

WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN KENYA: ACCESS, AGENDA SETTING & ACCOUNTABILITY

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1. BASIC ASSUMPTION

A key objective of the majority of women that engage in politics is not only to gain power but also to use the leadership position to advance and /or provide desired services or goods to the constituent group that they purport to represent.

Thus the basic assumption that guide this discussion is that the avenue or pathway and mechanisms (Access) towards the attainment of this goal, the issues (Agenda) that a potential woman leader purports to advance on behalf of her constituent group; the fulfilment of commitments made and compliance in form of tangible outcomes of representation (Accountability) are interconnected and are at the core of any meaningful representation in political leadership.

Access is the process and outcome of seeking entry to and/ or engagement with formal political structures- parliaments, political parties, etc.

Agenda Setting is both the process and the action plans (in form of covenants, promises, undertakings, and declarations) that a leader makes with the target constituency and seeks to execute in fulfilment of the needs of the constituency that s/he represents.

Accountability is the outcome, fulfilment and compliance with obligations and commitments (often presented in form of a Manifesto) that a leader makes to the constituent group that s/he claims to represent. Accountability is cyclical and a continuous obligation throughout the duration of representation.

Presence

This refers to the physical/numerical numbers of women in political office that should, on attaining a “critical mass”, form the basis of more meaningful representation of gender equity interests, by influencing government policy and action in favour of women.

Influence

This is the tangible impact on policy making and outcomes and is the culmination of women’s engagement in civil society and inside the state; with the State and other political/ institutions. It is also about service delivery to the constituency of women and others, to whom a leader is accountable.

2. WOMEN'S PRESENCE & PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Kenya women's presence and political participation in leadership and governance has a long history dating from pre-colonial through colonial to post colonial period; e.g. the first woman Chief -Wangu wa Makeri- (1901-1909), who defied patriarchal structures of culture and tradition, and rose to become a formidable leader who is said to have brought development and peace among to her community.

Many "unsung heroines" accomplished similar feats; including those who actively participated in the country's liberation struggle of the 1940s and 1950s, thus demonstrating that women can and do make a significant difference even in hostile environments.

Since Kenya attained formal independence in 1963, women have been seeking to effectively participate alongside men, in governance and decision-making in all aspects of public life. But in the first four decades of postcolonial rule, progress towards women's access to formal political leadership positions, has been slow due to a combination of structural obstacles which include: i) deeply embedded patriarchal socio-cultural values; ii) undemocratic institutions and policy frameworks and iii) low levels of civic and gender awareness.

Due to the constricted formal political space, ***most women's political engagement operated outside the State***, with minimal connection or support from the largely patriarchal State.

3. ADVANCING THE THREE 'A's THROUGH GENDER RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

In Kenya, feminist writings and analysis have been influential in shaping both the academic discourse but also acting as a catalyst for gender activism and struggle for women's rights, as well as contributing to policy and legislative action. Research and Analysis serves as an important and strategic tool for informing and facilitating the three AAAs.

A significant number of **feminist scholars who straddle between scholarship and activism, conduct** policy and action oriented research that is easily consumable by both policy makers and activists.

Such scholars also participate in civic and gender awareness programs as trainers, under the auspices of gender based NGOs.

In my view, **such feminist analysis and action, especially on women's political participation and empowerment, contribute towards shaping both policy and gender agenda setting for activists, voters and those contesting political office, as some of the studies examined below indicate.**

In this connection, a 1991 study entitled: “*Women in Politics and Public Decision-making*” (Nzomo: 1991) set the stage for the intellectual and policy discourse that has continued to preoccupy Kenyan gender researchers and activists in:- i) the search for effective strategies & solutions to the challenges and structural barriers that impede women’s access and influence in political leadership capacities and ii) in the development of accountable mechanism for holding the government and women representatives accountable.

Many of the studies undertaken in the last two decades, implicitly or explicitly note the socio-political context, as a key determinant shaping and setting limits to the agendas women leaders can implement in different historical contexts. They note that though most women leaders have been setting some kind of an Agenda as part of the process of seeking political office, few women candidates articulate that agenda in feminist terms, due to the predominantly patriarchal political context that remains intolerant to feminist agenda/ideology.

