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**Politics and Law-Making under Contemporary Parliamentarism
(St. Petersburg Legislative Assembly case study)**

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Abstract from Ph.D. thesis in Political Science

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Relevance

Achievement of political stability within the purpose of national development is inherent to the current phase of the development of Russia's society and political institutes. Generally, political stability is opposed to political struggle in the context of quest for a compromise and consensus in various dimensions. The discourse of political struggle continues to be associated with the communist ideology and works of its founders. The approach to and interpretation of political stability as an alternative to political struggle, that are quite popular in the modern political science, eventually lead to weakness and ambiguity of political positions of stakeholders and political parties with regard to multiple fundamental issues of ruling and governance. Abandonment of political struggle for political stability promotes favourable conditions for the processes that render the Russian political system ossified and incapable for development.

The political discourse of modern political science, with rare exceptions, lacks theoretical political analysis of the concept of political struggle. This term is used as self-explanatory, applicable to all areas of social life and flexible, although outdated, obsolete and more suitable for historical research and understanding of the past rather than contemporary political events. At the same time, the need for a more thorough understanding of the nature of political struggle is related to a set of key concepts to which it correlates somehow: interaction, rivalry, confrontation, violence, cooperation, domination, subordination, stability, etc.

Political struggle acquires a special meaning in the system of representative authority. The latter is primarily associated with parliamentarism, its nature and institutional development. In the modern world, parliamentarism is a key feature and institution of statehood intended to guarantee the legitimacy of authority. In a parliamentary environment, political struggle acquires a new quality, and its features differ essentially from those of non-parliamentary forms.

Russia is a state of federate nature that features a proper organizational structure of governance. Regional parliaments contribute to the processes of implementation of the political regimes existing in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and influence considerably the specifics of political struggle processes in Russian regions. Within the Russian system of public authority, regional parliamentarism plays an important role that is not limited to the traditional "checks and balances" formula. In regional parliamentarism, the forms and content of political struggle reflect the entire complexity of the configuration of political forces and political willpower of the governing entities, the underlying concepts of the process of implementation of various policies of Russian government combined with the substantiation of the claims to power raised by political parties. Abandonment of analysis of political struggle as a component of modern Russian parliamentarism is likely to lead to increased opacity of the current political processes and, accordingly, lower transparency and publicity of the ruling government, rather than to dissolution and/or pacification of the standing of the political stakeholders. Exploration of political struggle, its forms and hidden flows in a modern regional parliament is as relevant as the expressions and arguments supporting the views

and priorities of the key actors of political life in modern Russia are relevant to citizens.

Object and subject of the study

The object of this study is political struggle in regional parliamentary activity.

The subject of this study includes the forms of political opposition, neutrality and quest for compromise in the legislative efforts of the participants of the processes related to implementation of the principles of modern regional parliamentarism as they are realized in the proceedings of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly.

Problem exploration extent

The importance of exploration of modern Russian parliamentarism in the regional context is out of question. Political struggle among deputies as well their alliances and groups formed for achievement of their own goals concurrently with stabilization of the Russian political system constitutes one of the dimensions of this process.

Overall methodological foundations for struggle study, including political struggle, can be found in the works of such ancient authors as Heraclitus, Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch, Polybius, Augustin, etc.

In the early modern age, interpretation of political struggle can be found in the works of such philosophers and historians as T. Hobbes, J. Locke, I. Kant, J. Fichte, G.W.F. Hegel, F. Guizot, etc.

The works of K. Marx, F. Engels and later V. Lenin are imbued with the concept of class struggle and constitute the start of an entirely new approach to understanding of politics and the goals of struggle between social groups and classes.

The ideologists of Social Darwinism, L. Gumplowicz and G. Ratzenhofer took the role of an alternative to Marxists, yet were unable to offer another interpretation of a significance that would be comparable to their ideas and doctrine.

A concept of conflict that is more limited than the concept valid struggle of classes and social groups becomes the focus of the works of G. Simmel, L. Coser, R. Dahrendorf, T. Parsons and N. Luhmann.

Political struggle acquires fundamental importance in the concepts and studies of C. Schmitt, C. Mouffe, E. Laclau, C. Tilly, A. Zimichev and B. Kapustin.

