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QUALITY OF ELECTIONS, SATISFACTION WITH DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL TRUST IN AFRICA

by Etannibi Eo Alemika

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and civil society in Africa.**



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Quality of Elections, Satisfaction with Democracy and Political Trust in Africa

Abstract

Elections are a means for realising some of the core values of democracy, especially participation of the citizenry, which helps to ensure quality governance and accountability on the part of elected officials. The quality of elections therefore provides an indicator of the extent to which democratic governance has been consolidated. The analyses in this paper indicate a significant relationship between citizens' evaluation of the quality of their national elections and (1) satisfaction with democracy, and (2) trust in political institutions. The overall implication of the results of the analyses is that citizens' evaluation of their national elections has significant consequences for democratic consolidation in transitional societies. In this study we employ data from Afrobarometer - a public opinion survey that measures citizens' opinions on issues that we examine such as: freeness and fairness of elections; trust in political institutions (president, national parliament, electoral agency, etc.); satisfaction with democracy, and the efficacy of elections as a means of representation and accountability. The data for this study were obtained from the round 3 survey of the *Afrobarometer* conducted in 18 African countries in 2005.

INTRODUCTION

The quality of election is very important to democratic consolidation in societies transiting from dictatorship (single party or military rule) to liberal democracy. Elections provide citizens with the opportunity of (a) choosing between competing policies, policies and parties; (b) holding elected officers accountable for their official actions, and (c) translating the symbolic notion that ‘power or sovereignty resides in or belongs to the people’ into political reality. Since the wave of democratic transition started in Africa in the late 1980s, several countries have conducted rounds of elections. However, majority of them have been adjudged as “elections without choice” (Ibrahim 2003).

Citizens in Africa look toward elections as instrument of choice as well as change from the past legacy of dictatorship and impunity by the rulers. If elections fail to meet these expectations, the citizens in African countries transiting to liberal democracy are likely to be dissatisfied with democratic practice and distrust the government constituted through the poll (Alemika 2004a, Transition Monitoring Group 2003). This assumption informs the analysis in this paper, which generally aims to determine the relationship between citizens’ evaluation of the freeness and fairness of elections and their satisfaction with democracy as well as trust in political institutions. Specifically, we seek to answer the following two questions:

1. Is there a significant relationship between citizens’ evaluation of the quality (freeness and fairness) of elections and their satisfaction with democracy?
2. Is there a significant relationship between citizens’ evaluation of the quality of elections and their trust in the primary institutions of government?

Literature on Democracy and Quality of Election

Election is a means for realising some of the core values of democracy, especially the participation of the citizen in governance and the accountability of leaders. The quality of election therefore provides indicator of the extent to which democratic governance has been consolidated in society. Given the intricate relationship between election and democracy, measurement of democracy is often conflated with the measurement of election quality (Elklit and Reynolds 2005). Lindberg (2006) and Quinn (2006) observe that election in a democratic society promotes ‘political participation, competition and legitimacy’. According to Quinn (2006: 183), “democratic elections are ones in which the people in these societies can freely participate, there is competition among political parties, and the process is seen as legitimate”.

Political participation by citizens through the electoral process involves registration as voter, voting for candidates and parties, and contesting for offices. In Africa, participation is constrained by several factors, including administrative lapses and institutional weaknesses of electoral bodies, fraud and manipulation by political parties, especially the ruling party; widespread electoral violence, fraud and corruption; poverty, and religious and cultural biases against women. Similarly, competition among political parties is inhibited by the manipulation of electoral rules and processes by the government, wide inequalities in resources among parties in an environment where vote-buying, and inducement of electoral and security officials are widespread and critical to ‘electoral success’; the use of official resources, facilities and funds for political campaigns by the government and party in power. The legitimacy of the electoral process in many African countries is often undermined by these constraints on participation and competition. As a result, elections in Africa, often failed to fulfil the requirements of participation, competition and legitimacy.

