

To become a democratic state – what does it mean for Kazakhstan?

The article tries to answer the question what meaning a phrase ‘democratic state’ has for Kazakhstan, why there is a such great difference in comprehension, and what should be done in order to build a model of a democratic state appropriate for all interested actors.

The article analyzes the level of democracy development in Kazakhstan. There are opposite views on a democratic development of Kazakhstan by foreign scholars and official Kazakhstan. Foreign scholars consider it as less democratized in comparison with countries of Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus, whereas official Kazakhstan positions itself as a state, which tries to correspond to democratic principles. In spite of opposite opinions there is a two-sided process of democracy promotion, from the inner part – political reforms, participation in international programs for democratization, consequently cooperation with foreign partners in this sphere, chairmanship in OSCE, from the external part – financial and technical support of democratization, political consultations.

The vision of democratic state differs abroad and inside Kazakhstan as well. The western democratic promoters wish to see Kazakhstan as a stable state, where they can make their business without any risks and danger of being affected by an authoritative or totalitarian regime. The ordinary citizens of Kazakhstan don’t have theoretical understanding of the word ‘democracy’; they don’t exactly know its principles or comprehend what kind of democracy Kazakhstan aspires to. But they precisely understand that they want to live in a stable, effective state with less corruption, with worthy salaries and have well-to-do future. The official power of Kazakhstan knows theoretical underpinnings and is trying to show an image of a democratic state, but due to some objective and subjective reasons is still in the position of hanging behind. Opposition in Kazakhstan has little to do as they have no real power.

In this regard, the conclusions are made concerning the way of Kazakhstan becoming a democratic state with main its elements – modernization, decentralization, accountability, and stimulation of innovations.

Introduction.

In the modern world there are only a few states, which officially declare themselves not democracies or which are openly don’t want to adhere to democratic principles. The majority of the states claim themselves as democracies, but in fact in essence they are not democracies and are not recognized as democracies by the world community. For example, even the most vivid example of a totalitarian state – USSR – was building a soviet

democracy. The Republic of Kazakhstan is also position itself as a democratic state after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the constitution of the Republic of Kazakhstan in its first articles is written the following: “The Republic of Kazakhstan proclaims itself a democratic, secular, legal and social state whose highest values are an individual, his life, rights and freedoms” /1/. One of the fundamental principles of the Republic’s activities is named “resolution of the most important issues of the affairs of state by democratic methods including voting at an all-nation referendum or in the Parliament” /1/.

Nevertheless the case of Kazakhstan is the case of a democracy, which is not recognized as a democracy by the world community. Hence we face with the problem of sincerity in democracy affirmation of the ruling power and try to answer the reasonable question: how the term ‘democracy’ is comprehended by the ruling power of Kazakhstan. Certainly there is no a single, permanently defined in detail concept of ‘democracy’. And definitely democracy is not an ideal political regime as in practice nevertheless people don’t rule, the governance is exercised by political elite and government officials. Even in 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville observed that the shortcomings and weaknesses of the democratic government are easily seen, they are proved by obvious facts (complexity of decision making, long discussions on a particular issue, etc.), while its beneficial influence is displayed in subtle, covert ways. Its shortcomings impress at once and its good qualities are found out only in process of time. However, despite its all disadvantages real democracy reserves the option to change the Government, which is not able to operate for the benefit of the people. /2/

There are a number of the so-called optimal models of democracy, which are suggested by different authors and are widely discussed by political scientists. French politician and political scientist M. Roshar considers the reality of interrelations between elected bodies, mass media and electorate as a core of democracy. Information directly determines the democratic participation of citizens. The power of information means the freedom of press, publicity, abundance of public data banks and in particular it is realized through the satellite television systems and the world all-day flow of news (like CNN corporation). R. Abdeev in his "Philosophy of Information civilization" formulated the principle of "five rings", which defines how the state should to be organized in terms of scientific-technical progress. This principle states that: “The state may have a prosperous economy and progress in cultural terms but only in the interaction of five independent powers: legislative, executive and judicial, power of information and power of intelligence – and the last two ones should permeate all the rest” /3/.

An integral form of democracy or tehnodemocracy is offered by Canadian philosopher M. Bunge, who is seeking a "third way", which is opposed both to capitalism and socialism.

He believes that the new system should be based on science. This system should also affect the economic life, increasing the role of co-operative ownership and self-government. The changes should be made in the sphere of cultural life. The cultural autonomy and access to education throughout life should be increased. M.Bunge considers that the means of achievement of this form of democracy could become an enlightened rule of people, represented by its worthy envoy, as well as attracting a wide range of experts /3/.

