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Mitigating Structural Violence Against Women Leaders Within Political Parties: Lessons from Nairobi

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Abstract

This Research examined structural violence against women leaders within Nairobi's political parties, focusing on systemic and institutional barriers that impair women's political participation. Unlike direct violence, structural violence remains invisible but deeply embedded in party practices. The research aimed to understand structural violence against women leaders by engaging both genders to explore its basis, nature, and extent. Using a mixed-method explanatory sequential design, the study incorporated quantitative, qualitative, and intervention approaches. Findings examined the characteristics, prevalence, and impacts of structural violence against women leaders in Nairobi County's parties. The study engaged 88 participants quantitatively and 15 qualitatively. The research identified extensive structural violence including exclusion from networks, male dominance in institutions, electoral violence, and financial constraints on female candidates. The final objective of this study was to implement the interventions through participatory action research with stakeholders. The study revealed that political parties lack policies to address the ongoing violence and structural challenges faced by women, highlighting persistent systemic barriers to gender equity in Kenya's political institutions. This study is therefore valuable for enabling stakeholders to advocate for and initiate policies within political parties aimed at addressing these structural obstacles. The lessons drawn from Nairobi highlight the need for rigorous interventions that not only empower women leaders but also create an environment conducive to their success. Continued research and advocacy are crucial to ensure that political parties evolve into spaces where women can thrive as leaders.

Keywords: Structural Violence; Political Parties; Women; Leadership; Action Research