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Model of Electoral Behavior of a Resident of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation in Regional Elections of the Highest Official (2013–2022)

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Abstract. Being one of the strategically important regions for the development of the Russian Federation and a variety of aspects of its security, the Arctic represents a platform for defending the country's national priorities. The nature of the policy pursued in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation determines the status of the state as an Arctic power. Therefore, the aim of the study was to investigate the electoral preferences and to design the electoral model of the residents of the Russian Arctic in the gubernatorial elections in the period from 2013 to 2022. By means of multifactor comparative analysis using the clustering methodology, the author managed to determine such variables for the construction of the electoral model of a resident of the Russian Arctic zone as the level of electoral activity, voting for typical and atypical candidates and for the conditionally designated candidate “against all” as a marker of legitimate support for registered candidates and/or protest voting. The study revealed that, unlike the other federal subject's voters, residents of the Russian Arctic take a more active part in the election of the head of the region, providing electoral support to the candidates of the “United Russia”, although in some cases atypical voting was observed, the percentage of which was insignificant. At the same time, the data obtained show that the number of invalid ballots is higher in the Arctic regions than in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. Thus, the constructed model of electoral behavior of the resident of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the implementation of regional policy in the region allows taking into account not only quantitative, but also qualitative parameters of electoral preferences of the Arctic residents to predict the results of future elections.

Keywords: *Arctic, model of electoral behavior, resident of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, gubernatorial elections, electoral turnout, electoral preferences*

Introduction

The activity of the population in elections is an important component in the implementation of state policy. Electoral preferences determine the vector of its development through the legitimation of existing both internal and foreign policy practices of ensuring the country's national security. In this process, the fact of implementation of state will at the regional level becomes important. We believe that the specifics of the electoral behavior of residents depend on the place of residence of the voter, the nature of the socio-economic development of the region, and its strategic importance for the country.

The geographical factor continues to be the basis for determining the significance of geopolitical claims of the state. The Arctic is a geopolitical platform for the declaration of national

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wills on the part of the world's leading actors, which inevitably affects the actualization of research attention to the region. The study of the resource potential of the Arctic zone is enriched by an analysis of its environmental, socio-economic, and cultural aspects of security policy [1, Osmundsen L.; 2, Bie Q., Wang S. et al.; 3, Ulitskaya N., Ivanovaa N., Telushkina E. et al.; 4, Sovacool B.K., Baum C., Low S.; 5, Romanova T.; 6, Miller P.; 7, Cassivi A., Covey A., Rodriguez M.J. et al.]. The strategic nature of the Arctic and the interest in the development of this region at the level of national strategies of the main geopolitical players are known, one of which is the Russian Federation, which has the longest Arctic zone among the countries of the Arctic Five (Russia, Canada, USA, Norway and Denmark). After the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) of the Russian Federation in Ukraine in February 2022, a non-parity tendency of "seven plus one" is emerging in the Arctic Council: Canada, the USA, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and Iceland refused to take part in all meetings chaired by the Russian Federation and held on its territory [8, Zhuravel V.P., Timoshenko D.S., p. 110]. We believe that Finland's accession to NATO in April 2023 will further aggravate this trend. Thus, the Arctic is transforming from an actor of international cooperation towards a region of claims for the strategic interests of the Arctic and sub-Arctic powers. Such a change poses a threat to the development of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF) and the state security of the country as a whole.

In this regard, it is important to study the regional practices of the subjects of the Russian Federation that are part of the Arctic zone, through which the Strategy for Developing the Russian Arctic Zone and Ensuring National Security until 2035 is implemented¹. Special attention should be paid to the heads of these regions, their personality, leadership qualities, party preferences, which to a large extent is realized through the level of electoral support for a candidate for an elective position. In the current situation, it becomes relevant to study the opinion of the population of the Russian Arctic regarding the policies pursued in the region by studying the electoral behavior and political preferences of AZRF residents in the gubernatorial election in the region, which determined the purpose of this paper. In this paper the term "gubernatorial elections" is used, which, in case of the Russian Federation, means regional elections of the highest official in federal subjects, including the Arctic ones.

In accordance with the amendments to the federal law "On Basic Guarantees of Electoral Rights and the Right to Participate in Referendums of Citizens of the Russian Federation"² that came into force on June 1, 2012, direct elections of heads of constituent entities of the Russian

¹ O Strategii razvitiya Arkticheskoy zony Rossiyskoy Federatsii i obespecheniya natsional'noy bezopasnosti na period do 2035 goda: Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 26 oktyabrya 2020 [On the Strategy for developing the Russian Arctic zone and ensuring national security until 2035: Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of October 26, 2020]. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/45972> (accessed 08 March 2023).

² Federal'nyy zakon ot 12 iyunya 2002 g. N 67-FZ «Ob osnovnykh garantiyakh izbiratel'nykh prav i prava na uchastie v referendumе grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii» (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [Federal Law of June 12, 2002 No. 67-FZ "On the basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in a referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation" (with amendments and additions)]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/184566/89300effb84a59912210b23abe10a68f/> (accessed 18 January 2023).

Federation were returned, which to a large extent contributed to some democratization policies in the regions.

