

GENDER IN THE 2016 SOUTH AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS

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Gender Links**



 **GENDER LINKS**
FOR EQUALITY AND JUSTICE

CONTENTS

	Page no
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
BACKGROUND	7
Local government in South Africa	4
Gender and local government elections	8
Gender and development in SA	9
GENDER IN THE 2016 LOCAL ELECTIONS	11
Gender in party manifestos	11
Women cold shouldered as political parties cosy up to youth	16
Women as voters	18
Gender in election media coverage	19
Women as candidates	21
GENDER IN THE 2016 ELECTION OUTCOMES	24
Overview	24
Ward versus PR seats	24
Party performance	26
CONCLUSIONS	26
Table 1: Women's Representation in Local Government 2016	4
Table 2: Comparative analysis of local election results by political party 2006, 2011 and 2016	5
Table 3: Gender in political party manifestos	5
Table 4: Gender awareness rating – Voice, Choice, Control	12
Table 5: Registered women voters in the 2016 local elections	19
Table 6: Key comparative data in municipal elections 2016	22
Table 7: Women in ward candidate lists	22
Table 8: Overview of gender & election outcomes in 2016	24
Table 9: Gender outcomes of the 2016 SA local elections by party and electoral system	25
Figure 1: Gender in Local Government in South Africa by Political Party 2016	6
Figure 2: Gender In Party Manifestos	15
Figure 3: Women`s Voices in the Media	19
Figure 4: Party Candidates in SA Municipal Elections	21
Figure 5: PR vs Ward Candidates 2000-2016	24
Figure 6: Women in leadership in local government in SADC 2010 and 2016	27

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Women's representation in local government has increased from 38% of elected councilors in the 2011 municipal elections, to 41%, following the 3 August 2016 municipal elections. In 2008, South Africa joined SADC Heads of State in adopting the Gender and Development Protocol, committing to time-bound targets to spearhead women's development and attainment of socio-economic rights, including the attainment of 50% women's representation in all leadership positions. In 2015, South

Africa joined the world community in adopting the Sustainable Development Goals, taking up a new agenda for 2030, including goal 5.5: *Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.* The lack of commitment by political parties overall to women's representation, and their silence on these issues, does not bode well for the advancement of gender equality in South Africa.

Table 1: Women's Representation in Local Government 2016

Year	% Women Ward	% Women PR	% Women overall
1995	11%	28%	19%
2000	17%	38%	29%
2006	37%	42%	40%
2011	33%	43%	38%
2016	33%	48%	41%

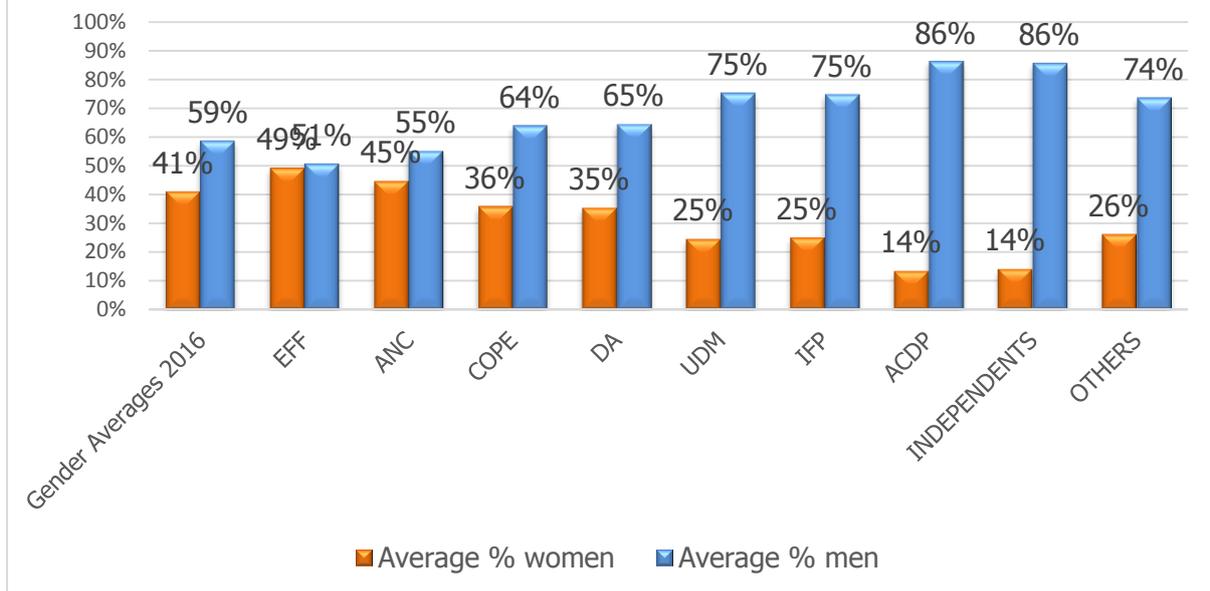
Table one summarises gender and local government election results over the five municipal elections since 1995. The table shows steady progress in the first three elections, with women's representation increasing from 19% in 1995 to 29% in 2000; up further to 40% after the African National Congress (ANC) adopted a 50/50 quota in 2006. Of particular significance in 2006 was the increase in the representation of women in ward seats (where women traditionally do not do as well as in Proportional Representation or PR seats) from 17% in 2000 to 37% in 2006. The decline in women's representation in ward seats from 37% in 2000 to 33% in 2011, and corresponding overall decline of women's representation by two percentage points is a bitter blow for the 50/50 campaign.

In 2016, women came through strongly on party proportional representation lists (48%) but remained static at 33% on ward lists, bringing South Africa back to the 2006 position (41%) but still shy of the SADC Gender Protocol target of 50%.

Table 2: Comparative analysis of local election results by political party 2006, 2011 and 2016

Political party	2006				2011				2016			
	Women	Men	Total	% women	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women
TOTALS	3 004	4 363	7 367	41%	3 429	5 420	8 849	39%	4 219	6 016	10 235	41%
EFF									448	461	909	49%
ANC	2 400	2 852	5 252	46%	2 665	3 429	6 094	44%	2 751	3 393	6 144	45%
COPE					74	187	261	28%	18	32	50	36%
DA	299	700	999	30%	503	1 158	1 661	30%	740	1345	2 085	35%
Others	65	198	263	25%	92	361	453	20	18	55	73	25%
IFP	196	480	676	29%	95	285	380	25%	131	390	521	25%
UDM	22	68	90	24%					3	19	22	14%
INDEPENDENTS									4	24	28	14%
ACDP	22	65	87	25%					106	297	403	26%
NFP					66	175	241	27%				
NP												
ID	41	106	147	28%								
PAC	13	78	91	14%								
VFP	9	62	71	13%								
AZAPO	2	20	22	9%								

Figure 1: Gender in Local Government in South Africa by Political Party 2016



With regard to political party performance, the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) topped the charts with 49% women; followed by the ANC at 45% (up by one percentage point from the 2011 elections). The Congress of the People (COPE) came third at 36%. The main opposition Democratic Alliance improved its showing from 30% in the last two elections to 35% in 2016. Only the DA had a higher proportion of women in ward than in PR seats. The DA has used this as an argument against quotas, stating that if women get exposed long enough they will be able to get into politics even in the more personalised and strongly contested ward seats.

