Revelation as the Foundation of Social Reality: A Paradigm of Divine Constructed Reality

Wahyu Sebagai Asas Realiti Sosial: Satu Paradigma Dibina Realiti Keilahian

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Abstract

The dominant premise in social sciences in general and in sociology of knowledge in particular is that the reality of everyday life depends upon socio-cultural condition and historicity of a society. In other word, it is socially constructed. There are two monumental works: Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's The Social Construction of Reality, 1967 and John R. Searle's The Construction of Social Reality, 1995. They advocate that the reality is based on what the majority of people or society believes. It, further indicates that peoples' perceptions of reality differ and there is no way to prove that one reality is more correct that the other (A. Henderson, 1995). Thus, the social construction of reality is used to give a common ground of communication that unites the perception of reality among those who want to communicate effectively. The paper observes that this notion of reality and its construction is defective as it is not linked with truth and goodness. The social reality is the manifestation of some cardinal principles revealed by the Absolute Reality, which is the source and epitome of truth and goodness (Wallerstein, 1976). Those principles enable human to lead a peaceful, harmonious and successful life in the world. They are in the best interest of humanity and thus altruistic. As the revelation comes from Divinity, so the society is formed and shaped by Divine guidance. Humans' struggle of existence and to act and behave in day-to-day life is shaped by the Divine guidance. Hence, the reality that emerges is Divine constructed reality.

Keywords: Social Reality, Reality Par Excellence, Objectivation of Subjective Process, Collective Intentionality and Plausibility Structure.

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Abstrak

Premis dominan dalam sains sosial secara umum dan khususnya dalam bidang ilmu sosiologi adalah bahawa realiti kehidupan sehari-hari bergantung kepada keadaan sosio-budaya dan sejarah masyarakat. Dengan kata lain, ia dibina secara sosial. Terdapat dua karya monumental: Peter Berger dan Thomas Luckmann The Social Construction of Reality(Pembinaan Realiti Sosial), 1967 dan John R. Searle The Construction of Social Reality (Pembinaan Realiti Sosial, 1995. Mereka mengatakan bahawa realiti adalah berdasarkan kepercayaan majoriti orang-orang atau masyarakat. Selanjutnya, ia menandakan bahawa persepsi realiti rakyat adalah berbeza dan tidak ada cara untuk membuktikan bahawa satu realiti lebih tepat dari yang lain (A. Henderson, 1995). Oleh itu, pembinaan realiti sosial digunakan bagi memberikan persefahaman komunikasi yang menyatukan persepsi realiti di kalangan mereka yang ingin berkomunikasi dengan berkesan. Kajian ini mengamati bahawa tanggapan realiti ini dan pembinaannya rosak kerana ia tidak dikaitkan dengan kebenaran dan kebaikan. Realiti sosial adalah manifestasi daripada beberapa prinsip kardinal yang dinyatakan oleh Realiti Yang Mutlak, yang merupakan sumber dan lambang kebenaran dan kebaikan (Wallerstein, 1976). Prinsip-prinsip itu membenarkan manusia untuk hidup tenang, berharmoni dan berjaya di dunia. Ianya adalah untuk kebaikan manusia dan dengan demikian, altruistik. Wahyu itu datang dari Keilahian, jadi masyarakat ditubuh dan dibentuk oleh panduan Ilahi. Perjuangan kewujudan manusia dan tingkah-laku sehariannya ditubuh oleh panduan Ilahi. Oleh itu, realiti yang dihasilkan adalah dibina dari realiti keilahian.

Kata Kunci: Realiti Sosial, Kecemerlangan Realiti Setaraf, Mengkonkretkan Proses Subjectif, Kesengajaan Kolektif Dan Struktur Bermunasabah.

Introduction

Reality is the true state of a thing or object, the qualities and features that it contains and by which it is known as a distinct and separate entity. According to Berger and Luckmann,[1] the REALITY is the "quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition". It is not only limited to what appears or perceived by individuals but "includes everything that is and has been, whether or not it is observable or comprehensible".[2] The identification of

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[1] Berger Peter, and Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books A Division of Random House, Inc. , p. 1.

[2] Kaspari, Bill. 2013. *The Galilean Pendulam: A New Science Reveals An Unseen World*. UK: Author House, p. 184.

reality is a complex phenomenon. Philosophers and social scientists have no agreement on it; they have developed different theoretical frameworks to identify what reality is. One way to explain it is to associate it with world view and thus, it is considered "the totality of all things, structures (actual and conceptual), events (past and present) and phenomena, whether observable or not". It is what a world view (whether it be based on individual or shared human experience) ultimately attempts to describe or map".[3] The problem in philosophy is to know and assess the nature of reality and its relation to mind, language, culture and society. The dominant view is that reality is independent of ideas, perception and mind-set of individuals. Verily 'the fact world' is quite different from 'the world individuals grasp'. This is identified as 'realism'. It explicates that the world and the objects that lie in it have distinct entities based on certain elements, exist, operate in certain ways according to certain principles and serve certain purpose. Humans try to grasp the nature, working and functions of the world according to the capacity and structure of their mind as well as their intellectual surrounding, eagerness and efforts to know the reality.

