Self-Protective Behaviors in Anchorage

Sharon Chamard

Introduction

Many people do things to make themselves feel safe in their homes, such as lock their doors, turn on lights, have a dog, use security systems, and participate in Neighborhood Watch. All of these behaviors are related to crime prevention. This study uses weighted data from the 2,080 respondents to the 2009 Anchorage Community Survey to determine relationships between these "self-protective behaviors" and perceptions of safety, social engagement, and collective efficacy. (Collective efficacy refers to the social cohesion of a group and the willingness of members to intervene on each other's behalf.)

It examines the assumptions that (a) people will engage in more self-protective behaviors if they generally do not feel safe; (b) those who interact a lot with others in their communities are more likely to carry out self-protective behaviors that involve working with others (specifically, attending Neighborhood Watch meetings and developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors); and (c) people who rate their neighborhoods high on measures of social cohesion and informal social control will be more likely to engage in self-protection activity that involves working with others. Research about such assumptions can assist law enforcement, policymakers, and planners in understanding how and why people engage in certain behaviors, and can also help in developing strategies and determining allocation of resources for crime prevention in neighborhhoods.

Data and Methods

Data for this study come from the 2009 Anchorage Community Survey (ACS)—a mixed-mode (mail and Internet) survey of adult heads-of-household living in the Anchorage municipality. The survey included questions designed to measure, among other things, experiences of criminal victimization, perceptions of safety, feelings about quality of life and perceptions of social cohesion in respondents' neighborhoods, involvement in community activities and groups, satisfaction with municipal services, and attitudes toward the criminal justice system.

A total of 4,702 people were included in the sample. Many of the addresses used to contact respondents were unusable for various reasons (n=546), and 15 people on the mailing list were deceased. After a data collection period of several weeks, during which four items were mailed sequentially to respondents (a notification letter, the questionnaire and $2 bill incentive, a reminder postcard, and another questionnaire), a total of 2,080 completed surveys were received. The response rate was 50.8 percent.

A recognized problem with mail surveys (and indeed, broadly-sampled community surveys in general) is large variation in response rates across different sub-groups in the population. Women, white people, and older people are considerably more likely than men, racial and ethnic minorities, and young people to respond to surveys. This is a problem because data from surveys are not really representative of the population if certain groups are overrepresented and certain groups are underrepresented. One way to deal with this is to over-sample from groups that you expect will have low response rates. Another approach, which was used here, is to weight the data after the survey has been administered. Briefly, weighting involves using data, such as the U.S. Census, to take into account the demographic characteristics of the surveyed population (in this case, adults living in Anchorage), and then comparing these to the demographic characteristics of the people who responded to the survey. The responses from people whose demographic characteristics are overrepresented compared to the whole population (for example, females, whites, and older people) are given less weight—that is, they count "less"—relative to responses from people whose demographic characteristics are underrepresented in the survey data. Using weighted data allows researchers to be more confident that their findings can be generalized to the whole population, and are not just descriptions of the people who sent back their surveys.

Variables

The dependent variables (what we are trying to explain) concern self-protective behavior. A question on the ACS showed

Table 1. Reported Self-Protective Behaviors, Anchorage Community Survey 2009

Self-protective behaviors	Overall
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.2 %
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	76.4
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	53.4
Keep a firearm in the home	51.3
Have a dog	47.7
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	33.8
Use a home security system	21.3
Take self-defense lessons	8.7
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	7.5
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	3.6
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.00**

2012 Alaska Dashboard: Key Indicators Impacting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault

André B. Rosay

The 2012 Alaska Dashboard provides at-a-glance information on key population indicators related to the Office of the Governor Sean Parnell's Choose Respect initiative to end the epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. The Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Data Group, which includes representatives from state, tribal, and nonprofit agencies, was convened by the Office of the Governor to develop these population indicators. The Data Group thoroughly reviewed potential population indicators and identified 32 indicators for the Dashboard. These indicators were selected because they provide a broad overview—at the population level—of key issues that impact domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. Population indicators were selected only if they were reliable, valid, and replicable.

Table 1. 2012 Alaska Dashboard: Key Issues Impacting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Alaska

Some of the data below are based on self-disclosures to survey questions on domestic violence (DV) and sexual assault (SA). These estimates are conservative (actual rates are much higher). As the stigma of reporting violence lessens and as we increase victim safety, those experiencing violence will be more likely to report and seek help. Certain estimates may increase over time (e.g., reports of harm, utilization of services, and reports to law enforcement).

	Key population indicators for Alaska	Previous AK data	Current AK data	Percent change	Progress*
	Childhood exposure to domestic violence				
1	Percent of adults exposed to intimate partner violence of parent (BRFSS)	19.1 %	19.2 %	+ 1 %	○
2	Percent of mothers whose 3 year old child saw violence or physical abuse (CUBS)	4.0 %	7.2 %	+ 80 %	◐
	Child and youth victimization				
3	Percent of students experiencing physical dating violence in past year (YRBS)	13.3 %	12.0 %	-10 %	●
4	Percent of students experiencing sexual violence in lifetime (YRBS)	10.1 %	9.2 %	-9 %	●
	Reports of harm (child and youth)				
5	Rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 10,000 (US DHHS)	190.1	150.8	-21 %	◐
6	Rate of reported child sexual maltreatment per 10,000 (OCS)	5.8	6.5	+ 12 %	●
	Adult and elder victimization				
7	Percent of women experiencing physical intimate partner violence in past year (AVS)	N/A	9.4 %	N/A	○
8	Percent of women experiencing sexual violence in past year (AVS)	N/A	4.3 %	N/A	○
9	Percent of pregnant women experiencing intimate partner physical abuse (PRAMS)	3.6 %	4.0 %	+ 11 %	◐
	Reports of harm (adult and elder)				
10	Number of vulnerable adults reporting abuse or neglect (APS)	176	160	-9 %	◐
11	Number of vulnerable elders reporting abuse or neglect (APS)	73	76	+ 4 %	○
	Primary prevention and protective factors				
12	Percent of pregnant women whose health provider talked to them about DV (PRAMS)	60.0 %	61.3 %	+ 2 %	○
13	Percent of students comfortable seeking help from 3 or more adults (YRBS)	44.6 %	43.8 %	-2 %	○
14	Percent of schools implementing Fourth R healthy relationship curriculum (DEED)	9.7 %	12.5 %	+ 29 %	●
	Reports to law enforcement				
15	Rate of forcible rape reported to law enforcement per 10,000 (UCR)	7.3	7.5	+ 3 %	○
16	Number of domestic violence related homicides reported to law enforcement (DPS)	5	15	+ 200 %	◐
17	Number of elderly victims reporting DV-related sexual/physical assaults to AST (DPS)	176	149	-15 %	◐
	Utilization of services				
18	Rate of children evaluated by child advocacy centers per 10,000 (ACA)	81.9	94.8	+ 16 %	●
19	Rate of adults utilizing services for domestic violence per 10,000 (CDVSA)	84.2	89.7	+ 7 %	●
20	Rate of children with adults in domestic violence services per 10,000 (CDVSA)	74.0	74.4	+ 1 %	○
21	Rate of adults utilizing services for sexual assault per 10,000 (CDVSA)	21.8	21.9	0 %	○
22	Rate of youth utilizing services for domestic violence per 10,000 (CDVSA)	22.5	17.9	-20 %	◐
23	Rate of youth utilizing services for sexual assault per 10,000 (CDVSA)	43.3	31.4	-27 %	◐
	Offender accountability				
24	Percent of reported forcible rapes resulting in an arrest (DPS)	24.3 %	21.0 %	-14 %	◐
25	Rate of juveniles referred for sex offenses per 10,000 (DJJ)	10.9	13.8	+ 27 %	◐
26	Rate of juveniles referred for a DV-related assault per 10,000 (DJJ)	N/A	38.5	N/A	○
27	Number of sexual assault cases accepted for prosecution (DOL)	111	118	+ 6 %	●
28	Percent of accepted sexual assault cases with a conviction (DOL)	63.0 %	66.1 %	+ 5 %	●
29	Number of sexual abuse of minor cases accepted for prosecution (DOL)	109	123	+ 13 %	●
30	Percent of accepted sexual abuse of minor cases with a conviction (DOL)	84.4	78.0	-8 %	○
31	Number of domestic violence cases accepted for prosecution (DOL)	2,617	2,977	+ 14 %	●
32	Percent of accepted domestic violence cases with a conviction (DOL)	73.8 %	73.1 %	-1 %	○

Progress: ● Progress satisfactory   ○ Progress uncertain   ◐ Progress needs improvement

* Percent change is relative to previous data. Percent changes may or may not be statistically significant.

Source: *2012 Alaska Dashboard, Alaska Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, http://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/docs/DVSA_Dashboard_2012.pdf*

The 2012 Dashboard includes nine different categories for which population indicators have been identified:

- childhood exposure to domestic violence
- child and youth victimization
- reports of harm for children and youth
- adult and elder victimization
- reports of harm for adults and elders
- primary prevention and protective factors
- reports to law enforcement
- utilization of services
- offender accountability

For the first time, these different indicators are presented together, and they now establish a baseline for the state of Alaska. Additional categories and indicators will be included in future versions of the Dashboard.

