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The Effects of the Norm of International Election Monitoring on Voters' Confidence Levels in Francophone West Africa's Presidential Elections 1990-2011

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THE EFFECTS OF THE NORM OF INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MONITORING ON
VOTERS' CONFIDENCE LEVELS IN FRANCOPHONE WEST AFRICA'S
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
1990-2011

By Lauren E. Gilliss

An Independent Study Thesis
submitted to the Department of Political Science
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Second Reader: Dr. Matthew Krain

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Abstract

International election monitoring is a phenomenon that began to spread rapidly in the 1990s and has since become an essential element of elections in the developing world. This study assesses the relationship between the presence of international election monitors during presidential elections and levels of voters' confidence in the electoral process. Several questions guide the study: How did the norm of international election monitoring develop and how widely do governments adhere to this norm? Are citizens more confident in the efficacy and transparency of presidential elections when international monitors are present? I hypothesize that when governments adhere to the norm of international election monitoring by inviting international observers, citizens will have higher levels of confidence in the electoral process. I conduct a comparative case study examining the presidential elections in Benin, Mali, and Guinea between 1990 and 2011. Using election monitors' reports, literature surrounding each of the elections, and public opinion survey data reflecting citizens' perceptions of the elections and democracy in their countries, I test the relationship between the two variables in my model. The findings suggest that a positive correlation between the variables is likely. However, because no data currently exists that directly measures the impacts of international election monitors, the study ultimately concludes that further research must be done to confirm the positive relationship between international monitors' presence and voters' confidence levels.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

When the electorate believes that elections have been free and fair, they can be a powerful catalyst for better governance, greater security and human development. But in the absence of credible elections, citizens have no recourse to peaceful political change. The risk of conflict increases while corruption, intimidation, and fraud go unchecked, rotting the entire political system slowly from within.
(Annan 2012)

Free and fair elections are one of the main determinants of the level of democracy in a country. While not the only significant criterion for a successful democracy, the international community generally accepts that free, fair, and competitive elections provide the political environment appropriate for the institutionalization of democracy in a state. However, the mere existence of an electoral process does not convey its impact on those whom it affects most, a state's populace. As Kofi Annan (2012) states, voters' perceptions of political and electoral efficacy are integral to the democratization process and the stability of established democracies.

The study of democratization is not new to the field of international relations, however there are aspects of it, such as the promotion of democracy through election monitoring, that have just recently begun to emerge as important areas for close study (Bjornlund 2004). Since the 1980s, election monitoring has become increasingly more widespread. Today, it is accepted that while established democracies do not need to invite election monitors in order to hold elections the international community views as legitimate, countries in the process of democratizing are expected to do so. "Given that countries have traditionally guarded elections as a strictly domestic affair and a sacred hallmark of sovereignty, the rapid expansion of monitoring is stunning" (Kelley 2012b, 3). The acceptance of election monitoring shows the changing norms of the international system from sovereignty and noninterference to participatory rights, freedom of expression, and self-determination.

The international norm of election observation took hold throughout the 1990s and today is internalized by a vast majority of countries around the world. While the literature on the rise of the norm of election monitoring and how monitors operate is extensive, it currently lacks attentive examination of how the effects of the emergence and internalization of election observation influence the levels of voters' confidence in the efficacy and transparency of elections in emerging democracies. As Birch (2008) writes, "Surprisingly little is known about the factors associated with popular confidence in electoral processes," yet "the legitimacy of the electoral process is crucial for the establishment and maintenance of a healthy democracy" (305). Additionally, the understanding of citizens' confidence in their elections is crucial to maintaining a functioning democracy since lack of confidence can cause problems stemming from a decrease in voter participation and less confidence in the integrity of the process.

Africa is a continent where many individual countries continue to struggle to build a democratic system. The democratic ideal is popular and democracy remains the principal form of government in the world, yet within democracies there is still discontent (Dorenspleet 2012, 280). While each country faces its own internal issues, many countries also deal with common factors that hold them back from achieving a democracy. For example, French colonization permeated West Africa and permeated the culture and politics of countries in the region. By 1960, former French colonies became independent and began to govern themselves and make their own policies. Some of these countries had reached the status of "democracy" before encountering problems and falling back into the categories of "military regime," "restricted democratic practice," or "emerging democracy" (African Elections Database 2012). While many West African countries still have corrupt electoral practices, there are also beacons of hope for true democracy in the region that can be seen in the successful practices being implemented by

countries such as Benin and Senegal. Because of the examples of both success and struggles toward democracy, francophone West Africa is a region especially important to the study of elections and election monitoring today.

This study analyzes election monitoring through the lens of how the emergence and formal adherence to the norm has affected levels of voter confidence in electoral efficacy and transparency in francophone West Africa. The questions guiding this study include how did the norm of international election monitoring develop and how widely do governments formally adhere to it? Are voter turnout rates higher in monitored elections? Do public opinion data reflect higher levels of confidence in electoral efficacy and transparency when monitors are involved? I hypothesize that formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring has led to higher levels of voters' confidence in presidential elections in emerging democracies. My hypothesis is based on the assumptions that international norms matter and that election monitors affect both how electoral processes function and how key actors perceive them.

In order to measure these perceptions and levels of confidence, I examine the relationship between two variables. The independent variable I use in my study is formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring. The dependent variable is the level of voter confidence in the efficacy and transparency of presidential elections in a country. The operationalization and conceptualization of these variables, as well as the research design I employ in my study will be discussed in Chapter Two: Methodology.

Organizational Preview

Chapter Two: Literature and Theory Review examines the existing literature and theoretical foundations surrounding the development and life cycle of norms, the norm of international election monitoring, the role of elections in democracy, election monitors and voter confidence. I discuss the relevant theoretical lenses of constructivism and institutionalism. I then explain how states signal their desire for legitimacy by adhering to norms, and how the timing of the norm's emergence helped it to take hold in the international system. I discuss the importance of elections with integrity, as well as how international election monitors assess the freeness and fairness of elections. I then define voter confidence and attempt to fill the gap in the existing literature between election monitors' work and how their presence affects voters' confidence levels in the electoral system.

The third chapter, Research Design and Methodology, describes how I will conduct this study. The independent variable in my model is formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring. I operationalize the variable by examining governments' invitation of international monitors to elections. The dependent variable is voters' confidence levels in the electoral process. I operationalize this variable by analyzing specific indicators of citizen desire for and satisfaction with democracy and their trust in the elections and the institutions surrounding them. I hypothesize that formal government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring leads to higher levels of voter confidence in the efficacy and transparency of the elections. I then outline the reasoning behind my case study approach and the process of selecting my three cases.

Chapter Four describes the case of Benin. I introduce the variables in the context of Benin, and analyze in detail the five multiparty presidential elections Benin has held since 1990,

using relevant literature and election monitors' reports, as well as public opinion surveys to understand citizens' perceptions of the elections. I also draw basic conclusions about the implications of this case.

The fifth chapter is organized similarly to the previous chapter and examines the case of Mali. I discuss the historical context of four presidential elections in Mali and election monitors' roles in these elections. I assess Malians' perspectives on electoral freeness and fairness, their satisfaction with democracy, and their trust in political institutions in addition to other variables by analyzing public opinion surveys. I draw conclusions about citizens' levels of confidence in the electoral process in Mali. I end the chapter by describing the support I find for my hypothesis.

Chapter Six presents the case of Guinea. Unlike the other two cases, no survey data is available about Guinea's elections. While I still conduct an in-depth analysis of the conditions surrounding the four elections in Guinea between 1990 and 2011, I analyze the dependent variable by using information in secondary sources. I find that my results are less conclusive in this chapter than in the other cases, but I am still able to draw some conclusions.

The last chapter presents an analysis of my data and the overall conclusions of the study. I discuss the possible relationship between the independent and dependent variables in my model. Next, I describe both the implications and limitations of the study. I conclude by making suggestions for further research. This study helps to build an understanding about the relationship between the rise of the norm of international election monitoring, government adherence to the norm, and the effects of that adherence on citizens. This research advances the existing literature by filling gaps and encouraging further research on the topic to strengthen the findings in this study.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter examines the literature surrounding the topics of the rise of international norms, the case of international election monitoring, and voters' confidence. The timing of the emergence of the international norm of election monitoring in the 1990s means that a growing body of literature on the topic has begun to emerge very recently. Within this existing literature, scholars focus on many different aspects of election monitors and their impacts on elections, including levels of pre-election manipulations and post-election violence (see Daxacker 2012; Hyde and Mahoney 2011). There is not much of a direct focus on the impacts of election monitors on citizens' perceptions of electoral efficacy and transparency, so I bring together literature that separately address these topics. In order to carry out an effective study of timely significance and to construct a well-founded hypothesis, I evaluate the relevant theoretical literature concerning the emergence and formal adherence to the international norm of election monitoring and levels of voter confidence in electoral efficacy.

Theoretical Foundations

Neorealism and Neoliberalism

Neorealism and neoliberalism have long been accepted as the primary theories used to analyze actors' behavior in the international system. These theories focus primarily on power dynamics and incentive structures to explain a variety of states' decisions and actions including those resulting in wars, treaties, and diplomatic discussions. However, these theories are not as successful in their interpretations of the influence of norms on state behavior (Florini 1996, 363). Neorealism and neoliberalism largely avoid explanations of how international norms create incentives for states to change their behavior, and in some cases, even their identity as an actor. Instead, they characterize norms as "unexplained sources of the exogenously given preferences

of actors” (Florini 1996, 363). Neorealists, focusing mainly on state security, are mostly interested in the way norms change the distribution of power in the system (Florini 1996, 365). Neoliberals emphasize cooperation, and are therefore more susceptible to normative ideals, but still do not heavily incorporate norms into their theory (Florini 1996, 365). Therefore, I reject these theories as being relatively ineffective in explaining the emergence, spread, and adherence to the norm of international election monitoring and focus on theories that are more conducive to the abstract nature of norms in order to analyze the relationship between adherence to the norm and changes in citizens’ levels of confidence in their electoral system.

Constructivism

Ample literature exists explaining the processes through which international norms are created and spread throughout the global arena. I base my study on the assumption that international norms influence international relations by shaping actors’ preferences and guiding the choices they make, an assumption made by authors from both the English School and constructivism (Sandholtz 2009, 2; Santa-Cruz 2005, 22). Today, most scholars generally accept this assumption, excluding some neorealists (Checkel 1997, 473). Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink (1998), experts recognized for their study of international norms, define a norm as “a standard of appropriate behavior for actors with a given identity” (891). Scholarly attention to the spread of norms is largely within the constructivist theoretical framework, as constructivism acknowledges the protean nature of the world, and therefore claims the structure of the international system is constantly being reshaped and remolded. This interpretive theory stresses the inter-subjectivity of the international system and argues that actors operate in an

interactive normative environment that affects their identity, their interests, and their views of other actors (Viotti and Kaupi 2012, 280).

The idea that international politics is heavily influenced by rules, beliefs, and practices shared by states with divergent goals and interests contributes to the significance of the assumption that norms determine the rules of the international arena by designating certain behaviors as appropriate and legitimate (Viotti and Kaupi 2012, 282). In fact, there are “logics of appropriateness” that claim actors will act rationally in ways that other actors perceive as appropriate in order to maintain legitimacy (Finnemore and Sikkink, 1998, 888). In the world today, there is a “constellation of existing norms, which provides the normative structure within which actors decide what to do, determine how to justify their acts, and evaluate the behavior of others” (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 6). Yet how do perceptions of which actions are viewed as appropriate change throughout the international system?

In addition to creating an underlying sense of order from an inter-subjective understanding of acceptable practices, norms lead states to change their patterns of behavior over time by either defining state identities or prescribing behavior, and in some cases, both (Viotti and Kaupi 2012, 285-286). Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) claim that changes in norms and ideas are the most influential factors in reshaping the system (894). However, the understanding of how norms create political change is a much more complex concept than the idea that norms determine behavior of actors in the international system. The mere existence of a norm does not inevitably alter a state’s behavior (Kelley 2008, 224). In fact, even when actors do adhere to existing norms, there is often choice involved between a variety of norms, some of which contradict each other (Santa-Cruz 2005, 15).

Finnemore and Sikkink (1998) argue that like many other theories in international relations, constructivism better explains the system in periods of stability rather than periods of change (888). One reason for this could be the oversimplification of the role and importance of norms. The relationship between international actors and norms cannot be viewed as a unilateral interaction. Instead, just as norms influence actors' identity and conduct, actors' behaviors reshape the norms that exist (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 7). The case of international election monitoring provides a fitting example through which to study the complexity of the theoretical framework surrounding a significant change in accepted international norms and perceptions of appropriate behavior in presidential elections.

Institutionalism

Martha Finnemore (1996) argues that sociology's theory of institutionalism is relevant to scholars interested in international relations and political science. While similar in substance to the English school in that it focuses on the relationships between organizations and culture, institutionalism is different than the typical international relations theories (Finnemore 1996, 328). Institutionalism "provides a much richer and more detailed theoretical framework than has constructivism" (Finnemore 1996, 327). Instead of just stressing the value of social structures, institutionalists delve deeper to analyze the interactions between different norms in all different areas. Addressing the concern that constructivism lacks the ability to explain the international system in times of change, Finnemore (1996) highlights that institutionalism encompasses change by acknowledging that states' identities and interests change depending on what norms are influential and widely accepted in the system, whether national or global, at the time (Finnemore 1996, 327-330).

Much of the institutionalist view of the spread of norms has to do with the diffusion of ideas spreading from the West (Finnemore 1996, 331). Western states strive to dominate the system politically, economically, and ideologically. The Western cultural value of individualism has permeated the areas of human and legal rights (Finnemore 1996, 332-333). Perhaps unsurprisingly, international election monitoring first appeared in the Americas and “became an export commodity of the new ‘system of interests’” (Santa-Cruz 2005, 59). Election monitoring is an example of the value placed on individuals’ freedom of expression and participatory rights being upheld, in addition to its strong Western ties as a pro-democracy norm.

Realism and liberalism make assumptions about actors’ interests and how these interests motivate the actors’ behaviors. These theoretical perspectives therefore maintain that states with divergent interests will act differently. Institutionalism comes to a different conclusion, claiming that norms allow actors with contrasting interests to have very similar behavior (Finnemore 1996, 334). While institutionalism questions exactly why this holds true, they move beyond realist and liberalist thinking about state behavior since institutionalists do not assume states will act a certain way, providing the possibility for more research about state’s motivations (Finnemore 1996, 337). This view of state behavior applies to the case of international election monitoring. Some corrupt governments cheat in elections to maintain power yet still invite monitors, for example. Other states invite monitors to some elections but not to others. While realism and liberalism can answer certain aspects of the desire for power and states’ self-interest as motivation, these theories do not explain why states would risk damaging their own legitimacy by not inviting monitors or by risking cheating in elections. Institutionalism offers an alternative theoretical framework through which to study these topics and others. A major flaw with this perspective that could limit its applicability is the lack of case study analysis used to

relate the theory to world culture (Finnemore 1996, 340). Therefore, institutionalism can be useful to research about election monitoring when used in combination with international relations theoretical perspectives.

The Development of the Norm of International Election Monitoring

Crucial to the constructivist argument is the understanding of the emergence and development of norms. A common argument is that the development of new norms comes from a need for change in existing norms (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). This need can stem from a lack of cooperation between actors in the “mixed-motive setting” (Florini 1996, 365) that is present in the international arena when there are contrasting values and ideas. Ironically, while norms exist because of inter-subjective consensus over expectations regarding particular behaviors, norms also “evolve in part through challenges to that consensus” (Viotti and Kaupi 2012, 313).

The development of the norm of international election monitoring can be used as a lens through which to examine more generally the emergence, evolution, and spread of norms. Kelley (2008) contends that norms, “as with many other social processes, are complex combinations of normative, instrumental, and other constraints and causes of action” (221). The norm of international election monitoring is particularly complex, and consequently intriguing, since the ultimate goal is not that all governments will invite election monitors, but instead that emerging democracies will invite monitors until the point when they develop a mature, stable democratic system and can “graduate out of the practice” (Kelley 2008, 223). International election monitoring is also a norm of particular intrigue because while it is expected that states adhere to norms that match its interests, it is more difficult to understand why a state would

respect a norm that challenges its interests (Hyde 2011, 3). In the cases of some governments, mainly those who use some form of corrupt practices in electoral processes, the invitation of international election monitors is not in their best interest. What motivates these states to adhere to the norm when “compliance is costly” (Hyde 2011, 4)? The international community regards the convention of governments of emerging democracies inviting election monitors to their elections as an expected step in the democratization process today, but it is important to understand exactly what gave rise to this supposition.

Signaling Theory

The literature presents differing theories on how norms undergo modifications. One way to understand the creation of new norms is through “signaling theory.” This theory of normative change argues that states may seemingly act against their interests to comply with certain norms, but in doing so, the state is actually attempting to send a specific signal to either an international or domestic audience in order to obtain a reaction (Hyde 2011, 4). Hyde (2011) contends that states gauge possible advantages they can attain through the adherence to a norm and act upon this cost-benefit analysis. Because the information exchanged between states is not always accurate, actors do not always know how to evaluate the motivations and interests of other states. In order to showcase their “desirable characteristics” (Hyde 2011, 188), states will attempt to signal other actors. States will act intentionally to send credible signals “when they perceive that doing so will increase their share of internationally allocated benefits, such as foreign aid, increased foreign investment, tourism, trade, membership in international organizations, and legitimacy and prestige” (Hyde 2011, 3). If other states perceive this signal as legitimate, the signaled behavior will spread (Hyde 2011, 188). Therefore, one possible argument is that

election monitoring developed as an “unintended norm” (Hyde 2011, 188) because it resulted from individual states’ incentives for compliance, not massive efforts from norm entrepreneurs, international organizations, institutions, or other states to promote the norm.

In the case of election monitoring, states wanted to signal their support of democracy after the Cold War. The invitation of international, nonpartisan monitors proved to be the most effective signal of this commitment since it was a trend that states noticed (Hyde 2011, 189). Hyde (2011) argues that this particular signal is so effective because it holds costs for the “pseudo-democrats” who invite monitors in an attempt to “mimic the signal” (189). These pseudo-democrats have to weigh the costs and benefits of their corrupt elections and decide whether to risk the costs of a negative assessment or accept “a virtually nonexistent chance that their elections will be viewed as democratic” (Hyde 2011, 192). This dilemma causes some states to change their behavior so that they can invite monitors without negative repercussions, and causes other states to abstain from inviting monitors because they want to continue cheating. Because of the high costs associated with cheating, it seems logical that citizens living in states that invite monitors have higher confidence levels in the efficacy and transparency of the electoral process in these states since cheating should not occur without consequence in the presence of international monitors.

The “Life Cycle” of Norms

A different perspective on the development of norms examines the three stages of the norm “life cycle”: emergence, norm cascade, and internalization. Critical to the first stage, emergence, is the role of norm entrepreneurs. These are the actors who are responsible for constructing “cognitive frames” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 897) that create specific

perceptions about an issue. They do so by using language to refer to the issue that alters the way other actors view that issue. At this point, the “logic of appropriateness” comes into play, as norm entrepreneurs must usually act outside of the “logic of appropriateness” to promote the norm currently under construction (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 897). In the case of international election monitoring, norm entrepreneurs including international NGOs, the United Nations, and the Carter Center played a significant role in incorporating election monitoring into a set of preexisting norms. Norms promoting human rights, democratic rights, and elections set a “normative enabling environment” for the emergence of the norm of election monitoring (Kelley 2008, 226). However, while some existing norms set the foundation for the emergence of election monitoring, others presented an obstacle to doing so. The norms of state sovereignty and noninterference were also strongly supported pre-established norms, so there was a period of disagreement and “contestation” (Kelley 2008, 227) over the clash of these two types of norms. Election monitoring is one of the forces that have gradually changed the system’s understanding of sovereignty, as now sovereignty includes a component of international legitimacy (Santa-Cruz 2005, 7-8).

The next step in the emergence of a norm is for the norm entrepreneurs to find or construct an “organizational platform” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 899) they can use to promote the spread of the norm, which often consists of an international organization, a transnational advocacy network, or a nongovernmental organization. These actors are helpful in providing legitimacy to the new behavior or outlook on the issue at hand. In 1989, the Organization of American States (OAS) was one of several organizations that decided to send election observers to member states upon request (Kelley 2008, 227-228). This encouraged other organizations to consider institutionalizing the norm and to create capacity for election

monitoring into their systems. With the influence of organizational platforms such as the OAS, or other similarly influential organizations, more actors are likely to back the new idea and further its progress towards becoming a norm.