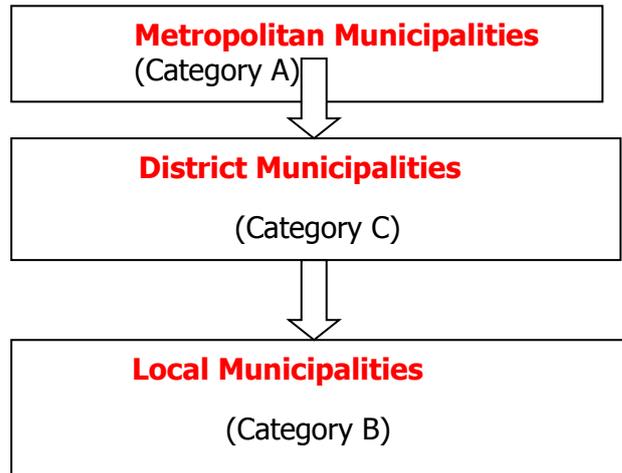
The study found that all parties fall short of effectively mainstreaming gender in their party manifestos, with the ANC at 40% being ranked the highest. In contrast, parties pay far greater attention to the youth as a category, with clearly identified measures to ensure their participation in the economy, in decision-making and development opportunities. The gendered dimensions of youth, that is the differences in the experiences of young women and men, are not explored in any of the party manifestos.

Media Monitoring Africa's (MMA) gendered analysis of media coverage in the build up to the elections reveals a disturbing downward trend in reporting on gendered dimensions of development issues, framed in party campaigning. Shockingly, coverage of gender-related issues during the 2016 municipal elections plummeted to 0.002% of news stories about the elections. Women comprised a mere 22% of news sources in the local elections coverage. But the silent "remember Khwezi (the young women who took up a rape case against President Jacob Zuma)" demonstration by four young women as the President spoke about the ANC's electoral performance at the Independent Electoral Commission hub served as a stark reminder of the crucial issues at stake in this election.

BACKGROUND

Local government in SA

Municipalities in South Africa are a division of local government that lie one level down from provincial government, forming the primary level of democratically elected government structures in the country. South Africa has 284 municipalities, divided into three categories. Municipalities can belong to one of three categories: metropolitan, district and local (referred to in the constitution as categories A, B and C).



Metropolitan- (or category A) municipalities represent large regions that encompass some urbanised region or regions that might be regarded as a city. For example, the City of Cape Town in the Western Cape encompasses the city of Cape Town and other surrounding towns.

There are six metropolitan municipalities in South Africa:

- City of Cape Town
- City of Tshwane
- City of Johannesburg
- eThekweni
- Nelson Mandela Bay
- Ekurhuleni

District Municipalities-(or category C)

- A district municipality is a designation for a class of municipalities found in several locations
- A district council has municipal executive and legislative authority over a large area
- For example, Aganang Local Municipality is contained within the District Municipality of Capricorn, in the province of Limpopo.

Local Municipalities- (or category B)

- Local municipalities share authority with the district municipality under which they fall.

Electoral system

There are two main types of electoral system:

- In the **Proportional Representation** (PR) or “list system” citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list. In an **open list system**, voters determine where candidates sit on the list. In a **closed list system**, the party determines where candidates sit on the list, although this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.
- In the constituency or “**First Past the Post**” (FPTP) system, citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system “the winner takes all”.

In South Africa, national elections are conducted on a simple PR basis while local elections are conducted on a mixed system that involves both the PR and FPTP system.

The mixed PR and FPTP system in South Africa is designed to harness the best of both electoral systems (with the PR system more friendly to women and minorities and the FPTP enhancing individual accountability). Initially however, this system disadvantaged women, as they performed worse than men in the ward seats.

For metropolitan councils, each voter has two votes: one for the ward councillor (or candidate of their choice) and the other for the PR vote (or party of their choice). For local councils, voters have three votes: one for the ward, the other for the PR and the third for the district PR vote.

District councils are constituted on the basis of two PR votes by District Management Area Voters plus one PR vote by local council voters and one representative from local councils. In sum, metropolitan and local councils have an even split of ward and PR councillors while in the case of district councils the split is 60:40.

Gender and local government elections



Initially, gender took a low priority in the complex negotiations on how to restructure and transform local government and did not feature in the debates on how the electoral system would affect women’s representation.

As reflected in Table one, in the first local government elections in 1995, women won a mere 11 percent of the ward seats and 28 percent of the of the PR seats, for an overall total of 19 percent (significantly less than in the 1994 national elections in which women won 27 percent of the 400 seats in the National Assembly).

At the time of negotiations on the White Paper on Local Government in 1998, the Cape Town-based Gender Advocacy Project (GAP) raised a number of concerns with regard to

women's representation as well as facilitating their effective participation in local government. GAP and the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), a constitutional body established to "promote and protect" gender equality, made a submission to the then minister responsible for local government, Valli Moosa, on how the situation might be rectified.

The outcome of these negotiations is reflected in the Municipal Structures Act 1998. Given women's poor performance in the ward seats, one significant gain was to adjust the balance of ward/PR seats in local and municipal councils from the original 60:40 ratio to the equal balance described earlier in this chapter for local and municipal elections.

The Act fell short of legislating a quota as advocated by GAP and the CGE. However it required that parties "seek to ensure that 50 percent of the candidates on the party list are women, and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed though (sic) the list."¹ The weakness of this wording is that it encourages, but does not oblige parties to adopt a zebra system for the PR seats, and places no obligation on them to field women candidates in the ward seats.

The influence has been especially felt within the ANC. While the party has shied away from legislated quotas, it has been at the forefront of promoting women's participation where it has the influence to do so.

The ANC adopted a voluntary 30 percent quota for women in all three provincial and parliamentary elections since 1994 and in local government in 1995 and 2000. While the quota, used in combination with the PR system at provincial and national level, ensured over thirty percent women in these spheres of politics, local government lagged behind because women struggled to get in on the ward seats in local government.

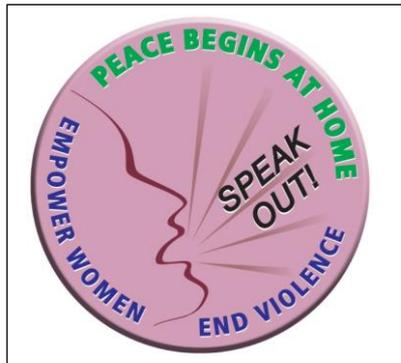
However, in the 2006 local elections the ANC adopted a 50 percent quota for women. Furthermore, it made a particular effort to ensure that women were elected on their own merit in ward seats, narrowing the gender gap between the PR and ward seats and increasing the overall representation of women in local government from 29 percent in 2000 to 40 percent in 2006. The ANC also adopted a 50/50 quota for national elections in 2009, resulting in an increase in the proportion of women from 33% to 44%.

