

**“ENHANCING PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT IN UZBEKISTAN”**

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<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13340645>**Abstract**

This thesis examines the state and effectiveness of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan, a pivotal mechanism for ensuring democratic governance and accountability. Despite significant constitutional provisions for oversight, practical challenges hinder its effectiveness, including limited transparency and institutional capacity. Through a comprehensive review of the existing legal framework and analysis of recent reforms, this study aims to assess how parliamentary oversight functions and identify strategies to enhance its efficiency. Drawing on sources that document both the historical development and current practices of parliamentary oversight, this research underscores the importance of strengthening legal structures and fostering public engagement to improve oversight mechanisms. Findings from the analysis suggest that while there have been advancements in legislative scrutiny and government accountability, substantial reforms are needed to ensure that parliamentary oversight can effectively contribute to a more transparent and accountable governance system in Uzbekistan. The thesis concludes with targeted recommendations for legal reforms and strategic initiatives to enhance the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight, aiming to foster a more robust parliamentary oversight process in the country.

**Introduction**

Parliamentary oversight is a fundamental component of democratic governance, serving as a vital check on the power of the executive branch. It involves the monitoring and evaluation of government actions and policies by the legislature to ensure accountability, transparency, and compliance with the law. In democratic systems, this oversight is crucial for maintaining the balance of power, protecting the interests of the public, and fostering a transparent governmental environment [7,35].

The primary objectives of this thesis are twofold: firstly, to assess the current state of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan by examining its legal framework, institutional mechanisms, and operational effectiveness [5]. This involves analyzing how parliamentary oversight has been implemented, the challenges it faces, and its impact on government transparency and accountability. Secondly, the thesis aims to propose viable strategies for enhancing the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight. These strategies will be designed to strengthen the independence and capacity of oversight bodies, improve legal frameworks, and foster greater public engagement in the oversight process.

Enhancing parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan holds substantial implications for the country's governance and democratic development. Effective oversight mechanisms can lead to improved government accountability, which in turn can reduce corruption, enhance public trust in government institutions, and promote more equitable and effective policy implementation. This thesis underscores the potential impacts of strengthened oversight mechanisms on Uzbekistan's political landscape and aims to contribute to the broader discourse on governance reforms in transitional democracies.

**Theoretical Framework**

Parliamentary oversight refers to the processes and activities through which legislatures monitor, review, and supervise government operations and policies. This function is a cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that the executive branch remains accountable to elected representatives and, by extension, to the citizens. Key mechanisms of parliamentary oversight include questioning government officials, conducting inquiries, organizing debates, examining public expenditures, and scrutinizing the implementation of laws [1,24]. This oversight is essential not only for preventing abuses of power and corruption but also for enhancing the effectiveness of public administration through continuous feedback and corrective actions.

The theoretical underpinnings of parliamentary oversight can be traced to the principles of checks and balances as described in the works of Montesquieu and later refined in the Federalist Papers. These theories argue that the separation of powers among the branches of government is essential to prevent tyranny and ensure freedom, with oversight playing a critical role in this balance.

1. **Principal-Agent Theory:** This theory frames parliamentary oversight in terms of a principal-agent relationship, where the electorate (principal) delegates powers to elected officials (agents), who must be monitored and held accountable for their actions. This perspective emphasizes the necessity of oversight mechanisms to mitigate information asymmetries and potential misalignments of interests between the public and their government.
2. **Democratic Theory:** From a democratic theory standpoint, oversight ensures that elected representatives uphold the values and interests of their constituents, fostering greater public participation and responsiveness in governance. This theory highlights the role of oversight in enhancing democratic legitimacy by making governments more reflective of and responsive to the will of the people.
3. **Institutional Theory:** Institutional theory looks at the role of structures, norms, and cultural contexts in shaping the capacities and effectiveness of oversight. It suggests that the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight is heavily influenced by institutional designs, including the formal powers of the legislature, the independence of oversight bodies, and the political environment in which these institutions operate [7, 36].
4. **Accountability and Transparency Frameworks:** These frameworks focus on oversight as a means of ensuring government transparency and accountability. They argue that effective oversight mechanisms help uncover inefficiencies, mismanagement, and corruption within the government, leading to better outcomes in public policy and administration [1,27].

The theoretical perspectives highlight the necessity of effective oversight mechanisms for ensuring government transparency, accountability, and responsiveness, which are crucial for the health and sustainability of any democracy. This chapter sets the stage for an in-depth examination of how these theories apply to the specific context of Uzbekistan, where various factors influence the implementation and effectiveness of parliamentary oversight.