There is also a contrasting trend of thought identified as anti-realism. It contends that reality lies in mind. It is, in fact, the product of ideas that one's mind occupies and according to that, one visualizes the objects. George Berkeley (1685-1753), an advocate of 'immaterialism' also known as 'subjective idealism' stressed on the ideas in mind that are the demiurge of the objects. He denies the existence of the material substance and the day to day objects that we face; they are but ideas in our mind. They have no existence beyond human perception. The ideas that we perceive, he contends, are created and coordinated by God. It shows that reality is 'mental construct'; it emerges and develops in mind within a definite set of ideas or framework. Phenomenology also expresses the similar view except that it considers mind as merely the collection of ideas, perception and other similar elements and there is no mind or soul over and above these mental events while Berkeleyan idealism did not

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[3] Ibid.

consider mind as merely ideas or made up of ideas. The idea that reality is the reflection of mental or cultural milieu and the existence of objects are merely social or cultural artifacts held ground, and different fads were emerged. One of them was social constructionism that held that the external world is but the upshot of social or cultural settings. Cultural relativism went one step further and discerned that values and morality are not absolute but the offshoot of culture. The other potential viewpoint was presented by the correspondence theory of knowledge that claimed that knowledge of reality represents exact similarity or consonance between the statement or image of reality and the features of actual reality. It is but obvious that knowledge of any object must correspond to the true nature of that object. If it is not so, the knowledge will be misleading and not help people lead a good life. The scientific method claims that it exhibits the correct knowledge of the nature of an object that it actually has on the basis of observable evidences. But the problem is that the scientific method based on observation relies only on what appears and does not go in deep to comprehend the force that activates and operates the object. However, the reality and knowledge are interrelated and require an appropriate way to exhibit the true nature of an object in knowledge and enable one to understand the object in correct perspective.

The present paper discusses that the reality is not that appears but it links with goodness and truth. It contains the force that enables it to perform distinct function for which it is created. It further explains how social realities emerge and what are the forces that let them come into being. It explains that the Absolute Reality (God) provides intellectual infra-structure in the form of revelation that constitutes plausibility structure that determines reality of everyday life.

The Nature of Social Reality
Social reality pertains to the social world where individuals live, meet the requirements of their lives, come across with others, establish relationship and interact with them, perform different sorts and sets of actions and serve the purpose of their lives. Human child from the very beginning observes the world and objects with curiosity and learns either

by following 'significant others' or by own how to react against certain situations, behave with others and perform certain activities. He follows significant others or sometimes acts according to his own way, but he is instructed not to do so if his acts are not in consonance with the preferences of significant others and if they are very much particular about their preferences. However, he tries to act according to the certain pattern, repeat it again and again and become habitual of doing the certain act in certain ways. At this stage he considers it appropriate to follow what exists, what people do and what significant others say. His consciousness is filled by the idea that the appropriate acts are what are done and dictated by significant others. But when he grows, begins to think, raises the questions of what and why and seeks answers within the framework of his own consciousness, he develops certain fundamental ideas or propositions that guide his perception, knowledge, day to day activities at micro level and his entire way of life and operation in this world at macro level. Here and now, he constructs reality about the social world. He considers how to act in a particular situation, how to interact with others and how to meet the requirements of day to day life. In this process, he sometimes adopts what is prevalent in a group or society or what is considered appropriate by the people, and sometimes he develops his own way of interacting with others: objects, situations and fellow beings. It is also possible that he conforms to the ideas that society sanctioned to decide the appropriateness of an act, but he develops his own styles to do that. Thus, the reality of social life is formed. However, in this context, there are two major treatises that explain how reality about society or day to day life is constructed. One is presented by Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann (1967)[4] and other is by John R. Searle (1995).[5]

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[4] Berger Peter, and Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books A Division of Random House, Inc.

[5] Searle, John R. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York, London: The Free Press.

The Social Construction of Reality

Berger and Luckmann presented an important work *The Social Construction of Reality* and set forth the idea that what majority of people or society perceives, believes and acts accordingly constitute reality. Humans' activities, according to them, produce a 'world of things' that society vindicates, attaches utmost important to it and considers it as foremost reality. This monumental work was first published in 1962 and since then its several editions came up to 1991. The major concern of this enterprise is to understand the 'world of everyday life' or the knowledge that guides the conduct of everyday life, manifests in different theoretical perspectives and constitutes the common sense understanding of the reality of the ordinary members of a society.[6] This is the subject matter of sociology that studies the intrinsic character of that reality and exposes the nature of society. Everyday life, according to them, consists of the conduct that people generally perform and consider them subjectively meaningful. It is the reality of everyday life that ordinary members of a society interpret subjectively meaningful, try to incorporate it in their actions and achieve the meaning that they consider important. Thus, a world emerges and originates in their thought and actions and continues as reality as a life pattern. The important point is to know how the meaning is translated into action and an objective world comes into being and what helps to initiate this process. Berger and Luckmann call it 'objectivation of subjective processes'. They observe:

The word of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their lives. It is world that originates in their thought and actions, and is maintained as real by these. Before turning to our main task we must, therefore, attempt to clarify the foundation of knowledge in everyday life, to wit, the objectivations of subjective processes (and meanings) by which the inter-subjective commonsense world is constructed.[7]

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[6] Berger Peter, and Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books A Division of Random House, Inc. p.19.

[7] Ibid. 19-20.

The foundation of knowledge in everyday life is important as it indicates how the perception of everyday life develops and takes shape. It can be understood and explained by phenomenological analysis albeit this analysis, according to them, eschews the ontological status of the phenomenon analyzed. It is a commonsense knowledge of reality which people generally develop, become conscious of it and consider it as having 'taken-for-granted' character. Commonsense, they agree, contains different interpretations and we should take all of them into account in order to understand the reality of commonsense as we take account of its taken-for-granted character. How the different interpretations of everyday life develop a common image of it is a question. Consciousness is intentional; it is related to an object and situation; it does not develop in a vacuum. One can develop consciousness in two ways: one when one faces and experiences the object or situation and the other when he/she visualizes the object according to his /her mind-set. In both the cases the consciousness is intentional but when one moves from one to another he/ she feels tension. The phenomenological analysis exposes the different levels of experience and different set of meanings attached to a phenomenon, situation and object, but they are interested in taking into account the common intentional character of all consciousness. The problem is how one can understand the nature of meaning attached to a phenomenon without comprehending its ontological nature. Similarly, it is also difficult to know the common intentional character of consciousness.