Several scholars have argued that the electoral integrity tends to decline after the founding elections (Bratton 2004). Others have argued that the democratic quality of elections increases after three or more rounds of elections, even if the earlier elections were not very free and fair (Lindberg 2006). The literature on alternation of power suggests that turn-over of leaders occur when elections are free and fair election. Empirical evidence suggests that alternation increases the legitimacy of government and political institutions (Bratton 2004). There is also evidence that in many African countries, second round of election after transition tended to be characterized by downward drift of electoral integrity and political

legitimacy. The Nigeria's 2003 election was adjudged flawed by both domestic and international observers. After the election, the trust in the president and political institutions plummeted (Lewis and Alemika 2005). In contrast, alternation has buoyed political trust and satisfaction with democracy in Ghana, Senegal and Mali (Bratton 2004). The import of alternation, according to Bratton (2004: 147) is that "a peaceful vote and the subsequent transfer of power from one group to another should serve in the public mind to validate "rule by the people"". Further highlighting the significance of alternation, Bratton (2004: 156) observes as follows:

At first, transitions to multiparty democracy generate optimism, even in the absence of alternation. Thereafter, initial commitments to democracy gradually deteriorate, often in response to disappointing government performance. But democratic legitimacy can be renewed, either by improved policy performance or by replacement of an underperforming government at the poll.

Concept and Measurement of Electoral Quality

The concept of electoral quality is often used interchangeably with electoral integrity. Both concepts refer to the degree of the freeness and fairness of elections. There are several factors that impact on the quality and integrity of elections. Among these are (a) legal framework; (b) electoral system; (c) technical efficiency of electoral management authority; (d) relative autonomy of the electoral agency from interference by other organs of government and the ruling party; and (e) degree to which electoral processes, decisions, participation and outcomes are insulated from manipulation, corruption, and violence. The literature on electoral integrity has paid most attention to the last factor. This has resulted, in part, from the focus on electoral irregularities in the form of campaign financing; illicit relationships between candidates and organized groups; constituency delineation motivated by partisan political consideration, and vote buying. In addition to these electoral malfeasance that are witnessed in varying degrees in all democratic societies, there are other forms of electoral irregularities that are more common in democratizing societies in Africa. Such are violence against opposition, stuffing of ballot boxes and destruction of ballot papers, voter intimidation, alteration or forgery of election results, deployment of security agencies and control of electoral agencies to facilitate electoral victory by the incumbent government.

Discussion of electoral integrity in the transitional societies in social science literature often focus on electoral rules concerning multi-party competition as well as the degree of fraud and violence associated with polling. These are the issues that engage the attention of election observers and on the bases of which they pronounce an election as either flawed or credible. Such discussion tends to ignore the fact that election is not an activity or event that is conceived and implemented within a few days. The reports of election observers are therefore inadequate basis for evaluating the integrity of an election, if consideration is not given to the several electoral management rules and decisions spanning several phases prior to polling.

Measurement of electoral integrity should take into account the various phases of elections from electoral rules in constitutions and statutes to the declaration, verification and certification of results of polls, and the adjudication of electoral disputes or grievances. A very comprehensive approach to the measurement of election quality has been proposed by Elklit and Reynolds (2005). Their measurement model incorporated the following factors and concerns spanning the entire electoral process: legal framework, electoral management, constituency demarcation, voter education; voter registration, access to and design of ballot paper; party registration and candidate nomination; campaign regulation; polling; counting and tabulation of votes; resolving election-related complaints; verification and certification of final results, and post-election dispute resolution procedures. The integrity or quality of election can be affected by decisions at each of these phases in the electoral process. It is, however, difficult for an individual researcher to include all these factors in the study of electoral integrity. Sources of data on electoral integrity include opinions of expert, content analyses of statutes and publications, and survey of citizens'

opinions. In this study we employ data from Afrobarometer - a social scientific survey of citizens' opinions on several issues: freeness and fairness of elections; trust in political institutions (president, national parliament, electoral agency, etc.); satisfaction with democracy, and efficacy of election as means of representation and accountability.

