



## Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar

0101101010101010111

# STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE:

Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes and  
Strategic Planning for Electoral Authorities



Organization of  
American States



Organization of  
American States

---

## **STRENGTHENING ELECTORAL PROCESSES AND SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT THE HEMISPHERE:**

### **Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes and Strategic Planning for Electoral Authorities**

*Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar*

## **Strengthening Electoral Processes and Systems throughout the Hemisphere: Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes and Strategic Planning for Electoral Authorities**

This is a publication of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) in cooperation with the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE).

Project coordination: Betilde Muñoz-Pogossian, Chief, Section for Electoral Studies and Projects, Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation.

Editing: Rebeca Omaña Peñaloza, Specialist, Section for Electoral Studies and Projects, Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation.

Compilation of Report: Tyler Finn, Consultant, OAS/DECO

Spanish translation: Alejandra Robles, Diego Macías, Gibbran Montero, Julia Almaraz, Mariana Sánchez y Marianna Lara, Coordination of International Affairs, IFE.

Spanish editing: Magdalena Palencia, Deputy Director of International Policies and Outreach, Coordination of International Affairs, IFE.

This publication may not be reproduced in whole or in part without authorization from the GS/OAS

© General Secretariat of the Organization of American States 2011

This publication was prepared with the financial assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

### **OAS Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar (3rd : 2010 : Mexico City )

Fortaleciendo los procesos electorales en el hemisferio : La Georeferenciación con Fines Electorales y la Planeación Estratégica de las Autoridades Electorales = Strengthening Electoral Processes and Systems throughout the Hemisphere: Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes and Strategic Planning for Electoral Authorities / [Presentaciones a] Tercera Jornada Interamericana Electoral [la cual] se llevó a cabo en Ciudad de México del 6 al 10 de septiembre de 2010.

p. ; cm. (OEA Documentos Oficiales; OEA Ser.D) (OAS Official Records Series; OEA Ser.D)

ISBN 978-0-8270-5714-2

1. Democracy--Study and teaching-- America --Congresses. 2. Political campaigns-- America --Congresses. 3. Elections-- Study and teaching-- America --Congresses. 4. Political participation--Study and teaching— America --Congresses. 5. Strategic planning. 6. Elections--Geographic information systems-- America --Congresses. I. Title. II. Title: Strengthening Electoral Processes and Systems throughout the Hemisphere: Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes and Strategic Planning for Electoral Authorities. III. Organization of American States. Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation. IV. Series.

JF1001 .I58 2010

OEA/Ser.D/XX SG/SA

P/III.10.3

ISBN 978-0-8270-5714-2

# Index

<b>Foreword:</b> .....	i
<b>Introduction:</b> .....	iii
<b>I. Electoral Authorities as Institutions that Strengthen Governability</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 The Relationship between Electoral Authorities and Democratization: The Case of IFE.....	3
1.2 Transparency and the Role of the Electoral Management Body in Incorporating Citizens in the Democratic Process. ....	9
1.3 Current Challenges Facing Electoral Authorities in the Americas.....	13
1.4 The Political Implications of Technical Processes in the Electoral Arena .....	17
<b>II. Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes</b> .....	<b>21</b>
2.1 Districting Policies and Electoral Governance: Theoretical and Methodological Aspects.....	23
2.2 The Realignment of Electoral Boundaries in Jamaica .....	29
2.3 Procedures for the Georeferencing of Citizens and their Impact on the Operation of the Federal Electoral Registry of Mexico.....	35
2.4 Georeferencing for Electoral Purposes: The Canadian Perspective .....	41
<b>III. Strategic Planning For Electoral Authorities</b> .....	<b>47</b>
3.1 Electoral Planning: A Strategic Focus for Electoral Authorities.....	49
3.2 Electoral Contexts in Latin America and the Caribbean: Effects on Strategic Planning.....	53
3.3 Strategic Planning Within the Framework of the Electoral Cycle: The Case of Mexico.....	59
3.4 The Organization of Electoral Processes in Panama .....	63
3.5 Strategic Planning and Quality Management .....	67
<b>IV. Next Steps</b> .....	<b>71</b>

# Appendices

Recommended Reading List.....	73
Speakers Biographies.....	75

## FOREWORD

---

The Inter-American Electoral Training Seminars are an initiative led by the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS) in collaboration with the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico (IFE), the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) and the Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLASCO). The Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation of the GS/OAS promotes these seminars with the aim of strengthening electoral processes and systems in the region. Since the first seminar took place in 2008, these conferences have become institutionalized as an annual exercise.

Through exercises at both the technical and the academic level, these conferences contribute to the professionalization of electoral authorities in the region. The training seminars strengthen the skills of members, officials of electoral bodies and promote horizontal cooperation in the region. Consequently, the training seminars can be characterized as academic and practical exercises that help improve the organization of electoral processes in the continent.

The Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar took place in Mexico City from September 6<sup>th</sup> to September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. Its goal was to contribute to the improvement of the institutional capacity of electoral authorities in two ways: 1) by offering academic and technical training facilitated by professors and experts in the field, and 2)

by strengthening spaces for discussion and horizontal cooperation among electoral authorities with extensive experience in the chosen topics of discussion.

After consultation with the electoral management bodies in Washington DC, two main topics were identified as pressing issues for institutional development. The seminar addressed these two themes: 1) strategic planning for Electoral Management Bodies and 2) georeferencing for electoral purposes.

This publication documents the primary discussions that took place at the Third Inter-American Electoral Seminar. The preparation of this publication constitutes an effort on the part of GS/OAS to continue the debate regarding the consolidation of equitable and efficient electoral practices. And to generally improve the organization and administration of electoral processes in the region.



---

## INTRODUCTION

---

Over the past three decades America has undergone a transition from authoritarianism and military rule to democracies. It must be remembered that not long ago, only four countries in Latin America enjoyed democracy: Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica and Mexico. Since then the complete American continent has been ruled by one single system. Never for such a long time and in so many countries has the region had so many fully-functioning democratic systems.

It is possible to declare therefore that a consensus regarding democracy has been consolidating. This consensus is shared among the people as well as among political, union and business leaders. Political problems are now channeled through peaceful pathways. The use of violence has been condemned and excluded. During this process, America has also given a new shape to its social organization. Distinct models and different political systems have been developed, but all are founded on the basic principles of democracy. It is within the framework of this deepening and intensification of democracy that each people, based on its beliefs and preferences, has built its own way.

At the same time as these paths have been forged, certain points of agreement have been reached within the macro-consensus of democracy. There was a group of principles and values which were expressed on September 11th 2001 in Lima, Peru in the Inter-

American Democratic Charter, a pillar of democracy that includes objectives as well as substantive elements. It is within this framework that the duty of electoral bodies is to ensure that all options are channeled by democratic procedures and to maintain an open, participative and inclusive debate.

This imperative corresponds to the role of the electoral body as the referee, guarantor and supervisor of democratic principles in the precise moments when they are placed under the greatest tension: during a debate of the polis, a popular election. In this context the electoral body is in the center of the political scene, and exposed to the challenges and threats that emerge from that situation.

As this democratic consensus has been established, there are some consensuses that are unique to the electoral arena which have emerged from the different experiences of the last decades. For example, the first consensus has meant greater access to the different stages of the process of electoral organization for national political stakeholders, for international observers organized by international bodies of public law and for national observers. The observation of elections has been established as the best tool of accountability for such processes. This new space entails a clear opportunity to involve these actors as the original legitimators of the electoral process, and to exclude once and for all the political debate regarding elections themselves.

A second consensus that could be identified is related to the financing of politics: it is imperative to regulate and control the use of financial resources by political parties and the electoral bodies themselves, always taking into account the diversity of formulas each country has adopted. Undoubtedly there have been important regulatory advancements in Latin America, but with great fragility in the supervision of the fulfillment of these norms. In the Caribbean, important efforts have been started in order to regulate financing. With this objective in mind, a meeting was recently held in Kingston, Jamaica that generated a debate for concrete proposals including a model law proposed by the OAS.<sup>1</sup> It is hoped that effort of the Organization will be the first step towards effective regulation in this area.

A third consensus is the need to resolve, in a prompt and expedited manner, those controversies that emerge from the electoral process. One of the formulas applied in this sense has to do with the specialization of a body that exercises legal authority. An example is the creation in October of 2009, of the Contentious Electoral Tribunal in Ecuador.

The fourth consensus established in this hemisphere is the consolidation of safe and modern identification systems. These are fundamental within the framework of the electoral process because they act as guarantees of transparency for all the actors in the race, but particularly to citizens. An emblematic case of this progress is Bolivia. There, in 2009 citizens cooperated broadly with the titanic but successful efforts of the National Electoral Court to re-inscribe in record time the national registry of electors. The OAS was the only international institution that accompanied the Court, confronting the skepticism of the international community, which was amazed by the tremendous strength and conviction shown by the National Electoral Court. Undoubtedly, identification systems are still a challenge in some of the countries in region, as in the case of the Caribbean. To advance in this sense would allow, amongst other things, the lightening of the intense debate around the rules applicable to the

diaspora within some electoral processes.

Finally, it is important to mention the current consensus regarding the importance of election observation and international cooperation. With the signing of the Declaration of Principles for International Electoral Observation which set up the first substantial bases for observation, the process has been evolving over time. Electoral observation is no longer viewed as an alien agent, applicable only to those elections that are subject to doubt. On the contrary, the true international observation, which comes from international bodies of public law, should not only confirm the existence of procedural weaknesses but also extract best practices.

It is in this context that international cooperation has a role to play. Two classic methods of cooperation have been developed: one coming exclusively from international bodies and one coming exclusively from the electoral bodies, which is to say horizontal cooperation. Nonetheless, the aspiration should be to utilize a formula that employs the best aspects of these two models, which could be denominated “international technical articulation.” This constitutes a dynamic, flexible and respectful manner of cooperation within the framework of the autonomies of the countries in the region. With the implementation of this model, one is able to take advantage of the capacity and international legitimacy of the intergovernmental body together with the experience and solidity of electoral bodies.

An excellent example, the present one, is the agreement of cooperation between the Organization of American States and the Federal Electoral Institute in Mexico. The emblematic case of this cooperation is the Inter-American Electoral Seminar. This space of learning and exchange that combines the efforts of IFE, OAS, FLACSO Chile and International IDEA allows for the harmonious mixing of knowledge and experience with the aim of the constant professional improvement of those directly responsible for electoral processes.

---

<sup>1</sup> This meetings took place on September 2 and 3, 2010.

## I. ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES AS INSTITUTIONS THAT STRENGTHEN GOVERNABILITY

---

The evolution of Latin American democracy over the past three decades has shed light on the critical importance of effective institutions. Experience proves that the building of solid institutions, particularly electoral management bodies, is a vital step towards democratic consolidation. The presence of independent and impartial electoral authorities provides stability and credibility to democratic systems. This is true in light of the challenges inherent to any political system and especially true in light of the particular challenges facing electoral authorities in America.

The challenge for contemporary electoral management bodies is to maintain conditions of democratic competition and guarantee that citizens can freely choose their representatives, a right which is the backbone of any democratic system. Governability, a quality which depends on governmental legitimacy, is only sustainable when electoral authorities are able to discharge their principle role, namely the delivery of free and fair elections.

The primary responsibility of electoral authorities remains the periodic peaceful transitions of power that are the fundamental characteristic of democratic regimes. Yet their role has continually evolved over the past decades. As democratic systems have matured

and become more complex, electoral authorities have moved beyond the realm of electoral logistics to occupy a central role in governance. Although charged with seemingly technical aspects, the actions and policies of electoral authorities have profound consequences for democracy and governability.

This new model, of electoral bodies as central players in democratic governance, reflects greater acknowledgment by electoral bodies of their role as facilitators of civic education and of the practice of democracy itself. As a result, electoral bodies have begun searching for avenues to perfect their links with other stakeholders such as legislators, political parties, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, public opinion, and the mass media, among others.

Contemporary electoral authorities are faced with challenges that extend far beyond merely guaranteeing the right to vote or ensuring that all votes are counted. In addition to elections that are free and fair, electoral management bodies are now required to promote equity in electoral competition and objectivity in the organization of elections. Furthermore, they must fulfill these institutional goals within the context of the conflicts, tension and political pressure that are produced by a pluralistic political system in which many actors vie for power.

The keynote speakers of the Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar broached the relationship between electoral management bodies and governability in a number of different ways: the current challenges facing electoral authorities in the Americas and how these have evolved over time; the strategic conflict between political actors and electoral management bodies due to competing incentives; and the political implications of technical processes in the electoral arena.

In this context, the case of IFE is emblematic. In Mexico, the creation of an electoral authority played a critical role in the transition from a hegemonic party system to a pluralistic democracy. In this sense, IFE exemplifies the link between electoral institutions and democratic governance. On the other hand, IFE's role as an institution has evolved over time. The challenges that it faces today, particularly the pressure posed by political actors, are a microcosm of the problems facing the region as a whole.

This chapter details the case of IFE from these two perspectives, as a guarantor of democracy and as proof of the importance of strengthening independent institutions given the political pressures and challenges facing these bodies in contemporary America. The case study of Mexico complements the theoretical and conceptual perspectives on electoral authorities to demonstrate the inextricable connection between electoral organisms and democratic governability.

## 1.1 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES AND DEMOCRATIZATION: THE CASE OF IFE

*Leonardo Valdés Zurita, President Counselor, IFE*

The Inter-American Electoral Seminars represent forums for international cooperation in the field of elections and spaces to strengthen democracy in the American continent. With those purposes in mind, Dr. Valdés Zurita concentrated his presentation on the contributions made by electoral organisms to governability, focusing specifically on the case of Mexico.

To understand the political transformation undergone in Mexico, it is necessary to take into account certain relevant aspects of Mexico's history and political background. The epoch of political change began in the 1970's and reached its most advanced phase in the 1990s. From a historical perspective, it must be recognized that this political change transformed a regime that had emerged originally from a social revolution. A basic account of the evolution of certain aspects of the Mexican state over the course of its history is a prerequisite for a better understanding of the significance of the revolution within the context of the historical development of Mexico.

For Mexico, the revolution that began in 1910 and culminated in an institutional phase in 1917 with the promulgation of a new constitution comprised two significant processes, separate yet intimately linked. Mexico came out of long period of personal dictatorship, from a political system in which power was concentrated in one person. This situation caused

a part of Mexican society, largely the learned youth, to endeavor to renovate political leadership within the country.

It was not a coincidence that one of the revolution's initial and principal driving forces was a political actor from Coahuila in the north of Mexico, Don Francisco I. Madero, whose revolutionary drive originated in a book titled *Presidential Succession in 1910*.<sup>2</sup> This work focused on a basic principle: ending the immediate and uninterrupted re-election of the President of the Republic. Even now, one of the characteristic aspects of Mexican state is that its Constitution prohibits the re-election of the President of the Republic and of governors while prohibiting the immediate re-election of municipal presidents as well as legislators, both local and federal.

The demand for the substitution or circulation of those charged with political power was evidently linked with the then elemental structure of the Mexican political party system. Like much of Latin America in the 19th century, Mexico had parties that were conservative and liberal and that identified as centralist and federalist; there was even a period in which some attempted to establish a monarchy, with the country to be governed by a European prince. Because 19th century Mexico was characterized by the inexistence of a real political

<sup>2</sup> Madero, Francisco I. *La Sucesion Presidencial de 1910: El Partido Nacional Democrático*. San Pedro, Coahuila: December 1908.

party structure and the lack of a strong political party system, as well as the presence of revolutionaries pushing to eliminate re-election, one of the principal challenges was to create institutions that would generate a democratic system of political parties.

Another element that served as a driving force behind the Mexican revolution and the violent clashes of that era was social demands that were being expressed in Latin America as well as Europe. In Mexico, issues such as the regulation of the labor sphere, the construction of unions and collective labor agreements and the rights of workers to strike were at the beginning of the 20th century, all demands that had not yet been codified by the legal system. These demands, as well as the legitimate appeals of peasants who had lost the tenancy of their lands and looked to regain control of their plots, were fundamental drivers of the Mexican revolution.

In the 1930's in Mexico - with the 1917 constitution being operational - social demands were channeled through functional institutions that allowed workers and peasants to not only demand their rights but also to see some of their claims satisfied. What occurred was the formation of a particular kind of party system. From the 1950s onward a system began to consolidate that some political scientists have labeled "hegemonic." Italian political scientist Giovanni Sartori used the Mexican case to illustrate his typology of a hegemonic party system<sup>3</sup> : a party that could not be described as exclusive because other parties were technically not banned, but that had sufficient strength to win all elections, and to govern with majorities in all legislative bodies and in every state of the republic.

It was a party system that, according to experts, possessed significantly authoritarian aspects. But it also formulated developmental policies in both the labor and agricultural sectors and in terms of public health and education policies. The system also drove the industrialization of the country and the development

of systems of communications and transport. In sum, for a long time the government of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) formulated policies that placed Mexico on the path to economic development in the 20th century, and provided social benefits for many social groups.

This developmental model was developed alongside an electoral system – which is where many specialists have concentrated – with authoritarian restrictions. The requirements for registering new political parties were very high. Furthermore when - for whatever reason - some part of the Mexican population organized to bring victory for an opposition candidate at the ballot box, sufficient mechanisms were in place to carry out electoral fraud, ensuring triumph for candidates from the hegemonic party.



### ***Electoral Reform: The Motor of Change***

As previously mentioned, in an intelligent characterization published in the middle of the 1970s, Giovanni Sartori used the term hegemonic to describe a powerful party that always wins elections and is surrounded by ornamental parties that never win - not because of rules or written laws but because of the particular functioning of the political system. It could be said that the publication in the mid-1970s of Sartori's book, which used the case of Mexico to exemplify the hegemonic system, coincided with the culminating moment of that system.

In 1976, for a number of reasons, the Institutional Revolutionary Party was the only party to field a presidential candidate. Two of the other legally registered parties decided to support the official candidate while the fourth party, the traditional opposition force, suffered an internal crisis that prevented it from fielding its own candidate. For the first time since the revolution, Mexico was holding an election with only one presidential candidate.

From the perspective of a hegemonic system, this

---

<sup>3</sup> Sartori, Giovanni. *Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

represented the climax. The presidential candidate of the dominant party ran no risk of losing the election. There was no need to even commit electoral fraud because the system of relative majority in force in Mexico since 1917 assured the official candidate of electoral triumph.

These circumstances provoked a long process of electoral reform in Mexico that began at the end of the 1970s. First of all, the reforms facilitated the registration of new parties and second of all, through a variety of proportional representation mechanisms, gave opposition parties access to legislative and deliberative posts in various councils. The reforms engendered the creation of a new party system in Mexico. As previously indicated in various works and forums, a motor ignited in Mexico in the 1970s that drove political change; this motor was a process of reforming electoral law to make the system more flexible and also to take steps to prevent electoral fraud.

The other driving force of political change, in perhaps an undesired and unplanned way, was a consequence of the social modernization being driven by the governing hegemonic party itself. A population more urban than rural, which was better educated, with employment in secondary and tertiary sectors – basically a population with a more extensive middle-class – began to show signs of pluralism that had not been present in the Mexican socio-political realm prior to the 1970s. This population began to pay more serious attention to the opposition, to both long-standing parties as well as newly-registered forces.

