Jonana, Nompumelelo Guza and Adelaide Varne.

The actual audit took place at night, based upon a decision of the women from Nyanga, as this is the time when they felt most vulnerable in urban spaces. The team was therefore accompanied by a group of Civic Patrol officials, whose presence ensured the safety of the team. The Civic Patrol team also took responsibility for escorting the women home. The team was equipped with a map showing the audit area and debriefing location and the audit questionnaire. The audit started at Lansdowne Road and stretched northwards into Sithandathu Avenue, ending at the Zolani Centre. Each participant was asked to tap into her knowledge and experience of the area to sketch a picture of safety/ insecurity in the audited site by providing information on which areas felt safe, which felt unsafe and the attendant reasons for this. A questionnaire was used to guide this process. The audit was conducted in Xhosa and because of my lack of proficiency in the language, a colleague who worked for the City conducted the audit and provided translation services for me. Once the audit had been completed, participants were debriefed. The debriefing session entailed going through the audit findings and discussing and clarifying them where necessary. The debriefing session was also used to prioritise the findings.[29] Pursuant to the audit, the data gathered was collated and compiled in a project report. A community focus group meeting was then called to discuss the draft report. This meeting was critical in eliciting the broader community's support for the findings.

The project findings were then referred to the relevant directorates and branches in the municipality. A brainstorming session of related municipal departments was called to explore ways of taking up the audit findings. This session led to the development of an intervention strategy, which was communicated to audit participants and related community structures for comment. The intervention strategy essentially comprised a plan that would address aspects of the built environment such as improved street lighting and trimming trees that served as potential hiding

[29] These findings are attached as an annexure.

places[30] to decrease the potential for acts of violence against women in the Nyanga area. This plan was based on the problems with the urban environment identified by the women. At this point, an independent contractor was brought in to hold one-on-one consultations with the women involved in the project to ascertain from them their experiences of working with the feminist bureaucrats and the extent to which they felt that they had been involved in all aspects of project planning and implementation. This feedback proved to be overwhelmingly positive and the project was clearly successful in its endeavours to work towards the feminist goals of working with women in contexts where the power dynamics in relationships are equalised.

At this point, something needs to be said about the narrative of what ensued after the project came to a close. From a process perspective, Cathy and my role was officially supposed to have terminated once we had presented the project findings to the management board and ensured that all the relevant line departments were informed of their respective responsibilities in acting on the project recommendations. Unofficially, Cathy and I had intended to play a facilitative-cum-lobbying role by monitoring how this was being implemented and exerting pressure where necessary. We had agreed to play this role and ensure that the project deliverables were presented to the community. We had also planned to host a community workshop about six months after the project recommendations were supposed to have been delivered on, to engage in a community assessment of the project as a whole. Cathy and I jointly drafted the project report to the management board and secured access to present these. Shortly hereafter I took a decision to leave the employ of the City, partly due to frustrations with the work context. After I had left, Cathy took sole responsibility for liaising with the respective line departments to ensure that work was on track to begin implementing the project recommendations. A few months after I had departed, Cathy also took a decision to seek employment elsewhere. Up until the point of her departure, appearances were such that everything would run smoothly. Once she left the employ of the City, however, nothing happened to give effect to the implementation of the project recommendations. Even though we tried to follow up on this, the fact that we were

[30] Refer to the annexure on the safety audit findings for other aspects of the urban environment that

not located on the inside of the City bureaucracy meant that it was easy to offer us complicated excuses as to why there was no delivery. Eventually we were told that it was no longer a priority and a decision had been taken to not pursue work on the Nyanga project and that work on the project had been terminated.

At the time that the decision to terminate work on the project was taken, a further decision was taken by management that the model for conducting safety audits was politically expedient to pursue and that the methodology would be employed to give effect to the City's need to pursue community safety initiatives. The City, however, decided to adapt the methodology so that it lost its focus on women and focused on working with communities in general. Whereas the initial methodology tapped into women's experiences of public violence and worked with women as a focus group, followed by broader community meetings and consultations, the adapted methodology obliterated any focus on working with women in isolation. These adapted safety audits were subsequently conducted in Lavender Hill, Tafelsig and Mitchells Plain. The safety audit concept came to the attention of the provincial government, which adopted the revised concept as a priority community safety initiative.

E. REFLECTIONS ON THE SAFETY AUDIT

THE EFFICACY/ LACK THEREOF OF GENDER PLANNING MODELS

Initially, one of the more peripheral interests of this project was to explore how to best incorporate a gender analysis into public sector planning processes. This was based on the premise that the design of planning processes impacts critically upon the extent to which service delivery is developmental or not and the extent to which it will positively impact upon the lives of women and that gender blind and gender-neutral approaches to planning adversely affect the adoption of developmental strategies that acknowledge and serve to bridge inequity between men and women.

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the women identified as being problematic.

One of the guiding assumptions of this study was that public sector developmental projects and initiatives in South Africa are characterised by a lack of gender sensitive planning methodologies. This is in keeping with an international trend where gender, as an analytic category, is yet to receive substantive legitimacy in planning traditions. Moser (1993) argues that this is evident when one considers that analytic categories, such as the environment; land-use; or town planning, have become significant planning indicators in their own right. Planners working within such traditions are expected to have comprehensive training as a prerequisite. The incorporation of gender as an analytical category into planning processes has not, however, assumed the same status. An attendant problem in incorporating a sensitivity to women's needs and interests into the planning of developmental initiatives is that there is a lack of training amongst public sector officials in the methodological skills entailed.

I began this project wanting to experiment with ways of using methodological processes and tools associated with gender planning, particularly the Moser model, and wanting to develop localised frameworks for engaging with gender as an analytic variable in public sector planning processes. I soon came to realise that the integration of a gender analysis into planning, should not be approached from a purely technicist perspective, in terms of dogmatically following prescribed processes and trying to transfer these to a multitude of different contexts where they are not suitably located. One of the key problems of the policy making process is the attempt to develop guidelines and frameworks that are able to accommodate the fluid nature of people's lives, that gives effect to their multiple identities and realities. The nature of policy and its associated planning processes generally entail the formulation of frameworks for resolving problems at national level which require a certain fixity and the assumption of categories of people with definitive identities and a flattening of the complexities of difference. This then raises the question as to whether it is possible to balance this tension and engage in policy discourse in ways that do not lead to the normalisation and standardisation of reality (Spiegel et al, 1998).

