

# How reality is socially constructed essay sample

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



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## **Introduction**

Over the years, scientists have greatly differed on what reality is. They have always sought to find the best definition of reality, and to explain what reality is. Sociologists, on the other hand, have a tendency to argue that reality differs from one individual to another. This raises a number of questions. For instances, what determines reality? How can reality differ depending on different individuals? In order to fully understand this, it is vital for one to note that reality is, to some extent, socially constructed. The manner that one interacts with other members of the society determines the way that they present themselves to the community. Life experiences also have a direct impact in determining the way that an individual may present himself or herself to the society. Different individuals are raised differently, with different beliefs, which shape the way that one presents themselves to the society. It also determines the decision making process, hence a direct impact on how one may perceive other members of the society. This means that the perception of reality depends on an individual's beliefs and background. A constant aspect may seem to be reality to one individual, while a second individual may not perceive it as being reality. The exposure

that people get within the society determines the experiences they will get. This shows that reality is socially constructed.

## **How reality is socially constructed**

The understanding of the world depends on jointly constructed perspectives. In essence, the way that individuals understand a certain phenomenon, the importance to which they may attach to the phenomenon and the meaning that they may attribute to the phenomenon are not individually developed (O'Brien et al. 2001). Important to note is the fact that such interpretation of the various phenomena in the society is as a result of the coordination that exists with other people who may hold different views. In most cases, human beings have a tendency of rationalizing the experience they have on the world by creating a social world model and the manner that it functions. Language plays a big role in constructing reality. On its own, language is not individually constructed, rather a social construction. As a result, therefore, it would be wise to argue that reality does not depend on personal attributes and perceptions, rather depends on what the society presumes about a certain phenomenon.

Reality as a construction of a society means that it is as a combination of different human choices. It generalizes perceptions rather than singularizing personal judgment. The theory of social constructionism opposes essentialism where phenomena in the society are interpreted depending on individual and independent judgment. Social constructionism plays a big role in determining the manner groups and individuals participate in constructing what they may perceive as being social reality (O'Brien, et al, 2001).

Creation of social phenomena is not achieved individually. It is because of

communal creation, institutionalization, and classifications into traditions by humans that the phenomena are created into traditions. Construction of reality is a process that is always dynamic and ongoing. As a result of this, the process ought to be reproduced by individuals that act on their interpretations and the knowledge of the process.

It is extremely important to note that the main facets of reality that are socially constructed are not nature given. This makes it essential that the reality must be maintained constantly and be re-affirmed if it is to exist and persist. Different things are prone to change depending on the individuals that determine the phenomenon. For instance, the meaning of justice may constantly change from one generation to another in society depending on the interpretation that the members of the society may give it. Communal beliefs play a crucial role in determining what society may refer to as reality (O'Brien et al. 2001).

Reality is mostly associated with knowledge about something, because of the social relativity among them. Human knowledge is developed and transmitted in social situations. Such transmission of knowledge from one generation to another is crucial in that the beliefs of the society can be transferred from one generation to another. In determining what is good in the society and what is bad, an analysis of communal values and beliefs is essential (O'Brien et al. 2001). The understanding of the transfer of knowledge, therefore, explains how reality is constructed by social constructions.

Knowledge and reality are inseparable. Knowledge is mostly distributed in the society by the members who carry it in both theory and practice.

Sociology of knowledge dictates how knowledge is transferred from one generation to another using the communication process and the face-to-face methods.

An analysis of the day-to-day life refrains from genetic or casual hypotheses and assertions on the ontological status of the analyzed phenomena.

Common sense has different quasi and pre-scientific interpretations on everyday reality. Such interpretations are very important since they have to be referred to if we intend to describe the reality of common sense. People tend to relate consciousness with reality. In normal practice, consciousness is directed towards objects. In viewing some phenomena and analyzing it, a person's conscious leads them to have some intentions on certain aspects of the phenomena. Consciousness of something may differ from anxiety awareness

Human beings share reality through everyday life experiences through vices such as face to face communications. In simple terms, social interactions within a society promote the manner and perception that people may develop towards a certain issue. Through the face to face communications, what is inevitable is the continuous interchange of the expressivities of the parties to a communication. The facial expressions that people put up mainly depend on the topic up for discussion and the reaction of the other party to what they hear. As such, the expressions that are adopted are directly oriented to the other person's expressions. It is only through such face-to-face communications that the other party can be considered to be fully real because one can see and touch them. Such realities are always compelling since they fall under the category of overall reality. Phenomena not

presented in the face-to-face mechanism may be real even without a face-to-face encounter, using the reputation mechanism or corresponding with them (O'Brien et al. 2001). However, they become more real to the fullest sense when they meet face to face

Throughout history, relationships with other people in face-to-face situations are very flexible as compared to any other form. During the face-to-face interaction, it is so difficult to impose patterns that are rigid. The flexibility presented with the face-to-face interactions means that the patterns that will be introduced will be modified continuously depending on the subjective meaning that will proceed. A good example for this is where a person, in a face-to-face communication, views the other as being unfriendly because of a pattern of unfriendly expressions. However, in face-to-face situations, the other party may confront the first party in a manner that is inconsistent with the patterns in question, hence forcing one to change their attitude and perception when interpreting the expressions. Through examining how we relate to the people around us, it is crucial to note that we develop some form of reality depending on what surrounds us. It is easy to trust someone that we converse in a face-to-face manner than trusting someone that is in a distant place. This is mainly because we are able to analyze the surrounding and make decisions based on what we see (O'Brien et al. 2001). By analyzing the surrounding, we simply look at other people and try to interpret them and what their beliefs in the society are. In a direct manner, this implies that human beings make decisions based on the communal beliefs and the perceptions that other people have towards a certain aspect of life.

