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**PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS BY PARTY LISTS
IN KAZAKHSTAN IN 1999-2016:
AN ANALYSIS**

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ABSTRACT

In 2017, the President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, who has remained at the helm of power for twenty-five-odd years of the republic's independence, has initiated the next, fourth batch of constitutional amendments.

Very much like the amendments of 1998, 2007 and 2011, these amendments are presented to the nation as another step toward further democratization of the political system of Kazakhstan. The three previous initiatives consolidated presidential power; this time, according to the preliminary statement, about forty, mainly social and economic, functions of the president will be redistributed between the Government and the Parliament. Thus, in the period of economic crisis and uncertainty, the President will be ab-

solved of the responsibility for possible errors and failures of the country's economic policy. On the other hand, these amendments expand the points, related to the immunity of private property (one of the weakest points in the legal system and political construct of Kazakhstan). This probably means that the elite groups will have to learn the rules of the game and operate within certain limits, while the amendments can be interpreted as a step toward the transfer of supreme power.

In this article, we have analyzed the history of the parliamentary elections by party lists, since redistribution of authority between the branches of power will widen the possibilities of the Legislative Assembly of Kazakhstan.

KEYWORDS: *parliamentary elections, Kazakhstan, parties.*

Introduction

In January 2017, the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Nazarbaev, made a public statement on the redistribution of authority between the power branches to add efficiency to the system of governance.¹ It was suggested that the Parliament should play a greater role in forming the Government, in order to increase the Cabinet's accountability to the deputies. The President pointed out that "the party that wins the elections will play a great or even decisive role in forming the Government."

According to the 1995 Constitution, the legislative power in the Republic belongs to the Parliament that operates on the permanent basis and consists of the Majilis (the lower chamber) and Senate (the upper chamber). According to the 2007 Constitutional amendments, the lower chamber of the Parliament is elected by party lists; 9 deputies out of the total 107 are elected by the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

In this regard, of particular relevance becomes the analysis of the previous parliamentary elections by party lists in Kazakhstan.

The 1999 and 2004 Elections

In October 1999, the Majilis was elected by a mixed-member proportional system; 10 out of 77 seats were reserved for the parties that ran in the national constituency and negotiated the 7% barrier. Ten political parties contested these 10 seats. The votes were distributed as follows: the Otan Republican Political Party won 30.89% of votes (4 seats);² Communist Party—17.75%, Agrarian Party—12.63% and Civic Party—11.23%. The last three got 2 seats each.

As the first experience of interparty competition, the 1999 elections did not clarify the advantages or disadvantages of the new electoral system. It should be said, however, that the parties which supported the existing authority (Otan, Agrarian and Civic parties) gained 54.75%, while the opposition Communist Party of Kazakhstan (CPK)—17.75%.

The parliamentary elections of 2004 were conducted according to the same scheme: 10 seats by party lists and 67 in single-member constituencies.

In the first years of the new millennium, practically all of the post-Soviet countries democratized their political systems. In 2001, the year that ended the first decade in the history of the newly independent states, people expected to discern the decade's first results and plans for the future. On the global scale, the early 2000s marked another progress toward democratization. In Kazakhstan, this was the period of fierce struggle for resources and spheres of influence between different elite groups.

In 2001, several members of the big business community and top officials founded the Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan (DCK) movement. As could be expected, the new movement, armed with a wide range of media resources, informed the public about its aims and widely popularized them. The authorities, however, did not hesitate to utilize harsh methods against the members: top officials lost their posts, while criminal cases were initiated against businessmen, which led to a schism in the ranks of the opposition. In March 2002, some of the former DCK founders left it to start

¹ See: Address of the President of the Kazakhstan Republic on Redistribution of Authority between Branches of Power, available at [http://www.akorda.kz/ru/speeches/internal_political_affairs/in_speeches_and_addresses/obrashchenie-prezidenta-respubliki-kazakhstan-po-voprosam-pereraspredeleniya-polnomochii-mezhdu-vetyami-vlasti], 3 February, 2017.

