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Victimization in Anchorage: Findings from the Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

Matthew Giblin

Throughout the country as a whole, crime tends to be significantly underreported for a variety of reasons. According to a survey conducted by the Justice Center, this is true for Anchorage as well.

This article, the second in a series of *Alaska Justice Forum* articles on findings from the Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey (AACVS), will look at actual criminal victimization experiences of the survey respondents, including whether such victimizations were reported to the police. Also presented are findings from a national victimization survey and a similar local victimization survey conducted in 12 cities.

The Anchorage survey was administered between April 1 and June 30, 2002. Eligible respondents, who were residents age 18 or older, were contacted via a household (non-business) telephone line. In general, the telephone calls were made on weekdays between 10:00 AM and 9:00 PM, although calls were usually not made during the dinner hours between 5:00 PM and 7:00 PM. A random-digit dialing (RDD) method that generates phone numbers using a computer program was used. Since each household with a telephone had an equal chance of being contacted, this method increased the likelihood that the residents surveyed were, in fact, representative of Anchorage residents.

Interviewers explained the purpose of the study to potential respondents, guaranteed confidentiality, and asked for participation. It should be noted that although households were randomly called, no random selection

of individuals within households occurred. While such randomization was attempted in the first few days of survey administration, interviewers realized that the number of callbacks necessary to secure an interview with a randomly selected respondent would be

both time and cost prohibitive. Participating respondents within a household were selected simply based on who was willing to answer the survey questions (in most cases

Please see AACVS, page 6

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of AACVS Respondents and Municipality of Anchorage Residents Based on Census 2000

	AACVS respondents		2000 Census	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Sex				
Male (age 18 or older)	299	38.3 %	92,953	50.4 %
Female (age 18 or older)	481	61.6	91,959	49.6
Refused	1	0.1	--	--
Race¹				
White	597	76.5 %	188,009	72.2 %
African-American	40	5.1	15,199	5.8
Alaska Native/American Indian	49	6.3	18,941	7.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	21	2.7	16,856	6.5
Other	22	2.8	5,703	2.2
Multiracial	27	3.5	15,575	6.0
Don't know	1	0.1	--	--
Refused	23	2.9	--	--
Hispanic origin¹				
Hispanic	41	5.2 %	14,799	5.7 %
Non-Hispanic	723	92.6	245,484	94.3
Don't know	1	0.1	--	--
Refused	16	2.0	--	--
Age				
18-19	33	4.2 %	7,192	3.9 %
20-24	60	7.7	17,694	9.6
25-34	164	21.0	40,113	21.8
35-44	179	22.9	48,210	26.1
45-54	167	21.4	38,803	21.0
55-64	106	13.6	18,158	9.8
65+	57	7.3	14,242	7.7
Don't know	1	0.1	--	--
Refused	14	1.8	--	--
Household income²				
Less than \$50,000	283	36.2 %	42,108	44.3 %
\$50,000 or more	344	44.0	52,972	55.7
Don't know	37	4.7	--	--
Refused	117	15.0	--	--

¹ Census data related to race and Hispanic origin refer to the entire population, while the data for the AACVS refer to respondents age 18 years and older.

² A \$50,000 dividing mark was used, since the census and AACVS categories only corresponded at this mark.

Source: Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

HIGHLIGHTS INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- U.S. prison populations continue to grow (page 2).
- A description of special visas for immigrant victims of crime (page 4).

Number of Prisoners Continues to Grow

Table 1. Prisoners Under the Jurisdiction of State or Federal Correctional Authorities, by Region and Jurisdiction, Yearend 2001 to 2002

