

Review of: "Contentious Biometric Voters Registration and Democratic Politics under COVID-19: The Myth of 'Social Distance' in an African State?"

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Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

- I will like to commend the efforts of the researcher on this work so far. The work opens a new vista to the societal dynamics that characterised COVID-19, especially its implications during the electioneering processes in one of the West African countries – Ghana. However, I will like to suggest that the paper needs to be systematically overhauled in each of the following areas:
- The introduction needs to be supported with citations to be scholarly and not journalistic renditions. It is somewhat journalistic in its current form.
- The first paragraph of the introduction needs to be restructured because it is full of unsubstantiated statements
- "...an emerging African democratic state" – in which context is this phrase used? What is the main yardstick that is used to classify an African country as an emerging democratic state? Has the Western style of democracy affected Africa positively or has it disrupted the primordial African democratic form of governance? Has Africa never been democratic in its pre-colonial system of administration? It may be disparaging to regard any of the African countries as an 'emerging democracy' based on the alien form of democracy that has hitherto destroyed their indigenous pattern of governance as well as their value system.
- Similarly, there is a need for clarity in this statement and other similar ones: '... other emerging democratic African states' – what is democracy in this context? Which democracy is exemplary of fully-advanced democracy? Can it be rightly said that the African primordial system of administration was not democratic before the advent of the alien and peremptorily-imposed democracy? This phrase is value-laden.
- Is there any primary statistical data or any of the extant literature that can convincingly show that the phenomenal increase in the cases of Covid-19 recorded during that period could be aptly linked to the non-observance of the protocols by the government officials and voters apart from the reports from the Newspapers?
- Supporting an argument by mentioning that scholars have hitherto written extensively on a particular issue demands that the works as well as the names of such scholars should be cited to support any of these categorical statements. For instance, the researcher should take a second look at this statement: "**Some scholars of comparative politics** have long noted that the continuous and periodic administrative task of the compilation of accurate and reliable voters' register constitute a major technical challenge for the consolidation of democratic elections, **especially in poor African countries with weak electoral institutions**, lack of adequate technical-know-how and the requisite technologies (Pastor, 1999)" Who are these scholars? The author should provide relevant citations of some of these scholars as had

been enunciated.

- The work is riddled with some categorical statements that need to be supported with citations rather than mere expressions that may not be in tandem with facts and figures.
- The methodology alluded to in the tractate includes the use of primary sources of information or data to interrogate this issue. The researcher needs to take a second look at this; I do not think the methodology is used as stated in the abstract.
- The use of 'ibid' in the in-text citations is superfluous. And I do not think this has been appropriately used. I think the researcher could give the full citations since these are not footnotes.
- "Some university lecturers also issued position papers exploring how the key democratic institutions such as the Constitution, Parliament, and Judiciary, as well as the political parties, can help to find solutions to better address these unforeseen political and constitutional crises". Indeed, the statements need citations that will unarguably show the works of those lecturers and their arguments.
- Sometimes, citing Newspaper reports might influence the renditions of a scholarly work to a journalistic reportage of a significant issue rather than logically interrogating such an issue. So, it is often advisable to cite them sparingly. They need to be corroborated by evidence-based citations. Indeed, this has made this work to be riddled with some journalistic statements.
- '... rigging elections by the **sitting incumbent** governments' - I think this is tautological.
- On the sub-theme '**Gauging the Implications of the Voters Registration on the Containment of the COVID-19 Pandemic**', the researcher cited UNICEF as the main source of information. Is there any local document or literature that can be cited to corroborate what UNICEF amplifies? Put differently, are there any other local reports to support the statistics put forward by UNICEF?
- In the final analysis, it is advisable to avoid the use of abbreviations, such as isn't, don't, etc., in this form of work.