

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

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The article studies twenty years of contemporaneous Nigerian political history which encompasses seven cycle of principal Nigerian elections from 1999 to 2019. The main theme under study deals with the existence of unlawful antidemocratic political behavior intertwined with electoral malpractices rooted on the majoritarian electoral system. To elucidate the unhealthy democratic conditions, it is indicated that political parties' contenders evolve as a zero-sum do-or-die game immersed in a Darwinian ecopolitical system where the fittest survive but without taking in account any democratic consideration. Therefore, elections are perceived as a game traced by illegal institutional aided strategies. The article properly points out several corruption levels ranging from clandestine unlawful practices up to violence, bloodshed and deaths, actions that describe a tragic landscape of the current politics and institutional life. Further, it warns about the existence of corruption between the Nigerian power federal branches and its electoral system. Personal enrichment, vote trade and a predominant Nigerian political gang culture with a vision of a zero-sum game where the winner takes all, are some electoral irregularities indicated. In the main, the article contains a systemic explanation of corrupted political electoral behavior in Nigeria.

As a point of departure, it is stressed that group decisions ruled by majority rule (MR) tends to favor to large political parties and toward the preservation of the government power status quo and current Nigerian electoral system implements MR through the winner-takes-all (WTA) electoral system. However, is convenient to consider to the winner-takes-all term a district based majoritarian principle more than an electoral system. Along with valuable information and data on electoral violence, deadly bloodshed and military interventions, the section titled *Majoritarian Presidential Federalism in Nigeria* recalls that current Nigerian constitution was really drafted unilaterally and handed over in 1999 by military presence and constitutional sections numbered 133, 134 and 179 have influenced electoral malpractices. To put more evidence, the article focusses on three election related dimensions: deaths derived from elections, judicial petitions and rejections of election outcomes and voter turnout. Therefore, it is indicated that among the political party contenders those represented by political parties in government use state institutions for gaining advantages at elections, as resembling the casino proverb "the house always wins". Due to this, electoral reforms searching for a better democratic life in Nigeria in connection with the worldwide challenges are suggested. Therefore, the article adds to the contemporaneous literature about politics, culture and electoral systems in Nigeria.

A proportional representation (PR) electoral system variant is the alternative propounded to replace to the current Nigerian plurality voting system. In this regard, for the *Introduction* section is suggested to include more references about the benefits of the proportional representation voting system and the well-known plurality voting systems' drawbacks as

higher production of waste votes, gerrymandering and lower turnout, among others. Also, it is suggested to take under consideration the physics point of view of society and opinion dynamics, in particular the theory sustaining that a critical mass of people shall emerge in order to produce a social change. A few references to this topic are included at the end of this review.

It is suited to include a brief but clear statement in the *Abstract* section indicating research methods and approaches employed, that is, collection of official online information, academic references, or even personal experience in politics if the case. In respect to the end part of the Introduction section, is advised to include at a separated paragraph indicating the sections of the article and its descriptions.

It is recommended to recall that Nigerian power structure is composed by the executive (president), legislative (bicameral termed the national assembly of Nigeria [NASS] composed by the house of representatives and senators) and judicial (courts) branches. Also, Nigeria has a total of 36 federal states (each one having its respective state house of assembly [SHA]), every state partitioned into 3 senatorial districts plus one senator for the federal capital Abuja giving a total of 109 senators; also, actually at the local level there are a total of 774 Nigerian Local Government Areas (LGA). In addition, at present the Nigerian electoral system elects a president for a four-year period, 109 senators plus one senate member for Abuja (upper chamber) for a four-year period and 360 members of the house of representatives (lower chamber) for a four-year period, all elected by First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system on single-member electoral districts.

Also, for the section titled *Understanding majoritarian systems* is suited to consider that multi-member districts (MMD) become a prerequisite necessary to implement a proportional representation voting system. Nowadays South Africa elects its national assembly through a proportional representation voting system using party list selection while several other countries as Finland elects its parliament by proportional representation with an open list selection mechanism. In this regard, it is convenient to consider that basically there are three mechanisms to achieve proportional representativity referred as party list (using either open or closed list), mixed-member, and single-transferable vote (also called choice voting). Further, FPTP indicates a district-based majoritarian electoral system termed single member plurality voting system (SMP) historically employed in English spoken countries which basically employs relative majority (RM) to elect a winner.

