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- A-WEB și AEP au adus la București elita mondială a managementului electoral

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STUDII, ANALIZE, COMENTARII

STUDIES, ANALYSES, OPINIONS

ALEGERILE CA HIEROGLIFE POLITICE. NOTE DESPRE CRIZA REPREZENTĂRII



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Președintele Autorității Electorale Permanente

Abstract:

The paper strives to shed some fresh light on an issue that has been somehow neglected in the public debates and in the relevant literature: the meaning of elections. On the one hand, there is a blatant crisis of democratic representation and an accelerate tendency to address political issues with the tolls and the language of economics. On the other hand, the recent regained interest in elections is focused almost exclusively on the technical aspect and the integrity of the process. Elections should be again regarded as a fundamental democratic experience, and not just as an instrument of producing decision-making bodies that seem less and less able to define in their own right the objectives and the means of government.

Keywords: *political representation, electoral campaign, post-democracy, separation of powers, freedom*

Abstract:

Eseul încearcă să îndrepte atenția asupra unei chestiuni relativ neglijate atât în dezbaterile publice, cât și în literatura de specialitate: rostul alegerilor. Asistăm, pe de o parte, la o criză a reprezentării în regimurile democratice și la o dominație tot mai accentuată a unei interpretări a proceselor politice în cheie economică. Pe de altă parte, preocuparea pentru alegeri pare în creștere, dar se concentrează aproape exclusiv asupra laturii tehnice și asupra integrității campaniei și scrutinelui. Alegerile ar trebui să redevină o experiență fundamentală a democrației, nu doar un instrument de confecționare a unor instanțe de decizie din ce în ce mai puțin capabile să definească în mod autonom obiectivele și mijloacele guvernării.

Cuvinte-cheie: *reprezentare politică, campanie electorală, postdemocrație, separația puterilor, libertate*

„In libertate labor, in servitute dolor. Il faut opter; ceux qui ne pourront soutenir le travail [de la liberté], n'ont qu'à chercher leur repos dans la servitude.” Plecând de la această sentință a regelui filosof Stanislas Leszczyński (*La voix libre du*

citoyen, 1749), Rousseau admite că în societățile moderne, complexe și industriale, a lucra pentru libertate nu poate fi o ocupație permanentă, deși costul leneviei politice rămâne în continuare servitutea, iar pentru a-și ușura munca, ar

fi înțelept să conceapă guvernarea cetățenii în așa fel încât intrigile și abuzurile acesteia să devină imediat evidente, desigur, în vederea înlăturării lor¹.

Nu cred că genevezii în folosul cărora raționa Rousseau își închipuiau că sunt niște atenieni ai vremii lor, chemați toți să-și guverneze direct și permanent orașul-stat. Erau însă negreșit familiari cu această recomandare a lui Pavel: „cum ați fost cumpărați cu un preț, să nu vă faceți singuri robi oamenilor” (1 Corinteni 7:23). Libertatea civică n-ar fi trebuit să fie pentru ei altceva decât prelungirea cea mai firească a libertății creștine. Servitutea voluntară – fie ea consecință a fricii, a lașității, a nepăsării, a comodității gândirii ori a ignoranței – poate fi deci considerată un păcat, nu doar o opțiune politică necugetată ori neglijentă. În plan etic, cetățenii sunt pe deplin răspunzători pentru alegerile pe care le fac din proprie voință sau pe care socotesc oportun ori convenabil să le amâne, dacă nu să le suspende definitiv.

A te considera pe deplin responsabil pentru tot ceea ce alegi să faci sau să nu faci pentru libertate în calitate de cetățean presupune un efort constant, echivalează cu un angajament pe durată nedeterminată. În materie de libertate politică, e mai bine să fii propriul tău angajat. Atunci când îi lași pe alții să lucreze pentru tine, îți rămâne obligația să-i urmărești îndeaproape, ca nu cumva să irosească, să deformeze sau să suprimă ceea ce le-ai încredințat spre administrare. Numai că înclinația naturală a cetățeanului – sugerează Rousseau – este aceea de a se dezinteresa de lucrul public pentru a se dedica propriilor ocupații și interese. Altfel spus, cetățeanul tinde să caute împlinirea în sine însuși și în ceea ce este al său. Atâta timp cât altcineva, prin delegare sau prin reprezentare, îi garantează libertatea. Acesta ar fi, din câteva trăsături, portretul înțelepciunii politice moderne.

Un paradox și câteva complicații

Această contradicție constitutivă a libertății moderne, simultan datorie și povară, a dat naștere celui mai surprinzător și antiintuitiv paradox ce definește condiția alegătorului în regimurile politice democratice. Joseph Schumpeter l-a remarcat acum șaptezeci și cinci de ani. Cu cât

este mai activ și mai performant într-un domeniu profesional – ca avocat, medic, artist, economist, savant, scriitor ori inginer –, cu atât mai mare tinde să fie ignoranța cetățeanului-elector în materie politică și mai slabă puterea sa de judecată în chestiuni politice. Efortul de a aduna informații și de a le examina critic pe care-l depune în exercitarea profesiei lipsește complet atât în formarea intenției de vot, cât și în conversațiile informale pe teme politice pe care le poartă în cercul său de apropiați².

Profesionistul are în prezent ocazia, pe care o folosește uneori din abundență, de a duce aceste conversații în public, mai precis în mediul virtual, fără a-și asuma pentru părerile sale responsabilitatea ce-i revine în momentul votului sau când se exprimă stând față în față cu cei din jur. Deși datează din 1942, observația lui Schumpeter nu și-a pierdut actualitatea. Când vine vorba despre politică în conversațiile dintre cei mai educați cetățeni, exclamația ia imediat locul reflecției. Pentru elitele profesionale, dezbaterea politică nu este mai mult decât o vacanță a gândirii și un prilej de a lepăda dubla povară a rigorii și a responsabilității pe care o poartă în propria lor carieră.

În democrațiile reprezentative, competența politică a cetățeanului se epuizează de regulă în actul de a vota. Pe rețelele sociale sau în studiourile de televiziune, incompetența politică a devenit astăzi ineputabilă. Elitele profesionale românești au creat imediat după alegerile din 20 mai 1990 legenda urbană a infirmității electorale a majorității, descrise ca fiind slab educată, îmbătrânită și preponderent rurală. Această majoritate și-a pus atunci încrederea în FSN și s-ar afla acum în spatele Partidului Social Democrat. Ar fi o majoritate condamnată la eroare, neputincioasă, asistată de stat și dependentă politic, incapabilă de raționamente proprii și de alegeri chibzuite. Această majoritate nu era însă în primii ani postcomuniști decât ambalajul cultural al clasei mijlocii produse de socialismul de stat în ultimele sale două decenii de viață. Începând din primii ani 2000, PSD a devenit aproape explicit un partid al clasei de mijloc, al întreprinzătorilor autohtoni și al notabilităților provinciale, ce trage după el o periferie socială încă tributară patronajului politic.

¹ Citat de Richard Tuck, *The Sleeping Sovereign. The Invention of Modern Democracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2015, p. 3.

² Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* [1942], Harper & Row, New York, 1975, pp. 261 – 262.

Legenda a avut dintru început și continuă să dețină un rost pur metodologic: a nu face parte din această majoritate este singurul criteriu care te definește, în propriii tăi ochi și sub privirea celorlalți, ca un om „de dreapta”. Astfel definită, dreapta s-a bucurat în istoria postcomunistă de un incontestabil ascendent cultural. În pofida a ceea ce susțin țesătorii de mituri politice, nu poate fi cu adevărat dovedită existența unui conflict homeric între două Românii, una avansată, a elitelor sofisticate, iar cealaltă profundă, a maseilor ignorante. Este în schimb vădită competiția ideologică desfășurată la nivelul elitelor, mai precis rivalitatea între două elite concurente, ale căror rădăcini sociale sunt însă aceleași. Numeroși cetățeni se încăpățânează să se autoidentifice ca fiind de „dreapta”, în măsura în care participă, oricât de difuz și necritic, la o cultură a resentimentului față de „stânga”.

Dacă așa stau lucrurile, dreapta și stânga nu mai sunt în acest moment noțiuni cu virtuți explicative certe. Am avea mai degrabă de-a face cu expresiile ideologice ale unor rețele electorale țesute și întrețesute timp de un sfert de veac. Succesul în alegeri, cel puțin până acum, nu s-a bazat pe vrednicia individuală a candidaților, ci pe organizare, pe capacitatea de patronaj și de distribuție de bunuri divizibile, dar și pe abilitatea de a utiliza ideologiile ca instrumente de agitație a străzii și a spațiului virtual.

Contrar părerii potrivit căreia partide antipolitice, precum PPDD în 2012 și USB/USR în 2016 ar fi mobilizat categorii mai proaspete de electori, electoratul se comportă, cu fiecare scrutin, ca o *peau de chagrin*. Se restrânge. Numărul partidelor crește, iar cel al alegătorilor scade. Electoratul nu se înnoiește, ci migrează sezonier de la un partid la altul. Părți semnificative din cei care au ieșit la vot apreciază încă mitocănia cordială și populismul diletant al unor politicieni de cartier. După cum alte segmente, de regulă mai tinere și mai legate de profesiunile liberale, ale aceluiași electorat s-au arătat vulnerabile în fața unui amestec ideologic de neopopulism și de neoleninism, dovedindu-se sensibile la teme postmateriale și postdemocratice, cum ar fi salvarea țării de politicienii corupți.

Astfel contextualizate, volatilitatea votului și precaritatea partizană sunt deopotrivă factori ce fac imposibilă naturalizarea în context românesc a oricăruia dintre modelele explicative clasice în știința politică ale formării și distribuirii prefe-

rințelor electorale. Toate aceste modele introduc inevitabil în rețeta de analiză a materialului empiric o formă de raționalitate ce nu pare capabilă să captureze satisfăcător varietatea de criterii utilizate de către alegătorul român. Ipoteza cea mai verosimilă ar putea fi formulată astfel: alegătorul individual recurge în același timp și fără a fi preocupat de vreun comandament de coerență la un număr variabil de criterii, ce iau în calcul identificarea partizană, pe care o contrastează permanent cu preferința față de personalitatea candidatului, dar și cu o anumită capacitate de a-și ierarhiza opțiunile pentru anumiți candidați.

O asemenea presupunere poate părea simultan previzibilă și vagă, dar ea este ilustrată cu forță analitică de comportamentul electoral al cetățenilor, dispuși să experimenteze – cel puțin parțial în plan local – alegerea unui candidat drept o formă de simpatie față de partidul acestuia, în vreme ce o asemenea favoare se pierde atunci când același alegător își formulează decizia cu privire la personalitatea și partidul național. În acest complicat joc de oglinzi, reflecția pe care candidatul preferat o lasă asupra partidului și modul în care partidul potențează preferința pentru un candidat nu sunt numai asimetrice, ci de-a dreptul incongruente. Aceasta mi se pare a fi o observație indispensabilă înțelegerii mai fine a modului în care s-a structurat de jos în sus logica politică românească a timpului prezent.

Cum se articulează reciproc politica națională de cea locală în diferitele tipuri de alegeri? Pentru a răspunde acestei întrebări, ar trebui analizate comportamentele electorale ale indivizilor, dar și regularitățile în formarea intenției de vot, precum și influențele pe care diferitele tipuri de variabile le au în crearea sau modificarea preferințelor politice ale cetățenilor. Două chestiuni s-ar putea dovedi centrale: pe de o parte, dezangajarea politică a cetățenilor manifestată prin absenteism electoral, iar pe de altă parte, incongruența între politica națională și cea locală la nivelul opțiunilor de vot. În cele zece runde de alegeri generale, prezidențiale și locale organizate în România postcomunistă, votul este gradual marcat de trei fenomene împletite ce necesită explicație: dezafectarea electorală accentuată a cetățenilor, volatilitatea preferințelor exprimate de la un scrutin la altul și dezarticularea relativă între opțiunile formulate simultan pentru aleșii locali și pentru cei naționali,

această din urmă trăsătură fiind cu precădere manifestă în divergența uneori dramatică dintre votul local și cel prezidențial³.

Am avea de-a face, în ultimă instanță, cu ceea ce s-ar putea numi procesul de „dez-naționalizare” a politicii românești, început lent în 2001 și desăvârșit în 2008. Altfel spus, politica locală este cheia de înțelegere a modului în care funcționează regimul politic românesc. Alegerile, partidele, clientelismul și birocrăția sunt cele patru mișcări ale acestei chei. Statul român nu este decât o practică a partidelor. Acestea, la rândul lor, sunt inseparabile de aparatele administrative locale pe care le utilizează pentru a se consolida, pentru a recruta și răsplăti membri, pentru a organiza scrutinele și a manufactura rezultatele electorale.

Votul divizat și realegerea nu sunt neapărat instrumente de control la dispoziția alegătorului. Dimpotrivă, mai ales din 2008, votul (cu precădere cel local și doar parțial cel național) este aproape integral controlat de aparatele de partid capabile să-l extragă din societate. Impredictibilitatea, atâta câtă există, ține mai degrabă de abilitatea, variabilă de la un partid la altul, de a forma, menține și dezvolta rețele de patronaj și clientelism producătoare de voturi. Partidele există și funcționează în acest orizont local mai ales ca dispozitive de mobilizare, de confecționare chiar a voturilor. Iar metoda prin care partidele realizează această operațiune sezonieră este clientelismul. Acesta din urmă, în schimb, este organizat în rețele de patronaj relativ stabile și, în orice caz, durabile, ce se manifestă ca unică formă locală de viață politică. Partidele românești, surprinse la lucru între aparatele statului și societate, nu au rolul de a-i reprezenta și socializa pe cetățeni, ci de a-i mobiliza la urne.

Reușesc să o facă, în cele mai multe cazuri, după o logică a bipersonalismului asimetric. În alegerile locale, personalitatea liderului local este determinantă în acumularea de sufragii în contul unui partid anume. În schimb, scrutinul prezidențial poate răsturna ierarhia voturilor prin forța opusă a personalității naționale, ce pare să dețină întotdeauna ascendentul asupra celei locale. Să fie vorba aici despre discernământul alegătorilor? Am avea de-a face, mai degrabă, cu două situații electorale deconectate

(chiar și atunci când s-au petrecut simultan, cum s-a întâmplat până în 2004), cu două orizonturi de așteptări suficient de distincte în imaginarul colectiv și în răsfrângerile acestuia din presă. Pe de o parte, orizontul vieții reale, unde mai binele sau diferitul sunt întotdeauna dușmanul binelui cu care te-ai obișnuit și ale cărui limite le cunoști, pe de altă parte, orizontul generic, fictiv și distant întrupat de Președintele României. Acesta din urmă se profilează pe un fundal fără legătură cu experiența directă a cetățenilor, care își pot proiecta la acest nivel, în deplină libertate, ca pe un ecran alb, toate iluziile, speranțele, resentimentele și frustrările. Fără riscuri evidente, concrete și imediate.

Dezvăluirea acestui caracter divizibil, divergent chiar, al opțiunii electorale a cetățenilor, prezentată adesea ca un bun politic indivizibil, reprezintă probabil principala lecție ce poate fi extrasă din analiza alegerilor românești. În democrații, votul este desigur un drept. Poate fi însă și o iluzie a libertății individuale. S-ar putea, de aceea, ca miza de astăzi a oricărui eveniment electoral să fie politica însăși. Dacă înțelegem politica, în descendența lui Rousseau, ca pe o știință practică a administrării libertății egale în vederea identificării și eliminării tuturor abuzurilor și intrigilor ce o amenință.

Depolitizarea politicii democratice

Din preziua campaniei electorale din 2014 și până astăzi, politica românească a devenit din ce în ce mai apolitică. Chiar și cei care o practică la vârf o asemuiesc, din precauție pesemne, cu un soi de birocrăție electivă. Ori de unde ar porni, dezbaterile publice ajung inevitabil la venituri bugetare și salariale, la chestiuni penale ori la rolul serviciilor. Realitatea este mereu aliniată fie unui limbaj economic rudimentar, fie unor ideologii bricolate, ce nu se recomandă prin miezul lor doctrinar, ci prin capacitatea de a săpa tranșee cât mai adânci între „ei” și „noi”. USB/USR ilustrează cu excelență acest nou uzaj al ideologiilor: dincolo de lozinca polemică (în sens etimologic) „ei sunt corupți” și „noi ne implicăm”, pare imposibil să deslușești dacă formațiunea, lipsită de un program cât de cât lizibil, este neoleninistă sau neopopulistă.

Politica nu este acum mai mult decât locul convenit în prealabil al coliziunii periodice și repetate dintre două narațiuni concurente despre ceea ce ține împreună comunitatea politică:

³ Vs. studiul de caz exemplar al Mihaelei Ivănescu, *Alegeri și comportamente electorale în România. De la local la național*, Editura Universitară, București, 2015.

statul de drept vs. agenda cetățeanului. Sunt partide, politicieni, activiști civici și intelectuali publici care-și justifică prezența în arenă prin lupta pe care o duc împotriva corupției (întotdeauna a celorlalți), a clasei politice lipsite de credibilitate și de pricepere, precum și pentru întărirea instituțiilor statului (în special a celor judiciare și speciale). Alte partide și alți politicieni, activiști și intelectuali luptă la rândul lor, dar pentru bunăstarea generală, pentru dezvoltarea țării, pentru largirea clasei mijlocii, pentru salarii și pensii mai mari, pentru locuri de muncă, pentru mai mulți bani în buzunarele cetățenilor. Militarizarea accelerată a limbajului și mijloacelor înfruntării politice desemnează ca terț exclus și ca victimă sigură democrația, regim eminamente civil, suspicios chiar față de uniforme și de eroi. Prețul depolitizării funcționale a politicii este dispariția aproape completă a narațiunilor despre libertate.

Trei fenomene – prezente fie separat, fie asociate în proporții variabile – sunt responsabile de acest rezultat. Evidentă este, în primul rând, tendința de „prezidențializare” a democrației, de concentrare pe verticală a deciziei, ce aparține din ce în ce mai mult prim-ministrului, cancelarului sau, după caz, președintelui și nu, așa cum se întâmpla până de curând, majorității parlamentare, cabinetului ori conducerii colective a partidului de guvernământ⁴. Apoi, dezafectarea socială a structurilor partizane⁵, observabilă pretutindeni, favorizează această insularizare și personalizare a voinței politice. În sfârșit și drept consecință, politicile publice sunt cel mai adesea produsul expertizei tehnice și, doar accidental, un rezultat al procesului legislativ, ceea ce conduce la o accentuată „deparlamentarizare” (*Entparlamentarisierung*) a democrației⁶.

„Prezidențializarea”, lichefierea partidelor și „deparlamentarizarea” pot fi acum identificate

⁴ Thomas Poguntke, Paul Webb, editors, *The Presidentialisation of Politics. A Comparative Study of Modern Democracies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2005.

⁵ Russel J. Dalton and Martin P. Wattenberg, editors, *Parties without Partisans. Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 2002.

⁶ V. în special capitolul „Entparlamentarisierung und deliberative Surrogatdemokratie”, în Danny Michelsen, Franz Walter, *Unpolitische Demokratie. Zur Krise der Repräsentation*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin, 2013, pp. 179 – 216.

în context românesc pe baza unui vast material empiric. Toate trei sunt efecte vizibile – inclusiv în proiectul de „resetare” a politicii românești pe care și-l atribuie Klaus Iohannis – ale unui proces istoric ce pare să afecteze ireversibil nu numai tipul ideal al democrației reprezentative, dar și cele mai multe întrupări naționale ale acesteia.

Este adevărat, *numele* democrației nu mai are adversari. Democrația a devenit, cu doar câteva excepții, o marcă înregistrată în toate regimurile politice de pe lume. Chiar și Coreea de Nord este nominal o republică democratică și populară, iar Iranul una democratică și islamică. Faptul că numele democrației nu mai stârnește controverse nu se cuvine să ne facă să uităm că el poate traduce experiențele politice cele mai diverse. Unele dintre ele radical ostile libertății de conștiință și libertăților cetățenești. Rusia lui Putin, de pildă, are darul să ne amintească mereu că, oricum am numi-o, democrația înseamnă alegere și pluralism, nu aprobare și unanimitate.

Recenta metamorfoză a regimurilor democratice a fost calificată în diferite moduri. Luciano Canfora s-a grăbit, cu un patos postmarxist, să concedieze însăși democrația ca pe o ideologie care, asemenea altora din trecut, și-a trăit traiul și și-a consumat rostul istoric⁷. Mai rezervat, Colin Crouch descrie mutația radicală suferită de democrația contemporană sub numele de „post-democrație”⁸. Guy Hermet a anunțat la rândul său apariția iminentă, după o „iarnă a democrației”, a unui nou tip de regim⁹. Acest anotimp dificil, în care politica democratică tinde pe alocuri să se transforme în contrariul ei, a fost explorat de Alfio Mastropaolo, pentru care *homo democraticus* este, ca subiect al dreptului și ca beneficiar al unei bunăstări în declin, mai mult un consumator încărcat de resentimente decât un cetățean angajat¹⁰. Peter Mair a constatat și el cum democrația își pierde conținutul liberal și reprezentativ și începe să sune a gol¹¹. Danny Michelsen și Franz Walter califică toate aceste prefaceri ale

⁷ Luciano Canfora, *La democrazia. Storia di un'ideologia*, Laterza, Roma-Bari, 2004.

⁸ Colin Crouch, *Post-democracy*, Polity, Cambridge and Malden, Mass., 2004.

⁹ Guy Hermet, *L'hiver de la démocratie ou le nouveau régime*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2007.

¹⁰ Alfio Mastropaolo, *Is Democracy a Lost Cause? Paradoxes of an Imperfect Invention*, translated by Clare Tame, ECPR Press, Colchester, 2012.

¹¹ Peter Mair, *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*, Verso, London and New York, 2013.

democrației reprezentative drept semnul evoluției către o democrație apolitică sau nepolitică (*unpolitische Demokratie*). Știind că politica există doar atunci când arbitrariul dispare, ar fi nimerit să ne întrebăm ce ar putea veni pe lume dacă politica ar fi amenințată cu dispariția. Oricum ar fi descrisă, metamorfoza democrației pare să fie caracterizată de cel puțin patru trăsături definitorii și inechivoce.

