

Security, Development and Gender in Africa

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Introduction

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When Hussein Solomon and I were working on 'Caring' Security in Africa¹ late in 1997, we both became aware of the need to pay much more attention to the link between security and development. This link is increasingly drawn in the developing world context, based on the assumption that one cannot have the one without the other. Although the two concepts are regularly linked, very little has been

written on the subject of what this link actually means. How are these concepts linked, why, what are the policy implications, and what is the situation within Southern Africa?, are some of the questions that confronted us. The result was a decision to compile a monograph on security and development, but with the main emphasis on development, and particularly 'gendered development', in contrast to the previous monograph which concentrated on security. Both monographs focus to a large extent on women and gender issues in an attempt to ensure that research on issues related to security and development, considered to be crucial to the region, will be and remain inclusive of all the people of the region.

This monograph starts off with an exploration of the link between the concepts 'security' and 'development' by Schoeman. The argument she makes, is based on the assumption that a critical approach to security is enhanced by taking development into consideration. The idea of 'human security' becomes much more real when seen against the background of a multidimensional approach to development which is people-centred. In the last section of the chapter, Schoeman presents the idea of a 'secure community' as one way in which the Southern African region, through the Southern African Development Community (SADC), can link security and practice in a real and practical sense. In his response, Van Nieuwkerk raises critical questions about the value of the concept of a 'secure community' and also questions the role of the state in the region's quest for security and development.

Linda Cornwell's chapter serves as a bridge between the first chapter, which is still firmly rooted in the security discourse and the later chapters which deal with development policy analyses. The thread which runs through the chapters in this monograph, whether implicitly or explicitly, is that of emancipation and the various methods through which emancipation, within the spheres of security and development, may be achieved. Cornwell points to the relationship between gender, democracy and development, the latter two being possible ways to attempt the emancipation of women. These processes are fraught with problems, not least because of the poor understanding, especially on the part of policy-makers, of the impact of gender on social, economic and political relations. Of particular value is Cornwell's discussion of the need to expand notions and practices of democracy in order to ensure genuine empowerment of women.

Although not an explicit theme of the chapter, the link with security – the need to 'secure' the environment within which people exercise their choices – is clear. Equally valuable is her constant reminder that most African states are weak states and therefore hardly exhibit the political will or have the capacity to serve as instruments of development. Hudson, in her response, picks up on the theme of the weak state, but highlights an issue not always dealt with or taken into consideration in the development discourse, and by implication in security studies concerned with human security. This is the often suffocating and sometimes blatantly threatening power of tradition as represented by and in traditional leaders when it comes to new ideas and approaches which might benefit members of their communities, particularly women.

Cornwell's chapter and Hudson's response are followed by two case studies based on Namibia and South Africa, focusing on women and the impact of certain development policies on women in general and on rural women in particular. Thompson looks at the issue of Namibian development policy against the background of the objective of attaining food security. Thompson also examines the way in which national development strategies in the Southern African region are 'disciplined' into following the hegemonic discourse on development, by examining aspects of Namibia's development discourse. In her rejoinder, however, Parpart argues that Thompson's emphasis on the hegemonic character of the international development discourse portrays Namibian policy-makers simply as puppets of global forces. Parpart contends that Thompson does not explore the possibility that these policy-makers may have their own reasons for adopting a neoliberal approach to development.

Sadie and Loots present a case study of projects that are part of the Reconstruction and Development

Programme (RDP) in South Africa, and analyse and evaluate these projects from a gender perspective. Read against the background of Cornwell's chapter, this analysis provides an example of the utility of using a gender approach, not only in terms of analysing development projects, but also in the necessity for policy-makers to be aware of the true requirements of formulating and implementing gender-aware policy. A 'paper' commitment to 'gender equality' does not necessarily translate into a genuine gender approach which is aimed at social transformation of traditional gender relations in order to emancipate women.

Sadie and Loots' analysis provides a comprehensive overview of development policy in contemporary South Africa and, from their findings and conclusions, important guidelines for regional gender-based responses to various aspects of security and development may be drawn. In her response to Sadie and Loots, Pretorius points to the link between empowerment and emancipation and the need, within weak states, for women also to mobilise in order to work towards empowerment and emancipation. But 'struggling for empowerment and emancipation' in itself, and perhaps paradoxically, also requires the social space within which such a struggle may take place. Most rural women, living harsh lives of intense poverty and deprivation under traditional systems which do not allow space for fulfilling needs, have little incentive to struggle for more than their basic survival. It is in this sense and in this context that one has to return to security and development to ask the question: How can the insecurity of these women be changed into a form of security that would allow them to participate in, or to make use of the opportunities, however meagre or few, presented by various development policies?

The above is not a question that we have attempted to answer in this monograph. For us the challenge was to establish the link between security and development and to explore aspects and dimensions of development which could inform our thinking on security – its meaning and its practice. We have come to realise that we still have a long way to go. At the level of national governments, and at the regional level, there is no clear sign yet of a commitment to link security and development – to create a 'secure community' – within which security for and multidimensional development of all the people of the region, men and women alike, can flourish. It is our hope that this monograph, though, will contribute to attempts, at various levels, and by various groups to think and act progressively and innovatively in the quest for regional security and development.

ENDNOTE

1. H Solomon & M van Aardt, 'Caring' Security in Africa: Theoretical and Practical Considerations of New Security Thinking, ISS Monograph Series, 20, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998.

An Exploration of the Link between Security and Development

Dr Maxi Schoeman

Over the past decade, the field of International Relations¹ has been subjected to challenges to its orthodox approaches. New approaches to various subfields within International Relations (e.g., International Political Economics, International Organisation, Foreign Policy) and debates between these, and between them and orthodox approaches² are characteristic of the current era, thereby making the study of International Relations a vibrant, if contested, discipline.³ One such subfield within International Relations which has been, and still is at the centre of debates and renewal, and the subject of a constant stream of publications is that of Security Studies. So-called 'new security', denoting the broadening of the concept to include more than traditional military-political security, and actors, agents and referents other than states and military establishments, is often associated with the space created by

the end of the Cold War and the changing nature of conflict. No longer are conflict⁴ and threats to security confined to the international arena and to military aspects. Security studies now also focuses on intrastate (violent) conflict, particularly in the developing world, and the fact that this 'world' is confronted by an 'insecurity' dilemma rather than a security dilemma.⁵ The need to study these, as well as the importance of 'other' dimensions of security, such as the economic, social and environmental spheres of security,⁶ are also acknowledged, or at least debated in terms of what is to be secured and how.⁷ However, the literature is still rather thin to non-existing when it comes to broadening or exploring the agents of security.⁸ The reason for broadening our understanding of the concept security is to some extent related to an increasing ethical and moral concern with the human condition, and a realisation and recognition of the fact that, both in terms of International Relations theory and in practice, the ultimate purpose of knowledge and its application are aimed at improving the human condition.

One of the most salient characteristics of the broadening of security is the extent to which the concept has been, and is still being informed by related and previously unconnected disciplines and approaches, such as Sociology, Feminism and Green Political Theory (GPT).⁹ In practice, security and development are increasingly linked. This connection is generally taken to have been forged by the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) and Boutros-Ghali¹⁰ as a result of the deepening inequality between the North and the South, the seeming intractability of absolute poverty in many areas of the developing world, and the extent to which intrastate wars and instability inhibits and destroys development and progress. The literature on security does not as yet reflect academic or scholarly attention to this link between the two concepts and two fields of study, namely Security Studies and Development Studies (and, to the extent that it is considered a separate field of study, that of Development Economics).

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the link between security and development, both from a theoretical perspective and in terms of this nexus in practice, with specific reference to South and Southern Africa. Some of the chapters in this monograph will explore development practice, and particularly the way in which it includes the most insecure sectors of society, namely women,¹¹ in more detail. This chapter is more concerned with Accessing the discussion around the link between security and development, while later chapters, by dealing with issues such as development, democracy, the role of the state, gender and the role and position of women, serve to illustrate the extent to which development is a process concurrent with, but also supportive of security-building. In the first section, the concepts 'security' and 'development' are dealt with, showing that applying elements of critical theory and critical security studies may serve the purpose of transforming current reality, rather than merely solving the problems which undermine the stability of the current global order. The second section consists of a discussion of the way in which regionalisation may provide a means for securing Southern Africa, i.e., providing security and development as the combined requirements for peace and welfare. It should be stressed that the ideas and suggestions contained in this chapter are very tentative and exploratory and much work still needs to be done in order to come to grips with the link or relationship between security and development, especially at the conceptual and theoretical levels.

The security-development nexus

When dealing with theory, and also with pre-theory at the level of conceptual exploration as in the case of this section, it is useful to keep Cox's dictum in mind that theory *"is always for someone and for some purpose"* and that no theory is *"independent of a concrete historical context."*¹² But one needs to understand Cox's remarks within the intellectual context in which he frames them. Cox distinguishes between problem-solving theory and critical theory. The first takes the world as 'given' and *"provides guidance to correct dysfunctions or specific problems that arise within this existing order."*¹³ The objective of neoliberalism, for instance, is to ensure that the state-system and the capitalist world economy *"function smoothly in their co-existence ... by diffusing any conflicts, tensions, or crises that might arise between them."*¹⁴ Neoliberal institutionalism has the facilitation of the *"smooth operation of*

decentralised international political systems" as its objective.¹⁵ Problem-solving theories do not question the prevailing order or explore its origins, nor are these theories aimed at transformation. In fact, the claim by problem-solving theorists that they are value-neutral,¹⁶ however unrealistic such a claim might be, explains why these theories cannot be transformative – they are supposed to reflect ‘reality’, not to work towards radical change guided by moral concerns. Furthermore, the work of some of these theorists, such as the liberal internationalist Fukuyama, seems to claim that the combination of Western liberal democracy and capitalism is an approach and condition beyond ideology, thereby negating the profound ideological underpinnings of these so-called value-neutral, realist approaches or theories.¹⁷ According to proponents of problem-solving theories, history is a linear, evolutionary process, and problems and issues arising within history as an existing order/system can be managed and/or solved, thereby maintaining, expanding, ensuring and improving stability and peace, the latter in its narrow definition as the absence of war. In this way, the international state system is de-historicised and elevated to the status of an ‘inevitability’, rather than admitting that it is a human construct and a product of a specific era and context.¹⁸

Critical theory on the other hand, in Cox’s words, is *"concerned with how the existing order came into being and what the possibilities are for change in that order ... exploring the potential for structural change and the construction of strategies for change."*¹⁹ In essence, critical theory is an aid in changing the existing order and is therefore self-consciously normative. Although generally viewed as drawing on strands of Western political, philosophical and social thought – traced back at least to Kant, and after him Marx, the Frankfurt Schule and Habermas – the work of *dependencia* theorists from the developing world has strong links with the basic aims and objectives of this form of theorising. Furthermore, the calls from the developing world for a more equitable and just international order – starting with the establishment of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) under the presidency of Prebisch in the early sixties, progressing through the calls for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in the 1970s, and the current attempts to revitalise and utilise an organisation such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) towards global transformation – point to the influence of critical theories on developing world leaders and on theoretically informed practice (praxis), thereby rescuing, as it were, critical theory from being solely Western in origin and development.

From a developing world perspective, critical theory with its emphasis on equity, justice, freedom and emancipation²⁰ seems to provide a viable intellectual tool for scrutinising the existing order and the knowledge claims of International Relations, and to reflect on the extent to which social reality is constructed and therefore amenable to radical change. Theory is rooted in reality and conditioned by era and context, impacting on the construction of reality through the way in which it orients the minds of people as actors/builders in/of this reality. This may account for the obvious ‘fit’ between the objectives and subject matter and the normative base of critical theory, and the views, concerns and approaches of the developing world in confronting or trying to deal with an international and global socio-economic reality which is largely the making of and under the control of the North. For the developing world, and particularly for sub-Saharan Africa and within it the Southern African region, issues of emancipation loom large. Taking the situation and condition of the lives of the vast majority of the continent’s inhabitants into account, it is small wonder that explanations and the possible transformation of these conditions would draw security and development together. In order to understand the almost inevitability of this link being forged, and to understand why development issues and the field of Development Studies contribute to critical security studies, particularly in a developing world and in the African context, it is necessary to pay brief attention to the concept ‘development’.

Development

Traditionally – referring here to the post-Second World War era and the period of decolonisation in what has been termed the ‘third world’ – development was largely defined in economic growth terms, much as

the definition of security was rooted in military-political thinking and practice. These restricted, narrow definitions point to an intellectual era during which disciplines rather jealously guarded their 'interests' and little interaction between various disciplines took place.²¹ Development was initially concerned with and defined as the ability of an economy to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP) in real terms, i.e., in excess of its population growth rate. In this way, development was measured in terms of 'real' growth in per capita income, disregarding the actual distribution of economic gains and the non-material aspects of human life. By the 1970s, development was also concerned with the distribution of economic growth and with social indicators of development, such as gains in literacy, health conditions and the provision of housing, all of which were considered to be necessary for a 'healthy' economy. This broadening of the definition of development to include economic development, rather than just economic growth, came about exactly because economic growth did not necessarily result in the expected spillover effect predicted by liberal economists and implied by the linear and evolutionary approach to history that underlies these theories.

The implicit acceptance of neo-liberal economic thought – that the 'good life' is economically constituted, measured and determined – should be noted here, because this points, at least in part, to the dominance or hegemony of this ideology and the fact that its tenets form the core of what passes as contemporary 'values'. In this regard, one can quote Denis Goulet: *"As long as esteem or respect was dispensed on grounds other than material achievement, it was possible to resign oneself to poverty without feeling disdained. Conversely, once the prevailing image of the better life includes material welfare as one of its essential ingredients it becomes difficult for the materially 'underdeveloped' to feel respected or esteemed ... Nowadays the Third World seeks development in order to gain the esteem which is denied to societies living in a state of disgraceful 'underdevelopment' ... Development is legitimized as a goal because it is an important, perhaps even an indispensable, way of gaining esteem."*²²

The linear, Rostowian stages of growth theory²³ were in ascendance at the time that independence came to Africa. In this era, it was believed that creating and recognising states would enable these entities to become (Northern-like) states, and to follow and replicate the development path of the North. Yet, at the very point in time when the South started from around 'zero' to 'catch up', the North was entering a technological revolution of immense proportions that would eventually lead to huge social and economic transformation. The point is that Africa never managed to catch up. As in the colonial era, but now on a bigger scale, uneven (and therefore often dysfunctional) penetration and development took place, bringing certain advantages and benefits, e.g. a sophisticated labour movement in a country like South Africa (compared to labour conditions in neighbouring countries), but also creating problems and obstacles to development (e.g. a level of productivity and international competitiveness that cannot sustain the demands of the labour force). Another example is that of Western medical science and technology which contributed greatly to the decline in infant mortality in sub-Saharan Africa, but natural population growth became, according to some, one of the biggest threats to the future of the continent.²⁴

The point being argued here, is that the very existence of a dynamic industrial North and the way in and towards which it has been developing, largely condition, influence and determine Southern development. One example will illustrate this point. The Northern era of the welfare state which allowed the creation of a large and prosperous middle-class and extensive social security nets is now drawing to a close. Current developments towards an ever-increasing hyperliberal globalising capitalism,²⁵ is at this stage affordable – even though only marginally – exactly because of the benefits that the welfare state created and sustained over decades. And while this era came and went in the North, Africa was still struggling to establish and internalise statehood. It had not reached the stage where its level of political and economic development and its economic integration into the world economy could allow for genuine welfare state policies that could propel it towards post-welfare state capitalism. Yet this is exactly what is currently expected of Africa in terms of liberal economic prescriptions.

The discipline of Development Studies changed its conceptualisation of the term 'development' over time.²⁶ accepting that development extends beyond the material and questions of wealth and, furthermore, that in a national setting, it is not so much 'the wealth of nations' that determines levels of development, but rather what 'nations' do with their wealth – how it is distributed – that accounts for levels of development.²⁷ According to Todaro, development is "*a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitudes, and national institutions, as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality, and the eradication of poverty.*"²⁸ When one turns to the 'three core values' of development identified by Goulet (and used by Todaro), the meaning of the 'major changes' mentioned by Todaro becomes clear. Goulet²⁹ identifies three core values that should serve as a conceptual basis and guideline "*for understanding the inner meaning of development*", namely sustenance (the ability to meet life-sustaining basic needs), self-esteem (a sense of worth and self-respect, at the individual and the national/state level), and freedom from servitude (to be able to choose, again at the individual and the national level). Such major changes clearly involve the political, economic, social and cultural domains of society, constituting human development which is defined by the UNDP as a process of widening the range of people's choices.³⁰

Considering the abject poverty and often extreme levels of deprivation suffered by the majority of Africa's population,³¹ and the fact that much of this deprivation is caused or exacerbated by civil wars and other forms of violent upheaval and disregard for human rights, the link between security and development, and the need to draw and apply it in practice becomes abundantly clear. In the changed intellectual climate at the end of the Cold War, concerns with people (long suppressed by issues of bipolarity and state and regime security) came to the fore and changed thinking regarding security and development so that the terms 'human security' and 'human development' are currently, at least on paper, central to development and security agendas worldwide.

Security ... and development

If critical theory (in International Relations) is about interrogating the origin and nature of the socially-constructed international order and the possibility of the transformation of this reality into one more conducive to human well-being, critical security studies lie at the heart of International Relations as a discipline. Critical security studies refer to an orientation towards studying security and, as a subfield, also constitutes a reconstructive agenda³² that broadens not only the dimensions of security (from military and political to environmental, social and economic) or of the referents of security (to include people), but also the agents of security.

From a critical perspective, the broadening and deepening of security poses the question whether the state is a necessary or the only form of political community as system of rule which is in itself worthy of security (i.e., referent of security) and capable of providing and maintaining security (i.e., to be an agent of security).³³ In turn, this question begs another: What/who is this state, so easily assumed in International Relations theories, that has to be secured and that has to provide security? And, in addition, another question, implied by Walker and Booth,³⁴ seems relevant: Can we talk about critical security studies, particularly of its transformative potential, if we query everything about security except the state and accept the state in terms and because of its 'easy identification'³⁵ with security? The idea is not to answer these questions here, but to flag them. And by accepting that states themselves are referents and agents of security, the transformative nature and potential of the arguments in this chapter, are obviously diluted. One justification for such an acceptance is that, by including the state in the object of study and using a critical orientation, the characteristics, role and functions of the state are challenged and explored, and while perhaps or explicitly accepting a role and function for the state, these may in themselves denote elements of transformation.

A way of casting a critical eye on the concept and practice of security is to juxtapose and link it with development,³⁶ as done, for instance, in the Human Development Report 1994: *"Human development ... is a process of widening the range of people's choices. Human security means that people can exercise these choices safely and freely ... There is a link between human security and human development: progress in one area enhances the chances of progress in the other. But failure in one area also heightens the risk of failure in the other. Failed or limited human development leads to a backlog of human deprivation ... This backlog in access to power and economic opportunities can lead to violence."*³⁷

The above link between security and development may perhaps better be understood within the context of the new conflict paradigm (NCP) which emerged in the aftermath of the Cold War.³⁸ The literature on the NCP and peace missions ranges far and wide in terms of quality and quantity, dealing with conditions, objectives, strategies and instruments, often in a confusing way and with military terminology dominating the conceptual arena.³⁹ It is within the sphere of peacebuilding – *"the identification and support of measures and structures which will promote peace and build trust"*⁴⁰ – that the link between security and development as elements and as the necessary underpinnings of peace becomes clear. Which leads one inevitably to the question of which comes first: security or development? Phrased differently: Is security necessary for development to take place, or vice versa? This is an important question for the simple reason that, if one or the other is the preferred argument, that perspective would probably dominate national policies, internally and externally, as evidenced for instance by the mercantilist approach to (international) political economy.⁴¹

It is often suggested or assumed that security is a prerequisite for development. This assumption points to a military-political conception of security, with the state apparently being the main referent of security: if there is peace (the absence of war), it is possible to pursue development (development being conceived of largely in economic terms). This would seem to be the general approach, for instance, to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. If judged by the Declaration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) heads of state and government which accompanied the formal change of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) into SADC, it becomes clear that this organisation also considers security to be a necessary condition for development: *"These [peace, security and stability] are prerequisites for development, and for the improvement of the standard and quality of life of the peoples of the region."*⁴² On the other hand, the above definitions of human security and development, as contained in the Human Development Report 1994, as well as (to some extent) Boutros-Ghali's approach to the link between security and development⁴³ would seem to indicate that building and maintaining security can (and should) in fact be reinforced by development, and vice versa. Boutros-Ghali, though, incorporates aspects of multidimensional development into what he terms 'peacebuilding', thereby strengthening the case for linking the two processes (security and development) and further justifying the case for critically assessing security thinking and practice. This approach, where aspects of multidimensional development are incorporated into peacebuilding, in other words, of 'using' development to counter and prevent war, however, begs some more questions: To what extent are development and security the 'same' thing if linked in this way? Is there still a difference between the two, particularly in practice? And what does it tell us about policy-making, in the sense of who would make what policy, and who would be responsible for its implementation? These are some of the theoretical and practical issues in need of examination in order to understand and realise the implications of linking the two concepts. A tentative suggestion in this regard is to explore the degree of overlap between the various dimensions of development and security, starting with the assumption that security is a condition and development a process, that they are mutually reinforcing and that the link between them necessitates a co-ordinated approach.⁴⁴

One way of pursuing the security-development nexus is to focus on regional co-operation and institution-building as means to attain the ideals of security and development. In order to show the link

between the two processes and the extent to which the condition of being secure and the ability to develop are interdependent, and to justify the claim that these two should be pursued jointly, the concept 'secure community' is employed, derived from, but in some ways different from the concept 'security community' as defined by Deutsch and others.⁴⁵ This is done in the following section, starting with a brief exploration of the concept 'security community', before focusing on the idea of a 'secure' community. The starting point is the fact that national borders in the region resulted in a skewed distribution and utilisation of human, natural and material resources, and that security and development in Southern Africa are therefore contingent upon co-operation.

Defining a secure community

The term 'community' is used here in the sense of 'political community' as defined by Deutsch and others. It refers to a social group *"with a process of political communication, some machinery for enforcement, and some popular habit of compliance."*⁴⁶ To this rather impersonal definition should be added Brown's dimension of *"the idea of common interest and at least an emerging, common identity."*⁴⁷ It is the affective quality of community that should be stressed. The modern African state cannot provide what Brown's Western state has (had?) the potential for: *"[T]he modern state could already provide the individual with the basis for a life lived in freedom, dealing justly with all."*⁴⁸ The African state, at the very least the majority of those in Southern Africa, lacks the capacity to provide/be this kind of community unilaterally. Yet, the possibility exists that close co-operation and the development of a community of states may provide this freedom and justice if resources and responsibilities are shared and spread across regions. In the process, strong states may develop, but the point is that the strengths and capacity of individual states to 'provide' and 'maintain' will be in relation to or contingent upon their relationship with the region as community.

The abiding essential characteristics of 'community' seem to be those of 'time' and 'sharing'. A community develops over time and it can only be considered a community if there is reason to expect that its sense of a shared present and future will last. Community in itself refers to sharing – not only a common present and future, but also a common history, covering a number of aspects which make for 'sameness' or at least recognition of each other in the sense of, for instance, shared values and expectations. 'Shared' does not mean identical, and neither does it mean that the same level of importance is attached to what is shared, or that there is necessarily agreement on how mutuality should be handled. For this reason, Deutsch's definition of peaceful change as the resolution of problems by institutionalised procedures rather than resorting to physical force,⁴⁹ should be emphasised.

Community is both a 'top-down' and a 'bottom-up' construct, involving state/s and society/ies and more than politics and economics, although the relevant dominance of one or more dimension over the other during specific eras or under particular conditions, is possible. Also, the extent to which the development of the community is driven more by top-down or bottom-up incentives and interventions may differ in place and over time. The overriding concern is that of a continuous visible commitment to the community by both state and society.

Deutsch and others stress integration as the defining characteristic of community. Integration in their definition has two dimensions. The first is an intangible dimension of a *"sense of community"*; in other words, a recognition and acknowledgement of shared interests and that common problems *"must and can"* be resolved peacefully. The second is a tangible dimension of institutions and practices *"strong enough and widespread enough to assure for a 'long' time, dependable expectations of 'peaceful change' among its population."*⁵⁰

Booth expands on this definition of a security community by juxtaposing it against other forms of international and/or regional organisations, such as anarchy and society. He refers to the position of

"transcenders" who view the key to security as "*the expansion of the obligations between people(s) implied by the idea of community*."⁵¹ Whereas Deutsch and others study integration at a specific point in time and attempt to determine the requirements for its success, particularly in preventing war, Booth's definition implies a broader vision: both of positive peace and of a belief that a commitment to inclusivity, care and responsibility (a moral dimension) at and between the state and social levels are necessary elements, principles and aims of community-building.⁵²

It is clear from Deutsch's work that the most important concern is that of peace. It is not the state or the future of the state which is at issue. This approach leaves room for various forms of structural development and allows for pluralism and amalgamation to act as two points on a continuum indicating levels of "*regioness*" – a phrase used by Hettne⁵³ to indicate levels of complexity in terms of regional co-ordination, co-operation and integration. The Deutsch approach means that it is not form or structure which determines the process of community-building and maintenance, but (shared) purpose. This is of crucial importance in community-building, because it implies that overriding concern with purpose will determine structure and not the other way around.

As to what creates a security community, Deutsch and his colleagues point to the following:

- mutual compatibility of values;
- strong economic ties and the expectation that these will broaden and deepen;
- a multiplicity of social, political and cultural contacts;
- increasing institutionalised relationships;
- mutual responsiveness; and
- mutual predictability of behaviour.⁵⁴

Some of these aspects highlight the earlier point about time. A shared history of co-operation or, at the very least, mutual dependence is necessary as this would be conducive to the development of mutual sensitivity and the desire to work towards a common, peaceful future. Deutsch and others refer to this as "*increasing responsiveness*."

Until now the discussion has focused mainly on the concept 'security community'. The concept 'secure community' needs some elaboration. The coining of this phrase and my preference to use it need to be explained. The concept 'secure community' builds on the work of Deutsch and others, and is influenced by Booth⁵⁵ and Hettne,⁵⁶ but contains an expansion of their work.

The main purpose of a security community, according to Deutsch and others, is the "*elimination of war*."⁵⁷ By contrast, a secure community pursues the dual objective of security and development, each broadly defined, and each specifically within a developing world context.

Another difference between a 'security community' and a 'secure community' concerns what Deutsch and others term the "*essential conditions*" for the success of such a community. These are:

- the compatibility of major values relevant to political decision-making by the members of the community;
- the capacity of the members to respond to each other's needs ('political responsiveness'); and
- mutual predictability of behaviour.⁵⁸

These requirements are implicitly accepted as necessary for secure communities, yet, a secure community would also exhibit the following characteristics:

- a concern with both security and development;
- a timeline that sets the limits for achieving the strategic goal of providing a secure environment for development to take place and for attaining a minimum level of development that would encompass the provision for the basic needs of people, both materially and non-materially;
- an inclusive process that allows for participation by both states and societies, with participation by civil society being much more central to community-building as envisaged by the idea of Deutsch and others of social interaction; and
- institutionalisation of the process as an essential condition in order to allow for structure, regulation and management.

These characteristics constitute an ideal type and therefore attempts at regional community-building can be measured in terms of and 'against' them to provide guidelines for adjusting strategies and medium term goals towards the strategic goal of building a secure community. All four of these should be present or pursued, no matter how flawed the manner, for a regional grouping to 'qualify' as building a secure community. A secure community differs in degree from a security community, not in kind. At this point, it would be useful to evaluate the extent to which SADC conforms to the requirements of building a secure community.

