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AMERICANS AND THE ISSUE OF UNSTABLE PLURALISM



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Abstract

One of the most crucial paradoxes or ambiguities of the United States of America remains the issue of unstable pluralism. The quest for legitimacy in early America was complicated by the presence of a kind of multi-dimensional pluralism. The highly dynamic interactions of many social and economic forces, the political phenomenon of many states but one nation balancing their sovereignties have consequently been paralleled by the phenomenon of uneasy socio-political pluralism. Through the lens of a qualitative approach utilizing content analysis method, this article intends to demonstrate how the American colonial history which had begun with a quest for unity and homogeneity, ended with a sophisticated rationale for pluralism and heterogeneity.

Keywords : *Pluralism, Legitimacy, Interactions, Homogeneity, Heterogeneity*

Résumé

L'un des plus cruciaux paradoxes ou dilemmes des Etats Unis d'Amérique reste et demeure le problème de pluralisme instable. La recherche de légitimité tôt en Amérique était rendue compliquée par la présence d'un genre de pluralisme multidimensionnel. Les interactions supra dynamiques de plusieurs forces sociales et économiques, le phénomène politique de plusieurs états mais une 'nation' faisant vaciller leurs souverainetés ont été par conséquent suivis du phénomène de pluralisme socio-politique difficile. Par le biais d'une approche qualitative qui se base sur la méthode de l'analyse du contenu, cet article prétend expliquer comment l'histoire politique Américaine qui avait commencé par la quête de pureté et d'homogénéité a finalement laissé place à une véritable cause de pluralité et d'hétérogénéité.

Mots-clés : *Pluralisme, légitimité, interactions, homogénéité, hétérogénéité*

INTRODUCTION

Contention over the meaning of America has always been factual with illustrative actions within the English colonial society from settlement to modern times. Social scientists view it whether in terms of a conglomeration of individuals, each one going his own way or a well-ordered society of generally co-operative groups. The first one I considered as a direct consequence of the New World's inevitably attractive character as a magnet to people of everywhere and the second one is nearly a necessity. This societal dualism in the American colonial life urged up to the quest of

purity and homogeneity for the well-being of the whole society even though aspirations and interests of every kind diverged from one social group to another and circumstances inspired everything except uniformity. Heterogeneity took place with a kind of unstable pluralism in a nation which has to develop both a multi-culture and the unifying distinctions of a mono-culture. How can we account for such a dilemma ? How can a heterogeneous society, made of diverse interests and ideals of groups and brought together by varied economic, political and social forces, meet this kind of enduring contradiction ?

The American experience of pluralism witnessed usual controversies or contradictions that plural societies generally display within their own distinct socio-cultural groups. When dissensions sparkle with ambiguities of every kind, social and political stability pay the price of an unstable democracy with a balanced government in search for a lost collective individualism. With the interactions of many social and economic forces in presence, added to conflicting interests which stem from factionalism and sectarianism, the phenomenon of uneasy socio-political pluralism instigate some serious threats to stability with Americans. Dynamic interactions of imported civilizations among 'Americans', impacts of transferred ideas and institutions, dilemmas and ambiguities from American founding fathers and unresolved contradictions in the American colonial experience characterize that unstable pluralism.

I. Multipluralism in America and focus on some insightful considerations

Knowingly called or qualified as 'The Daughter of all Europe' by Thomas Paine, a well-known English-born American political activist, philosopher and political theorist, America is like a heritage from European origins. In such a perspective, Thomas Paine expressively meant by his assertion, the European multiple and diverse backgrounds of Americans, the later one was backed up by many other historians. Geared up by a variety of motivations or obligations to get settled, the urgent need to establish a society which could offer better living conditions and opportunities for everyone to prosper, stood as a burning desire to fulfill. Regardless of their primary origins, the quest for legitimacy in early America did not appear as an easy task but indeed, a hard nut to crack because complex, due to the presence of a kind of multi-dimensional pluralism. Such a situation remains a subject of a highly commented interest for social scientists whether Americans or not.

I.I Americans' experience of pluralism : Possible suspected sources

Colonies as they were almost English at the very beginning of the making of the 'Promised Land', did display numerous characteristics related to manifestations in line with the multiplicity of cultures, present in the common land. Early intrinsic traits of those colonies drove some historians among whom Ortega Y. Gasset to qualify the New World as an invertebrate America. He sees the new nation as : "a series of water-tight compartments, none of which felt very much curiosity toward events in the

domain of the others”.²³ This personal stand of his represents in the eyes of many scholars a primary notice that encourages diversifications in early America. It could then be assumed that taken together, the plantations basically lacked a figurative spinal column to bind them all in a stream of common targets set, directions to take, ways and means to proffer in unison. Yet, all too easily, they did split in and out of relation to one another surely because they were not firmly connected. Thus, they had not yet achieved the kind of collective individualism whose motto would be struck by the American transcendentalist and reforming minister Theodore Parker in 1848 : “You are as good as I, and let us help one another”.²⁴ Colonies presented this kind of social facet as a direct consequence of the personal strive that animated each one of early colonies. Nevertheless, the subject under study could be analyzed even further than this first but societal remark.

