

## **VARIETIES OF MARGINALIZATION AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS IN SOCIETY**

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**Annotation.** This article examines the philosophical and cultural dimensions of the emergence and development of the phenomenon of marginality within the context of societal transformation. Marginality is analyzed as a multifaceted social phenomenon arising from profound changes in social structure, value systems, and cultural identities, particularly during periods of rapid modernization and globalization. The study explores the conceptual foundations of marginality in philosophical thought and cultural theory, emphasizing its connection with processes such as social stratification, cultural displacement, and identity crisis.

**Keywords:** Alienation, identity, isolation, personality, discrimination, epistemological, society, lumpens, community.

The term marginality comes from the Latin word *margo*, meaning “border” or “edge.” Initially, this term was used in cartography, i.e., in map drawing, to indicate the areas located at the edges of the page. Later, it entered the fields of sociology, anthropology, and philosophy and began to be used to express the social condition between the “center” and the “periphery” in society.

From a philosophical point of view, marginality is a condition in which a person feels alien, uncertain, and distant from a clear identity within the existing social system [1]. In society, the state of marginality indicates that an individual or a group that has not been fully integrated with existing structures has remained in an intermediate position. This condition determines how a person behaves in society, which system of values they rely on, and the ways in which they understand their existence in general. Austrian philosophers such as Martin Buber, Viktor Frankl, and others interpret marginality as a “borderline state of human existence,” a “crisis of self-understanding” [2]. The issue of marginality is one of the complex phenomena that is being deeply analyzed in the fields of modern philosophy, sociology, and cultural studies. This concept has been interpreted differently in various eras and regions, especially in the context of intercultural relations between the East and the West. In particular, in Western philosophy, marginality is explained through personal identity, existential anxiety, and conflicting relationships with society, while in Eastern philosophy, it has been assessed more based on social values, moral norms, and adaptation to society. In Western philosophy, the individual is understood as an independent subject who is self-aware and responsible for their own decisions. Therefore, the phenomenon of marginality arises when a person is unable to understand themselves, has lost their position in society, or has come into conflict with cultural processes.

Intercultural relations play an important role in the formation of marginality. Essentially, intercultural relations are the interactions and connections between different cultures, values, and

traditions. In this process, both individuals and society as a whole reassess their identity, relationships with others, and principles of co-existence. From a philosophical point of view, such relations are closely connected with the concepts of personal identity, solidarity with others, and social justice. Communication with other cultures is formed on the basis of uniqueness, difference, and mutual respect of the individual and society. Moreover, understanding the processes of assimilation, integration, and segregation is essential in revealing the unique aspects of this phenomenon. In particular, through the process of assimilation, a group belonging to a smaller or newer culture adapts its culture to that of the dominant culture, often partially or completely losing its former cultural identity. This process represents the complete absorption of one cultural group into a more dominant culture. Philosophically, this situation signifies an ontological “disappearance,” meaning that an individual or group loses its essence of being and is forced to live in the mode of “being” of another. From the viewpoint of the existentialist French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, assimilation is seen as a form of compulsion that may lead to the loss of individual freedom and identity. He emphasized that in this process, the person is forced to construct their self through “the gaze of the other,” which stands in opposition to genuine freedom. In contrast, the philosopher Michel Foucault analyzes the process of assimilation through the theory of power and knowledge. According to him, power is exercised by the dominant culture to control smaller groups and adapt them to normative values. Sometimes, assimilation reduces cultural diversity and leads to a threat of “cultural death,” which is contrary to philosophical pluralism and the protection of cultural rights.

Assimilation reflects the power dynamics within society. Rather than being a result of free choice, it is often a consequence of social obligation or pressure. This situation is closely related to the problem of “non-recognition” as discussed by the German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel. When an individual or group fails to achieve recognition, they are forced to give up their identity. Thus, assimilation often takes the form of violence without direct violence. Hegel emphasized that this process occurs on spiritual, cultural, and ontological levels. Marginal behaviors may be limited in time, often depending on favorable conditions. For example, a migrant who adapts to a foreign country ceases to be considered an outsider, and their marginal appearance gives way to a generally accepted image along with national diversity. Once they find a job and integrate into society, they lose their marginal status. However, this favorable scenario is not suitable for everyone. Some individuals-wanderers, radicals, revolutionaries, or youth with their own subcultures-consciously choose this path and do not seek adaptation. On the contrary, “they continue their struggle with society with all their strength.” An antisocial marginal individual may change, and with proper support, could return to their previous way of life, but often such people do not desire this. Such individuals can be found both among ordinary people and in elite circles. At different times, great writers, religious figures, and actors have been called marginals.