Region and jurisdiction	Total			Percent change	
	12/31/2001	6/30/2002	12/31/2002	12/31/01-12/31/02	6/30/02-12/31/02
U.S. total	1,404,032	1,423,095	1,440,655	2.6 %	1.2 %
Federal	156,993	161,681	163,528	4.2	1.1
State	1,247,039	1,261,414	1,277,127	2.4	1.2
Northeast	172,599	175,118	175,907	1.9 %	0.5 %
Connecticut ^a	19,196	20,243	20,720	7.9	2.4
Maine	1,704	1,841	1,900	11.5	3.2
Massachusetts	10,588	10,620	10,329	-2.4	-2.7
New Hampshire	2,392	2,476	2,451	2.5	-1.0
New Jersey	28,142	28,054	27,891	-0.9	-0.6
New York	67,533	67,131	67,065	-0.7	-0.1
Pennsylvania	38,062	39,275	40,168	5.5	2.3
Rhode Island ^d	3,241	3,694	3,520	8.6	-4.7
Vermont ^a	1,741	1,784	1,863	7.0	4.4
Midwest	240,679	243,876	245,303	1.9 %	0.6 %
Illinois	44,348	43,142	42,693	-3.7	-1.0
Indiana	20,966	21,425	21,611	3.1	0.9
Iowa ^b	7,962	8,172	8,398	5.5	2.8
Kansas	8,577	8,758	8,935	4.2	2.0
Michigan	48,849	49,961	50,591	3.6	1.3
Minnesota	6,606	6,958	7,129	7.9	2.5
Missouri	28,757	30,034	30,099	4.7	0.2
Nebraska	3,937	4,031	4,058	3.1	0.7
North Dakota	1,111	1,168	1,112	0.1	-4.8
Ohio	45,281	45,349	45,646	0.8	0.7
South Dakota	2,790	2,900	2,898	3.9	-0.1
Wisconsin	21,495	21,978	22,133	3.0	0.7
South	560,352	564,592	574,174	2.5 %	1.7 %
Alabama	26,741	27,495	27,947	4.5	1.6
Arkansas	12,594	12,655	13,090	3.9	3.4
Delaware ^a	7,003	6,957	6,778	-3.2	-2.6
Florida ^b	72,404	73,553	75,210	3.9	2.3
Georgia ^b	45,937	46,417	47,445	3.3	2.2
Kentucky	15,424	16,172	15,933	3.3	-1.5
Louisiana	35,810	36,171	35,736	-0.2	-1.2
Maryland	23,752	24,329	24,162	1.7	-0.7
Mississippi	21,460	22,001	22,705	5.8	3.2
North Carolina	32,253	32,755	32,803	1.7	0.1
Oklahoma	22,780	23,435	23,385	2.7	-0.2
South Carolina	22,576	23,017	23,715	5.0	3.0
Tennessee	23,671	24,277	24,989	5.6	2.9
Texas	162,070	158,131	162,003	0.0	2.4
Virginia	31,662	32,739	33,729	6.5	3.0
West Virginia	4,215	4,488	4,544	7.8	1.2
West	273,409	277,828	281,743	3.0 %	1.4 %
Alaska ^a	4,571	4,205	4,398	-3.8	4.6
Arizona ^b	27,710	29,103	29,359	6.0	0.9
California	159,444	160,315	162,317	1.8	1.2
Colorado	17,448	18,320	18,833	7.9	2.8
Hawaii ^a	5,431	5,541	5,423	-0.1	-2.1
Idaho	5,984	5,802	6,204	3.7	6.9
Montana	3,328	3,515	3,290	-1.1	-6.4
Nevada	10,233	10,426	10,478	2.4	0.5
New Mexico	5,668	5,875	5,989	5.7	1.9
Oregon	11,410	11,812	12,086	5.9	2.3
Utah	5,339	5,353	5,567	4.3	4.0
Washington	15,159	15,829	16,062	6.0	1.5
Wyoming	1,684	1,732	1,737	3.1	0.3

Note: As of December 31, 2001, the transfer of responsibility for sentenced felons from the District of Columbia to the Federal Bureau of Prisons was completed. The District of Columbia no longer operates a prison system and has been excluded from NPS.

a. Prisons and jails form on integrated system. Data include total jail and prison population.

b. Population figures are based on custody counts.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

The total U.S. prison population continues the inexorable growth it has exhibited over the last two decades, although the rate of growth seems to have slowed somewhat. At the end of 2002, over 1,400,000 individuals were held in jails and prisons throughout the country, according to figures released by the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. This total includes sentenced felons and misdemeanants and unsentenced detainees. Close to 4,400 individuals were in custody under the jurisdiction of the state of Alaska.

United States

The Bureau of Justice Statistics assembles its figures from counts reported by the state departments of corrections and the federal prison system. Table 1 shows the precise numbers for all the states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

According to the 2002 year-end figures for the nation as a whole, the rate of growth in the number of those imprisoned has slowed a little. There was an increase of only 2.6 percent in the number of prisoners between the end of 2001 and the end of 2002. The annual average growth rate since 1995 has been 3.6 percent.

Figure 1 shows graphically the rise in the total number of prisoners sentenced to more than one year—in general, sentenced felons—from 1925 through 2002. Since 1980, the actual number of individuals in custody sentenced to more than one year has grown by more than 300 percent, and since 1993 alone, by about 48 percent. These numbers represent a rise in the rate of incarceration from 139 per 100,000 resident population in 1980 to 476 in 2002 (Table 2).

Alaska

The Alaska numbers have also risen steeply, although not as precipitously as the national figures. The total number of individuals in custody under the jurisdiction of the state of Alaska at the end of 2002 was 4,398. Over the last decade the total inmate population has increased by over 60 percent, from 2,703 at the end of 1993 (Table 3). These year-end totals include all sentenced and unsentenced individuals held under state jurisdiction, including those in a private facility in Arizona and other out-of-state facilities.

