

ROBERT PARK'S MARGINAL MAN: THE CAREER OF A CONCEPT IN AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY

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Who now reads Robert Park? The answer, it turns out, is that many still do, and with good reason. Robert Ezra Park (1864–1944) was one of the leading figures in what has come to be known as the Chicago school of sociology, which played a central and formative role in American sociology as a whole, especially from 1914 to 1933 when he taught at the University of Chicago (Matthews 1977; Raushenbush 1979). Park remains well known among American sociologists today for his pioneering work on urban life, human ecology, race and ethnic relations, migration, and social disorganization, much of which continues to be assigned and read (though not uncritically) in graduate courses in the United States. This essay focuses on Park's seminal concept of the "marginal man," originally presented in his 1928 article "Human Migration and the Marginal Man" and later elaborated in the 1937 book *The Marginal Man* by Park's student Everett Verner Stonequist (1901–1979), who earned his doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1930. After examining the origins of the concept in the work of Park and Stonequist, I review the marginal man's subsequent career in American sociology. This review is not intended to be exhaustive or comprehensive. Instead, it aims to highlight several important lines of development: attempts at theoretical revision; application and extension of the concept to new areas of social inquiry, including the study of occupations, gender, and scientific innovation; and a revival of interest in the marginal man concept as it relates to Park's original interests in race and ethnic relations and migration. Throughout the essay, I emphasize how the reception, interpretation, and application of Park's

concept was shaped by the ambiguities of the concept itself, which suggested the potential for maladjustment and disorganization but also for creativity and innovation, and by the changing social and historical context in which American sociologists worked. In the essay's conclusion I outline some ways in which Park's concept remains relevant to present-day concerns, and I propose some directions for future research.

THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS OF THE MARGINAL MAN

Like other classical sociologists in the discipline's formative period, Park envisioned the social world in dualistic terms as undergoing a transition from the traditional to the modern, or in his terms from culture to civilization (Park [1925] 1950; Park [1931c] 1950:12–13; Park 1950:16; Matthews 1977:132–133; Persons 1987:34–36, 88). Culture designated a society with a moral order, integrated by means of ritual and tradition, and regulated on the basis of folkways and mores, while civilization signified a new social order which released individuals from the control of local custom while integrating them more loosely through trade and commerce. Upon this basic dualism Park and other Chicago sociologists overlaid a series of additional distinctions which they tended to see as related if not identical: primary/secondary institutions, sacred/secular, consensus/symbiosis, and rural/urban. They assumed an historical development from rural life, which was equated with the face-to-face relations and total involvement of the simple primary group, to urbanism, which signified the specialization, fragmentation, rationalism, and impersonality of life in modern civilization (Wirth 1938; Persons 1987:36–37). In this conception, the city symbolized the modern world and exemplified its central tendencies. The problems and tensions which conservative thinkers of the time blamed on democracy and socialists attributed to industrial capitalism were ascribed, in the Chicago school of sociology, to urbanization. Mobility was viewed as the chief means of transition from tradition to modernity; it initiated "culture-peoples into the complexities of urban civilization" (Persons 1987:34), a process the Chicago sociologists regarded as both destructive and liberating. Migration brought different peoples and cultures into contact and collision; these cultural conflicts interrupted habitual routines and broke what Park (1928) called the "cake of custom"; and this loosening of parochial bonds made possible a more detached, dispassionate, and enlightened perspective and a more rational organization of social life.

Park and his students saw these processes at work in the United States in their own time. After the U.S. Civil War (1861–1865), the United States began a rapid transformation from an overwhelmingly agrarian into an increasingly urban society. From 1860 to 1910, America's rural population merely doubled, but its urban population grew sevenfold, and it was in the larger cities that population growth tended to be most pronounced; the population of Chicago, for instance, more than doubled in the decade from 1880 to 1890 (Lal 1990:14). In 1920 the U.S. census revealed for the first time that more Americans lived in urban areas (defined as cities and towns with at least 2,500 residents) than rural areas. The dramatic growth of the

country's urban population was, in turn, fueled by a second and related trend: massive migration, both overseas and internal. From the early 1880s until the outbreak of the First World War, twenty million immigrants arrived in the United States, and by the mid-1890s most of them were arriving from southern and eastern Europe rather than the northern and western European sources to which Americans were accustomed. Many of these new immigrants were rural peasants who concentrated in the ghettos and slums of America's burgeoning industrial cities. Even after the First World War and, later, the national quotas legislation of 1921 and 1924 curtailed the massive influx of European immigrants, the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South, pulled by the labor shortages of urban industries, continued to fuel urban growth. Park ([1935] 1950:167) alluded to both of these trends—urbanization and migration—when he quipped that America was comprised of two classes of people: “those who reached the city and those who have not yet arrived.”