The perception of the world and the experience of different objects in it give us knowledge of different sorts and aspects of reality that constitute our consciousness. We find a difference in the facets of the objet as we see and as we thought about. This creates tension in our consciousness; we react in a different way, move from one to another and realize varied forms of reality. However, among different sorts of reality or in their term 'multiple realities' one is distinct which they call 'reality par excellence' and designate it as 'the reality of everyday life'. It always makes its presence vehemently, impresses the consciousness forcefully that one cannot neglect it. Individuals observe it in the state of wide-wake and consider it natural and self-evident. It is an ordered reality arranged in a pattern, though independent of human perception but influ-

ences it with force. The language used to explain it provides it with meaning and objectifies it.

The reality of everyday life, according to them, is based on the "here" of one's body and "now" of one's present. The "here and now" constitute the perspective within which the reality of everyday life takes shape. The "here" is the closest and easily accessible to one. It is in fact contains the one's inner world where one acts, has already done or plans to do something. It is one's personal world consists of mental set-up and its manifestation and translation into act. The other aspect of the reality is not as accessible as the first one. One is indirectly interested in it because it affects the situation in which one performs his/her daily routine work. It related to the outer world where the changes in the policy and situation affect the daily life of individuals particularly their professional lives.

The other importance of the reality of everyday life is that it is shared with others. The way one realizes and understands it, others also grasp and comprehend in the same way. The result is that a common sense understanding of the world develops based on which people act, communicate and interact with each other. As a matter of fact, an inter-subjective world comes into being. There are differences in perspectives, attitudes and way of acing but, in spite of all these, there is a common image of the world that people share and develop common meaning to live in and establish relations with others. Berger and Luckmann explain:

I know that my natural attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitudes of others, that they also comprehend the objectifications by which this world is ordered, that they also organize this world around the "here and now" of their being in it and have projects for working in it. I also know, of course, that others have a perspective on this common world that is not identical with mine. My "here" is their "there". My "now" does not fully overlap with theirs. My projects differ from and may even conflict with theirs. All the same, I know that I live with them in a common world. Most importantly, I know that there is an ongoing correspondence between my meanings and *their* meanings in this world, that we share a common sense about its reality.[8]

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[8] Ibid., 23.

Thus, a world common to most of the people emerges caused by the commonsense consciousness and provides commonsense knowledge which people share with each other. This is in fact, according to Berger and Luckmann, the reality of everyday life as it is manifested in general routine of everyday life of common people. It does not require any further verification because it exists in everyday life and taken for granted as reality. It is shared by others and serves as the basis of social interaction. In the face-to-face situation persons concerned apprehend each other along with their socio-mental background and accordingly act and react. Their apprehension of each other influences the entire process of interaction. They observe, "my and his "here and now" continuously impinge on each other as long as the face-to-face situation continues. As a result, there is a continuous interchange of my expressivity and his".[9] Besides, the social interaction is also shaped by typificatory scheme as a part of the reality of everyday life according to which persons apprehend each other and act in face-to-face situation. The typificatory scheme enables individuals to apprehend other as a type and interact in a situation that is typical. The typification of interaction has the character of anonymity that depends upon the degree of interest and the degree of intimacy; both of them combined together shape the nature and degree of anonymity.

The Concept of Society

Society, according to Berger and Luckmann, is a human product; even man is the product of himself. Man as an organism externalizes his traits and seeks a balance with the forces of environment and during this process he shapes himself and moulds his nature. They subscribe to the sociological concept that organic man gradually transforms into social man or human by various socio-cultural determinants. As the socio-cultural determinants are of various nature, the ways of becoming human is also various. Thus, humanness is socio-culturally determined. They observe:

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[9] Ibid., 29.

It is an ethnological commonplace that the ways of becoming and being human are as numerous as man's culture. Humanness is socio-culturally variable. In other words, there is no human nature in the sense of a biologically fixed substratum determining the variability of socio-cultural formations. There is only human nature in the sense of anthropological constant (for example, world-openness and plasticity of instinctual structure) that delimit and permit man's socio-cultural formations. But the specific shape into which this humanness is molded is determined by those socio-cultural formations and is relative to their numerous variations. While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself.[10]

Human phenomenon is based on certain factors: One is related to the development of man's organism and his self. Though they, according to them, are socially determined, they are based on the complicated relation between organism and self. One aspect is that man is a body and the other one is that man has a body. In this respect man, according to them, "experiences himself as an entity that is not identical with his body".[11] He can use it according to his own way. It shows that the development of organism and self is different. One is more organic and the other is more social. However, according to them, "man's experience of himself always hovers in a balance between being a body and having a body". Further, man's experience of his body has certain repercussion to his activities in relation to his material environment as well as his manifestation of subjective meaning. In this process man produces himself and his self-production is a social enterprise. Man together with other fellow beings produces human environment combined with socio-cultural and psychological factors. Thus, humanity and sociality, according to them are interrelated. They observe:

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[10] Ibid. 49.

[11] Ibid. 50.

