

Electoral Governance in sub-Saharan Africa:
*Assessing the Impact of Electoral Management Bodies' Autonomy
and Capacity on Citizens' Perceptions of Election Quality*

by
Nicholas N. Kerr
Manatt Research Fellow, Michigan State University



Charles & Kathleen Manatt Fellow, 2009



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Nicholas N. Kerr

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1101 15th Street, NW

Ste. 300

Washington, D.C. 22201

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Abstract

High quality elections are central to the consolidation of democracies. Yet very little is known about the factors that influence citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of electoral contests. This paper explores the influence of electoral management bodies (EMBs) — institutions vested with the responsibility to organize, supervise, and adjudicate — on the multiple dimensions of the electoral process. It is widely accepted that the independence of electoral management bodies positively influences the quality of elections (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002). However, current literature inadequately explores how voters evaluate EMB performance and how these evaluations shape voter perceptions of election quality. In this paper, I conceptually distinguish between two dimensions of EMB performance: institutional capacity and autonomy. I argue that citizens are able to effectively evaluate the autonomy and capacity of the EMB during elections, and they use these evaluations, among other factors, to assess the overall quality of elections. However, a comprehensive understanding of the effect of EMB performance on popular perceptions of election quality should also take into account the level of popular confidence in the EMB.

Based on these propositions, I hypothesize that voters are more likely to regard elections as being free and fair when 1) they have confidence in the EMB; and, 2) the EMB displays high levels of autonomy and capacity. I test these hypotheses using a mixed-method approach that combines 1) a cross-national analysis of 18 sub-Saharan African countries using survey data from the Afrobarometer with 2) a case study of Nigeria based on post-election survey data collected by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES). This research has significant implications on the assessment and reform of EMBs in sub-Saharan Africa as well as other emerging democracies.

I. INTRODUCTION

While many throughout the world celebrated the start of 2008, citizens of Kenya were embroiled in a violent post-electoral conflict that claimed the lives of approximately 1,150 people, left hundreds of thousands displaced and rendered a beacon of democracy and development in East Africa tarnished.¹ Although there are many reasons for the flawed December 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections, major domestic and international stakeholders highlight the poor performance of the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK)² as an important factor.³ Two events highlight the decline in the ECK's ability to act as an independent and administratively efficient institution. The first was the unexpected replacement of 15 of 22 ECK commissioners in the election year, by the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki.⁴ This action taken without the consent of opposition parties significantly undermined the public legitimacy of the ECK.⁵ The second relates to the late announcement of the final election results and the declaration of the presidential winner that contradicted the constitutional and legal framework for elections. Various stakeholders confirmed that the process of tabulating the results was not transparent since political parties and observers were barred from the tabulation center. In addition, the final tally reflected gross inconsistencies and anomalies, and the ECK announcement of President Kibaki as the winner was inconsistent with the electoral law because it predated the announcement of the certified constituency results.⁶

Kenya provides one of many examples of countries throughout the world, in which the unsatisfactory performance of the electoral management body undermined the popular legitimacy in elections. Other recent examples include Mexico (2006)⁷, Nigeria (2007)⁸, and Iran (2009)⁹ in which the failures in election administration, among other factors, potentially contributed to widespread post-election protests, outbreaks of violence, and fractured popular confidence in the electoral system.

The current political science literature suggests that we can understand some of the variations in election quality by examining the institutions and rules that govern electoral contests (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002; Eisenstadt 2004; Elklit and Reynolds 2005). Recent studies have highlighted the importance of Electoral Management Body (EMBs) performance in guaranteeing procedural legitimacy of elections (Mozaffar 2002; Hartlyn *et al.* 2008). However, current literature inadequately explores how voters evaluate EMB performance and how these evaluations shape voters perceptions of election quality. In this paper, I separate the concept of EMB performance into two dimensions: institutional *capacity* and

¹ Independent Review Commission of Kenya Report [IREC], 2008

² According to the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya (Section 42A) the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) serves as the main electoral management body.

³ For detailed summaries of the performance of the ECK during the 2007 election see the following: European Union Election Observation Mission, Kenya, 27 December 2007: Final Report on the General Elections, 3rd April 2008; The Report of the Commonwealth Observer Group on the Kenya General Election: 27 December 2007; Independent Review Commission of Kenya (IREC) Report on the General Elections held in Kenya on 27 December 2007, 2008; International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance: Support to Elections in Kenya 2007: Key Lessons, April 2009.

⁴ According to the Independent Review Commission of Kenya (IREC) report, 10 commissioners were replaced in January of 2007 and 5 others were replaced in October 2007 (30). Although the replacement of 15 commissioners was in-line with the Constitution, it abrogated the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group Agreement that stated that the president would consult opposition parties before changing the ECK commissioners.

⁵ European Union Election Observation Mission: Kenya Report [EU], 2008

⁶ IREC 2008

⁷ See Eisenstadt (2007)

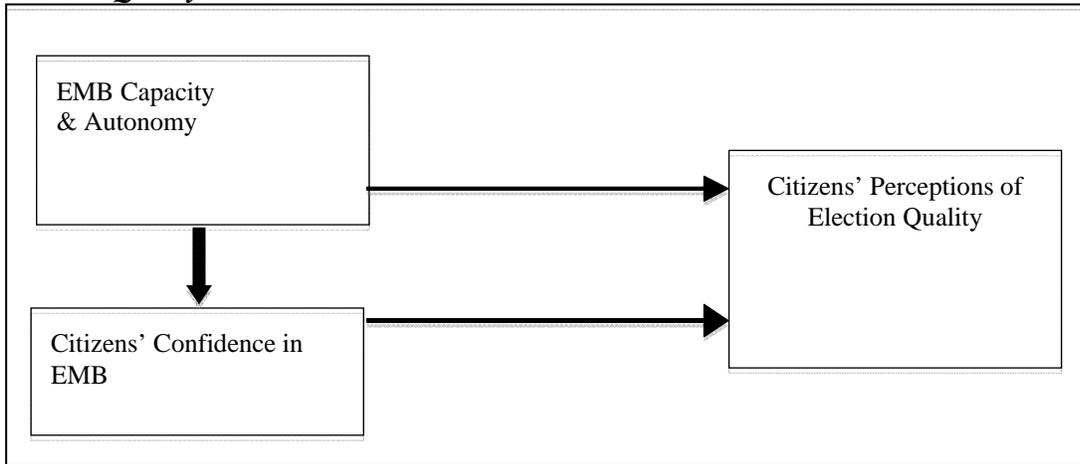
⁸ Nigeria Final Report Governorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections 14 April 2007 and Presidential and National Assembly Elections, 21 April 2007: European Union Election Observation Mission

⁹ Protests in Iran. 2009. *Economist*, June 15th.

autonomy. I conceptualize *autonomy* as the ability of the institution’s officials to make decisions independent of the influence of the executive and other state and society actors. *Capacity*, on the other hand, reflects officials’ ability to implement their preferences, or the legally mandated functions of the EMB. Relying on these two dimensions of EMB performance, I argue that citizens are able to effectively evaluate the autonomy and capacity of the EMB during elections, and they use these evaluations, among other factors, to assess the overall quality of elections. However, a comprehensive understanding of the effect of EMB performance on popular perceptions of election quality should also take into account the level of popular confidence¹⁰ in the EMB. This is vital in emerging democracies where legitimizing formal political institutions is an ongoing political process.

Based on these propositions, I hypothesize that voters are more likely to regard elections as being of a high quality (free and fair) when 1) they have confidence in the EMB; and, 2) the EMB displays high levels of autonomy and capacity. The causal relationships mentioned in the hypotheses are shown in Figure 1. First, Figure 1 indicates that EMB performance — autonomy and capacity — directly influences popular perceptions of election quality. Second, it highlights that citizens’ confidence in the EMB is also a determinant of popular perceptions of election quality. Finally, I show that EMB capacity and autonomy can have an indirect effect on election quality. In this causal pathway, EMB performance influences citizens’ confidence in the EMB and consequently shapes citizens’ perceptions of election quality.

Figure 1: Causal Pathway between EMB Performance, EMB Confidence and Citizens’ Perceptions of Election Quality



A central argument made in the paper is that citizens are, for the most part, capable of assessing the capacity and autonomy of the electoral commission through *direct* experience with the EMB and *indirect* information about the EMB. Citizens gain firsthand experience with performance of the EMB through involvement in voter registration, voter education, and polling activities. Although, direct interaction with the election administration may highlight some aspects of the overall autonomy and capacity of the EMB, it is indicative of administrative capacity and impartiality of the polling staff in the region or locale where citizens reside.

Popular evaluations of the EMB are also influenced indirectly through information obtained through the media, political parties, civic organizations, and popular discourse. These sources provide information concerning multiple aspects of the EMBs performance and represent the best way for citizens to formulate their impressions of the macro dimensions of EMB autonomy and capacity, such as the partiality of an EMB commissioner or the extent to which the EMB was able to provide all the materials

¹⁰ In this paper, I use the concepts of trust and confidence interchangeably in a manner that is similar to Easton (1975).

necessary for electoral exercise throughout the country. Because this form of information is filtered through intermediaries (such as political parties, the media, civic groups, and other citizens) citizens' evaluations are contingent upon the accuracy, reliability, and availability of these informational sources, and their willingness to seek out this type of information. Although there are multiple methods through which citizens gain information on EMB performance, their perception of the organization is influenced by its performance in the current election and the level of confidence that citizens have in the EMB. Popular confidence in the EMB is attributable to many sources including EMB performance in previous elections, and the general level of confidence in political institutions.

Consequently, I argue that citizens who have confidence in the EMB, and those who positively evaluate its performance are more likely to judge elections as being free and fair. Importantly, however, EMB performance and legitimacy are not the only predictors of perceived election quality; there are other *aggregate-level* factors — proportionality of electoral system, level of economic development, number of elections since democracy — and *individual-level* factors — partisanship, evaluations of political performance, level of political participation and engagement, experience with intimidation, violence and corruption, and social structure — that also figure prominently in citizens' evaluation of election quality.

I examine the hypothesized relationship between EMB performance and popular evaluations of election quality using a mixed-method approach that combines 1) large-n comparative analysis of sub-Saharan African countries and 2) a case study of Nigeria. The comparative analysis incorporates individual-level data from the Afrobarometer based on elections held between 2000 and 2005. The case study of Nigeria is carried out using rich survey data collected by the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) shortly after the 2007 elections, providing comprehensive insight on citizens' assessment of various aspects of the electoral process.

The overall findings are mixed. With respect to the cross-national analysis, I find Africans who have confidence in the EMB are more likely to perceive election outcomes as legitimate; however, there is no significant impact of EMB autonomy or capacity on citizens' perceptions of election quality. For Nigeria, however, the results provide strong confirmation of the importance of EMB performance and citizens' confidence in the EMB in determining perceptions of election quality. In particular, I demonstrate how Nigerians' assessment of the performance of the EMB in various aspects of an election is associated with their final evaluations of the quality of the 2007 elections. For instance, Nigerian's who felt the EMB acted as an autonomous body were more inclined to regard the elections as being free and fair.

In this paper I endeavor to make important theoretical and policy contributions. From a theoretical perspective, I seek to expand the literature on electoral governance, legitimacy of electoral institutions, and democratic consolidation in several ways. First, I advance the current electoral governance scholarship by highlighting various ways in which individual citizens formulate their opinions of election quality. Existing studies focus disproportionately on how EMBs shape elite assessments of election quality (Hartlyn et al. 2008). Taking an approach similar to Birch (2008), I argue, that macro-level institutions are crucial determinants of mass perceptions of election quality. Moreover, in the spirit of the new institutionalism approach (March and Olsen 1984), I demonstrate they ways in which citizens' perceptions of election quality are structured by the performance and the legitimacy of the EMB; thereby proving that in many instances EMBs “matter”.

Additionally, I make a crucial distinction between two components of EMB performance: institutional capacity and autonomy, and suggest that both dimensions are necessary conditions for ensuring election credibility. Previous studies have highlighted the impact of autonomy on election quality (Birch 2008;

Hartlyn et al. 2008), yet none have empirically examined the impact of EMB capacity.¹¹ My research presents a coherent theory that explains how variations in capacity and autonomy interact to affect EMB performance. I test this theory empirically in sub-Saharan Africa using objective measures of EMB capacity and autonomy, and supplement this with the study of Nigeria using a different approach based on citizens' perceptions of EMB capacity and autonomy.