There are many important developments remaining in the life cycle of a norm after the emergence stage. Before reaching the second stage in the norm life cycle, the norm cascade, the emergent norm is often institutionalized into organizations or areas of international rules. As the emergent norm begins to take hold more widely, other actors view it as legitimate and incorporate adherence that norm into their identity and behavior (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 900). Between the first two stages in the norm life cycle is a “tipping point” where the norm reaches a threshold of a certain number of actors adopting the norm (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 895). There is no way to tell when the tipping point will occur, nor how many actors are involved in the process of tipping a norm towards the norm cascade. Actors perceive the support of states with a relationship to the issue involved as more influential than states are less involved in the issue. Because of this, some states will be viewed as “critical” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 901) to a norm’s acceptance, whereas other states play a less significant role. Even though the timing of the tipping point’s occurrence is difficult to anticipate, the existing trend is that the norm must be adopted by at least one-third of the total number of states in the system (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 901). This was exactly the case in the norm of international election monitoring, as the number of emerging democracies that invited election monitors increased from 28% in 1989 to 44% in 1990 (Kelley 2008, 227). The timing of this tipping point can be challenging to explain, but Kelley (2008) proposes that the end of the Cold War impacted the international system in a way that altered the norms that actors viewed as most important (228). States recognized the failure of the Soviet Union and subsequently turned towards

Western norms. Once the emergent norm reaches its tipping point, states and other actors begin adopting it without the same level of domestic pressures as were necessary before the tipping point. This stage is referred to as the “norm cascade” (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 902).

The norm cascade is based upon the process of international socialization. The cascade is characterized by the “wider and faster spread of the norm after the tipping point” (Kelley 2008, 229). After the tipping point of the norm of international election monitoring in 1990, at which point 44% of all non-established democracies invited election monitors, the norm continued to spread so that by 1998, almost 70% of all non-established democracies were inviting monitors (Kelley 2008, 229). Through process of the norm cascade, norm entrepreneurs and supporters convince other actors to accept the norm. They do this through the encouragement and support of actors who adhere to the norm and the admonishment of those who do not. States react to the external pressure put on them by evaluating the costs of rejecting the norm against the benefits that could be gained by adhering to it. Most states desire to maintain legitimacy both from the international community and their domestic citizenry, so they act in ways that will satisfy these populations (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 903-904). Kelley (2008) argues that some governments began inviting election monitors in reaction to the West’s support of free and fair elections, but that other governments only invited monitors to appear legitimate (230).

The last stage in the norm life cycle is internalization. Once a norm has become internalized, it becomes embedded in the identity of actors. At this point, states no longer question compliance. The norms may even become so integrated into practice that they become difficult to distinguish from preexisting ideologies and beliefs. (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 904-905). In my study, I hesitate to say that the norm of international election monitoring has been fully internalized since there are a number of states that either reject the norm or have a

complicated relationship with it. I instead discuss “formal adherence” to the norm, which does not suggest the same level of acceptance and habit as does the term “internalization.” This accounts for the states that continue to manipulate the system by inviting lenient monitors to their elections in order to continue cheating, and a handful of governments such as those in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Cuba, Syria, and Uzbekistan, that continue to reject monitors’ presence in their elections altogether, as well as the states that invite monitors to some, but not all, of their elections (Kelley 2008, 232).

Restructuring the Normative Environment

Sandholtz and Stiles (2009) argue that existing literature misses important elements of normative change. They claim that “normative systems are inherently dynamic, and it is that built-in dynamism that is missing from any analytical approach that sees rules simply as outcomes of bargaining or political processes” (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 6). To fill this gap in the literature, the authors describe a model of normative change comprising of action, dispute, argument, and finally change (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 3). The dispute causes a reevaluation of what the norm encourages and permits, meaning that it will be restructured to become more or less strict and broader or narrower in scope (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 6).

In the case of international election monitoring, this “dispute” could be viewed as the tension between norms prioritizing the rights and freedoms of states and those favoring individual freedoms. International human rights based norms and pro-democracy norms began challenging the traditional concepts of sovereignty and nonintervention beginning after World War II and started gathering force in the 1990s (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 289-290). The concepts of freedom of expression and participatory rights, as well as an emerging right to

democracy, provided alternatives to the norms that had been generally accepted (Kelley 2008, 242; Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 23). For the first time, “the post-World War II era allowed for the justification of international involvement in domestic state affairs because states believed democracy was crucial for upholding international peace and security” (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 294). An example of this push for democracy is found in the Preamble of the 1950 Charter for the Organization of American States, that declares, “representative democracy is an indispensable condition of stability, peace and development” (Sandholtz and Stiles 2009, 294). The belief that democracy provides an achievable avenue through which to increase the stability of the international system continues today. Kofi Annan (2012) contends, “the time is right to underscore the rule of law, democratic governance and citizen empowerment as integral elements to achieving sustainable development, security and a durable peace” (4). The possibility of achieving these goals is a driving motivational force for actors to embrace pro-democracy norms.

The changing normative environment surrounding the right to democracy after World War II was not the only significant cause of respect for pro-democracy norms. The end of the Cold War caused a shift in the power structure of the international system being bipolar to unipolar, with the United States as the dominant world power. Therefore, states began to search for legitimacy in the new system structure by internalizing the West’s push for democracy (Kelley 2008, 229-230). Due to the normative environment of the 1990s, “election monitoring emerged out of an intensive debate that specifically pitted democracy and human norms against traditional sovereignty norms” (Kelley 2008, 242). While it is clear that pro-democracy norms became more highly valued after the Cold War, there are still elements of the relationship between

democracy, elections, and election monitoring, and monitors' effects on voters' confidence levels that are missing from the existing literature.

The Role of Elections in Democracy

“Elections can further democracy, development, human rights, and security, or undermine them, and for this reason alone they should command attention and priority” (Annan 2012, 5). One of the most important and most easily identifiable aspects of a democracy is the electoral process. The international community acknowledges elections as the foundation of successful governance (Bjornlund 2004, 33). Voting gives the population of a country the chance to stress their own beliefs and expectations of their leader by voting for the most capable candidate and choosing whether or not to re-elect an officer already in power. This can serve as a form of accountability by preventing leaders who might consider abusing their power by engaging in corrupt activities to refrain from doing so because of the chance that they could be exposed (Philp 2001, 359). While “there is much more to having democracy and making it work than free, fair, and truly competitive elections,” it is important to realize that effective elections are crucial to maintaining a functioning democracy (Diamond 2009, xviii).

Over the course of the past two decades, there has been a massive shift towards democracy. In 1989, there were 48 democracies, whereas today the world recognizes 95 democratic countries (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 12). Doig and Theobald (2000) state that while there is “no single checklist of a democracy,” the most important components include “political legitimacy for the state through universal suffrage and regular elections; the peaceful transfer of power; an effective political opposition and representative government; accountability through transparency of decision making [and];

effective standards of conduct in public office” (15). Of these elements, the pro-democracy norms of the individual right to vote, a representative government, and regular elections stand out. The “political legitimacy” mentioned has come to reside with democratic and undemocratic systems alike, as countries that do not have democratic systems have begun holding elections in recent years. Surprisingly, only 11 countries did *not* hold elections over the past 12 years (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 12). Merely holding elections does not signal that a country is democratic or abides by democratic principles, however. Some states use “façade elections” (Lindberg 2009, 6) to attempt to project themselves under a certain light to the international community. The difference between “the veneer of democratic legitimacy and genuine democratic legitimacy is electoral integrity” (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 12).

As the world and the relationship between the actors within it continues to change, elections are a chance for countries to signal their commitment to upholding democratic principles and to respecting the will of their citizens. Since elections play such an integral role in the development and perpetuation of democracy, I focus the majority of my independent study on elements that surround successful elections today; voter confidence levels and election monitors. These components of elections did not become associated with the study of democracy of electoral processes until the 1990s, but are relevant issues to the way the international system functions today. As Birch (2010) articulates, “the study of electoral confidence is key to understanding the role of elections in the ever-widening world of competitive politics” (1616). I agree with Birch, and push her argument even further to examine the link between that confidence and the role of election monitors in presidential elections.

Elections With Integrity

The connotation “free and fair” has become an expected component of the evaluation of democratic elections. The phrase originated from the United Nations’ designation of the elections of newly independent states as being “free and fair” in an effort to legitimize their status as independent states. The phrase appeared in Togoland’s 1956 independence referendum and has been incorporated into the evaluation of democratic elections as the “rhetorical touchstone for most assessments” (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 201; Bjornlund 2004, 96) ever since. In order to evaluate the standards that qualify elections as being “free and fair,” there must be a concrete way to quantify and assess these two measurements of democracy. This can be a challenging task because of the possible difficulties of both identifying the presence of certain elements in a state’s electoral process and combining these multiple factors into one score that designates the election as “free and fair” or not (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 202).

The concepts of “free” and “fair” are often perceived as being synonymous because how often they are used in tandem. However, there are important distinctions that differentiate freedom from fairness. The term “free” is used to describe voters’ opportunity to choose between multiple options and not face any limitations or restrictions to this choice. “Fair” refers to how regular and reasonable elections are, two concepts that stress the importance of an objective and unbiased electoral process (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 203). While both are critical to the international community’s perceptions of an election as being legitimate, freedom is more important because it is the “precondition for democracy and for elections as a means to that end” (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 203). Without freedom of elections, there can be no fairness. That being said, the international community generally expects elections to be both free and fair. Elections designated as such are deemed elections with integrity. These elections are “based on

the democratic principles of universal suffrage and political equality as reflected in international standards and agreements, and [are] professional, impartial, and transparent in [their] preparation and administration throughout the electoral cycle” (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 13). Today, the majority of the global community shares the expectation that elections are held with integrity.

Elections with integrity provide many benefits for the citizens of a country. When elections are perceived as having integrity, they promote the ideals of democracy and individual rights and encourage officials to run for election who are interested in promoting the values of their citizens by providing a mechanism through which the public can hold officials accountable (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 13). These intangible qualities “can be a catalytic step towards realizing democracy’s transformative potential” and are visible in more concrete forms as well (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 13). Elections have played a major role in efforts towards “empowering women, fighting corruption, delivering services to the poor, improving governance, and ending civil wars” (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 13). Therefore, it is important that support for elections with integrity is strong from both the perspectives of leaders and officials, and from states’ citizens. Citizens must perceive that they are able to vote, that the process will run smoothly, that their vote will count, and that there is transparency in the electoral process so they can be confident these other conditions hold true. I focus on this idea of citizen confidence as a factor crucial to elections and other elements of a state’s democratic system since my studies and experiences have impressed upon me that without citizen support, government and the institutions that support it are incapable of developing or maintaining a healthy, functioning democracy (Birch 2008).

Challenges to Democracy

Despite the popularity of the democratic ideal, challenges to democracy continue to exist. “Commitment to democratic values is higher than ever,” (Diamond and Plattner 2001, xxvii) yet public opinion surveys show a decrease in levels of satisfaction with democracy and its institutions. Some scholars discuss the trend of decreasing confidence in democratic systems as a “slump or even rollback of democracy globally” (Lindberg 2009, xvii). From 1974 to 2008, there were 25 examples of breakdowns or reversals of democracy (Lindberg 2009, xvii). In 2009, the year marking the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin wall, freedom declined in 40 countries (Kelley 2012b, 3-4). According to Freedom House, since 2005 there have been more states experiencing decreases in aggregate scores of political rights and civil liberties rankings than states that depict gains in these scores (Puddington 2012, 30). Freedom House analyzed the aspects of “government and accountability and public voice”, “civil liberties”, “rule of law”, and “anticorruption and transparency” (Tucker 2012, 1) to assess democratic governance in their 2012 study. Overall, there was a downward trend in the numbers reflecting a decrease in democratic governance. One area that experienced an increase was a category falling under the “accountability and public voice” data was free and fair electoral laws and elections (Tucker 2012, 1). This shows that there is hope for utilizing elections as a way to increase voter confidence in electoral efficacy and transparency as a way of strengthening the other areas of democratic governance.

Election Monitors and Voter Confidence

Free and fair elections can contribute to the development and conservation of quality democratic institutions when a state's citizens perceive the system as effective and the electoral process as efficient. "For elections to have integrity, electoral justice must be done, and citizens must see that it is done" (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 21). One way to aid in citizens' confidence and attempt to reassure citizens in their perceptions of electoral efficacy and transparency is to monitor the electoral process. "Election observation is the best-established, most visible, and often best-funded type of democracy-related assistance" (Carothers 1997, 18). The increase in international election monitoring shows the interest of individual states and the international community as a whole in the promotion of democracy, but it is important that election monitoring also helps the populations within those states' borders feel more confident in the institutions and systems of their country's government.

Characteristics and Roles of Election Monitors

Election monitors are often non-partisan bodies that observe states' elections and report about them. By doing so, monitors increase transparency in the electoral process and change the incentives facing politicians involved in the elections by increasing the cost of cheating and creating more benefits for being honest (Kelley 2012b, 10). Typically election monitors are able to access elements of the entire electoral process, from campaigns and voter registration to voting in the poll booths and counting the votes (Hyde 2011, 5). "Their core mission is to uphold a shared set of electoral norms enshrined in a vast collection of international laws and organizational documents" (Kelley 2009a, 767-768).

Election monitors can enter a country and observe its elections only if invited by the government of a state. This invitation serves as a formal agreement that gives the organization the right to access various aspects of the election (Kelley 2009b, 59). The fact that so many governments choose to invite monitors to their domestic elections is a form of acknowledgement of the importance and relevance of the norm in the contemporary international system. It also shows states' desire to show the international community and their own citizens that their country upholds a commitment to democratic principles and the voice of its citizens as being crucial to elections. A state intentionally signals other actors that it is confident in the quality of its elections and is committed to holding democratic elections (Hyde 2011, 61).

Monitors accomplish their mission by examining the electoral infrastructure, interviewing politicians and election officials, studying pre-election campaigns, inspecting voter registration, watching election rallies, reviewing media coverage of the election, observing the voting process on election day, and producing reports that reflect their judgments throughout the electoral process (Kelley 2012b, 39-40). Elklit and Svensson (2001) argue the importance of monitors' assessments in regards to the freedom and fairness of elections. They stress the importance in distinguishing the processes through which these concepts are evaluated and that the assessments must occur before Election Day, during the voting process, and after Election Day (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 203-205). Table 1.1, Elklit and Svensson's "Checklist for Election Assessment," shows the qualities of elections which monitors should observe in order to designate a country's election as being free and fair. The authors claim that while this table is useful and fairly thorough because of its basis on a wide range of literature, it cannot be depended upon as the sole tool for categorizing elections. Different election monitors may focus on the observation of certain phenomena listed in the table, while others are looking for the

presence of all the criteria listed. Although the table is not comprehensive, it summarizes the main factors of the electoral process that election monitors are attempting to assess, and is a useful tool in aiding the understanding of election monitors' missions.

Table 2.1—Checklist for Election Assessment

Time Period	Dimension	
	“Free”	“Fair”
Before Polling Day	Freedom of movement Freedom of speech (for candidates, the media, voters, and others) Freedom of assembly Freedom of association Freedom from fear in connection with the election and the electoral campaign Absence of impediments to standing for election (for both political parties and independent candidates) Equal and universal suffrage	A transparent electoral process An election act and an electoral system that grant no special privileges to any political party or social group Absence of impediments to inclusion in the electoral register Establishment of an independent and impartial election commission Impartial treatment of candidates by the police, the army, and the courts of law Equal opportunities for political parties and independent candidates to stand for election Impartial voter-education programs An orderly election campaign (observance of a code of conduct) Equal access to publicly controlled media Impartial allotment of public funds to political parties (if relevant) No misuse of government facilities for campaign purposes
On Polling Day	Opportunity to participate in the election	Access to all polling stations for representatives of the political parties, accredited local and international election observers, and the media Secrecy of the ballot Absence of intimidation of voters Effective design of ballot papers Proper ballot boxes Impartial assistance to voters (if necessary) Proper counting procedures Proper treatment of void ballot papers Proper precautionary measures when transporting election materials Impartial protection of polling stations
After Polling Day	Legal possibilities of complaint	Official and expeditious announcement of election results Impartial treatment of any election complaints Impartial reports on the election results by the media Acceptance of the election results by everyone involved

Source: Elklit and Svensson 2001, 204.

It is important for monitors and observer groups to accurately report election strengths and irregularities to ensure that the elections are legitimate. The neutrality of observers is crucial in efforts towards ensuring the accuracy of observers' assessments and decreases the chances that monitors will legitimize a flawed election. As declared in the 2005 Code of Conduct on election observation, "No one should be allowed to be a member of an international election observer mission unless that person is free from any political, economic, or other conflicts of interest that would interfere with conducting observations accurately and impartially" (Kelley 2012b, 75). Impartiality is one of the international community's shared expectations of election monitors, as is made clear from its repetition 8 times in the "Fair" column of Table 1.1.

While election monitors share the same mission, there are many elements that contribute to a diverse range of types of monitors and the way they are involved in elections. First, the electoral processes in a country are results of that country's unique history, culture, and other characteristics that make its elections distinguishable from the elections that take place in other states, even its neighbors (United Nations 2012). Electoral systems around the world may be structured differently due to "both colonial legacies and emulation behavior," in addition to other influences (Kelley 2012a, 206). The percentage of the population that registers to vote, the number of political parties, the length of candidates' campaigns, voting procedures, and many other factors will vary from country to country and even within a country between elections. Therefore, observers cannot necessarily generalize between elections in their evaluations. They must consider the election "in the context of the specific democratic-transition process" (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 206). This includes considering the election as fitting into the historical timeline of the evolution of a country's democracy through previous elections and evaluating

whether the election in question is furthering a country's progress towards a consolidated democratic system.

Second, different organizations and monitoring missions will operate in different ways. There are a variety of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that are involved in election monitoring. The United Nations (UN) was one of the first organizations to become involved in monitoring elections as part of its approach to peacekeeping. According to the UN, "electoral assistance is based on the principle established in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that the will of the people, as expressed through periodic and genuine elections, shall be the basis of government authority, while also recognizing the principles of state sovereignty and the national ownership of elections" (United Nations 2012). The Organization of American States (OAS), which became the first regional organization to start monitoring elections in 1962, closely followed the UN in its involvement in elections (Kelley 2009b, 61). Many IGOs, such as the European Union and the OAS, have strict rules by which they must abide in producing their official assessments of elections (Kelley 2009a, 769). On the other hand, some NGOs, such as the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), do not have to deal with the same types of restrictions as IGOs and can therefore act more freely in creating their election assessments (Kelley 2009a). NGOs do not report directly to any government, so there are fewer actors limiting their ability to produce their election reports (Kelley 2012b, 65). Due to structural differences and differing goals between organizations, some may focus their attention on observing various aspects listed in Table 1 (above), while others are more interested in changing the cost-benefit analysis associated with the incentive structure for actors involved in the election (Kelley 2012a, 207).

If a government invites more than one organization to monitor its elections, those organizations may cooperate or choose to work independently from one another, producing separate assessments (Kelley 2009b, 59). Collaboration between organizations can allow for broader coverage of polling stations and more legitimacy in the assessments they produce (Kelley 2009b, 60). Working separately, organizations often compete for “resources, attention, and influence,” and will even attempt to release their assessment of the election before other organizations release their reports (Kelley 2009b, 61). The different assessments produced by various monitoring organizations and the different approaches organizations utilize in the monitoring process reflect the lack of specific, widely accepted guidelines that exist for monitors to follow.

Despite the fact that international election monitoring is a phenomenon present in a majority of countries, there is no international law in place to ensure the monitoring process is carried out in a particular, uniform way, or that monitors hold elections to similar standards (Misk 2010, 766). One of the first attempts to create a set of guiding principles for election monitors was Larry Garber’s *Guidelines for International Election Observing*, published in 1984 by the International Human Rights Law Group (Bjornlund 2004, 131). A more recent effort that is more widely recognized is the 2005 United Nations Declaration of Principles for International Election Observation, which broadly defines standards of conduct for election monitors (Misk 2010, 767). While over two dozen supranational organizations have endorsed the Declaration, it is so general in its description of the guidelines monitors should follow that it leaves all small-scale decisions up to the individual monitors, meaning there is still no uniform criteria to which election monitors must conform (Misk 2010). One of the main elements of monitors’ reports that interests the international community is the designation of elections as being free and fair.

Yet, “the phrase ‘free and fair’ cannot denote compliance with a fixed, universal standard of electoral competition: No such standard exists, and the complexity of the electoral process makes the notion of any simple formula unrealistic” (Elklit and Svensson 2001, 211). Although there may not be a simple formula, there can be elements of the process that are standardized, such as the number of monitors present, how these monitors are accredited, the timeframe of the election observation period, and what election monitors’ duties should entail (Misk 2010, 766). Even if these elements are accounted for, election monitors may still produce differing assessments. “There is no set answer to the question of how many specific shortcomings must be observed, and how serious they must be, before an election can be called ‘*not* free and fair’” (Carothers 1997, 24). Monitors base their assessments upon phenomena they observe, so if two groups of monitors witness different aspects of elections, they may evaluate the entire electoral process differently.