În primul rând, sediul politicii democratice a devenit media. Voința comunității politice nu mai este decât episodic cea a corpului electoral, fiind exprimată (și desigur mediată) în principal de presă. Viața politică se reduce la prezentarea mediatică a evenimentelor și declarațiilor cu relevanță politică, fiind uneori dependentă de grupurile de interese ce controlează media (nu este probabil o coincidență că termenul post-democrație a fost folosit pentru prima dată în 1999 pentru a descrie schimbările structurale petrecute în politica italiană sub guvernarea lui Berlusconi). Sfera publică se transformă pe aceste căi într-un spațiu al retoricii și persuasiunii, a cărui principală funcție este să prezinte și să comenteze decizii ce au fost deja luate. Drept consecință, încetează să mai fie un loc de reprezentare, deliberare și decizie. Presa își asumă implicit o funcție de reprezentare neelectorală în măsura în care pretinde că ia poziție pentru (*stand for*) și în numele (*on behalf of*) cetățenilor în absența oricărei legitimări democratice și, mai ales, a oricărei răspunderi politice sau imputabilități administrative (*accountability*). Media și, mai ales, televiziunile au dobândit o influență în formarea opiniilor și alegerilor publice ce o concurează uneori pe cea a partidelor politice. Cu acest titlu, presa promite să fie și devine pe zi ce trece nu doar un aliat ori un critic al partidelor și personalităților politice, ci un actor politic în sine, cu agende sectoriale proprii.

A doua trăsătură ar descrie însușirea completă a politicii de către logica economiei globale. Teoriile de tip *rational choice* permisese deja în anii 1980 capturarea limbajului politicii democratice de către cel al economiei. Acum, lexicul politic este complet dizolvat în cel economic. Cuvinte cu rezonanță clasică și istorie intelectuală îndelungată precum *libertate* sau *dreptate* sună învechit. Vocabularul prezentului preferă *eficiența* și *managementul*. Vechile manifeste electorale ale partidelor se numesc acum „oferte”.

În regimurile democratice postbelice, resursele socio-economice inegal distribuite și drepturile politice egale se aflau într-o situație de separare strictă. Statul bunăstării admisesese ca sfera politică să exercite, prin prelevări, o anumită influență asupra celei economice. Primatul politicului asupra economiei fusese însă unul strict funcțional, rareori declinat normativ. Neoliberalismul anilor 1980 a răsturnat relația de dependență mutuală, întemeiată pe separare, între sfera politică și mediul economic. De atunci, politicul este convocat ca un servant al pieței, ce reduce agenda guvernamentală la controlul deficitului prin mijloace fiscale și la cel al populației prin agențiile de represiune. Asemeni monarhiilor secolului al XVII-lea ce se finanțau din credit, guvernele actuale nu mai trăiesc din taxe, din venituri prezente și reale, ci din împrumuturi contractate în contul veniturilor viitoare, ce sunt astfel consacrate în proporție semnificativă serviciului datoriei.

Începând cu anii 2000, capitalismul financiar global a generat pretutindeni în Europa și în America de Nord o elită politică autoreferențială, interesată mai mult să țină relații stabile și durabile cu grupurile de interese dominante decât să elaboreze autonom programe politice. Externalizarea serviciilor publice, parteneriatul public-privat, managementul privat al companiilor publice, introducerea criteriilor de piață ale eficienței în gestionarea administrațiilor publice sunt semnele incontestabile ale acestei transformări. Arie ale vieții publice ce erau cândva considerate ca fiind răspunderea exclusivă a statului și guvernelor (sănătate, educație, transporturi, utilități, pensii, prevederi sociale etc.) au fost fie contractate, date în arendă unor particulari, fie privatizate de-a dreptul. Ca atare, guvernele au devenit din ce în ce mai puțin răspunzătoare în fața cetățenilor și tot mai dependente de interese private, oricât de legitime în sine. Cu acest titlu, ele sunt condamnate să fie din ce în ce mai puțin transparente în deciziile și actele lor.

Să ne amintim: pe 6 mai 2010, Președintele României a anunțat că „a decis” să impună măsuri de austeritate bugetară, presupunând amputarea drastică atât a salariilor din sectorul public, cât și a pensiilor de stat. Guvernul a scris imediat un proiect de lege pe baza respectivei decizii, adoptat ulterior de Parlament și validat de Curtea Constituțională, cu o singură rezervă. Câteva luni mai târziu, ministrul de finanțe în funcție atunci când s-a petrecut episodul a dezvăluit că decizia în

cauză fusese luată într-un grup de șase persoane, printre care Traian Băsescu și el însuși, dar nu și prim-ministrul. Numele și afilierile instituționale ale celorlalți patru decidenți ce au pus în mișcare executivul, legislativul și Curtea Constituțională și au afectat traiul a milioane de cetățeni au rămas până azi confidentiale.

A treia trăsătură decurge de aici. Cum guvernul nu se mai află la comanda politicilor publice, ce par să fie cârmuite anonim, dintr-o zonă inaccesibilă privirii publice, cetățenii au dezvoltat sentimentul că nu mai controlează guvernul. Instituțiile publice de pe versantul integrator al statului (sistemele de educație, sănătate și asigurări sociale), subfinanțate, spoliuate și tot mai ineficiente au devenit o sursă de insatisfacție publică pe cale de generalizare. Faptul că executivul este, generic, mai puțin răspunzător în fața electoratului, mai puțin înclinat (ori capabil) să răspundă dorințelor și preferințelor cetățenilor a dus treptat la dezafectarea politică a societăților, măsurabilă în declinul dramatic al participării la vot și în emergența unor forme multiple de dezangajare politică și de depolitizare a vieții publice.

În această ultimă categorie trebuie clasate manifestațiile de stradă masive și recurente. Clivajele din societate nu mai sunt exprimate și sublimate de partidele de mase, așa cum ne încredințează Stein Rokkan că se întâmpla în epoca de aur a democrațiilor reprezentative¹². Masele au abandonat partidele, care nu le mai pot captura, canaliza și utiliza energia în competiția partizană, disciplinată de reguli și proceduri. Grupurile sociale, structurate ori agregate aleatoriu, nu se mai recunosc în partide, răbufnind periodic în proteste de stradă îndreptate împotriva tuturor partidelor de guvernământ.

Doar aparent paradoxal, chiar și angajamentul politic se manifestă ca o lepădare de politică. În România, de pildă, partidele noi (PPDD în 2012 și USB/USR în 2016) nu sunt organizații antisistem pentru că ascensiunea lor se datorează sistemului, atât versantului privat al acestuia (media și *social media*), cât și celui public (USR invocă cu religiozitate sprijinul DNA). Avem de-a face cu „partide fără calități”, postideologice, ce refuză cu obstinație să se pronunțe cu privire la marile teme de societate de teamă să nu dezvăluie fap-

tul că nu au în realitate niciun fel de identitate politică. Astfel de formațiuni de tip *Sturmabteilung*¹³ sunt suscitute foarte probabil de corporații (și, poate, de serviciile secrete) cu obiectivul de a slăbi, prin diabolizarea „clasei politice”, dar și prin acțiuni de agitație a străzii, a spațiului mediatic și a celui virtual, gestiunea politică a societății de către stat și a-l face pe acesta mai disponibil pentru piață.

Jumătate din adulții României sunt dezafecți politic și se sustrag oricărei participări la viața națiunii. În ultima decadă, media participării la vot a fost sub 50%, iar numărul actualilor și foștilor contribuabili (populația activă și pensionarii) s-a situat la același nivel (aproximativ nouă milioane). Fără a stabili o corelație directă între cele două cifre comparabile, ele indică – atunci când sunt privite împreună – o criză complexă a încrederii în comunitatea politică și un refuz ori o incapacitate de participare la viața acesteia, prin absenteism, emigrare, evaziune, pauperizare sau marginalizare.

Criza generalizată a reprezentării politice ar fi al patrulea aspect al exsanguinării politice a democrației. Politicienii au ajuns să vorbească mai ales ca mandatar ai grupurilor de interese articulate de piață și mai puțin în numele alegătorilor lor. Așa cum un senator român a declarat cu candoare în iunie 2010, în timpul procesului legislativ ce a dus la tăierea cu un sfert a salariilor din sectorul public, alegătorii săi nu sunt cele câteva zeci de mii de cetățeni chemați periodic la urne, cărora ar trebui să le dea explicații convingătoare cu privire la violența unei asemenea măsuri de austeritate, ci cei zece – cincisprezece întreprinzători și persoane influente din colegiul său cu care trebuie să-și negocieze atât propriul vot în Parlament, cât și, la timpul potrivit, realegerea. Pe scurt, democrația, ca politică a reprezentării unui corp de cetățeni egali și liberi, ar fi ajuns la sfârșit¹⁴.

La ce (mai) folosește votul?

Odată evacuată politica, ce mai rămâne din democrație? Alegerile continuă să fie organizate regulat și, în general, corect. Cu o limită totuși,

¹² E.g. studiile culese în 1976 de Ian Budge, Ivor Crewe and Dennis J. Farlie, editors, *Party Identification and Beyond. Representations of Voting and Party Competition* [1976], ECPR Press, Colchester, 2010.

¹³ Agresivitatea dovedită de USB atât în stradă, cât și în Parlament pe 2 februarie 2017 confirmă această calificare tipologică; agitații asemănătoare obișnuia să facă în Parlament în 2013 și PPDD.

¹⁴ Simon Tormey, *The End of Representative Politics*, Polity, Cambridge, Malden MA., 2015.

insistă Crouch: era postdemocrației este inaugurată global de stabilirea rezultatului alegerilor prezidențiale americane din anul 2000 printr-o decizie a Curții Supreme și nu prin numărarea completă a voturilor, miza acestei neobișnuite uzurpări de competențe fiind nu atât favorizarea unui candidat anume, cât graba de a restaura încrederea piețelor în guvernul american¹⁵. Ce contează în final în orice consultare electorală este dacă aceasta induce o creștere sau, dimpotrivă, o scădere a indicilor bursieri. Așa stând lucrurile, alegerile nu sunt mai mult decât *hieroglifă politică*. Orice obiect produs în capitalism este o „hieroglifă socială”, credea Marx, în măsura în care este conceput în așa fel încât să mascheze inechitățile din relația dintre muncă și proprietate, sensul curent atașat obiectului fiind menit să distragă atenția de la condițiile sociale în care acesta a fost creat¹⁶. În pofida aparențelor și a îndemnurilor pioase la participare electorală, alegerile încifrează un raport între politică și economie ce a fost radical răsturnat în ultimele două sau trei decenii.

Dacă alegerile sunt hieroglifă, iar parlamentul se constituie prin alegeri, cum mai poate fi citit rostul adunării reprezentative? Canonul hermeneutic tradițional ne spune că legislativul este una din cele trei puteri separate ale statului, ce se cuvin dispuse în echilibru și supuse controlului reciproc. Constituționaliștii din toate țările sunt încă uniți în credința că separația celor trei puteri identificate de Montesquieu nu numai că există încă, dar că este indispensabilă pentru funcționarea democratică a oricărui stat modern, ba chiar a ordinii internaționale¹⁷.

Fără a utiliza logica marxistă a hieroglifei, Theodore Lowi a demonstrat cu maximă energie intelectuală că cele trei ramuri ale guvernării, așa cum sunt săpate în litera Constituției americane, nu sunt decât o incantație politică recitată cu reverență de politicieni, juriști și jurnaliști, dar incapabilă să pună în mișcare politicile publice. În fapt, în republica americană, puterea nu este împărțită în trei, ci răspândită în ceva mai multe

arene de putere¹⁸. Interacțiunea dintre politicienii care legiferează ori guvernează în state sau la nivel federal, birocrăția de diferite trepte și categorii, instanțele morale recunoscute, interesele de grup structurate și curțile de justiție desenează o pluralitate de sfere politice de decizie cu privire la adoptarea, continuarea, modificarea sau abandonarea unei *public policy*.

Îndrăznind să generalizăm cazul american, aparatele administrației publice ar fi – și în orice *big government* se comportă astfel – o a patra putere, pe care teoreticienii secolului al XVIII-lea nu aveau cum să o cunoască. Grupurile de interese (companii, sindicate, asociații de tot soiul) pot constitui o a cincea putere, de vreme ce deciziile politice sunt negociate pretutindeni cu partenerii sociali. Am putea socoti „societatea civilă” ca a șasea *branch of government*, o putere efectivă prin intermediul procedurilor de transparență, consultare, dezbatere, ca și prin exigența realizării de studii de impact. În orice țară europeană, directivele și acțiunile de *infringement* impun Comisia europeană ca pe o a șaptea putere. Așa cum dovedește dramatic cazul britanic, instituțiile europene numite și, ca atare, lipsite de o legitimitate democratică directă și explicită, au tendința de a impune autorităților publice naționale democratic alese norme de conduită și funcționare aflate adesea dincolo de spiritul și litera tratatelor și pe care o parte a societății le interpretează drept o limitare și o condiționare a suveranității naționale. Băncile centrale independente, inclusiv cea europeană, au adesea o pondere hotărâtoare în stabilirea politicilor publice și a cadrului legislativ. Agențiile de rating tind să se manifeste și ele ca o posibilă putere de natură să influențeze decizii naționale de cea mai mare amplitudine. Nu în ultimul rând, cu precădere din 2001, serviciile speciale au ajuns să fie recunoscute public, în numele securității naționale, drept un factor determinant în adoptarea oricărei decizii politice de o oarecare anvergură.

Deși nu are geometria federală a Statelor Unite, România aleargă și ea în cursa de multiplicare a puterilor, cu precădere a puterilor de monitorizare a autorităților alese. Ar fi suficient să enumerăm, în treacăt, câteva consilii (fiscal, prudențial, de apărare a țării) ce au căpătat o pondere însemnată în rețeta de luare a deciziilor de ordin legislativ și executiv.

¹⁵ Colin Crouch, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹⁶ V. comentariile lui Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man*, W. W. Norton & Company, New York and London, 1974, p. 145.

¹⁷ E.g. Christoph Möllers, *The Three Branches. A Comparative Model of Separation of Powers*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013.

¹⁸ Theodore J. Lowi, *Arenas of Power*, Paradigm Publishers, Boulder and London, 2009.

Făcând bilanțul, democrațiile contemporane sunt de ceva vreme democrații monitorizate (*monitory democracy*¹⁹). Alegerile, partidele și parlamentul rămân hieroglife sacre ce decorează constituțiile, dar nu mai rezumă regimul politic ca atare, ci sunt supuse observației, criticii și presiunii instituționale de către o constelație de mecanisme extraparlamentare și extraguvernamentale. S-ar spune chiar că cele trei puteri ale canonului liberal clasic – legislativă, executivă și judecătorească – ar fi ajuns cele mai vlăguite dintre puteri, fiind controlate în practică de toate celelalte, după o logică adesea discreționară și nu după principiul echilibrului reciproc.

Într-un asemenea peisaj instituțional devastat de practici ale puterii radical înstrăinate de sursele lor teoretice de legitimitate, rostul fondator al alegerilor – fie ele libere, corecte și regulate – devine tot mai dificil de sesizat. Limbajul constituțional și ideile politice alternative au fost complet și inacceptabil sufocate de jargonul și de raționamentele de tip economic. Totul a devenit management, marketing, totul se judecă în termeni de eficiență, concurență, guvernanta, consum, raport între cost și beneficii. Politicienii se mândresc cu abilitățile lor administrative, cu experiența lor de întreprinzători, mulți dintre ei au ajuns să trateze agențiile statului ca pe niște companii. Economia a corupt politica.

A-ți manifesta credința în reprezentarea politică a voinței cetățenilor înseamnă a duce o luptă împotriva corupției, împotriva coruperii politicii democratice și a democrației reprezentative de către limbajul economiei și de către gândirea militarizată. Politica, inclusiv cea locală, nu este în fond o discuție tehnică despre asfalt, salubritate, trafic ori agentul termic, ci o dezbatere despre speranță, despre libertate, despre reprezentare, despre participare, despre demnitate, despre violență (și despre limitarea ei), despre comunitate, despre țesătura complicată de raporturi între oameni care nu se cunosc, dar care sunt concetățeni, despre modul în care se cuvine să fie luate deciziile care privesc pe toată lumea. Toate aceste chestiuni sunt tratate de obicei ca fiind de ordin teoretic, „rupte de viață”, când în fapt din ele este făcută viața însăși. Politica nu este un mod de gestiune a lucrurilor, ci o modalitate de (auto)guvernare a oamenilor. Paradoxal, politicienii și comentatorii politici, în

numele unui „realism” ce nu este în fapt decât o ficțiune, se dovedesc reticenți să înțeleagă politica drept o artă a reprezentării voinței colective, preferând să o trateze ca pe un surogat pragmatic de activitate economică sau ca pe o îndeletnicire de penali deasupra cărora mijește ochiul vigilent al legii.

Alegerile ca experiență democratică

Procesele electorale sunt ele însele luate în captivitate de această dublă patologie ce afectează politica democratică. Sunt văzute, pe de o parte, într-o cheie eminamente managerială, ca un dispozitiv tehnologic din ce în ce mai sofisticat și mai digitalizat de colectare, înregistrare și numărare a voturilor. Pe de altă parte, sunt adesea privite cu suspiciune, ca un prilej de fraudă și manipulare. Tehnicitatea și integritatea par să fi devenit singurele dimensiuni ce merită examinate și evaluate. Unica întrebare formulată pe cele mai variate tonalități este *cum* sunt organizate alegerile; *de ce* au loc consultări electorale pare să fie o preocupare cu totul marginală, cu miză exclusiv pentru protagoniști. În spațiul public și în mediul academic deopotrivă, atunci când vine vorba despre alegeri, modalitatea este infinit mai dezbătută decât finalitatea.

Există însă un loc politic în care modalitatea și finalitatea alegerilor nu pot fi separate nici măcar în ordine speculativă: campania electorală. Campania este o metodă de validare democratică a procesului electoral. Truismul este doar aparent. Tratate de regulă ca un instrument indispensabil și o precondiție a democrației reprezentative, alegerile suferă de o ambiguitate constitutivă. Bernard Manin a demonstrat dincolo de orice îndoială că votul ca atare este un procedeu eminamente aristocratic de desemnare a titularului unei magistraturi publice²⁰. Pentru că înțelegeau prin democrație competența egală în materie politică a tuturor cetățenilor, vechii atenieni își selectau magistrații prin tragere la sorți. În regimurile democratice moderne însă, votul creează o competiție în urma căreia, printr-o metodă anume, este ales cel considerat de o majoritate a fi cel mai bun. Câștigătorul alegerilor devine, pe cale de consecință, un ἀρίστέυς, un soi de aristocrat. Desemnarea aleatorie conservă neatinsă

¹⁹ John Keane, *The Life and Death of Democracy*, Simon & Schuster, London and New York, 2009, pp. 688 – 695.

²⁰ Bernard Manin, *Principes du gouvernement représentatif*, Flammarion, Paris, 1996, pp. 171 – 206.

egalitatea de statut a cetățeanului și a vremelniciului magistrat. Competiția electorală nu numai că distinge între candidați, dar conferă o distincție aproape ontologică unuia dintre ei. Aleșii devin cetățeni aparte, lăsând impresia că formează împreună o categorie socială superioară, cunoscută în limbajul colocvial sub numele de „clasă politică”.

Deși nu se numără printre stereotipurile discursului pios despre democrație, cetățenilor nu le scapă cu totul dimensiunea aristocratică a scrutinului. Alegătorii se așteaptă ca aceia care le cer votul să nu fie oameni oarecare. Chiar dacă nu-i votează întotdeauna pe cei care ar reuși la un test de cultură generală, de administrare a afacerilor sau de inteligență. Notorietatea publică, reputația profesională ori intelectuală nu aduc neapărat voturi, ci sunt mai ales o dovadă de considerație față de alegători. O formă de respect la care-i îndreptățește statutul lor de electori. Dreptul de vot include și dreptul inalienabil de a face o alegere greșită. Oricare ar fi cauza erorii. În ciuda opiniei comune, alegătorii nu au întotdeauna dreptate. Se pot chiar înșela sistematic și repetat. Au făcut-o adesea în istoria politică imediată. În plus, alegătorii învață rareori din greșeli. Pentru că versantul aristocratic al procesului electoral nu-i privește pe ei, ci pe candidați. Caracterul democratic al alegerilor rezidă tocmai în capacitatea cetățenilor electori de a cerne aristocrațiile bazate pe merit ce guvernează diversele sfere ale vieții contemporane și de a alcătui, din propria lor voință și după criterii ce nu sunt mereu raționale, o aristocrație electivă pe care elitele concurente – din economie, din cultură, din profesiile liberale sau din justiție – au tendința să o desconsidere.

Oricât de sofisticate și costisitoare ar fi tehnicile de campanie, nu prestigiul și meritele candidaților decid soarta alegerilor, ci ritmul și sensul de agregare a preferințelor individuale ale votanților. Orice s-ar pretinde, fiecare vot în parte nu contează. După cum doar o semnificație incidentală are și procentul celor care se prezintă la urne. Cei care nu ies la vot își cedează implicit voința celor care o fac. Nu scapă, simplu spus, de logica reprezentării. Acesta este motivul pentru care Bobbio semnalează că adevărata întrebare la care trebuie să răspundă democrația este nu atât *cine* votează, cât *unde* se votează; care sunt, mai precis, ariile de decizie în care cetățenii sunt chemați să încredințeze cuiva un mandat, socotind că există două blocuri de putere ce au o enormă incidență asupra vieții cetățenilor, dar care s-au

sustras până acum procesului de democratizare: întreprinderea și birocracia²¹.

Ceea ce voturile nu transcriu după ce au fost numărate este tocmai speranța difuză a cetățenilor, presimțită normativ de Bobbio, că alegerile nu au doar o miză politică, ci ar putea fi o șansă de restructurare a raporturilor de putere de la locul de muncă și din aparatele administrației publice. Cei mai mulți dintre alegători par mai puțin interesați să discute despre politică și despre politici, cât să-și istorisească pe un ton de revendicare propria experiență, legată invariabil de pierderea unei slujbe și de nevoia de a găsi de lucru, de o relație de muncă constrângătoare ori violentă, de o salarizare injustă sau la negru, de un calcul greșit al pensiei, de caracterul oneros al unui credit, de nevoia unei locuințe de la primărie, de o evacuare silită, de o restituire amânată a unei proprietăți, de absența ordinii publice, de refuzul unui drept sau de neglijența unei autorități.

