

International Standards for the Functioning of Democratic Legislatures



Francisco Herrero
Senior Resident Director
Colombia

Development of the Standards

- “Toward the Development of International Standards for Democratic Legislatures” (2007)
 - Existing practice
 - International declarations / statements
- Resulting benchmarks
 - Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)
 - Assemblée Parlementaire de la Francophonie (APF)
 - Southern African Development Community – Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF)

Questionnaire

- Based on Standards
- Measure perception gap between
 - Real powers of the legislature
 - Powers legislators exercise in practice
- As viewed by
 - Legislators
 - Legislative staff
 - Civil society organizations
- Useful for diagnostic or reform efforts

Questions

Election and Status (2)

- Immunity (1)
- Remuneration/Benefits (1)

Organization (11)

- Procedure (2)
- Committees (3)
- Caucuses (3)
- Parliamentary Staff (3)

Functions (7)

- Legislative (4)
- Oversight (2)
- Representational (1)

Values (4)

- Accessibility (2)
- Transparency/Integrity (1)
- Public Consultation (1)

Implementation

- 2008 pilot in Bosnia-Herzegovina
- 2009 participating countries
 - Colombia
 - Guatemala
 - Peru
 - Serbia

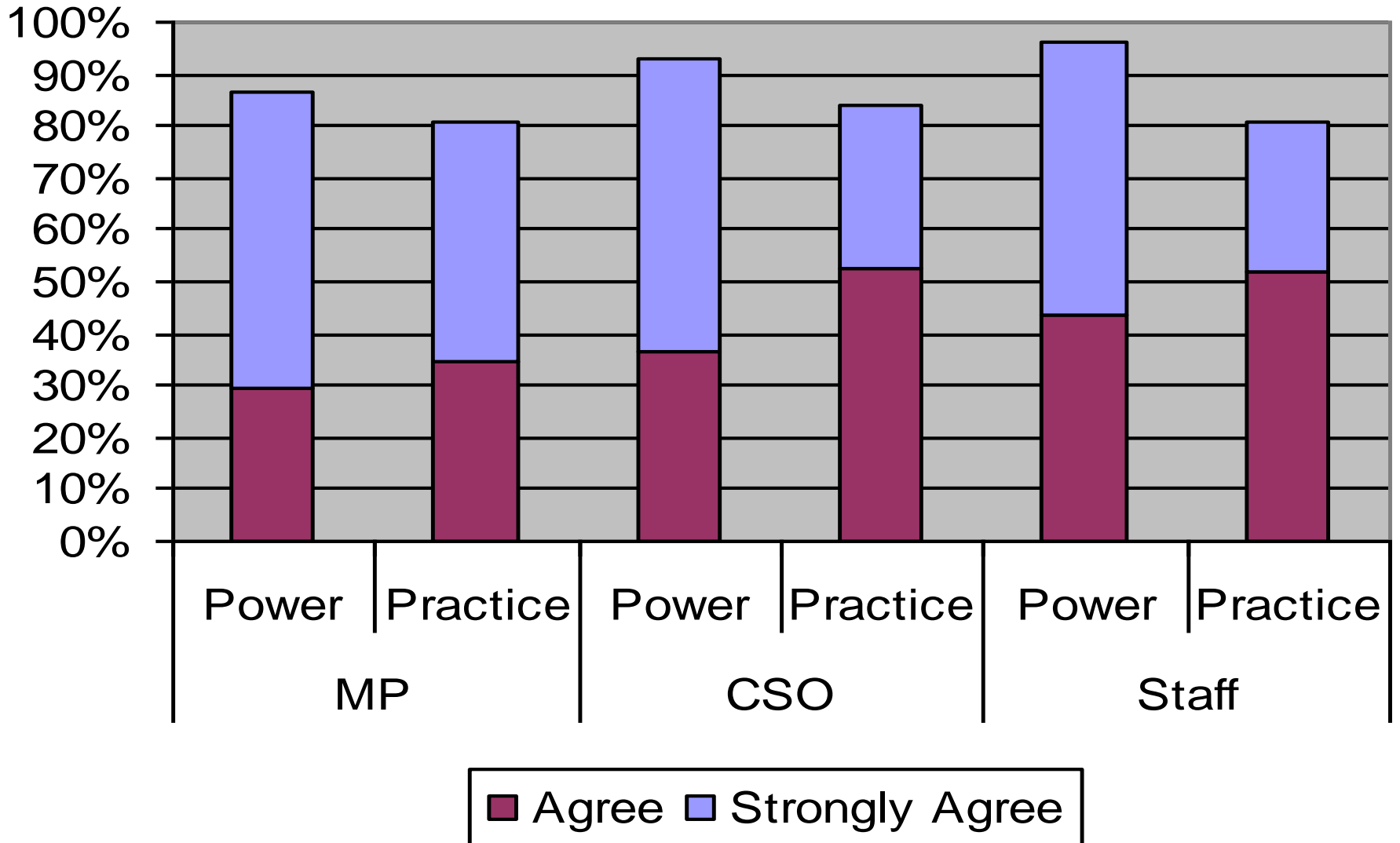
Methodology

- Guided interview
 - Administered by NDI staff
- 25 two-part sets of statements
 - Formal powers
 - Actual practice

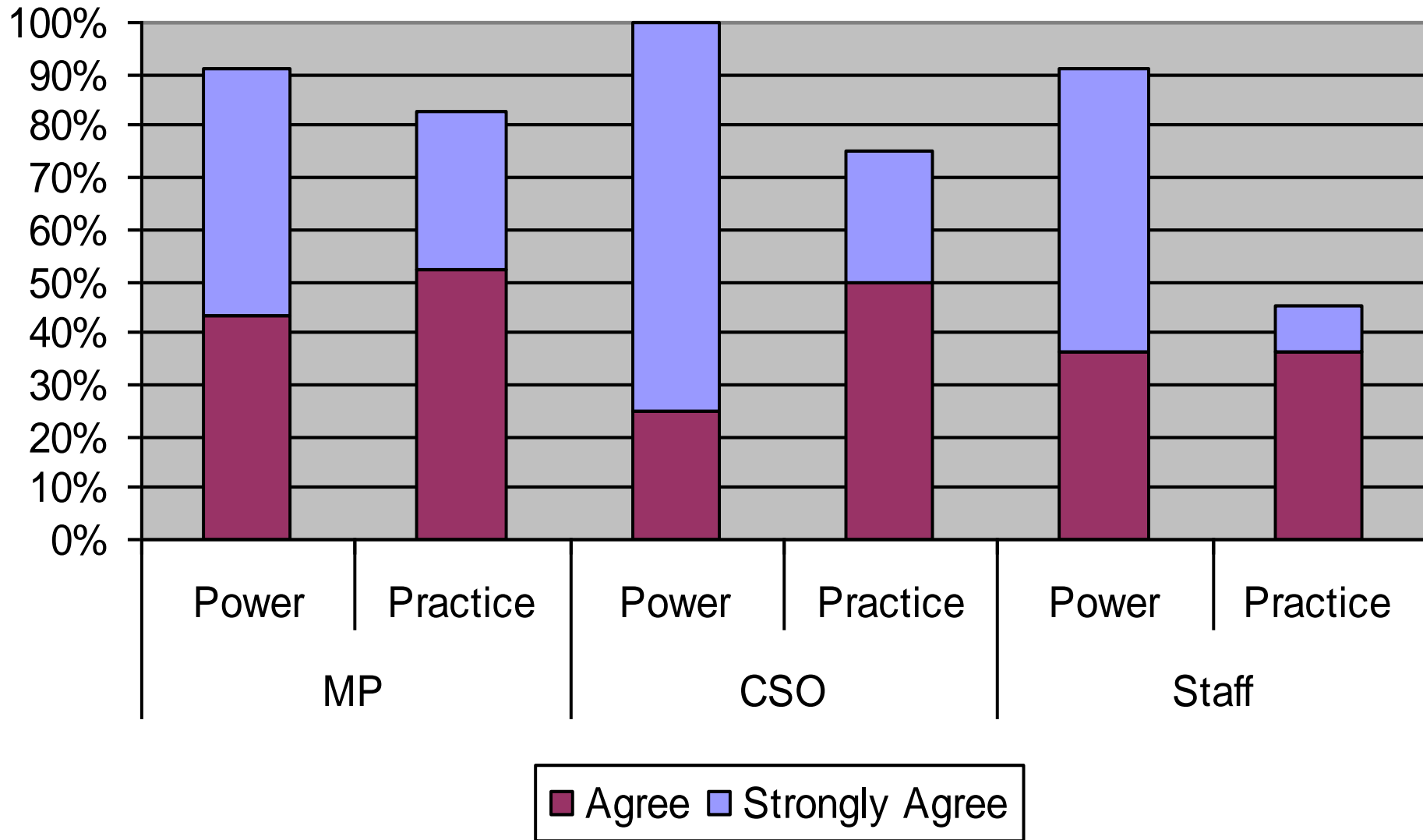
Oversight

- *Legally*, committees have the power of summons to examine persons, papers and records, including witnesses and evidence from the executive branch.
- *In practice*, committees have summoned persons, papers and records, including witnesses and evidence from the executive branch.