In fact, when one sets back to the very moments of ‘peopling’ America, one has to mention that from the outset, the English colonial society underwent a series of social changes. Irresistibly, they witnessed both a remarkable degree of ‘horizontal’ or simultaneous pluralism and of ‘vertical’ or sequential pluralism. In one way or another, they influenced colonies and men and women living in, as society-bound parameters when one intends to grasp or comprehend the problem of pluralism related to the case of Americans as much illustrative in the field. Regarding the first one we mean the simultaneous pluralism, we could refer to the available prodigious clusters of private groups, factionalism and a fairly complex governmental apparatus and with the second one, it could generally be mentioned the intermittent nature of the transplantation experience, the repeated shocks to social relationships as wave after wave of swirling groups washed up along the whole eastern trans-border shores. Put in block, they represent valuable but social parameters in apprehending the problem of unstable pluralism in early America. Further to these important points we could add the fact that many who came in the New World had already led disordered lives in Europe, and then that the vastness of quite available space provided yet another important stimulus to heterogeneity in America. Such clusters and inter-mingled characters are clearly approached by the American historian Michael Mammen when he says :

It has always been easier to deviate from canons of orthodoxy in this country, both because the canons have been so unclear and uncodified, and because people who thought ‘otherwise’, like Roger Williams or Brigham Young, could go ‘elsewhere’ and do so with impunity.²⁵

Individual undertakings have early on been entertained as a norm and complexities happened to take roots in Americans’ social building-up. Each sort of pluralism whether the simultaneous and the sequential, they both revived, intensified

²³ Michael, K. 1972. *People of Paradox : An Inquiry Concerning the Origins of American Civilization*. New York : Oxford University Press.

²⁴ Theodore, P. 1957. *The Political Destination of America and the Signs of the Times*. Garden City : Perry Miller Edition.

²⁵ Michael, K. 1972. *People of Paradox : An Inquiring Concerning the Origins of American Civilization*. New York : Oxford University Press.p58

and reinforced the other because undoubtedly, new people from unstable situations added their uneasy presence to the fluidity of colonial society, and thereby made it even more so in practice. For, the American case of pluralism experience stems from many sources. Viewing the huge way complexities came up with a cortège of hardships preventing colonies to quickly unite and design common achievements, Michael Kammen indicates that :

Certainly and unparadoxically, economic individualism has been a contribution factor, as well as the commitment (intermittently fulfilled) to uphold the dignity of individual persons and groups. Material opportunity has pushed sons toward an early independence, and disrupted the vocational and locational continuities of traditional European families. American fathers have held great expectations for their sons (and sometimes daughters), have wanted them to 'do better than I did'.²⁶

One could be tempted to add to the above inevitable and pertinent arguments, the notion of instability which should not be neglected within the framework of this research work which sets interest in a human-based community. Instability is likely to occur and provoke uncontrolled fallout in a heterogeneous society where rapid changes or improvements happen in a given place in terms of wealth with no or insufficient equally rapid change in other places, such as freedom, social stats, power and services.

I.2 Plural societies and contradictions they generate

Despite some specificities which characterize the American society, it could not escape the general perceptions related to plural societies. In fact, social scientists have been highly interested in the complexities of plural societies. At stake, they constantly disagree, vary and contradict in their own definitions and adequate criteria for inclusion. For some scientists, a plural society is one in which originally discrete cultures remain essentially separate and therefore fail to provide a cohesive basis for the whole community in which people must interact. For others, within a plural society, the various cultural patterns are seen as interpenetrating, thereby leading to the emergence of new forms. Furthermore and according to some others, the conflicting patterns of various groups are not cultural patterns in the usual sense, but 'value patterns' that comprise sets of activities which further both the interests and the ideals of groups brought together by economic, political and social forces.²⁷ In view to this exhilarating development with social theorists about the conceptual archeology of social sciences, one could presume that the main term 'plural society', at the very start, is perhaps contradictory, for the idea of society stands by means of customary definition, unity - the antithesis of plurality. In light of this, it could make sense to state that the contention about the definition of plural societies lie in this contradiction : How can one be once truly plural and yet literally a society ?

²⁶ Ibid, p59.

²⁷ John Rex, 1959. *The Plural Society in Sociological Theory*, British Journal of Sociology, X Edition, p24.

