

# Welcome to Qualitative Research

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***Week 7***

***Lecture 4***

## Qual Research Strategy & Empirical Evidence

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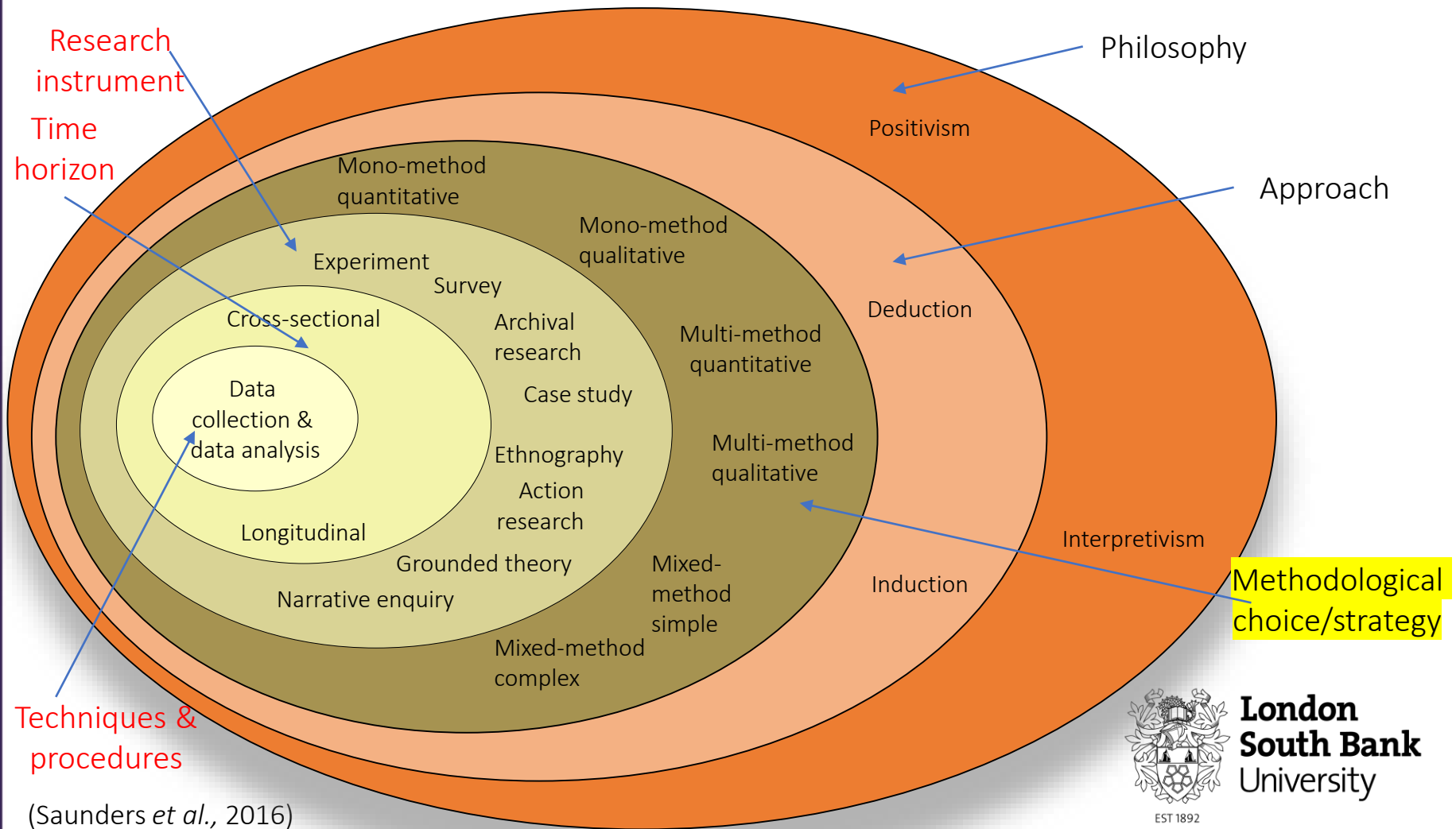
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# Your view of *truth*



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# Research strategy/choice

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The general **plan** of how the researcher will go about:

- **answering** the research **question** &
- addressing the research **objectives** ...