From the 1980s onward, Mexico saw significant increases in the competitiveness of elections. The times where the hegemonic party gained at least 60% or 65% of the vote became a vestige of the past. Mexico began to hold elections where no political party would be able to gain more than 50% of the vote; in the 2006 presidential election the winning candidate won by less than 1% over his closest competitor.

This pluralism that emerged in the 1970s had a strong impact on the 1988 elections because the hegemonic party was divided. An important group of Institutional Revolutionary Party members left the organization to put forward an alternative candidate and achieved more electoral success than any other opposition party had been able to achieve up to that point in time. Since that moment, Mexico began a new path of electoral reforms. In 1988 the hegemonic party lost its absolute majority in the lower legislative body. The opposition gained representation in the Senate for the first time and a year later in 1989, an opposition candidate won the governorship in the Northern state of Baja California.



### **The Creation of IFE**

This new panorama formed the context in which perhaps the most important - at least from the perspective of an electoral authority - electoral reform in Mexican history took place. The Constitution was modified, a new electoral code was promulgated, and the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) was created in 1990. On October 11th of 2010, the institution celebrated its 20th anniversary.

IFE was primarily given the responsibility of creating a new electoral registry which undoubtedly is an absolutely fundamental step. In order to organize elections with legitimacy, it was necessary in Mexico to basically revisit the meticulous task of inscribing citizens into the electoral registry (using what were modern technological means in those days) and creating what IFE called the voting credential with a photo.

Accompanying the electoral registry in Mexico is an image database containing the photos and fingerprints of every Mexican citizen registered on that list. This database allows IFE to use advanced technical procedures to prevent duplicate registrations, guaranteeing that each citizen is registered just once on the electoral registry. Furthermore, since 1997 photos

of citizens also appear on the nominal lists used by poll workers to identify citizens and allow them to vote.

The fact that the citizen presenting him/herself at the voting table is actually the person with the right to do so is guaranteed by the stipulation that his/her face must match the photo on his/her credential, which then must match the photo on the nominal list. The electoral register also contains an enormous quantity of security measures to prevent the falsification of the vote by citizens.

But this is not the only responsibility given to IFE. IFE is also charged with promoting civic education in Mexico, a mandate which has allowed it to enthusiastically develop a large number of programs aimed at the incorporation of citizens, particularly the most marginalized sectors of the population: woman, indigenous women as well as men, the marginal population living in rural areas, and the youth who lamentably are the group that is quickest to marginalize themselves from electoral processes.

### **Alternation**

In sum, it can be said that IFE, in its 20 years of existence, has played a fundamental role as an institution of democratic governability in Mexico. Perhaps the most germane point is that IFE, together with the Electoral Tribunal of the Judiciary Power of the Federation and other local electoral authorities in Mexico, has proved able to guarantee a basic principle of democracy: the principle of alternation.

Mexico lived for many years under a hegemonic system with the veneer of democracy. Opposition parties were not banned. Elections were carried out in a timely fashion: every three years to elect legislators and every six years to elect the President and senators, with states and municipalities operating under the same time frame. Under this hegemonic system, Mexico was an exemplar of electoral regularity. But the system operated with a crucial caveat. The premise

of alternation was not even a theoretical possibility in the functioning of the system.

Today, alternation is not a theoretical possibility of the Mexican political system but rather a reality that occurs whenever the Mexican citizenry decides to change its government through the vote. This principle applies equally to the federal government represented by the President of the Republic and to state or municipal governments. Political parties know that election results are not determined before electoral competition begins. Election results can only be known following a process in which citizens freely vote at the ballot boxes and a professional and objective electoral authority counts the votes and publishes its verdict on the electoral results.

Mexico had its first alternation of power in the 2000 presidential election. 2006 was a highly competitive presidential election in which the difference between the winner and his closest adversary was less than one percentage point. Mexico has also witnessed alternation in state governments. In 2010, there were 12 gubernatorial elections. In six of those, the party occupying the governorship changed. The year before, there were six gubernatorial elections of which three resulted in alternation of leadership. Therefore, in the past two years in 50 percent of states that have held elections, the governorship has changed hands from the party in power.

Mexico has begun to experience curious phenomena. Coalitions that would have seemed improbable in the past have transformed into fundamental actors in the electoral process, in some cases fielding candidates from parties that can be fairly characterized as emerging and now possess the strength to construct coalitions and to win gubernatorial elections in some states in Mexico. These phenomena are evidence of the vigorous condition in which political parties find themselves in contemporary Mexico.

By guaranteeing pluralism, equitable competition and objectivity in the organization of elections and

subsequent results, the Federal Electoral Institute contributes an important dose to the governability that characterizes the Mexican state, despite the fact that the country has a system of political parties in which electoral competitions and campaigns are decisive and in which the level of discussion between candidates sometimes reaches the level of grandiosity. Nonetheless it is a system in which the electoral authorities employ their experience so that the election is decided, at the end of the day, by the free vote of citizens. That is a truly fundamental element of democracy.

The principal challenge facing Mexican electoral authorities today, a challenge that is true of all Latin America is to maintain conditions of democratic competition and to guarantee that citizens are able to freely choose their representatives. If those goals are achieved, then electoral authorities can continue to be a fundamental factor of democratic governability in the nations of the region.



## 1.2 TRANSPARENCY AND THE ROLE OF THE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODY IN INCORPORATING CITIZENS IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

*Francisco Valdés Ugalde, Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO), Mexico*

**D**r. Ugalde began his presentation with a series of reflections on three essential points: firstly, the right to vote and the right to democracy in Latin America; secondly, electoral authorities in Mexico, particularly the Federal Electoral Institute, in the context of the dynamics of the Mexican political system between 1985 and 2010; and lastly governability. The presentation raised several conclusions, questions and problems derived from the concrete experience of Mexico, which - though not necessarily translatable to the rest of Latin America - are connected to the general experience of the region.



### ***Democratic Consolidation: Democracy as a “Tradition”***

What is often overlooked in discussions of Latin American democracy- due to the intensity of the events undergone by Latin America in the past two decades with the emergence of democratic political systems - is that democracy has not yet been established as a tradition in the region. It is not a tradition that is sufficiently deep-rooted to the point where it could be deemed a mode of political organization or political being that is definitively here to stay.

The presumption of democracy-as-tradition is often considered a fact, or a necessary consequence of the extension of the Latin American democratic

phenomenon. In truth, democracy as a political system has only begun to consolidate itself. Political science is particularly eloquent in these two aspects - democratic consolidation and democratic quality - especially in relation to the institutionalization of democracy in Latin America.

When one reads the biographies of political actors or statesmen, or when one reads the history of political systems throughout the diverse areas of the world, one can see that in certain regions, particularly the North Atlantic, the democratic tradition has become “sedimented.” It is a sedimented tradition in terms of the style of public decisions and of the habits of citizens, to the point where the possibility of a government not elected by the people is beyond the collective imaginary. On the other hand, in the Latin American political imaginary the possibility of unelected governments continues to exist, for some as a fear, for some as a temptation, and for others unfortunately as a project.

This point is exemplified by the autobiography of Ted Kennedy, *True Compass*.<sup>4</sup> Throughout this narrative of public life there are a number of scenes, in various moments of his trajectory, that talk about life in the United States Senate. Particularly poignant are the parts of the book describing Kennedy’s first election as

<sup>4</sup> Kennedy, Edward M. *True Compass: A Memoir*. Twelve: September 14, 2009.

a Senator representing Massachusetts, in the context of the violent and tragic conflicts over shared school busing and desegregation that dominated the politics of the 1970s.

Kennedy was against segregation and in favor of legislation to integrate public transport. However, he did not dare take the floor because of a tradition that was in force at that time but no longer holds. A custom dictated that Senators who arrived for the first time at their seat in the Senate would refrain from using their right to speak for at least two years. This was based on the idea that they were novices who had recently arrived at a place about which there remained much to learn. In other words, it wasn't sufficient to simply have earned the privilege to be there. It was necessary to learn about where one was.

This is an illustrative example, though unique and not universally applicable, of the problem of the democratic tradition in Latin America in comparison with other parts of the world where these practices are somewhat long-standing (a little more than 200 years in the case of the United States) but more importantly continuous. In the case of Latin America, these practices have been asymptotic: democratic periods have been systematically interrupted by cycles of authoritarianism and dictatorship.

In Latin American political traditions, one finds more frequently than rarely in elected officials the temptation to represent the group in a "Rousseauian" fashion, or to convert themselves into a manifestation of a "general will." Furthermore this general will not only does not allow but also impedes the representative presence of other wills that are not represented in the idea of the "general will." Latin America has a strong tendency towards ideological inflexibility. Ideological inflexibility is pure poison for political negotiation. In this sense, electoral authorities that defend the fundamental institution of democracy which is the vote - although the concept of democracy certainly extends beyond the right to vote - are definitely important. Latin America still finds itself in an early era of democracy,

in spite of the development it has undergone over the last decades.



### ***The Case of Mexico: The Creation of IFE***

In the case of Mexico, the country has lived through a very particular dialectic. Mexico operated under a presidential system with a hegemonic party in which the representation of parties other than the governing party amounted to a minority representation in Congress and governmental efficacy did not really exist. During that time, the social expectation was of electoral freedom. Those political parties whom electoral obstacles prevented from assuming power furthered respect for the vote as their central demand.

A fundamental demand was the construction of electoral institutions that would be fair, equitable, impartial and neutral from the point of view of election results. Whilst this climate prevailed, it was possible to develop an electoral institution like the one that exists today: a strong and robust electoral institution that is technically sophisticated and that, from an intellectual point of view, has an important cultural-civic capacity as well as the capacity to count the votes and ensure that votes are counted.

The construction of IFE made a different distribution of power possible, one that allowed all political parties to achieve a position in the various branches of government: municipalities, states, state legislatures, the national congress and of course the President of the Republic. Once this framework of divided government was achieved together with an environment of political pluralism that fails to generate absolute majorities – at least on the federal level because it has generated majorities on the state level – a strategic conflict arose between political parties and the electoral authority.

What was the nature of this conflict? It consisted of the fact that the intentionality of political parties in this second stage varied considerably from their intentions in the first stage of IFE's institutional life. While in the

first stage, the objective was to ensure electoral liberty and the impartial counting of votes, the new stage saw political actors aiming to gain power. This was a logical progression. Obviously the counting of votes is a prerequisite for gaining power.

In this context the electoral authority moved to a different plane. The institution was no longer encapsulated by the image of democracy wrapped up in the revolutionary flag. On the contrary, it is now considered an actor to be condemned, to be manipulated, to be threatened, to be blackmailed. In sum the electoral authority has become an actor to be conquered by the parties.

A series of pressures emerged as a result. While they haven't succeeded in limiting the autonomy of IFE, in threatening its capacity, or in jeopardizing the central functions that it carries out from the point of view of electoral equity, these pressures have placed the institution in a context in which its existence and presence is no longer in the fundamental interest of the political parties. The result has been a bifurcation between the interests of voting citizens, which continue to lie in ensuring that their vote is respected, and those of political parties whose interest lies in obtaining the votes necessary to gain power. While these two actors, citizens and opposition parties, converged in the past over the importance of the electoral institution, they now diverge. The interest of the citizen remains that his or her vote be respected. The interest of the party is simply to gain the votes of the citizen; if it is able to cheat without being detected then all the better.

to power, it has not yet been able to change the rules regarding the exercise of power. These are legacies of the authoritarian regime. This has generated a permanent conflict because while power tends to be exercised in an opaque fashion, with less transparency, and in a more authoritarian fashion, with as few checks as possible, on the other hand the citizenry and the electoral processes themselves are pulling in the opposite direction.

Therefore there is a struggle exemplified by a system that doesn't allow for consecutive re-election, a policy that was designed by the triumphant caudillos of the Mexican revolution to subordinate congress and which succeeded in subordinating them for 70 years. Without even speaking of federalism or the other powers of the state, this is an example of a dilemma that has not yet been solved. In this struggle, neither a parliamentary tradition nor a balance of power can be consolidated, nor the neutrality that derives the absolute respect for the centrality of the citizen in democracy.

Mexico is undergoing a great conflict which in particular affects electoral institutions, by exposing them to a high level of conflict and tension which has the potential to lead, perhaps not to their elimination as legitimate institutions of democracy, but to the limitation of their functions and the erosion of their capacity their prestige and their autonomy.



### ***Governability and the challenges ahead***

One can now speak not just of democracy in Mexico but of Mexican democracy; democracy is now a character in typical national dress. Today Mexican democracy finds itself in the grips of a constitutional crisis that consists fundamentally, in addition to the aforementioned issues, in the fact that although Mexico has successfully reformed the rules that govern access



## 1.3 CURRENT CHALLENGES FACING ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES IN THE AMERICAS

*Raúl Ávila, Consultant, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance  
(IDEA International)*

**D**r. Ávila's presentation on the distinct dilemmas facing electoral organisms in the Americas centered on three theoretical concepts. The first was "guaranteeism," a constitutional legal technique to protect fundamental human rights and electoral rights in particular, in which electoral organisms play a central role as "guaranteeing" institutions, that guarantee rights rather than serving a politically representative function.

Secondly, the presentation made reference to what international professional literature has found - mostly drawn from experiences in technical assistance and international cooperation – regarding the challenges that electoral organisms and the democratic process have faced in Latin America throughout the third wave of democracy.

Finally, Dr. Ávila touched on a number of challenges of a more contextual character relating to the role of electoral organisms as institutions that promote governability and that perform a stabilizing function by generating conditions conducive to economic growth.



### **"Guaranteeism"**

In Latin America, as well as in the United States and Canada, the doctrine of "guaranteeism" is spreading as a theory that pushes the consolidation of those

constitutional democracies that have emerged over the previous decades. This guaranteeist position spans both legal and political theory. Guaranteeism maintains that the Constitution represents a guarantee of the original social-political pact and that the separation of powers and the maintenance of electoral organisms as autonomous institutions are in a sense guaranteed by the democratic constitution. Electoral organisms play a central role in constitutional democracies; they act as protectors and resolving agencies, with the aim of guaranteeing the exercise of political rights.

The theory of guaranteeism also maintains that electoral organisms serve as secondary institutional guarantees. With their procedures and safeguards that are written either in constitutions or in laws and regulations, electoral institutions act as protectors of primary guarantees. Primary guarantees mean those which are written in the declarations of rights or elsewhere in constitutions: fundamental rights such as the right to vote, the right to be elected, the right to become a member of a political organization. As a result, electoral organisms are legally and constitutionally constructed with both organic and procedural guarantees.

#### **1. Organic Guarantees**

Organic guarantees encompass a range of areas, from the form of incorporation of the organ to the naming of its members: advisers, commissioners,

magistrates. The budget guarantee, an important aspect for the independence and impartiality of electoral organs also falls within the gamut of organic guarantees. A budget guarantee represents a normative guarantee because it ensures that an electoral organ can both devise normative regulations and effectively apply them. It also encourages the stability and immobility of members. In this manner, such safeguards are of an “organic character” for electoral organisms.

## 2. Procedural Guarantees

On the other hand, electoral organisms are also endowed with procedural guarantees. This category includes access to justice, in both an administrative and a jurisdictional sense. Procedural guarantees also refer to the right to present tests of a procedure to ensure that decisions are well-founded, that the reasons behind the decisions can be justified, and that these decisions are transparent and can be made public and known by all actors. All of these guarantees surround and structure electoral organisms.



### ***Challenges Facing Electoral Organisms According to the Literature***

The design, construction and functioning of electoral organisms has varied throughout the third wave of democracy, according to international literature and comparative studies. Analyses conducted by Horacio Boneo, Manuel Carrillo and others have shown how the challenges faced by electoral organisms in the late 1970s – beginning in 1978 with the first alternation of power in the Dominican Republic and Ecuador and with the first democratic constitutions in those countries devastated by dictatorships – are different from the challenges faced by contemporary electoral organisms, who tend to focus on issues such as: the construction of infrastructure; developing electoral registries and endowing political parties with the ability to fulfill their basic functions of interest aggregation; the fielding of

candidates and the construction of political programs.

The first phase of 1978-2000 was a stage in which electoral organisms were primarily faced with the challenge of constructing organic and procedural guarantees in order to be able to fulfill their function to consolidate constitutional democracy into a state of constitutional rule of law.

The second phase, from 2000 onwards, brought about a change in priorities for electoral institutions. In this second cycle, the construction of basic electoral infrastructure is no longer focused on the freedom or right to vote but rather on equity in electoral contests. The problems and challenges are now more complex and include political financing, the supervision of political party financing, access to the media and the treatment of minorities. The issue of electoral transparency has gained fundamental importance, particularly in terms of access to public information. The guarantee of information that is accessible both for and about political parties and electoral entities is now a prerequisite for the legitimacy of both types of entities. The topics of electronic voting and the treatment of minorities, involving indigenous minorities, migrants and of course gender equity in electoral processes and in the composition of political representation, have all become important concerns. It is necessary to strengthen, modernize and democratize political parties, but also to ensure that they do not monopolize political space within a constitutional state so that citizens, civil organizations, media outlets - i.e. the subjects of democracy – are able to occupy a place and to fulfill their particular role within constitutional democracy.



### ***Contextual Character: Electoral Authorities in Contemporary Latin America***

Since every country has its own history, its own culture and its own specific problems with contemporary democracy, each electoral body faces distinct challenges and dilemmas. Nonetheless, one must

not lose sight of the following: if one were to find a common denominator within the region it would be the fact that there are at least three constitutional paradigms in competition with one another: On one hand there is the paradigm of the liberal constitutional state with representatives to some degree in most of the region: from Mexico and Central America, from South American countries to the Caribbean. However, an alternate or aspiring paradigm has also emerged, notably in Bolivia, Ecuador or Venezuela.

This paradigm deviates from the ideas of liberal democracy and the liberal constitutional state, which assign a role, a particular composition and certain specific functions to electoral organisms. The new paradigm instead focuses on the proposal of a popular, communitarian and pluri-national character which entails a change in the composition of electoral organisms. The cases of those countries who have adopted this emergent model of popular communitarian participative and pluri-national organization prompt a number of questions: do the aforementioned organic and procedural guarantees intended to safeguard the independence and impartiality of electoral organs have sufficient solidity? Are they being constructed in such a way that they can fulfill the functions assigned to them in the democratic process?

One must keep in mind that outside of the political system not just within the political system – meaning the system of government, the electoral system and the party system – the region is experiencing dilemmas, problems and threats that neither existed in the first nor the second stage of the third wave of democracy; for example, the problem of the “megacrisis” in economics and finance. A few years ago President Bachelet claimed that electoral organisms in their role as democratic subjects also need to plan for, prevent and consider extra-political factors. The contemporary crisis, which has affected political participation as well as the state of mind of portions of the electorate, must be taken into consideration by electoral organisms in terms of planning, training, education organization

and electoral management.

The second point - which cannot be ignored - relates to the issues of poverty and inequality. Insofar as a persistent social gap affects the electorate, electoral organisms will be subjected to pressure that must be taken into account in strategic planning in order to be able to confront the challenge of preventing further decreases in citizen interest and citizen participation.

To conclude the discussion of the particular challenges currently facing electoral organisms, it bears mentioning that narco-trafficking, narco-delinquency and its international varieties such as terrorism and narco-terrorism all represent significant threats to electoral organisms.



## 1.4 THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF TECHNICAL PROCESSES IN THE ELECTORAL ARENA

*Pablo Gutiérrez, Director of Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation,  
Organization of American States*

**M**r. Gutiérrez began his presentation remarking that georeferencing and strategic planning feed into each other from a political perspective. The relationship between them is one of reciprocal influence. Within this context, two concepts are fundamental: legality and legitimacy.