DATA AND ANALYSIS

The data for this study were obtained from the round 3 survey of the *Afrobarometer* conducted in 18 African countries 2005. Data were collected through interviews of a representative sample of adult population (those eighteen years and older) in each of the countries based on a multi-stage, stratified, clustered sampling approach¹. Key questions in the survey that were analyzed include those on satisfaction with democracy; trust in political institutions, assessment of freeness and fairness of the immediate past national elections; opinions on whether or not election ensures that member of the national parliament reflect the views of voters, and how well election enables voters to remove from office leaders who do not what the people want. The study employed descriptive statistical analytical methods and estimates (percentages, cross-tabulations and correlations) to assess variations across the countries and relationships among the variables.

Comparative Analysis of Citizens' Perceptions of Selected Issues and Institutions

There are variations in the perceptions of citizens in the eighteen African countries on a range of issues and institutions that are analyzed in this study. Table 1 presents a comparative data on citizens' trust in political institutions and opinions on various issues. Citizens in Tanzania, Mozambique, Mali, Namibia, Lesotho, Uganda, Ghana, Senegal and South Africa exhibited very high level of trust in their presidents. What do these countries share in common that may explain the high trust repose in their presidents by citizens? The countries fall into two categories. In the first category are countries whose presidents led their country out of colonialism and apartheid to independence during the past two decades. The nations are Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa. In the second category are countries in which alternation of power had occurred during the past decade after transition to multi-party electoral polity. These are Ghana, Mali, Senegal, Tanzania and Lesotho. However, Uganda remains an exception that does not belong to either category, and the high level of trust in the country's president may be attributed to a combination of his charisma and performance. In majority of the countries where high level of trust is reposed in the president, a corresponding high level of trust in the national parliament, electoral agency, the ruling party, police and the courts were also observed. Citizens who evaluated their national election as free and fair also tended to exhibit a relatively high level of satisfaction with democracy.

¹ For description of the work, including the questionnaire and methodology of the survey, contact Afrobarometer's website: www.afrobarometer.org

Table 1: Cross-National Comparative Opinions and Trust in Political Institutions

| Counties | <i>% of respondents that trust a lot or somewhat</i> | | | | | | % registered to vote | % voted in last election | % that consider last election free and fair | % supporting democracy | % that consider it likely that country will remain democratic | % that are very satisfied or satisfied with democracy |
|--------------|--|------------|------------------|--------------|--------|--------|----------------------|--------------------------|---|------------------------|---|---|
| | President | Parliament | Electoral Agency | Ruling Party | Courts | Police | | | | | | |
| Benin | 54 | 38 | 37 | 37 | 40 | 43 | 90 | 89 | 74 | 70 | 60 | 48 |
| Botswana | 66 | 64 | 55 | 59 | 69 | 69 | 76 | 67 | 84 | 69 | 56 | 59 |
| Cape Verde | 49 | 50 | 45 | 45 | 67 | 61 | 77 | 68 | 58 | 71 | 66 | 47 |
| Ghana | 75 | 68 | 75 | 67 | 62 | 64 | 93 | 87 | 77 | 75 | 70 | 70 |
| Kenya | 58 | 44 | 53 | 48 | 55 | 37 | 73 | 64 | 79 | 75 | 60 | 51 |
| Lesotho | 79 | 62 | 67 | 73 | 74 | 67 | 78 | 71 | 79 | 51 | 49 | 40 |
| Madagascar | 66 | 46 | 48 | 49 | 42 | 56 | 83 | 76 | 77 | 42 | 47 | 25 |
| Malawi | 60 | 51 | 50 | 56 | 78 | 79 | 82 | 79 | 43 | 56 | 42 | 26 |
| Mali | 80 | 70 | 53 | 67 | 55 | 73 | 85 | 78 | 64 | 68 | 59 | 57 |
| Mozambique | 81 | 75 | 72 | 76 | 74 | 72 | 87 | 80 | 77 | 56 | 50 | 59 |
| Namibia | 80 | 70 | 56 | 64 | 66 | 64 | 81 | 79 | 77 | 57 | 63 | 69 |
| Nigeria | 24 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 36 | 16 | 74 | 67 | 30 | 66 | 57 | 25 |
| Senegal | 74 | 56 | 49 | 58 | 72 | 79 | 68 | 65 | 78 | 75 | 66 | 53 |
| South Africa | 69 | 55 | 57 | 61 | 68 | 48 | 81 | 76 | 75 | 66 | 69 | 63 |
| Tanzania | 94 | 88 | 86 | 89 | 86 | 84 | 82 | 81 | 79 | 37 | 35 | 37 |
| Uganda | 76 | 69 | 62 | 70 | 72 | 63 | 80 | 77 | 65 | 62 | 43 | 49 |
| Zambia | 39 | 40 | 33 | 32 | 49 | 31 | 66 | 60 | 29 | 64 | 44 | 26 |
| Zimbabwe | 31 | 35 | 29 | 31 | 53 | 39 | 82 | 74 | 36 | 66 | 54 | 14 |

