WOMEN'S ACCESS TO PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES
IN SOUTH AFRICA'S RURAL BANTUSTANS

by

Shamim Meer

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies
and Planning in Partial Fulfillment of
The Requirements for the
Degree of

Master in City Planning
at the

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

May 1994

©1994 Shamim Meer
All rights reserved

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to
distribute publicly paper and electronic copies of this thesis
document in whole or in part.

Signature of Author..............................................
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
May 1994

Certified by..........................................................Jesse Ribot
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Thesis Supervisor

Accepted by.........................................................Ralph Gakenheimer
Chair MCP Committee
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
ABSTRACT

Proposals for post apartheid agrarian reconstruction in South Africa are founded on assumptions about gender relations and households that obscure the underlying basis of gender differentiated access to productive resources. Based on their assumptions, policy makers believe that legalistic approaches in themselves will be sufficient to redress existing gender inequalities in resource access. However even when such policy intends to benefit women they may end up reinforcing existing gender imbalances precisely because these very policies get reshaped by existing gender and household relations on the ground.

A more nuanced understanding of processes of resource allocation stems from the realization that access to resources is shaped by a person's membership and status within a household as well as by the positions a person holds in non-domestic spheres. Household dynamics are diverse and evolving. A household is not a bounded, static unit. Instead its boundaries are permeable, and it is linked to other households as well as to wider social and economic structures. Relations within the household are characterized by co-operation and conflict. Macro-historical processes of state formation and capital accumulation in dynamic tension with inter- and intra-household relations shaped access to resources over time. Within these processes gender ideologies play a vital role in reproducing and maintaining gender hierarchies at the level of the state, the economy, and households. Women's disadvantaged position in resource access is a result of a complex combination of factors.

Access to resources, power, and authority is hence not shaped by law alone. Women's ability to take advantage of legal rights is linked to questions of wider authority and power in society. This suggests that while legal solutions are necessary they are not sufficient to redress gender inequities in resource allocation. Hence policy will have to rely on empowerment strategies that challenge the basic power relations in society. Nuanced understandings of local situations, rather than broad generalizations and idealized constructs will better inform such strategies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my adviser, Jesse Ribot, whose support was invaluable throughout the process of working on this thesis. Special thanks to my reader, Gillian Hart, for sharing her insights and providing valuable guidance and inspiration at various stages of this thesis. To Christine Gailey, my thanks for valuable comments and suggestions, and to both Ruth Perry and Christine Gailey, thanks for wonderful class discussions which served as stimuli as I grappled with ideas. My thanks to Louise Dunlap for support, friendship, and valued comments. Thanks to Marty Chen, Michelle Friedman, Jane Guyer, Marie Kennedy, Rider Moloto, Fatima Meer, Pauline Peters, Karen Polenske, Chris Tilly and Elizabeth Wood for encouragement and stimulating discussion at various points along the way. Thanks to Imraan Valodia, Rohan Persad, Michelle Friedman, Lumkile Mondi, Jacqueline Mathabe, Shan Ramburath and Karen Hurt for their help with making available the documents I required from back home. Thanks to my son Zen, and daughter Maia for their care and love. And to Bobby, thanks for being there for me.
### CONTENTS

**Introduction:**
Understanding Gender And Access 5  
Policies for Reconstruction 6  
Outline of Paper 8

**Chapter One:**
Policy Responses to Gender and Resource Access 9  
Inequalities and Proposals for Reconstruction 10  
Agrarian Reconstruction 14  
ANC's RDP and MERG Proposals 15  
World Bank Proposals 18  
Reconsidering Analytical Tools 20

**Chapter Two:**
Reconstructing Gender and Households 22  
Engendering Analysis 23  
Understanding Households 24  
Analytical Tools and Methods 28  
Engendering Analysis of Resource Access 29  
Rural Bantustans 32

**Chapter Three:**
Bantustans in Historical Perspective 34  
Political and Economic Control 34  
Conditions Today 36  
Conquest, State Formation and Accumulation 37  
Forced Removals 39  
Changes in the Economy 41  
Resistance 42  
Re-invention of Tradition 43  
Women'Experience 45

**Chapter Four:**
Changing Access to Resources Within Households 47  
The Macro\Micro Dynamic 47  
Understanding Pre-colonial Access 49  
Changes at the Local Level 52  
Gender Struggles Over Access to Resources 55  
Restructuring Authority 59  
Changing Gender Access 61

**Chapter Five:**
Conclusions: Re-visiting Gender And Access 63  
Shortcomings in the Proposals 63  
Gender and Empowerment 64

**Appendix 1 and 2** 69

**Bibliography** 71
Introduction:
Understanding Gender and Access

Black South Africans cast their vote for the first time in April 1994, bringing in a government headed by Nelson Mandela. A vital concern of this post apartheid government is the economic reconstruction that must take place in order to meet the basic needs of black South Africans who were severely exploited as a result of colonial and apartheid policies.

In a context where half the black population live in rural areas with severely restricted access to means of livelihoods, and basic amenities, an important component of economic reconstruction is agrarian land reform (MERG 1993, Binswanger and Deininger 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, World Bank 1993).

Several proposals have been put forward for agrarian reconstruction most notably by the African National Congress (ANC), the majority party in the post apartheid government, and the World Bank. In this study I examine the implications of these proposals for women’s access to land and other productive resources, such as inputs, training and jobs in South Africa’s rural bantustans\(^1\). I will attempt to show that the assumptions which inform these policy formulations do not match existing

---

\(^1\) Under apartheid, black people who make up 80 percent of the country’s population, were forced into areas called "homelands" or bantustans.
realities on the ground. I argue that access to productive resources in South Africa’s rural Bantustans came to be shaped as a result of historical processes of state formation, capital accumulation and the ways in which these processes clashed with and reshaped pre-existing unequal relations within the homestead. These processes include legal and political processes, as well as social relations and culturally constructed understandings (Berry, 1993), and have resulted in black, working class women in South Africa’s bantustans having less access to productive resources as compared with men of their race and class.

Policies for Reconstruction

The overall approach of the ANC is more likely to result in policies reaching the poor as the ANC advocates that the state plays a more direct role in addressing inequalities of wealth and income by developing the conditions that will allow market forces to be more effective within a larger and restructured economy (Erwin, 1994). The World Bank’s faith and emphasis on the functioning of markets on the other hand, threatens to result in a situation where the beneficiaries of its agrarian policy will in all likelihood be the wealthiest 30 to 50 percent of the population (Morris and Hindson, 1993).

In terms of redressing gender inequalities neither the ANC nor the World Bank proposals adequately address the question of poor rural women’s access to productive

---

2My focus is on those parts of the bantustans that are rural. I therefore do not discuss the squatter settlements in the bantustans, bordering on South Africa’s traditionally white metropolitan areas. Nor do I discuss the urban centers within bantustans.
resources. Firstly they lack an adequate analysis of gender. Secondly these policies are based on assumptions of the family farm and household that do not match existing realities. These notions are abstractions which do not bear out the reality of relations on the ground. The World Bank’s approach is gender neutral and hence masks a gender bias that privileges existing male access to resources. This is consistent with standard international development policy on the part of the World Bank (Elson, 1992). The ANC proposals assert that policy should ensure that poor women in the rural bantustans will be given access to land as a priority. These proposals however, are based on unrealistic assumptions of gender relations, and neglect an understanding of how gender operates at the level of the household. Hence they adopt legalistic solutions, which they assume will result unproblematically in intended outcomes. As I will show, legal solutions have not resulted in other contexts in redressing women’s unequal access to land. Custom intervened in India, where women’s lack of wider authority and power in society excluded them from the opportunities to land ownership provided in the law (Agarwal, 1988). Men intervened, in The Gambia taking control of land legally allocated to women (Carney, 1988). Hence while legal solutions are necessary, they are in themselves insufficient to ensure changes in the present imbalances in resource allocation which disadvantages women.

What is required is a more nuanced understanding of how gendered access to resources is shaped. Instead of assumptions about households, actually existing relations and networks among people, as well as the relation between law and custom need to be explored and understood.
Outline of Paper

In Chapter one I critically discuss the ANC and World Bank proposals, and their underlying assumptions, in greater detail from a gendered perspective.

In chapter two I draw from feminist and anthropological scholarship, challenge unitary models of the household, and attempt to understand changes in resource access over time, through a gendered perspective. I propose that unrealistic assumptions about households and gender relations on which present policy is based, needs to be replaced by a more nuanced notion of households as variable, as including dynamics of struggle, and as embedded within wider structures (Hart 1992, Guyer and Peters 1987). This calls for an understanding of how inter and intra-household relations govern access to land and other resources (Bernstein, 1989), within the context of political and economic history (Guyer, 1981).

Drawing from such perspectives, in Chapter three I trace the formation of the bantustans, and show how political, economic and historical processes served as the macro-reality within which households were reshaped in the struggle.

In chapter four I discuss the changing relations of production within households in rural Bantustans, and the impact of this on the sexual division of labour, resource access, and new struggles. I suggest that an understanding of these processes and conflicts will result in more realistic policy approaches in addressing gender imbalances in resource access.

In Chapter five I present some recommendations for further research and policy.
Chapter One:

Policy Responses to Gender and Resource Access

There is general agreement in all proposals for economic reconstruction in a post apartheid South Africa, that land reform is a necessity in order to meet the goals of equity and poverty alleviation (ANC 1994, Binswanger and Deininger 1993, MERG 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, World Bank 1993). There are however significant differences in approach on the question of gender equity in access to land and other productive resources. The African National Congress (ANC) on the one hand strongly affirms the need to make land available to poor rural women in the bantustans as a matter of priority (ANC 1994, MERG 1993). In order to achieve this the ANC sees the need to review and bring "in line with national policy" the "institutions, practices, and laws that discriminate against women's access" to land (ANC, 1994). The World Bank and the National Party\(^1\) on the other hand, do not address the issue of gender explicitly. In the World Bank’s view land distribution must promote "small family farms" as an efficient means for increasing agricultural productivity (World Bank 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, Binswanger and Deininger 1993).

