



College of Liberal Arts

**Center for Public Safety Initiatives**

# Race and Crime in a Rustbelt Suburb: Irondequoit, NY Part II

**Working Paper 2023- 12**

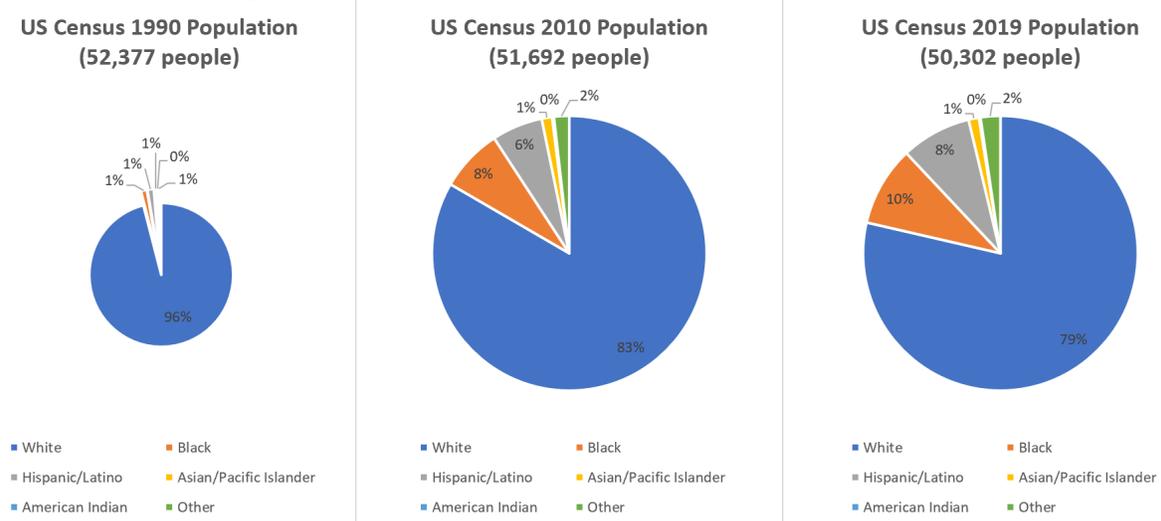
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## Introduction

The first paper in this three-part series focused on dispelling the idea that crime in Irondequoit, as measured by arrest data, became worse as the Town became more diverse. Using arrest data from 1990-2019, paper one clearly showed that overall crime has decreased as the town has become more diverse. This second paper focuses on race/ethnic specific felony arrest data over a 30-year period and illustrates that while overall crime and felony arrests have decreased during this period, racial/ethnic disparities in felony arrests have increased. An important caveat to this finding is that the race/ethnic specific rates of felony arrests are based on Census data for individuals who reside in Irondequoit, and some of the people arrested in Irondequoit come from other areas.

*Figure 1. Racial Demographics - Census Data 1990, 2010 and 2019*



Source: United States Census

Figure 1 provides a review of U.S. census data from 1990, 2010 and 2019; this data confirms the assertion made in the first paper. Irondequoit has historically been, and continues to be, a white majority suburb. The town has become more diverse in the past two decades, and this diversity is not correlated with an overall increase in crime. As Irondequoit became more diverse the number and rate of crime (felonies and misdemeanors) – as measured by arrest

data, has decreased.

