

1994 *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*

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The division within the social sciences between those who work with quantitative data and those who work with qualitative data is not simply methodological but reaches to the very idea of what is scientific about the study of society. The divide has sparked battles in nearly all of the social sciences.

Designing Social Inquiry bridged this critical division by arguing that quantitative and qualitative approaches to social science were more alike than different, and by offering a blueprint for social inquiry that could be used by a social scientist employing any method. The authors—all leading political scientists who, in their own research, work with different methods on different subjects—developed a unified approach to description and inference where numerical measurement was not possible.

The book elevated social scientific methodology to a new intellectual level, but it did more than merely contribute to a more rigorous qualitative research design. *Designing Social Inquiry* showed why good research design for quantitative and qualitative research did not significantly differ, and thus why the war between the approaches to social science should come to an end. The book remains controversial and has stimulated a fruitful debate among social scientists. In the words of noted social theorist David Laitin, “The rules elucidated have relevance to statistically minded scholars, formal modelers, comparativists, thick describers, and interpretivists.” In short, this book is relevant to every practitioner of social science.

