



Immigrants in America: Vain Invaders or Active Partners in the Making of the Promised Land?

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Abstract: This article aims at grasping a fuller comprehension of “immigrant” in American history. In an effort at apprehending him/her as a vain invader in the “Promised land” or a gem in the making of the later one, this research study clearly sets out to see at depths, the part he happened to play in such an endeavor. Drawing on from immigration, ethnic group impacts in American life experience to the American cultural character itself, it comes out to the conclusion that: immigrants represent in many respects, the most persistent and the most pervasive influence in the development of the United States of America.

Key Words: Immigrant - vain invader - promised land – ethnic group.

Résumé: Le présent article se propose de comprendre à juste titre ce que représente un “immigré” au sein de l’histoire Américaine. Sous l’hypothèse du statut d’envahisseur vain sur la « Terre Promise » ou d’une icône incontournable dans la construction de cette dernière, cette étude de recherche envisage d’appréhender le rôle joué par ce dernier sous l’égide d’une pareille motivation. Tout en s’inspirant de l’immigration, des impacts des groupes ethniques et du caractère culturel Américain, il en ressort que : les immigrants représentent à plusieurs égards, la pierre angulaire dans le développement des Etats Unis d’Amérique.

Mots clés: Immigrant – envahisseur inutile – terre promise – groupe ethnique.

I. Introduction

Through most of the five centuries of European, African, and Asian drive o America, the prospect of the natural landscape and its transformation have always played a role of paramount importance in the making of America as a whole. Some attempts to dig out from the depths of the American society and culture, a fuller understanding of the American character, have prompted and coerced researchers to set a solid focus on immigrants. Those have considered mainly the reason behind (why of) their coming to the promised land, the challenges they faced, their inputs in the life of Americans as a whole and how sediments from their making stand as stepping stones on the path of the American economic, social and political successes. In such a way, dilemma, paradox and polarities represent few of the single-factor explanation that have been ventured to account for the American character and the dualities that have struck prominent observers of the American scene could be viewed as another cornerstone. Would it then be reasonable, staking or putting the immigrant and all he/she represents, at the center of American experience or radically relegating him/her to the periphery?

Considering the dualities in American life as typical, a dialectic that had long characterized the nation Michael Kammen, in his book entitled *People of Paradox*, wrote:

There has been contention over the meaning of America. Was it to be a conglomeration of individuals, each going his own way, or a well-ordered society of general co-operative groups. The very vastness of the landscape made the former almost inevitable, but the latter nearly a necessity.. (Kammen 1972:94)

Yet, within the angle of apprehending what the American character means as it stands as the gem indispensable in demonstrating a style of mind attuned to function amidst deeply felt antitheses, psychologist Erick Erickson said:

Thus the functioning American, as the heir of a history of extreme contrasts and abrupt changes, bases his final ego identity on some tentative combination of dynamic polarities such as migratory and sedentary, individualistic and standardized, competitive and cooperative, pious and free-thinking, responsible and cynical, etc.(Erickson 1975:56).

From the above-two viewpoints, one could observe the United States as very well, one of the first large-scale societies, to have built innovation and change into its culture while nourishing monocausal explanation and the conflict-versus-consensus polarity, due to its mosaic structure in field of population. Looking beyond the horizon of such a societal sphere, attention could be called not to deformities or uniformities but to biformities in American life with regard to its social configuration. The matter would simply be the particular configuration of tensions, within a natural setting, as well as the behavioral, intellectual, and emotional consequence of that configuration. Within an effort of grasping an exhaustive comprehension on this living social shape, the immigrant in American history may stand as the focus-point where rays meet and where development-oriented ingenuity offers its best to that land of great opportunities: the United States of America.

II- Immigration and Ramifications it Ties in American Life Experience

Within the range of an effort toward an attempt of grasping the significant roles immigrants played in the making of America in general with a focus on the diverse links they proffered, one should definitely refer to the American character itself. Researchers, Americans as well as Europeans made their voices widely heard about the issue. They surely held standpoints that vastly nourished or fueled the debate over such a concern of a considerable importance in approaching significant interpretations related to subjects linked up to the very roots of people called today Americans. History tells long about viewpoints, convergences and discordances around the main to be learnt about what an eminent historian qualified as the Daughter of all Europe.