...through using **appropriate** sources of **data**.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Selection of data sources

Depends on your research **question**, & should **help** you **achieve** your **objectives**.

## Secondary data:

- Information that already exists somewhere.
- Obtained more quickly, lower cost.
- Obtained for a different purpose (not all will be useful).

Both must be:

Relevant  
Accurate  
Current/  
recent  
Impartial

## Primary data:

- Information collected for the specific purpose of your research.
- Qualitative or quantitative in nature.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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# Secondary research data

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There are 2 types that should not be confused:

1. Secondary market data

- Market research data collected about current & future market & industry trends.

2. Academic literature

- Academic theory, discussions & research of concepts/phenomena with the aim to develop knowledge & theory.

→ But they play different roles.

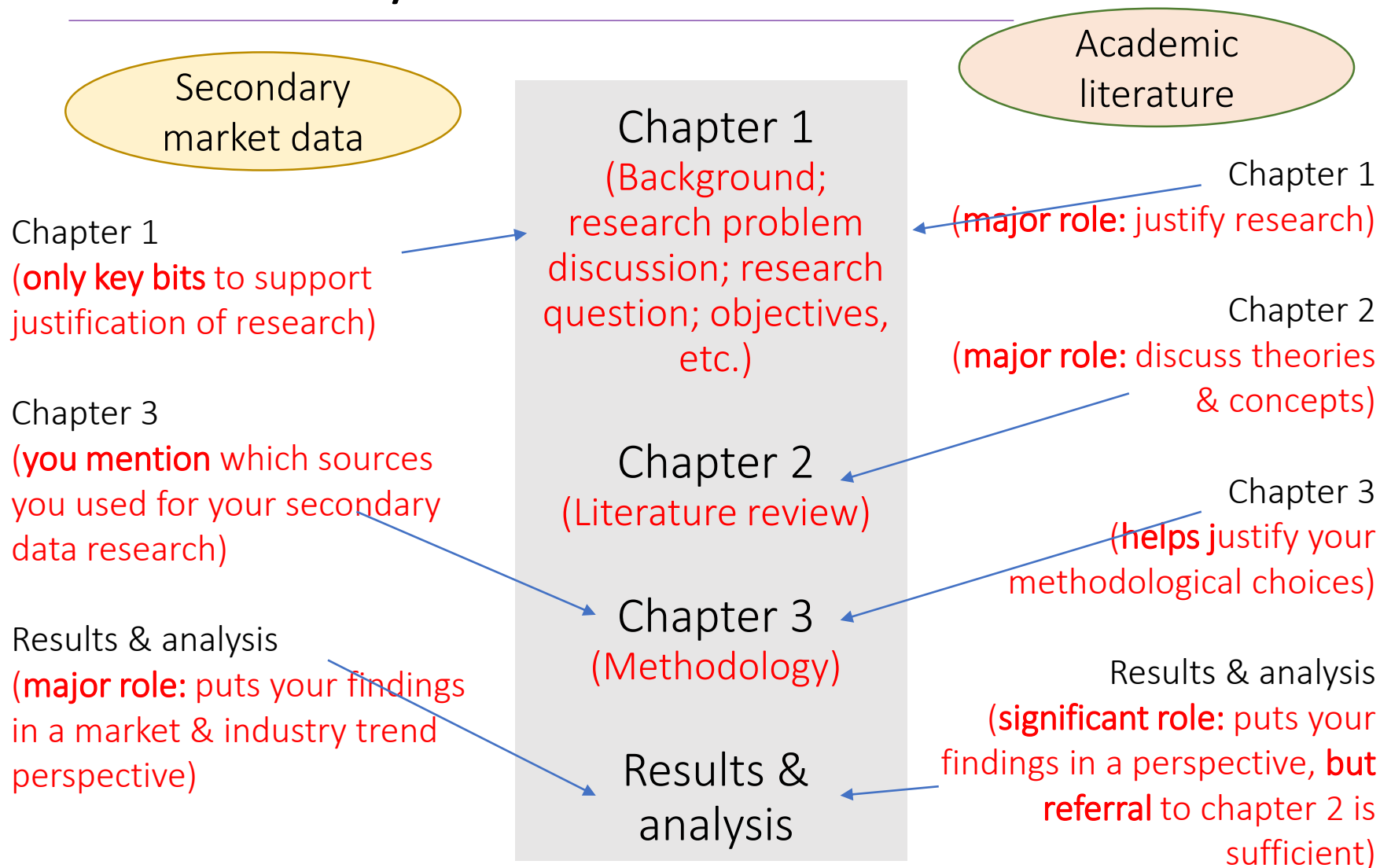
(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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# Secondary research data



