



ҚАЗАҚСТАН РЕСПУБЛИКАСЫ
БІЛІМ ЖӘНЕ ҒЫЛЫМ МИНИСТРЛІГІ
МИНИСТЕРСТВО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ И НАУКИ
РЕСПУБЛИКИ КАЗАХСТАН
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN



Л. Н. ГУМИЛЕВ АТЫНДАҒЫ
ЕУРАЗИЯ ҰЛТТЫҚ УНИВЕРСИТЕТІ
ЕВРАЗИЙСКИЙ НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ИМ. Л. Н. ГУМИЛЕВА
GUMILYOV EURASIAN
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY



Студенттер мен жас ғалымдардың
«Ғылым және білім - 2015»
атты X Халықаралық ғылыми конференциясының
БАЯНДАМАЛАР ЖИНАҒЫ

СБОРНИК МАТЕРИАЛОВ
X Международной научной конференции
студентов и молодых ученых
«Наука и образование - 2015»

PROCEEDINGS
of the X International Scientific Conference
for students and young scholars
«Science and education - 2015»

УДК 001:37.0
ББК72+74.04
Ғ 96

Ғ96

«Ғылым және білім – 2015» атты студенттер мен жас ғалымдардың X Халық. ғыл. конф. = X Межд. науч. конф. студентов и молодых ученых «Наука и образование - 2015» = The X International Scientific Conference for students and young scholars «Science and education - 2015». – Астана: <http://www.eni.kz/ru/nauka/nauka-i-obrazovanie-2015/>, 2015. – 7419 стр. қазақша, орысша, ағылшынша.

ISBN 978-9965-31-695-1

Жинаққа студенттердің, магистранттардың, докторанттардың және жас ғалымдардың жаратылыстану-техникалық және гуманитарлық ғылымдардың өзекті мәселелері бойынша баяндамалары енгізілген.

The proceedings are the papers of students, undergraduates, doctoral students and young researchers on topical issues of natural and technical sciences and humanities.

В сборник вошли доклады студентов, магистрантов, докторантов и молодых ученых по актуальным вопросам естественно-технических и гуманитарных наук.

УДК 001:37.0
ББК 72+74.04

ISBN 978-9965-31-695-1

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ұлттық университеті, 2015

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УДК 323:008(73)

MULTICULTURALISM IN THE USA

Әлмұханбетова Перизат Санатқызы

peri.s@bk.ru

Студент Факультета Международных Отношений Евразийского Национального
Университета им. Л.Н.Гумилева

Научный руководитель – Н.В. Милованова

Multiculturalism refers to the evolution of cultural diversity within a jurisdiction, introduced by its selection policies and institutionalized by its settlement policies.

As a descriptive term, multiculturalism refers to the selection policies that formed the demography of a specific place. This may have come about endogenously through the conjunction of two or more ethnic groups into one jurisdiction (Canada) or exogenously through immigration from different jurisdictions around the world (Australia).

As a prescriptive term, multiculturalism refers to one type of settlement policy that promotes the institutionalization of cultural diversity. This is often contrasted to other settlement policies such as social integration , cultural assimilation and racial segregation. Multiculturalism has been described as a "salad bowl" or "cultural mosaic" rather than a "melting pot".

In the first part of this two-part essay on the anti-multiculturalism movement in Europe and United States, I attempted to carefully note that the backlash against multiculturalism was far more niched against specific groups—the Muslims in Europe and the UK and the Hispanics in the United States.

I did not mean to suggest, however, that there aren't other groups that are singled out in those cultures. For example, ever since 9/11, Muslim communities in the US have certainly experienced bigotry in their many attempts to purchase buildings or to obtain zoning rights to build mosques. And the historic persecution of the Roma(Gypsies) in Europe recently prompted a strong list of specific recommendations from a European Commission to counter that prejudice.

In the second part of this two-part blog post, I will focus entirely on multiculturalism in the United States.

In America, multiculturalism is still not a prominent policy established at the federal level. The efforts of these prominent figures in promoting an egalitarian society in America gave rise to a new wave towards a sustained change in socio-economic development. America has always been proud to practice freedom of thought and religion. It gave equal opportunity to everyone, irrespective of culture and place. In the last few years, the influx of Latinos and Asians has rapidly increased. To deal with this, people must create a multicultural society based on equality, and should accept American history on racism.

Census showed that Asian-Americans are the fastest growing group in America, and 13% of

the total population is Hispanic. Today, America has become amalgamated with mixed culture, comprising immigrants, natives, and minorities, metaphorically representing the melting pot. Some of the distinctive characteristics of American society are: multiculturalism being accepted as a fair system by law, and tolerance towards people accepted as a means for better adaptability.

