

## THE NULL-VOTE: A DESPERATE CRY FOR DEMOCRACY IN MEXICO

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*ABSTRACT. Derived from the analysis of several election processes carried out within the last two decades, we have to ask ourselves whether there actually exists a democracy in Mexico, and if so, if its society is really being listened to by its government. The reality is that the number of null-votes in election processes has increased over the years, without it having any impact whatsoever in the country's politics. In fact, the null-vote seems to have a sole and simple purpose: to express the discontent that reigns over the candidates of the political parties and the federal government in general. However, no action has been taken to legitimate this petition, which makes us wonder if a real democracy can exist in a system where the government do not hear their people. The purpose of this comment is to analyze the effects of an null-vote within the country and determine if there is a way to force the authorities to listen to this evident desire of the people to obtain better politicians and, therefore, better governors.*

**KEY WORDS:** *null-vote, electoral process, voting*

*RESUMEN. Tras la observación de varios de los procesos electorales que se llevaron a cabo en las últimas dos décadas, debemos preguntarnos si en realidad existe una democracia de facto en México y, si la hay, si la sociedad es realmente escuchada por su gobierno. La realidad es que la cantidad de votos nulos en los procesos electorales ha incrementado con el paso de los años sin que parezca tener ningún impacto en la política del país. De hecho, los votos nulos parecen tener un único y simple propósito: Expresar a los Partidos Políticos y al gobierno el descontento general que existe hacia los candidatos. Sin embargo, ninguna ac-*

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*ción se ha tomado para legitimar esta petición, lo que nos hace preguntarnos si puede existir una verdadera democracia en un sistema donde los gobernantes no escuchan a su gente. El propósito de este ensayo es, precisamente, el de analizar los efectos que tienen los votos nulos dentro del país y determinar si existe alguna manera de obligar a las autoridades a escuchar este evidente deseo de la gente por obtener mejores políticos y, por lo tanto, mejores gobernantes.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *voto nulo, proceso electoral, voto.*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The principle upon which a democratic political system relies on is the fact that government functionaries are representatives of the people and are, therefore, chosen by the majority of the society by means of an electoral process. It is safe to assume then, that for democracies to be successful, they must be based on citizenship participation.

As society evolved, political parties were created to insure political human rights and to offer, to both interested citizens and society members, candidates that would follow the same line of ethics, ideals and regulations of their party. Those ideals would, theoretically, set a standard to improve the politicians on the running for a public function post. However, Mexican political parties seemed to have failed to improve their political standards and have been invaded, instead, by populism to a point which appears to be undermining democracy itself.

This comment will analyze, on a general scheme, the Mexican electoral procedures trying to separate the "ought to be" from the practical reality of what actually happens within them; in addition we will analyze the knowledge and awareness that society has both on the importance of citizenship participation and of voting, as well as the citizen's state of mind regarding the candidates that are nowadays nominated for government functions. Lastly, we will explore the polemic "null-vote" that has become the means for the members of society to object the candidates presented to them as a whole. On this last point, we shall determine the effects that the undervote has upon an

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