

**From the „Menace of the Mexican Race“ to the „Threats of Hispanics to US Culture“:
Continuity and Change in the Discourse on Mexican Americans during the 20th
Century**

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Abstract

Samuel Huntington recently accused Hispanics to threaten US national integrity because of their failure to assimilate into society. According to Huntington Hispanics are too many concentrating in certain areas, and too insistent on their own culture, i.e. language, to form an integral part of the US nation. His statement is neither new nor very original. Certain aspects seem to be almost as old as immigration from Latin America to the US. Immigration from Latin America became important for the US at the beginning of the twentieth century and since then has risen considerably, bringing ever new groups into the country. But, these immigrants and their descendants were not welcomed as potential members of the nation. Rather, the idea of a homogenous nation resulted in exclusion. While this exclusion was based on racial thinking during the first half of the twentieth century it shifted to cultural argumentation after World War II. Simultaneously, negation of a possible assimilation into US-society gave way to the fear assimilation might not take place at all. In both cases, Hispanics were blamed to be the cause for the respective situation, any part Anglos might take in this story are not considered. This will be shown by examining the Mexican American experience in the US.