

# Features of Party Construction in the Course of Political Modernization of Kazakhstan

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**Abstract**—This article considers the main features of party construction in the course of political modernization of Kazakhstan. Along with consideration of party construction author analyzed how the transformation of the party system was fulfilled in Kazakhstan. Besides the basic stages in the course of party construction were explained by the author. The statistical data is cited.

**Keywords**—elections, multi-party system, party construction, political pluralism, political party, Republic of Kazakhstan (RK)

## I. INTRODUCTION

IN present-day world political pluralism and multi-party system are viewed upon not only as the basic principles of the society social organization, but also as the initial and compulsory condition of democracy. In this connection having proclaimed itself as the democratic state Kazakhstan has been reforming its partisan-political sphere since the first years of its independence, and has considerably boosted up its development in recent years. Kazakhstan has traveled a long and rather complicated path during the last 22 years of its development first as one of the Republics of the USSR and then as the sovereign Kazakhstan State starting from the collapse of the totalitarian one-party system through «spontaneous» [1] multiplicity of parties towards multi-party system with predominant party represented by People's Democratic Nur Otan Party ruled by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan N.A. Nazarbaev.

## II. INITIAL PERIOD OF PARTY CONSTRUCTION

The following six main stages can be conventionally distinguished in the course of the party construction in Kazakhstan. The first stage falls on 1990-1993. The most important events and tendencies peculiar for this initial period are as follows:

- Abolition of the USSR Constitution, Clause 6 securing absolute rule of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the soviet society on March 14, 1990 at the second congress of people's deputies of the USSR. This event signified proclamation of the state permissible policy regarding political pluralism and creation of new political parties and consequently formation of multi-party system
- Creation of the first alternative parties in April-May 1990 in the Republic such as Social Democratic Party of Kazakhstan and Party of National Freedom «Alash» [2]. The first party positioned itself as a supporter of the social democracy ideas, while the second party strived for gaining independent statehood;

- Adoption of Law on Non-Governmental Organizations (public association) in the Kazakh SSR on June 27, 1991 that legalized the activity of political parties and social movements created at that date. Thereby legal conditions were formed for transition of these associations from the status of informal into officially acknowledged public structures;
- Convention of XVIII special extraordinary congress of the Kazakhstan Communist Party on September 7, 1991 that took resolution on reforming the Communist Party into Socialist Party of Kazakhstan. Before that the President of the Kazakh SSR N.A. Nazarbaev voluntarily resigned the office of the first secretary of the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party. Thereby a course was set for de-partisation of government apparatus and distancing it from all republic socio-political organizations without exception.

Proclamation by the Republic leadership of social and governmental relations reformation aimed to democracy development, law-governed state and market economy marked a fundamental event within the framework of further transformation of the party system. The main milestones of this policy were outlined in the publication by the head of the state in the Republic press under the headline "Strategy of Kazakhstan Formation and Development as the Sovereign State".

Particularly the President noted: «Various political parties and organizations will play more important role in Kazakhstan domestic policy as integral components of the democratic civil society. Party multiplicity expresses without prejudice real difference of various social groups depending on material, professional and other stratification of the population. Party multiplicity will not be artificially formed, but will be formed in proportion to creating the real basis for this by means of natural demolition of social-economic society homogeneity on the way to the market and crystallization of various population groups' interests» [3]. This statement of the head of the state laid conceptual – ideological foundation for further development of the party construction in the Republic.

Thus, collapse of the soviet communist regime, dissolution of the CPSU and transformation of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan into Socialist Party, collapse of the USSR and actual sovereignty gain and change of reform policy towards liberal-democratic modernization opened the possibilities for creation and activities of new parties and other social and political organizations. Among other factors one can mention new ideological trends that have emerged such as socialistic, liberal-democratic and national-democratic.

In its turn they were given proper institutional form as corresponding parties. Thus in autumn 1991 People's Congress of Kazakhstan came up at political arena as well as Republican Party of Kazakhstan and reconstructed Communist Party of Kazakhstan.

In November 1993 Party of Democratic Progress of Kazakhstan was created [4]. Alongside with that some of these parties have stopped their activity by various reasons.

The second stage of the party construction covers 1994-1997 period. Its distinctive feature is the creation of conditions for involvement of Kazakhstani parties in exercising governmental power and public administration processes. That became possible due to involvement of the appropriate parties in parliamentary elections and then depending on their results in the legislative body of the state.

