

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.72.12.18>

How to Cite:

Gadimaliyev, A.R. (2023). Evolution of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan: from the 20th century to the present. *Amazonia Investiga*, 12(72), 205-215. <https://doi.org/10.34069/AI/2023.72.12.18>

Evolution of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan: from the 20th century to the present

Azərbaycanda parlamentarizmin təkamülü: 20-ci əsrdən bu günə qədər

Received: November 5, 2023

Accepted: December 29, 2023

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Abstract

The study aims to examine information about the first Azerbaijani Parliament, its activities, composition, and the measures it implemented in practice during the period of its existence. In order to achieve its aim and objectives, the study used the methods of analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, as well as historical and comparative methods. The main conclusion of the study is the substantiation of the position that the people of Azerbaijan, which regained its independence, used the rich traditions of the short-term activities of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and, on this historical continuity, created a national and people's republic, the sovereign state of Azerbaijan. The author also argues that the Parliament established during this period played a major role in the formation of the statehood based on democratic principles since 1918–1920 was a period of formation of the political consciousness of the Azerbaijani people, a high level of formation and activity of the processes of national identity of the Azerbaijani people. This study is one of the first to examine the origins of the practice of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan in the early twentieth century and its peculiarities.

Keywords: parliamentarism, legislative power, mediation democracy, power of the people.

Introduction

In exploring the nuanced landscape of democracy, the contemporary conceptualization hinges on the pivotal role of parliamentarism as an essential cornerstone within the governance framework. Widely acknowledged by politicians, political scientists, and the public alike, the institution of parliamentarism is

Abstrakt

Tədqiqat ilk Azərbaycan parlamenti, onun fəaliyyəti, tərkibi, mövcud olduğu dövrdə praktikada həyata keçirdiyi tədbirlər haqqında məlumatları araşdırmaq məqsədi daşıyır. Tədqiqat məqsəd və vəzifələrinə nail olmaq üçün təhlil və sintez, induksiya və deduksiya üsullarından, həmçinin tarixi və müqayisəli metodlardan istifadə etmişdir. Tədqiqatın əsas nəticəsi müstəqilliyini bərpa edən Azərbaycan xalqının Azərbaycan Xalq Cümhuriyyətinin qismüddətli fəaliyyətinin zəngin ənənələrindən istifadə etməsi və bu tarixi davamlılığa əsaslanaraq, milli-xalq, milli-mənəvi dəyərlərin formalaşması və s. respublika, suveren Azərbaycan dövləti. Müəllif onu da əsaslandırır ki, bu dövrdə yaradılmış Parlament 1918-1920-ci illərdən başlayaraq demokratik prinsiplərə əsaslanan dövlətçiliyin formalaşmasında böyük rol oynamış, Azərbaycan xalqının siyasi şüurunun formalaşması, yüksək təşəkkül və fəallıq dövrü olmuşdur. Azərbaycan xalqının milli kimlik proseslərinin. Bu tədqiqat Azərbaycanda XX əsrin əvvəllərində parlamentarizm təcrübəsinin mənşəyini və onun özünəməxsus xüsusiyyətlərini araşdıran ilk tədqiqatlardan biridir.

Açar sözlər: parlamentarismo, poder legislative, democracia de mediação, poder dos povos.

deemed indispensable for the manifestation of democratic principles. Whether structured as a unicameral or bicameral entity and referred to by various names such as people's assembly, national assembly, or federal assembly, the parliament stands as the representative branch of government. It plays a critical role in formulating

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the norms and codes that shape social life through the creation of constitutions and legislative acts, thereby laying the foundation for a minimally democratic state system.

This study delves into the Evolution of Parliamentarism in Azerbaijan: From the 20th Century to the Present, acknowledging the constitutional principles that underscore the democratic organization of state power. Aligning with global practices, the Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan articulates the imperative of dividing state power into distinct branches. To delve deeper into this principle, the country's foundational law delineates the dynamics of interaction and concurrent independence among these branches within their designated spheres of influence. However, in a state governed by the rule of law, the absolute independence of each body, particularly the executive branch, is inherently circumscribed by the legal framework.