Finally, this research represents, what I believe to be, the first attempt to conduct a statistically rigorous comparative analysis of electoral commissions and their effects of election quality across sub-Saharan African polities using individual-level data. Cross-national comparisons of EMBs are rare (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002). Existing studies have been carried out in Latin America (Hartlyn et al. 2008) and industrialized and emerging democracies (Birch 2008). However, studies on the effects of EMBs in sub-Saharan Africa are primarily based on case studies and small-n comparisons (Ayee 1996; Gyimah-Boadi 1999; Gazibo 2006; Elklit and Reynolds 2000). My research provides a rigorous cross-national analysis of EMBs across a wide range of democracies in sub-Saharan Africa. By focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, I provide insight as to how the neopatrimonial norms of strong presidentialism, pervasive corruption, and clientelism, shape EMB performance as well as citizens' attitudes towards electoral institutions.

This paper also provides key insights for the policy community. From a methodological standpoint, the research emphasizes the importance of incorporating citizen opinions — through systematic public opinion surveys during the election period — as a means of assessing EMB performance and developing policies to improve election administration. More specifically, the research underscores the crucial influence that the competence and impartiality of local polling workers have on citizens' impressions of electoral quality; thereby highlighting the importance of improving the training and selection of polling workers.

The remainder of the paper is organized as follows: I begin by highlighting the theoretical relevance of my research. I then outline the data and methodology used in cross-national analysis and the case study of Nigeria, followed by a discussion of the results. I conclude with theoretical and policy implications of the research.

¹¹ The incorporation of institutional capacity and autonomy into the study of EMBs is based on various studies on state capacity and state autonomy. For a more detailed treatment of the interplay between state capacity and autonomy see Geddes (1994), Bratton (1994) and van de Walle (2001).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholars regard the credibility and legitimacy of elections as an important prerequisite to the consolidation of democracy (Diamond 1999). Although literature explores the impact of electoral rules (Cox 1997) party systems (Chhibber and Nooruddin 2004), and forms of government (Haggard and McCubbins 2001) on electoral outcomes; there has been a dearth of research on the role of electoral administrative institutions (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002). More recently, however, a few scholars have emphasized electoral administration as an essential institution, especially in countries that are beset by electoral fraud and manipulation, underdeveloped political institutions, and high levels of distrust amongst political actors (Lehoucq 2002; Mozaffar and Schedler 2002; Mozaffar 2002; Elklit and Reynolds 2000).¹² This paper builds upon the emerging literature on electoral administrative institutions with an attempt to assess how the performance of these institutions influences citizens' opinions about the quality of elections.

Conceptualizing EMB Performance

Scholars attest that the central task of an EMB is to secure “procedural legitimacy” and “substantive uncertainty” of elections. That is, “political actors will accept the uncertainty of outcomes in electoral competition if they are certain that the rules for organizing competition will not pre-determine the outcomes” (Mozaffar 2002: 87). When EMBs operate effectively, they provide a mechanism for adhering to the electoral rules. It is this mechanism that structures the preferences and expectations of political actors and induces an acceptance of the final election results. Electoral credibility is tenable if EMBs are able to achieve three conflicting but essential goals associated with the application and adjudication of electoral rules: 1) administrative efficiency; 2) political neutrality; and, 3) public accountability (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002). Administrative efficiency indicates the EMB's ability to effectively coordinate all the components of the election exercise — including, registration of voters, voter education and election-day organization. Political neutrality is achieved when no political party, in the government or the opposition, has the ability to significantly bias any aspect of the election. This is best attained when a non-partisan, professional body with autonomy from the government manages the elections. Public accountability invariably reflects the level of administrative and political neutrality, yet it also captures the amount of information the public receives from the EMB; the justification the EMB provides for its actions; and, the types of enforcement carried out by the body.

In this paper, I argue that administrative efficiency, political neutrality, and political accountability are difficult to achieve, yet are more likely to be attained when the EMB has greater autonomy from the executive and dominant political and societal actors; and when the institution is endowed with the requisite financial and professional capacity to appropriately carry out its functions. On this basis, I establish the importance of institutional autonomy and institutional capacity of electoral administration.

Conceptualizing the Autonomy of Electoral Administration

The literature on electoral governance has approached the concept on EMB autonomy in various ways. One group of scholars organizes EMBs based on their spatial location within the political system or the level of control the executive exercises over electoral governance (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002; Lopez-Pintor 2000: 41). Under this approach there is an independent model, government model, and mixed model of EMBs. Independent EMBs are institutionally autonomous from the executive branch, exercise responsibility over policy implementation, manage budgets without direct interference of the executive, and are staffed by personnel outside of the executive branch. Almost two-thirds of the African countries in our sample have independent EMBs; some of which include Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, Malawi, Tanzania, and South Africa. The next form of election management is the government-model. Under this framework, the state (either at the national or local level) has complete control over the administration of elections. Elected government officials and civil service workers staff the election management body.

¹² For a detailed summary of the comparative electoral administrative scholarship see Mozaffar and Schedler (2002).

There are no examples of the government model within our sample; however, within the African continent, countries such as Algeria and Egypt have government models. The mixed model of electoral management combines features of the independent and government models. It is comprised of an independently supervised and a government controlled component. Usually the independent component is empowered to monitor and supervise elections, while the government component is responsible for the implementation of electoral rules. Countries such as Cape Verde, Senegal, and Madagascar contain EMBs that incorporate some variation of the mixed model. Studies by Mozaffar (2002) and Birch (2008) have conceptualized EMB autonomy based on their institutional location. However, this approach does not provide sufficient details into the institutional variation of the EMBs throughout sub-Saharan Africa, because most of them are categorized as independent.

Another group of studies have attempted to expand the dimensions of EMB autonomy. These studies rely on past research on bureaucratic and judicial autonomy (Hartlyn *et al.* 2008; Gazibo 2006).¹³ For, instance Hartlyn *et al.* (2008) approach the classification of EMBs by examining their formal-institutional independence. Formal independence considers the process under which EMB commissioners are appointed and the tenure of both the appointees and appointers. The rationale is that the more inclusive the appointment bodies and the longer the tenure of the appointee relative to the appointer the greater the level of EMB formal-independence. These measures of independence will form one dimension of my analysis of EMBs in sub-Saharan Africa as they highlight many of the key differences between the countries with independent EMBs.¹⁴ However, one of the main disadvantages of these measures employed by Hartlyn *et al.* is that they are more reflective of the formal constitutional, statutory, and procedural rules that guide electoral governance than actual performance of the electoral administration. Other scholars have challenged the use of formal independence measures. For instance, Gazibo (2006) states “juridical regulations offer a static and idealistic view of the relationship between EMCs (electoral management commissions) and government authorities that, especially in Africa’s neo-patrimonial regimes, might be misleading” (617).

Due to the deficiency of studies using only formal measures, other scholars have strived to develop measures of EMB autonomy that reflect the empirical or the behavioral conceptions of autonomy. In his research, Gazibo (2006) proposed a measure of EMB autonomy based on the balance of political power during the creation of the electoral management body. Essentially, EMBs that are created within a context where no specific political actor has overwhelming control over the process are more likely to achieve autonomy. Additionally, Elklit and Reynolds (2000) suggest the use of perception based measures based on expert surveys of political parties and major election stakeholders, in addition to public opinion surveys that gauge perceived legitimacy, transparency, impartiality, and quality of service delivery. According to them,

Evidently, ‘level of independence’ is a difficult variable to measure, as the necessary evidence is only rarely available for public scrutiny, but perceptions about EMB independence are in any case almost as important as the actual, but indiscernible, level of independence as perceptions might be the basis for actions and counteractions of political actors at all levels (7).

This paper is also confronted by the difficulties associated with developing reliable and comparable indicators of behavioral autonomy. Although, I was unable to develop behavioral measures of autonomy for the cross-national analysis, in our exploration of electoral administration in Nigeria we incorporate

¹³ For a detailed summary of research on bureaucratic autonomy see Hammond and Knott (1996); central bank independence see Cukierman and Webb (1995); judicial autonomy see Larkins (1996).

¹⁴ The literature has identified other ways of classifying EMBs based on the level of centralization; bureaucratization; level of specialization; delegation and regulation (Mozaffar and Schedler 2002). In subsequent analysis I will attempt to explore these additional dimensions of EMB classifications.

Elklit and Reynolds' approach by probing the effects of citizens' perceptions of autonomy (as well as capacity) of the EMB on popular perceptions of election quality.

Conceptualizing the Capacity of Electoral Administration

Unlike the extensive focus on the autonomy of electoral administration, very few scholars have theoretically or empirically addressed EMB capacity as a distinct dimension of its performance. Mozaffar and Schedler's (2002) reference to administrative efficiency and transparency of EMBs provide insight as to the ways in which the financial and organizational capacity of electoral administration determines popular support. Research by Elklit and Reynolds (2000) more explicitly theorizes and measures EMB capacity. Their research incorporates implementation theory to explore the processes and factors that impact the translation of institutional and policy choice into the implementation and outcomes of electoral administrative systems. One important aspect in this regard is the ability of "street-level bureaucrats" or, more appropriately, Election Day workers to cope with the demands of the election process. Their ability to cope is fundamentally determined by training and motivation; all linked to organizational capacity.

Other more recent scholars have explored the concept of electoral administrative capacity focusing on the role of election workers. In particular, Hall et al. (2009) explore the impact of poll worker performance on voters' confidence in elections within the United States, and find a positive correlation between voters' perceptions of poll workers capabilities and their confidence in elections. From a more policy-oriented perspective, the Electoral Management Bodies Capacity Assessment Report (2008) compares the financial, administrative, and technological capacity of six countries in southern Africa based on surveys conducted with the staff of the electoral commissions. I use these theoretical and empirical treatments of EMB capacity to guide the development of measures for the administrative capacity of electoral management bodies.

Citizens' Evaluation of EMB Capacity and Autonomy:

The first proposition I make in this paper is that citizens are, for the most part, capable of assessing the capacity and autonomy of EMBs. Other scholars have also noted citizens' proclivity to evaluate electoral management performance. Birch (2008) for instance notes, "Citizens are thus in all likelihood better placed to evaluate electoral practices than they are in other aspects of procedural fairness on which survey researchers regularly quiz them" (307). However, here, I specify two levels of interaction between citizens and the EMB: direct and indirect. Citizens gain personal experience with performance of the EMB through involvement in various stages of the election process such as voter registration, voter education as well as polling activities—queuing, casting a ballot, and observing the poll station count. It is important to note that this involvement is not restricted to polling day assessments, thereby allowing individuals to develop a perception of EMB performance even before Election Day. Overall, direct interaction with aspects of election management is most indicative of the administrative capacity and impartiality of the polling staff in a specific locality, but highlights some aspects of the overall autonomy and capacity of the EMB. In this way, firsthand experience is reliable, but limited in scope and hinders citizens' ability to truly assess the multiple dimensions of electoral administration.

Popular evaluations of the EMB are also influenced indirectly through information obtained from the media, political parties, civic organizations, and popular discourse. These sources provide information concerning multiple aspects of the EMBs performance, and potentially represent the best way for citizens to formulate their impressions of EMB autonomy, such as the partiality of an EMB commissioner or the level of government control over the commission. However, due to the fact that information is filtered through various intermediaries, citizens' evaluations are contingent upon the accuracy and reliability of these sources, access to sources of information, and finally citizens' willingness to seek out information. Consequently, in contexts where access to information is limited or the state has a monopoly over the media, we should expect that citizens are less able to formulate accurate understandings of EMB performance. Although there are multiple methods through which citizens gain information on EMB

performance, their perception of the organization is not only influenced by EMB performance, but by the level of confidence they have in the EMB.

