

**Land Rights and the Gendered Path of Agrarian Transition
within the African National Congress (ANC) Government in
South Africa: Two Sides of the Same Coin?**

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ABSTRACT The year 2013 marks the centenary of the infamous 1913 Natives Land Act in South Africa. Although much has been written about the question of access to land, a part of South African history that receives little attention from historians, involves the lack of female representation in land administration. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between gender and land rights in South Africa, with special reference to access to land by women. The study departs from the premise that access to land by women is to a certain extent hindered by formal and traditional rules. The study will also evaluate land legislations in relation to gender in a democratic South Africa. Furthermore, the study briefly traces the history as to why gendering the land question remains critical for the empowerment of women farmers in South Africa. The realities of changing land policies over time in South Africa will be compared with those promulgated by the African National Congress (ANC) government since the dawn of democracy in 1994. Thus, the study will attempt to determine why a difference existed between the public discussion of land issues and the realities of women accessing land. The findings of this study indicate that land rights can make a notable difference to women's bargaining power within the home and community; enhance their confidence and sense of self-worth; enable them to negotiate better deals; increase the respect they command within communities; and facilitate their participation in village decision-making bodies.