

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.

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

The article has purpose to analyze, despite the different health precautions at the polling stations during the period of Covid-19 pandemic in Ghana, the effects on the health security in Ghana and the West African sub-region. The abstract is concise and reflects the purpose of the authors. However, it does not present the scientific procedure, the principal theories and the explanation of the target used in this paper.

In the introduction, the authors present the electoral system in Ghana, the different parties involved during the elections, the new biometric voters' register to ameliorate the democratic election, the electoral controversies concerning the low level of consultancy, participation and transparency to implement the biometric voter registration by the electoral commission especially during this pandemic period. The presentation of the paper with the 4 sections is clear and we can follow step by step the authors. The subject, which is large and heterogeneous, is quite explained and developed. However, this introduction is far away from the abstract and it is still difficult at the end of the introduction to understand the research question of the authors

In the first section dedicated to the arguments for and against the voter registration exercise by the electoral commission, the authors present the politics surrounding the electoral commission's decision under the current health crises. The purpose is more to analyze the capacity to undertake a safer new voter registration than the ability to hold elections.

This first section is interesting, well documented and well written. However, some references need to be conformed in terms of presentation (look at the APA norm)

The second section focused on "the politico-historical trajectory of the biometric voters' register in Ghanaian electoral politics" thanks to the electoral commissioner, Dr Kwadwo Afari-Gyan during the 2012 civic elections. After a series of claims and counterclaims by political leaders, this register has been modified many times and the compilation of an entirely new Biometric Voters' Register appeared from June 30, 2020, to August 6 2020. With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, new preventive measures were incorporated into the normal registration procedures for the observance of both the prospective voters and the electoral official.

This section is interesting and presents well the evolution of the biometric voters' register and the actual conditions. However, this section is too descriptive, without real scientific references and very few analyzes

In the third section, "The Myth of Social Distance in the Biometric Voters Registration Exercise" the authors analyzed the challenges dedicated to the voter registration exercise in terms of examining the behavior of both the electoral officials and the registrants in adhering to the basic health precautions during the process. Despite the implementation of restrictions and regulations during the elections, many scenarios of queue mismanagement and violations of the "strict" adherence to the social distancing protocols were reported concerning the registration exercise at most of the centers across the country, generating petitions from health practitioners and the widespread of the infectious COVID virus across the country.

Despite interesting information, which enlightened the situation in Ghana, this section, presents few interest in a scientific point of view with few references and no analysis

In the fourth section, "Gauging the Implications of the Voters Registration on the Containment of the COVID-19 Pandemic", the authors draw a negative balance on this period of new registration. Because of little observance of new restrictions and regulations established to prevent the pandemic, the number of contaminated persons increased a lot during this period with many deaths.

This last section, despite interesting information, presents no analysis

The conclusion is short and poor, with no real implications and does not permit to better understand the purposes of the authors

In resume, despite an interesting subject this paper presents many weaknesses: a lack of coherence, the inexistence of real question of research, no real review of literature and rare references don't permit to authors to present clearly their purpose

I suggest to authors to ameliorate their paper, not to be so descriptive and to insert more scientific analysis and more references