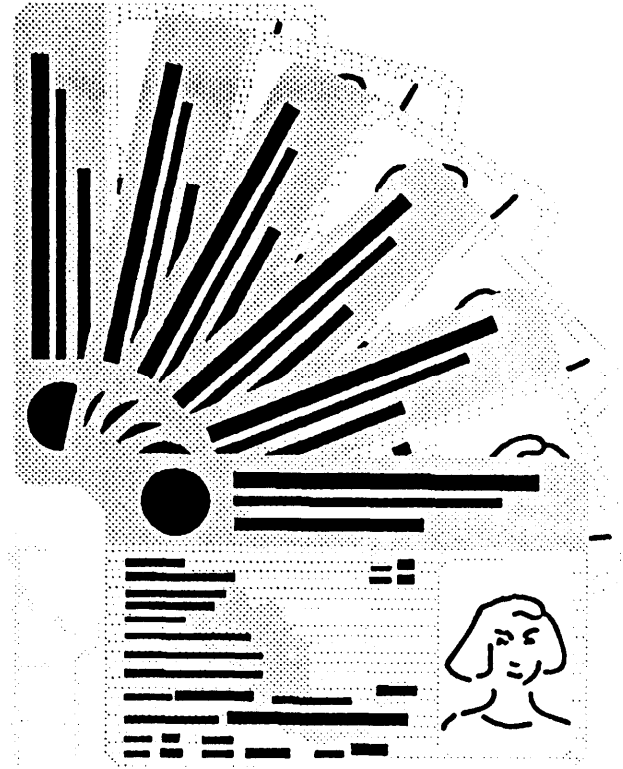


MEXICO

The Electoral Register



Redrawing Districts

By Juan Manuel Herrero Alvarez

1. Introduction

Creating a register of citizens for electoral purposes is something done in all countries where the form of government is democratic and representative and therefore where elections are held periodically under different names and with varying characteristics.

This is not, as may be thought, a recent practice, since in ancient Greece and Rome lists were made of those who should vote. A electoral register -with other connotations of course - was first drawn up in the Colonial period and later enriched by ideas arriving from France during the Independence. It developed further during the Reform and the Revolution, already times of representative democracy, into a voters list to sustain electoral processes.

This wide experience in the field has enabled Mexico to develop a comprehensive registration system so that the instruments helping toward the full exercise of suffrage can be forged within the framework of our institutions.

The following lines aim to give a succinct overview of the context and trends of activities connected with the electoral register in Mexico and the progress made in recent years.

2. The Exercise of Suffrage

One characteristic feature of contemporary democratic systems is that peoples have the opportunity to elect their leaders by vote. In Mexico, universal suffrage is the way enshrined in the Constitution for renewing the Executive and Legislative Powers.

The Constitution of the United Mexican States also lays down the requirements for the status of citizen and consequently the right to vote. Thus, it establishes that all individuals of Mexican nationality, having an honest means of livelihood, automatically acquire the legal capacity to vote, or right to suffrage.

To exercise this right, citizens must be registered on the Voters List and the nominal rolls once they have obtained their official voter credential, as stipulated by current electoral law.

The Voters List must record the names and general particulars of Mexican citizens of voting age and the fact that they requested to be so registered. This information must be constantly updated to include those who reach the age of majority and to delete information on those citizens who have died or have lost their rights through being the subject of criminal prosecution.

It is essential for the Voters List to record only those citizens in a position to exercise their voting rights since the veracity and accuracy of it will help toward transparency and confidence in the organization of election processes and their results.

3. The Legal Framework

Under the provisions of the General Constitution of the Republic and regulatory laws on electoral matters, the Federal Election Institute -a public agency with legal entity and own resources, professional in its activity and independent in its decisions, responsible for the important task of organizing federal elections- shall provide services and undertake activities intrinsic to the Voter Registration List or Electoral Register through the Executive Directorate of the Federal Election Register and the permanent decentralized agencies at the state and district level.

The activity of the Federal Election Institute in registration matters is based fundamentally on book IV of the Federal Code of Electoral Procedures and Institutions (COFIPE).

This section of the legislation regulates the duties and activities involved in registering electors, as well as the work of updating the Voters List, where it is imperative for the Political Parties to take part in monitoring actions.

