

## Social integration / Social Exclusion

### Elements of thought

All current figures of social exclusion (the poor, young people of disadvantaged districts, long-term unemployed, immigrants, drug addicts, mentally ill persons...) have a weakness in common on the symbolic dimension: it's the symbolic unrecognition of the place that occupies the individual or the group in the society.

This raises the question of: Where integrated? Excluded from what?

Integration and exclusion are two opposite poles of the process in which the individuals get integrated by different ways in the society where they live.

Three principal dimensions are identifiable:

- The economic dimension
- The social dimension
- The symbolic dimension

### The economic dimension

The first indicators to define economic insertion are quantitative:

The amount of resources, consumption forms (type of housing, food consumption...) who define the standard of living.

Which is the level, the threshold below of which an individual, a family, could be considered as economically poorly integrated?

The U.E, in the past the EEC, adopted finally in 1978, half of the national average revenue as reference of threshold.

Insertion in the work universe have a particular importance. Since the beginnings of the industrialization, work became the criterion of social integration.

It gets not only incomes offering the possibility to participate at the city life, but it gets also a real social identity, whose capacity of the identity definition became stronger than any other belonging.

This approach of work as the only main entrance in the social system is today because of the increasing of job-seekers (unemployed) in the middle of a social and political debate.

If integration in economic dimension is capital, its absence is not enough to define nor to explain the exclusion in its various forms.

More and more sociologists come back to the sociological tradition of Durkheim, paying attention on the importance of the social link and the integration in the relation network.

## The social demension

There isn't a single social link but multiple links.

*The horizontal links* expressed within the primary groups: families, neighbourhood, friends, associations, clubs...

The inscription of an individual in a primary network of sociability (horizontal links) fills of essential functions: exchange service, information, exchanges identifiable images offering the possibility to the person, to represent himself as well to the group as well to the society but also to identify his place and his role in this same society.

The social relations reduction represents an weakening on two levels: attenuation of the exchanges, therefore in case of difficulties, less information of communication, of mutual help or service, but also on the level of breaking the belonging, the impossibility of exchanging or negotiate identity images.

This isolation break down gradually the benchmarks of the individual to locate his own identity and the sources of insurance and valorization.

*The vertical links:* in link with the specific institutions of control and social protection: it's the system of redistribution, of collective solidarity (the social security) with the object of controlling, correcting, blocking the social drift related to the individual problems (economic, health, housing, psychological problems).

It's the base of the social contract established between the individual and the society.

On the individual side, the social network integration supposes to be conscience about the existence of these regulation institutions, the acceptance of the limits that they impose and the feeling to benefit of the advantages as well as all the other people, in an equal way.

## The symbolic dimension

The Social cohesion can't be imposed, it must be based on the voluntary adhesion of the individuals: the symbolic link.

It's based on the system of standards and the collective representations, which Durkheim called "the collective thought", "moral community".

This link passes by the participation of the individuals in the ideals and the cultural models of the group.

We can speak about a "social ideal ego", which get defined through a system of standards. If they are not respected, the society reject, stigmatize and devalue the individual.

In the other hand if all the standards are completed the individual will be socially recognised.

## Milton Gordon (1964): Acculturation and assimilation

Acculturation consists to adopt the dominant cultural standards while structural assimilation concerns, in particular, the inclusion of ethnic minorities members in to

the secondary groups activities (associations, clubs) and in the primary groups (family, friend relations,...).

This process of assimilation is done in 7 stages:

1. Acculturation: the members of the ethnic minority adopt the cultural practices except the religious practices.

Like the language, the clothing, the food habits, the musical tastes.

2. Structural assimilation: it's marked by the participation of the ethnic minorities in the associations, the clubs, the institutions and in the proximity social networks (neighbors, friendships...).

This is the most important stage for Gordon. When the structural assimilation is done, the other types of assimilation follow naturally.

3. The choice of the spouse is made inside the main ethnic group.

4. The identification of the migrant to the host society symbols and to its institutions. Here, the feeling of belonging of the migrant is referenced at the installation society either to the origin one.

5. The minority ethnic group is not any more object of hostility and xenophobia from the majority group.

6. More less discrimination.

7. Civic assimilation, understood as political and symbolic inclusion of the minority ethnic groups within the host society.

The three last stages belongs to the host society.

## Barth: Borders of the ethnicity

For Barth, belonging to an ethnic group is realized by a process of charge or subscription.

When the person recognizes himself (subscription) as a member of the ethnic group, or is recognized by the majority as a member of the ethnic group (charge) then the ethnicity appears in different lines.

It's the process of the ethnic borders construction which creates the cultural contents of the ethnic groups and not the opposite.

The culture is not crystallized, reified, immutable. It's not the component of the ethnic groups, it's a consequence of construction and reproduction of the borders between the ethnic groups.

The identities arise from social situations or by interethnic interactions and don't precede them.

## Abdelmalek Sayed

Abdelmalek Sayed said: "For this reason, the analysis of integration calls into question the migratory process in its entirety, which means all the trajectory of the immigrant and not only the result of this trajectory".

From this point of view we can say that integration started since the emigration, even well before this act which is only the demonstration of this integration:

Integration at the labor market on worldwide scale of individuals who up to that point lived in margin and in ignorance of this market and in every economic system they made part of.

This first integration which we don't see, because we don't have any interest to see it, implements all the other forms of integration that we always mention.

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