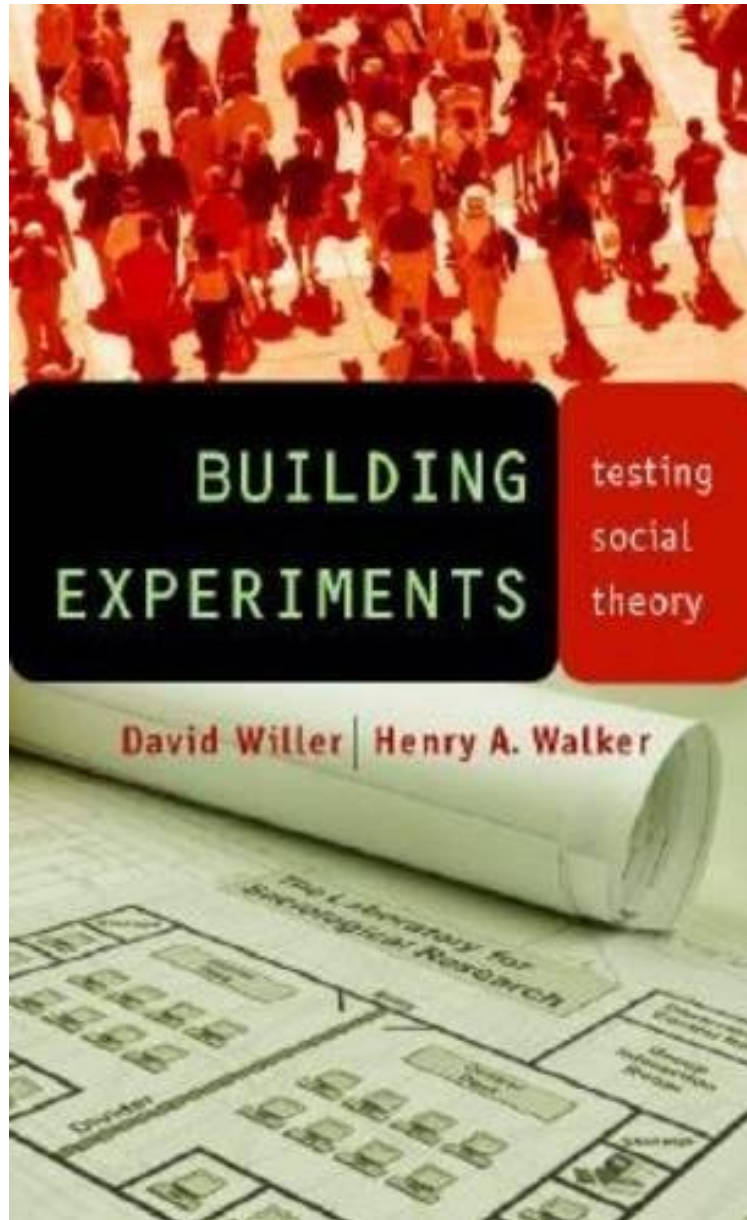


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Building Experiments: Testing Social Theory

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David Willer, Henry A. Walker : Building Experiments: Testing Social Theory before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Building Experiments: Testing Social Theory:

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Building Experiments is the essential text for understanding experimental methods. In engaging style, the book shows how theory is employed in experimental design, how experiments test theory, and how proper design and use of experiments can advance the social sciences as explanatory sciences. The interactive nature of the text encourages students to hone their skills, building and running experiments while learning the underlying principles of theory and experimentation. The book addresses practical issues, ranging from the critical analysis of historically important experiments to understanding how to recruit subjects properly and protect their rights. Founding experiments in sociology are compared to founding experiments in physics to demonstrate fundamental cross-disciplinary similarities of theory, experiment, and scientific method. Finally, the book explains how experimental research and theory can be applied in historical and institutional studies. This book will be a key resource in social science methodology courses at all levels.

Readers will enjoy Willer and Walker's informative coverage of the classic sociological experiments such as Bales, Asch and Berger, including a much-needed critique of Milgram's obedience experiments. The authors provide a clear exposition of experimental methods, based on a distinction between theory-driven experiments and empirically driven experiments using the method of difference. They have written the definitive work on experiments in sociology.

Randall Collins, University of Pennsylvania
Rigorous yet lucid, practical yet profound, this first-rate scholarly contribution is an excellent introduction to the logic of experimental research in the social sciences, ideal for methodology classes at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Especially noteworthy is the way Willer and Walker anchor experimental sociology and social psychology in social science more broadly, and demonstrate that these disciplines can indeed be sciences in the same sense that physics is a science.

William Sims Bainbridge
This book is brimming with examples, classic including Archimedes and Aristotle! as well as contemporary, of social research making it both accessible and useful to a wide audience.

Phyllis Moen, University of Minnesota
This book is a must: It teaches the different experimental aims and designs; it shows how to link experiments to theory and important social questions; it demonstrates that experiments in the physical sciences and sociology follow the same logic; it gives instructions how to select subjects and treat them in an ethical way; and, above all, it motivates by delivering many examples of answers to fundamental social questions already provided by experiments in the past.

Frans N. Stokman, ICS, University of Groningen, The Netherlands
From the Inside Flap
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