

# Participatory Establishment Survey Research: Centering the Respondent in Developing the Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES)

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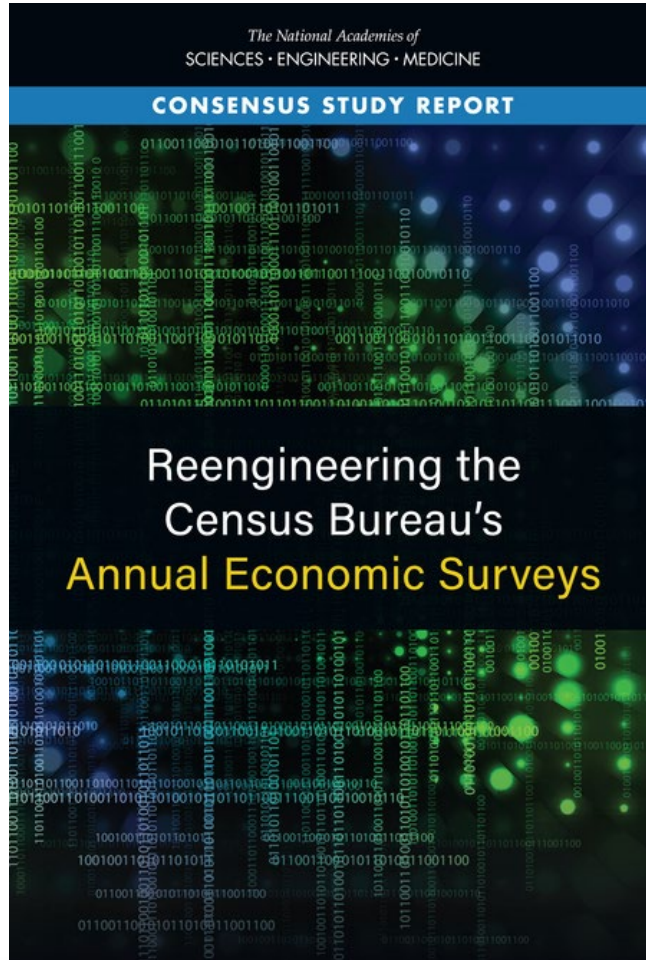
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Joint Statistical Meeting

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# Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES)

# NAS Panel of Experts and the ABSS



- Panel of Experts
- Factors:
  - Budget pressures
  - Declining response rates
  - Increasing periodicity and granularity
  - Increasing competition
- ABSS to include:
  - Integrated and harmonized content
  - Revamped sampling strategy
  - Coordinated collection strategy
  - Inclusion of alternate response methods
  - Single dissemination platform
  - Multi-sector and subnational estimates

