

| Method | Type | Primary Secondary | Positivist Interpretivist | Quantitative Qualitative | Reliability Validity | Advantages | Disadvantages | Studies |
|--|---|----------------------|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Official Statistics/ Statistical data produced by central and local government agencies. Official statistics are produced in vast quantities and provide a profitable source of information for sociologists, | Governmental Or Non-governmental Hard statistics are objective and not open to manipulation: births, marriages Soft statistics are subjective and the product of social interaction: crime, poverty, and unemployment | Secondary | <p>Positivists: Use them to look for correlations and causal relationships.</p> <p>Interpretivists: See them as social constructs. They interpret how they were constructed. They ask questions such as 'how do we discover the dark-figure of crime (70%)</p> <p>Note. Feminists, Marxists and Interpretivists are all critical of official statistics.</p> | Quantitative | Reliability | <p>Free and quick to access</p> <p>Comparable by representing data using graphs etc</p> <p>Available for a vast range of topics</p> <p>Up-to-date to show trends</p> <p>Already collected</p> <p>Study trends over time</p> <p>Allows you look at trends 'before' and 'after' social policies.</p> | <p>Official statistics are not always presented in a form useful to sociologists. They do not test relationships you are interested in.</p> <p>Validity problems. Do they really measure what they claim to measure?</p> <p>No meanings just statistical information</p> <p>Doesn't tell you everything (in crime the number of unreported incidents are unknown)</p> <p>They might be</p> | <p>Emile Durkheim (Suicide) He used official statistics (uncritically) to try and find causal relationships and laws of human behaviour.</p> <p>Peter Laslett He used parish records to show that the large extended family was relatively uncommon in pre-modern society.</p> <p>There are lots of amounts of official statistics</p> |

much of it impossible for researchers to obtain themselves.

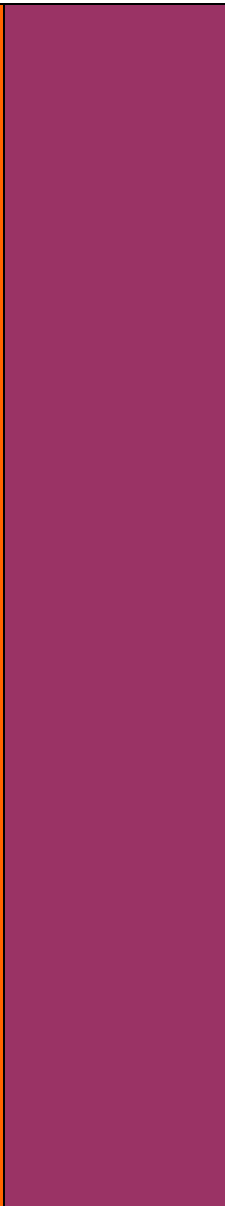
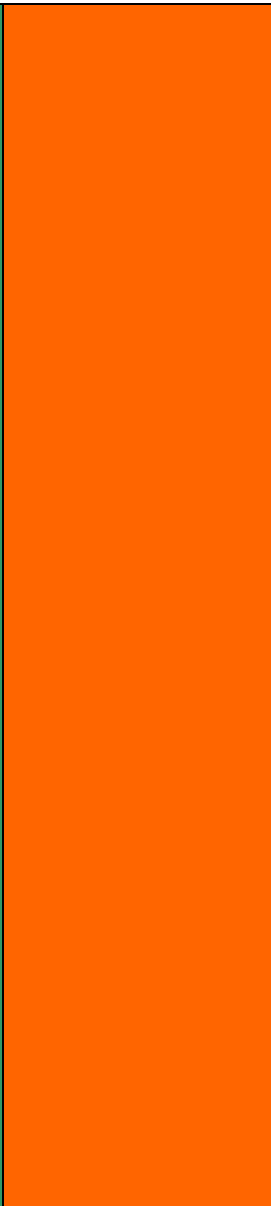
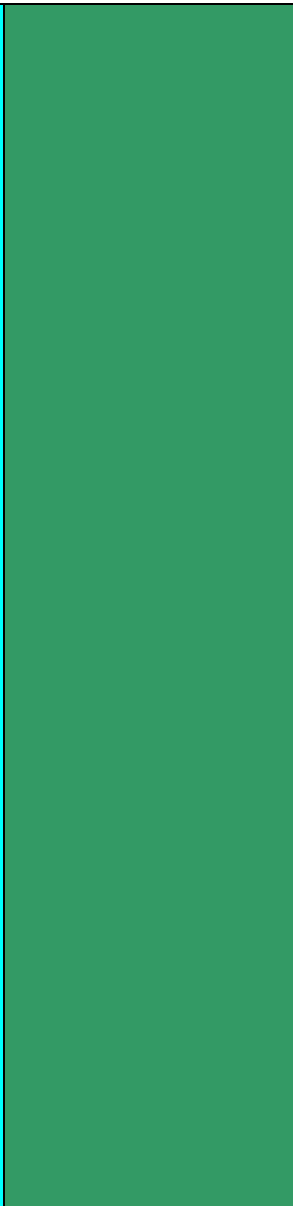
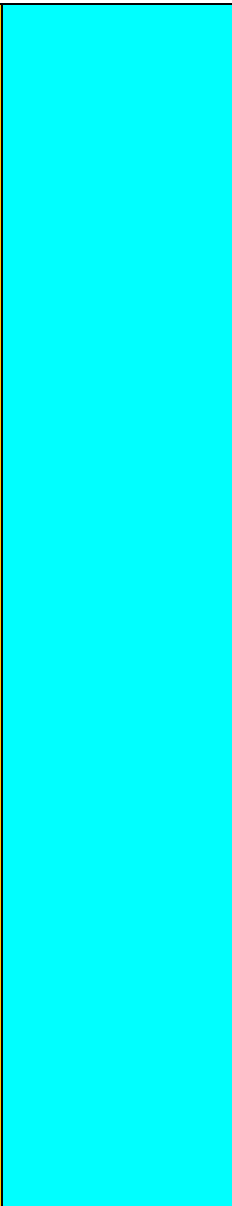
ment.
Surveys
Census

