**IFLA Section
Library and Research Services
for Parliaments**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Colleagues,

As always in summer, IFLAPARL business turns to the upcoming World Library & Information Congress (the 'WLIC'). Last year, to our great disappointment, the event was cancelled together with our associated satellite conference. This year the WLIC is back on, running on 17-19 August, but in a wholly online format. Details can be found here https://www.ifla-wlic2021.com/. IFLAPARL will be running a session in the WLIC, drawing on contributions proposed for 2020 on the theme of evidence-based policy. While there are no satellite conferences associated with the WLIC this year, IFLAPARL hopes to offer its own online conference later – in late September/early October – in partnership with the IPU. More on that as soon as details are finalised. The IFLAPARL/IPU event will provide opportunities for many colleagues to present, discuss and participate – far more than even in our traditional 'Pre-Conference'.

One element in the IFLAPARL/IPU event will be the pandemic survey that is open now – there is still time to get your response in – the survey deadline has been extended to July 13th, 2021.

IFLA currently plans a return to a WLIC in the traditional format in 2022, in Dublin. The WLIC in 2023 is planned to be a hybrid online/onsite event in Rotterdam. I would expect IFLAPARL to resume offering a satellite conference in these years but it is frankly far too uncertain a situation to make any kind of plan for IFLAPARL just yet.

The online conference format has been used to excellent effect recently by the Network of Parliamentary Libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean and the Association of Parliamentary Libraries of Asia and the Pacific. It is striking that they both opened their conferences to worldwide access and involved IFLAPARL directly – I believe that better links between the regional bodies and between them and IFLAPARL would bring great benefits to all.

Another strategic priority for IFLAPARL is to work more closely with the organisations involved in parliamentary strengthening. (You can find some work done by me on this at https://informationatwork.eu/category/service-development/parliamentary-strengthening/). In an intriguing result, respondents to the survey on the IFLAPARL conference in September voted 'parliamentary strengthening and library & research services: what works?' as the topic of greatest interest. I suspect a mixture of people who deliver parliamentary strengthening services and people who have been the subject of such programmes. This promises to be an interesting exchange.

It is good to see some kind of progress in the plans of IFLAPARL during what has been a challenging couple of years. There are many signs of growth and renewal out there. The election for the Standing Committee has shown that there is wide interest in being involved in our work, and I wish to congratulate those who are new members starting their first term, or re-elected members starting their second term, as well to as thank

those who will leave our group in August of this year. Commiserations to those who missed out on a place, but all are welcome to take part in the work of the Section – IFLAPARL runs a very open Committee with many non-members involved. The election results are included below.

The choice of Chair, Secretary and Information Coordinator will be made in July with the process being managed by IFLA Headquarters. As I come to the end of my term as Chair (in August) – and very soon to the end of my service as a member of the Standing Committee (by October) – I thank you for your support and wish my successor all the very best, with confidence that IFLAPARL is on a positive track.

Best regards,
Iain Watt, IFLAPARL Chair

IFLAPARL Standing Committee Members

Congratulations to members elected to their first term, or re-elected to their second term:
> Holger Scheerer; Karin Zaal; Sonia Bebbington; Augustin Antonio Lopez; Mary Mazanec; Janice Silveira; Julie Anderson; Fabiola Elena Rosales Salinas; Josefa Fuentes; Youlim Lee; Shuguang Zhang

Continuing members:
- Iain Watt; Ida Kelemen; Jonathan Curtis; Fatimadou Epse Bello Mohamadou; Karin Finer; Chifuyu Hiyama; Paola Mandillo; Chama Mpundy Mfula; Ellie Valentine

---

JOIN US

If you are already an IFLA Member and would like to join our Section, please go to Member Online Service to manage your membership account and join our Section:
https://members.ifla.org/membersarea/login/login.asp?type=EXTRANET

If you are not an IFLA Member, you must become one before joining any section.

More information is available at https://www.ifla.org/membership/new-members.

STAY CONNECTED

Visit the Section's website: https://www.ifla.org/services-for-parliaments , which includes links to our Action Plan, previous Newsletters, publications, meeting minutes, and more.

Join our mailing list: https://mail.iflalists.org/wws/subscribe/iflaparl

To contribute to the Newsletter, please contact IFLAPARL Secretary Sonia Bebbington (Sonia.bebbington@parl.gc.ca) or IFLAPARL Information Coordinator Ellie Valentine (infoiflaparl@gmail.com).