² Here and elsewhere official data of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan and open sources of the Internet, related to the parliamentary elections, are given; information is limited to the shares of the votes cast in percent, the number of votes cast for this or that party is not taken into account.

a moderate party, called the Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Ak Zhol; the DCK, supported by the opposition, became even more radical.³

The governing authorities were challenged with a real threat of an opposition in the Majilis and had to act promptly. In 2002, the Republic adopted a new law on political parties that replaced the 1996 law as “obsolete.”⁴ The new law established the minimum membership of 50,000 (instead of 3,000 in any part of the country under the previous law); under the new law, to be registered, a party should have acquired branches in all of the regions and big cities with the minimum membership of 700. In 2002, the courts got the right to liquidate any political party that missed parliamentary elections for ten years or two election campaigns.

According to Donnacha Ó Beacháin, the new law that tightened the rules of party activity was passed to help the authorities deal with the most acute problems. The ban on ethnic and religious parties deprived the opposition of the two potentially strong supporters. The republican Slavic movement, Lad, the party of Russian ethnicity (the strongest among the ethnic parties), could have challenged Nazarbaev’s efforts of national construction. The Islamic parties could have tried to destroy the Republic’s secular traditions and outwit the President, using their religion as a trump card.⁵

In 2002, only 7 out of the former 19 parties were successfully re-registered: Otan, the Civic Party, Agrarian Party, DPK Ak Zhol, the Communist Party, the Party of Patriots and the Peasant Social-Democratic Party Auyl. The CPC and DPK can be described as moderately oppositional, while the others were firmly on the side of the authorities.

In 2003 and 2004, Kazakhstan acquired more parties, the most important of the newcomers being the Asar Republican Party, headed by Nazarbaev’s daughter, Dariga; the Adilet Democratic Party of Kazakhstan and the Rukhaniyat, acting in unison with the authorities should be mentioned as well. The opposition camps were living amid widescale turmoil: DPK served as the foundation for the People’s Party “Democratic Choice of Kazakhstan”; the Communists split into a more moderate Communist People’s Party of Kazakhstan (CPPK), while the radical wing remained in the CPK.

Twelve parties in all were ready to run for the Majilis. Later, on the eve of parliamentary elections, the Civic and Agrarian parties joined forces in the AIST bloc (Agrarian and Industrial Union of Workers). The opposition acquired a highly doubtful, from the point of view of electoral support, Election Bloc “Opposition People’s Union of the Communists and DPK.”

The elections by party lists took place on 19 September, 2004, with 56.40% turnout. Three parties and one bloc negotiated the 7% barrier: Otan, Ak Zhol, Asar, and AIST. “The effective number of electoral parties was 3.4, the effective number of parliamentary parties—2.1.”⁶

Gulnar Nasimova explained the low turnout by the fact that “in the first electoral campaigns, people were attracted by a real choice and the first experience of competitive elections. Later, the share of those who missed voting, was gradually increasing, since the citizens no longer believed that the elections would realize their expectations. Elections did not resolve the gradually accumulating problems; the choice no longer produced excitement and people started paying more attention to their other everyday problems.”⁷

It should be said that in Kazakhstan, there is no legally registered minimal turnout, which means that elections are recognized as legal, irrespective of the number of voters.

³ See: L. Karmazina, “Institutionalization of the Party System in Kazakhstan and Russia: A Comparative Analysis,” *Central Asia and the Caucasus*, No. 1 (55), 2009, pp. 115-126.

⁴ *Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on Political Parties*, Official publication, Almaty, 2002.

⁵ See: D. Beachain, “Parliamentary Elections in Kazakhstan, September and October 2004,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4, 2005, pp. 762-769.

