

Women Political Candidates' Security Status and their Participation in Political Leadership Positions in Nairobi City County, Kenya

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Abstract. This study analyzed women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership in Kenya. Specific objectives included to establish the level of security for women political candidates, perpetrators of political insecurity, motive for political threats, and the survival tactics used by women political candidates. The study was anchored on conflict theory, standpoint theory, and feminism theory. A cross-sectional descriptive research design was adopted where the target population comprised 125 Members of County Assembly (MCAs) in Nairobi City County. Census was used to involve all of them in the study and a structured questionnaire applied for data collection. The findings established that security for women political candidates in Kenya was a serious issue, with more than 55% of the respondents having witnessed gender-based political violence against women political candidates. Perpetrators of the threats included close family members and political opponents. Common threats included bodily harm, sexual harassment, and embarrassments. Motives for political insecurity included jealousy by detractors/opponents, given the competitive nature of politics. The study concluded that women political candidates in Kenya stand higher security risks than their men counterparts. The study recommended the need for the IEBC to effectively protect all political candidates during campaigns regardless of gender.

Key words: women security, political candidates, leadership, insecurity, embarrassments, sexual harassment

Introduction**Background of the Study**

Political competition for both men and women is significantly gaining momentum worldwide. For women's participation, this not only helps in strengthening democracy, but also enables them to represent their unique interests and advocate for a level-playing field in all competitive processes in human existence. However, internationally women face very inhospitable political terrain, especially during electioneering periods (Endale, 2012). In a recent survey by the Inter-parliamentary Union, it emerged that across 39 countries globally, 44% of surveyed women reported to have been subjected to political threats such as rape, assault, abductions and sexual violence (Susan, Mona and Jennifer, 2012). According to Mona and Juliana (2016), in Latin America for example, women politicians have continued to face political insecurity hence denying them the chance to fully enjoy their electoral rights. For instance, despite establishment of specific laws in Peru, Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Costa Rica to protect women from political insecurity, the trend has not been any better for women politicians (Susan et al, 2012; O'Neill & Domingo, 2016).

In a study carried out by Melesse and Ojulu (2014) in Bedele town in Ethiopia to establish the status of women in political decision-making where a descriptive research design was adopted and 108 respondents selected randomly, the findings revealed that socio-cultural issues were the major hindrances for women's participation in political competition. Contrary to men, women political aspirants were harshly judged by the community, including being denied support by their immediate family members who thought women were better doing other things rather than being involved in politics. Similarly, Douglas (2014) contends that despite the

comparatively huge number of women as voters, their political representation in the global arena has not been anywhere near that of men. Furthermore, such issues as gender-based insecurity have been the major stumbling block for women politicians where, for instance, women political aspirants are subjected to violence and intimidations during electioneering period (O'Neill & Domingo, 2016).

Based on the feminist perspective, women undergo violence and threats during political campaigns as a strategy for men to keep the former in 'their places' – outside public life (Yoon, 2014). Kelly and Radford (1998) aver that in the eyes of majority of female politicians, violence against women, sexual violence, and gender violence, all continue to have political connotations where women are supposed to be relegated to the political and hence social and economic periphery. Some feminist scholars have however argued that the Beijing Declaration of 1995 marked a significant shift in political environment where the threats to women in politics are seriously being brought into the limelight through feminist research and other gender activist activities (CEDAW, 1992). Nonetheless, women political candidates continue to face huge security challenges in Kenya and the rest of the world.

While many studies of political gender-based insecurity have focused on the practices of groups during political campaigns, the practices of gendered repression have continued to remain real in many parts of the world including in developing democracies such as Kenya (Campbell, 2010). Recent studies have indicated that globally it has not generally been easy for most women to ascend to political offices due to the kind of suppression they face (Okoth, 2000). Yoon (2014) further observes that less than 50 states in the world have been able to elect women into a presidential or premier position. This has been attributed to, among other things, the kind of violence women face during electioneering period hence putting their security in danger. As a result of this, many women candidates tend to withdraw their candidature or abandon their political quests altogether.

Like in many other countries, in Kenya politics plays a key role in influencing policy-making processes. However, Nyabola (2016) notes that since multiparty politics in Kenya in 1992, every general election in the country has seen majority of women aspirants bulldozed by their male counterparts; which led some of them to abandon their political quests completely. Marginalization of women in politics means they will not be able to influence decisions and impact policy-making (Nzomo, 2010). According to Nyokabi (2010), only about 10% of the members of Parliament in the 10th Parliament were women. This was way below the global average of 18.8% and the critical mass threshold of 33%. Statistics further indicate that women's participation in political activities largely have to do with them playing the role of voters as opposed to being candidates in elective positions (Nzomo, 2010). This clearly goes against the provisions in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Vision 2030 where gender equality in all aspects is emphasized for a just society (Nzomo, 2011).

Furthermore, in the Kenyan case, women vying for political leadership have often been viewed as overambitious hence a threat to the status quo (Nyabola, 2016). In a report by the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), in 2012 general elections no woman was elected in a governor position out of the paltry 6 who vied (FIDA, 2013). Interestingly, 231 men had shown their interest in the position, making it 97% against only 3% of women. A similar trend was observed in other positions including Member of the County Assembly (MCA) where only 623 women against 9287 men campaigned. The dismal participation of women in active elective politics has been linked to, among other things, gender-based insecurity. While this trend has persisted even in the latest general elections in Kenya, this situation appears to have been under-acknowledged. Gender-based insecurity has often been viewed from a social dimension where it is commonly referred to as gender-based violence (GBV). Yet, political violence meted on women candidates is common, which often discourages them from participating fully in elective politics (Kamau, 2010). For instance, in 2017 the current Nairobi Women

Representative, Esther Pasaris, was accosted by about 30 goons, who roughed up her security details (The Star, 13th May, 2017). The action was reported in the media as politically motivated.

Statement of the Problem

Women seeking political leaders continue to face security challenges, especially during active campaign periods. In a study by Melesse and Ojulu (2014) in Ethiopia it emerged that more than 40% of women political aspirants encountered assaults and other harsh treatments from their husbands in order to stop them from contesting. In Kenya, despite the country's membership to the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) of 1979, women politicians continue to face physical abuse and other security-related challenges from different quarters. The insecurity may come in the form of violence, verbal harassment, intimidation, and cyber bullying among other security-related encounters.

According to media reports, during the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) party primaries in 2017, the current female Mbita MP's house was burnt down and her bodyguard killed in an alleged scheme by her male political competitors (The Standard, 25th April, 2017). In Nairobi, during the same period, an aspiring woman MP for Embakasi South was attacked by rowdy young men in Mukuru Kwa Njenga slums while on a voter registration drive (The Standard, 26th April, 2017). These cases and others which go unreported illustrate the kind of security threats women political leaders in Kenya face during competitive elections. Most of such incidences may go unreported, especially if they occur in rural areas where the media is not be very vibrant.