Citizens' Confidence in Electoral Administration

The literature on diffuse support of institutions and institutional trust ideally frames the discussion of popular confidence in the EMB (Easton 1975; Baird 2001; Mishler and Rose 2001). According to Easton (1975) diffuse support of an institution arises when citizens respect the role and function of the institution even when the institution delivers outcomes that diverge from their preferences. One important component of diffuse support is institutional trust. It is defined as the extent to which citizens believe that a specific institution will promote citizens' preferences even when the authorities in control of the institutions are not being directly monitored (Easton 1975:451).

Various studies probe the determinants of citizens' trust in political institutions and find that institutional trust is a multi-dimensional concept that is dynamically influenced by a wide range of factors. Some scholars argue that trust can develop through socialization. Based on this cultural approach, citizens see it as a part of their civic duty to espouse confidence in political institutions (Putnam *et al.* 1993). A more dominant approach is to associate institutional trust with the performance of institutions (Mishler and Rose 2001). Here, citizens are more likely to trust institutions when they have a history of producing outputs that are considered favorable. Another important factor, within the context of developing democracies, is citizens' affiliation with the electoral winner (Anderson and Guillory 1997; Bratton *et al.* 2005). The winner-loser concept of institutional support is premised on the assumption that citizens who voted for the political parties representing the government are more likely to espouse confidence in political institutions, than citizens supporting oppositional parties (Bratton *et al.* 2005). Other important determinants of institutional trust include citizens' perceptions of corruption (Anderson and Tverdova 2003), attitudes towards democracy (Bratton *et al.* 2005), access to information, and levels of political sophistication.

Despite the prevalence of research on institutional trust, minimal scholarly focus has been placed on the determinants of citizen confidence in electoral administration. Moheler's (2009) research on citizen confidence in electoral institutions comes closest to doing this. According to her, in Africa a "winner-loser" dynamic as well as evaluations of election quality affects the legitimacy of electoral administrative institutions. Citizens who support the winning party and those who evaluate the elections as free and fair are more likely to have confidence in electoral institutions such as the electoral commission. I expand upon her approach by emphasizing the reverse causal effect in which citizens' evaluations of EMBs are also likely to drive their perceptions of election quality.

Citizens' Perceptions of Electoral Quality

Electoral governance literature has explored the assessment of election quality using various approaches. The first approach to gauging election quality relies on actual reports of election malpractice, fraud, violence as well as the number of prosecutions of infractions against the electoral law (Lehoucq 2003). Such studies attempt to approximate the objective quality of elections; but are quite difficult to replicate in different contexts due to varying electoral laws and judicial willingness to prosecute offenders. International and domestic election observer groups also utilize a similar approach in which they send teams of observers to monitor key stages in the elections process, such as voter registration, Election Day polling, and vote tabulation. These groups determine the extent to which the electoral administration, political parties, security officials, and voters adhere to electoral laws and procedures. Observer groups usually aggregate the reports from different observer teams to develop an overall assessment of the quality of elections.¹⁵

¹⁵ Various election-monitoring organizations have employed innovative observation methodologies to evaluate the quality of elections. One such method is the parallel vote tabulation (PVT) in which observer groups predict the final election results based

The other two approaches utilize perception-based assessments to gauge the concept of election quality that are derived from either aggregate-level or individual level surveys. Assessments using aggregate level data are most prevalent and they incorporate perspectives of opposition political parties (Lehoucq and Molina 2002) and international observers (Hartlyn *et al.* 2008) or country experts. Studies have also based their measurements of election quality on citizens' evaluations. Most notably, Birch (2008) employs cross-national individual-level surveys in 27 developed and emerging democracies that explore citizens' evaluations of electoral conduct. My research advances this underutilized, yet fruitful approach of using individual-level data. Although many scholars have leveled criticisms at the use of perception based measures, due to their inability to accurately reflect objective experience with election malpractice, I concur with the views of Mozaffar and Schedler (2002) that the perspectives of voters are far too important to exclude from evaluations of election quality.

The second important contribution of this paper is the belief that citizens' confidence in the EMB is a crucial determinant of popular perceptions of election quality. This means that citizens who trust the EMB are more likely to judge elections as being free and fair. Other studies have examined the causal effect of perceptions of election quality on trust in electoral administration (Moehler 2009) and argue that perceptions of election quality predict trust in the EMB. Although this direction of causation is intuitively appealing, I propose an alternative stance, in which citizens' perceptions of the quality of elections are also determined, in some degree, by how well they believe that the EMB has performed. There are two reasons that account for my support of the reversed causal effect. First, because EMB activities are not limited to Election Day, I posit that citizens begin filling their EMB report card long before the final results are announced.

Second, EMBs play a crucial role in determining the legitimacy of elections in many emerging democracies, especially when there has been considerable evidence of incumbent leaders attempting to manipulate or steal elections in the past. Because of this, Africans are very keen on observing how EMB performance, which is determined in part by its autonomy and capacity during the elections, ensures that elections are procedurally fair and substantively uncertain. Notably, however, trust in the EMB as well as EMB performance are not the sole predictors of perceived election quality; there are other individual-level factors and country-level factors that figure prominently in citizens' evaluation of election quality and that will be incorporated into the analysis.

on the observation of the final vote tally from a representative sample of polling stations within a country. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) has partnered with domestic observer groups in countries such as Zambia and Ghana to conduct parallel vote tabulations (PVT) during national elections.

III. CROSS NATIONAL ANALYSIS OF ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

A central thesis of this paper is that the performance of electoral management bodies has an influence on citizens' evaluation of election quality in the context of emerging democracies. Based on this general proposition, I highlight three main hypotheses:

H1: The more citizens trust the EMB the more they consider elections as being free and fair.

H2: The higher the level of EMB autonomy, the more citizens consider elections as being free and fair.

H3: The higher the level of EMB capacity, the more citizens consider the elections as being free and fair.

To evaluate these hypotheses, I conduct a comparative analysis of 18-countries in sub-Saharan Africa that had elections between 2000 and 2005.¹⁶ The decision to limit the scope of the analysis to sub-Saharan Africa is based on the following considerations. First, the Afrobarometer (AB) public opinion survey, conducted in sub-Saharan Africa provides one of the most reliable sources of cross-national individual-level data that contains questions on citizens' perceptions of election quality as well as their degree of trust in EMBs.¹⁷ Second, unlike many other regions, sub-Saharan Africa displays a high level of variation in the main independent variables (citizens' trust in EMBs and EMB capacity and autonomy). Lastly, over the last five years considerable public attention has focused on the role of EMBs in promoting electoral integrity in sub-Saharan Africa.

Data and Measures

Dependent Variable: Perceived Election Quality

The main dependent variable captures the concept of perceived quality of elections. The measure for election quality indicates the extent to which respondents regard the last election as "free or fair".¹⁸ The values for this measure range from 1 ("Not Free and Fair") to 4 ("Completely Free and Fair"). Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of respondents who rated the last election as "Completely Free or Fair" or "Moderately Free or Fair." It shows that in most countries citizens believe elections are at least moderately fair, however, in Nigeria, Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe a sizeable proportion of the population perceived the elections as illegitimate.¹⁹

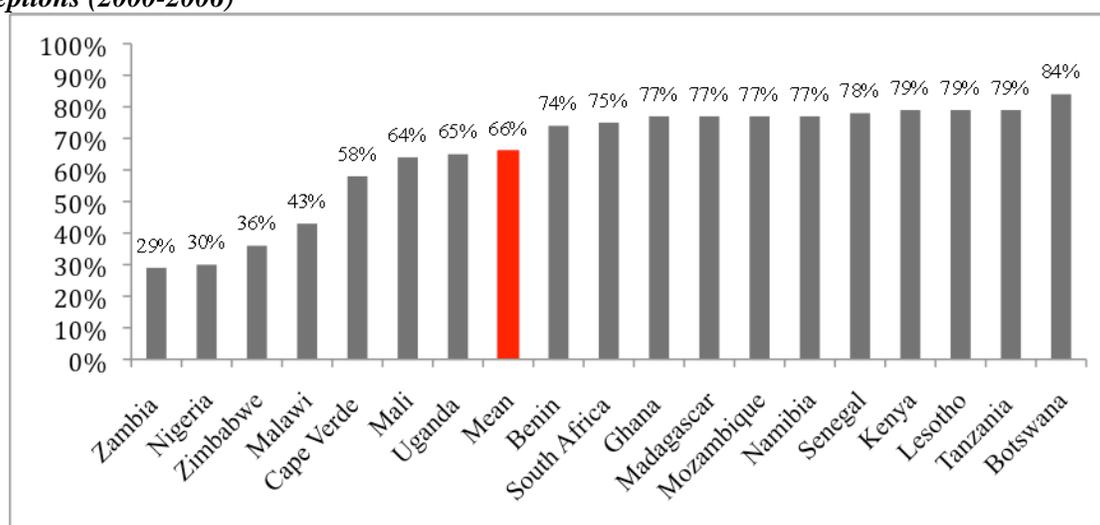
¹⁶ The eighteen countries include: Benin, Botswana, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The sample is limited to 18 countries, as these are the countries covered by the Afrobarometer (AB) survey data (Round 3).

¹⁷ The AB is a cross-national public opinion survey that measures individual attitudes and behaviors in response to a wide-range of topics such as democracy, market reform and civil society AB employs national probability surveys obtained using stratified, multi-stage, area probability samples. With sample sizes between 1,200 and 2,400 the survey yields margin of errors between 2.5 and 2 percent at the 95% confidence interval. For further information visit: www.afrobarometer.org. Round 3 of the Afrobarometer survey was carried out between 2005-2006.

¹⁸ Various studies have utilized this measure of election quality: Alemika (2007:1) explores the relationship between perceptions of election inequality and trust in electoral institutions; she however switches the causal direction to see how the credibility of last elections affects credibility in the electoral institutions. The election quality measure is also utilized in Moehler (2009) study of the "winners-losers gap," once again the measure was used as an independent variable to gauge the effect on perceived institutional legitimacy.

¹⁹ To ensure the temporal precedence of the causal relationship, I ensure that the date of survey (between 2005 and 2006 for each country) comes after the election period in which the measurements of the EMB and other independent variables are based.

Figure 2: Percentage of “Completely Free and Fair” and “Moderately Free and Fair” Election Perceptions (2000-2006)

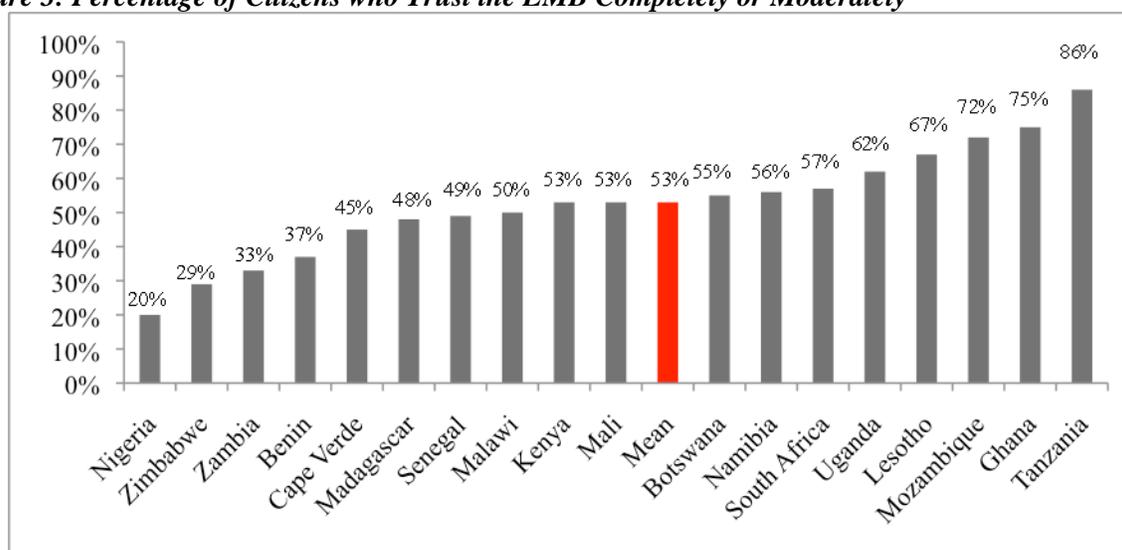


Source: Afrobarometer R3 (2005-2006)

Independent Variables: Trust in EMB

The first independent variable measures a citizen’s trust in EMBs and is derived from a question in the AB that asks, “How much do you trust each of the following: The Independent National Electoral Commission.” The variable is coded on a four point scale from 1: “Not at All” to 4: “A lot”. Figure 3 indicates the percentage of citizens who trust the EMB a lot or somewhat. As shown in Figure 3, there is significant variation in the legitimacy of the EMB across the 18 countries. In 10 of these countries over 50% of citizens support the EMBs: the highest being Tanzania (86%), Ghana (75%), and Mozambique (72%). Of the eight countries with less than 50 percent of respondents supporting the EMB, Nigeria (20%) and Zimbabwe (29%) have the lowest levels of legitimacy. These findings prompt us to examine the degree to which heterogeneity in popular confidence in EMBs is attributable to their autonomy and capacity.

