

You are to answer 3 of the following 4 questions. Try to be comprehensive but concise. The quality of your answer is more important than its quantity.

1. In the Wilhite et al. article from the compendium on household energy use in Japan and Norway, the researchers use qualitative interviews (a small sample of in depth, open-ended interviews) as their primary research method. Ortner, in her article about the relationship between Sherpas and mountaineers in Tibet relies on an ethnographic method. Compare and contrast these two research methods. Give attention to strengths and weaknesses of each.

2. In different social scientific research traditions, the ideal positioning of the researcher is seen either as being distanced from the subject (for example people or organisations) or involved with the subject. Give examples of research methods that represent these two poles. Discuss what is gained and lost (strengths and weaknesses) of researcher involvement with, versus distancing from, the subject(s) of research.

3. By reference to one or more problems in the field of development and environment compare the strengths and weakness of economics and anthropology in their ability to understand the issue and to advise on appropriate policy responses. Some examples of problems are the following, but you may choose any problem you find appropriate: the extinction of tigers in India; deforestation, urban air pollution, malnutrition in rural Africa.

4. The following presents two different study designs, – each of which may be characterised as “an experimental study”, “an observational study”, “a survey” or “a theoretical study”.

Migration in endangered butterfly.

- Measured local population size of the butterfly in 50 discrete habitat patches within an area of 15 km², and habitat quality, vegetation height, and an index of isolation of habitat (patch).
- Predicted the local population density of butterfly, and related the densities to the habitat characteristics (treatments).

Estimating pine seedling response to ozone and acidic rain.

- Ozone level (treatment) was forced into the chambers surrounding the plants. Different levels were assigned at random. Four replicates of each level.
- Acidic rain levels were imposed by dispensing volumes of premixed solutions (natural rain was excluded). Different levels assigned at random. Four replicates of each level.
- Each chamber received only one level of the ozone-acidic rain combination.

- a. Classify each of the two studies according to one of the four categories named above, and justify why you made this classification.
- b. What are typical characteristics of the assumptions and methods in the type of studies that these two cases represent?
- c. What are advantages and disadvantages of the two approaches?