

## **IMMIGRATION/MIGRATION AND CRIME IN ROCHESTER NY 2010-14**

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### **Introduction**

This summer's research is a continuation of my work in the area of immigration and crime. In the past I have focused on immigration and crime as a broad general topic, as well as focusing on Utica, NY and their refugee resettlement center. The objective of this summer's research was to examine any potential links between immigration and crime rates within the Rochester community. This is relevant because agencies in Rochester are always focusing on what causes crime and ways to stop it.

This summer I focused specifically on Rochester, NY and how immigration may or may not affect crime in the local area. The project has led me to focus on one specific area on the Northeast side of the city. This area is of significance because it has a very large Puerto Rican population as well as a large European, Asian, and Latin American population. It is important to note that Puerto Ricans are not immigrants because Puerto Rico is a territory belonging to the United States. Even though Puerto Ricans are not labeled as immigrants, they still have a similar Hispanic culture which is of importance to this project.

### **Background**

Previous research on immigration and crime has been conducted in Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago, which have all had very similar results, finding that immigration generally does not increase crime rates (Stowell & Martinez, 2009). There were only a couple of isolated areas showing an increase in crime rates when immigration is the main factor. Studies conducted on the individual level have shown that immigration reduces crime, but on the macro level,

there is a lack of literature on a correlation between immigration and crime (Stowell & Martinez, 2009). More specifically, violent crime is also an area where immigration is shown to not affect crime rates. Violent crimes committed by foreign born citizens, naturalized citizens, and non citizens are no higher than violent crimes committed by native citizens and in many cases, immigrants are attributed to lowering crime rates (Olson, Laurikkala, Huff-Corzin & Corzin, 2009).

### **Goal and Objectives**

For this project there were two main goals in mind. The first was to determine if immigration has a positive, negative, or neutral relationship with crime. The second was to do an analysis of various maps to discover any causal factors and their relationship to crime. These goals fit nicely into my summer timeline and allowed the right amount of time to conduct research while being able to get out in the field and get hands on experience.

### **Methods**

I used several different methods to conduct research this summer. The first thing I did was compile census data and comparing it to hot spot density maps which represent different crimes and specific areas of occurrence on the Northeast side of Rochester in the Norton neighborhood. The hot spot density maps that I received from the Monroe Crime Analysis Center represented both property crime and violent crime from 2004 to 2010. I compared these maps to maps retrieved from the Census Bureau and Project HOPE, still representing the Northeast area, which displayed a lot of demographical information. Unfortunately, this demographical information was static and did not show any changes over a period of time.

I also participated in a ride along with Rochester Police Department Crime Prevention Officer Eric Majewicz and attended several Northeast community meetings in order to interact with the residents and learn how the communities operate from both a policing point of view and a resident's point of view. In the community I worked with Ibero-American Action League,

which runs Project HOPE in the Northeast area. While out in the community and on my ride along, I was able to do some face to face interviews with various people in order to gauge perceptions on relevant issues. I also attended a Flower, Lill, Radio, Roth, Treyor (FLRRT) street meeting, which is a community group marked by the streets they live on. The residents of this area meet with each other and the local Crime Prevention Officers in order to talk about local issues relevant to their community.

