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Губернаторские выборы: состоявшиеся предсказуемые результаты в региональном политическом контексте

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Аннотация. В статье проводится политический анализ состоявшихся в сентябре 2024 г. выборов губернатора Ставропольского края. Выявляются детерминанты политического содержания и организационных технологий выборов главы региона в широком политико-хронологическом и политико-событийном контексте. Особо акцентируются начальные амбивалентные факторы карьерного роста В.В. Владимирова как высшего должностного лица Ставрополья. Выделены ресурсные факторы В.В. Владимирова как действующего губернатора в конкуренции с другими кандидатами. Акцентируется административный ресурс, а также иные обстоятельства программтики и выборов в соотношении с социентальными потребностями населения края и общероссийскими политическими трендами

Ключевые слова: выборы, публичная власть, Ставропольский край, политическая доктрина, электоральный марафон, «разумный консерватизм»

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Research article

Gubernatorial elections: predictable results in the regional political context

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Abstract. The article provides a political analysis of the elections of the governor of the Stavropol Territory held in September 2024. The determinants of the political content and organizational technologies of the election of the head of the region in a broad political-chronological and political-event context are revealed. The initial ambivalent factors of V.V. Vladimirova's career growth as a top official of Stavropol are particularly emphasized. The resource factors of V.V. Vladimirova as the current governor in competition with other candidates are highlighted. The administrative resource is emphasized, as well as other properties of the head of the region in relation to the social needs of the region's population.

Keywords: elections, public power, Stavropol Territory, political doctrine, electoral marathon, "reasonable conservatism"

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Introduction. The spring and autumn political season of 2024 in the Russian Federation are marked by large electoral cycles - at the federal and regional levels. The main elections were the elections of the President of the Russian Federation in March 2024, which were won by the incumbent head of state V. Putin with 87.28% of the votes. The March elections of the head of state actually launched the elections of the highest officials in the regions of Russia - in 21 subjects, such elections were held by direct voting of residents of the voters. In 4 subjects, the heads of the subjects were elected by voting in parliaments, people's assemblies. The large electoral marathon of the spring and autumn of 2024 testified to a number of trends typical of public policy and the rotation of public authorities in modern Russia.

These trends were evident in Stavropol Krai (SK) during the gubernatorial elections, which in September 2024 marked the start of the third term of V. Vladimirov as the head of the region. They took place in a series of elections for the heads of a number of constituent entities of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus Federal District (SKFO). Thus, in September-October, the head of the Republic of Ingushetia (RI) - M.-A. Kalimatov, the head of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (KBR) - K. Kokov were re-elected for the next term [1, 2]. The competitive advantages of candidates for the highest positions in RI, KBR, SK were largely ensured by the opinion of the President of the Russian Federation, who supported the candidates from United Russia.

Despite the presence of candidates from other parties - from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, the Socialist Revolutionary Party of Russia, and New People, it was clear that the current heads of the regions would win. All three of these candidates have largely lived up to the expectations of the federal center over the past ten years, primarily in terms of responsibility to the head of state, personal contribution to the stabilization and development of the regions, and increased commitment of the population of the regions to the course of the President of the Russian Federation. This was evident in the presidential elections in March 2024, during which 95.7% of voters voted for V. Putin in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, 89.6% in the Republic of Ingushetia, and 84.9% in the North Caucasus [3].

The elections of the governor of the SK were distinguished by the preservation of the democratic procedure, namely voting for candidates on the basis of universal, equal and direct suffrage by secret ballot in accordance with the legislation of the region. At the same time, the heads of Ingushetia and Kabardino-Balkaria are elected by deputies of parliaments - people's assemblies of the subjects, which, in our opinion, reflects the specifics of the political and administrative situation in the republics. At the present stage, this probably does not imply universal equal and direct participation of residents of these regions in the elections of the head. In this sense, as it seems to us, the preservation of such in the SK favorably characterizes the internal political portrait of Stavropol, and also testifies to the high quality of relations between the state (regional) authorities and civil regional society.

Materials and research methods. In politically analyzing the successful participation of V. Vladimirov in the third gubernatorial campaign, we will pay attention to some competitive factors that, in general, make up the positive background and attractive image of the re-elected governor.