To comprehensively grasp the significance of the study, it becomes imperative to contextualize it within the historical and political backdrop of Azerbaijan. This exploration aims to address critical research questions, elucidating the evolution of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan and its intrinsic connection to the broader discourse on democracy. By undertaking this research, we seek to unravel the complexities embedded in the historical trajectory, recognizing the imperative of understanding why investigating the issue of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan is both timely and indispensable. Therefore, the aim of this research is to comprehensively explore and analyze the historical development of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan from the 20th century to the present. Therefore, the main sections of the research will consist of the following tasks:

1. Determine the meaning of parliamentarism through the prism of analysis from the historical and theoretical aspect of legal institutions.
2. To describe the historical evolution and national features of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan.
3. To discuss the peculiarities of Azerbaijani parliamentarism against the background of the analysis of the influence of the Soviet political heritage and modern challenges
4. To investigate the influence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on the development of democratic movements in the East.

This study aims to answer the following question:

How has the concept of parliamentarism evolved historically and theoretically within the framework of legal institutions and what are its national features in Azerbaijan?

What role has the historical evolution of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan played in shaping its current state, considering the impact of the Soviet political heritage and contemporary challenges?

Literature review

The study of various facets of parliamentarism has garnered attention from foreign scholars, leading to a rich body of literature. Cheibub and Rasch (2022) identified two overarching trends through an analysis of constitutional texts across European countries spanning from 1800 to 2019. Firstly, they highlighted the constitutionalization of parliamentary practices, originating from strategic interactions between the government and parliament. Secondly, there emerged a tendency to safeguard both the executive and parliament from mutual interference. This constitutional evolution, influenced by the stabilization of parliamentarism post-World War II, demonstrates the adaptability of the system, emphasizing that contemporary regimes differ significantly from their nineteenth-century counterparts. Motos (2019) observed an "empirical turn" in research at the onset of the twentieth century, with a notable scholarly focus on evaluating the centrality of parliament in the democracy discourse of the 1920s and 1930s. The scholar emphasized how the early twentieth century witnessed transformative changes in classical parliamentarism. Post-World War II, European parliaments became battlegrounds for partisan conflicts, leading to a shift in focus for political scientists and lawyers. This shift reduced the significance of parliaments to arenas of partisan confrontations, diminishing the institution's role to mere displays of conflicts, negotiations, and vote counting. Dahlen and Skirbekk (2021) marked the late nineteenth century as a pivotal point for modernity in Europe and the early twentieth century as a period marked by conflict fueled by nationalism and class struggles. Democracy, according to the scholars, necessitates a particular skepticism about politics, with democratic processes serving as crucial guarantors of social integration in modern society. In response to the challenges of the first crisis of their time, Scandinavian countries adopted policies to fortify social democratic or social liberal welfare states with robust parliamentary traditions, aiming to uphold

credibility and trust between governments and citizens.

Jagodzińska's (2022) work appears to focus on the legal analysis of the Declaration of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan from 1918 to 1920. This work provides valuable insights into the legal aspects surrounding the declaration, offering a deeper understanding of the legal foundations of the democratic republic during that period. The collaborative work by Ihalainen et al. (2016) explores the conceptual nexus of parliament. Given the collaborative effort and its inclusion in a book on the comparative history of the European concept of parliaments and parliamentarism, it offers a broader theoretical framework for understanding parliamentary systems, which could be useful for contextualizing the specific case of Azerbaijan. At the same time, the work by Alieva (2014) explores the relationship between Azerbaijan and the European Union (EU) with a focus on the impact of the country's democratization process. The author delves into how the absence or limitations of democratic practices in Azerbaijan may have influenced its diplomatic and political ties with the EU. The study likely examines the challenges and implications of democratization (or the lack thereof) on Azerbaijan's broader international relations. Gadimaliyev's (2020) work is a study that concentrates on the organizational aspects of parliamentary institutions during the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic period. The focus includes the structure, functioning, and possibly the challenges faced by these institutions during the early years of the republic. The study contributes to a better understanding of the historical development of parliamentary systems in Azerbaijan. Moreover, Gahramanova's (2009) work was centred on the democratization process in Azerbaijan. The study examines both internal and external factors that have played a role in shaping the democratization trajectory of Azerbaijan. The author explores the complexities and influences that have affected the country's path towards democratization, offering insights into the broader dynamics at play. Malikli's (2020) work concentrates on the election process for regional representatives to the parliament during the period of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan. The study delves into the electoral mechanisms, procedures, and perhaps the significance of regional representation in the democratic governance of Azerbaijan during that specific historical period. In addition, Rasizade (2003) provides an analysis of Azerbaijan's transition towards democracy during a specific