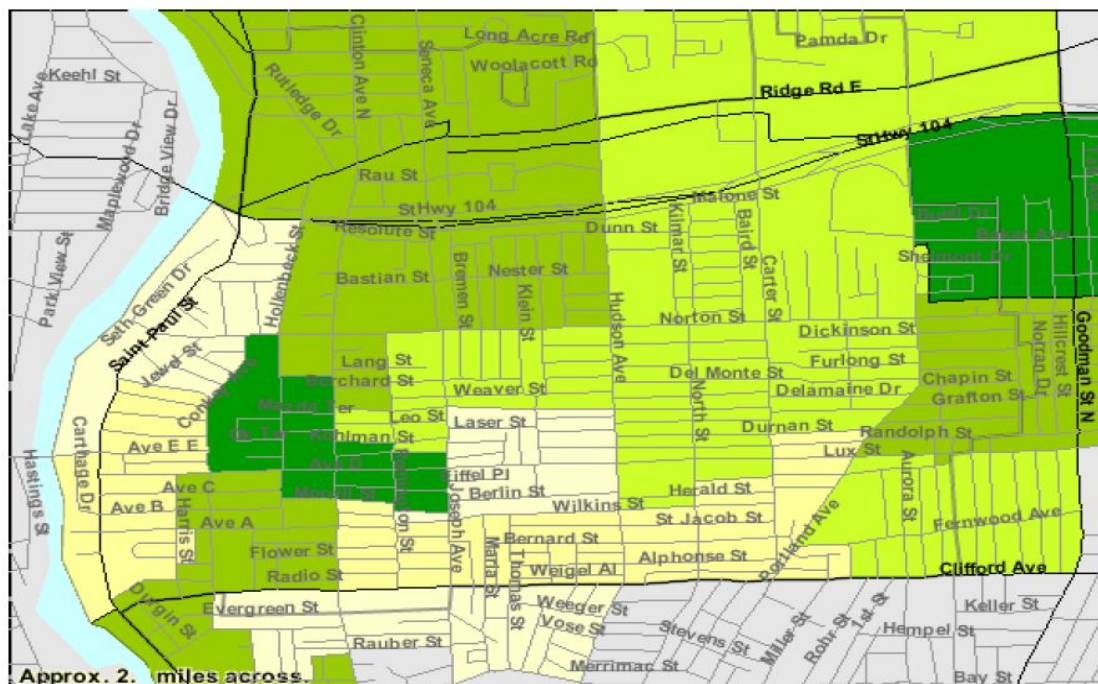
## **Results**

From the following maps I was able to make these conclusions. The heavy concentration of Foreign Born Residents is not an area with a high percentage of vacant properties. This is consistent with past research stating that foreign born residents revive housing markets in target areas (Stowell & Martinez, 2009). The area of Foreign Born Residents also runs between two hotspots of violent crime and property crime (Stowell & Martinez, 2009). This is also consistent with prior research stating that immigrants are no more likely than native counterparts to commit violent crimes which would likely lead to a decrease in property crime. It may also be attributed to reporting disparity in immigrant populations. Immigrant populations are less likely to report crimes such as domestic violence and dog and cock fighting because these are crimes that in other cultures are often viewed as less serious and not requiring police interaction (Olson, Laurikkala, Huff-Corzin & Corzin, 2009). On the Foreign Born census map, in the upper right hand corner, there is a large concentration of foreign born residents and no representation on the hot spot density maps. This is significant because a future study of that area may show some underlying reasons as to why there is a dense population of foreign born residents and not as much crime. When looking at these maps it is important to remember that Puerto Ricans are not counted as foreign born residents, but still add cultural diversity to these neighborhoods. Puerto