A concern with security and development

As was noted earlier, SADC heads of state and governments have made it clear in the declaration establishing the organisation that the objectives of security and development go hand in hand, implying furthermore, that security is considered to be a prerequisite for development. In practice, however, the security wing of SADC – the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security – is bogged down with problems, mainly, it would seem, due to an inability to resolve two interrelated issues. The first is the apparent contradiction between creating a permanent structure to deal with security matters (such a structure, in terms of the definition of an 'international organisation', presupposes regularisation of patterns of behaviour and *modus operandi*), while also retaining the flexible and *ad hoc* approach to security matters which characterised the Front-Line States (FLS). The second is the lack of confidence among political leaders to allow for the establishment of the various institutions within the Organ that would be necessary for the efficient operation of the security wing, e.g. and in particular a 'politics/political leg'.

The result of the failure to operationalise the commitment to security as stated in the declaration, and further elaborated in the treaty and the communiqué issued after the establishment of the Organ in June 1996, is that SADC is at present operating, for all practical intents and purposes, without a security structure or framework that could guide and facilitate co-operation. The exception seems to be the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), but this points to a continued bias towards military-political security, not necessarily welcomed by the defence establishments of the region.⁵⁹ It is also telling to note that the brief for the SADC review process (of which the report was tabled at the 1997 SADC Summit) did not include an examination or evaluation of security arrangements within the organisation, raising questions about how members perceive the organisation.

Another aspect of the review process which casts doubt upon the extent to which the organisation is actually intent on the promotion of multidimensional development, is the fact that the report of the consultants who conducted the review, focuses almost exclusively on economic growth and development. This emphasis exhibits a liberal economic bias that assumes that the non-economic dimensions of development are a "*trickle-down product of economic growth*."⁶⁰ It would seem that, despite its declared commitment to security and development, both broadly defined, the organisation does not have the

political will or skills to conceptualise and operationalise security, nor the vision to look beyond economic growth to full or multidimensional development as its priority. Little wonder that an analyst such as Malan⁶¹ recommends an "*amicable divorce*" between development and security arrangements within the structures of regional co-operation in Southern Africa, and that Schwersensky⁶² implies that regional co-operation through SADC seems to be interpreted by its members as merely facilitating "*economic integration via market liberalisation*." The SADC objective of security and development on paper is not reflected in its approach to security and development.

Timeline

The idea of a timeline or timelines is associated with strategic approaches towards realising goals and objectives. The underlying assumption on which timelines is based, is that without some form of timeframe within which to achieve goals, the process may become sidetracked, stalled or obscured by other priorities because there is no or little incentive to drive the initiative. Timeframes furthermore provide guidelines for monitoring, evaluating and, when needed, adjusting the activities and actions implemented to achieve goals. The SADC review report points out that there are almost no timeframes built into the various programmes and projects of the organisation. As far back as 1995, the executive secretary of the organisation complained that the lack of timelines was one of the major obstacles in building a regional community.⁶³ It is only in terms of the Protocol on Free Trade that a timeframe (eight years) has been formulated, detailing the various intermediary steps that are necessary to achieve the goal of turning the region into a free trade area. The timeline for market liberalisation in the region, incidentally, may be interpreted as further evidence of the extent to which economic growth is privileged in the activities of SADC.

Community-building as an inclusive process

It was stated above that building a secure community requires the participation of states and societies, and this requirement is considered to be as essential as that of linking security and development as the dual objectives of such a process. Multidimensional security and development emphasise the role and place of people as agents and referents of security and development. Within these broad definitions of security and development, it is impossible to conceive of the realisation of these objectives in the absence of genuine social participation. Security and development imply 'emancipation' of people in the sense that Ashley defines the term: "*freedom from unacknowledged constraints, relations of domination, and conditions of distorted communication and understanding that deny humans the capacity to make their own future through will and consciousness*."⁶⁴ Linklater sees security as related to the extension of the human capacity for self-determination.⁶⁵ Self-determination of humans (as opposed to the traditional association of self-determination with that of 'peoples') points to active participation of people in 'making their own future', not having it determined for them.

Article 23 of the SADC Treaty states that the organisation will seek to "*involve fully, the peoples of the Region ... in the process of regional integration*." When read in conjunction with the objectives of the organisation in article 5, it is clear that the potential for the participation and involvement of people in the activities and structures of SADC does exist. Should this objective be realised, it would place the organisation firmly within the definition of a secure community. Furthermore, such participation would probably or could conceivably support the realisation of the objectives of security and development, not least because of the input from civil society in defining the particular strategies and programmes needed to provide security and promote development.⁶⁶ However, until now, SADC has not managed to realise the aim of involving civil society in a meaningful way in the activities of the organisation. The review process, which could have been an ideal opportunity for initiating such an incentive, remained a 'management exercise' focused on, as mentioned earlier, a rather narrow set of issues. This is a pity, as it could be expected that the acceptance and implementation of the recommendations of the review

committee will ‘close’ the debate about the nature, functions and future of SADC for at least the foreseeable future.

Institutionalisation

In order to pursue the dual objective of security and development in an efficient and comprehensive way, institutionalisation of the processes and activities related to the realisation of these goals is considered necessary. Regional community-building within Southern Africa is pursued through SADC. So, at first glance at least, the requirement to build a secure community is in place in the region, including the provision for two wings within the organisation – that of a development wing (to a large extent the former SADCC) and the security wing (the former FLS turned briefly into the Association of Southern African States (ASAS)) in the form of the Organ. The apparent failure of the Organ has been dealt with earlier. Yet, the fact remains that the institutional framework, or at least the idea of pursuing security and development in a linked and potentially co-ordinated way, does exist. On the other hand, the overemphasis on economic growth and economic aspects of development – seemingly, at times almost to the exclusion of any other development concerns and needs – has already been noted. The challenge is to activate and provide content to the structures created for the purpose of realising security and development. The recommendations of the review committee regarding the institutional restructuring of the organisation to reform the secretariat and to replace the sectoral co-ordinating units (SCUs) with planning and co-ordination directorates may go some way to streamline the activities of the organisation. The question, of course, is whether such a restructuring, clearly based on business principles and logic, is sufficient for an organisation which claims in its Treaty to be much more than merely an economic institution. One cannot help but come to the conclusion that SADC is overwhelmingly concerned with economic issues, almost to the exclusion (and at least to the neglect) of its aims and principles as set out in the Treaty.

Conclusion

To link security with development is to become aware of the extent to which security is something concerned with people. It is to realise that the security of states is merely instrumental – the state is a necessary actor in the provision of security and in the process of development. To fulfil this role, the state itself needs to be secured and developed, but not as an end in itself. The first, and ultimate, test of security, seen from a critical perspective, is to achieve a moral and just society in which people are the main actors, referents and agents of security. But such a society – one in which people are secure – also points to the rationale for this security:

- to enable people to develop;
- to be the architects of their own lives;
- to co-determine the values that will characterise their life-world; and
- to participate in the creation of the framework within which self-determination will be exercised.

The ‘state’ is both too big and too small to decide for people, but at the same time, it is a necessary means to contribute to security and development. The authority vested in states, though, can be utilised to include people in the process of building a secure community. It can facilitate the inclusion of those interests and groups which are too ‘small’ for the state to know and to articulate and to decide on. And it can facilitate the utilisation and distribution of the resources, capacity and skills which are available across national borders (the building blocks of security and co-operation which are not within the grasp of one single state – the ‘too big’ functions) by promoting regional co-operation on an efficient and

dedicated basis.

Endnotes

1. In order to distinguish fields of study, disciplines and theories from practice and from existing systems, the former are capitalised: e.g., International Political Economics is a subfield of International Relations as a discipline or field of study, while the world is characterised by a capitalist-oriented international political economy which has certain implications for international relations.
2. Orthodox approaches are, among others, those of realism and neorealism, neoliberalism and liberal internationalism. Postmodernism and feminism are among the 'new' approaches impacting on the study of international relations.
3. See for example, S Burchill & A Linklater, **Theories of International Relations**, Macmillan and Krause, Basingstoke, 1996; K & M Williams (eds.), **Critical Security Studies**, University of Minnesota Press Minneapolis, 1997.
4. Conflict in the context used here comprises violent conflict, such as various types of war.
5. On the insecurity dilemma, see B Job (ed.), **The Insecurity Dilemma**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1992. A good exposition of the security dilemma is that of N Wheeler & K Booth, *The Security Dilemma*, in J Baylis & N Rengger (eds.), **Dilemmas of World Politics**, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992.
6. The work of Buzan has been pathbreaking in this regard; see B Buzan, **People, States and Fear**, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991.
7. See for example, J Matthews, *Redefining Security*, **Foreign Affairs**, 68(2), Spring 1989; D Deudney, *The Case against Linking Environmental Degradation and National Security*, **Millennium**, 19(3), 1990; S Walt, S, *The Renaissance of Security Studies*, **International Studies Quarterly**, 35, 1991.
8. I argue this in somewhat more detail in M van Aardt, *The Application of the New Security Agenda for Southern Africa*, in H Solomon & M van Aardt (eds.), **'Caring' Security in Africa: Theoretical and Practical Considerations of New Security Thinking**, ISS Monograph Series, 20, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998. An example of the recognition of the broadening of security (and the need for and logic of it) is to be found in G Mills, **South Africa and Security Building in the Indian Ocean Rim**, SAIIA, Braamfontein, 1998. Yet, Mills also accepts without questioning that the military is still the major, if not only, agent of security.
9. On GPT see M Paterson, *Green politics*, in Burchill & Linklater, op. cit.
10. UNDP, **Human Development Report 1994**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1994; B Boutros-Ghali, **An Agenda for Development**, United Nations, New York, 1995. I make the point elsewhere, though, that this link between security and development was already drawn earlier in the **Kampala Document** and in the rationale for creating SADCC in 1980. See Van Aardt, op. cit.
11. H Hudson, *A Feminist Reading of Security in Africa*, in Solomon & Van Aardt, op. cit.
12. R Cox, *Critical Political Economy*, in B Hettne (ed.), **International Political Economy**:

13. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
14. R Keohane, **After Hegemony: Co-operation and Discord in the World Political Economy**, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1984, p. 63.
15. R Devetak, *Critical Theory*, in Burchill & Linklater, op. cit., p. 150.
16. Ibid.
17. See for example, S Gill, *Theorizing the Interregnum: The Double Movement and Global Politics in the 1990s*, in Hettne, op. cit.
18. Examples of a theory built on this form of a-historicity can be found in the work of K Waltz, **Man, the State and War**, Columbia University Press, New York, 1954, and **Theory of International Politics**, Random House, New York, 1979, in which the author sees very little change, if at all, in the 'international system' between the Peloponnesian War and the Cold War. See also J Gabriel, *Worldviews and Theories of International Relations*, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1994, pp. 81-88.
19. Cox, op. cit., p. 32.
20. For an excellent discussion of critical theory, see Devetak, op. cit.
21. The underlying worldview of these theories, though, was the same, namely that of communism as a threat and the need for containment. This is evidenced, for instance, in the subtitle of Rostow's book: **A Non-Communist Manifesto**. See W W Rostow, **The Stages of Economic Growth**, Cambridge University Press, London, 1960.
22. D Goulet, **The Cruel Choice: A New Concept in the Theory of Development**, Atheneum, New York, 1971, pp. 89-90.
23. Rostow, op. cit. He concluded that "*the tricks of growth are not all that difficult*" (p. 166).
24. H Solomon & J Cilliers, **People, Poverty and Peace: Human Security in Southern Africa**, IDP Monograph Series, 4, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, May 1996, pp. 7-8.
25. R Cox, *Global Restructuring: Making Sense of the Changing International Political Economy*, in R Stubbs & G Underhill (eds.), *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, Macmillan, London, 1994, p. 49.
26. For an overview of the development of this field and various development theories, see M Todaro, **Economic Development**, Longman, London, 1997, Chapter 3.
27. UNDP, op. cit., p. 15.
28. Todaro, op. cit., p. 16.
29. Goulet, op. cit.

30. UNDP, op. cit., p. 23.
31. According to a 1991 estimate, 62 per cent of the people of sub-Saharan Africa live in conditions of absolute poverty. UNPF, **Population, Resources, and the Environment: The Critical Challenge**, United Nations Population Fund, New York, 1991, p. 16.
32. M Williams & K Krause, Preface: *Toward Critical Security Studies*, in Williams & Krause, op. cit., pp. xi; xiii.
33. See R B J Walker, *The Object of Security*, in Williams & Krause, op. cit.; also K Booth, *Security and Self: Reflections of a Fallen Realist*, in Williams & Krause, op. cit., pp. 109-110.
34. Ibid.
35. Williams & Krause, op. cit., p. xiv.
36. Walker talks about calls for “*the need to break down artificial barriers between security and development*”; op. cit., p. 65.
37. UNDP, op. cit., p. 23.
38. Cedric de Coning, senior programme officer at the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD), defines the concept ‘new conflict paradigm’ (NCP) as one characterised by being internal, rather than international, non-statutory in that at least one side to the conflict used irregular forces and militias, and civilian in that civilians are both perpetrators and victims of these conflicts. NCPs have been termed ‘complex emergencies’ by humanitarian agencies and other NGOs. C de Coning, Interview, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, November 1997.
39. For an overview of terminology and a basic approach to the development of a common understanding of core definitions used in peace missions, see B Rossouw, *A South African Perspective on the Place of Peace Support Operations within Broader Peace Missions*, African Security Review, 7(1), 1998, pp. 36-43.
40. Ibid., p. 41.
41. According to Gilpin, the central idea of mercantilism is that “*economic activities are and should be subordinate to the goal of state building ... All nationalists ascribe to the primacy of the state, of national security and of military power ...*” R Gilpin, **The Political Economy of International Relations**, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1987, p. 31.
42. SADC, **Towards the Southern African Development Community: A Declaration by the Heads of State or Governments of Southern Africa**, Southern African Development Community, Gaborone, 1993, p. 3.
43. Boutros-Ghali, op. cit., pp. 20-26.
44. I do not deal with these aspects in this chapter, although I base my definition of a ‘secure community’ (see following section) on the assumption that security and development are closely linked.
45. K Deutsch and associates, **Political Community and the North Atlantic Area**, Greenwood Press,

New York, 1957.

46. Ibid., p. 5. I refer here to the concept 'pluralistic' security community (as opposed to an 'amalgamated' security community).
47. C Brown, *International Theory and International Society: The Viability of the Middle Way?*, **Review of International Studies**, 21(2), April 1995, p. 185.
48. Ibid., p. 190.
49. Deutsch et. al., op. cit.
50. Ibid.
51. K Booth, **A Security Regime in Southern Africa: Theoretical Considerations**, Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, Belville, 1994, p. 14.
52. Brown, op. cit., pp. 185-186.
53. B Hettne, *The New Regionalism: Implications for Development and Peace*, in B Hettne & A Inotai (eds.), **The New Regionalism: Implications for Global Development and International Security**, WIDER, Helsinki, 1994, pp. 6-8.
54. See discussion in Deutsch et. al., op. cit., pp. 123-154.
55. Booth, op. cit.
56. Hettne, op. cit.; B Hettne, *Introduction: The International Political Economy of Transformation*, in B Hettne (ed.), **International Political Economy: Understanding Global Disorder**, SAPES, Cape Town, 1995, pp. 1-30; B Hettne, **Development Theory and the Three Worlds**, Longman, Harlow, 1995.
57. Deutsch et. al., op. cit., p. vii.
58. Ibid., pp. 65-69.
59. Van Aardt, op. cit., pp. 108-110; also M Malan, **SADC and Subregional Security: *Unde Venis et Quo Vadis?***, ISS Monograph Series, 19, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998.
60. S Schwersensky, **A Synopsis of the Review and Rationalisation of the SADC Programme of Action**, Friedrich Ebert-Stiftung, Johannesburg, June 1997, p. 5.
61. Malan, op. cit., pp. 17-19.
62. Schwersensky, op. cit., pp. 5-6.
63. SADC, op. cit.
64. R Ashley, *Political Realism and Human Interests*, **International Studies Quarterly**, 25, 1981, p. 227.

65. A Linklater, **Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations**, Macmillan, London, 1990, p. 10.
66. For a more comprehensive discussion of the idea of civil society participation in SADC in order to build a secure community, see M Schoeman, *Building a Secure Community in Southern Africa: The Case of SADC*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1998.

Response

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A recent cartoon in the Sowetan by well-known social commentator Zapiro depicts the African condition as it existed 'then' (under colonialism) and 'now' (under independence). In the first sketch, a white man — dressed in colonial splendour, with gun in hand — holds an angry-looking black man — dressed in loincloth — by a chain. On the iron ring around his neck appears the word 'slavery'. In the second sketch, the same two people appear, except that the white man is now dressed in the conservative dark suit often associated with World Bank employees. The gun made way for a clipboard under his arm. The angry-looking black man is dressed in faded Western-style clothing, and is still chained to the other. This time, the word on the iron ring is 'debt'. The cartoon speaks for itself.

I have read this chapter on two levels. One is theoretical and conceptual, where concepts and linkages between them are explored. The other is practical, and in my view encouraged, as the author claims "... *the ultimate purpose of knowledge and its application is aimed at improving the human condition.*" There is also a claim that regionalisation may provide a means for securing Southern Africa. So, can one use this chapter to improve the understanding or interpretation of often contradictory and frequently depressing developments in our part of Africa?

With some exception (too short on analysis), the chapter is successful on the first count. It is worth recounting the (logical) contours of the chapter's first section. There is a useful brief overview of the evolution of the concept 'development', which concludes with Goulet's three core values of development, namely sustenance, self-esteem and freedom from servitude. The section then explores a broad and deep understanding of the concept 'security'. "*Critical security studies*", according to the author, "*refers to an orientation towards studying security and, as a subfield, also constitutes a reconstructive agenda that broadens not only the dimensions of security (from military and political to environmental, social and economic) or of the referents of security (to include people), but also the agents of security.*" The third signpost in this section has to do with the nexus between the two, which the author explores by employing the idea of a 'secure community' which is based on the assumption that security is a condition and development a process, that they are mutually reinforcing, and that the link between them necessitates a co-ordinated approach.

What then is this 'secure community' — the central feature of the chapter? It appears to be a version of a 'security community', which in the understanding of Deutsch and others refers to a recognition and acknowledgement of shared interests (also on a moral plane) and that common problems can and must be resolved peacefully. Shared purpose determines the process of community-building and maintenance. If the purpose of a security community is the elimination of war, then the purpose of a secure community is the dual objective of security and development. A regional grouping will qualify as a secure community only if four conditions are present:

- a concern with both security and development;

- a timeline that sets limits for achieving a secure environment in order for development to take place;
- an inclusive process that allows for participation by both states and societies; and
- institutionalisation of the process in order to allow for structure, regulation and management.

The latter section of the chapter is an evaluation of whether the Southern African Development Community (SADC) can be viewed as a secure community. In essence, SADC appears unable to meet the first three criteria defined above, and only partially meets the test of institutionalisation. Although only briefly dealt with, a clear picture emerges from the evaluation: SADC suffers from a serious lack of commitment to deal with the issues of security and development. One can reinforce this analysis by pointing to SADC's inability or unwillingness to deal with the crises in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Great Lakes region in general, the debt crisis, and the democratic deficit apparent in many member countries. This means that, if SADC is indeed the premier vehicle to achieve a community of interests in Southern Africa, then the region cannot yet be regarded as a security or secure community. In fact, it might not be able to reach that state, given its current approach to co-operation and integration. Indeed, the institution seems overwhelmingly biased towards economic integration via market liberalisation, to the exclusion or neglect of the goals of development and security — all stated aims and principles contained in the SADC Treaty.

How valuable is the concept of a 'secure community'? It works as an ideal type. It usefully and without major theoretical difficulty marries our critical understanding of security and development. But it describes a vision of a shared community in such a way that puts it in dreamland for most of the people of Southern Africa. It makes for depressing reading because it does not suggest routes for SADC to follow in order to escape the trouble it finds itself in at present. Where there is no hope, there is no vision. Could it be possible that further research could operationalise the process of building a secure community?

One is left with a nagging question. How should one view the role of the state in the region's quest for security and development? Clearly, it has a role to play, as described in the chapter, but where are its limits? Who determines its role? As I see it, the main actors in the drama that is SADC are states and the political élite in control of the levers of power. The details may change, but states will occupy centre stage for a long time to come. The question then becomes: What must be done so that people can replace states as the key makers of history? Thinking about Zapiro's cartoon, it strikes me that the men in the sketches might actually represent states, not people. I think some follow-up work is in order.

Gender, Development and Democracy

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INTRODUCTION

Debates about development and the alleviation of mass poverty are currently dominated by three issues. The first is sustainable development – a goal commonly regarded as imminently worth striving for, even if there is little consensus about its meaning and, therefore, little clarity about the methodology and strategies required to reach such a state of being.¹ There is, however, broad agreement on some of the key elements required to ensure sustainable development (however defined), including a concern about incorporating gender sensitivity in any development effort, and about enhancing democratic processes

within developing states. Apart from being regarded as key elements in the process of achieving sustainable development, these two concepts – gender and democracy – are issues that dominate the development discourse in their own right.

Each of these three issues – democracy, development and gender – are vast areas of research and academic scholarship and each is characterised by fierce internal debates. The area where these three concentric circles of interest overlap is a mesh of complex relationships, contradiction and confusion. This chapter attempts to highlight some of these relationships and contradictions by examining gender and democracy from a development perspective.

A certain level of generality is unavoidable in a study of this nature. Writing in general about gender, development and democracy, one ends up generalising about ‘the’ state (as if there is only one kind of state, ignoring different political systems, and differences at national and local levels), ‘development’ (as if it is a commonly understood term, a ‘feel good’ phrase about which there can be no disagreement), and ‘women’ (as if women are a unitary and unified grouping in all societies). The postmodernist rejection of grand theory in favour of the metanarrative has increased the awareness that women are not the same the world over, and do not share the same ideals and problems simply because they belong to the same sex. Women, like men, are characterised by difference and diversity and there is a need to acknowledge specificity and homogeneity.² This does leave any analyst with a dilemma, as can be seen in the words of Waylen: *"If identities are complex, comprising multiple intersections of class, race, gender and sexuality, causing individuals to react in different ways at different times, women will act politically, not simply on the basis of gender, but race, class and sexuality as well, in a complex interaction."*³ Although this makes it virtually impossible to talk of a single category of ‘women’, Waylen, with reference to Mohanty, comes to the conclusion that it is possible to talk about *"Third World women"* as a political constituency because of their shared *"context of struggle."*⁴ In the development context, this struggle is one of achieving sustainable development which concerns not only the environment, its resources and their continued availability, but also the continuation of processes, the availability of infrastructure and the improvement of human capacities which all work together towards increasing people’s choices to control their own worlds. This struggle is also against mass poverty and for increasing the opportunities for individuals to get their voices heard and their needs attended to.

Whereas Hudson focused mainly on a feminist critique of security in Africa and on the insecurity of African women in the previous Monograph, this chapter draws attention to the way in which gender is a mostly ignored concept in African development policies. The idea is to give a more ‘practical’ slant to Schoeman’s argument in the introductory chapter, that a thorough understanding of genuine people-centred security necessitates a link between security and development.

This chapter argues that, what is required, is commitment from the African state to democratic processes that accommodate the needs of the entire population and, in particular, to do so in an equitable manner. But, as will be seen, the African state is weak (or soft, as Hyden⁵ calls it) and tends to put short term political survival before long term and sustainable development needs. Paradoxically, as will be described here, some policies that aim to foster both democracy and economic growth mitigate against any attempts states might make to bring about equitable development. This is especially true of the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) designed by the Bretton Woods institutions and which have now become the norm for any donor recipient.

CURRENT STATUS OF WOMEN IN AFRICA

Over the past four to five decades, vast resources – technical and material – were pumped into developing states, but seemingly to little avail. The Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) show that levels of human suffering and insecurity are still

exceptionally high in most states of the South, and particularly in Africa where states with the lowest per capita income are located, where inequalities between race, class and gender abound, and where little political freedom is found. Reasons for the lack of improvement in the material and physical well-being of the citizens of these states were sought in, among others, assumptions that underpin theories of development and underdevelopment, in the application of various theories in practice, in the strategies and methodologies used, in the nature of the African state, and in traditions and indigenous practices that supporters of modernisation theory argued were blocking development efforts.

Towards the mid-1970s, development planners, theoreticians and practitioners started focusing on specific social sectors that they thought would prove to be keys that could unlock the inherent development potential of the South. One of these sectors was women. It was argued that women constitute more than half of the world's population, that it was worth including them in any development effort simply because of their numbers, and because of the multiplier effect that increased welfare efforts towards women would have as a result of their reproductive role in society.⁶

Yet, despite more than two decades of allegedly concerted efforts and of targeting women as the new human resource and the new input in the development process, there is no denying that the statistical odds are still very much stacked against women, as Torres and her co-authors show:

- women perform 67% of the world's working hours;
- women earn 10% of the world's income;
- women are 2/3 of the world's illiterates;
- women own less than 1% of the world's property.”⁷

Rural women in sub-Saharan Africa produce between sixty and eighty per cent of all food grown on the subcontinent. They also process and market the food crops they produce. Statistics have shown that farmers who have had four years of formal schooling are likely to produce eighty per cent more than those without formal schooling, yet 62 per cent of women in Africa are illiterate, and currently, less than three out of every five girls have access to primary schools. Of these three girls, only two will actually complete four years of schooling.⁸

In addition to their tasks as farmers, women in a country like Tanzania perform almost three quarters of household tasks, such as collecting firewood and water, and taking care of the health needs of the household. The other quarter of the time devoted to such tasks is shared between adult males and children.⁹

Apart from their productive tasks, women also fulfill essential reproductive tasks. Women in sub-Saharan Africa are likely to produce at least six children in their lifetimes. Childbirth in Africa is a dangerous task, because of the lack of trained medical and paramedical staff. Health services are seldom available to those who need it most: pregnant women and young children. African women are 22 times more likely to die in childbirth than their counterparts in industrialised states.¹⁰ At the same time, the mortality rate among infants and young children, especially in rural areas, is high. In some countries, up to thirty per cent of children are likely to die before they reach their fifth birthday.¹¹

Simmons is quite blunt about the effect of development efforts on the world's women: *"No amount of talk about 'consultation', 'partnerships' and 'empowerment' can alter the fact that the principal effect of Third World development, as it is generally practised, is to impose an economic and political system beneficial to a relatively small élite."*¹² She explains that it has been the very efforts that have targeted women in development projects, since the 1975 UN Conference on Women held in Mexico that have led to the 'feminisation' of poverty. She locates the reason for this in five false assumptions that have been made about women's role in society and their place in development:

- Economic growth equals development and a resultant improvement in everyone's living standards.
- Women are not part of the post-war development process.
- All women want to be (and have the time to be) part of the international economy.
- Economic growth and the aims of women's movements are compatible.
- Women in the developing world have progressed further towards equality with men than their counterparts in the developed world.¹³

Assumptions such as these do not take into account, for example, that women have lost their land or access to land as a result of government policies that favour men, or the emphasis on cash crops. Attempts to integrate women into the international economy – whereby their labour also becomes measurable – often take the form of experimenting with new agricultural inputs. The idea that women would be pleased with improved high-yielding seed varieties, for example, is mistaken. Such varieties often require more frequent harvesting and more persistent weeding – traditionally women's work. However, with the increased need to produce subsistence crops on marginal land, where the quality of the soil is constantly degrading because of lack of inputs, women simply do not have the time to take on the extra labour burden demanded by new seed varieties.¹⁴ Citing the work of Mies, Simmons¹⁵ points out how income-generating schemes *"can too easily reinforce oppression in the home and in the workforce."* For example, opportunities to make money with home-based enterprises simply mean that women have to perform two tasks simultaneously all day long (that of mother and home-maker, and that of income earner). Also, in such schemes women are kept isolated from fellow workers, which reduces any possibility of joining forces to advocate for better wages or benefits. With reference to access to sources of credit, Simmons¹⁶ points out that such schemes have only limited advantages and may not lead to empowerment: *"Some credit schemes are successful in assisting women to establish a sound and independent economic base, but this is only in a few rare instances where the participants have real control over the conditions of credit and production. In most cases, the administration of credit remains in the hands of the creditor and is given in instalments."* Seldom do women have any say in where or from whom to buy inputs or to whom to sell their products.