Research results and their discussion. Family, mental and cultural connection with the region. In accessible, including official public pages (the portal "North Caucasus", the TASS Special Project, the information project "This is the Caucasus", the magazine "Vestnik. North Caucasus", the newspaper "Moskovsky Komsomolets. Caucasus", the newspaper "Arguments and Facts. North Caucasus", the publishing house "Kommersant", the Portal of the authorities of the

Stavropol Territory, etc.) V. Vladimirov is presented as a person accustomed from childhood to the rules of rural life, agricultural, peasant labor and life. V. Vladimirov repeatedly emphasized his Stavropol and even Cossack origin, as well as his childhood and youth participation in agricultural work, at the apiary to help his grandmother and grandfather in the village - Kommunistichesky Mayak of the Kirovsky District, in Georgievsk, Budyonnovsk. He also singles out the historical, cultural and mental characteristics of Stavropol residents as southerners, as residents of the North Caucasus - a region with many positive, but also problematic qualities, which he treats with respect and sympathy. It is symbolic that, while working in many important positions in different northern regions far from the NC, he did not lose touch with his native land and planned to return to his "small homeland" in a new capacity as a competent, experienced worker striving for new, project-based forms of management.

Professional and personal involvement in the problems of the region. V. Vladimirov adheres to the need to find and implement accessible and reliable forms of dialogue not only with the management team, but also with the population. He is not an office manager, he strives to travel to different areas of the region, to be aware of the real situation in the economy, social sphere, as well as to understand the needs of the population and realistically assess the situation on the ground. As an economic manager, he pays special attention to the development of agriculture, which is the main direction of the economic complex of the SK. In this regard, it is natural that, having joined the State Council of the Russian Federation, after some time he headed the Commission on Agriculture. The governor also pays great attention to the specially protected ecological and resort region of the Caucasian Mineral Waters as the "highlight of Stavropol." The population of the region is impressed by his resourcefulness - the desire to modernize others, himself and the regional community. He is a dreamer in a certain sense and in the alternative between a crane and a titmouse he chooses the crane, trying to extend this choice to the search for ways and technologies to solve the problems of the region. The attractive side of V. Vladimirov's everyday life is his commitment to a healthy lifestyle, physical education and sports, the desire to maintain proper physical fitness, to work on himself not only professionally, but also physically and morally. Also, residents of the region approve of V. Vladimirov as the head of a large family, a faithful husband and father of four children.

Political eventfulness of the electoral process. The significance of the gubernatorial elections of September 2024 for the candidate - the current governor of the North Caucasus Federal District - was that V. Vladimirov has been in this post since 2014. The political eventfulness of V. Vladimirov's appointment is quite ordinary. In 2013, Russian President V.V. Putin appointed him the head of the region and, having been elected in 2014 under the slogan " **Time to choose Vladimirov** " (VVV), V. Vladimirov strengthened his role as the governor of a large subject of the Russian Federation, the North Caucasus Federal District - a district that is a complex region of the South of Russia in economic, social, ethnic, religious and mental terms. Stavropol is surrounded by the North Caucasian republics and its inclusion in the North Caucasus Federal District in 2010 in accordance with the decree of the President of the Russian Federation D. Medvedev caused many political and administrative contradictions, public disagreements and objections. In the late 90s. In the 20th century and in the 2010s, the region was subjected to significant terrorist, extremist, social, and economic damage (loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, evacuation of migrants, ethnic conflicts, traumatization of society, etc.). At the same time, Stavropol has always played and plays a significant role in the typological entities of the "internal geopolitics of the North Caucasus," as well as the geopolitics of the Greater Caucasus, which is actualized today by the risky international situation.

2014-2024 is a reference period for political analysis of the activities of the head of the subject of the Russian Federation. Also, V. Vladimirov himself in 2024 had every opportunity for self-audit, which is inevitable and necessary. Without delving into the genesis of the political and managerial resource of the current governor of Stavropol, we note that his arrival in the region to the post of the first person was accompanied by several important introductory factors, which can be interpreted as ambivalent.

Firstly, despite his birth and early childhood in Georgievsk, and finishing school in Budyonnovsk, he was perceived as a person from the outside, since the initial stages of his social and professional development took place outside the region. Nevertheless, V. Vladimirov constantly emphasized his inseparable connection with Stavropol, which was perceived with understanding by the population.