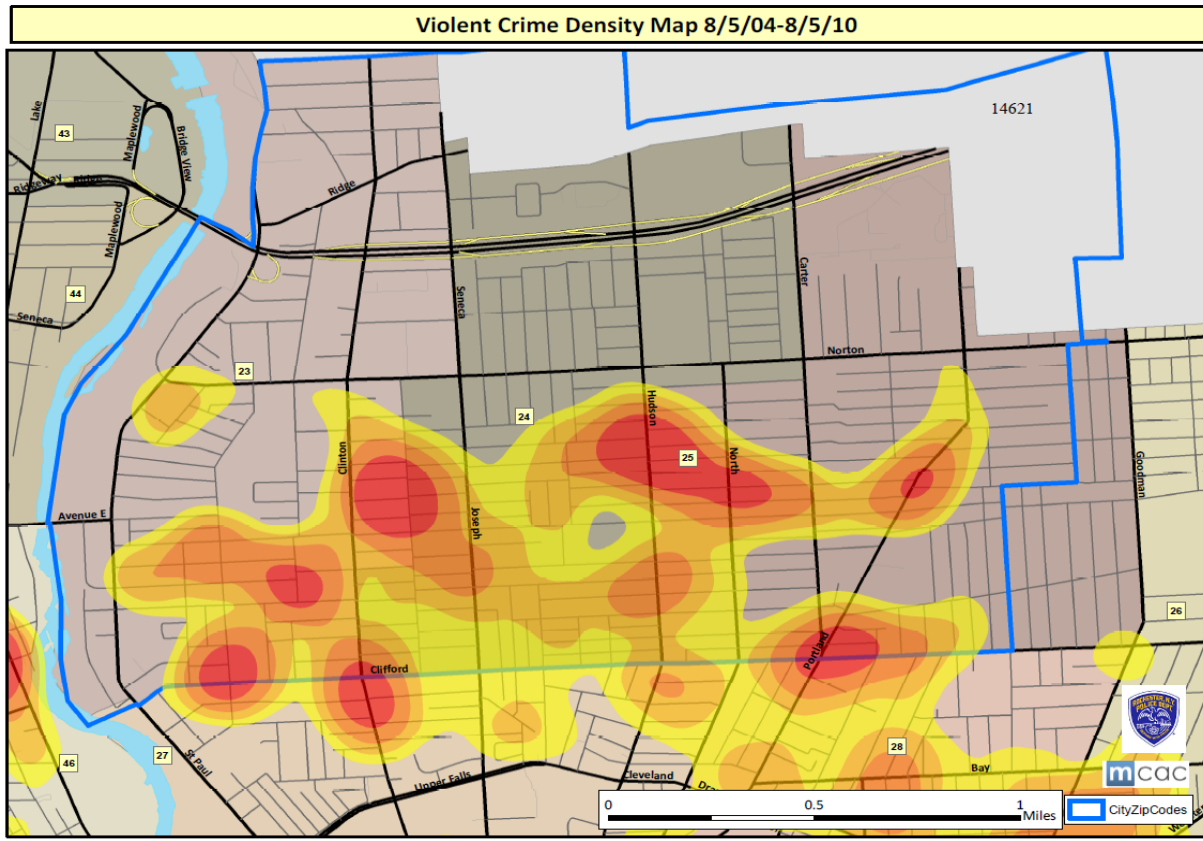
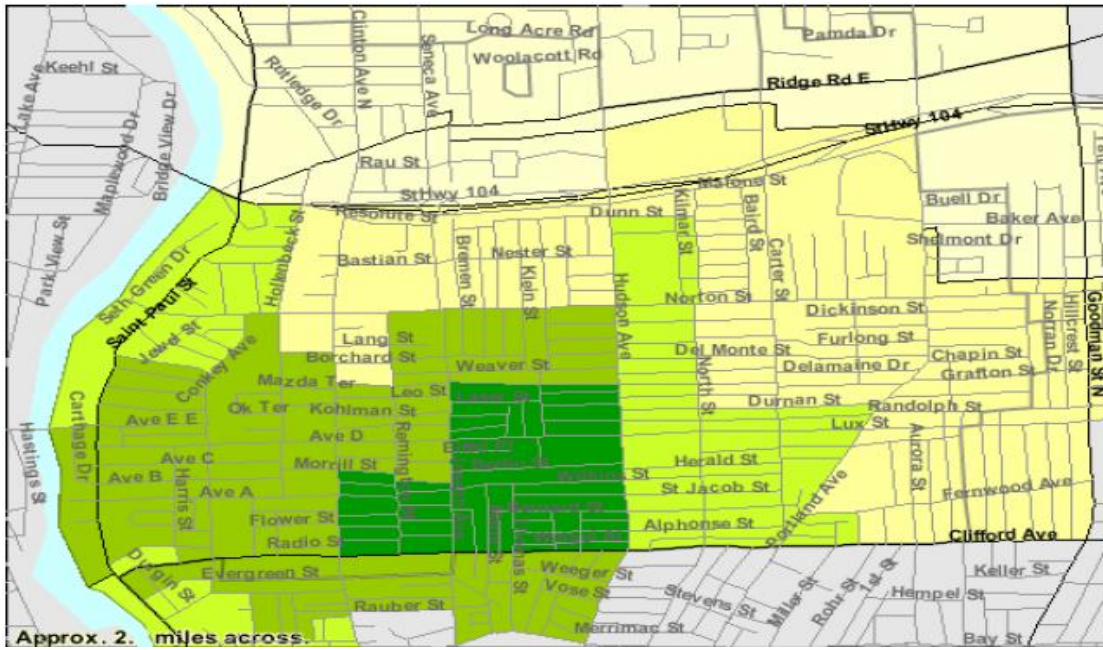
Ricans also tend to live in the same area as foreign born residents in order to be around people of similar Hispanic culture.