In writing about the second false assumption, Simmons points out that women had not been excluded from previous development efforts, or from the national economy. It is rather a matter of women's position and presence being ignored by the development professionals such as planners, foreign-aid experts and government officials. She explains: *"Development projects were planned for men, but it was women's unpaid and low-paid labour that provided the base for 'modernization'."*¹⁷ Women were not only responsible for subsistence farming, but increasingly became responsible for small-scale cash crop farming as men migrated to urban areas or the mines in neighbouring countries in attempts to secure better standards of living for the household. Simmons criticises attempts to integrate women in development efforts (or as Kardam calls it, 'bringing women in'¹⁸) by explaining as follows: *"The proposed solution, however – to make the women 'visible' by including them in development projects – is merely to propose a failed 'remedy' as a solution for the 'side-effects' caused by that very remedy in the first place ... The fact that development has left many millions of people worse off than before should lead to a questioning of development and the cultural and political ideologies it stems from, not to a proposal for more of the same."*¹⁹

The United Nations Decade for Women, declared in 1975, to some extent, made policy-makers aware of women, their specific needs and their plight. Yet, very little has changed since then in terms of the quality of women's lives. There is greater awareness of the truism that including women is essential in

any development process but, as shall be pointed out in the next section, simply following the notion that you have to ‘add women and stir’, has not led to the empowerment of women. All that has happened is that women have now increasingly become ‘targets’ that needed protection; they are seen as valuable ‘inputs’ in any development process; and they are relegated to a special subsection in development plans drawn up by both governments and aid agencies.

POLICIES OF THE PAST

Gender-insensitivity on the part of development planners and the state have brought about major shifts in power relations between men and women. In dealing specifically with the effects that changing agricultural practices have had on women, Momsen includes a useful synoptic overview in table form.²⁰ The summative sections, dealing with changes in women’s socio-economic conditions, are reproduced below.

Changes such as the ones tabled by Momsen, occurred at about the time that development planners and practitioners started attempts to include women in the development process. Simmons rather cynically reports that the attempt to ‘bring women in’ or integrate them into development projects was *"a whole new lease of life for the flagging development establishment"* and one eagerly grasped by many development agencies. Women in the developing world were not happy with these efforts, as Simmons reports: *"The women in these movements were not demanding the right to be included. They wanted to be allowed to decide for themselves what was wrong and how to put it right."*²¹ What is called for, in other words, is the opportunity to completely reformulate and renegotiate the key issues at stake in people’s lives.²²

Momsen²³ criticises development efforts aimed at women by pointing out that *"[d]evelopment projects directed at women are often small, scattered and peripheral to the main aims of development. They usually try to promote greater self-sufficiency rather than development in the sense of expansion and qualitative change."* Other problems related to such programmes include the fact that such development efforts focused on what is traditionally regarded as ‘women’s work’, such as knitting and sewing. By doing this, they ignored the fact that African women are the main agricultural producers. Therefore, the typical ‘adding in’ programme simply increased women’s workload instead of offering realistic and practical alternatives that would increase their efficiency and their opportunities to participate in decision-making at all levels of society. An additional problem is that women do not necessarily benefit in the long term from being integrated into the international economy. As a matter of fact, their positions are particularly tenuous as they are usually the most vulnerable in any formal employment context, being the first to be laid off in an economic slump.²⁴

A gendered approach to development will lead to greater understanding of the shifts within power relations. For example, the fact that the current economic crisis affects women more severely than men means that women have had to find alternative sources for survival and have had to develop new coping mechanisms. Momsen²⁵ points out that this has led to changes in women’s position in society: *"When women are able to respond successfully to crises they gain status within the household, either because they have become the chief income earner in the family or because they have gained confidence through learning how to negotiate successfully with national and international agencies, and to work with other women. This very success may provoke an additional crisis in the internal gender relations of the household [since it may lead to a] male backlash of violence and the expansion of female-headed households."*

Changes in the rural economy	Changes in decision-making	Changes in status
I Structural		
Capitalist		Increase in proportion of female

penetration of traditional rural economy	Increase because of male migration and economic independence of young women	Increase in proportion of female heads of household because of male migration
Land reform/Colonisation	Decline because of patriarchal nature of colonising authorities	Decline because of loss of economic independence
Socialist transformation of the rural economy	Separation of male and female decision-making units. Women underrepresented in state farm and collectives planning committees	Increase because of de jure equality between sexes and women's increased economic role
II Technical		
Green revolution – new seeds and livestock breeds, pesticides, herbicides, irrigation	Decline. Training in new methods in agriculture limited to men. Use of new technology and crops generally subsumed by men. Women farmers equally innovative when given opportunity	Increase in family income may allow women to concentrate on reproductive activities. In patriarchal society this increases status of male head of household
Mechanisation	Decline	Decline because of reduced role on farm and downgrading of female skills
Commercialisation of agriculture and changes in crop patterns	Decline because less involved in major crop production activity	Decline
Post-harvest technology	Decline because ownership of equipment and skills passed to men	Decline because female skills downgraded
III Institutional		
Credit institutions	Decline because of patriarchal control of credit	Decline
Co-operatives	Decline because not included in co-operative decision-making boards	Decline
Marketing and transport	Generally excluded from marketing decisions as community production is incorporated in national and international system	Decline because of loss of traditional role

If women are simply ‘grafted onto’ the development discourse that is largely informed by Eurocentric assumptions about matters such as the nature of development, ‘true’ democracy and male-headed households, we will never get a thorough understanding of the grassroots interaction between women, men and a gendered state. There is a definite need to re-examine commonly held understandings, but also to examine gender and the state in its context.

THE NEED FOR A GENDERED APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT

Seeing women as special targets or as inputs that have been ‘added on’ is likely to increase their vulnerability and dependency. They then become passive pieces in a development jigsaw puzzle being moved about on the basis of recommendations made without being the co-owners of any inputs and decisions. This is why a distinct feminist perspective is required if any real change in the status of women is to be observed and if the dominant tendency to be gender-insensitive is to be reversed.

Many development programmes of states and foreign aid agencies equate gender with women, focusing on access to social welfare services. But this leads to skewed development. Instead, what seems to be called for, is to look at relationships and inequalities between the two sexes anew and to address these, and not to focus on women alone.

One way in which to institutionalise a gender perspective into development policy-making is to ensure that data are generated that will make women visible. There is a distinct need for disaggregated gender statistics, so that it becomes clear who produces what with how much money and how much support. Currently, little of what African women farmers produce, is marketed. This means that they are seen as unproductive, and denied access to factors of production such as land and money.

In addition, women need to be given support for their double role in society. They need access to

resources that will reduce the burden of their manual labour, and they need time to increase their educational status which will help them to enter the formal labour market.

A new approach by development workers also seems to be called for. Development workers need to move away from the notion that one can universalise assumptions about women instead of taking socio-cultural and economic factors within countries into account. In addition, they need to move away from the idea that one can focus on women without, at the same time, examining the relations between men and women, that is, without taking broader gendered issues into account. They need to move away from the idea that the impact of state policies can be discerned at household level. Development workers and analysts have to take household analyses one step further by taking account of distributive and allocative patterns within a household. This can only be done if development workers and policy-makers are actively encouraged to institutionalise gender issues at national level and in international donor agencies.

THE DEVELOPMENT STRUGGLE OF AFRICAN WOMEN

The literature distinguishes between three kinds of public policies in terms of their effects either on women, or on governing gender relations:

- policies aimed directly and specifically at women, for example, ones that control reproductive issues such as abortion legislation;
- policies that govern relations between men and women, such as property rights; these often serve to formalise gender relations;²⁶ and
- “*general policies [which] are supposedly sex-neutral, but have a different impact on men and women.*”²⁷ These include traditionally male spheres such as defence, foreign policy, and policies relating to welfare and reproduction, spheres in which women are generally the main providers and consumers.

It is the latter with which this section is primarily concerned. The previous section mentioned a handful of the indicators that give a glimpse into the status of women in contemporary Africa. From these it is clear that women’s development challenge has daunting proportions. Women have to fight the effects of mass poverty on a wide front, ranging from:

- battles to control their reproductive rights;
- the push factors that govern women’s decisions to migrate to urban areas in search of an income;
- the crucial position of women and women’s rights in creating a sustainable environment;
- the right to have access to technology that is not simply appropriate, but specifically appropriate to women;
- the constant battle for political recognition; and
- participation in decisions that affect them intimately.

One theme that seems to be destined to affect all of the battles mentioned above, is that of structural adjustment. This is one of the most serious challenges facing African women today. It is an issue that has already started to change women’s status in society and is likely to continue doing so in years to come. It is also an issue that will have an impact on power and gender relations, on decisions to migrate, on the

search for modern employment opportunities, on sustainable development and on political issues.

Gendered outcomes produced by policies – irrespective of whether initiated by governments or by large aid organisations – are often disadvantageous to women. Sometimes these outcomes are merely constraining, sometimes they are outright disadvantageous.

Much of the blame for this can be laid at the door of the built-in bias against women that characterises macro-economic analysis and policy.²⁸ Macro-economic statistics do not stipulate gender or the sexual division of labour and appear to be neutral or value-free. However, statistics such as those reflecting gross domestic product (GDP), refer to marketed goods and services, and do not allow for subsistence farming, or for fuel gathering, water collection, preparation of food, nurturing of children, caring for the elderly or the ill, or for processing food – all women's tasks.

This bias – which renders women invisible – has serious policy implications and goes a long way towards explaining some of the negative effects of SAPs. Elson explains as follows: *"Macro-economic policy assumes that the process of raising children and caring for members of the labour force carried out by women unpaid will continue regardless of the way in which resources are re-allocated. Women's unpaid labour is implicitly regarded as elastic – able to stretch to make up any shortfall in other resources."*²⁹

But women's time and women's work are not infinitely elastic. Put simply, the curbing of expenditure on social services, such as health, means that women have to work longer and harder to make up for this reallocation of resources. Policy-makers are unaware of the potential problems this may cause: unpaid work is not reflected in any economic or cost-benefit analyses of development programmes. It is clear, though, that women will not indefinitely be able to cope with all the additional tasks they have to take upon themselves. Some authors even believe that the increased incidence of street children is a sign that large numbers of women have reached breaking point and are choosing to send their children out on their own as a survival strategy and coping mechanism.³⁰ Anecdotal evidence also abounds. In some countries, the cutbacks on health services mean that meals are no longer provided in hospitals. Women have to leave their farms to feed ill husbands. When a hospital stay is an extended one, it has happened that women have missed the planting season on the farm. This means they have lost subsistence crops, and the chance of earning additional income from potential surpluses.

Another reason for the negative effects of SAPs on women is simply because aid agencies and development workers still use notions of gender based on their understanding of gender and gender relations in the North. This imported understanding of gender sees a woman as an economically nonproductive member of a nuclear family.³¹

Western stereotyping, therefore, forms a strong basis for the assumptions that inform the development programmes of foreign aid organisations. Despite the fact that women produce up to eighty per cent of food grown in Africa, Western stereotyping of women's place in society still means that women are seen as gardeners, rather than farmers.³² Little is done to encourage women to improve production in order to increase local supply and lower the demand for expensive imports (one of the key aims of SAPs). Instead, it is assumed that all households are headed by males. This means that aid agencies gear their activities in such a manner that agricultural extension advice on large scale farming is given to men. Loans for mechanisation and for buying inputs are given to men – they are the ones who own land and are able to provide the necessary collateral to acquire loans. Often, the results of such aid packages simply make women's task more difficult. Instead of spending the average of fifteen to sixteen hours a day working the fields, women now have to work harder and longer hours to plant and weed the extra land that has been cleared by the new ploughs and tractors.

In addition, most of women's work in Africa is unpaid labour. The problem with unpaid work is that, if no price is put on labour, it is assumed that the labour has no value. In other words, value and price are conflated. This helps to justify the payment of low salaries to women who enter the paid labour market, either on farms, or in urban areas.

Because women's work is unpaid and invisible, aid agencies assume that women's labour is freely available, and also at no cost, to assist men in their export crop farming activities. This further reduces the time women have available to produce their food crops and to market their small surpluses. This lowers their earnings and reduces their financial independence.

Small and subsistence women farmers have little chance of becoming financially independent and increasing their operations. Banks are more inclined to lend money to men than to women. Men own land, and have the necessary collateral for loans. Women produce largely for subsistence, and expected earnings from marketing surpluses are low. One of the key functions of SAPs – the removal of ceilings on interest rates – leads to interest rates rising sharply, and a lack of cheap credit. This further decreases the chances of women, and poor and middle-income people to take out loans.

As already indicated, in trying to broaden the economic base of developing world countries, incentives are given for the production of export crops. These activities are normally male dominated, affecting women and their status negatively. More communal land is used to grow export crops, which reduces women's access to land rights. Because they have insecure access to land (often on loan from husbands), women tend to take decisions that adversely affect the environment. Rather than focus on long term returns from the soil, women are inclined to opt for actions that will guarantee short term benefits. They then use certain agricultural techniques and practices that encourage erosion, and overutilise and exhaust the soil. Therefore, large scale environmental degradation can be one of the unintended consequences of SAPs.

Supporters of SAPs incorrectly assume that, if one member of a household (the male) produces export crops, thereby increasing his income, this benefit will also filter through to the other members of the household. Yet, this does not happen as differences in spending patterns between men and women have shown. Men are more inclined to spend extra income on luxury items, such as alcohol, gambling, prostitution, another wife; whereas income under a woman's control is spent on children's and domestic needs.³³ Therefore, differences in the political and economic status of men and women, and in their entitlements, will have a massive impact on the macro-economy of a country, and can inadvertently alter the outcomes of SAPs.

One of the main assumptions underlying SAPs is that the benefits of these austerity measures will eventually trickle down, and improve the lives of the poorest of the poor. However, it is now widely accepted that the negative effects of SAPs are particularly felt by the poor of the developing world and, more specifically, by poor women. For example, although SAPs open up new employment opportunities, women are seldom in a position to take advantage of these. They either do not have the necessary training to do so, or they do not have the time. As indicated earlier, SAPs mean that spending on health and other social services are curbed. This inevitably means that women have to *"increase their work as providers of health and social services. Thus the increased domestic work imposed by these cuts actually prevents women from taking advantage of any new economic opportunities."*³⁴

The changes in prices of consumer goods (brought about by a devaluation of the local currency or by cuts in subsidies) are also likely to affect women rather than men. Elson points out that the nutritional status of children, and pregnant and lactating women drastically deteriorated in countries following International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank SAPs. When households cannot afford to buy sufficient food of the right quality for the whole family, preference is given to adult males.³⁵

The effects of SAPs also affect different members of the same household differently. Evidence suggests that if the private cost of education goes up (that is, if user charges are introduced or increased), the participation of women and girls is the first to be reduced. This is because the expected returns on the education of males are much higher.³⁶

There are many other ways in which women and girls are affected by SAPs, of which the following are but a few:

- more women have to enter the labour force to supplement their husbands' income; at the same time, the likelihood of women getting employment in the formal sector is lower than that of men because their educational status is lower than that of males;
- more women enter the informal sector in the absence of jobs in the formal sector;
- women farmers do not benefit directly from the devaluation of the local currency because they produce largely for own consumption, or they trade only in restricted, non-international markets;
- the unpaid work of women definitely increases, as already mentioned. One way in which this happens, is that they have to spend more time shopping to get products at low prices, and then have to spend longer preparing food because they buy less processed foodstuffs, or cheaper cuts of meat. In urban areas, they often start food gardens;
- girls assist their mothers with unpaid work; there is less time for schooling, and girls' eventual educational attainment is lower than that of boys; and
- there is a higher incidence of male migration in search of work. The benefits of such action do not filter through to the other members of the household. As a matter of fact, it adds to the burden of rural African women, who now also have to become farm managers. As Sparr explains, "[m]igration is a male survival strategy – not a female or household strategy."³⁷

Calls are increasingly being made for "*adjustment with gender equity*" to ensure that women do not become worse off – both as individuals within households, and in comparison with men in comparable social groupings.³⁸ This objective means that cuts in public expenditure must be done more selectively, for example,

- cut subsidies on national airlines rather than on basic foodstuffs;
- place greater emphasis on self-reliant food production, rather than on export crops;
- introduce measures that will enable women to use new economic opportunities by rechanneling some of the incentives for export crop production towards support services for women (that is, establish day-care facilities, better access to water and fuelwood); and
- bring about truly transformative changes to the economy, rather than simply adjustments.
- in other words, change the laws that govern women's access to factors of production – to land and to credit.

There seems to be a need to look for different ways in which to restructure public service activities and thereby reduce public expenditure. More money has to be earmarked for primary health care rather than expensive urban hospitals. Paramedics and barefoot doctors have to be trained rather than fully-fledged

doctors. In the field of education, user charges at tertiary education levels should be higher than that at the level of basic education. User fees should be differentiated: charges for electricity in wealthier suburbs should be higher than in low-income areas. None of these options will be popular, but they are essential if the skewed power relations in African societies are to be addressed, and the negative impacts of 'development' programmes reduced.

THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEMOCRACY INTERFACE

The positions of men and women in a developing state, their roles as citizens, their relationships with one another and with the state, are constantly in a state of flux. This is further complicated by the fact that these roles and relationships are subject to countless variables – many of which are outside the control of either the state or its citizens, such as the international prices of commodities, and the unintended consequences of compliance with externally induced SAPs.

Writing about the nature of the state and the relationship between people and the state, Kothari describes the state as *"the basic unit of organisation and identity in the world."*³⁹ In this context, the state can either reduce *"all other corporate identities to individualized subjects or, to the extent it admitted the existence of the former in the form of a complex called civil society, it has purported to be both the embodiment and the protector of such civil society ..."* In Kothari's brief cameos of the relationship between state and people, it is clear that each possible relationship also has a polar extreme. For example, among the various sets of relationships identified by Kothari are what he calls the *"bourgeois democratic liberal institutional model of the state based on the theory of accountability ..."*, and the *"social-democratic model of the state assuming responsibility for the social transformation and the welfare of the people."* The state therefore seems to both servant and leader. Paradoxes such as these abound, and are not only found to exist among states, but also within a single state. Much seems to depend on the specific context or the defining situation in mind. This is also evident in Kothari's own description of what he calls his *"own idea (not yet a model)"* of a state as *"a plural arena which, while it displays growing use and misuse of the coercive apparatus and sinews of repression and terror, nevertheless continues to be a mediator among contending groups ... I think of it as an increasingly problematic yet still relevant arena encompassing the large diversity of both contending and coalescing populations and interests within a context of historic transformation based on the democratic aspirations of countless millions of people round the world."*⁴⁰

The demands made of the arena to which Kothari refers, are immense. Democracy and principles of 'good' governance require *"sensitivity to issues of accountability, transparency and civil responsiveness in public decision-making ..."*⁴¹ Governance also describes the relationships between people: *"Central to this [relationship] is the issue of how social systems are organised and managed, resources allocated and consumed and the lifestyles of present and future generations are determined."*⁴² The inference is therefore that governance is concerned with

- political decision-making: determining how resources are allocated within society;
- socio-economic planning, i.e., with determining what is needed, where and when, and what the norms and values are that determine the distribution of any goods within society; and
- the establishment and maintenance of structures and institutions that are regarded as legitimate by the majority of the population, again based on the dominant values and norms.⁴³

In moving away from more conventional notions of democracy as a purely (or primarily) political phenomenon and concept, Bauzon emphasises the importance of a comprehensive, inclusive understanding of the term. He explains: *"... the meaning of democracy has been redefined ... as not*

merely the expansion of political rights and popular participation in government and politics, but also – and perhaps more importantly so – as the empowerment of people in the pursuit of their own economic and social well-being."⁴⁴ This understanding of democracy corresponds very closely to contemporary people-centred views of development. Development, as does democracy, touches on all social aspects that relate to initiatives that affect people's lives. It ties in closely with the notion of ownership of and control over resources, institutions and processes. By taking Bauzon's view of democracy as a starting point, we implicitly and explicitly link development to a political process within which democratic principles and norms are foremost.

The concerns of an integrated and holistic view of development also mirror those of democracy. Current development concerns are also the concerns of democratic processes and structures. Democracy, like development, emphasises accountability to grassroots movements, accommodating gender-related and gender-informed needs, the demand for physical well-being through ensured food security, a sustainable environment, people-centred and participatory processes, demographics (including population growth and population movements within and across national boundaries), instilling in people a sense of humanity and pride by acknowledging prior experiences and traditions.

But how has African states fared in the process of giving meaning and substance to both democracy and development? And how has the West, in its guise as international aid givers fared in this process? Neither have given satisfactory performances. African states fall short, precisely because of their own fragility and their reliance upon imported knowledge and technology, their own weaknesses in harnessing the strengths and potential of their people and their inability to create enabling settings for the empowerment of their populations. International aid organisations, such as the Bretton Woods organisations, fail to respond to the realities prevailing in the South and dovetailing their adjustment programmes to accommodate these realities.

In contemporary development discourse, dominated by the advocates of people-centred and adaptive development such as David Korten, Dennis Rondinelli and Robert Chambers, the aim is to "*... reverse the tendency toward concentrating power in impersonal and unaccountable institutions, returning it to people and communities and ensuring its equitable distribution. This empowerment process is advanced in part through developing strong member-accountable institutions and strengthening local resource control and ownership. There is no question that local organizing is integral to people-centered development.*"⁴⁵ Yet, African states are characterised by increased centralism, despite the threatening collapse of states and their capacities. Where attempts have been made to decentralise government institutions to grassroots level, such as in the case of the Zimbabwean village and ward development committees, these have ceased to function in nearly all instances.

In discussing linkages between development and democracy, we dare not try to find positive causal linkages. Broadbent makes this point clear in three propositions concerning causal relations between human rights and economic growth:

1. Although the sacrifice of human rights will not guarantee economic development, it will guarantee injustice to those whose rights are denied.
2. Although the suppression of democratic rights has been done by governments in the name of economic development, the only constant consequence has been to maintain the power and wealth of the governing party, elite, or class.
3. Although civil, political, social, and cultural liberties will not guarantee a fair distribution of economic benefits, it is unlikely that such fairness will occur when such liberties are denied."⁴⁶

At most, an attempt can be made to identify common ideals and norms between democracy and development. As pointed out, if Bauzon's definition of democracy is taken as the starting point and compared that to people-centred development, the linkages are clear and manifold.

When indicating the linkages between democracy and the eradication of poverty, Axworthy writes as follows: *"The precondition to solving mass poverty, according to Galbraith, is to break the equilibrium of poverty – the passivity or acceptance of fate that many traditional societies exhibit. At a minimum, democracy is a means to stir people up. It requires participation. By giving responsibility, it demands involvement."*⁴⁷

Participation is one of the cornerstones of people-centred development and has become one of the catch phrases of contemporary development discourse. As with most development terminology, definitions and diverse viewpoints abound. The contributors to the book edited by Nelson and Wright distinguish between "... *participation as a means (to accomplish the aims of a project more efficiently, effectively or cheaply) as opposed to participation as an end (where the community or group sets up a process to control its own development)*. Both types of participation imply the possibility of very different power relationships between members of a community as well as between them and the state and agency institutions. Simply put, the extent of empowerment and involvement of the local population is more limited in the first approach than it is in the second."⁴⁸ They state their interpretation of the concept clearly when they point out that "... '*participation*', if it is to be more than a palliative, involved shifts in power. These occur within communities, between 'people' and policy-making and resource-holding institutions, and within the structure of those organizations."⁴⁹

Typical definitions of participation can be categorised as being either instrumental or transformative. *"Getting communities to decide on their own priorities was called transformative; getting people to buy into a donor's project was instrumental."*⁵⁰ Today it is commonly understood that participation means that people are actively involved in a transformative process in which they determine their own priorities, courses of action and resources. This means that participation is no longer mere involvement in a predetermined set of actions decided upon by 'outsiders' (including government and non-government organisations (NGOs)) whereby their involvement lends either credence or legitimacy to the initiators of the change, or whereby they become providers of cheap labour. However, as Nelson and Wright remind us, participation in practice can never be either instrumental or transformative because any ethnographic research would show that there are different kinds of participation at play at different levels and in different situations within any given context.⁵¹

In drawing people into the democratic process, participatory methodology becomes increasingly important. Participatory research methods assist people from all classes and from either gender group to make their voices heard, both within the community and towards 'outsiders'. The results of participatory research processes, such as participatory rural appraisal (PRA) and participatory learning in action (PLA), in themselves, would lead to shifts in power relationships among community members because of 'exposing' people's feelings and experiences and questioning practices (such as the amount of time women spend on household tasks relative to that of men in a 'traditional' society). But such participatory methods also lead to power shifts between subject and object in the research process (usually communities and foreign development aid organisations). This promotes the move away from what Schrijvers calls the *"dichotomous, hierarchical oppositions between an active subject and a passive object."*⁵² In this sense, participation describes "... *an empowering process which enables local people to do their own analysis, to take command, to gain in confidence, and to make their own decisions. In theory this means that 'we' participate in 'their' project, not 'they' in 'ours'.*"⁵³

True democracy in any state would need to ascribe to the more radical conceptualisation of participation as a transformative process. This was clearly pointed out by Meintjes when she wrote about the prospects

for true democracy, citizenship and equality for South African women: *"If the new democratic dispensation simply adopts procedural and conventional liberal constitutional, legal and political forms which underpin western systems of government, an effective democracy which includes the participation on an equal basis of all its citizens will elude South Africa. The citizens of a merely formal democracy would be considered equal before the law, and would enjoy the vote. But unless these rights are accompanied by access to property, educational institutions, and empowerment opportunities empowered citizenship will remain a dream of the ANC's RDP [(Reconstruction and Development Programme)]."*⁵⁴

Writing about people-centred development and its relationship with development and poverty, Korten points out that *"[i]t attributes poverty to a concentration and misuse of power and resources – especially environmental resources – in a finite world."*⁵⁵ If a redistribution of resources and assets is then a precondition to development, how likely is this to happen given the way in which social changes exacerbate the precarious position of women, rather than enhance their chances of taking control of their own lives? It is issues such as these that will be addressed in the following section.

SOME LINKAGES BETWEEN GENDER, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

As in the case of the impact of SAPs, democracy and the mutual impact of gender issues on the establishment and maintenance of democratic processes cannot be examined by looking at democracy only at a fairly centralised level – that of the public domain. It is also essential to look at the lowest level to determine how intrahousehold power relations affect the opportunities of women to participate in any democratic actions (time shortage in particular, lack of access to resources (finances, land, credit) in general are important here). In this context, Rai remarks that *"... the time and resources at their disposal to cross the boundary of their private lives into the public sphere remained very limited."*⁵⁶ It is commonly believed that it is sufficient to look at the household as a unit of analysis for the impact of development efforts and state intervention. However, this does not take the different power relations within a household into account. A household is not devoid of power and conflict relations. Power struggles and conflict occur on an almost daily basis (albeit less visibly so at some times than at others) as men, women and children jostle to strengthen their own positions within households. Nevertheless, the state is tempted to see households as single, homogenous units, headed by men. It is also important to examine the potential of civil society as a democratisation tool.