**IFLA Section
Library and Research Services
for Parliaments**

87th WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS

The 2021 WLIC will be held virtually this year from 17 – 19 August.

From the invitation message of Gerald Leitner, IFLA Secretary General:

> *IFLA invites you to join its first ever virtual Congress, and experience an event open and accessible across continents, time zones, and information sectors. IFLA is organising the most inclusive and accessible event in its history, bringing together professionals from across the globe to inspire best practice and engage with colleagues across the library and information field. The world has shifted significantly.*
>
> *Be a part of conversations happening at the forefront of library and information innovations: discover, discuss, present, provoke, and solve alongside industry colleagues and contribute to change and progress in the field.*
>
> *Come on a journey to expand your professional network, retool your skills or reframe your thinking. Attend events and presentations, participate in conversations and problem-solving sessions—and leave ready to inspire your sector to innovate sustainable solutions.*
>
> *IFLA WLIC is the leading international conference focused on our profession's commitment to high quality library and information services and access to information. This first IFLA virtual congress is supported by the Dutch National Committee. Act now – early bird registrations are open and sign up to our WLIC newsletter to stay informed!*

IFLAPARL will be running a session in the WLIC, drawing on contributions proposed for 2020 on the theme
**Libraries & Research Services Enable:
evidence-based practice in parliamentary library and research services**

***

IFLAPARL is also planning a Virtual Conference in collaboration with the IPU in late September/early October this year.

Many thanks to those who contributed ideas on timing and topics of interest. We are working on the programme, and more details will follow as they become available.

Note that one item of continuing interest for this conference is our services' response to the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still time to participate in the IFLAPARL pandemic survey that is open now – the survey deadline has been extended to July 13th, 2021.

News from the Documentation and Information Center – Brazil

Submitted by Janice Silveira

Highlights of the Research Service of the Documentation and Information Center

In 2021, the Research Service carried out a study of users with the aim of analyzing 691 demands sent by Deputies and political bodies of the Chamber in 2019. These demands resulted in a total of 1,119 searches. The study used data available in the CRM system of the Chamber of Deputies (Prisma). It was verified through the analyzed data that forty-nine percent of the requests were received from MP staff.

The study showed that fifty-nine percent of research requests are about legislative proposals. Of the total surveys, seventy-six percent were of medium complexity. The most requested subjects were individual parliamentary performance, human rights, minorities and citizenship, public health. Ninety-three per cent of users who answered the satisfaction survey said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service.

The Research Service starts to answer research requests from deputies and Legislative Advisors via WhatsApp Business.

Since Middle of March 2020, the Documentation and Information Center Research Service of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies started to offer a new contact tool: the WhatsApp. The service is available to MPs and MP`s staff and Legislative Advisors.

 The service aims at receiving demands and informing research results. All the demands received are registered by the research service staff in a CRM system. Most of demands are bibliographic materials, laws, bills, studies and so on. WhatsApp makes it easier for the user to send his/her demand without the need to authenticate it in the CRM system.

When a message is received our staff members register it in the CRM system for the user. Since the service is finalized, the user receives a message confirming the request is completed.

The application used is WhatsApp Business and a profile was created with the landline phone of a service unit. Automated messages were created in order to inform business hours and how to access the requested information atter the service is finalized.

Library Online Training Portfolio

Since the beginning of the pandemic and with the need to adopt remote work, the Library of the Chamber of Deputies along with the Research Service has intensified online training in bibliographic databases and expanded the dissemination of online services. The measure was necessary due to the social distancing imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Latin America and Caribbean Parliamentary Libraries: experiences, challenges and practical work during the Covid-19 pandemic" Webinar held April 29, 2021

Submitted by Janice de Oliveira E Silva Silveira, Library Director, Brazilian Chamber of Deputies

The Network of Parliamentary Libraries in Latin America and the Caribbean hosted the Webinar "Latin America and Caribbean Parliamentary Libraries: experiences, challenges and practical work during the Covid-19 pandemic" on April 29, 2021. The webinar enjoyed success with an audience of over two hundred people.

Recordings of the webinar session are available on Youtube links in the original <u>Spanish</u> and with <u>English</u> interpretation.

Some of the topics upon which the panelists reflected included:

- The impact of the pandemic on parliamentary library and research services.
- Challenges in making the shift in work practices.
- Unexpected innovations made during this time.
- Will these be permanent changes in Services' products, services, processes, structures or others as a consequence of this time?