# Secondary research data

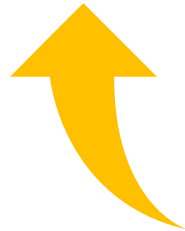
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## Secondary market data

- Market research reports
- Industry reports
- Newspapers
- Government data
- Business reports
- Regional & national data

## Literature review

- Academic journals
  - Periodicals
  - Research papers
  - Conference papers
  - Academic expert interviews
- Supported by textbooks



(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Secondary market data: purpose

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Information from published sources to:

- Understand different environments.
- Monitor environmental changes.
- Support strategic decisions.
- Develop & define primary research needs.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Question: does secondary data completely meet the data requirements?

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Secondary market data: purpose

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No but it was never meant to do.

Mainly to support strategic decisions, f.e.:

- Estimating the market potential.
- Justify your research & put your research into a market/industry perspective.

Preliminary research to define the primary data needs:

- Helps to identify relevant issues.
- To identify possible respondents (target group).
- Initial sizing & trend data for sampling.
- Identifying the key variables.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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Research strategy; primary & secondary data

# Secondary market data: purpose

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Types of research:

- Trend research.
- Competitive studies.
- Industry studies.
- Feasibility studies.

Types of information:

- Political, financial, legal data.
- General market data.
- Infrastructure data.
- Product/service specific data.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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Research strategy; primary & secondary data

# Secondary market data: types

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Population & demographics.

GNP, inflation & other economic indicators.

Housing, education & other social indicators.

Interest rates & other finance data.

Trade & balance of payments.

Industry production figures.

Ownership & usership data.

Media.

Product & brand sales.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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Research strategy; primary & secondary data

# Secondary market data: types

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Don't ignore internal secondary data sources:

- Accountants department.
  - Sales, orders, cash flow, costs, etc.
- Production department.
  - Schedules, stock, capacity.
- Sales force management.
  - Reseller reports, competitive activities, etc.
- Customer service.
  - Survey, complaints, enquiries, databases, etc.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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# Secondary market data: advantages

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## Cost

- To keep research costs low.
- Have reduced labour & agency fees.

## Time

- Readily available.
- Quick to access & use.
- Avoids duplication.

## Supporting role

- To evaluate performance problems & opportunities (internal data).
- Determine methodology & implementation (internal & external data).

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Secondary market data: challenges

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## Data fit

- Units of measurement or definition of classes/groups.

## Accuracy

- Inability to evaluate error.

## Timeliness

- Time lapse between data collection & use.

## Although often detailed & plentiful

- Cannot always find exact info needed.
- Reports might conflict due to different methods used.
- Not always as relevant, accurate, current & impartial.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Secondary market data: do's & don'ts

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## Do

- Try to be as accurate as possible.
- Check definitions where possible.
- Quote your sources.
- Take notes of potential issues that you are aware of (useful for limitations section).

## Don't

- Compare non-equivalent data (product & consumption).
- Assume differences between sources is attributable to 1 factor alone.
- Calculate trends using different sources.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Secondary market data is: ...

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- ... useful to identify broad issues.
- ... useful to understand the differences/similarities between existing markets, aspects, factors, etc.
- ... useful to identify areas of focus & further research.
- ... influential at most stages of your research project.