Because these are population *indicators*, they may be different than performance *measures* found in other reports. The goal of the Dashboard is not to assess the effectiveness of individual agencies. As noted above, the Dashboard is designed to provide a broader overview of the key issues that impact domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska.

The Dashboard includes previous Alaska data, current Alaska data, the percentage change from the previous data to the current data, and an indication of progress. Definitions for each indicator and the year for each data point are included in the full version of the Dashboard, available on the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (CDVSA) website (http://dps.alaska.gov/cdvsa/). The progress column is a subjective assessment by CDVSA on whether progress to date has been *satisfactory*, *uncertain*, or *needs improvement*. During the initial phases of the Choose Respect initiative, the goals are to:

- decrease victimization
- increase the number of victimizations that are reported to law enforcement
- increase the number of victims that are accessing services
- increase offender accountability
- increase primary prevention and protective factors

Primary prevention includes approaches to prevent initial perpetration or victimization

Table 2. National Comparisons for Key Issues Impacting Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in Alaska

National data for comparision purposes are only available for a few of the population indicators on the Alaska dashboard for key issues impacting domestic violence and sexual assault in Alaska. Few of the data sources on the Alaska dashboard are available nationally or in other states. When they are available, data are rarely directly comparable. In particular, different states have different definitions for domestic violence and sexual assault. Listed below are the few indicators that are directly comparable to national data.

	Key population indicators for Alaska	Previous AK data	Current AK data	U.S. data
	Child and youth victimization			
3	Percent of students experiencing physical dating violence in past year (YRBS)	13.3 %	12.0 %	9.8 %
4	Percent of students experiencing sexual violence in lifetime (YRBS)	10.1 %	9.2 %	7.4 %
	Reports of harm (child and youth)			
5	Rate of reported child abuse and neglect per 10,000 (US DHHS)	190.1	150.8	92.2
	Reports to law enforcement			
15	Rate of forcible rape reported to law enforcement per 10,000 (UCR)	7.3	7.5	2.8

Source: 2012 Alaska Dashboard, Alaska Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault, http://dps.alaska.gov/CDVSA/docs/DVSA_Dashboard_2012.pdf

before violence has occurred.

When looking at assessment, for example, indicator number 23 shows that the rate of youth utilizing services for sexual assault was 43.3 per 10,000 in FY 2010. In FY 2011, the rate of youth utilizing services for sexual assault decreased to 31.4 per 10,000. The rate of youth utilizing services for sexual assault is the number of unduplicated youth per 10,000 (ages 12 to 17) who utilized services from a CDVSA-funded domestic violence and sexual assault service agency, and who were recorded at that agency as being primary victims of sexual assault. Relative to FY 2010, the rate of youth utilizing services for sexual assault declined by 27 percent. Again, the percentage change is the increase or decrease in the current Alaska data *relative* to the previous Alaska data. (Percentage changes may or may not be statistically significant). CDVSA determined that the progress on this indicator needs improvement. It is hoped that in the first phase of the initiative, youths who are victims of sexual assault will seek and utilize assistance services at a higher rate than previously recorded. Unfortunately, as stated above, the rate decreased by 27 percent in FY 2011 relative to FY 2010. (Readers are encouraged to obtain the full version of the Dashboard online, which includes important definitions for each data point.)

While overall the level of violence in our communities remains unacceptably high, there are some hopeful data. For example, child and youth victimization declined from 2009 to 2011. The percentage of students experiencing physical dating violence in the past year declined by 10 percent and the percentage of students experiencing sexual violence in their lifetime declined by 9 percent. Nonetheless, these data should be interpreted cautiously, as they represent self-disclosures to survey questions rather than the actual rates of victimization.

For additional information on the 2012 Alaska Dashboard, contact Lauree Morton, Executive Director for the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (lauree.morton@alaska.gov).

André Rosay is the Director of the Justice Center.

Notes on Recidivism

Barbara Armstrong

Recidivism—criminal reoffending—is one of the most challenging issues facing the justice system. The recidivism rate in the U.S., according to an April 2011 study by the Pew Center on the States, is about 40 percent—four out of ten individuals who are released from incarceration will cycle back into the justice system. Recent studies in Alaska and across the nation continue to examine the costs to victims and to society when individuals reoffend and are reincarcerated, the measures for determining who is recidivating and why, and the possible strategies for reducing the rate of recidivism. Recidivism studies are important tools to assist policy makers in understanding the scope of the problem and allocating resources to deal effectively with this issue.

However, recidivism is a complex issue and definitions of recidivism and how to measure it vary. In this issue, we have two articles on recidivism. One is about the reliability of a survey instrument in use at McLaughlin Youth Center for predicting recidivism for juveniles (p. 9). The other is a study of felony and misdemeanor recidivism in Alaska (p. 6). Each of these studies uses a different definition of recidivism. Following are definitions of recidivism from four major national research organizations that illustrate the different approaches to determining and measuring recidivism.

The Pew Center on the States

In its April 2011 report *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons*, the Pew Center on the States outlines recidivism as follows:

> Recidivism is the act of reengaging in criminal offending despite having been punished. The prison recidivism rate—the subject of this report—is the proportion of persons released from prison who are rearrested, reconvicted or returned to custody within a specific time period. Typically, recidivism studies follow released offenders for three years following their release from prison or placement on probation. Offenders are returned to prison for one of two reasons:
>
> 1. For committing a new crime that results in a new conviction
>
> or
>
> 2. For a technical violation of supervision, such as not reporting to their parole or probation officer or failing a drug test

Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics website lists this definition:

> Recidivism is measured by criminal acts that resulted in the **rearrest, reconviction, or return to prison** with or without a new sentence during a **three-year period** following the prisoner's release (emphasis added).

U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC)

In *Measuring Recidivism: The Criminal History Computation of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines* released in May 2004, two definitions are used:

> The first, or "primary," definition includes the first occurring of any one of the following three types of events during the offender's initial **two years** back in the community:
>
> - a re-conviction for a new offense;
> - a re-arrest with no conviction disposition information available on the post-release criminal history record; or
> - a supervision revocation (probation or post prison supervision).
>
> The second "re-conviction only" recidivism definition limits the recidivism definition to re-conviction events during the two year follow-up period. As such, under this secondary definition, recidivism is measured as the first occurring re-conviction for a new offense during the initial two years back in the community.
>
> The use of two different recidivism definitions addresses the state of post-release criminal behavior.
>
> (emphasis added)

Even the definition of a first offender may vary. In their follow-up report, *Recidivism and the "First Offender,"* released in 2004, the USSC looked at who should be defined as a federal first offender in order to gauge risk of recidivism and determine who should be considered a first offender with regard to sentencing. The USSC report authors looked at a sample population of federal offenders in 1992 and designated three proposed first offender groups. Each group was assigned points based on criminal history. Group A had no arrests, Group B had no convictions, and Group C had only minor convictions. Under the USSC system in that report, however, all three of these groups were determined to have zero criminal history points

and could be designated "first offenders" even though some of the individuals had clearly been in the justice system before. The report examined the uniqueness of first offenders based on demographic, personal, and social characteristics, and described the efforts as a "first step in an empirical discussion regarding a first offender provision."

National Institute of Justice (NIJ)

The National Institute of Justice website has a much broader definition of recidivism:

> Recidivism is one of the most fundamental concepts in criminal justice. It refers to a person's relapse into criminal behavior, often after receiving sanctions or undergoing intervention for a previous crime.
>
> **Sanctions** are administered by federal, state or local jurisdictions and include all punishments that are available to the jurisdiction, such as fines, forms of community supervision and imprisonment. **Interventions** are programs such as drug treatment, employment training or cognitive therapies.
>
> **An individual recidivates when he or she commits a crime at any time during or after the intervention or sanctioning process.**

The discussion continues:

> Although recidivism is denoted by a return to crime, criminologists may not have a valid way of measuring whether a crime has occurred. Officially recorded criminal justice events such as arrest conviction are imperfect measures for assessing criminal activity **because many crimes are committed without detection**…
>
> Key considerations involved with measuring recidivism are:
>
> 1. How the study determines that a re-offense has occurred.
> 2. When the offender recidivates.
> 3. How risk is factored into the research design.
>
> (emphasis added)

In sum, most sources agree that rearrests, reconvictions, and returns to incarceration are the three main ways to define recidivism. Some definitions, however, use only reconvictions on felonies; some include only re-convictions on the same type of offense as the underlying offense. For returns to incarceration, some count all returns to incarcera-

tion, whether for re-arrest, re-conviction, or a probation or parole violation. Others limit returns to incarceration to only returns for a new offense. Many include only returns to prison. In most states, where prisons and jails are separate institutions, this is a critical distinction: far fewer offenders are returned to prison than to local jails. In Alaska, with a unified corrections system, all returns to incarceration are counted, which often results in Alaska showing a higher recidivism rate than other states.

Nature of the Offense and Rate of Recidivism

Offenders committing certain types of crimes appear to have a higher likelihood of rearrest. A BJS study, "Recidivism of Prisoners Released in 1994," reported that the highest rearrest rates in the three years following release were for motor vehicle theft, possession or sale of stolen property, larceny, burglary, robbery, and the possession, use or sale of illegal weapons.