Man's specific humanity and his sociality are inextricably intertwined. *Homo sapiens* is always, and in the same measure, *homo socius*.[12]

Human existence is not possible only through his organismic attributes because they cannot provide stability to human conduct. Human existence exhibits order, direction and stability that are possible only through social order that regulates, reforms and directs the organismic attributes to a desired way. Social order comes into being by human activities through the process of externalization of his attributes. It is, thus, according to them "a human product or more precisely, an ongoing human product".[13] It is affected by the past human activities as well as the present social scenario in which they exist. Social order is not at all related with the nature of things and thus, "no other ontological status may be ascribed to it without hopelessly obfuscating its empirical manifestations".[14]

Human activity takes place in an attempt to satisfy human needs and urges. Since they are felt again and again, the activities to satisfy them have also to perform again and again. The obvious result is the habit of doing certain activities: specialized and general. The habitualization is shaped by the meaning that an individual or society attaches to certain activities in view of their relevance, fruitfulness and preference. In this entire process institutionalization takes place as a result of habitualization of human activities. Institutionalization is a system of satisfying certain basic needs necessary for human existence in a distinct way. This way of doing things and performing certain acts are considered most appropriate among others and a society prefers that its members would follow the same way. To ensure the persistence and continuation of the ways of performing human urges are the priorities of a society and for that it develops a sound mechanism to transmit them to young generation. As a matter of fact, an institutional world takes place and people experience it and consider society as an objective reality.

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[12] Ibid. 51.

[13] Ibid. 52.

[14] Ibid.

Society is identified as "an ongoing dialectical process composed of the three moments of externalization, objectivation, and internalization".[15] These are combined together work and form the warp and woof of the social world as well as of human personality. Individuals externalize their inherent traits to understand and acquaint with the environment in which they are placed. They get the idea of the external world as an object, and with that they also comprehend the meaning attached to it and generally prevalent among other fellow beings. Thus, they internalize the subjective aspect of the world formed and constructed by the society. Society is, thus, both objective and subjective reality which an individual internalizes during his interaction with the social world and sharing the understanding of the world and people as others have. This is possible through internalization that makes an individual participate in social dialectic and becomes a vital part of a society. Internalization performs dual functions; on one hand, it develops understanding of other members of society and on the other understanding of the world as a meaningful and social reality.[16] Internalization, further takes place through the nature and efficacy of socialization both of primary and secondary types.

The Construction of Social Reality

The other important work that discusses the social reality is *The Construction of Social Reality* written by John R. Searle published in 1995 though the theme had been discussed earlier, delivered and communicated in various lectures at different universities. Searle is a philosopher interested in the study of the role of language and mind in constructing reality. He tried to apply his philosophy of mind to understand and analyze social reality. Social reality, according to him, is the creation of humans for certain purposes and they can be identified as the purposes themselves are. The structure of social reality can properly be analyzed by first person intentional vocabulary.[17] He argues that the word com-

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[15] Ibid. 129.

[16] Ibid. 130.

[17] Searle, John R. 1995. *The Construction of Social Reality*. New York, London: The Free Press. PP .4-5.

prise of particles that are organized into systems living and non-living. The living systems generate consciousness which produces intentionality by which we represent objects and state of affairs into words.[18] Thus, social facts can appropriately be explained in the framework of intentionality. Searle observes that the world is generally characterized by the existence of two broad types of facts: one exists with human agreement or depends upon human opinion; it is according to him institutional facts because they require human institutions for their existence. The other exists independent of human agreement; they are called non-institutional or brute facts and do not require human institutions to exist. We require language to state these facts. These facts have two different features: one that exists independent of observer and characterizes as intrinsic to nature, the other is dependent on the observer for their existence and characterizes as observer relative-features. The distinction between these two features is essential to understand the nature of social reality because "observer-relative features are always created by the intrinsic mental phenomena of the users, observers, etc. of the objects in question".[19] Thus, social reality can be understood and explained through an ontology based on three elements, the assignment of function, collective intentionality and constitutive rules.

Humans always assign functions to objects either by their natural characteristics or by those acts that help to perform the assigned functions. Inanimate aspects of the world are known not by their intrinsic natural traits but by the functions they are supposed to discharge as one observes in chair, table and house. Thus, functions, to him, "are never intrinsic but are always observer relative".[20] Functions are further divided into two categories. One that is assigned for immediate purposes, he calls it agentive and finds its example in chair, paperweight and screwdriver. These are not identified by their natural traits, but by the functions assigned relative to the practical interests of conscious agents. The other is the function that naturally occurs as the consequence of the operating

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[18] Ibid. 7.

[19] Ibid. 12.

[20] Ibid. 14.

system, it is identified as non-agentive function and its example is the heart that functions to pump the blood because it is obvious if organism has to survive. The other important aspect of agentive function is the category within it that symbolizes something else or some other meaning.

Collective intentionality is to cooperate and share the 'intentional state such as beliefs, desires and intentions with others. People when work in relation with others find that others have the same perception and views as the former have. Searle considers it a widespread phenomenon and gives several examples like baseball team, couples dance waltzes, orchestra and war fought by countries. In these cases, participants cooperate with each other, and perform actions in relation to others due to the collective intentionality. Participants in these cases do something as a part of the function assigned to them and necessary to operate the system. When a lineman blocks a defensive end as part of the team's execution of a pass play or a violinist plays certain notes as part of the orchestra's performance of a symphony, work as a team and have a common purpose. This indicates "we-intentionality" in addition to "I-intentionality", and is possible when participants engage in cooperative behavior and share intentional state such as beliefs, desires and intentions. Searle further views that the collective intentionality takes the form of "we intend". He states:

The form that my collective intentionality can take is simply "we intend," "we are doing so-and-so," and the like. In such cases I intend only as part of our intending. The intentionality that exists in each individual head has the form "we intend".[21]

Searle distinguishes between two major facts, brute and institutional which signify two features and characterize the world. One that exists independent of any human institution, come under the purview of physics and biology and associated with the brute facts. The other exists only within human institutions, come under the purview of culture and society and associated with institutional facts. These facts and their corresponding features are subject to certain rules. He further introduces another distinction between two types of rules that show the nature of these facts