In recent years, a variety of theoretical frameworks, each with its own set of related concepts, tools and methodologies, have emerged as an intellectual framework within which gender sensitive planning can be located. Framework, in this sense, is understood as being the methods of research and planning for assessing and promoting gender issues in institutions whilst tools refer to the observation and other research techniques that users of gender frameworks employ (March et al, 1999). Gender planning frameworks have operated from the premise that women continue to be systematically discriminated against and that a consideration of the gendered implications of all planning needs to integrated into the planning process. Some of the gender planning frameworks that have emerged include the Harvard Analytical Framework (developed by the Harvard Institute for International Development in collaboration with the WID Office of USAID), the Moser framework, the Gender Analysis Matrix (developed by Rani Parker, a practitioner working for a middle-eastern NGO), the Capacities and Vulnerabilities Framework (developed by Sarah Longwe on the African continent), the Social Relations Approach (developed by Naila Kabeer as a socialist feminist approach to gender and development planning) and Caren Levy's web of institutionalisation (a diagnostic framework for the institutionalisation of a gender perspective into development policy, planning and practice).

Even though on the whole, the frameworks differ, there appear to be about five thematic areas that many of them strive to deal with conceptually. The first of these is that they attempt to name and make visible the work that women do so that developmental planning can take cognisance of the roles and responsibilities of women. Identifying the roles that women take on and the tasks that they perform is critical in identifying their needs and interests. Gender planning frameworks therefore generally tend to develop tools that can be used to identify women's roles and to encourage analytical thought about women's related needs and interests.

The second thing that many of the frameworks strive to do is to elicit the participation of women so that they are actively involved in planning and decision-making processes that impact upon the quality of their lives. Most of the gender planning

frameworks therefore encourage a participatory approach that operates from the premise that public sector planners cannot work in isolation, but need to integrally involve targeted groups in all stages of developmental planning. This approach acknowledges that those who are the recipients of development have first hand knowledge of what their needs and priorities are.

Thirdly, many of the frameworks invest energy into thinking about the institutionalisation of ways of mainstreaming gender into organisational planning processes. This is because institutionalisation is required to avoid sporadic use of gender planning and to effect long term, systemic changes in power imbalances. The fourth general area of commonality in gender planning frameworks is data is disaggregated by gender so as to bring to the fore the gendered dimensions of developmental initiatives.

Lastly, many of the frameworks provide a diagnostic and operational framework for assessing the impact of developmental initiatives on women's lives. Very often, these are in the form of methodological tools for exploring the impact of developmental initiatives in structured ways. The frameworks generally attempt to re-look at the objectives of the initiative and assess to what extent these have been delivered on.

Some of the critiques of the gender planning frameworks will be discussed insofar as my experience of attempting to use them in the safety audit confirms these. One of the main critiques has been the fact that they appear to be 'seductively universal' and entail the use of tools that are designed to be universally applicable (Pearson,1996). Experience has shown that the frameworks are not universal in their applicability and at best, are only useful when they can be adapted to suit a particular context. Many of the frameworks entail the use of different forms of quantifying predetermined response sets of information such as checklists that strive to capture information about women's lived realities, needs and roles. One of the consequences of the usage of these tools is that the information that they capture becomes reductionist in the sense that they convert complex lived realities into pictures of standardised realities that obliterate differences. The frameworks also comprise methodologies

and tools that are administrative in nature. Yet, in essence, the frameworks are devised by people with political agendas to work towards political aims. They cannot therefore be merely technical tools, deprived of a political dimension. March et al (1999) argue that the frameworks should be seen as being political instruments and if they are not used in this way, then they are rendered sterile and are reduced to being tokenistic tools useful only for superficial changes at the expense of long lasting transformations.

I found gender planning frameworks to be a useful starting point in terms of structuring one's thoughts around how to remain cognisant of the impact of the safety audit on women and men. However, this is said in the context of acknowledging their limitations in terms of their capacity to spontaneously respond to the specifics of the context at hand. It became necessary at the outset of the project to abandon the attempt to experiment with the Moser framework, as the process became too technocratic. So even though a gender analysis informed the project at all times, the methodologies of the different models were not suitable to use in a context where many of the women on the reference team did not have basic literacy skills and were generally not amenable to working in such a prescriptive manner.

WORKING WITH WOMEN IN PROJECT TEAM PLANNING

One of the positive outcomes of the project methodology was that it enabled the feminist goal of including women from both organised civil society and the broader Nyanga community in all aspects of project planning and implementation. This group of women, together with the women officials from the City, constituted the reference team for the project. The primary role of this team was to advise on all aspects of project planning and implementation and to develop the related methodological tools.

As work on the project progressed, it became apparent that because the project depended on the goodwill of the women from organised civil society and women in the community, it became almost impossible to gather all the women together at any one meeting. A few of the women also stopped participating at some point. This can be attributed to the fact that participation on the reference team took place in a

context where all the women concerned had many other responsibilities. In the case of the women working for NGOs, their work schedules at times meant that work on the safety audit was not a priority. Initially, eight community women from each of the units in Nyanga had offered to serve on the reference team. Eventually, this was reduced to five women who participated on a regular basis. On the whole, most women were dedicated and made their contribution purely on the basis of social responsibility.

