

The Checks and Balances Mechanism and the Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight as Determinants of the Stability of Presidential Governance

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the relationship between the checks and balances mechanism, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight, and the stability of presidential governance through a qualitative approach based on library research and an integrative review method. This approach enables researchers to synthesize various scientific findings from reputable databases, such as Google Scholar, Scispace, DOAJ, and Scopus, to produce a comprehensive conceptual understanding. The results of the study indicate that the checks and balances mechanism operates through two main dimensions: the normative-constitutional one, which defines the boundaries of authority between institutions, and the practical-political one, which influences the effectiveness of oversight implementation. The institutional integrity, deliberative capacity, and public interest orientation of legislators determine the effectiveness of legislative oversight. These findings confirm that the stability of presidential governance is significantly influenced by the synergy between clear institutional design, healthy executive-legislative relations, and the parliament's ability to carry out its oversight function independently. This study recommends a further research agenda regarding the impact of political coalition configurations, multiparty presidentialism, and the digitalization of legislation on optimizing checks and balances in a modern presidential system.

1. INTRODUCTION

In a presidential system of government, the mechanism of checks and balances is a fundamental principle that ensures the proportional distribution of power among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches. This principle emphasizes that no single institution holds absolute authority, but rather that they monitor and balance each other's authority to prevent the concentration of power. Constitutionally, checks and balances function as a safeguard to ensure government stability, prevent abuse of authority, and strengthen public accountability. In the context of a modern democracy, the effectiveness of this mechanism is a key indicator of the quality of governance and the resilience of the political system.

The effectiveness of parliamentary oversight refers to the legislature's capacity to control executive actions through various legal and political instruments, including budget monitoring, the right of interpellation, investigations, and policy evaluations. Strong oversight requires adequate institutional capacity, professionalism of parliamentarians, and bureaucratic mechanisms that support the systematic implementation of evaluation processes. In governance studies, the effectiveness of legislative oversight is considered a key determinant of government stability, as it serves as a control mechanism to ensure that executive actions align with the public interest and the applicable legal framework.

Several studies have shown that political dynamics are often a more decisive factor than formal legal rules in the operation of checks and balances mechanisms. When the configuration of political power is unbalanced or dominated by a single executive actor, the legislative branch's space to control policy is

limited. Therefore, the effectiveness of checks and balances is determined not only by constitutional design but also by the political relations between state institutions and the actors within them (Huqt et al., 2010).

Other studies emphasize that effective oversight depends on the legislature's ability to establish and institutionalize consistent policy monitoring and evaluation processes. When parliament has strong technical and institutional capacity for monitoring and evaluation, the government's responsiveness to public needs increases. This suggests that the effectiveness of legislative oversight is not simply a matter of formal authority, but also the extent to which a structured and evidence-based oversight process can be implemented (Zantsi, 2019).

Other studies emphasize that the fragmentation of power through well-designed checks and balances is a crucial mechanism for preventing the dominance of one branch of government. This fragmentation creates a structure of mutual accountability, thus promoting long-term government stability. When the distribution of power is balanced and decentralized, the potential for institutional conflict can be minimized, and governance becomes more credible (Melo, 2010).

