CONCEPTS IN SOCIAL AND SPATIAL MARGINALITY

by
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ABSTRACT. The purpose of this paper is to present a conceptual taxonomy of *marginality* resulting from two counterposed structural conditions within *laissez-faire* on the one hand and controlled markets on the other. Marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage that individuals and communities may experience because of vulnerabilities which may arise from unequal or inequitable environmental, ethnic, cultural, social, political and economic factors. A typology of marginality is based on two primary and two derivative forms. The primary forms are *contingent* and *systemic*. The derivative forms are *collateral* and *leveraged*. Contingent marginality is a condition that results from competitive inequality in which individuals and communities are put at a disadvantage because of the dynamics of the free market whose uncertain and stochastic outcomes affect them adversely. Systemic marginality is a socioeconomic condition of disadvantage created by socially constructed inequitable non-market forces of bias. Collateral marginality is a condition experienced by individuals or communities who are marginalized solely on the basis of their social and/or geographic proximity to individuals or communities that experience either contingent or systemic marginality. Leveraged marginality is a contingent or systemic disadvantage that people/communities are made to experience when their bargaining position in free markets is weakened by dominant stakeholders like transnational corporations which are able to leverage lucrative concessions by using the threat of alternative, often cheaper and marginalized (contingent or systemic) labour pools to which they can potentially take their business.

Introduction

Studies of unequal development in society and space have focused on two important issues: the magnitude of social and spatial disparities in levels of living, and the root causes of unequal development. Both of these issues have attracted considerable research. However, from a policy perspective, those problems of disparity that can be redressed by the market system appear to dominate most of the debate. With increasing globalization, transnational corporate (TNC) enterprise has taken on new significance in the distribution of economic growth whereas the power of the nation-state "as the primary regulator of its national economic system" has declined (Dicken, 1998, p. 79). In the post-Fordist era, TNC-induced flexible production, trade liberalization and foreign direct investment (FDI) have contributed to recent regional and international convergence in development (Hanink, 1994, pp. 230–8; Dicken, 1998, pp. 429–60). However, extreme disparities in levels of living in all territorial scales, from local to global, continue to persist due to both market and non-market factors.

Interest in uneven development by geographers and planners which began in the 1930s was motivated by the dramatic economic imbalances that were discovered following the Great Depression, the Second World War, and the "Winds of Change" for Third World liberation. Each of these momentous changes resulted in significant social and spatial dislocations in areas which were then referred to as "problem regions" (Friedmann and Weaver, 1980, pp. 89–94; Scott and Storper, 1992, pp. 3–5; Massey, 1994, pp. 50–66). The root causes of these problem regions varied with structural differences between the principal world economic regions. In the more developed countries, "problem areas" were considered as "temporary and self- correcting aberrations" of the market which was otherwise characterized by strong country-wide growth and regional convergence (Hirschmann, 1958, pp. 183–95). It was assumed that communities, territories and countries would fall in or out of successful participation in the development process depending on the impact of lead-lag cycles of economic opportunity and growth-producing investments (Scott and Storper, 1992, p. 4). Such areas were often referred to as "depressed" or "distressed" or "lagging" regions and were presumed to be correctible by redistributive national, state and local planned interventions (Claval, 1983, pp. 118–23; Friedmann and Weaver, 1980, pp. 114–45). In many cases, especially in less developed countries, "problem regions" were the result of core-periphery antagonistic developments in which nodes of growth took advantage of rural peripheries with little or no political clout (Friedmann, 1988; Blaut, 1994, pp. 17–30; Riddell, 1985; Mehretu, 1989). Regional inequality continues to be a problem of development in all countries. However, its causes have become more complex than simple attribution to the functions of the market.

The aim of this paper is to advance a general framework of uneven development that will have a more universal appeal in its application and will aid in a more effective approach to policy formulation. The conceptual design for social and spatial marginality applied in this paper encompasses the following: (1) the definition of unequal development using marginality as an operative concept, (2) a theory of marginality which is based on a typology of marginality that includes two primary and two derivative forms, (3) the specification of factors of vulnerability to marginality, (4) sociospatial structural determinants of marginality, and finally (5) spatial scales of analysis of marginality.

Typology of marginality

Marginality is a complex condition of disadvantage which individuals and communities experience as a result of vulnerabilities that may arise from unfavourable environmental, cultural, social, political and economic factors. Although most discussions of marginality deal with distressed economic and ecological conditions of life, the concept of marginality can also be applied to cultural, social and political conditions of disadvantage (Mehretu and Sommers, 1992, 1994, 1998; see also Friedmann, 1988, p. 114; Gustafsson, 1994, pp. 13–23; Wacquant, 1996a; Blom, 1998, pp. 164–75; Wacquant, 1999). Individuals and communities with no discernible disadvantage in the marketplace may in fact experience exclusion from a dominant hegemonic civil society in which socially constructed deviancy is used to rationalize the abbreviation of rights and privileges (Sibley, 1995, pp.14–48; Marcuse, 1997b; Wacquant, 1997). The nature of marginality found in a specific community or territory of a given spatial scale of analysis will depend on its political, social and economic history, and on its natural and human resource endowments. Generally, marginality occurs in areas which experience a convergence of political, cultural, economic and environmental problems. However, it is conceivable for communities and regions to experience political and cultural marginality without necessarily showing signs of economic distress. Such marginality, often insidious, occurs under translucent hegemony which prevents people from exercising political rights and/or cultural and economic freedoms (McDowell, 1995; Sibley, 1995, pp. 90–114; Marcuse, 1996). Sometimes such cases are made more visible when hegemonic containment produces "spaces of exclusion" as in the case of the American ghetto (see also Darden, 1989; Wacquant, 1993; Marcuse, 1996, 1997b; Mehretu *et al.*, 1997; Krivo *et al.*, 1998).