In light of the above, it is important that the work of women who serve on such reference teams and the time that they invest, is properly valued and accredited. If this is not done, the perception that the role that women play in reproductive, productive and community work is of no great social and monetary value is perpetuated. An incentive-based system will serve to articulate the value ascribed to such participation. This need not necessarily be a monetary incentive, as there are many creative ways of approaching this.[31]

RESPONDING TO WOMEN'S CONTEXTS

The safety audit methodology was also successful in remaining cognisant of and sensitive to the broader contexts of the women involved in the reference team. The project reinforced the need to engage with these contexts in planning processes and to consider how issues such as the planning of meetings, considering childcare arrangements, making safe transport arrangements and the like all have gendered aspects to them. Because of the societal roles ascribed to them, women play a substantive role in childcare, caring for the aged and the home etc. These responsibilities were factored into planning suitable meeting times and in creating an enabling environment within they could participate. No budget had been allocated for childcare as women-focused initiatives generally attract meagre resources. This meant that a child-friendly meeting environment had to be constructed. This worked well on the whole and required a predisposition to being prepared to dispose of orthodox meeting culture and inculcating a very different kind of meeting ethos. The

[31] Such as being able to make use of municipal venues at no cost, civic awards ceremonies, access to municipal services such as electricity, water, rented housing for a determined period at a reduced cost etc.

benefit derived was that women were able to participate, secure in the knowledge that their children were in a safe environment into which they were welcomed. Much of the time, meetings had to be conducted in the community itself as this was the easiest arrangement for the women. Within the absence of a budget for this, we were therefore able to employ creative measures to enable women to participate.

CREATING ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS FOR COMMUNICATION

The safety audit sought to ensure that the women involved participated in all aspects of the project methodology. The level of their participation was therefore consistently monitored. In sync with this, efforts were invested into creating an enabling environment for participation. This entailed continuous reflection on the undercurrent power dynamics at play between the different roleplayers involved. For example, attention was paid to identifying the dominant voices and the factors at play that rendered these voices dominant. Similarly, the silent voices were identified and we sought to understand the reasons for these silences. The role of the feminist facilitators involved was to find ways of balancing out the levels of contribution i.e. employing strategies to tone down the dominant voices and to liberate the silent ones.

In dealing with the power dynamics at play, it was important to factor in the broader social context of the stakeholders. Factors such as race, culture and class play an important role in understanding and dealing with such dynamics. For example, even though most of the women involved had a functional knowledge of English, we found that participation was enhanced when the meetings actively encouraged the use of Xhosa. We found that it is critical that all the women involved are enabled to participate and that the power barriers were broken down to elicit meaningful participation.

I found that as the person managing the project, I had a fair amount of power in my own right in that I had easy access to relevant contextual information. I was also the person liaising with management on all matters pertaining to the project and this gave me access to strategic roleplayers that others on the reference team did not

have. Because I had conceptualised the local project, I had also spent a fair amount of time thinking it and often had opinions that I was bursting to articulate. I therefore found that I, at times, had to tone down my contribution at reference team meetings to create more space for others to make their voices heard. This had to be done in a manner where I balanced sharing the information that I was privy to and where I remained silent at strategic points to allow others to claim the space to talk.

Another dynamic at play was the age factor, which I was consistently aware of and initially uncomfortable about. Most of the women from the City (myself included) and those from the NGO sector, were all in the age group of "thirty-something". Our youth, compared with the seniority of the women from the Nyanga community, meant that we were consciously aware of according the older women respect. In a sense, we also tried to downplay our own positions of power as women who had greater access to economic resources and who represented the City, placed in a position where we were providing services to women who were older. I sometimes felt that the older women were also aware of this dynamic and that they expected us to accord them their status and power as older women.

We also found that the women involved came to the safety audit meetings with a range of different pressing issues that did not necessarily relate to the subject matter at hand. In some ways, they were so desperate to be afforded an opportunity to engage with a government structure, that they unleashed all the pent-up service delivery issues that are sites of frustration for them. We found that when dealing with such situations, a fine balance needs to be drawn between silencing women's voices when they need to engage on such issues and creating unrealistic expectations regarding the capacity for resolving these issues in the forum at hand. It was therefore important to refer and re-channel issues where possible and to play a facilitative role in this regard. This required a sense of commitment that went beyond the scope of our duty, but was critical in working with women in a way that enabled them to address their needs as they defined them. Of critical importance, was that the municipality alone did not define the agenda for dialogue and that space was created to engage on issues that were raised by the women. Facilitating a dialogue

of this nature therefore invariably entails the flexibility to talk about issues that were not planned for. At times, this was an overwhelming experience for the officials concerned. For example, in the course of planning and working on the safety audit project, all the women from Nyanga at some point disclosed that they had had personal experiences of gender-based violence. This had not been anticipated, but emerged in the course of dialogue and the importance of this and the attendant emotive energies that surfaced meant that space had to be allocated to engage on this. The agenda for the meeting was dispensed with in this context and very personal, confidential discussions ensued. Assistance was then provided in helping women to link up with counselling services.

From a practical point of view, the energy invested in integrally involving women from civil society in all aspects of project planning and implementation, was a time consuming process that entailed hard work. In retrospect, it would have been significantly easier from a bureaucratic perspective, to work without this kind of participation. Given that bureaucracies can be notorious for their obsession with the quantitative outputs of their employees, my performance when viewed in this way, did not necessarily reflect many quantitative outputs. This can be attributed to the fact that it took a six-month period to roll-out the project in a participatory manner that was acceptable to the key stakeholders. From a more qualitative perspective, however, the time invested in ensuring that the project became a joint initiative between the City and women in civil society, led to the community taking ownership of the initiative and being integrally involved in and supportive of the project's developmental objectives. Working in a manner where it is not the role of bureaucrats to define what community needs are, how these should be addressed and how resources should be allocated in this regard, but rather the role of people in the community and where the role of the bureaucrat is to use her specialist knowledge to advise and facilitate the planning process, is a far more enriching and progressive way for municipalities to address women's needs.

THE COSTS OF NON-COMPLETION

An independent evaluation was conducted on the processes entailed in the execution of the project, which entailed one-on-one interviews with the women who were involved in the initiative to elicit their assessment of working on the project. During the course of these interviews, many of the women revealed their concerns that the municipality had become known for its inability to work with people in the community. Where such attempts had existed, there had been little or no follow-through pursuant to interactions with the municipality. The City had therefore become renowned for making commitments or raising expectations that were not delivered on. The women articulated grave concern about their inability to trust the City to accord public participation initiatives the seriousness that it deserves. Many of them had embarked on this initiative because of the way in which we had engaged with them, which gave them hope that this time the situation would be different. The nature of the relationship with feminist bureaucrats and the manner in which they were given power to be equal partners in the planning process, made many of them believe that there was hope for developing a mutually beneficial and reciprocal relationship with the City. Most of them commented that the "real test" would be the extent to which the recommendations that arose out of the project would be followed through. In the end, the failure of the project to result in deliverables served to undermine the time, energy and trust invested into the project by the women who participated. It served to deplete women's willingness to contribute and to generate apathy in this regard.