Indeed, cultural marginality plays a particular role in the implementation of intercultural relations. It is precisely cultural marginality that serves as a foundational basis in the process of assimilation. In particular, in order to more precisely define cultural marginality as a phenomenon without a fixed boundary, it is necessary to refer to the concept of culture as a boundary phenomenon proposed by the English philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin. Specifically, he emphasized that culture should not be imagined as a spatial unity that possesses internal territory along with fixed borders. “The cultural domain has no inner territory: it is entirely located at the

boundaries; boundaries are everywhere and cross at every moment. The systematic unity of culture penetrates the atoms of cultural life, since the sun is reflected in every drop. Every cultural movement lives intensely at the boundaries-when it loses its soil, it becomes empty, arrogant, degenerates, and dies.” [4] In our view, this concept allows us to understand that each culture has its own unique lifespan, and-similar to human life-it possesses meaning only within its time. When a dominant culture intrudes, the lifespan of the previous culture may come to an end.

Our analysis shows that cultural marginality, under conditions of colonialism, was defined by other cultures as “secondary,” which led to the denial of their identity and ultimately to the process of assimilation. The philosophical aspects of marginality in the socio-cultural sphere were thoroughly studied by American scholar Tomatsu Shibutani. He approached marginality from the perspective of socialization of the individual within a changing society. According to him:

“Marginal persons are those who exist at the boundaries of two or more social worlds, but are not fully accepted by any of them as complete participants.” [5] At the same time, he highlighted the concept of the individual’s marginal status as a key to understanding marginality. According to him, marginal status is a position that reflects the contradictions within the structure of society. In our view, this approach allows for a shift away from the traditional focus-since R. Park-on the socio-psychological characteristics of the marginal individual “by definition.”

In the 20th century, American philosophers T. Wittman and J. Krauss raised the issue of structural marginality. During this period, the Italian philosopher Paolo Mancini also introduced important concepts of processual marginality to define the degree of marginality as a personal condition. Thus, American researchers emphasized that a significant and highly active part of American society exists in a marginal state. In particular, marginal situations are always quite intense and, in practice, are often realized in an ambiguous way.

Immigrants arriving in America from underdeveloped countries found themselves in a state of dual marginality. On the one hand, they had to adapt to a completely different type of social relationships and modes of production, which required a qualitative transformation of the entire normative system. In order to successfully integrate, they had to abandon their traditional mental frameworks-shifting from the value system of a traditional society to that of an industrial one on an individual level.

Researchers emphasized the difficulty migrants faced in transitioning to a new social status, as many of them were peasants and largely represented unskilled labor. This especially complicated the process of acquiring new social qualities. On the other hand, the illusion of “equal opportunity” created by America—regardless of one’s social position or status—seemed to open promising prospects for upward social mobility. However, not everyone succeeded in realizing the so-called “American Dream,” which led to the collapse of these hopes and to dissatisfaction with living conditions. Thus, a sense of ambivalence toward the ‘new homeland’ developed among immigrants. In our opinion, the migrants’ complex relationship with their new homeland was intensified by cultural alienation, a sense of having lost much of what they once considered familiar, and separation from a heritage that had initially been an integral part of their lives.

Marginality can be not only a negative but also a positive phenomenon, as in some cases it contributes to a person's individualization and the release of their creative energy. In such instances, individuals with marginal characteristics who have nevertheless succeeded in self-realization are presented as positive examples. This often emerges when entire segments of the population are excluded from civil society due to external circumstances. For a person, leaving one life behind and beginning another is naturally accompanied by cognitive dissonance. The physical transition from one mode of life to another occurs through marginality. Indeed, marginality represents a withdrawal from society, in which a person, during the transition from one life to another, may no longer fit into their previous community-sometimes not even into their own family. This phenomenon is also spatially related.

In this context, marginality and cognitive dissonance are closely related concepts, often overlapping. However, marginality is a more visible phenomenon, associated with changes in human thinking, acceptance of new ideas, and a conscious refusal to re-engage with one's former social environment. According to Yulo Vooglaid, marginality is "a psychological process associated with the inability to find one's place in the space offered by the masses." [7] Thus, while cognitive dissonance is primarily a psychological process, marginalization belongs to the domain of sociology, and atomization pertains to the realm of politics. Atomization is a somewhat more complex concept, often emerging as a result of fear. This fear, produced by the state or society itself, helps to explain the experience of atomization.

In general, the welfare of society depends on the existing social structure that assumes responsibility for managing the functions of the population. If this structure is destroyed or disappears, society descends into chaos and anarchy. In such conditions, people lose moral guidance, forget life values and norms. A marginal lifestyle can be led by both individuals and entire groups. In such cases, a marginal environment emerges within a larger society (such as national diasporas, ethnic minorities, or religious sects). At the same time, notable marginals throughout human history include individuals who became alienated from society or who deliberately positioned themselves against it. Among the most well-known marginals are Jesus Christ as a historical (religious marginal) figure, writers like Leo Tolstoy and Andrei Sakharov, and rebels such as Stepan Razin and Yemelyan Pugachev, among others.

Indeed, anyone who chooses their own unique set of values inevitably becomes a marginal.

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