The Arctic zone of the Russian Federation includes the northern regions of nine constituent entities, located in four (half of the total) federal districts:

Arctic zone of the Russian Federation³:

- I. North-Western Federal District:
 1. Arkhangelsk Oblast (9⁴ — Arkhangelsk city, Mezenskiy district, Novaya Zemlya urban district, Novodvinsk city, Onega district, Primorskiy district, Severodvinsk urban district, Leshukonskiy district, Pinezhskiy district)
 2. Murmansk Oblast (entire territory of the Oblast⁵);
 3. Nenets Autonomous Okrug (entire territory of the Okrug⁶);
 4. Republic of Karelia (6⁷ — Belomorskiy district, Kalevalskiy district, Kemskiy district, Kostomuksha urban district, Loukhskiy district, Segezhskiy district);
 5. Komi Republic (4⁸ — Vorkuta urban district, Inta urban district, Usinsk urban district, Ust-Tsilemskiy district).
- II. Ural Federal District:
 6. Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug (entire territory of the Okrug⁹).
- III. Siberian Federal District:
 7. Krasnoyarsk Krai (4¹⁰ — Norilsk city, Taimyrskiy Dolgano-Nenets district, Turukhanskiy district, partially Evenki district (10 rural settlements: “Surinda settlement”, “Tura settlement”, “Nidym settlement”, “Uchami settlement”, “Tutonchany settlement”, “Essey settlement”, “Chirinda settlement”, “Ekonda settlement”, “Kislokan settlement”, “Yukta settlement”))¹¹.
- IV. Far Eastern Federal District:
 8. Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) (13¹² — Abyiskiy ulus, Allaikhovskiy ulus, Anabarskiy ulus, Bulunskiy ulus, Verkhnekolymskiy ulus, Verkhoyanskiy district, Zhiganskiy district, Momskiy district, Nizhnekolymskiy district, Olenekskiy district, Srednekolymskiy ulus, Ust-Yanskiy ulus, Eveno-Bytantayskiy national ulus);

³ Ukaz Prezidenta RF ot 2 maya 2014 g. N 296 «O sukhoputnykh territoriyakh Arkticheskoy zony Rossiyskoy Federatsii» (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 2, 2014 No. 296 “On the land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation” (with amendments and additions)]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/70647984/> (accessed 20 January 2023).

⁴ AZRF.

⁵ AZRF.

⁶ AZRF.

⁷ AZRF.

⁸ AZRF.

⁹ AZRF.

¹⁰ AZRF.

¹¹ AZ indicators are conditional.

¹² AZRF.

9. Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (entire territory of the Okrug¹³).

The chronological scope of the study covers the period from 2013 to 2022. The time boundaries are determined by the fact that the first gubernatorial elections took place on September 8, 2013 in the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, and the last elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia at the time of the study were on September 11, 2022.

Methodology

There are different approaches to determining the essence of electoral behavior. The most common in Western theory are: behaviorist with two dominant voting models — sociological [9, Nazarov M.M.; 10, Berelson B., Lazarsfeld P., McPhee W.; 11, Lasarsfeld P.; 12, Berelson B., Lazarsfeld P., McPhee W.; 13, Lipset, Rocann S.; 14, Lipset S., Rokkan S.; 15, Verba S., Nie N.] and socio-psychological [16, Cambell A.; 17, Converse P.; 18, Convers P.], positivist, based on the principle of rational voter behavior [19, Downs A.; 20, Fiorina M.], and political-communicative or cognitive [21, Malashenko I.V.] approaches. A domestic school of electoral research is also emerging, based on an integrated approach of multifactor analysis in relation to the Russian realities of national and regional practices [22, Gelman V.; 23, Golosov G.V.; 24, Kolosov V.A., Borodulina N.A.; 25, Meleshkina E.Yu.; 26, Turovsky R.F.; 27, Turovsky R.F.; 21, Malashenko I.V.; 28, Mavlikasov A.Kh.; 29, Kochetkova O.; 30, Kynev A.V.; 31, Zhidkin A.P. et al.].

Methodologically, the present study is based on array of static data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation (CEC RF) for the period from 2013 to 2022, when gubernatorial elections took place in the constituent entities belonging to the Russian Arctic.

The units of analysis were defined as:

- electoral turnout;
- ranking of candidates for elective positions by the subject of nomination;
- voting for the so-called “against all” candidate, based on the number of invalid ballots.

The method of clustering was the basis for summarizing the data obtained and summing up the final results of the study.

It is known that all areas of the Murmansk Oblast, the Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets and Chukotka Autonomous okrugs are included in the Russian Arctic. In accordance with the special status of sovereignty and division of powers, gubernatorial elections are not held in the Nenets and Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous okrugs, which became the reason for excluding these regions from the analysis. The electoral districts of the Arctic zone of Russia were counted, their share of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation was determined, and the average values of the AZ territories by federal districts were derived (see Table 1).

¹³ AZRF.

Table 1

*Arctic zone of the Russian Federation*¹⁴

FD	North-Western FD					Ural FD	Siberian FD	Far Eastern FD	
Subject of the Russian Federation	Murmansk Oblast ¹⁵	Republic of Karelia ¹⁶	Arkhangelsk Oblast ¹⁷	Komi Republic ¹⁸	Nenets Autonomous Okrug ¹⁹	Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug ²⁰	Krasnoyarsk Krai ²¹	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) ²²	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug ²³
Number of AZ electoral districts	17	6	13	4	-	-	7	13	7
Share of AZ in the RF constituent entity (%) ²⁴	100	32	42	17	100	100	10	37	100
Share of AZ in the federal district (%) ²⁵	48				Elections of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation are not be held		10	68	

Electoral turnout

Electoral turnout is one of the most important indicators of voters' interest in elections. Due to the peculiarity of perception of the conducted policies, ranking them by degree of importance, citizens are most active in federal elections, especially in the elections of the President of the Russian Federation. In the case of regional electoral practices, the degree of interest of citizens decreases. This is clearly observed when the dates of federal and regional elections do not coincide.

The study determined the electoral activity of voters in the gubernatorial elections by districts of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation for the period from 2013 to 2022 (see Fig.).

¹⁴ Source: compiled by the author.

¹⁵ The entire territory belongs to the Russian Arctic.

¹⁶ Six administrative entities belong to the Russian Arctic (Belomorskiy district, Kalevalskiy district, Kemskiy district, Kostomuksha urban district, Loukhskiy district, Segezha district).

¹⁷ Nine administrative entities belong to the Russian Arctic (the city of Arkhangelsk, Mezenskiy district, Novaya Zemlya urban district, Novodvinsk city, Onega district, Primorskiy district, Severodvinsk urban district, Leshukonskiy district, Pinezhskiy district).

