

Contents

List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xii
Preface	xiii
Introduction	1
The structure of the book	2
1 The Nature of Research	7
The 'language' of research	8
The nature of research	10
The nature of the doctoral process	11
Why do a PhD?	12
The right place to study	12
Matters of time	14
Familiarise yourself	15
Summary	17
Further reading	17
2 The 'Nuts and Bolts' of Research	18
The tools of research	18
○ Model, typology and ideal type	20
■ Model	20
■ Typology	21
■ Ideal type	23
○ Paradigm	25
○ Concepts	27
○ The abuse of concepts	29
Key terms in research	30
○ Methods	30
○ Methodology	32
Summary	33

Essential reading	34
Further reading	34
3 Getting Started in Research	35
Getting started	36
○ The literature review, research questions and hypotheses	38
○ The initial 'dip' (stage 1)	40
○ 'Second' literature review, research questions and hypotheses (stage 2)	41
○ Full-scale critical literature review (stage 3)	44
Levels of analysis and types of research	47
○ Levels of analysis	47
○ The structure and agency problem	48
Types of study	50
○ Comparative studies	53
Summary	55
Essential reading	56
Further reading	56
4 The Building Blocks of Research	57
Ontology	59
Epistemology	63
Differing ontological and epistemological views	64
The directional relationship between ontology, epistemology, methodology, methods and sources	65
The 'social capital' debate	69
Summary	74
Essential reading	75
5 Introducing the Key Research Paradigms	76
Research paradigms	78
○ The core of positivism	79
○ The core of interpretivism	82
○ The core of post-positivism – critical realism	84
■ Critical realism	85
○ Summary of research paradigms	87
Key perspectives in research	89
○ Key perspectives in the 'positivist' tradition	90
Summary: Disciplines, perspectives, discourses and interdisciplinarity	95

Interdisciplinarity or 'post-disciplinarity'	97
Summary	98
Essential reading	99
Further reading	99
6 The Types and Uses of Theory in Research	100
Introducing theory	102
The traditional view of theory	104
The role of theory in social research	105
Research paradigms and the role of theory	105
○ The positivist paradigm	106
○ The (critical) realist paradigm	107
○ The interpretivist paradigm	108
○ The post-modernist paradigm	108
Different uses of theory	109
○ Metatheory	109
○ Grand or formal theories	110
○ Middle-range theories (or 'substantive theories')	111
○ Grounded theory	111
Inductive and deductive theory and research	113
Summary	115
Essential reading	115
Further reading	115
7 Introducing Research Methods	116
Quantitative research	117
Qualitative research	119
The quantitative–qualitative dichotomy:	
A false antithesis	121
Methods	125
○ Introducing methods of enquiry	125
○ Interview technique	125
○ Structured interviews	127
○ Semi-structured and unstructured interviews	127
○ Group interviews or focus groups	128
○ Questionnaire	128
○ The observation technique	129
○ Documentary analysis	131
○ The archival technique	131
○ Documents	132
○ Discourse analysis	133
○ Print media	134

x Contents

Triangulation, mixing methods and data	135
Summary	137
Essential reading	137
Further reading	137

8 Academic Standards, Plagiarism and Ethics in Research 138

Why worry about academic standards, plagiarism and ethics?	138
○ Plagiarism	139
○ Referencing – keeping academic standards	140
Ethics in research	142
Continuum of ethics in research	146
Summary	148
Essential reading	148
Further reading	149

9 Conclusion: Summary of Key Points 150

Appendix 1 Stages of the Research Process	154
The stages of doctoral research	156
Stage I	159
Stage II	159
Stage III	160
Appendix 2 Glossary of Research Terms	161
Bibliography	179
Index	186

1 The Nature of Research

Chapter 1 introduces:

- *The 'language' of research*
- *The nature of research*
- *The idea of preparing yourself by considering where to study, time management and by familiarising yourself with the task ahead*

The aim of this first chapter is to begin to familiarise you with the nature, tools and terminology of the research process. Central to my aims is the 'demystification' of research, be it a BSc or BA dissertation, an MSc, MA, MPhil, PhD or DPhil. The emphasis is on the *foundations of research* and many of the terms and much of the process will be applicable to all sustained research in the human sciences. The following advice will also be of interest to researchers who have to write lengthy dissertations or structured research reports. From time to time it will be necessary to address specific points relating to a higher degree, i.e. the PhD, as these are not relevant to advanced undergraduates or all postgraduate work. The majority of the points made, however, are fundamental to all research. This chapter also touches on the differences between undergraduate, postgraduate and especially PhD research.

