Unit Essay 1

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Three people who contributed to sociology that I am discussing in this paper are Comte, Martineau, and Spencer. These three figures helped to establish sociology as a scientific discipline. So who are these people? Auguste Comtes aimed to create a naturalistic science of society which would then explain past development and predict its future. According to Allan & Daynes, (2017), Comte wanted to use sociology to guide the rebuilding of society (p.14). Comte had many key concepts to achieve his goals such as focusing on sociology, social dynamics, social statics, methods of inquiry, positivism, and the law of the 3 stages. Comte created the word sociology by combining Latin and Greek words. According to Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory (2017), “Auguste Comte proclaimed that sociology could take its place among the sciences”.

The next figure in sociology is Harriett Martineau. Martineau wanted to create a science of society that would be systematic. She believed in morals and manners, things, discouragement of persons, impartiality, critique, and sympathy. Martineau also believed in feminism and domination. Martineau's desire for domination came after she visited America and saw how Americans used morals and manners. She observed slavery, the treatment of women, and the fetishing of wealth. Her observation of the treatment of women led to her contribution to feminism. According to Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory (2017), “Martineau was concerned with gender and saw the condition of women to be the chief measurement of any society’s democracy. For Martineau, the quality of a good society is measured by the happiness of its disenfranchised.”

Lastly, Herbert Spencer had a concern with evolutionary changes in social structures and social institutions. Spencer's key concepts were growth and structure, functionalism, social Darwinism, and survival of the fittest. He believed that sociology was a science. Spencer's evolutionary view created two types of societies, militant and industrial. Explorations in Classical Sociological Theory (2017), states that “He was the first to clearly see society as a large-scale system of interrelated institutions and structures.”

What is sociological theory and why is it important? Sociological theory is a conceptual scheme and set of ideas that explain observable facts and make sense of experiences. The development of sociological theory is an iterative process. Sociological theory is a fundamental aspect of the discipline of society and provides us with explanations for human behaviors. It can also provide us with a way to explain how people change and behave in certain social circumstances.

Sociological theory is different and unique more than other scientific theories in many ways. Sociological theory is based on different levels such as micro, meso, and macro levels. Sociological theory also looks to evaluate some aspects of society, critically challenge and understand people or society, and declare what is happening in our society.

**References**

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Unit Essay 2

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Who is Max Weber and why is he important in sociology? Max Weber was a German sociologist who lived from 1864 to 1920. Max Weber was the husband of Marianne Weber who was also a German sociologist. Max and Marianne are known as sociology’s original power couple. A few of Weber's key concepts included value neutrality, types of social action, ideal types, types of authority, and bureaucracy. He wanted to focus on the differences between natural and social sciences as well as value neutrality. He claimed that sociologists must engage in value neutrality by identifying and acknowledging the feelings of others. He focuses on social action and the interactions between individuals as well as what motivates actions between individuals. “Weber created an ideal type of social action in which he talks about the different kinds of meaning social action can have” (Allan & Daynes 2017, p.164).

Weber does not use a psychological approach and wants to understand the relationship between personal desires and social forces. He did this to focus on social action. Weber focused on social action because rationalization was a major issue in modern Western societies. Weber disagreed with Marx about conflict arising from the economy and rejected the positivist perspective., The types of social action are purposeful/rational, value ordinated, emotional/affective, and traditional.

Weber says that there are three types of authority. Those include traditional, charismatic, and rational/legal authority. Traditional authority is defined as doing things how we do them because that's how it's always been done in the past. Charismatic authority is defined as people trusting or considering one a leader based on their character. Rational/legal authority is defined as the belief in procedures and laws used by authority. Using concepts of ideal types and social action can help us analyze the types of authority in society. Ideal types is defined as a common mental construct. Social action can be defined as actions of others in society, I think that ideal types and social action fit together since both can be viewed based on the individual.“A good example of this in Weber’s work is his ideal type of bureaucracy” (Allan & Daynes 2017, p.158). Ideal types and bureaucracy fit together and have advantages as well as disadvantages and can be seen in society today. Weber says that ideal types are the purest form of bureaucracy. “Weber is the primary foundation for the sociology of organizations. All studies of bureaucracy come back to Weber” (Allan & Daynes 2017, p.162). Bureaucracy is defined as a system of organizing people and their behavior that is characterized by the presence of written rules, communication, job placement, expert knowledge, clearly outlined responsibilities, and authorities. Weber believes that bureaucracy affects society and that a bureaucracy must include a hierarchy, rules and regulations, and specialization.

