Al servicio de las personas y las naciones

TECHNOLOGY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

Ravneet Singh / Salvador Romero Ballivián / Pablo Gutiérrez / Ezra Chiloba
Fernando Barrientos del Monte / Marco Antonio Vargas / Aldair de Almeida Anhaia
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PRESENTATION

As a corollary to the international environment on the use of technology in voting, we recall that the Council of Europe in Strasbourg (France), with its 47 member countries across Europe, proposed that, throughout the continent, democratic principles be developed based on the Convention of Human Rights and other texts concerning the protection of people. It also organized joint workshops with various local and regional government ministries where representatives of member countries were given an opportunity to discuss the experience of observing electronic voting, with the ultimate goal of preparing guidelines or standards on the issue.

Consequently, the Council of Europe and other international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Union, made known *Recommendation CM / Rec (2009) 1 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on electronic democracy (e-democracy), adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 18 February 2009, at the 1049th meeting of Ministers' Deputies* and, among many other things, presented to Member States recommendations they could develop or revise concerning their e-democracy policies and, where appropriate, how they are practiced.

In this regard, one of the recommendations that strongly attrac-ted my attention was that "by introducing, reviewing and improving

e-democracy attention should focus on democracy and on the interested parties rather than on technology." That is to say, we must take a different approach to how voting technologies are used because, first of all, it is recommended that if attention is paid to the type of democracy as well as to the interested parties, it will lead us to review the related technology. In other words, not only must attention be focused on the technology to be applied but on the systems to be adapted.

In April 2011, the international seminar on "Technology and Citizen Participation in the Construction of Democracy" was held in Guadalajara, Jalisco. This book gives a wider audience access to a selection of papers presented at that forum. The seminar was organized jointly by the Electoral and Citizenship Participation Institute of Jalisco (IEPC Jalisco) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Mexico and now, as a new collaborative effort between them both, this volume is published as a co-edition with the same title as the seminar.

This book addresses, from different viewpoints, a very topical subject: the contribution information and communication technologies (ICTs) make to developing democratic institutions and practices. In this regard it must be borne in mind that, because Mexico has been a pioneer in proposing the use of voting machines, there is a favourable climate to evaluate and apply these technologies in the electoral field; as far back as 2 July 1918 Article 58 of the Federal Powers Election Law of that date provided for the possibility of collecting votes by means of automatic machines, as was mentioned for the first time in the book entitled *Temas Selectos de Derecho Electoral. Formación y Transformación de las Instituciones*[1] (Chihuahua State Electoral Institute, 2005). At local level we also promote the use of the electronic ballot box to collect citizens' votes.

[1] *Selected Topics on Electoral Law. Formation and Transformation of Institutions*.

For its part, the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) has incorporated this avant guard trend to analyse and assess the possibility of applying electronic voting through the work done by the *Temporary Committee to conduct research and technical studies to determine the feasibility or otherwise of using electronic means of voting in Federal Electoral Processes*, whose report was adopted by the General Council of the IFE at its regular meeting on 21 July 2010, and expressed the majority opinion that, for the 2011-2012 electoral process, non-binding exercises should be conducted by using electronic voting instruments. Mexico, therefore, by moving steadily along the path of digital democracy, is having a big international influence.

There is no doubt that the contents of this edition will allow those interested in applying the new technologies in electoral processes to broaden their perspective about a digital democracy, also known as an "e-democracy". Indeed, this book is not limited to studying experiences with electronic voting; it also addresses the use of informatics, the internet, social networks and cell phones in application areas such as monitoring elections, electoral justice, the various forms of citizen participation and the interaction between governors and those governed. On this last point, in his contribution Jorge Soto proposes an open government that connects to citizens and those who govern them by using data, innovation and open dialogue so that citizens may have all available information in order to manage and compare it to encourage improvements to be made in matters of public interest.

Another advantage of the book is that some of its contents deal with international advances in digital democracy. Here mention is made of the study conducted by Raul Zambrano on democratization in the use of internet platforms and cell phones in the recent demonstrations by multiple groups and communities in the

Middle East and North Africa. Also with regard to Africa, it is worth mentioning Ezra Chiloba's study on the use of new technology platforms in Kenya to give citizens the resources they need to observe elections before, during, and after they are held. Pablo Gutiérrez also discusses outlooks on the use of mobile telephones and internet technology in electoral processes in the context of OAS electoral observation missions.

A significant contrast to the favourable view on the use of ICTs to strengthen democratic participation is Fernando Barrientos del Monte's warning about the need to analyse where using electronic voting has been successful and where it has not. In this regard, Barrientos cautions that "there are various social and political aspects that decision-makers in the field of electoral management should consider when determining its use".

As regards Latin America, concerning the experience in the 2010 Colombian elections Ravneet Singh analyses the development of the following types of digital democracy: online policy, the web participation model, digital campaigns and how governments make use of electronics.

For his part Salvador Romero Ballivián addresses the problem of declining voter turnout in Latin America. According to Romero Ballivián, "Citizens are increasingly keeping away from the polls, a trend that electoral bodies, political parties or civil society associations have been unable to reverse. In this scenario, many pin their hopes and expectations on the new technologies to increase participation, especially by young voters". As an exception to this trend Romero Ballivián highlights the notable evolution in recent years of women's political participation. Also in the Latin American context Marco Antonio Martín Vargas and Aldair de Almeida Anhaia describe the success of computerizing elections and electoral justice in Brazil.

With regard to Mexico, David Sasaki discusses some of the forms of citizen activism, particularly by young people in Mexico City and Guadalajara. For his part, José Tomás Figueroa Padilla presents and assesses the experience with the electronic voting system in the state of Jalisco. In this regard Figueroa Padilla details the characteristics and advantages of the electronic voting model applied by the IEPC Jalisco.

In general, the book's individual contributions share a common denominator: find the best method, based on experience and according to the specific conditions in each country or region, to include the ICTs to develop an all-inclusive democracy, both concerning elections and in other forms of citizen participation, as well as in building democratic governance.

It is true that including technologies related to a democratic way of life requires an institutional and cultural context if a digital democracy is to function. It is evident that, in a climate of public distrust, the most advanced technologies can be suspected of contributing to electoral fraud so that recounting votes has to be carried out manually, as happened in the 2000 elections in the United States in Palm Beach, Florida.

Just as civic education is required to produce democratic citizens, it is also necessary to raise citizens' awareness about the advantages of digital democracy and to train them in the use of such technologies in the different democratic processes.

The educational dimension of digital democracy is a subject that must still be addressed in future editions because it is not enough for those interested in the issue to write and disseminate information about it; there is still a lack of education on digital democracy. On the other hand, it should be noted that the different opinions contained in this collective work serve as an

excellent starting point to position the subject in the public interest and to trigger not only a broader debate about it but also about the use of digital democracy to improve participation by citizens in all aspects of democratic life by training them in the proper use of ICTs to benefit democratic development.

The importance of making a change to voting by electronic means is explained in books such as the one we now have in our hands.

Thank you very much.

MA. MACARITA ELIZONDO GASPERÍN
Electoral Counselor, Federal Electoral Institute

PROLOGUE

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have changed our lives, just as the wheel, the steam engine, the combustion engine and the telephone did in their day. They have reduced distances between people and countries and validated the thesis of Marshall McLuhan, who wrote The Global Village: the medium is the message.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) works to closely monitor and develop these technologies on the understanding that, just as they can be used to curtail liberties and control how we think, they can also extend rights and improve the way we live.

This book is a clear example of the importance we attach to new technologies since we can say that, in general, they have been a factor in human development by improving the ability of individuals to choose the type of life they want for themselves. If that is true on a global scale it is also true in Mexico and certainly in Jalisco where a civil society and intellectually active and curious avant-garde institutions want to know more about, and to better reflect on, the impact ICTs have on political processes. It is recognized that the Electoral and Citizen Participation institute of Jalisco (IEPC Jalisco) gives much thought to ICTs and elections.

It used to be said that these technologies have generally been employed as a powerful tool for freedom. Yet echoes of elections in Spain or in Korea, where candidates apparently in the lead lost their advantage in just a few hours due to a flood of SMS messages, usually sent by young people, changed votes in favour of their opponents. It is well known how the availability of *Youtube*, *Facebook*, *Twitter* and other social network media influenced the Arab Spring by turning a cell phone, something no-one would dare prohibit, into an eye-witness camera of historical events as a vehicle to transmit images and messages that mobilized millions. We know the electronic media, and blogs in particular, publish today's newspapers and represent voices raised against repression and discontent. It is these media that provide channels for people who think differently, who dress differently, who live differently. This publication places emphasis on how using these new technologies affect policy-making, the mechanisms of citizen participation and the electoral cycle.

More than two decades ago, when the so-called "ICTs Revolution" began, UNDP, as a United Nations agency that uses knowledge management and dissemination as its main instrument of influence on how events are perceived, began promoting these technologies as useful tools to improve human development in the process of building citizenship, making information accessible, offering more efficient public services, better education and online training, restructuring public and private institutions, ensuring transparency and combating corruption among many aspects of everyday life and politics.

The ICTs are not an end in themselves but rather a means to ensure better accountability, provide more truthful information and improve understanding. In many ways they have the potential to expand democratic processes and institutions. They allow users to have more influence on how public policies are implemented

and on policy-making by political parties, by those who govern and by their opponents. By themselves technologies cannot solve such problems as poverty, marginalization, inequality, or the violation of human rights. But they can be a tool to mobilize, inform and understand, and to propose solutions.

What is known as "e-governance" has been developed as a means that seeks to use technological tools to help solve democratic governance problems: thus, "e-administration" encourages the use of ICTs in projects designed to reform or modernize the public system; "e-participation" promotes interaction between citizens and government on virtual platforms to have better access to information, online consultations or surveys and computerized services that result in lower costs and reduce displacements and opportunities for corruption. Perhaps unfinished business involves putting these technologies not at the service of citizens who are on the right side of the digital divide –the young, the professional, the urbanites– but rather at the service of the poorest and most vulnerable people living in remote or rural areas, people with disabilities, elder adults.

Hence, this book represents one of the first initiatives of UNDP in Mexico aimed at addressing the issue of new technologies and their impact on elections and citizen participation. Its significance is that, together with the Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute of Jalisco (IEPC Jalisco), we could continue the work and the good results obtained at the "International Seminar: Technology and Citizen Participation in the Construction of Democracy", organized by the IEPC Jalisco and UNDP in April 2011 in which leading national and international specialists, including the authors of this publication, participated. I want to make particular mention of the contribution of UNDP's Senior Policy Adviser on ICTs and Governance, our colleague Raúl Zambrano.

With this initiative, UNDP is grateful for the confidence the IEPC Jalisco has placed in the Programme to promote a new and pioneering project on issues as complex as they are necessary in this digital age. There is a reason why closing the gap mentioned above is one of the goals of Millennium Development Goal No. 8.

MAGDY MARTÍNEZ-SOLIMAN
Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Mexico and
Resident Representative in Mexico of the United Nations Development Programme

INTRODUCTION

As we live in an age of technological acceleration this book is very much of its time. Its ten essays, written from different outlooks, discuss how technologies, social networking and, in general, the *Web 2.0* platforms that are applied and used when dealing with electoral and participatory democracy. The publication's background, its essential component, points to the ever-increasing ability of citizens to change their situations when they have better access to information.

This edition is part of the work carried out at the international seminar "Technology and Citizen Participation in the Construction of Democracy", co-organized by IEPC Jalisco and UNDP Mexico. It is displayed as a logbook, an exercise in reflection and a comprehensive study about electronic democracy and how it is related to citizenship building and citizen participation.

From how the work is focused and considering the authors branches of research and specialization, the book's texts are grouped into three broad areas: a) "Use of technologies and the internet in electoral processes"; b) "Implementing e-voting: experiences and challenges", and c) "Technology platforms, citizen participation and political action".

In addition to these themes, the book highlights the different shades of meaning and styles ranging from academic research methods about the current role played by technology and democracy and their potential dimension in the coming years (Romero, Barrientos, Zambrano) to specific case studies of experiences and implications concerning the use of technology in recent elections (Chiloba, Kenya; Vargas and Aldair de Almeida, Brazil; Figueroa, Mexico; Gutierrez and Singh, Latin America); there are also short essays on the importance of empowering civil society, governability, transparency and account rendering, in the light of digital activism and citizen internet participation (Sasaki and Soto).

The book begins with the essay "E-Democracy in Latin America among inclusive democracy and *Web 2.0*" by Raavnet Singh that develops the relationship between technology, democracy and participation on the assumption that the *Web 2.0* is the point of encounter between citizens, information, collaboration and interaction that eventually leads to opportunities, inclusion and social justice. Similarly, it puts on the table the broad picture that technology brings to politics and, in general, to democracy.

In his essay on "Notes on political participation and electoral institutions in Latin America in the age of new technologies", Salvador Romero Ballivián analyses what has taken place in Latin America in terms of participation. It tells us how citizens have gradually stayed away from the polls and explores alternatives to increase participation, quantitatively as well as qualitatively. His essay weighs the importance of new technologies as mechanisms to reverse the negative trend in participation, especially among young people.

For his part, in his work entitled "Different views about the use of mobile technology and the internet in an election process

from the perspective of the OAS observation missions", Pablo Gutiérrez explains the experiences in Latin America on the use of mobile technology. By carrying out case studies in Colombia and Ecuador he identified a fundamental aspect of using technology to provide instantaneous, fair and transparent results.

Also remarkable are the reflections of Ezra Chiloba, who lectures on the theme of citizen participation in Kenya with the use of new technologies that focus on accountability in the electoral process. It is interesting that Chiloba highlights the importance of technology before, during, and after elections, as an authentic tool of empowerment that allows citizens to take action.

Fernando Barrientos offers an interesting reflection on why in some countries electronic voting is a failure while in others it is a success. He addresses issues that go beyond the merely technical to prepare the text from the perspective of political and social sciences and reflects on the relationship between politics, democracy and new technologies. He then explores the motivations that lead to these voting patterns being proposed and, finally, he addresses experiences of failure in some countries.

The essay "Brazil and the digital vote", written by Marco Antonio Vargas and Aldair de Almeida Anhaia, takes a retrospective look at the process of modernizing electoral justice in Brazil. The authors highlight how technologies were used to reduce and eradicate anti-democratic practices and how a solution was found for the complex social and cultural scenario in Brazil's very diverse regions. It is undoubtedly an essay that presents a successful electronic voting model.

The text of my own "Digital democracy: electronic voting system in Jalisco" deals with the experience of using electronic voting in the Mexican state of Jalisco. The article also gives a brief global

and national description about the use of electronic voting and provides a primary link between technology and the possibilities it offers to increase citizen participation and, therefore, strengthen democracy in periods when no elections are being held. In addition, it discusses the benefits of promoting the general use of this technology in electoral processes.

Meanwhile Raúl Zambrano poses the question of whether the digital age will make participation more inclusive. The result of studying several cases throughout the world suggests that indeed having greater access to networks allows new forms of social organization and, above all, public knowledge and impact.

David Sasaki's essay, "Fame, followers, anonymity and activism", analyses the main components of a successful use of digital activism and how they are used to change situations, make complaints or simply communicate matters that otherwise would not be covered. It reveals the power behind the social and political use of social networks and claims anonymity can have a positive effect by being able to change the world the way a hero changes his appearance by wearing a mask.

Finally, in his essay "Open government: a new panorama for governance" Jorge Soto outlines the features that technology brings to the interaction between citizens and governments. This essay stands out for its topicality and, above all, because it is inserted into a logic that is expanding throughout the world. Open government appears as a possibility to strengthen democratic values and encourage practices of co-responsibility by making use of a new and immediate method: *the click*.

I want to thank the United Nations Development Programme in Mexico for the interest, availability and unconditional support in organizing a successful seminar and for managing and

producing the book we now have in hand. I also thank Federico Valle Ochoa, Moisés Pérez Vega, Guillermo González Flores and Rodrigo Aguilar Benignos for their work in helping to achieve those objectives.

I cannot fail to thank each and every one of those involved in the challenge of making technology an indispensable partner in building democracy and citizen participation in Mexico and in the state of Jalisco in particular.

I am convinced that the contributions in this book record far reaching reflections on incorporating technology as a tool to achieve government that is more participatory and transparent; that is to say using technology and communications as instruments to provide citizens with a better quality democracy.

JOSÉ TOMÁS FIGUEROA PADILLA
Counselor President of the Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute of Jalisco

I. TECHNOLOGIES AND THE INTERNET IN ELECTION PROCESSES

E-DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA AMONG INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AND *WEB 2.0*

Ravneet Singh[1]

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the technology-democracy nexus in Latin America by defining e-democracy as the intersection of participative democracy with *Web 2.0*. Participative democracy is understood here as a concept that goes beyond free and transparent electoral processes to become a synonym for development, inclusion and social justice. Technology, and especially *Web 2.0*, including websites built on a model of architecture of participation, new media and social networks facilitate information sharing, collaboration and interaction.

Although Latin America is made up of a multiplicity of cultures and identities, and access to resources, knowledge and opportunities is unequally distributed, the overall democratic trends in the region are positive and have not been affected by the economic crisis.

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[1] President, CEO and Founder Electionmall.Com.

Equally important, Latin America is the fastest growing region in the world in terms of internet penetration, an ongoing trend encouraged by increased broadband availability. The article focuses on a concrete example of e-democracy, namely the 2010 Colombian presidential elections and Juan Manuel Santos's digital campaign. The innovative tactics used as part of his online strategy have been fine tuned taking into consideration Colombia's political and digital culture to achieve record results. The main lessons to be drawn from this case study can be summarized under three headings: the rise of the online politician, the participatory web model and finally the continuation from digital campaigns to e-government.

Ever since the internet and the information society have become current currency in developed and developing countries, various studies have attempted to explore and measure the impact of ICTs on several societal indicators connected to progress and well being. Among these indicators, the democracy-technology nexus is a salient one.

Currently, the debate revolves around such question as: how does the internet help engage the public in politics? Has politics changed in the information age? How are political parties and governments using internet as a communication tool? How does this benefit the voters/citizens?

WHAT GENERATES THE INCREASED INTEREST IN THE DEMOCRACY-TECHNOLOGY NEXUS?

This widespread interest in what technology can do for democracy and politics appeared due to two factors. The first and more obvious one has to do with technology itself, namely rising

internet penetration rates, increasing broadband coverage, the boom of social networks, etcetera. The second factor has to do with traditional politics and what many observers (academics, journalists, and politicians) see as a decline in interest and engagement in democratic politics.

This decline has several manifestations (Gibson, Nixon and Ward, 2003): electoral volatility and the decrease of base voters and the rise of swing ones, which on the longer term has led to new protest parties, sometimes of extreme/populist orientation. Another worrying trend is the declining electoral turnout both in national and subnational elections; partly, this is due to a lack of knowledge regarding the democratic process, especially among young voters. Last, but not least, more and more voters are voicing their distrust in political representatives, parties, state and government institutions.

This is caused mainly by perceived levels of corruption, but also due to macro-economic trends (for example, the economic crisis that we are still witnessing has made voters believe that politicians, even when they are not corrupt, do not have the expertise to deal with such phenomenon).

DEFINING AND ANALYZING E-DEMOCRACY

The impact of technology on democracy can be analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods. When using a quantitative perspective, available data such as internet connectivity, broadband access or average time online are correlated with democracy indicators such as social capital or voter turnout. In the qualitative model, the focus is more on telling a story, looking at case studies, focusing on best practices, relating to experiences.

Although it uses statistics related to technology indicators, this article is built on a practitioner's reflections, experience and lessons learned while working in numerous elections digital campaigns around the world, including in several countries in Latin America.

However, no matter what perspective is used, the effects of technology on democracy can be as varied as the meaning of these two wide concepts. Starting with democracy, the concept can be understood in a narrow, traditional form as clean and trans-parent electoral processes, but can also go much further, and become a synonym for development, inclusion and social justice. In this case, internet is not just another market for products and services, but a vehicle that facilitates this social justice.

This goes in line with the final declaration of the 2003 World Summit on the Information Society, which concluded: "We declare our common desire and commitment to build a people-centered, inclusive and development-oriented information society, where everyone can create, access, use and share information and knowledge, enabling individuals, communities and peoples to achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality o life" (quoted in Franco, 2009).

This distinction becomes particularly important when moving to define technology, and in particular when we make the difference between *Web 1.0* and *Web 2.0*. In the case of *Web 1.0*, users were limited to the passive viewing of content created within a website. With *Web 2.0*, applications facilitate participatory information and intelligence sharing, collaboration and interaction. Websites built on a model of "architecture of participation", social networks, new media, blogs and video sharing sites allow users to do more than retrieve information.

Therefore, the resulting e-democracy makes politics and its decision-making processes accessible to a whole new demographic

of people at the same time and with reduced costs. The incredible speed and manner in which information is dispersed across the internet is unrivalled by any other traditional form of media. No other method of raising awareness, advertising or marketing has the unlimited reach of *Web 2.0* and the capacity to reach inten-ded audiences through targeting techniques. Even in the case of political debating where traditionally everyone is required to be in the same place at the same time, *Web 2.0* enables to access and create debates online and partake in online discussions.

THE STATE OF E-DEMOCRACY IN LATIN AMERICA

Besides its transformational power, the internet is also a hall of mirrors which reflects the societies into which it is inserted (Gómez, 2000). In other words, besides impacting on the political modes of interaction in specific regions or countries, technology also takes the form and direction of the societies in which it is introduced. This should be a caveat both for political scientists analyzing e-democracy in different parts of the globe, but also for practitioners. They need to be aware of these political specificities before choosing one *Web 2.0* instrument or another.

Latin America is made up of a multiplicity of cultures and identities, and access to resources, knowledge and opportunities is unequally distributed. Despite institutions of formal democracy in most of the countries, governments are frequently corrupt and elitist and are not subject to public accountability for their acts. Furthermore, Latin America has long been struggling with issues of electoral processes and transparency.

Internet penetration statistics show a divide between Latin America and the developed world, between different countries in the region, as well as between people living in them, with access concentrated in the middle and upper classes.

Thus, the unequal level of internet penetration in Latin American countries reflect similar divides in social class; this has led to skepticism on the part of some about the real potential of e-democracy in the region.

However, the good news is that the latest statistics show that democracy trends are advancing in the region. This is acknowledged in the USAID 2010 Report on the Americas (Seligson and Smith, 2010), the largest survey of democratic values undertaken in the Americas, as well as in the *Latinobarómetro* [Latinobarometer] (*The Economist*, 2010a), a poll that has been taken regularly since 1995 and tracks changes in attitude across the region. Both surveys point out that there is an increased stability of attitudes towards democracy and its core institutions. This marks a positive change compared to a decade ago when economic woes undermined support for democracy. Fortunately, democracy has held up during the world financial crisis, mainly because many countries in the region suffered only a brief recession and have enjoyed a strong recovery.