The predominant discourse among gender/ feminist researchers focusing on Kenya women’s political participation, is still preoccupied with the issue of Access and Presence; of obstacles and strategies of attaining the *optimal numbers (“critical mass”)*: of women in political leadership, and less on the question of Agenda setting and Accountability.

More research is needed that goes beyond the focus on barriers to and strategies for access, to critically analyze linkages and intersections of AAA & the impacts of political presence, especially the differential performance of individual women political leaders (Agenda setting & Accountability) before and during political tenure and also interrogate the assumptions behind “critical mass” theory and its efficacy in different contexts (e.g. *the view that electing women to political leadership positions does not necessarily mean that the women’s agenda will be advanced*).

Analysis also needed on the issue of Accountability with respect to impact/performance / reporting by women in civil society and institutional frameworks that support women in political leadership, measured against the agenda they set in their declared missions and visions (of women’s political empowerment NGOs) and ii) national development/ gender policies (of government).

The preoccupation with Access in the Kenyan case is understandable given the country’s low political ranking regionally and globally in respect to female representation in Parliament, currently standing 9.9% of total MPs in the 2008-2012 10th Parliament.

This compares poorly with all of Kenya's Eastern African neighbors and partners in the East African Community, who have all attained and some even surpassed the magic threshold/ "critical mass" of 30% female presence in their respective Parliaments; e.g. Rwanda's (56.3%), Tanzania (36.0%), Uganda (34.9%), Burundi(32.1%). Similarly, South Africa (44.5%); Mozambique (39.2 %); and Angola (38.6%)

4.THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT: AGENDA SETTING AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE STATE & POLITICAL PARTIES

Globally, strong women's movements play a critical role in creating political space for female participation in politics and in supporting engendered social change. The women's movement also remains the best means of giving women Visibility & Voice.

The Kenya women's movement has played a key role as a change agent in respect to advancement of women's rights, **gender equality, social justice** and engendering governance in general. However, its impact has varied over time and in different contexts.

The period prior to 1992, was one of total cooptation and silencing of women's political voices by the Kenyan state that was intolerant to civil society organizing, unless such a group condoned and promoted the oppressive political status quo. Capacity to organize and engage politically was thus lacking

Thus the only three national women's organizations allowed to function at the time, namely, Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYWO), National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) and the Nairobi Business and Professional Women's organisation- operated strictly on government's terms: they had to be non-political and non- partisan in all their actions and deeds and had to limit their 'women's agenda', strictly to social welfare provisioning, promoting the role of women as homemakers & mobilizing & organizing women at grassroots' level into women's groups to support agendas of male political elites.

Between 1963-1992, there was little change in women's status and State support for women's empowerment initiatives was minimal at best. The government co-opted or controlled women's organizations, e.g. 1987 merger of MYWO with the ruling and only political party-KANU.

The period since 1992 has been dubbed the "Second Liberation" political phase for Kenya, as it marked the return to political pluralism in Kenya and the beginning of opening up of political space for exercising basic and universally accepted democratic freedoms.

The opening up of political space **facilitated women's political engagement/activism and created a pathway for revitalization of the women's movement**, as manifested in the emergence and mushrooming of new women's NGOs, with radical feminist agendas for transformative change in gender power relations.

New and old women Leaderships and perspectives converged to strategically utilize this political moment & to develop a women specific democratic agenda with specific Action Plans and targets.

This was done in 1992 at a National Women's Convention under the theme: Women's Agenda for a Democratic Kenya. The Convention that brought over 2,000 Kenya women representatives from across the whole country demanded that the democratization be engendered; an overhaul of legal policy framework, to remove all forms of discrimination against women in access to decision-making positions; in employment, etc.

Consequently, women's representatives put aside their differences and united around the motto: "*Unity in Diversity for Women's Empowerment*", as a strategy for effective collective action towards the lobby the State and to facilitate the engendering process.

