

Some Aspects Of Political Transition In Central Asian States

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Abstract

This Scientific Article Provides A Retrospective Analysis Of The Features Of The Political Processes That Took Place In Central Asian Countries In The First Period Of Independence – The Transition Period. The Article Examines Several Aspects Of The Implementation Of New Statehood In Central Asian Countries, Free Of Internal And External Pressures And Forces, The Nature Of Dynamic Systems, And The Effect Of Reforms On Long-Term Stability.

Furthermore, The Article Investigates Topics Including The Effect Of Political Factors On Forming A New National Statehood In Central Asian Republics, The Variety Of Growth Models During Independence Years, Political Transition Strategies, And The Impact Of Particular Aspects Of Internal Progress On Long-Term Development. Some Characteristics Of The Early Stages Of Political Processes In Central Asian Countries Were Described In The Analysis.

Keywords: Transition Period, Central Asia, Political Processes, Sustainable Development, National Statehood, Political Transition, Traditions, Society.

Introduction

According To Numerous Specialists, The Common Forms Of The Transition Period In Central Asian States Are Conditionally Divided Into Two Stages. Within The Initial Period, Covering 1991-1994, The Most Vector Of State And Society Improvement Was Distinguished. The Existing Political System Was Also Reformed. The Second Stage, Which Began In 1994-1995, Was Forming New Institutions Of Power, Establishing New Power Relations In Society, And Establishing Their Place In The International Community. In Order To Form An Effective Model Of Political Governance, Which Is Capable Of Ensuring National Security, Sustainable Development, The Ability Of The New National Leadership Was Crucial.

In The Globalization Period, The External Environment Affects The Direction Of Reforms, The Pace And Quality Of Their Implementation, The Coming To Power Of Political Forces And Individuals. The Degree Of Political Development Of The Nation, The People's Statehood Customs, And The Assimilation Of Modern Political And Socio-Economic Ideals All Play An Important Role [4: 11-12].

In Almost All Central Asian Republics, Priority Was Given To The Development Of Secular And Democratic Statehood. For Example, While Uzbekistan Chose Gradual Democratic Development, Kyrgyzstan And Kazakhstan Began To Present Themselves As Supporters Of Liberal Democratic Values. While Tajikistan Established Democratic Statehood During The Civil War (1991-1997), Authoritarianism Dominated The Political Process In Turkmenistan. Turkmenistan Developed A Unique Statehood Model Focused On National Traditions, And Democratic Processes Were Absolutely Under The President's Influence. Democratic Ideas Were Declarative, And They Were Not Completely Realized In Practical Policy.

Political Systems In All Central Asian Countries Began To Move Towards Forming A Model Of Managed Democracy While Maintaining The Institutions And Procedures Of A Pluralistic Society. According To The Ruling Elites, This Government Model Allows For The Most Optimal Maintenance Of Security And Social Stability And The Prevention Of Inter-Religious And Inter-Ethnic Conflicts. [2: 10]

Materials And Methods

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In Central Asia, Strong Governance Justified Internal Political Stability To Some Degree. It Also Served To Maintain The Status Quo In The Region's Long-Standing Complex Issues And To Address The Challenges And Threats Posed By Neighboring Countries. However, In Most Republics In The Region, This Form Of Governance Did Not Provide The Expected Results In Solving Internal Problems.

Experts Highlighted The Weaknesses Of State Institutions And The Lack Of Stable Structures For The Peaceful Transition Of Power To The Next Generation; Economic Dependency On One Or Two Export Goods; Infrastructure Shortcomings; Low Standards Of Living In Many Areas; Problems In Education, Employment, And Health; And The High Youth Unemployment Rate And Rapidly Increasing Population As Vital Issues. [2: 15]

Results

An Analysis Of The Conditions For The Formation Of Newly Independent States In Central Asia Shows That At The End Of The Twentieth Century, The Political Situation In The Region's Countries Differed In Its Specificity. Still, There Were Also Common Features On The Way To Achieving National Independence. These Included, For Example, Raising National Consciousness, The Issue Of The State Language, Introducing The Institution Of The Presidency, Adopting A Declaration Of Independence And, On Its Basis, A Law On The Foundations Of State Independence, And, Finally, The Official Announcement Of Political Sovereignty.

The System Of Values Formed In Each State Of Central Asia Under The Influence Of Multifaceted Historical, Socio-Political, And Spiritual Factors Influences Society's Development And New Democratic Institutions Of Statehood.

