

**ELECTORAL PROCESS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE INFORMAL
SETTLEMENTS OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA FROM 2007-2022**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is a product of my own work and is not the result of anything done in collaboration. It has not been previously presented to any other institution.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CMD Center for Multiparty Democracy

IEBC Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission

KNHCR Kenya National Human Rights Commission

NPS National Police Service

NS National security

UK United Kingdom

US United States

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Digital Space Mobilization involves sharing information and connecting people to resources using digital platforms. The current study examined digital mobilization based on the use of Facebook, Twitter, and other online spaces.

Displacement Patterns: This involves the movement of persons who have been forced to flee or leave their homes to avoid the effects of insecurity.

Electoral Process: According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2021) electoral process is the process of voter registration, registration of candidates for various political parties, electoral campaigns, accessibility of the mass media during elections, voting, counting of votes, tabulation and presentation of the provisional results, elections dispute resolutions and finally the announcement of the final election results.

Government Interventions: These are measures taken by the Government to prevent electoral violence. The current study examined government interventions, including providing enough funding for electoral processes, civic education, and partnering with regional and international bodies.

Informal Settlements: These are residential areas where the inhabitants do not have security of land tenure or dwellings. They do not comply with local authority requirements for conventional townships.

National security: Is the condition of having a secure and peaceful environment devoid of political and ethnic violence. National security has been broadened to include: human security, economic security, cyber security, political security and environmental security.

Political campaigns: This is a fight for power and the right to control and shape the content and the direction of public policy.

Political Divisions: This refers to ideological, ethnic, and cultural and religious-based divisions, which often play out during political campaigns in Kenya.

Political party activities: These are institutions that are involved in a nation's political processes. For instance, political parties conduct party nominations for candidates who will represent them in elections for various seats.

Political Players: These are individuals who are involved in the political processes, such as political candidates, youths, and political elites.

ABSTRACT

The implications of elections on national security have also been a point of concern to many countries, particularly African States. The electoral system encompasses voter registration, candidate registration to different political parties, election campaigns, accessibility to the mass media in elections, voting, counting votes, tabulation and presentation of the provisional results, election dispute resolution, as well as the announcement of the final election results. The political participants in the election are the political players, the political institutions, and the media. In certain instances, depending on the nature of their involvement, it may come to violence. This case study discussed the implications of some elements of the electoral processes for national security. The specific objectives of the research were to: Analyze how the election campaign strategies can affect National security in Nairobi city county; evaluate how the community leaders of different political forces can make different National security during the electoral process in Nairobi City County; examine security agencies efforts made up in guaranteeing safe electoral process in Nairobi city county and to examine the influence and effects the political parties, online electoral mobilization can have on National security. The scope of time was taken across the 15 years from 2007 to 2022. The research was informative, using two theories that incorporated the Human Security theory and Securitization Theory. The research design was mixed in the sense that qualitative and quantitative aspects formed part of the same study, thus creating a more comprehensive understanding of a research issue. The target population was sampled in the Nairobi city county informal settlements. The sample size of the study population was drawn from NPS, local leaders, and residents, and 400 respondents were given the sample using purposive and stratified sampling techniques. Data was gathered through the use of questionnaires and interviews. The thematic and inferential statistics were used to conduct the analysis. The research findings presented the key aspects of electoral processes and national security, namely campaign strategies that lead to insecurity in the informal settlements. These include door-to-door campaigns, political rallies and the use of youth and militia groups that incite violence; it has further been found that local leaders were employed as instruments of electoral-related insecurity and as peace makers. It is therefore recommended that a paradigm shift be considered in the trend of electoral practices within Nairobi's informal settlements, as well as the country at large, in order to promote security in elections.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This section discusses the background of the relationship between the electoral process and national security. It also presents problem statements, research objectives, research questions, the rationale and significance of the research, the scope, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations of the research.

1.2 Background of the Study

The electoral model in informal settlements has a strong connection to the aspect of national security because the locations have special socio-political and economic weaknesses. During the election phase, informal settlements, usually characterized by high population density, poverty, youth unemployment, minimum state representation and presence, tend to become the epicenter of political manipulation, violence and insecurity. Political leaders use the weaknesses to attract support in forms of ethnic or patronage politics, and this may, on some occasions, lead to conflicts between rival groups. Lack of adequate security infrastructure and law enforcement is a contributing factor that helps to make the electoral period a tense period filled with threats of instability. An analysis of the democratic process in informal settlements is thus a vivid revelation of how democracy is coupled with urban marginalization and spillover of security threats, hence the promotion of peaceful engagement in the political process, in consideration of national stability.

On the other hand, national security refers to the ability of a state to maintain peace, law, and order as well as protecting its citizens against political violence, crime or instability. Informal settlements are also more prone to systemic neglect, poor

governance, and a history of electoral violence and therefore, such settlements provide easy targets where violence can easily run rampant during election times. They tend to develop information on breeding grounds of political militant groups, criminal groups, or extremist elements which threaten local security as well as national stability. Thus, it is essential to observe how national security strategies actually combat or fail to respond to the particular threats which emerge in informal settlements during elections.

On a global scale, in India, the issue of electoral politics in large informal settlements (slums) is closely related to national security concerns often presented through the lens of political patronage and clientelism and even possible electoral fraud (Transparency International Knowledge Hub, 2025). These overpopulated areas symbolize major electoral constituencies, and the political parties will commonly offer guarantees to build infrastructure and supply basic amenities as the voting preferences at the bargaining table, leading to a situation of dependency and, in some cases, graft (Transparency International Knowledge Hub, 2025). The national security implications are based on the potential of these regions being used in communal conflicts or becoming new centers of local fighting during the elections in the context of social and economic inequalities, as is the case (Freedom House, 2022). The most common approach adopted by the Indian Government includes the development process that targets amelioration of slums as well as the use of force so as to arrest mass unrest during elections (Cities Alliance, 2024). The Election Commission of India plays a central role in the conduct of fair elections, but its neutrality has been questioned (Freedom House, 2022).

In addition to Brazil, informal settlements are at the intersection of national security and electoral processes. These regions can be defined by poor governmental control, occupancy by crime-related groups, and the high level of socio-economic disparity (State Department, 2022; UN-Habitat, 2020). The favelas also achieve such a position in the electoral process through the influence of either paramilitary groups ("milicias") or drug gangs, which control the voting pattern, vote-buying, or introduce intimidation tactics to undermine democratic integrity and be a direct threat to public security and national security (Freedom House, 2022). Generally, the reaction of the state can be characterized as a mixture of policing efforts combined with military actions; however, with a substantial number of social programs to provide better living conditions, depriving the sway of criminal elements (UN-Habitat, 2020). Nevertheless, the problems of intensive corruption and inequality still pose a threat to the attempts to maintain free and fair elections and national security in these multifaceted urban settings (Freedom House, 2022; State Department, 2022).

In Pakistan, cities like Karachi are already known to be centres of political activity, with informal settlements changing into a playing field of political and ethnic striving. Political parties often have militant elements that are active in these poor places, using force tactics, intimidation and armed violence to assert their election influence. According to Shah (2014), such dynamics not only threaten the democratic process but also the authority of states, given that factions impose their forms of governance where state institutions do not fare well. The dependence of the illegal settlements on patronage networks and politicized violence in Pakistan depicts the larger and more systematic failure of the state in the integration of these spaces into greater political and

security structures, which allows the armed groups, operating outside the system, to influence general election outcomes.

In Mexico, informal urban communities, especially those in areas that cartels dominate, are highly vulnerable during elections. Most criminal groups view elections as tactical opportunities to legitimize their power by sponsoring or supporting political figures who will not interfere with their criminal endeavors or will work directly with them. Trejo and Ley (2018) explain that drug cartels engage in assassinations, voter pressure, and intimidation in fringe neighborhoods where the state capacity is low. These settlements, originally located around the peripheries of cities, turn into not only the warzones between political opponents but also between the state and organized crime, making the election race a quest for national security. The Government of Mexico has tried to address this by sending federal forces to watch over elections, which have been less proactive and usually respond to entrenched problems of insecurity in informal settlements: poverty, corruption and state indifference. Moreover, the prospects of local politics are diluted by the cartels, which suppress any plans of decentralization and local governance, thus creating a cycle of violence and disaffection that has affected those vulnerable societies.

Likewise, the Philippines has had to struggle with electoral difficulties and political insecurity, especially among its informal settlements in the urban centres such as Metro Manila and conflict-ravaged areas like Mindanao. Such regions tend to have long-time political dynasties and politics of warlords, with political access to the vote purchased through bribery and intimidation, as well as intimidation and violence. Carli (2019) points to political families and armed groups operating in the shadow as well as the

mechanisms of their control over informal urban populations by exploiting their vulnerabilities on a socio-economic basis in order to obtain electoral support. In the Philippines, the electoral process is often militarized in areas of high risk, with the police and military often deployed to suppress violence. Yet these deployments are not matched with long-term investments in development, civic education, or reforming police, though, which are key contributors to the results of these deployments. The recurrent pattern of election period violence in informal settlements reveals structural factors, such as inequality, a weak democratic system and the absence of effective political representation of urban poor people.

The electoral system and national security in the Brazilian favela are a dynamic process, considering the highly evolved but complex electoral scheme in the country and the socio-political struggles in the informal settlements. Brazil has a vast and technologically developed electoral system controlled by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) that has the organization, oversight, and management of elections in the municipal, state, and national scope, with a focus on the safety of voting and freedom of the vote (TSE, 2025). Most remarkably, Brazil has adopted the use of electronic voting that is augmented with biometric voter registration, leading to decreased cases of electoral fraud and increasing the purity of elections.

Although the formal electoral system is strong, informal settlements in Brazil make certain demands. Such territories are distinguished by marginalization of a socio-economic nature and complex social relations, including clientelism and divisive political leadership. Political brokers or informal leaders tend to ease and at the same time obstruct participation in elections by acting as a go-between among residents and

formal political systems. According to the research, informal workers and residents in these settlements are more likely to support clientelist parties that also provide them with informal social insurance, reflecting a more personal and material incentives-based model of political culture that often plays a greater role in determining voting behaviours than do programmatic policies (Rains & Wibbels, 2023).

The political structure in Brazilian informal settlements has been described as non-homogeneous between communal unified leadership and compromise-based leadership structures. There were cases where the leadership became undone in other communities based on political fragmentation, clientelism, and even real estate speculation, compromising the tenure of the residents, which ended up destabilizing some informal political representation systems (Study on Comunidade do Pina, 2024). These dynamics are relevant not just to electoral participation but also to the order and security of the state, since clientelistic circuits can bolster informal governance and corrode the rule of law

Informal settlements, on a continental scale, in Ghana, whereas the general legal elections are usually commendable, the informal settlements are not spared from the electoral vicious interactions, even though localities' specific instances of such viciousness escalate with the increase of political competition (EISA, 2023). In the National Security Strategy (2020), reference to the individual citizen and the local community has been recognized as a key reflection of national security, as the country attempts to shed a strictly territorial focus on defence. But high rates of urban growth, a common feature in informal settlements, put candidates at greater risk of electoral violence, because of the uncertainty that this generates and as a factor that, in most

cases, allows grievances to be mobilized by political opponents (Birch, 2020). Even though there is an inter-party dialogue platform and also election security mechanisms, the causal factors of violence, including the politicization of identity and a sense of injustice, continue to play out in the dense urban settlements (EISA, 2023

In Egypt, informal settlements are very common and are inhabited by a significant proportion of the population at large, with insecure tenure and access to services. A backdrop of oppressive politics is undermining electoral processes in these regions due to the lack of freedom of assembly, political dissent and real competition. The state policy is the extreme security in voting where armed bodyguards and even military and police officers are present in polling centres, thus threatening the freedom of political participation. The election management system is disjointed and does not carry autonomous control, which makes it hard to introduce impartiality and transparency. Moreover, in the informal settlements, residents are frequently seen as marginalized and excluded from formal political affairs, and this increases the tensions and threatens national security. Efforts to develop informal settlements are ordinarily top-down and forceful, whereby eviction and relocation policies are used instead of participatory development strategies to tackle the political disempowerment of its residents (Egypt Presidential Election Observation Report, 2023).

The situation in Morocco is a bit different, whereby true power lies in the hands of the monarch and the executive and not in elected representatives. Though national and local elections are regularly held, they are not transparent and are overseen not by independent electoral commissions but by ministries that are close to the palace. The informal settlements of Morocco are characterized by high unemployment rates and

apathy, especially among the young population, and distrust in formal politics. There are large rates of voter abstention that are indicative of the lack of faith in official politics and electoral machinery. The security apparatus is also influential in keeping order, but security agencies have continued to complain of breaches of human rights. Citizens living in the informal urban settlements are likely to turn to demonstrations, social media, and informal representation methods to avoid electoral engagement. Such dynamics make it difficult to understand how the electoral processes impact national security because socio-economic discontent in informal settlements is the source of unrest (BTI Transformation Index, 2022; U.S. State Department, 2023).

Solving Sudanese electoral politics and national security issues of electoral-related issues in the informal settlements contains an extra challenge of protracted conflict, internal displacement, and political uncertainty. Factors that hinder political participation by the internally displaced persons among IDPs living in informal settlements/camps include loss of voter registration card, intimidation by armed groups, etc., lack of polling stations in the places of displacement, and fear of losing the land rights back home. Such aspects have resulted in a high level of disenfranchisement in previous elections, posing insecurity and bringing about a lack of legitimacy to electoral outcomes. The latter has been undercut by the recent military coup and the halted peace threats, disintegrating the electoral institutions and constitutional frameworks. Electoral reforms have been used to increase the inclusion and protection of displaced populations' voting rights, but have been stagnated by instability within the countries. The importance of credible elections in informal settlements and displacement cannot be ignored in the peacebuilding and national security of Sudan due to the need to ensure

transparent management of the election and the protection of voter rights and peaceful addressing of disputes (International IDEA, 2023).

Moreover, the presence of a tremendous security challenge in Nigeria has had drastic effects on the electoral process, not excluding informal settlements. The unifying phenomena of terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and ethno-religious violence make the process of disenfranchising the electorate, voter apathy and election manipulation so widespread (Frontiers, 2025). This is because of the high population densities in some informal settlements, which may be a place of political competition with promises of upgrading and updating being clientelist methods to win votes (Transparency International Knowledge Hub, 2021). Although security services play a critical role in ensuring that elections are orderly, the political elite in such sensitive societies have often been accused of infiltrating them, causing voter repression, intimidation and oversight of electoral fraud, which further discredits the elections in such sensitive communities (Frontiers, 2025). The ability of the state to provide societal services and maintain security is usually minimal, which adds disrespect on the part of citizens living in informal settlements (Carbone & Pellegata, 2017).

The informal settlements in South Africa also exhibit electoral problems that usually end in governance issues and insecurities. Although in recent years much attention was paid to the work on electoral systems and purity of the vote (IEC, 2020; Aleksandrov, 2020; Aleksandrov, 2020), the majority of efforts that could be associated with the cancellation of a no-confidence motion were related to citizenship vulnerabilities. According to the Institute of Race Relations (2024), the informal settlements are also prone to corruption, especially when there is a project to upgrade them. Due to the acute

demand for basic services and the safety of securing tenure, political actors use this by offering better services in exchange for votes (Transparency International Knowledge Hub, 2020). Not only does this give false election outcomes, but it also solidifies the current inequalities in such societies. Inadequate planning and affordable housing are also factors that lead to the widespread development of informal settlements, which are prime terrain to be politically exploited and a source of frustrations (MDPI, 2019).

Moreover, in Uganda, there is a limited human rights environment within the electoral environment and concentrated politics, especially in the informal settlements of the nation. It is not possible to generalize with regard to refugee populations, as some are permitted to self-settle in informal cities such as Kampala. Still, the overarching political settlement favours the heavy involvement of the military as well as patronage networks (RUC, 2025). This is a restriction of real political participation and is a climate that discourages political declaration. Although there is no direct evidence of large-scale usage of social cash transfer in formal settlements toward political gain, with the patronage orientation of the past, benefits may be directed to targeted groups to increase their political support (RUC, 2025). This is evidenced by state interventions such as arrests of critics of government officials and abuses of opposition leaders. In effect, this has the effect of stifling the freedom and fairness of elections in all places, including informal settlements (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Lastly, hotspots of electoral manipulations are often reported in the informal settlements in Kenya, with ethnic-based political control and fights over state powers and resources as the driving factor (National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2023). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) has been actively

involved in the conflict hotspot mapping process, and this has identified several counties with high levels of election-related violence owing to various fragilities. Attempts to reach higher voter turnout and representation in informal settlements were carried out, which included innovative awareness campaigns such as the project Change ‘amka Na Sana’ with voter education youth using graffiti and local women trained to educate other women voters (IFES, 2020). Nevertheless, a few issues are noted, such as the lack of faith in electoral bodies and the availability of organized crime gangs, which intensifies the security issues during election time (National Cohesion and Integration Commission, 2023). The Kabaraka occupations in Kenya are also favourable situations in that the expansion of informal settlements as a result of the rapid growth of towns also contributes to the risk of electoral violence through fostering the mobilization of grievances (Birch, 2020).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Elections in the informal settlements present unique threats to national security, especially in the fast-growing urban settlements such as Nairobi City County. The most unstable political regions in Kenya are the informal settlements such as Mathare, Kibera, Korogocho, and Mukuru, where elections have often sparked insecurity in terms of violence and threats to life, property, and people (Willis, 2020). Over the years, the elections in these regions have been characterized by the deployment of strategic, even manipulative, electioneering activities during voter registration, candidate registration, campaigning, voting, vote counting, result delivery, and winner declaration, and all these are manipulated by the political players among the socio-economically deprived people.

Policymakers can use populist rhetoric, ethnic politics, and patronage distribution to influence national security management and escalate relationships while polarizing the community (Mueller, 2011). In spite of their political benefits, such tactics inadvertently result in insecurity, gang mobilization, and even vote suppression, which was evident in the past general elections in Kenya (Kagwanja, 2015).

In addition, local leaders, including community elders, religious leaders, youth, and informal settlement representatives, have a dominant influence on the dynamics of security around elections. Such leaders either de-escalate or worsen the tensions based on their orientation and participation in the political affairs (Misati, 2021). Their role in mobilizing the grass man and their effect on peace messages or incitement directly reflect the security situation in these populated lands. Local leaders also mediate between the state and the community in other situations, mitigating violence in the

electoral process by de-escalating the situation through negotiation and advocacy. They lack sufficient mandates, are politically neutral, and have less institutional backing, which makes it hard to consider them in maintaining peace in critical electoral periods (Owuor & Mbatia, 2020).

Remedies by the Government, like the use of security officers, civic education, and changes in the law, are significant in addressing the issues of electoral insecurity. Despite this science, however, the effectiveness of such strategies in informal settlements is patchy. The interventions are more reactive than proactive and poorly coordinated across the agencies (Ndegwa & Akaranga, 2017). Any police act during elections are widely held as unfair or disproportional, which further increases the level of mistrust by the civil society and elevates the tension. Furthermore, institutional failures, such as corruption, slow-moving judicial processes, and political will, also weaken the ability of the state to handle threats related to elections in urban informal settlements (Branch & Cheeseman, 2019). These concerns point to a significant divide between the knowledge and enhancement of the role of government players in the management of electoral security in such vulnerable situations.

Also worth noting is how digital platforms are impacting the manner and even the tone of political mobilization in informal settlements. The trend of escalating utilization of digital media, particularly WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter, has revolutionized the process of the creation and distribution of political messages since they can be distributed seamlessly and outside of any government control. Digital mobilization comes with new security threats since it has led to the emergence of misinformation, hate speech, cyberbullying, and the organization of illegal activities (Kuiru, 2018). The

recent elections in Kenya in 2022 were characterized by multiple examples of how digital tools can be used to create fear, incite violence, and delegitimize elections, especially within the low-income areas of Nairobi (Ndavula & Mueni, 2023). This is an indication of the immediate necessity to probe the positive and negative contributions of digital political engagement to national security in informal settlements where the state does not necessarily have total control of the digital landscape.

All these research gaps demonstrate the necessity of a study that will investigate the interrelationship between campaign strategies, local leadership, government interventions, and digital political mobilization in influencing electoral security in Nairobi's informal settlements. To be more specific, the study explored the issue of electoral process and national security within informal settlements of the city county of Nairobi, Kenya, between 2007 and 2022.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The studies' general purpose was to assess the implication of electoral process and national security in the informal settlement of Nairobi City County, Kenya from 2007 to 2022.

The specific objectives of the study were to;

- i. Analyze the impact of election campaign strategies on National security in Nairobi City County.
- ii. Assess the role of community leaders in ensuring secure electoral process in Nairobi City County.
- iii. Examine security agencies initiatives and guaranteeing of safe electoral process in Nairobi City County.

- iv. Assess the effect of political party, online electoral Mobilization and National Security in Nairobi City County.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What is the impact of election campaign strategies on national security in Nairobi City County?
- ii. What do community leaders contribute to ensuring a secure electoral process in Nairobi City County?
- iii. What initiatives have security agencies undertaken to guarantee a safe electoral process in Nairobi City County?
- iv. What is the effect of political party, online electoral Mobilization on national security in Nairobi City County?

1.6 Justification of the Study

The importance of this study lies in the past weakness of this region to politically inspired violence and insecurity whenever an election is around the corner. Informal settlements are crowded slums inhabited by people experiencing poverty who lack economic opportunities and are the epicenters of electoral violence and manipulation. Such regions often undergo selective political organization, ethnic segregation, and the use of young people in support of violent causes, becoming significant sources of danger not only to security at the local level but to stability in the national realm as well. Kibera informal settlement has been a rock of protest in all three of the last elections and the various phases of the electoral process in Kenya. Moreover, the presence of poor state presence, poor policing, and poor civic educational process increases the risks during electoral periods. The study contributes to knowledge on the role and impact of electoral strategies and development interventions in these settlements as well as the change of pace on the community to help us understand how to curb the electoral

vehemence, resilience in democracy and the narration of exclusive, conflict-insensitive policies to suit the urban poor setting in Kenya.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The correlation between national security and the election process is a matter that should be explored in Kenya. This study would therefore be informative in defining the nature of political campaigns and their implications on national security in Kenya. The implications are an eye-opener for the security agencies and the Ministry of Interior regarding the areas that need to be improved, specifically in the political sphere.

This research would be of importance to different people in Kenya. Initially, the study shall be useful to the Government via the Ministry of Interior since it is the mandate of a national government to provide security to its citizens at all levels. The Government can use the advice that was studied in this study, particularly some of the policies and the strategies that should be implemented to address the divisive politics that exist in the country at the expense of national security.

Secondly, the study is of immense value to the people of Kenya since it will provide knowledge on the disadvantages of engaging in political factions that cost their security at the end of every election. This study evaluated the strategies employed by the political parties and the adverse effects that they have had on Kenya's national security. Through this, Kenyans were sensitized on the necessity of not being used as instruments in practicing divisive politics by political players.

Finally, in the academic discipline, the study contributes to the advancement of the body of knowledge in the most important area, which is the question of political

campaigns and national security. Research in election procedure and national security has been conducted, but it did not interrogate the implications of conducting election campaigns in informal settlements. The research continued to frame the variables related to election campaign strategies, the role of leaders in informal settlements, the effectiveness of government interventions on election-related challenges, and displacement patterns in informal settlements.

1.8 Scope of the Study

The time scale was 15 years, with the period between 2007 and 2022, and during this time, the constitution of 2010 has been in operation. In addition, this period was the best because it encompasses four general elections and one referendum that have been conducted in Kenya. In the four elections that have been conducted over this time, three elections had security incidents. The 2007 elections were marked by the most contentious post-election violence, which was marked by killings and displacement of Kenyans into their lands. With the 2017 elections, it also saw protests by the people who lost the elections and therefore, once again, it resorted to loss of lives. This played out in the same manner in the general elections of 2022.

Nairobi City County was used as the geographical scope of this study. In particular, this research focused on the informal settlements in Nairobi City County, such as Kibera and Mathare informal settlements. The primary motive for targeting the informal settlements was that cases of insecurity are continuously witnessed during elections. Moreover, politicians have, on several occasions, used the unemployed youth who are mostly concentrated in such settlements to derail electoral processes.

1.9 Limitation and Delimitation of the study

This is a very sensitive issue that the respondents may feel uneasy giving out all the required details, touching on the political security challenges and the effect on human

security. When faced with such a challenge, the respondents were assured of the utmost confidentiality. The other difficulty that was bound to be encountered during the verification process was the confirmation that the information posted in the questionnaire is objective and not subjective. To eliminate this problem, the researcher developed pilot testing in an effort to determine the reliability and validity of the research instrument employed. A Cronbach's alpha was used in this test.

Other shortcomings that were brought about by the research included the small sample. Though violence during electoral periods has been experienced in the informal settlements in Nairobi, there have also been cases of insecurity in other parts of Kenya, particularly the major towns like Kisumu. Consequently, the findings of the study must be applied with respect to the specific challenges and dynamics that may be peculiar in other places other than informal settlements.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This section reviews previously conducted research, focusing on its objectives and theoretical foundations. It also presents the conceptual framework.

2.2. Empirical Review

Here, the past studies are reviewed depending on the objectives of the study and the theoretical foundations

2.2.1. Election Campaign Strategies and National Security

The nature of an election exposes it to various security threats to participants, infrastructure, information and material (ACE Electoral Network, 2023). The proper analysis of election security has to utilize knowledge and experience in several fields. The strong level of communication and coordination between the agencies involved in the administration and security of an election is also a good advantage. Both security analyses and planning cannot be effective when they take place only during a short time leading to the beginning of the electoral process, nor rely entirely on reactionary measures. Barring security hazards and averting their effect, consequence, or likelihood of occurring is a strategy that the electoral authorities and their security partners anticipate and pre-empt.

Electoral process is a very elaborate sequence of interacting sub-processes of which the following can be discussed, among others: boundary delimitation, civic education, voter education, voter registration, party registration, candidate nomination, the campaign period, polling operations, tallying and counting, dispute resolution and the

formal declaration of results (Congressional Research Service, 2019). All these sub-processes take place, with the possible exception of boundary delimitation (which tends to take place after a decennial census exercise), in every election cycle. Such sub-processes can be described in terms of the types of threats involved, depending on: the specific strategy taken, cross-fertilization among sub-processes and the specifics of the particular election. Additionally, the circumstances of an election have the propensity to change swiftly, necessitating swift reprioritization or invalidation of initial security assumptions. In response, the threat and risk analysis become a continuous exercise throughout the electoral process and not necessarily an event-driven exercise.

The kinds of security threats that are likely to ensue in a given election depend on structural and circumstantial factors of the election process. The design of the election process, e.g., the selection of the electoral system, can encourage or discourage threats. As an example, an electoral system that operates using a single national district (the national borders constitute one voting division), where voters are free to cast their vote at any voting station, will not present any incentive to forcefully relocate voters within the territory because no matter where the vote is cast, it will be counted in the total number of votes (Rudolph, 2019). On the one hand, this structure can encourage attempts to forcefully migrate voters who are eligible to vote across national boundaries in order to keep them out of the voting process. A similar scenario presents an elevated level of structural risk to border control operations at the voter registration and polling stages of an election in security terms.

Events will determine the intensity and priority of danger of different threats in every election and at every step of the electoral process. That is, in the case of an election that

involves a presidential run-off (the last two nominees are contesting the elections), the risk of political assassination is posed on a much larger scale than in an election between several hundred parliamentarians to an assembly. Likewise, an election taking place under a post-conflict peace deal is not going to have the same risk profile when compared to an election held in a country with a history free of violent conflict (Wilde, 2024).

The mission-critical assets, which are people, infrastructure, information, and materials, are identified to map the risk profile of the election, such that without them, the election cannot reasonably proceed. Together, the structural and circumstantial characteristics of any election act will determine in which stage of the process an asset is the most important, and, importantly, whether this can vary across sub-processes. Certain kinds of electoral processes are also more capable of adjusting to an attack (Wilde, 2024). As an example, burning of ballot boxes at a polling station after the polls have closed may or may not incapacitate the capacity of the election to give a result of such an election. The effect of such an attack will depend on various structural and circumstantial factors. Differentiating between mission-critical and recoverable threats is an important part of the analysis of electoral risk across the evacuation process and prioritization. The section, therefore, discourses on the relationship between election strategies and national security in Kenya.

Wahman and Goldring (2020) discussed how the political dominance was connected with ethnic hostility in the election process in Africa. In particular, it applied regression in the analysis and researched the Sixteen elections in the Republic of Zambia. The result of the research revealed that pre-election violence is likely to erupt in areas where

there is less competition than in areas with high political rivalry, contrary to expectations. This is because dominating political parties and parties whose status was weak had reasons to entrench violence. Violence is employed as a means to reduce the democratic space and ensure their dominance. In contrast, the weak political parties may employ violence to break the monopoly of big political formations. It therefore reveals that the degree of political control by the political parties is a key contributor to political violence, which is one of the causes of insecurity.

A study by Wilde (2024) addressed the topics of election campaigning techniques and funding and their implication on national security in the framework of the United States. The researcher reviewed some of the components of campaign strategies which may have far-reaching effects on national security, either directly or indirectly. Based on the review, candidates can exploit partisan use of rhetoric by inflaming voters on a political, ethnic, or religious basis in order to recruit voters. This polarization may cause heightened tensions in society, and could emerge in civil unrest/violence. When the representatives of the population feel lost or endangered by the election process, there is a risk that social integration is destabilized and, therefore, national security is compromised. In addition, the study has looked at how election campaigns in contemporary society are likely to employ digital platforms to perform outreach and reach out to voters. This, however, also provides an instrument of misinformation, which can misinform voters about candidates or policies. This misinformation may result in confusion and distrust in the process of elections, which undermines voter turnout or objections to the results of elections. Also, as far as election security is concerned, threats that can impact the elections through the cybersecurity of the voting system carry risks to national security because security agencies can be used to exploit

the vulnerabilities in such an attack. Other campaign policies are those that give attention to particular matters that will appeal to voters, and such issues could become the priorities when elected leaders assume office. When a campaign focuses relatively more on particular domestic agenda items than another aspect of national life, such as economic development at the cost of defence expenditure or vice versa, it has the potential to undermine domestic national security capacities. Case in point, a drop in military preparedness funding or intelligence programs may make a country susceptible to foreign enemies. The study also determined that election campaigns can be interfered with by outside actors that want to manipulate community views or derail the democratic process in their interests. An outside government or entity could take part in strategic communication actions that would attempt to contest the electoral outcome by propaganda or by attempting to fund a specific candidate or party. This kind of interference not only undermines the integrity of the elections but also poses a difficult threat to the sovereignty and security of a nation. The review indicates that the approaches adopted in campaigns tend to determine the policy agendas of the individuals who win elections once they get into power. When a candidate centres the theme of isolationism in his campaign, it may result in less international cooperation between countries in terms of security issues, including countering terrorism or plans of collective defence (e.g., NATO). On the contrary, campaigns that harbour powerful international alliances can help improve national security through joint actions.

The results of a survey on the influence of the 2024 US election on world security, conducted by the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, 2024, were published. Essentially, the discussion entailed how the different strategies used in the campaigning process can be used to change the perception of the people concerning matters relating

to national security, policy priorities, and, ultimately, the decision-making process of the elected officials. The research identified some strategies during the election campaign that influenced the perception of the voters and national security in the end. These strategies comprised: rhetoric and messaging, influence on the media, political advertisement, public debates and forums. In the article, the authors discovered that candidates can offer national security issues in a manner that appeals to voters' fears or apprehensions. To take a more topical example, a focus on the threat posed by terrorism or cyber-attacks may encourage more citizens to support aggression in foreign policy or the expansion of internal security. Secondly, the language candidates adopt during their campaigns is important in mounding the opinion of the citizens. Clear-cut, aggressive language regarding national security may create assurance among the voters, whereas vague messages can create doubt among voters regarding the candidate on matters of national security. Thirdly, it was identified that the media is an important extra agent between the candidates and voters. Campaigns usually take the help of the media to broadcast their messages about national security. Fourthly, it was determined that advertisements broadcast specifically regarding national security concerns can persuade undecided voters by either attracting them to the accomplishments or repelling them to the inefficiencies of a candidate in this area. For example, advertisements that portray candidates as powerful in crime or terrorism could help them gain popularity amongst voters who feel safety is a priority. Lastly, the discourse on national security in public discussions during debates allows candidates to have a chance to explain their stands on the national security issue to the voters. The responses of the candidates on the issues of military involvement, intelligence affairs, and diplomatic relations can affect the methods of voter reliance and likability. As such, the study has concluded that the impact of election campaign strategies on the security of nations is double-

sided, taking into consideration psychological dependencies based on fear and trust, as well as the strategic communication itself adopted by candidates during an election year. Comprehending these dynamics becomes pivotal in the context of the work of political analysts as well as policymakers, as they are forced to hold onto the consequences of electoral politics in regard to national safety and defence policies.

In Kenya, the work of Ochieng, Matanga and Iteyo (2023) examined causes and outcomes of post-election violence in Kenya. The theory of voting guided the study. The study results indicated that the biggest causes of election violence in Kenya were the election campaigns, the reporting of election results or the failure to negotiate with satisfactory electoral conflict resolution mechanisms. Moreover, the study also established that internal displacement of civilians has been one of the impacts of post-election violence. It was also established that the violence associated with the election had led to loss of life and destruction of property. The study has, however, not dwelt on the informal settlements that have been characterized by election violence in each election cycle, thus presenting a contextual gap that was addressed in the current study.

Gebrehana's (2021) study looked into the causes of youth-led violence during the elections in the informal settlements in Nairobi. The research used the information of seventeen participants in the semi-structured interview. The main conclusion brought about by the study is that ethnic-focused election campaign strategies have played a major role in youth violence in the informal settlements of Kenya, especially in Nairobi. Furthermore, the results of the research indicated that in elections in Kenya, political campaigns have resembled commercial enterprises where the young people are hired and paid to attend political rallies and create a false sense of popularity. When these

candidates lose, the game of violence commences. Moreover, the results imply that the government showed less initiative in trying to caution politicians in the election campaigns about using inciting language. This has precipitated election violence in informal settlements. Conceptually, the study was weak as it failed to investigate the position of NGOs and leaders in the informal settlements in terms of national security and peace restoration. This study thus attempted to fill this gap.

In another work, Horowitz (2016) evaluated the experiences of the Kenyan 2007 elections and the causes of violence that marred Kenya's national security. The study concluded that the violence that took place during the 2007 elections was provoked by polarized election campaigns that pitted the forty-one communities against a single community. The results of the study indicated that ethnic centered campaigns in politics brought about a sense of ethnic injustices, and this eventually resulted in post-election violence that almost weakened the Kenyan economy. Weak electoral policies on how to address ethnic politics through their campaigns were also found to be one major vulnerability that encouraged the use of ethnic based campaigns and finally violence. The largest drawback of the study is that it did not consider the solution to the violence. An example is the non-analysis of the role of the leaders in the informal settlements, and the role of the nongovernmental organizations in advancing peace. This study thus assisted in filling such gaps.

Antonio and Huerta (2021) evaluate the use of crime organizations in political assassinations in Mexico during the 2018 electoral process. The research employed a descriptive research design and used a descriptive analysis to identify that political assassinations were at their peak in the year 2018, with forty-eight candidates being

assassinated. According to the findings, the political assassinations were due to political rivals who employed criminal groups. In some states, such as Guerrero and Puebla, it was indicated that murdered candidates were targeted because of criminal organizations. The study is useful in that it reveals the causes of political assassinations posed by political players, especially political rivals. However, the study has not elaborated much on how these political killings amongst the political actors lead to national insecurity.

Huebert and Zarychta (2019) considered the relation between political campaigns and political violence in Mexico during the years 1994 to 2010. The research employed a correlation study and established how the worst form of violence is affected by political campaigns, that is, homicides. The analysis focused on the relevance of municipalities and the quality of elections. The results of the research support the assumption that in conditions where the quality of elections was evaluated as high, the conditions of correlation between political campaign and violence were indicated negatively. However, during the instances where the quality of elections was considered poor, political campaigns caused the rise in the occurrence of violence. This, in effect, means that the interactions between political campaigns and violence were mostly based on how the elections were. The central gap with the study is that it was conducted in the context of Mexico, where political systems are not similar to those found in Kenya. Therefore, the current study focused on the interaction between political campaigns and national security in Kenya.

Dierolf, Milanese and Valencia (2019) examined the relationship between electoral competition, political orders, and violence in Colombia. The data was analysed using a

correlation analysis. In particular, the study looked at assassinations of social as well as civic leaders in Colombia who have been influential in the field of politics. Among the results of the study, it is established that approximately three hundred and eighty-four murders of social and civic leaders in Colombia were given a political order between 2016 and 2018. The results demonstrate that the political style of the political actors was important in its impact on causing violence in the nation. An example of this is that it was proved that the entry of new players into the political arena is a political threat to those already in the political arena, and in a bid to prevent the new entrants, they tend to resort to incursions into assassinations, thereby creating insecurity in Colombia.

