

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.

This is potentially a useful contribution to our understanding of the challenges of conducting free and fair elections during an extreme public health emergency, such as that posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The article is a mixture of editorialising, reporting, and analysis, stepping the reader through a mostly chronological argument concerning the implementation of a new biometric registration policy and its impact on (1) incumbent support and (2) increased risk of community transmission of COVID owing to the compromise of social distance measures.

The article could be strengthened by making clear what it is actually about, which is to say, I think it is more about the transmission of COVID than the contentious politics of moving to the new registration system. Currently, it is part political commentary and part COVID risk analysis. If it does hone its focus on COVID, then more evidence is required. In its current form, the article dedicates less space to the consideration of the impact of the registration measures on COVID. There is also an underlying causal claim in the section on COVID that cannot yet be sustained by the data. The author merely sites COVID case and death totals in general and does not really address the many other factors that may have accounted for the trends that have been observed, not are any of the geospatial dimensions to COVID taken into account.

The article ends quite abruptly, leaving the reader with a partially political and partially public health commentary.

I also note the following corrections that are needed:

1. This is not a sentence, please revise: 'Especially, in a highly competitive election year under a precarious health environment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.'
2. Please revise this sentence: 'At this point, the public opinion was stacked at the postponement of the December 2020 elections to an appropriate future date.'
3. Please revise this sentence as it currently does not make sense: 'The management and containment of the COVID-19 pandemic conceded with the commencement of the compilation of the new register of voters on June 30, 2020.'