¹⁸ Four administrative entities belong to the Russian Arctic (Inta urban district, Usinsk urban district, Ust-Tsilemskiy district).

¹⁹ The entire territory belongs to the Russian Arctic.

²⁰ The entire territory belongs to the Russian Arctic.

²¹ Four administrative entities belong to the Russian Arctic (the city of Norilsk, the Taimyr Dolgano-Nenets district, the Turukhanskiy district, and partially the Evenki district).

²² 13 administrative entities belong to the Russian Arctic (Abyiskiy ulus, Allaikhoyskiy ulus, Anabarskiy ulus, Bulunskiy ulus, Verkhnekolymskiy ulus, Verkhoyanskiy district, Zhiganskiy district, Momskiy district, Nizhnekolymskiy district, Olenekskiy district, Srednekolymskiy ulus, Ust-Yanskiy ulus, Eveno-Bytantaiskiy national ulus).

²³ The entire territory belongs to the Russian Arctic.

²⁴ From the number of electoral districts.

²⁵ From the number of electoral districts.

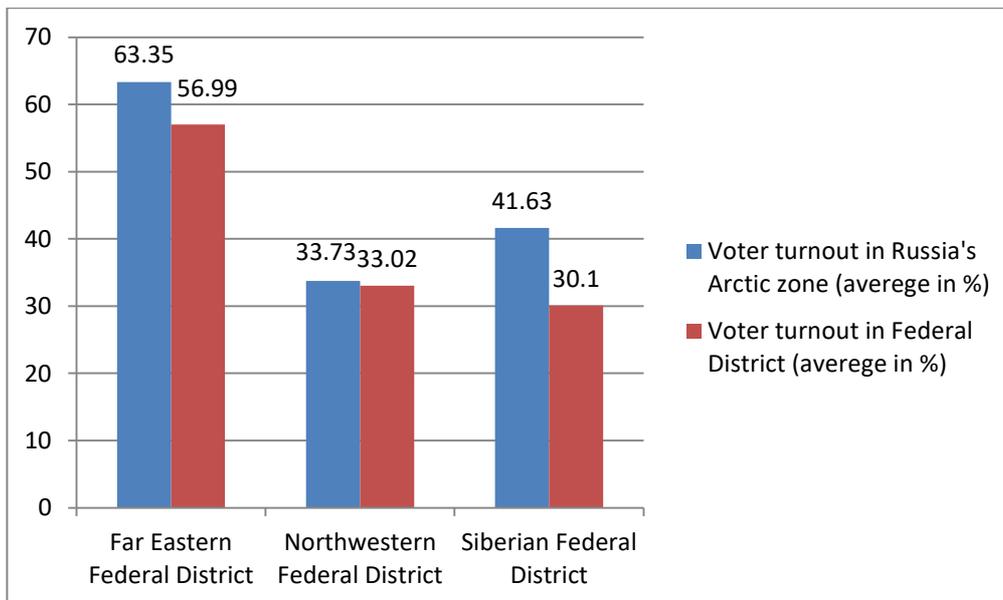


Fig. 1. Electoral turnout in the election of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (2013–2022) (in %) ²⁶.

The data obtained demonstrate that, in comparison with the electoral turnout in the region, in general, there is a higher level of activity of the population living in the AZRF. This is due to the fact that the number of voters in the Arctic regions is small and demonstrates an inversely proportional electoral dependence: the smaller the number of voters, the higher the electoral turnout. At the same time, while in the North-Western Federal District the share differences in voter turnout are insignificant, in the Far Eastern and especially in the Siberian Federal District the data obtained differ markedly. Statistically, this is due to the fact that the share of Arctic regions in the Siberian Federal District is insignificant compared to the North-Western and the Far Eastern federal districts.

The available CEC data for all voting stations in the analyzed subjects of the Russian Federation allowed us to calculate voter activity by AZRF regions (see Table 2).

²⁶ Source: compiled by the author based on data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

Table 2

Electoral turnout in the election of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation in the Russian Arctic (2013–2022) (in %) ²⁷

	2013 ²⁸	2014 ²⁹				2015 ³⁰	2016 ³¹	2017 ³²	2018 ³³			2019 ³⁴	2020 ³⁵		2022 ³⁶
Turnout by AZRF region	64.44	30.93 ³⁷	53.81 ³⁸	65.85 ³⁹	39.25 ⁴⁰	28.03	37.46	27.88	60.17 ⁴¹	62.96 ⁴²	44.01 ⁴³	35.83	27.55 ⁴⁴	37.80 ⁴⁵	30.20
Turnout by RF subject	64.44	30.93 ³⁷	59.06 ³⁸	52.69 ³⁹	31.26 ⁴⁰	21.00	40.67	29.25	60.17 ⁴¹	50.69 ⁴²	28.94 ⁴³	35.83	30.16 ⁴⁴	32.65 ⁴⁵	27.94

It was discovered that in 2014 the indicators of electoral turnout were quite high in the Arctic regions of Komi (53.81%) and Sakha (65.85%), which indicated the interest of the electorate in the election of the highest official in the region.

We believe that this circumstance was due to the following factors:

- reforming the electoral legislation on direct gubernatorial elections in the region ⁴⁶ and the expiration of the term of office of appointed heads of constituent entities of the Russian Federation;

²⁷ Source: compiled by the author.

²⁸ Election of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

²⁹ Elections of the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast, the Head of the Komi Republic, early elections of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), elections of the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai.

³⁰ Early elections of the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast.

³¹ Early elections of the Head of the Komi Republic.

³² Elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia.

³³ Elections of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, early elections of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), elections of the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai.

³⁴ Elections of the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast.

³⁵ Elections of the Head of the Komi Republic, Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast.

³⁶ Elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia.

³⁷ Murmansk Oblast.