Activities undertaken by the Women's Movement in Setting the Gender Agenda

1. **Facilitating the development of feminist research and analysis to guide policy and action**(e.g. the Association of African Women for Research and Development (AAWORD)-Kenya, formed in 1989, as a chapter of the Continental AAWORD)
2. **Facilitating women's access to political power through voter education**(e.g.. The League of Kenya Women Voters (LWVK) formed in 1992)
3. **Facilitating Capacity building training of women candidates and Election Monitoring**(National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), formed in 1992)
4. **Civic Education, Lobbying & Advocacy.**
5. **Legal Rights Education** for women and engaging in Public Interest Litigation to challenge discrimination and legal bias against women (The Federation of Women Lawyers, (FIDA- Kenya) established in 1985, in coalition with other women NGOs). e.g. , in July 2011, FIDA-K together with several other women NGOs, went to court to challenge and uphold as unconstitutional the appointment of judges to the Supreme Court, due to the failure by the appointing authority to

comply with the “no more than two thirds of either gender principle” of AA, as provided in the Kenyan Constitution.

6. **Strengthening Mechanism for Collaboration, mobilization and Collective Action among Women’s Organizations** (e.g. The Kenya Women’s Political Caucus (KWPC) formed in April 1997; Women’s Political Alliance of Kenya (WPAK). A significant Agenda setting contribution by the Caucus was the launching of the Women’s Political Manifesto for the 2002 General Elections, which defined women’s own platform for political participation, and served as a women’s Agenda Accountability tool for political aspirants and political parties; & the G10.
7. **Engendering Political Parties** (Center for Multi-Party Democracy(CMD), Women’s Program)
8. **Engendering the National Budgets and Parliamentary Governance, and Legislative work** (KENYA Women Parliamentary Association(KEWOPA) formed in 2002; The Women’s Shadow Parliament – Kenya (WSP-K) & The Collaborative Centre For Gender And Development (CCGD) e.g. engendering parliamentary standing orders and other House Rules; sponsoring women friendly and gender related Bills; establishing a parliamentary gender desk and developing gender materials for engendering parliamentary debates motions tabled in parliament
9. **Engendering the Media & giving women leaders Voice & Media Visibility** (e.g. **The Association of Media Women of Kenya(AMWK)**)
10. **Advocacy against Women and Gender based violence; the right to self defense and the right to State protection**, e.g. (The Coalition on Violence Against Women – Kenya, COVAW (K), formed in 1995).
11. **The 2012 National Women’s Charter- an Access, Agenda Setting and Accountability tool for realizing Women’s Constitutional gains(Coalition of over 30 Kenya women NGOs**

5. 1. Affirmative Action(AA) as a Strategy for Access, & Representation in Key Decision-making Posts

The issue of access to political office became pertinent in Kenya as in other African countries, due to the deeply entrenched structural societal barriers cited above, that block women’s entry into political leadership and seem to accompany them, when and if they accede to political office.

Among many women in Kenya, **the implicit assumption behind the many decades of concerted efforts to gain access to political leadership has remained that women can and do make a significant and positive difference when in leadership.**

This view has remained anchored on the conviction that despite their political marginality, throughout Kenya's political history, women have demonstrated positive performance in public leadership and in their daily lives and could do more if they attained a critical mass.

The failure to attain a "critical mass" of women in formal political representation structures despite all efforts, has led over the years to the conviction that the only solution to this stagnation lay in the provision of constitutional and non-constitutional Affirmative Action (AA) measures. **AA then came to be viewed as a core mechanism for unblocking women's access and attainment of the optimal ("critical mass") presence of women in formal governance structures.**

The engagement with the State and attempts to hold it accountable for the provision and implementation of AA measures has taken place through the collaboration of primarily Women MPs; women in NGOs and activist gender Scholars.

Individually and collectively, they have been active in seeking to engage and lobby the State to enact an AA legislation, without success, for nearly two decades.

The many failed attempts at enacting an AA law was finally rewarded in August 2010, following the promulgation of a new Constitution, that yielded a very progressive legal and political instrument, that not only provides for AA but guarantees both women and men, equality of rights and duties in equal measure; and removes all forms of discrimination in both legal and social practice.

A key Women's gain in the 2010 constitution, is **the entrenchment of AA provisions in the Bill of Rights**; thus firmly securing and guaranteeing compliance by the State in respect to implementation of the **"no more than two thirds of either gender" principle** (quotas and reserved seats), in all appointive and electoral offices.

Also entrenched in the Bill of Rights are the provisions for equality of rights between women and men and **outlawing of discrimination on any grounds**

The constitution also provides for **a devolved governance structure** that opens new opportunities for gender equitable participation and governance.

