2016 Homicides

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The Center for Public Safety Initiatives

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Introduction

This report examines 2016 homicide data from Rochester, New York and includes comparisons with homicide data collected from 24 cities, including Rochester, over time. The rate of homicides per 100,000 residents is reported in order to account for population differences among the various cities included within this sample. The homicide figures and rates are collected from a span of multiple years to identify the presence of any wider trends.

This sample contained 24 cities, selected due to their diversity in terms of both geographic location and population size. Population values for 2016 were based on 2015 U.S. Census estimates, and population values, which were recorded annually within the UCR. Homicide values were primarily gathered from news reports and police department websites, with the exception of homicide data from Dallas, Texas, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which were obtained directly from their corresponding units.
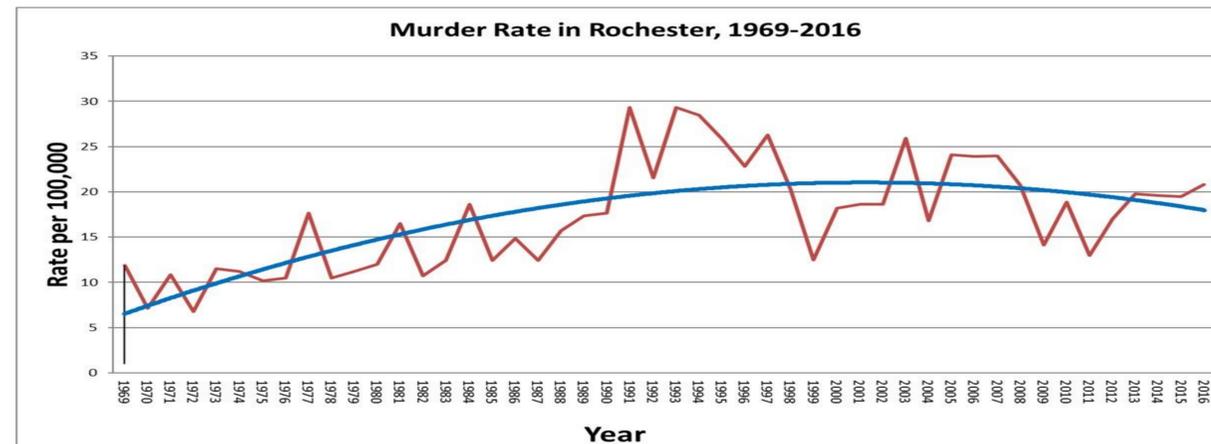
How Does Rochester Compare to Other Cities?

Across the 24 cities within the sample, there was enormous variation in terms of both number of homicides and homicide rates per 100,000.
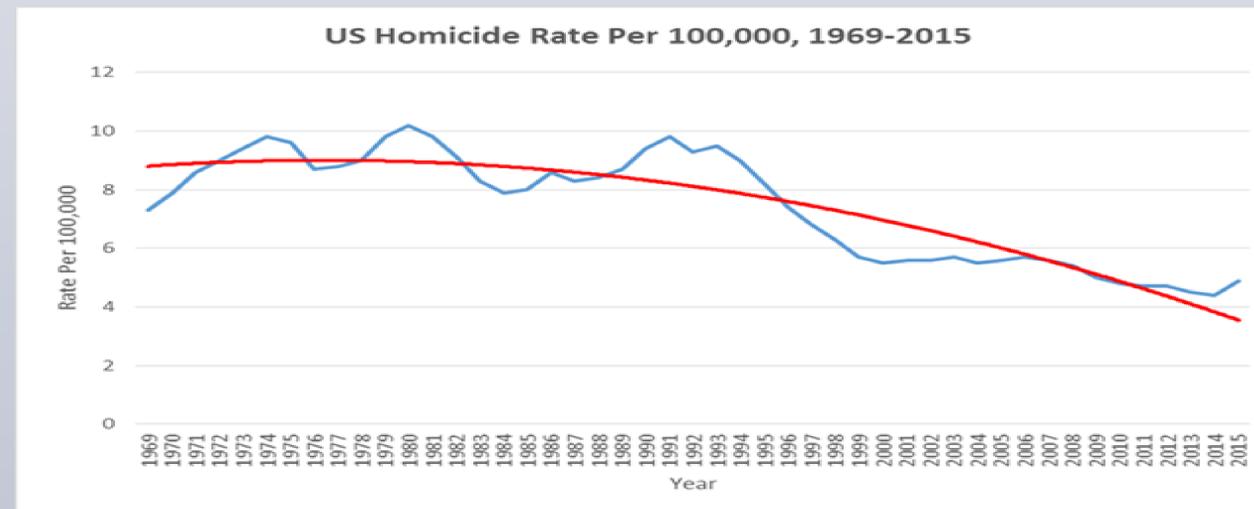
- Compared with the other 23 cities in this study, Rochester ranked 12th highest in terms of homicide rate with a rate of 20.02 per 100,000, indicating a moderately high homicide rate
- Rochester ranked higher than some larger cities, such as LA, which have often been viewed as more violent
- Chicago featured the highest number of homicides in this sample (762), however its rate of 28.08 is still comparable to that of Rochester
- Over one third of the sample cities experienced a decrease or no change in number of homicides, and many of the increases were not substantial