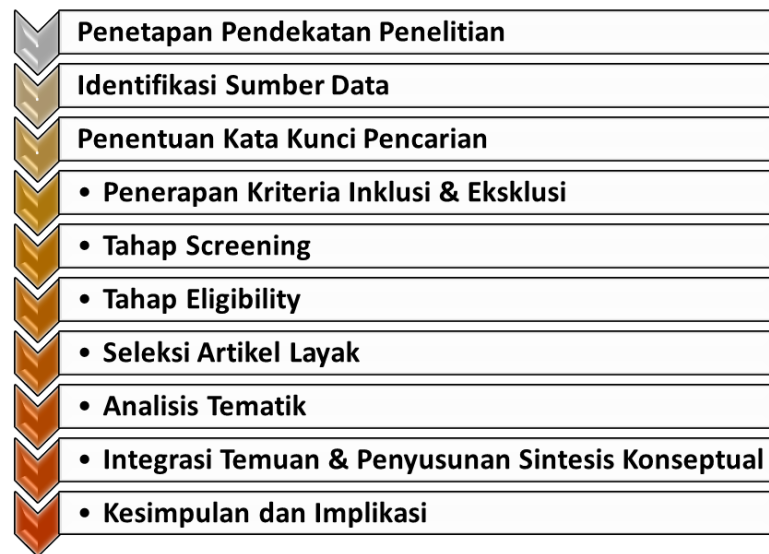
These three studies demonstrate that the relationships between political configuration, parliamentary oversight capacity, and the design of power distribution have a significant influence on the stability of presidential governments. However, existing studies partially separate these three aspects. Huq (2012) focuses more on political dynamics, Zantsi (2020) emphasizes the institutional aspect of oversight, while Melo (2009) examines the fragmentation of power as a fundamental principle of presidential systems. This research gap arises from the lack of studies that integrate these three variables into a single conceptual model to explain how checks and balances mechanisms and the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight simultaneously influence governance stability. The novelty of this research lies in the development of an integrated approach that analyzes the interaction of two independent variables: checks and balances and the effectiveness of legislative oversight, as joint determinants of governance stability in presidential systems.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze how the effectiveness of checks and balances mechanisms and parliamentary oversight jointly influence the stability of presidential governance. This research is expected to provide a theoretical contribution by offering a more comprehensive analytical model regarding inter-institutional relations within presidential governance. Practically, this research offers benefits to policymakers, legislative bodies, and oversight institutions by strengthening institutional design and enhancing the quality of oversight, thereby making governance more stable, accountable, and responsive to public needs.

2. METHOD

This study employed a library research approach with an integrative review method. This literature review technique combines, synthesizes, and analyzes various scientific findings to generate new and comprehensive conceptual understanding. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective of identifying conceptual relationships between checks and balances mechanisms, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight, and the stability of presidential governance. Data sources were derived from scientific publications available in reputable databases, including Google Scholar, Scispace, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Scopus. The literature used included journal articles, proceedings, research reports, and scholarly books relevant to the study of governance and state institutions.

The data collection process was conducted by establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure the relevance and quality of the literature. Inclusion criteria included: (1) scientific publications published between 2015 and 2024; (2) discussing variables such as checks and balances, legislative oversight, or governance stability; (3) available in English or Indonesian; and (4) in the form of journal articles or academic publications that have undergone a peer-reviewed process. The exclusion criteria included: (1) literature published before 2015; (2) opinion or non-academic articles; and (3) sources that did not provide full access to analytical content. The search process was conducted using keywords such as checks and balances, legislative oversight, executive-legislative relations, presidential governance, and governance stability using a search system.



Literature selection was conducted in two stages: screening and eligibility. The screening stage involved reading titles and abstracts to assess the suitability of topics. In contrast, the eligibility stage involved reviewing the full content of articles to evaluate their substantial contribution to the variables being studied. Articles that met the criteria were then analyzed using thematic content analysis, a technique for grouping findings based on key themes to identify patterns, relationships, and gaps between studies. This method enabled researchers to develop a stronger conceptual integration, in keeping with the characteristics of an integrative review.

Research validity was maintained through source triangulation, which involved the use of multiple sources from reputable databases to minimize bias in the findings and avoid favoring a single publication or journal (Patton, n.d.). Reliability was ensured through the consistent application of literature selection procedures, the use of systematic criteria for article selection, and the transparent recording of the review process, which facilitated future replication of the study. With this approach, the results of the integrative review not only illustrate the empirical conditions of previous research but also provide a strong analytical basis for explaining the relationships between variables in the context of presidential governance.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents a synthesis of findings based on the literature review conducted using an integrative review approach. Various studies related to checks and balances mechanisms, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight, and the stability of presidential governance are analyzed to identify conceptual patterns and relationships between variables. Based on the identification of key themes in the literature, this section's discussion is divided into three main focuses: the operational dynamics of checks and balances, the effectiveness of legislative oversight of the executive, and how the interaction between these two mechanisms contributes to the stability of presidential governance.

a. Interaction of Checks and Balances Mechanisms in Maintaining the Distribution of Executive-Legislative Power

Checks and balances mechanisms are a central component of the constitutional architecture, maintaining the balance of power between branches of government to prevent the accumulation of authority in a single institution. Within this framework, checks and balances serve a dual role: as a mechanism to prevent abuse of authority and as an instrument for enforcing public accountability through inter-agency oversight. Researchers emphasize that the effectiveness of these mechanisms stems not solely from the norms written in the constitution, but also from political practices that foster transparency, accountability mechanisms, and government legitimacy in the eyes of the people (Arifuddin et al., 2023).

