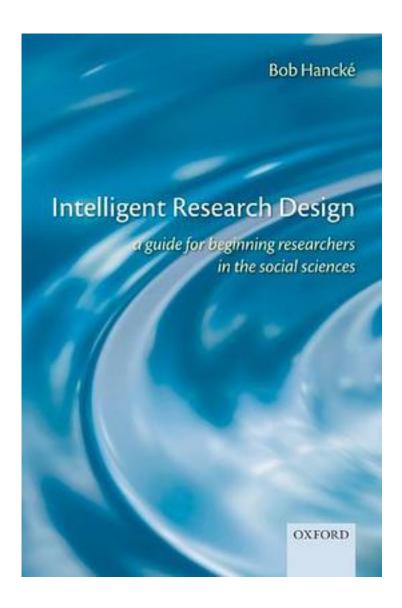# Intelligent Research Design

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This book offers advice to doctoral researchers and graduate and advanced undergraduate students on how to embark on their research. Based on a decade of teaching early-stage researchers in the social sciences at the LSE and other universities, and written with the central problems of beginning researchers in mind, Bob Hancke guides them through the process of thinking about the links between theory, cases and data, and to do so in a way that helps to turn their initial plausible ideas into convincing arguments. This lively book, deliberately jargon-free and with a hands-on, pragmatic approach to research design, addresses the problems that research students face - or ignore, often at their peril - in the course of their first few years. Its central message is that research is a complex and iterative process in which researchers construct every relevant part of their project with one goal in mind: make a persuasive point. They define the question they ask and the debate they engage, construct their cases and data to answer that question, and write it up as an argument that brings out the strengths of their research design. It addresses such key issues as statistical versus configurational approaches, time in social science research, different types of case studies and comparative research, and a critical approach to data. The Appendix gives tips on presenting and discussing papers, and on crafting research proposals.

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