

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH IN THE ADMISSION AND INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES

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Résumé

Cet article retrace le rôle de la langue, en particulier l'anglais, dans l'admission et l'intégration des immigrants aux États-Unis. Sur la base de différentes approches, nous avons tenté de montrer que la langue joue un rôle clé dans tous les aspects de la vie, d'où son importance dans le domaine de l'immigration. A cet égard, il convient de souligner que, bien que l'Amérique soit une nation multilingue et multiculturelle, elle reste un pays anglo-saxon blanc avec une culture axée sur l'anglais. Ces éléments sont, indéniablement, ce qui régit les politiques du pays afin de respecter et préserver les valeurs de la communauté anglaise. C'est dans ce sens que nous centrons la première section de cette étude sur la relation entre les immigrants et l'idéologie du nativisme américain pour montrer à quel point ces derniers doivent se conformer à cette philosophie tant pour leur admission que pour leur intégration. Néanmoins, la deuxième section démontre que les immigrants sont souvent sujets à des sentiments anti-immigrants, à la discrimination linguistique et culturelle dans le cas où ils ne pas sont en accord avec les exigences de la communauté anglaise. Parmi ces immigrants, nous avons, dans la dernière section de cette étude, noté les immigrants illégaux et les réfugiés qui, en raison de leurs barrières linguistiques et de leur statut de personne peu qualifiées, sont considérés comme mettant en danger l'atmosphère socioculturelle de la communauté autochtone.

Mots clés : admission, langue anglaise, immigration, intégration, nativisme.

Abstract

This article chronicles the role of language, in particular English, in the admission and integration of immigrants in the United States. Building upon different approaches, we have attempted to show that language plays a key role in all aspects of life hence its importance in the immigration field. To this regard, it is worth pointing out that though America is a multilingual and multicultural nation, it still remains a White Anglo-Saxon country with an English-oriented culture. Such elements are, undeniably, what govern the policies of the country in order to respect and preserve the values of the English community. It is, in this sense, that we centers the first section of this study on the relationship between immigrants and the ideology of American nativism to show at which point the latter should comply with this philosophy for both their admission and integration. Nevertheless, the second section demonstrates that immigrants are often subject to anti-immigrant feelings, linguistic and cultural discrimination in case they are not in line with the requirements of the English community. Among those immigrants, we have, in the last section of this study, noted illegal immigrants and refugees who, owing to their language barriers and low skilled status, are viewed as jeopardizing the socio-cultural atmosphere of the native community.

Introduction

American immigration has always been marked by various factors that have been the subject matter of several studies. Among those factors, we can note the role of language, the arrival of both documented and undocumented immigrants, but also and mostly their integration which can, on the one hand, be facilitated by their mastering of English or, on the other hand, be complicated by the non-mastering of English.

Considering this analysis, it seems interesting to acknowledge that English, even though America is a multilingual nation, plays a huge role in American immigration. The importance of English in U.S. immigration is, to a certain extent, linked to different factors which can be analyzed from cultural, historical, social, economic, or political perspectives. At the historical level, for example, we can recall the immigration of the Pilgrim Fathers who, in 1620, settled in America with the intention of finding better living conditions and religious freedom. They originated from England and contributed widely to the cultural and socio-economic development of America.

However, even though U.S. immigration has known several waves of immigrants from different parts of the world and who brought with them their customs, traditions, and practices, America remains a White Anglo-Saxon nation with an English-oriented culture. Today, as in the past, issues about language are very recurrent in the discourse about American immigration and such questions have been documented by a growing body of research. In the same direction, immigration literature has shown that non-English-speaking immigrants find it more difficult to integrate to the American society than English-speaking ones, an issue which, in his seminal book *Language Loyalties : A Source Book on the Official English Controversy*, James Crawford addresses in these terms :

It would be problematic enough if all limited-English-Proficiency (LEP) students spoke the same minority language. ... Besides the language barrier, children from immigrant and refugee homes are often "at risk" because of poverty, neglect, crime, and other factors that affect school performance. (Crawford, 1992 : 313)

As already observed, the problem is connected to the ideals and values on which the country has been founded. With regard to children from immigrant families, as Crawford argued, they are at risk as well as many other immigrants who cannot properly communicate in English. Furthermore, in linguistic terms, the influx of non-English-Speaking immigrants is considered as a threat to national identity and unity. To this point, one can remind Benjamin Franklin's terms when, in 1751, he expressed an alarm over the Pennsylvania German's alleged refusal to speak English, "*why should Pennsylvania, founded by the English, become a colony of aliens, who will*

shortly be so numerous to Germanize us, instead of our Anglifying them, and will never adopt our language or customs” (Daniels, 1990 : 109-110).

