

BM7043

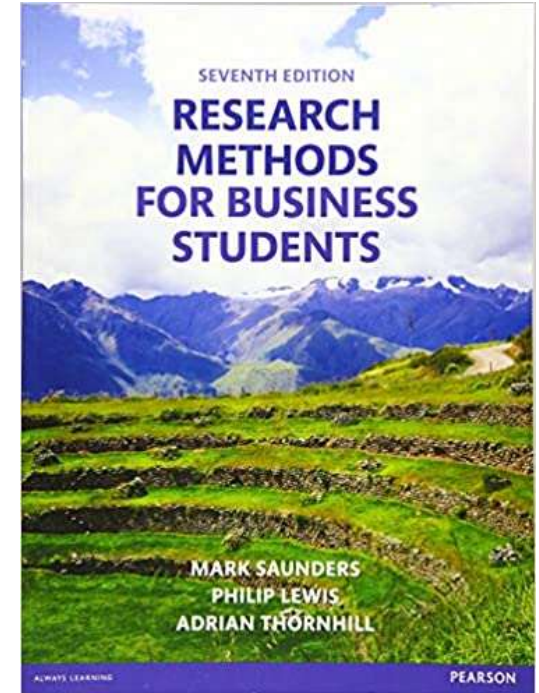
Research Methods

Research Ethics

Core reading materials

Course text:

- **Saunders, M., P. Lewis and A. Thornhill (2015) *Research Methods for Business Students*, Seventh Edition. Pearson.**
- **other suggested readings for lectures and seminars**



**Available
as an
ebook from
the Library**

*Let's
Recap*

Assessment

- **research proposal (100%)**
- **3,500 words**
- **targeted as preparation for your 60 credit third semester module**
- **choice to be made in discussion with your project supervisor (allocated in Week 5)**

*Let's
Recap*

Research design

Research design = overall plan of how to answer research questions

- 1. clearly define your research questions**
- 2. set out clear research objectives derived from your research questions**
- 3. specify data sources - consider constraints (access; time; location; money)**
- 4. consider ethical issues**

Let's
Recap

The Essence of Research Philosophy

- research philosophy deals with the source, nature and development of **knowledge**
- research philosophy is belief about the **ways in which data** about a phenomenon should be collected, analysed and used

Let's
Recap

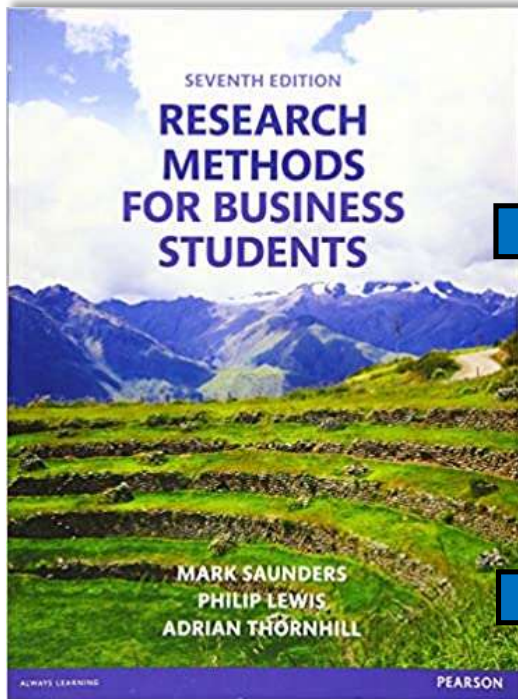
Research philosophies and data collection methods

| | Pragmatism | Positivism | Realism | Interpretivism |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| Popular data collection method | Mixed or multiple method designs, quantitative and qualitative | Highly structured, large samples, measurement, quantitative, but can use qualitative | Methods chosen must fit the subject matter, quantitative or qualitative | Small samples, in-depth investigations, qualitative |

[Research Philosophy - Research Methodology \(research-methodology.net\)](http://research-methodology.net)

