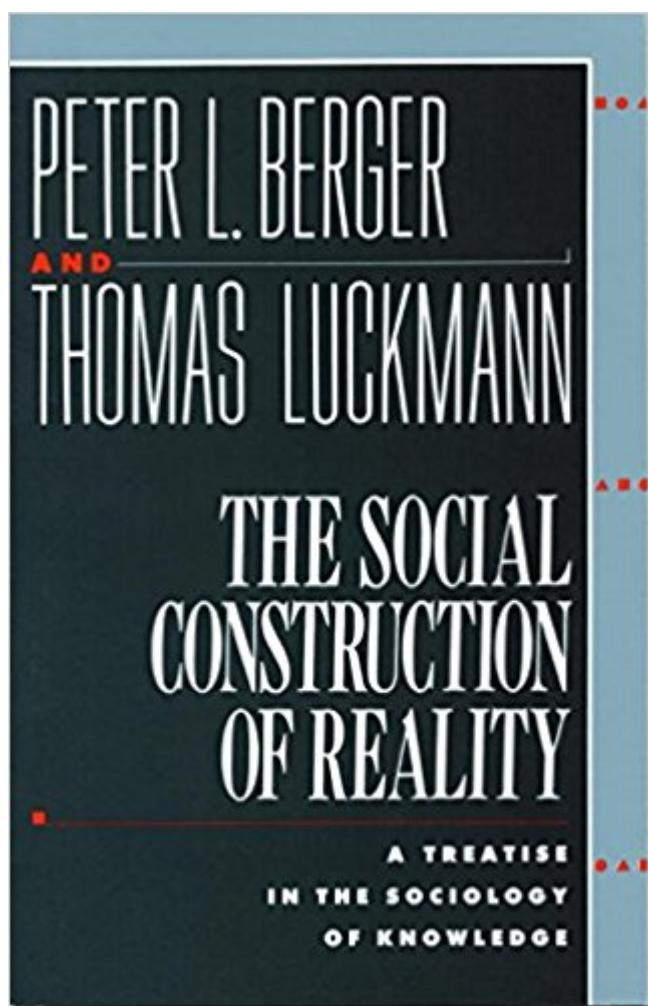


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# The Social Construction Of Reality: A Treatise In The Sociology Of Knowledge



## Synopsis

Called the "fifth-most important sociological book of the 20th century" by the International Sociological Association, this groundbreaking study of knowledge introduces the concept of "social construction" into the social sciences for the first time. In it, Berger and Luckmann reformulate the task of the sociological subdiscipline that, since Max Scheler, has been known as the sociology of knowledge.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"... A major breakthrough in the sociology of knowledge." -- American Sociological Review.

This book reformulates the sociological subdiscipline known as the sociology of knowledge. Knowledge is presented as more than ideology, including as well false consciousness, propaganda, science and art. "... A major breakthrough in the sociology of knowledge." -- American Sociological Review.

This is a rich compact book. I came across it while doing reading on epistemology. This book is well suited for an organized reading group. It is short but dense and should probably both be read slowly and read again. I have read it without the benefit of a reading group. Until I have read the book again, the best summary I can give is the following passages from the book. It will be enough, for our purposes, to define reality as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot wish them

away), and to define knowledge as the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics. It is our contention, then, that the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for knowledge in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such knowledge. And insofar as all human knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations, the sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes by which this is done in such a way that a taken-for-granted reality congeals for the man in the street. In other words, we contend that the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction of reality. The theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is real for the members of a society. Since this is so, the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people know as reality in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, commonsense knowledge rather than ideas must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this knowledge that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist. Two earlier writers on the sociology of knowledge cited by Berger and Luckmann are Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge* and Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Knowledge: Toward a Deeper Understanding of the History of Ideas*.

This work offers a controversial, though fascinating, theory of how society comes to be the way it is. As phenomenologists, Berger and Luckmann are interested in describing the social world. As social theorists, they are interested in explaining what society is. As such, they provide an interesting account for how society comes to be the way it is, how individuals within society come to be the way they are, and how we change. Anybody who is interested in "why must things be this way" will find this work intriguing. Again, the work itself is controversial, but if you are a reader who has an open mind and suspects many aspects of the world are arbitrary, this is a good book for you.

This is an important book. A classic in the field. But be forewarned: it is a challenging read. It cannot be skimmed and must be carefully read and carefully thought about.

Read this book many years ago in hard copy. The premise of this book explains a lot about how Trump became President. I love all of Peter Berger's books. Heard him in person at a conference at

USC in 2006 and love his thinking, even though I am more conservative in my religious thought than is he.

This book should be considered absolutely required reading for anyone studying sociology or psychology, or anything else. This book is written so well it elucidates some of the most profound and insightful psycho-social theories in plain english, although some familiarity with basic social science terminology is a prerequisite for thorough comprehension. Its impossible to give a complete synopsis of it in a brief review, but overall the book covers the construction of social reality in complete detail, from institutions to the microsocial world of individual identity construction. The section on society as subjective reality, and the subsection on identity, is of absolute importance for psychologists like myself who work with identity problems like DID. Too often psychotherapy of the self and identity ignores the underlying fact that these are dialectic social products. The foundation of self improvement and change is this awareness of the socially constructed self. This book explains all of this with great clarity and a lot of useful examples.

A very thought-provoking book. It really challenges you, but in a friendly way. The writing is crystal clear, warm and often witty. No need to "crack the code" of terminology: you get straight at the ideas. THAT is where the challenge is. Berger and Luckmann have crafted a fascinating argument, drawing on earlier sociological classics (Weber and Durkheim in particular) but also incorporating key insights and concerns from phenomenology, existentialism, and pragmatism. So there's a pedigree. But you don't need to be confident about or even familiar with Berger and Luckmann's predecessors to understand and appreciate this work. It stands alone as a classic in its own right. In fact, I appreciate the earlier works more AFTER having read the Social Construction of Reality. That's probably because Berger and Luckmann are so skilled and generous in explaining the best of what other theorists have to offer.

You will find this resource is referenced in nearly every study having to do with sociolinguistic analysis. This resource does not focus on any kind of quantitative study of sociology, or language but is a continuous and penetrating philosophical understanding of how the world uses both language, and the social structure to create what we call our "day-to-day reality." Highly recommended reading.

One of the most useful communication theories I used in my teaching career. Highly recommend for

any and all communication majors and professors.

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