Secondly, thanks to building a career and achieving life results beyond the borders of Stavropol and the North Caucasus in general, V. Vladimirov was free from multiple regional family, kinship, friendly ties and obligations. This made him relatively free in decision-making and allowed him to introduce his management team from outside at the initial stage, preserving and gradually strengthening the Stavropol personnel in the personnel corps.

Thirdly, the formation, career achievements and work path of V. Vladimirov from the head of the oil preparation and pumping unit to the director of the oil refinery of the Kogalym department for the production of oil products, collection and use of associated petroleum gas "Kogalymneftegazpererabotka" and further in many high management positions made a positive impression. Multidisciplinary intensive professional, administrative growth and the build-up of political positions in the ranks of "United Russia" testified to the purposefulness, perseverance, success, and resourcefulness of V. Vladimirov [4].

Direct elections of the governor since 2014 have provided the current governor with a high index of legitimacy. This largely allowed V. Vladimirov to form a gubernatorial team in several chronological stages, not without controversy, which generally meets the needs of the Stavropol community. V. Vladimirov took management steps to organize targeted and even targeted management, namely: combining the positions of the chairman of the regional government and the governor; introducing a polygraph testing system for civil servants, which V. Vladimirov himself passed in the first ranks; reducing the administrative apparatus; developing a targeted anti-corruption program; opening hotlines; increasing the degree of openness of government bodies for citizens, etc. It is worth noting that the public authority of the governor was damaged by corruption precedents, criminal excesses involving high-level officials. They prompted V. Vladimirov to make an ambiguous decision in 2021 to resign the Government of the Stavropol Territory. Despite the obvious management crisis, which received wide coverage in the media, social networks, blogs and public pages predicting the resignation of the governor, V. Vladimirov retained his personal, professional and political stability.

In 2019, at the conference of the Stavropol regional branch of the United Russia party, V. Vladimirov was rightfully elected secretary of the regional branch of the party. In December 2023, during a trip to the North Caucasus Federal District, Russian President V. Putin held a working meeting with V. Vladimirov in Pyatigorsk [5]. The head of the region presented the region as a breadbasket, a health resort, a territory of innovation, high-quality education and resort and recreational services, modern leisure, sports, as well as strengthening Russian patriotism and traditional Russian spiritual values. SK participates in competitions for presidential awards and grants, in the events of Rosmolodezh, FADN, in the International Competition and Prize "CARDO", in the actions of the All-Russian Knowledge Center "Mashuk". In 2024, Stavropol became a laureate of the 1st National Prize for the Formation of a Comfortable Urban Environment. The award ceremony took place in Kaluga at the All-Russian Forum “ **Development of Small Towns and Historical Settlements** ” [6].

V. Vladimirov systematically emphasizes the importance of the foreign policy course of the President of the Russian Federation V. Putin, correlating with his activities the new stage of successful development of Russia, and its victory, in the broadest - civilizational sense. V. Vladimirov's discourse is exclusively patriotic and pro-Russian, which emphasizes the importance of Russia - the great Motherland and Stavropol - the small Motherland, which became especially prominent during the conduct of Russia's special military operation (SVO) in Ukraine: " *It is important that the energy that each of us possesses is invested in our country, so that Russia wins.*

We are doing everything for this" [7]. Stavropol provides large-scale assistance to the population of the new territories of Russia, organizes assistance to the families of SVO participants, fighters of the units from Stavropol, the Cossack battalion "Terek", etc. [8].

Practical organization of elections. The legal framework for the electoral process and organization of elections in the SK is developing in accordance with federal legislation, in particular, with the Federal Law of 06.02.2023 No. 12-FZ " **On Amendments to the Federal Law " On General Principles of Organization of Public Authority in the Subjects of the Russian Federation" and Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation** ". Also, after the 2019 gubernatorial campaign, amendments were made to the Law of the Stavropol Territory " **On the Election of the Governor of the Stavropol Territory** " [9]. In 2024, the elections of the head of the region were held for the second time over three days - September 7, 8, 9. The election campaign began in the second half of 2024. According to the calculations of the Electoral Commission of the Stavropol Territory, each candidate had to collect from 143 to 150 signatures of deputies of all levels and heads of municipalities, of which 61 to 64 were deputies of representative bodies and (or) heads of at least 25 districts and urban districts of the region.