This ideology had far-flung effects. It not only brought about a change of social layers, but also made the citizen enjoy equal rights and liberty. It had a dominant theme in the educational and intellectual sector. This led to the demand for rights from people of various communities and backgrounds. Oppressed classes like gays, lesbians, elderly people, and downtrodden classes also put forth their rights.

The most prominent effect was felt in the reformation of the educational system. Oppressed classes like the African-Americans were given equal recognition in educational institutions. In the business, trade, and corporate sectors, the right to equal participation was given to people from different backgrounds.

I think that multiculturalism in the USA was accepted as an official policy, that gave recognition to multiple citizenship within the country. The government supported television shows, radio programs, and newspapers in minority languages. It also rendered support to minority celebrations, holidays, music, art, and festivals. Liberty in marriage and judiciary laws were also enforced by the US constitution, depending upon ethnicity. Overseas trade was encouraged.

Wearing traditional dresses in educational institutions was accepted. In the hiring process, much fairer policies were accepted. Racism or discrimination in schools and colleges was a punishable offense. Introduction of new textbooks with multicultural perspective was one of positive aspects of multiculturalism. Emphasis was laid on subjects such as history, sociology, philosophy, and art and literature of different cultures. Scholarships were funded by the government for higher studies. Representation of multicultural nationals in politics, engineering, science, and technology was a significant improvement in general.

This originated in the 1950s, during the civil rights movement. The movement brought on surface the issues regarding discrimination, inequality, and oppression. People placed their demands on political and social institutions for their social recognition. In the late 19th century and early 20th century, George Washington Carver, Charles H. Wesley, W.E.B. DuBoi, and William James played an instrumental role in promoting multiculturalism in the United States, and espoused the idea of a 'plural society'.

The United States doesn't have a unique culture. In fact it is the world's most multicultural country. The country has a lot of different cultures, and not one is similar to the others. No culture is better or worse than another. USA is different from other countries because that in this country are living representatives of all cultures. It is normal to meet people from all over the world in most every city; what is not normal is the idea of understanding that a lot of people are Americans, people born and raised in the US. These citizens might not seem to be Americans, but they are as American as any American. Ronald Takaki in his essay, "An Educated and Cultural Literate Person Must Study America's Multicultural Reality", gives an excellent example of what I meant when I said that some citizens might not seem to be American. Takaki was born in Hawaii, one of the 50 states. After graduating from high school, he decided to study on the mainland. He recalls that a lot of the students and even professors asked him how long he had been in America, and where did he learned to speak English. His answer was that he had been born in the US and that his family had been there for three generations (Takaki 486).

As the world is changing, people have to realize that Multiculturalism is a part of the United States. Americans have to accept and be proud of their heritages. According to Kenneth T. Jackson in his article "Too Many Have Let Enthusiasm Outrun Reason", everybody is responsible to maintain the culture "... the maintenance of distinctive cultures should be the function of synagogues, churches, music festivals, ethnic celebrations, and, most especially, dinner tables. The public schools should emphasize common traditions and common values" .

Multiculturalism is generating a lot of interest among concerned people in the United States. Americans are becoming more aware of the importance of multiculturalism in the country. Both the

public and private sectors are focusing more time, money and energy in the spread of information about various cultures. For example the beneficiary of spread of multiculturalism will be the United States of America because the country will be more powerful and united.

White Americans are beginning to understand that they are not the only owners of the United States. They are a part of it, and they have to get used to sharing privileges and disadvantages with other American citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. They also have to get used to calling other people Americans, even if for them they don't seem to be. If white Americans interact with other cultures they will help their country to unite as one nation. My definition of an American will be: a citizen of the multicultural country of The United States of America.

One of those forms can be seen in the limited access that most Americans have to foreign cultures throughout the world and to cultural minorities within their own country, except for Americans participating in ethnic festivals or visiting China towns as tourist attractions. Although there appears to be a widespread belief among American historians that even American history is under siege in elementary and secondary education, there is an even greater lack of understanding of other cultures, globally, nationally, and locally in the United States.

Europeans are often fond of satirically portraying Americans as cultural isolationists citing our geographical insularity and our international illiteracy.

However, to their credit, Americans have made some inroads in the area of cultural competence in specific fields like medicine, social work, counseling, and law enforcement in the United States.

The country has also made some attempts at diversity awareness in United States corporations and institutions through Human Resource Departments (I have an Indian friend, however, who jokes about the undercurrent of tokenism, even quaintness, of diversity programs in his job, programs that are often reduced to PR photos showing at least one or two “visible” minorities.).