In Kenya, the violence in the electoral competition was evaluated through a survey research design, as carried out by Rosenzweig (2018). Particularly, the research targets the politicians and their methods of engaging citizens through political groupings within the political process. The results of the survey showed that politicians use groups to meet citizens and resort to violence to terrorize voters and their political rivals, and therefore affect their voting patterns. In other instances, the researcher found that the politicians employed violence and harassment as a means of keeping a criminal enterprise going and intimidating the voters of the other party. On the side of the citizens, the research has found that they entrusted the leaders who had a history of violence due to disillusionment, which increases their expectations of the political candidates to engage in political violence in future, even after the correct election results. The researcher also observed that displacement and loss of lives by civilians have been one of the impacts of election violence in Kenya. The research did not, however, analyze election violence in informal settlements, which the current study does, as it fills the existing research gap.

In a study, Wambua (2017) noted that Kenya is a mixed ethnic nation and its pluralist elections are inevitably accompanied by ethnically charged strategizing and subtexts. No less than Kenya, which had been referred to as the most peaceful state on the continent, as well as on numerous occasions, such as in 2017,1992,2007, and 1997, experienced electoral clashes as a result of which many Kenyans lost their lives and were displaced from their homes (KNCHR, 2017). Although there are a number of other causes of conflicts in Kenya, which include cultural, legal, historical, institutional and structural reasons, they have always reflected an underlying ethnic-identity dilemma. This is because it is rooted in the foundations of pluralist democratic politics, which presuppose the existence of political party structures and strategies that initially split the nation along ethnic affiliations. Politicians were so careful to camouflage ethnic alliances in the name of nationalism because they aimed at gaining patronage and ethnic support that could propel them to power. In spite of the fact that the initiators of these electoral tensions in the nation are extra-ethnic, the analysis of these electoral conflicts, as well as interventions, thereof, have always been badly ethnicized and polluted with ethnic discrimination. This fact is herein conceptualized as ethnicization.

2.2.2. Role of Community Leadership in Ensuring a Secure Electoral Process

Elections constitute one of the most politically volatile moments in any democratic environment, and such is mostly accompanied by unity or disunity. Security plays a critical role at these moments, not only to prevent violence, but also to ensure the legitimacy of the process and the support of the people for the democratic institutions. However, a community policing model, through which the relations between the police and citizens should be built on the principles of partnership, decentralized decision-making, and proactive community intelligence gathering, has become highly popular worldwide. Although community policing has traditionally been seen as crime

prevention, it has increasingly become a general democratic policing style which can prove vital in securing electoral environments. In situations of political fragility, ethnic diversity, or electoral violence, this model would succeed in closing the trust gap between security forces and communities. Nevertheless, it is not equally effective everywhere; there are challenges in political manipulation, a lack of institutional capacity, and structural disparity, which can destroy the promise of its effectiveness.

Innes (2016) touches on the fundamental arguments on the practice of community policing in the United Kingdom with emphasis on its use in counter-terrorism operations, implementing neighborhood responses and forms of democratic responses to law enforcement practices. Although his focus is on terrorism threats, his conclusions can be effectively applied to the issue of security in elections. According to Innes, community intelligence flows, which are created through trust-based interactions between the police and the residents, play a key role in recognizing emergent risks before they become serious. These early-warning systems, in an electoral setting, may identify possible hotspots of unrest, track hate speech, and quell violent mobilization. Nevertheless, Innes warns that all these advantages require the legitimacy of the police in the mind of the community; when the police are politically partisan, then they may lose the benefits associated with community intelligence. This observation signifies that a research gap exists in this matter across the globe: though the key roles of community policing, in its turn, are well-documented in terms of improving the safety of a particular cohort of individuals, there is a lack of empirical investigation into how these intelligence exchanges, in particular, reduce electoral risks without violating political rights.

In Ferreira (1996), the author uses transitional democracies in Central and Eastern Europe as the means of examining how community policing was used to restore a level of public trust when the communist governments made a transition to democracies. In such events, police neutrality and responsiveness were held on a special platform with electoral legitimacy. This line of thinking, which sets forth the work of Ferreira, highlights the importance of community policing in the restoration of confidence in elections, particularly in rooting societies out of authoritarianism. The relationships developed between the police and the local people ensured that individuals felt secure enough to engage in political processes, whether at a rally or when going to vote. As Ferreira's comparative study indicates, however, such relationships can easily be corroded away once there are no institutional controls in place to guard against the politicization of policing. Although his work can inform the process of post-authoritarian transition, he does not comment on maintaining community policing programs in resource-poor or fragile state environments, which is especially pertinent to many African countries.

The study by Charlotte Cross (2014) on Tanzania provides an interpretation of community policing in the context of local politics within multiparty electoral politics. She discovers that, albeit initially, the community policing guidance was put in place as security reforms to enhance the sense of security. Still, it was bundled with local patronage, place loyalties, and political affiliation. In elections, police actions are occasionally long, allegedly in support of the government of the day, or to give its party an electoral advantage. This politicization compromised community trust and, in certain incidents, raised the crunch instead of settling it down. The case with Cross also demonstrates that in Africa, the effectiveness of electoral security tools such as

community policing lies not only in their operational conception but also in the political background. However, her work does not answer the question of how such risks can be alleviated by either institutional checks or independent scrutiny during elections.

In their research, Ochieng and Ruhode (2013), which centres on electronic voting technologies in South Africa, indirectly give insight into the role of community trust and, by extension, community policing towards maintaining electoral integrity. They state that technological systems are credible as the institutions which manage them. Suppose the electoral environment is characterized by community policing that is vital and functional. In that case, there is a tendency for the electoral results to be received with better acceptance by the people since they feel they have a say in how they can monitor the process. Their discussion supports the fact that the concept of community policing can be an instrument of confidence-building, especially where new technologies are being implemented. The study, however, lacks the explicit relationship as to how such trust-building effects can be directly attributed to the structures of community policing, giving rise to a gap in the connection between technological integrity and the localized security partnerships.

Blair et al. (2021) are more sober when it comes to the case of an experimental study carried out in the Global South, where cases in Uganda and Liberia are presented. They discover that community policing does not play a major role in enhancing citizen trust in the police or lowering crime, only as long as other processes of institutional improvements accompany its occurrence. When applied to elections, it implies that community policing can only give us more eyes and ears on the street. Still, it will not necessarily help to achieve secure electoral environments unless there are further

reforms that are made to accountability, training, and transparency. The difference here is noticeable, where much of the scholarship presupposes that community policing has inherent trust-building characteristics. In contrast, empirical evidence demonstrated that this is possible only given a deep-rooted change in the system.

The analysis conducted by Pommerolle (2023) on community policing in Kenya provides a critical perspective regarding its reform path prior to the year 2010. They claim that the introduction of community policing as a democratic and participatory policy paradigm, in fact, has worked as a more decentralized form of repression. With the tension that followed the Kenyan elections, particularly in the early 2000s, the community police mechanisms were at times used to collect intelligence on the political rivals instead of the fact that this was meant to provide electoral safety without favour or prejudice. Such a finding points to an underlying dilemma: absent a strong safeguard against it, community policing can serve itself up as a partisan tool of partisan security measures. However, the extent to which post-2010 constitutional change in Kenya was able to overcome these weaknesses in the polling process is poorly investigated.

A more modern opinion may be found in Skilling (2016), which draws attention to using the concepts of democratic policing in the context of community policing efforts in Kenya. Through field research, she observes that accountability, community involvement and transparency are the key to ensuring that the citizens trust the police during elections. Her review indicates that by enabling the operationalization of these principles in the open meetings, joint problem-solving, and visible impartiality, community policing can become a stabilizing factor during electoral periods. However, Skilling also points out that such programs are hindered because of financial limitations

and the fact that implementation is not uniform across the country. There is a gap in understanding the sustainability of these positive effects because there is a lack of longitudinal study that follows the same communities over time and through election cycles.

Mutisya Kioko (2017) centres the discussion on the collection of local peace committees and the Nyumba Kumi alternative, which is a hybrid organization of community-based policing in Kenya. He demonstrates how such grass-roots systems have been applied to conflict resolution and crime monitoring in the course of elections. By combining the traditional powers of the authorities with modern policing, such efforts have succeeded in forestalling localized violence around elections. Nonetheless, Kioko also admits that if there are no strict legal frameworks, the structures can be rather inconsistent and not necessarily politically neutral. This deviation begs significant questions regarding standardization, management, and control, which have not been addressed well in the literature.

A review of these studies supports the assertion that community policing can potentially promote election security through community-based intelligence collection, community-trust building between the police and the citizens, and localized conflict management. Nonetheless, a number of research gaps can be seen. This is because there is a scarcity of longitudinal studies on community policing and how it can influence successive elections, and, therefore, it is hard to determine sustainability. Second, there is a shortage in the literature of comparative analyses of Africa that measure and compare the effects of various political environments on community policing around the election time. Third, the interface between community policing and the use of new

electoral technologies has not been extensively explored, in part because there is evidence to show that trust in policing is linked to measures of acceptance of technological innovations (Ochieng & Ruhode, 2013). Fourth, citizen perception towards legitimization of community policing during elections is poorly studied, yet it is imperative to the success. Filling these lapses would inform reforms that would ensure that community policing is not politicized and achieve its full potential in achieving secure elections.

2.2.3 Security Agencies' Initiatives and Guaranteeing a Safe Electoral Process

Protecting electoral systems in the 21st century is a multi-dimensional challenge due to the intertwining of digital technology, cybersecurity threats and fast-changing disinformation environments with political rivalries. In most African countries, such as Kenya, security agencies are at the Centre stage of ensuring safe, credible, and transparent elections that are normally conducted under a high state of tension and mistrust by parts of the population. This literature review summarizes literature that has sought to determine how the initiatives of the security agencies are impacted by the deployment of electoral technology, institutional accountability and the mitigation of electoral threats. The main theme present in these works is that although technology promises to bring more transparency and security, there are additional weaknesses that it will have to deal with in the form of security agency countermeasures. There are research gaps on the impact of the interventions on the long-term, democratic freedoms and finding the balance between security needs and civil liberties.

The critical analysis provided by Pommerolle (2022), with regard to the circumstances surrounding the 2017 Kenyan presidential election, can provide a European academic insight into the use and hindrance of technology in matters of electoral transparency.

As her analysis shows, the management of the electoral process focused on the security organs as the main actors, including the intelligence agencies and police cyber units, especially the protection of sensitive digital infrastructure and their reaction to hacking allegations. Nonetheless, Pommerolle's findings confirm the paradox of security-led technological management whereby, in the guise of securing transparency, interventions tended to fortify the centralized state control and restrict scrutiny. This friction is explained by a wider issue across the world of democracy and how security agencies can increasingly encroach on their mandate as being protective, and indirectly influence the result of the elections by controlling digital information circulation. What is not adequately explored in her work, and indeed in the literature on the subject as a whole, is how institutionalized oversight systems can be built to help guarantee that technology-based elections through security agency participation primarily benefit rather than derail electoral legitimacy.

McDermott (2022) complements this discussion by exploring the verifiable voting system implemented in the developing nations, locating their results within the European scholarly community. They claim that end-to-end verifiable voting (EV2E-V) technologies can provide a theoretical defence against tampering, but that it is especially difficult to apply in low-resource contexts. In other cases, like in Pakistan, their challenges are amplified by poor institutional capacity, low digital literacy and inadequate expertise in the cybersecurity sector of electoral management operations and security departments. This observation is true in Africa, where security agencies do not always possess sophisticated forensic and monitoring prowess that enable them to promptly counter even complex forms of cyberattacks. Although the authors are able to offer significant technological criticism, they fail to address how institutional

coordination with the security agencies and civilian oversight organizations could be institutionalized to fill these capacity deficits.

In the same line of investigation, Okolo (2024) discusses the menace of disinformation that is being propagated via the input of AI and which presents an imposing challenge to the integrity of elections globally. Although he examines a specific case of Africa, his work is grounded in African political realities. Yet, it is engaged with the general trends of Western academic communities around counter-disinformation measures. Kolo discusses and argues that state security agencies are becoming more active in observing the online spaces, red-tagging the disinformation campaigns, and exercising counter-narratives. But he cautions that any such interventionary measures, in the absence of clear channels of accountability, can easily be used to allow political censorship. His work also illustrates how poorly developed cyber-intelligence capabilities in most states today are able to track and counter the wildfire spread of generative AI-based propaganda. What stands out is that there is a lack of empirical evidence on the effects of these cyber-countermeasures on people's trust in the electoral processes on a large scale, both in the global and the African context.

Sibe and Kaunert (2023) present the detailed Nigerian case study of electoral security in terms of the 2023 elections. They discuss how the security services in Nigeria have worked together with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to provide security mechanisms in the application of cybersecurity measures, control technological uptake, and curb the potential threats that comprise hacking and misinformation, among others. They found that although the legal systems offered a starting point on the path to security action, the effectiveness was rather standardized

by intra-agency coordination and the capability to change rapidly to emerging computer crimes. Notably, the Nigerian case emphasizes the need for states in Africa to institutionalize joint cyber task forces alongside electoral bodies and national security agencies, as well as the role of technology partners in the private sector. This does not, however, mean that rural and remote voting systems are not vulnerable, and the area has not been studied well enough in comparative African electoral security research.

In South Africa, Okaro, Omar, and Timcke (2024) examine the security of the Electoral Commission mobile app that was made to enable voting engagement and participation. They found out that the security agencies were key to the provision of data protection measures, as well as cyber intrusion and confidence in the application. However, they also raise the danger that, unless technology tools are strictly controlled, they can be used to spy on voters or the politically profiled. The importance of this finding is to more general African situations where mobile and digital are increasingly the Centre of attention in electoral involvement. However, this fails to analyze adequately how security agencies can strike a balance between technological safeguarding and maintenance of political rights, which is especially pressing in states with a tradition of security morass.

N. Daka, Oando (2024) and Majiwa (2024) continue the topic with commercial proceedings, turning to intellectual property (IP) and the importance of the private sector in the digitization of African elections. They complain that electoral technologies such as biometric voter registration systems are usually operated by private companies that are not subject to governmental control. Security agencies are both presented as joint players and oversight organs in a bid to ensure that there is no lapse in security

alongside the involvement of the private sector. The contribution also made by the authors in this study is crucial in connecting the phenomena of electoral integrity and IP governance, as they are linked. However, the question of accountability arises for the security agencies here when dealing with giant transnational technology agencies whose contracts include secrecy provisions that prevent any form of scrutiny.

The study by Odote and Kanyinga (2021) is deep in its interpretation of the interplay between electoral technology and the deployment of security forces alongside preventing the occurrence of political violence in Kenya. This investigation of previous elections in Kenya reveals that although technology can minimize the chances of cheating in the election, the shift towards technology has also resulted in increased debates, hence forcing the intervention of security forces in the form of overwhelming force. One such incident that happened in 2017 was allegations of server manipulation that launched high-stakes cyber-investigations by both police and intelligence agencies, and enforced physical security measures in curbing unrest. One inference that a reader can come up with by reading this work is that the security agencies tend to act reactively than preemptively, in that they cannot respond to a crisis when it happens. Instead, they wait until it has been exacerbated to an extent where action can help salvage the situation. Such a reactive posture has indicated a serious research gap on how security agencies can shift to the anticipatory, intelligence-driven approaches to electoral security.

Cheeseman, Kanyinga, Lynch, and Willis (2024) extend the discussion into institutional strengthening during the Kenyan general elections in 2022. They look at the synergy between the Independent Electoral Boundaries Commission (IEBC),

judiciary, and police that created a stable environment with protection of the electoral infrastructure and handling of claims of fraud. Their study indicates that multi-agency strategies, which are monitored by the judiciary, can help in the actual and apparent safety of elections. Nonetheless, they are careful to note that efforts at building institutional coordination are weak, and inter-agency rivalries at times sabotage concerted action. Although their efforts successfully bookmark the mechanics of inter-agency collaboration, they failed to answer the question of how the same can be maintained and advanced during the times between electoral periods.

Cheeseman and Lugano (2024) direct the eyes of attention to the phenomenon of social media and its regulation within the Kenyan presidential opinion during the 2022 election. They examine the extent to which state security bodies tracked the internet to identify and counter malicious content that was a threat to peaceful electoral processes. The emergence between what is needed to prevent violence and the possible curtailment of legitimate political debate comes out in their findings. This reflects the predicaments Okolo (2024) points out in the African reality at large. Nevertheless, there is limited empirical evidence on the perception of citizens towards such online surveillance during elections, which is a critical knowledge gap that potentially minimizes the contribution of security-led policy intervention in the online space in achieving a peaceful electoral process.

Considering these studies collectively, there is an observable common understanding of the importance of security agencies in ensuring a safe electoral state, especially in digitalized environments. The European take provided by Pommerolle (2022), Haq, Ali, and McDermott (2022), and African comparative studies by Sibe and Kaunert

(2023) and Okaro (2024) agree that technology provides empowerment and challenges to electoral integrity. In Kenya, particularly, as would be recorded by Odote and Kanyinga (2021) and Cheeseman (2024), security agencies would play a central role in averting both cyber threats and physical threats.

Nevertheless, there are still a number of research gaps in this body of literature. One, there is not much longitudinal examination into the efficacy of security actions by examining the effectiveness of security actions over multiple electoral cycles and how the lessons learned are institutionalized; two, there is little transnational cross coverage of the effectiveness of security interventions; and three, there is no transnational comparison of the effects of security interventions across regions. Second, although the technological capabilities of security agencies are a common issue, little is available on how such capacities can be developed in an environment where security agencies have limited resources. Third, the tension between the protection required in the electoral sphere and the protection of civil liberties has been, in most cases, under-theorized, especially in a scenario where intervention in the name of providing security may degenerate into political repression. Fourth, the citizen perception of the authority of security agencies to operate in electoral events is unclear, but this aspect is essential in enhancing credibility in the elections. Closing these gaps will necessitate interdisciplinary research on political science, security studies, information technology and the human rights systems.

2.2.4 The Effect of political party, online electoral Mobilization on National Security

Digital electoral mobilization has become a core topic in transformative aspects of how political campaigning is approached, voter participation is enhanced, and elections are

conducted in most parts of the globe. Digital environments, including mass-market social media networks and encrypted messaging applications, provide new vistas on political involvement as political actors can connect with many individuals in seconds and rapidly deploy voter bases like never before. Nevertheless, those tools have emerged as a threat to the national security of every country, as they multiply the spread of disinformation, divide people into camps, and decrease trust towards democratic institutions. Digital mobilization and the national security nexus are central during election times when political situations are too tense and flows of information are more prone to manipulation.

This is highlighted by Ferrara (2017) when analyzing the 2017 French presidential elections with the statement that misinformation campaigns organized through the use of bots undermined the election. His study of the activities on Twitter against Emmanuel Macron exposed an operation of fake accounts that shared fraudulent documents and conspiracy theories. Not only do these digital operations attempt to affect the way voters think, but they also attack the democratic process by causing people to lose trust in the electoral process. Existing in the realm of national security, the work presented by Ferrara raises the problem of timely identification and countering the influence operations organized by foreign or even domestic actors which can transcend national boundaries. Although his research presents detailed information on bot behaviours, it does not introduce questions of what must be done in the way future institutions and policies must be put in place to prevent such operations in different political settings, particularly in countries with lax cyber-defence systems.

The study by Stella, Ferrara, and De Domenico (2018) also sheds more light on the role of the bots in electoral mobilization since they focused on the Catalan independence referendum. Their results show that polar and inflammatory content grew more than nonpolar content in bots, adding fuel to the fire in a time of political sensitivity. This multiplication situation is a further exacerbation of prevailing cleavages in society, giving rise to the possibility of spiraling up to violence. The authors show that digital mobilization cannot be regarded only as a persuasion tool but can also play an important role in undermining national stability when used as a tool of dividing people. Nevertheless, the study is largely concerned with content dynamics and the effect of exposure. It does not address the issue of which concrete countermeasures the security agencies are able to take to strike a balance between free expression and harm reduction.

The study by Shao (2017) looks into the distribution of low-credibility material by social bots in electoral settings in the West. They conclude that bots are force multipliers of misinformation and boost content of questionable sources disproportionately, skewing the discourse across the world. It provides a direct challenge to national security as mass persuasion can be exercised at will, which can disenfranchise the results of an electoral process. Although their work measures the effect of bots and key actors in network clusters, it lacks studies on political and security systems that curb the bot influence without contravening the rights of individuals. This omission in the analysis reflects a larger research gap in understanding the component of digital mobilization threats in terms of governance.

A sub-Saharan country such as Nigeria and its 2023 general elections, as discussed in the work by Aideloje, Sylvester, and Jacintha (2024), provide an interesting example

of how social media simultaneously serves the functions of democratic activism and a driver of security risks. Their report will give an account of how Twitter and Facebook platforms were used to attract a large number of youth into the political scene. However, this mobilization also fueled pre-election tensions with online fights being transferred to real-life conflicts. In terms of security concepts, their discussion also shows how online mobilization may inadvertently increase the chance of instability, particularly when there is polarization in politics. Although the authors understand the key importance of the system of mobilization based on youth activism, they do little to explain what kind of institutional protection should be offered to transform this digital power into benign politics.

Ngange and Elonge (2019) give a historical insight into the presence of digital electronics electoral mobilization in Africa through the perspective of the utilization of websites and online facilities by parties in the Cameroon elections. Their study encapsulates the activities of digital mobilization in a sub-Saharan setting, where the lack of internet penetration did not stop parties from experimenting with digital mobilization strategies. Although the digital tools indeed increased the political reach, the security treatment associated with such tools was not yet developed at the time. The work is a form of benchmarking on the speed at which the security aspect of digital mobilization has changed in Africa. However, it has not delved much into the practices of how security threats on the internet can be undermined through online political activity.

Daka, Oando and Majiwa (2024) examine the intellectual property/proprietary digital platforms approach to digital mobilization and provide the Kenyan elections as an

important example. They claim that the dependence of the elections on electoral technologies to be put in place by the private companies can introduce weaknesses to the democratic rule, such as susceptibility to cyber-interference and loss of transparency. In national security, such vulnerabilities are hugely dangerous because they are exposed to political interventions or foreign interventions. The idea of secure and accountable digital infrastructure should be emphasized, as shown in their study; however, it remains an open question why state security agencies have a role in managing the private sector involvement in electoral mobilization technology.

The article by Wefwafwa, Wekesa, and Gagliardone (2025) is an investigation of the contribution of WhatsApp to Kenyan electoral politics, playing the role of voter mobilization, in addition to fueling polarization amongst Kenyan political actors. They conclude that WhatsApp groups became key arenas of political mobilization, as well as the dissemination of unverified information and explosive discourses. The literature review has shown that although there are privacy advantages to using encrypted messaging, there is also a new set of challenges it poses to national security authorities who need to balance their ability to track potentially violent forms of induced participation without violating privacy rights. This is a contradiction between the issue of privacy versus security, which has been left unaddressed in both the Kenyan and the world research.

Another type of digital mobilization is discussed in the article by Harris, Kamindo, and van der Windt (2022) regarding an SMS intervention that could help boost the number of voter registrants in Kenya. Their experimental study (based on a large-scale randomized sample) demonstrates that message-targeted campaigns can considerably

raise voter inclusion. Nevertheless, the process of mass collection and utilization of citizens' personal information to facilitate mobilization begs questions about security, state dominance, and surveillance abuse. The authors fail to provide a solution to the problem of how such systems can be made secure against misuse, even though the desired democratic end was achieved because of the intervention.

The chapter by Mare, Mainye and Manga (2024) locates the digital with organised online campaigning in Kenya within the political economy of digital campaigning. They single out some key actors, such as influencers, political consultants, and bot operators, who frame electoral debates and determine their influence on opinions. Here, their textual examination shows that these actors tend to lack effective regulation, which means that the digital mobilization may lead to the propagation of disinformation and societal polarization. The study highlights the grey area between acceptable campaigning and detrimental manipulation that has strong implications for national security. However, it does not go further to suggest any specific ways to deal with such challenges, either in terms of regulation or security.

What the literature has in common between the global and African contexts is a critical insight: digital electoral mobilization has become a two-edged sword, opening up possibilities of democratic participation even while entailing threats to national security. Disinformation campaigns, including bots, were proved to contribute to polarization and loss of trust in election system in European cases such as France or Catalonia (Ferrara, 2017; Stella et' Namen followed by al., 2018; Shao et al., 2017). Social media networks have boosted political engagement in Africa, yet on the other

hand, raised the threat of violence as experienced in both Nigeria and Kenya (Aideoloje, 2024; Wefwafwa ward qusfta Greek capital, 2025).

A number of research gaps can be identified on the basis of this synthesis. One is that there is minimal empirical examination of how security organs can go about adequately intervening in digital mobilization without violating the rights to expression and privacy. Second, with the few exceptions (McConaghy 1997, Marquardt. 2015), much of the literature is concerned with short-term electoral processes, and it remains unclear how the use of digital mobilization influences national security in the long term. Third, it fails to closely look at the contribution of the technology companies operating privately in the process of electoral mobilization and the security risks involved when they involve themselves. Fourth, a largely unexplored yet crucial aspect of security operations in the digital sphere is how citizens view those operations, which is a fundamental determinant of legitimacy in elections.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study adopted the theories of Human Security Theory by the United Nations Development Programme (1994) and Securitization Theory by Barry Buzan (1998)

2.3.1 Human Security Theory

Human security looks at persons and communities as the focal points of security in contrast to the state. It is concerned with safeguarding the citizens against dangers that undermine their physical, economic and psychological welfare.

Residents in the informal settlements in Nairobi are most of the time subjects of political violence, intimidation and displacement during a political campaign. This principle will inform the analysis to focus on the influence of the electoral process in

the day-to-day survival and dignity of people living in areas such as Kibera, Mathare or Mukuru as opposed to trying, and succeeding, to just protect the electoral process or the political order.

Human security understands that threats to safety are multi-dimensional (political, economic, environmental, food, health, personal, and community security).

Election periods can be described as a melting pot of multi-dimensional threats (such as political (e.g., incitement), economic (e.g., disruption of livelihoods), and personal (e.g., harassment, gender-based violence) threats) prevailing in informal settlements. This tenet enables the study to understand election campaigns not only as politics but also as agents of insecurity that affect most spheres of life of marginalized urban groups.

Human security is focused on early warning and preventative factors to decrease opportunities of conflict or insecurity before setting off violence.

This tenet reinforces the assessment of how local leaders and government interventions or digital mobilization efforts during election periods can lead to violence or avoid it. The proposed research promotes a study into whether security responses in the informal settlements of Nairobi are proactive and people-focused or reactive and militaristic.

Human security advocates a dual approach to individual security, as it not only furthers the protection of people against harm but also empowers them to make choices that guarantee their safety and development.

In the case of Nairobi, this principle highlights the importance of policies that secure residents during electoral periods (e.g. through peaceful policing and community dialogue) and strengthen them (e.g. through civic education, access to justice and through digital literacy). The explanations in the study reveal how election tactics and

state measures provide or impede the agency and engagement of the residents in the process of security elections.

Although Human Security Theory offers a useful people-based perspective through the focus on personal security and multi-dimensional security threats, it has been accused of being too generalized, ambiguous and challenging to implement in contexts that demand immediate and strategic security-related action planning. By focusing on long-term interventions, it is possible to lose sight of the more immediate political and institutional processes that fuel insecurity during election periods, especially in high-risk places such as the informal settlements in the City County of Nairobi. Within these contexts, where politics, states, and the security apparatus shape and react to perceived danger, Human Security, even on its own, is not adequate to explain how phenomena such as digital mobilization, ethnic polarization, and gangs become regarded as national security threats. This gap necessitates the implementation of the securitization theory, which can provide an alternative approach and look into the threats that are communicated through discourse by the actors. In such a way, it enables the extraordinary measures that are given as their justifications. Securitization Theory can also be applied, and it will enhance the study to examine how the electoral process in the informal settlements is framed and politicized as a matter of security that shapes perception by the people and the state.

2.3.2 Securitization Theory

Barry Buzan (1998) Securitization Theory is a tool that will be employed to frame the analysis. Securitization Theory can be used as a scope through which political processes and implications of the politics of security can be critiqued. The theory emerged from Barry Buzan, and it was later extended by Ole Wæge and Jaap de Wilde, who are

prominent versions of the Copenhagen School of security studies. Its defining assumption is that security is not a state of being but necessarily a product of a social process in which an issue is framed in a certain way: as a threat to its existence. Such framing is a process that is done by speech acts which transfer an issue out of normal politics and into the realm of security, and this authorizes exceptional interventions. As stressed by the advocates of the theory, security is not limited to the military aspect. Still, it could also extend to political, economic, social, and environmental issues. It thus can be highly applicable in examining the interplay of electoral processes and national security in marginalized urban areas.

Barry Buzan is one of the most distinguished strategists and international relations theorists who incorporated both structural and agency-based approaches in the theory of securitization. A major publication in 1998 by Buzan highlighted that a securitizing actor was vital (usually a political leader or institution), the existence of existential threats (real or constructed) and a referent object, which needs protection (typically the state or society). Their components are dynamic; an actor pronounces a threat to be a security threat; the audience does not question the articulation, and a legitimate response is sanctioned. This theory was a breakaway from the traditional security discourses because it showed how security threats are not innate but developed in the political and social discourse. Using his framework, Buzan enables researchers to see how electoral contests, specifically in the volatile informal settlements and those with established socio-economic challenges, become securitized, thus affecting the security apparatus and policies of the state in such settlements.

The principles of Securitization Theory are based on a speech act definition of security that allows for changing an ordinary political concern into a state of emergency. This takes the matter out of the sphere of regular political negotiation and into the sphere of

compelling security interest. In most cases, it justifies actions which would not have been countenanced in the normal world of politics. The theory explains the necessity of securitizing actors to persuade the relevant audience that a certain threat exists and that this threat needs to be acted upon urgently. To gain success in securitization, the acceptance of the audience is the key factor; otherwise, the process fails. Also, securitization demonstrates how a threat is artificially created to make central issues around it. The consequences of this are significant in terms of electoral processes, particularly in informal settlements where political opposition may be rife and discourses of security often marshalled to justify crackdowns or state actions, sometimes to compound local insecurity instead of resolving it.

Buzan's securitization theory was found to apply highly to the informal settlements of Nairobi City County due to the distinctiveness of the social-political atmosphere. Many informal settlements have marginalized territory in which the authority of the state is challenged and where there are high levels of socio-economic vulnerability. Electoral actors can securitize the struggle during an electoral period by declaring it a threat to national security, to allow the introduction of increased presence of security in an electoral context, or even the use of coercive actions. The outcomes of such securitizations affect the lives of the residents by changing the interaction with the state and altering the dynamics of violence and control within such areas. Such a theory allowed the thesis to break down how electioneering securitizing dispositions can shape national security policies and practices and how such moves interact with political talk, security enforcement, and marginality-related realities that permeate informal settlements in Nairobi. Using this lens, the study illuminates the role of electoral mechanics and political securitization on larger security governance and citizen-state relations in the Kenyan urban margins.

2.4 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.1 shows the conceptual framework of the research. The key factors that are assumed to affect national security constitute the independent variable. These factors are the strategies of the election campaign (such as mobilization of the tribes), the efforts of the community leaders (mediation, as well as monitoring), and the efforts by the security agencies (pre-election planning). These variables are hypothetically supposed to have a direct impact on the dependent variable, which is the national security within the city county informal settlements in Nairobi. Despite this, the framework also adds social cohesion and trust as an intervening variable. This implies that the influence of the independent variables on the existence of national security might not be direct, but rather goes through the level of social wellness and trust in society. In this regard, the positive impacts of community leaders, such as empowering social cohesion, would support national security.

Independent Variables

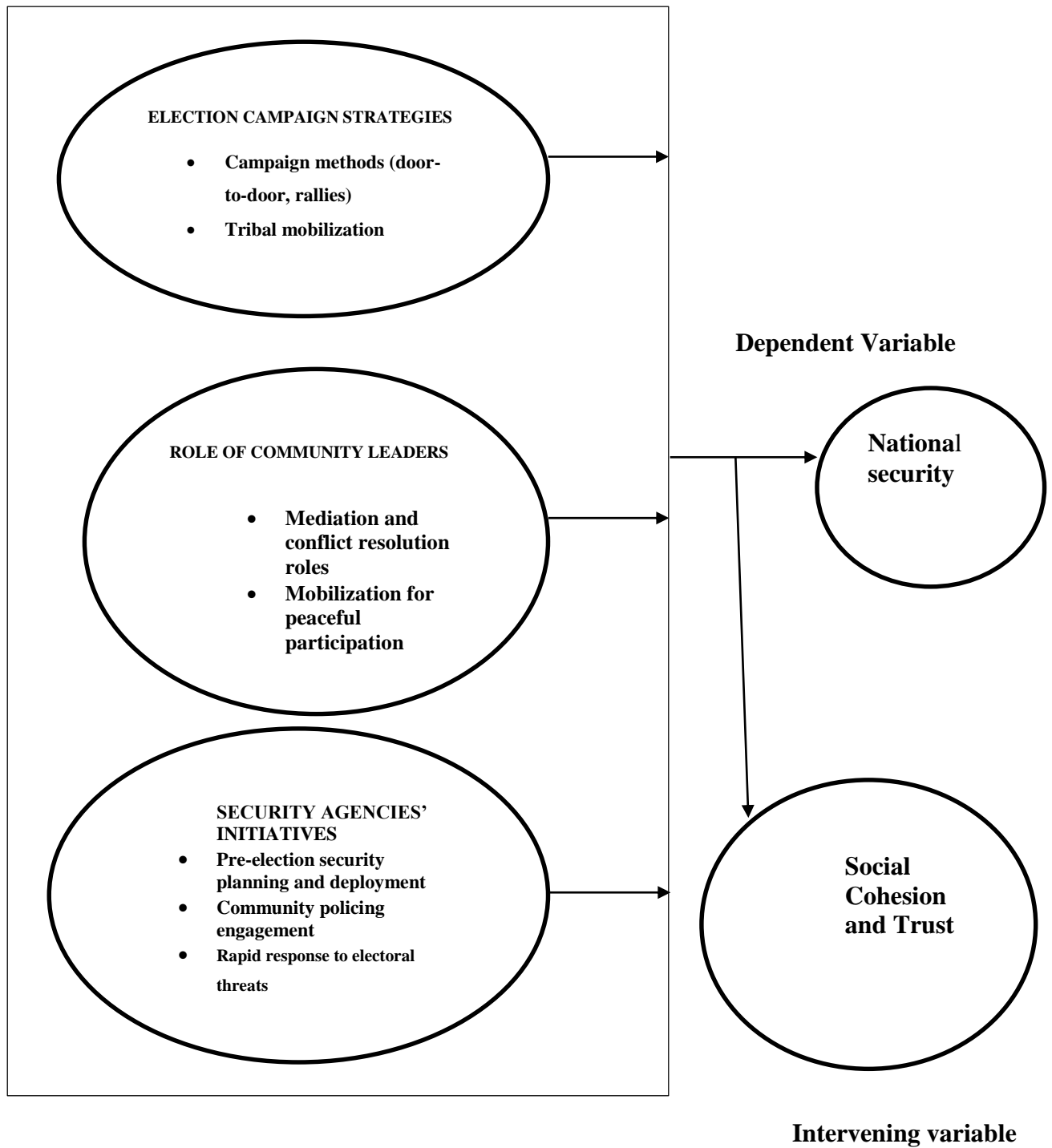


Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author, 2025

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The chapter contains the methodology applied in the study. It discusses the research design, the field of study, the study population, the method of sampling, research instruments, the validity and reliability of research tools, the method of research data collection, data analysis and presentation, and the ethics of the research.

3.2. Research Design

The study employed a mixed-method research design that consisted of a descriptive survey and a historical research design. The descriptive survey that was used was helpful because it enabled a wide range of data collection on experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of the residential sides, local leaders, and the security stakeholders towards the electoral process and security issues. The design would enable the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on a large sample, thereby allowing him to find patterns and correlations between the electoral campaign and incidences of insecurity in informal settlements like Mathare, Kibera and Mukuru. This approach also facilitated the determination of localized patterns and patterns of local variation in the electoral-security nexus. In addition, surveys helped gather updated real-time data, which represents up-to-date data, which was essential in the ever-changing political and social environments of informal settlements in Nairobi (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

On one hand, the research design of historical research was needed because this study gave context to a history in understanding the repeated relationship between electoral cycles and the security situation of Nairobi in its informal settlements. It is through historical analysis that the researcher was able to trace how the electoral violence, as

well as the state response and development of local peace and security mechanisms, have changed over time. This method added depth and perspective to the analysis, giving it room to critically assess how history in the form of past election events has been applied in the current issues and approaches (Given, 2020). Therefore, a combination of historical perspectives with current empirical evidence will lead to a better and more effective analysis of the security implications of the electoral exercise in informal settlements.