Figure 3: Percentage of Citizens who Trust the EMB Completely or Moderately



Source: Afrobarometer R3 (2005-2006)

Independent Variables: EMB Autonomy

I argue that two country-level variables: EMB capacity and autonomy influence individuals' evaluation of election quality. I begin by discussing the conceptualization and measurement of autonomy. EMB autonomy is conceptualized as the ability of the institution to make decisions independent of the control of the executive and other state and society actors. I suggest that the more autonomous the EMB the lower the possibility of manipulation from the incumbent government, political parties, and societal interests. The measure for autonomy incorporates three indicators: the appointment process of EMB commissioners, the tenure of EMB commissioners and the financial independence of the EMB. The individual scores for each dimension of EMB autonomy are shown in Table 1 (detailed description of the coding criteria are included in the Appendix C).

The first indicator of EMB autonomy is the appointment process score, which captures the inclusiveness of the appointment process of EMB commissioners. Various studies indicate that EMB autonomy is positively associated with the number of institutions and political actors that are involved in the appointing of EMB commissioners. Of the countries included with the AB survey, there are important disparities in the inclusiveness of the appointment process. For instance, in South Africa the president appoints EMB commissioners from recommended nominations submitted by a panel consisting of civic and political representatives (such as the President of the Constitutional Court and representatives of the Human Rights Commission, the Commission on Gender Equality, and the Public Prosecutor) (*South Africa Electoral Commission Act 1996*). When compared with Kenya, the president has complete authority over the appointment of EMB commissioners (*Kenya Electoral Act 1997*). The data collected on each of the 18 countries is derived from a variety of sources such as country constitutions, electoral codes, EMB procedural regulations, scholarly research, and election observer reports that detail formal rules governing electoral administration. Our method of coding the appointment process score is influenced by existing approaches used to measure the appointments to EMBs (Hartlyn *et al.* 2008), bureaucratic agencies (Lewis 2003), and central banks (Cukierman *et al.* 1992). As shown in Table 1 the appointment score ranges from 1 to 10, with 10 indicating a greater number of institutions or political actors included within the appointment process (see Appendix D for a description of the coding).

Table 1: Autonomy Measures: Appointment, Tenure and Financial

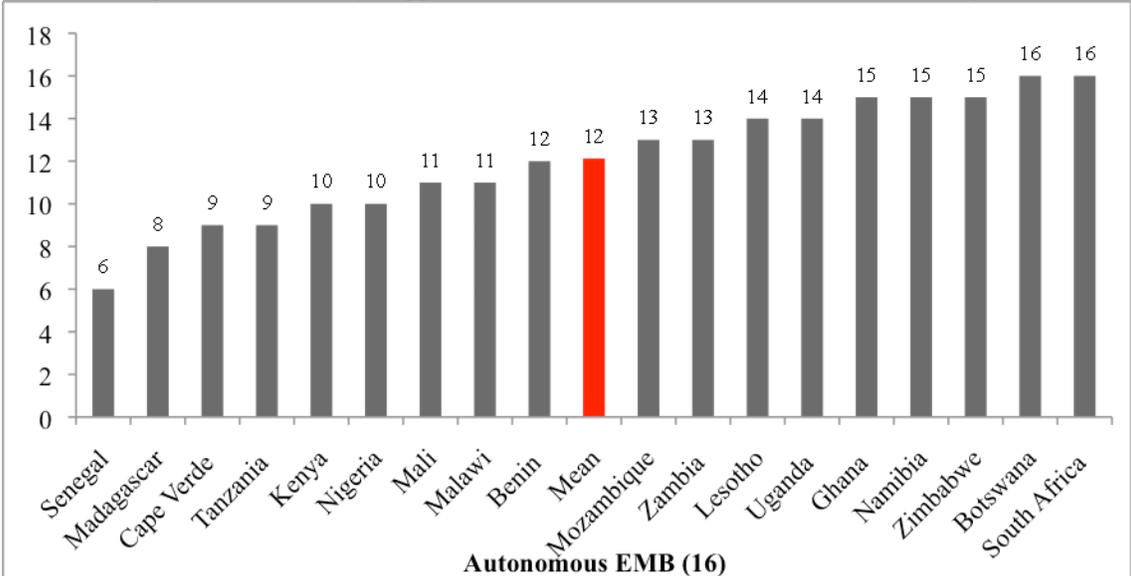
Country	Appointment	Tenure	Financial
Benin	9	1	2
Botswana	10	3	3
Cape Verde	2	4	3
Ghana	6	6	3
Kenya	5	2	3
Lesotho	7	5	2
Madagascar	3	3	2
Malawi	8	2	1
Mali	3	6	2
Mozambique	9	2	2
Namibia	8	4	3
Nigeria	6	2	2
Senegal	3	2	1
South Africa	9	4	3
Tanzania	5	2	2
Uganda	6	5	3
Zambia	6	4	3
Zimbabwe	8	4	3

The second indicator of EMB autonomy is the tenure of the EMB commissioners. EMB commissioners are more inclined to act impartially when they have some security of tenure. We address the concept of tenure by examining the number of years EMB commissioners are appointed to their positions as well as the possibility of their terms being renewed. I expect that in countries in which the tenure of the EMB commissioners is longer than the tenure of the executive or members of the legislature, and commissioners have the potential of being reappointed to their post, EMB commissioners should have a higher level of autonomy. The tenure score ranges from 1-6 indicating both the total years in the EMB commissioners’ term and the potential for renewal. Table 1 indicates that commissioners in Ghana have the highest tenure score. This is because commissioners in Ghana are appointed for life and accorded the same privileges as justices of the Superior Courts (*Ghana Constitution 1992 Article 44*). On the other hand, in Benin EMB commissioners only serve for the electoral period and as a result have a low tenure score (see Appendix D for the description of coding).

The third indicator of EMB autonomy relates to the institutions’ financing. EMB financial autonomy gauges the level of control the EMB has over its operational budget. In this case, the fewer the number of state and government agencies that are involved in the appropriations of EMB funding the greater the level of financial independence. That is, EMBs that have a separate line in the national budget that is determined by parliament is more financially autonomous than an EMB that relies on the finance ministry or the interior department to decide on the yearly budgetary allocations. The indicator of financial autonomy ranges from 1 to 3 based on the increasing level of autonomy in the allocation of EMB financing (see Appendix D for the description of coding).

I combine the scores based on the appointment process, length of tenure, and financial autonomy to construct an additive index of EMB autonomy. The EMB autonomy index ranges from 6 in Senegal to 16 in South Africa and Botswana, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Index of EMB Autonomy: Appointment Score, Tenure, Financial Autonomy



Source: Country Constitutions and Electoral Codes

Independent Variables: EMB Capacity

The capacity of electoral management bodies captures the organization's ability to implement its decisions, or its constitutionally mandated functions. There are many ways to operationalize EMB capacity that explores its administrative and financial wherewithal to implement policy. However, due to the availability of data, I operationalize capacity of the EMB with a measure of its level of professionalism.²⁰ The EMB professional score is the main indicator of EMB autonomy and measures the degree to which members of the EMB are either partisan or professional. EMBs are considered more effective when they are comprised of professionals who are assumed to be more capable of effectively managing the various functions of the EMB. Moreover, the score highlights the extent to which commissioners are expected to have acquired certain competencies related to the management of elections before attaining office. The values for the professional score range from 1 "mixed membership: partisan and professional" to 3 "professional with formal qualifications" (see Appendix D for the description of coding).

Control Variables: Individual-level

Although we expect that the autonomy and capacity of EMBs influence popular perceptions of election quality, there are other factors that potentially mediate the causal pathway I control for. I start with individual-level variables derived from AB data. I divide these variables into the following categories: electoral influences, performance evaluations, electoral participation, and social structure.

The first category, electoral influences, includes a measure for respondents' partisan affiliation with the incumbent government. I anticipate that respondents who feel close to the incumbent should have higher evaluation of election quality (Bratton *et al.*, 2005; Moehler 2009). The second category relating to government performance includes variables that gauge citizens' satisfaction towards democracy, evaluations of government performance in various policy areas, citizens' economic evaluations, their experience with and perceptions of political corruption, and extent of political freedoms. Existing studies demonstrate that evaluations of election quality are negatively associated with corruption perceptions (Hartlyn *et al.*, 2008; Birch 2008), while citizens who are satisfied with democracy and those who have positive evaluations of government performance and levels of political freedom are more likely to positively evaluate the quality of elections.

The third category focuses on citizens' electoral participation and engagement which includes whether citizens voted in the elections or were registered to vote. It also integrates a measure of their political sophistication, exposure to mass information, and their experience with vote-buying. Although I do not provide concrete expectations, the extant literature indicates that citizens who are more cognitively engaged should make more accurate judgments about the performance of EMB and the quality of elections (Zaller 1992). Moreover, the effect of vote buying is ambiguous; in some instances citizens who personally experience vote buying may view it as an illicit method of influencing vote choice, while others may see it as compensation for electoral participation. Finally, I include controls for social structure based on age, education, gender and whether respondents are reside in urban or rural areas.

²⁰ In carrying out this research I explored various measures related to the financial and administrative capacity. With respect to financial capacity, I constructed an indicator which gauges the amount of the EMB budget (from both local and international funding sources) devoted to the core costs of election management for two years preceding the election, such as voter registration, ballot printing and distribution, counting and result verification. I standardize each country's budget by controlling for the size of the population and the purchasing power of each country's currency (purchasing power parity). In terms of administrative capacity, I constructed measures that tap into the professional capacity of the EMB secretariat based on whether the EMB is permanent or temporary, the professional qualifications for EMB administrative staff as well as the level of training they experience. I also examined administrative capacity of the poll workers by examining the recruiting requirements as well as their level of training. Despite these advances, I was unable to find complete data for the 18 countries within the survey. In further iterations of the paper, greater attention will be given to developing these measures for the countries included within the survey.

Control Variables: Country-level

I also include country-level controls. I begin with measures for the number of elections since multi-party democracy with the expectation that election quality increases with experience with democracy (Lindberg 2006). I also differentiate between majoritarian and proportional electoral systems based on the notion that proportional elections positively impacts perception of election quality because of their ability to incorporate minority parties (Birch 2008). I control for economic differences by including the Gross National Product (GNP) per capita as a measure of socio-economic development: I expect a positive association between economic development and perceived election quality.

Methodology

To estimate the influence of EMB performance on popular trust in the EMB and perceptions of election quality, I employ a multi-level statistical analysis (Steenbergen and Jones, 2002).²¹ The multi-level method is an appropriate approach for research that incorporates data at different levels of aggregation.²² As highlighted above, this study utilizes individual-level data from the AB in conjunction with country-level data from a combination of sources.

Results

As a first step, I examine the individual-level determinants of the popular perceptions of election quality using OLS regression. The results confirm many of the general findings in the literature. As highlighted in Table 2, trust in the EMB is highly correlated with election quality, in that Africans who trust the EMB are also more likely to have positive evaluations about the quality of elections. This provides robust support for Hypothesis 1. The findings concerning the control variables also confirm many of the hypothesized results. Africans who are affiliated with the ruling government have more positive evaluations of elections; the same is true for Africans who are satisfied with the way democracy works within their country and those who positively evaluate the performance of the government. As dictated in the literature, corruption perceptions negatively impact citizens' opinions about elections fairness, yet there is no significant effect of citizens with experience with corruption. Interestingly, the results indicate that Africans who have experienced vote buying tend to be less approving of the election quality.