In the wider, mainstream American culture, I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that global awareness usually takes the form of a dramatic news event. Our news media is more apt to present international news in terms of conflict, drama, or tension (to be fair, American news, in general, is crisis oriented).

Japan only gets covered if there's an earthquake or a tsunami; China is more often portrayed as a country refusing to lower the value of its currency or as a consistent abuser of human rights; Venezuela as a country with a rogue, out-of-control socialist leader; Africa as a continuing “problem” continent of droughts, starvation, AIDS, and social turmoil; Mexico and Columbia as drug-ridden countries; and Europe in economic turmoil with the debt-ridden countries in the European Union.

In addition, the US news media often turns a foreign story into an event that, ultimately, has “implications for” or “effects on” the United States. Seeing foreign countries through this provincial lens has the effect of making most Americans believe that foreign cultures have no identities of their own unless there is some connection to the United States.

There is little doubt that multiculturalism, within American society, has been a rocky road—our history surely tells us that we have had some profound gaps in our ability to accept “foreigners” into the United States. But, thankfully, groups who were once reviled—the Irish, the Germans, and the Italians—have now become culturally homogenized into American society over many generations.

Multiculturalism in the United States has a long silent history. The United States has, from its founding, taken in immigrants from different cultural backgrounds, many of whom were, at the time, controversial. First, it was the Germans who raised questions about whether they could or would become “real Americans.” Then questions were raised about the Chinese and after them Irish and the Eastern European immigrants. Now it is Hispanic-Americans and Muslim-Americans of whom we ask those questions.

In every past instance those questions and, in a few limited cases, overt exclusionary policies have been overcome and those groups have become as American as descendants of Mayflower passengers. With a thoroughly thought-through effort in response to new globalized circumstances

there is no reason why new ethnic and religious immigrant groups, and those that follow, cannot be as successfully integrated into American life as those that preceded them.

There followed group after group demanding public validation, social acceptance, and government policies to redress the historical wrongs – some very real, others exaggerated – that they used to press their claims. Women, varieties of sexual and gender preference groups, and other groups with non-mainstream beliefs built on the moral and political foundation of the civil rights revolution to demand their own acknowledged place in the cultural mainstream. In many ways those movements succeeded in gaining their legitimate objectives, though not without rhetorical hyperbole and questionable government policies still in force to this day.

It was within this contextual legacy that the multicultural demand for "recognition" gathered traction. Multiculturalism in the United States has always reflected two strands of thought. The first, more prosaic and culturally benign strand, simply stated the obvious: America is a country in which many diverse cultures exist, co-exist and find common ground as Americans.

The second more divisive strand has argued that people do, and ought to, gain their primary identities from attachment to their racial or ethnic groups. In this view the role of the government is not only to accept that "fact," but to facilitate it. Advocates of such views insist not only on their right to recognition, but also on their exclusivity along with government policies that ensure it. It is hard to have a primary identity as an American if all you really care about is yourself. And it is also hard to have a primary national identity if all you really care about is your own group.

In conclusion I want to say that multiculturalism in the US has definitely shown positive aspects, and is still supporting a large number of immigrants who are engaged actively in education and business. Although weightage is much more on the positive side, there's some amount of corruption prevailing in America due to multiculturalism.

УДК 321.015:316.346.2-055.2

Gender Policy: Should women have equal access to positions of political power?

Baidollinova Diana

diana_nis@mail.ru

Student of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Astana

Supervisor – A.K. Mutali

Majority of people in the whole world say, that women and men have to be “equal”, but some kinds of countries are of the opinion that women must bow before men like in the middle ages. In most Muslim countries, women do not have many opportunities. But women and men equally pay taxes, both of them have brain, head, body, also women proved that she could do what men do and do more than men. And here questions: Why women should be less important than men? Why are women treated unequally? [1]

Woman is an individual person. But in some countries government limited her rights and opportunities. In the fact in 13 of the countries, more than 90 percent of the respondents said they supported equal rights; in every other country except Egypt, Jordan, Kenya, Indonesia and Nigeria, more than 75 percent backed gender equality, says New Your Items. Despite of results of this survey these countries continue their policy. In the whole world we have women, who rule the country or who are politicians. For example, “Hillary Clinton – diplomatic breakthroughs occur infrequently. H. Clinton, regardless of real merit, but can now records herself in active progress in US-Russian relations and the negotiations between Turkey and Armenia. H. Clinton showed all her skills in yet another attempt to bring peace in the Far East. Do not forget about its ongoing contribution to the advancement of women around the world, whether it be the victims of violence in the Congo or the floods in Pakistan”. (Forbes Woman) Also, we should notice women like Angela Merkel, Margaret Thatcher, Indira Gandhi and so on, who also were and are useful for own country [2].