3.3. Study Site

The research was carried out in the City County in Nairobi, Kenya, in the informal settlements, in the slums of Kibera, Kawangware, Mukuru, eastleigh, korokocho and Mathare. The main argument for targeting these informal settlements in Nairobi is that they have been identified as the most prone to insecurity and violent behaviours during most of the elections due to political opponents. The National Integration Commission (2020) has cited the informal settlements in Nairobi City County as political hotspots during the 2022 general elections, as has always been the case. It is based on this fact that the study centered on the informal settlements when examining the linkage between the electoral process and national security. Appendix II has a map that depicts the informal settlements in Nairobi City County.

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted the total population of the slum dwellers, which is estimated to be 2 million people, as per the KNBS 2019 Kenya population census. It also incorporates political actors who are primarily the politicians (those who do not inhabit Kibera), the IEBC officials, the election observers, the religious leaders, the National Police Service (NPS), and the representatives of the informal settlements in Nairobi. These bodies are

included because of the instrumental way in which they have been used during the electoral processes. Kothari (2014) explained that a target population is a group of people that an examiner can measure and generalize.

3.5 Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size is a section of individuals or objects selected from the research population (Crewell & Creswell, 2018). It represents the entire research population. In determining the sample size, Yamane's formula of 1967 was used as

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where:

n is the sample size

N is the population size

e is the margin of error

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1 + 2,000,000(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1 + 2,000,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1 + 5,000}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{1 + 5,000}$$

$$n = \frac{2,000,000}{5,001}$$

n=399.92

n=400

Purposive sampling was the right methodology because it is effective in sampling dense information providers since these participants have an in-depth understanding of electoral politics and security challenges in these volatile regions. Since the topic is very complex and sensitive, in particular, in the context of the informal settlements where the project has been conducted, namely, Kibera and Mathare, purposeful sampling has enabled the researcher to specifically approach key informants, i.e., local leaders, persons in charge of security, election monitors, and those residents who had first-hand experiences of election-related violence. This approach guaranteed the relevancy of the data obtained and was able to reflect the contextual realities that generalized sampling forms cannot capture (Palinkas, 2015). Also, purposive sampling adds depth to the study as it ensures that other pertinent views are incorporated in the study to facilitate the understanding of the entwining of the electoral processes and national security in the marginalized urban contexts.

The researcher and his assistants planned to sample 25 people in each of the four selected settlements, namely, Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho, and Eastleigh, for a total of 100 respondents. The remaining 300 were sampled on a stratified basis, representing the following political players: IEBC, election observers, religious leaders, NPS, and representatives of residents. Nonetheless, the respondents who participated were 370, as discussed in Chapter 4. All the interviewees took part, although only 274 questionnaires were completed (see chapter 4).

Table 3.1: Sample Size

Category	Population	Proportion	Sample Size= (Proportion*Total Sample size(400))
Citizens	2,000,000	Purposively selected	200
Political players	69	17.5%	34
IEBC	11	2.5%	6
Election observers	30	7.5%	15
Religious leaders	50	12.5%	25
NPS	200	50%	100
Representative of Residents	40	10%	20
Total		100%	400

Source: Researcher (2025)

The sample size used in the study is 400 respondents, as this would give a wide range of perspectives and experiences among the diverse communities in the heterogeneous societies. The informal settlements within Nairobi are heterogeneous in terms of their socio-economic statuses, ethnic groups, and tendencies of political involvement, which demands a large sample size to capture all these subsets of the population, as well as allowing comparison between the subsets. In addition, given a sample of 400, the study will increase the statistical power of the work, thus boosting its capacity to find out any significant correlation between electoral processes and national security indicators in these particular current urban settings. This sample size is balanced between the theoretical demands of statistical rigors and the realities that research in some areas may be compromised by the sense of difficulty that created the sample to leverage reliable inferences about the population.

3.6. Data collection Tools

The data collection was done using an interview guide, semi-structured questionnaires and a focus group discussion (FGD) guide. Regarding the explorative nature of the research topic and the relationship that exists between the electoral process and national security in the informal settlements, an interview guide was adopted in the collection of qualitative information that would give detailed insight to the key informants (local community leaders, electoral officials, and security agents). This instrument permitted cases of probes beyond complex and situational matters like political incitement by leaders during voter registration exercises, vote-buying during elections, and the whole process of forming exchanges in general. Alshenqeeti (2014) notes that interviews are useful in garnering in-depth insight regarding participant perspectives, motivations, and lived experiences, particularly on highly political issues that may not be explored in detail by utilizing structured instruments. The semi-structured qualitative interview/questionnaire format also allowed the researcher to respond to the changing social dynamics of the informal settlements of Nairobi, therefore, ensuring that rich and credible data was collected.

The use of a semi-structured questionnaire in this research was also appropriate, especially in gathering standardized quantitative data from a large and diverse sample spread across settlements like Mathare, Kibera, and Korogocho. Closed-ended questions are effective in producing information on voter turnout, perceived security threat, and trust in electoral institutions in a cost-effective, time-efficient way. They enable the spotting of trends and relations between electoral activities and security incidents.

The triangulation of the data collected using the focus group discussion (FGD) guide helped the researcher to get different points of view that people expressed in a natural

environment, and were easy to obtain. Group discussions are particularly useful in capturing the group dynamics that exist with regard to political groupings, group concerns and narratives that relate to politics, fear of security and response to security threats during elections. According to Krueger and Casey (2015), focus groups enable an investigation of social norms, on-the-ground viewpoints and unanimity, which makes it appropriate to address the nature of the complexity at the grassroots level in informal settlements. Such an approach enabled the researcher to detect non-verbal communication and interaction within groups through which the researcher was able to understand the inner feelings of the communities about the electoral process in the informal settlements of Nairobi city county.

3.7. Pilot Testing, Validity and Reliability

The testing was done in Kisumu City County, where electoral-related issues emerge whenever there is actual or perceived electoral malpractices, and a population of 10 per cent of the sample size was used in carrying out the testing. This tool allowed the researcher to collect suitable data with a significance of 92 per cent. The researcher enhanced the instruments that were applied to collect real data. Thus, the reliability and validity of the research tools were achieved. The supervisor had examined the instruments.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis entails thematic analysis, which is rather appropriate when it comes to the identification, analysis, and reporting of trends in the qualitative data. Thematic analysis provides a methodical process of labelling and sorting information into encouraging themes that can portray the lived experiences, views and understanding of participants about election-related security concerns. Interview transcriptions and focus

groups were read multiple times to become familiar with them and then coded to identify one or more repetitive ideas and concepts. These codes were, in turn, categorized into themes. Thematic analysis suited the study well because it was flexible and provided richness when interpreting the complex social dynamics in informal settlements (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The data that was analyzed was presented in the form of tables and diagrams, as well as in a narrative form.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Ethical concerns were of primary concern in this research. Informed consent was duly sought from all participants after making it clear to them about the objectives of the study, procedures involved, possible risks, and benefits of the study in the language they understood, to note their right to refuse or withdraw at any given time without any implication. Data was anonymously and confidentially processed by not associating information typifying a particular response with identifying information, and by securely maintaining data. Additionally, the study design and data collection procedures were taken into careful consideration to avoid any form of harm and/or distress to the respondents, considering the sensitivity of electoral processes and national security matters in informal settlements. Conducting the research places an ethical responsibility on the researcher because the ethical requirements must be met before the collection of data is conducted through the proper approvals of the relevant ethical review boards.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the study findings and discusses them in light of the study's objectives. The section provides the rate of response, demographic characteristics, descriptive analysis, and inferential analysis, in addition to qualitative findings that were discussed thematically.

4.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The demographic features of the study respondents who took part in the research on the effectiveness of the electoral process and national security in the informal settlements of Nairobi City County, Kenya. It consists of an analysis in terms of age, gender, level of education, and occupation. This population data will be essential in confirming the utmost research results because it will aid in the attestation of the appropriateness and representation of the sample. It also offers the rationale for the response rate obtained in the research.

4.2.1 Response Rate

The study targeted 400 participants across the different informal settlements in the Nairobi City County, including Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho, and Eastleigh. Of these, 370 respondents completed the questionnaires and returned them, thus resulting in a response rate of 92.5%. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) assert that a 70% or above response rate is acceptable in the context of social science research, thus justifying the reliability and generalizability of the findings of the current study.

The 30 non-participants were individuals within the target population of people who did not participate in the study, possibly because of attrition, lack of cooperation, or

inaccessibility. Although their refusal will inject potential demographical or attitudinal differences, their high base level of 92.5 per cent response rate eliminates significant risks of observed statistical bias or impaired generalizability, improving the accuracy of the findings in their non-response.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Target Respondents	Actual Responses	Response Rate (%)
400	370	92.5

Source: Researcher (2025)

4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

The age of respondents was categorized into five groups: 18-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, and 55+. The distribution is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
18-24	120	32.4%
25-34	120	32.4%
35-44	55	14.9%
45-54	40	10.8%
55+	35	9.5%
Total	370	100%

Source: Researcher (2025)

The highest number of respondents was in the 18-34 age category, amounting to 65 per cent of the total respondents. The importance of this age group is especially pertinent since they randomly comprise the majority of both voters and electoral mobilisers of informal settlements and can be directly impacted by the security dynamics of elections if they serve as direct targets. The predominance of this group indicates that the results of the given study are biased by the points of view and experiences of young people

living in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The attitudes towards security threats, the role played by the political actors, and their experiences of the elections are the focal points of the research that yield rich, but highly specific, data.

Conversely, the sample has a significant shortage of the older age groups. The concentration of the respondents is sharper after the 35-44 age group, which comprises only 14.9 per cent, and sharp declines to the 55+ group that forms the smallest percentage of only 9.5 per cent. Such a large difference raises the possibility that the study might have limited generalizability because it lacks the views and opinions of aged residents. The older members of society tend to have different life experiences, political orientations, and networks than younger generations. Their perceptions of the long-term effects of the election process on the security of community membership and the history of how they see political violence in their lives would prove invaluable.

4.2.3 Gender Distribution

The gender composition of the respondents was 58% male and 42% female. This reflects a fairly balanced representation considering the gender demographics of Nairobi's informal settlements.

Table 4.3: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	215	58
Female	155	42

Source: Researcher (2025)

Both male and female perspectives were critical in understanding how different gender roles affect perceptions of election campaign strategies, local leadership mediation, and security concerns.

4.2.4 Education Level of Respondents

Education levels were categorized into Primary, Secondary, Tertiary, and None. The distribution is illustrated in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Education levels of Respondents

Education level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Primary	157	42.4%
Secondary	120	32.4%
Tertiary	83	22.4%
None	10	7.7%
Total	370	100%

Source: Researcher (2025)

A majority of the respondents are those who have passed primary or secondary education. Namely, respondents with a primary education are the largest category because they make up 157 net respondents or 42.4 per cent of the net respondents. These are followed by those with secondary education, who constitute 120 respondents or 32.4%. The high proportion of these two groups would indicate that most of the people in these informal settlements have a basic level of education, which may determine their comprehension of the complicated political aspects, such as the electoral process and national security. Such an educational background can also influence their vulnerability to misinformation and the capacity to write off political rhetoric, which plays a key role in peace and stability during an election.

There is a smaller but still significant ratio of the population which has reached a higher educational level. The respondents with tertiary education are 83 people or 22.4 per cent of the sample. Although this group is not the majority, they outline a large proportion of residents who have probably been participants in more enhanced

processes of analytical and critical thinking, which may have made them perceive the interrelation of elections and national security more subtly. Their presence also saw a possibility of them understanding more of their rights and duties as citizens, hence not so easy to politically manipulate. On the other hand, a small percentage of the respondents 10 individuals or 7.7 per cent of them, do not have a formal education. This is a vulnerable and pathetic group that can struggle against all kinds of challenges and protocols involved in the lawful procedure of the elections, and is highly prone to manipulation and control.

The socio-demographic background of the respondents demonstrates the mixed economic and educational backgrounds of the informal settlements and the different levels of knowledge and political activity that may prevail within those communities. The fact that the number of educated people with primary and secondary schooling is very high indicates that voter awareness campaigns and other educational programs should be catered to these levels so as to be effective. The availability of a smaller but powerful group with tertiary education signifies a potential source of mobilising the people and leadership. It is also important to solve the problem of the lack of education of the minority population, which has no school, as a means of guaranteeing widespread participation and protection against political manipulation. Consequently, the results imply that a multidimensional communication approach and education programs are necessary to meet the diverse educational levels of the residents in order to capture the synergistic relationship between the process of electing executives and threats to national security.

4.2.5 Occupation of Respondents

Respondents' occupations were classified into four categories: Informal sector, Formal employment, Unemployed, and Students.

Table 4.5: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Informal sector	195	52.7
Formal employment	65	17.6
Unemployed	75	20.3
Students	35	9.4

Source: Researcher (2025)

The occupational distribution of the respondents in the informal settlements of the Nairobi City County also leaned heavily on the informal sector, as the informal sector accounted for more than half of the respondents (52.7). This overwhelming number of respondents working in the informal sector, representing activities such as hawking, small-scale trade, and casual labour, implies that most of the respondents work in precarious and unregulated occupations. This economic weakness can play a pivotal role in the manner in which the residents relate to national security and the electoral process. As an example, political uncertainties and crackdown campaigns can directly affect their livelihoods, as they often have unprotected businesses that are based on the streets. Their vulnerability in terms of dependability on daily salaries implies that any kind of unrest can have dire consequences rapidly, making them the most sensitive to matters of peace and stability.

The findings also indicate the high occurrence of the unemployed and the formally employed. Notably, 20.3 per cent of the participants questioned were unemployed, an aspect that depicts a form of economic deprivation in these settlements. Increased unemployment levels may lead to feelings of helplessness and a sense of relegation, which in turn may be turned against the political forces at the time of elections. These citizens are more vulnerable to political mobilization, using jobs or economic relief as a lure, and their disenfranchisement can become a social tension that national security

forces must deal with. Similarly, the 17.6 per cent of the people who are formally employed are yet another social stratum. Those living in the informal settlements are likely to have more stable incomes, and issues related to the electoral process and national security might be different among these individuals. Their interests may be focused on the safety of their property and holdings, and they may prefer a more constant, predictable political climate that ensures the security of their economic pickings.

Lastly, the addition of students in the sample of respondents provides another important aspect of the analysis since students are one of the least represented groups, making up 9.4% of the sample respondents. Students represent a politically important group that can be engaged in the electoral process for a number of reasons, which, apart from ideological beliefs, include future job opportunities and social justice concerns. Their participatory level can play a major role in the politics of these settlements. In addition, the students are also present, and this would lead to the issue of whether they are susceptible to manipulation or radicalization, especially at a time when the political atmosphere is tense. These informal settlements have a complex social fabric, as evidenced by the diversity of occupational groups here. The fact that the people residing in the various communities differ in the way they are economically situated, with the vulnerable informal workers and the unemployed together with the more firmly established formally employed and the ideologically driven students, implies that their reaction to the electoral process and national security is unlikely to be monolithic. This was an important concept that was used since it led to a general orientation of the research problem.

4.3 Presentation of Data on the impact of election campaign strategies on National Security.

Informal settlements within Nairobi City County have been the focus of electoral politics in Kenya over the years. High population concentration in these insecure locations that are characterized by high poverty rates and poor infrastructure is a fertile ground that is exploited by political movements. In the next section, we discuss what we found concerning the election campaign strategies deployed in the informal settlements of Nairobi and how they relate to national security during the 2007, 2013, and 2017 general elections, as well as the 2022 general elections. In this study, national security refers to an interplay between human security, local security and political tension in the informal settlements of Nairobi city county.

4.3.1 Door-to-Door Campaigns

Table 4.6: Election Campaign Strategies

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
During election door to door campaigns, ethnic mobilization and misinformation by political parties can perpetuate political divisions and result in election violence.	274	8%	11%	2%	40%	39%	3.96	0.64
The political rhetoric of politicians during door-to-door campaigns has been fueling divisions and violence through ethnic mobilization.	274	7%	9%	1%	42%	41%	4.15	0.52
Politicians in our area use language that might cause fights during door-to-door campaigns, often through coercion and intimidation.	274	7%	15%	3%	41%	34%	3.73	0.81
The campaigns during party nominations are responsible for perpetuating divisions and election violence through organized malpractice and voter bribery.	274	7%	12%	4%	39%	38%	3.87	0.74
The political messaging used by politicians during public rallies, including misinformation, can cause violence.	274	8%	8%	2%	43%	39%	4.12	0.6
Average Scores	274						3.97	0.66

Source: Research Data (2025).

The data findings illustrate that respondents widely agree that different forms of malpractice lead to division and violence in politics. The mean score of all the statements is 3.966, and the standard deviation is 0.662, which means that there is a consensus among the respondents. This consensus forms the pretext for a greater degree of individual analysis of concerns.

It was revealed that ethnic mobilization and misrepresentation by political parties demonstrated during door-to-door campaigns are perceived to be key causes of political divisions and post-election violence (Mean = 3.96, SD = 0.64). These results agree very well, as there is a low standard deviation of only 0.64. In addition to percentages, it was evident that 40 and 39 per cent of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed, respectively, on the role of door-to-door campaigns in ethnic mobilization. This result corroborates what Wahman and Goldring (2020) discovered- that more violence during the run-up to elections is likely in the electorates that have less political rivalry.

In addition, it is commonly believed that the political rhetoric employed by politicians during such campaigns contributes to ethnic divisions and violence due to ethnic mobilization (Mean = 4.15, SD = 0.52). Based on this response, the respondents answered 42%, 41% agreed strongly, and disagreed with divisions and violence in terms of ethnic mobilization during campaigns. As yet another study by Horowitz (2016) reveals, election campaigns based on ethnic discourse contributed greatly to the post-election violence in Kenya that occurred in 2007/08. It is also evident that most of the respondents tend to agree that the language employed by politicians when conducting door-to-door campaigns causes fights, mostly through coercion and intimidation (Mean = 3.73, SD = 0.81). The respondents who agreed to the extent of 41% and strongly agreed to 34%. This conclusion is compatible with the work by Gebrehana (2021), who found that inciting words were very much a part of the informal

settlements in Kenya, and the government does not bother to warn politicians against them. This indicates that the words employed, especially when they involve force, can be a serious cause of conflict in dealing with elections.

The study also determined that campaigns at the time of nominations of parties cause divisions and election violence by virtue of organizing malpractice and bribery of voters (Mean = 3.87, SD = 0.74). The findings also indicate that 39% and 38% of the respondents answered in agreement and strongly agree to the fact that the campaigns contribute to divisions, violence, malpractices and voter bribery, respectively. This occurrence shows that internal procedures of the political parties and their nomination methods can be a source of insecurity. Both a strong and a weak political party is likely expected to employ violence to either solidify or change the status quo (Wahman & Goldring, 2020). Wambua (2017) also noted that the political party configurations and approaches tend to split the nation on ethnic grounds.

A majority of the respondents agree that political messaging, such as misinformation provided by politicians in their public rallies, can result in violence (Mean = 4.12, SD = 0.60). The responding question also indicated that 43 and 39, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that political messages can contribute to the spreading of violence during elections. This resonates with what was found out by Ochieng, Matanga, and Itayo (2023) that the electioneering processes in most cases are characterized by rhetoric and propaganda, as opposed to ideologies, which drive them along and, in most cases, promote violence. This implies that campaign rhetoric used by politicians is the chief source of insecurity during a political campaign.

The survey carried out through key informants of residents of Nairobi's informal settlement, door-to-door campaigns, was one of the campaigning strategies that many

candidates preferred. Nevertheless, it had a direct bearing on the safety of the community and the generation of political tension affecting national security, according to a substantial number of informants. In this case, politicians, together with supporters, used to visit homes and meet individuals and families on a personal basis. This worked well in places such as Kibera and Mathare, where very little information about politics can reach voters, and therefore, face-to-face interaction was important in voter mobilization. The plan is the distribution of flyers, posters and promises of local development, and in most cases, they are coupled with material gains like food, money, or promises of employment. In the voter registration process, nomination of candidates, registration of parties and during the active campaign period. A key informant observed,

"In our area, door-to-door campaigns always seem to focus on ethnic groups. This was the case for 2007, 2013, 2017 and 2022 elections. People from different ethnic backgrounds were almost pitted against each other. It is very dangerous because what starts as a political disagreement turns into a fight. People feel more divided than ever." (OI Nairobi 28 Dec 2024)

This quote suggests that such a strategy was more limited and focused towards ethnic groups, as can be seen during the national elections held from 2007 to 2022, where there was a great gap in national security. This shows a progressive and risky trend because of the use of ethnic identity as a political tool. Restricting themselves to ethnicity, these campaigns intensify already present social divides and generate the sense of "us versus them." Here, the implication is that such strategies are not unintended consequences of the rough-and-tumble of democratic politics but rather purposeful policies that, whether knowingly or not, seek specifically to erode neighborhood safety and human security. The escalation of the fight is the direct result of this polarizing rhetoric that shows clues of how the low-level campaigning leads to upheavals on a large scale. In national security terms, this weakening of solidarity

renders the people more vulnerable to exploitation, influence, and civil warfare, given that a highly divided people is necessarily feebler and is easily compromised.

The national security consequences of this ethnic polarization are far-reaching and deep. The statement makes it clear that the people feel divided more than ever, which is an important sign of a declining social contract. This split forms fertile grounds for radicalization, not necessarily on ideological grounds, but on ethnic grounds, making it easy to form localized and vicious violence and insecurity that is hard to control within a short time, and it transcends across regions since many law enforcers and security agents have been taken by surprise. The regularity of ethnic groups pitting against one another weakens trust in the institutions perceived to be biased, as well as among the people, year after year. Such chronic ethnic tension costs the nation resources that would otherwise be used on matters of increasing concern to the state security, and it reduces the effectiveness of intelligence gathering as the community would not be cooperative and ultimately destabilizes the ability of the state to uphold law and protect the people against both internal and external attacks.

In the study by Clark (2016), the author presents and addresses the issues of ethnic voting and electoral violence in Kenya using the 2007 and 2013 Kenyan elections. The findings reveal that ethnic voting is a critical factor in predicting electoral viciousness, especially in multi-ethnic settlements. Moreover, the post-election violence that took place in 2007 exemplified the grave ramifications associated with ethnic mobilisation by the political elites (2016).

"Kenya: Tensions and Risks to Peaceful Elections" by the International Crisis Group. (2022). Africa Report No. 317. "Political actors have often resorted to ethnic mobilization to secure votes, with potentially dangerous consequences on safety

security and stability. This has been particularly evident in past elections, where inflammatory rhetoric and appeals to ethnic identity have fueled intercommunal tensions and violence."

The door-to-door campaigning strategy, while effective in voter outreach, often exacerbates tensions in Nairobi's informal settlements.

In the 2007 elections, for instance, most respondents observe that door-to-door campaigns became vehicles for ethnic-based violence, particularly in areas like Kibera and Mathare. Political candidates, backed by armed youth groups, would use these engagements to either incite violence or intimidate rival groups. As a result, these neighborhoods became highly volatile, with rival ethnic groups clashing in violent altercations. They further observe that although violence was less prominent in 2013, 2017, and 2022 sporadic attacks, tensions and insecurity related to electoral politics persisted, often fueled by door-to-door strategies that heightened ethnic rivalries.

The claim by Lee that door-to-door campaigning morphed into ethnic based channels of violence, even in such areas as Kibera and Mathare during the Kenyan election of 2007, therefore, deserves serious consideration towards the area of national security. This fact can imply a major flaw in the democratic game, and it is when the direct interest of the community, which should be used in political discussion, is apparently attacked for some nefarious purposes. The engagement between political candidates and armed groups of youth in provoking violence or harassing their opponents is evidence of a strategic arming of politics. This not only organised a direct attack on the electoral integrity but also became a highly volatile situation where ethnic groups were fighting in a violent conflict. The national security consequences of such events are particularly far-reaching, based on the fact that they clearly show how even internal politics, when not controlled and distorted, can easily escalate into widespread civil unrest that threatens the monopoly of the state on force and the capacity of the latter to safeguard its citizens. The inability to control this localized violence means that social

cohesion will break down and can have spill-over effects on further regional instability, necessitating extensive national security resources to control and establish peace.

Although the level of violence has reportedly reduced in the 2013, 2017, and 2022 elections, sporadic attacks, tensions, and insecurity associated with electoral politics and door-to-door campaigns are a further issue related to national security. This latent tension raises the suspicion that the underlying causes of polarization along ethnic lines and the prospects of politically instigated violence have not been dealt with adequately. The fact of the matter is that door-to-door campaigns still intensified ethnical conflicts, albeit without the level of violence that the country experienced in 2007. Viewed through a national security prism, this persistent susceptibility to threat requires proactive approaches in addition to crisis management, concentrating on future conflict aversion, peaceful society-building at the local level, and strict prosecution of incitement to violence. This involves analyzing the manner in which political campaigns are carried out and taking steps to stop the manipulation of campaign messages to bring about ethnic polarization, and hence protecting the credibility of the electoral system and national unity.

The findings are in line with the work of other scholars on electoral violence in Kenya. As an example, a report released by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) showed massive cases of human rights violations, such as ethnic violence, during the 2007 post-election period, which supported the accusations of increased tensions and clashes in slums such as Kibera and Mathare (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 2008). These sources back the idea that door-to-door campaigns can be used for ethnic incitement, and the electoral periods are still sensitive times that pose threats to national security due to the existence of ethnic rivalries and political baggage.

This was supported by a key informant from korogocho who stated that "It's like a war zone sometimes. During election seasons, we lock ourselves indoors because it's too dangerous to be on the streets. The door-to-door campaigns add to the fear because we don't know who is coming to our homes and what they want. It's a constant source of stress." O. I Nairobi 28 Dec 2024

This reflects a critical loss of law and order, and that the state security apparatus is incapable of ensuring the safety of the people in critical moments. Not only does this undermine the community's confidence in security agencies, but it also conditions the environment into fostering recruitment by non-state agents by taking advantage of these security gaps. In addition, the apprehension of the door-to-door campaigns promotes an intrinsic feeling of insecurity and vulnerability among the community, implying existential threat, prospect of intimidation, coercion, and even violence that undermines community preparedness, community safety, and the democratic voice, hence a direct threat to national stability.

The model of facilitating social networks on well-being in older people in Korogocho informal settlement, Nairobi, shows how the post-election violence that occurred in Kenya in 2007/2008 painfully affected people living in the Korogocho informal settlement. The study stresses the importance of social networks in alleviating the ill effects of such violence on the well-being of older people in the community.

The implication of door-to-door campaigns on the issue of public safety indicates that the election period among the informal settlements in Nairobi saw different campaign approaches with varied levels of influence in terms of their impact on the security situation in the area. The constant door-to-door campaigns were a salient characteristic. Such personal interactions, actually, at least in their politically organised ways, tended to become hotbeds of political activity. Candidates and their representatives toured through narrow alleyways, consulting people in their homes, promising projects and

developments, and giving out campaign materials. This is particularly true in Kibera, Mathare, Korocho, and Muguru kwa Njenga. As shown by recent research on electoral action in marginal urban neighborhoods, this approach is trying to establish an illusion of immediacy, individualized support, and a sense of approachability and immediacy (Mutua, 2021). Intentions notwithstanding, such interactions could become aggressive at one time, with residents feeling intimidated and coerced to vote for particular candidates as a result of aggressive campaigning. This is consistent with the findings that door-to-door campaigns contribute to the deepening of existing post-colonial social divisions and increase feelings of insecurity in the presence of patronage politics, leading to an environment of zero-sum dynamics where perceived benefit to one group is a visible loss to another (Ochieng & Wanjiru, 2022). Moreover, the fact that these interactions were so close together in the densely populated homesteads increased the likelihood of interpersonal frictions degenerating into community friction and insecurity, especially when mixed with ethnic or tribal overtones.

The use of election campaign strategies in the Nairobi informal settlements had geographical variations that resulted in differing impacts on local security affairs. A compare-and-contrast analysis between two of the largest and most densely populated cities, Kibera and Mathare, shows a different pattern. In Kibera, in particular, greater dependence on grassroots mobilization occurred.

According to a Questionnaire, the Kibera Community Leader, the most common were small and more intimate meetings arranged usually by localistic political intermediaries and local civil society. This is perhaps what was found in recent literature on political networks in cities wherein local social structures were exploited to instill a sense of ownership and involvement on the part of the people, as a means of political mobilization (Onyango, 2022). This method, however, was also conducive to having

small-scale and localized conflicts and insecurity as various sides pitched against each other to gain access to these networks and resources. Locals in Kibera were highly susceptible to taking part in political affiliations that might coincide with the social and household affiliations, resulting in the prevalence of tensions that increased to the extent of turning into interpersonal and community confrontations.

This resonates with studies that point to social embeddedness as one of the major factors affecting political behaviours and security outcomes in informal settlements (Atieno, 2021). Moreover, the fact that its labyrinthine alleyways and dense housing formed the spatial structure of Kibera favoured the former strategy of door-to-door campaigns. Still, it hindered the latter strategy of large-scale rallies, which often took place in certain open areas.

It is in the 2007 General Election that we have the most telling example of how door-to-door politicking in the informal settlements led to the flaring of violence and national security issues. Political agents did not depend on slums alone during this period because they engaged in door-to-door meetings that allowed them to use ethnic ties to win votes. In Nairobi (Kibera, Mathare, etc.), the campaigns were accompanied by harsh political mobilization, which promptly degenerated into ethnic violence. Politicians, with the support of youth brigades, would employ the door-to-door approach to provoke societies, and this would translate into violent clashes of different ethnic groups, mainly between the Kikuyu and the Luo racial groups, who were then the prominent political players of the parties. These small conflicts that were at first triggered by the rhetoric and promises that were produced through door-to-door political campaigns soon escalated into civil unrest and ended the lives of more than 1,000 people. The informal settlements, where poverty and the absence of government oversight precondition conditions that are ideal substrata in which to foment violence

with political overtones, became arenas in which the politically motivated violence driven by the desire to bring to the political forefront candidates most favourable to the militia members evolved and became increasingly prominent.

The 2013 elections were more of the same, but with different tensions. The entry of the new constitution and the devolution process in Kenya gave rise to a new political situation as local candidates were now competing to be part of county governments. Though door-to-door campaigns were still trendy, this time around they were couched on promises of devolution and development. In urban slums within Nairobi, especially Korogocho and Kawangware, candidates attempted to take advantage of the frustration of residents who were not getting their needs met by the central government by offering to provide access to social and personal services, infrastructure, and security. Nonetheless, such campaigns did not pose a risk to national security. As a matter of fact, the door-to-door approach still contributed to political polarization since competing candidates appealed to divided ethnic groups to consolidate votes, in the process releasing tensions. Security conditions were also problematic, particularly after the violence in 2007, when organised groups distributed arms and called for violence against enemies according to ethnic or political affiliations, posing a threat to national security.

At the time of the 2017 election, Kenya had experienced some advancements in the strategies to deal with security issues, as the government concentrated on improving surveillance and law enforcement in risky areas. Nevertheless, door-to-door campaigns in the slums such as Mathare, Kayole, and Eastleigh still portrayed weaknesses in terms of national security. In this election, corruption, land allocation, and development were the two issues which dominated the political speeches in the slums in Nairobi. Political candidates, as part of their canvassing, included door-to-door, which was done in an

effort to present themselves to the slum dwellers as representing their best interests. In this way, and once again, the politics involved the ethnic elements of mobilizing communities along ethnic lines. Such ethnic mobilization generated profound divisions in these neighborhoods, and groups that did not adhere to a specific candidate tended to face intimidation or physical violence. The door-to-door campaigning remained one of the ways of triggering violent clashes as different gangs and youth groupings would clash among themselves, rendering the informal settlements in Nairobi both volatile and dangerous as the elections approached.

By the 2022 elections, there has been a growing level of understanding that a more secure and inclusive political environment is needed. Nonetheless, despite an effort to curtail the risks posed by door-to-door campaigns, the above practice occurred widely, especially in Informal Settlements along the streets of Kibera, Mathare and Gikambura. In 2022, nevertheless, priorities changed a bit as such topics as economic revitalization after COVID-19, employment, and youth empowerment started to gain more traction. Nevertheless, door-to-door campaigns further assumed a sectarian approach as canvassing remained ethnic-based. In other regions, electoral campaigns resulted in violent exchanges between opposing political interest groupings, whereas in other regions, groups were mobilized by the threat of violent acts against rival candidates. Even though the Kenyan government tried to minimize the electoral violence, these local campaigns had once contributed to the instability of national security in the slums of Nairobi since they caused political division.

In the above discussion, it is clear that Many residents of informal settlements see politicians as opportunistic. With the door-to-door method, they see it as a way of exploiting them so that they can vote for them, and they cause insecurity with their actions. The respondent points out that frustration and, in some instances, eruption of

violent outbursts is the resultant effect of such disillusionment when its inhabitants feel that their grievances are not being listened to. In such localities as Korogocho and Kawangware, insecurity is commonly perceived by the community in the light of perceived election campaigns as one of the methods to maintain the status quo. In response to this, the government has been trying to enhance security during elections by mounting police checkpoints and putting surveillance networks in expected locations (Mampilly, 2019). Nevertheless, whilst the above interventions may seem to help, citizens would still feel that the police are too few or too one-sided in the interventions given to some ethnic groups rather than others. This attitude further adds to the challenges of security in these informal settlements since the residents may not trust either of the political parties or the law enforcement agency.

The observations made in this research indicate a significantly poor congruence between election campaign options and national security in informal settlements in Nairobi. The evidence clearly suggests that the mechanisms that are supposed to be used to achieve democratic inclusions turn out to undermine the very existence of those vulnerable societies and thereby disintegrate them. The common campaign practices defined by active mobilization, provocative rhetoric, and unequal access to resources directly facilitate the increased tensions and the rise of violence. This is an indication that the existing electoral practices, as opposed to stimulating civic participation, are leading to the worsening of social divisions and undercutting the positions on community security. The win-at-all-costs approach, in most cases, seems to be done through divisive means, which shows a major lack of connection between the aspirations of the political electoral process and the populace. The results support the argument that, regardless of the socioeconomic environment, political campaigns have been found to be a driver of insecurity; therefore, political campaigns in environments

with socioeconomic marginalization conditions render elections not the democratic process but the time when there is heightened risk and vulnerability.

The trend of using door-to-door campaigns in the process of elections in the Nairobi informal settlements over the electoral periods in 2007, 2013, 2017, and 2022 has had significant implications on the national security in the sense that these areas become hotbeds of attacks and violent encounters. In 2007, the post-election violence, including such campaigns, massively together with other political rhetoric, led to the incursion of ethnic-related violence in informal settlements, with the settlements becoming the epicenters of ethnic-related violence, displacement, and large-scale death and loss, undermining social cohesion and the state authority. A calmer period characterized the 2013 elections, but episodes of intimidation, coercion and close-quarters violence also accompanied subsequent elections in 2017 and 2022. The vulnerability of residents in the informal settlements, combined with high poverty, unemployment, and weak governance, predisposes them to political maneuvering where they can be recruited by political interests to use their ethnic destabilization and recruit gangs of youth to intimidate or disrupt as directed. This seems to propagate a state of fear and leads to mistrust with regard to democratic processes, further leading to repeated threats to national security by destabilizing urban centres and to the inability to face peace and reconciliation.

4.2.2 Rallies and Public Gatherings

According to the field data, Political rallies and public gatherings were another strategy that was favoured during the campaign despite their implications for local security and community safety. The political power of the masses was gathered through large public gatherings meant to mobilize mass support. The major respondents reported the risks that are at times witnessed in communal rallies and meetings during campaigns. The number of responses is shown in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Public Rallies and Gatherings

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
During election public rallies, politicians perpetuate political divisions and result in election violence.	274	4%	12%	2%	44%	38%	4.12	0.16
The political rhetoric of politicians during public rallies has been fueling divisions and violence through ethnic mobilization.	274	6%	11%	4%	41%	38%	3.97	0.32
Politicians have been exploiting and manipulating the youths to engage in violent acts during election campaigns.	274	7%	13%	3%	42%	35%	3.86	0.37
In Nairobi's informal settlements, there is a strain on security services due to actions of politicians during public gatherings and rallies	274	9%	10%	1%	43%	37%	4.01	0.20
Average Scores	274						3.99	0.263

Source: Research Data (2025)

According to the results in Table 4.7, most of the respondents disagreed (Mean=4.12, SD=0.16) that at election rallies, politicians revive political differences and lead to election violence. In addition, the respondents reported they mostly agreed and strongly agreed on the fact that politicians used political rallies to create divisions and violence during elections, which stood at 44 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. Based on the responses, it is also evident that the majority of the main respondents (Mean=3.97, SD=0.32) affirmed that the political rhetoric of politicians in their public rallies has been causing divisions and even violence by the mobilization of ethnicity among people. This observation also indicates that 41% and 38% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the fact that political rhetoric promotes divisions and violence.