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[21] Ibid. 26.

and how do they work. They are regulative and constitutive rules. Regulative rules regulate the activities that exist prior to the framing of such rules. He cites the example of the rule 'drive on the right-had side of the road'. This rule was framed to regulate the activities of driving but driving was existing prior to the framing of this rule. Besides, there are rules that not only regulate particular activity but also create the possibility of that activity. For example the rules of chess indicate how one has to play the game. In the absence of such rules it is not possible to play the game. They are the constitutive rules because they constitute the playing of the game and players can play the game by the rules. These rules are the parts of the system, constitute the system and can be identified in context of the system. The important point in this scheme is that institutional facts come out of the system of constitutive rules and take distinct forms. It shows institutional facts have a mental component that produces them and determine their nature and form.

Problematic Phenomena

The two important theoretical frameworks about the nature and construction of social reality explain in detail how social reality emerges, takes shape and persists in a society. One describes that living together in a society develops commonsense consciousness that gives birth to commonsense knowledge by which the members perceive the external world and come across the reality of every-day- life. Reality of every-day-life has different facets; one of them and most important is the 'reality-per-excellence' that is designated as social reality and emerges from the commonality of perception or thought of the majority of people. The other expresses the similar view but in different form. He stresses on collective intentionality that gives birth to institutional facts within which social reality lies. However, both of them have certain problematic issues:

1. The general consideration of reality as we discussed in the beginning is what exists particularly what we observe. The two theories which we have discussed take the similar view of social reality. The general perception of the people of the external world and of life, ways of acting and interacting with others, following certain procedures, treating something or object good and bad, giving preference to some ob-

jects and condemning others amount to social reality. In a nutshell, the general way of leading life or living with other fellow beings is considered social reality. This is similar to social fact which is the most appropriate term to describe the notion people generally attach with social reality. Social fact is presumed to be an outcome of society and as Durkheim observed it is the product of collective consciousness. Society creates a social fact with a view of giving members' behavior a definite shape and in this sense, it has some utility or benefit for the people. But in the course of time people do not follow it in the real sense or gradually deviate from it or add something different to it. As a matter of fact, it loses its relevance and remains only a ritual. In case society has a definite purpose and wants its members to follow it, the purpose is beneficial only to members and not to the humanity as a whole. Thus, the social fact is localized and lacks universality. The position of reality is different; it always embodies a sense of goodness. When we say an object or a state is real, it means that it contains two characteristics, actuality and goodness. The object actually exists, and it has qualities beneficial to humanity. Thus social reality is not what exists, followed, practiced and prevalent in a society but alludes to ideas, acts, pattern, process and system beneficial to human beings and makes their lives meaningful and comfortable. It is based on certain cardinal principles, universal in nature that determines what is good and bad, beneficial and harmful.

2. The other aspect of social reality is based on the perception and views of the majority of people. It is observed that what the majority of people perceive, develop a particular view of the world and act reflect the reality of everyday life. It is also problematic from three reasons. First, it is not necessary that the majority's view, act and way of life may be good and beneficial to humanity. There are instances that the position of women and poor are low and pathetic in many societies; they are denied the basic right of existence and majority of people justify it. Moreover, many societies have unhealthy traditions and customs; some of them dangerous to humanity. For example honor

killing in tribal and other societies is justified. Second, there are cases where we find a difference and gap between ideal pattern of society and practice of its members. Religion prescribes certain rules which humans have to follow in their relation with others and in leading their lives but they seldom follow though they consider them good. Instead, they follow their own for the sake of easiness and facilities. Third, in a society the view of the world and the pattern of life hold by the dominant group prevail on others. The dominant group in a society plays a vital role in spreading their views and ways of life on others. They have hold on media and propagate its ideology and people willingly or unwillingly accept it.

3. 'World of everyday life' and 'the knowledge that guides the conduct of everyday life' are complex phenomena. First, they are not the same. Knowledge that guides the conduct of everyday life is based on the cardinal principles that individuals and society cherish, consider important and try to implement them in everyday life while the world of everyday life consists of the activities produced by the implementation of the cardinal principles. It is not necessary that both would be same. We often find a wide gap between the two. Sometime we want to implement those principles on and manifest them in our everyday life but due to some other factors and unavoidable circumstances we fail to do so. Second, the world that develops in our mind is quite different from the objective world. The objective world consists of the activities of others that are different due to the different perception of subjective meaning and its manifestation in different ways. Thus, objectivation of subjective process varies from individual to individual and group to group.

4. 'Reality par excellence' cannot be identified among the multiple aspects of reality on the basis of what most of the people perceive and manifest in their actions. It is based on the fundamental purpose of life and the ways to achieve it. It relates to the sense of the goodness irrespective of the fact whether people follow it or not.

5. The concepts of "here" of one's body and "now" of one's present are confusing. The inner setting and the mental status of an individual are quite different from the position in which one lives and operates. Human behavior is not the cluster of these aspects of society rather he/she has to compromise between the two. Sometimes the inner setting of an individual is strong and dominant and he/she acts according to that, tries to mould the position of existence accordingly. Sometimes the position of existence is very strong and dominant and an individual acts according to that and moulds his/her inner setting accordingly. It depends upon the potentiality, orientation and commitment of an individual to his/her mental setup or ideology. We have witnessed a person who is living in the West from the last 30 years and he has not at all changed; his dressing pattern, daily routine, food habits and other aspects of behavior are the same as, they were before the migration. Against it, there is a person who went abroad and after three months he was completely a changed man; he adopted the behavioral pattern of the host country.

