Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Social Anthropology (Anth 1012)

A Freshman Common Course

Department of Anthropology

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PART FOUR

Marginalized, Minorities, and Vulnerable Groups

Chapter Objectives

- **Defining and indentifying concepts about and around marginalization: its major causes and manifestations.**

- **Over viewing the Human Rights Approach as a way to inclusion and protecting marginalized and vulnerable groups**

- ***Comprehending the interplay between Anthropology, Cultural diversity, and Human Rights Approach***

Brainstorming Questions

- **Do you think that marginalizing people and groups is a major problem in our country?**
- **How do you think that cultural relativism counters back the problem of marginalization?**
- **Do anthropologists need to support/appreciate harmful customary practices in the name of**

4.1. Definition of Concepts

- ***Marginalization:***

- *it is a multidimensional, multicausal, historical phenomenon unfolded with multiple meanings.*

But, put simply, it refers to:

…the treatment of a person or social group as minor, insignificant or peripheral.

- *It involves exclusion from social interactions, marriage relations, sharing*

Consequentially, It has three fundamentally different meanings:

a)underdevelopment, lack of resources, distance
b)relation, oppression, closure and:
c)lack of cultural integration, lack of adaption to norms (i.e. “culture of poverty”, “urban underclass”)
Thus,

marginalization is a complex as well as

Who are marginalized?

Class, in relation to specific social, cultural, economic and political conditions, as well as ideological systems, social awareness, and human nature and actions may lead to some sort of marginalization. To be specific,

- ***Women***
- ***Children***
- ***Older people***
- ***And people with disabilities***
- ***Religious, ethnic, and racial minorities***
- **Craft workers (tanners, potters, ironsmiths)**

Note: the level of marginalization can be:

Individual (individuals with disabilities)

- ***Minority Groups:***

  …refers to a small group of people within a community, region or country.

Race, ethnicity, religion and language are used as basis for categorizing minority groups.

Hence, the names (ethnic minorities, religious minorities, racial minorities and linguistic minorities)

E.g. - Black Americans in USA

- Christians in a Muslim majority country and the other way

✓ *Vulnerability:*

…refers to the state of being exposed to any forms of physical or emotional injuries as a result of attack, harms, or mistreatment.

➢ *Vulnerable persons/groups, such as children and people with disabilities, are often exposed to risks and neglect, therefore, they need special attention, protection and support.*

➢ Therefore, vulnerabilities includes: Physical, Social, Economic, Attitudinal.

4.2. Gender-based Marginalization

- ✓ It is closely related to gender inequality.
- ✓ Gender inequality involves discrimination of people based on their gender.
- ✓ It arises from socio-cultural norms and is manifested differently across cultures.
- ✓ Generally speaking, girls and women are prone to negative discriminations which expose them to social and economic exclusions = Gender-based marginalization.
- ✓ It is a global phenomena.

Manifestations;

- ✓ **Gender disparities** in education in rural/remote areas.
- ✓ **Lack** of income and employment opportunities
- ✓ **Unfair** distribution of resources
- ✓ **Deprived** of the rights to ownership and inheritance of wealth
- ✓ **Gender-based violence** such as rape, child marriage, abduction/forced marriage, domestic violence and female genital mutilation/cutting.

4.3. Marginalized Occupational Groups

- ✓ This is marginalization based on what people do for a living (craft-workers such as potters, tanners, weavers and ironsmiths).
- ✓ Studies show that there are occupational marginalized groups in Ethiopia who produce tradition hand-woven clothes, household utensils, and farm tools.
- ✓ Although they contribute to their communities, there are marginalized from the wider society.
- ✓ In some places, potters and tanners are considered as impure and excluded from social interactions, ownership of economic resources, and participation in associations and

Likewise,

- ✓ **Ironsmiths** (who make and repair iron articles without using machine),
- ✓ **Tanners** (who make leather products)
- ✓ **Potters** (who produce pottery for food processing and fetching water)

---are often considered as inferior and marginalized from the wider areas of social interactions.

