Handbook of Research Methods and Applications in Political Science

Is this a comprehensive overview of state-of-the-art research methods and applications currently in use in political science. It combines theory and methodology (qualitative and quantitative), and offers insights into the major approaches and their roots in the philosophy of scientific knowledge. Including a comprehensive discussion of the relevance of a host of digital data sources, plus the dos and don'ts of data collection in general, the book also explains how to use diverse research tools and highlights when and how to apply these techniques.

'It is rare for a book these days to seek to review and draw together the whole range of what political scientists – in many different countries and with many different interests – actually do. Given the divisions in the discipline between quantitative and qualitative, description and theorising, empirical and normative, it is difficult to develop an integrated and coherent discussion, let alone do it well and in sufficient detail to be methodologically and philosophically illuminating. But that is just what the editors and their collaborators have achieved in this fine volume – partly by not evading the difficult issues of what, if anything, the various approaches have in common and what they contribute to each other and to practitioners and politicians in the every day world of politics. All of these questions are confronted head on in the various chapters, some of which provide original technical analyses which could well stand in their own right as contributions to the discipline. None are less than provocative and interesting presentations of their own point of view, whether this be philosophical or methodological – and they all contribute substantial points to the discussion of whether there is disciplinary unity or not.'

– Ian Budge, Essex University, UK

'This work is unique and impressive in scope, size and ambition. No summary can do justice to the wealth of material assembled in its 33 chapters. The originality lies in the discussion of core epistemological, methodological and technical questions of political science within a multilevel framework; in relation to substantive topics; in connection with disciplinary subsectors; and with suggestions on how to do the analysis, where to find the data, how to enhance the relevance of your results, down to the chance of publishing them at best. Almost everything you want to know about contemporary political science is there.'

– Stefano Bartolini, European University Institute, Italy

'If you want to do reflected research, this Handbook on methods and applications in political science will become an invaluable companion. Its linking of meta-theoretical foundations, theory-building, method development and data gathering by a large number of distinguished scholars gives unique insights into the knowledge production process in political science. The Handbook will without a doubt contribute to better and more informed research.'

– Dietmar Braun, University of Lausanne, Switzerland

'Any student undertaking a politics degree at graduate level will find this book an indispensable introduction to the subject they are approaching and it will also be useful for teachers seeking to orientate themselves within the discipline as a whole. This is particularly true because of the supporting detail the book provides and the way it links up technical exposition to fundamental philosophical questions. From a student point of view it does not shrink from providing useful and specific guidance, while at the same time identifying, in and through its meta-theorising, the whole range of methods and approaches.'

– John Wollschlager, University College London, UK

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practical tips on how to present and publish research results and how to check out established themes with new data. This is a book which political scientists at all levels will benefit from reading. It should also stimulate them to take a fresh look both at their own work and that of others – and – who knows? – perhaps forge some of that unity across the discipline which is the main subject of its discussion.’
– Colin Hay, University of Sheffield, UK and Institut d’Études Politiques at Sciences Po, France

“This Handbook provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date account of the current state of empirical-analytical political science. The contributions share a systemic and multi-layered approach combining political actors, organizations, and institutions. In addition, types of data and data collection as well as advanced types of data analysis are described and explained. Finally, much can be learned about the evaluation of research output and publication strategies. The editors have motivated a stellar set of 40 authors to contribute to the 33 chapters of the Handbook. The index makes it easy to navigate the vast ocean of results and ideas. The Handbook is a “must have” for scholars interested in what political science can contribute to reliably answer the most important questions facing the complex world of politics today.’
– Hans-Dieter Klingemann, Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin (Berlin Social Science Center), Germany

“The editors have lined up an impressive list of contributors who show the way to the study of political processes using a systemic and multi-layered approach. This Handbook provides a comprehensive overview over the comparative study of politics. It not only provides an introduction to "hands-on" tools, it also introduces the underlying logics and epistemology of the social sciences in general and presents the empirical approaches in the different subfields of political science. This will be an important guide for research on politics.’
– Hans-Peter Kriesi, European University Institute, Italy

“This Handbook is an impressive survey of the current state-of-the-art in political science regarding both the variations in theory and methods that are employed in the discipline. The book is comprehensive and wide-ranging and at the same time well-focused and well-organized by the editors who have included a stellar cast of contributors, all experts on the different approaches presented. In short: this is a timely effort and exactly what political science needs in its present state of development.’
– Arend Lijphart, University of California, San Diego, US

‘Hans Keman and Jaap Woldendorp have brought within a single volume a superb collection of essays on political science methods, approaches, empirics, and results. The contributions, written by leading researchers, are engaging, informative, and a pleasure to read. I can think of no book that better summarizes the diversity of techniques, concepts, and theories that comparativists develop in their efforts to understand political phenomena within, among, and beyond national states. This volume will be welcomed by graduate students and established scholars alike.’
– Gary Marks, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the Netherlands and University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, US

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