Franklin raises concerns about language, that is to say the spreading of German which results from the flux of German immigrants in Pennsylvania. Such worries are today reflected by arguments that favor the interests of American citizens over those of immigrants. Drawing from his perspective, we should mention concepts such as Americanization, Nationalism, and Nativism which are defined in linguistic terms and are part of the core values on which America was built. With respect to immigrants, in particular non-English speakers, they are considered as not sharing those values hence their inability to integrate to the American society or mainstream culture.

Building upon these arguments, the purpose of this work is to bring to light the core role of language, in particular English, in American immigration. Although America is both a multilingual and multicultural nation, English occupies a central position in all sectors of activities and it is one of the policies that better determine what types of immigrants should be admitted in America or even who is entitled to be American or not. To provide information to these questions, we will first of all address issues about immigrants and the concept of American nativism. The second section of this work sheds light on anti-immigrant feelings, linguistic and cultural discrimination. In the third section, we outline the problem of illegal migration and language barriers.

1. Immigrants and the concept of American nativism

The term nativism, according to the *Cambridge Dictionary*, is “*the political idea that people who were born in a country are more important than people who have come to the country from somewhere else*” (web). To this definition, we can add the one given by the *Merriam Webster Dictionary* which suggests that, “*nativism is a policy of favoring native inhabitants as opposed to immigrants*” (web). Both dictionaries have in common ideas such as the perpetuation or revitalization of an indigenous culture as being the definition of nativism. In this sense, when applied to the context of the United States, nativism is an ideology which consists in favoring the interests of American citizens over those of immigrants. It is, in fact, what Blumer (1958) and Tilly (1998), quoted by Brian N. Fry, define as “*“native” reactions to “foreigners” as an effort to control access to valued resources through means of categorical distinction*” (Fry, 2007 : 2).

Of considerable importance to note here is how this policy has considerably influenced the debate about American immigration. In some respects, despite the idea of a nation of immigrants, race-based arguments have been used in the past as well as in the present in order to determine who must be admitted or is fit for American citizenship. For this reason, it is important to note that nativism honors the fact of loving or being familiar with American institutions and it is in this context that one should understand Kristofer Allerfeldt’s argument in *Race, Radicalism, Religion, and Restriction*

: *Immigration in the Pacific Northwest 1890-1924*. In a chapter "The Exclusion of Radicals", Allerfeldt writes :

Too many Americans are unfamiliar with the Constitution ; and we should see to it that foreigners who wish to become American citizens should know it and believe in it, and if they do not square with it should not allow them to become citizens. It is our country, our constitution and our government... We have been too liberal— liberal to the point of looseness—in admitting to citizenship men and women who are not in sympathy with our institutions, and citizens of this class are largely responsible for that form of radicalism in America which is now urging us to abandon the paths of our fathers, discard the constitution and get up a new kind of government in America. (Allerfeldt, 2003 : 95)

Allerfeldt, in this passage, chronicles issues that have to do with nationalism and patriotism. In other words, people who must be admitted or pretend to have American citizenship must be loyal to the country by being familiar with its institutions and also by adhering to the beliefs and values put in place by the forefathers.

Also important to mention here is that, as above-indicated, English plays an essential role when it comes to identifying who must be admitted, or even granted citizenship or not in order to preserve not only the white supremacy but also the English culture. From another angle, English can help immigrants reach their goals in terms of opportunities as Samuel Huntington pointed out with the example of Mexican Americans in his study "The Hispanic Challenge". He argues that, "*Mexican Americans can only share in the American dream and society if they do so in English*" (Huntington, 2004 : 30-45). Huntington's remark sheds light on the necessity for Mexican Americans to speak English if they want to achieve the American dream but more importantly to integrate to the society.