6. Berger and Luckmann observe that society is a human product; even man is the product of himself. According to them "humanness is socio-culturally variable".[22] It is partially true that humans form a society, but the formation and development of society depend on the identification of purpose of life, nature of values, virtues, what is good and bad, adequate and inadequate, proper and improper? Society is organized and human relations are structured based on certain principles relating to the sense of goodness not haphazardly that what people wished and thought absorbed by the society. Moreover, the two statements: 'man is the product of himself' and 'humanness is socio-culturally variable' seem contradictory. If human produces himself, he also develops attributes relating to himself and his existence. Thus, he also produces humanness. In other case if humanness

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[22] Berger Peter, and Luckmann, Thomas. 1967. *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, p. 49.

is determined by socio-cultural factors, how human will produce himself. He will be the product of society. The fact is that human is the product of both himself and social condition as well. Human how utilizes his inherent abilities of understanding, makes efforts to understand the truth about himself and the external world, comprehends the phenomenal reality and the forces that activate it is his responsibility and for which he is liable to. However, his perception and the process of internalization of the external world are influenced by the conditions and the general perception of the world and life prevail in a society. In this respect, he is molded and produced by society. The major role in making a human is of himself.

7. Collective intentionality as explained by Searle is to share intentional state such as beliefs, desires and intentions, take part in joint action and construct social reality. He gave several examples of collective behavior that according to Amy Kind[23] show two aspects: (1) participants engagement in cooperative behavior and (2) sharing intentional state as belief and intentions. Amy kind finds both these conditions inadequate characterization of the phenomenon in question[24] and cites an example. In a class students wait for ringing the bell to go for the recess. If they are well behaved they do not scramble to the door when the bell rings but wait for the students in front to exit. Some students hold the door for other students. Amy Kind feels that the students share the intentional states and their behavior is cooperative but not the case of collective behavior. This does not indicate we-together intentionality rather than simply we-each intentionality. Cooperative act is different from the act of collective intentionality. Thus, to give central role to collective intentionality in the construction of social reality is not genuine but problematic.

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Social Reality In Islam

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[23] Amy Kind. 2001 April. The Construction of Social Reality (Review). *Social Theory and Practice.* 27.2; ProQuest. Pp. 345 – 351.

[24] Ibid. 347.

Reality as generally perceived is the state of things that actually exists or that is "actually experienced or seen".[25] In scientific tradition, what is observable comes under the purview of reality but "in its widest sense [the term reality] includes everything that is, whether or not observable and comprehensible".[26] Reality in an Islamic perspective is quite different. It is, as Nasr observes, at once being, knowledge and.[27] It means that reality indicates actuality implying the state of existence, whether comprehensible or beyond of our comprehension, but it has a force to persist and influence others. It is a source of consciousness and makes humans aware of themselves and of the external world. It is linked with truth and goodness and as such most beneficial to human being.

In positivist tradition, constant occurrences of events or activities are considered reality and on that basis causal laws are derived, which is the essential ingredient of science. Roy Bhaskar who presents a systematic realist account of science as an alternative to positivism observes that constant conjunction of events is not only not sufficient, but it is also not necessary condition for a scientific law[28] that enables us to identify reality. H argues that in an experiment, the experimenter is the causal agent not the causal law identified by the sequence of events. It signifies "that there is ontological distinction between scientific laws and pattern of events".[29] It is explained that ascription of a law requires a theory that should have, according to him, conception of 'putative causal or explanatory link' to prove that law is genuine. Thus theory relies on 'a conception of natural mechanism or structure at work'.[30] He explains:

. . . if experimental activity is to be rendered intelligible, that natural mechanisms endure and act outside the conditions that enable us to identify them that the applicability of known laws in open system, i.e. in

[25] Sally Wehmeier. 2010. Chief Editor. *Oxford Advanced Lerner's Dictionary Of Current English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press . p. 1256.

[26] http:// research-education-edu-.blogspot.com

[27] Seyyed Hossein Nasr. 1981. *Knowledge and the Sacred*. Edinburg. p. 1.

[28] Roy Bhaskar. 2008. *A Realist Theory of Science.* London and New York: Routledge. p.12.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

systems where no constant conjunctions of events prevail, can be sustained. This has the corollary that a constant conjunction of events cannot be necessary for the assumption of the efficacy of a law. This argument shows that real structures exist independently of and are often out of phase with the actual patterns of an event.[31]

Bhaskar further contemplates that the causal structures and generative mechanisms of nature are the essential conditions that generate events, but they exist and act independent of the pattern of events and the actions of men. Similarly, events also occur independent of the experience in which they are apprehended. He, thus, concludes that "structures and mechanisms then are real and distinct from the pattern of events that they generate, just as events are real and distinct from the experiences in which they are apprehended".[32] He identifies three domains of reality (the domains of real, the actual and the empirical) and explains how they are collapsed into one by 'secreting an ontology based on the category of experience'.[33] He states:

Mechanisms, events and experiences thus constitute three overlapping domains of reality, viz. the domains of the real, the actual and the empirical. . . By constituting an ontology based on the category of experience, as expressed in the concept of empirical world and mediated by the ideas of the actuality of the causal laws and the ubiquity of the constant conjunctions, three domains of reality are collapsed into one.[34]

The fusion of these domains of reality into one form is the true character of reality. To confine the intelligibility of a reality only to its form or appearance is a postulatory and methodological error. The fact is that reality is not limited only to the appearance of a phenomenon, or as it exists, but it also contains the spirit, power or force that gives it a distinct form, assign particular function and determine its purpose. There is

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[31] Ibid. 13.

[32] Ibid. 56.

