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**ELECTORAL BEHAVIOR OF CITIZENS
IN THE CONTEXT OF DIGITALIZATION OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

Subdivision: 5.4.5. Political sociology

ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of candidate of sociology sciences

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The relevance of the dissertation research. Since the end of the 20th century, the active introduction of computer technology into social institutions and processes, the use of electronic-digital devices in everyday social practice has led to drastic changes in social reality. S. A. Kravchenko notes that: "digital innovations have ambivalent consequences, translate the problem of sustainable development into a qualitatively different state: previously thought problems are called into question. Universal factors that provided it, respectively, previous methodological approaches to their interpretation".

The development of information and communication technologies leads to significant changes in human behavior, affecting not only individual, group and social practices, but also changes the quality of human life.

Digitalization has a significant impact on socio-political processes, in fact forming "digital democracy" as a new way of organizing social discourse. Digitalization as a mechanism for ensuring the principle of democracy affects the electoral behavior of citizens, expands the opportunities for citizens to participate in political processes and promotes their involvement in the development and implementation of management decisions.

The active introduction of digital technologies, the use of electronic media resources (social networks, websites, blogs, e-mail) lead to the transformation of the electoral culture and behavioral attitudes of citizens and affect their socio-political self-determination. At the same time, digitalization of the electoral process increases the risks of political manipulation, distorting the objective perception of political ideas. Technological vulnerability of digital platforms and technologies, cyber-attacks and computer fraud, and the possibility of using administrative resources can also be considered as significant risks of digitalization of the electoral process.

Thus, the relevance of the dissertation is determined by the following circumstances:

- first, the active introduction of digitalization in socio-political processes;
- secondly, changes in the electoral behavior of citizens under the influence of information and communication technologies;

— third, the emergence of new risks and threats associated with the digitalization of electoral process.

The scientific development of the problem. The features of the problem under study determine the analysis of various approaches, which are grouped into several semantic blocks.

The first group of works consists of research in the field of digitalization as a significant trend in the development of political sociology. We can highlight the research of S.A. Kravchenko, who revealed the formation and development of a non-linear socio-digital-natural reality; L.A. Vasilenko and V.V. Zotov, who revealed the theoretical and methodological foundations of the formation of a digital society; N.A. Baranov, who considered how the introduction of digitalization in the electoral process contributed to the penetration of appropriate technologies, which influenced on the possibility of remote electronic voting; S.V. Volodenkov, who formulated an approach according to which digitalization generates a new digital reality, including advanced communication tools, artificial intelligence and neural network algorithms for working with digital data; T.D. Stepanova, who analyzed the issues of digitalization of the electoral process in Russia; R. A. Alekseev and A.V. Abramov, who studied the functioning of blockchain networks and other technologies and their application to the electoral process; S. A. Trykanova, who studied the actual aspects of foresight analysis of the implementation of digital technologies in the electoral process; A. I. Seravin and E. N. Sokolova, who contributed to the understanding of social and political aspects of digitalization at different levels; A. Y. Zakusilova, who analyzed the process of forming public opinion and the impact of Big Data technology on electoral processes. preferences of citizens; A. F. and M. A. Ivanko, V.A. Sorokina, M.A. Lipchanskaya, S.E. Channov, who studied the existing risks and difficulties that arise when implementing digitalization of the electoral process.

M.N. Grachev's research provides valuable insights into the development of electronic voting. A significant contribution to the study of the digitalization of the electoral process was made by foreign scientists J. Schneider and L. Grossman, J. Bisbee and J. Larson, Y. Nosetti, M. Wijeramar, E. Shabazz, E. Funk, F. Tepfi, etc.

The second group includes the works of scientists who laid the foundation for theoretical and methodological research of electoral behavior of citizens. Among them we can distinguish the works of A. Siegfried, who linked the formation of electoral views of the population with social factors, separating them from geographical ones; F. Gogel, whose works became key in the formation of the "ecological" school of studying electoral behavior; R. Aron, who argued that the electorate is a product of a system of social groups divided according to several characteristics and together with topics that interact with each other. We also note the importance of M. Dogan's theoretical views, which applied the "combined" method of analyzing the behavior of voters.