Right in the 1770's a well-known French farmer who had formerly settled in the Hudson River Valley had already posed a heart-breaking question that has met the acceptance of subsequent generations and reverberated through American history. "What then is the American, this new man?" asked St John de Crève coeur in writing a heartfelt sketch of his adopted country. His approach to the interrogation raised a claim already advanced by another recent arrival from Europe, Thomas Paine. In his famous revolutionary pamphlet, *Common Sense* (1776) while being the first loud and powerful call for independence, it openly stipulated and John Crève coeur didn't object but heartily agreed, that the Americans were not transplanted Englishmen. They were indeed, a mixture of many European peoples, a nation of immigrants. In limelight, the idea that all Americans, except possibly the Indians, once were immigrants has never had unqualified acceptance. It was early on, a case of minor view as not to be granted greater consideration. John Jay, writing the second of the Federalist Papers, probably voiced the part so high. John defined Americans as "one united people – a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs". (Winthrop. 1968: 336). Undoubtedly, many writers still described America not as an electric and cosmopolitan society, but as the creation of one dominating group. Even put as such, there is burning need to specify the case and provide explicit range of arguments to clearly shed light on that dominating group, the one or the ones dominated while sorting out the why of such a state of things and elaborating on connections linking those groups. In one way or the other, both interpretations tell us something about the American puzzle; but many authors comprehended its complexity. Diversity and homogeneity intertwine so densely in American experience that neither theme alone can do it justice. Such a remarkable standpoint as can be set as specific to Americans complicates enormously the problem of understanding immigration with especial focus on the "Promised Land". One legend puts the immigrants, and all he represents, at the center of American experience, another relegates him to the periphery. Caught up between an amalgam of partial truths and potent myths, there is harsh need to thread a way between rival legends for commonly agreed-upon comprehension.

In recent years, the highly valued legend of the American as immigrant has been widely stressed. In a book entitled *A Nation of Immigrants* and published in 1964, written for and attributed to President John F. Kennedy, the ideas summarized in it greatly influence serious scholarships to widen up through comments, the scope of this attribute. Maldwyn Jones, a British historian, making an excellent survey of American immigration pays a deference to the legend in these words: "Immigration is America's historic *raison d'etre*....the most persistent and the most pervasive influence in her development".(Maldwyn 1960: 2). In the same vein, still more sweepingly, Handlin Oscar an eminent historian declared that: "The Immigrants were American history....an adequate description of the course and effects of immigration would require to write the whole history of the country"(Handlin 1951:3). In some senses of course and banking on developments made about by scholars and

historians as well, immigration does ratify into every aspect of American life since it directly treats of men and women who fought and made America prosper in a highly cultural character, a mixture of civilization-based experiences and interest-oriented perspectives. George W. Pierson, in his book entitled *The Moving American*, stressed the case in these terms:

Conceived as the quintessential act of mobility, or as the starting point of the great American success story, immigration exemplifies conditions general to the whole society. Since the common experience of all Americans is the memory of displacement from somewhere else, migration may be seen as the key to the American character. In the absence of a truly rooted national tradition, Americans have been united – it might be argued – by their commitment to the future. And the future-looking orientation of the American people has shaped the most notable American traits: idealism; flexibility and adaptability to change; a dependence on the self and the immediate family more than the wider community; a high respect for personal achievement; a tendency to conform to the values of peers and neighbors instead of holding stubbornly to ancestral ways. (Pierson 1972:48)

The above-mentioned assertions offer plausible attributes of migration as a social process. Meanwhile they do provide and enlarge the immigrant as a specific type, to the dimensions of myth. Within the angle of such large conceptions of the matter, it is little wonder that scholars have been hard put to specify what particular features of American life derive in some distinctive way from immigration. Insofar as one may conceive it as a kind of rite of passage to an American identity, it profusely eludes us as a historical variable worth being duly apprehended. Historian John Higham highlighted the case his book, *Send These to Me :Immigrants in Urban America* in the following words: “ *By visualizing the immigrant as the representative American, we may see him building America; we cannot see him changing it; Whatever significance immigration may have in some inclusive or representative way, it has also been a major differentiating force. It has separated those who bear the marks of foreign origin or inheritance from others who do not. The importance of immigration in this more limited sense – as a source of distinctions, divisions, and changes within the United States – remains as yet only dimly grasped. We shall have to disentangle the special effects of immigration from the encompassing legend; and that will require all the right comparative history can shed* (Higham 1973: 5).