⁶ “Electoralnye protsessy i osobennosti razvitiia politicheskikh partiy v Kazakhstane,” *Teoria i praktika obshchestvennogo razvitiia*, No. 3, 2011, pp. 230-234.

⁷ G. Nasimova, “Kazakhstanskiy opyt predotvrashcheniia konfliktov,” *Analitic*, No. 5, 2005, pp. 38-43.

The low turnout in big cities meant that those who lived in the countryside and ensured its domination in the Parliament brought Otan to the Majilis. This is indirectly confirmed by the results of electronic voting in those of the urban constituencies, where Otan got 42.7%.⁸ People in the countryside are mainly conformists.⁹ The high figures of support of the governing authorities in the villages are mainly produced by considerations of loyalty, based on the ethnic and cultural piety and respect for the people in power, and widespread expectations of patronage.¹⁰

The results were the following: Otan got 53 mandates (7 by party lists, 35 official, i.e. nominated by the congress of those, who ran in single-member constituencies, 11 self-nominated party members). The AIST bloc got 14 mandates (1 by the party lists, 10 official single-member candidates, 3 self-nominated candidates), Asar—4 mandates (1 by party lists, 3 official candidates, who ran in single-members constituencies). Ak Zhol—2 mandates (1 by party lists, 1 self-nominated candidate), Adilet—1 mandate (official candidate, who ran in a single-member constituency) and three deputies, who did not belong to any party.¹¹

The Kazakh sociologist, Sabit Zhusupov, wrote: “People of Kazakhstan have a specific feature: if the governing authorities are lagging behind social expectations of the very much needed legitimate changes in the social and economic spheres, the population switches its preferences from the authorities to a more adequate political force, represented by moderate opposition.”¹² This explains Ak Zhol’s second place in party lists.

No matter what, the moderate opposition got two seats, while the pro-presidential parties shared 72 seats. The absence of mass protests after the elections confirmed that,

- first, the opposition was unable and not ready to struggle for power and,
- second, the electorate was mainly indifferent.¹³

The Kazakh political scientist, Daniyar Ashimbaev, has pointed out: “This electoral cycle turned out to be a formal durability test for the ruling elite after the fairly stormy political conflicts of the 2000s ... and after the so-called ‘velvet’ revolutions in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.”¹⁴ It should be said that 51% of the respondents of the social poll, carried out after the elections, were neutral or negative in their attitudes toward the elections.¹⁵

The 2004 parliamentary elections revealed that,

- first, the authorities had adjusted the electoral laws to its own interests;
- second, judging by the level of absenteeism in the Kazakhstan society as a whole and of the emerging middle class in particular, the people distrusted the electoral system;
- third, most of the republic’s population was more concerned with their own private matters, rather than those of the public and state;

⁸ See: C. Zhusupov, “Kakoy parlament my poluchili, ili Razmyshleniia posle vyborov,” available at [expert.ru/kazakhstan/2004/19/19ka-kpol_57884/], 3 February, 2017.

⁹ See: E.Zh. Babakumarov, Yu.O. Bulukataev, K.E. Kuserbaev, *Kazakhstan segodnia: mir politicheskikh partiy*, Almaty, 1995, p. 54.

¹⁰ See: Z.K. Shaukenova, S.A. Kononov, B.I. Rakisheva, “Analiz sotsiologicheskoy informatsii itogov vybornykh kampaniy v Kazakhstane 2003-2008,” *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 5, 2009, pp. 144-146.

¹¹ See: D. Ashimbaev, “Noviy Mazhilis: shtrikhi k portretu,” available at [http://www.nomad.su/?a=2-200410180125], 3 February, 2017.

¹² S. Zhusupov, op. cit.

¹³ See: “Electoralnye protsessy...,” pp. 230-234.

¹⁴ D. Ashimbaev, “Elektoralnye predpochteniia naseleniia Kazakhstana v period izbiratelnykh kampaniy 2004-2005 gg.,” available at [www.nomad.su/?a=2-200604040313], 3 February, 2017.

