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Political regime in post-soviet Kazakhstan: background and features of transformation

This article discusses the formation of the political system of modern Kazakhstan after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Also examines the ideological and theoretical aspects of the political modernization process that is still ongoing. An analysis of gradual political transition in Kazakhstan.

Key words: political system, post-Soviet Kazakhstan, political transformation, Soviet Union.

Political and regime transformation in the post-Soviet space, with more than twenty years of development after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, has recently caused many researchers more and more interest. However, as noted by a number of political scientists studying them is unproductive, because it is faced with a number of theoretical and methodological difficulties. Chief among them is the fact that the political transformation of post-Soviet countries have a greater variability, which is not possible to explain in terms of any kind was a universal theoretical model. No less difficult circumstances is a significant peculiarity of post-Soviet transformation and their outcomes compared with similar processes in other parts of the world.

It is obvious that the study of this problem is impossible without a more thorough analysis of the formation of political systems and regimes of post-Soviet countries, the study of the stages and characteristics of political transformations in individual cases. It seems that the solution to the above problems should be based on an inductive basis. In this regard, the study of political transformations separate independent states of the former Soviet Union in the post-Soviet period, it becomes extremely important.

Deep in the essence of the post-totalitarian countries, which include Kazakhstan, the political transformations are not limited to a simple and gradual overcoming difficulties of unification of political systems, but rather to expand the typological diversity of democracies. It is to this interpretation incline today, many foreign researchers. For example, Huntington, summing up the results peculiar almost two decades' of global democratization 3rd wave, «came to the conclusion that as the assimilation of formal democratic institutions, an increasing number of diverse societies» democracy itself is becoming more differentiated» [1].

Specificity of the phased development of political transition in Kazakhstan connected with the generally accepted assumptions that precede and accompany the deployment of political transition towards democracy in any country. In comparative politics stand «... three basic types of structural conditions of democracy: first, the acquisition of National Unity and the corresponding identity; secondly, achieving a fairly high level of economic development; and thirdly, the mass distribution of cultural norms and values that involve the recognition of democratic principles, the credibility of the main political institutions, interpersonal trust, a sense of citizenship and others».' The data structural conditions due to the influence of certain objective social phenomena, not the subjective intentions and actions of the participants of the political process [2].

Given these structural conditions, it is believed that a more comprehensive definition of the specificity and stages over twenty years of political transformation in Kazakhstan need to identify the institutional and functional conditions that preceded it and accompanied it. On this basis, it is considered justified to begin a phased analysis of the political transition in the country with consideration of interconnected structural, institutional and functional prerequisites for democratization.

At the same time, especially political transit in Kazakhstan does not exclude the presence of some partial analogies that can be traced between it and the classic version of political transformation. In this sense, in all cardinal differences between the Kazakh post-totalitarian transformation from successful southern European and Latin American transitions to democracy, it is in the initial stages of their series are subject to certain constants procedural model of political transition.

The first premise is related to determining the place of Kazakhstan's model of political transition in the overall process «of global democratization». First of all, it should be noted that the assertion of the democratic vector of development of Kazakhstan's political system during the previous ten-year period as a whole,

took place in the general framework of the third wave of democratization that swept a number of post-totalitarian and authoritarian countries in the world. Thus, the transit of Kazakhstan largely deterministic common patterns of global democratization. However, it should be noted that, following in line with some of the general laws of this wave of democratic transitions, Kazakhstan demonstrates its completely certain specifics. This specificity of the Kazakh political transition is not limited to a simple choice of Kazakhstan of its special «third way» towards democracy. It seems to us to be more justified to consider the current transformation of Kazakhstan's political system as one of the options for diversification «of global democratization».

However, after going through the initial stages, despite a number of similarities, Kazakh political transit in many respects moved to a custom algorithm development, which led to its isolated position with respect to not only the classic southern European and Latin American versions of political transformation, but similar processes in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and a number of CIS countries. Born during the post-totalitarian transformation of Kazakhstan's new socio-political reality it carries a complex fusion of partially overcoming and partially transformed traditions of the past, which leads us to the second definition of the preconditions of political transition in the country.

The second premise is related to the nature of the determinism of political transition in Kazakhstan. It should be noted that political reform in the late 80s and early 90s were mainly due to the external influences associated with the phases of the collapse of the totalitarian system of the Soviet Union and the establishment of the sovereignty of Kazakhstan. As rightly says one of the researchers of Kazakhstan MS Mary, «the latest count of the political process would be logical to maintain since 1985 — the actual beginning of the modernization of post-totalitarian, initially under the communist system» [3].

The third premise is related to the scale of the involvement of various social forces in the process of political transformation. The common denominator, which may indicate a similarity of political modernization in the Soviet Union and perestroika sovereign Kazakhstan, is the fact that reforms were launched in the direction from top to bottom. In other words, from the beginning of systemic transformation Kazakhstan fell into the category of countries where political reforms started in many ways by the political elite.