Gender and development in South Africa

The World Bank notes that there can be no growth in the absence of equity, and that there is a direct correlation between gender equality and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of a country. Globally, estimates place women's contribution to a country's GDP at 35-45%, without factoring in the unpaid care work that women bear in addition. The World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap analysis report for 2013 reveals that while progress has been made in addressing gender gaps in education (now at 93%) and health (96%), not enough measures have been put in place to address women's economic participation (60%) and political empowerment (21%). South Africa is ranked 17 out of 136 countries in this study, having closed the gender gap by 75%. South Africa's gender gap for women's economic participation stands at 65%, and that for women's political participation at 39%.

¹ Municipal Structures Act 1998, Schedule 2, Part 1, section 5(3).

Studies indicate that women are far more vulnerable to and deeply affected by poverty, unemployment and inequality, as a result of patriarchy which underpins women's subordination (Stats SA, 2012; Status of Women in the South African Economy, 2015). Poverty levels are higher for women than men, and poor women are further below the poverty line than men, compounded by race, class and geographic location. We see institutionalised challenges in women's access to land and land ownership, with insufficient data available and measures to accelerate women's access to land, credit, business finance, technology, extension services and markets. Women-headed households have less access than men to public and private assets, such as property ownership, water-borne sewage, electricity for cooking, and water.



The levels of gender-based violence (GBV) and sexual violence against women and girl children in particular, is a critical issue hindering women's advancement and development. In this sector, we see significant under-reporting of GBV, lack of funding for interventions, and duplication and inadequate coordination among stakeholders tasked with addressing prevention and response mechanisms. Overall, we see a lack of monitoring and evaluation of GBV interventions, inadequate access to justice and services for survivors of GBV, and impunity of offenders. The criminal justice system fails women due to

inadequate training for police and justice officials, and secondary victimization by the police and in the courts. Violence against women is exacerbated by the culture of silence surrounding this phenomenon, and by women's economic dependency on their abusers.

In addition, there are certain cultural and religious practices that undermine equality, violate constitutional rights and cause harm to women and girls. These include issues relating to forced and early child marriage, associated practices of abduction of girls for marriage (*ukuthwala*), virginity inspection (*ukuhlolwa*), allegations of witchcraft and assaults and killings of elderly women, and discriminatory practices associated with widowhood, across diverse cultures. Many religious denominations interpret their religious scripts in a patriarchal way and undermine women's equality. There is a general neglect of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) issues, rural women, women with disabilities and sex workers, as well as violence against these communities. While we have seen gains in terms of girls' access to education, with South Africa reaching parity in enrolment figures and attendance for girls and boys in primary education, there is concern at the drop-out rate of girls over the age of 15, influenced by teenage pregnancy and GBV at schools.

In the health sector, women face economic, domestic, cultural and legal barriers to health care and sexual and reproductive health rights and services. It is estimated that 56% of people living in rural areas worldwide do not have access to essential healthcare services, and South Africa is no exception to this trend. Men's risk taking behaviour contributes to women's ill health, particularly in relation to their HIV infection rates. HIV/AIDS prevalence among the youth aged between 15 and 24 indicates this is higher for females (8.1%) than for males (4.0%). Particular vulnerabilities of women with disabilities and those living with HIV and AIDS, need to be addressed, with instances such as forced sterilisation of HIV positive women and women with disabilities indicative of prejudice and discrimination at the hands of health care workers.

GENDER IN THE 2016 LOCAL ELECTIONS



2016 marks 60 years since the 9 August 1956 women's march on the apartheid government's discriminatory policies, and 22 years of democracy in South Africa. It might be asked why gender considerations should be an issue in these elections, and indeed remain a focus for debate at this stage of our democracy. The realization globally, is that for a country to reach its full potential, it needs to harness and nurture ALL its talent, and the potential of its working population. In a context where women constitute 51% of the

population, and half of a country's potential talent base, a nation's competitiveness depends on how it educates and utilises its women.

Gender in party manifestos

GL's analysis of South Africa political party commitment to advancing gender issues rates the extent to which gender is reflected in party manifestos in relation to political and economic participation, infrastructure, services and social concerns.

The analysis of party manifestos indicates that some parties have identified specific measures which would benefit women, and most have proposed measures from which women, as community stakeholders, would benefit. Nonetheless, parties cannot be said to be particularly gender-aware, in that they have not mainstreamed gender throughout their manifestos, by clearly indicating measures that would address the systemic challenges and barriers women experience in access to rights and services, outlined earlier in this brief. Gender mainstreaming requires an analysis of such structural challenges and the implementation of specific measures to ensure equal access to rights and services.

Only the ANC addresses the issue of GBV at policy level; by expressing a commitment to work with all sectors to end violence against women and children. The IFP makes a timid reference to women and children "feeling safe in our streets." Neither offers any analysis of why women's rights continue to be so flagrantly violated in this way.

Only the UDM commits to ensuring women's representation on municipal structures and in decision-making. The ANC commits to ensuring women constitute 60% of extended public works programme beneficiaries. COPE commits to creating a dedicated women's fund' and encouraging women to engage in small, medium and micro businesses. The UDM envisages supporting youth, women and people with disabilities to be entrepreneurs. None of the parties provide a gendered analysis of access to resources such as land, housing, and credit.

The ANC notes that an increase in provision of electricity and water to households reduces the burden on rural women in gathering these resources. Parties such as COPE, DA, EFF and UDM envisage measures to ensure access to these commodities for indigent households, but none identify challenges experienced by women-headed households.

Table 3: Gender in political party manifestos			
Political party	Specific measures for women	Other measures which would benefit women (but no gender analysis)	Measures for youth
ANC	<p>An increase in provision of electricity and water to households reduces the burden on rural women in gathering these resources, but the manifesto does not address the access challenges to these commodities experienced by women-headed households. An increase in primary piped water and free basic water would benefit women-headed households.</p> <p>The prioritising of women as extended public works programme (EPWP) beneficiaries (60%) is acknowledged as a key intervention to increase women's economic participation.</p> <p>Commitment to work with all sectors to end violence against women and children.</p>	<p>Commitments to a programme to address unemployment, poverty and inequality, singling out in addition sectors such as "farm workers, the rural masses, urban and jobless workers and middle strata", but failing to acknowledge and address the particular vulnerabilities of women in these sectors.</p> <p>Manifesto is silent on systemic interventions required to ensure women's equal access to land, business financing, opportunities and support measures.</p>	<p>Acknowledgement of 40 years since the Soweto student uprising, committing municipalities to focus on the youth, such as developing programmes for youth councils and youth cooperatives in municipalities.</p> <p>Measures are identified to support youth enterprise, development and employment, and include youth in municipal measures to adapt to climate change.</p> <p>Encouraging local businesses to target young people and to take advantage of programmes to promote youth employment.</p> <p>Youth constitute 50% of EPWP beneficiaries.</p>
COPE	<p>Commitments to empowering women in all walks of life through the creation of a dedicated "women's fund", and by especially encouraging women to engage in small, medium and micro businesses.</p>	<p>No specific measures are referred to in addressing structural barriers to women's advancement within the economy, or accessing existing SMME support interventions. Housing, energy, water and sanitation commitments are silent on issues relating to women's access to these resources.</p>	<p>Measures addressing youth unemployment and skills are referred to, but none specifically targeting young women.</p> <p>Measures such as youth forums to foster youth as active citizens to engage with municipalities and decision-makers</p>