Figure 2. Arrest rate by Race/Ethnicity

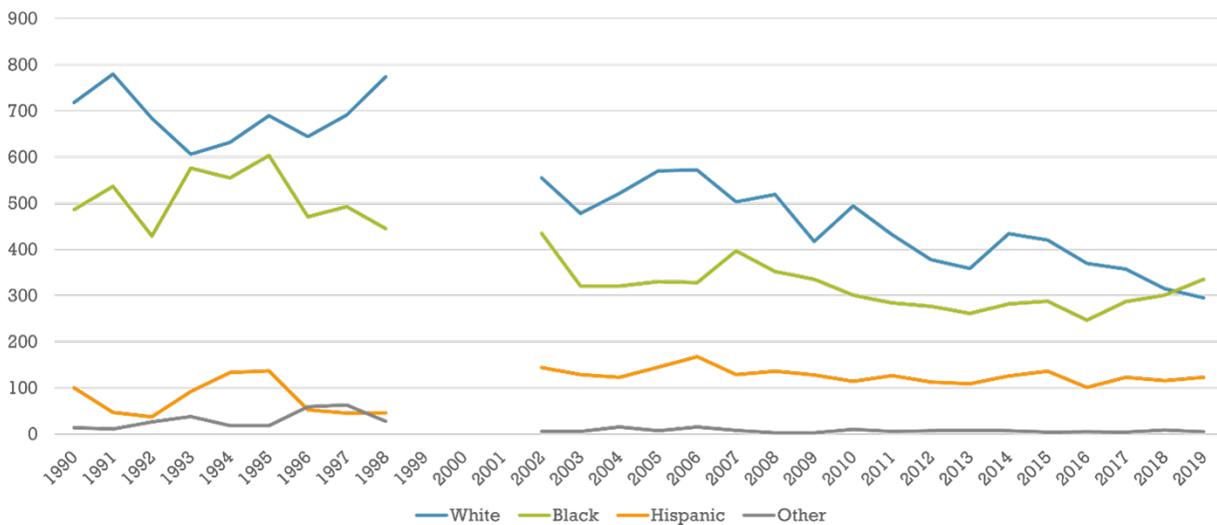
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>
White	14/1000	11/1000	7/1000
Black	690/1000	75/1000	70/1000
Hispanic	132/1000	35/1000	28/1000

Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 2 provides data on arrest rates by race and ethnicity. Since 1990 the overall arrest rates for White, Black, and Hispanic individuals in Irondequoit has decreased. While this fact is undeniable it neglects more thoughtful consideration of the data. As per the previous caveat, non-residents of the Town are among those arrested for felonies in Irondequoit, however, we use Town population data to calculate the rates above. Noting the relatively small proportion of Blacks and Hispanics who lived in Irondequoit in 1990, we must be cautious in our interpretation of the respective arrest rates (690/1000 for Blacks and 132/1000 for Hispanics) because a significant portion of the Black and Hispanic individuals arrested could have been non-residents of the Town, thus calculating the arrest rate using Irondequoit population data may be particularly problematic in this case. It is subsequently best to compare the 2010 and 2019 arrest rates of arrests among Blacks relative to Whites as the overall population of Blacks in Irondequoit increased significantly during these two decades. Similarly, it is best to compare the 2010 and 2019 arrest rates for Hispanics/Latinos relative to Whites as their population also increased significantly in the last two decades. With the aforementioned caveat in mind, the data indicate that in 2019 Blacks were ten (10) times more likely to be arrested in Irondequoit compared to Whites. By itself this disparity does not indicate that IPD officers engaged in discriminatory behavior directed at Black

Americans. For example, if the majority of Black arrests are not officer initiated, then the arrest disparity may be a function of other factors not related to officer initiated behavior. That Blacks are 10 times more likely to be arrested relative to Whites, however, should be concerning given the history of police discrimination against racial minorities by police and ample anecdotal evidence via members of the Irondequoit and larger Rochester community who claim to have experienced discriminatory behavior by IPD officers.

Figure 3. Total arrests Race/Ethnicity, 1990-2019



Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 3 illustrates the total arrest data broken down by arrestee's race/ethnicity. The gap in the chart indicates the fact that detailed arrest data broken down by arrestee's race/ethnicity was not available from 1999-2001<sup>i</sup>. From 1990-1998, an average of 77 Hispanic people were arrested each year. From 2002-2019, an average of 128 Hispanic people were arrested each year. From 1990-1998, an average of 511 Black people were arrested each year. From 2002-2010 there was an average of 347 Black people arrested each year. From 2011-2019 there was an average of 285 Black people arrested each year. From 1990-1998 there was an average of 691 White people arrested each year. From 2002-2010, an average of 514 White

people were arrested each year. From 2011-2019 there was an average of 373 White people arrested each year.

