Political Elections as an Element of Democracy

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Abstract
The article examines electoral systems in relation to democratic theory; and it links the study of electoral systems to that of voting systems. It compares elections in various other kinds of systems, and it looks at the differences between Azerbaijan experience and that of other countries.

The article tries to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The literature regarding the formation of party systems in different transition societies, reflects that establishment of institutionalized party system where competing parties exist is an extended process and needs a long time. Also, this study accounts for different electoral system in terms of political modernization and democratic transformation.

All these problems have been analyzed from both a comparative and a theoretical standpoint. Today, to attain a healthy and stable political structure is one of the main problems of political science. As a result, political parties and political elections are indispensable elements of democracy.

Keywords: Electoral system; Democratic theory; Passive suffrage; Voting systems

Introduction
The source of power, in a democratic regime, is election, and consequently it is the basis of legitimacy. Therefore, the purpose of parliamentary elections in multi-party democracy, first and foremost, is to clarify which party or parties will govern the country for a certain period, in other words, is to determine which party will establish the government or which party will be in the opposition.

Emerging democracies adopt their initial electoral system in different ways. In the case of the post-Soviet States, with the explosion of new parties after the Soviet breakdown in 1991, the link between electoral law and party systems has very important implications. The types of party systems emerging in these countries will exert an influence on the possibilities of democratic consolidation. To a certain extent, government stability in these countries does and will depend on the degree of fragmentation of the party system.

Electoral Systems as a Part of Political System
Election system is primarily, but not exclusively about the integration of special interest groups into political system and effective representation of minority. The election is one of the key elements of a democratic state. The existence of electoral system notifies the democracy in the country. Elections build trust between state and citizens. Therefore, it is an integral and necessary part of democracy.

Five varieties of plurality/majority systems can be identified: First Past The Post (FPTP), Block Vote (BV), Party Block Vote (PBV), Alternative Vote (AV), and the Two-Round System (TRS) [1,2].

The First Past the Post system is the simplest form of plurality/majority system, using single member districts and candidate-centered voting. The voter is presented with the names of the nominated candidates and votes by choosing one, and only one, of them. The winning candidate is simply the person who wins most votes; in theory he or she could be elected with two votes, if every other candidate only secured a single vote.

The Block Vote is simply the use of plurality voting in multi-member districts. Voters have as many votes as there are seats to be filled in their district, and are usually free to vote for individual candidates regardless of party affiliation. In most BV systems they may use as many, or as few, of their votes as they wish.

Party Block Vote, unlike FPTP, there are multi-member districts. Voters have a single vote, and choose between party lists of candidates rather than between individuals. The party which wins most votes takes all the seats in the district, and its entire list of candidates is duly elected. As in FPTP, there is no requirement for the winner to have an absolute majority of the votes. As of 2004, PBV was used as the only system or the major component of the system in four countries—Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti and Singapore.

Elections under Alternative Vote are usually held in single-member districts, like FPTP elections. However, AV gives voters considerably more options than FPTP when marking their ballot paper. Rather than simply indicating their favored candidate, under AV electors rank the candidates in the order of their choice, by marking a ‘1’ for their favourite, ‘2’ for their second choice, ‘3’ for their third choice and so on. The system thus enables voters to express their preferences between candidates rather than simply their first choice. For this reason, it is often known as ‘preferential voting’ in the countries which use

Party Block Vote - A plurality/majority system using multi-member districts in which voters cast a single party centered vote for a party of choice, and do not choose between candidates. The party with most
votes will win every seat in the electoral district. The Systems and their
Consequences it (The Borda Count, STV and the Supplementary Vote
are also preferential systems).

The central feature of the Two-Round System is as the name
suggests: it is no tone election but takes place in two rounds, often a
week or a fortnight apart. The first round is conducted in the same way
as a single-round plurality/majority election. In the most common
form of TRS, this is conducted using FPTP. It is, however, also possible
to conduct TRS in multi-member districts using Block Vote (as in
Kiribati) or Party Block Vote (as in Mali). A candidate or party that
receives a specified proportion of the vote is elected outright, with no
need for a second ballot. This proportion is normally an absolute
majority of valid votes cast, although several countries use a different
figure when using TRS to elect a president (see paragraph 179). If no
candidate or party receives an absolute majority, then a second round
of voting is held and the winner of this round is declared elected.

Each election system has its own selection methods. These methods
differ from each other for the conditions of the country in which they
are applied or according to the views of its creator. There is a strong
relationship between electoral system and election methods. In
practice, election methods vary as stated by electoral systems. Basically
different points of the various methods available in the majority
system. In a proportional representation system, only the list method is
applied.

Electoral systems affect the number of political organizations and
parties in the country. The ruling party efforts to create an electoral
system that can put more representatives in the parliament in the
future, the opposition wants to diminish the number of representatives
of the ruling party in government, the independents and small parties
try to carry their representatives in parliament.

Nowadays, the election system comprises two main principles:
justice and benefits. The presence of both principles in the electoral
system is the ideal situation. To ensure that idea is difficult, but not
impossible. However, it depends on the preferred selection system. So
that, there are main systems applied in the elections: majority system,
proportional representation system, and mixed or hybrid system.
While the majority system brings benefits policy to the forefront,
proportional representation system adopts the principle of justice. In a
mixed system, sometimes it is observed the weight of the majority
system, sometimes the emphasis put on the proportional
representation system.

