



# **Developmental Local Government in Post-Apartheid South Africa? A Feminist Rethinking of the State and Development in the Context of Neo-liberalism<sup>1</sup>**

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## **Abstract**

Neoliberal dictates and structural adjustment policies have denuded African states and attempted to limit their role to enabling the building and functioning of markets. These policies have failed to promote development, exacerbated gender inequities, and deepened Africa's entanglement within exploitative imperialist economic relations. There is, therefore, a pressing need to re-establish a proactive, developmental role for the state in Africa. This article argues that in the current conjuncture such a project must be grounded in a radical reconceptualisation of both development and the state. Previous statist theories of development erred in casting development as a set of outcomes to be delivered by the state to a passive population. Due to their inattentiveness to gender they also reproduced and exacerbated exploitative gender relations. The article argues that in a context where it is difficult to even imagine an alternative to neoliberalism, development should be redefined as building collective capacity to envision, create and struggle for a society and economy free of gender, racial and class exploitation. The state must be reconfigured so that it is both strengthened by and helps to build collective capacity through processes of participatory democracy attentive to addressing and overcoming the mutually constituting structural inequalities of gender, race and class.

Amidst the continent-wide retreat of the state from an active role in the development process, the post-apartheid South African policy of 'developmental local government' would seem to be grounded in just such a retheorization of the state and development. The policy establishes that the local government must promote development, redress apartheid inequalities and be participatory

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and gender sensitive. The article argues however that the South African approach is compromised by three fundamental weaknesses at the level of policy formulation. These pertain to the liberal conceptualisation of participation, the reduction of commitments to gender transformation to a focus on the participation of women, and the endorsement of a contracting vision for the local state which eliminates an active role for either the state or the citizenry in the development process. The article concludes by exploring more successful attempts at gender transformative, participatory approaches to governance and development in other parts of the world and reflecting on the challenges to pursuing them in the South African context.

## Résumé

Les impositions néolibérales et les politiques d'ajustement structurels ont dénudé les états africains et ont essayé de limiter leur rôle dans la mise en place de marchés qui leurs profitent. Ces politiques n'ont pas réussi à promouvoir le développement. Elles ont accentué les inégalités relatives au genre tout en enfonçant l'Afrique dans ses relations d'exploitée économique des impérialistes. Par conséquent, le besoin pressant de rétablir le rôle proactif de développement de l'Etat en Afrique se fait sentir. Cet article défend que, dans la conjoncture actuelle, un tel projet doit être basé sur une re-conceptualisation du développement, mais aussi de l'Etat. Les théories statistes antérieures ont commis l'erreur de voir le développement comme un ensemble de services délivrés par l'Etat pour le compte d'une population passive. Cause de leur négligence du genre, elles ont reproduit et accentué les relations exploitrices du genre. Cet article argumente que dans un contexte où il est difficile de concevoir une alternative au néolibéralisme, le développement doit être redéfini comme la création d'une capacité collective pour envisager, créer et se battre pour une société et une économie sans exploitation du genre, de la race et de la classe.

Alors que l'Etat, dans l'ensemble du continent, se démet de son rôle actif dans le développement, la politique de 'gouvernement local de développement' de l'Afrique du Sud d'après Apartheid semblerait être basée sur une telle re-théorisation de l'Etat et du développement. Cette politique stipule que le gouvernement local doit promouvoir le développement, corriger les inégalités issues de l'Apartheid, encourager la participation et prendre compte le genre. Cependant, cet article argue que l'approche Sud Africaine est compromise par trois faiblesses fondamentales au niveau de la formulation de la politique. Celles là ont trait à la conceptualisation libérale de la participation, l'affaiblissement de l'engagement pour les transformations liées au genre au profit d'une focalisation sur la participation des femmes, et le soutien de la vision restreignante de l'Etat local qui élimine le rôle actif de l'Etat ou des citoyens dans le processus de développement. L'article conclut par une exploration d'essais qui ont réussi dans le cadre de la transformation liée au genre, aux approches participatives pour la gouvernance et le développement dans d'autres parties du monde. La

conclusion constitue aussi une réflexion sur les défis qui se posent dans la poursuite de ces transformations dans le contexte Sud Africain.

Throughout most of the post-war era there was broad agreement across the political spectrum that African states should play the leading role in facilitating development in the continent. By contrast, in the current period the international financial institutions and bilateral donors are utilising conditionalities to enforce a shift to the 'enabling state', whose primary role is to facilitate the development and smooth functioning of the market. This policy has failed to promote development, has exacerbated gender inequities, and has deepened Africa's entanglement within exploitative imperialist economic relations.

There is, therefore, an urgent and pressing need to re-establish a proactive role for the African state in fostering development. Such a project cannot, however, simply entail a reversion to previous theories of development in which a strong centralised state bore primary responsibility for providing development. The political and economic context within which that vision was forged no longer exists. Any reconceptualisation of the role of the African state in development must be firmly grounded within an analysis of the constraints and possibilities within the context of neo-liberal globalisation. But perhaps even more importantly, renewed support for a developmental state must overcome the weaknesses within the original model itself. Key amongst these were its blindness towards, and hence reproduction of, gender inequalities, and its conceptualisation of development as a set of outcomes to be delivered by the state to a passive population.

Development must, of course, include improving the material conditions of the majority of Africa's people. However, particularly within a context in which it is difficult to even imagine an alternative to neo-liberal globalisation, this article argues for a redefinition of development as building collective capacity to envision, create and struggle for a society and economy free of gender, racial and class exploitation. The state still has a critical role to play within this new understanding of development. However, this article argues that it must be a reconfigured state which is both strengthened by and helps to build collective capacity through processes of participatory democracy which are keenly attentive to addressing and overcoming the mutually constituting structural inequalities of gender, race and class. As participatory democracy is most easily effected at local levels, the developmental African state of the twenty-first century must also be a state which involves a high degree of what Heller (2001) calls co-ordinated, democratic decentralisation.

Amidst the continent-wide retreat of the state from an active role in the development process, the African National Congress (ANC) government in post-apartheid South Africa has adopted a model of what it refers to as 'developmental local government'. South African policy and legislation clearly establish that developmental local government must be both participatory and gender sensitive, and must entail the granting of the local government with significant powers and responsibilities to redress socioeconomic inequalities. The South African approach therefore appears to not only boldly reassert a link between government and development, but to also resonate with the reconceptualisation of the role of the developmental state articulated above.

This article seeks to establish whether the South African approach can map at least part of the way forward for a renewed commitment to state involvement in African development in the twenty-first century. It explores whether in fact developmental local government is redressing gender inequality, building capacity and developing new forms of participatory, democratic governance. Based on analysis of the conceptualisation and implementation of developmental local government in South African policy and legislation, this article concludes that the reduction of commitments to gender transformation to support for women to participate in participatory processes is insufficient to address gender inequalities. The liberal framing of participation forecloses the opportunity to develop collective capacities for transformative struggles, and undermines the possibility of establishing truly gender-sensitive participatory democracy. The article further establishes that rather than opting for a model that challenges neo-liberalism and the shift to the 'enabling state', the South African government has sought to wed developmental local government to a contracting model of the local state, which, like the enabling state, reduces the state to a minimal core and implants market logic into the heart of the local government. Through analysis of local government restructuring in Johannesburg the article argues that this contracting model undermines gender transformation, developmental outcomes and processes, and the structures of participatory governance.

