

## Chapter 3

### Topic 1 Quantitative research methods

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#### Activity: Discussion

#### Official statistics - a useful resource?

#### Learning objectives

At the end of this activity you should be able to:

- Analyse the views of different perspectives on the use of official statistics in sociological research.
- Evaluate different perspectives' views of the use of official statistics in sociological research.

- A. Divide into four groups. Each group will take one of the perspectives referred to in the text, namely positivism, interpretivism, Marxism and feminism.

First read the relevant section of your textbook on your perspective's view.

Prepare a five-minute presentation on your perspective's view of the use of official statistics in sociological research.

Here are some points to help you. Add as many others as you can:

- Does your perspective favour the use of official statistics?
- What reasons can you give to support your perspective's view?
- Include examples of topics that illustrate the points you make, for example crime statistics.
- Would the views of your perspective apply to other statistics that are not official, such as those on church attendance or belief in God?

- B. Use your research to take part in a class discussion: 'Official statistics are a useful resource for sociologists'.
- C. As a class, vote on which perspective is most convincing. When deciding which way to vote, you must only consider the evidence presented during the discussion.
- D. Individually, write your own summary of your class's discussion.