In the previous Chapter, it was argued that the prevailing organisational discourse is the "official"/ "politically correct" discursive framework that is invoked to create the semblance of a gender sensitive environment. Yet, in substance, it is a superficial discourse, lacking in leverage because the councillors have no real conceptual understanding of why gender issues are important and how to go about undoing systemic gender inequity. Because the safety audit project was located in this organisational ambience, its non-completion and subsequent failure to deliver tangible improvements in women's lives must been in this context of an organisation

that "talks the talk" of furthering gender equity, without translating this into practical initiatives that really make a contribution in transforming the quality of women's lives.

In the context of working on the safety audit project, the personal effects of the failure of the project to deliver on the project recommendations affected me as the person who had conceptualised the project, formed relationships with the women involved and won their trust. The humiliation of being a part of an initiative that I sold to women that I eventually came to know and care about, and which then failed to deliver, was complex and a cause for serious introspection in terms of whether or not to pursue working as a feminist in this context. I have on many different occasions in the course of working for public sector bureaucracies, had reason to feel ashamed of the institution that I was working for and therefore representing. I need to point out, in all fairness, that there have also been moments when I have been proud to be associated with some initiatives pursued by South African bureaucracies. However, this does not detract from the moments of great shame, the safety audit project being a case in point. The dynamics and politics entailed in being an activist on the inside of a structure that one is lobbying to transform are complex. The line between identifying with the organisation which employs you and whose broader politics you support, and distancing yourself from actions based on problematic ideological assumptions and beliefs which serve to perpetuate gender inequity can be a difficult one to tread.

F. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, my experiences of working on the safety audit initiative illustrates how feminist bureaucrats are able to make inroads in securing organisational support for work aimed at enhancing the lives of women when the political context dictates that this is politically correct. As this case study also illustrates, the manner in which feminist bureaucrats opt to take up women's issues is eventually constrained by those in senior political and management positions, who on the whole (as the previous chapter illustrates), do not have an in-depth understanding of how to engage in gender analyses and how to transform the quality of women's lives in meaningful ways. The manner in which gender sensitive service delivery initiatives

are taken on, is therefore selective and dependent upon the extent to which the politicians and senior management are prepared to challenge the status quo. Because the political context dictates that the City needs to be seen to be engaging in gender-sensitive service delivery, the City feels the pressure of needing to be perceived as taking action in this regard. It has, however, been selective in how it chooses to take up these issues, as is illustrated by the way in which the safety audit focused on violence in the public domain. The safety audit case study further illustrates the manner in which the project was eventually appropriated as a model for engaging in community safety audits, but with a complete obliteration of its initial focus on women. By so doing, the intellectual work and practical initiatives of the feminist bureaucrats initially involved were taken up in a manner that annihilated its initial objectives and became a tool to focus on men and women, but without focusing on the gendered nature of the relationship between men and women. The safety audit also illustrates how the support given to the project dwindled and dissipated when the feminists driving the initiative left the employ of the City. The implication of this is that notwithstanding the political policy context, many gender-sensitive delivery initiatives are dependent upon the commitment espoused by feminist bureaucrats and that failing this commitment; many such initiatives are doomed to fail.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

A. CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this Chapter is primarily to draw out the key lessons learnt as a result of working on this project and to reflect on how successfully the research question has been addressed. The Chapter therefore firstly explores the extent to which public participation methodologies pursued by public bureaucracies provide meaningful spaces for women to articulate their voices in bureaucratic decision-making processes. Secondly, it considers whether or not the presence of feminists on the inside of state structures serves to facilitate the enhanced participation of women in civil society in bureaucratic decision-making processes. The implications of this for public participation processes and the development of gender sensitive public policy are then considered. The reflections on the research questions are then used to consider the implications for future research of this nature. This is followed by a discussion of the insights gained working with feminist research methodology and is followed by a short commentary on the efficacy of the research methods employed, both in relation to the interviews with councillors and the safety audit process. The Chapter closes with some thoughts on the relationship between feminism and bureaucracy.

B. KEY FINDINGS

The case study used for this project illustrates that when feminists design and co-ordinate public participation processes, women in civil society are indeed more likely to be accorded opportunities for participation. The interaction that took place between the feminist bureaucrats and the women in civil society clearly illustrated this to be the case. The women in civil society felt that they were included in all aspects of decision-making and project planning and that they were equal participants in this process. Their feedback confirms that they felt that their inputs were valued and taken seriously. At a very elementary level of analysis, it can therefore be inferred that the presence of feminists on the inside of bureaucratic structures is indeed likely to elicit enhanced public participation from women in civil society.

Yet, as this study has shown, when feminist-informed initiatives operate within unsupportive institutional contexts, this participation will not necessarily result in any tangible outcomes. The case study demonstrates how feminist initiatives can be used to create the impression of an institution taking up issues of gender in its work. As the interviews with the councillors illustrated in Chapter Four, it is politically strategic for the City to project itself as an institution that is cognisant of and sensitive to women's needs and actively pursuing practical initiatives to further gender equity. This is particularly so because the current national policy context dictates that municipalities need to take gender dynamics into account in their service delivery initiatives and the pressure is therefore felt to pursue such an agenda. The case study illustrates how, because of this policy context, the City saw the political importance of "talking the talk" and projecting an organisational image of the City as pursuing initiatives that serve to enhance the quality of women's lives. The skills of the feminist bureaucrats then became useful in creating this semblance and they were then used to be the public face behind such initiatives. Yet, the case study illustrated how such initiatives can then be subverted through inadequate resource allocations and according them no real institutional support other than the lip service paid to their importance. Support for the initiative was ultimately revoked at the point that it came to delivering on commitments. The outcome of the project was then that both the women bureaucrats and women in the community were used to become roleplayers in a "staged production" that portrayed the City as being cognisant of its role in gender sensitive service delivery, but did not yield any concrete results. The safety audit methodology was eventually "degendered" and appropriated in manner where it lost its initial focus on working with women. The adapted methodology targeted both women and men in communities and made no reference to considering the gendered dimensions of community safety.

