

PROSPECTS FOR ENHANCING THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC ELECTIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF IDEOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REGION (USING THE EXAMPLE OF UZBEKISTAN)

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Abstract:

In the context of global globalization, the electoral system plays an invaluable role in strengthening democracy. Elections are democratic if they are fair, transparent, and comply with universal electoral standards. In modern societies, the concepts of democracy and elections are closely related. The participation of the people in the formation of state governance is carried out through elections, that is, democratic elections.

In Central Asia, and in particular, in Uzbekistan, many reforms have been implemented in recent years to further democratize the electoral system and increase citizen participation and activity in elections. The reforms to improve the electoral system must include increasing the influence of political parties in the society.

Keywords: Central Asia, Uzbekistan, political party, democratic elections, Majoritarian electoral system, mixed electoral system, public administration, party system, democracy.

Introduction

The emergence of electoral systems in the world dates back to ancient times. Since the time of primitive people, elections and being elected have been considered a method of shaping the governance system. In times of ancient clan-clan communities, the tribe was ruled by elders in times of peace, but in times of war, strong young, experienced warriors were entrusted with the responsibility of leadership through selection (election). These processes were carried out at general tribal meetings using certain electoral elements. Over time, such methods of forming governance of growing tribal communities became unsatisfactory, and began to feel the need for further improvement. Later, the first institutional approaches to elections appeared in ancient Rome and Greece.

Although elections were held in the territory of the countries of the Central Asian region during the time of the former union, they were undemocratic. By the 1990s, the independence of the states of the Central Asian region had begun, leading to the abolition of the existing totalitarian regime and the transition to a democratic regime tested in new international experiences.

As a result of the introduction of multi-party democracy in the region, new political parties began to emerge. Initially, the electoral system played a significant role in strengthening the influence



and development of political parties in society. Although political institutions were not yet fully developed in the countries of the region in the early years of independence, emphasis was placed on creating opportunities for elections to be held based on democratic principles.

Among such opportunities was the adoption of electoral legislation, and legal and regulatory documents regulating the activities of political institutions, in particular, political parties. The legislative framework in the Central Asian countries was implemented by studying the experiences of countries with well-developed democracies.

Materials

To hold democratic elections, the first requirement is that the legislative framework comply with generally accepted international electoral standards. In general, if we dwell on the concept of "international electoral standards" and its essence, "International electoral standards are understood as the principles of international law for the organization and conduct of elections that concern the right of citizens to vote"[2, -P. 6]. In general, democratic elections are a concept related to these values. That is, one of the most important factors is the formation of the values of the people and the nation, the aspiration for freedom, and independence, and ensuring the transparency of elections.

The specific features of international electoral standards are as follows:

First, international standards relating to international electoral law and the electoral process (international electoral standards) are implemented by ensuring the expression of the will of citizens by universal, equal, direct suffrage to state bodies and local self-government bodies by secret ballot or by ensuring the exercise of the right to vote;

Secondly, international election standards, respect for the rights and freedoms of citizens and their protection, pluralism, and diversity of ideologies, stability of legal norms regulating elections, and their rapid development are the main conditions for ensuring democratic election processes.

Third, international election standards are implemented through impartial international observation of important aspects of the election process, such as the organization of voting and counting by electoral authorities or other authorized bodies, the existence and effective functioning of mechanisms for protecting the rights and freedoms of electoral participants, the ability to appeal voting results and election results to courts and other authorized bodies, and the announcement of election results. The principles and norms of international law serve as the basis for democratic elections. The main documents that reflect international election standards include:

- Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN General Assembly, December 10, 1948).
- European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950).
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (UN, December 16, 1966).

Also,

- Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (UN, 1967);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UN, 1966);
- Declaration of the Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the Principles of Free and Fair Elections (1994);
- American Convention on Human Rights (1969);



- African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1986);
- The Convention on Standards of Democratic Elections, Electoral Rights and Freedoms in the CIS Participating States (Chisinau, October 7, 2002) also serves as a source of international electoral standards[3, -P. 8].