To begin with the word itself, in 1809 a traveler noted ‘Immigrant is perhaps the only new word of which the circumstances of the United States has in any degree demanded the addition to the English language’ (Higham 1975:5). In 1789 Jedidiah Morse’s famous patriotic textbook, *American Geography*, mentioned the “many immigrants from Scotland, Ireland, Germany, and some from France” who were living in New York (Morse 1789:253). But in contrast Paine, Crèvecoeur and earlier writers had referred only to “emigrants “. It meanwhile became like a truism that by 1789, the American language was beginning to identify newcomers with the country they entered rather than the one they had left. Hence the term immigrant presupposed the existence of a receiving society to which the alien could attach himself. The immigrant is not, the, a colonist or settler who creates a new society and lays down the terms of admission for others, coming from elsewhere. It could be clearly described as the bearer of a foreign culture that may help in one way or the other build the new nation in fields beyond suspicion. No reluctance should then animate debates over the dualistic issue of “immigrants” and “original inhabitants”. Widening the range to the Dutch, the English “settlers” and many others, Jedidiah Morse explicitly establishes the difference:

The Dutch had planted in 1624 the settlement on the Hudson River that became the province of New York forty years later when it fell into the hands of the English. At the same time of the American Revolution Dutch was still spoken fairly extensively in churches and homes in New York and New Jersey. By that time people of English origin composed the preponderant element, as indeed they did in all thirteen states. The best estimate identifies as English about 60 per cent of the white population of 1790. Like the Dutch in New York, the English in all of the colonies before the Revolution conceived of themselves as founders, settlers, or planters – formative population of those colonial societies – not as immigrants. Theirs was the polity, the language, the pattern of work and settlement, and many of the mental habits to which the immigrants would have to adjust (Higham 1975:4)

Distinguishing immigrant from other aspects of American history compels any researcher dedicated to the task to bear the burden of excluding the founders of a society from the category of immigrant. This could bring about forgetting how many alien groups joined America involuntarily and how far the great American success story features the saga of the immigrant, for the immigrant chose America. Slavery, expansion and conquest being types of coercion having contributed to the peopling of the United States really help engulfed many tribes and other groups already established in the New World. Several thousand of them were uprooted, mingled and mixed up in a new society they finally made theirs, linking numerous ties among themselves while sinking useless differences and stand together for the benefit of everybody in that land of great disparities and at the same time a home. Without altering the distribution of ethnic power, the American experience witnessed the increase of variety of minorities.

III- American People and Ethnic Group Compositions.

Actually, within the perspective of all the light comparative history can shed, there is a great deal of things that can be said about ethnic groups formed by the American process of immigration. After taking account of the English colonizers, African slaves, the more or less indigenous groups adopted in the course of expansion and descendants of them all, remote observers didn't turn blind eyes on specific aspects related to the American culture and ethnic group characteristics as part and parcel of the immigration process and impacts it makes.

I. Ethnic Groups and American Culture.

No doubt that the so-called New World was peopled by so many immigrants, coming from diverse horizons. Even though motivations on their side were not the same, it has anyway become compulsory for them to make of the host land, a home. This new social venture gave birth to a certain number of things related to life in America. Statistics proved huge amount of immigrants but with different proportions. Historians Warren S. Thompson and P.K. Whelpton, figured out in their book *Population Trends in The United States* written in 1933 that:

The 40 per cent of the white population of 1790 who were English, plus the 46,000,000 immigrants who have entered the United States since that time, have produced a very considerable part of the American people. For example, in 1920, the best authorities estimated, nearly 15 per cent of the population of the continental United States might be ascribed to German immigration and another 10 per cent attributed to southern –ie catholic –Ireland (Warren 1933:90)