The marginal man, like the city, was a site in which cultures came into contact and collision. Although the German-Jewish sociologist Georg Simmel (1858–1918) and the American social scientists William Thomas (1863–1947) and Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929) anticipated the idea of the marginal man (Simmel [1908] 1971; Thomas [1917] 1966; Veblen 1919), it was Robert Park who coined the name and provided its most influential exposition in 1928. The marginal man, as Park (1928:892) conceived him, was a

cultural hybrid, a man living and sharing intimately in the cultural life and traditions of two distinct peoples; never quite willing to break, even if he were permitted to do so, with his past and his traditions, and not quite accepted, because of racial prejudice, in the new society in which he now sought to find a place. He was a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which never completely interpenetrated and fused.

Nearly a decade later in the introduction to Stonequist's study *The Marginal Man*, Park stressed not just cultural contact but cultural conflict in the emergence of this personality type: he was, Park wrote, “one whom fate has condemned to live in two societies and in two, not merely different but antagonistic cultures” (Stonequist [1937] 1965:xiv). This antagonism existed twice, moreover, in social relations and at the level of individual personality, outside and inside of the marginal man. On the one hand, he was a *product* of the cultural conflicts brought about by conquest, invasion, and migration. In an early description of globalization, Park suggested that “the vast expansion of Europe during the last four hundred years” had “brought about everywhere an interpenetration of peoples and a fusion of cultures,” producing in the marginal man “a personality type which if not wholly new is at any rate peculiarly characteristic of the modern world.” He was thus “an effect of imperialism” and “an incident of the process by which civilization . . . grows up at the expense of earlier and simpler cultures” (Park, in Stonequist [1937] 1965:xiv–xv, xviii). On the other hand, the marginal man was himself a *microcosm* of cultural conflict, which reappeared in his mind as “the conflict of ‘the divided self,’ the old self and the new” (Park 1928:892; cf. Stonequist [1937] 1965:4–5).

Although Park conceived the marginal man as a general social type, he closely associated the type with the Jews of the modern era. Park was a student of and strongly influenced by Simmel, and he explicitly identified the marginal man with Simmel's own notion of the stranger, the "classic example" of which for Simmel ([1908] 1971:144) was "the history of European Jews." Following his teacher's lead, Park suggested that the emancipation of the Jews, beginning in western Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, dissolved the cake of Jewish custom and thrust the Jews into closer contact with gentiles. "When ... the walls of the medieval ghetto were torn down and the Jew was permitted to participate in the cultural life of the peoples among whom he lived," Park (1928:892) wrote, the "new type of personality" appeared. "The emancipated Jew was, and is, historically and typically the marginal man, the first cosmopolite and citizen of the world." Emancipation was functionally equivalent to migration, stamping modern Jews—in contrast to their purportedly isolated and provincial forebears—with the enlightened, rationalistic, and cosmopolitan outlook that was the hallmark of the man living in two worlds. Park's students Louis Wirth (1897–1952) and Everett Stonequist reiterated this notion in their own work. In his classic 1928 study *The Ghetto*, Wirth—a German-born American sociologist who was himself Jewish—wrote that the Jew "lived on the periphery of two worlds, and not fully in either.... His self is divided between the world that he has deserted and the world that will have none of him" (Wirth [1928] 1956:73, 265). Nearly a decade later, Stonequist (1935:9) likewise pointed to the Jew as the "typical" and "classic illustration" of the marginal man in his own study of this personality type.

While Park and his students regarded Jews as the prototype of the marginal man, they did not confine the concept exclusively to Jews. Indeed, it was partly inspired by Park's interest in Americans of mixed black and white ancestry and by the similar notion of double-consciousness formulated by the African-American sociologist and social reformer W. E. B. Du Bois (1868–1963). The "American Negro," Du Bois (1903:3) suggested in his book *The Souls of Black Folk*, was only permitted to see and evaluate himself through the eyes of an "American world" that regarded him with "amused contempt and pity"; the result was a feeling of "two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder." Notwithstanding Park's close ties to Du Bois's rival, the African-American educator Booker T. Washington (1856–1915), Park ([1923] 1950:291–292) invoked Du Bois and his notion of double-consciousness a full five years before introducing his own concept of the marginal man. Park's students were also familiar with the notion of double-consciousness (Wirth Marvick 1964:336; Stonequist 1935:6–7; Stonequist 1964:338). Thus, it was likely under Du Bois's influence that Park and his students identified the mixed-race individual as a marginal man—not by virtue of heredity, they insisted, but because of the social situation in which he typically found himself (Park 1928:893; Park [1931a] 1950:382; Stonequist 1935:7). Over time they extended the concept from mixed-race individuals to African Americans, perhaps because the line between the two populations was difficult to draw (Park [1934a] 1950:67–69; Wirth and Goldhamer 1944:340; Stonequist

