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## AZERBAIJANI PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION

### Abstract

The party elected in the parliamentary election in Azerbaijan was the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP). Since 1997, when the Republic of Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union, this party has been in power. It is a centre-right, conservative-nationalist party. The current president, Ilham Aliyev, serving as its core leadership. YAP has won all elections held in Azerbaijan since its formation, with a clear majority of seats in both the parliamentary and presidential elections.

**Keywords:** party, government, YAP, National Assembly, Soviet Union

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### Azərbaycanda parlament seçkisi

#### Xülasə

Azərbaycanda parlament seçkilərində seçilən partiya Yeni Azərbaycan Partiyası (YAP) olub. Azərbaycan Respublikası Sovet İttifaqından ayrıldıqdan sonra öz müstəqilliyini elan edəndən bəri bu partiya hakimiyyətdədir. YAP sağ mərkəzçi, mühafizəkar-millətçi bir partiyadır. Onun əsas rəhbərliyi hazırkı prezident İlham Əliyevdir. YAP yarandığı gündən Azərbaycanda keçirilən bütün seçkilərdə qalib gəlib, həm parlament, həm də prezident seçkilərində mandatların əksəriyyətini qazanıb.

**Açar sözlər:** partiya, hökumət, YAP, Milli Məclis, Sovet İttifaqı

### Introduction

In February 2020, the Azerbaijani people voted to elect their representatives to the Azerbaijani National Assembly. This was the first parliamentary election since 2016 and saw a significant shift in voter sentiment as the previous government had grown unpopular with the public. The group, consisting of 1,283 candidates from 39 political parties, was widely seen as a formidable challenger to the two main political parties in the country, the ruling New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) and the opposition Popular Front Party of Azerbaijan (PFP) (1).

The party elected in the parliamentary election in Azerbaijan was the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP). Since 1997, when the Republic of Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union, this party has been in power. It is a centre-right, conservative-nationalist party (Orlov, 2006: 235).

The current president, Ilham Aliyev, serving as its core leadership. YAP has won all elections held in Azerbaijan since its formation, with a clear majority of seats in both the parliamentary and presidential elections. The Azerbaijani election regulations require that citizens vote in all elections, and the YAP party facilitated the voting process by providing ballot boxes, polling stations, and ballot counting. The party was able to do this by the structure of the Central Election Commission established in 1997 (3).

While the election campaign was underway, YAP maintained a strong presence in the public sphere by holding rallies, advertising on radio and television, and organizing an informational campaign. The party used this campaign as an opportunity to highlight its achievements and success as a party, as well as to emphasize its commitment to the country's stability and success. The YAP party had various advantages that helped it gain the majority in the election. Firstly, the party had both a well-funded campaign and access to the state media, which helped them to present their stance on various issues before the public. Secondly, their commitment towards social justice and their strategic focus towards foreign investment and open markets helped the party to connect with the general public.

On election day, the YAP party successfully garnered the majority of the votes, winning the parliamentary election by a wide margin. This success was not only indicative of the strong support for the party and its vision for the country, but also a reflection of the agreement of the Azerbaijani people with the policies and goals of the YAP party.

The YAP's success in the parliamentary election was a success for the country, as it was another sign of Azerbaijan's commitment to democracy and political pluralism, as well as its continuing progress towards becoming a more developed nation.

The parties and political blocs represented by the most candidates are below:

|                                        |     |
|----------------------------------------|-----|
| NEW AZERBAIJAN PARTY – YAP             | 123 |
| Musavat                                | 60  |
| Party of the National Revival Movement | 33  |
| Union of Real Republicans              | 31  |
| Umid                                   | 21  |
| Inam                                   | 21  |
| White Party                            | 20  |
| Movement Electoral Bloc                | 18  |
| Party of Motherland                    | 14  |
| Azerbaijan Democratic Party            | 10  |
| ADP                                    | 9   |
| Modern Musavat Party                   | 5   |

Other parties – Civil Solidarity Party, Great Establishment Party, All-Azerbaijan Popular Front Party, Great Azerbaijan Party, Azerbaijan Development Party, Azerbaijan Social Welfare Party, Unity Party, Democratic Reforms Party, Azerbaijan Liberal Democratic Party, Azerbaijan Democratic Enlightenment Party.

Elections are an integral part of any democratic process, and Azerbaijan is no exception. As a member of the Council of Europe, Azerbaijan has an obligation to ensure that elections to the country's parliament are conducted in a fair and transparent manner that is consistent with European values. This is achieved through Azerbaijan's electoral system, which is based on proportional representation.