The same law determines the joint responsibility of citizens when they register on the Federal Election Registry, participating in the creation of the Voters List.

In each and every one of these phases of activity the institution clearly demonstrates its confidence in the good faith of citizens. From the time they apply individually for registration and give their particulars, no personal identification or proof of domicile is requested, although their signature and thumbprint are recorded on this official document.

Despite the above comment, this confidence in the good faith of citizens is in fact put to the test because when they collect their photocredential they have to sign and thumbprint a receipt after identifying themselves by means of a public or private document fully confirming their particulars. In the absence of this they must be accompanied by witnesses, and this is recorded in a memorandum.

Therefore, the reliability of registered data is only open to abuse by citizens who in bad faith alter information about their identity. These are answerable to the Commission for the offenses characterized by the Federal Penal Code in force.

4. The Electoral Register as a Comprehensive System

The Federal Election Registry is a specialized agency belonging to the Federal Election Institute at the level of Executive Directorate. It is part of its structure at the central, state and district levels, and its purpose is to undertake the activities and provide the services intrinsic to the Voter Registration List and also has other powers granted to it by the corresponding regulatory laws.

In general terms, the Federal Election Registry's job is to draw up the list of citizens entitled to vote so as to include these registrations in the General Voter Catalogue, the Voter Registration List and nominal rolls and to issue them with their voter credential once they have met the voting requirements established by law.

Conceived as a comprehensive registering system, the Federal Election Registry's main objectives are to:

- Ensure that each citizen is registered only once on the Voters List;
- Exclude deceased citizens, those who have lost Mexican nationality or whose citizen's rights have been suspended by judicial decision, on the basis of official documents issued by the legally competent authorities;
- Include promptly new Mexican citizens who complete the relevant application;
- Record changes of address reported to the Federal Election Register on the Voter List;
- Issue voter credentials promptly to listed citizens; and
- Display voter nominal rolls for review and delivery to the competent agencies.

In addition, any citizen who is improperly included in or excluded from the Voter Registration List can lodge any complaints with the competent authorities.

The Federal Election Registry uses addresses to assign citizens to the voting area easiest for them (section, municipality, electoral district and state).

This land area is called an electoral section and is the basic division of the country for registration of citizens on the Voter List or Registry and the nominal rolls which include the names of listed citizens who have obtained their voter photocredential.

Each electoral section contains a minimum of 50 and a maximum of 1,500 voters and is inside one of the 300 single-member districts that the country is divided into for electoral purposes.

The Federal Election Institute conducts several programs to create the General Voter Catalogue which contains the basic data on Mexicans who have the right to vote, gathered by total census through house-to-house visits throughout the country.

This catalogue forms the basis of the Voter Registration List containing basic data on citizens who as well as being registered in the General Voter Catalogue have correctly and individually completed their application to be registered on the Voter List.

Once they are registered on the Voter List the Federal Election Register will issue the voter photocredential, which is the only document accrediting voting rights and is issued to citizens registered in the General Voter Catalogue and the Voter Registration List.

In addition to the general particulars of each citizen the credential must show the code number of the state, municipality and locality corresponding to the voter's address and the electoral section where he should cast his ballot.

Finally, once the Federal Election Institute has issued voter photocredentials to citizens they will be put on the Nominal Roll. This lists the names of voters on the General Catalogue and the Register who have obtained their photocredential alphabetically by district and electoral section.

Only citizens who are recorded on the nominal rolls and show their photocredential at the polling booth can exercise their right to vote.

All movements made to incorporate or delete Voter List entries by the Federal Election Registry are supported and guaranteed by the proper documents, which are processed for including citizen registration in the Voter List. This way registrations are kept permanently up to date.

5. The New Voter Registration List

As part of the 1990 electoral reform, in May of the same year the Government and Political Parties agreed to the creation of a new

Voter Registration List starting from a zero baseline. In other words, data contained in other registries was disregarded.

Nationwide door-to-door calls were necessary in 1991 to build the list, following total census techniques. As a result some 16.5 million homes were visited up to four or more times to gather citizen data or deliver voter credentials. Thanks to this it was possible to construct a 39.5 million Voters List and a 36.5 million Nominal Roll of voters who had received their credentials for the 1991 elections.