The fact of speaking English is, of course, what increases the chances of foreigners who may be victim of nativism or prejudices that very often hinder their success. Thus, even if immigrants are, more often than not, considered as foreigners whatever their status, it is important for them to be accepted by the dominant social group which, undeniably, wants to maintain and preserve its superiority toward other social groups hence the policy of nativism. In other cases, immigrants are merely viewed as aliens competing with the native-born population, a problem which Judith Gans highlighted in *A Primer on U.S. Immigration in a Global Economy*, "... *Competing claims are made, for example, that immigrants do jobs that "Americans won't do"*" (Gans, 2006 : 5). Not surprisingly, such arguments are, among others, what engender the different attitudes or feelings toward the foreign-born population.

With regard to those attitudes, it is worth mentioning that U.S. immigration has known different restrictions or policies that aimed at promoting the interests of the country by selecting skilled immigrants instead of unskilled ones. As a matter of fact, in 1917, the Test Literacy Act, known as the first national language restriction, was passed. With the TLA, immigrants were consequently admitted on the basis of their knowledge of

English. Regarding this process of selecting immigrants, it must be held that this policy has political orientations and cultural ones as well. Through literacy tests, for instance, linguistic minorities find it hard to be admitted and for those present in the country they are excluded from the political sector. Juan F. Perea, in *Immigrants Out ! The New Nativism and the Anti-immigrant Impulse in the United States*, describes the consequences of literacy tests on immigrants, mostly on those from southeastern Europe and from non-English-speaking countries :

To the surprise of the test's proponents, many of the immigrants from southeastern Europe passed the new test. As a result, the proponents shifted ground, urging restrictive national-origins quotas. These quotas, which were aimed at maintaining America's ethnic makeup (namely, dominantly white) were enacted in 1924 and remained in place for over forty years. During the height of hysteria over postwar communism, English literacy was made a condition of naturalized citizenship for the first time. (Perea, 1997 : 318)

Just like the Test Literacy Act, another act, commonly known as the Chinese Exclusion Act, was passed by the American Congress in 1882 and, as its name indicates, it prohibited the immigration of Chinese workers. What can be added to this analysis is that the strong presence of Chinese in the West Coast of America gave birth to a nativist movement which worried about the growing number of the foreign-born population. It is in the same context that, in 1924, the Johnson Reed Act was passed for the exclusion of Asian immigrants.

The passage of the aforementioned Acts is, without any doubt, related to arguments and policies that have to do with nativism and racism given that the presence of immigrants, in some parts of the USA, was seen as a threat to white hegemony and national unity. In his 1993 *Immigrant Voices : New Lives in America 1773-1986*, Thomas Dublin examines concerns about the admission and presence of some types of immigrants who can jeopardize white hegemony or be a burden to the economy,

What kind of people are these new citizens ? Some are honest men seeking a home... Others will join the hordes and Huns and Poles in the coal regions, hive together in hovels, live on refuse, save 90 per cent of their earnings and work for wages upon which no responsible laborer could exist. Others will come from the scum of Italy and Sicily... Isn't there food for thought in the number of immigrants ? (Dublin, 1993 : 4)

Dublin underlines the arrival of non-English speaking immigrants from southeastern Europe. However, given that they are not English-speaking aliens, there are assumptions which suggest that those immigrants may not adhere to the cultural values which are the foundations of America. Indeed, in many cases, English is an integral part in the admission and integration of foreigners and this is what Leonard Dinnerstein and David M. Reimers portray in their book *Ethnic Americans : A History of Immigration*. From a historical approach, they explain how American traditions and values have been framed

by groups of settlers including the Pilgrims and Puritans and whose heritage is still the driving force of American society :

More successful were groups of Pilgrims and Puritans who journeyed to New England in the 1620s and settled what is now Massachusetts... their move to the New World also afforded them the opportunity to implant their own cultural values. No other groups, no matter how large, were ever as significant in the development of the United States as these two groups... They cherished the Anglo-Saxon legal heritage and revered the written compact. They brought the English language to the New World... All of these aspects of their culture were firmly implanted in American soil and became the foundations for American society. Every succeeding immigrant group that came to the English colonies, and later to the United States, had to absorb these aspects of the dominant culture to be accepted Americans. (Dinnerstein and Reimers, 2009 : 8)

The authors of this excerpt evidence how English and other traditions implanted by the founders of the United States are important in the process of admission or integration to the U.S. society. As previously explained, speaking English reflects ideas about nativism and for nativist advocates English-speaking immigrants should be favored given that non-English-ones represent groups that may resist assimilation. In addition to being opposed to immigration, non-English-speaking immigrants are too often victim of stereotypes that result in anti-immigrant feelings, linguistic and cultural discrimination which are the focus of the following section of this study.

