

SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY MARGINALIZED (MIGRANT FARMWORKERS) IN MEXICO: THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THEM STUDY

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Abstract

This article is the result of scientific-sociological research, which was consisted in identify the main characteristics of the theory of marginality as a theoretical foundation for the study of migrant farmworkers. The author found that the study of migrant farm workers being socio-economically marginalized should be conducted from the positions of the theory of marginality, because this group of people has all the traits of marginalized: feeling “useless” in the new postindustrial society, present apathy, resistance, frustration, impotence, staff neglect and fatalism, absence of excellence spirit, accepting conformity with what little they have without trying to project towards a brighter future, formation of new identities and struggle. The theory of marginality analyzes not only the economic and social condition of the marginal people, but also their psychological state, that determines the first two: the marginalized internalize their exclusion and depend on it inasmuch that cannot live without it, lose the orientation and even the very meaning of life.

Key words: *socio-economically marginalized; study of migrant farmworkers in Mexico; the theory of marginality; marginal groups; marginal person.*

JEL classification: I24 Education and Inequality

I. I. INTRODUCTION. FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM IN GENERAL AND ANALYSIS OF RECENT RESEARCHES AND PUBLICATIONS

The systematic research on migrant farm workers in Mexico and its multiple problems began to be interest in Mexican social science in the late sixties - early seventies of the twentieth century (Sánchez, Rodríguez, 2008).

The problems associated with this type of labor migration and new form of incorporation of farm work involving large family groups, were approached from various perspectives by Bartra, 1974; Arizpe, 1976; 1985; 1986; Paré, 1977; 1991; 1997; Anguiano, 1991; Lara, 1991; Barrón, 1992; 1994; 2007; Torres, 1997; Sánchez, 2000; 2001; 2003; 2005; Cos, 2001; López, 2002; Morett, Cosío, 2004; Palacios, 2004; Seefoó, 2005; Olimón, 2005; Granados, 2005; Talavera, 2005; Lara, 2005; 2006; 2007; Reyes, 2006; Sepúlveda, Miranda, 2006; Rojas, 2006; 2009; Díaz, Salinas, 2007; Durán, 2007; Ortega, 2007; Galindo, Landa, 2007; Sánchez, Rodríguez, 2008; Guerra, 2008; Jiménez, 2010, Paleta, 2011; 2012, among others.

Most researchers confront these issues from economic theory; however, is not enough to analyze the economic and social status of this group of people, it is necessary to place it in a multidisciplinary background (including economics, sociology, political science, psychology, education, etc.). This may be possible studying it from the theory of marginality.

It is notably, that the subjects of modern studies of Latin American researchers (Negretti, Tovar, 1987; Jelin, 1994; Beccaria, López, 1995; Castel, 1998; Wacquant, 2001; Botto, Fenoglio, Moulia, 2002; Boltvinik, 2004; Damian, 2004; Urdaneta-Carruyo, 2005; Juárez-Bolaños, 2005; Cortés, 2006; Schulze, 2013, among others) about the socio-economic marginalization, are the people who appear in the margin of socio-economic relations, who have failed to adapt themselves to the new conditions of scientific and technological progress, of the “knowledge society”, globalization, postindustrial economic, new labor skills. These people became “useless” in the new postindustrial society.

A large segment of Latin American society, which has lost useful values for productive efficiency and social organization, is mired in resignation, impotence, staff neglect and fatalism, which total absence of excellence spirit, is characterized today by the “marginality complex”. These people in the back of their minds are attracted by the idea of being part of a more comfortable and pleasant lifestyle, but they are unable to reach it. Psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists define this lack of spirit of achievement motivation as an inferiority complex that makes man avoid difficult situations, leaving important goals and objectives in life to accept conformity with what little they have without trying to project towards a brighter future.

The causes attributed to this simplistic view of life, are proper to the historical tradition of African and Indigenous cultures enslaved in ancient times by the European domain; its lack of intensity to promote actions

to overcome their needs, loss of dignity, lack of education and self-esteem, influence of respect for life, work culture, integrity, responsibility and honesty.

In this regard, Wacquant discusses the relationship that arises between violence and isolation in communities. Drug use, unemployment and alcohol fuel a cycle of mistrust and interpersonal violence that permeates all aspects of rural life, impacting all routine activities including the work. In most cases, for the government and the progressive opposition, the problem of insecurity in communities is the lack of investment in social control (not the creation of new jobs, for example) (Wacquant, 2001, p. 17).

On the other hand, Castel expresses that the extreme fringes of marginalization falling into exclusion are not a separate unstable social environment of less stigmatized positions, but originating in precarious work situations and fragile social inscriptions. It proves to be a continuum of vulnerable situations shared by broad popular layers, which is the payment of social marginalization (Castel, 1998, pp. 347-348).

