

# **The PRSP Process and Parliament: Rethinking the Boundaries of Parliamentary Oversight**

*“The spirit of a people, its cultural level, its social structure, the deeds its policy may prepare—all of this and more is written in its fiscal history, stripped of all phrases.”*

Joseph Schumpeter

*“Few of the standard accounts of parliamentary government have well-integrated treatments of the political theories appropriate to institutions and practices of accountability. Further, very few accounts of democratic theory give much attention to the role of the legislature in maintaining accountability. Given the unwieldy profusion of concepts and practices, it is important to identify a basic framework of accountability through which we can begin to sort out the conflicting claims and justifications over contending accountability regimes.”*

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### **Introduction:**

Despite a rich tradition in parliamentary and legislature studies, there is a paucity of theories on parliament when compared with theory development in other fields of political science. Classification of parliamentary systems, on the other hand, is a much more developed area of parliamentary studies. From Westminster-based parliamentary systems to the American congressional system, to the dynamics of unicameral and bicameral representative bodies, each classification carries with it a host of assumptions about a legislature's role and capabilities in the governance framework of a society. This is even truer for studies of parliament in developing countries.

Thus, parliamentary development and reform initiatives often begin with the over-arching qualification of what classification the parliament should fit into. This often serves to circumscribe the limits of innovation and reform. Writing of reform initiatives in the House of Commons in Canada, analysts state the Canadian government recognized that theirs is an, "executive centred political system where the legislature is a 'reactive' and 'deliberative' body in which the mechanism of a disciplined majority party ensures that all significant government sponsored legislation passes."<sup>i</sup> This is a fundamental reaffirmation that any reform efforts should not overturn the principle feature of Canada's Westminster-type parliamentary system; executive domination and marshalling party unity should not be jeopardized.

Immediately an inconsistency appears within the same text of the Canadian reform experience. The Canadian evaluation and reform effort sought to develop functions and procedures that allow for a greater balance between the dominant policy making function of the executive and the necessary review, input, and analysis in an open forum, which parliament should provide.<sup>ii</sup> Yet, as is shown above, the authors continue to affirm the Canadian government's commitment to the pillars of executive domination and primacy of party unity. How can these two objectives be reconciled? This dilemma is struggled with across old and new democracies. It is the challenge of balancing parliamentary influence and initiative with a need for a strong and decisive executive.

Why is there a debate on this issue? If the executive has 'naturally' evolved into the dominant source of decision-making, why not move on and accept the status quo? Parliaments presently have little to no influence over budget policy.<sup>iii</sup> The debate arises from a confluence of two key issues. First, there is a strong sense that parliament has some type of role to play. This is reinforced by studies demonstrating the importance given to the existence of parliament by the citizenry.<sup>iv</sup> Second, there is widespread acknowledgement among scholars that parliament is an institution in decline across nations.<sup>v</sup> As a consequence, parliament cannot be ignored because people feel it *needs* to play a role and because its explicit state of decline could pose problems for governments in their people's eyes.

This debate, penetrating societies across the globe, has established a place for itself in the midst of the World Bank and IMF's most recent development thrust: the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper process (hereafter PRSP process). This is a comprehensive development initiative involving upwards of 70 nations. The PRSP process requires a

government to produce an initial, interim-PRSP. The interim-PRSP is then assessed by a group of World Bank and IMF experts at a stage called the Joint Staff Assessment (hereafter JSA). If a country's interim-PRSP is approved it gains access to concessional assistance. The country then focuses on producing a full-PRSP. This PRSP is then subjected to a JSA and if approved the country receives debt relief along with concessional assistance. The PRSP itself is a policy and plan for the reduction of poverty. The PRSP process represents the latest thrust in the field of development and poverty reduction by the major International Financial Institutions (hereafter IFIs).

#### *Focusing on the PRSP process*

By using the PRSP process as the context for making a contribution to the debate on parliamentary development and reform, this paper can be viewed as somewhat of a case study. As noted earlier, this is not a debate limited to PRSP countries; the example above illustrating the dilemma was drawn from Canadian experience. PRSP countries, on the other hand, provide a particularly rich basis upon which to contribute to this debate. It will also help expand the debate on the perceived democratic deficit of the PRSP process.

Many PRSP countries are still in the nascent stages of democratic development. This means that time has not allowed for the extensive entrenchment of norms and precedents that act as inhibitors of reform in countries such as Canada. As will be discussed later in the paper, one of the main sources for the theoretical proposals made here has its roots in South Africa and its willingness to take ground-breaking leaps in democratic development.

The PRSP context also helps to highlight the relevance of parliamentary development to the key challenge of government delivery of goods and services. The shortfalls in delivering even basic necessities in many PRSP countries reinforces the need to see parliamentary reform for its potential in assisting with the alleviation of poverty. This can only be done by defining parliament's role in the government's delivery processes. Therefore, the PRSP context improves the theoretical linkage between delivery challenges and potential contributions by parliament.

#### *Parliamentary Oversight*

Parliament performs a number of functions. These functions can be subsumed, generally, into four *areas* of parliamentary work: plenary/the House, caucus, constituency and committees. In these four areas of work, parliament fulfills its responsibility to make/pass laws, represent the people, hold the executive accountable for its actions, and foster participation by members and society in parliament and its processes. In doing this work, parliament helps to realize three fundamental principles of democratic governance: accountability, transparency, and participation.<sup>vi</sup>

Of course, one look at the areas of work, types of work, and the principles being aspired to compels recognition of the interdependence among them and justifiably begs the question of where to begin in terms of parliamentary reform. For the sake of clarity, focus and practicability in putting forth new ways of understanding parliamentary potential in the governance framework, this paper focuses attention on parliament's role

in the budget cycle through its budgetary oversight function. This is not to say that parliament does not perform other, more significant, functions. It is also not to suggest that oversight can and should be limited to the area of budget formulation and implementation. Nonetheless, as the quote from Joseph Schumpeter above suggests, budgetary matters have a way of reflecting a society's priorities and aspirations in ways that words and declarations fail to equal.

Almost fifty years after Schumpeter's statement on the real significance of a nation's budget, appreciation of the fact has only grown. Writing to NGOs that would seek to pursue their agendas vis-à-vis governments, the International Budget Project based out of Washington states that, "the budget is the most important economic policy instrument for governments. It reflects a government's social and economic policy priorities more than any other document, translating policies, political commitments, and goals into decisions on where funds should be spent and collected."<sup>vii</sup> It is not surprising, then, that PRSPs will largely be implemented through the budgets of participating states. It is in the budget, "where PRSPs must translate into spending and revenue specifics, [and where] *parliaments* must ultimately approve or reject PRSPs as they have been worked out financially."<sup>viii</sup>

Feasibly re-conceptualizing parliament's budgetary oversight function in the context of the PRSP process demands an admittedly arbitrary starting point. Such an ambitious project, no doubt, should be driven internally by the World Bank and IMF with access to the plethora of documentation to which the public is generally not privy. Without access to such resources the hopes of this paper must be limited to highlighting the worthiness of a more detailed and coherent review of parliament's role in the PRSP process in the future. With these limitations recognized, the starting point for the moment must invariably be a thorough audit of how the principle public documents related to the PRSP process cast parliament.

#### **The World Bank and IMF Conception of Parliament:**

The audit uses the most explicit source of information on what the World Bank and IMF expect from participating states in terms of preparing an interim and full PRSP. This is found in the PRSP Sourcebook (hereafter PRSP-SB). The PRSP-SB is a compilation of chapters and annexes commissioned by the World Bank and IMF and describe in detail what is expected regarding the numerous functions involved in producing and implementing a PRSP. In essence, the PRSP-SB is the 'how to' book for the PRSP process. It invariably embodies the principles, beliefs, and values of the major IFIs driving the initiative.

The PRSP process commenced in 1999. A World Bank driven review exercise in 2003, acknowledged that, "parliaments had been overlooked in the design phase of the PRSPs", with some suggesting that, "the lack of involvement by parliaments can possibly serve to undermine a democracy in countries in which this form of government is fragile and emerging."<sup>ix</sup> So what was it about the PRSP-SB that may have fueled the neglect of parliament in the PRSP design phase? Or, put another way, what *kind* of parliament did the PRSP-SB at first prescribe for countries engaged in developing and implementing a PRSP?

### *The PRSP-SB<sup>1</sup> and Parliament in the PRSP Process*

Despite flattering references to the significance of parliament, the PRSP-SB demands what can only be referred to as a rubber-stamp legislature. This is not to say the intention was to produce such a legislature, but an apparent lack of awareness of parliament's potential ultimately requires this classification. More precisely, the type of legislature emanating from the pages of the PRSP-SB is an 'inputs-oriented' legislature. It is geared principally to ensure that the resources dedicated to programmes are listed and then subsequently spent on the programmes for which they were intended.

The first indication of this is evident in the section of the PRSP-SB dedicated to public spending. This chapter of the sourcebook begins with a description of an "idealized" budget cycle. The cycle contains eleven stages that range from the review of budget estimates, to the preparation of line agency budgets, to implementation of, and reporting on, the budget.<sup>x</sup> Eight of the eleven stages solely require the executive to act in policy formulation as manifested through the budgeting process. One stage allows for the Auditor-General to review the government's accounts. Parliament's role in the budget cycle is relegated to the two remaining stages. In stage seven of the PRSP-SB's budget cycle, the "budget appropriations [are] debated and approved by parliament." This is after all the stages of planning and financial allocations along policy lines have been completed. In stage eleven, parliament is to approve the audited accounts after receiving them from the independent auditor.<sup>xi</sup>

It cannot be denied that parliament has a role in the budget cycle espoused in the PRSP-SB, what is at issue is the type of role. The type of parliament the aforementioned budget cycle fosters focuses solely on ensuring that the numbers in the appropriation bill all add up in an acceptable fashion. It ensures that proper respect was paid to financial reporting standards. It leaves just enough time to praise or chastise the government; without adequate information if the only documentation it has to work with is the appropriation bill and auditor-general reports. As a result, this type of legislature can only focus its attention on raw expenditure.

