

2. Social construction happens in a cyclical process

One key concept in the social construction of reality is the mutual influence between individuals and society. Humans shape and create their societies through their actions and beliefs, while simultaneously being shaped and formed by the societies they are born into. This relationship can be thought of as a dialectic, with neither society nor individuals existing independently of one another. It's a dynamic and iterative process, where society and individuals are constantly influencing each other:

Humans are a product of their societies *and* societies are the product of humans.

We create our societies. Generation after generation we author, edit, and change our societies. Yet, we are also born into these societies and they form us, shape us, and make us who we are.

In their classic book, '*The Social Construction of Reality*' published in 1966, Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann give a three part formulation of how this process takes place. Social construction emerges from:

1. Externalization

Externalization refers to the process of expressing or communicating internal thoughts and emotions through external means. This can be done through various forms of communication such as gestures, language, and artifacts. Through externalization, individuals take ideas and feelings from within themselves and make them visible to others, thus creating the first step in social construction. Externalization can take many forms, such as through gestures like waving, winking, or flipping someone off, through language such as spoken or written words, or through the creation or use of artifacts like clothes, art, or items. It's the process of making internal subjective things external, making them visible to others.

2. Objectivation

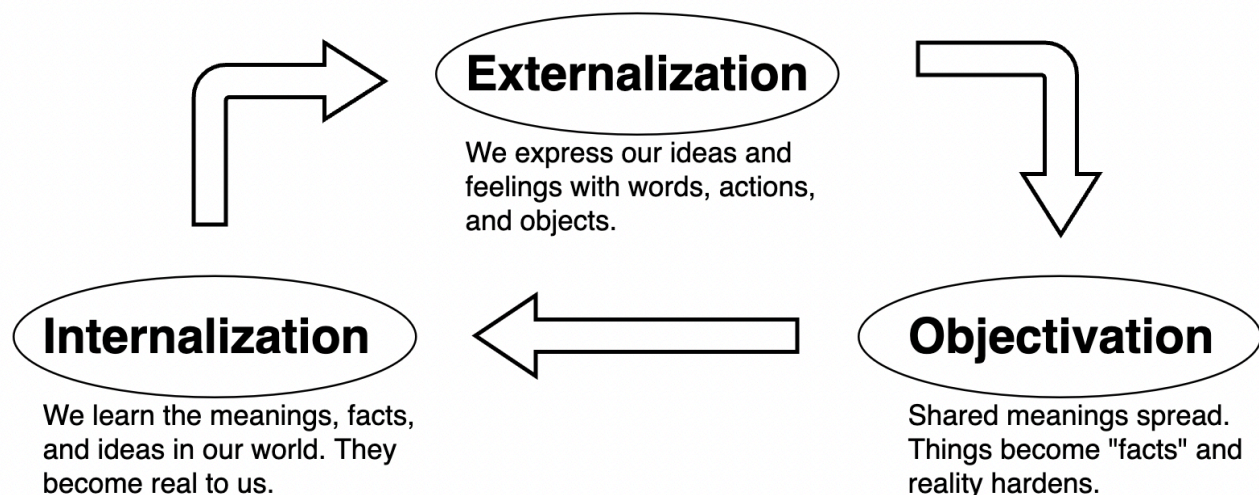
Objectivation refers to the process of externalized ideas and emotions becoming recognized and understood by others, taking on meaning separate from the individual. The words we speak, gestures we make, and artifacts we create become recognized and understood by others and take on meaning beyond ourselves. This process can be seen when a new word becomes part of a common lexicon and is understood by a group of people, or when a gesture becomes widely recognized and understood by a culture. Similarly, the clothing we wear can become objectivated, as a style becomes recognized and understood by a larger group of people. Objectivation can happen much faster in modern society due to the ability of the internet and social media to spread artifacts of culture more efficiently. Objectivation can also occur on a small scale, within a single subculture, as well as on a broader scale in mainstream society. It is the process by which

externalized ideas and emotions become recognized and understood by others, taking on meaning beyond the individual.

3. Internalization

Internalization is the process of taking the externalized ideas and symbols that have taken on meaning and bringing them into our own minds, interpreting and making them our own. We subjectively internalize these meanings and make them our own, sometimes interpreting these symbols differently from the intended meanings of those who externalized them. However, If a symbol is widely objectivated and understood by a group, we are more likely to interpret it accurately and in a way that aligns with the meanings agreed upon by others in our social world. For example, most people can distinguish a houseplant from a Christmas tree, as the meaning of a Christmas tree has been internalized by most people.

Internalization is the process of taking external objects and symbols and making them a part of our everyday expectations. Over time, as we encounter the same things repeatedly, they become normalized to us and we come to expect them. We expect the same products at stores, the same types of people on the sidewalks, the same types of programming on our digital devices, and the same types of foods on restaurant menus. Occasionally, we may encounter something new and novel, which may be surprising and initially confusing, but eventually through exposure or explanation, we come to understand it and it becomes a part of our internalized expectations. Internalization is the opposite of externalization, where we take the things in the world that have been recognized and understood by others and make them a part of our own understanding and experience.



Together, externalization, objectivation, and internalization form a cyclical process that continuously repeats for every individual and society. These three steps are constantly shaping our understanding and experience of the world. It's important to note that these three processes occur simultaneously and in no

Interrogate Society: The Social Construction of Everyday Life

particular order. They are constantly happening all around us and for everyone, shaping our experiences and understanding of the world on a daily basis, and forming culture and society at the same time.