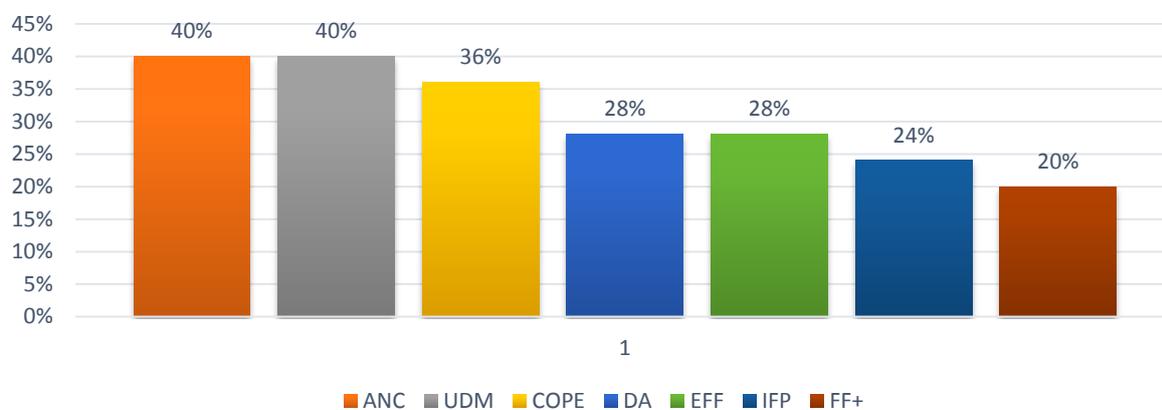
DA	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Measures to help vulnerable people out of poverty by assisting them with skills development, training and support. Commitment to supporting informal economy stakeholders offers a measure to facilitate women's economic development in this sector. An envisaged 'basket' of free basic services for indigent households would ensure monthly access to 50 kWh of free electricity, 6 000 litres of water, and rates rebates would benefit women headed households in situations of poverty, although the manifesto does not make reference to this as a priority stakeholder group	Using EPWP to foster youth development and employability. Addressing social issues faced by youth through substance abuse interventions and the provision of public, sport and recreational amenities.
EFF	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Envisaged land reform programme speaks of equitable allocation of land for residential purposes, but does not address the issue of current land reform mechanisms and processes, envisaged land tenure and ownership models, and current flawed approaches to addressing challenges experienced by women in securing access to and ownership of land. Local economic development measures are silent on issues relating to women's economic empowerment and overcoming structural challenges to women's participation in the economy, although women would stand to benefit from envisaged measures to support informal	Provision of a bursary fund to enable deserving students to study at the university of their choice, and ensure provision of residential accommodation to all students. Establishing and supporting municipal based professional sporting codes.

Political party	Specific measures for women	Other measures which would benefit women (but no gender analysis)	Measures for youth
		traders, and provision of free basic services to indigent households.	
FF+	No reference is made to women or gender equality in this manifesto.	Commitment to fostering diversity, yet for the recall of affirmative action, and silent on matters of gender transformation. Job creation and economic growth measures are limited to support for private sector expansion, with no mention of women's representation or participation within this sector.	No youth specific measures are mentioned.
IFP	The manifesto states that 'women and children should feel safe in our streets', but does not speak to how it intends to address sexual violence or violence against women in children – whether on the streets or in homes – beyond a commitment to the rule of law and to creating security in communities.	Reference to job creation and service delivery, but scant on detail in terms of what is envisaged, and silent on ensuring women's access to these measures.	No youth specific measures are mentioned.
UDM	Measures envisaged supporting economic development, including UDM councils to create a local business environment that supports youth, women and people with disabilities to be entrepreneurs. Intention to replace ward committees with sustainable development councils, representative of local communities, including the categories of youth, women and people with disabilities.	Measures ensuring access to water, energy and housing, yet no mention of any to address women's challenges in accessing these commodities. 'Put Community First' campaign envisages free access to basic services for the indigent, which would benefit women headed households in situations of poverty, but this is not specifically addressed in the manifesto.	Reference to creating a local business environment that supports youth to be entrepreneurs, and ensure representation of youth on local sustainable development councils.

Table 4: Gender awareness rating – Voice, Choice, Control

Score out of five	ANC	COPE	DA	EFF	FF+	IFP	UDM
1) The importance of women’s participation is highlighted and there are strategies for addressing this, including affirmative action.	1	1	1	1	1	1	3
2) There is a gendered analysis of local economic development and specific strategies for addressing women’s equal access and participation.	3	4	2	2	1	1	3
3) There is a gendered analysis of access to resources such as land, housing, and credit and how to redress these gaps.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
4) There is a gendered analysis of access to services such as water, energy and sanitation and how to ensure that women and men access these equally.	4	2	2	2	1	1	2
5) There is a gender analysis of social challenges, especially GBV, HIV and AIDS, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and how to ensure that local government promotes women’s rights.	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
TOTAL out of 25	10	9	7	7	5	6	10
% (Score x 4)	40%	36%	28%	28%	20%	24%	40%

Figure 2: Gender In Party Manifestos



Party	Percentage	Ranking
ANC	40%	1
UDM	40%	1
COPE	36%	3
DA	28%	4
EFF	28%	4
IFP	24%	6
FF+	20%	7

The analysis put the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) in lead positions with a score of just 40%. The Congress of the People (COPE), at 36%, and the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) at 28% did not do much better. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) at 24% and Freedom Front (FF+), at 20%, tailed the list.

It stands to reason that any party tapping into the issues impacting directly on a majority voting bloc such as women, should enjoy statistical advantage over its competition. Contentions within the ruling party, shifts in the balance of power between the ANC and its official opposition, the DA, as well as rising contender, the EFF's all indicate that in many municipalities, the vote is up for grabs. Might a party responsive to the everyday needs of the majority of the electorate – that of women – swing that vote? *It would appear that no party identified this opportunity!*

By comparison, most of the parties have revealed an understanding of particular challenges experienced by the youth as a sector, and have detailed specific interventions in response. These include measures designed to ensure young people's participation in the economy and in municipal decision-making processes, in accessing training and entrepreneurial opportunities, and in addressing social challenges experienced by the youth. As with parties' manifesto commitments on other issues, measures for the youth are not gender mainstreamed, in that they do not stipulate how challenges experienced by young women are likely to be overcome to ensure equal access.