1964:336; for a dissenting view from outside the Chicago school, see Myrdal 1944:699–700, 1385n28). In addition, Park's participation in a 1923 survey of race relations on the American Pacific Coast led him to conclude that the marginal personality type was also present among Asian Americans. Describing with sympathy a young woman of Japanese ancestry who was born and grew up in the United States, Park ([1926a] 1950:248–249) noted that she was not fully accepted in either country: her American manners, dress, and language provoked resentment in Japan, while her origins made her the target of race prejudice in America. According to Park, the Asian American thus found himself or herself, like the mixed-race individual, the African American, and the modern Jew, at the intersection of two worlds, not fully at home in either and internally divided as a result.

The marginal person as Park and Stonequist conceived him or her was an ambiguous, Janus-faced figure. On the one hand, Stonequist ([1937] 1965:220–221) suggested, the marginal man's "mental conflict" could become a "disorganizing force" preventing his "psychological integration." Personal disorganization could, in turn, lead to social disorganization. Wirth, for instance, citing his own study of Jewish immigrant families in Chicago, linked culture conflict to delinquency (Wirth 1925; Wirth [1931] 1964:235–236). On the other hand, living simultaneously in two worlds made the marginal man "the individual with the wider horizon, the keener intelligence, the more detached and rational viewpoint" (Park, in Stonequist [1937] 1965:xvii–xviii). He was therefore well suited to become an intermediary and interpreter between the races or cultures that were represented in his own person (Park [1934b] 1950:136–137; Stonequist [1937] 1965:175, 177–179, 182; cf. Willie 1975). Furthermore, culture conflict could serve as an impetus to creativity. Veblen, who was not part of the Chicago school of sociology but spent fourteen years at the University of Chicago from 1892 until 1906, suggested as early as 1919 that the intellectual pre-eminence of Jews in the modern world stemmed from the conflict of cultures which they experienced as a result of their dispersion and migration. According to Veblen (1919), culture conflict imbued Jews with a healthy skepticism toward Jewish and gentile conventions alike, which in turn was a primary requisite for creative contributions to intellectual life. Park ([1931b] 1950:366–369) also envisioned the possibility that the marginal man might become a creative agent, particularly through his leadership of nationalist or racial mass movements. Likewise, Wirth ([1931] 1964:241) was careful to acknowledge that "not every case of culture conflict inevitably leads to delinquency.... Delinquency represents merely one way in which the conflict may be expressed if not resolved." Echoing Park, he added that a person experiencing such conflict, "far from becoming a criminal, may develop into a prophet, a reformer or a political leader." Stonequist made a similar point: The marginal man could seek to overcome his inner conflict by changing the external ethnic relations which had produced it. The culture conflict which he experienced as a crisis provided him with an opportunity to "reconstruct his conception of himself as well as his place or role in society," and "those [marginal] individuals who have the potentialities to reconstruct their personalities and 'return' as creative agents not only adjust themselves but also

contribute to the solution of the conflict of races and cultures" (Stonequist [1937] 1965:122–123, 220–221).

As Park, Wirth, and Stonequist made clear, marginality had ambiguous implications not only for the marginal man himself but also for the race relations cycle said to be set in motion by the movement and contact of different ethnic and racial groups. Like the marginal man, the immigrant also experienced culture conflict as a crisis that required creative adjustment if it was to be resolved successfully. During this crisis, the immigrant "tends either to reorganize his life positively, adopt new habits and standards to meet the new situation, or to repudiate the old habits and their restraint without reorganizing his life—which is demoralization" (Park and Miller 1921:61). The process of reorganization, as William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki ([1918–1921] 1974:1130) had earlier pointed out, did not "consist in a mere reinforcement of the decaying organization, but in a production of new schemes of behavior and new institutions better adapted to the changed demands of the group"; borrowing a term from the American school of philosophy known as pragmatism, they called this process (as Stonequist also did) social reconstruction. As these remarks indicate, the Chicago sociologists did not regard urban civilization as a permanent state of social disorganization—at least not necessarily. Disorganization was a transitional phenomenon, which—if the crisis was successfully resolved—was "followed in the course of time by the reintegration of the individuals so released into a new social order" (Park 1928:888). Park and Ernest Burgess's famous race relations cycle—from competition and conflict to accommodation and eventually assimilation—was one way, though not the only one, in which Chicago sociologists described this process of creative adjustment.

SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT: REVISION, EXTENSION, AND REVIVAL

Following the publication of Park's article "Human Migration and the Marginal Man," his concept gained wide circulation in American sociology; it was covered in introductory sociology courses (Foreman 1938:214) and found in nearly all of the discipline's introductory textbooks (Fuller 1938:416; Green 1947:167; Golovensky 1952:333). Another indicator of its prominence is citations by other scholars. Between 1928 and the end of the Second World War in 1945, more than twenty articles (slightly more than one per year on average) referring to Park's notion were published in American sociological journals. Nearly all of these articles appeared in three prominent publications: the *American Journal of Sociology* (*AJS*), which was founded in 1895 at the University of Chicago and served from 1905 to 1935 as the official journal of the American Sociological Society; the *American Sociological Review* (*ASR*), established in 1936 by the American Sociological Society as its official journal in lieu of the *AJS*; and *Social Forces*, founded in 1922. Not surprisingly, many of these articles were written by sociologists trained at the University of Chicago, including William C. Smith (1934), Frederic Thrasher (1934), Charles S. Johnson (1936), Horace Cayton (McNeil and Cayton 1941), and Everett Hughes (1945). Like Park's work, most of the

articles that invoked the marginal man before the end of the Second World War did so in the context of race and ethnic relations, culture contact, or the relations of immigrants or the children of immigrants to the receiving society (Smith 1934; Thrasher 1934:479–480; Thompson 1935:326; Johnson 1936:264–265, 269; House 1936:5; Reid 1938:412; Pierson 1939:533; Goldberg 1941; McNeil and Cayton 1941:182–183; Slotkin 1942:37–38; Hirsch 1942–1943:38; Kramer 1943:474; Bloom 1943). For the most part these articles focused on minorities and immigrants in the United States. In addition, a handful of articles engaged Park's theory of marginality more deeply. These articles elaborated the concept of the marginal man (Stonequist 1935), criticized and revised it (Goldberg 1941), or subsumed it under a more general heading. As examples of the last kind of article, the Austrian-born American sociologist and philosopher Alfred Schuetz (1944:507) treated the marginal man as one manifestation of the social type of the stranger (cf. Siu 1952), while Hughes (1945; 1949) treated the marginal man as a special case of the more general problem of role conflicts and status dilemmas.

References to the marginal man continued to appear in American sociology journals in the postwar era. A search of the online journals database JSTOR reveals that the number of articles with such references fluctuated from just under twenty articles in the decade from 1960 to 1969 to more than thirty articles in the 1990s. Through the 1950s most of these articles continued to appear in the *AJS*, the *ASR*, and *Social Forces*. Beginning in the 1960s, however, the pattern changed markedly, with most articles referring to the marginal man now appearing in less prestigious or more specialized journals. This change likely reflects the postwar expansion of higher education and the proliferation of new journals in the United States in which sociologists could publish. Articles referring to the marginal man disappeared entirely from the pages of the *AJS*, *ASR*, and *Social Forces* in the 1990s, and only one such article appeared in *ASR* and two in *Social Forces* in the first decade of the twenty-first century. New trends also appeared in terms of the content of the articles. Some authors continued Goldberg's (1941) efforts to revise and reformulate the marginal man concept. Others, following the efforts of Park's student Everett Hughes (1945; 1949) to unmoor the concept of marginality from Park's starting point of racial and cultural mixing, made creative use of the concept to gain insight into occupations, gender, and scientific innovation. But a number of articles, hewing more closely to Park's original formulation, continued to refer to the marginal man in relation to race and ethnic relations, culture contact, and migration, and changes in the American social and political context brought renewed interest in these lines of inquiry after the 1960s.

The critical theoretical revisions of Park's marginal man concept generally began by distinguishing the marginal personality from the marginal situation that was said to give rise to it; they then tried to clarify the nature of each and the relationship between them. As previously noted, Goldberg (1941) was the first to offer this kind of revision. Like many subsequent critics, he emphasized the negative consequences of marginality—maladjustment, insecurity, and emotional instability—while overlooking its positive potential for creativity. He then argued that not everyone in