Cetățenii înțeleg instinctiv – am în vedere un instinct democratic – că politica trebuie să democratizeze administrația și întreprinderea, are datoria să le facă mai disponibile pentru cetățeni și mai permeabile la egalitate. Din această pricină campania este – mai mult chiar decât votul – un rit profund democratic. Candidații și alegătorii sunt aduși într-o situație de egalitate. Este singurul moment în care un politician este cu adevărat vulnerabil în raport cu cetățenii. Nu are încă un mandat care să-l separe de corpul cetățenilor și de aceea opiniile și atitudinile acestora trebuie să ia pentru el o formă imperativă.

Până la urmă, întrebarea fundamentală a lui Kant „ce pot să sper?” dă cel mai concret sens unei campanii electorale, desigur, atent contextualizată și confruntată cu experiența de viață a celor mai obișnuiți și mai nepretențioși dintre semenii. Sarcina politicii democratice ar fi și aceea de a da un răspuns credibil și cât mai convingător acestei întrebări cu iz filosofic, care, dacă nu este pusă regulat și explicit, transformă alegerile într-un rit profund inutil: „ce putem spera împreună și pentru toți (ori pentru cei mai mulți dintre noi), ca societate, cu titlu de comunitate locală ori națională?”. Sau, mai simplu, „putem oare spera să trăim convenabil unii cu ceilalți?”. Alegerile ar putea fi experimentate și interpretate drept o căutare colectivă a celui mai potrivit răspuns.

²¹ Norberto Bobbio, *Il futuro della democrazia*, Einaudi, Torino, 1984, p. 16.

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THE E-VOTING MIRABILIS: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS OF ICT IN ELECTIONS



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Abstract:

The introduction of a new voting technology to an existing electoral process requires more than taking the paper-based process and making it e-enabled. Developers must also change the whole back-office process and reorganize the whole business process. As in e-government, supporting the complexity of e-voting requires an expansion of thinking. Technological progress and developments in the field of e-voting are increasing over time, and so are the abilities of application of this technology. However, the multidisciplinary nature of elections presents a natural challenge. This section therefore presents a conceptual model that helps identify the areas that influence and are affected by the application of ICT in elections.

Interestingly, the same voting technology quite often works in one environment, but not in another. The question, therefore, is which fields influence and are affected by e-voting?

Keywords: new voting technology, elections, e-voting, law, society

Abstract:

Introducerea unei noi tehnologii de votare într-un proces electoral existent necesită mai mult decât transpunerea procesului bazat pe suport de hârtie într-unul electronic funcțional. Dezvoltatorii trebuie să schimbe întregul proces de back-office și să reorganizeze întregul proces privind activitățile desfășurate. Ca și în e-guvernare, sprijinirea complexității votării electronice necesită o gândire extinsă. Progresele tehnologice și evoluțiile în domeniul votării electronice cresc în timp, la fel și abilitățile de aplicare a acestei tehnologii. Cu toate acestea, caracterul multidisciplinar al alegerilor reprezintă o provocare firească. Această secțiune prezintă, prin urmare, un model conceptual care ajută la identificarea domeniilor care influențează și care sunt afectate de aplicarea TIC în alegeri.

Interesant este faptul că aceeași tehnologie de votare adesea funcționează într-un context, dar nu și în altul. Prin urmare, întrebarea este care anume domenii influențează și care sunt afectate de votul electronic?

Cuvinte-cheie: noua tehnologie de votare, alegeri, vot electronic, legislație, societate

First, it is necessary to integrate manifold questions arising from several disciplines, which researchers must answer according to the context in which the election takes place, making each solution unique (Svensson and Leenes, 2003).

Nevertheless, one can identify some main components reoccurring in the deployment of e-voting technology, and these can be best described in a conceptual model. In addition to preparing administrators for the actual use of the technology, such models also help researchers to understand and assess the use of ICT in elections before deployment. Conceptual frameworks are especially beneficial for election observers, who must pay close(r) attention to the context in which an e-voting technology is used than they must do with traditional voting procedures if they wish to assess the former properly (Krimmer and Volkamer, 2006, OSCE/ODIHR 2008, 2012).

The conceptual framework consists of four main macro dimensions – Technology, Law, Politics and Society – that explain the areas that influence e-voting deployment. The model also includes a micro dimension of the application of

voting technology to the electoral process itself, which covers the areas that are influenced by e-voting. It also includes the stakeholders of an e-enabled electoral process, as described in the previous chapter. Finally, it shows clearly the usefulness of selecting a multidisciplinary approach when applying and analyzing e-voting technologies. The following figure gives a graphical representation of the conceptual framework. The depiction of the framework is a mirabilis flower with four petals that represent the four macro dimensions influencing the e-enabled electoral process.

As described above, the conceptual framework is supported by the five stakeholder groups that help to apply ICT to the electoral process:

1. Voters, who are using the system to cast a vote;
2. Politicians, especially candidates, who run to be elected through the system;
3. Election managers, who administer the election and ensure the proper functioning of the system;
4. Vendors, especially inventors, who designed, developed, and provided the system; and
5. Media representatives and election observers, who monitor and report about the use of the system.

The first area is the technological dimension, for which researchers should consider how an e-voting technology can make use of the existing infrastructure (e.g. equipment in polling stations, central voter registers, election-management systems, ID documents and digital counterparts). This dimension includes the option of a new form of identification, which the voter must provide when no proper identification mechanism is available. Second, it is important to determine how many voters are actually able to use the Internet or how many voters possess capabilities for digital signatures. For examples of which infrastructural issues are important in the technological dimensions see Braun, Prosser and Krimmer (2003).

Second, the legal dimension regulates how the electoral code can be changed in order to allow votes cast by electronic means and to provide necessary accountability to the voter, as an electoral code is often one of the first sources of information that a voter consults. It should provide the

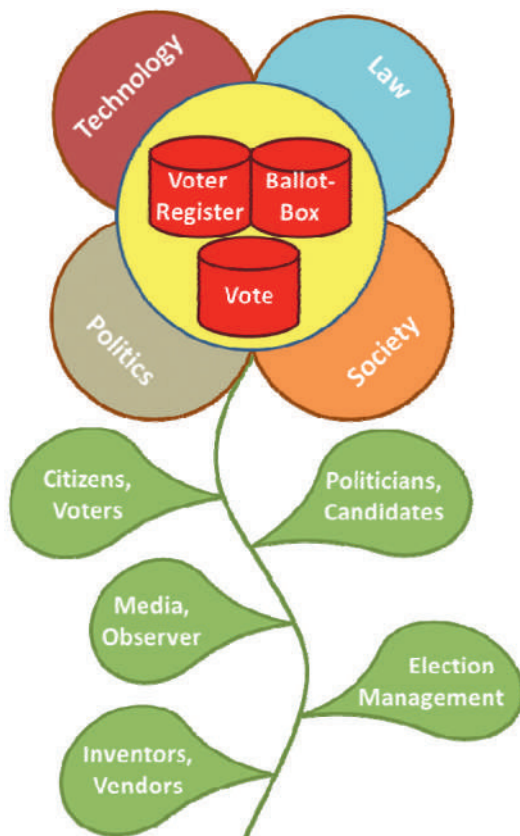


Figure 1: "The E-voting Mirabilis" conceptual framework

voter with the ability to see how his/her personal data is being processed. The documentation should also include the principle of proportionality when handling personal data, and it should serve as a guiding indicator. In other words, the use of ICT in elections should add value to the groups affected (Council of Europe 1981). In addition, any e-voting technology should provide the same possibilities as paper-based voting technologies (Heindl, Prosser and Krimmer, 2003).

The third area is the political domain, where the question remains what effect the introduction of e-voting will have. Possible effects include enabling individuals to participate who otherwise could/would not have, providing a trustworthy election outcome, and requiring the election administration's credibility and accountability during the process. It also includes the question of whether the system and the process meet the legitimacy criteria as set forth by Luhmann (1983) by providing enough possibilities for audits, evaluation, certification, as well as checks and balances. Another aspect is the overall political discussion of the topic. Does the public see the given technology as a useful tool for democracy, and if so, does technology encourage

higher quality voting, or does it encourage quicker and rash decisions? Alternatively, does it merely result in a quick democracy, as described by Aström (2001)?

The final dimension is the social domain, in which the citizens' trust is essential. Do the voters understand the e-voting technology enough (i.e. through voter education and training efforts) to comprehend the technical properties of the system and thus trust them? In addition, are the voters capable of using the system without trouble (EU Election Observation Mission to Venezuela 2007)? This component of IT-literacy might cause a technically perfect system to fail completely when the voters are not able to cast their votes as they intend to cast them because of difficult voter interfaces or misleading ballot sheets.

These four contextual factors then influence the implementation on the micro level, and thus the electoral components (ballot, ballot box and voter register) and the electoral process itself. Today, legal norms such as, i.e., the International Covenant of Civic and Political Rights (UNHCR 1966) or the 1990 Copenhagen document (OSCE 1990) best describe what the current understanding of an electoral process entails.

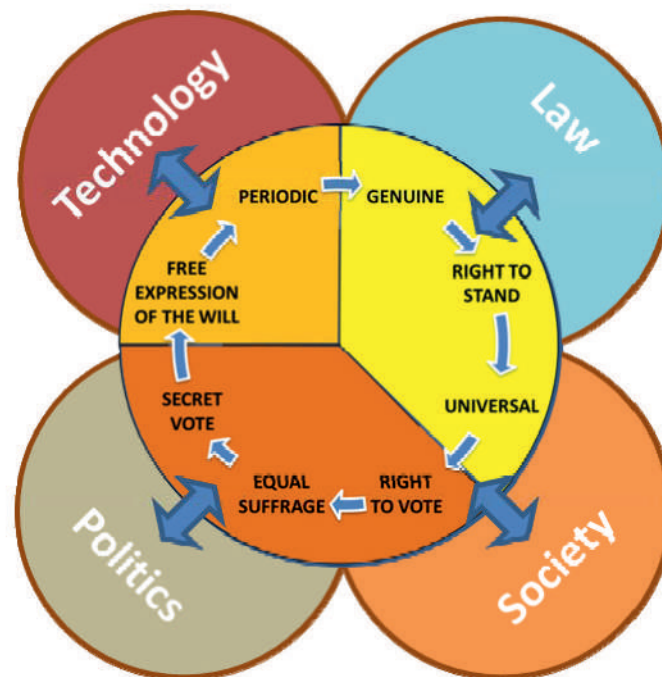


Figure 2: "The E-voting Mirabilis" conceptual framework with integrated electoral process

Applying ICT to such processes comes with several crucial questions, e.g. the problem of how a system can guarantee fundamental principles is central. In controlled environments, poll workers check the eligibility of voters against the voter register, and the workers also use dedicated machines to record the cast votes in an electronic ballot box. In uncontrolled environments, checking eligibility is a bit more complicated, because the workers must unequivocally determine the voter's identity while preserving the voter's anonymity (Volkamer and Krimmer, 2006; Alkassar, Krimmer and Volkamer, 2005; Krimmer and Volkamer, 2006; Kofler, Krimmer and Prosser, 2003).

Other considerations include ensuring that the system does what it is supposed to do (Volkamer, 2009; Barrat, 2008) and allowing the general public to check the validity of results produced by e-voting technologies. The latter consideration led to the major question that gained momentum after the Florida 2000 experience and the German ruling (Federal Constitutional Court 2009): how can voters verify whether their votes have been counted as they intended? This concern created a new area of research in

end-to-end verifiability (see, amongst others, Chaum et al. 2008; Rivest and Smith, 2007), where only limited practical experience exists (OSCE/ODIHR 2012). This remains a new challenge for the field, yet the promising stream of inquiry could enhance regular paper-based elections.

This conceptual model shows the four areas (technology, law, politics and society) that influence e-voting systems as well as the components of an electoral process that are influenced by the use of ICT for voting processes. The E-voting Mirabilis conceptual model is also able to help foster the development of e-voting systems in several ways, by helping to: (i) reveal why certain systems are successful and why others are not; (ii) identify areas that require adaptation when transferring knowledge from one project to another; (iii) enable exchange between projects, because it makes the developers aware of differences; (iv) document and evaluate projects, an issue identified early on (Buchsbaum, 2004); and (v) provide a comprehensive overview of a given implementation.

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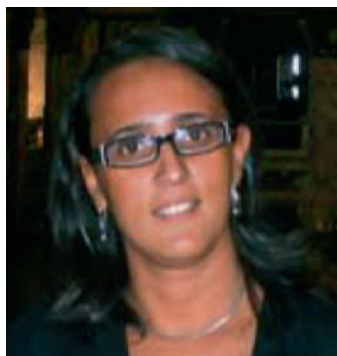
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PROVISIONAL VOTE RECOUNT IN ARGENTINA



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Abstract:

In Argentina there is no electoral management body in the strict sense, but two bodies that are conferred powers in the electoral field. We have a double counting system: the first one, with exclusive informational purpose and without binding consequences, is performed on electoral night and based on the information contained in the telegrams transmitted to the National Electoral Directorate or the entities that it designates for the accomplishment of these tasks; the second consists of the count of all the original Scrutiny Acts and the resolution of the contested votes – for their identity – or appealed – by their qualification, which is done by the National Electoral Justice in a decentralized manner, in each one of the country's 24 districts.

This paper addresses the activity called the Provisional Vote Recount that the National Electoral Directorate is in charge of, which consists of processing the voting data at each polling station recorded in the telegrams, made by the authorities of the polling station, which are transmitted to the National Electoral Directorate for dissemination.

Keywords: *provisional vote recount, scrutiny, Digital Transmission Center, scanning, transmission, incidents.*

Abstract:

În Argentina, nu există un organism de management electoral în sens strict, ci două organisme cu atribuții în domeniul electoral. Există un sistem dublu de numărare a voturilor: primul, care are un scop exclusiv informativ și fără consecințe obligatorii, se realizează în seara alegerilor, pe baza informațiilor conținute în telegramele transmise Direcției Electorale Naționale sau entităților desemnate pentru realizarea acestor sarcini; al doilea constă în centralizarea tuturor proceselor-verbale originale privind consemnarea rezultatelor votării, inclusiv a voturilor contestate și soluționate fie în ceea ce privește identitatea alegătorului, fie privind valabilitatea lor, aceasta realizându-se în mod descentralizat de către Justiția Electorală Națională, în fiecare dintre cele 24 de districte.

Această lucrare abordează activitatea numită renumărarea provizorie a voturilor pe care o realizează Direcția Electorală Națională, care constă în prelucrarea datelor privind votarea de la fiecare secție de votare și care sunt înregistrate în telegrame de către autoritățile secției de votare, iar apoi sunt transmise către Direcția Electorală Națională pentru diseminare.

Cuvinte-cheie: *renumărarea provizorie a voturilor, scrutin, Centrul de transmitere a rezultatelor, scanare, transmitere, incidente*

Argentine Electoral Process Organization

The Argentine Republic is a federal state composed of 24 subnational entities (23 provinces and the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires) and a federal organization that brings them together. The national Constitution establishes that the electoral legislation and management are local attributions, and that is why there are 25 electoral norms and a multitude of electoral bodies, without taking into account municipal bodies.

National Electoral Bodies

Argentina has no electoral organs in the strict sense. The Magna Carta does not establish a location for electoral competencies, and that is why legislators have chosen to confer powers in electoral and political parties to the judicial and executive branches, which implies the existence of the National Electoral Justice and the National Electoral Directorate.

The **National Electoral Justice** is composed of the National Electoral Chamber and 24 federal courts with electoral jurisdiction, on which the electoral secretaries of each district depend. The National Electoral Justice has jurisdictional functions pertaining to every court of justice, and is responsible for preparing, publishing and purging voter lists, registering political parties and alliances; registering the nominations for the different national positions, designating the polling authorities, organizing the election in each district, designing the electoral documentation and carrying out the definitive counting of votes. In national elections, it is its mission to proclaim the elected candidates.

The **National Electoral Directorate**, which reports to the Ministry of Interior, is the national body responsible for scheduling, organizing and carrying out the tasks assigned to it by legislation in electoral matters and political parties; and its primary responsibilities are to understand:

- the management of the party financing administration and all the aspects that the legislation entrusts with respect to the political parties and the electoral campaigns;
- the dissemination and training regarding electoral legislation, electoral and political party procedures and information;
- the procedural and normative modernization and innovation in the subjects of its competence.

The fulfillment of these responsibilities implies for the National Electoral Directorate the planning and execution of a broad set of actions that covers both the internal activities of the organization, and the collaboration and coordination with other governmental, nongovernmental and civil society actors¹, as well as being the body responsible for organizing and disseminating the Provisional Results Score.

¹ Some of its relevant actions are:

- carry out and execute national electoral policies, taking into account the different aspects of the electoral processes entrusted by the current electoral regulations;
- collaborate with the National Electoral Justice and local jurisdictions regarding logistical, material, communication and other activities related to electoral processes and popular consultations;
- carry out the tasks for the management of the Permanent Party Fund, the contributions of electoral campaign and printing of ballots and the financial aspects of the cooperation with other actors of the electoral processes;
- understand the activities foreseen in the legislation regarding the allocation of electoral advertising spaces in the audiovisual communication services;
- conduct the management of electoral and geo-electoral information systems and generate reports and specific geostatistical products; participate in the determination of the electoral geography, and in particular in the delimitation of the electoral circuits;
- carry out and manage the operative tasks and relations with the General Electoral Command and the security forces in electoral matters;
- conduct operational coordination between the National Electoral Directorate of the National Registry of Persons and the National Electoral Justice, in aspects imposed by the electoral legislation and the Law of Ministries;
- coordinate the required operational tasks between the National Electoral Directorate, the National Electoral Justice, the provincial and municipal jurisdictions, as well as the Official Post Office of the Argentine Republic (Correo Oficial de la República Argentina S.A.);
- understand the tasks of collecting, organizing and generating information related to electoral processes, planning and execution of dissemination and training activities related to institutional activities, electoral processes and federal, national and local participation, as well as the development of strategies and actions of civic-electoral formation and training;
- understand to carry out studies and analyses on electoral norms and procedures of political parties and on general electoral behaviour;
- propose and elaborate draft amendments on electoral regulations and political parties;
- understand the implementation of the policy of linkage, cooperation and electoral technical assistance with foreign electoral bodies, international or regional organizations, local jurisdictions, nongovernmental entities and political parties.

Provisional Vote Recount

As it can be seen in this exposition, just as in Argentina we have two electoral bodies, we also have a double counting system: the first one, with exclusive informational purpose and without binding consequences, is performed on electoral night and based on the information contained in the telegrams transmitted to the National Electoral Directorate or the entities that it designates for the accomplishment of these tasks; the second consists of the count of all the original Scrutiny Acts and the resolution of the contested votes – for their identity – or appealed – by their qualification, which is done by the National Electoral Justice in a decentralized manner, in each one of the country's 24 districts.

On this occasion, it will be described the activity called the Provisional Vote Recount, with which the National Electoral Directorate is in charge of, which consists of processing the voting data at each polling station recorded in the telegrams, made by the authorities of the polling station, which are transmitted to the National Electoral Directorate for dissemination.

Its purpose is to inform the results of the election to the people, notwithstanding that it is just approximate data, given the fact that the observed or contested votes are not resolved, nor has it been possible to process 100% of the polling station telegrams; as well as not having the information of the vote of Argentinians residing abroad or deprived of liberty.

It is also a control tool for political parties, which can detect problems at specific polling stations with certainty and speed thanks to the information processed in this instance of the electoral process, for their claim in the definitive scrutiny.

Transport, Scanning, Transmission and Processing of Scrutineering Telegrams

At 6 pm or later, when all the voters who showed up at each polling station have already voted, the polling station highest authority, assisted by the rest of the accredited authorities, proceeds to open the ballot box and make the qualification of the votes, which consists in determining the validity of each one to count them later.

The polling station authority prepares the Scrutiny Act, which includes the voting data,

consisting of the information that describes the polling station – district, section, circuit, number; the total number of voters and the total number of envelopes in the ballot box; the results: the total number of affirmative votes, blank votes, contested ballots – closed envelopes with ballots of voters whose identity was contested and that will be opened in the final count – and the votes appealed – those whose qualification is objected by a political party auditor, placing them in a special envelope and scrutinizing them in the definitive counting.

The polling station authorities – the president and his deputy – are citizens designated by the federal judge with electoral competence, and their work is to identify and decide on voters' identity contestation, carry out the scrutiny by counting the envelopes, open and qualify the votes, receive the observations of the auditors from political parties and civil society, make the sum of each category of votes and the votes for each candidacy, complete the terms and transcribe their data to the certificates of scrutiny and the telegram. All these steps are carried out under the control of the political party auditors.

The Scrutiny Act is placed in a special transparent bag along with the registration list, the contested and appealed votes, and the pocket being sealed.

Also, the data is transcribed into certificates of scrutiny that are delivered to the party auditors of political groups. For the purpose of the Provisional Vote Recount, the results contained in the polling station counting records are also transcribed in a document called **(electoral) telegram**. It is a document prepared by the president of the polling station and subscribed by him, his deputy and the political party auditors, which is transmitted by the National Post Office, through its internal networks for processing and dissemination.

The telegram form is produced and prepared by each electoral court, supervised by the National Electoral Directorate and the National Post Office.

At the polling station, the president, in the presence of the National Post Office Agent and the political party auditors, keeps the telegram inside an inviolable envelope that must be signed on the outside and delivered together with the ballot box and the bag to the staff of the Post Office.

The ballot box and the transparent bag are taken by the personnel of the National Post Office to the place that the National Electoral Justice provides for its definitive scrutiny, in the custody of the General Electoral Command.

The envelopes with the **telegrams** are transferred, in the custody of the General Electoral Command, from each polling station to the branches designated for their scanning – Digital Transmission Centers – where they are opened in the presence of party auditors of accredited political groups, they are verified that they correspond to the table identified in the envelope, they are scanned and their image is transmitted electronically to the Operation and Control Center for its computer processing and dissemination. From that moment on, the process is done entirely electronically, without reusing paper.

Each telegram consists of an electronic reading code that allows its association to a polling station in order to simplify its processing.

In the Digital Transmission Center, the telegram, which must be complete, is observed if it consists of more than one page and is placed in high performance scanners that transmit it by a private network of exclusive use by the National Post Office.

The use of this network is limited only to the scanners enrolled in the system and they can only transmit the list of telegrams corresponding to the polling stations that must be informed by this Digital Transmission Center. If an attempt is made to transmit from another device, the network cannot be accessed, or if an encoded device is attempting to transmit to a polling station outside the place of origin, an alert will be triggered in the central system.