Women cold shouldered as political parties cosy up to youth

By Janine Hicks and Colleen Lowe Morna

The youth sector is the party sweetheart for local government elections in 2016, with few specific considerations for women referred to in party manifestos. Ironically, women constitute 51% of the population, and 53% of registered voters.

One would think party strategists would at least tip their cap to women, if not attempt to woo their support, recognising the potential ballot box significance of this majority. Sadly, after the flurry of female leadership in the 2014 national elections, and despite the spate of high profile female faces in global politics of late, South Africa is sliding back into its old and tired patriarchal slumber.

An analysis by Gender Links of the extent to which gender is reflected in party manifestos in relation to political and economic participation, infrastructure, services and social concerns put the African National Congress (ANC) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM) in lead positions with a score of just 40%. The Congress of the People (COPE), at 36%, the Democratic Alliance (DA) and Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) at 28% did not do much better. The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) at 24% and Freedom Front (FF+), at 20% tailed the list.

August 2016 is not just the month we will cast our ballots again in local elections. 9 August (Women's Day) will mark the sixtieth anniversary of the women's march against apartheid South Africa's discriminatory policies. What really has changed?

In the 2014 national elections, with Helen Zille leading the DA, and Mamphela Ramphele's brief foray into politics, we experienced a temporary "normalising" of male and female faces in leadership. Now, even as Hillary Clinton makes a determined bid for the White House and three women vie for leadership of the two main political parties in the UK, every political party in South Africa is led by a man.

Women comprise 38% of elected councillors and 40% of MPs in South Africa – impressive by global standards, but both figures have fallen in recent elections. As the ANC is the only party to have embraced a voluntary quota of 50% women in local and national elections, there is a direct correlation between the ANC's waning political fortunes, and the extent to which women are represented in parliament.

Women's equal participation may be guaranteed by the Constitution, but political parties have done little to make sure that it is guaranteed in reality. Every indication is that there will be a further drop in women's representation in local government in August, at the very moment that South Africa has pledged in regional and global forums to make women equal partners in decision-making.

Nowhere is this more important than at the local level – the coalface of delivery. We see institutionalised challenges to women's access to land, business finance, technology, extension services and markets. Women-headed households have less access than men to public and private assets, such as property ownership, water-borne sewage, electricity for cooking, and water. (Stats SA, 2012; *Status of Women in the South African Economy*, 2015).

In the health sector, women face economic, domestic, cultural and legal barriers to health care and sexual and reproductive health rights and services. HIV/AIDS prevalence among the youth aged between 15 and 24 indicates this is higher for females (8.1%) than for males (4.0%).

The levels of gender-based violence (GBV) against women and girl children, in particular, is a critical issue hindering women's advancement and development. While we have seen gains in terms of girls' access to education, with South Africa reaching parity in enrolment figures and attendance for girls and boys in primary education, there is concern at the drop-out rate of girls over the age of 15, influenced by teenage pregnancy and GBV at schools.

Yet in the analysis of manifestos only the ANC expresses a commitment to work with all sectors to end violence against women and children. The IFP makes a timid reference to women and children "feeling safe in our streets." Neither offers any analysis of why women's rights continue to be so flagrantly violated in this way.

Only the UDM commits to ensuring women's representation on municipal structures and in decision-making. The ANC commits to ensuring women constitute 60% of extended public works programme beneficiaries. COPE commits to creating a dedicated women's fund' and encouraging women to engage in small, medium and micro businesses. The UDM envisages supporting youth, women and people with disabilities to be entrepreneurs. None of the parties provide a gendered analysis of access to resources such as land, housing, and credit.

The ANC notes that an increase in provision of electricity and water to households reduces the burden on rural women in gathering these resources. Parties such as COPE, DA, EFF and UDM envisage measures to ensure access to these commodities for indigent households, but none identify challenges experienced by women-headed households.

By comparison, most of the parties *have* revealed an understanding of particular challenges experienced by the youth including economic participation, access to training and entrepreneurial opportunities. But the analysis fails to distinguish between the challenges experienced by young women and young men.

It stands to reason that any party tapping into the issues impacting directly on a majority voting bloc such as women, should enjoy statistical advantage over its competition. Contentions within the ruling party, shifts in the balance of power between the ANC and its official opposition, the DA, as well as rising contender, the EFF, all indicate that in many municipalities, the vote is up for grabs.

Might a party responsive to the everyday needs of the majority of the electorate – that of women – swing that vote? It would appear that no party thus far has identified this opportunity! (*Janine Hicks is a former Commissioner on Gender Equality and Colleen Lowe Morna is CEO of Gender Links. This article was published by the Mail & Guardian ahead of the local elections*).

Women as voters



The final voter registration weekend for the 2016 Municipal Elections took place on April 9 and 10, 2016. The youth responded in full force to the call to register and to the campaign to “Love Your South Africa” endorsed by local celebrities and musicians. Many political parties also made an effort to target younger voters by creating campaigns specifically targeting these groups.

Table 5: Registered women voters in the 2016 local elections

Province	Female	Male	Total	Women	Men
Limpopo	1 521 360	1 034 768	2 556 128	60%	40%
Eastern Cape	1 908 575	1 428 957	3 337 532	57%	43%
Kwa Zulu-Natal	3 052 876	2 358 361	5 411 237	56%	44%
Western Cape	1 676 893	1 389 756	3 066 649	55%	45%
Free State	809 121	661 878	1 470 999	55%	45%
Mpumalanga	1 047 802	871 414	1 919 216	55%	45%
Northern Cape	332 780	288 530	621 310	54%	46%
Northwest	900 655	814 805	1 715 460	53%	47%
Gauteng	3 215 834	3 018 988	6 234 822	52%	48%
Total	14 465 896	11 867 457	26 333 353	55%	45%

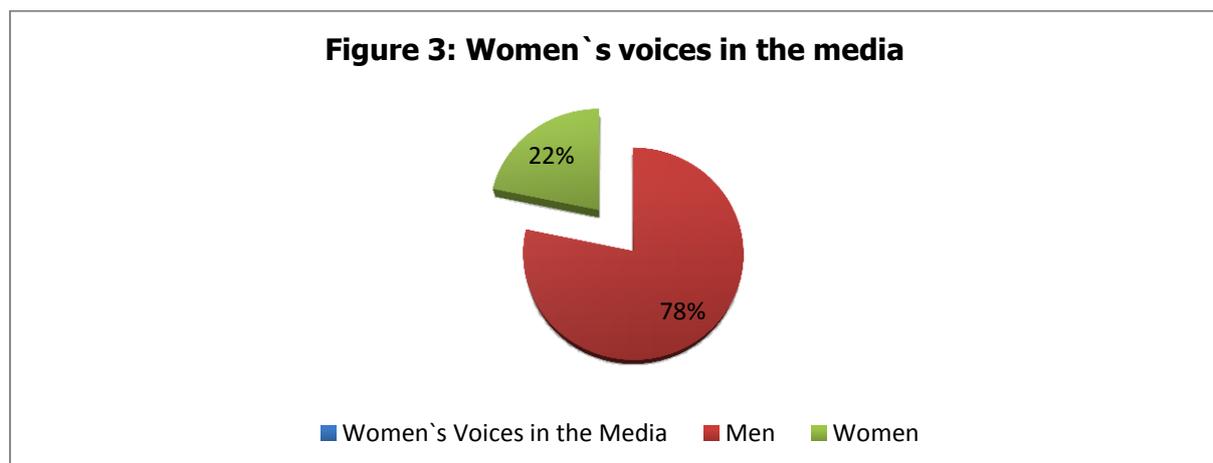
Source: Independent Electoral Commission published statistics as at 01 June 2016. See <http://www.elections.org.za/content/Voters-Roll/Registration-statistics/>; Retrieved on 01 December 2016.

