

Social Analysis Project

Solidarity: “The Opening of Worlds” that leads to Justice

What is Social Analysis?

Social analysis involves research to construct a comprehensive picture of a social injustice by exploring its historical and structural relationships. Social analysis is a necessary prerequisite to addressing social injustices, as diagnosis is the necessary prerequisite to curing physical illnesses. Essentially, social analysis enables us to identify specific patterns that violate universal human dignity and the common good so reforms can be developed and implemented.

OBSERVE: Explore the facts of a social injustice you regard as social sin. Uncover the root causes by gathering historical data, statistics and other expert information that describes the issues.

JUDGE: Reflect on information gathered and identify how this situation of social injustice violates the moral principles of social justice. Describe how JUSTICE is missing.

ACT: After careful analysis of the information gathered and the social principles violated, identify realistic and effective strategies that would bring about justice.

Pioneers of the Observe – Judge – Act Model

Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (Written 1265-1274)

SECOND PART OF THE SECOND PART, Question 47, Article 8

Whether command is the chief act of prudence?

I answer that, Prudence is "right reason applied to action," as stated above. Hence that which is the chief act of reason in regard to action must be the chief act of prudence. Now there are three such acts.

- The first is "**to take counsel**," which belongs to discovery, for counsel is an act of inquiry, as stated above.
- The second act is "**to judge of what one has discovered**," and this is an act of the speculative reason.
- But the practical reason, which is directed to action, goes further, and its third act is "to command," which act consists in **applying to action the things counseled and judged**. And since this act approaches nearer to the end of the practical reason, it follows that it is the chief act of the practical reason, and consequently of prudence.

Belgian priest Joseph Cardijn and the Young Christian Workers (1924)

The Observe, Judge, Act model is taught as a continuous process of reflection and action to bring about social change.

Pope John XXIII, *Mother and Teacher*, (1961) #236-237

There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.

It is important for our young people to grasp this method and to practice it. Knowledge acquired in this way does not remain merely abstract, but is seen as something that must be translated into action.

Observe – Seeing, hearing, and experiencing the lived reality of individuals and communities.
 Carefully examine the primary data of the situation. What are the people in this situation experiencing, feeling, and saying? What is happening to them and how do they respond?

Judge – The heart of the process involving two movements:

Social Analysis -- Obtaining a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring its history and structural relationships. We attempt to make sense of the reality Observed. Why are things this way? What are the root causes?

Theological Reflection – Analyzing the experience in the light of Gospel values and social tradition. How do Gospel values and principles help us to understand this reality in a different way? How does this reality fall short of the Gospel’s call to justice?

Act – Planning and carrying out actions aimed at transforming the social structures that cause suffering and injustice.

Social Analysis is difficult. Why?

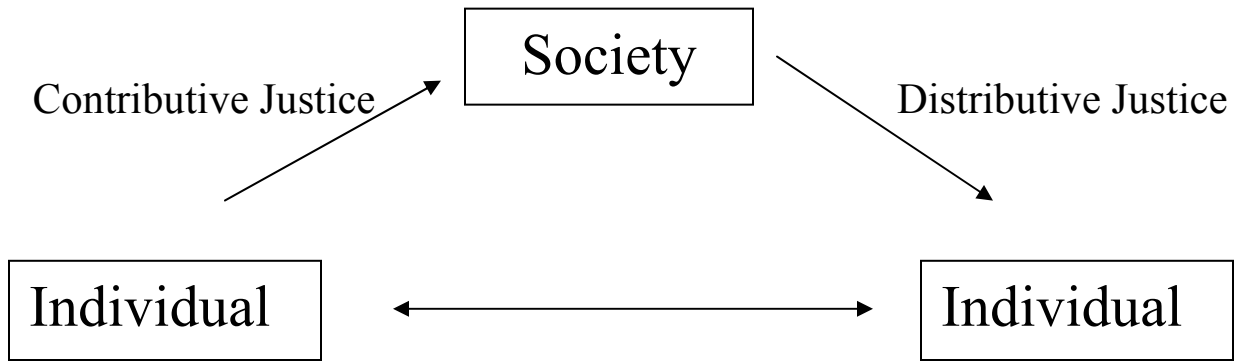
Social injustices are complex. Unfortunately complexity can make us feel powerless – even fatalistic. We may fear that the more we study, the more confused we may become. Dr. Martin Luther King described this as the “paralysis of analysis.”

Social injustices change. Last year’s description of a social issue may not be valid today.

Social analysis involves controversy. Social analysis is not value-free. It involves braving the moral question, “Just because we can, should we?” in regards to traditions and systems.

