

## **The Evolving Role of Self-report Surveys of Criminal Victimization in a System of Statistics on Crime and the Administration of Justice**

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Routinely collected statistics on crime and the administration of justice are essential for developing laws and policies that are responsive to the crime problem and for holding the police, courts and correctional agencies accountable in the execution of those policies. Any statistical system on crime and the administration of justice should include the opportunity for the direct participation of citizens in providing information on the crime problem. This direct participation enhances our ability to check on administrative record data and to bolster the legitimacy of these statistics more generally. Victimization surveys allow citizens to have this direct participation. The specific role of victimization surveys in a statistical system will depend upon the credibility and technical proficiencies of the police, court and correctional agencies. This paper describes the preferred role of victimization surveys and the technological challenges in playing that role under different conditions of legitimacy and technical capabilities.

**Key Words:** Crime statistics, citizen participation, administrative records, victimization surveys.