The respondents also concurred (Mean=3.86, SD=0.37) that the politicians have been exploiting and manipulating the youths in order to instigate violent acts in the election campaigns. It is clear that 42 per cent and 35 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that there has been exploitation and manipulation of the youths to engage in violent acts during elections. Lastly, the respondents unanimously said that politicians' actions on security services in Nairobi's informal settlements create a load on a particular area (Mean=4.01, SD=0.20). It is also clear that 43 and 37 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the actions of politicians when they strain security services during a public gathering.

These results are comparable to the results conducted by Wahman and Goldring (2020), who demonstrated that pre-election violence is likely to be carried out in constituencies where there is less competition than in other political campaigns. Similar to this study, a study by Ochieng, Matanga and Iteyo (2023) found that most causes of election violence in Kenya are election campaigns, election outcomes and poor electoral dispute

resolution mechanisms. In a study conducted by Huebert and Zarychta (2019), it was discovered that political campaigns were the greatest source of political violence in Mexico, which negatively affected national security between 1994 and 2010. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that political interests influence most political parties' ideologies at the expense of the people's interests and that it has an implication on national security.

This is also captured in the findings by Ochieng, Matanga and Iteyo (2023), who observed that most political campaigns tend to be dominated by political rhetoric rather than ideologies. In most cases, this rhetoric encourages violence in the form of political propaganda. The research also confirmed that in Kenya, during the election campaigns, it was the common use of inciting language within the informal settlements, and there was a lack of initiative by the government in giving warnings to politicians on the use of inciting language and hence the abrupt election violence formed within the informal settlements.

The results based on the key informants and the FGDs echo the answers of the main respondents. Ethnic solidarity is also propagated in rallies held in places such as Korogocho and Kawangware, which are densely populated by ethnic groups and may even fuel tension among the groups.

According key informants from Mathare. "Campaign rallies often end up being chaotic, especially when opposing groups are in the same area. We feel unsafe during these times. It's not unusual to hear gunshots or to see people fighting. We avoid going out unless we have to." OI Nairobi 28 Dec 2024

Data provides a critical insight, which relates to the complex interaction between local politics and national security in the informal settlements of Nairobi, describing a significant disintegration of local security during election times. The mention of

gunshots and fighting directly reflects high numbers of armed men or groups, either politically hired thugs or organised crime and uses political gatherings as a means of power and intimidation. This not only openly threatens the lives of its citizens and curtails the most basic rights, like free movement and access to the political life of the country, but also fundamentally hamstring the electoral process at the ground level. The fear and avoidance of all forms of locating in the public spaces are a clear indication of an insecure environment, the state of mistrust between the local government and communities, and, therefore, a potential breeding area of insecurity.

One of the major issues with national security is that this localized chaos in Mathare is not a one-off event but rather a reflection of a larger systemic vulnerability in Kenya's informal settlements. The recurring trend in security failure, which is the use of firearms in the electioneering activities, reflects the inefficiency of the national security forces to effectively control political tension and deal with law and order in these areas of intense political conflicts. The winner-takes-all political system in Kenya, usually fueled by ethnic mobilization, encourages aggressive and violent competition that at times spills over into the communities where the socioeconomic grievance is the highest. Such insecurity that has been a constant in informal settlements has ramifications on the national stability, resulting in possible large-scale displacement, internal migration, and ethnic divisions that have in the past led to post-election violence in the country. The desensitization of violence, based on the remark of the informant, is a critical deterioration of the social accord and presents a prospective (long-term) threat to democratic rule and nationhood.

As Campbell, S. (2010) notices, the Internet is a true reflection of the postmodern world. The article explains the manner in which the political rallies in neighborhoods, such as Mathare, transform into hotbeds of violence with opposing political groups

fighting one another. It shines a light on the importance of youth gangs, mobilized by politicians, involved in perpetrating violence. According to study results, they document how the people in these regions live in fear, especially during electioneering periods, thereby restricting their movement and general day-to-day activities.

Although Kanyinga, K. (2019) opines that in informal settlements such as Mathare, politicking can degenerate into violence because of the intensity of political competition and large numbers of marginalized young people. The research cites the cases of gun violence and physical fights at these rallies, which gives rise to a culture of intimidation and fear to the point where they have to caution their movements as residents. The KNCHR 2017 Election Monitoring Report indicated that there were widespread acts of violence, particularly during campaigns. Violence was particularly pronounced during the campaign period, especially in the urban informal settlements, including Mathare, Kibera, and Kariobangi. The report portrayed cases of police use of excessive force, political group rival fights and the feeling of insecurity by residents during rallies.

Respondents interviewed through questionnaires gave important clues on the widespread feeling of insecurity that originates in political rallies and other public gatherings in Nairobi's informal settlements. The repeated remarks say that such events are often accompanied by a great amount of fear and a direct threat to the safety of individuals. According to the research, the perceived disorganization and violence, such as gunshots or people fighting, is not a one-time occurrence; instead, it is a habitual occurrence, since life is severely interfered with as the respondents have to avoid going out unless they have to. Such behaviours of avoiding disorder collectively points to a major shortcoming of trust in the state's capacity to regulate order; this breeds a vacuum that informal security agents and criminals alike can use. In my analysis, although the rallies are presumed to be democratic gatherings where people can express their

democratic rights, the violent tendencies of such rallies, in these vulnerable places, turn them into a source of acute local insecurity.

The findings of the questionnaire, in terms of national security, show how local instabilities in informal settlements accumulate to larger national insecurity. The continuing terror and the alleged use of weapons during political occasions confirm that there is a breakdown in the security system of the state to secure illegal weapons and guarantee the security of its people in the marginalized sections. This weakening of the state power, along with the likelihood of political elites to mobilize or take advantage of violence to win elections, generates a highly unstable state of affairs with the potential to easily degenerate into a situation of civil unrest, as seen in the previous Kenyan elections. The results, consequently, act as a stern reminder that failure to ensure security considerations in informal settlements should have considerable, destabilizing effects on national cohesion and democratic stability, and a more dynamic approach to the issue of security provision, both in terms of symptoms and their causes, must be implemented in such areas. A study by Vargas (2017) looked at sports fans, and they were found to be quite resilient.

A 2022 Daily Nation report talked about violence in Mathare as political factions clashed with violent exchanges in the form of stone-throwing, shooting, and injuries reported. These reports reiterate the fact that political rallies in the region usually result in chaos and insecurity. Research conducted by Mutahi & Ruteere (2019) discovered that ethnic division, political competition, and the involvement of gangs to intimidate them are causing political violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The research mentioned that people even live inside their homes during the periods of campaign as they are afraid of violence. The HRW has on numerous occasions reported the cases of police brutality and election violence in Kenya. Their 2017 post-election report raised

the incidences where the security forces used live bullets, teargas and excessive force to quell crowds in the opposition strongholds including Mathare, where otherwise, Groups like the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) and Amnesty International have produced reports of political campaigns and elections in Mathare that are riddled with violence, intimidation and extrajudicial murder.

Security implications were also considered as far as political rallies and other mass gatherings, since in the informal settlement of Nairobi, there were few gathering areas where campaigns could be carried out, hence most mass gatherings were carried out on the sides of the road near the actual settlement, particularly in local politics. The rallies, usually conducted in small open areas within the settlements, were where the candidates held addresses, presented their popularity and tried to marshal followers. The massiveness of such rallies, the multitude of people and the elevated emotional tone of the crowds hosted an electrified environment. As Onyango (2023) tells us, these gatherings, despite being meant to show force and have people come with enthusiasm, were flash points of violence and unrest. The existence of competing political groups further enhanced the combustible atmosphere, and the consumption of liquor and other drugs. Tribalistic appeals and rhetoric concerning corruption were also used, leading to further rising tensions. This is in line with literature that brings out the significance of political rhetoric in the construction of perceptions of insecurity and threats, especially in ethnically mixed and politically polarized areas (Kamau & Atieno, 2020). These rallies disrupted the day-to-day life in the settlements with the result of roadblocks, noise pollution and the threat of bouts due to incitements, making life generally uncomfortable and insecure. Additionally, the sale of the campaign wares, paired with the cash payments amid such occasions, though acting to gain support, was a source of

a feeling of entitlement and bitterness to those who were left out, and heightened the social gap in the process.

The disparity in access to resources and infrastructure also had an important role. Development and promises of investments into the infrastructure were areas that received good attention in Kibera, which had limited access to basic services. This was more in Mathare, with its more diverse people and economics, and more prominence was given to the ideas of social justice and economic empowerment. The variances in the effects of these measures, determined by location, show that it is essential to understand the local context well in order to tackle the security challenges that may arise during the elections.

In contrast, Mathare witnessed a greater emphasis on large-scale political rallies and public gatherings. Interviews and questionnaires

(OI Nairobi Dec 20th 2024;) indicated that these events were frequently used to showcase political strength and mobilize support, often drawing crowds from surrounding areas.

The main data shows that political rallies and public gatherings pose a serious problem to national security. That habit of mobilizing large masses of people, especially in and out of informal settlements, provides combustible environments that can easily trigger security challenges. Such mobilizations appear democratic initially, but from a national security perspective, these soon become means to spread incitement and violence across the urban spaces. The number itself becomes a problem in policing and crowd control since it is very hard to control such a crowd, with the possible entry of criminal elements or political agitators who can take advantage of the excitement in the crowd to initiate any conflict. This escalation can culminate in a short time to civil unrest, threatening national stability and, perhaps, leading to the deployment of national security forces.

Additionally, political performance as an expression of political power through the numbers can be seen as a manifestation of a politician's ability to dictate and possibly wield a large number of citizens. Such perception may give way to a process of escalation in which the opposing integration forces feel compelled to organize bigger or even violent political rallies to indicate the strength of their influence, further heightening tensions. This is traditionally the case in countries where politically driven violence is prevalent, and indeed so during election periods, any such mobilization acts towards destabilizing national unity and trust and the end objective of ensuring a democratic process. The continual existence of this dangerous assemblage entails destabilization of the social environment, internal displacement and loss of faith in the capacity of the state to maintain the legitimate interests of its citizens, which in the end represents a serious and predictably repeating threat to the general national security system and national political stability.

The rationale behind this strategy, according to Kamau (2020), is that it resembles the projection of power and influence using urban spectacles within an urban political bootstrap. Nevertheless, the logistical nature of such large-scale political rallies, in combination with the number of competing political forces that often participated in them, made the related security situation extremely unstable. The open areas in Mathare, though providing the benefit of large masses, were also conducive to the action of the security agencies, thus resulting in possible disputes and conflicts. The rhetoric of inflammatory speeches and the propaganda dissemination brochures at such rallies also contributed to the tensions, mainly in those regions that have been characterized by political unrest. The geography of Mathare, which had more scattered residences and wider streets, enabled political processes as well as easier access for

political caravans and rallies. Still, it was more difficult to monitor and police the movements of the crowds.

It is important to note that the political rallies and the public gatherings on the issue of national security in the informal settlements of Nairobi during the elections in 2007, 2013, 2017 and 2022 contributed largely to shaping the political landscape, affected the voting participants and increased the ethnic and political fractures. Nairobi, with its huge informal settlements of Kilamba, Mathare, and Kawangware, has remained a constant centre of political rallies, which have had far-reaching impacts on national security. Political leaders have used the rallies to rally behind them. Still, they have also led to the rise of counter-political activities, ethnic ghettoization and violence, especially during electioneering periods and after elections. The size of such a diverse and, in many cases, politically marginalized population in these informal settlements has made them especially susceptible to the impacts of rallies, which at times have exacerbated any underlying tensions and prompted serious security concerns.

Another area of security challenge was post-election violence, where election campaigns, due to the influence of some candidates, led to insecurity during and after the elections. The testimonies of the respondent, a protestor, showed that the high politics of tension created during the campaign period usually permeated through after the elections, causing aggravation and anger. Such tensions were also worsened by the use of social media to provide misinformation and perpetrate hate.

Such a report has far-reaching consequences in both local and national security. At the local level, this is reinforced and already creates a history of mistrust and disunity, especially in informal settlements where ethnic and political affiliations are deeply integrated in the experiences. The bitter legacies took the form of minor military

conflicts, social marginalization, and even criminal syndicates by politically aligned mobs as a way to sustain power or avenge dominance, a constant problem when trying to maintain community solidarity and the responsiveness of local politics and governance. This context of continuous hostility also develops into an ideal environment in which social media can pass misinformation and proliferate hatred, where the digital space is turned into a battleground where fabricated information can propagate easily, further stonewalling the creation of an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation. National security-wise, these incessant inter-election tensions, aggravated by the level of digital misinformation, are a direct risk to the stability of the entire country. It shows the inability to come up with real political reconciliation and the failure to consolidate the democratic gains. This state's active low-intensity conflict, perpetuated by grievances and discriminatory information, can easily be re-awakened on subsequent election cycles or exposure to unrelated socioeconomic shocks. It undermines confidence in state institutions, including the security services, electoral agencies, and so on. It provides opportunities for internal and external actors to take advantage of divisions, undermining the peace in the country and diverting it from a path to development.

As Mwangi & Omondi (2021) said, social media was a mighty tool to gather supporters and spread information, yet there were also attempts to spread misinformation and motivate violence. In the minds of the population living in informal settlements in Nairobi, the sharing of uncorroborated information on electoral problems or violence caused fear and a lack of clarity. Unsatisfaction with the unfair electoral process and the words but non-realities of development generated frustration among the areas on the periphery of power, leading to the marginalized being prone to political manipulation. The mobilization of youths was one of the most worrying factors during

the election campaigns. Youths who were unemployed and with little hope of finding jobs were the target of political agents who gave them financial incentives and even a promise of gaining power in support of the agent. Here, it corresponds to a study that emphasizes the fact that youth are susceptible to political manipulation in circumstances of financial constraints and societal exclusion (Kamau, 2020). The deployment of the young ones as political cannon fodder also led to an increase in violence as youth were then involved in clashes and confrontations when rallies and post-election protests were witnessed.

Marches of youth gangs with their allegiances to political factions further aggravated the security situation. Such gangs, according to the current focus on urban crime in Nairobi, are thriving in a politically intricate network of patronage and crime syndicates (Wambui, 2022). They were frequently deployed to threaten the opposition and suppress political activities of the rival group, a tool, therefore, adding weight to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. One very common tactic was the utilization of the so-called youth wings. During the campaigns, these groups were quite noticeable, and they are mostly implicated in violence. Youths felt disenfranchised, and the political parties were exploiting them. The elusive promises of work and prosperity also stoked resentments that the youth had against this, and they were quite angry. The presence of the community leaders at the local level also played a major role. There were those leaders who sought to downplay violence, and others were perceived as inciters to violence. The popularity of these leaders differed in the various settlements, and their success was pegged on how well they interacted with the youth and political parties. The effect on national security was that the rift between the younger generation intensified, and there was a chance of instability in the long run. The youth felt that the political system was not serving their interests, and this caused hopelessness. This

feeling of hopelessness was becoming the tool of extremist groups. It is critical to point out the necessity of long-term solutions when dealing with the problem of youth unemployment and political apathy. The voting process brought to the fore already existing issues.

The campaign strategies utilized played an important role in shaping the perceptions of the residents of the informal settlements in the city of Nairobi, who thought that they were at risk during election times. Many respondents indicated a pervasive sense of insecurity characterized by most accountabilities in various settlements. However, some people were recorded as increasing the level of anxiety in assemblies, door-to-door campaigns, and other post-election activities. Several consistent themes emerged in the interview and questionnaire evidence, suggesting that the character of the political campaigns present usually ultimately led to an increase in feelings of vulnerability and fear.

'When candidates come to our area, we worry about violence breaking out because of the rival groups that follow them'', "When they have rallies, we worry about violence breaking out,"

"There are always clashes between rival groups." The presence of armed security details and youth gangs further amplified these fears. "They walk around with guns and knives (OI Nairobi 10th Dec 2025).

The statistics present a dire interconnection between political campaigns and the issue of deep insecurity that residents face in informal settlements in Nairobi. At the community level, this transforms community spaces that ought to engage communities in a civic setting into areas of fear and possible conflict. Residents have to choose whether to be safe at the cost of inflicting restrictions on their freedom of movement, thus serving to negate their fundamental rights and the role they can play in democratic processes. The appearance of armed non-state actors affiliated with politicians or

simply taking advantage of a bad situation signals the loss of the state monopoly on legitimate force and the development of a feeling of insecurity in these societies.

These local incidents of violence and intimidation can be seen to pose a major challenge to the rule of law and the stability of the whole country when viewed through the perception of national security. The deployment of youth gangs and supposedly of security units by the political parties to control territory has a certain attribute inasmuch as it is a calculated attempt to extract control rather than negotiate it. Such practice not only reflects on the poor performance of the national security apparatus to demobilize and disband such groups, but also reflects the problematic issue of political impunity, whereby those behind such violence are never brought to book. Normalization of armed presence and conflicts in urban centers during electoral periods have far-reaching destabilizing effects on the trust of the population in democratic processes, the development of a culture of violence, and on the risk of larger-scale conflicts that may spill over urban slums into other parts of the city and beyond, ultimately causing a national fragmentation and the hindrance of social-economic development.

Respondents claimed that when the campaigns were going on, no one could have predicted who would start a fight. These people go to your door and tell you to vote this way, and you do not do that- you get threatened". These first-hand testimonies are an important part of how these activities conducted by the campaign directly affected the sense of safety among residents. The fear spawned by the use of some campaign tactics, armed security details and youth gangs was all ingredients in the climate of fear that pervaded everyday life.

The feeling of augmented insecurity was not only based on violence. Many residents also felt that the campaigns' psychological effects were not good. The ever-present flow

of political rhetoric, full of emotion-stirring rhetoric and polarizing speech, led to the development of a feeling of discomfort and nervousness.

The constant noise and shouting, the insults they throw at each other, it makes you feel like anything can happen. "The police come and they are rough. They treat us like criminals, even when we have done nothing wrong. (OI Nairobi 12th Jan, 2025).

The data suggests the widespread sense of harmonical tension and rotundity in informal settlements of Nairobi, as indicated by excessive bickering, screams, and invectives being exchanged by residents. This word-based attack makes people develop a more stringent level of insecurity, whereby the members believe that violence or conflict could erupt at any time. This kind of setting compromises social unity and cultivates fear that can hamper mobility as well as economic activities, an aspect that will further intensify the vulnerabilities in such communities. The everyday stream of negative exchanges indicates the problems behind the scenes: namely, competition over limited resources, unemployment, and laxity of law enforcement that are typical of informal settlements.

In support of this finding, secondary literature on the study of security in the informal settlements of Nairobi reports that these settings are typically characterized by high crime rates, gang violence, and violence between individuals and in part, these issues are motivated by social disintegration and underfunded policing. Research reveals that the absence of official policing set-ups and a paucity of community policing programs contribute to the prevalence of insecurity in a way that makes residents more prone to crime and vigilantism. Nationally, the Kenyan government has noted that informal settlements have become highly problematic in terms of security challenges, and failure to address those challenges may lead to wider social unrest, which threatens to

destabilize urban areas. Hence, the hustle and bustle are more than mere examples of fights in the streets; they reflect the inner problems of the society, which need to be addressed on the local community level and by official policies at the national level.

Although the presence of security forces gave some people a sense of security, others felt intimidated and harassed, which destroyed their belief in security organizations.

The perceived impacts of political campaigns also had a huge influence. Locals complained of a loss of social unity and an increase in polarization along political divides. "We were neighbours before the elections. We do not even converse with one another since we are on different sides of the candidates."

The statistics indicate a strong collapse in the social fabric in the informal settlements of Nairobi, which is intensified by an increased political polarization, especially during the elections. Residents' testimonies that they no longer socialize with neighbours because they are on opposite political sides are indicative of the division that weakens community trust and communal security. All this disintegration undermines informal social networks that have historically assisted in keeping order and safety, and increases the chances of communal conflict and suspicion. Locally, such polarization can create roadblocks in the efforts to work together on common security issues, and at the national level, captures and potentially amplifies general political antagonisms in volatile urban centres, which may fuel violence or unrest. This way, the invoking and presence of differences in politics pose a threat to local coexistence, along with an unstable national security. This aspect would justify pre, during-election, and post-election inclusive dialogue and conflict alleviation processes and mechanisms.

The campaigns promoted division in society, which stoked suspicion and mistrust. According to the campaign resources, many felt entitled because they were left out in the distribution of food and money, thus creating some form of resentment.

Respondents offered mixed opinions about the effectiveness and impact of law enforcement interventions in informal settlements of Nairobi, with little agreement on how security forces responded to campaign-related activities in the settlement following the campaign. This perception of police brutality eroded the trust in the security institutions, leading to a feeling of vulnerability among the residents.

On the other hand, some respondents accepted that the security forces have a difficult time with the volatile mix of political campaigns. A community leader in Mathare observed, "It is not easy for them. It involves massive foot traffic, clan warfare, and dispersed fake news." Nevertheless, the non-involvement of the communities and the bias of the security authorities also presented common issues. A respondent in Kibera claimed that they tend to give preferences to some political groups. They do not treat everybody the same."

Statistics highlight the considerable threats to local and national security in informal settlements of Nairobi, which are witnessed and considered by community members because of the involvement of a huge population, gang-related activities, and misinformation. These are some of the reasons why there is a highly volatile environment, whereby tensions can escalate in a short time, disrupting the attempts to achieve peace and order. Moreover, the perceived absence of active community involvement on the part of security forces and the accusations of preferring another political direction obstruct trust among the residents and law enforcement. This perceived favouritism creates resentments and increases the social divide that

undermines collaboration, which is important in the establishment of effective crime prevention and resolving conflicts at the local levels. At a national level, this level of mistrust and exclusion may undermine overarching security efforts and, hence, may become a source of cycles and instability, particularly in politically contentious regions.

This picture of bias further lowered trust and built a sense of injustice. The respondents were of the opinion that law enforcement procedure was more reactive than preventative. The police would turn up often, when a fight had already erupted. The respondents responded that there was a need to have more proactive policing. These would involve more policing of the community and improved intelligence. The respondents also added that there was a need to train the police better. This training must involve taking steps to de-escalate the situation and knowledge of how to uphold human rights.

The connection between election campaigns and safety in the informal settlements of Nairobi had a lot to do with the socioeconomic circumstances, such as poverty, unemployment, and ethnicity. These principles formed a fertile soil for targeting politically manipulative and contradictory situations. Poverty and unemployment, which are common in these settlements, predisposed their residents to political favours and enticement by money. Individuals are in dire need, a respondent said, and will do anything to get money, even when it entails supporting a political candidate, they do not believe in. Political hands commonly used this desperation as they gave out cash and pledged employment as a means of gathering votes. The respondents have also cited the absence of a chance for the youth as being a driving force. The young ones normally worked as political foot soldiers. There was also the belief that what was happening in the political system did not support them, which predisposed them to

further acts of violence. There was also the use of ethnic differences, which are at times enhanced by religious considerations, whereby these factors influenced security outcomes.

"Tribalism is still a big problem," a Mathare resident stated "Politicians use it to divide us and gain support." (OI Nairobi 24th Jan 2025)

The data is a direct indication of the ethnic divide permeating Kenyan politics. This observation is consistent with vast research that showed tribalism in Kenya is politically exploited by leaders. Ever since independence, Kenyan politicians have relied heavily on the use of ethnic allegiance and tribe affiliation in an effort to get electoral votes to stay in power. This is historically opposed to colonial divide-and-rule policy, which divided the tribes and cemented the divisions across separate politics, and has extended into post-colonial politics too, through the formation and support of political parties along tribal lines. As a result, the electoral process assumes the form of ethnicity counts instead of policies and ideologies, as it continues to promote tribalism as a political factor to segregate and conquer, instead of reinforcing nation-building and development.

His understanding as a resident also highlights the evidence of the social and economic implications caused by this political manipulation of tribalism by inhibiting trust among communities and national cohesion. This is driven by strategic appeals to ethnic identity by the politicians, worsening the divide and encouraging exclusiveness and the distribution of unequal resources. This feeds on unhealthy ethnicity that destroys the social harmony and can hinder inclusive governance. The fact that tribalism is closely associated with political authority implies that it also becomes a major hindrance to development and effective leadership, as ethnic affiliations turn out to be the

determinants of positions via patronage of state resources, coupled with appointments instead of meritocracy.

Aggression through the use of tribalistic slurs and the accusation of corruption further inflamed the situation and contributed to the feeling of fear and mistrust. The respondents also expressed that the absence of unity among the various ethnic groups rendered it easy for politicians to exploit them. The bad infrastructure and absence of basic amenities, i.e. water and sanitation, also made the people feel insignificant, which made them develop a measure of resentment. According to the respondent, we feel neglected. The politicians just take off during elections, only to come around during elections. This feeling of neglect created anger and frustration and made residents prone to political manipulation and conflict. There was also an issue raised with regard to the involvement of more members of the community in the process of security. The respondents illustrated that the community must be part of the planning and implementation of security issues. The respondents further reported that there was a need to have more transparency and accountability in the electoral process. This would assist in gaining trust in the political system.

Local gangs and youth groups are key political actors in the electioneering in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The issues shared by most respondents are that some politicians mobilize and use youth to form local militia groups to make sure they are on the ground in door-to-door campaigns. During rallies, they provide security, guaranteeing crowd control. In more serious instances, these types of groups were deployed to either threaten anyone opposing or to start a fight if money or some material objects were offered.

*According to key informants "Politicians often use our young men during campaigns. They promise them money and work, but these youth end up becoming violent. In 2013, there was a lot of intimidation from gangs hired by politicians to ensure the youth voted for a certain candidate. This raised the level of insecurity because you never knew who was aligned with which party."
OI Nairobi 24th Jan 2025*

The data underscores one of the essential connections among political manipulations and both local and national security issues. The encouragement of the use of young men by politicians as campaign tools, as a form of promise of money and jobs, presents an opposite effect of militarizing young people, especially in volatile areas, and therefore becomes a source of violence and intimidation. This trend further promotes insecurity because the boundaries of loyalty and trust among the communities are unclear, as gangs that support different political parties create an unpredictable environment of fear and insecurity within neighborhoods. The results of this politically fueled violence are the destabilization of local security as well as national stability due to the establishment of such a culture of coercion, criminality and voter intimidation. The division brought about by such proxy wars continues the patterns of violence that make democracy difficult and necessitate the formulation of unified security systems that can serve the people in a non-partisan way, regardless of their political or ethnic affiliations.

Ruteere (2019) argues that political strategists have historically mobilized the unemployed youth in the informal settlements, such as Korogocho, by using them as security tools in the politics of seeking elective positions. This study states that 68 per cent of the respondents interviewed in the informal settlements in Nairobi reported having been recruited to be part of the security outfits during electioneering times, many of which have been used to threaten or attack other candidates. Such manipulation not only increased hackneyed gang warfare but also consolidated political patronage systems whereby young men relied on the politicians even after elections.

Another security issue associated with the electioneering campaign in informal settlements is the engagement of local militias and criminal gangs. Certain political candidates hired gang members in slums to act as foot soldiers during the campaigns. Frequently armed and organised, these gangs are employed to control political loyalty or to threaten voters. In Nairobi slums, most of the respondents report the existence of gangs like the Mungiki and Camp Jesh that have been associated with election-related violence. The outcome is the growth of insecurity among civilians in the firing line of such violent warfare.

According key informant "By 2022, there was a slight reduction in violence compared to 2007. We felt that the government tried to improve security, and we saw more police presence. Still, the campaigns were disruptive, especially in our neighborhoods. The campaign were infiltrated by militia groups and rowdy youths, remained a source of tension, though not as extreme as before." OI Nairobi. Jan 2025

The data shows a small decrease in the occurrence of violence between the years 2007 and 2022, which is a positive gain due to greater government action and policing, which is something that can be compared with the new security operations and increased police guards in the area. Nevertheless, the fact that disruption has replayed during election campaigns, which has been characterized by infiltration by militia groups and unruly youths, is an indication of some underlying local tensions, and potentially weak local security. This continuous violence, albeit not so intense as in previous years, indicates that the political contestation still uses violence as a factor in exercising power that threatens the safety of society and even national security. Militia pose the threat of contested loyalties and the uncertainties of the neighborhoods during the campaigns, which can destabilize peaceful political processes and make law enforcement more difficult. Since there is also a refugee population in Eastleigh, security strategies need to address both crime prevention and community acceptance so as not to similarly

create vulnerabilities and cast the security organizations as aliens. The above analysis highlights that, much as there have been positive changes as far as security enhancement is concerned, the political environment has continued to present localized instances of insecurity, which are of concern to the overall stability of Kenya.

In a survey of electoral violence in Kenya, Cheeseman (2020) noted that even though large-scale violence after the 2007 2008 post-election crisis had subsided meaningfully, localized forms of violence via micro-level intimidation have become the new norm, especially in informal settlements like Eastleigh. The research points out that such security sector reforms and police deployment in the years 2013 to 2022 could play a role in mitigating mass violence. Nevertheless, the existence of informal militia groups and the reception of door-to-door campaigning strategies deployed by political players persisted to scare and intimidate the residents.

During electoral campaign periods, Informal settlements are frequently inundated by increased criminal activities like muggings, assaults and extortion as groups take advantage of the madness and confusion that accompanies an election period. Door-to-door campaigns are easy targets of criminal activities, since campaign materials, funds, or even the supporters of the candidates are robbed or attacked. This threatens the safety of candidates and the general population and, in general, weakens national security at the time of elections.

Moreover, ethnic loyalties in informal settlements are easily exploited by Political parties and candidates. In Nairobi, the locations popularly referred to as Mathare and Kibera are heterogeneous in dispersion, with ethnic groups occupying certain parts dominantly. Indicatively, Kibera has been occupied by the Nubian, Luo, Luhya and the Kikuyu communities, whereas Mathare boasts of a combination of Kikuyu, Luo and

Kamba communities. According to respondents, in election years, it is in the nature of the political parties to take sides with these ethnic groups in order to win support, as the door-to-door campaigns are also applied to exploit such ethnic divisions. Ethnic loyalty is a frequent campaigning tool adopted by candidates who pledge to represent the interests of their community even at the cost of national unity.

In their study on urban political violence in Kenya, Mbote (2017) argue that informal settlements like Mathare remain hotspots for coercive political mobilization. The study shows that fear-based compliance is a common survival strategy among residents, as political campaigns are often accompanied by threats, intimidation, and sporadic violence. The authors note that in Mathare, approximately 55% of residents surveyed during the 2017 election period reported experiencing direct or indirect pressure to support specific candidates, often under threat of physical harm or social exclusion. This dynamic creates an environment where political allegiance is shaped less by democratic choice and more by fear of retaliation, mirroring the sentiments expressed by the key informant.

Major political parties, i.e., Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), Jubilee Party, and political coalition, CORD, JUBILEE Alliance, NAZA, ASIMIO and Kenya Kwanza, in most cases have candidates who have good local contacts in informal settlements. These parties are cognizant of the fact that voter turnout in such regions is decisive in any election. They usually assist their parties by organizing and financing door-to-door campaigns, rallies, and mobilizing local leaders to coordinate with ethnic leaders. The role of Party-affiliated youth groups is also important in spreading campaign messages and guaranteeing the loyalty of voters through grassroots-level communications.

The Table below summarizes the findings on the impact of election campaign strategies on national security in the informal settlements of Nairobi City County, Kenya.

Table 4.8: Summary of Findings on Election Campaign Strategies and National Security

Aspect	Description	Implications for Local Security	Implications for National Security
Use of Youth in Campaigns	Politicians in areas like Korogocho recruit young men with promises of money/work, who become violent agents during campaigns.	Militarizes youth, causes intimidation and violent clashes, creates confusion on political affiliations, destabilizes neighborhoods.	Entrenches culture of coercion and criminality; undermines peaceful democratic processes.
Campaign-related Violence Levels	In Eastleigh, violence during campaigns has reduced since 2007 but remains a source of tension due to militia and rowdy youths.	Ongoing localized insecurity disrupts community peace; presence of militias complicates policing and trust-building.	Continues to pose challenges for political stability and election credibility.
Politicization of Ethnic Divisions	Politicians use tribalism to garner support, deepening ethnic divisions as seen in Mathare and other areas.	Heightens mistrust and exclusion among ethnic communities, increasing potential for local conflicts.	Undermines national unity, fosters cycles of ethnic-based violence and patronage politics.
Election Violence Trends (2007 - 2022)	Severe violence marked the 2007 elections; recent elections (notably 2022) have seen significantly lower levels of violence.	Reduction in deadly violence points to some local improvements but risks remain in politically sensitive areas.	Indicates progress in reducing nationwide election-related violence, promoting greater stability.
Militia and Gang Involvement	During earlier elections (e.g., 2013), gangs hired by politicians intimidated voters and fueled insecurity.	Creates unpredictable and fearful environments, increasing vulnerability to gang-related crime.	Challenges law enforcement capacity, jeopardizes democratic legitimacy.
Government Security Response	Increased police presence and security efforts by 2022 have helped reduce violence but have not eliminated disruptions.	Enhanced law enforcement presence improves immediate security yet risks alienating communities if heavy-handed.	Shows state capacity to curb violence but highlights ongoing tensions in political contestation.

4.4 Role of Community Leadership in Ensuring a Secure Electoral Process.

In this section, the role played by the community leadership in making the electioneering a secure process is investigated. Community leadership is important towards secure elections in informal settlements in Nairobi as it supports cooperative partnerships and trust in a community with the police, and this helps in information exchange and collective ownership of security. In these highly congested and sometimes insecure neighborhoods, community leadership means engaging non-state actors and residents in concert with police to sensitize electorates, prevent election violence, and mitigate security issues through local patrols and engagement. Such collaboration becomes instrumental in eliminating credibility and ill will, and thus makes it easier to detect and avert possible threats in elections. Moreover, community policing programs like the one in the informal settlements of Nairobi, such as the Mlango Kubwa and Kibera, have shown that involving residents in the security-making process and in reporting crimes usually increases the security of such areas. The residents feel more at ease as they are empowered to take part in the democratic processes without fear. Such an ample security strategy is essential to peaceful and credible elections in high-risk informal settlements. In most provinces, elections are not democratic just because they constitute exercises in democratic participation, but they are also tense times and periods of possible conflict. Local leaders have both a complementary and a supplementary role to play. They may provide advocates of peace and stability by encouraging dialogue and propagating peaceful participation, or turn into tools of political manipulation and violence, augmenting existing insecurity.

4.4.1 Community leadership Concerns During Electioneering Period

Security is a major concern in Nairobi’s informal settlements, where election periods often see increased violence. Local leaders are central to managing these security concerns, whether through direct action or coordination with law enforcement and other stakeholders.

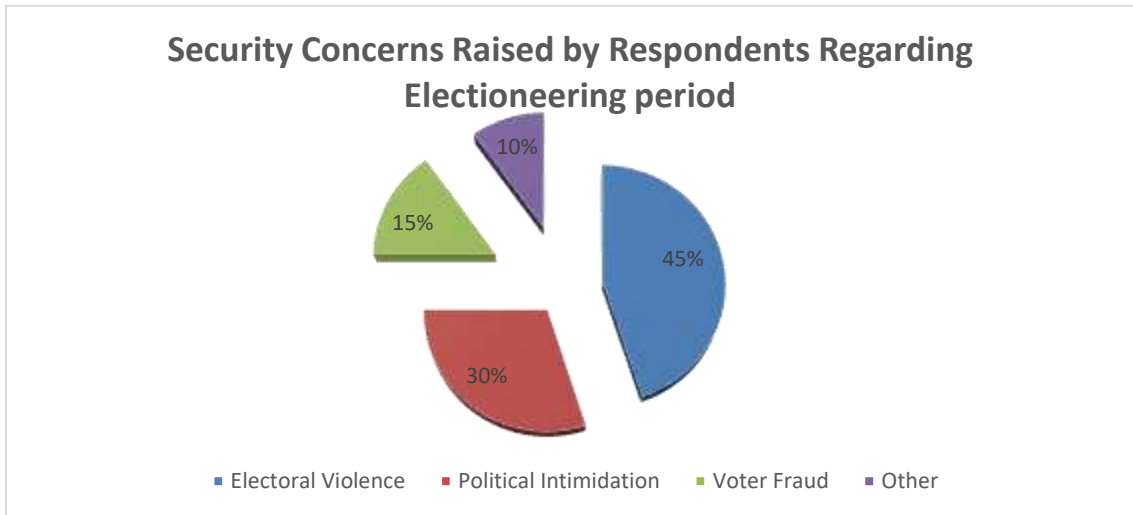


Figure 4.1 Security Concerns During Election Periods

Source field data 2025

The pie chart above illustrates the distribution of security concerns during election periods

The pie chart gives a critical breakdown of the perceived threats to secure electoral processes and ultimately national security. The drive of electoral violence is the major worry, with per cent figures of 45, and the major element of concern is about violence that occurs in the form of physical conflicts and disruption during election campaigns. This citizen fear expressed repeatedly about the existence of violence is a direct threat to the democratic process, in terms of voter turnout, and to the legal nature of a final election result. Political intimidation comes in at 30 per cent, showing that coercive

tactics, either subtle or overt, are common and can prevent people from speaking their minds and put a dent in voter preferences. The very high index of the combined weight of both factors in this section: 75 per cent, means that the physical and psychological security of the electorate is considered as highly eviscerated. The proportion of concerns about voter fraud is 15 per cent, indicating an interest in the manipulation of the actual process of voting, which may undermine the credibility of institutions with the population. The Other category consists of the other 10 per cent, which is most likely any number of issues adding to a general sense of insecurity. Such a breakdown of areas of concern highlights that in order to ensure secure elections with no threat to national security, the primary interventions should be aimed at curbing violence and intimidation as well as addressing the integrity of the electoral mechanics.