In the eyes of laymen, such figures may appear suggestive. Instead, they undoubtedly leave researchers uncertain about the extent to which most people actually identify with the origins imputed to them. The whole social order could be apprehended through its facets of ethnic composition within the American experience. Assuming that nearly everyone had a clear ethnic identity: an uncomplicated attachment to a specific line of descent originating outside the United States, John Higham, the most distinguished American social and intellectual historian having the ability to integrate and synthesize superbly scholarships on immigration and ethnic history and nativism advanced two assumptions to determine the ethnic composition of the American people:

The assumption that we are all ethnic – an assumption shared by some who would disdain to think of themselves as immigrants – has never been testable because the boundaries of most American ethnic groups are so vague. A second attempt to determine the ethnic composition of the American people was made in 1972 by census-takers who asked a broad national sample, “What is your origin or descent?” If the respondents said they were “American” the interviewers probed for a more specific and earlier origin. A large proportion of the white respondents, however – about four out of every ten – would not claim descent from any of the eight nationalities which the census-takers offered as possible choices. Some of this unclassified population can be assigned to small national strain, such as the Swedish and the Dutch; some were simply uncooperative. But a great many derived from European antecedents to sustain any consciousness of an Old World heritage (Higham 1975: 9)

Disparities related to unclassified groups in ethnic survey could be viewed as an indication of gradual erosion that habitually troubles American immigration groups after supply of fresh immigration has significantly decreased. At some point, the initial effort to set up an organized group life meets success by struggle to survive in that land of ever-mounting ethnic ups and downs. A deep-rooted religious heritage, compact settlement or pronounced phenotypical characteristics may help check it whereas intergroup conflicts may reverse it. Yet, it would be nice to mention that in the typical process of development, however, a substantial proportion of every generation after the first marries outside a group and becomes more interested in other associations. At the same time, those who lose close contact with their immigrant origins are assimilated into what one may describe as “a partially de-ethnicized host society”. Nevertheless, the triumph of assimilation is not nearly as complete or as rapid as the official ideal of the American melting-pot has sometimes persuaded many to think. Ethnic identity remains in the eyes of many a viable option in the spring of organized group constitution. This perception definitely meets my adherence insofar as it is widely felt that almost every ethnic group that has survived its formative encounter with American culture retains quite a loyal core, which keeps it alive and encourages a periodic rekindle of group consciousness. Scholars issued no denial against minority group consciousness in impacting on the American experience. They rather suspected some tangible fields of experience, empowering the nation as a whole. In quite recent years a renewed appreciation of the ethnic affinity as a source of political power and personal integration has greatly inspired scholars to look more closely than ever before at its

unavoidable persistence in American politics. About the subject, much research has abundantly shown that people usually inherit their political predisposition as they usually grow up with, and commonly pass on to their children, a set of values that clearly defines their friends, their enemies, and ultimately themselves. In the same vein and in order to rekindle the usefulness of such a point about immigrants in American social, economic as well as political history, John Higham clearly emphasized: *To take an extreme example, the Irish were already enthusiastic Jeffersonians in 1800 – ‘the most God-provoking Democrats this side of Hell’ Uriah Tracy called them. One hundred and seventy-two years later their stronghold – Massachusetts- was the only Democratic Party carried.* (Higham 1975: 11)

Yet, some aspects of this societal fact remain unclear. Ethnicity in this special case of melting-pot where potential stakes differ from time to time and where interests of people may prove reaching the same target as well as divergent, the wider significance of this ethnic impact is still nebulous. Maldwyn Allen Jones, examining the history of New Haven, Connecticut, has hypothesized that ethnic voting for example becomes most salient in some generation undertakings mainly when the emergent ethnic group has yielded a middle class capable of providing skilled and visible leadership. Recent researches on ethnic groups, ethnic conflicts and American political history reveal that the attainment of middle-class status tends to seriously weaken ethnic identity by tempting the recipients of that status into new residential and friendship patterns; occupation replaces ancestry as the foundation of social life, provoking an irony: ethnic voting intensifies as ethnic identity becomes problematic, said Raymond E. Wolfinger in his book, *The Development and Persistence of Ethnic Voting*.