To be able to apprehend the American case of 'plural society', let's regard plural societies as disparate parts, which owe their existence to external factors including for instance tribalism or distinct historical origins and which suffer from the lack of a common social will. Thus, it could be plain to notice that various affiliations and loyalties have certainly been characteristic of plural societies and highly problematic to them. The American one makes no exception. It is in fact what the American politician and Statesman John Dickinson, author of '*Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania, to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*', appeals to his fellow colonists to be led by such 'a spirit... that it will be impossible to determine whether an *American's* character is most distinguishable, for his loyalty to his Sovereign, his duty to his Mother Country, his love of freedom, or his affection for his native soil'.²⁸ It has long been so complex to clearly define and comprehend 'plural societies' and original characteristics since affiliations and loyalties as forwarded by John Dickinson, contain seeds of contention.

For, a 'plural society' implies in addition to basic characteristics, a polity which entails distinct cleavages among varied population groups. Consequently, there will surely be a dispersion of power among groups willingly or unwillingly bound together by some loyalties, common values, and a competitive equilibrium or balance of power. Likewise there is evidence to witness conflicts between racial, tribal, religious and regional groups, to such a level that the whole society would inevitably need to be maintained by regulation and force. This undoubtedly calls for the role of authorities in a given cultural or multicultural community with a system of domination and because of that, there is generally a psychological pressure upon subordinate cultural segments to deny legitimacy to the imposed order, and to contradict or reject law and authority as such. In nutshell, it is noteworthy to frame out that pluralism in less repressive societies has a built-in dynamic toward uncontrolled changes. Surely, that has been quite true in the United States of America where such conflictual interplays are easy to remark and witness every single day.

Yet, one could analyze that unstable pluralism of Americans under economic, social and even political angles. From the very beginning of American history, one could contend that governmental and cultural impulses have been in the direction of uniformity and away from multiplicity. But very soon, some economic and social imperatives such as labor shortage, military requirements, adequate patterns for colonization and available geographical space, have all fostered pluralism. Colonial America did welcome consciously or unconsciously some basic but societal elements which could help justify its unstable status. Many of the immigrants to the colonies came for anti-authoritarian reasons. They came with hostilities against restraints already well formed in their minds. Knowing that plural societies gain in stability when political parties cut across ethnic lines, the nineteenth- and twentieth century America met the point with quite illustrative examples. This period corresponded to the one where the history of parties is remarkable for continuity and longevity but such was not the case in colonial America where there were overtly Quaker parties,

²⁸John D, 1769. *The Farmer's and Monitor's Letters to the Inhabitants of the British Colonies*, Williamsburg.

German parties, Presbyterian parties and where each group might have its own faction, each sect its own school, each dogmatist his own ideology : instability easily takes place. In fact, because of the relative degree of permissiveness and toleration, pluralism developed from the unchecked density of ethnic, religious, and national groups of diverse origins. Paul Tillich, a German-American Christian existentialist philosopher described that notable instability as follows : 'the mystery of the future and the mystery of the past are united in the mystery of the present...But how can we have presence ? Is not the present the ever-moving boundary line between past and future ? *But a moving boundary is not a place to stand upon.*'²⁹ This well-elaborated metaphor is a typical one for a steady study of American civilization through time, because Americans' institutional, intellectual, and physical boundaries have been almost persistently in motion : the shifting changes in society.

2. Stable Pluralism and Religious dissensions.

From early colonies to the thirteen original ones, motivations for foundation and settlement diverge or vary along with time. Motivations to live out of domination claws and enjoy agreeable freedom were highly willed and fiercely fought for by colonists of all ranks. Yet, when leaders and founding fathers became defaulters of laws of their own making and expectations hardly met, ambiguities grew high, giving birth to unsuspected contentions within a society of immense shifting changes. Tribalism and sectarianism came up with a series of conflicting interests whether economic or social among Americans who, consciously or unconsciously navigate between homogeneity and heterogeneity regarding the unstable pluralism which dominates or fuels all debates in early America.

2.I Early Colonies : Between homogeneity and heterogeneity

With the passage of decades, social scientists revealed that the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries were the periods during which the problem of pluralism was seriously tackled by social scientists and contradictions abundantly nourished. The later ones revealed that the colonies during their first generations were much more stable than people could have supposed.³⁰ Colonies could not be claimed to appear unstable in process on time since immigrants kept on peopling America in search for adequate or more favorable living conditions of diverse sorts. Let's have an insight into the notion of earliest origins and anticipations in order to grasp an understanding about religious fragmentations which every single day, offered a scene of deplorable taste. Michael Kammen illustrates the case with this pertinent remark when social making of the New World is still in process, by putting forward :

Nonetheless, despite the eighteenth-century emphasis of this phenomenon, we ought to begin with some notion of earliest origins and anticipations .For the facts are that while Massachusetts, Connecticut, Virginia, and perhaps South Carolina were founded on the premise of stable homogeneity, and while Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey,

²⁹ Paul .T. 1963 *The Eternal Now*. New York. USA

³⁰ Philip J. G., Jr. 1970. *Four Generations, Population, Land and Family in Colonial Andover, Massachusetts*. New York : Ithaca.

Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Georgia were established with the expectation of stable heterogeneity, both sets of assumptions failed to be fulfilled.³¹

Churches, basing on their origins and primarily motivating mottos, were meant to develop a kind of co-operative autonomy and brotherhood within an ecclesiastical polity of plural equilibrium. With the passage of some decades and in the exercise of their religious missions, serious doctrinal differences and dissensions, however, emerged with effervescence with effects to affect the full fragmentation of the New England's orthodoxy. In such a context, divergences sparked and huge confusions became common practices breaking the bridge between principles and practitioners who were supposed to get on well with rules, defaulted with impunity. Puritans who were supposed to purify the England Church demonstrated the opposite because circumstances inspired other ways and means different from the anything else put forward at the beginning. Not only limited to Puritans but also to others, the same historian enlarges the span as follows :

The Puritans of Massachusetts, moreover, as well as Quakers and German sectarians scattered elsewhere, acquired a state of mind and underwent a social process known as 'tribalism'. In becoming so exclusive and withdrawn, they were demonstrating one kind of defense mechanism against an unexpectedly plural society. They coped by refusing to cope, by abandoning all sense of mission save the salvation of their very own kind.³²

Ambiguities about the legitimacy of religious diversity were plain to be noticed. The preservation of a social stability necessarily requires the strict enforcement of laws that should regulate religious practices. A social order which stands as a sine qua non condition to be fulfilled in a well-organized society calls for toleration, orthodoxy and uniformity or unity in spite of the religious diversities in presence. The absence of such conditions would certainly create a still greater confusion. About the issue, directors of the colony of New Netherland later called New York reminded their Dutch colonial governor Peter Stuyvesant of the necessity for stable pluralism in these terms :

Your last letter informed us that you had banished from the Province...a certain Quaker...Although we heartily desire, that these and other sectarians remained away from there, yet as they do not, we doubt very much, whether we can proceed against them rigorously without diminishing the population and stopping immigration, which must be favoured at a so tender stage of the country's existence. You may therefore shut your eyes, at least not force people's consciences, but allow everyone to have his own belief, as long as he behaves quietly and legally, gives no offense to his neighbors and does not oppose the government.³³

³¹ Michael, K. 1972. *People of Paradox : An Inquiring Concerning the Origins of American Civilization*. New York : Oxford University Press.p63

³² Michael, K.1972. *People of Paradox : An Inquiring Concerning the Origins of American Civilization*. New York : Oxford University Press.p63.

³³ Hugh H. 1901. *Ecclesiastical Records*. New York :Albany

From the above illustrative quotation, it is widely felt that a stable pluralism was highly recommended even though daily practices proved the opposite one in an environment of a cacophony of discordant sectarians among Americans. From the colonial period to the national one, it has long been a common notice that denominationalism is one of Americans' particular characteristics to the history of religion because sectarianism has taken place with tangible evidences. Sects and factions tend to be quite unstable and impermanent and constantly lack the longevity, institutional apparatus, and coalition qualities of denominations and parties : a sect is to a political faction as a denomination is to a party. Amazingly, sects happened to be unstoppably unstable. They fluctuate, fragment and feud among themselves having as main actors, their leading figures. A perfect example lies in this affirmation :

George Keith, the great Quaker controversialist of the 1690's, became an Anglican priest in 1702, while other erstwhile Keithian Quakers became Baptists. Francis Daniel Pastorius, the prominent Lutheran pietist, became a Quaker; and Count Zinzendorf, the German evangelical leader in Pennsylvania, was oft-criticized for constantly shifting his sectarian affiliation. Francis Makemie almost achieved martyrdom in fighting for Presbyterian liberties after 1700, yet he hated the Quakers who were waging the self-same struggle.³⁴

Individualistic motivations topped the bill to the vision of the group or group society. Religious dissensions added additional ingredients to the persisting plague of instability. Colonial life revived as it was geared up by the event of the Great Awakening which was a religious revival that significantly impacted the English colonies. It did have a lasting and influential impact on the American culture in general and more specially on religious or various Christian denominations.

