Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar

STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE:

THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES AND POLITICAL PARTIES

IFE
INSTITUTO FEDERAL ELECTORAL

Organization of American States

GOBIERNO DE ESPAÑA
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Appendices

The Country Profiles were used as a working tool to provide a political, electoral, and institutional overview of each participating country in the Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar.

FOREWORD

The First Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar, held in Mexico in 2008 by the Organization of American States, the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, International IDEA, and the Latin American School of Social Sciences, was well received by its participants as the beginning of a continuous process of learning and professional development activities to build capacity within electoral authorities. Following the discussions of the First Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar, there is little doubt that electoral authorities are a fundamental element to democratic consolidation in the Western hemisphere. Members of the Organization of American States have legally prescribed their electoral authorities as the institutions that guarantee the sovereign will of the people by organizing electoral processes in an impartial, efficient and effective manner. In carrying out this important job, electoral authorities have identified shortcomings in the administration of electoral processes that they would like to address; namely, they would like to benefit from greater institutional capacity and the professionalization of their roles to enhance their credibility and strengthen democratic processes in the region.

Building upon this experience, the Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar took place in Mexico City from September 28 to October 3, 2009.

Its goal was to continue to improve institutional capacity within electoral authorities in three key areas: 1) professionalization through human capacity development; 2) the institutionalization of processes and best practices; and 3) contributing to the improvement of technical electoral infrastructure. An important addition to the seminar was an element of capacity building that focused specifically on methodologies to formulate projects to improve electoral organization and administration.

The topics of discussion for the Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar were chosen by the electoral management authorities themselves from amongst several of the most pressing issues they are facing. A survey conducted among high level representatives of the electoral management bodies in the region identified two priority areas for institutional development: the role of the media in the electoral process, and the relationship between electoral authorities and political parties.

This publication documents the primary discussions that took place at the Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar in order to continue the debate over these topics as part of the effort to consolidate equitable and efficient electoral and democratic practices.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Head of the Electoral Studies and Projects Section, OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation

Throughout the Americas, the region is united in recognizing that elections represent the democratic method by which citizens elect their leaders. However, in terms of their interpretation and implementation, there are several models in place. In modern times, the electoral process constitutes the closest approximation to a method of citizen oversight of the government. Under the umbrella of democracy, elections are organized, carried out, and adjudicated through several distinct formal mechanisms and formulas, which correspond to different principles. The idea of the "democratic guarantee" is inherent to all these principles, which form the pillars underlying the legitimacy and recognition of elected governments. Democratic principles have common objectives: to ensure the legitimating capacity of elections and to provide democracies with normative importance. These elements generally guarantee democratic governability. Free and universal elections bring legitimacy to elected leaders and to the democratic principles that government represents.

Within this context, the main role of electoral management bodies is to guarantee democratic

continuity through the consistent and effective organization of elections. Their greatest challenge is effectively carrying out the electoral process itself while maintaining the trust of both political actors and the public. The legitimacy of elected officials is proportional to the level of trust that political parties and citizens place in the electoral authority and its ability to carry out its organizational responsibilities during elections. It is important that leaders throughout the region focus their efforts on reducing what International IDEA has named this "credibility gap" in electoral authorities. Credibility gaps can be incredibly damaging to democracy, which is one reason why it is important to professionalize electoral authorities and focus on building their human capacity. The OAS has taken a capacity-building approach in order to work with the region to close these gaps, with the goal of professionalizing electoral authorities throughout the region.

Capacity building for electoral management bodies is important on several levels, the first of which is human capacity. In other words, it is important to professionalize electoral institutions and the

public servants employed by these organizations to ensure the proper administration of electoral processes. The second level is institutional development. This implies constant support for the development of legal and organizational frameworks by which the institution must abide, and which public servants can use as a platform to apply their skills. The third level of capacity building is the provision of technical assistance by promoting the exchange of knowledge and experience. This includes knowledge sharing on electoral systems and tools, and disseminating technical knowledge at the national level, thereby allowing electoral authorities to fulfill the demands of their citizens.

The annual Inter-American Electoral Training Seminars are a new effort led by the OAS to address these three key issues. The seminars attempt to strengthen and clarify the roles of electoral authorities throughout the continent in a setting that benefits from the knowledge of practitioners as well as academics, utilizing a participatory methodology. Within this context of horizontal cooperation, general frameworks are developed to clearly link the strengthening of electoral authorities with improved governability. The general curriculum of the seminar is designed to promote professional and academic exchanges along the lines of the two main topics of discussion.

This year, the first discussion topic is the relationship of the media with electoral authorities and in electoral processes. In past years, and in spite of numerous obstacles, countries throughout the region have come to recognize the importance of the freedom of expression and freedom of information to democratic processes. Therefore, the media's role in the electoral process—as an engine that provides information to the public about the electoral process as well as keeping citizens responsibly informed between elections—was an important topic to explore through several angles in this seminar.

Electoral authorities should develop mechanisms to collaborate with the media to ensure respect for three basic democratic principles: the responsibility to ensure equal access to information, the media's right to inform, and citizens' right to be informed. These rights apply equally to political parties, candidates and even to electoral authorities. Both political parties and candidates have a right to inform the public about their proposals and platforms, and electoral authorities should inform the public about the voting process itself. In carrying out these tasks, the relationship between the media and electoral authorities is clearly an interdependent one.

In determining the appropriate mechanisms for collaboration between electoral authorities and the media, certain attributes should be considered:

1. Electoral authorities have their own role as communicators, and should educate the media on how to present information about the democratic process to their audiences. Their role is fundamental in educating voters on how to exercise their democratic right, and a strategic relationship with the media is beneficial.

2. Electoral authorities are news in and of themselves. Because the information they manage is in high demand, they must constantly develop external communications strategies to relay the proper message to the media, which will then disseminate to the public. Electoral authorities should always be prepared to confront information crises, and to counterbalance the permanent vulnerability of their image, and therefore credibility, which is implied by their role.

3. Electoral authorities should be especially aware of media advances in the digital age,

and the appearance of so-called "new media". People are more informed than ever through numerous sources, moving beyond traditional formats such as radio, television, and newspapers to the internet and other digital media, which has become extremely influential in the way that information is both produced and disseminated. On the one hand, as a new world of information has emerged on the internet, the type of available information and its mass distribution provides an opportunity to reach more voters. On the other hand, this new media presents a challenge to electoral authorities in regulating the quality of information. While traditional media are easy to pinpoint, anyone can post information or misinformation on the internet, allowing various actors to establish their own agenda. Studies on internet regulations during electoral periods suggest that this is a nascent element in the electoral process that requires significant consideration.

4. Lastly, in exploring the intricate relationship between electoral authorities and the media, it is important to consider the role of media coverage in influencing electoral campaigns. One aspect that is frequently debated and of growing concern for countries in the region is the role of state media in electoral campaigns, given their frequent support for the incumbent. Another element of concern exists in non-electoral periods, when governments are challenged by media groups, monopolies or consortia with political agendas of their own. The role of the media as a de facto power in some countries is an important topic for further discussion.

The second discussion topic of the seminar was the relationship between political parties and

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-Dr. Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian

electoral authorities. It is common practice in most democracies for intermediary actors such as political parties to represent public interests and participate on their behalf in political processes. In these cases, democracies depend on strong political parties that represent varied public interests and provide platforms for the discussion and implementation of policies. While the discussion of the relationship between political parties and the electoral authority often centers on mechanisms for oversight of political parties, it also needs to focus on how to strengthen political parties' abilities to represent and interpret the interests of the citizens. When political parties are strong, representative entities competing under transparent and accountable electoral procedures with oversight by the electoral authority, political leadership will benefit from greater legitimacy. In other words, as the relationship between electoral authorities and political parties narrows based on mutual respect and credibility, the electoral process will yield optimal results and be universally accepted.

The Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar was important in that it brought electoral authorities from the entire region together under one roof. Electoral authority representatives were able to exchange information and experiences that will deepen the analysis of the practice and organization of elections in these two key areas. As the primary political forum for the discussion of

regional problems, the OAS's recent work has validated multilateral approaches and negotiations as a means to achieve peace and governability. The Inter-American Democratic Charter is highly regarded and respected by its members, and the OAS is committed to the defense of democratic principles, with serious consequences for countries that violate them. These democratic values include freedom, political pluralism, equality and social justice.

The Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar was made possible by the cooperation of several counterparts, specifically the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO), and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). The immense efforts that have gone into the organization of these seminars are paying off, and the discussions and lessons learned from these seminars are currently being adapted to a virtual format which the organizers hope to use as part of a new certificate program on electoral studies. This program would be the first in the region, thereby leading to the continued strengthening of regional electoral authorities and improved democratic governance.

I. The Role of Electoral Authorities as Institutions that Strengthen Governability

The evolution of democracy in Latin America has been marked by a series of challenges, whose persistence have invariably failed to derail the continent from its democratic path. On the other hand, they have shed light on the importance of building effective and solid institutions, electoral authorities among them, as a means to bring about democratic continuity in spite of the challenges that are inherent to any political system. The frequently independent nature of electoral authorities can provide stability, impartiality and credibility to most democratic systems. So far, electoral authorities have lived up to the challenge in Latin America, as evidenced by the pervasiveness of democratic rule on the continent, and by the number of clean, fair elections that take place in the region.

Electoral authorities are responsible for the transition of power that characterizes democratic regimes. They provide legitimacy and credibility to the electoral winners, whose recently endowed power reflects the will of the electorate. To facilitate these transitions by enhancing their capabilities to administer complex electoral operations while ensuring fairness, electoral authorities would benefit from capacity building and professional development. Governability, which rests largely on the government's legitimacy, is only sustainable when electoral authorities are able to perform their main duty (delivering elections) in an effective and credible manner.

What are the characteristics of an electoral authority that render it credible? The speakers discussed several of these characteristics in the Inaugural Session of the Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar, including: the credibility of electoral results; the transparency of the electoral authority and its willingness and ability to provide credible and timely information; the influence of political parties on the electoral authority, specifically related to its composition or membership; public knowledge of the electoral process, usually encouraged by the electoral authority; and accountability.

Striking the perfect institutional balance to enhance the credibility of electoral authorities is an ongoing, ever-changing process. Electoral authori-

ties, like other democratic institutions, are faced with challenges; their inherent challenges should be catalyzed as opportunities for improvement over time. Mexico is an example of a democratic system that has gradually moved from one-party rule to a system of plurality. The nature of its electoral authority has consequently changed over time to reflect this gradual progression, in terms of its composition, credibility, transparency and relationship to political parties. As such, this chapter presents both the conceptual overview of these issues and details the Mexican case to demonstrate the evolving relationship between electoral authorities and governability.

1.1 Electoral Authorities as Institutions that Strengthen Governability: The Case of Mexico

Dr. Leonardo Valdés Zurita,
President Councilor of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico

D r. Valdés Zurita began his presentation by pointing out that governability, as per the definition of Spanish political scientist Manuel Alcántara, is a condition in which national actors agree to participate in political processes under the established procedures, or rule of law.[1] Simultaneously, the rule of law must be set by institutions that have the capacity to design and implement policies that respond to the needs and demands of those national actors. This interdependent cycle is only made possible when democratic institutions exhibit certain key attributes, such as impartiality and credibility, which in turn lead to greater governability and legitimacy. Electoral authorities play a role in this cycle as key actors in the transition of power inherent to every electoral process. Their ability to successfully carry out their role has a direct impact on governability. Their challenges, however daunting, can be useful over time if they are used to help correct and perfect the political institutions in any given country. As institutions become more effective and their legitimacy is enhanced, citizen buy-in and participation also increase, completing the cycle of governability.

Electoral Systems and Governability

Electoral systems have a direct effect on governability in two main ways. First, electoral systems allow for the institutional integration of relevant and active political tendencies, or forces, within a

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[1] Manuel Alcántara Sáez, Gobernabilidad, Crisis y Cambio (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Constitucionales, 1994).

[2] The principle of plurality/majority systems is simple. After votes have been cast and totaled, those candidates or parties with the most votes are declared the winners (there may also be additional conditions). However, the way this is achieved in practice varies widely. Five varieties of plurality/majority systems can be identified: First Past The Post (FPTP), Block Vote (BV), Party Block Vote (PBV), Alternative Vote (AV), and the Two-Round System (TRS). First Past The Post is the simplest form of plurality/majority electoral system. The winning candidate is the one who gains more votes than any other candidate, even if this is not an absolute majority of valid votes. The Two-Round System is a plurality/majority system in which a second election is held if no candidate or party achieves a given level of votes, most commonly an absolute majority (50 per cent plus one), in the first election round. The rationale underpinning all PR systems is the conscious translation of a party's share of the votes into a corresponding proportion of seats in the legislature. For more information see Electoral System Design: the New International IDEA Handbook 2005 at http://www.idea.int/publications/esd/.

country. The representation of different political parties and ideologies in the representative bodies of government (i.e. Congress or Parliament) augments governability by making a democracy more pluralistic. Mexico's 2009 legislative elections demonstrated that the country has taken yet another step in the direction of pluralism and democratic "normality" by welcoming seven out of Mexico's eight eligible political parties into the Chamber of Deputies.

Electoral systems tend to follow one of three major models, whose merits are a source of constant debate: simple majority (also known as first past the post), absolute majority, or proportional representation.[2] Regardless of the model, electoral systems share the same goals; namely, the regulation of electoral processes and the adequate distribution of political representation in each jurisdiction. The single most important factor that determines the merit of an electoral system is not the system, nor the method, to which it adheres. It is, instead, its ability to clearly identify winners and losers through a legitimate and effective electoral process.

The legitimacy of electoral systems is the second way in which they affect governability, as these tend to be proportionally related. An elected government is viewed as legitimate when backed by an electoral system and institutions that are highly trained, with ample experience in running electoral processes. Institutional legitimacy is essential for gaining the public's trust in its electoral system; when the public is confident in their system, it increases their desire to live in democratic continuity, thereby rendering a system governable.

The composition of the electoral authority may also influence the legitimacy of an electoral system. In some countries, electoral authorities are composed of representatives from political par-

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ties. However, it is the inclusion of impartial and politically independent representatives that leads to greater credibility in electoral processes in general. Impartial electoral authorities can enhance the public's confidence in its democracy, rendering it more legitimate and governable.

The Mexican Case: Improving Electoral Legitimacy

The credibility of electoral results is one key element to the legitimacy of electoral institutions, as was the case in Mexico's 2009 legislative elections. Its results went largely unquestioned because of the efficacy of the electoral process, which was technically and logistically sound, and well executed by IFE. Credibility was maintained throughout the electoral process, leading up to the final vote count, by a new system called the *Programa de Resultados Electorales Preliminares* (Preliminary Electoral Results Program, also known as PREP). PREP is a system that provides real-time information on all events during the electoral process, including the time when voting centers open and close, and that registers and calculates the vote tally as each voting center transmits its final results. This new system brought renewed legitima-

cy to the Mexican electoral process by enhancing the credibility of electoral results.

Mexico has yet to overcome several internal obstacles in its path toward democratic governability, and several external obstacles, such as the ongoing economic crisis. In times of great uncertainty, there is a stronger need for legitimate institutions and elected leaders to become the pillars of a stable democracy. Electoral authorities must be consistently strengthened, trained and improved in order to promote a culture of democracy that will be flexible and strong enough to outlast the challenges that are imposed by domestic and international pressures.

Political Parties' Influence on the Electoral Authority in Mexico

Mexico has accumulated significant experience in debating the role of political parties in the composition and operations of its electoral authorities. The 1996 electoral reform ended a long-standing tradition by taking away political parties' right to elect the leading representatives of the electoral authority. This right was instead transferred to Congress, where the Chamber of Deputies is responsible for determining the composition of the electoral authority (IFE) by a two-thirds majority vote among those present on the day of the vote. The Deputies themselves nominate potential candidates, but they must fulfill certain criteria: they should not be influential members of a political party, nor have been a director of a political party, nor should they have run for public office in recent years.