period. The study explores the political and societal changes that occurred during this transitional phase, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities faced by Azerbaijan as it moved towards a "New Age of Democracy. Hui (2019) delved into the revolutionary beginnings of the early twentieth century in Asian countries, asserting that the origins are not to be found in geopolitical competitions but rather in the "awakening of Asia" triggered by imperialist wars. The scholar highlighted the multifaceted impact of this awakening on globalization and its enduring influence on parliamentary institutions.

Kaya's (2022) work explores parliamentarism and rationalized parliamentarism with a focus on its applicability in Turkey. It provides a comparative perspective that might offer insights applicable to your study. Understanding how different countries, in this case, Turkey, engage with parliamentarism could contribute to a broader understanding of the subject. In addition, Balampanidis and Rezola (2023) proposed that the transition from authoritarianism to democracy culminates when a country establishes parliamentary traditions. They emphasized that democratization initiates with the downfall of an authoritarian regime and concludes with the inaugural democratic parliamentary elections. The path towards democracy becoming the "only game in town" involves a myriad of formal and informal actions, symbolic gestures, political decisions, social mobilization, and institutional arrangements, regardless of whether the focus is on transition or consolidation.

Hence, the reviewed literature presents a multifaceted exploration of parliamentarism, ranging from legal analyses of historical documents, such as Azerbaijan's Declaration of Independence, to conceptual frameworks that define the nature of parliamentary systems in Europe. The works collectively emphasize the historical significance of the Azerbaijani parliament, positioning it as a crucial element in the democratic fabric of the East. Additionally, insights into the applicability of parliamentarism in Turkey contribute to a comparative understanding of diverse political landscapes. However, there is a noticeable gap in global comparative analysis, with a focus on Azerbaijan. A broader examination of parliamentary systems across this country could enrich the contextualization of the study. Moreover, a shift towards more contemporary perspectives on parliamentarism in Azerbaijan and a more in-depth exploration of the legal

aspects could enhance the completeness of the existing literature. On the other hand, the current study endeavors to contribute significantly to the existing body of literature on parliamentarism in Azerbaijan by addressing crucial gaps identified in prior research. Several key works have been considered to offer a comprehensive understanding of the historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of the parliamentary system in Azerbaijan. The existing literature on parliamentarism in Azerbaijan reveals certain gaps that the current study seeks to address. Notably, prior research has touched upon the impact of the lack of democratization on Azerbaijan's relations with the European Union, yet a comprehensive analysis integrating historical, theoretical, and practical dimensions of the parliamentary system in this context is lacking. Additionally, while there are studies exploring the organization of parliamentary institutes in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, a more nuanced understanding of the evolution and national features of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan is needed. The examination of internal and external factors in the democratization process provides valuable insights, but a focused exploration of their specific influence on parliamentary structures is notably absent. The election process of regional representatives to the parliament of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic has been explored, but there is a need for a more integrated analysis connecting electoral mechanisms with broader parliamentary developments. Furthermore, while Azerbaijan's transition to a "New Age of Democracy" has been studied, a comprehensive synthesis of its impact on contemporary parliamentary structures is lacking. The current study aims to bridge these gaps by offering a cohesive and in-depth analysis of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan.