Telegrams are scanned according to their order of arrival and they are transmitted immediately to the Post Office servers where they are received and stored. In this way, a “work queue” is created respecting the order of sending and it is random in terms of the geographical origin of the files.

The files containing the images of the telegrams are subject to a technical review process carried out by the Post Office, where their integrity is checked – eligibility and completeness – without checking their content; in some cases the telegrams have several sheets that form a single document, therefore the sheets that make up each telegram must be integrated.

In the Digital Transmission Centers, in addition to political party auditors, there is also a representative of the Ombudsmen of each province, who informs the Ministry of Interior and the National Electoral Chamber regarding their performance.

The transmission is made to an Operation and Control Center that receives the images, registers the telegram in the system, performs the mentioned checks and transmits it to the area in charge of its processing. Each of these operations are computer-controlled, allowing the traceability of the electronic document.

The Post Office informs about the status of the transmission of telegrams from its Reception Center to the Processing Center.

Processing Stage

In this stage, a software previously sealed electronically through a hash is given to the National Electoral Chamber².

On the election day and prior to the start of operations, in the presence of partisan technical representatives, they verify that the computer system does not contain data of results. This procedure, called “set to 0”, is properly documented.

The planned telegrams loading procedures establish that the polling station telegram images are sent to the Data Management Center corresponding to the district of origin, maintaining the order of arrival.

When the images of the telegrams are electronically received, they are registered in the charging system – once a telegram is registered, another document can no longer be processed from the same source – and the image is transmitted to a data entry for a first digitization of results into an exclusive template of the transmitted telegram. The telegrams vary in format and/or content from section to section in case of simultaneous national and local positions.

The data of each telegram is loaded by two different operators. The assignment of the image from the telegram to the work station is random and whoever performs the second digitizing of a telegram data does not have access to the information that was recorded by the first operator. If the data loaded from the same telegram by two recorders coincides 100% and the sum of votes

² This operation has been carried out in all electoral processes since 2001, incorporating the hash since 2011.

is not greater than the number of voters, the telegram automatically passes to the system for totalization and diffusion. If the data of the same doubly recorded telegram does not match, it is passed to a third recording to record again only the inconsistent data; if the third recording coincides with any of the previous ones, it is processed and diffused.

Incidents

In all the processes of counting the results, some telegrams appear with errors in their making, presenting different situations:

- Information recorded is unreadable due to writing difficulties;
- Telegrams with votes with a greater sum than the number of qualified voters at the polling station. In this case, the telegram data is entered, but the loading validations will indicate the inconsistency.

Telegrams that are illegible or have data that exceeds the number of voters will be identified as a definite incidence, so that their information will not be computed or summarized in the system;

- Incorrect assignment of votes to political groups. These errors occur in the transcription of the Scrutiny Act to the telegram, made by the polling station authority. Usually, these are mistakes in the line of assignment, awarding votes to a group and not to the one that corresponds to it. This type of errors or omissions are not detectable during the loading process because the information, although erroneous, has internal consistency and does not exceed the basic parameter of the number of voters enabled in the polling station. These situations are only detectable through a comparative analysis with other tables inside the circuit or a posteriori in their contrast with the original Scrutiny Act or with the definitive count, and this is why the telegrams are computed during the process of provisional recount;
- Also, a certain number of telegrams do not reach the processing center due to logistical problems. An acceptable average of unmounted telegrams should not exceed 3% of the polling stations, except for extraordinary complications that must be reported publicly.

If the inconsistency is solved, the telegram automatically passes through the system to total-

ization and diffusion. In cases where the inconsistency cannot be resolved because the telegram contains more voters than electors at the polling station or does not contain any information, they are not totaled, but reported as definitive incident.

Finally, the list of telegrams that have not been received at the Digital Transmission Centers is recorded in detailed minutes, whose identification is reported to the political party auditors.

The data must be loaded as it is in the telegram. If a box does not record data, it must be loaded 0. Even in cases that appear to be wrong, the data entry must faithfully transcribe what was recorded by the polling station authority, thus errors can be detected so that political groups can adequately claim in the definitive scrutiny. Under no circumstances should the data entry interpret information, it should only recognize the entered numbers and load them.

The control of this activity is exhaustive. Each political group can appoint a Technical Computer Representative to the National Electoral Directorate and an IT auditor for each IT Auditing Unit, both in districts and nationally.

The IT Auditing Units (or political party auditors' offices) are located in each provincial capital, and those of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires and Province of Buenos Aires in the Operation and Control Center located in the City of Buenos Aires.

Provisional Vote Recount Followed up by Political Party Auditors

The Provisional Vote Recount must guarantee access to the information for the control by the participating political groups. To this end, the inspection units are set up. These are enclosures that have checkpoints with terminals to access two levels of consultation on line: the first to know the load of each polling station, and the second to know the situation of polling stations by district differentiated by their state of processing (first load, second load, revision, and incidents). Likewise, political groups that request it can follow the processing from their camp sites through remote access by VPN to the same system provided in the IT Auditing Units. For this reason, the IT applications designed for such purpose allow the monitoring of the process of entering and loading telegrams from the beginning to the end of the recount.

To achieve this, it is essential to have access to information about:

a) general monitoring of the recount:

- number and percentage of polling stations/telegrams per geographic reference area of the election, differentiated in a way to identify the situation or stage of the counting process in which it is located, more specifically:
 - ✓ polling station telegrams entered into the system;
 - ✓ nonentered telegrams – difference between total polling stations and telegrams entered;
 - ✓ telegrams in each of the stages of the counting process – computed in first or second recording, in resolution of incidents of load, with definite incidents that prevent their incorporation in the result.

b) monitoring the load of each polling station entered:

- list of polling stations entered into the system by geographic area of the election that allows the visualization of the data loaded regarding:
 - ✓ identification of polling station;
 - ✓ stage of the loading process;
 - ✓ results by group/list/candidate and other categories of votes;
 - ✓ image of the telegram transmitted and entered into the system.

The applications have always visible date and time, allowing the printing of the data and the continuous updating of the screen.

At 9 pm on the election day, the process of dissemination of results begins.

Dissemination of Results in Web Pages

The design of the results dissemination page addresses two characteristics that are considered central to the use of the information contained, namely: a) navigability and access to results, and b) the presentation of specific data.

a) regarding navigability and access to results³:

³ Particular care is taken ensuring that the bandwidth is sufficient for the criticality of the concentrated consultation, which could exceed the demand of a particular district, and adopting security measures to prevent intrusion and contingency in the face of transmission stability problems.

- The structure of the page allows the selection of the election or districts of interest to the public, for which it has a geographic selector – map or text with the names of the provinces or sections of interest – and elective category selector. Once the geographic selection is entered, the information of all the elective categories that correspond to it is available; conversely, selecting an elective category will only display the geographic areas where it is actually performed. This avoids the need to know in advance in which geographic area each post is chosen to see its results.
 - In the case of having different levels of geographical disaggregation, it is possible to access each one independently of the other; for example, it is not necessary to know in which provincial department a municipality is located to access its information.
 - The web page is developed in compliance with the web accessibility standards defined by current regulations. In particular, the development of the use of semantic code with the separation, on the one hand, of the structure and contents of the web page and, on the other hand, the very style of the page.
- b) about the presentation of the specific data:
- The data allows the understanding of the results, therefore, the presentation of total aggregates for the geographical unit in which the election is addressed is indispensable. However, it is also desirable to allow the analysis of results in the component areas of that total, for example, departments that make up the sections or electoral regions. The level of granularity of the presented data is determined according to each choice, taking into account that, during the process or in the later hours the data source – the image of transmission documents – and the database are available at polling station level.
 - For a correct interpretation of the information, it is considered appropriate to include a legend that indicates the source of the data and the scope of the provisional count regarding the final counting.

- The indispensable data to be entered on the page are:
 - *Block I – basic data for the monitoring of the provisional recount identifiable for each level of geographical disaggregation of the information:*
 - ✓ number of eligible electors – registration list;
 - ✓ number of enabled polling stations;
 - ✓ number of polling stations computed: which data were actually entered into the system and therefore included in the summary of results presented;
 - ✓ percentage of polling stations computed: calculated on the number of tables enabled;
 - ✓ number of voters: total votes cast at computed polling stations;
 - ✓ percentage of voters or participation – calculated on the total number of qualified voters at computed polling stations, not on the total number of voters in the district;
 - ✓ information presentation time: throughout the process you can identify at what point in the vote count the information you are viewing corresponds. In addition, a time-accumulation diagram – histogram – is used to allow the temporary record of the total process;
 - ✓ as an additional information, it includes the number of polling stations not computed by certain reason; for example, transmission document – telegram – not consistent – a higher number of votes cast than qualified voters – not readable – not received for transmission. Political party auditors have access to individualized information from polling stations not computed.
 - *Block II – votes for party options:*
 - ✓ identification of political groups and lists or qualified candidates;
 - ✓ number of votes obtained by each political group/list/candidate;
 - ✓ percentage, calculated on the type of vote defined by the standard and/or that allows the understanding of the result of the election. For example, calculation of positive votes in national general elections, valid votes in case of

primary elections⁴, when those are used as the threshold of selection of political groups that will participate in general elections, or percentage of the list or candidate on the total obtained by the groups.

– *Block III – types of votes cast:*

- ✓ number of positive votes and percentage of total votes cast;
 - ✓ number of blank votes and percentage of total votes cast;
 - ✓ number of null votes and percentage of total votes cast;
 - ✓ number of contested votes and percentage of total votes cast;
 - ✓ number of total votes cast.
- For multimember positions: number of disputed positions in the district or geographical reference area.
 - In cases where there are tables containing more than one elective category and, consequently, there are parties that dispute one category, but not another, this situation is explicitly explained in order to differentiate it from those party groups that do participate and have not obtained votes. An example is when a party option does not appear to the dispute of the charge – blank or voided via colour – and party option that was presented and did not get votes – cell with 0.
 - Additional presentations, such as charts or maps, maintain the same criteria as for the data.

Open Data

The data of the provisional count are offered, as soon as possible, in an open and reusable format, according to the Open Public Data Directive for the Electoral Administration approved by disposition.

Dissemination

In addition to the Internet broadcast and apps designed for smartphones, the day after the election, all the data of each polling station is given on magnetic support to the political groups for their effective control.

⁴ Primary, open, concurrent and compulsory elections are the method of selecting candidates and enabling parties and alliances to compete for national elective public offices.

About the authors:

Paola COSTABELLA graduated from the National University of Cordoba. She holds a Master's degree with Cum Laude in Applied Political Studies from FIAPP – Spain, adaptation of the title to the Ortega y Gasset Institute; postgraduate of the School of Law – UBA – in Political and Electoral Rights, and Diploma in Electoral Processes in the Americas by FLACSO Chile.

She is a fellow of several organizations such as IDB, OAS, Konrad Adenauer Foundation, United Nations Democracy Fund, MASHAV – Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others.

Since 2000, she has been working in the National Electoral Directorate, occupying different functions. She represented the Directorate in electoral meetings with international organizations – OEA, EU, UNASUR, A-WEB and in electoral processes in Latin America, Europe and Asia.

She has been a consultant specialized in missions of technical assistance and of electoral cooperation and integrated missions of electoral observation, especially of UNASUR and OAS. She has been also an exhibitor in national and international seminars on issues of democracy, electoral processes and youth. She has national and international publications on electoral matters.

She obtained the distinction granted by the Honorable Senate of the Argentine Nation: “Governor Enrique Tomás Cresto” to “Leaders for Development”, for the contribution to the integrated economic development of Latin America.

Sandra MINVIELLE graduated from the School of Philosophy and Literature of the University of Buenos Aires with the degree of Professor in Geography. She took postgraduate courses in Territorial and Environmental Policies at the same university, Statistical Methods for Social Sciences at the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences of Buenos Aires, and several courses on Spatial Data Infrastructure.

Between 2002 and 2009, she served in the Program for Political Reform and General Electoral Management of the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Since 2010, she is Director of Statistics and Electoral Mapping at the National Electoral Directorate, Ministry of Interior, Public Works and Housing.

She is a professor and researcher at the Department of Geography of the University of Buenos Aires on issues of political and electoral geography. She has been an exhibitor in national and international seminars and has published works regarding electoral matters.

She performed professional auditing and performance analysis of electoral processes in different countries of the Americas. She is also an expert in integrated UNASUR missions of electoral observation.

TECHNOLOGY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF TRANSPARENCY FOR ELECTORAL INTEGRITY: THE CASE OF ECUADOR – 2017



*Juan Pablo POZO BAHAMONDE, chairman
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Abstract:

During the 2017 general elections held in the Republic of Ecuador, there were elected 1 president and 1 vice president, 137 members to the National Assembly (15 representatives in national constituency, 116 provincial representatives, and 6 representatives for the special abroad circumscriptions), and 5 representatives to the Andean Parliament; in addition, a popular consultation was also held. With more than 12 million voters, it was imperative to generate an important planning of activities for the implementation of electoral IT systems. In the first part of this article, there is a review of the principles that an election must fulfill and in which way technology supports this process. In the second part and in the third part, this article describes specific technical aspects for the implementation of the applications, and, in a special way, the Transmission and Publication of Results System (STPR). Finally, it describes the international technical cooperation received by the CNE from the Republic of Korea, and specifies the findings, in relation to the STPR, of the International Electoral Observation Missions that participated in the aforementioned electoral process.

Keywords: electoral IT systems, technology and transparency, Transmission and Publication of Results System (STPR)

Abstract:

În urma alegerilor generale din 2017 din Republica Ecuador au fost aleși 1 președinte și 1 vicepreședinte, 137 de membri în Adunarea Națională (15 reprezentanți în circumscripția națională, 116 reprezentanți pentru provincii și 6 reprezentanți pentru circumscripțiile speciale din străinătate) și 5 reprezentanți în Parlamentul andin; în plus, a avut loc și o consultare populară. Cu peste 12 milioane de alegători, a fost imperativ să se realizeze o planificare riguroasă a activităților de implementare a sistemelor informatice electorale. În prima parte a acestui articol, voi trece în revistă principiile pe care orice alegere trebuie să se bazeze și în ce mod tehnologia susține acest proces. În partea a doua și a treia voi descrie aspecte tehnice specifice pentru implementarea aplicațiilor, și, în mod particular, Sistemul de transmitere și publicare a rezultatelor (STPR). În cele din urmă, voi descrie cooperarea tehnică internațională cu CNE din Republica Coreea și voi preciza, în legătură cu STPR, concluziile Misiunilor Internaționale de Observare Electorală care au participat la procesul electoral menționat mai sus.

Cuvinte-cheie: sisteme informatice electorale, tehnologie și transparență, Sistemul de transmitere și publicare a rezultatelor (STPR)

Introduction: Electoral Principles that Technology Must Respect

When it comes to electoral processes, technology must safeguard a series of principles in order to facilitate their proper development. Each of the electoral principles is linked to a technical aspect that has been covered by electoral IT systems: 1) electoral integrity, which is achieved thanks to information security during the process; 2) secret ballot, obtained through the confidentiality of data; 3) IT audits, which can only be attained by evaluating the efficiency of the software applications developed; 4) adaptability of regulations, which requires the development of flexible IT systems; and 5) support for a transparent process by keeping information available and easily accessible.

Furthermore, several authors point out some additional principles for developing an electoral process: “transparency and integrity with which the electoral process is carried out” (Toledo, Fornés, Cucurull & Lladós, 2016). For this reason, technology offers an advantage in creating transparency, making many nations around the world improve their laws so that the use of technology will better adhere to public management (Relly & Sabharwal, 2009) and promoting good gover-

nance, reducing bad practices and encouraging good relationships between government and citizens (Shim & Eom, 2008). That is the reason why many governments rely on this tool to strengthen the efficiency and transparency of their management (Von Haldenwang, 2004).

The Case of the Republic of Ecuador in the 2017 General Elections

The use of new technologies in the Ecuadorian electoral processes was for many years considered as a non-substantive task in their success. In 2017, following the institutional guidelines, it was possible to obtain the electoral results in record time. Historically, this time exceeded the deadline allowed by the law, having to request extended deadlines for the presentation of results.

In the 2017 General Elections, over twelve million voters (*see Chart 1*) elected five dignitaries: one president and one vice president, 137 members to the National Assembly (15 representatives in national constituency, 116 provincial representatives, and 6 representatives for the special abroad circumscriptions), and five representatives to the Andean Parliament. In addition, a Popular Consultation on Tax Havens was also held.

Chart 1 – Voters in the 2017 General Elections

Voters	Number
Total	12,816.698
Men	6,384.101
Women	6,432.597
In Ecuador	12,438.406
Abroad	378.292
Precincts	3.558
Polling stations	40.975

In accordance with the article added by the Organic Law Reform to the Organic Law on Elections and Political Organizations of the Republic of Ecuador (Code of Democracy), published in the Official Registry No. 634 of February 6, 2012, unnumbered after Article 127, it is established that: *“The National Electoral Council will implement technological procedures that make it possible to make public the provincial electoral results and the images of the counting minutes. This*

broadcast will take place from the moment that the first data is obtained”; the National Electoral Council of the Republic of Ecuador (CNE) presented, during the 2017 General Elections, the Transmission and Publication of Results System, abbreviated “STPR”, as an automation alternative for the processing of the Vote-Counting Minutes. The system represented an important innovation in the speed of consolidation of electoral results in Ecuador.

The National Direction of Information and Communication Technologies of the National Electoral Council, as part of its Electoral Operative Plan, took into account the design, development, guidelines definition, implementation and support of electoral systems, infrastructure

and technological components to guarantee the operation, availability and security of information.

The National Electoral Council implemented IT electoral systems for the pre-electoral, electoral and post-election phases, as seen in Chart 2.

Chart 2 – Implemented Systems

PHASE	SYSTEM	TYPE OF INTERVENTION
Pre-electoral	Precincts System (National and Abroad)	New
	National Address Change System	Adjustment
	Abroad Address Change System	Adjustment
	Address Change System by Virtual Consulate	New
	Diffusion of the Electoral Registry	Adjustment
	Candidates Registration System	New
	Electoral Promotion System	New
Electoral	Conformation of possible MJRV (Polling Stations Members) System	Adjustment
	MJRV Selection System	Adjustment
	MJRV Selection System abroad	New
	Vote Counting and Publication of Results System	New
Post-electoral	MJRV Payment System	New
	Non-voters and Notattendant MJRV System	New
	Training and Notification Indicators System	Adjustment
	Tracking System	New

For the implementation of the systems, the applied methodology included the following flow of activities: 1) listing requirements; 2) implementation/development, documentation and internal testing; 3) functional testing; 4) functional certification; 5) technical tests: safety, volume and stress; 6) training; 7) production start; and 8) technical support.

Infrastructure for information processing:

It refers to the implementation of data centers for the processing of information of the applications required for the electoral process. The activities covered were: 1) preparing the current data center infrastructure for the pre-election phase; 2) strengthening computer security mechanisms; 3) repowering the data center for the electoral phase; and 4) implementing the contingency data center for the electoral phase.

Infrastructure for the registration, transmission and diffusion of information: For the

operation of the Transmission and Publication of Results System (STPR), the Precincts for the Transmission and Publication of Minutes (RTPA) and the Results Processing Centers (CPR) were provided with the needed infrastructure.

The infrastructure deployed in the Results Processing Centers was the following: data and communication links, data network, electrical network and mechanisms that ensured the continuity of power supply (electric generator and uninterruptible power supply-UPS). Devices for the processing of information: computers, scanners, printers and screens for the presentation of results.

The infrastructure deployed in the Precincts for the Transmission and Publication of Minutes was the following: data and communication links, and devices for recording information: computers, scanners (technical kits).

Mechanisms of service and support: For the operation of the electoral IT systems, additional support components were implemented in order to guarantee the correct operation and support of the IT platform: technological help desk, technology contingency plan, plan of IT security, and tests and simulations.

Socialization and audit of the electoral IT platform: In order to provide and increase transparency and confidence in the electoral IT platform that operated in the elections, The National Direction of Information and Communication Technologies of the National Electoral Council proposed to socialize the implementation of electoral IT systems and to execute audits of the political organizations to the system.

Transmission and Publication of Results System (STPR)

The Transmission and Publication of Results System (STPR) is the result of an exhaustive study to automate the nationwide vote counting process, and represents a technological alternative for the National Electoral Council. This is not an electronic voting system. It is a system for the processing of the vote-counting minutes containing the totalized vote of each polling station (JRV).

The moment when the polling station counts the votes of each one of the dignitaries and transcribes them by hand into a vote counting minute, the STPR performs the following actions:

1. Preprocessing:

Scanning of minutes: nationwide the CNE enabled 1.818 precincts for the transmission and publication of minutes, where 41 thousand minutes were scanned.

2. Periodic reports:

The STPR selects the lines of the minutes that contain the information of votes in letters and numbers and generates an image with this data.

3. Intelligent Character Recognition – ICR:

It consists of automatically recognizing what is written by hand in the vote counting minute.

The **Results Processing Center (CPR)** received the information of the vote counting minutes of the corresponding province. The process continued in the following order (25 CPRs were enabled nationwide):

1. **Typing, quality control** – The cut images are presented to a typist to transcribe them. The system compares the value typed with the ones

recognized by the ICR. If the values are different, the image passes to a second digitizer for quality control.

2. **Review of signatures** – The system shows the signed minutes to the user so he or she can verify the existence of the signature.

3. **Results** – The scanned, digitized and signature containing minutes are shown as valid and their votes are counted in the overall results.

The CPRs maintained the internal electoral network operating 24 hours. The delegates of the political organizations (OPs) had access to the STPR at all times from computers that the CNE enabled for this purpose.

Advantages of the Transmission and Publication Results System (STPR)

In the implementation of IT systems in the management of electoral processes, in addition to the technical aspects described in the central part of this article, there are other advantages:

a) **Transparency**

The Vote Counting Minute can be visualized on the webpage at the very moment of its scanning.

b) **Innovation**

There were 2.202 scanning points nationwide in 2017, which transmitted the minutes, through exclusive links, from the precinct to the CNE.

c) **Speed**

Results delivered in real time: the CNE delivered more than 85% of the official results in less than 3 hours.

d) **Confidentiality**

The information was supported by security regulations that govern the CNE and the electoral process.

e) **Trained staff**

Staff with technical training was selected for the operation of scanners and computers. A website for on-line training was enabled (system manuals, use and maintenance).

International Cooperation: Project for the Modernization of the System of Digitalization and Transmission of Vote Counting Minutes

International Cooperation Timeline between the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB) and the National Electoral Council of Ecuador

- *August 2015:*

The first approach was in the second General Assembly of the World Association of Electoral Organizations (A-WEB).