Further, the subpopulation of individuals sentenced to more than one year—essentially, the long-term prison population—grew by more than 17 percent in 2002 alone. The rate of incarceration for Alaska—which

Table 2. Sentenced Prisoners Under Jurisdiction of State and Federal Correctional Authorities at End of Year, 1925-2002

Includes prisoners sentenced to more than one year.

Sentenced prisoners			Sentenced prisoners			Sentenced prisoners			Sentenced prisoners		
Year	Number	Rate per 100,000 population	Year	Number	Rate per 100,000 population	Year	Number	Rate per 100,000 population	Year	Number	Rate per 100,000 population
1925	91,669	79	1945	133,649	98	1965	210,895	108	1985	480,568	202
1926	97,991	83	1946	140,079	99	1966	199,654	102	1986	522,084	217
1927	109,983	91	1947	151,304	105	1967	194,896	98	1987	560,812	231
1928	116,390	96	1948	155,977	106	1968	187,914	94	1988	603,732	247
1929	120,496	98	1949	163,749	109	1969	196,007	97	1989	680,907	276
1930	129,453	104	1950	166,123	109	1970	196,429	96	1990	739,980	297
1931	137,082	110	1951	165,680	107	1971	198,061	95	1991	789,610	313
1932	137,997	110	1952	168,233	107	1972	196,092	93	1992	846,277	332
1933	136,810	109	1953	173,579	108	1973	204,211	96	1993	932,074	359
1934	138,316	109	1954	182,901	112	1974	218,466	102	1994	1,016,691	389
1935	144,180	113	1955	185,780	112	1975	240,593	111	1995	1,085,022	411
1936	145,038	113	1956	189,565	112	1976	262,833	120	1996	1,137,722	427
1937	152,741	118	1957	195,414	113	1977	285,456	129	1997	1,194,581	444
1938	160,285	123	1958	205,643	117	1978	294,396	132	1998	1,245,402	461
1939	179,818	137	1959	208,105	117	1979	301,470	133	1999	1,304,074	476
1940	173,706	131	1960	212,953	117	1980	315,974	139	2000	1,321,137	478
1941	165,439	124	1961	220,149	119	1981	353,673	154	2001	1,345,217	470
1942	150,384	112	1962	218,830	117	1982	395,516	171	2002	1,380,370	476
1943	137,220	103	1963	217,283	114	1983	419,346	179			
1944	132,456	100	1964	214,336	111	1984	443,398	188			

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

is based on this subpopulation—was 396 per 100,000 resident population at the end of 2002.

Alaska had over 30 percent of its inmates in private facilities at the end of 2002, one of the highest percentages among the states. Nationally, 6.5 percent of all inmates are held in privately-owned facilities.

Table 3. Prisoners Under Alaska Jurisdiction at End of Year, 1993-2002

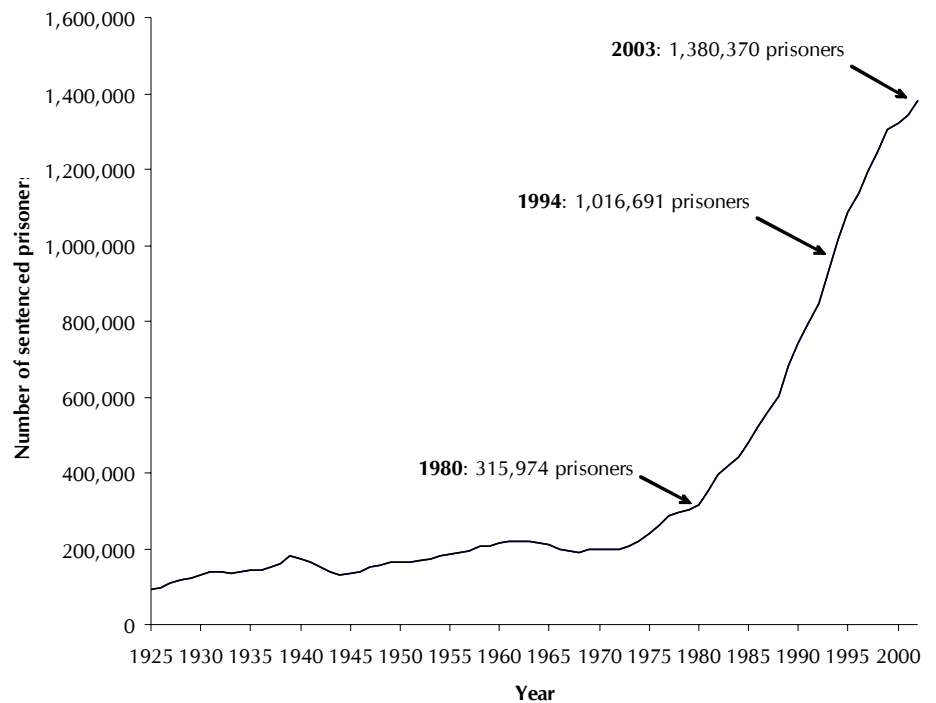
Includes both sentenced and unsentenced in both jails and prisons.