This type of legislature asks two basic questions: Do the expenditure and revenue columns balance? Did the government spend how much it said it was going to spend? This is not to suggest that these two questions are unimportant. The problem is that these two questions are only one fraction of the number of considerations given to budgeting and policy-making. Classifying the PRSP-SB legislature as 'inputs-oriented' serves to highlight the conspicuous narrowing of budgetary oversight in its scope. For example, by relegating parliamentary oversight to the inputs-side of the budgeting process, the executive manages to evade accountability for some of the more elemental foundations of a budget, such as the priorities of the government.

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<sup>1</sup> This project began when the PRSP-SB remained in a draft format. Therefore, references are made to the draft version. Project Deadlines prevented a reconfiguration of references in light of the new version. However, the substance has been cross-checked to ensure that the audit is still reflective of the substance of the PRSP-SB.

If there is any doubt about this analysis, it is dispelled in the subsequent paragraphs of the same chapter on public spending. The authors of this chapter of the sourcebook describe how the line agency departments should reconcile their operational plans with budgets and liaise carefully with the ministry of finance so as to ensure that budgets are driven by plans and priorities and not just by financial considerations. No role is allowed for parliament in such activity. Instead, parliament is mentioned in light of the need to ensure departmental compliance with spending projections. Under the heading “Improving transparency and strengthening accounting and auditing”, the PRSP-SB states that indicators of institutional practices needed to measure public financial management for effective poverty alleviation are:

1. The legislature’s timely approval of the annual budget and its public release in accordance with national laws;
2. Regular, timely and accurate reporting by the Ministry of Finance to the legislature of actual government revenues and expenditures during and at the end of the budget year [...];
3. Submission of timely reports to the legislature by the country’s supreme audit institution on the accuracy of government accounts and on its compliance with financial laws and regulations.

The relegation of parliament to oversight of inputs almost exclusively, is thrown into sharper contrast with the other elements of budgeting when the PRSP-SB discusses the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (hereafter MTEF). An MTEF often refers to budgeting on a yearly basis but with future years, usually two, considered in the planning stages. Thus, a budget for the fiscal year 2003-04, will also report budget projections for 2004-05 and 2005-06. This recognizes the need for more stability and transparency in budgeting and also that many programmes do not achieve their goals within a single fiscal year. The long term plans and sectoral budgets are developed by departments in close cooperation with the ministry of finance. The policy review, formulation, budgeting and debate stages before finalization of the budget are reserved for the executive. Parliament’s role, unsurprisingly at this point, is to approve a budget that is largely a *fait accompli*.

Participation is another critical area of concern to the World Bank and IMF and is dealt with explicitly in the PRSP-SB. It also provides the basis for gaining a deeper appreciation for the type of parliament the PRSP process fosters. As mentioned above, participation is also widely considered one of the functions parliament serves in a polity. Participation is also a highly regarded priority by the World Bank because the PRSP process is meant to reinforce the objectives of the Comprehensive Development Framework, which calls for development initiatives to be “owned” by the countries in which they unfold.<sup>xii</sup> The actual poverty reduction strategy paper of a country should be “owned” by the government and should ideally be owned by the citizenry. It is expected that adequate participatory processes can help to engender this sense of national/societal ‘ownership’.

Participation in the PRSP process is separated into two distinct categories in the PRSP-SB. There is participation by other government agencies, institutions and jurisdictions (e.g. local government). This will be referred to as ‘government-based PRSP

participation'. There is also participation by civil society, NGOs, and other interested stakeholders. This will be called 'societal PRSP participation'.

Government-based PRSP participation takes into account the tendency for budgetary processes to be dominated by only a select few interests within the executive, if not the ministry of finance alone. Therefore, the desire is to have budget formulation reflect the involvement of all the line agency departments. Under the rubric of intra-governmental cooperation, parliament is also to have a role. The PRSP-SB states that, "in many cases, most policy-level decisions, including budget allocation, are made by a core group of ministries, which exclude parliament, district and local governments, and sometimes even the line ministries."<sup>xiii</sup>

The PRSP-SB states that to realize adequate levels of intra-governmental participation, the PRSP process needs to, "involve parliamentarians and members of state legislatures to link the national government to the regional and local levels. Their position allows them to talk to their constituents and bring local level inputs into the national level formulation process."<sup>xiv</sup> In essence, what is meant by the involvement of parliament is actually the involvement of parliamentarians. While parliamentarians are no doubt fundamentally critical stakeholders for the legitimacy of the PRSP process, there is a distinction between individual parliamentarians and the institution of parliament. What remains untreated in the PRSP-SB is the latter.

The treatment of parliament in this way also reveals a conception of parliament as *just another* stakeholder. In this sense, parliament is to be consulted and have its say on the PRSP or perhaps even the budget. Therefore, a checklist of those to be consulted in budgeting or developing a PRSP would list the line agency departments (e.g. health, education, social welfare, roads and works), parliament, the necessary local governments, and state/provincial governments. In this way, the institution of parliament has the same status as the other bodies identified for consultation in the PRSP process.

The folly in this conception of parliament is a consequence of the missed opportunity to maximize its potential contribution as an entirely unique institution in the governance framework. It converts parliament into an institution that would have to articulate interests like a department in budgeting and planning. It is ill-equipped for this task. If one uses the PRSP-SB's own "idealized" budget cycle and public financial management system, parliament only has the appropriation bill information and auditor-general reports to concretely make informed opinions about programme specifics and budgeting details. Ultimately, by relegating parliament to 'inputs-oriented' oversight, any chance of parliament meaningfully contributing to PRSP formulation is confounded.

The second area of participation, societal PRSP participation, also requires some means of being operationalized. As noted earlier, facilitating public participation in parliamentary deliberations is considered critical for accountability purposes. It is defined as providing a, "fair opportunity for all citizens to participate in the making of decisions affecting their lives, regardless of economic means, gender or ethnicity. It also means that citizens have an obligation to participate in shaping the direction of the nation."<sup>xv</sup>

The PRSP-SB states that there are three possible channels for citizen/civil society participation in the PRSP process. These are: 1. An inter-ministerial steering committee that receives inputs from sectoral and technical working groups on areas of poverty alleviation, which in turn represent various stakeholders. 2. Using the Ministry of Local Governments to create a liaison between the various jurisdictions with the ability to represent peoples of different regions. 3. Using well-established and trustworthy NGOs to channel participatory processes.<sup>xvi</sup>

Parliament is entirely left aside as an institution in which participatory processes can be channeled in developing and following through with a poverty reduction strategy. The various structures for public participation, such as committees, and the ability of parliaments to receive inputs from stakeholders, are neglected. This also relies heavily on bodies that have fewer claims to representivity in society than parliament. In areas where democracy is either being built for the first time, or re-built after a period of dictatorship or autocracy, neither government ministries, local government-related agencies or segments of civil society necessarily have a greater claim to representivity than parliament.

This audit of the PRSP-SB leaves us with several indelible impressions of the type of parliament fostered by the PRSP process. It is a parliament relegated to 'inputs-oriented' oversight, unable to effectively articulate opinions as they relate to policy, priorities, and the translation of these into budgets. It is the type of oversight that simply checks compliance with internationally established *norms* in prudent public financial management. Furthermore, this type of parliament is a stakeholder vis-à-vis the PRSP's participatory elements. Just as line agency departments and various jurisdictions must prepare submissions, so to must parliament behave like any other department. Finally, such a parliament, despite being the source of representivity in a polity, is not to be the source for channeling participatory processes by civil society and other stakeholders in the PRSP process.

#### *The Implications of the PRSP-SB Conception of Parliament*

With parliament cast in the role of a minor watch-dog, the formulators of the PRSP process are unable to make one critical, yet seemingly obvious connection, between parliament and PRSPs. The formulators cannot see that parliamentary oversight, often a constitutionally mandated function, can and must be equated with the all-important 'monitoring and evaluation' stage of the PRSP process. Yet for some, "the obvious 'entry points' for the involvement of parliaments in the PRSP process are through the budget cycle – with parliament reviewing and approving government spending on poverty reduction initiatives – and through the monitoring and evaluation of outcomes and impact, via the 'normal' oversight and legislation link between parliament and government."<sup>xvii</sup>

The reason for the failure to make a connection is simple. By seeing parliamentary oversight as a minor and uni-dimensional function (focused on inputs), it is impossible to see a connection with the requirements of monitoring and evaluation of PRSPs. The



latter being a sophisticated, multi-dimensional process and thereby making it inconceivable that parliament might be able to play a critical monitoring and evaluation role through oversight.