Overall, arrests for individuals identified as Other and Hispanic remained relatively stable over the last two decades, while arrests for Blacks and Whites decreased. However, beginning in 2015, the number of Black arrests each year began trending upward, and for the first time in the thirty-year period analyzed, Blacks surpassed Whites in 2019 as the racial/ethnic group with the largest number of arrests (335 arrests vs. 295 arrests).

Figure 4. Felony arrest rate by race/ethnicity

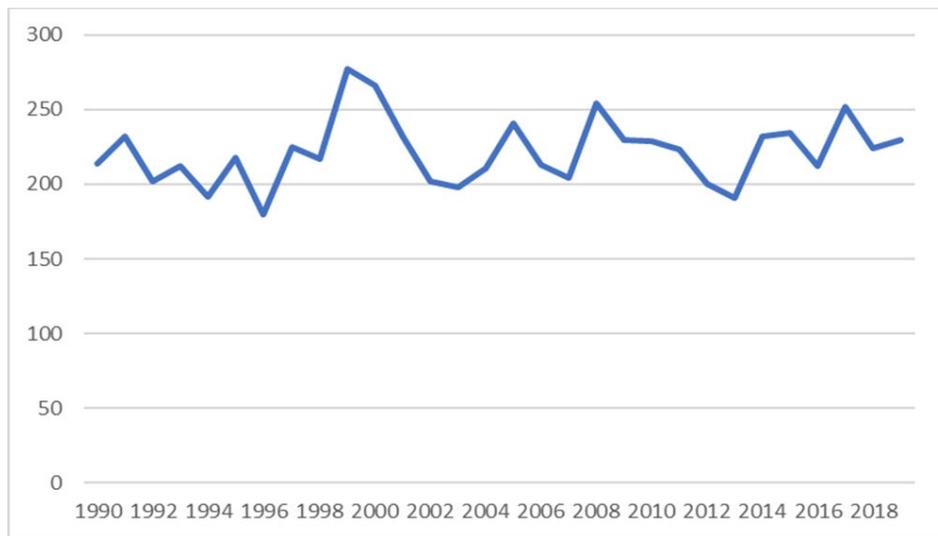
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2019</b>
White	2.5/1000	2.6/1000	1.6/1000
Black	106/1000	21/1000	25/1000
Hispanic	10/1000	8/1000	7.6/1000

Figure 4 provides data on felony arrest rates by race and ethnicity. Since 1990 the overall felony arrest rates for White, Black, and Hispanic individuals in Irondequoit has decreased. While this is undeniable, it neglects more thoughtful consideration of the data. As has been pointed out, non-residents of the town are not included in the town's population estimate. Therefore, calculating felony arrest rates using the towns population estimates may cultivate an inaccurate interpretation of the data, because a significant portion of these Black individuals could have been non-residents of the Town. It is subsequently best to compare the 2010 and 2019 felony arrest rates for Blacks relative to Whites as the overall population of Blacks in Irondequoit increased significantly during these two decades. Similarly, it is best to compare the 2010 and 2019 arrest rates for Hispanics/Latinos relative to Whites as their population also increased significantly in the last two decades. Hispanics in 2019 were about

(5) times more likely to be arrested relative to Whites.

With the aforementioned limitation in mind, the data indicates that in 2019 Blacks were fifteen (15) times more likely to be arrested in Irondequoit for a felony compared to Whites. On its own these disparities do not indicate that IPD officers engaged in discriminatory behavior directed at Black Americans and Hispanics. However, this disparity should be considered in the context of other systemic issues. For instance, the United States has an extensive history of discriminatory policing directed against racial minorities and ample anecdotal evidence from members of the Irondequoit and larger Rochester community who have claim to have experienced discriminatory behavior at the hands of the police.

