



Top 5 ...

Deception: Deceiving participants about the true purpose of research is an ethical consideration for sociologists. Some methods are more prone to deception, such as observations (covert and overt) and experiments. However if deception is necessary for the aims of the research to be met then this can be allowed with participants being debriefed at the end. An example of deception is **Humphrey's Tearoom Trade**

Right to Withdraw: Participants have to right to withdraw their information from the research at any point. This includes methods such as interviews, questionnaires and experiments. Sometimes in covert experiments, researchers have published information under aliases to ensure that a person's confidentiality is maintained. Similarly, some researchers publish anonymous accounts of peoples actions

Informed Consent: needs to be gained so that the participants know the topic being researched and that they are giving information freely. Some methods such as interviews and questionnaires imply consent when somebody participates. However other methods such as experiments may not give informed consent. An example of this is **Milgram's study of Obedience**. However, if subjects knew the purpose, the results would have changed.

Protection from Physical and Psychological Harm: This applies not only to the research subjects, but also to the researcher. **Patrick's Glasgow Gang Observed** was an observation of gang behaviour and Patrick was asked to attack a member of a rival gang. Methods most likely to result in harm are covert observations and experiments. Unstructured interviews, where a rapport is developed may be one of better methods for limiting harm as the researcher can show empathy towards subject

Social Sensitivity: Social sensitivity describes topics that research subjects may find embarrassing or difficult to talk about in front of other people. Poverty, sexual behaviour, substance abuse and domestic violence are among topics that may be seen as socially sensitive. These topics may be addressed through single unstructured interviews rather than group interviews or observations. Additionally, some people may prefer to answer anonymous questionnaires to avoid any distress in front of a researcher

Ethical considerations when conducting research