In the chapter entitled, ‘Governance and Poverty Reduction’, the PRSP-SB declares that developing and delivering, “credible policies and services that are sustained, effective, and adequately financed goes to the heart of the political process.”<sup>xviii</sup> The chapter proceeds to list the type of requirements that should be satisfied for meeting standards of good governance in reducing poverty. These take the form of questions and are as follows:

1. Does the cabinet or its equivalent have clearly articulated policy priorities?
2. Are there sectoral strategies for key sectors? Are they public documents?
3. Are the domestic stakeholders – civil society, business community, public interest groups, labour unions, farmer’s associations, and other interest groups – consulted on policy?
4. Are agreed-upon sectoral policies and goals subject to arbitrary change by the head of government?
5. Are major policies referred to the cabinet for decision?
6. Are policy proposals required to specify their intended outcome, associated output, and costs over the medium term – on and off budget?
7. Is there any effective way of checking that money has been spent as intended? How widely is this information shared?<sup>xix</sup>

It is telling that parliament is not mentioned at all on this checklist. This can be overlooked because it is evident from other chapters in the PRSP-SB that parliament is recognized as a relevant institution – albeit to an unsatisfactory degree. Yet, more importantly is the fact that no connection is made between the list of questions cited here and the type of questions parliament often seeks the answers to in fulfilling its oversight function. Indeed, these questions comprise the essence of most efforts to oversee the executive in Westminster-type parliamentary systems.

The conception of parliament put forth in the PRSP-SB prevents recognition of other areas where parliament can play a role. This is the subtle, but no less significant outcome of underutilizing such a key institution.

The PRSP-SB creates linkages between governance systems and public sector management in recognition of their interdependence. As a result, the PRSP-SB immediately describes what areas of work are needed to ensure that governance and public sector management are improved concomitantly. It identifies:

1. Measures to address systemic problems in budget formulation and execution, financial management and procurement systems, and monitoring of public spending.
2. Plans for improvements in governance arrangements and service delivery, including the role of local communities and local government.

3. Steps to be taken to improve transparency and ensure accountability of public institutions and services vis-à-vis the needs and priorities of the poor.
4. Efforts to address critical problems inhibiting civil service performance and issues of corruption in the public service.<sup>xx</sup>

These are all areas where parliament can focus its attention with a view to preventative action (e.g. by identifying a practice that will produce negative consequences at a later point in time) or, by holding the executive to account and isolating activities associated with destructive forces, such as corruption.

The PRSP-SB goes on to state that monitoring and evaluation practices should include several key features. Of these features, two are especially revealing. The sourcebook states that the, “monitoring of poverty outcomes should be complemented by a strengthening of the institutions and practices of expenditure management to enhance transparency and accountability in, and efficiency of, public spending.”<sup>xxi</sup> The PRSP-SB goes further with this issue in the chapter on public spending. It states that, “fragmented budgets and an exclusive focus on inputs are among the factors that have undermined the ability of budget systems to discipline policy making and to facilitate performance feedback that would improve outcomes.”<sup>xxii</sup> It is ironic, and fitting, that focusing on inputs is identified as problematic and at the same time the PRSP-SB’s vision for parliament’s oversight function is limited to focusing on inputs.

The problems of the executive in the area of public expenditure management are even deeper. The PRSP-SB forcefully cautions against falling unnecessarily into the trap of incremental budgeting. The typical conditions leading to incremental budgeting are often similar across jurisdictions. Line agencies will only receive the budgetary guidelines for their department late in the budget cycle and will therefore be unable to engage in a comprehensive policy review and consult all the necessary stakeholders or, at times, even gauge the delivery performance of specific programmes. As a result, the line agency’s deliberations with the Ministry of Finance are necessarily reduced to budgeting at the margins, or at the incremental level. “To overcome these practices, line agencies would need to draw up strategic plans in advance so that decisions are not driven simply by the central budget timetable.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

Once again, this recommendation by the PRSP-SB stands alone as being grounds enough to feel the executive can change and adopt better budgeting practices. The development of strategic plans in advance of time constrained budgeting periods should provide the basis for mitigating the detrimental effects of incremental budgeting on poverty reduction strategies. Who, however, will examine the strategic reports to ensure that incremental budgeting is being guarded against? Will it be the officials from the World Bank and IMF at the ‘Joint Staff Assessment’ stage of the PRSP process? Will it be the executive overseeing itself? At this stage, it does not seem so ridiculous to suggest that strategic plans must be forwarded to the relevant parliamentary committees in order for them to review the strategic plan with a view to using it as a standard against which the budget will be assessed.

The apparent disconnect between the PRSP process' monitoring and evaluation component and parliamentary oversight reveals an unnecessary and unfortunate situation. Is it impossible to conceive of a parliamentary budget oversight regime that is as comprehensive as the budget development process itself? It would only seem natural to link parliamentary oversight to everything the executive is expected to do. The only explanation for why this linkage is not made is that whereas some believe the executive can somehow develop and deliver the new ways of operating and budgeting expected from the World Bank, parliament is somehow incapable of making the same developmental leap. The basis for this belief arises from a general lack of understanding of parliament's potential and significance in the governance framework. Thus, it becomes an institution to which lip-service is paid, is full of representatives suggesting a degree of government legitimacy, and is relegated to the less meaningful role of 'inputs-oriented' oversight.

One final issue serves to reinforce the assessment made here. The PRSP process is, undoubtedly, heavily dependent on information. This can be attributed to the concrete linkages between the need for targets and measures in attempting to ascertain a nation's degree of progress in reducing poverty. The usual array of statistics are involved in this process. These often come from internationally agreed upon indicators such as the International Development Goals<sup>xxiv</sup>, and subsequently the Millennium Development Goals and other similar initiatives.

As a result, there is a chapter in the PRSP-SB dedicated to statistical and information systems. The chapter states that, "monitoring and evaluation activities need to be carried out by institutions that are competent and that have strong links to key decision-makers, if they are to be useful in the design and implementation of a poverty reduction strategy."<sup>xxv</sup> The chapter then goes on to list the various agencies relevant to this task and the role they should ideally play. It lists central ministries (such as the ministry of finance), line ministries (such as the ministry of health), project implementation agencies, central statistical offices, universities and research centres, and finally development assistance agencies such as the World Bank.<sup>xxvi</sup>

The potential for parliament to play a role in the identification and monitoring of indicators related to the PRSP process is entirely overlooked. Relegating parliament's attention to the 'input' aspects of budget formulation and implementation precludes making any useful contribution to the determination of outcomes indicators and ways of gauging society's priorities. Comprehending the absence of parliament from a list of relevant agencies in the selection of indicators is possible only when it is understood that the PRSP process does not conceive of parliament in such a way that appreciates its full potential, but is instead seen in more of a rubber-stamp capacity.

#### *The NDI<sup>xxvii</sup> 'Shift' and Alternative Conceptions of Parliament*

The preceding audit and critical review of the PRSP-SB and process in respect to parliament's role may seem excessive. In fact, space and time prevent a more detailed analysis arising from the audit that informed the above analysis. Only those elements

most relevant to the proposals made here were selected for inclusion, and even these did not exhaust the full score of relevant examples.

Nonetheless, it would be inaccurate and imprudent to declare that the formulators of the PRSP process intended to disregard parliament or, that they have little respect for its role in governing society. Instead, a general lack of appreciation for parliament's potential role allowed for its underutilization. This situation is neither static nor irreparable. The World Bank has invested resources facilitating numerous workshops, seminars and conferences on parliament and the PRSP process – something for which it should be commended.

Of all of these efforts, none is perhaps more significant to this analysis than the relatively recent production of a specific annex to the PRSP-SB, commissioned by the World Bank, entitled “Parliaments and the PRSP Process”. This nineteen-page annex dedicated totally to redressing the mistakes of the earlier versions of the PRSP-SB contains a rich array of innovations and ways of conceiving parliament heretofore unseen in the PRSP process. For this reason, a review of some exemplary elements of the annex is pertinent.

The first connection made between parliament and the PRSP process in the annex focuses on how the involvement of parliament can reinforce the core principles of the PRSP process. By involving parliament, realization of the principle of country ownership is far more likely. “Parliaments remain an obvious mechanism for encouraging poor people’s input into national poverty reduction policies and ensuring cooperation from a variety of political actors. The representative responsibilities of parliament, as assigned by each country’s constitution, provide a greater level of ownership and legitimacy than other participatory methods, such a stakeholder workshops.”<sup>xxxviii</sup>

Furthermore, the variation between regions and various political interests in many PRSP countries means difficulty in developing a truly comprehensive strategy. But the, “specific committee structure[s] of national parliaments, legislatures (and legislative structures) offer a potential space in which to debate a nationally comprehensive view of poverty or the non-quantitative impact of poverty reduction initiatives.”<sup>xxxix</sup> Channeling this process, as such, through parliament, also allows for its institutionalization and therefore can come to transcend any one particular government or members of the executive.<sup>xxx</sup>

The connections between parliament’s role and the principles of the PRSP process are quite clear. In the area of structures and institutions, the proposals become slightly more obfuscated, but remain important for developing alternative conceptions of parliament.

The annex on parliament proposes that in order to give the policy formulation stage of the PRSP process greater legitimacy, the sectoral working groups should better institutionalize the role of parliament. This may take the form of creating permanent membership of parliamentarians in sectoral working groups. The authors state that this would be a logical mechanism, “for ensuring the PRSP process benefits from the involvement of parliamentarians already active in specific sectoral areas.”<sup>xxxi</sup> In this way,

parliamentarians, empowered by sector-specific parliamentary committee work, are able to contribute to the forums in which PRSP policy is formulated.