¹⁵ See: Ibidem.

- fourth, people did not want a regime change by force and demonstrated a high level of tolerance;
- fifth, a greater part of the electorate—agricultural regions and villagers in particular—sided with the authorities.

Elections of 2007-2016

At the end of the electoral period of 2004-2005, the government reached the main conclusion. The trend of strengthening the position of the moderates, in case of this being neglected by both Central and local authorities that are adhering to their old policy, will become more pronounced¹⁶. The authorities need to implement preventive measures, in particular, to unite all of the pro-presidential forces and form a dominant party, to sow disagreements in the ranks of the radical opposition, and win over moderate opposition.

The country's leaders replaced their temporary support of the Otan Party with permanent patronage: in July-December 2006, the President, Nazarbaev, initiated uniting the Asar, Civic and Agrarian parties under the Otan aegis.¹⁷ As a result, the country acquired the biggest party—the People's Democratic Party Nur Otan.

The divided Ak Zhol lost its more radically-minded members who set up their own opposition Democratic Party of Kazakhstan Nagyz Ak Zhol; the more moderate members of the Ak Zhol party established contacts with the governing authorities.

Having created the dominant party, the authorities concentrated on legislation in order to ensure cooperation between the new party and the state and on weakening the opposition. In May 2007, in particular, amendments and additions allowed the state to finance public alliances, including political parties. The Constitution lost the provision that obliged the President to suspend his membership in a political party for the entire period of his presidency. Today, the President Nazarbaev is the Chairman of Nur Otan. The provision about election blocs was excluded from the new election law: a heavy blow for the disunited radical opposition. To keep members of the opposition away from the Majilis, the single-mandate constituencies were abolished; all deputies were elected by party lists.

The number of seats in the Majilis was increased from 77 to 107; 98 deputies were elected by direct vote; 9 seats were allocated to the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

On the one hand, the changes made the Nur Otan party a de facto part of the government and consolidated the president's influence in the Majilis, on the other, the lower chamber was dissolved. Early elections were carried out on 18 August, 2007.

Seven parties that ran for the parliament: Nur Otan, Auyl, the Party of Patriots and "Rukhaniyat" sided with the authorities; the moderate opposition represented by the DPK Ak Zhol and CPPK, and the radical opposition represented by the All-Nation Social-Democratic Party (ANSDP) with Nagyz Ak-Zhol as one of the members. The Communist Party of Kazakhstan refused to take part in the elections.

Nur Otan won by a large margin to form a one-party Majilis, all other parties remained outside. The ANSDP came second, with 4.54% (not enough to pass the 7% barrier), followed by Ak Zhol, a party of moderate opposition, with 3.09% and CPPK with 1.51%.

The victory of the party that had united the biggest pro-presidential parties and the one-party Majilis worsened, to the extent, the political indices of the Republic. Olga Khlopovskikh has written

¹⁶ See: S. Zhusupov, *op. cit.*

¹⁷ See: L. Karmazina, *op. cit.*

that “the 2007 elections set the Laakso and Taagepera index of the effective number of parties at the 1.27 level; the Juan Molinar index at 1.005. This means that there was no more or less noticeable shift toward a multiparty system.”¹⁸ These figures show that Kazakhstan has acquired a dominant party, based on the following values of indices of the effective number of parties: according to Cohen’s and Coppedge’s gradation—lower than 2; the Mainwaring and Scully gradation—below 1.8. The Juan Molinar index, below 1.1, means that a hegemon party dominates the political system.¹⁹

In 2007, the regions of oil extraction and metal-making (Atyrau, Mangistau and Karaganda) supported Nur Otan more actively than in 2004, which is explained by the local wages and salaries that, until 2007, had been growing along with the world oil and metal prices. The loyal media attributed the country’s fast economic growth to the President, Nazarbaev, while society associated Nur Otan with the President.