The Latin American researchers considered that the amount of missing values leads to marginal man to become a dependent state be who wants and easily accepts paternalism, who sees the state as his only salvation, becoming prone to populism and demagoguery.

II. THE AIM OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH METHODS

The *aim of this paper* is to report the results of scientific-sociological research, which consisted in identify the main characteristics of the theory of marginality as a theoretical foundation for the study of migrant farmworkers.

Research methods: this work was carried out under the critical-dialectical approach, using the methods of analysis, synthesis, comparison and generalization that were needed for the study of the original texts, official and normative documents; organization of the studied material and its exposure.

III. THEME DEVELOPMENT (THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND THE MAIN MATERIAL RESEARCH)

It is important to note that marginalization is a social phenomenon that has flourished in the XXI century worldwide, but which has been the subject of numerous studies internationally since the early twentieth century.

Negretti and Tovar (1987) argue that the concept of marginality appears in sociological literature associated with the interest in studying the problems of adaptation of migrants and ethnic minorities into American society. The term “marginalization” was first used by Robert Park, in his article *Human Migration and the Marginal Man*, published in 1928. His interest was focused on the role of migration in social change. Park was also the first to speak of marginalization that takes as synonymous of marginality (Negretti and Tovar, 1987; Juárez-Bolaños, 2006). According to Park (1928), migration creates a situation that places the individual at the alternative of trying to live according to the guidelines of two different cultural groups. The effect of this situation is that there is produced an unstable character, a personality type with characteristic forms of behavior: a marginal man (Park, 1928).

The idea of Park's marginal man, who is placed in the margins of both worlds, but not belong to any, exceeds the interpretation of poverty like the lack of resources because, although included it, is a conception identifying this problem as one of higher order in functional terms. From this approach, it is detecting the participation in various areas, which would constitute the possibility of *full integration*, participation, which, according to a regulatory scheme, should make an individual or group, and not only referring to the economic sphere (distribution of wealth, inequity, injustice, etc.). It means, there should be recognize this marginal man as a man who must “promote himself”, achieve the desired participation, also it suppose that he must “evolve” his guidelines, his traditional culture to achieve the redefinition of the roles (Schulze, 2013).

In Latin America, the systematic studies of marginality began with the urban ecology in the sixties of the twentieth century and try to describe the inhabitants of large Third World cities located in peripheral areas occupying precarious housing, underserved and often raised on illegally occupied land (Cruz Betancourt, 2006). Studies of marginality in Latin America feed on:

- The *sociology of marginality* (Goldberg, Farge, House, Mancini, Merton, Mitchel, Moser, Park, Sammner, Shibutani, Stonequist, Veblen, among other), where marginality is defined as the result of cultural conflict (Park, Stonequist); the consequence of social mobility (House); the result of casual membership in a reference group (Merton); the socially isolated groups membership (Mancini); consequence of the socio-political processes (Shibutani, Moser);

- The *theory of marginal man*, or the marginal personality (Park, Stonequist, among others);

- The *theory of marginal social situation* (Nun, Quijano, Turner, among others).

The *theory of marginal man, or the marginal personality*, was introduced in American sociology by Robert Park and Everett Stonequist, who analyzed the marginal man as a subject living in two societies, which are not only different, but antagonistic. These are individuals living in cultural conflict, feeling both, rejection and attraction, to the dominant society. It is a psychological condition, which forces person sink into standards of behavior and ways of life of the society in which they live. Hence individuals with marginal personality, are those who live in a less social environment that serves them as the common habitat, as the society around them. They are attracted by this community, but, at the same time, reject it because feel inability to achieve it by reason of the lack of overcoming spirit and to be unprepared to face the challenges (Park, 1928; Stonequist, 1961).

The *theory of marginal social status* derives from conditions that cause changes in the man's life and is explained by the sum of the contents of different views:

- The social conception referring to the deplorable conditions of living and working that are detected in urban slums.

- The ecological concept that encompasses the generic designation of "marginal", which applies to urban agglomerations increase and take firm hold in locations to limit the urban core; these congregations of people are the product of rapid demographic growth and installation of makeshift homes on illegally occupied land. Among the urban ecology's researchers are Nun (1969), Quijano (1970), Turner (1966), who designated the term "marginalization" to homes located on the edge of cities and lacking certain minimum comfort. The objectives of their investigations have been finding out, what were the causes of high dropout rate in the region and which mechanisms of economic development contributed to the marginalization of the people (Negretti and Tovar, 1987, pp. 23-24).

Passing up from the descriptive to the explanatory plane, the first attempt of theorizing about the marginalization in Latin America was made in 1965 by the *Center for Economic and Social Development of Latin America (DESAL)*. For this was deemed necessary analyze the historical and cultural development of Latin America, in order to determine the specific features of the Latin American marginality and so locate the genetic root of the phenomenon (Cortés, 2006).