Weber's types of authority are used today when studying sociology. The types of authority Weber identifies are traditional, charismatic, and rational/legal. Traditional authorities are defined by things being done how they are because that's how it's been done in the past. Society honors the past and continues to do things how they have been done in the past. Charismatic authority is defined as people trusting and looking up to another person. This person is considered a leader and has a calling and their authority is rooted in their personality. For example, God has charismatic authority and Christians in society look up to him. Rational/Legal authority is one that holds a position or job where they have authority over others. In society, an example is a professor having authority over their students. “According to Weber, the only kind of authority that can instigate social change is charismatic. Traditional and rational-legal authorities bring social stability—they are each designed to maintain the system” (Allan & Daynes 2017, p.185).

In conclusion, Max Weber contributed a lot to sociology. He is known for his types of authority, types of social action, and his focus on subjective meanings. When studying and understanding society today, we can use Weber's types of authority as well as types of social action to characterize people and actions.

**References**

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Unit Essay 3

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For unit essay 3, the theorist I chose to write about is Charles Wright Mills. According to the Mills PowerPoint from class, Mills was born in 1916 in Texas. He was raised in a middle-class catholic home where his father was an insurance banker while his mother was a homemaker. He went to college and received his Ph.D. in sociology. Mills was a prolific writer and has many notable books. Major concerns of Mills include the sociological imagination and the power of the elite where he focused on explaining how society uses both sociological imagination and the power of the elite in daily life. So what was sociological imagination? According to Jacobs (2021), “C. Wright Mills is best remembered for the sociological imagination, where he set forth his views on how social science should be pursued” (p.36). Sociological imagination can also be defined as a way of viewing the world and trying to see the links between personal troubles and public issues. Mill's interest in sociological imagination stems from wondering how social arrangements create the conditions for individual choices. “For Mills, a sociological imagination is not just for sociologists. Furthermore, as we endeavor to emerge from the pandemic of 2020, a sociological imagination will be needed by political leaders and activists who will try to restore a sense of normalcy while working toward a better, fairer, safer, and more resilient “new normal.” (Jacobs 2021, p.39).

C. Wright Mill's key theoretical contributions include the sociological imagination and the power elite. There are 3 components utilized by sociologists to see the sociological imagination. Those include general in the particular, strange in the familiar, and interplay of structure and agency. General in particular describes looking for patterns among the behavior of people. The particular is the choices we make, while the general is the groups of people that tend to make similar choices. The second is the strange in the familiar. This includes looking at the everyday features of our lives as if they were not normal or common. The 3rd is the interplay of structure and agency. This focuses on how the actions and choices of individuals are shaped by social relationships in which they find themselves.

Mill's work and contributions to society can be seen in daily life and can be used by all. His work with sociological imagination and the power of the elite is used in society to this day. According to *The Power Elite: Unveiling the Structures of Influence* (2023) “The Power Elite theory, introduced by C. Wright Mills, has provided a lens through which to understand the interplay of these elites and their impact on American society.” This lens helps society understand the different levels of the power elite. Mills wanted sociology to be about intellectual concerns and social problems and believed that sociological thought rested upon imagination. He believes that you can not understand the actions and choices of individuals without understanding the social relationships that they find themselves in. In society today, I believe we use sociological imagination when wondering why people interact with other groups and make the decisions that they do. Seeing the links between personal troubles and public issues was a goal Mills had. I believe that we look for the link between personal troubles and public issues within many categories of life. An example is unemployment. An unemployed individual can be viewed as having both personal troubles and public issues.

C Wright Mill's idea of sociological imagination helps others in society to understand situations and individual choices. We can also see it in society today when looking at how the COVID-19 pandemic affected both the choices and behaviors of others in society. “For Mills, a sociological imagination is not just for sociologists. As we endeavor to emerge from the pandemic of 2020, a sociological imagination will be needed by political leaders and activists who will try to restore a sense of normalcy while working toward a better, fairer, safer, and more resilient “new normal.” (Jacobs, 2021, p.39). Sociological imagination and the power of elite are both seen in society today, and his theories can continue to help us understand society.

**References**

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*The Power Elite: Unveiling the Structures of Influence* (2023) <https://socialstudieshelp.com/ap-government-and-politics/the--power-elite/>