Methodology

Research design

The study is aimed at a comparative analysis of parliamentary practice in the early 20th century in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic (ADR)

and modern parliaments. This study is of a qualitative type, as the analysis is based on a critical review of legislative acts and historical documents.

Data collection

Qualitative data was collected through a critical review of historical documents and primary sources, such as legislation. The main selected legal acts and historical documents constitute the research materials:

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Azerbaijan (1995): this key document defined the basic democratic principles, separation of powers, and individual rights in a format that determined the country's further development (Azerbaijan, 1995).
2. The Declaration of Independence (28 May 1918): a fundamental document that declared the establishment of the independent Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan (Jagodzińska, 2022).

Modern scientific and metric databases were used for the literature search, including Google Scholar, Web of Science, Index Copernicus, Taylor and Francis, etc. Only modern literature was selected - the date range was from 2016-2023. The keywords used to search for sources are as follows: parliamentarism, the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan, laws, documents, modern practice of parliamentarism. Based on the selected literature, a critical analysis was carried out and further used as a methodological basis for the study.

Data analysis

The qualitative analysis is focused on identifying the main principles and innovations in the ADR legislation and their impact on the development of democracy. The methods of analysis and synthesis were used to analyse scientific papers and legal acts. The work uses several specific analysis techniques, such as coding, categorization, and content analysis (See Table 1).

Table 1.
The specific research techniques

Coding	
Description	The coding process involves systematically labeling and categorizing specific elements within the collected data.
Application	Relevant sections of legislative acts and scientific literature are assigned unique codes based on thematic content. This facilitates the identification of recurring patterns, themes, and legislative trends.
Categorization	
Description	Categorization involves grouping coded data into broader categories based on shared characteristics or themes.
Application	Codes related to democratic principles, separation of powers, and individual rights are categorized to discern overarching patterns and thematic clusters in the legislative landscape.
Content Analysis	
Description	Content analysis systematically examines the content of documents to extract meaningful insights, uncovering implicit and explicit meanings.
Application	Historical documents, such as the Declaration of Independence, undergo content analysis to identify key statements, principles, and ideological underpinnings shaping parliamentary practices during the ADR era.
Thematic Analysis	
Description	Thematic analysis involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within qualitative data.
Application	Modern literature on parliamentarism is subjected to thematic analysis to extract key ideas, theoretical frameworks, and contemporary perspectives relevant to the study's focus.
Comparative Analysis	
Description	Comparative analysis examines similarities and differences between different sources, periods, or contexts.
Application	The study employs comparative analysis to juxtapose parliamentary practices in the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic with modern frameworks, highlighting changes, continuities, and the evolution of democratic principles.

Source: Author's development

Ensuring rigor

1. Data triangulation

Reliability is bolstered through data triangulation, involving the use of multiple sources, perspectives, and methods. In this study, historical documents, legislative acts, and modern literature are cross-referenced to corroborate findings and enhance the credibility of the analysis. By comparing legal provisions in the Constitution of 1995 with historical documents like the Declaration of Independence, 1918, data triangulation ensures consistency and reliability in capturing the evolution of parliamentary practices.

2. Theoretical saturation

The study achieves theoretical saturation by thoroughly exploring and analyzing existing theoretical frameworks related to parliamentary practices. This exhaustive examination ensures that the study captures the depth and complexity of the subject matter, leaving no critical aspect unexplored. By delving into diverse theoretical perspectives on parliamentarism, the study attains theoretical saturation, offering a

comprehensive understanding of the contextual and theoretical underpinnings of the research.

Intersubjective Audit

To enhance validity, an intersubjective audit is employed, involving peer reviews and consultations to assess the interpretative rigor of the study.

