

**From the Marginality of the 1960s,
to the “New Poverty” of Today:**

A LARR Research Forum

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From the Marginality of the 1960s, to the “New Poverty” of Today: A LARR Research Forum
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Abstract: This paper derives from a LARR-sponsored forum at the LARR 2003 Congress held in Dallas in March 2003. Targeted at younger scholars, a panel of leading researchers whose early work was shaped by marginality and dependency thinking of the 1960s were invited to reflect cross-generationally about how paradigms analyzing poverty in Latin American cities have shifted from that time to the present. Specifically, each authors compares “marginality” as it was construed more than three decades ago with contemporary constructions of poverty and social organization arising from their more recent research. While there are important continuities, the authors concur that the so-called “new poverty” today is very different, being more structural, more segmented and, perhaps paradoxically, more exclusionary than before. Moreover, the shift from a largely patrimonialist and undemocratic state towards one that, while more democratic, is also slimmer and downsized, thereby shifting state intervention and welfare systems ever more to local level governments and to the quasi-private sector of NGOs. If earlier marginality theory overemphasized the separation of the poor from the mainstream, today’s new poverty is often embedded within structures of social exclusion that severely reduce opportunities for social mobility among the urban poor.

Introduction and Overview: Marginality Then and Now

By Peter M. Ward

One of the goals of the new editorial team of LARR is to promote fora and workshops on cutting-edge research issues.¹ A second idea is for LARR to sponsor panels at LASA Congresses, and in March 2003 in Dallas three such panels were organized and chaired by the LARR editors. This Research Note reports on one of those panels, which invited senior scholars to reflect cross-generationally on how different cohorts of researchers during their careers have analyzed poverty, sometimes over almost a half-century. The aim was that younger scholars would benefit from hearing how their predecessors, many of whom are leading figures in the profession today, have confronted the same issues, albeit from different initial paradigms, often using different methodologies, and with inferior information processing capacities than those that we now enjoy. With the exception of Mercedes González de la Rocha, all of the scholars on the panel cut their teeth by researching poverty and urbanization starting in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Perhaps nowhere can such cross-generational perspectives be better tracked than in constructions of poverty, shifting as they have from the classic marginality theory of the 1960s to the so-called “new poverty” of today. Classic marginality of the 1960s came in two primary forms: economic and cultural, and the theory emerged at the shatterbelt of two conflicting paradigms. These were (the then waning) modernization theory that prevailed throughout the previous decade led by luminaries such as Gino Germani, Bert Hoselitz, Phillip Hauser et al., and the rising star of dependency theory that challenged and eventually displaced it, most often associated with the writings of Frank, Cardoso and Faletto, etc. Specifically, on the economic side José Nun (1969), Aníbal Quijano (1973) and others argued that there was a growing separation between a blue-collar elite on the one hand and the marginal masses on the other. This led to a debate about the extent to which the latter constituted an industrial reserve army of labor, and its impact in terms of wages and poverty. These marginal masses threatened social and political stability and exacerbated the “great fear” (Gerassi 1963), further fuelling perceived threats of a revolutionary overthrow forged by a lumpenproletariat (Fanon 1963), in many respects reminiscent of late nineteenth century Victorian England.

In fact, empirical research fairly quickly began to explode the notion of a marked separation between a small elite class of workers and the masses. Instead, it appeared that the Import Substituting Industrialization (ISI) model of economic development promoted by CEPAL since the 1940s was generating a wide accessibility

to jobs (albeit minimally paid ones, with low or modest levels of social protection). If people were poor it was by virtue of their integration, not their exclusion from formal economic activities (Oliveira 1972; Roberts 1978; Perlman 1976). From the early 1970s onwards, informal sector analyses drew attention to the multiple linkages between the formal and informal sectors, and to the apparent virtuosity of the latter, and even its capacity for growth (Bromley 1978). Although the formal sector offered greater job security and benefits denied to most informal sector activities, it became apparent that early formulations of a sharp economic process of exclusion were wrong, or at the very least were overstated, and probably applied only to a small elite section of the working class in key strategic industries.

On the cultural side, functionalist sociology emphasized the changing nature of value systems as Latin American societies urbanized. Migrants to cities were cast as peasants in cities, carrying with them the trappings of a rural and traditional culture, foisting their traits upon the city, and being “marginal” to the mainstream of city life. Indeed, one study even described a “ruralization of the city” and described the growth of shantytowns and squatter settlements as a “cancer on the carapace of the city” (Juppenlatz 1970), or as the flotsam and jetsam of what was perceived to be rapidly out-of-control and dysfunctional urbanization (Nelson 1979). Specifically, although Oscar Lewis’ earlier work had challenged these stereotypes of urbanization and migrant breakdown,² he also theorized a culture of poverty, arguing that the poor were outside of the cultural mainstream, and their poverty was so deeply embedded that it became trans-generational, such that those trapped in the culture carried a whole range of marginal traits at the individual, familial, and community levels (Lewis 1966).

These ideas, too, were challenged and discredited – not least by some of the scholars whose commentaries follow below. This critique was often reflected in the imaginative titles of several of their works: “Rationality in the slum” (Portes 1972); “The poor are like everyone else, Oscar”, (Safa 1970); The Myth of Marginality (Perlman 1976), Organizing Strangers (Roberts 1973). Social networks and local organization in self-help settlements were effective demonstration of social mobility and survival (Roberts 1972; Lomnit 1975). The poor were not radical (Ray 1969; Moreno 1970; Eckstein 1977), nor were they excluded, but were, instead, invariably locked into clientelistic networks that they could mobilize to reasonable effect (Leeds 1972; Cornelius 1975). Irregular settlements, it was argued, were rational and viable responses to rapid urbanization, and should be perceived as a “solution” rather than as a problem (Mangin 1967; Turner 1969; Ward 1976).