### *Strategic Planning*

From a conceptual point of view, strategic planning signifies the design of the institutional route leading into the future, which connects an institution's permanent objectives with its operations. This planning is very important because if there is one body that is subject to the vicissitudes of politics, it is the electoral organism. As a result, the resolution of the dichotomy between strategy and operations becomes an issue of fundamental importance. From the point of view of the definition of priorities, the alignment of human, material and financial resources represents the fundamental challenge.

From this perspective, strategic planning has certain advantages. First of all, it is able to protect the electoral organ in certain ways from any influence or modification of its directives. It is widely known that some electoral organs in the Americas have volatile tendencies in terms of changes to their magistrates or advisers. In so far as strategic planning and design

exists, it is able to overcome that volatility, promote stability and protect the institution.

Secondly, a strategic roadmap, although it may seem almost contradictory, provides flexibility to deal with the vicissitudes facing an institution. Because planning increases the possibility of confronting contingencies, it provides for a much stronger and more flexible musculature in an institution.

Thirdly, strategic planning also involves an externality, the specialization and professionalization of the bureaucracy of electoral organisms. For a concrete case, a permanent preoccupation of the OAS is the Conseil Electoral Provisoire (CEP) in Haiti, where for thousands of reasons the efforts of the Organization are aimed towards pushing the bureaucracy of the Provisional Electoral Council – which hopefully will be transformed into a permanent body at some point – to maintain an established protocol so that every election doesn't seem like the first.

Lastly, the delineation of objectives and strategic planning allows for a new accountability for the institution. Because once everything is on the table it is possible to know exactly what can be demanded of a political actor in the electoral process. One of the principal advances in this area has been the consensus around transparency, specifically in electoral processes.

  
**ISO Norms**

An established framework of permanent objectives and strategic planning provides the optimal conditions for the Organization to enter a new process and a new stage which is the quality certification of the institution. The certification of quality represents an institutional alignment of all divisions and officials within an organization, and immerses it in a culture of permanent improvement. This is extremely important because the electoral organ is the institution most subject to the uncertainties of politics and the changes of contingency.

From this perspective, the central focus of quality management is not, as in the private sector, obtaining the certificate - or the prize, the frame, the plaque. Instead, the central focus is the citizen, not the client as is the popularly used term today. Secondly, this type of quality management should be differentiated from just any alignment because it involves the improvement of public management and of a public body. The challenge of introducing quality management and a culture of quality into public management is a tremendous advance and a very important challenge. Thirdly, the ISO certification is simply a means. If there were another mechanism that could successfully introduce a culture of quality and improve the management of an electoral body, than this particular means could be forgotten. But today, certification with ISO norms represents a challenge that brings about substantive improvements.

It is possible for an electoral body to become certified with the ISO 9001 norms devised for private institutions; in May 2010 the Electoral Tribunal of Panama was able to achieve just that. It certified its processes. It was the first tribunal at the national level in the Americas to do so. Though there was the prior example of the Electoral Commission of Nuevo Leon in Mexico, Panama was the first national tribunal to obtain this certification. The Organization of American States has already completed the diagnostic stage with

Costa Rica. It has also already launched the beginning of a diagnosis of the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones in Peru. In this way, other tribunals have decided to take up this challenge.

But the Organization of American States is not willing to leave it at that. At the World Committee of ISO, the OAS emphasized the importance of creating a special electoral ISO. This means that the OAS has begun a project with the certified tribunals, with those that have already begun the process – and in partnership with a few institutions from Canada – to create the first worldwide ISO norm to certify quality in the electoral arena.

  
**Georeferencing**

On the subject of georeferencing and from a political point of view, the determination of who votes and where voting takes place is a sovereign decision of the state. As a result, georeferencing does not just signify a map or a design; it represents the operationalizing of a sovereign decision of the state. Georeferencing is the relationship that exists between the object and the geographic environment in which the object is located.

In terms of the issue of districting, representativeness and the principle of equality are consonant concepts although they apply to different areas. In so far as districting threatens the principle of equality, it affects representation and thus the democratic system as a whole. In this respect, demographic information and the changes in the censuses with respect to the quantity of citizens have crucial effects in terms of the principle of representation.

It is now generally understood that the electoral body is not the body responsible for determining voting districts. The role of the electoral organism is rather to watch over the districting process, to ensure compliance with the principle of representation. Electoral migration represents the principal threat

in this area today. It is thus necessary to apply the maximum knowledge to the biggest contemporary threat to the principle of representation in many countries in the Americas: in the case of the Caribbean, because of the Diaspora; in the case of Latin American countries, because of moving in the Central American cases from one country to the other and in the South American cases from one region to another.

Districting clearly has a direct relation with systems of identification. Both concepts, districting and identification, form the nucleus that permits the control and organization of georeferencing. To briefly mention the logistical aspects of georeferencing, the topic of electoral logistics produces a certain level of tension that in the context of certain political conditions can achieve the level of a critical condition by election-day.

Even though an election may be- as it is commonly called - an alternation of low intensity, the introduction in the areas of logistics and electoral tracking of technology to which the political parties have access generates a new state of trust between political actors and the electoral tribunal.

In conclusion it is important to consider each of these issues - Strategic Planning, Quality Management and Georeferencing - from a perspective other than that of an electoral body. Each of these three processes involves sovereign decisions for the countries in question, and therefore must be considered from a political perspective. It is important to try to apply the greatest quantity of safeguards to the body responsible for organizing electoral processes; it is an institution that does not always have the capacity to carry out the process but certainly shoulders all the blame for any errors within that process.



## II. GEOREFERENCING FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES

---

**W**ithin the context of elections, the term “georeferencing” refers to the process of associating electors and their residences with specific geographic areas in order to facilitate the process of voting and vote-counting. This seemingly technical process is eminently political. The periodic formation of electoral districts, perhaps the most practical and visible element of georeferencing, has profoundly political consequences. Districting policies determine the parameters for winning political power. Regardless of whether or not the ultimate decision rests with an independent electoral organ or is the result of political negotiation, it is a complex process that involves many political actors, all of whom have a stake in the results.

As such, georeferencing is a crucial and often contentious topic for electoral authorities. This chapter discusses the concept with two distinct thematic approaches of importance for electoral management bodies: from the perspective of political representation and from the perspective of logistics and electoral coverage.

Any process of districting entails representational consequences for political stakeholders, who often are involved themselves in the negotiation and implementation of districting policies. Each districting methodology involves certain philosophical choices: whether the goal is adherence to the one person one

vote principle or to guarantee the representation of a certain group. Criteria for district formation, whether that means keeping communities intact or respecting geographic or municipal divisions, are often defined by constitutions or by the electoral code. Recently, an international consensus has begun to emerge regarding best practices for district criteria, as evidenced in this chapter by the fact that IFE and Elections Canada operated with almost identical requirements. Though there is no one-size-fits-all approach to georeferencing, there is a consensus that one should establish the rules of the game at the outset of the process and operate with transparency.

In addition to the problems associated with guaranteeing equitable representation and electoral competition, this chapter discusses the technical challenges involved in building an electoral framework that facilitates voter access to polling centers. The growing use of technology such as geographic information systems has proved a useful facilitator of the electoral process, by providing precise coordinates for the definition of polling divisions. Accurate information on citizen residences greatly facilitates the logistical duties of electoral bodies, such as placing voting tables close to where voters live and helping voters locate them. Furthermore, the use of technology and of automated processes makes the solutions to the problems of district construction as objective as possible.

Yet the use of technology remains a controversial topic. Marcelo Escolar's presentation in this chapter argues that the political aspect of georeferencing cannot be completely externalized by technical processes. Since political neutrality is essentially impossible, a more effective solution is to systematize the political decision-making process.

The remaining presentations in this chapter are case studies by three practitioners with direct involvement in districting processes in their respective countries. Orrette Fisher discussed the 2010 district realignment process in Jamaica, emphasizing the involvement of stakeholders and the use of available technology. Miguel Ángel Rojano focused on the particular challenges faced by IFE in the construction of districts, in light of the requirement to promote the participation of a dispersed indigenous population and the challenges posed by a challenging geography. Lastly, Pierre Desjardins discussed the process of boundary adjustments in Canada as well as the criteria used for district formation in that country.

## 2.1 DISTRICTING POLICIES AND ELECTORAL GOVERNANCE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

*Marcelo Escolar, Professor of Political and Electoral Geography, Universidad de Buenos Aires*

In his presentation, Mr. Escolar emphasized the link between the public policies of districting on the one hand and electoral governance on the other hand. Electoral governance, a term borrowed from the Mexican author and researcher Andreas Schedler, is a useful concept because it brings together a series of activities and processes that do not belong to one specific area of a government but rather encompass a variety of different election-related functions.



### *Makeup of Institutional Relations*

The institutional relation between electoral governance and districting policies involves three levels of regulation (meaning legal regulation rather than constitutional “metanorms”) within the framework of electoral operation. This field is often called electoral administration or logistics, although the fact that it encompasses the certification of results and electoral process renders that terminology insufficient.

The regulation of electoral governance can be split into three levels: 1) norms that regulate political competition: electoral laws, the definition of the type of candidacies, the form of voting etc; 2) rules regarding electoral operation; and finally 3) rules relating to the certification of electoral processes. Rules at the level of political competition may obviously include aspects linked with political districting.

Rules governing electoral operation may or may not have a relation with political districting, and sometimes have to do with operational districting. Operational districting refers to all types of zoning of those processes which don’t involve an election of authorities or candidates. The area of operation also involves “circumscription operations,” meaning the general geographic aggregation of voters in countries with applicable electoral systems. The operational level also encompasses registration as well as the processes involved in the *domiciliamiento* of citizens, which often utilizes processes of districting. Activities such as the assignment of electoral materials and the design of routes and voting centers also fall under the logistical-organizational category. This area also includes aspects relating to transmission and computing such as the localization of the system that captures, computes and transmits results.

In terms of the third level of certification, regulations govern the certification of political districts and, eventually, the certification of zoning, which significantly affects the electoral process. Electoral governance related to results does not entail any type of activity linked with districting.



### *The Cycle of Political Districting Policies*

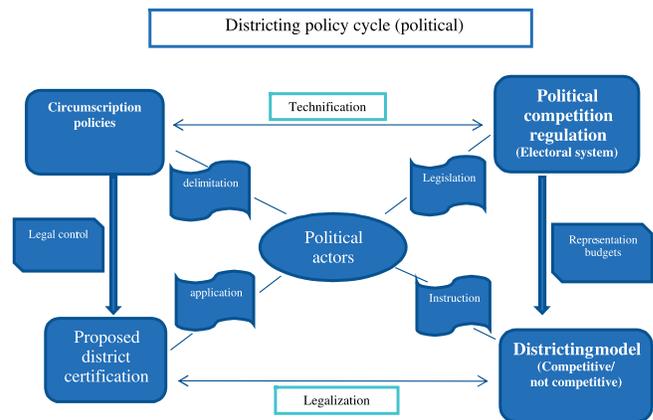
There are two cycles of districting policies: the policy

cycle of districting, which is strictly political, and the cycle of those districting policies that are operational in nature.

Political actors are unsurprisingly at the center of the policy cycle of political districting, either by action or by omission. Evidently, political actors participate in the process of regulating political competition in so far as they play a role in the legislation that defines the rules of the game. The regulation of political competition relates to distinct modes of districting. Basically there are two models of districting: a competitive type and a non-competitive type, terms which are explained in more detail below.

What is important is that the relationship between the particular electoral system, embodied by the regulatory framework governing political competition, and the particular model of districting applied reflects a series of theoretical and philosophical principles relating to representation. Generally, these principles are not explicit. Even when they are made explicit, it is only to a partial degree; the principles are presented as if they are the result of a natural process rather than of a debate.

Once a districting model is in place, there is a process of instruction. Political actors, through the pertinent institutions, begin to develop procedures for the circumscription of electors, which is delimitation. The circumscription procedure inevitably involves a process of legal control that results in the certification of the final districting proposal; the process culminates with the application of the districting policy, where the focus shifts once again to political actors.



This chart shows that the system is circular. The political actors that begin the process of definition are the same actors that will be elected and legitimated by the process which they themselves originated. This is because electoral institutions are politically endogenous. Just because systematic attempts are made to externalize electoral institutions from the political process does not necessarily mean that this end goal is materially possible or theoretically positive.

If circumscription procedures are directly linked to the regulation of political competition, the process becomes one of technification and will challenge the belief – which may or may not be correct – that the incorporation of technology will ultimately prevent the politicization of the political districting process.

On the other end, towards the bottom of the chart, one can see that there is sometimes a relationship between the proposed district certifications and the districting models. This relationship develops in situations where the process is extremely “judicialized,” when the certification organisms do not just certify but develop their own criteria and jurisprudence for districting.



### **Legislation and instruction of districting policies**

The relationship between the legislation and the instruction of political districting policies is the most political aspect of the policy cycle. Every districting process begins in the context of a system of political parties. It is important to bear in mind that there is no such thing as political actors out of context – political actors are always contextualized. Even if we limit ourselves to political organizations of a partisan type in order to simplify the scheme – as evidently they are not the only types of political actors– then classically there are three types of party systems: predominant party systems, bipartisan and multi-party systems.

The literature makes an accurate yet controversial point, which is to say that it is not mechanically the case, that the nature of a party system is directly related to the particular electoral system, which can be majoritarian, proportional or mixed. It has been posited that there is a relationship between majoritarian electoral systems and predominant party systems. However, an electoral system of this type could also engender a bipartisan, or in some cases, a multiparty system. According to the theory, the most likely outcome would be bipartisan. Regardless, the initial process of negotiating districting on a legislative plane is profoundly shaped by whether one party, two parties (cartelized or not) or a group of parties are negotiating the process.

The nature of the party system affects the districting process in a number of other ways. A majoritarian system that leaves out certain electable parties that lack representation entails effects from the point of view of legitimacy. In a mixed system, some representatives would have been elected by the way of a district and others not, which would also change the nature of the negotiating process. The list of distinct types of implications could continue.

Beyond the mechanical aspects of the system, meaning the relationship between the party system and the

electoral system, the districting process takes place within a theoretical and philosophical context. This basically entails two aspects. The particular model of districting that is applied, whether it is competitive or whether it is presumed that there is no bias, is important. A second significant factor is whether the divisions are geometric and not geographic and if the distribution is, as much as possible, random.

In a non-competitive model there are two possible alternatives; either there is positive gerrymandering or negative gerrymandering. The presumption in both cases is that the process is non-competitive. In the case of negative gerrymandering, manipulation can reach the point of illegality. While positive gerrymandering also amounts to a manipulation, it is a legal process based on the constitution of what are called communities of interest.

These two models of districting carry important philosophical assumptions. Each model adheres to a certain aspect of democratic theory. To borrow an idea from the Hungarian-Canadian thinker Will Kymlicka, there are two types of liberal assumptions: one based on the basic idea of liberal individualism and a second type based on a pluralist idea of liberalism. From the liberal individualist perspective, it is fundamental to guarantee that the voter, in individual terms, finds him/herself in a geographical environment that is neither biased nor conditioned by any type of territorially situated effect. The voter is not considered explicitly as a member of any group.

On the other hand, the pluralist vision of liberalism, which emphasizes the idea of communities of interest, claims that society, in reality, is not a society of individuals who decide their electoral preferences independently. On the contrary, individuals are contextually conditioned by their relationship to a group. In order to be able to carry out districting, the only groups that can be delimited are those that are territorially defined. A group that is tied together through the Web, for example, would be very difficult to “district.” Basically the only groups that are

susceptible to districting in this sense are those pre-modern groups that are geographically situated, who are constituted by forms of self-representation as communities and who treat each other as members of a specific community.



### **Delimitation and application of districting policies**

It is improbable that any process of legislation or definition of districting norms would take place in a context of political neutrality. In fact, the consideration of this process as neutral is rather dangerous because in reality it is not. Districting is explicitly political. It is better that it be considered political and that its political nature be clear, so that regulation mechanisms are generated to govern the political negotiating inherent in any districting.

Once the district is constituted, there is a process of certification. The certification process has to be carried out in a practical and professional manner. Making a district requires the services of public servants. Depending on the legislative framework in place, these can be political figures or even advisors to politicians in some cases. Another possibility is a specialized body or office that is dedicated to these affairs. It can also be a mixed process. In sum, the certification of districting proposals follows either a jurisdictional, a political or a mixed model.

In addition to the aforementioned dynamics, there are political relationships that are not institutional; these “para-institutional” relationships cannot be ignored. They cannot be ignored because the districts that are being delimited are essential for the election process of those same actors who not only defined the districting criteria but will also eventually participate explicitly or implicitly in the production of the districts.

Legal control conforms to two basic types. It can be diffuse, meaning that legal action must be requested; or there must be a formal complaint regarding the

infringement of individual rights or of group rights for not having the possibility of being represented through districting. On the other hand, the legal control can be concentrated, when there is an organism that concentrates exclusively on these issues. In either case, the legal control acts as the guarantee that, at the end of the process, the result coincides with the norms.

There is also an exogenous technical institutional context that has a lot to do with the system of decision-making and with the methodology applied. The decision-making system is relatively simple. It could be linked exclusively to the incumbent, who would clearly be affected by the results of the districting, in which case it would be biased. It could be pluralist in which for example two parties would be represented in the case of bipartisan system. Lastly the system could be, or simply claim to be, technical in which case the process is externalized and a technical body dedicates itself exclusively to the task under the presumption of political neutrality.

From both the literature and in practice, one can identify four types of applied methodology. In addition to the participatory model of more recent vintage, there are three main models:

- 1) a **descriptive method** of a cartographic type using geographic information systems
- 2) a **heuristic type**, according to Mick Altman’s terminology, that utilizes a semi-automated mechanism of successive approximation in districting
- 3) **automated systems** that cannot function with multiple criteria and much less with data matrices



## **Problems and limitations of political districting**

### **1) Competitive Districting**

In competitive districting, there are three types of criteria: geometric, demographic and institutional. What is meant by geometric criteria? The most common component is compactness. This is the belief that a more compact geographic unit implies a lower degree of freedom in manipulating boundaries, since these must be both geometrically plausible and practically possible. This postulate may or may not be accurate. There is not a necessary relationship between the geographic distribution of the population and the presumption of an isotropic space with pure geometric properties. Normally the geometric projection is used as a proxy or approximation.

Additionally, there are demographic criteria which are made up of two types: there are general criteria such as, for example, equal or approximately equal quantities of voters. But there are also other demographic criteria that have to do with the socio-demographic makeup of each of the members of a certain electoral population.

Lastly, there are institutional criteria, which involve adjusting district boundaries to pre-existing political areas, or distinct types of “polities.” This could mean municipalities, commercial areas, states or any other type of distinct political entities.

What are the basic factors required so that this is feasible? There needs to be low electoral volatility. With high electoral volatility it is impossible to carry out a districting process and to prevent bias because the political behavior of the voters cannot be predicted. The only way to gerrymander, whether one wants to do so or one wants to explicitly avoid doing so, is under the presumption that voter behavior is stable, that there is no electoral volatility. The incidence of electoral volatility makes the problem absolutely theoretical and no longer practical.

Of course, there must not be party realignment which is the other face of volatility. If there is change in the number of parties or partisan organizations that participate in a process, it is impossible to be able to predict what impact a delimitation will have in comparison with prior results. That is common sense.