A new type of democracy – a delegative one is described by an Argentinean political scientist G. O'Donnell on the basis of summarizing the experience of political development of new democracies in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, the Philippines, in Korea and the post-communist countries. Its principal difference is that it does not belong to representative democracies and does not seek to be such kind of democracy. Policy-making process, the formation of the will of the majority of the population via fair elections, equal access to power are not institutionalized, there are no stable forms of interaction of actors of politics in accordance with rules and regulations. However, despite this, delegative democracies could be sufficiently stable. There are certain political institutions that are official; they are elements of the constitutional system: the court, parliament, political parties, and the president. But because of the complexity of socio-economic problems inherited from previous governments, scarcity and weakness of existing institutions, the presidency becomes a dominant institute in the system of power, which is granted with significant if not unlimited authorities /4/.

One of the first attempts to create a model of the transition to democracy was made by D. Rastou. As necessary prerequisites D. Rastou emphasized national unity and national identity. The author distinguishes the following sequence of stages in the transition to democracy, “the rational unity as underlying cause of democratization, through struggle, compromise and addictive - to democracy.” Another model presented by G. O'Donnell and F. Schmitter, who distinguished three main stages of the transition to democracy - liberalization, democratization and resocialization of citizens, which involves the assimilation of new democracies norms and values. /5/ The disadvantages of these theoretical constructs is that they describe the specific cases of the democratization of a country, rather than represent a universal model of transition to a democratic regime type.

American political thinker Samuel Huntington identifies three models transition from authoritarianism to democracy:

- classical linear model (UK, Sweden). According to this model the country experiences a gradual limitation of monarchical power, expanding the rights of citizens and parliament.

- cyclic model (some countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa). It implies the alternation of democratic and authoritarian forms of government.

- dialectic model (Spain, Portugal, Greece). A stable, vigorous democracy is established after a series of regime change under the influence of the already existing internal prerequisites. /5/

Despite of a great amount of theories it is very difficult to apply any concept for the analysis of democratization of post-Soviet states and Kazakhstan in particular. The democratization in Kazakhstan is very specific, it took place in the presence of a number of factors: international (disintegration of the bipolar system), nation forming (national identity), socio-economic (crisis of economy), social (lack of middle-class), cultural ("culture shock"), procedural (the interrelations of economics and politics) and individual psychological factor (mental attitude of political leaders to make important political decisions).

However, there is a generalized image of democracy, which has incorporated a number of key provisions, which could variously be reconstructed in practice, but without which the modern civilized democracy either exists, or has a kind of different nature. According to western understanding of democracy the post-Soviet democracy in Kazakhstan and in some other post-Soviet countries has not gained a qualitatively new essence. Democratic norms and institutions in their political system doesn't significantly affect the functioning of the mechanism of power, they serve only as passive principles, and often as an external cover. The positions on the issue of democracy quality in Kazakhstan are radically different. We have three opinions and the most interested side is the civil society of Kazakhstan as they reap the consequences of the existing regime. Let's consider each position separately.

The official position of Kazakhstan's power on democracy in Kazakhstan.

The path for democracy is not easy. There is no any democratic state, which has not experienced the evolution process, the so-called Huntington's 'waves of democratization'. The histories of transformation to democracy in each state are peculiar. Some of them have the roots in revolutions; some in the victory over fascism, anti-colonial movements and the last are connected with the collapse of Communist regimes in the Soviet Union and in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe.

Immediately after the gaining of independence, Kazakhstan officially declared the start of the process of democracy building. The President of Kazakhstan in the programs, strategies of Kazakhstan's development and other official and legal documents, in his annual messages to the people of the republic, in his books stresses the importance of the further democratization. The main message is that there are no recipes of acheless transit from

totalitarian regime to democracy that is why the method of trial and error in Kazakhstan is inevitable. The rationality of such approach time and again was underlined by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan: “Certainly, there is no such degree of democracy and political freedom that would satisfy everyone. We did not go up to the forced copy of liberal models, carefully prepared the ground for each new germ of democracy. Today, no one doubts that the policy of democratization in Kazakhstan stood on solid objective ground, gaining a solid base, both in the economic and social environment...” /6/. The specific characteristics of democracy in Kazakhstan are explained by N. Nazarbayev in his various articles, published in foreign journals and newspapers. For example, he says, “There can be few greater challenges than to attempt to complete in little more than a decade a political process that in the West took many decades, if not centuries. But this is what Kazakhstan has been attempting since becoming independent in 1991. In the United States, markets preceded democracy. In Kazakhstan, however, we have sought to lay the foundations of a market economy, civil society and democracy simultaneously.” /7/ In the same article the President explains the slowness of democratic reforms in which the government is usually blamed: “Democratic reform and measures to enhance human rights must not, however, be introduced in a way that undermines stability. We cannot afford to disturb the atmosphere of religious and inter-ethnic tolerance... and ... Please remember also just how long your own societies took to complete the processes on which we are now embarked.” /7/ Just about the same explanations were given by foreign minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Erlan Idrisov in 2011 (at that period – the Kazakhstan ambassador to the U.S.) in his interview to the edition “The Hill”: “Kazakhstan is making major strides in the direction of democracy and President N. Nazarbayev is leading the charge... Progress can be slow and change is rarely achieved overnight. Indeed, Kazakhstan has work to do as it moves toward full democracy. Kazakhstan is just 20 years removed from its independence from the Soviet Union and it still has a few steps to take to reach the level that mature democracies elsewhere in the world have achieved... Encouraging democracy is far better than criticizing the often painful steps along the way.” /8/

