Appendix A

Mouzelis’s Analysis

**Background on macro and micro**

Subsequent to the writings of Boudon and Coleman, theoretical sociologists – Giddens, Habermas, Harre, Archer, Bourdieu, and others – have offered different ideas that bear on the Boudon/Coleman boat metamodel. These works have raised questions. What is the macro level? What is the micro level? How does the macro level affect the micro level? And vice versa? And, perhaps most importantly, how do micro- and macro-causation work? Some key thoughts on each of these are sketched below. This material describes the integrative model of Mouzelis, while also incorporating insights from Liska. Implications for the way the metamodel framework is used here are noted thereafter.

**What is the Macro Level?**

As used by Boudon and Coleman, and macro-sociologists generally, the macro level of analysis refers to social structure, “a whole of interrelated parts.” [7: 109] Macro units have analytical (“the aggregation of individual properties”), structural (capturing “the relationships between individuals within a group”) and global (“the social products of a group”) properties. [6: 292] If communities are viewed as macro units, examples of these properties would be a delinquency prevalence rate (analytical), the extent to which the social network of delinquents in the community contains multiplex, i.e., multi-stranded, ties (structural), and the views held by family court judges about the nature, causes, and severity of delinquency problems in specific communities within a city (global).
Many macro-sociologists are interested in understanding how change takes place or how structures get reproduced in large-scale macro-level units like countries, social classes or regions or ethnicities in a country. Thus, they might address, for example, as did Parsons, how “core values of the cultural system” are “institutionalized into roles/normative requirements at the social-system level” and later shape “internalized dispositions.” [7: 13] “Structures, as sets of interrelated elements, constitute internal as well as external environments of action which set limits and create opportunities for situated actors.” [7: 274]

But confusion has arisen because “the key term social structure has a multiplicity of meanings.” [7: 108] Common among those various uses of the term, however, are four different aspects of social structure. These capture, to simplify enormously, how the different parts of social structure connect. [7: 111] A second source of confusion is “the erroneous linkage of micro with face-to-face interaction and macro with institutional structures.” [7: 252] Instead, “social phenomena should be regarded in terms of both action/interaction and in terms of institutional structures.” [7: 253] Social phenomena have both micro- and macro-components.

**What Is the Micro-Level?**

The micro-level addresses the psychological processing, labeled intra-actions by Mouzelis, and the actions of individuals who do not have considerable say in affecting their surroundings. [7: 16, 275] This level is not necessarily bounded by face-to-face interactions. A conversation between two neighbors complaining to one another about the problem with rowdy teens has a substantial micro-level component, while the same conversation between a neighborhood leader and a city administrator in charge of all city youth programs has a substantial macro-level component. In short, social phenomena like conversations can have varying amounts of micro-
level content, aspects of “action/interaction,” and of macro-level content, aspects of the “institutional/systemic.” [7: 253] These are simply “two dimensions of all social wholes.” [7: 253-254]

Questions of Influence

*How Does the Macro Influence the Micro? (Link 1)*

The first link in the boat metamodel (Ma-I $\Rightarrow$ Mi-I) captures contextual impacts on individuals. (See figure 1.1.) How do these work and under what situations are they worthy of theoretical attention? [6] In modern and post-modern sociological theory, a range of views about how macro-level structure affects micro-level attributes have been promoted. [7: 87-141] Such views often go astray in one of two ways. They either over-emphasize the deterministic power of social structures while under-emphasizing the autonomous decision making of individuals, or do the reverse. This is just another way of saying their favor either methodological holism or methodological individualism. (Situational action theory’s introduction of self selection combined with social selection represents an effort to thread this needle. [11: 30-38])

Mouzelis proposed a balanced perspective in which structural influences, including what is happening in specific situations, lead an individual to reflect on certain, specific courses of action, and to simultaneously choose to engage or not in specific courses of action with specific other individual(s). [7: 252-253] “The constraints and enablements” of structure set in motion “processes of intra- and interaction” of particular individuals in particular contexts. [7: 275] This setting in motion, in specific situations, is structural causality or contextual causality.

*How Does the Micro Influence the Macro? (Link 3)*
Link 3 in the metamodel (Mi-O \(\rightarrow\) Ma-O) captures “actors’ causality (agentic powers),” individuals or small groups doing things that change the surrounding context. [7: 275] This occurs after actors have processed the conditions around them (Mi-I \(\rightarrow\) Mi-O). Because “actors tend to contribute unequally to the construction of social reality” it is important not to ignore “social hierarchies.” [7: 276] The actions of some individuals will have more of an impact on surrounding conditions than others. If a long-term, well-respected and feared streetblock leader tells a dealer living on the streetblock to avoid dealing on the block, it will have more impact than if a less well known resident tells the dealer. [8]

Further, action is not equated with agency. [7: 232] “Agency is an analytic dimension of human action; it refers to the capacity of an actor to be knowledgeable, reflexive, [and] creative” or to be “discerning, deliberative” when making decisions. [7: 232] Two different individuals may choose the same action, like speaking to a neighborhood drug dealer, but the amount of agency may be different. One may do it because he feels like it. The other may do it after reflecting carefully about strategy, content, and possible outcomes. There is more agency in the action of the second individual.

When Do We Need (At Least Some) Methodological Holism and How Much?
In Mouzelis’ view, macro-level causation (link 4) and micro-level causation (link 3) are both possible causes of changes in a Ma-O. But each represents different types of causes. “Causal powers of people are radically different from those of structures.” [7: 192] The causal power of structure “refers to cultural, institutional, figural relations between actors] and internalized dispositional environments of action that provide limits and opportunities for situated subjects.” [7: 210] The causal power of people, i.e., agency, “entails processes of discernment, deliberation,
and dedication … that activate or deactivate internal and external constraints and enablements.” [7: 210]

In Mouzelis’ view, these two processes tie together into a broader process of “social causation … a unitary process entail[ing] the articulation via mediating mechanisms of intra-and interaction of the causal powers of agents (discernment, deliberation and dedication) and those of structures (internal and external constraints/enablements).” [7: 213] These processes take place in a particular space-time context where long term trends are unfolding in a “hierarchized social space” where some have more power and some have less. [7: 212] His view, which moves past the methodological holism vs. individualism debate, allows, when explaining a macro-level outcome, both link 4 causal dynamics (Ma-I ➔ Ma-O) and link 3 causal dynamics (Mi-O ➔ Ma ➔ O).
References