If in doubt: ask Rebecca (or the library) for a one-to-one searching session &/or for recommendations on useful databases.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data

# Selection of data sources

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# Research strategy/choice

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## Quantitative studies

- Seek to quantify data & apply some form of statistical analysis.
  - Strongly dependent on seeking facts & external causes of social phenomena, with little regard to the subjective states of individuals.
  - Help the researcher to understand “*what*” is happening & the “*frequency*” of occurrence.
- Main methods: surveys & experiments.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Research strategy/choice

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## Qualitative studies

- Exploratory research based on smaller samples to provide insights & understanding of the problem setting.
  - Works from a narrower & less representative base than quantitative research to provide deep insights into a limited area of study.
  - Uncovers subtle & complex issues within a small sample.
  - Help the researcher to understand the “*why*” of behaviour.
- Main methods: group discussions & depth interviews.

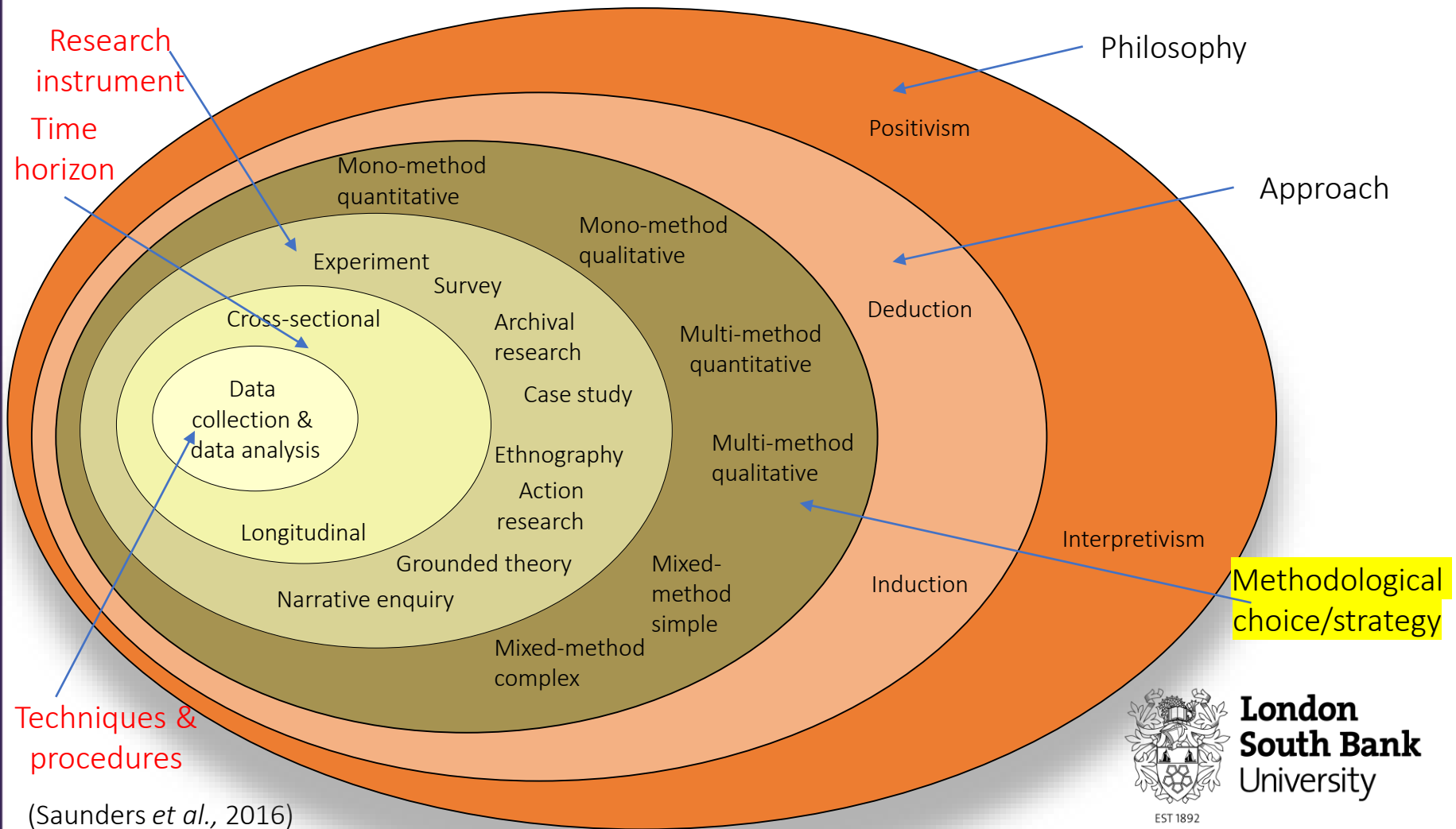
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Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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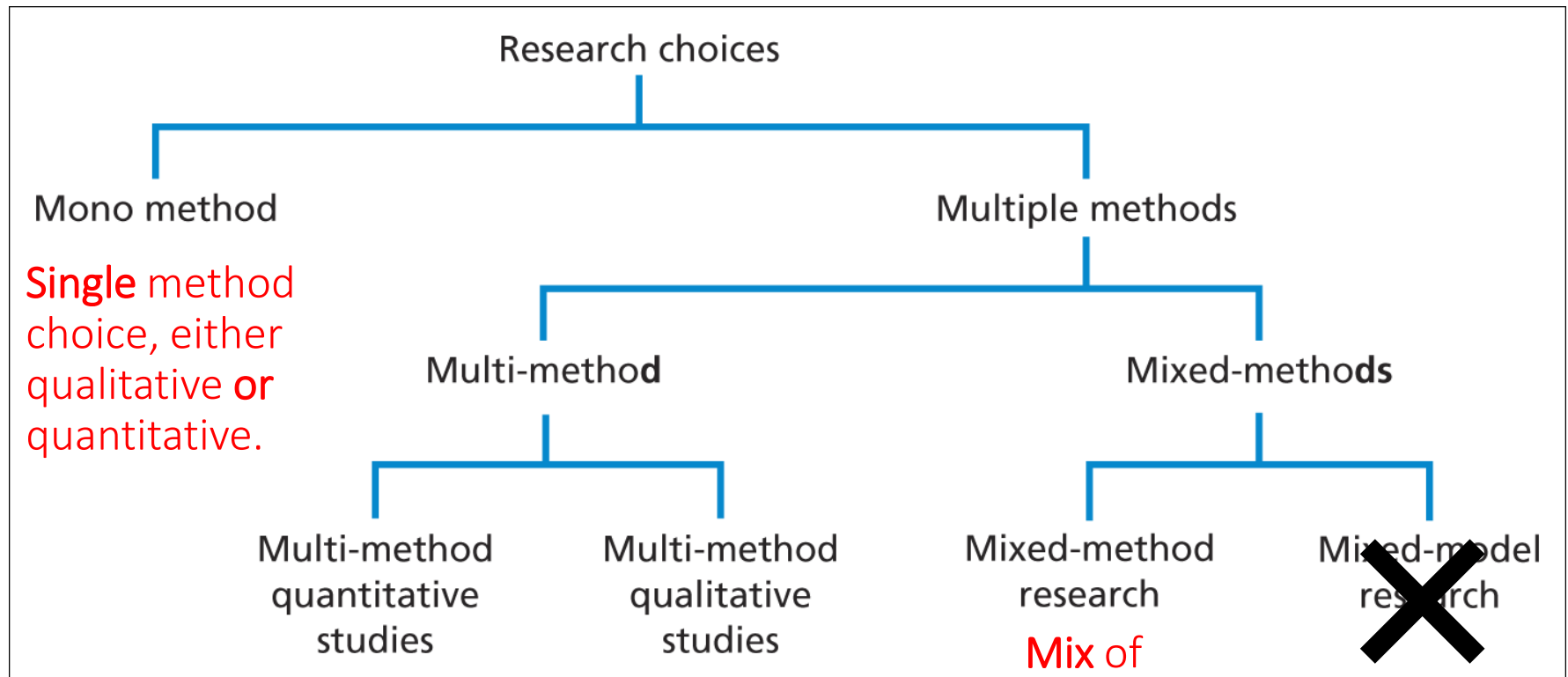
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# Research strategy/choice



Multiple  
method  
choice  
quantitative.

Multiple  
method  
choice  
qualitative.

Mix of  
qualitative  
plus  
quantitative.

