RESEARCH IN RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS
VOLUME 12

MARGINALITY, POWER, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE:
ISSUES IN RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER ANALYSIS

RUTLEDGE DENNIS
Editor

MARGINALITY, POWER, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: ISSUES IN RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER

RESEARCH IN RACE AND ETHNIC RELATIONS

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MARGINALITY, POWER, AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE: ISSUES IN RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER

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First edition 2005

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 0-7623-0277-1
ISSN: 0195-7449 (Series)

♾ The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper). Printed in The Netherlands.

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Dedicated to my Grandchildren
Shay, Justin, Desiree, Shaphan and Cierra
With love, Papa

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PART I

THE AGE OF MARGINALITY

Rutledge M. Dennis

As we move into the 21th century, we might ponder the pithy and insightful epigram of Talleyrand who asserted that the more things change, the more they remained the same. Such an epigram may be appropriate as we chart the evolution of ideas, events, and behavior from the 20th century and as we are alerted to ideological and social structural tendencies of an evolving new century. We were told with much fanfare at the end of the previous century that a global community would await us, that many social structural forces which hitherto sanctioned and supported inequities and perpetrated brutality against the weak and disinherited would weaken or disappear. However, the dialectical nature of societal change demonstrates that we can have severa1 thematic developments operating simultaneously. That is, on several levels and in many areas, actions, behavior, and the institutional networks which reflect a global community may be emerging. But this emergence does not hide, nor could it, the fractured world within which the excluded and the disinherited live. In this fractured world many are unprotected or semi-protected: members of oppressed ethnic groups, females, the young, the old, the impoverished, the lower castes, and those belonging to outcaste or suppressed religious faiths, and those persecuted.

There are paradoxical features of marginality, and viewed closely, these features may be called dual paradoxes in the same manner that I have used the term "dual marginality." The paradoxes relate to the fact that though many refer to those marginalized as being "outside" of the social sphere, a good case can be made that the marginalized are both "outsiders as insiders" and "insiders as outsiders." That is, no one or no group can evade or escape from the social sphere, in the

Marginality, Power, and Social Structure: Issues in Race, Class, and Gender
Research in Race and Ethnic Relations, Volume 12, 3–8
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ISSN: 0195-7449/doi:10.1016/S0195-7449(04)12001-1

same way that Ellison's Invisible Man is really not invisible, but rather is seen, but simply ignored. But being ignored does not mean that you will not play a variety of roles in a society. You are ignored because with power, position, and status do not view you as important to recognize, except within limited economic, political, or cultural boundaries. For this reason, we focus on those marginalized because there are social as well as personal consequences for both the marginalized and the non-marginalized within the larger society, as well as for the larger world. When one charts the events of the past 50 or so years: the wars, social movements, rebellions, and revolutions, what is clear is the precipitation of these events have their foundation in collective grievous (real or imagined). Nietzsche's concept of resentiment is a useful concept to explain those social and psychological consequences of being the outsider-insider and the insider-outsider.

In countries which attempt to adhere to democratic principles and have social movements and groups which attempt to hold the feet of national, state, and local government to the fire on issues related to those marginalized, the struggle continues because marginals continue to experience the social, economic, political, medical, and cultural consequences of their outsider-insider/insider-outsider status. In such countries safety-valves exist because there are processes and procedures to address, though often not to abolish, the inequities due to marginalization. The empirical studies of Kimya N. Dennis, Joseph Richardson, Jr., Martha Huggins and Myriam Mesquita illustrate various programs and practices designed to ameliorate the problems confronting marginalized youth in the United States and Brazil. Dennis's article probes the relationship between religiosity and delinquency and concludes that delinquency is multidimensional and empirical findings linking it ts religiosity remains "largely inconsistent." Her study looks at background issues of community disorder, neighborhood breakdown, and family and friendship network ties and measured religiosity by determining if the youth and young adults viewed religion as important and whether they attended religious services. Based on these two indicators she found that youth and young adults who attended religious services regularly and found religion to be important were more likely to view criminal activity as wrong and, therefore, less likely to commit acts of deviance. Utilizing the theoretical concept of social capital, social network analysis, ethnographic methods, and extensive case studies, Joseph Richardson, Jr. studies adolescent violence among young urban African-American males. Though the methodologies of Dennis and Richardson are different, they both analyzed youth through the prism of crime and deviance, social networks, and the social disorder and neighborhood breakdowns. Richardson's research, drawing on a four-year longitudinal ethnographic research study, looks at the social capital, strategies used by these youth and their families, to prevent the youth from involvement in serious violent behavior over the youth's life-course. The Huggins/Mesquita article

