



Office for
National Statistics

Measuring the Sexual Identity of Survey Respondents in the CAPI and CATI modes

Tom Anderson

ONS Social Survey

Acknowledgements

Colleagues in:

- ONS social data collection methodology
- Economic, Labour and Social Analysis directorate (ELS)
- ONS Social Survey

Focus of presentation

Context (drivers, census vs. survey)

Recommended questions for different modes

Additional findings from the development work

First 'experimental' estimates

Drivers

- Law / Government policy and apparatus / user demand for data / 'public' opinion
- From the 1965 Race Relations Act to the Equality Act 2010
- Strong user demand for data from 2011 census
- 'Lack of trusted statistics = invisibility in policy making'
- Not included in census – but ONS needed to address the demand

Sexual Identity Project

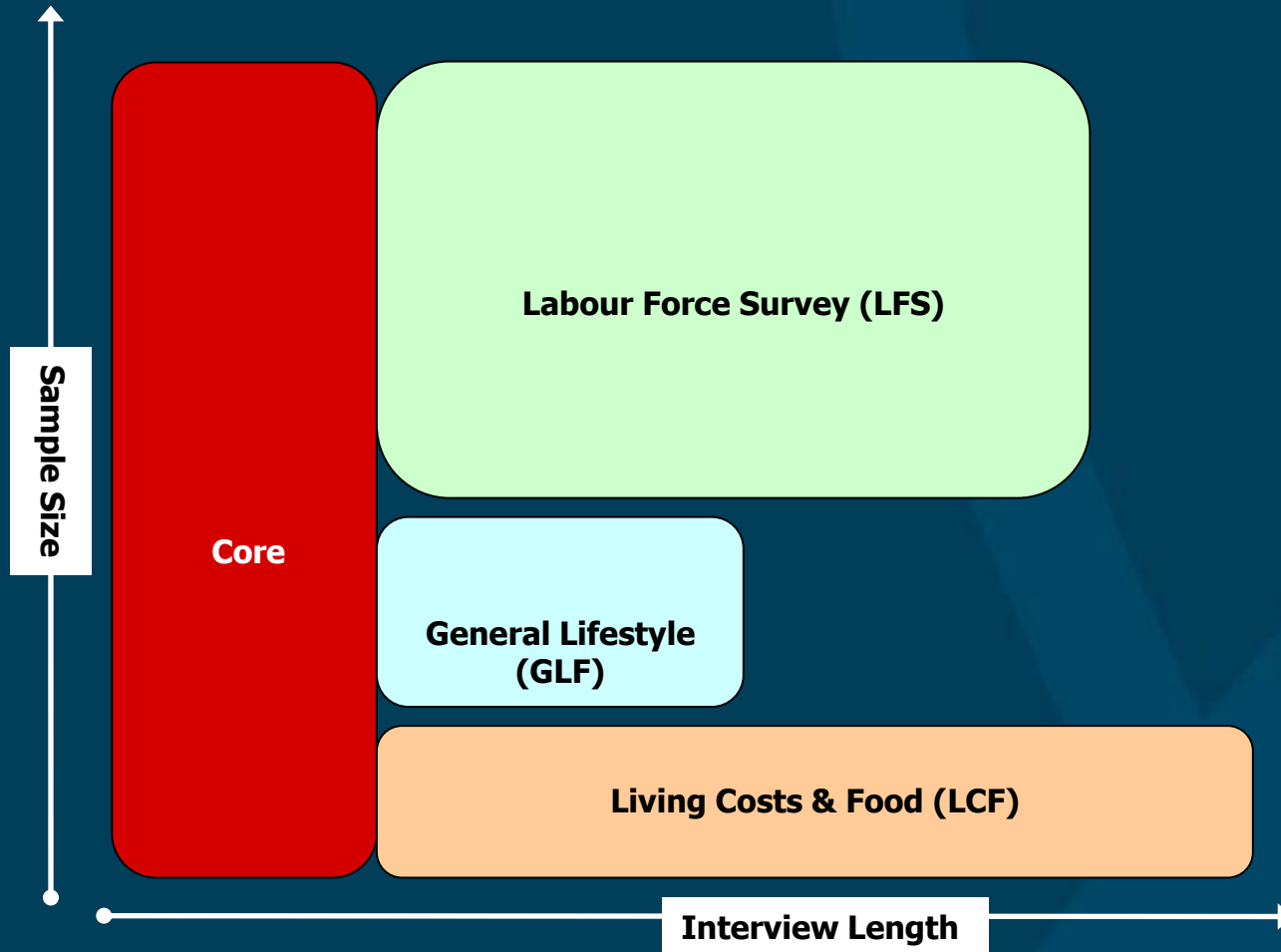
Started in 2006

Aims:

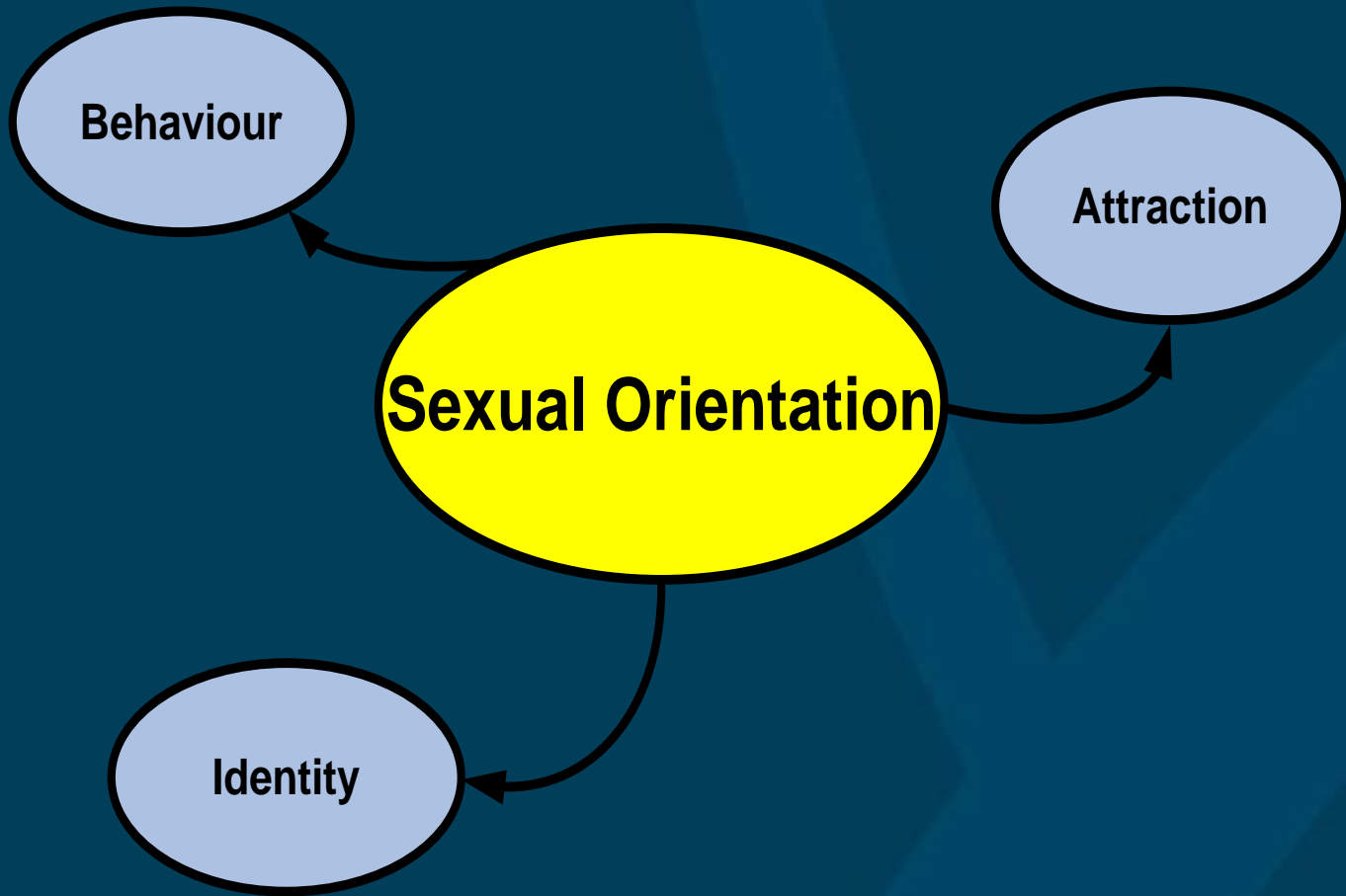
- Develop harmonised social survey questions for the Integrated Household Survey
- Reliable and valid data for equality monitoring purposes
- Develop trusted 'benchmark' statistics around sexual orientation
- Provide guidance for other social surveys

User consultation / involvement at all stages

The Integrated Household Survey



Dimensions of sexual orientation



Why pick sexual *identity* to measure?