Certainly, Nigeria faces a multiparty electoral democracy fashioned by a majoritarian electoral system. Accordingly, it denies a well-conducted representation to all minorities and losers become completely excluded from having a government or parliament representation even under close elections scenarios. This exclusion is attributed to the combination of an overwhelming predatory control of electoral institutions by executive power branch along with the winner-take-it-all electoral system in a single-member electoral district, as it is indicated in the *Understanding majoritarian system* section. For executive offices, such as mayors and governors, winner-takes-it-all type elections are unavoidable—because only one winner can be elected, but the situation is distinct for legislative elections. Therefore, it is recommended to consider that FPTP is not a majority voting system (more than a half of votes) like a two-round system which generally produces an absolute majority, rather, FPTP is a plurality electoral system meaning that the winner party have the largest part of the whole of votes. At the present, Nigeria uses a two-round system variant for presidential

elections. Also, in opposition to FPTP (single member districts and candidate centered voting), a proportional electoral system needs multiple winners, it means that more than one seat should be available for one district and the number of available seats per district could be proportional to the district population (geographical proportional representation) or alternatively winners elected per district could have been defined previously by prefixed lower/upper bounds.

The *Methodology* section includes enough reasons sustaining electoral and democratic unhealthy conditions in Nigeria. But voters' politic disinterest seems to be related with several other social factors. Consequently, it is advisable to indicate that Nigeria is the most populated African country with an approximated population of 219, 977, 961 persons reported up to March 20, 2023. Furthermore, at present Nigeria has unfavorable poverty and education indexes, even a large amount of people has no access to basic infrastructure. In respect to economy, global information media positions to Nigeria among the top five poorest countries in Africa. Thus, the aforementioned conditions provide an opportune playground for people's control and for a kind of electoral commerce because people in absence of support and under the need or desire of government incomes they negotiate it with political parties and then retribute or exchange the goods or benefits with votes or election commitments.

The number of deaths in relation with the six principal elections ranging from 1999 up to 2019 is summarized in the Figure 1 (along with the number of judicial petitions and the voter turnout percentage). The Table 1 restricts to the election of 2019 and indicates the number of deaths together with the number of disaster incidents reported according to seven ordinal direction regions of Nigeria. The caption of the Figure 1 indicates that its data were compiled from the website of the Independent National Nigerian Commission (INEC) and online media, in this regard, for the Figure 1 is convenient to include all indicated references to the online media data. Also, it is important to improve figures and table designs. In particular, a review about software for data analysis and figure design alike python and its matplotlib library or R or even sagemath is recommended. A 3D plot design for the Figure 1 seems unnecessary; instead, it is recommended a redesign of its histogram's colors in combination with its font type used for axes numbering. For the design of the Table 1 is suggested to avoid color filled background and a reallocation of its row/col division borders.

The section titled *Winner-takes-all majoritarian system and Election Litigations in Nigeria* adverts that majority electoral system driven electoral irregularities is on the basis of corruption, adding that the judicial branch handled past election results, because in general, judicial petitions in Nigeria becomes postponed by the judicial branch or even worse judicial authorities may decide elections winners according to particular interests. That is the underlying idea why the Table 2 presents the number of deaths in relation with elections, the number of judicial petitions and voter turnout percentage as the principal indicators to suggest a possible corrupted inclination of the legislative branch into Nigerian elections. However, the caption information of the Table 2 indicates that sources were INEC and online data thus it is appropriate to include all the indicated online data references in the caption of the Table 2 or in a footnote.

Lastly, it is worth to include a *Future Work* section. The actual conditions reported in relation with electoral events in Nigeria is a tragic information. Thus, it is undoubted the need of changes, of several proposals (as the alternative of a Nigerian proportional representation voting system) and constitutional reforms looking for a better social and political conditions in Nigeria.

Suggested readings

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