The thesis of A. Borsch is dedicated to the problem of political struggle and national security in Russia. An alternative approach to the relation between politics and political struggle is shaped in deliberative democracy theories.

In the history of political thought, the problems of parliamentarism, authority segregation, representative government and the related forms of struggle, opposition, neutrality, communications, agreements reached and compromise solutions defined therein are explored in the works of such thinkers as B. Spinoza, E. Burke, J. Locke, C. Montesquieu, J. J. Rousseau, I. Kant, A. A. Tocqueville, J. Madison, J.S. Mill, G.W. Hegel, K. Marx, G. Le Bon, M. Weber, G. Mosca, etc.

Russian pre-revolution thinkers, including B. Chicherin, S. Kotlyarevsky, I. Ilyin, M. Kovalevsky, N. Korkunov, etc., contributed significantly to parliamentary studies.

The development of Western parliamentarism and problems of political process implementation and management in the parliament as one of the key democratic institutions are discussed in the works of such authors as F. Ankersmit, M. Bernard, E. Bernays, B. Manin, P. Manow, N. Urbinati, J. Habermas, C. Schmitt, J. Schumpeter, etc. Parliamentarism is the focus of attention and studies of numerous Western authors that cannot be fully listed herein. Among the studies and publications of Russian authors there are some successful reviews and summaries of the outcomes of such studies; specifically, the works of V. Achkasov, O. Gaman-Golutvina, B. Gryzlov, A. Korneva, I. Plyais, etc., are dedicated to analysis of Western democracy institutions.

Detailed analysis of representative government and its features is offered in the encyclopaedic reviews by S. Dovi, J. Thompson, D. Kertzer, etc.

The development of modern Russian parliamentarism has been studied quite intensively and productively since the early nineties. Considerable attention in these studies has been paid to regional parliaments. Political processes related to political struggle have become the focus of research conducted by such authors as G. Golosov, V. Gelman, D. Goncharov, A. Linetsky, V. Kolesnikov, S. Predybailov, S. Rybakova, E. Trofimov, N. Filippova, etc.

The Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly has become the subject of research in a series of monographs and academic papers of such authors as V. Gelman, M. Gorny, A. Sungurov, A. Shishlov, V. Zarubin, L. Smorgunov, M. Kurzhiyamsky, S. Isaev, etc.

The thesis of D. Shevchenko is dedicated to the inception of the legislative assembly. The thesis of S. Artiushin explores the Legislative assembly coalitions. The thesis of A. Semenova studying the image of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly also deserves attention.

It is impossible to state that the existing papers exhaust the entire scope of exploration of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly. It is worth noting, although, that the tendency towards identification of stability factors in parliaments shifts the problem of political struggle in its modern formats towards the periphery. The ideas of a number of political scientists that the problem of political struggle disappears from the research horizon and that political struggle is nothing but a historical vestige of the period of building socialism have become common. Therefore, the declared subject requires a separate and more scrupulous and profound analysis within the problematic area of Russian political science studies.

Trial hypothesis.

Although political struggle has been disappearing from the vocabulary of politics and political scientists, it features an objective nature and is manifested both at the federal and regional level. Political struggle has a complex “organic” (integrated, systematic, “live”) structure and is an inherent quality (property, attribute) of the Russian version of the representative form of government. In a regional parliament,

political struggle reflects the actual conflict of interests of social groups and discloses to the electorate the picture and structure of the political reality of a federal entity. The actual status of a regional political continuum is defined by the phase and amplitude of the influence of inter-regional political struggle that constitutes an important and fundamental component within the context of the established political system in the Russian Federation. Attempts to silence the existing controversies and ignore the manifestations of daily political struggle in a regional parliament brings such struggle beyond the boundaries of legitimate political representation, which impairs the status and intensity of manifestation of constructive intentions of public opinion and political actors' ability to look for and identify trade-off solutions.

Scope of the study – to identify the structure, ways and forms of political struggle manifestation in a regional parliament, to conduct an analysis of the relation between political struggle and stabilizing intentions of parliamentarism in the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly, to identify the best practices and, where possible, to comprehend the failures and negative examples of legislative regulation of political struggle in representative bodies of federal cities of the Russian Federation for better control of these processes through development of best practices and improvement of the quality of the existing legal framework regulating the activities of the representative (legislative) authority of Saint Petersburg as a federal city.