Fast-forwarding almost four decades, there is now increasing evidence that although classic marginality may have lacked empirical veracity in its earliest iteration, changing economic conditions born of the structural adjustment and austerity of the 1980s, together with neo-liberal restructuring of the 1990s, is today creating the very conditions and cultural constructions conceived and predicted by Nun, Quijano and Lewis in the 1960s. Rising unemployment; declining opportunities in even informal sector activities; a rise of private provisioning within a barter economy (the trueque system in Argentina); social exclusion and new dimensions of marginalization; rising violence and insecurity—these are all-too-frequent features of the contemporary urban scene. Nevertheless, while these offer throwback similarities to the past, the political and public policy architectures are very different today, and this so-called “new poverty” is embedded within a framework of democratization, a rolled-back and more decentralized state, and a new intermediate ‘third sector’ of non-governmental organization with increasing responsibility for the delivery of social goods. Tied to democratic opening, a general broadening of citizenship rights has empowered the poor to claim and assert those rights, or as Jelin (below) puts it, “afirmar el derecho a afirmar”.

Against this backdrop, panelists were invited to engage in partial autobiographical reflections, comparing their earlier work and experiences with observations from their and others’ contemporary research. Specifically, too, they were invited to identify the principal similarities and differences between the marginality -- then and now. So fertile and interesting was the panel session that many in the audience requested that they prepare brief written commentaries for publication in LARR, and these are reproduced below.³

Alejandro Portes,⁴ participating in the panel (but not contributing to this Research Report), concurs that during the 1960s there was a clear “rationality” in the slum, and that this had generated both fears and expectancies from both the political left and right. But he underscores that these were rational responses to the contours of the day, and needed to be analyzed within the context of how marginality was constructed at that time. Similarly, under neo-liberalism of the 1990s, new forms of social organization have emerged, and invariably these are responding to declining employment and the growing scarcity of jobs. In turn, this has led to new patterns of self-employment, and the rise of a category that he refers to as micro-entrepreneurs (Portes and Hoffman 2003). Moreover, he argues that these responses also follow the contours and practices of the principal

cities in which he is currently working, and that different sorts of adjustment may be observed in each city. For example, emergency forms of organization are appearing in Buenos Aires that are no longer built around unions, but are much more individualized and vested within the shantytown and squatter areas or villas miserias. Similarly, in Rio de Janeiro samba schools have become important arenas of social organization that overlay their traditional role and functions. Finally, a key difference today is the fact that these cities are no longer growing fast--or at all in some cases.

From Rural to Urban; From Men to Women; From Class Struggle to Struggles for Entitlements.

By Helen Safa

In many respects the “new poverty” of today in Latin America and the Caribbean is very different from that observed in the 1960s. As Portes and Hoffman (2003) document in their article on changes in Latin American class structure during the neo-liberal era, income inequality in Latin America today is even greater than it was in 1980, largely because of structural adjustment and neo-liberal reform.

Other aspects of life for the urban poor in Latin America have also changed since 1960. The period of import substitution industrialization (ISI) from 1960 to 1980 brought about considerable economic growth and benefits to the working class because it was designed to build up an internal market, which required adequate wages to raise purchasing power. ISI also favored male employment in heavy industry and was built on the model of the male breadwinner, in which the man maintained authority in the household through his role as chief or sole breadwinner. The social wage increased as unions expanded and governments provided some public services to urban residents through expanded programs in education, health and basic infrastructure such as piped water and electricity. As my study Urban Poor of Puerto Rico (Safa 1974) demonstrated, most of the recruits to this expanding working class were rural migrants, and the opportunities for employment and education in the city gave them an optimistic outlook on social mobility and aspirations for their children. Failure to succeed was blamed on personalistic factors such as low educational levels or an errant husband.

Optimism came to an end in the 1980s with the growing debt crisis and structural adjustment policies imposed on loans from the International Monetary Fund. Structural adjustment severely limited government spending--resulting in the decline of the public sector and privatization of public services on which many of the urban poor depended. It also froze wages and employment, contributing to an expansion of unregulated jobs in the informal sector for the self-employed and subcontractors to the formal sector. The complex links between the formal and informal sectors belied the notion of marginality and the culture of poverty, which argued that the poor were outside the economic and cultural mainstream, and passed on their poverty transgenerationally. Social networks continued to supply sufficient social and material capital to enable the poor to survive, and for some to become socially mobile.

The final blow came with the initiation of neo-liberal policies in Latin America and the Caribbean in the 1990s. A policy of free trade removed all protection of domestic industry and allowed cheap imports to destroy an already eroded internal market. Cheap food imports contributed to a decline in agricultural production for domestic consumption, while the prices of commodity exports from Latin America and the Caribbean like sugar and coffee plummeted. A new model emphasizing export production required that wages be kept low to retain a “comparative advantage”, which became all the more difficult as the international economy globalized, and Latin American countries were competing with cheap labor in China, Africa and other areas. In my book on women industrial workers in Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, entitled The Myth of the Male Breadwinner (1995) I showed that female employment grew largely in response to the need for additional wage earners to supplement declining male wages, and also to provide cheap labor for new export processing zones and a growing service economy. The education women received in the earlier ISI period made them a highly qualified labor force, which continues to grow today. Increased educational and occupational opportunities for women contributed to the growth of the feminist movement in Latin America, and demolished the myth of the male breadwinner, as women became important contributors to the household and national economy. Female heads of household are increasing in numbers as men abdicate their roles as breadwinner.