a marginal situation developed these negative psychological traits; they could be avoided, he suggested, if the marginal individual developed and participated in a “marginal culture” shared by other similarly situated individuals. Within this new culture “poised between two other cultures,” the individual was no longer marginal but normal, “at home and at ease” (Goldberg 1941:57). In his view, second- or third-generation Jewish immigrants in the United States exemplified this possibility. Goldberg thus identified another possible outcome of the marginal situation (i.e., the development of a marginal culture) which Park and Stonequist had overlooked (though by eliminating the marginal man’s maladjustment, it took away his motivation to reorganize or reconstruct ethnic relations). Subsequent critics followed a similar tack, arguing that the marginal situation produces multiple response patterns, including but not limited to the personality type that Park and Stonequist described (Antonovsky 1956; Johnson 1960; Weisberger 1992; Grant and Breese 1997; Rockquemore and Brunnsma 2002). This line of criticism did not challenge the original conception so much as elaborate an assumption that Park and Stonequist already shared, namely, that the culture conflict internalized by the marginal man could lead to a variety of outcomes—mental conflict and disorganization leading to deviance and mental illness in the worst cases, creativity and cosmopolitanism in the best—depending upon the adjustments, or lack of adjustments, that he made or tried to make to his situation. Other critics have taken a different tack: rather than exploring other possible reactions produced by the marginal situation, they have tried to specify the precise conditions under which the marginal situation produces the personality characteristics that Park and Stonequist described (Green 1947; Kerckhoff and McCormick 1955; Mann 1958; Johnson 1960; Dickie-Clark 1966; 1967). Going further, Golovensky (1952) made a more radical critique that rejected several of the assumptions on which the marginal man theory was based, though he acknowledged the validity of the theory under very limited conditions. Perhaps the most far-reaching revision was suggested by Wright and Wright (1972). Dismissing past attempts at refinement, they differentiated the phenomenon described by Park and Stonequist into five categories: marginality, the marginal man, cultural marginality, social marginality, and psychological marginality. However, to my knowledge there have been no subsequent attempts to build upon the new starting point that they proposed.

The extension of Park’s marginal man theory from race and ethnic relations to occupations began in the 1940s with Hughes (1945; 1949), who elaborated the notion of status dilemmas with illustrations taken from professional and other occupational positions. He traced such dilemmas to technical changes, which altered occupations, and social mobility, which placed new kinds of people (e.g., racial minorities or women) in established positions. Other researchers applied the marginal man concept to specific occupations such as the foreman (Gardiner and Whyte 1945; Wray 1949), the chiropractor (Wardwell 1952; for a later reassessment see Rosenthal 1981), the druggist (McCormack 1956), the merchant-marine radio operator (Record 1957), the university dean of student personnel (Nudd 1961), the engineering technician (Evan 1964), the integrative manager (Ziller, Stark, and Pruden 1969), the

university labor educator (Nash 1978), and the academic general practitioner (Reid 1982), all of whom were either unable to attain acceptance in the roles to which they aspired or trapped between two occupations or statuses in which they were considered outsiders. Following Veblen (1919) and Park (1928), some of this work suggested that marginality stimulated creativity or made a more detached, dispassionate, and enlightened outlook possible. Wardwell (1952:346), for instance, suggested that the marginal role of the chiropractor furnished a "channel of medical innovation"—an idea explored in other studies (see below)—while Ziller et al. (1969:490) concluded that "the greatest potential asset of the marginal man to management is his ability to assume an intermediary role between two groups, coupled with his objectivity."

In the early 1950s attempts began to extend the marginal man theory from race and ethnic relations to gender relations. Hacker (1951:67–68) suggested that "the present contravention of the sexes" had produced "the marginal woman, torn between rejection and acceptance of traditional roles and attributes." Although the marginal woman internalized role conflict rather than culture conflict, the result was said to be the same: "Uncertain of the ground on which she stands, subjected to conflicting cultural expectations, the marginal woman suffers the psychological ravages of instability, conflict, self-hate, anxiety, and resentment." But it was not until after the advent of second-wave feminism in the early 1960s that Hacker's ideas were taken up by others. Hochschild (1973) identified the work of Park, Stonequist, and Wirth as the source of one of four main perspectives on the sociology of sex roles. As women moved from predominantly female or integrated occupations into traditionally male occupations, she suggested, the proportion of marginal women would likely increase. Wallace (1975:292) also noted the marginality of the modern woman who fell between "the home and female dominated occupations with housewife-like and motherly expectations," on the one hand, and "the male-dominated world," on the other hand. Some of this later work took a more positive view of female marginality than Hacker did. Whereas Hacker emphasized the damaging psychological consequences of women's marginal position in modern societies, Bart (1971) recalled the wider horizons and keener intelligence that Park had also associated with it. "Women sociologists," she suggested, "... have the advantage for sociological analysis of being between two worlds although not accepted or comfortable in either... [T]heir very marginality enables them to have insights about their society, different at least, if not more sensitive than that of men" (Bart 1971:736). Likewise, Collins (1986:515n6), while acknowledging that marginality was a problem for black women, argued that many black female intellectuals nevertheless used their marginality creatively to formulate a distinctive theoretical perspective on self, family, and society.