As a result of the 1996 reform, the General Council of IFE is integrated by one President Councilor and eight Electoral Councilors who fulfill the above-

mentioned requirements. Although political parties cannot vote, their representatives are allowed to participate in and share their thoughts with the General Council, as are Congressmen, who by nature represent political parties.

Due to the emergence of political pluralism in Mexico in the 1990's, this system guarantees that no single party will have enough votes to reach a two-thirds majority, thereby avoiding a one-sided or "stacked" electoral authority, even with the existence of these new independent councilors. As a result, at least three of the political parties with congressional representation must achieve consensus in selecting candidates to serve as Electoral Councilors. To a large extent, smaller political parties also back these candidates with representation in the Chamber of Deputies.

In 2003, when the first independent General Council was up for election, the outgoing Councilors spoke out against the existing model in favor of a more gradual process of Council turnover. The 1996 reform designated seven-year terms for the General Council, with no possibility for reelection. Seven-year terms were deliberately chosen in order to avoid overlap with presidential elections, which take place every six years in Mexico. However, if all nine members were to be replaced at the same time, the General Council would retain no institutional memory. Under the newly proposed model, turnover would happen at different times so that experienced councilors would preserve institutional knowledge and experience to pass on to incoming members. An unsuccessful informal proposal was made before Congress to reform the General Council's electoral schedule. It was not until the 2007 electoral reform that a new system was approved.

The President Councilor is now elected for six years and is eligible for reelection for a second term.

The rest of the Council members are elected every three years, and may hold office for a maximum of nine years. Under the current organization of the General Council, one-third of the Council is up for election in each electoral period, guaranteeing that two-thirds of its members at any given time will have at least three years of experience.

These examples illustrate the complexity of the relationship of political parties to the electoral authority in Mexico. While political parties are active yet indirect participants in the nomination and election of Electoral Councilors, these individuals must be of an independent nature. In Mexico, the electoral authority has undergone a "citizenization" ("*ciudadanización*") of sorts as a result of its composition. "Citizenization" has also resulted naturally in a country like Mexico, which is a federation of 31 states and one federal district. Each federation has a local electoral council (which is elected by the General Council), where political parties also have vocal participation but no right to vote. A total of 300 districts follow a similar structure with the composition of district electoral councils. In addition, every council member is a career civil servant whose performance, independence and impartiality undergo frequent evaluations. Therefore, although political parties do participate in the activities of the electoral authority, IFE has gradually emerged through its numerous reforms as an institution of the Mexican people.

Electoral Authority Oversight of Political Parties in Mexico

IFE's relationship with political parties extends beyond its role as the electoral institution in charge of organizing elections. While local and district electoral councils are active only during electoral periods, the General Council is a permanent organ whose duties include the supervision of political party financing. Prior to 2007, oversight activities were conducted on a yearly basis and sub-contracted to external accountants. The 2007 electoral reform limited political parties' access to private capital, and public financing must exceed private contributions for any activity.

A new, permanent unit was created within IFE to exert oversight over the origins, management, and spending of both public and private political party finances. This Oversight Unit for the Resources of Political Parties is an autonomous, technically specialized unit that reports to the General Council and whose sole function is to oversee these activities. Since 2007, political parties have been required to submit quarterly financial reports to the Oversight Unit, and in electoral periods, they must submit detailed pre-campaign and campaign expense reports. Irregularities of any nature, from accounting errors to suspected illicit activity, must be reported to the General Council, which has the right to impose sanctions on political parties.

The relationship between IFE and political parties was further modified in 2007 as IFE was given the institutional responsibility for arbitrating competition and electoral campaigns. The electoral reform imposed strict limitations on the nature and financing of campaign advertising, including the use of air-time on electronic media outlets, limitations on the content, placement, and raw materials (such as paper, cardboard, plastic) used in advertisements, etc. Strict rules are in place to keep visual, as well as environmental contamination at a minimum during electoral campaigns. IFE was always responsible for overseeing electoral advertising, but in 2007 its role was extended to make rulings on and impose sanctions on any legitimate violations.

The procedure established under the 2007 reform has been subject to much debate. When accusations or complaints are brought before IFE, it has

five days to investigate and adjudicate the case. A formal complaint is followed by a preliminary investigation in order to assess its validity. If a case is accepted, the relevant parties are contacted to prepare for a brief hearing in 48 hours. After the hearing is over, the Executive Secretary has 24 hours to render its decision to the interested parties, and impose sanctions where relevant. This new sanctioning process forced the General Council to double the number of sessions it held during the 2009 legislative elections. Compared to previous elections, IFE spent twice as much time investigating complaints and adjudicating cases. This led to some controversy, as many believe that the five-day period is too brief, whereas others believe that a judicial body, and not an administrative one like IFE, should have the jurisdiction to try these cases. It is worth noting that the majority of cases were related to the misuse of electronic media advertising.

The 2007 reform completely changed the role of the media in electoral processes by prohibiting political parties from purchasing airtime on radio and television. Radio and television airtime is now granted freely to all contenders, and IFE's role is to administer and allocate airtime under the principles of equality and fairness. Under the new formula, 30 percent of all slots are divided equally amongst all the contenders. The remaining 70 percent is distributed proportionally in accordance with the number of votes received by each party in the previous election. New political parties are granted airtime, but only their share of the 30 percent that is divided equally amongst all parties. Airtime runs from 6 a.m. to 12 a.m. daily. IFE is not only in charge of verifying that political parties adhere to their airtime allocations, but also monitors media compliance with the new rules.

Allowing citizens and political parties to voice their opinions and concerns is essential, but these voices should fall on the impartial and independent ears of the electoral authority, which is ultimately responsible for maintaining fairness, equality, and legitimacy in the electoral system.

-Dr. Leonardo Valdés Zurita

Conclusion

Governability goes hand in hand with legitimacy, without which a democratic system cannot endure the numerous challenges it faces. An electoral system is legitimate and credible when supported by a competent, impartial and effective electoral authority. In turn, credible electoral results bring about public confidence in the electoral system and its leaders, and allow for democratic continuity. In Mexico, there have been ongoing efforts to improve the quality of the electoral authority, IFE, to render it a more credible and legitimate institution in the eyes of the public and the country's political actors. A delicate balance is always at stake between the roles and responsibilities of the electoral authority and other essential actors in the political process, namely political parties, the media, and voters. Allowing citizens and political parties to voice their opinions and concerns is essential, but these voices should fall on the impartial and independent ears of the electoral authority, which is ultimately responsible for maintaining fairness, equality, and legitimacy in the electoral system.

1.2 Electoral Authorities as Institutions that Consolidate Governance

Dr. Rafael Roncagliolo, Director, International IDEA Peru

D r. Roncagliolo began his presentation by mentioning that International IDEA is an intergovernmental organization with an exclusive mandate to support the consolidation of democracy around the world. Created in 1995 as an initiative of several Scandinavian countries, it is now a global organization. IDEA's work revolves around three fundamental themes: the improvement of electoral, political and government systems. Aside from electoral reforms and collaborative work, IDEA also has a strong focus on constitutional reform, or the reform of government systems. The latter has become a topic of great importance in Latin America in recent years, as many countries are contemplating or implementing these types of reforms.

Electoral Authorities and Governance in Comparative Perspective

Studies on the contribution of electoral authorities to democratic consolidation commenced many years ago. As far back as 1999, the United Nations

Development Program (UNDP), the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), and others hosted an event on the subject of electoral authorities as institutions of governance. The conclusion that was reached ten years ago was that democratic governance would benefit by strengthening electoral authorities and turning them into permanent and independent institutions of the executive branch. At this time, the field of electoral institutional development was nascent, but nonetheless, it became an important one in studies on democratic consolidation. As a universal tendency emerged to embed these institutions into democracies as permanent and independent bodies, there was greater professional specialization on the subject.

It is interesting to note that when these studies took place ten years ago, 70 percent of the electoral authorities in Latin America were independent. Those few exceptions included some mixed institutions, in Argentina and other countries, where part of the electoral authority depended on the government. Clearly, though, Latin America was the most advanced region in this respect. In

Africa, 53 percent of electoral authorities were independent and 52 percent in the Middle East. The numbers were much lower in North America and Europe, where only 14 percent of countries had independent electoral authorities. In these countries, however, there was much less debate about the potential role of these institutions because these democracies were characterized by greater consensus. In other words, there was limited discussion on electoral issues, whereas in Latin America, the opposite was true. It was considered that independent institutions provided greater legitimacy to a system, especially in younger or unstable democracies, and studies showed that independent institutions were also more cost effective.

Historical Context of Democratic Progress in Latin America

Before examining the inherent challenges to strengthening electoral authorities, it is important to discuss the historical context of democratic progress in Latin America. While many consider Latin America's democracies to be new, this perception is incorrect. Upon closer examination of the history of democratic processes, Latin America followed only the first European democracies and the United States. Democracy in Latin America is now, in fact, almost 200 years old. Although this democratic history encountered considerable obstacles, it remains a history of democracy.

The 19th Century in Latin America was characterized, by and large, by military dictatorships, but also by many nascent electoral processes and the emergence of several political parties. Some of the oldest political parties in the world are in Latin America, for example the Liberal Party in Colombia, which was founded in 1849. Party systems in several countries, including Uruguay, Paraguay

and Honduras, date back to that time. Although many of these party systems are presently in crisis, they follow a long tradition that distinguishes Latin America from other regions.

With its numerous instances of fraud and one-sided parliamentary procedures that adjudicated elections, a second wave of democracy emerged in Latin America around the 1920s. This second wave was characterized by the creation of strong electoral authorities that were put into place to end these anti-democratic practices. In 1924, Uruguay adopted the *Corte Electoral* (Electoral Court) *and the Registro Cívico Nacional* (National Civic Registry). In 1930, Peru declared its *Jurado Nacional de Elecciones* (National Elections Jury) as a fourth branch of the government. These were among the first electoral authorities in the region. The notion that electoral authorities could be the fourth branch of government began to take hold, but a wave of military coups then swept the region. Nevertheless, some electoral authorities, like those of Chile and Uruguay, managed to survive these coups because of their outstanding legitimacy.

The third wave of democracy in Latin America commenced around 30 years ago in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. In 1978, only four countries in the region did not have military governments: Mexico, Costa Rica, Colombia and Venezuela. The latter two were considered democracies, but these democracies rested on non-inclusive, transitional political pacts that brought their military governments to an end. They provided stability, but their non-inclusive nature bred a great deal of corruption and disabled these countries from broadening their political and democratic spectrum, resulting in political crises several years down the line. During this third wave, the central topic of discussion regarding Latin America was the concept of free and fair elections. It was this collective concern that brought about reflection

on the role of electoral authorities and their role in strengthening democracy. During this period, several other institutions, such as central banks and ombudsmen, were strengthened and made independent. Spain's constitution under Franco served as a guide for many of the new constitutions that were born during this period.

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Current Challenges for Electoral Authorities as Institutions of Governance

Today, due to the evolving nature of electoral authorities, the challenges are somewhat different. Electoral authorities have become one of the fundamental pillars of representative democracy, with two plausible explanations: their legal autonomy, and/or that they have developed into socially legitimate and credible institutions. Regardless of the reason, they are now central to democratic "guarantees" in a representative system. Some of the following concerns are at the forefront of today's discussions on the current and evolving role of electoral authorities:

1. Control over the executive branch is a growing concern in the midst of an ongoing wave of reelections throughout the region. As leaders seek to reinstate reelections or legalize them for the first time, in some cases successive reelection, there is heightened concern about keeping checks on the executive power. Independent electoral authorities are one of the institutions that can keep the executive power in check, at least through its control of electoral processes.

2. There is a crisis of political power, due in part to legislative exuberance, which has led to more and more restrictions on political parties. Political parties depend increasingly

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on special interest groups as a result of new laws that regulate financing for political parties. Some countries maintain mixed formulas for party financing, including public and private resources, whereas in other countries, political parties are prohibited from accepting private funds.

3. Appropriate regulations for electoral campaign financing are a work in progress.

4. Appropriate regulations or formulas for media access during electoral campaigns also continue to be a challenge.

5. Civic education has become, and will likely remain to be a major concern for electoral authorities. Encouraging democratic values in society is essential but costly. It also covers a wide spectrum, ranging from the education of citizens that staff electoral centers during elections, to more permanent civic education for all citizens. The promotion of democratic culture is a central responsibility of electoral authorities, which are now per-

manent organisms and therefore must fulfill this duty between electoral periods.

6. In dozens of countries, electoral authorities can undertake legislative initiatives. In other countries, such as Costa Rica, they do not have the power to make legislative initiatives, but they are able to intervene in legislative processes. In the first group of countries, Congresses must consult with electoral authorities when they are debating electoral legislation. Where governments allow electoral authorities to take legislative initiative, the message is clear: electoral authorities are not only responsible for electoral organization and jurisprudence, but also for the development of the political system. They can support and encourage legislation not only in regulatory matters, but legislative ones, which can eventually translate to constitutional matters.

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Considerations for Improving Elections and Governance

In trying to overcome these challenges, there are several other factors to consider. First, and in spite of these challenges, Latin America generally has clean elections. There have certainly been controversial ones, but this is an expected outcome of close elections. Unfortunately, controversy tends to have a negative impact on the legitimacy of electoral authorities. Nonetheless, the predominance of clean elections has been an important accomplishment for the region. Building on that record, elections still need to be more free and fair. This concept is not black and white, as there are varying degrees of freedom, fairness and justice. More equitable elections, whereby candidates have equal access to financial re-

More equitable elections, whereby candidates have equal access to financial resources and media coverage, lead to more free and fair elections. As the authorities on electoral matters, electoral management bodies should take a leading role in shaping the electoral code and proposing legislation on how to better perform its functions, thereby creating a stronger democratic system.

-Dr. Rafael Roncagliolo

sources and media coverage, lead to more free and fair elections. As the authorities on electoral matters, electoral management bodies should take a leading role in shaping the electoral code and proposing legislation on how to better perform its functions, thereby creating a stronger democratic system.

Second, politics needs to break its dependence on special interest groups. This is a central problem that stems from the current crisis that political parties are undergoing. In the past, political parties would choose their candidates based on their political skills and experience. Today, they choose the candidates who can potentially attract or contribute the most money for the campaign and the party. In the past, party politics consisted of a career path whereby party members sought to eventually become members of Congress; today, party membership is based more on an individual's monetary contribution to the party. This pattern is not as widespread among the older political circles as among new parties and younger politicians. Past dreams of owning a home, or starting a non-governmental organization, were replaced with the

dream of having one's own political party. While governments continue to view political parties as the main contenders in the political arena, and consistently promote legislation to control these parties, these are no longer the real competitors. Electoral authorities should keep this in mind as they invent and implement new regulations to provide all electoral contenders with equal access to resources.

Third, electoral authorities must not shy away from participatory elements in a representative democracy. Representative democracy is not at odds with the principles of participatory democracy; they are, in fact, complementary. For example, the electoral authority of Ecuador is in the process of developing the standards and rules for a merit-based competition through which they will elect the members of a new citizens' participatory council. Electoral authorities, as in the case of Ecuador, must adapt to changing circumstances because democracy is a dynamic process whose actors are constantly in flux, as per Norberto Bobbio's definition of democracy.[3] Representative democracy has been subject to many changes over time, which the founding fathers of American democracy could never have foreseen. When representative governments face a crisis of legitimacy, there is an opportunity to open up the political system, increase participation, and steer the government back in the direction of a truly representative system in line with the evolving needs of its citizens.