Oversight (All)



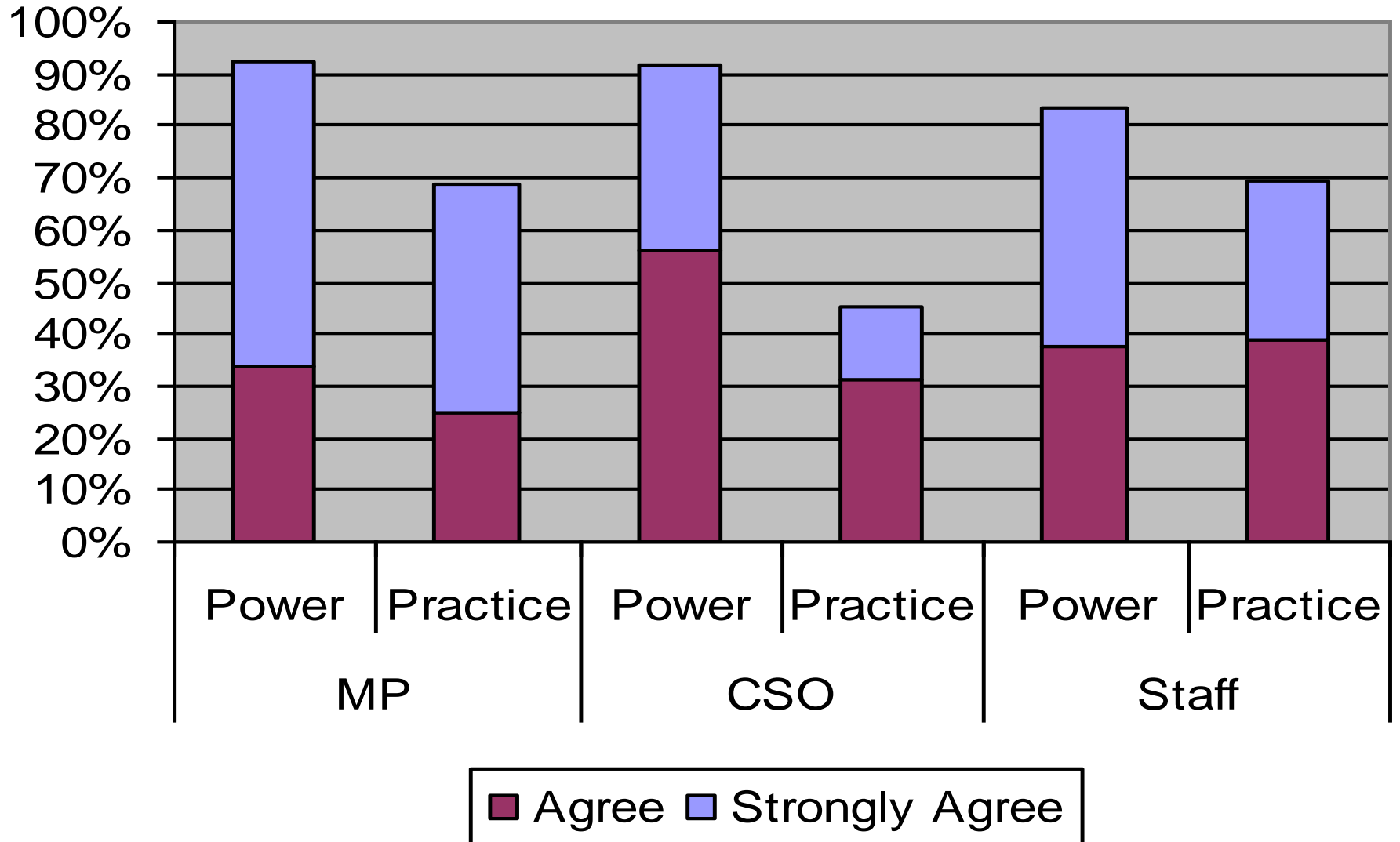
Oversight (Colombia)



