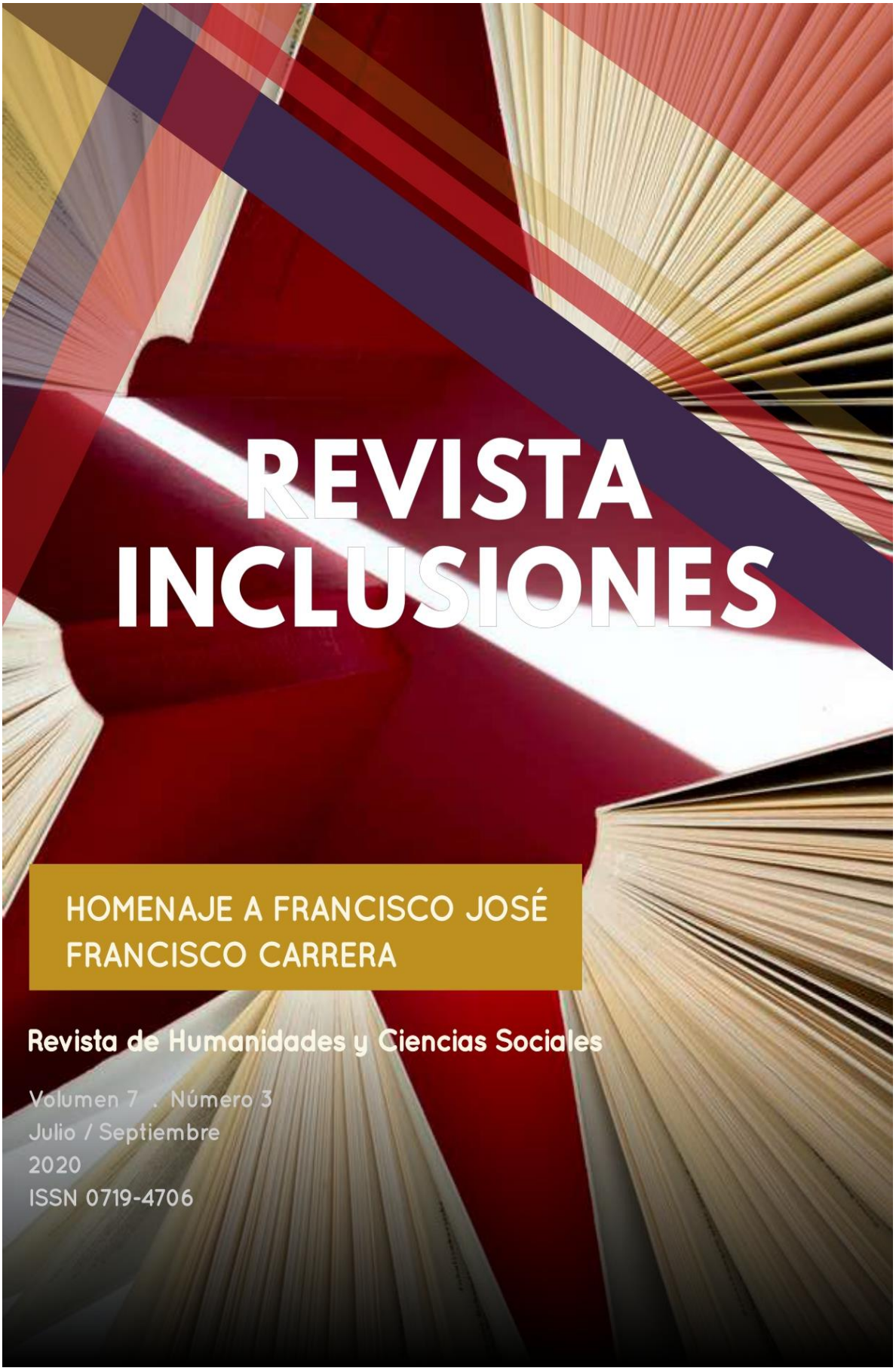
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THE VECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT OF AMERICAN SOCIETY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: THE MELTING POT OR MULTICULTURALISM?

