

***Social Explanation at the Macro
and Micro Level:
An Explanation of the Death of
George Floyd****

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I. Introduction

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed by police officer Derek Chauvin in Minneapolis, Minnesota while being arrested for the alleged use of counterfeit bills. While it is clear that Chauvin's actions were a cause of Floyd's death, much emerging anti-racist discourse has attempted to explain the event by appealing to *systemic* and *institutional* racism. The question of how best to explain Floyd's death is representative of a broader question in the philosophy of social science about when and how to cite "macro" or structural social phenomena as causes of events which include individuals.¹ In this paper, I will use the case of George Floyd's death to explore the relative merits of social explanation at the macro and micro levels. I will argue that macro level social explanation (without reduction to microfoundations) is a legitimate form of explanation that should sometimes be preferred over micro level social explanation. In Floyd's case specifically, the macro level

of explanation is adequate and to be preferred because it can provide grounds for effective social intervention which might prevent similar occurrences in the future.

For much of the last century, methodological individualism has been the predominant account of explanation in the philosophy of social science.² The methodological individualist's conception of the relation between micro and macro levels is often represented by a figure called "Coleman's boat."³

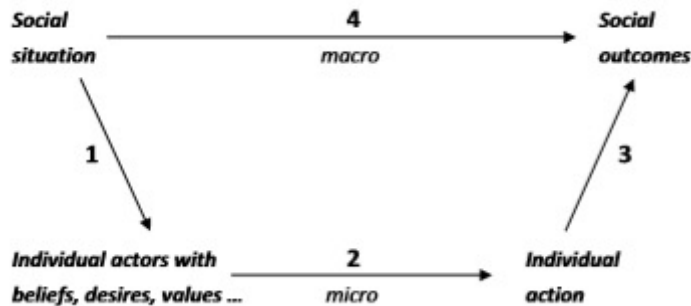


Fig 1. Coleman's boat (taken from Van Bouwel⁴)

This figure suggests that macro social phenomena, such as economic shifts in supply and demand, crime rates, revolutions, and systemic racism, need to be explanatorily substantiated by the individual actors. These actors (and their intentions, behavior, and interactions) constitute and are responsible for these phenomena.

In other words, social scientists cannot explain social phenomena merely by appealing to dependencies represented by arrow 4 but must trace the entirety of Coleman's boat through the micro level (arrows 1, 2, and 3).⁵ John Elster explains:

The elementary unit of social life is the individual human action. To explain social institutions and social change is to show how they arise as the result of individual action and interaction. This view [is] often referred to as methodological individualism.⁶

In economics, for example, many macro level claims are explained by referring to microfoundations. Take the macro claim that prospective tax cuts led to an increase in aggregate demand. Here, an economist might explain the economic shift by referring to changes in individual consumers' expectations and behavior: after hearing about future tax cuts, individuals believed that they would have more money down the road, so they decided to consume more now; the sum of the individuals' increase in consumption constituted an increase in aggregate demand.⁷ So too, in explaining the death of George Floyd, a methodological individualist would not stop at explaining Floyd's death as the result of *institutional* racism. Rather, they would identify the racist intentions and behavior of relevant *members* of the police force and examine the *individual* interactions which

brought about his death.⁸

II. Criterion of Adequacy and Explanatory Characteristics

There may be several genuine explanations for a given explanandum.⁹ While I do not have the space here to develop an account of genuine explanations, I will suppose at least that (1) their explanans contain true propositions and (2) that these propositions are explanatorily relevant to the explanandum. Of a set of genuine explanations for a given explanandum, some may be more or less adequate depending on how well they match the needs of the social context in which they are offered. In order to judge the social requirements of an explanation, I will use a criterion of explanatory adequacy adopted from Jeroen Van Bouwel. Adequacy, for Van Bouwel, is described briefly as the “relation to what the explained expects from the explanation addressing the explanatory interest.”¹⁰ I will take it to measure *how well the explanation matches the explanatory circumstances and whether it answers the explanation-seeking question appropriately*. In this evaluation, explanations and explanatory levels will be considered “adequate” or “inadequate,” even though adequacy may be better understood as a matter of degrees. I use these all-or-nothing terms to signify the significance of the relative difference between more and less adequate explanations.

