

Ch. III.G. Respondents

Procedure for respondent's identification in person/household surveys

245. The issue of whether the sample should be person based or household based, and the pros and cons of the possible options are discussed in the sample design chapter (see section "Sample unit selection" in Ch. III.F). [NOTE: Consider the possibility of moving that text here]

How to count offences and victims

246. Among the most commonly stated goals for conducting victimization surveys are producing estimates of the prevalence and incidence of crime. Prevalence estimates include the percentages of people or households victimized by measured offences. Incidence measures include estimates of the numbers of crimes and victims as well as crime rates, which are based on the numbers of offences or victims per unit of population.

247. The decision concerning the types of offence and victim related estimates the survey will produce must be made during the sampling design and questionnaire development stages of the survey design process. During the sample design stage, the developer must determine whether the estimates will be based on persons or households in order to develop the appropriate sampling frame. During the questionnaire design stage, the question sequences must be created to enable differentiation among different incidents of crime, different types of crime and account for multiple victims in crime incidents.

248. For many of these decisions, there is no one right or wrong way of proceeding. The decision becomes a determination of which estimates best address the surveys goals. In making these decisions there are a number of factors that must be taken into consideration to avoid creating counting problems during the analysis process. The following sections discuss the issues concerning counting of offences and victims.

Counting offences

249. Counting crimes is not a simple procedure. Offences can be complex, involving multiple victims, multiple offenders and multiple offences. Crimes are not necessarily discrete events, but may transpire over a period of time. Counting them requires the creation of a set of protocols for addressing each of the complicating factors. Surveys can incorporate a variety of techniques for doing so.

Prevalence versus incidence measures

250. As described in the introduction to the manual, one of the principal roles of a victimization survey is to produce estimates of the prevalence of crime. For a victimization survey, prevalence is the percentage of people or households (or for a commercial victimization survey, businesses) that experience one or more of the measured offences occurring during a given time period; most often a year. If a person were victimized multiple times, they would only be counted one time in a prevalence measure.

251. An incidence measure measures the number of offences occurring during a given time period; most often a year. If a person is victimized multiple times, then presumably (with the exceptions described below) each incident would be counted by the survey.

252. A third measure, used by at least one victimization survey, the U.S. National Crime Victimization Survey, is a “victimization.” A victimization is a victim-event measure in that it counts each crime as it affects each victim. If three people are victimized in a robbery it would be counted as one robbery incident, but three robbery victimizations in the survey, one for each victim. Because the survey interviews every household member, each victimization is counted by the survey.

Multiple and repeat victimizations

253. Most surveys treat criminal offences as discrete events, lasting a relatively short time and having a beginning and an end. For example, a robbery begins with some overt action by the offender and ends when the offender or victim leaves the scene. However, some offences actually may not have discernable beginnings and/or endings and may continue for an extended period. Some criminologists believe that such victimizations may be better understood as ongoing offences, (see Biderman and Lynch) Some intimate partner violence and workplace violence, may, for example, take this form, with the periodic threats or attacks being elements of an ongoing state of being victimized.

254. It is generally difficult to characterize such ongoing offences in victimization surveys, so some surveys count the different attacks and threats as individual incidents even when part of an ongoing situation; and all surveys generally have some sort of cut-off to limit the number of incidents recorded (see below). Respondents are generally asked to recall the detailed circumstances of each event they experienced during the survey’s reference period.

255. Some respondents report being victim of more than one victimization during a survey’s reference period. If the victimizations are unrelated, they are called “multiple victimizations” and if similar in nature or circumstance they are denoted as “repeat victimization.” An example of multiple victimizations is a person who was victim of one robbery and one burglary during the reference period. A person who was assaulted three times during the reference period by their intimate partner has experienced repeat victimization.

256. The issue of how to treat repeat or multiple victimization is problematic primarily for estimates of victimization incidence, for which it is important to know how many times an individual was victimized. To a lesser extent, this is also an issue for prevalence estimates. While prevalence estimates are based on the victim experiencing a crime at least one time, prevalence estimates for specific types of crime require protocols that can accurately differentiate the various types of crime.

257. To a degree, multiple and repeat victimization are artifactual in that the amount of multiple or repeat victimizations measured by a survey will be related to the length of the survey’s reference period. A survey with a short reference period will encompass smaller amounts of these victimizations than one with a longer reference period. While some multiple or repeat victimizations may be random; a person just happens to experience more than one crime during a given period of time; much of it is associated with a person’s employment, lifestyle or relationship with the offender.

258. While many victimization surveys have incorporated procedures for addressing situations in which victims have been victimized repeatedly during the reference period, generally these procedures have been developed to reduce either cost of interviewing or the burden on respondents rather than to produce estimates of people who are subject to ongoing states of victimization. This can be done in a variety of ways. One technique used by a number of national surveys is to restrict the number of incidents for which information is obtained. The British Crime Survey allows up to five incident reports to be filled for any respondent. The NCVS utilizes an alternative protocol called “series crimes” which allows the interviewer to fill one incident report if the respondent was victimized 6 or more times during the reference period in a similar manner (i.e. by the same offender or in the same general sort of way), and the respondent cannot recall the details of every incident. The 2004 Canadian Victimization Survey (General Social Survey Cycle 18) capped the number of incident reports 10 for any individual screening question and at 20 for any respondent at 20. In addition, the Canadian survey also utilized a series protocol, incorporated in the survey’s weighting procedure which capped the number of similar incidents in the series at three.

259. The U.S. and Canadian surveys differ in their treatment of series incidents in the survey estimates. In the NCVS, series incidents are entirely excluded from annual published estimates, while in estimates from the Canadian survey, the incidents in the series are included up to a maximum of three.

260. The capping of incidents clearly impacts the resulting survey estimates of the numbers of crimes. Placing an upper bound on the number of incident reports, or excluding or limiting the inclusion of series of similar crime incidents, might be seen as undercounting the extent of crime victimization. In the United States, the inclusion of series victimizations, counting each series as one victimization, would increase the estimate of crimes of violence and theft by about six percent. However, the alternative, not restricting or capping recurring victimizations presents the opposite problem, potentially overcounting the extent of victimization. People who experience repeated victimization may not be able to accurately count the number of times that they were victimized. Moreover, some criminologists speak of treating such victimizations as enduring conditions rather than as discrete events (Biderman 1975.)

261. Issues exist as well with the counting of repeat victimizations. Data from the NCVS show evidence that people tend to round estimates of the number of times victimized to a number ending in 5 or 10 or corresponding to a fraction of the reference period, such as daily, weekly, or monthly. In addition, counting every separate incident for people who report frequent victimization may introduce inaccuracies in the classification of these large numbers of crimes. It is not possible to obtain detailed information for each separate incident for a person reporting being victimized many times during a survey’s reference period. Attempting to do so would tax the respondent’s patience as well as their cognitive abilities.

262. One method for addressing this issue is to ask how many times a person experienced a given type of crime and inflate the estimate by the number of times victimized. This procedure inherently assumes that every victimization shares the same underlying circumstances and consequences as the victimization incident for which detailed information is collected, an assumption that may or may not be accurate. This estimation procedure can inflate estimates of measured crimes based on insufficient information or based on only a few actual incident reports. For example, when the estimate of rape from the National Violence Against Women Survey, a survey conducted in the United States in 1996 was weighted up to population levels, one victim reporting 24 rapes during the previous year accounted for 34 percent of the overall estimate.

263. If the survey developers opt for selecting a subset of incidents to measure or to obtain information about, a protocol must be developed for such selection. Some surveys utilize a hierarchy, obtaining information about the most serious incidents. Others opt for obtaining information about the most recent. Using the first protocol; that is, obtaining information on the most serious victimizations, can lead to overestimating the proportion of crime that involves more serious offences. Conversely, obtaining information about the most recent incident may introduce a recency bias, as people may tend to remember as more recent offences that are more serious.

264. To date, consensus has not developed in treating multiple and repeat victimizations across victimization surveys. The methods that each survey cited has used to address the problem have both positive and negative aspects. Each takes into account issues of available resources and burden and the ultimate goal of the survey. There is a growing survey literature about issues related to counting multiple and repeat victimization, and the impact of various methods upon survey estimates. Ultimately, as long as the methodology is transparent and made public, data users can evaluate the methodology and, if they so desire, calculate alternative measures of crime victimization.

Classifying types of crime

265. In designing the victimization survey questionnaire, the developers must be careful in mapping their operational definitions of offences to survey questions. The terms used in questions that determine whether respondents were victims of crime must be crafted to be understandable to the respondents, yet define the offences in ways that approximate the legal definitions of crimes as closely as possible. An exact mapping may not be possible; for example, a statute may look to an offender's intent in defining an offence; something that a victim may not know. However, the developer should look for a surrogate for the portion of the statute. As an example, many laws in the United States define burglary as illegally entering a building with intent to steal something or commit a crime. Because the respondents might not know the offenders' intent, for the NCVS the definition of burglary was modified to be "entering an apartment or house or other structure on the respondent's property by someone who does not have a right to be present in the home."

266. Another issue concerning crime definitions that must be addressed in designing the questionnaire is associated with the problem that offenders may commit more than one type of crime during the same incident. For example, an offender may break into someone's house, and finding two people home, assaults a man and rapes a woman. This is one incident, but encompasses elements of burglary, assault and rape against two different people. How this incident is counted in a victimization survey may depend on who is interviewed and how such incidents are treated.

267. One method commonly used is to create a hierarchy of offence seriousness and count the incident as the most serious offence. To enable creation of a hierarchy, the questionnaire must obtain information on what occurred during the incident. The attributes of the incident are then used to place the incident into a hierarchy based on the basic elements of the offence. For example, the National Crime Victimization Survey in the United States incorporates the following hierarchy, beginning with the most serious offence and ending with the least serious crime against persons, then continuing with the most serious crime against the household as an entirety:

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- Rape/sexual assault
- Robbery
- Aggravated assault
- Simple assault
- Purse snatching/pocket picking
- Household burglary
- Motor vehicle theft
- Theft

268. If an incident incorporates elements of more than one offence, it is categorized as the type of crime higher in the hierarchy. Thus, in the examples provided above, for the NCVS, the incident in which a victim was robbed during a rape, the crime would be counted in the rape category. The burglary in which the victim was attacked would be categorized as a robbery. By obtaining information about what occurred during the incident, the ability remains to produce alternative categorizations of crime to examine their various attributes, for example, how many rapes also involve robbery, or what proportion of burglaries involve victim injury. If all the elements of the incident are captured, the other crimes committed during the incident can be extracted during analysis as required.

269. If the survey utilizes a person based sample, that is, interviews a selected person in the household, and obtains information only about offences experienced by him or her, the offence measured by the survey may depend upon who in household is interviewed. In the above example, if the man is interviewed, the crime would be classified as an assault if a hierarchy rule was used; while if the woman was interviewed, the crime would be classified as a rape. The incidents that would have been reported by people who are not interviewed, (the woman in the first case and the man in the second,) are accounted for in the sample design; they are treated like any other person who is not in sample who may have experienced a crime.

270. If the survey utilizes a household based sample, and interviews all household members, (or all household members within a specified age range,) the counting procedure would differ somewhat. In the above example, if both victims met the survey's age criteria, then the crimes against each would be counted. Because there were two victims of two different crimes in a single incident some adjustment to the weighting protocol would be required to produce an estimate of crime incidents. Otherwise, the survey estimate would appear to state that there were two separate unconnected incidents of crime; an assault and a rape. (The U.S. NCVS uses the concept of victimization to enable such counting.)

Households versus persons

271. The issue of whether the sample should be person based or household based is more completely discussed in the sample design chapter (see section "Sample unit selection" in Ch. III.F). [NOTE: possible new text to be drafted here on what can be done with household and person based measures; in alternative, this section should be deleted]

Minimizing non-response

272. Minimizing non-response, a type of non sampling error, is an important goal for any survey. In minimizing non-response, data quality is maximized. It is imperative that the interviewed sample be as close as possible to the theoretical sample to assure a representativeness of the population. Fortunately, there are specific strategies one can apply to minimize non response.

273. There are two primary forms of non response: Total non response and partial non response. Total non response occurs when the interview of the sampled unit (whether individual or household) is not conducted. This can occur for a variety of reasons including the sampled unit cannot participate, the unit refuses to participate, or the unit cannot be contacted.

274. Partial non response results when the survey instrument or questionnaire is only partially filled. This can occur when some questions or even entire sections are omitted or ignored. In general, partial non response occurs more often in face-to-face surveys. In computer assisted interview surveys item non responses are less common as the system does not allow the respondent to continue the instrument until the field is filled, and in case items need to be skipped it is not up to the respondent to find the next question as the system can be programmed to do this automatically. Reasons for item non responses vary and may result from items the respondent feels are personal or too sensitive (e.g., income), a confusing skip pattern, or a simple lack of attention on the part of the interviewer or respondent.

Box: Reasons for refusal

The primary form of non response in survey research results from refusals and non contacts. Refusal may come about due to disinterest in the survey topic, lack of time, distrust in the survey's purpose, doubts regarding anonymity or confidentiality, family reasons, and language barriers. Aside from respondent refusals, reasons for complete non response (or non-contact) are empty house, respondents are never contacted, and/or the sample unit is not eligible.

275. To minimize total or partial non response, several strategies are recommended. The primary strategies used in minimizing non response include the use of introductory letters, timing of first contact, and providing a toll-free number. These topics are discussed in greater detail below.

The use of introductory letters

276. An introductory letter to the sampled household or person is an effective way to reduce non response. In one telephone survey, when introductory letters were not sent, refusals ranged from 30% to 35%. In contrast, when an introductory letter was used, refusals dropped to between 5% and 10%.

277. An introductory letter should contain several elements. First, the letter should be professional in appearance, include the survey company's logo, and the letter should be signed by the President, Director, or some other high-ranking official. In some societies, there may be advantages in sending the letter from the Director of the National Statistical Agency rather than from a politician or government official, in order to emphasise the independence of the survey. When the survey is being managed or conducted by multiple organizations

(e.g., the National Statistical Institute and other territorial Public Administrative Offices), the introductory letter might be signed by one official from each organization if possible. In addition, involving agencies at local level tends to elicit greater cooperation from respondents.

278. The introductory letter should also include a description of the general purpose of the survey as well as the Institute carrying it out or the Agency promoting the research. The letter should inform the respondents of the motivations and aims of the project, explanations about how respondents were selected, and reasons why respondents' cooperation is vitally important. The letter should also reassure respondents about the seriousness of the project, privacy of their responses and how respondent's data and information will be treated. This includes who will process their data, the possibility of accessing and modifying the own personal data, and assurances about security used to protect their data. The letter should also indicate how the respondent is expected to participate. Regardless of the mode, the respondent should learn in the letter the days and hours available for the interview.

Box: Introductory Letter Content

Though an introductory letter should not exceed one page, it should have in it essential information. Here is a summary of the contents of an introductory letter:

- Sponsoring agency or institute's logo
- Identification of the organization conducting the survey
- Major purposes of the survey
- Mode of interview and dates and times of the interview
- Information about obligations to answer and the protection of private and personal data
- Toll free number with hours when the respondent may contact for more information
- The phone number of agencies and institutions involved in the survey
- Thanks for participating
- Institute President's signature

279. It is important that the selected respondent read and remember the introductory letter meaning care must be taken to facilitate the reading and retention of it. This can be done by making the letter interesting by using graphics, emphasizing important points (e.g., underlining or using different fonts), and using color for the logo.

280. In some cases, the introductory letter is addressed to the household in general, yet it is important that each member of household read it. To encourage this, it is recommended that directions to put the letter in a place in the home where all can see it easily be underlined in the letter. Generally, however, letters addressed to a person are more likely to be read than letters which are sent to an address without a named recipient (e.g., 'to whom it may concern').

281. In some cases, it may be unclear what language is spoken in the household. If this is a possibility, send multiple letters (one in each language) to the household. This will assure that the letter is understood, and it will increase the likelihood that the respondents will participate in the survey.