explores the brutality surrounding the killing of marginal male street youth (the jobless, parentless, those black and dark-brown, and the uneducated) in Brazil and how, though the killings are illegal and represent deviant behavior, Brazilian society sees the killings as necessary in preserving a strange sense of societal order. The article highlights the case of "double consciousness" within the society, and is almost a classic case of "blaming the victim." As a post-script to the article, the national press and media in the United States have recently focused on the youth street killings and this has forced a section of Brazilian society to move to punish those engaged in these killings.

The concept of marginality is closely linked to identity, for the simple reason that we tend to live our lives in and through "identity shelves": males-females; dominant-nondominant. At some point, we are each "the other," the current literature indicates that though we all have identity shelves, not all the shelves are tightly attached, thus, there is room for identity construction in many areas. Jeremy Hein's ethnographic and life-history study looks at the resettlement system for Indochinese refugees and the process by which ethnic boundaries are created, intermediary roles are created, and eventually, how marginal individuals are recruited for these intermediary roles. The marginality of the caseworkers-intermediaries is highlighted in as much as they must act as the group in the middle, between the refugee community and the dominant (white) social service providers. In other words, these intermediaries are the boundary maintenanee keepers, and what is unique here is that these marginal intermediaries are those already societal marginals, so in a sense they may be yet another example of this editor, Rutledge M. Dennis' use of the term "dual marginality." The paper by Sadat Obol plays on Dennis' dual marginality theme but goes one better by proposing a "triple marginality" for Uighur Muslim women in Xinjiang Province whose status altered due to the in-migration of large numbers of Chinese into the province. Prior to the Chinese in-migration these women experienced gender inequalities because of the Uighur culture as well as Isiamic law. Using her life story and family history as case studies Obol then relates that post-migration Uighur women now had to confront race and ethnic marginality since they were not Chinese, and, in addition, faced religious marginality because the Chinese sought to downplay or abolish religious practices and institutions. Like in so many cases paradoxes abound, and in this case, one of the consequences of the domination of the Chinese in Uigu life was the diminishing role of male dominance as the only source of marginality for Uighur women. Retaining her paradoxical position, Obol labels the process of marginality as rather complex and problematic in that "It is largely oppressive, but ironically it can simultaneously be partially liberating." Mary Jo Deegan explores the gender theme which highlights Obol's paper, and begins by reconstituting Park's concept of "the marginal man." She then challenges Park's patriarchal assumptions as they

are linked to both sociology and the larger society. Rejecting Park's marginal man as a ". . . powerful, able-bodied, heterosexual, white male . . ." calls for an examination of "the marginal woman" in which the structural forces shaping women such as race, age, physical abilities, ethnicity, religion, class, and sexual preferences would be emphasized.

The articles by Martha Jacob and Frederique Van de Poel-Knottnerus and J. David Knottnerus present different views on class, the latter, the marginal status of teachers in an elite school system, and the former, a test of Wilson's thesis on inner-city residents and whether or not they adhered to basic American values. The elite school system study is significant in that it almost replicates the marginal status of female teachers in American society up to the late 1950s and early 1960s. Using the historical case study and employing a methodological procedure known as "literary ethnography," the authors explore and define the position of these elite school teachers as marginal because they occupied a position between their class of origin, the lower working class, and the classes with which they were educated and which they later taught, the bourgeois classes. The authors conclude their study by hypothesizing that replicating the study in noneducational settings might proffer similar examples of rnarginality if the variables were comparble, Martha Jacob's reassesses William J. Wilson's critique of the marginal urban poor, and rethinks the conlusions from his 1987 study. She asserts that Wilson's position is somewhat, though not fully consistent, with Oscar Lewis' "culture of poverty" thesis, and she posits the view which she attibutes to Wilson, in which inner-city behavior is the cause of the never-ending poverty in America. Jacob asks the question: Were those in Wilson's study who professed beliefs in "American" values (hard work, taking the initiative, and having a strong sense of morality), not the same respondents who displayed "ghetto-related" behavior? Using Wilson's data from his "Urban Poverty and Family Life Survey of Chicago 1987" survey, Jacob concludes that looking only at one dimension of Wilson's study, and using OLS regression models, she asserts that the vast majority of Wilson's respondents who expressed belief in "American" values had never engaged in "deviant" or criminal behavior and notes that values are important indicators of whether the individual engages in deviant behavior or Wilson's "ghetto related behavior." I don't think Wilson would refute that point, but much larger issues which Jacob raises, but admits to not having the time to address, are the possible connections between poverty, deviance, and individual behavior.

