Digitalization of Parliamentary Activity: The Potential of Internet Platforms in the Context of Democratic Reforms in the Republic of Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This paper examines the increasing digitalisation of parliamentary activity in Uzbekistan and how online platforms can create spaces to push the country forward in its democratic reform process. It assesses the extent of e-systems, open data sites, and public participation tools being used for transparency and accountability in lawmaking by a close examination of recent government plans, parliamentary papers and international ratings. They can also be described as playing a role of an instrumental. To be noted they have some good and some bad sides, the same can be said about large reforms around the whole Republic as well. And lastly, it gave pointers on how to use the builtin digital tools better. In conclusion, digitalisation could be a potent tool to reinforce democratic governance only if institutions adjust, size of technology, and behaviour of citizens and the state.

Keywords: digitalisation; e-parliament; Internet platforms; transparency; public participation; parliamentary reform; Uzbekistan; democratic governance.

1. Introduction

Recent years in Uzbekistan have seen broad reforms aimed at further consolidation of the democratic institutions in the country, improving the vitality and efficacy of representative bodies and modernization of public administration. One more important aspect of this transition is the digital governance transition, which is mostly unavoidable because of how much efficiency will improve, and this is one of the significant contributors to increasing the level of trust between state and citizen. Within this wider programme of reform, the parliament is given some stage. One in which the National Assembly is embodied will of the people through the code of law, as one who monitors the executive power, and a society open dialogue. Therefore, the digitization of the work of parliament not just about improvement in technology or introduction of the new systems. From the public's perspective, this is a deliberate initiative aimed at enhancing the accessibility, interaction, and responsiveness of the institution.

More recently, in particular, internet- domes forms create greater opportunities which communicate citizen with political life and of political events. Allowing citizens to file their public comments through the internet, streaming parliamentary sessions, and giving free access to

some legislative information may enable the public to at least watch and observe and at the most act on the lawmakers. These innovations also overcome information asymmetries that exist between the state and society, and allow for opportunities for more direct connections. These initiatives in Uzbekistan are also link to the national policies; the Digital Uzbekistan 2030 strategy aims to promote wider usage of technologies in various areas of governance. Various measures aimed at transparency and accessibility of the parliamentary activities themselves were also taken — such as initiatives such as "Mening Fikrim" ("My Opinion") through which citizens could submit collective appeals to the parliament, or the parliamentary sessions being streamed online.

However, technology by itself will not deliver deeper democracy. But unleashing the potential of these digital reforms will only be possible if we have the right enabling factors in place a willingness to embrace digital innovation in the institutions, openness, demand for digital services and demand-side access and skills across the country [1]. And to do those, online tools must, above all, be much less the luxury of a philanthropic symbolic, and much more the platforms of empowerment they aspire to be. They can be less effective due to unequal access to the Internet, pressure on digital literacy, and bureaucratic resistance. As such, this paper aims to explore the extent to which internet platforms can actually deepen democratic participation in the parliament of Uzbekistan and under what conditions they can operate. Its purpose is to identify what digital tools are currently in use, assess how well these tools work and do not work; and present actionable policy recommendations for more complete integration of these into the country's democratic reform process.

2. Research Method

This study adopts a qualitative policy-analysis approach supplemented by documentary review [2]. Primary data sources include official strategy documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan (for example the "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" roadmap) , parliamentary reports (e.g., the "Development of Parliamentarism in Uzbekistan" report) and external assessments such as the e-Parliament report conducted by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) in 2019. The study involved systematic content analysis of these texts to identify digital platforms, their intended aims and their operational features. In addition, a comparative review of international literature on e-parliament and citizen engagement was conducted to situate the Uzbek case in broader global experience. Key thematic categories included: platform functionality and architecture; citizen access and participation; transparency and oversight mechanisms; institutional integration. The research also entailed triangulation of policy commitments with documented evidence of implementation, such as frequency of online broadcasts and accessibility of portals. Given the limited data availability, this study does not rely on primary survey data but makes use of secondary statistical indicators where available, such as numbers of e-services and internet users. Limitations of the methodological design include reliance on publicly available sources, lack of in-depth interviews in the field, although the approach provides a structured analytical framework for assessing digitalization of parliamentary activity in Uzbekistan [3].

3. Result

The larger digitalisation agenda of Uzbekistan provides the necessary backdrop for parliamentary modernisation. As part of its "Digital Uzbekistan 2030" strategy, the government

has pledged to digitise state services, expand Internet access and integrate information systems at all levels of government [4]. In the parliamentary domain, reform efforts have been targeted at strengthening rule making practices, systematising legislation and embedding "smart regulation" tools into law making processes. E governance initiatives develop in synergy with legislative modernisation, thereby providing a favourable context for the deployment of Internet platforms.

In the centre of a 21st-century, digital parliament are the online platforms which provide two-way communication between citizens and lawmakers. The most apparent example of this in Uzbekistan is the "Mening Fikrim" ("My Opinion") portal, which allows citizens to submit petitions and legislative initiatives directly to parliament as individuals or groups. Additionally, government sites of the parliament like oliymajlis gov.uz and qonun. In addition, online broadcasts of Parliament sessions through gov.uz have allowed the public to witness lawmaking. Together, all of them make up another step forward in the evolution of open, transparent and accessible governance [5]. They provide the citizen with alternatives to voting over political engagement in an electoral year.