The annex affirms that public participation in parliament, “also offer[s] a natural inlet for existing poor people’s organizations that might have relevant information on poverty in specific regions or areas.”<sup>xxxii</sup> By doing so, public participation channeled through parliament, or outreach activities by Members of Parliament to gather inputs from their constituents to feed into PRSP debates, can improve the identification of issues to be addressed by policies. But, “to cement parliamentary involvement in an improved PRSP process, this engagement must become more institutionalized. Appointing a number of MPs to the poverty diagnosis working group, or institutionalizing a plenary hearing on the findings of the poverty diagnosis report would be one way to formalize parliament’s role in poverty diagnosis.”<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Also, parliament is to oversee and report on PRSP participatory processes. These are to then be used by World Bank and IMF staff during the JSA stages and review stages of the PRSP process.<sup>xxxiv</sup> This, however, betrays a degree of inconsistency in the recommendations. Are participatory processes to be channeled through parliament and also overseen by parliament? There are a broad array of possibilities and therefore the inconsistencies arise and only serve to detract from the overall value of the annex.

The critical issue to be gleaned from these sections of the annex is that parliament can gear itself to becoming an integral component of the policy formulation process before concrete decisions become etched into stone by the policy masons of the PRSP process. In this sense, parliament ceases to be a uni-dimensional, ‘inputs-oriented’ oversight institution and becomes, in sharp contradistinction, somewhat of a policy making body.

The significance of this cannot be understated and comes to the critical lacuna in the parliamentary development literature this paper attempts to address. The annex contains key recommendations that would have parliament (or at least parliamentarians empowered by their activities in parliament), become a unique element for policy formulation – but policy formulation no less. The vision of parliament in the PRSP process before the annex was of a parliament that had either the option of rubber-stamping key PRSP decisions or being relegated to a narrow focus on the raw expenditure and revenue columns of a budget. But how is this change to happen? More importantly, why is this change needed? Where is the sophisticated reasoning to justify the shift?

#### *Parliament Types and Visualizing Parliamentary Reform*

The various ways in which parliament has been cast and the underutilization of parliament that has been demonstrated thus far suggests that the classification of parliament is not static, and subject to radical change. From a policy perspective in parliamentary development, it would be better to see parliament as sitting on a continuum. This continuum, much like that of a “Left-Right” politics continuum, has key markers to which labels may be attached.

The United Nations' "Management and Governance Network", recognizing the shift in focus on parliamentary development, put forth an early work that provides conceptually useful labels. The three legislative models employed here are: Rubber Stamp Legislatures, Arena Legislatures, and Transformative Legislatures.

Rubber stamp legislatures should be considered the extreme of one end of the continuum. They, "merely endorse decisions made elsewhere, they typically require little in the way of internal complexity and information processing capacity."<sup>xxxv</sup> Sitting somewhere towards the mid-point of the continuum are arena legislatures. In such legislatures, the various groups and interests in society are represented and allowed to articulate their points of view.<sup>xxxvi</sup>

"An arena legislature draws its legitimacy from its representativeness and not necessarily its special claim to shape policy beyond the need to articulate the diversity of societal preferences and to press government ... to heed these concerns."<sup>xxxvii</sup> This type of legislature needs enough capacity to critically review policy developed externally and to sometimes refine initiatives of the government (the best examples are typical Westminster-type legislatures such as those found in the UK or Canada).<sup>xxxviii</sup> If policies could be thought of as rocks, to employ a simple analogy, this type of legislature hopes to influence *how* the rocks are moved once it has been decided *what* rocks are to be moved by some other governing body.<sup>xxxix</sup> This signifies the difference between assessing policy and making policy.

Finally, there is the transformative legislature; considered to be the most rare.<sup>xl</sup> This type of representative body both represents society with a view to giving stakeholders a voice in policy debates and at the same time helps to make policy directly (the clearest example would be the US Congress).<sup>xli</sup> This type of parliament has a role in deciding *what* rocks are to be moved.

The original vision of parliament in the PRSP process, and the subject of the extensive audit comprising the first half of this analysis, would sit towards the end of the continuum associated with rubber stamp legislatures. There were minor features, such as allowance for deliberation of inputs, that suggest arena legislature properties but are too limited in scope. This type of legislature does not even influence *how* the rocks are moved. The subsequent annex of the PRSP-SB that seeks to redress the poor treatment of parliament contained properties that distinctly placed the institution towards the end of the spectrum associated with transformative legislatures.

The shift from one end of the continuum to the other, from having rubber stamp properties to transformative properties, marks a significant leap. This is all the more true when one factors in criticisms that parliament is not even equipped to handle rubber stamp duties – making the shift to the transformative type of legislature all the more bold a move. It would appear that in the rush to redress the underutilization of parliament in the PRSP-SB, several of the proposals in the annex attempted to maximize the opportunity by demanding that parliaments take a place with the executive in policy formulation.

The difficulty with this leap is that no detailed road map is provided for such a transition and more importantly, no guiding logic is provided for making such a shift. Of course, the annex attempts to provide this by laying out how such a shift reinforces the core principles of the PRSP process itself. But the question becomes whether this motivation alone suffices from the perspective of parliamentary development within the PRSP process. What is generated by such an approach is a rather hobbled together set of prescriptions with little substantive reasoning behind them and a seemingly naïve hope that demanding such a role of parliament will immediately necessitate its capacitation for fulfilling the proposed functions.

To make the point clearer, a small comparison is in order. If the issue of public expenditure management is looked at in the PRSP process, it is evident that not only are the most basic budgeting and budget implementation functions described in explicit detail, but that the underpinning logic is a neo-liberal economic policy outlook. The preface of the PRSP-SB states that:

An effective poverty reduction strategy would be expected to: (a) be prepared by the country; (b) *focus on faster and broad-based economic growth, which requires macroeconomic stability*; (c) reflect a comprehensive understanding of poverty and its determinants; (d) assist in choosing public actions that have the highest poverty impact, *which are fully costed and prioritized consistent with institutional and fiscal constraints*; and (e) *establish outcome indicators that are set and monitored in an open and transparent way.*<sup>xliii</sup>

This, then, provides the underlying logic; the PRSP-SB in its entirety can be seen as driven by the neo-liberal principles cited above.

Yet, the sections on parliamentary functions and systems in the annex are not connected to any explicit theories, and are not operationalized in any consistent fashion, if at all. Therefore, you have a situation where simply being a transformative legislature is considered an ideal. So, the annex states that public participation should be channeled through parliamentary committees, and that these should then feed into processes whereby parliament can directly input into PRSP development, which is effectively policy-making. The glaring omission here are the necessary details for how and why this is to happen. Instead, loose references to inclusiveness and country ownership and allusions to democratic ideals are supposed to suffice.

In the existing body of literature and work on parliamentary development, the most alarming trend is one espousing a maximum role for parliament. This often means demanding that parliament shift on the continuum to being transformative. This is done, as shown in the annex, without any concrete justification or seeming appreciation for present parliamentary ineffectiveness.

A logic driving parliamentary oversight is needed. This logic must be connected to more explicit values and theories. This must then inform a framework for the concrete operationalization of parliamentary functions and systems in a manner consistent with the underlying principles and values. The neo-liberal, economics-oriented bureaucrats are able to point to well-debated theories and values, which they use to propose concrete

decision-making systems and budget formulation functions. Those dedicating themselves to parliamentary development must begin to take the same approach in order to begin building the same degree of legitimacy for their policy proposals, particularly if such proposals call for parliament's inclusion in policy-making and budgeting structures. They can no longer shirk the responsibility of committing to concrete recommendations and firm commitments to theories of democracy. In other words, parliamentary development policy makers must demonstrate that their recommendations are not based on lofty ideals and intuitive sense, but on concrete ideals reflected in theories and demonstrably manifested in the systems and functions of democratic institutions such as parliament.

**A New Oversight Paradigm:**

Since 1998, the Gauteng Provincial Legislature in South Africa has been asking very direct questions about the nature and purpose of parliamentary oversight. A base of research work and reports were developed and by mid-2000, the Gauteng Legislature was able to put forth a concrete logic to guide its oversight function – one grounded particularly in budgetary oversight.

*A Guiding Logic for Parliamentary Oversight*

This logic is reflected in an algebraic expression, “to ensure not only that it might endure in its simplest and most understandable form, but also that it [remain] versatile enough to be built upon over time.”<sup>xliii</sup> The expression is rendered as follows and hereafter will be referred to simply as the ‘oversight equation’<sup>xliv</sup>:

$$P_t \Rightarrow \sum_{i=1}^5 K_{it}; c_{it}; S_{it} \approx \sum_{i=1}^5 R_{i,t+n}$$

Where:

*P* = the policy framework which defines *priorities*; this infers, in terms of  $\Rightarrow$ , a direct relationship between the policy framework and financial inputs and service outputs that follow

*i* = the particular budget programme concerned; in the case of this presentation of the equation, it is assumed that five programmes exist

*K* = capital stock and budgeted capital expenditure which are *inputs*

*c* = budgeted current expenditure which is an *input*

*S* = service *outputs*

*R* = results and *outcomes*

*t* = is a variable for time

Although this is not reflected in the equation, it is essential to note that it is designed to run cyclically. It is also worth noting that although the, “variables may be loosely based on an economist’s basic production function, the equation was never rendered in these terms. Instead, the equation [is] rendered in a manner designed to draw attention to its function as an equilibrium.”<sup>xlv</sup> It is important to understand the reasoning of the ‘oversight equation’ and the process to which it contributes. The oversight logic:



Was presented in such a manner that it could form the basis of a comprehensive and systematic, yet perfectly simple, method according to which the legislature might hold the provincial government to account for the state of service delivery in the province. The model suggested that in the public sector particular outcomes (*R*) are to be understood as being a function of inputs (in this case capital (*K*) and current (*c*) spending, where current spending includes the cost of labour) as well as the service outputs (*S*). However, the quantities, costs and time-scales associated with the achievement of these outcomes (*R*) are predicated on existing public policy frameworks as manifest by individual departmental budget programmes (*P*). As such, outcomes, and by implication also service outputs, are not empirically efficient, but ought to be efficient in terms of the requirements of public policy. In short, input quantities in *K* and *c*, and service outputs in *S*, must be determined to be consistent with the requirements of *P* and necessary for the achievement of *R*.<sup>xlvi</sup>

The portfolio committee receiving a presentation on a departments' budget will have to subjectively assess the relationship between *P* and *R*. Discussion on these two variables reflects the fundamental essence and practicability of the 'oversight equation'. It recognizes the need to have the core components, priorities and outcomes, be politically determined (in contrast to the more technocratic processes pre-determining other variables). Thus, the deliberations focusing on the relationship between *P* and *R* is referred to as the 'politically negotiated equilibrium'.