So what is the advance of the latest internet technologies compared to these positive political trends? (comScore, 2011), the leader in measuring the digital world found in its last yearly report that in January 2011 the internet population had increased with 15 percent to 112.7 million visitors compared to the previous year. Overall, in 2010 the internet audience grew 23 percent compared to 2009, and now represents about 8 percent of the global internet audience. This makes Latin America the fastest growing region in the world.

User engagement data found that an average internet user in Latin America spent 24 hours online during January 2011, visiting the internet nearly 50 times during the month. Internet users in Mexico and Argentina outpaced the global average of

22.6 hours online per month in February 2010. With broadband penetration being the most influential factor on time spent online, this will lead to heavier usage as availability improves and costs decline in the region.

In terms of behavior, there are a few characteristics that stand out (*comScore*, 2010): first, the highly social nature of Latin American culture plays an important part in the rise of social networks in the region. *Twitter,* for example, has seen phenomenal growth in 2010: while the world growth of this social network was five-fold, its growth in the region has been 13 times. Furthermore, more than three quarters of web users consume entertainment sites, including music, video, tv, multimedia and entertainment news; high entertainment penetration despite relatively low broad penetration which impedes a great deal of high-bandwidth activity such as video streaming or music downloads, indicates a clear regional appetite for this type of content.

Another important characteristic is that blogs and news/info sites capture significant portions of the audience, compared with other developing regions such as Asia Pacific, the Middle East and Africa. Many of these blogs focus on politics and political commentary, a behavior surpassed only by North America.

A CASE IN POINT: COLOMBIA AND THE 2010 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS[2]

Before last year's elections, campaigns in Colombia made use of traditional channels such as television, billboards and face-to-face and door-to-door campaigning. However, with Colombia

[2] This section of the article draws on a previous case study that was published in the online version of the US magazine *Campaigns and Elections* on September 28, 2010 (Lopez, Singh and Anderson, 2010).

having a 48.7 percent usage penetration (21 million) in 2010, which is at a growth rate of 2267.7 percent between 2000 and 2009 and by another 31 percent in 2009-2010, the largest year on year growth in Latin America, the opportunity presented itself for candidates to run their first digital campaigns. Among them, Juan Manuel Santos used the most innovative strategies, and, as it turned out, his strategies worked, as Santos was officially elected on June 20 as the 40th President of Colombia. The digital strategy of Santos's campaign was to appeal to a pool of young voters who were digital-savvy, thirsty for change and anxious to bring innovative technology to Colombia's political landscape. This strategy presented itself with threats and opportunities: on one hand, the danger was to focus too much on young people, who, as mentioned above, are considered to be disenchanted by politics and register low levels of voting. However, the opportunity was also there, in the sense that if the campaign managed to catch these young voters precisely where they were spending a lot of their time (namely on the internet), then this could help re-engage them into politics.

The tactics used were fine tuned to Latin America's and Colombia's digital landscape. As we saw above, Latin Americans are keen on following the news, so the campaign used an *iPhone* app where users received daily feeds from the U Party (Santos's political party). Social networks were also used extensively, but because they can often turn into mere tools for propaganda and dirty campaigning, Santos's team used a real-time "Wall of Shame", where any citizen could post offensive material related to any candidate, not just Santos.

Because entertainment is a very popular category in Latin America, the campaign came up with an exciting *Super Santos* videogame. Its purpose was to raise awareness on how the

candidate was planning to fight corruption, unemployment and drug trafficking, the most pressing issues in the country.

There were also a number of innovative tactics used: for the first time, Colombians were able to send their voter ID number to an SMS short code and receive their exact voting location to their cell phones. When entered on the Santos website, the user would receive his or her exact voting location on a map, along with a suggested route. This made the voting process more transparent and helped increase voter turnout.

With all these tactics, the campaign achieved impressive engagement numbers: forty thousand website visits per day, collecting more than 4 million opt-in emails, videos receiving as much as 11 thousand views in one day. These initiatives helped Santos raise almost nine million votes, the highest recorded vote numbers in the country's history, getting 69 percent of the vote. Although one should never go as far as saying that *Web 2.0* got Santos elected, it is still fair to say that for people that did not quite grasp the power of *Web 2.0*, the Colombian elections and the Santos campaign in particular proved the opposite.

LESSONS LEARNED AND CONCLUSIONS

With the new round of elections in Latin America continuing through 2011, the Santos campaign can teach other democracies in the region some important lessons:

- **The rise of the online politician.**
  Santos should serve as an example for other leaders to engage more with their audience and to listen more than just to give speeches. The vertical and unidirectional communication

model (politicians talk, voters listen) is being replaced by a horizontal and multidirectional model, where voters want to have a say too during elections. Juan Manuel Santos, now a Blackberry-toting, tweeting citizen, is committed to continue using technology, social media, and innovations on the web, to stay close to the citizens.

- **The participatory web model.**
  Citizens and voters alike now have a real opportunity to have their voices heard, and they need to use this power to counter propaganda or manipulation. The boom of social networks has recently become a metaphor for a non-authoritarian society that is more collaborative, inclusive and horizontal (Franco, 2009).
- **The continuation from digital campaigns to e-government.**
  Technology's impact on democracy should not stop on Election Day and Santos decided to continue to use technology in his government. Colombia, now one of the most solid democracies in Latin America was recently dubbed the "Star of the South" (Newsweek, 2010), also because it showed the world a successful process in 2010.

Can Latin American states afford to ignore these points? Only if they want to ignore democracy and technology trends: internet penetration will only continue to grow, so will new media and social networks. History always has a funny habit of repeating itself, only in slightly different guises. It is already common knowledge that Roosevelt's now-famous fireside chats helped him rally the support of citizens for his New Deal measures. And more than one historian has pointed out that the turning point of the 1960 US presidential elections were the first-ever televised presidential debates between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon.

As a final conclusion, it is more than likely that the future will belong to those who understand and embrace e-democracy and the state-of-the-art tools it provides. Or, to quote the highly respected president of Chile, Sebastian Pinera: "Latin America arrived late to the 19th-century industrial revolution and that helps explain why we are still an under-developed continent. But we cannot be late for the 21st-century revolution: the knowledge, technology and information society that will be very generous to those countries that wish to embrace it, but indifferent -and even cruel- to those that let it pass by" (quoted in *The Economist*, 2010b).

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NOTES ON POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS IN LATIN AMERICA IN THE AGE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Salvador Romero Ballivián[1]

INTRODUCTION

In Latin America, political participation is experienced under the "republican" model (Nohlen, 2004: 149-152). This is a demanding model, as it requires informed and committed citizens, that are willing to participate, with an interest in public affairs (starting with elections) and with a feeling for political competence. In general terms and despite the difficult socioeconomic and cultural conditions, this is the approach taken by electoral institutions, as well as by State powers, the media, non-governmental organizations, organizations for international cooperation, and international institutions linked with political affairs, political parties, broad swaths of intellectuals. We are of course dealing with a lofty ideal which considers participation and abstention as a central parameter for the evaluation of democracy,

[1] Former President of the Electoral Court of Bolivia. Current Director of the National Democratic Institute (NDI) in Honduras.

a relevant subject of public debate, and thus a permanent incentive to seek the best formulas for increasing participation in quantitative and qualitative terms.

This ideal must face up to a reality that conforms less and less to its elevated prescription, since electoral participation is decreasing in Latin America. Citizens are farther and farther from the voting booths, without electoral institutions, political parties, or civil society organizations having been able to revert this trend. In this scenario, many pin their hopes and expectations for increasing participation, especially among the young, on new technologies, further encouraged by the role played by computer social networks in the overthrow of the autocracies of North Africa or on the experiences of Latin American citizens mobilized around subjects of collective interest.

This essay shows the situation and the evolution of Latin American political participation in recent decades, the limitations of electoral institutions for improving voting levels, and finally outlines some thoughts about how these might take advantage of the new technologies in this field.

THE SCENARIO: THE PARADOXICAL DECLINE OF ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION IN LATIN AMERICA AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Electoral and political participation is one of the most dealt with and apparently one of the best-understood subjects in Latin American political science. This, of course, only after leaving aside the complications of measuring participation with respect to population of voting age or sometimes just with respect to lists of registered voters, which in turn can carry significant differences in comparison to the total number of citizens who could

exercise the right to vote, be it because significant contingents of the population are not listed, sometimes due to structural exclusion or, in contrast, due to serious problems of updating because of deficient purging for deaths and migration, without discarding the possible combination of the two scenarios. Political participation is not only a technical or academic question; it is likewise one of the central themes of democracy, of its capacity for inclusion, integration or, on the contrary, of its levels and forms of exclusion.

The tendency raises concerns in Latin America: electoral participation is following a descending curve with the intense electoral marathon of the 2005-2006 season representing the nadir since the return to democracy, slightly below sixty percent, when the level had approached 75 percent in the period 1988-1991 (CAPEL, 2007: 33).

Among the reasons attributed to this decline it is necessary to mention the increase in electoral events. With the return to democracy, the majority of electoral processes were exclusively general (presidential or parliamentary on one single day), and thus they generated notable expectations and very high percentages of voter turnout. Political reforms led to progressively more voting; municipal, regional and parliamentary elections, plebiscites, and referendums became regular occurrences. This increase was judged to be a deepening of democracy, but it did not always result in the same enthusiasm on the part of the electorate or even on the part of the political parties themselves. Therefore, the high levels of abstention decreased the general percentage of participation. On average, and leaving aside the great disparity in results, from 1978 to 2007, voter participation levels for referendums and popular elections were a couple of percentage points lower than for presidential elections, 68.1 percent *vs.* 70.1 percent respectively (Zovatto in: Lissidini, Welp and Zovatto, 2008: 286).

Incidentally, voter turnout for presidential elections are still at much higher levels than the average noted for the "electoral marathon" of 2005-2006: in the presidential elections in the period 2004-2006, voter turnout was higher than 80 percent in Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru and Uruguay (IDEA, 2006).

However, in many countries, participation in presidential and general elections is not at the elevated initial levels, even if we only consider the presidential elections. The table about Honduras illustrates an example.

TABLE 1.

Percentage of Voter Turnout in Honduran Presidential Elections 1985-2009.

Presidential	1985	1989	1993	1997	2001	2005	2009
Participation	84%	76%	64.9%	72%	66.3%	55%	49.8%

The right to vote was one of the symbols *par excellence* of the political rights denied by authoritarian regimes, and its use symbolized democracy recovered. The succession of voting events has trivialized it, has erased the aura that surrounded it in the transition to democracy. From this perspective, following theses like those defended by conservative currents in the US in the 1970s, the increase in abstention would indicate establishment of democracy.[2] Nevertheless, such an interpretation is hardly compatible with citizens' disillusionment with politics, political parties, and even with democracy itself in some countries, which negatively affects participation. Many of the hopes regarding well-being that accompanied the return of democracy were not reached; the formal labor market is of a precarious character, poverty is decreasing but slowly, inequalities still exist and

[2] On this debate and a critical view of the conservative position, (Macpherson, 1997: 115-116).

disturbing processes of crime an criminality grip various States and societies even though civil wars are in the past. Likewise, in several countries there is skepticism towards the transforming power of the vote: many sectors don't believe that elections will achieve significant changes in the general features of the country or in their particular conditions of life, which leads to an attitude of withdrawal and indifference.

Analysis of this electoral turnout and its opposite, abstention, demands that we characterize the sociological and political factors. At the level of generality in which these considerations are developed, in Latin America we see that the level of political participation grows along with the level of integration into society: with higher degrees, better job fit, higher income, tighter links with associations, more access to the means of communication or more pronounced interest in politics, greater possibility of going to vote. In other words, the sectors that are commonly marginalized from the political sphere are the ones that vote the least and this with identical rates of registration, which does not translate into identical starting points given the limitations of the civil registries in many Latin American rural areas or lower rates of registration for elections for those groups. It is not surprising, for example, that the northern provinces of Argentina, which are the least developed, especially in the rural zones, have the highest abstention rates in that country (Basset, in: Romero Ballivián, 2007: 22).

Then there is the null vote, which is not the same as this abstention with sociological characteristics though it does have close links. Without a doubt, the null vote indicates a high degree of politicization on the margins of the political party system, for example among members of radical left groups, or can sometimes represent a movement promoted by sectors that are well integrated into, but dissatisfied with, the political regime, as

happened in Argentina with the *voto bronca* [vote of anger] at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the call by prominent intellectuals for a blank vote in the 2001 presidential elections in Peru or the call for the null vote in the 2009 legislative elections in Mexico. Nonetheless, in rural regions, which are among the poorest areas in Latin America, the increased level of blank votes suggests participation with such scarce information or with such minimal following of the campaign, that it diminishes the value of the vote as a profoundly personal act in the definition of a collective destiny. Here, the portion of blank votes (nearly a third) in the special districts of African descendants in Colombia stands out (Giraldo, in: CAPEL , 2010: 141-150).

In contrast, we see the notable evolution of political participation of women in recent years, along a trajectory that reminds one of the European path and is linked to the significant increase in prospects for women. From having been a minority on the voter registration lists, in the majority of countries women inverted the terms, which accords more closely with demographic reality; the notable exception is Guatemala, where women have only reached 45.8 percent (Llanos and Sample, 2008: 15). This change is seen above all in the capitals and in the major cities where there are increased socioeconomic, educational, cultural, and political opportunities for women, while there is evidence that the rural zones, where patterns of more traditional behavior persist, are still lagging behind. Costa Rica offers an example, with San Jose being the area with the greatest proportion of registered women voters, while the less developed rural areas show the opposite phenomena (TSE, 2009: 17-21). This fact has to do with registration for elections, and sometimes also, and ever more frequently, voter turnout, but it does not yet extend to positions of party leadership, nor to elected posts, where the tendency is moving in the same direction but at a much slower pace and with the help of quotas.

Participation in elections also depends on the political context. Presidential elections are still attractive and mark the high points of voter turnout, and in any comparative, international perspective, they would be in the upper part of the chart. On the other hand, research confirms that intermediate elections mobilize fewer people; participation decreases for legislative elections (as seen in Table 2); in elections for local and regional authorities; in referendums that the electorate finds less interesting (minimal participation, for example, in the referendum about the Peace Accords in Guatemala in 1999). If the broadening of the spectrum of elections represents, according to proponents, a deepening of democracy, it also trivializes them and paradoxically reserves them for the most politicized groups or those with direct interests at play in that balloting.

TABLE 2.

Percentage of Voter Turnout for Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in the Dominican Republic 1996-2006.

Election	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006
Presidential	76,6%		76,1%		72,8%	
Parliamentary		53%		51,1%		56,5%

The decline in electoral participation has a paradoxical twist: there are more electoral processes to vote in, and broader swaths of the population participate (18-year-old youth, residents in foreign countries); likewise voting takes place under better circumstances. Progress in accountability and openness represents a fundamental change in the way Latin America votes. Upon the establishment of the republics, this region has proclaimed popular suffrage as a principle that legitimizes power, and has made elections the very instrument for assigning power. But at the same time it betrayed its own ideals, paving its historical path

with State coups, civil wars, rebellions, crass frauds. Today, the great majority of electoral processes can be described by the infamous formula about the "certainty of the rules and the uncertainty of the results" (Przeworsky, 1991). We have left behind the period in which elections could indeed be carried out but many times with a seal of exclusion and fraud, and even when they were carried out regularly they did not necessarily serve to "resolve the political conflict and put into power those who will govern; nor were they a mean for expressing political preferences, nor a mechanism of control of the governed over those who govern" (Loaeza, 2008:87), as would occur in Mexico, and in a more authoritative context, Paraguay, where General Stroessner participated in and won six consecutive elections.

The fundamental indicators of clean, free elections that are the central means to access a political post are consistently complied with in the great majority of the countries: the index of electoral democracy created by the UNDP went from a value of 0.28 in 1977 to a value of 0.86 in 1990 and reached 0.96 in 2008, with one being the highest possible rating, showing constant positive evolution (UNDP-OAS, 2011: 65).

At the same time, there is increased confidence among Latin Americans that voting can change the future: according to data from *Latinobarómetro* [Latinobarometer], the percentage has increased from 52 percent in 2003 to 67 percent in 2009 (*Latinobarómetro*, 2009). The perception that elections are conducted fairly is also on the rise, and reached 46 percent in 2009, the record since the question was formulated in the mid 1990s. Nonetheless a gap remains between the "objective" level measured by the UNDP and the "subjective" level captured by the *Latinobarómetro*. In any case, Latin Americans paradoxically retreat more and more from the same ballot boxes that progressively show more accountability, less fraud, and more possibility of bringing change.

CAN ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT?

In nearly all Latin American countries, electoral institutions take on the task of promoting participation in elections and consider it a success when large numbers of people vote. They frequently consider how to achieve high voter turnout and look for successful experiences to replicate; they often suffer when abstention rates increase from one election to the next. Nevertheless, voluntarism on the part of the electoral institutions to affect the level of participation is probably in vain at the macro level, uncertain on the intermediate plane, and only effective on the microscale.

Beyond the issue of how much creativity, effort, and talent are mobilized by the electoral institutions to encourage citizens to vote, these have little weight compared to the structural factors that determine the levels of participation. Indeed, voter turnout or, its opposite, abstention, depends heavily on sociological, historical and political factors of great importance.

Indeed, as was proven by the early classical research of political sociology, electoral participation is marked by the degree of integration into the national society; as was noted, the participation curve goes up with increased education levels, income, membership in associations of any kind, knowledge of the language of management and business (in multilingual countries), knowledge of and interest in politics, etcetera. We are dealing with consistent correlation, and not determinism, to the point that sustained, multiple, convergent campaigns can invert strong tendencies. Here we see female voter turnout which ended up surpassing that of men, a change that was not independent of the efforts to promote this, from many angles, with many players, with significant resources and over decades.

Neither is political culture foreign to the levels of voter turnout. Some of those cultures cultivate a participative spirit that contributes to high averages of voter turnout. The republican culture in Uruguay is an emblematic case. Meanwhile, other political cultures have generated mistrust of, indifference to, and skepticism about public affairs or the conduct of the State, which puts voting at low levels. Sometimes within a single country there are sufficiently varied regional political cultures so as to affect participation rates, in the same way that they influence local political orientation. Thus, electoral participation should be measured both as an absolute and a relative index, in the historical sequence of each country. Of course, these cultures are not immutable; they may vary in any way, and have inflection points. Nor are they deterministic; seasonal changes may leave behind decades of a certain behavioral style, though it is probable that once the parentheses are closed, the average level of participation will return to their more habitual levels.

Finally, the characteristics of an election are decisive. If the electorate feels that the elections or the balloting are not particularly relevant, because the posts to be filled are ones with little power, or because either confusing or uninteresting questions are asked, then the probability of abstention grows. Polarization also constitutes a good indicator to predict voter turnout: elections that take place in the context of strong, marked confrontations among well differentiated social agendas are more appealing to the electorate than balloting in which continuity appears to be assured. As André Siegfried noted at the beginning of the twentieth century, there are "combat" elections and "pacification" elections, the former favorable for electoral mobilization and the latter for withdrawal (Siegfried, 1995). The presence of new political actors able to position themselves as clear alternatives to the traditional offerings may likewise generate positive effects on participation (*Cfr.* Romero Ballivián, 2003: 436-440).

The electoral institutions can do little about these major factors. Lower in the hierarchy, on an intermediate level, there seems to exist a certain relationship between confidence in the fairness of elections, and thus implicitly in the work of the electoral institution, and the levels of electoral participation. Hints of this tendency exist, but so do uncertainties.

According to the numbers cited from the *Latinobarómetro*, in 2009, confidence in electoral transparency reached its highest levels in Uruguay, Chile, Costa Rica and Panama. These are four countries that tend to be in the upper part of the electoral participation chart and that have well-established and respected electoral institutions. This correlation should be considered in a broad context: the first three countries make up the classical Latin American triad of institutionality and have a reputation for being strongly united societies. Therefore, confidence in the purity of the elections may only be one facet of a broader confidence in institutions, the State or the reflection of less fractured societies. This general confidence could result in increased participation. Panama contributes a strong element: in a country with a recent democratic tradition, the Electoral Tribunal has consolidated itself as one of the most prestigious institutions, with a wide base of credibility among citizens, this confidence in turn favors voter turnout.

At the other extreme, the lowest perception of cleanness in elections occurs in Honduras, Mexico and Colombia. In the first two countries, participation has tended to decrease systematically in the last decades, while it has been traditionally weak in Colombia. Voter confidence in electoral institutions is not very high either, despite being recognized as trustworthy among specialists and outside the country, which is particularly true in the case of Mexican electoral entities. However the links are not automatic; there are exceptions, like the Peruvian case, in which

the population simultaneously questions the cleanness of the elections and turns out massively to vote.

While firm conclusions cannot be drawn at that intermediate level, it seems reasonable to note that, in the long term, the consolidation of citizen confidence in electoral institutions generates favorable conditions for improving or maintaining participation. It is a demanding bet, to the degree that it requires a sequence of several quality elections, that leave no doubts; but it is also precisely in this way that democracies create citizens who are not preexistent, as Guy Hermet noted (1993). The accumulation of this capital of credibility is also a key factor for the moments in which storms erupt, like on election nights with very close results. When the confidence is just being established, a misstep is enough to take you back to square one.

Nevertheless, electoral institutions or the entities they are linked to and that play a role on the road to election day, find themselves in the position of having an impact on minor aspects that do indeed improve voter turnout. Consider the impact of, for example, the ease with which one can enroll in the civil registry, which in turn serves as the basis for identification documents and the voter register. Pointing in the same direction, the easy and impartial access to identity documents contributes to participation, especially among youth. There are still Latin American countries in which obtaining the document takes months or is presented after arbitrary political designations by municipal functionaries. Quick and easy voter registration also improves electoral inclusiveness. The distribution of polling stations is another variable that often depends on electoral institutions and has an effect on voter turnout: participation increases when they are set up near voters, then logically participation increases. El Salvador experienced this when it decentralized polling stations; the pilot trial in certain municipalities in 2009 showed greater voter

turnout in places where polling stations were dispersed rather than where they remained centralized. In addition to a quantitative increase, there is also qualitative progress: the voters that benefit from the increase in polling stations tend to live in rural areas or marginalized urban neighborhoods. Also, electoral institutions are tasked with creating the simplest ballots possible, in order to facilitate voting by the most disadvantaged sectors of the electorate. Lastly, they should present clear, pedagogical information campaigns regarding procedural aspects of the elections, particularly when there have been innovations in the manner of voting, or regarding the meaning of the balloting, especially if we are dealing with new modalities of voting, as in the exercise of direct democracy.