Once the **1991** federal elections were over, Parties insisted on the inclusion of a photograph on the voting credential.

On April 30, 1992 The General Council of the Federal Election Institute (**IFE**) -its supreme executive body- agreed to screen the Voter Registration List thoroughly, issue the new credential incorporating the photograph, thumbprint and signature of the citizen in booths, give all citizens the opportunity to obtain their voter credential, defer district redefinition, underline the obligation of citizens to apply to IFE modules for their credential, presenting some form of identification, use the new credential as identification in general and hand over the image and database of the Voter Registration List to the National Citizens Register.

IFE, the National Vigilance Commission (**CNV**) - the highest surveillance body for Election Registry activities, composed of all Political Parties on an equal basis- and the National Supervision and Evaluation Committee (**CONASE**) -an auxiliary body of the **CNV** with the same party representation where proposals of a technical are implemented- focused their efforts on making a general definition of the technical, operational and data processing procedures for incorporating a photograph in the new Voter Credential before undertaking the comprehensive screening of the Voter Registration List.

Comprehensive Screening of the Voter Registration List was carried out in three stages. Work to consolidate electoral mapping was done in the first, verifying the location of the addresses of citizens on the Voter Registration List in electoral areas throughout the country. All

electoral sections were checked to see that blocks of buildings and sites lay within the limits; it was verified that the number of electors in each section ranged between 50 and 1,500 as determined by the Federal Code of electoral Procedures and Institutions (**COFIPE**). In this way, 63,589 electoral sections were defined -689 more than in 1991- and these were given a new electoral identification code (renumbered) progressively by state.

In the second phase, document and field verification was carried out to make sure that the information provided in source documents coincided with that in the database and on maps. For this, a document inventory was made; each citizen's file was integrated; wrongly completed, missing and duplicate documents and those with mapping errors were identified.

The verification of documents in more than 40 million citizen files allowed inconsistencies to be detected, which were regularized by means of office work and door-to-door visits.

In the third stage, as a result of the corrections made to the inconsistencies detected in electoral mapping, and the documentary verification and field checks of registrations on the Voter List, the Voter Registration List database was reinforced and the screened registrations were recorded on a magnetic tape containing 40,368,696 citizen registrations to be printed on credential application forms and delivery receipts.

Once the comprehensive screening of the Voter Registration List was finished field operations began to issue the new credential in permanent, mobile and auxiliary modules. This included a regional stage divided into three stages and a simultaneous nationwide one.

The states in each phase of the regional stage, the period of field operations and the extensions granted were the following:

REGIONAL STAGE				
Phase	No. of States	States Included	Period	Remarks
I	8	D.F., State of Mexico	Nov. 17, 92/ Feb. 15, 93	Extended to May 31
		Colima, Chiapas, Nayarit Morelos, Queretaro, Tabasco	Dec. 8, 92/ Mar. 7, 93	Extended to June 14
II	11	Aguascalientes, Baja California, Campeche, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Durango, Nuevo Leon, Sonora, Veracruz Yucatan, Zacatecas	Feb. 16, 96/ May. 15, 93	Extended to August 15
III	13	Baja California Sur, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Jalisco, Michoacan, Oaxaca, Puebla, Quintana Roo, San Luis Potosi,	Jun. 01, 93/ Aug. 31, 93	

The actions carried out in the three phases of the nationwide stage and the duration of each one of them were:

NATION WIDE STAGE		
Phase	Actions	Period
I	Updating of the voter registration list and issuing of credentials	September 1,93/ December 16, 93
II	Updating of the voter registration list and issuing of credentials	January 1, 94/ February 28, 94
III	Issuing of credentials	March 10, 94/ June 12, 94

To apply the regulations on field operations in a due fashion a training strategy was required that involved more than 1,100 instructors and 113 thousand trainees in over 150 thousand hours of training.

In addition, to motivate, inform and orientate citizens about obtaining their new credential the program was supported by an intense mass communication campaign that was both interpersonal and inter-institutional and included 7.6 million radio messages, 308 thousand television spots and 550 million items in the press. Also, 11 million posters, **106** million flyers, 26 million pamphlets, 3.8 million calendars, 96 thousand banners, 447 thousand pennants and more than 2 thousand entertainment listings were printed and distributed, and over 15 thousand billboards painted. A Centro Metropolitano de Orientación Ciudadana (Citizens Advice Center) was set up in Mexico City and several state capitals which dealt with 1.4 million telephone calls. Eighty-one agreements were signed with public and private institutions to accept the credential as a means of identification.