- *June 2016:*

The National Electoral Council (CNE) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) signed the Memorandum of Understanding for the execution of the Project for the Modernization of the System of Digitalization and Transmission of Vote Counting Minutes; with a budget of 1,200.000 USD – by the concept of nonrefundable international cooperation.

- *September – December 2016:*

Knowledge transfer: a CNE official traveled to the Republic of Korea to receive training on the scanners donated by A-WEB.

- *December 2016:*

The National Electoral Council of Ecuador received 1.850 RTS/STR machines (High Speed Scanner) donated by the Government of Korea. In addition, a delegation of A-WEB and a delegation of the producer company traveled to Ecuador to verify that all the equipment arrived in the country in optimal conditions, complying with all the quality standards.

In total, 112 officials of the National Electoral Council received training, and online educational materials were provided.

- *February – April 2016:*

Deployment of equipment for the first and second rounds of the General Elections 2017.

During the first and second rounds, A-WEB sent technicians to Ecuador to support the CNE in the help desk, in order to give specialized attention to the use of scanners.

Cooperation Agreement Purpose

- *Objective 1:*

To provide 1.850 scanners for the digitalization and transmission of minutes.

- *Objective 2:*

To offer technical support and training on the scanners and their operation by Korean specialists.

International Recognition – Electoral Observation Missions

The National Electoral Council of Ecuador firmly believes in having a diversified electoral observation that generates confidence to the actors of the political electoral system and constitutes a guarantee of credibility and legitimacy in

the processing and proclamation of results. The exchange of experiences enriches our strategic management, combining the contemporary debates at international level with our local reality and trajectory.

Four electoral observation missions participated on the 2017 General Elections and Popular Consultation on Tax Havens: the Organization of American States (OAS), the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), the Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations (UNIORE), and the Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB). Once the electoral process concluded, each mission presented to the National Electoral Council a final report with technical findings and recommendations, which will allow us to consolidate the continuous improvement of our electoral practices.

On the following lines, there are some of the comments from the electoral observation missions regarding the Transmission and Publication Results System (STPR).

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB): *“The vote counting process was effective and dynamic thanks to the good organization and preparation of all actors at each stage. Particularly, the scanning of minutes was fluid and contributed to the high speed of the transmission process.”*

Organization of American States (OAS): *“OAS congratulates the initiative to publish all the processed minutes on the institutional website, making them available to the citizenship, and making this stage of the process transparent.”*

Inter-American Union of Electoral Organizations (UNIORE): *“It was possible to notice that the information that was transmitted and processed in an uninterrupted manner, with agility and technical solvency.”*

Union of South American Nations (UNASUR): *“All of the Precincts of Transmission and Publication of Minutes were fully equipped and had a responsible technician properly trained to carry out his or her duties.”*

Conclusions

The use of technology as a tool for innovation and permanent updating in the organization of elections should be mandatory in every nation that wants to carry out transparent processes and generate confidence in the population through the accessibility, reliability and integrity of processes.

The electoral bodies should promote the institutionalization of their IT systems within their organic structure, in such way that legislation to support the incorporation of new technologies, according to the reality of each electoral process, can be proposed.

All around the world the use of technology in the electoral processes has generated a research field of high impact to the experts in the matter, which has allowed having spaces of international debate and discussions that must be held to promote the good practices of the use of these tools.

About the author:

Dr. Juan Pablo POZO BAHAMONDE is a mediator, doctor of jurisprudence and lawyer. He has a master's degree on Economic Law, a specialization in Alternative Dispute Resolution of Social Issues and studied a postgraduate Program on Governance and Leadership. He is currently studying a doctorate in Constitutional Law. Since January 2015, he serves as president of the National Electoral Council and, at the same time, presides over the Electoral Function in the Republic of Ecuador. He has represented the National Electoral Council before the Electoral Council of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR for its name in Spanish). He has also carry out functions as executive coordinator of the project "Vote at Home Azuay 2014", general coordinator of the Electoral Mission of UNASUR in the 2016 General Elections in the Republic of Peru and general coordinator of the Electoral Mission of UNASUR in the Colombian Peace Plebiscite of 2016. He has also been international electoral observer in elections carried out in Paraguay, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico, Panama, Venezuela, Argentina, Mexico, Peru, Colombia and Costa Rica. University professor, author of several academic articles and of the book: *Democracy in the South American Context (Democracia en el Contexto Sudamericano)* 2015. On the 18th of May 2017, he received the National Order of Merit in the grade of Grand Cross, awarded by the President of the Republic of Ecuador.

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USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESSES IN THE KINGDOM OF BHUTAN



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Abstract:

Whether one believes technology to be a boon, a bane or both, ICT is ubiquitous and this is so even in the Kingdom of Bhutan, a late entrant with the announcement for the introduction of Internet and television being made on the 2nd of June 1999. Howsoever, it preceded the establishment of the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) in 2006 and the transition to Democratic Constitutional Monarchy marked by the first parliamentary elections in 2008, thereby providing the election management body the option to harness technology from the early stages of giving form to the electoral system. The ECB's initiatives and experiences pertaining to application of technology, particularly ICT, for selected operations at various stages of the election cycle, key in ensuring the conduct of free, fair and credible elections, as well as areas of future attention are highlighted in this report.

Keywords: Election Commission of Bhutan, electoral services, elections, electronic voting machine, public confidence and trust, social media, technology, voter registration

Abstract:

Indiferent dacă cineva crede că tehnologia este o binecuvântare, o povară sau ambele, TIC este omniprezent și acest lucru este valabil chiar și în Regatul Bhutan, un tânăr participant, internetul și televiziunea fiind lansate la 2 iunie 1999. Cu toate acestea, ele au precedat înființarea Comisiei Electorale din Bhutan (CEB) în 2006 și tranziția la monarhia constituțională democratică marcată de primele alegeri parlamentare din 2008, oferind astfel organismului de management electoral opțiunea de a valorifica tehnologia încă din primele etape ale formării sistemului electoral. În acest articol sunt evidențiate inițiativele și experiențele CEB în ceea ce privește aplicarea tehnologiei, în special TIC, pentru operațiunile selectate în diverse etape ale ciclului electoral, care au drept scop asigurarea desfășurării alegerilor libere, corecte și credibile, precum și domenii de interes pentru viitor.

Cuvinte-cheie: Comisia Electorală din Bhutan, servicii electorale, mașină electronică de vot, încrederea publicului, social media, tehnologie, înregistrarea alegătorilor

Background

The Kingdom of Bhutan is often referred to as the youngest democracy and a quirky latecomer to the world of information and communication technology with Internet and television being introduced into the country only in 1999.

In fact, we are already in full preparation for the third Parliamentary Election in the Kingdom, which is due next year. Bhutan's smooth transition to Democratic Constitutional Monarchy was marked by the first Parliamentary Election of 2008 followed by a peaceful transfer of power in the second Parliamentary Election of 2013, when the ruling and opposition parties switched status, as willed by the Bhutanese electorate. The fact that the two new political parties led by two women contested the primary round of elections is a confirmation of Bhutan's steady journey on the path of democracy.

Actually, the process of democratization and promotion of public participation in the decision-making process had started long before the first Parliamentary Elections in 2008: the erstwhile National Assembly with elected representatives was first established in 1953, subsequently followed by establishing an elected Royal Advisory Council, the district and thereafter the county (subdistrict) Development Committees. From 1998 to 2008, the Cabinet, elected for a term of five years, was vested with full executive powers with the ministers taking turns as Chair of the Cabinet and Head of Government. The establishment of these formal democratic institutions and participatory mechanisms was accompanied by changes in voting rights with steady progression from household-based voting rights to individual franchise for all citizens aged 25, which was further reduced to 21 years and thereafter 18 years, as it is provided by The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan adopted in 2008.

The referendum-like process of public consultations on the draft Constitution in the country is only keeping to tradition when, over decades, several five-year development plans had been prepared, monitored and reviewed in close consultation with the public, led by His Majesty the King in person, and public participation was consistently and systematically facilitated and nurtured.

While the introduction of Internet and television in Bhutan in 1999 may have been much

later than their uptake by most other nations around the globe, the use of ICT in Bhutan has been a similarly rapid one fueled by a young population as well as the inducement of undeniable relevance and benefits in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the public as well as in private and personal spheres. The Bhutanese society's take on technology has been reflected in the national policy of an ICT enabled society as provided in the Bhutan Information and Communications Technology Policy and Strategies (BIPS), July 2004, and enhanced by the Bhutan e-Gov Master Plan, 2014.

The challenges include the pertinent issues related to access, coverage, as well as reliability of services due to the status of infrastructural development in the country, as well as a certain mistrust and resistance to technology (although one could not be faulted for wondering if it is a convenient scapegoat for less than desired electoral outcomes). Such doubts were grounds for a few election disputes, but to date no allegation and case have been able to stand up to legal scrutiny, including in the Courts.

It is in this context that the Election Commission of Bhutan seizes the many opportunities and advantages technology offers in various aspects of the conduct of elections, but also accepts that prudence, based on sound knowledge and understanding of the society, must be exercised to ensure that elections in the Kingdom are not only free and fair, but also perceived to be so, as public confidence and trust are fundamental ingredients for credible elections. Essentially, it is required to identify in what areas technology can be applied and efforts can be made to ensure transparency and integrity of the process, as well as correct and current information and briefing to the stakeholders.

ICT in Key Areas

Boundary Delimitation

ArcGIS has been used for the delimitation of constituencies in Bhutan to generate accurate spatial database from high resolution satellite imageries and provide maps with clearly defined boundaries as well as providing ease of understanding and reference by the electorate. This has proved invaluable in the mandatory public hearing sessions where presentations are easily understood and discussions facilitated by the detailed geographical visuals. It has also been

used for locating election facilities such as the polling stations and election advertising boards.

Voter Registration and Electoral Roll

In 2006, one of the first major exercises undertaken towards the first Parliamentary Elections in 2008 was the registration of voters, preparation of the Electoral Roll and printing and issuance of the Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) to the registered voters. For this critical aspect of elections, the Microsoft SQL (MSSQL) server was used for the storage of the data and MS Access deployed for the management of the data and generation of necessary reports.

Thereafter, the user interface for the electoral registration system, the Bhutan Electoral Database System (BEDS), was developed as a desktop based client server application built in Microsoft Visual Studio .NET with MSSQL server at the backend and Crystal Reports for generating all the required reports.

The BEDS served the requirements of the ECB for the conduct of the first National Parliamentary Elections, although there were certain shortcomings related to centralized management of data and requirement of a high level of human intervention at all times. Besides the actual registration and verification in the field, the other activities including the printing had to be carried out centrally, while they did offer the opportunity to the district officers to learn on-the-job at the Head Office and for the team building, given that the ECB had only recently been established and the staff had been newly recruited.

During the conduct of the first National Council Elections in December 2007, the issue of voters having to stand in a long queue cropped up. To accelerate the process without compromising the integrity and address the problem caused by manual checking against the voters' list, the ECB introduced the Electoral Roll Search System (ERSS), an Excel based application for the verification of the registered voters at the polling station. The ERSS was very effective and user friendly. It is in fact still used in the conduct of elections and is highly applauded by the polling station officials.

This is actually a good lesson: that a simple application can be just as, if not even more useful than a high-tech solution if the cause, problem and desired output are clearly stated and understood by the user, manager and technician. It encouraged innovation and experimentation.

Taking advantage of upcoming technologies, in 2010 the BEDS paved the way to the Bhutan Electoral Roll Management System (BERMS), a web-based application integrated with state-of-the-art biometric based authentication system for the management and identification of registered voters. A pilot phase on the usage of the biometric based authentication of the voters at few polling stations was conducted in the local government elections 2011 with both positive and negative feedback. The BERMS as a system was found useful and is very much in use although it needs further refinement and upgrading. However, the piloted biometric experiment has met with mixed results related mostly to the unfamiliarity of polling station officers as well as voters leading to no significant saving of time in the polling process, which was one of the main objectives. Therefore, the biometric experiment has not been taken up further.

The BERMS has been further refined to decentralize most of the functions to be carried out at the district level and was successfully deployed during the local Government elections in 2016. Further upgradation of the BERMS is in the pipeline to address the shortcomings including high usage of storage space and memory, having been developed and deployed on a proprietary platform, leading to licensing issues and lack of user friendliness in the management of data at the backend.

Voter Education and Information

The voter education and information policy, presented in the Bhutan Election Education and Training Strategy (BEETS) and revised for each election, continues to be the basis for voter education aimed at a specific election, as well as the period between elections. The BEETS provides for the use of various means to reach, educate, inspire and prepare voters and also urges the use of ICT in view of its potential to reach the maximum in an effective manner.

In view of the small size of the population, albeit scattered and spread over geographically challenging terrain, efforts are made to reach voter education and information to every community with sessions held in a classroom mode by trained officials and trained volunteers. Mass media forms are used extensively with studies finding radio as the media form with the maximum reach corroborated with the feedback of

radio being the most important source of public information, especially for the rural electorate.

Given the increase in the number of Internet users among the educated Bhutanese voters, one innovation has been the adoption of the e-learning platform to introduce the e-learning Virtual Ambience for Learning and Understanding the Electoral System (VALUES) in 2014. This has met with limited success, but provides the basis to further develop and customize it for different age categories and varying use including for students as a learning resource.

Personalized Voter Services

A mobile application has been developed for registered voters to check their information including their polling station details or status as postal voter. The app can be downloaded and used by a voter.

Similarly, Google API has been integrated with the ECB official website so that a voter can access Google map to check the exact location of his or her polling station location.

It is expected that the uptake of these recent apps would see an increase during the upcoming Parliamentary elections.

Social Media

The social media, like the world over, is used widely and is indeed a powerful medium which can be used by all stakeholders in the electoral process. Political parties and candidates use social media to reach their campaign messages to the electorate and for communications. Voters use it to know more about the parties and candidates as well as to engage in discussion and debate. The election management body and the election officials use it as a means to inform the general public and as a speedy and effective means of communication in the conduct of elections. However, it can also be abused and manipulated to draw undue advantage for vested interests with implications to a level playing field, crucial for free and fair elections.

In Bhutan, a regulatory framework and policy has been put in place, but by the very nature of this media there are challenges in terms of practical implementation. Nevertheless, the *ECB Social Media Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2015*, provide a legal framework, outline accountability and responsibility of its use for election and campaign purposes and remind stakeholders, including users, as well as

the ISPs, media houses and reporters on the code of conduct while reinforcing the role of the media arbitrator and the mechanism for reporting of violations. Here, too, innovation and thinking outside the box are necessary, as proven by the appointment of one of the most popular Bhutanese social media user as a social media monitor attached to the media arbitrator's office during the last elections, which have had some positive implementation impact.

Electronic Voting Machine (EVM)

The EVM, as a result of continued hands-on exposure and training voters and election officers alike, has today become an accepted norm in Bhutanese elections. Voter awareness of the EVM and its usage continues to be carried out through various means of communication. Encouraging and facilitating its use for elections in schools, institutes and entities ranging from election of the speaker of Parliament to election of the representatives of the vegetable vendor's association foster a fundamental understanding and abiding respect for the EVM. The benefits in terms of time and costs, besides avoidance of human errors, and above all the secrecy of the ballot being upheld and immediate counting of results in a transparent and convincing manner become real and practically demonstrated.

An initiative with a long-term perspective is the introduction of Democracy Clubs in interested schools and educational institutions, which conduct school elections and organize various activities to explore and learn about democracy and elections, including the use of the EVM, voter registration, etc. Based on these Democracy Clubs, the Bhutan Children's Parliament has been also initiated to provide a forum for learning and engaging in democratic practices from a young age.

Election Results

In Bhutan, with the very first parliamentary election, the election results were counted in the polling stations and collated, compiled and communicated by the returning officers to the National Results Center immediately after the polling hours on the poll day itself, with the entire process covered live by the media and witnessed by the candidates and representatives. The election results are declared the next day: a practice followed ever since and a well-appreciated

tradition in Bhutanese elections, although not without challenges in ensuring efficiency, reliability and correctness.

In 2011, the SMS Gateway, a SMS based Poll Information Reporting System was developed and introduced for the collation and compilation of the election results and the communication of poll day reports via SMS within the shortest span of time. The SMS Gateway facilitated the collation and compilation of the election results and the poll day reports on the poll day itself, but many users found it complicated and hence failed to feed in accurate data on time. Fortunately, it was only being tried out as a secondary means and the primary source for receiving the results was the earlier tried and tested practice of telephone, fax and e-mail.

To improve the user friendliness and harness the full benefits of the SMS Gateway, the ECB developed mobile applications to take care of the lengthy SMS messages and codes at the backend which were the main cause for the human errors. It was again tried in the second local Government elections in 2016, with better results, but there were still few human errors and delays caused by the breakdown in 3G services in some parts of the country. The mobile applications minimized the rush and confusion in tabulation and generating the necessary reports and simplified the usage of the SMS gateway for the election results and the poll day reports via SMS. Customized tutorials have been developed for the officials and measures are being put in place to ensure that counting supervisors are IT savvy and confident in the use of the SMS Gateway.

Pipeline Projects

The ECB is currently exploring avenues for the introduction of the ICT in the following areas:

1. Nomination Filing System to facilitate candidates as well as to build a proper digital database for reliable paperless archives and easy retrieval of the nomination documents filed.
2. Preparation and printing of ballot papers to standardize the ballot papers for the EVM Machines, as well as for use in the postal ballot system.
3. Registry of political parties maintained by the ECB, in particular maintaining information on party membership in view of the legal requirement for the National Council

and local governments to be nonpartisan, and for monitoring the financial and fund status of the registered political parties including election campaign finance as mandated to the ECB.

4. Inventory of the Electronic Voting Machines for maintenance of full details and usage history of each EVM.
5. Inventory of officials appointed on election duty including the national observers, returning officers, presiding and polling station officers, counting supervisors and assistants with full details of each official's performance for recording as well as long-term human resource development and management purposes.

Besides these new initiatives, the existing programs and apps also need regular updating and maintenance to keep up with the changing needs and challenges of the time. Efforts are also being made to decentralize functions, responsibility and authority to the districts to the maximum possible for which it is required to build the district capability, both hard and soft. These would be the main area of focus for the proposed project with AWEB in 2019.

Concluding Thoughts

The real choice in terms of technology in elections is to identify those aspects of election operations where technology offers the most benefits in terms of saving costs, time, automating data, intensive, laborious and repetitive tasks that are prone to human error besides enhancing transparency in the process which would foster public trust and confidence in the system and the results.

From our experience in Bhutan we find that technology can be a vital asset in the conduct of free and fair elections. Constant monitoring and learning, revision and upgrading in response to actual experience in the field is required and there must be a common understanding between technician and user of the problem to be addressed, the field realities and what the final output must be able to deliver.

Of critical importance, therefore, is that technological options should not only be economic, effective and efficient, but that they should uphold transparency, timeliness, reliability, secrecy of ballot, unbiased objectivity, due access and easy

retrieval. Above all, efforts must be made to keep voters, political parties and candidates and the general public well-informed.

This age of ICT offers limitless possibilities to put efficient and incorruptible systems in place,

not only in terms of election administration, but for governance as a whole, which could serve to reach the unreached, inspire public trust and encourage wider participation in the democratic process.

About the author:

Deki PEMA serves as Election Commissioner. She was first appointed to the office in 2006 when the Election Commission of Bhutan was established to fulfil the unprecedented and privileged responsibility of preparing for and conducting the historic first-ever Parliamentary Elections in the Kingdom of Bhutan in 2008.

She started formal education in her birthplace of Shompangkha in South Bhutan and thereafter attended boarding school, the Punakha Central School in West-Central Bhutan. She graduated from Sherubtse College (University of Delhi) in 1990 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and thereafter received the postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Development and MSc in Agricultural Economics from the erstwhile Wye College, University of London, United Kingdom.

Successful in the 1990 Royal Civil Service Commission Officer Selection Examinations, she joined the Bhutanese civil service and started work as a Trainee Officer in the eastern district of Trashigang, where she also worked as a stringer for Kuensel, then the only national newspaper in the country. Thereafter, she served in the Policy and Planning Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, where she was involved in pioneering strategic planning exercises, coordinating development projects and undertook policy research related in particular to the renewable natural resources sector and rural livelihoods, whilst also working on several other national assignments.

Deki Pema was reappointed in the Election Commission of Bhutan in 2010 and 2015 and is a member of the Delimitation Commission of Bhutan. She received the Geyntag and Bura Karp, the symbol of office for Bhutanese women awarded by His Majesty the King of Bhutan, on the 14th of July 2016.

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ECI: USE OF TECHNOLOGY FOR ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION, TRANSPARENCY, EFFICIENCY AND CREDIBILITY IN ELECTIONS



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Abstract:

The Election Commission of India uses Information Technology (IT) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in a big way in all aspects of conduct of elections, viz., to maintain error-free electoral rolls, to conduct elections efficiently, to ensure better services to stakeholders, to provide access to information for greater transparency, to effectively redress complaints and grievances of the stakeholders and to create awareness and build capacity of stakeholders.

The ECI is leveraging the use of ICT in all areas of election management and have more than 40 active IT applications put in place. This paper presents some of the major Information and Communications Technology systems developed and used by the ECI to be used by all stakeholders.

Keywords: Election Commission of India, Information and Communications Technology, electronic voting machine, ICT Vision 2025, election management

Abstract:

Comisia Electorală din India (ECI) utilizează Tehnologia Informației (IT) și Tehnologia Informației și Comunicațiilor (TIC) într-o foarte mare măsură în toate aspectele legate de desfășurarea alegerilor, și anume menținerea unor registre electorale fără erori, organizarea eficientă a alegerilor, asigurarea unor servicii mai bune pentru toți actorii implicați în alegeri, pentru a oferi acces la informații în vederea unei transparențe ridicate, pentru a soluționa în mod eficient plângerile și nemulțumirile actorilor implicați în alegeri și pentru a crește gradul de conștientizare și de capacitate a actorilor implicați în procesul electoral.

ECI folosește TIC în toate domeniile de management electoral și are mai mult de 40 de aplicații IT care sunt utilizate într-un mod activ. Această lucrare prezintă unele dintre cele mai importante sisteme de tehnologia informației și comunicațiilor dezvoltate și utilizate de ECI pentru a fi folosite de actorii implicați în procesul electoral.