As noted in the above NIJ study, however, some crimes are not detected or reported. Thus, the type of offense is also a consideration when studying recidivism. For example, when examining something as complicated as sexual offenses, one needs to be aware that sexual assaults are severely underreported to authorities by victims. This lack of reporting, in and of itself, results in less available data about arrests, convictions, and recidivism for individuals who commit this offense. A BJS study using data from the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) found that during the period 1992–2000, over 60 percent of rapes were *not* reported to the police. And although crime reporting to police—including sexual assault crimes—appears to have increased overall during 1973–2005, sexual crimes are still underreported, according to a recent study in the journal *Criminology* by Eric Baumer and Janet Lauritsen.

Sexual offenses are also more complicated due to the definition of the offense itself. For example, the Uniform Crime Report definition of rape was just revised this year. The long-standing definition, "the carnal knowledge of a female, forcibly and against her will," now reads, "the penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim." This change has expanded what now is considered rape under the Uniform Crime Reports and will affect the statistics related to this offense.

Measures of recidivism

As seen in the definitions above, varied measures are used to determine recidivism,

making it difficult to compare recidivism rates, for example, among states. In some states, a large population of released offenders may be on parole or on probation. Because these individuals are under close supervision, violations of terms of their probation or parole are closely monitored and when a violation occurs, the individual may be sent back into custody. The recidivism rate for a state with this type of system will be higher than for a state with a less extensive parole/probation system and fewer individuals being monitored.

Some recidivism studies may also focus on shorter timeframes than three years due to the parameters of the study and availability of data. All of this affects any comparison with other studies.

National Recidivism Figures

Until the April 2011 Pew report, the most recent recidivism figures were from the BJS report for 1994. That study examined data for 272,111 offenders who were released in 15 states during 1994. (Alaska was not one of these states.) The measures included rearrest, reconviction, resentence to prison, and return to prison with or without a new sentence.

Within three years of their release, 51.8 percent were reincarcerated for a new prison sentence, technical violation of probation/parole, or were rearrested for a new crime. As noted earlier, the highest re-arrest rates within three years in the 1994 study were for the following offenses: motor vehicle theft (78.8%), possession or sale of stolen property (77.4%), larceny (74.2%), burglary (74.0%), robbery (70.2%), and possession, use, sale of illegal weapons (70.2%).

The report also showed that within three years, 2.5 percent of rape offenders were rearrested for a new rape, and 1.2 percent of homicide offenders were rearrested for a new homicide.

The 2011 Pew report *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons* reviewed the statistics from the BJS report on recidivism of offenders released in 1994, and also requested data on releases and recidivism from all the states for two time periods: 1999–2002 and 2004–2007. They received data from 33 states for the 1999 release date and from 41 states from the 2004 release date. Alaska was able to provide data for the period 2004–2007.

The report points out the difficulties in comparing state figures and in comparing results from the BJS study, but after adjusting for variances in data, the authors found that 45.4 percent of offenders released in 1999 and 43.3 percent of offenders released in 2004 were reincarcerated within three years. They noted that the recidivism rate

between the years 1994 and 2007 has remained fairly constant at about 40 percent —but that number is still high. The study did not examine rearrest rates for particular categories of crime. It focused on the overall recidivism rate and on strategies for dealing with this issue. The efforts of three states were highlighted and descriptions of the programs in Oregon, Michigan, and Missouri were outlined.

Juvenile Recidivism Rates

Juvenile recidivism rates are another example of the complexity of the issue of recidivism. The federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) notes on its website that the study, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report*, found that juvenile justice systems vary widely across the country. States differ in their selection of recidivism measures, sample populations, and follow-up periods when analyzing recidivism data. Moreover, in an effort to focus on ways in which the juvenile justice system is successful, many jurisdictions use performance measures to demonstrate the level of achievement for specific goals, rather than recidivism rates.

Conclusion

Although recent Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) show that the overall crime rate is declining, prisons still continue to be overcrowded, the cost of incarcerating individuals is growing, and financial resources are shrinking. Policy makers nationwide are in the midst of reviewing ways to make efficient use of resources both for victim assistance, and for services for offenders to reduce the risk of recidivating. Recidivism studies provide important information for policymakers to use, but it is important to keep in mind the variances in how recidivism is determined, the types of offenses examined, and that recidivism rates reflect crime that is reported to authorities. The Pew study cautions against making assumptions that if recidivism is low or high this reflects the success or failure of programs and strategies that are in place. It is important to look at all the measures used to determine recidivism and to also take into account that "recidivism rates can be influenced by larger social and economic forces. Therefore, any evaluation of recidivism data must include an understanding of this broader context and the larger policies and practices that drive the numbers." Continuing research on recidivism and the forces impacting it will help provide a clearer picture of this issue.

Links to reports and websites noted in this article are available at http://justice. uaa.alaska.edu/directory/r/recidivism.html.

Offender Recidivism Figures

A recent report by the Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) examined for the first time recidivism among both felony and misdemeanor offenders in the state. An earlier report in 2007 was the first general study of recidivism and focused on felons. In this 2011 study, the AJC analyzed records for felons and misdemeanants who returned to the community in 2008 and 2009. Because there were two years of data for the offenders released in 2008, the report highlights the analysis of that 2008 sample—2,675 felons and 8,815 misdemeanants. (The report does include data for the 2009 sample.) This article focuses on the data for offenders released in 2008.

In *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008-2009*, the researchers looked at three measures of recidivism:

- Rearrests—Department of Public Safety ASPIN data
- Reconvictions—Department of Public Safety ASPIN data
- Remands to incarceration, including remands for new arrests, and for probation and parole violations—Department of Corrections OTIS and AVOMS data.

There is some overlap in the measures, but each reflects an offender's contact with the justice system which impacts justice resources. In the report and in this article, "recidivism" is used as an umbrella term referring to all measures of recidivism. When a specific percentage for recidivism is given, the measure—remand, rearrest, or reconviction—is identified.

The report also looked at offender characteristics and the location of the court where the case was originally filed; this may or may not have been the same as the offense location. The court locations were designated as Anchorage, Fairbanks, Southeast, Mat-Su, Kenai, and Rural.

Offender Characteristics

Felons

Among felons, recidivism rates were highest among younger males and individuals with lengthy or more serious criminal histories. Rearrest and reconviction rates within two years were higher for Alaska Natives and Blacks than for Caucasians and Asian-Pacific Islanders. Remand rates were also higher for Alaska Natives and Blacks than for Caucasians and Pacific-Islanders.

The most common underlying (original) offense was a Class C (less serious) felony, and most felony offenders had committed property offenses (26%), followed by drug offenses (21%), drug/DUI/alcohol-related offenses (20%), and violent offenses (19%). "Other" offenses and sexual offenses represented much smaller groups of offenders, 5 percent and 9 percent respectively. Over a third of felony convictions were in Anchorage—the state's most populous city.

Highest remand, rearrest and reconviction rates were found for males, aged 17–24, with a prior criminal history. Felons with lengthier criminal histories (3 or more prior felony convictions) were more likely to reoffend than felons with no prior criminal history. (See Tables 1 and 2.)

Misdemeanants

The figures show results similar to those for felons. Recidivism rates for misdemeanants were highest among younger males and individuals with a prior criminal history, and rates were higher for Alaska Natives and Blacks than Caucasian and

Table 1. Offender and Offense Characteristics

Percentage of offenders.

	Felons		Misdemeanants	
	2008 N = 2,675	2009 N = 2,730	2008 N = 8,815	2009 N = 8,593
Sex				
Male	80 %	80 %	77 %	77 %
Race				
Caucasian	57 %	57 %	56 %	54 %
Alaska Native	32	32	35	37
Black	8	8	6	6
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	3	3	3
Age				
34 years old or younger	54 %	56 %	57 %	57 %
Level of offense				
Unclassified felony	3 %	3 %	—	—
Class A felony	20	19	—	—
Class B felony	15	15	—	—
Class C felony	62	63	—	—
Class A misdemeanor	—	—	100 %	100 %
Type of underlying offense				
Violent	19 %	19 %	20 %	22 %
Property	26	26	11	9
Sex	9	8	—	—
Drug	21	20	3	2
DUI	20	21	39	42
Other misdemeanor driving	—	—	15	14
Other	5	6	12	11
Prior criminal history				
No prior record	20 %	21 %	27 %	26 %
1–5 misdemeanors	31	29	33	34
6 or more misdemeanors	14	14	14	14
1 prior felony	20	20	16	16
2 prior felonies	8	9	6	6
3 or more prior felonies	7	7	4	4
Court location				
Anchorage	37 %	39 %	46 %	45 %
Fairbanks	16	15	13	14
Kenai	8	9	8	8
Mat-Su	13	14	10	10
Southeast	17	16	16	17
Rural	9	7	7	6

Source of data: <u>*Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009*</u>,
Alaska Judicial Council (November 2011)

Table 2. Recidivism by Race, 2008

Percentage of offenders.

