

# Ideological Aspects of the Activities of Political Parties (Asian countries cases)

**Bekzod Najmiddinov**

Researcher of National University of Uzbekistan

**Abstract:** This article analyzes influence of the ideological aspects of the activities of political parties in the political life of leading Asian countries such as China and Japan, and the role of political parties at the social and economic development of this countries.

**Keywords:** ideological aspect, political party, political activity, leading Asian countries, social and economic development, The Chinese Communist Party, The Japan Liberal Democratic Party.

Talking about the problematic situations in the activities of the leading political parties of developed countries and the mechanisms for their solution, first of all, it is crucial to understand the issues that arise in this process, as well as the role of those political parties. In other words, it is important to study the existing experience of the leading political parties in addressing the problems faced while carrying out their functions.

The events of the second half of the 1980s and the 1990s have shown that the emergence of major problems in **the ideological aspects** in the activities of the political parties might lead to quite serious consequences. As is known, in the early 1980s, communist parties were active in all developed countries, and used to be improved structures possessing their own electorate and foundation in society. For about 10 years, most of them split up and changed their ideas and programs, as well as their names, so that many of those parties were politically forgotten. Thus, the whole world witnessed the decline of communist parties, especially those operating in European countries (Kubata, 2010), the diversity of ideas and views on the ideological front played a decisive role in the subsequent destiny of the parties although those parties were organizationally strong.

However, the above statements do not apply to the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This is because the leaders of the CCP, realizing the need to reorganize the party in the late 70s and early 80s of the twentieth century and to change its ideological core to a certain extent, took appropriate measures in this regard, so that the actions were reflected in the activities of society and the state in turn. Surely, these changes are associated with Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997), the party leader, who initiated so-called “Chinese Interpretation of Socialism”, which envisages large-scale economic and social reforms to address the problems in the party’s activities and the country as a whole (Lan and Yining, 2010).

Deng Xiaoping overturned the wrong approaches in the Chinese Communist Party, such as the “Great Leap Forward” (1958-1961) and the “Cultural Revolution” (1966-1976) implemented during Mao Zedong’s (1893-1976) leadership which lasted for more than 30 years (Stavrov, 2015).

Even during D. Xiaoping’s leadership (1976-1989), the Chinese Communist Party maintained monopolistic control over the life of the entire country.

At the 1978 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party, “Four Modernizations” Program was announced, which envisaged large-scale reforms. The program, put forward by D. Xiaoping, included reforms in industry, agriculture, science and technology, and the military of the country. Unlike Mao Zedong’s propaganda-based party programs, D. Xiaoping’s program was directly focused on addressing the problems in the country (Isaev, 2020, pp. 350-359).

At the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CCP in 1987, a major three-stage program for building a socialist society in the country was adopted, and this program is now on the verge of full-scale implementation.

The period of Xiaoping’s leadership in the CCP can be described as a period of transition from communist totalitarianism to party authoritarianism, and a number of changes which took place in the life of the party are worth mentioning. In particular, since that time the CCP has stopped fully controlling all spheres of society: there is a private economy, civil society is emerging, albeit very slowly, and party control over science, education and culture has been partially removed.

The CCP, which quickly drew conclusions from the decline of communist parties in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress in 1992 abandoned ideological restrictions, stopped debating over the capitalist or socialist nature of the party and nationwide reforms, and decided to start to study and practice developed countries' experience boldly. As a result, by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a number of ideological, organizational and structural reforms were implemented in the CCP.

Firstly, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism were reduced to three-quarters, leaving only a quarter of them.

Secondly, the Advisory Commission, which was a unique social link in the party structure and approached the reforms in a conservative spirit, was disbanded. The composition of the party's Central Council was changed by 47% and the Political Bureau by 72%, and party leaders with old views and approaches were replaced by technocrats, scientists and spiritually ready personnel for new reforms.

Thirdly, a mechanism was created to implement party leadership through institutional improvement rather than through charismatic leadership efforts. It was not only a mechanism for party management, but also a political mechanism for public administration, a practical expression of the principle of succession, which ensured the continuity of state and party policy and provided for a change of power within the party elite.