Despite media highlights of the insecurity women political candidates face during campaigning periods, it is not well documented the level of the threats, the real perpetrators, the motives for the threats, and the effect of these challenges on the political careers of women politicians in general. Furthermore, while the threats to women political candidates may be widely seen as being orchestrated or perpetrated by male political opponents, it is not clear to what extent fellow women competitors could also be involved in breaching security of their female colleagues. Though widespread and persistent, depending on circumstances on the ground, gendered political threats may go unreported. It is against the aforementioned that the study analyzed women political candidates' security in Kenya: a case of Nairobi City County.

General Objective

The general objective of this study was to analyze women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions in Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Specific Objectives of the Study

This study addressed the following objectives:

- (i) To establish the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya.
- (ii) To understand the perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates.
- (iii) To analyze the motive for political threats to women political candidates in Kenya.
- (iv) To determine the survival tactics used by women political candidates.

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

- (i) What is the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya?
- (ii) Who are the perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates?
- (iii) What is the motive for political threats to women political candidates in Kenya?
- (iv) What are the survival tactics used by women political candidates?

Scope of the Study

This study focused on the security of women political candidates in Kenya, with a specific focus on Nairobi City County. As one of the counties attracting very many political office aspirants during the electioneering periods, Nairobi County was an ideal place to explore this study topic. The study was narrowed to determining the level of security for women political candidates, the perpetrators of political insecurity for the women political candidates, the motive for political threats to women political candidates, and the effect of campaign threats on the career of women political candidates in Nairobi City County.

Theoretical Review

This study utilized the Standpoint Theory, Conflict Theory, and Feminism theory. Each of these theories was important in giving a unique perspective in explaining women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions.

Standpoint Theory

The feminist standpoint theory can be traced back to Hegel's philosophy of the master-slave interaction, and later to Marxist viewpoint of the masses, or the proletariat. According to Harding (1991), Hegel was of the view that through conscious struggles against the master, the lower class can eventually get the freedom from subjugation. The standpoint theory further postulates that through hard work and determination those at the lowest rank of society can eventually rise up to shape their own future and the world around them. Furthermore, the theory presupposes that addressing social oppression and related injustices can better be analyzed from the standpoint of the less privileged members of the society rather than from the viewpoint of those belonging in high classes. Marxist and Hegel's ideas revolved around the framework of class consciousness, hence portraying the standpoint of the less privileged members of the society or the producers of capital as an important starting point for changing the world for the better (Hill, 1990).

This study focused on women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions in Kenya. In a sense, insecurity that faces women political candidates during campaign periods puts them in a disadvantaged position where they are not able to compete fairly with their men counterparts. Based on the standpoint theory, in order for the women political candidates to survive in the political field, they need to be innovative. This implies that standpoint theory directly addresses the subtheme of political survival for female politicians. The theory insinuates that the disadvantages faced by women political candidates in terms of personal security would better be understood if the story is told from the perspective of those (the female gender) who face the problem.

Based on the suppositions of the standpoint theory, a study on women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions would be the best starting point for reengineering a unique standpoint for providing impetus to clearly understand how to level political fields for fair competition (Sally & Kinsella, 1997). According to Smith (2004), although women political leaders are often not given as much focus as their men counterparts, renewed enthusiasm on marginalized group of political leadership is important in redefining critical research questions for helping to explain pertinent social and political problems. Furthermore, women political experiences can be viewed as a basis for feminist standpoint which arouses social reawakening on important societal phenomena. Such resurgence is critical for highlighting women's contributions in the political field and putting their challenges in the open as mainstream societal concerns.

Conflict Theory

Mainly associated with Karl Marx, as one of the 20th century theories, conflict theory focused on conflict in society and how this should be contained for the sake of achieving societal development. Moving away from structural-functionalism, the theory advocated more for the concept of change. As opposed to functionalists, conflict theorists argue that powerful groups and individuals would always tend to maintain the status quo unless there was conflict to force them to adopt change. This is because change is a critical element for correcting social injustices and inequalities. Related to gender-based political insecurity, women will remain in their traditionally crafted place unless they are bold enough to challenge the status quo. Women who fear to immerse themselves fully into the murky world of politics by choosing to remain in the periphery will not be able to make any meaningful change. This theory therefore is relevant in addressing the objective focusing on the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya and determining the perpetrators of political insecurity for the women political candidates.

Since there is no possibility of achieving social change without some level of conflict, conflict theory advocates for a struggle by conflicting groups so as to realize desired change. Modern conflict theory is heavily influenced by ideals of Karl Marx's theory which advocates for disruption of the status quo in order to transform society. In relation to competitive elective politics, winners are always those who are not ready to quit at any slightest provocation or resistance from their opponents. This theory would be very relevant in explaining how gender-based political insecurity affects women politicians not only in Kenya, but in many other parts of the world. This therefore means that women who want to excel in their political careers should be ready to square it out with their male counterparts or any other opponent.

Feminism Theory

The Feminist movement was born in New York in the 1980s, bringing together several people whose main focus was equality for women in civil, social, religious and economic terms (Butler, 1990). Generally, feminism theory focuses on the empowerment of women and advocates for women's equality in terms of social, political and economic realms. According to Connell (1995), like their men counterparts, women should be given fair opportunities to explore their livelihood endeavors. The Feminist movement came into the limelight in the 19th century and aimed at giving women equal access to life opportunities and put them in the same pedestal as their men counterparts in many spheres of life. This study focuses on the security of women political candidates as their human right. In line with the dictates of this theory, women in politics should be accorded sufficient security to be able to compete favorably men competitors.

At the advent of the Feminism theory, one of its main points of focus was on the women's rights to vote and make informed political choices. However, over time, the theory has expanded its scope to give a bearing on the women's political competition where the feminists push for the recognition of women's space in every aspect of life. To the feminists, equal representation of women in society is unalienable and men should be ready to cede some ground so that women can also feel accommodated (Coates, 2003). Sheldon (1997) further postulates that feminist theory gives women encouragement to stand up to be counted when it comes to equal political representation. This is critical especially given that politics plays a very critical role in terms of policy formulation and resource allocation. Although the feminist movement was originally intended for liberation of black women who seemed more repressed in terms of political rights, the philosophy has since gained traction hence attaining popularity as a foundation for advocating for women's rights and freedom.

Empirical Review

This study was founded on the need to explore gender-based political insecurity in Kenya and the challenges or opportunities this presents to women politicians in Nairobi City County. Empirical literature review is based on: women politicians and their level of security, perpetrators of political insecurity, motive for political threats to women political candidates, and the effect of campaign threats on the career of women political candidates.