2. Anti-immigrant feelings, linguistic and cultural discrimination

Opposition to immigration has long been a complex issue in America but today it seems to be, more than ever, a topical issue. However, while some people advocate for mass immigration, others, on the contrary, are for a merit-based system where skilled immigrants will be favored over unskilled ones. For anti-immigration advocates, many immigrants represent an economic burden and a menace to the social order and national unity. On the basis of these arguments, it can be noted that immigrants experience obstacles among which anti-immigrant sentiments, language-based and cultural discrimination which are nothing but the result of ideas and policies that aim to preserve white hegemony.

From an economic approach, immigrants compete with Americans and lower wages in many sectors where they represent a cheap labor force for employers. Owing to such assumptions, the foreign-born population undergoes discrimination along with other barriers. In the *English Oxford Living Dictionaries*, discrimination is defined as "*the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex*" (web). As clearly written in this definition, discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of people of a different race, age, or sex. In our study, these categories of people are referred to as minority communities or groups and they are socially, culturally, and linguistically differentiated from the majority community, in other words the white English community.

At the socio-economic level, minorities live in areas where they are disproportionately separated from the dominant community. The conclusion which can be drawn from this perspective is that such communities experience obstacles pertaining to poverty. It is, indeed, because of poverty or the lack of means that they live in disadvantaged areas. In his book *Ethnic America : A History* (1981), Thomas Sowell examines the topic by laying emphasis on the case of Irish immigrants :

The Irish were the first great ethnic "minority" in American cities (...) When the Irish began arriving in the 1820s, and especially after their massive immigration in the 1840s and 1850s, they began at the bottom of the urban occupational ladder, the men as manual laborers, the women as maids. They crowded into the poorest quality housing, far worse than slum housing today and lived under conditions that readily communicated disease, fire, and such social problems as violence, alcoholism, and crime. The native public's reaction to the Irish included moving out of neighborhoods en masse as the immigrants moved in ; stereotyping them all as drunkards, brawlers, and incompetents ; and raising employment barriers exemplified in the stock phrase "No Irish need apply". The jobs the Irish did find were considered too hard, too menial, too dirty, or too dangerous by others. (Sowell, 1981 : 17)

Sowell's description of the Irish immigrants substantiates our analysis on anti-immigrant feelings and language-based discrimination. Thus, similar to many minority groups, Irish live in neighborhoods where they are separated from the native population whose reactions consist in moving to places where immigrants are underrepresented. This movement reflects, in a way, the feelings which natives have toward foreigners. Moreover, Irish immigrants face discrimination in the labour market as illustrated in this expression "No Irish need apply". This phrase demonstrates how immigrants are, in general, excluded from occupying certain jobs that must be held by the native population.

In more specific cases, discrimination toward minority groups takes into account not only their race but also their language. To this regard, it must be held that non-English immigrants are more vulnerable since they go through multiple hardships when it comes to admission, integration, and finding employment. As a case in point, one may refer to *Aging in a Second Language : A Case Study of Aging, Immigration, and an English Learner Speech Community* (2017), written by Steven L. Arxer et al. In this book, the authors recount the stories of aging minority immigrants who are dedicated to learning English with the purpose of integrating to the American society or grasping other opportunities. In their third chapter "Minority Aging in an Immigrant Context", they underscore the story of Rosa, a 62-year-old woman, who started attending English classes :

I want to learn English because I have a family. I have a granddaughter who is in the 5th grade. And at the school she attends, they only speak English. But this has changed our lives. I want to be part of her life. I want to help her with her homework and talk to her teachers. But I can't read the papers she brings home. I am very

frustrated so I want to learn English to help me with these things.
(Arxer et al., 2017 : 31)

Rosa is a Mexican woman who, like many other immigrants, is victim of language barriers. Her decision to learn English is, de facto, motivated by various factors including her inability to help her granddaughter who is in a school where they only speak English. Starting from her case, it is interesting to recall that the problem of minorities and English in U.S. education is an old story that is still relevant today. To maintain and preserve white supremacy, advocates of English-only legislation reject ideas related to bilingualism. For them, it will give much power to non-English communities who want to promote their languages and cultures.