The Knesset Research & Information Center (RIC) during the Covid-19 Pandemic – Challenges Opportunities and Successes –

Submitted by Deena Tzadok

As a global pandemic, Covid-19 has brought about challenges for research services in parliaments around the world. In view of the fact that the beginning of the Covid-19 restrictions in Israel coincided with the elections to and swearing in of the 23rd Knesset in March 2020, the Knesset RIC was faced with a **double challenge**: <u>concurrently dealing with Covid-19 related issues and welcoming a new parliament</u>.

The need to welcome and advise many new MKs,[1] and especially new Committee Chairs (including the Chair of the new Special Committee on the Novel Coronavirus) brought about heavier than usual demand from the RIC staff; this *inter alia* due to the active role the RIC plays in committee work and in supporting parliamentary oversight. However, as mentioned above, these challenges of a new Knesset coincided with the early Covid-19 restrictions, that initially included <u>significant limits on the number of staff allowed to work</u> (in the office or at home),[2] all of which made satisfying the many requests even more difficult.

---

[1] It is true that in actual fact only 5 new Knesset Members (MKs) were elected to the 23rd Knesset, but taking into account the fact that there had been two election cycles within the year prior to these elections (in April and September 2019) – there were a total of 58 MKs (out of 120) with little or no parliamentary experience at the start of the 23rd Knesset.

[2] After some time, more **employees** were allowed to work-form-home (tele-work), and then also work in the office, at least part time. The restrictions on employees fluctuated over time, depending on the spread of the virus.

Many of the **challenges** faced by the RIC as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic were similar to those faced by parliamentary research services around the world. However, the new parliament and our significant roles in committee work and in supporting parliamentary oversight of the government enhanced and intensified the challenges we faced. Our main challenges included: extensive government action in light of the emergency situation; constantly changing data and policies evolving in light of the changes; no existing body of knowledge on the disease and how to deal with it; greater demand for reliable data used to supervise government actions; higher demand for international comparisons and information on best practices from around the world; round-the-clock demand for services with short deadlines. These challenges highlighted the increased importance of RIC work, as a body assisting with parliamentary oversight of government actions, and the need for quick response times from the RIC.

A further, more specific, challenge arose from the practice (which has since been discontinued) of holding committee meetings in two separate rooms to allow for greater social distancing. This brought about a change in the dynamics of the committee discussions and RIC participation[3], and also required new skills for researchers presenting virtually, on screen, while seated in a different room from the main discussion. Alongside these challenges, Covid-19 lead to several **opportunities** for the RIC. The need for immediate information, accessible data and shortened response time has led to an evolution of products and services supplied.[4] We have realized the need for these new and evolved products and services in routine times as well, and plan to continue providing them even after the crisis.

Tele-working was not available to Knesset employees (or other public service employees in Israel) before the Covid-19 outbreak. After the beginning of restrictions, once Knesset employees were allowed to work from home, we learned that tele-working has many advantages (as well as downsides) and hope to be able to continue with it on a partial basis even after Covid-19.

In addition, the fact that most research services in parliaments were also working-from-home enabled us to develop and expand collaboration with our colleagues abroad, by using virtual platforms which became the "new normal" way of holding meetings.

We also strived to improve our online presentation skills: Our Presentation Club enables researchers to receive feedback from colleagues on presentations before presenting them to clients. During the crisis, we converted the Club to virtual format and worked on online presentation skills.

Furthermore, despite the challenges mentioned, our work surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic brought about a number of meaningful **successes**. We played a major role in public discourse through our research for parliamentarians, which is also published online and often covered by the mass media. Some of our research brought about greater transparency by the Ministry of Health. We discovered various previously unknown data which was vital to decision makers, such as the number of available ventilators, or information on the types of places most and least likely for infection.[5] Additionally, RIC research exposed errors in some of the available data and caused the authorities to reassess their information.

Regarding **MKs**, despite restrictions, no remote voting or participation in the plenary or committees was allowed, except in situations where MKs were ill or in required isolation, in which cases they were permitted to participate virtually in committee discussions (but not to vote).

[3] In routine periods, RIC researchers present their papers in the committees and are able to participate in the discussion and directly assist the Committee Chair.