Women Political Candidates and their Level of Security

During political campaigns insecurity for political office aspirants tends to increase. By virtue of gender differentials, women political candidates tend to face more insecurity than their men counterparts (CEDAW, 2018). Gender-based political insecurity takes many forms and happens in various political contexts. Sometimes known as violence against women in politics (VAWP), this is a global phenomenon, happening both in public and private spheres (UN Women, 2015). Moore (2016) further adds that despite existing national legislation and global frameworks to enhance women's participation and representation in politics and public decision-making arena in an environment where their security is not threatened, the political environment in elective politics still remains skewed in favor of men.

Given the comparatively big number of women voters globally, political insecurity for active women political players tends to muzzle the voice of the majority in public decision-making forums (Morgan, 2016). Furthermore, according to the Center for Multiparty Democracy (2014), many women political contenders have been physically abused, emotionally tortured and psychologically harassed so that they can forego their quest for a political seat in favor of their competitors, who mostly turn out to be men. This ultimately undermines democracy and good governance and borders on criminality. Scholars have further indicated that as women continue to entrench their presence and authority in public life by freely exercising their political rights, gender-based political insecurity increasingly becomes their greatest barrier (Kroon, 2017). This is more so due to the fact that the situation instills in them fear for their personal security and that of their families.

Violence against women in politics is fundamentally associated with violence against women in general (CMD, 2014). This means that this form of insecurity robs women of their most basic right to equal and free participation in public processes and endangers their personal security and that of their families as well as the safety of their property (Ballington, 2016). The fact that gender-based political insecurity denies women the opportunity to freely participate in political processes clearly makes this a distinct form of human rights abuse and criminal tendencies which alienates women from the mainstream development agenda. According to the UN, the common forms of gender-based insecurity women in politics are likely to face can be broadly categorized as psychological, physical, or sexual abuse as well as arbitrary detention among others (UN, 2014). Past studies have attempted to address the topic, but not exhaustively.

Kellow (2010) conducted a study in Liberia to understand the kind of challenges women candidates face during campaign periods where primary data was collected from 112 Members of Parliament using a structured questionnaire. The study was analyzed using descriptive analysis methods and it was noted that there were several limitations for women politicians. The study specifically revealed that more than 63% of female candidates and their supporters were often accosted by politically organized gangs with gender-based intimidation which were meant to compel the women to abandon their campaigns, and possibly end their political careers altogether. Further, the study discovered that the aggression took the form of verbal harassment directed at questioning their competency and branding them as prostitutes. Despite the elaborate findings, the study did not focus on the level of security women candidates are accorded during campaigns and how they handle the situation every time things appear to be getting out of hand.

Similarly, Beardsley et al (2016) stated that for women to make it in competitive politics, they need to work harder than men since more than 56% of them face far more hurdles than their men counterparts in terms of their personal security and that of their families. In their study to understand what ails the woman politician in Sierra Leone in her quest to capture political office, it came out that women aspirants often meet severe and sometimes threats of violence. The study further noted that about 39% of women reported to have been physically abused.

In a study conducted by the Federation of Women Layers (FIDA) in Kenya, figures by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) indicate that in 2017 general elections there was an improvement of the number of women elected into different offices compared to 2013. For instance, 3 women governors from none; 23 vs. 16 MPs; and 96 vs. 82 MCAs were elected into office in 2017. Although this marked an impressive improvement from the previous elections, women comprised only about 9% of the 1,835 elected individuals in different offices (FIDA, 2018). The decimal showing of women in the elective positions was partly attributed to their fear of gender-based insecurity in form of electoral violence.

Nairobi County remains one of the politically competitive regions in the country, especially due to its centrality in the economic sector of the country. By virtue of its centrality in the country's affairs, Nairobi City County attracts a huge number of political candidates whenever elections are held (Nzomo, 2011). However, out of the 17 elected MPs in Nairobi, only 1 is a woman. Similarly, out of the 85 elected MCAs in Nairobi County, only 5 are women (FIDA, 2018). Following the big number of aspirants to political seats in the county, competition is known to be very stiff hence necessitating competitors to employ even dirty tricks to outdo their opponents. Although several gender-based insecurity cases go unreported, many such incidences have been witnessed in the recent past where women are the prime targets (Oroko, 2013).

Women Political Candidates and Perpetrators of Political Insecurity

The level of insecurity for women is unmatched in Africa where violence is often meted not only on the woman aspirant but also on family members and supporters (Htun & Weldon, 2012). This is no exception in Kenya where gender-based political insecurity has been in existence for as long as elections have existed, and especially since 1992 when multiparty politics was introduced in the country (Center for Multiparty Democracy, 2014). Women have often shouldered the heaviest burden of the violence during electioneering periods where both women political leaders and women aspirants become the prime targets of their male counterparts. Many times during campaign periods, the media is awash with news about armed militia or hired goons of some politicians unleashing terror on political opponents, and more so on women politicians (Escobar-Lemmon & Taylor-Robinson, 2014). Studies have further indicated that there are many cases where, during elections, women politicians have to contend with intimidations, verbal, physical and sexual abuse and destruction of property (Kamau, 2010).

Cases have also emerged where women candidates have lost their young children in incidences related to election-related violence, either through kidnappings or accidental deaths (Moore, 2016). Other personal costs included rape and hospitalization cases as well as threats to family members, which often act as disincentives to the new political entrants. Although the violence is not selective based on gender, women politicians are affected most where some of the attacks are intended to humiliate them and undermine their personal integrity (Ballington, 2017). Vulgar and repulsive language is meant to disparage the candidate hence portraying her as not fit to hold a public office. Many cases have emerged where individuals are directly involved or where gangs are hired to carry out the dirty work of their political masters.

According to the Center for Multiparty Democracy (2014), in 2013 elections in Kenya, 63% cases were reported about female candidates being subjected to physical theft of academic

and other legal documents certifying their nominations. This is where groups of young men were often organized by the woman political candidate's opponent to execute their orders. Bribery incidents have emerged where the women candidates are tempted to withdraw their harassment (UN, 2016). Furthermore, sometimes hecklers are paid to jeer women candidates and interfere with their campaigns. Maingi (2014) states that a dead body was placed at the nomination ground of one female candidate known as Mary Kimwele who was vying for Nairobi woman representative as a ploy to stop her. Another ugly incident involved a dirty propaganda gimmick where condoms were thrown all over the place bearing the name of one female candidate. The situation for most targeted women politicians is allegedly made worse by the police who are sometimes reluctant to investigate and make arrests on grounds that politics is, by its nature, dirty hence it is difficult to completely dissuade other politicians from attacking their opponents. Whichever way women harassment during election period is looked at, it is clear that they face more security challenges than their male counterparts.