Each of the theoretical papers had unique features which I believed might be of interest to readers. Robert Dunne's paper begins with the early conceptualization of marginality, moves through re-definitions and re-conceptualizations of the term, then provides the reader with contemporary empirical case studies of the individuals, groups, and nations which might be labeled marginal. He

frames his arguments around issues of the working class, modernization, global underdevelopment, surplus populations, social domination, and social control. He also positions marginality as a dialectica1 schema shifting between centrality and marginality, and asserts that pure forms of marginality are difficult to find because marginality is not absolute and there is a flux and flow as another dialectic is at work, that of social integration and social distance. Lastly, Dunne leaves us with an empirical assignment: that of validating through research, degrees of marginality. Janet Mancini Billson's article assesses the historical origin of marginality and then re-defines the concept's parameter. She then proposes that we analyze several dimensions of marginality: Essential versus Processual Marginality; Changeability of the Situation; Salience; Visibility; Cultural conflict; Group conflict; Attitude of Feeder-Group; Permeability of Recipient-Group; Direction of Identification, and Voluntary Nature of Position. These dimensions will assist us, she notes, in exploring even more dimensions of the concept, plus answer questions germane to the term itself, such questions as whether different types of marginality are related to differences in degrees of closures against internal groups, whether types of marginality are related to the distribution of scarce resources; Who determines the existence of marginality, and what happens in cases of multiple marginalities. It is interesting and instructive that these very questions are at the heart of Obol's study. Lastly, Thomas Jenkins' paper takes us back to a reexamination of Park and Stonquist, but he does so by rooting the concept of marginality and its linkage to European trade and commerce, Western slavery, colonialism, imperialism and immigration. Jenkins concludes his paper with an analysis and critique of the manner in which Park and the concept of shaped American sociology. He argues that the concept of marginality, though worn, is still appropriate in as much as it illustrates and relates to contemporary social phenomena and psychological consequences just as it did in earlier times.

The papers in this volume represent a wide range of perspectives on marginality, but whether mainly theoretical or empirical, they illustrate common themes, issues, and problems germane to assessing, defining, conceptualizing, and studying individuals and groups, and for Dunne, nations which are marginal to other individuals, groups, and nations. Either directly or indirectly, all of the articles highlight the fact that when we discuss marginality we are probing the degree to which power is held and/or exercised by one individual, group, or nation to the detriment of other individuals, groups, or nations. The consequences of this power-powerless or dominance-nondominance dialectic is situational and contextual, but we can note, using history as a guide, that the marginalization of one group is often not accidental, but results from a carefully crafted desire to exploit, use, or abuse power and dominance to secure or maintain an historical position, or to marginalize another in order to acquire such a position or place. A crucial

question central to each of the papers in this volume is the question and the problem of de-marginalization. It appears that a large percentage of individuals and groups advocating and leading wars, rebellions, social movement, and revolutions, mentioned earlier, were designed to do just that The process of de-marginalization has been, of necessity, a strategy to alter the status quo, and to make the last, the first. One of the first steps those of us in the academy can make in the alteration of the status quo is to insure a degree of theoretical clarity in our use of terms such as marginality.

Secondly, methodological clarity is just as important as theoretical clarity, and is a necessary second step. Lastly, I am a firm believer in methodological pluralism and sought this in selecting the articles for this volume.