[4] These include for example: shorter products (such as "points for committee discussion" and "At a Glance" papers), oral briefings to committee Chairs, and further development of podcasts and videos.

[5] This information was labeled by the press "the holy grail of data", since it was information necessary to decision-makers when discussing easing or tightening Covid-19 related restrictions in various places.

In conclusion, Covid-19 brought about challenges to the RIC – both similar to those faced by other parliamentary research services, and unique to our roles and the situation of working with inexperienced parliamentarians during this time. These challenges brought about opportunities to improve and evolve our services and remarkable successes in supplying data, information and research necessary and useful to decision makers in these critical times.

ECPRD seminar – 'Parliamentary research and libraries: A year of hope and transition'

Submitted by Annamaria Forgacs

The European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) hosted its annual conference for the research services and libraries of national parliaments from all over Europe, from Tuesday 1st to Thursday 3rd June 2021. The event, previously held in the autumn and now moved to the summer, was organised jointly with the ECPRD. Given the continuing circumstances of the pandemic, this fifth edition was once again, for the second year running, a virtual online event - although it was designed in a way that allowed for the interactive participation of the parliamentary staff involved.

This year's conference was entitled 'Parliamentary Research Services and Libraries: A year of hope and transition' and featured a number of new components in terms of both format and content. It took place over three days, rather than two, and each day had a different focus. The first day looked at issues faced by managers, while the second day centred on the needs of researchers, and the third, on those of librarians.

The conference provided a good opportunity to discuss the long-term effects of the coronavirus on working methods, products and services, and to evaluate the transformation that our services have undergone since the start of the pandemic. In addition, there were exchanges on how to transition into the post-corona world, and what that world may look like for us all in the future. The seminar brought together about 90 managers and staff from 30 countries' parliamentary research services and libraries, including guests from other G7 parliaments outside Europe (US, Canada and Japan) – which is the highest attendance we have had so far.

The conference was opened by **Rainer Wieland, Vice-President of the European Parliament,** and **Ida Kelemen, ECPRD Coordinator and Head of the Information Service at the Hungarian National Assembly**. This was followed by a conversation of experts on what is new in the EU in terms of economic recovery, foreign policy and the Conference on the Future of Europe.

Following the opening session, managers of three national parliamentary research services gave presentations. **Hodaya Kain, Director of the Research and Information Center of the Israeli Knesset,** spoke about the development of close contacts during the pandemic with clients of a new parliament. **Fotis Fitsilis, Head of Department for Scientific Documentation and Supervision at the Hellenic Parliament,** gave an overview on how to respond to clients' needs in a solely digital environment; and **Gunnar Fors, Head of Research Service of the Swedish Riksdag,** analysed how to 'measure successes' and how to evaluate crisis-born innovations.

In the afternoon, there was a Management Forum, hosted by **Anthony Teasdale, Director-General of EPRS,** with senior managers of four parliamentary research services - **Mary Mazanec, Head of US Congressional Research Service, Penny Young, Parliamentary Librarian of the UK House of Commons, Giovanni Rizzoni**, **Head of the Research Service of the Italian Chamber of Deputies,** and **Štěpán Pecháček, Head of the Parliamentary Institute at the Czech Parliament.** They discussed how the transition is carried out in their research services and what new practices and products they will keep in the post-pandemic world. The five parliaments had similar experiences during the corona crisis and they

dealt with similar challenges. The move to telework went smoother and quicker than expected, and with the help of digital services, they could serve the Members effectively. The main challenges they faced were the stability of the IT and the weakened connection of the staff to the parliament. All five managers wish to keep in the future webinars, flexible working hours and a certain degree of teleworking.

The first day ended with a speech delivered by **Klaus Welle, Secretary General of the European Parliament,** who explained how the EP protected its staff during the crisis, how it ensured business continuity and how it provided practical solidarity for the community it lives in. In addition, he spoke about the outlook for the EP post-Covid. He said that the staff is gradually returning to the offices. By the summer, 70% of the staff will be fully vaccinated. Hybrid work is being introduced, which will allow staff to work 1-3 days from home. At the plenary sitting, the presence of the MEPs will be required but hybrid meetings will be kept for instance in the case of delegations.