2.2 Insight into the American religious revival

Unlike the first Great Awakening which was a typical European philosophical movement known as Enlightenment or the Age of Reason, crossing the Atlantic Ocean to the American colonies and that was meant to emphasize a scientific and logical view of the world while downplaying religion, the American Awakening went the other way run . The later one which resulted in a new dedication toward religion seriously impacted in many ways the English colonies in America since passion for religion grew sold-fashioned and enthusiasm for Christianity went alike. Such conditions favored an eccentric multiplicity of religions dissensions because of the freedom to express personal stands, to operate and defend a religious choice with impunity. Some vividly claimed that revivals had a natural tendency to disturb and destroy peace and order in colonies while others looked upon them as pioneers of a grand engine of fomenting divisions that instilled separations in churches. The American religious revival aggravated conditions of unstable pluralism as openly expressed in a letter written by David S. Lovejoy :

Because there is here perfect freedom of conscience for all, except Papists, a spirit of confusion is ever blazing up more and more. Everybody may do what seems right in his own eyes....Hence so many conventicles exist. Hence so many are perplexed and misled; while

³⁴ Shelton. S. 1960. *American Christianity, An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*; New York.

others neglect or scoff at the divine service, not to speak of those who, on various wrong pretexts, entirely abstain from the Lord's Supper.³⁵

When conventicles exist in uncontrollable number as exhibited in the above address, inconstancies of cultural pluralism are blatant despite motivations which provoked them. They animated the American social life otherwise with enigmatic issues to be dealt with. Sectarian control over educational institutions, the presence of numerous foreigners unacquainted with languages, laws and customs, assimilating or anglicizing foreigners for specific and personal purposes became particularly problematic : both homogenizing and diversifying influences hit a bloc of perplexity. The sources, processes, and expressions of cultural pluralism all pushed up to the creative variability of the American colonial life with the religious revival at a great stake. Provincial America and regions mingled, interweaved, crashed up, renewed and sparkled in an uncontrollable intensity. Clifford K. S. describes the situation as such :

Even New England, the most homogenous of regions, received Huguenots by the 1680's, Irish after 1708, and significant number of non-English immigrants by the 1720's. By the 1690's, immigrants could no longer be easily absorbed by Puritan society; between 1690 and 1740, sharp class differences and hostility emerged between established families and newcomers. Moreover, whereas British naturalization laws were designed to minimize immigration, protect the hegemony of the Church of England, and avert threats to political stability at home, colonial naturalization laws were intended to encourage immigration.³⁶

Unlike British naturalization, the American colonial one offered motivating gear to everything except stability. Colonial naturalization laws were endowed with a kind of permissiveness which was in many regards, an invitation to unstable pluralism : openness to foreigners, growing acceptance to relatively liberal others, absence of religious rites, lower costs and simplistic procedures were stimulating symptoms. These parameters constitute den sources for instability, social or political. In the same respect, the proliferation of newspapers could be seen as double-edge instrument because being both a response and a generator of unstable pluralism. By reprinting news from abroad as well as from other colonies, newspaper printers offered that opportunity of a more unified outlook in terms of information. However, they represented organs of factionalism and sectarianism, far-fetching, untamable and quite abusive in practices and unsettling attacks. A striking illustration was the famous case and trial of John Peter Zenger which happened roughly in 1734-1735 and which arose from origins related to the socially destructive organs mentioned a bit earlier. At the advent of such a special trial, Zenger's lawyer Andrew Hamilton publicly invoked a new kind of legal relativism that suited the circumstances of plural societies : *'What is good law at one time and in one place, . . . is not so at another time and in another*

³⁵ David S. L. . 1969. *Religious Enthusiasm and the Great Awakening*. Eaglewood Cliffs.

³⁶ Clifford K. Shipton. 1936. Immigration to New England, 1680-1770, *Journal of Political Economy*, XLIV. pp225-239.

place'.³⁷ Circumstances determine the kind of consciousness adequate to protect interests even in field of laws.

Demographic changes occurred since people operated in every field at any time and everywhere. They did intensify mobility and highly contributed to change. It has remarkably been noticed that people quickly achieved physical maturity at younger age, established economic independence and get married earlier, were divorced more easily, and left their communities in greater frequency.³⁸ Due to economic growth and social diversity, the America society became more stratified at a given time and in the same drain, people in their demographic initiatives, moved to and through a plurality of ever-changing frontiers that surrounded discrete and discontinuous areas of settlement. Consequently, as material and religious differences kept the colonies at permanent loggerheads except during moments of mutual crisis, they became restlessly unsteady amongst themselves and within themselves. Conflicting interests and factions within each colony complicated relationships among colonies and jeopardized collective management over political issues. The British politician and political philosopher Witness Edmund Burke made his voice heard about the political will of Chatham (a little town in Barnstable County, Massachusetts) to attempt in 1766 to form a ministry that would satisfy all factions. He substantially said :

He made an administration so checkered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery, so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed ; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic : such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, kings friends and republican, whigs and tories; treacherous friends and open enemies : that it was indeed very curious show ; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on.³⁹

Rather homogenous or heterogeneous, stability fight of any sort in early America was so evasive to find, tenuous to keep and hard to implement. Generally acknowledged that union is the source of public happiness, settlers' public rhetoric approached incessantly themes like 'union' and 'unity' even though unstable English polities provoked a certain number of havocs regarding the American home management in whatever possible requirement or obligations it implied.