Year	Number of prisoners
1993	2,703
1994	3,292
1995	3,522
1996	3,716
1997	4,165
1998	4,097
1999	3,949
2000	4,173
2001	4,571
2002	4,398

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Figure 1. Sentenced Prisoners Under Jurisdiction of State and Federal Correctional Authorities at End of Year, 1925-2002

Includes prisoners sentenced to more than 1 year.



Source of data: Bureau of Justice Statistics

Visa Protections for Immigrant Victims of Crime

Robin Bronen

Among the barriers immigrant crime victims face when seeking access to the criminal justice system—language, culture and a lack of knowledge about the process—fear of deportation and permanent separation from family members, including children, is by far the most significant impediment. This fear prevents many immigrant crime victims from seeking police protection, shelter, medical care and other social services. For immigrant victims of domestic violence, the fear is compounded because abusive partners use the threat of deportation to ensure that the victim remains isolated.

Recognizing that the immigrant population is extremely vulnerable to victimization because of the fear of deportation, Congress has taken steps over the last decade to ensure that immigrant crime victims are afforded safety and protection, regardless of their immigration status. Immigration remedies provided in federal legislation specifically focus on those who are residing in the United States, but do not have immigration documents to live and work here. The federal legislation provides immigration options

to these individuals in certain situations to dispel their fear of deportation and to encourage cooperation with criminal investigations and prosecutions.

The Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 both contain provisions addressing immigrant victims of crime. The 1994 legislation specifically addressed the immigration issues that faced many immigrant domestic violence victims by allowing those married to a United States citizen or lawful permanent resident to legalize their immigration status without depending on the abusive spouse.

Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (VAWA)

Prior to the enactment of VAWA in 1994, immigrant spouses were not able to apply for legal residency and work in the United States without the cooperation of the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse.

Under VAWA an immigrant/non-citizen spouse married to an abusive partner who is a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident can file on her own to legally reside

and work in the United States. The process is called a “self-petition.” To be eligible for lawful residency pursuant to VAWA, the non-citizen spouse must prove the following: (1) the marriage to the U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident is bona fide; (2) the citizen or lawful permanent resident spouse was abusive; and (3) the petitioner is a person of good moral character.

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000 (VTVPA)

The protections provided immigrant victims of crime under VAWA were further strengthened by legislation passed in 2000. This legislation—the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000—broadened eligibility for the self-petitioning process and also established two new visa categories specifically directed at immigrant victims. In doing this, Congress recognized that victim cooperation and assistance can be the key to effective detection, investigation and prosecution of crimes. The new visas—referred to as U and T visas—allow certain crime victims to remain in the U.S. for at least three years, with the possibility of being able to live and work here permanently.

U Visa

The U visa provides a specific avenue for immigrant crime victims to avoid deportation and obtain lawful immigration status. Further, it extends these protections to victims of some other types of crime commonly directed at immigrants. Prosecutors, local law enforcement and the judiciary are critical elements to the U-visa application process.

To qualify for a U visa, an immigrant must: (1) prove that she or he has suffered “substantial physical or mental abuse” as a result of one of the following forms of criminal activity: rape, torture, trafficking, incest, domestic violence, sexual assault, abusive sexual contact, prostitution, sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, being held hostage, peonage, involuntary servitude, slave trade, kidnapping, abduction, unlawful criminal restraint, false imprisonment, blackmail, extortion, manslaughter, murder, felonious assault, witness tampering, obstruction of justice, perjury, attempted perjury, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes; (2) show that she possesses information concerning criminal activity; and (3) provide certification from a federal, state or local law en-

Working of U-Visa Process for Immigrant Crime Victims

The following two cases, in which names and other identifying details have been obscured, illustrate the interaction of authorities with immigrant crime victims under the federal legislation described in the accompanying article.

An attorney on behalf of N.G. contacted Officer T. of the Anchorage Police Department to request that the officer complete the U-visa certification form because Ms. G. had been the victim of domestic violence. Several weeks prior to the attorney’s contact with Officer T., Ms. G. had called the police because her husband was assaulting her. Officer T. verified from police records that the police officers that arrived at the scene had filed a report on the domestic violence incident. He determined that the activity at issue related to a violation of Alaska criminal law and completed the U-visa certification form.

Because it was believed that a business was employing undocumented workers, the Department of Homeland Security

(DHS) conducted a raid. After the raid, DHS realized that the workers had been forced to work under slave-like conditions, including 14-hour days seven days each week. The workers were not being compensated for their work, with the employer threatening to report them to DHS if they complained.