Consequently, the inability to communicate into English is a barrier which prevents many non-English-speaking immigrants from finding employment or which can cause job rejection or even worse it can cause exploitation and unfair treatment. Examining the case of German immigrants, Maris R. Thompson deals with language-based discrimination in her study *Narratives of Immigration and Language Loss : Lessons from the German American Midwest*. Her analysis is centered on diverse narratives from Germans who underwent ethnolinguistic repression during and after the two world wars. She writes, "*Doris's mother emigrated with the family as a young girl, and her grandfather struggled to find work in the States, often due to his inability to speak English*" (Thompson, 2018 : 50). Doris is a second-generation German immigrant who witnesses the obstacles faced by her grandfather.

In light of this example, it is worthy observing that many immigrants in the USA have gone through linguistic and cultural discrimination that prevented them from making headway or achieving their goals. In more recent years, anti-immigrant feelings are significantly expressed in terms of restriction and deportation mostly when it comes to those from some countries associated with poverty or war-stricken countries. Migrants from the latter countries are considered as racially inferior and will not be able to adapt to the requirements of the American society hence the urgent need to select the types of migrants who should be admitted but more importantly deporting the least desirable ones. Regarding these concerns, Amada Armenta proposes some solutions in "Who Policies Immigration ?" :

Nations define themselves through their immigration policies. Establishing who may enter, who must leave, and who is eligible for membership is central to nation-state sovereignty. Although the United States prides itself on being a "nation of immigrants," concerns about "undesirable" newcomers—convicts, the poor, the infirm, and those from groups considered to be "racially inferior"—have been features of American immigration policy from its inception. Early lawmakers worried that admitting the "wrong" kind of immigrants would burden public resources and increase crime. Lawmakers responded to these fears by creating restrictive immigration laws, attaching penalties to violating those laws, and increasing the government's resources and administrative capacity to implement them. (Armenta, Web)

By analyzing Armenta's words, we may come to the conclusion that she advocates for a merit-based immigration system which mirrors the admission of a qualified labor force. Nevertheless, what should be added is that the admission of a competent labor force focuses on policies that promote the benefits of the native population. Among them, we can note the promotion of English, the reduction of the annual admission number which, also, may be determined on the grounds of English speaking ability.

With reference to the annual admission number, questions about family migration also termed as chain migration are raised to denounce the admission of unskilled members. To put an end to this plight, proponents of skilled immigration recommend the merit-based system which, evidently, is going to reduce the annual admission number which has been one of the concerns made by the Trump administration. In such a context, the RAISE (Reforming American Immigration for Strong Employment) Act was introduced in February 2017 to replace chain migration by the merit-based system in which immigrants are admitted on the basis of requirements that seek to foster the interests of America and its citizens.

The introduction of the RAISE act was also motivated by arguments and feelings according to which America receives people who represent a fiscal burden since it is obvious that through chain migration, it is easy to admit unskilled workers who are sponsored by family members already present in the USA. With a view to stop this immigration process, it is held that :

President Trump is calling for an end to chain migration in favor of a system that admits new migrants based on merit – what they are able to contribute to American society. He has endorsed the RAISE Act, introduced by Senators Tom Cotton (R-Arkansas) and David Perdue (R-Georgia). If passed, the current, overly-broad "family reunification" policies will be replaced with a system designed to attract immigrants with job skills needed in the U.S. economy, as well as the education and language ability required to succeed. It would also eliminate immigration pathways for extended family members, allowing only the spouses and unmarried minor children of the primary applicant to qualify as derivative beneficiaries... Simply put, chain migration doesn't place the interests of American citizens first... Replacing chain migration with a merit-based system would both lower the overall number of aliens accepted into the country each year, and ensure that those accepted are able to further the United States' cultural and economic priorities. (Raley, 2017 : Web)

In this excerpt, issues involving education, language ability, and promoting the interests of American citizens over those of aliens are addressed to demonstrate the attitudes or sentiments which are nourished toward immigrants. Beyond any doubt, it is the same arguments that have brought forth another debate in which questions connected with illegal migration, refugees, and language barriers are discussed.