The following have entered the competitive struggle: V. Vladimirov (the current governor of the North Caucasus – United Russia), V. Goncharov (Deputy Chairman of the North Caucasus Duma – the Communist Party of the Russian Federation), A. Kuzmin (SRZ), B. Obolenets (Novye Lyudi), A. Lyushin (LDPR). It should be noted that in the 90s – 2010s, the positions of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, which reflects the guidelines of the older generation, and whose adherents in the North Caucasus regional politics represented a staunch “red belt”, were traditionally strong in Stavropol. At one time, the governor of the North Caucasus A. Chernogorov, who came to politics from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, left this party in 2007 during the elections to the regional parliament and joined United Russia, which led to the disapproval of some voters and to problems for United Russia. The positions of the SRZP (D. Kuzmin, A. Utkin), whose careers ended in high-profile criminal cases with international projections, were also strong. Also In the SK, for a long time, significant positions belonged to the LDPR, headed by A. Kuzmin. However, in 2024, the significant priorities of V. Vladimirov as a United Russia member, supported by the head of state, over his competitors were predictable.

In 2022-2024, V. Vladimirov strengthened his position as a manager and as a politician. In his annual reports and messages, V. Vladimirov emphasizes the socio-economic prospects of the region with the tasks set by the President of the Russian Federation: “All the tasks that I set for the regional team today are determined by the presidential decree, dictated by its spirit and ideology. Stavropol will definitely become an active participant in the implementation of these plans” [10]. The managerial ideal of the head of the SK is the well-being of Stavropol residents, which is planned to be achieved through effective professional activities of government bodies together with civil society : “Through communication with people, we build a program for the development of the region” [10]. On behalf of V. Vladimirov, the “ **Strategy for the Development of Stavropol for the Period up to 2030 inclusive and further up to 2036**” was developed. Also, with the support of “DOM.RF”, the “ **Master Plan for the Agglomeration of the Caucasian Mineral Waters**” was developed, which is the territory of federal resort cities.

On September 9, 2024, it became known that V. Vladimirov, nominated by the United Russia party, was leading in the regional head elections. The candidate from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, First Deputy Chairman of the regional parliament V. Goncharov ultimately gained 9.5% of the votes, Deputy Chairman of the Stavropol Duma A. Kuzmin from the SRPZ - 4.6% of the votes, B. Obolenets from New People - 2.7% of the votes, A. Lyushin from the LDPR - 2.4% of the votes [11]. As a result, V. Vladimirov, the current governor of the SK, secretary of the regional branch of United Russia, having gained 79.6% of the votes and accurately confirming the 2019 result, was successfully re-elected to the post of head of the region [12]. Experts note that on the modern Stavropol political stage, V. Vladimirov, as a systemic candidate from United Russia, endowed with the trust of the head of state, did not have and could not have serious competitors [13], which in many ways corresponds to the all-Russian trends of rotation of political and managerial elites, noted above.

Conclusion. Regional gubernatorial elections in the North Caucasus Federal District confirm the homogeneity of the regional electoral process with the all-Russian electoral process. The formation of the political program of candidates from competing political parties, despite their different party genesis determination, is carried out on the basis of the modern Russian political doctrine - reasonable conservatism. The elections of the heads of the subjects of the Russian Federation in the North Caucasus Federal District (Ingushetia, Kabardino-Balkaria, Stavropol) indicate the significant inclusion in the process of such a powerful factor as the support and trust of the President of the Russian Federation, as well as a response factor - personal responsibility and personal duty of the heads of the subjects to the head of state.

The results of the elections of the head of the SK in the modern regional political context, although predictable, nevertheless actualized the multidirectional, including positive and problematic, political-administrative and socio-political trends of Stavropol and the North Caucasus Federal District.

It is worth emphasizing that since 2014, the region's voters have been making their rational choice based on the state of the region, the solution of their own life problems (standard of living, employment, state of the economy, filling the consumer basket, quality of social services, security). They are also attentive to the professional, personal, moral qualities of candidates for the post of governor, to their attitude to the region as a significant subject of the North Caucasus, the South of Russia.

The political and managerial aspirations of the head of the region must correspond to the historical, cultural and social orientations of the residents of the SK, whose moods clearly express the needs for social justice, legality, law and order, interethnic stability, as well as strengthening Stavropol and Russian civil patriotism, strengthening the sovereignty of the Russian Federation.

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