AVOIDING THE OBSTACLES: TECHNOLOGY AND PARTICIPATION FROM THE ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS POINT OF VIEW

In the last years of the twentieth century and the first years of the following century, there have been fundamental technological changes, both in tools and in an accelerated propagation of these tools for use among the population. Computers are no longer a mystery for broader and broader swaths of the Latin American population, the penetration of telecommunications progresses at a much greater rate than that of the growth of the economy, and there is a considerable reduction in the period of time between the development of an innovative consumer product and its propagation to the masses. The author of this text does not even attempt to create a summary list of the profound social, economic, and cultural changes brought about by the technological revolution. The goal is simply to sketch out some thoughts about its connection with political and electoral participation, and about the way in which electoral institutions might relate to it.

Technology offers a broad range of means, provides new instruments and tools, nearly all of them valuable and useful, this is not a goal in itself for electoral institutions. The goals are the same as before technological change accelerated: achieve greater and better political and electoral participation, achieve the inclusion of traditionally marginalized sectors, guarantee elections that are fair, trusted, transparent and convincing for the political parties and the electorate, as well as strengthen the foundations of democracy.

In their relationship with technology, electoral institutions have antagonistic obstacles to avoid. They must navigate between, on the one hand, the temptation to convert technology from a means to a goal in and of itself and, on the other, the rejection of technology on the basis of the desire to maintain inherited practices. Likewise, the temptations of elitism and paternalism must also be evaded. Lastly, they must avoid the magical vision of an all-powerful technology as well as the view that technology is secondary to the achievement of their tasks.

The transition from viewing technology as a means to viewing it as a goal is rarely carried out deliberately; rather, it occurs like starting down a gentle hill. At the beginning, the goal is for technology to serve a purpose and then fascination with the potential of computers creates a perverse dynamic. One of the recurring examples, and sometimes with devastating consequences, comes from the desire to announce preliminary results as soon as possible. Many electoral institutions seek to promote tranquility at the close of election day; the timely presentation of data is a legitimate objective, for which they arrange for themselves or organize a service to provide this information within hours of the close of voting. In the process, technological achievement becomes the banner of electoral authorities. In an imperceptible manner, there is a shift from the search for certainty in the

presentation of data to the search for technological prowess. The failure of systems during those crucial hours can lead to the collapse of the entire process or to serious discrediting of the electoral institutions and authorities. This was observed at different levels in Ecuador in 2006, Colombia in the legislative elections of 2010 (when the website with election results was attacked by hackers, the sabotage could not be contained and there was a collapse in the propagation of information), and, while there were other factors involved, Mexico in 2006, when the preliminary results were within the margin of error (Schedler, 2009: 58).

At the other extreme, the obstacle is that traditionally labeled as "we've always done it this way," which slams the door on any innovative technology. This attitude is less common, as the modernization of electoral institutions in Latin America tends to be in the vanguard of states for technological change, insofar as the fluid relationships between them accentuate the propagation of successful technological innovations. Nonetheless, the more consolidated and established an institution, the more noticeable is its conservative tendency. This paradox might explain why these entities are marked by criteria rooted in a history of institutional achievements, public confidence and stability in leadership and administrative staff.

Elitism does not just create minor problems. Facing the vertigo generated by new technologies and the temptation of favoring them to confirm the modernity of the institution, electoral institutions should recall that while propagation of technology grows at an accelerated rate in Latin America, there are still limits. There are still broad sectors of the population for which computers are an unattainable and unfamiliar object. Electoral institutions should not lose sight of the disadvantaged voter. Despite the pertinence of recourse to technology, it is essential

for classical strategies to remain, especially in terms of information, communication and spreading the word. In this sense, new technologies must be seen as additional elements that reinforce and complement mechanisms that are already in use and not as their substitutes; new technologies can also usefully serve as a way of approaching youth.

At the extremes, the paternalistic view maintains that new technology is too sophisticated for the population and thus electoral institutions should not make use of it. The supposition that people are not prepared to use technological advances or that the political culture of the country is incompatible with certain technologies reflects a profound underestimation of the learning capacities of the average citizen, including voters with less education. Furthermore, in Latin America, the majority of youth are familiar with progress in information technology and computer systems (Tuesta, in: Nohlen, *et al.*, 2007: 961). While electronic ballot boxes are not per se the specific focus of analysis of this text, they are illustrative, especially in the case of Brazil, which was able to successfully install them, even in the poorest, most isolated regions where the level of education is low, which obviously requires an appropriate training plan.

The third dilemma begins with a fascination with technology, which leads to a magical view of its possibilities, as able to resolve political or social problems on its own. The broad spectrum of possibilities that technology, which is constantly surpassing itself, offers can easily lead to the belief that technology can resolve problems or conflicts that are not of a technical nature, but rather have political or social origins. This erroneous conception can lead to complicated impasses for democracy. In a similar deviation, many electoral institutions attempt to ease the

inadequate level of legitimacy they enjoy among the citizenry with technological innovation, which reminds one of the efforts of many authorities to improve their position solely through propaganda campaigns.

In contrast, some electoral institutions turn their backs on technological change, giving it a totally secondary roll, ignoring their potential, maintaining that the electoral processes can be carried out without it or with minimal recourse to its advantages. In a certain way this is true, since elections existed far before technological progress, but that option ends up generating significant costs in time, security and efficiency. It also ends up taking elections out of phase with a society that moves quickly and incorporates easily new technological contributions, if it has sufficient economic means to do so.

Navigating to avoid these obstacles and paying attention to the opposing risks is compatible with the fact that electoral institutions use as much technology as they can. Technology should be an important means for approaching the population, political parties, the media, the academic community and associations in civil society. Technology can serve to promote increased participation, encourage participation at a higher level, and in the end, contribute to the consolidation of democracy. It facilitates the simplification of paperwork and procedures. It allows us to cover various stages of the electoral process with greater security, dynamism and possibilities for verification. It also offers exceptional opportunities to test the openness with which the electoral authorities work. All of these advantages are possible, even though we recognize that there are gaps between groups and citizens in their access to and handling of technology. The available tools vary and are constantly increasing in numbers.

Based on these very general principles, very concrete practices emerge. Some, but not all, of the most common uses of technology by electoral institutions will be enumerated here. In general, they have understood that web sites include far more than decorative questions and are not simply trends, and have converted them into broad spaces for linking with all interested parties in the electoral processes as a whole and not only during the intense days around an elections. It provides abundant information, both recent and historical, making it available to all without restrictions. Likewise, they can take advantage of databases, digitalized cartography, and process flows, in order to better plan their activities, save time and resources. In numerous places, electoral institutions make it easier for the electorate to obtain information regarding voting locations through text messages; this is the case even in countries, such as Haiti, that are not up to date in technological advances. Voter registration is quicker and the voter rosters are easier to update, more precise, and more secure when electronic means are used. The creation of biometric registries is today among the feasible alternatives that electoral institutions can draw on. Nevertheless, the Bolivian case confirms that technological questions are just one of the factors for success in these experiences (Peñaranda y Candia, 2009). For election days, the quick transmittal of results has reduced the margin of suspense, a potential trigger for conflicts, while constant updating of results on websites generates certainty among the population and conveys openness: the citizenry can follow the election data at any level and the political parties can verify the numbers. This reaches the point to which lack of complete, detailed data on the sites leads to suspicion regarding the correctness of the results (Sonnleitner, unpublished). The debate regarding whether this information should flow from the beginning or once results from some specific number of voting locations has been tallied is a small issue compared to the

consensus that this information should be made available to the public shortly after the close of voting.

CLOSING WORDS

Technology provides numerous options and alternatives to facilitate the work of electoral institutions in nearly all of their areas. Nonetheless, technology does not increase political or electoral participation *per se*. There is not a causal relationship, but the decline in electoral participation at the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the current century has occurred at a time when nearly all stages of the electoral process have been marked by technological advances. Nor does technology function independently to increase confidence in electoral acts, convey security regarding electoral results being correct, or establish the legitimacy of electoral institutions.

Some of the Latin American countries with the highest levels of public confidence in their electoral institutions and the most reliable data are also those that lag behind the most in the use of the latest technologies. Again, we are not speaking of cause and effect, but this link reminds us that, in general, electoral institutions must first gain the trust of the public through their political, social, and institutional behavior and their attitude, and this confidence will in turn facilitate introduction of technology without opposition. The use of modern tools by electoral institutions under criticism can increase and sharpen potential conflicts, instead of easing them. Technology does not resolve by itself conditions of equity in political campaigns, and this is one of the more worrisome issues in contemporary democracies. Furthermore, due to its features, technology, especially internet technology, creates new challenges for regulation of campaigns.

Since rules applicable to the traditional media are no longer adequate, new inequalities are generated; but at the same time internet offers surprising opportunities for organizations and individuals with scarce resources for classic campaigns.

The challenge for electoral institutions is to appropriate new technologies. This means first of all to know what they consist of, what general advantages and problems they present, to identify what potential functions they could fulfill in the institution and the electoral processes, in order to finally decide how, when and where to incorporate them. Electoral institutions have, within the public structure, important advantages for appropriating technology and giving it practical content. Indeed, the periodic succession of elections allows them to access significant state funds as well as drawing attention for international cooperation. The political priority of elections places them in an advantageous position that other entities in the public sector do not often enjoy.

This opportunity brings with it responsibility and furthermore demands of the electoral institutions maturity and perspicacity in order to distinguish between true innovations (those that represent qualitative leaps for the electoral process) and technology that is just an expensive fireworks show; calmness in order to incorporate the technological advances with all possible precautions to reap benefits and not sow mines likely to explode at key moments; measured deliberation in the use of public funds for technological achievements that will strengthen the institution and consolidate democracy rather than waste them on shortsighted activities; and a touch of audacity to feel that technology is an ally in the attainment of the best ambitions of democracy.

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DIFFERENT VIEWS ABOUT THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET IN AN ELECTION PROCESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE OAS OBSERVATION MISSIONS

Pablo Gutiérrez[1]

The Organization of American States (OAS) work on electoral cooperation and observation as well as its research and analysis of the subject suggests that countries of the region are increasingly using new technologies in the administration of elections. From computer programs used to register candidates or handle other types of election-related procedures to modern systems for the transmission of results and the use of electronic voting machines, very few processes have been devoid of the use of these technologies (OAS, 2007).

The application of new technologies is another trait of the transformations of the social life in the region and the electoral processes; by being part of the interactions of any of our societies, they are not devoid of the macro changes that occur in them.

[1] Director of the Department for Electoral Cooperation and Observation. Secretariat of Political Affairs. Organization of American States (OAS).

Citizens' progressive access to technologies like internet and the use of mobile devices has encouraged that the own citizens ask immediacy of the electoral management bodies with regard to the stages of an electoral process. Prior to voting, the citizen demands receiving information about the table where he/she shall exercise the vote through a web page or a text message sent directly to his/her mobile phone, and on voting day he/she expects that the consolidated results with definitive trends are delivered during the course of hours and not days or weeks as it was the rule in times past.

When this immediacy request of the information is not fulfilled or there are problems with the systems incorporated by the electoral management bodies, the own credibility of the electoral system may be in question. This paper will survey two examples of this situation. The first one occurred in the legislative elections of Colombia in 2010. In this process, apart from the election of legislators, the presidential candidate of the Conservative Party was chosen. The first tally sheets presented by the electoral management body showed a candidate leading the tally of votes with an ample difference. During the night of the election, the trend changed and the candidate who was in second place moved to the first one. The citizens could not have access to this information given that there were errors in the software during the delivery of voting returns protocols, including system crashes, failure to update the information, gaps and returns in the numbering of the protocols, and divergence between the information delivered to the press and that delivered to the witnesses of the political parties (OAS, 2010).

Subsequently, it was officially informed that the problems were caused because the web page of the electoral institution had

been hacked, but the difficulties in delivering the information compromised the image of the electoral authorities in the middle of the preparation of the presidential election.

The second example is even more serious because it involved results of a presidential election, occurred in Ecuador in 2009. These were the first elections held after the legal reform that splitted the responsibilities of the electoral function within two separate bodies. Initially, the complexity of tallying and filling out the sheets for the elective offices of National and Provincial Assembly Members generated considerable delays and mistakes in filling out the sheets that should be processed in the Intermediate Scrutiny Boards. In addition to this, there were technical issues, particularly in the transmission of the information load from the sixty Intermediate Electoral Boards to the National Electoral Council. This was caused by the size of the information loads that were transmitted for every sheet and, above all, by the scanned images that ultimately caused the collapse of the transmission.

This provoked not only a significant delay in the consolidation, totalization, and publication of the electoral data, but also more complicated stabilization problems of the results between the web portal of the National Electoral Council and the consultation terminals for the political parties that were in the electoral institution. It also caused serious doubts about the certainty of the results, which were expressed by most of the media, by the political parties, and by opinion leaders (OAS, 2009).

As shown in previous examples, the concepts of opportunity and credibility are increasingly associated, almost indissolubly linked. The anxiety for information, for the certainties given by information, can generate a post-election environment harmful to

the image of the different actors of the process and incidentally create the conditions for anticipated proclamations, reciprocal accusations and allegiances of fraudulent schemes.

In both situations, the use of technology should have expedited and made the process transparent, but ended up affecting the confidence in and credibility of the institutions that implemented these tools. Therefore, the question and the challenge that we raise is how to introduce technology that gives immediate results, but does not cast doubt about the cleanliness, transparency, and the inclusive character of the elections?

The technologies used in electoral processes must be transparent, accessible and comprehensible for the citizens and, at the same time, auditable by the political actors and by the international community. When incorporating them, it is important to keep in mind the differences among electoral systems, the political system in each country, the level of confidence in electoral management bodies, and the degree to which voter information and education is adequate for the effective use of the implemented technology.

In the region, we have attested situations in which the application of the same technological tool generates satisfaction or resistance in the citizens. The case of the fingerprint reader for the identification of voters in Venezuela and Colombia is a concrete example. In Venezuela, biometric identification equipments that capture and compare the elector's fingerprints with the database of the National Electoral Council are used. This technology, which seeks to ensure the "principle of one voter, one vote" was the center of debate of some political sectors, based on the perception they had at the time about the complete automation of the electoral process.

The Venezuelan case reveals the relationship between reality and perception in the use of technologies in the electoral processes given that sometimes even the most reliable technological tool might prove useless if the citizen perception points to the opposite direction.

On the other hand, in Colombia the electoral management bodies have insisted on the need of implementing a biometric identification system as an efficient tool to combat voter impersonation, one of the most committed electoral offenses in the country. The citizens agree on the use of biometric identification of the electors; however, this technology has not been implemented due to the lack of financial resources, in spite of the request from the electoral management body.

As we see in these cases, the importance of the "adoption" process of a technological innovation implies an "installation" and social acceptance process for the electoral management body, so that the technological tool actually becomes a true technological "solution" that fulfills the expectations of the electorate and the political actors.

This case also illustrates the importance for electoral management bodies to keep electors informed, thus generating confidence that technology can be one of the many tools to expedite some specific aspects of the electoral process and ensure the free exercise of the right to vote.

In sum, for an optimal application of technologies by any electoral management body, it is vital that they guarantee transparency, accessibility for all political actors and a procedural regulation including manuals for their administration and application.

EXPERIENCES IN THE USE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND INTERNET IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

This section reviews some examples of the use of technology that have been observed by the OAS Electoral Observation Missions in the hemisphere.

Using web pages as a tool to deliver information to the citizen is one of the most extended uses of the internet in the electoral processes of the region. Thirty six electoral management bodies of the Americas have web pages. The only electoral management bodies that currently do not use this tool are those of Barbados, Grenada, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Suriname.

The contents of the web pages vary. Some electoral management bodies, apart from including information about their competences and jurisprudence, include historical statistical data about the electoral processes and information about the civil registry and the electoral roll; others focus on the contact with the citizens, and through the web page provide information to find the polling sites or answer frequently asked questions about polling.

In this section, we will focus on some interesting experiences regarding the use of Internet in the electoral context:

- **Electoral cartography and location of the polling centers.** The electoral cartography generated by Mexico's Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) is a permanent activity and the updates of their products are made every six months. The IFE and the company *Google* signed a collaboration agreement to facilitate to the citizens the location of their respective polling booth, to cast their vote for the 2009

Local and Federal elections. The IFE placed the electoral cartography in the *Google Maps* system and through the web address www.ubicatucasilla.org.mx the citizens could find the location information of the more than 139 thousand polling booths in the country.

- **Publication of tally sheets and results.**
  Peru and Colombia are two of the countries that use their web page to publish the tally sheets. In both cases, the web page allows citizens to view the digital tally sheets on voting day. The information is continuously updated as the data of the tally sheets are processed. The case of Colombia is of has a particular significance because the publication of tally sheets through the web page is used as a tool to rectify the deficiency of the electoral system that does not provide for the representatives of the political parties at the tables to obtain a copy of the tally sheets.
- **Access to consolidated official results.**
  The publication of consolidated results in the web pages of the electoral management bodies is a generalized practice in the region, even though the consolidation times and, consequently, the access to them vary. The case of Jamaica is remarkable because the Electoral Office has an Election Information Management System that includes a basic web interface available for the media that sign a framework agreement with the Electoral Office. This interface gives media access to interactive maps and link to real-time electoral results through a text file, charts, tables, and graphs, while the electoral management body ensures that the information received by the citizens does not come from non-official sources like the results of exit polls.
- **Risk maps.**
  In the 2011 municipal elections, Colombia's National Registry of the Civil State will use its internet platform to disseminate electoral risk maps. The first map was drawn

in 2009 and showed the electoral fraud risks per municipality, based on the annulment of tally sheets of the 2002 and 2006 Congress elections. Prior to the registration of citizen ID cards that must be done in 2011, the Registry drew an electoral transhumance risk map that detailed the risk levels per municipality for the 32 departments. This electoral transhumance risk map will be very important to alert the local electoral authorities, the members of the organized civil society, and the electors to the illegal practices that may influence the Colombian electoral process.

In the case of mobile technology, it has contributed to customize and bring the electoral process closer to the elector and, at the same time, it has facilitated the preparation of electoral processes in countries that present geographical and political challenges. Some remarkable cases are:

- **Biometric registration.**
  The transitory provisions of the Bolivian Political Constitution approved in February of 2009 set forth that for the general elections that would take place in December of that year a new electoral roll should be created with a biometric registration system. Besides conducting the registration in fixed offices, Bolivia's National Electoral Court used mobile equipments that were efficiently and comfortably taken between localities. Hence, isolated towns were reached in a country with a clear geographical complexity and a considerable figure of rural population. For the registration of citizens, the biographic and biometric information was introduced, including fingerprints, photograph, and signature. The obtained information could be transmitted through public (internet or intranet) or dedicated networks, or simply by exporting the data to a

portable storage device like a compact disc. The utilization of mobile technology as one of the factors that allowed for achieving more than five million registrations in 75 days.

- **Electronic information kiosks for the voter.**
  In the elections held in El Salvador in 2009, the OAS observed the use of electronic information kiosks located in places with high traffic or concentration of persons, such as malls, universities, churches and supermarkets. The kiosks served a double purpose: on one hand, persons that consulted their electoral information could inform the Supreme Electoral Court about any mistake found in it and, on the other hand, they could identify their polling center and the number of the polling booth where they would cast their vote.
- **Text messaging with electoral information.**
  Sending text messages to inform the citizens about their polling center and table has been observed in several countries of the region, including Costa Rica, Paraguay, and more recently in the presidential elections of Haiti. This tool is mainly effective when it is free, as a service for the citizens, and is used by the representatives of the political parties in the polling centers. In Paraguay, during the 2010 elections, for instance, a representative per party could be seen at the entrance of the polling centers helping to locate the polling tables of the militants of his/her organization through text messages.

The mentioned examples share a commonality: they are not the product of the application of technologies as an objective in itself, but as a tool to modernize processes or respond to particular political and citizen demands. These examples testify the progressive and gradual implementation of technology in the region and, the OAS should be prepared both to support the member states

through technical cooperation projects and to observe the use of technologies in the Electoral Observation Missions.

OBSERVING THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE OAS ELECTORAL OBSERVATION MISSIONS

The OAS General Secretariat has a renowned and extensive experience in the field of electoral observation. As the use of new technologies increases in the organization of the electoral processes in the region, so has the need of modernizing the observation techniques through the design and the application of a standardized methodology especially created to support processes in which technology plays an important role. The degree to which this methodology will be applied, depends on the degree to which technology is being used in the observed electoral process. However, in general the methodology is focused on:

a. **Gaining a general understanding of the electoral process and the technology being used:**
   - Collecting information about the legal framework.
   - Collecting information about the electoral technology (interviews with specialists, visits to installations, review of documents and manuals, opinions of main technology-related actors, press).

b. **Validating transparency of technology used in all the stages of the electoral process:**
   - Obtaining information about activities for review, certification, tests, and technology audit.
   - Obtaining information about activities for publicizing and providing training in the use of technology.

- Observing the quantity and quality of activities for review, certification, tests, audits, publicizing, and training that are conducted.

c. Validating transparency of using technology in the course of the electoral process:

- Establishing guidelines for technical observation in the field.
- Observing the official activities of electoral management bodies.
- Observing the work of the main consolidation center.
- Evaluating the severity of incidents reported by observers.

Any technological transformation implemented by the electoral authority should be done hand in hand with the actors of the electoral process, therefore one of the most important aspects to be observed by the OAS in every phase of the process is precisely the financial oversight that the main contesting actors such as political parties and social organizations should conduct, as well as the internal audit of systems done by the electoral management body.

In this sense, the Peruvian case is interesting. The technological solution of electronic voting was created with domestic technology and human resources. However the National Office of Electoral Processes wants it to be audited by an external body to identify its strengths and weaknesses prior to its definitive implementation and the OAS is supporting this process.

Besides audits, there are good practices applicable to the use of technology, including the use of international standards or

certifications such as ISO (International Organization for Standardization) with regard to computer security and quality management, among others.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude these reflections we must be very clear: technology is a tool, a means, not the definitive or infallible solution for all the evils of the electoral processes. As a means or tool, technology should abide by those who are its beneficiaries: the citizens. Nothing is achieved by driving citizens apart with lengthy theoretical, technical, or mathematical explanations about the operation of these tools that reach almost divine dimensions. This tool does not constitute yet another step, an option or alternative to fully achieve the fundamental principles of every election, the great virtue of the democratic rite: every citizen is equal to the other, each vote counts and deserves the respect and protection of the system.

The modernization and use of electoral technologies is, undoubtedly, a challenge for both the bodies in charge of organizing and managing elections and institutions like the GS/OAS in charge of observing these processes.

Even though the application of technologies in the electoral processes in our region is not close to the European levels, it is undeniable that in the last few years technology began to be seen as an elemental tool to solve speed and agility problems in such processes. In light of the above-said, technologies started to be incorporated, sometimes through electronic voting pilot plans or general automation of the voting process. At the same time, systems and software implementation began to be used for the transmission and publication of results, registration, and

electoral cartography. It was also used on a smaller scale, the registration programs of candidacies, citizens, and political parties.