3. Illegal migration, refugees, and the issue of language barriers

Questions about illegal migration and refugees have never been easy issues to address in the history of American immigration. Indeed, even if it is true that America is globally recognized as the first nation of immigrants, we should also reveal that the issue of immigration remains always a controversial matter. Thus, while some people perceive undocumented immigrants and refugees as individuals who need assistance and help, others, by contrast, consider them as economic migrants who flee the poverty and underdevelopment of their home countries.

To better understand the dichotomy that exists here, it is necessary to call to mind the changes and realities of present time. In fact, though America received refugees and undocumented migrants in the past thanks to its openness toward the rest of the world, welcoming such migrants has, today, become a problem simply because of discourses according to which those migrants are a threat to the country. In linguistic and cultural terms, most of undocumented migrants experience difficulty integrating to the mainstream culture or obtaining a decent job. Accordingly, due to their social status, undocumented immigrants are for the most part exploited considering that some of them are linguistically limited while others do not have the required skills or are not authorized to hold certain jobs where employers will take into account their rights.

On account of this situation, the presence of these types of immigrants in the United States has been firmly criticized by public opinion even if there are individuals who advocate for the humanitarian aspect toward those foreigners. Undoubtedly, since many of them experience communication barriers, it is held that such immigrants are a social threat given that their cultural integration is a problem. Refugees, for example, are too often from war-stricken countries or individuals who are prosecuted because of behaviours that are morally or legally banished. For such a reason, they should not be admitted since they will end up becoming enemies of the country that welcomed them.

Michelle Maklin makes this point clear in her book *Invasion : How America Still Welcomes Terrorists, Criminals, and Other Foreign Menaces to Our Shores* (2002). Similar to many others on the subject, namely anti-immigrant proponents, she opposes the admission of individuals classified as refugees or undocumented since, whatever the reasons for their admission, they pose a threat to national security. Through the choice of her title, she condemns the humanitarian response toward refugees or other immigrants who are admitted on the basis of programs dedicated to help them :

The nineteen hijackers who invaded America on September 11, 2001, couldn't have done it without help from the United States government. We unlocked our doors, spread out the welcome mat, and allowed these foreign visitors to plot death and destruction in the comfort of our home. And they could do it again in a heartbeat. The United States Congress, pressured by ethnicity lobbyists, corporations, the travel industry, and open-borders activists, aided the September 11 terrorists by losing track of foreign students and

visitors overstaying their visas. To this day, no such tracking systems have been implemented. Federal lawmakers also created visa programs and airline-sponsored regulations that aided the terrorists' travel. Those programs remain in place today. (Maklin, 2002 : IX)

By the means of this assertion, Maklin calls into question the admission of immigrants through programs or humanitarian actions because, as she explains, some of them overstay their visas in that they become illegal immigrants. However, like many anti-immigrant defenders, she supports the idea according to which illegal immigrants and refugees cause various problems in America. For a better exploration of this issue, we can draw evidences from Aviva Chomsky's chapter "We Need to Protect our Borders to Prevent Criminals and Terrorists from Entering the Country" where she argues that, "*Terrorist acts in the United States have been committed by citizens and by immigrants, and for causes related to domestic as well as international issues*" (Chomsky, 2018 : 180). Chomsky—by contrast to many other people who contend that immigrants are the only instigators of violence or criminal acts—suggests that violence or other problems can be caused either by the native or foreign-born population.

What can be learned from her perspective is that she does not only condemns the foreign-born population as other people do. To some extent, the assumptions toward aliens are deeply related to sentiments that seek not only to reduce the number of immigrants but also and mostly to promote the interests of natives over those of the former. Admittedly, it is because of such nativist feelings that many people reject ideas connected to the admission of refugees who are viewed as economic migrants rather than people seeking humanitarian protection.

To justify this point, one can refer to the example of German Jews who run political persecution during World War II. However, while those people were fleeing the atrocities of the war by seeking refuge to the United States, public opinion opposed their entrance to the country, and that is what Susan Kneebone summarizes in *Refugees, Asylum Seekers and the Rule of Law : Comparative Perspectives* (2009). In a chapter entitled "Refugees, Asylum and the Rule of Law in the USA", Stephen H. Legomsky writes, "*Among the reasons for the resistance were the Depression and the accompanying fear of competition for jobs, a fear that the refugees would hold subversive political views, and anti-Semitism*" (Kneebone, 2009 : 124). Regarding this statement, we must bear in mind concerns about the socio-cultural and economic impacts of refugees in America.