Lastly, and most importantly, electoral authorities should focus on consolidating democracy through the legitimacy of results. Democratic governments gain legitimacy not only through the electoral process, but also by following through on the delivery of their promises. The failure to deliver has been one of representative democracy's greatest problems in Latin America. Decades of democratic rule in the region have done little to reduce poverty or

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decrease inequality, and this has been one of its greatest failures. While electoral authorities are not directly responsible for the legitimacy of results, they do have a role to play. In 2004, UNDP published a report on the state of democracy in Latin America, whose conclusion was that most countries in the region had electoral democracies, but not citizens' democracies.[4] It remains true that electoral democracy is the main area of competence and responsibility of electoral authorities. However, as they evolve, they should consider advancing toward better political systems and quality representative systems with sound political agendas. Otherwise, the legitimacy "deficit" is bound to increase. Electoral authorities should be more ambitious and take on the responsibility for devising policies to improve democratic governance, including the quality of democracy as measured by its results.

[3] Bobbio, Norberto; The Future of Democracy (Great Britain: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

[4] United Nations Development Program, Democracy in Latin America: Towards a Citizens' Democracy (Buenos Aires: Aguilar, Altea, Taurus, Alfaguara, S.A., 2004).

1.3 Transparency and Accountability
of Electoral Authorities

Dr. Francisco Valdés Ugarte, President of the Superior Council,
Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO)

In his presentation, Dr. Valdés Ugarte began by pointing out that transparency and accountability are essential elements to a well-functioning government, and to the electoral authorities who legitimate it. Both are delicate matters in the electoral arena, where the electoral authority is responsible for providing justice for citizens through transparent and accountable elections which bring legitimacy and quality to elected governments. Transparency and accountability are different concepts, even though they are strongly interrelated. Their complementarities are best understood by exploring their differences in greater detail. Dr. Valdés Ugalde detailed their distinctions, their relationship to one another, and their roles as essential components to modern democracy.

Transparency without accountability represents a violation of citizens' democratic rights. A government can make information available to its citizens and exhibit transparent behavior, but with no real legitimacy in terms of accountability for its actions. Accountability without transparency is also possible, and its effect is to keep citizens

removed from the functions of their government. This would hardly fulfill the ideal of a citizens' democracy. Democratic representation, therefore, depends on the coexistence of both. Naturally, this coexistence depends strongly on how well transparency and accountability are conceptualized in the public sphere, and then translated into legislation. The devil is in the details, and the details can determine whether or not a government effectively abides by these concepts.

Transparency:
Citizen Access to Public Information

Democracies often institutionalize transparency through legislation that regulates the government's need to provide accurate and timely information to its citizens. In other words, transparency is frequently equated with the right to information about the government and the politicians who administer it. The right to information targets the citizen as its main subject or beneficiary. In some countries, however, the term citi-

zen can be rather exclusive, since it does not encompass minors who should have equal access to information, even if they do not yet have the right to vote. There are limits to the manner by which one can prescribe the right to transparency. Fundamentally, the concept should be governed by laws, incentives and procedures that will instruct both government and citizens to provide and obtain the information they desire.

In Mexico, it was not until the approval in 2002 of the Law of Transparency and Access to Public Information (*Ley Federal de Transparencia y Acceso a la Información Pública Gubernamental*) that any regulation changed the government's behavior in the direction of greater transparency. The only exception was Mexico's electoral authorities, which prior to this law had a direct relationship with citizens. In Mexico, the push toward greater transparency through its legal institutionalization has marked the clear distinction between Mexico's authoritarian past and its democratic present.

In his upcoming book, Dr. Valdés Ugalde will explore state reform in Mexico. He concludes that Mexico's democracy consists of a number of flexible elements, but the only two which distinguish it from an authoritarian government are the following: new legislation that regulates the electoral process and the party system, and legislation which grants citizens access to public information. Mexico's transparency law was derived from its Constitution, which stipulates that citizens have the right to information. There are two separate institutes that deal with transparency issues, at the federal and state levels, which facilitate the flow of information and respond to citizens' requests.

In Mexico, the push toward greater transparency through its legal institutionalization has marked the clear distinction between Mexico's authoritarian past and its democratic present.

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Access to Public Information in Mexico

As information flows have increased, the government has categorized information into three separate groups. The first group comprises personal data, and this type of information is not publicly accessible to anyone except the concerned individual. The second group comprises information that the state regards as confidential and withholds for reasons of national security. The third group comprises all other information, which can be requested by any individual through the legally established mechanisms. This type of information is wide-ranging and may include, for example, data on how political parties utilize public funds during an election.

At the federal and state level, IFE and other parties involved in the electoral process, such as electoral tribunals, comply satisfactorily with information requests. IFE is in charge of tracking public information requests and also keeps track of its responses. Although it demonstrates a clear willingness to comply with these requests, it has problems fulfilling its role on an organizational level. Not only does IFE process huge amounts of information and data, but also much of it is highly technical with respect to the role and behavior of the media during an election, campaign financing

and spending, etc. In addition, there is no way to filter requests for public information, since they need have no justification. In order to process and share information of such a technical nature, IFE needs to have specialized personnel and a robust budget to support this function. A second limitation is IFE's internal capacity to process and deliver the requested information, which usually comes from a secondary source, such as political parties. There are no mechanisms by which to hold secondary sources accountable for the manner in which they present the requested information to the IFE. This causes significant disruptions in the flow of information from the original source to the final recipient.

Accountability is really an equilibrium function between government institutions and powers, whereby each one is submitted to the oversight of others.

-Dr. Francisco Valdés Ugarte

Accountability and Intra-Governmental Oversight

Accountability, like transparency, works in favor of the citizen, who is supposed to be the "boss" of an elected government. However, this relationship tends to be inverted for numerous reasons, efficiency chief among them. Accountability is really an equilibrium function between government institutions and powers, whereby each is submitted to the oversight of others. Some institutions are created exclusively to serve the role of watchman, but these institutions must be equally scrutinized. The roles of each institution should be clearly spelled out in the law to avoid ambiguities and loopholes, whether these are *de facto, de jure*, or interpretable. Ambiguity and loopholes create incentives for distortion, misinterpretation and non-compliance with the law.

There are three important considerations that underlie accountability. First, legislative quality is essential in making governments accountable to their citizens. Modern democracies, including

many in Latin America, are subject to legislation that was formulated in less democratic times. They lack accountability because the laws were formulated in times when accountability was easily evaded or in less demand.

Second, government institutions whose main purpose is to provide oversight should have the autonomy and obligation to act impartially and beyond their personal interests. If this type of behavior is not compulsory under the law, it leaves considerable loopholes for impunity.

Third, it is absolutely necessary that legal transgressions are in equilibrium with their respective punishment. Legislation should provide disincentives for legal transgressions and go hand in hand with exemplary sanctions whose costs far outweigh the benefits of the violation. Otherwise, it is preferable to break the law and assume the penalty. This relationship applies equally to electoral competition, where political parties and candidates are more likely to break the law if it is ambiguous, lacks clarity, or the ensuing punishment is insignificant compared to the gains. Achieving accountability is considerably more complex than achieving transparency.

The Balance of Powers and Accountability in Mexico

In Mexico, the balance of power between institutions has changed considerably, with visible effects on accountability. The balance of power between the electoral authority and Congress has been transformed by the current system of political representation. As Mexican politics struggled to overcome a situation in which most parties were subject to the partial and imbalanced governance of one ruling party, the public began to rely on IFE as a respected, autonomous institution that satisfied the Mexican public's needs. That benefit, however, brought about a new set of problems, namely the strengthening of political parties. With a divided Congress, the legislative function has gained much power over the executive and judiciary. Deep congressional party divisions gave birth to a system of representative quotas for political parties.

Now that greater equilibrium has been reached among parties, their interests are more ambitious, particularly in regard to the selection of individuals to serve in the state's autonomous institutions. It seems, therefore, that under anomalous democratic conditions (i.e. single party rule), the referee was unquestioned. Under normal democratic conditions, the anomaly is that everyone wants to question, to be the referee, and to interfere in decisions, even if they themselves are the players in question.

In the 2006 elections, this situation reached a climax. The autonomy and impartiality of the electoral authority came into question because, within an electoral system that has no runoff vote, the results of the election were so close and the opposing parties were so ideologically opposed. As Mexican democracy reached greater openness and pluralism, there was a parallel deterioration in the legitimacy of the electoral authority.

The accountability of electoral authorities is subject to several considerations:

1. Electoral authorities should evaluate whether or not political parties should participate in their decision-making body. According to Dr. Valdés Ugalde, political parties should not be involved.

2. Electoral authorities should not be subject to the control of de facto or illegitimate powers or interests such as special interest groups or the media.

3. Electoral authorities should avoid interference by other state or political powers, such as political parties, private corporations, the executive branch and the president.

4. The designation of members of the electoral authority should take into consideration the political circumstances in the country. In Mexico, Congress is in charge of electing IFE's General Council. Therefore, these designations are tied to party divisions within Congress. If there is a fragile or catastrophic representative equilibrium, the designated members of the electoral authority could affect the medium and long-term legitimacy of the electoral authority, regardless of the efficacy of its design.

The latter point makes reference to the single most important problem with democracy, which is its ability to be truly representational. Participatory democracy is an option that should be exercised in certain areas, but Latin America is still in the early stages of achieving truly representative democracy.

There are two main deficiencies that are responsible for this fragility of participatory democracy, specifically in the areas of education and autonomy. When educational levels are extremely precarious, this affects a country's democratic and political culture. Simplistic political cultures lead to weak representation and affect the quality of democracy. Secondly, electoral authorities should be autonomous in order to exhibit transparency and accountability, and encourage a system that is more representational and legitimate. In order to achieve that, electoral authorities should be able to impose mechanisms for transparency and accountability on its main stakeholders: political parties, the media, and the citizens.

II. The Role of the Media in Electoral Campaigns

As a public institution, and given its responsibilities not only to disseminate electoral information and determine electoral results, but also to encourage civic electoral education, the electoral authority takes on a very public role. Its relationship with the media is therefore essential to the effective dissemination of its messages. However, unlike the electoral authority, the media is not, despite its public character, a public good. In Latin America, the media is usually privately owned, has its own political interests, and therefore represents one more actor in the electoral process. Its ability to reach wide audiences makes it a powerful actor, at that, capable of setting the mood for an election. The media determines who, what, and how they will cover an electoral process, the effect of which spills over onto the general public's opinion.

As such, the relationship between the media and electoral authorities can become delicate and even contentious during the electoral campaign. Nonetheless, this relationship also has a potentially positive dynamic in which the media serve as a helpful ally to electoral authorities in their

efforts at transparency and credibility. Similarly, the media is a tool for large scale dissemination of electoral information to the public. As a result, the management and coordination of this relationship is a critical aspect of the functioning of electoral authorities throughout the hemisphere, and an essential point for strengthening the electoral process.

As such, the presentations in this chapter reflect the idea that, rather than disallow the media from providing coverage during the electoral process, electoral authorities should formulate solutions or regulations to procure balanced coverage during electoral processes. In doing so, electoral authorities in each country should be mindful of the political context within which they and the media operate.

In this chapter, Dr. Rafael Roncagliolo of International IDEA and Dr. Raul Trejo of the Universidad Autónoma Nacional de México provided a general overview of this relationship and its implications for governance throughout the region. In addition, as Mr. Wesley Gibbings explained in his presenta-

tion on Media and Elections in the English-speaking Caribbean, media regulation is something that needs to be weighed carefully depending on the context, given potential negative effects on access to information. John Enright, Director of Media Relations at Elections Canada, explained in detail the media relations strategy of Canada's electoral authority, which has led to a streamlined, transparent relationship. Lastly, Gineen Beach of the U.S. Federal Electoral Commission, discussed the impact of the media on U.S. elections, with a special emphasis on the role of new technologies.

2.1 The Relationship between the Media and Electoral Authorities

Dr. Rafael Roncagliolo, Director, International IDEA Peru

D r. Roncagliolo opened the discussion about the media's relationship with electoral authorities by focusing on two main subjects: the character of this relationship during electoral periods, and the different models that are used to distribute media access to candidates and parties during electoral campaigns.

In Latin America and other regions around the world, politics have undergone a privatization of sorts, with special interests gaining the upper hand in politics. The media is one of these special interests, or de facto powers, and is as powerful as the electoral authority in many countries. The electorate receives numerous promises from candidates that are running for office, from governments that are trying to maintain support and from special interests and the media with their own agendas. Electoral authorities, in theory, are removed from these other actors because it is their role to act as the referee. This is particularly true of its relationship with the media, which is one of the most important of the de facto forces in any system.

*Types of Media Relations
with Electoral Authorities*

The media relates to electoral authorities in four different ways. The first is the electoral authority as a subject for media coverage. Because the electoral authority is often the source of news in itself, its relationship with the media should be transparent and collaborative. The second is the electoral authority as an influential agent over the media. The third is the media as a tool for transmitting and diffusing not just news, but also information about the electoral process. Lastly, electoral authorities can relate to the media as agents charged with oversight capacities. Regardless of the type of relationship between these two actors in a particular country, the inherent challenges to all such relationships include transparency, independence, openness, collaboration, training, dissemination and oversight.

The media stands side by side with other actors who try to exert influence over an election, namely candidates and political parties, but they

Regardless of the type of relationship between these two actors in a particular country, the inherent challenges to all such relationships include transparency, independence, openness, collaboration, training, dissemination and oversight.

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The media is responsible for setting the tone during an election and determining the electoral landscape upon which candidates compete.

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also act in parallel to the electoral authority because they like to think of themselves as referees in the electoral process. The media is responsible for setting the tone during an election and determining the electoral landscape upon which candidates compete. In trying to conceptualize the ideal relationship between electoral authorities and the media during electoral processes, Dr. Roncagliolo gave the following six warnings for consideration:

1: Media as an Actor with Interests

The media is not neutral; they have interests and positions and will try to steer electoral processes in favor of these interests. As such, the media acts in a similar way to a candidate or political party. Legislation in some parts of the world has tried to counterbalance the nature of media bias. In Europe, constitutions incorporate neutrality and pluralism of information as criteria for media coverage, and specify that the role of the media should be pluralistic, presenting a balance of opinions whereby different tendencies neutralize each other. In the United States, there is a culture of checks and balances that tries to balance out media bias. In Latin America, however, there are no mechanisms to make the media a more neutral force. Therefore, it is fundamental that electoral

authorities view the media not only as an agent that transmits information to an audience, but also as actors in the electoral process.

There are two separate theories of communications regarding the effect of the media on the population. The first theory is that the media behaves like a hypodermic needle that introduces ideas with absolute authority and omnipotence for a direct, immediate and powerful effect on its audience.[5] This theory has been disproven over time because the media is clearly not omnipotent nor can it control every outcome in an election. For example, in Peru's 2000 electoral election, the media was strongly in favor of Vargas Llosa; it was Fujimori, however, who won the election. The media is in fact considered impotent at times because it is merely capable of informing the public about situations that have already taken place, rather than instigating them.

The fact is, the media is neither omnipotent nor impotent; it is responsible for agenda setting above all else. Once they set the agenda, any candidate not included in that agenda is practically inexistent. Their ability to set the agenda also means that if there is a diverse or pluralistic media, sever-

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[5] Davis, D.K. & Baron, S.J. (1981). A History of Our Understanding of Mass Communication. In: Davis, D.K. & Baron, S.J. (Eds.). *Mass Communication and Everyday Life: A Perspective on Theory and Effects* (19-52). Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing.

al agendas will be exposed at once to balance out the information. The real problem, therefore, is in countries with media monopolies, duopolies or oligopolies in which the breadth of media agendas is extremely limited. This usually results in disproportionate media coverage of a particular candidate, or worse yet, disproportionate propaganda against a candidate. Media empires usually act like impartial observers in the electoral process, but they remain powerful actors.