PART II:
DEFINING MARGINALITY: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

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MARGINALITY: A CONCEPTUAL EXTENSION

Robert J. Dunne

The term "marginality" conjures up images that promise rich analytic depth. Unfortunately, concepts such as marginality are often "fuzzy" and lack the specificity that would allow them to serve as analytic tools capable of much fruitfulness. The terms "marginal," "marginality," "marginalize" and similar derivatives are currently found in sociological literature with some frequency, but they are usually used as descriptive labels and are often redundant terms for other concepts.

The question is, does the concept-marginality have any analytic use? In this essay I will argue: (1) that the concept has never been conceptualized in such a way that it could have much analytic value; and (2) but that it can be conceptualized in a way that will prove to be analytically fruitful.

EARLY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF MARGINALITY

The concept of marginality was introduced in 1928, in an essay by Robert Park titled "Human Migration and The Marginal Man." The essay was primarily concerned with migration rather than marginality. This is understandable when one considers that migration to the U.S. was a major phenomenon at that time. Park made only a few comments about marginality in his essay, using the term to refer to the cross-pressures generated by overlapping involvements in two cultures simultaneously that migrants were assumed to experience.

Marginality, Power, and Social Structure: Issues in Race, Class, and Gender
Research in Race and Ethnic Relations, Volume 12, 11–27
© 2005 Published by Elsevier Ltd.
ISSN: 0195-7449/doi:10.1016/S0195-7449(04)12002-3

Following the publication of Park's essay a number of scholars also used the concept "marginal." Yet, as in Park's original essay, there was a tendency to focus on other topics while only incidentally labeling something as marginal. Thus, Smith's (1934) essay on racially mixed populations in Hawaii bore the term "Marginal Man" in the title, but failed to develop the concept. This was also true of Cressey's (1935) essay on mixed race people that were the product of unions between British sailors and Indian women. Slotkin's (1943) essay also contained the words "Marginal Man" in its title but did not develop the concept and, indeed, only used the term once in the body of the essay.

In 1937 Stonequist published a book titled *The Marginal Man* that carried an introduction by Park. Stonequist's interest was colonialism and the adjustment native people made to European domination. Following a suggestion in Park's original essay, Stonequist turned his attention to the mental state of native populations. He concluded that two factors were crucial: first, the extent to which the native sought to assimilate into European culture; and second, the extent to which the native's efforts to achieve assimilation were rebuffed. Stonequist concluded that if the desire for assimilation was great and the rejection fairly complete, the native was likely to experience bitterness and confusion that could result in forms of mental illness, criminal actions, or other expressions of personal dysfunction. This became known as the Park-Stonequist framework-marginality produces personal disorder. In 1955 Kerckhoff and McCormick, working within this framework, reported that Chippewa Indian youth who identified with whites, yet were not accepted by whites, had higher numbers of personality abnormalities as measured by a personality inventory.

Other works, however, have been more problematic; either criticizing the Park-Stonequist framework, or suggesting reconceptualizations. In 1941, Goldberg published an essay titled "A Qualification of The Marginal Man Theory." Though his findings were actually consistent with the theory, he did insist on one variation-members of a nondominant culture, living in an area dominated by another culture, could be normal provided they successfully pursued the goals of their own culture. In 1956 Antonovsky published an essay in response to Goldberg in which a "refinement" of the marginal man concept was promised. Actually, Antonovsky reported a study in which he found several different ways in which a member of a nondominant group could adjust to the domination of another group. He concluded that marginal status did not have to produce anything like the disordered personalities hypothesized by Park and Stonequist. Even earlier, in 1947, Green questioned the scientific value of the marginal man concept. He concluded that it was based on circular reasoning, i.e. those who are disturbed are labeled marginal, and suggested that the clarity (as opposed to ambiguity) of one's position in relation to dominant and nondominant positions is probably the most important

consideration. In 1952 two works were published. Golovensky evaluated the Park-Stonequist formulation empirically and concluded that so-called marginal people were no more likely to exhibit signs of personal disorder than nonmarginal people. He stated that "The marginal man concept, in its broadest sense, is a sociological fiction based on a stereotype . . . a caricature . . . an exaggeration and distortion of a fact" (p. 335). Golovensky concluded that the marginal man concept could only have application in very specific and restricted circumstances. Wardwell, on the other hand, did see a positive use for the concept but in a greatly altered sense. His study of chiropractors put the focus on the extent of integration of social roles. He stated, "The Chiropractor is not marginal in two distinct cultures, as the term 'marginal man' ordinarily would imply. He is simply an incumbent of a role that is marginal" (p. 348). By that he meant that expectations were unclear and, consequently, sanctions inconsistently applied. Finally, Dickie-Clark's (1966) study of the coloureds of Durbane also expressed dissatisfaction with the concept as presented by Park and Stonequist. Dicky-Clark objected to the heavy emphasis on personality, which he called naive, and instead proposed to emphasize situations in which hierarchical rankings are inconsistent with each other. He states:

