Sociological imagination in relation to my life sociology essay

Sociological imagination is germane to experiences of the individual with other relationships in society. There are three primary characteristics of the sociological imagination history, biography and social structure. In correlation with Mills' hypothesis of the sociological imagination, we will be able to position ourselves in reality and have enhanced understanding of ourselves and others through a grasp of the links between personal experiences versus structural and historical forces (Mitra & Sarabia, 2005). In this paper, I will undertake a critical contemplation on the factors that seem to have influenced my life choices and chances. I will use my own personal encounters as a case study and will use the sociological imagination as the tool for examination while realizing that this concept must be applied critically since I am attempting to link personal experience to public issues (Schudson, 2008). Because of my life circumstances, the feminist point of view is the most useful approach although symbolic interactionism explains many of the issues I have encountered. The key sociological factors I have seen reoccurring in my research are class, gender and socialization. These pivotal factors of socialization have allowed me to unpack and carefully examine what the sociological imagination is, how it works based on my life experiences, and the ways in which it connects to the structural conditions in my life.

The distinctive attribute of history correlates to the ways in which a society was produced and how it has been transformed over the course of time. The term " Biography" is an idiom for the human circumstances, or the nature of man in correlation to the type of individuals in a particular society. Social structure defines the order of a society focusing on the people who are

dominating, and how they cling together and how over time they change. The sociological imagination defines visionaries who can see beyond what is in front of them in relation to history, biography and social structure. (Mills, 1959, pg. 7)

The theory of the sociological imagination facilitates an individual to associate their own life experience with the whole of history along with social, economic, and political forces. The entire concept of the sociological imagination was summarized by Mills' belief that the life of any one individual and the history of the whole society cannot be understood unless both are understood (Mitra & Sarabia, 2005). This is because individual occurrences as well as all human action is socially and historically contextualized. The central question concerns how we can proceed or make the leap from individual experience to the entire society and to history. Schwalbe exemplifies how the social world must involve individuals practicing a conscious effort of relating and unpacking their live experiences with society as a whole when stating how " In the end, sociological mindfulness must be about more than studying how the social world works. It must also do more than inspire curiosity, care and hope, it must help us change ourselves and our way of doing things." (Schwalbe pg. 43) The sociological imagination is best considered as a vehicle which permits use of one of the major sociological perspectives (Mitra & Sarabia). In this case, it will be feminism but symbolic interactionism is relevant for this analysis. My parents primarily instilled certain values and beliefs especially concerning fairness and justice. The sociological imagination promotes critical thinking skills. The sociological imagination has refined my ability to think in relation

to ground breaking new and innovative connections between myself and the society. A good metaphor by Allan G. Johnson's literary work " The Forest The Trees and The One Thing" exemplifies the sociological imagination as the forest is society and the trees are individual people. How the trees are related to the forest personifies how individuals relate to society and societies history as a whole. " It's crucial to understand the relationships among trees that make a forest what it is. Paying attention to that " something more" whether it is a family, corporation or a whole society, and how people are interrelated to it is at the heart of the sociological process" (Johnson, Allen, pg. 5)

" Social research is concerned with the definition and assessment of social phenomena. Social researchers enable us to get inside these diverse social worlds and discover what social forces are at work in creating social life." (Duneier pg. 53) Duneier's standpoint on the sociological imagination corresponds to the discovery of my own personal sociological saga. As a college student I think to be successful you need to have sociological imagination. How often do we sit in classes and wonder what the purpose of all this is? When many of us graduate from high school we see as far as the first day of college, we have no vision of our future, we are looking to escape from our parent's home and to find freedom and self expression. Then there are others who graduate from high school and start their college careers. The first day of college is just another day for them, they are thinking about the life they will lead 10-15 years in the future. They see their career going a certain way, when they plan on getting married and having children and

some even see their retirement by the age of fifty. I find myself somewhere in the middle.

I have always known I my dream job was to become a writer from the time I picked up a pencil as a child I was in love with the feel of the pencil lead on paper. I took all the courses I could in writing and participated in workshops and wrote for my local high school's paper read avidly. Upon graduation from high school I was focused more on making money, therefore I went to work and gave up writing. However, it did not take long before I went to college I quickly realized that if I wanted to not work so hard for a minimal amount of money I would need to get a college degree in something that was practical yet gave me time to write.

In college as I tried to choose a major I was still focused on making money rather than being happy with what I was doing. I was determined to follow one of my passions and I picked Broadcast Journalism as my major because I could use my writing skills and do something I loved doing which was storytelling through interacting with people and reporting.

I began seeing my life in years rather than days. I began taking classes in subjects I liked. I am studying business as at the Whitman School and minoring in Entrepreneurship because I know this will be an imperative skill to have later in life. I continued pursuing my passion for writing however in my many required arts and science elective classes, and have a plan for the years to come as how I want to make my living. I want to become either a sports broadcaster or a sports writer. I identified education as the key to change. The sociological imagination creates links between the personal the

wider society in a reciprocal way. The person who has the sociological imagination is able to understand the large historical process in terms of its meaning for the inner experience and outer life of the individual. Schudson argues that the sociological imagination allows us to critically investigate reality instead of passively observing it. Andreev expands on that by explaining that individuals who are positioned at different social and economic points in society hold different views of the world. Rushing argues that education is not always the solution but rather a source of new social and economic inequalities since we can never escape from the factors of class, gender and race. As a result, the concept of the sociological imagination needs to be applied to a system of education as well to understand what impact that education will produce on different groups of people. I have found through my analysis that in order to use the sociological imagination and see a need for structural change, the person has to be oppressed or deprived in some way.

With the internet there is no discrimination; sociological imagination has little historical or biographical influence even social structure is irrelevant. The world of C. Wright Mills is disappearing on the internet people have no sociological imagination. People on the internet are fast becoming a society with no past or future there is just the present what is being done right at this moment. I want this type of life so does that mean I have sociological imagination in regard to the internet and how I will use it in my life. I know how the internet began and what it was originally used for, but does it influence my vision of how I am going to use it? No, when I am sitting at my

laptop I don't think of the history of the internet or the people who use it. (Solis-Gadea, 2005, pgs. 113-122)

When I'm writing on my laptop I don't think of the people I am writing for or working for they have no face, no personality, no relevance to me except for giving me work. Social structure is nonexistent on the internet as well. No one has a face unless you want to and even then you can't be positive it is really their face.

The way sociological imagination works in my life is by me seeing into the future and having a vision of myself working as a sports broadcaster or a sports writer. If sociological imagination is about making a connection to historical events and my instincts for the life I want then I would have to say I want a life unlike my parents., I do not desire to restrict myself and my life's goals a job for 30-40 years because I have a mortgage and car payment, kids and a wife and the " Jones's" living to the side of me. I want mobility and freedom and most importantly I want to utilize the technology that is out there to assist me in having the life I envision. (Schneider & Silverman, 2006, pg. 43)

The sociological imagination is valuable for allowing understanding of ourselves by means of the links between personal experiences versus structural and historical forces. Through reflecting on my life choices and chances with the use of the sociological imagination, I have been able to arrive at particular realizations. Power and class are at work in the wider society just as they are operating in my own life. Socialization was a key factor in my life because it guided me to connect with the underlying and

structural conditions in my life. The sociological imagination promotes critical thinking skills, this idea to me means being able to think in terms of new and innovative connections between myself and the society.

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