

Review of: "Winner-takes-all Majoritarian System and Irregularities in Six Election Cycles in Nigeria, 1999 – 2019"

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A Review

Winner-takes-all Majoritarian System and Irregularities in Six Election Cycles in Nigeria, 1999 – 2019

Abstract

Abstract represents the synopsis of the whole gamut of the research work, therefore, it is apposite that the methodology as well as the gap(s) filled by this work *vis a vis* the existing literature on similar works should be plausibly established. These two ingredients should be included before making recommendations (page 1).

Introduction

In the citations, it is expected that the full names of the author(s) should be mentioned in the first citation before using *et al* subsequently; eg Onuoha et al has not been used initially, so, the citation should be full – (page 2).

‘There are also cross-national studies on electoral systems in young democracies’ (page 3) - it is significant to cite the scholars that carried out these studies and perhaps show the dynamics of their arguments.

‘Scholars observe that the incidence of electoral violence in **semi-democratic settings** has become a reinforcing tool for other forms of manipulation. Others contend that electoral irregularities may be a plausible reaction to poor electoral integrity (page 3)’.

There is a need by the authors to strongly conceptualised the term ‘democratic settings’ and or ‘democracy’. This is because the authors seemed to look at this concept from the lenses of the western perspective! For instance, can a particular brand of democracy be a general paradigm for all the countries in the globe? This could be likened to a situation whereby a particular brand of analgesic is fallaciously regarded as ‘the analgesic’ while belittling the efficacy of other brand of analgesics.

On the other hand, what are the features of a semi-democratic setting as underscored by the authors?

‘While some qualitative researchers examine forms of electoral irregularities and maintained that different forms are substitutional and exclusionary (page 3) ...’ - this statement needs to be backed up with empirical citations

‘Obiagu argues that despite their aim of ensuring peaceful power transfer, elections in most African developing countries

are riddled with electro-political violence and result in the decline of **democratic traits** (page 3). – the authors need to clarify the elements of democracy and not lump these up with mere elections that are often amplified by most of the western scholars.

Also, what are these democratic traits as underlined by the authors?

‘Again, while cross-national studies like **Fjelde and Höglund** provide general comparative insights on the electoral operations of different countries (page 3)’ – which of the works of these authors and what is the kernel of their argument?

‘...clandestine electoral strategies (page 3)’ – what are these clandestine electoral strategies? What makes them clandestine? Are they really strategies or stratagems employed by any of the political parties to outwit their opponents? The authors need clarification on this.

Understanding majoritarian systems

‘Historically, the majoritarian system was the first electoral system to be adopted worldwide (page 4)’. – How true is this assertion? I think the authors need a citation(s) to support this strong statement.

Understanding electoral irregularities in Africa with a specific focus on Nigeria

‘Fjelde and Höglund focused on electoral systems and violence and compared some sub-Saharan African countries with majoritarian rules and others without them (page 6)’. – This is an empirical study that needs citation.

‘Research shows that violence undermines the democratic value of elections by substituting free choice with coercion and by deterring participation ... (page 6),’ - which research exactly shows this contestation? Such a researcher needs to be cited.

‘... and, however, democracy is always in trouble when two out of three voters rarely turn up to vote during elections. (page 7)’ – the use of election as one of the fundamental elements and or ingredients of democracy is really contestable and arguable. Can there be democracy without elections?

‘Thus, the contemporary practice of electoral democracy is **a highly competitive and peaceful activity** and the entry of violence casts aspersions on the democratic value of elections (page 7)’. – The authors need to show veritable instances where the so-called electoral democracy has characterised the ‘peaceful activity’ given to it.

Majoritarian Presidential Federalism in Nigeria

‘The 1999 Constitution has various ambiguous and crisis-ridden sections (e.g. Section 7) ... (page 7)’ – the authors are expected to cite more than one section of the constitution that epitomizes ambiguities as underlined in the foregoing sentence.

‘To buttress the argument that winner-takes-all MES is at the root of the consistent manifestation of electoral irregularities, arising from the turbulent election environment in Nigeria, ... (page 9)’ - for this assertion to be treated as valid, it is

incumbent on the part of the authors to briefly show the antecedent of democracy in Nigeria which did not show the features that the MES portends.

Methodology

What is mixed research strategies (page 9) and is it synonymous with mixed methods?

Empirical Verification and Discussion

‘...based on political connections with those in corridors of power, the money you have to spend, and **spurious technicalities** (page 10)’. - What are these spurious technicalities? The statement is hanging and ambiguous.

Winner-takes-all Majoritarian System and Life-taking Elections in Nigeria

‘**Source:** Compiled by authors from INEC and online media data (page 11)’ – this source is not surgical enough. The authors need to give additional information on this source for specification and clarity purposes.

Conclusion

‘In consolidated advanced democracies (page 15)’ - which countries specifically practise these forms of democracies as described by the authors? Are they really advanced democracies as advanced by the authors?

I think the theme of this section can be put as **a conclusion and recommendations**

References

Unless the arrangement of references is in tandem with the pattern specified by this Journal, I do not think this is the right way to arrange the references.

NB: there is need to carry out a thorough grammatical overhauling via editing.