The literature on unequal development and social polarization treats the phenomenon of marginality as a generic concept of socioeconomic disadvantage in which *inequality* and *inequity* are treated as synonymous. There has not been a systematic attempt to differentiate forces of marginality that are unequal in some respects and inequitable in others (Mehretu, 1991). The objective of this paper is to suggest a typology of marginality which would encompass most variations of socioeconomic disadvantage that individuals and communities experience. This, it is hoped, will lead towards a more articulated discourse on marginality as well as policy for its redress. For this purpose a typology of two primary and two derivative variants of marginality is suggested. The two primary variants are called contingent and systemic marginality, and the two derivative variants are called collateral and leveraged marginality (see Table 1). In the following, each of these variants will be defined, and the conditions which give rise to each of the variants will be illustrated (Sommers *et al.*, 1999).

Contingent marginality

Contingent marginality is a condition that results from *competitive inequality* in which individuals and communities are placed at a disadvantage because of the dynamics of the free market whose uncertain and often random outcomes adversely affect them. Contingent marginalization especially affects individuals and communities that are least prepared to successfully negotiate the marketplace for reasons of unattractive locations, cultural restrictions, inadequate labour skills and lack of useful information about opportunities (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–97). Contingent marginality is assumed to be endogenous to the *laissez-faire* market system and is considered "accidental" or a "temporary and self-correcting aberration" of an otherwise equitable economic framework. It is assumed that such "aberrations" will be resolved over time by the "self-adjusting" free market dynamics (Ernste and Meier, 1992, pp. 263–6; Scott and Storper, 1992, pp. 3–24). Contingent marginality may persist and become a chronic distress (Micheli, 1996, pp. 41–5; Mingione, 1996b, p. 12). When this happens,

Table 1. Summary of typology of marginality.

	Scale of Analysis		
Types of marginality	Macro	Micro	In situ
Contingent	Core/periphery disparities on account of distance decay, cultural barriers to diffusion, and market imperfections	Central city abandonment and marginalization by suburban hedonism (hedonistic metropolitan enclaves)	"Gated" or "walled" communities within urban neighbourhoods to maintain desired and uniform housing stock and other residential characteristics.
Systemic	Core-periphery disparity resulting from hegemonic (antagonistic and dependency driven) development process	Hegemonic containment of inner city neighbourhoods (red-lining, outcast ghetto)	Segregation: racial, ethnic, cultural, class-based, age-based (restrictive residential covenants).
Collateral	Regional negative contagion effects (negative externalities) from systemically marginalized people on those who do not share the same vulnerabilities (development loans, FDI, etc.)	Subregional negative contagion effects (negative externalities) from marginalized people on those who do not share the same vulnerabilities (inadequate social and economic infrastructure, pollution, institutional decay)	Small-area negative externalities experienced by people who reside in marginalized neighbourhoods but do not share the same vulnerabilities (predicament of early gentrifyers).
Leveraged	TNC-led "downward wage levelling", outsourcing, subcontracting, union-busting using systemically marginalized low-wage labour pools in LDCs	Metropolitan housing stock turnovers due to differential market bidding between low-income and high-income households mediated by real estate establishments (arbitrage in housing markets)	Real estate manipulation of local housing markets by using arbitrage in block-busting and similar changes in diverse neighbourhoods

market forces may fail to bring about redressive action. None the less, so long as the dominant force for socioeconomic differentiation remains market-based, the condition is treated as contingent marginality (Ernste and Meier, 1992, pp. 264–5).

