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The social construction of what?

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Abstrak

Social construction is one of very many ideas that are bitterly fought over in the American culture wars. Combatants may find my observations rather like the United Nations resolutions that have little effect. But a lot of other people are curious about the fray going on in the distance. They are glad to hear from a foreign correspondent, not about the wars, but about an idea that has been cropping up all over the place. Ihave seldom found it helpful to use the phrase ??social construction?? in my own work. When Ihave mentioned it Ihave done so in order to distance myself from it. It seemed to be both obscure and overused. Social construction has in many contexts been a truly liberating idea, but that which on first hearing has liberated some has made all too many others smug, comfortable, and trendy in ways that have become merely orthodox. The phrase has become code. If you use it favorably, you deem yourself rather radical. If you trash the phrase, you declare that you are rational, reasonable, and respectable.