

# Social Justice: Anthropology, Peace and Human Rights

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**Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis.** Daniel Druckman.  
Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2005. 408 pp.

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Conflicts in the social world are multi-dimensional, involving a range of stakeholders, interests, positions, resources and levels. As such, conflicts can and should be studied from a full range of perspectives. Daniel Druckman's *Doing Research: Methods of Inquiry for Conflict Analysis* (Sage 2005) provides a valuable tool to those dealing with conflict analysis in a variety of disciplines and professions. Druckman uses his extensive teaching and research career to provide a readable account of the way research projects are actually carried out. With well over 100 publications (including books, book chapters and journal articles) on a variety of topics; a distinguished teaching career; and recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Association for Conflict Management under his belt, Druckman shares with his readers the fruits of a rich, productive academic and research career.

The first of its kind, this book is especially suited to conflict studies because Druckman demonstrates the value of multi-method approaches as a research program in a context "moving vertically from small (single experiments or case) to large studies (meta-analysis, comparative case studies) and moving horizontally from simulations to case studies" (ix). By including discussions of methodological flexibility and complementary approaches, *Doing Research* is a practical guide towards understanding different research traditions and how to apply them to real world contexts. Integrating both conceptual and practical dimensions of research, Druckman has highlighted complementarities among methods for more robust and original research projects in this well-crafted and lucid text. The helpfulness of this text is not limited to researchers alone; rather scholar-practitioners will also find an abundance of information which can be used to inform their ethical, reflective practice.

Responsible conflict resolution is intervention based on best practices: in order to intervene in an ethical manner, it is essential not only to know what techniques exist and how they may be applied, but also to know what effects such approaches have been shown to have in previous studies. *Doing Research* is helpful for reflective practice because it guides scholar-practitioners in knowing how to read and interpret relevant research findings, how to build on knowledge put forth in different studies and how to design research projects which highlight the most beneficial and effective methods of intervention.

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## Organization and Overview of *Doing Research*

Druckman begins with an often overlooked question, “Why do research?” *Doing Research* answers: because once students become professionals, those who have used this text will be able to design multi-method studies and perform research tasks including “...basic and applied research...modeling and framework development, [synthesis of] a wide array of research findings, lead study teams, perform evaluations of interventions and other practices, consult and teach” (350). Providing insight into the philosophical assumptions and orientations upon which all methodologies are based, Druckman guides researchers from understanding assumptions underlying various traditions, to deciding which general approach to use and then to deciding which data collection strategies may be applied, with what strengths and/or weaknesses. To help navigate the text further, Druckman gives the reader a handy list of issues covered in each chapter called “Issues Addressed by Chapter” (338-339). Examples cited in *Doing Research* frequently emphasize Druckman’s specialty, namely, international negotiation and mediation. However, Druckman cites a plethora of studies relevant to the CA&R field throughout the text, which are later recaptured in an extensive references section, that equip researchers in their further exploration of methods and areas of inquiry.

## Who Will Benefit from Reading this Text?

While designed for graduate students studying conflict, it is not limited to those in the CA&R field; educators and consultants in a variety of fields may also find *Doing Research* a useful tool for their professions. Research questions and examples of research projects in *Doing Research* provide an avenue into understanding the epistemology of CA&R for the unfamiliar. Likewise, those in related fields—political science, international relations, social psychology, and so on—can better appreciate the integrative nature and value of CA&R research in their own discipline’s work. The most useful set of chapters for practitioners, broadly conceived, and for career development may be found in Part VII, “Evaluating and Applying Research” (293 – 326) because these are crucially needed in all areas of intervention and policy assessments, as well as for designs and for determining best practices. Conflict resolution is primarily an applied field, and conceptual and practical challenges accompany the criteria for judging effectiveness of attempted interventions in conflict scenarios. One of the few texts to include research and policy consulting, *Doing Research* can inform “would be” consultants and aid them in meeting the increasing demand upon conflict analysts and social scientists for consultancy positions.

*Doing Research* also has applicability in the classroom for educators and students alike. For example, discussion questions provided at the close of each chapter are an exceedingly useful learning and teaching tool. Used as a study guide, students can use these questions to review and ensure that they have fully grasped the key components of each chapter. As a teaching tool, instructors may use the questions as in-class discussion prompts, individual take home assignments or the basis for small group, cooperative learning projects. A further benefit for educators using this text can be found in the

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concluding chapter (346 -347). Based on his many years of teaching students of CA&R research, Druckman distills the particular challenges that his students have experienced...a useful “heads up,” if you will, to instructors new to teaching research methods and determining which topics may require added class time or clarification.

## Concluding Thoughts

Considering the number of new undergraduate and certificate programs in CA&R emerging in recent years, creating a research methods text with more basic information could have tapped a broader audience at different levels of learning and research experience. Had it been 800-1000 pages (rather than nearly 400 pages), coverage of how to conduct a literature review (rather than reviewing the literature to identify gaps in research alone) or more in-depth treatment of qualitative methodologies may have broadened the readership base. This is not to say that *Doing Research* does not adequately raise the awareness of researchers with regards to many research methodologies, types of data and analytical techniques. On the contrary, Druckman offers a bountiful discussion of twelve types of data (see 344-346 for summary) as well as eleven research methods—the three pillar methodologies (experiments, case studies and surveys), including modeling, single case studies, comparative case studies with small  $n$  and with large  $N$ , content analysis, evaluation research, action research as well as policy consulting—and includes a thorough discussion of the capabilities and limitations therein.

*Doing Research* is not the only book you will need in the research process, but the first book that should be consulted when doing CA&R research. The CA&R projects cited throughout the text provide guidance for the types of approaches, skills and resources needed. However, it needs to be complemented by more narrow, specialized books which cover the variety of skills (creating research designs, producing data, conducting analysis, and so on) a researcher will draw upon in conducting research, as Druckman himself points out: “Textbooks can provide guidance for each of these types of skills” (348). Since other texts exist—which Druckman cites throughout *Doing Research* for his reader’s benefit—duplicating other’s work was not necessary here: “The social science landscape is covered by a wide variety of methodological approaches and analytical techniques...I make no attempt to provide another survey of approaches” (xiv). Further, as Druckman points out, “Although none of this is intended to be a rule of thumb for the researcher, all of it is intended to raise the consciousness of both new and experienced researchers” (346). To his readers’ benefit, Druckman provides excellent groundwork for getting started to do research and useful tools for searching the literature, including a table of online databases and indexes as well as tips to aid in searching online databases.

All social scientists study conflict, to varying degrees and depths. Further, authors of all kinds know that a good story pivots on some essential conflict; without conflict, stories seem flat, uninteresting and unreal. In terms of real world research, study of the social world will always involve central or peripheral conflicts that have captured the curiosity of the social scientist. Unpacking these conflicts—whether in the domain of political science, international relations, or social psychology—is essential for

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understanding conflict phenomena and for capturing the interest and curiosity of future researchers: the accumulation of such knowledge via rigorous research can serve as an invaluable guide for best practices in theoretical and applied research. *Doing Research* is a valuable tool to raise questions, refine those curiosities into researchable questions, decide which research tradition is needed to answer that question, and how to combine other research traditions to support and challenge initial findings. In order to refine research for more robust applications, one needs to be mindful of the strengths and weaknesses of research techniques as well as to how to creatively integrate approaches for greater complementarity. *Doing Research* highlights just such complementarity and provides a “foundation for the way methodologies can be used for social science research” (327).