Situational factors affect the outcome of monitors’ assessments as well. Monitors are likely to endorse an election if the electoral process improved since the last election, even if the overall quality of the electoral process is not as strong as other elections that monitor has endorsed and may still be “substandard” (Kelley 2009a, 782). Monitors may also take conditions such as pre-election violence into account when making their assessments. Often, when violence precedes elections there will be post-election violence as well. Election monitors want to avoid contributing to this violence, so they may adjust their reports so as to not spark any further conflict (Kelley 2009a, 783). Clearly, there are a variety of factors that contribute to differing assessments and types of monitoring processes for different organizations.

Due to the variety of types of monitors, levels of involvement in the electoral process, and methods used to monitor the election, scholars find it difficult to broadly assess the influence

of election monitors. There is no one indicator that points to high quality election monitoring. Even in cases where organizations have created methods of evaluating free, fair, and competitive elections, evaluations cannot apply consistently across all cases (Kelley 2012b, 13). Because of this, it is important to develop an understanding of the history of election monitoring before focusing more specifically on cases of countries' elections to learn about the effects monitors have on various aspects of the electoral process. In my study, I concentrate on election monitors' effects on a country's domestic population, since there is little value in having a democratic state if that state's citizens have no confidence in the system.

Voters' Confidence in Electoral Efficacy

Despite the significance of understanding citizen confidence in the electoral process, today's literature lacks much focus on this topic. The literature that does exist focuses on citizens' confidence in political institutions generally, and examines this topic within the context of mature democracies (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 232). It is important that more research is done regarding citizens' confidence levels in political institutions in emerging democracies since "the stability and legitimacy of a fledgling democracy largely depends on citizens' support" (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 232). Scholars in the fields of international relations and political science are much more likely to focus on legitimacy of elections than one of the factors that allows for that legitimacy to exist—voter confidence in electoral efficacy and transparency. Minimal literature examines "what is arguably the most obvious and most crucial legitimacy evaluation that prospective voters make: How well the election in question is likely to be conducted" (Birch 2010, 1615). The importance of citizens' confidence levels in their state's electoral system goes beyond measuring satisfaction with the outcome of the election. Much more significantly, the

population's evaluation of the electoral system will influence individuals' decisions about whether or not to vote (Birch 2010, 1602). When citizens do not have full confidence in the electoral process of their country, voter participation levels will decline, violent protests can break out, and citizen support for other political institutions can decrease (Birch 2008, 305).

Defining and Understanding Confidence

Confidence can be understood as a “general positive orientation toward a given set of institutions,” (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 231) in the case of this study, the electoral system. There are several explanations that contribute to citizens' confidence levels in various aspects of government. The first type of explanation is socio-cultural. This explanation attributes confidence levels to factors unrelated to the political system; interpersonal trust, interest in politics, civic participation, and opinions about the government that are not based upon performance (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 232). A second type of explanation comes from a citizen's party or ideological affiliation. The third explanation is most relevant to this study—performance (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 323). This explanation states that people will have confidence in institutions that they perceive as functioning effectively. Scholars use performance-based explanations most often to examine populations in developing democracies (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 323). Party-based and ideological explanations are less applicable to developing democracies since these institutions undergo changes that may change people's affiliations more often than in mature democracies (Aydin and Cenker 2011, 235). Another way to evaluate the origins of citizens' confidence comes from the “home team” hypothesis. Also known as the “winner effect,” this concept indicates that voters who support the winning candidate or party will have more trust in political efficacy than voters who do not support the

winner of the election (Banducci and Karp 2003, 447; Anderson and Tverdova 2001, 323). If my hypothesis holds true however, even “losers” in an election have increased levels of confidence in the electoral system when election monitors are present.

Election Monitors’ Influence on Citizen Confidence

Election monitors’ reports can legitimize the results of the elections and the electoral process itself by reassuring citizens and the international community that the process operated freely and fairly. As suggested above, “for elections to have integrity they must be, and must be *perceived* by voters as being, conducted competently in a professional, non-partisan manner” (Global Commission on Elections, Democracy, and Security 2012, 21). Citizens are more likely to have this perception when the population suspects that there may be problems in the electoral process, when election monitors are visibly present throughout a country, and when the population is aware of why the monitors are there and the job they will be carrying out (Brancati 2012, 4).

Election monitors cannot impact citizens’ confidence levels in the electoral process unless citizens trust the monitors themselves. As monitors’ presence and countries have increased, media attention on monitors has grown, and their reputations have become more well known. This allows citizens to have a better understanding of the election monitors in their countries based on general information about the size of the monitoring mission, the individual and country’s past experience with election monitors, and the way politicians discuss the monitors (Brancati 2012, 10-11). Therefore, when the population trusts election monitors, these monitors play an important role in bridging the gap between the electoral institutions and citizens’ perceptions of electoral efficacy.

Citizens' confidence in the electoral process and the governmental institutions in their country is crucial to strengthening the foundations upon which a mature democracy can be built. Confidence levels in representative democracy as a whole serve as indicators, or "report cards" that reflect the mindset of the population regarding the institutions that exist to serve the people's interests (Pharr, Putnam and Dalton 2001, 305). If a states' populace does not have confidence in the way the electoral process takes place, this "lack of trust in electoral institutions can erode citizens' perceptions of the legitimacy of other political institutions, [and] it can dent international legitimacy" (Birch 2010, 1602). Despite the problems resulting from a lack of confidence in the electoral system, this confidence does not guarantee that a democracy will be successful (Birch 2008, 315). In fact, "democracies can persist for considerable time in the absence of full support for electoral institutions on the part of substantial sectors of the population" (Birch 2008, 315). Even so, democracies are much more likely to survive when the population trusts the government and the political system (Anderson and Tverdova 2001, 322). While citizens' confidence levels cannot be the only measurement of how well a democratic system or elements of it are functioning, it is undoubtedly an important indicator to consider because of the implications that come along with these low confidence levels.

Since election monitors are, in accordance with their *raison d'être*, present during elections in emerging democracies, they serve as an important symbol of stability in times that are often volatile. The stability that election monitors provide goes beyond just providing assurance to voters that their vote will be counted. Monitors' presence can "encourage a wary citizenry to take the electoral process seriously," boost opposition parties' confidence levels in their hopes of running for office, and "help keep an electoral process on track when an entrenched leader loses the election and then balks at giving up power" (Carothers 1997, 20).

The possible benefits of monitors' presence in a country span even further than the scope of the electoral process, as "greater levels of government trust and efficacy lead to democratic stability and economic security, while lower levels have the potential to destabilize a government and create economic insecurity" (Atkeson and Saunders 2007, 655).

Moving Forward—Achieving Higher Confidence Levels

There are several ways states can change their elections to reflect higher voter confidence levels. One approach can be to "level the playing field" (Birch 2008, 307) and increase transparency in the electoral process. States can achieve this "level playing field" by reducing electoral fraud and promoting electoral systems that represent the popular vote through proportionate representation systems (Birch 2008, 307; Banducci and Karp 2003, 448). An approach for states interested in encouraging higher levels of voter turnout is to increase confidence in electoral efficacy, which in turn is possible by improving the conduct of elections (Birch 2010, 1616). While Birch (2010) does not explicitly point to election monitoring as the way to improve election conduct, election monitoring is the method that would be most beneficial to increasing confidence levels in a state's electoral process both domestically and internationally.

Conclusion

There is abundant research about the development of international norms, the work of international election monitors, and the significance of citizen confidence levels. However, there is no existing literature I have been able to find that combines all three of these areas to examine how formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring influences voters' confidence levels. This study makes an effort to fill the gap in the literature by contributing to the existing work in the field and encouraging more research to be done on the topic.

Hypothesis

Based on the existing literature, I hypothesize that formal government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring promotes higher confidence levels among voters in electoral efficacy and transparency. I will test this hypothesis in chapters four, five and six through comparative case studies.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The goal of this study is to explore the relationship between the presence of international election monitors in domestic presidential elections and levels of voter confidence in their country's electoral process. The research question guiding this study is, "does formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring lead to increased levels of voter confidence in their domestic electoral process?" I focus on how the norm of international election monitoring developed, how widely adherence to the norm is practiced, and if available data reflect higher levels of confidence in the quality of presidential elections when monitors are involved. As stated in the previous chapter, I hypothesize that adherence to the norm of international election monitoring is likely to increase voter confidence in electoral efficacy and transparency in presidential elections. In this chapter, I describe my research design and methodology. I begin with my hypothesis and an arrow diagram that explains the correlation between the variables and the expected outcome. I follow with a discussion of how I will operationalize my variables. I then discuss my method, a comparative case study design using multiple within-case comparisons for each of the cases. Lastly, I describe the process of selecting my cases.

Hypothesis and Expected Outcomes

I hypothesize that increased levels of adherence to the norm of international election monitoring following its development leads to increased levels of voter confidence in the efficacy and transparency of the domestic electoral process in presidential elections. Therefore as depicted in Figure 2.1, I expect that in states where international election monitors are present, citizens will perceive higher levels of efficacy and transparency in domestic presidential

elections. If my hypothesis does not hold true, international election monitors will have negative or no impact on voter confidence levels.

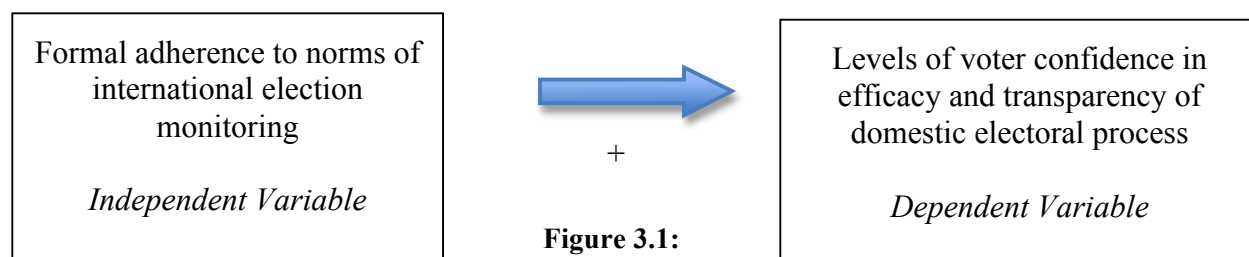


Figure 3.1:
Hypothesized Model

Independent Variable: Formal Adherence to the Norm of International Election Monitoring

I use formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring as the independent variable in this study. Most literature discussing the evolution of norms discusses “internalization” as one of the important steps in the normative life cycle. The term internalization, however, suggests acceptance to the point where the norm has become second nature and is no longer questioned (Kelley 2008; Finnemore and Sikkink 1998). I would argue that the norm of international election monitoring has not yet been widely internalized due to states that continue to refuse to invite monitors to their elections, and states that invite monitors but continue to cheat, showing a lack of acceptance of the norm. Therefore, I operationalize the independent variable of formal adherence to the norm as the presence of international monitors at elections by examining whether or not states invited monitors and whether monitors accepted this invitation. I gather information about monitors’ presence in state elections through organizations’ websites and publications, monitoring reports, and literature discussing elections in states. Several of these organizations include the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Carter Center, the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), The Research Group on the Democratic, Economic and Social Development of Africa (GERDDES), and *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (la Francophonie)*.

Dependent Variable: Levels of Voter Confidence in Efficacy of Domestic Electoral Process

Voters' confidence in the electoral system is an abstract concept that cannot be perfectly quantified. It combines several different factors, including voter turnout, evaluations of election quality and integrity, freeness and fairness of elections, trust in political institutions, satisfaction with democracy, and electoral efficacy through representation and accountability. Additionally, the literature argues that higher levels of voter confidence are positively related to voter turnout (Birch 2010). Therefore, I operationalize voter confidence levels by examining the levels of these factors mentioned above in presidential elections. I use data from surveys conducted by Afrobarometer when they are available, as well as examining monitors' assessments of elections and the literature surrounding specific elections in the selected cases.

Methodological Approach

In this study, I use a comparative case study approach to examine the relationship between the variables. In a comparative case study, "cases are chosen for the presence or absence of factors that a political theory has indicated are important" (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 198). A comparative case study allows a researcher to examine a variety of data available and analyzing it by controlling for the most significant variables discussed in the literature. When case studies support a hypothesis, this method allows the researcher to look further into the way the independent variable affects the dependent variable and explain how that relationship is carried out (Van Evera 1997, 54). Additionally, the comparative case study method "permits a deeper understanding of causal processes, the explication of general explanatory theory, and the development of hypotheses regarding difficult-to-observe phenomena" (Johnson and Reynolds 2012, 200). Voter confidence levels are challenging to

observe because they are comprised of many different factors that all aim to capture an abstract concept. While it can be challenging to argue that a change in the independent variable is what affects the confidence levels being discussed, there are ways through which to minimize the possible influences of extraneous factors. By using “a backdrop of fairly uniform case conditions,” (Van Evera 1997, 52) the researcher is able to eliminate the effects of outside variables on the relationship between the variables being examined in a particular study.

I use a congruence procedure—multiple within-case comparisons—to examine presidential elections from 1990, when the norm of international election monitoring spread most rapidly, to 2011, within the selected cases. “Cases allowing many observations are better test laboratories because they allow more measures of congruence, and tests that rest on more measures are stronger” (Van Evera 1997, 62). Tracing elections over time will help to analyze why changes in the variables occur (Lipson 2005).

Case Selection

I choose to focus my study on elections in Africa because “some of the most interesting and challenging material to study this topic comes from there” (Abbink and Hesseling 2000, 10). International actors question the commitment of African leaders to democracy more than they do in other regions of the world (Geisler 1993, 613). One reason for this is the fluctuating progress that has been made in achieving democracy across the continent. Scholars still question the future of elections and democracy in Africa. While some believe that African countries are making slow but steady progress towards stable democratic systems, others believe that when the international pressure to have a democracy subsides, “the African states will slide back into political strife, dictatorship and military rule” (Adejumobi 2000, 71). I aim to provide further

insight to democracy in Africa by examining citizens' confidence levels in domestic presidential elections in African states.

Kaarbo and Beasley (1999) suggest that factors such as culture, time period, and legal system are dimensions to be considered when attempting comparability of cases in situations where these factors might affect the dependent variable (380). In the case of this study, colonial history is important. In West Africa, "more or less autonomous electoral commissions are thus a tradition since independence in most anglophone countries [...]; whereas electoral commissions are a relatively new innovation in the francophone" countries (Fall, Hounkpe, Jinadu and Kambale 2011, 2). In an attempt to eliminate the influences of outside variables, I chose cases with the same colonial history to eliminate antecedent variables caused by historical differences of states left over from colonial times that could impact voters' confidence levels. Elections held in francophone countries at the end of colonization were still conducted under the French system, whereas anglophone countries acted more independently in the organization of their elections (Fall et al. 2011, 2-3). These differences have implications for how elections after independence took place. Therefore, I limit my cases to states in francophone West Africa.

To select my cases, I began by compiling a list of the eight countries in francophone West Africa. These states are Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, and Senegal. I then examined the history of elections in each of these states through sources including Afrobarometer, the African Elections Database, and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) World Factbook, and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) Election Guide. I made sure that substantial information was available about the elections in these eight countries. In selecting cases, it is important to consider data richness, because if large quantities of data are not available for each case, the case study cannot effectively draw

conclusions about the relationship between variables (Van Evera 1997). Mauritania and Burkina Faso have very limited information available about their electoral histories.

Mauritania's first president seized power in a military coup in 1989 and held flawed elections to stay in power for two decades (Central Intelligence Agency 2013a). The country had one fair election in 2007, and does not have enough available information for this study. Burkina Faso has had the same president since he gained power in a military coup in 1987, so I ruled this country out as well (Central Intelligence Agency 2013a).

I next looked at the information available about election monitoring missions being present in the remaining six francophone West African countries by examining information from election monitors such as the Carter Center, AU, NDI and *la Francophonie*, as well as information in the CIA World Factbook and literature about monitors' presence in countries' elections. Because I wanted to study the effects of election monitors' presence on voter confidence levels, I picked three cases in which international monitors were present at all of the presidential elections between 1990 and 2011. I selected one case where the elections have consistently been regular, and the country is considered an electoral democracy and well on its way to democratic consolidation. I wanted the second case to be another country that is considered an electoral democracy, but which has not had as smooth of a transition to democracy. In contrast to the other two cases of fairly successful democracies, I wanted the last case to be a country that has an uncertain democratic future because of the obstacles it has faced throughout its journey towards democracy. These cases in various stages of democratic consolidation allow me to examine voters' confidence levels in three countries with the same colonial history that have taken different paths since their independence, and to examine the impacts that international election monitors have had on the citizens of these countries and their

perceptions of their electoral system. The three cases I selected are Benin—which has had a representative government since 1989 and has held regular elections, some with irregularities, since that date, Mali—which is an electoral democracy that has held regular elections despite low levels of voter turnout, and was considered one of West Africa’s stronger democracies until a military coup in March 2012, and Guinea—which had its first free and fair elections in 2010 after a long history of turmoil, dictatorships, and false promises of democracy (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2010a; Hyde 2011; Central Intelligence Agency 2013a; Fomunyoh 2001).

Summary

In order to conduct a comparative case study with multiple in-case comparisons, I selected three countries to use as my cases. I will examine the elections in Benin, Mali, and Guinea between 1990 and 2011 to analyze how the presence of election monitors affected voter confidence levels. In the next chapter I conduct my first case study.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MONITORS IN BENIN'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Introduction

An essential element of the proper functioning of democracies that is often overlooked is citizens' trust in the democratic process and the institutions that comprise it. When citizens trust the political system of their country to function properly, they are more inclined to be a participatory member of the democratic process. "Political efficacy influences general political trust" (Nunnally 2011, 925), so when voters feel that their voice can be heard in the political arena through their vote, they are likely to feel more politically efficacious and therefore have higher levels of trust in the political system. Because of this, it is important for the electoral process to operate smoothly and in a manner that is perceived as legitimate and transparent by citizens, parties involved, and the international community. "But even in countries that are formally democratic, such formal trappings of democracy as free, fair and competitive elections seem to be coexisting with the informal practices of clientelism, corruption, ethnic mobilization and personal rule by largely unchecked presidents" (Houngnikpo 2011, 4). In the following chapters, I will conduct three case studies to examine the presidential elections in Benin, Mali, and Guinea, to test my hypothesis that the presence of international election monitors in countries' presidential elections increases voters' confidence levels in the efficacy and legitimacy of their country's electoral process. By closely examining the history and unique circumstances of each country's elections, I will be able to evaluate the relationship between international election monitors' presence in a country and the citizens' trust and confidence in their system. I will examine data that speaks to electoral integrity—largely surveys of citizens' opinions. After analyzing the results within each case study individually, I will study the data

collectively so that I can draw a conclusion about the impact of formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring on voters' confidence levels in the next chapter.

Historical Background

“In Africa, Benin is considered a model of democracy because it has successfully established a democratic political system based on consensus” (Houngnikpo 2011, 4). Benin became independent from its colonial power, France, on August 1, 1960. The country was called the Republic of Dahomey at the time (Houngnikpo 2011, 6). For the next decade, Benin experienced political unrest and a series of military coups. In 1972 Major Mathieu Kérékou led a military coup and assumed rule of Dahomey (Dossou-Yovo 1999, 62-64). Kérékou's Marxist-Leninist regime came into power in October 1972 and ruled for 17 years (Houngnikpo 2011, 4-5). He set up a military national revolutionary council and later a national revolutionary assembly that represented the people. In 1979, the assembly decided that Kérékou would be the only presidential nominee, and elected him to the position in 1980. In 1989, *Beninois* rebelled against the bankruptcy of the government, unpaid civil servant salaries, and claims of government corruption that were running rampant. A series of demonstrations were held that led to the start of Benin's democratization process (Battle and Seely 2007, 4).

Despite some tumultuous times throughout its early years of independence, Benin became acknowledged and respected as the first African country to smoothly transition from a dictatorship to a multiparty system (Houngnikpo 2011, 6). Through that transition, Benin set in motion Africa's “Third Wave” of democratization and became widely recognized as one of Africa's beacons of hope for democracy on the continent (Battle and Seely 2007, 1).