The historical origin of Latin American societies since its beginning mark the emergence of a dichotomous parallelism as a result of overlapping of cultures, that came from the duality of values, social structures and political and administrative systems. Hence for DESAL, the term "marginalization" refers to social groups, which, being members of the society of any country, fail to penetrate the privacy of their structures. This makes that the society is viewed in two different sectors: incorporated and marginalized. Thus, marginalization extends to the whole human person and to all aspects of the life of the marginalized sectors. However, its effects affect the entire society; it should not be seen as a phenomenon of the third world (although it is much deeper in this part of word), but it is a global problem (DESAL, 1965; DESAL, 1969).

The increase of poverty globally, as one of the main problems of the twentieth and present century, gives rise to the emergence of more slums in both poor countries and rich countries. The relationship between poverty, marginalization, exclusion, inequality and exclusion is irrefutable. The economic situation is the basis of social problems, but there are also cultural problems that aggravate the economic and social problems.

The diffusion between marginal groups of the attributes of modern life creates expectations that they cannot channel properly in their current condition, leading the entire generation to tensions and conflicts which make up a potentially explosive situation.

We must clarify that *marginality* and *marginalization* are often referenced to the same meaning. Several authors have tried these terminologies in their investigations. Thus, according to Cortés (2006), the concept of *marginalization* in its most abstract version tries to account for the differential access of the population to enjoy the benefits of development. The measure focuses on the needs of the population of the towns in access to basic goods and services, captured in three dimensions: education, housing, and income. For Cortés, marginalization is a phenomenon that affects the towns and not necessarily people who live in its (Cortés, 2006).

Seen this way, a locality can have high marginalization levels, but it does not mean that there are no inhabitants there with living conditions and level of income sufficient to not be considered poor.

Following Cortés, marginalization is a concept that located within the theory of modernization, according to which underdeveloped societies are characterized by the coexistence of traditional and modern segments, being the first the main obstacle to achieve economic and social growth and self-sustaining. The notion "marginal", in its most abstract conception, refers to areas which have not yet penetrated the norms, values and ways of being of modern men (Cortés, 2006).

In turn, Juárez-Bolaños (2005) considers that the marginalization must be understood as a social phenomenon in which members of various social groups facing difficulties to improve their life quality due to their location on a ranking system hierarchy in terms of power relations (Juárez-Bolaños, 2005).

So, if for Cortes marginalization has to do with access to the benefits of development, related to deficiencies and affecting localities, for Juárez-Bolaños is a social phenomenon, in which members of social groups are struggling to improve their lifestyle because their place in the system related to power relations.

Juarez also believes that the conceptual development of the term “marginalization” is a contribution of Latin American sociology, which has generated much discussion, especially since the decade of the sixties of the twentieth century, when the term was used to explain certain social phenomena caused by the rapid urbanization lived in this part of the planet (Juárez-Bolaños, 2005).

However, there are other views as that of Botto, Fenoglio and Moulia (2002) who understand marginalization as a process by which a society refuses to particular individuals, from simple indifference to repression and imprisonment. It is also the case of those who, not consistent with the values and norms of a given society, marginalize themselves (Botto, Fenoglio, et. al., 2002). Here marginalization appears as a process in which society rejects certain persons and it expresses identification between marginalization and exclusion. In this work, it is identified a specific feature of marginalization: deprivation or normal difficulty by satisfaction of secondary needs. This phenomenon can occur either by following the ideals of the community or when society responds to the interests of a powerful minority group.

The authors emphasize that social exclusion is a process, not a condition. Therefore, if social exclusion is the same as social marginalization, the latter is not obligatory and boundaries change, and who is now excluded/marginalized, tomorrow can be included/installed depending on education, demographics, social prejudice, business practices, public policies, etc. (Botto, Fenoglio, et. al., 2002).

Meanwhile, as shown some of the works⁴ of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, there are considered marginal individuals who are not directly incorporated into the basic institutions of the national government (CEPAL, 2008).

It is important to note that the concept of marginalization is closely related (and sometimes confused) with exclusion, which is the best descriptor of the situations where concerned citizens confront poverty with difficulties for return to “normal” life. The *exclusion* implies a lack of effective recognition of social rights, which, in turn, affect a deterioration of economic and political rights (Lowi, Ginsberg, et. al., 2002; Nun, 2003).

For Castel, *exclusion* is one of the terms used to characterize the situations that reveal a crisis that is originated by employment problems. They are excluded those individuals who do not participate in regulated exchanges, or who are not connected by more or less secured positions within a social formation, or registered in the production networks of wealth and social recognition (Castel, 1998, pp. 347-348).