Whilst the South African case does not, therefore, provide the rest of Africa with a new model for the developmental state, analysis of the South African experience highlights key lessons and challenges. Drawing on examples from more successful attempts at gender transformative, participatory approaches to governance and development in other parts of the world, the article concludes by exploring the possibilities for implementing a truly gender transformative, developmental local state within South Africa in the current conjuncture.

This article begins by exploring and critiquing previous conceptualisations of the role of the African state in development, and proposing some elements of a new vision for the developmental state. The following section outlines the South African approach to developmental local government, and explores the weaknesses in this approach. Analysis of the transformation of local government in Johannesburg is presented in order to examine the tensions between constitutional and legislative commitments to gender-sensitive developmental local government and participatory democracy, and market-oriented restructuring of local governance. The final section explores the potential for feminist, participatory developmental local government in the current South African context.

### **Re-imagining development and the developmental state**

The majority of African states achieved independence during a period of fierce debates between the proponents of starkly differing development paradigms. Advocates of modernisation theory focussed on the key factors required for individual third world states to pass through prescribed stages in the development process and ‘catch up’ with northern, developed countries. Dependency theorists criticised this approach for failing to locate third world states within the context of an unequal international capitalist political economy characterised by relations of dependency and exploitation. In direct contrast to the modernisation theory assumption that capitalism was the only route to development, a number of African states attempted to pursue developmental approaches rooted in variants of African socialism.

However, despite the tremendous theoretical and political differences between these approaches, they all shared a number of central assumptions. Each of the approaches equated development with industrialisation, and each argued that the nation-state must play a leading role in promoting this process (Leys 1996a; Cooper and Packard 1997; Saul 2004). Within the African context the challenge of promoting development within newly formed, ethnically divided nations added further weight to the presumed importance of a high degree of centralisation within the state (Heller 2001: 135).

This notion of a strong, centralised developmental state has come under relentless attack since the mid-1980s. Casting the state as a rent-seeking hindrance to development, neo-liberals argue that the state must be reduced to a bare minimum, and the market freed to play its ‘natural’ role as the real engine of development. They declare that the very idea of promoting development through state intervention had been misplaced, and that in any event the possibility of state-led national development strategies has withered together with nationally based economies in the face of globalisation (Leys

1996a). Informed by this neo-liberal ideology, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the bilateral donors have used their 'good governance' agenda to enforce a shift to what Gilbert and Gilbert (1989) have called the 'enabling state' in recipient countries. Within the confines of this new approach the key role of states is to secure property rights, create and facilitate markets, and provide a stable environment for capital (Moore 1999; George and Sabelli 1994; Graf 1995).

However, as has been widely chronicled, the withdrawal of the state from areas such as health care, education, basic services and the provision of food subsidies amongst others has had devastating effects on Africa's population. Foreign direct investment by private capital has largely bypassed Africa, and the continent's marginalisation from the world economy has only worsened (Hoogvelt 2001). As Arrighi et al. (2003) demonstrate, a clear hierarchy of wealth still persists in the global economy in which Africa is consigned to the bottom of the heap.

Most development theorists concur with Leys's (1996b) assessment that the capacity of states to pursue national development strategies has been fundamentally eroded due to their inability to control capital movements within the current context of neo-liberal globalisation. However, a number of theorists assert that even within these altered conditions the state must continue to play a central role in the development process. Drawing on Panitch (1994) these scholars start from the premise that globalisation is authored by states. Saul notes that although the room for manoeuvre for third world states is substantially less than for their northern counterparts (2004: 225), these states continue to play a pivotal role in the economy. It is argued that as nation-states are central to the creation and perpetuation of neo-liberalism, they must, therefore, play a pivotal role in dismantling it.

Moreover, as Graf eloquently argues:

The 'real' state in the Third World ... remains the major, and perhaps only, framework within which the important social and political issues can be dealt with in the context of a world system permanently stacked against peripheral societies and economies, while the theoretical state is probably the only conceptual framework capable of developing a counter-hegemonic project sufficiently comprehensive to challenge neo-liberal globalization. Without the state, therefore, there can be no large-scale, long-term emancipatory project for the South (Graf 1995: 159).

According to this perspective, despite, or indeed even because of, changes in the global political economy the state must remain at the centre of development theory and practice.

However, arguing for the continued salience of the state within the development process should not be interpreted as a call for a return to the developmental state of yesteryear. As has already been noted, the political and economic context has changed so dramatically in the past few decades that states (and particularly African states) cannot utilise the same instruments previously deployed as part of their development strategies.

But, even if the context had not been so radically altered, it would remain vital to rectify the numerous problems in the old mode of the developmental state. This calls for a re-imagining of what is meant by both development and the state. Two key aspects of development that must be reconsidered relate to its gendered nature, and its endorsement of narrow, liberal formulations of representative democracy. Each of these will be considered in turn, prior to elaborating some central elements of a new understanding of the developmental state.

### **Gendering the developmental state**

Since the publication of Boserup's (1970) landmark study on women's role in economic development the inherently gender biased nature of development as traditionally conceptualised has been widely acknowledged. Later critiques moved away from Boserup's 'women in development' framework, which sought simply to ensure women's inclusion into existing development processes, towards gender and development analyses which seek to recognise and transform gender-based structural inequalities.

For feminists the answer does not, however, lie simply in tasking states with implementing more gender-sensitive policies. For, as these scholars ably demonstrate, the state itself is a gendered social construct. Writing of the advent of liberal democracy in northern contexts, Pateman (1988) argues that the exclusion of women from the public sphere and citizenship rights, and their relegation to the private sphere of the home were central to the formation of the liberal democratic state. A large body of literature has ensued demonstrating the ways in which the northern welfare state was premised on the model of the nuclear family and the male breadwinner. Within this model women were cast as dependents of both men and the state (see for example Brodie 1994, 1995; Bakker and Gill 2003; Bakker 2003; Fudge and Cossman 2002; Young 2003).

Many of these same assumptions were carried through to the developmental state in the south. However, third world feminists such as Rai (1996) note that the gendering of the state in third world countries was additionally marked by the colonial experience. Colonial administrations frequently argued that the colonial state was protecting colonised women from the sup-

posedly oppressive structures of traditional society. However, the colonising power simultaneously encoded and operationalised deeply gendered and racialised assumptions into the workings of that very state. Rai (1996) further demonstrates that insufficient attention was paid to gender issues within development strategies adopted by post-colonial states that were inspired by both dependency theory and modernisation theory.

