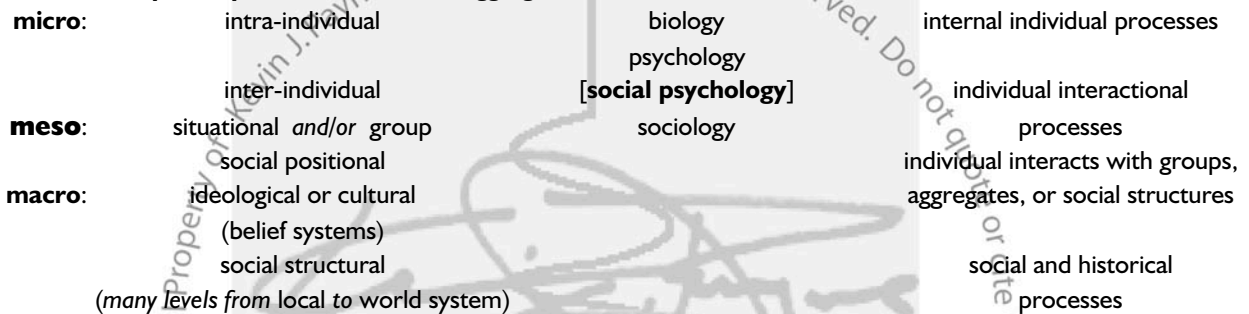


Lecture Notes:

- ① if science produces “knowledge” what, then, do we mean when we say we **know** something?
 - 1 **knowledge** is a special kind of assertion about the world
 - a an assertion links objects and their characteristics together
 - b this involves categorization (**nerd** example), but not stereotyping
 - 2 more specifically, what is **knowledge**?
 - a **data** = characteristic, quality, quantity, or attribute
 - b **information** = data in context or labeled
 - c **knowledge** = asserts relationships between bits of information and is shaped by assumptions
 - **belief** = the primary (or primitive) cognitive or conative state; an assertion about the world
 - **true** = the assertion corresponds to the world
 - **justified** = good reason to vindicate assertion
 - d knowledge rests within a framework of **assumptions**, or propositions you take as fundamentally true
 - e knowledge is the product of **thought** — it must be earned and actively integrated through action and cognition

- the importance of **level** in social science
 - 1 Levels of **empirical phenomena** in social aggregates:



- 2 Levels of **theory**:
 - micro**: concerned with face to face interactions, direct communications, and short-term localized phenomena
 - meso**: studies the point of interaction between an individual and social groups, aggregates, organizations, or systems
 - macro**: examines large scale (and often long term) phenomena concerning social systems, organizations, corporations, social movements, nation states, etc.
 - meta**: a theory of theories; or one that tries to draw together the findings or insights of several existing theories

- ③ important “schools of thought” in sociology and in the social sciences, generally:
- **exchange theory/rational choice:** people are rational and make decisions based on available information to maximize benefits and minimize losses
 - **symbolic interactionism:** people have to make sense of things and the primary way they do this is by interacting with one another and their surroundings; thus humans act based on their “definitions of the situation”
 - **role theory:** society consists of relatively stable patterns of social relationships and positions, each of which involve specific rights and obligations; people often interact based on their roles, and not individual characteristics
 - **structuralism:** understanding social structure (consisting of systems, institutions, and other forms of human organization) is more important than individual human actors who are largely conditioned by their relative places
 - **ethnomethodology:** humans are rational and develop certain idiosyncratic forms of knowledge and social competencies relevant to their own particular cultures, but designed to solve universal human problems or issues
 - **conflict theory:** human societies and interactions are fundamentally characterized and shaped by conflict and competition between individuals and, especially, groups
 - **critical theory:** seeks to recognize and understand patterns of domination and control of all kinds in modern societies (radical combination of neo-Marxist and neo-Freudian insights)
 - **functionalism:** asserts that society has certain needs (just like an organism) and that everything in society has (or once had) a purpose or reason for existence related to fulfilling those underlying needs
 - **feminist theory:** (there are actually many feminist theories as there are many feminisms) states that there are many ways of seeing and understanding the social world and that, until recently, the only option was presented by the dominant groups in society; females have a particular and different way of knowing which can help correct, or in some cases replace, the erroneous dominant viewpoint
 - other **standpoint epistemologies** (African-American, Latino, queer, etc.)
- ☆ the “fundamental tension” of the social sciences:
- **Thomas’ Theorem** (1928): “*that which we believe is real is real in its effects*”
 - **Merton’s Corollary** (1976): “*that which is real has consequences whether we believe it or not*”

Key Ideas:

Theory, exchange theory, symbolic interactionism, role theory, structuralism, ethnomethodology, conflict theory, critical theory, functionalism, feminist theory, standpoint epistemology, micro, meso, macro, knowledge, epistemology, ontology.