

Problem of ethnic voting in International discourse

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Abstract

© 2016 r. Problem of ethnic voting is widely reflected in discourse abroad but not among Russian scholars. Certain basic aspects of the problem are mostly discussed in Western literature. First of all, a concept of ethnic voting that is interpreted as polysemantic one. Its main features are vote by the ethnic group for candidate of the same group or ethnic party identified with that group; vote for an ethnically proximate group; vote against a candidate or party not identified with the given ethnic group. The second aspect of the problem is preconditions for ethnic voting: massive involvement of ethnic groups, in particular ethnic minorities, in electoral process; choice of electoral system making for lesser or stronger ethnization of voting; territorial concentration of ethnic group and creation of distinctive districts where an ethnic minority has majority among voters. Third aspect of the problem are reasons for ethnic voting or for its rejecting. The factors conducive to ethnization of election are ethnic solidarity, ethnic mobilization, ethnic discrimination, lack of information about parties' policy and candidates, pursuit of common ethnic interest. And, contrary, some factors are not conducive to ethnization of election: cross-cutting of identities; belief by members of ethnic group that their candidate has no chances; candidate's weak performance; growth of economic and social heterogeneity within ethnic group and some others. At last, a very important aspect of ethnic voting issue is latter's consequences. Of course, ethnic voting is an evidence of ethnic cohesion necessary in the case of ethnic or race discrimination. Ethnic voting is an important condition for political representation of ethnic minorities. However, on other side, it divides and sets off people of different nationalities. There appears a risk of electing not competent candidate. Party striving to base on one ethnic group exposes itself to estrangement from other ethnic groups.

Keywords

Electoral system, Ethnic group, Ethnic minorities, Ethnic voting, Ethnically identical candidate (coethnic), Ethnically proximate groups