Independent Variable: Formal Adherence to the Norm of International Election Monitoring

I measure the independent variable of my study, formal adherence to of the norm of international election monitoring by examining elections where governments invite international monitors. The presence of national and international monitors in elections in Benin, as in other emerging democracies, provides a sense of legitimacy to elections, which previously were marked with risks of violent reactions such as protests and attempted coups. Citizens distrusted elections based on the historical organization and administration of elections, which were neither free nor democratic before 1991 in Benin (Adjahouinou 1994, 218). Therefore, Beninese needed a reason to believe that the electoral process had changed, and that the results would really reflect their votes.

Election monitors provided an opportunity for every party involved to take strategic advantage of their presence. Kérékou hoped the monitors would provide credibility and assurance of legitimacy to his victory. Opposition parties hoped that monitors would be able to identify and overturn any election fraud that unfairly gave Kérékou power, and even justify a coup if the elections failed to be impartial. Additionally, financial advisors in the government were hopeful that if Benin's elections were perceived internationally as legitimate by being awarded a "certificate of democratic authenticity" (Adjahouinou 1994, 219), institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund would be more willing to lend financial support to Benin that could help the country address its struggles with its balance of payments.

Elections in Benin

In February 1990, under pressure from France and Benin's civilians, leader Mathieu Kérékou held a national conference that created a new constitution led to the installment of a temporary civilian-led government that was dedicated to the promotion of democracy. The country's democracy has strengthened since 1990 (Houngnikpo 2011, 4). Benin held "relatively free, fair, and transparent legislative and presidential elections" in March 1991 (Houngnikpo 2011, 5).

The national conference held on February 19, 1990 proved to be the start of a new era in Benin's history. The ruling party invited individuals of all economic and social levels to attend the conference at Hotel PLM-Aledjo of Cotonou and to play a role in the restructuring of the government. While these citizens wanted to implement changes, the government hoped that the changes occurring would be superficial rather than structural so that the regime in power would remain there. Through a national referendum, the parties involved drafted and approved a new constitution (Houngnikpo 2011, 8). Maxism-Leninism was no longer Benin's official ideology, and real changes were set in motion, perhaps contrary to Kérékou's initial intentions (Dossou-Yovo 1999, 67).

The 1990 national conference appears to have encouraged a new type of relationship between the military and the government, as the military has remained uninvolved in elections since (Houngnikpo 2011, 5). The transitional government that was in power following the national conference of 1991 was able to successfully address some of the problems relating to corruption and economic issues that had been building over the years of less effective government (Houngnikpo 2011, 9). On February 27, delegates to the conference elected Nicephore Soglo as Prime Minister, a new position in the Beninese government (Dossou-Yovo

1999, 68). With these changes in place, the government was able to pay salaries on time and re-open schools that had been shut down, and with some time and effort, was able to address greater issues within the educational system, including the university curriculum (Houngnikpo 2011, 9).

The 1991 Elections

The first presidential elections took place in two rounds. Without a candidate winning a majority of the votes in the first round of Benin's presidential elections, a run-off election is held (Battle and Seely 2007, 2). The two elections took place on March 10 and 24, 1991. Prime Minister Nicephore Soglo was Kérékou's biggest opponent, and ended up winning the election (Houngnikpo 2011, 6). In contrast to the Marxist dictator Kérékou, Soglo represented "the urban intellectual elite from the South" (Strandsbjerg 2000, 400). He was elected as the president and was inaugurated on April 4, 1991 (Houngnikpo 2011, 9). President Soglo was a former World Bank official, and served as the interim Prime Minister of Benin (Houngnikpo 2011, 9). Soglo's work in both of these positions helped guide his interest in reforming the economy of Benin and steering it towards economic liberalization (Houngnikpo 2011, 9). Citizens hoped that he would turn around Benin's economy, but the CFA franc devalued by 50% in 1994, which wracked the economy (Seely 2007, 196). Many Beninese perceived Soglo as arrogant, possibly due to his lack of affiliation with any particular political party for the first year of his term (Houngnikpo 2011, 9). In October 1993, Soglo lost the majority of members of the National Assembly's support, making his presidency much more of a challenge (Houngnikpo 2011, 9-10). Soglo also faced charges of nepotism, a harmful allegation in the period leading up to the 1996 election.

The government of Benin invited both international and national groups and organizations to observe its 1991 presidential elections. *La Commission Béninoise des Droits de*

l'Homme [Benin Human Rights Commission] (CBDH) was a domestic observer present at the elections. *Le Groupe d'Études et de Recherches sur la Démocratie et le Développement Economique et Social* [Research Group on the Democratic, Economic and Social Development of Africa] (GERDDES), a non-partisan, pan-African NGO based in Benin, sent observers to the elections as well. Other observers came to Benin from Côte D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Canada, the United States, Germany, and France (Adjahouinou 1994, 220).

The 1996 Elections

Kérékou re-emerged in Benin's political arena as the face of the opposition to Soglo during his term. A slogan endorsing Kérékou during these elections reflected the link between religion and politics in Benin: "In spite of the past 17 years, it is Kérékou that God has chosen for this people" (Strandsbjerg 2000, 395). While Soglo won more support than Kérékou in the first round of the 1996 elections held on March 3, Kérékou was able to win the second round (Houngnikpo 2011, 10). Kérékou garnered almost 90% of the votes from Benin's two northern districts, where he was from, as well as around 50% of votes in the South, Soglo's home region (Strandsbjerg 2000, 400).

The government of Benin again invited international observers to its presidential elections in 1996. In the first round of elections on March 3, there were many different observer groups present. Several were sub-groups of *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, an organization that works to unite the French speaking countries of the world through political actions and other methods to achieve peace, sustainable development, and support for the French language (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie 2013). The sub-groups included *l'Agence de coopération culturelle et technique* [Agency for Cultural and Technical

Cooperation] (ACCT), that had six experts who represented Canada, France, Gabon, Madagascar, Senegal, and Togo, as well as *l'Association internationale des parlementaires de langue française* [International Association of French Speaking Parliamentarians] (AIPLF), that had three representatives who were from Belgium, Canada, and Burkina Faso. This team worked with observers from several other organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and GERDDES. The National Democratic Institute (NDI), chose to work independently from the other observer groups and organizations. It sent an international election observer mission comprised of 17 individuals. The members were election experts, political and civic leaders, and experts in democratic development (National Democratic Institute 1996a). NDI, like the other international delegations present, announced its purposes for being in Benin “to demonstrate the international community’s continued support for the democratic process in Benin,” (National Democratic Institute 1996a, 1) “to learn from the Beninese people about the nature of their electoral process and its implications for the further consolidation of Benin’s democratic institutions” (National Democratic Institute 1996a, 1), and to “underscore to the Beninese public the need for credible elections that would strengthen the country’s nascent democratic institutions” (National Democratic Institute 2002, 1). The monitors’ goal was not to run the elections or decide the outcome. The consensus among the delegations of monitors was that the elections were transparent, regular, and democratic (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, 1996).

In the second round of the 1996 elections that took place on March 18, many of the same observer groups were present. ACCT and AIPLF worked under *L’Agence de la Francophonie*. The election experts represented Cameroon, Belgium, France, Gabon, Togo, Canada, and Senegal. The observers again were satisfied with the transparency and efficacy with which the

elections operated, and the final results confirmed Kérékou's victory (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, 1996). The Constitutional Court reviewed the 1996 electoral process and confirmed its outcome, even though there had been claims of vote rigging and intimidation, among other types of electoral manipulation on the part of Kérékou (Houngnikpo 2011, 10).

Kérékou's presidential term beginning in 1996 was called "Kérékou II," but did not prove to be much different than his earlier time in power (Strandsbjerg 2000, 400). While *Beninois* hoped that Kérékou would use his power to serve the people more than he had done during his dictatorship, by May 1997 it became clear that this would not be the case. Prime Minister Adrien Houngbédji withdrew his support for Kérékou in 1998 and resigned from his position (Houngnikpo 2011, 11). There was growing dissatisfaction with Kérékou leading up to the 2001 elections because of declining living conditions and strained relations between the government and workers (Houngnikpo 2011, 11).

The 2001 Elections

While the 1996 presidential elections were fairly clean, the 2001 presidential elections were less so. There were 17 candidates vying for the presidency (Seely 2007, 197). There was a boycott of the run-off poll by the main opposition candidates, resulting from dissatisfaction with certain irregularities in the electoral process (Houngnikpo 2011, 6). When Kérékou came away with a considerable lead in the first round of the election held on March 4, 2001, the Beninese responded by challenging the results and accusing Kérékou of rigging the vote. The challengers questioned the variation between the results found by the Elections Committee and the Constitutional Court (Houngnikpo 2011, 11).

The government of Benin again invited international election monitors in 2001. The observers represented organizations including *la Francophonie*, APF, *la Délégation aux Droits de l'Homme et à la Démocratie* [The Delegation for Human Rights and Democracy] (DDHD), and *le Bureau Régional pour l'Afrique de l'Ouest* [The Regional Bureau for West Africa] (BRAO), and came from Chad, Albania, Belgium, France, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Canada, Lebanon, and Senegal. On March 4, the observers divided into six groups and visited about 200 voting sites to monitor the Election Day activities. When the results of the first round of elections were announced, the first reaction was a verbal protest from Amoussou, the fourth place candidate, who had received between 4% and 8% of the votes. The results varied between those announced by *la Commission Électorale Nationale Autonome* [the National Autonomous Electoral Commission] (CENA) and the Constitutional Court. Next, the runner-up, Soglo, voiced his opinion that there were irregularities in the election. The Constitutional Court disregarded Soglo's complaints and set the date for the run-off election to be March 22 (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, 2001).

Soglo refused to participate further in the election due to the ignored accusations of fraud (Houngnikpo 2011, 11). Therefore, CENA and the Constitutional Court agreed to allow the third leading candidate, Adrien Houngbédji, to participate in the runoff with Kérékou (Houngnikpo 2011, 11). Houngbédji turned down the invitation in an act of support and endorsement for Soglo. The next candidate to whom the Commission turned was Bruno Amoussou, an ally of Kérékou. In the runoff election, Kérékou came away with 84% of the vote, a result that was highly contested and believed by few to be fair. On the day of the runoff election, the election monitors split into five groups to visit voting stations as they had for the first round of elections. The process was similar, yet there were several differences in the results, including a decrease in

voter turnout, improvement in the transportation of election materials to the voting stations, and an increase in the number of blank ballots. The monitors applauded the media's involvement in publicizing the elections and reemphasized the necessity of minimizing irregularities in the voting process (L'organisation internationale de la Francophonie, 2001).

The 2001 re-election of Kérékou "amid allegations of massive fraud was resented by many and seen as a fading shadow of democracy" (Houngnikpo 2011, 11). Kérékou's second term brought with it a worsening economic situation that in turn caused social turmoil. To the relief of many Beninese, the constitution stipulates that the maximum number of terms an individual is eligible to serve as president is two terms. That meant Kérékou could not serve another term as president in the future. Former president Soglo was also ineligible to serve another term because of a constitutional age limit placed on presidential candidates (Houngnikpo 2011, 12).

The 2006 Elections

At the end of his term, Kérékou announced he would be stepping down, an act which dispelled many suspicions that the president would attempt to amend the constitution in the hopes of pursuing a third presidential term (Houngnikpo 2011, 12). However, there were still some issues casting doubt on the legitimacy of the upcoming electoral process. In 2005, Kérékou announced that there were not enough funds to hold the 2006 presidential elections or the 2007 local and legislative elections, and that the government would hold combined elections in 2008 (Houngnikpo 2011; Seely 2007). This sparked a very public reaction, mobilizing Beninese to call for "a national fund-a-poll" (Houngnikpo 2011, 12) with their own donations to CENA (Seely 2007, 198). CENA moved forward with arrangements for the elections. Kérékou

voiced his opinion publicly that he suspected there were already flaws with the operation of the election, seemingly in an attempt to gain amnesty after his presidency ended (Seely 2007, 198). After weeks of planning, the presidential elections were held in 2006, as was originally scheduled.

The 2006 presidential elections were a slight interruption to Benin's record of successful democratic practice even though they were able to bring to power a new president (Houngnikpo 2011, 5-6). The elections included 26 candidates. One popular candidate was Thomas Boni Yayi, the former director of the West African Development Bank. Many citizens perceived him to be the "cleanest of the candidates" (Houngnikpo 2011, 12). Using the slogan, "Things can change! Things will change! Things must change" (Houngnikpo 2011, 12) in his campaign, Yayi dedicated himself to improving governance and the private sector during his presidency. The economy proved to be the main issue for most of the candidates running. Corruption was another focus in the elections, after the many accusations of patronage and nepotism during Kérékou's presidency (Seely 2007, 198).

There was a high turnout at the polling stations, with between 77% and 82% of registered voters actually casting their votes (Seely 2007, 198). Yayi and Houngbedji were the candidates with the most votes in the first round of elections. Voter turnout was lower in the run-off election, with only 68%-70% of those registered casting a vote. After close results in the first round, Yayi won the second round by a large margin (Seely 2007, 199). His opponent acknowledged his defeat, and election monitors from organizations including the United Nations (UN), *la Francophonie*, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) called the election free, fair, and transparent (Houngnikpo 2011, 12-13). Despite the

irregularities at the beginning of the elections, they proved to effectively put a new president into office in a democratic manner.

Yayi's victory caused celebrations in one of Benin's major cities, Cotonou, and gave citizens a renewed hope for the future of their country and its governance. Yayi's experience at the West African Development Bank prepared him to help Benin achieve economic growth. He also aimed to educate women, revamp agricultural production, improve health care, and minimize the incidence of corruption (Houngnikpo 2011, 13).

The 2011 Elections

President Yayi set out to win re-election in 2011. His main competitor was expected to be Adrien Houngbedji, but there were a total of thirteen other candidates. The 2011 elections were delayed twice due to claims that voters' names had been left off of the voter registration. While originally intended to occur on February 27, the election was postponed and polls finally opened on March 13, 2011 (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2011; Africa Research Bulletin 2011, 18763). The elections revealed that despite the growth in democracy since independence, Benin's democracy was not mature and still remained fragile (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2011, 3). Observers from ECOWAS and *la Francophonie* were present during the 2011 elections. The members of the missions were from Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, France, Ghana, and Senegal (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2011).

After the elections, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon issued a statement declaring that the first-round was "a testament to the patience and civic responsibility of the people of Benin" (Africa Research Bulletin 2011, 18763). ECOWAS, however, issued a statement of

“concern over the escalating tensions in some parts of the country after the announcement of the provisional results by the Independent National Electoral Commission” (Africa Research Bulletin 2011, 18763). Just three days after the elections, on March 16, hundreds of opposition supporters held protests outside of the electoral commission in the belief that the commission was not handling the election results in the proper methods. On March 21, the election results were released and showed that President Boni Yayi had won 53% of the votes. With this majority, no run-off election was necessary. The constitutional court confirmed these results, but opposition supporters continued to make claims that the elections had been fraudulent (Africa Research Bulletin 2011, 18763).

Dependent Variable: Levels of Citizens’ Confidence in the Electoral Process

“Citizens in Africa look towards elections as instrument of choice as well as change from the past legacy of dictatorship and impunity by the rulers” (Alemika 2007, 1). When the elections do not live up to citizens’ expectations, they are likely to lose trust in political institutions, including the government and the electoral process itself, as well as reflecting a decreased level of satisfaction with democracy in their country. The levels of trust in political institutions are an “indirect measure of regime legitimacy which is expected to be affected by the quality of election that brought the incumbent government to power” (Alemika 2007, 5). In this section I use data from Afrobarometer, a non-partisan research group that conducts research on social, political, and economic issues in Africa. The data was collected in surveys collected in 2005, 2008, and 2011. I therefore use the respective data to reflect public opinion following the 2001, 2006, and 2011 presidential elections in Benin. Public opinion data for elections in Benin prior to 2001 was not available, so I analyze the results from the three most recent

elections to draw a conclusion about the relationship between the presence of international election monitors and citizens' levels of trust in the legitimacy of the elections.

A prerequisite for success in any election is voter turnout. People will only go to the polls on voting day when they feel that political participation is worth the opportunity cost of sacrificing time away from the home, family, or job to cast a vote (Weatherford 1992). Benin had fairly high levels of voter turnout in the 2001, 2006, and 2011 elections (see Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Voter Turnout

Did you vote in the last election?

	2005	2008	2011
Yes	89%	91%	88%
No- decided not to	1%	3%	1%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

The results shown in Table 4.1 show fairly consistent levels of voter turnout, with results ranging only 3 percentage points from 88% to 91%. This high percentage shows that voters perceive there to be some advantage to casting their vote because of their choice to participate in the elections. Other possible responses to the survey question included that voters were prevented from voting, could not find a polling station, or were not listed on the national registry. I chose to only highlight “yes” and “no” responses that displayed a conscious decision to participate or not participate in the elections to examine the trend in voter turnout over time. The highest result was 91% of those surveyed who reported voting in the 2006 election. This is likely the result of a successful election in 2001 that gave the population more trust in the system, therefore providing incentive to participate in the next set of presidential elections. The problems with delayed elections that started in 2006 and continued in 2011, along with the tension surrounding the 2011 elections could explain the slight decrease in voter turnout results from the most recent election.

Another indicator of citizen's trust in their country's electoral system comes from their support of democracy. Citizens are more likely to participate in the system if it is one that promotes the type of government they feel would best serve the country. Table 4.2 shows that from 2005 to 2011, democracy remained the form of government most supported by the Beninese people. There was a leap in approval for democracy after the 2006 elections, from 70% preferring democracy in 2005 to 81% in 2008. Yayi's election and promise for economic and social development in Benin could explain this increase.

Table 4.2 Type of Government

What type of government is preferable?

	2005	2008	2011
Democracy	70%	81%	76%
Non-democracy	6%	10%	15%
Doesn't matter	9%	7%	9%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

Table 4.3 shows citizens' perceptions of the state of democracy in Benin at the time of the survey. The responses show interesting patterns in the public's view of democracy in their country. In 2005 and 2008, only 1% thought that Benin was not a democracy. In 2011, this grew to be 4% of the population who did not consider Benin a democracy. While a 3% increase does not seem drastic, it seems unlikely that as a country spends more time developing its democracy, the population perceives it to become less democratic. This could be attributed to citizens' changing perceptions of what qualifies a democracy and perhaps even rising expectations of how democracy in Benin should function.

As shown in the table below, the percentage of people who perceived Benin to be a democracy with major problems decreased from 2005 to 2008, but then increased slightly again in 2011. Contrastingly, the number of people who viewed Benin as a democracy with minor problems grew slightly in each round of the survey. The percentage of people who considered

Benin a full democracy varied the most; from 20% in 2005, to 37% in 2008, back down to 27% in 2011.

Table 4.3 State of Democracy

How would you describe the state of democracy in Benin today?

	2005	2008	2011
Not a democracy	1%	1%	4%
Democracy with major problems	27%	18%	25%
Democracy with minor problems	34%	39%	43%
Full democracy	20%	37%	27%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

While the majority of Beninese clearly want Benin to be a democracy and perceive it as such, in order to understand their trust in political institutions, including the electoral process, it is important to understand their satisfaction with democracy. Table 4.4 shows citizen's levels of satisfaction with democracy over time. Over the course of the survey rounds, the percentage of those not at all satisfied with democracy in Benin remained under 10%. The percentage of those not very satisfied with Benin's democracy decreased from 26% in 2005 to 21% in 2008, but increased again in 2011 to 31%. Those who identified as being fairly or very satisfied with democracy in Benin increased from 2005 to 2008, but declined again between 2008 and 2011.

Table 4.4 Satisfaction with Democracy

How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Benin?

	2005	2008	2011
Not at all satisfied	9%	7%	9%
Not very satisfied	26%	21%	31%
Fairly satisfied	31%	39%	40%
Very satisfied	17%	30%	20%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

Narrowing the scope from satisfaction with democracy to satisfaction with the electoral process, citizens were asked their preferred method of choosing leaders. Table 4.5 shows that in 2005, 94% of those surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that leaders should be chosen through

elections. In 2008, 80% agreed or strongly agreed, and in 2011, 92% agreed or strongly agreed.

These results show that a strong majority of the population favors democratic elections to alternative methods of selecting leaders.

Table 4.5 Electing Leaders

Statement A: We should choose our leaders through regular, free, and fair elections.

Statement B: Because elections can produce bad results, we should adopt another method of choosing leaders.

	2005	2008	2011
Strongly agree with A	90%	43%	71%
Agree with A	4%	36%	21%
Strongly agree with B	3%	8%	4%
Agree with B	2%	12%	6%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

In order to evaluate citizens' trust in the electoral system, it is important to understand their perceptions of how elections operate. One way this can be quantified is by examining their level of trust in the National Electoral Commission (CENA) in Benin. CENA is responsible for the administration of elections, so feelings of satisfaction with and trust in the electoral process often stem from how much the population trusts CENA. As shown in Table 4.6, while levels of trust in CENA decreased from 2005 to 2008, they increased in 2011. However, the levels of trust remained relatively low, with only 54% of those surveyed expressing trust on some level in CENA. If my hypothesis holds true, the presence of international election monitors would increase citizens' trust in the electoral process despite the relatively low levels of trust in the electoral commission.