The wide participation of the popular classes in social movements emphasizes the degree to which Latin Americans now recognize the structural impediments to their survival (and limited possibilities of mobility) and no longer blame themselves for failure. Most of these movements are directed against the state, and are based on collective interests rooted in gender, race and ethnicity (the indigenous and black movement), or on shared

concerns over land, environment, or health. This demonstrates that the poor now experience a sense of entitlement and recognize their rights as citizens more than ever, and that they no longer feel themselves disconnected from the nation. With the growth of urbanization and a market economy, “refuge zones” no longer exist, and for some, international migration becomes the only outlet. With the withdrawal of social development and social protection programs as well as the growth of drug trafficking, the need to police the poor has become stronger, potentially leading to a level of immiseration that may still prove explosive. But as long as the poor still expect the state to play a key role in redressing their grievances, they remain an integral part of the nation.

The Metamorphosis of Marginality in Rio de Janeiro

By Janice Perlman

Both the theoretical concept and the social reality of marginality have been significantly transformed since the 1960s, but Helen Safa’s final comment above, that “the poor are an integral part of the nation”, remains as true today as it was when I lived in Rio de Janeiro’s favelas in 1968-69. As I argued in The Myth of Marginality, favela residents were tightly integrated into society, albeit in an extremely perverse and asymmetrical manner. They worked in the least desirable jobs, under the worst conditions for the lowest pay; participated in the political life of their communities and city (to the extent permitted within the dictatorship) to little or no benefit; and contributed to the cultural and social life of the city without recognition. Peter Ward’s introductory summary above lays out the context and parameters of my earlier work. Now, 35 years later, I am engaged in an intensive re-study, interviewing the original study participants, their children, and grandchildren. As we have data on the parents of the original interviewees, this enables us to look at propositions of marginality over four generations.⁵

Interestingly, after a long period of relative silence, references to marginality are once again appearing in daily discourse on the streets, in the press, and in music, as well as in contemporary academic debates. The term was not widely used in activist circles, or social science writing after the 1970s. Since the mid-1980s and Brazil’s return to democracy, it has been replaced by concepts such as exclusion, inequality, injustice and spatial segregation, concepts that were increasingly linked to the new discussion of citizenship, rights, participatory democracy, and transparency. In the 1990s, however, with the growth in drug traffic, the word ‘marginal’ began to resurface in Rio’s press, in popular music and in common parlance, invested with new connotations. It is now widely used to refer to the drug and arms dealers, gangs and “bandidos”. Daily headlines in the newspapers scream out about the violence of the ‘marginais’ and their ongoing battles with the police. Rap songs and funk music talk about being ‘marginal’ as a kind of badge of pride, revolted by the injustices of the system. After many decades of co-existence, Rio’s populous has again begun to fear and shun favelas due to the sharp increase in violence. Although the favelados themselves are no longer considered marginal, the physical territory of their communities has become tightly controlled by the drug dealers, who have now inherited the term “marginais”, and are known locally as “the marginality” or “the movement”.

Beginning in the late 1990s, the concept of marginality has been revisited in academic circles, insofar as it is purported to relate to persistent poverty in first world cities. Terms such as “the underclass,” the “new poverty,” “the new marginality” or “advanced marginality”, are used in reference to the chronic poor in advanced capitalist countries, particularly the black ghettos of the United States, and in the stigmatized slums of Europe. Loic Wacquant has developed this concept most fully starting with his 1996 article where he points to what he calls the ‘contiguous configuration of color, class, and place’ in the Chicago ghetto, the French banlieue, and the British and Dutch inner cities. He posits a distinctive post-industrial marginality characterized by new constraints, stigmas, territorial separation, dependency (on the welfare state), and institutions within ‘territories of urban relegation’ (Wacquant, 1996; see also 1997,1999). However, our ongoing restudy of the original favelas and families that I researched in 1968 suggests that there are a number of disconnects between this “new marginality” portrayed by Wacquant, and actual social reality. Below I look at the four key structural dynamics that Wacquant (1997) finds to be reshaping urban poverty in advanced industrial societies.

1. Social inequality in the context of overall economic prosperity and in light of the deskilling and elimination of jobs for unskilled workers, along with multiplication of jobs for university-trained professionals. Brazil is one of the most unequal countries in the world despite some recent improvements, yet, in the case of Rio the question of social inequality is problematic. First of all, we are not talking of a context of overall

prosperity since the city's economy suffered greatly during the 1980s and is only gradually recuperating. While there has indeed been massive de-industrialization and reduction of jobs for unskilled workers, perception of inequality show mixed results. In open-ended discussions many favelados talk bitterly of the increased gap between rich and poor, but in response to questions about changes in social exclusion after 30 years, only one-third of them said that it had increased.