DHS referred the case against the employer to the U.S. Attorney. Several weeks later, an attorney for several of the undocumented workers approached the U.S. Attorney’s office to request completion of the U-visa certification form. The U.S. Attorney verified that a crime of peonage had occurred and that the undocumented workers were cooperating with the criminal investigation and prosecution. The attorney completed the U-visa certification form.

forcement official, prosecutor or judge that states that the U-visa applicant is being, has been or is likely to be helpful to the investigation or prosecution of the criminal activity.

It must be noted that this list of crimes is not comprehensive. Consequently, an immigrant victim of an ordinary theft would not be able to apply for a U visa. An immigrant victim of unfair employment practices, however, may qualify for the visa.

T Visa

Congress created the T visa to address the growing international problem of human trafficking. As in the VTVPA, approximately 50,000 people, mostly women and children, are trafficked into the United States each year. Trafficking in persons is not limited to the sex industry, but includes forced labor, involuntary servitude and peonage. VTVPA defines severe trafficking as "(A) sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such

act has not yet attained 18 years of age; or (B) the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery."

The T visa provides a trafficking victim with the legal means to prevent deportation. To be eligible for a T visa, the immigrant applicant must prove that he or she: (1) is a victim of a severe form of trafficking; (2) is physically present in the United States; (3) complied with any reasonable request for assistance in the investigation or prosecution of acts of trafficking; and (4) would suffer extreme hardship involving unusual and severe harm if deported.

State Courts and Protection for Immigrant Victims

For an immigrant fleeing domestic violence, the protective orders available under Alaska statutes can be critical. In addition to the safety and protection provided, such orders, evidence that she or he has been the victim of domestic violence, can establish eligibility for the self-petition process. Further, a state court can issue specific orders that assist the non-citizen in gathering the documentation required by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS—now responsible for the administration of immigration). For example, the non-citizen must prove that the spouse is a U.S. citizen or a lawful permanent resident and that the spouse, if previously married, is divorced from the prior spouse. In the protective order process a state court judge can require this spouse to provide the documentation that proves immigration status or US citizenship, i.e., a birth certificate or passport.

A state court judge can also issue specific orders that protect the immigrant spouse from deportation and protect the children, regardless of their immigration status. On behalf of an immigrant petitioner in a domestic violence proceeding, a state court judge can order the respondent not to contact DHS and not to withdraw any immigration documents already filed on behalf of the petitioner and the couple's children. The state court judge can also require the respondent to provide the court with the children's passports to prevent the children from being removed from the United States without the knowledge of the petitioner.

Even though the federal legislation passed almost ten years ago, many domestic violence victims have no idea that they have a legal means of obtaining their immigration documents without depending on their abusive spouses. Many of these women have

been married to a United State citizen or lawful permanent resident for years and have remained in the abusive relationship hoping that the spouse will begin the immigration process so that they can legalize their status. These situations are often very dangerous because of the extreme isolation of the victim and the length of time that the violence has been occurring.

The Immigration and Refugee Services Program of Catholic Social Services is the primary agency in Alaska representing immigrant domestic violence victims in their applications with the DHS Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. It is often the first place that a domestic violence victim seeks information and referral resources.

The program has also worked intensively with the Department of Homeland Security to develop a process to protect immigrant crime victims. Many of the U-visa applicants have been victims of domestic violence or unfair employment practices. To date the U-visa program has worked with approximately 24 individuals in Alaska. However, many more individuals in the state may be eligible for this visa. It is critical that local law enforcement officers, investigators and prosecutors understand the VTVPA so that they can provide immigrant crime victims with this essential information regarding their safety and protection.

Congress has clearly expressed its intent to ensure that immigrant victims of crime receive protection and safety regardless of their immigration status. In Alaska, local law enforcement, prosecutors and judges can encourage immigrant crime victims to come forward and seek protection and safety and to assist in the investigation and prosecution of crimes by understanding the immigration remedies made available by VAWA and the VTVPA.

Robin Bronen is the director of the Immigration and Refugee Services Program at Catholic Social Services.

New Justice Center Faculty

Sharon Chamard and Ronald Everett have joined the Justice Center at UAA as faculty members. Everett, who holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, has previously worked with the National Institute of Justice and at the University of North Carolina. Chamard received her Ph.D. this year from the School of Criminal Justice at Rutgers University.



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AACVS

(continued from page 1)

this was the individual answering the telephone). The overall survey cooperation rate (number of completed interviews divided by the sum of completed interviews, refusals, terminations, hearing/language problems, and lack of respondent availability) was approximately 60 percent, based on a total of 781 secured interviews.

As shown in Table 1, a comparison of AACVS respondent characteristics and Anchorage Census 2000 data shows strong similarities, but two key differences are worth noting. First, survey respondents were disproportionately female. Second, a smaller proportion of AACVS respondents reported household incomes of \$50,000 or more, although this difference is likely due to the larger number of respondents who refused to answer the income question.