Mailings

282. Once the introductory letter is completed, it must be mailed to the selected household. An important consideration in this step is ensuring that the time between the receipt of an introductory letter and initial contact from the interviewer is not too long. The more time that passes, the more likely the respondent will have forgotten the content of the letter. It is suggested that the interviewer's contact take place no more than one week to ten days after the letter has been received. To enable this, the mailing of the introductory letters should be staggered. The number of letters sent in each group of mailings is based on several considerations referred to as the "work time" of the households:

- length of the interview
- number of interviewers available
- days and hours the interviews are conducted

283. An initial estimate of the number of addresses that are "closed" each day (i.e., interviews completed) is essential to the timing of introductory mailings. To verify the time it takes between sending the letter and the receiving of the letter by the respondents, test mailings are encouraged. One can mail letters to members of the survey staff, or others not in sample to ascertain the amount of time it takes a letter to arrive. With this simple test, it is possible to verify the lag time between mailings, receipt of letters and contact for interviews.

284. To further encourage the respondent to participate in the interview process, one may select to mail the introductory letter twice: The first about ten days before the interview, and the second days before. However, research does not clearly demonstrate that response rates increase with double introductory letter mailings. Therefore, it may not be worth the additional cost to do so. In some surveys, families have been called in advance to remind them of the impending interview however, this tactic has been related to *higher* refusal rates.

Toll free number

285. The joint strategy of an introductory letter and a toll free number offers a substantial increase in the response rate. Making a toll free number available allows individuals to contact the agency conducting the survey if they need more information and/or reassurance about participating. The toll free number should be functional when the introductory mailings are mailed ensuring the respondent is always able to reach someone at the number. It is fundamental that the staff manning the toll free number be highly qualified and trained about the aims, content, and motivation of the survey. In addition, the staff must have effective communicative and listening skills.

286. The staff manning the toll free number needs to record the quantity and quality of the calls. How many calls are dealt with? What are the questions asked by the respondents calling? What are the doubts, concerns or complaints expressed by callers? The information gleaned from the toll free number is vitally important and can be recorded in a structured format on a sheet of paper. On this sheet the staff personnel records the caller motivations, caller profile (e.g., gender, age, educational level, region) as well as the staff's view of how the call was ended and the callers willingness to be interviewed.

287. Potential respondents call the toll free number for a variety of reasons. These include:

- Determine the seriousness of the survey

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- Gather general information about the purpose of the survey
- Ascertain their obligation to participate
- Consequences of refusing to participate
- Communicate a change of address or a period of absence
- Offer times when the respondent is available
- Provide an updated phone number
- Request a survey date
- Convey the death of the person to whom the introductory letter is addressed

288. Daily monitoring information gathered on the toll free number allows one to promptly catch situations that could later jeopardize the quality of the survey. For example, a current event related to criminality reported in the media may influence public opinion and change the desire of respondents to participate in the survey. Such instances may be signalled by the citizens' calls to the toll free number.

289. Aside from a toll free number, it is recommended that a second telephone number (not toll free) be included in the introductory letter. At times, suspicious respondents believe that the toll free number can be a tool to mask a fraudulent organization attempting to gain personal data. A second number easily connected to the agency or organization conducting the survey will reassure such individuals that the survey is legitimate and important.

Contact at the sample unit

290. Introductory letters and the activation of a toll free number were steps toward minimizing non response. It is hoped that these steps enable the successful completion of an interview when the first personal contact with the respondent is made.

291. Field experience shows that a large proportion of interviews are obtained and finished during the first contact. In addition, a large percentage of interviews are concluded following the second contact. The completion of an interview following a second contact is largely due to survey technique differences. For instance, in a face-to-face interview, the household may first be contacted by phone to make an appointment. It is then during the second contact that the survey is secured. After two contacts, the percentage of interviews completed decreases greatly. After a specific number of contacts it is more efficient for the overall economy of the survey to abandon that household. A study carried out on the EUICS survey showed a link between the number of contacts and the high victimization rate. Nevertheless the relationship wasn't strong and differed across countries.

292. To evaluate the maximum number of contacts for each respondent a cost-benefits evaluation should be made. On the one hand, the maintenance of the sample as selected is important to consider. But on the other hand, the cost and time lost with repeated contacts to a non responding unit must be taken into account. To establish effective and useful rules for when to abandon a sampled unit, it is important to analyze the reasons why an interview is not completed in a single contact.

293. One reason for a need for multiple contacts may be the sample design. Can the interviewer interview anyone at the sampled household (or phone number)? Or must the interviewer identify and locate a particular individual? Being able to interview anyone at the sampled unit will bias the sample since those most easily found at home are not representative of the population in general. However, this strategy means completed interviews are easier to obtain. When the survey is conducted over the phone, is the phone ringing but no one is

answering? Or does the interviewer make contact, but not with the desired respondent? Clearly understanding the reasons behind failure to complete an interview will guide the rules established for abandoning a particular unit.

294. Usually rules are structured based on the type of non contact. For example, how to proceed if no one answers a phone? If one calls and there is no answer at the phone, it is assumed that no one is at home so it is recommended that an additional call is made in one hour. If during a call, the line is busy, it is assumed that the person is at home on the phone, so it is recommended that an additional call be made five to ten minutes later. Obviously, it is not possible to define a priori a constant number of phone calls to be made since it depends on the type of non contact.

295. If contact is established with someone, the approach may differ. The person contacted may state that family is unknown to them, that the desired family member is severely sick or dead. Or the person contacted may be the desired target, yet he or she refuses, or he could start the interview but stops it after few moments. The contacted individual may ask for an appointment. Again, it is difficult to define a priori a constant number of contacts since the reasons for failing to conduct the interview may vary.

296. Difficult a priori rules are to establish, generally seven or ten consecutive calls over a period of two to three days to a respondent is considered enough to abandon the respondent. When there is no answer when phoning or the call is picked up by an answering machine or a fax, the number is to be re-called at some interval. In the Italian victimization survey two time ranges were established for recalling: From 18:30 to 20:00 and from 21:01 to 21:30. In case of a busy signal, the number is to be re-called every five to ten minutes for seven consecutive times. After a series of seven busy signals, the number is to be called again the next day at the same hour when the first busy signal was detected.

Managing refusals

297. Depending on the sample, various types of refusal can be foreseen. In the case of one stage sample design, refusal can only come from the person who answers the phone, who refuses and prevents the whole household from being interviewed. In the case of two-stage design, instead, it is necessary to identify and contact a respondent after having extracted and contacted the household. The refusal at the first stage will cause the exclusion of the entire household, the second stage refusal only concerns the selected respondent. In past two-stage telephone interviews, a much larger impact has been found in the first stage than in the second, which means that once the readiness of the respondent who answers the phone has been obtained, the probability of refusal from the selected respondent decreases significantly.

298. Strategies for managing refusals depend on understanding the reasons for refusals. Interviewers should be trained before the fieldwork on approaches how to deal with various arguments, including issues with are particular to a victimisation survey (e.g., the respondent saying 'I have not been victim of anything, go ask someone else').

299. There is no one single approach to handle all refusals since each situation is different. However, some guidelines may be established to help to limit the refusal rate. Some refusals arise from the situation and not the individual respondent. In these cases, it is necessary to make an appointment to contact the person at a more appropriate time. Refusals arising from lack of trust, hostility or fear regarding the use of the information given require a different

strategy. In these instances, the respondent should be reassured about the survey, the security of their data and given (again) the toll-free number. Refusals based on a respondent's notion that the interview is a waste of time or pointless should be handled differently. In these cases, the value of the survey must be stressed, and the respondent should be reassured about the importance of their participation in what is a socially important survey.

300. In interviewing minorities, respondents may choose to refuse because they feel that their language skills are not good enough. In such cases arrangements should be made for interviews in different languages (e.g. appointment with another interviewer). There may also be cultural reasons for not letting interviewers enter and conduct interviews in homes (e.g. male interviewers entering households where only women are present). Persons who have had bad experiences from authorities (at home or abroad) may also be vary of dealing with people who they perceive as officials. The religious holidays of some minority groups may make it difficult to conduct interviews at these times.

301. Interviews conducted via the telephone have additional considerations since the first contact is vital for establishing a positive relationship with the respondent. The initial presentation read by the interviewer must be carefully constructed. Experience shows the importance that the research Institute is well presented and the news on the data gathering in progress be highlighted. It is essential to refer immediately to the introductory letter and to inform the respondents of the toll-free phone number.

302. To select the ideal time of the day to call, one should refer to the refusal rates and non response rates by time of call for previous surveys. It is also important to pay attention to the time of the year. Further, it is recommended that the segment of the population that must be interviewed be considered. The young and the elderly are found at home at different time. Usually, interviews are carried out from Monday to Friday in the evenings (from 18.30 to 21.30) and on Saturdays from 15.00 to 19.00) are most productive.

303. Many of the activities to prevent non response are concentrated in the field work phase. The purpose of this is to control the activities daily via a set of pre-set indicators that allow checks to be made on the observance of the methodological choices and to highlight the onset of any abnormal events. In telephone surveys, the construction of an accurate system of indicators takes on a vital importance. This system keeps the refusals of sample units under control during the data gathering phase. In particular, the reasons that have caused the non response (non availability, refusal, interruption etc), the type of population that has been involved (male, female, elderly or young, single-person households or multi-person households) and the effects of the survey mechanisms used (appointments, call rules, times of data gathering etc) must be analyzed.

Two more points have to be added (to be drafted by Italy) on this paragraph:

- Recontacting respondents
- The use of the incentives

Addressing survey error associated with respondents

(Only the outline below is available - Section to be drafted by Italy)

304. Non-response bias; error introduced because of non participation by some selected sample units.

a. Identifying and addressing respondent associated survey error.

Identifying acceptable levels of unit and item nonresponse (include examples of data that became unacceptable because of the high number of non-response. For example, in Canada, they conducted the 1999 GSS on victimization in Canada's northern territories and did not release the data due to high non-response and slippage.

Conducting response bias analyses to determine whether respondents are representative of entire sample.

b. The impact of nonresponse on quality of survey results.

Use of proxy respondents

305. When a respondent is unable to provide requested information, a proxy respondent can be used to provide information. Because of issues of accuracy and confidentiality, proxy respondents are generally considered a last resort for obtaining information about the designated survey respondent.

306. Generally, surveys that allow proxy respondents do so to reduce costs of obtaining interviews or to avoid a noninterview when the person designated to be the sample respondent is unable to participate. Survey designers must determine if and when a proxy respondent may be utilized in any survey. Some surveys designate that proxy respondents will not be used at all. Others will specify that proxy respondents will be allowed only under specific conditions, such as if the designated respondent is physically unable to participate and a household member is willing and knowledgeable enough to provide information for the designated respondent. The 2005 inventory of victimization surveys conducted by UNODC-UNECE found that 29% of the 78 victimization surveys allowed the use of proxy respondents.

Advantages of using proxy respondents

307. There are two reasons surveys allow the use of proxies if the person designated for interview is not readily available: Reducing cost and reducing non-response. Allowing another person who is available to provide information for the survey may reduce the cost of obtaining the interview by eliminating the need to follow up and make further attempts to obtain the interview. Additionally, allowing a proxy interview can also avoid a noninterview situation if the designated person will not be available during the enumeration period, or if the designated person is unable to respond for him/herself.

Disadvantages of using proxy respondents

308. Proxy respondents are asked to provide information about the experiences of someone other than themselves. Their responses, therefore, may not be as accurate as those of the person actually designated to be the survey respondent. Importantly, for a victimization survey, a proxy respondent may not know about crimes the sample respondent has experienced, or may not know the details of such victimizations, or their impact on the victim. Proxy respondents may also forget events that happened to the designated respondent. In addition, for victimization surveys, the proxy respondent may, for a variety of reasons,

withhold information about incidents of crime experienced by the sample respondent. Such reasons include embarrassment, a desire to protect the sample respondent, or because the proxy respondent was the offender in crimes committed against the designated respondent.

309. The use of proxy respondents also raises issues of confidentiality. Generally, responses to surveys are known only by the respondent and the interviewer. Using a proxy respondent can violate the designated respondent's right to confidentiality as well as his/her right to choose whether to participate in the survey.

Establishing rules for proxy respondents

310. It is necessary for the survey designer to determine whether or not to allow proxy respondents, under what circumstances to allow their use, and to create criteria for identifying acceptable proxy respondents. To determine whether or not to allow the use of proxy respondents, the survey designer must determine whether the benefits outweigh the potential disadvantages. Will the use of proxies reduce survey costs sufficiently? Will the information obtained accurately reflect the information that the designated respondent would have provided? Will the designated respondent's rights to privacy and confidentiality be sufficiently protected?

311. Circumstances in which a proxy respondent might be acceptable include:

- The respondent is too young to respond for him/herself.
- The respondent is physically incapacitated or too ill to participate.
- The respondent has a mental illness or emotional disorder that prevents participation.
- The respondent will be away for the entire survey enumeration period.

312. Of the surveys in the 2005 UNODC-UNECE victimization survey inventory, the most common reasons given for using proxies were for persons unable to respond for themselves because of illness or disability or for young children.

Establishing criteria for identifying acceptable proxy respondents

313. If proxy respondents will be allowed, the survey designer must establish rules for choosing acceptable proxy respondents. For a victimization survey, the proxy respondent must be a person with a close relationship to the designated respondent. Such a person is more likely to know whether the sample respondent was a victim of a measured crime and to know enough information about these offences to provide the information the survey is collecting. Generally this will be a relative or member of the designated respondent's household. Children or people below a specified age are likely not good candidates to be proxy respondents. They may not be able to understand survey instructions and concepts and may not know necessary information about the survey respondent. Moreover, there may be cultural norms or rules against using children as proxy respondents.

Conducting interviews with proxy respondents

314. In conducting an interview with a proxy respondent, it may be necessary to reword questions to assure that the information collected is for the designated respondent and not the

proxy. For example, a question such as “Was something stolen from you?” should be reworded “Was something stolen from Mr./Ms X?”

315. Some questions, such as those asking for opinions or attitudes, should not be asked of proxy respondents because they may not reflect the opinions or attitudes of the designated respondent.

Identifying proxy respondents in survey data

316. To identify interviews conducted by proxy, the questionnaire should have an item that identifies when a proxy was used and also identifies the name and relationship of the proxy to the designated respondent. This information is important for evaluating the quality of the data and for excluding inappropriate items from the analysis. The protocols for proxy response should be included in the survey methodology sections of any survey report.

Summary

317. Under ideal circumstances, surveys would never require proxy respondents. Surveys however are never conducted under ideal circumstances making the use of proxy respondents an issue. The following summarizes proxy respondent use in victimization surveys.

- Proxy respondents are not appropriate for questions pertaining to attitudes or for information only the actual respondent would be likely to know, such as why a crime was not reported to police or satisfaction with the response of authorities to the respondent’s situation.
- Use of proxies is also inadvisable for surveys addressing intimate partner violence, or for violence committed by caretakers, because of the possibility that the proxy respondent may, in fact, be an offender against the respondent. In this case, using a proxy may result in underestimating victimization.
- For surveys whose sample design designates that nonrespondents be replaced, proxy respondents are not an issue; persons unable to respond for themselves are replaced by other respondents.
- If proxy respondents are allowed, ensure that the proxy is knowledgeable of the survey respondent’s experiences.
- Identify the use of proxy in the survey data, as well as the reason for taking the proxy interview.

Ch. III.H. Frequency of enumeration

318. There is a relationship between enumeration frequency, survey goals and available resources. Determining the frequency of enumeration depends upon the type of data required, the timeliness required of outputs, the resources available to support the survey, and the effect these decisions may have upon the ability of respondents to provide accurate data. More frequent surveys have the advantage of providing timely and responsive information to policy makers, particularly in establishing whether the level of crime is increasing or decreasing for particular crime types.

Irregular surveys

319. Irregular surveys are sometimes conducted only once in response to answering a specific policy question or a specific need of users at a given point in time. Often funding is provided on a one-off basis to collect this information. However, these surveys can be sometimes repeated at irregular intervals, often many years apart in order to gain an intermittent time series or comparison benchmark over time. They may take the form of a companion to more frequently collected data, but delve into a topic in a more detailed and comprehensive way. For instance, to supplement general prevalence figures of persons experiencing break-ins to their homes, a detailed irregular survey may be conducted to find out additional information about security measures taken before and after, characteristics of the incident, material damages and losses, and the effect on feelings of safety and routine activities, etc.

Periodic surveys

320. In some instances it may be desirable to have survey data gathered to establish a time series, but not necessary or practical to collect this data every year. In these situations, a periodic survey strategy may be introduced where surveys are conducted at fixed intervals such as every two years, three years, or five years. This can be an efficient way of balancing user needs for regular data with more restricted resources. Additionally, periodic surveys can give over-sampled sub-populations an opportunity to 'rest' from the survey cycle and manage respondent burden. If the periods between surveys are kept consistent, this strategy can be an effective way of creating a regular time series for clients to use as reliable benchmark or evaluative data.

