

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE – CRIME DATA

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Related to this, we now focus the presentation on crime data. We have two main types of crime data, and each one of these data sources say different things about crime victimization rates. So why would we consult one of the crime data sources versus the other you may ask? Depends on a series of questions.

For instance, we might be interested in how many people are victims of crimes each year. Or is the victimization rate going up or down from one year to the next? Who were typical victims of crime? Or you may be concerned about or interested in what is the relationship between the victims and the offenders? We might also want to know answers to these particular questions, such as how many women are victims of intimate partner violence each year?

Are intimate partner violence victimization rates going up or down from year to year? What are the characteristics of victims of intimate partner violence? What are the different relationship statuses of intimate partner violence victims? Ultimately, the ideal way to answer these questions would be to interview all these individuals about their past victimization experiences. Doing this on a large scale is not necessarily feasible at all times.

The two types of crime data we are to discuss specifically are official statistics comprised of entities like the Uniform Crime Reports and self-reported data victimization surveys such as the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey, which are considered more general victimization surveys. The most publicized criminal statistics in the United States come from the Uniform Crime Reports. It addresses all the offences that are committed in any given year through official police data. When you read in the paper that the homicide rate in California is higher than the national average or that Detroit has the highest homicide rate for any US city over a million population, these figures are almost certainly based on UCR data.

Immediately after the statistics are published each year in the Crime in the United States, a rash of articles on crime trends appear in newspapers and magazines. The Uniform Crime Reporting Program started in 1927. The initiative itself began in the 1920s by the International Association of the Chiefs of Police. During the 1920s, no two states defined all major crimes alike, so you can see that there was a need to create a crime reporting system that was uniform across police jurisdictions.

As such, in 1930, Congress passed a bill creating a Special Division within the FBI to collect the Uniform Crime Reports. The most reliable UCR data have been collected on the seven crime types that make up the original UCR crime index-- murder, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, theft, and motor vehicles theft. It is important to be able to interpret UCR crime statistics so that you can make comparisons between other crime types and intimate partner violence.

The UCR collects two main types of crime information from agencies all over the country. These are the total crimes known to the police and the total arrests made by the agency. Total crimes known to the police, which includes all crime reported to the police observe or discovered by the police, or reported from witness or complaints. The total arrests made by the agency comprised all the crimes that are cleared by arrest if a suspect is arrested, charged, and turned over to the court for prosecution or by exceptional means.

The latter term refers to the situation in which the police feel they have solved the case, but have not made an arrest. Self-report surveys involve asking people or a sample of respondents to voluntarily report their behavior or experiences. Chronologically, self-report surveys were developed after the UCR. James Short and Ivan Nye in 1957 and 1958 were some of the first sociologists to actually administer the self-report survey.

Self-report surveys show that people were willing to tell a lot of information. People were admitting to more delinquency and more victimization than what was ever previously known or reported in official data. General victimization surveys asked samples of the general public whether they or members of their household have been crime victims in some proceeding time periods.

These can be non-random or random samples. An example of a non-random sample is going into a classroom and distributing a survey, or standing in the mall and asking people to take a survey. The main problem with non-random samples though is that the findings that are generated from these samples are not generalizable.

In contrast, a random sample is when everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected for survey participation. The earliest attempts to study family violence involve non-random samples. These were primarily case studies of female victims who had been in contact with shelters or were receiving counseling services.

These convenience samples have the advantage to researchers of being readily available and oftentimes inexpensive. Their major problem, however, is that respondents are not representative of the entire population of people who experience intimate partner violence. Therefore, generalizations made from non-random samples about patterns of intimate partner violence within the population as a whole are questioned in convenience samples.

The first large scale random national victimization survey took place in the United States in 1966. These findings provided evidence of the existence of what you may have heard or discussed as the dark figure of unreported crimes, and further questioned the accuracy of the FBI UCR statistics for all offenses except murder. The motivation behind the move towards victimization surveys was clear. The US was in the early stages of what was widely perceived as a crime explosion, and no one really knew how steeply crime was going to rise.