Foundations of Social Justice: Equality, Merit, Protect the Vulnerable

<p style="text-align: center;">Distributive Justice</p> <p>Society has the <i>responsibility</i> to provide for the basic needs of all members for the common good.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Community’s responsibility toward its members</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This includes large social sectors: Government, Families, Corporations and Businesses, Schools, Medical Profession</p>	<p>Just societies provide the necessary means for safety and healthy development that human dignity requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Safety • Food • Shelter • Healthcare • Education • Meaningful employment • Living wages • Due process
<p style="text-align: center;">Contributive Justice</p> <p>Each member of society has the <i>right</i> and <i>responsibility</i> to positively contribute to common good <u>according to each person’s ability</u>.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Each individual member’s responsibility to the Community</p>	<p>Just individuals contribute to the common good of society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By becoming educated • By exercising responsible, self regulating citizenship • Through informed participation in the political process • By giving back to society through meaningful work



The Social Analysis Project

- Decide if you will be working independently or with one or two others.
- Select an issue of social injustice to research using the OBSERVE, JUDGE, ACT model.
- Prepare a 9-10 minute PowerPoint presentation to report your social analysis.
(3 minute minimum required per member of a group)

Each Presentation Must Include the following 6 Requirements

1. **OBSERVE:** Present your research concerning this injustice. Use the following questions to frame your research:
 - **Does this issue involve Distributive and/or Contributive Injustice?**

If Distributive Injustice, the issue involves society's failure to justly meet the needs of its members. Describe how this issue involves powerful institutions and/or cultural patterns that perpetuate injustices. How is society failing to meet the essential needs of certain members by directly oppressing individuals or standing by idle, allowing a sector of society to mistreat other members of society?

If Contributive Injustice, there are specific members of society who are failing in their just responsibilities to society. Describe how this issue involves individual irresponsibility toward the rest of society. How are some members of society perpetuating injustices on society at large? How are individual people failing to be responsible members of society?
 - **Describe the Vulnerable Population(s) affected directly or indirectly by this issue – the *Anawim*** *Anawim* is an Old Testament Hebrew word translated as "poor" or "afflicted". It is the *Anawim*, "the lost and the forgotten ones," to whom Jesus refers to in The Sermon on the Mount - Matthew 5:3,5 "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven", and "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."
 - **Identify and describe in depth at least one Root Cause of this issue of injustice.** Are there historical events that caused or aggravated the injustices associated with this issue? Are there dominant social attitudes or patterns of thinking that have caused or aggravated the injustices associated with this issue? Are there social traditions or patterns of behavior that have caused or aggravated the injustices associated with this issue?

You must indicate Research! Gather statistics, examples, quotes, timelines, maps, charts, graphs, etc. to explain your SEE findings to the class.

2. **JUDGE:** Identify at least 2 Catholic Social Teaching (CST) themes/principles that are violated by this issue of social injustice. You may not use "human dignity" for this requirement since this is a principle violated by all injustices in some way. Explain specifically how the 2 moral principles you have identified are violated.

For the list of CST see <http://www.osjspm.org/cst/themes.htm> Demonstrate that you understand the 2 principles selected and how the issue you have researched violates these moral principles.

3. **ACT:** Provide detailed information about ONE Organization that is working for social justice concerning this issue.

- Determine if this organization does social service or social change, or both.
- Describe the organization's
 - i. Overall mission or purpose
 - ii. Recommendations for what an average person can do about this social injustice

Social Service Organizations	Social Change Organizations
Respond to the immediate needs of individuals currently suffering from the injustices of this issue	Respond to long-term situation of injustice to prevent people from becoming victims in the future
Provide direct <i>services</i> : food, clothing, shelter, etc...	Promote <i>change</i> in society: work to change the way people think or behave; change the system
Require repeated actions to assist individuals currently suffering	Resolve problems in the social system causing injustices to prevent individuals from suffering in the future
Directed at the effects of injustice: symptoms	Directed at the root causes of social injustices: attitudes and policies that perpetuate injustices
Example: homeless shelter	Example: providing incentives for builders to want to construct affordable housing and not just expensive homes

4. **Create an interesting presentation:**
- Introduce yourself and begin with a CLEVER introduction that gets our interest. This might be a question, a poll, a personal story about why you chose this issue, etc...
 - Include at least 1 INTERACTIVE creative element that INVOLVES your audience. Make sure your audience has an opportunity to respond or do something. Your clever intro could be your interactive element. If you show a video clip, you must think of a way to involve the audience.
 - Finish with an interesting conclusion. This might be something to think about, ask your audience to change their thinking or behavior, show them something visual they will remember, etc...
5. **A PRINTED 'Works-Cited' page of websites and print resources used in research. Minimum 3 resources.**

6. An effective Presentation:

- PowerPoint outline of the presentation's main ideas. It includes both large print and interesting graphics. No spelling or grammatical errors.
- Presenter is knowledgeable – doesn't simply read notes or PowerPoint slides
- Professional presentation style (no gum, in uniform, poised)
- 5-7 minutes in length per person

Social Analysis: Learning about a current issue of Social Injustice and an Organization working to bring about Justice

Definitions of Justice

- **Equality:** Equal rights and responsibilities
- **Merit:** Everyone gets what each deserves
- **The vulnerable members of society are protected**