N. Nazarbayev names the democracy in Kazakhstan as an emerging one, pointing out that from the beginning he was trying to make democratic decisions, and the refusal from the nuclear weapon is one of the most significant and demonstrative. He stated that “keeping the weapons could have made Kazakhstan a larger player in our potentially volatile region, and surely the world would be more aware of us today. There were some who encouraged us to keep the arsenal. But larger considerations, including the role and responsibility of emerging democracies like ours, weighed heavily in the decision. Our focus was on building a new

economic and political model in Kazakhstan, and we had a firm belief that our future and welfare rested on commercial and security relationships in the West.” /9/

The official Kazakhstan does a lot to have an image of an adherent of democratic principles. It is an active participant in international organizations, which promote democratic principles and even the Chairman of the OSCE in 2010, an organization, whose mandate includes the promotion of human rights, freedom of the press, and fair elections. Kazakhstan ambitiously involved in various international programs for democratization, in cooperation with foreign partners in this sphere. In the year of Chairmanship in OSCE the President of Kazakhstan wrote that “Genuine security in the space of the OSCE is unthinkable without respect for and protection of fundamental democratic rights and freedoms. The fundamentally important steps taken by Kazakhstan became evidence of unconditional commitment to democratic values; they were aimed at further improvement of legislation on elections, political parties, the media, local government. Moreover, Kazakhstan adopted the National Action Plan for Human Rights for 2009-2012, as well as the Concept of Legal Policy for 2010-2020. Recently, I signed the Law on Gender Equality. We also intend to strengthen the fight against domestic violence and to make significant changes in the legislation on protection of children's rights.” /10/

The critics of democratic or even non-democratic development of Kazakhstan is explained by Nazarbayev as follows, “Democratic principles developed by Western world, nor in any way conflict with the traditional values of the Kazakh people. On the other hand, they do not coincide with each other - in the form and genesis. This means that it takes time in order the universal principles of democracy really sprouted on our soil, finding its national historical specificity. Democracy is not just a system, but also the culture.” /11/

The vision of Kazakhstan’s democracy of Nazarbayev is the following: “As for Kazakhstan, we don’t set the task to turn it into a democracy of the Western type. We are interested in the experience of different systems. Standards of democracy are universal, but in different countries, they have their own flavor. Besides, due to previous historical specificity we must carefully consider the social-democratic ideas, the experience of many European governments... We consistently implement democratic principles in the state and public life, forming rule of law and creating a proper political system, but no one can prove to me that blind copying of others' experiences and following theoretical dogmas is more important than objective compliance with the maturity of society, with some democratic norms and its economic status... Democracy cannot be proclaimed, it has to evolve.” /11/ He also adduces proofs of the democratization achievements in Kazakhstan: “Perhaps we have not yet created the democratic society. But we can be proud of the achievements we have. Our progress to a

truly democratic system is irreversible. We have created fundamentals of democracy; they are a democratic electoral system, a bicameral parliament, part of which is elected by party lists, independent judiciary, freely functioning media, dynamically developing political parties, including open opposition, and so on. Actively interpreting the processes of democratization, today we have formed a vision of further reforms in this area and initiated a broad public dialogue on the most pressing issues: this increase of the role of political parties, improvement of electoral legislation, the development of local self-government, increasing the role of non-governmental organizations and the whole of civil society institutions, strengthening freedom of the press, the introduction of private ownership of land.” /11/

From the above written we can make conclusion that the promotion of democracy is tightly connected with the phenomenon of personality of Nursultan Nazarbayev the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. This opinion is widely supported by some representatives of scientific circles in Kazakhstan. There is a huge amount of scientific dissertations, monographies, scientific publications and articles, devoted to this theme, which most often appear after the President’s messages to the people of Kazakhstan.