Overall, women comprised 55% of all voters. In all the provinces, there are more women voters than men voters. Limpopo province (60%) has the highest followed by the Eastern Cape (57%); KwaZulu-Natal (56%); Western Cape, Free State and Mpumalanga (55%); Northern Cape (54%) and then Gauteng (52%). Women traditionally take an active interest in elections, especially at the local level, as water, electricity and sanitation have a direct bearing on their lives.

Gender in election media coverage

Media coverage of the build up to the election, framing the issues debated, drawing on political analysts and commentators, is indicative of the extent to which gender equality has taken root in our society, both in terms of *content* of coverage, as well as *which voices* are reflected in commentary.

In tracking women as sources for media commentary related to the elections, MMA's analysis reveals that women constituted 22% of people quoted by the media in the local election coverage. This shows that the media still gives much greater weight to the views and opinions of men rather than women.



Media Monitoring Africa reported in a *Mail and Guardian* article, that “in the 60 days leading up to the local government elections, gender issues were only covered in 12 of more than 4,600 news stories in more than 70 print, broadcast and online sources, including community media”. This constitutes a shocking 0.002% of elections media coverage, down from 1% in both 2011 local government elections and 2014 national and provincial elections. The majority of the media did not have a single report dedicated to women’s interests in the election.

The article’s author, Giulana Sorce, notes:

The criteria for inclusion were based on a broad interpretation of the issues associated with gender – for instance, women in politics, education for girls, female candidates, women’s health, gender-based violence and LGBTI advocacy. The negligible news coverage about the importance of these voices and issues is concerning – the coverage amounted to a minuscule 0.002% of news stories about the elections. The news stories that did deal with gender issues featured pleas to include more women in local politics (eight stories), the sexism of politicians (three) and the lack of party support for LGBTI issues (one story). (M&G, 10 August 2016)

MMA notes that such marginalisation of gender related issues “collectively contribute to the dominant perception that women’s participation in politics is not as valuable as that of men, and that gender issues are not a main concern”, and calls for women’s experiences and their needs to be put back in focus. One rare moment during the local elections made this point vividly:



The dramatic protest staged in remembrance of Khwezi, the woman who accused President Jacob Zuma of rape in 2006, and who was the subject of both public vilification and support during the ensuing trial and subsequent acquittal of the President, amplified for many the deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes in our society.

Four young women stood in silent protest at the IEC formal elections results ceremony, for the duration of President Zuma’s address to the nation, before being bundled off by security guards.

Their placards citing rape statistics of one in nine women epitomised how fundamental gender equality issues such as gender based violence were ignored in this election.

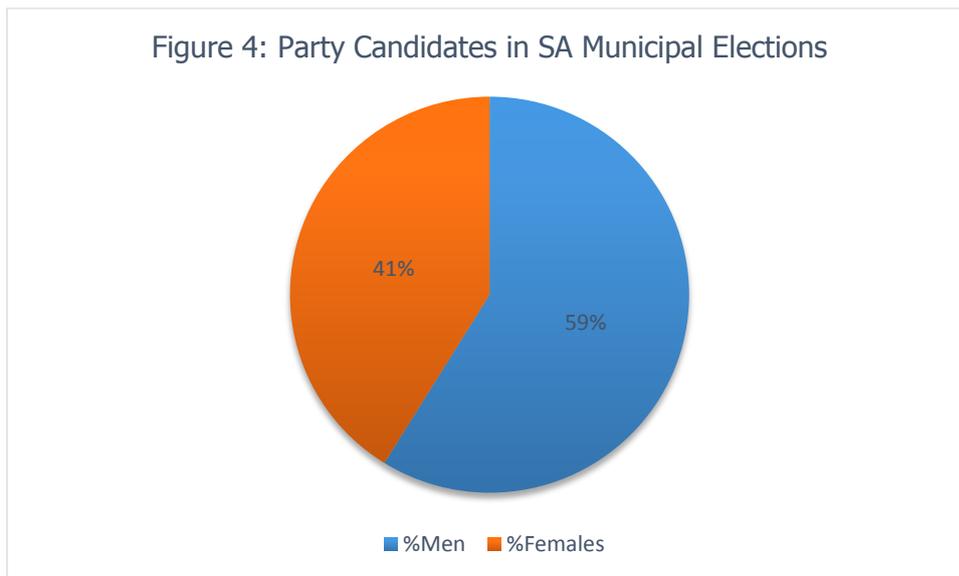
The IEC has been criticised by the ruling party for not intervening and removing the protestors. Independent observers noted that this poignant protest is a reflection of our democracy, highlighting a flawed justice system that violates the rights of survivors of gender violence and perpetuates the impunity of offenders.

Overall, MMA notes that “the 2016 municipal elections have essentially erased women’s interests and gender issues from the ballot.” The issue at the heart of this concern is that this lack of coverage indicates a lack of comprehension of the significance of gendered dimensions to poverty, education, health and economic development. With these issues not framed in public reflection and debate on key elections issues, these are effectively removed from the public policy agenda, and invisibilised, not only in party campaigning and analysis

thereof, but post-election, in the arena of policy contestation, when municipal and party stakeholders put forward issues of priority.

The MMA's media monitoring report concludes: "Not informing South Africans about issues and interests pertinent to our society hinders the goals of equality and democracy at all levels. We need to amplify gender interests in the public mind by asking questions and reporting on issues that reflect the lived experiences of our population."²

Women as candidates



According to the Independent Electoral Commission, of the 61,014 candidates fielded by 200 political parties for the 3 August 2016 municipal elections, 25,113 or 41% of these were female, and 59% men (see figure four).

Gender disparities emerge, however, when examining party proportional representation (PR) lists, as opposed to ward candidates.

2

(http://www.mediamonitoringafrica.org/index.php/news/entry/the_medias_coverage_of_gender_issues_during_elections_was_not_on_their_agenda/, sourced 19 August 2016, and <http://elections.mediamonitoringafrica.org/2016/southafrica/week3/>, sourced 30 August 2016).