The fourth assumption is related to the nature of the institutional environment, which preceded the accession of Kazakhstan to the process of political transformation. It should be noted that the end of the 80s. in our country, by and large, it did not have sufficient economic, socio-cultural prerequisites for democratic reforms because of what the holding of the first transformation began almost from scratch. Moreover, the conditions in which Kazakhstan has started to carry out political reform, for the most part, were unfavorable. Recall that the entry of Kazakhstan in the early 90s. the path of systemic transformation occurred in such circumstances, even references which gives us an idea about the whole complexity of the situation at that time.

Firstly, the country experienced a systemic social and economic crisis, the result of which was the collapse of the industry, hyperinflation, sharp declines in living standards;

Secondly, they not form the basis of the market economy as a major economic prerequisites of democracy;

Third, as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union almost everywhere in the post-Soviet countries has increased the politicization of ethnicity and strained international relations;

Fourth, there was no real political pluralism, multi-party system was not independent media, non-governmental organizations;

Fifth, there was no historical experience of democratic traditions and democratic institutions.

The presence of these complex conditions in the early 90s. It does not indicate that they were not adequately represented by the counter external and internal impulses that stimulate the process of political reforms. I think that they played a decisive role in overcoming obstacles to the gradual transition of Kazakhstan from one stage of political transition to another. At the same time the need for timely decisions interim tactical tasks to upgrade Kazakhstan's society has led to the fact that the process of political change has taken flexible.

The fifth assumption is related to the shape of the transition of Kazakhstan to the political transition. It should be noted that in our country the process of political reforms initially proceeded peacefully, largely indicative of national unity in the country. Largely due to the fact that the collapse of the geopolitical unification, the former Soviet Union, a number of objective and subjective reasons, was inevitable, in the early years of Kazakhstan's sovereignty was able to determine the parameters of the development of its political system.

Pointing to this feature of Kazakhstan's political transition, known Kazakh historian MK Kozybaev writes that, despite the urgency and intensity of the political landscape of the late 80s – early 90s., «... The process of sovereignty proceeded peacefully, without open internal struggle for the supreme powers of manifestation of extreme forms of intolerance, in the absence of external intervention» [4].

Around a similar vein and says A.H. Bizhanov, who writes that «as in most of the CIS countries, the transition to democracy in Kazakhstan was made a peaceful revolution ... It is a predetermined feature of political development in Kazakhstan, where in the first stage (phase) of the change process has been clearly defined the primacy of domestic political changes. The objectives of foreign and defense policy is generally to provide a process of transformation of a favorable external environment» [5].

The sixth assumption is related to the content of the internal political reforms in Kazakhstan. It should be noted that from the beginning of systemic transformation in our country was elected as a way to conduct a comprehensive transformation. In other words, unlike some transit countries, political reforms in Kazakhstan were very closely associated with the forced implementation of market reforms and the choice of optimal state-political structure of the country.

In his annual address to the people of Kazakhstan «New decade — new economic growth — new opportunities of Kazakhstan» voiced by January 29, 2010, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan approves the consistent political modernization in the context of improvement of the political system of the country [6]. At the same time the appropriate measures were announced to them in the framework of political stability. In this specific direction of political modernization identified in the Strategic Plan of Development of Kazakhstan till 2020, approved by Presidential Decree of 1 February 2010. The document, in particular, it is assumed:

1. to create effective local government institutions and civil society, relevant best international standards;
2. to create a modern, efficient and transparent electoral and party system;
3. to strengthen the role of representative government;
4. to establish mechanisms for a constructive dialogue between the state and civil society, government and business, government and the opposition;
5. to create an effective system of formation and reproduction of the political elite of Kazakhstan;
6. To focus in the public service the best representatives of the people of Kazakhstan.

Such statements show that the government of Kazakhstan continues to adhere to the principle of tactics regarding the consistency of the implementation of political reforms in the medium term [7].

Thus, step by step analysis conducted political transition in Kazakhstan suggests that in recent years in the country as a whole have been significant structural, institutional and functional changes that have consolidated the basic foundations of a democratic social order and a liberal political system.

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Посткеңестік Қазақстандағы саяси тәртіп: алғышарттары және өзгеру ерекшеліктері

Мақалада КСРО ыдырығаннан кейін қазіргі Қазақстанның саяси жүйесінің қалыптасу сұрақтары қарастырылған. Сонымен қатар авторлар бүгін жалғасып жатқан саяси үрдісті жетілдірудің теориялық және идеологиялық қырларын зерттеп, Қазақстандағы саяси транзиттің алғышарттарын белгілеген.

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Политический режим в постсоветском Казахстане: предпосылки и особенности трансформации

В статье рассматривается формирование политической системы современного Казахстана после распада СССР. Авторами исследуются идеологические и теоретические аспекты политического процесса модернизации, который продолжается до сих пор. Приведены предпосылки политического транзита в Казахстане.

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