**What Sociology Offers**

A sociological look at the world provides a number of unique benefits and perspectives.

Sociology provides an understanding of social issues and **patterns of behavior**.It helps us identify the social rules that govern our lives. Sociologists study how these rules are created, maintained, changed, passed between generations, and shared between people living in various parts of the world. They also study what happens when these rules are broken.

Sociology helps us understand the workings of the social systems within which we live our lives. Sociologists put our interactions with others into a social context. This means they look not only at behaviors and relationships, but also how the larger world we live in influences these things. Social structures (the way society is organized around the regulated ways people **interrelate** and organize social life) and social processes (the way society operates) are at work shaping our lives in ways that often go unrecognized. Because of this perspective, sociologists will often say that, as individuals, we are all social products.

Even though we recognize their existence, these structures and processes may “appear to people in the course of daily life as through a mysterious fog” (Lemert 2001, 6). Sociologists **strive** to bring these things out of the fog, to **reveal** and study them, and to examine and explain their interrelationships and their impacts on individuals and groups. By describing and explaining these social arrangements and how they **shape our lives**, sociologists help us to make sense of the world around us and better understand ourselves.

Sociology helps us understand why we **perceive**(воспринимаем) the world the way we do. We are **inundated** with messages in a variety of forms about how we, and the world around us, both are and should be. These messages come in forms as diverse as guidance from parents and teachers, laws handed down by religious and political **entities**, and advertisements ranging from pitches for athletic shoes to feeding hungry children. Sociology helps us examine the types of messages we are constantly receiving, their source, how and why they influence us, and our own roles in producing, **perpetuating**, and changing them.

Sociology helps us identify what we have in common within, and between, cultures and societies. Sociologists know that, although people in different parts of the city, country, or world dress differently, speak differently, and have many different beliefs and customs, many of the same types of social forces are at work shaping their lives. This is an especially important perspective in a world where media headlines (заголовки) are often accused of focusing on divisive issues. Sociologists look for what social structure and processes mean for various groups. They look at how various groups shape, and are impacted, by society. Sociologists can help groups find common concerns, understand other groups’ perspectives, and find ways to work together rather than work at odds with each other.

Sociology helps us understand why and how society changes. Obviously, the social world is constantly changing. This change has been a major interest to sociologists from the beginning of the discipline. However, many sociologists believe that sociology should not stop with only explaining society and how and why the world changes. They argue that sociologists also have an obligation to act, using their unique skills and perspectives to work to improve the world. Sociology, they argue, is a “**field of inquiry** simultaneously concerned with understanding, explaining, criticizing, and improving (italics mine) the human condition” (Restivo 1991, 4). Armed with a sociological perspective, we can more effectively take action if we don’t like what is happening. We can better participate in shaping the future for ourselves and for others.

Sociology is not just common sense. Results of sociological research may be unexpected. They often show that things are not always, or even usually, what they initially seem.

**The main idea of the text:**

Sociology is a many-sided science. (like conflicts that it solve). Sociology helps people to communicate with each other, to work and live together. Social structure integrates different people as from the different parts of the cities and countries as from the different parts of the world. Sociology solve divisive issues and conflicts as global as personal. It supervises the human behavior like a wise teacher and helps us to figure out various sociological and external world’s changes.

**Glossary:**

* **Patterns of behavior –** образцы, модели поведения
* **Interrelate –** объединять, делать взаимосвязанными
* **Strive –** прилагать усилия
* **Reveal -** выявлять
* **Shape our lives –** формировать нашу жизнь
* **Perceive - воспринимать**
* **Inundated** (with messages) **–** “завалены” сообщениями
* **Entities –** сущности, объекты
* **Perpetuate -** увеличивать
* **“Field of inquiry” –** “поле для исследования”

**SOCIAL STRUCTURE AND STATUS**

Humans are not preprogrammed biologically; culture and society are essential for human survival. Social structure is the way that society is organized. As in a theatre production, every member of society has a role to play. The structure of society contributes to making social life predictable. We have an idea of what to expect from new situations because we have a mental map for group situations. This map or awareness enables us to interact with others in an orderly manner. The underlying pattern of social relationships is called the social structure. Like culture, the social structure must be learned from others. Sociologists use the term status to refer to a position that one occupies within a social structure. Status defines who we are, and how we stand in relation to others within the same social structure. Some statuses are acquired at birth, others are **assumed** throughout one’s life. Statuses may be either ascribed or achieved**. Ascribed statuses** are not earned nor chosen, but assigned to us. Sex (except in the case of sex-change operations), age, and in some cases religion, are examples of ascribed statuses. An **achieved status** is earned or chosen. Being a parent or **spouse** and one’s occupation are examples of achieved statuses. The relationship between statuses is of interest to sociologists. A status set is all of the statuses that an individual occupies at any particular time. **Master statuses** are those that influence most other aspects of a person’s life. They may be achieved or ascribed. In industrialized societies occupations are often achieved master statuses. Having HIV/AIDS and being physically **handicapped** are examples of ascribed master statuses. Age, gender, race, and ethnicity are also considered master statuses because they shape opportunities to achieve other statuses. Statuses are similar to the parts performers play in theatre; the behavior of the individual depends largely on the status that individual holds.