In 1994 Kazakhstani parties got the opportunity for the first time to be voted in the elections into representative bodies of power at all levels. On March 7 elections of Deputies to the RK Supreme Soviet of 13th convocation and to local representative bodies called maslikhats. As a result 75 out 177 deputies of the Supreme Soviet were elected from the parties and other public and political organizations [5].

In this connection deputy fractions of the Socialist Party and People's Congress of Kazakhstan were created in the Supreme Soviet. In this case both parties were in opposition of different extent to the Republic Government. Association "People's Unity of Kazakhstan" (UPUK) was created in February 1993 to counter balance these fractions in the format of socio-political movement. This Association acted as the organization that secured ideological, managerial-political and social support of the political policy. UPUK was also represented by its fraction in the legislative body.

Controversial and rather intensive events occurred in the social-political life of Kazakhstan in 1995 starting with dissolution of the RK Supreme Soviet of the 13th convocation since the Constitutional Court recognized it as illegitimately formed, and ending by adoption of new RK Constitution on August 30 at the Republican referendum, which cardinally changed the entire structure of political-power system. These events considerably influenced the party system of Kazakhstan.

Such new parties as a party of Kazakhstan People's Unity (PKPU) formed on the basis of the similar association, Democratic Party of Kazakhstan, People's Cooperative Party of Kazakhstan, Party of Kazakhstan Revival (renewal) and Republican Political Labor Party were created prior to the first elections to the newly introduced parliament of two houses. Herewith all the parties supported the official political line. Thus the party system of Kazakhstan was represented by 9 political parties.

The majority of the working parties very actively participated in the parliamentary elections held in December 1995 following exclusively the majoritarian model. Thus 157 candidates for deputies to the RK Majilis Parliament of the first convocation were nominated from 30 parties and public movements.

At the result 63 out 67 deputies of the lower chamber (house) of the legislative body were elected from socio-political organizations [6]. Deputy fractions of PKPU and Democratic Party were formed by the results of these elections to the Majilis of the Parliament. Plus two deputies represented the Communist party of Kazakhstan.

### III. THE STRENGTHENING OF POLITICAL PARTIES' ROLE IS ONE OF THE MAIN ELEMENTS OF POLITICAL DEMOCRATIZATION IN RK

The third stage of the party construction took place during 1998-2006. The RK President N.A. Nazarbaev's Letter read on September 30, 1998 "On situation in the country and main trends of domestic and foreign policy: society democratization, economic and political reforms in new century" addressed to the people of Kazakhstan is to be considered at the beginning of this stage.

In this document the Head of the state specified the growing role of the political parties among seven fundamental elements of democratization and political liberalization policy. According to him the parties «...represent the main "structural material" used for construction of the democracy building, and we should do our best both in legal respect and other respects when establishing their place in the society for them to grow and strengthen» [7].

Thereby the leadership of Kazakhstan confirmed the adherence to further progressive advance of the institute of political parties and party multiplicity, and also expressed the loyalty to the existing and future parties of different ideological and political orientation. Alongside with that the appeal was put forward to the corresponding parties to respect and save the political stability and interethnic concord as one of the main conditions of supporting this policy.

The Parliament adopted amendments to the RK constitution on October 7, 1998 to develop the basic provisions of the RK President's Letter to the people of Kazakhstan. The most important one was the introduction of the proportional representation elements into the electoral system of the Republic. Therefore political parties that received not less than 7% votes of the electors having gone to the polls were allowed to distribution of the deputy seats in the Majilis Parliament based on the party tickets. Number of Majilis deputies was increased for this purpose from 67 to 77 persons including introduction of capability of 10 deputies to be elected on the basis of the party rolls in the territory of the single national constituency.

This constitutional reform, early presidential election held on January 10, 1999 and regular parliamentary election in autumn of the same year created an incentive for restructuring the party spectrum of the Republic including emergence of new political parties. The most influential one became republican political party Otan created on January 19, 1999 on the basis of the Campaign Headquarters in support of presidential candidate N.A. Nazarbaev at the 1st congress of this party held on March 1 of the same year and attended by the head of the state, the latter was ceremonially admitted into Otan RPP, and was elected its chairman.

Creation of Otan RPP initiated the process of the parties and movements consolidation supporting the official political line. Starting from 1999 this party was joined by the Kazakhstan People's Unity Party, Democratic Party of Kaazakhstan, Liberal Movement of Kazakhstan, and Movement for 2030 Kazakhstan, Party of Justice of the Republic of Kazakhstan, People's Cooperative Party and Republican Political Labor Party.