2: Competition with the Electoral Authority

The media tries to compete with electoral authorities and act as the sole and accurate interpreter of public sentiment. They assume they have the ability to interpret the sentiments of an entire (national) population and will not desist from airing these unsubstantiated messages. The media also keeps careful watch over the actions of electoral authorities and behaves like a pressure group that aspires to the role of referee over both the electoral process and the electoral authorities. The relationship, therefore, is competitive.

3: Competition with other Actors

The media also competes with other actors in the electoral process, especially political parties. Political parties are currently undergoing a crisis, and part of that crisis stems from Latin America's cultural and communications landscape. This landscape is the result of the emerging media culture in the region, which has crowded out the old political culture of political meetings, town halls and other techniques for introducing candidates to the public. That culture has been replaced by the mercantile logic of television and radio media, to whom news is not a public good, but rather a source of profit. Scandals and spectacles make for the most profitable kind of news, and politics has taken on these same characteristics in order to stay afloat

in an environment where the news is focused on the "bad" and not the "good". The candidates' or political parties' platforms are not profitable news; it is the face of the candidate. Because the media will always outlast politicians, and is allegedly impartial, it is generally more powerful than politicians and the parties that stand behind them.

4: Power regarding Legitimacy

The media tend to have more power than electoral authorities in this regard. When electoral authorities question the legitimacy of the media, the first defense tactic is normally to attack the legitimacy of the electoral authority. The latter's reputation is more delicate.

5: Media Interests and Influence

The media's actions are not guided by the same logic as the electoral authority, whose purpose is to serve the public good. The media is not a public good, although it is often perceived as such. In the Peruvian presidential elections in 2000, Alberto Fujimori's second reelection, all of the television stations in the country decided to ban electoral propaganda for any presidential candidate. The reason for this decision was supposedly to uphold the freedom and equality of expression. Candidates were not even allowed paid advertising during the campaign.

Fujimori, however, as the incumbent, was the only one who had access to television spots. The legitimacy and fairness of this electoral process obviously came into question. After Fujimori left the country and went into exile, a roundtable dialogue was led by the OAS to discuss the conditions for the next elections, with the goal of correcting the obvious distortions in the electoral process of 2000. The government, the opposition and members of civil society participated in the roundtable. At first, all political parties were in favor of a system comprising free, regulated airtime for politi-

cal advertising in the 2001 elections. The following day, they changed their minds and opted instead for unlimited, paid advertising. This example illustrates the power of the media over political parties, who seemed to succumb to its pressure for unknown reasons. Clearly, the media was opposed to the provision of free airtime to all candidates.

6: Public vs. Government-run Media

One of the biggest problems in the region is that countries lack solid public media. There is a distinction to be made between government-run media, which is abundant in Latin America, and public media that are built on the idea of public service.

Models for Allotting Airtime to Candidates

Keeping these warnings in mind, there are five different models for allotting media airtime to candidates, particularly television, during electoral campaigns, as demonstrated in the chart below. These models offer different combinations with respect to paid publicity and free airtime or campaign broadcasts. The combinations range from paid publicity to combinations of paid and unrestricted advertising, paid and limited advertising, or free advertising. Within these categories, some countries also allow for free airtime or campaign broadcasts.

		FREE TIME	
		NO	YES
PAID ADVERTISING	NO		V
	YES, LIMITED	II	IV
	YES	I	III

Examples
I = Honduras, El Salvador, Dominican Republic
II = Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Venezuela

III = Panama
IV = Bolivia, Guatemala, Paraguay, Peru
V = Brazil, Chile, Mexico, Ecuador

In Latin America, the tendency is moving toward model V, which consists exclusively of free airtime or campaign broadcasts; in other words, paid advertising is not permitted. Free campaign broadcasts have several implications in terms of their visibility and financing. Because campaigning is restricted to the broadcasts, the messages contained may be tailored to the length of time of the broadcast rather than the broadcast being tailored to the campaign message. In terms of financing, telecommunications laws have gone back and forth on placing restrictions on the use of public funds to disseminate campaign messages. Most countries have restricted the use of public funds for campaign financing, which means that in model V countries, the media have to absorb the financial loss that is implicit in their provision of free airtime.

The role of electoral authorities differs from model to model. In model I, the electoral authority has no role. In model II, electoral authorities have a difficult and costly role: to provide oversight over paid advertising. It is further complicated by the fact that parties can get around advertising limits by having third parties act on their behalf in contracting their advertisements. In model III, the electoral authority has to assign airtime to all candidates. Model IV is perhaps the most complex because electoral authorities are in charge of monitoring paid and free advertising, in addition to assigning airtime to candidates. Model V is similar to model III in terms of the role of electoral authorities, which is to assign and monitor free air time. Within model V, the tendency is moving toward the use of free campaign broadcasts, the first of which were used by Brazil and Chile and more recently, by Mexico and Ecuador. Model V encourages the

notion of more equitable elections by providing equal access to the media to electoral contenders. It is also based on the notion that the citizens have the right to submit an informed vote.

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When the Media plays a Predominant Role in Elections, is Democracy Reduced to the Notion of Free and Fair Elections?

Fair elections are a necessary but insufficient condition for modern democracy. Many dictators, such as Hitler, were elected through what were considered fair elections. Many people argue that elections tend to be aristocratic in their selective nature. Is democracy, therefore, a government of the people? The answer to this question rests on the legitimacy and credibility of the elected government, an element of which rests on the electoral process. If a government lacks legitimacy and credibility, the free and fair electoral process that brought them to power is no longer important. Democracy and electoral processes should be more equitable, and address the problems of poverty and inequality that plague many democratic societies today.

The progression of modern democracy has been from a parliamentary democracy, to a party democracy, to a media democracy. The democratic revolution transformed people from subordinates into citizens: citizens who can no longer be given orders, but who must be convinced or seduced by politicians and their messages and promises. This has been one among several changes that have resulted from the transition to a media democracy. With a plethora of surveys and polls, politicians have become marketing strategists and political debates have all but disappeared in many countries.

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-Dr. Rafael Roncagliolo

In spite of these transformations, the media should not be eliminated from electoral campaigns. Instead, governments and electoral authorities should devise creative solutions to improve our democracies through regulations and effective sanctions. At present, many electoral authorities have the jurisdiction to monitor and detect irregularities in the media's behavior, but they either have no sanctioning power, or the sanctions are not proportional to the offenses.

It is also important to develop the political culture within a country, and create a collective consciousness about the need for balanced media coverage and information. The substantive elements of electoral campaigns, such as political debates, should also be part of this consciousness. Electoral observation can also contribute to electoral authorities' media coverage oversight. New media outlets, such as internet and cable television, are additional tools for electoral authorities and candidates to make information widely available to the electorate. Most importantly, aside from sanctioning political parties or the media whenever they abuse the system, authorities should focus on correcting the system and its incentive structures. Electoral authorities in Latin America have the legitimacy and responsibility to contribute to this process.

2.2 The Effect of the Media on Electoral Processes and Governance

*Dr. Raúl Trejo, Head Researcher at the Institute for Social Research,
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)*

I n his presentation, Dr. Trejo began by pointing out that the media is an indispensable, unavoidable and irreplaceable instrument and protagonist in the electoral process. Consensus, which is essential to democratic governability, is unattainable without the support of the media. However, while the media represents a tremendous resource in the consolidation of democracy, it can also be one of its greatest impediments by incorporating its own interests in public affairs. In addition to disseminating information, they are responsible for simplifying and distorting the messages they send to the public in pursuit of their interests. In this way they may in fact weaken democracy and the electoral authorities that underpin its electoral legitimacy.

Media Role in Influencing Voter Decisions

Citizens judge their leaders at the polls. In nonelectoral periods, however, they judge their leaders based on their actions, which are publicized by the media. Suffrage depends largely on citizens

placing their trust in the media and the messages they spread about competing candidates. The media, therefore, is responsible to some extent for citizens' decisions at the polls, and for the consensus that enables democracy. They are not alone in trying to influence the opinions of the electorate, nor in political agenda setting, but work alongside other forms of persuasion and socialization. These may include families, schools, colleagues, as well as individuals' experiences and aptitudes for reasoning. All of these settings and circumstances are influential at the polls, which explain why, in some countries, the candidates with the greatest media coverage do not always win elections.

The media is a necessary player, but is by no means omnipotent. Some communications theories assume that the media can introduce information into societies in an almost mechanical manner. This assumption rests on the notion that people are all the same, and react in the same way to the messages they receive. However, the aforementioned conditions distort citizens' preferences, personal contexts and personalities, and their acceptance or perception of media messages is also different.

Although the media is effective in influencing the electorate, we must recognize that external circumstances have equal weight and are able to counterbalance the media's power. Politicians often view the media as a great mobilizing and manipulating force. The media itself is responsible for this perception, since it tends to often magnify its influence over society in order to prove its importance. The media often claims that it is the voice of public opinion, and many politicians and citizens surrender to this false notion.

Media Competition, Mass Media and Political Messaging

Media influence is inversely proportional to the number of media options in the market. Greater media concentration limits the diversity and plurality of opinions, and stunts the development of a sound political and democratic culture. When media outlets lack competition, they are also better equipped to compete against electoral authorities by promoting their interests and opinions.

In larger societies, mass media outlets are the only ones that are able to reach citizens at an extensive level. These outlets may choose to either build or undermine governability, depending on their political tendencies and relationship to the government. Mass media, such as newspapers, television and radio, are naturally authoritarian in their composition. Journalists and reporters, and particularly the owners of these media outlets, have the privilege of selecting their messages to the public, and the manner in which they transmit them. Metaphorically speaking, a small group of individuals at the tip of a pyramid disseminates messages to the rest of the population. Given the antidemocratic nature of mass media, checks and balances must be in place to ensure that information is balanced and accurate.

> *The media often claims that it is the voice of public opinion, and many politicians and citizens surrender to this false notion.*
>
> *-Dr. Raúl Trejo*

Audiovisual media forms, especially television, can be especially dangerous because of their tendency to trivialize, discriminate and disguise public events. Television formats are based on brief clips, aggressive headlines and slogans that substitute for rational oral and written discourse. Giovanni Sartori, an Italian political scientist, theorized that this media model implies a regression from civilized societal practices and effectively diminishes people's abilities to grasp complex matters.[6] The trivialization of television messages is proportional to its audience's ability to sift through the information and discuss it intelligently.

> *Greater media concentration limits the diversity and plurality of opinions, and stunts the development of a sound political and democratic culture.*
>
> *-Dr. Raúl Trejo*

This has important consequences on political growth; television's inability to transmit full messages and explain public issues leads to the in-

[6] Giovanni Sartori, El Homo Videns: La Sociedad Teledirigida, (Mexico: Taurus, 1999).

tellectual impoverishment of both the messages and their recipients. They disseminate facts and opinions with incredible speed, which requires abbreviated formats and general ideas that lack explanation and depth. Consequently, government leaders, including members of electoral authorities, feel compelled to compress and oversimplify their messages. By omitting relevant information, they fail to encourage understanding and dialogue and remain far removed from the citizens they represent. Their oversimplification of issues also encourages political polarization.

The expansion of information technology has broadened our sources of information, although they have yet to reach their full potential. Citizens have a new level of involvement and awareness with respect to information since they have access to a plethora of different sources and they can choose to be active participants. This increased awareness, understanding and experience is a good foundation for citizens' understanding of political issues. Yet on the other hand, if digital information platforms are not adequately regulated, people can drown in a sea of information and misinformation.

Political actors often compete against each other for public attention because they use the same public spaces to disseminate information. Electoral authorities are often confused with political actors because they also compete for these spaces. Electoral authorities' messages should differ, however, from the messages of political actors. Political parties and actors aim to persuade their audiences and market themselves favorably in order to garner support. They offer choices and marketing pitches and often undermine their competitors.

Electoral authorities, in contrast, are not there to persuade voters, but to inform them about electoral processes. Unlike political parties, they

Electoral authorities are instruments, though not protagonists of the electoral process and their failure to adhere to this role can cause serious distortions in the system.

-Dr. Raúl Trejo

should base their messages on hard facts. Their sole objectives are accuracy and impartiality, and should obtain them through transparent public messages that pertain only to the tasks of organizing elections and determining their results. Electoral authorities are instruments, though not protagonists of the electoral process and their failure to adhere to this role can cause serious distortions in the system. A former president of Mexico's IFE used to compare the electoral process to a football match. In a football match, it is the players, not the referee, who play the game and score the goals. Likewise, electoral authorities were created to organize, monitor and sanction political actors. Electoral authorities should try to have a good relationship with the media, based on their efforts to carry out their responsibilities effectively, and not on marketing strategies that stray from their legal duties.

How then, should Electoral Authorities keep Citizens Informed about the Electoral Process, and how should they Relate to the Media?

Electoral authorities should use their communication with the public as a platform for building trust amongst voters. There are no definitive formulas to achieve this, other than the dissemination of clear, transparent and timely information that is easily accessible. The appropriate model depends

on the particular situation of each country. Electoral authorities should approach their relationship to the media with caution, bearing in mind that they may not share similar priorities. The media is not always interested in spreading information for the greater good, and often filters its messages for its own benefit. Regardless of the popularity of the content of its messages, electoral authorities should always stick to the truth.

2.3 Media and Elections in the English-Speaking Caribbean

Wesley Gibbings, President of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers

M r. Gibbings commenced with a brief introduction to his organization, the Association of Caribbean Media Workers, which is a grouping of media organizations and individual journalists.[7] The Association was created to promote networking among journalists in the English-speaking Caribbean, but it also more recently includes journalists from the Spanish, French and Dutch speaking countries in the Caribbean. The organization mainly promotes professional journalistic development and training, as well as advocacy and freedom of the press.

Members of the Association are increasingly concerned with emerging versions of democracy that preclude the freedom of expression. The hemisphere is undergoing a dangerous trend whereby cultural relativism is being used as an excuse to threaten many freedoms, including the freedom of expression. Freedom of expression, along with its subsidiary freedom of the press, must be promoted and supported regardless of the circumstances. This freedom is not limited to the act of expression itself, but also includes the right to seek expression and receive it.

The Role of the Media in the Electoral Process

Most democracies recognize the role of the mass media in ensuring that elections are legitimate and backed by broad public support. If and when the media abuses its role during the electoral process, it is likely to result in disaffection, turmoil, and general distrust of electoral processes and results. A well-informed and vigilant media can ensure that transparency and accountability prevail. The notions of transparency and accountability apply equally to the media and to electoral mechanisms. The English-speaking Caribbean holds these values in high regard and several countries have developed specific guidelines for media conduct at the polls. Efforts are always underway to ensure that the media's outputs are accurate.

Checks and balances should be in place to ensure that the media's conduct is acceptable. However,

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[7] For more information, see http://www.acmediaworkers.com/

these checks and balances should not be in the form of impositions or regulations. In other words, the best media law is no media law. Instead, there should be a greater focus on elements that facilitate the media's work. The state has a role to play in this facilitation, as does the rest of society. The state should give the media wide access to information about the electoral process; on the other hand, the media should give coverage to all competing political elements. In several countries, like Mexico and Chile, electoral authorities control these public advertising spaces through proportional allocation systems. However, in the Caribbean, where there have been substantial changes in the political landscape, quota systems could be more problematic than helpful.