Agricultural regions and regions with predominantly agricultural population traditionally support pro-presidential forces mainly because TV is practically the only source of information, while the media channels available in these regions are controlled by the authorities. According to the public opinion polls, carried out by the Strategia Center for Social and Political Studies, the lowest level of knowledge about political activities of the Azat party and ANSDP was found among the villagers (55%) and people, engaged in the household activities (54%).²⁰

The voters in Almaty demonstrated a rather cool attitude to Nur Otan. Sociologist Gulmira Ilueova is convinced that “unlike villagers, people in Almaty are more critical—this is true of people living in any big city.”²¹

According to the May 2007 Constitutional amendments, the President appoints the prime minister after consultations with the parliamentary factions and after having obtained the assent from the parliamentary majority. The victory of Nur Otan made the reshuffling of the Cabinet unnecessary: the prime minister and the majority of ministers kept their posts.²²

The 2007 parliamentary elections suggest the following conclusions.

- First, Nur Otan reaped the absolute majority of votes of those, who came to the polling stations in the oil and metallurgical regions.
- Second, Kazakhstan acquired, for the first time, a party system with a hegemon party.
- Third, despite the favorable economic conditions of 2004-2007, people in big cities “voted with their feet.”
- Fourth, the ideology of stability and prosperity was successful in opposing the idea of urgently needed political reforms.

This means that the authorities ascribed the favorable context of the early 2000s, created by the high prices of the republic’s main exported items that ensured fast economic growth, to the policy of the President and the political system.

¹⁸ O. Khlopovskikh, “Parlamentskie vybory v Kazakhstane (15 January, 2012),” available at [<http://www.regional-science.ru>], 3 February, 2017.

¹⁹ See: A.Yu. Shishorina, Yu.O. Gayvoronskiy, “Vybory v zakonodatelnye sobraniia sub’ektov RF kak protsess formirovaniia partiynoy sistemy s dominantnoy partiei (na primere vyborov 13 marta 2011 g.),” available at [<https://www.hse.ru/data/2014/12/22/1302276038/Gaivoronskiy%20Dominant%20Party.pdf>], 3 February, 2017.

²⁰ See: *Partiynnye i elektoralnye predpodchteniiia kazakhstantsev (noiabr 2009 g.)*, Report of the Strategia Center of Social and Political Studies based on the results of mass opinion polls and discussions in focus-groups (November 2009), available at [www.ofstrategy.kz], 3 February, 2017.

²¹ A. Ibraev, “Kazakhstan v razreze regionov,” Interview with the social scientist Gulmira Ilueova, available at [<http://www.nomad.su/?a=10-201506010032>], 3 February, 2017.

²² See: R. Isaacs, “The Parliamentary Election in Kazakhstan, August 2007,” *Electoral Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2, 2008, pp. 381-385.

The one-party Majilis, created by the 2007 parliamentary elections, presented the governing authorities with a difficult situation. On the one hand, in the eyes of the international community, this refuted the country leaders' rhetoric on democratic ideals. On the other, this constrained the space of political rivalry. The authorities tried and failed to solve the problem by setting up a Public Chamber as an advisory body, to which members of all political trends were invited.

The governing authorities had no choice but to loosen the legislative restrictions, yet they moved cautiously so as not to endanger the regime. In 2008, the Constitutional Law on Elections was amended to grant the party that came second (with the share of votes below the required 7%) after the winner (with the absolute majority of votes) the opportunity to send its deputies to the Majilis.²³ This meant that there would be at least two parties in the Majilis; it was a broad hint from the authorities that the other parties should expect less than 7% of the votes.

The Law on Political Parties received its share of amendments: the number of followers required for registration was lowered from 50 to 40 thousand; the number of followers at the regional level was lowered from 700 to 600. These were superficial changes, carried out on the threshold of Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the OSCE that began in 2010.