But what is the problem that this could produce? Even if zoning is conducted on a permanent basis or in a very rapid fashion, even when the political system, the party system and political actors are all stable, there are still informational asymmetries between those who carry out the technical delimitation on the one hand and the political actors and electorate on the other. Basically the voters are those with the least information. A systematic change of district boundaries could increase the uncertainty of electors; it could also bring about a depersonalization of the vote even when in a uninominal circumscription, for example, the aim is to personalize the vote. If the voter is unaware of who exactly is running for office because the candidate is always presenting himself in a different scenario, then any stability in voting patterns will not be a result of the knowledge of the voter. Instead the vote will be directed towards the party organization to which the candidate belongs, which in many cases is the contrary to the desired objective.

### **2) Non-competitive districting.**

Non-competitive districting is based on exactly the opposite principles as its competitive counterpart. It has a foundation in the identification of groups. The legal assumption is that if a group exists – even if is not activated politically – and is geographically concentrated though politically inactive (because there is not a political movement or party associated with that ethnicity) that it should be able to be the majority group within a geographic area if it becomes activated and so desires. This does not mean that the districting is done hoping that this group will win. Rather it aims to generate the conditions so that should the group desire to establish itself and seek representation

through political-democratic mechanisms, it is able to do so.

This is an exception because it must be taken into account in the first place that the only way to effectively do this is not geographically because the large part of self-identifying groups are not geographically concentrated. There are classic examples of this such as New Zealand where the uninominal Maori circumscriptions are designed geographically, though the entire population is not Maori. They are a minority within the circumscription because registration in that district is voluntary rather than obligatory.

It must be emphasized that the use of socio-cultural criteria is also complicated because the construction of a group always brings about the possibility of leaving out N groups. When a group is discriminated against in a geographic sense of the term, one implicitly discriminates against all geographically concentrated groups that were not taken into account, but overall one discriminates against those groups that are not geographically organized. In general, in the contemporary society of communication, these make up the majority.

There are also demographic and political criteria. One tries, implicitly or explicitly, to concentrate political groups so that they obtain representation. This produces communities of interest in a geographic sense. It also tends toward the stabilization of majorities, which is not good for democracy. Use of such criteria also leads to the discrimination of groups and the debilitation of parties because it produces the opposite effect as competitive districting.

It is important to bear in mind that in the area of political districting the problems are eminently political. The possibility of preventing political problems by externalizing them technically or institutionally does not change the fact that one always has to make political decisions. It is much more effective to systematize the political decision-making process and to make it explicit than to try to avoid politics with an extreme

technical focus, because politics will inevitably enter through the back door.

## 2.2 THE REALIGNMENT OF ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES IN JAMAICA

---

*Orrette Fisher, Director of Elections, Electoral Office of Jamaica.*

Jamaica is a Parliamentary Democracy operating under a “first past the post” system. The political party which forms the government is the one which secures the majority of the seats in a parliamentary election. Making adjustments to constituency boundaries is a very sensitive, challenging and somewhat complex issue as it affects the chances of candidates of winning the very next election. In the past this system was handled by the government of the day but the role has now been passed to the Electoral Commission, which is an independent body.

The Constitution of Jamaica requires that every four to six years the Boundaries Committee of Parliament submit to the House a report detailing the number of constituencies into which Jamaica is divided as well the boundaries of these constituencies. The last report was released in March 2004. A new period of review therefore began in March 2008 and concluded in March 2010.

The role of the independent body of the Electoral Commission of Jamaica is to advise the Standing Committee on Boundaries based on the general instructions given by the Standing Committee and conveyed by the Speaker of the House.

In the last review, the instructions were to correct breaches of size limits of constituencies, those which fell outside the limit set by the constitution, and to

equalize the number of constituencies among parishes, increasing the number of constituencies from 60 to an odd number. The parliament decided to increase the number to 63.

The Electoral Commission recognized the challenges that would be faced in trying to undertake this task and so a meeting was convened to review the principles that would be adopted during the review. All the local stakeholders were invited including the major political parties and the independent electoral observer group Citizens for Free and Fair elections (CAFFE). Representatives from Elections Canada and from the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) were also invited. At the end of the seminar the Principles of Agreement were confirmed in writing by all stakeholder groups who were in attendance.



### *The Principles of Agreement*

According to the agreement, the commission would apply Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology to the exercise of defining polling divisions, electoral divisions and constituency boundaries and in the overall decision-making process related to these matters. In each parish a Parish Boundaries Forum would be established, comprised of all Members of Parliament, Constituency Chairmen, the Caretakers, Councilors and Political Liaison Officers and so on; the

forum was to be chaired by a Senior Returning Officer of the parish appointed by the Director of Elections. This group could range from anywhere between 25 and 50 persons. Within the forum was also founded a Parish Boundaries Committee, which was a subgroup of the larger group that comprised about ten members representing both major political parties and again chaired by the Senior Returning Officer.

The Parish Forums and Advisory Committees would consider and seek to agree on the definition of polling divisions as well as splits, mergers and the resolution of any anomalies that existed. Boundary adjustments would be made if the Parish Committee recommended that some changes would be effected in order to have equality in the number of electors in each constituency, even where constituencies in a parish were within the limits set by the constitution. Where there was no consensus, the status quo would remain.

One principle of agreement stated that where constituencies in a parish were in breach of the constitutional limits, the Parish Committees would seek to agree on the realignment of boundaries in those parishes with a view to correcting the breaches. In the event that no agreement could be reached, the matter would be referred to the Director of Elections and the Nominated Members of the Commission. The commission was to be made up of four independent members, agreed upon by both major political parties as well as the Director of Elections, and then four nominated members, two representing the opposition and two representing the government. This meant that the four independent members along with the director would be able to outvote the political representatives on any issue.

If the Nominated Members and the Director were unable to resolve the disagreement, the matter would go to the four independent members who would make a final decision. The final principles were that the Commission would make the decision to add constituencies – Jamaica is now seeking to move to 63 – and that this would be done based on the

mathematical principles set out by the constitution.



### ***Implementing the Principles of Agreement***

In April 2008 acting on instructions from the Boundaries Committee of Parliament, the Commission commenced the work on boundaries through the implementation of these Principles of Agreement. A parish boundaries forum and advisory committees were established in each parish. The field staff of the commission in each parish, along with scrutineers nominated by the two major political parties, carried out field work to review the description and definition of polling division boundaries in all sixty constituencies. A draft of the revised descriptions and definitions in each parish was then circulated to members of the parish forum for independent confirmation. Each agreement was signed by a designated representative from each political party and by the senior returning officer on behalf of the Director of Elections.

This resulted in the elimination of no-electors polling divisions, the merging of polling divisions where there were too few electors and the splitting of those which were too large, meaning those exceeding the amount prescribed by the Representation of the People Act, which is the act that governs elections in Jamaica. Anomalies were found such as electors who lived close to the borders of two or more constituencies and were found to be on the voter's list in one constituency though they actually resided in another. Such issues were resolved by having persons from the political parties as well as the electoral office going out on the ground to see exactly what should exist.

The criteria to determine constituency boundaries were also established:

- a. Polling divisions, which are the smallest units, were considered indivisible. That meant that if a polling division was to be moved, the entire polling division would be moved and not just some electors.

- b. Constituencies must be comprised of polling divisions that are contiguous, that is next to each other.
- c. Sections of a constituency should not be cut off from each other.
- d. Natural divides should serve as constituency boundaries. These should include roadways, gullies and so on but are not limited specifically to those.
- e. Distinct communities should be kept intact and communities next to each other with similar histories, occupational pursuits, sporting traditions and general interests should not be separated if historically they shared same political representation.
- f. In realigning boundaries in a parish, the population density should be considered with a view to ensuring that the number of electors within each constituency in a given parish is as close in number as possible.



### **Applying GIS Technology**

Traditionally, boundaries have been identified through existing features such as roads, rivers, buildings, large trees and imaginary lines drawn between two or more features. Such physical features change over time. Persons familiar with them move or die. Disagreements and controversy usually arise between contending parties, candidates and their agents. Jamaica has been acknowledged as a leader within the hemisphere and internationally in applying information and communications technology to the electoral system. This has contributed significantly to the improvement and enhancement of the electoral process in the country, resulting in increases in confidence with respect to the fairness of our elections.

The application of GIS technology would now allow

for physical features on the surface of the earth to be recorded in relation to coordinates of longitude and latitude. Applied to boundaries it meant that polling divisions, electoral divisions and constituencies could be defined and recorded by geographical coordinates. The polling division is the elemental unit of the electoral organization in Jamaica and so the most critical step in the process of applying GIS technology to boundaries is that of recording the boundaries of each polling division in terms of its geographical coordinates. Agreement on polling division descriptions and definitions, splits, mergers and the resolution of anomalies were therefore conditions precedent to applying GIS technology to boundaries.



### **Establishing the GIS Unit**

The Commission contracted the services of Mona Geo Informatics of the University of the West Indies to undertake the task of training and guiding the staff of the Commission in the application of this technology. Mona Geo Informatics was contracted to:

- 1) Train the Commission personnel
- 2) Provide training and oversight during the pilot phase in
  - data collection
  - quality control
  - data transfer
  - data conversion
  - editing and analysis of data
  - establishing and updating the GIS database
  - quality control in the creation of maps
  - guidance in integration of the spatial and elector databases
  - assistance in developing methods of displaying maps, graphs and other reports

Staff was recruited from amongst graduates of the University of Technology to operate in the following capacities: GIS Manager, GIS Analyst and Mapping Specialists. The core group trained by Mona Geo

Informatics was subsequently used to train field technicians and to continue the program after the conclusion of the pilot.

The key pieces of equipment that were procured included: GPS hand held units; computers with the requisite software; plotter, scanner and printer.

### **The Pilot Project**

The pilot was launched in two parishes in July 2008. These two parishes represented the landscape which would be encountered throughout the rest of the island. Twenty field technicians and two supervisors were split evenly between the two parishes. The Global Positioning System (GPS) technology was used to physically map and by extension determine the precise coordinates of polling division boundaries. This data collected under the supervision of Mona Geo Informatics was used to create digital electoral maps using GIS software. These maps reflected constituencies, electoral divisions and polling division boundaries. On completion of the Pilot, a review was carried out to identify and correct problems associated with the collection, transfer and processing of the data.

Research conducted by the Electoral Commission found that Canada was one of the leading countries in the use of GIS technology in mapping electoral boundaries. Following consultations with Elections Canada, two staff members from the Commission visited their headquarters in Ottawa where they were exposed to the operations of that organization. Plans are in place to continue the mutual cooperation between the Electoral Office of Jamaica and Elections Canada.

### **Overall Achievements on Boundaries Review**

By March 2010 the boundaries review had achieved the following:

- 1) The definition and boundaries of polling divisions as well as splits and mergers; agreement as to the numbering of polling divisions within each constituency and parish.
- 2) The Parish Advisory Committees resolved anomalies where they existed.
- 3) The mapping of polling divisions using GIS technology was completed for the entire island.
- 4) Digital maps were produced for all 60 existing constituencies.
- 5) Digital maps were produced for the electoral divisions of all 60 existing constituencies.
- 6) Proposals were made, supported by digital maps, to correct the breach in the parish of St. Ann where one of four constituencies was in breach of the upper limit of the number of electors as prescribed by the Constitution.
- 7) Similarly, proposals were made, supported by digital maps, to correct the breach in the parish of St. Andrew where one of the twelve constituencies was in breach of the lower limit as set by the constitution.
- 8) Using the mathematical principles set out in the constitution the Commission decided to allocate two additional constituencies to the parish of St. Catherine and one additional constituency to the parish of St. James.
- 9) Agreement was reached regarding the boundaries of the eleven constituencies in St. Catherine and the five in St. James, and digital maps were produced. It bears mentioning that coming to these agreements was not uniformly straight-forward. There were cases where they

were not able to arrive at any agreement at the local level and it was sent to the Director and the Nominated Members, who very often arrived at agreements or came pretty close. But in one or two instances the matter was referred to the Independent Commissioners who made the final ruling which was accepted by all the parties concerned.

- 10) The Commission was able to submit its report to the Boundaries Committee of the House of Representative on February 23, 2010. This was passed without amendment on March 7, 2010.<sup>5</sup>

The involvement of the stakeholders and the use of available technology have again been used to enhance Jamaica's electoral system. This experience can be an example for small member states that much can be achieved by working with stakeholders.

---

<sup>5</sup> This boundaries review officially became law on March 10, 2010.



## 2.3. PROCEDURES FOR THE GEOREFERENCING OF CITIZENS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE OPERATION OF THE FEDERAL ELECTORAL REGISTRY OF MEXICO

*Miguel Ángel Rojano, Director of Electoral Cartography, Federal Electoral Registry*

**M**r. Rojano began his presentation by describing the challenges that the Federal Electoral Institute faced in its construction of the electoral registry and examining the concept of georeferencing. Georeferencing, a term of recent vintage, refers to the process of associating voters' residences with a geographic area to facilitate the counting of votes. With this definition in mind, the presentation focused on two thematic axes: georeferencing vis-à-vis political representation as well as the effects of georeferencing on logistics and electoral coverage, focusing on the particular case of Mexico.



### ***Georeferencing and Political Representation***

In the construction of an electoral geography, it is fundamental to begin with a good definition of domicile. As a juridical concept, domicile has different meanings depending on the particular context in which it is applied. One can refer, for example, to fiscal domiciles, working domiciles, or electoral domiciles.

In the field of elections, the electoral law in Mexico treats a domicile as the place in which the citizen lives, with the understanding that the domicile impacts the installation of voting tables as well as the exercise of the vote. The sixth article of COFIPE, the Federal Code of Electoral Institutions and Procedures in Mexico,

establishes that one must vote at the table of the section corresponding to one's residence. Thus the law establishes a precise link between the geographic location of a citizen residence and the vote counting process.

To apply precise information to this process, IFE routinely utilizes Geographic Information Systems, whose use has recently become generalized due to the decrease in the prices of information technology. Ten years ago IFE had equipment that was extremely complicated to use, large to the point of immobility, and extremely costly. Today on a personal computer, or even on the smartphones that are in vogue among adolescents, one can access geographic information that in the past could only be accessed from a computer that filled up an entire room and was very expensive. Thus IFE has been taking advantage of modern technological advances and applied this information as reference for citizen domiciles.



### ***Construction of Digital Cartography***

Firstly, IFE had to construct a point of reference, a digital cartography in this case. IFE's cartography originated as a hybrid cartography. It was an endeavor that began in 1990 with the creation of the Institute, utilizing the census cartography carried out by the National Institute of Geography and Statistics (INEGI)

as a point of departure. In addition to the information gleaned from the census, the institute also made use of the cartography from the national registry of elections; both were paper sources. At that time, mapping was still carried out on paper. Thousands of papers were used to construct the national cartography.

Bit by bit, and as a result of a decade of work, this information was compiled and digitized. Digitization efforts began in 1999 and concluded around 2001-2002. As a result, IFE was able to integrate a completely digital reference tool that complied with the national and international standards regarding information systems that were applicable at that time. At the same time, satellite images depicting the 84 or 85 principal urban areas in the country were incorporated in order to provide precise georeferencing to accompany the information and geographical framework that were being constructed. For IFE, this precision was a basic requirement for reconciling cartographies of different origins.



### **Criteria for District Construction**

Within the realm of electoral geography in Mexico, the process of districting is of significant impact and importance. Various methodological schemes have been applied to districting. In the case of Mexico, IFE sought a scheme that was open to the participation of all interested bodies, whether that meant political parties, academics interested in the subject, or citizens interested in participating. Thus a discussion forum was opened that dealt with the different thematic areas with which the criteria for generating new districts would be constructed.

IFE paid close attention to certain principles drawn from the best practices formulated by the international community, such as the importance of drawing districts with a good balance of electors. Methods were also adopted to avoid gerrymandering, such as incorporating the criteria of compactness in the generation of districts. The aim was to avoid

territorially discontinuous electoral districts as well as island territories as districts.

In Mexico, this had a particular complexity because if one looks at the geography of municipalities, which is the level of political-administrative organization established by the constitution, there are municipalities that have been discontinuous since their origin. This arrangement created a certain amount of complexity when combined with the requirement of continuous districts. The aim was also to construct geographic circumscriptions with good accessibility to the interior, based on concerns of representativeness.

Another aspect that impacted districting criteria, and one recently incorporated into the law, was the need to promote the participation of indigenous minorities in the country. Through certain modifications to the law, it was established that districts in Mexico must promote the participation of indigenous communities, avoiding whenever possible the division of said communities during district formation.

In so far as it was possible, the law promoted the creation of districts with indigenous majorities. In the case that this would not be possible in a particular case, given the population dispersion of these groups, the law discourages the division of territories traditionally inhabited by indigenous communities.

Additional criteria were adopted to identify the indigenous population in the country. Hundreds of varieties of ethnicities have been identified in Mexico. Each speaks a different indigenous dialect or lives in a distinct manner throughout the diverse areas of the country. As a result, the indigenous population was considered as one bloc, without distinctions of language or place of residence. Included were those who spoke an indigenous language, those whose ancestors spoke an indigenous language and those who lived in regions that were traditionally populated by these indigenous communities. With these three elements in mind and based on the work of a governmental organism dedicated specifically to this

issue, the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples, a policy was established whereby those municipalities in which 40% or more of the population fit the above-mentioned criteria would be considered indigenous. The aim was to join these groups together with the creation of new districts.



### **Operational Aspects of District Formation**

The aforementioned elements are criteria derived either from constitutional norms and laws, or from basic operational aspects of district formation. Nonetheless, there are other operational aspects that must be considered in the delineation of circumscriptions, such as, for example, geographic accessibility.

Geographic accessibility also entailed a high level of complexity. Mexico comprises both urban and rural areas and they don't all possess the same infrastructure. This issue is resolved with an intermediary criterion called temporal accessibility. IFE coined this term by fusing two concepts: the time and distances of travel. If one compares, for example, a journey of 50 km on a perfectly straight paved highway with a journey of the same distance but on a dirt road or an unpaved path in a zone with very complicated orography, the travel times may be very different. While one trip could take 30 minutes, the other could take hours.

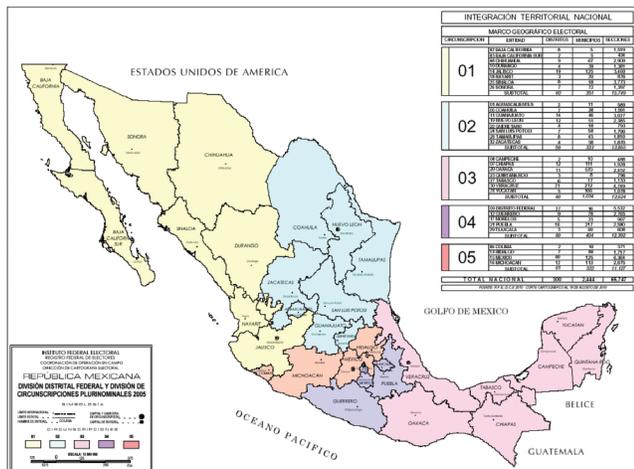
The concept of temporal accessibility automatically incorporates the variables of both time and distance, as well as geographical features, the lack of means of communication, or any particular conditions whether related to climate or vegetation or other issues that modify the possibility of access to the interior. IFE thus created tables of travel times and distances between each and every one of the country's municipalities so that this information could be used to nourish the Institution's information systems.