But this does not mean that gender inequalities and skewed power relations should only be considered at intrahousehold, or non-government levels. It is particularly when women transcend private domain boundaries and enter the public arena in large enough numbers to reach critical mass that any meaningful changes in equity and true development can be observed. However, the public domain is riddled with gender inequalities and low levels of participation and representation. This is true throughout the world. Contrary to popular belief, gender inequality is not typical only of African states with their predominantly patriarchal systems. The underrepresentation of women at all levels of political participation in all states is clear from the special conference held in February 1995 by the Council of Europe in preparation for the 4th World Conference on Women (Beijing, 4-15 September 1995). Taylor encapsulates the reasons for women's underrepresentation in public life in Europe as follows: *"There are structural and attitudinal reasons why women are not involved full-time in political life, and why the skills they show in other areas of activity are not used politically. These reasons include social and cultural beliefs, socio-economic factors, difficulties in reconciling family life with paid employment or political activity, the structure of political parties, including a reluctance to select women candidates, and the prevalence of the male norm in public professional and political life."*⁵⁷

The low levels of participation are pointed out in statistics given by Karl.⁵⁸ She shows that women hold an average of only ten per cent of parliamentary seats worldwide. In 1993, women accounted for more than twenty per cent of seats in only eleven out of 170 countries. In 1990, the average percentage of

women serving as ministers was only four per cent.

The low levels of women's participation in higher political echelons can also be attributed to either attitudinal and practical or structural factors. In the first instance, women's household commitments prevent them from actively participating in politics, thereby denying them the practice normally associated with career politicians. Secondly, as Waylen points out, the structure of formal politics is largely masculine: *"This ranges from the timings of meetings, the combative style and machismo ... and more widespread discrimination against women, for example in selection procedures, which prevents them from rising in political parties."*⁵⁹

However, not only are there relatively few political office bearers in the world that are women, but they are also unevenly represented in the bureaucracy. In addition, analysts have remarked on the *"embedded masculine style and organisation of state bureaucracies, epitomised ... by the Weberian rational model."*⁶⁰ In situations where it is difficult for women to access formal political institutions that are characterised by male bias, one is tempted to assume that non-government organisations will provide a safer conduit for women's political and participatory aspirations. However, in taking up the dichotomy of state/civil society regarding women's participation in democratic processes, Rai shows that this is not the case.

Rai takes as her definition of civil society that of Walzer: *"the space of uncoerced ... human association and also the set of relational networks – formed for the sake of family, faith, interest and ideology – that fill this space ... [In contrast] ... the state is grounded on coercion ..."*⁶¹ The importance of civil society lies therein that *"[t]he process of democratization has been one of the reinstitution of the autonomy of civil society."*⁶² But, as Rai immediately points out, the existence of civil society is no guarantee that women will find a safe space for participation in democratic processes or for improving their lives through participation in democratic institutions – it will not guarantee a greater say in or greater control over their own lives. Rai explains: *"In Third World societies (as well as in the West), however, the civil society instead of being an uncoerced space is one ridden with dangers and traumas for women who attempt to leave the private world of domesticity."*⁶³ Other questions she asks are: *"How are women to participate in associational politics of the civil society, the interest-based politics of the state, and the economy, and also carry the burden of domestic work? Further, if the dominant (male) discourse on social relations excludes women, how is there to come about a civil society that is open and democratic? For many Third World women, the impetus for their participation in the public sphere has come from state-led economic and political reforms rather than the civil society. Whether this has led to the democratization of the private sphere is another (not altogether happy) story."*⁶⁴

Halvorsen⁶⁵ points out that the many anecdotal and empirical studies of women and their positions in society show that a gendered state does exist, and that it has a wide variety of effects upon different classes and casts of women. As Rai⁶⁶ points out, the women that are most directly affected by the machinations of state, are those that can be classified as 'middle class' – the wealthy do not rely on the state to provide them with access to health, education, child care and employment, they can afford to make use of the private sector. At the opposite end of the class spectrum is the absolute poor for whom the state can also do very little, simply because it does not have the resources to compensate for things such as opportunity cost.

One of the ways in which the state governs relationships and subsequently determines gendered power relations (and therefore also such access to the means of production that could lead to empowerment and control of people's own lives) is in the legal status afforded women. If women are seen as legal minors, land ownership immediately becomes an issue that relegates women to subservient positions and subjugates them in a manner entrenched by law. Rai explains why the issue of legal rights is so important: *"In many cases women's exclusion from the public sphere is difficult to fight precisely*

*because while there is a culturally authenticated language legitimizing their invisibility, there is no counter discourse that allows them recognition as individual women in the public sphere."*⁶⁷ One also has to keep in mind that women's exposure to the state and the law is actually quite minimal in many African states as a result of the weakness and inability of the state to articulate any changes in policies and laws. Furthermore, women's inability to access information is also greater because of high levels of illiteracy, a fact that is compounded by vested interests keeping information that is delivered by other means from them. In South Africa, for example, the state's new housing policy has removed any statutory discrimination from the books in terms of granting subsidies. However, it is debatable how many women, especially in the remote rural areas, are aware of this.

There is no denying that a state containing predominantly democratic processes is desirable. With reference to rape, Rai⁶⁸ explains the need for a democratic system as follows: *"Women need a democratic system not simply as 'protector' (which it might or might not be) but as providing an access to a public space in which women might mobilize in their own defence."* What this boils down to, is support for the definition of development in the UNDP's Human Development Report as an increase in the choices or options open to people. Without a democratic system one may not even have recourse to anything that will help to protect women (irrespective of whether it actually does this or not). The chances are that one may have another option (instead of mere acceptance), but there are no guarantees that the state will be able to deliver the goods. Rai supports this as follows: *"What is clear ... is that a democratic system, however flawed, partial and gender-blind, provides women with greater and better opportunities to struggle for and in their own interests. The potential that a civil society, however fractured and conservative, provides women to organize is an enormous advantage as compared with a combination of an oppressive civil society and an authoritarian state."*⁶⁹

An indication of the value attached to democratic societies by women is seen in their unremitting participation in struggles to bring about democracy – the South African example is a case in point.⁷⁰ Other African states that exhibited high levels of women's participation in liberation struggles include Namibia, Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In some instances, their participation was largely in supportive capacities. As Karl points out, it was commonly understood that *"the emancipation of women would automatically be achieved by the victory of the struggle. At the end of the struggle, however, women were usually expected to assume their traditional roles or were largely limited to supportive positions in political and public life. Although most victorious movements proclaimed the equality of women and stamped out blatantly oppressive practices, women's issues continued to be considered peripheral."*⁷¹

South Africa is a notable exception in this regard. It is precisely because of women's active role in the liberation struggle in South Africa that so many women were subsequently taken up in the higher political echelons. This is one of very few states throughout the world where the contribution of women to struggles for democracy and political freedom is acknowledged. Here women actually occupy a relatively large proportion of the seats in parliament. A deliberate decision was taken by the African National Congress (ANC) as the ruling party, to ensure that one-third of all parliamentarians are female to 'reward' women for their role as political activists. This has a marked effect on the way in which decisions are made, and the content of such decisions, as Budlender explains: *"The decision by the ANC to have a 33,3% quota of women parliamentarians does not mean that parliament simply looks different. It is different in that women's issues are starting to be integrated into the work of government in ways that they have never been before."*⁷² One very important way in which this has occurred, is the Women's Budget Initiative, introduced in 1994. This initiative entails that all items of government expenditure have to specify the impact of such funding on women in South Africa. Very specific objectives have to be set to improve the status and conditions of women and to report on the extent to which these objectives have been met. Budlender explains: *"The Women's Budget is not a separate budget for women. It proposes that all programmes of every department at national, provincial or local*

level be examined for their impact on women."⁷³

It is important to keep in mind that women's political actions and activities are not solely linked to the parliamentary political sphere. They very often have an economic or a social basis. Such actions include women's involvement in food riots in states such as Zimbabwe and Zambia, and women challenging forced removals instituted by the former South African regime by standing in the way of bulldozers and trucks. But their political activities are seldom as militant as these two examples would imply. Often, they take the form of self-help activities where crafts are produced or where soup kitchens are run. The social activities that surround such actions often have a strong political current, for example the Oodi weavers in Botswana that have made political conscientisation a major part of their self-help project.

On the same topic, Momsen points out that women's groups, that start off as simple organisations to ensure survival, may have political spinoffs that few development workers or politicians take into account: "*... these women's groups may provide a focus for the politicization of women's lives around issues of prime importance to their domestic role, such as rising food costs and the disappearance of children at the hands of repressive regimes. This link between empowerment of women for household welfare and consequent political action has not been analysed by most development workers.*"⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was not to provide an analysis of gender and the democratic state (as opposed to any other forms of state), or to explain the detailed stances of various schools of feminist thought on gender, democracy and development. This would require several volumes. Instead, the aim was to highlight a few of the considerations and contradictions that come to the fore in the interface between gender, democracy and development. These concern gender issues that need to be taken into account in any analysis of how democracies impact on development processes, their results in African states, and, conversely, the demands made by contemporary development theories and approaches on democratic processes.

With reference to Larry Diamond, Bauzon describes strategies that may be used to induce democratisation in states where this is lacking.⁷⁵ These strategies focus on two sets of actors: political leaders and other political actors within states who need to encourage broad-based consultation and participation; and international aid agencies who may use various methods to encourage the formation and acceptance of democratic principles. The effectiveness and wisdom of such strategies in the African context, and as they relate to the improvement of women's position in society, needs to be questioned critically. Indeed, as Bauzon further points out,⁷⁶ arguments such as these are inclined to allow for a too narrow definition of democracy by focusing on the political only, and not including the socio-economic; they seem to equate democracy and elections; they are ahistorical, do not take into account the effects of colonialism, neocolonialism or the inequitable relationships that exist within the world order and which have determined the nature of structures and institutions within Africa. The practical realities of state leadership, the vested interests that need to be protected, the very fragility of state institutions do not allow for any new challenges that may topple the precariously balanced network of clients and patrons. These are simply too precious for the incumbents to allow measures that would improve women's low status and increase their limited positions in decision-making structures. It simply is not worth it – the risks are too high. Development policies of internal political leaders and international aid agencies all mitigate against improvements in women's status – the dice are loaded against women, in favour of men, largely because the understanding of male/female relationships is informed by a western and male bias.

What we have in Africa are weak or soft states that are, at best, blind to the interests and needs of gender. And yet, African women are increasingly seeing the state as of crucial importance in their lives. On the one hand, the state serves an enabling function, for example, by means of educational provision.

The higher economic status that women achieve because of state-sponsored education draws them into the public arena and gives them the opportunity to question the state's gender blindness. On the other hand, the very weakness of the state makes it difficult to ensure responsiveness and accountability, even to a growing economic pressure group. Instead, the weak state continues to negate, by law, women's real positions of economic power by further legitimising and keeping in place measures such as traditional patriarchal practices of land tenure.

What seems to be crucial to any understanding of development, democracy and gender, is that 'politics' has to be redefined to also include many of the activities in which women are involved. Waylen points out that, from the time of the contract philosophers, politics was seen to take place in the public domain only.⁷⁷ In addition, it was assumed that it was the male, representing the household, who entered and took part in activities in the political sphere. The domestic, private domain was not seen to be of any relevance or importance to the public and political domain. This artificial division between public and private meant that the public domain was exclusively seen as masculine, thereby rejecting the possibility (and reality) that many female activities are also political.

This chapter concludes by echoing Rai's call for an examination of "*... the growing and diverse areas of women's political activities which include not only opposition, but also negotiation, not only struggle, but also strategic bargaining in spaces that are intersections of the private and the public spheres ...*"⁷⁸ Only then can the mesh of the gender, democracy and development interface begin to be disentangled and can clear guidelines for future actions and directions be formulated.

Endnotes

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8. See World Bank, **World Development Report**, World Bank, Washington, DC, 1994, pp. 217-219.
9. See M Carr, **Women and Food Security: The Experience of the SADCC Countries**, Intermediate Technology Publications, London, 1991, p. 91.
10. United Nations Development Programme, **Human Development Report 1991**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1991, p. 143.

11. World Bank, op. cit., p. 215.
12. P Simmons, *Women in Development: A Threat to Liberation*, in M Rahnema & V Bawtree (eds.), **The Post-development Reader**, Zed Books, London, 1997, p. 244.
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14. See ibid., p. 246.
15. Ibid., p. 247.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., p. 248.
18. N Kardam, **Bringing Women in: Women's Issues in International Development**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1991.
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20. J H Momsen, **Women and Development in the Third World**, Routledge, London, 1991, pp. 52-54.
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24. See Simmons, op. cit., p. 250.
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61. Rai, op. cit., 1994, p. 213.
62. Ibid., p. 214.
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Response

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Women's role in the economic, social and political development process has formed a part of the development discourse, notably since the commencement of the UN Decade for Women in 1975. The correlation between democracy and development, although not necessarily causally linked, is also not new. Debates in these areas have evolved over the years to display a more sophisticated understanding of the interplay between gender relations (as opposed to women's issues) and development issues, and also how the democratic process impacts upon gender roles and the level of development. One of the most important reasons for undertaking a study on women's relationship to development and democracy is seated in the recognition that, despite the increase in awareness and the research on the plight of women, there is still no permanent and long term evidence in the 1990s that gender issues have been taken seriously on the macrolevel of analysis.

Linda Cornwell's well-researched article highlights this issue. But her biggest contribution to this subject is to be found in the fact that she avoids the temptation to theorise about gender, democracy and development, each an area of complex and contested academic scholarship and research. In this regard, her writing also stands out because, unlike most feminist studies with their tendency to obscure, she tackles the central question in an articulate and flowing style. Her focus on the overlap or interface between the three areas of study reveals a rich and dynamic web of relationships, more often than not disclosing paradox, contradiction and tension between the various spheres of analysis. The interface between gender, development and democracy is handled competently by first establishing the nexus between gender and development; then elucidating the development and democracy interface; and then, finally, completing the triad by linking all three areas. Cornwell achieves synthesis by placing her analysis in the context of 'developing world' African women and their relationship to development initiatives within a 'soft' African state.

Her approach is one of inductively guiding the reader from an exposition of the current status and development struggle of women to a more nuanced and somewhat theoretical understanding of the subject. However, her reluctance even to attempt a brief survey of some of the main schools of thought on the basis that there is a lack of consensus (that "*a certain level of generality is unavoidable in a study*

of this nature") and that it would, furthermore — as stated only in the conclusion - "*require several volumes*", does not convince. Problems of space should not prevent the author from explicitly making her own theoretical assumptions at the onset and, furthermore, should not detract from the inductive approach adopted in the writing. Another problem relates to the issue of why the focus on the nexus between gender, democracy and development was chosen. The introductory section neither makes the choice clear nor does it adequately explain why the three areas of interest overlap as they do. To some extent all these issues are left to the reader to work out for him/herself.

Nevertheless, in the first section of the article, Cornwell makes a strong case for a gendered approach to development as a means to greater understanding of the unequal impact of development efforts on men and women. She argues, quite correctly, that such an approach will highlight the shift within power relations in both the public and the private domain. A re-examination of the private domain, especially intrahousehold power relationships, is undeniably an area which is often overlooked. Sen (as referred to by Pearson¹) reminds us that the household should rather be seen as a form of co-operative conflict where considerable negotiation regarding needs and interests takes place. Bauzon's comprehensive definition of democracy is used in the second and subsequent sections of the article to form the cornerstone of Cornwell's argument. A concept of democracy and/or democratisation which does not only relate to the politics of the state and government, but also impacts upon all aspects of society has definite linkages with a people-centred or human needs-driven approach to development. Both these processes serve to widen the range of people's choices in the pursuit of their own well-being. Equitable participation as the common denominator is therefore seen as the key to both democratic and development processes. Cornwell does acknowledge that this somewhat idealistic and largely populist/people-driven stance is mitigated by reality. Not only does the African state very often lack the political will and physical capacity to implement such policies, but the fact also remains that many policies, such as structural adjustment — despite the best intentions of the state — are counterproductive to the cause of democratisation and development.

Relying on a vast body of literature on the subject, Cornwell paints a bleak picture of the current status of women (particularly rural women) in Africa. Gross inequalities exist in terms of working hours, workload, educational levels, income, property ownership, access to land, technology and credit facilities. Not only do women suffer at the hands of gender insensitive development programmes, but they are also adversely affected by a broad range of public policies. Since all policies, as products of human behaviour and socio-political and economic organisation, have gendered implications, our task is to clarify how assumptions about the roles of men and women impact upon these policies. In citing numerous examples of the detrimental effects of development efforts and public policies on women, she reinforces the argument for a gendered approach to development, thus deflating widely accepted assumptions about the universal distribution of development benefits. Cornwell is conscious of the fact that an approach where women are merely "*added in*" (kept on the periphery of mainstream development efforts) may provide increased visibility to women's interests, but will not contribute substantially to their empowerment. At the heart of fostering a distinct feminist perspective within the development discourse lies the true meaning of a gendered development point of view — the freedom of women to control their own development.

Notwithstanding the merits of the argument, Cornwell does appear to be treating the various approaches to development as rather monolithic and ahistorical. No explicit (albeit brief) distinction is made between, for instance, the modernisation approach which did not see women as a distinct and particularly disadvantaged group who would automatically benefit via men; the welfare approach which provided financial aid for economic growth on the one hand and relief or survival aid for so-called socially vulnerably groups (women as passive recipients of development rather than participants in the development process) on the other hand; and the politically unpopular equity approach which attempted to use top-down legislation and policies to redistribute power in the public and private spheres.² While it

gradually becomes clear that the author argues from a more radical Southern or developing world perspective, it has to be noted that the critics of development efforts are also not a homogenous group. The critique of Northern feminists, on the one hand, is premised on the gender-biased or sexist character of approaches to development. Southern feminists, on the other hand, contend that women's declining position is directly related to their assimilation — willingly or unwillingly — into the global market economy that is built upon a patriarchal exchange between North and South. The author repeatedly blames Western/Northern stereotyping for the gendered outcomes. While the cultural bias of external donor agencies and development planners has been and still is largely prevalent, this stance reveals a curiously one-sided view of the role of culture and traditionalism in the lives of African women, in particular. Not only is culture a useful tool for the analysis of the interplay between economic and political dimensions in general, but it can also enhance the interplay between — more specifically — gender relations, development and democracy. Except for a fleeting reference to "*traditional patriarchal practices of land tenure*" in the conclusion, Cornwell is mainly silent on the 'homegrown' cultural underpinnings of some traditional African societies.

The author offers a number of useful suggestions on how to reverse the differential impact of development on women. These include the institutionalisation of a gender perspective at the national level and in international donor agencies by means of desegregated gender statistics, increasing women's access to resources and time to improve their educational status, as well as a development approach which takes cognisance of gender issues rather than women's issues. With regard to the institutionalisation of gender issues in public policy-making, the emphasis — to quote Cornwell — is placed on "*truly transformative changes to the economy*" and changing "*the laws that govern women's access to factors of production.*" What Cornwell ultimately proposes, is a radical redistribution of resources.

Cornwell alludes in her critique of development efforts to the danger of conflating women's interests with gender interests. In pursuing the goal of the institutionalisation of gender in development and democracy, Caroline Moser's³ distinction between strategic and practical gender needs may therefore serve as a useful methodological tool. Strategic gender needs are essentially feminist, as they challenge women's subordinate position in society. In contrast, practical gender (or rather women's) needs are more tactical and usually non-feminist in nature, because they are formulated from women's concrete experience, that is, the effects of women's engendered status. Her proposals should therefore be read in this context, namely one where strategic demands for equal opportunity and access in the areas of education, health, wage labour, agriculture, the management of natural resources and financial services are coupled with grassroots attention to basic needs such as food, water and shelter, thus allowing room for differences between African women themselves.

The second part of the article on the development and democracy interface is superior in coherence and clarity of argument to the former section, mainly because of the emphasis on the shared features of people-centred development and an expanded notion of democracy which goes beyond a formal or procedural legal and political form. This implies that truly transformative participation becomes an end in itself. Quite clearly — according to this view — participation, empowerment, ownership and the freedom to choose embody the essence of both the process of development and of democratisation. Cornwell, however, is mindful of the paradox that this perspective poses for development on the African continent. If the answer lies in no longer regarding the state as the only vehicle for development, then it follows that the state should relinquish some of its vested powers. Yet, ironically, the very nature of the African state, weak as it is, mitigates against a needs-driven approach to development. On the contrary, in order to ensure its survival, the state often turns to increased centralisation and intervention, as few mechanisms exist to manage the co-operative and conflictual demands of a pluralist society. In Zimbabwe, for instance, localised efforts at community development have been advocated widely in terms of the benefits for strengthening democracy and civic responsibility, minimising bureaucracy and

thereby achieving greater efficiency. But, in practice, the transfer of power and authority has been problematic, especially for those in power.⁴ Recent poverty hearings in South Africa's Northern Province have also revealed how deeply entrenched traditional power structures can be. In rural areas, any development initiative such as self-help schemes, has to be approved by the local *induna*. Such an anachronistic system makes a mockery of democracy, especially in light of the fact that provincial officials legitimise the traditional leader's authority by refusing to act without his consent.⁵ Rather than being a primary agent for development or providing an enabling structure for development by other agencies, the state in the African context is therefore generally seen as a structural impediment to development.

In the third and final part of the article, Cornwell completes the argument by linking gender, democracy and development. The low levels of participation of women in public or political life point towards and confirm the fact that women have always been on the margins of democracy; just like their invisibility in macro-economic planning testifies to their marginalisation in development planning. Given the impotence of civil society as a vehicle through which women can exercise their choices, the author opts for a democratic (state) system as the only viable alternative, mainly because it provides a platform for the mobilisation and organisation of women's and gender interests. Cornwell's choice poses another paradox, namely that — while the state enables women to educate themselves, which ultimately allows them to enter public life, thus providing a platform for women to challenge the state's gender bias — the very weakness of the state makes it difficult to ensure responsiveness, even in the face of growing pressure. In this context, women's role in the reinterpretation of tradition may then become an exercise in futility.

Disentangling these and many other contradictions in the intersection of democracy, gender and development, is what makes Linda Cornwell's contribution noteworthy. Her work provides a noble vision of people (and women) themselves as agents of development and democracy. Much work, regrettably, still needs to be done to find ways of replicating such a vision on a larger scale than the local one, for example the regional context.

Endnotes

1. R Pearson, *Gender Matters in Development*, in T Allen & A Thomas (eds.), **Poverty and Development in the 1990s**, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 302.
2. See C O N Moser, *Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Needs*, in R Grant & K Newland (eds.), **Gender and International Relations**, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1991, pp. 95-96, 98-101, for a more detailed discussion.
3. Ibid., pp. 106-107.
4. J Chikwanya, *The Evolution of Development: Comparative Analysis of Southern African Country Approaches*, Cantilevers, 4, Second Half 1997, p. 15.
5. C Barron, *Tradition's Lords of Poverty*, **Sunday Times**, 5 April 1998, p. 21.

Development and Security in Southern Africa: The Case of Namibia

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"Development writing constantly delineates and divides territory by means of a relentless dualistic logic."

*The binary oppositions between developed (territories that have) and the undeveloped (territories that lack) created by the cartographic exercise are very familiar ... development also needs geography to link these binary oppositions, a task performed through the language of spatial dispersion and diffusion ... the static language of spatial demarcation needs the dynamism of the historical narrative ... it is sometimes helpful to see development as a form of story telling. Put this way, the idea of development as a narrative with stage, plot, characters, coherence, morality and outcome has its appeal ..."*²

INTRODUCTION

The Southern African region is usually referred to in terms of its 'economic potential' *vis-à-vis* the rest of Africa. Since South Africa's transition to democracy and the end of apartheid, the region is, some would have it, on the verge of a new era, one which heralds the formulation of a truly regional development strategy to underpin the regional integration process as envisaged by the Southern African Development Community (SADC)³ (previously the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC)).⁴ However, the nexus between national and international production, finance, security and knowledge structures remains a significant obstacle to regional development.⁵ This chapter examines the way in which national development strategies in the region are 'disciplined' into following the hegemonic discourse on development, by examining aspects of Namibia's development policy discourse. The analysis highlights the way in which the hegemonic discourse on development is a crucial dimension of the international knowledge structure, particularly in terms of orthodox International Political Economy (IPE) approaches to the developing world, and their need to 'fit into' the global economy. The gender aspect of this discourse is stressed in relation to the manner in which the discourse on development truncates understandings of socio-economic security by absorbing and neutralising alternative gendered discourses on development.

There is a large gap between SADC's stated regional development and integration goals and national economic policies in the region. Since the signing of a formal treaty in 1992, a stronger market-oriented approach has been added to SADC's original policy goals. The *modus vivendi* of the new SADC is ostensibly to build economic strength through regional development and integration initiatives, or, to put it more cynically, as was said at one SADC conference, "*united we stand, divided we beg.*" In addition, SADC states have shed most of their socialist and/or communist ideological baggage during the 1990s (which existed, needless to say, at the level of rhetoric for the most part) and are embracing, albeit to varying degrees, democracy, neoliberal economic ideals and free market capitalism. Regional links, at most levels, remain patchy, and despite the stated aim of overlapping economic growth with regional socio-economic security, almost seventy per cent of rural populations in the region remain socio-economically insecure.

The above is at least partly the result of the 'development' discourse in the Southern African region, which remains firmly embedded within the national context of each state.⁶ The discourse is largely but not only, enforced by international 'development'-oriented agencies and organisations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), Oxford Committee for Famine Relief (OXFAM), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The international non-government organisations (INGOs)⁷ enforce, at the national level, the 'realities' as outlined by international financial/development organisations such as the IMF and World Bank, as well as international markets. These 'realities' centre around the conceptualisation of individual developing states advancing economically through the introduction of neoliberal, market-friendly policies oriented internationally, not regionally.

To explore the impact of the dominant discourse, aspects of the development policies of independent Namibia are examined.⁸ The focus is specifically on two dimensions:

- the ways in which national development policies become disciplined into reflecting international neoliberal economic norms which underpin a socio-spatial demarcation which is predominantly internationally, not regionally oriented, especially with regard to agriculture and food security; and
- the ways in which this discourse drowns out alternative discourses, specifically those on gender.

THE ‘BUILDING BLOCKS’ OF THE DISCOURSE

The development discourse as it is constructed within each individual state invariably uses socio-spatial dualisms as its ‘building blocks’: urban/rural, commercial/communal, men/women.⁹ The discourse does have ‘development’ variants, but centres most frequently on how to improve the disparities between the advantaged or superior: urban, commercial, men; and the disadvantaged and inferior: rural, communal, women. The discourse, with its variants, usually relates more or less the same ‘story’: the socio-spatial disparities hinder growth, but growth will bring about less disparities, if the superior is not ‘pulled down’ in the process of trying to aid the ‘inferior’. In the opening quotation of this article, Crush alludes to the dichotomous nature of that socio-spatial demarcation and its accompanying history that function at the national, but also at the international level. In the Southern African context, the discourse rarely, if ever, touches on regional (interstate) development, because, as a discourse, it initiates within a contextualised geographically confined entity: ‘the developing state’. This artificial socio-geographic construction forms an integral conceptual part of the larger geographically bounded ‘international development story’. Regional development is illusory because the development discourse, and hence dominant understandings of development, remain glued to the nation-state. The socio-spatial disparities between urban and rural, and between states (developing or developed) form the necessary dichotomous and bounded landscape within which the discourse perpetuates itself.