Respondents note that election seasons are usually marked by increased violence, such as ethnic violence, political violence and interparty violence between various political groups.

“When elections come, we see a lot of violence. People are threatened, and youth get used by politicians to fight for their own benefit.” – Religious Leader, Mathare. O.I Nairobi Feb 2025

The data directly reveals a serious vulnerability of the secure election process and, therefore, of national security. This assertion reflects the circularity in the use of violence in elections, as the anticipation and utilization of youth in violence predetermines the waves of elections. Being recruited as agents of violence is an indication of economic marginalization and the lack of opportunity, and this is what, according to him, politicians use the youth to meet their selfish gains. Besides undermining voter integrity and fairness, electoral intimidation leads to the breakdown of communities and resentment and exacerbates widespread instability. Concerted

efforts to identify the causes of youth vulnerability, complete inclusion in politics, and empower religious and community leaders to preach and hold politicians accountable for their incitement and verses must be guaranteed on a firm position to foster a safe and secure electoral process, besides sustaining overall national security.

According to Mueller (2014), in Kenya, the electoral seasons, especially in the Mathare and Kibera informal settlements, have been marked by the arming of jobless young people by interest groups to perpetrate violence and intimidation. She finds that political elites use economic weaknesses and marginalization to recruit young people into the use of violence, offering immediate rewards of cash or security. This is a common practice, which instigates violence throughout the election process, as well as destabilizes community lives and creates insecurities after the political campaigns.

“I always talk to the youth groups, warn them about the dangers of violence, and encourage peaceful actions.” (O.I Nairobi 2nd Feb 2025)

Data offers a very important understanding of proactive measures to make the electoral process safe and increase national security. The face-to-face connection with young people by a local leader is a critical alternative discourse to the possibility of political abuse and violence that tends to occur during elections. By specifically cautioning against the ills of violence and promoting the peaceful course of action, the leader is directly interfering in a population that is highly vulnerable to political thuggery, as existing data have illustrated repeatedly. A grassroots movement to teach the appropriate way to engage in the civic process and de-escalate tensions is a major contributor to preserving elections and diminishing voter intimidation, as well as the ability to know that election results are a true statement of the will of the people. These kinds of initiatives not only increase the trustworthiness and stability of the electoral

process, but they would also promote resilience within the communities, thus protecting the larger national security against the destabilizing impact of electoral conflict.

Wairuri (2019) asserts that during elections in informal settlements such as Kibera, community leaders, especially in Kibera, are critical in preventing violence and finding peace. His research describes how community leaders, religious representatives, and youth role models do not hesitate to work with youth to convince them not to participate in political violence and, in many cases, will have peace meetings, sports programs and community gatherings. These ground-level practices have been proven useful in curbing tensions and offering alternative discourses to the violent political mobilization that is often applied by political forces.

4.4.2 Community Leaders' Policing Strategies during the Electioneering Process

Community policing employs the help of elders, youth leaders, religious leaders, and women's groups; these implications have a strict influence on security during elections, with the direct means of voter mobilization. The findings of the interview and survey conducted in the informal settlements in Nairobi were analyzed, which brought forth a few important themes on how local leaders mediate during election campaigns and security concerns. Table 4.9 indicates the reservations of the main respondents.

Table 4.9: Community Leadership Policing Strategies

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Most leaders from the informal settlements have been encouraging dialogue among different ethnic communities during election campaigns to prevent violence	274	7%	13%	3%	50%	27%	3.85	0.22
Local leaders act as crucial intermediaries between political parties and the community. They are deeply involved in voter mobilization, disseminating political information, organizing rallies, and encouraging voter registration	274	10%	7%	2%	42%	39%	4.08	0.13
community leaders help in mediating conflicts and peacebuilding to de-escalate tensions during elections period	274	8%	9%	1%	47%	35%	4.13	0.11
There is enhanced youth engagement and empowerment through shifting the focus from political competition to shared community safety and socio-economic concerns	274	6%	8%	2%	43%	41%	4.23	0.10
The local leaders have a significant role to play in promoting security in the informal settlement during election campaigns	274	12%	16%	5%	35%	32%	3.35	1.00
Average Scores	274						3.94	0.99

Source: Research Data (2025)

According to the results presented in Table 4.2, the respondents were requested to indicate how much they agreed that the majority of the leaders in the informal settlements have been promoting dialogue among different communities of ethnic groups involved in electioneering, in order to avoid violence. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents concurred (Mean=3.85, SD=0.22). The SD is less than

one, and this means that the responses given varied less. Regarding the percentage, there was agreement of 50% and strong agreement of 27% on the role of the leaders in the informal settlement regarding the promotion of the dialogue. Also, the respondents were comfortable with the notion (Mean=4.08, SD=0.13) that Local leaders form significant agents between the community and political parties. They are engaged in voter mobilization, distribution of political information, holding rallies, and mobilizing voters to register. The latter further demonstrates that 42% and 39% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that political parties use local leaders as mediators to communities.

On the point that mediation of conflicts is a strategy, most of the study participants concurred that community leaders assist in resolving conflicts and peace building to calm the tensions when elections are forthcoming. Based on the findings, it is evident that 47 per cent and 35 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that the community leaders contribute to conflict and peace-building mediations. Simultaneously, the majority of interviewees (Mean=4.23, SD=.0.10) also supported the view that youth involvement and empowerment will increase due to focusing not on the rivalry of politics, but on common security and community socio-economic issues. This is equivalent to 43 and 41 per cent who concurred and strongly concurred, respectively. The majority of the respondents concurred (Mean=3.35, SD=1) with the fact that local leaders can play a key role in enhancing security in the informal settlement during election campaigns. However, there are some varying degrees of responses given on this (SD=1). The results reveal that 35 per cent and 32 per cent respectively agreed and strongly agreed that the role of community leaders in ensuring security is promoted in the informal settlements.

These findings are comparable with those presented by Birch, Daxecker and Hoglund (2020), who described the avoidance of electoral conflicts during the campaign period due to the positive statements of leaders. Conversely, the study has found that bad political rhetoric by leaders during elections might prove catastrophic towards the peaceful electoral processes. The fact that leaders in the informal settlements have contributed a lot to security incidents when it comes to campaigns is a manifestation of the finding. This is in line with the findings by Turnbull (2021) that the political leaders have a very significant influence on security. The study has established that leaders can deploy armed gangs to conduct election violence in service to the incumbents, and the outcomes have been colossal and forcible displacement of human citizens and loss of human life.

The information on the main informants and the FGDs repeatedly demonstrated the participation of community leaders (elders), youth leaders, and representatives of religious and women's groups in voter mobilization and political communication. Respondents explained how these leaders would typically act as messengers between political parties and the community safety, pass information, organize rallies and act as voter registration agents as they plead to have the security law and order upheld in the slums. In some cases, the respondents also mentioned that political candidates often courted the favour and the support of powerful local leaders because they could use them to give them large voter bases and afford them security. These results were supported by the survey results, which revealed that a good percentage of voters depended on local leaders when seeking political information, security and protection during the campaigns. The respondents embraced the role of the leaders in organizing political activities as well as distributing campaign resources, thus emphasizing the role they played in mobilizing voters and further shaping the security situation in regions.

This highlights the significant role of local leaders as a security actor and a medium between the political figures and the community policing, being highly conscious about the security issues, especially in situations where state institutions are weak and are not seen as close to the community (Onyango, 2019).

The role of community leaders in our informal settlement is to work closely with the police to identify places that are more vulnerable to conflicts whenever elections take place. We hold meetings with the residents to help them understand the significance of peace and to report any suspicious activities. Our presence with the officers in joint patrols helps them maintain order and also relieves the community.

This perspective highlights the fundamental place of community leaders in mediating between the residents and the police during elections in informal settlements in Nairobi. This active cooperation ensures that the first indications of unrest are spotted and dealt with quickly, which lowers the risk of electoral violence occurring. By increasing awareness among citizens and enabling them to report possible suspicious activities, community leaders increase situational awareness among citizens and security agencies. Such collaboration establishes trust and legitimacy, makes the electoral environment safer, and helps create better local and national security by ensuring localized conflicts do not reach the national level.

Data provides evidence of the role of community leaders who work with police to increase election security in the informal settlement. According to a study, such a collaboration contributes to trust building, early warning of problem areas, and collective ownership over peaceful elections (Mugaju, 2020). Examples of such partnerships include conducting community meetings where community members are raised on topics of nonviolent engagement in elections and the importance of vigilance

when reporting suspicious individuals, which helps in the mitigation of electoral violence (Kamau & Nzioki, 2019). Also, the police and community representatives should join in joint patrols, especially on the day of voting, to provide a sense of security and discourage anyone interested in disruptions (Mwangi, 2021). Such combined methods resonate with the results presented, which demonstrate the importance of security initiatives rooted locally in establishing order and strengthening the democratic procedures in high-risk areas of urban informal settlements.

Conversely, the majority of Respondents support that they not only collaborated with the police but also facilitated the resolution of conflicts involved in election processes to deter violence. They involve young people in peaceful events and make recommendations on the effects of violence during elections. They can facilitate dialogue and improve mutual understanding, thereby cooling the tensions and establishing an environment in which everyone will feel welcome to exercise the vote."

This statement shows the active role of community leaders in election campaigns in informal settlements in the aspects of community policing and peace-building. Their mediation activities deal with flash points before they degenerate to violence, which is relevant to populous and politically sensitive settings. In youth engagement and through open communication, the leaders of a community can instill a culture of peaceful political participation, which strengthens the social fabric and electoral competition. Through these grassroots initiatives, national security is enhanced by reducing the threat heightened by the risks of electoral interference that could lead to the eruption of broader instability in society.

The data has always been on the safety of community-based interventions in moderating the violence that is caused by elections. As an example, a report conducted

by Miron and Gadir (2020) demonstrates that a combination of mediation, empowerment of youth, and town hall meeting programs yields significant results in the arena of tension de-escalation and effective electoral process promotion through improved communications between communities and fostering another source of trust. Likewise, studies conducted by Otieno and Omondi (2019) note that direct participation of community organizations in resolving campaign-related conflicts and training the youth on the consequences of these actions directly contribute to the reduction of campaign malpractices and strengthening of trust among voters and their turnout rates.

Local leaders in the regions of interest resorted to using different tactics to avert violence and encourage the peaceful electoral process. Such toppings include, but are not limited to, community conversations and peace campaigns. The comprehension of the effectiveness of these measures provides information regarding the capability of local leaders to sustain public order and security.

During an in-person meeting, the local leaders play a leading role in the community's engagements to enhance peace and togetherness. They force people of different political inclinations to interact and understand one another, which minimizes tensions.

“We organize forums where different political groups meet and talk about their security issues. I believe communication solves most problems.”

“We bring youth from different factions to the table to discuss what they want. It's not about winning the election; it's about ensuring that our community is safe.” (O.I Nairobi 3rd Feb 2025)

The statistics underscore an important, proactive dimension of securing electoral processes and creating national security: conflict resolution and dialogue at the local level. The first one refers to organizing forums where political groups can talk about security matters, and the fact that communication can solve most problem points to the effectiveness of preventive diplomacy. These forums help to reduce the risks to

electoral integrity, which are highlighted because of the creation of safe areas by rival political factions to air their grievances and develop middle grounds before the grievances develop into violence by clashes, intimidation and voter suppression. Such active mediation makes diffusing current threats and establishing trust and understanding between rival groups a longer-term goal that can be used to create common bonds in preparation for a peaceful and credible election.

Moreover, the community orientation on making youth of various factions sit at the negotiation table to determine what they desire helps to move beyond the elections to focus on the security of the community. This strategy considers that youth should not be ignored since they can be critical instruments of peace. They are usually vulnerable to politicking, but can be influential when their demands are listened to and their grievances openly discussed. Having redefined the goal of winning the election as, instead, to make sure our community is safe, the Youth Leader will place much more emphasis on having a long-term view of stability that goes beyond the electoral cycle. By enhancing social cohesion and inculcating the notion of collective responsibility in peace, this localized and youth-focused peace-building endeavors is directly significant to the national security insofar as such an undertaking would allow discarding the spectra of post-election violence, as well as strengthening the measures by which the democratic process can be preserved unscathed by the political opposition.

Byer (2017) indicates the significance of community-based peace forums within Mathare, which help political rivals interact and manage conflicts to avoid electoral violence and insecurity. In a similar vein, Mkutu (2021) highlights the transitional significance of youth-led peace dialogues in the informal settlements of Nairobi, especially in Kibera. In their study, youth leaders and local peace actors have increasingly turned to the use of community dialogue to bring together youth across

rival political divides. These forums work to depoliticize and eliminate the electoral pitting contest to gain focus on mutual socio-economic issues that propel peaceful coexistence and minimize the risk of the eruption of violence during elections. Neighbourhood leaders always liaise with law enforcement agents to offer voters safety. They assist in recognizing vulnerable populations and areas and coordinate with the police to install safety facilities at venerable locations.

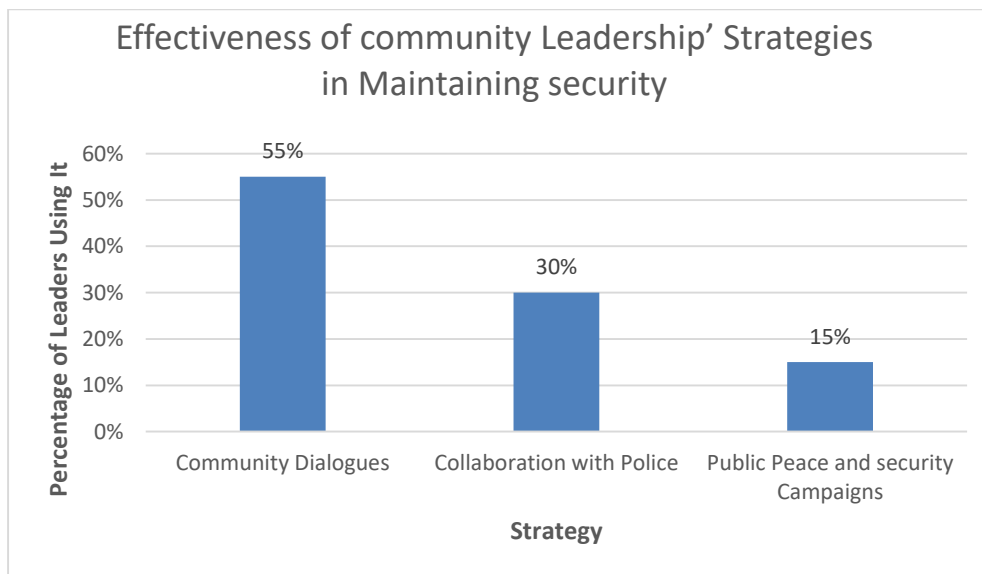


Figure 4.2: Effectiveness of community Leadership' Strategies in Maintaining Security

Source: Research Data (2025)

The bar graph can elicit vital information regarding the roles of local leaders in the informal settlements of Nairobi in national security and electoral security. The largest type of strategy is the most common, being community dialogues, with 55% of the leaders practicing them, as it is a testament to the importance and prevalence of internal communication and conflict resolution in sustaining peace. The fact that this proactive interaction curbs threats of tensions that would lead to electoral violence or other related insecurity is a critical account noted in the previous figures, pointing out the Youth

Leader in Kibera. The presence of collaboration with police is rated at 30% which is symptomatic of acknowledging formal security mechanisms. In contrast, the ratio is low in relation to community dialogues, which implies that the grassroots channels are usually valued as more effective or easier to approach. Last, at 15%, there is a more external, awareness-raising orientation, which is "Public Peace and Security Campaigns." Taken together, they are an indicator of a multi-pronged approach by local leaders to ensure security challenges, which, in turn, is certainly beneficial to improving the security of the election and, thus, the general stability and national security of the nation.

4.4.3 Community Perceptions on the Effectiveness of Managing Security

Community perceptions are an important issue in relation to community policing and how the locals perceive the entry of community policing in matters of campaigning, electoral, and ensuring security. This section deals with the community's attitudes towards community policing and how this affects the process of elections. The primary respondents participated in a questionnaire administered to them, and their replies are shown in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10: Community perceptions on Effectiveness of Managing Security

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
The community places greater trust in local leaders compared to external police or political figures.	274	7%	14%	3%	40%	36%	3.84	0.56
The community's leaders are considered the "first line of defense" in peacekeeping, filling gaps where formal security institutions fall short.	274	9%	9%	2%	41%	39%	4.02	0.43
The community views local leaders as "one of us," implying a greater sense of accountability and commitment to the community's well-being	274	5%	13%	2%	47%	33%	4.01	0.49
Despite the high expectations and trust placed in them, local leaders face significant resource limitations.	274	9%	8%	1%	48%	34%	4.10	0.25
Average Scores	274						3.99	0.43

Source: Research Data (2025)

As per the results in Table 4.10, respondents largely agreed (Mean=3.84, SD=0.56) that the community has a higher trust in the local leaders than external police or political authorities. The fact that the standard deviation is considerably low signifies that there exists a high level of agreement among the 274 respondents as far as this factor is concerned; there is little deviation on this aspect. Table 4.10 reveals that 40 per cent

and 36 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that the trust of the community leaders is in the communities rather than external police.

Additionally, the survey participants were in unison in regard to their agreement on the point that leaders of the community are viewed as being the first front in peacekeeping, a role they have failed to fulfil through formal security institutions. The second-lowest SD of the table indicates a very high level of agreement between respondents. In terms of the percentage of the respondents, it can be observed that most of them agreed; 41 agreed and 39 strongly agreed that the community leaders are the first line of defence in peacekeeping.

The respondents also agreed (Mean=4.01, SD=0.49) to the fact that the community regards local leaders as one of them, suggesting an increased sense of responsibility and dedication to community welfare in terms of security. This is also supported by the percentages that reveal that 47.33% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the societies perceive their leaders as being part of them. Lastly, the respondents were of the view that local leaders have considerable resource constraints despite the high expectations and trust posited on them (Mean=4.10, SD=0.25). The mean score on this statement is the highest of all statements, thereby showing that there is overwhelming consensus that local leaders are under-resourced despite the very high trust they have gained. The SD is the lowest in the whole table, indicating almost the same views among the 274 respondents. There is also very little variance in the statement scores. These results are also supported by the percentages revealing the levels of agreement and strong agreement on the issue of the presence of resource limitations among community leaders, despite their high level of contribution.

The results among the main respondents are aligned with previous research. It can be used to develop early-warning mechanisms to identify unrest and build trust and confidence in electoral proceedings, from Ferreira (1996) to Innes (2016). Nevertheless, it is not certain to be effective. Research in the Global South (Blair, 2021), Tanzania (Cross, 2014), and Kenya (Pommerolle, 2023) indicates that political manipulation of community policing, its institutional fragility, and patronage networks are likely to subvert community policing. Unless followed up with other institutional reforms and protections, it may devolve into enabling partisan politics and not being an instrument of objective security.

The responses of the key informants and FGDs also evidence these findings. The key informants noted that the leaders in communities are normally perceived by the locals as trustworthy people aware of their community's safety. Their appearance is regarded as essential in making the conduct of elections peaceful.

“We trust local leaders on issues of security more than police deployed from outside. They are one of us, and we know they will fight for us.” O.I Nairobi 2nd Feb 2025

The data provides a striking revelation as to the importance of localized trust in not only the security of elections but the national security itself. The feeling highlights the fact that most people tend to seek close leadership on critical issues such as security. The us vs. them mentality, where local leaders can be perceived to fight on behalf of locals as someone close to home, projects a sense of higher accountability, knowledge of the local, and perceived interest in the welfare of locals compared to the outsiders. Such a great trust in local leaders ensures that they are key agents in securing improved security during elections; the local leaders mediate disputes, spread accurate information or mobilise communities against acts of violence or other malpractices. On the other hand, distrust in the outside politics or official security apparatus generates a favourable

environment for episodes of disorder, disaffection, or even rejection of election results, and they expose the electoral process and the country's general security system. Hence, the involvement and empowerment of the trusted local leaders is not only important but is indeed crucial in delivering credible and peaceful elections.

As argued by Resnick (2019), in the urban informal settlement, Kibera, locals trust the local leaders more than the external political actors. Such a credence is based on familiarity, closeness, and constant interaction. As the study indicates, it appears that local leaders, whether they are elders, youth leaders, or religious figures, are considered to be more accountable for security needs and responsive to such needs because they live under the same conditions as their people. This dynamism empowers their legitimacy and positions of power over political mobilization and peace-building initiatives.

“Local leaders understand our vulnerability and security problems. They’ve been here for years. When they speak, we listen. “We have to rely on the police sometimes, but in many areas, the police are not enough to keep the peace. It’s mostly the local leaders who maintain order.” (OI Nairobi 10th March 2025)

The data provided by Mathare highlights the centrality of the local leaders in the establishment of a safe electoral process and the support of national security. The statement of the voter underlines the high level of trust and respect of communities in such leaders because of their long-term status and familiarity with the local weaknesses and security risks. It is this embeddedness that enables the local leaders to be effective intermediaries and be in a position to predict any sources of tension and muster peaceful responses during elections. Since in politically volatile settings such as Mathare, electoral processes rapidly turn into violent confrontations, the capacity of the local leaders to affect their populations considerably lowers the risk of violence, enables

peaceful engagement in the usually difficult electoral process, and consequently ensures order at the local level.

In addition, the admission of the local leader that the presence of the police alone is not enough further points to the shortcomings of state-sponsored security, especially in low-resource or high-threat areas where state agencies may not be able to provide consistent security. In this regard, local leaders can serve as the bulk shield in peace operations as they rely on their legitimacy and connections with the community to prevent clashes and cool down troubles. This harmonious Relationship between the two, the community-based leadership and the formal security agencies, is necessary to ensure an environment that allows free, fair, and safe elections to take place. Enhancing the capacity of local leaders, as well as supporting law enforcement, is hence key not only to electoral integrity, but also to the national security perspective of ensuring that there is sustained peace and social cohesion during politically sensitive periods.

As Lynch (2014) states, in informal settlements of Nairobi, there are established local leaders with considerable power and authority due to long-term experience and their knowledge of local struggles. His experience reveals that such leaders, especially in a setting such as Mathare, are trusted intermediaries who are able to mobilize the people, mediate conflicts, and voice concerns of the community effectively more than outsider political actors. The reason is their credibility, which may be ascertained due to their long-time involvement in local social and economic issues.

When comparing the importance of local leaders in terms of mediating the election campaigns and security issues in the informal settlements of Nairobi City County, it is evident to see a couple of patterns and relationships. Among such clear patterns is the fact that there is a strong agreement among the respondents that local leaders play a

great role in the safety of the people during the election period. According to most of the people interviewed, including members of the community, youth leaders, and elders, local leaders play the role of mediating between candidates of political interests in the community, therefore, contributing to the conduct of peaceful campaigns and representation of the opinions of people living in informal settlements. According to one community elder in Kibera, local leaders would be the first people to address us concerning our security status with the activities of the politicians, and they ensure that we comprehend what is at stake. This is an observation of a consensus that local leaders are very important conduits whereby complex security situations can be translated into a more understandable, more easily relatable form to the rest of the community.

Similarly, local leaders are considered pivotal in ensuring order and security during a highly combustible period of elections. Several respondents indicated that local leaders tend to be on the ground and to interact directly with the community and the police to prevent violence. One of the youth leaders of Mathare indicated, " It is our obligation as the youth to make sure that we do not get used during the elections. I have observed numerous occasions where local leaders avert war before it grows. An enormously long period. This emphasizes the initiative that local leaders have taken in security and how their leadership is perceived to be critical in the prevention of election-related violence. This Relationship between local leadership and security stretches through all the settlements, and this implies that local leaders are not only involved in mediating political campaigns, but also play an active role in maintaining the safety of the society.

However, when comparing this realization about the importance of local leaders to the hardships that they complain about, such as resource shortages, a significant disparity is quite evident. Although the community shows excessive trust in the local leaders, these leaders complain that they are not able to fulfil their responsibilities well because

of the lack of resources (Mkutu, 2019). Local leaders in the informal settlements experience one heavyweight in the form of enormous financial and logistical strains that even limit their ability to mobilize the community members, organize peaceful movements, and even maintain security during turbulent times. One community leader in the slum of Kibera states it is hard to organize security forums when you cannot even afford to feed people and transport them to the venue. The kids tend to or are prone to getting into violence because in most cases, there is nothing to do, and I alone cannot reach the kids without getting support. This assertion indicates that there exists a serious disjuncture between the expectations of the locals and their capabilities of fulfilling those expectations, mainly owing to resource shortage. The difference between what communities expect and what local leaders can realistically provide leads to a state of disillusionment, where local leaders feel that they cannot keep up despite all their efforts.

4.4.4 Relationship between the role of Community leadership and national security

The second study objective aimed at establishing the nexus between the role of community leadership and national security in Nairobi's informal settlements. This subsection presents the model summary, ANOVA and regression output where other factors are kept constant.

Table 4.11: Model Summary (Role of Community Leaders)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	S.E Estimate				
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.711 ^a	.505	.502	.34831	244.140	1	273	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Role of Community Leadership								

Source: Research Findings (2025)

Using the results in Table 4.11, the coefficient of correlation (R)=0.711 and the coefficient of determination (R²) before adjustment = 0.491. The adjusted R-squared is 0.489, indicating that 48.9 per cent of the variations in national security can be attributed to the importance of community leadership in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The p-value taken to be 000 reveals that the effects on national security brought about by changes to the role of community leadership are significant. A similar study by Soderberg and Bjarnesen (2018) has determined that the role of leadership in the community is vital to ensuring peace. This means that the community leadership can play a significant role in ensuring national security through good political messages and rhetoric, as well as promoting peaceful elections.

Table 4.12: ANOVA (Role of Community Leaders)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	8.987	1	8.987	56.243	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.304	273	.160		
	Total	21.291	274			
a. Dependent Variable: National Security						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Role of Community leadership						

Source: Research Findings (2025)

As observed in Table 4.12, the F-statistic was significant (p value<.05), indicating that the model was significant in explaining the Relationship between the election campaign strategies and national security. Williams (2024) notes that ANOVA assists in providing information regarding the existence of differences between the group means noted in the data collection. In case the P-value is <.05, it means that there are some statistical differences between the means of each of the groups. The following roles of local leaders that were evaluated were the degree of cultivating dialogue not only by local leaders but also by local leaders facilitating conflict resolution, local leaders adopting ideology-based campaigning, mobilization of youths, and fostering national security initiatives. Thus, comparing the results in Table 4.12, it can be stated that there were significant statistical differences in the impact on the national security of different roles of local leadership under consideration.

Table 4.13: Regression Output (Role of Community Leaders)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
1	(Constant)	2.125	.193		11.012	.000	1.741	2.510
	Role of Community leaders	.458	.062	.649	7.500	.000	.335	.578

a. Dependent Variable: National Security

Source: Research Findings (2025)

From the findings in Table 4.6, the model thus becomes;

$$Y=2.125 - 0.457X_2 + e$$

Based on the results in Table 4.13, the impact of the local leadership is significantly and positively related to National Security at the other variables held constant ($r=0.416$, $p<.05$). This means that the leaders may have a constructive and constructive aspect of increasing national security in the electoral processes with their political message and the promotion of dialogue and reconciliations in case of grave disagreements. The results are in line with what Birch, Daxecker and Hoglund (2020) discovered, which is that political leaders can be useful in promoting peace and stability provided they participate in supplying peaceful campaigns. Similar research by Soderberg and Bjarnesen (2018) confirmed that sometimes, wrong political messaging is used by political leaders, and this gives rise to violence and threatens national security. Still, they can also be a central figure in achieving peace.

4.5 Security Agencies Initiatives and Guaranteeing a Safe Electoral Process in Nairobi City County

The study shows that their device approach includes the intensified inter-agency coordination, intelligence-driven policing, and community-engagement techniques. The results of the current research suggest that deployment of special electoral security, increase of surveillance, and cooperation with local peace committees played a role in preventing electoral violence in the most vulnerable localities. Besides, the inclusion of early warning and rapid response systems was also very useful in containing possible threats before they became serious. Nonetheless, some obstacles like political interference, insufficient resource mobilization, and lack of cohesiveness between the national and county security forces proved counterproductive to these efforts at times, thus requiring superior and better-coordinated organizational efforts to achieve a lasting peace in the flow of votes.

The answers of the principal respondents showed the different measures implemented by security organs, such as the use of intelligence, early warning systems, and human resource deployment. The results are demonstrated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: Security Agencies Initiatives

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
The government has been deploying enough security personnel to deal with election related violence	274	9%	13%	3%	41%	34%	3.73	0.65
The security agencies have been very proactive in addressing election related concerns that can trigger violence in the informal settlement	274	5%	10%	2%	50%	33%	4.15	0.275
The security agencies have been using intelligence information effectively to arrest politicians inciting violence during election campaigns	274	7%	14%	4%	38%	37%	3.76	0.42
The integration of early warning and rapid response systems proved instrumental in managing potential threats before escalation	274	11%	8%	5%	45%	31%	3.84	0.39
The government have been partnering with the regional blocks and international institutions in conducting civic education to the electorate during election campaigns	274	9%	7%	3%	44%	37%	4.05	0.24
The government in partnership with NGOs in the informal settlement has been effective in dealing with election-related security concerns	274	5%	13%	3%	47%	32%	3.98	0.408
Average Scores	274						3.918	0.397

Source; Research Data (2025)

As shown in Table 4.14, most of the respondents disagreed with the statement that security agencies have been posting a sufficient number of security personnel to combat election-related violence (Mean=3.73, SD=0.65). These results are further supported by the percentages, which indicate that the majority of the respondents agreed (41%) and strongly agreed (34%) on the fact that police are largely reactive, as opposed to proactive, in their interventions. One of the critical strategies that the respondents have agreed on is the deployment of security personnel to guard civilians during election-related conflicts. These results align with the findings of Siegle and Cook (2024), where it was reported that deploying more security personnel to high-risk locations during the election periods, as well as conducting community engagement activities, and coming up with effective conflict resolution systems.

Most respondents also shared the view that security agencies have effectively used intelligence information to put a halt to politicians who take part in organizing violence during election campaigns (Mean=3.76, SD=0.42). It was also found that 38 per cent and 37 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, about the use of intelligence information as a strategy. The conclusion of this study is comparable to that of the International Crisis Group (2023) on elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), which established that the government can utilize the tools of information and intelligence sharing in reducing the risk of violence during the electoral processes. Based on this finding, it would be surmised that the government can effectively employ intelligence to avert conflict related to elections.

The combined effect of the early warning and rapid response systems was pivotal in resolving an impending threat before it degenerated, as most respondents concurred (Mean=3.84, SD=0.39). The results indicate that 45 per cent and 31 per cent of the respondents accepted and strongly accepted the importance of early warning systems

and rapid response systems integrations in dealing with the rise of tensions. Moreover, it is the consensus among the respondents of the studies that extensive collaboration has been happening between the security organs and the regional blocks and other international institutions in carrying out civic education to the electorate in the election campaigns (Mean=4.05, SD=0.24). Given the findings, 44 per cent and 37 per cent of the respondents answered yes and strongly yes on the issue of partnership between security agencies and regional blocs. These findings indicate that there is engagement of security information partners within the region in the sharing of security information during the electoral period by the security agency. The result is aligned with the study of Lawal and Olusola (2023), who suggested that regional influences such as the ECOWAS should be included in the participation in West Africa to address insecurity in Mali, Guinea, Niger and Burkina Faso during elections. Siegle and Cook (2024) determined that the most efficacious way to prevent violations during elections is to reinforce the collaboration with foreign organizations such as the AU and UN.

Lastly, the respondents also concurred that partnership with NGOs in the informal settlement is one of the initiatives employed by security agencies that have proven to be effective in addressing election-related security issues (Mean=3.98, SD=0.48). Based on the findings, it can be concluded that there has been a good bond between the security agencies and the NGOs during the electoral events. Further, 47 per cent and 32 per cent, respectively, responded that they agreed and strongly agreed with partnerships with nongovernmental organizations. Most of the previous studies have encouraged partnerships with regional institutions. As an example, a study by Lawal and Olusola (2023) presented the importance of regional partners, and a survey by Siegle and Cook (2024) suggested incorporating regional partners.

However, FGDs and key informants had mixed responses regarding the interventions. In particular, their responses regarding the effectiveness of these strategies indicated that there are inherent challenges that hamper their effectiveness. These were broad interventions. There was a major concern about security measures, such as increased police patrols and the setting of police posts within the settlements. The residents, however, felt these were not proactive measures but reactive measures with little or no effect on the routes of the causes of insecurity. A common theme was that the police response of consolidating their presence is often seen to be reactive and not dealing with the causes of insecurity.

"They come when there's already a fight, or violence escalated," one resident stated, highlighting the lack of preventative measures. "We see the police more often during campaign, but the crime doesn't stop," O.I Nairobi Feb 2025

The statements made by the residents reveal that in the case of security, there is an acute gap in the security provision, which directly affects the secure run of elections and national security issues; this is the nature of law enforcement, that is, reactive as opposed to proactive. The fact that authorities appear when there is already a fight or a violent spill point to the absence of preventive methods, which is especially troubling during the election periods, when there are always conflicts. This passive system is weak as it cannot prevent electoral violence, intimidation, or any other violence that leads to the prevention of the fairness and peacefulness of the polling environment. Moreover, the fact that police patrol "more frequently during campaigns, but the crime does not stop" implies that more visibility is not a sufficient practice without actual engagement and proper strategies to reduce criminal activity and ensure the safety of the citizens. This apparent ineffectiveness costs the security agencies and formal institutions the confidence of the people, which could or may drive communities to self-

help or to rally on political camps that promise protection. As such, this compromises the legitimacy of the electoral process and presents a real national security challenge through destabilization and lawlessness.

According to Tuteere (2018), police activities in the course of elections in the informal settlements within Nairobi tend to be reactive as opposed to proactive. The analysis demonstrates how security forces always come into play, showing that violence had already erupted as opposed to preempting its causes. Moreover, the greater police presence that accompanies an election is more likely to be seen to control political demonstrations rather than concern itself with day-to-day crime, making the citizens feel that they are not adequately protected against robbery, gang violence, and local violence.

This sentiment was echoed by a young man who said, "The police are here, but they don't know who the real criminals distracting elections are." O.I Nairobi Feb 2025

Such statistics are indicative of the primordial sense of disconnect between law enforcement organizations and the lived experiences of local people during elections. This feeling highlights a major flaw in the process of intelligence collection and the police relationship with the communities, where it is noted that security agencies have a presence during elections. Still, they are actually not effective due to the absence of knowledge and trust in the community. On a national security level, this is indicative of a systematic problem wherein the top-down approach to electoral security does not take into account the local, community-specific dynamics that drive electoral fragility. It also presents questions related to the penetration of political actors or other criminal networks into electoral activities, which is not always easy to detect by foreign security agencies that lack local historical awareness.

The local perspective embodies this opinion by showing that there is minimal interaction between the security organs and the community members, which is paramount in the identification and elimination of threats before there is escalation. Electoral violence in a number of informal settlements of Nairobi is organised by informal power structures such as gangs or politically connected youth associations existing outside of the range of view of formal policing strategies.

Muchomba (2021) evaluated police and multisector response actions during the election period of 2007/2008 in Nairobi County. In the research, the police used force as a first resort reaction to civic violence, and it was identified as ineffective. This conclusion extends the belief that police response is incident-oriented rather than preventive, since it echoes the attitudes of residents who claim that police presence does not get down to the foundations of disturbances during elections.

The focus here is on how the police presence is not correlated with security. The sense of mistrust was dominant. In some cases, citizens even cited the police as the issue, as they experienced some cases of police misconduct and corruption that have broken their trust and contributed to the low level of perceived police effectiveness. Awareness campaigns were also carried out, and residents were educated on their rights, reporting procedure and peaceful conflict resolution methods. Although these programs were well-intentioned, they were frequently ineffective because they had limited reach and/or sustainability (often secondary to a resource constraint and/or community mistrust).