Operationally, the relationship between the executive and legislative branches is governed by a set of legal norms and procedures that determine each party's latitude in the policymaking and budgeting processes. At the regional level, for example, Law Number 23 of 2014 provides a formal framework that facilitates such interactions through joint budgeting mechanisms, approval of draft regional

regulations, and legislative oversight of regional policy implementation. This legal framework allows the legislature to exercise oversight over executive policies while encouraging productive institutional cooperation (Ismiyanto, 2023).

Furthermore, the design of checks and balances mechanisms is intended not only to prevent the hegemony of one branch of government but also to promote substantive accountability and institutional stability through structured mutual oversight. In practice, legislative and executive institutions are expected to interact through accountable procedures, such as interpellation, the right of inquiry, budget audits, and policy evaluation processes, so that the dominance of power is mitigated and governance becomes more stable and credible (Andrian et al., 2022).

Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that the interaction of checks and balances mechanisms in maintaining the distribution of executive-legislative power operates on two interrelated dimensions: the normative-constitutional dimension, which provides the legal basis for oversight, and the practical-political dimension, which determines the effectiveness of the oversight itself. A literature review indicates that the success of these mechanisms depends heavily on the quality of procedural implementation (e.g., budget transparency and the legislature's evaluative capacity) and the political conditions that enable the legislature to function as an independent watchdog without excessive subordination to the executive. Therefore, strengthening the distribution of power between the executive and the legislature requires synergy between clear legal design, increased parliamentary institutional capacity, and a political culture that values the role of oversight as an integral part of stable presidential governance.

b. Effectiveness of Parliamentary Oversight as an Instrument of Control over Executive Policy

The effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of executive policy is a fundamental element in ensuring the implementation of democratic principles, particularly transparency and public accountability. In both presidential and parliamentary systems of government, this oversight function serves as a control mechanism that prevents the concentration of power in the executive branch. Several studies confirm that the quality of parliamentary oversight is influenced by the internal dynamics of the legislature and the institution's structure. (Saharuddin et al., 2023) Demonstrate that effective oversight originates not only from formal regulatory instruments but also from the political commitment of parliamentarians in fulfilling their representation and oversight responsibilities.

One dominant factor influencing this effectiveness is the ideological orientation of parliamentarians. Research (Akbik, 2023) shows that the trade-off between political ideology and national interests heavily influences voting behavior in the European Parliament. Party ideological orientations often drive legislators to support or reject executive policies not solely based on the policy's effectiveness, but to strengthen their party's political position. This situation suggests that parliamentary oversight operates within a complex framework, where party interests, public pressure, and the government's policy agenda intersect.

These findings highlight the potential dilemma for parliamentarians when faced with executive policies that are crucial to the national interest but conflict with their political ideology or preferences. In such situations, parliamentarians are required to make rational judgments that consider the policy's impact on government stability and public welfare. (Akbik, 2023) emphasized that the process of political compromise is often an integral part of practical oversight efforts, as legislators must maintain a balance between party loyalty and constitutional responsibility.

Based on these research findings, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight as an instrument of control over executive policy depends heavily on the institutional integrity and deliberative capacity of legislators. Ideological tendencies do have a significant influence, but strong oversight can still be achieved when parliamentarians prioritize the public interest in the oversight process. Thus, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight is the result of the dynamic interaction between institutional structures, political culture, and the value orientations of political actors, which determine the quality of executive-legislative relations in modern governance systems.

c. The Synergistic Effect of Checks and Balances and Legislative Oversight on the Stability of Presidential Governance

In the context of Indonesia's presidential system, the relationship between checks and balances and legislative oversight is a crucial foundation for maintaining stable governance. Changes through the 1945 Constitution brought significant transformations to the architecture of power, particularly regarding the position of the president and the relationship between the executive and legislative branches. The amendments not only reduced the previously strong executive dominance but also strengthened the legislative oversight function by granting more balanced authority to the House of Representatives. Research indicates that this strengthening enhances government accountability and transparency by affirming the legislative role in overseeing executive policy (Dirkareshza et al., 2022).