It should be also stand out that in modern societies, urban and rural socio-economic marginalization is related to the concept of *poverty*, understood as a way of being or social situation generated by a differentiation of social classes that determines the unequal distribution of wealth and resources. *Poverty* is a deficiency state of material resources, the condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs; it is also related to the characteristics of the society in which manifests itself (Sen, 1981). This vision involves an understanding of poverty, which must take into account the historical trajectories and values of examined society. Poverty is increasingly a phenomenon of overlapping of economic, social and environmental shortcomings (Beccaria and López, 1995, p. 165).

Unlike poverty is lack of something necessary, the definition of *extreme poverty* means that people have not the minimum necessary to satisfy their most pressing needs (Urdaneta-Carruyo, 2005). Currently, the extreme poverty reveals a reality of isolation and dehumanization. The exclusion and the poverty are signals of deprivation of fundamental rights, without which cannot be democracy. That is, exclusion and dismissal are contrary to the idea of actors and scenarios (Jelin, 1994, pp. 366-367).

In addition, rural and urban poverty are expressed differently. The rural poverty is projected to a use of agricultural resources and creating of social cooperation systems. If for the rural poor is proper be isolated in their misery, in the city this is not possible, because the poverty in the city means not only lack, but also contradiction with an affluent society, with which a poor person coexists in the same physical space. Life in the underworld of urban poverty has to be violent and the poor have to adopt systems and defense of life within they cannot survive in the society which no hosts them even in the lowest positions of its strata. Thus, people become marginalized by economic and social circumstances surrounding them; they are transformed to individuals for who wait unemployment, frustration and a life of misfortune, lost in neighborhoods, which as slums proliferate in large cities (Negretti and Tovar, 1987).

Social groups developed different strategies as a way of responding to the exclusion and marginalization: apathy, resistance, formation of new identities and struggle; but those do not imply the possibility of the emergence of a new social force, because there is continued playing a violent speech. Extreme poverty and exclusion become priority areas in economic and political processes, from the formulations of the agents of power. Therefore, those excluded don't became actors, they resist, protest, resigned, live with another law, such as the legality of violence. Their efforts do not address the integration or the claim, but to acting.

Marginalized can be:

- 1) political (political migrants, political prisoners, extremist ethnic opposition, extremist groups, etc.);

⁴ Sociological considerations of social economic development of Latin America in the postwar period.

- 2) socio-economic (unemployed, poor, people without profession, people who do not study and do not work, etc.);
- 3) social (people who lost their social roots, who ceased to be members of their primary social group where they were born and raised);
- 4) cultural (people without citizenship, people who do not speak the official language of the country where they live, illiterate people, people who have no access to education and national cultural heritage, amoral people, Orthodox atheist, extremist believers);
- 5) socio-psychological (extreme individualists who have psychic anomalies, are irritable, aggressive, not dominate their emotions);
- 6) people with different mental or physical abilities;
- 7) criminals (Moser, 1996, p. 19).

Following this classification, migrant farm workers belong to the second group of marginalized: socio-economically marginalized. Also their study should be conducted from the positions of the theory of marginality, because this group of people has all the traits of marginalized: feeling “useless” in the new postindustrial society, present apathy, resistance, frustration, impotence, staff neglect and fatalism, absence of excellence spirit, accepting conformity with what little they have without trying to project towards a brighter future, formation of new identities and struggle.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

So the *theory of marginality* is the multidisciplinary study of marginalized groups of population realized from points of view of economics, sociology, political science, psychology, education and other science. The *marginalized groups* are those which are positioned on the limit of society, are on the verge of different social values; pass through its contradictory impact, leaving a mark on their psyche and lifestyle.

The term “*marginality*” or “*marginalization*” is a structural social phenomenon that originates in the form, style, or pattern of development and refers to social exclusion comprising the entire population and affects humans in their personal, psychological, professional and social development; it reproduces and aggravates, undermining human development. Marginalization is a direct consequence of the structural changes associated with the loss of identity in society.

A *marginal man* is the person who is outside of different cultures or social groups and experiences the impact of its norms, values, customs, traditions, etc., which contradict each other. A representative of any social stratum can become marginalized. One of the criteria of belonging to marginalized groups is the crisis of identity.

One of the objectives of the study of marginalized groups is the design of effective projects for their integration into socially useful activity. Also, one of the main mechanisms of this integration is education, because it allows the person to get paid employment, income to meet his needs, grow professionally, located in a place in society and participate in a field of relations.

The development of educational programs for the marginalized, in particular for migrant farm workers, should be based on the precepts of the theory of marginality, which analyzes not only the economic and social condition of the marginal people, but also their psychological state, that determines the first two: the marginalized internalize their exclusion and depend on it insomuch that cannot live without it, lose the orientation and even the very meaning of life. The main goal of education for this group of people must be unsheathe this fatal dependence, detach this feeling through a horizontal and participatory instruction.

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