		Rearrests		Reconvictions	
	Remands	Within one year	Within two years	Within one year	Within two years
Felons					
Alaska Native/American Indian	41 %	31 %	48 %	19 %	37 %
Black	41	34	47	20	31
Asian/Pacific Islander	27	29	40	18	27
Caucasian	35	26	36	16	28
Overall	**36 %**	**27 %**	**39 %**	**17 %**	**30 %**
Misdemeanants					
Alaska Native/American Indian	44 %	45 %	60 %	34 %	51 %
Black	40	44	59	29	45
Asian/Pacific Islander	30	30	40	21	33
Caucasian	29	30	41	22	34
Overall	**34 %**	**35 %**	**48 %**	**26 %**	**40 %**

Source of data: *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009*, Alaska Judicial Council (November 2011)

Asian-Pacific Islanders. Within one year of return to the community, 44 percent of Alaska Natives and 40 percent of Black misdemeanants were remanded while 30 percent of Asian-Pacific Islanders and 29 percent of Caucasians were remanded. Within one year, 45 percent of Alaska Native and 44 percent of Black misdemeanants were rearrested compared to Caucasian and Asia-Pacific Islander misdemeanants, who were rearrested at the same rate: 30 percent. Reconvictions rates were also higher for Alaska Natives and Blacks. Within one year, 34 percent of Alaska Natives and 29 percent of Blacks were reconvicted, and within two years, 51 percent and 45 percent respectively were reconvicted. In comparison to felons, for over one-third of offenders, the underlying offense was DUI/alcohol-related, followed by violent offenses (20%), other driving offenses (15%), "other" offenses (12%), property offenses (11%), and drug offenses (3%). One-half of misdemeanor offenses were sentenced in Anchorage.

Recidivism rates for misdemeanants were also higher for younger males and those with a prior criminal history. Within one year, 39 percent of misdemeanant offenders between the ages of 17 and 24, and 40 percent between the ages of 25 and 29, were rearrested. However, the relationship between age and recidivism was less consistent among misdemeanant offenders. Among misdemeanants between the ages of 40 and 44, 39 percent were also rearrested within one year. And within two years, both 17–29 year olds and 40–44 year olds had similar rates of rearrest: 53 percent and 51 percent respectively.

Timing of Recidivism

Reoffending, for both misdemeanants and felons, was most likely to occur within one year after return to the community. Within 6 months of release, 20 percent of felons were remanded, 17 percent were rearrested, and 8 percent were reconvicted. Within one year, 36 percent of felons were remanded, 27 percent were rearrested, and 17 percent were reconvicted. Within two years, 39 percent of felons had been rearrested and 30 percent had been reconvicted.

For misdemeanants, within 6 months of release, 21 percent were remanded, 24 percent were rearrested, and 16 percent were reconvicted. Within one year, 34 percent were remanded, 35 percent were rearrested, and 26 percent were reconvicted. Within two years, 48 percent of misdemeanants were rearrested and 40 percent were reconvicted. (See Table 3.)

Felons experienced higher *remand* rates which the report suggests might be attributed to felons being on supervised probation, and therefore more likely to be reported for a new crime or violation of parole or probation by a probation or parole officer. Misdemeanants are not on supervised parole or probation.

Location of Court

After two years following return to the community, felony offenders in the Anchorage court location had the highest rates for rearrest (46%) and reconviction (35%), and felons in Mat-Su had the lowest rate of rearrest (32%). For misdemeanants, Southeast had the highest recidivism rates across all measures, while Mat-Su had the lowest rates. The report notes that more examination is needed to explain this variability which may be due to variations in law enforcement, prosecutorial or judicial practices, or other factors.

Types and Seriousness of New Offenses

The report also examined how the original offense compared to new convictions to determine if offenders repeated the same type of offense or went on to more serious offending. For felons and misdemeanants, the more serious the underlying offense, the less likely the individual would reoffend (see Table 3.)

Among felons, those convicted of the least serious felony (Class C) had the highest recidivism rate. Thirty percent were rearrested within one year. Felons convicted of an "Unclassified" (most serious) felony

Table 3. Recidivism by Level of Offense, 2008

Percentage of offenders.

		Rearrests		Reconvictions	
	Remands	Within one year	Within two years	Within one year	Within two years
Felons					
Unclassified felony	20 %	14 %	21 %	7 %	12 %
Class A felony	32	25	38	15	26
Class B felony	38	28	40	16	29
Class C felony	40	30	44	19	34
Overall	**36 %**	**27 %**	**39 %**	**17 %**	**30 %**
Misdemeanants					
Class A misdemeanor	34 %	35 %	48 %	26 %	40 %

Source of data: *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009* Alaska Judicial Council (November 2011)

Offender recidivism

had half the rate of recidivism: 14 percent were rearrested within one year. In terms of seriousness of offenses and recidivism rates, sex offenders had the lowest rates of remand, rearrest, and reconviction.

Among misdemeanants, nearly 40 percent had originally been convicted of a DUI charge, and this group had the lowest rates of recidivism across all measures—nearly one-half of other misdemeanants. (See Tables 1 and 4.)

Felons

Within two years of return to their community:

- 30% of felons were convicted of new offenses.
- 2% of Class B felons and 3% of Class C felons were convicted of a more serious crime than their original underlying offense.
- No Class A felons were convicted of a more serious crime. (An unclassified felony is the most serious category and an unclassified felon could, therefore, not commit a more serious offense.)
- 29% of individuals convicted of a violent offense, 34% convicted of a property offense, and 34% convicted of "other" offenses were reconvicted of the same category of offense.
- 15% of drug offenders were reconvicted of a drug offense. (These offenders were more likely to be convicted of a driving or property offense than another drug offense.)
- 2% of sex offenders were reconvicted of another sex offense.

Misdemeanants

A higher percentage of misdemeanants were convicted of a new offense within two years of return to their community, and misdemeanants were more likely to be convicted of a new, more serious offense. Within two years of return to their community:

- 40% of misdemeanants were convicted of a new offense.
- 15% of offenders convicted of a Class A (most serious) misdemeanor as the underlying (original) offense were convicted within two years of a *more serious* offense.
- 40% of offenders who were convicted of a property crime were reconvicted of the same type of offense within two years.

Table 4. Recidivism by Type of Underlying Offense, 2008
Percentage of offenders.

		Rearrests		Reconvictions	
		Within one year	Within two years	Within one year	Within two years
	Remands				
Felons					
Violent	50 %	36 %	50 %	23 %	38 %
Property	46	34	46	22	37
Sex	32	18	32	10	20
Drug	35	24	35	14	25
DUI	36	21	36	11	25
Other	37	36	49	19	42
Overall	**36 %**	**27 %**	**39 %**	**17 %**	**30 %**
Misdemeanants					
Violent	44 %	46 %	60 %	34 %	50 %
Property	43	46	58	34	50
Drug	44	46	60	33	51
DUI	19	22	32	15	25
Other misdemeanor driving	39	41	55	30	47
Other	49	47	63	35	53
Overall	**34 %**	**35 %**	**48 %**	**26 %**	**40 %**

Source of data: *Criminal Recidivism in Alaska, 2008 and 2009*
Alaska Judicial Council (November 2011)

- 38% of offenders who were convicted of a violent crime were reconvicted of a violent offense within two years.
- Misdemeanants convicted of a drug offense were the least likely to be reconvicted of a similar offense.

Policy Implications

The study suggests that Alaskan policy makers and administrators consider the following:

- Allocating resources toward groups shown to be more likely to reoffend—misdemeanants—to reduce recidivism among this group. Data show this group is likely to reoffend and commit a more serious crime.
- Focusing on felons who commit violent, property, and "other" felonies. This group had the highest recidivism rate among felons, and these individuals were most likely to go on to commit a similar new offense.
- Focusing on youthful offenders, Alaska Natives, Blacks, and those offenders with prior criminal records. The likelihood of reoffending was high for these groups.

The AJC also recommended examining why there was higher recidivism in Anchorage and Southeast than in other areas of the state.

The report also notes that recidivism rates for sex offenders, DUI, and felony drug

offenders are relatively low. However, as indicated in "Notes on Recidivism" in this issue, when analyzing recidivism rates, the category of offense may affect the rate. Sex offenses, for example, are severely underreported to police.

The 2007 recidivism study by the AJC reviewed records for a much smaller number of offenders (1,934) who had been charged with a felony in 1999 and convicted of either a felony or a misdemeanor. That study also examined socio-economic, health, and substance abuse data for the sample. Analysis of the data showed that within 3 years, 66 percent of offenders were remanded to custody at least once for new offenses or violations of parole or probation. (For a summary of this report, see "Offender Recidivism Figures" in the Winter 2007 issue of the *Forum.*) Although socio-economic, health, and substance abuse data were not available for the offenders in this latest study, the comparison of felon and misdemeanant reoffending patterns provides additional information that can assist policymakers in decisions about resource allocation to reduce recidivism, especially with regard to Alaska's *Five-Year Prisoner Reentry Strategic Plan, 2011-2016* released by the Alaska Prisoner Reentry Task Force in 2011. (See "Alaska's Five-Year Prisoner Reentry Strategic Plan, 2011-2016," in the Summer/Fall 2011 issue of the *Forum.*) The 2011 Alaska Judicial Council recidivism report is available at http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/reports/recid2011.pdf.