Another important intervention was the community policing program, which involved cooperation between the residents and the police. These programs were meant to generate trust and information sharing, but they never received consistent support and

training. The government officials emphasized their policy frameworks and strategic plans in anticipating enhanced security, but with little link to their realities.

Community engagement initiatives, such as community policing, showed some promise, but faced significant challenges.

"We try to work with them, but they don't listen to us, they come for meetings, they take notes, and then they disappear, they make decisions for us, not with us," one resident stated, (OL Nairobi 20th Feb 2025)

The data indicate a precarious straddling of participatory governance in security, especially between national and local security activities. Such a perception of not being included in national or external security processes is expressive of a top-down approach in which consultative processes take place, but in a merely performative way as opposed to being truly collaborative. Although legally unobjectionable, such tokenistic involvement erodes the legitimacy of security operations and compromises the efficacy of electoral security planning by ensuring that strategies lack the grounding required to mitigate unique threats, actors and grievances fueling instability during elections.

This sentiment at the local level has shown increasing distrust between the communities and security actors, leading to the destabilization of early warning systems and conflict prevention programs. In Nairobi's high-risk regions, community intelligence may be the most reliable and immediate source of information for detecting possible threats related to the election. When citizens feel disregarded or marginalized, they are unlikely to present important information, thus creating a blind spot in surveillance and reaction efforts. In addition, this uncollaborative aspect of the decision-making process can be seen as a source of marginalization, leading to resentment or passive resistance to security issues. To narrow this gap, security agencies will need to move in the direction of inclusive frameworks of interaction that are appreciative of local inputs not only as

the sources of information, but also as co-producers of sound, context-specific security strategies.

A research study about the adoption of community policing in Nairobi County illustrates that the security services often fail to meet the expectations of the community. The causes of failures are systemic, such as low response, sincerity in engaging the community and inadequate support logistics, among other factors. According to the research, officers in community meetings note the concerns raised by the residents, but in very rare cases translate the engagements to joint decision-making or subsequent action, which deepens the perception that police are not partakers in security planning on equal footing with the residents (Awino & Kimani, 2017) At the national security level, such a disconnect erodes legitimacy and civilian trust in the law enforcement policies, so the centralized security measures appear more ceremonial than responsive. Locally, the trust deficit results in unembarrassed quality intelligence circulation as well as a decrease in community readiness to be involved in crime prevention activities, leading to a dilution of national and community-level security strategies.

The findings concur with various research conducted on election violence in Kenya, especially by scholars such as Odhiambo (2013), who postulates that although the efforts by government security agencies to curb election violence are important, they tend to lack the sensitivity to deal with the social-political dynamics of the informal settlements in Kenya. This can be compared to the findings of the study, which state that aggressive government action in most cases increased tensions and thereby failed to foster permanent peace.

Furthermore, Lynch (2015) notes that interventions by the government in Kenya regarding security during election time in informal settlements are often criticized because they are done without the involvement of the locals. This study indicates that community-based interventions are more effective in terms of trust and cooperation between locals and security agencies because community-based approaches engage community leaders, youth groups, and civil societies. Nevertheless, implementing this in some areas of Nairobi's informal settlements has been done in insufficient ways or not at all. This implies that the government security interventions tend to be top-down and do not recognize community-led peacebuilding approaches, which reflects what has been criticized by Lynch and Ghai.

Additionally, Ahlborg (2018) examines how governmental action in the security of elections tends to be subject to ethnic and political allegiances. His analysis of the Kenyan election processes shows the deployment of more security to certain regions, which are perceived to be strongholds of the opposition, and also neglecting and leaving other areas prone to violence. This was equally witnessed in the informal settlements in Nairobi; it appeared that security forces were more predominantly deployed in places that had had past political riots or areas associated with political opponents. Therefore, there was a perceived sense of unequal treatment, and this raised community frustrations.

"During the last elections, we saw better coordination between the police, the chiefs, and the youth groups. The Joint Command Center made it easier to share information quickly and respond before things got out of hand."
(OI Nairobi 24th Feb 2025)

This information shows that the Joint Command Centre enhanced the timely flow of information and enabled it to quickly deploy responses that curbed tensions among the select. The implication of police, chiefs, and youth groups signifies horizontal

coordination among security, administrative, and community actors that is important in achieving peace in high-density and low-trust neighborhoods such as Mathare.

It confirms the idea that multi-agency coordination can fill operational gaps between institutions and informal networks at the community level. This is congruent with secondary evidence provided by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC, 2023) that multi-stakeholder communication platforms during elections in informal settlements reduced violence by more than 30 per cent.

Further an interviewee observes

"Before, everyone acted on their own. Now, with the command centers, we have joint briefings, shared patrols, and agreed protocols. It makes a big difference because even the boda boda riders know what's going on and feel part of the peace process." (OI Nairobi 25th Feb 2025)

The statistics indicate how institutionalizing joint briefings and patrols via command centres contributes to a coherent operation and helps generate trust. The inclusion of boda boda riders, who often play roles as informal information brokers, demonstrates that the multi-agency structures also expand civic inclusion into the security ecosystem.

This buttresses the academic positions in support of Kagwanja (2022), who argues that localized joint security structures are most effective in cross-divisional cohesion, formal-informal bridging, and establishing community legitimacy within electoral security interventions in socio-economically unstable environments.

4.5.1 Challenges of Security Agencies in Guaranteeing a Safe Electoral Process

Although various collaboration efforts and extensive security plans are witnessed, a number of issues are highlighted as factors that negate their effective performance. First is the politicization of security interventions in informal settlements, which can also obstruct collaboration between the government and local communities. Table 4.15

shows the responses of the main respondents to the statement about the challenges that security agencies face in ensuring that electoral processes and findings are safe.

Table 4.15: Challenges of Security Agencies in Guaranteeing Safe Electoral Process

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Police often intervene after violence has already started, rather than proactively addressing the root causes of insecurity	274	5%	12%	3%	49%	31%	4.04	0.22
While police presence increases during campaigns, there is perception that law enforcement's efforts are more about managing political demonstrations than ensuring public safety	274	4%	12%	2%	40%	42%	4.11	0.19
The national-level interventions like specialized security units and command centers show promise, but lack the localized knowledge and trust needed to be truly effective.	274	8%	10%	3%	45%	34%	3.99	0.42
Despite the existence of initiatives like community policing and awareness programs, their effectiveness is often hampered by limited resources, inconsistent support, and a deep-seated distrust of law enforcement	274	9%	6%	2%	47%	36%	4.16	0.17
The perception of bias can lead to selective enforcement and a reluctance to investigate politically connected offenders, which compromises the integrity of the entire electoral process and can fuel post-election disputes	274	9%	10%	4%	44%	33%	3.89	0.45
Average Scores	274						4.04	0.29

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on the findings presented in Table 4.15, most of the respondents agreed (Mean=4.04, SD=0.22) that one of the issues experienced is that police leave addressing the main causes of insecurity until violence has already taken root. The low SD shows that there was insignificant variation in terms of the responses given. The result indicated that 49 per cent and 31 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that the police are reactive as opposed to proactive in addressing the root causes of insecurity during elections.

In addition, respondents concurred (Mean=4.11, SD=0.19) that the major struggle that plagues the security agencies in ensuring security during elections is the fact that as elections near, Police presence augments; however, it is perceived that the law enforcers' work is more on handling political protests rather than providing security to the people. This is evidenced by the fact that the majority of respondents (42% strongly agreed and 40% agreed) found that the presence of the police only escalates when dealing with demonstrations.

Respondents largely concurred (Mean=3.99, SD=0.42) that the national-level interventions, such as specialized security forces and command centres, have potential, but do not carry the local knowledge/trust to be successful. The finding corroborates that 45 per cent and 34 per cent of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed, respectively, that there was knowledge and trust that security agencies needed to be effective. This implies that ineffective knowledge on the specification of security agencies is one of the worst setbacks to ensuring effective security agencies in ensuring safe electoral processes. The majority of the respondents also theorized (Mean=4.16, SD=0.17) that although some efforts towards achieving police reforms, such as community policing and awareness programs, exist, they are hindered by inadequate resources and spotty support, coupled with an ingrained distrust of the police. This is

supported by 47% and 36% of the respondents who strongly agreed that resource constraints and ingrained trust among law enforcement impede effectiveness in security management.

Lastly, the respondents responded in the affirmative (Mean=3.89, SD=0.45) that when the perception of bias exists, it will translate to selective enforcement and unwillingness to pursue politically-connected offenders, whereby this will undermine the integrity of the entire electoral process and may become a source of post-election disputes. The results are further supported by 44% and 33% respondents who answered affirmatively and strongly that the feeling of bias among the trend of security agencies impedes their work in securing the people.

These findings agree with those of previous studies. This is not the only case, as the expansion involves weaknesses in the security sector infrastructure, such as logistical deficits and inadequate investment in training, which have historically undermined its capacity to deal with election-related crises, namely the 2007/2008 post-election violence (Khadiagala, 2010). "[Elections in Kenya] exhibit ineffective inter-agency communication and lack of a unified command structure among the security organs, which has resulted in operational inefficiencies, duplication of efforts and significant intelligence gaps, undermining the By political influence, Saferworld (2016) concluded that the independence and impartiality of security agencies is directly undermined and that there was a major decline of people confidence hence effectiveness of the security agencies in security management.

Most of the findings made by the main respondents are also corroborated by the key informants and FGDs on the issues hindering security agencies in ensuring a safe electoral process. The key informants argued that, when communities see interventions

as politically-based, they might not cooperate with the security forces due to the risk that such cooperation might be used to take revenge on them or to discriminate against them. Hence, political elements that interfere with interventions in security operations largely undermine interventions geared towards enhancing safety and limiting electoral crimes in the informal settlements.

"The biggest hurdle is sometimes political interference. When there's a perception, or even reality, that certain agencies are biased towards a particular political faction, public trust erodes. This makes it incredibly difficult to implement security measures impartially and gain the full cooperation of all stakeholders."

Data supports political interference as a principal flaw that compromises the integrity and efficiency of security agencies during elections, which has serious local and national security implications. The feeling, or actually the fact, that favouritism is given to certain political groups destroys community confidence, which is crucial to obtain the cooperation of the population, and hence gain legitimacy in security operations. When security agencies are regarded as partisan players rather than agents of neutrality in the protection of the electoral process, law enforcement becomes unable to take place fairly and impartially. This loss of faith usually causes mistrust and opposition among the major players, including voters, political candidates, and civil society organizations, leading to an environment that is likely to cause unrest, manipulation, and electoral violence. The consequences of the loss of trust in democratic governance at the national level may destroy democratic control and lead to a high level of social instability. In contrast, the security measures aimed at ensuring safe elections at the local level may lose their effectiveness even within their limited environments.

Besides, the lack of political neutrality among security agencies undermines their operational autonomy by restricting their ability to act impartially in response to election-related threats. This is evidenced in selectivity and refusal of authorities to

investigate political contacts or conflicts within the agencies that outsiders influence. Such partiality serves to worsen relations among the competing political factions as well as erodes accountability and transparency, which are essential building blocks to sustainable security. In the absence of independent and nonpartisan security organizations, the whole structure of election security is open to tampering, which will compromise the legitimacy of electoral outcomes and may fuel post-election conflicts or bloodshed. Curbing the problem of political interference is thus of paramount importance in the fortification of both national and local security and reforms to the institutions, legal provisions that clearly guard against instances of politics being played in security matters, and transparency-based oversight mechanisms need to be enacted with security agencies operating within reasonable levels, so far as fairness is concerned.

The fact articulated by the respondent that political intervention results in the perception or actual bias in security agencies, then the trust and objective enforcement of security measures suffer, is one of the documented ills in the Kenyan electoral process. Scholarly work, notably the discussion by Saferworld (2016) that notes the way in which control over the police service became one of several major battlegrounds between a power struggle between a power struggle that took place within a Kenyan political elite, in which a newly assertive political elite sought to shape and constrain that reforms measures that were perceived to be threatening centralized control over senior police appointments and strategy. The report also argues that this political influence directly compromises the independence and impartiality of the security agencies, and it results in a serious undermining of the loyalty and support of the people, as citizens sense that the agencies are tools of political masters instead of working in the wider interest of the population.

Evidently it was further noted by an interviewee that;

"Our officers are committed, but they are often stretched thin. We lack adequate vehicles, proper communication gadgets, and specialized training for election-specific security challenges. It's hard to guarantee a truly safe process when you're always playing catch-up with limited tools."(OI Nairobi 26th Feb 2025)

This information presents severe operational issues that security officials go through that directly affect national and local security during electoral campaigns. The overall statement in response to the acknowledgement of a commitment indicates a certain readiness on the part of the personnel to contribute to safety provision; nonetheless, the absence of proper equipment, including vehicles, communications gear, and specialized training, indicates the possible flaws in organizational and personnel resources. This resource insufficiency requires officers to work under conditions not favourable to their performance, as they will not be able to quickly and effectively address threats related to elections. When time matters most in delivering timely intelligence and prompt operations to prevent instances of violence or irregularities, such limitations manifest in more risks at both local and national levels within Nairobi City County and the country. This is because electoral security is one of the pillars that prop up political stability and public trust.

Moreover, the information suggests that it is a reactive rather than proactive concept of dealing with security, as police are playing the cat and mouse game when they deal with election-specific issues, which are multidimensional. Such a phenomenon is evidence of poor planning and preparation by security agencies, which are further aggravated by the uniqueness of electoral periods that often embark on high tension levels and target criminal practices. Lack of specialized training reduces the capacity and capability of the officers to foresee and address unique threats, including voter intimidation, electoral fraud and politically-motivated crime. Such a gap, therefore, not

only jeopardizes immediate safety but also undermines the faith that people have in security institutions both locally and nationally, which also endangers the integrity of the national election as a whole. These resource and training gaps must therefore be strategically addressed to holistically improve the efficiency of security agencies in ensuring that a safe and credible election is realized.

The testimony of the respondent points to one of the central issues within the election security picture in Kenya: the lack of adequate resources to mount an effective response and mitigate the effects of security incidents. Security agencies remain weak in managing complex, moving electoral threats due to the absence of vehicles, modern communication equipment and training specific to operational needs, even in the face of committed personnel. This is not a unique case; as Khadiagala (2010) has observed, institutional weaknesses of Kenya's security sector, such as logistical shortages and underinvestment in training, have a historical record of undermining the country's capability to react to election-related crises such as the 2007-2008 post-election violence. Lack of strategic investment in physical and human capital perpetuates reactive security agencies and has the potential to jeopardize the electoral process and results due to disruptions and violence that could be avoided through greater investments and preparedness.

In addition, one of the interviewees noted a large problem in coordination.

*"We have multiple security agencies involved in election security, but sometimes the coordination feels disjointed. Information doesn't flow as smoothly as it should between police, intelligence, and other bodies. This creates gaps that can be exploited, making it harder to anticipate and prevent potential hotspots."
(OI Nairobi 23th Feb 2025)*

This fact raises an important issue about the lack of cohesion in security agencies during elections. The above observation by the respondent highlights an organizational

operational failure within the national security architecture because, despite having numerous agencies available, which include the police, intelligence services, and paramilitary forces, there is an operational vacuum in the sense that the agencies do not operate together. The incoherence within the intelligence community is also averse to diffusing the intelligence in time and taking proactive steps, including early warning and rapid response. These loopholes, at the national level, culminate in larger security risks, in the sense that failure to predict and prevent any flashpoints can be translated into nationwide violence during the electioneering period, which compromises the government's ability to protect citizens.

At the local level, and particularly in volatile informal settlements in Nairobi, such failures of coordination are more intense and threatening. A lack of connection to communities means that when left to their own devices, security bodies fail to capture local area/tailored intelligence or conflict dynamics, leading to inappropriate or delayed interventions. This observation shows how the disengagement creates space where political players or criminals can exercise their influence on the security gap and increase insecurity during elections. Thus, the report identifies the necessity of strong inter-agency structures and coordinating operational centres that optimize communication channels, synchronize intelligence inputs, and allow grounded intervention, in order to not only cool the national environment but also enhance safety on the ground during the elections.

The observation of incoherence with regard to the coordination of various security agencies tasked with election security in Nairobi, where the circulation of information is hindered, resulting in exploitable gaps and inability to foresee and prevent hotspots, is closely supported by the research on election security in developing scenarios. Indicatively, a report by Oxfam (2017) particularly noted that ineffective inter-agency

communication and absence of a unified command structure among the security organs in times of elections often present operational inefficiencies, duplication of responsibilities and critical inter-agency information gaps, thus endangering the overall security strategy and increasing the threat of electoral violence. The secondary data support the main point made by the respondent, which is that poor coordination and communication are some of the systemic issues that ensure that the electoral process is safe.

While pointing out the mistrust between security apparatus and the communities a participant observes that;

"Despite our efforts, there's still a significant level of mistrust from some communities towards the security agencies. This historical baggage makes it hard for us to get vital intelligence or for community members to report suspicious activities. If people don't feel safe engaging with us, it creates a vacuum that can be filled by criminal elements or political incitement." (OI Nairobi 18th Feb 2025)

This underscores the severe handicap that the lack of trust that some communities could have in security organs poses to national and local security during elections. It is this baggage of the past that creates mistrust and inhibits or prevents the development of the relationship, which is essential in terms of effective community policing practice and intelligence gathering. Security agencies fail to detect threats early (and, therefore, prevent them) and with sufficient knowledge about their nature because of the failure to build trusting relationships with the local population, without which residents will not share the essential information with security agencies. Such a communication gap undermines the situational awareness of agencies. It makes them unable to immediately prevent or address security incidents, exposing the particular communities and the whole community of Nairobi City County to more risks. At the national level, such mistrust can lead to the disjunctive security conditions, pave the way to a lack of

coordinated solutions, cause the loss of public trust in the voting process, and generate unproductive instability.

Additionally, the statistics highlight the fact that the non-existence of secure and open channels of engagement leaves a gaping security gap that criminal syndicates and politically-driven actors may fill. When community residents do not feel free or able to associate with the security officers, they will not be in a position to report suspicious activities or even work together with them when it comes to restoring peace. This vacuum tends to give way to violent outbursts, electoral manipulation, or hate speech, and it creates tensions in some cases, questioning the legitimacy of elections. The lesson to local security is obvious: local security has to build trust with communities in order to design inclusive security models that can be used to prevent electoral violence and criminality. On the national level, it will entail systemic reforms of security agencies, openness, and systematic and positive interactions with the agencies that can rebuild trust, hence strengthening electoral security and democratic governance.

This concern of the respondent is an indication of deep mistrust between security agencies and local communities, which greatly hinders the intelligence gathering process and efficient community policing, particularly in sensitive electoral periods. This distrust may be linked to experiences of the security using excessive force, political inclination, or discriminatory application, with hesitation by the population. As stated by Pommerolle (2023), colonial methods of policing in Kenya, as well as militarization in the context of managing law and order, likely cause alienation between the security agencies and the people they are supposed to serve. Such poor relations discourage communities from cooperating with authority officials, and as a result, this weakens the early warning systems and raises the chances of electoral violence. Therefore, inclusion, rights-based security practices, and community interaction are key

to the reestablishment of trust, which will prevent the consolidation of organised crime and eliminate political incitement toward elections.

4.6.3 Relationship between Security Agencies' Interventions and National Security

The third study objective aimed at establishing the nexus between security agencies' interventions and national security in Nairobi's informal settlements. This subsection presents the model summary, ANOVA and regression output where other factors are kept constant.

Table 4.16: Model Summary (Security Agencies' Interventions)

Model	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	S.E of the Estimate				Sig. F Change
					F Change	df1	df2	
1	.664 ^a	.441	.439	.37369	66.547	1	273	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Security Agencies' Interventions								

Source: Research Findings (2025)

Based on the results in Table 4.16, the correlation coefficient (R) = 0.664 and the Coefficient of determination (R²) before adjustment = 0.441. The adjusted R-squared is 0.439, implying that 43.9 per cent of changes in national security can be attributed to changes in security interventions in the informal settlements in Nairobi. The p-value of .000 shows that the shifts in national security as a result of changes in the interventions of security agencies are significant. The results are comparable with the literature in some of the studies. Specifically, Norden, Tisler, Howard and Chowdhury (2022) discovered that the federal agencies in America can play a role in mitigating

national security threats by intervening through different measures, such as election misinformation and threats to election officials.

Table 4.17: ANOVA (Security Agencies’ Interventions)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.939	1	10.939	68.558	.000 ^b
	Residual	12.331	273	.157		
	Total	23.270	274			
a. Dependent Variable: National Security						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Security Agencies Interventions						

Source: Research Findings (2025)

Based on the results obtained in Table 4.17, the F-statistic was significant (p value<.05), indicating that the model was significant in explaining the relationship between government interventions and national security. According to Williams (2024), ANOVA can be used to explain whether there is a significant difference between the means of the various groups of data one is analyzing in the data set. Where the P Value is < .05, it will infer that each group means has a statistical difference from each other. Security measures in the processes undertaken by the security agencies in this study were the deployment of security personnel, the use of intelligence information, partnerships with regional blocs, and partnerships with NGOs. Thus, based on the findings in Table 4.10, it can be inferred that there were significant statistical variations in the impact on the national security of the measures among different aspects of interventions by security agencies studied.

Table 4.18: Regression Output (Security Agencies' Interventions)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.495	.252	5.945	.000	.995	1.997
	Government Interventions	.437	.058	.407	7.532	.000	.323 .551
a. Dependent Variable: National Security							

Source: Research Findings (2025)

From the findings in Table 4.20, the model thus becomes

$$Y=1.495 + 0.437X_4 + e$$

Based on the results in Table 4.18, interventions made by the security agencies positively and significantly impact national security ($r=.437$, $p<.05$). This means that as the interventions of the security agencies increase nowadays, the level of national security during elections can be effectively handled. The results align with those of Mbah, Nwangwu and Edeh (2017), which show that government interventions to curb insecurity in the northern part of Nigeria have been effective. However, according to a study conducted by Norden (2022), the Americans were no more confident about federally controlled agencies in dealing with voting deception and threats to electoral officials, which is a threat to the nation at large, indicating that safety agencies were ineffective in tackling safety risks caused by elections.

4.6 Digital, Online Electoral Mobilization and National Security

The results and discussion in this section will address the objective aimed at testing the Political Party, Online Electoral Mobilization and National Security within informal settlements of the Nairobi City County in Kenya. The analysis was rooted in the acknowledgement that online platforms have gained significant influence in conducting political mobilization and citizens' participation, as well as the cause of election-based tensions and violence. The importance of digital connectivity during elections is that informal settlements in Nairobi tend to be politically aware but socially and economically marginalized, therefore, making them extremely susceptible to the positive and negative effects of digital participation during elections. In this section, an analysis of the use of digital spaces by the residents and other local actors during the subsequent general elections, as well as their impacts on security, and the main patterns noted in thematically developed categories out of the data, is discussed.

4.6.1 Patterns of Digital Space Mobilization

The results reveal that the digital platforms were instrumental during the electoral process within the informal settlements in Nairobi. The most common platforms used in political mobilization, information dispersion, and community organizations are WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter. Respondents recognized digital communication tools to be powerful, immediate, and, on certain occasions, more trusted than traditional media in the run-up to elections. However, the seriousness, goal, and apparent value of the use of digital space were different due to local settlement-specific considerations, such as the density of youth, the level of digital literacy, and socio-political processes. Most of the respondents disclosed that the most commonly used platform was WhatsApp, as 78 per cent reported having frequented it during the electoral season.

Facebook came next with 61% of the respondents using it, with Twitter used by only 34%, mostly by students who are considered to be more digitally literate or politically engaged. A very low proportion of respondents also named TikTok and YouTube, which were certainly used as forms of entertainment or sources of political commentaries, but not direct mobilization.

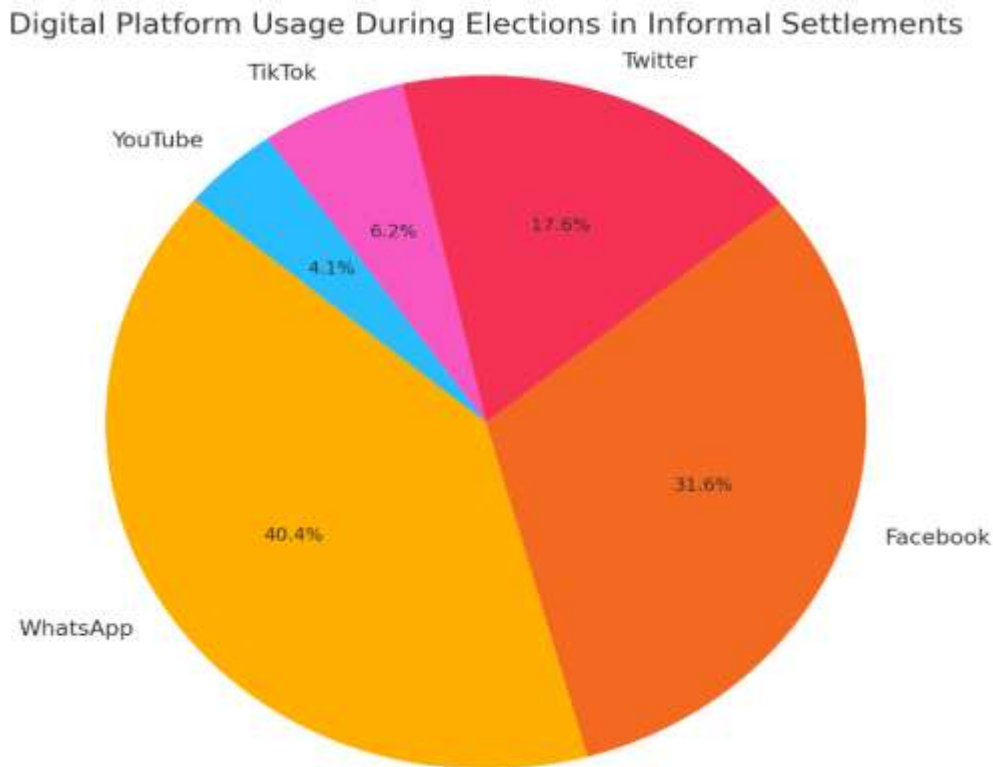


Figure 4.3 Platform Usage Frequency Among Respondents.

Source Field Data

As per the given pie chart, the high involvement of WhatsApp (40.4%) and Facebook (31.6%) in digital connectivity as per elections in informal settlements has certain national security implications. It is usually on these channels that people communicate privately or in groups, and this can be hard to track; hence, misinformation, disinformation, and hate speech can easily spread. This can become violent, divisive, and destabilizing to regular social coexistence if given the opportunity to do so. The

very small utilization of more publicly visible services, such as Twitter (17.6%), TikTok (6.2%) and YouTube (4.1%), indicates that a large portion of election-relevant digital engagement is done on less observable platforms. This complicates the activities of authorities and civil society organizations in detecting and preventing incentivizing narratives on a timely basis, which is a threat to the order of the state and the democratic process.

The popularity of WhatsApp can be explained by the fact that it is affordable, available, and simple. Respondents in all the locations cited that this was their primary source of political information, political campaigns, and security messages. One youth from Mathare stated,

“During elections, our groups are always active. Every minute there’s a new message someone has seen a politician arrive, someone has heard a rumor, someone is warning people about violence. WhatsApp is where we know what’s happening.”(OI Nairobi 23rd Jan 2025)

Based on the data at hand, the analysis shows that WhatsApp has become an important, real-time information source in the course of elections that play an important role in forming national security perception among the citizens. Its never-ending flow of messages, which can vary between actual evidence of political forces at work to mere gossip and threats of violence demonstrate this dual role; it puts massive power in the hands of civilians by granting them instant access to the latest events, but it also can be a significant source of misinformation, as well as its capacity to encourage violence. The impact on national security can hardly be overstated; the spread of dubious information or otherwise inflammatory content through WhatsApp is capable of growing into a disruptive force on a national scale within no time, resulting in civil unrest or even electoral violence. It further shows the necessity of measures to prevent

the spread of misinformation and encourage responsible information transfer across social media sites at particular phases of the year, including elections, since the online sphere has a direct impact on the sustainability and the safety of the country.

A report by the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) (2021) regarding political communication in the 2017 and 2022 Kenya general elections shows that WhatsApp was the most popular digital communication tool via real-time updates, mobilization, and spreading of rumours in the urban informal settlements. The report identified that the Mathare, Kibera and Korogocho residents depended on WhatsApp more than TV and Radio when it came to localized political information.

WhatsApp groups formed around blocks in an estate, youth association, or even a religious group became key networks in spreading rumours and civic education. These group chats became information centres themselves, and in some cases, they were faster than official channels of communication.

Facebook was far more popular for achieving wider mobilization of people, announcing campaign events, and livestreaming political rallies. In Kibera and Korogocho, the respondents indicated the use of political aspirant Facebook pages to address followers, post manifestos, and discredit opponents.

The respondents claim that political candidates are actively using Facebook pages to mobilize constituents and manifestos and discredit their opponents through social media, which is indicative of how it has become a central element in the process of political mobilization and communication in the urban informal settlements. The implication of this practice has extensive implications on national security as it suggests the use of digital platforms to spread political moods, form mass supporters, and ultimately place political competition in the danger zone. Upon the experiences in

Kenya and other related areas, this online political activity can be both the sword and the hammer: on the one hand, it enhances political activity and information distribution and, on the other hand, it can - potentially - strengthen primary power and fuel the political divide and the actions of misinformation and interference which can result in destabilization. Such use of Facebook to challenge political discourses is an illustration of the main issue of ensuring digitally enabled spaces against the vulnerability of promoting political violence or social division, as it is essential to the national stability of volatile settings, as well as democratic governance.

An aspiring Member of County Assembly (MCA) explained during an interview,

“We no longer rely on posters alone. Facebook helped me go live during rallies, engage young people with comments, and clarify fake news that my opponent was spreading. It was like a digital battleground.” (IO Nairobi 23th Jan 2025)

Based on the data, the analysis indicates that there has been a high change in political campaigning, whereby social media, in this case Facebook, has become a digital battleground where national security narratives have been accentuated in political campaigns during the national elections. The capacity to go live during rallies, activate young people with comments, and clarify fake news indicates how digital platforms have become the key tool in the provision of real-time information and immediate interaction with the audience. On the one hand, this promises to open the doors to transparency to a degree never seen before, and allows counter-narratives to misinformation in real time. Still, on the other hand, the prospect also comes with serious national security implications. It is just as easy to have such live broadcasting and direct communication utilized to disperse propaganda, to cause unrest, or to drive divisions within society, and the response to the fake news through clarification is a war fought continually with retaliation. It presupposes that national security ceased

being merely a matter of physical lines but is increasingly being doubted in the online space, requiring strong measures of cybersecurity, digital literacy, and control of online political discourse to avoid its manipulations and preserve the public peace.

In the 2022 Election Observation Report conducted by Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet), it was reported that over 70 per cent of candidates in the urban regions, and especially in Nairobi, were actively using Facebook and WhatsApp to communicate messages to their voters as well as interact with them. The candidates indicated that these platforms are more effective in reaching younger voters, as opposed to more traditional posters and rallies. This personal contact also produced a sense of intimacy between candidates and voters, albeit one that allowed a digital form of confrontation.

Twitter plays a smaller role overall but a disproportionately large role among politically active residents, youth leaders and young people in general. It was particularly notable in Eastleigh, which was home to enlightened young people and bloggers who organised hashtag campaigns and participated in national political discourses. Twitter would also be used to elevate local issues to national ones, e.g. police brutality, election irregularities. A community digital activist from Eastleigh observed,

"Even if you are from the slums, Twitter gives you a national voice. You can tag IEBC, politicians, or journalists, and they will see. We pushed the trending hashtag" OI Nairobi 18th Jan 2025

The argument presented by the youth leader of Eastleigh is a manifestation of a very important change in the context within which national security is exercised, with the empowerment of social media today, and Twitter in this case, giving the previously deprioritized voices a voice in the national platform. The power to name individuals, including the IEBC, politicians, or even journalists, and incite trending hashtags shows

a new power held by individuals, more so in informal settlements, who can now directly affect the discourse and hold institutions accountable. This democratizing factor is an invaluable part of analysis because it can increase civic participation and transparency. A critical approach, however, will divulge some possible weaknesses in national security. Though this is a powerful tool of empowerment, it can also be used to foster misinformation and hatred or even organize individuals to spread havoc, all in the name of citizen participation. The velocity and the scope of trending hashtags, in the wrong hands, can quickly destabilize social stability or compromise formal explanations, which creates a significant problem for conventional countermeasures that bind society and ensure peace and order.

Current research on digital rights by ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa (2022) shows that young people and grassroots activists in the informal settlements (such as Mathare and Kibera) in Nairobi are turning to Twitter to create greater political accountability and visibility. The use of hashtags such as; #RespectOurVote, #SabaSabaMarchForOurLives, and #RejectElectoralFraud were established as informal campaigns organised by residents with little access to conventional media. Thus, this platform was then used to advocate and take responsibility.

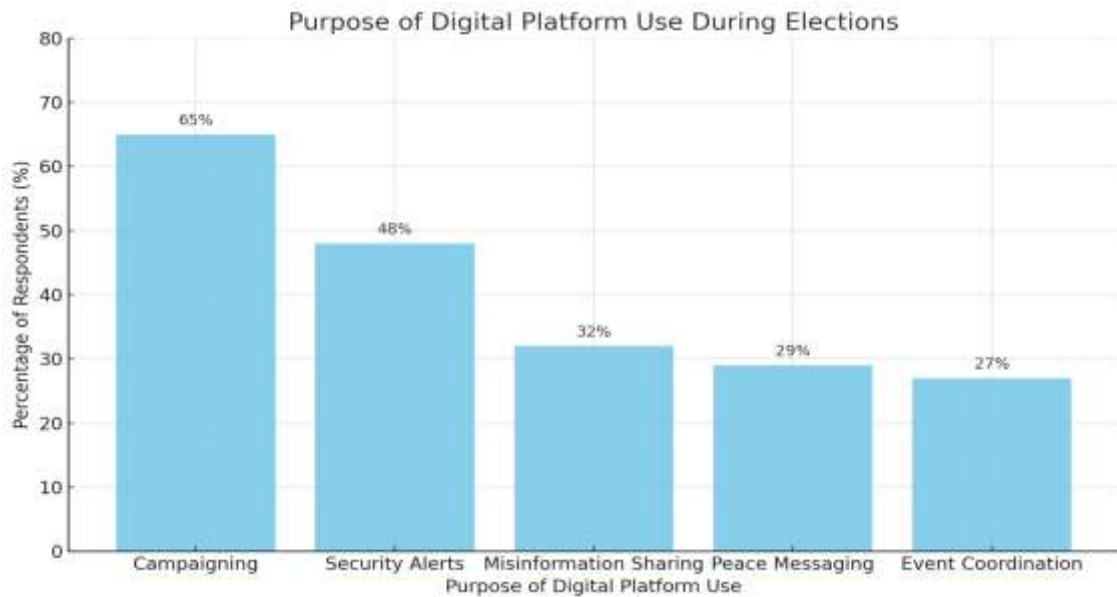


Figure 4.4: Purpose of Digital Platform Use During Elections

Source Field Date 2025

The bar graph reveals the various intentions of use of digital platforms during elections, which have great implications for national security. The category which received the largest amount of reported usage, which is also seemingly harmless, is Campaigning at 65%, which may involve actions that have a direct impact on the security factor, like the spread of politically connotative material, which has the potential of sparking unrest. Of greater concern directly to the topic is the security alerts, at 48%, which means that there is a universal dependence on the online platforms to stay informed in real time with regard to security and threats. This is a high percentage, which indicates that the citizens consider these platforms as important to their personal and community safety, but also indicates a weakness in the decoy of these alerts being manipulated or used to create panic, causing a security loop that could be conventionally defined as self-fulfilling. Moreover, the direct threat to national security is 32 per cent of "Misinformation Sharing," because, given the appropriate conditions, the intentional or unintentional sharing of misinformation that undermines social stability and destroys

trust in the system, including even the incitement of violence. 29 per cent of Peace Messaging and 27 per cent of Event Coordination are positive uses; however, they are accompanied by lower percentages of campaigning and security alerts, indicating that the proactive use of digital platforms to establish peace may be left behind by actions, which have an inherent risk to national stability and security during electioneering periods.

Settlement-specific analysis showed significant differences. Kibera registered the highest activity level of the digital campaign, especially on Facebook and WhatsApp. Political self-recognition and mobilized youth networks were two undeniable factors reinforcing digital mobilization in the area. WhatsApp groups in Kibera were more often than not characterized by the polarization of groups along party political lines, with messages of a very partisan nature.