In terms of electoral participation, the results highlight those citizens who were registered to vote as well as those who casted ballots were more likely to perceive the elections as being acceptable. However, citizens' level of political interests and their exposure to the media seem to negatively affect their evaluations of election quality. In other words, those citizens who are more politically adept and have greater access to information are more likely to be skeptical of the overall quality of elections. Lastly, of the main social structure variables, men and more educated citizens are inclined to negatively judge election quality.

Given that the results of the individual level analysis reveal certain significant predictors of popular perceptions of election quality, our next step is to examine the causal effects of our main country-level variables: EMB capacity and EMB autonomy and country-level controls using a multi-level modeling. As a preliminary step, I run an ANOVA model separating variance of the dependent variable into the individual and country-level components. The results indicate that 21% of the variation in perceptions in election quality is attributable to differences across countries and this difference is statistically significant.

²¹ More specifically I utilize the Hierarchical Linear Model (HLM) to carryout the multi-level analysis (Raudenbush and Bryk 2002).

²² There are three approaches to dealing with multi-level data: 1) dummy variable models 2) interactive model and, 3) multi-level modeling. However, multi-level modeling is often considered the best alternative as it addresses the theoretical and statistical limitations of the two former models. Additionally, there are two statistical problems that can be overcome by using a multi-level model. First, the potential problem of clustering in which observations within countries might be more similar than those between countries. Second, multi-level model addresses the potential problem of underestimating the standard errors and committing type I errors (rejecting the null hypothesis).

Table 2: Individual-level Determinants of Perceived Election Quality and Confidence in the EMB

	Unstand. Coefficients [Standard errors]
Trust in Electoral Management Body	.134*** [.006]
Electoral Influences	
Partisan affiliation incumbent	.129*** [.012]
Performance Evaluations	
Satisfaction with democracy	.187*** [.006]
Index of government performance	.055*** [.008]
Index of corruption perceptions	-.075* [.006]
Index of corruption experience	-.017 [.009]
Retrospective household economic evaluations	.007 [.010]
Retrospective national economic evaluations	.004 [.009]
Prospective household economic evaluations	.019** [.008]
Prospective national economic evaluations	-.006 [.008]
Index of political freedom	.144*** [.008]
Participation and Engagement	
Voted in last election	.129*** [.024]
Registered to vote in last election	-.038 [.039]
Index of media exposure	-.022*** [.006]
Index of political sophistication	-.009** [.005]
Vote buying experience	-.018*** [.005]
Social Structure	
Gender (Male)	-.021** .016
Respondent is an urban resident	-.006 .017
Age of respondent	0.00 .001
Education of respondent	-.012*** .005
(Constant)	1.548*** [.055]
R-squared	.333
Adjusted R-squared	.332
N	25021

All tests are two tailed. *** p<0.01 **p<0.05 *p<0.1
Note: Included country dummy variables (reference: Benin): Only the coefficient for Kenya was not statistically significant
Missing values were imputed using a multiple imputation procedure and I found no significant differences in the results of the key outcome variables or the overall fit of the model.

Our next step is to see the extent to which our macro-level measures of EMB performance can account for the between country variation using a random-intercept model highlighted in Table 3. In Model 1, I test the contextual effects of EMB autonomy on citizens' perceptions of election quality. First, the results show all individual-level variables maintain the similar sign and significance as found in the individual analysis (Table 2). Contrary to expectations, the results indicate that countries with high-levels of autonomy, citizens are more likely to espouse low perceptions of election quality; however the result is not statistically significant. I then include the measure of EMB capacity as shown in Model 2. Here the results indicate that countries with high levels of EMB capacity, citizens are more likely to perceive elections as being free and fair. This finding is consistent with our prior expectations, but the coefficient for the measure is statistically insignificant. Model 3 incorporates the aggregate controls as well as both measures of capacity and autonomy. The number of elections since multi-party democracy has a positive coefficient, but an insignificant effect on perceptions of election quality. Moreover, the coefficients for proportionality of elections and economic development are both negative and insignificant.

Table 3: Multi-level Analysis of the Determinants of Citizens Perceptions of Election Quality

	Model 1 Unstand. Coefficients [Standard errors]	Model 2 Unstand. Coefficients [Standard errors]	Model 2 Unstand. Coefficients [Standard errors]
Trust in Electoral Management Body	.136*** [.018]	.136*** [.006]	.136*** [.006]
Electoral Influences			
Partisan affiliation incumbent	.063*** [.017]	.63*** [.018]	.063*** [.005]
Performance Evaluations			
Satisfaction with democracy	.178*** [.021]	.178*** [.021]	.178*** [.006]
Index of government performance	.042*** [.011]	.042*** [.011]	.042*** [.006]
Index of corruption perceptions	-.075*** [.014]	-.075*** [.014]	-.076*** [.006]
Index of Political Freedom	.119** [.015]	.119** [.015]	.119*** [.006]
Participation and Engagement			
Voted in last election	.129*** [.024]	.129*** [.03]	.125 [.023]
Registered to vote in last election	-.038 [.039]	-.042 [.027]	-.042* [.025]
Index of media exposure	-.022** [.006]	-.018 [.006]	-.019** [.006]
Index of political sophistication	-.009** [.005]	-.012** [.005]	-.013** [.005]
Vote buying experience	-.020* [.011]	-.020* [.011]	-.02*** [.005]
Social Structure			
Gender (Male)	-.021* .012	-.022* .012	-.022** [.01]
Education of Respondent	-.021** .01	-.021** .01	-.022*** [.007]

Country Level			
Index of EMB autonomy	-.101 [.087]		-.138 [.339]
EMB capacity		.085 [.104]	-.0338 [.099]
Number of elections since democracy			0.109 [0.130]
Proportionality of electoral system			-.163 [.119]
Economic development (GNIPP)			-0.554 [0.321]
Variance Component	.213***	.217***	.201***
N	25738	25738	25378

All tests are two tailed. *** p<0.01 **p<0.05 *p<0.1
Missing values were imputed using a multiple imputation procedure and I found no significant differences in the results of the key outcome variables or the overall fit of the model.

In sum, our analysis of 18 sub-Saharan African countries indicates Africans' trust in EMBs is positively associated with their evaluations of election quality; however we find our two macro-level determinants of EMB performance — capacity and autonomy — do not have a statistically significant impact on citizens' perceptions of election quality. There are two potential explanations for the null findings with regards to macro performance measures. First, the indicators used to measure EMB capacity and autonomy are derived from formal-legal rules that are static and in many instances unreflective of the actual performance of the EMB during election periods. Formal rules take significant time to become institutionalized and for many of the countries within the sample, EMBs had recently undergone significant reforms to their legal framework. Zimbabwe provides an excellent example of this. The legal framework establishing the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission was instituted in 2004, less than six months before the 2005 Parliamentary elections (Wall 2006).

A second explanation as to why citizens' perceptions of election quality were not affected by the macro-level performance indicators is due to the fact that citizens are more likely to base their evaluations of institutions on their personal interaction with them (Mishler and Rose 2001). I expect that within each country the performance of the EMBs vary significantly and citizens would develop heterogeneous evaluations on their experience of the EMB's performance. The resulting variation in citizens evaluations of performance may not be directly associated with aggregate measures of EMB capacity and autonomy. Nonetheless, the positive association between citizens' trust in the EMB and their perceptions of election quality prove that EMB evaluations have an important influence in shaping citizens attitudes. But the AB survey does not allow us to probe beyond citizens' trust in the EMB to examine directly Africans' experience with the EMB and how this experience affects their evaluations of elections. In the next section of the paper, I reexamine the causal relationship between EMB performance and perceptions of election quality using individual-level data that explores multiple aspects of citizens' experience with the EMB.

IV. ANALYSIS OF EMB IN NIGERIA (2007)

The largely cross-national aspect of the research prompts a more focused analysis of EMBs in individual countries. Such an analysis provides an interpretive understanding of the causal mechanisms that explain the influence of EMB performance on popular evaluations of election quality. The use of a case study is especially important, as the findings of the cross-national analysis reveal no significant impact of the macro-level institutional factors (EMB capacity and autonomy) on Africans' perceptions of election quality; but a strong association between Africans' trust in EMBs and their perceptions of election quality. The case study of Nigeria provides a different method of assessing the causal relationship between EMB performances and election quality that relies on the micro-level interaction between citizens' personal evaluation of EMB capacity and autonomy and their perceptions of election quality.

Case Selection

The decision to select Nigeria as the focus on the case study was informed by the following factors. First, and perhaps most important is the availability of survey data collected immediately following the 2007 Presidential and National Assembly elections on April 27. The survey closely examines Nigerians' assessments of EMB performance through questions gauging personal experience with and knowledge of crucial stages in the electoral process such as voter registration, voter education programs, as well as polling activities: standing in line, casting a ballot, and witnessing counting and tabulation. By incorporating this data, I can more accurately investigate the causal pathway between EMB performance and citizens' evaluations of election quality by examining the perceived levels of EMB capacity and autonomy, while controlling for relevant social and political factors shown to structure citizen attitudes towards the quality of elections.

Second, Nigeria represents an extreme case of an EMB when compared to the other 17 countries in the AB survey (as demonstrated in the cross-national analysis). The Independent Nigeria Electoral Commission (INEC) — Nigeria's federal election management body — has been characterized by very low levels of autonomy from political manipulation, administrative efficiency, and public confidence.²³ Additionally, the most recent elections in 2003 and 2007 have been marred by allegations of electoral fraud, political manipulation, and incidents of electoral violence. Although, Nigeria's electoral record may be unrepresentative of the countries in the AB sample, they may be more indicative of the challenges facing other emerging democracies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lastly, similar to countries like Zimbabwe and Kenya, Nigeria is currently undergoing a comprehensive process of reforming its electoral system that involves a wide array of state and society actors.²⁴ As a result, examining the ways in which institutional features of electoral administration shape popular confidence has important implications on the types of reforms that should be implemented. Moreover, with upcoming elections expected in 2011, it will be intriguing to understand how different reform proposals can help reduce the type of post-election conflict, electoral fraud, and intimidation that have become unwelcomed, yet pervasive features of elections in Nigeria.

²³ For a detailed summary of INEC performance during previous elections see the following: Report of the Electoral Reform Committee, December 2008; Nigeria Final Report Governorial and State Houses of Assembly Elections 14 April 2007 and Presidential and National Assembly Elections, 21 April 2007: European Union Election Observation Mission; Statement Of The National Democratic Institute (NDI) International Election Observer Delegation To Nigeria's April 21 Presidential And National Assembly Elections Abuja, April 23, 2007; and, Federal Republic of Nigeria State and National Elections April 14 and 21, 2007 Election Observation Mission Final Report

²⁴ For a detailed summary of the electoral reform process in Nigeria see: Report of the Electoral Reform Committee, December 2008; and, Electoral Reform: Ten Critical Points of Order. National Democratic Institute, 2008.

Brief background on Election Administration in Nigeria

Since the return of civilian rule in 1999, Nigerians have participated in democratic elections in 2003 and 2007. On both occasions the National Assembly, Presidential, and Gubernatorial elections were deeply flawed and fell short of regional and international standards for democratic elections (Suberu 2007; Rawlence and Albin-Lackey 2007). The elections were poorly administered and witnessed widespread voting irregularities, electoral fraud along with voter intimidation, and violence. Local and international observers identified poor performance of the Independent Nigerian Electoral Commission (INEC) as an important cause of the problematic 2003 and 2007 elections (European Union Election Observation Mission: Nigeria Report, [EU] 2007). INEC's inability to secure a free and fair election in 2007 was manifested in its lack of independence from executive control, low levels of transparency and openness in its operations, and ineffective election administration—witnessed in the late voter and political party registration, inadequate provision of polling materials, and insufficient training and partial selection of polling staff (EU 2007).

Electoral Framework

One way of understanding the INEC's inability to secure credible elections is by evaluating the constitutional and legal frameworks on which the body has been established. The Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution (1999) and the Federal Republic of Nigeria National Assembly Electoral Act of 2006 govern the legislative framework for elections in Nigeria. INEC is granted the powers to “organize the elections to the offices of the President and Vice-President, the Governor and Deputy Governor, and to the membership of the Senate and the House of Representatives and the House of Assembly in each State of the Federation.” INEC also has responsibility to register voters and political parties, and monitor party financing and political campaigns (*Federal Republic of Nigeria Constitution 1999*).