**The main idea of the text:**

Social structure is directed on making human life more predictable and ordered. The mainest components are social statuses. They are divided into ascribed and achieved. Due to them people can have their own place in society : have a special power, influence and a stage in a career ladder. Sociologists learn how statutes impact on people relationship, how people that have different social statuses communicate with each other. There are also master statuses and people who have them usually tend to be leaders, they are strong and self-confident persons ( often popular) and they are always encourage and motivate the others.

**Glossary:**

* **Assume –** принимать, предполагать
* **Ascribed statuses –** предписанные статусы
* **Achieved statuses –** достигаемые статусы
* **Spouse -** супруг
* **Master statuses –** ведущие роли (статусы)
* **Handicapped –** инвалид

**Fairness and Inequality**

In most societies there are certain broadly shared beliefs about what is socially just and unjust, what is fair and unfair. Here is the basic problem: we observe some empirical case of social inequality – some people are better off than others or their lives are more fulfilling than others or they are healthier than others. These are observations. And we ask: is the observed inequality just or fair? Does the inequality **violate** some principle of justice? Now, some inequalities are simply cases of bad luck – one person gets hit by lightening, another does not.

There is a dramatic inequality in their fates. And there is a sense, of course, in which one could say (as kids do): that’s not fair; the person who got hit by lightening “didn’t deserve it.” Such expressions reflect a deep moral intuition that most people have: people should get what they deserve and deserve what they get. This is why when someone gets struck by lightening we say “that’s so unfair, they didn’t deserve that.”

When we talk about a social injustice – not just the unfairness of bad luck – what we mean is that there is an inequality which is unfair and which could be **remedied** if our social institutions were different. Something could in principle be done about it. When we say that it was a social injustice for African-Americans to be denied **admission** to all-white universities before the end of racial segregation in America what we mean is that it was not just “bad luck” to be born black and thus denied admission, but that this grossly unfair inequality in educational opportunity could have been remedied by a change in social institutions. This does not mean, of course, that it was politically possible to remedy that injustice in the 1920s or 1930s. Racial segregation was always a **profound** social injustice, as was slavery before it, but the social forces supporting segregation were so powerful and **cohesive** that until the 1950s and 1960s they were able to successfully repress struggles against segregation and maintain those institutions. The claim that an inequality is unjust, therefore, can be seen as an **indictment** of the way in which existing configurations of power block the social changes needed to reduce or **eliminate** the inequality in question.

Discussing problems of social justice quickly becomes really complicated, since a diagnosis of injustice really requires two judgments: first, a moral judgment that an inequality is unfair, and second, a sociological judgment that this unfairness could be remedied by a social change. It’s not fair that some children are born with physical disabilities – they don’t “deserve it”. But it is not in and of itself necessarily a social injustice. What becomes a social injustice is if there are things we could do to minimize the effects on people’s lives of the unfairness of such “bad luck” and fail to do so. The lack of curb cuts in sidewalks is an injustice for people in wheelchairs. The lack of affordable prosthetic limbs is an injustice for amputees. To insure that curb cuts exist requires a change in rules governing urban planning. To insure that everyone who needs a prosthetic limb can afford one requires a change in the rules governing access to medical services. Both of these constitute social changes. And since remedies such as these involve changes in the uses of resources, they almost inevitably **trigger** resistance and conflict from those who stand to lose from the social change.

When there is an inequality that is also an injustice – that is, an unfair inequality that could be remedied -- we can expect there to be a set of power relations operating in the situation which block the necessary remedies. Injustices do not continue just because of some law of inertia; they continue because people are unwilling to pay the costs to remedy the injustice and they have sufficient power to avoid doing so. This combination of inequality, injustice, and power is what we will call **oppression.**

**The main idea of the text:**

Social inequality or unfair “ bad luck ”, like most of people prefer to call it, is completely depends on human unwilling to pay for the changes and to struggle through some life hardships. But of course not all of the social injustice we should remedy, unfortunately, there is some of the unfairness we can’t impact on and we need to access this fact, but not give up. For example, physical disabilities that people usually get from childhood and live with for a whole life. You may say that “Why? They don’t deserve it”, and I will be absolutely agree with you. But it is not a verdict, it is a “push” for the action.