One of the most important methods applied to reduce bias in the formation of scenarios and in the use of information was automating the construction process.

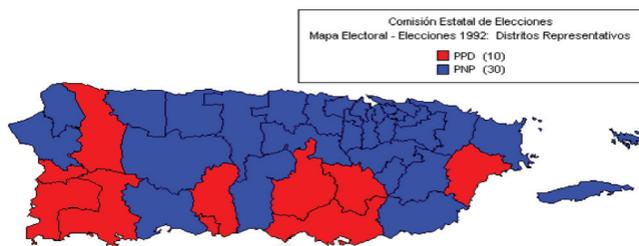
This was achieved by developing applications built in open systems or in what is today called "open source systems," and by making the program and source code available not just to the authorities in the institution but also to political parties and to the citizenry in general. In this way, the process can be audited at all times in terms of both inputs and results, both automatically and manually, so that the criteria that are programmed into the system are permanently an object of evaluation and validation.

Finally, procedures were established to ensure that scenarios are assessed in an objective and systematic manner. In this procedure, the same tool is provided to all the participants so that they are able to validate results and, depending on the case, propose improvements to the scenarios. This ensures the application of the criteria which were approved by the electoral authority and which already passed through a process of analysis.

Two golden rules were applied. One: define the rules before the results, meaning establish criteria that have been approved by the general council. Two: subject these criteria to an appropriate process of critique. These rules provided certainty and stability to the database. Once the criteria were adopted, the geographic information system associated with these criteria was created. The scenarios were subsequently generated so that they could be evaluated under the perspective of the hierarchy of the aforementioned criteria.



The above diagram depicts the final results of the 2005 distribution of plurinominal districts in Mexico. The process sought balance both in terms of the number of districts and of population size. The districting was conducted first. Subsequently, in a similar exercise, the plurinominal circumscriptions were constructed with balances that did not exceed 15% deviation, which was the number established as the norm. This norm was also fully complied with in the construction of 300 uninominal districts. None of them at that time exceeded 15% deviation in terms of population, and the vast majority stayed below 10% deviation.



The above picture represents one example of the effects of a biased process, which can be the effect of gerrymandering. It is presented here as a graphic form to help understand the phenomenon, which signifies creating districts in such a way or form that benefits one political force above the rest.

Territorial discontinuity can also be used to bias

results. IFE thus endeavored to avoid districting with discontinuous territorial areas. Success was achieved as none of the districts suffered from this problem. In the case of the island territories in Mexico, the electoral sections – which is the smallest unit in the Mexican system – in a few cases were comprised of both continental and island areas. This means that one electoral section contains land in both zones. In this way, IFE was able to incorporate the island zone of the country with one particular district and to incorporate these areas with the rest of continental Mexico.

Means of communication was also incorporated as a criterion for the construction of digital cartography. As part of this effort, travel time and distances were obtained through two different methods. Information is drawn directly from the fieldwork carried out every day in all 300 districts by IFE personnel as part of efforts to update the cartography and supply information tables. The highway administration is the other source of data, which is then incorporated into a Geographic Information System that allows for the validation of the information received from the field. Thus if a piece of data is obtained from the field that is not congruent with the mathematical analysis, a validation process can take place.

IFE tries to respect the integrity of municipalities and to penalize their division during the construction of electoral districts. Evidently there are municipalities that must be broken down into several districts because of their size, but whenever possible and in the majority of cases they are formed in a continuous manner.

The concept of accessibility was approached through a database of access times. Existing highway networks were incorporated into the cartography and a system was developed with the explicit purpose of being able to integrate these variables into a single measurement schema.



### ***Georeferencing for logistics and electoral coverage***

It bears emphasizing that the cartography was constructed with the specific aim of accurately locating the elector. The goal was not simply to associate the elector with the registry and to provide him/her with a voting credential associated with one single electoral section within the country. Additionally the aim was to ensure that when he/she goes to vote, that the voting table is the closest and most accessible to his/her domicile.

Evidently the objective was not to create a one-of-a-kind cartography, a tool that would only be of use to IFE, but rather one that complied with national and international terms and could be effectively emigrated to Geographic Information Systems.

Today IFE uses a mobile platform as its base for updating processes. PDA (Personal Desktop Assistant) equipment with GPS is used to give precision to the uploads that are incorporated through satellite images. IFE has an agreement that grants it access to updated images.

The relevant information incorporated in the cartography includes those services which allow citizens in areas lacking adequate infrastructure to be able to provide the location of shops, of churches, of schools and other public services that can serve as a reference for precisely locating their place of residence.

As mentioned above, one of the most important factors is to move forward from a solid definition of domicile and to resolve along the way the problems of political delimitation and electoral boundaries. One must always take into consideration that the electoral authority is the body responsible for defining the geographic borders of electoral circumscriptions while administrative and political authorities and their staffs are responsible for defining the borders of municipalities.

In conclusion, the issue of georeferencing is complex and multi-faceted. Mexico has tried to tackle those issues with two strategies. One is ensuring that the relevant actors participate actively in its construction, meaning the participation of political parties. The other, much like IFE's counterparts in Jamaica, is making use of the technology available in order to make the solutions to this problem as objective as possible.



---

---

## 2.4 GEOREFERENCING FOR ELECTORAL PURPOSES: THE CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

*Pierre Desjardins, Director of Electoral Geography, Elections Canada*

**M**r. Desjardins began his presentation by providing an introductory background to the Canadian political landscape. He then detailed the principles that Canadian electoral law stipulates for the construction of electoral constituencies and discussed the challenges facing Elections Canada as well as the future projects being developed by that body in the area of electoral mapping.



### ***Canadian Political Landscape***

Canada is a federation composed of 10 provinces and 3 federal territories located in the north of the country. It is a parliamentary system of government headed by the Queen, represented in Canada by the Governor General. The parliament itself is made up of a Senate or high chamber with 105 appointed members as well as low chamber, or the House of Commons, which has 308 elected members. The rights to vote and to stand for office are guaranteed by the constitution.

In terms of the country itself, Canada comprises 23 million electors spread across 308 electoral districts in 6 time zones. The representation in the House of Commons is readjusted after each decennial census, so every 10 years. The next census will take place in May 2011<sup>6</sup>, so the next redistricting process – or

redistribution as it is called in – will start once the population count is received from Statistics Canada around February 2012.

Boundary readjustments are conducted by independent commissions in each province. Canada, like Jamaica, operates under a first-past-the-post system with single member plurality. The candidate with the most votes is elected. The winning party is the one that elects the most candidates and the leader of that party becomes the prime minister. The party with the second highest number of elected candidates forms the official opposition in parliament.



### ***Political Representation in Canada***

The below “map of results” depicts the official results of the 40th general elections in Canada, which took place in October 2008. From looking at the map, one can see the winning party, represented in dark blue, was the Conservative Party. One can also notice that the map seemingly contains very little red, the color representing the Liberal Party. However, the inset on the lower left representing the Toronto area shows that most of the winning candidates in that area were liberal and there are many ridings (districts) in the Toronto area. In the north, there are 3 territories that were not part of what is called the redistribution. As federal

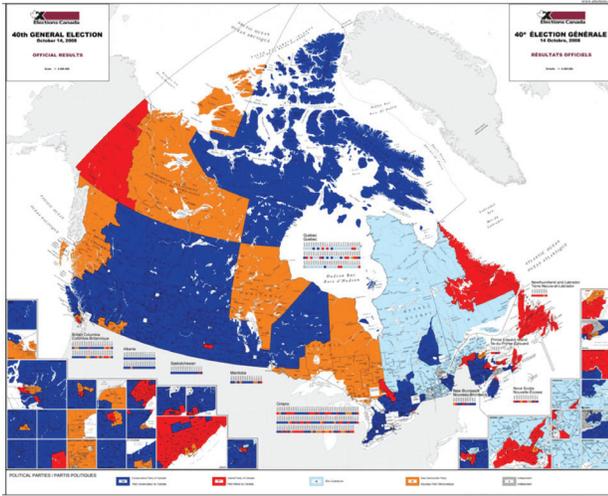
---

<sup>6</sup> At the time of publication, the census process in Canada was

---

already underway, having begun on May 2, 2011.

districts each one counts as one electoral district. The redistribution only applied to the 10 provinces.



- 1) Equilibrium in the number of voters in each geographic constituency.** In Canada, federal boundary commissions, of which there is one per province, are charged with dividing the territory assigned to them into a specified number of electoral districts. That number is set by the population count per province and then divided by a quotient. The quotient differs from one province to the other. For example in Ontario at the last redistribution the quotient was around 100,000 people while in PEI, the smallest province in Canada, the quotient was 75,000. Elections Canada tried to correspond to that quotient as closely as reasonably possible. In fact the variance allowed in Canada is 25% per district because of the specific landscape of Canada and the fact that the population is very sparse in the country.
- 2) Methods to avoid the Gerrymandering effect.** The biggest obstacles to gerrymandering are the institutions that Elections Canada has in place. The Electoral Boundary Commissions are independent and apolitical, which is very important. Commission chairpersons are

appointed by the Chief Justice of each province. There are two additional members – the commission is composed of three members – that are appointed by the Speaker of the House of Commons. The Speaker of the House of Commons is elected by all members of the House of Commons; of course names could be sent or proposed to the Speaker of the House of Commons by parties or even by Elections Canada but it is ultimately up to the Speaker of the House of Commons to make the decision. No member of the Senate or House of Commons and no member of a legislative assembly or council of a province can be appointed.

Importantly, it is boundary commissions and not political parties who have the final decision in the delimitation of districts. In terms of the process, once the commission has completed its work and tabled its report, there is a period of time where the proposals are discussed in committees in the House of Commons, where modifications to the scenarios can be proposed. However, in the end the boundary commission has the last word.

- 3) Avoiding territorially discontinuous electoral constituencies.** Though not stipulated in the law, electoral constituencies in Canada are contiguous. There was an attempt to establish a discontinuous district during the last federal redistribution in 2003. The commission proposed an Indian district that would cover all Indian reserves in New Brunswick, so that there would be pockets of Indian reserves. However, the reserves themselves rejected the proposals in public hearings. Evidently, they preferred to have some influence in multiple districts than to have a larger influence in just one district of the province.

- 4) **Promoting the vote of indigenous minorities in Canada.** The commission tries not to split the Indian reserves. There are a number of large Indian reserves, especially in the North. The commissions are also encouraged to consult the affected bands during public hearings. Additionally, efforts are made to increase voting accessibility in remote localities. Elections Canada receives complaints from time to time from Indian reserves because their remote location translates into limited accessibility on the day of the vote. Canada's solution was to institute an advance poll process that takes place one week before the actual voting. In fact there are two days allocated for people to vote in advance. In some Northern localities, Elections Canada has created one advance poll per polling division, which basically provides people with three days to vote: two days in advance as well as the election-day itself. The fact that in certain cases people have to drive more than 100 km to vote is a problem in Canada.
- 5) **Constructing geographic constituencies which respect municipal boundaries.** Canada tries to respect the boundaries of the municipality as much as possible. In some cases, the larger municipalities are split but Elections Canada makes an effort to look at municipal and local boundaries as well. In Canada, once the readjustment is completed, Statistics Canada will readjust the statistical limits of the electoral limits so that the next census can operate with a perfect alignment between statistics and electoral districts.
- 6) **How to address the challenges of geographic accessibility.** The commission has to take geographic considerations and community of interests into account. What is the definition of communities of interest? It is up to the commission to define that. However, Canada tries to respect the official language because it has two official languages, French and English,

as well as the languages of some Indian reserves. The language issue is something that the Commission has to take into account.

Other aspects considered are the historical pattern of an electoral district and ensuring that it is of a manageable size, although there are some huge districts in the Northern regions. Topographical features and transportation networks are also provided to the commission. The commission has developed a so-called redistricting tool which is a GIS tool that gives to the commission all the geographical features that are needed to draw boundaries as well as population counts and demographic data from the previous census. As mentioned above, the law permits a variance of +/- 25% from the quotient in order to accommodate human and geographic factors in Canada.

7. **Automation of the constituency construction process.** How to address the automation of the constituency construction process? Canada does not operate with an automatic process. It is a non-competitive process with a mix of descriptive participative methods. Public hearings are held so that people are able to have a say in the process. There are recommendations that Canada move to a semi-automatic redistribution process where there is a first draft done by software but Canada is not there yet.
8. **Objective and systematic evaluation procedures.** The commissions must follow the criteria set out in the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act. Proposals must be advertised and discussed in public hearings; on average 70% of proposals are changed after the public hearings. After that, there is one year to publish the report and it is tabled to the Parliament, where MPs are allowed input. Nonetheless, as indicated above, the commission has the last word.

## Georeferencing and electoral logistics

Canada has three key databases for the management of electoral limits. The first one is called the National Geographic Database (NGD) and contains most of the geographic features needed to manage an election, including road networks. This database was built with the help of Natural Resources Canada and other bodies in the Federal Government; it is not Elections Canada that digitizes or goes into the field to capture the data. The other geographic database is the Electoral Geography Database (EGDB), which contains all 308 districts and polling divisions. In Canada, polling divisions are a sublevel used to manage the elections. There are more than 65,000 across Canada, which averages out to around 300 polling divisions per district. The NGD and the EGDB are the two geographic databases maintained by Elections Canada.

Additionally, Elections Canada operates with a Civic Address Database that contains more than 14 million georeferenced individual addresses. This information is derived from a process called “geocoding” or “georeferencing;” both terms are used. The database holds coordinates or the point locations of addresses, but there are no names; it contains only addresses, information which comes from the National Register of Electors.

The third database is the National Register of Electors, which is maintained on a weekly basis. The National Register of Electors is the current list of the 23 million plus electors in Canada. Even though Elections Canada maintains this database, they are not allowed to capture the data. Instead, provincial datasets are used to build the database as well as information from tax forms that citizens can choose to share with Elections Canada. In the Canadian case, sharing that information is voluntary rather than mandatory.

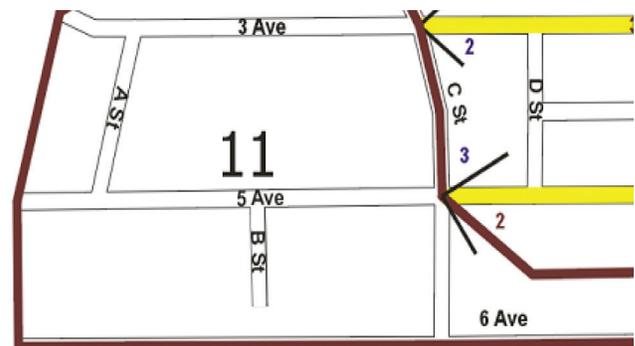
The national register of electors contains 94% of eligible electors. Of those 94%, 85% are located in the right place. Because there is a lot of moving between

ridings and provinces, it is a challenge to keep the information up to date.

Within the register of the electors, processes have been built between the databases to maintain the addresses of the elector. At every election Elections Canada sends what are called voter information or VIC cards to the electors with information on where to go to vote on the election-day. That card is built on information from those two databases: the address database and the elector database.

Geography plays an important role not only in the management of elections but also on other topics in the election that could happen. For example, Elections Canada maintains a layer called strategic building, in order to be able to locate the nearest hospital in the event of an emergency, for example.

All of Elections Canada’s GIS systems are based on ESRI’s ArcGis. Over the years, the application has been customized; it is now used to edit the geographic layers, to update the databases, to perform the geocoding, and also to design and publish different map products, both digital and on paper. Of course it is customized. One of the issues facing the institution is that it relies heavily on consultants to make the changes because ESRI people can no longer recognize the application.



The above diagram provides an example of how streets are managed; there is an address range on each street segment between two intersections with the information from side to side. It is with that information that electors are geocoded; it is an interpolation of the

address between two intersections.

A portal was also developed but it is currently only accessible to staff, candidates and political parties. This portal contains all the geographic information that is needed during an election. Future plans involve the development of an application for the general public but it will probably be a shell on top of this application with some of the information, not all of the information.

geographic information for the clients; rather than having the elector trying to understand GIS, to have a “dashboard” concept.



### ***Future Developments and Challenges***

Elections Canada is currently developing an e-registration system that will allow people to register online. The plan is to have the system online by 2012. The system will involve three steps: one to check if one is in the register, a second step to modify information and the last step would be to add citizens to the register.

Also in the works is an I-voting feasibility study, where the I stands for internal, not electronic, voting. However, this project is still in its initial stages. Because Canada is such a large country, the internet is seen as a tool to make the voting process more accessible. Nonetheless, there are still a lot of pending issues regarding privacy and security. Canada will look at the experience of other countries that use that technology.

Elections Canada is also looking to improve its geo services. The most common question during an election day is “where do I vote?” or “where is the polling station?” Currently this information is provided on the Elections Canada website but it is not interactive. This information is also provided through a 1-800 line. The eventual goal is to offer these services on multiple platforms, such as on the iPad or other portable devices.

Elections Canada wants to also develop internet mapping using Rich Internet Applications and dashboard concepts. The goal is to package the



### III. STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

---

Strategic planning originated in the private sector as a management tool, consisting of assessment, objective setting and strategy building. The concept has only recently penetrated the realm of public administration and has not as yet been embraced by electoral authorities with the same robustness as in the private sector. However, it represents a tool of particular importance for electoral management bodies, one which defines the mission of an EMB as well as the principles that will guide its approach to electoral administration.

In addition to increasing technical efficacy, strategic planning in an electoral context serves to increase accountability as well as public confidence in electoral processes and to improve attention to citizens. The relevance of strategic planning for electoral authorities is growing as EMBs are increasingly expected to expand services to marginalized groups, embrace new technologies and improve the democratic quality of elections. Because of the complexity of electoral processes and the inevitability of contingencies, strategic planning is of particular importance for electoral authorities. It provides a common objective to an institution and thus a framework for the day-to-day decisions made at all levels of an organization.

What does the strategic planning process entail for electoral authorities? Electoral planning involves the definition of an institutional direction, of an electoral

body's objectives and of a strategy for allocating limited resources, whether human, material, or technological. The planning process identifies constituencies and defines the values with which the organization will conduct its operations. The use of indicators to measure performance provides an objective means to assess the progress of an electoral authority towards meeting its goals.

Strategic planning provides a framework for continual improvement within an organization; it requires a sober assessment of strengths and weaknesses. While the strategic plan is integral as an output, the process by which planning initiatives are developed is equally important to the end product. Sustained engagement of stakeholders contributes towards greater public confidence in elections and electoral authorities. The presentation by international electoral expert Jeff Fischer described the component parts of electoral planning: strategic, operational and political, a confidence-building dimension which is not often appreciated.

Citing the cases of Guyana and Trinidad, Professor Mark Kirton emphasized the crucial importance of strategic planning for small states as well as the importance of electoral contexts, such as the lack of fixed election dates in the Caribbean. José Luis Rodríguez, Director of the technical planning unit at IFE, discussed how the creation of a division dedicated exclusively to technical

planning added continuity and structure to the Mexican electoral authority. Osman Valdés described the process of developing an institutional network of planning for the Electoral Tribunal of Panama as well the efforts of the body to certify its processes with ISO Norms.

This certification represents the final step of a policy of quality management, a concept that is intimately linked to strategic planning. Quality management systems serve as both a planning philosophy and an implementation tool for electoral management bodies. Maria Teresa Mellenkamp's presentation discussed the links between quality management and planning on all levels, touching on the programs conducted by the OAS to mainstream quality certification within the electoral arena.