Current neo-liberal policies of structural adjustment enforced by the international financial institutions are similarly gender-blind. As the edited collection by Elson (1995) first lay bare in explicit detail, rather than being gender-neutral, such policies have profoundly gendered impacts, which serve to further entrench existing gender inequalities. Their gendered assumptions also undermine the ability of the policies to achieve their own developmental goals. Feminist work on development and the developmental state has thus clearly established that any reconceptualisation of development and the state must not only foreground the importance of addressing and eradicating unequal gendered social relations within society and the economy, but must transform the state itself as a gendered institution.

### **Development as the development of collective capacity**

Whilst it is becoming increasingly common for development theorists across the political spectrum to accept the need to address gendered social relations, amongst both post-development theorists and mainstream development theorists associated with the Bretton Woods institutions and bilateral donors, there is a rather profound silence with respect to class relations and the capitalist system which underpin them (Hart 2001: 651; Cooper and Packard 1997: 3). However, as Marxist scholars such as Leys (1996a), Saul (2004) and Hart (2001) note, the material inequality and deprivation experienced by the majority of the world's population is structured by and within the global capitalist economy. They therefore argue that rather than focussing on proposing policy prescriptions to ameliorate conditions within the capitalist economy, any project that seeks to reinvigorate development theory (and the developmental state) must refocus on what Hart (2001) calls the 'small d' development of capitalism.

But what does it mean to propose a feminist, anti-capitalist, or socialist approach to development in the twenty-first century? What does it mean to even launch an approach to development that simply counters the hegemony of neo-liberalism? Most theorists argue that it is impossible to define what this means concretely in advance without falling into the trap of a predetermined, uniform goal for all societies. If we continue to equate development with a bundle of particular outcomes then we are therefore left

with an unsatisfactory and hazy vision of what we must do and where we are headed.

However, it is argued here that perhaps the solution lies in fundamentally re-orienting our understanding of development. Liberal development theorists Amartya Sen (1999) and Martha Nussbaum (2000) have developed a capacities approach to development which defines development as the fostering of freedom and capacity. Sen's work has been particularly influential in the formulation of the United Nations' 'human development index' (Waylen 1997). This is an inherently liberal framework which focuses exclusively on the level of the individual, and affirms and entrenches the capitalist system.<sup>2</sup> However, the focus on capacities is a useful one, and resonates with innovative work being conducted by Marxist theorists which focuses on collective, as opposed to individual capacities, and which foregrounds the capacities required to effect fundamental societal transformation.

The Marxist focus on capacities is grounded in Mike Lebowitz's elaboration of a Marxist 'political economy of the working class'. Lebowitz argues that capitalist relations of production limit the ability of workers to even envision a socialist world, let alone develop the collective skills required to achieve that vision. He therefore argues that a central focus of all struggles and mobilisations must be on the self-development of the working class (Panitch and Gindin 2005). The fundamental challenge, therefore, for socialists is what Sam Gindin (1998) calls the 'democratic development of our capacities'.

Like the development theorists referred to above, Gindin recognises that, '... the truth is that we don't and can't know what socialism will, in any detail, look like'. However, he proceeds to provide the important insight that this is because 'socialism is not a state of affairs, but a process' (Gindin 1998: 84). He therefore argues that, '[t]he kind of movement that could develop the confidence, understanding, unity, collective capacities, and innovative organizational structure to one day defeat capitalism, would certainly have established its potential for completing the invention of socialism' (Gindin 1998: 85).

Building on this form of analysis it is possible to argue that development should also be seen as a process, one which focuses on building the collective capacity of people to envision and achieve a more just and equitable society free of the deeply intertwined structural inequalities of gender, race, and class. Such an approach does not discount a focus on improving material well-being in the current period. However, it locates this more specific objective within a broader context, seeing it as important in helping to build a stronger base from which to launch an even deeper and more meaningful process of transformation.

## **Democratic decentralisation and the participatory developmental state**

But where is the state in all of this? A slew of post-development, social movement and civil society theorists would likely argue that the state is either irrelevant, or a hindrance to the development of popular capacities. However, as has been noted above, the state continues to play a critical role in the governing of the economy and society. Eschewing any focus on the state and concentrating only on ‘civil society’ ultimately provides the international financial institutions, bilateral donors, and sympathetic governments in the third world with free rein to transform the state into an agent of neo-liberalism. It is therefore arguable that rather than being discounted, the state must be fundamentally reconfigured to facilitate the achievement of this new reconceptualisation of development.

In recent years an increasing number of theorists have begun to advocate forms of popular democracy and participatory governance that radicalise and deepen democracy. Such approaches to the redefinition of democracy clearly resonate with the reconceptualisation of development forwarded in this article. Within the African context Issa Shivji (2004) and John Saul (1994, 2001) argue for a popular or new democracy which is ‘geared to facilitating and/or expressing a wide-spread mobilisation of the hitherto powerless against the structures of their socio-economic subordination’ (Saul 1994: 175). Writing of existing initiatives to radicalise governance, Olin Wright explicitly argues that participatory democracy plays an important role in building capacity (2003: 28). Importantly, Oldfield notes that this is not necessarily the case, as in practice participation can lead to disempowerment (2002: 98). However, if participation is combined with collective organization and pro-active reflection by participants on the limitations of existing models of governance the very act of participating in processes of participatory democracy not only ensures a democratisation of society in the present, but can also build the capacity required to envision and pursue even more radical transformations in the future.

Development defined as the building of collective capacity to transform our reality, and participatory democracy must, therefore, be seen as going hand-in-hand. Within this framework the developmental state must take a radically different form than its previous incarnation as a highly centralised agent which delivered development to a passive population. It must, rather encompass what Olin Wright (2003) refers to as democratic, co-ordinated decentralisation to the local level, in order to generate maximum opportunities for participatory governance.

Olin Wright and most theorists of participatory democracy do not foreground the centrality of gender to this process, and relatively little work has been done examining the gendered nature of current experiments in participatory democracy. However, at a more abstract theoretical level feminist scholars Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty have developed a concept of feminist democracy (which is explicitly socialist) that links commitments to participatory democracy, the development of capacities and the eradication of gender and other forms of structural inequality. For them, feminist democracy is both the ultimate goal and the collective process through which it will be achieved:

... feminist democracy suggests a different order of relationships among people. It suggests understanding socioeconomic, ideological, cultural, and psychic hierarchies of rule (like those of class, gender, race, sexuality, and nation), their interconnectedness, and their effects on disenfranchised peoples within the context of transformative collective or organizational practice. Thus, the transformation of relationships, selves, communities, and the practices of daily life leading to self-determination and autonomy for all peoples is crucial in crafting a different order of relationships (1997: xxviii).

They further argue that the process of 'decolonisation', in which we think and act ourselves out of the spaces of domination within the context of a collective or communal process, is a central component of feminist democracy (Alexander and Mohanty 1997: xxviii).

