

AUDIT OF THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL RECALL REFERENDUM IN VENEZUELA

FINAL REPORT

26/AUGUST/2004

1. Objective

The following questions are expected to be answered by this audit of the manual recount of voting receipts (*comprobantes de votación*) in the ballot boxes:

Does the electronic result transmitted by the voting machines (shown on the respective tally sheets) coincide with the manual recount of the receipts deposited in the respective ballot boxes, or not?

Is there a discernable bias in the discrepancies found in favor of either the “Yes” votes or the “No” votes?

To that end, the audit compared the results obtained by a manual recount of the receipts for the YES and NO options with the results that had been generated by the voting machines and then transmitted to the National Electoral Council (CNE) totalization system. In all, 16 observers from The Carter Center and 20 observers from the Organization of American States observed aslsesun0.45,Tc ount of voting r.CNE)

The sample was generated by CNE staff using a simple software program with the following characteristics and procedures:

The program was the same as that used to obtain the sample generated the day of the referendum (to conduct the audit immediately [*en caliente*]), modified to work at the polling station rather than voting machine level.

The program was a Delphi (Pascal programming language) application. The international observers were given a copy of the executable file, the source code, the input file (i.e. list of 8,141 automated polling stations), and the output file (i.e. the random list of 200 automated polling stations).

The sample was generated during a public ceremony broadcast live on television by Channel 8 and in the presence of Comando Maisanta representatives and international observers from The Carter Center and the OAS, and another group of European observers. The Coordinadora Democrática did not attend this ceremony.

There were several test runs of the program conducted prior to the generation of the sample, and observers checked to see that the output file was deleted.

The sample produced the following distribution:

150 polling stations and 359 voting machines distributed over 21 states.

STATE	STATIONS	STATE	STATIONS	STATE	STATIONS
CAPITAL	16	ARAGUA	10	CARABOBO	11
ANZOATEGUI	9	BARINAS	5	COJEDES	1
GUARICO	4	LARA	11	MERIDA	6
MIRANDA	18	MONAGAS	5	PORTUGUESA	1
SUCRE	4	TACHIRA	8	TRUJILLO	4
YARACUY	4	ZULIA	18	VARGAS	3
APURE	2	BOLIVAR	6	FALCON	4

The margin of error in this sample was 3 percent, with a level of confidence of 95 percent.

- e. Whenever a box contained _____ receipts from three machines, all the receipts were first sorted according to machine, then by YES or NO vote and then were counted. A check then was made to see whether a voter had placed his or her voting receipt in another box. This last exercise cleared up some of the apparently major discrepancies encountered.
- f. Each of the two auditors performed an independent count of all the voting receipts, providing a double check of the process.

3.5.5 Records in the minutes: The CNE auditor recorded the following information in the minutes:

- a. Date and time the minutes were drawn up
- b. Name of the garrison
- c. Name of the state
- d. Name of the municipality
- e. Name of the parish
- f. Code and name of the voting center
- g. Number of the polling station
- h. Number of votes counted in each basket
- i. Observations and discrepancies
- j. All those present signed the minutes, indicating their name, and I.D. (*cédula*) or passport number
- k. The CNE auditor kept the original of the minutes. One photocopy was made for each witness and each international observer.

3.5.6 Closing of boxes: Once the audit of a box was finished, the contents of all the baskets were placed in the original box, along with the electoral material that had been taken out of it. The CUFAN sealed the box with new tape and glued a copy of the audit minutes onto the top of the box.

3.5.7 Breaks and pauses: Members of the audit team were able to leave the room temporarily to eat, go to the lavatory, and to rest. The team members could decide whether to continue or suspend the audit when one member temporarily left the room, but under no circumstances could the audit take place without the presence of the auditor designated by the CNE or of the international observer.

4. The calculation procedure 1

- a) First, discrepancies were calculated for each voting machine between “the number of votes transmitted” and “the manual recount of the paper receipts” (which had previously been sorted) for both the YES and the NO options. We added the positive and negative discrepancies to obtain the direction and magnitude of the final effect of the discrepancy.
- b) A positive discrepancy indicates the result transmitted exceeded the number of receipts counted. These discrepancies may be caused by numerous factors, such as a voter failing to deposit his or her voting receipt in the box, placing it in the wrong box, receipts being lost during transportation, etc.
- c) It was agreed to tolerate a discrepancy of less than five percent between votes transmitted and those counted manually. Any discrepancy more than five percent would indicate major errors in the process.
- d) A calculation then was made of the average discrepancy of votes per voting machine. (This is the ratio of the sum of vote discrepancies for each of the two options and the total number of machines in the sample. 2)
- e) The percentage discrepancy vis-à-vis average votes per machine was also calculated.³ This was done by dividing the average discrepancy of votes per voting machine calculated in point d) by the 406 average of votes.
- f) The average discrepancy of the machines in the sample then was extrapolated to the total number of machines⁴, to obtain the total possible discrepancy of votes for both of the options.
- g) Finally, a calculation was made of the incidence of total discrepancy of votes for each option in relation to the total vote nationwide.
- h) Given the highly stable nature of the results obtained, the polling stations that could not be found or recounted did not affect the degree of reliability or the

¹ For various reasons it was not possible to clarify the cases of three polling stations still showing a “high” discrepancy – unlike other instances in which more in-depth investigation in Mariches revealed that the voting receipts had been placed in the boxes corresponding to adjoining stations. The three polling stations for which explanations are still pending are:

Center	Station	Exercise book (<i>cuaderno</i>)	Comment
13651	3	3	Bolívar, NO1: 31 discrepancies; NO2: 28 discrepancies; NO3: 29 discrepancies
13654	2	1	Bolívar, NO1: 17 discrepancies; SI1: 13 discrepancies
26290	1	3	Guarico, NO1: 28 discrepancies

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1 2 The total number of machines in the sample turned out to be 334

2 3 The average number of votes per machine is 406

3 4 The total number of machines in the country was 19,664

Projection of the impact of the discrepancies is based on the sum of the discrepancies, while the machine count for the absolute value of each discrepancy is used to evaluate the number of machines with a discrepancy.