The 2010 Constitution has opened doors to the implementation of a long stalled gender agenda, and provided the necessary constitutional mechanisms, for women to hold the State accountable and in particular attain and surpass the long awaited 30% critical mass female presence in the next parliament after the 2012 elections.

But trends to date indicate that male resistance to AA remains; and hence more than ever before women collective pressure is required to hold the state accountable.

5.2 Women's agenda setting through Informal Strategies

Due to the limitations of formal methods of negotiating power, political space and women's rights in Kenya, women have over time learnt to exploit skilfully the non-formal methods of influencing public policy and governance, gaining access and influencing change, by overriding the formal structural and procedural road blocks to access, agenda setting and influence.

In some cases, women have turned their stereotyped profiles of motherhood; as sex symbols and as tools of oppression and subordination to their advantage, and used them to shape and influence the agenda of democratic governance.

Such was the February 1992 case of a group of elderly **Mothers of Political Prisoners** who sustained for several months, an unconventional strategy of public protest against the Kenyan State, combining a hunger strike and publicly stripping naked, as they mobilized support for their demand for the release of their politically criminalized sons.

The mothers of political prisoners seized the political space for activism created by the return to political pluralism in Kenya in December 1991 and riding on the energy, resolve and sense of women's solidarity emanating from the National Women's Convention that had just concluded in Nairobi.

Through this novel and public way of lobbying, these women received attention of the political leadership and support from the women's movement, Kenyans in general and the outside world. Four prisoners were released in June 1992, and four more in January 1993

In their own way, these mothers set a gender agenda for women in governance, and *provided a demonstration effect to women* and society at large, of the many possibilities and strategic avenues that exist for political engagement and for gaining access and influence to and in political leadership.

5.2.1. Women Engaging the State: Sex Boycott

More recently another group of women acted in a radical feminist manner, using a radical & unconventional mode of demanding accountability and staking their claim to justice and good governance.

In April 2009 A coalition comprising of ten (10) leading national women's NGOs known as "the **G10**" spearheaded a one-week sex strike whereby women would withhold sex privileges to male partners for seven days and to get the President and Prime Minister to sign a Performance Contract, in a bid to express their dissatisfaction with the persistent failure of Kenya's leadership to meaningfully serve the citizens and to pressure the President and Prime Minister to settle their differences in order to effectively serve the country

By spearheading the seven-day sex boycott the G10 were expressing the concern of many in the country who were frustrated by the lack of leadership portrayed by the two the top leaders, at a time of increased socio-economic woes.

The G10 had hoped that this political form of mass action, if heeded in the privacy of thousands of bedrooms across the country, would raise public consciousness to action and cause the top leadership to change course and begin to exercise, 'good leadership and governance'.

The strike was also making the *case that the personal is political and that all women, even in the privacy of their homes and bedrooms, can set a gender agenda and positively influence governance.*

Despite the controversy and mixed reactions that the boycott evoked, the G10 saw this action as setting the agenda for addressing women's rights and as a way of holding the government accountable to Kenyans for poor governance.

Furthermore, this bold act succeeded in raising public and government attention to the dissatisfaction of the citizens with the poor state of governance in the country and also served as a positive tool for strengthening women's voices in mainstream politics and media.

5.2.3. Conclusion

Women's organizations, have served as the **incubator for 'breeding' /training women leaders and building their capacity for political office.**

Women's NGOs also serve as a crucial **mechanism and political agents for civic empowerment of citizens and political mobilization of women**, in demanding accountability from the State and society, in

respect to gender balance in representative governance structures and gender equality and justice in other aspects of private and public life.

The women's movement remains the one critical non- State actor that serves as a political bridge, a vehicle and midwife for lobbying and advocating for engendering of governance and a constant support structure for women politicians.

This then amplifies the concern and need to strengthen the Kenya women's movement. The opportunity provided by the current legal and political transition allows for the possibility to strengthen the women's movement

Decades of struggle in Kenya spearheaded by women civil society activists, academics, politicians, and women from all walks of life, have demonstrated that **the various actors comprising the women's movement, in their own fractured way, do chart and implement some element(s) of a gender agenda, as spelled out in their respective mission and vision statements.**

Their demonstrated efforts in implementing various political empowerment programs, implies their commitment to remain accountable to the many unorganized women across the country, whom they claim to represent and the women politicians and MPs whom they claim to support.

