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The Characteristics of the Formation and Development of the Multi-Party System in Uzbekistan

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Abstract: The article highlights the introduction of a multi-party system in Uzbekistan, its political and legal foundations, the emergence of the first political parties in the political system of independent Uzbekistan, and the specifics of its development.

The attention paid to the activities of political parties for the development of civil society as a fully democratic institution in the new stage of Uzbekistan’s development is discussed, as well as the reforms being implemented to bring its development to a new level, as well as the fact that in political science, multipartyism, democracy, and civil society are closely related, inseparable, and at the same time complementary concepts.

Keywords: political party, multi-party system, democracy, civil society, political system, party system, electorate, opposition, election, political institution, political power.

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Introduction. When Uzbekistan emerged on the world political map as an independent state, it set itself the goal of building a democratic political system to ensure the primacy of human dignity and freedom and took bold steps in this regard. World experience shows that introducing and developing a democratic system is a political process that occurs directly in parallel with the transition to a multi-party system.

In the new stage of Uzbekistan's development, these reforms have been consistently continued and enriched with new directions of development, such as further developing a modernized free civil society and, in this regard, implementing the concepts of the "People's State" and the "Social State". In ensuring the development of civil society in the new Uzbekistan, it is important that human dignity is prioritized, that human rights are guaranteed, that all existing political, economic, cultural, ideological, and other spheres serve their interests, and that the introduction of the constitutional principle of "man-society-state" is aimed primarily at ensuring a prosperous life for the person, placing the person at the center of reforms.

The multi-party system in Uzbekistan and some factors hindering its development were expressed in President Sh's report. Mirziyoyev, entitled “Our Parliament should become a true school of democracy, the initiator and main executor of Reforms” at a meeting with representatives of the

chambers of the Oliy Majlis, political parties, and the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan on July 12, 2017, in which he took a critical approach to the activities of political parties, stating: “Any political party can survive as a political force only if it keeps pace with the times and meets its acute demands” [2, -P. 549]. Although many reforms have been implemented in the sector over the past period, some of the problems in the activities of political parties that the President of Uzbekistan highlighted at this meeting remain relevant.

Materials. After Uzbekistan gained independence, it first began to radically reform its political system, and in parallel, its party system. It is known from the best experiences of the world that today the importance of democracy, civil society, and multi-partism in management relations is increasing. The study of problems related to political parties and multiparty systems is one of the central subjects of today's political science.

Political parties and multi-partyism are being researched by many world-leading research centers and scientists in modern political science. In particular, it was studied by Western political scientists such as N. Machiavelli, J. Sartori, M. Duverger, G. Hegel, T. Hobbes, J. Locke, Russian political scientists such as M. Ostrogorsky, V. Baturin, V. Malsev, V. Pugachev, A. Solovyov, S. Lantsov, and Uzbek political scientists such as I. Ergashev, M. Kirgizboev, N. Zhuraev, V. Kuchkarov, B. Yakubov, Kh. Odilkariev, D. Razzakov.

The concept of a political party is considered a complex ideological and institutionalized structure in political science, and there is no single, universally accepted definition. There are different definitions of the concept of a political party by different scholars. In particular, “A political party is a specialized, organizationally ordered group of people aimed at winning elections or seizing power by other means”[4, -P. 251]. A party system is formed when one or two or more political parties operate in a political space, in competition (without competition) with each other. In modern political science, the most advanced party system today, whose geography is expanding, is the multi-party system.

A multi-party system is a system in which more than two parties have some influence in the political life of the state[16].

The multi-party system is an important condition of democracy, and the existence of constitutional regulators in the relations between the branches of power is "the guarantee of the rights and freedoms of people and citizens"[10, - P. 116].

Multipartyism is one of the main constitutional principles of organizing the political life of modern democratic societies. Due to multi-partyism, constant dialogue between political parties and their representatives, which embody the principles of democracy, such as political pluralism, rule of law, and equality of opportunities, is ensured [7, - P. 198]. Based on the above, the concepts of a multi-party system, democracy, and civil society are strongly interconnected and complementary. It is impossible to build a civil society based on democracy without ensuring ideological diversity based on multipartyism. The core of a multipolar or multiparty system is competition between three or more parties operating based on the principle of multipartyism. The formation of such a party system can be caused by various factors: historical, national, social, and ideological. For example, a two-party or multi-party system is suitable for societies with many classes, strata, various forms of property, and stable democratic traditions. However, despite the primary advantages (for example, pluralism), a multi-party system also has certain disadvantages. It is known that in a two-party system, two rival parties try to maximize their electorate (voters). As a result, the effectiveness of the political system increases. Due to the existence of a large number of small parties in a multiparty system and each of them represents the interests of a relatively small number of voters, the government may face many conflicting actions of political subjects. Finally, the multiparty system can in some cases destroy the possibility of ensuring stability in the parliament. The resulting coalition government may not be able to provide

stability. However, such potential disadvantages of a multi-party system can be overcome by forming party coalitions. Because, thanks to such a way, party coalitions consisting of factions of political parties can coordinate their political actions and ways at least in the parliament[5, - P. 160].