INEC is comprised of a chair and 12 other members who are appointed by the President, in consultation with the Council of State and approval of the Senate. The Electoral Act (2006) requires that the chair and the 12 members be over 50 and 45 respectively: all possessing “unquestionable integrity”. Additionally, each state has its own electoral commission headed by the Resident Electoral Commissioner who is also appointed by the president. The appointment process for commissioners at both the federal and state level gives the first indication of the deficiency in the INEC formal-institutional independence: the executive has complete control over the selection of commissioners and the Senate acts only as a rubber stamp to the president's appointment. This has direct implications on INEC's legitimacy and its ability to impartially organize elections, as the commission has been largely perceived as being biased in favor of the incumbent government (Report of the Electoral Reform Committee [ERC], December 2008).

Another source of concern has been a lack of independence in the funding of INEC. Although the Electoral Act of 2006 establishes the INEC Fund to increase the institutions' financial autonomy, the timely and appropriate allocation of funds to the commission in the 2007 elections was heavily dependent on the discretion of the executive. This dependence significantly contributed to the administrative failure of the commission in the 2007 election as there were countless instances in which the INEC failed to receive funding for crucial aspects of the election process on time (EU 2007; NDI 2007; ERC 2008).

Lastly, INEC has also experienced challenges in the recruitment and training election-day poll workers. The lack of proper training was evident with workers' limited awareness of voting procedures and electoral law, polling irregularities associated with the opening of polling stations, the sealing of ballot boxes, and inaccurate tabulation of polling station results, amongst others. International observers indicate that low levels of training represented another factor that helped to undermine popular confidence in INEC (EU 2007).

Hypotheses

In assessing the impact of EMB autonomy and capacity on citizens' perceptions of election quality in Nigeria, I utilize hypotheses similar to those derived in the cross-national analysis. The most important change has to do with the level of measurement of the main indicators of EMB capacity and EMB autonomy. In our assessment of the performance of INEC, we consider citizens' perceptions of the level of autonomy and capacity (Hypotheses 5 a-b). The hypotheses are as follows:

H4: The more Nigerians trust INEC the more likely they are to have high perceptions of election quality.

H5_a: The more Nigerians perceive INEC as autonomous, the more likely they are to have high perceptions of election quality.

H5_b: The more Nigerians perceive INEC as having sufficient capacity, the more likely they are to have high perceptions of election quality.

Data and Measures

The data used in this analysis were collected on behalf of the International Foundation of Electoral Systems (IFES) in Nigeria between May 3 and 10, 2007, based on a representative sample of 2416 Nigerians.²⁵

Dependent Variable: Perceptions of Election Quality

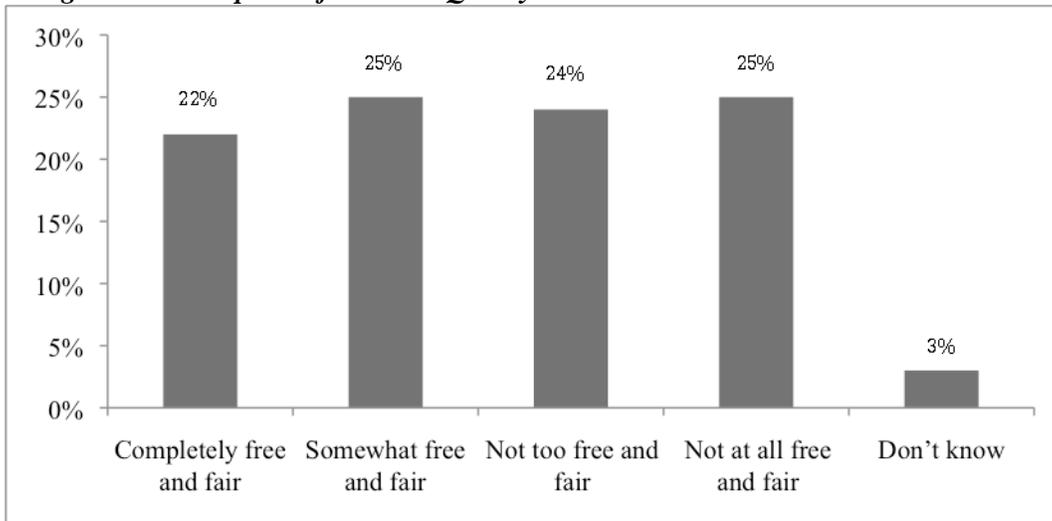
To measure Nigerians' evaluations of the 2007 election, I construct a composite measure based on five questions that survey various dimensions of election quality (see Appendix F for coding criteria). Incorporating responses to the five questions increases the reliability of the election quality measure. The first question assesses the freeness and fairness of the 2007 presidential and parliamentary elections. I also include two questions that gauge citizens' confidence that the presidential and parliamentary results accurately reflected the way people voted. The remaining questions in the index evaluate whether the elections were clean (rigged), peaceful (violent), and orderly (chaotic). The index ranges from 1 to 6 with increasing levels of election quality.²⁶ To give some indication of Nigerians' evaluation of election quality, I highlight the responses to one of the questions in the index: "How free and fair were the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections?" Nigerians' were equally split in their assessments as approximately half of the respondents viewed the elections as completely or somewhat free and fair.

²⁵ Interviews were carried-out in all 36 Nigerian states and the federal capital territory. The sampling error for the post election survey is plus or minus 2 percentage points.

²⁶ I calculated the estimate of reliability (Cronbach's alpha= 0.856). The reliability estimate explains the proportion of variance in the observed scale that is consistent with the included variables.

I also performed a factor analysis (principal components analysis) that seeks to define the latent variables that most effectively predict the variables included within a composite measure. The results of the analysis shows that the six variables included in the index of election quality share one common underlying dimension that explains over 65% of the variance.

Figure 5: Nigerians' Perception of Election Quality

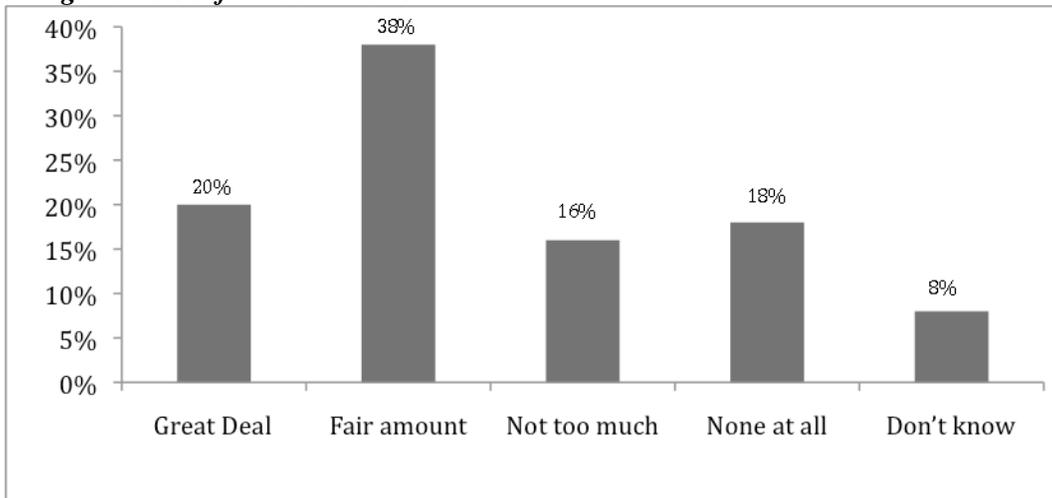


Source: IFES post-election survey of Nigeria (2007)

Independent Variable: Confidence in INEC

The measure for Nigerians' confidence in INEC is based on a question asking respondents: "How much confidence do you have in the Independent National Electoral Commission?" Overall, a majority of Nigerians (68%) either have a great deal or a fair amount of confidence in INEC, compared with three out of 10 respondents who question the institutions' legitimacy. I expect that Nigerians with a high degree of confidence in the EMB should be more likely to consider the 2007 elections as being of an acceptable quality. A follow up question was posed to those who either had not too much confidence or no confidence at all in INEC. Of these respondents, approximately 30% stated that officials were "involved in rigging of elections", while one in five respondents highlighted the lack of independence and a further 29% pointed to officials involvement in bribe taking.

Figure 6: Nigerian's Confidence in INEC



Source: IFES post-election survey of Nigeria (2007)

Independent Variables: Perceived Autonomy of INEC

I utilize an index of three questions to operationalize Nigerians' perceptions of the INEC's autonomy in the 2007 elections. These questions investigate respondents' evaluation of the neutrality of the INEC, the impartiality of the poll workers, and finally the extent to which INEC was representative of various political parties. The index ranges from 1 to 6 with increasing levels of perceived autonomy (see Appendix F for coding criteria).²⁷

Independent Variables: Perceived Capacity

The other main causal variable represents the perceived capacity of INEC. The indicator for capacity is a composite measure derived from six questions that assess respondents' opinions about aspects of the administration of elections. These include citizens' satisfaction with voter registration, their evaluation of the adequacy of information regarding the poll location and voting procedures, the competence of poll workers, adequacy of facilities, and overall effectiveness of INEC in carrying out its duties. The index ranges from 1 to 4 with increasing levels of perceived capacity (see Appendix F for coding criteria).²⁸

Control Variables

To estimate the effects of perceived performance of INEC and Nigerians' trust in INEC on their opinions of election quality we control for a number of factors relating to electoral influences (partisan affiliation with the ruling party), performance evaluations (satisfaction with democracy and economic evaluations), political participation and engagement (whether respondents voted or registered to vote; level of political sophistication and media exposure; level of experience with violence and vote buying), and social structure (age, gender, education and rural/urban dwelling) (see Appendix F for coding criteria).

Results

To estimate the main predictors of Nigerians' perceptions of election quality, I utilize OLS regression. The results of the analysis are displayed in Table 4. A crucially important result from the multivariate analysis is that Nigerians who trust INEC are more likely to positively assess the quality of the 2007 elections (Hypothesis 4).²⁹ This provides major corroboration to the results of the cross-national analysis in which trust of the EMB is a main determinant of Africans perceptions of election quality. An important distinction in our assessment of Nigeria is that the performance of INEC measured through individual evaluations of autonomy and capacity has a positive impact on Nigerians' perceptions of election quality. In this case, when Nigerian's believe INEC possessed the resources to effectively perform its functions during the registration process and on Election Day, elections were more likely to be interpreted as being of high quality (Hypothesis 5_a). Similarly, Nigerians who saw INEC as an impartial body that represented diverse interests were more inclined to positively evaluate the quality of the elections (Hypothesis 5_b). Moreover, these findings remain robust after including various important control variables.

Let us turn to the control variables. Here I find that citizens' affiliation with the winning political party has a positive effect on election evaluation; Nigerians who are affiliated with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) are more inclined to having positive impressions of the election quality. The positive influence of affiliation with the winning political party confirms our findings in the cross-national analysis, and further underscores the critical impact of citizens' partisan identification. Also Nigerians satisfaction with democracy and interests in politics are positively correlated with evaluations of election quality. Furthermore, the findings highlight the adverse repercussions of electoral violence, as Nigerians

²⁷ The index INEC autonomy has a reliability estimate of (Cronbach's alpha= 0.844). The factor analysis shows that the six variables in the index of INEC autonomy share one common underlying dimension that explains over 65% of the variance.

²⁸ The index INEC capacity has a reliability estimate of (Cronbach's alpha= 0.711). The factor analysis that shows the six variables in the index of INEC capacity share one common underlying dimension that explains over 68% of the variance.

²⁹ It is also possible that Nigerian's who positively evaluate the 2007 elections are more likely to trust INEC. At this point, I am unable to rule out this alternative explanation. However in future iterations of this paper, I will consider the endogeneity of trust in EMBs.

who experienced violence or those that felt that the elections were too violent were more likely to view elections negatively. Meanwhile, Nigerians were more likely to positively rate the quality of elections when they registered to vote or actually voted in the 2007 elections. Lastly, younger Nigerians had more positive evaluations of election quality, while gender and education had no significant impact.