³⁸ Komi Republic.

³⁹ Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

⁴⁰ Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁴¹ Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

⁴² Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

⁴³ Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁴⁴ Komi Republic.

⁴⁵ Arkhangelsk Oblast.

⁴⁶ Federal'nyy zakon ot 12 iyunya 2002 g. N 67-FZ "Ob osnovnykh garantiyakh izbiratel'nykh prav i prava na uchastie v referendumе grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii" (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [Federal Law of June 12, 2002 N 67-FZ "On the basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in a referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation" (with amendments and additions)]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/184566/89300effb84a59912210b23abe10a68f/> (accessed 18 January 2023).

- the entry of Crimea into the Russian Federation influenced all areas of foreign and domestic policy pursued in the country, which focused the attention of voters in the regions primarily on issues of a national-state nature;
- peculiarities of the political and legal status of the national republics of the country, which are reflected in the implementation of regional policy;
- implementation of the fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic until 2020 and the further prospects⁴⁷ and legal regulation of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation, in accordance with Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 2, 2014 No. 296 “On the land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation”⁴⁸.

Another surge in electoral activity was observed in 2018 (see Table 2). As can be seen from the data obtained, AZRF residents participated in voting more actively than for the subject as a whole, which was noticeable in the elections in the Krasnoyarsk Krai and in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia). In the constituent entities of the Russian Arctic of the Far Eastern Federal District, turnout was one of the highest for the entire period of regional elections under review. We believe that this could be caused by the elections of the President of the Russian Federation held in March 2018 and the active implementation of programs for the comprehensive development of the Far East⁴⁹.

However, these factors are still insufficient to judge the electoral preferences of the residents of the Russian Arctic. Thus, as additional variables, it was interesting to study the ranking of votes cast for candidates for the position of the highest official in the region by the subject of nomination, as well as to calculate the percentage of electoral support for the conventionally designated “against all” candidate.

⁴⁷ Osnovy gosudarstvennoy politiki Rossiyskoy Federatsii v Arktike na period do 2020 goda i dal'neyshuyu perspektivu (utv. Prezidentom RF 18.09.2008 N Pr-1969) [Fundamentals of the state policy of the Russian Federation in the Arctic for the period until 2020 and further prospects (approved by the President of the Russian Federation on September 18, 2008 N Pr-1969)]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/195720/> (accessed 23 February 2023).

⁴⁸ Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 2 maya 2014 g. № 296 «O sukhoputnykh territoriyakh Arkticheskoy zony Rossiyskoy Federatsii» [Decree of the President of the Russian Federation of May 2, 2014 No. 296 “On the land territories of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation”]. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/38377> (accessed 22 February 2023).

⁴⁹ See, for example, Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva RF ot 6 marta 2018 g. № 232 «O vnesenii izmeneniy v postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 27 dekabrya 2016 g. № 1502» (ne vstupilo v silu) [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of March 6, 2018 No. 232 “On amendments to Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation of December 27, 2016 No. 1502” (has not entered into force)]. URL: <https://www.garant.ru/products/ipo/prime/doc/71795806/> (accessed 23 February 2023); Postanovlenie Pravitel'stva Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 30.03.2018 № 362 «O vnesenii izmeneniy v gosudarstvennuyu programmu Rossiyskoy Federatsii «Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoe razvitie Dal'nego Vostoka i Baykal'skogo regiona» [Decree of the Government of the Russian Federation dated March 30, 2018 No. 362 “On introducing changes to the state program of the Russian Federation “Socio-economic development of the Far East and the Baikal region”]. URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001201804050012> (accessed 23 February 2023), etc.

Ranking of candidates for elective positions by subject of nomination

The subject of nomination is an important indicator of the electoral process, especially in regions. To convey the will of the state leadership, it is important that the subjects of the Russian Federation elect leaders who are close in ideological and political views, which, in general, reduces the level of conflict in the regions and promotes national unity in matters of domestic and foreign policy.

The analysis has shown that from 2013 to 2022, candidates nominated or supported by the United Russia party won elections in all the subjects of the Russian Federation under study. This trend in the electoral practices of our country is not unique. It is well known that “United Russia” is a party whose ideological positions are close to the current President of the Russian Federation, as V.V. Putin has repeatedly spoken out publicly as its leader. More interesting is the fact that voters in the Russian Arctic voted for candidates from United Russia a little more actively than the average for the subject of the Russian Federation (see Fig. 2).