[33] Roy Bhaskar. 1989. *The Possibility of Naturalism*. New York and London: Harvester Wheatsheaf .p.15.

[34] Roy Bhaskar. 2008. *A Realist Theory of Science.* London and New York: Routledge. pp. 56-57.

an ontological structure behind it that determines its nature and functioning in a particular framework. The reality which we observe in everyday life is the reflection of a vital force that provides the former with vitality and buoyancy to exist and operate. The events and activities that take place or crop up in everyday life are the manifestation of human cogitation of transcendental reality in its true or deviational forms.

In Islamic doctrine the principal, primordial and the Absolute Reality is Allah (swt), the Most Powerful, the Most Knowledgeable, Just and full of Wisdom. The Qur'an categorically explains:

That is because Allah is the (only) Reality, and because whatever else they invoke besides Him is falsehood; and because Allah – He is the Most High, Most Great (Qur'an, 30: 31).

Sharif (1995)[35] with reference to the Qur'an describes some of His attributes which help us to understand the nature of reality in an Islamic perspective. He states:

God, as described by the Qur'an for the understanding of man, is the sole self-subsisting, all-pervading, eternal, and Absolute Reality. He is the first and the last, the seen and the unseen. He is the transcendent in the sense that He in His full glory cannot be known or experienced by us finite beings – beings that can know only what can be experienced through the senses or otherwise and what is inherent in the nature of thought or is implied by it.[36]

He further explains that "to Him is due the primal origin of everything. It is He, the Creator, who began the process of creation and adds to creation as He pleases".[37] He has innumerable attributes and, according to Sharif (1995) can be "summarized under few essential heads: Life, Eternity, Unity, Power, Truth, Beauty, Justice, Love and Goodness".[38] It shows that "God as Realty is at once absolute, infinite and, good or perfect. In Himself He is the absolute which partakes of no relativity in Itself

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[35] Sharif,M. M. 1995. *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. (Ed. & Introduced). Vol. 1. Delhi: D. K. Publishers Distributors.

[36] Ibid. 137.

[37] Ibid. 139.

[38] Ibid. 138.

or in Its Essence".[39] He is the source of all that exist and has power over them as the Qur'an says, "In Whose hands is the domain of all things" (the Qur'an, 36:83). He is the Creator of the world and all things that lie in between heaven and earth reflect His attributes in one way or the other. They get vitality and strength to exist, persist, operate in the world and perform the function allocated to them. The phenomenal world has two aspects: physical and transcendental. One is visible and the other is invisible. Both are integrated with each other and their integrated view gives the idea of the nature of the existence of objects, tangible and intangible. The phenomenal world which we observe by our senses is only the partial reality and not the whole. The other aspect of that world is the force and vitality that enables it to exist, operate and maintain its buoyancy. This directly links with the Absolute Reality which gives it a form and establishes a pattern according to which it operates and assigns a purpose which it has to fulfill. We are, thus, surrounded by two realities; phenomenal and transcendental. Phenomenal reality is easier to grasp as it can be observed and experienced by our five senses. Every individual directly comes in contact with it, develop certain set of ideas of how to face it, treat it and use it. Transcendental reality lies within the phenomenal one, provides it with vitality and activates it to operate. It can be identified by the sources of knowledge other than the senses. Humans can know it when they develop extensive knowledge, ponder over the working of the phenomenal reality and "have access to those twin sources of metaphysical knowledge and certitude, namely revelation and intellection".[40] The verity is that both are linked together and determine the nature, form and worth of an object. The correct understanding, the nature and working of an object as well as the purpose of which it comes into existence are possible when one acquires knowledge of transcendental reality and its manifestations. Transcendental reality originates from the Absolute Reality, the cause of the causes, the vital source of strength and

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[39] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1993. *The Need For A Sacred Science*. Richmond: Curzon Press Ltd. P. 8.

[40] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1993. *The Need For A Sacred Science*. Richmond: Curzon Press Ltd. p. 7.

vigor. It gives strength and potentiality to every object on the basis of which the objects survive and operates in this world. Variation in human cognition, thinking and understanding crop up when a human concentrates only on phenomenal reality as he/she directly confronts with it neglects transcendental reality and its source, the Absolute Reality or does not feel the need to understand it. Humans are so much involved in the gratification of their bodily urges and in the fulfillment of the aspiration of their egos that they only consider phenomenal reality important and as such explore it. The catastrophe of modern particularly scientific knowledge is that it has reduced reality to the sense perceived world and consequently reduced "God and in fact all spiritual realms of being to the category of the abstract and finally to the unreal" (1993).[41] The result is that modern man has manipulated the interpretation of reality, removed it "as a category pertaining to God used it according to his/her own advantage and pleasure and constructed other realities accordingly. Nasr discerns:

At the base of the loss of the sense of the reality of God by modern man in his daily life lies the philosophical error of reducing the meaning of reality to the externally experienced world, of altering the meaning of realist in its early medieval sense to the connotation it has gained in various schools of philosophy since the rise of nominalism as the end of Middle Ages.[42]

Social world is the arena where humans perform different sets of activities, meet the requirements of life and tries to survive in a distinct way. In this attempt they come in contact with other fellow beings, seek cooperation of others and give their own cooperation to them. They enter into interactional situation where they manifest their inner traits and perception of the external world and understand the same of others. In this process they mould their interaction with others and try to live and operate amidst complex pattern of social relations. The important phenomenon in this context is how humans make their earthly life possible amidst three vital forces: organic (bodily requirements), psychic (mental set up)

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid. 7.

