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# POLITICAL SCIENCE ISSUES

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The scientific journal is published since 2011 at the “Publishing House “Science Today”. Translated (eng.) version of the journal is published since 2016. Since its inception, the journal was guided by high scientific and ethical standards and today it is one of the leading political science journals in Russia.

The purpose of the journal is to promote scientific exchange and cooperation between Russian and foreign political scientists.

The journal is intended for the publication of the results of fundamental and applied scientific research. Thematic focus of the journal is reflected in the following permanent headings: “History and philosophy of politics,” “Political institutions, processes and technologies,” “Political regionalism and ethno-politics,” “Political culture and ideologies,” “Political problems of international relations and globalization.”

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## AFTERWORD TO THE ARTICLE BY M. L. LEBEDEVA “FRENCH REGIONAL POLITICAL SPACE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL CHARACTERISTICS” [6]

*The article under review analyzes theoretical and methodological problems associated with the regional political research within the subject field of political regionalism as an integral part of political science. The review highlights the importance of the article by M. L. Lebedeva “French regional political space: conceptual and theoretical characteristics” for comparative political science.*

**Key words:** *regional political space, the French model of management decentralization, theoretical and methodological problems, political regional studies.*

Over the past two decades, “Political regional studies” has been firmly established in Russia as a new direction of political science that comprehensively studies the problems of political regions. At the same time, many problems arose related to the definition and limitation of the subject field of political regionalism as a scientific and educational discipline.

As we have repeatedly emphasized in various monographs and textbooks, the problems of the territorial structure of society and the state are the subject of research in a number of sciences: political science, sociology, political geography, socio-economic geography, regional economy, etc. At the same time, one of the least developed aspects of the territorial structure of the society is socio-political, since Russian sociology and political science started to seriously develop the above issues only in recent years. We mean primarily the socio-territorial problems in the political context, both at the settlement, regional and state levels, as well as modern problems of decentralization, local self-government and federal structure.

The conceptual apparatus of political regionalism has been thoroughly clarified in recent years based on the current situation and for a clearer definition of the subject of political regionalism as a branch of political science. The phrase “political region” has become the key concept in the field of regional studies for most political scientists and politicians. In this context we should bear in mind that the arsenal of various researchers – geographers, economists, sociologists and ethnologists – includes such concepts as “economic region,” “socio-cultural region,” “ethnopolitical region,” etc.

At the same time, we understand the impossibility of absolute exclusion of the interrelations of political geography and political science, we should be guided by the concepts and terms of both scientific directions that are similar in their content. It should be stressed that the works of Russian authors published in recent years cover a wide range of issues in this subject area [1; 16; 3; 4; 5; 7; 9; 12; 13. Pp. 1029-1037; 14; 15. Pp. 19-32; 2].

However, the problem of regional political research cannot be called unambiguously exhausted. Due to many objective circumstances, the study of this topic continues to maintain a high level of relevance.

The research methods and interdisciplinary approach used by M. L. Lebedeva in her article "French regional political space: conceptual and theoretical characteristics" show both the positive aspects of combining the subject spaces of geography and political science, and some of its shortcomings.

For example, this is how the author of the article defines the content of the concept of "political region" based on the approaches of various scientists. "A political region (spatially organized or historically formed territorial community) has a certain level of political relations. At the same time, a number of authors consider political certainty as one of the characteristics of any region. Other authors consider it to be a feature of certain type regions. Third authors understand the region as a subject of politics, and, accordingly, the object of political analysis. "Being an active political unit, a political actor, the region becomes a subject of political regionalization, a level of political action, acts as a set of power institutions that have certain competencies within a certain territory of the state" [6].

And it is difficult to disagree with such author's definition. After all, for the modern states of the XXI century, along with many problems of socio-economic nature, the challenges associated with the transformation of its territorial and political structure become extremely urgent, and resolution of the problems of integrating regional political processes into the overall process of modern political life of the country is one of the most important tasks of stable and effective development of any state. In this regard, modern political regionalistics as a new scientific and educational discipline is becoming popular because it allows a systematic understanding of territorial political phenomena, a comprehensive and all-sided disclosure of the problems of regional political institutions and political processes in the regional dimension, it also allows us to take into account the international experience of regional development in the context of globalization on the example of CIS or EU member states. In addition, this approach helps to characterize in detail various models of unitary states and analyze modern models of federative states [8].