Results and discussion

Effective management of the parliamentary practice that is developed in a particular country and has its own traditions, as well as its successful implementation in practice, is crucial for successful representation in modern democracies. The world history of parliamentarism as social (class) representation in the highest authorities dates back to the activities of the English Parliament of the 13th century: the establishment of the House of Lords and the House of Commons of England, as well as the first bicameral parliament in this country in the mid-14th century. From the end of the same century, the English Parliament received the right of legislative initiative and became the prototype of modern legislative assemblies, but only after the adoption of the Bill of Rights in

1689, which deprived the king of the right to repeal or suspend laws without the consent of elected representatives, did it become a full-fledged supreme legislative body. This classic parliament gave birth to the principles of opposition to the supreme state power, the two-party system, and lobbying, which have become integral attributes of modern European political culture.

The representative function of the parliament as a key democratic institution necessarily brings to the fore the election procedure designed to ensure genuine and most favourable representation of social, ethnic, professional, and other strata and groups of the population, which is possible to implement in certain specific conditions. Therefore, the so-called electoral democracy, democracy in the form of general elections, is the minimum necessary precondition for the democratic nature of the social order.

Minimal because at the time of its inception and approval (late eighteenth - first half of the nineteenth century), it was criticised due to the illegality of universal suffrage, which was extended to more and more categories of the population in Europe and America gradually over decades. Moreover, the adoption of the relevant laws did not guarantee only the actual participation of these categories in political decision-making but even their involvement in the political process. In other words, electoral democracy does not become a mechanical participatory democracy, a social and participatory form of democracy.

These basics of democratic practice were repeatedly reminded throughout the twentieth century when the notorious “waves of democratisation” described by dozens of contemporary researchers rose. Over the past decade and a half, states that emerged from the ruins of a system that was called communist totalitarianism or authoritarianism have been trying to learn the lessons of democracy. In assessing their experience, we should first of all proceed from the unequal starting conditions for overcoming the past in which they were. Even though they were united by belonging to a common system (the Soviet type), these states were not homogeneous and equally developed according to the criteria of the system; after its collapse, their political, economic, and socio-cultural heterogeneity (of course, with many homogeneous characteristics) became fully apparent.

The theory of state and law distinguishes between two main ways in which people exercise their power:

1. direct exercise of power (direct democracy);
2. exercise of power through representation (representative democracy).

When describing the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, it should be noted that the democratic institutions created in them after the collapse of the Soviet Union are in the process of adjustment and development, and in its middle stage. This is fully consistent with the notion that post-communist societies are going through a stage of transit before the complete formation of new social systems, in which liberal democratic institutions and Western values form a stable unity with the socio-historical practice of a certain region located to the east of the nuclear countries of European civilisation. One of the key issues in the EU is to prevent relapses of authoritarian rule, and the main factor in solving this problem is the problem of the optimal combination of parliamentary (potentially democratic) and presidential (potentially authoritarian) power. Thus, the European Parliament has expanded its powers in relation to other EU institutions, strategically using the powers it already possesses and appealing to its contribution to democratic legitimacy (Crum, 2023).

The greatest advocate of the first mentioned method of exercising power by the people was Jean Jacques Rousseau, who believed that direct democracy is a political ideal. According to his theory, it is necessary that the legislative power belongs directly to the people's assembly, in which all citizens should participate, and all other authorities should be fully subordinated to it and responsible to it. According to Montesquieu, from the perspective of the idea of representative democracy, the direct exercise of power by the people is impossible in large states and problematic in small ones, so there is a need for popular representation. According to the thinker, elected representatives are the ones who can best conduct discussions on public issues. In this case, representative assemblies should not be convened to make decisions or take active action, tasks they cannot handle, but to create new laws or monitor compliance with those already adopted. Another group of thinkers, obsessed with the protection of individual freedoms, developed a framework of parliamentarism as an alternative to Montesquieu's separation of powers, from Burke to Weber, some of whom

were often parliamentarians themselves, preferring a central and powerful representative assembly to a system of checks and balances (Plassart, 2021).