Predicting Recidivism for Alaska Youth:
An Evaluation of the YLS/CMI Survey

The mission of Alaska's Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is to "hold juvenile offenders accountable for their behavior; promote the safety and restoration of victims and communities; [and] assist offenders and their families in developing skills to prevent crime" (http://hss.state.ak.us/djj/). (A juvenile is an individual under the age of 18 at the time of committing an offense.) To meet these goals, DJJ utilizes methods to estimate a youth's risk of recidivism, and to assess the youth's needs for services. Since 2005 DJJ has been using the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Survey Inventory (YLS/CMI) that is also used by a number of other states. The YLS/CMI includes questions about eight "life domains"—areas of experience and background—with scoring on a scale of 0 to 42. Higher scores indicate greater risk of new offenses, and the scores in each domain give information about services that could benefit the youth.

Annually DJJ looks at recidivism rates for youths released from DJJ supervision. However, the agency had not examined these rates in relation to YLS/CMI scores. In 2010, DJJ requested the Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) and the Institute of Social Economic Research (ISER) to look at records for 507 Alaska juvenile offenders released in 2008: 402 released from formal probation and 105 released from secure treatment. The researchers were asked to examine the relationship between recidivism and YLS/CMI initial scores upon entering the juvenile justice system. DJJ also wanted to know if the YLS/CMI scores did assist in predicting recidivism of youth offenders. To ascertain recidivism rates, the DJJ definition of recidivism was used: "an adjudication or conviction on an offense committed within a year after the youth's release from Division supervision or secure placement" (p. 4 of the report). (Adjudication refers to the formal delinquency hearing at which it is determined whether the youth is a delinquent minor as the result of an offense.)

AJC and ISER released their report in August 2011, *Does YLS/CMI Help Predict Recidivism? An Assessment of the Division of Juvenile Justice's Use of the Youth Level of Services/Case Management Inventory*. This article summarizes the major findings of the report.

Administration of the YLS/CMI

DJJ policy was to administer the YLS/CMI within the first 21 days after a youth

---

Table 1. Age Distribution by Sex
Juveniles released from treatment or probation from the
Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, 2008

Age in years	Male		Female		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
14 years or less	6	1.4 %	0	0.0 %	**6**	**1.2 %**
15 years	23	5.4	2	2.5	**25**	**4.9**
16 years	37	8.7	5	6.3	**42**	**8.3**
17 years	84	19.7	20	25.0	**104**	**20.5**
18 years	180	42.2	44	55.0	**224**	**44.2**
19 years	97	22.7	9	11.3	**106**	**20.9**
Total	**427**		**80**		**507**	

---

was adjudicated delinquent, if the individual had not had a YLS/CMI assessment in the previous six months. The survey instrument included questions about prior and current offenses/adjudications, family circumstances and parenting, education and employment, peer relations, substance abuse, leisure and recreation, personality and behavior, and attitudes and orientation.

A juvenile probation officer (JPO) administered the survey in an interview setting with each youth, computed the numerical score (0 to 42), and assigned a risk level of *Low*, *Moderate*, *High*, or *Very High* based on the score. However, JPOs were allowed to override the assigned risk level based on the score to a higher or lower risk level.

The YLS/CMI was also administered to youths on formal probation or in a DJJ institution at other times during the period the youths were receiving DJJ services. The DJJ policy was to conduct a YLS/CMI assessment every six months while a youth was on formal probation, or if the youth's situation changed significantly. A total of 459 of the youths had at least one YLS/CMI score from an assessment prior to their release from DJJ; the mean score was 14.7—which falls into the *Moderate* risk category.

The study notes that DJJ staff did not consider the YLS/CMI useful for assessing sex offender risk. According to DJJ policy all juvenile sex offenders are given a minimum contact level of *Moderate supervision*, and youth who commit unclassified felonies are given a required contact level of *High supervision*.

The Sample

Of the 507 youths in this study, 79 per-

cent were released in 2008 from supervised probation and 21 percent were released from secure treatment facilities. The majority—84 percent—were male, and 16 percent were female. Most individuals (86%) were between 17 and 19 years in age, but the overall age range was 14 or under to 19 years of age. (See Table 1.) Of the 507 youths in this study, 39 percent were Alaska Native/American Indian, 35 percent were Caucasian, 9 percent were Black/African-American, 10 percent were Multi-ethnicity, 3 percent were Asian, 3 percent were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2 percent were Other. In looking at community of origin, over one-third of youths (38%) were from the Anchorage/Mat-Su region, and nearly one-third (32%) were from rural Alaska. In a note, the report comments on the disproportionately high percentage of Alaska Native and Black/African-American youths in the juvenile justice system. Alaska Natives between the ages of 10 and 19 represented 22 percent of the Alaska population in 2008, but accounted for 39 percent of the youths who were adjudicated or committed to formal probation or secure treatment in that year. Similarly, Black/African-American youths comprised 5 percent of Alaskan youths between the ages of 10 and 19 in 2008, but accounted for 9 percent of the youths who were adjudicated or committed to formal probation or secure treatment in that same year.

The report indicates that DJJ attributes at least part of this over-representation to over-representation that exists at the referral stage, and that over-representation is also due in part to "two circumstances: (1) minority teenagers are at higher risk than

YLS/CMI

White teenagers of being detained and formally charged; and (2) minority teenagers are more likely to have detention screenings than White teenagers" (p. 8).

Findings

Overall about one-third (30%) of the youths released from DJJ services in 2008 were adjudicated or convicted of a new offense committed in the first year following release. Among youths released from secure treatment, the recidivism rate was 38 percent; among youths on formal probation the rate was 28 percent. (See Table 2.) For the recidivism analysis, the authors used initial YLS/CMI scores and did not include overrides. Overrides by JPOs did not change

scores, but changed only risk category—which impacted such items as services. A higher initial YLS/CMI score was associated with recidivism for males. Initial YLS/CMI scores were not associated with recidivism for females—that is, the scores did not accurately predict recidivism for females. Overall however, scores for males and females did not differ significantly, nor did scores among ethnic groups.

Scores were significantly lower for youths from rural areas compared to youth from urban areas. For males, higher initial YLS/CMI scores were associated with recidivism. Older males were more likely to reoffend than younger males, and Alaska Native males—from both urban and rural areas—were more likely to reoffend. Youths who were released from secure treatment had higher initial YLS/CMI scores than

youths on formal probation, which was anticipated because individuals on formal probation generally had less serious offenses and fewer treatment needs.

The risk of recidivism reported in this study relates to a youth's risk of reoffending after adjudication. This may be different than the risk of reoffending, as measured by subsequent YLS/CMI assessments, after release from formal probation or secure treatment. Because of the treatment and supervision provided by DJJ after adjudication, the risk of reoffending at release is expected to be lower than the risk of reoffending after adjudication. As this study was only able to examine the YLS/CMI scores at the time of adjudication, additional research is needed to identify whether the YLS/CMI scores at the time of release are associated with recidivism after release.

Study Conclusions and Recommendations

The initial YLS/CMI assessment was a useful tool for understanding the likelihood of recidivism for juvenile male offenders. However, there was no statistical correlation between the risk levels assigned by DJJ and the risk of reoffending.

The report authors encourage DJJ to consider the recommendation by Multi-Health Systems, Inc. (MHS)—the developer of the YLS/CMI—that DJJ's current scoring system be changed to account for possible differences in gender and whether youths are on formal probation or in secure treatment. MHS made this recommendation based on extensive recent research on the use of the YLI/CMS which included Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice data. DJJ is also encouraged to review its policies and procedures to increase the usefulness of the YLS/CMI, both initially and at subsequent assessments, and to continue efforts to improve data collection and analysis for a better understanding of the effectiveness of DJJ's assessments and services.

DJJ has been taking steps to reduce the disproportions of minority youth who are in the early stages of the juvenile justice process. Given the high level of recidivism of Alaska Native youth as discussed in the report, DJJ should now consider what additional steps might help reduce recidivism among Alaska Native youth.

The full report is available at the Alaska Judicial Council website http://www.ajc.state.ak.us/reports/djjreport8-11.pdf. Information on the Alaska Department of Health and Social Service Services Division of Juvenile Justice is at http://hss.state.ak.us/djj/.