Annual surveys

321. Annual surveys, as the name suggests, are conducted every year. The biggest advantage of surveys conducted annually is that there is usually a high degree of relevance to the data when released, as the data is collected and disseminated in a regular and timely manner. These surveys are very well suited to the collection of headline indicators and information required by governments and other agencies for performance indicator and evaluation processes. These surveys are used to demonstrate trends and they can be used to calibrate the 'official' police statistics collected through administrative data. This can be particularly valuable if 'report to police' data items are included. Given the regular enumeration, processing and output generation required by these surveys, they are often quite expensive. Given the greater cost, the amount of detail that can be collected and number of topics or items that can be covered may be restricted to save resources. This is an example of

the trade-offs that are required between timeliness, resources, and answering the client information need.

Continuous surveys

322. These surveys are also known as ongoing, rolling panel, or rotating panel surveys. As these names suggest, these surveys are constantly in the field and collecting data from respondents, which is then processed, and periodically collated according to a specified reference period for analysis and dissemination. These surveys have the advantage that they tend to smooth out seasonal variation, as they can cover an entire 12 month period. It also means that a smaller number of people can be used to interview over a longer period of time, which can be helpful when managing workloads and resources. However, such an approach does, by the same token, require a constant utilization of resources, which may not be practical for some organizations. A rotating design also has the benefit of lending itself to ‘pooling’ of data over time to accumulate a larger sample and possibly reduce the level of standard errors. This can become complex when conducting analyses using the data, however, as the reference period can become convoluted. As an example, if the data item ‘experiences of robbery in the last 12 months’ is collected for three years continuously and this data is pooled together to create a total, users may be confused as the ‘in the last 12 months’ may refer to any particular 12 months over 3 years.

Other frequency considerations

323. A number of seasonal factors that can affect the enumeration of any survey must be considered. For example, what is the availability of people to respond to surveys during peak holiday times? An additional factor specific to crime victimization surveys is the established correlation between higher family violence incidents, break-ins and national holidays or festivities. Additionally, warmer months have been found to correlate with higher levels of violence. If a short recall period is used, it is possible that the results may be affected if one of these seasonal periods is the only one included. Generally a longer timeframe for respondent recall can be expected to smooth the impact of these effects.

324. There are more specific considerations in relation to recall, such as the length of reference period to be covered by any one crime victimization survey. Determination of the reference period the survey should cover needs to be in part determined by the needs of the intended users. For instance, are users interested in crime victimization experiences in the past 6 months, 12 months, 5 years, 15 years or lifetime victimization? Different reference periods can have different pros and cons, however, and a number of implications for the quality of respondent recall.

325. There are a number of issues that can arise if the reference period is too long, and these generally revolve around the difficulty for respondents in remembering accurately. Over time, it can be expected that memory decay can occur, and if dealing with long reference period, this needs to be allowed for in data analysis. Telescoping is also an issue that arises, where respondents have difficulty accurately locating events within the appropriate reference period. Forward telescoping refers to events that are moved forward in time in the respondent’s mind to seem more recent than they really are, while backward telescoping occurs where events are recalled as occurring further in the past than reality. As a result, some events which should be included may be excluded, and some events that should be excluded

Ch. III.H. Frequency of enumeration

may be included. In most international surveys, 12 months is considered an acceptable average reference period.

326. The frequency of enumeration and the timeframe upon which users require the data needs to be balanced with the practicality of collecting data on such a basis, in addition to the possible effect that reference periods can have on the resulting data.

Ch. III.I. Content of the survey

1. Structure of the survey

327. Victim surveys may cover several victimisation and non-victimisation issues, which may take the form of modules. The placement of different modules within the survey structure may depend on strategic/organizational decisions based on the overall purpose of the survey, the method of interviewing and the target population. The sequence of modules and questions in the questionnaire is very important and needs to be taken into account in the pilot-testing phase. In order to make the respondent feel comfortable, some questions not directly related to his/her crime experience could be asked upfront.

328. The UNODC-UNECE inventory identified the most frequently mentioned purposes of victim surveys (Table 1), which included measuring victimisation (85%), fear of crime and insecurity (79%), the dark figure/unreported crimes (66%), attitudes towards law enforcement and the criminal justice system (60%) and crime prevention strategies, protection measures and security systems (47%). Each of these issues can be surveyed by relevant sets of questions/modules in the questionnaire, which will have more or less prominence depending on the established primary purpose of the survey.

Table 1 – Purpose of surveys

Purpose	% of surveys
To measure victimization	85
To measure fear of crime and insecurity	79
To measure dark figure/unreported crimes	66
To measure attitude towards the police and the criminal justice system	60
To measure crime prevention measures, security systems and/or strategies	47

Source: UNODC-UNECE inventory, 2006

329. Victim surveys are likely to be designed having in mind one or more of the main purposes identified in Table 1. The content of the survey may be compiled through different modules in view of serving the various purposes of the survey itself. Taking into account the main purposes, this section will provide examples and suggestions regarding the possible content of several “modules”, each of them aimed at providing information matching the relevant purpose (see Table 2).

Table 2 – Content of the survey according to survey purpose

Module	Purpose
Fear questions	To measure fear of crime and insecurity
Crime experience	To measure victimization
Follow-up for victims	To measure dark figure/unreported crimes
General attitudinal questions	To get knowledge of the context of victimisation To measure attitude towards the police and the criminal justice system
Prevention, safety and security	To measure crime prevention measures, security systems and/or strategies

330. It should be noted, however, that in order to obtain complete information, for example, on fear of crime and insecurity, it may be necessary to ask direct questions about the

respondents' experiences of victimisation. There may be therefore the need to expand the areas covered by the questionnaire beyond the primary purpose of the survey. In order to do that, it may be necessary to balance the different modules placing more or less emphasis on the different areas. As an example, Box xx shows the structure of the 2004 victimisation survey in Canada.

Box: Structure of Canada's 2004 Criminal Victimization Survey

2004 GSS ON VICTIMIZATION SECTIONS

Section 1: Perceptions, History and Risk

This section introduces respondents to the survey and is designed to measure the extent to which people worry about their personal safety in everyday situations, the extent to which fear imposes limits on their opportunities and freedom of movement, and how they manage threats to their safety in their daily lives. Information is collected on a variety of issues dealing with perceptions of crime and the justice system, contact and satisfaction with various aspects of the criminal justice system, crime prevention measures, frequency of evening activities, and fear of crime.

Section 2: Criminal Victimization Screening Section

This section collects information on the type of crimes the respondent has been a victim of over the past 12 months, as well as the number of occurrences of each type. Each time a crime is reported in this section, a Crime Incident Report (Section 8) is completed. Respondents are asked to include incidents committed by family and non-family and to exclude physical and sexual assaults committed by current and previous spouses or common-law partners because questions on these topics are asked separately (Sections 3 and 4).

Sections 3 and 4: Abuse by Current or Previous Spouse / Partner

Emotional and financial abuse

Sections 3 and 4 ask about controlling and emotionally abusive behaviour on the part of a marital partner. These questions test theories about links between spousal power and control and spousal violence. In addition, they help us better understand the dynamics of an abusive and violent relationship by providing context to reports of violence by spouses.

Physical and sexual violence

Measures of violence by current or previous marital partners are obtained through a number of categories of violent acts ranging from threats of violence to threats or use of guns or other weapons, and sexual assault. Research suggests that questions itemizing violent incidents into discrete categories of behaviour are necessary in order to counteract denial and unwillingness to identify experiences as assault or violence.

Emphasis in this section is on violence within the relationship and not on quantifying individual acts or events. Respondents are asked to specify the number of different occasions that their spouse has been violent toward them. In the case of marriages of less than 5 years, respondents are asked whether the violence occurred before they were married or living together, during the marriage or during a temporary separation. In the case of previous partners, respondents are asked whether the violence happened after separation, and if so, whether it increased after separation.

Analysts are able to characterize the types of abuse that occurred within the past 12 months. It is possible to separate the 12-month incidents into sexual and physical violence. Respondents who report one or more acts of violence by a spouse or partner are asked to respond to questions in an Abuse Report (Sections 5 and 6).

Sections 5 and 6: Abuse Reports

The Abuse Reports collect detailed information about violence in current or previous marriages or common-law relationships. Each report contains questions about: the impact of the experience for the victim (physical injury and emotional trauma); whether anyone else was threatened or harmed in the incident(s); whether the victim attempted to obtain compensation; who they turned to for help; their involvement and satisfaction with the police; the actions taken by the police; reasons for contacting or not contacting the police; use of restraining or protective orders; use of victim services; and interest in participating in victim/offender mediation programs.

Respondents are also asked about the impact that police intervention has had on their partner's behaviour, if they ever feared that their life was in danger, and whether their children ever witnessed the violence.

Section 7: Stalking of Respondent

This section asks respondents if, in the past 5 years, they have been the subject of repeated and unwanted attention that caused them to fear for their safety or the safety of someone they know. It also asks about two types of incidents that do not require a repetitive component to be considered stalking: an attempt to intimidate or threaten the respondent by threatening or intimidating someone else; an attempt to intimidate or threaten the respondent by hurting his / her pet(s) or damaging his / her property.

Respondents who report being victims of stalking are asked a series of follow-up questions with reference to the most recent incident, including questions about: the length of the incident; whether the stalker ever physically intimidated, threatened violence, or attacked the victim; sex of the stalker and his / her relationship to the victim; impact of the experience on the victim; who they turned to for help; involvement of the police; reasons for contacting or not contacting the police; type of charges laid (if any); use of restraining or protective orders; satisfaction with how the case was handled by the justice system.

Section 8: Crime Incident Reports

A Crime Incident Report is completed for every crime reported in Section 2 (up to a maximum of ten Crime Incident Reports per screen question or twenty per respondent). The Crime Incident Report collects information on characteristics of victimization incidents (e.g. month, place), the physical, financial and emotional consequences of victimization, whether the incident was related to the use of alcohol or drugs by the perpetrator or the victim, offender characteristics (e.g. age, gender, relationship to respondent), whether medical attention was sought, whether the respondent believes the incident could be considered a hate crime, attempts to obtain civil or criminal compensation. It also asks questions about police involvement, reasons for contacting or not contacting the police, level of satisfaction with the actions taken by the police, who the respondent spoke to or turned to for help, whether they contacted victim services or victim assistance programs, and the respondent's level of interest in victim / offender mediation.

Section 9: Other Crime Events

Respondents who have been victimized by non-family or family members more than 12 months (or 5 years) ago are accounted for in this section. Respondents are asked if anything else (aside from what they have already mentioned) has happened to them in their lifetime that could be considered a crime. The information gathered is used to derive a variable on lifetime criminal victimization (LIFEVICT).

Sections 10, 11 and 12: Main Activity and Education

These sections contain standard GSS classification questions that are useful and central to the study of victimization, including questions about the main activity, current work experience and education of the respondent. Respondents whose marital status is married or common-law are asked about the main activity and education of their spouse/partner, and all respondents are asked about the education of their parents.

In addition, Section 12 gathers information about the consumption of alcoholic beverages by the respondent and his/her spouse/partner. Questions about current spouse's use of alcohol, their education, and whether their current spouse has been out of work and looking for work are important for identifying correlates of spousal violence and high risk offenders.

Section 13: Housing Characteristics of Respondent

This section gathers information on the respondent's home and neighbourhood, including a new set of questions on social disorder. Respondents are asked about the type of dwelling they are living in, home ownership, and how long they have lived in their home, neighbourhood, and city or local community. They are also asked about the number of people that they know in their neighbourhood and about favours exchanged between neighbours.

In the social disorder module, respondents are asked how much of a problem the following situations are in their neighbourhood: noisy neighbours or loud parties; people hanging around on the streets; people sleeping in public places; garbage or litter, vandalism, graffiti and other deliberate damage to property or vehicles; people being attacked or harassed because of their skin colour, ethnic origin or religion; people using or dealing drugs; people being drunk or rowdy in public places; prostitution.

Section 14: Other Characteristics

Section 14 provides background characteristics of respondents regardless of whether they have been a victim of crime. This section contains a variety of socio-demographic and health measures that contribute to the analysis of risk factors and other correlates of people's fear and victimization. It also asks a series of questions about whether or not the respondent was a victim of discrimination in the past 5 years.

1.1 Handling sensitive issues in household surveys

331. Victim surveys address a wide range of issues, some of which may be particularly sensitive or disturbing for the respondents. In many cases the offender and the victim used to know each other. According to the ICVS aggregated results from 30 countries¹ “offenders were known to the victim in about half of the incidents described as both offensive behaviour and sexual assault (... and) in about half of the incidents of both assaults and threats”. This confirms that the stereotype of the offender as a stranger is very often false. Victims may be very reluctant to share their experiences with the interviewer, on the basis of the involvement of somebody they knew in the crime as offender.

332. Furthermore, according to some criminological theories, a certain portion of crime can be considered *victim-precipitated*, i.e. incidents ‘in which the victim is a direct, positive precipitator’ (Wolfgang, 1958). Even if this was not their case, victims may feel blamed for what happened, either because they had not been careful enough in their behaviour, or were too confident, or because somebody actually did blame them after the incident. A specific form of victimisation, called *secondary victimisation*, has been defined by criminologist to describe the process in which a victim seeking for assistance from the institutions (in general, the police) is blamed as a result. The Council of Europe defines secondary victimisation as “the victimisation that occurs not as a direct result of the criminal act but through the response of institutions and individuals to the victim”.² A victim of secondary victimisation may also be unlikely to talk about her experience to the surveyors, fearing that this would result in further blaming and victimisation.³

333. It is therefore important to consider such sensitivities when starting a victim survey and to take into account that different persons may react differently to the interview. While some people may look forward to the possibility to talk about what happened to them (they may feel that the survey is finally giving them a voice), others may feel very disturbed by the content. Sometimes, this may also be the case with non-victims, especially if the questions are considered culturally and/or socially inappropriate to the context in which they are asked.

334. For example, including a question on theft of livestock may be crucial in a rural developing setting, but the same question may be considered irrelevant or even ridiculous in urban industrialised areas. The theft of a bicycle may appear a negligible loss in many instances, but in some cases and societies a bicycle may be an indispensable working tool, therefore its loss may have serious consequences for the victim in monetary and practical terms.

335. It is therefore very important to develop a credible questionnaire to match the target population group, in terms of concepts and language used.

¹ ICVS report 2004-05, pages 79-80.

² Council of Europe, Committee of Ministers. Recommendation Rec(2006)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on assistance to crime victims (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 14 June 2006 at the 967th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies). Definitions (1.3).
<https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1011109&BackColorInternet=DBDCF2&BackColorIntranet=FDC864&BackColorLogged=FDC864> (12/9/08)

³ “Victims should be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity. They are entitled to access to the mechanisms of justice and to prompt redress, as provided for by national legislation, for the harm that they have suffered.” United Nations, General Assembly Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power (General Assembly resolution 40/34, annex, of 29 November 1985). Art. 4.

2. Beginning of the victim survey

2.1 Fear questions

336. This section introduces respondents to the survey and is designed to measure the extent to which people worry about their personal safety in everyday situations, the extent to which fear imposes limits on their opportunities and freedom of movement, and how they manage threats to their safety in their daily lives. Information may be collected on a variety of issues dealing with perceptions of the crime situation. Fear questions included in victims surveys generally deal with the following three main areas: feelings of safety, likelihood of becoming a victim of crime, and perception of the crime problem and trends.

2.1.1 Feelings of safety

337. Issues that may be covered in this part of the questionnaire include a wide range of questions dealing with feelings of safety and fear of crime. The most frequently used question in victim surveys is one that has been used by the BCS for many years and subsequently adopted by many other surveys for comparability purposes (“How safe do you feel walking alone in this area after dark?”). A number of other issues related to feelings of personal safety may be surveyed in this respect, including feeling safe in walking during the day; feeling safe at home alone; avoiding walking in some specific areas for fear of crime; or identifying on a map areas or specific locations that are perceived unsafe by the respondent. It should be taken into account that feelings of safety and public perception of crime may be influenced by external variables other than crime (experienced or perceived). For example, respondents’ perception may be influenced by their frequency of going out or pattern of television viewing.⁴ Surveys may therefore include questions aimed at getting information on a number of lifestyle patterns and their relation with safety concerns. It should be noted, however, that responses to the general fear questions may also reflect non-crime related worries - such as overall dissatisfaction with own life or income, unemployment, migration issues, or environmental decay of the area in which the respondent lives. For this reason, some surveys also include questions aimed at measuring respondents’ satisfaction with their life or health in general, or overall happiness, in view of making a distinction between their responses to this set of questions and those on fear of crime.