Motive for Political Threats to Women Political Candidates

Globally, the political field is dominated by men where the question of gender imbalance seems to play out overtly in terms of both the voters and political office seekers. According to Ballington (2016), violence against women in politics (VAWP) is a common strategy that is used to silence women and prevent them from exercising their political rights. In addition, as the violence poses imminent danger to their lives, those of their family members and the safety of their property, a number of women political office aspirants are known to give up their ambitions for elective positions once they realize that there is too much intimidation for them. This view is rooted in the UN definition of violence against women in politics as a human rights violation hence a culmination into criminality. Generally speaking, according to the UN (2013), political violence is always designed to influence the outcome of an electoral process and hence the distribution of political power. The violence can manifest as physical, psychological or social forms where these may involve beatings and physical injuries, coercion or intimidation, or abductions to isolate the targeted individual from family and friends. While these are clearly criminal offenses, during campaign periods they are likely to go unpunished, depending on the influence of the perpetrators since in most instances such behaviors are orchestrated by politicians with a lot influence on the justice system processes.

In many occasions men are linked to political terror gangs which are mandated to silence their women opponents (Morgan, 2016). While such groups mostly comprise of young men, their target is usually female candidates who can be attacked at any time of the electoral cycle, including during, prior or after the elections (UN and DPA, 2013). Based on the very definition of the concept of 'violence against women in politics', it is portrayed as if men are the main perpetrators. However, according to Ballington (2016), 'violence against women in political life is any act of, or threat of, gender-based violence, resulting in physical, sexual, psychological harm or suffering to women, that prevents them from exercising and realizing their political rights, whether in public or private spaces, including the right to vote and hold public office, to vote in secret and to freely campaign, to associate and assemble, and to enjoy freedom of opinion and expression. Such violence can be perpetrated by a family member, community member and or by the State'. Similarly, such an act can be perpetrated by a fellow woman who has her ulterior motives against the victim.

According to feminist theorist, patriarchy in the political arena continues to deny women the opportunity to realize their potentials both in terms of leadership and contributions to important public decision-making processes (Nzomo, 2014). On the plebiscite, men play a critical role in enhancing women's representation and participation in politics. Equality of men and women in key decision-making positions marks the beginning of democratization of leadership and governance structures not only in political sphere but in all aspects of life. Yet, studies have indicated that right at the household level, women aspiring for political seats are

sometimes denied support from their male spouses, including preventing them from using family assets for campaigns (Morna, 2014). The worst case is where they are physically abused so that they can 'toe the line' in terms of pulling out of the race due to pressure from the spouse. Furthermore, men may refuse to give moral support to their female relatives who aspire for political office, either for fear of the latter's security or due the feeling of social insecurity on the part of men like in the case of a spouse (Moore, 2014). Although on the face of it this is sometimes viewed as a case of denying one her political right, a deeper insight would reveal a criminal act; one that requires the perpetrator to face the law.

Survival Tactics of Women Political Candidates

Many women are known to have abandoned their political quests due to gender-based political insecurity. In a study done by Inter-parliamentary Union in Geneva Switzerland to understand the effect of sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians, it emerged that the attacks were particularly gendered and were intended to discourage women from becoming active in politics hence muzzling their voice in parliament (James et al, 2016). Among the victims of violence surveyed, 66.7% of them said that the incidents had distressed them while 46.7% indicated that they had feared for their physical security and that of their families and friends. This therefore led to their withdrawal from their campaigns and subsequently ended up abandoning politics. In addition, 38.7% of the respondents said that the incident of being subjected to acts of violence had undermined their ability to discharge their representation and oversight roles and had curtailed free expression of their opinions. The findings of this study are just a demonstration of what may be the effect of political insecurity to elected politicians who are targeted on the basis of their gender (Krook, 2016).

In quantitative study by the UN Women and UNDP to understand how to prevent violence against women in elections in sub-Saharan Africa, 20% of the respondents said that they had experienced physical violence (UN Women and UNDP, 2017). A questionnaire was used to collect data and 32% of the respondents said they had been slapped, pushed, struck or hit wit with an object; all in a bid to stop them from contesting the seats in question. Twelve percent of those who were surveyed said that someone had threatened to use or actually used a firearm, knife or other serious weapon against them during their campaigns. Some even said they had been beaten by policemen during their peaceful political campaign rallies. In order to survive the ordeals, some of them had to increase their security personnel. The study did not however elaborate on the performance of the candidates after their security details were enhanced.

Such violence against women is not only unique to a few contexts but is rampant in many places, mostly perpetrated by male supporters of rivaling parties, male family members or law enforcers (UN, 2013). The general impact on the victims is heightened fear, restricted travel and movements, and cumulative emotional and physical cost especially if it is repeatedly done. In the long run, it causes women aspirants to reconsider dropping their political ambitions hence totally interfering with their political rights and instilling in them untold fear. According to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the minimal number of women political office entrants could be a testimony to the effect of political intimidation which causes them a lot of trauma and ultimately leads to their total absence from public decision-making arena (IFES, 2016). But in order for some of the women political candidates to survive such tribulations, some of them turned to their close family members for solace and social support.

Households represent the first line of defense against the consequences of gender-based political insecurity. However, break-up of marriages and escalating domestic violence meted on women politicians is not a new phenomenon as a marker of increased tension due to women involvement in politics. In a study by Moore (2014) where descriptive research design was used and a questionnaire adopted for collection of data, the study revealed that women political candidates were more disadvantaged than their male counterparts. The study further indicated

that increased insecurity in many aspects of life may exacerbate political insecurity for women in politics, either as voters or candidates for various offices. In this sense, 27% of the respondents said that the most immediate aspect of women political insecurity is the widespread physical and sexual violence which threatens women's well-being and, sometimes, their very survival. Despite these revelations, the study fell short of holistically addressing the issues surrounding women political candidates' security during political campaigns. Furthermore, the study failed short of highlighting what kind of support family members provided to insecure women political candidates and how this helped them to excel in their political offices pursuit. Hence, this proposed study intends to address this question more holistically.

Conceptual Framework

This study was restricted to four independent variables which included level of security, perpetrators of insecurity, motive for political threats, and survival tactics of women political candidates. All these were presumed to influence security of women political candidates in Nairobi City County who engage in competitive politics.