Table 2. Recidivism
Juveniles released from treatment or probation from the
Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice, 2008

	Non-recidivist N = 355		Recidivist N = 152		Total N = 507	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
By age						
14 years or less	5	83.3 %	1	16.7 %	**6**	**1.2 %**
15 years	21	84.0	4	16.0	**25**	**4.9**
16 years	30	71.4	12	28.6	**42**	**8.3**
17 years	85	81.7	19	18.3	**104**	**20.5**
18 years	145	64.7	79	35.3	**224**	**44.2**
19 years	69	65.1	37	34.9	**106**	**20.9**
By gender						
Male	292	68.4 %	135	31.6 %	**427**	**84.2 %**
Female	63	78.8	17	21.3	**80**	**15.8**
By ethnicity						
Alaska Native/American Indian	120	61.5 %	75	38.5 %	**195**	**38.5 %**
Caucasian	132	75.0	44	25.0	**176**	**34.7**
Black/African-American	34	73.9	12	26.1	**46**	**9.1**
Multi-ethnic	37	71.2	15	28.8	**52**	**10.3**
Asian	13	92.9	1	7.1	**14**	**2.8**
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	12	85.7	2	14.3	**14**	**2.8**
Other	7	70.0	3	30.0	**10**	**2.0**
By community of origin						
Anchorage/Mat-Su	133	70.0 %	57	30.0 %	**190**	**37.5 %**
Fairbanks	26	66.7	13	33.3	**39**	**7.7**
Kenai	21	77.8	6	22.2	**27**	**5.3**
Juneau/Ketchikan	21	58.3	15	41.7	**36**	**7.1**
Rural	114	69.5	50	30.5	**164**	**32.3**
Out-of-state	15	88.2	2	11.8	**17**	**3.4**
Unknown	25	73.5	9	26.5	**34**	**6.7**
By secure treatment or probation						
Secure treatment	65	61.9 %	40	38.1 %	**105**	**20.7 %**
Probation	290	72.1	112	27.9	**402**	**79.3**

Row percentages ... *Column percentages*

Self-protection
(continued from page 1)

respondents a "list of things people may do for self-protection or to feel more secure in their homes and neighborhoods," and asked them to check all that applied. As shown in Table 1, the most common self-protective behavior, selected by almost all survey participants, was "lock doors at night and when you are away from home." There were nine other self-protective behaviors included on the list: "lock doors during the day and when you are at home," "have a dog," "keep a firearm in the home," "use a security system on vehicle(s)," "use a home security system," "attend Neighborhood Watch meetings," "develop a signal for 'danger' with neighbors," "have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers," and "take self-defense lessons."

The final dependent variable was derived from a composite measure of the ten self-protection behavior variables. It is essentially a count of the number of behaviors each respondent reported doing to feel more secure in their homes and neighborhoods. This count ranges from 0 to 10; the mean was 4.0 (see Table 1).

There are four independent variables (things related to or correlated with the dependent variables) used in the analyses: (1) *perception of safety*, (2) *social engagement*, (3) *social cohesion*, and (4) *informal social control*. *Perception of safety* is a composite measure of responses to ten questions in the ACS asking people how safe they feel in a variety of scenarios in their neighborhoods, both during the day and at night (see Table 2). People reported feeling least safe while walking along trails at night, and most safe at home alone during the day. The value of the composite measure ranges from 1 (if the response to all ten scenarios was "very unsafe") to 4 (if all ten responses were "very safe"). The mean score of the weighted sample was 3.29, that is, between "reasonably safe" and "very safe."

Social engagement is also a composite measure derived from respondents' reported involvement in different types of local organizations: religious groups; local political organizations; block groups, tenant associations, or community councils; business or civic groups; ethnic or nationality clubs; and Neighborhood Watch groups. As shown in Table 2, 44.1 percent of respondents were involved in a church, synagogue, mosque, temple, or other religious organization, while only 4.1 percent said they were involved with a local ethnic or nationality club. Over 40 percent of

Table 2. Independent Variables, Anchorage Community Survey 2009

Perception of safety	Mean	SD
Scenario		
Home alone in the day	3.62	.606
Shopping in the day	3.61	.593
Walking alone in the day	3.52	.682
Home alone at night	3.48	.672
Using bus stops	3.31	.697
Being in neighborhood park	3.27	.734
Shopping at night	3.23	.754
Walking along trails in the day	3.10	.861
Walking alone at night	2.93	.890
Walking along trails at night	2.56	.992
Perception of safety composite	**3.29**	**.606**

1 = "very unsafe," 2 = "somewhat unsafe," 3 = "reasonably safe," 4 = "very safe."

Social engagement	Percent	
Participation in local organizations		
Church, synagogue, mosque, temple or other religious organization	44.1 %	
Block group, tenant association, or community council	17.2	
Business or civic group like the Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Elks/Moose Lodge, etc.	13.5	
Local political organization	13.5	
Neighborhood Watch group	7.0	
Ethnic or nationality club in Anchorage (Samoan club, Hispanic club, etc.)	4.1	
	Mean	**SD**
Social engagement composite	**0.91**	**1.03**

Social cohesion	Mean	SD
People in my neigbhorhood…		
…are willing to help	3.81	.922
…can be trusted	3.70	.973
…do not get along (reverse-coded)	3.70	.927
…do not share values (reverse-coded)	3.29	.977
Mine is a close-knit neighborhood	3.02	.994
Social cohesion composite	**3.52**	**.739**

1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neither agree nor disagree", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree"

Informal social control	Mean	SD
One or more of my neighbors could be counted on to intervene if…		
…children were spray-painting grafitti on a local building	3.80	1.095
…a fight broke out in front of their home	3.73	1.069
…the fire station closest to their home was threatended with budget cuts	3.49	1.007
…children were showing disrespect to an adult	3.41	1.046
…children were skipping school and hanging out on a neighborhood street corner	3.30	1.119
Informal social control composite	**3.59**	**.860**

1 = "strongly disagree", 2 = "disagree", 3 = "neither agree nor disagree", 4 = "agree", 5 = "strongly agree"

Self-protection
(continued from page 11)

survey participants reported no involvement in any of the listed organizations. The *social engagement* variable ranges from 0 to 6, with 0 indicating no reported involvement in the listed organizations, and 6 indicating involvement in all six of the listed organizations. The mean score of the weighted sample was 0.91; the average respondent was involved in just under one of the listed organizations.

Social cohesion and *informal social control* are derived from ten questions first developed by Sampson, Raudenbush and Earls in their collective efficacy research associated with the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods. The five questions on the ACS concerning social cohesion included "People in my neighborhood can be trusted," and "Mine is a close-knit neighborhood," and the five questions measuring informal social control included "One or more of my neighbors could be counted on to intervene if a fight broke out in front of their home," and "One or more of my neighbors could be counted on to intervene if children were spray painting graffiti on a local building." Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations for the ten measures. The mean score of the weighted sample on the *social cohesion* composite is 3.52; the mean score of the weighted sample on the *informal social control* composite measure is 3.59. These scores fall between "neither agree nor disagree" and "agree" on a five-point Likert scale.

Additional variables used included *age*, *gender*, *race*, *gross household income*, and *home ownership* (see Table 3). *Age* is a continuous variable that represents respondents' replies to the question "How old were you on your last birthday?" The mean age of the weighted sample was 48.5 years old, with a standard deviation of 14.5 years. For some of the analyses discussed in this article, *age* was collapsed into age ranges, as shown in Table 3. *Gender* is a dichotomous (only 2 values) variable where male=1 and female=0; 44.2 percent of the weighted sample was male. *Race* is also dichotomous. Whites, which comprised 79.6 percent of the weighted sample, were coded as 1, and all other racial groups were coded as 0. *Gross household income* was measured as income ranges; respondents were asked to indicate into which category their gross household income fell: less than $20,000, $20,000 to $34,999, $35,000 to $49,999, $50,000 to $74,999, $75,000 to $99,999, and $100,000 or more. Over one-third of the weighted sample reported a gross household income of at least $100,000, and

slightly over twelve percent of the weighted sample said their household income was below $35,000. According to the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation, the median household income in Anchorage in 2009 was $70,151. *Home ownership* was coded as homeowner=1 and renter=0. Homeowners comprised 80.3 percent of the weighted sample.

Analyses

A number of analyses were conducted to explore the relationships between the dependent and independent variables. The results from the univariate analysis are discussed in the above section of this article and are presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3. The next step was bivariate analysis, which involves looking for relationships between a dependent variable and an independent variable using tabular analysis. For example, are homeowners more likely than renters to report that they keep a firearm in the home for protection? Is household income related to whether a survey respondent has a security system for their vehicle? To facilitate this approach, many of the independent variables were collapsed into a smaller number of categories: the three composite measures of *perception of safety*, *social cohesion*, and *informal social control* were each collapsed into three categories: "low," "medium," and "high" based on their standard deviations. These categories allow for comparison among respondents who scored unusually low, unusually high, and close to average on these composite measures. As Table 4 shows, most respondents fall into the "medium" category. The fourth composite measure, *social engagement*, was also collapsed into three categories: "low," no reported participation in any of the listed organizations; "medium," participation in one organization; and "high," participation in two or more of the listed organizations.

For the series of bivariate analyses, all relationships between each dependent variable and each independent variable were examined for strength of the relationship and direction, if appropriate. Direction can be either positive or negative; a positive direction indicates that as one variable increases, the other increases. A negative direction indicates that as one variable increases, the other decreases. The relationships were also examined for statistical significance. An interesting thing about statistical significance is that the likelihood of finding it depends a lot on the size of the sample.