Box with examples

2.1.2 Likelihood of becoming a victim of crime

338. Another area to be surveyed is the respondents’ perception of likelihood of specific incidents to happen to them, generally within a given time period. This can be the case of questions such as “How worried are you about...”. The advantage of using such specific fear questions versus those more general is the possibility to focus the respondents’ attention on concrete examples. Some surveys ask how worried the respondent is about becoming a victim of crime in general. Other surveys include specific questions on likelihood of certain types of crime happening, such as, for example, having someone breaking into the respondent’s home and stealing something; being mugged, robbed, raped, or physically attacked by strangers;

⁴ Research findings suggest that television broadcasts that include fictional or factual treatment of crime stimulate the perception that violent crime is more frequent than in reality (Pfeiffer et al., 2005).

having property stolen, such as a car, things from a car, a mobile phone; or “being insulted or pestered by anybody, while in the street or any other public place”; or being discriminated and subject to a physical attack because of the respondent’s skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.⁵

2.1.3 Perception of crime problem and trends

339. In this section it is possible to measure the perception of the respondents as regards the overall crime problem and trends in crime. Typical questions to this end may ask “How much of a problem do you think is/are...”, followed by descriptions of different types of situations or profiles of different behaviours. This may include criminal and non-criminal situations and behaviours and also serve at assessing levels of tolerance to environmental degradation and anti-social behaviours. A possible list may include several different types of crime, the presence of youth gangs, loiterers, homeless, drunk people as well as garbage, broken, vandalised or burnt property in the street. Reference may be made to problems with the neighbours. This section may also deal with concern with people using or dealing with drugs. This aspect is covered by some surveys as an issue of experience of exposure to illegal drugs (see point 3.10 below), thus falling into the victimisation experience section of the questionnaire.

340. Trends question are those asking the respondent whether crime has gone up or down in his/her area over a certain period of time, either a fixed period (for example, over the past two years) or since an important social event which the respondent is likely to remember well (for example, a major official or religious holiday, or sports event, etc.). It is debatable whether it is appropriate to relate such questions to political situations or government changes, since this may lead to attributing any variations to such changes, while it may be preferable to limit the scope of the questions to trends over time.

2.2 Crime experience

2.2.1 Crime types and categories

341. The experience of the respondents represents the crucial part of victim surveys. Household victim surveys may deal with a wide range of offences. It will be necessary to identify a desired set of offences to be surveyed, depending on the purpose of survey and the target population. It may also be considered whether to include or exclude some types of crime, especially the most sensitive ones such as those related to personal violence, depending on the method of interviewing.

342. A first principle to be taken into account is that victim surveys allow to overcome the problem of crime definition. Crime definitions from criminal codes apply when victims report to the police, thus crime records reflect the police interpretation of victims’ accounts of what happened to them. In victim surveys, some scenarios are given as examples of possible crime situations in which the respondent may have been involved as a victim or a witness. Different ways to define crime situations limit comparability between victim surveys and police data.

343. Survey definitions may contain simple wording to clearly explain to respondents the characteristics of incidents that may have occurred to them. Wording such as “[over a given time period] has anyone taken something from you, by using force, or threatening you?” may

⁵ Most examples given are from the BCS.

easily convey the concept of an incident that would fall into the broad crime category of robbery. Simple definitions can be translated into different languages and cultures more easily than the legal concept of robbery. Crime definitions used in victim surveys are therefore not related to exact criminal code articles. Questions on crime experience should avoid legal terminology and convey a clear concept. It is important therefore not to ask whether respondents have been victims of a specific crime, but whether certain incidents – described in the survey in non-legal terms – happened to them. This will ensure a more clear description of the circumstances, which is likely to be reflected in common understanding by the respondents, irrespective from their age, education, experience and cultural background.

Table 3 – Types of crime included in victim surveys

	percentage of surveys		percentage of surveys
Assault with force	89	Theft of bicycles	62
Threat of using force	79	Non-contact personal thefts	62
Burglary with entry	77	Attempted burglary	60
Theft of car	70	Vandalism	57
Robbery	70	Theft of mopeds/motorcycles	53
Pickpocketing	70	Fraud/cheating	34
Sexual assault	70	Psychological violence	26
Theft from car	68	Bribery/corruption	26
Rape	66	Exposure to illegal drugs	13

Source: UNODC-UNECE inventory, 2006

344. Table 3 shows a list of the types of crime more frequently included in the surveys examined by the UNODC-UNECE inventory. More than 70% of the surveys included questions on the main categories of crime, i.e. assault with force, threat of using force, burglary with entry, theft of car, robbery, pickpocketing and sexual assault. Some sub-categories of crime, often involving theft of specific types of property (such as objects from cars, bicycles, motorcycles), were included in 50-70% of surveys.

345. Finally, less than one-third of surveys dealt with types of crimes about which it is particularly difficult to obtain information, including questions on fraud, corruption, psychological violence and exposure to illegal drugs. Questions on such types of incidents may be difficult to ask and results more difficult to interpret than those for more “conventional” types of crime. However, information obtained through surveys on these illegal behaviours may prove useful to understand more about the context surrounding the incidents and the victims’ profile. Section 3 below will deal with each type of crime in more detail.

346. Different categories of crime may be included in the survey. A first important distinction exists between crimes that affect the entire household and personal victimization experience. The first category refers to incidents, especially related to property (for example theft of a vehicle or house burglary), which the entire household may consider itself a victim of. Any member of the household who is interviewed may have knowledge of and report to the survey about such incidents. Personal victimisation experiences are those that affect only one person and about which only the direct victim can report to the survey. They include crimes with a contact between offender and victim (such as assault, sexual assault, street robbery), but also non-contact crimes in which the victim is deprived of some personal property, like a wallet or a mobile phone.

347. Wording of questions in the two categories may be different, taking into account the level of knowledge that respondents may have about the various incidents, whether they occurred to them personally or to the entire household. Table 4 shows examples of types of crime falling into the categories of household crimes and personal victimisation experiences.

Table 4 - Types of crime that may be included in general household surveys, by category of victim

household crimes	personal victimisation experiences
Vehicle theft (motor vehicle, car, motorcycle, bicycle); theft from vehicles	Theft of personal property (pickpocketing, other thefts)
Housebreaking (domestic burglary, attempted burglary)	Robbery (theft by using violence)
Vandalism (damage to cars, graffiti)	Assault and threat;
	Psychological violence (mobbing, stalking)
	Sexual offences (sexual assault, rape)
	Fraud (cheating, credit card fraud, internet frauds)
	Corruption/bribery
	Exposure to illegal drugs

348. Another important distinction exists between contact and non-contact crimes (see Table 5). The first category includes all incidents that involve a contact between the offender and the victim, irrespective whether violence was used or not. In such situations, even if the victim was not threatened, he or she was directly exposed to the offender(s), which can be considered as a form of victimisation per se. Non-contact crimes, in turn, include all incidents in which the victim did not face the offender, such as thefts of unattended property. Contact crimes are generally considered as more harmful for the victim than non-contact crimes.

Table 5 – Contact and non-contact types of crime that may be included in general household surveys

Contact crimes	Non-contact crimes
Robbery (theft by using violence); mugging; bag snatching	Vehicle theft (motor vehicle, car, motorcycle, bicycle); theft from vehicles
Assault and threat; Psychological violence (mobbing, stalking)	Housebreaking (domestic burglary, attempted burglary)
Sexual offences (sexual assault, rape)	Vandalism (damage to cars, graffiti)
	Theft of personal property
	Fraud (cheating, credit card fraud, internet frauds)
	Corruption/bribery
	Exposure to illegal drugs

2.2.2 Screeners

a) Establishing ownership of property

349. It is good practice to establish whether the respondent and/or the household have been in possession of the property which will be the object of questions about theft. For this purpose, it is desirable to include in the questionnaire as many screeners as necessary to ascertain possession of the relevant property. This may be the case with vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles, mobile phones, or any other object which theft the survey will be concerned about. In this way, it will be possible to assess the prevalence of victims not only on the basis of the entire sample, but also on the basis of the sub-sample of owners of the specific property. Such sub-sample may show large variations in size among different surveyed areas, depending on the rate of ownership of the different goods. Wording used to

describe the goods need to be simple and generally understood by the respondents in their spoken language. It is important that words used to describe the various goods are exactly the same in the screener and in the actual question on theft (for example: “Over the [reference period], has anyone in your household had a car, van or truck for private use?” may be followed by “Over the [reference period], have you or other members of your household had any of their cars/vans/trucks stolen?”).

b) Establishing victimisation experience

350. Most victim surveys address experience of victimisation in two steps, starting from establishing which respondents have been victims through screeners that describe the incidents. The second step is limited to those who have been victims and includes all questions aimed at capturing details of the incident. In general, follow up questions are asked for each type of crime covered by the survey. Thus, respondents who were victims of more than one type of crime will be asked follow up questions as many times as the number of crimes they were victims of. Some surveys group all screeners for each type of crime covered by the survey in one section, asking relevant questions in sequence, and going back to details of the incidents only upon completion of the entire series. Other surveys prefer go through all questions related to one particular type of crime at once, thus asking relevant follow-up questions immediately after the screener.

3. Types of crime

Household crimes

3.1 Vehicle-related crime

351. Most households own vehicles and their value, be that of a motor vehicle or of a bicycle, is generally known and shared among the population surveyed. For this reason, many surveys consider victimisation suffered as a consequence of theft of vehicles or parts of it as a good indicator. The questions should provide a description of the vehicles in words that can be easily generally understood by the respondents in their everyday spoken language. This gives origin to a variety of local definitions of the types of vehicles most frequently used in the surveyed area, such as cars, tricycles, quads, mini-vans, etcetera. It is also important to make sure that the question is consistent with the wording used to describe the various types of vehicles in the ownership screener(s). Separate sections may deal with cars, motorcycles, bicycles and/or any other vehicle that is frequently used in the surveyed area. Some surveys specify that vehicles should have been for private use of one or more persons in the household.

3.1.1 Theft of car

352. It should be noted that “theft of motor vehicles” is probably the type of crime for which the “dark figure” is smallest. Most victims report to the police because of vehicle registration and for insurance reasons. This makes statistics on this type of crime relatively easier to compare between victim surveys and police records and for this reason in some surveys the wording of the question is designed to correspond to definitions used by the police in the country.

353. Many surveys probe whether the vehicles were eventually recovered. This aspect may be very important, since the actual disappearance of a car – be that through dismantling it into various parts or shipping abroad - requires a certain level of organization on the part of the

offenders and may indicate the presence of organized crime groups. One important distinction has to do with the presence or not of the car driver or any other passengers on board. In some contexts, this type of crime (called car hijacking – see infra) occurs more frequently than theft of unattended cars, thus a separate question needs to be asked in this respect.

3.1.2 Theft from vehicles

354. Having something stolen from a car (e.g., radio, car mirror, spare tyre, luggage, etc.) is among the most frequent types of crime experienced by citizens. Irrespective of the country in which surveys may be carried out, this form of victimisation affects large portions of the population and is a good example of a type of crime that goes frequently unreported. This phenomenon may be considered as an indicator of anti-social behaviours in the respondent's area.

3.1.3 Bicycle theft

355. A question on theft of bicycles is frequently asked in victim surveys. Some surveys may record bicycles stolen during the course of another offence (e.g. housebreaking where other items are stolen). Different societies, however, experience crime in different ways, thus the theft of a bicycle may represent a more or less serious crime in different contexts. Bicycles may be used for transportation to the workplace or school, or for sports and leisure. Some bicycles may have very high value to the respondent, for example as a working tool or as highly sophisticated sports equipment. Theft of bicycle may affect different victims in different ways.

3.2 Housebreaking and domestic burglary⁶

356. The most relevant (and complicated) issue for household crime is housebreaking. Definitions and wording of questions vary among surveys. One important aspect is the identification of the physical boundaries of the household. In most jurisdictions, illegal entry of a garage, shed, or any other structure on the premises also constitutes trespassing the household boundaries. Several surveys, however, in their questions on housebreaking make exceptions for cellars, garages, attics and second houses on the assumption that surveillance at such premises cannot be as high as at the “main” household premises, thus breaking into them may be easier and resulting in an inflated number of incidents. However, the inclusion or exclusion of such premises from the survey may depend on different country/regional life styles and should also be taken into account when comparing survey results with other surveys.

357. Questions on housebreaking should aim at assessing whether there was unlawful entry or attempted entry of a residence, with or without force, for example, by asking “In the [reference period], did anyone break into your home?”⁷. The use of force generally provokes damage to doors, windows, or fences, which is a form of victimisation per se, irrespectively of the offender's successful entering the premises. This crime is generally motivated by the intention of stealing something.

358. Some surveys also ask respondents whether any members of the household were at home when it happened, and if they were aware of the presence of the burglars. This is an

⁶ In common law, *burglary* is defined as the act of entering a building or other premises with the intent to commit theft.

⁷ ABS – National Crime and Safety Survey

important question, since it may establish whether what happened involved contact between the offender and the victim, and the use or threat of violence to persons.⁸

359. Some surveys aim at capturing both illegally entry and theft of property (domestic burglary) in one question, which may read, for example, “[over the reference period], did anyone GET IN without permission and STEAL or TRY TO STEAL”.⁹ It should be noted that the more complicated the question, the more difficult to obtain clear responses. Furthermore, results obtained from questions that combine more than one incident in their wording may be difficult to compare over time or across countries.

360. Victim surveys covering housebreaking and domestic burglary may therefore take into account that there are several issues to be expressed in the wording of the questions aimed at establishing what happened. Such issues can be summarized in the following scheme:

- 1) identification of the premises
 - a. main residence
 - b. cellars, garages, attics and second houses
- 2) entry or attempted entry
 - a. successful entry (completed burglary: a person who has no legal right to be present in the premises successfully gains entry to a residence)
 - b. attempted entry
- 3) use of force
 - a. force was used to gain entry to a residence
 - b. no force used
- 4) victim-offender contact, threat or use of violence
 - a. somebody was present
 - i. violence used or threatened
 - ii. no violence used or threatened
 - b. nobody was present
- 5) actual theft
 - a. something was stolen
 - b. nothing was stolen
- 6) damage to the household
 - a. something was damaged
 - b. nothing was damaged

3.3 Vandalism

361. Questions on vandalism may address damage to household and other property, involving, for example, graffiti, damage to external parts of buildings, gardens and cars. It may also include incidents involving arson. Some surveys ask separate questions on damage to households and cars. Damage to households maybe a result of attempted burglary, so some surveys only ask questions on intentional damage to vehicles and deal with damage to households within the housebreaking section.

⁸ In some countries/surveys, the case of theft at home when somebody was present is considered as *robbery* (see *infra*).

⁹ BCS

Personal victimisation experience

3.4 Theft of personal property

362. More than sixty percent of the surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory include questions on non-contact personal thefts, i.e. those involving property that was not being carried by the victim. This is the case, for example, with handbags, purses, wallets, mobile phones, documents left in changing rooms, or on trains or other means of transportation, or at the beach, at the office, etc.. A broad definition of this category may refer to thefts (including attempts) from the victim, but without the use of physical force or the threat of it. For example, theft committed by a person who has the permission/right to be in the household premises would belong to this category rather than domestic burglary.

363. The wording of the question may include a list of items as example of circumstances and/or types of property that may have been stolen. It should be taken into account that different lists may produce different results in terms of response, thus affecting the resulting victimisation rate.

364. Incidents involving theft without the use of force may be easily forgotten by victims, thus making responses to this question very much depending on memory decay and its results not very useful for analysis.

365. Some surveys make a distinction between theft of personal property and pickpocketing, which involves theft of property that the victim was carrying or wearing at the time. This may include or not include mugging and bag snatching, which in turn are often categorised as robbery (see *infra*). In general, a distinction between simple theft and pickpocketing can be made through follow up questions aimed at ascertaining if the victim was – for example - holding, carrying or wearing (any of) the property that was either stolen or the offender tried to steal. The British Crime Survey specifies that this includes “items in pockets of clothes being worn at the time”.