Self-report surveys had just revealed greater volumes of illegal acts and victimization than were ever previously indicated by official statistics, such as those provided in the UCR. In 1973, the federal

government began the National Crime Survey. It has since been retitled the National Crime Victimization Survey in 1982, and the survey also went through a major redesign, essentially having more questions being added about rape and other types of crimes.

However, before the redesign, respondents were not asked any specific questions about a text that were perpetrated by relatives or offenders known to them. When the National Crime Survey started in 1973, 10,000 households were randomly selected. Years later, the sample size increased to 80,000 households, but now it's 42,000 households that comprise nearly 76,000 persons. The NCVS examines the frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization in the United States.

The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders. The survey enables us to estimate the likelihood of victimization from rape, sexual assault, robbery, assault, theft, household burglary, and motor vehicle theft, or the population as a whole. As well as for segments of the population, such as women, the elderly, and members of various racial or ethnic groups.

The NCVS is a random sample of 42,000 to 45,000 households, which includes those living in group quarters such as a dormitory or religious dwells, and excludes correctional quarters such as a prison. Each household stays in the sample for three years total. After they are selected, their first and fifth interview is conducted face-to-face, and every six months after that they are interviewed via the phone. They are surveyed about their victimization experiences for the previous six months. An attempt is made to survey each member of the household who is over the age of 11.

The NCVS has had an annual response rate of nearly 93%, and is conducted by the Bureau of Census and the Bureau of Justice Statistics. It is a very comprehensive data source because it asks demographic questions about victim's offenders, detailed questions about the victimization experience itself, and the consequences of the crime.

Researchers at the Center for Policy Research has since designed the National Violence Against Women Survey. These results are derived from a sample that is contacted via national random digit dialing of telephone households and enclose 8,000 English-speaking and Spanish-speaking women 18 years of age and older, and 8,000 men who reside in households throughout the United States. Originally introduced to respondents as a survey merely on personal safety, it has since become more important and widely known for its efforts at examining domestic violence and violence against women specifically.

The National Violence Against Women Survey asks about general fear of violence and ways of coping with that fear. Emotional abuse suffered at the hands of a current or former spouse and same sex or opposite sex cohabitating partners. Physical assault experience as a child at the hands of a caretaker, or physical assault experience as an adult at the hands of other adults. And finally, it asks questions regarding their experience with forcible rape and stalking over the course of their lifetime.

The data from the National Violence Against Women Survey are definitely rich in the sense that respondents disclosing victimization are asked detailed questions about the characteristics and consequences of violence, the relationship between the victims and the perpetrator, any injuries sustained, the use of medical, mental health, and criminal justice services, and time lost at work, school, or lost time for household chores. Essentially 72% of women and 69% of men agreed to be interviewed and completed the interview, which is observably lower than the NCVS response rate. Nevertheless, the National Violence Against Women Survey includes victimization experiences that were not reported to authorities. And those that were reported, which is similar to the NCVS.

This portion of the presentation now focuses on comparing the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey. This comparison largely draws from Bachman's article entitled "Comparison of annual incident rates and contextual characteristics of intimate partner violence against women from the National Crime Victimization Survey and the National Violence Against Women Survey."

Specifically, the Bachman article compared the NCVS and the National Violence Against Women Survey in terms of the relative risk of intimate partner violence for women by age, income, and race. Violence perpetrated annually against women by types of vendors, such as intimate partners versus strangers. Estimates of physical injury resulting from victimization by types of offenders such as intimate versus non-intimate partners, and compare the estimates of police reporting behavior. To make comparisons between the NCVS and the National Violence Against Women Survey, only victimizations reported by individuals 18 and older that were experienced in the past 12 months were included in the analysis. Because unlike the NCVS who interviews those over the age of 11, the National Violence Against Women Survey only sampled those who were 18 years of age and older.