For those having immersed themselves in either public expenditure management or the PRSP process itself, something of the 'oversight equation' may seem familiar. This is because the 'oversight equation' is predicated on an executive that is operating within an outcomes-oriented, performance-based policy-making and budgeting framework. The equation in essence describes a set of expectations regarding the variables: priorities, inputs, outputs, and outcomes (see annex A for a diagrammatic representation of the equation). Recall that one of the principles of the PRSP process quoted from the "Preface" of the PRSP-SB requires participating countries to identify and be guided by outcomes. Between the two chapters of the PRSP-SB most directly related to monitoring and evaluation, it is not difficult to grasp the outcomes orientation of the PRSP process. For indicators, the PRSP-SB recommends four types: inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact.<sup>xlvii</sup> In this case, the category of impact effectively refers to a reassessment of the policy environment upon implementation of a given programme and therefore is equivalent to the 'priorities' (*P*) variable of the 'oversight equation'.

A review of the PRSP process commissioned by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development reaffirmed the outcomes orientation of the process. In the review, the authors state that the process is still grounded in the idea of conditional based assistance by the IFIs. The innovation is that the conditionality is based on "in-country processes."<sup>xlviii</sup> They go on to write that the, "process conditionality is, in turn, a means of opening up discussion among stakeholders within developing countries about ways and means of addressing poverty reduction goals that are: [...] more performance based or outcomes oriented in the way they allocate resources."<sup>xlix</sup>

The `oversight equation' is predicated on an outcomes oriented policy development framework because of legislation in South Africa that shifted budgeting principals in the same direction as the PRSP process. This coincidence provides the basis for adoption of the `oversight equation' by PRSP-participating countries. The only innovation here for oversight systems is that the method of policy formulation guiding the executive has been appropriated by the legislature for structuring its oversight function.

### *The Budget Cycle*

Earlier it was mentioned that the `oversight equation' was meant to operate cyclically. This is achieved when parliamentary committees apply it during the budget cycle. The budget cycle will be developed from the references made in the PRSP-SB to stages where parliament can exercise oversight. By using the PRSP-SB, it is hoped that these stages can serve as a lowest common denominator and should not limit the number of stages desired in any one jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

Recall the “idealized” budget cycle presented in the chapter of the sourcebook on public spending, which identified a role for parliament in passing the budget, and approving the audited accounts after the Auditor-General has presented them to the legislature. The chapter on governance also makes reference to the submission of an annual report by the executive to the legislature to explain performance in the context of the audited figures – once again reaffirming parliament’s `inputs-oriented' oversight function. Nonetheless, these stages will be used as the budget cycle.<sup>li</sup> Although instead of the limited `inputs-oriented' oversight work prescribed by the PRSP-SB, the proposed `oversight equation' will be applied at each stage of the budget cycle. Therefore, the equation will be used during analysis of the executive’s budget, annual report, and during reviews of the executive’s audited accounts.

When the budget is presented to the legislature, the `oversight equation' will require the executive to explain how it determined its priorities – the variable *P*. This is to be done before any discussion of the resources dedicated to the priorities. In so doing, the executive will have to produce the data it used to justify why one priority outweighs another and why a priority may have been removed from the executive’s list. The detailed revelation of the data on priorities, uncomplicated by technical issues of the budgeted resources for each priority, allows the legislature to focus attention on society’s needs. During this stage, members of civil society ranging from research institutes to community-based organizations will be given the opportunity to present the data they have on the relevant priorities and to put forth alternative conceptions of the policy environment.<sup>lii</sup> This allows the committee to independently verify the robustness of the executive’s data regime. If there are significant differences between the executive’s data and that from civil society sources, it will remain incumbent upon the executive to reassure the legislature about the quality of its information. The most important point at this stage is to avoid confusing legislators with complicated technical details stemming from the budget (a technique often used by the executive in avoiding difficult lines of questioning).

The next step will be for the executive to provide the outcomes it aspires to in relation to the identified priorities. It must try to justify these outcomes on the basis of the discussion on priorities. This becomes the basis for the 'politically negotiated equilibrium' mentioned earlier. The legislature can assess the outcomes desired by the executive directly in relation to priorities in a democratic, transparent, and uncomplicated fashion. At this stage of the discussions, the executive and legislature must also discuss the outcomes indicators being used by the executive to measure the impact of programmes on priorities. Although the 'oversight equation' does not absolutely require a parliamentary say in budget development (its role is simply of a monitoring and evaluation nature) it does require agreement between the executive and legislature on the indicators selected. This ensures that any future disagreement on the government's performance cannot be undermined by alternating and inconsistent use of indicators.<sup>liii</sup>

Only then, after the discussion on the essence of the executive's budget, would attention shift to discussing inputs and outputs. This, obviously, is where the technicalities of a budget may be unpacked. Discussion on inputs must demonstrate how the current and capital expenditure allocations of the budget produce the outputs generating the outcomes needed to meet the priorities of the budget.

The discussion of priorities and outcomes is referred to as 'programme evaluation'. This connotes an emphasis on the macro-level issues that must be subjected to scrutiny by society's elected officials. The emphasis is on the less-technical, admittedly more emotive issue of a nation's priorities and what they expect the government to achieve. The latter discussion, on inputs and outputs, is referred to as 'budget analysis'. This suggests the 'oversight equations' emphasis on the invariably more technical details around budgeting (see annex A). This process allows the legislature to determine whether priorities adequately drive inputs and outputs in order to attain the desired outcomes and produce the desired equilibrium that is the essence of the 'oversight equation'. At all times, the overriding concern is that priorities, inputs, and outputs remain in a satisfactory balance with outcomes.

At the annual report stage, the legislature will begin with a discussion on the realization of the department's projected outputs that were presented during the budget for the relevant financial year. Then the executive must present the data on the outcomes being realized using outcomes indicators agreed upon during the budget review stage of the budget cycle. Only after a discussion on the status of outputs and outcomes will discussion shift to the implications for priorities and inputs. The fluctuations in outcomes, positive or negative, demand an adjustment of priorities. Any failure to produce the projected outputs necessitates an analysis of the management and application of inputs (current and capital expenditure) with a view to overcoming the obstacles faced by the departments in resource utilization. Civil society sources will also be provided the opportunity to present their own data at this stage, fulfilling the independent information verification required by the 'oversight equation'.

The Auditor-General's report shifts emphasis to inputs by examining the financial management of departments. Any problems evidenced in the audited accounts of the

executive have direct implications for outputs. For example, the failure to use certain resources because of poor planning means the outputs for one or more programmes were not fully realized. Failure to produce the projected outputs prevents realization of the needed outcomes (at least as a consequence of the government's efforts). This represents a state of imbalance in the equilibrium with negative implications for poverty alleviation. Civil society sources should also be invited to this stage of the process as an empowering measure. It will expose them to the area of government operations that seldom is overseen by society and help them to better understand issues of governance and performance in relation to their interests.

It is possible for a state of imbalance in the equilibrium to represent something positive. For example, savings in a given programme realized by efficiency on the part of programme managers, without compromising the quality of the outputs or the outcomes, indicates that effectiveness has also not been compromised. In this situation, the 'oversight equation' highlights praiseworthy performance by a department. In this way, the 'oversight equation' is unbiased in revealing exemplary, mediocre, and poor performance by the executive.

At this point it is worth reemphasizing the subtle shifts in focus of the 'oversight equation' during the three stages of the budget cycle presented here. During the budget presentation stage, the focus began with priorities and all else followed. At the annual report stage, the focus is on outputs and then outcomes to inform the assessment on priorities and inputs. Finally, the Auditor-General's reports draw attention to inputs as the basis for assessing the other variables. This reflects the iterative nature of the 'oversight equation' in monitoring and evaluating all the variables of concern in the budgeting process.

It is not possible here to operationalize such an oversight system fully. A description of relationships between the finance committee, public accounts committee and, portfolio committees overseeing the work of particular departments is beyond the scope of this analysis.<sup>liv</sup> Instead, what has been operationalized is the system of oversight whether done by one committee (e.g. finance committee and/or poverty reduction committee) or by employing all the committees of the legislature in a comprehensive fashion. Despite this qualification, it is worth noting that such empirically rigorous oversight work will likely mean it is beyond the capabilities of one committee and will require a collective effort of some sort.