The application of these technologies represents a challenge for the OAS, especially for its electoral observation work. The development of a methodological tool for the Observation of Highly Automated Electoral Processes forms part of the commitment assumed by the General Secretariat through the Department of Electoral Cooperation and Observation to progress qualitatively in the professionalization of the Electoral Observation Missions (EOMs) of the Organization, while adapting to the new challenges posed by the inclusion of technologies.

The main challenge is, however, the one faced by the countries of the hemisphere that commit to a larger incorporation of technological solutions. In this regard, I would like to conclude my presentation reflecting about how this challenge can be faced. First, the implementation of technology should always respond to a sovereign decision, taking into account the costs and benefits, the political context, the acceptance of the initiative by the electors, etcetera.

A second aspect to be kept in mind is the balance that should exist, on one hand, speed and security, and on the other, transparency and accessibility. With regard to accessibility, the OAS has been working with the electoral management bodies on the importance of allowing the representatives of the political parties to be present or audit the several processes involved in an election.

A third aspect is related to the accountability principle and the mechanisms to make it effective. Whether the technical solution is the product of own applied technology or delivered by an external vendor, the State is the only accountable for the correct

operation of the electoral system as a whole. Therefore, it is not only fundamental to have warranties when the service is supplied by an external entity, but also the technical capacities or alternative solutions to face in an adequate and timely fashion possible failures of the systems during any of the stages of the electoral process. For this reason, the need of training the officials of the electoral management bodies that will be in charge of the use and implementation of any type of technology should be added to the conditions we have mentioned.

To conclude, I want to assert that the application of electoral technology in the region goes hand in hand with the citizen perception about its use. Consequently, the citizens should be informed and trained through civic education campaigns, especially the first time any new technology is implemented. The decision refers not only to the opportunity but also to the proper selection of the technological solution, for instance, the use of citizen-friendly means because even the best technology becomes inefficient when the citizens perceive it as a tool that can be used to manipulate their electoral preferences.

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CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORMS: THE PROMOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENYA´S ELECTION PROCESS

Ezra Chiloba[1]

INTRODUCTION

There has been a growing interest among policy actors in understanding the implications of technology on free, fair and credible elections in the last decade or so. However, most of the discussions on the subject have revolved around the efficacy of different forms of technology in the management of elections. By default, most of these discussions have focused on appropriate technology for voter registration, electronic voting and transmission of electoral data (results) after voting.

Until recently, not much attention has been paid to the role of new media and technological platforms in the promotion of electoral accountability for free, fair and credible elections.

[1] Governance Specialist-Elections and Political Management. Programme Analyst-Electoral Systems & Processes. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP-Kenya).

This paper presents a case study of how new technological platforms have been used in Kenya to provide opportunities for ordinary citizens to promote electoral accountability before, during and after elections. More specifically, the case study features the *Ushahidi*, *Uchaguzi* and *Uwiano* platforms. The paper will highlight some of the lessons learned and their implications for policy. It must be pointed out at this stage that the paper does not seek to discuss the technical aspects of the "technology" in question. Rather, it focuses on opportunities and challenges presented by new technological platforms for citizen participation in electoral processes.

The paper will first highlight the place of ordinary citizens in the conduct of public affairs, the impact of new technological platforms on citizen participation and its significance to electoral processes. It then presents the Kenyan case study before making conclusions of the key lessons learned and their policy implications for the delivery of free, fair and credible elections.

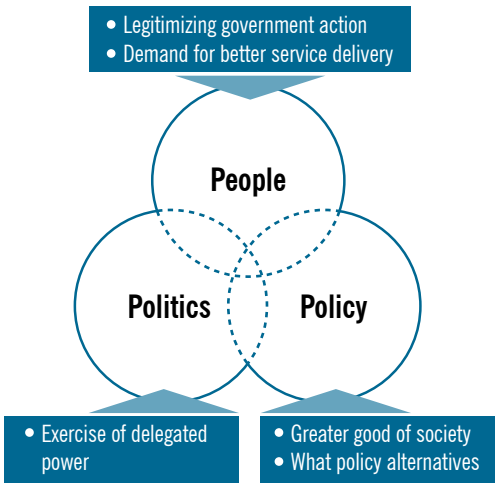
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, NEW TECHNOLOGY AND ELECTIONS

The idea of citizen participation in governance remains one of the most fundamental tenets of democracy (Arnsein, 1969). Through participatory democracy, citizens are expected to be informed, consulted and given an opportunity to influence decision-making. This form of engagement of citizens provides opportunities for among other things identifying new policy ideas from individual citizens, empowering the voiceless, promoting justice and fairness, and enhancing public trust in governance processes (Hardina, 2003; Cahn and Cahn, 1968; Bowen, 2007; Wang and Wart, 2007).

Thus, citizen participation confers legitimacy not only to the elected officials but to any policy decisions involving the citizens. Therefore, in conceiving citizen participation in an open and democratic society, one expects an intense interaction between politics, policy and people (citizens) as shown in Image 1 below.

IMAGE 1.

Diagrammatic representation of the interaction of politics, policy and people.



The emergence of the new technology has added a new impetus to the interaction between politics, policy and people. Through new media, the political elite (e-politicians) and policy makers (e-government) are reaching out to new audiences to seek for votes or communicate policy. On the other hand, citizens (e-citizens) are engaging directly with politicians and government officials to hold them to account or advocate for certain policy options.

But the new media has also changed the way ordinary citizens communicate with each other. Compared with traditional media, new media has not just reordered communication itself; it has reorganized political mobilization among the tech-savvy generation at unprecedented scale.

As noted by Barassi (2009), the IT has transformed the way in which citizens have come to "imagine, experience and organize" themselves in the public sphere. This was possible partly because of the low costs required to communicate using these new tools and partly because it does not require formal organization or central authority (Bennett, 2003).

While these new communication tools have now permeated almost everywhere in people's daily lives, they are also conspicuous in electoral processes in many parts of the world. As stated earlier, politicians can use new communication tools during campaigns as exemplified by President Barack Obama's successful presidential campaign in 2007. However, the interest of this paper is to show how these new tools can be used to promote electoral accountability before, during and after elections.

Elections have almost become synonymous to democracy. But most importantly, it is during elections that one sees a significant number of citizens coming out to participate in deciding on who should govern them. Regardless of the intensity of political contestation during campaigns, every participant in the electoral process expects the elections to be free, fair and credible.

But free, fair and credible elections are not always the case in many countries undergoing democratic transition. In Africa, many countries transiting from autocratic single party regimes are yet

to come to terms with competitive multi-party politics. As a consequence, practices such as vote buying, intimidation and violence, media censorship, gerrymandering of electoral units, ethnicization of political competition, and manipulation of electoral management bodies have become strategies used during elections to acquire or retain political power. It is therefore important to put in place measures that ensure electoral accountability in defense of democracy.

Citizens have a role to play in guaranteeing electoral accountability. Traditionally, elections observation and monitoring have provided opportunity to identify both drivers and inhibitors of free and fair elections. But domestic observation and monitoring as is it known follows a very structured pattern. For instance, it is organized from the centre; involves accredited observer delegations; it requires huge financial resources to be operationalised; participating citizens are recruited by a central organization, often a civil society observer group; and in many cases, it is a one-off event.

Although traditional elections observation and monitoring continue to serve an important part of promoting free and fair elections, new tools such as the internet and mobile phones are providing greater opportunities for ordinary citizens to better engage in the process.

Citizens can actively participate in elections as election monitors and provide reports on their experiences without necessarily being organized from the centre. Through these new platforms, citizens will be able to share their experiences on the electoral processes with relevant authorities, but most importantly, with each other.

CASE STUDY: ELECTORAL ACCOUNTABILITY IN KENYA

Three initiatives have been identified in this case study to show how new technological platforms have been used to promote electoral accountability in Kenya. These are: the *Ushahidi*, *Uchaguzi* and *Uwiano* platforms. However, it is important to give an overview of the social, economic and political context of Kenya.

Kenya's Social, Economic and Political Context

Kenya is an East Africa country that lies along the equator. The significance of Kenya in the global geopolitics cannot be overemphasized (Uwiano, 2010). It remains to be a regional hub for many social, economic and political activities in the Eastern and Southern African region (*Ibid*). The country's population stands at 39 million people according to the 2009 Population Census. It has a population growth rate of 1 million per year. There are also diverse ethnic groups numbering more than 42. Managing ethnic diversity as far as electoral politics is concerned remains to be a challenge for Kenya.

Following political and economic reforms from 2003, Kenya registered a GDP growth of 7.0 percent in 2007 compared to 0.5 percent growth in 2002 when the authoritarian regime under former President Moi relinquished power (Chokera, 2011). The economic reforms that took place between 2003-2007 saw a reduction of poverty incidence from 52 percent in 1997 to 45.6 percent in 2006. Due to reforms undertaken during this period, Kenya received favourable ratings in the region on key indicators on economic reforms. Kenya's main economic drivers include agriculture, tourism and telecommunication industries.

However, the country's impressive record of growth was extensively reversed following the 2007/2008 political crisis. In 2009 for example, the GDP growth dropped from 7.0 percent in 2007

to 2.6 percent. But the country is again on a slow recovery. In 2010, the country registered an average growth of 5.6 percent GDP. Although most projections for 2011 were at around 5.3 percent, institutions such as the World Bank have now downgraded 2011 growth projections to 4.3 percent due to external and internal factors including high fuel and food prices, and unprecedented drought in some parts of the country (*Ibid*).

A report by the *International Telecommunication Union* (2011) indicates that between 2008-2010 Kenya was Africa's fastest growing internet market attributed to increased competition among mobile phone service providers. The Communication Commission of Kenya [CCK] (2011) also reports that about fifty percent of Kenyans have access to mobile phones. As of mid 2011, CCK reports that 4.7 million Kenyans had subscribed to internet/data at the end of the second quarter of 2011 with around ten million reported number of users (*Ibid*). Increased internet use is attributed to increased penetration of mobile phones which provide mobile data/internet through GPRS/EDGE and 3G (*Ibid*). In a nutshell, the appetite for internet/data, mobile phones and their applications is ever on the increase.

On the political front, Kenya has held four successive elections since the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992. In addition, two referenda on proposed constitutions were held in 2005 and 2010. Although each of these elections has been accompanied by spates of ethnic-based tensions and violence, the violence in December 2007 was unprecedented in the county's post-independence history.

The post-election violence in 2007 registered the death of more than a 1000 persons and hundreds of thousands were displaced. The violence stopped and peace restored after international mediation led by the immediate former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Following the signing of a power sharing agreement, a grand coalition government was formed between the main contestants, the Party of National Unity (PNU) and the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). The mediation process also identified key areas of reform to be spearheaded by the Grand Coalition Government. Some of the reforms identified include: constitutional reforms, electoral reforms, transparency and accountability, national cohesion, and addressing inequality and unemployment among the youth.

As part of the reform agenda, in August 2010, Kenya passed a new constitution through a peaceful referendum. The new constitution seeks to reengineer governance in Kenya. If well implemented, it has potential to fundamentally improve the lives of common citizens through accountable people-centered governance.

Ushahidi Platform

It should be recalled that voting during the 2007 elections was peaceful and ended peacefully. However, the problem arose during the tallying of the presidential results. At the beginning, the opposition candidate, Raila Odinga of ODM, was ahead of the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki of PNU by a large margin. The gap between the two narrowed as results from areas perceived to be President Kibaki's stronghold trickled in. Violence broke out immediately, President Kibaki was declared winner and sworn in for his second term late in the evening. The violence went on for several weeks leading to 1000 people losing their lives with hundreds of thousands being displaced (Heacock, 2009).

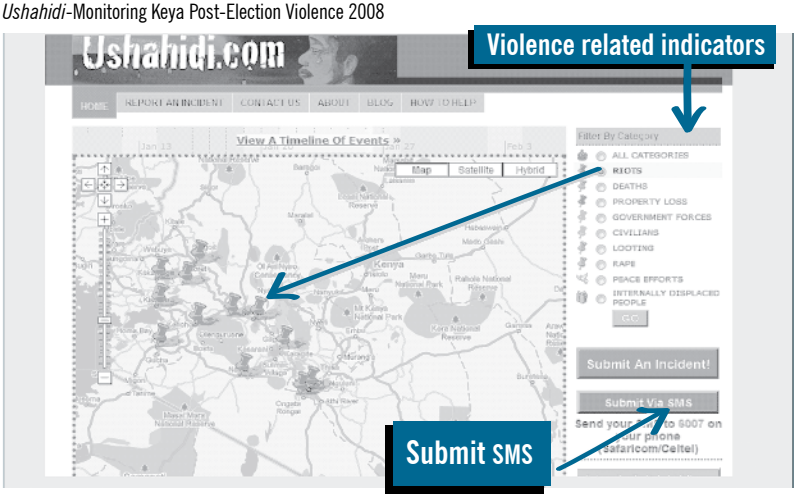
At the height of the violence, the Kenyan government banned any live media coverage of the violence. It was during this time that the internet became the main source of information. Meanwhile, the *Ushahidi* platform was conceived. The word *Ushahidi*

means "testimony" in Swahili. *Ushahidi* was set up in the middle of the crisis to enable eye witnesses to report on what they had witnessed where they were (e.g. riots, tensions, rape, looting, deaths and action by security forces, among others). The information would then be uploaded on the *Ushahidi* site to be viewed using *Google Maps* application (See Image 2 below).

IMAGE 2.

Ushahidi 2007-2008 (http://legacy.ushahidi.com/index.asp).

Ushahidi-Monitoring Keya Post-Election Violence 2008



The *Ushahidi* tool was simple in the sense that eye witnesses would send information on the violence related incidents using SMS, email or online. Although information would be generated from different sources, it needed to be verified; an active role that civil society groups would play. The site remained active from December 30, 2007 to April 2008 when normality returned.

The launch of *Ushahidi* platform happened after the election. In as much as the focus was on monitoring violence, the violence was triggered by a disputed election. It demonstrates that participation of citizens in voting during an election is not an end in itself. Citizens ought to be vigilant even after the voting to secure the vote and stability where the political contest is likely to be the trigger of violence.

Ushahidi platform provided the opportunity for citizens to play that role. In addition, the platform became a record for future references on the 2007–2008 post-election crisis (Kenya Pundit cited in Goldstein and Ruto, 2008). Since then, *Ushahidi* has been improved and is now an open-source software used globally for crisis mapping and citizen activism.

Uchaguzi Platform

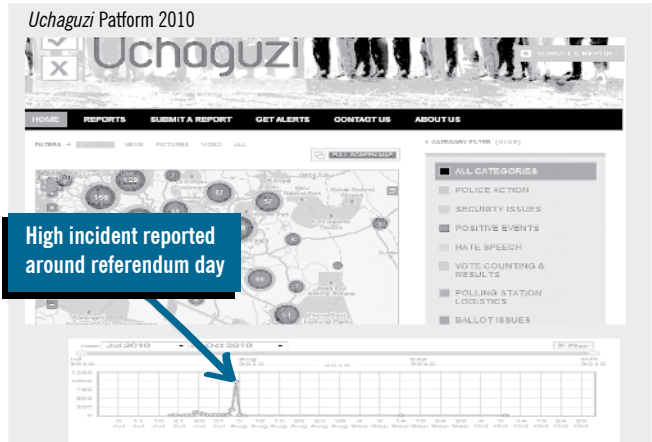
Following the success of the *Ushahidi* platform in 2007-2008, the *Uchaguzi* platform was established. It was set up through a partnership of *Ushahidi* and some civil society organizations.

Uchaguzi is a Swahili word meaning "Elections". Its main thrust is to monitor elections through citizen reporting on various incidences around the electoral process. These may include polling station logistics, ballot papers, voter issues, security issues, positive actions among others.

The reporting aids are both web- and mobilize-based platforms. Anyone can use an SMS, email, online form, *Facebook* or *Twitter* to report an incident. Other than the visual maps and images, *Uchaguzi* also relays statistical data for analytical purposes (See Image 3).

IMAGE 3.

Uchaguzi Kenya's 2010 Referendum (Source: http://uchaguzi.co.ke/).



The *Uchaguzi* platform was deployed first in Uganda during the 2010 general elections and later in Kenya and Tanzania during the referendum and general elections respectively. Unlike *Ushahidi* in 2007-2008, *Uchaguzi* planned and launched its intervention prior to the voting date. This would enable citizens to monitor electoral activities before the actual election. This adds value to the electoral process since any concern identified early enough would be addressed prior to voting.

In order to improve the utility of the tool to the electoral process, the *Uchaguzi* platform was coordinated from the centre. This coordination ensures that data received from the field is analyzed and issues of concern are passed on to relevant authorities for action. In addition, partnership with traditional elections observers makes verification of data posted on the site easier.

Despite the success of *Uchaguzi* platform in 2010, the Uganda experience demonstrated some of the challenges attributed to the political environment. When the Ugandan government issued notice to monitor SMS under the pretext of monitoring hate speech, it was difficult for citizens to report on electoral malpractices that were already taking place. Further, analysis of reporting trends during the three electoral events shows that it is actually on the material day that citizens were active in reporting.

Uwiano Platform

As part of the conflict prevention strategy before the Kenya's 2010 Referendum on Kenya's Proposed Constitution, a multi-stakeholder forum that included the *National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management* (NSC); *National Cohesion and Integration Commission* (NCIC); *PeaceNet Kenya*; and, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) established the *Uwiano* platform (Uwiano, 2010). *Uwiano* is a Swahili word that means "cohesion". The overall objective of the Uwiano platform was to contribute to peaceful pre- and post-referendum processes through partnerships, conflict early warning and early response and establishing a solid foundation for national cohesion and integration (*Ibid*).

As part of the early warning and reporting system, the platform deployed peace monitors and security agents in areas considered as hotspots. The peace monitors were provided with information collection gadgets to facilitate reporting. However, the critical component of the *Uwiano* initiative was the installation of an SMS platform for reporting any incidents of tension or threats to peace. The SMS facility was made accessible to the public on 24hrs basis and at no cost. The reports received were analyzed, verified and disseminated to relevant authorities for action.

The *Uwiano* platform reports that between July and August 2010, it received 600 SMS per day. On the eve of the referendum, an average of five thousand messages was recorded. *Uwiano* platform claims part of the credit for establishing a responsive system that led to a peaceful referendum. The *Uwiano* platform partners are now working on an improved platform in readiness for the next general elections.

The success of the *Uwiano* platform was such that it integrated mobile phone technology into traditional peace monitoring interventions. The platform also put in place mechanisms for immediate action from relevant authorities in the event of reported incidents of threats to violence. The process of verification was simplified by the fact that the *Uwiano* partners deployed their own monitors to the field.

Unlike *Ushahidi* and *Uchaguzi* platforms which maximized the use of ICT tools in monitoring pre- and post-election situations, the *Uwiano* platform utilized the SMS platform as one of the many strategies for conflict early warning and responses.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICY

New technological platforms have tremendously transformed the way in which citizens can engage in the public space. This arose from the fact that new media platforms have far reaching impacts at very minimal transaction costs. Further, the decentralized nature of these platforms is transferring the power for political action from the centre to the citizens.

The three cases show how new technological platforms can enhance electoral accountability before, during and after elections

through citizen monitoring. There are a number of lessons learnt that have implications for policy. They include the following:

1. **Timing.**
   The cases show that deployment of new technological platforms must be timely, to add value to the entire electoral process. It should be able to provide opportunities for citizen engagement before, during and after an election.
2. **Collaboration.**
   These platforms are more effective if there is strategic collaboration between key actors in the electoral process. Collaboration may mean that a joint platform can be established where civil society organizations can monitor reports from citizens, analyze them and inform the electoral management body to take immediate action where necessary. The *Uwiano* platform is a good example of where a multi-stakeholder approach ensured the success of the SMS platform for pre- and post- referendum conflict prevention strategy.
3. **Verification.**
   Citizen reporting does not discriminate sources of information. While thousands of reports may be reported on a platform, some may need verification for relevant action to be taken. Thus, citizen monitoring through new platforms does not replace the traditional elections monitoring and observation. They have to complement each other. As shown by the *Uchaguzi* and *Uwiano* platforms, traditional elections and peace monitors can be deployed to verify reports received on the platform. In the absence of verification, there are possibilities of "opposition" voices seeking to provide misleading information.

4. **Regulation.**
   How effective these platforms become depends on the policy and political environment with respect to freedom of information and political participation. Where the government controls free flow of information through internet, mobile phones and media, the effectiveness of the platform will be undermined. *Uchaguzi* platform in Uganda is a case in point. In addition, new media is increasingly becoming a threat to traditionally closed political regimes. Citizen monitoring using new media may not necessarily flourish in such regimes.
5. **Adaptation.**
   While new technology evolves very fast, it also requires timely adaptation. Often the electoral management bodies have been slower in using new technological platforms. Similarly, a majority of the population is yet to come to terms with the idea that mobile handsets are a powerful tool when it comes to citizen mobilization and reporting. By implication, the new tools should be socialized among key actors in the electoral process to widen the scope of their use.
6. **Penetration.**
   The level of internet and mobile phone penetration will determine how successful these platforms become. For instance, if accessibility to internet is limited to urban areas, high levels of urban based citizen voices will be registered and *vice versa*.
7. **Proliferation.**
   It is fashionable nowadays to talk about electoral monitoring using the *Ushahidi* open-source software. It does not require a lot of resources to deploy. Proliferation of

these platforms in the absence of a coordinated approach may have a negative impact on the monitoring exercise. As much as possible, coordination and collaboration must precede any deployment.

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II. APPLYING E-VOTING: EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES

"NO TO ELECTRONIC VOTING": WHY IS ELECTRONIC VOTING SUCCESSFUL IN SOME COUNTRIES AND FAILS IN OTHERS?

Fernando Barrientos del Monte[1]

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this paper is to highlight aspects that are not technical, or legal or strictly electoral but must be considered in the process of implementing electronic voting systems. Electronic voting is a reality that has gained momentum in several countries, but it is important to note that it is not a linear process, initially it is not quite socially accepted, nor is it a process that must forcefully and necessarily be implemented in all democracies.

It is therefore important to explain why in some countries its implementation has been successful and why in others it has not. There are several socio-political aspects that decision makers in the field of electoral management should consider at

[1] Doctorate in Political Science from the Italian Institute of Human Sciences and the University of Florence. Professor and Director of the Department of Political Studies at the Guanajuato University.

the time of commissioning. In some countries they focused on legal and technical aspects of electoral management, ignoring public opinion, the "experts", the academia and obviating the supposed virtues of a "new" system for voting. Electronic voting is not the panacea, it is simply the implementation of new mechanisms to cast a vote and improve the efficiency and speed in the count.

Technically it can be (or is) complex, but without any complication that cannot be resolved by the current state of science and technology. However, voting is not a technical issue; it is a political phenomenon with highly relevant implications to the life of a society and of a democratic regime. Neglecting the social and political aspects which surround the electoral process through technical and legal issues in the implementation of electronic voting systems can mean wasting hours of work, research and investment of large sums of money. Three questions guide this essay. Why is there any opposition to the implementation of electronic voting? Why did this implementation succeed in some countries and failed in others? Who and why are they opposed to electronic voting?