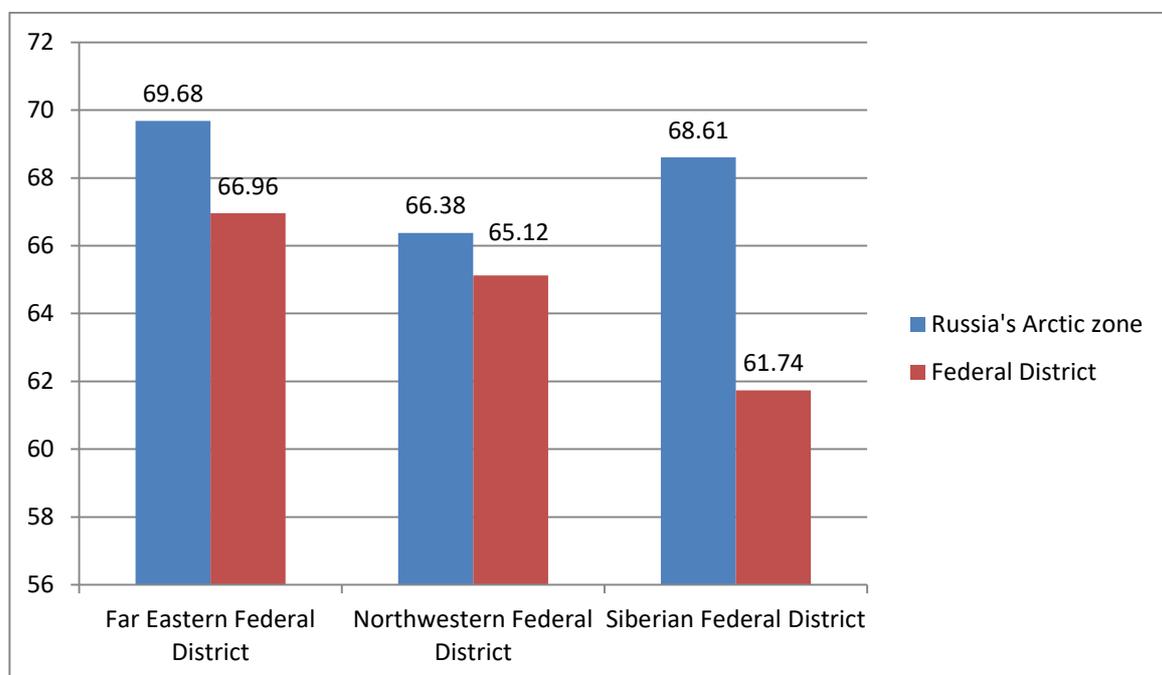


Fig. 2. Electoral preferences for the elected highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation from “United Russia” (in %) ⁵⁰.

According to the Federal Law of June 12, 2002 No. 67-FZ “On the basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in a referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation”, “In the election of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, a registered candidate who receives more than 50% of votes is considered elected” ⁵¹. The generalized data indicate a confident victory of United Russia candidates in the Russian Arctic regions, receiving

⁵⁰ Source: compiled by the author based on data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

⁵¹ Federal'nyy zakon ot 12 iyunya 2002 g. № 67-FZ «Ob osnovnykh garantiyakh izbiratel'nykh prav i prava na uchastie v referendumе grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii» (s izmeneniyami i dopolneniyami) [Federal Law of June 12, 2002 No. 67-FZ “On the basic guarantees of electoral rights and the right to participate in a referendum of citizens of the Russian Federation” (with amendments and additions). Art. 71, par. 1]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/184566/> (accessed 31 January 2023).

more than 66% of the votes (see Fig. 2). However, in three cases — Arkhangelsk Oblast (13.09.2015⁵²), Republic of Karelia (10.09.2017⁵³), Chukotka Autonomous Okrug (09.09.2018⁵⁴) — the ranking of electoral preferences was different.

On September 13, 2015, in the early elections of the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, candidates from five political parties competed for the post of the highest official of the region: “United Russia” (UR), “Liberal Democratic Party of Russia” (LDPR), “Communist Party of the Russian Federation” (CPRF), “Just Russia” (SR) and “Communists of Russia”. Igor Anatolyevich Orlov (UR) did not receive an absolute majority of votes in 6⁵⁵ (46.15%) of the 13 polling stations of the Russian Arctic. Moreover, in four cases⁵⁶, second place was taken by the LDPR candidate Olga Sergeevna Ositsyna, and in the remaining two⁵⁷ — by Vasilii Nesterovich Pavlov (CPRF). Thus, in 2015, electoral preferences in the Arctic regions of the Arkhangelsk Oblast were not absolute, and this allowed us to conclude that LDPR and CPRF had a fairly stable position in the region.

Representatives from four political parties took part in the elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia on September 10, 2017: UR, SR, CPRF, LDPR. In one⁵⁸ of the six regions of the Russian Arctic, it was also possible to observe the “loss” of the absolute majority of the UR candidate Artur Olegovich Parfenchikov under the majoritarian system. Second place at this polling station was taken by Irina Vladimirovna Petyaeva (SR). A similar situation occurred in the elections of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug on September 9, 2018, where candidates from four parties competed for the mandate of the highest official of the region: UR, LDPR, CPRF, SR. In two⁵⁹ of the seven electoral districts of the Russian Arctic, Roman Valentinovich Kopin (UR) did not receive an absolute majority of votes, and in the city of Anadyr he completely lost to Yulia Sergeevna Butakova (LDPR).

Undoubtedly, these interesting cases require additional study and specification from the perspective of the specifics of the regions themselves, which is beyond the scope of this study. At the same time, one should not deny the fact that the electoral preferences of voters in our country in general and in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in particular are still influenced by the positions of such political forces as “United Russia”, “Liberal Democratic Party of Russia”, “Communist Party of the Russian Federation” and “Just Russia / Just Russia – For Truth”.

This is confirmed by the analysis of 15 election campaigns in the Arctic regions of the Russian Federation for the period from 2013 to 2022 (see Table 3).

⁵² Early elections for governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast.

⁵³ Elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia.

⁵⁴ Elections of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

⁵⁵ Arkhangelsk, Isakogorskaya; Arkhangelsk, Lomonosovskaya; Arkhangelsk, Oktyabrskaya; Arkhangelsk, Solombalskaya; Arkhangelsk Yuzhnaya; Novodvinskaya.

⁵⁶ Arkhangelsk, Isakogorskaya; Arkhangelsk, Solombalskaya; Arkhangelsk Yuzhnaya; Novodvinskaya

⁵⁷ Arkhangelsk, Lomonosovskaya; Arkhangelsk, Oktyabrskaya.

⁵⁸ Loukhskiy district.

⁵⁹ Anadyrskaya urban, Bilibinskaya.

Table 3
 Ranking of electoral preferences of residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (2013–2022)⁶⁰

Year	2013 ⁶¹					2014 ⁶²					2015 ⁶³	2016 ⁶⁴	2017 ⁶⁵	2018 ⁶⁶			2019 ⁶⁷	2020 ⁶⁸		2022 ⁶⁹
	Number of candidates					Number of candidates					Number of candidates									
Voting results by subject of nomination (subject)	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR
	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR
	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR	UR	LDPR	SR

⁶⁰ Source: compiled by the author.