With the proposed 'oversight equation' and budget cycle model for parliamentary oversight in place, it is worth returning to the annex on parliament and the PRSP process discussed earlier for comparative purposes. Numerous recommendations within the annex reinforce the aspirations of the proposed oversight model presented here. This is most true of the participatory processes recommended in the annex. For example, the annex states that parliaments can serve as a "natural inlet" for organizations representing the poor by allowing them to testify before committees. This is exactly what was recommended in Gauteng, South Africa in 2000, but guided, as stated above, by the logic of the 'oversight equation'.<sup>lv</sup> What is missing in the annex is an appreciation for the

context in which such an activity is to take place. It signifies the inconsistency arising from indecision on whether to espouse an arena or transformative legislature for the PRSP process.

The 'oversight equation' provides these recommendations with a firm logic, giving them greater meaning in relation to the oversight process. Nonetheless, the 'oversight equation' stops well-short of producing the type of legislature that can make policy or develop a budget. It is simply designed to capacitate the legislature to ask meaningful questions about the executive's operations and subsequently produce substantive, well-structured, comprehensive oversight reports. The executive, for a number of reasons, will hopefully begin to take cognizance of these reports and feel pressured to begin factoring in the oversight work of parliament when developing and implementing budgets. This gives parliament a unique, but practicable role in the budget process.

Thus, this paper puts forth a more modest vision for parliamentary oversight work; yet, it will also require resources and parliamentary capacitation. It puts forth a modest vision underpinned by a coherent logic and a practicable cycle for budgetary oversight. This 'modest vision', on the other hand, is intended to build the level of awareness, sophistication in decision-making systems, and institutional identity needed for a systematic slide along the continuum from rubber stamp legislature to effective arena legislature to transformative legislature. No humility, meekness or apprehensiveness should be gleaned from this statement. The proposed oversight model presented here is thoroughly associated with the arena legislature classification, but it is deemed a necessary evolutionary step in becoming a transformative legislature in the future. In this way, this analysis hopes to serve as stepping stone to the grander role proposed for legislatures contained in the pages of the PRSP-SB annex, 'Parliament and the PRSP Process'.

The question that follows from the preceding paragraphs necessarily becomes, 'What does this all mean then for eliminating the perceived democratic deficit, if all that is generated are meaningful questions and improved committee oversight reports?' This is an entirely valid question and helps to place this analysis in context. The assumption here is that alternative proposals seeking to eliminate the democratic deficit by making parliament a full partner in policy-making and budgeting are imprudent and impracticable. In other words, the leap across the continuum from rubber stamp to transformative legislature is unreasonable and likely unrealizable.

Giving such a proactive role to legislatures in the budget process immediately compels attention to the legislature's resources for fulfilling such a function. The amount of resources and professional staffing needed to empower a legislature for such work is phenomenal. In western democracies the model has been the Congressional Budget Office used in the United States.<sup>lvi</sup> As mentioned above, the United States Congress is also a standard example of a transformative legislature. In an era where well-established, centuries-old democracies are deemed to be in a state of decline and relegated to "debating clubs",<sup>lvii</sup> what confidence in parliament is there to make this sudden leap? When this consideration is applied to nascent democracies, perhaps just emerging from

civil war, dictatorship, or other debilitating conditions, it seems all the more unlikely that resources would be suddenly set aside for such parliamentary development based on opaque references to democracy.

There is one last dimension to the question of reducing the democratic deficit of the PRSP process. It is entirely conceivable that in this proposed method for parliamentary oversight, the executive may choose to entirely ignore parliamentary committee oversight reports on the budget, annual report or Auditor-General reports. In such a case, no degree of interaction is taking place between budget formulation and parliamentary oversight processes. This reflects a complete disregard for parliament. Such an eventuality is not indicative of a poor oversight system, but instead a level of contempt for democracy by the executive or governing party. This would suggest the need for policies on democracy-building that spill-over into much more fundamental areas of governance than simply parliamentary oversight. Such a blatant demonstration of contempt for parliament should serve as cue for citizens and policy makers within the major IFIs that democracy is being undermined.

#### *A Theory Giving Meaning to the Proposed Oversight Regime*

Having put forth a logic to guide parliamentary oversight in the form of the 'oversight equation', and identified a minimal budget cycle in which it can be applied, one critical task remains. Without drawing explicit connections between the proposed oversight framework and theories of democracy, the proposals would suffer and falter due to the absence of any explicit theories to give them meaning. Once again, it is worth recalling that systems and functions of public expenditure management seen in the PRSP-SB are intimately connected to conceptions of neo-liberal economic paradigms and theories. They give meaning to every requirement and suggestion within the PRSP-SB related to the management of state funds. The oversight paradigm proposed here requires the same connections to ideas of democracy in order to give it meaning. Without this meaning, oversight work is void of a deeper relevance and it would betray a level of intellectual slothfulness by simply assuming that budgetary oversight by parliament is necessary, as though it were something on a 'democracy shopping list'.

Connecting the oversight paradigm to theories of democracy also demonstrates to formulators of the PRSP-SB and policy makers of the PRSP process that theories of democracy and notions about parliament in the governance framework are not irreconcilable with the needs for concrete proposals and operationalization in a systematic and coherent fashion. These technocrats, for lack of a better name, cannot be derided for having this perception because so little has been done to link abstract democratic values and theories with institutional design proposals for parliamentary oversight. It rests in the hands of those concerned with ideas of democracy to make the bold recommendations about institutional design and connect them to theory for this perception to be overcome.

The theoretical framework that gives meaning to the proposed 'oversight equation' is embedded in literature on deliberative democracy. For some, the definition of deliberative democracy is minimalist. Some take it for granted that most western polities are "imperfectly deliberative", pointing to, "the norm that statutes and administrative

actions ought to be the result of deliberative consideration of alternatives according to public values.”<sup>lviii</sup> This type of definition is avoided here particularly because the desire to support something as concrete as the ‘oversight equation’ requires concrete theoretical application. Two sources were drawn upon almost exclusively in defining what is meant by deliberative democracy. Each was chosen because it focused attention on relevant areas where deliberative democracy could be applied: parliament and multicultural societies.<sup>lix</sup>

One feature of deliberative democracy is its requirement for having, “citizens rationally evaluate the reasons for, and implications of, policy alternatives in open public forums designed to incorporate the perspectives of all members of society. Collective decisions do not result merely by aggregating the pre-existing desires of citizens; rather members of the polity attempt to influence each other’s opinions by engaging in public dialogue.”<sup>lx</sup> This element of deliberative democracy gives credence to the ‘oversight equations’ emphasis on a rational system for assessing the decision-making process conducted by the executive in the formulation of budget plans. In this way, emphasis is placed on, “the importance to effective democracy of fair and open community deliberation about the merits of competing political arguments.”<sup>lxi</sup>

What is also recognized by deliberative democracy in this context is that many societies – especially those in Africa – are culturally pluralistic. A theoretical guidepost for ‘societal deliberation’ such as deliberative democracy can help to overcome the limitations created by most western political philosophy, which often assumes a “culturally homogenous body politic.”<sup>lxii</sup> Failure to address these issues has serious implications for the legitimacy of the state and government in the eyes of communities feeling excluded. This often erodes democratic virtues and social cohesion.<sup>lxiii</sup>

In this way, deliberative democracy must be seen as a theory very much connected to processes of nation-building by demanding open, inclusive, and transparent forms of societal debate. “Character traits associated with democratic citizenship, such as mutual understanding among the members of the political community, are cultivated when pride of place is granted to public deliberation, which promotes political discourse in which people learn to see the world from the perspective of others.”<sup>lxiv</sup> The ‘oversight equation’ and the type of deliberation described during the stages of the budget cycle, is exactly designed to allow all stakeholders to engage in a forum that brings together officials, representatives, bureaucrats and civil society in a structured environment that marshals deliberations in a fashion geared to maximize its relevance to policy makers. This can reinforce belief in the utility of societal dialogue by providing the space and opportunity to put forth differing views meaningfully.

The ‘oversight equation’ also shatters any attempt to mold or limit the scope of parliamentary oversight by requiring deliberation on all variables factored into budget and policy-making. For John Uhr, this fits into the call by Thomas Paine to restrain the executive in the corrupt application of power that serves to keep the legislature dependent and meek.<sup>lxv</sup> By institutionalizing oversight of the budget in a consistent fashion over years, the initiative is placed in the hands of the legislature to follow through in fulfilling

this function. The executive may still deny parliament the information or even access to ministers, but not without surrendering a high degree of its legitimacy in the process.

In exploring the application of deliberative democracy in the context of parliament, acknowledgement of the significance of budgets is not lost. In fact, “money is indeed at the root of parliament’s interest in the public accountability of government, deriving from parliament’s historic responsibility for the constitutional control over public expenditure and government access to the revenues of taxation.”<sup>lxvi</sup> While the ‘oversight equation’ has wider applicability than just budget figures, it is nonetheless structured with a view to focusing parliament’s attention in the area of budgetary oversight.

Deliberative democracy also holds that in the deliberative process, means of empowering the weakest of participants must be facilitated. Without this element, especially in multicultural societies, the competition between the weak and the strong will likely perpetuate pernicious patterns of behaviour when one group feels it is at a disadvantage. The negative effects of actions taken in many PRSP countries before democracy was introduced cannot be understated:

long-standing legacies of oppression introduce profound cultural and psychological elements which may hinder the persuasive proficiency of certain cultural minorities in public deliberation. Additionally, entrenched suspicions and resentments, not to mention outright hatred, between cultural groups can distort the dialogical process and make it difficult for them to engage in collective deliberations which presume a high degree of civility and public magnanimity.<sup>lxvii</sup>

Jorge Valadez refers to the process of empowerment of the weaker elements of society as “epistemological egalitarianism.”<sup>lxviii</sup> In his work, the scope of epistemological egalitarianism is quite broad and can be connected to the issues of socio-economic empowerment through education programmes. In the comparatively myopic outlook of this paper, it will be applied to the empowerment of weaker elements, such as political parties and community-based organizations. The ‘oversight equation’ and the substance and structure of deliberations it entails throughout the budget cycle are designed to generate a bare minimum of information, in as simplified a manner as possible, for practical usage by those exposed to it.

