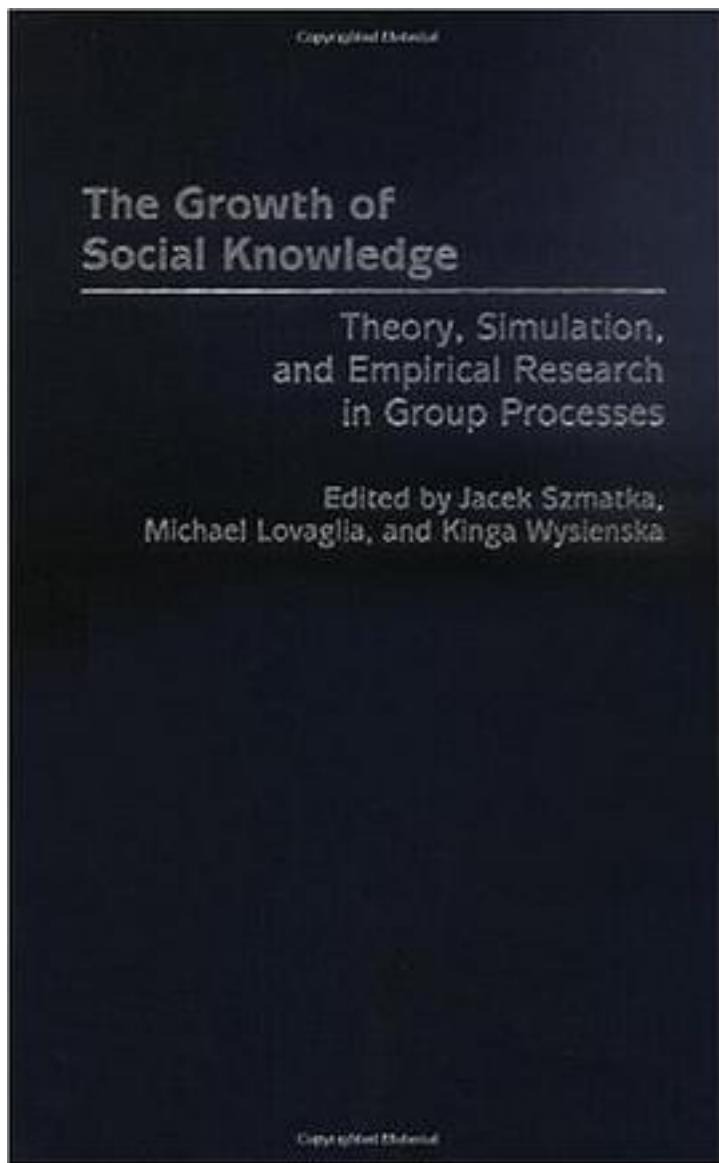


The Growth of Social Knowledge



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Analyzes and describes processes of scientific, cumulative knowledge growth in sociology. This timely, comprehensive analysis of the latest advances in group processes research shows how cutting edge technologies, such as laboratory experiments, simulations, and complex systems combine, with the rigor of cumulative research programs to change the way we see the social world. Group processes researchers study society scientifically, and have used sociological theory to build scientific, cumulative knowledge about the social world. Over the last 20 years, they have been extremely successful in advancing this knowledge through the reciprocal interplay of theory and experiment. The synthesis of such knowledge--uniting theory, simulation, and experiment--provides substantive explanations for social phenomena and predictions about events in complex social systems. This volume explores aspects of this synthesis from the perspective of group processes research. Providing deep analyses of methodological issues related to the synthesis of the theories, simulations, and experiments of group processes research, the authors also offer empirical examples of various studies that have been conducted. They investigate the ways in which theoretical research programs coordinate theory and empirical research in sociology to produce scientific progress and how computer simulations have evolved into an important component of theoretical research programs. This illustration of the relationships between theory construction and the method of theory verification advances our understanding of the field and may lead to a radical shift in the methodology and substance of modern social science.

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