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Abstract

The sociocultural policy of the United States was originally aimed at erasing ethnocultural and ethnolinguistic differences, persistently cultivating a unified American culture and values. Cultural uniformity was seen as the key to national unity and state-territorial integrity. In accordance with this, Americanization was taken as the basis of state policy at the beginning of the 20th century, which took the form of an educational campaign, in which English was given the role of the most important means of Americanization – the process of immigrant entry into American society. The purpose of the article is a comparative analysis of the concepts of “melting pot” and multiculturalism as ways to implement Americanization. *Results of the study:* The melting pot as one of the main paradigms of US ethnic development, formation of a single national identity, and cultural and biological mixing proved to be unrealizable due to racial discrimination and ethnic prejudices, while multiculturalism led to cultural and religious pluralism, which, as history shows, leads to many problems in society. The scientific novelty of the study is associated with a negative assessment of both ways of development of American society: neither of them led to an ideal result. *Conclusions:* What this vector will be like, depends on the welfare of the nation, nature of national-state education, US foreign policy, and its international relations. The prognosis for American society of the 21st century is as follows: the multicultural state of society with a predominance of Latin American traditions.

Keywords

Multiculturalism – Foreign policy – International relations – National identity

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Introduction

Immigration had a direct impact on the formation of the American nation, ethnic composition of the population, and historical and cultural image of Americans. Throughout the history of the country's development, Americans have been looking for the answer to the question: who are they? Is there an American identity? Is a multicultural and multinational society a universal model of integration? The famous American political scientist S. P. Huntington at the beginning of the 21st century suggested reconsidering the issue of American identity: "Is the United States, as some have argued, a 'universal nation' based on values common to all humanity and in principle embracing all people? <…> Are we <…> a mosaic or a melting pot?"[1]. There is a debate between scholars from around the world about these two ways of forming an American identity[2].

The founders of the United States of America laid the foundation for the official policy of the state – the integration of immigrants into a single American society, reduction of cultural differences, and international compromise. The dominant role in the state was assigned to Anglo-Saxon legal norms and Protestant values and morality. At the time of the formation of the US, the ancestors of almost half of the colonists came from England and about 30% of the settlers came from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Holland, France, and Portugal. Black people accounted for 20% of the population[3]. Until the end of the 19th century, immigrants arrived in the US from Western and Northern Europe, but at the end of the century, the ethnic composition of immigration changed: a new wave came from Eastern European countries, Italy, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Greece, and Russia. In the 20th century, the country's population was replenished by immigrants from Asia and Latin America. Immigrants had to abandon their language, traditions, and value system, adopt Anglo-Saxon norms and traditions, and adapt to existing orders. As the first American president G. Washington said, "by an intermixture with our people, they, or their descendants, get assimilated to our customs, measures, laws: in a word soon become one people"[4]. The words that immigration will ultimately lead to the destruction of social strength and national culture and jeopardize a sense of community of history and unity belong to the great American enlightener B. Franklin[5]. T. Roosevelt stated that immigrants and their descendants should abandon their own cultural heritage[6]. In his words, "There is room here for only 100% Americanism"[7].

Methods

The research methods were the analysis of the historical and political and sociocultural development of American society, as well as the analysis of statistical data,

[1] S. Huntington, Who are we? The challenges to America's national identity (New Delhi: Simon & Schuster, 2004).
[2] N. I. Anufrieva; E. A. Anufriev; I. S. Kazakova y M. V. Pereverzeva, "National socio-cultural values of the USA and its reflection in musical culture", Opcion Vol: 34 num 18 (2018): 1902–1928.
[3] V. A. Tishkov, Etnodemodraficheskiie issledovaniia. Etnologiia v SSHA i Kanade (Moscow: RAN. In-t etnologii i antropologii, 1989).
[4] A. Schlesinger, "The cult of ethnicity, good and bad. A historian argues that multiculturalism threatens the ideal that find America", Time Vol: 138 num 1 (1991): 121.
[5] C. P. Norman, "Commentary", The American Jewish Committee Vol: 89 num 4 (1990): 21.
[6] A. Mann. The One and the Many. Reflection on the American Identity (Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1979), 112.
[7] T. Jacoby. Immigration Nation (Foreign Affairs. 2006).