Discussion

Several Permanent And Short-Term, External And Internal Influences Affect Kazakhstan's Political Situation. The Historically Shaped Ethno-Social And Ethno-Demographic Characteristics Are The Most Significant Factors That Determine The Country's Internal Situation And General State. An Important Factor In Maintaining The Balance Of Interests In Society Is The Zhuz (One Of The Three Main Territorial And Tribal Divisions In The Kypchak Plain Area Covering Much Of Contemporary Kazakhstan And Represents The Main Tribal Division Within The Ethnic Group Of The Kazakhs) System.

Patron-Client Relations (It Is A Mutual Relationship Between An Individual Who Has Power, Social Status, Money, Or Some Other Personal Resource (Patron) And Another Who Benefits From Their Support Or Influence (Client)) Determine The General State Of The Political System In Kazakhstan. And It Is Carried Out In The Form Of A Rivalry For Power Between Three Historically Established Sub-Ethnic Groups Of The Kazakh People – "Elder Zhuz" (Southern And South-Eastern Kazakhstan), "Middle Zhuz" (Northern, Central, And Eastern Kazakhstan), "Younger Zhuz" (Western Kazakhstan). Currently, 35 Percent Of The Titular Population In The Country Is Represented By The "Elder Zhuz" (11 Clan Groups), 40 Percent – By The "Middle Zhuz" (7 Clan Groups), And Twenty-Five Percent – By The "Younger Zhuz" (3 Clan Groups). [6: 103]

Unlike Other Republics In The Region, The Political Processes Of Kyrgyzstan In The Transition Period Did Not Allow To Establish A Strong Political Structure Meet The Interests Of All Political Forces In Society, A Periodic Repetition Of Political Crises In The Form Of "Color Revolutions" ("Tulip Revolution" In 2005, "April Revolution" In 2010), Imbalance Of Interests Of Political Forces, Frequent Changes In The Forms Of Government, The Strong Influence Of External Forces On The Political Situation, Socio-Cultural, The Territorial Division Into Two Parts ("North" And "South").

That Was The Main Factor In The Instability Reigning In The Country. Therefore, The Constant Rivalry For Power Between The Parliament And The President Stimulated For Transforming The Form Of Government Into Parliamentary, Presidential, Or Mixed. Interethnic Conflicts And Clashes Occurred In Kyrgyzstan's South Due To Ongoing Confrontations And The Central Government's Influence In The Region.

In General, The Underdeveloped Mechanism Of Checks And Balances In Kyrgyz Society Is A Key Factor In Conflicts Between The Branches Of Government And Political Crises—The Limited Economic Opportunities Of Kyrgyzstan Further Slow Down The Formation Of Such A System.

The Transitional Period, Which Included A Bloody Civil War In 1991-1997 And Numerous Losses, Indicates That Forming A National Statehood In Tajikistan Was Very Difficult. Tajikistan Is The Smallest State In Central Asia, Consisting Mainly Of Four Relatively Independent Regions Separated By Mountain Ranges. The Risk Of A Potential Escalation Of Sub-Ethnic And Inter-Confessional Confrontations (Most Of The Population Are Sunni Muslims And The Inhabitants Of The Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region Of Tajikistan Belong To The Ismaili Trend Of Shiism – *Author's Note*) Is Of Particular Importance.

It Must Be Noted That During This Period, The Influence Of Radical Islamist Movements On The Political Processes Associated With The Formation Of National Statehood In Tajikistan Was Very Strong. For A Long Time, Tajikistan Was The Only Central Asian State Where An Islamist Political Organization (The Islamic Renaissance Party Of Tajikistan) Officially Functioned. Following The General Agreement Signed In Moscow In 1997, Its Members Received A 30% Quota In The Republic's Legislative And Administrative Bodies, Law Enforcement Agencies, And Military Structures. [3]

In Political Processes, Contradictory Secular And Theocratic Tendencies In The Development Of Statehood Appeared.