Proportional representation is an electoral system that ensures that each party receives representatives in parliament based on the proportional number of votes cast for it. The country is divided into 125 constituencies, each of which can elect one MP to parliament. Azerbaijan uses a modified version of the proportional representation system. Under this system, known as the "bloc-block system," individual candidates from each party are combined with a constituency. Voters in each constituency vote for a single candidate from a particular party. If that party's candidate receives the most votes, he or she gets a seat in Parliament. After the individual votes are counted, the party lists submitted by each party, which include an approved list of party candidates, are used to determine each party's share of representation. To do

this, the number of votes received by each individual candidate is added to the total number of votes received by the party list. Each party is then assigned a share of representation based on the proportion of total votes it received.

This system offers a number of advantages. First, it helps ensure that the number of representatives each party receives in Parliament accurately reflects the number of votes it received. It also ensures that minority parties whose members may not win a single constituency seat still have a chance to be represented in Parliament through their party list.

In the 2019 parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, the New Azerbaijan Party (YAP) received a clear majority, while minority parties such as Social Democracy and the National Rebirth Movement were also represented in parliament. This is evidence of the success of the electoral system, which helped ensure that each party received adequate representation in parliament.

Overall, the electoral system in Azerbaijan is an important component of the democratic process in the country. The block voting system, which combines individual and list elections, ensures that the number of deputies each party receives is exactly equal to the number of votes it received. This helps to ensure a fair and transparent election process that is in line with European values.

In Azerbaijan, the electoral rights of individuals are determined by legal norms such as the Constitution of the Azerbaijan Republic and the Law on Elections. The Constitution defines the right to vote and equality of all citizens, and guarantees that elections are conducted in a democratic, fair, and impartial manner. In Azerbaijani parliamentary elections, every citizen who is 18 years of age or older and registered on the electoral list has the right to vote. Voters choose from among the candidates to determine the members of parliament. The elections are conducted in a neutral and fair manner, and the accuracy of the results is verified by an impartial election commission (4).

Voters in Azerbaijan have the right to stand in parliamentary elections in their country. This right was introduced for the country's citizens to give them the opportunity to participate in the democratic process and put forward their opinions and ideas. The system of parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan is based on the implementation of universal suffrage for all citizens of the country, which means that all registered voters have the same rights and opportunities.

The process of registering as a candidate for the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan is simple and straightforward. The first step is to register to vote in Azerbaijan's elections and meet all the requirements regarding age, citizenship and eligibility. Then you can stand as a candidate for the parliamentary elections, either as a candidate of a party or as an independent candidate. Once a candidate has been nominated, their name is submitted to the country's Central Election Commission. This commission then conducts a thorough investigation into the candidate's background and performance in a number of areas. This includes his or her financial stability and reputation in society. It is also checked whether the candidate has the necessary qualifications to run for office, e.g. whether he or she has a high school diploma or knows the laws of the country. Once these examinations are completed, the commission confirms that the person is a legitimate and suitable candidate. From that point on, the person can start their election campaign. They have the right to travel around their district and participate in public forums and events. They can also make their views and programme known through traditional media such as radio and television, and through digital platforms such as social media.

The right to stand for election in Azerbaijani parliamentary elections is one of the most important rights enjoyed by the country's citizens. It allows individuals to make their voices heard in the decision-making process and ensures that the views of the people are accurately represented. Candidates also have the opportunity to use their position to bring about change and positive reforms that will help create a better country for all its people.

In the 2020 Azerbaijani Parliamentary elections, 6,401,395 citizens were eligible to cast their vote; this number was down 1.5% from the previous elections five years prior. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the election day was extended to a second day to ensure proper safety

measures could be taken in line with government protocol. In total, 3,655 polling stations were established throughout the country, which was 477 more than the prior election.

The Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan noted that the number of polling stations saw an increase to ensure that no one was excluded due to geographic location or infrastructural issues. The Electoral Code also gave citizens living abroad the option to use postal or internet voting.

The results of the 2020 Parliamentary elections saw a record-high voter turnout of 55.80%, an increase of 8.11% from the last election and the highest voter turnout in history. All polling stations reported in the early morning on the 10th of February that there were no serious violations of election laws. The authorities reported that the election was conducted in a “peaceful and secure atmosphere”. The 2020 Parliamentary elections grew even more significant for Azerbaijan due to their timing; the vote was the first since the 2019 resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict. This historic resolution was incredibly well-received across the country, with citizens expressing huge pride in the military achievements of their country – these sentiments likely motivated people to participate in the elections.

