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

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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
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