

Crime data comparison



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Crime Data Comparison University of Phoenix GA11BCJ01CJA 314:

Criminology Crime Data Comparison The Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) is a voluntary program that provides nationwide crime statistics based off information provided by law enforcement agencies across the country. The UCR collects data on a number of different crimes to include burglary, murder, and terrorism offenses. The UCR bases its findings solely from those individuals who have been arrested by law enforcement agencies and not statistics that may have been collected from court room proceedings, or decisions made by prosecutors. Analyzing the occurrence of the offense of murder in Birmingham, Alabama and Anchorage, Alaska provides a comparison of factors that may contribute to differences between the two areas as well as provides an insight of crime rates and reasons crime rates may change over time. Rates of Murder Crimes Anchorage, Alaska is the state's largest city with a population of more than 279, 000 people. Anchorage possesses a diverse population; however, the majority of the population is predominately white. In 2009, the UCR suggests murder offenses have risen over the years. 14 cases of murder offenses were reported in 2009 which was an increase from 2008 as only 10 murder crimes were reported and listed on the UCR.

In comparison, Birmingham, Alabama maintains a population of more than 227, 000 people, possessing a racial make-up of more than 70% African Americans and approximately 23% of the population is white. The UCR suggests that in 2009 there were 65 murder crimes reported which was lower than the 82 cases listed in 2008 ("Alabama Live Llc", ? 2011). In terms of percentages, it appears that murder crimes in Anchorage in 2009 were on

the rise with an increase of approximately 40%. On the other hand, the number of murder crimes in Birmingham decreased by approximately 21% as the numbers went from 82 in 2008 to 65 in 2009 (“ The FBI Federal Bureau Of Investigation”,? 2011). With the large number of murder offenses reported in Birmingham it appears this type of crime is a problem for law enforcement agencies on duty in that state.

Crime statistics suggest Birmingham holds the number five position compared to other states in terms of the number of murders committed in a city with a population of more than 100, 000 people. On the other hand, Anchorage holds the position as one of the cities possessing the least amount of annual slayings with a population of more than 100, 000 people (“ Alabama Live Llc”,? 2011). Differences in Murder Crime RatesNo single factor can explain the differences in the murder rates of the two metropolitan areas; rather a combination of factors may help in explaining the disparities between the two areas.

Factors to include the cost of living, unemployment rates, and the amount of murder crimes reported to the UCR can help provide an understanding of the differences. Metropolitan communities with inadequate housing communities or a lack thereof resulting in poverty and homelessness may increase crime rates as people are likely to participate in illegal activities hence committing crimes as a means of survival. Higher costs of living to include expensive housing accommodations may also increase the likelihood of individuals committing crimes. Birmingham possesses a low cost of living, however possesses a low job-rate growth because of the economy??™s current status

thus may be a cause of the increase in murder crimes committed each year ("Alabama Live Llc",? 2011).

The UCR is a voluntary program thus may be another reason for the disparity in crime rates between the two areas. Law enforcement agencies are not obligated to submit information to the UCR, rather information is submitted on a voluntary basis hence may cause variations in the number of offenses committed with the number of offenses that were actually reported to the UCR. Law enforcement agencies in Anchorage may respond and report crime statistics differently than Birmingham law enforcement agencies hence may have different determinations that must be considered prior to submission to the UCR; this may cause a delay in reporting or even reasons for not reporting certain offenses. Conclusion Variations in crime rates when comparing the occurrence of murder offences in Birmingham and Anchorage may indicate a number underlying reasons causing the differences even though each is considered a metropolitan area. Factors to include incomplete/differences in reporting, cost of living, and economic status may each contribute to differences in murder offense rates.

The same factors may also contribute to reasons crime rates change over time as populations may increase or decrease as well as again, changes in economic status. References Alabama Live LLC.? (2011).? Retrieved from [http://blog.](http://blog.al.com/spotnews/2010/09/birmingham_crime_rate_down_ove.html)

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