⁶¹ Elections of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

⁶² Elections of the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast, the Head of the Komi Republic, early elections of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), elections of the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁶³ Early elections of the Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast.

⁶⁴ Early elections of the Head of the Komi Republic.

⁶⁵ Elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia.

⁶⁶ Elections of the Governor of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, early elections of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), elections of the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁶⁷ Elections of the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast

⁶⁸ Elections of the Head of the Komi Republic, Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast.

⁶⁹ Elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia.

⁷⁰ Murmansk Oblast.

⁷¹ Komi Republic.

⁷² Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

⁷³ Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁷⁴ Chukotka Autonomous Okrug.

⁷⁵ Republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

⁷⁶ Krasnoyarsk Krai.

⁷⁷ Komi Republic.

⁷⁸ Arkhangelsk Oblast.

		Voting results by subject of nomination (AZRF)											
		SR	LDPR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	
	Civic Platform	SR	LDPR	LDPR	SR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	UR	Civic Platform
	Right Cause	CPRF	SR	SR	CPRF	SR	SR	SR	SR	SR	UR	UR	Right Cause
	Russian Party of Pensioners for Social Justice	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	UR	Russian Party of Pensioners for Social Justice
	SR	CPRF	Patriots of Russia	Patriots of Russia	CPRF	Patriots of Russia	UR	UR	SR				
	Communists of Russia	CPRF	SR	SR	CPRF	SR	SR	SR	SR	SR	UR	UR	Communists of Russia
	Patriots of Russia	CPRF	SR	SR	CPRF	SR	SR	SR	SR	SR	UR	UR	Patriots of Russia
		CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	UR	
		CPRF	SR	SR	CPRF	SR	SR	SR	SR	SR	UR	UR	
		CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	UR	
Civic Platform	Party of Pensioners	CPRF	SR	SR	CPRF	SR	SR	SR	SR	SR	UR	UR	Party of Pensioners
		CPSU	Green Alternative	Green Alternative	CPSU	Green Alternative	UR	UR					
Green Alternative	Party of Pensioners	LDPR	CPSU	CPSU	LDPR	CPSU	CPSU	CPSU	CPSU	CPSU	UR	UR	Party of Pensioners
	Rodina	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	CPRF	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	LDPR	UR	UR	Rodina

It is curious that candidates from only two political parties — United Russia and LDPR — took part in all 15 election campaigns, SR — in 13, and CPRF — in 11 campaigns. We believe that in the last two cases the regional activity of parties is not so significant, which may be caused by some internal factors that require additional study. It was also found that the electoral preferences of residents of the Russian Arctic did not coincide with the voting results for the constituent

entity of the Russian Federation in the elections of the Head of the Komi Republic and the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai in 2014, although in other respects the ranking positions were similar (see Table 3).

Determining the specifics of the electoral behavior of residents of the Russian Arctic in the gubernatorial elections of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation, it can be argued that mainly its adherence to the ideas of the main players does not differ from the electoral preferences in the region. However, it is interesting to note how “atypical” candidates from other political parties became more active in different electoral cycles, which in the total amounted to 10 out of 15 cases (66.66%). Moreover, in some regions, their candidates won against representatives from the CPRF, LDPR, SR (in 2014 this happened in the elections in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia) and in the Krasnoyarsk Krai). It is also curious that out of four registered candidates for the elections of the Head of the Komi Republic in 2020, two belonged to “atypical” political forces (the Communist Party of Social Justice and the Green Alternative), which indicates a weak position of Communist Party of the Russian Federation and Just Russia in the region (see Table 3).

All this forced to pay attention to those voters who came to the elections but did not vote for any of the proposed candidates.

Invalid ballots or voting for a candidate “against all”?

Electoral statistics show that there are invalid ballots at all analyzed polling stations of the Russian Arctic. One can only assume for what reason a citizen at the polling station spoiled a ballot paper.

It is noteworthy that in 2006, by decision of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, the item “Against all” was excluded from the ballot papers⁷⁹. The official justification for this decision was the fact of saving budget funds for re-elections in the event that the candidate “against all” gets more votes than the real candidate with the most votes. However, electoral preferences for a given candidate demonstrate the degree of support for registered candidates. Since the voter does not have the opportunity to vote for a candidate “against all”, we assume that one of the reasons for the damage to ballots in the elections under consideration for the head of the highest official in the region is this fact, as well as a possible reason for protest voting, when neither one of the registered candidates did not suit the voter.

In this regard, the average values of the number of invalid ballots at polling stations were determined for the constituent entities of the Russian Federation and regions of the Russian Arctic (see Fig. 3) and the degree of ranking of candidates, taking into account the conditionally desig-

⁷⁹ Federal'nyy zakon ot 12 iyulya 2006 g. № 107-FZ «O vnesenii izmeneniy v otdel'nye zakonodatel'nye akty Rossiyskoy Federatsii v chasti otmeny formy golosovaniya protiv vseh kandidatov (protiv vseh spiskov kandidatov) [Federal Law of July 12, 2006 No. 107-FZ “On amendments to certain legislative acts of the Russian Federation regarding the abolition of the form of voting against all candidates (against all lists of candidates)]. URL: <https://base.garant.ru/12148261/> (accessed 10 February 2023).

nated candidate according to the number of spoiled ballots by the candidate “against all” (see Table 4).

