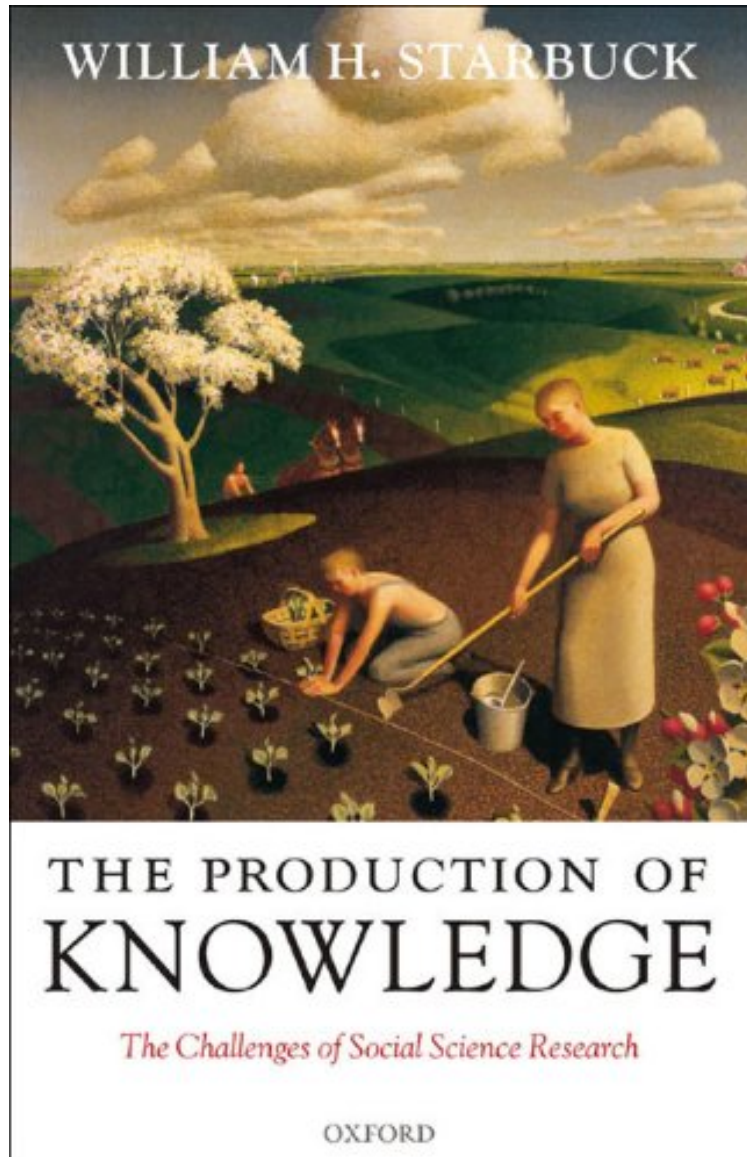


The Production of Knowledge: The Challenge of Social Science Research

William H. Starbuck

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William H. Starbuck : The Production of Knowledge: The Challenge of Social Science Research before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Production of Knowledge: The Challenge of Social Science Research:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great book!By AndiThis is a great book. It re-shaped and deepened my understanding of social science research. Bill Starbuck, is one of the most prominent and serious researchers in the

field of management and organizational studies. He draws on his wealth of personal research experiences to describe his own journey from enthusiastic application of established research methodologies towards the realization how these methodologies constrain the production of knowledge. In the author's own words, "this book is partly a cry of protest, partly an advocacy for reform, and partly an expression of hope." For me, the autobiographical parts make this book unique. They offer a "behind-the-scenes" perspective of social science research. They reveal to the reader the underlying motivations, convictions, and institutionalized processes that shape management research and are the foundation for the author's arguments. In addition, his candid descriptions of personal experiences make the book a very entertaining read. The author's ultimate aim is nothing less than a paradigm shift. His book presents the related methodological issues and recommendations clearly. It conveys thought-provoking and important ideas that are relevant to any researcher in the social sciences. Thus, I highly recommend this book to anybody interested in management research and social science -- senior, junior or novice!

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.
A remarkable book
By Ingemund Hagg, Sweden
A remarkable book, most valuable for doctoral students in the social sciences and in particular students of organisations. The book is provocative. No other book in recent decades has given me so many disquieting thoughts about my own and others' academic activities. Starbucks criticism of much of today's social science research is sharp. We are invited to follow his own impressive research road over time, an open autobiography which is not common in academia, and also his challenging analysis of major problems in social science research. To take part both in Starbucks own journey and in his analysis of major problems in social science research makes the book particularly stimulating. Starbucks not only gives critique but also presents interesting and as I see it realistic ideas for improving social science research. This important book deserves many readers for many years to come!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.
Sharp Insights Dulled by Confusing Presentation
By David P. Racine
Starbucks takes well deserved aim at the pretensions of institutionalized social science and the impediments they pose to real progress in the production of useful knowledge. His willingness to talk in the first person about his own failings and successes sets him refreshingly apart from the norm, in which scientists tend to spend their careers elaborating on and defending, in one way or another, their initial intellectual insights. His conclusions about how to do social science better are right on target. But the value of his insights is marred for the reader by a muddled presentation. He marches back and forth in time from one chapter to the next, often repeating an item several times. There is a sort of mild stream-of-consciousness quality to the writing that could have been fixed by a good editing job, which either Oxford did not supply or Starbucks did not want. Too bad, because the mixture of historical narrative and stepping out of the stream of history to offer perspective, which the book tries to do, can be a potent combination.

Bill Starbucks has been one of the leading management researchers over several decades. In this book he reflects on a number of challenges associated with management and social science research - the search for a 'behavioral science', the limits of rationality, the unreliability of many research findings, the social shaping of research agendas, cultures and judgements. It is an engaging, chronologically structured account in which he discusses some of his own research projects and various methodological debates. This is a feisty argument from someone who has been fully engaged with all aspects of research - carrying out research programmes, evaluating research, tirelessly questioning the assumptions and claims of social science research, and never avoiding the awkward theoretical or practical challenges that face organizational researchers. Well written, provocative and unusual, this quasi autobiographical account will inform and entertain, and be a valuable guide to current and future research students.