More recently, Deegan (2002:103) has argued that "the concept [of the marginal man] is intrinsically male"—a claim that appears to reject, at least implicitly, earlier efforts to extend it to gender roles. In lieu of Park's concept, Deegan proposes two new ones: the marginal woman and the marginal person. In contrast to the marginal man, who is "at home in one setting or culture and then moves into a new setting or culture," Deegan (2002:104) argues that the marginal woman is never at home anywhere because "Western society" is "controlled and defined by men" and lacks a

“viable women-only world” with “its own language, national structure, and identity.” Her concept of the marginal person refers to anyone whose “perception of the self, experience of the world, and access to material resources do not fit” the “hegemonic” standard of “white, able-bodied, capitalist, and heterosexual men” (Deegan 2002:108). Thus, in contrast to previous work in which marginality referred specifically to the experience and internalization of culture or role conflict, Deegan defines marginality far more broadly to mean any kind of isolation from or non-conformity to the dominant society or culture. Moreover, in contrast to Bart (1971) and Collins (1986), the positive potential of marginality disappears from Deegan’s perspective. In her view, “dichotomized lives” are “intrinsically destructive to the marginal person” (Deegan 2002:110) rather than a possible impetus to creative action and insight.

The positive potential of marginality, which Deegan and others have overlooked, has been the prime focus of another line of research into the sources of scientific innovation. Early studies questioned the idea found in Veblen (1919) that marginality is an impetus to creativity. A laboratory study by Nash and Wolfe (1957) found little evidence that the presence of a stranger (in Simmel’s sense of the term) increased inventiveness within small groups, though they cautioned that a person who was socialized in a marginal situation might be more likely to stimulate invention than an adult person who was briefly introduced into such a situation as part of an experiment. Similarly, when Coleman, Katz, and Menzel (1957) studied the adoption of a new drug by physicians in four Midwestern cities, they found that it was not marginal men but the physicians who were most closely related to their local colleagues who embraced the innovation first. After re-examining the data, Menzel (1960) concluded that early adoption of innovations depended on exposure to communication about them and—when local norms discouraged innovation—emancipation from local norms. Physicians who were well integrated into the community of their local colleagues had become early drug adopters because “local integration itself afforded them a high flow of communication about the new drug” and the local norms favored rather than opposed the adoption of this innovation (Menzel 1960:707–708). However, new research beginning in the 1960s provided mounting support for the thesis that marginality was a source of scientific innovation. A series of case studies concluded that bacteriology and psychoanalysis (Ben-David 1960), scientific revolutions or paradigm shifts (Kuhn 1962:88–90), experimental psychology (Ben-David and Collins 1966), molecular biology (Mullins 1972), X-ray protein crystallography (Law 1973), physical chemistry (Dolby 1976), radio astronomy (Edge and Mulkay 1976), nineteenth-century optics (Frankel 1976), eighteenth-century chemistry (McCann 1978), and neuroendocrinology (Latour and Woolgar 1979) were all created or reconstituted by the innovations of scientists who were in various ways marginal to the area of inquiry. Coser (1962:179–180), Press (1969), and Chubin (1976) buttressed these findings by elaborating how structural circumstances, role ambiguity, or demographic factors (migration of scientists between scientific specialties and the replacement of older by younger researchers) enabled the marginal man to function as an innovator. Gieryn and Hirsh (1983) noted that by the 1980s the notion that marginality was a source of scientific innovation was widely shared among sociologists and historians

of science—"the marginal man lives on," they wrote, "and nowhere is he more visible these days than in the history and sociology of science" (88)—but they themselves dissented from this view. In contrast to much previous research, their study of X-ray astronomy found that scientists who were marginal to this field were no more likely than others to contribute innovations. More recently, in a case study of Erich Fromm's innovations in psychoanalysis, McLaughlin (2001) has tried to move beyond this debate with the concept of "optimal marginality." Instead of asking whether marginality leads to innovation, he has attempted to specify the conditions under which it is likely to do so.