Principles of Social Justice: Catholic Social Teachings

- **The Diversity of Human Dignity is Honored and Protected**
- **Nurtures the building blocks of society: Productive Participation in Families and Local Communities**
- **Basic Human Rights are Safeguarded: life, food, housing, clothing, security, healthcare, employment, and education**
- **The Poor and Vulnerable are Cared for (The *Anawim*)**
- **The Dignity and Rights of Workers are Respected by Employers**
- **Solidarity is Created: people cross over boundaries of age, race, ability, nationality/ethnicity, etc to support one another in good times and bad**
- **The Environment is Protected for Future Generations**

Social Analysis of a Social Injustice: Subject Ideas and Web Resource Starting Places

Public Agenda
Human Rights Watch
PBS Frontline
Catholic Social Teaching

<http://www.publicagenda.org/>
<http://www.hrw.org/>
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/>
http://www.osjspm.org/major_themes.aspx

Abortion	http://www.abortionfacts.com/ http://www.birthright.org/ http://www.guttmacher.org/statecenter/spibs/spib_OAL.pdf
Domestic Abuse	http://www.wadv.org/wadv1.htm http://www.edvp.org/GetInformed/CycleOfViolence.aspx http://www.wadvocates.org/
Xenophobia and Immigration	http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?sid=175 http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/new-americans-north-star-state
Understand the Immigration Process	http://www.foreignborn.com/visas_imm/immigrant_visas/9imm_process.htm
<u>Social Dimensions of one specific Addiction</u>	
(Examine how a specific addiction is promoted by society through manipulative and exploitive patterns (including advertising) and how the addiction harms society - <i>avoid researching the biological dimension of addiction</i>)	
Consumerism	http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/cool/ http://www.globalissues.org/TradeRelated/Consumption.asp http://www.storyofstuff.com/
Corporate Injustices - choose a corporation that has a current track record of unjust business practices that violate workers' rights and/or harm the environment	
	http://www.corpwatch.org/index.php http://www.change.org/sweatshop_watch
Examine the legal status of corporation as "person" and a recent case of corporate injustice	http://www.reclaimdemocracy.org/personhood/
Unjust Distribution of Wealth	http://www.aflcio.org/corporatewatch/paywatch/ http://www.demos.org/inequality/about.cfm http://www.globalissues.org/article/26/poverty-facts-and-stats
Crisis in Affordable Healthcare	http://www.pnhp.org/ http://www.pbs.org/healthcarecrisis/
Poverty (Focus on a region in the U.S., a specific population, or a specific underdeveloped country in the world)	
U.S. Poverty Stats: States, Counties, Cities	http://usccb.org/cchd/povertyusa/povfacts.shtml
Appalachia	http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/countryboys/readings/duncan.html
Pine Ridge Reservation	http://www.itvs.org/homeland/today2.html
Poverty and Hurricane Katrina	http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=658
Elderly	http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/07/elderly_poverty.html
Global	http://www.oxfam.org/
Crisis in Affordable Housing	http://www.fhfund.org/ http://www.afhh.org/comm_ar/comm_ar_crisis.htm
Landmines	http://www.icbl.org/ http://www.howstuffworks.com/landmine.htm
Organ Black Market	http://www.vachss.com/help_text/organ_trafficking.html http://health.howstuffworks.com/organ-donation7.htm

Exploitation of Children <http://www.freethechildren.com/index.php>
http://www.missingkids.com/missingkids/servlet/PublicHomeServlet?LanguageCountry=en_US

Broken Criminal Justice System
Convicting the Innocent Without Restitution <http://www.innocenceproject.org/>
<http://www.innocenceproject.org/Content/2276.php>

Repeat Offenders (Recidivism) <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/rpr94.htm>
Restorative Justice <http://www.restorativejustice.org/>

Bullying -Social Hierarchies <http://www.bullybeware.com/moreinfo.html>
<http://www.cyberbullying.us/>
<http://abcnews.go.com/Primetime/story?id=2421562&page=1>

Coal Mining Mt Top Removal <http://ilovemountains.org/>
<http://mountainjustice.org/facts/steps.php>

AIDS Pandemic <http://www.johnmlloyd.org/docs/chronology.pdf>
<http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/05/060525-aids-chimps.html>
<http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp>

Native American Sovereignty <http://www.bluecorncomics.com/sovrein.htm>
http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/weshallremain/native_now/sovereignty

Sexual Harassment <http://www.eeoc.gov/facts/fs-sex.html>
<http://www.sexualharassmentsupport.org/JensonVsEvelethMines.html>

Torture in Interrogation <http://www.tortureawareness.com/>
http://www.nrcat.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=298&Itemid=219

Pharmaceutical Testing on the Poor <http://www.newswithviews.com/Dean/carolyn9.htm>
<http://www.globalissues.org/article/52/pharmaceutical-corporations-and-medical-research>
The Tuskegee Experiment <http://www.npr.org/programs/morning/features/2002/jul/tuskegee/>

Child Soldiers <http://www.hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm>
<http://www.child-soldiers.org/home>

Conflict Diamonds <http://www.un.org/peace/africa/Diamond.html>
<http://www.amnestyusa.org/diamonds/index.do>