Research philosophies and research design further reading

Let's
Recap



**Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill
(2015) *Research Methods for
Business Students***

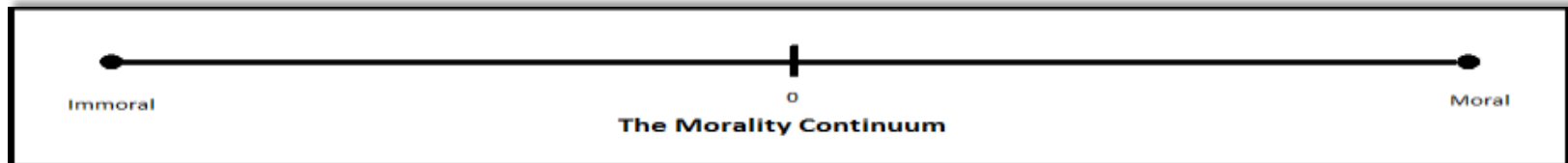


**Chapter 4: Understanding
research philosophies and
approaches to theory
development (pp. 122-161)**



**Chapter 5: Formulating the
research design (pp. 162-221)**

- **values** - *ideals that we look up to*
- **morals** - *standards of behaviour; principles of right & wrong*
- **ethics** - *moral principles that govern a person's behaviour*
- **religion** - *a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature & purpose of the universe*
- **policies** - *a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organisation or individual*
- **laws** - *the system of rules which a country or community recognises as regulating the actions of its members & which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties*



If I find £/\$/€10 on the ground, what could/ should I do?...

- buy a treat for my children
- buy a lottery ticket
- give it to a homeless person
- ask if anyone has dropped it
- give it to a charity/ religious group
- invest it in my bank savings account
- leave it where I found it
- buy materials to start a small business



what about £/\$/€50 or £/\$/€1,000?