\(^1\)Since the National Party has not put out detailed proposals on agrarian reform, I focus on ANC and World Bank proposals in this paper.
While the ANC has made strides in directly acknowledging the need for policies directed at addressing issues of women’s access to resources, both the World Bank and the ANC labor under unrealistic assumptions about gender relations and the nature of the household. Such assumptions have been pervasive in international development generally (Elson, 1992), and have resulted, in the context of other countries, in reproducing existing gender imbalances, even when gender equity goals have been a concern in project design (Carney, 1988).

Implicit in the ANC’s proposals is the notion that the causes of women’s subordination lie in the state and economy, and that changes in state policy can hence remedy gender imbalances in resource allocation. These assumptions lead to the somewhat simplistic notion that legal solutions will redress gender imbalances. They do not attempt to understand extra-legal, non-state mechanisms of resource access. Instead assumptions are made about the "family farm," by the World Bank, and the "household" by the ANC as discrete units, controlling resources and making joint decisions about resource allocation. These assumptions also underly the ANC’s notion of "household." Neither ANC nor World Bank proposals consider conflictual relations between men and women at the level of the household. And neither takes into account that these internal household dynamics shape policy, and lead to unintended outcomes.

**Inequalities and Proposals for Reconstruction**

Given the extreme inequalities of wealth and income in South Africa, it is hardly surprising that all parties agree on the need for the state to play some role in
economic reconstruction. For both moral and political reasons, issues of distribution and equality are in the forefront of discussions on economic reconstruction (Schrire 1993, Brand, Christodoulou, van Rooyen and Vink 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, Binswanger and Deininger 1993, ANC 1994, MERG 1993). Statistics for South Africa are generally unreliable and limited so that there is a lack of information on the conditions of the poor (MERG 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, Bundy 1993). Some indication of the extreme inequalities in wealth and income by race can be gleaned from the following figures: 1980 per capita incomes of white South Africans were 12.9 times greater than per capita black incomes for that year (Schrire, 1993); in 1989 16 million of a population of 37 million South Africans had incomes below the minimum subsistence level, and 93 percent of these were black people (MERG); per capita social spending benefits for whites in 1986 was R879 as compared with R214\(^2\) for blacks; infant mortality rates for whites nationally is 13 deaths per 1,000 births, among blacks by region this figure ranges from 68 to 120 deaths per 1,000 births (Bundy, 1993); there are 13.5 tuberculosis cases per 10,000 whites as compared with 780 cases per 10,000 blacks (Bundy, 1993).

In addition to inequalities by race, glaring inequalities exist between urban and rural areas. In 1983 whites had an annual disposable per capita income of R6 242. Blacks in urban metropolitan areas (that is, outside the bantustans) had an annual disposable per capita income of R1 366, while blacks in the bantustans had an annual

\(^2\)At May 1994 currency exchange rates one South African Rand (R1) is equivalent to approximately 35 cents in U.S. currency
disposable per capita income of R388 (Bundy, 1993). In 1985 the metropolitan areas received 62 percent of the Gross Domestic Product while the bantustans received 5 percent (Bundy, 1993). In general black people in rural areas have the lowest incomes, although rural poverty is more acute in some regions of the country than in others. Fifty percent of black rural households do not have access to safe water, as compared with 30 percent of black urban households; fourteen percent of rural dwellers have access to adequate sanitation as compared to 62 percent of urban dwellers who have access to sanitation (MERG, 1993).

Although figures are hard to come by, evidence suggests that black rural women are over-represented among the poor. A very large gap in wages exists between rural women and men for the same work, with women receiving two thirds of the male wage in non-farm agricultural employment. Seasonal farm work and domestic work are the lowest paid of all work and it is women who dominate these categories. Women farm workers tend to be seasonal workers and earn one third the daily wage of permanent/male farm workers (MERG, 1993).

However while there is agreement that the state should play a role, there are differences in the extent of state involvement suggested. The National Party and their advisers are cognizant of the need for the state to play a role in leveling the playing field somewhat. Key policy makers of the Development Bank of South Africa, the development arm of the apartheid state, see the need for the state to play a role since "enormous differentials in ability to compete in the market exist as the result of apartheid...the ability of many to compete has been constrained by past
discrimination," (Brand, Christodoulou, van Rooyen and Vink 1993). However the National Party policy recommendations stress the role of the market. Its aims are to curb government’s role, limit spending to avoid crowding out of the private sector, and to encourage small business, labor discipline, frugality and individual initiative (Friedman, 1993).

The World Bank is similarly concerned with addressing equity and alleviating poverty through the removal of distortions created by an intrusive apartheid state. The World Bank, and advisers to the World Bank, have presented proposals for addressing inequalities and promoting growth in agriculture through the removal of price distortions, a program of land allocation, and a program of small family farms (Binswanger and Deininger 1993, World Bank 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993). The market driven proposals of the World Bank threaten to create a situation of insiders and outsiders on the basis of class, thus creating what Morris and Hindson (1993) refer to as the "50 percent solution".

The ANC proposals sees a greater role for the state in development. At the same time the ANC also sees a greater role for the people through "institutions of popular democracy." The ANC’s program for economic reconstruction is its Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP). This is based on a macroeconomic policy document put out by the ANC-linked Macro-economic Research Group (MERG) made up of South African and international economists, as advisors to the ANC and its allies the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The trade unions and the civic organizations were party to drawing up the RDP and this is reflected in the RDP’s
concern for drawing in the mass resistance organizations to play a role in development and reconstruction. The five basic principles of the RDP are:

1) *an integrated sustainable development program* -- stressing coordinated rather than piecemeal policies;

2) *a people-driven process* -- in which the people of South Africa "regardless of race or sex, be they rural or urban" shape their future;

3) *nation building* -- to redress the divisions within South African society, to support the development of the Southern African region, and as a basis to take an effective role in the world economy;

4) *linking reconstruction with development* -- this involves a strategy of growth with development and meeting basic needs; and

5) *the democratization of South Africa* -- democracy is not confined to periodic elections but is seen as an active process requiring all South Africans to have access to power and the right to exercise their power.

**Agrarian Reconstruction**

While the ANC documents must be commended for their specific focus on women's subordination, their approach, like that of the World Bank, is limited in two main respects. Firstly the ANC and World Bank proposals seem to locate the problem

---

3The National Party, as the party with the second highest number of seats in the new parliament (with 82 seats to ANC's 252), in view of its position at the head of government since 1948, and in the context of an unchanged civil service is an important player in South African politics. However since they have not put out detailed proposals on agrarian reform I am not in a position to discuss the National Party position.
of existing gender imbalances at the level of the state and economy and exclude an understanding of gender relations within the household. This indicates an economistic and legalistic view of gender relations. Secondly, underlying the ANC proposals is the assumption of the household as a discrete and bounded unit. I discuss the assumptions of these proposals below.

(i) The ANC’s RDP and MERG Proposals

The ANC’s Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) was put forward as its election manifesto. This document states a strong commitment to women’s development and empowerment. Among its recommendations for state action in achieving this it proposes:

-- the implementation of mechanisms to address the "disempowerment of women and boost their role in the development process;"

-- addressing existing gender inequalities as they affect access to jobs, land and housing;

-- the removal of all laws and practices that discriminate against women’s access to land;

-- that the budget provides a social impact statement detailing how allocations would affect women’s workloads, income, education and career options; and

-- improving women’s access to marketing, finances, co-operatives and legal aid.

The RDP is based on the Macro-Economic Research Group’s (MERG) report,
which has more detailed recommendations on agrarian reconstruction. Like the RDP this document makes strong recommendations for improving women’s access to land and other resources. This document calls for the active involvement of men and women in every sphere. It makes reference to women’s limited access to the means of agricultural production as a result of "patriarchal culture and the oppressive, invented legal traditions in the homelands." Of all categories of rural people who need land the MERG report singles out "adult female members of landless households in rural bantustans" as those to be allocated land as a first priority. This is expected to result in "benefit to their own and their children’s diet, through the consumption of vegetables and other food produced on newly acquired land, and through small amounts of additional income they may acquire through sales of agricultural produce."

How should this concern for women’s empowerment and development be read? While the stated concern is for women as they comprise a large proportion of the poor, I suggest the document’s proclamations should be read against the background of ongoing struggles between men and women within the ANC. These struggles include pressure from the ANC Women’s League at the 1990 ANC conference to change the ANC constitution so that at least one third of elected office bearers must be women. ANC women lost this battle in 1990 but won it in 1993 in preparing the ANC’s election list. As a result one third of ANC parliamentarians (84) are women. At the same time as this demand was won, however, the ANC was party to passing a clause in the country’s constitution which allowed tribal law to take precedence over the national bill of rights, thus continuing in effect the practices that militate against
women's access to productive resources (Friedman 1994, Gevisser 1994). As a result of organized pressure by women, led by the Rural Women’s Movement, this discriminatory clause was overturned (Friedman 1994, Gevisser 1994). This indicates the ongoing struggles -- particularly the unevenness, ambivalence, and lack of clarity on issues relating to women’s empowerment. It also indicates the conflicts and contestations between ANC men and women and, perhaps, ANC men making concessions to organized women.

Secondly, the MERG document suggests that the concern with women is linked to efficiency considerations, based on the view that investment in women goes a longer way because women care for children? The MERG document states that the outcome from access to land for women will be a "benefit to their own and their children’s diet, through the consumption of vegetables and other food produced on newly acquired land, and through small amounts of additional income they may acquire through sales of agricultural produce." While increasing the means to livelihoods is an important objective, this concern is framed in the context of benefits to the whole community through women, rather than in the context of empowering women to achieve equality of authority, power and opportunity alongside men.

Thirdly, it has been suggested that the concern for women is tied to electoral politics. While agreeing that the male leadership of the ANC is now firmly committed to redressing gender inequality as an essential component of the RDP, ANC Executive Committee member Cheryl Carolus says,"Suddenly all the old men have woken up and realized that women are the majority in this country and that they need women’s..."
votes. It might be opportunism, but what the hell, we should make the most of it" (Gevisser, 1994).