For example, the associated professor of Political Science B. Gabdulina states that the introduction and subsequent fixation of the institute of presidency in the already independent Kazakhstan occurs simultaneously with the real changes in terms of the democratization of the electoral system, and their direct initiator was the President himself. She underlines the growing role of Nursultan Nazarbayev in the modernization of Kazakhstan, “who contributes to the interethnic peace-keeping, supports stability in society, and ensures the implementation of democratic reforms. The institute of presidency contributes to the consolidation of society on a multinational basis, providing to representatives of various nationalities an opportunity of equal participation in the process of building democracy. Awareness of their role in building an independent democratic Kazakhstan is one of the most important principles in strengthening the unity of the peoples of Kazakhstan, and this factor has become one of the priorities in the functioning of the institute of presidency”. /12/

The President of Association of Sociologists and Political Scientists B. Bekturganova explains the difficulties of obtaining of Kazakh identity by the problems of incomprehensibility, which swing between “ethnocratism to liberalism, from authoritarianism to democracy and vice versa”. /13/ So she considers that the implementation of ‘guided democracy’ is justified in Kazakhstan in order to provide a proper national construction.

One more example of the support of state democratization policy was made by an academician, doctor of Philosophy A. Balgimbayev, who affirmed that a certain level of modernization of political system has already achieved, and that some outlines of

Kazakhstan's model of democracy are formed, and that the universal democratic characteristics, such as freedom and equality, pluralism and representativeness, human rights and freedoms are realized in their peculiar way /14/. Though he admits some negative features of democracy building in post-Soviet space, such as formally existing Parliament, formally functioning universal suffrage, parties and other institutions, the absence of competition and broad political representation, but he considers that deliberate balanced state policy, free from the extremes, consistent implementation of the economy's development course and its liberalization allowed in very difficult conditions successfully solve the problems of the first stage and provide the further development of the democratic reforms' way /14/.

Summarizing, we should say that from the official side the standard answer for the questions, connected with the state of democracy and human rights in Kazakhstan, may be also expressed by the words of N.Nazarbayev, who affirms that the glass of democracy in Kazakhstan is half or three-quarters full.

The position of foreign scientists and institutions on democracy in Kazakhstan.

The problems of democracy in Kazakhstan and the whole post-Soviet space are in the center of attention and are widely discussed in the circles of foreign scientists and institutions. In the beginning of the post-Soviet transformation's process, which was viewed as a radical change in the socio-economic and political foundations and basic values of the society, the expectations were very positive and optimistic. However the today's achieved results are very far from those expectations.

Nowadays the democracy in Kazakhstan is called 'cunning democracy'. This term is thoroughly explained by the western experts in an official report of Freedom House and Norwegian Helsinki Committee in 2013, "it is undeniable that the government of Kazakhstan initiates certain democratic processes, establishes democratic political institutions and brings legislation into accordance with international standards and so forth. However, within all these processes there is a certain point past which the authorities will not cross under any circumstances. In their understanding, a real division of power would doom the current political system to principled change, something that is not in the interest of government representatives and is seen as a threat to their own position. In everyday life, this is evident through the political control of all democratic institutions. This form of control eliminates the risk of political parties, civil society or popular initiatives having any real impact on the political situation in the country. This is the core of what we call Kazakh-style "cunning democracy". /15/

Kazakhstan is abused of having big problems in the sphere of human rights' protection and suppressing its opposition. It was stated that Kazakhstan is currently "suffering a bleak

media scene, a lack of real political pluralism and a widespread disillusionment as to Kazakhstan's commitment to human rights." /15/

The main accusations are made regarding Constitution itself, which is considered formal, and which in reality doesn't protect the freedom of speech, doesn't guarantees the constitutional right of peaceful assembly, which is automatically considered illegal if it doesn't have an official permission from local authorities and cannot be held in the places, where they can attract public attention, this instructions contradict to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). It doesn't guarantee the right to vote and to be elected along with the population, which is highly manipulated by the government with the use of media. The court system of Kazakhstan in the context of correspondence to democratic principles also leaves much to be desired, and in case of political slant of the trial, takes the government's position. There is also a huge problem in Kazakhstan to realize a right of political party's creation, especially if it is an opposition one; it should get over an 'insurmountable barrier'. The whole Kazakhstan with a vivid example of the realization of the National Action Plan on Human Rights for 2009-2012 is called "a Potemkin village raised to fool those who do not have the possibility to see the true situation with regards to human rights in Kazakhstan" /15/. Thus, the achievements in the sphere of democracy, which are declared by the officials of Kazakhstan, are considered by the western experts as a 'hypocrisy' since it "it does not consider the welfare of the population, not the production potential of the country, not the level of public health or education, but rather membership and chairmanship in various international organizations, the hosting of international forums and award ceremonies." /15/