An FGD participant explained, “We don’t just talk, we fight online. Each group defends their candidate like it’s a football team. Sometimes it gets ugly, but it’s also powerful.” OI Nairobi 22nd Jan 2025

The observations made by the FGD participant provide a critical approach to the implications of digital since the way countries address them can influence national security. The analogy of online conflict as an engagement to defend a football team has indicated a polarized and tribal character of political rhetoric in the informal settlements. Although such online engagement may prove to be powerful in terms of its ability to stir up support and magnify the voices of vulnerable groups, it poses substantial harm to national security. This conjecture of being ugly implies the possibility of intemperate language, personal trawl and the easy degeneration of online quarrels into real-life tensions or violence. Such high-level online partisanship deteriorates the social cohesion of communities, leaving them open to manipulation and extremism, especially when it is exchanged with misinformation. Hence, although

digital platforms promise to bring a unique political voice and access, the unregulated utilization of digital platforms directly threatens the stability of a nation by sowing divisions and hatred between various groups.

A survey by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC, 2022) established that the ethnic and party-based politics experienced offline have been replicated in online political debates, especially on Twitter and Facebook. Social media users, especially the youth, create digital camps around their candidates, which, in turn, results in organised attacks and defenses that resemble the hype of fans during football matches.

Mathare was more inclined towards security-related digital communication than Ndakaini. Some respondents reported having developed community watch systems in WhatsApp that organised their actions against instances of security threats or suspicious activities. A local respondent indicated, "We do not even wait until the police come. When people notice the collection of goons, they share the same via WhatsApp, and we warn others. It had saved lives the last time."

The statement itself provides an insight into national security, especially in those areas where the presence of law enforcement agencies may be considered inadequate or sluggish. The fact that it involves posting on WhatsApp immediately after a sighting of goons gathering and warning others shows an extraordinarily effective community-led, real-time early warning scheme. An argument like it saved lives last time illustrates the importance of online platforms in building solidarity, self-defense, and responses in times of crisis at the ground level. Nonetheless, a critical reflection shows that there are challenges to national security. On the one hand, the informal networks of security people provide empowerment in the sense that they can act outside of the official sources of authority. On the other hand, acts of vigilantism or the wrongful

identification of a threat and the escalation of minor problems due to communication failures may take place. A lack of rigour in researching or sharing information, or a rapid fire of panic over WhatsApp, without the restraining hand of official confirmation, also risks producing a combustible atmosphere in which mob justice or inter-communal violence might be more liable to occur and eliminate state monopoly on effective force, as well as threaten to weaken other national security activities.

Digital activity was comparatively poor in Korogocho due to less access to smartphones and poor digital literacy. However, NGOs active in the area supported peace-focused WhatsApp groups during the campaign period. An elderly resident commented,

“Young people teach us how to use phones. Before elections, our group was told not to forward messages without checking. We tried.” (OI Nairobi 28th Jan 2025)

The data will provide vital information to understand the changed national security environment, which is especially insightful in terms of information integrity. Having been dependent on the younger population in terms of their digital literacy, there is a digital divide that is open to exploitation, hence making older citizens prone to misinformation campaigns. The learning point that does not lead to forwarding messages that do not need verification is another sign of understanding the threat of unverified information. It is a successful step towards reducing its effects on national security. Nonetheless, there is a more subtle cue in the closing line, where the narrator states that they tried, indicating how hard it would be to maintain the same level of caution all the time, particularly when it is emotional, e.g. during the time of electioneering. This underlines an important task: despite honest intentions and fundamental training, the amount of content and the persuasiveness of online materials overwhelm the individual efforts of fact-checking. The national security implications are that these vulnerable groups can continue to be predisposed to narratives that can

generate panic, hate speech or an ability to influence electoral processes, and thus national security can not rely exclusively on individual literacy. Still, it needs to support these literacy efforts with well-developed mechanisms to counter disinformation.

The Internews Kenya (2022) assessment of its Together Against Disinformation campaign explained that organizations working in the low-income communities of Nairobi trained youthful volunteers to visit households and educate them on the issue. The participants educated the older people on detecting fake news, fact-checking, and not promoting fake political information.

In Eastleigh, Twitter and Telegram were surprisingly more popular than in the other areas. This is partly because there was more concentration of literate youth, diaspora and discourse with national political discourses. Business owners also cited digital coordination in feverish moments when they need to coordinate with each other. One Somali trader explained,

“We share updates in our Telegram group. If something happens near the market, everyone knows quickly. We close early if needed.” (OI Nairobi 2nd March 2025)

This data shows one of the advantages of a locally-based rapid information-dissemination system: a Telegram group that permits a community to take rapid collective action, like frictionless early market closure, in response to local events. This informal network, which is not only very efficient but also has its localised intelligence, is both a blessing and a curse to national security. On the one hand, it proves a great strength of the community that can recover itself during natural disasters and overcome emergencies by self-governance. In such a way, the grassroots intelligence sharing becomes a highly valuable addition to the early warning procedure, contributing to emergency relief or a health crisis, or even recognizing the emergence of a potential

security threat otherwise overlooked by official agencies. The speed at which a community is self-regulating and adapting to immediate dangers, in the form of market closures, goes a long way toward limiting the panic and chaos factor that occurs and creates an overall sense of stability within the nation.

Nevertheless, what gives this system its strength is also its speed, informality, and localization, which make this system vulnerable to various aspects of national security. Having no official supervision or check of this closed communication channel makes it vulnerable to spreading misinformation, disinformation, or propaganda. Malign actors may use these networks to cause division, fan the flames of dissatisfaction, or organize criminal activities, and then compromise citizen confidence and ultimately catapult into greater safety threats. Additionally, the use of such informal sources as a source of important information can only readily assist in the local response, yet omits the usage of formal communication channels that can be addressed effectively by national security bodies. Such an informal information feed is potent, but also a loose wilderness that must be examined thoughtfully in a holistic approach to national security.

A 2022 report by The Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANet) identified the increasing use of Telegram and WhatsApp groups by residents of Nairobi's informal settlements to report such incidents quickly, especially during elections and events of a security nature. Such boards were critical to spreading messages about riots, police, or strange activity around community hubs, such as markets.

This shows the power of digital platforms in economic and safety coordination roles, as well as electoral debates.

One of the other developing themes emerged as the proliferation of misinformation, particularly at the counting and announcement processes. Respondents in every region

could remember the case of phone tests, inappropriately cut videos, and provocative messages being spread. Although some of those interviewed identified these messages as untrue, some had actually taken actions based on such messages. A 22-year-old from Mathare said,

“One day we heard on WhatsApp that our candidate’s votes were stolen. People were so angry. We almost went to protest, but later we found out it was a mistake.” (OI Nairobi 23rd Jan 2025)

This data shows graphically the serious risk that misinformation, especially that spread on social networks such as WhatsApp, represents to the national security of Kenya. The speed at which a completely unproven claim about purloined ballots nearly caused a mass uprising demonstrates how unconfirmed rumours whip up popular indignation and can lead to a tangible destabilization of the situation. In a state that has endured politically charged ethnic divisions during elections in the past, rumours of this nature are the factors that can be described as an accelerant that can put at risk democratic processes, undermine trust in the institutions by the people and cause an outbreak of civil unrest and violence on a wide scale. The fact that such information, though later proven to be untrue, can create hue and cry straight away is a dire warning that something needs to be done, really effectively on an emergency basis, to catch up with the information spread.

The case highlights the fragility of the social fabric and national security towards digital tampering. That the community later discovered it to be an error implies there is a self-correction or self-intervention. Yet, it is Henri Nadeau who says that it often results after a lot of agitation and risk-taking. The swift and inaccessible character of the WhatsApp groups, leading to community communication, likewise provides space for misinformation to thrive unchecked, owing to its rapidity and the inability to capture

data. To national security, this equates to an uphill struggle against storylines whose purpose is to polarize and destabilize. It not only requires technical methods of identifying and countering fake news, but also active educational campaigns to promote media and general awareness and critical thinking within society, so that they become the defence against false attempts to achieve order through manipulation of opinion and inciting social unrest.

A report by the Mozilla Foundation (2022) identified WhatsApp as the most used tool for sharing unverified political statements during the general election held in Kenya last year. Voice texts and screenshots purporting to show vote rigging or ballot-tampering would often spread across informal settlements in a matter of minutes without confirmation.

Nonetheless, amid these dangers, some of the respondents observed positive mobilization initiatives, especially through peace messages. Local churches and CBOs used WhatsApp to pass on daily Bible verses on peaceful elections. Some youth groups started a hashtag to spread messages of peaceful elections, such as #VotePeacefully and #SautiYetuAmaniYetu. In Mathare and Kibera, Facebook Events Peace among hosted thousands at peace concerts.

A youth leader noted, "We decided to campaign for peace the same way politicians campaign for votes online, with posters, slogans, and videos. It worked. People saw that not everything on social media is hate." (OI Nairobi 22nd Jan 2025)

This testimony lends an important understanding of a proactive, citizen stream of national security through countering online threats and encouraging peace. In reflecting on the campaign strategies used by politicians, these youth leaders practiced the omnipresent effect of social media by directing proper discourse. This shows an appreciation that the online world, usually the source of divisive narratives, can equally

become a driver in peacebuilding. This has been a measure of their success in altering perceptions. People realized that not all that is on social media is hate, and that is a very critical step in inoculating societies against toggling misinformation and incitement, as they are very big threats to national cohesion, especially in ethnically diverse and politically sensitive places like Mathare.

As far as national security is concerned, this initiative sheds light on the potential great resource that youth can be, but does not translate into that potential and that has the power to lessen the incidences of war and promote social resilience. Rather than being strictly seen as future perpetrators or victims of violence, this example demonstrates the youth as peace-seeking actors. What is most empowering is the modality in which they engage with their peers, and what adds to the value of using local voices with the help of informal networks is their power to reach and inform people in ways that are relatable and accessible to them. The bottom-up strategy of fighting negative discourse online is, anyway, much more effective than a top-down intervention by the government because it produces trust and ownership within that community. It is important that Kenya invests in and duplicates these young people-driven programs, which not only help in their personal growth but also make their social structure more resilient to radicalization and political exploitation and eventually lead to a more stable and peaceful state.

In UNDP Kenya Peace Messaging Evaluation (2022), online communication on peace and unity, particularly when developed by local youths who use campaigns' recognizable aesthetics, achieved quantifiable effects on the attitude of the population. The engagement measures peaked when the messages resembled political ads typographically.

Though the statistics agree with the narration of digital platforms' transformative capacity for developing political narratives and actions, they also represent the grave context of demands for digital literacy and verified fact-checking. Quite a number of the respondents were also frustrated with the lack of reliable online sources and the number that appear online without getting even moderately validated. Some were upset by the spread of hate talk in local WhatsApp groups, which they felt served to separate communities.

An elderly woman noted, "We used to talk together in person. Now people just forward messages and fear each other. It has changed how we live." (OI Nairobi 15th Jan 2025)

This emotional observation of an older woman shows a major change in community gradients and at least a direct national security outcome: the loss of face-to-face interaction and its replacement with online message-based interaction, which breeds paranoia and diminishes community strength. Traditionally, such informal settlements as Korogocho have used informal social networks and neighborhood relationships as the sources of information sharing, resolution of disputes, and group protection. This natural state of community policing and trust is vital in places where the formal representation of state security would be considered lacking or non-trustworthy. Changes in the approach to simple forwarding of messages mean separation of text and control of the verification of context and correctness through direct human communication, which makes communities more vulnerable to manipulations and filtering out information. It reinforces the impression of their internal weakness towards the external influence.

The, as yet, unimpeded undermining of the social fabric poses a considerable vulnerability with regard to the national security front. When inhabitants are living in fear of one another, as a result of unvalidated online messages, it stimulates an

atmosphere of distrust, division, and even radicalization. It can be used by malicious individuals and organizations such as criminal gangs, extremist groups, or political agitators to spread propaganda, incite violence, or recruit disaffected people. The loss of communal faith and face-to-face communication also reduces local source information gathering to formal security services, since residents may be less disposed to sharing information or communicating with authorities due to increased levels of fear and distrust amongst themselves within their communities. Consequently, to alleviate this tendency, it is necessary not only to promote digital literacy but also to restore social capital and redefine the potential of in-person, trust-based communication in communities prone to vulnerability, such as Korogocho.

According to the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) Hate Speech and Misinformation report (2022), false or inflammatory political messages that spread through WhatsApp and Facebook systems also increased suspicion and distrust among communities, particularly in politically sensitive places such as Mathare and Kibera. Denizens also complained of a lapse in open communication and heightened social rupture.

In conclusion, there are mixed valences of the mobilization of online space in electoral activities in Nairobi slums. Both digital engagement and harnessed digital manipulation, as well as provocation and the generation of insecurity, are being used. WhatsApp dominates the local information landscape because of its accessibility and level of informality; Facebook and Twitter offer wider platforms of engagement to political actors and youth activists. The differences between settlements underline the need to target interventions based on context sensitivity, since what works in Korogocho may not apply to Eastleigh, and interventions must resonate within local digital cultures. With the imminence of the next elections, these lessons inform

policymakers, civil society leaders, and stakeholders in digital platforms of the importance of ensuring that the protective and civic abilities of digital mobilization are enhanced and the security risks mitigated.

4.6.2 Implication of Digital Mobilization to National Security

The mobilization of digital space had a dual role in defining the landscape of national security during the electoral process within informal settlements in Nairobi. On the one hand, digital platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter have become important instruments for early warning, the dissemination of news, and the policing of communities. Conversely, the same media were used to propagate hate and fearmongering, fake news, and increase tension and violence in some cases. The answers provided by the major respondents demonstrated the positive and negative aspects of the digital platforms in the context of electoral campaigns and their impact on security. Table 4.20 contains the findings.

Table 4.19: Implications of Digital Mobilization on Security

Statement	N	SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
Digital mobilization has facilitated the ability to share verified information	274	6%	16%	4%	40%	34%	3.72	0.54
Digital platforms have helped in enhancing community policing hence influencing security	274	3%	15%	3%	47%	32%	3.98	0.49
Digital platforms are reshaping information dissemination and perception of reality, directly impacting national security	274	8%	14%	2%	49%	31%	4.02	0.38
Digital space platforms in Kenya have been used to fuel tribal and ethnic tensions which leads to violence during elections	274	7%	10%	2%	44%	37%	4.07	0.24
Digital media despite its positives has also become catalysts of divisions during elections to the detriment of national security	274	8%	7%	1%	45%	39%	4.21	0.12
Digital space platforms in Kenya have been used to fuel tribal and ethnic tensions which leads to violence during elections	274	9%	9%	3%	43%	36%	4.05	0.22
Most digital media spaces in Kenya have become platforms of political propaganda against certain political opponents	274	11%	13%	3%	40%	33%	3.67	0.85
Average Scores	274						3.96	0.41

Source: Research Data (2025)

Based on the result in Table 4.19, the majority of the respondents confirmed (Mean=3.72, SD=0.54) that the Digital mobilization has enabled the sharing of verified information much faster during the election cycle. Based on the findings, 40% and 34% of the respondents replied positively and strongly positively to the question of the benefit of digital mobilization in the spread of verified information. The same can be said of Verdeja and Hook (2022), who concluded that social media is a significant communication tool. The respondents were also in agreement (Mean=3.98, SD=0.49) that the digital mediums have contributed towards improvement in community policing, thereby affecting security. On the basis of the findings, 47 and 32 per cent of respondents stated that digital platforms have contributed to community policing to a large extent. This means that communities can organize themselves utilizing online networking to establish community policing when issues of security arise during voting procedures. The respondents further comprehended (Mean=4.02, SD=0.38) that cyberspace is transforming the process of information delivery and also how reality is perceived, with a direct consequence on national security. It is also evident that 49% and 31% of the respondents never disagreed and strongly disagreed, respectively.

Conversely, the respondents expressed the disadvantages of the digital spaces in the elections. Analysis of Table 4.19 shows that the majority of respondents agreed (Mean=4.07, SD=0.24) that tribal and ethnic tensions in Kenya have been incited using digital space platforms, resulting in violence during the election period. The percentages of those who agreed and strongly agreed were 44 and 37, respectively. In addition, they agreed (Mean=4.21, SD=0.12) that the digital media, which have their positives, have also been a source of division during the period of elections at the loss of national security. 45 per cent of the respondents shared the opinion, whereas 39 per cent strongly agreed. The respondents also concurred (Mean=4.05, SD=0.22) that

digital space platforms in Kenya have been utilized to incite tribal and ethnic tensions that lead to violence during the elections. The respondents who agreed were 43% and strongly agreed 36 %. Lastly, it was clear that most of the digital media avenues in Kenya are being used to propagate political propaganda against certain political opponents, as evidenced by the mean of 3.67 and SD of 0.85. The percentage of the respondents who agreed and strongly agreed was 40 and 33, respectively. These results show ambiguous findings concerning the usefulness of digital platforms in handling security in the course of electoral processes.

There are also mixed results in the past studies that have been done. In particular, Verdeja and Hook (2022) reported a finding that social media is a valuable communication channel, but can serve as a source of security crisis and political instability through fostering misinformation and political propaganda among the political protagonists. The other lesson that Oluleye, Maduagwu, Adeniyi and Musa (2023) identified is that it has turned into an instrument of misinformation and distortion of political preferences and views. The findings in Oluleye, Maduagwu, Adeniyi and Musa (2023) determined that politicians can utilize social media and the digital space in general in spreading misinformation against their electoral rivals, and this has certain negative implications in special contexts and special demographics. This observation highlights the fact that the digital realm has developed into a means of political lies and polarization that, in the end, jeopardizes national security. Similar findings were made by Wambua (2020), who discussed the influence of social media on Kenyan security. Wambua stated that there is much that is taking place on social media platforms that can cause tensions and threaten national security.

The key informants and FGDs were also involved in getting an in-depth perspective. The differing but robust perceptions of the mitigating and aggravating properties of

digital space on electoral insecurity were felt across Kibera, Mathare, Korogocho, and Eastleigh.

Early Warning Systems

Among the most pronounced positive impacts of space mobilization in the digital sphere was the setting up of community-based early warning systems. What is remarkable is the presence of WhatsApp groups, mainly informal alert systems. More than 54 per cent of the people who participated in the survey reported that they were advised in real time on possible security threats through digital platforms. These were real-time accounts of demonstrations, suspected locations of armed youth, or even suspicious vehicles showing up.

In Mathare, a youth respondent shared: *“We had a group for every court, and anytime someone saw trouble, maybe a stranger loitering with weapons, or police coming in vans, they would post instantly. People would know where to hide, where to stay away. It helped a lot.”*

The response to the question presented by the respondent presents an interesting reasoning for the appropriation of digital tools in instantaneous responses to security in vulnerable urban environments, which has considerable implications for national security. The organization of a group in each court to report anything untoward, such as a stranger loitering about or the police arriving in vans, is one that relies on a country-specific intelligence network that is real-time. The power to post in real time and to instruct the populace on where to hide or stay away indicates the importance of these informal networks in saving lives and property in line with perceived inadequacy or absence of formal security provisions. This dependency on community-based digital alertness can be seen as a preemptive step of self-protection in regions that are vulnerable to insecurity. A critical interpretation signifies the possible problems regarding national security as well. Although appreciable in the short term, such ad-hoc

applications could also be susceptible to misinformation, could be used to fuel tension and spread panic, or even inadvertently assist mob violence in the event that these reports are not verified. In addition, the fact that the main characters hide or evade tables or ratchet up the police coming in vans indicates a poor relationship with formal security agencies, which restrains the legitimacy of the state and the establishment of complete national security.

A 2022 study by the Kenya Red Cross Society established that during the election period, unofficial communities in the informal settlements developed localised communication networks to help facilitate responses to unrest. When police trucks were detected or groups of armed youths were sighted, instant alerts were posted, which enabled people to take precautionary measures such as hiding or closing their businesses.

This kind of communication sometimes led the way to official police reports and enabled the community to organize itself and stop escalation. In Eastleigh, there were also WhatsApp groups related to business circles or religious leaders who could alert the residents to the safe routes or temporarily close some stores to prevent conflict spill-overs.

Information Dissemination

Another protective feature of digital mobilization was the ability to share verified information rapidly. About 62% of respondents said that digital platforms helped them stay updated with electoral outcomes, changes in voting times, or official security directives. This was particularly important during the tense tallying period, when rumours were widespread.

A respondent from Korogocho stated, *"I don't have a TV or radio, but on WhatsApp, I knew what IEBC was saying. Someone would post a screenshot or a video of the news. That's how we knew what was real."*

The statement by the respondent presents an insightful examination of how digital platforms are transforming information distribution and perception of reality, particularly in national security. To those without access to conventional media, WhatsApp has been the first and, in some cases, the only source of an official communication channel, like the IEBC. The dependency on collective screenshots and videos as a measure of the truth depicts the main dual-edged sword of national security. On the one hand, it provides access to information to all levels democratically and with no exceptions, every inhabitant of a country is made aware of the processes that are taking place. As such, the most marginalized groups are no longer at a disadvantage. At the same time, it leads to enormous susceptibility to the proliferation of distorted material. The originality of a screenshot/video was easily tampered with, making deepfakes, mis contextualized video clips, or selectively edited videos viable efforts to misinform, panic, or discredit official authorities. The criterion of peer-to-peer sharing of truth raises the importance of having a strong digital literacy-based initiative in the fight against misinformation, because the perceived reality on the platforms could directly impact national stability, as it engenders public trust and social integration.

The International Crisis Group Kenya report (2022) explained how peer-to-peer information sharing, mostly through WhatsApp, was critical in places where the media infrastructure was weak. To get information on important developments, residents depend on close-knit groups that get updates from family or friends and have access to mainstream media. The IEBC and others also use peer-to-peer information sharing to inform crucial developments.

Facebook and Twitter could also be used as amplifiers for security-related campaigns. Civil society organizations had their online caravans of peace that they conducted. They made brief videos that were widely disseminated among young people in places that were usually inaccessible to traditional peacebuilding outreach. For example, a video advertisement by a local NGO in Kibera, which included some reformed gang members to appeal to nonviolence, was shared hundreds of times within two days.

Community Policing and Reporting

Residents increasingly used digital platforms to support community policing efforts. More than 46% of respondents reported either sharing or receiving crime-related alerts through their digital networks. In Mathare and Korogocho, some youth groups were trained by peacebuilding organizations to use WhatsApp to log incidents, take photos of hotspots, and coordinate with local administrators.

An interviewee noted: *"Without digital platforms, we would not know half of what's happening. The youths are our eyes and ears. They report on WhatsApp, sometimes even before police respond."* (OI Nairobi 27th Jan 2025)

This data provides an in-depth assessment of the changing security environment and implications for national security. This is an indication of how digital platforms, especially WhatsApp, have enhanced the process of gathering intelligence using the youth as key eyes and ears since they are more active in the digital world. Possibility of instant reporting, at times even before the arrival of law enforcers, indicates a considerable increase in situational awareness, as well as the possible acceleration of the response in risk-filled regions and, by proxy, national stability. Nonetheless, a critical analysis brings out the possible challenges. The extensive use of the unofficial youth groups through WhatsApp is effective. Still, it has a possible outcome of acting on false information, vigilantism, and panic as a result of rumours. In addition, when these informal channels replace official law-enforcement channels, they may foster a

parallel authority not subject to official controls and operating procedures, and, therefore, a threat to national security models in the long term.

Tufekci (2017) explains that social media has been vital in conflict zones as they provide real-time communication and can be used to motivate and spread information. The immediacy applies when communities can act as both witnesses and informants during emergencies. In most cases, the media sources, especially the youth, can outclass the usual media channels in terms of speed and reach.

Other communities went to the extent of improvised incident mapping, where salient areas known to be on the receiving end of social media posts were tagged as flashpoints, and timely mitigation by the peace monitors or elders took place before reactivity took place.

Spread of Hate Speech

Wide propagation of hate speech on digital platforms was mentioned as the most popular security risk. Overall, 63 per cent of respondents reported having observed tribal, ethnic, or political slurs on the internet throughout the election period. These voices could quite frequently be formed as partisan WhatsApp groups or Facebook pages in support of particular candidates. The speed and, therefore, anonymity of the message passing could hardly be regulated.

A female respondent in Kibera states, "They used to write expressions like, 'Do not trust them; they are all going to steal votes.' Others, in turn, would answer with epithets. It enraged people. You begin to muster suspicions against your neighbour."

Such a statement paints an ominous picture of how online misinformation and inflammatory rhetoric can directly erode the social ties that provide the foundation for national security. The distribution of unconfirmed texts, such as, do not trust them

because they are planning to steal the votes, and the insults that follow, is a very volatile online setting. Societies such as Kibera have a history of political and ethnic frictions, so such online disputes are not virtual arguments but rather manifest themselves on the ground with real-life resentment and distrust. The fact that it starts on the internet and then graduates to the point of you suspecting your neighbour evinces the treacherous quality of the threat since it dissolves the very trust that holds the community together and leaves a society in a position to be controlled and torn apart by outside agents. The erosion of trust among neighbours is one of the fundamental steps to local conflict and potential instability of the entire society, an issue directly affecting national security.

How such divisive narratives can easily spread through social media platforms, particularly during politically sensitive times such as elections, is of concern to national security in Kenya. The anonymity and viral nature of online content are such that incendiary messages have a way of reaching a wide audience, and do not take into account the conventional gatekeepers of information. This is an example of how unproven allegations (vote rigging) and personal insults can go together in evoking emotional reactions and raising the barriers along perceived political or ethnic lines. To tackle hate speech, national security considerations should also include a system to both monitor and potentially de-platform any source of such speech, as well as the investment in thorough digital literacy efforts to empower citizens to be better equipped to question information. Moreover, the promotion of community dialogues and peacebuilding activities as a form of countering the existing grievances that the misinformation campaigns are exploiting is also important since they can restore trust and resilience against such attacks.

Krause (2021) explains that social media is used as a political polarization instrument and the means of negative rhetoric distribution. The research indicates that people can

use popular hubs such as WhatsApp as a medium to provide their parties with a chaotic environment, creating divisions and inflaming social relations. The spread of these messages about vote-rigging or unfaithfulness will nourish the anger and develop mistrust among the neighbours.

The latter tended to dehumanize the enemy group with coded words or memes, which in some cases led to incitement of division. Although some platforms have been censoring posts and taking others down, WhatsApp groups were too informal and prolific to be doable, with most hate speech going unrecognized.

Fake News and Disinformation

Another significant digital security threat was fake news. More than 52 per cent of participants had viewed or shared misinformation on elections that was later proven to be false. These may constitute artificial results, manipulated videos of political violence, or words put in the mouths of candidates.

Within Eastleigh, one of the respondents explained: "A video was released in which ballot papers were burning. It viralized. All were in a state of panic. No sooner was it told later that it was some other country, but by then, the damage was done."

This event in the town of Eastleigh, of burning ballots but making viral videos of them, leading to panic in the country at a very sensitive political time, and then being proved false that it was filmed abroad, shows how vulnerable the national security can be, due to false information spread on social media and getting massive attention within a short amount of time. Eastleigh, a dynamic and high-density commercial centre with a good number of Somalis, is particularly vulnerable to narratives that easily stoke tension due to its dynamic social set-up and the history of security issues associated with the area.

The panic reaction expressed by the residents within an instant highlights how speedily unverified information can chip away at the confidence in the electoral process and government agencies to produce an environment of revolt and even violence. Such misinformation, even when later inaccuracies are offset, indicates the vast delay between the dissemination of falsehoods and their correction, which creates a very unsafe window of unstickiness.

On a national security level, this data point is conditioned by a need for a dynamic approach. One is that there must be early and authoritative fact checks by official institutions to help avoid viral misinformation. Secondly, it creates the need to pay attention to digital literacy and critical thinking among the population, which will allow citizens to identify reliable information and distrustful content. The case also shows that social media platforms should find a more effective way to moderate the content and hold accounts and their authors accountable, especially when it may cause panic or violence. Finally, the fact that a false video can spread panic, even in the case where it is of a foreign origin, demonstrates how quickly internet-based media can be manipulated by outside/bad players in order to spread discord and destabilize peace and stability in Kenya.

In their work, Pennycook and Rand (2018) investigate the spread of fake news and its effects on public perceptions during elections. The study argues that once false information, such as a viral video showing ballot papers being burned, is shared widely, the damage to public confidence is often irreversible, even when the truth is later revealed. They stress that such misinformation creates fear and distrust that can undermine the legitimacy of the electoral process.

The spread of fake content was often deliberate, used by rival supporters to sow fear or delegitimize outcomes. Youths were especially vulnerable, as they often lacked digital verification skills and shared content rapidly without scrutiny.

Fear, Panic, and Heightened Tensions

The psychological impact of digital mobilization was a recurrent theme. Messages warning of violence, even when unverified, created widespread fear. In some cases, entire neighborhoods shut down based on WhatsApp rumours.

A trader recounted: "We closed the market early because someone said goons were coming from another area. Later, we found it was just a group of youths walking. But we didn't take chances." (OI Nairobi 16th Feb 2025)

This experience is a glaring example that depicts how flimsy the likes of community stability in informal settlements are when dealing with unreliable information, which has direct effects on the economy and, by proxy, social stability and national security. The fast response in closing the market early on a rumours of an imminent arrival of goons in another part of the area is a testimony to the high degree of anxiety and inbuilt vulnerability in such communities. In contexts where regular security systems can be low or gradual to residents, people usually turn to the informal systems to act within seconds of threat assessment. Such dependence, however, makes them too vulnerable to misinformation, causing panic. As such, they experience an economic panic as traders and locals whose livelihood depends on the operations of such a market are greatly affected every day. The fact that the damage was already done before the market had even closed down underlines the physical and financial cost that misleading rumours hold and can ultimately disintegrate the entire economy in the process, leading towards overall instability.

This kind of event heightens some of the key issues concerning national security. To begin with, it demonstrates how easily misinformation can become a tool to spread fear, disorient everyday life, and, ultimately, trigger local conflict. The industrialization of an unverified threat, once refuted, leaves an environment of suspicion and paranoia that

is subject to manipulation by criminal groups or political trouble-makers, hoping to disrupt an area. Second, it is indicative of the necessity of community policing and a better response to the trust between residents and formal security forces. The failure or perceived failure to provide official and credible information in time or the perceived failure of protection causes communities to act on the unofficial and uncorroborated information provided on rumours, which creates a vacuum that can be filled by fear and informal and potentially volatile responses. In addition to digital literacy to address misinformation, resilience of such communities should also include the capacity to enhance forms of communication and trust between the civil population and formal sources of security to deter economic impacts and public unrest.

Fine and Ellis (2010) analyze how rumours, especially in harsh political situations, tend to spread at an increased pace and tend to elicit a direct and subsequent behavioral response. In their research, even unproven rumours like threats of violence by incoming goons may compel errant small shops and markets to close even before the event itself occurs. Previous insecurities and a low level of tolerance to perceived threats normally cause such reactions.

This fear weakened economic activities and impacted inter-community relations in ways that appeared in some instances to result in preemptive retaliatory mobilization. Some of the respondents argued that online fear caused distrust among ethnic groups that had lived harmoniously prior to the elections.

Table 4.20: Frequency of Security Incidents Linked to Online Mobilization by Settlement

Settlement	High Frequency	Moderate Frequency	Low Frequency
Kibera	43%	38%	19%
Mathare	39%	41%	20%
Eastleigh	28%	46%	26%
Korogocho	22%	34%	44%

Source Field data

On the basis of information contained in Table 4.13, a hierarchy of risk to national security can be ascertained. Kibera and Mathare emerge as the most vulnerable settlements with the highest percentages in the High Frequency, at 43 per cent and 39 per cent, respectively. It shows that online mobilization activities in such regions are most likely to cause frequent and ruthless security incidents. Korogocho, by contrast, has a relatively low high-frequency risk with just 22 per cent of the cases fitted into this category. Another important observation is that Eastleigh and Mathare have the highest percentages of Moderate Frequency, which are 46 and 41, respectively, implying that security issues are actually major in the localities, calling for an appropriate response.

The findings are significant as far as national security is concerned, as they raise a need to establish a more tailored and risk-based approach to security. The periodic violent outbreaks in Kibera and Mathare are a potential area of mass unrest that can destabilize the functioning of the local populations and create a risk of a crisis threat to national stability. On the other hand, the imminent risk of high-frequency incidents is smaller in Korogocho, whereas the fact that any security incidents associated with online mobilization in all settlements reflect a comprehensive and systematic problem. A national security strategy must hence incorporate specific bushwhacking and

surveillance of hotspots such as Kibera, as well as create a national game plan on digital literacy and online misinformation debunking, so that all communities are resilient to online incitement.

4.6.3 Relationship between Digital Space Mobilization and national security

The fourth study objective aimed at establishing the nexus between digital space mobilization and national security in Nairobi's informal settlements. This subsection presents the model summary, ANOVA and regression output where other factors are kept constant.

Table 4.21: Model Summary (Digital space mobilization)

Model	R	R2	Adjusted R2	S.E of the Estimate				
					F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.629 ^a	.396	.394	.39082	151.039	1	273	.000
a. Predictors: (Constant), Digital Space mobilization								

Source: Research Findings (2025)

Based on the results in Table 4.21, we have $R = 0.629$ and $R^2 = 0.394$. On adjustment, the R2 goes to 0.394. R2, as advanced by Greene (2008), assists in explaining the percentage changes of the dependent variable with changes linked to one unit of the predictor variable. It can thus be concluded that 39.4 per cent of the variation in the state of national security can be attributed to the variation in digital space mobilization strategies. Going by the p-value ($<.05$), it can be concluded that the impact of digital space mobilization on national security was statistically significant. Related to this study is a study by Hunter (2022), who examined the impact that social media and disinformation disseminated on social media have on democracy. The conclusions of a cross-national, time-series study across 158 states suggest that social media disinformation, online political polarization, and the use of social media to coordinate offline violence undermine the levels of democracy.

Table 4.22: ANOVA (Digital space mobilization)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.428	1	23.428	151.039	.000 ^b
	Residual	40.450	273	.161		
	Total	63.878	274			
a. Dependent Variable: National Security						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Digital space mobilization						

Source: Research Findings (2025)

Based on the results found in Table 4.22, it was observed that the F-statistic was significant ($p \text{ value} < .05$), which is an indication that the model was significant in explaining the relationship between the digital space mobilization and national security. According to Williams (2024), ANOVA assists in explaining the variations in the means of the various groups that are under assessment in the data set to determine whether the variations are significant or not. When the P-value is less than 05, it shows that there are statistically significant differences in the means of each group. The areas of digital mobilization of space under the evaluation in this analysis were the use of digital space as the platform of propaganda, social coverage, tribal and ethnic interest ignition, and media coverage.

Ogenga (2024), in his review of the correlation that exists between social media and democratic change within the African region, concluded that social media use during elections in Africa has become a crucial determinant of national security. The use of digital platforms has taken two directions, with the platforms easing democratic participation, but equally creating critical threats to stability and security. An example would be that social media has become an effective means of speedily disseminating

information. Candidates and political parties use these sites to send their messages to the electorate by circumventing the usual gatekeepers in the media during elections. Thus, it can be concluded based on the findings provided in Table 4.13 that there were significant statistical differences in the impact on national security between different aspects of the mobilization of digital space described.

Table 4.23: Regression Output (Digital space mobilization)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	1.651	.156		10.664	.000	1.348	1.958
	Digital space mobilization	-.506	.041	.609	-12.301	.000	.426	.589
a. Dependent Variable: National Security								

Source: Research Findings (2025)

From the findings in Table 4.23, the model thus becomes

$$Y=1.651- 0.506X_4 + e$$

From the findings in Table 4.23, the digital space mobilization has a negative and significant effect on national security ($r=0.506$, $p < .05$). This implies that with an increase in digital space mobilization, the level of national security during elections has declined significantly. The findings are consistent with those of past studies; for example, Feldstein (2021) established that dictatorial regimes and their opponents, in the modern era, are using digital apparatus to track, control and watch citizens and political narratives, hence endangering national security.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary of Findings

The campaign strategies used by the political candidates play an important role in shaping the electoral landscape, the effects of which often permeate far beyond the impact on voting outcomes to immediately tailor to national security, especially on the local level. In the nature of the electoral process, this study explored the two main campaign styles, door-to-door campaigning and political rallies, with a view to assessing their relevance to community security and national security as a whole. The results obtained indicate that though these approaches are conventional and popular ways of involving the voters, they introduce political tension and security problems. The evidence indicates that the mere process of voter mobilization and the consolidation of support by such processes has a direct relationship with the stability of the community and thus, a direct relationship with national security.

Door-to-door campaigning became a popular and most used method by political candidates. Perceived as a positive mode of connecting with voters, ascertaining population concerns, and requesting their backing in person, it was viewed as an appropriate means by the candidate's pupil who used it. Results, however, suggest that this apparently harmless strategy has a direct connection to community safety and the generation of political tension. In informal settlements and politically segregated neighborhoods, the ability of the campaign teams of various groups to circulate in the same streets may provoke tensions. The direct contriving over support at the household level leads to verbal fights, allegations of voter intimidation and physical fights also between party supporters.