For responding in a didactic manner we must first make a brief reflection on the relationship between politics, democracy and new technologies; secondly, we explain the motivations for implementing electronic voting systems; and thirdly, we balance out among some success cases such as in Brazil and Venezuela, and we mainly expose those that have failed such as Ireland, England and Holland. Finally, we take stock of the political conditions that make the difference between success cases and those which have not achieved it.

POLITICS AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

There is no doubt that the new information and communication technologies (ICT) that have been developed in the last quarter of the XXth century have marked a before and after in the history of mankind. The advent of computers, (and mainly) the information processors and their massification, as well as the development of the internet and of all its applications in communications and commerce, are without a doubt phenomena comparable to the creation of the printing press by J. Gutenberg in the XVth century, and the advent of the steam engine in the XVIIIth century. These are events that mark the beginning of a new era, they marked a before and an after. These historical circumstances themselves did not impact the development of politics, but they do partly explain fundamental changes in this area: the development of books helped to massively spread the Renaissance political ideas first and later the Enlightenment's. The invention of the steam engine ushered in the industrial revolution in the XVIIIth century, impacting the labor market known until then which led to labor movements that later marked the appearance of mass parties. The same is happening with ICTs in the early XXIst century, their emergence and development are the foundation of an Information Revolution marking, like the events listed above, a before and an after in the history of mankind.

Despite the rapid development and advancement of the ICTs, their impact is still undetermined and they have generated both positive and negative utopias (Cotarelo, 2002; Rodotà, 2000).

Gradually, new technologies have been inserted into the dynamics of relations between the government and the governed;

various processes such as tax payments, tenders and requests for documents and public information are based on ICTs, developing what is now known as *e-government*. This technological progress has encouraged a growing number of scholars, among academics and intellectuals, as well as a large segment of players who decide on policy and electoral management to develop and implement a range of ideas and projects which they think they can "remedy" to some of the shortcomings of representative democracy. To date, practical mechanisms are: transmission of the debates and discussions in the parliaments and in the halls of the supreme courts, the opinion polls with no legal value, and especially electronic voting systems. For decades we have had direct information systems, radio and television, and lately the internet. But in the early XXIst century there are also instant intercom systems (social networks and mobile phones). Direct communication has an impact on social relations, what matters is the immediacy, instantaneousness (Cotarelo, 2002).

Despite our day to day use of new technologies, we do not know if it is too early to try to figure out to what extent these will impact or are impacting in politics. ICTs are transforming the public space, and politics has always depended on their relationship with it. Transformations of one imply transformations of the other: political practices, social representations, interactions between individuals, relationships of power, among others, involve flows that contribute to shape certain structures and concepts (Cairo, 2002:19). Some argue that this gives way to a digital democracy, but it can also be argued that since social processes are not linear, we may find ourselves in the future with a digital anarchy or even a form of digital authoritarianism, as access is free, but control is not so much. We do not know the extent to which policy changes will be positive or negative, what we do know is that politics is changing and society is optimistic about the potentials of the new technologies and their applications. History

has taught us that sometimes the introduction of new technologies does not always have followers, as happened with Luddism in the early XIXth century in England: a labor movement that was characterized by a hatred of machines on the grounds that these replaced workers.

Today there are various groups in the world, consisting mostly of computer technicians and engineers, who are opposed precisely to the use of new technologies in politics and especially in elections. For its part, politics has not always been reliable and much less so in the field of good conscience. According to data from the *Latinobarómetro* (1995-2009) the majority of the population in the region believes that the elections are fraudulent and in virtually all countries political parties are mistrusted. But citizens are not alone, even Latin American politicians themselves, interviewed during several periods (1995 to 2008) in the Parliamentary Elites of Latin America project of the University of Salamanca (PELA), indicate that they largely distrust the transparency of the elections that have led them to a seat in the legislature of their country. The introduction and use of new technologies in the political decision-making processes, carried to the extreme, may disrupt the foundations of representative democracy, which so far has proved efficient in mass societies.

MOTIVATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC VOTE

The control of certain aspects of the electoral process such as the formation and maintenance of the electoral roll, the transmission of voting results (both with more than two decades of application in almost all democracies) and ultimately the implementation of electronic voting systems, are the clearest example of the optimism in the possibilities of new technologies. The motivations for implementing electronic voting systems are of

two types: technical and sociopolitical. The former belong to the dynamics of the incorporation of ICTs in everyday life, the replacement of administrative procedures in the administration of elections is part of the ongoing modernization which almost all areas of election management are subject to. These can be summarized as follows:

a) **Increase the efficiency in receiving votes.**
   This is perhaps the most important reason, as it is about avoiding all the mistakes in voting that commonly occur with traditional ballots. While it is not a guarantee, it does significantly reduce errors such as double voting, makes the voter's choice clear and even allows correcting the option.
b) **To improve the accuracy in the count.**
   Electronic voting systems, by their very nature and design, are accurate in counting, and reduce (or even eliminate) errors in the counting of votes; the role of citizens participating in the count is reduced to seeing that the information is transmitted in a clear and incorruptible way.
c) **To reduce the time to get the results of the vote.**
   Related to the speed in counting, electronic voting systems allow speeding up the counting of the total votes for each and every one of the tables or voting booths, as well as the total sum in a short time. Even the size of a territory as large as Brazil, for example, a country where electronic voting machines have been used since the election of 2000, was not an obstacle for that a few hours after the polls close the final results are known, which in previous years only became known two or three days later.
d) **To improve the auditing of the voting process.**
   Under certain conditions it is possible to audit the voting process to ensure that it meets the democratic requirements

of vote casting, that the processes were not corrupted, and that effectively, the vote that the voter casts, corresponds to what the system recorded.

On the other hand, the socio-political motivations have a strong symbolic and evaluative component on the role of new technologies in society, these are summarized as follows:

a) **Demonstrate the capabilities of the new technologies.** Basically many of the initiatives that propose the implementation of electronic voting systems have no justification other than to point out a supposed need to "modernize" or "keep up" with new technologies, their use representing a sign of modernity and avant-garde although there is no need for their use. Furthermore, this impulse is given by companies engaged in the development of such technologies. The extent to which electronic voting really is necessary appears to have no connection with this justification, the fact is that in several countries the implementation is the result of the confluence of other factors, but it is also true that it includes a *naïve* perception that its simple use is in itself, a symbol of modernity.
b) **Increasing confidence in the electoral processes.** If well implemented and used new technologies may increase confidence in the development of elections and in the voting exercise, although this assumption is not confirmed. On the other hand, minimum failures or even mild suspicions of a political nature can lead to the dismantlement of the entire electronic voting system, even if it is technically reliable, and to be replaced again by the "traditional" system (see below the example of the countries where this was the case).

c) **Provide better information to political parties and citizens.** Consequently, by reducing the margin of error in the votes counting, better information is obtained about the behavior of voters and parties.

d) **Extend facilities for vote casting.** Depending on the type of system in place, electronic voting, for example via the internet version, facilitates voting remotely. Some projects such as the *e-poll* in various European countries is based on the installation of special kiosks for voting from any European country. Other versions of electronic ballot boxes are adopted to facilitate visually impaired people the cashing of the vote.

Both technical and socio-political motivations drive the logic of development and implementation projects for electronic voting systems.

While discussions on the feasibility and desirability of electronic voting have derived from socio-political motivations (Is social and political voting really justified?), a variety of arguments have emerged from technical issues (Is electronic voting really –more– secure?) that in other contexts have brought down systems already in place.

SUCCESS AND FAILURE CASES

The emblematic cases of successful implementation of electronic voting are Brazil and Venezuela in Latin America. Brazil began to use Direct Electronic Recording (DER) ballot systems in 1996, achieving full implementation in all their territory in 2002. The number of voters is very high (136 million in 2011) and given the extent of the territory the electronic ballot box has streamlined the flow of information with the overall results,

in the case of national elections, being available at midnight. In previous years, this situation could have taken up to three days because of the topography of the country. Despite the proven success in Brazil, there are several groups that have criticized the implementation of the electronic voting system: in the 2002 and 2006 elections, false ballot boxes have been found, and it is mostly computer engineers who have consistently indicated that the system is vulnerable. In Venezuela an optical vote reading system (OVR) has been used since 2000, and was extended to the entire territory during the mayoral elections and the referendum on the permanence of president Chávez in 2004.

As in Brazil, in Venezuela the main critics of electronic voting have been specialists in electronics and computing. Although technically the system combines the traditional system with the new technologies, allowing for a twofold check if there is any doubt about the outcome of the polls, the electoral body did not allow for such a review to be carried out, which in turn increased doubts on the results and permitted that in the last decade the incumbent government has swept the elections.

In Europe, the only country to use electronic voting machines regularly for more than twenty years was Holland. In other countries the interest in the automation of electronic voting was born from the impulse of projects that began to be developed at European Union level, such as the *e-poll*, *cyberVote*, and *TruE-Vote*, as well as the growing computerization process of all sectors of public life. I will focus briefly on three landmark cases (following Caporusso, 2010: 25-53), Ireland, England and Holland (Estonia and Germany, are not covered for space reasons), where policies designed to strengthen participatory democracy were implemented, even to talk about *e-democracy*: innovative electronic voting systems were adopted, developed and introduced, but were later suspended or revoked.

The case of Ireland is an example of how the pressures of civil society can influence in revoking government decisions made at the highest levels. In 2002 the government of that country carried out pilot projects and experiments. In 2003 the initiative to replace the ballots for a DER (Direct Electronic Recording) developed by the Dutch company *Nedap/Power Vote* was formally presented in order to be used in the local and European elections of June 11, 2004. The vote in Ireland was cast by means of open lists and in order of preference. Each button on the electronic ballot box proposed is associated with a candidate and the keyboard, in order to help voters avoid distracting errors in the sequence order of preferences. Electronic voting is a very efficient solution to count the votes and issue the results. However, the system does not provide for verification by the voter of the sequence selected on the screen and there is no paper trail. Some computer experts reacted in a short time and created the pressure group "Irish citizens for trustworthy e-voting" who defined themselves as "a group of ordinary citizens who believe that no electronic voting system can be reliable unless it does not include a paper verification system for the voter". The doubts were not only related to the lack of proof on paper, but also to the choice of a private maquiladora that uses proprietary software and therefore does not make the source code available. Based on the protests from this group, the government decided in March 2004 to create an Independent Commission to examine the *Nedap/Power Vote* system. In April of that year a report was issued, that recommended not to use the machines already acquired due to the failure to ensure with certainty its proper operation.

The commission did not have enough time to carry out the necessary tests and inspect each of the components of the machines.The inability to access the final software, the unavailability of the source code and other technical issues weighed on the

decision of the Commission, which also suggested amendments to the electoral law regarding the distribution system of the remaining votes, an imperfection that replicated in the electronic counting system. In 2006 the same Commission published a more extended report which even showed the position of the maquiladoras. This experience is completed with the acceptance of the authorities of having made a huge investment in a project that is unwanted by the public. The cost of over EUR fifty million was not justified in the context of the recent economic crisis and became the scapegoat for election campaigns, and by April 2009 the government finally announced that Ireland would not automate the voting system.

In England the use of new technologies in the elections was proposed in order to achieve greater voter participation. A concern that began to grow in 1997 when a level of 71.3 percent was reached, the lowest participation level since the 1935 ballot, which was confirmed in 2001 when slightly more than 60 percent of the electorate showed up at the polls. Therefore in 2002 the *Independent Commission on Alternative Voting Methods* was created, which in its report stated the familiar:

> Whatever the arguments for or against the idea of facilitating the vote, we believe that culture is more important than convenience, and that politics is the main reason why we vote and not by the procedure. In short, people vote when they feel that there are good reasons for doing so and that their vote counts. It depends on the parties and candidates during the election campaign, to provide these incentives: when they do, citizens vote, even if the procedure is inconvenient. If they don't do so, citizens do not vote, even if they have at their disposal the most advanced, friendly and accessible voting technology possible. Voting is a political act, not merely a procedural act.

Despite these findings, the Labor Party under Tony Blair continued to believe that one way to reduce absenteeism was to automate the polls. To achieve this, a *green paper* entitled *In the Service of Democracy* was outlined, to conduct all tests necessary to provide electronic voting facilities to all those who so wished starting from 2008 but no later than 2011. But criticism continued, some stated that the *green paper* seemed to have been written by well-meaning people but who knew little of the real world; one critic noted: «that the citizens have the desire to use new technologies does not necessarily mean that they want to use them also for taking political decisions». But these and other criticisms did not stop testing. Five guidelines were proposed that sometimes overlapped: a) the extension of postal voting, b) the electronic count (*e-counting*), c) voting at boxes through electronic voting (*e-voting*); d) vote by phone (*t-voting*) and voting by internet (*i-voting*). There was a reason behind such a momentum which was a product of electoral reform: postal voting, a form of remote voting, had been in force since 1918 only for those who could argue reasons to justify its use. But in 2000 the *Representation of the People Act* was signed and postal voting was made accessible to anyone who requested it without the need for explanations. The percentage of voters in this mode increased exponentially, in various polling stations variations from 3 to 45 percent were observed, with a nationwide average of twelve percent. It was thought that a system that reduces the "costs" or that requires less effort on the part of voters may increase participation. Also in the context of the American experience of the 2000 presidential election that involved a series of scandals, it was thought that a faster and more accurate count should increase or at least maintain confidence in the electoral system. Between 2000 and 2001 ten automated voting experiments were held in an equal number of locations combining the various guidelines in local elections and referendums. But reports from the Electoral Reform Society,

an independent group that is dedicated to the promotion of democracy, said the machines used for testing of *e-counting* had problems with getting stuck, were slow, had difficulties in the allocation of votes, and that if used at a national level would imply an increase in costs without offering in return a reduction in counting time, much less an increase in the electorate. This group recommended that they be used only in contexts of reduced electorate dimensions. With respect to voting by telephone and internet they noted the difficulties of auditing the procedure and the low capacity to ensure the secrecy that both systems might offer. At the end of the pilot tests of 2002, the ad hoc commission, "Independent Commission on Alternative Voting Methods" issued an opinion contrary to expectations, as various elements were brought together to be wary of the tested voting systems. But not only were the evaluations of the Electoral Reform Society and the Independent Commission not favorable to the introduction of electronic voting, some local government agencies, such as the Local Government Association upon evalution of their own experiments found that new technologies did not attract younger people:

> Most non-voters, especially younger ones, express different reasons for their disaffection. In particular, they are much less sensitive to voting than more adult persons. And among internet users, the youngest are the least likely to vote electronically.

The results of their surveys indicated that a large proportion of the population supports the introduction of electronic voting, but the same commission clarified that "support for the electronic voting system is not the same as a demand for it by the public". In 2003 a very extensive test was carried out among 160 thousand voters in 59 pilot tests covering approximately fourteen percent of the electorate, arriving at similar conclusions: security concerns due to the opacity in the count and the

absence of paper proof, from which it was suggested that electronic voting be implemented on a limited scale and never on a national scale (Wright, 2006). In 2007, other pilot tests were carried out in which only *i-voting* and *t-voting* systems were tested, all supervised by independent observers and by the Electoral Commission, to which a pressure group called Open Rights Group (ORG) was added and funded by the Rowntree Reform Trust. The ORG was able to attract hundreds of volunteers to "dedicate a day to democracy" as was their motto. From the beginning, members of this group pointed out the lack of seriousness in the organization of the tests, and the low quality in certification procedures and quality control of the instruments used. Above all, it was observed that many of the representatives of the local election authorities were totally dependent and their actions were directed by the suppliers of the voting machines, which reflected a total lack of technical training and skills to manage such systems. Moreover, the suppliers of the *e-counting* systems were not knowledgeable enough about the British electoral system, which identified two inefficiencies, one on behalf of officials at a technical level, the other by the supplier representatives at electoral management level. The findings of these tests and subsequent analyses led to relinquishing the project both for local and European elections in 2008, a year when it was thought to automate the entire electoral process, and especially not foreseeing any future project in the short term.

The Dutch case represents the situation in which the movement of certain sectors of computing questioned the legitimacy of a widely diffused system put into operation in previous years. In the Netherlands DER machines had been implemented since the 90s to gradually replace electromechanical machines. By 2006 the whole country, with the exception of Amsterdam in which pencil and paper ballots were still used, began to operate voting machines produced by Nedap/Groenendaal and a few by

its competitor SDU. In that year Amsterdam decided to join the experience of electronic voting, for which Rop Gongrgrijp, an outstanding member of the so called *Chaos Computer Club* that brings together hackers from various European countries, upon perceiving risks in the voting system called to meeting a group of experts in computer science and sociology. This group acquired two voting machines that had not been used by a municipality and managed to start them up and through the use of social networking and online video showed the shortcomings of such machines in three ways: mechanical –unsafe locking system–, electronic –the memory can be changed for another– and electromagnetic –it was possible to register other results and not those that the voter marked. Moreover, the hackers responded to the challenge by the software producer who dared that chess could be played on such machines, which they did in a few days. The operation of this group was completely mediatic and casted doubt on the entire system that had been used for over a decade. The government responded with new evidence on the electronic voting system and in 2007 declared, once a special report in this regard had been issued, that the system was being abandoned and they were returning to the traditional system of ballot and pencil. In 2009 all Dutch people returned to voting with traditional ballots and it was assumed that it would be inevitable to assume the cost of the slowness in the count, but that –according to a group slogan– "in the Netherlands we know how to use paper and pencil. The sky did not fall and we didn't go back to prehistory".

CONCLUSION: THE LIMITS OF ELECTRONIC VOTING

The speed at which technology is renewed has forced us, since many years ago, to an unsustainable rate of reorganization of our mental habits. Every year we have to change computer, because

these machines have been designed for just that: to become obsolete every year (Eco and Carrière, 2010:45). Can electronic voting systems keep pace with these dynamics when elections are held every few years and generally on a single day?

On the other hand, new technologies create certain illusions. It is sometimes thought that they came to stay but we do not know that.

In 1937 the crash of the Hindenburg ended the career of airships, which were thought to be replacing ocean liners. And the same happened with the Concorde, when the crash of 2000 ended its career. In both cases they were technologies that surpassed others. Who would counter that it was better to cross the ocean in three hours than in nine? (Eco and Carrière, 2010: 22). But the accident made it clear that it was very expensive and it was discontinued. Today we prefer the wide body aircraft with greater safety. Almost all European examples on electronic voting that have been mentioned are attached to this idea: it was not suspended for not believing in its benefits and its ability to deliver speed in counting, but due to the political costs that could lead to putting the electoral process in doubt.

A lesson learnt is that in all cases where an opposition to the implementation of electronic voting existed, it was not a large group or masses of people. On the contrary, oppositors have been very small groups but with a high educational level and knowledge of ICTs, and their capacity and mobilization are located entirely within the law and their challenge to government decisions is very effective. So what lessons can be drawn? First, the simplicity and everyday use of new technologies does not always imply a blind trust in them. One thing is to use them in order to simplify life and another to use them for political decision-making aspects. Second, the implementation must be sufficiently clear and

transparent, involving many specialized fields of the technology world, as the lowest degree of mistrust can put the whole process in doubt. Third, the traditional ballot plays a crucial symbolic role, it is a material display of vote casting, and in some contexts its elimination is not justified. Fourth, electronic voting is not the panacea, as it does not prevent electoral fraud; it complicates its realization but does not inhibit it. Fifth, the logic of politicians is not the logic of the experts; this can lead to the implementation of electronic voting systems based on simplistic arguments without taking into account the voice of its developers. Sixth, every electronic voting system involves the help of others (maquiladoras) that have little or nothing to do with electoral management; this can have negative political implications if the bidding processes and an adequate supervision are not shielded.

Finally it should be mentioned that the cases of success are different because in Brazil and Venezuela as well as in many countries in Latin America the implementation of electronic voting has been in the hands of the electoral management bodies: permanent, highly skilled bodies that are dedicated exclusively to electoral management, an advantage not found in any of the European countries. Whereas there is no doubt that electronic voting will be a reality that will eventually be widespread throughout the world despite the movements opposed to its use, it is also true that this will improve current democracy, but we must consider that a bad implementation in itself can damage democracy significantly.

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BRAZIL AND THE DIGITAL VOTE

Marco Antonio Martin Vargas[1]
Aldair de Almeida Anhaia[2]

INTRODUCTION

This article aims to present the history of the computerization of the Electoral Court System in Brazil. This article deals with the undeniable contribution of the information technology area to the democratic process in Brazil, to the extent that this computerization made it possible to significantly reduce external fraud occurred during the elections, which is very common in voting conducted with ballots, since said computerization has permitted to guarantee the legitimacy of elections.

The complexity of this process is also unquestionable, given the continental dimensions of Brazil, as well as the diversity of its regions regarding geographic, climatic and cultural aspects.

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[1] Associate Justice of the Presidency of the Regional Electoral Court of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

[2] Justice Assistant of the Regional Electoral Court of Sao Paulo and Chief of Electronic Vote Section.

The computerization process of the Electoral Court System in Brazil began in 1986 when the new national register of electors was implemented and became unique and computerized.

After twenty five years and various stages of computerization, which will be discussed in this article, the Electoral Court System is in the midst of a major project: the biometric registration of national electors.

The technology used in the computerization process of the Brazilian Electoral Court System is 100 percent national and globally recognized as a breakthrough in the electoral process and therefore is the subject of interest in several countries.

CONTEXT

The computerization process of the Brazilian Electoral Court System started in 1986 with the implementation of the new national register of electors, which was initially proposed by the Superior Electoral Court (TSE) to reduce irregularities and fraud in the Brazilian Elections. This new national register of electors was regulated in 1986 by means of Resolution No. 12.547/86 rendered by the TSE, and foresaw the following improvements and objectives:

- Implementation of the voter registration system through electronic processing.
- Consolidation of the national registry with the use of sequential numbers for voters' registration cards, so it became a single record. Previously, voters' registration was conducted by the states of the Federation and represented a problem of national control, for the voter could register in a particular unit of the Federation and, afterwards, the

voter could fraudulently register in other unit, a situation that was very difficult to control by the Regional Courts.
- Now security paper is used, printed with a watermark (the coat of arms of the Brazilian Republic).
- The voters' registration cards are now filled by dot matrix printers instead of typewriters.
- Review of the national electorate.

This event, which allowed the registration of about seventy million Brazilians, was fundamental and eliminated duplication of voter registration cards a common occurrence in those days since such irregularity was very difficult to uncover and enabled possible electoral fraud. The single integrated national registry technically prevented that a single voter had two or more valid electoral cards, a problem that was already discussed in the previous paragraph.

Another advance of computerization was the first electronic counting of all votes, which took place in 1989 in six states of Brazil. In the aforementioned year the election was conducted by ballots and votes were counted manually in the electoral commissions; the total of votes, however, was obtained by means of SERPRO computers, by using the data communication structure of said company, hired to provide technical assistance.