In the Democracy index 2012, worked out by the Intelligence Unit of influential weekly British edition "The Economist", Kazakhstan took 143rd place among 165 countries and 2 territories, and its political regime was officially classified as an 'authoritarian regime'. According to the data from the reports from 2006 till 2012 the democracy index of Kazakhstan has a tendency of decline /16/. The report of the same organization in 2013 shows a slight improvement of democracy index in political participation in Kazakhstan and the up movement to 140th place among the same countries /17/. In the last reports of Freedom House "Nations in Transit 2013" and "Nations in Transit 2014" as well in the previous ones, starting from 2003 Kazakhstan was assigned to the group of states with 'consolidated authoritarian regime' /18, 19/ with the worsening of situation in 2014 in the sphere of civil society "as a result of increased pressure and new legal constraints on public assembly, religious activity, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)" /19/. The picture of democratic processes is a bleak one according to the available information in reports of Freedom House for the period

2001-2014, because it indicates the worsening of situation. The electoral process in Kazakhstan in the period of 2001 – 2002 was 6.25, then starting from 2003 till 2008 was 6.50 but in the subsequent years it increased to 6.75 (The ratings are based on a scale of 1 to 7, with 1 representing the highest level of democratic progress and 7 the lowest.) The civil society in the beginning of the specified period was 5.0 and according to the last data 6.50. The situation with independent media also leaves much to be desired. In 2001 it was 6.0 and now it is 6.75. National Democratic Governance was estimated at 5.0 and now it markedly increased to 6.75. Local Democratic Governance was 5.0 in 2001 and in 2014 it has become 6.50. Judicial Framework and Independence was 5.75 and now it is 6.50. Corruption in 2001 was at the level of 6.25 and for the last 11 years it holds the level of 6.50. And finally the overall democracy score has a tendency of almost the annual increase 2001- 5.7; 2002 - 5.96; 2003 - 6.17; 2004 - 6.25; 2005 - 6.29; 2006, 2007, 2008 - 6.39; 2009 - 6.32; 2010, 2011 - 6.43; 2012 - 6.54; 2013 - 6.57, 2014 - 6.61 /18, 20/.

Western part of the world, the U.S. and Europe actively invest money in promotion of democracy, but simultaneously with the worsening of the situation, the western circles realized that sometimes they wasted money. “The main challenge for European donors in Central Asia is to make sure that funding reaches those who genuinely desire change rather than ending up in the hands of corrupt elites.” /21/ So this resulted in significant shortage of financing the programs and small grants /22/, remaining little activity of the U.S. embassy’s in Kazakhstan, the USAID’s programs with insignificant results /23/.

Thus, in most cases we can establish a fact of decrease of the level of democracy and great disappointment of democratization, taking place in Kazakhstan, apart from a few opinions /24/ of experts and scientists from the neighboring countries, where the level of democracy is also low and who uphold the position of officials due to subjective reasons.

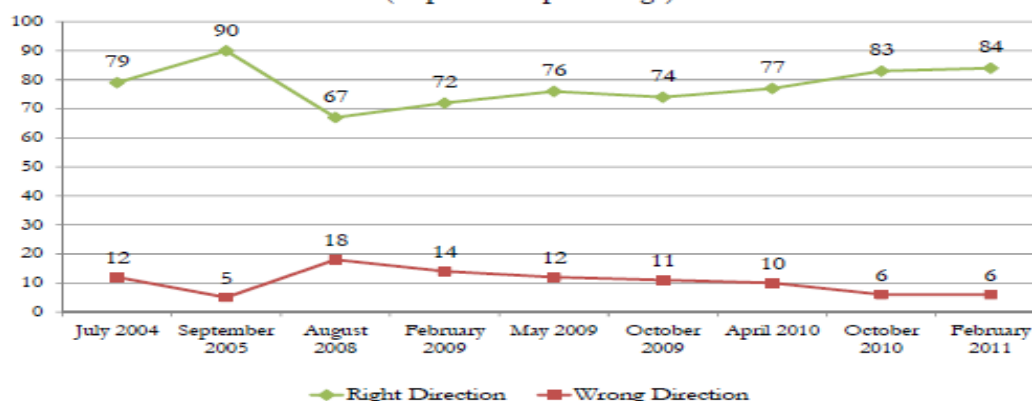
The position of civil society on democracy in Kazakhstan.

