

Childhood matters

Sociology



Childhood Matters For the last few years, active agency has drawn great attention from the public after its massive use by the “ new” sociologists of childhood. Giddens (1991), even though not a sociologist, had great ideas that were greatly centered at agency. To be an agent (Giddens, 1984), there must be proof of the ability to deploy influential powers and acting with an aim of standing out from the crowd by being unique. The idea has been adopted by many sociologists since they find it useful in a child’s daily life encounters that need attention. Understanding kids is therefore a fundamental requirement in building social reality. With massive efforts directed towards understanding children, it has been already identified that children lack authoritative power; seen as an adult possession, which thus make them voiceless in society.

Prout & James (1990), in relation to the suggestions made by Giddens consider childhood a continuous social construction. This is an indicator that such a stage is an important variable when making an analysis in a particular society and thus deserves separate and independent studies to understand social and cultural relationships among children. Just like any human being, children have a voice when it comes to controlling their social orientations and behavior.

To further understand sociology of childhood, it is important to dig deeper and view children as beings. James & Prout (1997) view children as active agents just as Giddens had put it. This means that in their being as children, the social factor phenomenon can be illustrated independently without creating insignificance. These researchers have shown interest in how children interact with structures and agency. This gives a clue of how such relationships are sustained even with parents and the rest of the world.

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Therefore, the ideas have helped in finding out how the relationships mentioned earlier on are affected by a range of social factors. For instance, childhood relationships can be affected by learning institutions, social policies, economic factors or environmental conditions. This proves why sociology of childhood views children as beings who are limited by both structures and agents that act upon the structures (Prout & James, 1990). The good thing is, this kind of sociology acknowledges that children exist in a real world and not a vacuum. Therefore, they all have a social world that has a high dependence on huge social processes (James, Jenks & Prout, 1998). The idea of social constructions (James & James, 2008), is seen to be a theoretical perspective through which people find out the reality behind the day to day interactions. It gives a collaborative meaning in that human beings create something out of the daily interactions and the portrayed actions thus giving rise to ‘symbolic-interactionism’. However, there is a huge tendency of people ignoring some events in social construction like adolescence in teenagers. This is world in which they view things differently from what they thought of in the childhood stages. It is an experimental and risky stage if not nicely incorporated in the social world of children.

Work cited

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