Table 4.6 Institutional Trust

How much do you trust the National Electoral Commission?

	2005	2008	2011
Not at all	23%	28%	18%
Only a little	23%	29%	26%
Somewhat	14%	28%	25%
A lot	23%	16%	29%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

The main measure of citizens' confidence in Benin's presidential elections comes from their perceptions of the freeness and fairness of the elections. Table 4.7 shows the perceived freeness and fairness of elections. When polled in 2005 about the freeness and fairness of the 2001 elections, only 3% of those surveyed voiced that the elections were not at all free and fair. 16% felt that the elections were free and fair with major problems, and 30% agreed but thought the problems were minor. 44% of those surveyed thought the elections were completely free and fair. In 2008, when asked about the 2006 presidential elections, the percentage of those who perceived the elections as neither free nor fair decreased to 1%. The perception of the elections as free and fair with major problems also decreased, by 8%. More people expressed the opinion that the elections were free and fair with minor problems in 2008 than in 2005. There was also an increase in the percentage of people who rated the elections as being completely free and fair, from 44% to 51%. In 2011, there was a major increase in the percentage of individuals surveyed who rated the elections as not free and fair from 1% to 11%. The percentage who rated the elections as free and fair with major problems also increased, while the percentage of ratings describing the elections as free and fair with minor problems decreased to 22%, lower than in either 2005 or 2008. The ratings labeling the elections as completely free and fair increased slightly from 2008 to 2011, from 51% to 52%.

Table 4.7 Freeness and Fairness

How would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?

	2005	2008	2011
Not free and fair	3%	1%	11%
Free and fair with major problems	16%	8%	12%
Free and fair with minor problems	30%	37%	22%
Completely free and fair	44%	51%	52%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011

These results show mixed phenomena. While the percentage of citizens surveyed who responded that the elections were completely free and fair increased from 2005 to 2011 by 8%,

the percentage of those who rated the elections as neither free nor fair also increased by 8%. Over the six year period between surveys, the percentage of people who rated the elections as free and fair with major problems decreased by 4%, and the responses describing the elections as free and fair with minor problems decreased by 8%. 2008 was the year in which the results were highest in recording the elections as either completely free and fair or free and fair with minor problems, with 88% responding in these categories. In both 2005 and 2011, the results in these two categories of ratings equaled 74%. It is promising for the future of democracy in Benin that over 50% of those surveyed responded that the 2006 and 2011 elections were completely free and fair, but less promising that the percentage of people who categorized the election as not free or fair in 2011 was 11%.

Table 4.8 below shows various ratings of democracy in Benin over time. In 2011, those surveyed were asked to reflect upon the level of democracy in 2011, in 2001, before 1990, and where they want Benin's democracy to be in the future. Using a scale from one to ten, respondents rated the level of democracy. I compiled the responses and grouped them into two categories; I considered results under 5 to be signs of nonexistent, limited, or weak democracy, and results 5 and over as strengthening or strong democracy. 86% of respondents quantified democracy in Benin in 2011 as a 5 or over. 70% described democracy in Benin in 2001 as a 5 or over. When asked about Benin under one party rule before 1990, only 13% rated it as a 5 or over, while 83% rated it fewer than 5. When asked about where they want Benin's democracy to be in the future, 94% responded with a 5 or higher, and only 1% gave an answer under 5. These answers show a clear progression in Benin's democracy, especially from 1990 to 2011. While there are many factors that could have contributed to the 16% increase in perceptions of

democracy between the elections in 2001 and 2011, one possible explanation could be the presence of international election monitors as a legitimizing force behind the process.

Table 4.8 Democracy in Benin

On a scale from 0-10 where 0 is completely undemocratic and 10 means completely democratic, where would you place the following:

Level of Democracy	Total Under 5	Total 5 and Over
Today (in 2011)	14%	86%
Benin in 2001	30%	70%
Benin under one party rule before 1990	83%	13%
Where you want the country to be in the future	1%	94%

Source: Afrobarometer 2011

Conclusions

The Afrobarometer surveys did not directly ask about trust in international election monitors, so it is impossible to conclusively determine that changes in citizens' levels of trust in the elections were caused by election monitors. Much of the data shows that confidence in democracy and the elections in Benin was higher in 2008 than in 2005 or 2011, showing that the effects of the 2006 elections had a strong impact on citizens' perceptions of democracy during the period following the elections. The 2011 data was collected in June and July of 2011 (Afrobarometer 2011), so citizens may not have had time to fully understand the impact of President Yayi's election or reflect upon the electoral process that took place merely months before the survey was given. Election monitors, including many monitors from the same organizations, were present at the 2001, 2006, and 2011 elections. While their presence during presidential elections was constant, citizens' perceptions of the freeness and fairness of elections, along with their satisfaction with democracy was not constant.

It is possible that citizens' changing perceptions of the characteristics and capabilities of monitors present in the elections impacted their conclusions about Benin's electoral process. Brancati (2012) writes that the mandates and ability of monitors to carry out their mandates are the two factors most relevant to citizens' perceptions of the monitors (6). Since representatives from organizations such as *la Francophonie* were present at all three of the elections included in the survey data, and even elections before survey data was available, it is likely that citizens gained trust in the capabilities of the monitors as well as an understanding of their mandate by the 2011 elections. The increasing levels of satisfaction with democracy, trust in CENA, and perceptions of freeness and fairness in elections suggest that the presence of monitors during the elections was a factor in this increase. The decreasing levels between 2006 and 2011, however, do not support my hypothesis that formal adherence to the norm of international election monitoring increases citizens' confidence in the efficacy and transparency of the electoral process.

CHAPTER FIVE: INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MONITORS IN MALI'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Historical Background

Mali was a French colony from the 1890s until 1960 in what was then called French Sudan. 1945 marked the beginning steps of the democratization process in the country. The French allowed the African citizens to vote in the elections that year (Lange 2000, 230). Since the French did not gain many financial benefits from the territory, they had little interest in investing too many resources into the development of the colony. When the French were leaving in 1950, they encouraged Modibo Keita, the leader of Mali, and Leopold Senghor, the leader of Senegal, to form the Mali Federation for consolidation in the political and economic arenas of governing the region. On June 20, 1960, the federation became officially independent from France. In August of that year, Mali and Senegal declared their independence from one another, and on September 22, the state was officially named the Republic of Mali (Clark 1995; Lange 2000). Modibo Keita became Mali's first president. He ruled the state through a one-party, socialist system. Due to a depressed economy and low standards of living, Lieutenant Moussa Traoré led a military coup in 1968 to overthrow Keita. Most Malians were ready for a change in governance because of the many problems that resulted from Keita's rule (Clark 1995, 207-209).

General Moussa Traoré led a military dictatorship government in Mali from November 1968 until he was overthrown in a popular revolution in March 1991. The economic situation had not improved much, meaning that people were still living in poor conditions. Other problems included corruption, repression of political opposition, and violence during student and labor protests (Clark 1995, 210). There was again dissatisfaction with the regime and pressure

for a change to be made. “People were weary of the old dictatorship, which like many in Africa was vaguely Marxist-Leninist in organization; further, the demise of communism in the Soviet Union had destroyed whatever legitimacy such regimes still had” (Pringle 2006, 32). Thousands of citizens took to the streets and called for the installation of a multiparty system (Gorée Institute 2009; Camara 2011; Freedom House 2011a). The riots resulted in the deaths of between 50 and 200 rioters killed by armed forces and the violence surrounding the demonstrations in the capital city alone (Clark 1995). Lt. Colonel Amadou Toumani Touré (popularly known as ATT) led the coup d’état that arrested Traoré and overthrew him (Freedom House 2011b). After the pro-democracy forces ejected Moussa Traoré from power, ATT handed power over to a transitional government that lasted a year, called the Transition Committee for the Well-Being of the People (CTSP) (Pringle 2006, 32; Clark 2005, 213). CTSP announced that it would be taking steps to move Mali towards democracy by holding a national conference to create a new constitution and create a plan for election procedures (Clark 2005, 213-214). At the end of the year in 1991, Mali held its national conference that lasted a few weeks and resulted in a new constitution, an electoral code, and the charters of political parties (Camara 2011, 78; Pringle 2006; Clark 2005, 214). Alpha Oumar Konaré from the Alliance for the Democracy in Mali (ADEMA), the largest of Mali’s 70 some political parties, was elected to be the president in June 1992 (Gorée Institute 2009, 251; Freedom House 2011a). Since then, leaders in the government have promised to help Mali to develop its democracy (Camara 2011,79).

Independent Variable: Formal Adherence to the Norm of International Election Monitoring

I again measure the independent variable of my study, the spread of the norm of international election monitoring, by observing governments' adherence to the norm through the invitation of international monitors to their presidential elections. If my hypothesis holds true, and the presence of international election monitors during presidential elections does in fact increase citizens' levels of confidence with the electoral process in their country, it would be beneficial to both Mali and other countries struggling to consolidate their democracy to know the important impact that monitors can have on citizens' attitudes and outlooks.

Democracy in Mali did not immediately produce results that improved quality of life, so after about 15 years without much noticeable difference, many Malians felt frustrated with the system. "On the international scene, Mali continues to benefit from its reputation as a young and exemplary democracy. However, the lack of transparency and integrity in public and economic management is feeding frustrations" (Rhazaoui 2010, 7). These frustrations are an important reason that Mali's government invited international election monitors in the past and continues to do so today.

When questioned about the meaning of democracy in a 2005 survey, 75% of people surveyed understood the meaning of democracy in French, 17% of people needed "democracy" to be translated into another language to understand its meaning, and 7% of people did not understand the word or the question in either French or a national language (Afrobarometer 2005b). This shows that in 2005, democracy was visible and near the forefront of people's minds, but was not fully integrated into society.

"Mali's democracy is moving slowly and while the mentalities of people are gradually changing, it has not always been in good ways" (Camara 2011, 87). However, it is clear that Malians are trying to move towards stronger democracy and have the intentions to address the

factors that have put a strain on democratic consolidation. In the rest of this chapter, I examine the presidential elections in Mali from 1990 to 2011, the roles that international election monitors played in these elections, and the impact, if any, that these monitors had on citizens' attitudes towards the electoral system.

Elections in Mali

Mali is an electoral democracy in which the president is elected by popular vote and can hold one or two five-year terms (Freedom House 2011a). All Malian adults over the age of 18 were automatically registered to vote after a 2002 consensus. Individuals who turned 18 after the census had to register themselves (Freedom House 2011a). Three organizations work together to run the elections by organizing the polls, establishing the electoral rolls, and overseeing the election (Camara 2011, 77). These agencies are the Independent National Election Commission (CENI), the General Delegation to Elections (DGE), and the Territorial Administration. CENI oversees the elections as a domestic monitoring body made up of members from majority and opposition parties, religious groups, and NGOs including human rights organizations (Freedom House 2011a).

Citizens are free to express their opinions and support the political party of their choice, even if it is not the majority party. While there are 113 registered political parties in Mali, only 14 of them have much of a voice in the governance of the country, as they hold seats in the National Assembly (Freedom House 2011a). It is clear that Mali has established democratic institutions, but is still struggling to fully embody the democracy that these institutions could support. In a 2005 survey, Malians were asked how well elected officials reflect the opinions of voters. 15% said not at all well, 26% said not very well, 41% said well, and 9% said very well

(Afrobarometer 2005b, 49). While these results reflect some confidence in the effects that voters have in selecting leaders and getting their voice heard in the political arena, only 50% of those surveyed felt as though the elected officials actually represented their opinions. This percentage is fairly low and the perception that elected officials will not sufficiently represent their constituents could be a reason for lack of confidence in the electoral process. Despite these problems, Mali has proven to the international community that it is able to function effectively as a democracy. As is the case in many emerging democracies, Mali has struggled, but overall, “Mali’s electoral track record since 1991 has been just messy enough to suggest that the country’s democracy is genuine, not the creation of one strong, quasi-permanent leader in the background” (Pringle 2006, 32). In the following sections I examine the specific events and atmosphere surrounding elections in Mali from 1992 to 2011 to evaluate the role that monitors played.

The 1992 Elections

The 1992 presidential elections were the first multiparty elections in Mali. They took place after a referendum passed on January 12, 1992 approved Mali’s new constitution that was a by-product of the national conference. The first round of presidential elections occurred on April 12, 1992 with nine candidates on the ballot. 48 official political parties existed in Mali at this time (Lange 2000, 237-239). In the run-off election on April 26, the two candidates who had received the most votes in the first round competed for the presidency (Lange 2000, 236; Clark 2005). Alpha Oumar Konaré won 69.01% of the votes, while Tiéoulé Mamadou Konaté won 30.99% (Gorée Institute 2009, 257). Konaré represented ADEMA, and was a leader within the party. ADEMA was well known in both rural and urban areas of the country, and Konaré made

sure to make the most of this by campaigning in both rural towns and urban areas, while other candidates underestimated the importance of the more remote towns. Konaré was inaugurated on June 8, 1992 (Clark 2005, 216).

The forty international election monitors who were present, and who represented a variety of different countries and organizations, unanimously agreed that the elections were free and fair. However, the Malian media suggested that the observers were not very involved in the electoral process, meaning the validity of the monitors' reports was called into question (Lange 2000, 236).

The 1997 Elections

“Despite the judicial structure put in place, the 1997 elections took place in a sphere of utmost confusion and in a tense climate where fears of a violent outbreaks [*sic.*] were often expressed” (Lange 2000, 242). Some of the problems were related to difficulties in setting up an electoral register. The first round of the presidential elections was supposed to take place on May 4, but instead was delayed until May 11 because of these difficulties. Another distinguishing feature about the presidential elections in 1997 was that the Collective of Opposition Political Parties, a coalition of opposition parties, boycotted the elections. Only one candidate ran against the incumbent, Alpha Oumar Konaré (Gorée Institute 2009, 257).

Voter participation was low in 1997, just as it had been in 1992. Only 28.41% of voters participated in the presidential elections. Konaré was reelected as president in the first round of elections since he won the majority of the votes (Lange 2000, 243). No run-off election was necessary.

La Francophonie sent an observer mission to this election. The members were from Canada, France, Guinea, Madagascar, Senegal, and Mauritania. Other international election monitors represented GERDDES Afrique and the Pan-African Observatory for Democracy (OPAD), and monitors from Sweden and Norway. On May 11, 1997 the election monitors split into five different teams and covered four different regions throughout the country. They visited over 250 polling stations. *La Francophonie* reported that voting took place peacefully and without disruption. They also noted that the counting of the votes was transparent. The observers claimed that the first round of presidential elections were an improvement from the legislative elections that had occurred just a few months earlier, in April. Overall, the observers from *la Francophonie* concluded that the elections were lawful, despite a few irregularities (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1997).

The 2002 Elections

The 2002 elections were viewed as being much freer and fairer than the 1992 and 1997 elections. This year marked the important transition of power from President Alpha Oumare Konaré's two terms to a new leader (The Carter Center 2002a). Many more political groups were involved in the 2002 elections than had been present during the 1997 elections. In the first round of elections, held on April 28, 2002, 24 candidates competed for the presidency (The Carter Center 2002a, The Carter Center 2002c). Amadou Toumani Touré, a former military officer who had ruled in the transition period after Traoré's dictatorship, was elected in this year, and helped to strengthen Mali's democracy in the period after the elections (Freedom House 2011a).

Representatives from *la Francophonie*, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and the Carter Center monitored the 2002 presidential elections. The monitors came from Switzerland,

Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, France, Gabon, Senegal, Niger, and Cameroon. The monitors' reports stated that the voting process took place without major incident. The Carter Center (2002a) remarked that, "the elections were peaceful, well managed, and conducted in a spirit of transparency." Their monitoring delegation was not large, so the Carter Center did not have observers present in voting sites throughout the country. The Carter Center collaborated with the other international and domestic election observers, as well as representatives of political parties and voters themselves to learn more about Mali's electoral process (The Carter Center 2002a).

In the first round, the observers noted some irregularities in the form of an absence of voting cards available, missing election materials, and delays in the opening of polling stations. The Carter Center noted with appreciation the domestic observers from CENI who were present at most of the polling stations. The Center assessed that a quicker release of results would have decreased levels of suspicions about surrounding the announcement of results (The Carter Center 2002a). However, despite suspicions, the recognition and acceptance of the results by the third place candidate Keita and other opposition candidates contributed to success in the next round of elections (The Carter Center 2002b).

In the lead up to the second round of elections, opposition parties filed complaints to the Carter Center officials that ADEMA affiliates were stealing voter cards and forging electoral materials (The Carter Center 2002b). Touré ran against Cissé in the run-off elections. On Election Day, the Center's monitors observed Malians being permitted to vote without any identification of any form (The Carter Center 2002b). Monitors also noted that there was a smaller turnout over voters in this second round of voting. 38.31% of registered voters cast their vote in the first round of elections, and only 30.17% in the second round (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2002). The Constitutional Court announced the final results of

the elections on May 23, 2002 (The Carter Center 2002b). Despite the low turnout of voters and minor irregularities, the second round of elections operated more smoothly than the first and international monitors confirmed that Touré won with 926,243 votes, 65.01% of the total votes, while Soumaïla Cissé had 498,503 votes, or 34.99% (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2002; The Carter Center 2002c; Gorée Institute 2008, 258). Election observers from the Carter Center (2002b) commented that it was apparent that Malians as well as the international community viewed Touré with a sense of legitimacy.

The Carter Center (2002c) noted, “The impressive election observation and parallel vote tabulation undertaken by CENI was of limited immediate value, as CENI findings were not made public. CENI should review how best it might fulfill its mandate to supervise the conduct of the elections” (30). This suggests that while CENI, as a domestic monitoring body, plays a role similar to international election monitors, but they do not impact citizens’ confidence levels or the perceptions of legitimacy of the international community as much as international monitors are able to because the reports and findings from elections are not published for the public to see. One recommendation for improvement is that “the future role of domestic election observers may be enhanced through capacity building, training, and ongoing international and domestic support to facilitate observation of all aspects of the election process” (The Carter Center 2002c, 34).

The 2007 Elections

In 2007, Amadou Toumani Touré was in power, and seven candidates ran against him. Touré had strategically used the period of time leading up to the elections to start a number of development projects and initiatives that would improve his image among the Malian people.

These projects involved improvements to infrastructure, health care, and housing in Mali (Camara 2011, 82).

Touré was backed by *Alliance pour la Démocratie et le Progrès* [Alliance for Democracy and Progress] (ADP), a coalition of 15 political parties and associations (Camara 2011, 77; Freedom House 2011a). Other coalitions and parties backed the other seven candidates. In the period leading up to the 2007 elections, many felt as though Mali was operating under a single-party system since there was less national opposition than in the past (Camara 2011, 79). Opposition parties had a weaker presence, and there was even less opposition in the parliament. This meant that the so-called checks and balances to the president's executive power were limited and citizens began voicing concern over the issue of ATT's solitary authority over Mali's government. This frustration was not only directed at the president himself, but also at democracy in Mali more generally, as people felt that democracy had been unable to produce the results they were expecting (Camara 2011, 80).

Maliens went into the 2007 elections with the sentiments of frustration with democracy that stemmed from ATT's monopoly on governmental power. However, it was ATT who won the first-round of elections by receiving 71.2% of the votes. The other candidates were dissatisfied with the election results and claimed that there was fraud (Gorée Institute 2009, 259; Camara 2011, 78; Freedom House 2011a).

Front pour la Démocratie et la République (FDR), a coalition, requested that the results of the 2007 elections be declared invalid because of the fraud involved. They accused ATT of campaigning before the constitutional campaign period and stuffing the ballot boxes among other charges. The Constitutional Court refused to consider the complaints filed by the opposition and

decided not to annul the election results because more than five days had passed since the election, so the designated period for complaints had passed (Camara 2011, 83).

The final results of the elections were published on May 16, 2007 and the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), among other international institutions, labeled the elections as free and fair (Camara 2011, 84). The 2007 election proves that Mali could be “recovering from voter apathy,” as voter turnout rates were higher than in the past (Camara 2011, 86). It also shows that democracy in Mali needs participation in elections to survive. The 2007 election is a sign of Mali’s maturing democracy, as it operated without significant problems despite the public’s sentiments of frustration, and occurred with less accompanying violence than did previous elections (Camara 2011).