First, I discuss the language of research; that is, the manner in which it is presented and why it is important to learn the generic terms of research in order to dispel the mystery surrounding the -isms and -ologies that pepper research papers, research methods books and courses. I then turn to the nature of research, distinguishing between undergraduate dissertations, MAs and PhDs. PhDs get a special section, because they differ in so many ways to the former two. The final three sections touch on where to study, time management and familiarising

yourself with the task ahead. All of these factors are relevant for what I am concerned with here: the foundations of research. The choice of where to study is most relevant for postgraduates, but also for those undergraduates wishing to continue their studies. Time management is essential for both undergraduates and postgraduates. Finally, we turn to the most obvious, yet underused idea of simply looking at what it is you are supposed to be producing. Before we can embellish our work with wonderful, sophisticated and insightful statements, we need to know the mechanics of research: what does a dissertation or thesis look like?

► The 'language' of research

Whilst we all know the old cliché, 'knowledge is power', it is worth reflecting on the ways in which knowledge is discussed, disputed and disseminated. In the human sciences there are a number of different 'discourses' between disciplines, for example economics, history and cultural studies. Common to most discourses is the basic language of research. Given the variety of uses of the terms and terminology of human science research, it is hardly surprising that students rarely have a firm grasp of the tools of their trade. Different academics in different disciplines attach a wide range of meanings and interpretations to the terminology of research. One person's 'theory' is another's 'taxonomy', while another researcher's 'ideal type' is another's 'theory', and so on. With little or no knowledge of the standard reference points in general research, you are likely to produce a dissertation or thesis which is unclear and imprecise; learning the rules of the game simplifies the process, makes it transparent and takes away the fear associated with the unknown. It is my contention that in order to be able to work within the parameters of the human sciences, you need to be very clear about what the tools and terminology of research are and what they mean *before* you can begin researching. If you spend a little time learning the language of research, learning what the terms and concepts mean and how they can be employed, the mystery associated with much of academic work, especially at the postgraduate level, will begin to disappear.

This may sound trivial, but given the fact that many students – and seasoned academics for that matter – have difficulty in differentiating between crucial terms such as ontology (what is out there to know about) and epistemology (what and how can we know about it), their subsequent research is bound to suffer, as knowledge of these two key

terms and their place in research is essential to understanding the research process as a whole.

These particular terms (ontology and epistemology) are often shrouded in ambiguity, partly created by the language in which they are explained, leaving the reader more confused than she was before she began reading. There is an obvious and urgent need for agreement on the meaning of specific generic terms across the disciplines in the human sciences to prevent the confusion which surrounds many concepts at present. Suffice it to say that this should not be understood as a call for unity of methodological approaches, as diversity is essential for the vibrancy of the human sciences, but rather a call for clarity on key terms that can travel across disciplines.

What other reasons are there for needing to know and understand standard terms and concepts in social research? A simple example will do: consider a would-be bricklayer who does not know the difference between a trowel, a spirit level and a chisel. These are the basic tools of his trade, without which no wall can be built. Each tool has a specific purpose and, if it were used wrongly (or in the wrong order), for example taking a chisel to lay bricks, the results would be disastrous. In research, specific tools have specific purposes and, if one is to employ them correctly, one must first understand what they mean, what they are meant to do and how and when to use them. The lack of clarity and constancy of the social-research lexicon has led to a minefield of misused, abused and misunderstood terms and phrases with which students must contend. It has also led to confusion surrounding the presentation of assumptions upon which research is based. There is a need to be clear about these assumptions and a need to know the research traditions from which these assumptions spring. Thus, by familiarising ourselves with the technical language of research, we effectively demystify it.