**Glossary:**

* **Violate -** нарушать
* **Remedy –** вылечивать, исправлять
* **Admission –** вход, принятие
* **Profound –** глубокий, основательный
* **Cohesive –** сплоченный, связующий
* **Indictment –** обвинение, обвинительный акт
* **Eliminate –** устранить, ликвидировать
* **Trigger -** вызывать
* **Oppression -** угнетение

**Technology**

Some would say that improving technology has made our lives easier. Imagine what your day would be like without the internet, the automobile, or electricity. In *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman (2005) argues that technology is a driving force behind globalization, while the other forces of social change (social institutions, population, environment) play comparatively minor roles. He suggests that we can view globalization as occurring in three distinct periods. First, globalization was driven by military expansion, powered by horsepower and windpower. The countries best able to take advantage of these power sources expanded the most, **exerting control** over the politics of the globe from the late 15th century to around the year 1800. The second shorter period, from approximately 1800 CE to 2000 CE, consisted of a globalizing economy. Steam and rail power were the guiding forces of social change and globalization in this period. Finally, Friedman brings us to the post-millennial era. In this period of globalization, change is driven by technology, particularly the internet (Friedman 2005).

But also consider that technology can create change in the other three forces social scientists link to social change. Advances in medical technology allow otherwise **infertile** women to **bear** children, indirectly leading to an increase in population. Advances in agricultural technology have allowed us to genetically **alter** and patent food products, changing our environment in innumerable ways. From the way we educate children in the classroom to the way we grow the food we eat, technology has impacted all aspects of modern life.

Of course there are **drawbacks**. The increasing gap between the technological haves and have-nots––sometimes called the **digital divide**––occurs both locally and globally. Further, there are added security risks: the loss of privacy, the risk of total system failure (like the Y2K panic at the turn of the **millennium**), and the added **vulnerability** created by technological dependence. Think about the technology that goes into keeping nuclear power plants running safely and securely. What happens if an earthquake or other disaster, as in the case of Japan’s Fukushima plant, causes the technology to **malfunction**, not to mention the possibility of a systematic attack to our nation’s relatively vulnerable technological infrastructure?

**The main idea of the text:**

The technology is a very strong, modern and incessantly developing power, that alter all the spheres of human life. It improves the agricultural industry, advances medicine, changes peoples’ attitude for the environment ( they became to respect and appreciate it, trying to save its beauty). The most important source nowadays is the internet. It helps people to do their work quickly and save a lot of time every day. There are also some disadvantages like digital divide, but they are considerably less than positive sides.

**Glossary:**

* **Exerting control –** осуществляя контроль
* **Infertile -** бесплодный
* **Bear –** рождать**,** терпеть, нести
* **Alter -** изменять
* **Drawbacks -** недостатки
* **Digital divide –** цифровой разрыв
* **Vulnerability -** уязвимость
* **Millennium -** тысячелетие
* **Malfunction –** неисправность, дисфункция

**Resource Mobilization**

Social movements will always be a part of society as long as there are aggrieved populations whose needs and interests are not being satisfied. However, **grievances** do not become social movements unless social movement actors are able to create **viable** organizations, mobilize resources, and attract large-scale followings. As people will always weigh their options and make rational choices about which movements to follow, social movements necessarily form under finite competitive conditions: competition for attention, financing, commitment, organizational skills, etc. Not only will social movements compete for our attention with many other concerns—from the basic (our jobs or our need to feed ourselves) to the broad (video games, sports, or television), but they also compete with each other. For any individual, it may be a simple matter to decide you want to spend your time and money on animal **shelters** and Conservative Party politics versus homeless shelters and the New Democratic Party. The question is, however, which animal shelter or which Conservative candidate? To be successful, social movements must develop the organizational **capacity** to mobilize resources (money, people, and skills) and compete with other organizations to reach their goals.

McCarthy and Zald (1977) conceptualizeresource mobilization theory as a way to explain a movement’s success in terms of its ability to acquire resources and mobilize individuals to achieve goals and take advantage of political opportunities. For example, PETA, a social movement organization, is in competition with Greenpeace and the Animal Liberation Front (ALF), two other social movement organizations. Taken together, along with all other social movement organizations working on animals rights issues, these similar organizations constitute a **social movement industry**. Multiple social movement industries in a society, though they may have widely different constituencies and goals, constitute a society’s **social movement sector**. Every social movement organization (a single social movement group) within the social movement sector is competing for your attention, your time, and your resources