Alexander and Mohanty thus make the critically important contribution of emphasising that as we build our collective capacity to struggle and to create a society in which structural inequality will be eradicated, we must grapple with and overcome those inequalities in our own movements, organisations and processes. This has extremely powerful political implications. What it asserts is that far from taking the approach of 'liberation/class struggle first, gender second', we must address inequality within our own movements. It also highlights that by addressing gender issues within processes of participatory governance we are actually taking an important first step in addressing gender issues within society at large, and developing the capacity to launch even more radical initiatives as the outcome of these participatory processes.

### **The South African initiative: Gender-sensitive developmental local government**

The transformation of local government in post-apartheid South Africa would appear to be an attempt to give effect to this new approach to gender-transformative, capacity building governance and development. The South

African Constitution of 1996 for the first time established local government as a distinct sphere of government. The Constitution grants local government significant authority in a large number of areas ranging from municipal health services, to water and sanitation services, to electricity and gas reticulation. Even greater responsibilities have been thrust onto the level of local government through the requirement of the Development Facilitation Act of 1995 that it develop Land Development Objectives (LDOs), which were later incorporated into the even more encompassing Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) first introduced by the 1998 White Paper on Local Government and Municipal Systems Act of 2000 (Beall et al., 2002: 80). Thus although there is no official policy on decentralisation in South Africa, Beall et al., argue that there has been a 'decentralization by stealth' (Beall et al., 2002).

The Constitution of 1996 enshrines a developmental approach to local government which is explicitly intended to overcome apartheid-era exclusions, biases and inequalities. To this effect the Constitution specifically requires municipalities to structure and manage their administration, budgeting and planning processes 'to give priority to the basic needs of the community, and to promote the social and economic development of the community' (RSA 1996: s. 153(a)).

Decentralisation is thus seen as a means to promote development, and indeed Heller argues that the degree to which the constitution and subsequent legislation explicitly empower local government and task it with redistribution and service delivery is likely unprecedented in new democracies (2001: 139-140). Importantly, whilst development is clearly understood as including improvements in material conditions of the impoverished majority, it is also explicitly seen as encompassing participation in general and participatory democracy in particular as developmental objectives in and of themselves. This approach is made most explicit in the White Paper on Local Government, which clarifies that '[d]evelopmental local government is local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives' (Ministry 1998: 17). Section 16 of the Municipal Systems Act legally entrenches this notion, asserting that formal representative government must be complemented by a system of participatory governance.

Although the Constitution entrenches the right to equality, and prohibits unfair discrimination on the basis of both gender and sex it does not specifically require developmental local government to redress gender inequality. However, after sustained mobilisation and intervention by feminist organisations, a relatively strong gender analysis was incorporated into the White Paper on

Local Government (Beall 2005: 259). The White Paper (Ministry 1998) clearly establishes a proactive role for developmental local government in addressing and assisting the eradication of gender inequality. It requires municipalities to be aware of divisions within the community, remove obstacles to women's effective participation in local government processes, understand the diverse needs of women, and address these needs in planning and delivery processes. In line with Constitutional prohibitions on discrimination the 'Principles for Service Delivery' included in the White Paper state that, 'municipalities must ensure that all citizens - regardless of race, gender or sexual orientation - have access to at least a minimum level of service' (Ministry 1998). The Act includes specific measures to ensure that councils specifically target women for inclusion in participatory processes, and also includes guidelines promoting quotas for women councillors.

### **Historical legacy: Challenges and resources**

This approach to developmental and participatory local government tasked with overcoming gender and racial inequalities is a radical inversion of the role of local government during apartheid. The apartheid state had been highly centralised, and during that period the sphere of local government had no autonomous existence. Local government structures operated solely in terms of parliamentary legislation and political ordinances which charged them with certain functions and spelt out their powers. Racially based local authorities and structures fell under the direct control of central and regional authorities (Croesser 1991: 144). White South Africans were enfranchised to participate in whites-only elected local government, and received services comparable to those in the First World. By contrast, during apartheid coloured, Indian and African South Africans received substandard services. In many instances Africans received no services at all. Coloureds, Indians and Africans were all subjected to a succession of undemocratic, racially based local government structures (Swilling 1991). This system of unrepresentative, undemocratic local government played a crucial role in the apartheid project. As has been noted by Swilling, '[t]he urban system ... underpinned, and was a necessary precondition for, the formal disenfranchisement of the black majority of the nation-state' (Swilling 1991: ix).

This historical legacy creates tremendous challenges for the implementation of the new vision for developmental local government which requires the transformation of local government structures from forces of oppression to agents of development (Heller 2001). This is particularly so given the spatialised racial and class inequalities ingrained into the South African social fabric over centuries of colonisation and apartheid. The reality that outside of former white areas there was no history of effective local government

structures further complicates the situation (Beall 2005: 258). As McEwan notes, the fact that black South Africans have a long, lived experience of local government as an agent of dispossession means that democratic, developmental local government must also overcome a culture of alienation and distrust (McEwan 2003: 475).

However, whilst the historical form and nature of local government creates barriers for the achievement of developmental local government, the struggles against those structures provides a strong foundation for this vision. During the 1980s protests and rent boycotts targeting the Black Local Authorities became a focal point for the anti-apartheid struggle. Militant civic movements, largely falling under the umbrella of the United Democratic Front (UDF), demanded an end to racially based local government, 'one city one tax base', the upgrading of services, and the establishment of affordable service charges (Chaskalson et al., 1987; Shubane 1991; Tomlinson et al., 2003). The democratic nature of these movements has been widely noted, and contrasted with the top-down structures of the ANC in exile.

The urban-based struggles of the 1980s therefore established a deep culture and experience of local participatory democracy within UDF structures, and provided a strong base for the radical reconceptualisation of the role of local government in post-apartheid South Africa (Beall et al., 2002: 70; Heller 2001: 143). The active role of women within the civic movement also foregrounded the importance of addressing gender issues within a new democratic local government dispensation.

### **Problems with the model**

Despite the strong popular support for, and constitutional and legislative commitment to, developmental local government, it is arguable that the South African approach is compromised by three fundamental weaknesses at the level of policy formulation. These pertain to the liberal conceptualisation of participation, the reduction of commitments to gender transformation to a focus on the participation of women, and the endorsement of a contracting vision for the local state which disassociates developmental local government from an active role for either the state or the citizenry in the development process. Each of these three issues will be addressed in turn.

### **Liberal, individualistic conceptualisation of participation**

Building on the approach taken in the White Paper, the Act establishes Integrated Development Plans (IDPs) as the main mechanism through which the citizenry can influence local government. The White Paper stresses that IDPs should 'serve as a basis for engagement between local government and the citizenry at the local level, and with various stakeholders and interest

groups' (Ministry 1998: 27). Moreover, it emphasises that the approach to developing IDPs must be one of 'partnership', and that IDPs should play a key role in realising participatory and accountable government (Ministry 1998: 27).