During The Transition Period, Turkmenistan's Method Of Establishing A New National Statehood Was Much Faster And Smoother. Some Authors Argue That During The Transition Period, The Turkmen People Did Not Experience Either Political Or Cultural Liberalization Since The State's First President, S. Niyazov Replaced The Soviet One-Party Government Model With A Similar Turkmen Model, Creating The Democratic Party Of Turkmenistan Based On The Communist Party. That Allowed The Turkmen Elites To Retain Power And Institutional Capacity. [5]

The Establishment Of The President's Absolute Power In Turkmenistan Is Characterized By A Historically Rooted Peculiar System Of Values And A Weak Attitude Of Most Of The Population To Political Processes. The Tribal System Still Preserved In Turkmen Society (The Teke Tribe, Which Makes Up 40% Of The State's Population, And The Yomud And Ersari Tribes Play A Significant Role Among The Almost 20 Tribes That Make Up The Turkmen People). Traditional Lifestyles Of The People Remaining In The Countryside And Strict Procedures For Maintaining National Customs Become Increasingly Important In The State's Socio-Political Life.

The President, Who Combines All The Instruments Of Power, Is A Charismatic National Leader In Turkmenistan. High Revenues From The Export Of Natural Resources (Turkmenistan Is The Fourth Country In The World In Natural Gas Reserves – *Author's Note*) Represent The Country's Political System, Which Preserves The Political, Social, And Economic Stability Of The Turkmen Society Based On Inter-Tribal Relations. The Closed Nature Of The System Of Relations Between The State And Society Led To Establishing A Sultanism Regime, Which Many Authors Consider As Despotic. [1: 25-26]

In General, Very Contradictory Processes Took Place In The States Of Central Asia During The Transition Period. In The Post-Soviet Period, Central Asian Republics Tried To Build A Stable, Modern, Sovereign Democratic State, Free From Internal And Destructive External Threats And Influences (Such As The Factor Of External Power, Sub-Ethnic Conflicts, Social And Political Confrontations, Environmental And Natural Disasters, Terrorism And Extremism, Drug Trafficking, Etc.). If The Political Processes In Uzbekistan And Kazakhstan Were Carried Out Sequentially During This Period, Political Crises Accompanied Them In Kyrgyzstan And Tajikistan. In Turkmenistan, The Old Soviet System Of Government Was Combined With The Turkmen People's Traditions And Ethno-Social Characteristics. As A Result, A Specific National Model Of Government Was Formed.

After Gaining Independence, Central Asian States Started To Build Their National Statehood Based On Democratic Principles. During The Years Of Independent Development, Uzbekistan Chose The Evolutionary Path Of Building A Democratic Rule Of Law And Civil Society. Uzbekistan Deliberately Abandoned The Revolutionary Method, The So-Called "Shock Therapy," Which In Many Cases Meant Blindly Introducing The Principles Of Development Of Western Countries Into Public Life.

The "Uzbek Model" Of Development, Which Was Adopted During The Transitional Period To Reform And Modernize The State, Played An Important Role. In Uzbekistan, The Idea "Without Building A New House, Do Not Destroy The Old One," "From A Strong State To A Strong Society" Became The Main Principles Of The Renewal Of Society At That Time.

During This Period, Uzbekistan Pursued A Comprehensive Strengthening Of Independence, Establishing A Democratic State Based On A Combination Of Centuries-Old National Values And Universal Principles. The Formation Of The Foundations Of Civil Society Became A Key Direction Of Modern Statehood.

It Is Worth Noting That During The Transition Period, Reforms Did Not Go Smoothly. The Establishment Of New Institutional Frameworks And Adaptation Of Society To New Conditions Were Not Carried Out Immediately. The Reason Was That Each State Created Its Ideology Based On The Culture, Customs, And Way Of Life Of Its People. It Was Based On This Ideology That Political Culture Was Formed In Society.

In Some Central Asian Countries, Political Processes Developed Linearly, While In The Rest, They Were Based On Periodicity. Such Procedures Included The Adoption Of A New Constitution, The Strengthening Of The Sitting President's Authority, And, In Some Cases, Giving The President A Special Status As A National Leader. In

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Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, And Turkmenistan, This Process Proceeded Smoothly And Was Supported By Political And Legal Foundations.

Some Presidential Power Of Public Administration Passed To The Legislative And Executive Branches Of Government In Other States. The Heads Of Some Central Asian States Are Called Not Only Presidents But Also Have The Status Of "Leader Of The Nation," "People's Hero," "Founder Of The Peace," "Arkadag."

The Introduction Of Them Is Primarily Associated With The Processes Of The Transit Of Political Power. For Example, In Kazakhstan, Institutional Reforms Continue To Create The Necessary Conditions For Further Liberalization And Modernization Of The State, Including Balance Mechanisms For The Implementation Of The General Population's Interests.