> The comprehensive definition put forward in this study was derived from the literature on marginality and rests on the contention that the marginal situation is a special case of hierarchical situations. What makes an hierarchical situation marginal in character, is any inconsistency in the ranking of individual or collectivity . . . such inconsistency is the essence of the marginal situation, or what might be called sociological marginality (p. 185).

Thus, the Durbane coloureds rank above blacks but whites look down on them, they are in a marginal situation as Dickie-Clark conceptualizes it. But being in a marginal situation was not found to produce disordered personalities, as Park and Stonequist hypothesized.

The conceptualization of marginality that has grown out of the Parkian tradition is certainly problematic. One must question what the concept helps us to understand. Several scholars have used the concept only as a label in discussions that really seem concerned with other topics. Other scholars have criticized its scientific adequacy, and others still have produced inconsistent empirical evidence concerning the consequences of marginality. Even Dickie-Clark's conceptualization of the marginal situation is problematic because even though his research disfirmed the Park-Stonequist hypothesis, he has not presented a clear enough conceptualization so that we may grasp just what it is that his formulation is to help us understand.

However, though the Parkian heritage is problematic, it does suggest something interesting. In his original essay Park's comments about marginality, cursory as they were, conveyed a sense of a person or group that had been cut off or isolated

from the mainstream of social life. Then the ambivalent and somewhat inconsistent nature of the concept became apparent. Stonequist, Kerckhoff and McCormick, Wardwell, and Dickie-Clark all emphasized the importance of a person or group failing to be fully integrated into dominant societal structures. But it is interesting to note that Goldberg, Antonovsky, and Golovensky reacted to this notion by emphasizing the ability for individuals to achieve satisfactory integration into nondominant groups. I believe both insights are accurate, though undeveloped.

A DIFFERENT DIRECTION

A more contemporary scholar, Edward Shils, has also dealt with some of these concerns in his book *Center and Periphery* (1975). Though not writing in the Parkian tradition, Shils concept of periphery nonetheless captures the sense of marginality. To Shils, every society that is not in a state of collapse has a center – a social loci of power. Distant from the center is the periphery. Shils also recognizes that local centers exist at some distance from the societal center and that individuals are, to some extent, oriented toward them. Shils concept of distance,[1] i.e. the distance that separates peripheries from societal centers, is conceptualized in two ways: first in terms of stratification (differences in wealth and power), and second in terms of the societal center setting cultural standards to which more distant individuals and groups attempt to conform.

Shils formulation is not without its problems. In places his discussion is sketchy, and his depiction of society is somewhat formal and static. His conceptualization fails to capture the dynamic and messy character of real societies. Two qualifications are especially important.

First, Shils' concept of social distance requires fuller development. Park and some of those writing in response to him suggested the importance of a person or group's integration into a dominant culture. I propose that social distance be understood in terms of resource flows. The term "resource," as I will use it, refers to several categories of necessary, useful, valued or enjoyable things. Goods and services are the most obvious examples but I also include such things as social support, and such ideational entities as accurate information (Barley et al., 1992; Burt, 1992; Cook, 1982; Pawlik, 1992; Powell, 1991; Wellman et al., 1988; White, 1992). Thus, the greater the flow of resources to and from centers and individuals or groups, the more adequately they are integrated. Social distance would be minimal and they would not be marginal. On the other hand, minimal resource flows would indicate poor integration, great social distance and marginality. Since resources flow more or less well, social distance will be more or less great. Thus, marginality is a matter of degrees not an absolute.