According to section 25(1) of the Act, the IDP is to serve as 'a single, inclusive and strategic plan for the development of the municipality'. Section 35(1) further establishes that the IDP is the framework within which all planning and development decisions must take place, and is binding on the municipality. The requirements regarding the participatory nature of the IDP should therefore be interpreted as entailing that the overall vision and plan for the municipality must be collectively developed through participatory processes.

The Act makes clear that municipalities have a responsibility to ensure that the citizenry is aware of its right to participate and is provided with the information necessary to facilitate that participation. For example, it stipulates that municipalities must inform communities of their rights and duties, the issues on which they can participate, and as well the mechanisms, processes and procedures for participation. The public must both be informed of meetings of the council and allowed to attend council meetings. The Act even specifies how the council must communicate with the public to ensure that information reaches the illiterate and those who speak only African languages.

With respect to participation in the IDP, section 29 of the Act stipulates that the process to develop the IDP must be in line with a predetermined programme that includes time-frames for each step; allow for the community to be consulted on its development needs and priorities; allow for the local community to participate in drafting the IDP; allow for organs of the state including traditional leaders, and other role players to be identified and consulted on the drafting of the IDP; and provide for the identification of all plans and planning requirements binding on the municipality.

Despite the rhetoric of partnership, the mechanisms for participation in the Act clearly establish that the citizenry is being invited to participate in a process still firmly controlled by the local council. The legislation does not include the creation of democratic structures with real decision-making power through which the citizenry can debate, negotiate and collectively develop their vision for the municipality. Citizens are simply expected to make submissions as individuals, or through their pre-existing organisations. The Act does not even include mechanisms specifying how citizens' inputs are to be incorporated into the IDP. As a result councils are free to decide whether and how to include any of the inputs from the community. Beall notes that

due to lack of gender sensitivity and expertise amongst the officials who ultimately compile the IDPs there has been a tendency for gender issues to be lost as local priorities are aggregated into the final plan (2005: 261). Moreover, as the identification of developmental priorities in the IDP process is not linked to any discussion of the allocation of financial resources, IDPs resemble wish-lists more than strategic plans, and there is no guarantee that gender transformative projects that are included will receive sufficient resources.

As noted above, the Act goes into quite specific detail regarding how citizens must be informed of their rights to participate, and provided with opportunities to do so. Commendably the Act also requires councils to take women's special needs into account in order to facilitate their participation. However, research by the Gender Advocacy Project has shown that many officials in the Western Cape believe that making special provision for women's participation would amount to unfair discrimination (cited in McEwan 2003: 478). Within a particularly detailed and useful study focussing specifically on women and participation in local government processes in Cape Town, McEwan (2003) argues that few meaningful efforts have been made to ensure women's participation and that the level of women's participation has been low. McEwan identifies that, despite the legislative responsibility of municipalities to disseminate information on IDP processes, the lack of information was identified as a key hindrance to participation. As access to information is inextricably bound up with class, black working class women were particularly marginalised and disadvantaged. She further notes that the IDP handbook developed by the Department of Provincial and Local Government fails to recognise that cultural norms regarding gender roles make it difficult for women to participate even when they do attend meetings and provides no guidance regarding how to overcome this problem.

The approach to participation entrenched within the South African model of developmental local government is rooted within a liberal framework in which it is the responsibility of individuals to avail themselves of the opportunities to participate. It is simply presumed that citizens can and should be able to formulate inputs on complex developmental issues, and that these inputs should be made by isolated individuals, or pre-existing organisations which they have formed for other purposes. The model of participatory developmental local government does not include any obligations on the part of the state to develop the capacity of citizens to participate effectively and meaningfully. Despite the fact that many South Africans gained a wealth of experience working collectively in democratic organisation during the struggle, a significant percentage was not active in these structures. The culture of

democratic centralism within the ANC is also not necessarily compatible with notions of participatory democracy. Moreover, there is an important difference between taking collective democratic decisions regarding issues related to struggle, and those related to governance. There is, therefore, at least as much a need in South Africa to build capacity for participatory democracy as in other contexts.

### **Gender transformation, or women's participation?**

Despite the strength of the gender analysis and specific commitments to gender-sensitive service delivery included in the White Paper, there are a number of critical weaknesses in the approach taken to gender in South African policy and legislation on developmental local government. As von Donk notes, '[o]n only one occasion does the White Paper refer to the need for municipalities to develop their capacity to understand and address the diverse needs of women in the community' (2002: 213). Aside from this, women are consistently treated as a discrete and homogenous category. There is no acknowledgement of the profound inequalities between women of different races and classes, and hence no recognition that their needs and interests may and indeed do conflict. Although the Constitution clearly mandates local governments to prioritise meeting basic needs, policy and legislation on developmental local government are silent on the fact that within the current socioeconomic context, the achievement of this goal would necessarily entail focussing on meeting the needs of black, working class women. As von Donk notes, this would amount to a fundamental transformation in South African social policy (2002: 205).

Neither the White Paper nor the Act require councils to disaggregate information analysed as part of the IDP process by gender, race and class, evaluate the impact of the IDP on different categories of women, or indeed ensure that the IDP promotes the objective of redressing structural inequalities of gender, race and class. Concern with gender is reduced to ensuring that councils address barriers that may prevent women from participating in the IDP process and include women on any advisory committees that they may establish.

As has been noted above, numerous problems have been encountered in ensuring women's participation in IDP processes. However, even if women were participating en masse, the equating of women's participation with meeting obligations towards gender transformation is highly problematic for a number of reasons. Whilst ensuring gender equity amongst participants in IDP processes is an important goal in and of itself, it is incorrect to assume that women are inherently capable of identifying their practical and strategic interests, and that they will necessarily make interventions which promote

the transformation of gender inequalities. If the equally important goal of ensuring that the content of the IDP is gender-sensitive is to be achieved it is critical that councils develop the capacity of both community participants and officials to conduct gender analysis and utilise a gender framework when developing the IDP. Crucially, it must be a requirement that IDPs be assessed for their gender transformative potential.

### **Contracting out of participation, and even a role for the state itself**

Whilst the previous sections have highlighted inadequacies in the conceptualisation of citizen participation in the model of developmental local government, other developments are severely constraining the scope of legislated participatory processes and undermining the ability of local government itself to be an active agent in the development process. The casting of the local state as a proactive agent for development and empowerment was consistent with the overall conceptualisation of the state within the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which served as the ANC's election platform in 1994. The RDP committed the ANC to a macro-economic strategy of 'growth through redistribution'. Although elements of an export-oriented market strategy were clearly present in the RDP, the document endorsed an interventionist, developmental state.