As a result of these actions, and a demonstration of the great citizen participation and interest in the Program, approximately 47.5 million Mexicans registered on the Voter Registration List and over 45.7 million possessed their voter credential for the 1994 federal elections. Similarly, it should be noted that during the photocredential program almost 13 million citizens visited the modules to apply for registry on the Voter List, 2.4 million to report a change of address, 1.4 million to correct their particulars and 700 thousand to request replacements for lost or seriously damaged credentials.

6. Maintenance of the Election Registry

Mexico's population is highly fluctuating: every year more than two million people reach the age of citizenship every year, deaths of people over 18 years of age number 250 to 300 thousand, over two million citizens change their address, and there are between three and four million migrant workers. Therefore, various steps were taken to update and improve the Voter Registration List.

6.1 Updating the Election Register

To keep the Voter Registration List permanently updated, the Federal Election Institute, through the Executive Directorate of the Federal

Election Registry mounts an intensive campaign every year (CAI) to encourage and advise citizens to visit Federal Election Registry modules and offices to be included in the Registry and obtain their voter photocredential, as provided for in Article 146 and subparagraph II of Transitory Article eight of COFIPE. This campaign involves more than 1000 points all over the country where citizens can go to complete these formalities.

During the campaign citizens can also give notice of change of address, ask for corrections to be made in their particulars or request replacements for stolen, lost or badly damaged credentials.

Independently of this the Federal Election Register runs a permanent updating campaign (CAP), that is to say all year round in the 300 district offices of the Federal Election Registry, in accordance with Article 147 of COFIPE.

Under this campaign citizens can complete the same formalities as during the intensive campaign to update their entry in the Voter List database.

Based on the Support and Cooperation Agreements signed with state governments the Federal Election Institute, through the Executive Directorate of the Federal Election Registry, also undertakes a series of actions to screen and update the Voter registration List and the nominal rolls in states holding elections. This means setting up modules where citizens can complete the formalities mentioned above. Work is also done in Change of Citizen Status, detecting duplications, address identification and mapping inconsistencies before finally producing nominal rolls and handing them over to the state electoral authority.

6.2 Screening the Election Registry

Furthermore, to update and improve the Voter Registration List, various measures are taken to screen it.

Using the Change of Citizen Status program and the information supplied by the appropriate institutions, the registrations are deleted of citizens who have died, whose political rights are suspended by judicial decision, or who have lost or renounced Mexican nationality.

Another program is also run to detect duplicate registrations through office and field work. Entries that contain errors as to section are also detected so that they can be corrected and the credentials held by the persons concerned can be replaced. For this they are notified of the error at their home address so that they can go to the module and request the correction, or else they are notified at their home address of the station where they can vote. This procedure aims to ensure that citizens' right to vote is not put at risk.

As part of this work to improve the Voter Registration List, as stipulated by Article 163 of COFIPE, registration applications are cancelled, and the credential request forms and receipts are destroyed of citizens who registered on the List but did not collect their voting credential from an IFE module or office after one year or else did not go to take any steps to update their registration.

Nevertheless, to safeguard citizens' political rights against acts of the electoral authority in the matter of registration IFE, in accordance with COFIPE provisions, puts administrative agencies at citizens' disposal where they can apply for a credential to be issued or the nominal roll to be rectified. Here they can also appeal against any decision that the requests mentioned above are invalid, or lodge a complaint because they were not attended to opportunely.

Another form of screening is that based on any observations that Political Parties might make on the nominal rolls during the time they are posted. Under **COFIPE** provisions, any comments must refer to concrete facts and individual cases. Observations that prove to be valid will serve as a basis for modifying entries in the database and the corresponding nominal roll.

7. Important Aspects of the Election Register

To conduct the Comprehensive Screening Program and issue the new voting credential with photograph it was necessary to plan a suitable strategy for field operations and communication, as well as conditions for the effective participation of Political Parties. All these elements were intended to induce high citizen participation nationwide to ensure that the Institute would meet its commitment to add photographs to more than 40 million new voting credentials within the space of 20 months at the most.

