­Transcript

Chapter 2: The Social Research Process

So there are different ways of making a meaningful contribution to the knowledge community. You can describe an aspect of the social world that has not received the attention it perhaps deserves; you can explain a social phenomenon in terms of how it comes into being or how it’s sustained; or you can seek to understand a particular view about the human world and how and where such perspectives might arise.

And when doing a piece of research for the first time, many students tend to overestimate what is required by dissertation research project. You’re likely to need to demonstrate some originality in your dissertation with respect to that description, explanation, and understanding, but you are not expected to make a hugely ground-breaking finding - even very well established academics rarely do that!

Originality may mean applying an idea in a new place, with a different group, or in a different time. This is often only a small increment in terms of the knowledge-base - and even the most direct re-study will achieve at least one of those things.

So, I think, try not to get caught up in thinking you need to make a huge contribution. Focus on understanding key orientations to social research, and the different types of approach that you might like to adopt.

So, Social research is about describing, explaining, and understanding the human world. Try not to overestimate what is required in terms of originality. And, make sure you understand the basic building blocks of research and that’ll produce and good starting point for your dissertation.