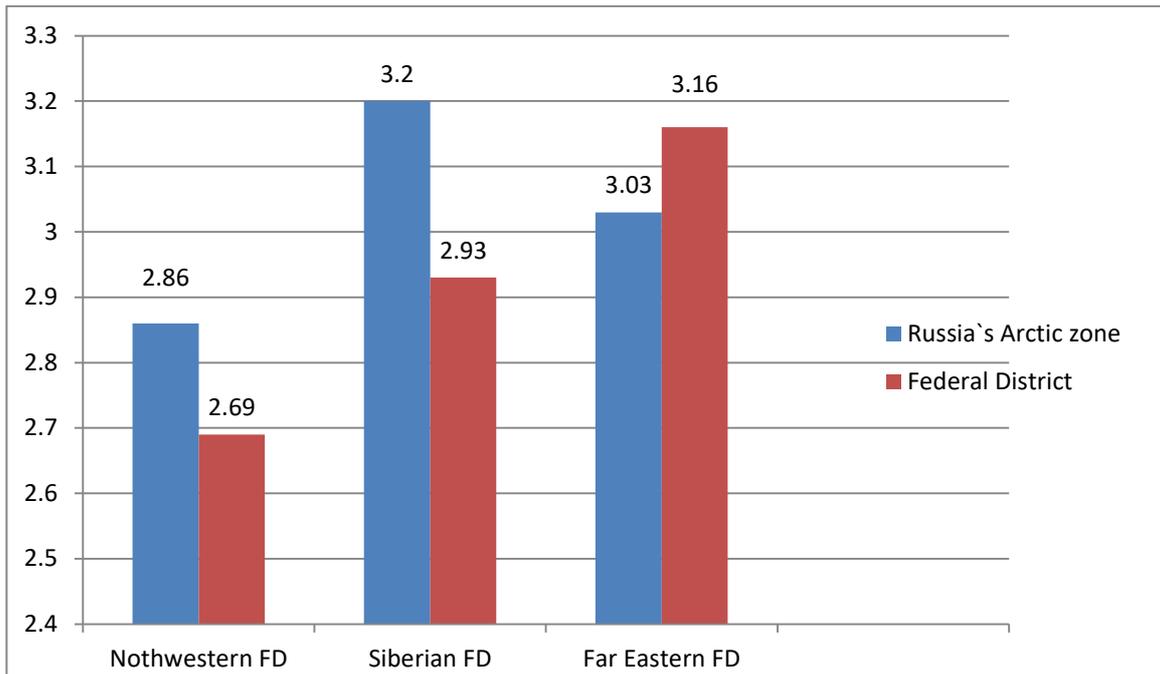


Fig. 3. The number of invalid ballots in the election of the highest official of the constituent entity of the Russian Federation (in %) ⁸⁰.

Table 4

Ranking of candidates in the gubernatorial elections of constituent entities of the Russian Federation (2013–2022) ⁸¹

FD	North-Western FD						Siberian FD		Far Eastern FD						
Subject of the Russian Federation	Murmansk Oblast		Republic of Karelia		Arkhangelsk Oblast		Komi Republic		Krasnoyarsk Krai		Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)		Chukotka Autonomous Okrug		
Elections	14.09.2014	08.09.2019	10.09.2017	11.09.2022	13.09.2015	13.09.2020	14.09.2014	18.09.2016	13.09.2020	14.09.2014	09.09.2018	14.09.2014	09.09.2018	08.09.2013	09.09.2018
% of invalid ballots (average value)	2.12	3.13	2.79	2.53	2.18	1.54	1.87	4.45	4.55	1.73	4.14	1.87	3.76	2.97	4.06
	2.62		2.66		1.86		3.62		2.93		2.81		3.51		
	2.69						2.93		3.16						

⁸⁰ Source: compiled by the author based on data from the Central Election Commission of the Russian Federation.

⁸¹ Source: compiled by the author.

Lost to a candidate “against everyone”	Ranking a candidate “against all”	Number of candidates ⁸³	% of invalid ballots (average value) ⁸²			
			3.03	3.20	2.86	2.92
-	6	6	2.12	2.62	3.33	3.68
5) SR 6) Party of Pensioners 7) Civic Platform	4	7	3.13	3.33	2.98	2.36
-	5	5	3.68	1.88	1.40	1.35
5) LDPR 6) Rodina	4	6	2.98	3.62	4.74	4.77
-	6	6	2.36	3.20	2.30	4.11
7) Green Alternative	6	7	1.40	2.55	3.26	2.97
6) Right Cause	5	6	1.35	3.51	4.06	
6) Patriots of Russia	5	6	4.74	3.20	1.85	
5) Green Alternative	4	5	4.77	3.03	3.26	
6) SR	5	6	2.30	3.20	2.97	
-	4	4	4.11	3.03	2.97	
5) LDPR 6) Russian Party of Pensioners for Social Justice	4	6	1.85	3.03	2.97	
5) LDPR	4	5	3.26	3.03	2.97	
-	4	4	2.97	3.03	2.97	
-	5	5	4.06	3.03	2.97	

Although the number of invalid ballots was slightly higher in the AZRF regions in general compared to other polling stations in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, AZ residents in the Far Eastern Federal District were less likely to spoil ballots than in other districts, thus demonstrating a more loyal attitude towards registered candidates.

In addition, the data obtained made it possible to determine the level ratio of indicators of invalid ballots to the number of votes for real candidates:

- low (from 0.00% to 1.99%);
- average (from 2.00% to 2.99%);
- high (from 3.00% or more).

The calculated average values of the number of invalid ballots for the subjects of the Russian Arctic by federal districts demonstrate the distribution of the attribute as high in the Siberian

⁸² Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

⁸³ Taking into account the candidate “against all”.

and Far Eastern Federal Districts and medium in the Northwestern Federal District. We believe that this may be caused by the public's attention to issues of regional policy pursued in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation, and possible problems of a geopolitical and national nature in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.

It was also noted that in the overwhelming majority of cases, the percentage of invalid ballots in the regions of the Russian Arctic in the first elections was lower than in subsequent ones, with the exception of the Arkhangelsk Oblast and the Republic of Karelia. In addition, the average number of invalid ballots in the elections of the Head of the Komi Republic in 2014 was the lowest compared to other regions of the Russian Arctic, and in 2020, on the contrary, the highest, which together led to the highest average values of the number of invalid ballots in elections in the northwestern republic.