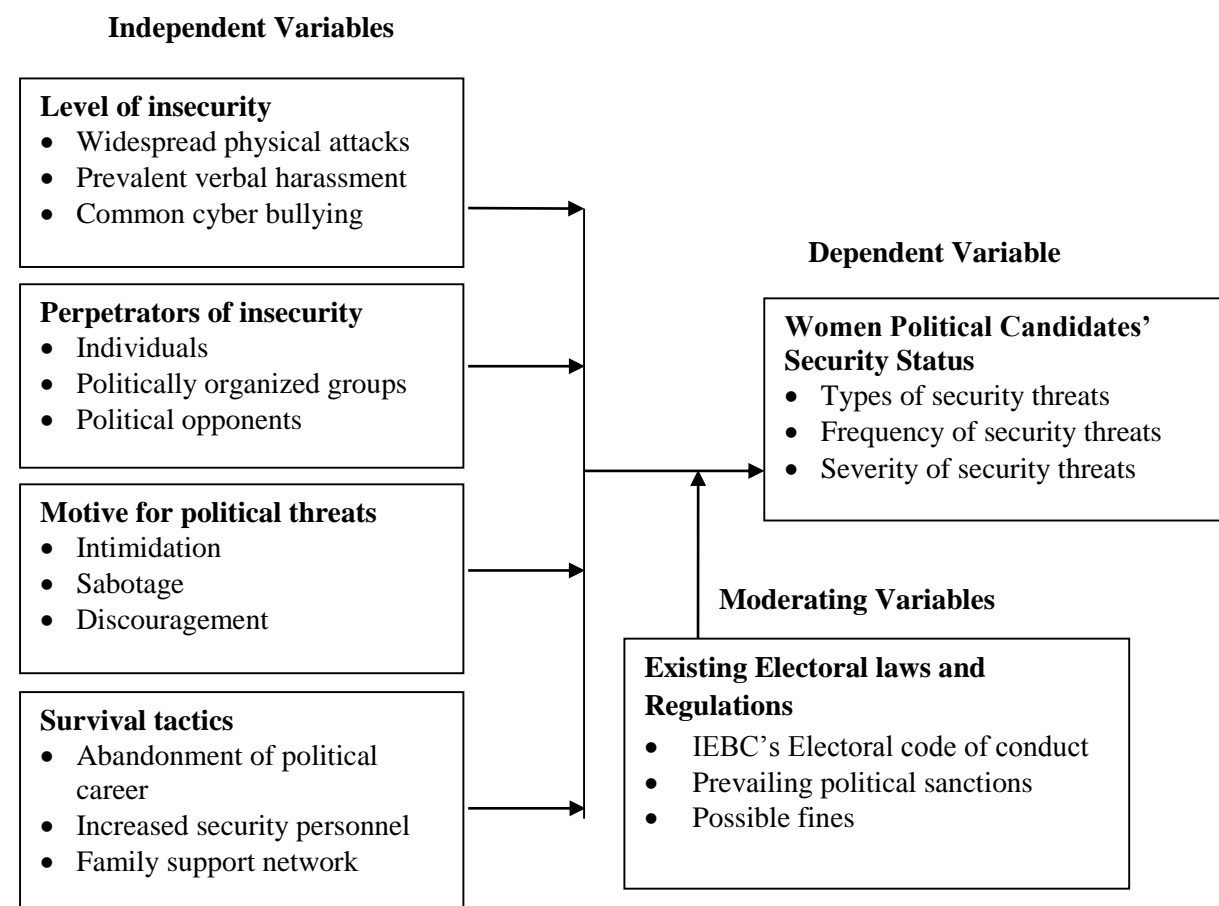


Figure 1. Operational framework of security of women political candidates independent variables

Research Design and Methodology

Study Design

This study used cross-sectional descriptive research design as a process through which to achieve the study objectives. According to Orodho (2002), this approach is suitable on account of its ability to allow for collection, summarizing, interpretation and presentation of information in a concise manner. Further, descriptive studies explain phenomena based on their social reality. This design was therefore suitable to allow collection and analysis of data regarding women politics in Nairobi City County in terms of their challenges and opportunities.

Study Area and Target Population

The study was carried out in Nairobi City County. Besides being one of the 47 counties of Kenya, Nairobi is also Kenya's capital city. It is located in south central Kenya, about 140 kilometers (87 miles) south of the equator. According to the 2019 national population census, Nairobi has a total population of about 4.4 million residents, comprising of 49.9% of male and 50.1% of female (KNBS, 2019). The county is composed of 17 parliamentary constituencies and 85 electoral wards. It is a very ethnically diverse city, with some of the major tribes as Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kamba, and Kisii. In the last general elections in 2017, the county attracted more than 800 candidates in various electoral positions. This trend has tended to recur where numerous candidates usually emerge to compete for the limited positions at various political levels.

The target population for this study constituted 125 Members of County Assembly (MCA) of Nairobi County who were either competitively elected or nominated. They were grouped into elected and nominated MCAs. Table 1 gives a summary of the target population.

Table 1. Target population

Category	Number of Respondents
Elected MCAs	85
Nominated MCAs	40
Total	125

Sampling

The study used census where all the 125 MCAs in the Nairobi City County Assembly were involved in the study. This implied that all the 125 MCAs in the Nairobi City County Assembly formed a sample for the study. Table 2 illustrates the sample size for the study.

Table 2. Sample size

Units of Analysis	Target Population (N)	Sample Size (n)
Elected MCAs	85	85
Nominated MCAs	40	40
Total	125	125

Research Instruments and Data Collection

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data, and this was administered through face-to-face interviews. Closed-ended and open-ended questions provided an opportunity for complementary information hence enriching data for the study. Both quantitative and qualitative data were important for the study. While quantitative data was critical for statistical purposes, qualitative data helped the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of the factors that contribute to insecurity for women aspirants for political positions. Interviews were largely conducted at offices of the respondents.

A questionnaire was preferable because it easily allows for gathering of large information and saves time during data collection. In addition, a questionnaire provides the opportunity to uphold confidentiality of the information shared by the respondents as they are not expected to write their actual names. Dropping the questionnaire for the respondents to fill at their convenient time before filled ones were collected, also saved time during fieldwork. For those respondents with busy schedules, a questionnaire enabled them to complete the same during their free time. It was also easier to self-administer the same by the respondents hence cutting on the cost, especially in terms of fare by the researcher and his research assistants.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Descriptive data analysis techniques were employed in processing of data. After data entry, SPSS computer software program and Excel worksheets were used to analyze quantitative data. Results were then summarized in form of frequencies and percentages using distribution tables. Regarding qualitative data, this was analyzed using thematic content analysis technique. This method was appropriate in making extrapolations through objective and systematic identification of common features of information collected from the field. Qualitative data was presented using narratives within the main texts.

Ethical Considerations

During the entire research process, all due protocols were observed. A clearance certificate was obtained from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). In addition, during the actual data collection process the respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of their shared information. Collected data would only be used for the purposes of the study and the respondents' true identity was not going to be revealed. They were also informed of their right to freely participate in the study without any form of coercion. Proper acknowledgement of the source was also done so as to respect intellectual property of other scholars.

Research Findings and Discussion

The study analyzed women political candidates' security status and their participation in political positions in Nairobi City County. Specific objectives included to establish the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya, the perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates, the motive for political threats to women political candidates, and the survival tactics used by women political candidates. In this study, out of a total sample of 125 respondents, 95 of them managed to successfully complete and return the questionnaire, which translated to 76% response rate.

Table 3. Response rate

Category of Respondents	Sample Size		Response Rate	
	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Elected MCAs	85	68	68	80
Nominated MCAs	40	32	27	68
Total	125	100	95	76

Descriptive Analysis of Women Political Candidates Security Status

The first objective of the study was to establish the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya. Asked whether in their political career the respondents had faced any gender-based political violence, 52 (55%) of them answered in the affirmative while 43 (45%) said they had not. Furthermore, on a 5-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree,

2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree, the respondents were asked to give their opinions regarding the level of security for women political candidates. A number of propositions were used to gauge the level of gender-based political violence encountered by women political candidates where varied responses were given.