Table 6: Key comparative data in municipal elections 2016

Comparison	2000	2006	2011	2016
Parties contesting	79	97	121	205
PR list candidates	16 573	21 507	23 278	26 743
Ward candidates	13 214	23 672	29 570	36 981
Independents	690	667	748	831 ³
Total candidates	30,477	45,179	53,596	63 724
Gender breakdown candidates	Male 66%	Male 65%	Male 63%	Male 59%
	Female 34%	Female 35%	Female 37%	Female 41%
Uncontested Wards in nation-wide bi-elections	75	11	7	2 ⁴

Compiled by GL with data from the IEC

Table 6 provides key comparative data on the last three municipal elections in South Africa. The 2011 elections witnessed a record number of political parties participating, with a total of 121 contesting political parties, up from 79 in 2000 and 97 in 2006. According to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) women comprised 19 731 of the 53, 000 candidates; 37% of the total, up just two percent compared to 2006. In 2016, the proportion of women candidates increased by four percentage points, from 37% to 41%. However, *political parties fielded fewer women candidates at the ward level.* This is singularly responsible for SA not achieving gender equality in the elections.

Table 7: Women in ward candidate lists

Party	Male	Female	Total	% Male	%Female
COPE	1 181	833	2 014	59%	41%
DA	2 859	1 509	4 368	65%	35%
ANC	2 872	1 501	4 373	66%	34%
ACDP	1 569	785	2 354	67%	33%
EFF	2 861	1 385	4 246	67%	33%
UDM	761	318	1 079	71%	29%
IFP	910	289	1 199	76%	24%
FF+	2 080	579	2 659	78%	22%

As reflected in Table 7, the Congress of the People (COPE) fielded the highest number of female ward candidates, at 41%, followed by the Democratic Alliance (DA) at 35% and the African National Congress (ANC) at 34%. The EFF and ACDP tied at 33%, with the United Democratic Movement (UDM), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and Freedom Front + (FF+) having less than 30% women ward candidates. What is disappointing is that the two largest parties fell far short of gender parity.

³ Source for number of independent candidates from the IEC website -

<http://www.elections.org.za/content/About-Us/News/200-parties,-61-000-candidates-to-contest-2016-Municipal-Elections/>; Retrieved 01 December 2016.

⁴ Sources for number of uncontested wards in January 2016 Bi-Elections -

<http://www.elections.org.za/content/About-Us/News/Results-of-the-municipal-by-elections-held-on-20-January-2016/>; Retrieved 01 D

December 2016.

Table 8: Women in PR lists by political party 2016

Party	Males	Females	Total	% Male	% Female
ANC	1936	3002	4938	39%	61%
EFF	1971	3018	4989	40%	60%
COPE	237	195	432	55%	45%
IFP	752	516	1268	59%	41%
ACDP	574	388	962	60%	40%
UDM	534	342	876	61%	39%
DA	2782	1411	4193	66%	34%
FF+	374	138	512	73%	27%

Table eight shows the proportion of women and men on the PR lists of the eight political parties analysed. The ANC had the highest proportion of women (61%) followed by the EFF (60%) and COPE (45%). The IFP came in third at 41%; the ACDP next at 40%. The DA came second to last at 34%. Both the ANC and EFF exceeded the 50/50 quota by on their party lists. COPE, the ACDP and the UDM came close to achieving parity without quotas in the local election PR seats.

GENDER IN THE 2016 ELECTION OUTCOMES

Overall results disaggregated by sex

Women’s representation in local government decreased from **40% in 2006, to 39% in 2011, increasing to 41% in 2016** still short of South Africa’s Constitutional and international commitments to gender parity in leadership and politics. Having committed as a country in 2008 to attaining this target by 2015, merely regaining lost ground from a decade prior indicates that insufficient measures have been put in place by the state and political parties to safeguard and advance hard won gender equality outcomes, let alone making incremental progress towards achieving the ultimate target of parity.

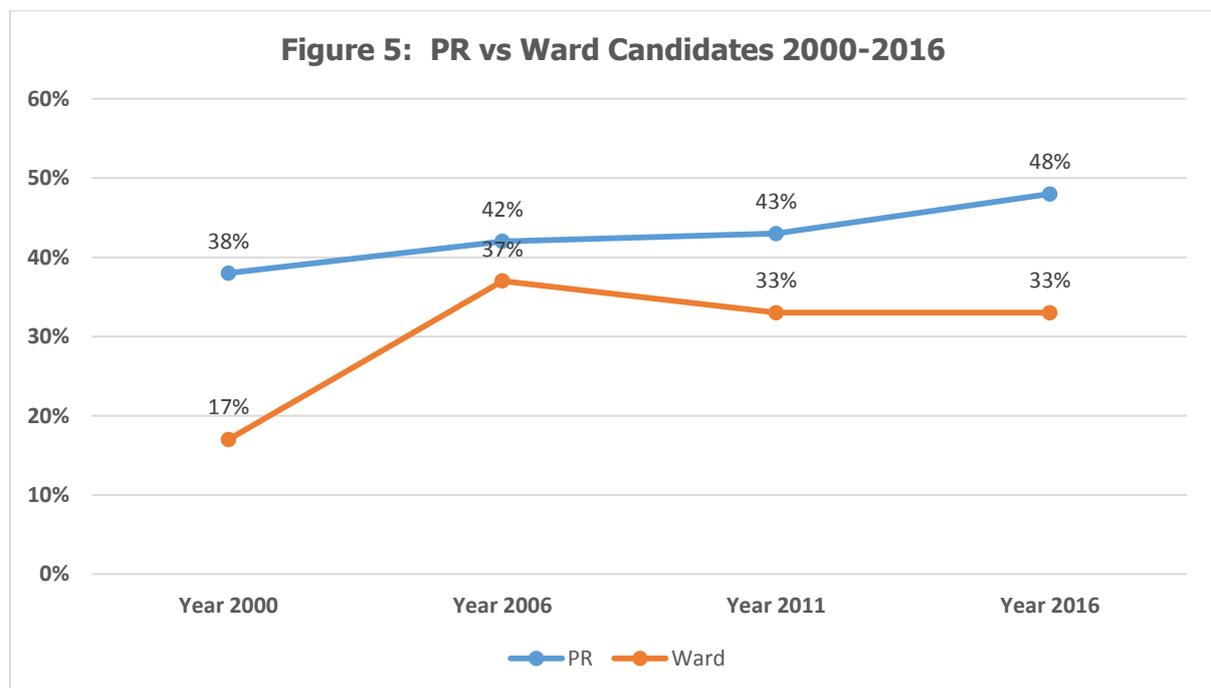
PR versus ward seats

Table 8: Overview of gender outcomes in the 2016 SA local elections.

	Female	Male	Total	% women
PR	2 835	3 012	5 847	48%
WARD	1 384	3 004	4 388	33%
TOTAL	4 219	6 016	10 235	41%

Source: Independent Electoral Commission

Table 8 shows that while women constituted 48% of those who women ward seats, they are only 33% of those who women PR seats.



Analysis of outcomes of previous municipal elections (see figure 5) reveals that women perform better in the PR than ward elections where the rough and tumble of party politics is hostile to newcomers. The 2016 municipal election results illuminate this starkly. In 2000, women comprised 38% of PR candidate lists and 17% of ward lists. This increased to 42% and 37% respectively in 2006, and 43% and 33% in 2011. In 2016, women comprised an all-time record high of 48% of PR candidates, yet only 33% of ward candidates.