In summary, it would seem that the ANC lacks a coherent and consistent gender analysis. Coupled with this it fails to take into account the potentially conflictual relations, and readily identifiable antagonisms between men and women, which have resulted in other countries, in men resisting and subverting policies intended to benefit women (see, e.g., Carney, 1988). Even if the ANC means to empower female heads of households it cannot be assumed that these women can act autonomously, that is that they are not subject to claims by men in other households -- brothers, sons, the father of their children, husband’s brothers -- who may thereby excercise control over women’s resources. The documents contain an almost naive assumption that state proclamations will result in intended policy outcomes and that men will stand by and allow women to gain unimpeded access to resources.

Discussions on land issues in South Africa challenge this view, as I will show. Gender struggles between men and women take place over jobs and land (Budlendar 1992, Cross and Friedman 1993).

(ii) The World Bank Proposals

The World Bank makes no explicit mention of gender inequalities. However implicit in their proposals lies a gender bias which, if the South African case parallels others, would result in the perpetuation of existing relations of gender inequality. Underlying the World Bank’s proposals focusing on the small family farm as the way
to revitalize rural production (World Bank 1993, Binswanger and Deiniger 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993), lie implicit assumptions about gender relations within the household.

Small-scale, labor-intensive family farms are seen as offering the potential to create jobs and reduce poverty. The assumption is that family farms will "saturate their land" with their labor providing higher levels of output than large-scale farms (Lipton and Lipton, 1993). The efficiency of the family farm is associated with the use of family labor (Binswanger and Deiniger, 1993). The success of small family farms is pointed to in the Punjab, Taiwan and Japan. Lack of success in Africa to date with small family farms is attributed to the inadequacies of government policy (Lipton and Lipton, 1993). The assumptions in this model are that "the family" has a clearly defined membership, is a productive unit, has common residence, and that members either work together harmoniously or can be mobilized by the authority of the male household head.

However, as Guyer (1989) points out, regarding other African contexts, assumptions that household heads could mobilize the labor of younger men or had control of the labor of their daughters and wives, are not warranted. No one asked says Guyer, "How is labor mobilized." In addition, as Guyer points out, the household in African societies (as in many other post colonial contexts) is not fixed. Membership is fluid; moreover, members may be located in various households and relationships between members are constantly changing. As Guyer argues, African households are not necessarily developing into the corporate households of classic peasantries. Falling
marriage rates, women living independently in urban areas, high proportions of married women living separately from their husbands, less restrictive forms of marriage, high proportions of female-headed households, and a widely recognized struggle between adult women and men are all characteristics of families in Africa today (Guyer, 1989).

In summary the World Bank’s gender neutrality hides a bias that will ensure the maintenance of existing power imbalances and gender inequalities. Coupled with unrealistic assumptions of gender relations World Bank proposals are based on idealized constructs of the "family farm" and "household." As many feminist anthropologists and historians have stated, households need to be explored and understood in historical, political economic context (see e.g., Guyer 1989). They cannot be treated as fixed analytical categories.

Reconsidering Analytical tools

The unrealistic assumptions about households, and gender relations, on which present policy is based, need to be replaced by a more nuanced notion of households as variable, as including dynamics of struggle, and as embedded within wider structures (Hart 1992, Guyer and Peters 1987). What needs to be explored are the ways in which inter and intra-household relations govern access to land and other resources (Bernstein, 1989), within the context of political and economic history (Guyer, 1981). The household needs to be reconceptualized and understood within the context of the broader structures and processes within which it is embedded. Within
such an analysis the question of differentiation on the basis of gender needs to be understood.

For the South African case there is very little information on which to base an understanding of the ways in which rural bantustan dwellers secure livelihoods, how they mobilize labor, what networks they have, what resources they have, or use and so on (Lipton 1993, MERG 1993). This suggests the need for a research agenda as a matter of priority. However in order to develop a research agenda that adequately addresses such issues it is necessary that research efforts are also mindful of the assumptions made on gender, and households.

In the next chapter I draw from feminist and anthropological studies to explore ways in which households and gender may be deconstructed and reconceptualised.
Chapter Two:
Reconstructing Gender and Households

Neither the ANC nor the World Bank policy formulations adequately address
issues of women’s access to land and other productive resources. Two separate but
related issues hamper the analyses of these proposals. On the one hand they carry
unrealistic assumptions about gender relations, on the other they are based on
unrealistic ideal-type concepts of the “family farm” and household. The unrealistic
assumptions about households and gender relations on which present policy is based,
needs to be replaced by a more complex notion of households as variable, as including
dynamics of struggle, and as embedded within wider structures (Hart 1992, Guyer and
Peters 1987).

In this chapter I draw from feminist and anthropological scholarship in order to
explore alternative analytical tools and methods, as more appropriate responses to
understanding households and processes of resource allocation in South Africa’s
bantustans. I suggest that including gender as a key category in analyses changes the
nature of the investigation, and results in a more complete understanding of social
differentiation; I draw on anthropological evidence that challenges unitary models of
the household; and I explore methods for understanding changes in resource access
Engendering analysis

Attempts have been made to redress existing theories so as to take account of
the question of men and women’s differential access to power and resource control.
These attempts have been, as Guyer and Peters (1987) point out, as relevant to
planners and policy makers as they are to theoretical development.

What is required firstly is a more coherent engendering of policy analysis and
formulation. Gender needs to be incorporated as a valid and necessary social category
(Morgan 1989, Afonja 1986) as gender is central to understanding how class identity
is produced or undermined (Hart, 1991). However gender is linked to other forms of
social identity such as race, class and age (Gailey, 1987). Both men’s and women’s
claims to resources, power and authority have been shaped largely through
intersections between race, class, and gender (Sacks, 1988). These interconnections are
located and deployed within specific historical and cultural contexts. Sacks (1988)
proposes that class, race and gender oppression be understood as part of a unitary
system, as opposed to analyses that view capitalism and patriarchy as separate
systems. Within Sack’s conceptualization the centrality of class is maintained. Class is
"...modified very significantly so that it becomes both a gendered and a racially
specific concept, one that has no race or gender-neutral essence" (Sacks, 1988).

Gendered structures and meanings play a vital part in reproducing and
maintaining gender hierarchies at the level of the state, the economy, within the
community or locality, and within households (Hart, 1992).

Analyses of social structures and social processes that take gender differentiated experience into account will allow for a more complete, more accurate understanding of reality. Conversely analyses which take gender for granted in effect concentrate on male experience and subsume women’s experience to that of men (Robertson and Berger, 1986) and miss out a crucial aspect of social differentiation.

Understanding Households

Recent anthropological work in Africa offer very useful guidelines for deconstructing and re-conceptualising households. Guyer (1989) points out that a more satisfactory understanding of actually existing relations will result if researchers approach the study of local level organization with questions rather than assumptions. These questions should be explored in historical, political and economic context (Guyer 1989).

The assumptions made about households, suggests Guyer (1989), are useful to economists, because they need to simplify social relations in order to understand the intricacies of commodity flows, and behavior patterns via decision making. For these purposes unambiguous units which can be modelled statistically are critical. The household lends itself to this function. It has a locus, resources, and a labor force, and is a universal enough kind of unit to be worth making a model out of. The new household economics and Chayanovian theory depend critically on the assumption of the household as a unit, controlling resources and making joint decisions about their
allocation. Survey data is collected in terms of household terms like the small-holder and family farms are found all over the literature (Guyer, 1989).

However this model is inaccurate for Africa as considerable research evidence cited by Guyer (1989) and others (for example Guyer and Peters 1987, Russell 1993, Murray 1987, Martin and Beittel) show. The assumptions generally contained in the household model are that the household has a clearly defined membership, is a productive unit, has common residence, that members either work together harmoniously or can be mobilized by the authority of the male household head. There is the assumption also of a universal trend towards a nuclear household (Guyer, 1989).

Studies conducted in Africa show that households are far more variable and evade strict categorization than the economistic models with their underlying assumptions imply. In addition to variability, such studies show that the household is not a bounded unit but is rather permeable and embedded within wider structures (Guyer and Peters, 1987). And African kinship is not moving in the same direction as classic peasantries (Guyer, 1989).

Africanist researchers have come up against the problem of defining household membership and maintaining continuous records on people with high mobility rates. Instead of units with defined memberships researchers come up against "compounds swarming with children the one week and almost without children the week after" (Bohannan, 1954 in Guyer, 1981). As Guyer points out, "although the house and farms sit there to be counted people come and go -- on business, on visits, or for seasonal migration." This variability in turn makes calculations of production and consumption
patterns difficult. And, understanding households labor constraints and food requirements becomes a far more complex task than the notions of the household model would suggest (Guyer, 1981).

In a similar vein, Russell (1993) points to the Swazi household as "an elusive institution, peculiarly resistant to quantitative analysis. It’s social boundaries are elastic and permeable." It’s physical boundaries are also unclear with scattered fields, and with married sons and widows uncertain of the rights to homestead headship. Thus rights are not clearly defined and relations between household members are variable. Households are constituted by a series of implicit or explicit contracts, not by the "total subsumption of the members into a solidary unit whose internal relationships can be taken as given" (Guyer, 1981).

Russell (1993), in the context of Swaziland, sees the universal adoption of the nuclear family as misguided. What is significant about a nuclear family is the structuring of the relationships in which the various family members are embedded. Relationships between parents and between parents and children are invested with paramount importance. Duty is in the first instance to other members of this nuclear family. Bonds within the family-household are privileged above all others, including those with non-nuclear family kin.

Russell (1993) proposes that the Swazi homestead be seen not as a household but as a flexible patrilineal land-holding group of kin who compose and recompose themselves into a number of constantly shifting residential patterns according to changing and continuously negotiated interests. By labelling patrilineal homesteads
"farm-households" the more complex nature of lineage institutions gets obscured. And their political and jural significance gets trivialised.