At this point, I would like to return the research question of this study and reflect on my how my experiences in working on this project have shaped and shifted my thoughts in relation to it. The research question seeks to understand whether or not feminists should locate themselves on the inside of state structures to facilitate the

participation of women in civil society in the decision-making processes of public bureaucracies. As the case study of the safety audit project confirmed in Chapter Five, feminists have a contradictory relationship with the state. Women need political power to effect social transformation, but bureaucratic incursions do not appear to offer real power that serves to shift power imbalances in significant ways. The discursive frameworks and organisational ethos and practices of public bureaucratic institutions serve to entrench patterns of oppression and power imbalances. This renders it very difficult for feminists located on its inside to work within such frameworks to effect social transformation when public bureaucracies are inherently resistant to change.

In the literature review, the notion of women's lived realities as constituting a submerged voice in the discursive frameworks of public bureaucracies was explored. Together with other subjugated knowledges and experiences that are distributed in the discursive and institutional arena, women's submerged voice ends up being lost within the institutional framework. Patriarchal institutional contexts serve to insulate themselves from women's voices through dominant linguistic and institutional practices. As Ferguson (1984) argues, because we can speak no more than our language allows us to speak and can see no more than our social context allows us to experience, altering the terms of public discourse must entail strategies for making sense of different experiences. The articulation of women's voices entails breaking into the dialectic speech and social structure and changing the relationship between them. Both our institutions and our speech therefore have to be transformed because it is the relationship between them that defines them. There is a need to search for alternatives to the discursive and institutional practices of public bureaucracies in the submerged and devalued experiences of women.

Foucault (1991) argues that opposition voices strive to change the nature of how power dynamics are constituted in institutional contexts. Ultimately, however, it is a plurality of resistances both from within and outside of the bureaucracy that will serve to shift and reshape the way power is constituted. Foucault emphasises that the goal of such resistance is not to take over and replace the dominant discourse of

bureaucratic capitalism, but to render it obsolete and to reveal the partiality of its universal claims and the inadequacy of institutional practices. It is important to note that discourses of resistance are not necessarily homogenous and non-contested, but that they exist as various layers of meaning and are articulated through an ongoing process of discovery and shifts in consciousness where insights are recrafted to give meaning to women's lived reality.

Feminist discourse offers incursions into reconceptualising the terms of political life in public bureaucracies and challenges the discursive framework within which particular configurations of power, knowledge and practice sustain and make claims on institutional culture. However, the dominant norms that prescribe how and when voices are articulated and the courses of action pursued, present very limited opportunities for feminist discourse to thrive in bureaucratic institutional settings. In her concluding arguments on the relationship between bureaucracy and feminism, Ferguson argues that the two are not compatible. She argues that like all forms of opposition, feminism is endangered by close contact with bureaucratic linguistic and institutional forms and that ultimately, feminism can be absorbed, integrated and eventually rendered harmless in a bureaucratic context. Bureaucracy can be resisted, but not on its own terms, since these terms will serve to render opposition invisible. The essence of her argument is that feminists may well survive in bureaucracies with their integrity and commitment intact, but they will in all likelihood not prosper within the organisation on its terms and will not be able to change these terms in any significant manner. Resistance and survival are therefore possible in the bureaucratic context, but the chances of resistance and thriving are ultimately slim. This is because the conformity that bureaucratic participation requires affects the way one thinks, feels, responds to others, conceives of and presents oneself. For this reason, Foucault argues that successful infiltration into the bureaucratic realm calls for each individual to subject their body, gestures, behaviour, aptitudes and achievements, to the "universal reign of the normative".

Notwithstanding the sites of tension between feminism and bureaucracy, disengagement with bureaucratic power is not an option. If feminists opt not to locate

themselves on the inside of state structures, then the alternative is to be located within civil society. Mama (2000) points out that civil society has increasingly been conceptualised as an alternative to the failings of bad government. Civil society has been portrayed as an important site of governance, as being instrumental to democratisation and is increasingly viewed as offering a panacea for the weaknesses and failings of the state. However, she questions the extent to which this view is realistic, given that civil society is often very "uncivil" to women and that patriarchal structures ensure that civil society is not organised around women's interests. Some feminists have argued against the location of feminists on the inside of state structures because the environment is antithetical to feminist consciousness. Yet, it is also clear that working "outside" the state in civil society is not without its attendant challenges.

It is important to note that the political context within which any given bureaucracy is located also determines whether or not it is feasible to engage with it or not. Bureaucracies located in authoritative regimes, for example, do not tend to offer incursions for feminist engagement. In the South African context, there have been instances where feminists have made significant gains in engaging with bureaucratic structures. In different national contexts, engagement within the political arena can work for or against the resolution of practical and strategic gender interests. Much therefore depends upon the political climate and support for change (Staudt, 1998).

Feminist activists therefore cannot turn their backs on the key sites of governance and resource allocation. The state regulates women's lives through its legislative and policy stances and appropriates and directs the allocation of public resources. Engagement with bureaucratic channels are sometimes the only way in which points of contestation can be raised. The question is therefore not whether or not to engage with such channels, but to acknowledge both the difficulty of so doing and the limitations in what can be accomplished in directing opposition through them.

Because it is critical that women's interests are institutionalised in the state, it is important that feminists establish a strategic presence in policy-making. This strategic presence ensures interest representation at the level of the state. Inasmuch as feminists need to resist oppressive state practices, it is strategic to ensure that feminist interests are articulated in state bureaucracies. It is therefore critical that there are concerted efforts to introduce processes of articulating and aggregating women's interests in important political arenas (Goetz,1995).

Staudt (1998) identifies several different levels at which bureaucracies are gendered. At each of these levels, it is important that feminists focus their strategic and political energies to work towards undoing systemic gendered inequities. One of these levels is that of bureaucratic outcomes, i.e. the substance of what bureaucracies produce, provide or control in the way of projects, programmes and policies. Another level is that of the institution as the means by which gendered outcomes have heretofore been produced and which should be a key locus of understanding the nature of social problems and their solutions. Yet another level is that of the bureaucrats who give life to institutions, their balance in terms of representation or lack of it, professional demeanor, discourse and culture of elitism or egalitarianism. Within each of these sites, it is critical that there are feminist points of pressure.