Citizens' Evaluations of the Quality of their National Elections

Election is an important means through which political legitimation of democratic governance is promoted. This is because it offers platform for citizens' participation in governance and also gives a meaning to the ideal in democratic society that sovereign power belongs to the people. Through elections, 'the people' express their sovereign power by determining which policies are to be prioritized in society and which party and politicians are best suited to develop and implement them. However, the extent to which these political ideals are realized in democratic societies depends on the integrity of their electoral regulatory frameworks, institutions and outcomes.

Elections have often been a source of conflict in most African countries. Recourse to single party rule in many countries on the continent during the 1960s and 1970s was justified on the grounds of the need to avoid ethnic, religious and social conflicts that multi-party electoral competitions may engender. Significant majority of the citizens in thirteen of the eighteen African countries adjudged the last general elections in their nations as free and fair (table 2). The citizens' evaluations of electoral efficacy (election ensuring that parliamentarians reflect the views of electorates and that under-performing elected officials are removed) and satisfaction with democracy are lower than their assessment of the extent to which their national elections are free and fair (see and compare columns 10-13 in table 1 and also table 2).

Table 2: Citizens' Evaluations of the Quality of their National Elections

| Countries | Completely free and fair | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Free and fair, with major problems | Not free and fair | Does not understand | Don't know |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------|
| Benin | 44 | 30 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 6 |
| Botswana | 50 | 34 | 7 | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| Cape Verde | 29 | 29 | 15 | 5 | 1 | 22 |
| Ghana | 47 | 30 | 8 | 9 | 1 | 6 |
| Kenya | 39 | 40 | 11 | 4 | 1 | 6 |
| Lesotho | 61 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 10 |
| Madagascar | 57 | 19 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 9 |
| Malawi | 28 | 14 | 18 | 33 | 1 | 5 |
| Mali | 47 | 18 | 15 | 12 | 0 | 9 |
| Mozambique | 57 | 20 | 9 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| Namibia | 49 | 28 | 13 | 3 | 1 | 5 |
| Nigeria | 9 | 21 | 22 | 41 | 1 | 6 |
| Senegal | 63 | 16 | 6 | 3 | 1 | 12 |
| South Africa | 47 | 28 | 10 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Tanzania | 55 | 24 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 14 |
| Uganda | 33 | 31 | 18 | 11 | 1 | 5 |
| Zambia | 9 | 20 | 21 | 34 | 1 | 15 |
| Zimbabwe | 19 | 16 | 19 | 39 | 1 | 5 |
| <i>18 nation sample</i> | <i>40</i> | <i>25</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>1</i> | <i>9</i> |

Quality of Election and Trust in Political Institutions

Trust in political institutions represents an indirect measure of regime legitimacy which is expected to be affected by the quality of election that brought the incumbent government to power. Three political institutions are critical. These are the president as head of the state and the executive arm of government, the parliament and the electoral agency. In most democratic societies, the president and parliamentarians are elected. Public confidence in them will be largely dependent on the integrity of the election that

brought them into office. A strong relationship between quality of election and trust in political institutions is expected. These expectations are confirmed by the data presented in tables 3, 4 and 5.