The boundaries of the patrilineally extended kin group are wider, vaguer and the demands upon each member less intense in relation to others. The existence of classificatory kin locates each individual in a mesh of relationships. When members of the patrilineage reside in different places, son in sugar plantation, father in town, mother in rural area, with a daughter and several grandchildren, the resulting pattern is not a series of nuclear groups. The links between migrant and rural dependents are complex. Members do not lose their homestead membership or their kin responsibility as a result of residence elsewhere (Russell, 1993).

The assumption of internal harmony of a peasant household is challenged by research findings. Murray (1981) shows in the context of Lesotho, that inequalities of power exist within households. He points out that "rationalized and condoned as they may be by customary definition of marriage," these inequalities of power are very obvious and painful in every day life. Thus the experience of men and women respectively -- the differential incorporation into the labor market, their differential access to land and control over domestic resources -- suggests that the relationship between them is one of constant tension, incipient conflict, potential breakdown.

Women are disadvantaged in Lesotho "in wage employment, in conjugal and migrant careers, in the frequency of three generational extended family in which grandparents looking after grandchildren are linked by female absentees outside an extant conjugal relationship" (Murray, 1991).
Analytical Tools and Methods

Rather than reifying "particular sets of historically produced relations" (Guyer and Peters, 1987), what is required is an approach that understands social dynamics in historical perspective. The domestic sphere should be seen as a contributor to and product of wider cultural, social and political processes -- including colonialism and capital accumulation.

There is a dynamic relationship between the local spheres and the wider spheres within which the local is embedded. Power is generated by familial processes at the local level -- power to expand production in response to policy, to combat state intervention or to survive low wages and uninsured unemployment. Power is also exerted on familial processes by major structural changes in economy and policy (Guyer and Peters, 1987).

Units that approximate households depend for their basic livelihood (rights of land, mobilization of labor, organization of production and consumption) and identity (deriving from lineage, clan, village, rank group and so on) on encompassing structures. Hence the household is not a bounded, discrete unit. The structure of local organization needs to be understood. At the same time processes need to be considered. One way out of the structure versus process problem is to discuss both in context of specific historical processes (Guyer, 1989).

Guyer (1989) points out that an important material concern has been the control of resources. The concentration of resource control may be better understood in relation to processes of incorporation into state structures, differentiation,
commoditization and association, or formation of new kinds of local organization. The outcomes of these processes owe much to the differentiation present in the indigenous mode (Guyer, 1989).

Key conceptual problems that need to be addressed are the relationship between domestic units and the wider social field; the internal relations between domestic groups; and the implications of both for the use of models and the development of methods (Guyer and Peters, 1987).

Engendering Analysis of Changing Resource Access

It is crucial to understand the intersection of class and gender hierarchies when looking at processes of state incorporation, differentiation, commoditization, or association. Differences in power, resource access and labor allocation between men and women have a fundamental effect on patterns of production and demographic change. These differences are to be found within the domestic unit, and within institutions beyond the household.

There has been considerable neglect of actual control mechanisms of women by men. Guyer suggests empirical testing to explore how and why these mechanisms have arisen. Explanations about why men control women have been centered in the material relations of production; the emergence of affinity as political relationship; the development of the state and class formation. Guyer suggests posing these as questions rather than as solutions. The question of how control by men over women is achieved and maintained has received much less attention than it deserves (Guyer, 1989). The
critical question remains: "when ranking begins to undermine the equal prerogatives of
people generally, why is it that the autonomy and authority of women as a sex are
threatened rather than those of men?" (Leacock, 1983).

Recent cross-cultural and historical study present broad trends that may inform
new questions and analysis. Studies show that women’s status in Sub-Saharan Africa
have for the most part been seriously undermined by colonial policies (Etienne and
Leacock, 1980). The origins of socioeconomic and sexual hierarchy are inextricably
bound together (Gailey, 1987). Colonial expansion introduced new forms of social
differentiation and undermined the division of labor between different ages and sexes.
This led to the deterioration in the status of women. With commoditization female
activities became restricted to the private domain (Etienne and Leacock 1980, Kipuri
1989). These processes show the correlation between the stratification of people in
general and the subjugation of women, and that the subjugation of women is tied to
the loss of control over products of their (women’s) labor (Sacks 1975, Kipuri 1989).

The concept of ownership did not exist in many pre-capitalist African societies.
Rights were limited to use rights. There was no centralized political authority in most
cases. Rather political power was decentralized, and diffused. No group was separated
from the means of production (Davison 1988, Shipton 1988).

Bozzoli (1983) in attempting to present an approach to understand the
explanation of gender relations in South Africa, presents the view that social change is
based on processes of confrontation, resolution and further confrontation between
contradictory and opposing forces. These conflicts occur in the ‘domestic sphere’ and
involve conflicts between certain men and women.

Discussing the impact of proletarianization on African social systems and the household Bozzoli suggests that conflict takes place, in periods of proletarianization, around the domestic economy." She sees the power of pre-capitalist society and economy to resist the onslaught it confronts, as resting within its internal relationships, its capacities to resist proletarianization, to retain access to the land and to continue to produce and reproduce, as well as to retain some sort of cultural and social independence. Thus, Bozzoli points to the reorganization of male/female division of labor in African societies in South Africa and the capacity of these societies to sustain themselves through the use of women's labor as an issue of central importance. The sudden imposition upon women for the maintenance of the social system must, she concludes, have involved some conflict and reorganization. And the capacity of the pre-capitalist society to impose these tasks on its women was quite possibly one of its most potent weapons against the onslaught of capitalism. Two forms of struggle need to be identified, according to Bozzoli -- struggles within the household and struggles between the household and the state. Bozzoli's assertions have yet to be illustrated through studies within South Africa.

The assertion of the household as a site of struggle and a sphere where distribution is unequal on the basis of gender and age has been highlighted by recent feminist scholarship which points to the need to re-conceptualize households (Folbre 1986, Hart 1992, Agarwal 1990, Kabeer 1990). Researchers have criticized both neoclassical and Marxist economics for taking a limited view of the household, and
propose a more dynamic view of the household as including conflictual and bargaining relations among household members. As Hart (1992) points out, this results in a politicized notion of the household where men and women, elders and juniors contest property rights, labor obligations and resource allocation. Feminist anthropologists have stressed the importance of kin roles and kinship networks as vehicles for labor claims and use-right allocations (e.g. Gailey, 1987). In all these accounts ideologies of gender figure prominently in intra-household negotiations and struggles.

Rural Bantustans

Notions of the family farm wherein the family, as a rational economic actor, saturates its labor on its land are called into question by the evidence on households in Africa, and by politicized notions of the household. However the way forward is not through the imposition of new models, and idealized constructs. The study of resource control and labor mobilization should begin rather with interrogating forms of local level organization. Such an approach will result in more realistic research and policy outcomes. Both structure and process need to be analyzed within historical perspective, and against the dynamic relationship between levels of organization from the local to the world economy. Gender differentiated access, power and authority must be analyzed and explored at every level -- that is within the household as well as beyond, in the state and economy (Guyer, 1989).

At the same time the household should not be seen as a bounded unit. Rather it is contributor to and product of wider cultural and social processes. Power is generated
by familial processes -- power to expand production in response to policy, to combat
or accommodate state intervention, or to survive low wages and uninsured
unemployment. Power is also exerted on familial processes by major structural
changes in economy and policy (Guyer and Peters, 1987). Since the household is
linked to other households and to wider structures, the influence members are able to
wield in struggles within the household is linked with conditions of access and labor
claims in non-domestic spheres. Membership in a household as well as people's
position in non-domestic spheres hence shape access to resources (Hart, 1992). Guyer
and Peters (1987) concur with many others in stating that the household is mutable:
both over time and across cultural and social geography.

Drawing on these perspectives, outlined above, I attempt in the subsequent two
chapters, to locate changes in social relations in the bantustans within a specific South
African path of state incorporation and capital accumulation.
I focus on the macro level in Chapter 3. I look at the local level in Chapter 4 and I
explore -- to the extent that the available material will allow -- changes in inter- and
intra-household relations, governing access to land and other resources, division of
labor and claims of income.
Chapter Three:
Bantustans in Historical Perspective

Women’s access to resources, power and authority has been shaped through historical processes of state formation and capital accumulation. These processes resulted in struggles between the state and the pre-capitalist sphere, in addition to struggles within the pre-capitalist sphere. These included struggles between men and women, and struggles between ideologies of gender.

In this chapter I trace the formation of the bantustans, and show how political, economic and historical processes shaped access to resources and served as the macro-reality within which household were reshaped in struggle.

As a result of the needs of mining capital for male labor, state restrictions on the movement of women, and the pressure from their men to remain on the land to keep the subsistence economy going, black women came to be locked within the bantustans where survival became increasingly more dependent on remittances from male migrant workers.

The Bantustans - Political and Economic Control

The bantustans are made up of dispersed territories, comprising 13 percent of the land area of South Africa. These are areas set aside for South Africa’s black population who make up 85 percent of the entire South African population. They
include the Transkei, Ciskei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, KaNgwane, Lebowa, Gazankulu, Kwa Zulu, KwaNdebele, Qwa-Qwa. Appendix 1 gives an indication of the size of the bantustans. Very little farming takes place in these areas, there is some industry and in addition to rural areas, huge commuter settlements exist. Each bantustan is meant to be home to a specific tribe or ethnic group in accordance with apartheid policy.

The bantustans are a result of state policy to solidify the spatial division between black and white people in South Africa in order to contain the political threat of large numbers of black people to a white minority government. Through its bantustan policy the state entrenched the reserves created under colonial rule, and prevented the free movement of black people within South Africa. With the emergence of the mining industry in the late 19th century, and the period of rapid industrialization of the early 1900s, capital required large supplies of cheap labor. On the one hand black males were pushed into wage labor through repressive measures such as taxes. On the other hand their families and unemployed black males were prevented from entering cities through other repressive laws.

Thus through its bantustan policy the state regulated and controlled the movement of black workers and contained the political threat of a majority black population. The creation of bantustans has been an integral component of the history of dispossession of black people and of the development of racial capitalism in South Africa.