This also raises the question as to what extent the location of greater numbers of feminists in strategic positions in public bureaucracies will serve to shift power imbalances in significant ways. As the safety audit case study has shown, a small number of feminists can make a significant difference in securing resources for initiatives that aim to improve women's lives and in working with women in ways that transcend the traditional models of public participation and where the power imbalances between bureaucrats and civil society, in all aspects of project planning and implementation, are reduced. The case study also shows how when feminists are no longer around to spearhead such initiatives, institutional support is withdrawn. This raises the question as to whether it is the creation of a critical mass or a critical consciousness that is required to transform the gendered nature of organisations. Taylor (2000) argues that the inclusion of increased numbers of women in politics

and bureaucracies has not led to a significant shift in the balance of power between women and men. One of the reasons for this, is the fact that the increasing representation of women in state structures has not necessarily correlated with increased initiatives to undo systemic gender inequity. There are generally less women than men in state structures. Of the women located in state structures, many do not have a feminist consciousness. The fact that the political landscape is one where a feminist presence is virtually non-existent, has constrained our ability to shift the balance of power in more significant ways. Many feminists have, however, argued that the relationship between women and the state cannot be transformed by the mere integration of women or feminists into bureaucracies. What is required to effect significant transformation is not only an increase in the numbers of feminists in bureaucracies, but concentrated efforts to radically transform these sites of power by acting as pressure points from both within and from the outside. This study confirms that the state, particularly in the South African post transition context, is not monolithic in nature, and there are some spaces within which feminists can mobilise and work towards pursuing feminist agendas.

In grappling with whether or not feminists should locate themselves on the inside of state structures or not, my preconceived response to this debate was that it is an important site of location for feminists. This can possibly be attributed to my subconscious need to validate my own professional location. I was therefore not prepared to encounter the doubt that work on this project raised for me in this regard. It yielded many insights on the constrained parameters within which feminist bureaucrats are able to manoeuvre, and the limitations of contemporary engagement within public bureaucracies. It also resulted in reflections on the personal effects, such as the sense of demoralisation and the fatigue factor, entailed in such work. This has prompted me to speak to other feminists located in public bureaucracies and to find that there are great similarities with my own experiences in terms of the limitations within which gains can be made and what these cost us at a personal level. My shift in thinking here has caused me to reassess the contribution that I can realistically make in my current role as the researcher to Parliament's Joint Monitoring Committee on the Improvement of Quality of Life and Status of Women. I

am not arguing that all feminist bureaucrats should consider disengagement from this kind of work. I think that if we are aware of the limitations of what can be achieved in bureaucratic contexts and focus work in our own small spheres of influence, then it is possible to plant seeds for social transformation.

In relation to the initial attempts of this project to examine the usefulness of gender planning frameworks in public bureaucratic contexts, I have also developed my thinking in this regard. Work on the safety audit initiative confirmed that although the gender planning frameworks do add value in terms of contributing towards a conceptual debate as to how we engage with gender as an analytical variable in the planning process, their implementation in the South African developmental context is hampered by their technocratic approach to dealing with complex developmental issues. In some instances, they could even serve to cause more harm than good to women. Work on the safety audit therefore highlighted three key issues. The first is that the gender planning frameworks are based upon the well-meant intention of providing adequate spaces within planning processes for the articulation of women's voices. They serve, therefore, to remind planners about the value and importance of engaging with women's voices. The second key issue is that reducing complex information about women's lived realities to fit into predetermined frameworks, can result in a loss of valuable information about their contexts, the complexity of their lives and their realities. Public bureaucracies have tended to demonstrate an affinity for methodological tools that can convert complex realities into checklists. Yet, attempting, for example, to hear narratives about women's lived realities in relation to their service delivery needs will not necessarily be enhanced by predetermined tools by which one merely attempts to quantitatively gauge women's needs and issues. In order to truly listen to, hear and engage with the narrative of women's experiences, there is a need to cast aside preconceived notions of what will transpire in this process and to strive towards listening to the essence of what is being articulated in public consultations with women. Thirdly, the implications of the information derived from the gender planning frameworks do not necessarily translate easily into practical policy steps. This is because the policy process is far more complex in reality. Lastly, because policy is a highly political process, models of public

consultation that create open spaces for dialoguing and engaging with the political issues at hand, are far more likely to afford women genuine opportunities to make themselves heard.

C. IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESSES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENDER SENSITIVE PUBLIC POLICY

In the literature review, I expressed an intellectual interest in Chomsky's argument that the arena for public participation has been greatly diminished and that states are consequently engaged in a massive public relations industry that entails engineering public participation processes so that a public perception is created that civil society has impacted upon and determined important state policy decisions. Without detracting from the fact that there are instances in which civil society has made strategic interventions that have impacted upon state policy, the case study used for the purposes of this study shows that there are also instances where public participation exercises are not followed through on and where there is no accountability to the people who participated in such processes. In the course of my experiences of working in public bureaucracies, I have noted a link between political outcomes and groups that are well versed in advocacy and lobbying strategies and who have a relatively sophisticated understanding of the political process. These groups usually engage in professional advocacy work, have political and strategic skills and are either from an NGO or academic background. They tend to employ more aggressive lobbying strategies and have a sound conceptual grasp of the inroads for public participation and how to use these and how to ensure that there is political follow-up and accountability to the inputs that they make. These groups are more likely to have a real impact on public policy.

In the course of my experiences, I have also noted that socially vulnerable groups such as poor women with little or no education, are less likely to impact upon political outcomes. This can be ascribed to a number of attendant reasons such as a lack of resources to participate, a less aggressive advocacy strategy and the lack of a conceptual understanding as to how the political process works, where the strategic

points of intervention are and how to hold politicians accountable. Women who are powerless in a social, political and economic sense, tend to have a harder time contending with the power embedded in public institutions. The irony here of course is that these are the women whose voices most need to be heard in state arenas. It is therefore easier for the state to offer spaces to socially vulnerable women that give the semblance of listening to women's voices without a correlation between actually listening to these voices and acting upon them. One of the purposes of these public participation exercises is to create a sense of public well-being in the political system and to justify the jobs of the bureaucratic officials who are employed to engage in work of this nature.