Via these internet bases, the parliament is able to issue necessary legislative information such as draft laws, amendments put forward for consideration, and voting records earlier and more openly. It helps us go through the trajectory that laws take and their decision-making process. International assessments, especially those executed by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), have, however, repeatedly shown that greater accountability and better-informed citizens are always associated and therefore correlated with less use of digital systems for parliamentary work [6]. These can be tools that will get to gradually transform not just the process of how the parliament work in Uzbekistan and the parliament work will be open for the citizens to be able to more mobilized at tracking the parliament.

However, significant barriers remain that continue to hamper the potential of digitalisation. Similarly, among others Internet is neither equally reached nor equally used to engage with public through there are a digital skills and language divide between Uzbek and Russian speakers. Also, while coordination tools have now moved online, they have not been integrated into official decision-making [7].

This increases the likelihood of them acting as ceremonial as opposed to substantive vehicles of public expression. Stiff administrative practices, institutional routines that are resistant to change, and operating in a citizen feedback black hole, are also powerful challenges.

To unleash the democratic potential of such digital tools, however, Uzbekistan needs more than technological change; it also needs institutional and cultural change. But it also means that opening up the internet to more people will not in itself create a better capable voice to determine how their parliament interacts with the citizen feedback that has been harvested online and that in fact we need to be asking what further steps will have to be taken so that citizen feedback is thereby steered into deliberations in ways that people can trust it as they should [8]. We would also hold that accountability by attaching any submissions through a given platform to work done in committee under more rigorous data transparency policies. Finally, in combination with public education and awareness efforts, they will be essential for fostering the culture of digital civic engagement that will ensure that such interventions work to empower citizens and thus contribute to democratic governance [9].

Findings In terms of digitalization of activity of the Parliament of the Republic of Uzbekistan based on comparative analysis, and document review etc. Second, there has been a lot of state work to develop the legal and strategic framework for using Internet platforms in parliaments [10]. Digital Innovations and Rule of Law: In the last few years some relevant legislation and governmental programs with system-oriented public policy initiatives aiming for adoption of digital technologies together with more general reforms in governance have been approved by Uzbekistan. Sure, each of those initiatives is a pretty straightforward effort to make legislation more responsive to contemporary technology, and to put the democracy back in democracy [11].

The general policy in that regard, including the Digital Uzbekistan 2030 strategy depicts that the government is aware that digitalisation has the ability to advance efficacy, transparency and citizen participation as part of the larger law-making process. Another key conclusion is that the entry into play of online platforms such as Mening Fikrim ("My Opinion") and websites of official parliaments is quite a significant advance towards transparency and the 'interactive' side of the interaction of civil society and legislators [12]. They also provide the opportunity for citizens to express their opinion, to suggest new legislation and to complain about existing legislation. Similarly, we also have online broadcasting of sessions of Parliament and the posting of draft legislation. Though still the works in progress, these developments show that state institutions increasingly grasp the challenge of satisfaction of public calls for participation and need to form digital places for civic engagement [13].

But their utility and effect on the ground is still very limited. This includes the digital divide, as there is a large difference in both internet access and digital ansicity between the urban and the rural, as well. Most citizens do not have the required skill-set or equipment to use these online systems [12]. Moreover, there is still insufficient data about how many people actually participate via these channels, or how closely their input corresponds to actual legislation.

Finally, the institutional link between the online platforms and the internal procesess of decision making in the parliament is still weak. Although tools such as "Mening Fikrim" have endeavoured to facilitate the conversation around the committee reviews of draft laws, or during the amendment process, they have not yet become completely institutionalized [15]. it may mean that citizen proposals can be collected but cannot be systematically discussed or acted upon. If digital participation is to fulfill its potential as more than a symbolic exercise, if it is to exercise a material influence over public policy and democratic governance in Uzbekistan, then, this link will need to be reinforced. Finally, fifth, the potential of digital platforms to become transformative agents of parliamentary democracy is evident, but their effective realisation depends on complementary reforms in access, institutional culture and process design [16].

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Final WORD In the course of democratic evolution of Uzbekistan digitization may be regarded as an early phase of the parliamentary ilfe transplantto on-line playing-field. Such innovations can improve and possibly simplify the law-making process, introduce transparency and accountability, create collaborative opportunities and make it ultimately responsive to the needs of its users. Digital encourages accountability and citizen engagement in that it provides citizens with more and easier access to information, watch parliament at work or express their view online. But it will be transformative when humans shift their practices that accompany the technology makeover. The benefits of Uzbekistan and its citizens will be much more profound when all citizens throughout the country have equity in digital technologies and education. And although the digital divide closed, culture bring people from offline world needs to be fostered through e-Participation platforms where e-Participation with activation is balanced real-time with no-break-windows. Also, the parliament should not limit itself with having citizens' voices heard, but rather start to through the citizens' view in the legislative process and decision-making. Of course, parliamentary transparency should not be a radical departure, but the established practice. So long as Uzbekistan gets by on these digital systems, it won't evolve to change how institutions work or how they interact with citizens.

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