The bantustans, with the exception of Kwa Zulu were given nominal independence beginning with Transkei’s independence in 1976. The apartheid
government, in collusion with bantustan elite, forced this independence on black people who, against their will, lost their citizenship of South Africa. No other country in the world has recognized this independence. Now, with the dismantling of apartheid the bantustans will be drawn back into South Africa. My focus is on women in rural bantustans, rather than rural South Africa. Hence I do not include in my discussion the situation of African women on white farms. Nor do I include women in the vast shack settlements and townships within those sections of the bantustans adjoining white areas and close enough to urban centers to allow for commuting.

**Conditions Today**

The legacy of apartheid is very much present within the bantustans and presents a considerable challenge to a new government. People within these bantustans suffer the most acute poverty. These areas experience higher population densities, higher infant mortality rates, greater rates of poverty and hardship generally than in South Africa’s urban areas.

The system of male migration, and gendered notions of appropriate work, upon which the capitalist economy was developed, resulted in intensifying a sexual division of labor within which women managed households while the men spent their working lives in South Africa, returning home for visits at brief intervals. The bantustans increasingly became the reproductive sectors, serving as reservoirs and nurseries for generations of new labor for the mines and industries of South Africa.

The creation of the bantustans may be traced historically to the processes of
colonial conquest, dispossession and capital accumulation. These processes resulted in changes in local level organization, as they were themselves shaped by pre-existing relations within the pre-capitalist economy.

**Conquest, State Formation and Accumulation**

Pre-capitalist societies within what is now South Africa were drawn slowly into an expanding world economy through conquest, the imposition of taxes, and the development of a cash economy. This process took place unevenly across the country over time, affecting the different tribal groupings at different points in time.

In the Cape, Dutch colonization in the 17th and 18th centuries, ushered in an era of merchant capital, which depended on slavery and the reduction of the Khoikhoi to landless laborers. The frontier wars, annexations, and alienation of Xhosa lands marked the incorporation of the Khoikhoi and Xhosa into the Cape economy - itself being shaped by the expansion of British capitalism in the 19th century (Bundy, 1993).

In Natal and the Boer Republics similar developments took place, but white landholding populations were too small to seize effective control over land or labor. Hence most white owned land was rented or occupied without payment by African communities which even in the late 19th century were still able to provide for their needs.

With the discoveries of diamonds and gold, however, South Africa was transformed economically and the process of industrialization was speeded up. In the early 1900s the mines and growing cities required labor on an unprecedented scale.
Male rural producers were pushed out of agriculture and into wage labor, either as migrants or as permanently urbanized workers. A series of wars and annexations completed the conquest of African societies and brought Boer republican independence to an end. The "scatter of disparate statelets, republics, colonies, independent kingdoms came under British control and were reconstituted as the Union of South Africa in 1910" (Bundy, 1992). The economy of this newly created state was almost completely dependent on mining.

The injection of Africans in the region into wage labor resulting from the rapidly growing needs of the mines and emerging industry may be seen as a feature of late, uneven, and rapid industrialization which tended to rely on the state to force wage labor out of the countryside (through taxes) and into the emerging industry (Trapido, 1971 in Bundy, 1993). Lonsdale (1983, quoted in Bundy 1993), situates these repressive labor practices in the context of colonial conquest and rule. Lonsdale (1983) points out that conquest was scarcely complete when mine labor demands "first became insatiable." So employers and successive governments used and adapted instruments of control designed in the preindustrial era, for example pass and vagrancy laws, and the Masters and Servants Acts. The violence of colonial conquest and rule was translated into the regimentation of labor in the compound, on farms, and in factories. In these ways colonial "relations of dominance" (Lonsdale, 1983 in Bundy, 1993) helped structure new relations of production in industrializing South Africa. The colonial reserve policy became entrenched and paved the way for the development of the bantustans.
As capitalist farming grew, land prices and rents increased and landless producers were pushed off land they had occupied. This process affected both black and white tenants. The creation of thousands of poor whites forced white politicians to do all they could through welfare and expanded employment to solve the "poor white problem." Black poverty, on the other hand, was dealt with by segregating the dispossessed in separate black ghettos; rural reserves were created on the basis of the notorious Land Acts of 1913 and 1936. These black areas fast became "overpopulated, over stocked and underdeveloped zones of structural poverty" (Bundy, 1992).

Social and economic relations were shaped along racial lines. White miners were able to win high wages because they had the skills and they had political power. African migrant workers were unskilled, and low paid (earning one-ninth the wages of white workers in 1899). They were kept out of the electoral system, and hence had no political leverage. Their families became increasingly reliant on their meager wages as overcrowding, increasing landlessness, and lack of inputs made it increasingly more difficult to subsist from farming.

**Forced Removals**

The state policy of segregation was imposed to stop the movement of African people into white areas. African men and women, however, continued to enter the towns, and white farms. In the 1960s the state responded with massive population removals, resulting in some two to three million African people being forcibly
removed from urban areas and white farms. The bantustan population grew from 40 percent of the African population in 1960 to 54 percent of the African population in 1980 (Freund, 1983). Forced relocation included urban to rural removals as well as rural to rural removals. Removals from urban areas included people endorsed out of cities, i.e. those seen by the state as surplus or unnecessary residents. Rural forced removals included removing African tenants from white farms, where mechanization resulted in the need for fewer African workers, and where dwindling numbers of white residents often resulted in the politically threatening situation of large areas inhabited solely by African tenants. Removals were thus economic and political in intent. Some 300,000 to 400,000 African people were pushed into the so-called African homelands from white farms during the 1960s.

During the 1960s and 1970s removals of black spots, that is islands of black tenure in white zones, resulted in the forced removal of some 97,000 African people. These were mainly a more prosperous strata of the African peasantry who had been able to purchase freehold property. Consolidation of the bantustans was yet another reason for further forced removals. Within bantustans a form of removal called agricultural betterment had the intention of redistributing property rights and access to rural resources. Removal thus, has been a constant threat and a process over a prolonged period.

In 1976 the first of the homelands was made an independent bantustan. The impact within the homelands as a result of forced removals, was devastating (Hirsh, 1987). For example one of the larger settlements of Dimbaza in the Ciskei resulted in
a population increase from almost zero to nearly seven thousand between 1967 and 1971. The overall population of the Ciskei it is estimated was increased by 172,537 as a result of removals. Incomes were low or barely existent. It has been recorded that housing comprised tents and one and two room, sheet metal, houses, many of which collapsed in the winter of 1970. There were no shops or water taps, sanitation was provided in the form of shallow pit latrines, and a clinic opened only after the deaths of a number of infants. Barely months after the first influx 90 graves were noted in Dimbaza 70 of which were children’s.

Changes in the Economy

By 1970 South Africa became one of the most powerful and sophisticated states in the world, and a middle-ranking industrial power. However unlike most major capitalist states it excluded the majority of the population from its social and political institutions. During the 1970’s as a result of restructuring within the mining sector a dramatic "spiral of differentiation took place...with potentially explosive social and political repercussions" (Murray, 1987). Looking at the impact of this trend for Lesotho, Murray notes that mine wages and remittances increased substantially, existing workers in the mines were stabilized, and new recruitment was heavily squeezed. Hence mineworkers came to represent a group of "insiders" as distinct from an "entire generation of young and middle aged men engulfed by a surging tide of structural unemployment" (Murray, 1987). At the same time many female headed households without access to earnings to male remittances struggled to maintain
livelihoods through limited mechanisms of redistribution within the rural economy and through the lower and more irregular incomes of female migrants.

Over the 80s and much of the 90s mining and industry performed poorly. Manufacturing employment was the same in 1992 as in 1980, and has been falling since 1990 (ISP, 1994). Unemployment is currently calculated at 50 percent, creating perhaps an even more extreme insider/outsider dichotomy than referred to by Murray for 1970.

Resistance

Black people resisted the processes of colonization, conquest and proletarianization discussed above and were, hence, never passive victims. Resistance took the form of wars, protest, and political organization of communities and workers. Organizations such as the ANC, Pan African Congress (PAC), and South African Communist Party (SACP) emerged to resist state pressure and thus, affected the process of state formation in many ways. Trade unions such as Industrial and Commercial Workers’ Union (ICU), and South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU) took on the struggles of workers. Both urban and rural struggles took place in the early 1900s. The ICU for example organized peasants as well. Women organized to resist pass laws, and in 1956, 20,000 women from all over South Africa’s rural and urban areas marched on Pretoria to demand an end to pass laws for women. In 1920s, but even up to the 50s rural struggles focused on the rights to rural resources. The most well known of these was the Pondoland revolt of the 1960s which
involved sustained rejection of government authority, and the defence of local control over local resources. Since the 1960s the decentralization of control to bantustan authorities has muted protest in most bantustan areas of South Africa (Beinart, 1988).

Re-invention of Tradition

In order to control black people and to govern them with greater ease systems of codified customary law were imposed. As in other parts of Africa under indirect rule, the British used pre-colonial structures to suit their own ends. Chiefs who opposed the colonists were deposed, while those who were compliant were set up in chieftainships under British administration. As Shula Marks (1978) shows, in Natal the control of the black population through chiefs was imposed since the mid-nineteenth century. It was because the forces of colonization were weak that this tendency to conserve African society developed. Marks argues that entrenchment of traditional rule was a measure used by the Natal government for the co-option of the petty bourgeoisie and Zulu Royal family in the face of threatened class conflict and trade union organisation by the ICU. Marks quotes government-official Heaton-Nicholls, who promoted the need to invoke Zulu tradition within segregationist policies asserting that promoting Zulu "communalism" will serve as a means to fight off "communism" (Heaton-Nicholls quoted in Marks, 1978).

Hence, the objectives of colonial policy were achieved through securing the support of a segment of the African population. The structures and social relationships of African pre-capitalist society shaped the struggles that crystallized in the policies of
segregation. Contests over the form and pace of proletarianisation took place at a number of levels. Between capital and labor, between and within branches of the state, between capitalist interests, and between all these and the pre-colonial ruling class of chiefs and headmen in the countryside, as well as between chiefs and their subjects (Marks 1986, in Nzimande, 1994).