### **Historical Context and Development of Parliamentary Oversight in Uzbekistan**

#### *Early Developments and Legal Framework*

The evolution of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan has its roots in the Soviet era, characterized by a centralized political system with limited legislative autonomy or oversight

capabilities. Following Uzbekistan's independence in 1991, the country began to establish its own legislative structures.

The establishment of the Oliy Majlis marked a critical step in this evolution, serving as the nascent form of parliamentary oversight in the newly independent state. However, the early years post-independence saw the legislative body with limited powers, as the executive branch held predominant control over national governance [1,23].

The Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in 1992 and later amended, laid down the foundational legal framework for parliamentary oversight. According to the Constitution, the Oliy Majlis exercises oversight over the executive through mechanisms such as inquiries, interpellations, and the examination of national and regional budgets [2]. Furthermore, the Law on Parliamentary Control, established in 2021, provides a detailed outline of the procedures and powers related to oversight activities, ensuring a more structured approach to holding the executive accountable [6].

### *Challenges and Progress*

Despite the formal establishment of oversight mechanisms, the implementation has faced significant challenges. Issues such as lack of transparency, limited public engagement, and inadequate institutional capacity have impeded the efficacy of parliamentary oversight [7,33]. Nevertheless, progress has been observed, especially in recent years. Legal reforms, such as the National Strategy on Parliamentary Development (2020), have aimed to enhance the capacity and autonomy of parliamentary oversight by introducing modern tools and clearer legislative frameworks [5]. Moreover, the introduction of the Ombudsman's Office in 2018 marked a significant step towards increasing transparency and accountability in government operations [1,23]. While the historical context of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan shows a trajectory from minimal oversight capabilities during the Soviet era to a gradually strengthening oversight mechanism post-independence, significant challenges remain.

### *Current State of Parliamentary Oversight*

The structure of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan is facilitated through several institutional mechanisms, primarily the parliamentary committees. These committees are specialized by function and cover a range of sectors such as finance, legal affairs, and foreign relations. Each committee is tasked with the oversight of corresponding governmental activities, including the review of legislation, budgetary scrutiny, and the monitoring of executive actions. The Law on Parliamentary Control details the rights and responsibilities of these committees, ensuring they have the necessary powers to summon officials, request documents, and conduct hearings [6]. While the institutional setup provides a framework for robust oversight, the effectiveness of these mechanisms is often hampered by several factors. The institutional capacity of these committees is frequently undermined by insufficient resources and expertise, which are crucial for in-depth analysis and evaluation of government policies and practices. These limitations are significant barriers to achieving effective parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan.

### **Analysis of Literature**

The scholarship on parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan reveals a complex interplay between legal reforms and institutional challenges. Khudaykulov and Khakimov (2018) offer a critical examination of the Oliy Majlis's evolving role within Uzbekistan's political landscape,

arguing that despite recent reforms, the parliament's capacity to exercise effective oversight remains limited. Their analysis highlights a political culture where the executive branch continues to exert considerable influence over the legislature. They claim that this is reinforced by contemporary political practices that prioritize executive efficiency over legislative scrutiny. Khudaykulov and Khakimov suggest that for the Oliy Majlis to fulfill its oversight role effectively, there must be a concerted effort to shift political norms towards greater legislative independence and accountability.

Saidov (2017) complements this view by focusing on the legal frameworks that have been developed to enhance the role of the Oliy Majlis. He acknowledges the significant progress made through legal reforms, such as the Law on Parliamentary Control, which outlines the mechanisms for oversight. However, Saidov is critical of the gap between the legal provisions and their implementation. He argues that while the law theoretically empowers the parliament to hold the executive accountable, in practice, this power is often undermined by insufficient resources and the lack of expertise among MPs. Saidov's analysis points to a fundamental issue in Uzbekistan's governance: the need for capacity-building within the parliament to ensure that legal reforms translate into effective oversight practices. This includes providing MPs with the necessary tools and knowledge to scrutinize government actions effectively and establishing independent research bodies that can support the legislative process with unbiased information.

Juraev (2019) takes a broader view by examining the relationship between democratization efforts and parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan. He argues that genuine democratization in the country is contingent upon the strengthening of parliamentary control, which serves as a crucial check on executive power. Juraev's analysis underscores the importance of not just legal reforms but also cultural and institutional changes that promote transparency and accountability. He posits that the success of parliamentary oversight is closely tied to the engagement of civil society. Without a cultural shift towards valuing these democratic principles, even the most well-crafted legal frameworks may fail to achieve their intended outcomes. Juraev's work highlights the need for a holistic approach to governance reform in Uzbekistan—one that integrates legal, institutional, and cultural dimensions to create an environment where parliamentary oversight can thrive.