Vulnerability to contingent marginality is generally based on spontaneous disadvantages that develop because of social, cultural, locational and ecological limitations in dealing with the market. Such vulnerabilities are either self-inflicted by cultural rigidities and choice of residence, or subject to the vicissitudes of the market. Such vulnerabilities are generally regarded as amenable to amelioration with enhanced preparedness to benefit from opportunities of the competitive market. Perhaps the best known non-random factors of vulnerability to contingent marginality are poor relative location and deficient natural resources (Claval, 1983; Wiberg, 1994; Brown and Hirschl, 1995; Schwarzweller and Davidson, 1997; Kousis, 1998; Tesitel *et al.*, 1999). Environmental liabilities such as rugged terrain, poor soil, rainfall deficiency and a short growing season, especially when combined with poor relative location, can intensify contingent marginality. Post war concerns about unequal development were focused on such regions as the US Appalachia, southern Italy, western Ireland and northern Scandinavia (Wiberg, 1994; Kousis, 1998; Preston *et al.*, 1998). More recently, vulnerability to contingent marginality has often been the result of behavioural constraints of culture or politics that limits success in dealing with the new information economy and its related cyber culture (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–228; see also Buck, 1996; Gibbs and Tanner, 1997). Self-inflicted contingent marginality with deliberate intent to refrain from engaging mainstream developments is rare, but it does occur, as in case of the Amish, who opt for simpler lives closer to nature, or, as in the case of ghetto youths, some of whom may be "unwilling to seize opportunities for educational and occupational advancement" (Knox, 1994, pp. 302–5).

Systemic marginality

Systemic marginality results from disadvantages which people and communities experience in a socially constructed system of inequitable relations within a hegemonic order that allows one set of individuals and communities to exercise undue power and control over another set with the latter manifesting one or a number of vulnerability markers based on class, ethnicity, age, gender and other similar characteristics (Sibley, 1995, pp. 49–114; Marcuse, 1997a; Gotham, 1998; Squires, 1999; Wacquant, 1999). Unlike market-based inequalities, systemic marginality does not lend itself to reform policies of the welfare state (Painter, 1995). This is because systemic marginality is a deliberate social construction by the dominant class to achieve specific desirable outcomes of political control, social exclusion and economic exploitation (Gans, 1993; Mingione, 1996b, pp. 3–40). Systemic marginality is of particular significance in countries that have experienced pervasive inequity and oppression under colonial and/or neocolonial regimes in the less developed world (Friedmann, 1988, pp. 108–44; Blaut, 1994, pp. 17–43). The application of apartheid in colonial South Africa and Rhodesia and the use of tribal-based exclusionary marginalization in Rwanda, Ethiopia and the Sudan offer excellent examples of social constructions resulting in systemic marginality (Palmer, 1977; Holtzman, 2000, pp. 1–22).

Vulnerability to systemic marginality, unlike that of contingent marginality, is neither random nor self-inflicted. It is a product of social construction of stereotypes that uses both mutable and indelible markers like culture, ethnicity, immigration status, gender and age to exclude and marginalize (McDowell, 1995; Sibley, 1995, pp. 14–48; Bhalla and Lapeyre, 1997; Pred, 1997). Ethnic-based minority status has been of particular significance to vulnerability because of its visible and indelible or unalterable markers (Gans, 1993; Blaut, 1994, pp. 1–49; Massey, 1994, pp. 212–48; Harris, 1995, pp. 21–55; Marcuse, 1996; Wacquant, 1996a; Mingione, 1996b, pp. 275–369). Although much progress has been made on integration, as David Sibley points out, there are still contested spaces that often exclude vulnerable communities. This has given rise to discourses on “purified suburbs”, “boundary consciousness”, “guardians of mainstream values”, “border crossings” and the “outcast ghetto” (Sibley, 1995, pp. 32–48; see also Wacquant, 1993, 1997; Tosi, 1996; Marcuse, 1997a; Krivo *et al.*, 1998; Mignione, 1998).

Ethnicity, an indelible factor of vulnerability to systemic marginality, is generally prevalent in most countries. In North America it affects African Americans and to some extent, Hispanics, Asians and Native Americans (Darden *et al.*, 1987; Darden, 1989; Fainstein, 1993; Gans, 1993; Jargowsky, 1994; Knox, 1994, pp. 302–20; Roscigno and Bruce, 1995; Marcuse, 1996; Kwong, 1997). In Western Europe, vulnerability to systemic marginality is based largely on indelible markers. It stigmatizes the gypsies all over Europe, Turks in Germany, Africans in the United Kingdom, France, Italy and Sweden, the Sami (Lapps) in northern Scandinavia, West Indians in the UK and Asians throughout Europe (Buck, 1996; Wacquant, 1996b; Cannan, 1997; Pred, 1997; Van Kempen and Bolt, 1997; Anderson, 1998; Deurloo, 1998). In Eastern Europe factors of vulnerability are largely mutable, with culture playing a much more significant role (Tesitel *et al.*, 1999). In the case of former Yugoslavia, systemic marginality that led to violent inter-ethnic conflict and “ethnic cleansing” was triggered by religious history which put Moslem Bosnians and Kosovars in deadly conflict with Christian Serbs.