Another problematic situation in the activities of political parties is **the prolongation of the ruling parties.**

As is known in democratic countries, the occasional aspiration of political parties in opposition to the government to gain the trust of the electorate and get their votes is an effective means of ensuring a transparent electoral system, multiparty system and democracy. After the changes caused by the defeat and lost in the elections, political parties will further democratize their views, modernize their programs and prepare for future elections and for a new "campaign" for taking the power. Victories and defeats in the activities of political parties, cycles of governance and opposition have a positive impact on the political "health" of parties and create the basis for "normal" changes in them. In developed countries, political parties that lose elections or get relatively fewer votes will go to the polls as soon as the current election is over, and this will certainly pay off.

A long stay in power will not go unnoticed. If parties do not lose voters' confidence for decades and keep winning the elections in a row and the process of change and renewal comes to a standstill, this will signal the beginning of certain stagnation in the activities of these structures. Such a cycle often ends with "abnormal" changes and can be observed in the activities of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan and the Christian Democratic Party of Italy. These structures were the largest political parties in their countries and even though they were consistently recognized as "winning parties" from the 1950s to the early 1990s, their activities lacked the focus on the public interest, which caused the voter distrust, and consequently, they faced organizational problems.

**The Japan Liberal Democratic Party (JLDP)** was formed in 1955 by a merger of two political parties, the Liberal and the Democratic Parties, and unites the middle class and the rich, intellectuals and large corporations representing conservative views in Japanese society.

The fact that the JLDP has not formed a single ideology is also considered as one of the party issues by critics. Nevertheless, the party recognizes the following directions among the program goals and objectives:

- rapid development of export-based economy;
- extensive cooperation with the USA;
- reducing the impact of the bureaucratic system;
- continuous implementation of tax reforms, etc. (Senatorov and Tsvetova, 2006).

Among the main conceptual documents of the party is the "Declaration" adopted in 1995. This document ensures the following three principles of the party's activities:

1. The party relies on liberalism in its activities.

2. JLDP is an open, democratic party, which focuses its efforts on large-scale reforms in the country.

3. The party contributes to peace and stability, development and environmental protection (Streltsov, 2013, pp. 259).

The Liberal Democratic Party of Japan relies on genuine liberal-democratic values, such as the protection of human rights, support for the principles of a market economy and the rational use of public resources to ensure social stability.

The party advocates amending the country's constitution, implementing a relatively compact government project, and increasing the country's international competitiveness as a solution to a number of problems that have arisen in Japan at the present stage (Streltsov, 2013, pp. 259).

It should be noted that JLDP facing some internal party problems in the implementation of the goals and objectives of the party. **One such problem** is the formation of several groups within the party and the fact that the party's MPs in the country's parliament have formed several groups or in scientific term this is called **division into several factions**. Such negative situations are common phenomenon in the activities of political parties, this mostly happens when party leaders or progressive members have got different attitudes and approaches to specific goals and objectives, and suggest various ways of implementing relevant projects and solving faced problems.

The internal groups, i.e. factions, in the JLDP are informal structures; the legal basis for their activities is not defined in any party documents. However, it is known that at different periods there were from 5 to 12 factions in the party, led by experienced and influential, as well as skilled politicians with long party experience.

In the example of the JLDP, it is possible to witness a number of such cases. Focusing on the fact that the government in Japan has been changing several times in a short period of time since the 1990s, it can be seen that the post of Prime Minister has been passed from one person to another among JLDP leaders. In particular, based on the results of the parliamentary elections held in August, 1993, the JLDP got the majority votes, but a new government was formed due to the merger of several opposing parties, and Morihiro Hosokawa, a former member of the JLDP who had to leave the party due to differences of opinion and the leader of newly formed party called "Japan New Party", became Prime Minister. M. Hosokawa served as Prime Minister until April 1994, when he had to resign due to problems in the coalition. After that, even though in June 1994, JLDP managed to return to the government in a coalition with other parties, Tomiichi Murayama, the leader of the Japanese Socialist Party, took over as Prime Minister. As a result of the parliamentary elections held in January 1996, the JLDP returned to government due to majority members in the parliament, and since then the party has been playing an active role in the life of the country (Krauss and Pekkanen, 2010).

