2. The Social Research Process

This chapter outlines some of the basic features of social research. It introduces students to the notion that social research is a process, helps to clarify the reasons for research, and explores the relationship between theory and research. Using the analogy of a voyage, it demonstrates that specific tasks associated with carrying out social research tend to be ordered, but not always orderly. There are dynamic points of issue that need to be negotiated to move a dissertation project toward completion, or otherwise there is a risk of being blown off course. By understanding what is meant by the research process, and how theory can be used in social research, readers can begin to explore, describe, and explain the human world with greater confidence.
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