

# Becoming new yorkers

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Many changes happened in the world in the past years. One of the most notable modifications that are observed is the development of international relations that involves different countries around the globe. Almost every state are giving due importance in strengthening their diplomatic ties with other countries.

This kind of practice only shows the increasing vitality of the interdependency and collaboration of each nation from another especially during this time of globalization. Another essential phenomenon that is also a clear implication of globalization is the immigration of the citizens of one country into another nation.

There has been a dramatic increase in the immigration of people coming from developing countries to go to developed states in order to seek for greener pasture. Being the case, this kind of situation is also changing the very way of life of the countries that they go to. There are specific places in a certain country wherein the immigrants are concentrated. Due to the difference in cultures of the immigrants as well as the native born of the country that they went to, it cannot be prevented that an assimilation of culture will take place.

Nevertheless, assimilation is most observable in the second generation of these citizens wherein an immigrant will give birth to her child in the foreign land and raise him or her with the values and principles of two different cultures. As such, the dominating existence of these immigrants will largely contribute in modifying the perspective of people with regards to different important issues in the place they are in. It can also reach a point that these second generation of citizens will create their own culture, which is a mixture

of the way of life of their immigrant parents and the foreign country that they lived in.

The phenomenon of immigration and the situation of second generation of this type of citizens are discussed in the book entitled “ Becoming New Yorkers. ” This book is a collection of the studies conducted by numerous researchers with regards to immigration and its effect in the certain places of a country where immigrants composed the majority of the population. Their study is specifically focused in the situation of New York, which is considered as one of places in the United States of America where immigrants are larger than the actual native-born citizens of the country.

The methodology that the researchers use in the duration of the studies deal with qualitative case studies about second and “ 1. 5” generation immigrants in New York. 1. 5-generation immigrants are those people whose parents were immigrants but they were born or substantially raised in the United States (Kasinitz et. al, 2004). The participants of these studies are all young adults that are defining their path of life in a complex and often very tough city. Most of them considered themselves as very different from their immigrant parents.

They work in various kinds of jobs and they have various educational opportunities. They view about race and ethnicity differently from their parents and they also have varying stand about important issues like love and marriage, relations with relatives, and the way to raise children. At the same time, only a minority of these young people considered themselves as “ mainstream” Americans. In their everyday lives they have to establish a balance between the ideas of foreign-ness and native-born entitlement.

It is a struggle between the statuses of an insider from an outsider. This eventually creates tension that is often referred to as the reason that makes them very much “ New Yorkers” (Kasinitz et. al, 2004). In this case, it is vital that the concept of assimilation is discuss in order to understand the effects of immigration to the American culture and its citizens may they be native-born or immigrants. Assimilation is defined as the “ process by which the characteristics of member of immigrant groups and host societies come to resemble one another” (Brown and Bean, 2006).

It is also known as integration or incorporation. The process of assimilation has both economic and socio-cultural dimensions. It started with the immigrant generation and persists through the second generation and beyond (Brown and Bean, 2006). Social scientific observers that studied the last great wave of immigrants to the United States, which are largely European, assumed that assimilation was desirable and inevitable. Social scientists during the midtwentieth century perceived assimilation as synonymous to upward mobility.

However, during the late 1960s, this idea was greatly debated because of the relation of assimilation with America’s loss of confidence in terms of the racial and ethnic problems that it brought about. It is at this moment that assimilation was greatly regarded as historically for “ whites only” (Kasinitz et. al, 2004). Another issue that emerged with regards to the concept of assimilation is the idea of “ becoming American”. Critics of immigration believed that it is impossible to have immigrants that are 100 percent Americans and even their offspring cannot be considered as true Americans.

On the other hand, the supporters of immigration believes that through time these immigrants will be able to acquire the American way of life and eventually forget and lose its ties with his or her native land (Kasinitz et. al, 2004). Similar with the arguments of the researchers of this book, I believed that it is indeed impossible for immigrants to become true or pure Americans. The recent developments in communication technology as well as the cheap cost of foreign travel even make it easier for immigrants not to lose their connection with their native land.

In relation to this, I also believed that the process of assimilation indeed has its benefits and consequences. It is capable of creating conflict through the confusion of balancing various cultures but it also creates spheres of cooperation that allow more people all over the world to relate and interact with each other. The outcome of the second generation's assimilation is very difficult to foresee especially with the debate on the real meaning of assimilation in this present time.

However, I deem that one thing is sure that assimilation will indeed produce cultural loses and cultural gains. References Brown, S. K. , & Bean, F. D. (2006). Assimilation Models, Old and New: Explaining a Long- Term Process. Retrieved December 19, 2008, from <http://www.migrationinformation.org/feature/display.cfm?id=442>. Kasinitz, P. , Mollenkopf, J. H. , & Waters, M. C. (2004). *Becoming New Yorkers: Ethnographies of the New Second Generation*. U. S. A. : Russell Sage Foundation.