Ethnic group compositions open wide doors to many other unsuspected considerations related to cultural pluralism bonds within the context of urban social networks. The American ethnic experience reveals itself as not poor in new developments worth being scrutinized for the good of both the country in a whole as well as for minority groups for their survival as a potential societal pattern or buried in a total assimilation. Between great evidence of some quite striking continuity in ethnic life and contrary evidence of continuous changes, reconciliation seems impossible without appreciating the fundamental features of national and class boundaries in American society. About such a mention, a leading sociologist has concluded: the distinctions among groups, whether identified as occupational class or ascribed status groupings, tend to merge, almost imperceptibly, into one another. This consideration urged Joshua A. Fishman to state: “*Thus the model of urban pluralism that we see developing for the American case must necessarily take into account the relatively high permeability of the boundaries between groups and the corresponding tendencies toward fusion*”(Higham 1970:12). The founding of new societies has always urged some differences as it is the case in Brazil where a more complete absorption is demanded or in Canada where a fuller separateness is tolerated. Nevertheless, in the case of the United States, my standpoint rightly meets the one of Joshua A. Fishman in his address on the great secret ethnicity has learned “*To exist and yet not to exist, to be needed and yet to be unimportant, to be different and yet to be the same, to be integrated and yet to be separate*” (Higham 1970:12). Ethnicity, in general perspective or in close relation with the one of the American context, really teaches more if one could develop no resentment in investigating right at its very roots and any other aspect from which evidence of any kind can branch off. Falling within the context of immigrant in the American history, there is still need to inquire more in the American context as it is widely admitted that no other country has gathered its people from so many different sources than America, then subject of diverse demonstrations.

II. Immigrants and Social Impacts.

Leaving aside the exceptional situation of the indigenous groups and the blacks, the American society may be considered as a cluster of immigrants-ethnic communities boosted by an expanding core population of mixed origins and indeterminate size. In a simple manner, just a little inflow from the ethnic communities smoothly enlarges the cloudy perimeter of the core population. Standing progressively as a bastion of ethnic diversities, the host society becomes less and less capable of defining itself in an exclusive way. The on-going cultural mixture of diversities coming from everywhere has faded Pilgrims and Puritans as American symbols. New drives came over, imposing other ways and means which could help interpret anything related to that host-society.

Although the immigrant sector has at times been large in America, it has never been overwhelming, reaching dizzy heights when compared to the case of other countries like Canada where foreigners outnumbered natives with nearly one-third of the population. What matters most in the American case is the diversity in the first, second and even third generation of immigrants. In some states and localities at certain periods the impact of immigration has indeed been massive. Stephen Thernstrom estimated:

At the time of the American Revolution German stock alone comprised about a third of the population of Pennsylvania, to say nothing of the many Ulstermen from Northern Ireland. At the time of the Civil War more than half the residents of Chicago, Milwaukee, and St Louis were foreign-born. In Milwaukee in the late nineteenth century 20 per cent of the adult population could not speak English. At the beginning of the twentieth century 75 per cent Minnesota, 71 per cent of Wisconsin, 64 per cent of Rhode Island, 62 per cent of Massachusetts, and 61 per

cent of Utah were people with at least one parent born outside the United States. The great immigration of the early twentieth century concentrated heavily on the cities, so that three-quarters of the population of New York, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, and Boston.....the proportion of foreign-born in the twenty-five principal cities actually declined steadily every decade after 1860 (Higham 1970:14)

Actually, the United States of America has gathered its people from so many different sources. The very diversity of the immigration makes its impact somehow difficult to measure. Critically speaking, one may rightly say that diversity limits that impact in some ways. In fact, where one immigrant culture predominates, it can impart its own distinctive flavor to an area and perhaps affect decisively in one way or the other the allocation of power. Yet, the influx as miscellaneous as that which the United States received cannot easily alter preexisting relationships in an irreversible way. Additional ingredients made be added to the existing, provoking new types of social norms but not make the first totally disappear with no slight part being mixed up with the up-to-date. Competing against one another, immigrants have ordinarily found themselves on all sides of the choices America has thrust upon them.