There are an innumerable number of circumstances where a causal explanation of the death of George Floyd might be offered or required. We may hear it in a coroner’s office, a court of law, a university, a state capitol building, or in conversations between parent and child. In all of these circumstances, what constitutes an adequate explanation will be different. For this reason, there are a variety of explanatory characteristics or dimensions that could be required in different explanatory circumstances.¹¹

In some circumstances, an adequate explanation will need to be one which is relatively accurate and precise.¹² Other circumstances demand an explanation which is relatively idealized and abstract. The autopsy report on George Floyd, for example, needs to be a precise, detailed explanation of the physiological processes and mechanisms that were involved before, during, and after his death. A police report, similarly, may need to outline in detail the actions, interactions, conversations which took place during the event of his death, and perhaps relevant features of the environment. In these cases, it is not enough to simply say: “George Floyd’s death was caused by Derek Chauvin’s knee pressing onto his neck.” However, this explanation may be adequate in a court of law which is trying to determine legal responsibility for Floyd’s death. In this situation, the explanation is adequate because it is sufficient

to assign blame and punishment; more detail may be provided but may not be necessary.

Now, consider a final circumstance. In an explanation to a child, it would surely be inadequate to include even this much information, that Floyd was killed as a result of Chauvin's knee pressing onto his neck. Here, we may need to abstract further, saying something like: "George Floyd was killed (or even just hurt) by a policeman." If we do not idealize and abstract to the correct extent, the explanation may become incomprehensible, unnecessarily laborious, or even harmful (to the child). In sum, different explanatory characteristics, such as precision and abstraction, match different explanatory circumstances and need only be required when the circumstances demand them.

For certain kinds of explanations to be adequate, they need to be able to facilitate effective intervention. With respect to Floyd's case, there are several explanatory circumstances which may require an explanation that leads to social intervention. They may be located in the American legislature, broad political discourse and dialogue, social justice and anti-racist activism, popular media, the classroom, or police departments. It is clear that, in many circumstances, people demand widespread anti-racist reform and intervention which would prevent similar instances of police brutality in the fu-

ture. But in order to facilitate this type of intervention, one has to have the right kind of explanation, or, in other words, an explanation that has the right characteristics.

I will call the characteristic of an explanation that provides grounds for effective intervention the *intervention characteristic*. This idea is inspired in at least a general way by the interventionist theory of causation of James Woodward, insofar as it involves intervention, pragmatism, and (social) change.¹³ In the relevant circumstances, an explanation may be judged adequate only if it has the intervention characteristic, meaning *it grants the capacity to produce an effective intervention, where an effective intervention is understood as one which prevents relevantly similar events from happening in the future*.¹⁴

There are a few things to note about intervention and the intervention characteristic. First, because many circumstances do not permit or require intervention, the intervention characteristic may not always be linked to adequacy. Second, an explanation with the intervention characteristic does not itself intervene; rather, it lays the foundation for future intervention strategies and action. Third, any subsequent intervention should not be understood as occurring in the (past) explanandum event (of Floyd's death), but as preventing future events of this type. Finally, the intervention characteristic should

be understood as having principally epistemic and pragmatic value, as opposed to metaphysical value, for instance. I shall argue below that it is the presence of the intervention characteristic that explains why macro level explanations are to be preferred over micro level explanations in contexts where our explanatory interests involve social change.