The role of state media is another area that requires further scrutiny. State media tends to be partisan media, since public service broadcasting has never taken hold in the English-speaking Caribbean. The state media is therefore seen as a tool for governments to preserve their political power. Private media, on the other hand, are often attracted by the lure of advertising income and pay little attention to the allocation of advertising space across the political spectrum. Mechanisms should be in place to uphold the principle of politicians' equal access to the media, with special considerations for each country's political situation. Nevertheless, these reforms should not be subjected to official regulation. In the Caribbean, the media should be given the opportunity to devise their own mechanisms and electoral authorities should cooperate by encouraging conditions that facilitate equal access to the media.

Checks and balances should be in place to ensure that the media's conduct is acceptable. However, these checks and balances should not be in the form of impositions or regulations.

-Mr. Wesley Gibbings

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Trajectory of the Mass Media in the English-Speaking Caribbean

The mass media in the English-speaking Caribbean has had peculiar experiences to date. The liberalization of broadcast media came along with a wave of political change where long-time opposition forces came to power after many years of single-party rule. This happened, for example, in Saint Lucia, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, the Bahamas and Antigua & Barbuda. In almost all these countries, broadcast media were characterized as state monopolies that favored the ruling parties. In some cases the liberalization arose from the common, public view that opposition parties were victimized by their restricted access to the media, specifically radio and television. The liberalization of broadcast media created an opening in the political arena as opposition parties also gained access to media spots.

This transition occurred, however, without regard for an appropriate regulatory environment or formal commitments to the freedom of expression. Today, in countries like Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana and Jamaica, there is ongoing debate about self-regulation versus official regulation and censorship of the media. In most other countries, the debate stems from the governments in power that

are dissatisfied with media coverage and content. Where the phenomena of media liberalization and political change have intersected, they have brought a new focus on the work of media during elections.

The perception remains that media coverage has a linear impact on electoral results. Political parties and civil society organizations have been paying more attention to the distribution of airtime to electoral candidates, regardless of whether that time is free or paid. In Guyana, a media-monitoring unit was established in 2006 to measure media performance during the 2006 elections. The unit measured broadcast times and monitored general media performance. Many attribute the relatively peaceful nature of that election to this mechanism, which involved of panel of independent referees, and a voluntary and self-regulated code of conduct for the media. The code of conduct was not imposed, but it was endorsed by nearly thirty newspapers and television stations, except the radio which remained a state monopoly. The effectiveness of this media unit challenged the preconception that the media is a necessary evil during the electoral period.

In fact, the media is capable of portraying the free and transparent nature of elections. If elections are considered free and transparent, and citizens are confident that the results are representative of the will of the electorate, better governance is achieved. Governments that rise to power under these conditions are more likely to obtain consensus among the population and govern in relative peace. However, if elections are not conducted in a manner that involves the free exchange of ideas, and where the voting process is not transparent, the outcome can have a negative impact on governance.

Media independence does not signify the absence of bias, but the freedom to be biased, to hold opposing views, or to be extremely liberal or conservative. In short, independence is tantamount to freedom, and is an essential element to the integrity of electoral processes.

-Mr. Wesley Gibbings

Media Regulation in the Electoral Process

An independent media should be able to express information, analysis and opinions in an unregulated manner. Media independence does not signify the absence of bias, but the freedom to be biased, to hold opposing views, or to be extremely liberal or conservative. In short, independence is tantamount to freedom, and is an essential element to the integrity of electoral processes. Governability depends largely on the existence of real choices among candidates and parties who can campaign openly, and who abide by the rules that are known and respected by all. The law should protect the practice of journalism, and the basic journalistic tenets of accuracy, impartiality and sound judgment are important assets within the framework of democratic elections. Without good journalism there cannot be good electoral reporting.

Electoral authorities should and do play an important role in setting the news agenda during elections. It is often believed that the mass media are responsible for agenda setting, but this function is multilateral and ever changing. During elections, it is electoral authorities who set the news agenda

and determine the relative importance of factors such as voter registration, political parties, training of electoral staff and conduct at the polls, candidate nomination, vote counting and the declaration of final results. Electoral authorities provide a blueprint for the news agenda, and in many cases they employ media liaisons for this purpose.

In the English-speaking Caribbean, this practice has had limited success in dealing with the media due to limited resources. In many cases, the heads of the electoral authorities are the de facto media liaisons, which can detract from their fulfillment of the roles that are specific to their posts. Electoral observation missions are a relatively new phenomenon in the English-speaking Caribbean whose work has enhanced the news agenda.

Public opinion surveys and polls have also become increasingly important in determining the outcome of elections. Surveys are now an integral part of media coverage of elections. However, journalists need to abide by more rigorous standards before they accept survey results and publish this type of information. This requires specific training, which is one of the goals of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers.

The value of media-monitoring by electoral authorities cannot be underestimated. The media have an important role to play in validating electoral processes and uncovering transgressions when they occur. Media monitoring should take place, moreover, within the context of a voluntary process of self-regulation through the establishment of codes of conduct and independent referee system, much like the system in Guyana. This model has the potential to improve the relationship between electoral authorities and media and to eliminate their mutual distrust. It can also help to increase public awareness of the work required during electoral processes and produce better media performance at election time.

2.4 Country Case Study: How Elections Canada Manages Media Relations

John Enright, Manager of Media Relations, Elections Canada

Mr. Enright's case study described the actors and established procedures that Elections Canada utilizes for media communications and messaging. Media relations at Elections Canada are focused on controlling the message, rather than the messenger. The purpose of this case study is to provide a model for other electoral authorities, which could be adapted to country circumstances, or used in media relations and communications training sessions. The case study outlines policies and procedures to manage media messaging, internal processes to manage the relationship with the media, and the resources in place for the development and dissemination of messages. It also discusses the roles and responsibilities of various actors, whose role it is to react swiftly and accurately to situations that may occur during an electoral campaign, and to deal with possible crisis situations.

Elections Canada, like many electoral authorities, has struggled with the perception that it is affiliated with the government and governing political structure. Over time, it has educated journalists to understand that their role is strictly adminis-

trative in relation to elections. These efforts have been successful in raising journalists' awareness, allowing media messaging to be better positioned and reinforcing the agency's role as a non-partisan source of electoral information.

During electoral campaigns, Elections Canada has a system in place to ensure that media requests are handled efficiently and effectively. An Ottawa-based Media Center is supported by a network of field personnel. For the first time in 2008, a governance structure was put in place for the general election to respond to media inquiries under a management model. The model ensures that journalists receive rapid responses to their questions and maintains clear lines of communication with internal experts.

Who are the Players in the Model?

Electoral Media Center (EMC) in Ottawa: This is Elections Canada's direct link with the media during and between elections. It ensures a reliable

electoral information service during elections, and between elections it responds primarily to media inquiries from the national media covering Parliament. During electoral periods, the team expands to include additional media advisors, most of whom have previous experience as journalists or spokespersons.

The EMC hires Regional Media Advisors across Canada to work with Field Liaison Officers, who support Returning Officers in the field. Regional Media Advisors handle local and regional media inquiries. They are also in charge of drafting responses to inquiries and handling interview requests. The EMC also supports the Chief Electoral Officer to prepare for his media interviews, prepares questions and answers and conducts background research for media lines, and drafts analyses and summaries. The EMC coordinates the activities of Regional Media Advisors in the field and responds to questions that neither Field Liaison Officers nor Returning Officers are able to answer.

Subject Matter Experts at Elections Canada: This is a network of experts in various program areas including operations, elections financing and legal services. Most of these experts are at middle to senior management levels and are the primary contact points and information providers to the Media Relations Team, who work together to draft responses to questions from journalists. Their contribution is their high level of expertise within their program areas. However, in order to reflect the key messages that Elections Canada wants to convey, all Subject Matter Experts receive formal media relations training, particularly for developing media lines. This training helps them to understand how questions from journalists are answered and provides an overview of the newsroom and of the day-to-day functions of journalists so that subject matter experts can better understand how information is used by media.

Returning Officers: Returning Officers are stationed in each of the country's 308 electoral districts. They are chosen via a competitive staffing process and serve for a period of ten years as they administer the electoral process in their federal electoral district. Political parties have no role in the selection of Returning Officers. Returning Officers are in charge of managing the elections in their respective electoral district, which may comprise up to 120,000 electors. They are responsible for all key aspects of elections, from updating lists of registered voters, to ballots, to staffing polls and transmitting results. Returning Officers are experienced in areas like financial planning, public relations and human resources management. They receive general media training, but their role with the media is limited and in fact discouraged so that they can focus on delivering the election. The media is allowed to contact them to solicit basic information, which they are authorized to provide. Any interview requests must be pre-approved by Elections Canada. Interview requests and their subject matter are forwarded to Field Liaison Officers or Regional Media Advisors who first decide if the interview should proceed. If so, they consult with the EMC to decide who should conduct it, and what the official response will be.

Field Liaison Officers: Field Liaison Officers support and coordinate several Returning Officers within a geographic area. They are often former Returning Officers with election coordination experience. Significant effort is put into training Field Liaison Officers in media relations skills, and they are given the tools to act as spokespersons and subject matter experts. The Field Liaison Officer's role is critical, since they are the primary contact for the EMC and Regional Media Advisors during elections to respond to operational questions in the field.

Regional Media Advisors: These advisors are contracted during electoral periods to support the media relations program. They are usually former journalists or public relations experts and are the primary contact points in the regions. They are stationed across the country to guarantee all media access to reliable, efficient and rapid information. When journalists call the central EMC number they are automatically redirected to these advisors to ensure that there is a regional flavor to the stories. Because they are in the field, they tend to know local journalists and have established networks of contacts.

Regional Media Advisors proactively target local media outlets and answer media inquiries while also alerting the EMC to any controversial and immediate issues that are developing in the field. In other words, they are the eyes and ears of the EMC on the ground. Aside from responding to journalists' questions and assisting with the preparation of media lines, they maintain regular contact with Field Liaison Officers to keep a pulse on election activities and follow emerging trends. This way, they can deal in a proactive, rather than reactive way to any problems that may arise. With this mechanism there is no delay in response times, and media messaging is already prepared when journalists pose questions about the relevant issue.

Field Liaison Officers vis à vis Regional Media Advisors: These actors are in constant contact to discuss media requests. When the requests are basic, either one of these actors can provide answers without seeking central approval. They are also allowed to conduct fact-based interviews for print or broadcast media when they refer to publicly available information. However, when questions are complex or require background research, they are directed to the EMC via a defined governance structure. Likewise, interviews whose content may

go beyond public information must be approved centrally. Returning Officers do not conduct interviews, although their participation can sometimes be an advantage with local or regional media. These interviews are the exception and must be approved centrally and in consultation with the Field Liaison Officer, the Regional Media Advisor, and the Manager of Media Relations. They will assess whether there is an advantage to the Returning Officer conducting the interview and will consult with the Returning Officer's supervisor to determine if the interview should proceed.

In addition to coordinating media relations in the regions, the Field Liaison Officer and the Regional media Advisor report directly to Elections Canada and prepare daily reports on all activities, media requests and respective responses, highlighting relevant sensitive issues. These reports are reviewed daily at the central level and summarized into a briefing for the Elections Canada Executive Committee.

Governance Structure of Elections Canada

The internal governance structure, or hierarchy regarding media requests, in its simplest form, is like a traffic signal, with each color signifying the complexity and urgency of the media request. Questions are classified as green when the answer can be found in the public domain. There are no approvals required to respond to green questions, and the service standard requires that answers be provided within the hour. Answers to green questions are usually on the website, or they are questions which have been recently asked and answered.

Amber questions are more complex and require the assistance of Subject Matter Experts to be

answered. Usually, the information is not available publicly, but it is not deemed sensitive in nature. Amber questions can also be requests for clarification on the administration of electoral legislation. They tend to be about a specific and isolated incident that is unlikely to gain national coverage. These requests are responded to within three hours as per the service standard of Elections Canada. Subject Matter Experts, Regional Media Advisors and the EMC discuss the requests in order to determine if someone else needs to be brought in to assist, such as lawyers, information technology experts, etc. They also determine whether or not the questions are complex or serious enough to be escalated to a red question.

Red inquiries are the most complex in nature, and have the possibility of creating a negative story with national implications. These questions may undermine credibility in the electoral process, or they relate to an individual or group whose reputation could be damaged. These questions require the input of the Chief Electoral Officer, and should be answered the same day or within twenty-four hours.

Governance and service standards have helped to improve the relationship with the media by establishing clear lines of communication, both external and internal and allowing Elections Canada to respond to journalists within their deadlines. In Canada's 2008 elections, Elections Canada met the service standard for 87% of the calls received.

Elections Canada conducts post-election evaluations to measure the effectiveness of its media communications, and surveys journalists directly to obtain their feedback on the process. In the latest elections, 95% of all incoming calls were classified as green and responded to within an hour. The remaining four to five percent were amber, and mostly answered within the three-hour limit. The Chief Electoral Officer was consulted only for red inquiries during the election. In addition to those findings, Elections Canada also determined that journalists appreciated the speed and effectiveness of the response to their inquiries. Most journalists felt that Elections Canada was a credible, accurate and knowledgeable source of information.

2.5 Country Case Study: New Technologies in the U.S. Electoral Process

Commissioner Gineen Beach, US Federal Electoral Commission (FEC)

Ms. Beach's case study presented a brief background on the US electoral system and discussed the role of the media in elections, in addition to how the emergence of new technologies has impacted elections in the United States.

Elections in the United States are decentralized, and each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and U.S. territories have an election authority which oversees over 7000 jurisdictions, and a total of around 177 million voters. The US federal government does not administer elections; this is done at the state, county or local levels. Voters' needs are also determined at the local level and reflected in different voting laws and procedures. In some areas, mainly the Northwest, people prefer to cast their ballots by mail, rather than in person. This is also a growing trend in California, where in the November 2008 election, nearly 42% of voters cast their votes by mail. In rural areas, on the other hand, elections are still a community event where people vote in person. The same is true in larger cities, such as New York City. In most cases, electoral laws and regulations are deter-

mined at the state level. Some states have introduced additional modalities to make voting more convenient for voters, such as early voting centers. Depending on the state, early voting centers can open from three days to three weeks before the election to accommodate voters who cannot make it to the polls on election day.

For the first time in 2002, the federal government allocated funds to states to make electoral improvements through the Help America Vote Act (HAVA). More than $3.1 billion have been disbursed to purchase new voting systems, update voter registration databases, install provisional voting centers, increase access for voters with disabilities, and other improvements. HAVA includes basic requirements for voting systems, but it is ultimately up to each state to determine which systems they want to purchase. HAVA also created the US Election Assistance Commission (EAC), which is an independent, evenly split, bi-partisan commission. The EAC offers electoral assistance and guidance to states.

How has the Growth of New Media Affected Electoral Information Reporting?

Television is the dominant source for campaign coverage during elections. Studies by the PEW Research Center show that from 1985 to 2009, 71% of the population got their information from television, 42% from the internet and 33% from newspapers. During elections, internet use is on the rise. In the 2008 elections, 44% of adults got their information online, up from 29% in 2004.

With the explosion of new forms of digital media and the internet, Americans have come to expect instant online updates from the media. In elections, however, it is impossible to publicize results in this manner because they cannot be released until the polls close. Although polls open for a set amount of time, the time differences throughout the country do not allow for the simultaneous calculation of results. There are also cases where electoral races are extremely close and authorities agree to a vote recount; in many states, the winners are not officially certified until weeks later.

Many news sources update their websites often to satisfy the public's expectations for immediate updates. Election officials need to keep up with this information to make sure it is accurate and will not impact their ability to host the election. Inaccurate information, usually on individuals' personal websites, can impact voter turnout.

How are New Media Outlets Benefiting Electoral Organization?