The goal of the thesis work stipulated the following **research tasks**:

1. To identify the historical and methodological framework for political struggle studies.
2. To define the relation between the concept of political struggle and conceptual framework of parliamentarism.
3. To demonstrate the development patterns of new forms of political struggle and regional parliamentarism in Russia.
4. To explore the specific features of political struggle manifestation in the legislative process of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly and the key elements of factional conflicts in the work process of the members of parliament.
5. To identify the determinants of struggle for leadership and authoritative status in the political space of a regional legislative authority.
6. To compare the best practices of legislative regulation of political struggle in representative bodies of Russia's federal cities for the purpose of improvement of the legislative framework of the activities of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly.

General and ad hoc approaches and tools were used in this research. The logic of presentation is based on the top-down approach. For task setting and validation of conclusions system and historical approaches are used. A set of political science approaches and tools is required for defining and evaluating the opposing forces involved in regional political struggle. In the diagnosis of the interests of political stakeholders applied methods were used, including the comparative, combinatorial

and analytical techniques. Sociological approaches were applied for the synthesis of empirical data.

Academic novelty.

The academic novelty consists in a systemic research of the content and structure of political struggle in Russian parliamentarism in the case of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly.

- The key elements of the concept of political struggle have been identified and its original definition has been proposed.
- The key dimensions of political struggle and its relation to representative government have been established to constitute a system and system quality relation.
- The author has demonstrated (and partially substantiated) that the development of new forms of political struggle within the scope of origin and development of Russian regional parliamentarism is and expedient and to a certain extent controlled, rather than a chaotic and subjective process.
- A complicated succession relation between the manifestations of the elements of primary race in the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly election campaigns and forms of deputy interaction in the course of subsequent collaboration in the legislative (representative) body of regional government.
- A systemic task for self-identification and personal fulfilment of political faction leaders of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly and the key threats in the struggle for leadership, leading position and authority have been defined.
- The best practices of legislative regulation of political struggle in representative authorities of federal cities of the Russian Federation have been identified, analysed and explored for applicability and rollout for the purpose of improvement of the legal framework of the activities of the Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly on the basis of political dialectics of stability and struggle.

Based on the findings, **the following theses are presented:**

1. The author views political struggle as the activity of group subjects related to definition and achievement of public goals through acquiring leadership position and authority. Content-wise, political struggle is divided into “pro” in which supporters of the declared goals are retained, “contra” in the conflict of opposed political forces, “struggle against” competitors for leadership in a legitimate political space.
2. Struggle for leadership is an integral component of political struggle in representative bodies. It should be considered in the context of inter-faction and intra-faction interactions. In its course, the ideological component is tested for relevance to the electorate goals. Struggle for leadership within the scope of operation of the principles of power balances is manifested in interaction between the legislative and other branches of power.

3. Political struggle essential to representative government. Representation of the people's will in a Legislative Assembly constitutes the area of struggle of the deputies for interpretation of view of political reality. In a parliament, political struggle follows its own laws, while parliamentarism constitutes a three-dimensional space of political struggle: A. Struggle for electorate in an election campaign; B. Struggle between Legislative Assembly factions for representation of a true political reality through enactment of a code of laws; C. Struggle for leadership and authority in the parliament and regional political space.
4. The content and forms of Saint Petersburg Legislative Assembly primary race for electorate have evolved significantly in three stages that correlate with three ideal types of parliamentarism: the classical parliamentarism, the party parliamentarism and the modern parliamentarism. At the first stage the struggle between charismatic individuals prevailed, at the second stage the struggle between party programs prevailed, and at the third stage the struggle between the leaders of political parties prevails. The evolution of the forms of political struggle was determined by the change of the types of electoral systems. The modern form of political struggle for electorate consists in representing through key political programs a view of political reality that would combine analysis of the current problems of the citizens with appealing solutions and outstanding leaders bringing in new ideas.
5. Political struggle is the source of identity of political factions in a Legislative Assembly. Deputy roles shift from actor to subject in the struggle. The paradox and dialectics of political struggle for leadership in a Legislative Assembly consist in the fact that the victory in this process, i.e., struggle for leadership between individuals, undermines the institutional framework of the political structure within which the struggle takes place. In considering political struggle within the context of interaction between the ruling parties and the parties representing opposition, it is worth noting that the ruling parties mainly act as the proxies of state interests, while the opposition fractions and parties promote the interests of the citizens. Maintaining proper balance between these factions incites a fruitful political process. The victory of a leader or a faction means establishment of conditions for destruction of the platform for a bloodless political struggle. Only these conditions may ensure legitimacy and significance in the relations with the executive government. Whenever the executive government dominates in this struggle, the policy of the Legislative Assembly becomes less socially oriented, which impairs the legislation.
6. Considering the complicated and versatile nature of the object of this study, special attention should be paid to improvement of the legal framework regulating the interaction between the participants of political struggle. This research has identified five best practices set forth in the statutory instruments of Moscow, Sevastopol and the Moscow and Leningrad Oblast that could be