variety of options

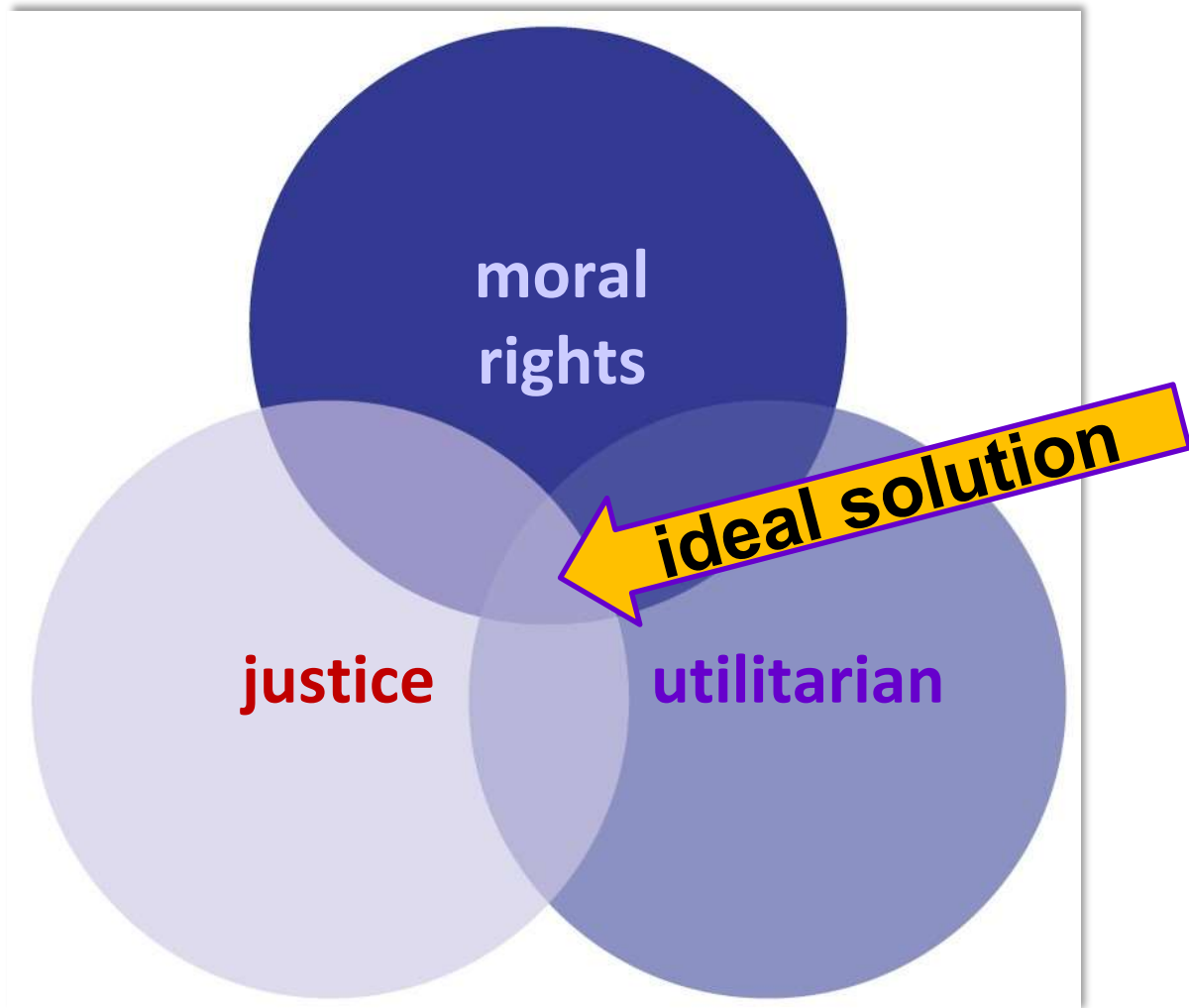


dilemmas

decisions



Ethical models



Core values



Autonomy

Respecting an individual's freedom to make their own decisions



Beneficence

Acting in the best interest of the individual; providing benefit



Non-maleficence

Avoiding and doing no harm to the individual



Justice

Treating all individuals with fairness, equality, and impartiality

Professional Ethics

- **principles** that govern the behaviour of a person or group in a business environment
- professional ethics provide 'rules' on how a person should act towards other people and institutions in such an environment

applies to fields where:

- **specialists have knowledge**
- **recognised appropriate modes of behaviour**
- **published codes of conduct**
- **regulation by practitioners of profession**

Codes of Ethical Conduct

- **Academy of Management (AOM), *Code of Ethical Conduct*: www.aomonline.org**
- **Market Research Society (MRS), *Code of Conduct and Guidelines*: www.mrs.org.uk (also includes specific MRS guidelines on qualitative and quantitative research, doing Internet and employee research)**
- **British Sociological Association (BSA), *Statement of Ethical Practice*: www.britisoc.co.uk/bsaweb.php?link_id=14&area=item1**
- **American Sociological Association (ASA), *Code of Ethics*: www.asanet.org/ethics.htm**

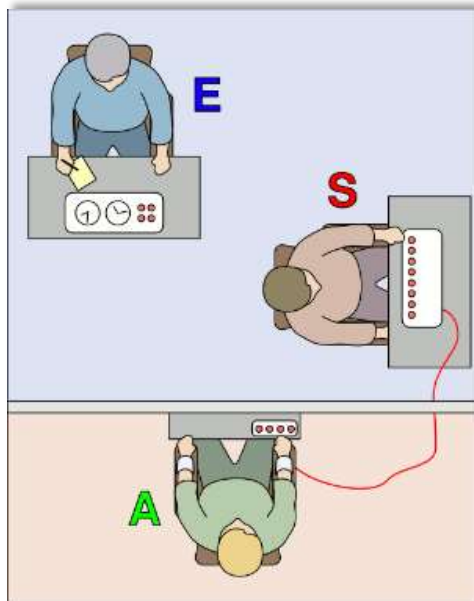
Stanley Milgram experiment

- scientific experiment of social psychology designed to measure the **willingness of a person to follow orders** when those orders may conflict with his or her conscience
- Milgram devised the experiment in an attempt to understand the behaviour of Nazi soldiers during the Holocaust



1933-1984

The Milgram experiment



many participants continued to give shocks despite pleas for mercy from the actor, as long as the experimenter kept on ordering them to do so

numerous concerns were raised:

- psychological harm to participants
- lack of informed consent
- deception

The scope of research ethics

ethical considerations cover all aspect of research, but they are foregrounded when the subjects of the research are humans (or animals)



4 Ethical Principles

Discussions about ethical principles and their transgression can be broken down into 4 main areas:

- whether there is **harm to participants**
- whether there is a **lack of informed consent**
- whether there is an **invasion of privacy**
- whether **deception** is involved

Harm to Participants

- researcher's responsibility to **assess and minimise** the possibility of harm to research participants
- **confidentiality and anonymity** issues need negotiation and agreement
- in quantitative research, anonymize records and reporting of findings so that individuals cannot be identified
 - e.g. with the use of pseudonyms
- the issues of confidentiality and anonymity raise **specific difficulties** for qualitative research
 - e.g. sample sizes in specialized areas may be very small to the point where employees themselves could be identified
 - employees should be informed of the risks at the beginning of interviews, and given the opportunity to withdraw