For instance, 45 (47%) of the respondents generally agreed that there was widespread physical attacks and intimidation for female politicians to drop out of race or politics whereas 22 (23%) of them disagreed and 28 (29%) said they were not sure. On whether verbal harassment and assault cases are common to female politicians in Nairobi City County, 49 (51%) of the respondents generally agreed, 36 (38%) disagreed while 10 (11%) said they neither agreed nor disagreed with this account. Furthermore, majority (47; 49%) of the respondents generally affirmed that there was rampant cyber bullying cases for female politicians while 25% (26%) disagreed and 23 (24%) stood middle ground. There were also threats of harm, coercion and intimidation to women political candidates to force them to drop out of political races, with 53 (56%) of the respondents generally agreeing, 17 (18%) disagreeing, and 25 (26%) of them indicating that they neither agreed nor disagreed with this account.

Threats of divorce or economic coercion by their spouse were also common to female politicians, thus jeopardizing their political career. Sixty eight (71%) of the respondents generally agreed with this account whereas 23 (25%) disagreed and 4 (4%) said they stood neutral ground. Moreover, women political candidates were faced with beatings, bodily attacks, assault and bodily harm as common occurrences from their spouses so that they could abandon their political campaigns especially when they were accused of misusing family resources. Thirty seven (39%) of the respondents held this opinion while 32 (34%) of them had opposing views over the same, as 26 (27%) said they were not sure. It also turned out that there may be arbitrary detention or kidnappings of women political candidates orchestrated by their male opponents, where 38 (40%) generally agreed, 42 (44%) disagreed and 15 (16%) neither agreed nor disagreed with this account.

The findings of the study regarding women security status during political campaigns was a reflection of what other previous studies have revealed. For instance, according to the Center for Multiparty Democracy (2014), violence against women in politics is still rampant, especially in the context of developing countries where more than 57% of women faced these risks. Such a scenario prevented women from participating in politics freely either as voters or candidates and in other active civic duties. Morgan (2016) further noted that, given the comparatively big number of women voters globally, political insecurity for active women political players tends to muzzle the voice of the majority in public decision-making forums.

Just as reflected in the findings of this study, Kroon (2017) established that women political contenders have been physically abused, emotionally tortured and psychologically harassed so that they can forego their quest for a political seat in favor of their competitors, who mostly turn out to be men. This study further noted that spouses to women political candidates posed serious threats to them, especially as the latter were sometimes viewed as misusing family resources in their political pursuit. Such a scenario ultimately undermines democracy and good governance and borders on criminality.

The second objective of the study was to understand the perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates. Asked whether political insecurity to female politicians in Nairobi City County was generally rampant, 68 (72%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative while 27 (28%) said no. There were indications that there existed organized groups that were commonly responsible for insecurity of women political candidates, with 41 (44%) of the respondents confirming this. On the contrary, 35 (36%) of the respondents disagreed with this proposition while 19 (20%) neither agreed nor disagreed. There were also some groups of individuals hired by political opponents who commonly perpetrated

insecurity of women political candidates where 56 (59%) of the respondents agreed with this proposition, 24 (26%) disagreed while 19 (20%) said they did not agree or disagree. Political opponents of either gender were personally commonly directly involved in harassment of women political candidates, with 58 (61%) of the respondents agreeing with this account whereas 26 (28%) disagreed and 11 (12%) neither agreed nor disagreed. Men political opponents were also commonly directly involved in harassment of women political candidates, where 44 (45%) of the respondents agreed, 28 (29%) disagreed while 23 (24%) said that they were not sure.

As revealed in this study, women political candidates have faced all sorts of physical insecurity during political campaigns. These findings are largely a reflection of revelations by previous studies which have demonstrated that politically instigated gender-based insecurity has been in existence for as long as elections have existed in Kenya. According to the Center for Multiparty Democracy (2014), since 1992 when multiparty politics was introduced in the country, women political candidates have experienced a bumpy political ride in many parts of the country. Ironically, many incidences have emerged where the perpetrators of violence against women political candidates are people closets to them. Similarly, according to the UN (2016), like it emerged in this study, cases have previously emerged of groups of young men who were often organized by women political candidate's opponent to execute their orders. Bribery incidents have emerged where the women candidates are tempted to withdraw their harassment complaint reports to the authorities or end their campaigns, especially for fear of further reprisals from their aggressors. Furthermore, sometimes hecklers are paid to jeer women candidates and interfere with their campaigns.

The third objective of the study was to analyze the motive for political threats to women political candidates in Kenya. Asked if women political candidates in Nairobi City County faced political threats of any kind during campaign periods, 53 (56%) of the respondents answered in the affirmative whereas 42 (44%) said no. From these responses, it was evident that women political candidates in Nairobi City County faced political insecurity during their political campaigns. On a 5-point Likert scale where 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree, the respondents were further asked to give their views regarding the motives for political threats to women political candidates in Nairobi City County during campaign periods. It emerged that many of the threats were meant just to intimidate women political candidates, with 52 (55%) of the respondents agreeing with this account while 30 (32%) disagreed and 13 (14%) said they did not agree or disagree.

The findings of this study further indicated more or less similar sentiments expressed by previous studies regarding the motives for threats to women political candidates. Morgan (2016) noted that in many occasions' men are linked to political terror gangs which are mandated to silence their women opponents. While such groups mostly comprise of young men, according to UN and DPA (2013), their target is usually female candidates who can be attacked at any time of the electoral cycle, including during, prior or after the elections. Based on the very definition of the concept of 'violence against women in politics', it is portrayed as if men are the main perpetrators. The motives for violence against women political candidates ranged from jealousy by close family members to the woman in question, to the political competitors' drive to ensure that they eliminated women political competitors from political competition. This study further noted that such violence can be perpetrated by a family member, community member and or by the State'. Similarly, such an act can be perpetrated by a fellow woman who has her ulterior motives against the victim.

Furthermore, Nzomo (2014) noted that based on feminist theorists, patriarchy in the political arena continues to deny women the opportunity to realize their potentials both in terms of leadership and contributions to important public decision-making processes. These sentiments pervaded this study, with the findings indicating that a number of the threats

directed towards women political candidates were instigated by men where some of them felt that women political leadership did not stand a chance of occupying political offices. Further, according to Mona (2014), right from the household level, women aspiring for political seats are sometimes denied support from their male spouses, where they were even prevented from using family assets for campaigns under claims that they were misusing family wealth and yet they stood very slim chances of making it in their political quests. The worst case was where women are physically abused so that they can 'toe the line' in terms of pulling out of the race due to pressure from the spouse, as noted by Moore (2014).