# ANNUAL INTEGRATED ECONOMIC SURVEY (AIES)

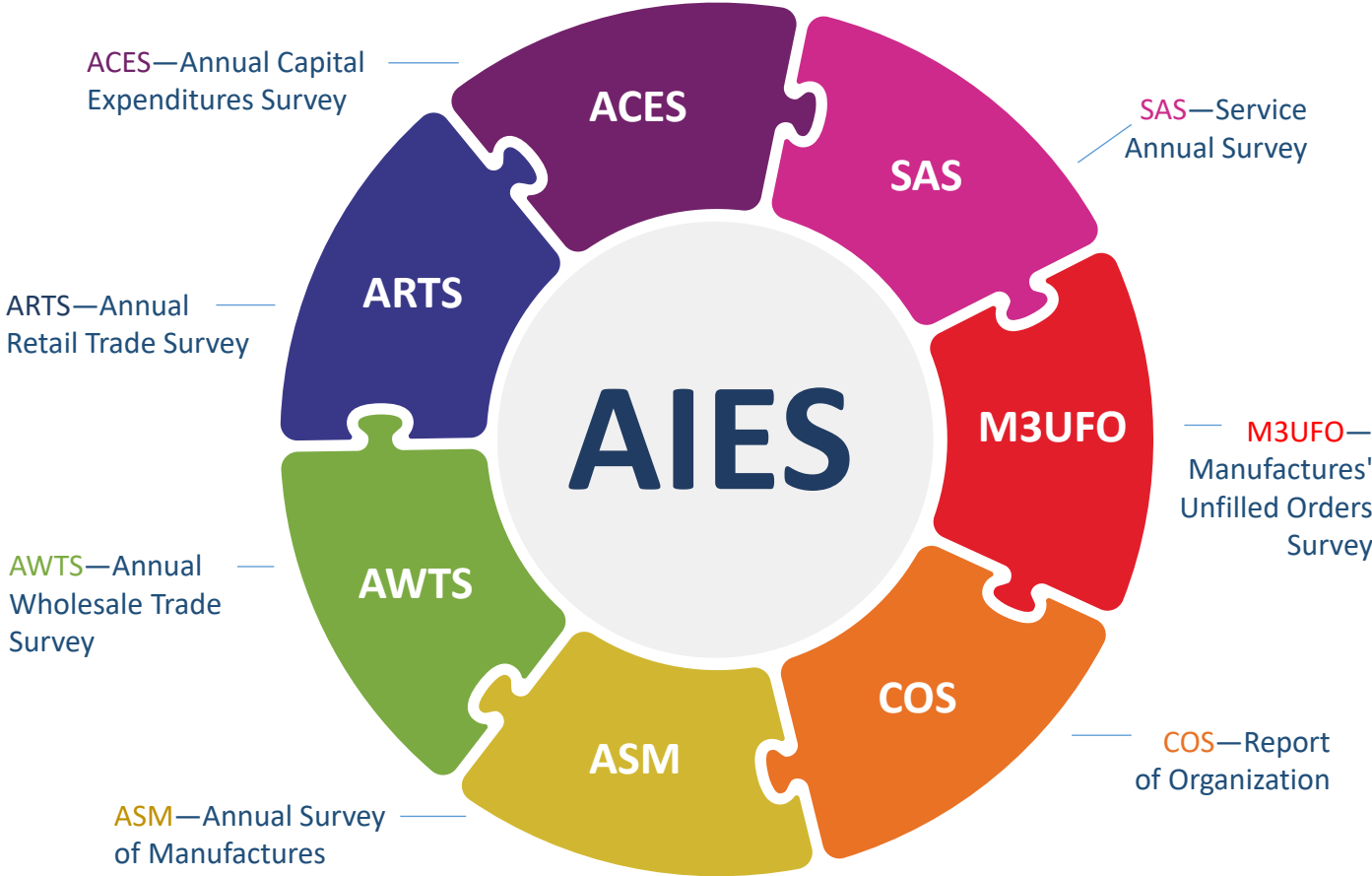
Current State

- Industry focused
- Overlapping content
- National estimates
- Independent samples
- Different reporting units by program
- Inefficient processes and operations
- Varying classification systems

Future State

- Alignment to enterprise programs
- Consolidated processing system
- Integrated frame and sample
- National and state geographic estimates
- Standardized and rotating content
- Respondent centric
- Coordinated collection and instruments
- Harmonized reporting units
- Leveraging of alternative data
- Holistic company analysis
- Economy-wide data products

Integration of Seven Annual Economic Surveys

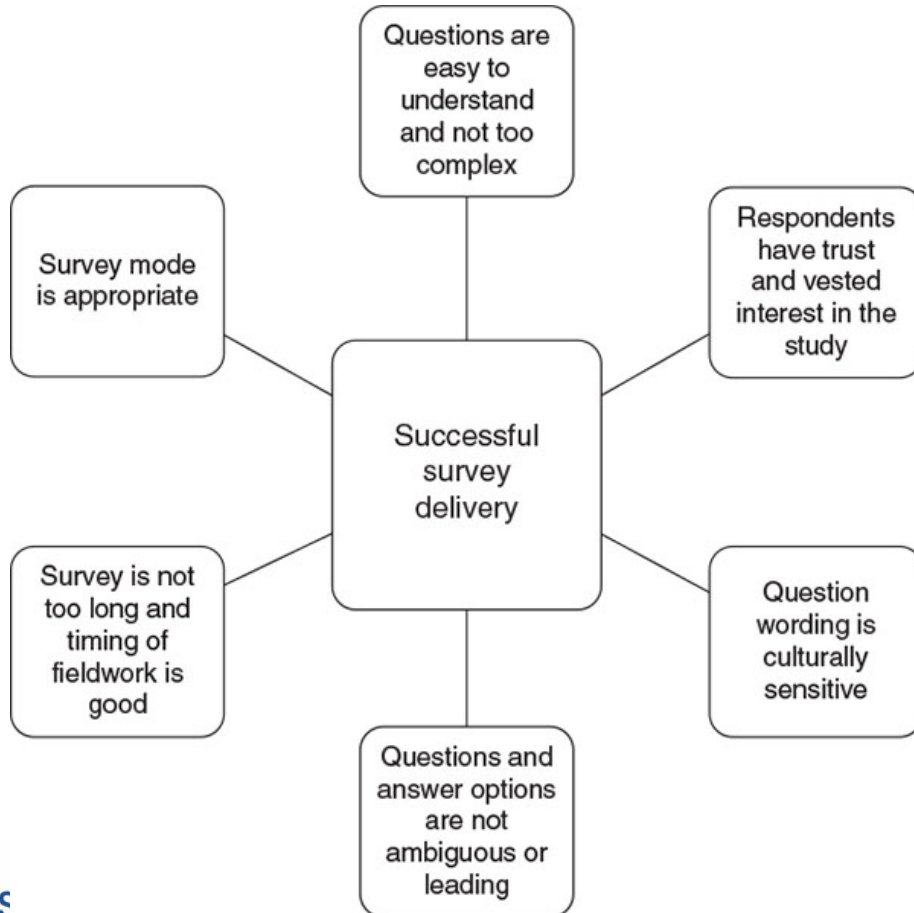


# Participatory Research

# What is Participatory Research?

- Orientation to research, not a methodology
- Research is “co-created” with the communities in which it is conducted:
  - Research questions
  - Investigatory methods
  - Dissemination, use, and perpetuation
- Engages key stakeholders throughout communities in every step of research