On the second day, the focus shifted to issues dealt with by researchers. In the morning session, **Elina Kaartinen, Head of Ex-Post Evaluation Unit, EPRS, and Claudia Lindemann, Head of Secretariat of the Committee on Economic Affairs, EP** spoke about the importance of evidence-based policy-making, while **Diarmaid O'Sullivan, Head of Socio-Economic Research, and Darren Lawlor, Senior Parliamentary Researcher of the Irish Oireachtas,** outlined how short digital papers and data visualisation can be useful for clients. **Borut Peršolja, Head of Research and Documentation Division at the Slovenian National Assembly,** ended the session by presenting the lessons learned from the crisis.

Afterwards, experts from parliamentary research services had a thematic dialogue in two parallel workshops. The first focused on climate change and the second on transatlantic relations. The second day ended with a webinar 'Working with partners', where **Nazim Belhocine, Deputy to the Director of the Europe Office of the IMF** gave a presentation on how researchers can make the best use of IMF sources.

On the last day, the central theme was the response of the parliamentary libraries to the crisis. **Susan Schlicht, Head of Information Management at the UK House of Lords Library,** talked about the parliaments' reaction to the push for digitalization. She said that the House of Lords was well prepared when the pandemic hit since all its staff had a laptop, had remote access to the management system and the database, and participated in hybrid meetings before. A number of changes were introduced in 2020 in the House of Lords Library. It began to hold virtual one-to-one trainings for sources, it bought more ebooks, obtained new press reader subscriptions, improved its website and introduced a new product - podcasts.

Franck Debié, Director of the Library of the European Parliament explained how the EP Library was opening up to the public. The Director highlighted the importance of being close to the citizens and to reinvent part of the library's business in order to stay relevant. The process of opening up occurs on two fronts, online and onsite. On both fronts, the library introduced a number of innovations, including a citizens' app, digital study visits and an online legislative collection for the public. In addition, it has created reading corners for visitors outside of the library and it will open a new Library for Europe, where the citizens will be able to use the physical collection of the Parliament.

Josefa Fuentes, Director of Library, Archives and Documentation at the Spanish Senate, presented how parliaments can strengthen cooperation. She underlined that using IPEX, ECPRD and EUROPEANA were essential in this regard. The Director proposed to create a free comparative law database where the parliaments could upload relevant information on their legal systems. In order to facilitate this process, she suggested to set up a working group through the ECPRD network.

The closing remarks were delivered by **Roberta Metsola, Vice-President of the European Parliament** responsible for relations with national parliaments. The Vice-President underlined that research services and libraries are key components of all parliaments as research means knowledge and knowledge means power. According to her, they are the only reliable and clear sources of information upon which politicians

can base their legislation. The Vice-President stressed that foresight must be a central part of research since it can effectively help us address future risks and challenges.

The World e-Parliament Conference 2021 – report

Submitted by Ellie Valentine

This year's World e-Parliament Conference 2021 organized by the Interparliamentary Union (IPU) covered five main themes:

1. Towards the digital parliament
2. Infrastructure
3. Data in digital parliaments
4. Enabling digital parliamentarians
5. Artificial intelligence

The IPU invited the IFLAPARL section to organize a panel on June 17 on the topic "Virtual parliamentary research services" under the conference subtheme "Tools and techniques for the digital parliamentarian."

IFLAPARL Information Coordinator Ellie Valentine moderated the roundtable session discussion of colleagues from three parliamentary library and research services:

- Janice de Oliveira E Silva Silveira, Library Director, Brazilian Chamber of Deputies
- Christine Ivory, Senior Director, Parliamentary Information, Education and Research Services, Library of Parliament, Parliament of Canada
- Balazs Mellar, Senior Administrator, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, European Parliament

This discussion covered recent innovations in library and research services in parliament related to meeting the changing needs of parliamentarians in the technology-rich environments in which they operate, as well as management issues regarding human and technology resources in library and information services. The panelists also addressed some of the technology solutions they employed in facing service challenges caused by the 2020-2021 global pandemic. The recording of the session is online here.

National Assembly Library – Republic of Korea

Submitted by Anna Lee

From its first information sharing agreement with the Seoul Metropolitan Office of Education concluded in July 2018 to the last one with the Gyeongsangnamdo Office of Education in April 2021, the National Assembly Library has completed signing agreements with all of the 17 provincial education offices in Korea. As a result, 2,900 local schools under the municipal and provincial education offices can freely access the National Assembly Library's digital information anytime, anywhere. At a time when online learning has become of utmost importance due to the Covid-19 pandemic, such conditions were created for students to freely fulfill their dreams using knowledge and information materials from the National Assembly Library. Dr. Hyun Jin Kwon, Chief Librarian, said he hoped to conveniently access the database of more than 310 million

pages of the library to bridge the digital divide between regions and help foster the development of the educational community.