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the survival tactics used by women political candidates during their campaign periods. Asked if women political candidates in Nairobi City County employed any survival tactics during political campaigns, 69 (73%) answered in the affirmative while 26 (27%) said no. This was a clear indication that women political candidates were faced with a number of security threats during their campaign periods hence they had to devise means of countering those challenges for their own political survival and career progression in politics. The findings further revealed that some women opted out of political races due to security challenges they faced during political campaigns. For instance, 53 (56%) of the respondents indicated that incidences of verbal harassment and assault have forced many women to abandon their political races.

There were also some women who enhanced their security details in order to survive the onslaught they received from their political detractors during campaign periods. Forty eight (50%) of the respondents agreed that imminent beatings, attacks, assault and bodily harm to women political candidates forced many of them to enhance their security personnel. On the contrary, 34 (36%) of them disagreed while 13 (14%) said they did not agree or disagree with this view. Furthermore, a number of women political candidates tended to seek solace in their close family members including spouses, parents and siblings when they felt that their security was threatened during campaign periods. This was in an effort to gain renewed confidence so that they could proceed regardless of the onslaught they received from their political enemies or competitors.

Despite perpetrators of political insecurity being close family members and people very well known to the victims of the violence, the study established that in many instances' family formed the first line of defense for women political candidates who felt that they were threatened in their pursuit of competitive political offices. Moore (2014) noted that break-up of marriages and escalating domestic violence meted on women politicians is not a new phenomenon as a marker of increased tension due to women involvement in politics. Using a descriptive research design and a questionnaire for collection of data, the study revealed that women political candidates were more disadvantaged than their male counterparts. The study further indicated that increased insecurity in many aspects of life may exacerbate political insecurity for women in politics, either as voters or candidates for various offices.

Since politics in the city is viewed as largely having been militarized, women political aspirants remained disadvantaged hence the need for them to be provided with proper security during campaign periods. There was evidence that more women than men political aspirants faced serious challenges during campaigns hence the need for them to be provided with adequate security if they were to compete on equal footing with their men counterparts. In a fair security environment, women stood a better chance to perform even better than their men counterparts.

Inferential Analysis

Sekaran (2003) argued that if a study seeks to analyze the data beyond means and standard deviations, then bivariate analysis such as correlation and regression analysis are the most appropriate. Thus, this study applied Pearson correlation analysis to examine the strength

of the relationship between women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The analysis revealed that there was a positive and a significant relationship between the dependent variable women political candidate status and the independent variables; level of insecurity, perpetrators of insecurity, motive for political threats and survival tactics.

The model summary in Table 4 demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by Adjusted R square to be 0.392 implying that 39.2 % of women political candidate is explained by level of security.

Table 4. Model summary for level of women political candidates security status

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.631 ^a	.398	.392	.79325

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1

In Table 5 the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, then level of insecurity had a significant explanatory power on women political candidate security status (F=61.491 and p-value <0.05).

Table 5. ANOVA for level of security and women political candidate security status

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.693	1	38.693	61.491	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.519	93	.629		
	Total	97.212	94			

From Table 6 regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 0.862 + 0.787 X1$$

Where X1 is level of security and Y is women political candidate security status. The regression equation above shows that when level of security is held constant at zero, women political candidate security status would be 0.862 units. A unit increase in level of security increases women political candidate security status by 0.787 Units. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 we conclude that there is a significant influence of level of security on women political candidate security status.

Table 6. Table of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.862	.335		2.574	.012
	X1	.787	.100	.631	7.842	.000

The second objective of the study was designed to establish the influence of perpetrators of insecurity on women political candidate security status. The model summary in Table 7 demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by Adjusted R square to be 0.276 implying that 27.6% of women political candidate security status is explained perpetrators of insecurity.

Table 7. Model summary for perpetrators of insecurity

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.525 ^a	.276	.268	.87016

In Table 8 the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, then perpetrators of insecurity had a significant explanatory power on women political candidate security status ($F=35.388$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Table 8. ANOVA for perpetrators of insecurity

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	26.795	1	26.795	35.388	.000 ^b
	Residual	70.417	93	.757		
	Total	97.212	94			

From Table 9 regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 1.084 + 0.709 X_2$$

Where X_2 is perpetrators of insecurity and Y is women political candidate security status. The regression equation above shows that when perpetrators of insecurity are held constant at zero, women political candidate security status would be 1.084 units. A unit increase in perpetrators of insecurity increases women political candidate security status by 0.709 Units. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 we conclude that there is a significant influence of perpetrators of insecurity on women political candidate security status.

Table 9. Table of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.084	.401		2.702	.008
	X_2	.709	.119	.525	5.949	.000

The third objective of the study was designed to establish the influence of motive for political threats on women political candidate security status. The model summary in Table 10 demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by Adjusted R square to be 0.349 implying that 34.9% of women political candidate is explained by motive for political threats.

Table 10. Model summary for motive for political threats

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.591 ^a	.349	.342	.82489

In Table 11 the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, then motive for political threats had a significant explanatory power on women political candidate security status ($F=49.866$ and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$).

Table 11. ANOVA for motive for political threats

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	33.931	1	33.931	49.866	.000 ^b
	Residual	63.281	93	.680		
	Total	97.212	94			

From Table 12 regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 1.471 + 0.510 X_3$$

Where X_3 is motive for political threats and Y is women political candidate security status. The regression equation above shows that when motive for political threats is held

constant at zero, women political candidate security status would be 1.471 units. A unit increase in motive for political threats increases women political candidate security status by 0.510 Units. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 we conclude that there is a significant influence of motive for political threats on women political candidate security status.

Table 12. Table of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.471	.287		5.116	.000
	X3	.510	.072	.591	7.062	.000

The fourth objective of the study was designed to establish the influence of survival tactics on women political candidate security status. The model summary in Table 13 demonstrates the coefficient of determination as indicated by Adjusted R square to be 0.466 implying that 46.6% of women political candidate is explained by survival tactics.

Table 13. Model summary for survival tactics

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.683 ^a	.466	.461	.74681

In Table 14 the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, then survival tactics had a significant explanatory power on women political candidate security status (F=81.300 and p-value <0.05).

Table 14. ANOVA for survival tactics

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	45.343	1	45.343	81.300	.000 ^b
	Residual	51.868	93	.558		
	Total	97.212	94			

From Table 15 regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 1.718 + 0.531X_4$$

Where X₄ is survival tactics and Y is women political candidate security status. The regression equation above shows that when survival tactics is held constant at zero, women political candidate security status would be 1.718 units. A unit increase in survival tactics increases women political candidate security status by 0.531 Units. Since the p-value is less than 0.05 we conclude that there is a significant influence of survival tactics on women political candidate security status.

