Marginalization

Marginalization of people occurs when an individual or group is considered to be far from the center or majority of a given society, and are instead relegated to a minority status in the outer margins. This categorization of people as closer to the center of focus, or as further from it, evitably leads to a struggle for dominance. In his essay, Omar Zain discusses this minority/dominant struggle as it plays out with the minority Muslims living in India, " It is most useful to think of majority – minority relations as an ongoing social function, characterized by varying degrees of repressive measures underlined by overt and covert hostility (Zain 101). This "ongoing social function" can be both openly hostile and more covertly insidious, and often pushes people out to the minority margin for a variety of issues that range from economics, race, and gender, to more complex religious and cultural ideals.

Pushing people to the edges or periphery of a society cause them to be considered a minority or less important voice in their society. This can be seen as an "othering" of groups of people or individuals, and is often displayed in democracies. This othering is especially remarkable in postcolonial countries like India in relation to economic, religious, and other social issues, but is common to all of humanity. In "Citizens Versus People," Dipankar Gupta discusses this tendency in Democratic India, "Democracies have to be perpetually on their guard because this unfortunate anthropological tendency to put up barriers between "us" and "them" is alive and active today" (Gupta 30-31). This "us" and "them" mentality is precisely what makes marginalization possible. A marginalized people become "the other" in their own society. This "othering" of people trivializes their roles, identities, and functions in their societies.

Marginalization of people is a dangerous first step to more damaging conflicts between

"them" and "us," and may lead to more terrible and dangerous consequences like violence,

racism, sexism, and other tremendously destructive ideologies that promote inequality.

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