SADC has both a regional development and an integration dynamic. It appears that neither dynamic provides much input into the construction of policy direction in the SADC states as yet. Increasingly, SADC governments on the national level, speak the language of development as it appears in official reports of international development agencies. A particularly obvious example of this phenomenon is evident in Namibia. The following analysis makes clear that the Namibian government has ‘absorbed’ the development language of, among others, the World Bank, as well as United Nations agencies such as the FAO, UNICEF, UNIFEM and the UNDP.¹⁰

The development language of these organisations trivialises much of the critical academic input into the development debate, thus removing a great deal of the power of the critique. Nowhere is this more evident than in the absorption, into official reports, of the critiques of urban/rural, male/female, commercial/communal socio-spatial dichotomies done by critical theorists, postmodernists and feminists. For example, Meena, Parpart, Watts and Thompson¹¹ have pointed out that the discourse severely constrains understandings of societies in the ‘developing’ world, particularly in relation to socio-economic security. The gender aspect of the inclusion/exclusion dynamic in the development discourse is especially pronounced, because it is enforced at national, regional and international levels. This aspect will be discussed in detail below, indicating how the discourse has absorbed and neutralised the gender critique, primarily by making women a ‘development category’, as well as the effect this has had on those the discourse purports to be attempting to include.

AN ALTERNATIVE DISCOURSE: FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY

There are a number of different theoretical feminist approaches, including liberal, socialist, marxist, radical, ‘third world’, postmodern and critical. It is neither possible nor necessary to explain the nuances

of all the approaches here, but certain aspects pertinent to the discussion of development discourses must be highlighted. In terms of epistemological foundations, the approaches are not mutually exclusive, but do posit different assumptions about state-social relations, and consequently also interstate and intersocial dynamics.

Because of the diversity of feminist approaches, there is no single theory or understanding of a woman's 'standpoint' on such issues, but all feminist theories encapsulate a critical dimension, which aims at exploring possible changes to both national and international systems which enforce negative gender discrimination. Feminism thus adds to our understanding of the theory and practice of state-social and interstate relations by pointing out biases, false assumptions and negative stereotypes.¹² Furthermore, unlike the dominant realist, or neorealist conceptualisation of interstate relations, feminism is concerned with the politics and economics of inclusion and exclusion, both within and between states, particularly in terms of how these dynamics affect societies. As such, feminism adds a critical and emancipatory dynamic to the understanding of the international system.

The problem of overgeneralisation manifests itself in the attempt to create an all encompassing women's standpoint.¹³ Postmodernists and feminist postmodernists maintain that the problem of overgeneralisation stems from the modernist theoretical attempt to achieve universalistic understandings about the nature of social reality.¹⁴ In this sense, the problem of achieving a common standpoint rests on knowledge. Socialist and third world feminists, together with feminist postmodernists, emphasise that women in different classes and societies will have different realities, not only by virtue of geographical location, but also in terms of how the dominant or hegemonic discourse relating to power and knowledge is entrenched within their particular society. Similarly, the difference between 'first world' women's interpretation of reality and those in the so-called 'developing' world will be different. For example, the experiences of Latin American women or Southern African women would be different in terms of the knowledge structure in each society and/or region. For this reason, third world feminism tries to relocate questions of gender discrimination, in order to make the questions more appropriate.¹⁵ It could be argued therefore that third world feminism moves beyond modernist theory, in the sense that the approach deliberately avoids generalising about 'women' as a universal category in the social (not biological) sense. Instead, there is a tendency to discuss women as a social category in a regional, or socio-spatially specific context, as the following discussion makes clear. Socialist and third world feminism thus add to emancipatory theory in the sense that they deliberately challenge relations which are enforced and entrenched by dominant understandings about the nature of intra and international relations.

The perspective of third world feminism, by virtue of the political and economic position of women in the third world, tends to emphasise the economic hardship of women caused by capitalism and 'hangovers' from colonialism.¹⁶ Meena points out that women in Southern Africa have to contend with both the remains of various forms of African patriarchy and Western patriarchy. Meena¹⁷ states further that while it is dangerous to generalise about African culture, "*... as Africa presents cultural diversities which have been exposed to variety of external forces ...*", we cannot ignore the tendency of both the political and economic structures of society in Africa to perpetuate a bias towards African women.¹⁸ The emphasis on African culture with regard to women has mystified and mythified women's roles.¹⁹

Third world feminists also point out that women's roles as farmers, for subsistence and cash, remain trivial to 'mainstream' theory and also in terms of government policy. The economic (in)security of rural women, as a result, has received insufficient attention, theoretically and in practice. Part of the reason for this is that the capitalist system, both in its internal and international manifestations, does not regard labour that does not have 'exchange value' as particularly important to the functioning of the market.²⁰ The liberal theory of supply and demand, while having the labour component built into the equation, does not regard the reproduction of labour, and labour for use or for informal markets as fundamental

economic components of the national or international economic system. It is for this reason that the economic roles of women, both for exchange (informal market) and use (subsistence), have not been adequately addressed.

Third world feminism is thus a particularly salient approach on which to draw when analysing the socio-economic situations of 'developing' states. It has some of the advantages of postmodern analysis, for example the distrust of 'universal truth' (as representations of truth are most often linked to power), and of logocentric constructions of reality. Third world feminists and feminist postmodernists' primary referent point for emancipation is deconstructing the knowledge/power nexus in development discourses in their specifically gendered form.²¹ Because socio-economic groups form the key structural framework for analysis, the pitfall of absurdist deconstruction of concepts is also usually avoided (i.e. the deconstruction of the category 'women' out of existence).

However, the chief method employed to include women into 'public production' has been one inspired by liberal feminism. The emancipatory content of this approach (or lack of it), and relatedly, the effects of liberally inspired development policies on the lives of women (especially rural women) in the developing world are briefly discussed below.

LIBERALISM IN PRACTICE: WOMEN AS AN 'ISSUE AREA'

The liberal approach to the incorporation of women into development initiatives has predominated in the developing world.²² This initiative was inspired by the United Nations declaration of the Women's Decade (1975-1985) through an approach which became known as the WID approach (Women in Development) and which was later developed to the WAD or GAD approach (Women and Development; Gender and Development). These approaches attempted to add women to existing development strategies in the developing world. This was done in such a way that, although it led to a more adequate understanding of the position of women, it did not contribute substantially to their empowerment.²³ Based on the Zimbabwean 'development' experience, Meena criticises these strategies, mostly funded by external (Western) donors subscribing to liberal ideals of gender equality, as not having been part of 'mainstream' development plans.²⁴ The lack of women's involvement in the actual formulation of these projects, in Southern Africa and elsewhere, led to the WAD approach which attempted to practically involve and economically 'empower' (or strengthen) women. However, the approach was still centred on a relatively narrow conception of development which fell within the parameters of the liberal approach. Women needed to be 'empowered', according to this approach, in such a way that they could take advantage of the opportunities which capitalism had to offer. The fact was negated that capitalism, in theory and in practice, tends to ignore the multiplicity of roles that women must play (characterised in feminist literature as the "*triple workload*": mothers, wives, professionals and/or producers) and discriminates against women through its 'assumed' gender neutrality.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the need to incorporate women into mainstream theories of development requires a reconstruction of ideas on development, and not simply the absorption of women into existing frameworks, particularly, but not exclusively the liberal framework. This point is well made by third world feminists. As they point out, it is when gender is simply 'added on' (as in liberal feminism) that women become a 'development issue'. The following sections examine the impact of the dominant discourse on development, and particularly its 'add-on gender dimension' in the context of Namibia's development policies. It will become clear that the discourse has a particular socio-spatial orientation, and enforces most of the socio-economic biases of neoliberal economic theory, specifically with regard to the inclusion of gender into the discourse./p>

THE DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE IN NAMIBIA

The critique of the discourse in Namibia is sketched by examining the ways in which the Namibian government has oriented its economic goals. Attention is focused more particularly on ways in which policy is formulated, as well as the 'development language' used in official reports, to gain an understanding of how Namibia's development script is being written. This discussion of the development discourse in Namibia as a 'story' does not intend to obfuscate the clearly visible practical dimension of economic interaction within Southern Africa, and between Southern African states and the rest of the world. It is clear that regional objectives are most often rendered inoperative by the dynamic generated between the developing state and its lack of economic manoeuvrability, as well as the necessity of trading on international markets. Nevertheless, the way in which individual governments interpret their position in the international arena, the ways in which they prioritise, as well as the language used to express those priorities, help to indicate the extent to which governments of developing states in Southern Africa and elsewhere have become characters in the story, rather than authors on their own behalf, and on behalf of the citizens they represent.

OF the NAMIBIAN DEVELOPMENT 'DREAM' (AND OF THE PRINCIPLE DREAMERS)

The influence of the West is particularly obvious in Namibia, not surprisingly, given the role played by Western states in the attainment of independence. There is now a particularly strong connection between UN development agencies and the Namibian government. These links were strengthened as a result of regional and international events which took place in the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola, the end of the Cold War, and the economic collapse of many states in Eastern Europe.

The political situation in Namibia is somewhat different to many other states in SADC, not only because of its date of independence from South Africa (1990), but because rhetorical commitment to socialism have been minimal.²⁵ The South West Africa Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO), the winning party in the 1989 independence elections, followed a pre- and post-election strategy of national reconciliation. The influence of the Western Five Contact Group during the early 1980s led to a distancing of relations between SWAPO and previous Eastern Bloc allies.²⁶ This background sets the scene for the particularly powerful influence of international agencies in Namibia. Their direct input into policy has become even more evident since independence.

Suffice it to say that the most convincing conspiracy theories are glibly put. The analysis below is an attempt to point out the ways in which the discourse actually manifests itself in policy debates and, as a consequence, in government decisions on resource allocation, the prioritisation of some socio-economic groups above others, and the justifications for doing so. It is an attempt to indicate how representations of reality tend to lead to reorganisations of reality, especially for those who have minimal input into the development discourse. Because agricultural and food security policies are two areas which affect the lives of the majority of women in Namibia (as is the case elsewhere in the region), these are the point of focus. To what extent does the policy discourse in the area known as 'the economy' orientate towards the hegemonic development story?

Namibia's agricultural policies

Namibia has been *de facto* part of South Africa since the Treaty of Versailles, which transferred trusteeship of Namibia (previously a German colony) to South Africa. Hence, the legacy of colonialism is particularly strong, the dichotomies of discrimination nailed fast by years of apartheid. While Namibia is referred to as a young country by some, most of the old Namibia (or South West Africa as it was then called) still remains in the form of economic, if not political domination by South Africa. Entrenched patterns of economic discrimination based on race are still prevalent.²⁷ To make matters worse, while most of the SADC states are economically dependent on South Africa, Namibia and the other BLNS

states (Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland), by virtue of their formal economic links, such as the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) agreement with South Africa, have very little room for manoeuvring in terms of their economic policies.²⁸

Patterns of income inequality and economic dependence have not been fundamentally challenged since Namibia's independence. SWAPO's election strategy of National Reconciliation has been followed by a reconciliatory economic policy which does not fundamentally challenge the racial distribution of wealth in Namibia. Approximately five per cent of the population earn more than seventy per cent of the national income and the poorest 55 per cent earn approximately three per cent. Average incomes reflect this disparity. The average income for the top five per cent of the population in 1990, was approximately US \$16 300, while those in the traditional sector (communal areas) earned approximately US \$85 per annum.²⁹ Put in consumption terms, "*...(t)he richest 1% of households consume as much as the poorest 50%.*"³⁰

The central question is how the government has scripted a redirection to Namibia's development 'story'.³¹ Two major policy documents have been released by the government, the Transitional National Development Plan (1991/1992-1993/1994) formulated in 1992, and the First National Development Plan (NDP1) formulated in 1995. These two documents clearly reflect the priority 'characters' in Namibia's script, and also show the influence of international agencies. For example, while the Transitional National Development Plan (TNDP) acknowledges disparities in wealth, economic growth is highlighted as the means to alleviate income inequalities. The document states, "*... (t)he most striking feature of the formal economy is the lack of participation in it by the majority of the people. It is not just that a small section of the population receives a disproportionate share of the national income, but also that a relatively small number of people produce most of the national income. The need for redistribution is clear but the principle means of achieving general prosperity will be through economic growth and through employing increasing numbers of people.*"³²

This orientation stands in contrast to SWAPO's earlier commitment to socialism and the redistribution of resources (including land) in order to transfer the "*... means of production and exchange into the ownership of the people.*"³³ It is also clear that cash income is used as an overwhelming indicator of 'poverty'. Once this occurs, monetisation and the market mechanisms to achieve growth become priority objectives in the development discourse.

Poverty alleviation is to occur through the following measures: "*... the Government can assist the poorest in four ways ... it can provide direct cash and food transfers ... [t]he second form of assistance is public services ... [t]hirdly the government can adopt policies aimed at encouraging economic growth and employment creation ... [l]astly, the legal system can be used as a means of ensuring access and fairness of opportunity and eliminating exploitation ...*"³⁴

The liberal 'free market' orientation emerges clearly in these statements. Furthermore, in relation to trade, the TNDP states that two of the Namibian government's central foreign trade policy objectives should be to "*... pursue an open, liberal and fair trading regime ... [and to] ... work towards the progressive liberalisation of world trade by reducing and eventually removing barriers to trade consistent with international obligations ...*"³⁵ This orientation has profound consequences in terms of government policies for agriculture and food security, particularly household food security.

The emphasis of liberal economic policy on productivity tends towards producing a definition of those who are less 'visibly' productive as 'vulnerable'. The emphasis on productivity is clearly evident in the approach taken to land reform: "*... [t]he challenge to the government will be to come up with meaningful land reform proposals without endangering the productivity of the commercial farm sector.*"³⁶

It should therefore come as no surprise that hardly any changes have been made, on the part of the government, to the distribution of land. The Bill on Communal Lands (1995) further ensures a maintenance of the *status quo* in communal areas as there appears to be no fundamental change to customary systems of land usage.³⁷

While the TNDP was never officially adopted, the same commitment to liberal economic policy emerged in the NDP1. Consider the following objectives for the economy in general, and for agriculture specifically: "... [p]roviding an enabling environment for sustained socio-economic development ... [e]nsuring that development is sustainable."³⁸

*"The overall goal for the agricultural sector is to bring about sustainable growth in agricultural outcomes, across the broadest possible socio-economic base. This will be achieved by encouraging the subsistence agriculture sector to take advantage of more modern, commercial production practices which will improve productivity and provide a secure foundation for equitable growth and income distribution."*³⁹

It is clear that the productivity (for markets) is linked to notions of income redistribution, and that the government is committing itself to an increasingly minimalist economic role. The NDP1 — all 480 pages of it — it must be added, does mention the upliftment of the poor, and the document is peppered with references to women and development. To take, for example, the section on agriculture again: *"With de facto agricultural production being inadequate to meet basic food needs ... food insecurity is a serious problem among much of the rural (and urban) population, in particular for members of households headed by women. Seasonal food shortages, and the associated nutritional inadequacies cause particular problems amongst the most vulnerable groups."*⁴⁰

However, the government does not envisage more than creating an 'enabling environment' for 'sustainable growth', which is 'development-speak' for playing the role of the liberal nightwatchman state, and only within the framework of productivity. The following quotations illustrate this point clearly: *"[t]he government will promote the involvement of the private sector and co-operatives in both agricultural investment and production activities and in providing essential commercial services such as input distribution, output processing and marketing of produce. Government will also withdraw gradually from supplying services that are more appropriately and adequately handled by private sector initiatives (the supply of seeds, fertiliser and tractor hire services, for example)."*⁴¹

*"... Strong efforts will be made to improve the technical capabilities of the farming community, in particular, women producers, so as to increase productivity."*⁴²

Furthermore, it is clear that Namibia has absorbed the category distinction, made by development agencies, between 'food security' and 'agriculture', the former category being imbued with a strong welfarist dimension, while the latter is more 'productivity'-oriented. This is evident in two other official documents produced by the Namibian government: Namibia: Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report, and the National Food Security and Nutrition Action Plan. The two documents were drafted under the auspices of the National Food Security and Nutrition Council and Committee. The Council consists of the permanent secretaries of relevant ministries (such as Agriculture, Water and Rural Development and Education) and is supported by the Committee. According to the Action Plan, *"...[i]nternational agencies also play an important role in improving food security and nutrition in Namibia. FAO, UNICEF, WHO (World Health Organisation) and WFP (World Food Programme) are all active members on the FSNTC (the Committee)."*⁴³ It is important to note that the welfarist dimension, both at the level of the discourse and materially, is taken care of largely by the international agencies themselves, ostensibly to improve the position of 'vulnerable groups'. However, it appears as if the participation of organisations such as UNICEF and UNIFEM has enabled the government to slip into

a pattern of soothing rhetoric and benign neglect towards those groups.

In addition, Namibia (like other developing states) often relies on the fact-finding reports of international agencies to aid their understanding of current national economic concerns. The negative side of this is that the development discourse prevalent among these agencies is absorbed along with the empirical information contained in the reports.⁴⁴ Indeed, in many of the agencies' reports the two are inseparable: the empirical information is interwoven in order to support a specific view of development, for the most part, one which does not challenge free market economics or the prevailing international economic system. Take as an example the following statement from the Food Security Report, bearing in mind that it is an official government report: *"Efficient land-use and environmental protection may not be compatible with a radical redistribution of land from large-scale to smallholder farmers. Land fragmentation may lead to reduced outputs (and reduced exports of livestock and meat). This could also result in more intensive range utilisation, beyond carrying capacity, possibly leading to medium-term ecological damage. Summarising the trade-off, the World Bank concluded that 'an economically efficient land reform is not likely to satisfy the aspirations of many. A land reform which satisfies the aspirations of many may expose new farmers on poor land to undue risk of economic failure'."*⁴⁵

The balancing off of 'aspirations' versus 'economic failure' underlines the 'severity' of failing to adhere to the implicit preference of the World Bank: the maintenance of the current land ownership *status quo*. The absorption of 'development-speak' into the new government's vocabulary is clearly evident here. Even if the NDP1, like the TNDP, has been solely written by foreign consultants, this does not detract from the fact that the NDP1 is what government has put forth as its official position. The technicist economic edge to this reasoning hides the clear economic bias in favour of leaving the commercial sector untouched. This becomes all the more clear if one looks for any sign of visible change to existing land distribution in Namibia, as well as to existing patterns of land-use.

LAND USE PATTERNS AND REDISTRIBUTION

Approximately seventy per cent of Namibia's population rely on subsistence farming or farm labour for survival.⁴⁶ Approximately fifty per cent of households in rural areas are headed by women (*de facto* and *de jure*), almost all of whom do not produce for the 'formal' economy. Economic statistics and growth rate figures cannot therefore adequately portray the extent to which the majority of the population have benefited (or not) from the new government's strategies since the informal and semi-subsistence sectors remain hard to quantify in formal economic terms.⁴⁷

The 'reserve' system imposed on Namibia from the period of German occupation, and even more so since the National Party government took control of Namibia, has severely affected production practices in the rural areas.⁴⁸ Since the Odendaal Commission Report of 1964, large numbers of (black) rural people were relocated to their "*appropriate ethnic homeland*." Furthermore, the reserves were deliberately denied access to extension services, agricultural and technological inputs, financing and markets. Because of the lack of support from the pre-1990 authorities,⁴⁹ no 'trickle down' from the seemingly quite well developed 'formal' capitalist economy has been forthcoming, except in terms of remittances from migrant labour.⁵⁰

There are clear differences between urban/rural and communal/commercial. However, in the context of the development discourse, the way in which these dichotomies are further polarised into superior/inferior, men/women, remains problematic. Insufficient attention is paid to the fact that some of these dichotomies are largely the creation of former colonial powers. In this context, it is illuminating to note the bland and technical rendering of the discrepancies in the NDP1, which is later followed by an agricultural policy that avoids the land issue: *"... a broadly dualistic land tenure structure ... remains today, whereby 6,337 large-scale, private tenure farms, averaging more than 7000 ha in extent, are held*

by 4,045 owners (mainly individuals) and cover about 44% of the country, while the communal tenure farms which support a total population of almost 900,000 occupy a further 43% of the land area."51

The system of migrant labour, caused mainly by restricting these farmers to reserves, has meant that monetisation of communal areas has occurred mostly in terms of remittances. Most households have developed a need for cash to buy food during lean seasons, for basic household commodities, and for education. Agricultural inputs are rarely purchased, because of a lack of availability, technological expertise and, of course, financial resources. However, while migration in search of formal employment continues, the availability of such employment is limited.52

There is no ownership of land in the communal areas. Rather, land is usually allocated to male heads of households. Although it differs from region to region, women generally do not inherit land, except in the Okavango and Caprivi regions. Although attitudes towards women inheriting land are changing at grassroots level, the problem of access to resources remains.

It cannot be sufficiently stressed that most small farmers are enormously productive if energy expenditure is used as the marker of productivity. However, this is not the definition generally used in the development discourse. While the UN has tried to come up with a definition which takes subsistence and informal labour into account, this is generally not the approach used by governments. The World Bank's conceptualisation (and the Namibian government's in this context) is extremely visual — productivity must yield something to see: preferably for (formal) markets. Smaller farmers, and especially women farmers, face enormous difficulties in becoming more 'productive' in the latter sense.53 Nonetheless, for many of those unable to find employment, farming in the communal areas remains the only option. This makes the new government's emphasis on productivity (in the market sense) all the more problematic. There are few programmes specifically targeted towards those who are not potentially productive within the neoliberal economic model. It is also clear that, although land distribution remains unequal, the government has 'bought' the World Bank's argument that redistribution would be 'inefficient'.

The NPD1 states that the commitment to land reform is to be minimal. The one paragraph on land reform (in the 480-page document) reads as follows: "*Government will undertake land reform on the basis of the Commercial Agriculture Land Act 1995. The aim of such legislation is to provide land to poor landless families without jeopardising productivity. N\$100 million has been allocated during the course of NDP1 to assist in carrying out the land reform programme.*"54

The upliftment of the communal areas is seen to go hand-in-hand with the commercialisation of production and minimal redistribution: "... [t]he Technical Committee on Commercial Farmland set up after the Land Conference has earmarked 7.3 million hectares of land for resettlement. However this land includes ... abandoned, under-utilised, unused [in the communal areas], foreign owned, state and municipal land, as well as land which could be made available as a result of the streamlining of multiple farm businesses/farms with excessive land, [and] the expropriation of some foreign owned farms such as absentee owners [sic]."55

Not surprisingly, the World Bank Report (1991), the TNDP (1992) and the NDP1 (1995) stress that commercialising the existing communal areas is the most advisable strategy. In formal (liberal) economic terms, the problem has been defined as "... addressing the country's equity problem at an acceptable pace without jeopardising growth..."56 The commercial areas have also been consistently prioritised, both before and after independence.57

Because land redistribution is to be minimal, the emphasis is on an horizontal, instead of a vertical restructuring of the agricultural sector. In other words, the focus is on improving methods of production

and production inputs.⁵⁸ A further development is that larger communal farmers are being encouraged to buy land which comes onto the market in commercial areas.⁵⁹

According to official sources, women are not discriminated against if they wish to buy land in commercial areas. However, because women, in general, are the poorest in terms of cash and resources, they are unlikely to benefit at all from the proposed resettling of "*large communal farmers*" in commercial land areas. Even more problematic for smaller, less resource endowed farmers, is that wealthier communal farmers have recently begun to 'privatise' this land illegally by fencing it off.

Because of the above practice, poorer households are worse off than they were before independence. Devereux and others⁶⁰ state that such illegal fencing-off has been met by no more than "... *verbal interventions from the government*." Tapscott⁶¹ points out that many of those who have fenced in land have had or have links with the government. While the government has proposed an alternative strategy — the fencing off of land in communal areas (into 'communal' communities) — it is unclear how effective this strategy will be if the practice of individual fencing continues. Even then, the envisaged system of fencing will limit communities to already overworked areas. The government's commitment to ensure access to land for the majority, in this context, should be treated with circumspection.

The representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Rural Development (MAWRD) who were interviewed all responded that their directorates were 'gender neutral', but did not specifically target women as a group for special attention in terms of research or programmes. Brock's reply to the question whether women would be effectively absorbed into 'mainstream' development, was that this was "... *unlikely, it would require a massive injection of capital*."⁶²

In terms of land utilisation and redistribution, it seems as though the situation will remain relatively unchanged. In accordance with the policy of the 'wealth creating sector' balancing the 'wealth distributing sector', the commercial farmers are not to be 'threatened' in any way.

THE CATEGORISATION OF 'WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT'

It is clear that the government's emphasis on productivity — implicitly, if not explicitly — discriminates against poorer farmers, especially women farmers. It is also interesting to note that the TNDP devotes a whole chapter to *Women In Development*. It appears that the new government has developed a commitment to the 'free market' emphasis of the plan, while ignoring, or underplaying its emphasis on social security. The NDP1 (significantly) relegates the question of women and development to a paragraph here and there, and the section on development policy begins: "*If participation in the economy is to become a reality, women must have access to education and health and the enabling environment must raise the status of women*."⁶³

While this approach is consistent with the liberal feminist WAD approach, it should be clear that the prioritisation of agricultural productivity for markets does not necessarily promote national or household food security. Nor does it show any specific orientation towards regional food security objectives. Most significantly, it takes very little account of the variable impact that agricultural policies have on different socio-economic groups. While rural communities do have certain homogenous socio-economic characteristics, the position in which many rural women, as a socio-economic community, find themselves, is addressed only in rhetorical techno-speak: enabling environments, opportunities, and so on.

Paralleling Zimbabwe, the Namibian government has also created a Department of Women Affairs (DWA) in August 1990, that is attached to the Office of the President.⁶⁴ With the exception of the DWA, there were only two women ministers and one deputy minister in government in 1991. Other

women are employed, but at lower ranking levels or as secretaries. Their influence is therefore minimal.⁶⁵

Thus, while the Constitution guarantees the legal rights of women, and affirms non-discrimination, gender equality remains far from a reality. Government has effectively neutralised the question of discrimination, however, by absorbing the liberal feminist 'gender and development' discourse into its official policy pronouncements and stated commitments. It has been amply aided by international organisations such as UNICEF and UNIFEM, of which the staff have a professional duty to problematise "*rural women's difficulties*."⁶⁶

Namibian government policy shows clearly that capitalist development, based on the international free market ideology, does indeed discriminate against women through its so-called 'neutrality'. It is also clear that gender stereotyping influences and inhibits the inclusion of women. This is reinforced by the capitalist system, but also stems from social custom. These customs tend to be reinforced when an emphasis is placed on 'commercialisation', because the poor are the last to be favoured, and it is not incidental that the majority of poor in the rural areas are women. This has very serious long term implications for both national and regional food security, as it generalises the problem into a non-problem: an issue area which does not form part of the central discourse on "*restructuring and developing the economy*."

REGIONAL FOOD SECURITY

The Early Warning and Food Information System Unit (EWU) was set up in 1991 to monitor weather and household food security conditions. The Unit is affiliated to SADC. The Unit itself is not responsible for action — it feeds through relevant information to Cabinet, donors and business. No joint drought combating or drought relief programmes exist on a regional basis. Nor is there any strategy for ensuring food security in times of crisis within the region through the EWU mechanism.

It is clear that SADC's overall policy framework is not sufficiently included in national policy formulation. Little attention has been paid to building regional complementarity, even in terms of drought relief programmes. In interviews, most government representatives looked confused and answered evasively when questions were asked about strengthening regional ties with regard to food security and agriculture. Thus, the intention to examine the linkages between regional and national policy in this analysis was thwarted by the very lack of such linkages.

CONCLUSION

In Namibia, there is a discernible leaning, on the part of both the government and international non-government organisations, towards 'productive' or potentially productive groups who can be absorbed into capitalist development in a 'cost-effective' manner. Ironically, those who fall into the above category usually form part of the already advantaged section of the population.