Table 3: Quality of Election and Trust in President

| Extent of trust in the President | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not at all | 40.8 | 22.7 | 11.0 | 7.7 |
| Just a little | 28.2 | 29.0 | 20.2 | 11.2 |
| Somewhat | 13.9 | 23.0 | 26.8 | 18.5 |
| A lot | 17.1 | 25.4 | 42.0 | 62.6 |
| No. of respondents | 3231 | 3189 | 6094 | 9891 |
| X² = 4228, df =9, Sig. < .001. Kendall tau-b = .348; Sig. < .001 | | | | |

Table 4: Quality of Election and Trust in National Parliament

| Extent of trust in the National Assembly | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not at all | 35.1 | 22.8 | 13.8 | 11.9 |
| Just a little | 32.7 | 32.8 | 24.9 | 15.9 |
| Somewhat | 16.4 | 25.7 | 33.4 | 27.4 |
| A lot | 15.8 | 18.7 | 27.8 | 44.8 |
| No. of respondents | 3186 | 3131 | 5900 | 9443 |
| X² =, df =, Sig. < .001. | | | | |

Citizens' evaluation of the integrity of election significantly influences trust in critical political institutions (tables 3, 4, 5 and 11). The affected political officials and institutions are the president (table 3); national parliament (table 4) and the national electoral agency (table 5).

National electoral agencies are responsible for the enforcement of electoral rules and the management of electoral processes. Their independence from manipulation and competence in election management play important role in the consolidation of democracy. Efficient and credible management of elections can inspire the citizens to ascribe legitimacy to political institutions. On the other hand, fraudulent elections can erode the legitimacy of political institutions. Citizens who adjudged elections in their countries as honest exhibited more trust in the president, parliament and the national electoral agency (tables 3, 4, and 5). As a corollary to this, countries in which significant majority of citizens adjudged elections to be free and fair also recorded high levels of trust in political institutions (table 1).

Table 5: Quality of Election and Trust in National Electoral Agency

| Extent of trust in the national electoral authority | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not at all | 44.2 | 28.9 | 14.7 | 9.7 |
| Just a little | 29.6 | 32.5 | 25.5 | 16.0 |
| Somewhat | 14.7 | 22.3 | 32.7 | 27.2 |
| A lot | 11.5 | 16.3 | 27.1 | 47.2 |
| No. of respondents | 3109 | 3059 | 5730 | 9178 |
| X² = 3693, df =9, Sig. < .001. Kendall tau-b = .335; Sig. < .001 | | | | |

Quality of Election and Democratic Consolidation

Democratic consolidation requires democratic legitimation – support for and satisfaction with democracy. In addition, the practice of democracy will influence satisfaction with democratic governance as well as and the confidence of the people that democracy as a system of government will survive in their countries. The relationship between citizens’ evaluation of the quality of election and satisfaction with democracy, opinion on extent of democracy and the likelihood of sustainability of democratic governance in their countries are examined below (tables 6, 7 and 8).