Second, Shils' cursory acknowledgment of multiple local centers requires development. Though Shil's claim that any functioning society has something resembling a single societal center is certainly correct (Domhoff, 1978; Johnsen & Mintz, 1989; Knoke & Laumann, 1982; Marger, 1987; Mills, 1956; Mintz & Schwartz, 1985; Mizruchi, 1982; Rhodes, 1991; Tepperman, 1988; Useem, 1984), he does not deal extensively with the multiplicity and complexity of nonsocietal centers. It is my contention that we must take account of the extremely large number of nonsocietal centers that every complex society contains (Fischer, 1982; Ibarra, 1992; Stokowski, 1994; Wedel, 1992; Wellman et al., 1988; Wheeldon, 1969). It is also important to recognize that these local centers are located at varying distances from the societal center, i.e. some of them will be marginal (Arnold, 1970; Becker, 1963; Brake, 1985; Hebdige, 1979; Mars, 1984; Yinger, 1972).

Furthermore, in reaction against the Park-Stonequist formulation Goldberg, Antonovsky, and Golovensky emphasized that individuals who were not integrated into the dominant culture could still develop satisfactory adjustment, often through integration into nondominant groups. The extension of these ideas which I propose implies a critique of Shils' conceptualization. Individuals and groups do not always seek to conform to the cultural standards of the societal center. In fact, though marginality is often the result of exclusion by the societal center – or, stated in the terms I proposed above, due to restrictions of resource flows imposed by dominant persons or groups – this is not always the case. Individuals and groups will often be found to prefer being oriented toward local centers, sometimes even marginal local centers, rather than the societal center, i.e. they may create flow restrictions in order to establish some autonomy from the societal center. Marginality may sometimes, or to some degree, be voluntary.

And a final observation. Marginality is distance from a center. This proposition, coupled with what has been said above, leads to the following conclusion. Just as one may be distant from the societal center, i.e. the flow of resources to and from the societal center is restricted, this is also true for any local center toward which one may be oriented. Marginality is a multidimensional phenomenon in that a given person may be simultaneously integrated with one or more centers while being marginal from one or more other centers.

CONSIDERING SOME CASES

At this point, I believe it would be helpful to consider a few cases to illustrate the analytic use of the conceptualization being offered. In dealing with any particular candidate for "marginal position," two considerations will be foremost: First, consideration of the individual or group in terms of their dual position, i.e. distance

from both societal and local centers. Second, consideration of resource flows, and obstruction of flows that either integrate positions with centers or constitute the distance that separates them.

Let us consider five cases: low-level employees, surplus populations, criminals, the stigmatized, and communities in the hinterlands of underdeveloped nations.[2]

Low-Level Employees

Were I writing at an earlier time, I might have used the sub-heading "The Working-class," and in one sense that is exactly the category I wish to comment about. However, the term working-class is so frequently equated with blue-collar factory laborers that questions might be raised concerning the inclusion or exclusion of white-collar workers, and increasingly today pink-collar workers. I believe, therefore, that the term low-level employees best serves my intentions. They work at the bottom of the chain of command in manufacturing, services, and sales (Gans, 1988; Gilbert & Kahl, 1993). Management recognizes its need for them but regards their skills as commonly possessed or easily established by "on job training" and, therefore, regards them as easily replaceable. Pay and working conditions, consequently, are not good but there is some meaningful variation depending on applicable legislation, union representation, seniority, and other factors (Bluestone, 1974; Doeringer & Piore, 1971; Piore, 1977; Thurow & Lucas, 1972; Wachtel & Betsey, 1972).

In considering this category of people, the major flows are easily identifiable. Labor, a resource or resources resulting from labor, flow from these workers toward centers called businesses where the workers are employed. These businesses participate in economic relations which further circulate the flow of resources more widely through the societal economic system. Another major flow involves taxes and the information upon which taxes are assessed. These flows can be societal, or sub-societal (to governmental centers at national, state and in some cases, local levels).

Influence is another concern. It involves the success workers have communicating information by which their concerns may receive consideration by employers and government officials. Generally speaking, workers do not have much influence, and it is not surprising that workers realize this and do not, therefore, make many influence attempts.

On the other hand, resources also flow to them. We may call this "trickle down." In the case of low-level employees it is usually adequate to allow workers to afford a life-style that is above the subsistence level. This helps explain the lack of political unrest among these people, but here we must also consider ideational

flows emanating from the societal center that play important social control functions.