On the other hand, several benefits have been discovered to these new informational modalities. Many election officials have embraced new technologies as a credible source that enables faster and cheaper communications. In Los Angeles County, officials have discovered that Twitter is a great way to keep voters informed in real time. It is the largest voting county, with over four million registered voters, and uses Twitter as a tool for providing updated information to a wide audience. For example, if there is a flood in one of the polling stations or another unforeseen problem on election day, officials need not wait until the media reports it. Voters can receive the information immediately through Twitter wherever they are.

Many states experienced a surge in the youth vote in the last election, mainly among college-age students. These voters want to obtain information quickly and in multiple formats. Many rely on updates delivered by their friends through numerous platforms, such as Facebook.[8] Alabama's Secretary of State set up a Facebook page for the last election in order to send instantaneous, accurate updates about election-related matters.

Another benefit to technology is that it is a better way to share best practices in training electoral officials and voters. YouTube is a great way to educate the public on voting technologies, and the EAC has a YouTube site that currently features a video on how they certify voting systems.[9] A video format is more useful for training purposes than traditional paper or oral training materials because they show, rather than describe, the steps involved. The EAC's YouTube site also includes training videos for setting up polling stations and videos on contingency planning.

Several challenges remain for electoral officials in adapting fully to the new information age. Misin-

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[8] See www.facebook.com
[9] See www.youtube.com

formation travels as fast as accurate information via text messages, blogs and social media outlets, so officials must be prepared to correct this misinformation with the same technologies. In some jurisdictions, there is narrow access to these technologies due to limited resources. It is also challenging to compete with such a large number of information sources and still get the public to rely on election officials for the facts.

The EAC is working with election officials to overcome these challenges. In October 2008, the EAC held a public meeting for journalists and election officials that provided a platform for them to discuss their needs in preparation for the 2008 elections. Also in preparation of the 2008 elections, the EAC participated in several radio and cable

network shows to provide information to voters. The EAC has also produced several resources for electoral officials, including a chapter on public communications that is integrated into their training. It also gathers resources and tech solutions from elections officials around the nation and hosts workshops on contingency planning, voter empowerment, cost savings, military and overseas voters, and pre-election testing. All of these seminars are webcast and free.

In conclusion, the more tools electoral authorities have to deliver information to the public, the more successful elections will be. Keeping up with technology is a challenge, initially, for electoral officials, but the benefits are insurmountable once they adapt to them and realize their potential.

III. The Relationship between Political Parties and Electoral Authorities

The electoral authority's role as the referee in the electoral process is only plausible when the main players, political parties, have a tacit agreement to abide by the rules of the game. Political parties are often the only conduits for organized representation of the public's collective interests. It is in the public's interest, therefore, to have strong political parties that accurately and effectively represent it; political parties' interest in correctly interpreting public opinion and building effective platforms to win elections and put their constituents' agendas into action; and to ensure the electoral authorities' role in creating a level playing field on which to put these platforms to the test of public opinion. A level playing field provides incentives for players to act fairly based on the notion of opportunity; it must be possible, even if improbable, for any and all candidates to emerge victorious at the polls. It puts forth the conditions for free and fair elections where public opinion, and not political parties or electoral authorities, is primary in electing the winners.

How does the electoral authority lay the groundwork for free and fair elections? First, it must work from within to exhibit transparency, professionalism, efficiency and impartiality in its administrative tasks leading up to and throughout the electoral process. Second, many electoral authorities are also responsible for oversight of the numerous players involved in an election, including the media as previously discussed, and certainly, political parties. For political parties, this usually includes oversight of financial contributions and campaign expenditures, and public advertising during the campaign. Electoral authorities are in charge of monitoring the behavior of these actors; in addition to that, they are often responsible for mediating conflicts and sanctioning players who step outside the boundaries of the law.

The composition of the electoral authority is largely responsible for its ability to carry out these functions that create a level playing field. Historically, political parties have largely determined that composition. As democracies have evolved throughout the continent, opening up the spectrum to greater plurality to meet public demand, electoral authorities have also evolved. In some countries, electoral authorities have been of an independent

nature since their inception; in others, political party representatives in the legislative branch had the ability to appoint the members of the electoral authority. Today, there are several models in place for political party participation in the electoral authority.

These models for political party participation have as much of an impact on the relationship with electoral authorities as do the roles of the electoral authorities themselves. As with the media, the electoral authority's oversight functions of political parties can lead to tensions. Dr. Lorenzo Córdova Vianello described several models for political party participation in electoral authorities, with the implicit tensions underlying each model, which also depend on the functions attributed to the electoral authority. As Dr. Andreas Schedler surmised in his presentation, it is imperative for electoral authorities to always uphold transparency as a valued principle, in order to preclude allegations by the losing parties of unfair conduct or judgment. These types of allegations can be harmful not only to the electoral authority, but could impair the legitimacy of the electoral process as a whole.

While it appears that most governments are moving toward an independent model, their institutional makeup should fit the political and social context of each country. The Mexican case provides an example of a system that is evolving toward greater independence as the electoral authority also takes on additional responsibilities. In Jamaica, on the other hand, polarization and distrust, illustrated by a history of violent elections as described by Senator Tom Tavares-Finson, require political parties to be deeply involved in the work of the electoral authority. Mr. Adrian Lopez used the Ecuadorian example to highlight another aspect of the relationship between political parties and electoral authorities. Namely, when electoral authorities become completely independent and removed from political party influence, there is little clarity about who oversees their actions. Regardless of the model, the presentations highlighted the need for governments to draft clear legislation on electoral matters that specifies the roles of each actor in the system. Without clear rules, there is limited space for accountability by political parties and electoral authorities alike.

3.1 The Relationship between Political Parties and Electoral Authorities: Lessons from the Mexican Case

Lorenzo Córdova Vianello, Head Researcher at the Institute for Judicial Research, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM)

The relationship between political parties and electoral authorities is a deeply complex subject. It is both an essential component of and determinant factor to the effectiveness of electoral mechanisms and democracy as a whole. Dr. Córdova divided his presentation into two separate parts. The first part explores different models for political party participation in decision-making and oversight of electoral authorities, their implications for the relationship between the two actors, and the areas where the greatest tensions are bound to arise between parties and electoral authorities within each model. The second part of his presentation illustrated the relationship and tensions between political parties and electoral authorities through an analysis of the Mexican model.

Models for Political Party Participation in Electoral Authorities

Dr. Córdova described four institutional models for political party participation in electoral authorities, differentiated by the degree of integration of political parties in decision-making processes. Each model differs in its level of institutional independence and composition.[10]

- **The Governmental Model**: In this model, the government, through the executive branch, is in charge of administering elections among its other functions. This model is popular in several European countries, where often the Ministry of the Interior or other ministries or institutions manage the electoral process.

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[10] International IDEA describes three models of electoral management: Governmental, Independent and Mixed. These models are differentiated by their independence and autonomy from the executive branch, financial autonomy and accountability, composition and membership, and basic functions ranging from electoral administration to oversight. For more information, see Electoral Management Design: The International IDEA Handbook. International IDEA (2006), available at http://idea.int/publications/emd/index.cfm.

- **The Independent Model**: In this model, political parties are excluded from the electoral authority, which is wholly independent. The electoral authority is not housed within a ministry, as in the Governmental Model, but exists as a separate institutional entity. This model is applied in some countries in the form of electoral tribunals.

- **The Mixed Model**: In this model, political parties have vocal representation in the electoral authority, but they do not always participate in decision-making mechanisms. Mexico is one prime example of this model, and worthy of study in order to better understand the complexities and tensions that are derived from such a system.

- **The Ruling Party Model**: The fourth model is no longer applicable to Latin America. It involves an electoral authority whose integration is largely determined by political parties, and its composition tends to favor the ruling party. Prior to the 1990 reform, Mexico's electoral authority was designed in this manner. In 1988, IFE was mostly composed by political party representatives, whose participation was proportional to the votes received by each party in the previous congressional elections. Of its 31 members at the time, 16 belonged to the ruling party.

Implications for Relations with Political Parties

Each of the four models implies a different type of relationship with political parties, and political pressures on the electoral authority that vary in their nature and intensity.

- **The Governmental Model:** The electoral authority is subjected to external political pressures as an extension of the pressures that opposition parties typically place on governments. External forms of pressure are part of the natural criticisms that stem from any democratic system. The ruling party always runs the risk of being seen as imbalanced or biased in all of its government functions, including electoral management. External pressure tends to take the form of accusations of manipulation of the electoral process. In Italy, for example, this case was taken to the extreme when the ruling party accused the government (which was controlled by the same party) of electoral fraud in its penultimate elections. The success, therefore, of this model depends upon a great deal of responsibility by government officials in carrying out transparent and credible elections, as well as a great deal of public confidence in government institutions.

- **The Independent Model:** This model is similar to the Governmental Model in that external pressures also threaten the electoral authority's legitimacy. However, the Independent Model has additional guarantees in place with respect to the impartiality of the electoral authority because there is no direct political participation in the institution. Since the electoral authority does not depend directly on the state, it is more likely to be impartial, and its autonomy helps to diffuse some of the accusations of impartiality that could befall it. However, the electoral authority must still act responsibly and transparently in order to gain society's trust.

- **The Mixed Model:** This model, which is IFE's model, is founded on the notion of distrust. The inclusion of political parties in the electoral authority was designed to counteract the

inherent lack of trust in the country's electoral system. The model is incoherent in some ways, because the very actors that the electoral authority must regulate (political parties) also partake in the institution's decision-making processes. This is the typical design that allows political parties to oversee, but not determine, electoral functions as they are able to participate but not to vote. Their presence is a guarantee that elections are planned and carried out without partisan biases, but rather with transparency and objectivity. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the greatest tensions between political parties and the electoral authority emerge during the creation of voting lists, or in the distribution of airtime for campaign advertising.

Mixed Model institutions are the most difficult to design, since their internal structure should create an equilibrium that will hinder political parties from altering the course of its work. Through their representatives, political parties will always seek to steer the decisions of the electoral authority in their favor. Electoral authorities should expect this behavior; their independent, voting members should do their best to avoid the influence of political parties and uphold their independence.

- **The Ruling Party Model:** The last model is usually born out of transition periods to democracy. It is implicitly biased, and the work of the electoral authority is only as good and as impartial as its members would like it to be.

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Impact of Electoral Authority Functions on Political Party Relations

The particular functions of the electoral authority also influence the type of relationship they have

Mixed Model institutions are the most difficult to design, since their internal structure should create an equilibrium that will hinder political parties from altering the course of its work.

-Dr. Lorenzo Córdova Vianello

with political parties. These functions include electoral management, oversight of political parties, and mediation or conflict resolution between political parties.

Electoral Management

The first function of electoral authorities across the board is electoral management. This includes the creation and maintenance of voter registration lists, recruiting election officials, installation of voting centers, and calculating electoral results. Political parties accompany rather than intervene in these functions. It is in their best interests that elections are carried out smoothly, transparently and legally. That way there is no chance that the elections will be questioned on the basis of technical problems, which could render the results illegitimate.

Political Party Oversight

A second function of some electoral authorities is oversight of political parties, in areas such as party registration, adherence to legal requirements such as gender quotas, or campaign financing reporting. When electoral authorities are endowed with this responsibility, their relationship with political parties ceases to be collaborative. The authority in charge of oversight within the electoral authority, frequently the same one that manages the elec-

toral process, will have a confrontational relationship with the political parties that are the subjects of this oversight.

Resolving Conflicts between Political Parties

A third common function of electoral authorities is conflict resolution between political parties, with respect to issues such as electoral advertising and illegal conduct, among other things. As the referee, this relationship is clearly confrontational, because there will almost always be an aggravated party after each dispute. Political parties will likely accuse the electoral authority of being biased in favor of one party or another, irrespective of its decision. Regardless of whether or not sanctions are imposed on the accused party, the electoral authority will lose favor with either the accuser or the accused. Oftentimes, accusations are brought forward to protect the accusing party or to debilitate another.

If this behavior becomes common currency, it can affect the electoral authority's ability to carry out its other functions. The functions of the electoral authority, therefore, should be compartmentalized to offset these possible negative effects. Ideally, different departments within the institution should run electoral justice, administration and oversight. This is not the case in most electoral authorities, however, because of limited economic and institutional resources.

The Experience of Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute

Mexico's IFE, on the one hand, is a poster child of institutional progress resulting from the need to resolve political controversy. On the other hand, its electoral management organizational model currently presents some of the worst scenarios in

The functions of the electoral authority, therefore, should be compartmentalized to offset these possible negative effects. Ideally, electoral justice, administration and oversight should be run by different departments within the institution.

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terms of tensions with political parties, and the concentration of its institutional responsibilities or functions.

Mexico has experimented with several electoral models. Prior to the establishment of IFE, the Ministry of the Interior was in charge of electoral matters. Accusations of fraud in the 1988 elections led to IFE's establishment in 1990. The electoral authority continued to be staffed by political parties until a subsequent reform in 1996, which separated IFE completely from the executive branch and gave the legislative branch the authority to designate IFE's members. This reform developed the institutional structure that is currently in place, where political parties have a voice but no voting abilities within IFE. This reform, however, created a two-tiered model that failed to separate IFE's three main functions. The first tier is in charge of administering elections, political party oversight and electoral justice. The second tier is the electoral tribunal, which is capable of overriding IFE's decisions.

IFE's functions have gradually increased over time, complicating its relationship with political parties. In the latest reform of 2009, IFE's role was expanded to include conflict resolution between political parties. It also introduced new restrictions that limit campaign advertising to public airtime, which is now solely distributed by IFE. In addition, IFE is

now responsible for monitoring political parties, as well as the media, to make sure they comply with the new legislation. These reforms have placed IFE in a confrontational position with respect to political parties, as well as some of Mexico's largest economic powers.

In Mexico's July 2009 legislative elections, IFE focused most of its attention on disputes regarding campaign advertising, sanctions on one of the largest media networks (Televisa), and tensions with the electoral tribunal. Its administrative role in the electoral process was largely ignored until election day. Its success in carrying out the elections while also managing its newly appointed duties, demonstrates that these reforms are not without their virtue, even though they put IFE in a delicate position.

Although the creation of autonomous institutions was a positive step towards consolidating democracy, Mexico's legislation left openings for its political parties to interfere with the election of their members. Political parties have no incentives to resist the temptation to designate their members to these positions for the benefit of their party. IFE's membership, therefore, continues to have politicized elements that can threaten the legitimacy, impartiality and autonomy of the institution. As a result, IFE's multiple functions should be reconsidered or redesigned to better serve democratic interests. Otherwise, Mexico runs the risk of "institutional deconstruction". Until the benefits of a neutral and depoliticized electoral authority are not accepted or, alternatively, imposed on Mexico's political parties, the legitimacy of IFE is at risk. In Mexico, the sum of "partialities" does not lead to impartiality.

3.2 Transparency and Electoral Legitimacy

Dr. Andreas Schedler, Center for Economic Research and Education (CIDE), Mexico

Inconsistencies in electoral administration can have contaminating effects on the electoral process. Dr. Schedler focused his presentation on the effect that these inconsistencies can have on the legitimacy of electoral authorities and the elections in question. Electoral legitimacy, as defined by Dr. Schedler, results from the relationship between the transparency and consistency of information provided by the electoral authority. Its achievement is the fundamental challenge and objective of any electoral authority.

Democracy is a system that will always generate losers, and its legitimacy rests on the losers' acceptance of their defeat. As Adam Przeworski has defined it, democracy is a system in which political parties lose elections.[11] In other words, the losers in the democratic process are the protagonists of long-term democratic consolidation. As such, electoral authorities should never provide excuses or justifications to the losing candidates or parties to reject electoral results. Unfortunately, electoral legitimacy does not rest solely on the actions of the electoral authority, but also on other external variables and actors that lie beyond its control.