Criminal Victimization

Much of the survey instrument addressed the victimization experiences, if any, that the respondent had suffered in the previous twelve months and the characteristics of those victimizations. Crimes covered by the survey include rape, other sexual assault, aggravated and simple assault, robbery, larceny, motor vehicle theft, and burglary. Respondents were never directly asked whether they had been the victim of a specific crime. Instead, specific crime labels were attached to incidents based on responses to a series of questions representing definitions of particular crimes. This more indirect approach helped to avoid situations where respondents were unaware of the definitions of

crimes (e.g., distinction between a burglary and a robbery) and erroneously reported victimizations.

As Table 2 shows, the 781 participating respondents reported 284 separate incidents consistent with the definitions of crimes captured by the AACVS. These victimizations were experienced by 208 survey respondents—more than a quarter (26.6%) of the survey sample. Over 80 percent of the incidents were property crimes; 19 percent were personal/violent crimes; and the remaining one percent fell into the category of completed pocket picking. By far, the most common type of victimization was larceny or attempted larceny (n=185), accounting for

Table 2. Reported Victimization Types and Rates in Anchorage

Victimization type	N	Rate per 1,000 respondents
Violent victimizations	54	69.1
Completed/attempted robbery	7	9.0
Aggravated assault	12	15.4
Simple assault	16	20.5
Verbal threat of assault	17	21.8
Verbal threat of rape/sexual assault	2	2.6
Completed pocket picking	2	2.6
Property victimizations	228	291.9
Larceny/attempted larceny	185	236.9
Burglary/forcible entry	30	38.4
Completed/attempted motor vehicle theft	13	16.6

Source: Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

Table 3. Specific Victimization Reported by AACVS Respondents

Victimization type	N
Personal victimizations	54
Completed robbery with injury from minor assault	1
Completed robbery without injury	1
Attempted robbery with injury from serious assault	1
Attempted robbery without injury	4
Completed aggravated assault with injury	6
Attempted aggravated assault with weapon	4
Threatened assault with weapon	2
Completed simple assault with injury	3
Assault without weapon without injury	13
Verbal threat of rape	1
Verbal threat of sexual assault	1
Verbal threat of assault	17
Completed pocket picking	2
Property victimizations	228
Larceny	179
Attempted larceny	6
Completed burglary, forcible entry	7
Completed burglary, unlawful entry without force	16
Attempted forcible entry	7
Completed motor vehicle theft	9
Attempted motor vehicle theft	4

Source: Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

Table 4. Personal Victimization in Anchorage by Demographic Characteristics

	Total number of respondents	Number of victimizations	Victimization rate per 1,000 population ¹
All respondents	781	54	69.1
Sex			
Male (age 18 or older)	299	20	66.9
Female (age 18 or older)	481	24	49.9
Refused	1	--	--
Race			
White	597	39	65.3
African-American	40	3	75.0
Alaska Native/American Indian	49	7	142.9
Asian/Pacific Islander	21	--	--
Other	22	--	--
Multi-racial	27	5	185.2
Don't know	1	--	--
Refused	23	--	--
Hispanic origin			
Hispanic	41	3	73.2
Non-Hispanic	723	51	70.5
Don't know	1	--	--
Refused	16	--	--
Age			
18-19	33	5	151.5
20-24	60	6	100.0
25-34	164	18	109.8
35-44	179	12	67.0
45-54	167	10	59.9
55-64	106	2	18.9
65+	57	1	17.5
Don't know	1	--	--
Refused	14	--	--
Household income			
Less than \$10,000	17	4	235.3
\$10,000-\$19,999	41	4	97.6
\$20,000-\$29,999	76	9	118.4
\$30,000-\$39,999	69	12	173.9
\$40,000-\$49,999	80	5	62.5
\$50,000-\$59,999	79	3	38.0
\$60,000-\$69,999	52	4	76.9
\$70,000 or more	213	10	46.9
Don't know	37	2	54.1
Refused	117	1	8.5

¹ Rates for each category are computed by dividing the number of victimizations by the number of respondents and multiplying by 1,000. For example, for male respondents, 20 is divided by 299 and the quotient is then multiplied by 1,000.

Source: Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

nearly two-thirds (65.1%) of all victimizations reported. Larceny involves the attempted or actual theft of property or cash from the respondent or respondent's household. Unlike robbery, larceny does not involve the use of force or threat of force and, unlike both robbery and pocket picking, it does not involve any type of personal contact.

