

## THE PLACE AND FUNCTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PUBLIC OVERSIGHT WITHIN THE SYSTEM OF SOCIAL CONTROL

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**Abstract.** This article analyzes the distinctive features of social control and public oversight, as well as the place and functions of public oversight within the system of social control. The main objective of the study is to identify the role of public oversight in the social control system and to examine its principal functions from a theoretical and methodological perspective. The research seeks to answer the following questions: What position does public oversight occupy within the system of social control? What functions does it perform? How does it differ from other forms of control? The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the theoretical foundations and practical significance of public oversight as an essential mechanism for ensuring transparency, accountability, and democratic governance.

**Keywords:** public oversight, social control, control system, functions, democratic governance, civil society, law and ethics, subjects of public oversight.

## JAMOATCHILIK NAZORATINING IJTIMOY NAZORAT TIZIMIDAGI O'RNI VA FUNKSIONAL XUSUSIYATLARI

**Annotatsiya.** Mazkur maqolada ijtimoiy nazorat va jamoatchilik nazoratining o'ziga xos xususiyatlari, ijtimoiy nazorat tizimida jamoatchilik nazoratining o'rni va funksiyalari tahlil qilingan. Maqolaning maqsadi jamoatchilik nazoratining ijtimoiy nazorat tizimidagi o'rnini aniqlash hamda uning asosiy funksiyalarini nazariy-metodologik jihatdan tahlil qilishdan iborat. Tadqiqot jamoatchilik nazoratining ijtimoiy nazorat tizimidagi o'rni, uning funksiyalari hamda boshqa nazorat shakllaridan farqli jihatlarini aniqlashga qaratilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** jamoatchilik nazorati, ijtimoiy nazorat, nazorat tizimi, funksiyalar, demokratik boshqaruv, fuqarolik jamiyati, huquq va axloq, jamoatchilik nazorati subyektlari

## МЕСТО И ФУНКЦИОНАЛЬНЫЕ ОСОБЕННОСТИ ОБЩЕСТВЕННОГО КОНТРОЛЯ В СИСТЕМЕ СОЦИАЛЬНОГО КОНТРОЛЯ

**Аннотация.** Настоящая статья посвящена анализу особенностей социального и общественного контроля, а также определению места и функциональной роли общественного контроля в системе социального контроля. Цель исследования состоит в выявлении его роли в данной системе и теоретико-методологическом осмыслении его ключевых функций.

**Ключевые слова:** общественный контроль, социальный контроль, система контроля, функции, демократическое управление, гражданское общество, право и мораль, субъекты общественного контроля.

The strengthening of democratic governance and the growing need for the practical development of civil society have increased the importance of ensuring openness, transparency, and accountability of public authorities to citizens. Within this context, public oversight, as an integral component of civil society, has gained increasing significance as an important socio-political institution that maintains a balance in the relationship between society and the state.

Public oversight constitutes an essential component of the broader system of social control. Examining the interrelationship between public oversight and social control contributes to a better understanding of the distinctive characteristics and conceptual boundaries of these two closely related phenomena.

At the present stage of democratic development, social control occupies a central place in the analysis of relations between society and its members. The effectiveness of the system of social governance is directly associated with the active participation of civil society institutions. From this perspective, social control is regarded as an important mechanism for ensuring social stability, strengthening the principles of the rule of law, and enhancing the accountability of public authorities. The term *control* originates from the French word *contrôle*, meaning "inspection" or "supervision." Initially, the concept was used in the context of comparing and verifying financial records; however, it subsequently evolved into a broader term referring to supervisory processes within public administration and social governance. In its general sense, control denotes the process of monitoring the condition of a particular object, verifying its compliance with established standards, and introducing the necessary adjustments where appropriate. It may also be understood as the operation of a mechanism that maintains social order. This mechanism ensures compliance with restrictions, obligations, and norms established on the basis of law and morality. Accordingly, control may be defined as a mechanism for maintaining social order by ensuring adherence to legal and moral norms and requirements [6].