The population of Kazakhstan at first believed in perestroika and reforms, directed toward the establishment of democracy and conceived the proclaimed aims of market (refusal from the Soviet planned economy, introduction of private ownership and market institutions) and democracy (political pluralism, liberal freedoms, the development of civil society) as granted, often not even knowing where they can result. Ideas of publicity seemed attractive and democratic freedoms and rights seemed promising. The people were promised a better life, so it is understandable why people in general with hope looked in the post-Soviet future, supporting radical changes in the beginning of 1990’s. The creation of first democratic institutions (elections of president and parliament, multiparty system, freedom of speech and movement, etc.) was perceived in mass consciousness as the wildest dreams of the Soviet era

embodied in their life. However, by the mid of 1990's the situation changed. Socio-economic reality in the post-Soviet republics differed sharply from the expected market abundance and democratic equality. Bureaucracy grew, corruption flourished. Quality of life in Kazakhstan and as well in other post-Soviet countries has decreased. The population of Kazakhstan hardly could realize why their aspirations have ruined. The Soviet democracy was bad, the liberal western democracy which was suggested by their governments also haven't resulted in the paradise they expected. The majority of population doesn't know that their government almost did nothing in the way of liberal democracy, the information they get is limited due to little access to opposition information and lack of knowledge of Russian and English languages, especially in rural areas. The propaganda from the government's side is very high, the population is convinced in the need of their own special kind of democracy, or even not democracy, but the path of development, suggested by the Leader of Nation.

According to the results of the Kazakhstan's National Opinion Poll, conducted on February 17-28, 2011 by International Republican Institute with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy 84% of the respondents consider that Kazakhstan is moving in right direction what is more their quantity is steadily increasing from August 2008 and respectively the quantity of opposite-minded is decreasing (Table 1). The phenomenon of 90% of positively-minded in September 2005 is possibly connected with PR actions in favor of acting President before the upcoming presidential elections in December.

Generally speaking, would you say that things in Kazakhstan are headed in the right direction or the wrong direction?
(responses in percentage)



IRI, Baltic Surveys/The Gallup Organization

Kazakhstan National Public Opinion Survey, February 2011

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Table 1.

The loyalty of the electorate is supported by the implementation of reforms, provision of certain rights and freedoms, improved living standards, ideological mechanisms. In this way, N.Nazarbayev provides civil support to his authoritarianism, perhaps saving the democratization processes in their countries from hasty, ill-considered and spontaneous

actions and slogans, and from danger of external staging of internal regime change under the auspices of the "velvet revolutions". Moreover, the population of Kazakhstan in its majority is convinced of the already existing democracy in Kazakhstan, possibly their own kind of democracy. In the below table, 69% of respondents consider that democracy either exists or mostly exists in Kazakhstan (Table 2).

In your opinion, does democracy exist in Kazakhstan?

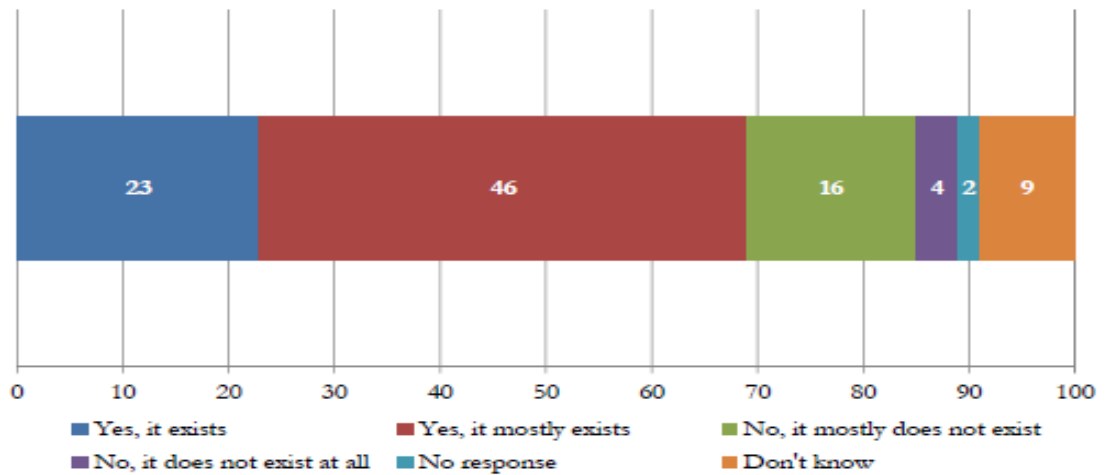


Table 2.

The majority of the population in spite of their dissatisfaction with their economic situation still approves the political activity of N.Nazarbayev. The indicators are always high, none of the negative events, which occurred in the country, strongly affected the figures (Table 3).

