



**Joint EC-UNDP Thematic
Workshop on
Sustainability in Electoral
Administration:
Adequate Resourcing for
Credible Elections**

COMPARATIVE COST OF THE THREE CATEGORIES OF EMBs

(Independent, governmental, mixed model)

By

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A STORY FROM THE MOUTH OF THE HORSE

- UNDP STUDY 2000
 - Electoral authorities labelled as EMB
 - Cost data brought to debate (Mexico 1999)
 - IDEA handbook on EMBs followed
- UNDP CORE study 2006
 - A cost assessment methodology proposed
 - Very limited database (34 countries: 32% stable and 68% emerging democracies)

THE EVIDENCE FROM 2000 REINFORCED IN 2006

- Key variables explaining electoral costs
 - Previous experience at elections independently of region or economic development
 - Permanence/professionalism of electoral administration
- Key factors on cost effectiveness
 - Continuous voter register
 - Integrated strategic and operational planning
 - Permanent professional staff

THE EVIDENCE (2) A SPURIOUS RELATIONSHIP?

- From the 2000 study: 48 countries mid 1990's; cost per elector in US \$ of the year
- Independent (35 countries) Average \$6.37.
Range: Bangladesh \$0.2 - Cambodia \$45.5.
- Mixed model (6 countries) Average \$2.83.
Range: Netherlands \$1.0 – Norway \$4.8.
- Governmental (7 countries) Average \$1.97.
Range: UK \$0.8–Switzerland \$5.4

The evidence (3)

- **Variation of average cost between:**
- **Governmental and independent EMB model: \$4.41**
- **Widely state apparatuses and challenging at state building \$4.04**
- **Stable and post-conflict democracies all countries \$8.41**
 - **In countries with widely spread state apparatuses \$4.01**
 - **In countries with challenging at state building \$10.79**

Methodological challenges on shading cost areas

- Indirect and diffused costs assessment
- Political parties and campaign funding and expense
- International electoral assistance and support, official and informal
- Integrity costs in post-conflict scenarios (security, enfastructures, displaced populations)

Concluding remarks (1)

- EMB model matters, but not as much as:
- State building of national institutions, local government structures and a professional civil service.
- Public trust in government and among the electoral contenders.
- Rising standards and popular demands about quality of elections (IT use, transmission of results)

Concluding remarks (2)

- Independently of EMB model, election costs might keep increasing like the cost of other public services at democratic governance (e.gr. Physical infrastructures, health or education).
- Why could it be different?
- Let be reminded that the highest cost is with warfare, followed by authoritarian rule. And we do not like either of those.