Table 6: Quality of Elections and Satisfaction with Democracy

| Democratic satisfaction and dissatisfaction | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not at all satisfied | 47.9 | 24.0 | 11.1 | 10.0 |
| Not very satisfied | 33.4 | 40.2 | 28.0 | 17.4 |
| Fairly satisfied | 12.3 | 27.4 | 47.5 | 35.3 |
| Very satisfied | 6.4 | 8.3 | 13.4 | 37.3 |
| No. of respondents | 2838 | 2875 | 5527 | 8339 |
| $X^2 = 4826.1$, $df = 9$, $Sig. < .001$. Kendall’s tau-b = .369; Sig. = .001 | | | | |

The data presented in table 6 indicate that there is significant relationship between public evaluation of electoral integrity and satisfaction with democracy. Individuals who adjudged their nation’s elections as free and fair were more satisfied with democratic practice in their country than those who considered the elections as lacking integrity.

Citizens who adjudged elections in their country as free and fair also tend to consider their country as democratic. In contrast, those who had negative evaluations of their national elections tend to deny that their country is a democracy (table 7).

Table 7: Quality of Election and Opinion on Extent of Democracy in Country

| Extent of democracy in country | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not a democracy | 31.6 | 8.0 | 3.1 | 3.5 |
| A democracy with major problems | 49.3 | 61.4 | 23.9 | 17.7 |
| A democracy but with minor problems | 12.0 | 22.6 | 61.1 | 33.2 |
| A full democracy | 7.2 | 8.0 | 12.0 | 45.7 |
| No. of respondents | 2927 | 2891 | 5524 | 8241 |
| $X^2 = 8191$, $df = 9$, $Sig. < .001$. Kendall’s tau-b = .449; Sig. < .001 | | | | |

Free and fair elections can develop citizens’ confidence in democracy. In the circumstance they are more likely to consider their country as a democracy and to also hold positive opinion about the prospect of democratic consolidation and sustainability (tables 7 and 8). The citizens who evaluated their national elections as free and fair also exhibited higher optimism about the prospect of their countries remaining democratic polities. In contrast, in countries where majority of citizens consider elections to be grossly deficient in integrity (e.g. Nigeria), citizens were less optimistic about the sustainability of democratic governance. Historical experience in Africa indicate that lack of electoral integrity can hinder democratic

consolidation in the following important ways (1) absence of alternation of power, (2) reversal of multiparty electoral competitiveness by suppression of opposition; (c) military intervention and rule justified as response to political and economic crises.

Table 8: Quality of Election and Opinion on Sustainability of Democracy in Country

| Likelihood that country remains a democracy | Quality of the last national election | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Not free and fair | Free and fair with major problems | Free and fair, but with minor problems | Completely free and fair |
| Not at all likely | 18.8 | 13.1 | 7.6 | 6.5 |
| Not very likely | 31.9 | 32.0 | 19.6 | 13.3 |
| Likely | 34.7 | 38.8 | 48.1 | 43.3 |
| Very likely | 14.6 | 16.2 | 24.7 | 36.9 |
| No. of respondents | 2343 | 2519 | 5110 | 7669 |
| X² = 1461, df = 9, Sig. < .001. Kendall tau-b = .231; Sig. < .001 | | | | |

Efficacy of Elections in Africa

The primary values of elections include the enhancement of efficacious participation of citizens in governance through being registered as electorate, standing as candidate in elections, and more importantly, using their votes as instrument of control over their representatives, and the behaviors of political parties and politicians. Concretely, elections should produce parliamentarians that are representative of and responsive to the views of the majority of voters, and enable the voters remove underperforming leaders. However, where elections do not accomplish these, they cannot be described as possessing democratic qualities. In majority of the countries in the sample, citizens do not think that elections enable them ‘to remove from office leaders who do not what people want’. This is indicative of the shallowness of democratic practice on the continent, which in part also account for the relatively low level of satisfaction with democracy, compared to the support for democracy (tables 1 and 6).

The data presented in table 9 indicate that citizens are generally unable to use elections to ensure that their views are reflected in the decisions of the legislators. Thus, elections do not represent efficacious means of representation for the voters in the countries. Only in five countries (Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Mozambique and Benin) did majority (50% or more) of the respondents consider their national elections as efficacious means of representation. Of note in the table is the high proportion of respondents who gave the response category of ‘don’t know’, which further points to poor representation and disconnectedness between the voters and the legislators.

