

Redesign of the National Crime Victimization Survey and Producing Subnational Victimization Estimates

Michael Rand

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

michael.rand@usdoj.gov

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs



Outline

- NCVS overview
- Why redesign?
- Redesign goals
- Initial projects and activities
- Subnational estimation
- Future directions

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

- Initiated in 1972 (as the National Crime Survey)
- Redesigned in early 90s
- Purposes:
 - Measure “dark figure of unreported crime”
 - Obtain information on characteristics of crime victims and crime events
 - Provide estimates of year to year change

Crimes measured by the NCVS

- Rape/Sexual assault
- Robbery
- Aggravated assault
- Simple assault
- Pocket picking/purse snatching
- Burglary
- Motor vehicle theft
- Theft
- Identity theft

NCVS Design

- Nationally representative stratified multistage sample drawn from Decennial Census
- Household (address)-based survey
- One of the largest ongoing government surveys
- Interviews with non-institutionalized persons age 12 or older
- Sample interviewed every 6 months
 - 38,700 households
 - 68,700 people in 2009

Why Redesign?

- Survey not meeting goals
- Survey not sustainable
- Recommendations from NRC study
- Issues with 2006 estimates
- Need to enhance survey capabilities

Redesign goals

- Improve precision of estimates
- Improve quality of operation
- Improve cost efficiency of methodology
- Enhance flexibility
 - address emerging issues
- Enable subnational estimates

Data quality goals

- Develop ongoing methodological research program
- Re-establish/strengthen quality control protocols
- Improve paradata

Framework for redesign

Survey goals identified in NRC report:

- Nat'l measure of crime independent of police
- Contextual/etiological information about crime
- Address emerging issues
- State/local area estimates
- Information beyond crime rates
- Timely publication
- Hard to measure crimes

Survey attributes requiring attention

- Measure of rare events
- Sensitivity of topics covered
- Protection of respondents
- Informed consent of juveniles
- Need to cover subpopulations
- Memory & burden related issues

Redesign research

- Small area (subnational estimates)
- Sample design
- Survey mode
- Reference period
- Non-response bias
- Crime screening question review

Other activities

- Meetings with stakeholders
- Review of alternative designs
- Evaluation of other surveys

Strengthening Core

- Improve quality of current survey
 - Reintroduction of sample
 - Enhance paradata
 - Continue to review 2006 data
 - Reinstitute recurring interviewer training
 - Strengthen quality control protocols

Subnational victimization estimation

- Long stated desire for subnational estimates
 - For what areas?
 - For which types of estimates?
 - For what purposes?

Strategies for generating subnational estimates

- Direct estimation
 - 'Rolls Royce' option
 - Rolling average
 - Federal/state collaborative model
- Indirect estimation
 - Model w/ existing sample and auxiliary data
 - Model w/ low cost companion survey; blend estimates

Model with low cost companion survey

- Research project initiated October 2010
 - Competitively awarded to Westat
 - Low cost companion survey to NCVS
 - Study in 6 MSA's
 - Address based sampling
 - Testing ability to collect victimization data at lower cost

Future Directions

- Many areas still require examination
 - Within household sampling
 - Screener evaluation/research
 - Strengthening response with difficult to enumerate subpopulations
 - Collecting non-victimization related information

Contact Information

Michael Rand:

–Email: michael.rand@usdoj.gov

–Phone: 202-616-3494