The documents we have reviewed above summarize the main criteria for the implementation of democratic elections. Also, when talking about democratic elections, we should pay special attention to the political activity, political culture, and values of the population. The Central Asian region has long been recognized as a hotbed of science and enlightenment. As an example, we can cite the fact that many famous thinkers and scientists have emerged from this land and made a significant contribution to the development of world science. But there were also times when intellectuals and enlightened people who emerged from the population were persecuted and repressed. The desire for freedom of the region's population was crushed. When the desire for independence was realized, the organization of civil society institutions and their increased activity became one of the most important issues. It was precisely for the elections to be held based on democratic principles that these institutions had to be established and operate stably. It is impossible to talk about democratic elections without ensuring the free activity of civil society institutions, in particular political parties.

To observe democratic elections in society, it is necessary to first monitor the activity of political institutions. That is, to increase the effectiveness of civil society institutions that ensure democracy, the media, observers, and other NGOs should monitor the conduct of elections based on open, direct, equal suffrage and play an important role in their transparency. The level of political culture and political activity of the population of the countries of the Central Asian region was sufficient to accept democratic institutions and the basic conditions of civil society in the early years of independence.

Methods. Many methods are used in political science to study the relationship between party systems and electoral systems. In this study, we used the methods of a comprehensive approach, comparative analysis, and functional and systemic-structural approaches.

Results

Along with other countries in the Central Asian region, Uzbekistan has also implemented reforms aimed at strengthening the free functioning of democratic institutions, in particularly political parties and their participation in shaping a democratic electoral system. These reforms are continuing at a rapid pace today. In Uzbekistan, legislation on the "Electoral System" and the activities of "Political Parties" is considered one of the leading countries in the region in terms of its compliance with democratic principles. In particular, the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan also contains articles on the activities of the "Electoral System" and "Political Parties." Chapter XXII of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan is called the "Electoral System," and Article 128 states: "Citizens of the Republic of Uzbekistan shall have the right to elect and be elected to the representative bodies of state authority. Every elector shall have one vote. The right to vote, equality, and freedom of expression of will shall be guaranteed by law"[1].

Also, democratic electoral processes are being carried out in the country on the basis of the Electoral Code of the Republic of Uzbekistan, adopted in 2019. This code fully complies with



international electoral standards. For example, Article 3. "Basic principles of conducting elections in the Republic of Uzbekistan

In the Republic of Uzbekistan, elections are held on the basis of universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot.

Elections will be held openly and transparently"[2].

The electoral system is a political institution related to the organization of the process of electing politicians, the implementation of voting procedures and the determination of results, as well as the distribution of mandates (representative legal relations, vacancies occupied through elections) between parties"[7]. In general, the electoral system is an important tool in the formation of governance, ensuring the participation of the people in it. The electoral system is also studied in modern political science by dividing it into three types. 1. Majoritarian electoral system. 2. Proportional electoral system. 3. Mixed electoral system. Moreover, for political parties to form governance, an electoral system must first be formed under democratic conditions. Based on this, we can say that there is a strong connection between the party system and the electoral system. The party system and the electoral system are an integral part of the political system and form its basis. The correct organization of the electoral system in a democratic environment ensures healthy competition between political parties. Political parties can promote their ideas and ideologies only in societies with a fair, transparent, in a word, democratic electoral system.

A majoritarian electoral system (from the French word "majorité," meaning majority) is understood in constitutional law as determining the outcome of voting in elections to representative bodies.

Previously, elections were conducted using a majoritarian system based on an absolute majority of votes. In this system, a candidate who receives an absolute majority of the total votes cast, that is, $50\% + 1$ vote, is considered elected. Among the candidates, the one who receives more votes than each of their opponents is deemed the winner. To put it more simply, in a majoritarian system based on the votes of an absolute majority of voters, a candidate who receives one vote more than 50 percent of the total number of votes cast is recognized as elected (for example, in France). According to the majoritarian absolute majority system, if no candidate receives an absolute majority of votes ($50\% + 1$), then a runoff election is held between the two candidates who received the most votes.