7.1 Planning and Execution of the main

One of the main criteria in implementing the general strategy for issuing the new photocredential was that field operations should be carried out in modules. Therefore it was very important to consider how easy it was for citizens to reach locations where these were set up-

After analyzing the types of zones in the country (urban, rural and widely scattered), means of communication and journey times, four types of modules were decided on: fixed, mobile, semi-fixed and auxiliary. It was also decided that field operations would be carried out in one regional stage divided into three phases in sequence and a simultaneous nationwide stage.

The idea to use service modules for the photocredential program is in response to the agreement adopted by Political Parties in the IFE General Council on April 30, 1992. This establishes that as far as voter registration is concerned the legitimacy of an election is not secured by accumulating a determined percentage of citizens with a voting credential but rather by encouraging and promoting voter registration by all means within reach and the fact of having given all citizens the chance to obtain their voting credential.

The ideas put forward by Political Parties were taken into account for designing the new photocredential, basically that it should be practically impossible to falsify and unusable if tampered with, to generate the greatest possible confidence in electoral processes. Therefore a voting credential was approved that has several control and security features: an invisible web on the obverse plastic face; two webs, one visible and the other invisible on the photographic paper; a seal in the form of a hologram partly covering the lower left portion of the photograph; spaces for the photograph, signature and thumbprint of the holder; name, sex, age and address; a bar code covered with an infrared sensitive black strip; a numerical code; national folio number, year of issue; voter code number, code of the state, municipality, locality and section corresponding to the citizen's address. Molecular heat fusing ensures that tampering renders the credential unusable.

7.2 Communication Strategy

Issuing credentials and updating the Voter Registration List were actions supported by an intensive publicity campaign urging citizens to procure their new credential or complete formalities for the Voter Registration List, and to inform and guide them on the corresponding procedures. The strategies followed to spread the program were mass, inter-institutional and interpersonal publicity.

This mass media campaign included the following stages: advisory -to arouse interest in something that was happening but was not fully understood; informative- to publicize the fact that the Federal Election Institute would issue the new credential in its modules; motivational -people to go to the modules and obtain their credential, at the same time publicizing the additional value of the new credential as a means of identification accepted by many public and private institutions; guidance- giving information about formalities to be completed at modules and the location of these. The primary instruments used were television, radio and the press; on the second front there were posters, pamphlets, publicity products, pennants, mounted posters for display on subway platforms, and posters at bus stops; billboards

and banners were painted and loudspeakers were also used as an adjunct.

As far as inter-institutional communication is concerned, agreements were reached with public, private and social bodies to use their internal and external communication channels to spread information about the procedures and objectives of the program and encourage citizens to obtain their new credential and update their entries on the Voter Registration List.

Through inter-personal communication direct relations were established between the Program and the organizational bodies of the public, private and social sectors. It was implemented with informational talks, presentation sessions and outreach groups. In this way 2,140,004 citizens were reached throughout the country.

It is important to note that the characteristics and structure of the campaign were defined by the Federal Election Institute and the Political Parties, who emphasized that the messages should be colloquial and friendly, using clear, simple and precise language and adopt some forms of expression characteristic of each region to guarantee their acceptance.

The main slogans used during the campaign were “Come and have your photo taken“ ; “Only you are missing“; “Just wait for the notice”; “Only for over eighteens” ; “Identify yourself with it”; “You need it to vote”; “Have you put your name down?”; “Haven’t you put your name down yet?”; “Have you changed your address?”; “Are you 18?” ; “Do you have your voting credential?”; “Ready for the camera?”.

In one phase of the campaign to publicize the program special emphasis was put on the additional value of the credential as a means of identification because of a definite lack -especially among females -of means to do so. This encouraged the population to obtain credentials from the modules,

In later stages of the communication campaign the primary value of the photocredential as confirming the right to vote was publicized.

7.3 The Photocredential as a means of identification

At the request of the Political Parties and by agreement of the IFE General Council the new credential with photograph, as well as confirming the right to vote has an additional value as proof of identity when dealing with public and private institutions.

To settle this additional value and verify it fully the Institute signed 81 Cooperation Agreements with various public and private institutions for the new photocredential to be accepted as a proof of identity in citizens' dealings with them.