Table 15. Table of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.718	.203		8.475	.000
	X ₄	.531	.059	.683	9.017	.000

Multiple Linear Regressions

Multiple linear regression model was adopted for testing the significance of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Therefore, the overall model for the study was:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon$$

Where Y = women political candidate security status, the dependent variable and X's are the independent variables where X₁ = level of security, X₂ = perpetrators of insecurity, X₃ = motive for political threats, X₄ = survival tactics and ε is the error term. β's are the coefficients of the model. In Table 16 the ANOVA was used to show the overall model significance. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, this means that the whole model is significant. (F = 53.266 and p value <0.05).

Table 16. ANOVA Table

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	68.343	4	17.086	53.266	.000 ^b
	Residual	28.869	90	.321		
	Total	97.212	94			

The results in Table 17 show that there was a significant influence of level of security, motive for political threats and survival tactics. This is because the p value of the predictors was less than 0.05 the level of significance.

Table 17. Table of coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.271	.303		-.895	.373
	X1	.623	.106	.500	5.888	.000
	X2	-.138	.112	-.102	-1.226	.223
	X3	.389	.062	.451	6.259	.000
	X4	.200	.060	.256	3.345	.001

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This study analyzed women political candidates' security status and their participation in political leadership positions in Nairobi City County, Kenya. Specific objectives included establishing the level of security for women political candidates in Kenya, perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates, the motive for political threats to women political candidates in Kenya, the survival tactics used by women political candidates, and assessing the moderating effect of existing electoral laws and regulations on the relationship between the independent variables and women political candidates' security status. From the 125 target respondents, 95 of them managed to complete the interviews, translating to 76% of response rate.

Findings for objective 1 revealed that 55% of the respondents had suffered gender-based political violence in their political career whereas 43% said they had not. Furthermore, on a 5-point Likert scale which was pegged on a number of propositions regarding the level of security for women political candidates, 47% of the respondents generally agreed that there was widespread physical attacks and intimidation against female politicians to drop out of political campaign races. Also, 51% of those interviewed indicated that verbal harassment and assault

cases were common to female politicians in Nairobi City County. Similarly, 49% of them generally affirmed that there was rampant cyber bullying cases for female politicians in the county. There were also threats of harm, coercion and intimidation to women political candidates to force them to drop out of political races.

Threats of divorce or economic coercion by their spouse were also common to female politicians, thus jeopardizing their political career. Further, 71% of those who were interviewed indicated that women political candidates were faced with beatings, bodily attacks, assault and bodily harm as common occurrences from their male partners. These were meant to intimidate them so as to abandon their political campaigns especially when it appeared like they were 'misusing' family resources. Similarly, harm to or abuses against family and campaign team were some of the commonly used threats to scare away women political candidates, with 42% of the respondents expressing these sentiments. There were also unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors that were directed towards women political candidates with the promise that they would be helped in their campaigns by stronger male politicians. Related to these were verbal or physical conducts or gestures of a sexual nature which were common to female politicians meant to scare them out of political races in favor of their male counterparts. At 5% significance level, the P value for level of insecurity was $P=0.003<0.05$, implying that this variable had a significant bearing on women political candidates' security status.

Regarding objective 2 of the study, it emerged that 72% of the respondents agreed that there was rampant political insecurity to female politicians in Nairobi City County. Furthermore, 44% of those interviewed agreed that there were organized criminal groups that were commonly responsible for insecurity of women political candidates. There were also some groups of individuals hired by political opponents who commonly perpetrated insecurity of women political candidates, with 59% of the respondents agreeing with this proposition. It also emerged that political opponents of either gender were personally commonly directly involved in harassment of women political candidates, same as men political opponents who notoriously harassed their women political opponents.

Equally critical was the question of women political opponents who were commonly directly involved in harassment of their fellow women political candidates. Further to these, young men were commonly incited to harass women political candidates, with 53% of the research participants agreeing that this was actually happening. Similarly, male spouses also played a role in frustrating their women political candidate spouses, causing them immense security concerns. To some extent, close relatives other than spouses also commonly directly got involved in harassment of women political candidates, especially out of jealousy. At 5% significance level, the P value for perpetrators of political insecurity was $P=0.002<0.05$, implying that this variable had a significant influence on women political candidates' security status.

On the third objective which was about the motive for political threats to women political candidates in Kenya, 56% of the respondents agreed that during campaign periods women political candidates in Nairobi City County faced political threats of one kind or the other. Furthermore, the study revealed that many of the threats were meant just to intimidate women political candidates, with 55% of those interviewed saying so. It further emerged that many of the threats were intended to sabotage political careers of women political candidates, where 63% of the respondents had this view. Some of those threats were also intended for embarrassing the women political candidates to the public, with the hope that this would force them abandon their campaigns thereby giving their opponents the leeway to perform better in the absence of stronger opposition. At 5% significance level, the P value for motive for political threats was $P=0.001<0.05$, suggesting that the variable had a significant impact on women political candidates' security status.

Concerning women political candidates' survival tactics as the fourth objective, 73% of the research participants agreed that women political candidates in Nairobi City County employed any survival tactics during political campaigns. The findings further revealed that some women opted out of political races due to security challenges they faced during political campaigns, with 56% of the respondents saying so. It was also clear that some women had opted to drop out of their political campaigns due to imminent political threats thereby trying to save their public images. Threats of harm, coercion and intimidation had also caused many women to abandon their political races, with the hope that further besmirching of their characters and that of their close family members would end following their withdrawal from political arena.

There were also some women political candidates who chose to enhance their security details in order to survive their onslaught from political opponents and detractors. Furthermore, a number of women political candidates tended to seek solace in their close family members including spouses, parents and siblings whenever their security felt threatened as a result of their political activities. Based on these findings, it was evident that while some women political candidates persevered in their political journey regardless of the security threats, there were others who decided to quit their political races due to what they perceived as a threat to their personal security as a result of political pursuit. At 5% significance level, the P value for survival tactics used by women political candidates was $P=0.004<0.05$, implying that the variable had a significant impact on women political candidates' security status.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research, it was concluded that women political candidates in Kenya stood higher security risks than their men counterparts. The study also concluded that perpetrators of political insecurity against women political candidates comprised of various players, with some of them being close relatives or friends to the victims. Further, the study concluded that there were various motives for political threats against women political candidates, with some arising out of jealous or due to the competitive nature of politics. It was also clear that women political candidates devised survival strategies such as enhancing their security details, and even sometimes opting out of their political races in order to save their public images. Despite existing electoral laws and regulations intended to moderate electoral campaigns and other political activities, these alone were not enough to shield women political candidates against security threats.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, a number of recommendations were given. Regarding the high level of insecurity for women political candidates, it was important for the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to be more vigilant during political campaigns so that women candidates are protected from possible insecurity threats. There was also need for more sensitization of the public against perpetrating political insecurity against women candidates. Furthermore, it is important for the women politicians to form a strongwomen political caucus to actively and progressively champion for political rights of women political aspirants. This will also help to strongly bring to light imminent security threats that need to be curtailed so that women political aspirants can all have freedom to participate in political processes without any fear of intimidation and insecurity.

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