

# Review of: "Government interference in election administration and lethal electoral irregularities in Africa: Evidence from Nigeria"

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This is a lucidly written article on the efficacy of electoral management institutions in Nigeria and the lack of support of the federal government in institutionalizing processes and practices to ensure fair and clean elections. The article also mentions other African and Asian countries such as India, but does not compare or contrast electoral institutions or practices in those countries. The article discusses the following themes, particularly in connection with Nigeria: democracy, strong federal government overpowering state rights, weak election machinery, outnumbered government election officials and a huge number of ad hoc officials prone to political influencing, poor funding of election management organizations, purse strings used as leverage by the federal government, even increasing electoral malpractices and violence and the lack of interest shown by the politicians to cleanse the electoral process which leads to reduced voter interest in elections which is not a good omen for democracy in Nigeria and finally people driven electoral reforms. The authors have also pointed out the failure of election observers to pull up the Nigerian government for election interference. In some cases, the courts have stepped in to declare elections null and void but as the authors emphasize, in most cases, the courts have also sided with the government of various countries in not questioning the electoral malpractices. The authors have also demonstrated statistically that fatalities due to election related violence has been on the rise in almost all regions of Nigeria over the past several election cycles. This is a very worrisome picture for those who respect democracy. The authors seem to indicate that there are many countries which have democratically elected governments, which are democracies in letter but not in spirit. This is a conundrum facing many post-colonial democracies.

The authors could have explained in better detail what they mean by voter or people driven electoral reforms. How does this even work procedurally? In terms of precedence, which African or Asian or even Western countries could provide political, legal and constitutional pointers? What is the difference in socio-political context of Nigeria and comparable countries and the strategies and constitutional-legal procedures adopted by various countries in dealing with electoral malpractices involving financial and criminal means of influencing elections?