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Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024



Presentation

"The health of democracies, of whatever kind and degree, depends on one tiny technical detail: the electoral process. Everything else is secondary. Without the support of genuine suffrage, democratic institutions are in the air."

José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses*, 1929.

In this third edition of the newsletter "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024," we present the organizational model that has safeguarded elections, based on two fundamental pillars: 1) the existence of an autonomous and professional electoral authority, with high technical expertise, and 2) the direct participation of citizens, not only exercising their right to vote, but also in key stages of the electoral process and in decision-making.

In addition, in the "Last Glance" section, we explain how electoral authority is mainstreaming gender into the process by nominating women for governorships to be elected in 2024.

The National Electoral Institute (INE) has a permanent structure throughout the country, including 32 Local Boards (one per state) and 300 District Boards (one in each electoral district). Each board has five officials who are members of the Electoral Professional Service. The Electoral Professional Service is essential for fulfilling INE's guiding principles. Crucially, they have job stability, irrespective of the political party in power. A professional electoral bureaucracy, in turn, strengthens the independence and impartiality of those who organize the elections.

During electoral processes, INE's professional structure is joined by citizens who serve as electoral councilors. This means that in Mexico's electoral processes professional election officials and community leaders come together to accomplish the shared objective of conducting high-quality and transparent elections.

Keys to Electoral Organization: Professionalism + Citizenship

Election day in Mexico represents a crucial moment of public life where laws and the Constitution guarantee equality among citizens. The right to vote is exercised equally throughout the country with uniform procedures and guarantees for suffrage, regardless of whether one resides in the most rural areas or within the bustling metropolis. The decisions of all individuals are equally respected and have equivalent weight, regardless of demographic factors such as gender and socioeconomic status.

On election day, citizens find polling stations near their homes, which are set up by their neighbors randomly selected and trained by the National Electoral Authority. Polling station officials verify voter identity, distribute ballots, and count, and record the votes.

In a nation where public distrust is prevalent, ensuring legal and legitimate electoral processes rests on the Electoral Professional Service, as well as in the incorporation of a citizen structure. This approach has led to the INE being the most trusted civil public institution in Mexico, as per the National Civic Culture Survey (INEGI, 2020).*

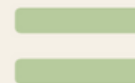
Equal Conditions = Equal Value of Vote

Article 41 of the Mexican Constitution



Federal and local election organization rules.

Federal elections (presidency, deputies and senatorships) and local elections in 32 states: 20,375 positions to be elected on June 2, 2024.



All with the same rules and guarantees to elect representatives through free and authentic suffrage.

*https://www.inegi.org.mx/contenidos/programas/encuci/2020/doc/ENCUCI_2020_Presentacion_Ejecutiva.pdf

Permanent and Professional Structure of the Mexican Electoral Authority

On the one hand, Mexico has a professional structure organized into 332 permanent executive bodies, with career civil servants selected through public entry exams, who once in office receive ongoing training and are evaluated annually on their performance.

INE'S PERMANENT STRUCTURE

The INE has **332 permanent bodies** throughout the country. The bodies are **composed of career civil servants** in charge of all the technical and administrative tasks required to organize the electoral processes. This allows for **professionalization** and guarantees the **impartiality and independence** of those who organize elections



Each Local and District Board is **composed of 5 members** with voice and vote



Executive Official
Chairman/chairwoman of the board and chairman/chairwoman of the council in the electoral process.

Federal Register of Voters Official

Responsible for issuing voter identification cards, electoral geography and the electoral roll.



Electoral Training Official

Responsible for citizen visits and training, as well as civic education activities.



Electoral Organization Official

Responsible for election logistics, setting up and equipping polling stations, as well as the official results.



Secretary Official

Legal representation of the INE. In the electoral process, it is the secretary of the Local or District Council



1,660 members, selected **through public entry exams**, who once in office receive **ongoing training** and are **evaluated annually**. They owe their position to professional merit, not political affiliation. Their **work is therefore impartial, objective and of high quality**.

Source: Compiled by authors based on information supplied by INE.

Beyond Voting: The Role of Citizens on Electoral Process

On the other hand, during electoral processes, 332 INE councils are activated, including 32 local and 300 district councils. Therefore, out of the seven votes in each council, six belong to independent citizens. Political parties are represented in each council, with a voice but no voting rights to prevent them from acting as both decision makers and interested parties.