No discussion about the language of research can, however, avoid mentioning the bewildering array of -isms and -ologies used in presenting research. Many of these terms are used wrongly or imprecisely, which adds to the mystery of research and the impenetrability of much of its output. Use of specific terms, for example 'variables', 'relationships', 'measuring', 'co-variation' and 'hypotheses' (see also Ragin 1994: 11–13), denote a sense of seriousness, of sound academic judgement, but the fact of the matter is that merely using specific terms is no guarantee of solid research. Many researchers, as we shall see in the following chapters, refuse to use such a language when undertaking and presenting their work, as they seek to distance themselves from particular research paradigms (most notably 'positivism' – see chapter 5).

► The nature of research

Undergraduate dissertations and MA dissertations have many things in common. Both are pieces of sustained research of up to and around 10 000–15 000 words. It is often said that the best undergraduate essay gets near to or attains Master's level of work. At the Master's level, students are expected to be far more independent in their choice and execution of research projects. Also, a Master's would usually contain an empirical case-study, unless, of course, its key concern was of a more theoretical nature. Such an empirical study usually means a sustained amount of time spent on fieldwork, something only a minority of undergraduates would have the time or resources to do. Nonetheless, a solid undergraduate dissertation should exhibit some characteristics similar to those of an MA dissertation: a clear presentation of the problem; clear research questions or hypotheses; a discussion of the methods, methodology and sources employed in the project; a section which attempts to address the research questions posed, and a clear evaluation of the findings. Each of these sections, as I shall point out throughout the following chapters, is logically interlinked.

If we leave the differences to one side, the question still remains: what is research? Generally speaking, research at BA, MA and PhD level will have a number of things in common:

- 1 You will have a question to ask or problem to solve (chapter 3 discusses how to arrive at such a question).
- 2 You will set about answering your question by sifting through a variety of data and sources, using specific research methods (chapter 7 introduces the most well-known).
- 3 You will need a methodology to be able to answer your questions (chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 discuss the underpinnings of research).
- 4 You will need to think about how your project adds to knowledge on this topic either by generating new knowledge or clarifying or furthering existing work.

The distance between a solid MA (Master of Arts; *Magister Artium*) dissertation and a PhD is less great than that between BA (Bachelor of Arts; *Baccalaureus Artium*) and PhD (Doctor of Philosophy; *Philosophiae Doctor*), as the Master's student will already have had to contend with many issues confronting a doctoral candidate. The leap from a BA to a PhD is great, but not unbridgeable. The most obvious unique aspect of **doctoral research** is the emphasis it places on the individual. There are

few taught elements of the degree, except for research training, and the student is expected to have a high level of self-discipline in order to be able to cope with only minimal guidance and structure – in comparison to what students at BA or MA level are used to. (This is not the case in the USA, where PhDs entail required coursework.) In addition, PhD students will have to go through a comprehensive **viva** examination, defending the work they have submitted. Self-discipline, of course, is needed for all types of sustained research and is easier to produce if you have a keen interest in a subject in the first place. This makes the choice of topic important for undergraduates, essential for an MA and absolutely crucial for a PhD.

► **The nature of the doctoral process**

A PhD can be successfully completed by anyone who has a certain amount of intelligence, and, importantly, the degree of commitment necessary. This is not to suggest that obtaining a doctorate is easy. Commitment and steely determination are essential, but of little use if not accompanied by an open and enquiring mind and a willingness to take criticism and advice and to listen and learn from others. Herein lies the first difficulty: to complete a higher degree successfully, you will have to reassess and recalibrate your often deeply-held opinions in the light of the new material, arguments and debates that you will encounter on your learning journey.

The first thing to note about a PhD is what it is not. It is rarely a magnum opus, the study of all studies ever on a specific topic (many educational systems, for example Germany, cater for this by offering a higher doctorate option). There is plenty of time to produce this afterwards, as most great thinkers in fact have. For example, Albert Einstein and Karl Marx made relatively modest contributions to their fields of research in their doctoral theses, but they spent that time learning the tools of their trade whilst ‘demonstrating their fully professional mastery of the established paradigms’ in their field (Phillips and Pugh 1994: 35).

