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Understanding Peace Research: Methods and Challenges

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This textbook provides a comprehensive overview of different methods and sources of information-gathering for peace and conflict students and researchers, as well as the challenges presented by such work.

Research on conflict-ridden societies carries special challenges for the collection and evaluation of information about the conflict and its actors. First, due to the nature of information emerging, incentives to misrepresent and propaganda is common. News coverage is sometimes poor and reporting is often incomplete, selective and biased. Second, the sensitivity of the topic and the questions posed in peace and conflict research means that access to and the security of informants can be a problem.

Peace and conflict research as a discipline encompasses a number of different approaches for obtaining empirical information which serve as a basis for analyzing various research topics. This book provides a comprehensive overview of different methods and sources of information-gathering for students and researchers, as well as the challenges presented by such work. It offers:

- tools for evaluating sources and information
- suggestions on where different types of information can be found
- advice on using different types of sources, including news reports and written narratives
- practical guidelines for constructing large-scale datasets
- insights and guidelines for comparative fieldwork, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and surveys?
- reflection and discussion on important ethical concerns in peace research

This book will be of much interest for students and researchers of peace and conflict studies, conflict resolution, war and conflict studies, development studies, security studies and IR, as well as for NGO workers/researchers.

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