It seems to us that other definitions of the concept of political region and regional policy that are found in the scientific literature relate to other scientific areas and, above all, the subject of political geography and regional economy. It is no accident that the authors of these scientific disciplines use the terms "regional

economic policy" and "regional policy" as synonyms. As for political regionalism, it is one of the sections of general regionalism and one of the directions of political science, in this context it studies the socio-political and political-legal aspects of the regions and territorial communities [8].

When revealing the relationship between the political science and regionalism, it should be borne in mind that political regionalism is one of the new branches of political science. If we proceed from the fact that political science is defined as the science of politics, and politics is a diverse world of relations, activities, behavior, orientations, views and communication links between people about power and management of the society, and the concept of the region is defined as the territory of a country, several neighboring countries, part of the territory of one or more neighboring countries with more or less homogeneous natural, economic, socio-political and cultural conditions, then political regionalism is one of the areas of political science, and regional science that studies the problems of regional structure of the state and society, regional development and interregional cooperation, while paying special attention to the spatial forms of political phenomena, the dynamics of political processes and institutions in the regions, nature and the balance of political forces, originality of processes of formation of regional elites, the problems of interaction between the center and the periphery, as well as the reverse impact of the regional political environment on the state and society as a whole.

A few words about the object of political regionalism. If the object of study of general regionalism, as defined in the "Political encyclopedia," is "the region as an independent spatial-geographical, administrative-territorial, institutional-political, economic, social, historical-cultural, ethnic and demographic value" [10. P.333-334], the object of study of political regionalism is the regional state policy, the policy of the regions and the political sphere of regional communities.

At the same time, political regionalism, forming its subject, considers political processes and relations at several structural levels:

- at the level of a region comprising the territories of several states;
- at the level of a region comprising the territory of a single state;
- at the level of a region comprising the territory of a part of one or more states;
- at the level of the region that comprises the territory of one or more municipalities.

Depending on the appropriate level political regionalism changes the quantitative and qualitative characteristics and parameters of its subject of study [8].

Based on this, it should be emphasized that the subject of political regionalism is primarily related to the regularities of the formation and development of political power in the regions, the mutual influence of state policy on the region and regional policy on the state, as well as the regularities of the functioning of the political sphere of regional community life.

Of course, in this definition of the subject of political regionalism, it should be clarified that when we are talking about a region consisting of the territory of several states or parts of several states, we are talking about the regions of those states that are united in various political unions. A concrete example of this is the regions of the European Union or the Union of Belarus and Russia. This area is studied by foreign political science in the framework of “internal geopolitics”. Russian political regionalistics considers the political sphere of the regions as administratively managed territories that coincide with the borders of the republics, territories, regions, and autonomous districts (subjects of the Russian Federation), as well as with the borders of territories that are part of federal districts and interregional economic associations.

Often political regionalistics separately considers political institutions, political processes and relations in the regions that differ in socio-economic or ethnopolitical identity and homogeneity, but do not coincide with the administrative borders of the federal subjects. We are talking about such regions as the North Caucasus, the Far North, etc. The prospects of political regionalism as a separate scientific direction and academic discipline will be determined within the framework of the development of Russian regional studies as a whole and, of course, in conjunction with the development of domestic political science. For example, we have been forming a new scientific direction, ethnopolitical regionalism, for several years now.

Russian regionalistics, as most scientists emphasize, has been developing especially dynamically over the past decade and it is on the rise now, to a certain extent it is due to the fact that “during this period it took some revenge in those subject areas that were previously muted due to the obscurity or complete closeness of the subject itself – the problems of real federalism and real self-government, territorial asymmetries and regional depressions, regional finance and inter-budgetary relations, foreign economic regional activities and uncontrolled migration, etc. “Regionalistics in the coming period will begin to turn from interconnected, but still traditionally isolated areas of study of regional situations (law, geography, analysis of social relations, economics, political science, demography, ecology, etc.) into a single interdisciplinary branch of knowledge with an exceptionally high level of systematic approach.

In the future, regional studies will increasingly go deeper – to the level of small territorial entities, where the internal integrity and inherent systemicity of any regional environment (the relationship of space, settlement, economy, etc.) is most clearly manifested. Municipal (urban, rural, district) Russia, its problems and justifications for their solutions can become a huge and exceptionally fruitful field of the latest regional research” [11. Pp. 30-31].

Such an assessment of the state and prospects of the general regional studies can be attributed to the same extent to the development of problems of political regionalistics in both scientific and academic disciplines.



In conclusion, it should be emphasized that M. L. Lebedeva's article provides good material for comparative political studies. The author's conclusions about the decentralization of the French unitary state are particularly valuable since the 2020 constitutional amendments orient the future development of federalism in Russia towards further centralization.

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