## 3.1 ELECTORAL PLANNING: A STRATEGIC FOCUS FOR ELECTORAL AUTHORITIES

*Jeff Fischer, International Electoral Expert*

One of the important issues for modern day electoral management bodies (EMBs), one that is emerging more and more, is strategic planning. In his presentation, Mr. Fisher introduced some general concepts and approaches that are used by EMBs in strategic planning and discussed how this planning relates to other forms of planning required by EMBs.

### *Levels of Electoral Planning*

Electoral management bodies are really compelled to plan on three levels: strategic planning to provide them with the vision, the mission statement and guiding principles that define what the EMB is all about and what it intends to pursue. Operational planning addresses the technical aspects of election administration such as procurement, logistics, information technology, communications; in sum the kinds of activities that emerge from the strategic objectives that are defined in the strategic planning.

There is another form of planning that is not often appreciated: political planning. Representatives of EMBs interact with political stakeholders such as political parties, candidates, election observers and the media. In order to foster positive relationships and confidence in the electoral process, planning has to be conducted on a political level to ensure that these

relationships are intact.

### *Fourfold Purpose of Strategic Planning*

There is a fourfold purpose for strategic planning.

- To provide a framework and focus for improvement efforts within the organization itself, to improve organizational performance.
- To optimize the organizational systems within the election authority.
- To provide guidance to managers for day-to-day decisions.
- To provide a means to assess progress in meeting goals and activities.

Strategic planning gets to the very soul of the EMB: what it's about, what it intends to do and how it intends to go about its responsibilities.

### *Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles*

In a sense, strategic planning can be defined as, to use the definition offered by a departed colleague Joe Baxter: "a practical, action-oriented guide based on examination of internal and external factors that directs goal-setting and resource allocation to achieve meaningful results over time."

It is based on a set of assumptions. It is based on an organizational assessment, which defines the steps that need to be taken to formulate a strategic plan. In many ways, the concept can be distilled into three fundamental components:

- 1) First, vision. Vision is a profile defined by the EMB on its public role and future objectives. By developing a vision, the EMB can define how its services are currently delivered and will be delivered in the future.
- 2) The second element is the mission statement that describes the purpose, responsibilities and functions of the EMB. It identifies the constituencies that the EMB serves and the programs that it creates to service these constituencies. For example the corporate plan for the electoral commission of the United Kingdom<sup>7</sup>, which is available online, serves as their mission statement. The electoral commission of the UK does not actually administer elections but provides advice and guidance to local authorities – but its mission statement is very simple. “To foster public confidence and participation in the democratic process within the United Kingdom.” Thus, mission statements do not have to be complex in nature but should be straightforward to identify the basic activities of the EMB.
- 3) The final component is guiding principles. Guiding principles reflect the philosophy by which the EMB conducts its operations. They amount to a value statement. The principles should address the EMB’s values concerning people (both staff and the public); processes, (management and decision making); and performance (evaluation criteria). A recent example which shows good practices in terms of defining principles can be found in the strategic plan for the Election Commission of Pakistan, which was released a few months ago and is also available online.

Among the guiding principles which that commission has put forward for itself, it wants to demonstrate independence, impartiality, transparency, integrity, inclusion of marginalized groups, professional excellence, conducive working conditions and gender balance.<sup>8</sup>



### **Strategic Issues and Objectives**

Next there is the topic of strategic issues and strategic objectives. After the parameters of how an organization is going to function have been defined, what are the issues that need to be addressed in strategic planning? Strategic issues may be internal or external to the EMB itself. A strategic issue could be the need to improve the quality of the voter registry as an internal issue. It could also be an external issue: how can attempts at bribing election officials be stopped? What strategies can be developed to thwart these activities?

Emerging from the strategic issues are the objectives that concretize the approach that are taken to resolve these issues, within the framework of the vision, the guiding principles and the mission statement.

But it has to be measured whether or not the EMB is on track with achieving these objectives; it is necessary to look at milestones or performance measures. How can one benchmark the progress made against the objectives set forward for the organization? What are the indicators? What is the impact and how can it be measured?



### **Strategic Product Versus Process**

It is important not to get the impression that strategic planning is all about producing a product because it is not solely about producing a product. Although at the end of the day a plan has to be developed and put forward, the process by which that plan is created is

---

7 Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom. “Statement of Corporate Purpose,” 2003.

---

8 Election Commission of Pakistan. “Five Year Strategic Plan (2010-2015),” 2010.

equally important. The process will define the quality of the inputs, the inclusiveness, the diversity of the views, so that on an organization-wide basis these objectives are embraced by the EMB.

One can draw out five steps in the process from Joe Baxter's document on strategic planning. The first step is to conduct an organizational assessment. Taking a look at the capabilities of an organization, where are some deficiencies in terms of staffing, facilities, locations, procedural deficiencies? Take an honest assessment of the organization. From that one can begin to develop the strategic foundations for the plan: the vision, the mission and the guiding principles. Then, one must identify the strategic issues and objectives, write the strategic plan and then develop implementation action plans – in effect, operational plans to implement the strategic plan.

The strategic plan can be a public document but it can also be packaged as almost a public relations style document. An example from a few years ago is the strategic plan from Elections Quebec in Canada.<sup>9</sup> The plan is put out as a brochure for public consumption and includes an election calendar so that the public is able to see what is before them. Thus, while the strategic plan does have an internal dimension to it, it can also be used as a marketing tool for the public to better understand an EMB's challenges and its attempts to improve.



### **Operational Planning**

The second level of planning is operational planning. Action plans are conducted on a functional basis; they can cover electoral operations, voter education, electoral security, election worker training, and financial management. Basically operational planning addresses those practical elements associated with running an elections operation.



### **Political Planning**

The final level of strategic planning is political planning, which involves defining the protocols and relationships with political contestants, election monitors, and media organizations. This includes candidate vetting and registration. Political planning also includes contingency planning for when things may go wrong: if there has been some disruption in service, how can a body quickly respond to its stakeholders so that they understand that these are honest mistakes that happen in election administration rather than a result of any deceptive efforts. Political planning has a confidence building dimension to it.



### **Conclusions**

In wrapping up, the literature on strategic planning – although it is thin – as well as the concept of strategic planning itself have been used in the private sector for decades, for much the same purposes as mentioned above. However, strategic planning has not been embraced by election management bodies with the same robustness. This will change as EMBs are expected to embrace new technologies, to enhance services to marginalized groups and to improve their transparency.

Strategic planning will begin to emerge more and more as a necessity for election administrators. Some of the common features reviewed by the literature on the subject include the three fundamental elements of vision, values and guiding principles. The literature urges that the process by which strategic planning is developed be inclusive; it could even possess a public dimension to it, with public hearings to obtain input from constituents on where they see improvements could be made.

Strategic planning has to include contingency components. Mr. Fischer drew off his experience running elections in Kosovo, Bosnia and East Timor to

<sup>9</sup> Elections Quebec. "Strategic Plan 2001-2005" 2001.

emphasize that things can often go awry in election administration. Thus one needs to have contingencies so that the process can stay on track. Contingency planning becomes an important factor.

The unpredictability of elections also underscores the importance of monitoring and evaluation. How can one know that one is making progress toward strategic objectives? Setting up these milestones becomes an important element in the effective implementation of a strategic plan.

## 3.2 ELECTORAL CONTEXTS IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN: EFFECTS ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

*Mark Kirton, Professor of Latin American Studies, University of the West Indies*

It is important to understand the context in which small states operate within a significantly changing global environment. The need for strategic planning in the midst of dwindling resources becomes even more critical in the context of small states like those in the Caribbean.



### *Electoral Context of Small States in the Caribbean*

In the Caribbean, electoral processes are central to democracy and to democratic legitimacy as Larry Diamond in 1999<sup>10</sup> had indicated. Given that small states in most cases operate with the Westminster model of governance, it must be recognized that trust in the electoral process is integral to the legitimacy of the entire state arrangement. Even though the concept of strategic planning has only recently penetrated electoral arrangements, it must be said that electoral officials have already been engaged in strategic planning; even though some may argue that the structures have not been sufficiently in place to guarantee that approach.

However, in an era in which democracy is still being threatened in parts of the world, the consolidation taking place in the Caribbean is an indication of a

commitment to democratic governance under the Westminster model, which has its limitations. One can see Caribbean states organizing elections in a very efficient way within their own limited resources.

The small Caribbean states must be understood in the context of contemporary priorities and the changing environment in which Caribbean states have to operate: the current global economic crisis; the inexorable march of globalization; the loss of preferential markets for Caribbean exports like bananas, rum, rice; increasing concerns about the environment, climate change, rising sea levels; and challenges related to the Caribbean's location between job-producing "supply" nations and "demand" nations.

One has to recognize that these challenges have constrained governments, in the sense that they have mandated governments to shift their priorities in terms of resource allocation in order to counter these threats to their citizenry. However, in spite of these challenges, the Caribbean states have been upholding the principles of democracy through fair, free, open and transparent elections since their independence, which was just a mere 40 odd years ago in most cases.

Strategic planning is a critical element in the electoral management process. Strategic management has in the past been seen as a systemic process for identifying goals and approaches. Though it has generally been

<sup>10</sup> Diamond, Larry. *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation*. The Johns Hopkins University Press: April 8, 1999.

a private sector kind of approach, it has moved to the electoral management mode or arena, which is significant.

In an IFES publication, “Strategic Planning for Election Organizations,” Joe C. Baxter<sup>11</sup> treated strategic planning as a management tool to help elections authorities to do a better job of administering the elections process. Baxter also saw strategic planning as a “focused effort to produce decisions and actions that shape and guide what the election authority does, how it does it, and where it will be in the future.”

In fact, he viewed strategic planning as a process of examination, objective setting and strategy building. Thus, this kind of process has gone beyond the private sector and into the realms of election management and into the public management sector as a whole.

Strategic planning in the context of the Caribbean must be understood within the specific context in which Caribbean small states are operating: the political, economic and social contexts in which electoral planning is taking place in the Caribbean. When compared to Latin America, where there are presidential systems and where systems of governance have become institutionalized over time through many years of experience, it can be said that the Caribbean is not doing badly in terms of how processes have emerged.

Presidential systems in Latin America share certain characteristics: rule directly by the people, direct mandates with different types and levels of legitimacy; a separation between presidency and legislature; checks and balances to prevent abuses of authority and ensure efficiency. In this sense Latin America operates with a different type of context from the small states of the Caribbean and has undergone different types of experiences.

---

11 Baxter, Joe. C. “Strategic Planning for Election Organisations: A Practical Guide for Conducting a Strategic Planning Exercise,” International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 1999.

A more distinctive feature of the Caribbean states is the Westminster style of parliamentary democracy, systems of governance in which the Prime Minister and his cabinet are accountable to Parliament. These factors shape the context and thus the kinds of limitations and challenges that election management bodies face in small states.



### ***Examples from the Caribbean Experience***

A few examples: given the electoral context of the Caribbean, prime ministers have election dates “in their back pockets.” There are no fixed dates for elections. How do electoral management bodies plan and strategically organize for an election that could be called next week? For example, in Trinidad & Tobago there have been four elections in the past ten years. In 2010, the then Prime Minister called an election with only six weeks of notice; systems had to be put in place at relatively short notice. To the credit of the elections management bodies, the elections were carried out without much damage to the system. Although public trust might have been reduced, the systems of democracy have remained firm.

Another example: in 1999 in Grenada, the Attorney General decided overnight to leave office. The next morning the Prime Minister asked the Governor General to dissolve parliament and call an election. How does an electoral management body strategically plan for that type of reality?

It is important, in terms of addressing those challenges facing elections management bodies in the Caribbean, to advocate for fixed dates for elections as part of strategic planning. This may be a minority position. Politicians in the region may want to argue that their constitutional arrangements allow for election dates to be in the preserve of the incumbent government and that they would like to maintain that arrangement going forward. However, in the context of strategic planning in small states, the opposite view merits consideration.

There are different systems of elections and electoral processes in the commonwealth or English-speaking Caribbean. There is one country with proportional representation and some with first-past-the-post systems. This means that different types of electoral processes have to be put in place. Strategic planning becomes more critical in systems where party lists are, for example, under the proportional representation model, as in Guyana. This differs from the constituency electoral arrangements of Trinidad & Tobago which bring different approaches and therefore require different solutions.



### *Involvement of Stakeholders*

Given the variety of different systems in the Caribbean and their particular advantages and disadvantages, attempting to put strategic arrangements in place that ensure voter confidence and public trust requires that election management agencies at all times involve all of the stakeholders in strategic planning. Relevant stakeholders include the states, which are the most important. The ministries of finance for some of the smaller Caribbean states are also critical for planning because they hold the public purse.

Furthermore, as alluded to above, challenges to governments such as rising sea levels as well as concerns for the environment, health and education produce a tendency to prioritize differently. Elections, while in a sense a critical part of the democratic process, are seen by some governments in the region as an event rather than a process; therefore they plan for that event only and not for an entire process.

It is critical for small states in understanding and developing strategic planning arrangements to ensure that governments are encouraged to view elections and the electoral system as part of a process. Elections should also be given a priority role in terms of finance, understanding however that the provision of water, of adequate housing, and of education may very well vie for prominence with issues like ongoing registration

and georeferencing. These issues might be seen as important for some only when elections have been called.

In sum, engagement of all the stakeholders in this process is an important element in planning and the subsequent movement towards greater popular confidence as well as high levels of public trust, both of which result from proper strategic planning.



### *Challenges to and Opportunities for Strategic Planning in Elections*

The shifting priorities of the state represent a challenge that can limit the kind of planning that an electoral management body can make, especially in terms of the allocation of resources. In most of the states of the region, one might argue that the access to resources has not always been forthcoming, to put it mildly.

From a strategic point of view, reductions in resource allocation very much threaten the efficiency and quality of the electoral process. Therefore, resource allocation and advocacy for sustained resource allocation must be part of any strategic plan for the electoral processes of the Caribbean.

- 1) Stakeholders.** In terms of advocating a strong strategic plan, fixed election dates must be an element. Additionally, an election should not be considered an event, but rather as a process. A change in thinking must be part of the whole planning process. Sustained engagement of the stakeholders at all levels is critical, particularly ensuring that everybody is guaranteed that their vote has equal value and that they are part of the whole process of representative governance. Strategic planning must plan for all: for the disabled or “differently-abled.” As for the youth, education and civic education processes must be planned so that there is that level of confidence which ensures the continuity of the democratic process in the Caribbean.

- 2) **Technology.** It is important to build and strengthen electoral infrastructure. In terms of regional strategic planning the practice of incorporating technology that has been established by Jamaica should be utilized across the region, to ensure that best practices are used to strengthen the process of the electoral management bodies. Use of new technologies could be borrowed from and utilized in a regional approach to electoral strategic planning.
- 3) **Electoral Observation.** In terms of electoral observation and monitoring, within the region the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is attempting to deploy observers and monitors for elections at short notice. There should be a plan in place that involves training arrangements at the level of the tertiary education institutions, universities. In this way, there would be a cadre of trained observers and monitors to back up the traditional observer groups and to ensure the quality of the elections, and that the public confidence is always there in regional electoral processes.
- 4) **Political Financing.** Strategic planning can also be applied in terms of the supervision of financial resource allocation. The OAS held a seminar in Jamaica where draft legislation regarding campaign finance was introduced. This could be borrowed/adapted by the region to ensure the provision of a level playing field in this area.
- 5) **Media.** Planning relates to the media as well. In the region, there is always concern and questions always arise - especially in countries like Guyana where the media is controlled by the state – regarding equity in terms of media access, particularly the radio, in the electoral process. Strategic planning by electoral management bodies will ensure that states recognize the need for equitable access for all parties. This aspect should be part of any kind of strategic plan that is developed on a regional basis for the small

states of the Caribbean.

6. **Regional Approach.** The solutions to the dilemmas of minorities, of transparency, and of the institutionalization of strategic planning, involve civic and public education as well a regional approach to election management. Given the rejuvenation of the Association of Caribbean Electoral Organizations (ACEO) this organization should play an important role in developing a strategic plan and in ensuring that best practices and standards are established. Such a regional approach to elections management would allow for a strategic plan that could be replicated across the member states of CARICOM and the wider Caribbean that draws from some of the best practices of its hemispheric counterparts, including those of IFE in Mexico. There is also the issue of training of elections management personnel by regional institutions.

Though there has not been a history of reduction in the commitment to democracy by Caribbean states, in terms of consolidating the democratic process – especially given the rumblings in the region about illiberal democracy or elected dictatorship or other types of threatening approaches – it is important to have a strong electoral body with an independent approach to elections that ensures that these concerning trends do not become realities.

### ***Case Studies: Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago***

Two cases studies were included as part of Mr. Kirton's presentation. In Guyana, an increased commitment to the democratic process was observed. The involvement of international actors, particularly the presence of the Carter Center, the OAS and the Commonwealth, shored up public confidence. In this area, there were differences between Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago.

The Latin American Public Opinion Project<sup>12</sup>, a project

---

12 Vanderbilt University. "Latin American Public Opinion Project."

similar to Latinobarometro, asked 1,500 citizens in Guyana “to what extent do you trust elections?” 50.8% responded that they did not trust the electoral process. This raises a red flag and therefore cries out for a need for electoral management bodies to work more assiduously in developing public trust, which is a necessary element.

In the case of Trinidad & Tobago, the fact that Prime Minister called on the President to call an election four times within ten years indicates that proper systems have not been put in place. As a matter of fact, the Latin American Public Opinion Project survey for Trinidad & Tobago indicated that more than 50% have no trust in the Elections and Boundaries Commission. Respondents also expressed little trust in the government of the time.

The fact that Guyana and Trinidad & Tobago are both racially or ethnically bifurcated states adds another dimension, which further underscores the need for greater collaboration and a better systemic arrangement for the electoral processes.

In conclusion, it must be said that there is a need for continued professionalization of the electoral processes in the small Caribbean states. Part-time approaches will not suffice. What are needed are strong legislative or constitutionally-driven bodies that will ensure continuity, reliability and sustainability of the electoral process.

In some states, the elections office is not constitutionally-driven and could therefore be vulnerable to outside influences. In the development of any strategic planning arrangement, one must look to ensure the enshrinement of a constitutional arrangement for elections bodies in all of the states of the English-speaking Caribbean. Electoral Management Bodies act as guarantors of free, fair and transparent electoral processes; they provide strong elements of legitimacy and inspire public confidence.

For the continued function of electoral management bodies in the small states of the region, there must be a regional approach. An example is providing opportunities for small states to get together and purchase elections material in a regional way, which would reduce costs as well as ensuring reliability and public confidence in the systems across the region. This kind of united and regional approach will ensure legitimacy and will inspire greater public trust.



## 3.3 STRATEGIC PLANNING WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE ELECTORAL CYCLE: THE CASE OF MEXICO

*José Luis Rodríguez, Director of the Technical Planning Unit, IFE*

In his presentation, Mr. Rodríguez discussed the experience of Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute with the subject of planning and how they were implementing this concept despite the fact that the Institute was then 20 years old.

### *Background*

To give some information that provides context on the magnitude of the task, Mexico has 108,000,000 residents, of which 80,000,000 are part of the federal register of electors. What is IFE's experience in the electoral arena? Between 1990 and 2010, IFE organized six federal electoral processes, supported 185 state electoral processes and registered six political parties. Mexico has an electoral cycle of three years: senators and the president of the republic are elected every six years while federal deputies are elected every three years.