2. Absolute surplus population which Wacquant relates to the mutation of wage labor, implying a degradation and dispersion of the conditions of employment with a high percentage of 'redundant' workers – many of whom will never work again-- alongside widespread poverty for those who do have jobs, due to low pay and the exploitation of temporary workers. Brazilian unemployment levels are among the highest in history, with Rio among the metropolitan areas suffering most. There has also been a weakening of the labor movement with an erosion of conditions of formal employment and the informal economy also masks what might be a considered a surplus population. We found one quarter of the households of our original favela sample reported at least one person of working age defined as unemployed, suggesting even higher level of unemployment.

3. Retrenchment of the welfare state, characterized by social dis-investment, with programs targeted at the poor being cut and turned into instruments of surveillance and control. Here it must be understood that the welfare state in Brazil was never as highly developed as that of Europe or the USA. As in other countries in Latin America, Brazil has been undergoing a process of reform, rationalizing its state social expenditures. However, some social programs focused on the poor are being expanded, both under the past and current Presidents, as well as by state and local governments. Food vouchers, educational vouchers, low-income ('popular') restaurants, and citizens' wages are among the programs being implemented. The recently-elected Labor Party President, Luis Inacio Lula da Silva has pledged a campaign of zero hunger, and of full land regularization for squatters. Moreover, in our own sample it is clear that state retirement payments are a major source of income for a majority of households; some 58 percent of the original (1968) interviewees stated that their retirement payments are now their principal source of livelihood, and, for household heads it was even higher (66 percent).

4. Spatial concentration and stigmatization, which Wacquant posits is expressed in hard-core areas of outcasts, territorial stigma and prejudice, and in a diminishing sense of community life. Although favelas are not "hard-core areas of outcasts", they are certainly stigmatized. In fact of the eight sources of discrimination most mentioned by people in our sample, "living in a favela" was the most prevalent, (mentioned by some 66 percent) with a close second being "skin color" (mentioned by 65 percent). A diminishing sense of community life was also striking: in the 1968 study 56 percent regarded the people in their community as being "very tightly united" whereas today only 12 percent feel this way.

Where our findings differ from those of Wacquant are in the realm of spatial concentration. First, not all of Rio's poor are in favelas, and not all favelados are poor: They are racially, socially, culturally and economically heterogeneous. In contrast to the total racial segregation characterizing the new marginality, Rio's favelas have always been racially mixed. At the time of my original 1968 study the random sample showed 21 percent of favelados were black, 30 percent mulatto and 49 percent white; and these percentages are almost identical in the current study. Secondly, favelas in Rio are not concentrated in any one area of the city, but are intermixed geographically with more prosperous neighborhoods. Indeed, some are so well located that rental and sales prices are higher than those in certain parts of Copacabana or Botafogo (both upper and middle-income areas, see Abramo 2001). However, the boundaries between the favela and the "asphalt" are unmistakably clear to all despite a massive ten-year program of infrastructure upgrading designed to integrate favelas with their surrounding neighborhoods.

Perhaps the most striking finding contesting the premise of advanced marginality is that favelados are not "forcibly relegated" to staying in their communities. Of the random sample "survivors" we re-interviewed, 30 percent live in favelas, 37 percent in "conjuntos" (housing projects), and 34 percent in neighborhoods, mostly in the periphery of the city. Among the former community leaders in the sample, only 16 percent are still in favelas and 48 percent are in neighborhoods. Our socio-economic analysis shows clearly that moving into neighborhoods is an indicator of upward mobility, so we have robust evidence that the poor (even the black poor) are not consigned to 'bounded territories of urban relegation' (Wacquant, 1997).

De los “recursos de la pobreza” a la “pobreza de recursos” y a las “desventajas acumuladas”

By Mercedes González de la Rocha

Mi contribución a esta discusión necesariamente lleva el sello de las investigaciones que he realizado a lo largo de dos décadas, los ochenta y los noventa, en el México urbano. Se trata de un período de cambios vertiginosos, dos décadas trepidatorias marcadas por las fuertes sacudidas de profundas crisis económicas. Mi búsqueda se aparta de las miradas estáticas para dar cuenta de algunos de los cambios más importantes en la organización social de los grupos domésticos y las familias de escasos recursos en el contexto de las transformaciones en los mercados laborales y, en general, en las estructuras de oportunidades. De manera casi obsesiva, sistemática pero también intuitiva, mis estudios me han llevado a estar inmersa en un constante proceso de reflexión basado en estudios longitudinales y diacrónicos sobre las bases sociales y económicas de la sobrevivencia en situaciones dinámicas que imponen nuevos y constantes retos a los pobres urbanos y a los sectores medios empobrecidos.

Basada en un estudio realizado en 1981-1982 (inmediatamente previo al estallido de la crisis de los ochenta), argumenté que el grupo doméstico — poco armónico y caracterizado por diferencias internas de género y generación -- es el escenario primario de sobrevivencia en contextos caracterizados por bajos salarios y escasa presencia de un Estado de Bienestar. Esta unidad contradictoria (en donde coexisten el conflicto y la solidaridad) aparecía como el escenario social en donde se instrumentaban mecanismos y “estrategias” de adaptación a los bajos salarios de los “pobres trabajadores” (working poor). Los recursos de la pobreza — la capacidad de generar ingresos de distintas fuentes -- eran conseguidos con esfuerzo pero se volvían evidentes al estudiar la vida cotidiana de los pobres urbanos trabajadores (trabajo en empleos de distintos tipos, producción doméstica de bienes y servicios para la venta y para el consumo, ayuda mutua entre amigos, vecinos y parientes). Bajo esa perspectiva, enfatiqué la multiplicidad de recursos en manos de los pobres y la diversidad de fuentes de ingresos que nutrían las economías familiares y domésticas (González de la Rocha 1994).

