**PET – OFFICIAL STATISTICS**

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| **Define the**  **method** | **Statistics created by government agencies or other public bodies** | | | | |
| **Example(s)** | **Crime statistics, employment statatistcs, school league tables** | | | | |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths** | | **Weaknesses** | | |
| **Practical** | free source of huge amounts of data  Allows comparisons between groups   |  | | --- | | Often Official Statistics are the only practicable source for certain studies  They are often easily accessible from government sources – especially through libraries or the increasingly via the internet | | | If statistics are not created then they are not available.  Governments may not be interested in collecting and publishing certain statistics.   |  | | --- | | There may be problems of collection – especially where the public are required to report honestly,  Can lack data that is useful to the sociologist | | | |
| **Ethical** | |  | | --- | | If secondary data is already publicly available, Official Statistics present almost no ethical problems of data gathering for sociologists who use them “second-hand”.  No need to obtain informed consent, no need to anonymise responses, etc this is already done | | | Don’t know how it was collected in ten first place   |  | | --- | | On the other hand public services’ ethical duties may well hold back these materials, denying it to sociological researchers | | | |
| **Theoretical** | Can be highly representative as can cover larger sample size   |  | | --- | | Official Statistics are likely to be reliable as they are often gathered in the same way over extended periods of time  Governments have the resources to engage in very large scale research | | | Statists don’t provide a depth of understanding   |  | | --- | | Official statistics are socially constructed, they rely on rules and cultural assumptions and this affects their validity    Verification is difficult – the replication of any statistical survey is generally too costly and impracticable.  Reliability is problematic – the use of statistics and criteria for assessing them as accurate may change over time or between authorities | | | |