Table 9: Gender outcomes of the 2016 SA local elections by party and electoral system

Political Party	PR				WARD				Total	Total Men	Total Female	Average % women
	Male	Female	Total	% women	Male	Female	Total	% women				
Overall	3 012	2 835	5 847	48%	3 004	1 384	4 388	32%	10 235	6 016	4 219	41%
EFF	452	446	898	50%	9	2	11	18%	909	461	448	49%
ANC	1 070	1 664	2 734	61%	2 323	1 087	3 410	32%	6 144	3 393	2 751	45%
COPE	31	18	49	37%	1	-	1	0%	50	32	18	36%
DA	885	461	1 346	34%	460	279	739	38%	2 085	1 345	740	35%
OTHERS	287	103	390	26%	10	3	13	23%	403	297	106	26%
IFP	215	121	336	36%	175	10	185	5%	521	390	131	25%
UDM	53	18	71	25%	2	-	2	0%	73	55	18	25%
INDEPENDENTS	-	1	1	100%	24	3	27	11%	28	24	4	14%
ACDP	19	3	22	14%	-	-	-	0%	22	19	3	14%

Party performance

Table 9 shows that the party that performed best, with just shy of 50% women winning on its ticket, is the EFF. However, this is thanks largely to its strong performance in the PR seats (50%). The EFF performed dismally on gender in the ward seats (18%). Overall, with less than 10% of the seats, this still guaranteed EFF first place on gender.

At 45%, the ANC came close to the 50% target, shored up by 61% women in the PR seats, but only 32% in the ward seats.

As in the past, the DA did better in the ward seats (38%) than in PR (34%) and is the only party to have done so. The DA has used this as an argument against quotas, claiming that it empowers women to stand on their own feet and fight in elections, rather than being names on party lists.

Other parties fell below the 30% mark, with dismal performance in the ward seats, and better performance in the PR seats, where the ANC's zebra style of "one woman, one man" approach to lists seems to be rubbing off.

CONCLUSIONS

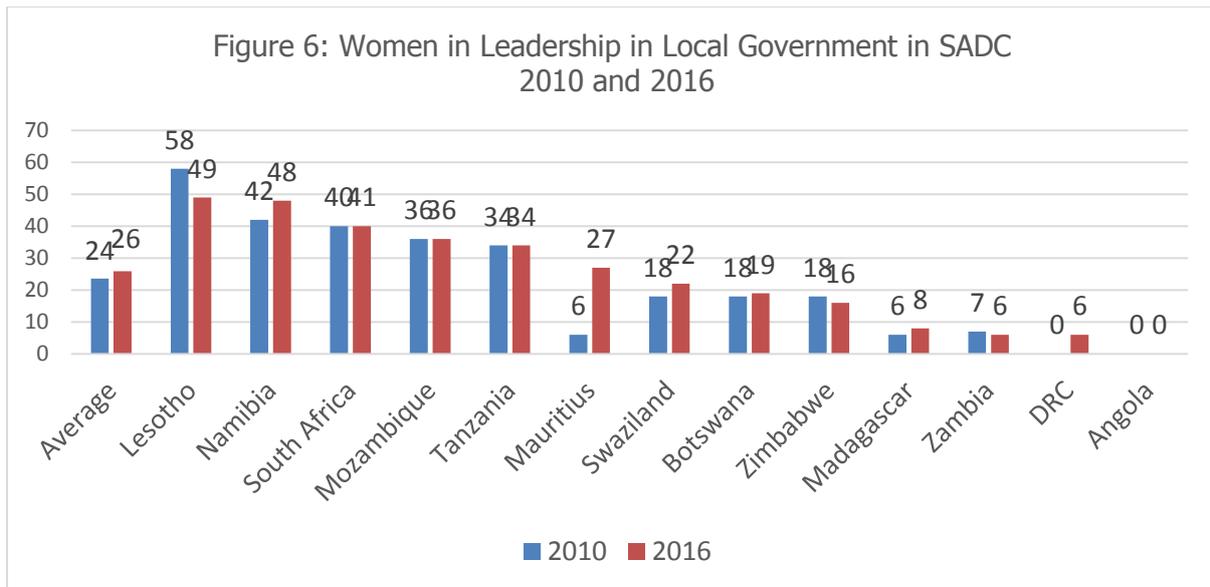
It is well-documented that while South Africa is acknowledged for increasing women's political participation and representation, the current levels of women's representation in legislatures and municipalities is attributable to a combination of the proportional representation system, and the fact that the majority party, the ANC, has adopted a 50/50 quota system, and applied this to its party candidate lists prior to elections (Gender Links, 2011).

As noted, while the ANC improved its proportion of women in local government slightly (from 44% in 2011 to 45% in 2016) its overall reduced proportion of seats could easily have led to a reduction of women in the 2016 elections. What helped South Africa to claw back to 41% women in local government in 2016 was the strong showing of the EFF (49% women), and improved performance of the DA (from 30% to 35%).

In the absence of a quota mechanism, South Africa relies entirely on the commitment of individual political parties to promote women's representation.

With only the ANC having adopted such a mechanism, and committing to applying this in a "zebra stripe" fashion, namely alternatively listing male and female candidates, there is no guarantee that the nominated women candidates will win. Past trends have shown that other parties do not apply the 50/50 principle to the top end of their lists, resulting in many women missing the cut off point when these seats are allocated.

This flies in the face of South Africa's commitment to gender parity as enshrined in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development; Beijing Plus Twenty; the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063.



Source: Southern Africa Gender Barometer 2016

Once a shining beacon of hope in SADC and globally, South Africa's star role in promoting women's political participation is waning. South Africa is now third in local government after Lesotho and Namibia. The lesson from Lesotho, which has 49% women in local government is pertinent. Lesotho is the only country in the region to come close to gender parity in any area of decision-making because of a mixed legislated quota.

All South African political parties argue that this should be left to voluntary party quotas or alternative approaches. The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), the South African Local Government Association's (SALGA) Women's Commission, and Gender Links, have long argued that the issue is too important to leave to party whims.

We celebrate the outstanding achievements of the ANC and the EFF in terms of championing women's representation as PR councillors, which largely served to restore women's representation in local governance to the levels attained in 2006, and secure a final outcome of 41% representation for women.

GL, together with partners CGE and SALGA calls on Parliament and political parties to ensure South Africa honours its treaty and Constitutional obligations to promote gender equality, and enact the legislative reform necessary to embed the principle of 50/50 in our electoral legislative framework. This will require not only adherence to 50/50 representation on party PR candidate lists, but an intervention at the ward level, to address women's poor representation in this category.

Equally, GL calls on political parties to ensure the gendered implications of development and service delivery are made visible in their manifestos and campaigning, and taken up in departmental planning and budgeting. GL challenges media houses to "give voice to the voiceless" and address issues impacting on the daily lives, quality of life and advancement of the majority of South Africa's population.