Cuvinte-cheie: Comisia Electorală din India, Tehnologia Informației și Comunicațiilor, mașină electronică de vot, Viziunea TIC 2025, management electoral

India, the largest democracy in the world, is the 7th largest (by area) and the second most populous country in the world, with a population of over 1.3 billion. India is one of the world's oldest civilizations, yet a very young nation with more than 50% of the population under the age of 35. India is a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic. The Constitution of India adopted a parliamentary form of government. The Parliament consists of the President of India and the two Houses — Rajya Sabha (Upper House) and Lok Sabha (Lower House). The Election Commission of India (ECI) is a constitutionally established autonomous body responsible for administering all the electoral processes in India. Under the supervision of the commission, free, fair, peaceful, transparent and credible elections have been held in India at regular intervals for more than 65 years. As provided in the Constitution, the Election Commission has the power of superintendence, direction and control regarding preparation and revision of electoral and conducts all elections of the National Parliament and State Legislative Assembly and Council, and of the office of the President and Vice President of India.

The Election Commission is a multi-member body with a chief election commissioner and two election commissioners. The Election Commission decides the election schedules and oversees for the conduct of general elections and bye-elections. It prepares, maintains and periodically updates the electoral rolls, supervises the nominations of candidates, registers political parties, monitors the election campaigns, including funding and expenditure of candidates. It also facilitates the coverage of the election process by the media, undertakes campaigns/programmes for spreading awareness among the voters to increase their participation in the democratic processes as well as on the electoral processes, organizes the polling stations to ensure easy accessibility to the electors, and conducts secure counting of votes and the declaration of results of each election.

Elections in India are one of the most challenging processes in the country's democratic tradition for the sheer scale, size, diversity and complexity. The holding of free and fair elections in India has always been a matter of pride and honour for the Election Commission, apart from being a constitutionally mandated duty. There are about 1 million polling stations spread over 36 states and union territories of India consisting of more than 866 million voters. The ECI engages about 5 million personnel and about 2 million

security personnel for the conduct of general elections of Parliament.

The Election Commission has always been proactive in use of technology. Keeping pace with the rapid changes in technology, the ECI has regularly introduced IT to share information and knowledge with stakeholders for improved transparency and credibility in electoral process. The ECI replaced the paper ballots with Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) on a pilot basis in 16 assembly constituencies, comprising 2,930 polling stations in legislative assembly elections in three states held in 1998. Finally, EVMs were used at all Lower House of Parliament constituencies in the 14th general elections held in the year 2004. For the last 19 years, EVMs have been used in three national Parliament elections, in the years 2004, 2009 and 2014, and 107 elections of state legislative assemblies. Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) was introduced in 2013. It enables a voter to verify that his/her vote has gone to the intended candidate only. A printer is attached to the EVM and kept into a voting compartment which prints serial no., name and symbol of the candidate for whom a voter has voted. This printed slip remains exposed for seven seconds under a transparent window and gets cut automatically and falls into a drop box which remains sealed. The ECI has now decided to use VVPATs in all polling stations in all future elections.

The Election Commission uses Information Technology (IT) and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in a big way in all aspects of conduct of elections, viz., to maintain error-free electoral rolls, to conduct elections efficiently, to ensure better services to stakeholders, to provide access to information for greater transparency, to effectively redress complaints and grievances of the stakeholders and to create awareness and build capacity of stakeholders.

The ECI is leveraging the use of ICT in all areas of election management and has more than 40 active IT applications put in place. A database of over 866 million voters of India being maintained in a single Unified National Photo Electoral Roll Data (UNPER), it ensures that getting all electoral services is a click away on National Voters Services Portal *nvsp.in* and *eci.gov.in*. Online applications may be made by any citizen of the country for inclusion, change of address or modification in records which works on ERO Net, a national IT application for all electoral registration officers. All polling stations are mapped on the Google map along with the voter list and details of

election officials. Integrated Contact Centre is a unique concept which, through its stratified structure of national, state and district contact centres, provides access – through toll-free number, e-mail, mobile app, SMS and fax – to all citizens to get information, give suggestions and get grievance redressed. Other popular IT applications are National Grievance Service System (Portal), Single Window Clearance System, SMS based search of names in electoral roll and other services, Poll Monitoring and Counting of Results, EVM tracking, webcasting of elections and so on.

With 100% use of EVM and VVPAT in all the polling stations and setting up IT applications with successful quality infrastructure, incident-free and transparent elections could be conducted and results could be compiled in just a few hours rather than a number of days, which used to happen in the past with paper ballots. The ECI website was robust enough to handle 480 million hits on the 16th of May 2014 – the day national Parliament election results were declared to display live trends and results to general public. During recent state assemblies elections trends and result dissemination observed 68 million hits in a single day on the 19th of May 2016. During nonelection period, National Voter Service Portal (NVSP) of the ECI receives also about 6 to 8 hundred thousand of hits every day. Through NVSP, highly efficient and speedy facility for searching their name in existing Unified National Photo Electoral Roll Data is provided to electors, citizens, political parties and other stakeholders.

ICT Vision 2025 of the ECI, launched in May 2017, envisages implementing the mission mode *e-Governance* projects for ICT revolution in the election process in India. With rollout of ICT Vision 2025, projects like Unified IT Applications, Centralised Portal & Applications, GIS & Data Analytics, mobile applications, Social Media Solutions, Knowledge Management, Learning Management System, National Grievance Service System, along with Integrated Contact Centre, Reengineering of Election Processes, Transformation of IT Divisions, Integrated Back Office Solutions, etc., are ready to achieve the goal to handle the gigantic electoral and political volume of India.

The main objectives of the use of Information and Communication Technology in elections by the ECI are:

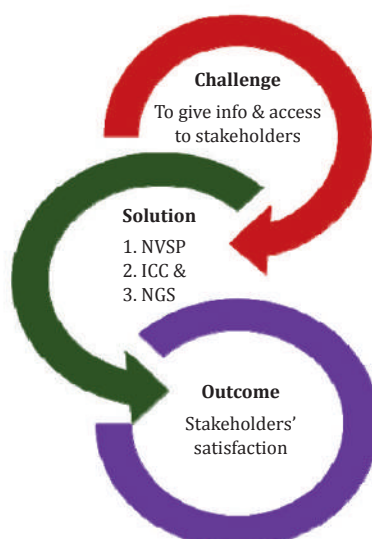
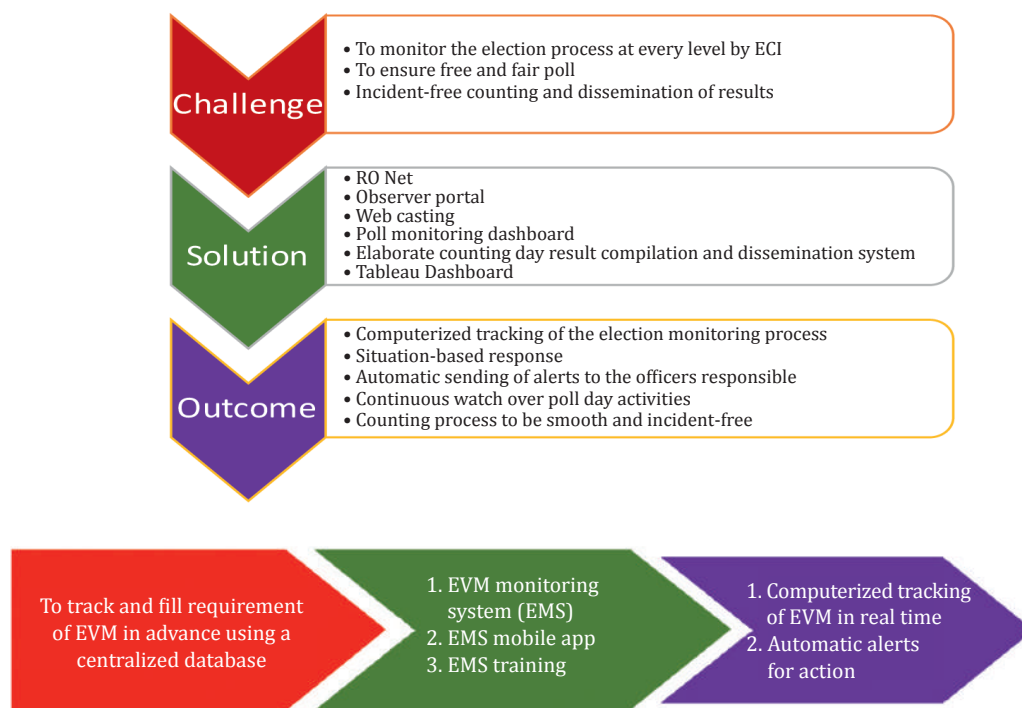
- to maintain error-free electoral rolls;
- to conduct elections efficiently;
- to ensure better services to stakeholders;
- to provide access to information with greater transparency;

- to redress complaints and grievances of the stakeholders;
- to create awareness and build capacity of stakeholders.

To achieve the motto: “No voter to be left behind” and “Every vote counts”, the ECI is using technology in all the phases of elections encompassing and addressing the needs of all stakeholders as may be clear from the details given below:

1. Pre-election phase: to maintain error-free electoral rolls:
 - a. services to stakeholders;
 - b. electoral rolls management;
 - c. electoral awareness, literacy and education;
2. Election phase: to conduct elections efficiently:
 - a. election material and manpower management;
 - b. EVMs and VVPATs;
 - c. electoral confidence building and security arrangement;
 - d. observance of code of conduct, election expenditure by the candidate and political party;
 - e. conduct of poll including one way electronically transmitted postal ballots;
 - f. counting of votes;
 - g. dissemination of election results;
3. Post-election phase:
 - a. dissemination of electoral data and statistical information;
4. Integrity and security for use of ICT in elections:
 - a. standardization of security protocol for ICT in various election processes related to databases;
 - b. maintaining secure and reliable data centre;
 - c. electronic communications and transactions and use of the Internet protocol;
5. Research and development continuum for ICT in election process.

To overcome the challenges and to obtain, store and share data, information and knowledge with stakeholders, viz., citizens, electors, political parties, media, civil societies organizations, governmental agencies, the Election Commission of India uses technological solutions in almost every activity of electioneering. The charts below indicate the major challenges of election processes, the IT solutions solving them and benefiting as end result.

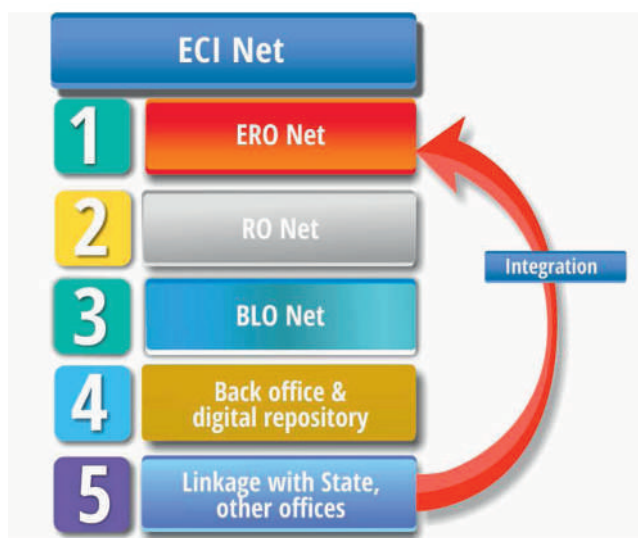


Overview of IT Applications in the ECI

Some of the major Information and Communications Technology systems developed and used by the ECI to be used by all stakeholders are described below:

ECI Net

The ECI Net is an umbrella system to integrate processes of the Election Commission of India. The system enables National Rollout of the **e-Services** (NRES) to stakeholders. The electoral process has two distinct components, first is the maintenance of healthy Electoral Rolls (ERs), and second is the efficient conduct of elections. Each of these two components is proposed to be integrated at the national level and managed through **ECI Net** using Information Technology (IT). **ERO Net** is for ERs management and **RO Net** is for assisting in the conduct of elections. ECI Net also envisages **e-office** to automate process flow in the ECI along with digitization of all information & records. The system will enable extending various services to external stakeholders. The system will also help in improving efficiency and decision making of internal stakeholders.



ERO Net

ERO Net brings in seamless processing of forms, easy handling of the databases, regular and simpler way of monitoring the ERs activities and maintaining the ERs health. The ERO Net system has three major components: 1) **ERO Net** – links all ERs of nation; 2) **UNPER** – Unified National Photo Electoral Rolls Data; 3) **NVSP** – citizen electoral services. To provide services on NVSP

at the national level, data exchange services are deployed at each state. To integrate ERs at the national level as Unified National Photo Electoral Rolls Data, the ERs data is managed and maintained on state server by using ERMS of respective states. The ERO Net system provides a unified ERMS (Electoral Roll Management System) service at national level on a secure cloud using UNPER. The data exchange services will still be there to maintain the ERs both at national and state servers. The state servers will have mirror image of the latest synchronized data on which all operations related to ERs may be done at state level. The state servers will also act as disaster recovery remote servers for UNPER.

National Voter Service Portal (NVSP)

ECI NVSP is a portal for citizens to register and to get all the information, knowledge and services related to electoral registration and electoral rolls. The elector search IT tool has been developed for the use by anyone to search their name in electoral roll and get to know the polling station where they are expected to cast their votes during election. Considering that the Indian electorate is about 866 million in size, this IT application has hosted on cloud big data of multilingual nature. The electors can file online the electoral forms in 14 Indian languages.

The information and services provided on NVSP are the electoral search, an online application to get registered in ERs, to correct details and delete entry in the ERs, to know about the polling stations, constituency details and the officers responsible to maintain ERs.

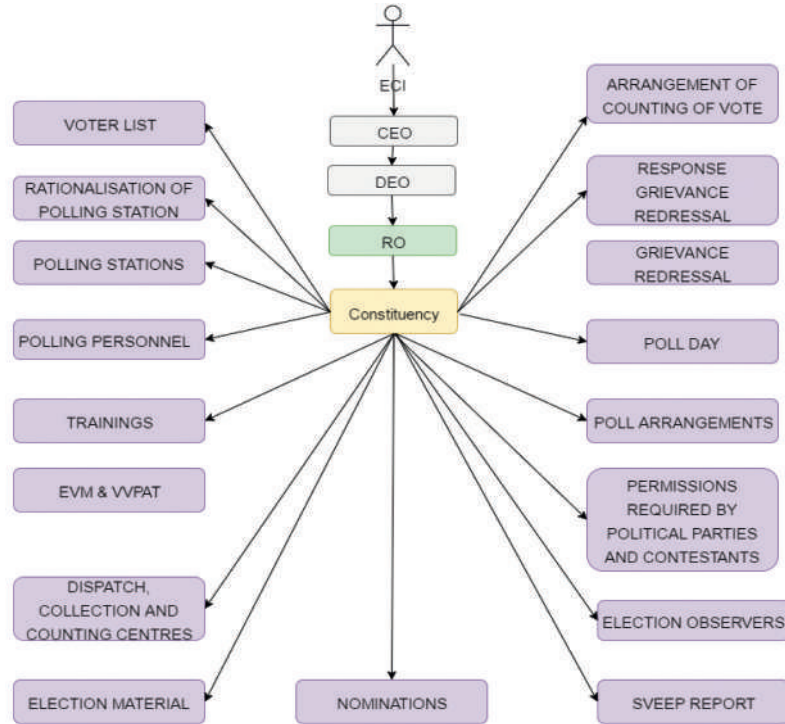
ECI Portal/Website

The web portal of the ECI is the gateway to all relevant information and knowledge to the stakeholders. It contains information on latest happenings in the ECI, the knowledge and information about past elections, historical data in election results, election laws and rules, instructions of the ECI, information on trainings and capacity building with useful link to various other portals such as NVSP, Voter Awareness, Voter Education and Electoral Participation, Citizen Corner, Political Parties, Candidates, Election Expenditure Monitoring, Model Code of Conduct, Electoral Rolls, etc.

RO Net

RO Net is a comprehensive system for conducting elections for the returning officer and other election related functionaries. It is a network of backend systems which links up to a user

friendly frontend in the shape of a web portal and smart mobile app/SMS. All the functionaries are tasked with effective conduct of elections. The flow chart is shown below:



Integrated Contact Centre (ICC)

ICC is a seamless and integrated **Help Desk – Call Centre – Single Window System** for all stakeholders like the citizens, electors, political parties, candidates, media and election officials at the national, state and district level to get quality and time bound services for election related matters. The Integrated Contact Centre has three tiers – National Contact Centre (NCC), State Contact Centre (SCC) and District Contact Centres (DCC). The roles of the Contact Centres are:

- take all the calls at 1800111950/1950 received from citizens on all working days;
- respond to queries/issues/status of grievance over the phone;
- lodge the grievance on the NGS portal and monitor its timely disposal;
- NCC's role is to transfer regional language calls through IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) or phone to the respective State Contact Centre;
- maintain the call log register.

National Grievance Service System (Portal)

National Grievance Service System (Portal) is a single window platform to link all election officers to provide information, to take suggestions and to register complaints from stakeholders received through calls, e-mails, SMS, by post and website, by providing unified access in an integrated and time-bound manner. NGS portal provides unified access to all election officers for citizen grievance redressal.

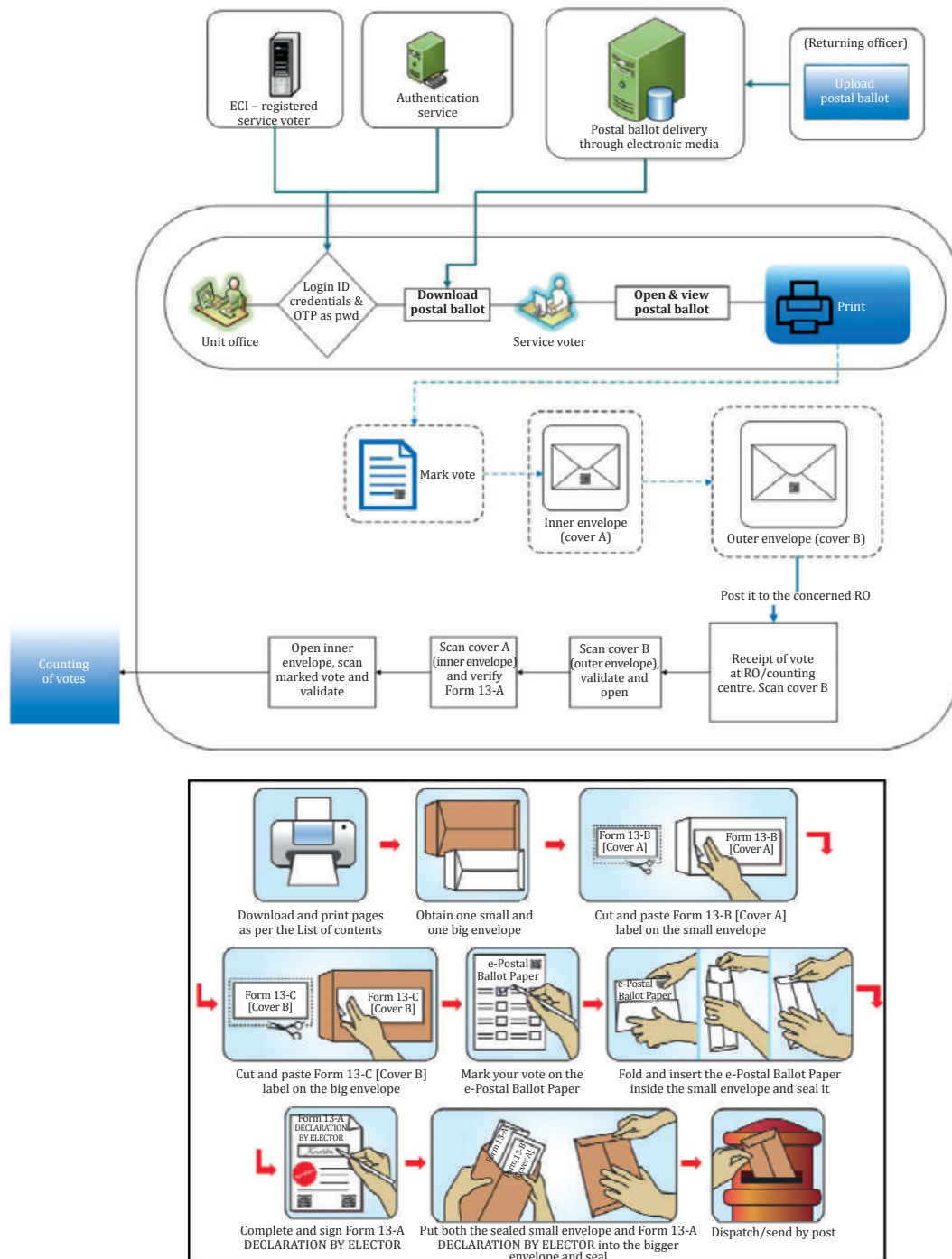
Online Service Voters Registration System

The purpose of the online system is to provide a convenient and easy-to-use online system for service personnel to apply online to become service voters through their record officers. The system is based on a relational database with registration and acceptance of forms for service voter. This software system will be a web application

system for registration of service voters by the nodal officer of concerned forces. This system is designed to allow the nodal/record/unit officers to register the service personnel as a service voter online, they can regularly update the information like: updating/recording unit office details of each service voter, modification of service voter details, notifying those service voters who are about to retire or are no more in service for some reasons.

Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS)

The ETPBS has been developed and implemented to establish one-way electronic transmission of blank postal ballots to the service voter, saving enormous amount of time, but expecting return journey of cast postal ballots through regular postal system. It is in line with the decision of the Election Commission taken as the first step towards e-voting mechanism. The flow chart of the process and how to use ETPBS are given below:



BLO NET

It is a digital module aimed at ensuring probity and accountability in Booth Level Officer (BLO) verification process and to avoid delay in receiving the remarks of BLOs on lakh of

application during summary revision period through mobile phone based communications, viz., SMS for normal mobile or GPRS data transfer on an Android smartphone.

Generation of checklist for every application containing data entered, probable duplicate entries, proofs of verified document



BLO visits the applicant's residence for verification of claims/objection, probable duplicate checking and proof collection



Submission of online filled in checklist through mobile app/hard copy of checklist, reporting outcome code by SMS

Political Party Information and Registration

It is about the use of political party registration division within the Election Commission. New political parties are entered and assigned with some symbol and existing parties can be deleted or edited. The information on List of political parties, election symbol, constitutions of political parties, organizational election, recognition and derecognition of parties, political party disputes, merger, etc., political party contribution reports, expenditure reports, annual audit reports, miscellaneous orders, notices, etc., transparency guidelines applicable to political parties and current instructions relevant to political parties are made available in the public domain.