3. Focus on some intermittent English polities in early America

The American colonial life was in a number of regards, a receptacle of sporadic leading practices or measures from English colonials. From early time to the moment of revolution and even after, the problem of unstable pluralism that was at the core of the divided states of the colonies was justly deplored by all sensible men : interested in their safety and prosperity and motivated by an appropriate zeal for their welfare. At the very period of hectic debates over the necessity of a stable pluralism, circumstances led to new concepts because difficulties proved blatant in addressing the unstable

³⁷ James Alexander.1963. *A brief Narrative of the Case and Trial of John Peter Zenger*, Printer of the New York Weekly Journal. Cambridge : Massachusetts.

³⁸ Cadwallar C. 1968. *Collections of the New York Historian Society for the Year*. New York.

³⁹ Michael K.1970. *Empire and Interest. The American Colonies and the Politics of Mercantilism*. Philadelphia.

character of the American socio-political pluralism. Unstable democracy, balanced government, confederation, decentralized nationalism or collective individualism were among others, the epithets used to qualify or apprehend as one could, the related ambiguities toward that quasi irreversibly instability of Americans’.

3.I From an unstable democracy to a balanced government.

For over a century or nearly more, English colonists faced tremendous challenges related to a real leadership towards colonial communities which not only didn't stop increasing in number but also developed diversified characters. Thus, colonists had been highly bothered by the diversity, untidiness, and instability they consciously noticed in colonial life in general, laws for internal regulations or social contracts and polities for the management of colonies. In order to quench difficulties that could easily jeopardize life in communities as a whole, elusive efforts were again and again made to impose uniformity. For this reason, some social, political and economic measures as well were taken but in vain to meet the goal which was to fulfill the purpose of government. Historian Michael Kammen enumerated a series of controversial reforms in his book entitled *People of Paradox : An Inquiring Concerning the Origins of American Civilization*. He said :

Hence the Dominion of New England, the sporadic revocation of colonial charters, repeated requests for codification of colonial laws, resentment of provincial paper currencies, parliament passage of the Naturalization Act in 1740, creation of the entire navigation system, and the administrative reforms which came in 1764-1765 and caused so much trouble. Hence one imperial official's denunciation in 1752 of the 'false Polity', that calls Factions and Parties, and Checks, and independent Interests, and such Stuff Constitutional. Hence, Thomas Hutchinson's lament in 1767 that 'we shall never be all of one mind in our political principles.'⁴⁰

In the eyes of officials, life in colonial communities inspired more than what could be envisaged or widely known by everyone. Reforms were made with a fit-and start effects on social, economic and political grounds. Instability was blatant in every domain and democratic measures lacked efficiency to help maintain uniformity in colonial communities and even among founding fathers. Provincial constitutions and government-based regulations hit the block in addressing common issues, at the same place and in the same time. Daniel Leonard, a notorious loyalist in Britain's North American colonies, the polemical opponent of John Adams, wrote in 1775 that :

The provincial constitutions, considered as subordinate, are generally well adapted to those purposes of government, for which they were intended, that is, to regulate the internal police of the several colonies; but [they] have no principle of stability within themselves.⁴¹

Adequate or most appropriate decisions took time and really delayed to address a democratic uniformity to cope with the American ever-changing character. Conventional wisdom was mostly proffered by colonials to envision and rationalize alternatives towards colonies. Inconstancies and inconsistencies were widely felt. The

⁴⁰ Michael K. Ibid.p70.

⁴¹ Ibid.

following two affirmations are illustrations of the state of flux about the American pluralism which provoked lots of illusions :

If a person migrated to a remote place, meet it is that he do change his Rulers. A man should only understand colonization with the 'approbation of the Rulers whence he goeth, and with the acceptance of those to whom he removeth, lest by unstable changes they...slip out from under the Government of the Lord.

(John Eliot, 1604-1690, Puritan England's foremost missionary)

To persuade one colony to distinguish herself from another, by unbecoming condescensions, which will serve the ambitious purposes of great men at home...Opposition can never be effectual, unless it is the united effort of these provinces – that therefore benevolence of temper towards each other, and unanimity of counsels, are essential to the welfare of the whole.

(John Dickinson, 1732-1808, Founding father of the United States, American statesman.)