Estudios posteriores, durante y después de la crisis de 1982, basados en seguimientos al mismo universo estudiado en primera instancia, dieron cuenta de las respuestas familiares y domésticas a la crisis en México. Lejos de tomar las calles en movimientos de protesta, los pobres urbanos “privatizaron” la crisis económica mexicana (Benería, 1992; González de la Rocha, 1991) a través de mecanismos domésticos y familiares que incluyeron la intensificación del trabajo (más trabajadores por hogar, especialmente mujeres adultas, y más horas de trabajo por trabajador), la reducción y modificación del consumo y el uso más intenso de las redes sociales. Las respuestas familiares y domésticas a la crisis en México pueden ser sintetizadas en más trabajo -- en condiciones cada vez más precarias -- y menos consumo. La participación de mujeres, niños, jóvenes y viejos (además de hombres adultos) en el mercado de trabajo y los ingresos devengados por éstos (aunque precarios) amortiguaron lo que hubiera sido un efecto aún más devastador de la crisis económica de la llamada “década perdida”.

Aunque menos estudiados, sabemos que los sectores medios también sufrieron impactos severos. Los pocos estudios que durante los años ochenta realizaron seguimientos longitudinales sobre las prácticas y patrones de consumo (Jusidman 1987; González de la Rocha 1991, 1995) mostraron que los grupos domésticos de los sectores medios se vieron forzados a hacer modificaciones drásticas en sus patrones de consumo. Mi estudio comparativo de grupos domésticos en Guadalajara y Monterrey (ciudades que ocupan el segundo y tercer lugar en términos demográficos) planteó que las familias de clase media procuraban defender la escolaridad de los hijos —y evitaban enviarlos a trabajos remunerados como lo hacían las familias de los pobres urbanos-- a pesar del empobrecimiento cada vez más notorio de sus presupuestos familiares. Paradójicamente, adoptar una estrategia distinta a la de las familias pobres significó, para muchos grupos domésticos de los sectores medios, una medida de empobrecimiento. Aunque mis estudios enfatizaron el costo social de la crisis económica de los ochenta, el resultado de los mismos me llevó a subrayar la capacidad ingeniosa de adaptación de las familias y grupos domésticos al cambio económico. De forma similar a la de otros estudios realizados en otras ciudades latinoamericanas en esta época, mis resultados apuntaron la flexibilidad, adaptabilidad y existencia de opciones y recursos en manos de los pobres.

Los años noventa, por otro lado, nos han forzado a cambiar nuestros enfoques y a modificar nuestros esquemas de análisis. La crisis mexicana de 1994 y el galopante proceso de consolidación del modelo económico neoliberal dejaron al descubierto nuevas y alarmantes condiciones socioeconómicas para toda la población y particularmente para los pobres. La creciente escasez de empleos para las mayorías urbanas ha

impreso un nuevo sello a la capacidad de supervivencia de los grupos domésticos. La nueva realidad, he sostenido, no puede ya explicarse con el modelo de “los recursos de la pobreza” porque las familias pobres no pueden intensificar el uso de su fuerza de trabajo ante la falta de empleos. Es necesario un cambio de enfoque puesto que las opciones para los pobres son cada vez más escasas y los límites para la “capacidad ingeniosa de adaptación” son evidentes. He planteado la discusión conceptual de dos modelos: los recursos de la pobreza, que se basa en la premisa de que los recursos son “inagotables” (la capacidad de adaptación a través de la intensificación del trabajo, el consumo restringido y el uso de las redes sociales), y la pobreza de recursos que plantea que dicha premisa, en el contexto actual, es falsa. Este segundo modelo, el de la pobreza de recursos, subraya que los recursos son limitados y que abundan cada vez más los obstáculos que opciones, los límites que las alternativas. El deterioro producido por el ajuste económico en la capacidad de hacer uso del recurso más importante, la fuerza de trabajo, ha producido severos ajustes privados que yo he intentado entender y explicar en el marco de un proceso de desventajas acumuladas. Entre estas, sobresale la creciente incapacidad de formar parte de constelaciones sociales y flujos de reciprocidad y solidaridad, así como la menoscabada capacidad de participar en actividades de auto-provisionamiento (González de la Rocha 2001). Los recursos de los pobres no pueden ser activados y, en efecto, aparecen similitudes claras entre los rasgos sociales y económicos de la marginalidad de antaño con la pobreza de recursos y la incrementada vulnerabilidad del mundo contemporáneo.

Al igual que Bryan Roberts, me pregunto si estamos discutiendo cambios empíricamente observables (en donde los otrora deviant cases son ahora menos desviantes y más frecuentes: aislamiento social, “nueva marginalidad”), o si se trata del producto de nuevos enfoques y perspectivas. Mi respuesta es doblemente afirmativa. Hay tanto nuevas situaciones y procesos de cambio como preguntas, enfoques y perspectivas novedosos. Esta nueva plataforma empírica-conceptual nos ha forzado a detectar y empezar a conocer lo que he denominado como desventajas acumuladas. Este concepto alude, precisamente, al impacto que la exclusión laboral ha provocado en otros ámbitos de la vida social. Los ajustes privados que han tenido lugar en los espacios domésticos y familiares no han dado a saldos neutros ni, mucho menos, positivos. Por el contrario, estamos observando la suma o acumulación del déficit y deterioro de las condiciones de sobrevivencia. Este desgaste, desde mi perspectiva, resta a los pobres capacidad de acción y de reacción y los hace mucho más vulnerables.