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Nursultan Nazarbaev is handling his job? (responses in percentage)

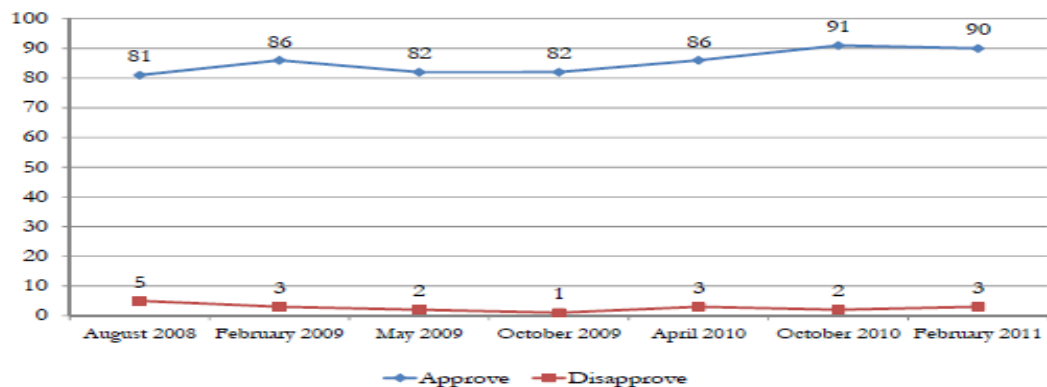


Table 3.

The disapproval is minimal. Possibly it is connected with the fact that the part democratic opposition had to leave Kazakhstan not to be persecuted by special services of

Kazakhstan; others forfeit their freedom for the ability to criticize N.Nazarbayev. /25/ Due to the desire of the government to seem democratic the opposition has the possibility to express their ideas on democracy development mostly in internet as the access to it is not available to the whole population, all existed opposition TV channels were forbidden, the quantity of opposition newspapers is minimized. The support of opposition due to national mentality is low, though the intelligence understands and shares the logics of opposition's arguments: "It is clear that democracy is a process, not a one-time act. It is really impossible to declare it on the exact day. But if this is a process, then once started it should be continued permanently. This means that today democracy should be a little bit more than yesterday and tomorrow more than today. And this lasts day after day, month after month, year after year. If so, then we can talk about the process of democratization...Unfortunately, the process goes on, but in the opposite direction. Democracy in Kazakhstan is becoming less and less. And it does not satisfy the democratically oriented part of society." /26/

One of the features of Kazakhstan's political transformation is that the political elite is the initiator of reforms in the country. Civil society also until recently did not show any significant initiatives in this direction, remained the lowest socio-political activity of Kazakhs, their reliance on the initiative "from above". High degree of political apathy of Kazakh population apparently was due primarily to the fact that democratic values are recognized in principle, has not perceived the mass consciousness as a real tool to solve the problems facing society. Nevertheless, over the years of the political transformation of Kazakhstan the degree of political participation of citizens through the institution of democratic elections has increased markedly. In the nature of citizen participation in the electoral process is a gradual transition from mobilization to democratic participation. In the early years of reform initiative citizen participation in the electoral process in entirely came "from above", in recent years it has come partly from "below". This gives the hope of the changes in mass consciousness of civil society, concerning its participation in democracy promotion.

Conclusion.

Transformation of the former Soviet Union occurs under the auspices of democratization, the Soviet concept of democratic centralism - a kind of "special model of democracy" - in the CIS again replaced by a "special model" of democracy for each of them. This once again demonstrates the ambiguity of the concept of democracy. It turns out that the more varieties of options and models of democracy, the more it is effective: there is no a unified understanding of democracy, everyone has its own. This is a paradox of democracy.

The problem with democracy exists in all post-Soviet countries. But as for Kazakhstan it also has a specific of being a Central Asian county too. Some researchers, mostly adherents

of dividing the world into East and West, believe that democracy will not settle down in the countries of Central Asia, that democracy is alien to the mentality of Central Asian peoples, to their historical experience and in general to the Asian lifestyle (as democracy, in their view, is a Western phenomenon). Others, mostly the official power and local authors argue that in these countries can be only a specific model of democracy. Third side, mostly human rights activists and Western liberals are convinced that democracy of Western-style should be established in these countries immediately and unconditionally. Unfortunately, in all these debates about the fate of democracy in Central Asia, there are more of myth-making, stereotyping, bias and linearity than theoretically based concepts, dialectical approach to the problem and a systematic view on the complex process of post-Soviet transformation of societies and states.

First, we need to say that in the beginning the goal of all three sides was the same to transform the society in Kazakhstan and other post-Soviet countries from the form it existed before to the better one, in the majority of interpretations to the democratic one. Nowadays we see that the form definitely has changed but the question of its good quality has a negative answer. The population more worries about the problems of material well-being, social order and security, than democratic principles and the human rights. The liberal approaches in politics and economy gradually have been substituted by the strengthening of a state. The term 'democracy' is widely used by the government of Kazakhstan, but the essence of the word is peculiarly interpreted. The government of Kazakhstan declares about the specificity of their democracy. The theories of 'guided' and 'limited' democracy, which imply the use of internal forces, reliance on traditions in conducting of further political reforms and the need for more time for its realization, have become the explanation of the existing policy in democratic sphere. Today Kazakhstan supports such rules of the game, when it is safer and more profitable for economic and political elites to keep a status-quo, even if it is strategically ineffective, than to bear the costs and risks of transition to a true democracy model.