3.4.1 Theft of mobile phone

366. In all parts of the world mobile phones have become an item accessible to large portions of population. Victim surveys often include questions on theft of mobile phones, either in addition or in alternative to the general question on theft of personal property. A mobile phone is a well identified object, which value is likely to be commonly understood in any given society. Questions on theft of mobile phone may produce more precise results than the general ones, because they have the advantage of clearly indicating the type of property at stake.

367. The completed or attempted theft of mobile phone may occur in a variety of circumstances, with or without personal contact between the victim and the offender. As an example, Box ... provides a detailed list of circumstances as included in the relevant British Crime Survey question.

Box... - Theft of mobile phone (BCS)

Can I just check, under what circumstances was the mobile phone stolen?

1. While it was being used by someone
2. While it was being carried by someone in their hand, but not being used
3. While it was on the person, and visible (e.g. on a belt or clip, in an open pocket, etc)
4. While it was on the person, but not visible (e.g. in a bag/briefcase being carried, in an inside pocket, etc)
5. While it was unattended, and visible (e.g. on a table, a desk, etc).

6. While it was unattended, and not visible (e.g. in an unattended bag/briefcase, in a locker, etc.)
7. Some other way (not specify)

3.5 Robbery¹⁰

368. Seventy percent of the surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory included questions on robbery. Robbery offences known to the public may be divided into two broad categories, namely robberies against institutions such as banks or post offices, and “street-robberies”, i.e. robberies against persons. Although respondents may have been involved in robberies against institutions as victims or witnesses, in general questions in victim surveys only address street-robberies, which may be defined as completed or attempted theft, directly from a person, of property or cash by force or threat of force, with or without a weapon, and with or without injury. In general, the concept of robbery in victim surveys excludes theft at home, which falls into the category of domestic/house burglary (see *infra*).¹¹ The not unique meaning of robbery from the legal point of view makes the comparison between victim survey results and police records very difficult. Many surveys found that robbery was among the types of offences victims tended to report to the police less frequently.

3.6 Assaults and threats

369. Incidents of assault and threat are covered by most victim surveys. Most victim surveys make a distinction between three types of assault and address each type through separate screeners: 1) a general category of interpersonal aggression (assault and threat); 2) assaults sexually motivated (rape, attempted rape and sexual assaults); and 3) assaults aimed at stealing property (robbery and attempted robbery). However, different surveys may use different formats to address relevant questions, thus obtaining results which may be difficult to compare (for example, some surveys deal with sexual assault and robbery as subsets of assault).

370. Important elements to be considered in question formulation are whether the aggression was physical or psychological, and whether force was actually used or threatened. Questions on assault may make reference to any deliberate physical assault, with or without a weapon, which harms the recipient in any way. Assault may or may not result in visible injury and may include a variety of actions against the victim, such as kicking, hitting, slapping, choking, burning, stabbing and shooting. The offender may be a stranger, but also somebody the victim knows well, or a family member. The incident may happen in a variety of locations, such as the respondent’s home or in the street, in a public place, at work or school, on public transport, on the beach, ... Some surveys also include incidents in the respondent’s line of work (for example, security guards). In general, incidents occurring while playing on a sporting field are excluded.

371. Wording of the relevant questions may therefore include elements of the location in which the incident occurred, list possible behaviours of the offender and mention that the offender may have been somebody known to the victim. For example, “[over the reference period] has anyone, including people you know well, deliberately hit you with their fists or with a weapon of any sort or kicked you or used force or violence in any other way?”¹²

¹⁰ Robbery may be defined as the act or an instance of unlawfully taking the property of another by the use of violence or intimidation.

¹¹ The safety survey in Italy representing an exception. (Robbery includes theft with force in the household).

¹² BCS.

3.6.1 Assaults without force (threat)

372. The severity of assault may range from minor threat to incidents which are nearly fatal. The absence of physical contact may generate the impression that the crime was less serious. However, in many jurisdictions, the use of words or a behaviour resulting in a declaration of intent to injure another by doing an unlawful act is a crime per se. There may be threats made with the intent to blackmail¹³ or extort money or property. Other threats may be aiming at obtaining the victim's consent to acts he or she would not normally accept, thus becoming the beginning of further victimisation. Surveys may wish to capture the prevalence of threats through a separate question (for example "...has anyone threatened to damage things of yours or threatened to use force or violence on you in any way that actually frightened you?"¹⁴). As an alternative, it is possible to establish whether force was actually used or the victim was just threatened through a screener question for assault (for example "have you [over the reference period] been personally attacked or threatened by someone in a way that really frightened you..."¹⁵).

3.6.2 Psychological violence

373. Specific questions on non-physical threats may take into account several aspects of psychological violence or emotional abuse. This is more frequent in surveys on violence against women, but is also encountered in some surveys of general population or quality of work life. Threat by telephone or by mail¹⁶, which may be considered "indirect" since it does not involve a face-to-face encounter between the victim and the offender, can also be included in this category.

374. Many surveys cover various forms and levels of harassment, physical and verbal, with or without sexual implications. Among the various forms of harassment, some victim surveys consider those occurring at the workplace, such as mobbing and bullying, which undermine the morale of employees and represent an important cause of emotional distress among the working population. According to ILO, mobbing and bullying at work are forms "of psychological harassment consisting of persecution through vindictive, cruel or malicious attempts to humiliate or undermine an individual or groups of employees"¹⁷. Results of surveys on quality of work life have identified some direct and indirect indicators of mobbing experienced by workers at their place of work, such as those presented in Box...

Box ...: Mobbing at the workplace

In 2006, the Institute for Labour and Family Research of the Slovak Republic (Stredisko pre štúdium práce a rodiny, [SŠPR](#)) carried out a survey on the incidence of mobbing or bullying and sexual harassment at the workplace, the reactions of victims of harassment and the outcomes of harassment cases. The research also examined general opinions on the reasons for mobbing and sexual harassment at the workplace and methods of prevention. The table below shows direct and indirect experience of mobbing at the workplace as reported to the survey.

<i>Indicators of mobbing</i>	<i>No. of workers</i>	<i>% of workers</i>
Task overload and pressure to perform well	739	70.9
Slander and deception	634	60.9

¹³ Blackmail may be defined as the act of extorting money or other valuables from a person by threatening to reveal discreditable information about him or her.

¹⁴ BCS

¹⁵ ICVS

¹⁶ Italy, Citizen's Safety Survey.

¹⁷ ILO Thesaurus 2005 - <http://www.ilo.org/public/libdoc/ILO-Thesaurus/english/index.htm>

Threatening and frightening a person	587	56.3
Use of provocative notes and jokes	530	50.9
Making derogatory comments about a person's work	472	45.3
Isolating and ignoring a person	458	43.9
Inappropriate work assignment	439	42.1
Withholding information	415	39.8
Unjustified warnings or hidden monitoring	411	39.4
Vicious remarks	362	34.7
Unrealistic and meaningless work assignment	339	32.5
Physical violence, aggression	42	4.0

Notes: Total number of respondents = 1,041 workers.

Source: Institute for Labour and Family Research, 2006 - <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/2007/09/SK0709019I.htm>

375. Some surveys take into account the problem of stalking, which is generally defined as a conduct or action – or a mix of different conducts and actions - directed at a specific person, usually repeated or persistent and without an apparent purpose if not harassing that specific person. This behaviour results in substantial emotional distress in the victim and makes her feel frightened and/or intimidated.

Box ... - Example list of elements of stalking

According to the Stalking survey of the University of Leicester¹⁸, the most common methods of stalking experienced by victims can be summarized as follows:

- Following the victim
- Sending unsolicited letters/other written material
- Making unsolicited phone calls
- Sending unsolicited e-mails
- Sending unsolicited text messages on mobile phones (SMS)
- Trying to communicate in other ways against the victim's will
- Taking photographs of the victim without her agreement
- Abused the victim's pet(s)
- Threatened to harm the victim's pet(s)
- Vandalised the victim's home
- Vandalised the victim's car
- Vandalised other property/destroyed something valuable to the victim
- Harassed the victim's family/friends/neighbours/colleagues
- The victim was physically assaulted
- The victim was threatened of being physically assaulted
- The victim was sexually assaulted
- The victim was threatened of being sexually assaulted
- Harassed the victim's children
- The offender threatened to harm the victim's children
- The offender broke into the victim's home
- The offender made unsolicited visits to the victim's home / Stood outside the victim's home
- The offender made unsolicited visits to the victim's workplace/school/university / Stood outside the victim's workplace/school/university
- The offender spied on the victim
- The offender left unwanted items for the victim to find
- The offender turned up at places where the victim was even though s/he had no business being there
- The offender sent unwanted 'presents' (e.g. flowers)
- The victim felt being manipulated by the offender
- The offender spread lies about the victim

¹⁸ University of Leicester, on-line questionnaire at www.stalkingsurvey.com.

3.6.3 Hate crime

376. The following operational definition of hate crime was developed by the responsible team of the National Crime Victim Survey (USA): "A hate crime is a criminal offence committed against a person or property motivated, in whole or in part, by the offender's bias against a race, religion, ethnicity/national origin, gender, sexual preference, or disability. The offence is considered a hate crime whether or not the offender's perception of the victim as a member or supporter of a protected group is correct".¹⁹ Hate is unfortunately becoming a frequent motivation for committing a crime. For this reason, some surveys ask respondents whether they have reason to believe that the incident(s) they had been victims of was motivated by prejudice against their personal beliefs, characteristics or religion. As a result, respondents who indicated that that was the case may be asked to provide details of what occurred that made them feel having been victims of hate crime. For example, the NCVS provides a list of additional questions that describe circumstances/scenarios aimed at helping the respondent remember details of what happened and that may help qualifying the incident as hate motivated. This may include whether specific negative words were used or hate symbols showed, or whether the incident happened close to any specific holiday or date that would have a meaning for the offended group.

3.7 Sexual offences

377. Among the various forms of victimization, incidents sexually motivated play a prominent role. These crimes include a wide range of physical and psychological aggressions involving unwanted sexual contact between victim and offender. As for the general assaults, even though the absence of physical contact may give the impression of a less serious crime, threats are important because through them the offender may constrain the victim to consent to behaviours she would not normally accept. Because of their sensitivity, questions related to sexual offences require specific training of the interviewers and special attention being paid to their wording and contextualisation. These behaviours most frequently involve a male offender and a female victim. For this reason, victim surveys should pay special attention in determining whether the various forms of aggression are sexually motivated or not. Questions on sexual offences may be embarrassing for the respondents, so a special warning should be inserted before the relevant section of the questionnaire starts. This is reflected in instructions for the interviewers and reassuring wording preceding or following the actual question (for example "There may be some questions that you have difficulty answering so please take your time").

378. Approximately 1 out of 4 women who experience violence is a victim of sexual violence.²⁰ This justifies a separate course of interviewing for sexual incidents and other personal (non-sexually motivated) assaults. The majority of surveys included in the UNODC-UNECE inventory include specific questions on sexual offences, frequently to be addressed exclusively to the female respondents in the

¹⁹ Meredith Lee, Denise Lewis, Melinda Crowley, Elaine Hock, Christopher J. Laskey, Colin Loftin, Wayne Logan, and Lynn Addington, "Developing Hate Crime Questions for the National Crime Victimization Survey", Paper Presented at the 54th Annual Conference of the American Association for Public Opinion Research, 1999. Available from the American Statistical Association website <https://www.amstat.org/sections/srms/Proceedings/>

²⁰ (add source). This is the case in less than 1 out of 10 men.

sample. It is only recently that in some countries surveys have started addressing questions on sexual victimisation to male respondents. In the past, including sexual victimisation of males in a survey could have caused a loss of credibility of the research, which would have not been considered serious. The screener question may be very broad, as for example in the ICVS (“People sometimes grab, touch or assault others for sexual reasons in a really offensive way. This can happen either at home or elsewhere, for instance in a pub, the street, at school, on public transport, in cinemas, on the beach or at one's workplace. [Over the reference period] has anyone done this to you? Please take your time to think about it”), and then try to establish what really happened through follow up questions.

379. Depending on the cultural environment and sensitivity of the context, such a broad screener may capture more or less serious incidents. For example, in areas where women feel more free to talk about such issues there may be high reporting of sexual incidents / sexual harassment. However, such incidents of less serious nature are different from sexual assault, notably rape and attempted rape, and the questionnaire should be able to make a clear distinction between them.

380. Sexual assault may be understood as a sexually motivated physical aggression. For example, the NCVS covers this aspect of victimisation by asking a direct question: “Incidents involving forced or unwanted sexual acts are often difficult to talk about. [Other than any incidents already mentioned,] have you been forced or coerced to engage in unwanted sexual activity by (a) Someone you didn't know before; (b) A casual acquaintance; (c) Someone you know well?”²¹ Further details of the incident are explored through follow up questions that use neutral/legal language, assuming that the victim is aware of what happened to her and had a possibility to come to terms with the incident and define it somehow. However, if the victim describes what happened as a rape, the interviewer is instructed to ask a follow up question (“Do you mean forced or coerced sexual intercourse?”) to make sure that indeed the victim knows what she means.

381. Another option, especially in case of dedicated surveys on violence against women, is to use very technical and detailed wording to describe exactly what happened. This may be considered more appropriate for surveys with a particular focus on personal victimisation than general population surveys. For example, specialised surveys on rape contain screening questions aimed at establishing whether the victim was raped, which use very explicit medical/graphic language.²²

3.8 Fraud

382. From the legal point of view it should be noted that in almost all countries, legislation limits “fraud” to cases where there was economic loss to victims. However, “fraud” is also commonly used to describe conduct involving the use of

²¹ NCVS

²² For example, in the National Women's Study (NWS)/ National Violence Against Women Survey (NVAWS) of the USA: “[Female respondents only] Has a man or boy ever made you have sex by using force or threatening to harm you or someone close to you? Just so there is no mistake, by sex we mean putting a penis in your vagina.”. See CDC, National Center for Injury prevention and Control, *Measuring Intimate Partner Violence Victimization and Perpetration: A Compendium of Assessment Tools*. Sexual victimization scales, http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/Compendium/Measuring_IPV_Victimization_and_Perpetration.htm

dishonesty or deception, but not necessarily any financial or other material loss or benefit. From the point of view of victim surveys, the most relevant types of fraud are those affecting individuals and households, such as consumer fraud, credit card fraud and identity theft. The Federal Trade Commission of the USA conducts a dedicated survey of consumer fraud among the population²³ addressing a wide range of incidents. Victim surveys in many countries include questions on this type of incidents.

3.8.1 Identity theft

383. Theft of identity occurs in cases when an offender steals and/or uses information on the identity of another person, generally to get financial gain or to provide the thief with false credentials. This type of crime partially overlaps with credit card fraud, since the offender frequently uses credit card information to commit the crime, and with consumer fraud/cheating. The information may be used to obtain credit (frequently to open bank accounts), goods, and services in the name of the victim. Two types of crimes can be included in this category, i.e. the actual stealing of identity information or documents (proper “identity theft”), and the use of identities to deceive others (“identity fraud”).²⁴ Although impersonating someone else has always been an illegal way to obtain economic and practical advantages, this type of crime has become much more frequent due to the use of Internet, especially through “phishing”. Phishing is a scam aimed at deceiving Internet users and recipients of emails, inducing them to disclose credit card numbers, bank account information, passwords, or other sensitive information. A well known form of phishing is the so-called 419 scam, from the number of the relevant criminal code article in Nigeria, which consists of emails from Nigerians requesting the recipient to assist them in getting money out of Africa. Surveys including questions on identity theft may face several problems, including the likelihood of victims being reluctant to admit having been cheated. Questions should be formulated in a way that properly describes what is being measured and possibly deal with direct experience rather than perceptions. For example, the question used by the Eurobarometer in 2006 only dealt with perceptions.²⁵ In the first place, surveys may wish to ascertain how the victim has become aware of the theft of personal information. As a next step, the survey may probe exactly what happened. An example of including identity theft issues in a household victim survey was provided by the NCVS (2004), which covered credit card thefts, thefts from existing accounts, misuse of personal information, and multiple types at the same time.²⁶

²³ <http://www.ftc.gov/opa/2007/10/fraud.shtm>

²⁴ UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice - Results of the second meeting of the Intergovernmental Expert Group to Prepare a Study on Fraud and the Criminal Misuse and Falsification of Identity - Report of the Secretary-General. E/CN.15/2007/8. <http://daccess-ods.un.org/access.nsf/Get?OpenAgent&DS=E/CN.15/2007/8&Lang=E>

²⁵ “Identity fraud is the act of stealing somebody else’s identity for illegal activities (for example, illegal use of bank data or personal social security data). In your opinion, is this problem of identity fraud very widespread, fairly widespread, fairly rare or very rare in (respondent’s country)?”. Special Eurobarometer 264/ Wave 65.4 - “The role of the European Union in fighting against organised crime”, 2006. http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_264_en.pdf

²⁶ <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/it04.htm>

3.8.2 Consumer fraud/cheating

384. Consumers' awareness of their rights implies that they expect, for example, a product or service to perform in the manner in which it was advertised. Citizens may feel cheated when their rights as consumers are not respected or they have to pay too much for poor service. In such cases they call themselves victims of "consumer fraud". The UNODC-UNECE inventory found that questions on this type of incidents were included in 25 out of 66 surveys. In many cases, the wording of the question was that of the ICVS, i.e. "last year, [in...], were you the victim of a consumer fraud. In other words, has someone - when selling something to you, or delivering a service - cheated you in terms of quantity or quality of the goods or services?". Further probing for the type of incident may include asking which type of product or service was involved in the transaction.