Namibia cannot be taken as representative of all the states in the region. Nevertheless, it is evident that external influence from Western states has decisively contributed to the prioritisation of international integration first, and regional integration thereafter. Furthermore, in the Namibian situation, regional initiatives promoted by SADC are undermined by South African domination, particularly through SACU. While the Namibian government has explicitly stated that it supports SADC's goals and is committed to regional trade integration with other SADC states, there is little evidence of this occurring in practice. It would seem that SADC's stated objective of achieving regional identity does not extend beyond the rhetorical commitment of government leaders. It is noteworthy that the interests of the national élite in Namibia (both those in government and in economic production) are closer to the priorities of

The theme of Namibia's development story is evident, wrapped in techno-jargon and neo-Weberian efficiency-speak. The government is defining its character according to the neoliberal economic paradigm which is internationally, not regionally oriented, and internationally, not nationally scripted. This orientation is reinforced, either implicitly and/or explicitly, by international development agencies. As a result, social security, especially for those in rural areas, remains illusory, both nationally and regionally, even while the questions of social security, and 'women and development' continue to be largely rhetorical additions to Namibia's development script.

Endnotes

1. An earlier version of this paper was published in **Africanus**, 27(2), 1997.
2. J Crush, *Imagining Development*, in J Crush (ed.), **The Power of Development**, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 14.
3. SADC is not the only economic organisation in Southern Africa. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and COMESA also function within the regional context. SACU has four members: Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia. The Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern African states (PTA) was renamed the Common Market for Eastern and Southern African states (COMESA) in 1994. See for example M Nkuhlu, *The State and Civil Society in South Africa: Transition to Democracy, Social Reconstruction and Implications for Regional Relations in Southern Africa*, **Southern African Perspectives: A Working Paper series**, 28, Centre for Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, Belville, 1993; R Davies, D Keet & M Nkuhlu, **Reconstructing Economic Relations with the Southern African Region: Issues and Options for a Democratic South Africa**, MERG/Centre For Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, Belville, 1993.
4. The Southern African Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was founded in 1980 and renamed itself the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in August 1992. The member states are Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, Namibia (who joined officially after independence in 1990) and South Africa, who joined in August 1994, and who has recently taken over as chair of SADC. As of September 1997, two more states have been accepted, the Seychelles and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.
5. S Strange, **States and Markets: An Introduction to International Political Economy**, Pinter Publishers, London, 1988; S Strange, *An Eclectic Approach*, in C N Murphy & R Tooze (eds.), **The New International Political Economy**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1991. Strange elaborated on the ways in which these four structures can be understood heuristically as the framework of the international political economy.
6. It cannot be argued that regional goals are stymied by this discourse only. There are other factors involved which also account for the lack of regional integration, such as an unwillingness to surrender sovereignty, even where this is symbolic, as in the case of the BLNS states. However, the weight of the discourse is a powerful deterrent and, arguably, the most unassailable obstacle to regional integration.
7. The acronym stands for International Non-government Organisations, although the strong (Western) government influence within the IMF and World Bank, for example, makes the 'non-government' part of the definition somewhat misleading.

8. The effects of the INGOs are felt regionally in that most SADC states have at least the IMF and World Bank involved in their economic strategies. Thus, while the conclusions reached here are country specific, the conclusions have regional resonances.
9. J Ferguson, **The Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticisation and Bureaucratic State Power in Lesotho**, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1990; J Parpart, Postmodernism, *Gender and Development*, in Crush, op. cit.
10. 'Absorbed' may have more than one meaning here. Some of government policy papers have been written by foreign consultants, who generally use the same techno-jargon and development approach as the international development organisations.
11. R Meena, *Gender Research Studies in Southern Africa: An Overview*, in R Meena (ed.), **Gender in Southern Africa: Conceptual and Theoretical Issues**, SAPES Trust, Harare, 1992; Parpart, op. cit.; M Watts, *A New Deal in Emotions*, in Crush, op. cit.; L Thompson, *Strictures or Structures? Societal Security and the State in Southern Africa: An International Perspective*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of the Western Cape, 1996.
12. In terms of stereotypes, 'feminine' qualities are pejoratively assigned to interstate relations. This accords with the logocentric way of thinking which permeates all of the social sciences in the effort to be more closely associated with the natural sciences)
13. For further discussions of this point see A M Jaggar, **Feminist Politics and Human Nature**, Rowman and Littlefield, New Jersey, 1988; S Harding, **The Science Question in Feminism**, Cornell University Press, New York, 1987a; S Harding, *Feminism, Science, and the Anti-Enlightenment Critiques*, in L J Nicholson, (ed.), **Feminism/Postmodernism**, Routledge, New York, 1990; J Cocks, **The Oppositional Imagination: Feminism, Critique and Political Theory**, Routledge, London, 1989; S Bordo, *Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism*, in Nicholson, *ibid.*; L J Nicholson & N Fraser, *Social Criticism without Philosophy: An Encounter between Feminism and Postmodernism*, in Nicholson, *ibid.*; J Flax, *Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory*, in Nicholson, *ibid.*; M Mbilinyi, *Research Methodologies in Gender Issues*, in Meena, op. cit.; Meena, op. cit.; R Gaidzanwa, *Bourgeois Theories of Gender and Feminism and Their Shortcomings*, with Reference to Southern African Countries, in Meena, op. cit.
14. See particularly R B J Walker, *The Prince and the Pauper: Tradition, Modernity and Practice in the Theory of International Relations*, in J der Derian & M J Shapiro, (eds.), **International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics**, Lexington Books, Massachussetts, 1989; R B J Walker, *Gender and Critique in the Theory of International Relations*, in V Spike Peterson (ed.), **Gendered States, Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1992; Fraser & Nicholson, *ibid.*; Flax, *ibid.*; A Yeatman, *A Feminist Theory of Social Differentiation*, in Nicholson, *ibid.*; Mbilinyi, *ibid.*, for a critical discussion of the negative effects of trying to incorporate a feminist approach into existing modernist theoretical approaches.
15. This is the term applied by feminists using this approach. Because of its negative connotations it is not one I would choose to use, but have retained for the sake of representational accuracy.
16. See for example G Sen & C Grown, **Development, Crises and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives**, Monthly Review Press, New York, 1987; S Chant & L Brydon,

17. Meena, op. cit., p. 8.
18. Meena quotes Fanon in trying to define the situation: "... *decolonisation is quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species of men' by another 'species of men'*"; *ibid.*, p. 9.
19. See Sen & Grown, op. cit.; Brydon & Chant, op. cit.; Meena, *ibid.*; Gaidzanwa, op. cit., for a discussion of this point. Western feminists emphasise that the same has occurred in the context of Western culture. See M Daly, **Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism**, Beacon Press, Boston, 1987; L Schiebinger, **The Mind has no Sex?**, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1989.
20. T Manana, *Conventional Economic Theories and Gender Analysis*, in Meena, op. cit.
21. Bordo, op. cit.; Spike Peterson, op. cit.
22. See Brydon & Chant, op. cit.; Sen & Grown, op. cit.; Manana, op. cit.; Meena, op. cit.
23. Sen & Grown, *ibid.*; Brydon & Chant, *ibid.*; Meena, *ibid.*; Mbilinyi, op. cit. critically discuss the impact of WID and WAD approaches.
24. Meena, *ibid.*, p. 20. This point is substantiated by research done by Brydon & Chant, *ibid.*, and Sen & Grown, *ibid.*
25. L Cliffe et. al. **The Transition to Independence in Namibia**, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1994, pp. 222-231 point out that, during the 1970s and early 1980s, SWAPO did in fact adhere to a 'socialist' ideological stance, which tempered gradually. By the time the elections took place, references to socialism were practically non-existent. See also C Tapscott, *Changing Discourses of Development in South Africa*, in Crush, op. cit., pp. 161-163.
26. J Pitsoane, *Namibia: Challenges of the First Decade*, in L Benjamin & C Gregory (eds.), **Southern Africa at the Crossroads**, Ashanti Publishers, Johannesburg, 1992; A du Pisani, *Rumours of Rain: Namibia's Post-Independence Experience*, **Southern African Issues**, 3, SAIIA, February 1991; Tapscott, *ibid.*
27. IFAD, **Namibia: Northern Livestock Improvement Project, Socio-Economic and Production Systems Diagnostic Study**, FAO/IFAD, Rome, 30 November 1992, p. 3; S Devereux et al., **Namibia Poverty Profile: A Report for SIDA, Social Sciences Division**, Multi-Disciplinary Research Centre, University of Namibia, February 1995, pp. 40-41.
28. Davies et. al., op. cit., pp. 52-54.
29. IFAD, **Report of the Strategy-Cum-Identification Mission to The Republic of Namibia**, 1, February 1992, p. 22. Average incomes vary significantly. A comprehensive study on incomes and poverty for SIDA compiled by Devereux et. al., op. cit., pp. 8-9 calculates that, measured in terms of "*standardised consumption levels*" (SCL), 28 per cent of the 247 000 households in Namibia have "low economic resources" and a further 22 per cent have "*very low economic resources.*" Those households whose SCL are less than N\$496.69 per month are classified as 'poor', and those with an SCL of less than N\$248.35 are classified as 'very poor'. These calculations are based on Namibia's CSO survey (1994).

30. Government of the Republic of Namibia, **National Development Plan 1** (NDP1), prepared by the National Planning Commission, Windhoek, 1995, p. 10.
31. The redirection implies that per capita income is accepted as a valid way of assessing the well-being and security of individuals.
32. Government of the Republic of Namibia, **Transitional Development Plan 1991/1992 – 1993/1994**, (TNDP), prepared by the National Planning Commission, Windhoek, December, 1992, p. 11.
33. UNIN, **Namibia: Perspectives for National Reconstruction and Development**, UN Institute for Namibia, 1986, pp. 59-60.
34. TNDP, op. cit., p. 9.
35. Ibid., p. 100. These international obligations create some conflict in terms of trade orientation. As they are listed in the TNDP and NDP1, these are seen to be towards SACU, SADC, GATT, UNCTAD, the Commonwealth and the Lomé IV Convention. Ironically, the conflicting agendas of these organisations and institutional agreements are not discussed in either the TNDP or NDP1.
36. Ibid., p. 11.
37. While the Bill appears initially pathbreaking, for example, by replacing traditional authorities with Regional Land Boards, it allows for the delegation of power in terms of land allocation, or the cancelling of land use rights back to traditional authorities. See Government of the Republic of Namibia, **Bill on Communal Land**, Windhoek, 1995, pp. 12-13.
38. NDP1, op. cit., p. 39.
39. Ibid., p. 146.
40. Ibid., p. 139.
41. Ibid., p. 147.
42. Ibid., p. 151.
43. Government of the Republic of Namibia, **National Food Security and Nutrition Assessment Report** (NFSNAR), prepared for the National Food Security and Nutrition Committee, Windhoek, August 1996, p. 7.
44. There has been a veritable spawning of reports in Namibia since the country's independence, some of them have been used for factual information in this article. Most are very detailed and comprehensive, but are generally subject to the criticisms levelled here. Unfortunately, it is impossible to examine them in any depth.
45. NFSNAR, op. cit., p. 59.
46. TNDP, op. cit., p. 55; IFAD, op. cit., p. 5. The term 'subsistence farming' is more accurate in Namibia than in, for instance, Zimbabwe, as many rural households do not sell their produce.

There is however some informal trading.

47. See R Dixon-Mueller & R Anker, **Assessing Women's Economic Contributions to Development**, International Labour Organisation, Geneva, 1988; they discuss UN and ILO definitions of 'productivity' and the difficulties of quantifying informal (including subsistence) forms of economic productivity.
48. Devereux et. al., op. cit., pp. 31-34.
49. The public administration of Namibia, prior to independence, consisted of a central authority, second tier authorities (ethnically based) and third tier or municipal authorities; see World Bank Report, **Namibia: Poverty Alleviation with Sustainable Growth**, World Bank, Washington, 1991, p. iii.
50. As in other Southern African states which still have migratory labour patterns.
51. NDP1, op. cit., p. 138.
52. Devereux et. al., op. cit., pp. 15-16; DWA, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
53. Detailed studies have been done since independence on the situation in the communal areas; see, for example, IFAD, op. cit.; and Devereux et. al., ibid.
54. NDP1, op. cit., p. 50.
55 P Harnett, **The Land Issue and Affirmative Action: Options for Range Management and Tenure**, report prepared for the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Namibia, 1993, p. 13.
55. World Bank, op. cit., p. iii.
56. Devereux et. al., op. cit., pp. 46-47; IFAD, op. cit., pp. 59-60.
57. NDP1, op. cit., pp. 150-153.
58. Ibid., p. 146.
59. Devereux et. al., op. cit., p. 67.
60. Tapscott, op. cit., p. 166.
61. C Brock, Interview, Chief Co-operative Officer, Co-operatives Directorate, Windhoek, Namibia, 27 October 1993.
62. NDP1, op. cit., p. 49.
63. It evolved from the Women's Desk which was set up immediately after independence. Although many of the SWAPO women activists wanted to see women represented adequately in all spheres of government, a Cabinet decision in 1990 concluded the debate, which led to the creation of a separate department; see H Becker, *From Anti-colonial Resistance to Reconstruction, Namibian Women's Movement 1980 to 1992*, unpublished Ph.D., 1993, pp. 213-216.
64. Becker, ibid.; DWA, op. cit.

65. ILO, **Namibian Women and Employment, Documents of a Tripartite Symposium held in Windhoek**, 25-29 November 1991, pp. 6-7, discusses the limited efficacy of the **Constitution** in redressing gender inequalities. The UN agencies' focus on 'women' stems from the UN declaring the 1970s 'the women's decade'. Although the earlier approach (Women in Development) is said to have been replaced by a less welfarist (Women and Development) approach, this is not often obvious in practice. See Meena, op. cit; and Thompson, op. cit.
66. Tapscott, op. cit., pp. 162-167, discusses the process of national reconciliation in Namibia and points out that the new government, through its unwillingness to alienate foreign and local capital, has largely replicated the socio-economic inequality of the colonial period. In this sense, the 'nationalist' populist ticket which SWAPO has used to gain the support of the majority of Namibians has been separated from the new government's economic policy. In fact, as Tapscott notes, the separation of political from economic issues helps to conceal the non-populist nature of the government's economic policies.

Response

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Lisa Thompson, in her critique of *Development and Security in Southern Africa: The Case of Namibia*, discovers little evidence of a commitment to or participation in regional organisations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC — formerly SADCC, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference). She looks to Namibia's development policy documents for clues to this disinterest. Drawing on the insights of postmodernist critiques of development, Thompson deconstructs the language of Namibian development policies to reveal a startlingly uncritical acceptance of mainstream development discourse. This approach, which is grounded in the world view of international finance and development institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), is resolutely committed to neoclassical economic solutions, with their emphasis on the nation-state, rather than regions, as the fundamental building blocks of development (and security). She concludes that this state-centric discourse has played a crucial role in Namibia's apparent disinterest in regional organisations and concerns. However, an in-depth analysis of regionalism would have required further attention to issues raised in passing in a footnote. Concerns about the protection of sovereignty and cultural identity cannot be explained away as Western policy issues. Moreover, regional integration does not just exist (or not exist) at the level of policy. What about the informal trade and smuggling that flourish across the region, making a mockery of official policies carefully crafted in capitals far away from all too porous borders? And even more significantly, how do we explain the fact that this informal trade is often dominated by the poorest, most marginalised populations, especially women, who receive little attention in official documents about regional economic development and security? These issues need to be explored before we can fully pronounce on Namibia's commitment to regionalism.

Given the limited involvement in regional development and security, Thompson focuses most of her attention on official Namibian development policies, especially their discourses and programmes for women. She cites some shocking figures — little has changed since independence. In 1990, five per cent of the population earned more than seventy per cent of the national income, while the poorest 55 per cent earned approximately three per cent of that income. Although about fifty per cent of households in the rural areas are headed by women, few of them own land. These figures immediately suggest the need for a redistributive policy with a gender focus. However, Thompson's analysis of Namibian development

documents reveals quite another response, one that reflects the world view of institutions such as the World Bank, the IMF and many international non-government organisations (INGOs). Citing extensively from Namibian policy documents, Thompson reveals the close correlation between Namibian development policies and those of international hegemonic development discourses, particularly the commitment to privatisation, increased efficiency and productivity, a free market system and minimalist government. While women's role in development merits occasional mention in these documents, they are only mentioned in relation to the goals of mainstream Women In Development (WID) policies, such as improving women's productivity as workers and mothers, training programmes and other band-aid approaches to women and development. Empowerment, transforming gender roles and expectations and other 'alternative' ideas are notably absent, apparently silenced by the commitment to the WID approach of mainstream development discourse and policy.

Thompson's main point — that Namibia's development policies are deeply affected by and similar to those of the dominant development discourses and policies coming out of Western institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF — is convincingly and powerfully argued. The argument that the dominant discourse of development appears to have drowned out alternative perspectives, especially those concerning women and gender, is not in dispute as well. However, she overplays her hand. The emphasis on the hegemonic character of international development discourse and policy portrays Namibian policy-makers simply as puppets of international organisations and global forces. The chapter does not explore the possibility that these policy-makers may have their own reasons for adopting a neoliberal approach, or that official policy may hide the struggles and conflicting agendas and factions within national development policy-makers and discourses. An overemphasis on the hegemonic role of development discourse reifies the very dichotomies that poststructuralist thought has criticised. These dichotomies such as the first world/third world, dominant/dominated, coloniser/colonised, have permeated much of the writing on development. They reduce the developing world poor and élite to passive victims who play no role in their own history. But matters are rarely that simple. The Namibian state may produce documents that look like they were simply handed down from on high, but unless we know more about the struggles over those documents and the way they intersect with local conflicts over resources and meanings, they do not tell us enough about what is really going on. Thompson has made an important beginning, but we need to combine her deconstruction of development discourse with a more thorough analysis of the struggles over meanings and resources among those making the policies that now seem so neatly tied to Western agendas.

We also need to know much more about the marginalised, especially women. Women do make up a large percentage of the poor, and many of them have little or no land or resources. But the very poststructuralist thinking that Thompson draws on to critique development can offer insights into the complexities of power in everyday life. Women are not all poor, and those women who are poor, are not entirely without resources, both material and personal. If we are to understand the way policies affect the lives of people on the ground, including women, we need to know more about their daily lives and their everyday struggles over the way life is supposed to be organised, explained and lived. Recent writings on the colonial/postcolonial remind us that even the most powerful are affected by the 'powerless', and that, indeed, power is never simply the preserve of a small group. There are spaces in between where even 'unequal' people interact and affect each other, albeit not on a level playing field, but in ways that disrupt the easy notion that one side controls the agenda and the other is simply an obedient, disciplined pawn.¹ The job undertaken by Thompson — the deconstruction of development policies and discourses — needs to be carried further, so that we can understand the complex, contradictory and fluid nature of policy construction and implementation, and can remind ourselves that even the most apparent hegemony constantly has to be reinforced and is, in fact, never as hegemonic as official policies claim. Only then will we be able to truly assess the degree to which alternative visions of development and gender have found unexpected places to germinate, even if officially they have no land of their own.

Endnote

1. A Stoler & F Cooper, **Tensions of Empire**, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1997.

RDP Projects in South Africa: A Gender Perspective Analysis

Dr Yolanda Sadie and Dr Elsabé Loots

Introduction

The South African government is bound to various national and international commitments and obligations which compel it to promote gender equality in all its activities, while ensuring that it is achieved in society as a whole. The most notable national commitments are the entrenchment of gender equality in the Constitution and the creation of the Commission for Gender Equality. The ratification (without reservations) of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by the government in December 1995 and the official adoption of the South African Platform of Action on the return from the 4th United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, are among the most important international commitments. The ratification of CEDAW means that South Africa is legally bound to take the steps outlined in the Convention to ensure that women enjoy real equality, including social and economic equality, in society.

Although the legal equality of women and men in South Africa is indisputable, it remains a well-known fact that women, by no means, have achieved equality in the economy and in society, in general. Women (who constitute 54 per cent of the South African population) are in the most instances still more disadvantaged than men.² Calculations by Central Statistics³ reflect a nearly twenty per cent difference between the Gender Development Index (GDI) and the Human Development Index (HDI), a clear indication of the existence of gender disparity in South Africa. The following examples of the inequality and poverty of women in relation to men will suffice to demonstrate this point. Women earn a mere 38 per cent of the income earned by men. The labour force participation rate for men is 72 per cent, which is significantly higher than the female average of 45 per cent,⁴ while the unemployment rate for economically active women of 38 per cent is much higher than the 23 per cent unemployment rate of economically active men.⁵ The situation of black/African women is far worse in that their unemployment rate of 47 per cent far exceeds the national average of 29 per cent (which is also the unemployment rate of African men).⁶ According to the 1991 census,⁷ eighty per cent of women in rural areas have no access to income at all. Literacy rates also show that more females than males are illiterate. Of the 46 per cent illiterate people, 43 per cent are male and 49 per cent are female.⁸ As many as 58 per cent of African women are illiterate.⁹ Finally, 75 per cent of African workers in the informal sector are women, 82 per cent of whom are in 'elementary' occupations such as street vending, domestic work and scavenging.¹⁰

It therefore comes as no surprise that poverty in the country has a strong gender dimension.¹¹ Women's larger share of the poverty burden can be explained by their disadvantaged position in the labour market, both in terms of jobs that are available and income that can be earned. In addition, over one-third of all households in South Africa are headed by single women. The level of income of households run by single women is half that of households in which men also contribute.¹²

The government's concern with the development and empowerment of women has been emphasised in official development policy documents, particularly the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). In his State of the Nation address in 1994, President Mandela also maintained that true freedom can be achieved only when women have been emancipated from all forms of oppression. He further

emphasised that the objectives of the RDP will not have been realised "... *unless we see in visible and practical terms that the condition of the women of our country has radically changed for the better, and that they have been empowered to intervene in all aspects of life as equals with any other member of society.*"

As has been pointed out in the introductory chapter, various development paradigms regarding the development of women have been followed over the years by governments, donor-agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs). This article offers a critical analysis of the South African government's RDP policy and selected projects through a gender lens. Because of the strong emphasis on attempts to empower women, this analysis also provides some insight into the issue of emancipation which is, as pointed out by Schoeman in the introductory chapter, crucial to security. Empowerment underlies emancipation, thereby also pointing to the inextricable link between security and development.

This analysis makes no claim to being exhaustive. It focuses only on national departments responsible for the selected RDP projects. In most instances, these departments are mainly responsible for the policies surrounding the projects, while the implementation of the projects is the responsibility of the various provinces. Reference to some projects in the provinces, however, will be made to serve as examples.

The Gender Approach

The gender approach to development involves not only an integration of women into development, but looks for the potential in development initiatives to transform unequal gender/social relations and to empower women.¹³ It therefore views inequality between men and women as structural, dictated by socio-cultural norms that serve as organising principles of society. The gender-based approach is distinct in that it focuses on women and men, rather than considering women in isolation.

The best known methodological framework which examines the gendered position of men and women is based on the work of Molyneaux¹⁴ and Moser,¹⁵ among others. Moser distinguishes between three categories of work: reproductive, productive and community work. Within these categories, men and women generally fulfil different roles. These are the gender roles of men and women. It suggests that women have a triple role (reproductive, productive and community managing roles), whereas men fulfil a double role (the productive and community politics role).

Reproductive work involves the care and maintenance of the household and its members, including bearing and caring for children, food preparation, water supply, fuel collection, shopping, housekeeping and family health-care. One of the results is that women generally work longer hours than men. Despite it being the foundation of every society, reproductive work is often taken for granted, undervalued, and not regarded as 'real work'. Productive work involves the production of goods and services for consumption and trade (farming, employment and self-employment in the informal sector). This is usually considered to be the 'real' area of work, especially when it generates income. Community work involves the collective organisation of social events and services, including local political activities. Again, both men and women engage in community activities, but a gender division of labour also prevails here. A distinction is made between community managing activities and community politics. The former entails activities such as organising the collective provision of food, basic services, education or health-care. It is regarded as an extension of women's reproductive role and is thus often done voluntarily. Community politics is the public role of organising and decision-making at community level. While women may participate in this, men usually have the decision-making power.

By assessing and understanding the gender roles in a given society the specific needs of women (and men) can be ascertained and addressed within projects.¹⁶ Molyneaux¹⁷ distinguishes between practical and strategic gender needs. Practical gender needs are those which are formulated from the concrete

conditions women experience in their gendered position within the sexual division of labour. Arising from these conditions are their practical interests for their own and the survival of their dependants. Strategic gender needs seek to address women's subordination to men. These advocate an alternative, more equal and satisfactory organisation of society in terms of both its structure and the relationship between men and women.

As the term 'empowerment', particularly the empowerment of women, has become a central concept in government and development circles in South Africa, its position within a gender perspective needs to be addressed briefly. Empowerment is central to a gender perspective. This is also acknowledged by the government in its National Gender Policy¹⁸ which asserts that the empowerment of women can be achieved by "... *understanding and addressing the gendered nature of society and the differential needs and interests of women.*" Although 'empowerment' is a multifaceted and complex term, it generally emphasises women's freedom of choice and power to control their own lives at both the personal level within the household and outside the home, in terms of political, social and economic processes and change. It therefore leads to the general question of whether it increases or decreases women's power to control their lives.¹⁹ The empowerment of women can only be achieved by meeting practical as well as strategic gender needs. Meeting only practical gender needs will not eventually lead to the empowerment of women. Meeting these needs (i.e. the practical gender needs) is necessary, argues Molyneux²⁰ because "... *the formulation of strategic needs can only be effective as a form of intervention when full account is taken of these practical needs.*" However, a long term strategy addressing practical gender needs often amounts to nothing more than treating the symptoms of a disease. To cure the disease, strategic gender needs must also be met. Therefore, a combination of strategic and practical gender needs should be addressed successfully. Thus, projects aimed at empowerment endeavour to increase women's knowledge, develop confidence, make them self-reliant, improve their skills, improve their access to resources, and provide opportunities for participation in decision-making.²¹

The level and quality of empowerment brought about by a development project can be measured qualitatively through the assessment of five criteria. These are based on the criteria used by Longwe²² and are the following:

- **Welfare:** Does the project meet material needs or address immediate problems such as access to food, income, shelter and health-care? In other words, are these practical gender needs met in the planning, implementation and evaluation of a project?
- **Access:** Does the project provide better access to the means of production on an equal basis with men, such as equal access to land, labour, credit, training and all publicly available services and benefits?
- **Conscientisation:** Does the project enhance women's awareness of the gender roles and inequalities within communities? Are the strategic needs for creating or enhancing women's awareness and understanding considered and addressed in the planning and execution of a project?
- **Participation:** Are women involved in the decision-making process about the project, in policy-making in the community, in planning and administration not only of the project, but beyond its completion? A significant indication of the degree to which women's strategic needs are addressed in a project can be found in the degree to which they take part in the planning, management, implementation and assessment of a project.
- **Control:** Do women have control over the end product of their labour? Following on the criteria of awareness and participation, control over the end product of their labour depends on whether women's strategic needs were considered and woven into the project. The extent of women's

control over the product of their input in development can also be seen as an indication of the degree to which conventional gender roles have been challenged and changed through the project.

The greater the number of levels of equality met by the project, the more the project empowers/develops women. Projects oriented to meet practical gender needs usually do not move past stage one.

With the above analytical framework in mind, the extent of gender awareness in RDP policy and projects will be evaluated.

Women and the RDP

The RDP, one of the official policy frameworks for South Africa, is a coherent socio-economic policy which strives towards a non-sexist future, among others.²³ Throughout the policy document, specific emphasis is placed on the development and empowerment of women. No less than forty references are made either to women in the development process or to gender equality. The principles set out relate to the fulfilment of women's practical, as well as strategic gender needs. Needs to be addressed relating to their social condition (practical gender needs) include:

- improvement of maternal health;
- promotion of the provision of child-care facilities;
- affordable and safer transport; and
- the provision of electricity (it is acknowledged that rural women in particular face a heavy burden collecting wood).²⁴

Meeting the strategic gender needs of women which are related to their social position, include:

- special attention to be paid to their legal, educational and employment status;
- all forms of discrimination regarding women's access to land to be removed;
- the approach to housing and other social services to support gender equality;
- legislative obstacles and constraints to housing and credit to be removed;
- women to have equal access to education, training and economic opportunities;
- reproductive rights to be granted to women;
- opportunities and choices for women, as well as broader participation in economic decision-making to be facilitated; and
- the development of small-scale farming by women and of small enterprises focusing on women to be promoted.²⁵

Although the policy guidelines on development in South Africa suggest a gender-based approach to development, the challenge of a gender approach, however, lies in its implementation, which is the *sine qua non* of all development policies and programmes. As has been mentioned, all legal constraints inhibiting women's equality have been abolished since 1994. The issue now is whether the above ideals

have materialised in actual projects and whether those projects launched, indeed meet the criteria of empowerment in terms of meeting other 'social' strategic gender needs such as participation in decision-making.