Control exists in various forms, and the position and functional characteristics of public oversight within the system of social control constitute an important subject of scholarly inquiry.

Since one of the primary functions of civil society is to monitor compliance with legal and moral norms, which serve as fundamental social regulators, the study of the formation and development of social control has become one of the most pressing issues in contemporary research. Social control is widely recognized as one of the key institutions contributing to social development and stability. In the academic literature, social control is generally interpreted as a mechanism through which society regulates and evaluates the behaviour of individuals and social institutions. The concept of social control was originally developed within sociology, and its theoretical foundations were established by leading representatives of Western sociological thought. One of the principal founders of social control theory was the American sociologist Edward Alsworth Ross (1866–1951). In his seminal work *Social Control* (1901), Ross defined social control as "the system through which social forces influence individual behaviour within society" [3]. He identified morality, convention, etiquette, education, religion, social evaluation, law, and public opinion as the principal elements of social control. According to Ross, social control represents a system of mechanisms through which society maintains the behaviour of its members within established norms, rules, and expectations [3]. This approach is grounded in Ross's conception of social order, normative regulation of behaviour, and collective mechanisms of social regulation developed in *Social Control*. The French sociologist Gabriel Tarde likewise interpreted social control as an instrument for regulating behaviour within society [4]. The American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), approaching the issue from a structural-functional perspective, viewed social control as a mechanism that ensures the stability of the social system. According to Parsons, social control performs several essential functions, including the internalization of normative values through socialization, the regulation of deviant behaviour through sanctions, and the maintenance of equilibrium within social relations by coordinating individual and collective interests [8]. The mechanisms of social control consist of two principal components: social norms and social sanctions. Social norms comprise the accepted rules, standards, and behavioural patterns recognized within society. These include legal norms, moral principles, religious prescriptions, customs, and traditions. Social sanctions,

in turn, represent the mechanisms of reward and punishment designed to ensure compliance with these norms [9].

Social control serves to maintain public order, ensure the stability of social relations, and promote compliance with established norms and rules. The preservation and consolidation of social order, which constitute one of the fundamental prerequisites for societal development, largely depend on the effectiveness of control mechanisms. Throughout history, the responsibility for maintaining social order has traditionally been regarded as the exclusive function of the state, and this perception continues to prevail today [6]. However, under contemporary conditions, hierarchical control mechanisms exercised solely by the state are no longer sufficient. Ensuring sustainable social order and promoting societal development require the active participation of society itself alongside the state within the overall system of control. Consequently, in modern democratic societies, the system of social control encompasses not only state control but also public oversight exercised through civil society institutions [7]. In this regard, the system comprising both state and societal control may be conceptualized as the system of social control. Accordingly, social control may be interpreted in both a broad and a narrow sense: in its broad sense, it includes the entire system of social regulation, whereas in its narrow sense it refers specifically to public oversight [6].

In contemporary democratic states, the system of social control is not confined solely to state supervision. Although public oversight constitutes an integral component of social control, the distinction between these concepts should be maintained in academic research whenever conceptual clarity is required. Today, public oversight exercised through civil society institutions, non-governmental non-profit organizations, mass media, neighbourhood self-governing bodies (*mahalla* institutions), and the direct participation of citizens has become an essential structural element of the social control system. In this respect, public oversight functions as a democratic mechanism that ensures a balance between society and the state [10]. The concept of *social control* is considerably broader in scope, encompassing both state control and societal control.

It is well established that numerous governmental bodies exercise state control, whereas societal control refers to supervision carried out by citizens in accordance with legally established procedures. Within the system of social control, public oversight occupies a distinctive position by providing an institutional mechanism for citizens' participation in public affairs and state governance. It represents one of the most active and democratic forms of social control, implemented by citizens, non-governmental non-profit organizations, mass media, and other civil society institutions. Nevertheless, the position and functional characteristics of public oversight within the system of social control have not yet been examined in a sufficiently systematic manner. In particular, its relationship with other forms of social control, its functional differentiation, and its institutional mechanisms continue to generate considerable academic debate.