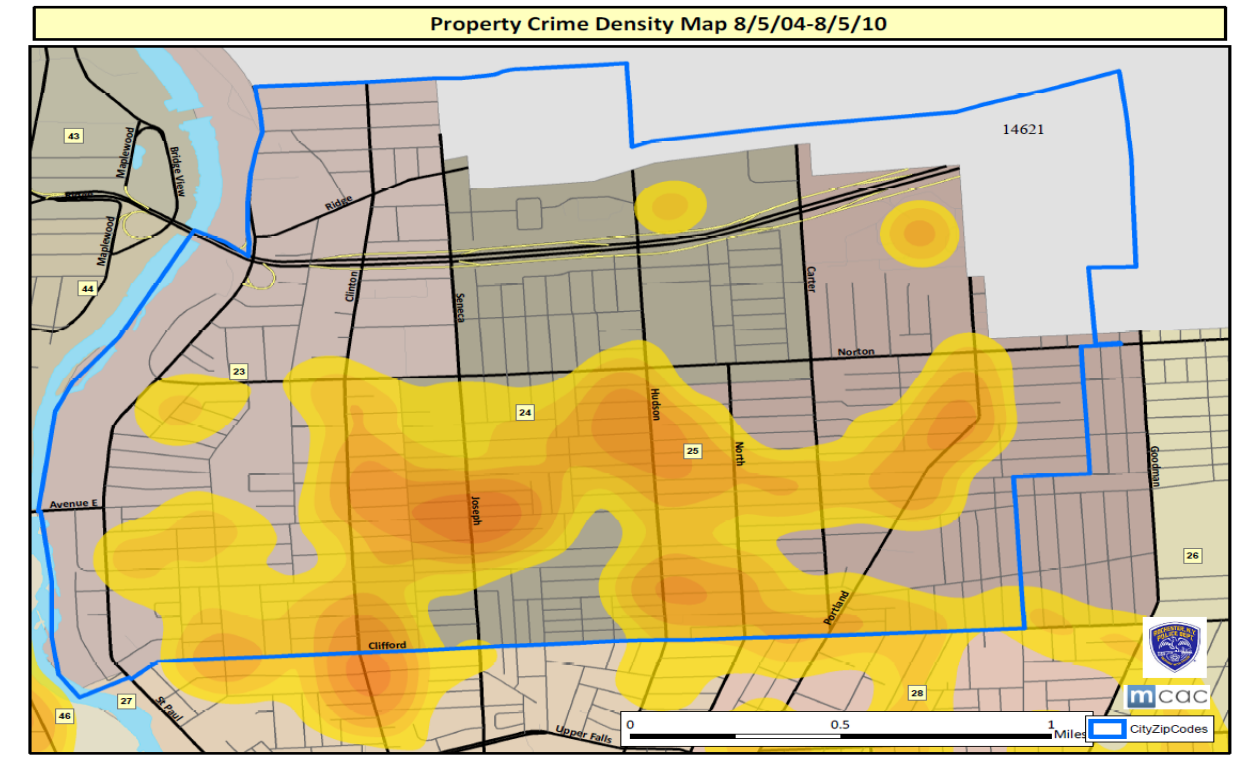
What has really come out of this project is that immigration by itself has no relation to crime rates. Instead, it is the cultural differences that immigrants or migrants bring with them to this country and to this particular area. This is what I found to actually have an effect on the way people behave within their community which is what would cause them to commit more or less crime. A lot is lost in translation when a person moves from a place with a specific widespread culture into an area where their culture is either a minority or not represented at all. Things that we view as criminal may not be viewed as such by people with culturally different backgrounds. These crimes include acts of domestic violence, and dog and cock fighting. The lack of reporting in instances of victimization is also another issue when dealing with people from other cultures. From what I have found thus far, no specific conclusions can be made on the correlation between immigrants/migrants and rates of crime.

Foreign Born Residents:



# Vacant Housing:





All of the maps featured above have areas that are darker than other areas. Areas that are darker have a higher concentration of whatever they are representing. For example, on the map directly above, the darkest areas represent a higher concentration of property crime, less dark areas represent lower concentrations or none at all.

### **Implications**

This has implications in Rochester because if immigration is known to have a negative, positive, or even a neutral relationship with crime, policies can be implemented to potentially lower rates of crime. In the future, if possible, a time series analysis of immigration and crime rates in a specific area of Rochester can be conducted. It would also be a good idea to revisit this project in a couple years when the 2010 census data is released. In the future it would also be good to compare this highly concentrated Hispanic area with another area in the city of similar size but with a less concentrated Hispanic population.

Reference:

Olson, P. C. Laurikkala, K. M. & Corzine, L. (2009). Immigration and violent crime citizen status and social disorganization. *Homicide Studies*, 13(3), 227-241.

Stowell, I. J. Martinez, Jr. R. (2009). Incorporating ethnic-specific measures of immigration in the study of lethal violence. *Homicide Studies* 13(3), 315-324.

U.S. Census Bureau. (2000). American Fact Finder. Retrieved July 7, 2010, from U.S. Census Bureau Web Site: [http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/home/saff/main.html?_lang=en)