It should be mentioned that the one-party Parliament, elected in 2007, was a true reflection of the party sector of pre-electoral times: the authorities had the initiative, while the opposition, having pushed aside the need to build up support of the masses, was trying to sort out its own problems.

Later, the governing authorities seized full control over the party sector. The initiative of the President, Nazarbaev, who insisted on a two-party Majilis, made it clear that the country needed a second dominant party. Russia was facing a similar problem in 2008, when the Kremlin administration compared the absence of a second strong party in the Duma with the need "to have another leg on which society could stand, when the first would have become stiff."²⁴ It should be said that in the period of party building in Russia, there appeared a classical triangle in the Duma: the Centrists (United Russia), the Left (the Communist Party of the Russian Federation) and the Right (the LDPR), the latter two representing a systemic opposition.

The later events demonstrated that Kazakhstan had followed the same road to arrive at the classical variant. The authorities staked on the DPK Ak Zhol (seen as the Right) and CPPK (the Left) in a "chess game" combination.

- First, in 2011, a year before the parliamentary elections, the leaders of the DPK Ak Zhol were relieved. The party congress unanimously elected Azat Peruashev, head of the Atameken National Economic Chamber (in 1999-2006 he headed the Civic Party that later became one of the Nur Otan elements), to the chairmanship of Ak Zhol. A couple of days before that, the newly elected chairman had left Nur Otan, where he was one of the political council members. The party's previous Chairman, Alikhan Baymenov, was appointed, by a presidential decree, the Chairman of the Civil Service Agency.
- Second, the Communist Party of Kazakhstan was deliberately kept away from the elections, so that the CPPK could reap the votes of the left electorate. In 2011, the Communist Party was suspended for six months by a court decision; in 2012, suspension was extended to six more months to keep the party away from the 2012 elections.

²³ See: *Constitutional Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the Elections in the Republic of Kazakhstan of 28 September, 1995*, available at [http://www.akorda.kz/ru/official_documents/constitutional_laws/konstitucionnyi-zakon-o-vyborah-v-respublike-kazahstan], 3 February, 2017.

²⁴ "Vtoraia partia vlasti poiavilas s podachi Surkova," available at [<https://lenta.ru/news/2006/08/16/party/>], 3 February, 2017.

In November 2011, the President, by his decree, dissolved the Majilis of the fourth convocation and specified the date of the early elections for 15 January, 2012.

It should be said that the opposition had learned the lesson of the 2007 elections and realized that in order to win, it should close the ranks. In 2008, it set up a Public Parliament of 30 parties and NGOs. In 2009, the opposition ANSDP, CPC, DPK Azat, and Alga! united to form a single party. Until 2011, however, nothing else was done, except the unification of ANSDP and Azat. It was decided that the opposition would run for Parliament under the aegis of ANSDP Azat on a single party list, with all the prominent opposition figures included.

Overall, seven parties ran: Nur Otan, PPK, Ak Zhol, ANSDP, CPPK, Auyl and Adilet.

The turnout of 75.45% across the country was higher than the 2007 figures of 10.89%; an increase was registered in all regions.

People explained their failure to vote by the time shortage (23%), their principles (15%) and low quality of elections (13%).²⁵ The share of those, who referred to their principles, was higher by 6% than in 2007.

The votes gained by the major parties (Nur Otan—80.99%; Ak Zhol—7.47%; CPPK—7.19%, ANSDP—1.68%) formed a three-party Majilis.

To allow three parties to squeeze into the Parliament, the authorities sacrificed a certain share of votes that could have been cast for Nur Otan.