However, in 1996 the adoption of the neo-liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) macroeconomic strategy radically transformed this view of the state. Unlike most neo-liberal states the South African state maintains an explicit commitment to poverty alleviation, and GEAR does include elements such as a 'national social agreement' not normally associated with neo-liberalism (Gelb 2003: 35). Yet, as numerous commentators have pointed out, GEAR neglects the link between growth and better income distribution, does not set redistributive targets, and does not demonstrate how its policies will lead to the achievement of its targets (Davis 2003: 39; Marais 1998: 171). GEAR adopts all of the key elements of a standard structural adjustment policy and most key spheres of post-apartheid social policy are explicitly market-driven (SACN 2004; Social Movements Indaba 2004; Pape and McDonald 2002).

At an ideological level, the reconceptualisation of the role of the state in GEAR necessitated a significant shift in the role ascribed to developmental local government. Drawing on Chipkin, Beall et al., argue that within the context of GEAR, '... the initial statist conception of local government's task (one of leading development) was downgraded to one of facilitating development' (Beall et al., 2002: 73). It was within this context that the White Paper on Local Government cautioned that, 'municipalities will be expected to enhance service delivery within the constraints of available

resources', and therefore advocated partnerships with business (and also non-profit organisations) as an important way to 'mobilise off-budget resources' (Ministry 1998: 34). Amongst other options the White Paper cited corporatisation, contracting out, public-private partnerships (PPPs), and the outright sale of assets as service delivery options (Ministry 1998: 94). This approach to service delivery was subsequently entrenched in the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000).

Although the White Paper and Municipal Systems Act simply include public-private partnerships and privatisation as one option for service delivery, in the mid 1990s to early 2000s national government induced local councils to adopt PPPs by using a variety of means to reduce their resource-base (including reducing intergovernmental transfers and capping property rates), whilst simultaneously pressuring them to have balanced budgets (Ruiters 2002: 79; McDonald 2002: 23). It also created the (now defunct) Municipal Infrastructure Investment Unit (co-financed by USAID) specifically to assist municipalities to design and implement PPPs. National government therefore facilitated a shift to a form of developmental local government in which the private sector, as opposed to either the local state or the citizenry, is the key agent for development.

The restructuring of Johannesburg under the auspices of the iGoli 2002 plan is widely recognised as the most extreme manifestation of tendencies to yoke developmental local government to market-based models of governance, and is touted as a prototype for other municipalities.<sup>4</sup> iGoli 2002 is overtly based on implanting market logic into the heart of the municipality, and fundamentally reconceptualising the city as a business (GJMC 1999a: 6). As part of iGoli 2002 the number of council functions identified as core and kept in house were reduced to a minimum. The remainder were sold off or transformed into utilities, agencies or corporatised entities (UACs), which are municipal business entities, as defined in the Municipal Systems Act (RSA 2000).<sup>5</sup> Although presently council is the sole shareholder in each of the UACs, they are registered as private companies and contracted by council as independent, external corporations to deliver services on its behalf. iGoli 2002 is therefore firmly grounded within the contracting model of the local state (Barchiesi 2001) in which non-elected government structures are reduced to a minimal core, the services and activities of local government are commodified, key activities are transferred to the private sector, and state activities are based on a series of internal and external contracts in an attempt to secure the supposed benefits of market relations (Stoker 1991; Walsh 1991; Mather 1991).

In recent years attempts have been made to cast iGoli 2002 as a tool to facilitate the meeting of basic needs and the realisation of developmental local government (GJMC 2000). However, the plan was largely based on an Organisational Review by Price Waterhouse Coopers (1998) which was designed to address the financial crisis faced by the city in 1997<sup>6</sup>. iGoli 2002 (GJMC 1999a) makes scant reference to concerns related to poverty, basic needs or development and the term “developmental local government” does not feature in the document. The factors cited as motivations for the plan are limited to financial and institutional issues (GJMC 1999a: 6-8) and it is simply asserted that these financial and institutional problems ‘substantially contribute to poor service delivery to the city’s residents and businesses’ (GJMC 1999a: 4). As the South African Municipal Workers’ Union (SAMWU) has noted, highly unequal levels of service delivery and the importance of addressing basic needs do not feature in the iGoli 2002 document (SAMWU 1999: 1). iGoli 2002 treats the city as a completely ungendered space. It makes no mention at all of the racialized and class-based inequalities in the city, the particular burdens faced by women workers and working class, black women citizens in relation to service delivery, or the need to promote gender equity.

Research conducted in the waste management and water sectors has revealed that the implementation of iGoli 2002 has had detrimental and strongly gendered effects. Within the waste management sector the focus on profitability has led the Pikitup waste management utility to minimize expenditure on non-revenue generating street cleaning services. As the vast majority of the utility’s African women workers are located in this section they have borne the brunt of ensuing labour shortages and changes in work organisation. A significant number of these women workers are now forced to work alone, increasing their vulnerability to crime and sexual assault. A shift to flexible deployment of workers has resulted in a significant reduction in their control over their own labour time, which previously allowed them to more easily combine family responsibilities and paid employment.

The reduction in street-cleaning service by Pikitup has been compensated for by increased service provision by poverty alleviation projects and volunteer initiatives in working class areas. African women provide the overwhelming bulk of labour in these initiatives. Poverty alleviation projects are partially excluded from labour laws and volunteer initiatives are completely excluded. They both fall outside of the scope of coverage of collective agreements on wages and benefits within the municipal sector and the workers receive minimal or no payment for their labour. iGoli 2002 has therefore contributed to a highly gendered resegmentation of the waste management labour market in which workers (both male and female) employed by Pikitup benefit from labour laws, bargaining council agreements and minimum wages,

and the predominantly African female labour force working for poverty alleviation and volunteer initiatives labours under significantly worse conditions (Samson forthcoming).

Research in the water sector has focused on the negative effects of *iGoli* on communities who receive services. Under *iGoli* 2002 the privatised water utility, Johannesburg Water, has focussed on cost recovery. It has concentrated new investments in (formerly, and still largely white) bourgeois suburbs where residents can afford to pay for services, and has attempted to roll-out pre-paid water-meters in the black working class townships (Public Citizen June 2004: 5-6). With pre-paid meters, once households have used the woefully inadequate 6000 units of free water a month, if they cannot afford to pay for additional water they are forced to cut themselves off before they consume it.

Pre-paid meters have had devastating effects in the township of Orange Farm, the first area where they were introduced in Johannesburg. Prior to the implementation of the pre-paid system residents received water for free from communal stand-pipes and tanks transported by trucks. Research by the Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee et al. (2004) and Public Citizen (2004) has found that half of residents surveyed had run out of water due to lack of money. At times families were compelled to choose between the purchase of food and the purchase of water. Of those surveyed 66 per cent limited bathing and cleaning due to insufficient funds and a startling 57 per cent limited drinking of water.

The implementation of the pre-paid water system has had particularly pernicious effects for women and gender equity. As women bear responsibility for social reproduction within the household, research found that they are required to walk longer distances to purchase units when they have money, and to seek free water when they do not. Sixty per cent of respondents agreed that women were required to work harder when it was more difficult to access water. Respondents reported that water shortages caused tensions within the household and led to an increase in domestic violence. They also cited concerns that because pre-paid water made it prohibitively expensive to move outdoor toilets into the house, women and girls continued to be exposed to the risk of sexual assault and rape when using outdoor facilities (Orange Farm Water Crisis Committee et al., 2004; Public Citizen 2004).