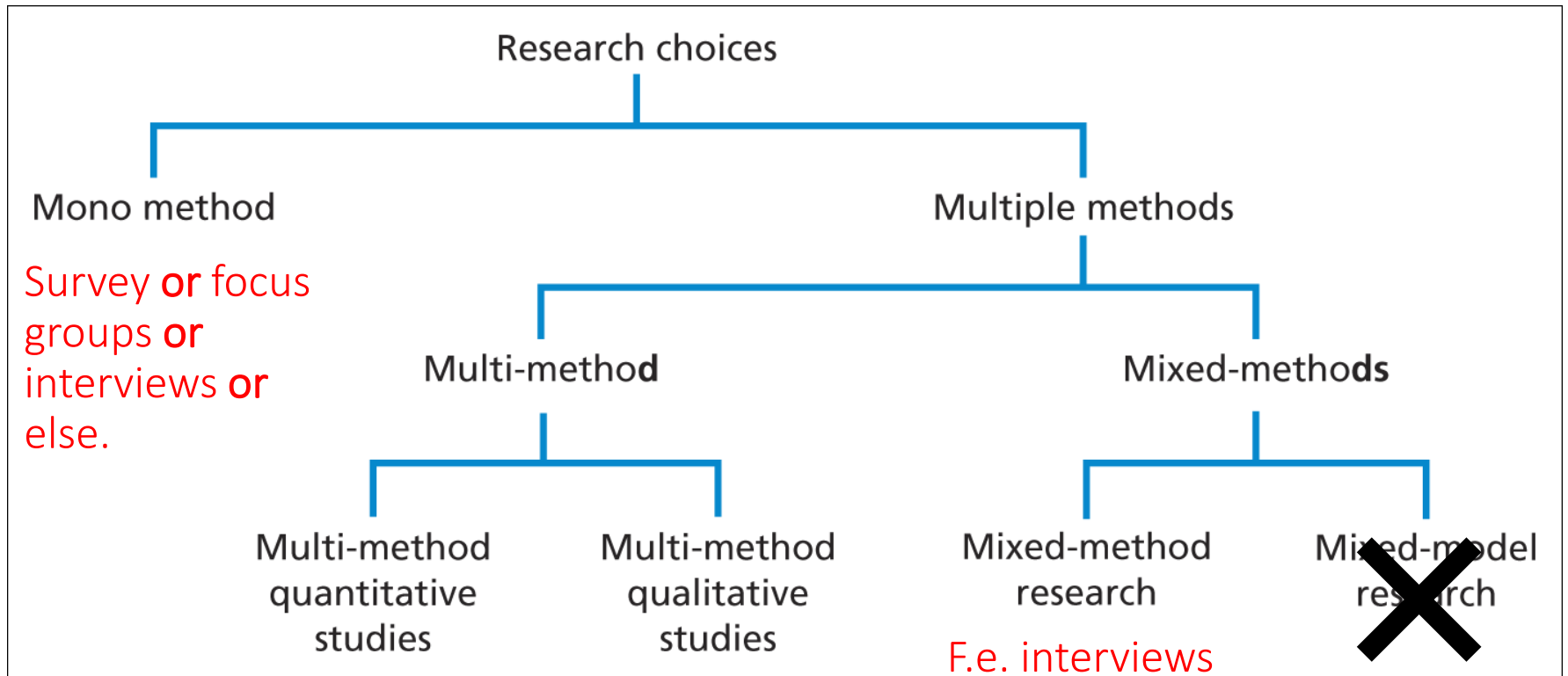
(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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# Research strategy/choice



Survey **plus** experiment **plus** observation (at least 2).

Interviews **plus** focus groups **plus** etc. (at least 2).

F.e. interviews **plus** survey.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)



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# Research strategy/choice

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## Mixed-method research

- Combining **quantitative with qualitative** methodological choices.
- The research choices **complement** each other.
- The **different methods** can be used to **answer** different research **objectives**.

(Saunders *et al.*, 2016)

Research strategy; primary & secondary data



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# Points to summarise

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- **Research choice** is your **plan** to answer the **research question** & achieve the **objectives**.
- Sources of data may be **secondary & primary**.
- **Secondary data** sources may be **secondary market data & secondary academic literature**.
- **Primary data** sources can be **qualitative, quantitative or a mixture** of the two.
- The **target group** that you intended to question will **impact** the **choice** of the **primary data sources**.