Informed Consent

- *usually* obtained **in writing** from participants after they have been given information about the research
- need to have time to consider the **implications** of granting consent
- informed consent must be given freely, not as a result of **pressure** to be involved



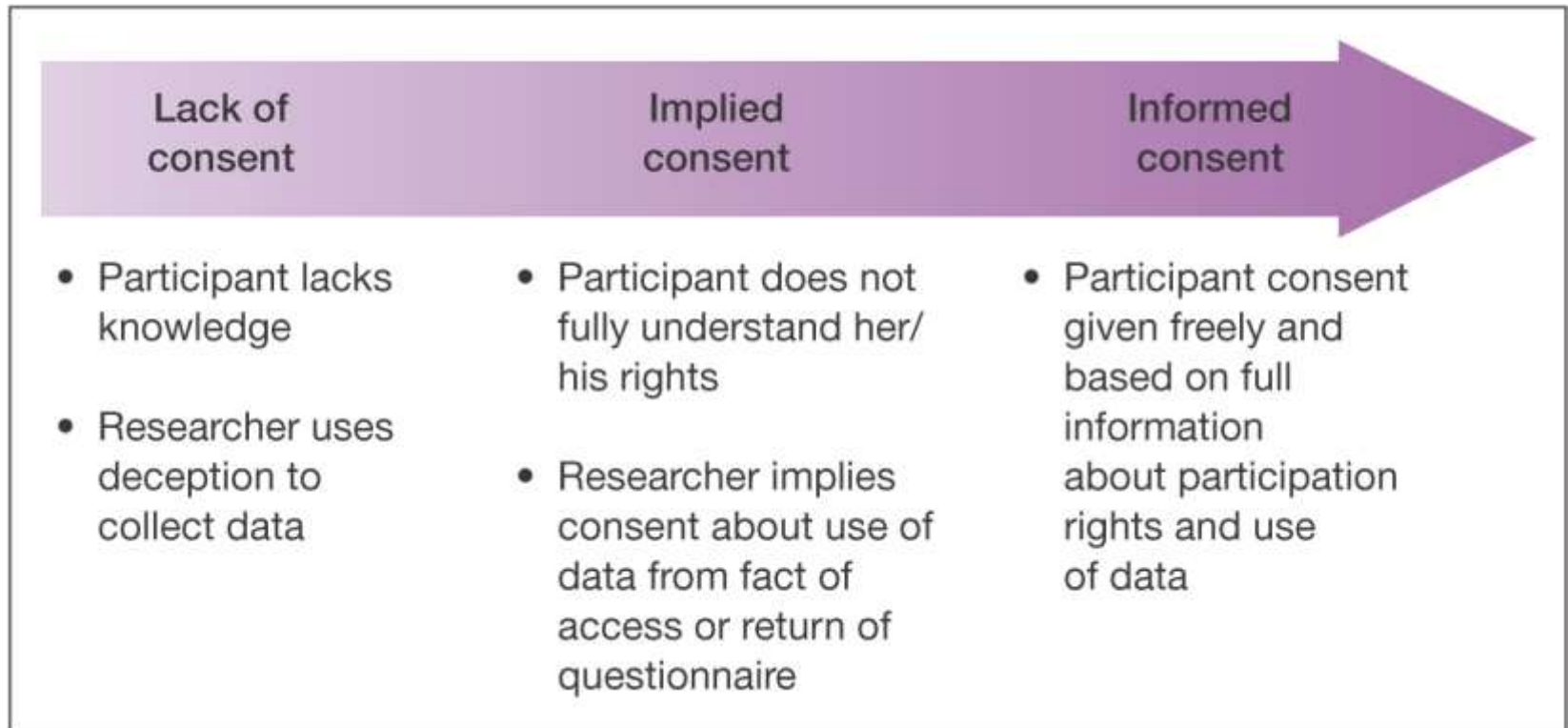
Lack of Informed Consent

implementing the principle of informed consent is
“*easier said than done*”

- It is **extremely difficult** to present prospective participants with **absolutely all** the information that might be required to make an informed decision about their involvement.
- In ethnographic research, the researcher is likely to come into contact with a **wide spectrum of people**, and ensuring that absolutely everyone has the opportunity for informed consent is not practicable, because it would be extremely disruptive in everyday contexts.

