

## 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 stand point. 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.

### Election 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 one 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 comply 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 [6].

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 [3]. 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 [2].

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 programmes 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.

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