

The concept «American Dream»: diachronic analysis

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In the last decades many American values and cultural peculiarities have been spreading in other cultures. Some of these values constitute the concept «American Dream». In this research, we present the diachronic analysis of the concept «American Dream», its current state and components.

Going behind the history of the USA, we discover that the ideas the concept «American dream» implies can be traced in the 16-17 centuries. Namely, European settlers envisioned the «New world» as a possibility to build a new ideal country which would be free from European laws and biases. The core ideas and ambitions were legislated in 1776 in the Declaration of Independence, which proclaims equality and inviolable and inalienable rights to «life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness» [4].

The tipping point of the concept's development was Gold fever in 1849, when every American could rise from rags to riches. Although many of them failed to enrich, the possibility of being successful took roots in Americans' minds.

In 1920s dominance of business ideology was observed. Even more, the politicians likened business to religion and proclaimed it the future of America. Consequently, the social ideals were connected with wealth. In 1929, Wall Street crashed; so the social policy changed. In 1931, James Truslow Adams in his book «The Epic of America» described the American dream as the equality of people, regardless of their origin and social status. Thus, his apprehension of the concept «American Dream» referred to the original ideas in the Declaration of Independence.

Since the 1950s American dream was converting into the idea of rampant consumerism, which TV made substantial contribution to. The series from 1950 to 1990 transmitted idyll: luxurious houses, expensive cars and material prosperity. It is worth noticing that affluence of TV characters gradually increased. Obviously, wealth moved to the foreground, which can be proved with dramatic rise of credits. Moreover, the 1960s were connected with Martin Luther's activity who fought for equal rights regardless of the nationality and skin colour. In the 2000s, the ideas of placid happiness for the future generations spread through TV series that focused on the affluent offsprings enjoying their lives.

Based on our diachronic analysis we created a scheme of the concept «American Dream», where all 5 revealed components are included: equality of people and their rights, equality of opportunities for self-fulfillment through labour, material prosperity, life harmony and faith in better future.

The modern Americans associate American dream with owning real estate, business and access to healthcare and education, but these components can be inserted into the previous ones. Nevertheless, according to CNN Money survey in 2014 about 60% of Americans do not believe in American dream. In the article «What Is the American Dream? The History That Made It Possible» by Kimberly Amadeo, reasons for disillusionment are listed: low wages' mobility in comparison with Europe, federal tax, big national debts and actions of authorities within the Global Green New deal. Besides, the economic crisis of 2007 undermined the faith of Americans.



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Finally, the concept «American Dream» is a versatile notion which has been extended through time. In our research, 5 core components of this concept are stood out. Due to the recent social, political and economic upheavals people tend to lose their faith in American dream.

Key words: American Dream, concept, faith, American culture.

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