The photocredential is now the official document held by most Mexicans and the one most used for purposes of identification in public and private institutions.

7.4 Participation of Political Parties

The Political Parties have participated fully and intensively in the work done by the Federal Election Registry through the National, Local (32) and District (300) Vigilance Commissions throughout the country, which each meet at least once a month. They have similarly played their part in the National Supervision and Evaluation Committee (CONASE) which as mentioned earlier is the auxiliary technical agency of the National Vigilance Commission of the Federal Election Register, which meets at least once a week.

In these bodies, the Political Parties proposed and adopted measures and agreements fundamental to the planning, programming, supervision, monitoring, evaluation and audit of the new photocredential program.

Evidence of this is that from May 1992 to December 1994 the CNV met on 37 occasions and adopted 282 agreements - 242 by consensus and 40 by a majority. During this same period the 332 Local and District Vigilance Commissions met more than 17 thousand times all told and adopted over 38 thousand agreements of which 97% were by consensus. From January 1993 to December 1994, CONASE met 108 times, adopting 505 agreements of which 439 were by consensus and 66 by a majority.

7.5 Access to Voter Registration List information

The participation of the Political Parties in the work of the Federal Election Register is based on computerized information network which gives them permanent access to the entries on the Voter Registration List and nominal rolls at the levels of state, electoral district, municipality and section.

For this, party representatives have terminals exclusively for their use in the offices of the National Vigilance Commission, where there are also word processors, spreadsheets and other application packages.

These same information systems are also to be found in the Information Centers which have been open in the 32 federal entities since August 15, 1993.

Each of the State Centers has a networked server (RISC/6000) with two external disks of 670 megabytes and an 8 mm tape unit; the network consists of 3 terminals (PCs) and a dot matrix printer, which means that retrieving information of interest to the Parties is fast.

Thus, one year before the 1994 federal election day representatives of the national Political Parties accredited with the Local Vigilance Commissions could permanently check and analyze information about the Voter Registration List and the nominal rolls, retrieve in the information of interest to them in magnetic or printed form, verify the data included, monitor measures undertaken and make the comments they felt pertinent for the smooth running of the Program.

Party representatives can access the following six information systems:

- System for consulting tables of inconsistencies, which incorporates the results of the comprehensive Screening Program with the citizen registrations that were deleted from the Voter Registration List because they did not supply the requisite documents or there were errors in their particulars;
- Reporting System of the National Printing Center (CNI), with which party representatives can monitor the credential application forms and receipts which come into the CNI, and whose information is certified by a notary public;
- Module Directory System, through which the location of modules, their opening hours, section and coverage in each state, electoral district or municipality can be consulted;
- Statistics Information System. This shows the quantitative behavior of the Voter Registration List and the nominal rolls over time at the level of state, district, municipality and section as well as updated figures on the coverage of the photocredential program;
- Voter Registration List and Nominal Roll Information System. This makes available specific information on registered citizens at the level of state, district, municipality and electoral section;
- Credential Printing Monitoring System. With this, the process of printing the particulars of each citizen on the corresponding credential application forms can be checked at any moment, and the number and ownership of the cards produced can be audited;
- **The system of deletions because of duplication, makes it possible to consult nominal roll entries that were registered twice in the database of the Voter Registration List; and**

System of deletions because of Changes of Citizen Status, gives the names of citizens deleted from the database of the Voter Registration List reported as deceased, stripped of their political rights by judicial decision or who have lost or renounced Mexican nationality according to information supplied by the competent authorities.

Since July 18, 1994 Political Parties have also had access to the image bank in each Regional Computer Center in accordance with the schedule established. Each Regional Computer Center has a terminal for the exclusive use of Political Parties from Monday to Friday inclusive from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.

With the consultation procedure approved by **CONASE**, Political Parties can call up citizen image data (photograph, signature and thumbprint) on the terminal monitor and, if they are interested, check them against photographs of the photocopies of receipts, which are supplied by the Regional Computer Center.

As of August 13, 1994 party representatives have also had the option of asking the Regional Center for prints of the photographs of citizen registrations of the sections they wish to consult.

So that electors can check that their personal and geo-electoral data are correctly entered on the nominal roll the Federal Election Institute supplies the 300 district offices of the Federal Election Registry with a copy of the lists containing the names of citizens who hold a photocredential.

