

# Structurally-Constituted Human Kinds\*

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## Abstract

Some kinds of human or person seem to be intimately involved in the extra-human or extra-personal world; this involvement can take a variety of forms. Social constructionists have suggested that various human kinds may exhibit surprising dependence upon socially caused or constituted aspects of the world, and some have appealed to externalist, causal historical accounts of the semantics of kind terms for a model of how to reconcile such unappreciated sociality with successful reference of the terms. Focusing on the case of race in the U.S., I suggest that following this appeal to externalist semantics may lead, in some cases, to the embrace of human kinds that are constituted by the causal and material effects of past social practices. I also suggest that such structural dependence has counterintuitive consequences.

**Key Words:** social construction, semantic externalism, human kinds, race

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Received September 1, 2019; accepted June 30, 2020; last revised June 1, 2020  
Proofreaders: Pi-Mei Lin, Tsung-Yi Wang, Hsin-Wen Fan

\* Thanks to audiences at University of Illinois—Chicago and Academia Sinica (Taipei) as well as two anonymous referees for helpful feedback and criticism on earlier drafts.