Political restructuring through the bantustan system centered mainly around the full incorporation of the chiefs and headmen as a basis for creating and strengthening the bantustan system (Nzimande, 1994). The mass of the people were caught between loyalties to the chief on one hand and resistance to colonial oppression as manifested through the institution of chieftaincy, on the other. Chiefs became responsible for the allocation of resources and today expect payment from their subjects, although they do not provide the protection, in the form of food, shelter and security as did the chiefs in pre-colonial times (Zulu, 1985).

In the 19th century Native Law was codified by the British resulting in disadvantages to women's access to resources. Under this "traditional" law women could not own land, and remained perpetual minors, unable to marry or enter into contracts without the consent of a male relative (Unterhalter, 1988). In many bantustans this is still the prevailing law, and current struggles are being waged by women to ensure that these laws are done away with the passing of the new South African constitution.

As Berry (1993) writing on African countries more generally, observes, the colonial inventions of tradition provoked new debates over the meaning and
application of tradition, which in turn shaped struggles over authority and access to resources. Often the codified laws resulted from attempts by anthropologists and administrators to encode tradition through discussion with informants willing to enter into truck with colonial agents. These were usually men with their own agenda's who manipulated tradition. Hence tradition came to be used against women and against youth (Ranger, 1983). And "Men's dominance in society that is their control over religious beliefs and political organization" was clearer in colonial invented custom than it had been before (Ifeka-Moller 1975, quoted by Ranger, 1983).

Women's Experience

The processes of state incorporation and proletarianization which devastated communities resulted in women suffering the greater burden. Women's position worsened alongside the position of the communities they were a part of. In addition women's position within their communities worsened on the basis of unequal gender relations within which women held an increasingly subordinate position.

In addition to their class and race interests, the colonial and post-colonial states, as well as mercantile and industrial capitalism, were imbued with patriarchal values. Pre-capitalist relations of production and distribution among many of South Africa's black people were also imbued with a system of gender hierarchy. The reshaping of relations among black people resulted in women being further marginalized. In addition, the state promoted an ideology of "black traditional values" that held that women had always been subordinate, and then orchestrated the loss of
land use-rights in the bantustans. The state designated fathers and husbands as guardians of women.

Because of gender as well as racially segregated labor markets, Black women were proletarianized much later than were men. The greatest wave of black female proletarianization was in the 1940s. It should be noted, however, that influx control between 1920 and 1940 blocked women's entry into the urban areas. They remained in the reserves, relying to a large extent on remittances from the meager wages of their men.

The lateness of black women's proletarianization proved a disadvantage to these women as jobs in mining and industry were taken up by white and black men and in some industries by white women. Black women who entered the urban shack settlements went into occupations of laundry, liquor-brewing and selling, and domestic service, as well as prostitution. Women in urban areas continue to this day to be employed in the lowest paid sectors of the formal economy, as well in the informal sector.

In the next section I focus in on kinship relations and male/female struggles within the domestic sphere. I show how women become increasingly dependent on male remittances, how agriculture becomes increasingly less possible. Hence capital, state and male authority come together to shape women's position. At the same time women resist and find ways to maintain livelihoods.
Chapter Four:  
Changing Access to Resources Within Households

In this chapter I attempt to trace changes at the household level resulting from the historical macro processes discussed in chapter three. The broad historical background serves as a backdrop for understanding changing gender relations within households, as well as women's present access to productive resources.

I draw from studies for South Africa and elsewhere, to tease out the kinds of questions that need to be asked of local situations in order to understand changes within the household and the restructuring of power and authority along gender lines over time. I begin by discussing the dynamic between the macro and micro levels; I explore evidence on what pre-colonial relations at the local level may have been; I trace changes in the local level as suggested by the existing material; and I discuss gender struggles over incomes and resources.

The Macro\Micro Dynamic

The relationship between the macro processes and the local level is a dynamic one with the local level being outcome of, as well as channel for, these macro processes (Beinart 1988, Guyer 1981, Guyer and Peters 1987). Out of the struggles emanating from this dynamic interaction, changes took place in inter- and intra-
household relations governing access to land and other resources, division of labor, and claims to incomes. The macro forces as I outlined in chapter three may be traced back to colonialism and merchant capital; the repressive process of proletarianization based on the needs of accelerated mining industrialization; state repression and bantustan policy arising from the need to control large numbers of black people in the face of a minority white government; restructuring of industry in the 70s; the reinvention of traditional law.

These processes in themselves were uneven in their impact on different parts of the country, and on different groups of indigenous people. In addition each of these processes interacted with specific local situations, and encountered variations in pre-existing social, political and economic organization of the local people. Hence variations in outcome may be expected in different regions of South Africa. Variations also exist in relation to geography, soil conditions.

An understanding of present relations of access to resources within South Africa needs to consider such regional variation. As Beinart (1980) points out, "the process of capitalist penetration, the response of rural producers and patterns of migrancy varied considerably from area to area." The historical processes of colonial contact and conquest affected some areas earlier, and more thoroughly than others. There were varied patterns of stratification and political struggles within households, as well as between households and the state. These need to be understood within an analysis of the specific interaction between migration and production in each area (Beinart, 1980).
Such detailed work which interrogates the networks men and women create or retain to gain access to resources and to maintain or generate livelihoods, and that seeks to understand processes of differentiation within and between households will serve as a sounder basis for informing policy formulation than existing approaches based on abstract models of the family and household, and on unrealistic assumptions about harmoniously hierarchical male/female relations.

An understanding of present relations of access will hence emerge from detailed study of a specific geographic location -- a village, or a section of a rural bantustan. This is beyond the scope of this paper. However I will try to sketch, from existing ethnographic studies, an understanding of pre-colonial relations and the kinds of changes suggested in gender relations of access to resources, with the idea that such a discussion could inform questions for further study.

Understanding Pre-colonial Relations of Access

Davison (1988), writing on Africa generally, says, "Women's current access to land needs to be examined in the context of dynamic changes over time in the distribution of power at the compound-household, community and nation-state levels, bearing in mind always that the world market system as presently constituted directly and indirectly affects the distribution of power at all levels."

Davison (1988) points out that it is often difficult to decipher from existing literature how allocation of labor and decision making were constructed in pre-colonial societies. Often data are not disaggregated by gender. Where there has been some
attempt to look at experience by gender, it has been found that women had access to specific land or crops. Female producers often had complete control over crops they planted, over how they produced them and over the products of their labor. In some instances there were lands designated as women’s lands while other areas were designated as communal, patrilineal lands (Carney 1988, Davison 1988).

Women’s relationship to land has been linked to their relationship to other members of society -- husbands, children, co-wives, parents, siblings and other related kin (Davison, 1988). Authority and access in communally constructed societies are embedded in kinship relations, with husbands often (although not always) having greater authority than wives. Kinship relations in association with gender determine what one does, with whom, for whom, at what time. The gender division of labor and access to resources depends on a woman’s specific roles -- as mother, sister, mother-in-law, wife -- as well as to her status at that time in her life cycle (Gailey, 1987).

In patrilineal areas of Africa men generally gained access to land as lineage members, activating these claims upon marriage. Women gained access as wives. Marital lineages thus usually controlled women’s access to land; in some cases this extended to claims to women’s labor (Okeyo 1980, Davison 1987). Among patrilineal groups the more wives a man had the more land he could accumulate and control. The limit, however, was the extent to which a lineage would provide bridewealth to a man who wished to expand the number of his wives. The complexity of precolonial gender relations regarding resource allocation and control over products is not to be underestimated, or overgeneralized (see eg. Ettienne, 1980).
It is not clear how much of this applies in the case of South Africa. Very little ethnographic work has asked similar questions of the South African reality. Bundy (1979) presents a picture of Cape Nguni life in traditional, pre-capitalist economy in South Africa. Women, men and children were all involved in production essential to the survival of society. Men cleared the land with rough axes and by burning, they cared for livestock, made frames for houses and built the animal shelters of wood or stone. Women tilled the top soil and weeded lands with hoes, kept the surface soil soft and moist by turning, and reaped and threshed the grain crops. Children assisted in protecting the crops from birds and animals, and they herded cattle.

Women had a central role in distribution. The primary social unit was the homestead or umzi. Each wife had her own garden and grain storage place. Each house with a married woman was the center of an independent economic unit. At the same time all members of the umzi shared in the produce of the umzi.

Chiefly authority was a diffuse authority, and the chiefs power was limited by what his subordinates were prepared to accept. An ungenerous chief who took too much and distributed too little found his people transferring their allegiances (Mayer, 1980).

Elsewhere in Africa the commoditization of crops resulted in a restructuring of gender relations of production with men growing and controlling cash crops and women producing food crops (Davison, 1987). This seems to apply to parts of South Africa as well.

Margaret Kinsman (1982), writing of Tswana women in South Africa, shows
that at the beginning of the 19th century women exclusively produced and controlled harvests. Between 1800 and 1840 women were independent producers, controlling their wealth. The commoditization of grain production, however, supported the growth of a male dominated peasantry on the one hand and an increasingly wealthy agricultural aristocracy on the other. While some women were able to sustain their independent production of grain for subsistence, many others became dependent on the fields of their brothers or husbands which they were expected to tend or reap. The men in these cases claimed the harvest resulting in increasing subordination of these women, and their dependence on wealth controlled by their fathers, husbands or sons (Kinsman, 1982).

Changes at the Local Level

In the South African context the division of labor within the household, the means of maintaining a livelihood, and relations of authority also underwent changes as a result of migration.

These changes were gradual, as Beinart (1989) shows, in the case of Pondoland (which is now a part of the Transkei rural bantustan). The early migrants were young men whose labor could be spared for at least parts of the year without, it is argued, the dislocation of agricultural production. In 1910 twenty-five percent of males between the ages of 15 and 45 years were absent at any one time. By 1936 this figure had risen to forty-five percent. Most families had a migrant by this time.