Advantages and disadvantages of the majority system are the
following:

The most significant advantages of the majority system is its
simplicity. Implementation, counting of votes, and determination of
winner do not take much time;

The simplicity of the system makes increase participation level in
the election. The reason for that is voters know how it is assessed the
votes they use. And it helps to build confidence in the results of
election, the number of canceled votes are reduced to a minimum;

Majority system leads to a reduction of the number of parties in the
country, tends to the two-party system. It is seen in countries where
the application of one method turn two - party system, as an example
of the US and UK party system can be displayed;

Two-party system would bring a political order about the alleged
benefits, especially focused around the concept of political stability.

The parliament dominated by two main parties, the ruling
and opposition parties, is regulated in more easily. Furthermore, the
compliance in the government that can be established without need for
coalition are more possible and attainable. The emergence of well-
balanced decisions in the government increases public confidence and
provides stability in the country.

However, it should be noted that the link between electoral systems
and the number of parties is not only about accountability, but also
political legislative framework. In other words, it is claimed that the
electoral system - that is, the way in which the election is contested and
votes are translated into seats - strongly influences the number and
types of parties that develop.

Analysis of voting systems into the study of electoral systems shows
that the major consequence of a single member district plurality voting
system is a very strong tendency for two political parties to dominate
the political system, or what is called a “two-party duopoly”. In this
kind of political system it is extremely difficult for third parties to play
a sustained, important role.

Elections in Transition

In the new democracies and especially in several Post-Soviet
countries, there are some difficulties with the lack of democratic
traditions, as well as the absence of electoral experience. Major political
parties were formed as a result of the national liberation movement in
the Post-Soviet countries. Such parties sprang up during the fight for
state sovereignty. Their main goal was to determine the ideological
framework after gaining independence.

Political pluralism, one of the important principles of democracy
stipulates political parties directly. Today, practically there are political
parties almost in all countries of the world and they are actively
involved with the public and political life. The experience of various
countries shows that political parties and party systems in any country
are not eternal and are subjects to frequent changes. In other words, an
endless number of different electoral systems may exist in different
countries. The main reason for this is that any electoral system cannot
complies with all criteria chosen for evaluation. When choosing any
system each state takes different principles into account. Therefore,
each country chooses the electoral system in accordance with the
government’s effective functioning and the country’s economic growth.
One of the most important arguments is that contributing to the
stability of the political system.

The most commonly used method was named after the Belgian
mathematician, d’Hondt. The remainder systems work by allocating
the seats per constituency according to a quota, and then by allocating
remaining seats according to the votes ‘left over’ after the quota has
been applied. The remaining seats could be given to the parties with
the greatest number of leftover votes, or the least number, and in
principle in several other ways [3-6].

Election System in the Republic of Azerbaijan

According to the Electoral Code of Azerbaijan, The will of the
people of Azerbaijan is manifested through fair and regular elections
based on general, equal and direct suffrage by means of a secret and
personal ballot, as well through nationwide opinion polls/referendums
based on general, equal and direct suffrage by means of a secret and
personal ballot. The Azerbaijani State guarantees the free expression
of the will of the people of The Republic of Azerbaijan through the
protection of principles and norms of universal suffrage. This Code establishes the rules for the organization and conduct of elections of deputies to the parliament of The Republic of Azerbaijan (the Milli Majlis), presidential and municipal elections of the Republic of Azerbaijan and nationwide opinion polls/referendums.

If we look at history, the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan were held under a mixed system until 2000. In other words, one hundred of the 125 seats in the National Parliament were elected according to pluralistic - majority system and 25 seats were formed for the proportional representation system. But after 2000, since 2005, the parliamentary elections have been held by the pluralistic majority system shyness. Some opposition parties put forward proposals about the restoration of the proportional representation system. In contrast, the majority party in the parliament says that the pluralistic-majority system is more compatible with the reality of Azerbaijan.

Conclusion

Through comparative cross-national and cross-temporal analyses, we can clearly understand that countries with similar political culture...

In general, the study of election rules has not drawn much on recent advances in the analysis of voting systems is a point to which we return shortly. First, though, it is important to stress that studying the rules of an activity is an important subject partly because it helps us to understand the strategic elements of that activity.

There are three main points to be made about them in a summary way which are then explained in greater detail.

Not only are there a considerable number of electoral systems that we could think of if we tried; in reality there is an infinite variety of electoral systems that could be devised.

Electoral systems are key variables in the political process in a democracy, because to a large extent they determine who gets what, when and how.

Despite the infinite variety of systems and their importance in allocating values in a society, in most regimes electoral systems tend not to be changed very often or very radically. Particular electoral systems are maintained even when the elites forming the government change.

In weak party systems, the absence of party identification leaves voters with no options, other than to rely on the personal characteristics of certain candidates and patronage. In the more unstable new democracies (several post-Soviet states are good cases in point), parties continually enter and leave the political scene, and therefore provide no continuity between the elections. Under such conditions, the opportunity for voters to keep lasting preferences for one party or another is of course, minimal.

Thus, it would probably be a mistake to assume that institutional effects found in established democracies will be replicated in the different social and political context of new democracies in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. In addition, as often occurs in the first elections after authoritarian rule, party choices of candidates for office and voter preferences may be guided by calculations (correct or incorrect) regarding who can best ensure the continued stability of the new democratic system. While this may indeed bolster that stability, this form of choice by no means reflects democratic consolidation.

In sum, political corruption and inferior economic situation are some of the most frequent barriers to the development of party system. Lack of information about the programmers and agendas of the political parties creates chaotic situation in democratic transition. The point is that in the context of new democracies, where the consolidation process is not completed, it is difficult to attribute voting preferences in the same way as in institutionalized consolidated democracy.

References