the causes and consequences of the conduct of a particular social policy of the state. We analyzed current census reports, chronicles, as well as scientific studies of American society, in terms of population and size of a race and nationality for the period 1990-2010. Analysis and evaluation were conducted in terms of the relationship between legislation and the results of sociocultural assimilation of different racial and national groups in American society. Researchers of the processes of implementing the concepts of a multinational state take different approaches as a basis. For example, Leslie, Bono, Kim, and Beaver, use random effects meta-analysis (k = 296) to investigate the effects of 3 identity-blind ideologies – colorblindness, meritocracy, and assimilation – and 1 identity-conscious ideology – multiculturalism – on 4 indicators of high quality intergroup relations – reduced prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping and increased diversity policy support[8]. Stepinski and Dmowska focuse on assessing levels of racial segregation at the spatial scale of a metropolitan area[9]. However, this study discusses the process of the social and historical development of various ethnic groups in the US in the 19-20 centuries, the events of domestic and foreign policies, and their impact on the formation of the national identity of Americans. A causal logic is built between the intentions of the government and the real social and historical conditions that contributed to or hindered the achievement of goals, as well as the circumstances that determined the course of the development of American society.

Results

The Americanization movement in its development went through three stages: from the end of the 19th century to 1914, the period of the First World War, and the post-war years. However, already in the 1920s, the impossibility of complete Americanization became apparent: everywhere in America “ethnic subcultures continued to live quietly behind the facade of Americanization, preserving their culture, values associated with home, family, and community”[10]. Thus, the Germans defended their cultural identity, using language, church, school, and the press as a means of counteracting forced Americanization. In the urban centers of the north-east of the country, the Irish, as a rule, living in slums, developed their own group consciousness and led a socially isolated life. The Native Americans in the reservations maintained a strong commitment to their tribal culture and group identity. They did not integrate into American society and their culture did not transform into the white culture[11]. African Americans were separated by barriers from white America and formed their own network of organizations and institutions and social world[12].

Later, intellectuals identified the realization of the ideas of the “melting pot”, the fusion of different peoples, and the creation of a supranational identity as the main task of American society. The concept of the melting pot became the national symbol of the US in

[8] L. M. Leslie; J. E. Bono; Y. Kim y G. R. Beaver, “On Melting Pots and Salad Bowls: A Meta-Analysis of the Effects of Identity-Blind and Identity-Conscious Diversity Ideologies”, Journal of Applied Psychology Vol: 105 num 5 (2020): 453–471.

[9] T. F. Stepinski y A. Dmowska, “Imperfect melting pot – Analysis of changes in diversity and segregation of US urban census tracts in the period of 1990–2010”, Computers, Environment and Urban Systems Vol: 76 (2019): 101–109.

[10] R. Alba, “Assimilation's Quiet Tide”, Public Interest num 119 (1995).

[11] D. L. Boxberger, “Individualism or Tribalism? The Dialect of Indian Policy”, The American Indian Quarterly Vol: XV num (1991): 29–31.

[12] M. Gordon, Assimilation in American Life. The Role of Race, Religion and National Origin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964).

the 20th century. The melting pot was named one of the main paradigms of US ethnic development, according to which, the formation of a single national identity was to go according to the formula of fusion, mixing of all ethnic groups and racial minorities. It was assumed that their cultural and biological mixing would reduce the potential for conflict. However, this process turned out to be complex and lengthy. Mixed marriages as an important channel of natural biological assimilation did not occur on a large scale due to racial discrimination and ethnic prejudice. The melting pot was successful in terms of popular culture: by the mid-20th century, a massive national culture had developed in the US that was different from the old Anglo-American one, becoming more than just the sum of different cultures.