Of particular importance are the works of P. Lazarsfeld, who laid the foundations of the "sociological" concept of electoral behavior and argued that the choice of a voter is determined not only by political preferences, but also by belonging to social groups. Undoubtedly important were the works of S. Lipset and S. Rokkan, the founders of the sociological theory of electoral behavior of citizens, who created a "genetic" model of party systems. A significant role in the study of electoral behavior of the population is assigned to E. Downs, the author of the theory of "rational behavior of voters"; M. Lewis-Beck, who linked electoral behavior with social factors of society development; A. Campbell and E. Oppenhuys, who developed a model of the "causality funnel" of electoral behavior.

An important role in the study of the electoral behavior of Russian citizens was played by the research of A. S. Akhremenko, who revealed the methodological foundations of political analysis and forecasting; V. V. Fedorov, who contributed to the theoretical foundations of the analysis of electoral behavior of the population; R. V. Evstifeev, Y. M. Baskakova and T. N. Mitrokhina, who developed models of the electoral space; K. G. Kholodkovsky, who analyzed the role of demographic, social, economic and psychological factors in the formation of party and political preferences of citizens; V. A. May and O. V. Kochetkova, who determined the economic nature of electoral behavior of voters; E. Y. Meleshkina, who adapted the "causality funnel" model to Russian political realities.

The third group includes works that reveal changes in the electoral culture and political attitudes of citizens in the modern period, among which the following studies are distinguished: F.I. Sharkov, who studied the genesis of communicology, types and models of communication, the origins and main paradigms of social communication; N. V. Karpova, who analyzed the electoral culture of Russian society, which is one of the indicators state and development of the electoral institution as the main mechanism for delegating power; V.V. Komleva, who revealed the social essence of the development of electoral culture; E.V. Okhotsky, who analyzed in his works the anti-crisis strategy of Russia's development in the framework of the transformation of civil society in the context of the introduction of information and communication technologies; E.P. Kotlyarov, who analyzed the role of electoral culture in Russian politics; M.A. Al-Daini, who identified the main types of electoral behavior of Russian citizens; A.G. Chernyshov, who studied the influence of digital technologies on changing the electoral field of politics; foreign scientists G. Almond, S. Klakhon, R. Linton, who developed theories of the political system and political culture.

The object of the study is digitalization of the electoral process.

The subject of the study is the electoral behavior of citizens in the context of digitalization of the electoral process.

The aim of the study is to identify the features of electoral behavior of citizens in the context of digitalization of the electoral process.

Objectives of the dissertation research:

- reveal the digitalization of the electoral process as an object of sociological research;
- to study the theoretical and methodological foundations of electoral behavior of citizens;
- identify social factors of electoral behavior of citizens in the context of digitalization of the electoral process;
- research the impact of digitalization on the behavioral attitudes and electoral culture of citizens;
- to substantiate the conceptual model of electoral behavior of citizens in the

context of digitalization of the electoral process.

The hypothesis of the scientific study is that digitalization of the electoral process leads to significant changes in the electoral behavior of citizens. At the same time, a multi-factor approach to the analysis of electoral behavior may become important, considering the transformation of electoral culture and behavioral attitudes in the context of digitalization of the electoral process. The use of information and communication technologies in the electoral process leads to the need to form a new conceptual model of electoral behavior of citizens.

Novelty of scientific research:

— the scientific content of "electoral behavior of citizens in the conditions of digitalization of the electoral process", which is understood as a method of "electronic" participation or non-participation of citizens in the electoral process using digital technologies, is substantiated;

— it is revealed that the introduction of digital technologies in the electoral process leads to an increase in the number of citizens who took part in voting, both in general and at the expense of young people;

— based on the identification of factors that affect the level of trust/distrust of various population groups in voting in electronic format, the positive and negative aspects, as well as constraining elements of digitalization in the implementation of digital technologies in the electoral process, are identified and characterized;

— three main levels of electoral culture are identified: electoral orientation (considered as a manifestation of political preferences), electoral consciousness (characterized by a system of political views, political ideas and emotional characteristics), electoral behavior (defined as a way of citizens' participation in the electoral process, considering values, political orientations, preferences);

— two main types of voters are identified and justified: "traditional" (making an informed choice based on political preferences) and "remote" (for which elections in the context of digitalization turn from an irrational practice into a rational and pragmatic ritual);

— a conceptual model of citizens' electoral behavior in the context of the digitalization of the electoral process has been developed, which includes, along with the main external and internal factors, such determinants as digitalization and electoral culture, which have a significant impact on citizens' electoral preferences.

Theoretical and methodological basis of the dissertation research.