For centuries, parliament has been the central European political institution for expressing dissent and holding debates between citizens' representatives in a spirit of fair play, while the modern parliament controls the government and bureaucracy, and claims the right to make unquestioned sovereign decisions (Ihalainen et al., 2016). The role of the parliament in the state system of the Republic of Azerbaijan is assessed from various historical, legal, and political perspectives, and in general, it is assigned a special role in the process of state-building. However, in order to fully understand the place of the Azerbaijani parliament in society and its role in public administration, it is necessary to consider the development of the country's parliamentarism.

Azerbaijan's parliamentarism is not limited to a single constitutional provision. The history of real parliamentarism in the Republic of Azerbaijan is much broader than the parliamentarism defined by constitutional norms. The history of parliamentarism in Azerbaijan does not go back several centuries, as in a number of European countries, but has been enriched by its national characteristics and political diversity during the twentieth century. At the present stage, European countries are experiencing the following processes of interaction between the legislative and executive branches of government: the executive takes on a dominant role in lawmaking, which is why parliaments are increasingly marginalised (Griglio, 2020).

The emergence of the tradition of national parliamentarism and its comprehensive formation, such as statehood and patriotism, can be traced back to the early twentieth century. Parliaments operating in European countries are the epicentres of European democracies, where policies are discussed and potentially shaped (Kiss & Sebók, 2022; Palieieva et al., 2022). The parliaments that were elected and established in Azerbaijan have gone through a somewhat different path of formation compared to other countries and have managed to occupy a special place among Muslim states. Having formed and benefited from its historical experience, the Azerbaijani parliament was able to strengthen its influence in terms of integration with the parliaments of other countries. Despite the fact that Azerbaijani parliamentarism emerged in the historical dimension, it would be wrong to

assume that it was created without a well-thought-out strategy. Certainly, it is not worth talking about the real independence of the legislative and representative body that existed in the Soviet period, during which the country's party-state elite resolved all important issues, "bourgeois parliamentarism" was rejected, and such values as Western democracy and the theory of the separation of powers were denied. At the same time, the principles of the modern state and law, especially the principle of historicity, direct the study of any problem in the period of its development.

After the end of the Civil War and the transition to a new economic policy, a new stage in Soviet state-building began. During the Civil War, relations between the Soviet republics took the form of a military alliance, which was later supplemented by an economic union, bringing them closer together and leading to the need to create a single state. On 30 December 1922, a congress of representatives of the Soviet republics - the RSFSR, Ukraine, Belarus, and the Transcaucasian Federation (consisting of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, and Abkhazia) - approved the Declaration and Treaty on the Establishment of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The main provisions of the Constitution of the RSFSR were based on the Constitution of the Union State of 1924. The Congress of Soviets of the USSR, which convened once a year, and from 1927 - once every two years, was proclaimed the supreme authority; in the period between the congresses, the Central Executive Committee of the USSR met three times a year.

Delegates to the Congresses of Soviets of the USSR regularly listened to reports from the government and People's Commissariats and made decisions on issues of socialist construction, such as industrialisation, collectivisation, tasks from the five-year plans, and the development of Soviet legislation. From the early 1930s, a specific procedure was established at the sessions of the Central Executive Committee: the deputies approved resolutions adopted by the Presidium without discussion. The composition of the delegates to the congresses was systematically renewed, which allowed for the involvement of workers' representatives in the activities of the highest authorities (Rahimli, 2021). However, this practice also had a downside - weak continuity. The Congresses of soviets were short-term representative institutions, and each Congress of soviets adopted its own rules of procedure. The work of the congresses was open and widely

covered in the press. The congresses were convened for 1-3 days and were more like the Zemsky Sobors of the Moscow state. Real power was increasingly concentrated in the top party-state apparatus, which increasingly controlled the process of forming the congresses of the Soviets and its bodies. In fact, however, the Supreme Soviet of the USSR was both a facade and a pseudo-parliament, often appealing to popular sovereignty (Sablin, 2020).

