

## Ethics in Social Science Research

### Ethical:

- Def. Webster Dictionary: “conforming to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group.”

### Institutional Review Boards

- Professional Codes American Sociological Association: <http://www.asanet.org/members/ecoderev.html>
- Northeastern University: [http://www.research.neu.edu/research\\_integrity/](http://www.research.neu.edu/research_integrity/)

### Ethics of Social Science Research

- Benefits of participation vs. possible risks/harm to participants
- Def. Sensitivity to the rights of those being studied
- Implications of research on those being studied

### Guidelines

- **Openness and Honesty**
- **Voluntary participation** (Informed consent) vs. Coerciveness
- **Protection from harm** to participants: emotional or psych. distress,
- **Right to Privacy** of research subjects: Confidentiality and/or Anonymity
- Information about process and consequences of participation (**Informed consent**) vs. deception.

### Anonymity

- Def. both the researcher and those reading about the research cannot identify a given response with a given respondent. Example: mail survey without identification numbers

### Confidentiality:

- Only the researcher can identify a given person’s responses but essentially promises not to do so publicly.

### General Concerns:

- Relationship between researcher and those being researched => Awareness of power dimension
- Respect for those involved! => Honesty and openness

### Specific Considerations in Experiments:

- Selectivity of distribution of benefits (experimental treatment groups)
- **Deception => Debriefing:** Withholding information about the study can be justified, but telling true purpose of the study after participation
- Example: Milgram Experiment

### Specific Considerations in Survey Research:

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### Specific Considerations in Field Research:

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### Specific Considerations in Comparative/Historical Research:

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