used for improvement of the legal framework regulating the Saint Petersburg parliament:

- 6.1. Procedure for early termination of powers of Chairperson of the legislative body of a federal entity – upon the initiative of one third of the members with “pro” votes of over a half of the members, provided that no less than two thirds of members have participated in the voting (the Sevastopol Legislative Assembly);
- 6.2. Application of the principle of proportionate representation of factions in the formation of parliamentary boards and committees (the Moscow Oblast Duma);
- 6.3. Plenary meeting participation procedure for political parties that are not represented in the parliament (the Sevastopol Legislative Assembly);
- 6.4. Ban on faction exit for members elected on party list basis (the Leningrad Oblast Legislative Assembly);
- 6.5. Mandatory personal attendance for participation in the voting, ban on transfer of votes (the Sevastopol Legislative Assembly, the Moscow Oblast Duma, the Leningrad Oblast Legislative Assembly).

The practical value of the findings consists in substantiation of legislative initiatives for improvement of the legal framework regulating political struggle in the Legislative Assembly of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation. In the possibility of issuance of training and methodological guidance on regional parliamentarism. This research may provide a blueprint for political analysis of regional parliamentary business. This research is relevant for preparation of election campaigns. Its results are useful for the system of civil education in the Russian Federation and professional training of parliament members. The results of the research substantiate proposals related to improvement of the efficiency of representative government within the scope of advanced investigation of the problem of parliamentary political struggle and parliamentary relations. This allows integration of the proposed theses into a holistic system of proposals combined together for the purpose of settling controversies in regional parliaments using the mechanisms of parliamentary struggle manifestation.

Evaluation of research results.

The key theses and conclusions of the research are stated in 6 publications in the dedicated journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Board under the Ministry of Science and Education of the Russian Federation. These publications are entirely in line with the topic of the research and disclose its key provisions.

1. Заикин А.А. Представительная демократия как пространство политической борьбы // Управленческое консультирование. – 2016. – № 3. – Р. 8-13. (0,4 p.s.).
2. Заикин А.А. Становление парламентаризма в контексте критики его природы // Управленческое консультирование. —2017. – № 8. — Р. 21-28. (0,5 p.s.).

3. Волков В.А., Заикин А.А. Политико-философские основания парламентаризма как института представительной демократии // Власть. – 2017. – № 7. – Р. 120-124. (0,15 p.s.).
4. Волков В.А., Заикин А.А. Исторические и логические основания структуры понятия политической борьбы // Власть. – 2018. – № 8. – Р. 198-204. (0,2 p.s.).
5. Заикин А.А. Особенности политической борьбы в процессе формирования регионального парламентаризма в современной России // Управленческое консультирование. —2018. – № 8(116). — Р. 116-122. (0,4 p.s.).
6. Заикин А.А. Политическая борьба как борьба за лидерство и власть // Управленческое консультирование. —2019. — № 7(127). – Р. 17-24. (0,5 p.s.).

Thesis structure

This Ph.D. thesis in Political Science reflects the logic of the solution of the tasks set therein and achievement of the declared goal. The thesis includes an introduction, three chapters composed of six paragraphs, a summary and a list of bibliographical references. The total volume of the thesis is 163 pages.