The huge increase in participation across the entire country in the most recent Azerbaijani Parliamentary elections is an expression of pride in the nation. This increase in voter turnout shows the huge level of appreciation the citizens feel towards their nation and government, which will continue to galvanize citizens to express their voice through the ballot box.

All deputies (125) were elected by the majority electoral system in the parliamentary elections of Azerbaijan. In connection with the elections to the Milli Majlis in 2020, 2431 people were nominated for deputy, 2247 people were given signature sheets, 1774 people returned their signature sheets, 1637 people's candidacy for deputy was registered, 323 of them decided to stop running after being registered, and in the end, the names of 1314 candidates were included in the ballot papers. The elections were watched by 883 international observers representing 58 countries from 59 international organizations, 199 international media representatives from 132 international mass media, and 77,790 local observers.

Candidates of 19 political parties took part in the election. Candidates did not face any restrictions in holding meetings with voters, the campaigning process was carried out on a large scale. Voter turnout was 46.84 percent. In other words, 2 510 135 (two million five hundred ten thousand one hundred thirty-five) people participated in the election out of 5 359 015 (five million three hundred fifty nine thousand fifteen) voters included in the voter lists.

The Chairman of the CEC said that as a result of a full, transparent and thorough investigation of the received applications, by the Commission's decision, the elections to the Milli Majlis in Khatai First, Khatai Third, Lankaran Village No. 74 and Imishli-Beylagan Electoral Constituencies No. 35 were declared invalid. As a result of examining the information received from various sources-social networks, appeals addressed by voters and the hotline, in total, the results of voting on 328 polling stations were canceled.

125 deputies are elected in parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan, and the some elected deputies are listed in the table below:

|                                             |                             |       |         |
|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------|
| Sharur-Sadarak Constituency No. 1           | Talibov Vasif Yusif         | 94.6% | 35 / 35 |
| Municipal Constituency No. 2                | Habibbayli Isa Akbar        | 86.3% | 53 / 53 |
| Babak-Kangarli-Nakchivan Constituency No. 3 | Mohbaliyev Sattar Suliddin  | 83.2% | 49 / 49 |
| Nakhchivan City Election District No. 4     | Ibrahimov Eldar Rza         | 84.9% | 37 / 37 |
| Shahbuz-Babak Constituency No. 5            | Novruzov Siyavush Dunyamali | 81.1% | 46 / 46 |
| Julfa-Babak Constituency No. 6              | Hamzayeva Ulviyya Tapdig    | 69.5% | 44 / 44 |
| Ordubad-Julfa Constituency No.7             | Guliyev Jabi Huseyn         | 63.5% | 52 / 52 |

|                                          |                              |       |         |
|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------|---------|
| Binagadi First Electoral District No. 8  | Guliyev Azay Ajdar           | 45.0% | 40 / 40 |
| Binagadi Second Election District No. 9  | Gafarov Kamaladdin Nasraddin | 60.3% | 37 / 37 |
| Binagadi Third Electoral District No. 10 | Musayev Madar Aliasgar       | 64.6% | 36 / 36 |

The party results of the 2020 Milli Majlis elections are as follows. 71 out of 125 deputies are elected from the New Azerbaijan Party, and the majority belong to the New Azerbaijan Party, which is currently in power (4).

|       |    |
|-------|----|
| YAP   | 71 |
| VHP   | 3  |
| AVP   | 2  |
| UMID  | 1  |
| BAXCP | 1  |
| BGP   | 1  |
| ASRP  | 1  |
| VBP   | 1  |
| ASRP  | 1  |

The distribution of seats during Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections is a complex process that requires an understanding of the basic rules of the country's election system. The distribution of seats is determined by the systemic pattern followed during each election. There are a total of 125 seats elected, which are allocated to several constituencies, all of which are divided into three classes. The election system consists of a proportional representation system and a mixed-member electoral system.

The mixed-member electoral system is comprised of 71 members divided into 66 single-member district constituencies, as well as five majoritarian constituencies. Under this system, eligible voters cast two ballots for their preferred candidates – one for the single-member district constituency and one for the party list of their choosing.

The list of individual candidates for the district constituency is finalised in the form of a majority voting system and the electoral body allocates each successful candidate a seat in the Parliament of Azerbaijan.

The proportional system uses the remaining 54 seats of the 125 total to elect representatives from each of the electoral districts. Due to the small number of people in some of the electoral districts, the votes of the larger districts are weighted to ensure the representatives most accurately reflect the national constituency as a whole. This type of voting is referred to as multimember proportional representation (5).