In sum, the case study of Nigeria based on individual-level survey data, which reveals respondents' personal experience with election administration, highlights a significant correlation between EMB performance and citizens' perceptions of election quality. Overall, the findings from the multivariate analysis indicate that capacity and autonomy of the EMB, and confidence in the EMB figure prominently in Nigerian's evaluation of election quality. When compared to the cross-country analysis, positive findings from the case study suggest the importance a citizen's personal experience with electoral administrative structures has on their evaluation of electoral integrity. This underscores the value of micro-level factors in understanding political attitudes towards electoral quality.

Table 4: Determinants of Citizens Trust in the EMB and Popular Perceptions of Election Quality

	Model 1 Unstand. Coefficient [Standard errors]
Confidence in INEC	.190*** [.020]
Index of capacity of INEC	.077** [.030]
Index of autonomy of INEC	.459*** [.020]
Extent to which Nigeria is a democracy	.109** [.021]
Index of political sophistication	.069*** [.019]
Partisan supporter of PDP	.528*** [.037]
Personal experience w/ violence	-.168*** [.023]
Experience w/ intimidation	-.060 [.045]
Experience w/ vote buying	-.056 [.042]
Problems w/ violence	-.097*** [.023]
Respondent's level of education	-.009 [.007]
Age of Respondent	-.002* [.001]
Female Respondent	-.08 [.083]
Registered to vote	.120** [.046]
Voted in elections	.274*** [.041]
Constant	1.136 [.113]
R-squared	0.672
Adjusted R-squared	0.670
N	2415

All tests are two tailed. *** p<0.01 **p<0.05 *p<0.1
Missing values were imputed using a multiple imputation procedure and I found no significant differences in the results of the key outcome variables or the overall fit of the model.

V. CONCLUSION

In this paper, I explore the determinants of popular perceptions of electoral quality in sub-Saharan Africa. By focusing precisely on two dimensions of electoral administrative performance — autonomy and capacity— and the degree of citizens' confidence in the EMB, I argue that EMBs with high levels of autonomy and capacity and those that infuse citizens with greater confidence in the EMB are more likely to positively influence citizens' perceptions of election quality. I test these propositions with cross-national survey data in 18 sub-Saharan African countries as well as a focused case study using post-election survey data from Nigeria. The empirical results are mixed. The multi-level cross-national analysis emphasizes the indelible relationship between Africans' confidence in electoral administration and perceptions of election quality. However, the results indicate that the measures of EMB autonomy and capacity are not significant predictors of popular perceptions of election quality across the sample. The case study of Nigeria presents more favorable results. Principally, Nigerians who consider their EMB as autonomous and adequately equipped to carry out its functions are more inclined to perceive the elections as legitimate. Of equal importance is the finding that associates Nigerians' level of trust in the EMB to the overall quality of the 2007 elections.

The foremost shortcoming of the paper, and perhaps the current literature on electoral administration, relates to the measurement of EMB capacity and autonomy. In this paper, I attempted to improve upon the limitations of the EMB performance measurements employed in the extant literature by conceptually separating EMB capacity from autonomy and examining the impact of financial constraints. Despite these critical improvements, the measurements fail to accurately reflect the actual level of EMB performance, but instead approximate formal EMB standards derived from constitutional rules and electoral laws. The weakness of the measurement approach taken in the paper is evident in the null result in the cross-national analysis. To account for these inherent limitations, I took a different approach to the measurement of EMB capacity and autonomy based on citizens' perceptions in Nigeria. Clearly, perceived evaluations have their associated weaknesses; yet, they provide valuable insight into a citizen's own assessment of EMB performance based on their direct and indirect experience with various phases of the election process. Moreover, with the close proximity of the survey to the 2007 election, I am convinced that citizens were in a better position to accurately recall details of their election experience and thereby produce more reliable survey responses.

Many salient remaining issues await future research. The first research agenda concerns the relationship between perceptions of election quality and confidence in the EMB. In this paper, I argue in the context of the sub-Saharan Africa, confidence in the EMB is an important predictor of election quality. Future research could clarify the direction of causation by expanding the number of cases under consideration and employing certain statistical techniques such as structural equation models. Another important line of inquiry involves the conceptualization and development of reliable, comparable measures of behavioral autonomy and capacity of electoral administration. A handful of studies have made conceptual advances in measurement of EMB performance, and have applied them to case studies, or to small-n comparisons. Yet to date, none have effectively tackled the measurement issue from a cross-national perspective.

Beyond theoretical implications, the findings of the research have important consequences for policy makers. First, citizens' opinions matter and should become a critical resource for developing reliable measures of the performance of electoral administration. Second, EMBs play an important role in shaping the attitudes and behaviors of voters, this is particularly important for countries currently undergoing electoral administrative reforms, such as Nigeria, Kenya and Zimbabwe (to name a few). Based on the results from the Nigeria analysis we can infer that Africans' demand politically neutral electoral management bodies that are constantly interacting with a wide range of political and societal interests; both during the appointment process of EMB commissioners as well as critical stages of the election period. Moreover, because citizens base their evaluations on direct experiences with the street-level EMB

workers, greater attention should be paid to increasing the impartiality and competence of these workers through improved recruitment and training programs.

Third, the results from both the cross-national and Nigeria studies indicate a high rate of unawareness about the role and function of the EMB. EMBs need to devote resources to establishing transparency in its operations, improving citizens' awareness of its role in the elections as well as the legal framework that guides its operations. It is not sufficient for EMBs to conduct voter and civic education programs that inform citizens about voting procedures without informing them about the functions and mandates of the EMB. By adding this component to voter education, the EMB will enhance its legitimacy and gain greater public support for its operations.

Last, it is important for us to recognize the limitations of EMB reforms: effective and autonomous EMBs are not "silver bullets" of electoral integrity. From an individual-level we find that public opinion of election outcomes are shaped by other crucial determinants such as the legitimacy of other state institutions (police, army, judiciary and legislature); the rates of electoral violence, intimidation or vote buying, and political actors' commitments to respect the democratic rules of the game. It is therefore incumbent upon policy-makers and major stakeholders to develop a more holistic approach to improving election quality throughout sub-Saharan Africa and other developing democracies.

Appendix A: Descriptive Statistics: Individual-level Variables of Cross-National Analysis

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev
Quality of Elections	25437	1.00	4.00	3.0090	1.02497
Trust in Electoral Management Body	25437	1.00	4.00	2.7094	1.04619
Partisan affiliation incumbent	25437	.00	1.00	.3861	.48116
Satisfaction with Democracy	25437	1.00	5.00	3.5396	.97541
Index of Government Performance	25437	1.00	4.00	2.6190	.72203
Retrospective economic evaluations	25437	1.00	5.00	2.8601	1.09803
Retrospective personal economic	25437	1.00	5.00	2.9040	1.06487
Prospective economic evaluations	25437	1.00	5.00	3.3348	1.10757
Prospective personal economic	25437	1.00	5.00	2.9040	1.06487
Index of Corruption Experience	25437	.00	4.00	.5495	.65145
Index of Corruption Perceptions	25437	.00	4.00	1.8904	1.03882
Voted in last election	25437	.00	1.00	.7467	.43357
Registered to vote in last election	25437	.00	1.00	.7992	.39960
Index of political sophistication	25437	2.00	7.00	4.8250	1.54070
Index of media exposure	25437	1.00	5.00	3.0158	1.16465
Vote buying experience	25437	1.00	5.00	1.6707	1.14762
Index of political freedom	25437	2.00	6.00	4.6223	.82976
Highest level of education	25437	.00	10.00	4.0964	2.01212
Male	25397	.00	1.00	.5001	.50001
Respondent is Urban	25397	.00	1.00	.3817	.48582
Age of Respondent	25397	.00	130.00	36.2089	15.23187
Valid N (listwise)	25437				

Appendix B: Question wording and Coding of Cross-national Analysis

Quality of Elections: On the whole, how would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election (4=completely free and fair, 3=Free and fair with minor problems, 2=Free and Fair with major problems, 1=Not free and fair).

Trust in Electoral Management Body: How much do you trust the Electoral Commission? (1=Not at all, 2=Just a little, 3=Somewhat, 4=A lot.)

Partisan affiliation incumbent: Do you feel close to any particular political party?(1= close to incumbent party, 0=close to other)

Democratic Satisfaction: How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in your country? (1= Country is not a democracy, 2=Not at All Satisfied, 3=Not Very Satisfied, 4=Fairly Satisfied, 5=Very Satisfied)

Index of Government Performance: (3 items: index ranges from 1-4 increasing performance)
How well or badly would you say the government is handling the following matters: reducing crime, health services, and educational needs (1=Very Badly, 2=Fairly Badly, 3=Fairly Well, 4=Very Well).

Index of Corruption Perceptions: (6 items: index ranges from 1-6 increasing corruption perceptions)
How many of the following people do you think are involved in corruption (President, Parliament, Assembly representatives, National government officials, local government officials, police)
(1=None, 2=Some of them, 3=Most of them, 4=All of them)

Index of Corruption Experience: (5 items: index ranges from 1-4 increasing corruption experience)
In the past year, how often (if ever) have you had to pay a bribe, give a gift, or do a favor to government officials in order to: obtain a document, get child into school, household service medical attention, avoid arrest. (0=Never, 2=Once or Twice, 3=A Few Times, 4=Often, 1=No experience with this in the past year)

Economic Evaluations: Prospective economy: "Looking ahead, do you expect the following to be better or worse: Economic conditions in this country in twelve months time?" Prospective household: Looking ahead, do you expect the following to be better or worse: Your living conditions in twelve months time? Retrospective economy: "Looking back, how do you rate the following compared to twelve months ago: Economic conditions in this country in twelve months time?" retrospective household: Looking back, how do you rate the following compared to twelve months ago: Your living conditions in twelve months time? (1=Much worse, 2=Worse, 3=Same, 4=Better, 5=Much better)

Index of Political Freedom: (4 item: index range (0-5) increasing performance.
Please tell me if the following things are worse or better now than they were a few years ago, or are they about the same: (Freedom to say what you think, Freedom to join any political organization, Freedom to choose who to vote for without feeling pressured, equal and fair treatment for all people by government) (1=Much worse, 2=Worse, 3=Same, 4=Better, 5=Much better)

Voted in last election: With regard to the most recent national elections, which statement is true for you? (1=Yes; 0= You decided not to vote, You could not find the polling station, You were prevented from voting, You did not have time to vote, Did not vote for some other reason, You were not registered)

Registered to vote in last elections: Understanding that some Ghanaians were not able to register as voters for the 2004 elections, which statement is true for you? (1=You were registered to vote, 0=You did not want to register, You could not find a place to register, You were prevented from registering, You did not have time to vote, Did not register for some other reason, You were not registered).