Fundamental in this dissertation work are the theoretical positions and conclusions of domestic and foreign scientists who study the electoral behavior of citizens in the context of digitalization of the electoral process. The author relies on the following main theoretical and methodological approaches to electoral behavior: socio-demographic, sociological, socio-psychological, and economic.

The source base of the research is represented by legislative and regulatory legal acts of the Russian Federation; materials of scientific and practical conferences, dissertation research, monographs and scientific articles, analytical materials of electronic portals and digital platforms, and other documents devoted to the research problem.

Data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation, the Department of the Federal State Statistics Service for Moscow and the Moscow Region, the All - Russian Center for Public Opinion Research (hereinafter referred to as VTSIOM), the Public Opinion Foundation (hereinafter referred to as FOM), and the Moscow City Election Commission were used to substantiate the thesis of the dissertation research, as well as conclusions, conclusions, and hypotheses federal regulatory legal acts in the field of the electoral process, as well as regional, territorial and precinct election commissions.

Empirical base of the dissertation. The research uses the following methods: a sociological survey, an in-depth interview, and a secondary analysis of sociological research data.

Research conducted directly by the dissertation author:

— "The attitude of Moscow residents to the introduction of digitalization in the electoral process" (index in the dissertation-OZHMCVCIP-2023). September 2023. Research method: questionnaire survey (handout survey). Respondents: the population of the capital's districts totaling 1,200 people. Sample type: stratified. Result: representative

by gender, age, level of education, social status, etc. Head of research: E.A. Litvintseva - Doctor of Social Sciences, Associate Professor;

— "Experts assessment of the approach to implementing digitalization in elections". February-March 2024 (index in the dissertation – OECC-2024). Research method: in-depth interview. 20 respondents: chairmen and deputy chairmen of district, territorial and precinct election commissions, heads of Departments and committees of the Moscow Government, prefectures of administrative districts and administrative districts of the capital, as well as IT experts. Head of the research: Y.V. Druzhinina - Candidate of Social Sciences.

For a secondary analysis, we used materials from sociological studies that reflect the problems of electoral behavior of citizens in the context of digitalization of the electoral process:

— "Remote electronic voting in Moscow". August 2021. Conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research. Research method: telephone interview based on a stratified two-based random sample of landline and mobile numbers used in Moscow (the selection was based on gender and age). Respondents: Muscovites, 1200 people. During the study, the reasons for choosing the voting method, the positive and negative aspects of remote electronic voting were considered;

— "Results of the State Duma elections-2021: VTSIOM forecast". September 2021. Conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research. Research method: combined (telephone survey, apartment survey). Respondents: population of 4,000 people. The survey examined the expected participation/non-participation in the elections of deputies of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, electoral preference for political parties and public associations;

— "Elections in Russia: participation, legitimacy, trust." September 2021/August 2023. Conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research. Research method: telephone interview based on a stratified random sample extracted from the complete list of cellular phone numbers used in the territory of the Russian Federation. Respondents, respectively: 1200 people/1600 people. During the interview, the intention of citizens to take part in the electoral process, the choice of the method of

participation in voting was investigated;

— "What do people think on the eve of the election?" December 2023. Conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation (POM). Research method: interviews at the respondents' place of residence. Respondents: 6,100 people. The interview analyzed the assessment of Putin's understanding of people's interests, the opinion of Russians about what he needs to focus on in 2024;

— "Presidential elections of the Russian Federation-2024: evaluation of results". March 2024. Conducted by the All-Russian Center for Public Opinion Research. Research method: telephone interview based on a stratified random sample extracted from the complete list of cellular phone numbers used in the territory of the Russian Federation. Respondents: 1,600 citizens. During telephone interviews, confidence in the results of the presidential election of the Russian Federation was examined;

— "Remote electronic voting: monitoring". March 2024. Conducted by the All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion. Research method: telephone interview based on a stratified random sample extracted from a complete list of cell phone numbers involved in the territory of the Russian Federation. Respondents: 1,600 citizens. During telephone interviews, the attitude of citizens to online voting was investigated.

Key points for defense:

— based on the materials of sociological research, it is revealed that when digital technologies are introduced into the electoral process, changes occur in the structure of voting participants in elections at the expense of voters using the remote electronic voting system in elections;

— the influence of information and communication technologies on the electoral behavior of citizens is revealed;

— identify and characterize the positive, negative aspects and constraints of digitalization of the electoral process;

— a conceptual model of citizens' electoral behavior is proposed, taking into account such factors as the digitalization of the electoral process and electoral culture,

which should be considered as a three-component system: electoral orientation, electoral behavior and electoral consciousness.

The theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation research. The theoretical significance of the research results obtained in the work consists in the development of sociological knowledge about the electoral behavior of citizens, which contributes to the development of the sociology of politics and the sociology of electoral behavior.

The results of the study can be taken into account in the practical work of legislative and executive authorities, organizers of election campaigns, including those involved in the digitalization of the electoral process, as well as candidates, parties and public associations during the preparation and conduct of elections.

The research topic meets the requirements **of the passport of the scientific specialty 5.4.5. "Political sociology"**, the field of science: 5. Social sciences and Humanities, group of scientific specialties: 5.4. Sociology. Research direction: 1. Specifics of the sociological approach to the study of political processes and phenomena; 15. Forms and methods of political behavior and participation; 16. Electoral behavior as a form of political behavior; 20. Values and ideology in politics, their role in the formation of political attitudes, political consciousness, political behavior and political culture; 27. The institute of Elections as a form of political behavior. an element of the socio-political system of society; 28. Specifics of electoral campaigns and approaches to the study of electoral preferences of citizens.

Approbation of the results of the dissertation. The main provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research were presented by the author at methodological seminars of the department of organizational design of management systems of the faculty of personnel management and public administration of the Institute of public administration and management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, as well as in the course of presentations at: international conference session "Public Administration and Development of Russia: Civilizational challenges and National interests" (Moscow, 15.05.2023); 3rd International Scientific and Practical Conference: "Digital Environment and University Policy in the

field of intellectual property" (Moscow, 05.07.2023); International Interuniversity Scientific and Practical Conference (Saint Petersburg, 25.08.2023); V International Scientific and Practical Social Science Conference "Strategies for the development of society and the economy in the new reality" (Rostov-on-Don, 26.10.2023); IX International Scientific and Practical Conference: "The role of Local self-government in the development of the state at the present stage" (Moscow, 17.04.2024); II International Scientific and Practical Conference: "The role of local self-government in the development of the state at the present stage" (Moscow, 17.04.2024); Practical conference "Leadership and Challenges of our time" (Moscow, 18.04.2024); International conference session "Public Administration and Development of Russia: new horizons and the image of the future" (Moscow, 24.05.2024); All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference "Digital Society: a sociological dimension of the present and future" (Moscow, 29.10.2023); II All-Russian Scientific Conference "Digitalization of society: transformation of everyday practices and research prospects" (Moscow, 11.12.2023); All-Russian Scientific and Practical Conference "Digital Society: a sociological dimension of the present and future" (Moscow, 29.10.2023); II All-Russian Scientific practical conference "Socio-cultural factors of consolidation of modern society" (Penza, 12.05.2023); All-Russian Scientific and practical Conference "Quality of life of the population in modern Russia: socio-economic and socio-cultural aspects" (Penza, 17.05.2024); scientific conference "Sociology: yesterday, today and tomorrow" (Moscow, 22.10.2024).

The materials of this dissertation research were tested in the following forms:

- 10 scientific articles were published with the main provisions and conclusions of the dissertation research in peer-reviewed scientific journals, including four of them (with a total volume of 4.6 p. l.) in leading journals recommended by the Higher Attestation Commission (HAC);
- directly involved in practical work organizing and conducting election campaigns at the federal, regional and local levels of the legislative and executive branches of government in the territory of the city of Moscow;

— within the framework of lectures and seminars in the disciplines "Psychology of electoral behavior" of the Master's program "Psychology of Political Leadership and Management" of the Institute of Public Administration and Management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration and "Psychology of Political Communications" of the master's program "Psychology of Political Leadership and Management" with a double diploma of the Department of Organizational Psychology of Non-Governmental private educational institution of higher education "Moscow Institute of Psychoanalysis".

This dissertation was discussed at a meeting of the department of organizational design of management systems of the faculty of personnel management and public administration of the Institute of public administration and management of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.

The structure of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of an introduction, two chapters, five paragraphs of the main part, a conclusion, 160 used sources and the list of literature, including 30 monographs, 31 foreign research and 13 dissertation studies. This dissertation research uses more than 50 scientific papers published in the last 5 years.