IFE has defined its institutional mission with the utmost clarity. Beginning in 1998 there has been a series of initiatives focused specifically on the topic of planning. However, because of the absence of a formal body within the institute that would be responsible for these matters, these initiatives tended to lack continuity or remained unfinished. Though these projects received support, they did not represent a "project of change" within the institute.

Therefore, the creation of the planning unit that became active in March 2010 represented a complete modernization of the institute. What was the purpose assigned to the planning unit when it was approved by IFE's general council? This unit formulates all planning initiatives, evaluates and improves institutional processes, and optimizes the use of human, material, financial and technological resources.

What are some basic principles that the planning unit has considered to carry out its mandate? Firstly it aims to take advantage of internal talent and knowledge. The planning unit is a small unit made of up of 14 people: nine technicians and five support staff. One of the conditions stipulated by IFE was that the majority of members of the small unit would first of all be hired internally and secondly would have the capabilities necessary to be able to work on the issue of planning.

Another fundamental requirement of the unit was that it would seek out best practices wherever they could be found and implement them in the institute. The unit would promote the integration of all areas, and finally would take the issues of transparency and the use of public resources very seriously.

The unit was approved in January 2010 and began to operate in March of the same year. Its fundamental objectives were the construction of an institutional and strategic direction as well as the establishment

of conditions in which such strategic initiatives could be executed. The latter requirement was vital. The establishment of a strategic plan has no value if it is not executed. IFE is well aware of this fact and pays close attention to ensuring that it seeks out the means to convert all plans into reality and to carry out those plans.

What was IFE's vision? Obviously in developing its strategic plan with a view to change functional operations and processes, IFE's aspiration was that this operation would help the Institute analyze its structure. Above all, efforts aimed to optimize the use of resources in order to improve the operation of the institute as a whole. Another initiative advanced was the administration of projects.

At that time, projects were quickly assigned money but there wasn't a tool that permitted IFE to track what they said they were going to do, to make sure that projects were carried out within the timeframe and budget set out. Another fundamental element was the indicators that would permit tracking all of the institute's operations, from strategic objectives to the individual activities of career professionals. The idea was to create a single system of indicators and tracking for the institute.



### **General Context**

What is the general context in which IFE operates? IFE works with three-year electoral cycles; every three years there is an election for deputies or a federal election for the president and the senators of the republic. These triennial cycles frame the way in which IFE is organized and the way it operates.

In this context, IFE has a clear idea of the process that needs to be followed to carry out an election. Some of these stages are established by law. Others were instituted by IFE precisely to strengthen the electoral

process and to decrease the risks and problems that can come about in highly complex events.

What exactly is IFE designing? The institute has begun to design a system of institutional planning and tracking. What are the components that the institute has begun to identify as important parts of this model? With the base of electoral cycles, the institute will analyze its organizational resources. All of this is based on a technical architecture that is nothing else but a computer platform of communication that allows the institute to truly maintain its status as a modern organization. IFE could not be considered a modern entity without a strong computing and communications infrastructure. The other big effort is for IFE to clearly identify its processes with the likely aim of certifying some of them.

IFE is also obviously concerned with improving everything that has to do with attention to citizens, including the issuing of credentials and all contact that the institute has with the citizenry. It is important to carry out citizen relations in the best conditions possible under the juridical framework established by law or by the institute itself. In what way would this help? Precisely to lessen risks in the electoral processes, which are organized every three years.

The following challenges and goals were identified for the Federal Election Cycle of 2009-2012:

- 1) To strengthen the confidence and trust of both citizens and political actors
- 2) To strengthen transparency and accountability in the use and application of public resources
- 3) To improve efficacy in operational, administrative and organizational areas for the upcoming electoral process
- 4) To maintain and strengthen electoral processes and procedures that are efficient, trustworthy and able to be audited
- 5) The permanent updating and culling of the electoral registry, particularly the "03 Credential" that will no longer be used

as identification for voting as of the 2012 elections

- 6) To improve attention to citizens and fulfill what was mandated to IFE by the electoral reform, which brought about important changes within the operation of the institute as well as the obligations assigned to it.



### ***Institutional Planning for Electoral Administration***

In terms of institutional and strategic planning, there are a number of fundamental elements that are universally applied by IFE in constructing their model. IFE is considering these elements in order to be able to establish and adapt them to the particular conditions of the Institute to ensure the simplest manner of operation and implementation.

What is IFE's universe of work in terms of institutional planning? Evidently, it includes all of IFE. But what is IFE? IFE is represented by 32 state offices, 300 executive boards on a district level and 8000 units dedicated to citizen attention. This makes for an extensive universe, which complicates the operation and organization of institutional activities.

When the technical planning unit began operating in March 2010, a number of planning-related initiatives had already been tabled, mostly dealing with the question of how this planning would be considered in the drafting of the budget for the following year. The unit was considering how to formulate their work plan to coincide with the vision for the direction of IFE as a whole. The work plan was defined through a strategic planning workshop with the Institute's board of directors, which resulted in the final results of a mission, a vision, values and strategic objectives.

A SWOT<sup>13</sup> exercise was also conducted to identify IFE's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

<sup>13</sup> An acronym standing for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

The outputs from this exercise were compared with the policies and programs which were being developed or already in development at the Institute. Finally the general council approved those policies and programs that were included in the strategic direction of the institute and which were used to formulate the budget.

A fundamental point of this project was ensuring that the budget aligned with this strategic direction. IFE also began to implement project administration methodology. At the end of the process, a portfolio of 120 projects was reduced to four. These four projects comprised 40 initiatives: one project to guide the electoral process; a project relating to the electoral registry; a project involving citizen voting in foreign countries; and finally a project relating to infrastructure and modernization of the institute. The first deliverable for each project was the drafting of articles of incorporation, which would later be used to track these projects.

What was the model that IFE wanted to implement? It began with the strategic reference framework which is the strategic direction that involves: the situational diagnostic; the establishment of strategies; the alignment of the architecture and infrastructure of the institute with these strategies; the elaboration of operational planning; and the effort to link this planning with both the budget and the management of the strategic plan.



### ***Challenges and Perspectives in the Area of Planning***

IFE is also working to revise and strengthen its electoral process, and see if it can be certified. IFE's aim is the establishment of an ideal model based on a planning committee in which everybody is represented, in which strategic initiatives are presented and approved in such a way that people will be fully committed to them upon their final approval.



## 3.4. THE ORGANIZATION OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN PANAMA

*Osman Valdés, National Director of Electoral Organization, Electoral Tribunal of Panama*

**M**r. Valdés' presentation discussed the inner-workings of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama touching on the challenges faced by the institution and the organization of different electoral processes, which have included elections, plebiscites and referenda among others.



### **Background of the Institution**

The Electoral Tribunal learned years ago that the organization of an electoral event is extremely complex, a fact which is well recognized by those professionals within the field who have lived and suffered through the experience. One has to try to look for some tools or mechanisms so that the planning, supervision and control become instruments that facilitate an electoral process that is carried out in a successful manner without hurry.

The organization of an electoral process involves strict timeframes. An election is held on a date established by law. One cannot, for example, say two weeks before an election that it cannot be carried out on time and then ask for two more weeks.

In 1991 when the reorganization of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama began, the institution faced a very problematic election. The officials responsible for handling the election didn't know how to organize

such a process and thus encountered a number of problems. As a result, for the referendum that was planned for November 1992, the Institution decided to begin a reorganization process and to seek out mechanisms to be able to comply with its mandate as an institution.

An organizational matrix model, made up of 27 electoral programs, was developed. In this case, a matrix was taken out of the normal institutional structure. Each person was responsible for fulfilling a specific program objective. For example, within the electoral process, the administrative unit was assigned tasks that had to do with finances and with managing the electoral budget. All these tasks were related to the matrix organization.

At that time, this organization faced various limitations, namely a lack of resources, knowledge and tools for the tracking and control of activities. Drawing from the 1992 experience for the general elections of 1994 – between 1992 and 1994 the institution began a phase of institutional re-organization with the support of many international organizations –the Electoral Tribunal sought out mechanisms to automate its organization. The chosen method was a program called “Timeline,” which could not be effectively implemented. It was a tremendous failure.

The institution learned a number of lessons from these

errors and from this failure. The planning process for the 1999 general elections began in 1996-1997. From the previous evaluation, the Institution had learned that it was first necessary to form the work team. Strategic planning projects could not be carried out by people who didn't know about or didn't have any experience with the subject. Thus it was decided that the first stage of planning should involve training the relevant staff as well as both regional and provincial directors. The tribunal was able to achieve a tremendous investment through seminars regarding the evaluation and tracking of projects. Training human resources was the initial stage.

The tribunal was in the midst of such an effort when it was ordered to carry out a referendum in 1998. This represented an opportunity to test whether what the institute was doing would at least go well. The institute decided to use some of its resources to acquire an information technology tool called MS-Project '98 that was used for project management. This tool was acquired and then adapted so that it could provide a centralized tracking system for the multiplicity of tasks that need to be carried out during an electoral process. After all, a simple task that is not executed on time can hamper an electoral process. For the 1998 referendum, the tribunal defined 767 activities enshrined in four big macro products: the voter registry; the establishment of voting tables, electoral logistics and finances.

Furthermore the institution instituted a policy which required that an evaluation be conducted after every electoral activity or event. These evaluations concentrated not on what was done well but rather on what was done poorly. The idea being that what was done well is a problem that has already been overcome while what was done badly represents an opportunity for improvement.

In the 1998 referendum, the tribunal took advantage of the opportunity and redesigned its work plan for the 1999 elections; 84 electoral products were defined around 108 activities. For the first time, the institution decided to use – given that it could rely on the use of

an IT tool for tracking and control - the Institutional Cooperative Network. This meant that every one responsible for the General Plan of Elections (PLAGEL) had access to MS-Project in order to update, correct and revise each one of the activities, as well as to correct the direction if necessary. It was important that those responsible for making decisions had day to day access to how the project was going. In order to make decisions it is vital to have precise, reliable and secure information.

In 2006 the tribunal was called upon to organize a referendum for the approval of the expansion of the Panama Canal, an issue that needed to be decided through a popular consultation. At that point, following the 1999 evaluation, it was decided to expand the use of the tool that had brought about such good results. There were obviously some things to correct and to improve.

It was decided to expand the project management tool throughout the country, to all of the regional and provincial offices of the electoral tribunal. Everyone was granted access to the institutional network and it was decided to design a regional PLAGEL that would interlink the activities designed for each one of those responsible for carrying out the tasks designed by the commissions.

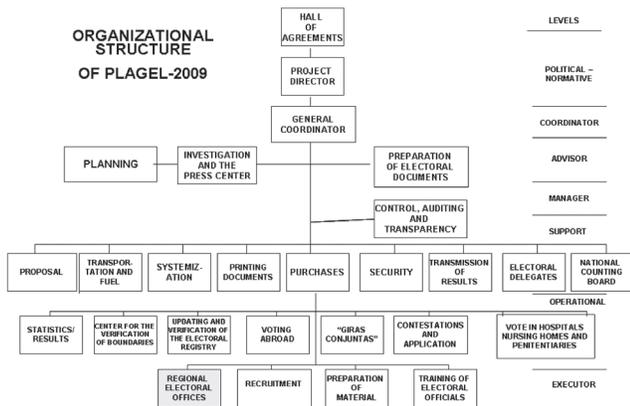


### **2009 General Elections**

What does the PLAGEL consist of? It is a set of interrelated projects relating to the different stages of the electoral process. Each one of these projects is the responsibility of a specific person. PLAGEL is a tool that allows the Tribunal to plan and supervise, as well as provide follow-up and evaluate all the activities. In the case of the 2009 PLAGEL, there were slightly more than 1000 defined activities. The plan is divided into three main stages. Three years are needed to prepare for elections. 2007 was for institutional preparation, which involved defining goals and preparing staff. 2008 was the year of electoral organization and 2009 was

for execution. This advance preparation was largely prescribed by law.

The 2009 PLAGEL was made up of 23 Electoral Commissions. This number has fluctuated since the beginning of PLAGEL when there were around 27-28 Electoral Commissions. Over time, the Institute had added and removed new commissions in accordance with the particular task that has been assigned.



The above chart depicts the basic structure of PLAGEL-2009. At the top is the Hall of Agreements, the top institutional authority; below that is the Director and Coordinator of the Project. All of the remaining commissions at their various levels appear below.

### Evaluation of PLAGEL 09

An evaluation phase follows every electoral process. Each commission and regional office meets once all activities are concluded. This inter-elections meeting took place in May 2009. In other words, the evaluation meeting is held two weeks after the election. The idea is to prevent errors from being forgotten and from being overshadowed by possible successes in the electoral process. Thus those who performed the tasks get together quickly following the elections and each one presents their problems as well as any unforeseen situations that may have occurred. It is well known that even when one has all plans and contingencies in place that something unpredictable always occurs in

the course of an electoral process. Thus the meetings come up with solutions that can be applied to these unforeseen situations as well as recommendations for the future.

In the evaluation of PLAGEL with the inputs of the final evaluation each official goes over the planned activities for the project. Each responds to certain questions: the activities carried out vs. the ones that were programmed; activities not carried out (there are always activities that are not realized for whatever reason), those activities carried out with modifications and lastly those activities that were carried out but were not in the Project. In terms of the budget, the questions tackle issues such as what was solicited; what was modified; what was effectively implemented; the lessons learned from implementation; what was not predicted but was performed; what was planned for but not completed.

### Preparation of PLAGEL 2014

Project and budget preparation for Panama’s 2014 elections began in March 2010. In terms of the inputs and tools that have been employed, the corrected project - modified with lessons learned from the previous process - will serve as the point of departure for the 2014 elections, preparations for which are scheduled to begin in 2012.

This remains a rough draft because Panama finds itself in the midst of an electoral reform. Thus the tribunal must wait to learn in what ways the electoral reforms will legally obligate the institution to modify its work plan. The budget area also needs to be revised and adjusted for inflation. For example the budget actually implemented in 2007 will be compared with the projected budget for 2012 because these two years are equivalents in terms of their place in the institution’s electoral cycle.



### **Certification in ISO 9001: 2008**

Two or three months prior to the Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar, some of the processes of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama were certified as meeting the requirements of the ISO 9001:2008 norms. The institution decided to participate in that process based on the idea that it would raise the quality of its systems by basing them in the processes and norms outlined by ISO.<sup>14</sup>

With the help of the OAS and after three years of hard work, the work of four divisions was certified: Electoral Organization; the Civil Registry, Registration and Computing and processes associated with supporting the offices within the division of Public Relations, Procurement and Human Resources. The tribunal is currently working on a process to certify the remaining administrative offices that make up its electoral system.

ISO norms define certain quality objectives. The policy of quality provides the focus for what the institution wants to do, how it wants to do it, and what it wants to achieve regarding client services within the implementation of a quality planning system. Within the Electoral Organization Division, three processes were certified: controlling the registration, inscription, and removal of adherents to political parties, a process which within the institution is managed by a specific department within the division of electoral organization; the updating of electoral residence, a pre-electoral task relating to the electoral registry that when begun in 2012 will already be somewhat advanced. The development of electoral maps and the distribution of voting centers make up the last of the three processes certified.

The Tribunal is also in a process of collecting evidence

and making the necessary adjustments so that by November 2010 - or March 2011 at the very latest – it will be able to implement a certification process for everything to do with electoral training and its program of civic and electoral education.

There are also challenges inherent in a policy of quality management, one of which is guaranteeing freedom, honesty and efficiency in popular suffrage. This represents one of the most significant institutional policies and has to do with the division of electoral administration. How can this objective be achieved with the institutional activities and related processes that are already certified with ISO norms? Another quality objective is to guarantee that political parties and independent candidates reflect political pluralism for the improvement of democracy. How can this be achieved through the inscription of adherents?

Challenges and goals include continually improving the services provided, through technology and other means. Lastly, a crucial aim is to contribute to education, civic-electoral participation and the strengthening of the electoral experience in order to leave the legacy of a better country for future generations. The role of the Electoral Authority, through its activities and the development of the quality management process, is to comply with these policies, which are also immersed in objectives of institutional quality.

---

<sup>14</sup> ISO, the International Organization for Standardization, is an international standard-setting body based in Switzerland and composed of representatives from various national standards organizations.

## 3.5. STRATEGIC PLANNING AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

*Maria Teresa Mellenkamp, Chief of Technical Cooperation Section,  
Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation, Organization of American States*

Following the more concrete cases of previous presentations, Ms. Mellenkamp adopted a more abstract approach, discussing the link between the three levels of planning outlined by Professor Fischer (strategic, operational, political) and quality management and certification under ISO Norms, especially the 9000 family.

The reasons behind the choice of this topic were twofold: firstly, because of related projects being developed within the Organization of American States and also because of the growing interest in the subject on the part of the electoral authorities in the region.

The ISO 9000 Norms are a series of standards that make up a base for quality management, are internationally recognized and, as mentioned above, have been used in a primitive form in the private sector. These norms are gaining relevance and importance as they continue to expand their influence within the public sector.

Quality management systems are two things: they are a philosophy of planning per se as well as a tool that allows for the implementation of the key processes applied within an electoral organism. As a result, quality management has a double meaning: in addition to planning and implementing what has been planned, it empowers the internal capabilities of governmental bodies, in this case the electoral organ.

The case of how the four divisions of Panama achieved

certification, as mentioned above by Osman Valdés, followed certain processes and principles. The principles of quality management can be seen below:

### QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES



One principle is of particular importance for electoral authorities and deserves to be discussed in more detail. A quality management based organization is a client-oriented organization and it should be based on leadership, involve the participation of all personnel and operate with a process-based focus. As mentioned above by Professor Rodríguez, IFE is trying to elaborate a process-based operational model to analyze its internal structure while simultaneously improving it. This process embodies the phase of radical change that occurs within an electoral organ or institution when it decides to focus on a quality management process.



### ***The Stages of the Process***

How is quality management planned into the projects supported by the Organization of American States? The first stage is to carry out a diagnostic. The diagnostic is carried out through a documental analysis of the current state of operation in every one of the processes that is subject to certification.

The second stage involves consultation meetings with upper management. The OAS explains to the upper management what their role is within a project of certification and quality management, as well as the implications involved in the operation of a system of quality control within an electoral authority.

There is a training stage which is one of the most important phases because it involves all the personnel of all of the key processes. This stage involves conducting certain courses obligated by the norms such as executive analysis of the norms, process management, mapping of said processes, the training of auditors among others.

The stage of deploying strategic plans involves the training and formation of project implementation teams. One cannot implement a project, whether strategic planning or quality management, without forming teams with the necessary abilities to do so.

The phase of designing and structuring quality management consists basically of the development of a "skeleton" or preliminary version of the quality manual. Developing system implementation is the next phase; this involves all development related to procedures, to control documents, to controls of the registry, to internal audits, to preventative and corrective actions and alignment of the electoral organ. This is all based on the particular legal norms in force.

At this point, one arrives at the pre-audit certification phase. This practice activity is carried out prior to the

audit conducted by an external certification house. Basically, the pre-audit is a partial assessment that aims to identify non-conformities so that the electoral organ is better prepared to respond to any inconsistencies detected during the certification audit by the external certification house. This whole cycle culminates with the delivery of the certificate of quality, which is what occurred in the case of Panama.

