



# Top 5 ...

**Time:** the length of time a research project may take is a practical consideration. Some methods such as mailed questionnaires may seem less time-consuming but take a while to collate results. Other methods such as covert observation are very time consuming as it takes a while to establish a cover and earn the trust of the group being observed. The length of time influences the scale of the research and how it will be funded.

**Research Opportunities:** the opportunity to research a specific topic is a practical consideration. Some sociologists find themselves in a position to conduct research quite easily – such as **Mac an Ghail** who was approached by his students whilst working in a school to conduct research. Other topics might be less accessible for researchers – e.g. Domestic violence, football hooliganism, gang violence, or historical issues

**Access to Participants:** Another practical consideration is access to participants. Gaining access to some areas such as Education requires DBS certification and permissions from parents and Gatekeepers such as headteachers. Other topics such as gangs might require finding somebody willing to discuss research or establishing a cover. Lab experiments might be influenced by volunteer bias while GDPR creates problems with access

**Money and Funding:** How to fund the research is a practical consideration. Most funding comes from government, universities or charities and they may look for certain types of data limiting the range of research methods that a researcher can use. Governments tend to prefer quantitative data so they can apply findings to general population. Some methods may also be more costly than others. Experiments are usually more costly than interviews for example

**Personal Characteristics:** The personal characteristics of both researcher and subjects of research are another practical concern. Some researchers may be unable to do undercover research due to age or social class. **Thornton's** research into rave culture is an example of this. Some may not be skilled at interviews and require training. Some participants might be wary of researchers due to status differences – **Labov** found this in his study of language

# Practical considerations when conducting research