Nur Otan, however, remained the favorite in the oil, metal-making and agricultural regions: Karaganda, 85.63%; Atyrau, 84.72%; Almaty, 84.02%. According to Olga Khlopovskikh, “these regions are very different where their social and economic characteristics are concerned and are found in the country’s different regions. The results look like a product of purposeful use of the administrative resource in these regions.”²⁶

As a result of the 2012 parliamentary elections, Nur Otan lost a certain share of votes to Ak Zhol and CPPK; the ANSDP electoral base shrank for the same reason: the votes were divided between CPPK and Ak Zhol. Their electoral base in all the regions that became high enough to be elected to the Parliament, confirmed what had been said earlier: “In Kazakhstan, the regime is the main electoral engineer and political technologist.”²⁷

The elections created a classical political pattern: the Center occupied by Nur Otan with 83 seats; the Right represented by Ak Zhol with 8 seats; the Left represented by CPPK with 7 seats.²⁸ L. Karmazina pointed out that the combined representation of Ak Zhol and CPPK was not big enough to challenge the Nur Otan domination in the Majilis.²⁹

This means that the changes, introduced by the two more parties in the Majilis, were minimal.

After the 2012 elections, the party sector was narrowed down to the optimal size, as the authorities saw it: 3 parliamentary parties (Nur Otan, Ak Zhol and the CPPK) and three non-parliamentary parties (the ANSDP, Auyl, and Birlik; the Azat party remains practically inert).

Six political parties ran for the parliament in 2016: Nur Otan, Ak Zhol, CPPK, Auyl, ANSDP, and Birlik.

²⁵ See: Z. Shaukenova, V. Dunaev, *Ideologicheskoe konstruirovaniye v Respublike Kazakhstan: vekhi evoliutsii i traektorii razvitiya v kontekste strategii “Kazakhstan-2050”*, Monograph, Institute of Philosophy, Political Science and Religious Studies KN MON RK, Almaty, 2013, 438 pp.

²⁶ O. Khlopovskikh, op. cit.

²⁷ L.I. Karmazina, “Kazakhstan posle vyborov: sokhraneniye status quo,” in: *Sbornik trudov konferentsii Partii i vybory: vchera, segodnia i zavtra*, ed. by Yu.G. Korguniuk, G.M. Mikhaleva, KMK, Moscow, 2012, p. 62.

²⁸ See: *KISI Report concerning the Results of the Presidential Elections of 2015 in the Republic of Kazakhstan*, available at [www.kisi.kz], 3 February, 2017.

²⁹ L.I. Karmazina, “Kazakhstan posle vyborov...” p. 62.

Nur Otan won 82.2% (84 seats); Ak Zhol—7.18% (7 seats); CPPK—7.14% (7 seats).³⁰ This means that the pro-presidential party gained one more seat against the previous elections, while Ak Zhol lost one seat.

The 2016 election turnout (77.1%) was higher than the 2012 figure by 1.65%.

The 2016 elections changed practically nothing in the party sector.

Conclusion

Between 1999 and 2016, Kazakhstan saw five parliamentary elections; while in 1999 and 2004, the Parliament was only partially elected by party lists, since 2007 voting by party lists has been extended to 98 seats in the Majilis, 9 seats went to the candidates of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan.

Throughout the entire history of parliamentary elections by party lists, Otan/Nur Otan invariably carried the day. According to the Constitutional Law of 2007, the prime minister is appointed after discussions with the deputies. In the nine years that have elapsed since that time, the deputies never objected to presidential candidates.

In his address on the redistribution of authority between the branches of power, Nazarbaev pointed out that the party that won the majority in the Parliament would have enough power to form the Government that would resign after the new elections and would be accountable to the Majilis, not the President. Today, however, the situation remains far from the one described, since the President, as the Chairman of the ruling party, has enough power to form the Government.

³⁰ See: *Soobshchenie ob itogakh vneocherednykh vyborov deputatov Mazhilisa Parlamenta Respubliki Kazakhstan shestogo sozyva*, Appendix to the Decision of the Central Election Commission of the Kazakhstan Republic of 22 March, 2016, No. 30/126, available at [<http://www.election.kz/rus/news/messages/index.php?ID=3294>], 3 February, 2017.