Peter Roberts in his book, *The New Immigration* voiced the case: *Except in relatively isolated, rural areas, no immigrant enclave- no close-knit neighborhood or favored occupation – has been safe from invasion by some newer, less advantaged group. Employers learned to set one group against another and thus manage their labor force more easily, a policy they called ‘balancing nationalities’* (Higham 1970: 17). Even politically, impacts from immigrants cannot be judged as vain. Politicians skillfully learned to rally miscellaneous support, while exploiting ethnic division, by a strategy known as “balancing the ticket”. In short, the immigrants have never been arrayed solidly against the native population on economic issues, and no political party has ever captured the whole “foreign vote”.

From all that has been said, there is no assurance in advancing that immigrants have exercised only fleeting and localized influence before melting away into America’s great majority. In the same token, it would not be safe stating that the commanding position of the majority group nor the fragmentation of the immigration into many disunited minorities significantly deprives them of a major role in American history. Attempting to delimit the scope of their role is rather to make possible a judgment of its distinctive import where lies the crux of the matter. We would then be urged to concentrate on the process of immigration by being able to separate what it may have made possible from what it merely reinforced. That would be a hard nut to crack by researchers since no one has yet wrestled hard with that question. The United States not only had colonial immigrants, but by the time of the American Revolution a significant portion of the immigrants of the preceding century had been fully accepted in the new society. This kind of situation settle in the American-like way, cultural clusters of immigrants, rendering the society too pluralistic to make a monolithic way of life. This didn’t prevent misunderstanding to happen among immigrant communities against one another. The first major ethnic crisis in American history boiled up in Pennsylvania in the 1770s, when the mushrooming German settlements temporarily seemed an inassimilable alien mass. Calling his fellow citizens attention on the need to sink differences and think well ahead with regards to their future and urging them for not being disunited, a Schwenkfelder leader wrote wonderingly in 1768: “*You can hardly imagine how many denominations you will find here.....We are all going to and fro like fish in water but always at peace with each other.Dear Friend, think of the unlimited freedom....and you will understand in what dangers we are concerning our children*” (Higham 1970: 19). Out of the commitment to breed a” new man “fostered by the first immigration implanted and deep-rooted in American culture, a universalistic and eclectic sense of national identity was created. This was mainly due to the fact that the immigration of the eighteenth century enabled Paine and other formulators of the national legend to claim that Americans unlike Englishmen are a truly cosmopolitan people, the heirs of all mankind.

IV- Immigrants: The Strong-willed Actors of Urban America.

History provides reliable mainstream frameworks about immigration in America in general and by the same way does it give details about specific aspects of the later one. The second immigration, like the first, lasted for a century. Both in each case presented its own characteristics different from the other but specifically in terms of import into the building-up of the new society under the influence too many foreign traits for a melting-pot standing. The second immigration human flood vastly extended the diversity its predecessor had created. During the first two decades of the nineteenth century, war and other restraints on emigration had kept the transatlantic movement at a low level. Consequently, the proportion of the foreign-born in the American population fell down and a transportation revolution made America accessible from more and more remote points, while a population crisis in rural Europe and the breakdown of the traditional agricultural system put millions of people to flight. Whereas the first immigration had been entirely white and predominantly English-speaking, the second one brought “*babel of tongues and an array of complexions ranging from the blond Scandinavian through the swarthy south Italian to the west Indian Negro. And whereas the first immigration had been very largely Protestant, the second was heavily Catholic from the outset ; and by the end of the century it was increasingly*

Jewish and Eastern Orthodox"(Taylor 1971:76). Stately, many society patterns revealed themselves in the open air of the American life experience. Lifestyles were many, multiple and multiform, intercross and project new facets worth incorporating by all members of that heterogeneous but cultural basin.

