

History and Challenges of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

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Outline

1. Survey Design
2. History
3. Challenges

SURVEY DESIGN

Sample Design

- Sample Design:
 - Stratified
 - Two-stage cluster design
- Rotating panel design:
 - 7 panels
 - 6-month intervals
- Monthly Sample Size:
 - 10,500 cases

Data Collection Methods

- Interview Mode:
 - Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI)
- First time interview:
 - Personal visit
- Subsequent interviews:
 - Phone (decentralized) when possible to save costs; personal visit if necessary

Respondents and Reporting Periods

- Three types of respondents:
 - HH (18+)
 - Individual (12+)
 - Proxy (18+)
- Unit in sample 7 times over 3 years
- 6-month reference period

Questionnaire Design

- NCVS-1: Screener Questionnaire:
 - Theft
 - Break-in (HH respondent only)
 - Vehicle (HH respondent only)
 - Attacked
 - Stolen/attacked by known person
 - Unwanted sexual activity
 - Catch Alls (Call police and did not call police)
- NCVS-2: Crime Incident Report:
 - Detailed questions on each incident reported in the screener
 - Information gathered to classify personal and property crimes

HISTORY

1965 President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice

- Uniform Crime Reporting Program (UCR)
 - Misses crimes not reported to police,
 - Lacks common definitions of crimes categories,
 - Insufficient details about characteristics of crimes,
 - Little information about victims, and
 - Little information on impact of crime on victims.
- Recommended a national victimization survey (1967)

1972 National Crime Survey

- Purpose
 - Develop detailed information about the victims and consequences of crime,
 - Estimate crimes not reported to the police,
 - Provide uniform measures of types of crimes, and
 - Permit comparisons over time and types of areas.

1976 National Academy of Science Recommendations

- Eliminate the commercial and central cities components,
- Revise the crime screening questions,
- Add questions about activities associated with crime victimization, and
- Add questions about preventive measures.

1992 National Crime Victimization Survey

- Name change
- 18 month phase-in period
- Screener revision to include prompts and improve recall of crimes
- Added questions on sexual assault and rape

2006 Sample Redesign

- Loss of Power
 - Cumulative effect of budget reductions
 - Declines in crime prevalence
 - Declining response rates
- New bounding method
- Shift from paper interviews to computer assisted interviews
- Temporary break in longitudinal estimates

CHALLENGES

Telescoping, Bounding, and Recall

- First interview
 - Prior to 2006 – Not used in estimation
 - After 2006 – Statistical adjustment is used to bound first interview
- Reference period
 - Current – 6 months
 - Proposed – 1 year

State Estimation

- Added sample to 11 states in 2013
- Goal to produce 3 year rolling estimates of crime and victimization at the state level
- Reviewing and researching new weighting and variance estimation methods

Budget

- Rising Field Costs
 - Declining response rates
- Interest in state-level estimation
- Restored funding after many sample reductions

Underestimation of Rape and Sexual Assault

- Privacy
 - Current – Personal/telephone interview “within earshot” of others in household
 - Proposed – Self Response Module
- Context of crime survey
 - Current – Some respondents unlikely to report rape and sexual assault in a crime survey
 - Proposed – Collect rape and sexual assault reports in new health and wellbeing survey or supplement.
- Questionnaire wording
 - Current – Uses the word rape
 - Proposed – Ask about specific actions

Questions?