The proportional electoral system (Latin *proportion* - proportion) is one of the types of electoral systems that emerged a century after the majoritarian electoral system.

Under the proportional electoral system, the state is transformed into a single electoral district, and the list of political parties participating in the elections is indicated in the ballot papers instead of the candidates, and voters vote for the parties they prefer. A party receives the same number of seats in the lower house of the country's parliament as it receives the same percentage of votes in the elections.

The mixed electoral system is essentially a combination of two systems: proportional and majoritarian. In this case, one part of the mandates is distributed according to the proportional system (by party lists), and the other part - according to the majoritarian system (voting for a candidate). This electoral system is one of the manifestations of the electoral system, reflecting



the combination of proportional and majoritarian electoral systems in several countries [5, -P. 23].

Different electoral systems can contribute to the development of different party organizations and party systems (two-party or multi-party); contribute to the formation of party electoral blocs; and contribute to the emergence of a single-party or coalition government[6]. The party system operating in the political system and the electoral system play an important role in shaping each other and demonstrating its specific characteristics. For example, in a proportional electoral system, an increase in the role of political parties in society is observed. To be clearer, in a proportional electoral system, voters vote for political parties, which form their representatives based on a list.

Due to the advantages possessed by both electoral systems we examined above, the geography of the mixed electoral system (which combines the characteristics of majoritarian and proportional electoral systems) is expanding today.

Discussion. According to the well-known Uzbek political scientist M. Kirgizbayev, party systems are described as follows: "The concept of a party system is a political space consisting of a set of independent entities (parties) with a certain number and dimensions (voter size, types of internal systems and other criteria), as well as the ability to cooperate. Currently, there are four types of party systems: one-party, bipartisan, "two-and-a-half-party" and multi-party"[4, - P. 209]. Thus, this definition also focuses on the "volume of voters", which means that the party system and the electoral system have a strong and complex relationship. In general, let's give our author's definition of the party system: "A party system is a set of one or more political parties that participate in political processes within a political system without competition or based on mutual competition, have their ideology, and their goal is power". Within a party system, political parties can change their type as a result of movement, division, or merger. For example, the division of a single political party operating in a one-party system creates a two-party or multi-party system.

In the Central Asian region, and in particular, in Uzbekistan, the conduct of democratic elections is being implemented in political processes based on generally recognized principles and norms of international law in the field of ensuring and protecting the electoral rights and freedoms of participants in the electoral process.

The dynamics of international election observation in Uzbekistan in recent years indicate an increasing participation of foreign (international) observers. While 296 foreign observers participated in the 2015 presidential elections in the Republic of Uzbekistan, 555 of them participated in the 2016 elections, and 971 in 2021[8].

Conclusion. In conclusion, the electoral system and its choice are of great importance for the countries of the Central Asian region. Depending on the nature of this or that electoral system, it can limit the quantitative growth of political parties (two-party system) or, conversely, promote an increase in the number of parties (multi-party system), and also support or limit the formation of party coalitions.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has also implemented numerous reforms to improve the efficiency of the electoral system and further strengthen its democratization. In the case of the recent elections alone, the positive assessment of the process by international observers and its implementation based on a new system was of particular importance. The fact that the Uzbek



electoral system is one of the most democratic in the Central Asian region indicates that the legislation in this area is constantly being improved, and democratic reforms are being further accelerated in the country.

Acknowledgment

Based on the conclusions, we put forward the following proposals:

- The strengthening of ideological diversity in society is one of the main factors in the fragmentation of parties, which creates and develops multi-partyism;
- There is a strong parallel growing relationship between the multi-party system and democratic elections;
- As part of democratic reforms in the region, it is necessary to form and develop formats of cooperation for the development of multi-party and electoral systems

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