The systematic and consistent breakdown of the budget in the fashion demanded by the ‘oversight equation’ provides for a high degree of transparency and simplicity in budget-related information. What it cannot do, unfortunately, is provide the will or initiative needed by members of parliament and civil society to use the information and diligently engage in budgetary oversight.

The information generated by the ‘oversight equation’ might be thought of metaphorically as an *oversight floor*, or bare minimum, with which any group should be able to hold the government to account satisfactorily. For members of parliament representing the weakest elements of society, this *oversight floor* might in actuality represent the shattering of glass ceilings that presently prevent them from engaging in effective oversight. Such glass ceilings are often due to inadequate capacity to generate the type of information produced by the ‘oversight equation’, and the lack of opportunity to utilize such information as is provided by the budget cycle.



Public participation is also central to ideas of deliberative democracy.<sup>lxix</sup> The 'oversight equation' and the budget cycle demand a high degree of public participation. The information demand of the 'oversight equation' is quite heavy and depends critically on public and expert inputs as part of a process of independent information verification. No assumptions are made that civil society information is more robust than departmental information. Yet, it remains incumbent upon the departments to justify the veracity of their own information when confronted by challenges to such from the public.

This process is also intended to generate the motivation for widespread public participation. In the process of mediated exchange between the executive and civil society facilitated by the 'oversight equation', it is hoped that the openness will build the confidence needed to encourage greater public interest and participation in budget oversight.

Ultimately, the measure of success of the 'oversight equation' and proposed budget cycle must not be limited to whether parliament suddenly begins to produce a certain quality of oversight reports during the budget cycle, or begin to tangibly impact on the executive's budget development process. More importantly, as the institution embodying the hopes and aspirations for a democratic future, parliaments employing the 'oversight equation' should be judged for their contribution to a polity's commitment to discuss and deliberate internal differences with words and not weapons. "Deliberation should be seen as a joint social activity which succeeds not when all participants agree with the reasons for the deliberative outcome, but when they are willing to continue their ongoing cooperation."<sup>lxxx</sup> In the case of parliament and budgetary oversight, the 'oversight equation' will be assessed by its ability to generate confidence in participants that the deliberations were worthwhile and not worth defecting from for some other method of influencing the allocation of resources in society. These alternative routes in many PRSP countries can range from corruption to state seizure and at times, outright violent means.

### **Criticisms and Conclusion:**

As this paper initially sought to make a contribution to the debate on parliament's role in the governance framework and poverty alleviation, addressing potential criticisms will be used to conclude the argument with a view to pre-empting potential responses to the proposals made.

Perhaps the most simplistic, albeit often employed, means used to dismiss parliament's claims to a role is the lack of capacity. This is not entirely unjustified. Parliaments throughout long standing democracies lack the capacity to involve themselves in the issues of budgeting and comprehensive oversight due to the complexity involved.<sup>lxxxi</sup> Unfortunately, this criticism seems to be reserved unjustly for parliament while almost every other institution in the governance framework is allowed to escape it.

This same criticism can often be made against the ministry of finance in a country, the office of the president or prime minister and the numerous executive posts. Yet, the whole assumption is that somehow the ministry of finance can reform and assume the heavier burden of work while parliament must languish, and stagnate in development

terms. The aspiration here, is that policy makers driving the PRSP process will see parliamentary development along the lines of budgetary oversight as a partner in the process of developing the skills in the various departments and in the executive. Outside observers from multilateral institutions stand to gain as much from such a rigorous and empirical form of oversight as the citizens of the societies involved – although the main purpose is to empower the participating societies, and not the lenders and technocrats of the major IFIs.

This is not to ignore the fact that many will require some degree of capacitation to meet the demands of such an oversight regime, but it also provides a succinct logic to plan development assistance for parliament.

Another variation of the same criticism is that parliament will not get the information needed in order to operationalize this type of oversight. This reality simply reveals the emptiness of the criticism about the incapacity of legislatures to do this kind of work. If parliament is not receiving the type of information commensurate with the demands of the `oversight equation' it is merely an indication that departments are not budgeting in the agreed upon method. It may be safely judged that departments are performing inadequately in the planning stage of the budgeting process and are themselves having capacity problems when inadequate information is received from a department. Poor or non-existent information is also indicative of a potential disregard for transparency. This requires a report from the committee explicitly identifying the matter. For example, if a department did not provide the data used to justify its priorities or if the Auditor-General could not submit reports on time because a department could not provide financial data, a committee's oversight report must simply identify this as a failure of the department. This is not without precedent. John Uhr's own treatment of deliberative democracy and parliament cites an instance where an oversight committee could not get the data to do its work. The committee's report stated, "The lack of adequate documentation means that the parliament cannot properly assess the Minister's performance and makes it impossible to hold the Minister accountable for her actions."<sup>lxvii</sup> This type of report must be deemed the most grave and requires the intercession of parliament and the major donor countries to assist the relevant department(s) in overcoming the problem.

Another issue is the absence of adequate time to allow for parliament's oversight work to be heeded in the budget development process. Disbelieving that any influence over the budget is possible in the proposed budget cycle framework is often the basis of demands for automatic parliamentary inclusion in budget formulation structures. In many respects this criticism is true, and the proposals made here do little to directly address the matter. The `oversight equation' and budget cycle are based on modest aspirations. The hope is to have a form of tacit influence over the budget as parliament's oversight work becomes more penetrative and robust and is complimented by increased public participation, which should add to pressures on the executive to heed parliament's budgetary oversight work as reflected in committee reports. It can be thought of as a process of influence akin to osmosis.

Another area of criticism asserts that such a rigorous oversight framework will not have the necessary political will to be implemented. Once again, this criticism reflects the same pressures faced in other areas of government development, but for some reason the argument is allowed to stand when applied to parliament. This particular development challenge is avoided by the international community and particularly by the IFIs. The new demands placed on the ministry of finance and other departments by the PRSP process also require vast reserves of political will. It is the responsibility of all involved to meet the same challenge in respect to the development of parliament. The pattern of avoidance of firm commitments to develop parliament evidenced thus far reflect a bias towards technocratic development at the expense of democratic development.

Perhaps the most important criticism, one that conveniently serves to help conclude this paper, is that the essence of the `oversight equation` and the work it entails may alter the nature of parliament, making it into some form of department. This criticism is grounded in the misperception that the `oversight equation` somehow privileges technocratic, empirically based oversight work at the expense of meaningful deliberation of society's needs and priorities.<sup>lxxiii</sup> In some respects this criticism holds true. The `oversight equation` and budget cycle are designed to render the budgetary oversight process exponentially more empirical. It also serves to institutionalize the oversight function, making it less dependent on the particular members of parliament at any given point in time and more dependent on the consistency of the institution in ensuring accountability.

This criticism understands that some policy issues are beyond the scope of resolution based on empirical analysis. The causal chain of unknowns and infinite data needs make it impracticable to believe that the `oversight equation` can provide answers to everything even if enough resources are applied. This is where parliament assumes its truest function; providing the political space for debate about the questions that empirical analysis cannot answer.<sup>lxxiv</sup> Parliament, in this vision, is a lever with the capacity to create a debate without being guided by the government or the executive.<sup>lxxv</sup>

To this criticism, the only rejoinder is that in rendering the oversight function more empirical and explicit it may be possible to empower the representatives and the institution to define what those areas of debate are and what it is a society is unable to resolve through empirically-based strategies. This criticism also overlooks the primacy given to the `politically negotiated equilibrium` by virtue of the premium it places on the `Priorities` and `Outcomes` variables. The inputs and outputs variables are initially kept separate from discussion of priorities and outcomes with a view to ensuring political space is provided for a meaningful discussion on what directions society would like to take. The type of oversight prescribed here aspires to be labeled "deliberative oversight." This reflects its desire to be a force in allowing parliament to create political space for debate on society's highest priorities in a meaningful fashion.

Parliament is an institution unto itself in the governance framework and this type of deliberation reflects this fact. What has been proposed above may hopefully be the stepping-stone towards a brighter future for the institution and thus for democracy.