Although the current leader of the JLDP and the country's Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga (since September 2020) is also an experienced politician, it is no exaggeration to say that his predecessor Shinzo Abe was able to fully demonstrate his leadership skills in both party and government activities. After a short period of leadership in the party and serving as Prime Minister in 2006-2007, S. Abe was re-elected to the leadership of the JLDP in September 2012, and in the parliamentary elections held in December of that year, the party was able to form a government with an absolute majority and S. Abe became the country's prime minister once more. Unlike his predecessors, S. Abe tried to cooperate closely with several groups (factions) within the party, trying to take into account the views of all, and acting as a real manager in the party, which allowed him to remain as a party leader and to hold the post of Prime minister for longer period of time.

At first glance, factionalism in the JLDP can be interpreted as a factor that hinders the party's activities and leads to the disintegration of the party. However, the ability of leaders of internal party groups or factions to negotiate on a particular issue, the ability to agree and compromise when it is required, as well as continuous changes in party leadership allows the Japanese society and the world community to understand that constant changes and reforms are taking place in the JLDP and new leaders are initiating new ideas. As a result of mutual competition in the JLDP, the internal groups i.e. factions can influence the party's idea, the party's activities, and thus they manage to reflect their views and positions in the activities of the parliament and government of the country.

It should also be noted that in Japan, where development is booming, there is no case of providing four or five years and waiting for any leader of the leading party or the Prime Minister to achieve the goals and objectives of his pre-election program. Apart from the famous leaders of JLDP J. Koizumi and S. Abe, such situation can be observed in the activities of all the leaders of the party (politicians who held the post of Prime Minister of the country at the same time) at present stage, and in these cases their leadership of the party and work as the Prime Minister lasted an average of one and a half year. This shows that voters are constantly monitoring the activities of particular leaders whether they achieve their program goals and objectives, and if they fail to fulfill their duties, after a certain period of time the voters demand the resignation of that leader.

Summing up the above-mentioned opinions about the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, it can be said that the party is a leading socio-political force that reflects the views and opinions of the majority in Japanese society, as well as working for their interests of the people.

Above we tried to analyze the activities of the leading political parties in China and Japan, which are considered to be developed countries in Asian region and rank first and second in Asia in terms of their GDP. This reveals that in complicated circumstances of both countries, a reliable and consistent action can guarantee success to the parties and at the governmental level it could be effective in a certain area of domestic policy.

## Conclusion

The major ideological problems that political parties face and the party's attitude, position and measures in response to these problems are of utmost importance. It is well known that the inaction of the party and the indifferent attitude of the party administration in such cases might cause serious consequences. The approach and reformist position of the Chinese Communist Party in such situations is noteworthy, and this situation has led to the implementation of a number of efforts that have given further impetus to the future activities of the party. These successful reforms have had a positive impact on the party's image in the eyes of both the Chinese people and the world community.

It can be said that the fact that the Chinese Communist Party changed its ideological, organizational and party views in accordance with the requirements of the time and period has given a new impulse to the further activities of the party. The major reforms that began in the CCP at the end of the twentieth century, although not clearly noticeable, are still going on. "The Fifth Generation" of party leaders have been running the country, genuinely preserving the party's ideology and the views of their predecessors. In the future, we can expect a new generation of leaders in the CCP, and it should be noted that the practice of making changes within the party has been institutionalized, that is, it has been tested in practice and was turned into a legal norm and accepted by all party leaders.

The foundation and activity of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan as an important leading political force in the re-establishment of Japan as a developed country after being defeated in World War II is worth mentioning.

While studying the experience of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, special attention should be paid to the experience of this political structure in working with each voter, achieving consensus within groups to maintain internal party balance and changing the party administration in order to update and enhance the party's image.

The success of the JLDP is due to the fact that it takes a serious approach to a particular issue or problem, prepares for each political event thoroughly and for a long time, as well as it possesses a unique strategy based on traditions and applies appropriate tactical actions in party activities.

While studying the experience of the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, special attention should be paid to the experience of this political structure in working with each voter, achieving **consensus** within groups to maintain internal party balance and changing the party administration in order to update and enhance the party's image.

In this regard, it is recommended that the Movement of Entrepreneurs and Businessmen – The Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan should establish and develop close relations with the Liberal Democratic Party of Japan, as well as to study thoroughly and introduce the experience of JLDP in its activities.

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