The DPR's oversight function is strategically important in ensuring that policies are implemented effectively. The government operates effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with the principles of good governance. Following the constitutional amendment, the House of Representatives' (DPR) power in lawmaking and oversight of public policy implementation has increased substantially. However, several studies have revealed challenges in optimally implementing checks and balances mechanisms, particularly in the context of simultaneous elections. (Jurdi, 2020) Notes that although simultaneous elections are intended to strengthen political legitimacy, in practice, they do not continually strengthen the DPR-executive relationship and can impact the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight of the executive branch.

Furthermore, post-election political dynamics often influence the extent to which the DPR can exercise independent oversight. The majority coalition formed in parliament tends to influence the oversight orientation, with the DPR being more likely to be accommodating to government policies if the political relationship between the two institutions is harmonious. These findings confirm that although the legal framework provides a strong foundation for checks and balances, its effectiveness remains dependent on political conditions and the behavior of legislative actors.

Based on these research findings, the synergy between checks and balances and legislative oversight plays a crucial role in supporting the stability of presidential governance. Strengthening the legislature through constitutional amendments provides a structural foundation for more effective oversight. However, government stability is determined not only by institutional design but also by the quality of executive-legislative relations. When the House of Representatives (DPR) can carry out its oversight function independently, accountably, and with a focus on the public interest, the checks and balances mechanism works optimally to maintain the distribution of power and the stability of the government system. Conversely, when political dynamics weaken the independence of oversight, this stability becomes vulnerable. Therefore, harmony between institutional design and the behavior of political actors is key to achieving stable and responsive presidential governance.

The synergy between checks and balances and effective parliamentary oversight greatly influences the stability of presidential governance. Healthy inter-institutional interaction ensures the distribution of power between the executive and legislative branches. In contrast, legislative oversight, carried out independently and in the public interest, ensures that executive policies remain accountable and transparent. Literature findings indicate that the effectiveness of these two mechanisms is determined not only by institutional design and formal regulations, but also by political conditions, ideological orientation, and the institutional capacity of legislative actors. Thus, the stability of presidential governance is not only the result of a sound constitutional framework but also of consistent synergy between the executive and legislative branches, which balances power and improves the overall quality of governance.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on a literature synthesis, this study concludes that the checks and balances mechanism and the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight are two key pillars determining the stability of presidential governance. The checks and balances mechanism operates on two complementary dimensions: the normative-constitutional dimension, which defines the boundaries of authority between institutions, and the practical-political dimension, which determines the effectiveness of oversight in the reality of government. A stable distribution of power between the executive and legislative branches can only be achieved if clear regulations are supported by adequate institutional capacity and a political culture that fosters transparency and accountability.

On the other hand, the effectiveness of parliamentary oversight is primarily determined by institutional integrity, deliberative capacity, and the ability of legislators to prioritize the public interest above ideological preferences or partisan orientations. When the structure of legislative institutions and the orientation of political actors align, oversight of executive policy can proceed independently and substantively. This enhances the effectiveness of legislative oversight as a democratic control mechanism, capable of mitigating the potential for abuse of power.

Overall, the stability of presidential governance depends on the synergy between clear institutional design, the quality of executive-legislative relations, and the legislative capacity to carry out its oversight function. When such synergy is realized, the checks and balances mechanism can function optimally to maintain the balance of power, increase accountability, and ensure the continued stability of government.

Conversely, when political dynamics weaken the independence of oversight, the stability of the presidential system of government becomes vulnerable and potentially subject to governance distortions.

Moving forward, further research is needed to examine how the configuration of political coalitions, multi-party presidentialism, and the digitalization of the legislative process affect the effectiveness of checks and balances and legislative oversight. Furthermore, empirical research based on longitudinal data is urgently needed to understand how changes in political culture and legislative behavior impact the long-term stability of presidential governments.

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