By May 1999 were created 16 regional party organizations (in 14 regions and cities of Astana and Almaty), 204 territorial (in all towns and districts of regional subordination) and about 6600 primary party organizations uniting more than 150 thousand Otan RPP members [8].

In 1998-1999 in addition to Otan RPP Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan, Civil Party of Kazakhstan, Party of Justice of the RK, political alliance of female organizations of Kazakhstan, Republican People's Party of Kazakhstan and Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Azamat came up at political arena of the country. The latter two parties acted as the opposition to the policy pursued by the state leadership.

The majority of the earlier acting and newly created parties took an active part in the parliamentary election held in September-October 1999. So on evidence of Central Election Commission as of September 23, 1999 563 citizens of the republic were registered as candidates for deputies of Majilis Parliament; out of this quantity 117 persons were nominated by political parties, and 80 persons were nominated by public associations. Ten party rolls were also registered including 70 persons [9].

Following the results of Majilis deputies election to the RK Parliament of the 2nd convocation within the framework of the proportional representation, the distribution of 10 deputy seats was done according to the votes cast in support of one or another party as follows: RPP Otan (30.89% votes) - 4 deputies, Communist Party of Kazakhstan (17.75%), Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan (12.63%) and Civil Party (11.23%) – by 2 deputies [10]. Then in 2000 in conditions of intra-parliamentary ideological and political heterogeneity and relative competition the party of Kazakhstan Patriots and Social Democratic Party Auyal were formed. The latter of them formed its own deputy fraction in the legislative body.

The fourth stage of the party construction covers 2002-2006 period. This stage is essentially linked with serious changes of legal foundation of the party construction process, which followed after adoption of new law on political parties on July 15, 2002.

This Law primarily modified the procedure of formation and state registration of political parties towards its tightening, and also methods of the state control over their activities. This modification is expressed in the requirement that membership of the parties should include not less than 50 thousand citizens representing the branches or party offices in all the regions of the republic and cities of Astana and Almaty. In its turn the number of party members should be not less than 700 party members in each of its regional subdivision [11].

With introduction of such procedure the state demanded to go through the procedure of re-registration in judicial authorities from the earlier working and newly formed parties as of the date of this law adoption in order to bring their membership and charter documents in compliance with the law. It ought to be noted that as of September 1, 2002 nineteen officially registered political parties were working in the Republic [12] including those created in 2001-2002: Party of the National Unity Kaz Eli, Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak Zhol and the Russian Party of Kazakhstan later on renamed into political party "Compatriot".

However subject to the Law on Political Parties 12 parties were dissolved in 2003. Many of them failed to induct the required quantity of potential partisans in the conditions of high political apathy of the population.

On the other hand the requirement under consideration did not become impassable barrier for creation of new political parties in the country. On the threshold of the election appointed on autumn 2004 new parties were created at political arena of Kazakhstan such as Rukhaniyat Party (on the basis of former party of Kazakhstan Revival), Republican Party Asar, Democratic Party of Kazakhstan later on renamed into Democratic Party Adilet, Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan created because of the split of the Communist Party and Party "Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan".

All twelve parties acting on that date were competing for deputy seats in parliamentary election that took place in September-October 2004. In this case some of parties for the first time legally implemented the strategy of creating electoral blocks. Particularly Agrarian and Civil parties united into Agrarian-Industrial Coalition of working class (AICW), and Communist Party of Kazakhstan and the Party "Democratic choice of Kazakhstan" have united into "Oppositional People's coalition of communists and DCK".

By the results of the parliamentary election the below mentioned parties entered the RK Majilis Parliament of the 3d convocation: Otan RPP – 60.61% votes of electors (7 seats out of 10); DPK «Ak Zhol» - 12.04% (1 seat); «Asar» - 11.38% (1 seat) and AIST Block – 7.07% (1 seat) [13]. At the same time Otan Party and AIST Block managed to increase the number of their representatives in the Lower House at the cost of the candidates that won in one-candidate constituencies by correspondingly 53 and 14 seats. These associations were able to create their own fractions in the Majilis Parliament.

The fifth stage of the party construction falls on 2007-2011 period. Its beginning should be linked with adopting by the Parliament the Law "On Inserting Amendments into the Constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan" on May 21, 2007. The carried out constitutional reform introduced considerable changes in electoral and party system of the Republic.