To extrapolate the impact of the discrepancies on the electoral result, the direction of the discrepancy is taken into account because part of these discrepancies cancel each other out, both in the sample and for the total number of machines.

To explain the accuracy of each machine's electoral result, the calculation is based on the absolute value of the discrepancy since this is the magnitude of the difference between the electronically transmitted result and the manual recount of the voting receipts.

5.2 Distribution of the discrepancies:

Table 2. Distribution of the discrepancies

Number of votes involving a discrepancy (in absolute terms)	Number of machines	Machines for which a discrepancy exists as a % of the 344 machines in the sample
1	112	33.5%
2	43	12.9%
3	11	3.3%
4	4	1.2%
5	1	0.3%
6	3	0.9%
7	1	0.3%
8	3	0.9%
9	0	0.0%

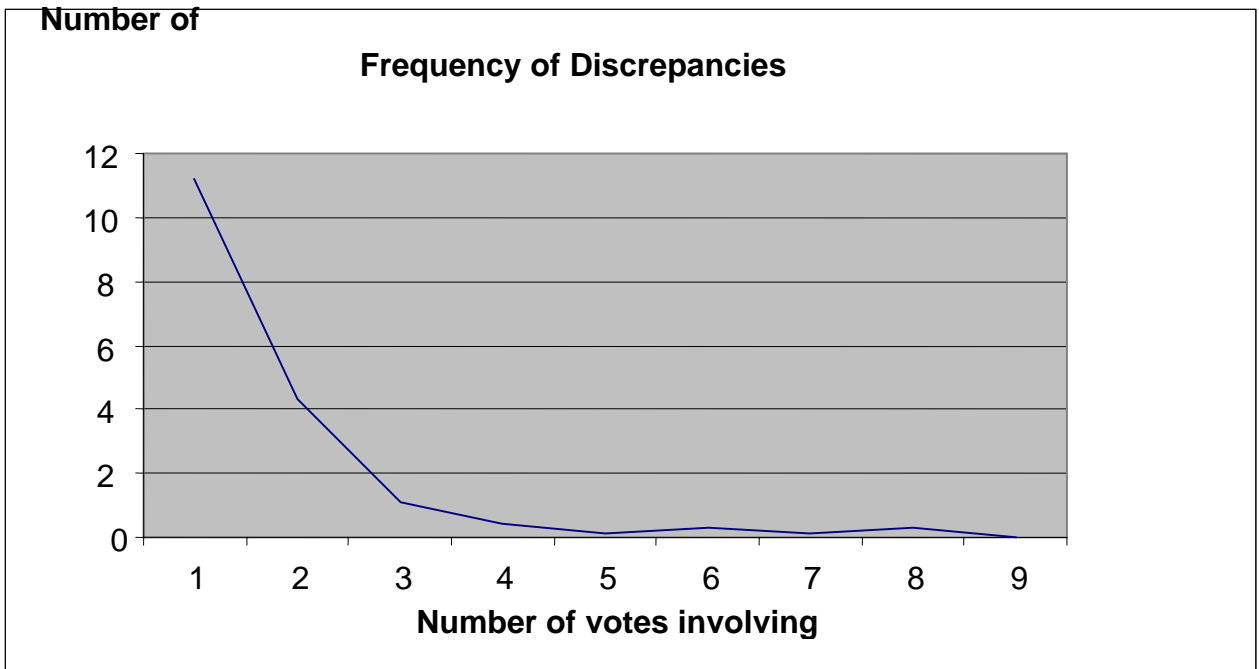


Chart 1 provides a clear indication that discrepancies involving more than four votes are few and far between. It also shows more than 90 percent of the discrepancies occur in machines with an individual discrepancy of three or fewer votes. indication

Table 3: Cumulative distribution of machines with discrepancies

X	Number of machines with discrepancies of X or more	Percentage of machines with discrepancies
1	184	55.1%
2	72	21.6%
3	29	8.7%
4	18	5.4%
5	14	4.2%
6	13	3.9%
7	10	3.0%
8	9	2.7%
9	6	1.8%

Table 3 shows that for 184 machines (55.1 percent of those audited), there was a discrepancy of at least one vote. It also shows a five-or-more vote discrepancy for 14 machines (4.2 percent of those audited). Consequently, it is estimated that 95.8 percent of the machines have a discrepancy in respect of four or fewer votes.

Five cases were detected in which the discrepancy exceeded five percent. These cases do not suggest a pattern since they affect both the YES and the NO options. The conclusion reached is that these are isolated cases in which electors probably failed to deposit the voting receipt in the correct ballot box.

Based on the sample analyzed above, it is safe to say that the results transmitted by the voting machines have been fully validated by the results obtained during the manual recount of the voting receipts.

In the discrepancies encountered, no bias has been detected favoring either one of the options.