



Handbook of Sociological Science Contributions to Rigorous Sociology

Research Handbooks in Sociology series

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22 out of the 26 Chapters are available Open Access on Elgaronline.

The Handbook of Sociological Science offers a refreshing, integrated perspective on research programs and ongoing developments in sociological science. It highlights key shared theoretical and methodological features, thereby contributing to progress and cumulative growth of sociological knowledge.

'This is an ambitious, comprehensive, and much-needed Handbook that aims to bring back rigor to the current practice of sociology. The emphasis is on rigor, not old battles of theory versus empiricism or quantitative versus qualitative research. I recommend it to anyone who wishes to conduct or understand sociological research.'

– Yu Xie, Bert G. Kerstetter '66 University Professor of Sociology, Princeton University and Visiting Chair Professor of Center for Social Research, Peking University

'This ambitious book tackles the challenge posed by the fragmentation of 21st-century sociology. Arguing that knowledge accumulation is possible if sociologists reach consensus on a common core of methodological standards, the authors construct a tent large enough to encompass multiple subfields and theoretical approaches. The result is inspired sociological research at its best.'

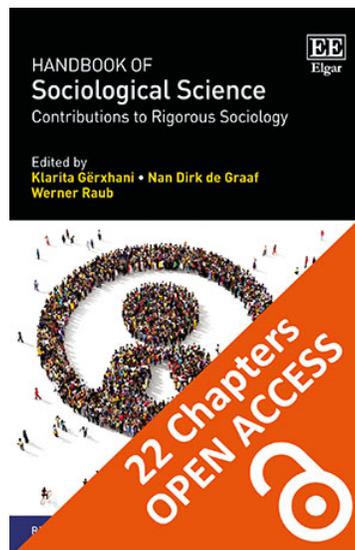
– Mary C. Brinton, Reischauer Institute Professor of Sociology, Harvard University

'This Handbook covers substantive areas from sociogenomics to climate change and methodological issues from causal inference with observational data to rigorous ethnography and reproducibility. This is sociology at its best.'

– Karl Ulrich Mayer, Max Planck Institute for Human Development Berlin and Yale University

'The Handbook of Sociological Science: Contributions to Rigorous Sociology seeks to demonstrate that explanatory sociology is possible, even with the diversity of opinion about the prospects of scientific sociological inquiry. The editors and authors use the rubric—rigorous sociology—to avoid arousing the overdrawn debates revolving around whether or not sociology can be a true science. The editors clearly understand the fragmented nature of much sociology and, thus, have sought to collect 26 chapters from scholars working in different areas of specialization using different methodologies and theoretical frameworks to illustrate that sociology can have, at the very least, a consistent core of shared methodologies and theoretical approaches that can integrate rather than divide and partition sociological inquiry.

Every serious sociologist pursuing knowledge about the nature of the social universe—whether graduate student, academic scholar, practitioner, and even interested lay scholars—will find this book useful because it illustrates rather than preaches what a rigorous approach to assembling can produce: a large body of cumulative knowledge about the fundamental properties and processes of the social universe. Most of the authors in this volume seek in their own unique ways to be rigorous in their empirical and theoretical investigations, whether at the micro, meso, or macro levels of human social organization. The nature of theorizing in sociology can



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thus vary in style and focus, as can the methodologies used to test theories or to report empirical data, but in the end, the simple criterion of rigor will integrate rather than divide scholarship in the discipline and, indeed, the social sciences as a whole.

Thus, whatever the level of inquiry (micro, meso, or macro), whatever the methodological approach (qualitative or quantitative, experimental or ethnographic) for collecting data, and whatever the scope, range, and modes of theorizing (formal or discursive), there must be rigor in how knowledge is to be accumulated; and this rigor will contribute to a science of sociology that unites rather than divides sociologists. Sociology and sociologists can thus be diverse in their approaches and orientations but still have a common or shared purpose to explain theoretically how the social universe operates and to verify these explanations with diverse collections of data. For, in reality, most sociologists share a common interest in achieving this goal through a variety of routes, and if modes of inquiry and theorizing are rigorous, then sociology can become more coherent and scientific. Commitment to rigorous analysis is what will unite the diversity of approaches and topics in sociology. And indeed, what the chapters of this book clearly illustrate is that there are many ways to be rigorous but, at the same time, pursuit of rigor will ultimately realize the ultimate goal of all of the social sciences: explaining the operative dynamics of the social universe. And, if sociologists commit to the rigor involved in achieving this goal, they will be in a better position to use knowledge in applied applications for human and societal betterment.'

– Jonathan H. Turner, 38th University Professor, University of California

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