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- <sup>i</sup> Gunther, Magnus and Conrad Winn eds. House of Commons Reform, Ottawa: Parliamentary Internship Program, 1991. P. 206.
- <sup>ii</sup> Ibid. P. 208-9.
- <sup>iii</sup> Schick, Alan. "Can National Legislatures Regain An Effective Voice in Budget Policy?" conference paper presented on January 24, 2001. 15.
- <sup>iv</sup> Norton, Phillip. Does Parliament Matter? Hertfordshire: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993. P. 2.
- <sup>v</sup> Ibid. P. 4-5.
- <sup>vi</sup> These three principles are taken from The Parliamentary Centre and World Bank's publication, Parliamentary Accountability and Good Governance: A Parliamentarian's Handbook. 2001. [www.parlcent.ca/publications/sourcebooktext.pdf](http://www.parlcent.ca/publications/sourcebooktext.pdf).
- <sup>vii</sup> The International Budget Project. "A Guide to Budget Work for NGOs". [www.internationalbudget.org/resources/guide/guide.doc](http://www.internationalbudget.org/resources/guide/guide.doc).
- <sup>viii</sup> Parliamentary Centre, "Handbook on Parliamentarians and Policies to Reduce Poverty", 2002, <http://www.parlcent.ca/publications/hpprp.pdf>. (in partnership with WBI, CIDA, and IDRC). P. 25. (emphasis mine).
- <sup>ix</sup> Parliamentary Network on the World Bank. "Parliament and PRSPs" March 02, 2003. <http://www.pnowb.org/html/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=9&mode=thread&order=0&thold=0>.
- <sup>x</sup> Fozzard, A., M. Holmes, J. Klugman, and K. Withers. "Public Spending for Poverty Reduction" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/chapters/pubspend/pubspend.htm>. P. 5.
- <sup>xi</sup> Ibid. P. 5.
- <sup>xii</sup> World Bank. "Comprehensive Development Framework". <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/PROJECTS/STRATEGIES/CDF/0,,pagePK:60447~theSitePK:140576,00.html>.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Tikare, S, D. Youssef, P. Donnelly-Roark, and P. Shah. "Organizing Participatory Processes in the PRSP" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/chapters/particip/orgpart.htm>. P. 14.
- <sup>xiv</sup> Ibid. P. 15.
- <sup>xv</sup> The Parliamentary Centre and World Bank's publication, Parliamentary Accountability and Good Governance: A Parliamentarian's Handbook. 2001. [www.parlcent.ca/publications/sourcebooktext.pdf](http://www.parlcent.ca/publications/sourcebooktext.pdf). P. 11.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Ibid. P. 27.
- <sup>xvii</sup> L'eaugier, Frannie A. "Parliaments and Poverty: Building the Capacity to Tackle Problems" in The Parliamentarian 2, 2002. <http://www.worldbank.org/wbi/documents/ParliamentarianIssue2for2002.pdf>. P. 180.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Girishankar, N, L. Hammegren, M. Holmes, S. Knack, B. Levy, J. Litvack, N. Manning, R. Messick, J. Rinne, and H. Sutch. "Governance and Poverty Reduction" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/chapters/governance/govern.htm>. P. 18.
- <sup>xix</sup> Ibid. P. 18.
- <sup>xx</sup> Klugman, Jeni. "Overview" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://poverty.worldbank.org/library/view/5301/>. P. 20.
- <sup>xxi</sup> Ibid. P. 23.
- <sup>xxii</sup> Fozzard, A., M. Holmes, J. Klugman, and K. Withers. "Public Spending for Poverty Reduction" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://www.worldbank.org/poverty/strategies/chapters/pubspend/pubspend.htm>. P. 2.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> Ibid. P. 7.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> Prensushi, G, G. Rubio, and K. Subbarao. "Monitoring and Evaluation" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://poverty.worldbank.org/library/view/4480/>. P. 4.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Ibid. P. 3.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> Ibid. P. 27.

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- <sup>xxvii</sup> The National Democratic Institute's Scott Hubli was one of two authors of an annex that sought to overcome some of the problems in the treatment of parliament by the PRSP-SB. NDI has also been very active throughout the process in advocating a different role for parliament in the PRSP process.
- <sup>xxviii</sup> Hubli, K.S. and A.P. Mandaville. "Parliaments and the PRSP Process" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://64.124.46.12/documents/prsp.pdf>. P. 3.
- <sup>xxix</sup> Ibid. P. 4.
- <sup>xxx</sup> Ibid. P. 4.
- <sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid. P. 10.
- <sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid. P. 7.
- <sup>xxxiii</sup> Ibid. P. 8.
- <sup>xxxiv</sup> Ibid. P. 11
- <sup>xxxv</sup> Johnson, John K. and Robert T Nakamura. "A Concept Paper on Legislatures and Good Governance". <http://magnet.undp.org/Docs/parliaments/Concept%20Paper%20Revised%20MAGNET.htm>.
- <sup>xxxvi</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xxxvii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xxxviii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xxxix</sup> This analogy arises from a discussion between Robert Miller, Director of the Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa, Canada and the author.
- <sup>xl</sup> Johnson, John K. and Robert T Nakamura. "A Concept Paper on Legislatures and Good Governance". <http://magnet.undp.org/Docs/parliaments/Concept%20Paper%20Revised%20MAGNET.htm>.
- <sup>xli</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xlii</sup> World Bank. "Preface" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://poverty.worldbank.org/library/view/11019/>. P. 1. (emphasis added).
- <sup>xliii</sup> Besdziek, Dirk and Michael Youash. "Measuring the Delivery of Development: A Preliminary Model for Programme and Budget Oversight in the South African Provincial Context" in Outcomes-based Governance: Assessing the Results. Karel van der Molen, Andries van Rooyen and Belinda van Wyk eds. Sandown: Heinemann Publishers, 2001. P. 54.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Ibid. P. 50.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Besdziek, Dirk and Michael Youash. "The Provincial Legislature and Poverty in Gauteng: Oversight Proposals to Monitor Poverty Alleviation" conference paper in Johannesburg, South Africa, on October 3, 2002. P. 2.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Ibid. P. 2.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Prennushi, G, G. Rubio, and K Subbarao. "Monitoring and Evaluation" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://poverty.worldbank.org/library/view/4480/> P. 6.
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Booth, David and Henry Lucas. "Desk Study of Good practice in the Development of PRSP Indicators and Monitoring Systems: Initial Review of PRSP Documentation". Commissioned by DFID. Overseas Development Institute, May 22, 2001. P. 4.
- <sup>xliv</sup> Ibid. P. 4.
- <sup>1</sup> For instance, the budget cycle might also include examination of departmental quarterly reports.
- <sup>li</sup> At this point it is important to clarify any potential problems with the application of the term "budget cycle". It is well appreciated that the budget cycle for the executive refers to the stages by which they actually develop the budget. In the context of parliament's budgetary oversight work, "budget cycle" refers to the stages where parliament receives submissions from the executive on budget-related matters.
- <sup>lii</sup> Besdziek, Dirk and Michael Youash. "Measuring the Delivery of Development: A Preliminary Model for Programme and Budget Oversight in the South African Provincial Context" in Outcomes-based Governance: Assessing the Results. Karel van der Molen, Andries van Rooyen and Belinda van Wyk eds. Sandown: Heinemann Publishers, 2001. P. 51.
- <sup>liii</sup> Ibid. P. 55.
- <sup>liv</sup> Every parliament/legislature is unique and therefore it is not possible to venture assumptions about the connections between committee structures, the operations of staff and the roles of members of parliament and office bearers. Any such work must be tailored to each legislature but guided by a deep appreciation of the 'oversight model' and budget cycle.
- <sup>lv</sup> Hubli, K.S. and A.P. Mandaville. "Parliaments and the PRSP Process" in Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Source Book. World Bank, 2001. <http://64.124.46.12/documents/prsp.pdf>. P. 7.

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- <sup>lvi</sup> Schick, Alan. "Can National Legislatures Regain An Effective Voice in Budget Policy?" conference paper presented on January 24, 2001. 15-16.
- <sup>lvii</sup> Ibid. P. 8.
- <sup>lviii</sup> Ferejohn, John. "Instituting Deliberative Democracy" in Designing Democratic Institutions. Ian Shapiro and Stephen Macedo eds. New York: New York University Press, 2000. P. 75.
- <sup>lix</sup> These books are: Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-Determination in Multicultural Societies by Jorge M. Valadez, and Deliberative Democracy in Australia: The Changing Place of Parliament by John Uhr.
- <sup>lx</sup> Valadez, Jorge M. Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-Determination in Multicultural Societies. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001. P. 5.
- <sup>lxi</sup> Uhr, John. Deliberative Democracy in Australia: The Changing Place of Parliament. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 4.
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- <sup>lxiii</sup> Ibid. P. 19.
- <sup>lxiv</sup> Ibid. P. 34.
- <sup>lxv</sup> Uhr, John. Deliberative Democracy in Australia: The Changing Place of Parliament. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 38.
- <sup>lxvi</sup> Ibid. P. 161.
- <sup>lxvii</sup> Valadez, Jorge M. Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-Determination in Multicultural Societies. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001. P. 6.
- <sup>lxviii</sup> Ibid. P. 71.
- <sup>lxix</sup> Uhr, John. Deliberative Democracy in Australia: The Changing Place of Parliament. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 11.
- <sup>lxx</sup> Valadez, Jorge M. Deliberative Democracy, Political Legitimacy, and Self-Determination in Multicultural Societies. Boulder: Westview Press, 2001. P. 59.
- <sup>lxxi</sup> Saalfeld, Thomas. "Members of parliament and governments in Western Europe: Agency relations and problems of oversight" in European Journal of Political Research 37, 2000. P. 354.
- <sup>lxxii</sup> Uhr, John. Deliberative Democracy in Australia: The Changing Place of Parliament. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. P. 156.
- <sup>lxxiii</sup> This criticism serves as a constant reminder for the author of the dangers when rendering elements of parliamentary work so formal and explicit. Bob Miller, Executive Director of the Parliamentary Centre in Ottawa has brought this point home and presents a necessary and important cautionary note in doing so.
- <sup>lxxiv</sup> This conception of parliament's role underlies the critical work and compelling ideas generated by Bob Miller of the Parliamentary Centre. Interview with Bob Miller, Director, Parliamentary Centre, Canada. December 16, 2002.
- <sup>lxxv</sup> Ibid.

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