*Figure 5. Total Felony Arrests, 1990-2019*

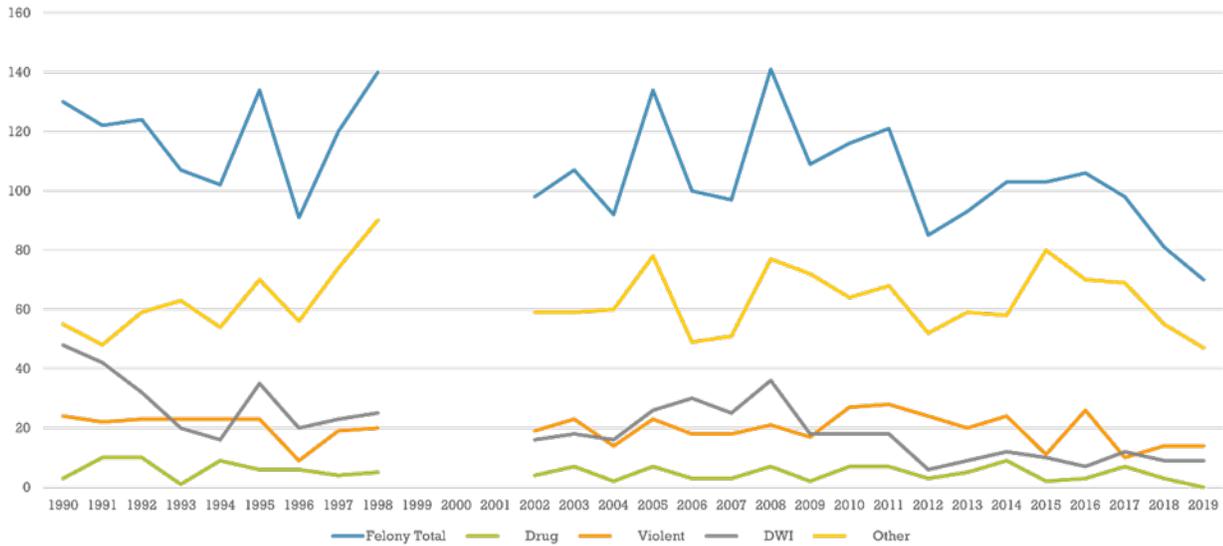


Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 5 illustrates total felony arrests across the 30-year period of observation. Across the 30-year period, the number of arrests each year ranges between 180 and 277 arrests.

The number of felony arrests in 1990 is similar to the number of felony arrests in 2019, with 214 arrests in 1990 and 230 in 2019. Overall, arrests of this kind remained relatively stable across the 30-year observation period.

Figure 6. White Felony Arrests, 1990-2019



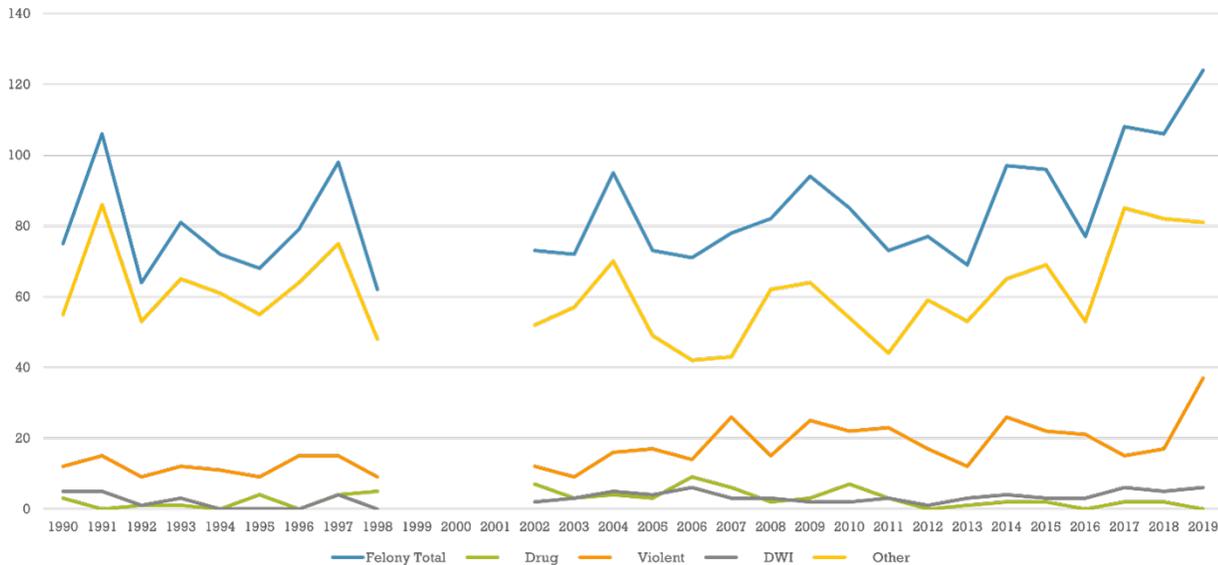
Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 6 illustrates the total number of White felony arrests each year as well as the total number of arrests each year by specific felony type. The gap in the chart indicates the fact that detailed arrest data was not available for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001<sup>ii</sup>. Overall, White felony arrests decreased over the 30-year period. White felony arrests peaked in 2008 when there were 141 total arrests made. The great majority of Whites arrested on felony charges typically had committed an offense that fell under the category of ‘Other’.