Table 3. Respondent Demographics, Anchorage Community Survey 2009

		Percent
Age		
	Under 25 years old	3.9 %
	25-34 years old	16.3
	35-44 years old	18.6
	45-54 years old	26.8
	55-64 years old	22.3
	65 years old and over	12.1
	Mean age	48.5 years
	SD	14.5
Gender		
	Male	44.2 %
	Female	55.8
Race		
	White	79.6 %
	Alaska Native or American Indian	5.6
	Asian	5.0
	Black or African American	3.8
	Pacific Islander	1.6
	Other	4.5
Gross household income		
	Less than $20K	4.8 %
	$20K-$34,999	7.4
	$35K-$49,999	12.8
	$50K-$74,999	18.6
	$75K-$99,999	20.7
	$100K or more	35.7
Home ownership		
	Homeowner	80.3 %
	Renter	19.7

The smaller the sample, the stronger the relationship between two variables has to be for it to be statistically significant. With a large sample, such as that of the Anchorage Community Survey, even weak and unmeaningful relationships can be statistically significant. In this study, all but one of the 90 bivariate analyses were statistically significant. So this doesn't really tell us anything. It is more important to look at the strength of the relationships. To do this, two statistics which are measures of the proportionate reduction in error (PRE) were used: Gamma when the independent variable had more than one category, and Cramer's V when the independent variable had only two categories (such was the case

Table 4. Distribution of Collapsed Composite Variables, Anchorage Community Survey 2009

	Low	Medium	High
Perception of safety	15.3 %	63.4 %	21.3 %
Social cohesion	13.6	72.4	14.0
Informal social control	15.5	71.1	13.4
Social engagement	41.4	36.9	21.7

for *gender, race,* and *home ownership*). PRE measures tell us how much better our ability to predict the value of the dependent variable becomes if we know the value of the independent variable. For example, if we know the gender of a person, are we better able to predict whether that person takes self-defense lessons than if we have no knowledge of the person's gender? Gamma is a directional PRE measure, which means that it tells us the strength of the association as well as the direction of the association. To illustrate, suppose we are interested in the relationship between gross household income and attendance at Neighborhood Watch meetings. Gamma will show whether there is a relationship between these two variables, how strong it is, and whether respondents from households with larger incomes are more likely to go to Neighborhood Watch meetings than people from households with smaller incomes.

Findings and Discussion

Tables 5 and 6 show the results of the bivariate analyses. Numbers represent the weighted percentage of respondents who answered that they did perform the assorted self-protective behaviors. For example, in Table 5, 97.5 percent of respondents who scored "low" in *social cohesion* reported locking their doors at night and while away from home. Percentages should be read across by rows to get a sense of whether the independent variable is related to the dependent variable. The greater the differences in the percentages, the more likely that there is a meaningful relationship. A more statistically valid approach is to look at the PRE measure (Gamma or Cramer's V). The closer this measure is to 1.00 or -1.00, the stronger the relationship between the two variables. A good rule-of-thumb is that the relationship is weak if the PRE measure is less than .100, moderate if it is between .100 and .200, moderately strong if it is between .200 and .300, and strong if it is above .300. Also, in the case of Gamma, the sign of the measure (positive or negative) indicates the direction of the relationship.

Social Cohesion

An examination of Table 5 shows that while there appear to be patterns based on the percentages, *social cohesion* is not strongly related to any of the ten self-protective behaviors, though it is moderately related to locking doors during the day and while at home, and using a home security system. As respondents reported higher levels of *social cohesion*, their tendency to lock their doors during the day and while at home declined. It may be that because they are more trusting of their neighbors, they are less concerned about daytime intrusions into their homes. Conversely, respondents were more likely to use a home security system if they scored higher on *social cohesion*. This may be an illustration of Robert Frost's observation that "good fences make good neighbors."

Respondents who scored low on *social cohesion* were more likely, compared to those who scored higher, to report taking

Table 5. Reported Self-Protective Behaviors by Independent Variables, Anchorage Community Survey 2009

Self-protective behaviors	Low	Medium	High	Gamma
Perception of safety				
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	99.7 %	98.1 %	92.2 %	-.683
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	83.9	78.7	52.1	-.461
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	55.1	54.9	44.4	-.134
Keep a firearm in the home	55.0	52.4	52.4	-.025
Have a dog	40.8	52.9	45.4	.023
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	34.1	36.9	25.4	-.133
Use a home security system	22.6	20.5	20.9	-.022
Take self-defense lessons	17.8	8.7	4.5	-.406
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	9.2	8.0	9.9	.037
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	7.2	3.2	4.0	-.169
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.25**	**4.14**	**3.51**	
Social engagement				
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.3 %	97.2 %	97.9 %	.047
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	73.0	77.3	81.2	.148
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	49.2	54.9	58.1	.119
Keep a firearm in the home	47.9	51.9	57.0	.113
Have a dog	48.7	46.8	47.6	-.020
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	31.3	35.6	37.4	.092
Use a home security system	18.4	17.7	30.6	.186
Take self-defense lessons	5.9	10.5	9.7	.191
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	1.5	6.5	17.2	.669
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	1.5	3.1	7.2	.487
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**3.75**	**4.01**	**4.44**	
Social cohesion				
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.5 %	97.5 %	96.9 %	-.061
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	81.8	76.6	68.4	-.198
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	48.8	54.5	54.8	.065
Keep a firearm in the home	50.8	51.0	59.8	.099
Have a dog	46.8	49.4	52.6	.063
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	40.0	32.3	40.2	.005
Use a home security system	16.2	21.1	31.9	.241
Take self-defense lessons	13.5	7.7	7.5	-.191
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	8.9	7.5	12.4	.116
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	3.6	3.3	6.0	.168
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.08**	**4.01**	**4.30**	
Informal social control				
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.0 %	97.1 %	96.3 %	-.059
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	85.0	76.2	66.8	-.273
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	60.2	54.6	46.5	-.148
Keep a firearm in the home	52.1	53.2	58.4	.067
Have a dog	43.0	51.2	45.7	.039
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	43.3	32.8	34.4	-.113
Use a home security system	25.5	19.6	28.6	.033
Take self-defense lessons	18.7	6.8	5.5	-.416
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	9.4	7.8	9.8	.009
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	5.8	3.2	4.3	-.119
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.40**	**4.02**	**3.96**	

Self-protection
(continued from page 13)

self-defense lessons, while the survey participants who scored high on *social cohesion* were more likely to attend Neighborhood Watch meetings and develop a signal for "danger" with their neighbors than those who scored lower. These findings are not surprising. People who feel connected to others would be expected to rely upon others to some extent for their personal safety, while those who feel less connected might be inclined to seek more independent approaches.

Informal Social Control

Informal social control was strongly and negatively related to taking self-defense classes. Respondents who disagreed that their neighbors would be likely to intervene in the event of occurrences like children spray painting graffiti or skipping school to hang out on a local corner were more likely to report taking self-defense lessons. Another negative relationship, though not as strong, is evident between *informal social control* and locking doors during the day and while at home. Respondents who scored lower on *informal social control* were also

more likely to have outside or automatic lights to deter prowlers and to use a security system on their vehicles. All these relationships are in the expected direction. Those who believe their neighbors are not likely to intervene in different situations are more apt to take matters of defending themselves and their property into their own hands.

Social Engagement

All of the strong or moderately strong relationships between *social engagement* and self-protective behaviors were positive, that is, the more organizations respondents

**Table 6. Reported Self-Protective Behaviors by Respondent Demographics,
Anchorage Community Survey 2009**

	Gender			Age						
Self-protective behaviors	Female	Male	Cramer's V	Under 25	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65 and over	Gamma
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.1 %	97.4 %	.010	93.2 %	96.9 %	97.0 %	97.0 %	98.2 %	98.2 %	.198
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	80.5	71.3	.108	82.4	83.1	76.1	76.0	72.8	73.6	-.122
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	53.2	53.7	.004	37.7	44.6	53.8	56.7	55.0	60.0	.127
Keep a firearm in the home	45.2	59.1	.139	44.2	48.3	48.0	55.8	56.1	43.9	.036
Have a dog	49.7	45.2	.045	41.2	47.5	55.2	56.7	44.2	25.4	-.148
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	34.7	32.5	.024	30.0	34.7	35.3	37.0	32.5	26.7	-.054
Use a home security system	20.5	22.3	.023	12.1	14.1	19.2	25.5	23.7	23.2	.145
Take self-defense lessons	8.3	9.2	.016	16.7	13.3	10.5	8.2	2.3	4.3	-.294
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	7.6	7.3	.006	1.6	3.7	8.6	7.2	9.1	10.3	.200
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	3.8	3.2	.015	1.6	2.5	3.1	3.9	4.2	4.5	.148
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.00**	**4.01**		**3.61**	**3.89**	**4.07**	**4.24**	**4.01**	**3.70**	

	Race			Gross household income						
	White	Minority	Cramer's V	Less than $20K	$20K-$34,999	$35K-$49,999	$50K-$74,999	$75K-$99,999	$100K or more	Gamma
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.1 %	97.6 %	.013	97.4 %	98.3 %	97.6 %	95.0 %	98.7 %	96.8 %	.048
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	74.5	84.0	.089	77.9	82.8	79.2	75.7	72.1	74.8	-.025
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	54.3	49.0	.043	45.8	45.4	49.7	53.8	51.5	57.2	.074
Keep a firearm in the home	52.8	46.1	.055	26.1	36.2	49.1	48.9	51.2	58.3	.183
Have a dog	50.1	37.8	.099	14.1	38.3	47.4	56.0	51.9	52.8	.160
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	32.4	38.5	.052	16.0	22.4	30.2	32.3	34.0	38.8	.145
Use a home security system	20.2	25.7	.054	14.8	16.5	15.2	18.3	17.4	26.7	.173
Take self-defense lessons	7.9	12.1	.061	15.7	11.3	9.2	9.3	6.9	7.6	-.108
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	6.9	9.8	.044	7.5	6.4	8.1	8.6	6.1	7.7	.000
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	2.3	8.5	.135	7.5	3.9	2.4	5.8	2.7	1.5	-.384
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**3.96**	**4.09**		**3.23**	**3.62**	**3.88**	**3.94**	**3.93**	**4.22**	