3.8.3 Credit card crime

385. The fraudulent use of credit cards is very frequent and becoming more and more disturbing for citizens. There are several types of fraud related to credit cards. The first type is the use by the offender of lost and stolen cards, i.e. the card is either lost by or physically stolen from the victim, then used by the offender who enters in its possession. Offenders may also counterfeit cards by cloning or encoding them without permission. In such type of crime, data present on the magnetic band of a credit card is extracted and reproduce on an illegal copy of the card, which is used by the offender to make purchases ending up on the legitimate card's owner. A third type is the Card-not-present (CNP) fraud, in which the offender uses card details obtained in trivial ways (such as discarded receipts or by copying numbers during a transaction) to purchase goods, mostly over the Internet, by telephone, fax and mail order. Survey questions on credit card crime may require several layers of screening to contextualise the incident and identifying in which of the above categories may fall. Furthermore, understanding of the question may depend on the local use of credit / debit cards.

3.9 Corruption

386. A quarter of the surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory included questions on bribery/corruption. The interest in assessing the extent and estimating the impact of corruption is very high. Several attempts have been made at measuring corruption in victim surveys, starting from the assumption that in most jurisdictions corruption is a crime and citizens are the victims of it. Being a crime, corruption shares the same data collection and methodological problems with other illicit behaviours. As in the general crime area, surveys (of general population, businesses and/or special groups of respondents) may provide important insights as regards the prevalence of the phenomena. It should be noted however that many public opinion surveys address the issue of corruption from a perception point of view. This generates a different type of information, which may also be captured – as reference and control – through a victimisation survey. In this respect, surveys may include questions on perceived extent of corruption, categories of public employees that are likely to receive bribes, etc. The analysis of responses to such questions compared to those on the real experience of corruption may provide useful information on the extent of the gap between the two measures. Questions on perceived corruption are generally

formulated in simple language thus a response (perception) is normally obtained from all those interviewed. This produces the advantage that even a small sample can produce a sizeable basis of data. On the other hand, these questions are too often susceptible of being vague, leading, and/or biased. This represents a serious obstacle for the validity of the inferences that can legitimately be made from the data obtained, especially when used in different cultural settings.

387. Experience of corruption as a crime may be addressed in surveys through questions aimed at measuring the prevalence of experience of bribe paying among the surveyed population. The following is an example of question on corruption experience:

“In some areas there is a problem of corruption among government or public officials. During [reference period] has any government official, for instance a customs officer, police officer or inspector [in your country], asked you or expected you to pay a bribe for his service?”²⁷

388. In general, the longer and more detailed the question, the more precise the response. Of course this may also generate limitations in term of inferences that can be made, but they are likely to be less sensitive to the different cultural contexts. Follow-up questions may require victims to indicate the specific sector of the public administration from which the request was made. However, it may be expected that very few cases are reported to the survey, thus the opportunity of including any follow up questions in the questionnaire should be carefully considered from the point of view of time and cost.

389. It should be noted that addressing corruption in victim surveys may be affected by the cultural and social environment in different countries, which levels of tolerance of the phenomenon, irrespective of existing legislation, may be higher or lower. As a consequence, citizens may consider bribery and corruption more or less acceptable behaviours in everyday life and be more or less prone to acknowledge having incurred in such experiences. Furthermore, the experience of paying a bribe may result either in suffering a loss or enjoying a privilege, thus not all respondents may see corruption as a form of victimization. It is also difficult to assess if increased awareness and stigmatization of corruption in a country would result in increased readiness to provide open responses to such surveys or if the opposite is true.

390. A questions on experience of corruption has also been included in a special *Eurobarometer*²⁸, in which the question used was: *“Over the last 12 months, has anyone in (OUR COUNTRY) asked you, or expected you, to pay a bribe for his or her services?”*.

3.10 Exposure to illegal drugs

391. Eleven surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory included questions on exposure to illegal drugs. Since this is not a clear type of crime/victimisation, definitions vary among surveys and range from the simple being in contact with drug

²⁷ ICVS

²⁸Special Eurobarometer 245 / Wave 64.3 (Nov-Dec 2005) on Opinions on organized, cross-border crime and corruption, http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_245_sum_en.pdf.

related problems to the direct experience of having been offered drugs or using drugs. In the first category, the most frequently used question is taken from two special issues of the Eurobarometer²⁹, and reads “Over the last 12 months, how often were you personally in contact with drug related problems in the area where you live? For example seeing people dealing in drugs, taking or using drugs in public spaces, or by finding syringes left by drug addicts? Was this often, from time to time, rarely or never?”. This question has also been included in surveys following the ICVS design and has the advantage – in EU countries - that historical data are available. As regards illicit drug use, the BCS has included this issue in a self-completion part of the questionnaire aimed at estimating the prevalence of use of several types of drugs.

3.11 Examples of other forms of victimisation to be included in household surveys if relevant in the country

3.11.1 Theft of livestock

392. Theft of cattle or other livestock is very frequent in rural areas and represents a serious problem for a large portion of population living as farmers. The financial loss may vary from the theft of one or two backyard animals to the abduction of cattle in large numbers. Victim surveys targeting rural areas should take into account the impact of this form of victimisation and possibly include questions aimed at capturing its prevalence.

3.11.2 Arson

393. Experience of having been a victim of burning or destruction of dwellings may be considered worth including in a survey. This can be seen as a modification and specification of the vandalism questions.

3.11.3 Kidnapping for ransom

394. Kidnapping, i.e. capturing and/or keeping a person as hostage and requesting money to release him or her, is unfortunately frequent in some countries to the extent that it can be captured in victim surveys. This is particularly the case with the so-called “Express kidnapping”(from the Spanish secuestro express), frequent in Latin America, in which the offenders request a small ransom, that the family of the victim may be able to pay relatively easily and quickly. The National Survey of Perception of Public Security in Mexico³⁰ included questions on experience of kidnapping.

3.11.4 Car hijacking

395. The theft of a car (or any motor-vehicle) normally happens when the car is unattended. In some countries, it may also occur when the vehicle is occupied. Typically, the carjacker is armed, and the driver is forced out of the car at gunpoint.

²⁹ Public Opinion Regarding Security and Victimisation in the EU - Contact with Drugs Related Problems - Eurobarometer surveys n° 44.3 (1996) and 54.1 (2000)
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_145_100.pdf

³⁰ INEGI,
http://www.inegi.gob.mx/est/contenidos/espanol/proyectos/metadatos/encuestas/ensi_2313.asp?s=est&c=10859

This type of crime occurs in some countries with a frequency that justifies its inclusion in victim surveys. The national victim survey carried out in South Africa in 1998 included questions on car hijacking and attempts.³¹

3.11.5 Witnessing violence

396. Being exposed to violence and physical abuse, even without having been a victim of it, may be considered a serious form of victimisation. For example, the General Social Survey in Australia includes the following question: “Have any of these been a problem for you or anyone close to you during the last 12 months? 1) Alcohol or drug related problems. 2) Witness to violence. 3) Abuse or violent crime. 4) Trouble with police.” This may even be the case of murder. In some countries, it has been considered important including a specific question on having witnessed murder of someone close to them.

4. Follow-up for victims

4.1 Reporting to the police

397. A fundamental part of a crime victim survey questionnaire deals with the issue of reporting to the police. This part of the questionnaire is crucial in establishing whether the incident reported to the survey was actually reported to the competent authorities as a crime. In most cases, victims of crime have to decide whether or not to report to the police. This decision goes through several steps, such as: a) establishing whether indeed it was a crime; b) deciding whether or not to report it to the police; c) having the means to reach the police; d) having their report received and heard by the police. Depending on the purpose of the survey, the questionnaire may wish to explore in more or less depth this process. Most surveys analyse the reasons for reporting or not reporting to the police. Furthermore, victims may be asked whether they were satisfied with the way the police dealt with their report and the assistance received.

398. It is important to consider that any attempts at reconciling victim survey data with police records goes through this section of the questionnaire. Victim surveys aiming at comparing with police data may be particularly keen to focus on this part of the questionnaire.

4.1.1 Relationship between the victim and the police

399. Citizens who have experienced crime as victims may have an image of the police different than other citizens. Victims or witnesses of crime may call the police for assistance. Some surveys ask about the quality of the service provided by the emergency number, or the time of reaction, i.e. how long did the police take to react to an emergency call.

³¹ Statistics South Africa; Victims of Crime, 1998.
<http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/statsdownload.asp?PPN=P0341&SCH=798>

400. At the level of the individual, several reasons for non-reporting have been identified, including those related to the profile of the victim, fear of revenge from the part of the offender, as well as practical obstacles between the victim and the police (distance of the police station, language problems, unwillingness of victims to approach the police and – in some extreme cases – the police being the offenders).

401. Patterns of reporting also vary across countries, thus the extent of the “dark figure” (the estimated number of unreported cases) is likely to be different in different countries. In some cases the presence of alternative mechanisms for dispute resolution, such as justice of the peace or traditional leaders, may divert victims from formally approaching the police.

4.1.2 Victim support services

402. In some countries, surveys may ask respondents who have been victims about their awareness of the existence of victim support services and whether they had the opportunity to use them. Depending on the availability of services, they may be mentioned in survey questions by name or making general reference to “victim support services”.

4.2 Context of victimisation

403. Further to screeners to establish the prevalence of victimisation, respondents who have been victims will be interviewed on the impact of crime. Since this area of the questionnaire deals with the perceptions and attitudes of the subset of respondents who have been victims of a crime. It should therefore be taken into account that the number of respondents will depend on how many were victims of each specific type of crime. In particular, in deciding the size of their sample, survey organizers should consider that the number of victims may be small. It is important to ensure that the basis for analysis of responses to questions in this section is not too small to provide reliable indications.

404. Questions in this section will aim at providing more details on the context of the incident, such as, for example, where it happened, when, how many times, at what time, how many offenders were involved and whether they were known to the victim. Further questions may assess the severity of offence, for example by asking whether any weapons were used and if the victim was physically injured. Finally, an important component of the questionnaire will deal with victims’ reporting to the police and their experiences.

Box XX – Example of follow up questions for victims of physical assault (Ireland)

Physical assaults

Q. In the past 12 months has anyone physically attacked you?

1. Yes
2. No

Q1. if Q= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
How often did this occur (in the past 12 months)?

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1. once
2. twice
3. three times
4. four times
5. five times or more

Q2. if Q= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
(For the last incident,) can you remember the month it took place? __

Q3.. if Q= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
(For the last incident,) did this occur:

1. in your home
2. in vicinity of home
3. at work
4. near workplace
5. at school/college
6. near school/college
7. in/near pub/dance hall/disco
8. at/near other public place (shopping area, church etc.)
9. elsewhere

Q4. if Q= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
Was a weapon used or threatened by the attacker?

1. Yes
2. No

Q5. if Q4= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted with a weapon in past 12 months)
Was it a.....

1. knife
2. gun/rifle
3. syringe or needle
4. club or stick
5. bottle/glass
6. other

Q6. if Q= 1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
Were you physically injured?

1. Yes
2. No

Q7. if Q6= 1 (if respondent physically injured in assault with weapon)
What kind of treatment, if any, did your injuries require

1. cuts/bruises not requiring medical attention
2. visit to doctor/G.P.
3. needed medical treatment, but not hospital stay
4. injuries requiring overnight hospital stay
5. hospitalisation for more than one night

Q8. if Q=1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
(For the last incident,) was it reported to the Gardai (*police*)?

1. Yes
2. No

- Q9. if Q8=2 (if assault not notified to Gardai)
 What was the main reason for not reporting the incident to the Gardai?
1. not serious enough/no loss
 2. solved it myself (knew the perpetrator/thief)
 3. reported to other authorities instead
 4. no insurance claim anticipated/could not claim insurance
 5. believed Gardai could do nothing/lack of proof
 6. believed Gardai wouldn't do anything about it
 7. did not wish to involve the Gardai
 8. fear of reprisal
 9. other reasons

Counselling

- Q10. if Q=1 (if respondent physically assaulted in past 12 months)
 As a result of any incident you have mentioned, have you received any counselling from a professional or a support group?
1. Yes
 2. No

Source: Crime and Victimization module, Quarterly National Household Survey, Q4 2003, Central Statistics Office, Ireland (modified by UNODC).

4.3 General attitudinal questions

405. Victim surveys represent an important tool to capture attitudes of respondents on a variety of issues that are not immediately related to their crime experience, but can help understanding the social context surrounding them and providing important indications for the development of crime prevention policies. Several issues, such as those presented in Table 7, are typical features of victim surveys and appear in many of the surveys included in the UNODC-UNECE inventory.

Table 7 – Non-crime issues included in victim surveys

	<i>percentage of surveys</i>
Attitudes toward the police	64
Crime prevention and protection	51
Attitudes toward corrections	17
Attitudes toward courts	15

Source: UNODC-UNECE inventory, 2006

4.3.1 General attitudes toward the police

406. Questions on general attitudes towards the police are useful to determine how the population, irrespective of their having been victims of a crime, perceives law enforcement and their operations. The majority of surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory covered this item, at least with one question on the overall perception of

police performance, which can be formulated as follows: “Taking everything into account, how good do you think the police in your area are at controlling crime? Do you think they do a very good job, a fairly good job, a fairly poor job or a very poor job?”³² If the survey has a specific interest in gauging police performance on different aspects of its work, questions may be more detailed and probe, for example³³:

Do you think your local police force does a good job, an average job or a poor job:

- ... of enforcing the laws?
- ... of promptly responding to calls?
- ... of being approachable and easy to talk to?
- ... of supplying information to the public on ways to reduce crime?
- ... of ensuring the safety of the citizens in your area?
- ... of treating people fairly?

407. Another aspect that may be covered by victim surveys is the experience of having been stopped and searched by the police. This can happen on foot or in a vehicle. Survey questions on this matter may be used as useful feedback tool to check that routine operations of the police are supported by the public and not perceived as an intrusion in their private life, or even worse as a victimisation experience. Results are an important indicator of public confidence in the police. The formulation of the question may start from a screener asking, for example, “Have you EVER been stopped and asked questions by the police when you were on foot?”³⁴. Follow-up questions may deal with when it happened, what happened afterwards, what were the feelings of the respondents, etc.

4.3.2 Crime prevention and protection

408. Victim surveys frequently deal with issues of safety and crime prevention by asking respondents which type of precautions they use to protect themselves and prevent crime. More than half of the surveys in the UNODC-UNECE inventory include this item. Typical issues covered by questions in this section include the presence of physical deterrents at the household such as burglar alarms, fences, security locks, windows grids and – if relevant in the context – watchdogs. In the case of victims of burglary who state they own a burglar alarm it may be interesting for the survey to check whether the alarm was installed before or after the burglary occurred. Questions may also cover the presence of physical measures to deter crime on vehicles, such as special locks on cars, motorcycles or bicycles.