White arrests for drug related felony offenses were of low prevalence and remained relatively stable over the 30-year period of observation. From 1990-1998, there was an average of 6 White arrests for drug related felony offenses each year, an average of 5 White arrests for drug related felony offenses each year from 2002-2010, and an average of 4 White arrests for drug related felony offenses each year from 2011-2019. From 1990-1998 there was an average of 21 White arrests for violent felonies each year, an average of 20 White arrests for violent felonies each year from 2002-2010, and an average of 19 White arrests for violent felonies each year from 2011-2019. From 1990-1998, there was an average of 29 White

arrests for felony DWI offenses each year, an average of 23 White arrests for felony DWI offenses each year from 2002-2010, and an average of 10 White arrests for felony DWI offenses each year from 2011-2019.

*Figure 7. Black Felony Arrests, 1990-2019*



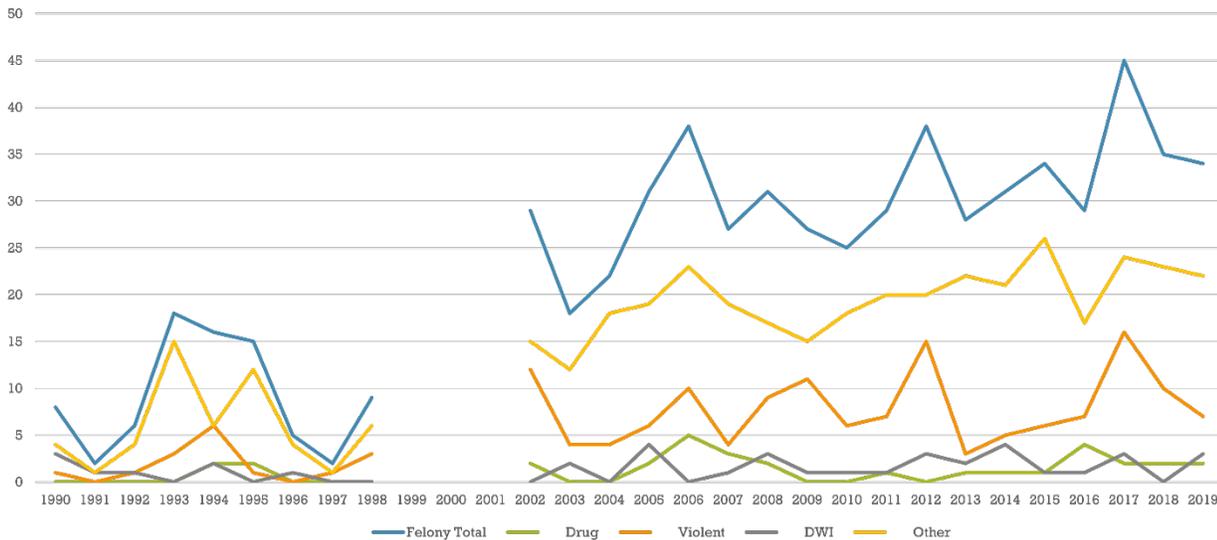
Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 7 illustrates the total number of Black felony arrests each year as well as the total number of arrests each year by felony type. The gap in the chart indicates that detailed arrest data was not available for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001<sup>iii</sup>. From 1998-2002 there were an average of 78 Black felony arrests each year, an average of 80 Black felony arrests each year from 2002-2010, and an average of 92 Black felony arrests each year from 2011-2019. Black arrests for felony offenses that fall under the category of ‘other’ constituted the majority of arrests. From 1990-1998 there were an average of 62 Black arrests each year, an average of 55 Black arrests each year from 2002-2010, and an average of 66 Black arrests each year from 2011-2019.