A brief history of the importance of parliament in the system of state bodies shows that the Republic of Azerbaijan has some experience in studying the basic principles of parliamentarism and a number of special issues. Thus, during the Soviet period, Azerbaijan and other Soviet republics partially took into account the peculiarities of modern parliamentarism, and stabilised traditions related to such issues as the functioning of collegial legislative bodies, the organisation of their work, the legislative process, and others. Despite the fact that a class approach to political and legal issues was mandatory, one cannot dismiss all studies of the constitutional order and law of this period based on ideological considerations alone.

The proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan on 28 May 1918 was a significant event in world history. For the first time in the practice of the Muslim East, a republic was established and the foundation of parliamentarism was laid based on a multi-party system and pluralism of political positions: a wide range of political currents was represented in the Parliament, which was reflected in the formation of eleven parliamentary factions.

The contemporary public consciousness is awakening a deep interest in the true history of Azerbaijan, in understanding the most difficult, full of heroism, but also drama and irreparable losses, the time when the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic functioned, despite the fact that it existed for only 23 months - from 28 May 1918 to 27 April 1920, but its influence on the future fate of the Azerbaijani people is undeniable. A new stage began - the national revival and the formation of the national statehood of the Azerbaijani people. For the first time in the history of the Muslim world, a republic emerged whose state structures influenced the development of republican ideas and democratic movements in the countries of the East. The Parliament of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the legislation regulating its activities carry out their functions in accordance with the requirements, goals, and objectives of a democratic state with

the rule of law. It is impossible to create a modern institution of parliamentarism and determine its further development without analysing the activities of representative, advisory, and legislative bodies that previously operated in Azerbaijan and the norms that regulated these activities. In addition, as Palonen (2020) correctly notes, parliaments themselves form their own concepts based on debates, decisions, precedents, and agreements collected in the Rules of Procedure and procedural commentaries.

Until recently, however, the history of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic and its development in 1918-1920 have been interpreted one-sidedly, with no attempts to understand the positions of various political parties and movements of that period, to assess the activities of the parliament and government impartially, or to identify those features of historical experience that had a positive impact on the development of the republic and are therefore valuable and applicable at the present stage of state-building in sovereign Azerbaijan. Recreating in full the dramatic and at the same time significant page of national history became possible only with the restoration of the independence of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Hence, the results obtained indicate that parliamentarism in Azerbaijan is not only a reflection of one constitutional provision but has deep historical roots. The results emphasise that the proclamation of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan in 1918 was defined as an important event in world history, as it was the first emergence of a republic in the Muslim East. During this period, the foundations for parliamentarism based on the multi-party system and pluralism of political positions were laid. Modern scholars agree with these statements, in particular Norden (2021) and Christiansen et al. (2021). A wide range of political currents was represented in the Parliament, which demonstrates the diversity and openness of the political process. The eleven parliamentary factions mentioned in the results indicate that there was a diversity of ideologies and views in the political life of the country. The results confirm the opinion of Ceyhun qızı Qasimova (2021) that the current interest in the history of Azerbaijan, in particular in the period of the existence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, indicates a desire to understand the difficult moments of national revival and the formation of national statehood. Despite the fact that the republic existed for only 23 months, its influence on the further development of the

Azerbaijani people is recognised as extremely important, which is also confirmed in the study by Gurbanalieva (2021) and Ismayilova et al. (2022).

It is worth agreeing with Norden (2021) that parliamentarism, its history, and development depended on a number of internal and external factors in a particular state. Thus, the success of democratic transformation in a particular region had different reasons: a) whether the country had democratic experience in its past; b) the conditions for the political and economic development of this country to develop representative institutions in the future; c) the importance of parties in the development and adoption of political decisions.