During Revolution time, newly independent states seemed to have reached their utmost unsteadiness. Alexander Hamilton called it 'Unstable Democracy' in 1777, describing the situation as follows :

Unstable democracy is an epithet frequently in the mouths of politicians...When the deliberative or judicial powers are vested wholly or partly in the collective body of the people, you must expect error, confusion and instability.⁴²

The postwar situation exposed a nation in a perpetual state of growth, everything did favor that general tendency : everything divides and multiplies. Founding fathers of the nation didn't see their viewpoints meet in interpreting that current situation because they were primarily obsessed with achieving and rationalizing a system of stable pluralism. John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and James Madison as well could resist the wind that blew everyone some hard times to live. Agreeing on how suitable possible to save the nation from uncontrolled division was the main to defend by all means. That objective urged up John Adams to write his fast *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States in 1786*. That aim prompted Thomas Jefferson to advocate for a society where diverse men might be free to inquire, worship, and express their beliefs openly. That same aim motivated Benjamin Franklin to write to parties 1786 that "such will exist wherever there is liberty; perhaps they help to preserve it. By the collision of different sentiments, sparks of truth are struck out, and political light is obtained".⁴³ Wondering whether stability and security could be achieved in a large and extended polity, James Madison said the following when the issue became a central preoccupation at the Assembly of Philadelphia during summer of 1787 : 'Complaints are everywhere heard from our most considerate & virtuous citizens... that our governments are too unstable'⁴⁴. In such a seeming confusion, both Federalists and Antifederalists explicitly desired a balanced political pluralism variously called, consolidation, confederation,

⁴² Ibid,p71.

⁴³ Adrienne k. 1961. *Power, Morals, and the Founding Fathers*. Ithaca.

⁴⁴ See Federalist Papers, Number 10.

decentralized nationalism, as well as other casual epithets. In one word, they couldn't agree on how best to achieve that goal structurally.

The concept of balanced government was projected in that precious period of time in the history of Americans in order to experience the possibility for a viable political system to be maintained in a diffuse society. Giving the government that stability which was everywhere called for and that was firstly regarded as the most volatile form of political organization, James Madison issued a statement to support the proposed Constitution in these words :

Thought it safe to the liberties of the people, and the best that could be obtained from the jarring interests of States, and the miscellaneous opinions of Politicians ; and because experience has proved that the real danger to America and to liberty lies in the defect of energy and stability in the present establishment of the United States.⁴⁵

Beyond the bounds of what can properly be said or developed about the instability in the American character in general, the constant fight for a unified nation remains a permanent endeavor for Americans. Within this context of controversial sentiments and inconsistencies about an appropriate government, the harsh need for a newly-found national unity was still at stakes.

3.2 Unstable pluralism and the search for cultural unity.

It has been a common notice that the remarkable permissiveness of regional, social, and political pluralism inspired many to state their minds about the federal America. The physical expansion and constant injections of new immigrants impacted the new nation in many ways, mainly the unstable pluralism. Agreement on constitutional fundamentals caused divergences of diverse sorts, best to illustrate that disturbing reality about the uneasy socio-political pluralism. Seen the new nation as too big for union, too sordid for patriotism or too democratic for liberty, the fear for disunion among the states and collapse of the republic were present or illustrate this American particular case of unstable pluralism as a large and unwieldy story.

Collective individualism calls for the hope to achieve a common citizenship based upon cultural unity and well-ordered liberty. Free Americans of the Revolutionary generation would sensibly subordinate his identity to the larger, singular character envisioned for the nation. A one mass of citizens was envisaged to get people melted, homogenized, educated as such, following some stereotypes of manners, morals and habits. The following description of David Tyack on some key figures of the Revolutionary period clearly stipulates their different supports to that collective individualism, each one viewing it in a particular way :

In fact, most of those engaged in educational enterprises in the young nation believed, with George Washington, that "the more homogeneous our citizens can be made...the greater will be our prospect of permanent union" So Noah Webster sought "uniformity & purity," and Thomas Jefferson most admired those "who have been educated [at home], and whose manners, morals, and habits are perfectly homogeneous with those of the country." Benjamin

⁴⁵ Madison to Mazzei, October 8, 1788, in Gaillard Hunt ed; : The Writings of James Madison. New York.