While many American sociologists extended Park's marginal man concept to the study of occupations, gender, and scientific innovation, interest in the marginal man as a way to study race and ethnic relations, culture contact, and migration never disappeared from the literature, even after immigration to the United States was severely restricted in the 1920s. Indeed, that interest was reinvigorated by three important changes beginning in the 1960s. First, immigration reform in 1965 again opened the United States to large numbers of migrants from outside northern and western Europe. Immigrants and their children now comprise about 22 percent of the entire U.S. population, and a plurality of those immigrants come from Latin America and, to a lesser extent, Asia (Lee and Bean 2003:28). These new immigration patterns are, in turn, transforming race relations: nearly fifty years of increased immigration from non-European countries is converting the United States from a predominantly black and white society into an increasingly multiracial and multiethnic society; many individual immigrants are themselves of mixed racial heritage; and immigrants often bring with them understandings of race and principles of racial classification that differ from those of native-born Americans (Navarro 2003). Second, the civil rights movement of the 1960s made possible a rise in intermarriage between whites and nonwhites. Illegal in sixteen of the fifty states as recently as 1967, the number of racial intermarriages in the United States rose from 150,000 in 1960 to 1.6 million in 1990—a tenfold increase over three decades. By 2003 about 13 percent of American marriages involved persons from different races, and by 2010 the share of new marriages involving spouses of a different race or ethnicity had risen to slightly more than 15 percent (Lee and Bean 2003:27–28, 30; Wang 2012). Third, in a historic change in the way the United States government collects data on the racial composition of the country's population, the 2000 census allowed the individual for the first time to report himself or herself as a member of more than one race. Nearly 7 million Americans in 2000 and 9 million in 2010 classified themselves in this way as multiracial. Although this is a small minority (less than 3 percent of the population), a study by the National Academy of Science estimates that the multiracial population could rise to 21 percent by the year 2050 because of rising intermarriage, particularly among Asians and Hispanics (Lee and Bean 2003:30; Saulny 2011). Furthermore, by giving official status and recognition to multiracial identities, the census itself may encourage more Americans to adopt this classification and thereby contribute to the trend it appears merely to describe.

These changes have given renewed relevance in American sociology to the man or woman on the margin of two cultures, racial categories, or societies. This is most readily apparent in recent studies of multiracial individuals and migration. Studies of multiracial or multiethnic individuals have generally sought to derive hypotheses from Park's marginal man theory and then test them with quantitative analysis of survey data. Starr and Straits (1984) tested several hypotheses about the personality traits and social behavior of multiethnic individuals with survey data from a large sample of Malaysian secondary school students. Other scholars have used data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health to test hypotheses concerning social and psychological differences between multiracial and monoracial adolescents (Campbell and Eggerling-Boeck 2006; Cheng and Lively 2009), the rejection of racial labels by multiracial adolescents (Doyle and Kao 2007), and biracial adolescents' school attachment (Cheng and Klugman 2010). Starr and Straits (1984), Campbell and Eggerling-Boeck (2006), and Doyle and Kao (2007) found little support for their hypotheses, but in all three studies the hypotheses were mostly limited to the negative consequences of marginality or bore a tenuous connection to Park's original ideas. In contrast, Cheng and Lively (2009), who noted that "the marginal man theory ... remains one of the most common theoretical frames for research on the experiences of multiracial individuals" (61), found evidence that multiracial adolescents differed from their monoracial counterparts in both negative ways (e.g., higher levels of psychological distress) and positive ways (e.g., more friendships and participation in more social occasions). "Although results show some evidence of multiracial heterogeneities," they concluded, "self-identified multiracial adolescents, overall, display outcome profiles that fit well within the purview of the marginal man perspective and/or the subsequent elaborations of the theory" (Cheng and Lively 2009:84). Other studies have qualified this assessment without entirely rejecting the applicability of Park's theory to multiracial adolescents today. Using data from a survey of public high school students in California and Wisconsin, Herman (2009) found evidence that multiracial students who had some black or Hispanic ancestry or self-identified as black or Hispanic tended to have lower grades than multiracial students who had no black or Hispanic ancestry or self-identified as white or Asian. This study, though it continued to focus exclusively on the negative consequences of marginality, nevertheless suggested a valuable insight: that the consequences of marginality were not the same for all multiracial adolescents. Similarly, Cheng and Klugman (2010) found that school racial composition has little influence on the school attachment of biracial adolescents with a partial-white identification—an indication of cosmopolitanism and tolerance, they suggest, which is consistent with Park's conception of the marginal man—but "partial-black adolescents feel a greater sense of belonging in schools that have a large share of black students or a small share of white students" (169). They concluded that "this strong sense of black identity—forged by a history of discrimination and stigmatization—means that the applicability of the marginal man thesis is limited by the color line in the United States" (Cheng and Klugman 2010:169). In fact, this finding is consistent with the original arguments of Park ([1931b] 1950:366–369) and Stonequist ([1937] 1965:160), both of

whom suggested that marginal men who were rebuffed by the dominant group sometimes identified with or assumed a leadership role within the subordinate group.

