

Understanding social behaviours

Sociology is the science that studies man living in society, the relationships between individuals and the functioning mechanisms of human societies. Let's apply this definition to a simple example:

Grégory Letourneur comes home from school, accompanied by his mother; arriving at a dangerous crossroads, she starts to daydream, he begins to cross while the traffic light is red for pedestrians; his mother catches up with him and gives him a monumental set of slaps!



This act may seem trivial and unworthy of attention to you, but on closer analysis the apprentice sociologist can draw some lessons from it. Grégory and his mother are part of the same family; the mother, by punishing her child, shows authority, she leads him to internalise a safety rule. It is part of her role in the education of her child. The same foolishness committed by a child from another family might not have resulted in such violent punishment.

Each gesture of daily life can therefore become an object of study for the sociologist. However, this scene will only become an object of study if, after numerous observations, it is possible to identify statistical regularities (ex: in which case are children punished?) And to update certain explanatory mechanisms.

Basic Sociology, Nathan, 1992.

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