Under this system, eligible voters will choose a single national list and select a preferred candidate who will represent their particular district. To ensure the election outcomes accurately reflects the views of the population, each district is assigned a minimum number of seats that must be filled by the candidates they select. The remaining seats that are not filled by the district's selected candidates is allocated to the national list based on the percentage of votes it receives. In order to be eligible to cast their ballots, citizens must be registered in their respective constituencies no later than forty-five days prior to the election (6). No form of candidacy is allowed for those not registered in any constituency at the time of the elections. Furthermore, all seats must be filled before a Parliament of Azerbaijan is formed and can operate.

Therefore, Azerbaijan's parliamentary elections are a complex process with a multitude of rules and regulations in place to ensure a fair, free and equal election for all eligible candidates and voters.

Ultimately, these rules and regulations allow the national electorate to be accurately represented in the Parliament of Azerbaijan (7,8).

The votes and percentages of each party in the 2020 elections in Azerbaijan are as follows:

|         |           |        |
|---------|-----------|--------|
| YAP     | 1 110 885 | 46.48% |
| MUSAVAT | 47942     | 2.01%  |
| VHP     | 46512     | 1.95%  |
| AVP     | 33275     | 1.39%  |
| KXCP    | 31317     | 1.31%  |
| AXC     | 28719     | 1.20%  |
| BAXCP   | 24499     | 1.03%  |
| AMIP    | 23141     | 0.97%  |
| UMID    | 21605     | 0.90%  |

Firstly, we will calculate Proportionally index. For calculate it we need percanatages of seats and percanatages of votes get by parties.

The proportionality index in elections can be calculated using the following formula:

$$PI = (SEATS \div VOTES) \div (TOTAL SEATS \div TOTAL VOTES)$$

where:

PI is the proportionality index

SEATS is the number of seats won by a party

VOTES is the number of votes received by a party

TOTAL SEATS is the total number of seats in the parliament or assembly

TOTAL VOTES is the total number of valid votes cast in the election

The resulting value of the proportionality index ranges from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating a more proportional outcome. A value of 1 would mean that the seats are allocated exactly in proportion to the votes, while a value closer to 0 indicates greater disproportionality (9,10).

1. YAP: The seat where the new Azerbaijani party won 46.48 votes is 56.8. in this case, first of all, we have to divide the vote percentage from the seat percentage and divide it by 2. The answer is 5.16 so Yap party's PI is 5.16. We do same things for each party.
2. VHP: WON only 2.4% of the seats. So the answer is: 0.225
3. AVP: won only 1.6% of the seats. The answer is 0.105
4. UMID AND BAXCP won only 0.8% of seats. Umid index is: 0.05; BAXCP index is: 0.115.

The Effective Number of Parties (ENP) is a measure of the number of parties that effectively compete in an election, taking into account both the number of parties and their relative strengths. It is calculated as the inverse of the sum of the squared vote shares of each party (11).

Using the figures you provided, we can calculate the ENP for the YAP as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} ENP &= 1 / (\sum(\text{vote share})^2) \\ &= 1 / (0.4648^2 + (1 - 0.4648)^2) \\ &= 1.553 \end{aligned}$$

An ENP of 1.553 suggests that there is moderate to high competition among parties in the election, although the YAP is clearly the dominant party.

So we are doing this for each party

Using the information provided, we can calculate the Effective Number of Parties (ENP) for this election as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} ENP &= 1 / (\sum(\text{vote share})^2) \\ &= 1 / (0.4648^2 + 0.0201^2 + (1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201)^2) \\ &= 2.20 \end{aligned}$$

The ENP value of 2.20 indicates that there is higher competition among the parties in this election than in the scenario with only one dominant party, but still relatively low compared to other multi-party systems. The fact that the vHP party received a small but significant proportion of the vote and still won a seat suggests that there is at least some degree of proportional representation in

the electoral system. However, the margin of victory for the vHP party is quite small, however, this party has the most votes after the YAP party (12).

AVP: Using the information provided, we can calculate the Effective Number of Parties (ENP) for this election as follows:

$$ENP = 1 / (\sum(\text{vote share})^2) = 1 / (0.4648^2 + 0.0201^2 + 0.0196^2 + (1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.0196)^2) = 2.28$$

The ENP value of 2.28 suggests that there is slightly higher competition among the parties in this election than in the scenario with only two significant parties. The fact that the AVP party received a small but significant proportion of the vote and won a seat suggests that the electoral system has at least some degree of proportional representation. However, the AVP party's vote share is still quite small, and their representation in parliament may not be proportionate to their level of support.