Recent studies of migration have generally found more consistent support for Park's marginal man theory. An exception to this pattern is Zhou (1997:70), who subsumed Park's marginal man concept under what she described as an outmoded "assimilation perspective," according to which immigrants shed old cultural and behavioral patterns and move "inevitably and irreversibly toward assimilation." However, this interpretation seems to be based on a misreading of Park (1928:893), who stressed the relative permanence of the marginal man's situation, and Stonequist ([1937] 1965:130, 184, 206–207), who regarded assimilation as merely one of several possible adjustments that the marginal man could attempt to make to it. In contrast, and more persuasively, Pedraza (2000:710) suggested that the development of bicultural identities among new immigrants, rather than total assimilation, made them similar to Park's marginal man. Echoing Park's argument that new immigrant institutions serve to combat the disorganization experienced by individuals adrift between groups and cultures, other sociologists of migration have used the marginal man concept to explain the establishment of ethnic churches by Korean immigrants (Shin and Park 1988:237), the impact of residential and school mobility on adolescents' friendship networks (South and Haynie 2004:317), and the weak social support networks of minority immigrant parents (Turney and Kao 2009:669, 686).

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS: WHITHER NOW FOR THE MARGINAL MAN?

Park's concept of the marginal man has been a remarkably fruitful source of intellectual stimulation in American sociology over the past eight decades; in this respect the 1928 essay in which he originally presented the concept surely qualifies as a sociological classic. More remarkable still, though Park's concept undoubtedly needs further revision, its potential for intellectual stimulation is apparently not yet exhausted. As we have seen, a number of scholars have extended Park's notion of the marginal man beyond his focus on race and ethnic relations to a broader range of social phenomena, including occupations, gender, and scientific innovation. Others, recognizing that Park anticipated contemporary sociological interest in globalization, immigration, cultural hybridity, and multiculturalism (Gilroy 1993; Hall 1993; 1996; Portes and Zhou 1993; Bhabha 1994; Alba and Nee 1997; 2003; Brubaker 2001; Alexander 2006:425–457; Bloemraad, Korteweg, and Yurdakul 2008), have returned to the concept in recent years to gain insight into the present-day movement and interpenetration of peoples. What accounts for this continuing fascination of American sociologists with men and women on the margin? Wirth ([1948] 1964:39–40) suggested one possible answer in his presidential address to the American Sociological Society in December 1947: in "contemporary society," he noted, where there is greater mobility and more "contact between diverse racial and cultural groups" than in the past, "all of us are men on the move and on the make, and all of

us by transcending the cultural bounds of our narrower society become to some extent marginal men."

There are many ways in which contemporary sociologists might continue to develop, test, and refine Park's seminal idea, but let me conclude with one suggestion that Park himself might have made. The application and elaboration of Park's marginal man concept by American sociologists has unfortunately remained limited, with a few notable exceptions, by a parochial focus on American society. Park was, of course, intensely interested in his own society, but he believed that the same social processes and conflicts he saw remaking America were at work globally. "Vast changes are everywhere in progress," Park and Ernest Burgess ([1921] 1924:867) wrote in 1921. "Not only in Europe but in Asia and Africa new cultural contacts have undermined and broken down the old cultures." "If America was once in any exclusive sense the melting pot of races," Park ([1926b] 1950:149) added five years later, "it is no longer. The melting pot is the world." Consequently, Park (1928; [1934b] 1950) and Stonequist (1935; [1937] 1965) did not confine their perspective to the United States; they also wrote about cultural hybridization in Africa, Europe, India, Indonesia, and Latin America. What the study of marginality in contemporary American sociology largely lacks but sorely needs is this global and comparative perspective. What roles have marginal men and women played for instance, historically or now, in the former Soviet Union and its successor states, Israel, the European Union, Australia, or post-apartheid South Africa, each of which is in one way or another a meeting point of peoples and cultures? Of course, the comparative study of marginality need not and should not be the exclusive purview of American sociologists. Many of the places that were merely objects of sociological study in Park's time now have their own producers and practitioners of social science. In addition, the circulation, exchange, and movement of social scientists across national borders and the formation of regional and global institutions like the International Sociological Association (founded in 1949) bring sociologists from all parts of the world into contact and communication. With these developments, sociology itself has become a meeting point of peoples and cultures, making a collaborative as well as comparative study of marginality possible.

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