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Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev: Political-psychological Insights into Pre-election Castling and Prospects of the Power-holding Tandem

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Abstract

Before and after the 2012 presidential election, journalists and experts continue active discussions about longevity of the Putin-Medvedev tandem, pre-election change of the highest posts in the country, and contradictory forecasts as to how close their cooperation is going to be within the framework of the current configuration of power. The unwavering focus on the relations between Putin and Medvedev is quite clear as the effectiveness of the nation's governance depends on who is in the tandem – partners or rivals. Although the leaders are not always unanimous in their views on domestic and international politics, which is quite natural, they, however, tend to shun confrontation.

In my research I employ the methods of psychobiography, case studies, and content analysis of spontaneous speeches and abstract from mass media materials and forecasts of political analysts, which allows me to make impartial judgements about leadership features of Putin and Medvedev and consider the impact of their personalities on the political activity within the tandem.

The research has shown that each of the politicians has a complex I-concept that lets him respond to challenging and intricate situations with discretion, for the common good, for the national interest. Although Putin and Medvedev belong to two consecutive generations, their personal and political socialization ran in different situations. They were affected by similar agents and institutions of socialization but in different combinations and to different degrees. With strategically similar goals certain differences in their operational code reveal differences in their tactics. Medvedev sides with international economic integration and diplomatic manoeuvres, while Putin strives to step up the might of the Russian defence and political-military consolidation with allies. Differences in their motivation profiles and the absence of power dominant let them view the effectiveness of their activity in their own way and build up their teams to their own liking, – governmental and presidential, respectively. However, neither of them would fight for supremacy, believing that his status in the public mind is the result of his hard work.

The research thus shows that the alliance of Putin and Medvedev is based on their personal compatibility, closeness of values, and readiness to share political responsibility. This is why their tandem-bound cooperation may well be viable and promising.