In terms of information denied, information manipulated, and information manufactured the societal center provides a steady stream of media that seems particularly effective in confusing issues so that lower-level employees find it difficult to participate in the political process in ways that would allow them to advocate their own interests effectively (Entman, 1989; Gans, 1988; Parenti, 1993; Sheehan, 1970). Here we see content being communicated, but because it is often not accurate information, it must be recognized as having a dual status: it represents both an information flow and an obstruction or distortion of the flow of information.

One of the most important parts of the explanation for the relatively passive adjustment workers make involves their integration with local centers which offer them a series of resource flows that focus on personal satisfactions such as leisure time activities (Gans, 1988; Stokowski, 1994; Wellman et al., 1988). Family and co-worker networks, church organizations, recreational organizations, and informal associations all offer meaningful and rewarding involvements. It is important to note that such involvements and their activities must, necessarily, be consistent with (or deviate minimally from) the standards of the societal center. If it were otherwise, affiliation would be stressful rather than recreational.

An overall conclusion finds workers to be only intermediate in marginality. The societal center and many local economic centers need them. However, their expendability does not gain them more than barely adequate trickle down. Information flows also are of a mixed nature. Such flows allow little influence for these people and media flows provide evidence of social control attempts. Locally, however, workers and their families are usually well-integrated into networks that offer personal gratification and much of the most important part of the social control dynamic is located at this point. Particularly in the latter sense, they are rarely marginal.

Surplus Populations

Historically the surplus population has been identified as a category of people, of significant number, that is not matched by functioning statuses in the existing social order. That is, at points of time in the history of given societies, something happens that creates a crisis (usually economic or demographic) of such magnitude that a significant percentage of the society's population can no longer find places to fit into societal resource flows (Cipolla, 1965; Meuvret, 1965; Mizruchi, 1983; Spengler, 1968). It is as though mass job elimination suddenly took place and many people were set adrift. Our concern is with the marginality of such people.

The definition of this category of people is largely in terms of disruption of resource flows. But this is not usually a case of exploitation.[3] Usually the societal center is not acquiring resources from these people. In the case of surplus populations the disruption is more complete than that. Surplus populations simply are only tenuously involved in the societal flow of resources. It would be easy, if this were the only consideration, to conclude that such people constitute the most marginal of all social categories. The facts, however, are more complex than that.

First, surplus populations do not generally exist in their status as surplus for very long – survival considerations do not allow it. Consequently, in their usually short existence, they remain marked by their former social and cultural characteristics as people who were integrated into community life. Their orientation, consequently, is to become reintegrated. That is, a willingness to become reinvolved in societal and local resource flows characterizes these people.

At local levels important flow patterns generally persist for some time. Survival is predicated on much of this, as local charity bears witness. In most cases the displaced are reabsorbed into their old statuses when the crisis has past.

Another pattern uncovered by several scholars involves the concern leaders at societal centers feel when they learn of the problem. One result is the mobilization of resources to establish or extend institutions that can provide places for the surplus population (Howard, 1943; Mizruchi, 1983). Here information flows provide de facto influence that can result in changes in the flow of resources.

Social control is also a consideration. Those at the societal center are usually concerned that the existing order be maintained, especially to the extent that it bears on their interests. Their concern with the flow of information reaching them about the state of the hinterland is at least partly understandable in these terms. The surplus population becomes a social control problem for them if this surplus population begins to disrupt the social order. As indicated above, some leaders at the societal center respond by trying to reintegrate such people. But when this is not possible, some of the surplus population may become disruptive in response to the unresolved crises that they encounter (Cohn, 1970; Hobsbawm, 1959; Meadows, 1944; Rotz, 1976). At this point, even wise societal leaders will decide to take social control measures that go beyond the ordinary (MacMullen, 1966; Mangione, 1972; Piven & Cloward, 1972).

However, the record also presents us with many cases of adaptive-integrative responses such as emigration to places of new opportunities and changing economic structures that provide new statuses to reabsorb the surplus population. In these cases, the populations rendered surplus maintained their orientations toward integration into larger societal networks and did manage to find new statuses for themselves (Chambers, 1965; Cipolla, 1965; Koellmann, 1965; Meuvret, 1965; Moore, 1978; Slicher Van Bath, 1968).