From Marginality to Social Exclusion: From Laissez Faire to Pervasive Engagement

By Bryan Roberts

In comparing the urban poverty and marginality of the 1960s with their equivalents today, my assessment is necessarily influenced both by where I began my studies and by where I am doing research today. The contrast is both geographical, as well as in terms of levels of economic development. I began working in Guatemala City in the 1960s, one of the poorest Latin American countries with very low levels of urbanization, but with a rapid and highly concentrated urban growth. Today, I am looking at urban poverty in the Southern cone countries, which, in the 1960s, were already substantially urbanized and industrialized and which, with the exception of Chile, have experienced worsening poverty in recent decades. This highlights one important source of difference in the meaning of the ‘new’ urban poverty in different Latin American countries. In comparison with countries such as Brazil, Central America, Mexico and Peru, the working and middle class populations of Argentina and Uruguay are confronting a much more severe deterioration in living standards, a more dramatic reconfiguration of job opportunities and, importantly, have a memory of much better times. The urban populations of many Latin American countries, in contrast, have no ‘golden’ benchmarks in the past with which to evaluate present crises. They have always struggled for survival. The ways in which these differences affect politics and the formal and informal ways in which people cope with crisis pose interesting research topics.

A central issue in analyzing the ‘new’ poverty is whether the change in the concepts that we use reflects a change of reality, shifting intellectual fashions or a combination of both. “Social exclusion” replaces marginality as a means of characterizing the situation of the poor, while the term “assets” replaces “survival strategies” to depict the potential of the poor to manage their situation (Kaztman, R. et al. 1999; Moser, 1998). Inequality and vulnerability, rather than poverty per se, are seen as the major challenges of the Latin American urban environment. Another key concept that has gained popularity lately is citizenship, which has largely replaced class as a means of analyzing the political struggles of the poor. Citizenship was not a concept that was

widely used to capture the dynamic of poverty in the 1960s and 1970s, since, as Gino Germani (1973) argued, marginality was precisely the absence of citizenship.

My sense is that the change in concepts reflects both fashion and a change in reality; but for brevity's sake I will only note some of the changing circumstances that require us to look at poverty with a new optic. One area where the facts are substantially different is that of rising violence. Crime and violence are common features of the large cities of Latin America and, in many cities, the incidence of both has shown a sharp increase in the 1990s. The various reports of the Andrew W. Mellon research project on Latin American Urbanization coordinated by Alejandro Portes and myself document this increase for five of the six major Latin American metropolises being studied (<http://cmd.princeton.edu/> Center for Migration and Urbanization Website). The debates about marginality in the 1960s focused on the urban situation and were closely related to the political movements of the time, particularly in Chile with the competition between the Christian Democrats and the more left-wing Marxist related movements. The issue, to an extent, was that of capturing the support of poor populations mobilized by rural-urban migration and the 'making' of the city. In contrast, urban environments today are much more consolidated physically and provide a very different context both for living and demand making. The competition for space is more severe as empty spaces are filled in and deregulation exposes both public and private land to commercial development. In some respects, the economic environment is a more hostile one as free trade exposes small and large-scale producers to import competition to a much greater extent than occurred in the days of Import Substituting Industrialization. The 'informal economy' grows, but incomes drop within it. In this situation, there are severe constraints upon the upward mobility of the poor. In contrast, the urban poor of the '60s and '70s – migrants and natives - had real opportunities for their rising expectations to be met, albeit through their own efforts in constructing their homes and creating work opportunities.

The increasing institutional formalization of the urban environment creates new challenges to the poor, particularly in terms of education and in the relation between education and employment. Social exclusion, in its European sense, differs from marginality (Rosanvallon, 2000). As Peter Ward describes above, marginality implied that people were outside the formal institutions that promoted the values and skills of modernity – the educational system, the formal labor market and so on. Social exclusion, in contrast, is basically a second-class citizenship in which disadvantage derives from the differentiation produced by the institutions of the state. In education, for example, all citizens receive a public education. The poor are not marginal to the educational system. However, the education that you get marks you for life, determining your occupational possibilities. Social exclusion is thus based on a differentiated inclusion in a social system. This apparent paradox is increasingly evident in Latin America in the mismatch between ever-higher levels of education, rising unemployment and the reduced number of decent jobs.

The workings of the state were very different in the 1960s and 1970s than they are now in the era of neoliberalism and state downsizing. There was, of course, considerable variation in the size and effectiveness of the state between Latin American countries, but it had certain common characteristics. It exercised a highly centralized, bureaucratic control, but its reach was limited and was based principally on the employment relation through coverage of workers at their place of work. It did not really permeate systematically into poor urban neighborhoods. When it did so, its intervention was clientelistic and discretionary, often operating through official parties as in the case of the PRI in Mexico. Today, while the state is slimmer and downsized, its reach is, I would argue, much deeper, and more effective. Governance is increasingly decentralized to sub-national and local entities, and is also more efficient and managerial in nature (Bresser Pereira and Spink, 1999, Ward 1998). Central government may have less of a national reach, but the delegation of functions to lower-order authorities is accompanied by central oversight, regulation and intervention through targeted national programs. The state also intervenes indirectly as when it delegates programs and their implementation to NGOs. When these activities are added to those independently undertaken by national and international NGOs – whose presence is very much greater than in the 1960s and 1970s – the result is widespread external intervention in the lives of the poor. No one leaves the poor alone anymore. Under the influence of multilateral and bilateral organizations, this intervention is accompanied by a stress on the rights and the responsibilities associated with citizenship and participation. Whether this new situation improves the capacities and welfare of the poor by helping or hindering organization and demand making amongst them are important issues for research. As Alejandro Portes pointed out in the LASA forum, we must look to the unanticipated consequences of these new forms of relations as states, community organizations and non-governmental organizations overlay their

traditional functions with additional ones. The new sets of relationships with urban populations can lead to greater control from above and to the fragmentation of collective action below. They can also create new spaces of participation and a stronger and more diverse sense of rights among urban populations.