III. Micro Level Social Explanation

Methodological individualism employs the micro level of social explanation in order to reduce macro social phenomena to their constitutive individuals. Instead of relating macro entities directly, they appeal to individuals' interactions, intentions, and behavior. Discussing the causal and explanatory role of the Protestant work ethic, Stuart Glennan offers an analysis that illustrates the microfoundational move:

Protestant theological doctrine is neither an entity nor a property of an entity that can act upon an individual agent... It is not the Protestant ethic as such, but the particular sermon, the repeated prayers at the dinner table, or the particular things that Mom, Dad, and others say that shape the particular individual's dispositions.¹⁵

If we analogize this explanation to the case of George Floyd, we get the following micro level explanation:

Institutional racism is neither an entity nor a property of an entity that can act upon an individual agent. It is not institutional racism as such, but the particular actions of Derek Chauvin and other officers which caused Floyd's death. Specifically, Floyd's death was caused by Chauvin pressing his knee onto his (Floyd's) neck.

Differences aside, these micro level explanations contain the same basic explanatory sentiment: it is not a social phenomenon like institutional racism or religious doctrine which influences the individual, but the particular individuals and their behavior that are constitutive of these social phenomena.

In popular discussions of police corruption, there is a similar microfoundational move where responsible individuals are identified as "bad apples."¹⁶ This phrase admits that while there may be a number of blameworthy individuals in the police force, the police force as a whole should not be held responsible. Importantly, this type of explanation stops at the level of the individual. It identifies "bad apples" as the cause of corruption but does not identify the social structures that turn "good apples" bad nor the institutional procedures and norms that facilitate oppressive police-civilian interactions. The "bad apple" theory of police corruption is thus a popular token example of the micro level of social ex-

planation.¹⁷

Micro level explanations do have explanatory power and may be adequate in some circumstances. In a court of law, if the judge and jury are only trying to determine the *individuals* responsible for George Floyd's death, and to confer blame and punishment on these individuals, then this level of explanation may be adequate because it picks out Chauvin as the causally responsible agent. In other explanatory circumstances, however, it is inadequate. If a medical professional is inquiring into the death for the purposes of medical research, the micro level (at the level of the individual) will not be adequate. Here, oddly, the micro level detail is not micro enough. The medical professional requires an explanation not merely about the individual *persons* involved, but the mechanisms and processes found *within* these people.

While the micro level of social explanation may seem useful to proponents of anti-racism and social reform, it is ultimately not adequate as it does not provide grounds for *effective* intervention. It may be objected, by some, that this level of explanation *does* create room for intervention, in more than one way. First, it allows for intervention in the sense that, because the explanation picked out those individuals responsible for the death, courts will now be able to remove these individuals

from the police force, or even society, if they are sent to prison. Once these "bad apples" are removed, similar issues will be avoided in the future. Second, if the involved individuals are identified and punished, they and others will be deterred from committing similar actions in the future. In other words, this explanation will be grounds for the prevention of both the "bad apples" and the "good apples turned bad" from committing such atrocities down the road.

In cases of police brutality against black people, the micro level, "bad apple," theory of explanation has not historically guaranteed that officers will be removed from their positions or prevented from joining other police forces upon firing, never mind going to prison. In fact, they may face little to no repercussions whatsoever. This is what happened to the officers responsible for the deaths of Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Stephon Clark, and Breonna Taylor.¹⁸ Due to the lack of accountability and intervention associated with the micro level, "bad apple" theory of corruption, history has been allowed to repeat itself again and again: black people are continually brutalized by police. One of the key issues with this type of explanation, therefore, is that it often fails to do what it was meant to do in the first place: meaningfully intervene at the level of the individual by removing those who are directly responsible.