# Are surveys participatory?



- Tied to discipline:
  - Health:
    - Brown et al 2005 – CHIS: Respondent feedback was used to determine sample size and composition, influence the final instrument design (including content), and periodicity of collection (3).
  - Government:
    - AmeriCorps’ Office of Research and Evaluation: Current Population Survey, Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement
- Can we use for establishment surveys?

# Respondent-Centered Establishment Survey Design



# Research Questions:

- 1. Definitions:** how do businesses define themselves relative to the Census Bureau definitions?
- 2. Accessibility:** how accessible are key data points at varying business units?
- 3. Burden:** how resource intensive is gathering data at these varying business units?

Formative



Summative



Simulative

# Record Keeping Study

## Research Overview:

- 29 interviews with medium-sized companies
- **Topics:**
  - NAICS
  - Four key variables: sales/receipts/revenues; inventory; expenses; capital expenditures
  - Response process overall

## Major Findings:

- NAICS isn't intuitive
- Operating units vary
- Company-level data are key

29 RKS interviews  
+30 DAS interviews  
**59 total interviews**

# Data Accessibility Study

## Research Overview:

- 30 interviews with medium-sized companies
- **Topics:**
  - Definitions and equivalencies
  - NAICS
  - Data accessibility by level and topic

## Major Findings:

- NAICS is still challenging
- Accessibility ranges:
  - Company = most accessible
  - Industry = less accessible
- State would be sum of establishments

# Coordinated Collection Debriefing Study

29 RKS interviews  
+30 DAS interviews  
+35 R-CC interviews  
+19 NR-CC interviews  
113 total interviews

## Research Overview:

- 35 interviews with responding companies
- 19 interviews with non-responding companies
- **Topics:**
  - Evaluation of contact materials
  - Barriers to response

## Major Findings:

- Mixed results with communications
  - Letters and emails: COVID-impacted
  - Respondent portal: positive
  - Responsiveness: less positive
- Barriers to response can be external (company-related) or internal (survey-related)

# Survey Structure Study

29 RKS interviews  
+30 DAS interviews  
+35 R-CC interviews  
+19 NR-CC interviews  
+39 SS interviews  
152 total interviews

## Research Overview:

- 39 interviews
- **Topics:**
  - Mock-ups of screens
  - Mode of completion
  - General impression

## Major Findings:

- Unit and topic both play a role in response
- NAICS is challenging
- Respondent wants:
  - Spreadsheet
  - PDF previews
  - Ability to share the survey

# SUMMATIVE RESEARCH

## AIES PILOT PHASE I

- N = 78 companies, with 62 providing at least some response
- Multi-method collection:
  - Online instrument with harmonized content
  - Debriefing interviews
  - Response Analysis Survey
  - Field monitoring
- Major Findings:
  - Instrument needs additional features
  - Burden is unclear

## AIES PILOT PHASE II

- N = 890 companies, with 318 providing at least some response (36% RR)
- Multi-method collection:
  - Updated response spreadsheet
  - Debriefing interviews
  - Response Analysis Survey
- Additional response support
- Major Findings:
  - Communications needs refining
  - Instrument features support response
  - Instrument change as burden

# SIMULATIVE RESEARCH

- Upcoming AIES Dress Rehearsal
  - Approximate N = 8,200
  - Launches in late summer/early fall
- Field conditions for respondents and us!
- Last testing before 2024 full implementation

# Is what we did participatory research?

- Research is “co-created” with the communities in which it is conducted:
  - Research questions
  - Investigatory methods
  - Dissemination, use, and perpetuation
- Respondent-centered, NOT participatory



# Can we engage participatory research in establishment surveys?

## No!

- Motivational mismatch
  - Response on behalf of a business – the ‘businesses’ best interest’
- Mission mismatch
  - The production of official measures of the economy

## Yes!

- Historically undercounted populations in an establishment survey context
- Establishments are embedded in social communities

# What might participatory establishment survey research include?

- Exploration of Historically Undercounted Populations in establishment surveys
- Include coalitions, community groups, and others in framing of needs
- Mechanisms for continued feedback/co-creation of knowledge

# Thank you!

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