Along with the integration processes in American society in the 1960s, for sociopolitical reasons, there was an increase in ethnic and cultural self-determination of racial-ethnic groups. Black and other nonwhite citizens, remaining outside the melting pot, demanded their inclusion in American society based on equality in all areas of socioeconomic and political life, while recognizing the right to cultural identity. The tension grew and the conflict intensified. The government adopted civil rights legislation and other anti-discrimination measures that resulted in black and other minorities gaining full membership status as a constituent group of the American people. However, barely having time to be outlined, this unity in a multitude began to disintegrate. The civil rights revolution in the second half of the 20th century turned into evolution towards a society organized on ethno-racial grounds.

National identity gave way to racial, ethnic, and other identities. The state was forced to take measures based on the consideration of racial origin in the distribution of public goods. In the 1960-70s, the government developed “affirmative action” programs, which provided benefits to racial and ethnic groups in hiring, receiving federal contracts, and entering universities. Radio and television programs were established in the languages of immigrants from different countries, projects to study ethnic and cultural heritage were implemented, representatives of racial and ethnic groups were appointed to senior government posts. All this was intended to demonstrate the diversity of the US population, officially encouraged the cultural diversity of society, and recognized the concept of multilingualism. The paradigm has gradually changed – the Anglo-Saxon assimilation vision of society has given way to a pluralistic vision, which included the culture and values of non-European peoples. The melting pot was replaced by multiculturalism, which implies the absence of a single national community.

The concept of multiculturalism has developed under the influence of sociodemographic changes and an increase in the volume of immigration. According to statistics[13], from 1961 to 1980, more than 7.8 million people received permission to enter the country, which is 50% more than in the previous two decades. Immigration from Great Britain, Germany, and Italy sharply decreased. Among immigrants, citizens of Mexico, Korea, the Philippines, Cuba, India, Vietnam, Jamaica, and the Dominican Republic dominated. During this period, 24.6% arrived in the USA from Europe, 25.8% from Asia, and 39.9% from Latin America[14]. During the peak of immigration in 1980, 85% of immigrants came from Asia and Latin America and only 6% from Europe. The diversity grew, the ethnic composition changed, and in some cities and states whites became a

[13] Statistical Yearbook of Immigration and Naturalization Service (Washington, 1991).
[14] Statistical Yearbook of Immigration…

minority[15]. The colored population became a majority in Detroit, El Paso, Washington, New York, Atlanta, San Antonio, and others. An ethnic minority is growing from Southeast Asia and the Pacific islands. The Spanish-speaking community is growing particularly fast, becoming the largest in numbers in the 2000s. From 1970 to 1990, its share increased from 4.5 to 8.2%.

Today, in 18 states, Hispanic Americans make up the largest ethnic minority outnumbering African Americans. In the 21st century, the volume of Hispanic immigration only increased. In 2000, Hispanics accounted for 12% of the total population of the country and after a couple of years, their number increased by another 10%[16]. The increase in the number of Hispanics is also due to illegal immigration, which is only increasing. By 2050, their share is projected to increase by another 23%. More than half are immigrants from Mexico, then Cubans, Dominicans, Filipinos, etc. This group is characterized by a significant number of young people and a high birth rate. The high concentration of immigrants in the states of California, New York, Texas and Florida can have serious social, cultural, and political consequences. In May 2001, President G. W. Bush spoke English and Spanish in his first radio address to the people. In 2003, the debate of presidential candidates also went on in two languages.