In the 1994 general elections, the Regional Electoral Courts electronically added all the votes by using the data communication network belonging to the Electoral Court System itself to the central computer that was physically installed in the TSE. It was a year of great achievements, as all Regional Courts were connected to the TSE.

It is worth noting that the communication network was gradually expanded and now allows the integration of all electoral

areas of the country. It is certainly one of the most extensive and safest network databases.

In 1995, the computerized voting scheme was implemented by using equipment (electronic voting machines) able to record electors' votes. The aim was to use the electronic voting machines of the 1996 municipal elections to collect the votes of one third of electors in Brazil. That year, Brazil had approximately 100 million voters.

In the 1996 municipal elections, electronic voting included 57 municipalities. Cities with more than 200 thousand voters, as well as the capitals of each state of the Federation, were selected.

In 1998, approximately 57 percent of Brazilian voters used the electronic voting machines in cities with over 40,500 voters. In the 2000 Municipal Elections, all the voters of the country were included. That year, it was achieved that the electronic voting machines arrived in the 5,559 Brazilian municipalities and all polling stations, and reached all voters: from farmers to bankers, from indigenous people to urban residents; therefore, all voters could express their decision by means of electronic voting machines.

It is important to note that the electronic voting machines were designed to meet the requirements of reliability of results; facilitate the use of the ballot box by voters; reduce the number of abstentions, blank votes or invalid votes; solve more diligently claims and disputes; and give legitimacy to mandates by preventing irregularities and improprieties in the voting process.

Contrary to what the opponents of the electronic voting system anticipated, there were no significant differences in the time of voting, neither in the countryside nor in the cities.

Young and old voters, regardless of their educational level, did not find significant difficulties to vote electronically. The Electoral Court System undertook the required actions to enlighten, inform and train all citizens so they would accept the change in the way of casting their ballot. This strategy achieved excellent results.

Last but not least, the electronic voting machines should achieve, in accordance with the requirements of the project set by the Electoral Court System, the following:

- Standardization of the model so that voters could get used to the equipment and the way of voting.
- Reduced costs and expenses of public resources, already scarce, to ensure that savings be channeled to other areas of public administration.
- Durability of the electronic voting machines in order to allow its use in various elections over several years and also with the aim of reducing costs and expenses.
- Security so that the voters could be confident that their votes would be respected and validated.
- Autonomy of operation in order to ensure their use in all regions of the country.
- Transportation logistics so that they could be easily moved and reach the remotest regions of Brazil.

The use of electronic voting machines also achieved to meet the desires of Brazilian electors who, after a dictatorship of more than twenty years, were and still are relearning the undeniable value of democracy.

To understand the true importance of the electronic voting machine, it is necessary to understand the Brazilian electoral context

of the time, with respect to the practices used in the election when it was executed by paper ballot. These political practices were rigged and, unfortunately widespread, carried out by vested interests who were seeking the victory at the polls.

A candidate prepared fake ballots and a member of his/her electoral campaign gave them to an elector willing to participate in the vote rigging. The elector, after identifying himself or herself in the appropriate polling station, went to the private booth and deposited the fake ballot cancelled and took the real ballot, handing it over to the member of the electoral campaign, who in turn filled it out with the vote for his/her candidate and handed it to the next elector, who again returned him/her other true ballot and so on. This practice was known as "carousel voting" due to the line of electors that was formed.

Electoral committees, comprised of ordinary citizens, may be open to electoral fraud if one of the candidates could manipulate committee members into rigging the vote. Counting voting ballots was too laborious and sometimes this activity took days or even weeks to complete. This process was so slow that it also provided opportunities for fraudulent purposes.

The vulnerability of the electoral process by means of manual vote recount was unquestionable and the Electoral Court System had to take the required steps in order to correct it.

With the implementation of electronic voting, corrupt politicians can no longer use the "carousel voting" and now the results of each polling station are known at the time the voting activity is over and polling station closes, by printing a report for each electronic voting machine, which includes a list of the votes casted. These results are registered and communicated to the media and

used for their transmission or broadcasting and final counting. It is worth mentioning that currently there is no possibility of questionable or erroneous ballot counting in the Electoral Boards.

The electronic voting machine meets requirements that achieve to consolidate electoral truth, both at the time electors vote at the polling stations and in the way the final vote counting is executed. Electronic vote was and is transmitted with security keys (encryption), through the private network of the Brazilian Electoral Court System, which even disables any other communication channel on Election Day.

Another advantage that was added to the voting process in Brazil is the agility and reliability of vote counting from electronic voting machines.

To ensure the legitimacy of the electoral computerization process it was necessary to jointly seek with the National Congress the political will in order to harmonize the pertinent legislation and establish guidelines, goals and actions. The legislation had to be revised and updated. Simultaneously, the Electoral Court System in Brazil had to define new regulations for administrative processes by adapting them to digital reality. The technological advance of programs and equipment demands the same degree of advance and updating in regulations in order to ensure that these programs and equipment are appropriately used, while preserving the achievements reached and implementing new safety features.

Having reached all voters, the TSE requested improvements over the security of the entire electronic system before, during and after the elections, with the aim of strengthening reliability of electronic voting machines and the computerization process.

It is important to underline the collaboration, participation and control of political parties, the Brazilian Bar Association (OAB) and the Public Prosecutor in the development and implementation of digital voting by providing suggestions, indicating the failures and the items that needed and need to be improved.

The participation of these entities is in line with the principles of Electoral Justice, which fights tirelessly to achieve greater transparency and reliability in the electronic voting process.

Since the 1996 election and over the last fifteen years, the TSE has strived to improve the electoral process, add new resources and elements to enhance safety.

The TSE made available to interested institutions various monitoring mechanisms. Said mechanisms are used at different times during the voting process:

Before the election

- Monitoring and supervision in the TSE of the development of electoral systems by the political parties, the OAB and the Public Prosecutor.
- Sealing of electoral programs at the TSE: after the compilation, systems are sealed and signed by the entities present at the sealing ceremony.
- Monitoring and supervision in the Regional Courts and in the Electoral Areas for the preparation of electronic voting machines with the electoral systems already sealed by the political parties and other aforementioned entities in a public ceremony held on a date previously informed to the interested parties.
- Audits of electoral programs in the Regional Courts and Electoral Areas carried out by the political parties and entities with control systems implemented by the Electoral Court System or by entities' own systems.

During the election

- Printing of a report called "partial zero" (*"zerésima"*) some minutes prior to initiating the election, in which the inclusion of the names of all candidate and voters entitled to cast votes in that electronic voting machine is attested. By means of this report they can verify that no votes for a determined candidate were fraudulently introduced in the ballot boxes before starting the election.
- Ability to perform supervisions and audits by the representatives of political parties, the OAB and the Public Prosecutor in the polling stations.
- Voter's biometric identification: identification process started in 2008 in some municipalities, which guarantees voter's identity by means of digital registration.
- The direct recording electronic voting system (DRE) was developed to replace printed ballots according to the following procedure: 1) Registration of elector's votes, 2) vote counting, 3) random recording of votes for each public office, 4) digital signature generation, 5) end of the elector's vote.
- Parallel Voting: voting process that occurs in a public place at the same time as the official election. This mechanism deserves a detailed explanation: this is one of the best methods to examine and prove the reliability of electronic voting machines and their systems.
- A parallel electoral committee is formed to follow up the predetermined procedures required by the parallel voting.
- Public draw of the electronic voting machines prepared for the polling stations where electors are going to cast their votes. On the eve of elections a public draw of the electronic voting machines already prepared to be used in the election is carried out in the Regional Courts. All polling stations or sectors of each State participate in the public draw. The electronic voting machines being drawn are reserved to be used in a parallel voting ceremony. It is worth mentioning that

other electronic voting machines have to be prepared to be used in the original electoral sectors or areas on Election Day. A vote will be simulated by using the electronic voting machines that were chosen in the public draw, in the presence of political parties and other entities, with votes previously prepared by the representatives of the political parties. These votes are entered in the ballot boxes and are copied in a laptop (notebook). The whole process of parallel voting is filmed. At the end of the day the vote counting of the results is carried out. The purpose of this Parallel Voting is to compare the results of the voting executed by printed ballots with the result of the electronic voting machine and the registration or record executed by the computer.

After the Elections

- Audits of electoral systems executed by the Political Parties, the OAB and the Public Prosecutor in the Regional Courts and in Electoral Areas.
- Supply of the files with the results of the different polling stations or sectors, so that they may be analyzed by the interested entities.
- Delivery in the Regional Courts and Electoral Areas of the copy of log files from the electronic voting machines, so that interested parties can verify the events occurred in each of the electronic voting machines.
- Supply in the Regional Courts of the correlation tables, in which polling stations and electronic voting machines (equipment) used are linked or related. This information is used to verify the actual use of the electronic voting machine related to a given polling station or sector, as well as to check the results recorded and reported for each polling station or sector.
- The electronic voting machine was indisputably accepted not only nationwide but also internationally.

At the request of the TSE, in 2008 the Nexus Institute conducted a survey in 26 states with 2 thousand voters. This survey revealed that 97 percent of the electors surveyed approved the electronic voting machines and ninety percent had no problem when casting their vote.

The Brazilian electronic voting system is recognized throughout the world as an efficient system for collecting and counting votes, with total exemption with regards to defects and inaccuracies.

The Brazilian Electoral Court System, through agreements, has given advice to various countries including the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Mexico, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Argentina.

The Organization of American States (OAS) acted as an intermediary in the agreements signed between Brazil and interested countries in order to eliminate any suspicion of interests or interference in the politics of these countries.

Lending of electronic voting machines was always free, and interested countries only had to cover expenses related to the transportation and insurance of the equipment.

For the Electoral Court System the use of the electronic voting machine outside the borders of our country is a source of pride and a confirmation of the safety and reliability of our *e-voting* model.

Many countries have visited us to learn about our electronic voting system, namely: Japan, Portugal, South Korea, France, Ukraine, Turkey, Tunisia, Mexico, Bolivia, Colombia, Peru, Venezuela, Panama, Zambia, Spain, Delegation of African Countries, Austria, United States, Honduras, Guatemala, Philippines,

Poland, Indonesia, Mozambique, São Tome and Principe, Afghanistan, East Timor, Palestine, Suriname, India, Italy and Pakistan, among others.

Since the implementation of *e-voting* with global computerized vote counting, the electronic system has become the target of argumentation and debate regarding the safety, reliability and inviolability of data. It is worth noting that many of these arguments are motivated by a legitimate interest in ensuring that popular will expressed by voting is respected. Others, however, have created interests of a personal, political or commercial nature. Even so, they cause confusion and cast doubt on the electronic process as a whole.

The Brazilian Electoral Court System is aware and confident of the hard work carried out over two and a half decades, and in order to remove all doubts and rumors that may, eventually, divert attention to minor issues, tries to clarify and solve such arguments in conferences and congresses.

In this regard, in 2009 the TSE sponsored public testing with prizes and with the test plans developed by approximately forty specialists in information technologies to try to violate our electoral programs. At the end of the tests, specialists were unsuccessful in their attempt to violate our electoral systems.

Work and study groups were formed with the representatives of various Regional Courts and the TSE in order to further improve the Brazilian electoral process, based on regional experiences and on their peculiarities and difficulties. It was found that there was a need to improve the system of voter's identification at polling stations or sectors. Given this finding, a new and important

challenge was launched: the biometric registration of voters across the country.

The word biometric comes from the Greek: *bios* (life) *metron* (measure). It defines an automated method of individual recognition based on biological measures (anatomical and physiological) and behavioral characteristics. At present, the use of biometric identification has provided total reliability to safety and security systems. The Electoral Court System opted for the biometric system of voter identification through fingerprints. The process of a person's identification and confirmation consists in comparing the information provided with the information recorded in the database.

For individual recognition, biometric data is collected by sensors that put them in digital format: the better the quality of the sensor, the better the resulting recognition. In the case of the identity card or the biometric registration that will be carried out by the Electoral Court System, data will be obtained through a high definition scanner.

The electoral benefit that will be achieved with the use of biometric identification of Brazilian voters is unquestionable. On the other hand, the collection of said data will also serve other purposes since the TSE signed an agreement with the Department of Justice to assist it with the delivery of the Registry of the Electoral Court Systems which currently comprises nearly 136 million voters. The system will help with the implementation of the Civil Identification Registry (RIC), which is a unique number that will serve Brazilian citizens as identification for issuing their driver's license, passport and other documents.

Since 2008, in three previously selected municipalities, the biometric voter registration was implemented for the municipal election of said year and it was used as the elector's biometric identification.

The procedure of the biometric registration is achieved through the completion of the following stages: 1) Summon all electors of the municipality in order to carry out the registration; 2) Collect and compare electors' data and their addresses; 3) Obtain the fingerprints of all fingers of voters; 4) Obtain a digital photograph of voters; 5) Register data collected in a database; 6) Print the voter's card.

The objectives for the biometric identification process of all Brazilian electors are very challenging: In 2008, 43 thousand electors in three municipalities: Colorado do Oeste-RO, Fátima do Sul-MS and São João Batista-SC. In 2010, more than one million electors casted their votes through biometric identification, in sixty cities in 23 states. In 2012, ten million electors are expected to be registered, including all the voters of the States of Alagoas and Sergipe. The goal for 2018 is to register 100 percent of the national electorate.

The TSE has regulated the actions planned for the electoral registration renewal through Resolutions and Provisions. A Biometric Kit was developed for the National Biometric Registration. The so-called "Kit Bio" consists of a suitcase and a large binder, which contain a laptop (notebook), a digital camera, a scanner and a mini studio with bench.

The technology embodied in the Kit Bio allows for quick and easy collection of fingerprints and photographs and officials of

the Electoral Court System will not encounter major problems during its operation. The scanner will read the impressions and a computer program will automatically correct positioning, focus and light errors of the photos.

ADVANCES IN 2010 ELECTION

The Brazilian Electoral Court System takes advantage of organization and technology in its relentless pursuit of improving the electoral process in order to achieve agility, safety, security, economy as well as in order to guarantee political rights, with the possibility of establishing polling stations for voters in transit (voting in transit) and polling stations in detention centers.

In the 2010 election, the President of the TSE, Justice Ricardo Lewandowski, announced that vote-counting in this election was executed in record time.

In a group interview granted in the evening of the general election (3/10), he reported that in less than five hours after starting the count, they had already counted 97 percent of the votes and hence it was possible to have a certain perspective of the candidates elected to public office.

He also announced that the presidential election was already mathematically decided by then, after completion of the runoff voting of the candidates with most votes.

In 2012, the Electoral Court System plans to implement polling stations in police stations so that the police officers in duty may cast their votes.

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DIGITAL DEMOCRACY: ELECTRONIC VOTING SYSTEM IN JALISCO

José Tomás Figueroa Padilla[1]

This collaboration's main objective is to share with readers a series of reflections on democracy, the situation of electronic voting systems in the world and in Mexico, benefits and myths about the use of electronic ballot boxes and more importantly, to share with you the positive experience we had in the state of Jalisco. To begin with, we can say that the essence of democracy is the same today as the one Aristotle the Greek philosopher coined centuries ago: the power resides and emanates from the people. However, the concept of democracy has widened and its formal and administrative mechanisms, as well as its legal and institutional framework, have evolved. Today, to speak about democracy is to speak about many things: representation, participation, voting, parties, civil society, and institutions. In short, we speak of a system. For such a system to work all its parts must converge.

[1] Counselor President of the Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute of Jalisco.

Voting is one of the mechanisms that give meaning to democracy. It allows citizens to exercise an inalienable political right. It enables the vision of the majority to come to power, without undermining the rights of minorities; it integrates the levels of government and powers. Voting is the starting point for a healthy democracy, that is, a democracy that is displayed in participation, representation, control, co-responsibility and increasingly has legal mechanisms of citizen empowerment, such as plebiscites and the referendum.

Voting has also evolved. To perfect this mechanism, institutions and citizens have come a long way. Behind the shielding of the vote, is the goal of ensuring reliable and transparent elections. To achieve this, it was necessary to develop technologies that have been present during the history of voting and democracy, and which are the subject of a separate study. As an example, let us remember how we went from voting lists to electoral rolls, to the voter registration card with photograph, to the unforgeable ballot, to indelible ink and a range of resources that feature applied technology.

The electronic voting system has been advancing gradually in the world. The precedent of the use of electronic voting systems dates back to 1965 in the Netherlands, through the electronic bulletin board system with non-touch screen. From that year until 2008 electoral reforms refined the legal framework so that finally, in 2006, 99 percent of the votes cast for communes were made with an electronic voting system.

In 1980, the state of Florida in the United States of America first used a device for counting of votes (votomatic). For the year 2001, through legal reforms, the devices were changed by migrating to devices with an optical reader.

In 1982, Brazil and India conducted their pilot testing with electronic voting systems. In the former, through the use of computers. In 1995 Brazil legislated electronic voting and the following year held its first binding election. In 2000 a totally electronic election was carried out throughout the country. In the case of India, the legislation on the subject happened in the year 1989 and by 2004 electronic voting was implemented throughout the country. The 1989 legislation is still valid.

At the federal level the use of electronic voting systems is still limited. Mexico City, the states of Coahuila and Jalisco have all been pilot tested, and held some binding elections; electronic voting systems were not used in all electoral sections. Coahuila was the first state to legislate the use of electronic voting systems in 2001. In 2003, some pilot tests were carried out and since then the system has not been implemented. Mexico City, with support from Brazil's Superior Electoral Court, held its first pilot tests in 2003, 2006 and 2007. In 2008 the local congress finally legislated its use. For the year 2009 the first binding elections took place in the country's capital in 40 boxes, one per congressional district.

The precedents in Jalisco date back to May 10, 2005 when the decree 20906 was published in the *Jalisco State Official Gazette* [*Periódico Oficial El Estado de Jalisco*], approved by the local Congress, by which its fourth, fifth and sixth transient articles established the way in which the Electoral and Citizen Participation Institute (IEPC) of Jalisco would implement a statewide electronic voting pilot test for the ordinary local electoral process of 2006. To carry out the local pilot test, the IEPC of the State of Coahuila offered its counterpart from Jalisco to use its electronic voting machines. In 2009 Jalisco held binding elections for the first time using an electronic voting system.

Three election processes were conducted in the municipalities of Tuxcueca, Gómez Farías and San Cristóbal de la Barranca, respectively. It was the first time elections were ever conducted with an electronic voting system in the country.

Since then the interest in implementing electronic voting in Jalisco has grown. Work was undertaken to develop a ballot box model that was different from other existing models. IEPC Jalisco has patented its own model whose main features are:

- The printing of the startup, counting, computing and closing minutes are prepared by each ballot box, and printed at the time each step takes place.
- The existence of a voucher that corroborates the election ballot of the voter, both on screen, such as the physical vote that the device issues; which ensures that the paper and electronic results will coincide, and at the same time the voting witness always lands face down, guaranteeing its secrecy.
- Finally, the ballot box that is used in Jalisco, at the time of installation, issues a message announcing that it has been installed; additionally, at closing, the system does three things:
  - counting and computation,
  - the closing minutes; and
  - the transmission of the results for their summation and immediate publication.

These qualities of the voting system respond to principles longed for by both political actors and by citizens themselves: reliability, immediacy of results and their publication. They also make us value the advantages of having an electronic voting system. The notion of digital democracy implies direct benefits in different fields.

First, to have highly reliable security mechanisms that ensure the ballot meets the characteristics of being universal, free, secret, direct, personal and not transferable. Second, the files that are generated before, during and after the vote are perfectly safe and are fully auditable. Third, a considerable saving in voting time, the calculation is sixty seconds per vote cast. Fourth, the contracting of the election results program is not necessary since the results are obtained at the close of polling, a situation that prevents the further development of electoral disputes. Fifth, the electronic voting system reduces the possibility of mistakes in filling the minutes.

In other aspects the reduction of costs over the medium term should be pointed out. The use of electronic voting systems has a lifespan of at least twelve years, which is equivalent to five elections. During this period the purchase of election materials suddenly decreases which on the one hand makes the elections more expensive and on the other hand, generates a significant environmental impact. Furthermore, the implementation of the electronic voting system reduces the number of polling officials, the time of scrutiny, simplifies the electoral training, polling organization and the delivery of ballot boxes.

When analyzing the implementation of an electronic voting system for the entire organization, we face different situations. On the one hand with regards to those who are suspicious of the technology and on the other hand with regards to those who thought that the voter would find it difficult to use the devices. A study conducted after the election in the municipality of Gómez Farías, clearly showed the positive experience of the voter towards the system. 68.4 percent of those who voted granted it a high level of reliability. In the municipality of San Cristóbal, 76.4 percent of voters expressed a high degree of confidence in the system. More than ninety percent

of respondents said they would like the next election to be made with electronic voting.

In addition to the acceptance of the system, we can say that these municipalities have a unique social composition, where there are many elderly people, the education level is medium-low and access to technologies is almost nil. That is to say they are rural municipalities where the technology gap is high and despite such conditions, the processes flowed smoothly. Regarding the technical issues and on the operation, we have insisted on highlighting the inviolability of the system: there is no possibility that the results are manipulated, there is no possibility of cheating.

While digital democracy is no panacea, it is a tool that provides us with the opportunity to streamline the electoral process and optimize public resources; it helps ensure electoral certainty, inhibits the temptation to perform undemocratic practices and it modernizes electoral systems.

Global experiences, as well as domestic experiences, indicate the convenience of modernizing our democracy and this is the path we will take.

III. TECHNOLOGY PLATFORMS, CITIZEN PARTICIPATION AND POLITICAL ACTION

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE: TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION?

Raúl Zambrano[1]

INTRODUCTION

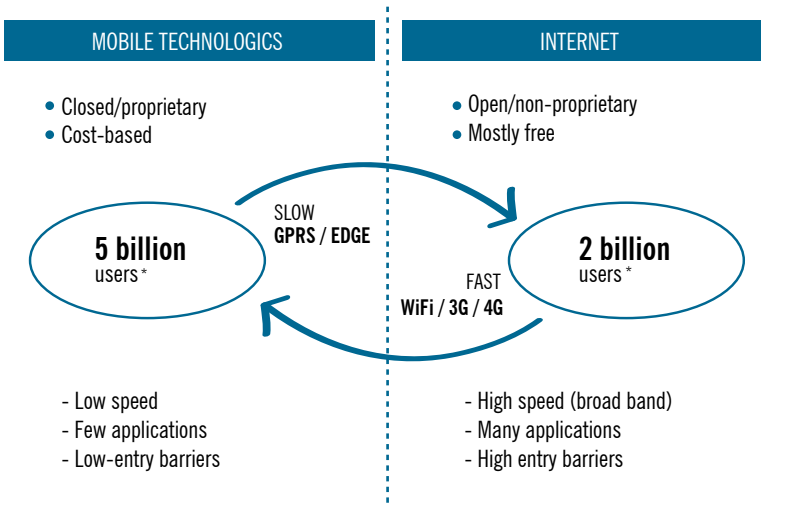
New Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) are now available to billions of people throughout the globe. In particular, the expansion of mobile devices has been exponential in the past five years. The latest data suggests that while two billion people use the internet, over five billion now have access to a mobile device of some kind (see Figure 1). The rapid evolution of mobile technologies, which took many by surprise and has overshadowed internet growth, is unprecedented in history: it is the first time that an ICT has diffused so fast to so many people in so many countries across the globe (World Bank, 2009).

