

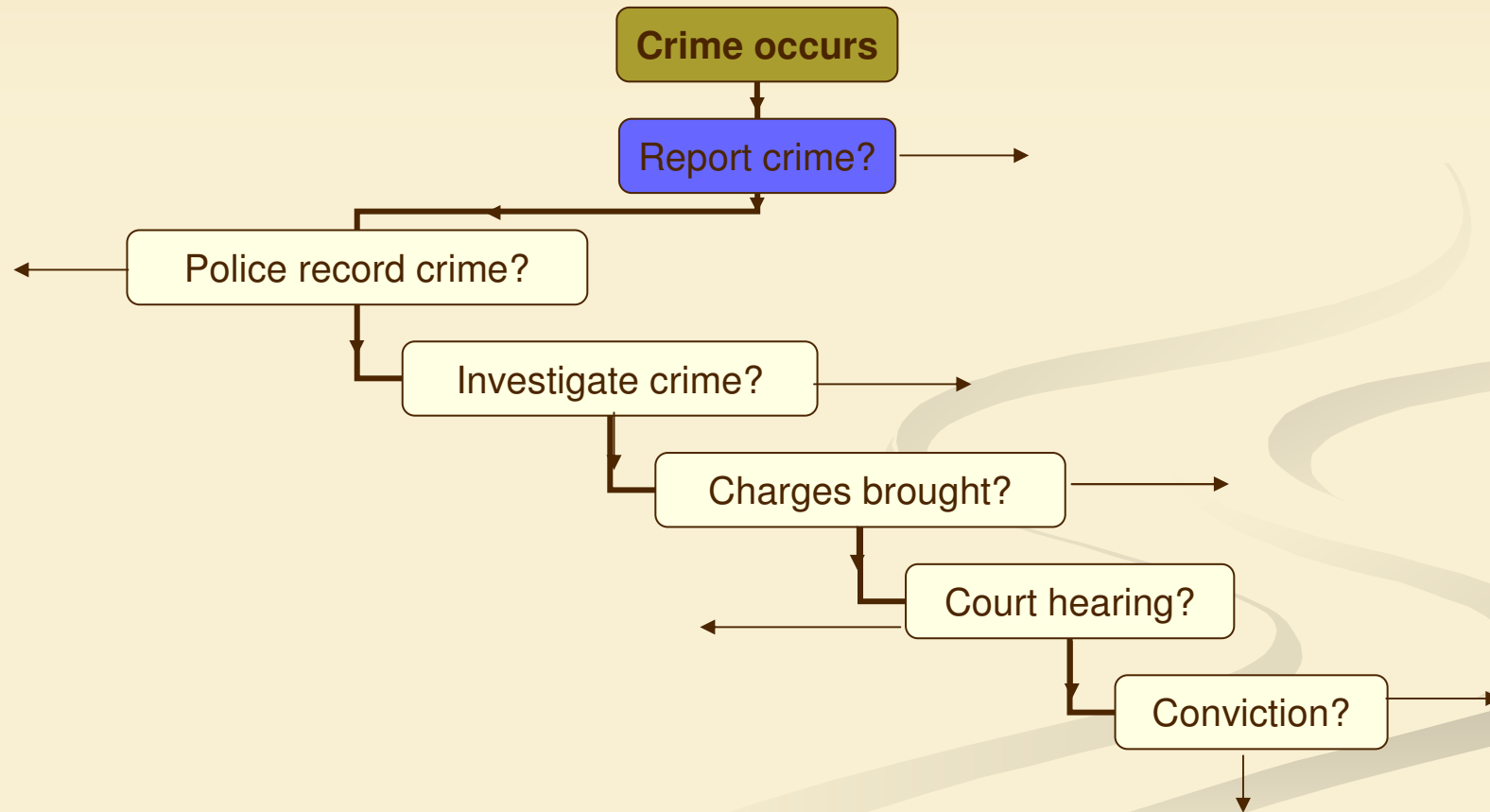
Official Statistics & Crime & Deviance

- Official Statistics
 - Recording & reporting processes
 - Advantages & problems
 - Viewpoints on crime statistics
- Investigating the “Dark figure” of crime
 - Self-report surveys
 - Victim surveys
 - Advantages & problems

Official Statistics

- Collected by government agencies
 - Eg:.....
- Crime statistics collected since 1857

Reporting & Recording Process & factors affecting it



Advantages of Official stats

- Collected since mid 19th C
- Highlight trends & patterns
- Freely available
- Quick turnaround of data – Hall-Williams (1982)
- Most accurate available picture of white-collar crime – Mayhew & Smith (1985)

Limitations of Official Stats

- Outcome of multi-stage process
 - Public & police
 - Regional variations
- Crime subjective – can there be a real number?
– Block & Block (1984)
- Differences in counting process – Mayhew & Smith (1985)
 - Regional
 - Over time
- Manipulation of data – police/politicians/media

Views of crime stats

- Interpretivists – inaccurate, picture of attitudes & justice system
- Feminists – inadequate, recorded by men
- Marxists – reflect inequalities of power
- Left Realist – crime real problem, current stats inadequate
- Right Realist – stats useful & give true picture

“Dark figure” of crime

- Much crime not reported/recorded
 - 61% - BCS (2000)
 - 85% - Radzinowicz & King (1977)
 - 50% - Young
- Use of other methods to ascertain levels of crime
 - Victim surveys
 - Self-report surveys

Victim Surveys

- Gives good view of extent & patterns of victimisation
- Examples – British Crime Survey (annual)
 - Islington Crime Surveys (1986, 1995)

Problems of victimisation surveys:

- Individuals' memory
- Categorisation of crimes
- Don't cover all crimes
- Media sensitisation
- Victim awareness

Self-report studies

- Reveal offenders not otherwise seen
- Data about “victimless” crime

BUT

- Validity?
- Representativeness