As the experience of political development has proven, the most favorable form and condition for the democratic development of society is a multi-party system. Political scientists sometimes put forward different opinions on this issue. For example, J. Sartori expresses the opinion that the presence of five or more parties, that is, the “multi-party” system, leads to the emergence of a dangerous situation for the life of the state [6, -P. 50].

Methods. In studying political parties as organizations and multi-party systems, political science usually uses the institutional approach. In this study, we also used the methods of complex approach, comparative analysis, functional, and systemic-structural approaches.

Results. After the collapse of the former Soviet single-party system, a new multi-party system based on ideological pluralism was introduced in Uzbekistan. First of all, the legal foundations of the multi-party system were created and political opportunities for its development were expanded. Article 74 of the new Constitution of Uzbekistan states that “Political parties shall express the political will of various sections and groups of the population, and through their democratically elected representatives shall participate in the formation of state authority..... [1]”. The fact that the activities of political parties are regulated by separate articles in the Constitution of Uzbekistan is proof that they are one of the most important institutions in the life of society.

Due to the conditions created for the free operation of political parties in Uzbekistan, their number has increased. Currently, five political parties are operating based on free and healthy competition. In particular, on November 1, 1991, the People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan was first established in Uzbekistan and the priority areas of its socio-political activities were determined. "In December 1991, the party was registered by the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Uzbekistan. By the end of December, the process of organizational formalization of the party and the formation of its territorial organizations in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, all regions and the city of Tashkent, as well as in all districts and cities of the country, was completed" [11].

The Social Democratic Party of Uzbekistan "Adolat" was founded on February 18, 1995. This party recognizes that a person, his rights, freedoms, and legitimate interests are the highest values of the state and society, and promotes the ideas of creating the necessary conditions for the prosperous life of every person in all aspects of the life of society and the state, ensuring the criteria of social justice and the rule of law[12].

November 15, 2003 – The Founding Congress of the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen, was held. The party's Program and Charter were approved, and the composition of the Political Council and the Central Control and Audit Commission were elected.[13] Thus, the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan, which is currently the strongest political party in our country, was formed.

On June 20, 2008, a congress of the unification of the Democratic Party of Uzbekistan "Milliy Tiklanish" and the National Democratic Party "Fidokorlar" was held, and the new Democratic Party of Uzbekistan "Milliy Tiklanish" (UzMTDP) was established based on these two parties[14].

On January 8, 2019, the Ecological Party of Uzbekistan was established based on the Ecological Movement of Uzbekistan. The main goal of this party is to ensure the implementation of state policy aimed at achieving sustainable development, environmental safety, preserving natural resources and creating a favorable environment for present and future generations, and to help achieve environmental protection and conservation of natural resources, which is the duty of the

state, society and every citizen of the country[15]. These political parties operating in Uzbekistan have been forming governance based on competition and transparent, democratic elections. The elections to the Oliy Majlis and local councils held on October 27, 2024, were also heated, full of political debates and discussions. The difference between the elections held on October 27, 2024, and the previous elections was that the Oliy Majlis was held based on a "mixed electoral system" for the Legislative Chamber. The election results are as follows;

1. UzLiDeP — 64 seats (38 single-mandate districts, 26 single districts);

2. National revival — 29 (15+14);

3. Adolat SDP — 21 (9+12);

4. PDP — 20 (7+13);

5. Eco party — 16 (6+10) [17].

The pre-election struggle between the parties serves to ensure that the daily activities of the parliament will continue, the competition of ideas and programs will take a permanent shape, and that the parties will achieve their goals and objectives. At the same time, political parties are required to have their long-term program, which is closely related to the requirements of the socio-economic and political reform process being implemented in the country, and at the same time, to continuously improve it in line with the times [7, -P. 207].

