**PET of PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**

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| **Define the**  **method** | **Where the researcher joins in with the activities of the group- either covert or overt, could be part of an ethnography (an umbrella approach to understand the way of life of a group of people- will use participant observation alongside other methods e.g. unstructured interviews).** | | | | |
| **Example(s)** | **Willis ‘Learning to Labour’ (overt), Venkatesh ‘Gang Leader for a Day’ (overt), James Patrick ‘A Glasgow Gang Observed’ (covert), Irene Zempi ‘Unveiling Islamophobia’ (covert)** | | | | |
| **Circle correct** | **Quantitative** | **Qualitative** | **Positivist** | **Realist** | **Interpretivist** |
|  | **Strengths** | | **Weaknesses** | | |
| **Practical** | -Allows access to groups that other methods or techniques may not e.g. sensitive, gangs.  -Could be useful for creating hypotheses for future research.  -Within a group a range of possibilities can occur- leading the research in new directions e.g. Venkatesh found out about the local community, not just gangs. | | -Time consuming e.g. Venkatesh took 7 yrs.  -Group might refuse access.  -Could be expensive- requires highly skilled researcher and time to complete.  -Need to make sure that the characteristics of the researcher fit the nature of the group. | | |
| **Ethical** | -Gain consent in overt research e.g. Willis gained approval from school and the lads.  - Less likely in overt research for the researcher to end up in danger.  -Overt avoids deception.  -Overt- can build trust because motives are clear. | | -Covert- can’t gain consent because participants are unaware they are being studied e.g. Patrick.  -Could be put at risk in covert research e.g. if group found out. Patrick used a pseudonym and had to wait before publishing work.  -Could be issues with a moral duty to report crimes that have been witnessed. Also potential issues with having to fit in with the group e.g. Patrick- taking drugs.  - Zempi had psychological damage from the role she took on. | | |
| **Theoretical** | -Ethnography reduces hawthorne effect because the length of time for the observation means people can’t change their behaviour that much.  -Covert can be more valid because participants won’t change their behaviour.  -Validity is high because able to see someone’s real lived experiences.  -Overt- can ask questions- increases validity. | | -Lacks reliability- hard to compare and repeat. This form of research is very rare.  -Hard to generalise- samples are very small- cannot compare to groups more widely.  -Researcher could go native.  - Overt- can disrupt actual activities of group short-term, which could lead to a decrease in validity.  - Positivists won’t like this approach. | | |