In developing countries, ethno-cultural factors of vulnerability to systemic marginality operate on two planes. The first plane is characterized by positional polarities that exist between colonial (settler) and indigenous populations especially in those situations where the former continues to exercise political hegemony and/or economic control. Although official exclusionary ethnic homelands no longer have statutory sanction, spaces are still being contested to challenge the spatial fixtures of “undeserved” privilege. Ethnic Chinese minorities in Malaysia and Indonesia, and European minority settlements in South Africa and Zimbabwe are often cited as unstable conditions, as they are based on a system that makes the majority as well as the minority vulnerable to systemic marginality (Palmer, 1977; Callaghy, 1988; Roscigno and Bruce, 1995; Wild, 1997). Tensions resulting from such polarities sometimes explode into violence, as in the deadly riots against Chinese businesses and shopkeepers in Indonesia in 1999, or the pressure on European large landowners in Zimbabwe and South Africa to give up real estate for distribution among smallholder African farmers. The second plane is characterized by internal tribal cleavages sometimes exacerbated by religion. In some Asian and African countries such tribal sentiments, which had remained dormant after the independence euphoria, are beginning to appear with real or bogus claims for self-determination and recompense. In examples like Kashmir in India and the Tamil region of Sri Lanka, secessionist or irrendentist sentiments which have gone against the prevailing national policy of sovereignty have been suppressed with deadly force. In the case of Africa, postmodernist tribal and clan divisions and conflict, claiming politics of self-determination, have compromised the fledgling state apparatus as a secular and neutral infrastructure, causing it to be usurped by "war-lordism" resulting in cycles of violence with catastrophic outcomes as exhibited in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Angola, Congo and Somalia. Some attempts at resolving such issues along with moves for unilateral declaration of independence as in western Sahara and Eritrea may have been thought of as an expedient solution for redress of long-fought causes, but the disastrous border war between Ethiopia and its former province of Eritrea following the independence of the latter has dashed those hopes (Abbai, 1999).

Immigration status is one of the most insidious factors of vulnerability for marginalization and exploitation worldwide. In many countries, opposition political parties have often used immigration as a rallying force to galvanize nationalist and sometimes jingoistic sentiments (Harris, 1995, pp. 85–131; Kwong, 1997, pp. 139–59; Pred, 1997). Immigrants, legal or undocumented, who arrive seeking employment, face a variety of discriminatory pressures. Those without residency status are subject to random cruel treatment by immigration authorities and law enforcement bodies as well as those who employ them. Immigrants also become convenient scapegoats for causing local problems and are often subjected to stereotyping, exploitation and even violence (Pred, 1997; Van Kempen, 1997). Recent successes in the anti-immigrant legislation in France, Austria and California have exposed immigrant communities to political and economic marginalization with little in the way of mitigating conditions (Harris, 1995, pp. 186–214; Mingoine, 1966b, pp. 29–34).

Age and gender are also important factors of vulnerability to systemic marginality. Households with many children and those headed by a single parent, often a female parent, have been more likely to be marginalized (Buck, 1996). According to a study by the Population Reference Bureau (PRB, 1996), 50 per cent of the people in the United States who are below the poverty income level are not of working age; 40 per cent are under age 18, and 10 per cent are over age 65. It is also observed that the poverty rates of families increase with the number of children in a family. Over 53 per cent of families with five or more children under age 18 are in poverty. Gender inequity is a persistent problem that affects employment and income potentials. Female-headed households are especially vulnerable to marginality. In the United States, the highest percentage of households below the poverty line is for single mothers with children (see also Massey, 1994, pp. 175–248; Christopherson, 1995; McDowell, 1995; PRB, 1996, p. 18). In developing countries, the plight of women and children from culture-based vulnerabilities is crucial. Women are relegated to domestic chores whose demand on their time and energy never ceases. Women not only receive less food than men but they eat foods that have less nutritional value (Leghorn and Parker, 1981). Women also bear more than their share of work burdens in farming and home-making. They also spend significant amounts of their time and energy performing routine activities such as fetching water, gathering firewood and doing the laundry, all of which require head- or back-loaded weights which are carried over long distances on foot (Mehretu and Mutambirwa, 1999).

Collateral marginality

Collateral marginality is a derivative form of disadvantage which depends on the existence of contingent and/or systemic marginality. Collateral marginality is a condition experienced by individuals or communities who are marginalized primarily on the basis of their social or geographic proximity to individuals or communities that experience either contingent or systemic marginality. Generally, individuals or communities who are collaterally marginalized may not, in themselves, share vulnerability markers, but they suffer marginality by contagion as a function of their presence in a social or geographic milieu that is pervasively disadvantaged by contingent or systemic forces. Examples of collateral marginality vary over a great range depending on how they are formed. Towards one end are extreme examples where religious missionaries and humanitarian operatives such as in Rwanda, southern Sudan or East Timor may render themselves vulnerable to contingent health and physical dangers in order to make a positive difference in the lives of disadvantaged communities. At the other end are poor but majority communities in rich countries that are hostile to improvements for the minorities in their midst who experience systemic marginality. In doing so they jeopardize social and capital investment in their own (majority) self-interest. At the macro scale, concerns about collateral marginality may discourage European and North American Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and tourist flows into peripheral regions like tropical Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. At the micro scale, in metropolitan communities in Western Europe and North America, the fear of collateral marginality is what drives the politics of hostility and exclusion of minorities and immigrants. This often leads to a variety of discriminatory urban real estate practices such as steering, redlining and arbitrage (Hartshorn, 1992, pp. 264–5; Knox, 1994, pp. 255–8; McGregor and McConnachie, 1995; Marcuse, 1997b; see also Roscigno and Bruce, 1995; Coulton *et al*., 1996; Krivo *et al*., 1998).