Political sophistication: (2 items ranges (1-7) increasing sophistication)

- How interested would you say you are in public affairs? (1=Not at all interested, 2=Not very interested, 3=Somewhat interested, 4=Very interested)
- When you get together with your friends or family, would you say you discuss political matters? (1=Never, 2=Occasionally, 3=Frequently)

Media Exposure: (3 items (0-5) increasing media exposure)

How often do you get news from the following sources: radio, tv, newspapers? (1=Never, 2=Less than once a month, 3=A few times a month, 4=A few times a week, 5=Every day)

Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed? 1=No formal schooling, 2=Informal schooling (including Koranic schooling), 3=Some primary schooling, 4=Primary school completed, 5=Some secondary school/ High school, 6=Secondary school completed/High school, 7=Post-secondary qualifications, other than university e.g. a diploma or degree from a technical/polytechnic/college, 8=Some university, 9=University completed, 10=Post-graduate,

Gender: (1=Male; 0=Female)

Age: How old are you?(18-99)

Respondents Urban/rural location: (Urban=1; Rural=0)

Appendix C: Description of Country-level Variables

COUNTRY	DATE OF ELECTIONS		AUTONOMY MEASURES				CAPACITY MEASURES	COUNTRY LEVEL CONTROLS		
	Legislative	Presidential	Appoint	Tenure	Finance	Index	Profess.	GNIPP*	Number Elections**	Electoral System ***
Benin	30-Mar-03	4-Mar-01	9	1	2	12	1	1.25	4	3
Botswana	3-Oct-04	N/A	10	3	3	16	1	5.57	8	1
Cape Verde	14-Feb-01	11-Feb-01	2	4	3	9	2	2.13	3	3
Ghana	7-Dec-04	7-Dec-04	6	6	3	15	3	1.24	4	1
Kenya	27-Dec-02	27-Dec-02	5	2	3	10	3	1.47	3	1
Lesotho	25-May-02	N/A	7	5	2	14	3	3.41	2	2
Madagascar	15-Dec-02	16-Dec-01	3	3	2	8	2	0.87	3	2
Malawi	20-May-04	N/A	8	2	1	11	3	0.69	3	3
Mali	28-Jul-02	28-Apr-02	3	6	2	11	1	1.0	3	3
Mozambique	1-Dec-04	1-Dec-04	9	2	2	13	2	0.66	3	3
Namibia	15-Nov-04	15-Nov-04	8	4	3	15	3	7.91	4	3
Nigeria	19-Apr-03	19-Apr-03	6	2	2	10	2	1.41	2	3
Senegal	21-Mar-01	N/A	3	2	1	6	2	1.560	5	2
South Africa	14-Apr-04	N/A	9	4	3	16	3	8.90	3	2
Tanzania	14-Dec-05	14-Dec-05	5	2	2	9	3	0.98	3	3
Uganda	27-Jun-01	12-Mar-01	6	5	3	14	2	0.880	2	3
Zambia	27-Dec-01	27-Dec-01	6	4	3	13	3	1.41	3	3
Zimbabwe	31-Mar-05	11-Mar-02	8	4	3	15	3	0.17	6	2

*GNIPPP: Gross national income purchasing power parity (World Development Indicators, 2005)

** Number of Elections since Multi-party Democracy (Lindberg 2006)

*** Type of electoral system: 1=Majoritarian; 2= Mixed; 3= Proportional (Lindberg 2006)

Appendix D: EMB Autonomy and Capacity Coding Criteria

EMB Appointment process sub-score (1-10)

		Appointing body
Semi-Autonomous/ Mixed EMB	1	Legislature only or executive only
	2	Mixed appointment: legislature and executive
	3	Mixed appointment: politicians and civil society/judiciary
	4	Judiciary and civil society
Autonomous/ Independent EMB	5	Legislature only or executive only
	6	Mixed appointment: legislature and executive
	7	State entity other than legislature and elected president
	8	Mixed appointment: politicians and civil society/ judiciary
	9	Judiciary: Supreme Court or Council of Judges
	10	Civil society: Commission of lawyers and academics, etc.

The scale for EMB appointment independence ranges from 1: least independent to 10: most independent. Because semi-autonomous EMBs are divided into two separate bodies: one controlled by the government and another controlled by independent commission, I rate the appointment process of the semi-autonomous body and assume that the government-controlled body is completely dependent. Consequently, all semi-autonomous EMBs are less independent than any autonomous EMB; semi-autonomous EMBs can only attain an appointment score of 4. In making the distinction between autonomous and semi-autonomous EMB, I assume that the independent body within the semi-autonomous structure carries out less functions than the government-controlled body. For instance, the four countries in the sample with semi-autonomous structures (Cape Verde, Madagascar, Mali and Senegal) all have independent commissions that carryout supervisory functions, while the government components control the administrative aspect of the electoral contests. Because the independent component of these semi-autonomous structures, play a less crucial role in the electoral management process they are only able to determine 40% of the overall structure's independence.

EMB Tenure Score

Score	Description
1	0-1 years of tenure (e.g., Benin)
2	2-5 years of tenure (e.g., Botswana)
3	2-5 years of tenure (possibility of renewal)
4	6-9 years of tenure (e.g., Cape Verde)
5	6-9 years with (possibility of renewal)
6	10 or more years of tenure (e.g., Ghana)

Financial Autonomy Score

1	Budget submitted directly to government ministry
2	Mixed submission to both government ministry and parliament
3	Budget submitted to directly to parliament (EMB has line item in the budget)

EMB Capacity Score

	The credentials of the EMB members
1	Mixed membership: partisan and professional
2	Professional (No professional qualifications stated in constitution)
3	Professional (at least one member with professional qualifications stated in the constitution)

Appendix E: Descriptive Statistics Nigeria Post-Election Survey

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perceived election quality	2416	1.00	4.00	2.4514	1.08434
Elections were peaceful	2416	1.00	2.00	1.5763	.48774
Elections were orderly	2416	1.00	2.00	1.5695	.48634
Elections were clean	2416	1.00	2.00	1.4054	.47020
Parliamentary results reflect actual vote	2416	1.00	4.00	2.5868	1.02522
Presidential results reflect actual vote	2416	1.00	4.00	2.5586	1.08391
Index of the Perceived Quality of Elections	2416	2.00	6.00	4.0197	1.27407
Trust in INEC	2416	1.00	4.00	2.6484	.98327
Effectiveness of INEC in carrying out its duties and responsibilities	2416	1.00	4.00	2.5355	1.00589
INEC Capacity: Satisfaction with voter registration	2416	1.00	4.00	3.0793	.91970
INEC Capacity: info on poll date/location	2416	1.00	4.00	3.0948	.88456
INEC Capacity: info on poll procedure	2416	1.00	4.00	3.0345	.89907
INEC Capacity: competence of staff	2416	1.00	4.00	2.8928	.92771
INEC Capacity: adequacy of facilities	2416	1.00	4.00	2.7262	.99996
Index of Capacity of INEC	2416	1.00	4.00	2.8939	.71108
INEC Autonomy: impartiality of poll workers	2416	1.00	4.00	2.5370	1.12299
INEC Autonomy: represented political party interests	2416	1.00	4.00	2.7580	.98940
INEC Autonomy: performed as a neutral body	2416	1.00	2.00	1.4269	.47653
Index of Autonomy of INEC	2416	2.00	6.00	4.0744	1.26366
General level of interest in politics	2416	1.00	4.00	2.7311	1.07086
General level of information about politics	2416	1.00	4.00	2.6864	.95551
Index of political sophistication	2416	1.00	4.00	2.7088	.93294
Level of information about politics: TV	2416	1.00	5.00	2.9709	1.40780
Level of information about politics: Print	2416	1.00	5.00	2.2040	1.35674
Level of information about politics: Radio	2416	1.00	5.00	3.7294	1.28354
Index of Media Exposure	2416	1.00	5.00	2.9681	1.07255
Extent to which Nigeria is a Democracy	2416	1.00	3.00	2.2560	.77780
Partisan supporter of PDP	2416	.00	1.00	.3425	.46320
Experience with intimidation	2416	.00	1.00	.7917	.40327
Experience with vote buying	2416	.00	1.00	.7509	.43054
Voter Registration	2416	.00	1.00	.8708	.33448
Voted in Presidential elections	2416	.00	1.00	.7775	.38469
Age	2416	18.00	97.00	33.2074	12.79169
Gender (Female)	2416	.00	1.00	.4992	.50010
Respondents level of education	2416	1.00	11.00	5.4360	2.61508
Valid N (listwise)	2416				

Appendix F: Question Wording and Response Codes: Nigeria Analysis

Index of the Perceived Quality of Elections (6 items: index ranges from 2-6 (greater quality))

- In your opinion, how free and fair were the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections? Were the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections completely free and fair, somewhat free and fair, not too free and fair or not at all free and fair? (1= “Not at all free and fair”; 2= “Not too free and fair”; 3= “Somewhat free and fair” 4= “Completely free and fair”)
- “Thinking only about the recent *PRESIDENTIAL* elections, how much confidence, if any, do you have that the election results accurately reflected the way people voted in the *PRESIDENTIAL* election”
- “Thinking only about the recent *PARLIAMENTARY* elections, how much confidence, if any, do you have that the election results accurately reflected the way people voted in the *PARLIAMENTARY* election” (1= “None at all”; 2= “Not too Much” 3= “Fair Amount” 4= “Great Deal”)
- “How about Peaceful or Violent? Which of these better describes the recent presidential and parliamentary elections?” (0= “Violent”; 1= “Peaceful”)
- “How about Chaotic or Orderly? Which of these describes the elections better?” (1= “chaotic”; 2= “orderly”)
- “Which of these better describes the recent presidential and parliamentary elections: Clean or Rigged?” (0= “rigged”; 1= “clean”)

Confidence in INEC: “And how much confidence do you have in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)?” (1= “None at all”; 2= “Not too much”; 3= “Fair amount”; 4= “Great Deal”)

Index of Capacity of INEC (6 items: index ranges from 1-4 (greater capacity))

- In your opinion, how effective) and leaders in carrying out the duties that are their responsibility?: Independent Electoral Commission (INEC) (4=effective, 3=somewhat effective, 2=not too effective, 1=not at all effective?).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Voter Registration Process (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Information on where and when to vote (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Information on voting procedures and how to mark the ballots (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Competency of the polling station staff (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Adequacy of facilities and equipment at the polling station (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).

Index of EMB autonomy (3 items: index ranges from (1-6) (greater autonomy)

- First of all, thinking about the performance of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), with which of the following statements do you agree more: The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) performs its duty as a neutral body guided in its work only by the law, OR INEC makes decisions which favor particular people or interests? (1= INEC performs its duty as neutral body guided in its work only by the law; 2= INEC makes decisions which favor particular people or interests).
- For each of the following, please tell me how effective or ineffective you think the this was in helping to ensure the Presidential and Parliamentary elections were free and fair: Representation of different political parties on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) (1= Not at all effective; 2=Not to effective; 3=Somewhat effective; 4=Very effective).
- Please tell me how satisfied or dissatisfied you were with the following aspects of the 2007 Presidential and Parliamentary elections: Impartiality of polling station staff (1= Very dissatisfied; 2= Somewhat dissatisfied; 3= Somewhat satisfied; 4= Very satisfied).

Political Sophistication Please tell me how interested you are in matters of politics and government?(1= Not at all interested; 2=Not too interested; 3=Somewhat interested; 4=Very interested).

Media Exposure: (4 items: index ranges from 1-4 increasing exposure)

- Could you tell me how much information you have about political developments in Nigeria? Do you have a great deal information, a fair amount, not too much or none at all? (1=None at all; 2=Not too Much; 3=Fair Amount;

4=Great Deal)

- Please tell me how often you ... Watch television for news on politics and government--- every day, a few times a week, a few times a month, once a month or less OR never? (0= Never; 2= Once a month or less; 3=A few times a week; 4=A few times a month)
- Please tell me how often you ... Read the newspaper for news on politics and government--- every day, a few times a week, a few times a month, once a month or less OR never? (0= Never; 2= Once a month or less; 3=A few times a week; 4=A few times a month)
- Please tell me how often you ... Listen to the radio for news on politics and government--- every day, a few times a week, a few times a month, once a month or less OR never? (0= Never; 2= Once a month or less; 3=A few times a week; 4=A few times a month)

Attitudes towards democracy: Do you believe that Nigeria is primarily a democracy today, or that it is not primarily a democracy today? (1=Not a democracy; 2=Both equally; 3=Democracy).

Partisan Affiliation with Incumbent: Can you tell me which political party best represents the aspiration of people like you? (1=PDP; 0= feel close to other political party)

Experience with intimidation: On or before the presidential and parliamentary elections, did anyone try to pressure YOU to vote for a certain candidate in the election? (1= No; 0=Yes)

Experience with vote-buying: On or before the presidential and parliamentary elections, did anyone try to pressure YOU to vote for a certain candidate in the election? (1= No; 0=Yes)

Electoral Registration: Were you registered to vote in these recent elections? (0=No; 1=Yes)

Vote in Presidential Election: Did you vote in the April Presidential election or not? (0=No' 1=Yes)

Social Structure:

- **Age:** (18-79),
- **Education:** (1= No formal schooling, 2= No formal schooling, 3=Primary school uncompleted, 4= Primary school completed, 5= Secondary uncompleted, 6= Secondary completed, 7= Technical school uncompleted, 8= Technical school completed, 9= Some university..., 10= Complete University; 11= Post-graduate (completed or uncompleted),
- **Sex:** (Male= 0; Female=1)

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