and social (existing social priorities). Humans try to make a balance among these forces, develop a synthesis of them and project it in their activities as well as in their relation with others. The synthesis that humans generally develop may not be a true one in which all the forces have the same degree of share. It is possible that the accumulation may be tinged to any one of the aspect more in comparison to others. The other question is whether any one of them requires any preference. If it is so which one should be given preference? These issues depend upon the plausibility structure which individuals and society develop and according to which they decide which aspect of life is important and which not. Plausibility structure comprises of certain principles considered most fundamental and thus precious which determine the validity and appropriateness of an act, object and, as a whole, the operation of individuals in the world. In an Islamic perspective the plausibility structure is derived from the Absolute Reality [Allah (swt)] Who is the pivotal impetus behind the existence of every object tangible and intangible as well as behind the activation of inner forces to survive. He provided humans with guidance, conveyed certain principles through His prophets according to which humans have to live and make their earthy life possible. These revealed principles acquaint humans of the reality of the world and of their own lives and mould their mind-set ups. They in fact constitute the fundamental knowledge that guides and ushers the thinking, actions and the entire operation of humans in the world. They mould the forces (organic, psychic and social) that surround their existence and give them new form and vitality. This is the revealed knowledge conveyed by Allah (swt) and forms the basis of social reality. Thus, reality about humans, society and their operation in the world from an Islamic perspective is Divine constructed rather than social constructed. This is shown in the following diagram.

Absolute Reality

Plausibility Structure

Organic

Human

Revelation

Revelation

Psychic
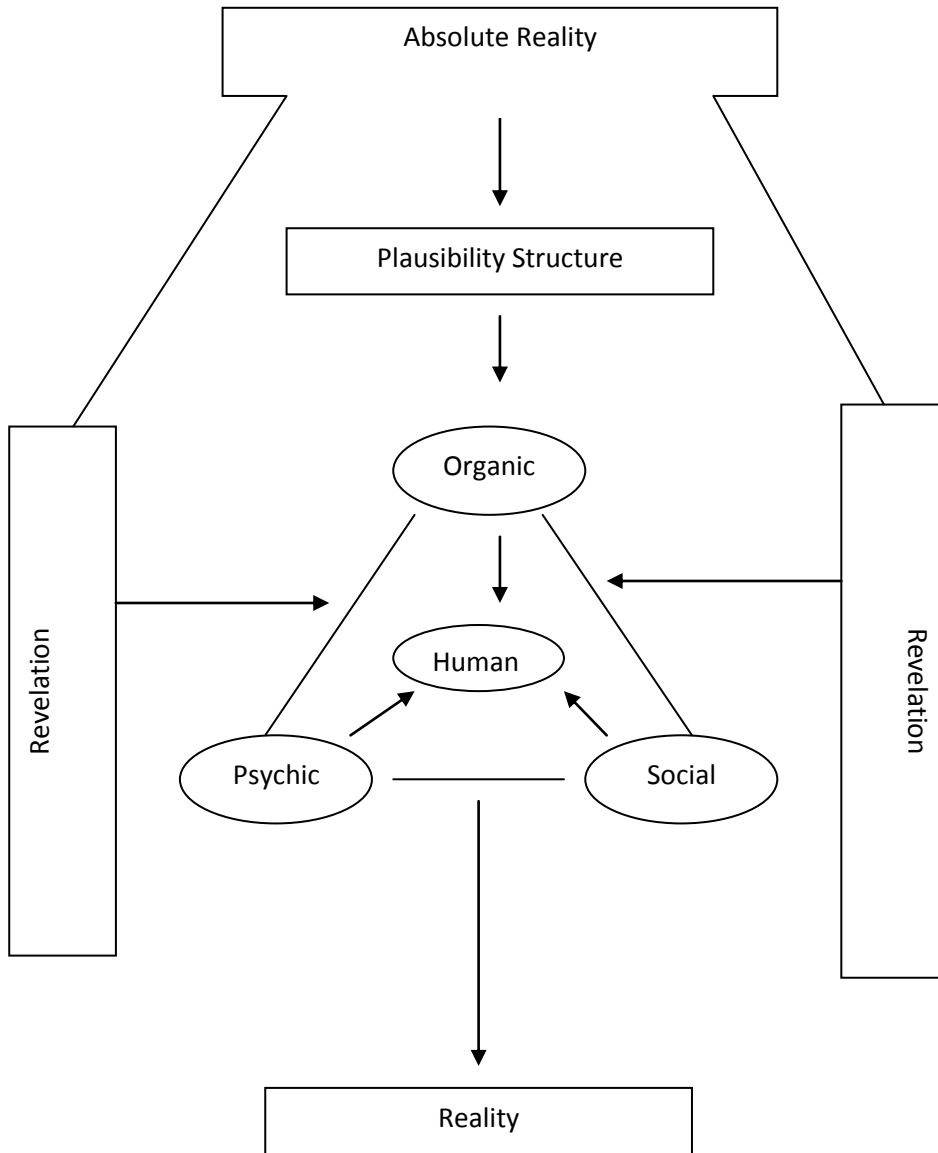
Social

Reality

Conclusion

The paper indicates that the premises of Social Construction of Reality (1967) and The Construction of Social Reality (1995) are problematic and not relevant in all situations. The reality of everyday life is, in fact, not the product of socio-cultural condition and historicity of a society. It is rather based on certain cardinal principles revealed by the Absolute Reality, the source of all phenomenal realities and strength of their operation in the world. The Absolute Reality created humans and provided guidance how to live in the world and develop earthly life. The guidance is the fundamental knowledge that constitutes plausibility structure determining what is appropriate (the good) and what is inappropriate (the bad). The plausibility structure synthesizes the organic, psychic and social aspects of human operation in the world and creates earthly life and produces the reality of everyday life. Social reality is indeed divinely constructed.