International Election Observation: a Sociologist’s View

Dr. Olga Kamenchuk

Director on International Relations
Russian Center on Public Opinion Research (VCIOM)
Voters and Observers: Two Paradoxes

1. Trust in the institute of international observers VERSUS distrust in the existing “options”

   - Face-to-face interviews;
   Sample: 1600 respondents from 40 regions and republics of RF – representative by gender, age, education, occupation, income, political affiliation;
   Margin of error: +/- 3.4%

2. Evaluations of the outcomes of the elections VERSUS potential of elections’ fraud
Trust in the Institute of International Observers
What do you think about international observers being present at the elections in Russia? (close-ended question, two replies maximum) - AGE

**TOTAL**
- **31** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **26** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **7** Their presence doesn't affect anything
- **10** Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- **22** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **17** Undecided

**AGE 18-24 years old**
- **32** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **28** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **6** Their presence doesn't affect anything
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- **22** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **19** Undecided

**25–34 years old**
- **27** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **25** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **6** Their presence doesn't affect anything
- **9** Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- **24** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **17** Undecided

**35–44 years old**
- **30** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **27** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **7** Their presence doesn't affect anything
- **9** Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- **23** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **15** Undecided

**45–59 years old**
- **35** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **28** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **6** Their presence doesn't affect anything
- **14** Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- **19** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **14** Undecided

**60 and more**
- **29** This will help to count the votes fairly
- **24** This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- **8** Their presence doesn't affect anything
- **11** Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- **20** It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- **22** Undecided
What do you think about international observers being present at the elections in Russia? *(close-ended question, two replies maximum)* - *EDUCATION*

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<thead>
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**Positive**
- This will help to count the votes fairly
- This will ensure the "civilized" way of electoral campaign
- Their presence doesn't affect anything

**Negative**
- Their presence is only good to the interests of our Western opponents, which criticize Russia
- It only disturbs the organizers of the elections from their work
- Undecided
Cross: International Observers VS Honesty of Elections

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Honest</th>
<th>Smwht Honest</th>
<th>Smwht Dishonest</th>
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Distrust in the Existing Options
Suppose the results of the elections were contested. Whose evaluations will you trust most? (close-ended question, one reply possible) - AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Central Election Commission</th>
<th>Observers from parties-participants of the elections</th>
<th>OSCE observers</th>
<th>Sociologists</th>
<th>UN observers</th>
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<tr>
<td>60 and more</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- Green: Central Election Commission
- Light green: Observers from parties-participants of the elections
- Yellow: OSCE observers
- Light yellow: Sociologists
- Light violet: UN observers
- Gray: Undecided
Suppose the results of the elections were contested. Whose evaluations will you trust most? (close-ended question, one reply possible) – INTEREST IN POLITICS
Suppose the results of the elections were contested. Whose evaluations will you trust most? (close-ended question, one reply possible) – POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS

Political forces supported

- **United Russia**
  - Central Election Commission: 34
  - Russian independent observers: 19
  - Observers from parties-participants of the elections: 4
  - Sociologists: 7
  - OSCE observers: 4
  - UN observers: 3
  - Undecided: 28

- **LDPR**
  - Central Election Commission: 19
  - Russian independent observers: 14
  - Observers from parties-participants of the elections: 16
  - Sociologists: 8
  - OSCE observers: 3
  - UN observers: 6
  - Undecided: 31

- **Communists**
  - Central Election Commission: 28
  - Russian independent observers: 17
  - Observers from parties-participants of the elections: 11
  - Sociologists: 4
  - OSCE observers: 3
  - UN observers: 2
  - Undecided: 31

- **Democrats**
  - Central Election Commission: 17
  - Russian independent observers: 40
  - Observers from parties-participants of the elections: 2
  - Sociologists: 10
  - OSCE observers: 2
  - UN observers: 7
  - Undecided: 19
Suppose the results of the elections were contested. Whose evaluations will you trust most? (close-ended question, one reply possible) – HONESTY OF ELECTIONS

Elections were honest?

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- Undecided
Suppose the results of the elections were contested. Whose evaluations will you trust most? (close-ended question, one reply possible) - TENDENCY

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1. Trust in the institute of international observers VERSUS distrust in the existing “options”

2. Evaluations of the outcomes of the elections VERSUS potential of elections’ fraud

USA: How likely do you think is that there will be widespread voter fraud in the upcoming presidential elections? *(close-ended question, one reply)*
Problems:

- Lack of trust towards existing institutions with the overall positive outlook towards the idea of international observations

- Post-electoral evaluations do not coincide with the popular opinion

- Current electoral research is done in various countries by various companies with varying methodology (and almost none on international observers) → impossible for comparative analysis
Solutions:

1. WHO?
   • Joint research group

2. WHAT?
   • Evaluation of the existing systems
     - Knowledge
     - Effectiveness
   • What should be changed?
   • How to do this?

3. WHERE?
   • OSCE member states

4. HOW?
   • Structured face-to-face interviews
   • Focus groups
   • Expert surveys
Contact information:

Dr. Olga Kamenchuk

*Director on International Relations*

Russian Center on Public Opinion Research (VCIOM)
Kazakova Str., 16
Moscow, Russia
Tel: +7 495 7480807 (Ext 114)
okamenchuk@wciom.com
inform@wciom.com

www.wciom.ru