In other terms, their presence in America will culturally and economically affect the country and this is what urges public opinion to oppose their admission. In recent years, the same arguments are made to oppose the admission of refugees and all immigrants deemed to be a cultural, social, economic, or political threat to the USA. In this way, it is interesting to point out that the debate about people stereotyped as being a menace to the USA has today taken multiple orientations. To begin, let's remind that during the Trump administration there was a legislation called the travel ban and which consisted in banning the admission of some nationals from countries accused of failing to cooperate with the United States.

Among those countries, we can mention Iran, Iraq, Lybia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Yemen, Chad, North Korea, and Venezuela which, as we may know, are culturally and ideologically different from the USA. Nationals from the above-mentioned countries are, therefore, targeted by the travel ban which not only highlights that these countries fail to cooperate with America but some of them are also countries stricken by terrorism. In some respects, the ideology of the travel ban reflects the attitudes that public opinion has toward immigration. Likewise, while some people advocate for a merit-based immigration system in which immigrants will not experience language barriers, others go further by rejecting any ideas pertaining to the admission of individuals whose countries are stricken by terrorism. As explained beforehand, the admission of immigrants from those countries pose a national security threat since, along with the economic burden, the latter are linguistically and culturally considered as foreigners whose integration may be a complex process.

Additionally, it should be observed that the integration of such aliens is difficult because they are not from English-speaking countries and do not have an English-oriented culture. In this sense, research has shown that many immigrants have been denied access to the United States because of the sentiments mentioned above while others deported to their home countries for the same reasons. Today, the problem is mostly noticed with immigrants from Mexico and Central American countries that represent an important number of the U.S. immigrant population.

In the U.S.-Mexico border, many migrants are struggling hard in order to enter to the United States where they hope to start new lives. Despite their determination, crossing the border is not an easy matter because of the fact that many migrants are viewed as having ties with criminal organizations residing in Mexico and Central America as well. To put it differently, drug trafficking organizations and other types of organized crimes are said to be among the factors that increase the number of undocumented aliens that benefit from the help of people who, in the past, managed to cross the border. As a consequence of this phenomenon, the question of undocumented immigrants and refugees is still a very complex issue which the American government is struggling to resolve while taking into account the changed realities of the country and public opinion toward immigrants.

Conclusion

The United States, although it is referred to as a multilingual and multicultural nation, is commonly known as a White Anglo-Saxon country where English, by contrast to other languages, is the common language used in the administration and institutions. The dominance of English over other languages is, with no doubt, related to many factors that explain how the country was founded by people who originated from England. However, even though English is not officially adopted by the country, one cannot deny its core role in all sectors of activities. For example, when it comes to immigration, English plays a crucial role in the admission and integration of

migrants whose knowledge of the language may determine who must be accepted or not. In like manner, knowledge of English helps many immigrants to find employment.

Consistent with the above-analysis, we have pointed out that America is a country with an English-oriented culture and in order to preserve the supremacy of the English community, it seems important to promote the interests of its members. To some extent, we can admit that it is in this context that immigration policies are, in recent years, in favor of immigrants who speak English considering that the latter may economically and culturally contribute to the development of the country. By contrast, non-English speakers are viewed as an economic burden and they are very often undocumented immigrants or refugees. Owing to their social status and the communication barriers they go through, anti-immigrant proponents contend that such aliens represent a menace to the national security and social atmosphere of the country.

From a socio-economic stance, it is argued that undocumented immigrants—in particular low skilled ones—are very often involved in illegal activities to provide for their needs. Such individuals are, like many people throughout the world, motivated and lured by ideals according to which America is a land of opportunity where everybody can start a new life and achieve their desired goals. Regarding this perception of America by people around the world, it is necessary to highlight that it is indeed possible to start there a new life but this goes with a lot of tenets and values that are defined by the American dream.

This ideology has always been a pull factor which has drawn many people to the United States. Thus, although there are those who managed to achieve it, others, therefore, found it difficult to achieve the dream owing to a lot of obstacles which do not meet the requirements of the country. Among the obstacles, our study outlines different issues that are directly or indirectly in connection with language barriers. To this point, we have throughout our analysis examined the role of English in the United States while taking into consideration several elements with a focus on the immigration issue.

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