The most common personal victimization was assault (n=28), including 12 aggravated assaults and 16 simple assaults. Aggravated assaults include attacks resulting in serious injury to the victim (e.g., weapon wounds, broken bones, loss of consciousness, internal injuries) or attacks, attempted attacks, or threatened attacks involving the use of a weapon, regardless of whether or not serious injury occurs. In contrast, simple assaults include attacks or attempted attacks without a weapon that result in minor injury (e.g., bruises, scratches, black eye, and cuts) or no injury to the victim. In addition to aggravated and simple assaults, threats of assault (other than those involving a weapon), rape, or sexual assault (n=19) were also relatively common.

Table 2 also includes rates for the various crimes, but, particularly for violent crimes, caution should be exercised in interpreting rates. Due to the small number of violent victimizations reported in the survey, violent crime rates are unstable—that is, they can shift dramatically as a result of small changes in the number of victimizations. This issue is less problematic with property victimizations, where the larger number of reported victimizations results in less sensitive rates of property victimization. Nevertheless, all rates are viewed best as rates of victimization for the survey sample rather than as estimates of the rate of victimization in Anchorage as a whole.

Table 3 shows, with greater specificity, the incidence of particular victimizations. This increased precision in definition demonstrates that the broad categories presented in Table 2 comprise varied incident types. Several examples illustrate such distinctions. First, the most common type of assault is one where no weapon was used and no injury occurred (46% of all completed assaults). Nevertheless, one-third (32.1%) of all assaults result in some type of injury to the victim. Second—as would be expected—most larcenies are completed larcenies (96.8%); respondents are not generally aware of a theft unless some item was taken. Finally, completed burglaries where no forcible entry was used (69.6%) were more common than completed burglaries when forcible entry was used (30.4%), perhaps reflecting the relative ease of accomplishing the former over the latter.

Personal victimization rates for survey participants were higher for respondents who were male, Alaska Native, young, and/or from households with lower combined incomes. Table 4 shows the demographic characteristics of the victims in the 54 personal crimes. Again—many of the cells have very small counts, resulting in sensitive estimates.

Respondents experiencing property victimization most often reported that the crime occurred at or near their homes. In fact, one-third (67.5%) of all property crimes occurred in the respondent's home or another structure on the property, in the apartment hall, storage area, or laundry room, in the yard or on the sidewalk, or on the street immediately adjacent to the home. Slightly more than one-third (37.0%) of respondents experiencing personal victimization indicated that the crime took place in or around their home. Over 15 percent (16.7%) of personal victimizations occurred on the street not adjacent to their own residence or the residence of a neighbor, friend, or relative. Other personal victimizations occurred in restaurants, nightclubs, or bars (7.4%) or inside some other commercial establishment (7.4%).

Reporting to Police

Victimization data are able to lend insight into crimes regardless of whether they are reported to the police. This is important because in Anchorage 63 percent of personal victimizations and 66.2 percent of property victimizations went unreported. Table 5 identifies the reasons given by respondents for not reporting the crime to the police. The most commonly cited reasons for not reporting personal crimes were that the incident was a private matter (23.5%) or it was reported to another official (23.5%). For property crimes, more than 40 percent (43%) indicated that the minor nature of the crime was a contributing factor in the decision not to report the crime to police. Other more practical considerations were given as addi-

Table 5. Reasons Given by AACVS Respondents for Not Reporting Personal and Property Victimization¹

Reason for not reporting	Personal victimization		Property victimization	
	N	% of unreported victimizations	N	% of unreported victimizations
Minor crime	4	11.8 %	65	43.0 %
Cannot recover property	0	0.0	23	15.2
Lack of proof	1	2.9	20	13.2
Reported to other official	8	23.5	9	6.0
Police inefficient	1	2.9	5	3.3
Personal matter	8	23.5	9	6.0
Not important to police	3	8.8	14	9.3
Child offender	0	0.0	11	7.3
Fear reprisal	5	14.7	1	0.7
No insurance	0	0.0	5	3.3
Not clear it was a crime	2	5.9	2	1.3
Police biased	1	2.9	3	2.0
Too inconvenient	0	0.0	4	2.6
To protect offender	3	8.8	0	0.0
Found out too late	0	0.0	2	1.3
Advised not to report	0	0.0	2	1.3
Other	4	11.8	14	9.3
Don't know	0	0.0	10	6.6
Refused	0	0.0	1	0.7

Note: Figures do not total 100 percent because multiple responses were allowed.

¹ 151 property crimes and 34 personal crimes went unreported to the police.

Source: Anchorage Adult Criminal Victimization Survey

tional reasons why property crimes were not reported: property could not be recovered (15.2%) or lack of proof (13.2%). In nearly 1 in 10 property victimizations where the incident was unreported, residents viewed the crime as unimportant to the police (9.3%).

Other Victimization Studies

In this section, findings from the Anchorage survey are presented in conjunction with findings from two victimization studies employing virtually identical survey instruments, but using slightly different methodologies. As discussed later, it is important to use caution in making comparisons. Nevertheless, placing the Anchorage surveys findings within a comparative context is worthwhile since the two comparison studies actually served as models for the AACVS.