The rise in illegal immigration and the attacks of September 11, 2001 forced the government to take action and revise its immigration policy. To reduce illegal immigration and solve the problem of labor shortages in 2004, G. W. Bush adopted a program on temporary admission of unskilled workers on a legal basis, which provided the right to all illegal immigrants already living to legalize their presence in the country[17]. As a result, by 2008, the US population had increased by 23 million, mostly due to immigrants. As a result, fear has begun to emerge among the American population that America is losing internal unity and that with the growth of Mexican immigration, which is increasingly expressing its claim, the centrifugal tendency is gaining strength. The policy of multiculturalism is now considered as a historically determined need for the development of Canadian society in the second half of the 20th century and is also taken as the basis of social policy in European countries. Multiculturalism leads to cultural and religious pluralism, which, as history has shown, leads to many problems in society. So has multiculturalism turned the US into a symbol, a model of the whole world?

Discussion

Debate over issues of identity and culture of the US flare up in connection with the question of the possibility of accepting new immigrants for the economic effect. Therefore, E. Hodaj notes that the “need to transcend alienation, as well as the preoccupation to express belongingness in some naturalistic American premises, will hint at a relevant, analogous strive for identification to that of the migrants”[18]. At the same time, fundamental issues of national identity and culture are addressed. Concerns that cultural and linguistic diversity within the state can jeopardize the fundamental foundations are expressed by

[15] America's New Melting Pot. U.S. News and World Report num 3. April 29. 1996.
[16] S. Huntington, The Hispanic Challenge. Foreign Policy. 2004.
[17] R. Walsk, Bush Reaches Out of Hispanics with an Election Year Plan to Ease Immigration Law US News and World Report. 2004.
[18] E. Hodaj, “The Jewish salad bowl within the American melting pot: A literary contemplation”, Folia Linguistica et Litteraria Vol: 27 (2019): 41–48.

many politicians and scholars. In 2004, S. Huntington, in the article titled "The Spanish Challenge," wrote that "a constant influx of Spanish immigrants threatens the division of the United States into two peoples, two cultures, and two languages. In contrast to immigrant groups in the past, Mexicans and other Hispanics did not assimilate into mainstream American culture, instead forming enclaves from Los Angeles to Miami, and rejected the Anglo-Protestant values that created the American dream"[19].

Patriots were worried about the unity of the country and society based on the ideas of freedom, law, and respect for human rights. However, American national identity is evolving and requires the close attention of scholars. Today, American national identity is faced with the problem of weakening the very significance of national identity, undermining the power of key elements of American identity and culture with the ideas of multiculturalism, delaying the process of assimilation of Latin Americans and huge immigration, most of which speak a common non-English language.

The existing multiculturalism, the Spanishization of the southwestern US, and the spread of bilingualism are of concern to historians, sociologists, and political scientists. As Stepinski and Dmowska note, during the 1990-2010 period urban tracts increased their diversity in line with diversity increases of entire metro areas, but unlike metros, they also increased their levels of segregation. They hypothesize that an increased tendency for the residences of people of the same race to spatially aggregate on the tract scale is the result of individuals exercising preferences regarding their neighbors in reaction to the nationwide increase in diversity of the American population[20]. According to Kennedy, Mexican Americans will soon have "greater cohesion and critical mass, and if they want, they can maintain their distinctive culture on an unlimited scale They can do something that none of the previous immigrant groups could dream of, namely, challenge the existing cultural, political, legislative, commercial, and educational systems to fundamentally change not only the language, but also the institutions themselves, where they work"[21]. P. Buchanan, in his book "The Death of the West: How Dying Populations and Immigrant Invasions Imperil Our Country and Civilization", shares these concerns and proposes a series of measures to limit legal immigration, deport illegal immigrants, and protect the borders of the state to save America.

Conclusions

Multicultural America today is an inevitable reality. Many citizens have a negative attitude towards assimilation, as evidenced by opinion polls[22]. The country is again experiencing a large wave of immigration. The battle continues between the defenders of the melting pot and those who fear that millions of outsiders will change the nature of society. A group of pro-immigration multiculturalists is singled out who call the traditional idea of assimilation racist, aggressive, "forcing immigrants to live according to the standards of a different culture"[23].