The results of the study do not contradict the opinion of Kaya (2022), who notes that many explanations and interpretations of the origin, history, and nature of the separation of powers doctrine indicate that the democratic value of the parliamentary system of government is high. According to the scholar, the incentives created by the parliamentary system can undermine democracy, as well as strengthen the mechanism of checks and balances between different branches of government. In addition, the study notes that modern parliamentary systems are undergoing changes, which are described in more detail in Almoatasm (2020), first, at the present stage, there is a need to introduce appropriate amendments to the constitutions to enable parliaments to play a more effective and influential role, taking into account the historical experience of parliamentary practice in a particular country; and second, the internal rules of procedure of the parliament of democratic states should respond to the moods and aspirations of the parliament and its members, providing adequate coverage for the implementation of new.

However, the findings somewhat contradict Christiansen et al. (2021), who argue that the study of parliaments tends to focus on the activities of elected members or individual political parties, as well as the formal procedures and informal arrangements that govern their interactions with each other, as well as with governments, interest groups, or citizens. Instead, we believe that there is research that is already expanding the study of parliaments to include aspects of governance that go beyond the activities of elected members and political parties. For example, some studies may examine parliamentary engagement with civil society, the role of committees in policy-making, or the

impact of parliamentary decisions on socio-economic development (Mineur, 2020).

Thus, the scientific novelty of this study is a comprehensive study and comparison of the parliamentary practice of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in the early 20th century and modern legislatures. An important aspect is to determine the impact of those times on the development of democracy and the formation of modern institutions. The results of the study reveal similarities and differences in the structure and functioning of parliamentary bodies. The knowledge gained can serve as a basis for further research in the field of parliamentarism and democracy development. The recommendations based on the analysis can be used to improve parliamentary practice in the current context. Therefore, this study is important in the context of understanding the evolution of parliamentary systems and contributes to the improvement of democratic institutions both nationally and internationally.

However, like any study, this paper has certain limitations, in particular, not all historical documents may be taken into account, as access to them may be limited. This may affect the completeness and accuracy of the historical analysis. There are also language limitations. The focus is on sources available in Russian, Azerbaijani, and English. This may lead to the omission of some contextual details. Despite these limitations, the study aims to provide an objective and comprehensive analysis of the parliamentary practices of the Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan and compare them with modern legislative systems in order to draw important lessons and conclusions.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this study underscores the pivotal role of historical analysis in comprehending the evolution of parliamentarism, shedding light on its emergence, traditions, and enduring impact. The investigation of parliamentary practices in the Republic of Azerbaijan, juxtaposed with international counterparts, employs a historical lens to unveil the intricacies of this institutional development. By delving into the historical necessity that shaped parliamentary traditions, the study constructs a nuanced narrative, enriching our understanding of the national parliament's trajectory. The findings convincingly demonstrate that the influence of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic transcends its brief existence, leaving an indelible mark on the national resurgence and the formation of

statehood. Furthermore, the study highlights the global ramifications of the Democratic Republic's activities, contributing to republican ideals and democratic movements in Eastern countries during that era.

Hence, the scientific novelty lies in the comprehensive examination and comparison of parliamentary practices between the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic in the early 20th century and contemporary legislatures. The study probes into the impact of historical events on democracy's development and the formation of modern institutional frameworks. Revealing both similarities and differences in parliamentary structures and functions, this research provides foundational knowledge for future inquiries into parliamentarism and democratic evolution.

Despite these contributions, it is essential to acknowledge the study's limitations. Access constraints to historical documents may hinder the completeness and accuracy of the historical analysis. Additionally, language limitations focusing on Russian, Azerbaijani, and English sources could lead to contextual omissions. Nonetheless, these limitations are inherent in any study, and this research remains an invaluable resource for understanding the evolution of parliamentary systems. The insights derived from this study have practical applications, offering recommendations to enhance contemporary parliamentary practices on both national and international levels, thus reinforcing its significance in advancing democratic institutions.

In essence, this study stands as a beacon illuminating the historical foundations of parliamentary systems, with particular focus on the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic. Through its insightful comparisons and comprehensive analysis, it not only enriches our understanding of the evolution of democracy but also provides practical recommendations for improving contemporary parliamentary practices.

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