Since April 9th 2021, the exhibition *Artificial Intelligence and Art: Deep Learning presents Patterns* has been held to showcase the art of free expression with artificial intelligence tools at the Corridor Gallery of the Library's main building. This exhibition featured a series of six "Line Grids" created using deep learning, showing that artificial intelligence can open new possibilities for expression and become an innovative tool to inspire creation through coding as a tool for painting, printing and completing digital files of images. This exhibition, which is the first of its kind in the library circles, signals the National Assembly Library's push for various exhibitions that seek to expand expression by actively utilizing artificial intelligence as an artistic tool of a new era.

Uruguayan Parliament Library

Submitted by Eliana Carvidón

As part of the commemoration of its ninety-second anniversary and around the celebration of the Ibero-American Year of Libraries, the Uruguayan Parliament Library brings you the complete digital collection of Sessional Diaries, which is unique in Uruguay and has both historical and contemporary value.

The Sessional Diaries are the official publications of the debates and decisions taken during parliamentary sessions.

It includes documents ranging from 1830 to the present, both in text and video formats. Click here to enter the database. You can also access them from the Library's main page, where you will also find a video tutorial with detailed instructions on how to use the database.

A personal message from Hamburg, Germany

Submitted by Dr. Christine Wellems

Having completed my 1st term for the 2nd time in the Standing Committee (SC), I have decided not to continue for another term so that I can prepare for my approaching retirement. IFLA has changed a lot since I attended the first preconference of the section and the World Conference in Jerusalem 2000.

Serving on the SC from 2007 to 2015, on the Governing Board from 2015 to 2017, and returning again to the SC for the most recent term, gave me a huge amount of professional information, communication and professional contacts for many years.

In addition to the work, there was also a lot of fun and joy during our meetings at the conferences. I will definitely remain connected to the Section and will join you in Dublin 2022 as a guest so that I may meet my long-time colleagues as well as the new ones personally.

Thank You and Goodbye…

Best wishes,
Christine

Canadian Library of Parliament

Submitted by Sonia Bebbington

New search tool for Library of Parliament Research Publications

A new search tool is available on the Library of Parliament website for searching the Library's Research Publications.

The Library of Parliament's research publications provide non-partisan, reliable and timely information and analysis on current and emerging issues, legislation and major public policy topics.

Books of interest (and congratulations to some colleagues!)

Government Information in Canada received the Margaret T. Lane/Virginia F. Saunders Memorial Research Award. Published in 2019, the book contains contributions from Sandra Craig and Peter Ellinger of the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, Maureen Martyn of the Library of Parliament, and Greg Salmers of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

Two Library of Parliament employees, Laura May, Manager of Information Description, and Alexandre Fortier, Metadata and Taxonomy Librarian, were acknowledged for their review contributions in the recent publication, Introducing RDA: A Guide to the Basics after 3R, Second Edition by Chris Oliver of the University of Ottawa Library.

And congratulations again to Alexandre Fortier of the Library of Parliament who, along with Heather Pretty, Daniel B. Scott and Olivier Spéciel, won the Canadian Association for Information Science's best practitioner paper 2020 award for their presentation 'Are Canadian Libraries Ready to Transition to BIBFRAME?'

NEW BOOKS, ARTICLES & REPORTS

Reflections on parliamentary research: an approach to multi- inter- and transdisciplinary methods (2021)

Submitted by Fabiola Elena Rosales Salinas

This book, written by the Center of Studies on Law and Parliamentary Research (CEDIP as in Spanish) of Mexico's Chamber of Deputies, is centered on parliamentary research method and addresses the topic from the most basic question derived from it: Could we talk about a single method of parliamentary research or, in fact, should is it better to name it in plural? In order to find the answer to this and other questions, a number of specialists were invited to discuss and exchange ideas.

The work starts by developing a methodology aiming to establish a diagnosis regarding the ways in which research is carried out in this context. It analyses multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary methods, and the ontological, epistemological and methodological domains of parliamentary research phenomena. The analysis highlight the relevance of research results that stem from no-unidisciplinary knowledge.