First and foremost, the introduced innovations concern the following: deputy corps of the RK Majilis was increased from 77 up to 107 members; 98 members are elected on the proportional basis, and the remained 9 parliamentarians were elected by the People's Assembly of Kazakhstan.

Procedure of the Republic Government was also changed. According to the new procedure the Government has to be formed after consultations of the RK President with fractions of the parties represented in the Parliament as for the candidate of the Prime Minister and later on submitted before the entire lower chamber of the legislative body. Moreover the provision prohibiting the party membership by the RK President was removed from the Constitution [14].

It is important to note that this constitutional reform was preceded by merging of Otan RPP, Republican Party Asar, Civil Party of Kazakhstan and Agrarian Party of Kazakhstan in 2006.

As the result of this process “the party of power” was renamed into People’s Democratic Party “Nur Otan”

#### IV. SOME DATA OF SOCIAL RESEARCHES

In general the corresponding consolidation of the parties of pro-power political spectrum and the above mentioned results of 2007 constitutional reform created serious preconditions for multi-party system formation with one party being predominant. This tendency particularly revealed itself with holding an extraordinary parliamentary election on August 18 the same year, which ended up by a clear victory of Nur Otan PDP. According to Central Election Committee 88.41% electors cast their votes for this party [15]. The remained 6 parties failed to overcome 7% vote threshold. Thus Nur Otan took 98 seats in the RK Majilis Parliament intended for party tickets voting. Thereby this party came up to the level of the ruling party.

The start of the sixth stage of the party construction was marked by dissolution of the Majilis Parliament of the 4th convocation on November 16, 2011, and calling an election to the Parliament of new composition for January 15, 2012. Election requests were given by 8 parties out of 9 officially acting political parties of Kazakhstan. According to voting returns the following parties entered the Majilis Parliament of the 5th convocation: Nur Otan PDP (80.99%), Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak Zhol (7.47%) and Communist People’s Party of Kazakhstan (7.19%). In this connection deputy seats were distributed between these parties as follows: 83, 8 and 7 correspondingly [16].

At the same time results of the last election in Kazakhstan can be evaluated as controversial and multivalued. On the one hand the election resulted in departure of the Republic political system from one-party system in the process of formation and activity of the Parliament. This is a big step forward from the viewpoint of further development of the party system. Moreover the voting results reflect electoral preferences of Kazakhstani citizens that were revealed by means of the public opinion polls conducted by various research and information organizations.

For example, according to social studies «Public sentiments in large cities of Kazakhstan» conducted in July 2011 by the Institute of Political Decisions (IPD) electoral preferences of Kazakhstani citizens looked like this [17].”

In this way as per the IPD respondents’ preferences the first quartet of contenders for taking the seats in the Majilis Parliament of the 5th convocation included Nur Otan PDP, Ak zhol DPK, Alga People’s Party and Communist People’s Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK). Though Alga Party created in 2006 still fails to undergo state registration caused by apparent impeding on the part of the corresponding state bodies because of radical character of Alga party opposition to official political policy.

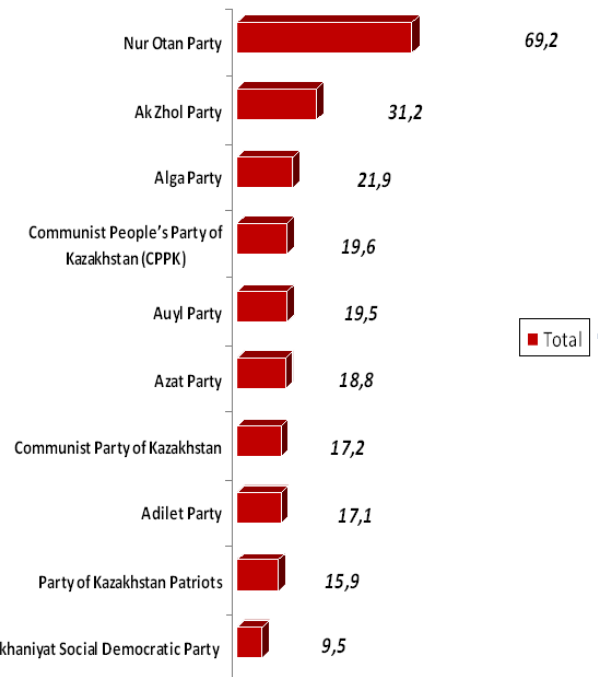


Fig. 1 electoral preferences of the rk citizens what political parties would you like to see in the parliament? (% of the number of respondents)

Accordingly this party lacks legal opportunities to participate in the parliamentary elections. Therefore its electoral niche was occupied by the CPPK.

