Your Name

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The Sociological Imagination

The term sociological imagination was first coined by the famous American sociologist by the name of C. Wright Mills. Writing a book by the name *The Sociological Imagination* in 1956, Mills tried to understand how aware an individual is of the relationship between his personal perspective and the wider society (Mills). The theory seeks to apply imaginative ideas to answer social questions using territories he hasn’t explored before. For instance, a woman getting an abortion was seen in a different light back in the day. The woman was ostracized from society and she was isolated from society. However, the present society gives a woman the right to choose what to do with her body. Thus, whether she wants an abortion or keep the baby, the choice is hers alone. Additionally, various social institutions have measures in place to help her regardless of what choice she makes.

Social context i.e. the physical or the social setting where people live and develop as a part of society. This includes the culture of the place, the people he lives with as well the institutions he is a part of and how they interact with one another (Casper). It shapes and even influences the ideas we hold, the attitudes we keep about a subject and even the behavior of individuals towards a certain situation. It also validates the emotions we feel when we are being subjected to an unprecedented situation (Rogoff and Lave). The social context comprises of a number of different characteristics and operates on the basis of three different levels i.e. broad, narrow or intimate.

The broad social context ideally deals with historical events that shaped our society and our cultural norms and moral values. This includes historical events like war and peace, the depression that often follows war, economic booms and later prosperity. The narrow level of perception in social context deals with race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and social class. The intimate of person levels includes the thing that is personally related to an individual. These include the relationships we share with our family and our friends, as well as our perception of matters close to our heart (Herzfeld).

Our Social location, on the other hand, refers to one’s location within society. This isn’t limited to one’s physical location in society. It also includes their age demographic, their health, education, marital status, their belief, their ethnicity, the racial group they belong to, as well as the sex group they identify themselves as. However, social location only defines one’s standing in society, i.e. if the society as a whole is a circle, the part of the circle that they occupy is their social location. It does not determine one’s actions in any capacity, neither can it predict it (Devine).

Social location is further characterized on the basis of two units. The first one is the physical location an individual holds, while the second one is personal. The physical characteristics one may hold, with regard to the social location, is their height, eye color, hair color, gender, race, and ethnicity (Sanchez Gonzalez). For instance, I would be identified as a 5’6” green-eyed, blonde-haired, white female. These characteristics are the ones that an individual cannot change. However, belonging of the upper middle socioeconomic class, as a bisexual, Christian, a citizen of the USA and an honors’ roll student are all characteristics of my social location that can be regarded as personal ones.

As a contributing member of society, I believe that my sociological imagination is greatly influenced by my social location, as well as social context. It accounts for how my society looks at me and what role I play in it. It also decides the opportunities that will be extended to me in life, as well as dictate the perspective society holds about me and those around me. In conclusion, sociological imagination permeates every sphere of life of an individual and the perception it holds regarding the society as a whole.

Works Cited

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