Table 9: Efficacy of Election as Means of Representation

| Countries | Election as means of ensuring that parliamentarians reflect the views of voters | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Not at all well | Not very well | Well | Very well | Don't know |
| Benin | 10 | 17 | 30 | 20 | 23 |
| Botswana | 5 | 26 | 47 | 18 | 4 |
| Cape Verde | 7 | 22 | 31 | 10 | 31 |
| Ghana | 5 | 14 | 46 | 25 | 10 |
| Kenya | 11 | 35 | 32 | 11 | 12 |
| Lesotho | 13 | 29 | 34 | 8 | 15 |
| Madagascar | 8 | 42 | 35 | 4 | 11 |
| Malawi | 39 | 24 | 13 | 17 | 7 |
| Mali | 15 | 27 | 40 | 9 | 9 |
| Mozambique | 6 | 14 | 37 | 19 | 24 |
| Namibia | 5 | 22 | 45 | 22 | 7 |
| Nigeria | 17 | 46 | 22 | 9 | 6 |
| Senegal | 16 | 21 | 30 | 11 | 23 |
| South Africa | 9 | 26 | 37 | 12 | 15 |
| Tanzania | 12 | 27 | 30 | 11 | 20 |
| Uganda | 10 | 32 | 30 | 16 | 4 |
| Zambia | 10 | 51 | 23 | 7 | 11 |
| Zimbabwe | 30 | 36 | 23 | 8 | 2 |
| <i>18 nation sample</i> | <i>12</i> | <i>29</i> | <i>33</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>13</i> |

One of the most important functions of democratic elections is that of enabling voters to hold their leaders accountable. Only in about a third of the countries (Botswana, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia and Senegal) did the majority of respondents think that elections enable them 'to remove from office leaders who do not do what the people want'. Again, a large proportion of the respondents do not know whether or not election enables them 'to remove elected leaders who do not do what voters want'.

Table 10: Efficacy of Election as Means of Accountability

| Countries | Elections enables voters to remove leaders | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| | Not at all well | Not very well | Well | Very well | Don't know |
| Benin | 11 | 18 | 29 | 17 | 24 |
| Botswana | 6 | 25 | 41 | 23 | 5 |
| Cape Verde | 8 | 16 | 32 | 17 | 26 |
| Ghana | 4 | 9 | 42 | 37 | 8 |
| Kenya | 16 | 33 | 27 | 12 | 12 |
| Lesotho | 13 | 24 | 27 | 16 | 21 |
| Madagascar | 5 | 31 | 41 | 12 | 11 |
| Malawi | 26 | 11 | 13 | 43 | 7 |
| Mali | 23 | 25 | 31 | 14 | 8 |
| Mozambique | 10 | 15 | 30 | 18 | 28 |
| Namibia | 9 | 25 | 37 | 22 | 7 |
| Nigeria | 24 | 44 | 20 | 6 | 6 |
| Senegal | 10 | 13 | 40 | 15 | 22 |
| South Africa | 14 | 32 | 29 | 10 | 15 |
| Tanzania | 17 | 24 | 28 | 9 | 21 |
| Uganda | 16 | 32 | 30 | 18 | 4 |
| Zambia | 14 | 47 | 23 | 7 | 10 |
| Zimbabwe | 32 | 33 | 24 | 9 | 2 |
| <i>18 nation sample</i> | <i>15</i> | <i>27</i> | <i>30</i> | <i>16</i> | <i>13</i> |

Against the foregoing findings, it may be asked: do votes really count as efficacious means of representation and accountability? Data presented in tables 9 and 10 suggest that from the perspectives of the citizens in majority of the countries, they do not. This seems to confirm the fear that elections in the continent are subject to manipulations by the rulers (Schedler 2002) and that multi-party elections reflect competitive authoritarianism rather than democratic elections (Levitsky and Way 2002).