In Tajikistan And Turkmenistan, Such Trends As The Strengthening Of The Incumbent Presidents' Political Power And Their Leadership Positions In Society, Changes In The Party System Led To The Evolution Of Political Processes.

In Kyrgyzstan, One Can Examine Aspects Of The Democratic Process, Such As The President's And Parliament's Differing Interests About How The Government Operates And The Open Competition Between Pro-Government And Opposition Political Parties. Frequent Changes Of Heads Of State And Government In Kyrgyzstan Indicate That The Democratic Reforms Remain At The Formation Stage. The Degree Of Influence Of Various Factors On Changing Public Mood In Kyrgyz Society Is Still High.

There Are Several Areas For Ensuring The Consistency Of Democratic Reforms In Uzbekistan:

First, The Deepening Of The Liberalization Processes In All Spheres Of Public Relations By Creating A More Democratic And Effective System Of The Highest Legislative And Representative Bodies Of Power;

Secondly, Increasing The Role Of Political Parties And Other Social Institutions In Public Administration Through Parliamentary Activities, As Well As Developing The Foundations Of Civil Society;

Third, The Strict Implementation Of The Powers Separation Principle And The Development Of The Rule Of Law By Strengthening The Legislative Functions Of The Parliament;

Fourth, Increasing The Effectiveness Of Checks And Balances Between The Head Of State, The Legislative And Executive Branches, And Improving Public Control.

The Concept Of Further Deepening Democratic Reforms And The Formation Of Civil Society In 2010 Marked The Beginning Of A New Qualitative Stage In Socio-Political Processes. The Strategy Of Actions In Five Priority Areas Of Development Of The Republic Of Uzbekistan In 2017-2021 Enriched It With New, Practical Content And Became A National Program To Form A Modern Basis For Deepening Democratic Reforms.

Conclusion

In Short, During The Transition Period, The Formation Of National Statehood In The Central Asian States Took Place As Very Contradictory Processes. In The Post-Soviet Period, Most Central Asian Republics Did Not Complete Stable, Modern Sovereign Democratic States. During This Period, The Political Processes In Uzbekistan And Kazakhstan Were Consistent, While Political Crises Accompanied Kyrgyzstan And Tajikistan. In Turkmenistan, The Former Soviet System Of Government Was Mixed With The Values And Ethno-Social Characteristics Of The Turkmen People.

In Central Asian States, It Was Formed The Following Specific Aspects Of The Political Process In The Transition Period:

- Strong Presidential Institution;
- Traditions Of Authoritarian Rule With Historical, Socio-Cultural, And Ideological Foundations;
- The Impact Of Paternalism, Informal Territorial, Tribal Relations On The Consolidation Of Society;
- The Path Of Secular, Democratic Statehood Is Inevitable.

The Following Conclusions Can Be Drawn Through Studying The Evolution Of Political Processes In Central Asian States:

1. In The Post-Soviet Period, Political Processes In The Newly Independent States Of Central Asia Took Place In Two Stages. The First Is A Transitional Period Associated With The Foundation Of A New National Statehood Based On Democratic Principles And Development Directions. The Second Is Political Modernization Processes That Are Focused On National, Historical, And Global Experiences.

2. The Development Models Chosen By The Central Asian States Are Different. It Is A Natural Process That Can Be Considered A National Feature Of The Countries Of The Region.

3. Uzbekistan's Developmental Path Aligns With People's Political Culture And Serves As A Regional Stabilization.

4. Since 2017, Processes Of New Political Development Have Been Taking Place In Uzbekistan. The Reforms Currently Being Carried Out In The Country Within The Framework Of The Action Strategy Are Intensive. There Is A High Level Of Transparency In Active Democratic Transformations. It Indicates That A Modern Political System With A Democratic Essence Is Being Formed In The Country. The Current Political System Aims At Solving The Most Pressing Problems, Such As Ensuring Openness Of State Power And Governance In The Country, Organizing A Direct Dialogue With The People, Protecting And Realizing Rights, Freedoms, And Legitimate Interests.

5. In The Modern Development Period, Uzbekistan Is Directly Interested In Turning The Central Asian Region Into A Zone Of Stability, Consistent Development, And Good Neighborliness. Uzbekistan's Development Is Inextricably Linked To The Region's Overall Development.

Conflict Of Interests And Contribution Of Authors

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