

Thinking about Social Problems: An Introduction to Constructionist Perspectives



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(Juston Mraz)

THINKING ABOUT SOCIAL PROBLEMS: AN INTRODUCTION TO CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVES

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Aldine. Paperback. Book Condition: New. This item is printed on demand. Paperback. 224 pages. While social constructionist approaches to social problems are popular among academic researchers in sociology, communication, public policy, and criminology, this perspective tends not to be adequately covered in popular social problems texts. There are several likely reasons why students are often not introduced to constructionist perspectives until they reach advanced undergraduate or even graduate work. Student interest often lies in understanding real problems in the social world, but social constructionist perspectives focus on questions about how humans create the meaning of our world. Donileen R. Loseke claims that questions of constructionists seem esoteric and perhaps even a waste of time in a world containing very real want and pain. Social constructionism originally was posed as an alternative to other theoretical approaches examining social problems as objective conditions. This has led some to argue that either you believe that social problems exist out-side human awareness, or you believe that social problems are constructed. Loseke is convinced that social construction perspectives help us make sense of daily living. The questions of construction--how do humans create, sustain, and change meaning--only sound esoteric. At its best, social constructionism encourages a way of thinking that is distinctly sociological and empowering, to those who use it. However, the insights of constructionism do not depend on suspending all belief that a real world exists outside our understanding of it. Constructionism is less an alternative to other theoretical frameworks, than an important addition. Different frameworks pose questions about different aspects of life. To deny the importance of any theoretical framework is to limit our comprehension. The author claims that we cannot afford to do this if we want to understand the perplexity and complexity of the human condition. Donileen R. Loseke is Professor of...



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