Rush advocated a federal university where “the youth of all the states may be melted (as it were) together into one mass of citizens”.⁴⁶

In opposition to George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Noah Webster and Benjamin Rush who championed cultural unity, the nation witnessed Jacksonian America more far more heterogeneous than anything else that was envisioned by those engaged in educational enterprises. Physical expansion and the injection of new immigrants made that possible. In fact, when manhood suffrage tended to become widespread, ethnic and religious differences tended to become the more important sources of political conflict. The American unstable pluralism was at stakes, prospected to be doomed to negativity or nothing more than a total failure. A nativist reacted reflexively, tackling the fact in these evocative words :

Our country presents many inducements to foreigners to come here; and the past policy of the government has given a too easy and indiscriminate admission to it ... In the early period of our national existence, there may have been reasons for the free admission of foreigners which do not exist now; and if the reasons have changed or ceased to exist, the practice founded on them should also be changed.⁴⁷

In their permanent search for unity, Americans of all social rank vacillated between self-praise for being a ‘nation of immigrants’ and self-hate for the agitated viewpoints forwarded by themselves against one another, in the same of the same nation. The heterogeneous character decried was definitely advocated by Americans themselves while fighting at the same time for the achievement of effective national organization. The paradox was sufficiently nourished through sporadic declarations such as the following, coming from the commissioner of a common school in New York City in 1896 :

I consider it the paramount duty of our public schools, apart from the educational knowledge to be instilled into our pupils, to form American citizens of them, to take up and gather together all the heterogeneous elements of this cosmopolitan population, and through the crucible of the public school to fuse and weld them into one homogeneous mass, obliterating from the very earliest moment all the distinguishing foreign characteristics and traits, which the beginners may bring with them, as obstructive, warring, and irritating elements.⁴⁸

Crystal clear that American nation even very young at the time, strove to develop both a multi-culture and paradoxically, promote the unifying characteristics of a mono-culture. Yet, the American conformist diversity and styles represented patent arguments or characteristics of a nation that advocates for a certain kind of heterogeneity-within-homogeneity. This conformism could be placed less in specific characteristics than in a widely felt common conditions of compromise or in a kind of hybridization. The highly varied range of regional, occupational and cultural variations formatted in the United States of America rested on social differences

⁴⁶ David Tyack. 1966. ‘Forming the National Character : Paradox in the Educational Thought of the Revolutionary Generation’. *Harvard Educational Review*, xxxvi.

⁴⁷ Lee. B. 1961. *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy. New York as a Case*. Princeton.

⁴⁸ Jacob W.M. April 16, 1896. *Strong Papers*, New York City Municipal Archives.

which animated all political and ideological affiliations or initiatives. Coalitions of every kinds were formed in a competitive arena whereby compromising assaults via diverse groups revealed ambiguities about the American unstable pluralism. During the second administration of Thomas Jefferson, denouncing that excessive dichotomy, Thomas Moore, an Irish poet, satirist, composer and political propagandist unveiled the truth in one of his poems as follows :

Who can, with patience, for a moment see
The medley mass of pride and misery,
Of whips and charters, manacles and rights,
Of slaving blacks and democratic whites,
And all the piebald that reigns
In free confusion o' ver Columbia's plains ?

And Thomas Moore weaves on by adding this :

Take Christians, Mohawks, democrats and all
From the rude wigwam to the congress-hall,
From man the savage, whether slav's or free,
To man the civili'z, less tame than he, -
Tis one dull chaos, one unfertile strife
Betwixt half-polish'd and half-barbarous life;
Where every ill the ancient world could brew
Is mix'd with every grossness of the new.⁴⁹

In the eyes of the poet, bridging from the golden dream of homogeneity to the truth about the unstable American pluralism, the gap is so crucial and illustrative to the ambiguous practices around the subject. Contradictory realities about homogeneity and heterogeneity brought to light unavoidable arguments that helped much describe the so-called American melting pot.

Conclusion

The English colonial society in early America faced challenges and went through series of metamorphosis, at the cultural level. The quest for legitimacy hit the bloc of a kind of multi-dimensional pluralism present in everyday life of Americans. The latter one was with no doubt, a cornerstone to pass with flying colors even though very dim were prospects to fulfill such a goal.

The American experience of pluralism didn't escape from inevitable fallouts and contradictions that plural societies in their complexities generally provide. Shifting changes, divergences and controversies engendered by the American clusters of numerous cultures instill some inconsistencies with a creative variability of colonial life : demographic changes with the related cortège of economic growth and social diversity. Unstable English politics to cope with home matters lead to material and religious differences which represented constant threats to social and political stability needed to implement a stable pluralism. From unstable democracy, balanced government, to collective individualism; English colonists, social scientists and

⁴⁹ Thomas, M.1806. *Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems, In the Poetical Works of Thomas Moore*. Boston.

founding fathers as well have incessantly been unstable to qualify that American social vitality in search for cultural unity. The nation was looking forward to developing both a multi-culture and the unifying characters of a mono-culture. The American nation, then being built was miraculously both singular and plural, organized and scattered, unified and diffused. The American colonial history that had begun with a quest for unity and homogeneity, ended with a widespread rationale for unstable pluralism and heterogeneity.

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