- Subjective judgement – measure as an opinion
- Logical fit with IHS
- Minimise burden on survey respondents
- Minimise the cost
- Perhaps most likely to be correlated with disadvantage / discrimination in social domains measured (employment, housing, etc)

Work informing the question design

Feasibility work

- Reviews: Literature, legal framework, UK and International surveys
- Qualitative: focus groups, telephone interviews with refusers, feedback from the field
- Quantitative: 4 pilots

Main stage of project

- Qualitative: cognitive interviewing
- Quantitative: 1 pilot in concurrent interviewing environment

The question - CAPI

ASK ALL AGED 16 OR OVER

[NAME] SHOWCARD 1, [NAME] SHOWCARD 2, [NAME]
SHOWCARD 3 etc

**Which of the options on this card best describes how you
think of yourself?**

**(Only if concurrent interview) Please just read out the number
next to the description.**

27. Heterosexual / Straight

21. Gay / Lesbian

24. Bisexual

29. Other

(Spontaneous DK/Refusal)

The question - CATI

ASK ALL AGED 16 OR OVER

I will now read out a list of terms people sometimes use to describe how they think of themselves.

(INTERVIEWER: read list to end without pausing.

Note that 'Heterosexual or Straight' is one option; 'Gay or Lesbian' is one option.)

1. Heterosexual or Straight,
2. Gay or Lesbian,
3. Bisexual,
4. Other

(Spontaneous DK/Refusal)

As I read the list again please say 'yes' when you hear the option that best describes how you think of yourself.

(INTERVIEWER: Pause briefly after each option during second reading.)

Recommended self-completion question

ALL AGED 16 OR OVER

Which of the following options best describes how you think of yourself?

1. Heterosexual or Straight,
2. Gay or Lesbian,
3. Bisexual,
4. Other
5. Prefer not to say

Other findings during development

- No evidence of negative impact on response rates from measuring sexual identity
- No matter what mechanism you have to maximise privacy, you will never get 100% of respondents answering honestly
- The cognitive process in answering the question differs depending on sexual identity
- The question should be asked with similar questions, but there was evidence of an order effect associated with religion
- Get your interviewers on board!

Why not CASI or A-CASI?

CASI module within CAPI often used to collect 'sensitive' data – this was the original intention.

BUT

- Having sexual identity as a CASI module was drawing unnecessary attention to the question
- It was taking too long to administer the question
- Needed a 'prefer not to say' answer option which increased item non-response
- A 'section refused' option was used in confidentiality was likely to be compromised – which also reduced coverage

'Experimental' estimates

- New official statistics undergoing evaluation
- Published to involve others in their development; building in quality at an early stage
- Can be subject to revision

Headline experimental estimate

Sexual Identity, April 2009 to March 2010

	Population aged 16 and over	
	Thousands	Percentages
Heterosexual / Straight	46,922	94.8
Gay / Lesbian	481	1
Bisexual	245	0.5
Other	242	0.5
Don't know / refusal	1,393	2.8
Non response	233	0.5

Other is a valid response provided by the responder.

ONS defines non response as no data provided to the question by an eligible responder.

Source: *Integrated Household Survey, ONS*

Comparisons with other surveys

Table 6 Comparison of LGB estimates; surveys from within the UK

Survey	Coverage	Year	LGB (%)	Sample Size	Non response (%)
Integrated Household Survey	UK	2009/10	1.5	238,206	3.8
Citizenship Survey	England and Wales	2009/10	2.3	9,203	2.7
British Crime Survey	England and Wales	2009/10	2.2	22,995	2.7
General Lifestyle Survey	Great Britain	2008	1.1	3,443	5.4
Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey	Northern Ireland	2005	1.7	1,199	1.3
British Social Attitudes Survey	Great Britain	2005	1.4	1,732	1.4
Scottish Census Small Test	Scotland	2005	1.3	692	14.7
DTI Fair Treatment at Work Pilot Survey	Great Britain	2008	2.4	2,704	9

The International Perspective

Survey	Country	Year	LGB population proportion %	Sample size	Non response
IHS	UK	2009/2 010	1.5	247,623	3.3
Norwegian Living Conditions Survey	Norway	2010	1.2	6,238	8.5
Oregon Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System	USA	2006	2.4	9,853	2.3
Canadian Community Health Survey	Canada	2005	2	132,947	1.6
California Health Interview Survey	USA	2005	4.1	12,571	1.8
North Dakota Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System	USA	2004	1	3,045	3.8
National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey	USA	2003/2 004	3.1	10,122	0.7
Vermont Behavioural Risk Factor Surveillance System	USA	2002	4.6	4,239	6.8

Where to find more information

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/about-statistics/measuring-equality/equality/sexual-identity-project/index.html>