[1] Senior Policy Advisor at the ICTD & E-Governance. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP/BDP/DGG).

Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, the so-called Arab Spring, have led many to see social networking platforms and mobile technologies as a critical tool for participation, empowering not only stakeholders but also the general public. Communication among actors and the mobilization of multiple groups and communities is now more feasible than before and includes the voices of those who were previously excluded from conversations that determined their own futures.

FIGURE 1.

Internet and Mobile Users, 2010.



* ITU 2010, © UNDP.

There is no doubt that we are witnessing the "democratization" of access to new ICTs, and to new means of communication in particular. In addition to creating the global communication infrastructure, built in the last fifteen years or so, such democratization responds not only to lower costs but also to the new wave of globalization, started in the late 1980s, which has

interlinked most, if not all, countries in the world economically, socially and politically. Thus, the internet, social networks and mobile technologies have indeed made it simpler for atomized communities of people to interact, associate, share and mobilize, thus lowering the barriers to collective action (Coleman, 2009).

All this raises several issues that need to be addressed if the goal is to enhance democratic governance at the national and global levels. Some of these are: What is the actual role of new technologies in this process? What is the impact of these new developments in the actual functioning of governments? Are we seeing a big push for inclusive participation in governance processes and mechanisms? Are the new social actors in the scene carving a permanent space in the public sphere? Are they taking over from other more traditional actors (traditional media, community networks, political parties, unions, etcetera.) in the process?

We will explore some of these issues below and present some examples, and will conclude with some ideas on the impact of the new ICTs on democratic governance and people's participation in political and decision-making processes.

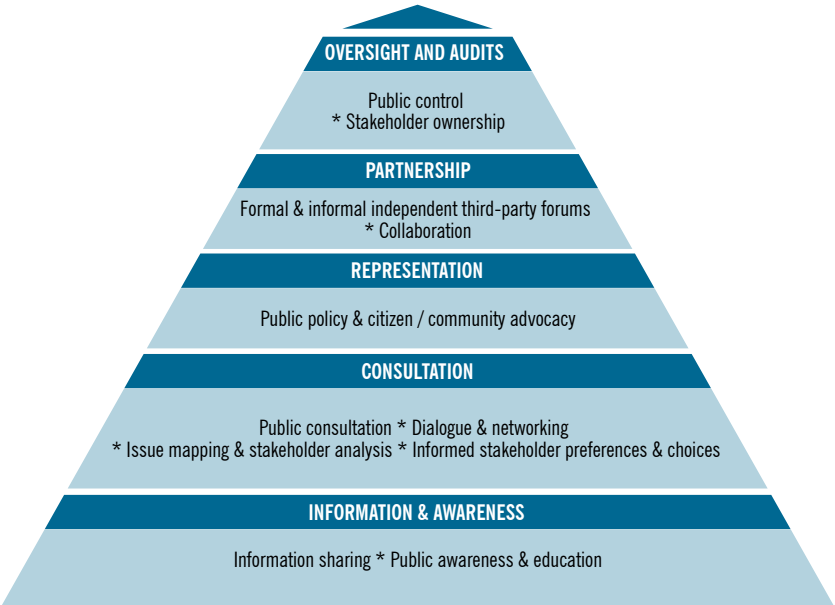
PARTICIPATION AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

For many years, "participation" has been an integral part of development agendas. Indeed, a plethora of participative methodologies and projects have been developed and implemented with varying degree of success (and failure). At any rate, participation is understood in different ways by actors, communities and institutions in both the supply (governments) and demand sides (civil society).

Figure 2 below presents the core forms of participation used in different processes, programmes and projects:

FIGURE 2.

The Participation Pyramid.



* © UNDP, 2010.

Without entering into details, it will suffice to say for the purpose of this article that most participation initiatives in development programming contexts are confined to information and consultation, the two bottom layers of the participation pyramid in Figure 2. What needs to be assessed today is the role, if any, new ICTs have in fostering greater participation in the public sphere of those who have thus far been unable to do so, while also opening the doors for higher and more sophisticated levels of engagement between governments and the general public.

Participation is not only a critical component of democratic governance. It is also a fundamental human right and thus has clear links to the human rights agenda. The right to participation in public affairs and to vote asserts that people are entitled to be consulted and have a say in the decisions that affect them. Participation is essential for overcoming social exclusion and marginalization. Practical experience has demonstrated that policies are more legitimate and more likely to a have larger impact when open and transparent consultations take place. And new ICTs can provide the networking platforms to give voice to stakeholders and to aggregate socio-economic demands via networks and networking.

The above right is linked to the right to information, the right people have to secure access to public information, and the duty that public bodies have to make information available. Without equal distribution of information, the gap between poor information and rich information increases, resulting in unequal opportunities to participate in democratic processes. The rapid development of new icts in the last two decades has significantly decreased the cost of production of information and reduced almost to zero its reproduction costs. The "democratization" of ICTs has also opened opportunities for citizens and stakeholders to launch new media channels based on ICTs to both disseminate information and serve as intermediaries between government and citizens to package and popularize public information and public issues.

The right to association and expression is the final piece in the rights puzzle. Citizens and other stakeholders have a right to be consulted, informed, and express opinions, including dissent. This fundamental human right gives content to the principle of participation and to political rights more generally.

An integral part of the ICTs revolution is the way in which it has opened up vast possibilities for participation, information access and new forms of assembly. There is now a greater focus on how to increase access to information and to foster participation in governance and democratic processes. These basic human rights are interdependent and mutually supportive, meaning that none can be properly exercised in isolation. This set of rights also promotes transparency and accountability, core pillars of democratic governance and human development.

THE NEW ICTs AND PARTICIPATION

It seems a bit paradoxical that while for every internet user in the world, there are 2.5 mobile users (see Figure 1 above), the *emphasis* in emerging ICTs has been mostly placed on social networks. Indeed, there seems to be a factor of "coolness" here. From this perspective, SMS is certainly no match vis-à-vis the popular social networks so frequently quoted in mainstream media.

Social networks are part of what today is known as *Web 2.0*. They are, so to speak, the new face of the internet in the twenty-first century. Social networks essentially comprise two elements: user-generated content, riding on ICT platforms designed for such purposes, and mass communication (Castells, 2009) which, using the internet, allows any user in the network to reach millions, if not billions, of people at once and in real time. This basic fact has convinced many observers that social networks are indeed the core triggers of the social change that has taken place in the Middle East.

Twenty years ago, when the so-called "internet revolution" started, we saw a similar reaction from pundits and observers who back then also claimed that the internet was going to transform

the world, empower people like never before and help topple regimes that were not in line with Western democracies. This view lasted until the dot-com crash of 2000 brought such pipe dreams to a nightmarish end. Actually, existing privately owned social networks such as *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Google+* are essentially following the same type of evolution as the internet did in the 1990s: rapid growth in developed countries complemented by access by the elites and upper middle classes in developing countries. It has taken the internet almost twenty years to reach two billion users across the globe, a fact that still reflects the reality that most people at the bottom of the pyramid continue to lack access. Latest data indicate that *Facebook* for example has over 750 million users, 45 percent of which are located in five developed countries alone, a number that raises serious questions when it comes to fostering inclusive participation in developing countries (see Annex I for data).

Just like old ICTs, social networks must be seen as a *means* to an end. After almost twenty years supporting the use of ICTs to promote human development, we at UNDP are well aware that ICTs are enablers that must be adequately harnessed by both governments and stakeholders to have any impact on human agency and development agendas. As enablers, ICTs can provide new solutions to traditional development issues, but at the same time they are not a panacea to the deeper structural issues that entrench poverty and marginalization.

However, and in contrast to older ICTs of the early 20th century (i.e. telephones, television), the new technologies also have the potential for *transforming* not only business processes and public institutions but also the way in which people interact among themselves and with governments. Critically important in this transformation is that users are now empowered to generate and distribute their own content to other peers and partners.

Social networks can thus transform *how* we interact and connect. What they cannot do is compel us to participate. Thus, while the Egyptian protesters readily acknowledge the role of digital media in their organizing, they also note that it was not social networks that banished Mubarak –it was the Egyptian people who took to the streets and public squares in protest– which took place while the country had no access to the internet and mobile providers, which were forced by the regime to shut down their networks. New evidence suggests that such shutdowns actually exacerbated the protests. Thus, these new networking tools do not take the place of genuine human action –they can transform and augment it.

While the mobilizing potential of social networks is valuable, there are many more avenues where they can make a difference in people's lives. For instance, social networks can be employed to promote public service delivery, improve public administration, and engage citizens more actively in governance processes. In fact, social networking platforms provide many different venues for access, relying not just on the internet, but also mobile technologies, which have a much wider reach in marginalized, under-served communities around the world.

SELECTED EXAMPLES OF ICTs AND PARTICIPATION

Below we present four case studies which pinpoint ways in which icts –old and new– have been used in various forms to promote participation with relatively successful results.

SMS: Hello Garci in the Philippines

The Philippines, called "the text-messaging center of the world" (Castells, *et al.* 2007) –has close to 100 percent cell phone coverage (versus thirty million internet users) in a total population

of 85 million people. Mobile phones are an important symbol of social status, which has helped the technology spread quickly, creating a mass consumer base, but also fierce competition for market share among providers, meaning the cost of handsets has dropped (Castells, *et al.* 2007: 20). Like in most developing countries, upwards of 90 percent of subscribers use pre-paid cards, and SMS is by far the preferred method of communication because of its low cost (SMS was at one time free). As a result, SMS and other mobile-based media have been harnessed by civil society as a powerful tool for popular mobilization in the last decade (Pertierra, 2005; Ramey 2007).

One of the first of such mobilizations was in 2001, when over a million people mobilized in support of the presidency of Gloria Arroyo, protesting the government of then-president, Joseph Estrada. SMS was one of the most widely used tools to oust Estrada, with text-based polls, online petitions and text-based jokes spreading throughout the mobilized population.

The power of the "coup de text" arose again, this time *against* President Gloria Arroyo, when the "Hello Garci" scandal broke. The 2004 election results officially gave Arroyo the presidency and Noli de Castro the vice-presidency. Then in 2005, wiretapped audio recordings of phone calls between President Arroyo and election commissioner Virgilio Garcillano were publicly released, and listeners could hear Arroyo discussing the rigging of the 2004 national election with the election commissioner. Activist group TXTPower turned a clip of the wiretapped call into a ringtone –"Hello, Garci? Hello Ma'am"– which became one of the world's most downloaded ring tones (Ramey, 2007).

Officially the administration denied any wrong doing and challenged allegations in court, although the controversy continued throughout Arroyo's administration, and remains an issue today

such that the new president Benigno Aquino III has called for a thorough investigation. So although the SMS campaign did not succeed in ousting the accused president, the strength of the civil society response from one of complacency to grassroots empowerment, demonstrated a new level of engagement by the Philippine population, and the power of these new tools to change the conversation.

Blogoshere: revolution in Egypt

There are several catalysts for the revolutionary mobilization in Egypt: the "Jasmine revolution" in neighboring Tunisia, the organized and sustained action on the part of protest groups, as well as the use of new communication tools and platforms. The bloodless "Jasmine revolution" in Tunisia, for instance, was a defining moment. Indeed, if Tunisia was able to oust a repressive dictator why not Egypt? After the Tunisian upheaval, protesters in Egypt were emboldened to take to the streets, calling for, and eventually bringing, Hosni Mubarak's resignation (Franklin, 2011; Hirschkind, 2011; Herrera, 2011; Kirkpatrick and Sanger, 2011; Mahmood 2011).

The protests in Cairo started with individual Egyptian citizens' long frustration with the government, which fostered the broader mobilization in the population. But they were also enabled by the planning and organization of numerous organizations, including the April 6th Youth Movement. Starting around 2004, Egyptians began turning with greater frequency to street protests to give voice to their demands, as they watched unemployment increase and public institutions become less responsive. Egypt witnessed an upsurge of demonstrations from a broad cross-section of public servants demanding better wages and working conditions, including transportation, postal and textile workers, health workers, pharmacists, doctors, lawyers, judges, and real estate tax collectors (Franklin, 2011; Bamyeh, 2011; Eltahawy, 2010).

The *Egyptian blogosphere* also emerged around 2004 with the birth of the *Kefaya* movement –the Egyptian Movement for Change. *Kefaya* formed as a grassroots coalition opposed to Mubarak's presidency and represented a new kind of opposition in Egypt, drawing support from a broad range of political actors, from Islamists to secularists, Marxists to liberals. When Mubarak crushed *Kefaya's* demonstrations and jailed their leaders, rather than quieting discontent, his actions fomented greater frustration, with many young bloggers voicing their discontent in on-line fora, leading to more activism and demonstrations. By the following year, a handful of blogs had birthed hundreds more, and there are now thousands of blogs in Egypt.

Police brutality was one of the touchstones for mobilization. Many Egyptians experienced state brutality, but rarely saw it reported in the media. Enter the amateur cell phone camera and *YouTube*. Videos of innocent Egyptians tortured for imagined crimes became a regular feature in blogs and *Facebook* pages.

From the Kefeya movement of 2004, to the April 6th movement of 2008, to the Khaled Said campaign of 2010, Egyptian organizers used the public sphere to communicate their frustrations and demands. They learned from their confrontation, adapted their tactics and strategies accordingly, and networked with other anti-government protesters around the world, such as Otpor in Serbia, for training and guidance. All of the new communication modes –social networking platforms, SMS, not to mention *Al Jazeera* online– were crucial resources that allowed activists to reach out to others –creating a critical mass of people prepared to demonstrate and ushering in one of the most profound transformations to the political culture of Egypt in recent history.

Grass-roots networks and internet

EZLN and the First Informational Social Movement in Mexico

Rather than guns, the indigenous Maya of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) deployed words as the weapon of their struggle, mobilizing via emails and the then new web-based platforms. Emerging from the jungle into the international public sphere in January 1994, the Zapatistas used the internet as well as telecommunications, videos and faxes to broadcast their cause to the world, earning them the moniker of the first post-modern insurgency, or the "first informational guerilla movement" (Castells, 2004; Halkin, 2008).

The internet allowed the EZLN to disseminate their so-called "revolutionary" communiqués to the world instantly, in which they demanded land, food, democratic reform and stronger constitutional guarantees, infused not with threats of violence but poetry and ancient Mayan mythologies.

In particular, the development of "La Neta", an alternative computer communications network in Mexico and Chiapas –linking Mexican NGOs with the Institute for Global Communications in San Francisco– was vital for diffusing Zapatista declarations and communiqués. "La Neta" originated between 1989-1993, supported by the Catholic Church with the help of U.S. based computer experts who donated their time and expertise to build it. "La Neta" established a presence in 1993 in Chiapas to help a dozen local NGOs get online, many of which then helped to inform the world of what was happening during the Zapatista uprising.

The pressure created internationally actually forced the Mexican government into negotiations for a cease fire and later, for the San Andres Accords, granting limited autonomy to the indigenous of Chiapas (although it was never properly implemented), and fostered the transition to democracy in 2000. Moreover, the

tools of the internet and other ICTs helped the EZLN to call on international civil society to join them in "building a world in which many words fit", the call that became the rallying point for the anti-globalization movement.

It was the EZLNs ability to communicate to the globe that helped them capture the world's attention at a time when neoliberalism was asserting its hegemony against (among other things) communal rights and land. The strong presence in the global sphere, and a mobilized base of support, protected the Zapatistas from being crushed by the then-authoritarian Mexican state.

The EZLN itself was not actually a "wired" indigenous army (Castells, 2004). Instead these tools were in the hands of Mexican and transnational civil society actors who mobilized in support of the Zapatista cause. Now these tools are more widely available, and social network platforms and the World Wide Web are full of Zapatista materials, stories, videos and other communications. Yet, the early tools of socially-engaged, networked media allowed individual actors to reach out on their own to the world. As the first movement to do this, the Zapatistas demonstrated a novel innovation with the use of ICTs, well before the emergence of popular social networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*.

Open Source Crowdsourcing: *Ushahidi*

IT developers in Kenya have turned crowdsourcing into a revolutionary tool for humanitarian crises and social activism. It started when violence exploded in Kenya following the disputed 2007 presidential elections. Ory Okolloh, a Kenyan lawyer and blogger, posted the idea online of a mapping tool that would allow people to anonymously report violence. Volunteer tech-wizards ran with the idea, and over a long weekend created a simple, open source platform to collect eyewitness accounts of

post-election violence and human rights abuses. The software pairs GIS and mobile phones, allowing users to submit and to view SMS and email messages superimposed on a digital map that shows the message's place of origin.

Witnesses in Kenya submitted reports of riots, rapes, deaths and stranded refugees via email and SMS, locations of which were then plotted on a map on the website. In the end, upwards of 45 thousand reports were submitted, collecting more testimony with greater speed than reporters and elections monitors combined. Called *Ushahidi* –Swahili for "testimony" or "witness"– it created an innovative database and significant historical archive of electoral incidents (Giridharadas, 2010).

What makes *Ushahidi* particularly important is its open-source design which gives voice to billions of people in the world via a basic mobile phone using SMS, without any internet connectivity. This has allowed its use and adoption all over the world for specific event-mapping purposes. After its initial launch in Kenya, the software has since been used for many global humanitarian causes and crises –from wars to earthquakes– to provide logistical support in natural disasters, track violence and crime, watch elections, and monitor pharmaceutical inventories. In South Africa and the Congo, it has been used to track violence and all over East Africa to inventory much-need drug stocks. It was used by *Al Jazeera* in the Gaza strip to collect eyewitness accounts of violence in 2008-2009, and it has been widely used for election monitoring from Mexico to India. It was even used in Washington D.C. after the winter storms in 2010 to create a map of blocked roads for residents trying to get around.

When the earthquakes struck Haiti and Chile in 2010, *Ushahidi* joined forces with several universities, civil society organizations

and UN agencies to assist humanitarian relief efforts. In New Zealand, *Ushahidi* was used to create the Christchurch Recovery Map to help earthquake survivors find food, water, toilets, fuel, ATMs, and medical care. And in Japan as well, *Ushahidi's* Japan Recovery Map is being used to help with humanitarian efforts there.

The platform has also been used to support pro-democracy demonstrators across North Africa and the Middle East. In Egypt, for instance, *Ushahid;* maps ("you witness" in Arabic) were produced by the Development and Institutionalization Support Center (disc) in Cairo to monitor events during and since the January 25th 2011 "revolution". In Libya, the *Ushahidi* platform was adapted almost immediately at the start of the protests there, at the request of the un Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to allow citizens and observers to submit information about conditions on the ground, as protests and violence expanded (Meier, 2011; IRIN, 2011).

Plotting events with input from citizen observers allows users to visualize patterns –whether patterns of violence, or patterns of logistical support needs –tracking claims of what is happening, to whom, and where, and creating a user-driven platform for augmenting transparency and accountability. *Ushahidi* represents a vital new frontier of ICT innovation, driven not by Silicon Valley investors, but by developing country social entrepreneurs who see ICT innovation as a way to change the world.

TOWARDS A MORE INCLUSIVE PARTICIPATION

The examples described above depict how different ICTs, ranging from fax and email to advanced social networks have been

used not only to give voice to those who before had none, but have also *transformed* the way in which marginalized people can participate in the public sphere and peacefully reach goals and targets previously established. The examples also highlight that no matter what the level of ICTs sophistication –fax, email, SMS or social network– the real impact on social and political processes can take place as long as stakeholders continue to network and push their aims.

Perhaps the most salient feature of the new ICTs is the diffusion of mobile technologies to billions of people in many countries in a very short period of time. Although some of the numbers quoted in the daily press might be overestimated, there is no doubt that many people today have for the first time in their lives access to a communications device that they own and can freely use as they better see fit.

How can we then capitalize on these new developments to continue to support human development and foster inclusive participation?

Before we can answer this question, we need to first bring down to earth some of the hype we hear about *Web 2.0* in general and social networks in particular. The first one is the assumption that ICTs in general and *Web 2.0* technologies in particular will –by default– propel people's participation, enhance democracy, and strengthen human rights. This view, also known as the *cyber-utopian view*, claims that "freedom" will inevitably come if people use the internet (Morozov, 2010, 2011; Rieff, 2011; Young, 2011). This viewpoint simply ignores the fact that the same technologies that can enhance democratic governance can

at the same time be used to control and monitor people's activities –and in more sophisticated ways than ever before in history (Morozov, 2010). Technology *alone* cannot bring democracy, nor will it bring authoritarianism for that matter!

The other related view that is still out there and that is not really new, is the notion that ICTs are "neutral." Let us illustrate the issue with the example of gender equity. When the internet emerged in the early 1990s, it was seen as a platform that would inevitably bring women more opportunities altogether and thus lead to a reduction of existing gender disparities. The worst-case scenario was that new ICTs –as *neutral tools*– would at least not exacerbate gender inequalities. Based on this, many ICT policies and programmes in developing countries were implemented without explicitly addressing gender issues. Needless to say, the outcome of such policies and programmes actually ended up increasing gender inequalities in most cases (UNDP, 2008; Castells *et al.* 2007).

A development approach to the new ICTs should be focused not on ICTs themselves but rather on how ICTs can support both existing development agendas that developing countries have established as well as Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs). This means first and foremost avoiding the current hype on private social networks and instead looking at ways in which new ICTs can promote both participation (even if at basic levels) and the delivery of public services to the most vulnerable populations in developing countries. There are already plenty of examples out there, a few of which we have depicted above, that can demonstrate how effective such approaches can be. Nevertheless there is an issue of scale that still needs

to be addressed and where governments, the private sector and other development partners need to be involved.

The "democratization" of access to ICTs, especially to a mobile communications device, opens the door for rethinking the way in which development programmes are implemented. With this in mind, one key role is to promote the use of ICTs, social networks and mobile technologies to build or strengthen the dialogue and engagement between governments (national, local), and civil society and non-state actors. This will augment the public sphere or public space where women and marginalized populations can have voice and thus be part of critical development decision-making processes that affect their lives. National governments in developing countries should be part and parcel of this process and need to jump into the moving train before it leaves the station. In fact, they have perhaps for the first time in their history the possibility of reaching millions of people with information and services while at the same time listening to them in a responsive and open fashion.