On the other hand the above mentioned two parties that entered the Majilis Parliament along with Nur Otan PDP take maximum loyal position towards the official political policy. In this respect because of the inconsiderable number of their fractions Ak zhol DPK and CPPK are unable to the fully oppose “the party of power”, and also implement their pre-election promises to electors.

To date the party system of Kazakhstan officially includes the following 9 political parties officially registered in the RK Ministry of Justice. Therewith as regards to their relation to the country leadership and the official political policy they can be divided into the following groups:

- People’s Democratic Party Nur Otan claiming to be the governing party since it is ruled by the RK President N.A. Nazarbaev and possessing so far the stable status of the party of parliamentary majority.
- Parties though showing maximum loyalty to the official political policy but at the same time not representing potential political allies for Nur Otan PDP in order to probably form political (parliamentary) coalitions. Democratic party Adilet, Kazakhstan Social Democratic Party Auyl, Party of Kazakhstan Patriots and Rukhaniyat Party can be referred hereto.
- Parties being forced to act as parliamentary opposition, but unable to approve themselves in this capacity. In this case reference is made to Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak

zhul and Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan.

- Parties being in principal opposition to the official political policy. These are Nationwide Social Democratic Party and Communist Party of Kazakhstan.

The only factor unifying these parties is that they all practically determine democratic development of Kazakhstan as their main programmed aim. The below indicated value markers give more or less clear idea about each of these parties.

TABLE I  
COMPARATIVE DATA ON VALUE MARKERS OF KAZAKHSTAN POLITICAL PARTIES [18]

Political Parties	Value Guidelines
Adilet» DP	Strengthening legal statehood based on the principles of true democracy, interethnic concord and political stability, free market economy and supremacy of the statute law
«Ak zhol»DPK	Independent, prosperous, democratic and free Kazakhstan; dignified life for each Kazakhstan citizen. Our fundamental values are independence, democracy, freedom and equality.
«Auy!»KSDP	Strengthening governmental control and support of agricultural sector; defense of agricultural workers' interests; efficient promotion of economic and political reforms aimed to further democratization of the society; implementation of the reasonable forms of market relations in all branches of economy; advance in living standards of the citizens; social equality and stability preservation; strengthening interethnic confessional concord.
Communist People's Party of Kazakhstan	Striving for social and political equality, government by the people, solidarity and brotherhood, respect of national dignity, language, traditions and history of the peoples of the multinational Kazakhstan and all peoples of the world.
CPK	The aim of Communist party of Kazakhstan is to create conditions for construction of free society and social equality based on scientific socialism principles. New Program of the Communist party is based on the following concepts: a person and collectivism (team spirit), socialism and government by the people

Nur Otan PDP

NSDP

PPC

«Rukhaniyat» SDP

(sovereignty).

Implementation of economic and political reforms aimed to further society democratization, advance in living standards of the citizens, assertion social equality and stability preservation, strengthening interethnic and inter-confession concord, education of patriotism and responsibility for universal and harmonious development of Kazakhstan.

Consistent effort of implementing the values of the world social-democratic movement, principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, construction of democratic, legal and social state, innovative economy and pursuing new humanitarian policy.

Mental and cultural rebirth of the society and creation of conditions for economy growth, wellbeing increase and national wealth in order to solve social problems (unemployment elimination, ensure subsistence minimum for people on pension, handicapped persons, free education and medical care).

Based on interethnic concord make contribution to construction of democratic and legal state with socially oriented market economy via moral and mental people revival.

## V. CONCLUSION

However, regardless of quantitative and value-oriented variety practically all Kazakhstani parties lack access to full participation in exercising governmental power and administration processes owing to specific structure of political and power system and «game rules» inside the ruling elite of Kazakhstan. Among them is Nur Otan Party, whose provisions and activity with regard to political and power system bear rather supportive than decisive character. In addition the Republican Party system is formed and developed by the Government, whereas the role of the civil society is inconsiderable in this process.

In general the variety of assessments and discussions among Kazakhstani public regarding the current situation and prospects for further development of the domestic parties in political system of the Republic obviously reflect those complicated and multiple-valued processes, which take place in the society and the state. Incompletion of modernization processes capable of approaching Kazakhstan to universally acknowledged standards of political democracy means that the process of party multiplicity formation still continues in the Republic.

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