Undertaking a PhD should be seen as a learning process, an apprenticeship in the art of research in which you will learn to reflect on the origins of theories and concepts, how to theorise, how to mesh theory with practice, and how to prioritise and organise a vast quantity of material into a readable text within a restricted period of time. The discipline necessary for successfully completing a doctorate will benefit the student far beyond the walls of academia. There is no doubt that

a solid formal education will help you undertake a doctorate, but other factors such as mental agility, inquisitiveness, motivation and discipline, which can be acquired outside the school gates, are also beneficial.

► **Why do a PhD?**

Denis Lawton makes a valid point in stating that just because you are interested in something does not necessarily mean you should write a PhD on it. You may be better off producing another kind of book, one without the constraints and ‘hoops’ a PhD candidate is required to jump through (Lawton 1999: 3). However, the combination of both your interest and ability should ensure that you have a good chance of being successful over the sustained period of study. The point here is not to do a doctorate for the sake of it. The title ‘Dr’ may be elevating – for a short while – but that is not a good enough reason for spending at least three years studying hard. As a researcher, you should be aiming to contribute something new to an existing body of knowledge and, if you cannot, you do not have a PhD thesis.

What you should avoid in all cases is to end up simply adding to the increasing mountain of monographs, a scenario in which, as George Steiner puts it, ‘the true source of Z’s tome is X’s and Y’s work on the identical subject’ (Steiner 1991: 39). Instead, what you should aim to do is to come as close as possible to what Steiner terms ‘the immediate’, or, in the manner in which I interpret it here, the event you are attempting to shed light on or explain. The point of research should not be to give an analysis of a critique of an event, but to deliver an interpretation of the event itself. You need the tertiary material (texts on texts) and the secondary material (others’ work on the event) to position and guide your work and to situate your contribution, but the aim is to complement this with primary or new material, or with a novel interpretation. There is a certain tension here with the need to produce original work within a restricted period of time.

► **The right place to study**

If you are finishing a first degree and wish to continue with your studies, now is the time to consider the right place for you and your project, as

choosing the right department in the first instance is crucial. If you wish to undertake a taught Master's, you need to think very carefully about the 'fit' between what's on offer and where you want to go. If you are taking a doctorate, you need to consider a number of factors: if there are only two other postgraduates in a given department, one working on a Marxist interpretation of Franz Kafka's *Das Schloss* and the other on an econometric analysis of Dollar–Deutschmark exchange-rate dynamics, you are not going into the best environment for, say, studying the impact of the Iraq war on European–US relations. Apart from the fact that this department will probably not have a European or US expert, you will be isolated in your studies, with little chance of either the type of feedback you require or the opportunities to present ongoing work in postgraduate seminars.

Do not let your choice of department be guided solely by an internationally renowned scholar – if there are half a dozen in the department, then that is fine. Otherwise, leading scholars have a tendency to be in great demand and will almost certainly have a large number of Master's and doctoral students, a heavy conference schedule (i.e. they are very often abroad when you need to see them) and may be hard to make an appointment with. Their turnaround time on giving feedback on versions of your work – an important part of your development – could be months. If, however, there are a number of capable scholars in a given department, this will be less of a concern, as you will always have somebody with whom you can discuss your ideas, providing your topic chimes with the research interests of the department. Remember, too, the dangers associated with all supervisors, celebrities or not. These include:

- you doing your supervisor's project
- you never being able to come up with an original idea (because he or she has been there, done that, etc.)
- a general lack of confidence in your own judgements and an over-reliance on the supervisor and, especially, his or her knowledge of the subject.

Whatever postgraduate degree you do, you do need, however, someone who knows what an MA, MPhil or PhD consists of and who is at least halfway *interested* in your subject area and is sensitive to how *you* want to approach it. For research degrees you should, ideally, seek joint supervision (see Wisker 2001: 22–8 for a further discussion on 'where to study' and for differences between degrees).

► Matters of time

Good time-management skills are of paramount importance in research, and now is the moment to give these some thought. A major problem for undergraduates contemplating their extended essay is all the other work and assignments they need to submit beforehand. Even so, you need to give some thought to your dissertation a long time in advance of starting it. One of the main reasons for this is that gathering information and data for an extended essay takes far more time than writing it up.