External Factors for Electoral Legitimacy

Democracy is defined by its procedural legitimacy, which not only stems from the process itself, but also from the electoral results, which are beyond the control of the electoral authority. Electoral results are measured by the winners and losers: did the governing party win, or the opposition party? In the ideal scenario, from the perspective of the electoral authority, the opposition would win every election by a wide margin. In the worst-case scenario, the governing party would win by a narrow margin, as in Mexico's 2006 general elections. When the opposition wins by a wide margin, it dispels doubts about the partiality of the electoral authority and also lowers general expectations for administrative perfection in the electoral process. Electoral results should also be consistent with

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[11] Adam Przeworski, Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

"extra-electoral" information, such as polls and surveys and public opinion. When results generally coincide with poll and survey data, there is less tension and suspicion towards the electoral authority.

A second external factor is the degree of democratic consolidation within a country. This consolidation is defined by the level of trust or distrust amongst political parties. Democracy is consolidated when it is truly "the only game in town".[12] Political parties do not resort to armed rebellion, exclusion of other parties, electoral fraud, military options, or other solutions that lie outside the parameters of a democratic system. Consolidation is also the result of mutual expectations of legality. In other words, political parties are convinced that opposing parties will follow the rules of the game and desist from engaging in fraudulent activities.

A third external consideration is the cost-benefit analysis of the competitors. In other words, what is at stake for each actor? The cost of electoral defeat depends on several factors. First is the ideological polarization of the political system, which determines the variation between the policy platforms of each party. When parties converge near the center, their policies are not radically different and the costs of defeat are lower. A second factor is the limitation of political power. How confident are the losers that their democratic rights will be respected, and not restricted, after their defeat? When power is not concentrated in a central entity (for instance in the executive branch), the loser does not lose everything and retains certain political leverage. In these types of systems, defeat is less costly and easier to accept. In winner-takes-all systems, it is far more difficult to accept defeat. Lastly, the institutional role of the defeated party is important, and the prospect of future wins is essential to its acceptance of defeat. Defeat must be perceived as a temporary condition.

> *Elections should not only be democratic, but should also appear to be democratic.*
>
> *-Dr. Andreas Schedler*

The actors in the political system also have an influence on electoral legitimacy. Actors should be differentiated in accordance with their moral compromises, some of which can be extreme. There are democratic actors, opportunistic actors, and non-democratic actors. Strategic intelligence is important for these actors. In Mexico, for example, analysts were confounded by the actions of Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador after his electoral defeat in 2006. By failing to accept his defeat, he managed to alienate many of his supporters and curtailed his chances for electoral victory in future elections. Had he accepted the defeat, he could have maintained more of his political capital for the future.

Electoral Authorities' Role in Generating Legitimacy

Although electoral authorities cannot control the afore-mentioned factors, they are responsible for many others that have a direct effect on their legitimacy. Building up credibility is a major challenge for electoral authorities. Elections should not only be democratic, but should also appear to be democratic. In other words, credibility presents a dual challenge: one that is fact-based and administrative, and one that is political, public relations and image-related.

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[12] Juan J. Linz and Alfred Stepan, Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation: Southern Europe, South America and Post-Communist Europe (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Credibility is a complex matter, as it cannot be legislated, demanded or defined. It is a combination of what we see and what we believe; in other words, it is the combination of transparency and trust. Transparency is extremely important and in high demand when there is a lack of trust in the system. Transparency does not create trust, but rather substitutes for it. People can evaluate and judge that which they can see, and transparency provides tangible, empirical evidence for evaluation. Trust, on the other hand, requires a leap of faith into believing in something that people cannot see. Intricate and complex processes like electoral organization, especially in large countries like Mexico, are always a black box in spite of best efforts to make them crystal boxes. Effective elections require the public's trust, either in the electoral authority or the multiple actors that monitor or supervise its actions.

How can we create trust? Trust depends largely on consistency: consistency between words, words and actions, and actions themselves. Consistency is the only way to confirm reputations, sincerity and honesty, and when consistency is breached it is easy to generate suspicion and doubt. Regardless of whether or not these suspicions have a foundation, inconsistency is their prime generator in any electoral process.

In Mexico's 2006 presidential election, administrative inconsistencies made by the electoral authority generated a great deal of suspicion. In previous years, certified vote tallies were required to provide a registry of the number of votes and the number of remaining unused ballots. In 2006, IFE introduced additional requirements in order to make the process more controlled and reliable. For example, certified vote tallies had to also account for the number of ballots received, the number of voters that turned up, and the number of ballots counted. However, these requirements were not

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implemented with any parallel control or monitoring mechanisms to ensure consistency across the board. IFE's noble intentions were poorly implemented and thus generated uncertainty and distrust, which were only exacerbated by the narrow margin obtained by the top candidates.

In the democratic context, credibility and legitimacy are completely interwoven and interdependent concepts. In order for a "democracy" to be credible, it must be democratic, and in order for it to be legitimate, it must be credible. These conditions, as previously noted, are necessary but insufficient for ensuring legitimacy when we take external factors into account. Transparency and consistency are essential elements in this process, but they alone do not guarantee credibility and legitimacy. In fact, transparency and consistency often go unnoticed when electoral authorities behave in this manner. Professional and functional electoral authorities are usually seen as administrative, rather than political, institutions. But when they breach transparency and consistency, they come to the forefront and start to quickly erode an election's credibility. Opacity and inconsistency will lead to suspicion, illegitimacy and the potential rejection of electoral results.

3.3 Oversight of Electoral Authorities:
The Case of Ecuador

Adrián López A., Researcher, Latin American
Schoolof Social Sciences (FLACSO), Ecuador

I n his presentation, Mr. Lopez began by claiming that electoral authorities face five main challenges as they are strengthened over time in the process of consolidating representative democracy. These challenges are: oversight of the executive branch, the crisis of political parties, financial oversight over political parties, equal party access to the media, and providing civic education to the population. As these challenges are addressed, they imply structural and administrative changes that redefine relationships both between political actors and within existing power structures; in other words, the search for consolidated democracy implies an era of transition.

In Latin America, in several cases this transition has also meant a move towards a more participatory and plebiscitary type of democracy. Direct democracy provides one possible solution to the challenge of representation by providing direct linkages between the citizen and the government. It also implies the need for stronger electoral authorities to adjudicate and carry out plebiscitary processes, which tend to occur more frequently as citizen participation is invoked for decision-making in addition to electing representatives. Yet this process often circumvents political parties. As the governing structure establishes a direct relationship with the citizen, it obviates representative intermediaries such as political parties. This transition implies a shift in the relationship and balance of power between electoral authorities and political parties.

The Ecuadorian Case

Ecuador's recent history illustrates well the evolving nature of the relationship between political parties and the electoral authority after a long period of political turmoil. Its 2008 constitutional reform brought about changes in the nature of political consultation, from a party-dominated system of representation to a more participatory system. Another critical element of the reform included the division between electoral administration and electoral justice. These changes in the electoral landscape have reconfigured electoral administration and management along both technical and

political lines. Its course could be a useful example to other countries in the region, in particular the Bolivarian axis (Venezuela, Ecuador and Bolivia), where governments are contemplating constitutional reforms with their sights set toward greater use of citizen consultations and direct participation in political decision-making.

Increasing Direct Democracy Practices

Over the last three years, Ecuador has held seven national elections,[13] in addition to several regional elections, signifying a clear move towards more participatory methods. In addition to general elections, there has been a popular consultation for convening a Constituent Assembly, followed by Constituent Assembly elections, a constitutional referendum, and municipal elections. This has implied an intense workload, not to mention increased responsibility, for the electoral authority, as well as high demand for public participation through the exercise of its democratic right.

Constitutional Reforms to the Electoral Management and Government Structure

Prior to the 2008 reform, the Ecuadorian system consisted of three main branches of government and an independent electoral authority. This structure was expanded under the newly approved constitution to incorporate five branches of government. The electoral authority was elevated to a branch of government, joined by the new Transparency and Social Control branch. Each is subject to the Constitutional Court, as equals to the other three branches (judiciary, executive and legislative).[14]

Under its new status, the electoral branch has taken on additional responsibilities that extend beyond organizing elections. The electoral authority has now taken on an oversight role on electoral spending and advertising by political parties. It is also endowed with legislative initiative and has the ability to resolve conflicts on electoral matters in addition to imposing sanctions. The electoral branch is divided into two bodies: the National Electoral Council and the Litigious Electoral Tribunal, thereby separating the administrative tasks from electoral justice. Membership of the electoral authority has also changed, and its five councilors are chosen on the basis of a merit competition. Candidates may be nominated directly by citizens or political parties, but are chosen by the Council of Citizen Participation and Social Control.

New technical divisions between the electoral authority and other branches of government have created political divisions as the electoral authority has taken on additional responsibilities. Political parties, which previously dominated the political landscape, are less and less the protagonists as the current structure has sought to depoliticize the electoral authority. Evidence of this transformation existed early on in the process. The new Constitution called for the Constituent Assembly's appointment of a transitional National Electoral Council and Litigious Electoral Tribunal to oversee

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[13] October 2006: Presidential and parliamentary elections first round; November 2006: Presidential elections second round; April 2007: Referendum; September 2007: Constituent Assembly elections; September 2008: Constitutional referendum; April 2009: Presidential and parliamentary elections; June 2009: Andean Parliament and Municipal Council elections.

[14] Constitución de la República del Ecuador (2008). http://www.asambleanacional.gov.ec/documentos/constitucion_de_bolsillo.pdf

presidential elections in April 2009.[15] Rather than limit nominations to the Constituent Assembly, nominations were opened to the public "as a demonstration of greater transparency and increased opportunity for participation by the citizens."[16] Before 2008, political parties with the greatest number of votes would submit shortlists of candidates for the seven-member Supreme Electoral Tribunal. Today, it is the Transparency and Social Control branch that elects members to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal through merit contests, and chooses five councilors and five electoral justices to serve on the tribunal.

Growing Power of the Electoral Authority and the Need for Oversight Mechanisms

With new powers granted to the electoral authority, there is a parallel need for greater judiciary supervision over the constitutionality of the electoral authority's decisions. This is important in the context of a system that is increasingly distancing itself from the influence of political parties. In the ongoing quest to depoliticize Ecuador's electoral bodies, legitimacy of origin has been sacrificed for the legitimacy of processes. The only two branches that maintain legitimacy of origin are the executive and legislative branches. The other three branches are appointed through merit contests, but retain a great deal of importance in the national political agenda.

Within the context of the electoral authority's growing power, and to further depoliticize the electoral authorities, there is a greater need for clarity with respect to the application and sanctioning of electoral justice. In Ecuador, there are several constitutional controls in place to balance the power of the electoral authority. For example, there is the right to question electoral results, to

file appeals or complaints, the recourse of revision or reconsideration of results, the right to demand clarification or expansion upon the decisions taken by the electoral court, as well as protective actions and political trials. In other words, political parties, candidates and individuals have several tools or mechanisms of varying importance by which they can oversee the actions of the electoral authority. What is lacking, however, is clarity on how to apply, process, and sanction these measures. There is also a great need to provide capacity-building at the national level about the new constitutionally established mechanisms, especially to political parties and politicians. At the moment, there are few individuals who possess this capacity and understanding of the new system.

Conclusions

It is clear that the region's current political processes have strengthened the role and importance of electoral institutionalization, forming part of a historical juncture that is setting the stage for new electoral and democratic opportunities. It is essential that during this process, guarantees be put in place allowing for democratic channels for constitutional control over electoral authorities. These channels should systematize, clarify and institutionalize the role of electoral authorities, other government bodies and political parties with respect to the electoral process.

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[15] The Carter Center, "Report on the Appointment of the Temporary Electoral Authorities of Ecuador,"
November 2008. At http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/The_Carter_Center_Report_on_the_appointment_of_the_temporary_electoral_authorities_Ecuador_FINAL.pdf
[16] Ibid, p.3.

Moreover, these controls should be extended to cover periods between elections, and the relationship between electoral tribunals and the highest instance of constitutional control should be carefully thought through when countries are considering constitutional reforms. In doing so, the role of political parties should not be marginalized. On the contrary, it should be strengthened with the goal of making democracy more participative and of higher quality.

3.4 The Case of Jamaica: The Role of Political Parties in Overseeing the Electoral Authority

Senator Tom Tavares-Finson, Jamaican Electoral Commission

Senator Tavares-Finson began his presentation by explaining how political parties play a fundamentally important role in defining and promoting democracy in Jamaica. Their continued existence and contributions over time have ensured the continuation of political pluralism and the creation of democratic institutions.

While several political parties are active in Jamaica, it is considered a two-party state. The two main political parties, the People's National Party and the Jamaica Labour Party, emerged in the late 1930's, as in many other countries in the Caribbean. These two parties have shaped Jamaica's political culture and dominated the political landscape in spite of new parties that have emerged,[17] which have been unable to garner a significant amount of support. Both parties have demonstrated a long-term commitment to democracy, both by their participation in parliamentary and national elections and their promotion of peaceful transitions to democratic norms and values.

Political Party Participation in the Jamaican Electoral Commission

The composition of Jamaica's Electoral Commission and the role of political parties within it are largely a reflection of the country's political landscape. In Jamaica's 1980 general elections, there were over 800 casualties from politically related violence.[18] In the aftermath of this election, and within the context of a highly politicized society like Jamaica's, the presence of politicians in the electoral authority was essential to provide le-

[17] In Jamaica's 2002 general elections, other contenders included the United Peoples Party, the National Democratic Movement and the National Jamaica Alliance. For more information see International Foundation for Electoral Systems, "2002 Elections in the Commonwealth Caribbean: The Electoral Experience of Jamaica and the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago," 2003, at http://www.ifes.org/publication/e4d842afaed3b154a08abf4a075668e4/Elections_in_the_Commonwealth_Caribbean_2002.pdf.
[18] The Carter Center, Activities by Country: Jamaica, at http://www.cartercenter.org/countries/jamaica.html.

gitimacy and credibility to the system to put the country on a more peaceful, democratic path. The country has successfully transitioned from violent elections to predominantly peaceful elections.

Jamaica's Electoral Commission is composed of eight individuals, four of whom are independent members (including a judge, a lawyer, and two academics) and four who are appointed by political parties. The electoral authority operates on a consensus basis for all decision-making. This practice has not been written into law, but political parties have agreed to it for the sake of preserving the legitimacy of the institution. Political parties each have one vote, independents have four votes, and the Chairman has a final vote. Independent members of the electoral authority lose their right to vote in national elections for seven years.

The participation of political parties in the decision-making body of the electoral authority has had several ripple effects, both within the institution as well as within political parties themselves. At the individual level, political party representatives are frequently in the position of having to sell an opinion (the electoral authority's) to their parties. As a result, these representatives of the electoral authority are frequently accused by their own parties of selling out the interests of the party to the electoral authority.

For example, several years ago, the Commission was discussing the introduction of a system of electronic voter identification through fingerprint-recognition machines. Its introduction would have a fundamental effect on voting patterns because it would help prevent electoral fraud. When this idea was presented to political parties, there was a great deal of resistance because the parties believed they would lose some control over the electoral process. The system was finally introduced, but not before political parties agreed to it first.

Only then could consensus be reached in the electoral authority.

Once the Commission makes a decision, it is discussed in Parliament, where political parties no longer have the ability to interfere in the decision-making process. Once Parliament approves the change, the decision is final. In a highly politicized society like Jamaica's, political party members of the electoral authority call for restraint and understanding at the party level, presenting the electoral authority as a serious institution to be respected.

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Political Party Roles at the Polls

In most existing and emerging democracies, political parties are usually permitted to be present at the polling stations on election day. The primary objective of their presence is to provide candidates and parties the ability to monitor and participate in the implementation of the election. Their presence ensures transparency and legitimacy, even though their first and foremost role is to promote their own interests. It is precisely their self-interest, however, which is the main guarantor of legitimacy because each party watches the others very closely. Their participation ensures that elections are more free and fair.

