

## Open letter to The Economist

### Incredible blunder of one of the best journals of the world

April the 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, The Economist presented his article on Peruvian elections in unacceptable terms for its lack of objectivity, which transmits a very poor and biased analysis.

#### **“Peru’s election”**

“A dangerous farce”

“Daft decisions from the electoral authority subvert democracy and undermine the rule of law”

The Economist says that: “Peruvians are discovering, to their bemusement, that the referee can determine who wins in politics, too. On April 10th they will go to the polls to choose a new president. Two names, those of Julio Guzmán and César Acuña, will not be on the ballot, although polls promised them almost a quarter of the vote between them. However, barely a month before the election and after weeks of legal gyrations, the electoral authority disqualified them”.

Pitifully, we Peruvians are also discovering, to our rage and frustration, that The Economist, one of the most admired global publications, is not as rigorous as we have always rendered. It is very surprising that for your article on Peruvian elections, you have just taken for granted the very biased explanations of Guzmán and Acuña themselves or of their colleges’.

#### Analysis and perspective

1. Peruvian legislation has gone, during the last 15 years, through a process of massive reproduction and multiplication. This has been the case for all aspects of our society. It covers the judiciary, the electoral authorities, business regulations and citizen’s relationships with all instances of government.

One example: Julio Velarde, President of the Peruvian Central Bank, explained recently the evolution of mining regulations: In 2001, mining regulations included 9 different legal procedures. In 2014 they include 204.

Most of the regulations that suffocate every activity in the country are useless or outright stupid. However, we all have to comply, especially so in the case of authorities. Recognizing that we have very absurd norms, could you imagine what would happen if everybody had to decide whereas to comply with norms or not?

2. The electoral authorities have being in a sort of trap. Probably they deemed our legislation as absurd, and instead of excluding Guzman immediately, they tried to gain some time and went through cumbersome ways to try to overcome the peculiar situation.
3. Guzman should have been excluded immediately because his party, actually, did not comply with norms that where clearly established and where known by them. As a matter of fact, when Guzman took over the party, their people in charge of legal

- procedures with the electoral authority asked Guzman to maintain the proceedings under their control. Stupidly, Guzman decided to exclude them from the process and assigned one of his sisters to take charge of them.
4. A few days further, the people with the relevant experience in the party detected a series of mistakes and requested Guzman again to take that responsibility in their hands. Guzman insisted in maintaining his sister as the sole responsible for the process and the results speak for themselves.
  5. When the electoral authority first objected Guzman's procedures by December, last year, he had only 1% of approval in the polls. Guzman's party did not react as they should have, and let time go by.
  6. Later on, the trap was perfect, Guzman had climbed in the polls, nobody understood the legal procedures, and Guzman made a lot of fuss presenting himself as a victim.
  7. Once more, the authorities pressed by the conscience that those norms were stupid, Guzman's figures in the polls, and the outburst of the media, instead of cutting off Guzman, decided to go through all possible procedures to see if they could manage the situation without more noise. Finally, the scenario was unmanageable, the authority had to exclude Guzmán and he took the opportunistic approach of accusing every body of his own mistakes.
  8. Acuña's case is the consequence of another very stupid law, which stipulates that the candidates cannot give any kind of goods to voters with the risk of outright exclusion from the elections (with no graduation of the penalty and with a very small limit of 19 soles, equivalent to US\$6).
  9. Acuña had systematically breached that norm, personally giving gifts and promoting publicly that activity. Whereas Keiko Fujimori explicitly denied her support to finance the dance contest, the matter of the claim against her, and was only invited to be present in the ceremony in which prizes were given.
  10. The Jurado Nacional de Elecciones excluded Fujimori's candidate for the second vice-presidency, because he actually gave presents, a bottle of water and a tuna can. Stupid as it looks, that is the consequence of an incredible law.

Unfortunately, your publication is not the only newspaper that employs local correspondents that have policy and political stances, which are the opposite of the newspapers they work for. You should know that, and especially during political events like national elections, you have to compensate that with other sources.

In [Lampadia](#), we admire and follow very closely your analysis and reports. We look forward for a new report of your very prestigious newspaper on the Peruvian elections.

Sincerely,

[Lampadia](#)