In addition to having negative, gendered effects in the sphere of service delivery, *iGoli* 2002 has profoundly undermined the prospect for participatory democracy. Patrick Heller (2001) notes that there has been a trend towards the development of IDPs by experts and politicians, and critiques this outcome for undermining the culture of civic participation which lies at the heart of the stated objectives of developmental local government (147). In

the case of Johannesburg the processes to develop iGoli 2002 not only overrode the participatory nature of the IDP process, but even circumscribed the structures of liberal representative democracy. Furthermore, once implemented, iGoli 2002 hived off key services from the local council, and placed them beyond the reach of participatory processes.

The contracting of private companies to deliver local government services had been on the agenda of the Johannesburg regional office of the ANC since at least 1996 (City of Johannesburg Council 2001: 38). However, under normal circumstances the Council would have had to engage in consultative processes prior to embarking on privatization and public-private partnerships. The ANC seized on the financial crisis as a pretext to push through a radical, market-oriented model of city governance (Beall et al. 2002: 93-94). In the city's own history of iGoli 2002 (City of Johannesburg Council 2001) it describes how outside of the official structures of government the ANC at local, provincial and national level agreed that the best way to quickly resolve the crisis and achieve a fundamental restructuring of the municipality would be to bypass the democratic processes of Council and establish a small committee empowered to take and implement decisions without prior approval from Council. The ANC provincial Minister for Development Planning and Local Government then utilised his legislative powers to instruct the Council to establish what came to be known as the Committee of Ten (City of Johannesburg Council 2001: 35). Significantly, this Committee's mandate included the specific task of identifying which Council activities were core and which could be outsourced (City of Johannesburg Council 2001: 37). After the Committee had approved recommendations from Price Waterhouse Coopers to adopt a radical contracting model (City of Johannesburg Council 2001: 39) it became concerned that this would be opposed within Council and by the ANC's alliance partners. According to Khetso Gordhan, who later became the Municipal Manager, the Committee therefore requested the Minister to amend its terms of reference to include implementation of the proposals made by the consultants, in order to once again foreclose the possibility of opposition through democratic processes within the Council (Interview Gordhan: 18/05/2004).

When the life-span granted to the Committee by the provincial instruction expired, the five substructures of the Council agreed to establish a committee called the Transformation Lekgotla which was empowered to take forward the activities of the Committee of Ten (which had previously been expanded to include fifteen members). The Transformation Lekgotla moved swiftly to develop iGoli 2002, which bears striking resemblance to the report by Price Waterhouse Coopers. It was presented to the Council as a *fait accompli* and ANC party discipline was used to ensure its passage. ANC

councillor Trevor Ngwane was expelled from the party for publicly questioning the plan. Although there was fierce opposition to the plan from unions and social movements (including several strikes and large-scale protests), it was implemented in virtually unaltered form in January 2001.

Once in place iGoli 2002 hived off key services from the local council, and placed them beyond the reach of participatory processes within the municipality. Despite the legislative requirement that service delivery arrangements be reviewed in the IDP process, the 2001/2002 IDP (Johannesburg 2001) simply took the iGoli 2002 model as a given, as have all subsequent plans. As a result of these processes neither women workers, nor women citizens, nor indeed the unions or citizenry in general have ever been given an opportunity to comment on or input into the current model for municipal governance and service delivery in Johannesburg.

Ironically, Council employs arguments relating to the enhancement of democracy to argue in favour of iGoli 2002's client-contractor model. It argues that this approach increases democratic control, as according to Council prior to iGoli 2002 '[t]he lack of separation between policy, regulation and operations [made] it difficult for elected representatives to measure performance and hold staff members responsible for non-delivery' (GJMC 2000: 5). However, claims that this approach strengthens democratic control are questionable. Despite iGoli's rhetoric about citizens being valued customers, it is actually the central administration, in its role as client that must be satisfied and catered to by the service providers. As noted by da Silva, '[t]he public interest is assumed to be fully delegated and represented by the council as the 'client'. If it acts against the public interest there are no safeguards to ensure the social rights of the public' (Silva 1999: 1). iGoli 2002 is therefore implicitly predicated on a rejection of participatory democracy and a confining of democratic processes to the formal representative structures of liberal democracy.

Significantly, Council itself has struggled to exert influence and control over the externalised utilities, agencies and corporatised entities (UACs). Initially a Contract Management Unit was tasked with monitoring and evaluating the UACs. However, according to the former Director of Operations and Evaluations of the Contract Management Unit it proved difficult to effectively perform these tasks as a "toothless" external oversight body. In addition, Council was unable to exert sufficient control over the priorities and strategies of the UACs simply through its role as a shareholder. In March 2006 the Council therefore adopted a new structure in which the UACs each report into a sectoral department which is responsible for strategy, planning and implementation within the UACs (Interview Coetzee: 2/11/2007). Effectively the UACs are being re-integrated into Council structures and

processes, belying the supposed democratic and accountability gains of a client-contractor model and the externalisation of service delivery. What has, however, been achieved and maintained through the creation of the UACs is the enforcement of market logic within each of the city's service areas.

## Conclusion

Analysis of the iGoli 2002 plan has demonstrated the incompatibility between a contracting model of the local state and commitments to gender transformative developmental local government. Even if more explicit attention had been paid to gender issues within the formulation and implementation of the plan, the primary focus on profit generation necessarily entrenches and exacerbates existing gendered and racialised socioeconomic inequalities.

The highly undemocratic manner in which iGoli 2002 was formulated and implemented was rather extraordinary. It does, however, indicate the need to take account of the interplay between policies of decentralization and participatory democracy within formal processes of governance and the highly centralised nature of the ANC as a political party which is in control of national as well as the vast majority of provincial and local governments. Political processes internal to the party and willingness to utilize the powers of different spheres of government to implement plans agreed within party structures can have a profound effect on the realization of participatory democracy within the sphere of local government.

More generally, analysis of iGoli 2002 demonstrates that as the contracting model privatises the bulk of local government activities it effectively places them beyond the reach of even the structures of representative democracy, let alone participatory democracy. Adopting a market-based approach to development and governance which reduces local government to a minimalist core therefore precludes the possibility of meaningful participation, and hence the opportunity to use participatory democracy as a means to develop collective capacities to transform structural inequalities of gender, race and class.

