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# On Searle and the collapse of civilization

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## Abstract

This article addresses a neglected problem in Searle's social ontology, namely, how civilization may collapse. In the first section, I provide the theoretical framework. In the second section, I offer the key elements to understanding Searle's ontology as well as the structure of society, emphasizing the role of constitutive rules and deontic powers. In the third section, I discuss how they improve trust and co-operation. Global and local natural disasters are discussed in the fourth section, because the former is sufficient to undermine pacts, promises, and deontic powers, while the latter is neither sufficient nor necessary. In the fifth section, I put forward an argument via a thought experiment that allows us to anticipate how people did not keep promises and pacts, on the one hand, and did not respect constitutive rules and deontic powers, on the other hand. Such events, I argue, would result in the collapse of civilization.

**Key words:** Searle, ontology, civilization, trust, co-operation, collapse.

## Introduction

Searle has proposed a theory that explains the structure of human civilization, worth mentioning that Searle's view counts as a philosophical *system*, a philosophical feat. Mind, language, and society are explained by applying systems of rules relating them together so that they can explain reality. For example, mind is explained in this view, because consciousness, which involves sentience, and intentional action and representation via intentional mental states, have fundamental roles in how we live in the world. Language, with illocutionary acts, is also important, as certain speech acts and declarations elucidate the normative features of social reality. Finally, I discuss the logico-philosophical tools that explain this reality, making all the connections between mind and language.