All in all, social networks in general and mobile technologies in particular have expanded access to ICTs and ICTS's networks, but alone, they cannot close the economic, social and political inequalities that many developing countries still face today. In the end, it is the interaction among people, and between state and non-state actors that will lead the way. And here ICTs –old, new, emerging and about to emerge– can be a critical and indispensable catalyst.

CONCLUSION

As we begin the second decade of the XXIst century, the new ICTs–comprised of social networks and mobile technologies– are

being associated with social protest, revolution and, as the recent events in London show[2], with violence and crime. Such a negative connotation is complementing to a certain extent the initial and perhaps even *naïve* view of cyber-utopians that the new ICTs would inevitably lead to more "freedom" across the world. In the end, this will create a more balanced view of new ICTs in terms of the effective participation of people in key and core governance issues. Many governments however still feel a bit reluctant to fully embrace new ICTs as a strategic tool to build partnerships with civil society and thus enhance participation.

New ICTs have the potential of transforming the way in which stakeholders and the public engage with each other, liaise with national and local governments, and further strengthen the public sphere. This is perhaps more critical for the billion who sit at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid and are still lacking the rights and resources to climb out of poverty –the latter understood in a multi-dimensional way with social, political information and participation components.

While we have to agree that the new ICTs alone cannot make this happen, it is also true that development agendas will not be fulfilled in the short and medium term without the strategic use and deployment of such technologies. There is no middle ground here if we really target inclusive participation to further strengthen democratic governance while supporting at the same time the achievement of Internationally Agreed Development Goals (IADGs).

[2] Between 6 and 10 August 2011, several London boroughs and districts of cities and towns across England suffered widespread rioting, looting and arson where thousands took to the streets.

ANNEX I

Top 50 Countries using Facebook sorted by Penetration.

Rank by absolute # of *Facebook* users	Country	Population (2010)	Internet users % (2010)	*Facebook* users % (2011)	Mobile subs-criptions % (2009)	ICT price basket as % of GNI per capita (2009)
21	Chile	17,113,688	54,0	53,5	14	3.49
50	United Arab Emirates	7,511,690	69.0	50,8	154	0.82
1	United States	309,050,816	78,0	50,2	97	0.40
45	Denmark	5,544,139	85.9	50,2	96	0.41
19	Australia	22,328,800	78,0	50,0	87	0.86
13	Canada	34,108,752	79,0	49,9	4	0.58
29	Sweden	9,379,116	92,0	49,4	20	36.15
5	United Kingdom	62,218,761	82,0	48,7	130	0.82
18	Taiwan	23,071,799	70,0	47,7	116	N/A
42	Israel	7,624,600	70.4	47,4	49	0.61
17	Malaysia	28,401,017	58,0	44,9	34	1.65
44	Serbia	7,292,574	92.4	41,9	160	1.60
32	Belgium	10,879,159	78,0	41,8	59	0.75
12	Argentina	40,412,376	66,0	41,0	120	2.28
4	Turkey	72,752,325	44,0	39,5	30	1.77
34	Portugal	10,642,841	48,0	37,7	135	1.28
40	Hungary	10,008,703	0.5	35,9	63	2.18
9	France	64,876,618	69,0	35,6	64	0.95
47	Switzerland	7,825,243	80.5	35,2	29	0.60
14	Colombia	46,294,841	50,0	35,1	55	2.46
11	Italy	60,483,521	80,0	34,8	1	0.86
20	Venezuela	28,834,000	37,0	34,8	99	2.99
43	Czech Republic	10,525,090	65.6	33,2	88	2.18
41	Greece	11,319,048	46.2	32,5	57	1.02
15	Spain	46,081,574	62,0	32,0	40	1.08

Continuation.

Rank by absolute # of *Facebook* users	Country	Population (2010)	Internet users % (2010)	*Facebook* users % (2011)	Mobile subs-criptions % (2009)	ICT price basket as % of GNI per capita (2009)
49	Austria	8,384,745	74.8	31,9	106	0.61
26	Netherlands	16,612,213	88,0	30,6	164	0.75
8	Philippines	93,260,798	29,0	26,8	167	10.12
6	Mexico	113,423,047	30,0	26,1	26	2.08
46	Tunisia	10,549,100	33.9	26,0	103	0.93
10	Germany	81,702,329	79,0	25,8	61	0.81
38	Ecuador	14,464,739	22.3	25,5	3	5.56
23	Peru	29,076,512	31,0	24,0	39	5.98
16	Thailand	69,122,234	27,0	18,7	97	7.94
24	Poland	38,187,488	58,0	18,1	57	1.76
31	Saudi Arabia	27,448,086	44,0	17,1	111	1.12
39	Romania	21,442,012	35.5	17,0	133	1.87
2	Indonesia	239,870,937	16,0	16,6	151	5.81
7	Brazil	194,946,470	37,0	13,9	140	2.19
35	Morocco	31,951,412	41,0	12,4	47	9.69
22	Egypt	81,121,077	24,0	10,9	203	3.40
30	South Africa	49,991,300	14,0	9,0	48	4.20
33	South Korea	48,875,000	81,0	8,4	22	0.79
48	Algeria	35,468,208	13.4	7,7	94	2.43
27	Japan	127,450,459	78,0	3,7	98	1.39
28	Russia	141,750,000	43,0	3,3	101	0.73
3	India	1,170,938,000	8,0	3,1	121	3.64
25	Pakistan	173,593,383	10,0	3,0	118	3.49
36	Nigeria	158,423,182	28,0	2,6	117	38.88
...						
Sources:		(Worldbank 2010)	(Internet World Stats 2010)	(Socialbakers.com 2011)	(Worldbank 2010)	(ITU 2011, data from 2009)

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FAME, FOLLOWERS, ANONYMITY AND ACTIVISM

David Sasaki[1]

There are two crucial ingredients for successful digital activism and online civic participation that receive little attention: fame and anonymity.

I was once having beers with some of Mexico City's most well known online activists. It was this group that helped remove a three percent tax on internet access and stalled the construction of Via Express in Guadalajara and Super Via in Mexico City. As I glanced around the table, I realized that the tech savvy activists looked like any other Mexico City youth out for a Friday afternoon beer. The major difference is that, collectively, they command a *Twitter* following of around thirty thousand users. They have become "internet famous", which means that when they talk, politicians are forced to listen –and, frequently, respond.

[1] Latin America Advisor at the Open Society Foundation. Former Director of Outreach at Global Voice On Line.

BUT WHAT IS "INTERNET FAMOUS"

When Michael Jackson passed away in 2009 many media commentators remarked on the death of something far greater, fame itself. In 1982 Michael Jackson sold over 100 million copies of the album *Thriller*. That is greater than the population of Mexico at the time. Compare that to the greatest selling album of last year, Eminem's *Recovery*, which sold a humble 3.42 million copies. Everyone knows at least some of the lyrics to songs like Thriller, Beat It, and Billy Jean. But only a handful of us know the lyrics to any of the songs from *Recovery*.

This also holds true in television. In 1953 around seventy percent of American households watched the television show *I Love Lucy*. Last year the most popular television show in the United States, *Two and a Half Men*, was not able to command the attention of more than five percent of Americans. Meanwhile, Ryan Higa –a young Asian American from Hawaii who uploads videos in his spare time– has over 3.2 million *YouTube* subscribers –more than Lady Gaga or Justin Bieber. Though TV is still the medium of the day in Mexico, it is starting to lose its grip here as well. In 1976 *El Chavo de Ocho* had 350 million viewers worldwide. Today the most watched television show in Mexico is *Triunfo del Amor*, and while it still has far more viewers than is rationally explicable, it pales in comparison to the audience of *El Chavo del Ocho* in the 1970s, despite the fact that more Mexicans have television sets than ever before.

WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN FOR THE FUTURE OF FAME AND THE FUTURE OF ACTIVISM

When *I Love Lucy* aired in the United States it was still illegal in fifteen states for a man and woman of different ethnicities to marry.

By reaching an audience of nearly seventy percent of American households, the relationship between Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz was able to normalize multicultural marriages for an entire nation. Today any television show can only reach a small minority of a country.

A few years ago internet researcher David Weinberger attempted to explain the differences between broadcast fame and internet fame. Fame, he says, is a product of the broadcast era. Fame is built on the assumption of one too many communication –that I am able to speak to all of you, but you're not able to speak back to me. According to Weinberger, internet fame is completely different –it is participatory. On the internet Televisa doesn't get to decide who is famous –we all do. People are made famous because we cite them on *Twitter*, we link to their blog posts and *YouTube* videos.

Andy Warhol once said that we all wanted to be famous for fifteen minutes. That is, we all wanted to receive our limited fifteen minutes of broadcast fame on television or radio. David Weinberger says that on the internet we will all be famous to fifteen people–those who follow us on *Twitter*, *YouTube*, and our blogs. It is a democratic & egalitarian view of how attention is distributed on the internet, but, in fact, it rarely works out that way. A recent study of *Twitter* by *Yahoo Research* found that more than fifty percent of the content that is actually read on *Twitter* is produced by just .05 percent of users. In other words, there are around twenty thousand elite users who are responsible for more than half of what is read on *Twitter*.

In the end, Weinberger described internet fame as when an individual attracts more attention than he or she is able to respond to. Using this definition, even I am famous. I'm not able to keep up with my 3,200 *Twitter* followers; most days I can barely keep up with my email inbox.

Joi Ito –who has 24 thousand *Twitter* followers– once described internet fame in another way. It's when you have the power to bring together hundreds or even thousands of individuals to spontaneously work on a single project or campaign. And I think that is the type of fame that most internet activists are searching for (of course, they also enjoy keeping politicians on their toes).

"THE LESS YOU KNOW ABOUT ME, THE BETTER"

While most internet activists depend on fame and popularity to bring about change, others depend on their anonymity. There's no greater example of this than the anonymous leaks that are published on *Wikileaks*. *CableGate* is the most famous, but *Wikileaks* also published the personal emails of Sarah Palin, a collection of secret documents about the hierarchy of Scientology, a list of members of the UK's far-right British National Party, and many others. Anonymous activists are also responsible for the pictures that came out of Myanmar and Iran during recent major protests.

Anonymity lowers the barrier for everyday individuals to engage in activism. Take the case of Wael Ghonim. In 2010 Wael moved from Cairo to Dubai to take a job as Head of Marketing of *Google* Middle East and North Africa based at *Google's United Arab Emirates office*. Later that year, in June, Wael anonymously created the *Facebook* page "We are all Khaled Said" to commemorate the passing of a young man who was beaten to death by Egyptian security forces in broad daylight. The page demanded greater accountability and oversight of Egyptian police, and its followers soon grew to over 350 thousand. Ghonim viewed it as an opportunity to inspire real action, to remove Mubarak from power once and for all. Inspired by the successful mobilization in Tunisia, Ghonim invited the *Facebook* supporters to take to

the streets on January 25th. He asked his bosses for a couple weeks off, citing personal reasons. Ghonim protected his activist identity obsessively, and with good reason.

Two days after the protests began, he was detained by Egyptian police and questioned for his role as the administrator of the "We are all Khaled Said" *Facebook* page. Twelve days later, on February 7th, Ghonim was released from custody and made an emotional appearance on television that helped catalyze and amplify the protest movement.

It is doubtful that Ghonim would have become involved in activism at all were he not able to maintain his anonymity. But it is equally important to point out that despite his insistence that Egypt had a "leaderless revolution," his inspirational role eventually depended on his public persona, his fame.

The short history of what we call *Web 2.0* is full of anonymous activists who have published important information that would otherwise have risked their safety and the safety of others. They include:

- *Salam Pax,* Iraq.
- *Targuist Sniper,* Morocco.
- *Oxfordgirl,* England/Iran.
- *The Religious Policeman,* Saudi Arabia.
- *Sleepless in Sudan,* Sudan.
- *Zimpundit,* Zimbabwe.

Here in Mexico the most well known and controversial example of anonymous blogging is *Blog del Narco.* I recently traveled to Monterrey and just a few hours before my plane arrived, a grenade was thrown into the offices of *El Norte*, the city's major newspaper.

If the identities of the two young students who manage *Blog del Narco* were made public, they would be dead in a matter of hours. As they said themselves in an interview with *Boing Boing*: "For the scanty details that they put on television, they get grenades thrown at them and their reporters kidnapped. We publish everything. Imagine what they could do to us".

In the realm of activism, both fame and anonymity have their downside. Fame can create division among a network of like-minded activists, as a select few receive recognition for their work, while the vast majority is left ignored. As Wael Ghonim himself has said: "I'll keep my identity anonymous even if a revolution kicks in and this government is kicked. "Cause the reason why I think we are fucked up in this country is that everyone is looking for his personal fame. Everyone starts somewhere with good intentions. Then eventually they get corrupted".

But the vast scale of online activism and the limited attention span of politicians make necessary a select few "famous activists" –like Andrés Lajous, León Felipe Sánchez, and Maite Azuela here in Mexico– who can serve as ambassadors between the hundreds of thousands of internet users and the few hundred politicians who allegedly represent them.

While anonymity allows activists like *Salam Pax* and *Zimpundit* to publish information without losing their jobs or risking their safety, online anonymity also permits criminals to spread fear while avoiding the reach of police. The Gulf Cartel once had its own official *YouTube* channel. In the border town of Reynosa, where fighting between the *Zetas* and the Gulf Cartel has been the most intense, a *Facebook* message warning of an upcoming shootout caused the entire city, including schools and shops, to shut down (The predicted shootout never did take place). In Colombia there was even a black list published on *Facebook* that led to the murder of three teenagers.

Mexican politicians have responded by proposing a law that would give them power to block websites that facilitate the breaking of the law. It would also make illegal the publication of any information that enables anyone to break the law or avoid the police. In practice, the law could provide the government a handy excuse to censor legitimate information that helps hold government officials accountable, such as a video of soldiers harassing reporters at the scene of a shootout in Nuevo Laredo. Already the Mexican government is using copyright claims as a mechanism to censor online protest.

However, the government is quickly becoming acquainted with a concept called the *Streisand Effect*, "a primarily online phenomenon in which an attempt to hide or remove a piece of information has the unintended consequence of publicizing the information more widely." A classic example of the *Streisand Effect* occurred here in Mexico when a federal judge attempted to remove the documentary film *Presunto Culpable* from movie theaters. It was the best thing that could have happened for the film's producers and distributors. Within hours it became the fastest selling product of pirate DVD vendors on the streets. There was even a double irony. When activists uploaded the film to *YouTube*, the director ordered it removed because he didn't want to lose revenue at the box office. That only spread the distribution of the film further –it was re-uploaded dozens of times to *YouTube* and other video-sharing websites.

IN THE REALM OF ONLINE ACTIVISM WE NEED ANONYMITY TO INFORM, AND WE NEED FAME TO INFLUENCE AND TRANSFORM

German Green Party politician and privacy activist Malte Spitz came to this realization when he wanted to spread more awareness about the amount of data our mobile phone service providers collect about our every move. Spitz went to court to demand

all the information that *Deutsche Telekom* had stored about his location and phone calls over the last six months. When he received the astounding collection of automated digital stalking, he decided to make public his private life, which resulted in the internets most talked about visualization.

Spitz is advocating for the right to live our lives more anonymously in an era where our every move can be tracked. But in order to do so, he had to become famous himself.

OPEN GOVERNMENT: A NEW PANORAMA FOR GOVERNANCE

Jorge Soto[1]

INTRODUCTION

The interaction between government and civil society by means the new technological media, such as text messages, social networks and internet creates opportunities for transparency, account rendering, participation and collaboration through an open government.

The open government should be a philosophy focused on the individual and a strategy which suggests that the best results are obtained when alliances between the public and governments are forged at all levels. The goals are efficiency, information handling, transparency and getting the public involved. The consequences are an increase in service quality, enhanced legitimacy, lower costs and the creation of social capital.

[1] Co-founder and Director of Strategy and Operations at CitiVox.

TOWARDS OPEN GOVERNMENT

It is very often difficult for the public and government officials to grasp the scope and magnitude of an open government. In broad terms, an open government is one that embraces and encourages transparency, accountability, public participation in the government process, innovation and the use of new technologies to interact and establish a more efficient dialogue in real time between the public and the government.

An open government connects the public and the governors through open data, open innovation and open dialogue. Open and accessible data are key elements that touch everything mentioned above. It should be noted that having information available, perhaps in PDF or a website, is not the same as accessible information that is handled and compared in order to encourage improvements, boost professionalism and create an informed public.

Finding space is a challenge to be faced by an open government and the potential to democratize politics is through the technology we have, to make the branches of government render accounts and work towards finding innovative solutions to problems. Just as *Facebook* and *Twitter* created ecosystems, the government has an opportunity to be a platform that commits government with the public, which means that power would no longer reside in platforms but in the person-to-person connection.

Technology on its own does not create an impact. The data spewed forth every day like a cognitive overload must be dampened. The challenge of receiving information is in the representation and visualization of data. In these *Twitter-times*, we have to think in terms of 140 characters that can be easily understood by all. This is why the application of technology, fed by processed and context-applied information, works as a medium between the

government and the general public. Nevertheless, it is important not to fall into political interpretations or preferences, but to leave everything to the public's judgment so as not to lose public credibility and to establish a relationship of trust.

What makes technology so interesting is the potential to change how things are done, that is, there has to be updating in how the audience is approached, the message to be transmitted and the creation of shared experiences, and thus arrive at contents that have much more bearing. The government should also perceive this new use of resources as an advantage as this makes it possible to cut opportunity costs with a more efficient use of natural resources; this result provides clear information that leads to more efficient and effective policies.

Technology must be applied to real needs, the key is in simplicity. A person is very unlikely to wake up in the morning with the intention of doing something civic or the intention of exploring data and making visualizations, but if people are given the correct tools that enable them to express their needs and communicate, they will do it. For example, if they could make a complaint from a cell phone or get in touch with their representatives and understand their bills over the internet. This is why data have to be used to satisfy projects or carry out specific actions and to create communications with shared experiences that encourage participation.

Another challenge in modern societies is that we no longer think in terms of hierarchies but networks. It is very easy to continue and try to interact with our leaders through social networks. The fact that many leaders have not submitted to this new trend is a question of anthropology, not technology. Technology makes it possible to strengthen ties and it is a space where civil society is redefined. The community of shared experiences that is to be created through transparency, participation and accessibility

used together, invites the public to form part of the governing process, by making their political capacities effective.

A political factor that has posed a significant risk in the government process is the fact that governments come and go, but we have to understand that the institution of government remains. If the public sphere is altered with tools like internet, social networks and mobile communication, there will be fewer barriers to accessing information and the opportunities for democracy will be expanded.

The ideal would be to reach a participatory government where the voters feel included and where information is accessible. The first step which is gradually becoming a reality in various countries is that the public generates applications for itself in organized events. These events try to combine people from diverse areas and knowledge fields: from the technical field to extract and manipulate data, from the social or journalistic field, to identify their relevance and from the graphic field to create easily-understood visualizations. This means communities are being created.

These events have various benefits:

1. They build bridges between communities (government, civil society organizations and the developers) around a shared goal or challenge.
2. They promote open government and collaborative solutions.
3. They encourage feedback for different viewpoints around the same issue in real time.
4. They promote creativity and innovation in the solution of social problems.
5. They create a communication link between decision makers and developers.

6. They generate a government that evolves through participation and openness.
7. They illustrate real needs by removing perceptions and subjectivity.

In Mexico City, on October 17th and 18th, 2011 CitiVox in alliance with Fundar, Centro de Análisis e Investigación held the first hackathon of public data in Mexico in order to determine the possibility of creating a community in the field that would join journalists, developers, government decision makers and civil society leaders (www.opendata.mx).

Various specific results were obtained:

- Animated visualization of the federal budget 2011.
- Visualization of World Bank loans to Mexico so far in this administration by area.
- Extraction and breakdown of databases on bills submitted and frozen in Congress by commission.
- Visualization and statistics on investment projects approved by the Ministry of the Treasury.
- Visualization and statistics on purchases and acquisitions of HIV-related medications by hospital and by item.
- Extraction and breakdown of databases on software license purchases by the federal government 2009 and 2010.

Several lessons can be learned:

1. Simplicity is what generates adoption.
2. Focus on the user's needs and attend to the public's real problems.
3. Data must be used to satisfy specific projects or actions.

4. The goal is to create communities, not to have an applications contest.

It is very important to keep the last point in mind. If there is a contest to get applications, you end up with applications. If you create a contest of applications to develop a community then you will get dividends, that is, people who spend much more time helping bring about change. The applications will be more sustainable and a platform for increased public participation will be built.

In order to maximize the above, governments must focus on becoming platforms and creating developer ecosystems. The competitions or contests are a model to encourage and create a developers community in the medium and long term.

They will help in the creation of new companies and businesses and also help the general public get involved in change.

THIS IS YOUR CITY IN REAL TIME

Directly and indirectly, an open government is one that encourages and embraces crowd-sourcing for the solution and joint understanding of problems.

Crowd-sourcing fosters decentralization, creativity and transparency. This makes it possible to understand various perspectives on the same subject and to find blind spots and considerations that were not in various possible solutions.

There are four major points to be considered when using crowd-sourcing:

1. Actively listen to and consult the masses because this:
   - Generates immediate feedback.
   - Maximizes inclusion.
   - Diversifies opinions.
   - Adds legitimacy and increases support for the community.

Lessons:
   - Facilitates and speeds up participation.
   - Shows that you are listening.
   - Clearly defines public expectations.

2. Design by creating an environment where connections can be created and focused on people or community and not on expected results. It's okay to lose control if you have clear goals.

Lessons:
   - Create confidence and repeat interactions.
   - Design the space and not the results.

3. Bridge the gaps.
   - Purposefully connect people with different perspectives priorities and experiences.

Lessons:
   - Establishes reputation and confidence..
   - Catalyzes mutual support.

4. Establish the vision and strategy to guide activities without controlling the final result. The parts create the whole.

CONCLUSIONS

The new media and technologies are not the solution but they are a new space where civil society can be redefined and organized, coordinated and interact individually and with their governments in real time and establish a new dialogue.

All the strategies mentioned must eventually be aimed at touching on each opportunity so that the public, companies and organizations can interact with the government through the new media. To provide feedback, ask questions, seek aid, report public services, influence thought and collaborate in solving the problem. And more importantly, touch the government's capacity to process and manage information to respond, interact and analyze.

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TECHNOLOGY AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION
IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF DEMOCRACY

As we live in an age of technological acceleration this book is very much of its time. Its ten essays, written from different outlooks, discuss how technologies, social networking and, in general, the *Web 2.0* platforms that are applied and used when dealing with electoral and participatory democracy. The publication's background, its essential component, points to the ever-increasing ability of citizens to change their situations when they have better access to information.

This edition is part of the work carried out at the international seminar "Technology and Citizen Participation in the Construction of Democracy", co-organized by IEPC Jalisco and UNDP Mexico. It is displayed as a logbook, an exercise in reflection and a comprehensive study about electronic democracy and how it is related to citizenship building and citizen participation.

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