One of the most notable achievements of the Kenya women's movement (in conjunction with other women friendly groups) to date is the engendering of the new 2010 Constitution. Despite the implementation challenges, the constitution has provided greater leverage for women to demand rights, access, appropriate and effectively enjoy them.

Since the coming to effect of the new constitution, women in Kenya have managed to secure a number of high level positions in the judiciary, including the powerful post of deputy Chief Justice, another in the Supreme Court and about 50% of new Judges of the High Court. Will they make a transformative difference in engendering the reforms in the Judiciary?

6. WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT WITH POLITICAL PARTIES: ACCESS, AGENDA SETTING AND INFLUENCE

Kenya women politicians as well as those working in civil society have to date been generally unsuccessful in shaping or setting the agenda in political Parties. Parties have historically been

highly gendered institutions with male gatekeepers that incorporate women into party structures on a different basis from men, and in ways

Although women play important roles in campaigning and mobilizing support for their Parties, rarely do they occupy strategic decision-making positions in Party structures or benefit from political parties' resources for conducting election campaigns.

The selection and nomination processes within political parties also tend to be biased against women in that 'male traits' are emphasized and often become the criteria for selecting candidates.

Lack of internal democracy, undemocratic membership recruitment and absence of substantive elections in leader's recruitment, has been the rule rather than the exception. This democratic deficit within political Parties, limited the recruitment and ascendancy of women to top positions in Party hierarchies.

This in turn limited women's political exposure and visibility, thus denying them strategic political leverage for party nominations during national elections.

But this may change under the new constitutional dispensation and legislations that seek to democratize and engender Parties and other governance institutions.

Women now have an opportunity to use this legal mechanism to demand inclusion, engagement in and democratization of party decision making structures and processes.

CMD's engendering of political parties' program targets women in political parties and through them, all other women in the country through civic education and candidates' training programs.

CMD also plays an important bridging role; mediating between political parties and other civil society organizations on gender issues pertaining to women's access, representation and influence in political parties, parliament and other political decision-making institutions.

7. ENGAGEMENT INSIDE THE STATE: GENDER MECHANISMS/STRATEGIES FOR ACCESS, REPRESENTATION AND INFLUENCE

7.1. The Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association (KEWOPA)

KEWOPA, a cross party Parliamentary Caucus to which all women MPS are automatically members, was founded in 2001 in response to the need to **increase the number of women parliamentarians, and**

enhance their contribution; influence on Parliamentary business and ensure increased attention to issues affecting women.

For four decades prior to the formation of KEWOPA, no legislations in support of women's rights was enacted in the male dominated Kenyan Parliament. In some cases, laws supporting women's rights were repealed.

Under the auspices of KEWOPA, and in collaboration with women NGOs and other women all over the country, women MPs in the 9th and 10th Parliaments, though a numerical minority in parliament, have played a significant role in engendering legislations, policies and political institutions in parliament.

KEWOPA initiated and successfully lobbied for the following: i)the *Children's Act of 2002*; ii)the *Sexual Offences Act of 2006*; iii) the *Counter Trafficking in Persons Act of 2010* iv)the review of the *Employment Act, No. 11 of 2007*, which led to the increase in maternity leave to four months v) the *2011 anti- FGM Act*. vi)successfully lobbied for *tax waivers for sanitary wear and diapers*; and an increased focus on gender issues in relation to HIV and AIDS and vii) *engendered the 2008 revised version of the Standing Orders of The National Assembly* which were previously gender-blind; viii) secured *maternity leave with benefits for women MPs and female designated washrooms*; ix)successfully lobbied for the appointment of women MPs as Chairs or Co- Chairs of five (5) out of *the 16 standing Parliamentary Committees which were previously all chaired by men and* for the establishment of the *2008 Equal Opportunities Committee (EOC)* (that monitors and promotes equal opportunities for all marginalised groups, including women.

The KEWOPA members in collaboration with women organizations the women MPs have played a strategic role in engendering the 2010 constitution making and implementation process now underway.

In so doing, they have demonstrated their capacity to set a gender agenda in Parliament and to demand and secure accountability, from the State.

This has given women within and outside parliament the confidence that a "critical mass" of women in parliament would secure transformative changes; engender legislations, policies as well as change the institutional culture of this and other governance institutions, including political parties.