Web Portal for Candidates

This portal provides comprehensive information required by the candidates about various forms, the legal provision on qualification and disqualifications to become a candidate, security deposit and the process pertaining to filing conditions for an election. It helps contesting candidates to know salient provisions of election law and procedure so that they may not experience any difficulty or inconvenience in connection with their candidatures. This web portal also creates a static website (html only) to display candidate affidavits to the public to give access to personal details of candidates which have been provided in the affidavit as per law. The affidavits of candidates in the past elections are also made available to general public in .pdf format.

Election Expenditure Monitoring System

Online monitoring and tracking system for election expenditure accounts lodged by the candidates during elections to check for its correctness. The system helps in the scrutiny of the accounts submitted as per the defects found. Salient features of the system are the following:

1. monitors candidate's total expenses;
2. monitors funds given by political party to the candidate;
3. monitors funds given by others to the candidate;
4. monitors expenses understated or not;
5. monitors candidate's expenses exceeding ceiling amount or not;
6. EEMS dashboard with graphs, charts and MIS analysis reports.

Election Related Complaint Monitoring System

It is the Election Time Public Grievance Redressal System, thought for prompt disposal of any complaint regarding conduct of elections, violation of model code of conduct by the candidates and political parties, sharing of information on election expenses, instances of electors' inducement and intimidation apart from getting the ERs or polling station related information, suggestions and redressal of the individual grievances. It is a comprehensive system with multiple modes for receiving complaints, information, suggestions and queries (online, by phone, e-mail, mobile application, fax, post, SMS) and online processing of complaints. Monitoring and

alert mechanism features are also built in and the complainants can track and see action taken on their complaints.

Single Window Clearance System for Permission Related to Campaigning

It is a single window clearance system for candidates and political parties to apply for various permissions such as permissions for public meetings, rallies, use of vehicles, establishing temporary election offices, use of loudspeakers, helicopters and helipads, etc. It serves for applying, processing, granting and monitoring permissions for the candidates and political parties by respective authority. It uses IT to link all authorities on a single platform to streamline the process of disposing requests in a very transparent manner on first come first served basis. Also, the information of availability of a place, etc., is offered well before applying reducing chances of dispute, if any.

Vehicles Hiring and Deployment System

It is a vehicle management system with the facility of issuing requisition letters for vehicles, maintaining vehicle details such as address, mobile number and bank details of owner and driver, transfer of vehicles from one district to another district, etc. It helps the citizens to promptly know about requisitioning of their vehicles for election purposes and smoothen the process of payments for vehicle hiring.

Web Casting and CCTV at Polling Stations

Framework for web casting of video picked up from within the polling station has been created using open source software tools to display the happenings in the polling station. Where connectivity is not available, CCTV is used to display the video stream from inside the polling booth. It keeps a check on untoward activities and helps bringing about complete transparency in the voting process. Being a live telecast, it builds confidence in the entire poll process and brings in transparency in the poll process. It may be used for *awareness* of the users as well.

SMS Poll-Day Events and Queue Information System

A comprehensive system with the use of mobile technology has been developed to send, receive, monitor and share the information related to the activities that have to be done on the poll day by the different officers engaged in elections apart from collecting the information on the important events taking place at the polling station. The information and reports for the poll day monitoring have been customized for users to submit/view in real time using mobile phones through mobile web interface techniques. It also helps the officials working in the field to get the alert messages and the decisions taken straight away on their mobiles within few seconds so that timely action can be taken providing a mechanism of smart governance of elections. The polling station information such as voters turn out and status of queue is shared with the stakeholders on web, alerts and SMS.

Precounting GENESYS – General Election System (Web)

This portal is for entering the information of contesting candidates. The project involves capturing of election related information (precounting) from all over the country during the general elections (parliamentary as well as assembly elections and bye-election) held in India, processing the same, satisfying various statutory requirements, and publishing it for public dissemination.

Salient features:

1. to capture information (precounting) from state headquarters, district headquarters and to disseminate the same through the official website;
2. to capture and display the scanned copies of affidavits submitted by the contesting candidates along with nomination papers and ballot papers;
3. there are various exception reports that can help the state's CEO to monitor the data entry.

Counting Application (Window Application with Web Services)

This application is used on the counting day only. The counting application is designed for data entry and calculation of EVM votes & postal

ballot votes polled for each contesting candidate, round-wise votes from each counting centre. Salient features are:

1. capturing information round-wise votes from counting centres;
2. capturing and finalizing postal ballot information;
3. final result declaration of AC;
4. all data entry operations are available at the RO level;
5. the system provides various administrative reports at DEO & CEO levels, which are extremely helpful in ensuring correctness of information at various stages.

Trends and Result Management System

Static html page generation for trends and results dissemination as per the records is being entered in the counting application. The project involves creating html files for trends and results dissemination during the general elections (parliamentary as well as assembly elections and bye-elections) held in India. Creating static files and hosting them for the public helps minimise the database access.

Index Card and Statistical Report Generation

Statistical reports are generated displaying analysis of the election results. The index card application for election is meant for entering complete election related information like candidate-wise nomination, rejection, male – female voters/electors, etc. The user can get the statistical reports for current election as well as past election.

Tableau Dashboard

Interactive dashboards on Tableau platform were presented for public use to disseminate election results of the five poll states with similar elections of 2012. The users get constituency analysis with respect to:

1. participation of electors (constituencies with more female electors, constituencies by slabs of voter turnout, turnout by poll days); and
2. candidates (gender-wise participants, winners and major competitors);

3. analysing the performance of political parties on seats won by them;
4. the percentage vote share in the state and the profile (age and social category) of candidates fielded by them have been included;
5. candidates have been mapped to their constituencies and the votes polled in their favour.

The users can download data, crosstab, PDF and images for analysing the elections further at their end.

Geographic Information System (GIS)

GIS technology is effectively being harnessed in helping the stakeholders to locate their polling station using GIS tools and applications made available on web and on mobile app. The ECI has mapped all polling stations on GIS platform and the use of GIS is being now extended to the mapping of polling stations' boundaries to facilitate easy access to polling stations located in the nearest building.

The ECI on Social Media

Since younger generation is social media savvy, the voter education promotion and ethical voting education is carried out through social media like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Training sessions and public addresses are delivered through YouTube as open data. During elections, WhatsApp groups are created and used effectively for immediate sharing of information.

Mobile apps to share information among stakeholders are:

- ❖ **ECI APP** – the ECI app is a single installation app to begin with, making the initiation simple and clutter-free;
- ❖ **ECI 360** – is a mobile app (IOS and Android) to be used by ECI, CEO, DEO, RO, electorate, candidates, political parties, the supervisor, PRO, SSP/COP, election teams and the media. ECI 360 helps bringing transparency, accountability and empowers the citizens regarding the elections and voting;
- ❖ **Matdata** – an app for voters' facilitation to search in electoral roll, location of polling station, etc.;
- ❖ **EASY – Elector Assistance System** – it helps to know all the information about electoral rolls, election officers and polling

station; to get voter slip with key map to reach the polling station;

- ❖ **E-Netra** – a unified app for information sharing on violations of Code of conduct by political parties and candidates;
- ❖ **Matdaan** – an app for poll day monitoring of events at PS and its sharing;
- ❖ **ELECOM** – an Android app for releasing election news/press release;
- ❖ **E-Counting** – an Android app for viewing counting trends/result.

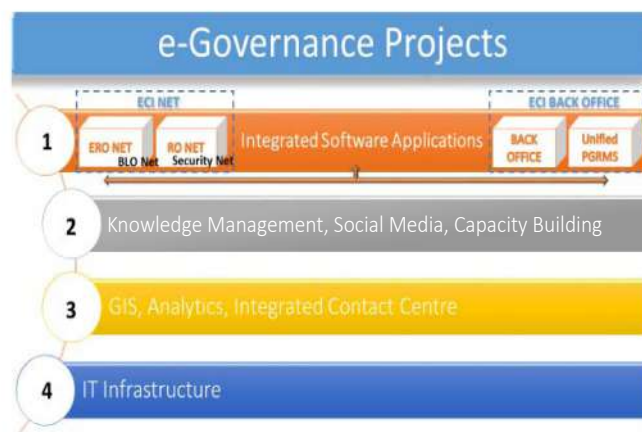
A Way Forward

ICT Vision 2025 of the ECI released in May 2017 provides integrated single window view of services to its multiple stakeholders through diverse delivery channels in an inclusive manner and by adopting contemporary paradigms in e-Governance. The key guiding principles are:

1. to take good standard of Election Commission to the next level of electoral governance using e-Governance;
2. to adopt technology to reach out to citizens and enlist their participation in electoral process;
3. to provide enhanced e-services to external and internal stakeholders;
4. to build secure IT infrastructure in all areas of the electoral process;
5. to recognise, nurture and associate partners and institutions within and outside India to bring changes in processes/technology for more transparency;

6. to strive for adoption of innovative measures in achieving excellence.

ICT Vision 2025 has four e-Governance projects as given below.



The challenge to conduct elections in India in a fair, free, transparent and smooth manner is quite formidable. With over 1.3 billion people and more than 866 million electors, India is not only the largest democracy in the world, but a country known for its cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity, with a secular and federal policy binding people together. You can add to this the geographical diversity, the socioeconomic variability, and vast gaps in information and knowledge awareness. Pragmatic use of technology, therefore, has immensely helped the ECI to keep up the high standards in conducting credible elections.

About the author:

Achal Kumar JOTI took over as Chief Election Commissioner of India on 6th July, 2017. Earlier he served as Election Commissioner since 13th May, 2015. During his tenure as Election Commissioner, state assembly elections in the states of Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa were successfully conducted. Some of the initiatives undertaken during these elections are IT initiatives including the one for service voters through Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot System (ETPBS) along with National Voter Service Portal (NVSP) – an e-portal for easy registration of eligible voters, voter awareness and educational initiatives and stringent expenditure monitoring mechanism, etc. Previously, he has served as a long time Civil Servant of Indian Administrative Service (1975 Batch). He has got a rich experience of 42 years in public administration.

JUST ON THE EDGE: TECHNOLOGIES ON VOTE ACCOUNTING AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN PORTUGAL

An electronic enrolment system supporting manual operations, a manual based vote counting system feeding two electronic devices. And we go on discussing, mainly because we have citizens voting abroad.



João Manuel Rosa de ALMEIDA

Member of the National Electoral Commission, Portugal

Abstract:

My purpose is simply to present you with a brief account of how things are in my country, centered on the issue of vote counting, but in general taking account of the use of technology to make electoral processes more transparent and reliable.

“Just on the edge” is not a thriller, but the real situation that, somehow, inhibits the step forward to the adoption of electronic vote accounting systems – to the full understanding of the situation, let me tell you, briefly, how we account the votes.

Keywords: *Portuguese elections, votes accounting, election chart, electoral enrolment, candidates lists, e-voting, voting abroad, elections and technologies*

Abstract:

Scopul meu este de a prezenta o radiografie în ceea ce privește modalitatea de numărare a voturilor în țara mea, dar luând în principal în calcul maniera în care este folosită tehnologia în vederea unei mai mari transparențe și fiabilități a proceselor electorale.

„Pe muchie” nu este un thriller, ci situația reală care, într-un fel, inhibă pasul către adoptarea sistemelor electronice de contabilizare a voturilor – iar pentru înțelegerea deplină a situației, voi prezenta pe scurt modul în care noi numărăm voturile.

Cuvinte-cheie: *alegeri în Portugalia, numărarea voturilor, grafic electoral, înregistrarea alegătorilor, liste de candidați, vot electronic, vot în străinătate, alegeri și tehnologii*

How We Count Votes

I start with a detail: we vote, in all elections with multiple candidates, on a single ballot with closed lists. And this has some limitations, of course, but on the accounting perspective, it is truly effective.

Our voting organization includes about 12.5 thousand polling stations, each one run by five citizens appointed by the candidates and serving as electoral officers¹.

More than 100 citizens and less than 1,500 are assigned to a polling station (an average of 750 citizens) and, as we have a low turnout, no polling station has more than 800 ballots to account.

Let's make a highlight on this to avoid misunderstandings: we have less than 9.4 million citizens entitled to vote living at home and a bit more than 300 thousand living abroad. Well, some 5 to 6 million of Portuguese citizens are living abroad and we estimate that between 10 and 15% of the non-voters are enrolled as home residents – so, they just don't vote.

As soon as the polling station closes (7 pm), the ballots are checked, sorted in batches and counted. The result is registered on a form signed by all the electoral officers and the delegates of the candidates (if they want) and published outside the door.

Null and claimed votes are set apart to be presented to a specific assembly, chaired by a judge, that will meet two days later and decide their validity, will sum the partial results and proclaim the elected candidates (changes may be relevant only if there are very close numbers and, mainly, in little constituencies).

The published results outside the polling stations doors are sent, almost immediately, to the Ministry of Internal Affairs electoral department, through a specific communication channel handled by the municipalities and the parishes (the lower administrative level with elected bodies).

The central electoral department validates (on the internal coherence perspective), aggregates by constituency and publishes them – when polling stations close in Azores islands (one hour later than in the mainland), you can see the aggregation of the provisional results by constituency being updated as they receive the numbers from the polling stations.

¹ Candidates also have delegates acting as representatives of their own interest and not as public servants.

By 11 pm (a bit later for the local elections, because you have to count three ballots by voter instead of one) things are clear: who won, who lost, how many seats for each party, all the names of the elected people. And you have seen it growing on the TV or on a specific site on the Internet, with both numbers and graphics.

Electronics on Vote Accounting

Of course, you have recognized where and what electronic stuff is on our vote accounting system – quickly reporting the partial provisional results to the central department using communication technologies; instant validations and aggregations presuppose database storage and software running on the stored data.

No on-site accounting machines are affordable without changing the whole structure: the price, of course, especially a huge price for a small benefit (half an hour, less than one hour to know the results?) can only be reduced by concentrating the counting, for example, in the municipalities, reducing the machines (whatever they are) from 12.5 thousand to about 300.

Well – changing the vote accounting system is not easy. People trust it and, on the one hand, the displacement of the ballots before the accounting and, on the other hand, the substantial reduction of the number of citizens acting in the accounting process wouldn't contribute to enhance the confidence on the system.

And, as we began, we are just on the edge: sometimes, if you are on the tightrope and need or just want to change, you cannot choose without falling, you must jump. Because of this specific situation (that, of course, is not original, but is not common) we don't discuss the usage of electronic accounting systems, we are discussing e-voting systems.

Apps to Support the Electoral Process

And we have other apps to support the electoral process, looking for efficacy and efficiency and enhancing or, at least, not lowering the stakeholders' confidence.

For instance, we randomize several things, like the place of each candidates' list in the ballot, the position of each one in the free airtime on radio and TV channels – we have apps for that.

And we are not far from a specific software to produce candidates' lists with some useful connections and validations.

We have a web portal to produce a chart with the final results of each election and the whole names of all the elected citizens that must be published (for the local elections, that's the hell – there are results of almost 4 thousand simultaneous elections and names of a bit less than 40 thousand elected citizens!).

Of course, to collect the data for the chart, since 2009, we provide access to the web portal to the assemblies that formally proclaim the final results and the elected candidates – they collect the polling stations voting results from the portal, download and use a very simple local app that runs on a pen and allows to verify and change, if necessary, the local scrutiny and, finally, they insert the results into the portal.

The web portal applies the highest average method to the results, distributing mandates (it is the method that we use), shows the names of the candidates, produce all the forms that you need and, of course, allows to print them locally.

And, as you can see in the extended subtitle, we have electronic enrolment of the citizens entitled to vote.

By the end of the last century, the enrolment's data was registered in 308 local databases that were monthly synchronized with a central one. A few years later, the system has been reconverted to a central system with local access and the registration of citizens living home turned entirely automatic (the registration of the citizens living abroad is voluntary).

An automatic intercommunication system has been settled between certain governmental agencies databases ensuring that every citizen living home is registered in the electoral enrolment database when they turn 17 years old, in order to be entitled to vote if there is an election on or after his next birthday (people have the right to vote if aged 18).

It also ensures that any changes that will affect her/his right to vote will be reflected in the database, ending with his or her death.

This is an important step to allow some e-voting related facilities.

Why E-Voting Discussion Gained Ground Just Now?

Voting abroad is a huge issue: voluntary registering impose long trips to many citizens – there are not so many embassies or consulates and the 32 Portuguese citizens entitled to vote here, in

Romania, had to come to the Portuguese embassy, wherever they live in the country.

Only 300 thousand can vote all over the world and, as we said above, we estimate a number between 5 and 6 million Portuguese citizens living abroad, some of them young and highly qualified.

It's precisely this new group of emigrants that put the question on the table: they move as they have jobs, they cannot make several long trips to register themselves and update their register in the electoral enrolment and, also, to cast their votes. Briefly, they wanted the enrolment to be automatic as it is for people living home and the vote to be electronic and, of course, by the Internet or mobile phone.

Well, this is their perspective, but there are others that deserve some attention, too.

Voting Abroad for the President and for the Parliament

First, there are some countries with specific laws forbidding political participation of foreigners on their own countries issues, others allowing it, but making restrictions on some rights, and even one, Brazil, where Portuguese citizens are entitled to elect and be elected if they don't exercise their political rights in Portugal (and vice versa for the Brazilian living in Portugal) – this is the main reason for the voluntary character of the electoral enrolment abroad.

And neither the conditions, nor the process of casting votes to both organs of sovereignty (the President and the Parliament) are the same: the first is a nominal election, a single constituency and our Constitution imposes that, to be entitled to vote, a Portuguese citizen living abroad must demonstrate connection with the homeland, another obstacle to the intended total automatization of the electoral registration.

The second election has one constituency for residents in Europe (about 110 thousand registered) and another to those living in the rest of the world (about 210 thousand), each one electing two parliamentarians within a total of 230.

The vote for the President is cast personally at polling stations in embassies and consulates and the vote for the Parliament is the postal vote. The solution for both elections cannot be the same without serious political changes.

Despite other reasons that require some changes, people underline the issues on the turnout – 11.9% (Europe 17.4% and the rest of the

world 8.9%) of voters on 2015 legislative elections and 4.7% on 2016 presidential election (6.1% and 3.9%).

The balance between legislative (postal vote) and presidential elections (personal vote at a polling station) shows that the need of citizens' displacement to cast the vote has true negative influence on the turnout.

And the numbers hide a similar effect on the turnout of legislative elections – voters receive their ballots at home by registered mail and, if they don't go to the consulate when they change their addresses for the registration update, the ballot is lost.

On the other hand, the numbers themselves point to other and different questions to arise and answer if we want a meaningful participation of voters abroad – we can say that electronics will enhance the turnout, now very low, but surely it is not the solution to reach acceptable levels of participation, even under those very special conditions.

My Commission has always expressed, when asked, the same opinion on the automatic registration abroad – the voluntary character of the registration cannot be preserved by such a system, but you don't need to reproduce abroad everything that we have home.

We have compulsory identity cards and, when we ask for one (because we lost it or it needs to be renewed, for instance), we must declare our civil domicile that will be kept in the electoral enrolment database and, using the ZIP code, we are affected to the correspondent circumscription – with some more work it will be possible to make similar updates abroad.

The difference is the trigger to insert a new citizen in the database – at home, the civil registry database interacts with the electoral enrolment database, without human handling, when a citizen turns 17 years old; abroad, instead of the age control, the interaction should take place as a result of an identity card request by a citizen living there.

As the card must be requested by the individual, the citizen would be able to declare if he or she doesn't want to be registered to vote on Portuguese elections or, on the other hand, to choose if he or she wants to be registered abroad or at home, with a secondary domicile.

Once registered in the electoral enrolment database, you can update your civil domicile by

the Internet using your identity card, a software that is provided online and the specific code they have sent to you.

No trip to the embassy or the consulate should be required from citizens to register themselves for voting and to update it when changing the address.

E-Voting

E-voting is not a total new issue in Portugal: some private organizations like political parties, unions, associations (Benfica, for instance) or great companies have used e-voting for ten years or more.

Governmental agencies have conducted electronic voting experiences: the first took place in 1997 and Portugal became the 5th European country running an electronic voting experience, after the Netherlands, Belgium, France and Spain, and the 8th all over the world (after USA, Brazil and Philippines).

Other experiences were run in 2001, 2004 and 2005, the last of them larger and diverse: one third of 26.5 thousand citizens have tried electronic voting at the polling station. Abroad, 11.9% of the voters who use postal voting tried the voting online.

Some years ago, we expressed the opinion that online voting could easily substitute the postal vote – concerns were only with information security, but limited by the reduced impact on the Parliament composition (remember that only 1.6% of the parliamentarians are elected by postal voting).

Recently, while accounting postal votes, something like a vote syndicate (someone that takes the ballots and other stuff from several voters and casts their votes) came across and we became more cautious – something must be done to make it difficult, like limitations on non-officially recognized IP addresses, for instance.

Until now, we have no absolute opposition to electronic voting, but we underline a requirement very often forgotten: any voting system must ensure not only secrecy and that the vote is cast by the person entitled to vote, but also that the person acts freely, with no external constraints when he or she casts his or her vote.

There are systems allowing multiple vote castings, like the Estonian one, designed to ensure the possibility of the vote cast changing. Sure, they are a contribution to solve the problem.

After all, we prefer personal voting at a polling station as the general rule. Exceptions can be made on very specific situations. And we prefer, also, the minimum data traffic – if there is an electronic voting system, Internet or other communication devices must be used to communicate vote accounting, not each vote *per se*.

Of course, exceptions may happen – those we just talked about and some others if you allow voters to cast their votes anywhere, not at the specific polling station where they are registered. On elections with single constituency, like presidential elections or for the European Parliament, there are no constraints to vote anywhere, but if you have two or more constituencies, with different ballots, and you want to preserve the vote secrecy, the vote cast on a constituency that is not the one where the vote had to be accounted must travel to the appropriate polling station before the vote accounting.

In fact, and as all of you know, an advantage that you can take from the electronic enrolment is the capacity of discharging voters online, making possible the mobility vote, both at the polling station and through the Internet or the mobile phone.

Well, as you can see, our concerns are not so different from the usual concerns and, at least until now, we had chosen not to disturb. We have drawn some boundaries and we opened the door to e-voting, on that sense of electronic voting by the Internet, in some special circumstances.