7.6 Checks and audits

Since 1991, 38 checks have been made of the Voter Registration List and the nominal rolls at both national and state level using different methods and approaches. These checks have been carried out by different social actors, Political Parties, several consultancy agencies, academic institutions and the electoral authority itself. The results of these checks showed an average 96% consistency and reliability of the Voter Registration List.

One of the most important checks was the one made on the Voter Registration List in 1994 at the request of the Political Parties and named the National Sample Check of the Voter Registration List. This - was to find out, through office and field work among other things, how well the information contained in source documents coincided with that in the database, the existence of citizens at selected addresses,

the level of consistency and the errors it could suffer from so that the appropriate corrective measures could be adopted. Eight of the Political Parties took part in this check (the PRD declined) at the levels of Central Coordinating Group, State Operations Group and in check and supervision in the field. The Parties carried out and certified the supervision of data entry and in the processing and analysis of results. The results of this nationwide sample check showed that the consistency rate of the Voter Registration List ranges from a low of 96.09% to a high of 97.63%. These results were approved by seven of the nine parties existing at the time. The PDM abstained and the PRD registered its disagreement.

Another important check of the 38 carried out to identify the level of consistency and reliability of the electoral instruments was the one that the General Council of the Institute agreed to make with an audit of the Voter Registration List and the nominal rolls by a group of private firms coordinated by respected Mexican scientists on a Technical Panel. This external review included information aspects of legal and procedural auditing, checking samples drawn from the database against source documents, and the database against information supplied by citizens, as well as an audit of the balance between materials and the credential forms produced. As a result of the inconsistencies and errors identified the appropriate corrective measures were implemented to improve the quality of the Voter Registration List.

The results of the field check on a sample universe of 64,000 citizens showed the Voter Registration List (database-stocks-citizens) to be 97.42% consistent.

In the area of data processing the results also showed full consistency of the information contained in the databases of the State Information Centers and the Regional Computer Centers. Here the auditing firm suggested control measures should be adopted to counter possible external manipulations of the Voter List database and nominal roll in order to bring more certainty to the results of the audit itself.

As regards the legal framework, it was found that the activities connected with the processes of registration, issuing photocredentials and updating by deletions followed the provisions of COFIPE and the agreements of the General Council of the Federal Election Institute, the National Vigilance Commission of the Federal Election Registry and the National Supervision and Evaluation Committee.

The Technical Panel for the Voter Registration List, after supervising the methodological aspects and testing and checking the work done by the firms responsible for the External Audit, stated that it had been carried out according to all the criteria and norms established in law and according to scientific standards and generally accepted procedures in the design, planning, programming and execution of this type of work.

Therefore, the Technical Panel unanimously validated the External Audit of the Voter Registration List.

7.7 Level of Coverage

To March 27, 1995 the coverage of photocredentials issued (45,863,309) in proportion to the Voter Registration List (47,138,283) is 97.3%, and in relation to a citizen population estimated at 50 million, 91.7%.

7.8 Homogeneity of Coverage

The numbers of photocredentials issued are very similar at the district level, since 90% of the 300 electoral districts have a 95% coverage of the Voter registration List in respect to the nominal roll

8. Concluding Remarks

Without any doubt, what has been done over the last few years is fundamental in creating a comprehensive registration system.

Recognition must be given to the progress made, which would not have been possible without the participation of citizens, Political

Parties and, let it be said, the efforts of the executive and staff of the Federal Election Registry.

This team made it possible to carry through a program such as the Comprehensive Screening and the issue of the New Voter Photocredential which, because of its scope and timing allowed the creation of a Voter Registration List of 47.5 million citizens who obtained their voting credential in about 20 months, a feat unique in the world.

Nevertheless, we must realize that still further progress has to be made in refining electoral instruments.

On this course, mapping products, correction procedures, programs to screen and improve the Voter Registration List and the arrangements for Political Parties to take part in the work of the Federal Election Registry must be kept permanently up to date.

In the medium term we are faced with the task of redrawing the country's electoral districts, something that will consolidate a large part of the Federal Election Registry's efforts. The challenge is too strengthen what has been done, improve our programs and thus help toward transparency in the electoral processes of our country to advance in our democratic way of life.