The White Paper on the reconstruction and development programme and the identification of projects

In the White Paper on the Reconstruction and Development Programme (WPRDP) various so-called RDP projects were identified. These RDP projects originally consisted of fifteen Presidential Lead Projects, fourteen Special Integrated Presidential Projects and 48 other RDP-related projects. The Special Integrated Presidential Projects are mainly focused on urban renewal, especially those areas where infrastructure was damaged during the unrest before the 1994 elections. Most of these areas are black townships like Katorus on the East Rand, Botshabelo in the Free State and Cato Manor in KwaZulu-Natal. The other 48 RDP-related projects are projects that were initiated through provinces and financed through provincial discretionary funds. The real RDP projects, called the Presidential Lead Projects, will be the focus of this analysis. These projects are:

- primary health-care programmes;
- building of clinics;
- an AIDS awareness and prevention campaign;
- primary school nutrition schemes;
- rural water provision;
- land reform;
- land restitution;
- the National Urban, Reconstruction and Housing Agency (NURCHA) and the provision of low-cost housing;
- a national literacy programme (now known as adult basic education);
- a culture of learning programme;
- small-scale farmer development; and
- public works programmes.²⁶

The criteria set out in the WPRDP to which these presidential projects have to conform, however, seem to be very general and do not take any gender considerations into account. The WPRDP also does not refer explicitly to gender in its discussion of monitoring and indicators. Examples of the general nature of criteria include: programmes should focus on the empowerment of communities, jobs must be created through these programmes; they should focus on training and capacity development; programmes should be visible and transparent; and affirmative action with respect to gender and race must be taken into account.²⁷ The latter does not necessarily mean that policies and programmes will address the differential and unequal needs, responsibilities and opportunities created by the unequal division of labour. However, provision was made for a Gender Unit in the RDP Office whose task was to determine

gender policy, as well as evaluate the gender sensitivity of all programmes.²⁸ This Unit also initiated the National Policy for Women's Empowerment in 1995 with the objective of mainstreaming gender into all government policies and programmes. Important principles of this policy include:

- gender equality should be a key objective of all government policies, planning and programmes;
- the impact of government gender policies on the private spheres and the implications of this for women's empowerment should be monitored and addressed;
- government policy, projects and programmes should firstly be based on an analysis of the sexual division of labour, and, secondly, on women's interrelated productive, reproductive and community management and decision-making roles; and
- all policy decisions should not only be aimed at addressing women's practical gender needs, but should also address strategic gender needs.²⁹

Although this policy document had no official status, it served two purposes. In the first instance, it served as a guideline to the development of priorities and programmes by government departments. Secondly, it can be seen as a first step towards making government departments more gender aware in their implementation of RDP and other development programmes. This mainstreaming of gender into all development policies and programmes was strengthened by the ratification of CEDAW in January 1996. This led to the establishment of a CEDAW Working Group which prepared a resource document based on the terms of CEDAW's provisions, the Women's Charter for Effective Equality, the above National Policy for Women's Empowerment and the Beijing Platform of Action. The Women's Charter provides a reference point for government departments and NGOs in their task of planning and implementing gender policies. It also has a direct bearing on RDP projects because, with the closing down of the RDP Ministry in April 1996, the RDP Office's disability, gender and children programmes were moved to Deputy President Mbeki's office.³⁰ In practice, this move resulted in the Presidential Lead Projects being diverted to the individual line departments concerned. The gender sensitivity of all development programmes were to be determined by the individual line departments.

Guidelines to government departments in the Policy for Women's Empowerment include:³¹

- all key policy-makers and implementers to receive gender education and training for development of skills in gender planning, policy development and implementation; and
- that, on the policy side, all policies, projects and programmes are reviewed for their gender implications by using gender disaggregated data, and that indicators, targets and other quantifiable measures of women's empowerment are established.

In return, the line ministries made various commitments to address gender issues in their RDP and other development projects.

Gender sensitivity of RDP projects

As the presidential RDP projects have been allocated to the appropriate line departments, this analysis, as has been indicated above, is structured according to government departments on a national basis. Their respective commitments to gender sensitivity will serve as a backdrop to the implementation of their projects.

Department of Agriculture

Small scale farming, initially a Presidential Lead Project, presently comes under the jurisdiction of the Department of Agriculture. Although small scale farming development should be promoted to benefit all the rural people in South Africa, at Cabinet level, the Department has specifically committed itself to recognise and assist women in their central role as food producers by taking positive steps to support small scale, rural-based agricultural enterprises managed by women.³² However, in its report to CEDAW, the Department of Agriculture³³ acknowledges that, although it tries hard to involve women in the field of agriculture, it will take a while before such endeavours are able to produce satisfactory results. The reason for this is that it is mainly African women from rural areas who practice agriculture but they do this as a means of survival (subsistence farming) rather than as an economic commercial activity. In addition, these women are generally poor and illiterate (see statistics above).

Currently, the Department is engaged in grant assistance to small scale farmers. According to the Directorate: Financial Assistance and Land Administration,³⁴ the purpose of the grant assistance for small farming development is "*to assist groups of emerging and small food producers to develop/improve their production efficiency.*" The primary criteria laid down for grant assistance include that projects must be demand-led, that community involvement and ownership are prerequisites, and that the target beneficiaries must be the poor and disadvantaged. In its summary of grant assistance to small farming developments, the Directorate reported that 814 projects involving 20 224 small farmers, were approved until 1997. The projects include the establishment or upgrading of irrigation infrastructure, dairy units, poultry projects, vegetable gardening and the creation of fences.³⁵

No gender disaggregated data are kept by the Department. Such data are the key to ensure that women — as both the majority of the population, and the majority of the poor and marginalised — receive a fair share of resources. The value of gender disaggregated data is that it clearly shows the difference between men and women. If information is not collected in a way that enables the differences between men and women to be clearly stated, it is likely that the specific gender needs and interests of women will be given less attention — if not ignored completely.

Communities apply for financial grant assistance on a 'first come, first served' basis and criteria for grant assistance is gender-neutral, despite the claim that agricultural policy is gender-sensitive. Gender-neutral criteria do not take the particular needs of African rural women and the constraints faced by these women in applying for grants into consideration. Such constraints and key issues facing women to gain access to productive agriculture, include:

- the lack of accessible information: the Department of Agriculture has been accused of insufficient communication of their services;³⁶
- low literacy levels, customary marriage law that gives men a decision-making role, and cultural practices defining women as minors;
- the fact that women are economically dependent; and
- their lack of skills and training to enter productive agriculture.

In conclusion, the provision of assistance for small scale farming in the Department of Agriculture does not take any gender considerations into account. The empowerment of women is therefore unlikely to take place, as substantive equal access is not provided and economic domination by males is apparently the norm.

Department of Education

A national literacy programme (presently known as Adult Basic Education and Training) and a Culture of Learning programme are the two Presidential Lead Projects relating to education in the country. This section will pay particular attention to the Adult Basic Education and Training programme, as the Culture of Learning programme mainly concerns the restoration of a culture of learning in educational institutions. The programme caters for the physical improvement of school buildings, as well as the quality of learning by targeting the improvement of school governance.³⁷ It therefore leaves little scope for a gender interpretation.

According to the RDP policy framework,³⁸ Adult Basic Education aims to "*provide adults with education and training programmes equivalent to exit levels in the formal school system, with an emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills.*" It also states that special attention must be paid to the needs of women: "*adult basic education and training programmes should give special emphasis to women trapped in the rural areas.*"³⁹ This special emphasis on women, particularly rural women's, needs no justification as the figures given above on women's literacy rates illustrate. However, when referring to the 9,4 million adults in South Africa who have had fewer than nine years of schooling, the Department of Education's Directorate of Adult Education and Training does not acknowledge, for example, the particular lack of education among African rural women.⁴⁰

A first step in the process of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) was the adoption in September 1995, of the Interim Guidelines for the Provision of Adult Basic Education and Training as the official policy of the national government. These guidelines represent a fundamental component in building a coherent framework for the provision of ABET achievements in particular areas of learning (language, literacy and communication, and mathematics/numeracy).⁴¹

A programme was launched to improve both the quantity and quality of delivery to adult learners at the lowest level of ABET, known as the Ithuteng 'Ready to Learn' Campaign. This was the first Presidential Lead Project with an overall budget of R50 million. Some 10 000 learners in each province were taught literacy and numeracy skills equivalent to Grade 4,⁴² in the pilot ABET programme nationwide.

The above Interim Guidelines have been reviewed since 1995, and this has resulted in the Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training in October 1997, as well as the National Multi-year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training. The Department sees ABET as both part of and as a foundation for lifelong learning and development.⁴³ The Document provides policy guidelines on key components of the ABET system, as well as guidelines for a national curriculum framework which will assist the provision of ABET learning, which is still being developed by the Department. According to a member of the Directorate for Adult Education in the Department of Education, the Department is only responsible for the formulation of policies, while all programmes are implemented at a provincial level.⁴⁴

Despite the RDP policy framework's emphasis that special attention should be paid to the needs of women and the fact that the Department committed itself at Cabinet level to "*develop gender sensitive curricula*,"⁴⁵ neither the Interim Guidelines nor the subsequent Policy Document is recognised as having a gender dimension.⁴⁶ This is of particular concern, given the historical legacy of racial and sexual inequities that have led to a situation where black women occupy the most disadvantaged educational position in society.

The particular needs of women to be addressed in specific gender-sensitive ABET programmes are not recognised in the Policy Document. They are merely envisaged in a gender-neutral sense: the "*new policy will serve the needs of a diverse range of learning constituencies, including organised labour in the formal economy; self-employed and under-employed people; ... the rural unemployed; and women heads of households in urban and rural areas.*"⁴⁷ In a similar gender-neutral vein, a curriculum

framework is proposed *"that will equip learners with the knowledge, attitudes, skills and critical capacity ..."*⁴⁸ Programmes would therefore be general and not directed at a particular group's specific needs. Women's interests are thus subsumed under the broad goals of ABET. Failure to recognise the specific needs of women is likely to result in inadequate provision of ABET and may contribute to the perpetuation of women's low status in society.

Although 'disadvantaged' women and 'women with special needs' are among the groups that have been identified as priorities for mobilising and enrolling learners in ABET programmes, the gender-neutral approach is also evident in the targets set for state provision of ABET in each province.⁴⁹ In the Gauteng Department of Education's ABET Business Plan, which set the guidelines for implementing the Ithuteng 'Ready to Learn Campaign' in the province, no specific targets to reach women were set. It has also been acknowledged by the Gauteng ABET Centre that no particular effort was made to mobilise women to participate. The fact that they are not enabled or encouraged to participate in ABET programmes was expressed by women as a grievance at the ABET National Working Conference in 1997. They maintained that more constraints are faced by women learners than by men.⁵⁰ In this regard, Wolpe⁵¹ remarks that additional factors such as familial activities, militate against women taking advantage of educational programmes, particularly if they take place outside working hours. Because of their responsibilities at home, the amount of time they can devote to education is limited and their motivation is low. With the increasing number of female-headed households, these elements become even more important.

As suggested in the criteria above, the success of a development project in terms of empowering women depends in the final instance on whether practical and above all women's strategic needs have been met. Have conventional gender roles been challenged and changed by the ABET programme? The guidelines on monitoring and evaluation set out in Chapter 15 of the ABET Plan⁵² do not include provision for a gender analysis. It is mentioned, however, that the collection of data and reporting will be focused particularly, but not exclusively, at the five special target groups identified earlier: disadvantaged women, women with special needs, disadvantaged youth, youth with special needs and disadvantaged learners with special needs.⁵³ The indicators according to which data will be collected, include aspects such as enrolment and performance success. Although disaggregated data will be available on the above, it would merely seem to reflect women's participation and performance in these programmes and not whether the new skills acquired really contributed to their empowerment. If a gendered approach is not built into programmes in terms of needs, targets and contents, there is no guarantee that such programmes will indeed benefit disadvantaged groups such as African rural women. A gender-neutral approach to development has been criticised on these grounds by development practitioners.

In conclusion, the ABET policy and plan presently fail to recognise the specificity of women's interests, whether practical or strategic. Continual disregard of the particularity of the needs of different groups of women in accordance with their specific circumstances will lead to the failure of ABET to redress gender inequalities in South Africa.

Department of Health

The three former residential projects which now fall under the Department of Health are primary health-care programmes, such as free health-care for pregnant women and children under six years of age; the building of clinics; and an AIDS awareness and prevention campaign. Free public health-care for pregnant women and children under six years has already been introduced in 1994. This has led to the increased use of antenatal health services contributing to fewer pregnancy complications. These programmes are also in line with the Department's CEDAW commitment that accessible and affordable primary health care should be provided for vulnerable groups such as women and children.⁵⁴ Since 1994, 504 new clinics have also been built, serving an additional five million people.

The introduction of the above programmes serves practical gender needs. The programmes contribute to making women's lives easier in that they help them to perform their traditional roles and responsibilities better. Although it may appear that women and men have common needs with regard to, for example, the provision of clinics and an AIDS awareness programme, women have a particular interest in these programmes because of their disproportionate responsibility for social reproduction.

HIV/AIDS continues to be an important health concern in South Africa. The country is considered to have one of the fastest-growing HIV epidemics in the world. According to Sher,⁵⁵ women of reproductive age are the fastest-growing segment of the population to be infected. It is also easier, he notes, for women to become infected with HIV/AIDS than men. Statistics published by the Department of Health obtained from a national HIV survey of women attending antenatal clinics reveal that, at the end of 1997, 16,01 per cent of the women were infected by HIV. This represents a 12,99 per cent increase in the prevalence of HIV infection since 1996.⁵⁶

Although an AIDS/HIV awareness and prevention campaign has been identified as a Presidential Lead Project, the Department of Health has been criticised since 1996 for the lack of implementation of a national AIDS/HIV awareness programme.⁵⁷ The most recent criticism comes from the National Assembly's Health Committee report, which describes the government's response to HIV/AIDS as being slow and inadequate. The Department of Health, according to the report, had not shown a broad vision for dealing with the disease, for example, by indicating interventions, target groups or ways of evaluating how effective interventions were.⁵⁸ Given these accusations, it is not surprising that no gender-sensitive approach to the epidemic exists. The lack of a gendered approach to AIDS/HIV prevention has also been confirmed by a spokesperson for the HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Diseases Directorate in the Department of Health.⁵⁹ At present, there are no particular strategies relating to women and their particular needs. A gender consultant, however, has been appointed in April 1998 to design and implement a gendered approach to HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention strategies.

Over and above physiological differences, women's educational, economic, social, political and cultural status in varying degrees and combinations affects their capacity to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS and to demand that their partners do so as well. For these reasons, women's particular problems and needs need to be taken into consideration in any HIV/AIDS prevention plan for such a plan to achieve any measure of success. Specific factors to be taken into consideration regarding women, include the following:

- Women's lack of access to and control over resources for decision-making particularly in the sexual relationship appears to be a key to their vulnerability and that of their children in the HIV/AIDS epidemic.⁶⁰
- Therefore, if reducing the risk of HIV transmission appears to threaten the balance of power in the sexual relationship, then measures to prevent AIDS could mean failure in their roles as women and loss of position in the family.
- For the majority of rural African women, fertility means status and self-esteem. Having offspring who will survive beyond infancy may also mean benefits from children's labour. As Ulin remarks: "under conditions of scarcity and competition for survival, the economic metaphor is central in women's interpretation of their own sexuality."⁶¹
- Socio-economic factors that constrain life options and sexual behaviour represent another set of influences on women's vulnerability to HIV infection. Women are more likely to be poor and uneducated than men, as has been indicated above, and are thus likely to be dependent on men for

their survival and that of their children. In the context of unequal relationships and in settings where their wage-earning abilities are limited, women may be afraid to risk angering or losing their partners by raising the issue of monogamy and condom use. Leaving an unco-operative partner is not seen as a realistic option. Furthermore, women who do have to support themselves may find that they have to exchange sex for money, goods, favours and other services, thus placing themselves at risk of exposure to AIDS.⁶² To the extent that sex means survival, its economic rewards will reinforce high-risk behaviour and perpetuate the powerlessness of women to break out of a downward spiral.

- There are socio-cultural aspects, such as the importance of large families, which can be attributed to an overriding emphasis on lineage in the African social system. Lineage survival is dependent on women's ability and willingness to produce large families. Reports from several sub-Saharan countries document women's fears of family conflict, economic loss, and lowered self-esteem if they advocate condom use.⁶³

The particular focus on women in an HIV/AIDS campaign stems from their reproductive role as care-givers (mothers), and as service providers (sexual partners). There is a well-known link between maternal health and child survival. This is illustrated in the lives of children of HIV-infected mothers. Between twenty per cent and forty per cent of these women will pass the virus on to their babies, and about eighty per cent of the infected children will die before their fifth birthday.⁶⁴ In addition, mothers suffering from AIDS are unlikely to provide the care their children need to prevent and survive those diseases that already account for high rates of child mortality. As the AIDS epidemic among adults progresses and results in death, the impact will be increasingly evident in growing numbers of orphans.⁶⁵

Gender-sensitive strategies need to be adopted in HIV/AIDS campaigns, and women therefore have to be active participants in prevention strategies at community level. Such campaigns must include research and intervention directed at removing barriers to participation by men and women in decisions to protect themselves from HIV transmission. Male perspectives and gender differences on important issues in the patterning of sexual behaviour should form the basis of HIV/AIDS campaigns. Sher⁶⁶ further emphasises the importance of the empowerment of women in the struggle to deal with the HIV/AIDS problem. Such empowerment, however, should be part of a larger strategy of poverty and social upliftment.

Department of Housing

Housing is a fundamental human right embodied in Section 26 of the Constitution, and every citizen of the country has the right to have access to adequate housing. The state is now bound to ensure that, within its available resources, the right is realised. The provision of low-cost housing is therefore regarded as one of the key RDP projects. Only twenty per cent of households in South Africa requiring housing are able to meet their needs in the marketplace without assistance. The remaining eighty per cent depend on state support to a greater or lesser extent. Hence, the national housing subsidy scheme which is administered by the various Provincial Housing Boards, was introduced. The subsidy criteria are gender-neutral and subsidy levels are linked to household incomes and not to gender criteria. A family with a monthly household income of R0 — R800, for example, is eligible for the full subsidy of R15 000. This Housing Subsidy Scheme offers subsidies over a range of options: project-linked subsidies, individual subsidies, consolidation subsidies and institutional subsidies.⁶⁷

According to the 1998 Budget Review,⁶⁸ approximately 385 000 houses have been built and 700 000 subsidies have been reserved in the period April 1994 to December 1997. No gender disaggregated data are available.

Another Presidential Lead Project was the establishment of the National Urban Reconstruction and Housing Agency (NURCHA) in October 1995, to provide guarantees to financial institutions for low-income housing provision.⁶⁹ The issue of bridging finance has been a problem for developers in the low-income housing sector since the above subsidy scheme was implemented.

Although the Department of Housing committed itself to enable women to obtain affordable housing, to take positive measures in conjunction with other stakeholders to assist women with dependants who have limited or no financial resources to acquire housing, and to facilitate women's participation as consumers and employees in decision-making processes concerning the allocation of housing, a spokesperson of the Department acknowledged that the Department's current primary aim is to facilitate low-income housing to the broader population. At present, no specific preference is given to the housing needs of low-income women (see statistics above which would justify such a preference).⁷⁰ Although the Department is especially looking at the plight of rural women and their problems of access to land, in particular, the current housing programmes are gender-neutral. As a result of the decentralisation of power to provinces and local governments, the Department is also at present not in a position to enforce gender sensitivity in the planning, allocation and implementation of programmes.⁷¹

Illustrating the lack of a gender-sensitive policy towards housing is the Presidential Urban Renewal Project of the township Katorus, mentioned above, of which the Phola Park housing project forms part. Community leaders within existing organisations played a key role in identifying housing needs and steering the process of identifying the best ways in which their community's needs could be satisfied. Although more than sixty per cent of households in Phola Park are headed by women, the project in no way indicated responsiveness to women's practical or strategic needs.⁷² There was no gender sensitivity with regard to the design and management or implementation of the project.⁷³ Additional training in new directions for women in particular has not been considered, and even where women have been included in some building activities, little attention has been paid to equip them with new and marketable skills, like brickmaking or bricklaying. Women were only involved in cement-washing walls and assembling roofs — work presumably more suitable for women.⁷⁴ Training and capacity-building among women are important activities in terms of the RDP's plans for community labour-based construction methods and are essential in terms of the empowerment criteria set out earlier. In the absence of ongoing skills development and training, women's access to employment and income has not improved in Phola Park. Not only did the developer not train women in non-traditional areas of work, but no notice was taken of the potential contribution of women. Support facilities to clear more of the women's time were therefore not included in the project. It is unlikely that Phola Park women will benefit from the project beyond receiving adequate shelter. Empowerment criteria also require that there will be a fundamentally changed perception by women of their position in the community and in the wider society. This understanding has not been engendered by the Phola Park project.⁷⁵

Similarly, projects guaranteed by NURCHA are not subject to any gender-sensitive criteria. According to Mjoli-Mncube, the Executive Director of NURCHA, women are not incorporated in all the stages of the housing projects.⁷⁶ Although women attend meetings to initiate housing projects, they do not participate because of their marginal knowledge of technical terms. They are therefore not elected to decision-making committees. Despite NURCHA's preference for assistance to women-driven projects, fewer than ten of the 75 projects launched by them are women-driven.

A gender-sensitive approach to housing has great potential to transform women's position by, for instance, favouring women's access, tailoring projects to women's needs and to the needs of particular households, and by including more development aspects, such as training and income-generation.⁷⁷

Research by Todes and Walker⁷⁸ confirms that women address the issue of housing from the perspective of its meaning in their lives, rather than as a mere commodity. Owning a home gives a woman, for

example, greater control over her home, and over gender relations within. As Moser⁷⁹ also points out, men and women's priorities frequently differ, and it is more often women who take responsibility for housing.

As has been pointed out above, no special preference is given to the housing needs of low-income women — although access to housing for such women is potentially made possible, particularly through the state's subsidy scheme. However, according to the South African People's Homeless Federation (which represents 350 communities countrywide at the very low-income scale of the spectrum and whose members are predominantly women), access to the subsidy proves to be difficult as it seems to favour projects undertaken by private contractors, rather than people building for themselves.⁸⁰ Even with the government subsidy, unemployed individuals (among whom women are the majority) cannot access housing.

If women are to benefit and not be marginalised, they must participate in and have influence over the institutions controlling housing in the first place. Without women's participation in and influence over the institutions affecting housing, women will be unable to ensure that their needs are met, either at the level of housing policy as a whole, or in relation to more localised issues as the practicalities of allocation. Women are only empowered when such participation *"increases their power to control their lives."*

Secondly, a product mix should be incorporated into housing projects to suit different kinds of households. Women should therefore also have a say in the structure of houses. Conventional housing is not always appropriate to women. Housing is generally designed for a nuclear family, the members of which live individualised lifestyles, and is seen as purely residential space. Such housing is inappropriate for aged women and single mothers, and one third of all households in South Africa are headed by single women. It tends to isolate, force them to live on their own, and expose them to physical and sexual harassment. It also does not take women working from home into account, an increasingly important phenomenon in developing countries.⁸¹

Thirdly, a critical area for consideration is the appropriate level of service provision, and how decisions on it are made. The quality of services has an obvious impact on the extent and burden of household labour, and also affects health, and thus women's responsibility in this regard. Where women also have to work outside the house, poor service levels can exert an intolerable burden on them.⁸²

Lastly, if housing is regarded as a key target for government investment from a macro-economic perspective (by kick-starting the economy through job creation), a focus on domestic labour reinforces the argument in favour of housing from a gender perspective. Women's responsibility for domestic work is an important constraint on their participation, choice and position within the labour force. The housing projects can benefit the local economy through training and employing women, and also ensuring that skills remain that can be utilised after the project is complete. Women can benefit both as wealth generators, and beneficiaries in the process. The irony in South Africa is that, although the majority of home-builders in rural and informal housing are women, men take over when the activity is formalised and becomes an income-generating activity.⁸³

A voluntary group, supported by the Department of Housing, set up a Women for Housing Group in 1996 (co-ordinated by Mjoli-Mncube, also Executive Director of NURCHA), to empower women through housing, ensuring that they benefit from subsidised housing, and preventing the marginalisation of women during the process of housing formalisation.⁸⁴ Major objectives of the Group include:

- promoting the inclusion of gender-sensitive women in all decision-making bodies that impact on housing so that policies may begin to reflect a gender-sensitive approach;

- lobbying and educating the housing industry on how it can involve women as contractors, labourers etc.; and
- education and conscientisation of women on housing issues – their rights, responsibilities, potential and capacity-building in terms of skills training and education in the technical housing fields.

Despite the extensive and ambitious goals of the Women for Housing Group which is affirmed in the Department of Housing's Urban Development Framework,⁸⁵ this group has little influence in terms of any of their stated goals. At most, it may have contributed to sensitising the Department to the housing needs of women, particularly those of rural women.⁸⁶

Department of Land Affairs

Land reform and land restitution are the two Presidential Lead Projects which are now the responsibility of the Department of Land Affairs. The government has a stated policy commitment to the material, social and political empowerment of poor and landless women through land reform and rural development. According to the Green Paper on South African Land Policy (the green paper on land reform) published in February 1996, the land reform programme has the following elements:

- land distribution (which explicitly aims to provide the disadvantaged and the poor with land for residential and productive purposes). Labour tenants, farmworkers, women and emergent farmers are targeted. The government would assist in the purchase of the land by providing a settlement/land acquisition grant, to a maximum value of R15 000 per household for the purchase of land directly from willing sellers. This grant is pegged at the same level as the national subsidy housing scheme. The Green Paper promised that by 2006, rights in land would be secured for a large proportion of eligible South Africans, assisted by government grants. It stated, however, that the proposed redistribution was not yet quantifiable but priority would be given to the 'marginalised' and the needs of women;
- land restitution which aims to restore land to those dispossessed through racially discriminatory measures; and
- land tenure reform that will provide security of tenure to all South Africans.

In a draft document on Women's Rights in Land, the Deputy Director of Land Affairs, Mhloti Mathye,⁸⁷ acknowledged that, in order for women to achieve a fair and equitable benefit, it is necessary that all legal barriers to women's participation in land reform should be removed. This includes a reform of marriage inheritance and customary law where they contain obstacles to women's rights to land. In addition, clear mechanisms in project planning, beneficiary selection and project appraisal should exist in order to ensure that women as a group benefit; special provision should be made for women to enable them to access credit facilities; specific mechanisms should be developed to provide security of tenure for women; and training in participatory gender planning should be given to all officials and organisations involved in implementing the land reform programme. The above issues clearly indicate the existence of gender sensitivity. Meeting these requirements will contribute to the fulfilment of women's strategic gender needs. The Department acknowledges, however, that its ability to identify areas of concern, design appropriate remedial action, and monitor progress will depend on the availability of gender disaggregated data.⁸⁸

The Land Reform Pilot Programme (LRPP) was the initial exploratory phase of the land redistribution programme and was initiated in December 1994. The programme involved the selection of individual

projects within pilot districts in every province, so that the Department of Land Affairs could develop and test land reform approaches which were efficient, equitable and widely replicable. The LRPP were to 'kick-start' land redistribution and enable the development of "*efficient, equitable and sustainable mechanisms of land redistribution in rural areas*."⁸⁹ The total financial commitment for the land reform pilot programme in the nine provinces until the end of 1996/97 was R315,81 million, or R35,09 million for each province.⁹⁰

Regarding women's needs, the LRPP Core Business Plan explicitly states that "*the elements of the Programme are intended to enhance the material, political and social status of women*."⁹¹ The programme is to adhere to the RDP guidelines, which are specified in the Framework for Planning of the Core Business Plan. The framework requires the participation of women in representative decision-making structures for district and project planning and measures to ensure that rural women gain social and economic benefits. These centre on women securing access to land through responsive tenure design and employment opportunities through appropriate construction design. Legal entities for land and property holding are to be developed which protect the rights of all members to assets held collectively, and which specifically enshrine the rights of women and the poor.