As a conclusion, the construction of an object of parliamentary study from the transdiscipline is proposed, which opens traditional knowledge towards more complex possibilities as an obligatory request from the parliamentary context.

As a conclusion, the construction of parliamentary research, as an object of study taken from the transdisciplinary method, is proposed. It would open traditional knowledge towards more complex possibilities and should be a compulsory figure in parliamentary context.

The publication (in Spanish) is available at: bit.ly/Libro_Reflexiones

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)

Submitted by Franklin De Vrieze

Doing anti-corruption democratically
Despite almost 30 years of the global anti-corruption agenda, it has become increasingly clear that measures taken to prevent corruption have been insufficient, as the UN has recognized. In this new publication, Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) outlines the case for linking democracy support to combatting corruption. It argues that those who care about democracy, human rights and social justice, need to get serious about 'doing anti-corruption democratically'. Corruption undermines trust in politics and in each other. It fuels protest, populism, and anger. It keeps kleptocrats in power and undermines national security. Democracies need to tackle corruption, but they also need us to get better at thinking about how to do it.
https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Doing-anti-corruption-democratically.pdf

Rethinking strategies for an effective parliamentary role in combatting corruption
As strategies against corruption have become a renewed priority in policy circles, this WFD paper takes stock of the theoretical and empirical approaches on how to diagnose and fight corruption and promote integrity, including the tools for assessing governance systems and assessing corruption. The paper outlines a policy framework discussing how 'technical' solutions that add pressure (such as for instance asset declarations for MPs) can be more effective when aligned with political incentives (such as civil society or media exposure that changes politicians' calculations on transparency), thus politically maximising the effect of 'formal' control mechanisms.
https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Rethinking-strategies-for-an-effective-parliamentary-role-in-combatting-corruption-1.pdf

Post-legislative scrutiny of climate and environment legislation: Guide for parliamentary practice
Parliaments have a key role in responding to the clear, present danger posed by current rates of environmental decline and a warming climate through its legislative, representative and scrutiny functions. This guide for parliamentary practice outlines an approach to assessing the implementation and the impact of climate and environmental legislation at national level.
https://www.wfd.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PLS-climate.pdf

New Article: Research on the Digital Transformation of Parliament

Submitted by Dr. Fotis Fitsilis

Abstract
Societies are entering the age of technological disruption, which also impacts governance institutions such as parliamentary organizations. Thus, parliaments need to adjust swiftly by incorporating innovative methods into their organizational culture and novel technologies into their working procedures. Inter-Parliamentary Union World e-Parliament Reports capture digital transformation trends towards open data production, standardized and knowledge-driven business processes, and the implementation of inclusive and participatory schemes. Nevertheless, there is still a limited consensus on how these trends will materialize into specific tools, products, and services, with added value for parliamentary and societal stakeholders.

This article outlines the rapid evolution of the digital parliament from the user perspective. In doing so, it describes a transformational framework based on the evaluation of empirical data by an expert survey of parliamentarians and parliamentary administrators. Basic sets of tools and technologies that are perceived as vital for future parliamentary use by intra-parliamentary stakeholders, such as systems and processes for information and knowledge sharing, are analyzed. Moreover, boundary conditions for development and implementation of parliamentary technologies are set and highlighted. Concluding recommendations regarding the expected investments, interdisciplinary research, and cross-sector collaboration within the defined framework are presented.

Articles and reports from the Documentation and Information Center – Brazil

Submitted by Janice Silveira

Journal 'Estudo em Debate' - series of infographics on legislative studies

The Documentation and Information Center (Cedi) and the Legislative Consultancy Body of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies (Conle) published six new "Study in Highlight" series providing a quick, clear and objective analysis.

The issue number 2 titled "Women in Politics", for instance, offered a panorama on the participation of women in the federal legislative body several countries.

The Editions can be accessed at Chamber Digital Library, the Chamber Press bookstore, and the Legislative Consultancy Body.

Online Journal "Agenda Brasileira" Covid-19

Agenda Brasileira Covid-19 is the new edition of the journal Agenda Brasileira, a biannual publication, which aims to address issues of social relevance debated in the Chamber of Deputies.

This second volume deals with the theme of the Covid-19 pandemic and brings together nine articles written by the Legislative Consultancy Body of the Chamber of Deputies.

The publication aims at contributing to the enrichment of the national debate and to facilitate public access to the studies that take place in the National Congress.

The publication is available for download online.