[19] S. Huntington, The Hispanic Challenge (Foreign Policy, 2004).
[20] T. F. Stepinski y A. Dmowska, "Imperfect melting pot – Analysis of changes in diversity and segregation of US urban census tracts in the period of 1990–2010", Computers, Environment and Urban Systems Vol: 76 (2019): 101–109.
[21] S. Huntington, The Hispanic Challenge…
[22] C. P. Norman, "Commentary", The American Jewish Committee Vol: 89 num 4 (1990): 124.
[23] V. Cannato "Assimilation and its discontents", Public Interest num 154 (2004): 124–149.

Despite the negative attitude towards the fact of assimilation in society, calls are now being made to revive the ideal of the melting pot and the ethics of assimilation. N. Glazer pointed to the need to recognize and promote the assimilation of peoples into American culture[24]. However, the idea of assimilation is replaced by the slogans of multiculturalism. America hesitates to make a choice. Statistics show that mixed marriages occur among various ethnic and racial groups and minorities. A trend toward an increase in mixed marriages is observed among African Americans: from 2.3% among men over 55 to 11% between the ages of 15-24. Interracial marriages between blacks and whites are more common among people with higher education. Among Asians, the increase in mixed marriages is even more noticeable: from 8.7 to 30%. The level of mixed marriages among young American Jews reaches 50% and among Italians and Poles 60%[25]. About 15% of Hispanic men are married to women of different ethnicity and among USA-born Hispanics, around 25% are in mixed marriages[26]. All these facts indicate the process of assimilation in American society.

A proponent of the revival of the melting pot, researcher T. Jacoby, believes that immigration should not be seen as an insoluble problem. If it is necessary for the economy, it requires finding a way to effectively solve it. Moreover, there is no fear that immigrants cannot become Americans; much needs to be done to promote and help immigrants assimilate[27]. Nevertheless, what is the future of the melting pot? Edwards and Kim are sure, that “African American pastors face challenges to their authenticity as black religious leaders for leading multiracial congregations. Asian American pastors experience a sense of ambiguity that stems from a lack of clarity about what it means for them to lead multiracial congregations as Asian Americans. Both are left to navigate a racialized society where they are perceived and treated as inferior to their white peers, which has profound personal and social implications for them[28]. The development of American national identity over two centuries shows an objective picture of its transition to a qualitatively new demographic state.

The vector of the future development of the American nation in the 21st century is not defined: the melting pot or multiculturalism? Neither of them led to an ideal result. However, multiculturalism is more promising because it is associated with high-quality intergroup relations. Smith, Lyon and O’Grady discovered that Americans “demonstrate ethical bracketing in that they considered religious and spiritual issues favorably within the framework of multicultural counseling”, which speaks about their openness to “spiritual and religious diversity”[29]. Futurological forecasts regarding American society of the 21st century are close to its multicultural state with a predominance of Latin American traditions in the coming decades. Without a doubt, the welfare of the nation and its prosperity, as well as the nature of the national-state formation, depend on what this vector will be like. Moreover, the US foreign policy and its international relations also depend on it.

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[24] N. Glazer, Do we need the census race question? Public Interest Num 149 (2002): 21–31.

[25] E. Todd. Posle imperii. Pax Americana – nachalo kontsa (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniia, 2004) y R. Levine, “Assimilation, Past and Present”, Public Interest num 159 (2005): 93–108.

[26] R. Levine, Assimilation, Past and Present…

[27] T. Jacoby, Immigration Nation (Foreign Affairs, 2006).

[28] K. L. Edwards y R. Kim, “Estranged Pioneers: The Case of African American and Asian American Multiracial Church Pastors”, Sociology of Religion: A Quarterly Review Vol: 80 num 4 (2019): 456–477.

[29] T. B. Smith; R. C. Lyon y K. O'Grady, “Integration or Separation? Addressing Religious and Spiritual Issues in Multicultural Counseling: A National Survey of College Counselors”, Journal of College Counseling Vol: 22 num 3 (2019): 194–210.

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