The distant magnet urging European Emigration to the United States of America was the land free to welcome people from everywhere but once around, social bounds brought about new visions and adapted strategies, methods or simply a know-how best to cope with truth of the ground. Social disparities were plain to see in the course of the second immigration though changes it directly or indirectly imposed on population were many. An analysis of the American social class and power brings researchers to hit their minds against the American pluralistic character as mosaic versus melting-pot: reality or illusion. Religious patterns firstly attract attention as they could easily be noticed with serious impacts in active populations. Assessing the major religious consequence of the second immigration, John Higham releases:

...Because of immigration, the Roman Catholic Church as early as 1850 became the largest single religious body in America; and so it has remained. Immigration transformed the church into an ethnic parish, their own parochial schools, hospitals, and orphanages resisted the onslaught of the surrounding Protestant culture on their faith and traditions. As long as the Second Immigration lasted, Catholicism in America was mostly defensive and conservative: an anomaly, in spite of brave assertions to the contrary, in a Protestant country. Ultimately, however, Catholicism identified itself so closely with Americanism that Americanism ceased to be Protestant. By the 1950s informed observers of all faiths recognized that America was no longer distinctively or predominantly a Protestant country. This in itself was a major consequence of the Second Immigration. (Higham 1970: 21)

In limelight, the promise of land and the wealth it contained intensively attracted many people who poured out of Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second immigration apparently stands as most important in shaping an urban, industrial way of life. On the issue, it is hard distinguishing the influence of immigration sharply from that of other forces, just because many influences intermingled in transforming the United States from a decentralized, rural republic to a consolidated, industrial nation. Instead, a comparative approach helps sorting out the special ways in which immigration met the demands of an urban, industrial order in the United States. Indeed, immigrants did supply an industrial labor and an urban state of mind. With the insatiable land rush, *'immigrants broke the soil and harvested the wheat of the Argentine pampas and the Canadian prairies ; they cleared forests in southern Brazil ; they dug gold in California and Australia; they spread rich farms over large parts of the American Middle West. Where they could acquire land, they took root. Increasingly, however, the newcomers in the immigration-receiving countries gravitated toward the cities. This was so in the United States'* said John Higham.

It could safely be putting forward that the urban immigrants played a unique role in the United States. On the one hand, immigrant-receiving countries needed immigrants not only for hard labor that built the cities and the transportation network but even more to provide a wide range of commercial, technical, clerical, and professional skills. On the other hand, the United States already had its own vigorous middle class. On the trot, what its more highly developed economy lacked was just an individual working class. The second immigration coincided with the industrialization of the United States and furnished the bulk of the manpower for it. Furthermore, Irish and French Canadians gave a tremendous boost of the textile industry of New England. Germans, Jews, and Italians transformed the clothing industry of New York. Only in America did the immigrants constitute a mass proletariat fully engaged in manufacturing; and because this happened as such, America was able to develop to the full a system of mass production. In another respect, adjustment to the standardized, mechanized life of the industrial city was quite stressful however the immigrants were relatively well motivated and prepared to reach the target. The older Americans cherished ideals of individualism even though they didn't suit the interdependence character of the new urban world. The later ones were slow to respond to collective needs, slow to reach out for mutual support beyond the immediate family whereas foreigners, remembering the intimate villages they had left, probably liked the big impersonal cities of America no more than most native Americans did at the time. For, the immigrant cultures were far less individualistic.

In seeking means of self-protection in striving to make their homes and jobs decent and secure, the immigrants had no inhibitions about resorting to collective action to meet the challenge ahead. One means at hand being the trade union. In fact," first and second generation immigrants in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dominated the labor movement, the most prominent leaders of which were Irish, German, and Jewish". (Grob1962:145). The author of *Send These to Me: Immigrants in Urban America*, added:

When fully mobilized, immigrants could throw themselves into a strike with the selfless passion of communal uprising. But most of the unions belonged to skilled workers from northern Europe, who held aloof from the southern and eastern masses and took pride in the exclusiveness of their craft.... The immigrants tended

to identify not with a downtrodden class but with exemplars of success among their own people. For most immigrants, therefore, the trade union offered a less accessible or responsive channel for collective action than the political party (Higham 1970:25)