The National Violence Against Women Survey defines rape as an event or attempted event that occurred without the victim's consent that involves the use or threat of force to penetrate the victim's vagina or anus by penis, tongue, fingers, or objects, or the victim's mouth by penis. Physical assault is defined as behavior that threatened, attempted, or actually inflicted physical harm. In comparison, the NCVS or National Crime Victimization Survey, defined rape as forced sexual intercourse and includes psychological coercion as well as physical force.

Forced sexual intercourse means vaginal, anal, or oral penetration, and includes incidents where the penetration is from a foreign object. Comparatively, assault is defined as an unlawful physical attack whether aggravated or simple committed against another person. It also includes attempted assaults, and assaults committed with or without a weapon. The specific comparisons in the rate or incidents of rape is 33% according to National Crime Victimization Survey, and 41% according to the National Violence Against Women Survey. Regarding physical assault, estimates in the National Crime Victimization Survey are 31% compared to those that are 69% in the National Violence Against Women Survey.

Regarding other comparisons between the NCVS and the National Violence Against Women Survey, intimates perpetrated more than two-thirds of all physical assaults reported according to the National Violence Against Women Survey. This compares to one-third of all assault victimizations reported in the National Crime Victimization Survey. Accordingly to the NCVS, an intimate perpetrated 33% of all rapes in contrast to the National Violence Against Women Survey where an intimate reportedly perpetrates 41% of all rapes. Overall, both surveys indicate that women are more likely to be raped and physically assaulted by someone they know and love-- specifically an intimate partner.

Both surveys indicate that women are more likely to be raped by someone they know and love. More comparison between the NCVS and the National Violence Against Women Survey indicates both surveys report similar proportions of intimate offenders using weapons. Specifically 15% percent according to National Crime Victimization Survey and 13% according to National Violence Against Women Survey. This is almost one in five intimate partner assaults involving a weapon.

According to NCVS, 48% of adult women victimized in the past 12 months by an intimate partner or injured compared to only 41% of victims in the National Violence Against Women Survey. According to estimates from the NCVS, more than one-half-- 54% specifically-- of assaults perpetrated by an intimate partner against women were reported to the police compared to only 35% of assaults perpetrated by an intimate partner according to estimates from the National Violence Against Women Survey.

It's important that we review the several methodological differences between the NCVS and the National Violence Against Women Survey. For example, there were instrumentation differences in that the National Violence Against Women Survey is presented as a survey interested in safety-related issues, whereas the NCVS is presented as a survey about crime. The term "crime" may discourage some respondents from reporting some incidents they do not perceive as a crime.

There were also screening question differences. Specifically, there were major differences in the screening questions used by the two surveys. They were also sampling differences in a sense they used different sampling frames.

In the end, measuring violence against women will always be difficult for several reasons. The nature of the subject matter is very private. There's also perceived stigma associated with one's victimization. Also, there's a general belief that no purpose may be served by reporting it. And oftentimes the victims fear retaliation from the offender.

Nevertheless, surveys that attempt to measure sensitive subject matter present researchers with a number of ethical considerations. Researchers must never lose sight of the possibility that with every telephone call, the respondent could be living with an abusive partner and that their safety could be jeopardized should the intimate partner-- abusive partner specifically-- learn about the nature of the survey. Also, by asking respondents to recall events of abuse and violence, there's always the possibility of causing these victims more emotional trauma and harm.

In general, the NCVS has done little to protect the safety of its respondents or offer guidance in finding emotional support should they need it. Comparatively, respondents of the National Violence Against Women Survey are given a toll-free number they can call should they need to suddenly hang up during the course of the interview. The National Violence Against Women Survey interviewees were also instructed to contact a supervisor at the first sign a respondent was becoming upset or distraught. The supervisors were provided with referral information from the National Domestic Violence Coalition that listed rape crisis and domestic violence hotline numbers from around the country.