The acting model can be described as the following: the state institutions function in favor of a small group of people, who have concentrated the power in their hands and the supposed democracy principles are used only for creation of an illusory image of democracy. Those who govern the state are not accountable to the society.

Everything is right, and the detection of negative factors is necessary, but in case we only reveal them, we will not move ahead, it doesn't make sense. We will make progress trying to answer the questions: what kind of state should become Kazakhstan? Do we really need a western style of democracy?

Kazakhstan should become a strong state with new well-defined rules of the game, with new motives and stimuli for the authorities. Business and society could become such a driving force, which doesn't control the state, but rather set those stimuli to the politicians to act in the constitutional frames and in accordance with definite rules.

The advantages of democracy could not be denied, but we also should say that it is not a panacea. Therewith the debates on democracy are very lively representing opposing views not only in academic circles, but among politicians too. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's report there is given an interesting example: "although democracy-promotion is high on the list of US foreign policy priorities, there is no consensus within the US government on what constitutes a democracy". /27/ As a proof they cite the words of one observer, "the world's only superpower is rhetorically and militarily promoting a political system that remains undefined--and it is staking its credibility and treasure on that pursuit". /16/

In theory democracy has a variety of forms; in practice it is even more diverse. It is difficult to choose the best one, appropriate to Kazakhstan. In this case we may affirm that Kazakhstan in fact is in need of a special way of its own democracy, but not the way which is suggested by the acting powers, we should start from the constitutional liberal model of state, then to gradually move towards its merger with democracy, with its 'undeniable' advantages. And in the process Kazakhstan should go through a complex path, inevitably accompanied by high costs and risks. In order to fulfill this task of becoming an effective state Kazakhstan should start the process of modernization. Nowadays there is a lot of declarative modernization in Kazakhstan, because this concept is extremely attractive; it is perfectly 'sold' to the citizens and to the electorate. It has an initial good intention – to make an improvement, the process of modernization is associated with development and progress. But this declarative modernization is a part of the so called 'cunning democracy'. In the reality the modernization should make Kazakhstan effective, the great impact in this result could be contributed by decentralization and stimulation of innovations. But their introduction is also connected with certain problems from the side of state and political elites themselves, who are interested in maintenance of an existing status-quo. That's why Kazakhstan is slowly moving in this direction, though the heterogeneous essence of the country requires decentralization. R. Doorenspleet and H. Pellikaan in their study of the best type of democracy, basing on empirical findings, gave policy recommendations, concerning this aspect: "Centralization works best in homogeneous countries, while decentralized systems are the best forms of government in heterogeneous countries." /28/

There are objective reasons, which impede the development of democracy in Kazakhstan: poverty, general underdevelopment, the population is mostly semi-literate

peasants, authoritarian mass consciousness. The objective prerequisites for democracy establishment are created in the process of rapid economic development and growth of the population's well-being, changes in socio-class structure of society, the rise of educational and cultural level and transformation of mass consciousness from authoritarian toward compromise, democratic one. The abovementioned innovations are extremely necessary as only industrial development of a state with high production rates can provide successful development of democratic processes without the probability of creation of quasi-democracy.

The accusations of no democratization progress in Kazakhstan are certainly fair from position of supporters of western-style democracy. But the fact of the matter, that Kazakhstan has a traditional society not the western one. It has its own mentality, which is not fully compatible with the political norms, based on 'western values', it is characterized by collectivism. That is why there are such phenomena as rejection of division of society along party lines, the worship of power, based on the principle of respect of elders, who better know what is necessary for people. It is expressed in a rooted tradition of obedience to authorities.

In order to overcome these problems and move towards democracy the state should increase the role of civil society, it should give more opportunities to intelligence and social forces like NGOs and other public organizations, which are able to awaken the consciousness of civil society in Kazakhstan, because it is undeniable "a healthy democracy requires the active, freely chosen participation of citizens in public life. Democracies flourish when citizens are willing to participate in public debate, elect representatives and join political parties. Without this broad, sustaining participation, democracy begins to wither and become the preserve of small, select groups." /27/ Thus, in order Kazakhstan to become a democratic state it should change the qualitative indicators of political elite and civil society, the political culture itself should be changed, the primary task in this direction is the struggle with political illiteracy. The West should give a card blanche to Kazakhstan in the constructing of democracy achievement model without pressing but only with the condition of its compliance to "the basic ingredients of a democracy such as free and fair elections, a transparent government, a parliament that holds government to account and a vibrant civil society" /21/, which could be achieved only after the shifting of mass consciousness to understanding of the benefits of may be not the Western democracy, but the benefits of effective and strong state.

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Tables:

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