A distinctive feature of the development of multi-party democracy in Uzbekistan is that political parties maintain a political culture when engaging in political debates and discussions in political processes, particularly during electoral processes. The common goal is to ensure the development of society.

Discussion. It is known from world experience that in a multi-party system, the leadership of a single party is convenient for some societies, for example, Norway, Sweden, and Spain, and for some, we can observe the development of civil society in a multi-party system where the leadership of a particular party is not observed. For example, in the Netherlands, Switzerland, France, etc. countries. The importance of multipartyism in building a developed civil society is immeasurable. Therefore, we should first focus on its strengths.

Strengths of the multi-party system:

1. A competitive political environment is created that reinforces the traditions of debate, agreement, and compromise.

2. Opportunities to adequately represent the interests of many social groups will expand.

3. The formation of a responsible government, realizing the possibility of replacing it if it makes serious mistakes.

4. More and better solutions to political problems are offered.

5. The public feedback mechanism works more reliably.

6. Opportunities for political participation will be expanded for ordinary citizens, etc.

The multi-party system also has its weaknesses, which are manifested in the following. These processes can be observed only when the multi-party system exceeds certain limits.

1. It leads to excessive fragmentation of the electorate and, as a result, the elimination of many political parties from the system; the more parties or electoral alliances participate in the elections, the fewer of them will enter parliament: voters, realizing that their parties have no chance of entering parliament, vote for parties that are guaranteed to send their deputies to the elected government.

2. The parliamentary faction structure is excessively fragmented; a large amount of time and energy of deputies is spent on inter-factional struggle, which reduces the effectiveness of their legislative activities.
3. It makes it difficult to form a stable government in parliamentary systems (complex coalitions are necessary here).
4. It brings to life the phenomenon of "irresponsible opposition"; small parties that do not have a real chance of entering parliament, realizing that they are not accountable for them, begin to make deliberately impossible promises; this "rocks the political boat", contributes to the radicalization of the political mood of the masses, etc.

Thus, party systems have a significant impact on the political process [4, - P. 258].

Party systems are also closely related to elections, which are considered important political processes.

The essence of the party system largely depends on the nature of the electoral system. According to the law developed by M. Duverger, the proportional electoral system contributes to the development of a multi-party system, while parties strive to be as free and independent as possible from each other. In a majoritarian electoral system, parties in a multi-party system with two rounds of voting are united into inter-party blocs and alliances [8, -P. 303].

Political parties, as active participants in political processes, are becoming increasingly important in the formation and functioning of state bodies, and the adoption of state decisions. In addition, the existence of political parties is one of the necessary conditions for the development of democratic systems. When approached from the point of view of the principles of democracy, political parties do not enter the system of state bodies and do not directly participate in state affairs. However, political parties are distinguished by the fact that they are simultaneously an institution belonging to both the state sphere and civil society [3, -P. 105]. In modern political science, parties are recognized as an institution of civil society that forms state power and ensures its continuity.

The multi-party system is directly linked to the concept of civil society. The idea of "civil society", one of the most important political phenomena of the modern era, has gradually given rise to several concepts and interpretations. However, it has always been contrasted with the phenomenon of "state". The liberal interpretation of civil society dates back to the time of T. Hobbes, J. Locke, and C. Montesquieu [7, -P. 12].

According to some scholars, a democratic society is “first and foremost a civil society. The highest content of true democracy is the harmonization of interpersonal, interethnic, state and socio-political relations” [9, -P. 7]. Based on these scientific approaches, we can say that civil society, democracy, and a multi-party system are inseparable and complementary concepts.

Among the political scientists who have developed the relationship between civil society and the state in great detail, Hegel is the most prominent. Hegel defines civil society as a set of individuals, classes, groups, and other institutions whose activities are governed by law, and this set is not directly dependent on political state rule. Hegel also expresses the following opinion about this. “The nature of civil society is such that in it the rights of each person have already become the personal rights of the state, and in it, the state “takes upon itself” the obligation to protect and decide on my rights as if they were its own” [6, -P. 8].

Conclusion. In conclusion, the development of a multi-party system in Uzbekistan is one of the main factors ensuring the development of a democratically based civil society. According to many political scientists, it is distinguished by its more complete and effective coverage of society than other party systems. The multi-party system is more likely to meet the needs of different segments

of the population in terms of their participation in political life in the formation of civil society. The multi-party system in Uzbekistan unites representatives of different strata of society as a political force and protects their interests. To ensure the further development of civil society, it is necessary to raise the activities of existing political parties in our country to a new level.

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