Table 11 further presents spearman rank correlations between several variables. Many of the variables (e.g. trust in the president, parliament and electoral agency; satisfaction with democracy) are moderately and significantly (statistically) related to the citizens' evaluation of the quality of national elections in their countries.

Table 11: Quality of Election, Satisfaction with Democracy and Trust in Political Institutions

| | Election Quality | Trust President | Trust Parliament | Trust Election Authority | Trust Police | Satisfaction with Democracy | Assembly as Reflection of Electorates' Choices | Election facilitates removal of leaders |
|--|------------------|-----------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--|---|
| Election Quality | 1.00 | | | | | | | |
| Trust president | .398 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| Trust Parliament | .306 | .673 | 1.00 | | | | | |
| Trust Election Authority | .387 | .635 | .665 | 1.00 | | | | |
| Trust Police | .276 | .470 | .475 | .484 | 1.00 | | | |
| Satisfaction with Democracy | .420 | .435 | .381 | .388 | .265 | 1.00 | | |
| Assembly as Reflection of Electorate Choices | .214 | .239 | .267 | .254 | .187 | .274 | 1.00 | |
| Election facilitates removal of leaders | .205 | .205 | .199 | .218 | .211 | .209 | .567 | 1.00 |

Note: All the correlations are significant at .001

Factor analysis of eleven variables was undertaken². The variables are evaluation of election quality (*elefree*); (2) trust in the president (*trupres*), national parliament (*truass*), electoral agency (*truelect*), police (*trupol*), trust ruling (*trurul*) and courts (*tru-court*); citizens opinions on whether or not election enables voters' views to be represented by parliamentarians (*assreele*) and enables voters to remove their leaders who do not respond to the needs an aspirations of citizens (*elerevld*); opinion on whether or not politicians deliver development (*poldeldv*); opinions on satisfaction with democracy (*demsat*), extent of democracy (*extdem*) and prospects of the country remaining a democratic polity (*demfut*). Table 12 provides the structure matrix for the analysis which produced three factors, all the three explaining 59% of the total variance.

² Eigen value for entry was set at 1.0

Table 12: Factor Analysis of Political Trust, Election Legitimacy and Political Efficacy

| Variables | Components | | |
|-----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Trupres | .805 | .511 | .220 |
| Truass | .803 | .408 | .253 |
| Truelect | .798 | .424 | .242 |
| Trurul | .789 | .462 | .231 |
| Trupol | .739 | .220 | .232 |
| Trucourts | .730 | .179 | .187 |
| Extdem | .371 | .824 | .258 |
| Demsat | .418 | .820 | .284 |
| Elefree | .410 | .681 | .239 |
| Demfut | .206 | .673 | .203 |
| Assreeele | .259 | .257 | .855 |
| Elerevld | .230 | .182 | .840 |
| Poldevld | .114 | .173 | .421 |

Components 1, 2 and 3 are named respectively as political trust, electoral legitimacy and political efficacy. The correlation between component 1 and 2 is .415; between component 1 and 3 is .275, and between component 2 and 3 is .290. The correlation statistics show a moderate relationship between electoral legitimacy and trust in political institutions.

CONCLUSION

In the preceding analytical sections of this work, we have examined the extent to which the citizens' evaluation of the qualities of their national elections influenced satisfaction with democracy and trust in political institutions. We employed univariate and bivariate descriptive statistical methods to examine the relationships. The analyses indicate significant relationship between citizens' evaluation of the quality of their national elections and (1) satisfaction with democracy, and (2) trust in political institutions. The overall implication of the results of the analyses is that citizens' evaluation of their national elections has very significant consequences for democratic consolidation in transitional societies. The import of electoral integrity – freeness and fairness of electoral processes and credibility election outcomes derive from its effects on satisfaction with democracy, trust in political institutions and citizens' political efficacy.

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