7.2.National Commission on Gender and Development - NCGD / National Gender and Equality

Commission (NGEC)-enacted through an Act of Parliament in 2003 & 2011 respectively, coordinates and facilitates gender mainstreaming in national development through advice to the government and

stakeholders, participation in policy formulation, advocacy, research, education, investigation of gender based violations, establishment of partnerships, monitoring and evaluation, in order to achieve gender equity and equality.

The NGECC is the **main watchdog body to coordinate, monitor and ensure compliance to & implementation of women and gender related provisions in the 2010 Constitution**

8. BEYOND ACCESS/ NUMBERS' DEBATE : WHAT LESSONS FOR KENYA ?

As we grapple with the 'how' of attaining a critical mass of women in political leadership, the most common assumption has been that women political leaders in the African countries that have attained a "critical mass" in political representation, have effectively used their respective positions to advance the gender and democratic agendas.

Hassim for example argues that this assumption has not been borne out by empirical evidence in the African countries that have to-date attained and even surpassed the 30% threshold, in respect to advancing feminism's democratic aims of transforming and achieving institutional change, where political cultures become more responsive and accountable.

Rather, **quotas can have negative impacts on deepening democracy when adopted in contexts where the key institutions of democracy and human rights are weak or absent**, and where elected political actors are weakly accountable to electoral constituencies; e.g. women politicians get co-opted and become collaborators in restricting political rights of feminist and other dissenting voices.

Thus in such a situation, AA quotas may **fast-track women's representation**, but they may not fast-track equality or democracy, thus reminding us that there is no automatic link between socio-economic development and political representation.

Similarly, it has been noted that sex quotas, are not necessarily feminist quotas and hence **the mere presence of women in parliaments may not necessarily change the patriarchal culture of political institutions or force institutions to recognize women**.

This in turn raises the need to revisit the "critical mass" theory & make a distinction between 'critical actors' and 'critical mass', in order to identify the *concrete representatives* – not defined in term of 'sex' or 'gender' – but rather in terms of the actual role an individual plays in advancing women-friendly policy changes; thus

shifting the focus in analysis from the macro-level of what 'women' do to the micro-level, of what specific women do.

9. CONCLUSIONS

This study has demonstrated the intersections and linkages between Access, Agenda setting and Accountability (AAA), in connection with women's struggles for effective participation in political leadership in Kenya.

It has emerged in this regard, that the role of women in civil society, gender scholars and women MPs has been crucial.

Experience from those African countries that have been implementing quotas, such as South Africa, Rwanda and Uganda show that a good constitution on its own cannot guarantee that a gender agenda will be advanced.

This has come through especially in respect to the complexity of implementing the 'not more than two thirds of either gender' Bill of Rights provision.

Cases such as this where the constitution provides the Principle without a workable mechanism for enacting relevant legislations calls for vigilance by feminist groups that struggled for so long to have key gender provisions ingrained in the Bill of Rights.

Some of these gains can be lost or indefinitely delayed during the enactment of legislations, and hence will require close collaboration between women in civil society and those in Parliament to protect and advance the gender agenda through the provisions of this new constitution.

The State & other institutions of governance remain gendered and greater physical presence of women will not automatically alter the dominant male culture in governance structures or the distribution of political power and other resources between men and women.

The current Kenyan democratic transition, affords a rare opportunity to ensure that we pay more attention to the process and criteria of attaining political leadership as well as create strong mutually accountable constituencies and mechanisms within and outside formal governance structures, for advancing well defined legislative and policy agendas.

There is need to pay greater attention to the ***declared agendas*** of political office seekers and set ***criteria and mechanisms for enforcing accountability***, bearing in mind that once in government, women politicians may not automatically become the powerhouses expected; and some may only symbolically ***“stand for”*** women rather than genuinely represent or ***“act for”*** women.

The current trend in the constitutional implementation indicates that the women’s movement though still fractured, the feminists within it, have matured in their capacity to negotiate, lobby male legislators and secure gender friendly legislations, reflective of the constitutional provisions.

Furthermore, unlike e.g. South Africa, Uganda and Rwanda, where a single ruling party dominates political life, Kenya women could turn the fluidity of the country’s political parties (mergers, shaky coalitions etc.) into an opportunity to negotiate strategic positions within the party leadership structures.