Public oversight represents a distinctive and indispensable form of social control, and its significance has steadily increased worldwide [8]. As the Russian scholar A. V. Sokolov argues, public oversight over the activities of state authorities constitutes one of the fundamental indicators of democracy [13]. Public oversight may therefore be understood as a form of supervision exercised by civil society institutions. The distinction between the concepts of *public oversight* and *social control* lies primarily in their scope. Whereas *social control* represents the broader concept, *public oversight* constitutes only one of its components. In addition to public oversight, social control also encompasses state control and civic control, both of which are, in essence, manifestations of the broader system of social control.

Article 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan guarantees citizens the right to exercise public oversight over the activities of state authorities as follows: "*Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to participate in the management of public and state*

*affairs both directly and through their representatives. Such participation shall be exercised through self-governance, referendums, the democratic formation of state bodies, as well as through public oversight over the activities of state authorities. The procedure for exercising public oversight over the activities of state authorities shall be determined by law" [1].*

Although public oversight has a long historical tradition, it was the French scholar Gabriel Tarde, one of the founders of social psychology, who first introduced it into academic discourse as a scientific concept. In Tarde's interpretation, the concept referred to a set of methods designed to restore the behaviour of offenders to socially accepted norms.

Academic literature offers a variety of approaches to defining the concept of public oversight. Some scholars interpret it as the process through which citizens and their associations monitor, analyze, and evaluate the activities of public authorities. According to Professor A. Jalilov, public oversight is a mechanism by which society as a whole, or a particular group of citizens, monitors, records, and evaluates the formation and functioning of social institutions, including public administration bodies, with the aim of improving their performance [11]. The Russian scholar A. V. Malko defines public oversight as *"a system through which civil society institutions monitor, evaluate, and influence the activities of public authorities by lawful means"* [12]. Although these definitions differ in their wording, they are substantively similar. Therefore, it appears more appropriate to adopt a definition that comprehensively reflects the essential characteristics of public oversight: public oversight is the activity carried out by public associations to determine and evaluate whether the activities of state authorities and public administration bodies comply with the applicable legislation [3]. This definition is fully consistent with the provisions of the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan *"On Public Oversight"*, which specifies the scope and direction of public oversight.

From a sociological perspective, public oversight may be exercised in various forms: direct or indirect, positive or negative, coercive or advisory, conscious or unconscious, formal or informal, constructive or destructive, and natural or artificial [11]. Public oversight over the activities of state authorities possesses several distinguishing characteristics. It is not imposed from above by the state, does not possess legally binding authority, cannot be exercised by public administration bodies themselves, and is conducted on behalf of society and its citizens.

According to the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan *"On Public Oversight"*, the subjects of public oversight include citizens' self-governing bodies, non-governmental non-profit organizations registered in accordance with the law, and mass media organizations. Article 3 of the Law further provides that public oversight may also be carried out by public councils, public commissions, and other public organizational structures established in accordance with the legislation [2].

Public oversight may be exercised across various spheres of social life, including family relations, culture, traditions, moral values, as well as the formation and exercise of state authority. Owing to its functions, implementation mechanisms, and socio-legal nature, this form of oversight differs fundamentally from state control. Public oversight over the executive branch is of particular significance, as it is aimed at protecting the everyday interests of citizens and contributes to preventing corruption and other legal violations within the extensive bureaucratic apparatus responsible for delivering public services.

In conclusion, in contemporary democratic states the system of social control extends far beyond state supervision alone. Public oversight, exercised through civil society institutions, non-governmental non-profit organizations, mass media, *mahalla* institutions, and the direct participation of citizens, has become an indispensable component of the social control system. In this sense, public oversight serves as a democratic mechanism that maintains a balanced relationship between society and the state while promoting transparency, accountability, and good governance.

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