The whole process is based on what is generally called the Deming cycle or the spiral of continuous improvement. It consists of four components: plan, do, check and act. Planning because the objectives must be established. Doing because it is necessary to implement what is planned. Checking because, for any norm, it is necessary to track and measure the processes or products or corrective policies that have been established. And finally acting because the system allows for corrective actions over time that are, in a way, obligatory for recertification.



### ***Links Between Quality Management and Planning***

Quality management is basically a planning tool that is as applicable to the strategic level as it is to operational and political levels. How are quality management and planning linked in each one of these three areas?

At the level of strategic planning, once upper management assumes the challenge of implementing a system of quality management, they must define a quality policy through a planning process. These are two things which cannot be separated: planning is a prerequisite for a norm and a framework that will bring about continuous improvement.

Quality management systems must have a mission, a vision and values, all of which form an integral part of the electoral body. At the level of operational planning, the objective of quality systems is to effectively manage all the resources allocated to the institution. Electoral organs have various objectives and they must

also be complied with. Therefore being able to count on adequate planning based on time and resources is very important.

At the level of political planning, key processes are mapped and defined based on the relationship between electoral authorities and the different political bodies: political organizations, political parties and others. An example of this could be what has been done by some states in Mexico in the case of certifying processes that are linked to the prerogatives and supervision of political parties.



### ***Conceptual Structure of a Quality Management System***

The conceptual framework of quality management systems involves four definitively obligatory elements: identification, political planning, resource management, and continuous improvement. Also required by the system are the planning of the realization of products (by product it is meant, for example, elections which are something that the law obliges the institution to carry out) and the planning of quality objectives. Senior management must ensure that the objectives are applied to the pertinent divisions within the organization, that they are measurable, and that they are aligned with the quality policies defined at the strategic level.

Basically there is a perfect correlation between a strategic planning system and the mission, vision and values of an electoral organ. These values are included within a quality management policy with three documental levels. The first or highest level is the quality manual which refers to the scope of a quality policy within any institution. The second level, or operative documentation, includes the procedures defining the ways activities are carried out. The third level comprises the quality registries that provide objective evidence of the functioning of a quality

management system.

Planning has an important impact on electoral structures and quality management systems. Planning is important for the drafting of budgets in an electoral organ, for professionalizing the electoral service and for providing a transparent system of tracking prerogatives. It also allows an institution's key processes to be documented and validated by an international normalizing body in order to attain higher levels of trust among the citizenry and political parties and to make better use of information for decision-making. Planning also represents an expression of the political will of the electoral organ to subject itself to external audits and to an external voice that can make a pronouncement on whether or not recognized international norms like ISO norms have been followed.

It is important to speak of two levels of planning: national and international. At the national level, everyone has a certain level of strategic, operative and political planning to different degrees and in different forms. The OAS provides the opportunity for Member States to solicit technical cooperation relating to strategic planning through ISO norms. This was the first step taken by the Organization.

But, as indicated by Mark Kirton above, there is also planning on a regional level. The OAS, as a regional organ par excellence, has a task that extends beyond the realm of the technical cooperation that it provides at a national level. It involves planning not just at a regional but on a global level. The Organization is taking a step forward through the creation of an Electoral ISO norm specifically catered to electoral processes. The OAS sent an invitation to the presidents of electoral authorities asking them to join in this initiative to create a norm specific to electoral bodies.

Osman Valdés' presentation touched on the process of certification undergone in Panama. This experience perhaps involved key processes that some of the other countries in the region would want to certify. From the perspective of planning, it is important to locate which processes would be subject to possible certification. The work that could be done at the regional level is to determine to what extent that processes, in general terms, could be subject to certification with an ISO norm. This effort would give electoral bodies in the region an unparalleled comparative advantage. The OAS invites all electoral authority to join in this process of strategic planning through the implementation of quality management systems.

---

## IV. NEXT STEPS

---

The Third Inter-American Training Seminar represented another successful step in the ongoing series of professionalization activities for electoral authorities in the region. Like its predecessors it aimed to enrich the knowledge of participants by stimulating theoretical and practical discussions and providing a forum to share case studies that highlight regional experiences with electoral management. The Inter-American Training Seminars are not designed as events with definite beginnings and ends. They form part of a continuous training process of diverse activities connected by common objectives: facilitating horizontal cooperation in the region and improving the capacity of electoral authorities.

As such, several follow-up mechanisms were envisioned to encourage the continued application of training objectives. For example, the Certificate Program in Electoral Processes in the Americas developed in collaboration with FLACSO Chile and the Federal Electoral Institute of Mexico, is an additional initiative through which the OAS General Secretariat hopes to continue strengthening the technical capacities of the electoral authorities.

This report presenting the experiences, ideas and proposed solutions that were shared by experts and practitioners is another initiative to continue strengthening the work of the conference.

It systematizes both the theoretical discussions that took place during the Third Inter-American Electoral Training Seminar and the case studies from across the hemisphere. The hope is that the exchanges that took place during the Third Training Seminar will serve as points of departure for further discussion and pave the way for a Fourth Training Seminar.

Analysis of the Third Training Seminar's discussions demonstrates the need for continued collaboration and horizontal cooperation within the region as electoral authorities navigate delicate topics such as strategic planning and georeferencing. Though each organ faces unique challenges depending on its particular political context, there are certain dilemmas that are common to all. As public demands on electoral management bodies grow, particularly in terms of transparency and accountability, the institutional capacity of electoral authorities becomes increasingly important.

The consensus that emerged from this report is that these processes, if they involve the meaningful participation of stakeholders and political actors, can make significant contributions to public confidence in elections. Such citizen confidence in electoral processes facilitates democratic consolidation and allows the electoral authority to function as an institution for governability. Recognizing this, the Inter-American Electoral Training Seminars seek to promote improvement in the administration of

electoral processes and systems in the hemisphere through the strengthening of the institutional capacity of electoral authorities.

Institutional integrity and the implementation of mechanisms such as strategic planning, quality management and georeferencing safeguards the independence of the electoral authority and insulates it from social and political pressure, allowing the electoral organ to fulfill its responsibilities as the guarantor of free, fair and equitable electoral competition, which is the cornerstone of democracy.

---

## RECOMMENDED READING LIST

---

ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. "El enfoque del ciclo electoral." [http://aceproject.org/ace-es/focus/fo\\_eea/fo\\_eea-electoral-cycle-approach](http://aceproject.org/ace-es/focus/fo_eea/fo_eea-electoral-cycle-approach)

Baxter, Joe. C. "Strategic Planning for Election Organisations: A Practical Guide for

Conducting a Strategic Planning Exercise," International Foundation for Electoral Systems, 1999.

Diamond, Larry. Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation. The Johns Hopkins University Press: April 8, 1999

Electoral Commission of the United Kingdom. "Statement of Corporate Purpose," 2003.

Election Commission of Pakistan. "Five Year Strategic Plan (2010-2015)," 2010.

Elections Quebec. "Strategic Plan 2001-2005" 2001.

Elections British Columbia, "Service Plan 2010/2011-2012/2013," 2010.

Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Joint Electoral Management Body, "Afghanistan Presidential Election Operational Plan Outline," 2004

Kennedy, Edward M. True Compass: A Memoir. New York: Twelve, 2009.

Madero, Francisco I. La Sucesión Presidencial de 1910: El Partido Nacional Democrático. San Pedro, Coahuila: 1908.

Organization of American States, "Guide for Mechanisms that Promote Transparency and Integrity in Countries of the Americas," 2009.

Sartori, Giovanni. Parties and Party Systems: A Framework for Analysis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976.

Schedler, Andreas. "Contaminating Inconsistencies: Electoral Governance and Post-Electoral Conflict in the 2006 Presidential Election." CIDE 2009.

Vanderbilt University. "Latin American Public Opinion Project." <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/lapop/>



---

## SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES

---

### **Raúl Ávila Ortiz**

Consultant, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)

Dr. Ávila has twenty-five years of academic, political and public administration experience, and more than a decade of experience working on electoral issues internationally, including electoral observation and participation in forums and activities in various countries.

He has a Doctorate in Constitutional Law from the National Autonomous University in Mexico and a Masters degree in Latin American Studies from the University of Texas.

He has been the author of various publications on constitutional and electoral matters, including transparency and access to public information. He has collaborated in the writing of “The Subject of Comparative Electoral Law in Latin America” coordinated by Sonia Picado, Dieter Nohlen and Daniel Zovatto. He is a Commissioner at the Institute for Public Information Access in Oaxaca, Mexico; External Consultant for International IDEA and also a member of the Advisory Council on the Global Program on Constitutional Development for International IDEA.

### **Manuel Carrillo Poblano**

International Affairs Coordinator, Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)

Mr. Carrillo has served as the International Affairs Coordinator since 1993. He has a degree in Political Science and Public Administration from Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) and a Masters in Political Science from the International Studies Center of El Colegio de México.

Mr. Carrillo has participated in various electoral observation missions as well as technical cooperation exercises in the field of the organization of electoral processes. He is the co-author of various publications in the electoral field, notably his collaboration on the second edition of the Diccionario Electoral, edited by the Center of Electoral Advisory and Promotion of the Instituto Interamericano de Derechos Humanos (IIDH-CAPEL).

### **Pierre Desjardins**

Director of Electoral Geography, Elections Canada

Mr. Pierre Desjardins is currently the Director of the Electoral Geography Division at Elections Canada. He manages a team of 23 professionals and technicians that maintains different geographic databases needed to conduct an election, to feed the National Register of Electors and for boundary delineation exercises.

Mr. Desjardins is also involved in the planning of the next electoral boundaries redistribution that will start in 2012. Mr. Desjardins has been with Elections Canada since June 2008 and was formerly a program manager at the Centre of Topographic Information in the department of Natural Resources. Mr. Desjardins has more than 20 years of experience in the field of geographic information systems and more particularly on road network data and civic address management. He holds a B.Sc. in Geography and received several management certifications in the course of his career in the Public Service of Canada.

### **Marcelo Escolar**

Professor of Political and Electoral Geography, Universidad de Buenos Aires

Dr. Marcelo Escolar is currently an Investigator at the School of Politics and Government, UNSAM. He has a Doctorate in Political Geography from the Department of Philosophy and Letters at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

He has served as Director in the area of research in the Legislative Electoral Studies Program at the Department of Political Science and International Studies at Universidad Torcuato Di Tella and Director of the Program of Investigation in Government and Territory in the Geography Institute of the Department of Philosophy and Letters at Universidad de Buenos Aires.

Dr. Escolar is the author and co-author of various books, including "Federal Politics and Sub-National Politics"; "Transformation in the Political Party System and Federal Political Process in Argentina"; The New Politics of Parties in Argentina: political crisis, political party realignment and electoral reform"; "Federalism and Decentralization in Major Cities"; "The New Role of the State in Territorial Reorganization, Theoretical Approaches"; "Critique of Geographic Discourse". Additionally, he has published numerous chapters in books, and specialized articles in journals such as the American Journal of Political Science, Electoral Studies,

Political Analysis, and International Social Science Journal.

### **Jeff Fischer**

International Electoral Expert

Mr. Fischer has held three internationally appointed positions in post-conflict electoral transitions. In 1996, he was appointed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to serve as Director General of Elections for the first post-conflict elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1999, Mr. Fischer was appointed by the United Nations (UN) as Chief Electoral Officer for the Popular Consultation for East Timor. And, in 2000, Mr. Fischer received a joint appointment from the UN and OSCE to head the Joint Registration Taskforce in Kosovo and served as the OSCE's Director of Election Operations in Kosovo. Additionally, Mr. Fischer served as a senior advisor to the UN and Independent Electoral Commission of Iraq during the 2005 election cycle.

Since 1987, Mr. Fischer has participated in electoral assistance, observation or conference projects in over 50 countries and territories in the Americas, Europe, Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Much of this participation was through his 16 year association with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) as Executive Vice President, Senior Advisor and in various consulting roles; and with the UN for which he has conducted numerous electoral assessment missions.

Mr. Fischer has been a Visiting Lecturer in International Affairs at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University teaching a policy seminar on Elections in Fragile States. Mr. Fischer has a Master of Science from George Mason University in Peace Operations Policy.

### **Orrette Fisher**

General Director of Elections, Electoral Office of Jamaica

Mr. Orrette Fisher is the Director of Elections of the Electoral Office of Jamaica. Mr. Fisher brings an excess of 15 years of senior management experience and a proven track record of success to the post of Director of Elections of the Electoral Office of Jamaica (EOJ). His professional career began in High School when he served as Head Boy at Munro College in 1979. He joined the Electoral Office of Jamaica in 1995 as Assistant Director of Administration, with overall responsibility for the strategic direction and management of the organization's support service departments.

Mr. Fisher has represented the Electoral Office of Jamaica on numerous overseas observer missions and conferences. Additionally, he has conducted over six national elections in Jamaica.

Mr. Fisher holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Management Studies and a Masters Degree in Public Sector Management, both from the University of the West Indies. Additionally, Mr. Fisher has pursued a number of professional certificate courses.

### **Pablo Gutiérrez**

Director of Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation, Organization of American States

Mr. Pablo Gutiérrez has been the Director of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation at the Organization of American States (OAS) since August 2007. During his tenure as Director he has supervised the deployment of forty Electoral Observation Missions in Latin America and the Caribbean and the implementation of more than fifteen technical electoral cooperation projects. Prior to working at the OAS, Mr. Gutiérrez served as Chief of Staff for the Ministry of the General Secretariat in the administration of the Chilean President Ricardo Lagos Escobar. From October 2003 to May 2006, Mr. Gutiérrez was Chief of Staff in the Office of the Vice-

president/Ministry of the Interior. Before his position as Chief of Staff, from April 2000 to October 2003, Mr. Gutiérrez served as Special Advisor on Social Conflicts in the Office of the Vice-president/Ministry of the Interior.

Mr. Gutiérrez began his political career as a student leader. From 1995 to 1999, he was the Coordinator of the student committee of the "Chile 21 Foundation". In 1996, he was elected President of the Student Federation at the Central University of Chile, and was the spokesperson for the Chilean Federation of University Students. He was also President of the Student Association at the Law School of Central University of Chile.

Mr. Gutiérrez received his law degree from the Central University of Chile, and holds a degree in National Security and Defense from the National Academy of Strategic Studies of Chile. Mr. Gutiérrez is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Constitutional Law at the Catholic University of Chile.

### **Raymond Mark Kirton**

Professor of Latin American Studies, University of the West Indies

Dr. Raymond Mark Kirton is currently a Senior Lecturer at the Institute of International Relations, University of The West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad, where he teaches graduate courses in the Global Studies programme.

Born in Guyana, he is a graduate of the University of Guyana, Bachelor of Arts, and completed a Master of Science (M.Sc) degree at Georgetown University. He also holds a PhD degree from the University of Texas. Dr. Kirton has served as Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Guyana and has also lectured at the University of Florida, Anton de Kom University of Suriname, and The Federal University of Roraima. He has co-edited (with Dr. Cedric Grant) a book, "Governance, Conflict Analysis and Conflict Resolution" and his current research interests include foreign

policymaking in Latin American states, democracy and development in the Caribbean and Latin America. He has also participated in OAS electoral observation missions in Jamaica, Grenada and Suriname.

### **Maria Teresa Mellenkamp**

Chief of Technical Cooperation Section, Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation, Organization of American States

Ms. Maria Teresa Mellenkamp has served as the Chief of the Technical Electoral Cooperation Section of the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation of the OAS since 2007. She has supervised cooperation projects in various countries in the region linked to civic education, electoral mapping, electoral registration, quality management, among others.

Ms. Mellenkamp brings vast experience in the field of international cooperation as an official of the OAS since 1993, working as an Economic and Social Affairs Official and later as a Coordinator for Integral Development Projects in South America. Ms. Mellenkamp has a degree in International Relations and two Masters Degrees in International Transactions and International Development.

### **José Luis Rodríguez**

Director of the Unit of Technical Planning and Financial Resources, Federal Electoral Institute (IFE)

Mr. Rodríguez is the Director of the Unit of Technical Planning and Financial Resources at IFE. He studied Chemical and Industrial Engineering at the School of Advanced Chemical and Industrial Engineering (ESIQIE in Spanish) in the National Polytechnic Institute. He has a Masters in Education from the Anahuac University and the Complutense University in Madrid.

He has additional training in project administration. He has worked as a professor in the Autonomous Metropolitan University, and the Mexican Institute of Petroleum, as well as in the Mexico City's local government as an Advisor in the Sub-Secretariat of

Strategic Projects within the Secretariat for Public Works and Services.

### **Miguel Ángel Rojano**

Director of Electoral Cartography, Federal Electoral Registry, IFE

Miguel Ángel Rojano has been the Director of Electoral Cartography in the Federal Electoral Registry since 1999. He has a degree in Biomedical Engineering with a specialization in Medical Electronics, and a Bachelor's in Business Administration with a focus on Finance. He has previously worked in the Department of Business Administration on a project for the Implementation of the Computer CRAY YMP and the UNAM Fiber Optics Networks. Mr. Rojano also collaborated on the development of a data processing information system for the Maya Calepino de Motul Dictionary. He has held various posts at IFE: Systems Engineer in the Officer of Technical Support; Head of the Digitalization Department; Sub-Director of Digitalization; and Director of Technical Support. In 1999, he participated in the implementation of a standard model for the creation of cartographic information in IFE. He has taught classes on Software Engineering in the field of Computer Engineering in the National University.

### **Francisco Valdés Ugalde**

Director of Latin American School of Social Sciences (FLACSO)

Dr. Valdés Ugalde is Director of the Academic Headquarters of FLACSO in Mexico. 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 doctoral professor at FLACSO's Mexican campus.

Dr. Valdés Ugalde is a member of the Mexican Academy of Science, the Latin American Association of Political Science and the Spanish Association of Political Science, among others. 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 the Mexican newspaper El Universal.

In his most recent professional experience, he has been a consultant for the Economic Commission for Latin American and the Caribbean and other international organizations. Between 2004 and 2008, he was an appointed member and President of the High Council in the Faculty of Latin American Studies for the periods of 2006 to 2008, and 2008 to 2012. He is a member of the Reflection Group for the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (OAS) and President of the Superior Council in the Faculty of Latin American Studies.

**Osman Valdés**

National Director of Electoral Organization, Electoral Tribunal of Panama

Mr. Osman Valdés is the National Director of Electoral Organization for the Electoral Tribunal in Panama. He has an Undergraduate Degree in Biology, with a specialization in Zoology from the University of Panama and is currently undertaking his Masters in Electoral Studies.

He has nineteen and a half years experience in the Electoral Tribunal of Panama in the areas of administration, processing of identification cards, civil registry and planning. During the last thirteen years in the National Office of Electoral Observation and on behalf of the Electoral Tribunal he has also been responsible for planning, follow-up and general coordination and implementation of all necessary activities for the organization of five electoral processes: the General elections of 1999, 2004 and 2009, and the referenda held in 1998 and 2006.

**Leonardo Valdés Zurita**

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

Dr. Valdés Zurita holds a degree in Economics from the Universidad Anáhuac and a PhD in Social Sciences with a specialization in Sociology from the Center for Sociological Studies at El Colegio de México. He has authored and co-authored eight books on political and electoral matters, as well as several research articles. 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 served as Proprietary Electoral Councilor for the Electoral Institute of the Federal District, where he presided over the Electoral Organization Commission.