However, based on the number of voters and electoral turnout in the regions of the Russian Arctic, it was not possible to identify the dependent variable of such a quantitative distribution of the attribute. Therefore, the research focused on the electoral preferences of the residents of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. A conditionally designated "against all" candidate was added to the number of registered candidates, based on the number of invalid ballots, and his place in the ranking was determined (see Table 4). As it turned out, the candidate "against all" took the last place only in 6 cases out of 15, in another 6 cases he was second to last, and in 3 cases he surpassed the real candidates in more than two points. Thus, it was possible to identify those political parties that have a vulnerable position in the regions of the Russian Arctic. Along with political forces unpopular among the population, this list included in two cases candidates from "Just Russia" (14.09.2014 — elections of the Governor of the Krasnoyarsk Krai; 08.09.2019 — elections of the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast) and in three cases — candidates from the "Liberal Democratic Party Russia" (14.09.2014 and 09.09.2018 — elections of the Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); 11.09.2022 — elections of the Head of the Republic of Karelia). Despite the small number of cases, attention is drawn to the fact that position of the LDPR is more weakened in the national republic, and position of "Just Russia" — in the region and territory. In part, this allows us to recommend that the leadership of political parties pay more attention to the policies pursued in the regions, especially in the Russian Arctic, and also take into account the administrative status of the Arctic subject in their activities.

Conclusion

By means of multifactor analysis using clustering methodology, it was possible to construct an electoral model of a resident of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the gubernatorial elections in the region. The following comparative indicators were identified:

- electoral turnout;
- voting for a typical candidate (in Russia, this is a candidate nominated by United Russia);

- voting for an atypical candidate (in Russia, this is a candidate nominated by any other political party except United Russia);
- voting for a conditionally designated candidate “against all” as a marker of legitimate support for registered candidates and/or protest voting (see Table 5).

Table 5
Electoral model of the voter in the gubernatorial election of the constituent entity of the Russian Federation (2013–2022)⁸⁴

No.	Indicator	Constituent entity	AZRF
1	Electoral turnout	1	> 1
Electoral preferences			
2	Voting for a typical candidate	1	> 1
3	Voting for an atypical candidate	1	< 1
4	Conditional voting for a candidate “against all”	1	> 1

If we take the value in accordance with the norm as “1”, the electoral model of a resident of the Russian Arctic in the election of the highest official in the region is above the norm in three out of four indicators. Compared to voters of territories containing regions belonging to the Arctic zone, residents of the Russian Arctic more actively participate in regional elections, giving their preferences to candidates from United Russia. At the same time, the number of invalid ballots in the Arctic regions is higher than in the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. When implementing regional policy and especially in electoral practices, one should take into account such a distribution of characteristics in the political behavior of residents of the Russian Arctic.

At the same time, in some regions of the Russian Arctic, a different distribution of characteristics is observed (see Table 6).

Table 6
Electoral model of a resident of the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation in the election of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation (2023–2022)⁸⁵

No.	Constituent entity of the Russian Federation	AZRF region	Electoral turnout	Voting for a typical candidate	Voting for an atypical candidate	Conditional voting for a candidate “against all”
Far Eastern Federal District						
1	Republic of Sakha (Yakutia)	13 — Abyiskiy ulus, Allaikhovskiy ulus, Anabarskiy ulus, Bulunskiy ulus, Verkhnekolymskiy ulus, Verkhoyanskiy district, Zhiganskiy district, Momskiy district, Nizhnekolymskiy district, Olenekskiy district, Srednekolymskiy ulus, Ust-Yanskiy ulus, Eveno-Bytantayskiy national ulus	> 1	> 1	< 1	< 1
2	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	Chukotka Autonomous Okrug	1	1	1	1

⁸⁴ Source: compiled by the author.

⁸⁵ Source: compiled by the author.

North-Western Federal District						
3	Arkhangelsk Oblast	9 — Arkhangelsk city, Mezenskiy district, Novaya Zemlya urban district, Novodvinsk city, Onega district, Primorskiy district, Severodvinsk urban district, Leshukonskiy district, Pinezhskiy district	> 1	> 1	< 1	> 1
4	Murmansk Oblast	Murmansk Oblast	1	1	1	1
5	Republic of Karelia	6 — Belomorskiy district, Kalevalskiy district, Kemskiy district, Kostomuksha urban district, Loukhskiy district, Segezhskiy district	> 1	> 1	< 1	> 1
6	Komi Republic	4 — Vorkuta urban district, Inta urban district, Usinsk urban district, Ust-Tsilemskiy district	< 1	> 1	< 1	1
Siberian Federal District						
7	Krasnoyarsk Krai	4 — Norilsk city, Taimyrskiy Dolgano-Nenets district, Turukhanskiy district, partially Evenki district (10 rural settlements)	> 1	> 1	< 1	> 1

First of all, this concerns the Murmansk Oblast and the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, the entire territories of which belong to the Russian Arctic, and the data obtained can determine the criteria for the electoral model of an Arctic resident in the election of the highest official in the region. In addition, two more cases with a different distribution of the trait were identified. In the Arctic regions of Yakutia, the percentage of invalid ballots is lower than throughout the republic, which indicates a more tolerant attitude towards registered candidates on the part of residents of the Arctic zone of the region. While in Komi this indicator coincides with the electoral preferences of voters in the region, the electoral turnout of residents of the Arctic zone is lower than in the republic as a whole.

Taking into account the data obtained, a separate study of regional cases is required using not only statistical quantitative parameters, but also qualitative methods. We believe that the study of the characteristics of the socio-economic state of the Arctic, the human and resource potential of the region will make it possible to explain the reasons for the electoral behavior of residents of the Russian Arctic in the election of the highest official of a constituent entity of the Russian Federation.

The conflictual nature of modern international relations, the ongoing sanctions regime against Russia, and the migration outflow from the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation complicate the implementation of investment projects in the region and, to a certain extent, increase research attention on the interdisciplinary scientific study of the Russian Arctic, especially at the level of specific regions.

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