	Home ownership		
	Home-owner	Renter	Cramer's V
Lock doors at night and when you are away from home	97.3 %	96.8 %	.011
Lock doors during the day and when you are at home	76.2	77.5	.012
Have outside/automatic lights to deter prowlers	57.0	39.6	.139
Keep a firearm in the home	54.6	39.1	.123
Have a dog	51.7	31.6	.160
Use a security system on vehicle(s)	36.2	25.2	.092
Use a home security system	24.6	8.6	.155
Take self-defense lessons	8.2	11.0	.039
Attend Neighborhood Watch meetings	8.4	3.6	.072
Develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors	3.6	3.5	.001
Average total number of self-protective behaviors	**4.17**	**3.37**	

said they were involved with (zero, one, or two or more) the more likely they were to do all the listed self-protective behaviors. An exception was having a dog, which varied little depending on the amount of reported *social engagement*. Not unexpectedly, the strongest associations were with attending Neighborhood Watch meetings and developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors. Because it uses a composite measure, this analysis does not differentiate among involvement in say, a religious community or business group, and involvement in a more explicitly neighborhood-level group (such as a tenant association). It is possible that social engagement with particular organizations is associated with some self-protective behaviors, but not with others.

Perception of Safety

The general pattern is that *perception of safety* is negatively associated with most of the self-protective behaviors. Respondents who said they feel safer are less likely to do things like lock their doors, either during the day or at night, at home or when away, and take self-defense lessons. Though the association is somewhat weaker, survey participants who feel safer are also less likely to use outside or automatic lights or a security system for their vehicles, or develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors.

Gender

There was little difference between women and men in the survey with respect to most of the reported self-protective behaviors (see Table 6). However, women were more likely than men (80.5% versus 71.3%) to say they lock their doors when at home and during the day, and men were more likely than women to report keeping a firearm in the home (59.1% versus 45.2%). The relationship of gender to (1) door locking at home and during the day and (2) keeping a firearm is moderate in both cases.

Race

Survey respondents from minority racial groups differed from white respondents not in terms of how many of the ten self-protective behaviors they reported doing, but which ones. As shown in Table 6, compared to white respondents, minority respondents were more likely to lock their doors during the day and when at home (84.0% versus 74.5%), take self-defense lessons (12.1% versus 7.9%), attend Neighborhood Watch meetings (9.8% versus 6.9%), and develop a signal for "danger" with neighbors (8.5% versus 2.3%). White respondents were more likely than minority respondents to have a dog (50.1% versus 37.8%), use outside or

automatic lights (54.3% versus 49.0%), and keep a firearm (52.8% versus 46.1%). With the exception of developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors, all of these relationships are weak, and should thus be interpreted with caution. It appears these behaviors could be categorized as *things you do* versus *things you buy*. A relationship to income may be connected with these categories.

Home Ownership

The self-protective behaviors reported by homeowners and renters in the survey were moderately different. Renters reported doing fewer of the ten possible behaviors, and were much less likely than homeowners in the survey to have outside or automatic lights (39.6% versus 57.0%), keep a firearm in the home (39.1% versus 54.6%), have a dog (31.6% versus 51.7%), or use security systems at their homes (8.6% versus 24.6%). Home ownership is a reasonable proxy for income; it is possible that the greater one's income, the more one can spend on security systems and firearms. Another explanation is that renters have little incentive to install security systems, particularly in their homes, as they do not own the property. Also, renters might not be allowed to install a security system, or may see no need to do so if the rental property already has some form of crime prevention implemented by the landlord. With respect to dogs, many renters are prohibited under conditions of rental agreements from owning dogs, so it is not surprising that they typically did not report keeping a dog for self-protection. Homeowners and renters in the survey reported similar levels of door locking, whether during the day or at night, or when at home or away, and both groups had the same likelihood of developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors. Homeowners who answered the survey were more than twice as likely as renters to say they attend Neighborhood Watch meetings (8.4% versus 3.6%); this was, however, a weak association.

Age

Some of the self-protective behaviors seemed to increase with age, such as locking doors at night and while away (even though this is a behavior practiced by just about everyone in the sample), using outside or automatic lights, attending Neighborhood Watch meetings, and developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors. The latter two behaviors involve working with others; it might be that older people have lived in their homes longer, and thus are more likely to know their neighbors and work with them to feel safer in their homes and communities, or that they have more time (presumably

because they are less likely to be raising children and working full-time compared to younger adults) to devote to interaction with their neighbors. Locking doors during the day and while at home and taking self-defense lessons appeared to decrease with age. Older people may be reluctant to partake of self-defense classes because they feel less physically able compared to younger people (there is a large drop in those reporting to have taken self-defense lessons between the age groups of 45-54 and 55-64). Dog ownership reached a peak among those aged 45-54 years, but dropped among older respondents. A similar pattern was observed for use of security systems on vehicles, and to a lesser extent, use of security systems in the home. While only a weak relationship, firearm ownership increased with age up to a point; the oldest respondents had the lowest reported level of keeping a firearm (43.9%).

Gross Household Income

The strongest relationship involving income was a negative one—people who reported the highest household incomes were least likely to work with neighbors to develop a "danger" signal. Those with incomes in the middle range ($50,000-$74,999) were the most likely to do this. A moderately weak and negative association was seen between taking self-defense lessons and *gross household income*; respondents from the households with the lowest incomes had the highest reported participation in that activity. Household income was moderately and positively associated with keeping a firearm in the home, and having security systems on a vehicle or at one's home. The only non-statistically-significant relationship in all the bivariate analyses was *gross household income* and attending Neighborhood Watch meetings.

Conclusion

This study looked at the relationships between self-protective behaviors and how safe people feel, how much they interact with others in their community, and how they rate their neighborhood on measures of social cohesion and informal social control. It also examined the assumptions that (a) people will engage in more self-protective behaviors if they generally do not feel safe; (b) those who interact a lot with others in their communities are more likely to carry out self-protective behaviors that involve working with others; and (c) people who rate their neighborhoods high on measures of social cohesion and informal social control will be more likely to engage in self-protec-

Self-protection

tion activity that involves collective activity.

This analysis validated two of the three assumptions tested in the research. Feelings of safety are inversely related to self-protective behavior. The less safe one feels, the more one will do things to feel safer (or the more one does things to feel safer, the less safe one feels).

Involvement in local organizations is strongly and positively related to engaging in collective self-protective behavior, that is, getting involved with Neighborhood Watch and developing a signal for "danger" with one's neighbors.

The third assumption, that people who report greater feelings of community or think their neighbors will do something if crime or disorder is occurring are more likely to engage in collective self-protective behavior, was partially supported by the research. *Social cohesion* was moderately and positively related to both attendance at Neighborhood Watch meetings and developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors, while *informal social control* was not related to participation in Neighborhood Watch in any apparent way, and was negatively associated with developing a signal for "danger" with neighbors.

Crime prevention advocates recognize that the police and other agencies of the criminal justice system have limited resources to adequately deal with crime after the fact, let alone prevent it before it happens. Thus, a goal that is common to most crime prevention programs is to encourage individuals to take more personal responsibility for their safety. This study suggests a variety of strategies for those who wish to promote more self-protective behavior. First, if fear of crime is associated with self-protective behavior, it might make sense to target particularly fearful groups for interventions aimed at increasing the use of these behaviors. Whether this is ethical or even effective at reducing crime is unclear. There is some evidence from other studies that teaching people how to do things that supposedly will make them safer can actually make people more afraid of being a crime victim. Also, the relationship between fear and actual risk of victimization is inverse; for example, members of the most fearful groups in American society are often the least likely to be victimized. Directing scarce crime prevention resources at the people at the lowest risk of victimization is not efficient. To quote British crime prevention researchers Mike Hough and Nick Tilley, this is not "getting the grease to the squeak."

This study shows a strong relationship between social cohesion and participation in local organizations and collective self-protective behavior. This suggests that a fruitful approach would be to direct efforts toward those who are already somewhat so-cially connected to others with the belief that those persons are more likely to engage in crime prevention activities. However, given that much research indicates that social connectedness in general seems to provide protection against criminal victimization, focusing more resources on connected individuals is also not especially efficient.

In reviewing the results of this study, it is necessary nonetheless to consider the limitations of the survey, particularly the difficulty in surveying hard to reach segments of the population, and the impact this may have on estimates. As noted earlier, weighting the data helps address some of these limitations.

Future research on this question should incorporate other possibly explanatory variables, such as victimization experience, household income, education, length of time in one's current home, and attitudes towards the efficacy of the criminal justice system. While the *social cohesion* and *informal social control* measures were generally poor at explaining self-protective behavior, the inclusion of other variables measuring neighborhood-level factors, such as social and physical disorder and reported crime, would help in understanding if a person's immediate environment affects whether that individual engages in self-protective behaviors, and if so, what type.

Sharon Chamard is an associate professor with the Justice Center.