Ciudadanía, derechos e identidad

By Elizabeth Jelin

El debate sobre la marginalidad en los años sesenta fue rico y complejo, tanto en orientaciones y posturas teóricas como en los estudios empíricos que generó. Creo que las posturas analíticas, que llevaban en sí mismas también posturas políticas y éticas a la vez, pueden sintetizarse en cuatro sentidos de la noción de marginalidad, y un quinto que fue tomando fuerza en las décadas siguientes. Quiero tomar cada una de ellos de manera sobresimplificada y comentar si y cómo sirven o se aplican en la actualidad, en el cambio de siglo.

Primero, la marginalidad como período de transición. En el pensamiento de Germani y otros que se ubicaban dentro del paradigma de la modernización y el progreso, los defasajes y las asincronías de los procesos de cambio provocaban la existencia de poblaciones marginalizadas y marginales. Se trataba de un fenómeno de transición en el curso de vida de personas y grupos, y de transición en el pasaje hacia la sociedad moderna.

Segundo, la marginalidad vista en el contexto del desarrollo de las fuerzas productivas. Las teorizaciones de base marxista se preguntaban sobre la “población excedente” o el “ejército industrial de reserva” que ayudaba a bajar los salarios y aumentar la explotación (polémica Nun – Cardoso). En general, no compartían el implícito optimismo del progreso de la primera versión. Más que ver procesos de movilidad e integración en el horizonte futuro, la preocupación estaba puesta en si la estructura económica capitalista que se estaba desarrollando sería o no capaz de incorporar a esa “masa marginal”. Por un lado, podía resultar en una población excedente; por el otro, en sobreexplotación de la mano de obra.

Tercero, la marginalidad como “comunidad”. Aquí la figura paradigmática es Oscar Lewis y la postulación de una “cultura de la pobreza”. Anticipo culturalista y esencialista (quizás perverso) de las posturas del reconocimiento de identidades diferenciadas, esta postura ponía el énfasis en la reproducción intergeneracional y permanencia temporal de rasgos culturales incompatibles con la modernidad de la sociedad dominante. Cuarto, es la marginalidad como “amenaza”. Otra noción de marginalidad, no tematizada en América Latina en los años sesenta y setenta, sino en Europa mucho antes, se basa en la noción de “clases peligrosas”, de sectores sociales externos a la sociedad dominante, vividos como amenaza y como peligro — estigmatizados y definidos en un paradigma de la criminalidad y la delincuencia. Frente a ellos, lo único que cabe es el poder de control policial. Y por último, una quinta visión, desarrollada con posterioridad, que puso el énfasis en la creatividad y la agencia existentes en los contingentes de población pobre y marginal. Del lado más reaccionario, Hernando de Soto (1986) bregaba por la desregulación y la ausencia de protección estatal a los sectores más pobres; por el lado más progresista, se trató de quienes estudiaron los movimientos populares urbanos (empezando por Castells), la creatividad en la expresión de demandas, y la creatividad de los “recursos de la pobreza”.

Preguntarse sobre qué de todo esto nos ayuda a entender estos fenómenos de pobreza e indigencia, marginalidad o exclusión en la actualidad implica poder diferenciar qué ha cambiado en la realidad que estudiamos, y qué ha cambiado en los paradigmas y herramientas analíticas con los que nos acercamos al tema — cuestión ya planteada por Bryan Roberts. Personalmente, sé que mi trayectoria académica implicó cambios de modelos y paradigmas de análisis. De las preocupaciones por el mercado de trabajo y la movilidad ocupacional el camino transitado me llevó a incorporar las formas de organización y protesta obrera primero, para luego preocuparme por otros movimientos sociales y su vinculación con los procesos de transición política post-dictatoriales. Al mismo tiempo, mis inquietudes me llevaron a incorporar la dimensión de la vida cotidiana y la organización de los hogares y las familias en los análisis de las clases populares urbanas. De allí, el paso siguiente fue estudiar las protestas y demandas populares en clave de demandas de ciudadanía y de la afirmación del “derecho a tener derechos”, las tensiones entre los derechos humanos y los derechos ciudadanos por un lado, y el reconocimiento de identidades diferenciadas por el otro.

Este camino implicó un cambio de paradigma significativo. Voy a señalar dos rasgos centrales: primero, pensar los fenómenos sociales incorporando el nivel de grupos, organizaciones y acción colectiva (reemplazando, o complementando la perspectiva poblacional y el nivel de análisis de agregados poblacionales). Segundo, incorporar el análisis de la constitución de los escenarios de la acción social y la definición

multidimensional de actores colectivos (combinando los intereses materiales, los rasgos culturales, las manifestaciones simbólicas y las identificaciones colectivas). Estos dos rasgos llevan implícito un tercero, sin duda fundamental en el cambio de paradigma: la incorporación explícita y dinámica del Estado y de su lugar en la definición de ciudadanía y de derechos legítimos como referentes ineludibles y permanentes en el análisis.

