Example of the effects of population density and noise essay

Sociology, Population

The Effects of Population Density and Noise

Population density can be defined as the measurement of the amount of individuals in a given area (Lerner & Millon, 2003). The percentage is determined by dividing the number of individuals by the area. In the last United States census, the mean population density was 87 individuals per square mile. This measurement is not widely applied in the average individual's daily life and is only considered as a fact of the growing population. However, when issues of pollution, noise, territory, privacy, and space are considered, then it clearly reflects the effects of population density. Many individuals are not aware of the impacts population density has on their daily lives. Therefore, to understand the effects of population density and noise, the concepts of personal space, privacy, and territory will be analyzed. In addition, a focus on the impacts of noise and urban environments on individuals and suitable strategies of reducing noise in the living environment will be done.

Proximity can be defined as the distance between two things, or their nearness, or intimacy. All individuals experience proximity in different ways with other individuals, which is a phenomenon based on the term proxemics (Lerner & Millon, 2003). Proxemics refers to the individual-environmental longitudinal associations, consisting of concepts of individual space, crowding, and territoriality. It is also known as the concept of personal or private bubble. People react to territory through having a need of privacy that in turn affects personal space.

Therefore, in analyzing the effects of population density, territory is not

considered as a vast or large land or area, but rather the governing space surrounding an individual that defines the distance or space among themselves and other beings or people. This territory can be categorized into three domains, namely; public, primary, and secondary domains (Lerner & Millon, 2003). Primary territories refer to individual spaces that are usually permanent like someone's home. In a secondary domain, the space is not permanent and not individually owned; it is only rented for a little period such as an ATM booth. In public territories, there is no personal space as there are public interaction and encroachments like those found in the streets, stadiums, and supermarkets. The public territory is open to everyone where the first come first serve criteria is used (Hashmi, 2006). These domains do interact in people's daily lives, but with well-defined and clear outlines.

Territorial behaviors and practices are designed to uphold a certain extent of privacy. Evidently, the variance of territorial margins defines the extent of privacy that can be afforded. For instance, in the primary domain, one expects the highest level of privacy because the territory is owned permanently rather than rented or shared. According to the 1975 " Privacy Regulation Theory", proposed by Irwin Altman, altering the extent of openness so as to make a personality boundary results in less or more accessibility of social communications. Therefore, privacy can be defined as a process of discriminatory control over a personal margin by either a group or individual. This theory argues that each person desires a certain extent of

privacy all the time and therefore employs methods like self-disclosure to govern or determine the desired level of privacy (Lerner & Millon, 2003).

A significant portion of territory and privacy is the theory of personal space. Personal space refers to the sense of imperceptible boundaries surrounding an individual group and splitting one from others and its violation can result in anxiety (Hashmi, 2006). According to Lerner and Millon (2003) the idea of personal space means the area surrounding the body someone perceives is regarded to be an addition of personal area. This area may not be used or entered into by outsiders without the permission and consent of the character. Therefore, it is defined in the mental map kept in an individual's mind.

While humans are defined as social beings, they all need and have individual space. The advancement of this space is based on a several factors like age, environment, gender, mental ability and culture. Hashmi (2006) explains how expansion and shrinkage of the individual space happens in reaction to the environment. According to Hashmi, (2006) expansion and shrinkage of personal space is linked to environmental stressors that include humidity, temperature, light, absence and presence of harmful stimuli, like noise and odor. Differences in personal space are also bolstered in Edward's Proxemics concept. The concept argues that there are degrees or levels of isolation created on the individual space scale, which is determined by factors such as biology, culture, and social concepts (Lerner & Millon, 2003). The space scale identifies three kinds of personal spaces defined by detachments or closeness. The first kind is known as the intimate space defined as the first

approximately eighteen inches of space around an individual. The second kind is the consultative or social space, demarcated as the comfortable-individual space in social routines or situations around 4-8 foot space. The third space is the public space, demarcated by the impersonal or anonymous communications and chosen at around 12-20 feet (Lerner & Millon, 2003).

Parks, zoos, and other nature environments were initially created to amuse public curiosity, but they have a more significant use especially in the urban areas. Nature has a significant association to the psychology of individuals and communities. According to the Park Association, the relationship between nature and psychology was illustrated in research projects. The results concluded that people exposed to nature have improved mental health, with less hostility in social interactions. Additionally, according to Clayton and Myers (2009), nature has numerous positive impacts on the human wellbeing such as recovery, relaxation, and restoration. The advantages of exposure to the natural green environment within an urban area can be numerous. Sick people tend to recovery quickly in the natural environment rather than a closed or limited space like a house or hospital. Parks promote social communications through interactive activities like games, debates, and other socially engaging activities. For many people who find calm and reliving refuge in nature in the urban areas, they develop a reciprocal respect and concern for the sustainability of nature.

Noise is defined as any sound that is unwanted, but could mean differently depending on different people and things. For instance, an elder may refer to the music being played by a teenager as noise. Therefore, in most urban

areas, the noise from cars, industries, businesses, and other contributors is considered as noise pollution. However, most of the undesirable and unwanted noises are a part of human's daily lives. Also, noise can psychologically and physiologically impact individuals in society (Clayton & Myers, 2009). Physiological impacts are evident in hypertension, stress, sleep disturbances, and hearing loss. In most areas with high population density, noise pollution is at its highest and is categorized as a disturbance rather than a health risk. This is because impacts are not fatal. Psychological impacts are not visible or observable and can be a phenomenon like increased anxiety.

There are numerous ways of reducing noise in the living surrounding or workplace. One strategy is limiting the noise by limiting its source. For instance, one can switch-off the television or radio, or reduce the volume to a suitable level that does not disturb anyone. Homes can also be constructed using sound proof walls that limit the outside noise from entering, and the inside noise from exiting. Industries or organizations can also adapt less noisy methods of operating their business by using silencers and other technologies of noise limitation. This strategy ensures there is few or no psychological/physiological effects from any noise in a community.

The second strategy of reducing noise is substituting it with an alternative that is more pleasing. Some types of noises are more pleasant than others. Through advanced sound machines, noise from outside like cars hooting can be substituted by a more pleasing noise like birds making sounds or waves crushing on rocks and sand. According to Clayton and Myers (2009), some

sounds have fewer impacts in terms of distraction and harm. For instance, one may be working in a noisy manufacturing industry, but can work comfortably while listening to music on an iPod or phone connected through earphones. In cases where it cannot apply, the individual can as well seek for a space more comfortable to work or live.

In conclusion, from the analysis in this paper, it is evident that population density is increasing, which is limiting privacy and increasing noise. People must lead in their personal proxemics and consent that they will be encroached by others, especially in urban and public domains. Therefore, through the understanding of the ideas analyzed in this paper, it is easy to admit and fight the negative impacts that occur. There is increased understanding of alternative solutions in daily human personal and public lives. Hence, as the population increases, it is significant to develop noise reduction strategies that will promote healthy and comfortable living and workplace environments.

References

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