Initially migration was seen as necessary at certain points of the life cycle --
for example until marriage and the setting up of a household. However economic conditions necessitated prolonging these periods of migrant labor.

More regular periods of migration resulted in an increasing burden on women. Women were responsible for agriculture, but had fewer people to help them. The absence of male labor power stifled cultivation. Each woman had to spend a longer time looking after children, collecting firewood, and fetching water for the homestead, since families were smaller and natural resources scarcer. Some families responded by leaving parts of arable land uncultivated. In addition forced removals consolidated apartheid's plan of having 80 percent of the country's population (i.e. black people) living on 15 percent of South Africa's land, resulting in severe overcrowding and soil erosion. Much of the land in the bantustans is not arable, as appendix 2 shows. More wages were hence, of necessity, spent on consumer goods than on stock and implements. As soon as the family became dependent on purchasing food and consumer goods the value of the wage spiralled downwards. The decline in production was gradual and uneven.

Migration and other changes in the economy created tensions over the control of resources within the homestead. Pre-colonial property was controlled by the homestead head who consulted with brothers, sons and older women. As wages increased in importance the authority of the father was eroded by the wage-earning son. Tensions were resolved by sons moving into their own homestead earlier than was formerly the practice. Gradually this led to smaller households and to the decline in polygyny (Beinart, 1980).
Gradually cultivation became less possible in most bantustan areas, and the primary resource and source of subsistence for the whole rural community has shifted today to wage earnings (Spiegel 1980, Murray 1981). Not all households receive direct remittances however. Many gain access to these monies through indirect routes -- agricultural activity, bride-wealth transfers, petty trading, and prostitution. With the movement from cultivation to wage labor as the central form of subsistence, women’s central role in production and distribution evaporated. Women in the bantustans are now reliant on wages from men (husbands or sons), sometimes from other women (daughters).

Women in this context assume the onus of domestic responsibility, but have little control over the resources with which to carry out that responsibility. Effective household management depends on cash. "Women’s experiences range from relative security to bitter frustration, acute personal stress and emotional desolation" (Murray, 1981). The results of male desertion are evidenced today in the highest rates of malnutrition among children whose mothers had no support from the fathers, and where children were in the care of relatives other than their own parents (as for example when mothers migrate to towns to take up domestic work). Limited employment opportunities and scarcity of land led to a deterioration of women’s economic status.

In Lesotho, for example, the common family type today is three generational: a woman, her daughter, and her daughter’s children. However Peters warns against using abstract categories such as "female-headed household" as it does not necessarily reflect
much about a family’s situation. Some female-headed households may be extremely impoverished but this is not necessarily the condition of all. Peters points out that in the situation where marriage is itself a process, rather than an event, it is difficult to label households in the first place. Further the links between households need to be understood. Female heads of households may be linked with men in different households, example the household of her children’s father, both in terms of material support and social recognition. Women frequently have close ties to brothers or other male kinsmen (Peters, 1983).

**Gender Struggles Over Access to Resources**

Variations exist today in the means available for income generation -- for example geographic and soil conditions prohibit the possibility of farming the land in some bantustans, while this is possible in others (Sharp and Spiegel, 1990). Such differences may also apply between different sections of one bantustan (Meer and Mlaba, 1983). However while regional variations and variations in experience need to be considered, on virtually all indicators of well-being, the gap between rural men and women is greater than between urban men and women (Budlender, 1992).

Women have limited access to employment in the urban areas, and hence have come increasingly to rely on men for livelihoods. Rural women have to find ways of maintaining livelihoods given the situation that men do not send money regularly or send too little for household needs. In addition the economic recession of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in large-scale lay-offs from the mines and industries, and women
were faced with loss of income, as well as with increasing numbers of people to feed as men returned to the bantustans (Budlender, 1992).

Struggles between men and women over jobs have broken out in such conditions of job scarcity. In the bantustan of Qwa Qwa such struggles took the form of physical violence, with men demanding that they, rather than women be employed in factories in this bantustan. The men 'went on the rampage,' assauling women factory workers and fruit vendors (Budlender, 1992).

Other conflicts arise between spouses around forms of income generation. In a settlement in one bantustan women with no access to land ran shebeens (i.e. sold liquor) in order to make ends meet. Their husbands were opposed to their activities. The uncertainty of remittances and the fact that contract wage labor opportunities scarcely existed for women, were major factors that led wives to disregard husband's views, although they hid their beer brewing and selling activities from husbands. Women felt they had a right to earn income locally and to defy their husbands towards this end (Sharp and Spiegel, 1990).

In a second settlement the situation was more complex and conflicts were expressed in more subtle ways. Women were able to farm some land and this meant there was the possibility of income generating activity supported by men. Women were expected to use their labor and remittances from husbands to build a homestead as the rural base he would return to on retirement. It was failure to do this, and the wasting of money on consumer items that was criticized by the men (Sharp and Spiegel, 1990).
In addition to less access to incomes, women have less access to land. Land is usually allocated by chiefs, headman and officials, in the form of individual plots for household groupings and communal land for all. Household land is allocated to married men, a practice seen as traditional but open to question. As in many other patrilineal societies in Africa, it was in-marrying wives who received the use-rights because they would be producing children for their lineage (Okeyo, 1980). Hence marriage is the only way to get access to land in many of the bantustan areas (Budlender 1992, Small and Kompe 1992). Women's identity, then, is still linked to men who have more rights than they -- fathers, husbands or sons. Many women in the bantustans are completely dependent on husbands or sons for support (Small and Kompe, 1992).

As has been found in Kenya and in The Gambia (Okeyo 1980, Carney 1988), in South Africa men appear to be hostile to the idea of women getting access to land. The conflict between men and women over tenure issues has been highlighted for South Africa in a discussion document by Friedman and Cross (1993). Drawing from discussion and research within a South African NGO concerned with land issues, they refer to the "underground gender struggles" which exist around issues of tenure. These struggles however are not always underground as they emerge in violence against women, declining rates of formal marriage, divorce and desertion.

Friedman and Cross (1993) point out that it is not easy to attack gender disadvantage in tenure through the law alone as the roots of women's disadvantage "run deep". When land is scarce, tenure and power relations appear to bear down the
hardest on women. Women are disadvantaged under official tenure systems as well as by socially based informal land practices not controlled by law.

One of the main problems of rural women is the changes in role structure and in concepts of gender. This is parallel to situations in India, where it was found that legal changes allowing women to inherit property did not result in women actually getting such property (Agarwal, 1989). Instead women were pressured through authority relations in the name of tradition, to give up such property to their brothers.

Men are resistant to women owning land in part because they see this as undercutting male authority, an authority promoted by colonial rule. In addition "it allows households headed by women to exist on their own" (Cross and Friedman, 1993), as if these did not already exist de facto, given separation rates.

Conflictual relations between men and women in relation to access to resources has been cited for other African countries. Resistance by men to women’s land ownership in Gambia and Kenya arose from men’s fears that land would be alienated from the compound in the case of divorce (in a context of virilocal residence and exogamous marriage) (Berry 1993, Carney, 1988).

A development project in The Gambia which intended to achieve gender equity goals by giving women land titles was unable to deal adequately with male resistance. The response from the donor agency was to assuage men’s resistance by listing the names of the male compound head alongside the name of the women owner, implying that the compound had rights to the land. Since men controlled compound resources this resulted in men having control of the land intended for women even though the
land was in the women’s name. Awarding women legal rights to land did not result in women’s control of this land. This illustrates that "powerful ideological forces are at play in maintaining existing rural, political and economic alignments" (Carney, 1988).

**Restructuring Authority**

Women’s access to authority in South Africa, as well as elsewhere in Africa, was deeply affected by the creation of new systems of law and adjudication based on colonial interpretations of African tradition. These disadvantaged women’s access of use rights and limited women’s power considerably (Ettienne and Leacock, 1980).

As Ranger (1983) has shown, codification often took place through colonial agents consulting with compliant male chiefs who took the opportunity to re-invent tradition to their own advantage, and in doing so disadvantaged women’s access to political power and productive resources. Hence, in Nigeria for example, Igbo women’s traditional autonomy and power were destroyed with the creation of modern colonial institutions. As a result of "received" Christian and Victorian notions of women’s place, colonial officials could not see or accept existing market and political institutions of women (Van Allen, 1972).

Colonial inventions of tradition served not so much to define and shape the colonial social order as to provoke a series of debates over the meaning and application of tradition, which in turn shaped struggles over authority and access to resources (Berry, 1993). Within South African bantustans the codification of laws based on colonial and apartheid inventions circumscribed access and authority.
It is not clear what traditional authority women had in pre-contact South Africa. In present day bantustan "traditional" systems women have no political authority. Writing about their experiences in the five bantustans in the Transvaal region, Small and Kompe (1992) point to struggles by women to become part of traditional meetings (*kgotla*) on issues of land restitution from the apartheid state. Women in a workshop in the Northern Transvaal took issue with the power of chiefs because they were denied land for a gardening project. Arising from these discussions, women came up with the following recommendations, recorded in minutes of the Rural Women's Movement Workshop of May, 1991: "Women shouldn’t have to go through (male) members of the royal family to get access to the chief because these people do not understand women’s problems. Women want to be able to send their own representatives to speak directly to the *kgotla* and the chief". And..."Recognized women’s committees should be part of the land distribution mechanism. Currently, men are in charge of land distribution and women are discriminated against. Women must therefore be part of the kgotla. They must also be under the (*kgotla*) tree...taking decisions with men" (Small and Kompe, 1992).

Rural women’s resistance is probably most clear in the chant "one woman, one man -- one husband one wife" popular at voter education workshops in the northern Transvaal (Wixley, 1994). As Kompe (1994) states, "Polygamy is a major problem, with men having several wives, in both rural and urban areas. Women know that there are insufficient resources to support more than one wife. But they feel unable to escape marriages, because it would mean surrendering their access to land or a house". 
Women under "customary" law in most bantustans are treated as minors. They have no say in the home although they have full responsibility while their husbands are migrant workers. They cannot "sell a goat, let alone a cow without the husbands permission. Often they are victims of battery, but they don’t have places to go when such problems arise....Chiefs often dictate to women and demand their free labor. Under customary law a woman has no right to choose the man she wants to live with after her husband’s death. She has to live with her husband's brother, who treats her as a possession" (Kompe, 1994).