Dependent Variable: Levels of Citizens’ Confidence in the Electoral Process

I examine Malians’ perceptions of democracy in their country, satisfaction with this perceived democracy, levels of trust in political institutions, and judgment about the most recent presidential elections in order to draw conclusions about citizens’ changing levels of confidence in the electoral process. I use survey data from Camara (2011) for voter turnout, as well as Afrobarometer data that were collected in 2002 (published in 2004), 2005, and 2008. I use this data to reflect citizens’ opinions on the elections preceding the collection of results for each of the surveys. Therefore the data will be a representation of Malians’ perceptions and attitudes following the 1997, 2002, and 2007 presidential elections.

Voter turnout for elections in Mali is and has been low. Meager participation rates have been a problem in Mali since the 1992 elections, as can be seen by the low percentage of registered voters who voted in the elections depicted in Table 5.1 below (Camara 2011, 85).

“The reason for this lack of enthusiasm, the indifference and the disinterest of Malians to the vote, is their lack of confidence in political leaders and candidates because they know the feeling that their votes have neither meaning nor relevance because ‘the dice is cast’ in advance” (Camara 2011, 81). If my hypothesis holds true, international election monitors’ consistent presence at elections should increase citizens’ confidence levels in the electoral process despite their lack of confidence in other institutions involved, because of the idea that international monitors give the elections external validity and legitimacy. This could be one way to interpret the results in Table 5.1, which shows slow yet substantial increases in the percentage of voters who participated in elections from 1992 until 2007. The initial increase between 1992 and 1997 likely reflects the widespread interest in contributing to the democratic process that had started out successfully in the 1992 elections. Malians had time to adapt to the idea of participating in elections, and may even have been aware that observers would be present at the elections. Between 1997 and 2002 there was only a 0.7% increase in voter turnout. This reveals citizens’ reactions to the flaws with the 1997 presidential elections. Many voters were probably not satisfied with the selection of candidates in 1997 and assumed they would encounter similar problems in 2002. Another possibility is that participants in the 1997 elections felt as though their voice had not been reflected in the outcome of the elections, so they could not justify taking the time to go vote when their vote would not make a significant contribution to the outcome of who became president. Between 2002 and 2007, there was an increase of just over 6% in voter turnout (Camara 2011). This increase is notable because it shows how the smooth electoral process in 2002 that was monitored by three reputable organizations created greater interest in voting in the next presidential elections.

Table 5.1 Voter Turnout

	1992	1997	2002	2007
Presidential Elections	21.61%	29.2%	29.99%	36.24%

Source: Camara 2011, 86

Despite the levels of voter participation being low in Mali's presidential elections, especially when compared to Benin's voter turnout of between 80% and 90%, Malians do have a clear desire for democracy in their country. The results below in Table 5.2, taken from the Afrobarometer data collected in 2002, 2005 and 2008, reflect the percentages of people who said democracy is preferable over any other type of government, those who said a non-democratic government is preferable, and those who had no preference. In each year, around 70% of those surveyed said democracy was the type of government they preferred. The percentage of respondents with this answer decreased slightly after the 1997 elections and then increased again after the 2002 elections (as seen in the 2004 and 2005 columns below). As with voter turnout in Table 5.1 above, these results reflect a decrease in confidence in democracy after the controversial 1997 elections, then a resurgence in confidence in democracy following the 2002 elections that functioned much more smoothly. While there were international election monitors present during both of these elections, the monitors present at the 1997 elections had minimal complimentary remarks about the overall electoral process. Monitors present at the 2002 elections had much more positive contributions to give in their reports about both rounds of the elections.

Table 5.2 Type of Government

Which type of government is preferable?

	2004	2005	2008
Democracy	71%	68%	72%
Non-democracy	12%	18%	12%
Doesn't matter	15%	12%	13%

Sources: Coulibaly and Diarra 2004, Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

Table 5.3 shows Malians' perceptions of the level of democracy in the country. In 2002, the response most commonly given was that Mali was a democracy with minor problems, followed closely by the belief that Mali was a full democracy. In 2005, full democracy was the most common response, followed by democracy with major problems. Results in 2008 reflected again that full democracy was the most frequent answer, with democracy with major problems being a close second.

A significant indicator of this survey question is the overall number of Malians who perceive Mali to be some form of democracy. When looking at the combined responses of democracy with major problems, democracy with minor problems, and full democracy, the percentages are very high. In 2002, 87% of those surveyed categorized Mali as a democracy. This number remained consistent in 2005, and then increased to 89% in 2008. These percentages are a positive indicator of citizens' perceptions of the way democracy has taken hold and developed in Mali.

The percentage of people who describe Mali as a full democracy increased slightly yet consistently from 2002 to 2008. This shows promise that citizens in Mali are confident that their system is working effectively to promote democracy. Despite minor irregularities in certain elections, the sentiment remains that democracy is taking hold in the country. On the contrary, the percentage of those who stated that Mali was not a democracy increased from 5% in 2002 to 8% in 2005, before going back down to 5% in 2008. This reflects the impact of flawed elections on citizens' perceptions of democracy. People, especially those who were skeptical of democracy's ability to flourish in Mali, gave up on Mali's prospects for being a democracy after the electoral issues, but saw democratic potential again after the elections in 2002 that ran smoothly.

Another interesting trend in the data is the varying levels of individuals who described Mali as a democracy with major or minor problems. The percentage of people who thought Mali was a democracy but had major issues to address increased from 24% in 2002, to 29% in both 2005 and 2008. The percentage of people who perceived Mali as a democracy with minor problems had the opposite progression. 33% of people surveyed considered Mali a democracy with minor problems in 2002, then 26% in 2005 and 27% in 2008. This can be explained by citizens' sentiments after the highly disputed 1997 elections. People could have felt that the issues of corruption and limited opposition participation were major hindrances to the democratization process. The survey responses show the change in sentiment that the problems occurring are minor and democracy will continue to function with these problems still existing, to the feeling that the problems holding Mali back from a strong, consolidated democracy are major and need to be taken care of for the country to move forward with a democratic government.

Table 5.3 State of Democracy

How would you describe the state of democracy in Mali today?

	2004	2005	2008
Not a democracy	5%	8%	5%
Democracy with major problems	24%	29%	29%
Democracy with minor problems	33%	26%	27%
Full democracy	30%	32%	33%

Sources: Coulibaly and Diarra 2004, Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

While almost 90% of those surveyed in Mali responded that Mali was a democracy with or without problems, the percentage of those satisfied with the way democracy works in Mali were much less resounding. In 2002, when questioned about satisfaction with democracy, the question was phrased to reflect general satisfaction or dissatisfaction with democracy in Mali. 33% of those surveyed said they were unsatisfied, while 63% said they were satisfied (Coulibaly

and Diarra 2004, 12). In 2005 and 2008, the survey question was more nuanced to reflect levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The results from these two years are depicted below in Table 5.4.

In 2005 and 2008, the percentage of those not at all satisfied with democracy in Mali remained at 20%. Those not very satisfied with the way democracy works decreased from 25% in 2005 to 19% in 2008. Those fairly satisfied with democracy in the country increased only 1% between the two years, but those very satisfied increased by 7%. The total amount of dissatisfaction with Mali's democracy was 45% of those surveyed in 2005, which is almost equal to the amount of people who were satisfied—49%. In 2008 there was a slightly wider gap between satisfaction and dissatisfaction, with 39% of respondents claiming dissatisfaction with Mali's democracy and 57% saying they were satisfied. It is interesting that the year with the highest percentage of people satisfied with democracy in Mali was 2002, whereas the survey results in the previous tables have reflected that 2002 generally brought a slight downturn in pro-democratic responses. It is more understandable that the levels of satisfaction increased in 2008 from 2005 after two consecutive sets of presidential elections that functioned smoothly and showed improvements in the way that the electoral process was operating.

Table 5.4 Satisfaction with Democracy

How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in Mali?

	2005	2008
Not at all satisfied	20%	20%
Not very satisfied	25%	19%
Fairly satisfied	28%	29%
Very satisfied	21%	28%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

Elections are clearly an important element of a functioning democracy. The majority of citizens in Mali agree that elections are the best way to select leaders. In a 2002 survey,

participants were asked whether they were for or against elections as the preferred mode of establishment of power. 81% said for, and 15% said against. Only 2% of those surveyed were neither for nor against elections as the means of selecting leaders in Mali (Coulibaly and Diarra 2004, 4). As Table 5.5 shows, 86% of participants in 2005 agreed that elections are the best way to choose leaders, while only 13% disagreed with this sentiment. In 2008, 81% of citizens surveyed agreed that elections are the best means of selecting leaders, a slightly lower result than in 2005. 17% thought Mali should employ a different method of selecting its leaders, an increase from 2005. This increase could be because of the limited presence of opposition parties in the 2007 elections that would be reflected in the 2008 survey data. Because ATT was practically unchallenged and was elected in the first round vote, citizens may have felt frustrated with the electoral system and their lack of viable options of candidates for whom to vote. Regardless of the slight variation in results, the clear majority of people surveyed consistently responded that the best method of selecting leaders is through regular, free, and fair elections.

Table 5.5 Electing Leaders

Statement A: We should choose our leaders through regular, free, and fair elections.

Statement B: Because elections can produce bad results, we should adopt another method of choosing leaders.

	2005	2008
Strongly agree with A	41%	50%
Agree with A	45%	31%
Strongly agree with B	8%	9%
Agree with B	5%	8%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

An important way of bolstering citizens' trust in the electoral system is implementing mechanisms that ensure legitimacy in the electoral process. The National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) is the main body in Mali that oversees the way the elections take place. They have a large force of domestic monitors, who observe the voting process at each polling station throughout the country. International election monitors including those from the Carter

Center have commented on the contributions of CENI to the monitoring process in their reports. When surveyed about trust in CENI in 2002, 46% responded that they trusted CENI, while 32% said they did not, and 22% were unsure (Coulibaly and Diarra 2004, 18). Table 5.6 shows the responses to the more refined question asked in the 2005 and 2008 Afrobarometer surveys. When asked how much they trust CENI in 2005, 33% said a lot, 20% said somewhat, and 17% did not know. Only a combined 29% trusted CENI only a little or not at all. In 2008, the percentage of those who trusted CENI a lot decreased to 25%, those who somewhat trusted the organization increased to 28%, and those who didn't know decreased by 8%. A total of 38% of survey respondents trusted CENI only a little or not at all. A positive indicator of this survey is that the percentage of people who were unsure or did not know if they trusted CENI decreased across the three years in which the survey was given. The decrease in high levels of trust in CENI could be from the persistent irregularities that occurred throughout Mali's presidential elections from 1992-2007. Electoral materials were missing or arrived late, the polling stations were tardy in their opening, and results were at times contested. While all of these problems do not stem from CENI, it is reasonable to assume that the public blamed one or all three of the agencies responsible for running the electoral process in Mali.

Table 5.6 Institutional Trust

How much do you trust the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI)?

	2005	2008
Not at all	13%	15%
Only a little	16%	23%
Somewhat	20%	28%
A lot	33%	25%
Don't know	17%	9%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

The best measure of citizens' confidence in the electoral process comes from gauging their perceptions of the freeness and fairness of the last presidential elections in the country. In a

2001 survey, 24% of respondents claimed that the last presidential elections had been either “not free and fair” or were “free and fair with major problems.” 55% of those surveyed claimed that the elections had been “free and fair with minor problems” or “completely free and fair” (Afrobarometer 2009, 10). Table 5.7 shows the perceived levels of freeness and fairness in the 2002 and 2007 presidential elections. 47% of those surveyed felt that the 2002 election had been completely free and fair, while only 12% felt that it had not been free and fair. 32% fell in the middle of these responses, stating that the elections had either been free and fair with minor problems, or free and fair with major problems. The total percentage of people who described the 2002 elections as free and fair on some level was 79%. This total percentage increased to 83% in 2008, when reflecting upon the freeness and fairness of the 2007 elections. This shift is interesting because of the limited involvement of opposition parties in the 2007 elections. It is possible that despite this factor, citizens still evaluated the actual electoral process as running smoothly and reflecting their votes, or monitors’ presence reassured voters.

Table 5.7 Freeness and Fairness

How would you rate the freeness and fairness of the last national election?

	2005	2008
Not free and fair	12%	10%
Free and fair with major problems	15%	15%
Free and fair with minor problems	17%	20%
Completely free and fair	47%	48%

Sources: Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b

Conclusions

As in Chapter 4, the case of Benin, it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about the effects international election monitors have exclusively had in changing Malians’ levels of confidence in Mali’s electoral system. However, based on the history of the elections, the information available about monitors’ involvement, and the survey data that reflects citizens’ general attitudes towards elections and democracy in Mali, I am able to draw some assumptions

to assess the validity of my hypothesis. The majority of the survey data shows a decrease in preference for democracy, satisfaction with democracy, trust in institutions, and confidence in elections after the 1997 presidential elections that were the most contentious of those in the 1992-2011 time frame I examine in this study. After the 2002 elections, the pro-democracy indicators rose again, and continued to rise in most cases after the 2007 elections, despite the minor issues with that election. It is clear that the electoral process plays a crucial role in determining Malians' confidence levels in democracy in their country more generally. It is also highly likely that election monitors have been involved with bolstering these confidence levels. Monitors were not very involved in the 1992 presidential elections, so citizens were unlikely trust international election monitors in that year and going into the next presidential elections. International observers were most critical in their reports in 1997. Monitors declared the 1997 election transparent and free overall, but they also pointed out many problems with the electoral process. Many citizens agreed with these findings, and may have had more knowledge and trust in international election monitors in the 2002 presidential elections. This was the year when monitors were most complimentary in their evaluation of the election, and Malians again reflected similar sentiments in their assessments of the electoral process in 2002 survey data. Despite some irregularities and lack of strong participation from opposition parties in 2007, citizens were still generally satisfied with the electoral process and other pro-democracy indicators that year. This can be explained by the continued strong presence of international election monitors in 2007 giving a sense of legitimacy to the electoral process.

When asked in 2005 how likely it is that Mali will remain a democracy, 12% said not at all likely, 22% said not very likely, 44% said likely and only 14% said very likely (Afrobarometer 2005b, 23). This is a total of 58% of survey participants who think democracy is

likely to continue in Mali. While this percentage is not extremely high, it is possible that the continued presence of international election monitors as a legitimizing force behind elections will encourage citizens to have more confidence in Mali's prospects of remaining a democracy.

CHAPTER SIX: INTERNATIONAL ELECTION MONITORS IN GUINEA'S PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Historical Background

Guinea was the first sub-Saharan African country to become independent from French colonization. On October 2, 1958, Guineans voted for popular sovereignty and became an independent state under President Ahmed Sekou Toure (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007, 4). Toure aimed to completely free the Guinean people from their French colonial history. He publicly voiced his belief that “decolonization does not consist merely in liberating oneself from the presence of the colonizers: it must necessarily be completed by total liberation from the spirit of the colonized... from the evil consequences—moral, intellectual and cultural—of the colonial system” (Jallow 2011, 375). Despite Toure’s desire to free the Guinean people from the “evil” of colonization, he imposed his own destructive policies on citizens that ended up being the defining legacy of his presidency.

Toure subjected Guinea to an extended period of turbulence and brutality as the country’s head of state. He ruled for a quarter of a century, holding onto power as tightly as he could. Toure’s style of governance was radical, which was apparent even before his presidency when he was active within the *Parti Democratique du Guinee* (PDG), which he influenced to become fairly militant in its operations. Toure appreciated Marxist-Leninist views of society, and he used a single-party system to proliferate these views (Harshe 1984, 624). “Those who desired to speak politics in Guinea had to speak politics according to Sekou Toure” (Jallow 2011, 377). The only party allowed to exist was his own PDG (Harshe 1984, 624).

Presidential elections in Guinea under the single party system operated under specific conditions. Only one candidate was nominated for the presidency—Toure. Elections were held more as a symbol than as a way for citizens to select the leader they wanted in office. Voter turnout levels were often low, as voters knew they only had one option to select on the presidential ballot. The party in power continuously struggled to increase voter participation rates to show a unanimous decision by the Guinean people in the selection of the president. Although Toure was elected automatically, a certain number of votes were necessary to adhere to party principles and ensure the legitimacy of the election results in the eyes of the citizens and the international community (Diallo 2009, 209). Because of the single party system, Toure was able to ensure that he could retain his position as president.

Toure was also able to maintain power for such a long period because of his approach of dealing with competition. He was suspicious of the Guinean military, and kept a close watch over the military leaders' actions. He also tried to be involved with the public enough that they would not turn against them. If Toure ever felt challenged, he wasted no time in resorting to violent means of addressing the issue (Harshe 1984, 624-625). For example, in 1970, Toure had 58 people publicly hanged for an alleged conspiracy plot to assassinate him (Jallow 2011, 378). Actions such as this prompted the common designation of Toure as “perhaps the most vehement exponent of the single-party system in Africa” (Jallow 2011, 375) and “one of the most ruthless dictators of modern Africa” (Jallow 2011, 378).

More impressively, Toure's foreign policy initiatives helped to elevate Guinea's position in African society and give it some legitimacy in the international arena. Toure strongly opposed colonization and racism. His efforts to address these issues included using the media to build a force of opposition to Portuguese rule in Guinea-Bissau and racism in South Africa (Harshe

1984, 625). He was bold in both his support and his disapproval of policies. Toure died during heart surgery following sudden heart complications on March 26, 1984 (Jallow 2011, 379).

After Toure's unexpected death, Guinea fell into disarray. Prime Minister Lansana Béavogui was appointed to be the interim president, but the power structure was unclear. A military group under the control of Colonel Diarra Traore and Colonel Lansana Conté declared itself the Military Committee for National Redress (CMRN) and overthrew the interim government on April 2, 1984. Conté declared himself the President, and Traore was designated as Prime Minister (Jallow 2011, 379).

The new government's first initiatives included invalidating the Constitution left over from the Toure government. Within the first eight months of his presidency, Conté reduced Traore's rank from Prime Minister to education minister, showing his hunger for complete control. Within another eight-month period, in July 1985, there was a coup attempt in which the military had to get involved to put an end to the fighting (Jallow 2011, 379).

Under Conté's presidency, the government passed a new constitution in December 1990 that allowed for a multi-party political system and acknowledged human, civil, and political rights (Diallo 2009; Jallow 2011, 380). 99% of voters approved the new constitution that displayed clear intentions to decentralize, liberalize, and restructure the government (Diallo 2009; International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998). A multi-party structure was highlighted, as well as an electoral system formed around "universal direct and secret suffrage" (Diallo 2009, 211). While Guinea produced a new constitution under Conté, he "never intended to create a genuine democracy—that is, to allow for a change of power. Manipulated elections, oppression and intimidation poisoned the political climate" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007, 4). Conté ruled in Guinea for twenty-four years until his own death (Jallow 2011, 371). At the end

of President Conté's life, he had both diabetes and leukemia, and is suspected of having amnesia as well. Conté was therefore unable to be an effective leader, but he held onto power until his death on December 22, 2008, when Moussa Dadis Camara led a military coup and declared himself President (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007, 2; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, 2). Guinea was in worse condition after Conté's death than it had been in 1958 when it became independent or in 1984 after Toure's death (Jallow 2011, 371-372).

Independent Variable: Formal Adherence to the Norm of International Election Monitoring

As in the two previous chapters, I operationalize the independent variable of the study, the spread of the norm of international election monitoring, by noting Guinea's compliance with the norm of international election monitoring through its invitation of international monitors to its presidential elections. My hypothesis suggests that the presence of international election monitors during presidential elections in Guinea produces an increase in citizens' levels of trust in Guinean elections. Should the available data support this hypothesis, the acknowledgement of the significant role of international election monitors in Guinean elections would be monumental in moving Guinea towards a consolidated democracy.

Guinea's history has been marked by single-party regimes that left a lasting legacy of resistance to diversity in the political arena. Dissent and opposition to the majority party were prohibited for many years, and have just recently begun to become more apparent in Guinean politics. In the remainder of this chapter, I examine the history of presidential elections in Guinea from 1990 to 2011 to explore the role international election monitors have played in changing citizens' perspectives on electoral efficacy and their levels of confidence in the electoral process.

Elections in Guinea

Guinea's electoral history dates back to 1946, when the government held legislative elections to elect an African representative to the National Assembly in Guinea (Diallo 2009, 208). Since that point in time, "Democratic experiments and electoral politics have failed in Guinea, and more generally in Africa not because they are unsuitable to African conditions as argued by some scholars, but because of African leaders' propensity to suppress dissent and cling indefinitely on to power and their failure to politically empower their peoples" (Jallow 2011, 371). As evidenced by the length of the presidencies of Toure and Conté, and as will be further illustrated in this chapter, leaders in Guinea have repeatedly attempted to extend their rule past the number of terms a president can and should hold according to democratic principles.