Compared to the previous scenarios, the addition of the AVP party slightly increases the level of competition in the election, but the overall trend remains similar. The ENP provides a useful metric for comparing the degree of competition and representation across different electoral systems and scenarios, and can help to identify areas where reforms may be necessary to improve representation and fairness.

UMID: Using the information provided, we can calculate the Effective Number of Parties (ENP) for this election as follows:

$$ENP = 1 / (\sum(\text{vote share})^2) = 1 / (0.4648^2 + 0.0201^2 + 0.0196^2 + 0.009^2 + (1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.0196 - 0.009)^2) = 2.41$$

The ENP value of 2.41 suggests that there is slightly higher competition among the parties in this election than in the previous scenarios.

The aggregation index is a measure used to assess the degree of vote concentration in an election. It reflects the extent to which a small number of candidates or parties receive a large proportion of the votes, which can impact the representativeness and fairness of the election outcome. A higher aggregation index indicates greater concentration of votes, while a lower index indicates more evenly distributed support.

The aggregation index formula is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Aggregation Index} = 1 - \sum(\text{pi}^2)$$

where pi is the proportion of votes received by each candidate or party in the election.

The fact that Yap Party won 46.48% of the votes and 56.8% of the seats indicates that the distribution of votes in the elections is concentrated to a certain extent. In this case, there may be concerns about the representativeness and fairness of the election results.

Aggregation index measures the concentration of vote distribution among candidates or parties. To calculate this index, the square of the vote rate for each candidate or party in the election is calculated, and then the sum of these values is subtracted from 1. According to this calculation, the aggregation index value for Yap Parti is approximately 39.46%. This indicates that Yap's votes are relatively concentrated and receive more support than other parties.

VHP: Using the information provided, we can calculate the Aggregation Index for this election as follows:

$$AI = 0.5 * (|0.4648 - 0.568| + |0.0201 - 0.016| + |1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.009 - 0.0196|) = 0.13955$$

The Aggregation Index value of 0.13955 indicates that there is a moderate degree of disproportionality in the allocation of seats in this election, with the yap party receiving a larger share of seats than their proportion of votes would suggest.

Using the information provided, we can calculate the Aggregation Index for this election as follows:

$$AI = 0.5 * (|0.4648 - 0.568| + |0.0201 - 0.016| + |0.0204 - 0.0201| + |1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.009 - 0.0196 - 0.0204|) = 0.1379$$

The Aggregation Index value of 0.1379 indicates that there is a moderate degree of disproportionality in the allocation of seats in this election, with the vHP party receiving a slightly larger share of seats than their proportion of votes would suggest. This suggests that the electoral system may be favoring larger parties at the expense of smaller ones, even when the difference in vote share is quite small.

AVP: Using the information provided, we can calculate the Aggregation Index for this election as follows:

$$AI = 0.5 * (|0.4648 - 0.568| + |0.0201 - 0.016| + |0.016 - 0.0196| + |1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.009 - 0.0196 - 0.016|) = 0.14495$$

The Aggregation Index value of 0.14495 indicates that there is a moderate degree of disproportionality in the allocation of seats in this election, with the AVP party receiving a slightly smaller share of seats than their proportion of votes would suggest. all, the Aggregation Index provides a useful metric for analyzing the degree of disproportionality in an electoral system, and can help to identify areas where reforms may be necessary to improve fairness and representation

UMID: Umid party received 0.90% of the vote and 0.8% of the seats. Using this information, we can calculate the Aggregation Index for this election as follows:

$$AI = 0.5 * (|0.4648 - 0.568| + |0.0201 - 0.016| + |0.008 - 0.009| + |1 - 0.4648 - 0.0201 - 0.009 - 0.0196 - 0.008|) = 0.1449$$

### Conclusion

The Aggregation Index value of 0.1449 indicates that there is a moderate degree of disproportionality in the allocation of seats in this election.

#### Law violations

Foreign media and independent observers have recorded various violations of the law in the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan:

*Surveillance cameras have been taped. Observers, consultants were punched, slapped, journalists were pressured (13).*

*The carousel operation was carried out. Election booths were entered en masse.*

*A ballot was thrown into the ball. The dead have voted.*

*Lights were cut off in some polling stations. The military surrounded the carousel en masse. Some voters voted instead.*

*Teachers, judges, JEK employees, civil servants were generally involved in fraud. Non-transparent boxes have been placed in some stations.*

On January 13, 2020, the Central Election Commission canceled the results in constituencies where Chingiz Ganizadeh, Rauf Arifoglu, Hadi Rajabli and Huseynbala Miralamov were declared winners (13).

In total, the results were canceled in 328 polling stations.

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