It is these traditions women want changed. The Rural Women’s Movement, of which Kompe is a founding member, was able, together with other women’s organization, to overturn a clause in the country’s draft constitution which privileged traditional law above the bill of rights.

### Changing Gender Access

Legal changes are necessary in order to redress women’s lack of rights instituted by bantustan and traditional law. However, legal changes are in themselves not sufficient and must be accompanied by a process for altering women’s authority and status in society, so that women may be empowered to make claim to the rights provided for them in law. This calls, I suggest for a program of empowerment.

Power should be viewed as "a social relationship between groups that determine access to, use of, and control over the basic material and ideological resources in society" (Bookman and Morgen, 1988). Since women’s access to productive resources
is linked to women's power and authority within and beyond the household, the question of women's empowerment is crucial to redressing present gender imbalances in resource allocation. Empowerment should be seen to include a range of acts, from individual resistance to mass mobilisation, that challenge basic power relations in society (Bookman and Morgan, 1988).

I suggest that what is required is an approach to policy and research which is centered on such an idea of empowerment, and that draws women's organisation and active involvement in shaping the process of development.

Research and policy should be informed by a gendered perspective that considers struggles within the household, and recognizes that households are embedded in wider struggles. Questions need to be asked of pre-colonial gender relations and access to resources; invented traditions need to be understood in terms of how these shape access and power; gendered ideology and structures within the state, economy and the legal system need to be understood as these shape access; and questions need to be asked of the domestic unit in order to understand how resources and labor are allocated resulting in unequal gender outcomes.
Chapter Five:

Conclusions: Revisiting Gender and Access

Given the extreme inequalities created by apartheid there is general agreement by the ANC and World Bank that land reform is a necessity in order to meet the goals of equity and poverty alleviation (ANC 1994, Binswanger and Deininger 1993, MERG 1993, Lipton and Lipton 1993, World Bank 1993). I argue, however, that because these proposals for agrarian reform are based on unrealistic assumptions of gender relations, and on idealized constructs of "family farm" and "household" they will have limited impact in redressing the present imbalances in resource allocation which disadvantage women.

Shortcomings in the Proposals

The World Bank does not discuss gender explicitly. Implicit in their analysis is a gender bias that will result in maintaining present gender inequalities. The ANC’s RDP and MERG proposals are concerned with ensuring that women get access to land but mistakenly assume that this can be achieved through legal solutions. This view arises from the assumption that the causes of existing gender imbalances in resource access lie solely in the state and economy. It does not attempt to understand extra-
In addition to unrealistic assumptions of gender relations, both the World Bank and the ANC make the assumption of households as discrete units, controlling resources and making joint decisions about resource allocation. Households in African societies (as in many other colonial contexts) are instead not fixed. Membership is fluid; moreover members may be located in various households and relationships between members are constantly changing. As Guyer (1989) argues, African households are not necessarily developing into the corporate households of classic peasantries. Falling marriage rates, women living independently in urban areas, high proportions of married women living separately from their husbands, less restrictive forms of marriage, high proportions of female-headed households, struggles between men and women are all characteristics of families in Africa today (Guyer, 1989).

At the same time the household is not a bounded unit, its boundaries are permeable, and it is linked to other households and wider structures. Complex inter- and intra-household struggles, in conflict with processes emanating from the state and economy have shaped women’s access to resources over time. The influence members are able to wield within the household is linked with conditions of access and labor claims in non-domestic spheres. Membership within a household as well as people’s position in non-domestic spheres hence shape access to resources (Hart, 1992).

Gender and Empowerment

An approach to policy formulation that has a chance of ameliorating rural
women's conditions depends on a gendered perspective and a more accurate understanding of how resource access gets shaped as a result of membership in a household as well as positions of authority and power in non-household spheres. This includes consideration of gender ideology at the household or local level as well as within the state and economy. Policy recommendations need to operate from the basis of relations on the ground rather than on abstract and simplified economistic concepts. Exploring specific realities will show that relations within households are not harmonious: indeed conflict and contestation may characterize intra-household relations. Policy formulation should take this into account and not confine its attention to the state and economy.

Conflictual relations, and readily identifiable antagonisms between men and women, have in other countries resulted in men resisting and subverting policies intended to benefit women (see, e.g., Carney 1988, Agarwal 1988). In South Africa intense gender struggles take place over land, income generation and access to jobs between men and women (Budlendar 1992, Cross and Friedman 1993).

Policies seeking to redress women's disadvantaged access to resources require to take a dynamic understanding of conflictual relations, located within a critique of existing structures of oppression (Stamp, 1989).

While legal measures are necessary, they are not sufficient for addressing women's disadvantaged access to resources. This is because women's ability to take advantage of legal rights is linked to questions of wider authority and power in society, including power within the household. Women's ability to exercise power in
society is a critical factor. Hence a process of empowerment is necessary.

Empowerment should be seen to include a range of acts, from individual resistance to mass mobilization, that challenge basic power relations in society (Bookman and Morgan, 1988).

In South Africa bantustan law and practices require challenge. In addition to legal changes, altering authority and status must occur; the best vehicle for this process appears to be women’s organization and active involvement in shaping the process of development.

Existing networks of women need to be located as agents of development. Often in international development, middle class women’s networks are drawn into development, while indigenous peasant networks are ignored or rendered invisible (Stamp, 1989). In South Africa women are involved in church networks and in savings clubs (Budlender, 1992). The potential for drawing women into the development process, through strengthening and including such networks needs to be appreciated.

The Rural Women’s Movement in the Transvaal region of South Africa illustrates how women organized and created organized networks around land claims (Small and Kompe, 1992). A distinction has been made between community participation -- where experts devise a solution and get people involved in implementation, and community ownership--where people decide on a project and call in the experts to implement it (Budlendar, 1992). Empowerment should be aimed at reaching the latter situation.

Struggles for empowerment and increased political authority and status need to be waged within the household as well as outside the household. Empowerment can
take place over basic needs issues. Women in the bantustans in the Transvaal came together around concerns as mothers and wives relating to forced removals or threatened water supplies. Through this process of responding to survival needs they began to challenge male control over decision making (Small and Kompe, 1992). Hence struggles in one sphere can be seen to reverberate leading to challenges in other related spheres.

Within South Africa policy formulation needs to be informed by an understanding of specific local conditions, including women’s existing networks, means of keeping livelihoods afloat, structures and practices of authority and power within and between households, and the ways in which reinvented traditions impact on people’s lives. Research to gain an understanding of these issues should be conducted in a manner that taps women’s knowledge by involving them in the process of research, including research design and distribution of research results. Research and policy should be located within an approach that places issues of power, culture, social and political economic relations at the center of concerns.

Research and policy need to be framed within a gendered perspective. If gender is absent from analysis, as it has been from the social sciences over the centuries, women’s experience will continue to go by unrecorded or recorded through the distortions of male privilege, and gender bias in policy will continue.

Incorporating gender into analyses requires a commitment to understanding the intersections between gender, class, race, and ethnicity. Feminist researchers have begun a process of attempting to understand these intersections (Sacks, 1988). Such
work can be taken forward through studies which attempt to understand these intersections in specific cultural and historical contexts.

In addition to a more appropriate response to gender, research should begin with questions about the nature of domestic organization, instead of approaching the local level with assumptions such as the classic nuclear household (Guyer, 1987). The household should be located within broader structures, in relation to which it exists in dynamic relationship. This dynamic needs to be understood within specific cultural and historical context.

Included in a research agenda should be questions about the form of pre-colonial household arrangement, the kinds of changes that took place over time. What needs to be understood is what rights women had, and how these rights changed over time. As Leacock (1983) suggests what needs to be explored is the question "when ranking begins to undermine the equal prerogatives of people generally, why is it that the autonomy and authority of women as a sex are threatened rather than those of men?"

The development initiative must be seen in the context of a broader program of empowerment since women’s ability to take advantage of legal rights is linked to questions of authority and power within the household and beyond.
APPENDIX 1: South Africa’s Bantustans

APPENDIX 2: Potential Arable Land in South Africa’s Bantustans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bantustan</th>
<th>Total Area (Ha)</th>
<th>Total Dry Arable</th>
<th>% Grazing Area</th>
<th>% Irrigable Area</th>
<th>% Rural Population 1985</th>
<th>Rural Population</th>
<th>Total Arable Per Capita Rural Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bophuthatswana</td>
<td>4 050 900</td>
<td>490 709</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>3 484 011</td>
<td>86.0</td>
<td>4 680</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ciskei</td>
<td>815 930</td>
<td>52 770</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>745 000</td>
<td>91.3</td>
<td>13 769</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gazankulu</td>
<td>656 531</td>
<td>61 873</td>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>574 372</td>
<td>87.5</td>
<td>20 286</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu</td>
<td>3 607 320</td>
<td>361 079</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>2 430 773</td>
<td>67.4</td>
<td>74 000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebowa</td>
<td>2 183 331</td>
<td>326 080</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>1 677 310</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>9 765</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QwaQwa</td>
<td>65 514</td>
<td>6 947</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>52 983</td>
<td>80.9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transkei</td>
<td>4 365 264</td>
<td>663 000</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>2 663 263</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>100 000</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Venda</td>
<td>680 000</td>
<td>70 474</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>556 508</td>
<td>81.8</td>
<td>4 181</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Moutse)</td>
<td>(64 355)</td>
<td>(21 319)</td>
<td>(33.0)</td>
<td>(36 261)</td>
<td>(56.3)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>17 257 064</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 160 705</strong></td>
<td><strong>12.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>12 615 156</strong></td>
<td><strong>73.1</strong></td>
<td><strong>273 928</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Bibliography


Meer, Y.S. and Mlaba, M.D. 1983 Apartheid--Our Picture. IBR, Durban.