Today, Guinea is a republic. The president is elected by popular vote to hold up to two five-year terms. There is universal suffrage for those aged 18 and older. The elections are structured so that if a candidate wins the majority of the votes they are elected; if not there is a runoff election. There are over 130 political parties registered (Central Intelligence Agency 2013c). It is clear that much progress has been made towards democracy since the Toure and Conté eras in Guinea's history. Each set of elections throughout the past decade has brought a new dynamic to the country and has influenced citizens' perceptions of democracy.

"Considering the political history of Guinea, analyzing these elections from 1990 to this date could help us take stock of the electoral processes and progress that the country has made in complying with democratic rules" (Diallo 2009, 212). In the following sections, I evaluate the events and implications of the recent presidential elections in Guinea and the role that international election monitors played in these elections.

The 1993 Elections

The first post-independence multiparty presidential election in Guinea was held on December 19, 1993. Eight candidates competed for the presidency. While this election was a major step forward in Guinea's democratization process, it was filled with serious flaws (Diallo 2009, 212-213). Delays in the arrival of election materials and other signs of incomplete preparation for the elections left voters with a sense of suspicion about the process. This increased the rumors of electoral fraud, accelerating the spiral of social and political tensions (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 50). Additionally, opposition party leaders faced major obstacles in their attempts to campaign. In Conté's home region, no other candidates were permitted to campaign. Members of the government were recognized as favoring certain candidates over others, and gave these candidates special privileges, or withheld opposition party leaders' ability to campaign in certain districts or public facilities. State resources were heavily allocated in the direction of the majority party, giving the party in power an advantage over the opposition candidates. Officials even confiscated the voting cards of citizens they presumed would vote for an opposition party candidate (Diallo 2009, 212-213).

In 1993, there were 2,859,403 registered voters and 2,236,426 of these individuals actually voted, meaning 78% of those registered cast a vote (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998, 9). The Supreme Court verified the results of the elections on January 4, 1994, concluding that Lansana Conté had won the election in the first round with 51.7% of the votes (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 1).

Despite the Supreme Court ruling, international election observers proclaimed that the 1993 elections were not free, fair, or transparent. The government was not accepting of democratic elections and refused to cooperate with opposition parties or members of civil society

(Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1998). Nineteen political parties contested the election results and claimed that the elections were replete with voter intimidation and other methods of fraud and corruption (Jallow 2011, 380). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) declared that the results of the 1993 elections were fraudulent and did not reflect the real electoral results or the desires of the Guinean people (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 3).

Guineans actively demonstrated their disapproval of Conté. On September 24, 1994, close to 30,000 Guineans rallied for a transitional government because of their opposition to the Conté administration's governance. Four main opposition parties in Guinea joined together in 1995 to form the Coordination Democratique (Codem), which had the primary goal of removing Conté from his position. After a particularly hostile riot in 1996, Conté supposedly went into hiding to protect himself from his own constituents (Jallow 2011, 380).

In a joint seminar by IFES and UNDP on November 24, 1993, local and international press was able to learn about the upcoming elections and ask some questions. While these covered a broad range of topics, two of those highlighted in the IFES report included a question about the number and origin of the international election monitors who would be present at the election, and the qualifications of national election observers. Guinea decided not to permit domestic observers to be a part of the 1993 elections because of expected problems with their neutrality (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 26).

The Guinean government did not communicate well with the international observers present during the election. The observer delegations did not receive any information or access into the process until 24 hours before the election. The government did not specify the roles different observers should play or acknowledge any differences between the monitors present

from different NGOs or other organizations. The IFES election report states that the government's behavior and attitude towards the efforts of international election monitors shows that the Guinean government neither understands nor is concerned about international election monitoring (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 55). One of the nine recommendations that IFES made to the Guinean government was that it needed to be more open to election monitoring, by both international and domestic monitors (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 93).

The 1998 Elections

The second presidential election was held on December 14, 1998 (Diallo 2009, 214). Many countries invested in Guinea's electoral process in 1998 by supplying materials or assistance of some kind to help with the democratization process. Canada, the United States, Egypt, Germany, the European Union, China, France, and Libya, as well as some NGOs all contributed to the elections in some fashion (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998, 12-13).

3,796,293 people were registered to vote in the 1998 elections, an increase from 1993. 69.82% of voters turned out at the elections (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998, 28). There were 8 candidates running in the election, and Conte won 50.98% of the votes, as well as the presidency for five more years (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1998). Again there was discrimination against voters who were suspected of supporting opposition candidates (Diallo 2009, 214). The U.S. State Department declared that violence surrounded the electoral process and irregularities were rampant. No independent electoral body

ran the elections, which was a major cause for dissent among the population and opposition parties (Jallow 2011, 381).

Many international organizations worked together to observe the elections. Delegates represented organizations such as *la Francophonie*, NDI, the Organization of African Unity, ECOWAS, *Observatoire International des Libertés et des Médias*, Pan-African Permanent Conference on Democracy and the Mastery of Transition in Africa, and countries including Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Mauritania, Senegal, and Togo. Most of the organizations were not planning on sending observers to the elections, but when UN Observers decided not to observe the elections, other organizations agreed to send observer missions (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998, 29-30).

Despite the population and opposition parties' problems with the election outcomes, the international election monitors generally found the electoral process to be free and fair. The monitors from *la Francophonie* declared elections to be fair, although they did make note of irregularities in the electoral process (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1998). The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) sent two experts to observe and facilitate the elections. The IFES report discussed some violence and irregularities in the 1998 elections, but indicated that overall the elections were free and fair (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998). NDI also confirmed that the electoral process operated smoothly and that each political party involved in the elections had a representative present at the polling stations, "an essential element for trust in the process and acceptance of the results" (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998, 31).

After securing his second term in the multiparty system, Conté began to look towards the future. He announced a plan to extend the presidential term from five to seven years. Conté also

wanted to abolish the limit on the number of terms a president is eligible to hold, meaning he could hold power for as many terms as he was re-elected. All of these adjustments seemed to be Conté's approach to ensure he could stay in power indefinitely. The government passed a referendum in November 2001 that allowed Conté to hold an unlimited number of 7-year terms as president (Jallow 2011, 371). Government data states that 98% of Guineans approved of these agendas (Jallow 2011, 382), but the behavior of Guineans after the 2003 elections reflected otherwise.

The 2003 Elections

December 21, 2003 was Guinea's third multiparty presidential election since independence. At this point, "the Guinean population, now disillusioned, had lost faith in the elections" (Diallo 2009, 214). All of the biggest opposition parties boycotted the elections because of the issues they had with Conté and his party's monopoly on governmental power. Conté ran against just one other candidate and won the election by securing over 95% of the votes (Diallo 2009, 214-215; Jallow 2011, 371; Jallow 2011, 382).

One of the problems in the election was the "lack of credible election monitoring and management bodies" (Diallo 2009, 219). Other problems included officials' lack of neutrality, misallocation of government resources, and election fraud and manipulation. Guinea denied local NGOs the ability to observe the elections but did invite international election monitors to observe in order to ensure that the elections were perceived as legitimate and to reduce the chances that countries might refuse Guinea aid or enforce other sanctions if international monitors were not present (Diallo 2009, 224).

Between 2003 and 2006 there were a series of meetings designed to serve as a forum for discussing Guinea's national issues and ways to address them. A few of these meetings focused specifically on elections and democratization in Guinea. The Gorée Meeting was held in Senegal in mid-June 2005. The goal of the meeting was to create a better environment for free and fair elections. The National Forum of Civil Society on the electoral process in Guinea in March 2006 focused on civil society's role in the past and future democratization process in Guinea (Diallo 2009, 204-206).

In June 2004 there were violent protests throughout Guinea, especially in the capital city of Conakry. When this round of demonstrations ended, another started again in September then again in December. Protests, strikes and uprisings continued throughout 2006 and into 2007. In February 2007, Conté declared that Guinea was in a state of emergency (Jallow 2011, 383).

Public discontent continued as Conté became older and weaker. Despite illness, Conté continued to declare his ability to govern the country. After Conté's death in December 2008, Captain Moussa Dadis Camara led a military coup and appointed himself president and head of the National Council for Democracy and Development (CNDD), that was newly in charge of transitioning Guinea to a stable government. Camara was not a figure who the public recognized, but citizens in Guinea were excited about the prospects for democracy that Camara promised them (Jallow 2011, 372; Time 2009). "The coup was reported to have had the backing of most Guineans" (Jallow 2011, 373). However, it became clear that Camara would not lead Guinea to hold elections within a year of his coming into power. The public became less and less convinced that Guinea really was moving towards democracy. Oury Bah, the head of Union of Democratic Forces (UFDG), an opposition party, claimed that under Camara, "There's no reason to be optimistic" (Time 2009).

The public organized mass demonstrations to express their frustration with the government's false promises of democracy. On September 28, 2009, tens of thousands of members of Guinea's major opposition movement called *Forces Vives* gathered in Conakry's national soccer stadium to protest the authoritarian style leadership the government seemed to be embodying. Witnesses state that armed forces reacted to the protest by locking the prodemocracy supporters inside the stadium and starting to shoot. Many of the wounded were finished off with bayonets (Time 2009). Over 100 women and girls were publically gang raped. At least 157 people rallying for democracy died in the massacre and another 1,200 were injured. The bodies were disposed of in a mass grave (U.S. Department of State 2012, 2-3; Jallow 2011, 373; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 2).

After the massacre of 2009, President Camara's bodyguard, who had been selected to take the blame for the horrific incident, shot Camara in the head. Konaté, the Defense Minister at the time of Camara's death, came to power. Konaté decided that Guinea would hold presidential elections to select its next president (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 2). "Guineans [were] faced with the paradoxical situation of hoping that the military—which ha[d] systematically killed, raped, arbitrarily arrested and detained its own citizens—w[ould] now be the institution to reinstate civil rights" (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, 7).

The 2010 Elections

Guinea began taking steps in the right direction in 2010 that helped to ease the outrage and despair surrounding the 2008 massacre. The Ouagadougou Agreement was signed in January 2010, which highlighted elections as a key component of political accountability. This Agreement was crucial in allowing Guineans to regain confidence and hope in their political

system (The Carter Center 2010a). Citizens felt as though a new political era was about to begin—an era that would start with the 2010 presidential elections.

Guinea held its fourth multiparty presidential elections in June and November 2010. Leading up to the elections, there were conflicts between members of the majority and opposition parties that led to violence and even deaths of those involved (Human Rights Watch 2011). Despite some pre-election violence, the 2010 elections were the first free and fair elections in Guinea since its independence. Election monitors described the “palpable sense of excitement and expectation among Guineans, who hope for a meaningful democratic transition and civilian government” (The Carter Center 2010a). The monitors also expressed their desire to “contribute to a peaceful, transparent, and credible electoral process and [...] support Guinea’s efforts to promote key reforms for future elections” (The Carter Center 2010b).

The first round of voting took place on June 27, 2010. Since there was no incumbent running for re-election, all 24 candidates started on the same footing. 4.2 million out of Guinea’s 10 million citizens registered to vote (The Carter Center 2010e). Cellou Diallo and Alpha Condé were announced to be the two leading candidates after the first round of elections. The elections were not flawless—there were minor problems resulting from managerial issues—but overall the high voter turnout and sense of national unity surrounding the elections overpowered the procedural issues (The Carter Center 2010c).

The second round of the 2010 elections was initially scheduled for September but was rescheduled multiple times because the electoral management body was not prepared. The election was finally held on November 7, 2010. There was violence both before and after the November election, including rallies in September that left 50 people injured (U.S. Department of State 2012, 16; The Carter Center 2010e). Before the results of the run-off election were

released, Diallo announced that he would not endorse the outcome because some of his supporters had not been permitted to vote. Diallo had received more votes than Condé in the first round and had expected to win the second round easily, so when the electoral commission, CENI, announced results that put Condé in the lead with 52.5% of the votes, Diallo's supporters protested. The rallies led to arrests, injuries and even some deaths. President Konaté declared a state of emergency with a strict curfew to stop the violence (The Carter Center 2010e). Diallo formally objected the results and brought them before the Supreme Court. In December, the Supreme Court confirmed the election outcome. Alpha Condé was sworn in December 21, 2010 (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012).

The 2010 elections were first elections in Guinea since independence to be perceived by citizens, observers, and the international community as free, fair, and transparent (Human Rights Watch 2011). International observers had a strong presence at the elections. The international election monitors included representatives from France, the United States, the European Union, ECOWAS, IFES, NDI, The Carter Center and the African Union. The EU had about 70 monitors present, and ECOWAS had 200. The Carter Center sent eight long-term monitors to the election in addition to over 20 short-term observers (The Carter Center 2010a). Despite accounts of election fraud of various types, the international observers officially declared the elections to be generally free and fair (Human Rights Watch 2011; U.S. State Department 2012, 16; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). The Carter Center noted that “the successful voting process [was] an overwhelming testament of Guineans’ profound desire to express their will at the ballot box and to complete their historic democratic transition” (The Carter Center 2010d). Despite the violence surrounding the elections, CENI made important steps towards improving the electoral process, and the Guinean citizens showed their enthusiasm to participate in a democratic system.

Dependent Variable: Levels of Citizens' Confidence in the Electoral Process

I assess Guinean citizens' confidence in the electoral process as indicated by their support for democracy, satisfaction with democracy, trust in political institutions, and judgment of past presidential elections. It is impossible to draw definitive conclusions about these factors because of the lack of available data, in contrast to the other two case studies. One difficulty with this case resulted from the lack of survey data, which can provide valuable insights into public opinion. Therefore, I used secondary sources to draw conclusions about citizens' confidence in the efficacy and transparency of the electoral process in Guinea. The 2012 Bertelsmann Stiftung Transformation Index Country Report for Guinea states,

There is no survey data available on public opinion regarding democracy in Guinea, but Guinean citizens have shown themselves ready to organize, demonstrate, and to even die for securing the right to choose those who represent them and to send home those who do a poor job. After 52 years of autocratic rule, no term limits, and little separation of powers, this is a mostly unprecedented experiment in Guinea, and may be accompanied both by great enthusiasm and by unrealistic expectations. Like many other West Africans, Guineans retain some skepticism about democracy, and are keenly aware that a credible presidential election is one small step toward the broader set of institutions and practices that constitute democracy. (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 9)

Guineans' frustration with election results and the failure of democracy in the past has undercut their support for democracy in Guinea (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009). Low participation levels in Guinean elections show the citizens' disenchantment with democratization through elections based on their country's flawed electoral record. Diallo (2009) relates the basic thought process of many Guineans who refuse to go to the polls on Election Day. "As long as this regime is organizing the elections, the results are known beforehand. So we might as well make do and refuse to give moral support to fraud" (Diallo 2009, 230). When people feel like their vote does not matter, they have little to no motivation to participate in the electoral process.

Because of their tumultuous history with elections and authoritarian rule, Guineans have had a particularly difficult time committing to democratic values. “Although Guineans state their strong commitment to the idea of democracy, in reality, many remain highly skeptical of Western-style democracy” (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, 8). There are several reasons this seems to be the case. First, Guineans preferred military rule to the constitutional alternative that a member of the old government took over after President Conté’s death. Next, Guineans are intent to limit the number of political parties in the country to two or three. It also appears that some Guineans fear that elections will bring dissidence among different ethnic groups or political parties (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 17). Citizens seem to want to have a restricted democracy in order to evade issues stemming from too much political competition (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, 8). Potential actors against democracy in Guinea include the military and ethnic groups, particularly the Fulbe and Kpelle (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 18).

Another issue with measuring citizens’ support for democracy stems from the fact that it was difficult to gauge Guinean’s interest in democracy before 2010, because they had no experience with that type of government (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2007). The 2010 elections were the first time that democracy was promised and steps were taken after the elections to ensure that democratic practices were established and maintained. Alassane Sylla, a worker at a Guinean electric company said on Election Day in 2010, “We’ve been waiting for 52 years. Today I’ve waited three hours, but I don’t mind” (Time 2010). Citizens had long anticipated the opportunity to vote in free and fair elections—elections in which their vote would actually be counted and contribute to the selection of the next Guinean president.

This anticipation and excitement for transparency and credibility in elections is only one indicator that suggests that citizens desire stronger democracy in the country. A factor signaling

progress towards democracy “is the fact that Guineans have grown far more outspoken in demanding the effective democratic protections to which they are entitled by law” (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012, 8). There seems to be consensus on many values that democracy supports, including the importance of term limits and a balance of power.

It is clear that citizens’ confidence levels and degree of trust in the electoral process in Guinea have just begun to change after the 2010 presidential elections. Before 2010, Guineans were subject to authoritarian rule that meant they were limited in certain aspects of their freedoms, including the ability to vote in multiparty elections. Citizens did not trust the president or the outcome of elections. The population felt as though the government made promises they did not intend to keep. By the time Camara was president, the public was fed up with authoritarian regimes and made clear that democracy was their preferred type of government.

Conclusions

The lack of available data about public opinion in Guinea precludes a clear-cut conclusion regarding my hypothesis. It is clear that Guinea has taken significant steps towards a consolidated democracy:

Guineans must now continue down this path so that this opportunity to have real democracy for the first time in the country’s history is not lost. The way to ensure that democracy flourishes is not only by casting ballots in a peaceful manner on Election Day and then allowing the legal process to take its course. Guineans must also continue to be engaged in their country’s affairs by voicing their concerns to the government and holding its elected officials accountable. Democracy is not just the act of electing leaders—citizens have to do their part to ensure the process remains on track. (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 2010b)

The role of international election monitors in that progress towards democracy is less clear in the case of Guinea than in the other two cases in this study.

By using the information published about the presidential elections, I was able to learn about the role that international election monitors played in Guinea's past elections. While monitors were present at each of the four elections examined in this case study, they played a larger role in the 1998 and 2010 elections than in 1993 or 2003. However, even when monitors had a strong presence, citizens often still came away with feelings of distrust because of the long history of Guinean leaders breaking their promises to their constituents. Jallow (2011) poses insightful questions about the relationship between civil society and the government: "Is it really possible to have effective democratic and electoral regimes without transforming the civic culture—the people's attitudes, perceptions, and understandings of the nation-state system? Is there not an anomaly between African peoples' ideas and understandings of government and the realities of the modern nation state under which they live and act?" (386).

To improve the prospects of a thriving democracy in Guinea, it is imperative that the government aims to rebuild the trust between themselves and the population. The newly elected government has much more international and domestic credibility than did many of Guinea's past leaders (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). This will be crucial in ensuring that the next elections run even more smoothly than did the 2010 presidential elections.

Holding regular, free and fair elections is another prerequisite for successful democracy. In order for Guinea to move towards freer and fairer elections, it is necessary for Guinean citizens to put pressure on the government to encourage the government to be accountable to its own promises (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2009, 21). International pressure will also play a key role in ensuring the government holds regular, transparent, and credible elections. While international election monitors have played a role in Guinea's democratization, they need to continue their presence during elections as democratic practices grow stronger in Guinea in order for more

conclusive results to be drawn. Public opinion survey data would be incredibly helpful in evaluating the role played by the international monitors in changing the public's confidence levels in the Guinean electoral system, and even just in evaluating the expectations and sentiments of Guineans regarding democracy in their country.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The norm of international election monitoring took hold around the globe in the early 1990s. Its rise and spread reflected changing expectations of democratic principles, human rights, and expectations of state sovereignty. After the fall of the Soviet Union, democracy quickly became the model of government for developed and developing countries. Since elections are such an important function of democracy, governments are expected to invite international election monitors to ensure that the elections operate smoothly. Pressure by the international community as well as domestic pressure from citizens for free and fair elections led many governments to invite international monitors and observers to their elections starting in the 1990s. “This tremendous increase in the use of election monitoring is a signal that states [...] have come to accept that internal legitimacy is at least partially dependent on external validation and that external legitimacy depends in part on electoral processes that meet international standards” (van Sickle and Sandholtz 2009, 298). Authors of the existing literature on international election monitoring have focused on governments’ desire for external legitimacy as motivation for inviting monitors. This focus on international opinion neglects to recognize the significance of citizens’ confidence levels in the government and the institutions it supports. “Unless the people buy into the electoral process, it is doomed from the outset” (Soudriette 2007, 12). Because of this, it is crucial that emerging democracies’ governments invite international monitors to their elections to ensure that both international and domestic actors are confident in the transparency and efficacy of the electoral process.