Observando el complotamiento de este último punto (el lugar del Estado) creo que en la década de setenta y especialmente en los ochenta, tres líneas de trabajo caminaron paralelamente en las ciencias sociales de la región, con poca interacción y enriquecimiento mutuo. Por un lado, la consideración de los mercados de trabajo y dentro de ellos la dinámica de la informalidad urbana, tema que abordaron otros colegas en esta mesa. Allí el estado entraba como poder regulador — y como ausencia de control y regulación — del mercado de trabajo. Por otro lado, la preocupación por el estado estuvo ligada fundamentalmente a la represión de las dictaduras (incorporando el marco interpretativo de las “violaciones a los derechos humanos”), y se reflejó en las demandas sociales de democracia y vigencia del “estado de derecho”, lo cual lleva implícita una noción de ciudadanía. En ese marco, hubo una clara definición de “exclusión”, “amenaza” y peligro en términos ideológicos y políticos más que estructurales o económicos. La “amenaza” era política, y debía ser combatida con la fuerza, arbitraria y a menudo clandestina. Luego, especialmente en los años noventa, la “amenaza” se redefinió en términos de criminalidad, y se asoció pobreza con delincuencia. La represión se transformó, pero no dejó de existir (lo que lleva a muchos sectores a ver la continuidad represiva entre los regímenes dictatoriales y las políticas neoliberales del presente). En este sentido, la presencia del “estado policía” y de diversas formas de control social es innegable en las ciudades de la región. Definen sus destinatarios o blancos como los “marginales”, y frecuentemente enmarcan las prácticas represivas en la lógica de la “seguridad ciudadana”.

La dinámica de otro de los sentidos de la noción de marginalidad, el cultural o identitario, es diferente pero convergente. Las últimas dos décadas han visto la proliferación de movimientos mundiales de reconocimiento de derechos culturales y de reclamos diferenciados: las mujeres, los grupos indígenas, los negros, las nacionalidades y grupos étnicos, han hecho oír sus voces. Las políticas de “reconocimiento” o de “identidad” han estado a la orden del día, a veces compitiendo con las políticas universalistas de derechos humanos en el plano global y de ciudadanía en los espacios del estado-nación. La diversidad de identificaciones se ha tornado mucho más presente y visible en la esfera pública que antes.

La cuestión que esto plantea a la discusión de la marginalidad es importante, aunque no estudiada o teorizada en su complejidad: hace cuarenta años, se hablaba de “cultura de la pobreza” dentro de un paradigma que contraponía una sociedad “moderna” (léase blanca, urbana, occidental, masculina, idealmente meritocrática y políticamente progresista) a culturas “tradicionales” (rurales, familísticas, conservadoras). En el comienzo de un nuevo siglo, el tema de la relación entre pobreza, marginalidad y cultura se plantea de otra manera: las desigualdades sociales persistentes y duraderas, así como las desventajas acumuladas y acumulativas, no se distribuyen al azar, sino que siguen líneas de género, de color, de identidad étnica. Se ha hablado de la “feminización de la pobreza”, de la marginación histórica de las demandas indígenas, de la discriminación racial (y también de las nuevas creencias y prácticas de religiosidad popular). La saliencia de identificaciones de este tipo (que combinan de manera muy compleja identificaciones ancestrales con las nuevas propuestas de la multiculturalidad), en un contexto de profunda desigualdad social, puede entonces llevar a la paradoja de privilegiar o celebrar políticas de reconocimiento cultural, y a preocuparse menos por las políticas de redistribución que se han dado en la región en la última década — políticas que llevaron a una concentración del ingreso y a una polarización social en vez de promover la igualdad.

En suma, creo que la existencia de caminos paralelos — los que miran la economía y los mercados de trabajo, los que miran la política y el estado, y los que analizan las identificaciones y rasgos culturales— constituye un peligro para las ciencias sociales en la región. Se requiere una agenda de investigación que enfrente el desafío de comprender las desigualdades persistentes en su multidimensionalidad (económica, social, cultural y política) y en las diferentes escalas en que éstas se manifiestan: desde el interior del hogar o en relaciones interpersonales hasta el nivel global transnacional.

Notes

1. See Editor's Foreword, LARR 38, 1, p. 5
2. Itself a quarter-century throwback to Louis Wirth's "Urbanism as a Way of Life", American Journal of Sociology, 1938. See Oscar Lewis, 1952 "Urbanization without breakdown", Scientific Monthly, 75, 31-41.
3. LARR is grateful to two external readers who offered comments on this Research Note.
4. Department of Sociology, Princeton University.
5. For more details on the study, methodology, and preliminary findings see Janice Perlman, "The Metamorphosis of Marginality: Favelas in Rio de Janeiro 1969 – 2002" in Urban Informality, Ananya Roy and Nezar AlSayyad (eds), Lexington Books, forthcoming: 2003. pp 105-146. and Janice Perlman, "Longitudinal Panel Studies in Squatter Communities: Lessons from a re-study of Rio's favelas : 1969-2003" paper presented at Urban Longitudinal Research Methodology Conference, University College London, May 28-29, 2003.

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