INE's citizen structure

INE has **332 temporary councils** throughout the country. The bodies are **composed of citizens** and operate only **during the electoral process**.

32 Local Councils

One in each of the **32 states**. Local Councils are composed of **192 citizen councilors**.



300 District Councils

One in each of the **300 districts**. There are **1,800 citizen councilors** throughout the country.



Each council is composed of **6 citizens** with both, voice and vote.



Some decisions made by Local and District Councils:

1. Interview and select those who will train polling station officials
2. Determine number and location of polling stations
3. Draw lots for polling station officials
4. Designate polling station officials
5. Accredite electoral observes
6. Register formulas for deputies and senators
7. Count the votes for the three federal elections (presidential, deputies, and senators)

The key decisions that give security to the elections are made by the civil structure that joins the INE.

What to Expect for the 2023-2024 Election Cycle

For the 2023-2024 election cycle, INE established 32 local councils on November 1st. Among their initial tasks is the appointment of 3,600 district councilors –comprising both principals and alternates– who will make fundamental decisions in the country’s 300 electoral districts. The district councils will assume their duties on December 1st, 2023.

Each district council is responsible for organizing the election in the area that corresponds to an electoral district (see item 2 of the “Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024” newsletter). On average, 565 polling stations will be set up in each district, allowing approximately 325,000 citizens to vote on June 2.



Source: Compiled by authors based on information supplied by INE.

Citizenship in the Electoral Authority: Plurality and Leadership

The appointment of Local and District members is based on a public call for applications that identifies individuals with prestige in their communities and who come from diverse fields including the business sector, academia, organized civil society, human rights advocacy, environmentalism, journalism, among many other professions and areas of public life.

Profiles are selected based on certain guiding criteria, such as cultural diversity or community involvement. It is also essential that candidates possess public and professional recognition, can demonstrate democratic commitment, and preferably have knowledge of electoral matters.

All sessions of the local and district councils are public.

Incorporating citizens into each stage of the electoral organization ensures transparency and accountability. Therefore, preparing for elections becomes a broad citizen participation exercise. This model shows that the apparent conflict between a powerful State and a strong civil society involvement is illusory: within a democracy, transparent public institutions benefit from an engaged and involved citizenry.

Gender Equality and the Tasks of INE's District Councils

Likewise, since 2005, adherence to the principle of parity has been maintained by appointing three men and three women. If a non-binary individual is called, three more women and two more men are designated to maintain the balance.

Local and District Council members form an army of citizens who carry out visits to verify the number and location of polling stations; they draw lots and appoint those who will serve as polling station officials; they approve the hiring of electoral trainers and supervisors; they accredit the electoral observers; they register the representatives of the candidates' parties at the polling stations and register the candidacies for deputies competing according to the principle of relative majority (plurality vote). The district councilors also perform the procedures to issue the official results.

If you would like to know more about the process of appointing local councils and the people who will be part of them, consult the INE's Agreement INE/CG540/2023 at <https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/153209/CGor202309-20-ap-15.pdf>

Editorial team of the newsletter "Democratic Integrity: Mexico 2024", coordination: [Ciro Murayama](#); edition: [Farah Munayer](#); editorial council: [Cecilia Farfán](#), [María Marván](#), [Heberto Peterson](#) and [Daniel Yanes](#).

Last Glance

Affirmative Gender Actions in the Nomination of Candidates for Gubernatorial Candidatures

On October 24, 2023, the General Council of the National Electoral Institute approved an agreement mandating that political parties or electoral coalitions nominate at least five women in the nine entities where governorships will be renewed on June 2, 2024. These entities include Mexico City, Chiapas, Guanajuato, Jalisco, Morelos, Puebla, Tabasco, Veracruz, and Yucatán. The determination aims to increase female representation in political spheres and promote gender equality.



Source: Compiled by authors based on information supplied by INE.

To learn more about this issue, you can consult the **Agreement that Guarantees the Principle of Gender Parity in the Nomination of Gubernatorial Candidates** at <https://repositoriodocumental.ine.mx/xmlui/bitstream/handle/123456789/154308/CGex202310-24-ap-01.pdf>