409. Another set of questions in this area has to do with community based crime prevention schemes, such as taking part in neighbourhood watch or community alerts, or informally asking the neighbours to look after the house when nobody is at home. A final set of questions may deal with any type of measures or behaviours adopted by the respondents to protect him/herself or property from crime. This may include reducing the frequency of going out, especially at night, avoiding certain places/areas, changing itineraries/routines, registering for self-defence courses, carrying sharp objects to protect themselves, etc.

³² ICVS

³³ Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization.

³⁴ BCS, A5

4.3.3 Attitudes towards the criminal justice system (courts, corrections)

410. Victim surveys may ask about respondents' opinions on the functioning of various parts of the criminal justice system. This may be particularly the case with courts and corrections, which are frequently mentioned in general debate with reference to crime issues.

Box – Attitudes towards courts and corrections, example from Canada

The General Social Survey on Victimization in Canada deals with respondents' attitudes towards courts and corrections the same way as with the police, by asking a series of questions on several aspects of interest to the general population, as well as a question on having been in contact with courts³⁵:

- Now I would like to ask you a similar question about the Canadian Criminal courts. Are they doing a good job, an average job or a poor job:

... of providing justice quickly?

... of helping the victim?

... of determining whether the accused or the person charged is guilty or not?

... of ensuring a fair trial for the accused?

- In general, would you say that sentences handed down by the courts are too severe, about right or not severe enough?

- Have you ever had contact with the Canadian Criminal courts? (INT: Contact with a criminal court may have been for any reason. Respondents may have had contact with a criminal court because they, their friends, or family members were charged with a crime, were witnesses to a crime or were victims of a crime. Contact could also be in the form of jury duty.)

- Do you think that the prison system does a good job, an average job or a poor job:

... of supervising and controlling prisoners while in prison?

... of helping prisoners become law-abiding citizens?

- Do you think that the parole system does a good job, an average job or a poor job (INT: The responsibility of the parole system is to decide which prison inmates can serve part of their sentence in the community under supervision and to make sure the conditions of parole are being met. If offenders don't meet parole conditions they can be returned to prison):

... of releasing offenders who are not likely to commit another crime?

... of supervising offenders on parole?

411. A particular aspect that can be dealt in this area is to assess the opinion of respondents about punishment. This can be done, as in the ICVS, by providing an example of a situation in which a crime is committed and the offender should be

³⁵ Canada, General Social Survey on Victimization.

sanctioned by the respondent, who can choose from a range of sanctions ranging from a fee to many years imprisonment. Results may provide important indications on the level of tolerance of citizens about crime issues.

4.4 Respondent's characteristics (socio-demographics)

- ▶ Social and demographic (ask about items that can be a motivation for a crime, but consider that in some countries some topics such as ethnicity may be sensitive and can not be asked in large-scale surveys),
- ▶ Life style

5. Determining whether information can be obtained from other sources and linked to survey data

(for example take information on the school from other sources, take characteristics of the neighbours from other sources (from postal codes):

Box: Administrative data.

Information on crime incidents can be obtained from administrative data. The statistical category of criminal incidents reported to police provides data that should be at the same level of victimisation incidents reported to the police. It should be noted, however, that police records include crimes reported to, or detected by, police, which were subsequently considered serious enough to be recorded on police administrative systems. Different recording methods exist in different countries. The most important difference depends on the point in time at which the crime is recorded, i.e. following and initial report (*input* statistics) or following an initial investigation (*output* statistics). Crime categories may also depend on criminal code articles or police classification systems, thus information on specific types of crimes should be checked against definitions and aggregate categories (such as violent crime, property crime, drug offences, etc.).³⁶

Box. Other surveys including victimisation issues

European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS)

Every five years, the Foundation conducts a survey to study working conditions in Europe. The survey has been carried out four times: in 1990/91, 1995/96, 2000 (extended to cover the 10 new member states, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey in 2001/02) and 2005 (31 countries). Fieldwork for the Foundation's most recent instance of the European Working Conditions Survey was carried out in all EU25 countries (plus Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Norway and Switzerland) during autumn 2005. The full descriptive report of the EWCS 2005 is available.

The surveys provide an overview of the state of working conditions throughout Europe, and indicate the extent and type of changes affecting the workforce and the quality of work. The recurring nature of the survey gives a picture of trends in working conditions throughout Europe.

³⁶ See UN Manual for the Development of a System of Criminal Justice Statistics, ST/ESA/STAT/SER.F/89, 2003.

The European surveys on working conditions use the random walk procedure, a method of selecting a random sample in door to door surveys. The respondents (employees and self-employed people) were interviewed face-to-face in their own homes outside normal working hours.

The survey questionnaire has expanded from twenty questions in the first edition to nearly one hundred questions and sub-questions in 2005. Topics covered in the survey include working time, work organisation, pay, work-related health risks and health outcomes, and access to training.

Question 29 (see below) deals with violence and harassment at work.

Q29 - Over the past 12 months, have you or have you not, personally been subjected at work to...?

- A - Threats of physical violence
- B - Physical violence from people from your workplace
- C - Physical violence from other people
- D - Bullying / harassment
- E - Sexual discrimination / discrimination linked to gender
- F - Unwanted sexual attention
- G - Age discrimination
- H - Discrimination linked to nationality
- I - Discrimination linked to ethnic background
- J - Discrimination linked to religion
- K - Discrimination linked to disability
- L - Discrimination linked to sexual orientation

Source: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveys/index.htm>

Box: Geocoding victimizations data so that they can be used with other data (census, ...).

6. Comparability

412. Comparability issues are problematic for victim surveys. In particular, the following areas may need to be taken into account:

1. Comparing among different surveys carried out in the same country
 - a. at the same time
 - b. at different points in time
2. Comparing among different surveys carried out in different countries (see Part IV)
3. Comparing with administrative (police) data

413. The example of case 1.a has to do with a country in which different surveys are carried out at the same time, each with different objectives but with partial overlapping of content. This can be the case, for example of a general household survey containing a victimisation module and a standalone victim survey. Different results may be determined by a variety of reasons. Some have to do with the content of the questionnaire and are summarized in Box { }

Box { } Enhancing comparability in the content of the survey

Include similar modules covering key offences

Ch. III.I. Content of the survey

Use the approach of asking about victimisation experience using colloquial language containing consistent core elements

Recall periods should be consistent and include screener questions before narrowing down to the last calendar year or 12 months immediately prior to the date of the survey in respect of any crimes initially reported. Comparability may be higher for the period after the screener questions.

The more detailed wording and accurate description of incidents, the higher the likelihood of obtaining comparable results.

The detail of additional information provided by the interviewer should be similar, in order to minimise the influence of individual interpretation of the meaning of the question. At the same time, slight variations in terms used to describe objects in a way that is familiar to the respondent in different contexts may increase comparability.

The sequence of questions, or at least questionnaire areas, should be similar. In particular, it is suggested that questions concerning sensitive offences, such as sexual assault, should be asked towards the end of the questionnaire to allow time for the interviewer to build a rapport with the respondent.

414. As regards comparing with administrative (police) data, it should be taken into account that victim surveys differ from official police statistics in a number of ways, including in the source of the data, its coverage, the manner of identification of criminal incidents, and in sources of error. Victim surveys eliminate the effect of a range of police decisions that may otherwise affect the data, come closer to the ‘dark figure’ of crime than official police statistics, and have the advantage of transcending different national legal definitions of crime by seeking the view of victims directly. A number of comparability challenges are summarized in Figure [].

Figure [] – Comparability challenges of administrative police statistics and crime victim surveys

	Administrative Police Statistics	Crime Victim Surveys
Nature of Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Existing records. ▪ Decision as to event recording already taken. ▪ Data collection process aims to capture existing information as accurately as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information exists only in personal memories. ▪ Decision as to recall taken during survey data collection process. ▪ Data collection process aims to prompt recall and record information in a standardised way.
Comparability Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identification and correction for existing differences affecting records captured. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistent recall of equivalent events with equivalent accuracy.

7. Other issues

Box on VAW surveys

Content for VAW surveys

???

Box on minorities (FRA)

???

Consideration could be given to discussions about the use of 'fear' in survey research and what it does and does not measure. Reference can be made to research which questions the traditional way of looking at 'fear of crime', and which suggests alternative measurements such as 'anger'.

Victimisation of minority groups may also take forms which are not always well covered by traditional victimisation surveys such as harassment and hate motivated crime. This should be considered when designing the content.

Follow-up might include items on the perceived motive for the incident according to the victim; with motivation related to the victim's gender, ethnicity etc. An indicator on minority status should be included in the questionnaire, so that the analysis will be able to examine if some groups are particularly vulnerable to victimisation; for example, ethnicity or immigrant background, religion etc.

Box on tourist surveys

Victimisation surveys targeting tourists are becoming more and more frequent, and go parallel to the literature within the tourism field on crime, insecurity and tourism. Specialised victimisation surveys for tourists have been attempted in various contexts, including, a national survey of British tourists' experiences and perceptions of crime on holiday³⁷; a survey of tourists in Malaga;³⁸ surveys in Cornwall covering the local public's and police perceptions of tourism and crime and the views of tourist victims. Specific content for tourist surveys:

- becoming a victim in unfamiliar surroundings
- access to police
- etc.

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³⁷ Tourist victimisation and the fear of crime on holiday, by Paul Brunt, , Rob Mawby and Zoe Hambly, http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B6V9R-401RX8S-9&_user=5235131&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&view=c&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=5235131&md5=af3c5b2df7e206b3ecbf98f9685b4ef2

³⁸ Stangeland, P. 1995

Ch. III.I. Content of the survey

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Ch. III.J. Data collection and capture operations

415. Victimization surveys can be conducted in a variety of ways, including face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, self response, and the internet. The method of conducting a survey is called the survey mode. Face-to-face (also called "in person") surveys remain the most common mode for conducting national victimization surveys. Of the 66 current surveys included in the 2005 UNODC-UNECE victimization survey inventory, 35 (53%) were conducted fully or partially using face-to-face interviews. Some of the surveys utilized more than one survey mode.

416. Face-to-face (also called "in person") interview remain the most common mode for conducting national victimization surveys. Of the 61 surveys included in the UNECE-UNODC victimization survey inventory, 24 (39%) were conducted fully using face-to-face interviews at the respondent's home, with paper (17 surveys) or electronic questionnaires (7 surveys). In 14 more surveys (21%), face-to-face interview was used together with other modes.

417. Telephone interviews (CATI) is also a popular survey mode, used in 17 surveys (28% of the total) as the only survey mode and in 7 more surveys (11%) in combination with other modes, mostly face-to-face interview.

418. Five surveys used electronic self completion, always combined with some form of face to face. Postal questionnaire was used in four surveys, and “other self completion” in four other surveys (including for instance school surveys).

419. No country reported using internet based victimisation surveys.

Table: Survey mode for victimization surveys in the UNECE-UNODC inventory

Survey mode:	Number of surveys where the survey mode was used...		Total	% of the total no. of surveys*
	as the only survey mode:	together with other modes:		
Face to face interviews at the respondent's home using paper questionnaire	17	9	26	43%
Face to face interviews at the respondent's home using electronic questionnaire - CAPI	7	8	15	25%
Face to face interviews elsewhere (place of work or study, etc.)	1	2	3	5%
Telephone interviews (CATI)	17	7	24	39%
Self-administered questionnaires (CASI)	0	5	5	8%
Self-administered questionnaires (Postal questionnaire)	2	2	4	7%
Self-administered questionnaires (other)	2	2	4	7%
<i>Combinations or various modes</i>	15			
Total no. of surveys:	61			

* The total of the values for this column is higher than 100 because in 15 surveys multiple modes were used.

420. Before the introduction of computer assisted interviewing technology, the three modes of interview, face-to-face, telephone, and mail surveys, were all accomplished by either an interviewer or respondent filling answers to questions on a paper questionnaire. Technology has enhanced the survey operation and expanded the means for conducting surveys. Mail surveys are no longer the sole means for conducting a self response survey, as a variety of methods are now available to enable respondents to provide information without an interviewer actually reading the questions.

421. Personal visit and telephone interviews can be conducted using paper and pencil questionnaires or by computer assisted technology, which involves entering responses directly into a computer. Some forms of self administered surveys are also enabled by computer technology. While computer assisted personal interviews (CAPI) and computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) are increasingly used in survey operations, paper and pencil instruments are still widely used. Self response surveys, which include mail out/mail back surveys, can now be conducted using paper and pencil, or using computer or telephone technology.

422. A number of factors impact the choice of interview mode for any survey, including cost, availability of technology, and cultural conditions in the Nation or region. Developers of surveys must determine which mode and data capture method is appropriate for their purposes, and must understand the impact that the various modes and methods can have on the resulting data and costs of enumeration. Each of the various modes and methods has advantages and disadvantages. In addition, the various modes and methods have impacts upon interviewers and respondents and their interactions that can affect the quality and accuracy of the data being obtained. The circumstances within a Nation or region may impose constraints on the appropriateness or utility of the various interview modes. These constraints may change over time, as well, and dictate whether a particular survey mode may be viable for use.

423. This section briefly reviews each of the modes of interview and data capture methods and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Survey modes

Face-to-face interviews

424. Face-to-face interviews, also called in person interviews, are generally done in surveys that utilize an address based sample. In countries or regions in which most households do not have telephones, it is likely that face-to-face interviewing will be the mode of choice for contacting the respondents. In many countries in which telephone coverage is extremely high, face-to-face interviews have been supplanted by telephone interviews because of the high cost of travelling to conduct the interviews in person.

425. Face-to-face interviews have a number of advantages over other modes. First, the interviewer can determine that the person being interviewed is actually the selected respondent. Additionally, face-to-face interviews have been shown to produce higher response rates than other modes of interview. Personal contact between interviewer and respondent is believed to build a rapport and therefore increase the likelihood that the respondent will participate in the survey. This is a benefit for victimization surveys which require a large number of interviews because of the relative rarity of the events being measured.

426. Personal visit interviews have other advantages over telephone and mail surveys. Personal visit interviews allow interviewers to use materials such as information cards and other interviewing aids to help respondents understand concepts and the information they are being asked to provide. Interviewers can collect information about the respondent's living quarters and their neighborhood without having to ask the respondent. This reduces the burden on the respondent and increases the accuracy of such information by eliminating any biases the respondent may have about these characteristics. Face-to-face interviews can be longer and more complex than telephone interviews because face-to-face interviews are not as tiring for either the respondent or the interviewer, and they are more conducive to respondents referring to household records for information than are telephone interviews.

427. In person interviews may enable more control of the interview environment than do telephone interviews. For example, the interviewer can determine who else may be present during the interview, or ask the respondent if he/she wants to go to a different location or conduct the interview at another time to ensure that the interview is conducted privately. In

telephone surveys, it can be difficult or impossible to determine who is present with the respondent during the interview.

428. Face-to-face interviews are expensive, however, because of the time and costs associated with interviewers travelling to and from the respondent's home or other place to conduct the interview. Some surveys that use face-to-face interviews therefore cluster sample addresses to decrease these travel costs. Clustering respondents decreases the travel time between interviews. It does, however, impact variances associated with estimates. These effects must be accounted for in the estimation process. Often this clustering is one component of a multistage stratified sampling process.

429. In addition to its higher cost, face-to-face interviewing has other disadvantages when compared to telephone interviewing. Interviewers work with less supervision than they might if they conducted telephone interviews from a central facility. Generally, interviewers who do personal visit interviewing are observed for only a small fraction of the interviews they conduct. While other forms of quality control can be used to ensure the accuracy of the responses, the interviewer's manner and interactions with respondents can have a large impact upon the survey results.

430. Cultural and social conditions may also constrain the use of face-to-face interviewing. For example, in small communities, interviewers may know respondents; a situation that can affect the likelihood of respondents participating or providing information about their experiences. This may also be the case if minority interviewers are recruited to interview respondents from relatively small minority populations. Additionally, interviewers may influence respondents' responses to survey questions, by actions or attitudes they present to respondents during the interview, thereby introducing biases into the survey results. This potential bias is present for telephone interviews as well.

431. It also may be difficult to find interviewers willing to travel to some places or after dark because of concerns for their safety. Safety requirements in some areas require interviewers to travel in pairs, increasing costs of enumeration; this may be of special concern for surveys on violence against women which generally require female interviewers. . In interviewing minorities interviewers may also need to conduct interviews in areas which they feel are unsafe and they may be reluctant to carry expensive equipment such as laptop computers for the fear of mugging. In addition, some respondents may be more reluctant to provide information about sensitive subjects in a face-to-face interview that they might be more willing to provide in a different mode of interview because telephone interviews, for example, are less personal and therefore afford respondents more anonymity than do face-to-face interviews.

