

## August 2020 Entry (on macrostructures)

What is macrostructural? Here are some examples gleaned from Google Books (free stuff!):

“The studies on macrostructural problems will cover subjects like the power of particular groups within the nation, such as retired army generals and politicians working in various sectors of trade and industry ... or the number of representatives of large banks on advisory boards of other companies.... In the Netherlands, Mokken et al. carried out an investigation on the latter subject after Frank Mertens (president of the Netherlands Catholic Trade Union at the time) presented his ‘200’ formula. He claimed that key positions in business and so ‘real power’ in Holland were occupied by some 200 persons, the same happy few.” – Mauk Mulder, [The Daily Power Game](#) (1977), p. vii

Mauk Mulder’s statements are consistent with Ian Robertson (1989) quotes in the GGDM section [1 Corporations](#), p. 1239, and thus probably represents a concept of macrostructural thinking that existed in the 1970s and 1980s mainstream intellectualism.

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“A variant of the expectation that we should ‘explain everything all at once’ is a game that we can call the ‘verstehen game,’ on the one side, and the ‘macrostructural game,’ on the other side. Good theory, some say, explains things ‘at the level of meaning,’ while other said that ‘good theory’ explains the social forces that create subjective states. Actually, those are not irreconcilable positions, once we abandon the notion that theory must explain ‘everything all at once.’ We can have theoretical principles that allow us to understand subjective states, we can have other theoretical principles that allow us to understand broader structural processes; and we can have a few social psychological principles to help us understand the relationship between the two. There will no more be ‘one theory’ that explains meaning and structure than there is ‘one theory’ of the physical universe or of the organic realm of the universe.” – Jonathan H. Turner, [“Returning to Social Physics: Illustrations from the Work of George Herbert Mead,”](#) [George Herbert Mead: Critical Assessments, Volume 3](#)(1992), Ed. Peter Hamilton, p. 137.

I am still learning my craft, and anyone of any age who claims they are not, is lying or kidding themselves. Despite all of the brave talk about how confidence empowers, every intellectual should always walk in fear that they are an unwitting living exhibit of the [Dunning-Kruger Effect](#) (either of classic low-competence or less studied, high competence). And this is my true feeling about my own project, GGDM.

From the first paragraphs of the previously-cited article, I learned that [Aguste Comte](#) viewed the then fledgling idea of social science as ‘social physics.’ This was intended merely to provide a conceptual link for the Newtonian audience, but it seems that sociology has not moved much beyond the concept and is still rife (as argued in

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GGDM) with pseudo-biological and pseudo-physical language, which even I cannot avoid by my own admission.

But more importantly, knowing that Comte called social sciences “social physics” improves my understanding of the origin of sociologist Clarence Marsh Case’s ‘four orders of natural phenomenon’ which is used widely as a framework throughout GGDM. Prof. Case does mention Comte once in the introduction and it is now clear that is the line he drew from; but it is also a springboard in that by admitting that social phenomenon are a different order of phenomenon than physics or biology, it is implied that the language of physics and biology are not suitable for social sciences. Professor Case referred to those who study social phenomenon as a thing onto itself as “social sociologist.” Thus, social sciences, as argued in GGDM, needs to develop a new language.

Now, I don’t think I am going to convince any professors that sociology needs a new language and needs to stop using the language of physics and biology – any passing familiarity with [Thomas Khun](#) suggests the futility of trying to convince the old guard. In fact, I received a rather emphatic refutation from one such professor who self-describes as an iconoclast!

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“Moving on from the basic level of rules, challenges, feedback and software-hardware interface mechanisms, there were essentially two macrostructural types of games: games of emergence and games of progression (Juul, 2005). Games of emergence, which are historically older than games of progression, follow 'a small number of rules that combine and yield a large game tree, that is, a large number of game variations that players deal with by designing strategies. Emergence is found in card and board games, most action, and all strategy games. Almost all multi-player games are games of emergence. [They] exhibit a basic asymmetry between the relative simplicity of the game rules and the relative complexity of the actual playing of the game (Juul, 2005, pp. 73-5).’ The above-mentioned simplicity of rules exhibited by Tetris and the difficulty of successfully implementing and mastering them are a prime example of the structures of a game of emergence.” – Astrid Ensslin, [The Language of Gaming \(2012\)](#), p. 49.

Simplicity is relative, but GGDM is clearly designed – macrostructurally – as a game of emergence. It is, as discussed in GGDM section [3 Constructural Elements](#), intended to generate emergent narrative and group storytelling, and I have maintained that GGDM is itself an emergence.

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