While deterrence through individual identification and punishment does appear to have some inhibitory effects, it is not an effective or complete form of intervention. In the first place, if little or no meaningful repercussions are administered, as shown above to frequently be the case, then there is not likely to be any sort of deterrence. Additionally, Lawrence Sherman has found deterrence through punishment to be an effective strategy only in some circumstances and when applied only to certain demographics.¹⁹ In some cases, it may actually increase crime rates. Braithwaite has found that, within police forces specifically, deterrence may not have as long-term inhibitory effects as other measures.²⁰ And finally, Newburn, in his *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, discusses four broad categories of "corruption control" that could be implemented within police forces: human resource management, anti-corruption policies, internal controls, and external environment and environmental controls.²¹ Deterrence through individual punishment makes up only one part of the "internal controls" category, while a majority of the other categories go beyond individual punishment to address the social, procedural, and ethical aspects of the force. It is clear from his discussion that deterrence makes up only a small part of a much broader macro intervention scheme.

Individual punishment and deterrence cannot be con-

sidered effective forms of intervention because either they do not result in meaningful intervention at the level of the individual or they make up only a small part of a wider intervention scheme. Therefore, the micro level, "bad apple" theory of social explanation cannot be considered adequate. The underlying reason for this inadequacy and ineffective interventionism is that these explanations do not address the structural and institutional aspect of racism, aspects that cannot be reduced merely to individuals. They fail to facilitate intervention which alters the social environment which engenders and perpetuates racism.

Developments in contemporary social and political philosophy have helped highlight the structural and institutional character of racism and other forms of oppression. Iris Marion Young writes:

Oppression in this sense is structural, rather than the result of a few people's choices or policies. Its causes are embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutional rules and the collective consequences of following those rules.²²

In fact, one of the five faces of oppression which Young speaks about is *systemic* violence, which includes police violence against black people.²³ Angela Davis has characterized the structural nature of the criminal jus-

tice system, especially insofar as it treats proponents of black liberation:

The judicial system and its extensions, the penal system, consequently become weapons in the state's fight to preserve the existing conditions of class domination, therefore racism, poverty, and war.²⁴

Finally, Todd May and George Yancy, in a recent *New York Times* article, address Floyd's case specifically:

Like an organ in a human body, a Police Department is part of a structural whole. It functions to perform a certain task in the body politic; it is an organ in that body. Seen this way, each police officer is then like a cell in that organ. Before we can identify any problem in that organ, we must first understand the job that organ performs.²⁵

In order for an explanation to lead to effective social intervention, it must address the structural aspects of racism that Young and others have shown to be at the core of widespread racism and oppression in society. Instead of focusing and intervening solely on individuals and their interactions, we must also identify and change the policies, norms, habits, symbols, and organization of police forces and American policing in general. In the next section, it will become clear that only

the macro level of explanation can facilitate this sort of intervention.

IV. Macro Level Social Explanation

Macro level social explanations come in a variety of forms. Here, I will limit myself to macro explanations where micro level events involving individuals are explained by appealing to *social influences*.²⁶ The identification of the social influence will not require micro-foundations, or an appeal to individuals, though these microfoundations may be implied ontologically.²⁷ If we were to explain the death of George Floyd using the macro level of explanation, we might say something like: "George Floyd's death was the result of institutional racism in the Minneapolis police force." This is a relatively *meso* level explanation, because it explains at the level of a group or organization. We might also say: "George Floyd's death was the result of institutional racism embedded in American policing or American society more broadly." This is a relatively macro level explanation, as it speaks about large social entities that span multiple groups and organizations. Note that these explanations are fairly idealized and simple; they merely identify the social influence, its general location, and the affected individual.²⁸ More robust explanations may develop in detail the influence's causally relevant properties, mechanism, or procedures, and reveal *how* this influence took place.²⁹

In the evaluation of the adequacy of macro level explanations, there are important explanatory trade-offs. With respect to precision, for instance, adequacy seems to decrease significantly with the move from micro to macro. It is not as precise to point to institutional racism within the Minneapolis police force as the cause of Floyd's death when we know his death was in fact the result of the specific actions of one individual, Derek Chauvin. As Glennan noted above, institutional racism in a police force, like Protestant religious doctrine, is not an entity or property of an entity that can causally influence an individual agent. Because a macro explanation does not precisely identify the individuals responsible, it would be inadequate in a courtroom or coroner's office. In order to assign blame, punishment, or determine the physiological cause of death, we need an explanation that identifies the individual responsible for Floyd's death and perhaps gives a detailed account of how that individual caused his death. That being said, when is a macro level explanation adequate?