Many other considerations need being tackled in line with the great efforts immigrants happened to make, devoting time and energy for. Their success fights embody political ground and mass culture in its widest dimensions. In the cities, immigrant politics could be considered as a machine politics: a politics of loyalty, authority, reciprocal obligation, and personal services. Even though the machine served self-interest, it definitely not gradually adapted to the immigrants' requirements while suiting the political tastes of many authorities. In such a perspective, the Detroit independent reform mayor, Hazen Pingree showed in the 1890's how an aroused immigrant working class could be rallied to support a program of cheap transit fares and equalized taxes even against the opposition of the old-style-bosses. In his turn, John D. Buenker backed up the case in his book *Urban Liberalism and Progressive Reform* with a mention in these terms:

After 1910 the Democratic machines in major cities came increasingly under the control of politicians like Alfred E. Smith of New York, who recognized the value of welfare legislation to their organizations as well as their constituents. Through a new politics of welfare the Democratic Party won the allegiance of more and more of the urban ethnic groups. In the process, it broke the Republicans' grip on the industrial states and became after 1930 America's majority Party (Higham 1970:25)

While coming to terms with the city in these ways, immigrants didn't fold arms in wait for God to provide them with a miracle in their daily life. They were serious in forging an urban mass culture to replace their traditions they couldn't transplant intact into their new living society. Cutting adrift from their past, those heterogeneous people caught up in the machine process with a common life motivation in the mass media. Americans became a nation of newspaper readers owing to immigrants just because what the later ones shared was not a common past but rather the immediate events of the present: the news. In his book: *Our Press Gang: A Complete Exposition of the Corruption and Crimes of the American Newspapers*, Lambert A. Wilmer developed:

Beginning as early as 1835, when the Scottish-born journalist James Gordon Bennett started the raucous New York *Herald*, immigrants have pioneered in the production of mass culture. Hungarian-born Joseph Pulitzer's New York *World*, with its special appeal to immigrant readers, showed how a newspaper could speak for, as well as to, the urban masses. Meanwhile a transplanted Irishman, Robert Bonner, developed the promotional techniques that created in the late 1850's the first mass-circulation weekly, the New York *Ledger*. Of the four outstanding editors at the turn of the century who expanded the magazine audience still further, two were foreign-born, S. S. McClure and Edward Bok.(Higham 1970:27)

On many accounts did the immigrants gear up with methods and commitment, well-thought American society requirements? In fact, the prominence of immigrant editors in the creation of mass-circulation newspapers and magazines suggests that the need to adjust to a cosmopolitan society and an unfamiliar culture nurtured a burning passion to communicate and an instinctive feeling for what is immediately transmissible to an amorphous public. The music shops, the film studios, the professionalized field of public relations, the early history of radio broadcasting, the remarkable number of Hollywood influential people and popular comedians were firstly instigated, shaped and fully animated by immigrants in early as well as urban America.

V-Conclusion

Immigration, seen by Maldwyn Jones as America's historic "*raison-d'etre*" does ramify into every aspect of American life experience. Known as a mixture of many peoples, Americans definitely belong to a nation of immigrants. Altogether, the United States has participated in almost all of the process by which a nation or empire can incorporate a variety of ethnic groups. Having acquired a diverse people through invasion, conquest, enslavement, and mainly through immigration, the United States of America offer a great deal of arguments best to view immigrants as the very actors of the American history in so many respects. In some senses, they do gain a special capability for the making of a new society, a milieu of illusion and surprise but of great opportunities. Clearly, immigrants have on the one hand, enhanced the variety of American culture. Their diversifying influence is imprinted in the American ideal of nationality, in the American religious pattern, and in the sheer presence of so many different human types. On the other hand, the diversities have given way time and again to immigrants to inspire and shape them for the best interest of the whole nation. Through the systems of mass production and mass communications, immigrants assimilate one another within an urban, technological culture

that overrides distinctions of place, class, and ethnic type. Opposite to other societies that have had a simpler experience with immigrant groups, either absorbing them or acquiescing in their separateness, in American life these contrary impulses mingle under the auspices of immigrants as part and parcel in the making of America.

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