Leveraged marginality

Leveraged marginality**,** like collateral marginality, is a derivative form of contingent or systemic disadvantage that people/communities experience when their bargaining position as wage earners in and suppliers to advanced enterprises is weakened by transnational corporate agents who leverage lucrative concessions by using the prevalence of alternative, often cheaper, substitutes for labour supplies or intermediate inputs in less prosperous communities to which they can potentially take their business (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–228; Dicken, 1998, pp. 26–78; Porter and Sheppard, 1998, pp. 459–492). The meteoric rise in the power of transnational corporations (TNCs) has made it possible for them to wield tremendous influence in reshaping the spatial organization of industrial activity. In so doing, they are highly advantaged by existing disparities in economic and political development as they seek to maximize their returns through improved efficiency, markets and raw materials. Because of their global reach, TNCs are able to leverage a profitable arrangement for themselves by demonstrating their ability to be more flexible and spatially mobile and to create *competitive bidding* between countries or regions that want their investment (Dicken, 1998, pp. 270–7). The loss in opportunity benefits experienced by labour pools in a country or region because of the increased bargaining leverage that TNCs apply to extract better deals lends itself to leveraged marginality. Leveraged marginality is contingent when the leveraging is done between two equally competitive conditions such as workers in Western Europe competing for the same jobs as those in the United States. In such developed countries, TNCs deal directly with unions or local governments in trying to obtain the best concessions by leveraging one region against the other. Leveraged marginality is systemic when leveraging is made possible by TNC dealings with corrupt and undemocratic state operatives in poor areas allowing the exposure of their labour pools with little protection. Such compacts often enable TNCs to secure lucrative deals by allowing them to leverage *more developed country* (MDC) labour pools with those of *less developed countries* (LDCs) or LDCs with other LDCs (Dicken, 1998, pp. 259–76).

Leveraged marginalization is a more recent phenomenon that has appeared with post-Fordist flexible production in which MDC workers are forced to compete with low-wage peripheral workers in poorer MDC regions or in LDCs. An important factor in the new international division of labour is the enhanced ability of TNCs to leverage concessions from MDC workers by threatening to take manufacturing jobs to off-shore locations where wages are low and sometimes controlled by the local elite who work in compact with TNCs. This of course has been aided by major technological advances that have helped flexible production which has not only forced Fordist firms into vertical disintegration of organization of production but also reduced the collective bargaining power of high-wage labour as down-sized firms realized opportunities to relocate in areas with low wages and less protected labour (Martinelli and Schoenberger, 1991, pp. 117–24; Gans, 1993; Buck, 1996; Micheli, 1996; Sassen, 1996; Dicken, 1998, p. 260).

Vulnerability to leveraged marginality depends on location and levels of living. In rich countries like the USA, Canada and those in Western Europe, leveraging is usually realized by TNCs when they try to bid down wages and benefits in high-wage and union-strong regions like the US Midwest with threats of relocating enterprises to less unionized regions in the US South or LDC locations in Latin America or East Asia. Thus firms like Nike, Lee, Reebok or Arrow, which have a history of production in places like Maine, Oregon or North Carolina, will threaten the labour in those locations with the real possibility of moving that production to countries like Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand or Pakistan. This is a form of systemic leveraged marginality because concessions are being leveraged in MDCs due to impoverished labour pools in LDCs which may be subject to control by their governments. Thus leveraged marginality is realized when systemic marginality experienced in LDCs is utilized to indirectly compromise the bargaining power of labour in MDCs. The competitive bidding that ensues would result in the “down-levelling” of wages and benefits in rich countries (Barf, 1995; Dicken, 1998, pp. 270–7). The process may also result in the segmentation of the labour force and introduce a bipolar occupational structure that would favour professionals such as engineers and others that can be absorbed by high-technology-based industries while marginalizing those who continue to depend on low-skilled manufacturing jobs which will be down-sized and subject to pressures to "down-leveled" wages (Benko and Dunford, 1991, pp. 3–23; Castells, 1991, pp. 172–228).

Vulnerability to leveraged marginality in poor economies takes a different form. In poor regions such as Eastern Europe, South-east Asia, Latin America and Africa, TNCs may deal with the state apparatus itself, which, in the interest of improving its competitive bidding to attract FDI, exposes its labour pools to indirect control by imposing regulatory restrictions on collective bargaining. Since most LDCs are hungry for investment, TNCs exercise considerable power in bidding one region or country against another for better concessions in rents and wages. The core-periphery structure of most LDC economies allows easier compacts between political elite in LDCs and TNCs for profitable arrangements for the latter, even though the compact may increasingly feminize and marginalize the LDC labour pools (Dicken, 1998, pp. 312–14).