Where such strategies are pursued, there seems to be little or no understanding of the longer-term damage that a lack of follow-through can cause. One repercussion is a consequent loss of faith in the political process and the rise of public participation apathy where people get to a point of being fatigued by public consultation processes that yield no results. The point to be emphasised is that the state constructs a range of relations that position people in ways that make the political system work. Where possible, the state will at times create the illusion of engaging with women to create the sense that it has fulfilled its mandate in involving women in the political system. Whilst this point is one of the main reflections that I want to emphasise, it does not intend to negate Tsikata's (2000) argument that the state is not intrinsically "bad", whilst civil society is intrinsically "good". This would serve to over-simplify the complex relations that govern the interaction between civil society and the state and would discredit the experiences of many women who have turned to the state in order to challenge gender-based discrimination. The challenge for feminists is to negotiate their way through the complex and shifting allegiances between these two sets of arenas.

D. IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This safety audit project has illustrated that because of the dominant institutional discursive frameworks and organisational practices in public bureaucracies, the transformative efforts of feminists in these sites will be subjected to constraints in

terms of what can be achieved in transforming bureaucratic organisational cultures. This should not detract from the fact that the location of feminists on the inside of bureaucracies is strategic in terms of sowing seeds for social and political transformation and for serving as a pressure point for change within a constrained sphere of influence. What is important is that the pressures entailed in such work are acknowledged. In order to further explore the tensions between what can be achieved and the limitations incumbent upon this, there is a need for more knowledge to be produced on the conditions under which feminists can retain their autonomy from the state and still use political spaces for feminist gains. There is also a need for knowledge that pertains to how feminists can, both individually and collectively, engage more effectively with the state to transform its policies, programmes and structures without being neutralised.

E. REFLECTIONS ON FEMINIST RESEARCH EPISTEMOLOGIES

Work on this project addressed some critical methodological concerns that have long since been the subject of feminist enquiry. In relation to the feminist methodological innovations that create spaces for the articulation of voice as an integral part of the research process, I spent much energy reflecting on the tension that ensued in the research interviews between endeavours to hear and listen to voice and the practicalities of interviewing men. I approached the interviews cognisant of the feminist methodological concern with creating spaces for dialoguing and maximising the potential for the research respondents to articulate their voices and claim space to talk in their own terms. I soon realised, however, that there are different dynamics at play when a woman interviews men, which necessitate a different approach. The underlying power dynamics that prevailed where they claimed too much space to talk and determined the agenda of the dialogue and the ways in which it flowed, meant that I had to challenge this by drawing boundaries as to what I was prepared to listen to. I also opted to then make periodic interventions to ensure that I also influenced the flow of the dialogue and its agenda. In this process, my interviewing skills were enhanced.

In relation to creating spaces for the articulation of women's voices in the processes of the safety audit project, I learned the value of being cognisant of the underlying power dynamics inherent in dialoguing and how one can employ strategies to create an ambience within which previously silent voices can begin to liberate themselves and dominant voices can be toned down. In short, my facilitation skills were improved upon and I came to realise the valuable role that I am able to play in shifting the dynamics of power in the dialoguing process. The trajectory of the safety audit as a process within which the women involved started out by being relatively silent and evolved to a point of feeling safe enough to use the spaces created for them to articulate their voices, illustrates how effective feminist techniques to enhance participation and dialogue can be.

Initially, I struggled with placing myself in the same critical plane as the research participants/ respondents. My academic background has been in political studies where I had not been exposed to feminist research methodology and had been taught to use research methods that rendered my subjectivity invisible in the research process. At the outset of the project, I found it difficult to use my subjectivity as a resource for providing insights into the relational aspects of my research methods. It was therefore challenging to examine my research methods in relation to my individuality in terms of my historical, cultural and social contexts. The usage of this subjective element served to add value to the research process and enabled me to reflect upon and understand my relationship to it. Feminist research methods provide scope for reflecting on the researcher's emotional involvement in the research process. I found this beneficial in resolving some of my own feelings about the project. When work on the safety audit project terminated in such an abrupt manner with no follow-through on the commitments to service delivery interventions, I grappled with my emotional involvement with the project and the women involved and went through an emotional roller-coaster of feeling guilty, betrayed, humiliated and embarrassed. The fact that feminist research methods provide a space for the scrutiny of emotions meant that I was able to reflect on my feelings in relation to the project and work towards making my peace with them. Because I had previously been trained to deny emotional involvement in the research process and focus only

on cognitive; rational and intellectual dimensions of experience, I found it liberating to validate, consider and reflect upon the emotive dimension to the project.

The fact that I commenced work on the safety audit project, driven and inspired by the practical interventions that the project would lead to in women's lives, meant that the failure of safety audit to lead to such interventions redefined my conceptualisation of the links between feminism and activism. Prior to this experience, I placed great value on research that was closely linked to activism in very practical ways, particularly where such work aimed to work directly with women in socially vulnerable circumstances living in conditions of great poverty. This probably has links with my background in working as a researcher in non-governmental organisational contexts where research initiatives were largely linked to social developmental initiatives pursued by NGOs once the research findings were collated. In this context, research was always conducted to inform the work of the organisation. I have since redefined my conceptualisation of the links between research and feminist activism, realising that this is a problematic and challenging link to pursue in government. I have since accorded greater value to the production of feminist knowledge that just seeks to be in its own right, as this can serve to inform and strengthen political and strategic initiatives. Research can be activist in many different ways. It can, for example, be transformative and activist by contributing towards knowledge production that assists us in better understanding the nature of the social problems that we are confronted with, by inspiring and informing other initiatives to produce related knowledge or by contributing towards attitudinal shifts in society or by informing and improving upon strategies for change.