A slow start will inevitably translate into a mad rush towards the end of the period of study. Try not to get into the habit of burning the midnight oil and waking up at two o'clock in the afternoon. A good night's sleep and a regular work pattern will probably lead to better results in the end. Remember also to leave time for life outside your studies, as merely immersing yourself in your studies without coming up for air could lead to a number of problems. First, you need time off from direct studying, so that you can recover, absorb and reflect on everything you have been thinking, reading and writing about. Secondly, if you give up previous hobbies or socialising to fit in a few hours of extra reading, the results may be counter-productive. You need to feel 'balanced' within yourself, a state that will obviously differ from person to person (see May 1999: 62–3). This is, after all, what you will hopefully aspire to post-degree, so you may as well start now.

Reasons for bad time management are manifold: for example, the perfectionist who refuses to write but continues to gather data will eventually be buried under a pile of information with little or nothing to show for it. The perfectionist would also not have had the benefit of frequent exchanges with her dissertation tutor or supervisor and thus run the risk of 'going off at a tangent', that is, digressing from her area of enquiry. Perfectionism may be a virtue to some, but under conditions of tight time constraints, it could prevent a person from actually achieving anything. Other reasons for delays include distraction from the task in hand. This can come in many forms, including having to work to make ends meet – a particular concern for many part-time students holding down a job. Once the research momentum is broken, it is very difficult to find your way back in.

Postgraduate studies in particular demand constant application and concentration for a longer period of time, and students ought to ask themselves whether they are willing to enter into this commitment before beginning their studies. On the positive side, research is a gradual

process of accumulating knowledge, which brings with it a sense of achievement and confidence that, in turn, makes the whole process more enjoyable and may lead to publication or conference papers en route.

► Familiarise yourself

Fear of the unknown, the esoteric and the complex only hinders progress. By seeing the research process stripped bare, revealing the factors that constitute good scholarship, you will be in a position to overcome these fears.

There are a number of things that will make the research process far more productive and enjoyable and allow you to 'hit the ground running'. These range from learning to assess the manageability of your project, to getting to know what it is that constitutes an undergraduate dissertation, MA, MPhil or PhD in the first place. Taking some time at the beginning of your studies to familiarise yourself with what lies before you will save time in the long run: the 'hares' who throw themselves into writing their dissertations or theses with little consideration for university regulations, the format or the word length are often overtaken by the 'tortoises' who allowed themselves sufficient time to study the research terrain before beginning.

Surprisingly, many students do not have a clue what their **dissertation** or **thesis** is supposed to consist of beyond the word-limit and, perhaps, the intimidatory sentence in university handbooks (for PhDs) calling for 'works that contribute substantially to human knowledge'. This sentence is enough to put off the brightest student. The point here is that if you do not know what constitutes the degree you are aiming for, you are not going to be able to map out a plan of how to get there. Imagine training for a race and not knowing the distance to be run. It is no good being a good sprinter if the race turns out to be over ten miles. Hence, you will need to familiarise yourself with what is expected of you *before* you begin. By looking at past dissertations or theses of previous students from your department – they are usually all collected in the departments themselves or the main university library – you can learn several things. What is the average length? What is the ratio of empirical material to the literature review and theoretical approach in your particular department and topic area? Familiarise yourself with the structure of the theses and, after a while, a pattern may emerge. Here is a standard example which will assist in highlighting specific components

of research (however, bear in mind that this is only one model of research and it should *not be considered as fixed*):

- 1 introduction
- 2 literature review
- 3 methodology
- 4 case-study(ies)/empirical section
- 5 evaluation
- 6 conclusion
- 7 appendices and bibliography.

This example is certainly valid for many standard social-science dissertations and theses. In the humanities, however, the stages highlighted above may be less pronounced. You will, however, have a beginning and an end. You must also connect your work with a wider literature (no. 2 above) and your project will exhibit, perhaps implicitly, a methodology (no. 3) and a case-study or subject (no. 4). You will also have to evaluate and sum up your work. The difference is that, in the social sciences, the above sections are more likely to be clearly distinguishable from one another. The simple advice here is that you should acquaint yourself with the task ahead. By having a rough idea of what you are aiming at, you manage to dispel many myths and anxieties and you can already begin to have a mental picture of the logic of research. By breaking down your project into broad parts, as in the example above, you can begin to get a feel of what it comprises.

