

A MODERN VIEW AT THE ETHNIC FACTOR IN THE ELECTORAL STRUGGLE IN THE UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT: The article in a short form examines a modern view of the ethnic factor in the electoral processes in the United States on the example of the presidential elections of the 1970s, 1980s and 1992. The activity of ethnic groups of voters, the main trends in the choice of party affiliation.

KEYWORDS: Voters, electoral process, electoral struggle, racial and ethnic groups, civil rights, African-American voters, Hispanic electorate, political parties.

INTRODUCTION

One of the important features in the electoral process in the United States, both at the state and federal levels, is the attitude of ethnic groups towards candidates from political parties, election programs regarding socio-economic changes that may affect in a positive or negative direction.

In the first quarter of this century, in the electoral process among voters, activity is observed precisely on the part of ethnic groups. It should be noted that representatives of different ethnic groups also put forward their candidacies among the elected.

If until recently it was rare to see a representative from ethnic groups in significant state structures, then for the present this phenomenon has become commonplace. If you look at the history of participation in the electoral processes of ethnic groups, then it takes an active start from the second half of the XX century.

THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Since the second half of the 1950s, the activity of ethnic minorities in the United States has been expressed in the struggle for their civil rights and participation in political life. The importance of the votes of African-American voters manifested itself in the presidential elections of 1960, when John F. Kennedy defeated his rival R. Nixon by a minimum margin of 100,000 votes. American researchers note that John F. Kennedy owed his victory to the votes of African-American voters.

Their votes also played an important role in the 1964 elections, when the issue of black civil rights became one of the main issues in the electoral struggle. In 1976, the voices of black voters, deeply disappointed with the eight-year stay in power of the Republican administration, played an important role in the success of the Democratic Party candidate, John Carter. 90% of African-American voters voted for him [1, p.92]. They brought him victory in a number of southern states, as well as in the state of New York.

The upsurge of civil rights has awakened millions of African-Americans to political life and helped transform this electorate into a formidable political force. The removal of formal barriers to the participation of African Americans in elections made it easier to get to the ballot box in the southern states, where this category of the electorate constitutes a significant part of the population. The role of the voice of African Americans has also increased in the industrial centers of the North, where, as a result of the migration processes of the post-war decades, high concentrations of the black population have developed. According to the 1980 Census, African Americans make up 70.3% of the voting age population of Washington, 50.5% in Birmingham, 50.3% in Baltimore, 41.1% in Cleveland, 35.5% in Chicago, 34.6% in Philadelphia, 27.6 - Charlottes, 22.6 - New York, 18.7 - Boston, 15.8% Los Angeles [2, p.].

The rapid numerical growth of this population group also contributed to the strengthening of the role of African-American votes: in the 70s alone, the number of African-Americans of voting age increased by 44% and amounted to 11.8% of all American voters [3, p.87]. Although this electorate does not have a majority in any state of the country, in a number of states - including four of the five states in the country that give the largest number of electoral votes, California, New York, Texas and Illinois - in the case of a small gap between candidates, their votes can be decisive. The importance of black votes has also increased in congressional, state, and local elections. In 14 constituencies of the South, as well as the central districts of the cities of the

North, black voters today make up the majority, in 86 constituencies - over 20%, and in 110 - at least 15% of the population of voting age [4, p.46].

The previously passive Spanish-speaking minority has also become an impressive bloc of voters that the ruling circles have to reckon with. In the 1970s, Hispanics made up 33.1% of the voting age population of New Mexico, 17.7% of Texas, 16.1% of California, 13.3% of Arizona, 9.8% of Colorado, 8.5% of Florida, 8.3 - New York, 5.8 - Nevada, 5.7% - New Jersey [5, p. 2707].

Hispanics made up over 20% of the voting age population in 40 constituencies across the country. Of these, in 10 - from 30 to 50%, and in nine - over 50% [6, p. 423]. According to calculations made in the early 1970s, a change in the vote of only 6% of Hispanic voters could have a significant impact on the outcome of elections in the states of California, Texas, Illinois and New Mexico, which produced 101 electoral votes out of a minimum of 270 required for election of the president. As The New York Times noted, "The emergence of the Hispanic minority as a powerful political force in the Southwest, Northeast, Florida, and parts of the Midwest has introduced a new and important element to the political equation".

The political activation of ethnic groups of European origin contributed to the increased attention of Republicans and Democrats to this significant part of the electorate, which, according to American researchers, includes up to 30 million voters. A significant proportion of them are concentrated in the 10 states that give the largest number of electoral votes.

The special strategic importance of this group of the electorate is determined by the fact that part of it - according to rough estimates by American researchers, numbering about 7 million voters - does not have a firm party affiliation, and its transition to the side of one or another candidate can play an important role or a decisive role in his victory or defeat. Thus, in the 1972 presidential election, dissatisfaction with McGovern's program brought more than 1 million voters to the camp of R. Nixon's supporters, who traditionally support Democrats of Catholic ethnic groups, a significant part of which are immigrants from Eastern and Southern European countries. In the 1976 presidential election, 7 million voters belonging to white ethnic groups switched from Republicans to Democrats (Carter), which was one of the factors that helped the latter's candidate take the White House.

The increasing importance of racial and ethnic groups in political life is not only reflected in the results of their voting. Both parties now, more than before, have to reckon with their demands in the conduct of election campaigns. Weekly "Y.S. News and World Report" acknowledged that

“special interest blocs of voters are making significant changes to American political life, forcing candidates to seek new methods of electoral struggle”.

Support for candidates by racial and ethnic voters is increasingly dependent on the positions of politicians on issues of concern to these voters.

For racial and ethnic groups, as, indeed, for the electorate as a whole, a weakening of loyalty towards both parties are characteristic. This process, which reflects a more critical attitude of Americans towards the politics of parties, dissatisfaction with its results, a certain increase in their political consciousness, is manifested in noticeable “overflows” of part of the voters from one party to another in almost every national election in 1964, 58.5% of African Americans took part, 1968 -57.6, 1972 -52.1, 1976 -48.7, 1980 - 50.5%. In 1972, 37.5% of Hispanic Americans participated in the elections, in 1976 -31.8%, and in 1980 - only 29.9% [7, p.VI].

The traditional ties of minorities with the Democratic Party have somewhat weakened. An example of this is the fluctuations in the sentiments of the Hispanic electorate. In the presidential elections of 1956, 1960 and 1964. about 95% of the Hispanic Americans participating in them voted for the candidates of the Democratic Party [8, p.200]. However, dissatisfaction with the practical results of the activities to solve the problems facing Hispanics generates a gradual departure of Hispanics from the Democratic Party. Its first signs appeared as early as 1968, when 10% of Hispanics (instead of the usual 5% or less) voted for the Republican candidate.

Presidential elections in 1992 in %.

% of 100 total		1992		
		Clinton	Bush	Perot
	Ethnic groups			
	White	40	39	21
	Black	83	11	7
	Hispanic	62	24	14

Source: Hegel Bowles. The Government and politics of London W1P9HE. The United States. Tottinhem Court Road National Journal. 7th November 1992.

CONCLUSION

Thus, based on the foregoing, the result of the active manifestation for their political rights of African-Americans and all behind them and other ethnic minorities began to bear fruit. Since the 70s of the XX century, candidates from ethnic minorities began to be nominated at the state and federal levels, and if at that time these were isolated cases, in our time it has become quite commonplace, and moreover, the election of the 44th US President Barack Obama is the fruit of African-American struggles for political rights that began with active participation in local and federal elections.

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