Despite the existence of gender-sensitive policy guidelines, in practice, the pilot programmes do not reflect such guidelines. In an analysis of the Land Reform Pilot Programmes in Mpumalanga and the North West Province, the Transvaal Rural Action Committee (TRAC) has identified serious problems which prevent poor rural women from gaining the maximum social, economic and political benefit from land reform and development. The first problem is that, within all the institutions of the pilot programme (from national to community level), in Mpumalanga as well as the North West Province, the representation of women with effective decision-making capacity is uniformly inadequate.⁹² Women are confined either to secretarial and administrative roles and where they are represented on pilot structures, they generally lack the self-assurance and capacity to participate to maximum effect. Poor rural women's participation in public forums is further hampered by physical and time constraints associated with their multiple roles and cultural and social barriers.⁹³

A second problem identified by TRAC is that the planning briefs for both the North West and Mpumalanga district plans contain hardly any reference to the inclusion of rural women in the planning process, nor do they define clear guidelines for ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable gain benefits.⁹⁴ Therefore, no commitment exists to the empowerment of the poorest (for example, the women-headed households). The process of beneficiary selection should adhere to the principles set out in the RDP and the LRPP's Core Business Plan. Sensitivity to different situations and different categories of women is required, and should be rooted in disaggregated analysis.⁹⁵ In this regard, Friedman⁹⁶ also warns against the generalised notion of 'rural women'. She points out that South African rural-based women occupy and use land in a variety of different ways, and there are considerable differences between and contradictions within rural communities which should be taken into consideration in land reform programmes.

A further problem surrounds the Department's policy, which identifies the household as the unit of grant allocation. Two issues arise from the definition of a household comprising a minimum of a single adult with one or more dependants or two or more adults with or without dependants. Firstly, as Moser⁹⁷ points out, it is assumed that the household functions as a socio-economic unit within which there is equal control over resources and powers of decision-making between members in matters influencing the household's livelihood. Concern about whether all household members will enjoy the benefits of the grant equally, or whether the unequal power relations within households and in broader society will merely be affirmed, is expressed by TRAC.⁹⁸

Secondly, women object to the fact that community proposals for beneficiary selection criteria that

included single women had been rejected by pilot district managers.⁹⁹

From the above discussion it can be concluded that, despite general gender-sensitive policy proposals on land reform, the translation of gender policies into practice is difficult. Problems identified in land reform pilot programmes in Mpumalanga and the North West Province suggest that fundamental changes are required in the planning and implementation of the LRPP if rural women are to be empowered through land reform and rural development.

Department of Public Works

A community-based public works programme to create jobs especially in rural areas is a further Presidential Lead Project (within the National Public Works Programme) identified in the WPRDP. The National Public Works Programme (NPWP) was adopted by the Government of National Unity in May 1994 as one of the key mechanisms for the implementation of the RDP. The aim of the NPWP is to:

- reduce unemployment;
- empower communities;
- create physical assets that will improve the quality of life of the poor; and
- provide education and training to the unemployed, especially women, youth and rural dwellers.¹⁰⁰

A strategy called the Community-Based Public Works Programme (CBPWP) was adopted to kick-start the programme and ensure short term delivery. The target beneficiaries for the CBPWP are rural areas, women, women-headed households and youth.¹⁰¹ It is significant that officially the existence of the large percentage of women-headed households is implicitly recognised.

Since 1994, approximately R350 million has been allocated to the NPWP, while R250 million was allocated to the CBPWP from the RDP fund. In the same period, 900 CBPWPs have been implemented, creating approximately 40 000 job opportunities.¹⁰² The Department of Public Works was not too far off its target of creating 30 000 job opportunities by March 1996 and 68 000 by 1997. By 2000, the Department plans to increase the number of jobs created to 300 000 a year.¹⁰³

A 1997 evaluation of the above programmes concluded that 41 per cent of those employed, were women. However, it was found that women were often assigned the more menial jobs, that their average wages were lower than those of men, that they were employed for shorter periods than men, and that they were less likely to receive training than men.¹⁰⁴ Unemployment through these programmes is thus not addressed in proportion to the existing unemployment rate for men and women. A gender bias in the availability of employment opportunities therefore exists. This is further confirmed by research conducted in KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape which concluded that, in 46 per cent of the projects, no women were employed at all.¹⁰⁵ This is a cause for concern, seeing that women are one of the key target groups in the programme.

Due to the fact that programmes and needs are identified in development committees at this level and women have minimal involvement in decision-making structures at community level, women's particular needs are not prioritised in projects. According to Gwagwa, the Deputy

Director-General responsible for the National Public Works Programme in the National Department of Public Works,¹⁰⁶ women's participation in these committees stood at 46 per cent, while women held key positions in only 25 per cent of the projects.

As pointed out above, women are assigned the menial or supportive jobs such as carrying water and bricks, doing site-clearing or administrative work. These job-creating programmes therefore still reinforce the sexual division of labour. Very few women have obtained vocational or technical skills training.

Women's minimal involvement in the decision-making process at community-level limits the responsiveness of projects to women's strategic or practical needs. As pointed out above, a significant indication of the degree to which women's strategic needs are addressed in a project can be found in the degree to which they take part in the planning, management and implementation of a project. The planning, design and management of the majority of present public works programmes do not reflect gender sensitivity.

The limited number of women receiving vocational or technical training skills emphasises the fact that little attention has thus far been paid to equip women with new and more marketable skills such as those required in the construction industry, which is still male-dominated at all levels. Women do not seem to gain any significant new abilities through these projects. Instead, as has been pointed out, the sexual division of labour continues to be reinforced. In view of the limited skills development and training, the majority of women's access to employment and income has not improved. Training and capacity-building among women are important activities in terms of the RDP's plans for community labour-based construction methods¹⁰⁷ and are essential to the empowerment criteria as set out earlier.

While the limited number of women in decision-making positions within communities may have contributed to improved articulation of community needs, women in general have not been helped or directed to achieve greater control over the conditions that govern their lives.

In sum, while some practical needs of women have obviously been met (e.g., the provision of an income), the lack of gender sensitivity in the majority of the projects has served to stagnate women further in their traditional position. Little contribution has been made toward challenging their roles (see empowerment criteria above), thus in meeting strategic needs. In general, public works programmes do not seem to be vehicles for empowerment for the majority of women, nor for giving women a unity of purpose beyond a project's lifespan.

Department of Water Affairs and Forestry

Rural Water Supply and Sanitation is the RDP Presidential Lead Project being implemented by the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry. The lack of water supply and sanitation in rural areas is evident in the statistics provided by Central Statistics in their October 1995 Household Survey. According to these statistics, 66,6 per cent of African dwellings in non-urban areas have no access to running tap water in their dwellings or on sites, while more than half of these households (34,3 per cent) have to travel distances of more than half a kilometre per day to fetch water (members of 16,6 per cent of these households travel a kilometre or more per day).¹⁰⁸

The lack of basic services, such as water supply and sanitation, is a key symptom of poverty and underdevelopment. The provision of such services is therefore regarded as central to reconstruction and development in South Africa. In addition, the need for running water is

specific to women as it relates to their reproductive responsibilities. It is also women who are primarily responsible for the collection of water.

A basic policy principle emphasised in the White Paper on Water Supply and Sanitation, is the fact that development in this regard should be demand-driven and community-based.¹⁰⁹ New ways of implementing community water-supply projects were therefore proposed with increased focus on community involvement and management of the process. The White Paper further acknowledges the fundamental role played by women in the provision and maintenance of basic services, as well as the fact that they are the key to household health. The Department therefore committed itself to the empowerment of women by undertaking to recommend to all statutory bodies in the water sector, including Local Water Committees, to involve a minimum of thirty per cent women at all levels, particularly in management.¹¹⁰

Additional Guidelines for Increasing the Involvement of Women on Water and Sanitation Projects in Local Communities in Rural Areas were published in 1995 when the Department started to implement the new community-managed water projects. Areas for women's involvement were identified on project management level (to encourage a gender-sensitive approach to the project), in project construction (to provide income for unemployed women), in project design (with regard to end-user facilities which can make all the difference between use and non-use, or more comfortable use (ergonomics) for the end users, who are predominantly women), and lastly, in project health and water usage promotion (women are continually making decisions with regard to water quality and quantity and its uses which are not apparent to an outsider).¹¹¹

The document further acknowledges the necessity to adopt a gender-sensitive approach to the creation of an enabling environment for the increased involvement of women. Such measures include:

- a supportive policy framework at project level which supports the participation of women as 'equal partners' in projects and committees;
- the official targeting of women as the major beneficiaries by project planners;
- the identification, understanding and consciousness-raising at all levels of the project which would involve raising the debate at all meetings, establishing reasons for women's possible lack of participation and prioritising factors that need to be overcome to ensure greater involvement of women; and
- data collection covering information on women, such as how they see their role in the project, unemployment and representation of women on committees and their roles.

The Department further ensured that women's involvement was adequately addressed in project business plans and tenders.

The content of the above document bears testimony of an understanding of the meaning of a gender-sensitive approach, in practice. If the practical guidelines are followed in water and sanitation projects, women's practical and strategic needs will be addressed. The empowerment criteria set out earlier will therefore be met, ensuring that women's 'power to control their lives' will be increased.

The fact that a million women and children in rural areas have thus far gained access to clean

water supplies,¹¹² that unemployed women and men have been trained, and that some 38 000 jobs have been created, mainly benefiting women,¹¹³ does not necessarily ensure the application of a gender-sensitive approach in these projects as envisaged by the Department of Water Affairs in its policy documents.

Despite the supportive policy framework and the monitoring of women's involvement, women still seem not to be fully participating at project level and men are still dominating project activities. In a study of three water-supply projects in the Northern Province, problems regarding women's participation have been identified. This can by no means be interpreted as a general trend in water-supply projects in all provinces. It does suggest, however, that the application of a gender-sensitive approach in practice is not a necessary consequence of a gender approach in policy and guidelines.

According to the research, the above projects did comply with the basic criteria on women's involvement set by the Department to get business plans approved. These include that women formed more than thirty per cent of the Project Steering Committee and that the business plan had a section on women's empowerment (i.e., through capacity-building, training, employment, etc.).¹¹⁴ The following problems were encountered which resulted in men dominating the project activities:¹¹⁵

- Most consultants were not exposed to gender issues and the need to involve women in terms of ergonomics (as women form the majority of water supply services end-users). They therefore lacked the commitment to ensure that women were involved in all stages of the project, including the design.
- When included, women's participation was not meaningful as they lacked confidence to speak at project meetings due to the lack of experience in articulating their views, their unfamiliarity with technical concepts and the predominant use of English.
- Educated rural women have heavy workloads and therefore did not attend project meetings as these placed a further burden on them.
- Women's involvement or empowerment is seen as a threat to family values. Most men within the communities feel that women's participation in water project activities led to them neglecting their responsibilities in the household. Men are still dominant in community activities (men fulfil a community politics role), and most women share the traditional outlook of their situation with men.

From the above, it is obvious that no community awareness was developed, especially on the importance of women's involvement and the barriers to that. No traditional gender practices were therefore challenged.

With regard to the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, Modiba¹¹⁶ identified the following problems:

- The Department's project teams, particularly the technical staff, had little exposure to gender issues and gender awareness to the extent that they could make a difference to project activities.
- Gender disaggregated data are lacking within most project plans, and the concentration is on technical feasibilities. Without a clear understanding of the position of men and women

it will be difficult to evaluate the relevance of the project to men and women and its impact on them.

- Sound monitoring tools (and not only quantitative ones) on the success of women's empowerment programmes, are largely absent.

From the above problems, the conclusion can be drawn that the implementation of a gender-responsive water project faces many obstacles, most of which developed over a long time and cannot be solved overnight. Problems seem to revolve around three issues:

- the conditions or environment of the project are not conducive to women's meaningful participation;
- a community environment that is not supportive of women's involvement; and
- the lack of knowledge of gender issues by those implementing policies and strategies.

Conclusion

The incorporation of a gender perspective in general national development policy documents and guidelines and the incorporation of a gendered approach in the policies and programmes of national line departments, range from the acknowledgement of the need to mainstream gender in all policies and programmes to gender-neutral principles and criteria to which Presidential Lead Projects have to conform. The national Policy for Women's Empowerment of 1995 initiated by the Gender Unit in the former RDP Office and the Guidelines for Increasing the Involvement of Women on Water and Sanitation Projects in Local Communities in Rural Areas serve as examples where gender is mainstreamed, while gender-neutral principles and criteria are evident in the Adult Basic Education and Training programme, public works programmes, financial grant assistance for small scale farmers, and the national housing subsidy scheme for low-cost housing.

Particularly striking in some policies and programmes (such as in public works programmes) is the apparent lack of understanding of the actual meaning of a gender-sensitive approach. Gender-sensitivity seems to be equated with special efforts that have to be made in targeting women or in identifying women as 'target beneficiaries'. No further reference to women in policy guidelines is then made. Women's particular needs are not prioritised in the planning and execution of projects. If gender equality is to be promoted, it is essential that women's different and unequal needs, and the responsibilities and opportunities created by the unequal division of labour are addressed in policies and projects.

Where policy frameworks supportive of a gender-sensitive approach to projects exist (as in the case of the Department of Land Affairs and the Department of Water Affairs and Forestry), problems are experienced in translating gender policies into practice. The first problem experienced is the lack of meaningful participation by women in the planning, management, implementation and assessment of a project, which is a significant indication of the degree to which women's strategic needs are met. Participation not only increases the information available about the locality in which projects are to be launched, but also enables women to prioritise their needs and develop self-confidence and collective capacity. Meaningful participation of women can be measured against the empowerment test: Does it increase their power to control their lives?

Women face various obstacles which limit their participation in decision-making, a problem also touched upon by Cornwell in an earlier chapter. These include: time constraints associated with their multiple roles, which are exacerbated when there is a lack of infrastructure and services, particularly in rural areas, as this increases women's workload; inexperience in articulating views and unfamiliarity with technical concepts; cultural and social barriers in that they are not expected nor encouraged to become involved in decision-making processes; and, lastly, prevailing attitudes to women's abilities. Widely accepted stereotypes depict men, not women, as having the skills required to become involved in, for example, decision-making and project management.

A further problem is the lack of appropriate experience and analytical abilities with gender issues among officials. Gender-awareness training should therefore be promoted at all levels of government, including among those directly involved in projects. Such training is a means of ensuring the integration of gender issues into policy, planning and implementation. A last problem concerns the lack of gender-disaggregated information. If information is not collected in a way that enables differences between men and women to be clearly established, it is likely that the specific gender needs and interests of women will be given less attention — if not ignored completely.

Finally, a gender-sensitive approach requires not only the incorporation of gender planning in programmes, but also the development of appropriate methodologies for planning and monitoring projects for their impact on gender relations. Only by understanding the effect of projects and policies on women and men, is it possible to know whether their various needs are met. Quantitative indicators are not sufficient and the focus should not only be on meeting women's practical needs but also their strategic needs. In this way, women will be empowered and emancipated, thereby promoting the development of a secure society.

Endnotes

1. Dr Yolanda Sadie is a senior lecturer in the Department of Politics and Dr Elsabe Loots a senior lecturer in the Department of Economics at the Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg.
2. It must be remembered that women in South Africa do not form a uniform group and differ mainly in terms of race, colour, class and region, although these categories are not mutually exclusive. Class and regional differences within the ranks of women, especially, seem to play an increasingly important role. African rural women are the most suppressed, impoverished and unequal women in South African society, followed by the extremely poor women in the squatter camps on the fringes of cities and large towns.
3. Central Statistics, **October Household Survey 1995**, P0317, Central Statistics, Pretoria, 1996.
4. DBSA, **South Africa's Nine Provinces: A Human Development Profile**, Development Bank of Southern Africa, Midrand, 1994.
5. Central Statistics, op. cit., p. 6.
6. Ibid., p. 45.
7. The 1996 census figures have not yet been released. The figures quoted here are taken

from the **Weekly Mail & Guardian** (supplement), 20-26 September 1996.

8. Central Statistics, op. cit., p. 75
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid., p. 39.
11. A Whiteford, D Posel & T Kelathang, **A Profile of Poverty, Inequality and Human Development**, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1995, pp. 5-6; **The Star**, 9 August 1996.
12. **Weekly Mail & Guardian**, op. cit.
13. R Braidotti et. al., **Women, the Environment and Sustainable Development**, Zed Books, London, 1994.
14. M Molyneaux, *Mobilization without Emancipation? Women's Interests, the State and Revolution in Nicaragua*, **Feminist Studies**, 11(2), 1985, pp. 231-234.
15. C Moser, **Gender Planning and Development**, Routledge, London, 1993, pp. 27-36.
16. C Moser & C Levy, *A Theory and Methodology of Gender Planning: Meeting Women's Practical and Strategic Gender Needs*, **DPU Gender and Planning Working Paper**, 11, Development Planning Unit, London, 1986.
17. Molyneaux, op. cit.
18. South African Government, **National Gender Policy**, Office of the Deputy President, Pretoria, January 1997 (NGP).
19. UNDP, **Human Development Report**, Oxford University Press, New York, 1993, p. 21; see also N Heyzer, *Introduction: Market, State and Gender Equity*, in N Heyzer & G Sen (eds.), **Gender, Economic Growth and Poverty**, Kali for Women, New Delhi, 1994; ANC, **The Reconstruction and Development Programme**, Umanyano Publications, Johannesburg, 1994.
20. Molyneaux, op. cit. p. 234.
21. See, for instance ANC, op. cit., pp. 52; 79.
22. S H Longwe, *Gender Awareness: The Missing Element in the Third World Development Project*, in T Wallace & C March (eds.), **Changing Perceptions**, Oxfam, Oxford, 1991, pp. 151-153.
23. ANC, op. cit., p. 1. The RDP document was originally an ANC election document, but was subsequently accepted in 1994 by the Government of National Unity (GNU) as its official development policy document. To implement the proposals made in the the RDP document, the **White Paper on Reconstruction and Development**, based on the principles set out in the RDP base document was published in September 1994; see RSA, **White Paper on Reconstruction and Development**, discussion document, Pretoria,

1994.

24. ANC, *ibid.*, p. 31.
25. *Ibid.*
26. RSA, 1994, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-58. The three remaining Presidential Lead Projects focus on provinces and as this analysis deals with national projects, they are omitted. Also omitted is the primary school nutrition programme as it is directed at children and a gender-sensitive approach is not applicable.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.
28. To co-ordinate and implement the RDP projects, an RDP Office was set up in the Office of the President during 1994 and headed by the Minister without Portfolio, Jay Naidoo. It was expected that this office would manage the RDP fund and liaise with the different government departments in implementing RDP projects.
29. RDP Office, **Mainstreaming Gender Considerations in Policies and Programmes**, Pretoria, July 1996, pp. 15-18.
30. **RDP Monitor**, 3, April 1996, p. 2.
31. RDP Office, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-31.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 36.
33. Department of Agriculture, **The Status of Women in South African Agriculture**, CEDAW Report, 7 March 1997.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
36. See, for instance, Department of Land Affairs, **Report on the Consultative Workshop on Women's Rights in Land**, 21-22 Johannesburg, November 1996.
37. RDP Culture of Learning, **Final Report**, National Co-ordinating Office, 1997.
38 ANC, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
39. Department of Education (DET), **Policy Document on Adult Basic Education and Training**, October 1997.
40. Department of Education (DET), **A National Multi-year Implementation Plan for Adult Education and Training**, October 1997a, p. 24.
41. SAIRR, **South Africa Survey 1995/1996**, South African Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, 1996, p. 213.

42. DET, op. cit., 1997, p. v.
43. N Daniel, Interview, Directorate for Adult Education, Department of Education, Pretoria, 21 April 1998.
44. RDP Office, op. cit., p. 47.
45. See D Daniels, *Gender Gaps in Education White Paper*, **Agenda**, 24, 1995, p. 57.
46. DET, op. cit., 1997, p. 2.
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Response

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Sadie and Loots' overview of the South African government's concern with the development and empowerment of women is provided against the background of the objectives and ideals set out in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). The government has committed itself to the principle of gender equality and has acknowledged empowerment and emancipation as central concepts in its National Gender Policy. For these reasons alone Sadie and Loots' analysis is a timely and necessary contribution, not only for those interested in security and development, but as an evaluation of the progress being made in implementing the RDP, in general.

The authors do not profess to make a theoretical contribution, but use the frameworks of well-known feminist authors on the subject of gender relations and, more particularly, policy

requirements and implications of development policies. Although a critique of these theoretical perspectives and frameworks might have been valuable, it is understandable that Sadie and Loots do not engage with the various debates in this field. Clearly, the task they had set themselves - evaluating gendered development policies and projects in South Africa - is a big one and incursions into the theoretical field would have been a tall order. In terms of what they set out to do, this chapter as such provides much empirical information and knowledge which could stand theorists in good stead.

One particular aspect which is brought to light in this analysis, but which is not interrogated, is the issue of policy-implementation (and, to some extent, policy formulation as well), especially with regard to the glaring lack, as pointed out by the authors, of the necessary skills, knowledge and capacity to implement development policies, in this case gender-oriented development policies in the form of various national projects. The lack or absence of these is of relevance to wider security and development issues and not only to South Africa. Rather, it points to one of the most crucial 'shortages' in the developing world, both in the public and private arenas, namely what Gerald Meier refers to as the 'superconstraint' on development - that of a lack of effective management.¹ 'Effective management', in the political sphere, can also be defined as political will - government's ability and willingness to implement policies that will raise efficiency and build or enhance security and development. In Africa, it has been shown, also in this and other articles in this monograph, as well as in those in Solomon and Van Aardt,² that what is most needed, is such effective management, based on the ability and willingness of government to realise its goals. The point is that Sadie and Loots touch upon one of the most crucial challenges to African governments: to develop and enhance their policy-making and policy implementation skills. This challenge includes the very important aspect of gender and knowledge about the subject, the people involved, the needs and, above all, the ability to act upon such knowledge and insight.

The whole question of the so-called 'superconstraint' on development brings one to another aspect touched upon in this article: that of empowerment. It is obvious that, given the problems related to efficient policies (i.e., informed policy-making and 'able' implementation), whether in the field of development or of security, people, and in the case of this chapter, women have to empower themselves and have to continue their struggle for emancipation. Governments cannot do this, or can, at most, only contribute partially to their emancipation. This calls for a strong society - I deliberately refrain from using the term 'civil society' due to its problematic nature in the African context. A strong society is one in which self-help in the form of mobilisation and joint grassroots projects aimed at basic education and life-skills training, plays a major part.

In South Africa, and in a country such as Namibia (dealt with by Thompson), various mechanisms and provisions have been provided, many of them in the constitutions of these countries, which could be accessed and utilised by groups in society, and women in particular, to empower them and to assist them in the struggle for emancipation. Yet, many of these provisions remain little than empty promises on paper, mainly because women often are literally not aware of their existence. When women become aware of their rights and responsibilities, and start to exercise these, the possibility also develops that they will create their own environment conducive to the satisfying of their needs. Africa, it would seem, is a place in which many aspects of security and development need to be people-driven, not because governments are so sensitive to their needs, and/or so democratic, but simply because governments very often do not have the will and, even less, the ability to really supply and maintain the condition of security and to drive and sustain the process of development.

Endnotes

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2. H Solomon & M van Aardt (eds.), '**Caring' Security in Africa: Theoretical and Practical Considerations of New Security Thinking**, ISS Monograph Series, 20, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, February 1998. In this volume, Van Aardt, in particular, (pp. 110-111) raises the questions of political will, the ability to implement policy decisions and the implications of ineffective or unrealisable security policies.

Conclusion

Hussein Solomon

This monograph commenced with Dr Maxi Schoeman's observation that security and development are inextricably intertwined. It is clear that the gravest threat to security facing Africa's people as we approach the dawn of a new millennium, is poverty related to underdevelopment. A few statistics quoted recently by Professor Fred Obeng¹ underline this truism:

- one in ten children born in sub-Saharan Africa today will not live beyond their first year;
- one in twenty of these children's mothers will die in childbirth; and
- Africa's people are poorer today than they were thirty years ago.

What is remarkable about these figures is that the emiseration of Africa's people is occurring at a time when the continent, according to many, is making a remarkable economic turnaround. A recent World Economic Survey of the economic performance of twenty-four African states revealed that the continent reported a two per cent growth rate between 1990 and 1996 after a decade of negative economic growth. The breakdown for individual countries is even more revealing. Between 1994 and 1996, Lesotho's economic growth has averaged more than ten per cent. Between 1990 and 1996, Mozambique's average economic growth rate stood at 6,58 per cent. Over the same period, the annual economic growth for Uganda and Botswana averaged 6,54 per cent and 5,06 per cent respectively.²

How does one account for this paradox? What is clear from the contributions by Cornwell, Thompson, and Sadie and Loots is that economic growth (growth in Gross National Products) does not translate into economic security for the poverty-stricken masses; that such growth which does occur, is often at the expense of the most marginalised in society (for example, rural African women) and benefits a tiny élite which constitutes a "*neocolonial oligarchy*", in the words of Georges Nzongola-Ntalaja.³ In many cases, the African state either actively assists this national élite in their acquisition of an ever-larger slice of the pie or, as Cornwell notes, is too weak to challenge their economic domination. Either way, the result is the same: an ever-widening gulf between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'.

This socio-economic polarisation of African society, as Thompson eloquently argued, is assisted and reinforced by the hegemony of the neoliberal paradigm. For progressive intellectuals this raises important challenges. According to Maxi Schoeman in the first chapter, "*... the ultimate purpose of knowledge and its application is aimed at improving the human condition.*" In this vein, it becomes the responsibility of intellectuals to articulate an alternative discourse, a

discourse of emancipation which challenges the prevailing dominant orthodoxies around development, a discourse which reflects the concerns of the most marginalised communities. In doing so, we find practical expression of our common humanity. But, this plea for a more inclusive security and development discourse is motivated by more than 'mere morality'. Practically, there is no other alternative. History indicates that any system which privileges the few at the expense of the many is bound to lead to social polarisation and conflict. If there is one lesson which is to be gleaned from the recent demise of Suharto's Indonesia, it is this: economic liberalisation uncoupled from broader socio-economic and political emancipation is not sustainable for both political stability and economic development in the long term.

Endnotes

1. F Obeng, *Economic Dimensions of the African Crisis*, paper presented to the **Preparatory Workshop on South Africa and the Non-Aligned Movement in the Era of Regionalisation and Globalisation**, co-hosted by the Foundation for Global Dialogue (FGD) and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 29-30 April 1998, p. 1.
2. **Sunday Times**, 22 March 1998.
3. G Nzongola-Ntalaja, *The Role of Intellectuals in the Struggle for Democracy, Peace and Reconstruction in Africa*, **African Journal of Political Science**, 2(2), December 1997, p. 4.