Jamaica has a peculiar system for recruiting party workers on election day to work at polling stations. The electoral authority provides a stipend to workers and pays for their training prior to the election. As a result of their training and role on election day, party workers have a vested interest in the operation of the election.

Additionally, electoral legislation in Jamaica allows for parties to have both indoor and outdoor agents at polling stations. Political Liaison Officers,

who are at a special administrative level, were introduced in 2002's parliamentary elections to provide general political supervision of party workers. They are allowed to visit polling stations and may visit each table for up to three minutes. These officers monitor voter turnout, and the law allows them to inspect electoral materials, observe all movements except the actual act of filling out the ballot, and, more critically, to participate in the initial counting of the ballots. Not only do they observe the counting of the ballots, but they also sign off on the final results that are submitted to the electoral authority.

On the other hand, Political Liaison Officers are subject to some restrictions; they are not allowed to interfere with or intimidate voters, nor are they allowed to wear party colors indoors. Misconduct may result in their removal from the polling station. Because they are now part of the administration of the electoral process, the presence of Political Liaison Officers greatly reduces the possibility of allegations about unfair elections.

The Electoral Commission plays an integral role in ensuring that political party agents act within their mandated roles. Since the 1990s, the electoral authority has trained these agents with its own funds. The electoral authority uses party agents as avenues for communication with political parties, particularly to disseminate knowledge about electoral procedures. Yet because of the high degree of politicization in the country, political parties are often suspicious. Returning to the fingerprint recognition example, many people thought that it would be used for other purposes, such as tracking criminal records. By training the agents of political parties on how to use the machines, this information was transmitted to their parties and was critical in convincing the leaders of their proper functioning and purpose.

Another innovation in Jamaica's system came into place in the last five years. Once an election is announced, an organizational body called the Election Center is created. It operates 24 hours a day, and is comprised of two members of the Commission representing each party, representatives of civil society, the head of the military, the head of the police, the ombudsman and the director of elections. Any infractions, violence, allegations of misconduct, or other issues are taken directly to the Center for resolution. This system has managed to diffuse many tensions in Jamaica, where political "over-enthusiasm" often results in violence.

In a country like Jamaica, the question of transparency and legitimacy is very important and unquestioned faith in the benefits of democracy has yet to fully develop. Until it does, authorities will have to keep reinventing themselves in an effort to maintain a well-functioning electoral system. In doing so, political parties must be close allies.

3.5 The Case of the Dominican Republic: Legislative Regulation over Political Parties

John Giuliani, Judge of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic

In his remarks about the evolving nature of the Dominican Republic's electoral code, Mr. Giuliani sought to provide more clarity on the relationship between political parties and electoral authorities from the standpoint of the oversight and implementation of elections. As the Dominican Republic's highest authority in electoral matters, the Central Electoral Board (Junta Central Electoral) has several responsibilities relative to electoral administration and justice. These roles and responsibilities have influenced the behavior of political parties over time, and have been executed but not properly reflected in the country's electoral legislation, which is now in the process of discussion as part of the Dominican Republic's new constitution.

The oversight function of electoral authorities in the matters of public financing, access to the media, and restrictions on campaign financing, tends to be the greatest factor of contention between it and political parties. While these practices have been put into place over time to make the electoral system more fair and credible, there has been an absence of electoral legislation to streamline these processes. In most countries in Latin America, including the Dominican Republic, there are merely mentions of political party regulation in their legislation. Although political parties are rarely in favor of being regulated, the frequency of crises they experienced in the Dominican Republic led them to bring this issue to the forefront. Political parties demanded the adoption of legislation that would spell out their roles and recourse for dealing with different scenarios for conflict, within parties and also in relation to the electoral authority. On the other hand, the electoral authority is also in favor of a new law for political parties, as it will provide a legal backdrop for its actions, grounded in the electoral code and allowing for fewer instances of interpretation and conflict.

Among the most controversial is the electoral authority's role as mediator of political parties' affairs. Aside from resolving any issues stemming from the creation or dissolution of political parties, the electoral authority is also responsible for resolving matters relating to coalitions or mergers between them. This is in addition to the electoral authorities' jurisdiction to distribute all public

funds for political campaigns, and to provide financial oversight of parties at any time. Although political parties are not required by law to submit periodic financial statements to the electoral authority, they must submit to financial audits by the institution at its behest. During elections, political parties must submit complete financial statements detailing all campaign contributions and expenditures. Also during the electoral processes, the electoral authority may interfere with internal party politics if they involve the removal from the party of a potential candidate, for example. As a result of the far-reaching abilities of the electoral authority, political parties have resorted to changing their membership during non-electoral periods, at which point the electoral authority may not intercede in their decisions. In spite of these attributes, there is no legislation that explicitly lays out a sanctions regimen for political parties found to be acting in violation of their legal parameters, particularly with respect to campaign financing.

The new political party legislation under discussion is of benefit to political parties in many ways. For example, opposition parties see potential benefits in a law that strictly prohibits the incumbent from using public funds (other than those allocated by the electoral authority) for political campaigns. It also includes regulations for primaries within parties, quotas for the inclusion of female candidates by political parties (33 percent), and discusses the issue of sanctions. Specifically, the draft law calls for different levels of sanctions on political parties depending on the infraction committed, which in the harshest instances, allows the electoral authority to withhold public campaign funds from the guilty party. The draft political party legislation is seen by most as a positive political tool that will strengthen political parties and improve their relationship amongst themselves, and with the electoral authority.

IV. Next Steps

The Second Inter-American Training Seminar was a successful follow-up in a now ongoing series of professionalization activities for electoral authorities in the region. Like its predecessor, it sought to enrich the participants' knowledge by stimulating theoretical and practical discussions and using country case studies to illustrate the region's experiences in electoral management. Horizontal cooperation was encouraged amongst the seminar's participants to not only share experiences, but also to find areas of common interest for future sessions.

As an additional step to consolidate its commitment to the professionalization of the region's electoral authorities, the OAS has commenced the development of a certificate program in electoral studies in collaboration with FLACSO, which will be aimed at officials from electoral management bodies. This academically certified program will provide both further theoretical and applied knowledge on the state of electoral systems and practices throughout the Americas.

In addition, based on the positive response from member-states to the Inter-American Electoral Training Seminars, the OAS has begun to tailor National Training Seminars for individual electoral authorities throughout the hemisphere. These trainings present electoral authority staff with information from both experts and from other EMBs throughout the region on their experiences in election administration and organization.

This report is but one of the takeaways from the Second Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar. It captures the ideas, challenges and possible solutions that were shared by experts and participants alike. As such, it provides participants with the theoretical discussions that took place, in addition to practical case studies from around the hemisphere. All seminar-related materials, including this report, are knowledge resources for all participants as well as other interested parties. It is hoped that the exchanges and exercises that took place over the course of the Second Training Seminar will continue to evoke thoughtful discussion and pave the way for a Third Training Seminar.

Analysis of the Second Training Seminar's discussions demonstrates the need for additional collaboration within the region as electoral authorities balance delicate relationships with actors like political parties and the media in their respective countries. Their increased visibility as guarantors of fairness in the electoral process also raises the demand for transparency and accountability. As seen throughout this report, their internal administration and operations are as important as their public image, which is largely determined by their relationship with the media and political parties.

The discussions held during the Second Training Seminar made clear that one size does not fit all in electoral administration. The challenges and dilemmas are common to all, but the solutions are far more complex. Electoral management bodies share many characteristics, but the context in which they operate, including the electoral model, number and strength of political parties, and concentration of media control, is a determining factor in choosing the most effective and appropriate solutions for each country. Electoral authorities must respond to societal pressures and trends that are constantly in flux. They should not be static entities, and their roles should adapt over time to ensure that under the current circumstances, they can guarantee free and fair elections to their citizens. By strengthening these institutions, the Inter-American Training Seminar series seeks to contribute to the improvement of their legitimacy so they will successfully face these challenges and continue to uphold democracy in the region.

Speaker Biographies

COMMISSIONER GINEEN BRESSO BEACH

U.S. Election Assistance Commission

Ms. Gineen Bresso Beach holds 5 years of experience as a Commissioner and formerly served as Counsel for the United States House of Representatives. She provides assistance to states on election administration matters under the Help America Vote Act. She is also the primary spokesperson for the Election Assistance Commission, conducting interviews and liaising with several media outlets to educate and provide voters with information during elections.

JOHN ENRIGHT

Manager, Media Relations, Elections Canada

Mr. John Enright has served for 25 years at Elections Canada and is currently Manager of Media Relations, acting as principle spokesperson for Elections Canada and the Office of the Commissioner of Canada Elections. He regularly responds to news media requests directly, and provides media interviews for both broadcast and print media. Within Elections Canada, Mr. Enright provides strategic media relations advice and guidance on sensitive and complex issues.

WESLEY GIBBINGS

President of the Association of Caribbean Media Workers

Wesley Gibbings is a freelance journalist, media trainer and communications consultant. He currently heads the Association of Caribbean Media Workers (ACM), a network of journalists spanning the Caribbean Basin. He has contributed to and edited publications on the Caribbean media and climate change and the coverage of elections by Caribbean journalists. He has also written extensively on the subject of freedom of the press and is on the Advisory Committee of the Global Forum for Media Development.

DR. JOHN GIULIANI

Judge of the Central Electoral Board of the Dominican Republic

Dr. John Guiliani is a Principal Judge of the Litigious Chamber of the Central Electoral Council of the Dominican Republic. He holds a PhD in Law from the *Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo*. He is a member of the College of Attorneys and Notaries of the Dominican Republic. His law practice currently is based in the city of Santo Domingo.

ADRIÁN LÓPEZ

Researcher, Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Ecuador

Adrián López graduated from Hampshire College in Massachusetts, majoring in Political Science and History. He also holds a Master's Degree in Latin American studies from the *Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar* and another in Political Science from the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO). His main areas of research include electoral matters and South American integration. He currently works for the Ministry of Planning and Public Policy in Ecuador.

DR. BETILDE V. MUÑOZ-POGOSSIAN

Head of the Electoral Studies and Projects Section, OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation

Dr. Muñoz-Pogossian is Head of the Electoral Studies and Projects Section at the OAS Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation. She has a doctorate in Political Science from Florida International University in Miami, with a concentration in International Relations, Comparative Politics and Latin American Politics. Her doctoral thesis explored the impact of Bolivia's electoral system on the relationship between the president and congress, and social conflicts from 1995 to the present. She received several research scholarships for her Master's thesis on the role of women in national political processes and transitions to democracy in Venezuela. She has participated as an electoral observer and Deputy Chief for several OAS Electoral Observation Missions, and has worked on democracy and conflict resolution topics for the last ten years.

DR. RAFAEL RONCAGLIOLO

Director, International IDEA Peru

Dr. Roncagliolo has been the Director of International IDEA's (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) Peru Program since January 2003. Both a sociologist and journalist, he has worked as a journalist in print, radio and television. He teaches at the University of Lima, Catholic University of Peru and Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. He has also been a visiting professor at the University of Quebec, *Iberoamericana de México and Pontificia de Ecuador*. He has served as a consultant for UNESCO, UNDP, OAS, IDB, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), and bilateral aid agencies of the United States (USAID), Italy and Germany.

Dr. Roncagliolo was Secretary General and a founding member of the Peruvian Transparency Civil Association from its creation in 1994 until December 2002. His memberships include the Global Council for Radio

and Television, sponsored by UNESCO (1994- 1997); the Institute for Latin America, headquartered in Lima; and the Federation of Communications Faculty of Latin America (FELAFACS). He was Vice President of the International Association for Mass Communication Research, IAMCR / AIERI (1982-1986) and President of the Global Association of Community Radios (AMARC) from 1995 to1998.

DR. ANDREAS SCHEDLER
Researcher, Center for Economic Research and Education (CIDE), Mexico

Dr. Schedler is a researcher and professor at the Center for Economic Research and Education (CIDE) in Mexico, in the Department of Political Studies. He holds a PhD from the University of Vienna in political science. Dr. Schedler has published widely on the topics of democratic transition and consolidation, citizen disenchantment, accountability, electoral manipulation and the process of democratization in Mexico. His current areas of focus are: institutional design and analysis; democratization; fraud and electoral reform; comparative public institutions; political parties and elections; and research processes and methodologies.

SENATOR THOMAS TAVARES FINSON
Senator and Member of Jamaica's Electoral Commission

Senator Thomas Tavares-Finson is a member of Jamaica's Electoral Commission. He is a lawyer, with degrees from the University of Jamaica and McMaster University in Canada. He is a member of the Jamaica Labour Party and has held a seat in the Senate since 2007. Between 2005 and 2006, he was a member of the Committee of Electoral Advisors.

DR. RAÚL TREJO DELABRE
Head Researcher at the Institute for Social Research, *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM)

Raúl Trejo Delabre holds a PhD in Sociology from the Department of Political and Social Sciences of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM); a Master's degree in Latin American Studies and a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism, also from UNAM. He is the head researcher for the UNAM Institute for Social Research and a professor in the Department of Political and Social Sciences. He teaches in the Department of Communications at UNAM, and has taught in the Department of Economics as well.

Dr. Trejo has been a member of the Academic Post-Graduate Council in Political and Social Sciences as a representative of the Institute for Social Research. He has authored fifteen books and coordinated another ten collective publications. His writing has contributed to another 90 publications. Among his most recent work are included: "Poderes salvajes. Mediocracia sin contrapesos" (Cal y Arena, 2005) and "Viviendo en El Aleph. La Sociedad de la Información y sus laberintos" (Gedisa, Barcelona, 2006).

DR. FRANCISCO VALDÉS UGALDE

President of the Superior Council, Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO)

Dr. Valdés Ugalde is President of the Superior Council of FLACSO. He holds a PhD in Political Science from the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM), is Head Researcher for the Institute of Social Research at the same university and a doctoral professor at FLACSO's Mexican campus.

Dr. Valdés Ugalde is a member of the Mexican Academy of Sciences and other professional international associations. He is part of the National System of Researchers and the editorial councils of the Mexican Sociology Magazine, the Journal of American History, Latin American Profiles and Fractal, and is a weekly contributor to Mexico's newspaper El Universal.

Dr. Valdéz Ugalde is also the director of the Mexican Sociology Magazine of the Institute for Social Research of the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM). He was General Director of the National Institute of Historical Studies of the Mexican Revolution within Mexico's Secretaría de Gobernación. He has taught and researched at Harvard University, Brown University, University of Connecticut, University of California-San Diego, University of Salamanca and the *Instituto Universitario de Investigación* José Ortega y Gasset. He has authored numerous articles on political science, and is currently working on a piece on state reform in Mexico.

DR. LEONARDO VALDÉS ZURITA

President Councilor of the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE)

Dr. Valdés Zurita holds a degree in Economics from Universidad Anáhuac and a PhD in Social Sciences, with a specialization in Sociology, from the Center for Sociological Studies at *El Colegio de México*. His list of publications includes eight co-authored books on political and electoral matters, as well as several research articles. Some of his work has been published in the United States, Brazil, Uruguay and the United Kingdom.

Dr. Valdés Zurita was IFE's Executive Director from 1996 until 1998. He was also a member of the Commission of Specialists that was appointed by IFE's General Council in 1998 to study voting models for Mexicans residing abroad. From 1999 to 2005, he was appointed Proprietary Electoral Councilor for the Federal District's Electoral Institute, where he presided over the Electoral Organization Commission.

Recommended Reading List

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, "Media and Electoral Management." http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/media-and-elections

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, "Political Parties and Candidates." http://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/lf/lfb/lfb05?set_language=en

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