The solution does not, however, lie in simply fighting for a rejection of the contracting model, and a reinstatement of the vision of participatory democracy encapsulated in the White Paper and the Municipal Systems Act. As has been demonstrated, this is predicated on a liberal approach which reduces society to an aggregation of fully-formed, isolated individuals. Whilst the participatory model does provide scope for organisations which individuals have previously formed to make inputs into participatory processes, these too are expected to make discrete interventions. The South African approach to participation makes no attempt to create democratic structures to give meaningful effect to participatory democracy. There is no training or

education provided to assist the citizenry in gaining the knowledge and expertise required to participate effectively. Despite acknowledgement of pervasive gender inequalities, the council's responsibility for ensuring that the IDP prioritises transforming gender relations is limited to ensuring that women in the community are given an opportunity to participate in the IDP process. Even if these women have the capacity to formulate and submit comprehensive gender analyses and proposals, in the absence of legislated requirements to ensure that councillors and staff who compile the final IDP have been sensitized and are committed to gender transformation it is unlikely that their proposals will be reflected in the IDP. As has been noted, Beall (2005) argues that this has, indeed, been the case to date.

The South African model of developmental local government does not advance either the development of collective capacity, or struggles to eradicate gender, racial and class inequalities. As Heller notes, whilst the South African government tends to claim that their efforts have been thwarted by the constraints of neo-liberal globalisation, more radical and effective programmes for democratic decentralisation have been effected in places such as Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Kerala, India which in fact are subject to greater pressures from the international political economy (2001: 134). Chavez's approach of what Vera-Zavala (2005) calls 'parallelism' in Venezuela, in which the state is establishing parallel, participatory structures as a means to challenge entrenched, class biased bureaucracy is another example of the scope for real alternatives within the current conjuncture.

Within each of these cases the state has established structures through which citizens can participate in collective, democratic processes that negotiate community priorities. Although there are serious critiques of the extent to which these structures are empowered to make meaningful decisions, there is undeniably greater scope than in the South African case. These processes are securing concrete developmental outcomes which redress inequalities in the present, and appear to have stronger potential than that afforded in South African policy to develop the collective capacity required to envision and work towards even more radical transformations in the future. Although many of these initiatives are currently taking place at the local level, as Vera-Zavala notes, as '[a]ll global decisions must be implemented at local level for them to have any effect', radical initiatives and resistance at the local level have ripple effects and implications on a much broader scale (2005: 19, 14). Moreover, they provide the capacity, inspiration and models for larger, more ambitious projects.

The literature on approaches to democratic participatory governance which advance the notion of development forwarded in this article is largely silent

on gender issues. Scant attention has been paid to whether and to what extent these processes are aiming to, and succeeding in, transforming gender-based inequalities. However, the path-breaking work of Seema and Mukherjee (2000) provides insight into the ways in which the People's Campaign in Kerala, India has learned from initial inadequacies, and evolved a method which appears to give meaningful effect to commitments to gender transformation. Key elements include quotas for women's participation in representative and democratic structures, the inclusion of education on gender issues within each of the modules that comprise the extensive training programme for participants in the participatory processes, special training for women elected representatives and women active in the participatory structures, the provision of examples of the types of projects that would promote women's strategic interests, and the setting aside of dedicated funds for specific women's projects, in addition to the requirement that the general plan work to transform gender inequalities. Seema and Mukherjee acknowledge that the process is still far from perfect. However, through initiatives such as a workshop for all women task force members with the explicit purpose of reviewing and improving the gender component of the Campaign there would appear to be a sincere commitment to continually strengthening the gender transformative potential of Kerala's approach to participatory governance.

It has only been possible to implement this type of approach in Kerala due to the support of a vibrant civil society, and both the Communist Party of India – Marxist and the Communist Party of India. As Heller (2001) notes, given the ANC's history of democratic centralism within the party, its uncontested predominance within electoral politics, its disinterest in engaging with (and indeed its hostility towards) civil society organisations, its long-standing commitment to capturing state power as a means to transform society from above, and its endorsement of market-based service delivery and governance, it is extremely unlikely that the ANC will be supportive of a shift to more truly gender transformative, democratic, participatory governance.

The challenge, therefore, remains for the newly emergent social movements to struggle for this new vision for both development and the developmental state. This would require real shifts and transformations within the movements themselves. To date they have largely focussed on fighting cut-offs and evictions, and have made few real attempts to envision and advocate for an alternative approach to governance. Moreover, as has been widely observed, despite the fact that women comprise the majority of members within the anti-privatisation community organisations, they have failed to take up gender issues in any meaningful way (Pointer 2004; Hassim

2004; Beall 2005). Whilst this struggle may be a long and difficult one, by addressing internal gender issues and implementing feminist democracy within their own organisations the movements would begin the important process of developing the capacities required to help mount the struggle for a new form of the developmental state in South Africa.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank America Vera-Zavala, Shireen Hassim and John Saul for comments on earlier versions of this article.
2. Indeed Sen (1999) argues that freedom to participate in the market must be seen as a fundamental right in and of itself.
3. There is no form of similar support for local councils wishing to strengthen and improve service provision by the municipality itself.
4. Indeed, the council has even formed a special department called Joburg Innovation and Knowledge Exchange, part of whose mandate is to share information on iGoli 2002 and advise other municipalities (both in South Africa and abroad) on issues related to municipal transformation.
5. The differentiation between utilities, agencies and corporatised units is based primarily on the level of profit they are expected to generate, as well as their level of financial self-sustainability. Utilities, which generally provide services for which consumers are charged per unit consumed (such as water and electricity), are expected to be fully self-sustaining and generate a profit. Agencies provide services such as roads and parks for which no fee can be charged and are therefore fully subsidised from property taxes. Although corporatised units such as the zoo have some income-raising capacity it is recognised that they will continue to require subsidies in order to provide adequate services (City of Johannesburg Council, 2001, p. 102).
6. In mid-1997 the council declared that Johannesburg was in a deep financial crisis and on the verge of bankruptcy. The city was indeed confronted by serious financial difficulties. In July 1997 the GJTMC was unable to pay a R300 million bill to ESKOM for bulk electricity supply (City of Johannesburg 2001: ix). For three months it also failed to make payments to other creditors. It had an actual deficit of approximately 10 per cent and capital expenditure had been slashed from R1,280 million in 1996/97 to R592 million in 1997/98. As a result of these financial difficulties its credit rating had been significantly reduced and it was unable to access new loans from banks (City of Johannesburg 2001: 22-23; Beall et al., 2002: 91-94). According to the City, the financial precursors to these problems lay in a range of factors. High capital budgets in 1995/96 and 1996/97 had been partially funded by short-term bonds. New geographic areas without any real rates base had been incorporated into the city at precisely the moment that intergovernmental grants were drastically reduced. As noted above the MLCs transferred insufficient funds to the metro to pay bulk suppliers due to their failure to collect revenue and their utilisation of funds

collected as bridging finance. In total the city was owed R2.1 billion in arrears for non-payment of rates and service charges, both in the townships and in Sandton (the eighteen-month rates boycott in Sandton against the harmonisation of property rates resulted in a loss of R220 million in rates from Sandton alone). Accounting systems had masked the true extent of the deficit as they were based on the assumption of full payment for rates and services (City of Johannesburg 2001: 23-26; GJMC 1999a: 7).

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