Homicide Rates for 24 Cities Ranked from Lowest to Highest			
City	Homicides (2016)	Homicide Rate (2016)	Homicides (2015)	2015-2016 Percent Change
Albany, NY	2	2.03	5	-60.00%
New York, NY	335	3.92	352	-4.83%
San Diego, CA	67	4.8	37	+81.08%
Colorado Springs, CO	22	4.82	25	-12%
Boston, MA	47	7.05	38	+23.68%
Los Angeles, CA	294	7.4	282	+4.26%
Denver, CO	53	7.77	53	0
Hartford, CT	14	11.29	32	-56.25%
Anchorage, AK	34	11.38	26	+30.77%
Dallas, TX	172	13.23	136	+26.47%
Buffalo, NY	44	17.05	41	+7.32%
Pittsburgh, PA	59	19.38	57	+3.51%
Rochester, NY	42	20.02	33	+27.27%
Washington, DC	135	20.08	162	-16.67%
Oakland, CA	85	20.27	85	0
Syracuse, NY	30	20.81	22	+36.36%
Atlanta, GA	107	23.07	94	+13.83%
Richmond, VA	61	27.69	43	+41.86%
Chicago, IL	762	28.01	478	+59.41%
Newark, NJ	95	33.69	105	-9.52%
Cleveland, OH	136	35.045	78	+74.36%
Detroit, MI	302	44.6	295	+2.37%
New Orleans, LA	176	45.17	164	+7.32%
St. Louis, MO	188	59.55	188	0

Homicide Rates Over Time

Murder Rate in Rochester, 1969-2016

- In the above chart, the red line indicates the rate per 100,000 from year to year while the blue line shows the overall trend in homicide rate

- The rate of homicides in Rochester, NY have risen from 11.86 per 100,000 in 1969 to 20.02 in 2016, indicating an increase over time in the problem of homicides within the city

- The number of homicides in Rochester have been relatively consistent over this time period, however the population has been steadily decreasing, resulting in greater homicide rates

- The increased homicide rate from 1991 to 1998 was associated with the expansion of crack cocaine experienced in many American cities during the 1990s

US Homicide Rate Per 100,000, 1969-2015

- In the above chart the blue line indicates the actual homicide rate per 100,000 for the total US population and the red line represents the overall trend in homicide rate

- The homicide rate per 100,000 for the United States as a whole has fallen from 7.3 in 1969 to 4.9 as of 2015

- The national homicide rate has decreased by about 33 percent over the course of the past 46 years

- If Rochester, NY had experienced the same decline as the nation since 1969, the city would have had 16 homicides instead of 42

Conclusion

By any way it is measured, Rochester has a serious violence problem and has had it, uninterrupted, for nearly 50 years. The uniformity of the trend means that no city administration or associated law enforcement agency has fared better or worse, and there is no justified criticism of one more than another. This leaves us with several important details that we can take away from the findings of this study:

1. The problem of violence in Rochester has grown along with increases in various problematic social conditions and this trend has continued through 2016

2. Despite many recent claims of increasing violence, nationally, homicides have been steadily decreasing and even in many cities this past year homicides have not been substantially increasing and, in some cases, have actually decreased

3. Though it garnered national attention in 2016, Chicago's homicide rate was less than half of that of St. Louis and ranked only sixth highest in terms of homicide rate within our sample cities

4. For Rochester to have had a roughly equivalent homicide rate to that of Chicago or St. Louis, it would have had to have had an additional 13 or 77 homicides respectively

References

- Murderdata.org
- Siegel, L. (2011). Chapter 1: Crime and Criminology. Criminology (11th edition)

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