432. While historically, face-to-face interviewing has been associated with higher participation rates, it is possible that changes in society have made people more reluctant to admit a stranger into their home to conduct an interview, even if they have credentials. This may decrease the advantage that personal visit interviewing has over telephone interviewing in this area.

Telephone interviews

433. Because of the costs associated with face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews have become the survey mode of choice for countries and regions in which telephone

coverage is widespread. Telephone interviews may be conducted from the interviewers' homes, or from centralized telephone interviewing facilities designed for this purpose.

434. The primary advantage of telephone interviews is the ability they afford to attempt contacts with large numbers of respondents quickly and at lower cost than does face-to-face interviewing. In 2004, the Scottish Victimization Survey transitioned from in person to telephone interviewing, enabling more frequent surveying using much larger samples.

Box: The Scottish Victimization Survey Experience

Prior to 2004, the Scottish Victimization Survey was conducted every 3 years as in-person interviews at 5,000 households. The 2004 iteration of the survey involved moving to a larger, telephone based sample in order to produce more robust victimization estimates and conduct the survey more frequently without drastically increasing the survey's budget. In order to evaluate the transition to a telephone survey, the 2004 survey included a parallel sample of 3,000 households that were drawn from an address based sampling frame and were interviewed by personal visit. The target sample for the telephone sample was 27,000 households. The response rates for the telephone survey proved to be much lower than that of the face-to-face survey (49% and 67% respectively). Because of the differences in response, and especially the low response rate for the telephone sample, a nonresponse bias analysis was conducted. This analysis found that the telephone sample results were biased in that nonvictims were less likely to participate in the survey; thereby *overstating* victimization estimates. The final report concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to conclude that the telephone survey accurately measures victimization.

435. Interviewers can make several attempts to contact difficult to reach respondents without incurring repeated travel costs associated with repeated trips to the respondent's home. Telephone interviewing may facilitate more flexibility in arranging interview times than face-to-face interviews and enable completing questionnaires across more than one interview.

436. Telephone interviews afford respondents more anonymity than face-to-face interviews, and may in some circumstances be better for collecting sensitive information. Telephone interviews also afford interviewers a greater degree of safety since they do not have to travel to possibly dangerous areas or at night to conduct the interviews. Telephone interviews may also provide more safety for some respondents by enabling interviews when they know no other people are around. This can be an important feature of surveys addressing such subjects as violence against women, for which respondent safety is of special concern.

437. If conducted from a centralized telephone center telephone interviewing enables closer supervision of interviewers and monitoring of interviews than does personal visit interviewing. Supervision can be further facilitated if interviewing is done using computer assisted telephone interviewing (CAPI). Most CAPI software packages incorporate monitoring functions that allow supervisors to observe live cases being interviewed. This affords immediate feedback to interviewers to correct any errors or flaws in their interviewing skills.

438. A telephone sampling frame, such as random-digit-dialing (RDD) eliminates the requirement to cluster sample cases to reduce costs; a procedure that increases the variances around survey estimates.

439. There are disadvantages associated with telephone interviewing. Unlike personal visit interviews, it is more difficult for an interviewer to determine the actual identity of the person to whom he/she is speaking. Respondents who do not want to participate can tell the interviewer that they are not at home or not available.

440. Surveys conducted by telephone can be conducted using random-digit-dialing or by utilizing sampling frames of lists of telephone numbers. In nations or regions in which a substantial proportion of the population does not have a telephone, the telephone sampling frame will not be representative of the population. In such cases, the resulting sample will have a bias.

441. Telephone surveys generally cannot be as long or as complex as personal visit interviews because both respondents and interviewers tire more quickly. CATI has alleviated some of this fatigue difference to some degree, but telephone interviews do not allow the use of visual aids possible in personal visit interviews to help explain complex concepts or reduce the burden on the respondent.

442. The increasing use of cellular phones is beginning to impact telephone interviewing in some nations. Cell phones present problems both in developing a telephone sampling frame and for conducting telephone interviews. As the number of cell phones increases, telephone sampling frames may not be capable to distinguish land line from cell phones. This increases the number of calls required to obtain interviews and also complicates the weighting algorithms used to make the data representative of the population. Some nations do not allow interviewing to be conducted using cell phones because they are not secure and because they can incur costs to respondents for their use during the interview.

443. In recent years, there has been a growth in many nations in the use of devices and services that enable people to restrict telephone access to their households. Services such as caller id, call blocking, and call screening devices can make it difficult for interviewers to contact prospective respondents and obtain interviews. This is of particular concern for telephone based sampling frames such as RDD.

Self administered interviews

444. Self administered questionnaires are filled by respondents themselves rather than by an interviewer. The most common form of self administered questionnaire is the mail out/mail back questionnaire. Such surveys are typically less expensive than face-to-face and telephone interviews, but have some serious drawbacks as well, which are discussed below.

445. In addition to mail questionnaires, some other forms of self administered surveys have been developed in recent years that take advantage of advances in computer and telephone technology. One type is audio self-completed personal interview (CASI), in which a respondent during a personal interview is given the opportunity to fill the computerized questionnaire for him/herself. Another is the telephone equivalent to ACASI, in which an automated telephone recording prompts respondents to enter responses by using the telephone keypad or by saying answers aloud.

446. Questionnaires that respondents fill themselves have the advantage that they afford privacy and anonymity to a degree not possible with personal visit or telephone interviews. Respondents do not have to actually relate sensitive information to another person but can enter it on the form themselves. For victimization surveys, this can therefore provide a better vehicle for measuring such crimes as domestic violence or sexual assault. The British Crime Survey incorporates a CASI component to provide estimates of violence against women. In the BCS experience, the estimates of domestic violence from the self administered questionnaire have been up to 5 times as high as estimates of this offence using CAPI.

447. Self administered questionnaires must be designed to be understandable by respondents who may not be familiar with the concepts the survey is attempting to convey or with questionnaire structures. For this reason, they cannot be as complex as surveys that utilize trained interviewers. For ACASI surveys the interviewer is present during the interview to help the respondent if necessary, but with mail surveys, respondents have no resource to help them fill the questionnaire. Therefore, mail surveys generally have higher item nonresponse and more inappropriate responses than do interviewer conducted surveys.

448. Mail surveys questionnaires also have the disadvantage of allowing respondents greater opportunity to opt out of participation. Typically response rates to mail surveys are extremely low, and therefore require large numbers of questionnaires to be sent out in order to obtain enough responses to enable analyses. For victimization surveys, which attempt to measure relatively rare events, this can be a formidable problem. Additionally, the low response rates can create biased samples if some subpopulations are less responsive than others.

449. Another disadvantage of mail surveys is the length of time they take to conduct. Most often multiple mailings must be made to prospective respondents to persuade them to participate, with a few weeks in between mailings. This can be alleviated in some circumstances by allowing respondents to fax the questionnaires rather than mailing them back. Another new approach is that recipients of mail surveys are given the option, instead of mailing back the questionnaire, to complete it online (the respondents can be given in the mailing individual access codes for signing in to the websurvey).

Internet based questionnaires

450. With the growth of the world-wide-web, some surveys (but currently none of the national victimization surveys included in the UNODC-UNECE inventory) are conducted using questionnaires that respondents can access by visiting a web site. At present internet access is not broad enough in any nation to enable using the internet to design a sampling frame. Therefore, internet based questionnaires are viable as part of a mixed mode framework, but not as the sole means for conducting a survey that will produce representative, unbiased estimates. Such use will not be viable until personal computers are as universally owned as telephones.

Mixed mode interviewing

451. Some nations have begun combining different modes to conduct victimization surveys to take advantage of the benefits they offer as well as to reduce the disadvantages of traditional interview modes. As described above, to offset the reluctance of respondents to

provide information about sexual assault and domestic violence the British Crime Survey combines a large personal visit sample to obtain information about a broad set of crimes with a smaller sample in which female respondents complete a questionnaire using ACASI to provide information about sexual and domestic violence they may have experienced. The United States' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) utilizes both personal visit and telephone interviews. In the NCVS, contacting respondents by telephone after the initial contact has been made with the household by a personal visit substantially reduces the cost of conducting interviews. Households that do not have access to a telephone continue to be interviewed by personal visit.

452. If both the sampled person's address and telephone number are available when the sampling frame is designed, a survey could, for example, require telephone interviews for households with telephones and face-to-face interviews for households without telephone access.

453. Using multiple modes can result in improved response rates. Respondents who cannot be contacted by one method may be reachable by another; thereby increasing their likelihood of participation in the survey. However, as in the case of the Scottish Victimization survey discussed in the box above, the interview mode may have had an effect on the results.

Summary of survey mode advantages and disadvantages

454. Face-to-face interviews:

Advantages:

- Positive identification of respondents
- Possible higher response rates
- Possible better rapport between interviewer and respondent
- Enables use of interviewing aids such as information cards
- Interviewer can obtain information about housing unit and neighborhood by observation
- Enables use of longer, more complex questionnaires
- May enable more privacy than other modes

Disadvantages:

- Is more expensive than other modes of data collection
- May increase variances around estimates if sample is clustered to reduce costs
- Repeated attempts to contact respondents can be very expensive
- May afford less supervision of interviewers than telephone interviewing
- May be problematic in areas in which interviewers may know respondents
- May inhibit some respondents from reporting some behaviors
- Fears for interviewer safety in potentially dangerous survey areas
- Concerns for privacy may result in lower response rates in some areas

455. Telephone interviews

Advantages:

- Less expensive than face-to-face interviewing
- Enable repeated attempts to contact respondents at lower cost
- Affords greater safety for interviewers
- If conducted from centralized facilities enables greater supervision of interviewers
- Affords greater anonymity which may encourage reporting on sensitive subjects

Ch. III.I. Content of the survey

- Eliminates need to cluster sample to reduce enumeration costs
- May enable more flexibility in arranging interview times

Disadvantages:

- More difficult to determine identity of respondent
- Requires high telephone saturation in Nation or region to avoid creating a biased sampling frame
- Cannot be as long or complex as face-to-face interviews
- Cannot use visual aids in conducting interview
- Increased use of cell phones may create problems for creating sampling frames and conducting interviews
- Increased use of technology such as caller id and call blocking may inhibit ability to contact respondents

456. Self administered surveys

Advantages:

- Mail out/mail back surveys are typically less expensive than other survey modes
- Affords more privacy and anonymity than other modes
- May facilitate asking more sensitive questions

Disadvantages:

- Must be simpler in construction and content
- Mail out/mail back surveys typically have very low participation rates
- Mail out/mail back surveys require extensive enumeration period

457. Internet based questionnaires

Advantages:

- Could reduce costs of processing data
- Afford more privacy and anonymity
- May facilitate asking more sensitive questions

Disadvantages:

- Requires high internet saturation in Nation or region to avoid creating a biased sampling frame
- Not yet a viable option unless incorporated in a mixed mode configuration

458. Mixed mode interviewing

Advantages:

- May reduce interviewing costs
- Can use modes that afford privacy or anonymity to facilitate asking sensitive questions
- Can improve response rates

Disadvantages:

- Use may be constrained by available resources or other considerations

Methods of data capture

459. There are a variety of options for actually recording the information provided by respondents and transferring that information from the questionnaire to computer files. Paper

and pencil and mail in/mail back questionnaires require some procedure for doing this transfer; for computer assisted interviews, this transfer can be done utilizing software incorporated into the questionnaire design.

Paper and pencil

460. Paper and pencil instruments are the traditional means used for conducting surveys. Interviewers, (or respondents for self administered questionnaires,) read questions and enter responses on printed forms. The information must then be keyed or otherwise entered into computers to be analyzed.

461. Paper and pencil instruments, while still widely used, have been replaced by computer assisted instruments in many nations. Where paper questionnaires are still used it is because of the costs associated with developing automated instruments and providing computers; usually laptop computers, to the possibly large numbers of interviewers. It may be less expensive to create a paper instrument and associated data entry and computer processing protocols than it would be to procure and maintain the equipment and develop the automated questionnaires required for computer assisted interviewing. Sometimes the use of pen and paper questionnaires may be based on security concerns interviewers being unwilling to carry expensive equipment in areas they feel are unsafe.

462. Paper questionnaires have few, if any advantages over computer instruments if the cost of implementing the computer instrumentation is not an issue. They do have a number of disadvantages. They cannot be as complex as computer instruments. Skip instructions, which guide the interviewer from question to the next appropriate question, must be simple enough for interviewers (or respondents for self administered questionnaires) to follow without error. Such errors result in asking inappropriate questions, and often, failing to obtain important information about the victimization being discussed.

463. Subsequent to the interview, the questionnaires generally go through a number of processes, such as clerical and computer edits to eliminate inconsistencies and errors on the questionnaires. However, each step can also introduce the possibility for error and lost data. Editors can mistakenly make a correct response incorrect. Paper questionnaires can be misplaced or lost in transmission between interviewer and data processing center. The information from the paper instrument must then be somehow entered into computers. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways; most commonly by data keying the entries, with the possibility for miskeying data. An alternative means of transferring the data from the paper forms to computer files is by scanning the data from questionnaires specially designed for this purpose.

464. Processing the data from paper questionnaires takes longer and is more costly than processing data from computer instruments because of all the additional steps required after the interview.

Computer assisted interviewing (CAI)

465. Computer assisted personal (CAPI) or telephone (CATI) interviewing is rapidly replacing paper and pencil interviewing because of its many advantages. First, it removes the necessity to move the data from paper forms to computer files, a step that can add errors to the data. Additionally, computer administered questionnaires can be designed to incorporate

more complex question sequences than is possible in paper questionnaires and the survey can better utilize information obtained during the interview to direct subsequent questions. In a panel design survey, the computer can be used to recall information provided in an earlier interview.

466. Computer administered surveys can also be designed to reduce interviewer error. In a paper questionnaire, interviewers (or respondents in self-administered surveys) must follow the instructions embedded in the forms to ask the appropriate questions based on responses provided. If the interviewer follows the wrong path, questions that should be asked may be omitted, while inappropriate questions may be asked. Computer administered questionnaires automate this process, forcing the interviewer to the next appropriate question.

467. Computer assisted self administered surveys are also growing in use, and provide similar advantages over paper that CAPI and CATI provide. The complexity of the instrument is transparent to the respondent, and the next appropriate question appears on the screen based on the previous entry.

Selecting the appropriate mode and method of data capture

468. To determine the appropriate choice of survey mode and data capture the survey developer must evaluate a number of factors, such as cost, availability of resources and staff of trained interviewers, goals of the survey and the possible sources of survey error. There is no one perfect survey mode that will fit all circumstances.

469. Victimization surveys have some special characteristics that influence the selection process for survey mode and data capture method. Many of the concepts associated with victimization are complex and may be difficult for respondents to understand. Interviewers trained to explain the purposes of the survey may help respondents to better understand the concepts and survey protocols. Victimization surveys generally measure events that occurred during a specified time window. Interviewers can also assist in insuring that the events being measured actually occurred during the survey's reference period. On the other hand, interviewers may have a negative effect, and filter information provided by respondents or otherwise deter respondents from providing information about sensitive subjects. Likewise, computerized questionnaires can greatly simplify and facilitate the interview, but may in some circumstances, constrain responses and diminish the accuracy of the data.

470. Factors such as the telephone coverage in the nation or area being surveyed, the availability of trained interviewing staffs, and the financial resources available for the survey will also play a large role in the selection process. In addition, the scope of the survey and intended sample size will also be factors in the selection process. For a survey measuring a broad range of offences a telephone or personal visit interview might be the mode of choice, but if funds are available, a computer assisted personal visit interview might be the mode of choice for a survey focusing on rape, sexual assault or domestic violence.

471. Similarly, for a survey with a large sample size, telephone interviews might be the affordable option. If utilizing a smaller sample, it might be feasible to conduct the interviews by personal visit. Finally, mixed mode interviewing is becoming more common, and enables the survey designer to take advantage of the strengths of more than one mode and method of data collection.

Conclusion

472. As described in this chapter, each mode of interview has both advantages and disadvantages; benefits and costs. The selection of survey mode must be made in conjunction with decisions associated with the development of the survey sampling frame. These decisions must be made taking into account all of the factors associated with survey costs, available resources, survey goals, and the social, geographic and technological situation existing within the area in which the survey is to be conducted.

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