Detaching reality from the surrounding and the communal values and

believes creates a situation whereby it is difficult to understand what the true meaning of something in a place is. The society, therefore, plays an important role in determining what reality is.

Reality is always filled with objectivities. In a society, we are always surrounded by fellowmen and the values they hold directly impacts the decision making process of an individual on a certain aspect. Language is one aspect that explains the direct impact that the society and the surrounding have in shaping an individual's lingual. By constantly interacting with those that surround us, we get to develop some of understanding with their expectations and the values they may uphold. A person's first language is always determined by the ethnicity and the surrounding they are raised in. By being introduced to the culture and traditions of a given society at an early age, one is given an orientation to the expectations of the society, the do's and the don'ts (O'Brien et al. 2001). In the long run, the beliefs that are held by the society affect a person's perceptions to certain issues. Due to this reason, reality about something may differ from one given culture to the other depending on the individual notions that people have towards certain aspects of life.

Coordinated interaction in the society directly affects an individual's ability of making definitions and maintaining them. These definitions are always a product of the society since the ancient times that are supported by communication from one generation to another. It is worthy to note that there is a complex relationship between society, communication and self. The cultures of the society define who an individual will be and how they will communicate. Communication is essentially a very critical element in the

society because through it, it is possible to change the structures that create human beings.

The society has a step-by-step process through which members of a society construct reality. It may all start with simple individual character and behavior. The personal habits practiced by few men in the society may end up becoming public and as a result, they may be adopted by a majority of the community members. Adoption by the community members is likely to make the habits widely accepted and have a strong impact on the beliefs of the society. Such habits may end up being passed on through different generations in the society to the extent that it will become difficult to argue against them (O'Brien et al. 2001). At this stage, the habits would have succeeded in being classified as the truth in the society and anybody going against it will be seen as going against the realities of life. Important to note is the fact that such habits are created and developed by the surrounding people, who have a direct impact on determining the value that is attached to a societal norm. In most cases, it becomes difficult to go against such habits and as a result, the society would have constructed some reality that ought to be followed. Going against such norms would simply mean choosing the wrong way.

Reality and habits always arise naturally in the society. In essence, frequently repeating an action has an impact of casting it into a pattern. Consistency in a pattern will effectively be reproduced and in the long run, it will be accepted in the society. An excellent way of explaining this is by looking at an example of a habit that may start as a simple practice and end up being accepted in the society. An individual in society may decide to



be addressing people in a certain manner when greeting them. As a result of this, he may end up influencing other people to adopting that style and after a while, all the people in the society would adopt it. Such an impact that is caused by a habit that was invented by one individual may end up being considered a norm in the society. This, therefore, explains the fact that the values the people hold in a society about certain aspects depend on how the society constructs them. Reality is socially constructed the same manner gender roles are constructed, through constant practice of a habit.

Effectively, this means that what may be considered reality in one place may not necessarily be considered as reality in another part of the world (O'Brien et al. 2001).

The class on reality plays a crucial role in determining the manner that we see different issues in the world. Anything that is to be considered as reality ought to depend on how the society dictates. Individual analysis and judgment plays an insignificant role in determining what is true in the society. The traditions and norms are very essential in determining the expected behaviors of human beings. I have also learnt to appreciate the fact that whatever that is accepted by the society as being reality depends on the norms and expectations of the members of the society. As such, choosing what to consider as reality may fully depend on the expectations of the members of the society.

Communication has always facilitated the social realities in society. In almost all cultures, human beings ought to negotiate several objects and events regardless of the roles they play in the society. To some extent, such negotiations may include fields such as the normal life activities and the

contexts through which they occur. Events and objects in the society exist objectively. Reality is just the knowledge about them. In most cases, the knowledge that exists about them may involve descriptions that are less accurate about them and the manner that the human beings respond to them. The manner that such events and objects make us change our actions plays a crucial role in shaping reality in the society. The objects and events of the world are the things that we simply find, and we end up developing some knowledge about them. The knowledge may differ from one geographical location to another, depending on the values that a society may decide to attach to a certain phenomenon. Through seeking to understand what the values stand for, humans tend to relate the events and objects to the already existing knowledge. However, no guarantee is given that such an association will provide the reality about a given situation. As a result of this, it would be wise to argue that reality is socially constructed.

## **References**

O'Brien, J., & Kollock, P. (2001). *The production of reality: Essays and readings on social interaction*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Pine Forge Press.