Once you have familiarised yourself with dissertations and theses in your department and university, the best advice is to consider the format and presentation of your own work in this light. Usually, the university library or your department will have a pamphlet on how to present your work, including page set-up (size of margins), font size, how to use footnotes and references and word-length (check whether this includes or excludes appendices, tables, diagrams, bibliography and footnotes). Look at this before you start any writing, for if you set up your project and your computer in the format and style (point size, paragraph, page set-up, etc.) stipulated in your department's or university's regulations, you can use this for all subsequent work on your project and you will save yourself no end of trouble when you come to put together its constituent parts. Setting out the format early does not, however, mean that the first sections or ideas you put down on paper are fixed. On the contrary, you will need to go over and redraft sections and chapters several times before they are actually finished.

Summary

The opening chapter offers you some rudimentary advice on what to think about prior to commencing your studies. In particular I have highlighted the following:

- The nature of, and difference between, an undergraduate dissertation, Master's and doctorate.
- The need to learn the specific 'language' of research and why this is important at this early stage.
- The need to reflect on the type of degree you wish to undertake.
- The need to consider carefully, as far as it is possible given financial constraints, the place where you choose to study.
- The need to develop a regular working pattern to achieve the best results.
- The need to find out exactly what it is you are supposed to do by familiarising yourself as soon as possible with dissertations and theses at your chosen institution (look up previous examples of your degree).

► Further reading

- Burnham, P. (ed.) (1997) *Surviving the Research Process in Politics*, London and Washington, DC, Pinter.
- Graves, N. and Varma, V. (eds) (1999) *Working for a Doctorate. A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, London and New York, Routledge, especially chapters 1, 4 and 10.
- Phillips, E.M. and Pugh, D.S. (eds) (1994) *How to Get a PhD: A Handbook for Students and Their Supervisors*, Buckingham and Philadelphia, PA, Open University Press, chapters 1–4.
- Wisker, G. (2001) *The Postgraduate Handbook. Succeed with your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, chapter 1.

Index

Note: Page numbers in bold refer to definitions or explanations of important terms.

- academic perspectives, 19, 77
 - an overview, 90
 - in research, 89–95
- analysis, levels of (macro, micro)
47, 48
- approach, 26, **161**
- archival technique, 131–2
- assumptions, meta-theoretical, 20

- BA, full name, 10

- case study, 50
 - single, 51–2, **162**
- causal statements, 118
- choosing a topic, 37
- comparative studies, 53–5
 - rationale behind, 54
- concept, 27, **162**
 - abuse of, 29
 - and assumptions, 27
 - operationalising, 28
- constructivism, 61
- correlation, 118, **163**
- critical realism, 84, **85**
 - the key premises, 86–7
 - and theory, 107–8

- data collection, 124, **163**
- deception, in research, 145

- deductive research, 113–14, **164**
- dependent variable, 43, **164**
(*see also* hypothesis)
- dichotomies in research, 2
- directional relationship
 - of key research components,
65, 66
 - of ontology and epistemology,
60, 66
- disciplines, 95–8
 - and entrenchment, 153
 - and interdisciplinarity, 97–8
- discourse analysis, 133–4
- dissertation, 15, **164**
 - undergraduate and MA, 10
- doctoral research, 10, **164–5**
 - stages of, 156–60
- documentary analysis, 131–5

- empirical, 72, **165–6**
- epistemology, 8, 63, **166**
 - continuum of examples, 146–8
 - ethics, 138
 - main areas, 143
 - and ontology, 9, 57, 64 (*see also*
ontology)
 - in research, **142–8**
- ethnographic research,
120, **166**