F. EFFICACY OF RESEARCH METHODS

The interviews served the purpose of providing insight into the gender competence of the councillors and how this is applied in policy-making and service delivery. This sketched a picture of the organisational context within which the City strives to incorporate gender as a variable into its modes of operating. It also provided insight into the organisational culture and ethos and the dominant discursive frameworks that operate within it. It would have been interesting to have interviewed more

women councillors and a larger spectrum of people across racial lines to further explore the tensions in discourse along racial and gender lines.

On the whole, the safety audit data proved useful in presenting a case study of an experience where feminist bureaucrats and women in civil society worked well together in terms of equalising power dynamics and planning all aspects of a social development project together. It is also a useful case study of how broader organisational contexts can work against feminist initiatives by not according them the necessary institutional support. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that there are also different narratives that have ensued in relation to the same research question. There are, for example, accounts of situations of where feminists have not worked well with women in civil society and there are narratives where feminist bureaucrats have managed to strategise in such a way that they were accorded the institutional support required to make significant gains. What is important is what each of these examples teaches us in relation to our broader political strategy for intervening in public bureaucracies. The safety audit, for example, teaches us that when individuals leave a given initiative before completion and are not around to act as pressure points, that bureaucratic commitment to delivery can wane. The irony in the case of the safety audit is that the individuals spearheading the safety audit left because the organisational ethos became unbearable. The initial gains made in securing support and resources for the project were therefore not carried through on in the end, largely because the individuals concerned were no longer able to contend with the bureaucratic environment.

The safety audit project also teaches us that one or two feminists who are prepared to work hard can accomplish much. Cathy and I had managed to secure funding for the project, had managed to secure management authority to execute it, had managed to make significant inroads in rebuilding a relationship of trust with women in the community and had used this work to ignite the interest in City's internal Gender Forum. In assessing gains made, it is encouraging to consider the possibilities for making inroads into transforming how bureaucracy functions, how it engages with women in civil society and how it can, through the gender

consciousness of its staff, begin to consider the gendered repercussions of its modes of operation.

G. THE PERSONAL EFFECTS OF WORKING AS A FEMINIST IN BUREAUCRACIES

In closure, I would like to draw out some of the personal effects of working as feminists in bureaucratic environments. One of the serious constraints of feminists working in isolation within hostile organisational contexts relates to the personal repercussions of working in this way. Ferguson articulates this very eloquently when she argues that "....bureaucracies have a tremendous capacity to hurt people, to manipulate, to twist and damage human possibility" (Ferguson, 1984). Given that the modus of working in bureaucratic environments is anathema to much of what feminism represents, the personal strains on feminists working in this way are serious and worth reflecting critically on. This kind of work can be physically and emotionally draining. My experiences of working for the City and subsequently for the South African Parliament, have also taught me that being a feminist on the inside of a state/ government structure is to be in state of perpetual tension and conflict. It invariably means that one becomes embroiled in ideological conflicts. Usually these transpire relatively frequently and can entail a loss of popularity. I first started working on women/gender related initiatives for government about six years ago. At this point, I was optimistic about the contribution that I could make and had boundless reserves of energy to challenge discourse, attitudes, initiatives, resource allocations and the like when I thought them to be informed by sexist ideological perspectives. I have learned in very painful ways that have greatly impacted on my life in general, that standing tall in the strength of my ethical convictions regardless of the context and my lack of power, can have very severe personal and emotional repercussions. Because of this, I have learnt to choose my conflicts carefully rather than pursue every issue that I find offensive from a feminist perspective. Partly, this is because I want to reserve my energies for the conflicts that are strategic and critical to pursue and partly, it is a survival mechanism because I am no longer able to operate in conditions of perpetual conflict, the personal effects are too great.

Bartky (1977) holds that becoming a feminist is a profound personal transformation, involving changes in behaviour and consciousness. She describes the phenomenology of feminist consciousness in terms of four key aspects. These relate to the consciousness of anguish, victimisation, constant exposure and double ontological shock. Bartky argues that the multiplicity of feminist consciousness derives from differing involvement in and interpretations of diverse situated experiences. The process of being feminist usually entails anguish as the intolerableness of women's subordination affects the feminist in personal ways. It also entails experiences of victimisation where two dichotomies can be experienced, namely, victimisation as the diminishment of being and also an awareness of strength in feminist consciousness. Bartky describes the experiences of vulnerability as being linked to the constant exposure to oppression that many feminists experience. The double ontological shock is described as being the complexity of reality which involves both an awareness that things may be different from their appearance and presentation by others and also not knowing when they are actually different and when such differences are merely imagined. This raises the problem of distinguishing between "valid paranoia" and "invalid paranoia". Bartky describes feminism as containing elements of paranoia in the sense that feminists interpret social reality in ways that are often radically different from other interpretations. Without wanting to portray feminists as being paranoid, I have found that Bartky's phenomenology of feminist consciousness directly speaks to my experiences of being feminist on the inside of a state structure. The anguish, victimisation, vulnerability and sometimes not being sure about whether the grounds for my own paranoia are valid or not, are all part of the daily turmoil of being a feminist in a bureaucratic environment. I have therefore learnt that connecting with a support network both within the organisation and in civil society, is instrumental to my own state of well being. Much energy therefore needs to be invested into developing and sustaining relationships that are critical in terms of planning strategy and bouncing ideas off like-minded people. It is through the building of alliances with like-minded people that we create our support base. This support base is the life-line that can be invoked whenever we require intellectual input around understanding the nature of the problems facing us and the strategies to be pursued in dealing with them. This

support base is also instrumental in our emotional survival as it can provide us with a sounding board of people who will empathise and rejuvenate depleted energies. In the face of hostile institutional contexts, the support base is our point of replenishment when we reach the end of our intellectual and emotional reserves.

Notwithstanding the fact that the safety audit project did not result any tangible service delivery-related outcomes, the lessons learnt in the process of working on this initiative have been invaluable. One of the repercussions of examining the audit as part of my research process, was that I was able to make sense of this experience and developed the analytical tools to assess the lessons learnt. This transpired within a scholarly community of an academic gender studies department and the intellectual support provided to me equipped me to analyse the project and its institutional context from a gender perspective and to make cognitive sense of it for my own growth and development. This has been an overwhelming positive experience that has added much to my development as a researcher.

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