Structural implications of marginality

The prevalence and magnitude of contingent and systemic marginality depends on the intersection of three structural dualities in a country's socioeconomic system which are: (1) competitive vs. controlled market mechanism, (2) endogenous vs. exogenous market dependency, and (3) neutral vs. vested regulatory state (Painter, 1995).

The first structural duality that differentiates contingent and systemic marginality concerns the role of competitive vs. controlled markets in the overall allocation of scarce resources. Generally, in more advanced economies, free market forces play a greater role in the allocation of scarce resources whereas in controlled economies, especially those with colonial histories, extra-market forces emanating from a heavily regulatory state are more dominant. Consequently, marginality in free markets tends to be accidental or contingent, as is likely the case in more developed economies such as the USA and Western Europe. In contrast, in poor countries with weak *laissez-faire* systems, marginality tends to be systemic with controlled markets, external functional links of dependency, and a neo-mercantilist (often crony capitalist) regulatory and interventionist state as is the case with many of those in Latin America, South Asia and Africa (Wild, 1997, pp. 257–80).

The second structural duality that differentiates contingent and systemic marginality is the degree of dependence of the national economy on endogenous market inducements for its dynamics. This duality has its roots in the sources of decision-making in the modernization of the national economy. In more industrialized economies, the inducements are largely the result of endogenous economic and technological developments. In such countries, the decision to engage in modern production enterprises arises largely in response to the potential demand by the national population that is ultimately the beneficiary of the development process. In the USA, Canada and Western Europe, endogenous systems dominate, and the advancement of the general welfare of the home country is the primary rationale for modernizing the economy. On the other hand, in situations where the inducements for the industrial development are external, most "modernizing" forces have little or no relevance for fundamental national priorities. Mobilization of resource endowments and the related technological transformation in most poor countries have been largely the result of enclave development to produce commodities for overseas markets. This was supported by a *staple theory of development* which stipulated that less developed countries should specialize in the production of export commodities like coffee, fibres, tropical fruits and minerals in which they have comparative advantage (Todaro, 1994, pp. 407–46). More recently, traditional raw material staple exports of LDCs have been joined by FDI-driven export processing zones (EPZs) and the tax-free zones (TFZs) whose outputs are largely for export (Hanink, 1994, pp. 230–8; Dicken, 1998, pp. 130–2). In addition to being dependent on external inducements, such industries show little promise for linkages with other industries in the countries in which they are located. Export staples, EPZs and TFZs are attracted to poor regions and countries because of availability of cheap unskilled labour pools. The inducements have little to do with internal priorities to improve the basic needs of the poor populations; nor do they have a long-term transformational role as most such industries are characterized by poor linkages to local markets and local industries (Wong and Chu, 1984; Dicken, 1998, pp. 130–2, 245–59).

The third structural duality that differentiates contingent and systemic marginality pertains to the dichotomous role of the state in exchange relations. The state plays a significant role in the triangulation between its own regulatory institutions and those of the entrepreneurial class and industrial labour. Generally, in free enterprise systems, government, which is generally democratic, is expected to play a more neutral and, of late, increasingly weakened role in the market-negotiated equilibrium between the entrepreneurial class and industrial labour. According to the conventional mode of regulation, in free markets the state monitors macro-economic indicators and enforces regulatory provisions to facilitate a free and orderly engagement in the marketplace (Painter, 1995). This is assumed to produce competitive efficiency with possibly unequal but equitable distribution of development benefits in society and space. The marginality that is derivative of this is contingent. On the other hand, in controlled markets, the state apparatus, whose character often manifests autocratic, crony capitalist, clientelistic and kleptocratic tendencies, behaves in a highly coercive manner in mediation between business and labour (Callaghy, 1988; Barf, 1995; Wild, 1997, pp. 266–80; Peet and Hartwick, 1999, p. 111). In most developing nations, the state forms strategic collusion with TNC and national entrepreneurial agents to take advantage of cheap labour, land, minerals and utilities, with additional benefits from tax relief, and lax work place safety and pollution standards (Barf, 1995; Dicken, 1998, pp.250–1). Thus systemic marginality results when the regulatory state creates conditions that compromise the operation of free markets and expose productive factors, especially labour, to coerced compliance.

Spatial patterns of marginality

The spatial forms of contingent and systemic marginality are also characterized by two contrasting patterns of regional development and spatial interaction. Contingent marginality, operating within the context of the modernization framework, is assumed to embrace convergent and diffusionist dynamics of development opportunities and rewards (Myrdal, 1957; Hirshmann, 1958; Peet and Hartwick, 1999, pp. 65–85). On the other hand, systemic marginality, operating within the centre-periphery mode, is likely to have less free and more filtered and controlled channels of information diffusion and exchange of ideas unilaterally determined by the core on which the periphery is essentially dependent (Friedmann and Weaver, 1980, pp. 114–18; Riddell, 1985; Wild, 1997, pp. 257–80; Peet and Hartwick, 1999, pp. 107–14).