The macro level of explanation of the death of George Floyd is adequate in circumstances which demand effective social intervention, and it is adequate because it has the intervention characteristic. There are several ways this level of explanation can act as grounds for effective intervention. First, it directs attention *away* from ineffective micro level, "bad apple," explanations

which have been shown to be unable to facilitate effective intervention. Second, it directs attention *towards* the systemic and institutional aspects of racism which were shown to be fundamental to racial oppression in society. Third, it identifies the relative location of this racism (the Minneapolis police force, American policing, etc.), allowing proponents of change to approach these institutions and begin to formulate preliminary intervention strategies. Fourth, relatively simple and idealized macro social explanations like those offered above can be developed into robust macro social explanations which more precisely detail the causal relationship between institutional racism and black individuals. These robust explanations can allow for even more nuanced and effective intervention strategies.³⁰

There may be objections to the adequacy and preference of the macro level of explanation. First, it may be argued that because the macro level omits reference to the perpetrator of the crime, it is therefore inadequate because it cannot facilitate individual level intervention and deterrence. Note, however, that an explanation at the macro level does not preclude an explanation at the micro level. In fact, they may realistically be paired in order to address distinct but related explanatory questions and circumstances. That the macro level of explanation employs a particular perspective or orientation, and in this sense is not by itself complete or encom-

passing, does not diminish its explanatory power in the relevant circumstances. And in circumstances which require large-scale social intervention, it has been shown to be adequate. Second, it may be objected that the prospect of effective intervention at the level of police force or society seems implausible. How does one go about addressing the institutions and structures of racism which extend beyond individual agents?

While it is beyond the scope of this paper to outline macro level intervention strategies, it is clear that these types of intervention are possible. One example are the kinds of macro level intervention strategies discussed by Newburn, including a program he calls “ethical policing.”³¹ Another, more relevant example, is a recent bill proposed by Congress which seeks to outlaw chokeholds and other abusive maneuvers which are used by police officers disproportionately against black people.³² This type of intervention, which targets the *procedures* of a social entity (rather than its individuals), came about as a result of the widespread Black Lives Matter movement which has relied on macro social explanations concerning the *institutional* and *structural* components of racism. Clearly, this is just a start. In order to make even greater progress at the social and political level, more robust macro level explanations and intervention techniques need to be explored.

V. Conclusion

While George Floyd’s death admits of both macro and micro level social explanations, only the macro level is adequate in situations which demand effective social intervention. It is adequate because it has the intervention characteristic, which in this case manifests as the ability to identify and analyze the structural and institutional aspects of racism which are so fundamental to oppression in society and which must be altered in order to eliminate oppression. The micro level of explanation, on the other hand, is inadequate in these circumstances because the identification and analysis of the relevant individuals alone cannot be grounds for effective intervention. Historically, for example, the “bad apple” theory of police corruption has been ineffective as a means for intervening on responsible individuals and is at best a small part of a much wider macro level intervention scheme. Although, in the social and political circumstances surrounding Floyd’s death, the micro level of explanation has been shown to be inadequate, this particular inadequacy does not in any sense negate the value of methodological individualism or social explanation at the micro level in other circumstances. Rather, it points to the spirit of explanatory pluralism in the social sciences. Understanding and intervening upon social phenomena will require explanation at distinct levels, of different kinds, and of various characteristics.