Decisions must be taken in time for the European Parliament election on May/June 2019 and there is a kind of pression to use e-voting technologies – concerns about turnout.

But the real problem is, of course, confidence – confidence of voters, but also confidence of the candidates and the political parties, confidence of the electoral officers and of the decision makers.

About the author:

João Manuel Rosa de ALMEIDA has a degree in Philosophy from Coimbra University, Portugal. He is a retired public servant after almost 40 years in the position. For 20 years the functions performed have included dealing with electoral processes at the local and metropolitan levels, running experiences and driving the implementation of technological solutions such as traditional data management or GIS projects.

He was elected by the Parliament as a member of the National Electoral Commission, Portugal, in March 2003 and was reelected successively until now (2005, 2010, 2011 and 2015).

RECENZII EVENIMENTE

EVENTS REVIEW

A-WEB ȘI AEP AU ADUS LA BUCUREȘTI ELITA MONDIALĂ A MANAGEMENTULUI ELECTORAL

Capitala României a găzduit, în perioada 31 august – 2 septembrie 2017, două evenimente internaționale importante, organizate de Asociația Mondială a Organismelor Electorale (A-WEB) și Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă (AEP). Cu acest prilej, s-au reunit la București reprezentanți ai elitei domeniului electoral de pe toate

continentele. Astfel, sub cupola Parlamentului României și-au dat întâlnire peste 200 de invitați străini pentru a participa la cea de-a 3-a Adunare Generală a A-WEB și la Conferința internațională cu tema *Cum numărăm și cum interpretăm voturile: utilizarea tehnologiei pentru consolidarea transparenței proceselor electorale*.



Președintele AEP, Daniel Constantin Barbu, noul șef al A-WEB



În ultima zi a lunii august s-a desfășurat cea de-a 3-a Adunare Generală a A-WEB, forul decizional al Asociației, care se întrunește, potrivit Cartei A-WEB, la fiecare doi ani în țara al cărei organism de management electoral a fost desemnat să preia președinția organizației pentru următorii doi ani.

Misiunea Adunării Generale este aceea de a evalua și a adopta modificările Cartei A-WEB, de a promova politicile și proiectele asociației, de a analiza și a aproba recomandările Comitetului executiv, cererile de aderare pentru noi membri, bugetul, raportul de audit și raportul financiar și de a alege organismul de management electoral care va găzdui următoarea Adunare Generală.

Decizia privind preluarea conducerii asociației de către președintele AEP, începând cu anul 2017, a fost luată în august 2015, în cadrul precedentei Adunări Generale a A-WEB.

Adunarea Generală întrunită la București a consfințit, în cadrul unei ceremonii solemne, predarea de ștafetă a președinției deținute de Julio

Cesar Castanos Guzman, șeful Comisiei Electorale Centrale a Republicii Dominicane, către Daniel Constantin Barbu, șeful Autorității Electorale Permanente.

Noul președinte al A-WEB a declarat că este mândru să preia funcția de facilitator al comunicării și colaborării între membrii unei organizații internaționale cu un rol atât de important în promovarea democrației în lume: „Este momentul ca o organizație internațională să preia misiunea enunțată acum o sută de ani de Woodrow Wilson, aceea de a face lumea un loc mai sigur, prin democrație”, a opinat Daniel Barbu. El a mai spus că, în calitatea sa de președinte al AEP, este onorat să fie parte a echipei unui serviciu public cu o misiune atât de importantă pentru democrație.

Forul de conducere al A-WEB, reunit la București, a mai decis ca următoarea Adunare Generală să aibă loc în India, țară al cărei organism de management electoral – Comisia Electorală – va prelua în 2019 președinția asociației.

Conferința internațională pe tema utilizării tehnologiei în numărarea și interpretarea voturilor

Cel de-al doilea eveniment internațional de mare anvergură organizat la București de către A-WEB în parteneriat cu AEP a fost Conferința internațională cu tema „Cum numărăm și cum interpretăm voturile: utilizarea tehnologiei pentru consolidarea transparenței proceselor electorale”.

La acest summit electoral au participat peste 200 de reprezentanți ai organismelor electorale din 70 de țări de pe toate continentele, specialiști de marcă ai domeniului electoral și prestigioase organizații de profil, precum: Institutul Internațional

pentru Democrație și Asistență Electorală (International IDEA); Fundația Internațională pentru Sisteme Electorale (IFES); Rețeaua de competențe electorale francofone (RECEF); Programul Națiunilor Unite pentru Dezvoltare (UNDP); Asociația Internațională a Oficialilor Guvernamentali; Organizația Organismelor Electorale Arabe; Uniunea Interamericană a Organismelor Electorale; Asociația Oficialilor Europeni (ACEEEO); Centrul European pentru Asistență Electorală (Ecowas/ECONEC).



În mesajul adresat invitaților, președintele Senatului, Călin Popescu-Tăriceanu, a felicitat organizatorii pentru tema aleasă și a arătat că „fiecare stat are responsabilitatea de a asigura cetățenilor săi cadrul democratic în care aceștia să decidă liber, având garanția că în ziua alegerilor egalitatea dintre ei este matematic garantată: 1 alegător = 1 vot”.

În opinia președintelui Senatului, „toată ecuația se sprijină pe corectitudinea numărării voturilor,

etapă care trebuie să reflecte cu acuratețe opțiunile exprimate de toți cetățenii care s-au prezentat la urne”.

Oficialul român a mai spus că este necesar ca managementul electoral să concilieze tendința și necesitatea armonizării tehnologiei cu legislația specifică, astfel încât cadrul legal să poată ține pasul cu progresul tehnologic, dar, în același timp, să asigure respectarea drepturilor electorale și a drepturilor constituționale.

Președintele A-WEB, Daniel Barbu, a lansat invitațiilor două teme de reflecție privind misiunea organismelor de management electoral, una vizând natura acestora, iar cealaltă referindu-se la echilibrul dintre mijloacele și scopurile lor: „Cine suntem noi, ca instituții: ONG-uri, instituții de stat? Care este misiunea organismelor noastre? Cum putem echilibra modalitățile noastre de lucru cu finalitatea noastră?”

Daniel Barbu a arătat că, indiferent de diferențele dintre organismele de management electoral, acestea îndeplinesc o funcție comună, aceea de a asigura alegeri corecte, libere și transparente. În opinia președintelui A-WEB, „organisme de management electoral ar trebui să reușească să transforme viața politică nu numai într-un moment al alegerilor, ci într-o permanentă activitate de promovare a democrației”.

Dezbaterile din cadrul conferinței au fost traduse în șapte limbi – arabă, coreeană, engleză, franceză, română, rusă, spaniolă – și au fost transmise în direct pe canalul oficial de YouTube al AEP.

Discuțiile s-au axat pe rolul cooperării la nivel global între organismele de management electoral

în definirea și dezvoltarea de standarde comune de utilizare a noilor tehnologii care pot fi folosite în alegeri, etapele din timpul proceselor electorale în care este benefică utilizarea acestora și riscurile pe care le prezintă adaptarea legislației electorale în vederea facilitării procesului de implementare a noilor tehnologii în alegeri. Vorbitorii au invocat necesitatea identificării celor mai recente tendințe, provocări și evoluții în managementul electoral democratic și în ceea ce privește tehnologizarea proceselor electorale, precum și importanța fructificării celor mai bune practici în materie.

Laitmotivul intervențiilor pe marginea temei supuse dezbaterii l-a constituit rolul noilor tehnologii în prevenirea și combaterea fraudei electorale.

Pe perioada evenimentului a putut fi vizitată o expoziție de echipamente IT&C, care a oferit participanților șansa de a cunoaște instrumente și aplicații tehnologice testate cu succes în diferite etape ale proceselor electorale din Republica Coreea.



Cele două zile de dezbateri din cadrul conferinței au fost structurate în jurul următoarelor subteme:

- *Tehnologia, în prima linie a proceselor electorale: opțională sau obligatorie?*
- *Instrumente IT de îmbunătățire a proceselor electorale;*
- *Sisteme de management electoral, între tradiție și inovație;*
- *Rolul mass-mediei tradiționale și a mediei online în alegeri;*
- *Sisteme și metode de numărare a buletinelor de vot: studii de caz;*

- *Rolul tehnologiei în îmbunătățirea managementului electoral.*

Dezbaterile au evidențiat preocuparea majoră a oficialilor electorali privind identificarea și selectarea unor standarde și principii de integritate general acceptate în vederea implementării echipamentelor IT&C în domeniul electoral. Una dintre concluzii a fost aceea că achiziționarea soluțiilor tehnologice trebuie să se facă transparent, iar utilizarea acestora trebuie să reprezinte o garanție a desfășurării în bune condiții a alegerilor și a fluidizării etapelor proceselor electorale.



Speakeri:

- **Peter Wolf**, director tehnic în cadrul Internațional IDEA;
- **Gwang Il Park**, director adjunct, Departamentul informatic din cadrul A-WEB;
- **Gilmar Mendes**, președintele Curții Electorale Superioare din Brazilia;
- **Juan Pablo Pozo**, președintele Consiliului Electoral Național din Ecuador;
- **Cengiz Topaktas**, membru al Comisiei Electorale Superioare din Turcia;
- **Arnis Cimdars**, președintele Comisiei Centrale Electorale din Letonia;

- **Francisco Guerrero**, secretar al Departamentului pentru Consolidarea Democrației din cadrul Organizației Statelor Americane;
- **Bekmatov Abdyjapar Gapyrovich**, vicepreședintele Comisiei Electorale Centrale din Kârgâzstan;
- **Zsolt Szolnoki**, Secretarul General al ACEEEEO;
- **Omar Marwan**, ministrul afacerilor parlamentare din Egipt, și **Refaat Komsan**, consilierul prim-ministrului egiptean;
- **Mr. Alexander Ignatov**, director executiv al Institutului Public pentru Drept Electoral din Rusia;

- **Robert Krimmer**, consilier superior în cadrul A-WEB;
- **Fabio Bargiacchi**, director executiv în cadrul Centrului European pentru Asistență Electorală (ECES);
- **Najibullah Ahmadzai**, președintele Comisiei Electorale Independente din Afganistan;
- **Al Pareño**, consilier în cadrul Comisiei Electorale din Filipine;
- **Manuela Sărățeanu**, director adjunct în cadrul Serviciului de Telecomunicații Speciale din România;
- **Peter Erben**, consilier în cadrul IFES;
- **Therese Pearce-Laanela**, manager de proiect în cadrul International IDEA;
- **I-Chou Liu**, președintele Comisiei Centrale Electorale din Taiwan;
- **Manuel Carrillo**, directorul Departamentului pentru Afaceri Internaționale din cadrul Institutului Național Electoral din Mexic;
- **Francis Gabriel Oke**, directorul Direcției electorale al ECOWAS;
- **Mathew Flinders Lemisio**, membru în Biroul Electoral din Samoa;
- **Abubakarr Koroma**, director administrativ în cadrul Comisiei Electorale Naționale din Sierra Leone;
- **Deki Pema**, membru al Comisiei Electorale din Bhutan;
- **Mohammed Saneem**, consilier pentru alegeri în Biroul Electoral din Fiji;
- **Arief Budiman**, președintele Comisiei Generale Electorale din Indonezia;
- **Andrada Mateescu**, consilier parlamentar, Departamentul management electoral din cadrul AEP;
- **Octavian Chesaru**, expert, Departamentul legislativ din cadrul AEP;
- **João Almeida**, membru al Comisiei Electorale Naționale din Portugalia;
- **Paola Costabella**, director pentru cooperare și asistență electorală în cadrul Camerei Electorale Naționale din Argentina;
- **Achal Kumar Joti**, președintele Comisiei Electorale din India;
- **Mansour Sadeghi**, director pentru parteneriat strategic în cadrul UNDP;
- **Bayasgalan Khurelchuluun**, directorul Departamentului informatic din cadrul Comisiei Generale Electorale din Mongolia.

CALL FOR PAPERS

ELECTORAL EXPERT REVIEW

Second Scientific Electoral Experts Debates: “Equal Suffrage”

Bucharest, May 2018, organized by the Permanent Electoral Authority in partnership with the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission of the Council of Europe)

The Electoral Expert Review is a quarterly publication of studies, researches and analyses related to the elections field. With an interdisciplinary and applied character, firstly the publication aims at a wide audience, this being ensured by distributing our journal to the Romanian Parliament, the Government and other institutions from the central and local government, to the most important public libraries, universities, the media, other academic institutions and NGOs.

The Electoral Expert Review, published by the Permanent Electoral Authority, invites stakeholders and those interested to contribute in publishing scientific articles that have not been or are not published in other journals, reviews or scientific symposium volumes, related to the theme of the Second Scientific Electoral Experts Debates: “Equal Suffrage” due on the 3rd – 4th of May 2018, which will be “Equal suffrage”, and in particular:

- Equal voting rights;
- Equal voting power;
- Equality of opportunity;
- Equality and national minorities;
- Equality and parity of the sexes.

The authors may submit proposals for articles directly to the following address: expert.electoral@roaep.ro.

Deadline for submitting the proposal for articles in English, French or Romanian: 25th of March 2018.

Due to the preparations needed for organizing the event there will be a “rolling submission” model used for proposals: every proposal will be reviewed and given feedback within 2-3 weeks of submission. Your submission will either be accepted or you will be provided feedback from our reviewers and offered an opportunity to revise and resubmit. We will continue this process of accepting or giving constructive feedback to proposals until all presentation slots are filled. Submissions will still be accepted after the submission deadline, but they will be considered in the second round of proposals. We will work with those who submitted by the deadline and then look toward later submissions to complete the program, should presentation slots still be available.

Indications and text formatting requirements:

✓ Submitted articles may cover theoretical studies, case studies or researches that have not been published or submitted for other publications or part of the proceedings of scientific conferences. Submitted articles should be original.

✓ Submitted articles should be between 4,000 and 6,000 words in length (bibliography and footnotes included).

✓ Manuscripts must be accompanied by an abstract. The abstract must have between 100 and 150 words (Times New Roman, 12, italic). After each abstract the author must mention the keywords.

✓ Articles submitted should be accompanied by a brief presentation of the author/authors (name, institutional or/and academic affiliation, brief research activity and published papers, e-mail address).

✓ Main text of the manuscript: Times New Roman, 12, justified, 1.5 line spacing options. Page setup: A4 with 2.5 cm margins. Titles: Times New Roman, 14, bold. Subtitles: Times New Roman, 12, bold. Footnotes: Times New Roman, 10, justified.

✓ All figures, tables and photos must be clear and sharp. The tables should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numbers. The number and the title of each table should be written above it, using Times New Roman, 12, bold. The number and the title of each figure or photo should be written under it, using Times New Roman, 10, bold.

✓ Abbreviations and acronyms will be explained the first time they appear in the text.

✓ Quotations and references should be made using the Harvard or European system (only one of them will be used in the manuscript).

✓ Internet references should be quoted with the whole link.

CALL FOR PAPERS

REVISTA „EXPERT ELECTORAL”

Cea de-a doua ediție a dezbaterilor științifice ale experților din domeniul electoral: „Sufragiul egal”, organizată de Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă în parteneriat cu Comisia Europeană pentru Democrație prin Drept (Comisia de la Veneția a Consiliului Europei), București, mai 2016

Revista „Expert Electoral” este o publicație trimestrială de studii, cercetări și analize cu tematică electorală. Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă a inițiat editarea acestei reviste cu scopul de a crea o platformă de dezbateri a subiectelor referitoare la reglementarea și administrarea proceselor electorale. Prin caracterul interdisciplinar și aplicat, publicația are drept scop, în primul rând, o largă audiență, aceasta fiind asigurată prin distribuirea revistei Parlamentului României, Guvernului și altor instituții din administrația publică centrală și locală, celor mai importante biblioteci publice, universități, mass-mediei, altor instituții academice și ONG-uri.

Revista „Expert Electoral”, editată de Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, invită persoanele interesate să contribuie prin publicarea unor articole științifice originale, ce nu au fost valorificate prin publicare în alte jurnale științifice, în volumele simpozioanelor ori ale conferințelor științifice. Articolele comunicate vor reflecta tema conferinței științifice „Sufragiul egal” care urmează să aibă loc în 3 – 4 mai 2018 și vor urmări, în particular, una din următoarele subteme:

- egalitatea dreptului de vot;
- egalitatea puterii electorale;
- egalitatea șanselor;
- egalitatea și minoritățile naționale;
- egalitate și paritate între femei și bărbați.

Autorii pot transmite propuneri de articole în limbile română, engleză sau franceză până cel mai târziu în data de **25 martie 2018** la adresa de e-mail: **expert.electoral@roaep.ro**.

Datorită pregătirilor necesare pentru organizarea evenimentului, pentru analiza articolelor se va utiliza modelul „rolling submission”. Astfel, fiecare propunere va fi revizuită și se va oferi un feedback în termen de 2 – 3 săptămâni de la depunere. Propunerea poate fi acceptată sau va fi returnată de recenzorii noștri în vederea revizuirii. Vom continua acest proces de acceptare sau de oferire de feedback constructiv pentru propuneri până când toate pozițiile din panelul speakerilor vor fi completate. Propunerile comunicate peste termenul-limită vor fi acceptate, dar vor fi luate în considerare în a doua rundă de propuneri. Vom lucra cu aceia care au depus până la termenul-limită și apoi vom căuta înscrieri ulterioare pentru a finaliza programul, în cazul în care vor rămâne poziții disponibile.

Indicații și cerințe de redactare a textului:

- ✓ Articolele prezentate pot include studii teoretice, studii de caz sau cercetări care nu au fost publicate sau trimise spre publicare către alte publicații ori care nu fac parte din lucrările conferințelor științifice. Articolele trimise trebuie să fie originale.
- ✓ Articolele trimise trebuie să aibă o lungime cuprinsă între 4.000 și 6.000 de cuvinte (inclusiv bibliografia și notele de subsol).
- ✓ Manuscrisele trebuie să fie însoțite de un abstract. Abstractul trebuie să aibă între 100 și 150 de cuvinte (Times New Roman, 12, italic). După fiecare abstract, autorul trebuie să menționeze cuvintele-cheie. Articolele prezentate trebuie să fie însoțite de o scurtă prezentare a autorului/autorilor (numele, afilierea instituțională sau

academică, o scurtă prezentare a activității de cercetare și a lucrărilor publicate, adresa de e-mail, fotografie).

- ✓ Textul principal al manuscrisului: Times New Roman, 12, aliniere stânga-dreapta, spațierea între paragrafe de 1,5.
- ✓ Configurarea paginii: A4 cu margini de 2,5 cm. Titluri: Times New Roman, 14, bold. Subtitluri: Times New Roman, 12, bold. Notele de subsol: Times New Roman, 10, aliniere stânga-dreapta.
- ✓ Toate figurile, tabelele și fotografiile trebuie să fie clare. Tabelele trebuie numerotate succesiv cu cifre arabe. Numărul și titlul fiecărui tabel trebuie să fie scrise deasupra acestuia, folosind Times New Roman, 12, bold. Numărul și titlul fiecărei figuri sau fotografii trebuie să fie scrise sub ea, folosind Times New Roman, 10, bold.
- ✓ Abrevierile și acronimele vor fi explicate prima dată când apar în text.
- ✓ Citatele și referințele trebuie făcute utilizând sistemul Harvard sau european (numai unul dintre ele va fi folosit în manuscris).
- ✓ Referințele la internet trebuie făcute utilizând întreaga legătură (link).

PORTALUL ELECTORAL WWW.ROAEP.RO

Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă a lansat în luna martie 2013 o nouă versiune a paginii sale de web www.roaep.ro.

Noul www.roaep.ro a fost gândit ca un portal electoral modern în spațiul căruia publicul să găsească toate informațiile privind procesele electorale, atât cele desfășurate, cât și cele în curs de desfășurare sau care urmează să aibă loc.

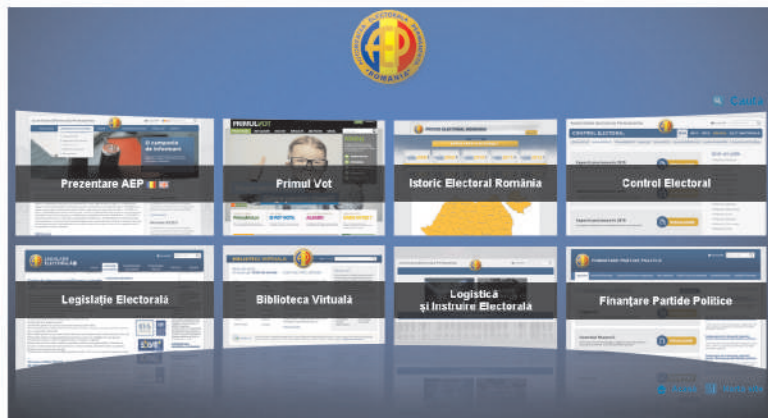
Secțiunea **LEGISLAȚIE ELECTORALĂ** conține actele normative în vigoare care guvernează procesele electorale, dar și proiecte pentru îmbunătățirea, perfecționarea și armonizarea cu acquis-ul comunitar a cadrului legislativ electoral românesc.



Secțiunea **ISTORIC ELECTORAL** cuprinde date referitoare la toate alegerile și referendumurile din România începând cu anul 1990. De asemenea, înglobează site-urile Birourilor Electorale Centrale începând cu anul 2007.

Secțiunea **FINANȚARE PARTIDE POLITICE** include informații privind aplicarea legii finanțării activității partidelor politice și a campaniilor electorale, date despre alocarea subvențiilor partidelor politice, dar și îndrumarea partidelor politice sau a candidaților independenți privind legalitatea finanțării.

LOGISTICA ȘI INSTRUIREA ELECTORALĂ reprezintă două coordonate importante ale AEP. Secțiunea prezintă atât elemente de logistică



electorală, cât și materiale necesare instruirii actorilor implicați în procesul electoral.

De asemenea, secțiunea **CONTROL ELECTORAL** conține date despre acțiunile de control privind îndeplinirea atribuțiilor legale în materie electorală de către autoritățile administrației publice.

BIBLIOTECA VIRTUALĂ a fost concepută ca o secțiune de resurse documentare electorale dedicată persoanelor cu preocupări în domeniu, specialiști din mediul academic, universitar, societatea civilă sau mass-media.

PRIMUL VOT este o secțiune dedicată tinerilor care împlinesc 18 ani și pentru care următoarele alegeri reprezintă ocazia de a-și exercita pentru prima dată drepturile electorale.





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