

The principle aim of this paper is to analyse power relations focusing on the parliamentary procedure and the adoption of collective decisions in the Polish Republic of Nobles during the reign of the Vasa dynasty. The examination of the power structure emphasized four key questions within the political domain, namely the problem of relationships between particular institutional centers; the possibilities and extent of political participation; the part played by local assemblies in public opinion formation and the manner of final adoption of binding decisions.

The first of these questions entails the analysis of “the power triangle“; Monarch – Senate – Izba poselska, whose mutual balancing of political power led to the rightful denotation of the Polish state system as a monarchia mixta. The related problems of the extent of political participation is focused mainly on the principles which defined the borders of the politically legitimate community and on the disproportion between the formal equality of the nobility and the influence of its socio-economic status on the formation of the political decisions.

The third part of this paper includes the analysis of the regional level of the political decision-making with a view to the question of to what extent were the deputies of the central parliament obliged to follow the instructions of the local assemblies (sejmiks), which led to the tensions between regional interests and those of the state as a whole. This dilemma between respect for opinions of the regional deputies and the demand for “the fighting power“ of the parliamentary assembly is also analysed in the last part of this paper. This segment focuses on the consensual principles of the decision-making in the Polish political procedure and aims to prove that the successful use of the principle of unanimity (liberum veto) depended on the political culture and therefore the opposition to majority voting was not at all a functionless element.