Black arrests for drug related felony offenses made up a relatively small data category. In the

entire 30-year period of observation there were never more than 10 drug arrests in any given year. Black arrests for violent felony offenses were more common but not especially prevalent. From 1990-1998 there were an average of 12 Black arrests each year for violent felony offenses, an average of 17 Black arrests each year for violent felony offenses from 2002-2010, and an average of 21 Black arrests each year for violent felony offenses from 2011-2019. Black felony DWI arrests, across the whole 30-year observation period, never exceeded 6 arrests in any given year. The average number of Black felony arrests for each year increased each review period (1990-1998, 2002-2010, and 2011-2019). The number of Black felony arrests in 2019 was the highest in the entire 30-year period under investigation (124 arrests).

*Figure 8. Hispanic Felony Arrests, 1990-2019*



Source: New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services

Figure 8 illustrates the total number of Hispanic felony arrests each year as well as a breakdown of the number of arrests each year by felony type. The gap in the chart indicates the fact that detailed arrest data was not available for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001<sup>iv</sup>.

Overall, there is much year-to-year variability in the number of Hispanic felony arrests. The

overall number of Hispanic felony arrests increased in the later 20 years, however the number of Hispanic felony arrests never exceeded 45 in any given year.

Hispanic arrests for drug related felony offenses are few. In the entire period of observation, the greatest number of arrests was in 2006 when 5 arrests were made. Hispanic arrests for violent felony and DWI offenses also proved to be quite rare. Over the 30-year period there were never more than 16 violent felony arrests and no more than 4 arrests for felony DWI.

## Conclusion

The data presented here paints a complex picture of race and policing in Irondequoit over a thirty-year period. From 1999 to 2019 the Town became more racially and ethnically diverse, yet the overall number of arrests declined significantly. Racial disparity in overall arrests also declined in the 30-year period, however, racial disparity persisted in the rates of felony arrest such that in 2019 Blacks were fifteen (15) times more likely to be arrested for a felony offense relative to Whites and Hispanics were almost (5) times more likely to be arrested. It is important to note that the calculation of arrests rates by race/ethnicity uses Census population data for the Town of Irondequoit and therefore does not account for those arrested in the Town who live elsewhere. White felony arrests were rather variable from year to year, and certainly declined in the last 4 years (2016-2019). Black year to year felony arrests were also quite variable across the period under investigation, and generally increased in the last 5 years (2015-2019). The number of Hispanic felony arrests were rather variable from 1990 to 1998 however, they have been rather consistent in the last two decades. Overall, analysis of 30 years of IPD data does not indicate much change in the number of total felony arrests. This indicates that the significant decline in overall arrests is largely a function of a decrease

in misdemeanor arrests. The next paper in this series will analyze misdemeanor arrest data by arrestee race/ethnicity.

<sup>i,ii,iii,iv</sup> Race and ethnicity data is not available for the years 1999, 2000, and 2001 because the NYS DCJS did not collect such data outside NYC for those years.

## About the Center for Public Safety Initiatives

The Center for Public Safety Initiatives is a unique collaboration between RIT's **Department of Criminal Justice**, the City of Rochester, and the criminal justice agencies of Greater Rochester including the Rochester Police Department and Monroe County Crime Lab. Its purpose is to contribute to criminal justice strategy through research, policy analysis and evaluation. Its educational goals include training graduate and undergraduate students in strategic planning and policy analysis.

The foundation of the Center is the practice of action research in which relevant data and analyses are brought to bear on the day to day decision-making processes of organizations. The Center serves the practice of policy development and implementation in real-time.

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