4.4. Age-based Vulnerability

It is the susceptibility of people, specially children and older peoples, to different forms of attack, both physical and emotional.

a) Children: Discrimination and Vulnerability

- ✓ *Because of their age, children (girls and boys) are exposed to harm and abuse.*
- ✓ *Whereas, girls are exposed to double marginalization and discrimination = FGM and early child marriage.*
- ✓ *Because of its multifaceted consequences, the International human rights conventions regards early/child marriage as violation of the right of the*

- ✓ *Under the criminal code of Ethiopia, child marriage is also classified as illegal.*
- ✓ *However, social norms and economic factors haven't prevented the case*
- ✓ *Chastity of girls and economic benefits are among the possible explanations.*

b)Marginalization of Older Persons

- ✓ *'Older persons' refers those above the age 60.*
- ✓ *In some cultures like Ethiopia, they are respected and are considered as custodians of tradition, culture, and history.*
- ✓ *As situations are changing, care and support for older people tend to decline.*
- ✓ *Globally, their number is increasing and* ***ageism*** *is a widely observed social problem.*

Ageism *refers to stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination against people based on their age.*

- ✓ *Aged people are good at mentoring younger people, resolving disputes, and restoring peace across Ethiopia,*
- ✓ *Modernization, globalization and urbanization are changing family structures and living patterns*
- ✓ *this, in turn, is complicating the lives of older peoples*
- ✓ *They are being denied of the care and*

4.5. Religious and Ethnic Minorities

Are a group of people who differ in race or color or in national, religious, or cultural origin from the dominant group.

- ✓ *Religious and ethnic minorities are another group of people who also face marginalization.*
- ✓ *this problem is not limited to specific areas, regions or countries.*
- ✓ *However, the level and impact of such marginalization is different depending on the contexts,*
- ✓ *and is mostly manifested in the form of discrimination and/or prosecution.*

The two well-known examples;

- ***Jewish*** *people in Germany and other parts of the world.*
  - ✓ *they were targets of extermination because of the identity.*
- ***Muslim Rohingyas*** *are marginalized and prosecuted because of their religion.*
  - ✓ *are one of the most ill-treated and prosecuted refugee groups in the world.*
  - ✓ *half a million Rohingyas fled Nyanmar to neighboring countries such as Bangladish.*

Further reference on www.opendoorsusa.org

4.6. Human Right Approaches and Inclusiveness: Anthropological perspectives

- ***The human right approaches***

is fundamentally against all form of marginalization and discrimination against vulnerable and minority groups.

- *Including women, children, people with disability, older people and minority and vulnerable groups.*
- it is an international standards and operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights.

✓ *The human rights approach promotes:*

- *Inclusive services and equal opportunity*
- *the right to be free from harmful traditional practices (from early and/or forced marriage, FGM, gender-based violence)*
- *the right to survival, development, participation*

4.7. The interplay between Anthropology, Cultural diversity and Human Rights Approach

- ✓ We live in a rapidly changing world bringing various cultures in closer interaction with each other.
- ✓ This interaction can be positive or negative = **cultural relativism or ethnocentrism**
- ✓ *Anthropology appreciates cultural diversity and communality*
- ✓ *The principle of cultural relativity = understanding all cultures relative to its respective context.*

As an Anthropologist we do,

- ✓ ***appreciate*** *the life styles of others including their dressing styles, food habits, beliefs, rituals and celebrations.*
- ✓ ***avoid*** *value judgments such as 'backward or primitive etc.*
- ✓ ***not support*** *customarily practices that violet the rights and wellbeing of individuals and groups.*
  - ➢ ***FGM*** *violets the rights of girls to physical integrity. Also causes health complications*
  - ➢ ***Early/child marriage*** *deprives the rights to decide on their future fates.*