The AACVS resulted, in part, from a Bureau of Justice Statistics initiative encouraging states and local communities to conduct crime victimization surveys. This effort was designed to overcome one of the key limitations of the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which has been around since 1973. The NCVS is most useful in painting a national (or other large aggregate) picture of crime. Since it is based on a national sample of respondents, individual communities or states represent only a small

AACVS

(continued from page 7)

portion of the overall sample, thereby prohibiting the extraction of reliable local (small area) crime statistics. In the late 1990s, the Bureau of Justice Statistics conducted a demonstration project designed to show the feasibility and utility of conducting local victimization surveys. This study, referred to here as the 12-City Study, led to production of a software program for administering local victimization studies. (It is described in the BJS report *Criminal Victimization and Perceptions of Community in 12 Cities, 1998*.)

Although the instrument used in each study was largely the same, there were several key differences in methodological approaches. First, the NCVS and the 12-City Study administer the survey instrument to all households members age 12 years and older, while the Anchorage survey is an adult (18 and older) victimization survey. This primarily presents a problem for violent crime rates, because each respondent identifies only personal victimization experiences. For property crimes, a single household respondent, regardless of age, acts as the informant for collecting information on all property crimes experienced by the household. Second, the AACVS and 12-City Study used telephone surveys, while the NCVS still collects much of its data through person-to-person interviews. Third, NCVS respondents are interviewed multiple times over a three-year period, thereby reducing reporting errors associated with recall. In contrast, the AACVS and the 12-City Study participants were interviewed only once. Finally, each of the three studies was administered during a different time period.

Table 6 presents data from all three stud-

ies—the Anchorage study, the 12-City Study, and the 2001 NCVS (the most recent year for which published data are available). The findings—crime rates and reporting rates—from the second two studies are presented only to show what has been found in other cities and in the nation as a whole. Due to the diverse methodologies used in each study, no firm conclusions can be drawn from comparisons; that is, we cannot say definitely that property crime rates are greater in Anchorage than in Los Angeles, for example.

The caveats aside, Table 6 does show that findings from Anchorage are generally consistent, both in victimization rates and reporting rates, to findings from the 12-City Study, the study most similar in methodology to the AACVS. The NCVS results shown are lower. Unlike the Anchorage study, which sampled a non-rural area, the national figures derive from a sample of urban, suburban and rural areas. The NCVS urban-only victimization rates for 2001 (not shown) were 33.2 and 212.8 for personal and property victimizations, respectively.

Other findings from the AACVS will appear in future issues of the *Alaska Justice Forum*. Some of the topics to appear in forthcoming articles in-

clude respondents' perceptions of the police as well as AACVS findings disaggregated by the geographic location of the respondents' residences.

The complete results of this analysis will be available in a final report in fall 2003. Matthew Giblin is Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice at York College of Pennsylvania. From 2000 to 2002, he was a research associate with the Justice Center.

Table 6. Victimization and Reporting Rates: Comparing AACVS, NCVS, and 12-City Results¹

Source/coverage	Violent crime		Property crime	
	Rate per 1,000 persons ²	Percent reported to police	Rate per 1,000 households	Percent reported to police
2001 NCVS				
National	25.1	50 %	166.9	37 %
2002 AACVS³				
Anchorage	69.1	37 %	286.8	33 %
1998 BJS 12-City Study				
12 City Total	74.5	35 %	167.2	34 %
Chicago	67.9	38 %	218.6	37 %
Kansas City	60.1	44	180.2	45
Knoxville	72.4	41	166.6	43
Los Angeles	64.7	34	177.0	33
Madison	72.7	36	169.7	37
New York	85.2	32	133.2	29
San Diego	63.1	36	153.7	28
Savannah	80.1	40	213.6	47
Spokane	63.9	31	211.0	38
Springfield	81.6	58	171.4	41
Tucson	81.6	42	226.3	44
Washington, DC	59.6	50	249.9	41

¹ NCVS statistics were derived from *Criminal Victimization, 2001: Changes 2000-2001 with Trends 1993-2001*. BJS 12-city data were derived from *Criminal Victimization and Perceptions of Community in 12 Cities, 1998*.

² AACVS and 12-City study victimization rates do not include cases where reporting to police was unknown. For four property crimes in the AACVS, reporting behavior was unknown. The published report from which NCVS data are drawn does not make it clear whether rates exclude cases where reporting behavior was unknown.

³ AACVS violent victimization rates are for respondents 18 years old or older. NCVS and 12-City Study violent victimization rates are for respondents 12 years old or older.



Alaska Justice Forum
Justice Center
University of Alaska Anchorage
3211 Providence Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

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