Notes

* In this paper, I will use phrases like “the death of George Floyd” and “the killing of George Floyd” rather than “the murder of George Floyd.” In using this terminology, I do not aim to in any way misdirect, deny, or water-down either the atrocities that took place on May 25, 2020, or Derek Chauvin’s individual responsibility for these atrocities which must be duly recognized. Rather, in keeping my explanandum (the thing I want to explain) neutral, I hope to set the stage for a variety of types of explanation, some of which must necessarily characterize his death as murder (perhaps legal or moral explanations at the level of the individual). However, other useful types of explanation—specifically those that recognize racism as a structural issue which requires social intervention—do not always permit the term “murder” in their explanation. Saying that systemic racism murdered George Floyd entails the substantive claim that a non-individual and non-physical thing (here, systemic racism) can murder a person. While there may be validity and merit to such arguments, I would not ask my readers to take them for granted. Accordingly, I have made the difficult decision to not use this phrasing before thoroughly unpacking it.

1. Collin, Finn, and Julie Zahle, *Rethinking the Methodological Individualism-Holism Debate* (Springer, 2014).
2. See Weber (1922), Elster (1989), Hedström and Swedberg (1996), Hedström and Bearman (2009). Close variations of methodological individualism are *structural individualism* (Hedström and Bearman 2009) and *methodological localism* (Little 2012).
3. James Coleman, *Foundations of Social Theory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1990).

4. Jeroen Van Bouwel, “Do Mechanism-Based Social Explanations Make a Case for Methodological Individualism?,” *Journal for General Philosophy of Science* 50, no. 2 (2019): 265, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10838-019-09446-w>.
5. Daniel Little (2006, 2012) argues that a *meso* level could be situated in between the macro and micro level to describe medium-sized social groups like firms and mid-sized organizations. Additionally, as noted by Ylikoski (2012, 2014), terms like *macro*, *micro*, and *meso* should be thought of as perspectival. There are no set or absolute macro and micro levels; rather, their relative placement depends on the perspective and purpose of the explanation. While more explanatory work can be done to identify intermediate levels, here I am taking macro levels to encompass all levels of social organization above individual human agents.
6. Some, like Craver and Bechtel (2007), would understand arrows 1 and 3 in Coleman’s boat as describing relations of constitution and arrow 2 describing a relation of *causation*. It is not the macro level phenomenon as such which is influencing Floyd, but the constitutive individuals which influence Floyd. In other words, there is *intralevel* causal influence but not *interlevel* causal influence. While metaphysical questions about the nature and possibility of top-down causation are important, my claims concerning intralevel and interlevel *explanation* are largely independent of these questions.
7. N. Gregory Mankiw, *Principles of Economics*, Ninth (Cengage Learning, 2018), 735.
8. For the sake of simplicity, I will not focus on any of the other police officers or bystanders besides Chauvin who may have been

involved in the event of Floyd's death.

9. Jeroen Van Bouwel, "Explanatory Strategies Beyond the Individualism/Holism Debate" in *Rethinking the Individualism-Holism Debate* (Springer, 2014), 153-176.

10. Van Bouwel, 157.

11. Petri Ylikoski and Jaakko Kuorikoski, "Dissecting Explanatory Power," *Philosophical Studies* 148 (2010): 201–219. The characteristics mentioned below are derived primarily from Van Bouwel (2014) and Ylikoski and Kuorikoski (2010). Van Bouwel discusses adequacy, accuracy, and efficiency, while Ylikoski and Kuorikoski discuss non-sensitivity, precision, factual accuracy, degree of integration, and cognitive salience. These characteristics largely overlap and will not receive individual attention in this paper. I only allude to a few.

12. Precision in this sense should be understood as adding detail to the explanandum so as to shrink the possible range of contrasts (Ylikoski and Kuorikoski 2010). "A bright navy-blue car" is more precise than "a blue car" because there are fewer possible contrasts. Precision may or may not imply microfoundations.

13. James Woodward, *Making Things Happen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

14. To whom the explanation grants the ability to effectively intervene will depend on the explanatory circumstances. It may be a single individual, many individuals, an organization, or even a government.