The fact that the strategy is based on the use of political followers to go door to door in the neighbourhoods implies that such campaign teams may occasionally be seen as party extensions; as such, they are not neutral. This view may result in territorial thinking when the followers of one or another campaign team may feel aggrieved by another campaign operating in the field. Such movement induces a fluid situation in which minor conflicts are prone to degenerate into a serious blow-up. The individualized quality of the door-to-door campaign creates a successful outcome in terms of voter turnout; however, in turn, it enshrines the local political rivalries and thus promotes an immediate security threat to members of the communities and entangles the local flashpoints that render the services of security agencies necessary.

Another area of campaign that stood out was the use of political rallies and mass assemblies, which were largely employed to raise a level of mobilization and ground down support. The magnitude of these events, which often attract thousands of people, has a firsthand and direct effect on the community's security and local safety. Although rallies are not only a cardinal expression of political liberty but a challenging security issue as well, there is a way out. The flow of such massive events needs long-term security planning to contain the crowd, stampede, and the possibility of violence prevailing, especially when there might be violence-prone groups present.

The evidence indicates that such large marches are avenues through which political leaders give inspirational speeches that are, in some instances, incendiary in that they provoke strong emotions and incite followers, thereby threatening to intimidate counterparts holding contrasting political values. This created a huge atmosphere of polarization, whereby the ecstatic mood of one group was interpreted as an absolute threat to the mood of the other. The logistical problems of accommodating huge masses and the consequent heated rhetoric and political provocations all make a viable field of

security incidents. These may include petty fights, burning of properties on one hand, and clashes of a more potent faction on the other hand. Thus, although there is evidence that such a rally can be a viable method of mass mobilization, they are always a threat to the security and safety of the local population, which requires a considerable amount of effort and resources on the side of national security forces in order to restore peace.

The importance of community policing in ensuring a safe and secure electoral process cannot be overemphasized. This is a dynamic topic, particularly in a place whose electoral history is marred with violence. The study sought to illuminate key players in the community policing campaign at election time, issues that are of significant concern at this time and the effect that community attitudes have in determining the success of community-based initiatives. The results indicate that community policing is not a single phenomenon; it is an ever-evolving grassroots movement led by a segmented group of agents whose direct and significant involvement in elections has a direct and significant influence on security outcomes. These programs are, however, critically dependent upon community buy-in and the capacity of the involved parties to remain neutral.

During the study, the following people were found to be key actors in the community policing system: the elders, youth leaders, religious figures, and women's groups. Such groups do not sit back as mere spectators, but are vociferously connected in voter mobilization and the wider election process. An important role covered by the elders is the traditional authority to mediate political wrangles and reduce tensions. Their experience and honours enable them to bring together conflicting groups and discuss feasible peaceful solutions to conflicts and be a stabilizing force in the community. Whereas youth leaders may put a high premium on mobilizing voters, especially during elections, they have a dual role. Their networks of contacts are critical towards

encouraging their participation or even their energy itself, but this can also at times be a source of security worry when they can be used by political interests in fuelling unrest, whereby it may be in their interest to ensure that they are not caught in this crossfire. Clergy also takes its pulpits and the forums organized to preach peace and social unity, and encourages the population to have a peaceful, non-violent electoral process. Finally, women's groups tend to be formidable voices of peace and stability because they are chiefly concerned with the protection of their families and communities. Their collective voice can also be a strong discouragement to violence. The fact that these actors have direct participation in voter mobilization implies that they are not just responding to matters of security but help to create it.

Although community policing programs have enormous potential, there exist a number of factors and issues that are of concern or critical during the electioneering period. The most common of them is the politicization of these community policing groups. A constant threat exists that these actors or their groups are likely to be co-opted by those in power and thus lose their neutrality and lose the trust of the community. This creates internal wrangles, and it becomes hard to be viewed as an independent party. Other important issues are the absence of formal training and resources, which reduces their efficiency in dealing with the complicated issues of security threats.

These fears have a direct impact on community mindsets regarding the usefulness of security management. The results indicate that the perceptions of a particular community are highly correlated with the effectiveness of the approach of community policing. When the leaders within a community are viewed as believable and neutral, there is a likelihood that they will be obeyed and followed by the citizens on security issues. Such trust becomes a social cement and promotes peaceful conduct and collective security. On the other hand, should there be a belief that these actors are

favouring a certain political party, their credibility is destroyed, and so is their capacity to form behaviours. Community policing, thus, becomes effective not only because of the strategies adopted but also because of the trust the community has in leadership. The fact that the vetting of both these initiatives relies on trust is the ultimate determination of whether these initiatives can indeed promise a secure electoral process.

Moreover, the major element of the proactive approach was the usage of specialized electoral security units in the riskiest locations. These teams were not simply added to general police presence but also specially trained in dealing with tension-filled political events, non-lethal approaches to situations dealing with a crowd of people, and responding to the situation in a community-friendly way. This specialization played an important role in that it enabled it to skirt the heavy-handed approaches that are generally associated with general policing, and which can be a precipitating cause of violence. The availability of such professional units was a tremendous defence against attack, showing the preparedness and lack of bias. In line with this, there was the use of tighter surveillance, whereby security agencies used both human and technological assistance to monitor flashpoints. This increased degree of vigilance, especially in places where electoral violence has occurred in the past, enabled strategic allocation of resources in an informed manner.

Besides face-to-face presence and monitoring, the success of the security strategy depended on a successful partnership with the grassroots peace committees. These committees, made up of highly-regarded elders, community leaders, and youth representatives, served as an important channel between the security agencies and local people. Such cooperation was significant in establishing trust, which is a resource that is not available in abundance in these communities. The peace committees were able to

furnish the security organs with ground intelligence on potential eruption of violence, factional infighting and spreading of rumours, which have caused unrest. Security agencies, on the other hand, could exchange verified information and coordinate with the committees on safety measures in exchange. This collaboration changed the security outlook from a non-local and top-down approach to a more mixed and community-involved approach.

Other supporting variances to this collaborative paradigm were rapid response and early warning systems. These were computer-based networks commonly supported by community networks and online communication systems, which enabled effective reporting of possible threats in a short time. In case of a warning received, a street faceoff, a mob gathering, or hate speech on social media, the security agencies could easily deploy rapid response teams to the scene. This prompt response rate made a big difference in handling and de-escalating an incident before it could turn into large-scale violence. A close combination of early warning capability and professional response capability meant that the security agencies were usually a step ahead of any threats. Hence, these threats never reached a critical stage. All these efforts brought an overall result of the new security framework compared to the previous approaches as more agile, informed and more trusted.

Although these strategies were elaborate and led to their successful use, the study acknowledged that there were notable challenges which impeded the effective operations of the security agencies. The most widely sown and most bruising of these was the politicization of security interventions. In many informal settlements, the security agencies are not seen to be dispassionate adjudicators of law and order. Still, they are seen as instruments of the dominant political regime or even a particular political faction. This notion, real or otherwise, is a fundamental blow to both trust and

cooperation of the people. The lack of willingness of communities to assist when they feel that the security forces are out to serve the interests of either side makes them less receptive to efforts at information sharing and thus obedience to directives. Such politicization sets expectations of vicious cycles: communities will bar information, which will force the security organs to resort to more drastic means, which will validate the perception of bias, and further weaken the trust.

This was a major factor which was not effective, even with the well-intentioned initiatives. An example is the cooperation between peace committees and peace activists, which was highly effective in some regions. Still, in some regions, the cooperation was approached with suspicion as the committees themselves were considered co-opted by political interests. Mistrust is planted by the politicization of deep-rooted security issues since the value of better surveillance and early warning systems could be offset by a loss of important intelligence data provided by the community. Thus, although there were notable improvements in the approaches of security agencies' operational and cooperation strategies, the environment of the operations faced a serious and largely insurmountable challenge in terms of creating a secure and ultimately fair election process due to the underlying political nature of the environment.

The environment of electoral politics has changed, and it is impossible to go back to the previous order with the rise of digital technologies. Due to a shortage of traditional media and physical infrastructure, which is present in most informal settlements, digital logics have taken centre stage in political mobilization, the dissemination of information and the engagement of community members. This study attempts to assess this delicate nexus between the mobilization of digital space and national security with references to the dynamics between WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter in particular.

Results indicate a mixed compatibility and incompatibility: these tools are simultaneously an effective means to peace and stability and a means of misinformation and incitement, and thus, directly threaten stability and cohesion of communities in the time leading up to elections.

The results show that there is an evident hierarchy in using digital platforms to make electoral mobilization efforts. WhatsApp, especially, was seen to be used most, and this was mostly because it has a private group communication aspect. The end-to-end encryption and the option to organize large closed groups make it an excellent tool in terms of distributing information quickly and engaging community organizations with an element of targeting. In this regard, WhatsApp has been used in all aspects, such as sharing political manifestos, the mobilization of rallies, the mobilization of voters, and even the organization of the local safety patrols. Such a closed characteristic, however, simultaneously serves as a breeding ground for the uncontrolled spreading of rumours and politically-charged information, which is why it is often hard to control or verify. The efficacy of the platform is based on the premises of its capability to utilize the social network and trust in the neighbour, with the ability to magnify the messages within close-knit communities.

Facebook plays another more public role. It is a critically important medium of mass-scale political signifying, political campaign advertisement, and streamed live events. Its two-fold characteristic of containing both a collection of public pages and a collection of private groups permits an "official" top-down communication by political leaders as well as a grassroots chat among supporters. The newsfeed algorithms working on Facebook often result in an echo chamber effect, an environment in which individual users tend to be exposed to information that supports the ideology that they already hold or one that contributes to their partisan identities. Such dynamism is good

in campaign politics, but on the negative side, they are a contributing factor to social polarization, which forms a big part of the calculus of national security.

Although it counts fewer people among the users, Twitter is regarded as the best place to conduct real-time politics and set the political agenda. It serves as a state house where politicians, journalists, activists, and citizens can debate, trends are initiated, and news is broken. Its public and open character permits greater inspection of political discourses but also exposes the user to a barrage of unverified information and hostile political speeches. Twitter, in this case, plays a lesser role of community organizing and a greater role of dictating the national political dialogue, being able to shape the national political stories, national conversation and national hashtag that are often being covered by the traditional media and national discourse.

On the one hand, digital platforms are an irreplaceable resource for ensuring security in the electoral process. Study reveals that these sites are very important sources of early knowledge and fast information transmission. In high-tension settings, communities, leaders, and peace activists form WhatsApp groups where they issue real-time notifications about possible security threats, including where protests are to take place, conflicts brewing, or suspicious behaviours. This is a decentralized information network, which helps individuals to identify high-risk zones and enables groups to take proactive action towards de-escalation of situations before they escalate. This is majorly better than the conventional sluggish means of communication.

Moreover, such platforms are the core issues in terms of community policing and conflict resolution. They can provide a direct communication link to the local security providers so that information can be verified and a response to incidents can be coordinated. An example is the false rumour, which may trigger a mob; peer community

leaders in the WhatsApp group may effectively demolish the misinformation in a time-bound process. The platforms also provide a platform for peace campaigns and de-escalations. Activists and civil society groups actively use Facebook and Twitter to send messages of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, and unity with the aim of mitigating messages of hate and fear. These positive messages, through deliberate use of digital tools, form one of the strategies for building social unity and encouraging a secure election environment.

Although they have been producing their benefits, the nature of such platforms also presents a threat to national security. The velocity and coverage of online media can be both a blessing and a curse, and our results have outlined the use of such media to target hate speech, incorrect news, and terror. The same can be said about WhatsApp, where the closed nature of group message boards and chats means that fake and defamatory information can spread without any type of filtering, often using existing ethnic, political, or social lines of division. In the same manner, the openness of Facebook and Twitter can serve as a means of spreading propaganda by polarizing actors and using disinformation to stoke fear. Whether this is in the form of a fake news story about a political rival or hate speech against a particular group of people, it can soon spread rapidly and is hard to take down once it has been released.

The most serious implication is the fact that through this online content, tension and subsequent violence are likely to be intensified in the physical world. Out of control: Study reveals how false rumours and fear-mongering sent out along the internet have, at times, caused real-world conflicts. Fake news, such as a sensational story of any electoral fraud or an act of violence, can precipitate spontaneous protests or retaliatory attacks. This is a clear and present national security threat, as viewed in the speed at which the digital popular conversation about a rumour could progress into the real

world via violence. In addition, the invention of online echo chambers via online social media such as Facebook and Twitter tears the trust between neighbours and communities. The constant reinforcement of specific narratives and demonizing political opponents via social media has the potential to break down the very notion of at least a perceived social order, meaning that communities are that much less resistant to being influenced and turned against each other. The dilemma of national security is therefore how to control and curb these risks without interfering with the basic rights of freedom and the right to information.

5.2 Conclusion

The results of the research studies eloquently show that traditional election campaign strategies, which are necessitated as part of the exercise of democracy, do not go without crucial national-level security implications. Knocking on doors and political gatherings become important manifestations of the direct effects of campaign practices on community safety, pressure and national security. The door-to-door canvassing or the personalized and competitive model of the said institution, though viable in raising voter turnout, can serve as an unintended source of tension and localised security hotspots. Likewise, such methods as the use of large public gatherings and rallies, with all their power to consolidate support, are riddled with serious security concerns in terms of the inflammatory rhetoric, ID issues of managing the crowd, and the presence of inter-group conflict.

The main finding is that the means employed to mobilize the voters may serve to destabilize the state, especially in polarized circumstances. The findings reflect the necessity to rethink the planning and implementation of campaign strategies as well as pay more attention to conflict-sensitive operations. A stable electoral process cannot be left solely to the security agencies; political parties and candidates bear the

responsibility. Failure to combat the insecurity associated with such campaign tactics may result in the establishment of a cycle of tension and violence with grave effects on communal solidarity and national stability.

The importance of community policing in the context of the secure electoral process cannot be overestimated, and its effectiveness is rather dependent. This study has shown how community policing is a multi-faceted activity with a wide range of local actors such as elders, youth leaders, religious groups, and women's groups. Such actors do not play a minor role in the election process; on the contrary, their direct engagement in voter mobilization and the resolution of conflicts contributes to shaping the security picture. Their strategies are not a magic bullet because, despite the existence and effort, they can improve peace and stability to a considerable degree. Community policing can only be as successful as a gossamer thread of trust and perceived fairness will allow. The risk that the politicization inheres with a consequent loss of the community's confidence is always a threat to these initiatives, as it can frequently treacherously undercut even the well-intentioned efforts. Yet, community policing is not the ultimate solution, as the trustworthiness and credibility of the community have to be firm to ensure a safe election process.

The research conclusions underscore a compelling and intricate image of electoral security in Nairobi City County. On the one hand, the proactive and cooperative policy of security agencies, such as the deployment of special forces to prevent electoral violence, increased monitoring and cooperation with the local peace committees, worked quite well. Combined with the early warning and rapid response systems, the decision contributed to defusing any potential threats in time and achieving a modern and agile approach to security. Such efforts effectively neutralized a lot of the

immediate risks inherent in electoral periods in high-risk informal settlements and formed a considerable leap in security implementation.

Nonetheless, all the intrigues barely worked as proper strategies since the issue of politicization was persistent. The view that security interventions are politically driven causes distrust on the part of the community and undermines effective collaboration. This lack of trust introduces a significant gap in that security agencies find it hard to receive the requisite intelligence and cooperation that they need in order to perform their mandate of protecting them. Finally, the findings indicate that although security agencies may perfect their operation strategies, the underlying political suspicion and the feeling of partiality will definitely pose a greater threat to ensuring a safe and secure election process. The effectiveness of what will come next with regard to security will therefore not only be due to whether or not there will be a high level of operational efficiency, but also due to the ability to work on this as a systematic issue of lack of trust.

The evidence of this study highlights that conditions of digital mobilization around election time are considered a sword with two sides, with both benefits and grave concerns for national security. The forums of WhatsApp, Facebook, and Twitter have become hubs through which citizens interact with the electoral process. Because of the high level of transmission and decentralization, they are used as effective instruments in political campaigns, an important medium in community organizing, and, lastly, a means of peace and societal security.

Despite their effectiveness, however, these platforms are also incredibly dangerous; the same qualities that make them so effective also make them so dangerous. Unrestrained, viral propagation of hate speech, fake news, and fear-mongering are direct threats to

national security because they divide communities, undermine trust and spark violence, in certain extreme cases. This study helps to clearly understand that online incitement does not constitute an alternate universe of the physical world; the effects of online incitement are truly concrete with physical consequences. This dynamic poses a big and continuous challenge to law enforcement bodies and requires them to deal with a risk that is largely dispersed, swift, and hard to control without affecting civil liberties.

To respond adequately, this complex duality must be addressed collaboratively. Governments and security agencies should go beyond the orthodox approach to security to come up with ingenious methods to surveil the internet environment, without being heavy-handed to the extent that they suppress meaningful political communication. More importantly, particular efforts have to be made in order to promote digital literacy among citizens and help empower individuals to critically assess the information presented to them and prevent the spread of misinformation. Tech companies also need to do more to ensure content on their platforms is vetted, invest more into moderation systems, and work with local authorities and civil society to stop harmful narratives. Ideally, a stable culture of electoral security in the digital era will require a balanced approach that both harnesses the power of these platforms to do good and defends against their abilities to do evil.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Re-engineering Campaign Strategies for Security Cohesion

The findings indicate an absolute necessity to re-engineer political campaign strategies so as to mitigate security risks positively, as opposed to unintentionally increasing them. Door-to-door campaigning and political rallies are quite traditional, and their use is effective, yet in the informal settlements, such activities can cause tension and local

conflict. It is thus advisable for political parties and candidates to use a Conflict-Sensitive Campaigning Framework. This structure would see a change in the voter mobilization system to a positive and peace-building process. Door-to-door campaigning would be in the form of teaching campaign teams conflict resolution and de-escalation strategies. It is imperative that teams are taught how to deal with or avoid verbal confrontations, avoid politically sensitive areas, and how to report possible future flare-ups to a neutral mediator, such as a local peace committee, rather than getting into fights. Instead, the campaign rhetoric and the campaign materials must be focused on policy and community development as opposed to partisan invectives, which at times can serve to inflame rivalries.

In the case of political rallies, the framework recommends that there should be a shift to collaborative security. Instead of depending purely on the national security agencies, the rally organizers must be required to partner with local community committees and leaders in co-hosting their rallies. Such an arrangement of co-hosting events would not only lead to the management of the events by the community, but it would also lead to the development of a Code of Conduct for rallies. This would be a code of conduct to control the use of inflammatory language and would require a mixed, community-led so-called Peace Patrol to control crowd behaviour internally. Such a shift would change rallies into possible avenues of discord into arenas of dialogue and mutual community vision, therefore positively building upon, and not jeopardizing, national security proactively.

5.3.2 Institutionalizing Community Policing with Neutrality and Resource Capacity

The study recognizes community policing as an essential resource; however, due to the scarcity of funds and the general belief of being politically biased to a particular group, its efficiency can be undermined. To overcome this, what is suggested is to institutionalize community policing into a formal, non-partisan structure. Within this framework, a new institution, the Community Electoral Security Council (CESC), would be linked to national security agencies and legitimized in the eyes of community actors to represent their interests in, and engagement with, national security agencies.

The CESC itself should be made up of a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, pre-vetted group of elders, and out of ten more broadly, young people and religious leaders, as well as representatives of women's groups, whose integrity and neutrality are beyond question. The members would be chosen during a wide-open, communal procedure. They should be prepared to sign a written neutrality contract, any political association being an offence that will exclude them. The institutionalization would also entail training these councils on formal handling of issues on electoral security, early warning systems and dealing with conflicts in a formal manner.

More importantly, the government must provide the CESC with a source of funds that would enable it to acquire basic communication equipment and a small operational budget. This would enable them to be independent and play their beneficial role without being in need of political leaders' support. The national security agencies would be required to adopt the CESC as a legitimate partner to whom they must work exclusively, as that is the only way that they would be treated equally, as the rest in the electoral security architecture. This would not only empower community policing to be able to

conduct their activities, but would also prevent the community policing activities from being co-opted by political power, which in turn would restore trust that is paramount in maintaining a secure electoral process.

5.3.3 Collaborative Digital Security Framework and Media Literacy

The digital domain has become a two-faced instrument: an effective vehicle of peace and prejudice at the same time. To mitigate that, it can be recommended to utilize a Collaborative Digital Security Framework that not only defines the power of digital platforms but also actively minimizes their risks. This framework would have a multi-stakeholder approach, which entails government, technology companies, and civil society.

A Digital Peace Corps ought to be set up. This would ideally be a youth-based, oppressed-led volunteer force, trained in digital forensics and media literacy. They would constantly check digital spaces in real time and remove hate speech, misinformation, and encourage violence. They would not become a censorship entity; rather, they would be working on counter-messaging and fact-checks. The corps would collaborate and coordinate with tech firms such as Meta (Facebook/WhatsApp) and X (formerly Twitter) to debunk false information with trusted facts and push the counteracting narratives of peace and unity as quickly as possible.

The government and civil society should then initiate an expansive digital literacy program. This campaign, whose tagline is "Think Before You Share", would be run in the informal settlements in the form of community forums and digital workshops. It would aim to train citizens to think critically about the material on the internet, to learn how to recognize fake news and to learn about the implications of the distribution of information that has not been verified. This campaign would allow people to take

charge of their digital security status, moving them away from being consumers of information and becoming critical thinkers and responsible digital citizens.

5.3.4 Rebuilding Trust through A Politicization-Proof Security Doctrine

The most important and universal observation is that politicization debilitates security interventions. To counter this, the national security agencies are advised to use a new Politicization-Proof Security Doctrine for elections. This doctrine would be twofold, with the two central tenets being complete operational impartiality and strategic community-centric transparency.

The initial principle would necessitate a wholesome transformation in the deployment of security. Rather than subject security officers to the authority of local authority administrators who may have political connections, all electoral security forces must be concentrated under a non-partisan electoral security authority. Such a command would be given a strict mandate to administer the law without favour to any political party. This should involve the establishment of a transparent and easy-to-identify accountability system, like the formation of an independent oversight committee capable of interrogating and disciplining security personnel that is found to be undertaking security duties in a politically biased manner.

The second principle, strategic community-centric transparency, is an extreme overhaul to the way in which security agencies interact with the people. In the case of election periods, the security agencies must clearly articulate their security deployment strategies, including the number of officers and the areas they are to secure, and they must publicize their rules of engagement. Such transparency would help de-mystify security operations and alleviate the feeling that there is a dark force behind security operations with a politically minded agenda. Additionally, agencies are encouraged to

develop an accessible online portal where citizens will be allowed to report security incidents and track the progress of their reports in real time. Such a high degree of transparency would not only promote trust in the security forces but also enable citizens to hold the security forces accountable, cultivating a security atmosphere that is actually of the people and by the people and trusted by all.

5.4 Areas of Further Research

- I. Further analysis is needed to design and implement a framework of Conflict-Sensitive Campaigning, with workable suggestions for political parties and candidates to address the security implications of door-to-door campaigning and rallies.
- II. To assess how formal training and institutional assistance help community policing actors to remain neutral and effective in times of electoral processes.
- III. To examine the efficacy of certain institutional changes and community-based structures of accountability in countering the politicization of security agencies during electoral cycles in the informal settlements.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

My name is Jairus Mutinda. I am a PhD student in security studies at Kenyatta University-Kenya. As partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am conducting research on the **Electoral process and National security in the informal settlements of Nairobi City County, Kenya from 2007 to 2022** which I request that you participate.

The information you provide will be confidential and used only for academic purposes. You are not obliged to disclose your names both during the interview and on the questionnaire.

Your participation is highly appreciated

Regards

Jairus Mutinda

Kenyatta University

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In ticking this questionnaire, a likert scale is used where;

1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=Not sure, 4=Agree and 5=strongly agree.

Gender

a. Male

b. Female

2. Which agency/institution do you serve?

a. National Police Service

b. community leader

c. observer

d. IEBC

3. How long have you served in your institution?

a. Below 5 years

b. 5-10 years

c. 10-20 years

d. More than 20 years

4. What is your age?

a. 18-24 years

b. 25-34 years

c. 35-44 years

d. 45-54 years

Above 55 years

5. What is your Education Level?

a. Primary

b. secondary

c. Tertiary

d. None

SECTION B: ELECTION CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES

This section presents the questions on the various aspects of election campaign strategies and its role in election violence in Kenya

1. Door to door Campaigns

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
During election door to door campaigns, ethnic mobilization and misinformation by political parties can perpetuate political divisions and result in election violence.					
The political rhetoric of politicians during door-to-door campaigns has been fueling divisions and violence through ethnic mobilization.					
Politicians in our area use language that might cause fights during door-to-door campaigns, often through coercion and intimidation.					
The campaigns during party nominations are responsible for perpetuating divisions and election violence through organized malpractice and voter bribery.					
The political messaging used by politicians during public rallies, including misinformation, can cause violence.					

2. Public Rallies and Gatherings

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
During election public rallies, politicians perpetuate political divisions and result in election violence.					
The political rhetoric of politicians during public rallies has been fueling divisions and violence through ethnic mobilization.					
Politicians have been exploiting and manipulating the youths to engage in violent acts during election campaigns.					
In Nairobi's informal settlements, there is a strain on security services due to actions of politicians during public gatherings and rallies					

SECTION C: ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS IN INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

This section presents the questions on the various aspects of role of local leaders in election processes and national security in Kenya

1. Community Initiatives

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Most leaders from the informal settlements have been encouraging dialogue among different ethnic communities during election campaigns to prevent violence					
Local leaders act as crucial intermediaries between political parties and the community. They are deeply involved in voter mobilization, disseminating political information, organizing rallies, and encouraging voter registration					
community leaders help in mediating conflicts and peace building to de-escalate tensions during elections period					
There is enhanced youth engagement and empowerment through shifting the focus from political competition to shared community safety and socio-economic concerns					
The local leaders have a significant role to play in promoting security in the informal settlement during election campaigns					

2. Perception of Community to Leaders

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The community places greater trust in local leaders compared to external police or political figures.					
The community's leaders are considered the "first line of defense" in peacekeeping, filling gaps where formal security institutions fall short.					
The community views local leaders as "one of us," implying a greater sense of accountability and commitment to the community's well-being					
Despite the high expectations and trust placed in them, local leaders face significant resource limitations.					

SECTION D: EFFECTIVENESS OF SECURITY AGENCIES INTERVENTIONS IN ADDRESSING ELECTION RELATED AND SECURITY CONCERNS

This section presents the questions on the effectiveness of government interventions in addressing election related and security concerns

1. Security Agencies Interventions

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Police often intervene after violence has already started, rather than proactively addressing the root causes of insecurity					
While police presence increase during campaigns, there is perception that law enforcement's efforts are more about managing political demonstrations than ensuring public safety					
The national-level interventions like specialized security units and command centers show promise, but lack the localized knowledge and trust needed to be truly effective.					
Despite the existence of initiatives like community policing and awareness programs, their effectiveness is often hampered by limited resources, inconsistent support, and a deep-seated distrust of law enforcement					
The perception of bias can lead to selective enforcement and a reluctance to investigate politically connected offenders, which compromises the integrity of the entire electoral process and can fuel post-election disputes					

2. Effectiveness of Security Agencies Response to Security

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
The government has been deploying enough security personnel to deal with election related violence					
The security agencies has been very proactive in addressing election related concerns that can trigger violence in the informal settlement					
The security agencies have been using intelligence information effectively to arrest politicians inciting violence during election campaigns					
The integration of early warning and rapid response systems proved instrumental in managing potential threats before escalation					
The government have been partnering with the regional blocks and international institutions in conducting civic education to the electorate during election campaigns					
The government in partnership with NGOs in the informal settlement has been effective in dealing with election-related security concerns					

SECTION E: POLITICAL PARTY, ONLINE ELECTORAL MOBILIZATION

This section presents the questions on the various aspects of digital platforms mobilization during political campaigns in Kenya

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Digital mobilization has facilitated the ability to share verified information within the political parties					
Digital platforms have helped in enhancing community policing hence influencing security and political parties actions					
Digital platforms are reshaping information dissemination and perception of reality, directly impacting national security					
Digital space platforms in Kenya have been used to fuel tribal and ethnic tensions which leads to violence during elections					
Digital media despite its positives has also become catalysts of divisions during elections to the detriment of national security					
Digital space platforms in Kenya have been used to fuel tribal and ethnic tensions which leads to violence during elections					

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME

Appendix II: Key Informants Interview

1. Do you think the election processes in Kenya have been relatively peaceful?
2. How do political parties' ideologies contribute to ferocity during elections?
3. How do you describe the political messaging during political campaigns in Kenya and do you think they result in election violence?
4. What is your view on digital space mobilization in electoral process?
5. Do you think digital space mobilization has an influence on national security?
6. In your opinion do you think political leaders from informal settlements in way fuel violence during political campaigns?
7. How satisfied are you with the role of government in addressing election related security concerns in the informal settlement?
8. How do you describe the media coverage of political campaigns in Kenya?
9. What is your view on ethnic mobilization and how does it contribute to violence and insecurity?
10. How would you describe the preparedness and response of security agencies to political campaigns violence?
11. How best should security agencies prepare to deal with violence during political campaigns?

Appendix III: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guide

Main purpose is to gather collective narratives, community-level perceptions, and socio-political dynamics shaping electoral security.

FGD Themes and Sample Questions

Theme 1: Experiences with Election Campaigns and Security

- i) How do election campaigns affect daily life and safety in your community?
- ii) Have you observed changes in violence or intimidation during election periods?
- iii) What are common tactics used by political actors that impact security here?

Theme 2: Community Leadership and Peacebuilding

- i. What role do community leaders play during elections?
- ii. Can you share examples where community leaders helped prevent or resolve electoral tensions?
- iii. What support or resources do they need to be more effective?

Theme 3: Role of Security Agencies

- i. How do security officers behave during election season? Are they seen as neutral?
- ii. What are your experiences with police or security personnel during previous elections?
- iii. How can security agencies improve their relationship with the community?

Theme 4: Digital Mobilization and Its Impact

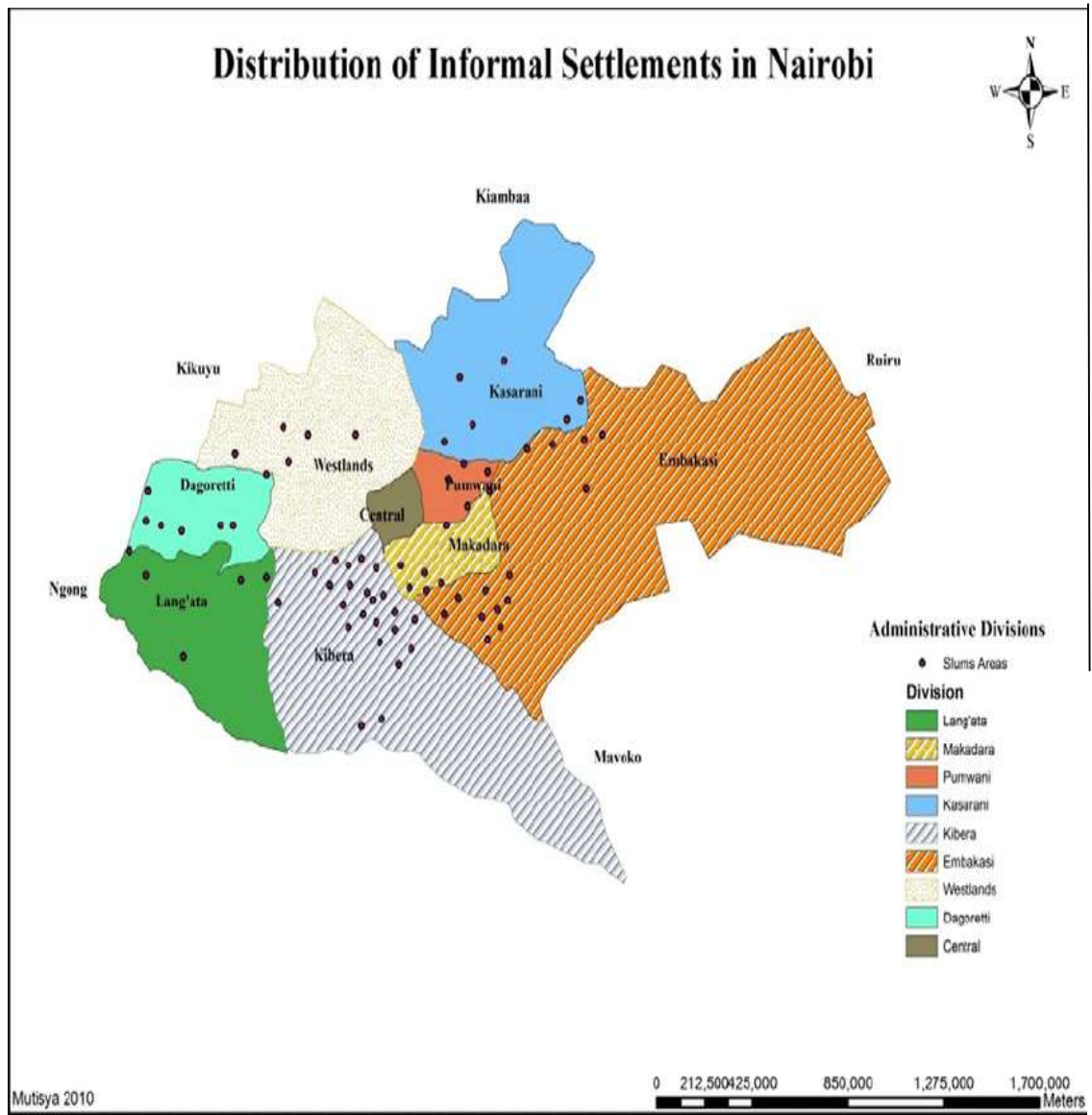
- i. How is social media or mobile messaging used in political mobilization among your peers?

- ii. What are risks associated with digital political communication?
- iii. How can communities protect themselves from false or inflammatory digital content during elections?


Theme 5: Suggestions for Enhancing Electoral Security

- i. What specific measures should be implemented to reduce election-related insecurity in your settlement?
- ii. What roles should citizens, community leaders, political parties, and security agencies play?

Appendix IV: Map of Informal Settlements in Nairobi



Appendix V: Letter of Approval of Research Proposal


**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: kubps@yahoo.com P.O. Box 43844, 00100
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke NAIROBI, KENYA
Website: www.ku.ac.ke Tel. 810901 Ext. 57530

Internal Memo

FROM: Executive Dean, Graduate School **DATE:** 26th November, 2024

TO: Jairus K. Mutinda
Dept. of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY **REF:** C82/CTY/21641/2021

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL.


This is to inform you that the Graduate School Board at its meeting 15th November, 2024 approved your Ph.D. Research Proposal entitled "Electoral Process and National Security in the Informal Settlements of Nairobi City County, Kenya from 2007 to 2022".

You may now proceed with your Data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed supervision Tracking and Progress Report Forms. The Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage downloads.

Also, please ensure that you publish article(s) from your thesis before submitting it to Graduate School for examination as per the Commission for University Education and Kenyatta University guidelines. By copy of this letter, the Registrar (Academic) is hereby requested to grant you substantive registration for your Ph.D. studies.

Thank you.


JOHN M. ODONGI
FOR: EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies
Registrar (Academic) Att; Dr. Harriet Isaboke

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Evans Odhiambo
C/o Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
2. Dr. Lazarus Ngari
C/o Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

JMO/1000

Appendix VI: Research Authorization Letter



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: kubps@yahoo.com
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
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P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57530

Our Ref: C82/CTY/21641/2021

Date: 26th November, 2024

The Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR JAIRUS K. MUTINDA REG. NO. C82/CTY/21641/2021

I write to introduce **Mutinda** who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. The student is registered for a Ph.D. degree programme in the Department of Security, Diplomacy & Peace Studies in the School of Law, Arts & Social Sciences.

Mutinda intends to conduct research for Ph.D. thesis entitled, "Electoral Process and National Security in the Informal Settlements of Nairobi City County, Kenya from 2007 to 2022"

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,


PROF. ELIUD N.M. NJAGI
EXECUTIVE DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

AK/cap

Appendix VII: NACOSTI

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **496251** Date of Issue: **17/December/2024**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that **Mr. JAIRUS MUTINDA KILATYA** of **Kenyatta University**, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the **Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014)** in on the topic: **ELECTORAL PROCESS AND NATIONAL SECURITY IN THE INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS OF NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA FROM 2007 TO 2022** for the period ending : **17/December/2025.**

License No: **NACOSTI/P/24/414664**

496251
Applicant Identification Number

W. Mutinda
Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code



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