The spatial form of contingent marginality is generally described by distance-decay functions of unequal distribution of development indicators like income per capita declining over distance from the centre of growth. Distance-decay patterns may be distorted by local environmental, cultural and economic limitations that invite localized contingent marginality, but the overall pattern is indicative of a decline in development variables with distance from the centre of development. Contingent marginality is exemplified by the decline of income per capita with distance from metropolitan areas out to rural hinterlands of any major city in Europe and the United States.

The spatial form of systemic marginality is more complicated. First, although distance-decay may generally apply to macro-spatial patterns in the distribution of development indicators, the linear form of the decay in contingent marginality is not present here. The decay in systemic marginality tends to be more discontinuous with significant truncation of the function with distance from the metropolitan core to the rural periphery. It is exemplified by sharp qualitative and quantitative breaks in physical and social environments as one traverses from the centre of a typical modern and technologically sophisticated primate city in Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa to the rural margins where life can be abruptly traditional, poor and technologically backward. Mexico City and Nairobi, Kenya serve as good examples.

Marginality and spatial scales of analysis

For the purpose of empirical analysis, the spatial forms of contingent and systemic margins can be divided into four spatial scales of inquiry (Sommers *et al.*, 1999). The first scale is termed *megaspatial* and refers to international relations in production that differentiate the core economically developed countries from the peripheral countries of the less developed world within the context of contingent or systemic marginality. Megaspatial contingent marginality applies to regions in the less developed countries whose poverty can be explained by classical market theory, comparative advantage, technological backwardness and space-time lags in diffusion of innovation. The historical evidence for this includes the rise of the newly industrializing countries (NICs) whose “Asian Miracle" and "Asian Tigers" have been cited as demonstrating successful impulses of investment capital from rich developed countries that gave rise to FDI-led globalization of industry (Dicken, 1998, pp. 131–43). On the other hand, megaspatial systemic margins come under a different theoretical construct in which a system of monopoly capitalism, driven by TNCs and operating within a core-periphery structure which maintains dependent relations with LDCs, uses the margins as sources of cheap labour and raw materials worthy of exploitation but with little hope for sustained endogenous capital formation. The world systems theory, within which this is articulated, refutes the notion, put forth by modernization theory, that core-periphery relationships lead to the development of both core and periphery. Instead, it maintains that the system is inherently exploitative of the poor countries (Wallerstein, 1992; Blaut, 1994; Shannon, 1996; Peet and Hartwick, 1999, pp. 107–22).

The second scale of marginality in space is *macrospatial* and applies to regional or national disparities in levels of living between central (core) locations of economic activity and peripheral and remote locations and/or areas with poor natural resources (Friedmann and Weaver, 1980, pp. 140–3; Massey, 1994, pp. 50–66). When macrospatial marginality is a product of market forces, the outcome is treated as competitive inequality in which the vulnerability factor is locational, cultural and/or ecological, giving rise to contingent macrospatial marginality. Since competitive inequality is a free-market characteristic, contingent marcrospatial marginality is assumed to be, at least theoretically, ultimately convergent. Examples of contingent macrospatial marginal areas are northern England, western Ireland, the Massif Central in southern France, the Mezzogiorno of Italy, and Appalachia, the Ozarks, parts of the Deep South, and northern Michigan in the United States (Friedmann and Weaver, 1980, pp. 140–59; Claval, 1983). The history of underdevelopment of these areas, of course, has shown that poverty can become endemic with little sign of convergence. Systemic macrospatial marginality is produced by an inequitable and often a hegemonic order which uses politics and culture to prevent the market from operating equitably in society and over space. Systemic macrospatial marginal areas are intentional gerrymandered spaces which are created either to appropriate land and resource assets and/or contain communities within exclusionary zones such as "tribal" lands, native reserves and ethnic homelands. In many cases, this is maintained by physical and social structures of containment of the marginalized people within a nation. Historical examples are Native American reserves in North America, "Tribal Trust Lands" in colonial Zimbabwe, and "Bantustans" in South Africa. More recently, similar problems have developed from territorial disputes with undercurrents of "ethnic cleansing" such as in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and the Congo, and East Timor in Indonesia.