British Crime Survey

Family Expenditure Survey

General Household Survey

Registration Data
(dynamic and continuous collection)
Births, marriages, divorces, deaths, unemployment, crime, child



Sample sizes are often large. Therefore, they are more likely to be representative.

Many government surveys are well planned and organised.

Surveys are conducted at regular intervals.

Official statistics may be your only source of information on a topic.

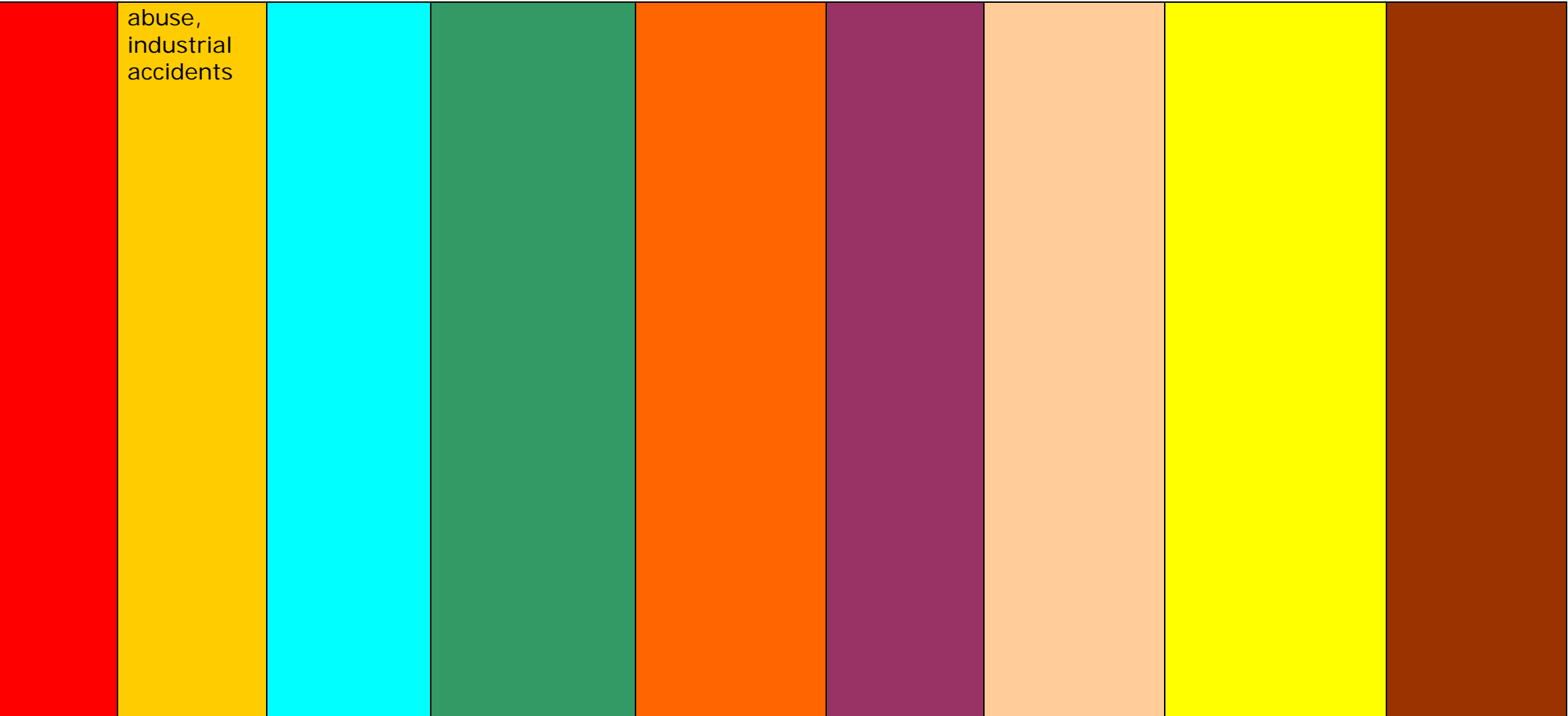
politically biased. Official statistics are government statistics. The Conservative Government change the method used to count unemployment 30 times from 1982-97.

The construction of statistics is a social process.

Official statistics may record information using categories that sociologists would not accept.

Required information not available.

available: Police, The Home Office, Social Trends and The Census.



abuse,
industrial
accidents

Summary of Research Methods: Official Statistics