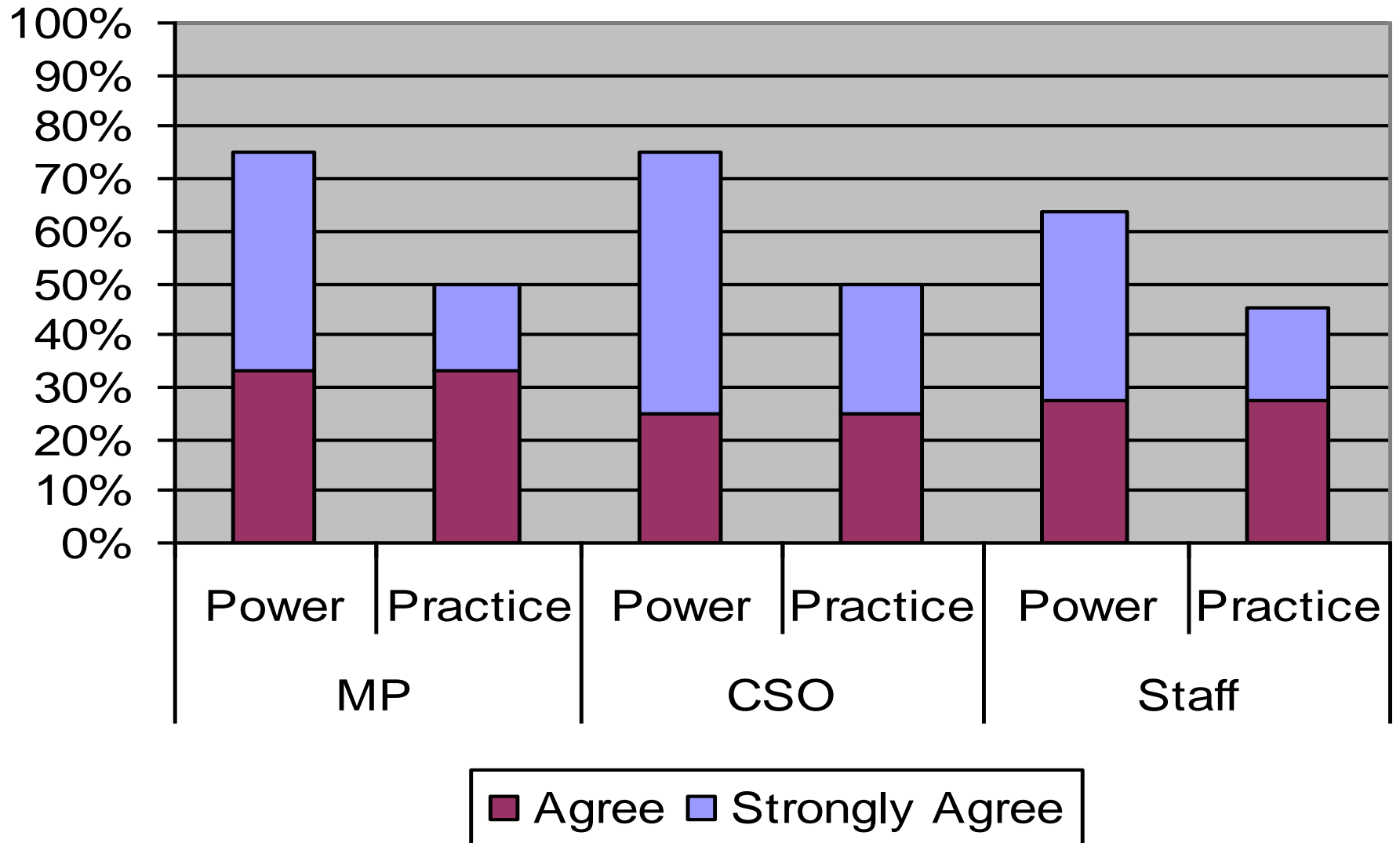
Budget

- *Legally*, the legislature has the power to amend the budget before approving it.
- *In practice*, the legislature amended the budget before approving it.

Budget (All)



Budget (Colombia)



Next Steps

- Further analysis of results
 - Why?
- Share with legislators and staff
 - Identify areas of potential reform
 - Promote full use of legislature's powers