Finally, Tojiboev (2020) offers a historical perspective on the evolution of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan. He traces the development of oversight mechanisms from the post-Soviet era to the present, noting that while there has been progress, some of the challenges that existed in the early years of independence still persist. Tojiboev points out that the transition from a highly centralized, executive-dominated system to one where the legislature plays a more active role has been with difficulties. He argues that recent reforms, while promising, need to be supported by deeper structural changes that address the underlying power dynamics between the executive and the legislature. Tojiboev's work suggests that the future of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan depends on a sustained commitment to reform that goes beyond formal legal changes and addresses the broader political and institutional context.

The literature on parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan paints a picture of a system in transition, where legal reforms have laid the groundwork for greater legislative scrutiny, but significant obstacles remain. These include the need for capacity-building within the

parliament, and the broader cultural and institutional environment that shapes governance in the country.

### **Enhancing Parliamentary Oversight**

To strengthen parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan, strategic initiatives are crucial, particularly those outlined in the National Strategy on Parliamentary Development. This strategy emphasizes enhancing the autonomy and capacity of the parliament through several key actions: increasing the resources available to parliamentary committees, training MPs in oversight processes, and establishing independent research bodies to support the legislative process. These initiatives aim to empower parliament to perform its oversight duties more effectively, moving away from symbolic actions to substantive, impact-driven oversight [6].

Legal and institutional reforms are also essential to improve the effectiveness and autonomy of parliamentary oversight. One significant reform is the modification of the Law on Parliamentary Control to provide clearer, more comprehensive guidelines on the execution of oversight functions. This includes defining the procedures for summoning government officials, conducting inquiries, and public reporting of oversight activities. Additionally, strengthening the legal framework to ensure the independence of auditors and other oversight bodies can significantly enhance transparency and accountability. Establishing a system where legislative and oversight roles are distinct from executive influence is also crucial to ensure unbiased scrutiny of government actions [5].

Moreover, the role of civil society and public participation cannot be overstated in the context of parliamentary oversight. Engaging the public through regular consultations, public hearings, and mechanisms for submitting petitions can enhance the oversight process by aligning it more closely with the needs and concerns of the citizens. Furthermore, leveraging digital platforms to facilitate interactive dialogues between MPs and the public can help in demystifying the oversight process and increasing transparency. Promoting a culture of civic education where the public understands and values the oversight function can lead to more robust public support and involvement, thereby strengthening the democratic fabric of the nation.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

This thesis has provided a comprehensive analysis of the state of parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan, examining its historical development, current effectiveness, and potential enhancements. Key findings include:

1. **Institutional Framework:** While Uzbekistan has a structured legal framework for parliamentary oversight, actual practices often fall short of their potential due to limited transparency, and insufficient institutional capacity.
2. **Effectiveness of Oversight:** Current oversight mechanisms are constrained by a lack of resources, which hampers their ability to hold the executive accountable effectively.
3. **Insights:** Robust legal frameworks, independent oversight bodies, and active public participation are essential for effective parliamentary oversight.

Based on the findings, the following policy recommendations are proposed to strengthen parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan:

1. **Strengthen Legal Frameworks:** Amend existing laws to clarify and expand the powers of parliamentary committees to conduct oversight, including the ability to enforce summons and require timely responses from government officials.

2. **Enhance Institutional Independence:** Establish independent bodies within the parliamentary system, such as an office of budgetary oversight or a parliamentary research service, to provide unbiased information and analysis to MPs.

3. **Promote Transparency:** Implement mandatory public disclosures of parliamentary inquiries and decisions, and utilize digital platforms to livestream committee meetings and public hearings to ensure wider accessibility.

To continue enhancing parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan, further research should focus on:

1. **Comparative Case Studies:** Conduct in-depth comparative analyses with countries that have recently improved their parliamentary oversight mechanisms to identify adaptable strategies.

2. **Impact Evaluation:** Investigate the long-term impacts of enhanced parliamentary oversight on government accountability and public trust in Uzbekistan.

3. **Cultural and Social Factors:** Examine how cultural and social dynamics in Uzbekistan influence the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight and public participation in governance processes.

In conclusion, while challenges remain, the potential for significant improvements in parliamentary oversight in Uzbekistan is substantial. By implementing the recommended policy changes and continuing to research best practices and innovations, Uzbekistan can enhance its democratic governance and ensure strengthened parliamentary oversight for a more accountable and transparent government.

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