15. Stuart Glennan, *The New Mechanical Philosophy* (Oxford UP, 2017), 142-143. Glennan's concern here is more ontological than it is methodological. However, the case provides a concise exam-

ple of how a methodological individualist could explain macro level influence.

16. Tim Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption: Lessons from the Literature*, ed. Barry Webb (London: Research, Development, and Statistics Directorate, 1999), 14.

17. The "bad apple" theory of explanation should not be conflated with methodological individualism per se, but should be understood as a type of popular explanation which makes a similar microfoundational move. Many methodological individualists may not be satisfied by "bad apple" explanations of police brutality. My focus here is primarily with the micro level of explanation and not methodological individualism.

18. "Breonna Taylor: Timeline of Black Deaths Caused by Police," *BBC News*, September 23, 2020, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-52905408>. The case of George Floyd may mark a step in the right direction. Contrary to past cases, Chauvin was arrested and has been charged with 2nd degree murder. This indictment, however, may have been the result of sweeping macro level explanations of institutional racism in American policing.

19. Lawrence Sherman, "Defiance, Deterrence, and Irrelevance: A Theory of Criminal Sanctions" *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 30, no. 4 (1993): 445-473.

20. John Braithwaite, *Crime, Shame, and Reintegration* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989).

21. Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, 28.

22. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," in *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton University Press, 1990), 41. Also, see Iris Marion Young, *Responsibility for Justice* (Oxford Uni-

versity Press, 2011).

23. Iris Marion Young, "Five Faces of Oppression," 61.

24. Angela Davis, "Political Prisoners, Prisons, and Black Liberation," in *The Angela Davis Reader*, ed. Joy James (Blackwell, 1998), 39–52.

25. Todd May and George Yancy, "Policing Is Doing What It Was Meant to Do. That's the Problem." *The New York Times*, June 21, 2020.

26. "Macro level" explanations usually proceed from macro to macro or meso to meso. I will be talking about a "macro level" explanation which proceeds from the macro to the micro level (institutional racism to George Floyd). I leave a more complete ontological discussion of "downward causation" for further research. If we are speaking of institutional racism within a police force influencing George Floyd, then there does not appear to be downward causation, as Floyd is not a constituent entity within the police system (see Craver and Bechtel 2007). However, if we are talking about institutional racism as an American-wide phenomenon, then there does seem to be downward causation because Floyd is a constituent entity of this larger social entity.

27. See Daniel Little, "Explanatory Autonomy and Coleman's Boat," *Theoria* (Spain) 27, no. 2 (2012): 137–51, <https://doi.org/10.1387/theoria.3016>. This discussion has interesting parallels to the work of Hilary Putnam (1973) and Jerry Fodor (1974) in the philosophy of mind literature.

28. These preliminary explanations have a similar thrust to that of Craver's (2007) *mechanism sketch* and Glennan's (2017) *bare causal mechanism*.

29. See Glennan, *The New Mechanical Philosophy*, 68.

30. Further research may also develop a more intentional link between interlevel social explanation and social *mechanisms*. See Hedström and Ylikoski (2010), and also Machamer, Darden, and Craver (2000) and Glennan (2017).

31. Newburn, *Understanding and Preventing Police Corruption*, 45–49.

32. Felicia Sonmez, Paul Kane, and Rhonda Colvin, "House Passes Broad Police Reform Legislation in Wake of George Floyd's Killing," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/powerpost/house-poised-to-pass-broad-police-reform-legislation-in-wake-of-george-floyds-killing/2020/06/25/445307f8-b6ed-11ea-a8da-693df3d7674a_story.html. Also see Kimberly Kindy, Kevin Schaul, and Ted Mellnik, "Half of the Nation's Largest Police Departments Have Banned or Limited Neck Restraints since June," *The Washington Post*, September 6, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/national/police-use-of-force-chokehold-carotid-ban/>.

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