The third scale of marginality in space is termed *microspatial*. Microspatial margins are distressed localities within relatively small territories such as metropolitan regions. Microspatial marginality can also be divided into contingent and systemic variants. Contingent micromargins are those resulting from competitive markets in which metropolitan margins are a reflection of the economic bipolarization associated with cyclical markets and changes in regimes of accumulation (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–228; Marcuse, 1996; Tosi, 1996, pp. 89–90). Contingent micromargins are of particular significance in more developed economies where capital has become increasingly footloose and often uncoordinated and "anarchical", which may lead to "capital switching" to take advantage of new opportunities to maximize returns (Gottdiener, 1994, pp. 96–100). On the other hand, systemic micromarginal areas result largely from social vulnerabilities which are often aggravated by hegemonies associated with the dominant political and cultural order (Gottdiener, 1994, p. 105). Although vulnerability factors such as history, age and gender are important in systemic microspatial marginality, the most common forms are those based on ethnocultural distinctions and immigration status. In Europe and North America, systemic microspatial marginal areas are usually located in the centres of major metropolitan areas (Coulton *et al.*, 1996; Wacquant, 1996a; Marcuse, 1997a). Although systemic micromarginality is often attributed to factors that are internal to poor urban communities as exemplified by the "culture of poverty" debate, it is the systemic external forces, including "social gatekeeper" agencies, that seem to be more responsible for the phenomenon (Roscigno and Bruce, 1995; Micheli, 1996; Tosi, 1996; Wacquant, 1993, 1996a; Marcuse, 1997a). Systemic microspatial marginality is revealed in those areas in which there is a convergence of many of the stereotypical factors of vulnerability. In some North American examples, factors of vulnerability such as ethnicity play the role of an "anchor" factor joined by others like immigration status, gender and age to produce some of the worst cases of systemic microspatial margins (Mingione, 1966b; Hill, 1983, pp. 91–8; Darden *et al*., 1987, pp. 67–108; Knox, 1993, pp. 27–9; Knox, 1994, pp. 255–8; Cadwallader, 1996, pp. 366–8; Marcuse, 1996, pp. 176–216; Wacquant, 1996b; Marcuse, 1997b).

The fourth and final spatial scale of marginality is termed *in situ.* The term *microperipherality* has also been applied to address this phenomenon (Blom, 1998). This refers to unequal development within very small geographic units, like census tracts or city blocks, in which poor and marginalized households and prosperous households may share neighbourhoods. Both contingent and systemic *in situ* margins can be found in urban neighbourhoods. However, the dominant form of *in situ* marginality appears to be systemic. *In situ* margins are a consequence of many vulnerability factors such as ethnicity, immigration status and single female parent households. Large disparities in levels of living can be found within systemic *in situ* marginalized places. Contingent and systemic *in situ* margins may apply to cases of well-to-do households that are residual from better days in neighbourhoods in which older residents have maintained the quality of their housing stock either by choice (contingent) or due to hegemonic exclusion (systemic). Purely contingent *in situ* marginal dwellings may also be the result of countervailing developments of enclaves of better neighbourhoods within blighted regions of inner cities, often as a result of urban renewal programmes and/or gentrification (Knox, 1994, pp. 258–61; McGregor and McConnachie, 1995; Cadwallader, 1996, pp. 367–6, Marcuse, 1997b).

Conclusion

Unequal development will continue to be an important policy issue especially because of current trends in the polarization of society and space with structural changes in the global economy and the rapid switching of the international division of labour from the old to the new (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–228; Dicken, 1998, pp. 238–40). The changing international economic scene has also produced a more complex configuration in unequal development requiring an equally complex policy response.

With increasing globalization of the world economy, expanding frontiers in industrial production, and high rates of development in many poor regions, it is possible to realize economic convergence with reduction in both contingent and systemic vulnerability throughout the world. However, it is more likely that both contingent and systemic marginality will intensify. The *new international division of labour* (NIDL) and related post-Fordist flexible production will deepen the effects of the conventional social factors of vulnerability like race, “tribe”, ethnicity, age, gender and immigration status. As patterns in Europe and the United States have shown, NIDL will increase the pressure on the unions whose bargaining power will be compromised by TNCs which are able to leverage concessions and take advantage of post-Fordist (flexible manufacturing) and neo-Fordist (high-technology information age) regimes of production and accumulation (Castells, 1989, pp. 172–228; Martinelli and Schoenberger, 1991; Jessop, 1992). When such developments expose majority populations to leveraged marginality, systemic marginality tends to increase for local minorities and “immigrants” who are scapegoated for the job losses or TNC “assaults on the Fordist social compromise” (Jessop, 1992, p. 30; Harris, 1995, pp. 85–131; Painter, 1995, p. 141; Kwong, 1997; Pred, 1997).

This paper suggests a theory of marginality based on two clear-cut and counterposed factors of marginality. The distinction is drawn between contingent and systemic sources of marginality because each comes from a totally different dynamic of free versus controlled situations. Policies designed to redress contingent marginality may be inherently inappropriate for dealing with places that experience systemic marginality. For example, at a micro scale, an enterprise zone which is designed to redress contingent marginality in an inner city district is likely to succeed if the root causes of marginality in the district are market-related. The same design would have little or no impact if the district’s disadvantage is rooted in non-market systemic causes. At the mega scale, neoliberal generic policies to liberalize and deregulate markets, as has been pushed by the *International Monetary Fund* (IMF) in a variety of structural adjustment programmes all over the world, are not likely to bring about comparable results in both free market and controlled economies. Policies for structural adjustment must first and foremost take into account fundamental dichotomies in process and structure between contingent and systemic setbacks in the economy of poor regions.

Conceptually, the division of marginality into contingent and systemic also allows further nuances to address derivative patterns like collateral and leveraged marginality. The point that needs to be stressed is that there is no "one-size-fits-all" policy to address uneven development in society and space. For a policy instrument to successfully tackle sociospatial marginality, it must be based on a sound empirical assessment of the factors of vulnerability, and the magnitudes and specific characteristics of contingent and systemic dynamics that are operative.

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