The literature about elections and democracy in Africa right now are much more from the top-down than bottom-up perspective (Bratton 2007, 63). This means there is not much literature focusing on African citizens’ views of democracy, “yet they are precisely the ones who

matter and who should be consulted first” (Bratton 2007, 63). Additionally, many authors claim that election monitors “may” inspire confidence in elections and the democratic process (Abbink and Hesseling 2000; Soudriette and Pilon 2007; López-Pintor 2007). But how accurate is this claim? The purpose of this study was to analyze the significance of the rise of the norm of international election monitors and its effects on citizens’ confidence levels in the electoral process in their countries. Through the examination of the cases of Benin, Mali and Guinea, I sought to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables in my model. The independent variable was formal government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring and the dependent variable was citizens’ confidence levels in the domestic electoral process. I hypothesized that government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring would promote higher citizen confidence levels in the efficacy and transparency of the electoral process. While my results are not definitive, I find evidence that supports my hypothesis in each of the three cases, particularly in Benin and Mali. I discuss my analysis and conclusions in the following sections.

Analysis of Findings

The cases of Benin, Mali and Guinea provide different insights into the role of international election monitors in presidential elections and the influence the monitors have over the citizens in these countries. While the three francophone West African countries had the same history of French colonization and independence between 1958 and 1960, their progress towards democratic consolidation has taken disparate paths. In 2011, the end of the time frame examined in this study, Beninese, Malian and Guinean citizens expressed their desire for democracy despite the flaws that may have accompanied democracy’s arrival in their respective countries.

“Democracy is the stated aim of most African countries but practice varies enormously and many countries are not on a one-way street toward political liberalization” (Herbst 2011, 394). Benin and Mali have had much more straightforward paths than Guinea to the level of democracy at which they were functioning in 2011. While all of the countries have experienced periods of authoritarian-style leadership in their recent histories (Benin very briefly, Mali slightly longer, and Guinea for the majority of its existence since independence), their governments have all adopted factors crucial to democratic consolidation. These practices include holding regular elections and inviting international election monitors to ensure that the elections are free and fair.

Benin, Mali and Guinea have the same basic procedures for running their presidential elections. In the first round of elections, a candidate must win the majority of the votes to be elected. If no candidate wins over 50% of the votes, a run-off election is held between the two candidates who garnered the most votes in the first round. Despite the similarity in their systems, the results of presidential elections in Benin, Mali and Guinea have been very different, and the public and international community’s responses to these results have also varied widely between the countries.

The Case of Benin

Benin has sound institutional support to help elections run smoothly. The Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA) organizes and operates the elections, and announces their tallies of the votes. The Constitutional Court is the body that releases the official results of the elections and regulates any problems that occur during or after the electoral process (L’organisation internationale de la Francophonie 2001). Benin’s government invited international election monitors to its 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, and 2011 presidential elections.

1991 brought about a transfer of power from Mathieu Kérékou to Nicéphore Soglo. The 1996 elections shifted presidential power back to Kérékou. The number of election monitoring groups present during the 1996 elections was much higher than the number of election observers in Benin in 1991. The observers confirmed the validity of the results and the transparency of the process. The 2001 elections proved more problematic, as the main opposition candidates boycotted the run-off election. Many Beninese accused Kérékou of electoral fraud. The fourth place candidate in the first round was the only candidate who agreed to compete in the run-off election against Kérékou, and Kérékou won this contest easily, with 84% of the votes (Houngnikpo 2011). The monitors' reports after these elections were not as complimentary as they had been in 1996. The 2006 elections had some organizational problems, but ended up bringing Thomas Boni Yayi into the presidency. He was re-elected in 2011, but observers expressed some concern about the levels of tension in Benin after the announcement of the results (Africa Research Bulletin 2011, 18763).

Combining this historical information about Benin's elections with public opinion survey data allows for a clearer understanding of the role of international election monitors play in changing citizens' confidence levels in the electoral process. Voter turnout in Benin was very high across the three years accounted for in the survey data, ranging from 88%-91% of those surveyed. Citizens' preference for democracy was highest following the 2006 elections, which named Yayi President. There was an 11% increase in those who expressed their preference for democracy from the previous survey, reflecting citizens' active acknowledgement of the benefits democracy could provide them in terms of economic and social development under Yayi's leadership (Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a). Citizens' satisfaction with democracy in Benin reflected a similar pattern—69% of those surveyed in 2008 claimed to be either fairly or

very satisfied with the way democracy works in Benin—the results following the 2006 elections were higher than those following the 2001 or 2011 elections (Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011). The percentage of Beninese surveyed who rated the last presidential election as free and fair in some regard—whether with major problems, minor problems, or completely free and fair—fluctuated between 90% in 2005 to 96% in 2008 then down to 86% in 2011 (Afrobarometer 2005a; Afrobarometer 2008a; Afrobarometer 2011). These results likely reflect citizens' sentiments that the 2001 elections involved the opposition candidates boycotting the run-off election and contested results, the 2006 elections running very smoothly after a small delay, as well as that the more serious delays in the 2011 elections were frustrating and the violence and criticism surrounding the elections was alarming.

Overall, the 2006 elections clearly had a strong impact on citizens' perceptions of democracy in Benin. The reports of the UN, *la Francophonie*, and ECOWAS all declared the 2006 elections free, fair and transparent and there were the fewest reports of irregularities in these elections. The presence of international election monitors cannot be definitively linked to the success of democracy in Benin reflected in the 2008 Afrobarometer surveys, or in the past decade more generally. The monitors' reports on the elections do, however, match up with citizens' public opinion reflected in the survey data. This implies that the monitors' ability to assess the situation in Benin surrounding the elections mirrored citizens' sentiments. It is possible that the international observers were one of the factors that influenced citizens' confidence in the elections. The Beninese people's high levels of trust in democracy and perceptions of free and fair elections that increase at a fairly steady rate across the selected survey questions suggest that international election monitors, in addition to other actors such as CENA and domestic monitors, have been able to bolster support for democracy and trust in the

electoral process since 1990. These assumptions support my hypothesis by signaling that the Beninese government's adherence to the norm of international election monitoring has led to increased levels of citizen confidence in Benin's electoral process. However, because the available data does not allow me to directly measure the effects of international monitors on citizens' confidence levels, the possibility remains that there is in fact no positive relationship between the two variables in my model.

The Case of Mali

Mali's political history with authoritarian style regimes led to a slower transition to a functioning democracy than Benin experienced. While Mali has three agencies in place to run the elections, Malians felt frustration with the democratic system since elections did not seem to produce any changes to society for fifteen years. Mali has made significant progress in establishing democratic institutions but is now struggling to incorporate them into society and gain citizens' trust in these institutions.

Mali invited international election monitors to all of its multiparty presidential elections—in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007. The elections in 1992 were Mali's first multiparty elections after independence. Alpha Oumar Konaré won the 1992 presidential election. Over 40 election observers were present and declared the elections free and fair. The media did report that monitors were not extremely involved in the electoral process, so the monitors' assessments may not have carried meaningful implications about the elections and state of democracy in Mali (Lange 2000). The 1997 elections were comprised of delays, confusion, boycotts, and controversial results. Konaré won reelection in the first round. The monitors from *la Francophonie* determined that the elections were lawful and transparent, despite some

irregularities (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1997). The 2002 elections were much freer and fairer than the 1992 and 1997 elections. Amadou Toumani Touré (ATT) was elected President, and monitors from *la Francophonie*, the National Democratic Institute, and the Carter Center found the elections to be free and fair. In 2007, many Malians felt as though their country was operating under a single party system because of Touré's leadership style and the lack of opposition (Camara 2011). ATT was reelected and the elections were again labeled free and fair.

An examination of Mali's electoral history in addition to public opinion survey data provides insight into how international election monitors impact citizens' confidence levels in Mali's electoral process. Voter turnout across all four of Mali's presidential elections between 1990 and 2011 was low—less than 40%. The percentages grew slowly yet consistently from 1992 to 2007, from 21.61%, to 29.2%, to 29.99%, and finally to 36.24% (Camara 2011, 86). While Malians were not as readily accepting of democracy or elections as Beninese, they are slowly warming up to the idea. If the trend continues, voter turnout rates should continue to increase as Malians grow more accustomed to democratic practices and values in their country. This is reinforced by Malians support for democratic government. Between 68% and 72% of those surveyed expressed that democracy is preferable to any other kind of government (Coulibaly and Diarra 2004; Afrobarometer 2005b; Afrobarometer 2008b). This represents a clear majority of the population. The majority of respondents also viewed Mali as a democracy at the time of the survey. 87% of those surveyed characterized Mali as a democracy, with or without flaws, in 2002 and 2005. In 2008 this indicator increased to 89% (Coulibaly and Diarra 2004; Afrobarometer 2005b; Afrobarometer 2008b). Despite the fact that the majority of individuals surveyed viewed Mali as a democracy, the percentage of those who were satisfied

with the way democracy works in Mali was much smaller. For example, in 2005, 45% were not very satisfied or dissatisfied, and 49% were fairly or very satisfied (Afrobarometer 2005b, Afrobarometer 2008b). When evaluating the freeness and fairness of the elections themselves, citizens' evaluations have been improving over time. In 2001, 55% of survey respondents described the last elections as being "free and fair with minor problems" or "completely free and fair" (Afrobarometer 2009, 10). In 2005 this percentage increased to 70% and it increased again to 83% in 2008 (Afrobarometer 2005b; Afrobarometer 2008b). The 13% increase following the 2007 election is interesting because there was not much involvement by opposition parties, so ATT was largely uncontested in the election. This shows Malians are becoming more comfortable with elections in their country, despite irregularities that might accompany them. This could also be an indicator that the institutions and organizations supporting the effective functioning of the elections, including international election monitors, were able to reassure voters of the legitimacy of the election, increasing their levels of confidence in the transparency of the election.

As with the Benin case study, I am unable to directly link citizens' increased satisfaction with democracy and elections in Mali to the presence and involvement of international election monitors in the presidential elections. Again, however, I am able to claim that the international election observers and the citizens of Mali arrived at similar conclusions in the evaluation of presidential elections between 1990 and 2011. Monitors endorsed Mali's 2002 elections more strongly than the other elections, and citizens' indications of preference for democracy, trust in institutions supporting it, and confidence in elections increased after their own assessments of the 2002 elections. The evidence I found in monitors' reports and Afrobarometer public opinion surveys supports my hypothesis that international election monitors' presence increases Malian

citizens' confidence levels in their electoral system. Although international election monitors are not the sole cause of the increases in Malians' confidence levels, they do seem to be a contributing factor. Because democracy was slow in gaining initial support in Mali, it is important that international election monitors continue their presence during Mali's presidential elections to encourage Malians to be even more confident in their trust of democratic processes and institutions in their country.

The Case of Guinea

Unlike Benin and Mali, which have generally been viewed, until the 2012 coup in Mali, as two of West Africa's strongest democracies, Guinea has been less accommodating to democracy. Military coups and violence have played a much larger role in Guinea's history and democratic transition than in the other two cases in this study. Guinea held multiparty presidential elections in 1993, 1998, 2003 and 2010, and invited international election monitors to each of them, although monitors' involvement was very limited in the 1993 and 2003 elections. Lansana Conté won the 1993 election in the first round with 51.7% of the votes cast (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993, 1). The government was not clear in its communications with election observer missions, and IFES reported that the Guinean government had a clear lack of concern about international monitoring efforts (International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1993). International election monitors present declared that the elections were neither free, nor fair, nor transparent (Jallow 2011). Conté won the presidency again in 1998 (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1998). While there was much dissent among the Guinean people regarding the election results, the election monitors present from *la Francophonie*, NDI, the Organization of African Unity, ECOWAS, and other

organizations found the elections to be generally free and fair, with some irregularities (Organisation internationale de la Francophonie 1998; International Foundation for Electoral Systems 1998). In 2003, Conté won the election for a third time because opposition parties boycotted the Constitutional amendments he passed that allowed him to stay in power indefinitely (Jallow 2011). Guinea denied access to domestic election monitors, but allowed some international monitors to be present in the elections. In September 2009 was the brutal massacre in Guinea's capital of Conakry in which governmental forces killed almost 200 citizens who had been rallying for democracy (U.S. Department of State 2012; Jallow 2011; Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). The elections that occurred in the aftermath of this massacre in 2010 were Guinea's first free and fair elections that citizens and the international community recognized as such. Alpha Condé was elected President in December (U.S. Department of State 2012).

The analysis of the case of Guinea is much different than the examinations of Benin and Mali. This is largely due to the absence of Afrobarometer or other survey data available. Because no public opinion data is obtainable to the best of my knowledge, I evaluate the indications of citizens' views of democracy and election in Guinea by using other secondary sources. Voter participation levels are historically low in Guinea, because of the prevailing belief that election outcomes were determined before the elections even took place under Conté's presidency. The exception to this low voter turnout was in the 2010 election, when observers took note of the higher levels of voter turnout (The Carter Center 2010e). In addition, Guineans seem to be hesitant in their acceptance of democratic values despite their support for the idea of democracy. Prior to 2010, Guineans had no experience living in a functioning democratic system. While they expressed their discontent with Conté's authoritarian-style leadership,

Guineans also seemed to prefer military rule to a transition of power to a member of Conté's old government. Guineans also seem intent on limiting the number of active political parties in order to minimize violence stemming from too much political competition (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2012). However, the support and demand of citizens for free and fair elections is impossible to ignore. In recent years, Guineans have become more expressive in making their demands for democratic elections, limits on term length, and a system of checks and balances so the president does not become the sole source of authority in the government.

Although election monitors were present in all four of Guinea's presidential elections since 1990, Conté's regime undermined the sense of legitimacy election monitors were able to provide citizens in Benin and Mali, so the same effects did not happen in Guinea. The monitors were rather generous in declaring that the 1998 and 2003 elections were free and fair, since unlike in Benin and Mali, these monitors' reports did not match the public's sentiments. Citizens have just begun to become more optimistic about Guinea's democratic prospects since the 2010 elections. As international election monitors become more familiar with the functioning of democracy and Guinea, and citizens become more aware of monitors' presence and mission, monitors should become more in tune with citizens' perspectives and views, and citizens should trust the monitors' ability to report honestly on the conduct of the elections and therefore have greater levels of confidence in the electoral process. Although the support for my hypothesis in the case of Guinea is not as strong as it is in the cases of Benin and Mali, there is still evidence that suggests that international election monitors are one of the many factors contributing to Guineans' increasing confidence in the transparency of their elections and the functioning of democracy in their country. There is no way of knowing how low Guineans' confidence in their system could have been if international monitors were not present at any of the elections. The

continued support of international election monitors during Guinea's presidential elections in the future will encourage citizens to continue to build their trust in the electoral system and the institutions that sustain it.

Conclusions

Implications

This study has found evidence to support the hypothesis that formal government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring bolsters citizens' confidence levels in their domestic electoral process. This implies that international election monitoring is a "key mechanism for diffusing pro-democracy norms" (van Sickle and Sandholtz 2009, 297). There is currently no way to measure the effects of international election monitors. Because no method for this measurement exists—such as surveys asking citizens to evaluate the international election monitors—I turned to specific data about elections between 1990 and 2011 to evaluate monitors' effects on citizens' confidence levels.

Bratton (2007) uses a correlation test to find that citizens' perceptions of the last election affect the strength of their support for the next elections. This relationship, while statistically significant, is not very strong because elections with irregularities do not detract from citizens' confidence levels at the same rate as well-run elections increase their confidence levels (Bratton 2007, 68). This is supported by the sentiment that "the publics of many African countries continue to support elections even when they are disappointed with the systems that have evolved" (Herbst 2011, 395). While this notion holds positive implications for the furthering of democratic processes and institutions in the developing world, it means that the impact of actors such as international and domestic election monitors is harder to observe.

Bratton (2007) and Herbst's (2011) findings reflect my own research based on Afrobarometer survey results and data about voter turnout levels in the elections in Benin, Mali and Guinea. After particularly successful and well-run elections that international election monitors deemed free and fair, citizens were more likely to reflect increased levels of confidence in political institutions, support for democracy, satisfaction with democracy, and perceptions of the freeness and fairness of the elections. The contribution of international election monitors to this increased confidence is impossible to distinguish with the present data available, but there is evidence of a connection between the two variables. This connection is reinforced by the fact that "international observers and ordinary voters arrive at similar judgments about which countries have free and fair elections, and which do not" (Bratton 2007, 78). Since international election monitors and voters tend to share a similar outlook on elections, it seems as if citizens are likely to evaluate elections as free and fair when monitors are present and evaluate the elections in the same manner.

Looking to the future, it is important to recognize that international election monitors cannot and should not be the permanent mechanism for building and maintaining citizen confidence levels in the electoral process.

Although observers from overseas may be more familiar with the intricacies of democratic electoral practice, and while some may be very effective as trainers of local people who have not previously observed elections, it must be remembered that international observers are short-term visitors to the countries holding elections and are frequently unfamiliar with the local society, its politics, the areas to which they are posted, and especially the local language. As such, their main purpose is to transmit what they observe to the outside world, and especially to the members of the international donor community which increasingly conditions aid programmes on whether democratic transitions are on track. (United Nations Department for Development Support and Management Services 1997, 20)

After international observer missions complete their tasks in a country, they leave until the next election. Therefore, the governments in emerging democracies must recognize the importance of

strengthening their own electoral commissions and allow domestic monitors to play a role in the electoral process. Domestic monitors may be a longer-term safeguard against election fraud and manipulation, as “worldwide evidence shows that domestic observation constitutes a booming activity in the democracy domain, and it has no doubt contributed significantly to democratic development by improving the electoral conditions of a given country” (López-Pintor 2007, 26-27).

Limitations of the Study

As with any study, there were certain constraints that limited my ability to reach definite conclusions in support of my hypothesis. Time was a significant constraint in this study. With more time available, I could explore more cases to strengthen my findings about the relationship between the variables in my model. Another limitation of this study is the lack of survey data available for Guinea, and limited data available for all of the elections between 1990 and 2011. Since I did not select my cases based on the availability of survey data, I had to attempt to draw conclusions about Guineans’ confidence levels based on indicators in other sources, but not directly from public opinion data, as I was able to use in the cases of Benin and Mali. Although there was evidence to support my hypothesis in all three cases, the results I found are not conclusive since there is currently no way to establish a definite connection between international election monitors and increased levels of citizens’ confidence in elections. In fact, as of now there is no effective way to measure the impacts of international election monitors at all. If Afrobarometer included a question asking citizens to rate their perceptions of trust in international election monitoring organizations, or whether they felt that elections were freer and fairer when election monitors were present, I would be able to more confidently conclude

whether a positive relationship between the presence of international election monitors and citizen confidence levels exists.

I intentionally limited my study to the region francophone West Africa. This allowed me to hold constant the variable of colonial history, which affects the past governance of the cases, but also plays a strong role in structuring the government and institutions still in place in the countries today. West Africa is an area full of emerging democracies, and a region that many scholars focus on in their studies of democratization. However, there is limited scholarship available on the role of international election monitors in these areas. Therefore, this study fills a gap in the existing literature.

Suggestions for Further Research

This study has suggested a positive relationship exists between government adherence to the norm of international election monitoring, as represented by the presence of international monitors during presidential elections, and citizens' confidence levels in their domestic electoral processes. There are a few directions that would be beneficial to take further research. One approach is to expand the study to study the effects of domestic election management bodies (EMBs), such as CENA and CENI, as well as domestic election monitoring groups on citizen confidence. As I conducted research, I realized how crucial EMBs and domestic election monitors are to the effective management and regulation of elections. Another approach would be to broaden the study to include cases in other regions of the world, using public opinion data when available to evaluate citizens' confidence levels. As more research and reports become available about election monitors' presence in presidential elections and citizens' evaluations of

democracy in their countries, this study will be able to expand drastically and come to more definitive conclusions about the relationship between the two variables.

The last suggestion is to expand the years included in the evaluation of international election monitors' effects on citizens' confidence levels in the electoral process in their country. This study does not include elections that occurred after 2011. Since that date, Mali has experienced large levels of violence due to ethnic tensions that escalated into a rebellion that overthrew Touré on March 22, 2012. Amadou Haya Sanogo was the leader of the coup, but he handed power back over to a civilian government in April, under the interim presidency of Dioncounda Traore. In May 2012, Traore was attacked and had to leave the country for several months to recover. While ECOWAS is working with the interim government, there is still much turmoil in the country (Central Intelligence Agency 2013b). The next presidential elections are sure to be replete with controversy, so the role of international election monitors in these future elections will be interesting to observe in the case of Mali, as well as in Benin and Guinea, to see if the relationship between international monitors and citizens' confidence levels continues to hold a positive correlation.

Overall, this study has made important steps in advancing the study of the effects of the norm of international election monitoring on voters' confidence levels. My research suggests that international observers' presence during elections may in fact bolster citizens' confidence levels in the efficacy and transparency of the electoral process in their country. However, the inability to measure the effects of international election monitors on citizens' confidence levels means that it is currently impossible to find strong evidence in support of or opposition to my hypothesis. Future research on this topic will be crucial to promoting the strengthening of democracy in countries in francophone West Africa and elsewhere in the developing world.

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