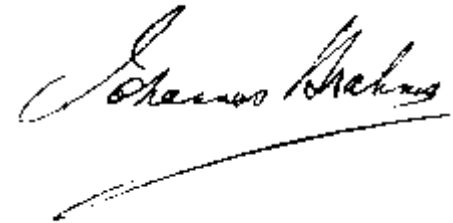
Homan, R. (1991:73) *The Ethics Of Social Research*.
Addison-Wesley Longman Limited

The nature of participant consent



Consent documents

- informed consent is about people's **understanding and willingness** to participate in a study, and **not just about signing a form**
- a consent document or an accompanying fact sheet can help to clarify points of concern and potential confusion
- prospective participants may need **time** to think about their decision and maybe discuss it with family and friends before deciding
- it also **protects the researcher** against accusations of lack of consent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Adams", written over a horizontal line.A grey, torn-edge label with a red border and two red push-pins on the right side. The text "Fact Sheet" is printed in black on the label.

Fact Sheet

Privacy



*Privacy is a **fundamental human right** recognized in the **UN Declaration of Human Rights**, the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** and in many other international and regional treaties.*

*Privacy underpins human **dignity** and other key values such as **freedom of association** and **freedom of speech**.*

Respect for Privacy

- **how were participants selected?**
- **why are they being approached?**
- **is there intrusion into their private life?**
- **would it be possible to identify the participant from the results?**

Invasion of Privacy

- **privacy is strongly linked to the notion of informed consent**
- **the research participant does not give up the right to privacy entirely by providing informed consent**
- **covert methods** are usually deemed to be violations of the privacy principle
- **the issue of privacy is also strongly linked to issues of anonymity and confidentiality**

Deception



- **deception** occurs when researchers represent their research as something other than what it is
- deception should be minimal or zero

Practical checklist

- **harm test:** does this option do less harm than the alternatives?
- **publicity test:** would I want my choice of this option revealed?
- **defensibility test:** could I defend my choice of this option before my peers?
- **reversibility test:** would I still think this option was a good choice if I were affected by it?
- **colleague test:** what could my colleagues say when I describe the problem and suggest this option as my solution?
- **professional test:** what might my profession's professional body say about this option?
- **organization test:** what does my company say about this?

Ethical Decision Making Model

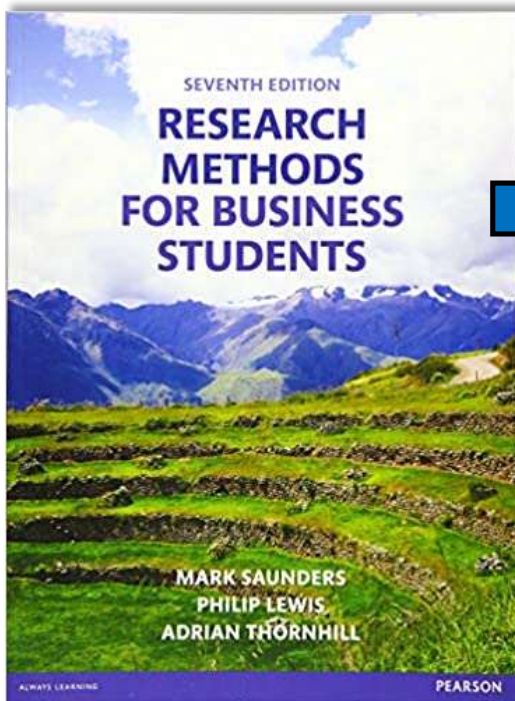


The 4 main areas of concern for research ethics:

- 1. potential for harm to participants**
- 2. obtaining voluntary, informed consent**
- 3. risks of invasion of privacy**
- 4. avoidance of deception**



Further reading



**Chapter 6: Negotiating
access and research
ethics (pp. 220-271)**



Case Study

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Classic psychology experiments

- [Milgram Experiment - Big History NL, threshold 6 – YouTube 5m04s](#)
- [Stanford Prison Experiment – YouTube 8m 23s](#)
- ***what factors would you consider **unethical** in these 2 examples?***
- [5 Psychology Experiments You Couldn't Do Today – YouTube 10m 55s](#)