- feminism, 87–9
- fieldwork, 51, **167**
- functionalism, 92–3
 as grand theory, 110
 overview, 95
- generic terms, 9
- getting started, 36
- grand theory, 110
- grounded theory, 111–12, **167**
- hermeneutics, 133, **167**
- heuristic tool, 24, **167**
- historical empiricism, 94
 overview, 96
- human sciences, 1
 key perspectives therein, 78
- hypothesis, 21, **42, 167–8**
 example of, 43–4
 and literature review, 41
 working, 44
- ideal type, 23, **168**
 example of, 23
 and Weber, 24
- independent variable, 43, **168**
 (see also hypothesis)
- inductive research, 113–14, **168**
- inference, 116, **169**
- interpretivism, core of, 82–4
 key premises, 83–4
 and theory, 108
- interviews, 125
 general points, 126–7
 group, 128
 semi- and unstructured, 127–8
 structured, 127
- key components of research, 59
 and the directional relationship, 59
- language of research, 8, 18, 151
- laws in social research, 101
- literature review, 38, **169**
 and locating your approach, 45
 reasons for, 38–9
 stages of, 39–47
 stage 1, 40–1, stage 2, 41–2,
 stage 3, 44–7
 summary of, 45
- MA, full name, 10
- metaphors, 28
- metatheory, 109–10
 and assumptions, 20
- methodology, 32, **169–70**
 and methods, 30
 and ontological and
 epistemological
 assumptions, 32
- methods, 30, **170**
 examples of, 125–35
 link to research questions and
 sources, 30–1
 and methodology, 30
 and ontological and
 epistemological assumptions,
 31, 68, quantitative or
 qualitative, 123
- middle-range theory, 111
- model, 20–1, **170**
- nature of research, 10
- neoclassical economics, 91
 overview, 91
- objectivism, 61
- observation technique, 129–31
- ontology (ontological), 8, 59, **171**
 (see also epistemology)
 assumptions, 60
 critical realist example, 62
 different meanings of, 62–3
 and epistemological
 assumptions, 58
 and epistemology, 9, 57, 64

- ontology (*continued*)
epistemology and research
questions, 67
position, **59–60**, 61
operationalise, 28, **171**
- paradigm, 25, **171–2**
(*see also* research paradigm)
shift, 25–6
- parsimony, 22, **172**
- PhD, full name, 10
as an apprenticeship, 11
process, 11
- philosophical traditions, 19
(*see also* research traditions;
research paradigm)
- plagiarism, 138, 139–40
- positivism
core of, 79–82
key premises, 80–1
- post-modernism, 87–9
and theory, 108–9
- post-positivism, 84
- print media, 134–5
- professional organisations, 40, **172–3**
- qualitative research, 32, 116,
119–21, **173**
criticisms of, 121
and ethics, 120
and specific language, 120
- quantitative–qualitative
dichotomy, 121
summary, 122
- quantitative research, 32, 116,
117–91, **173**
criticisms of, 119
and specific language, 118
- questionnaire, 128–9
- question–method fit, **124**
- rational choice theory, 91–2
overview, 93, 106
- realism (in IR), 91–2
overview, 94
- referencing, 140
examples of the ‘Harvard’
method, ‘humanities’
method, 141
- research
model of, 16
paradigms, 9
tools, 19
- research paradigm, 77
outlined, 78–89 (*see also* research
traditions)
- research proposal, contents,
36–7
- research questions, **173–4**
and literature review, 41
and methods, 124
- research strategy, 32, **174**
- research traditions, 76 (*see also*
research paradigm)
- sources, primary and secondary, 131,
132, **174**
- stages
of the doctoral process,
156, **157**
of research, 154–6
- structure and agency problem, 48,
49, 50, **174–5**
- study, types of, 50–5
supervisors, 13
- taxonomy, 21–2
- theory, 100, **175**
grand theory, 110
grounded theory, 111–12
inductive and deductive,
113–14
introduction, 102–4
metatheory, 109–10
middle-range theory, 111
and positivism, 101, 106

- theory (*continued*)
 - its purpose in research,
 - 112–13
 - and its role in research, 105
 - the traditional view, 104–5
 - and its uses, 109–13
- thesis, 15, **175**
- thick description, 121, **176**
- time-management, 14
- tools and terms in
 - research, 18, 19, 30–33
 - (*see also* key components of research)
- triangulation, 121, **176**
 - of methods and data, 135–7
- typology, 21–2, **176**
 - and Aristotle, 22
 - and comparative studies, 55
 - and parsimony, 22
- value-free research,
 - 117, **177**
- variables, 21, **177**
 - dependent, 43
 - independent, 43
- viva, 11, **177**