

PITTSBURGH BENCHMARKS (9/96)

BLACK AND WHITE QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE CITY OF PITTSBURGH AND ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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INTRODUCTION

This is the third Benchmarks report in which we compare black and white conditions in the city of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to that of other large cities and counties in the U.S. The two previous reports are: Economic Benchmarks (October 1994); and Black and White Economic Conditions in the City of Pittsburgh (June 1995).

In this Benchmarks report we provide the most recent data available on important indicators of living conditions (i.e., quality of life) among black and white residents of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The indicators cover the subjects of population change, housing, family conditions, education, jobs and income, public safety, and public health.

Many standards or benchmarks are used to interpret the indicators: past local conditions, U.S. averages, median black and white conditions in the 50 largest cities and counties, ranks among all 50 large cities and counties, and disparities between black and white conditions. See Appendices 1-5 for population data on the 50 largest cities and counties. Note that county data throughout this report include any central cities located within the counties.

Quality of life is analyzed by race because: 1) minority conditions would be hidden if only total population data were analyzed; and 2) majority white conditions are misrepresented by total population data in cases such as Pittsburgh and Allegheny County where a high percentage of non-Hispanic whites makes overall (and majority) conditions appear positive when they actually are not. Since about 99 percent of the population in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County are either white or black, these are the only two races analyzed.

Note that while we have gathered data whenever possible for non-Hispanic whites, we will use the term "whites" to make the text more readable (although "non-Hispanic white" still appears in the graphs). Also note that besides controlling for race and ethnicity, age and gender breakdowns are used to make the comparisons more accurate and relevant. Finally, when we refer to "Pittsburgh" we mean the city of Pittsburgh.

The indicators in this type of Benchmarks report should be judged individually and collectively. We did not create any composite indices

or aggregate measures since: 1) some indicators are overlapping; and 2) we have no objective way to weight the contribution of each indicator to the central concept, quality of life.

This report will be useful to many citizens and leaders for identifying community strengths, focusing attention on problems which need to be addressed, and targeting those most in need. Problems can be either poor current conditions or a negative trend in conditions. Demographic analysis will also show which groups have the most serious problems and may need special attention.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report on quality of life in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County is useful for identifying local strengths as well as problems, which need to be addressed by the community. The information was generated by:

Selecting social and economic indicators of living conditions;

Gathering the most accurate and detailed available data;

Assessing trends to determine whether conditions are improving or deteriorating; and

Comparing Pittsburgh and Allegheny County to other large cities and counties.

THE MOST POSITIVE FINDINGS

Homes were affordable in 1990 for high percentages of whites under age 60 in the city and county and blacks under age 60 in the county.

Rental housing was affordable for high percentages of white and black elderly residents of the city and county in 1990.

The birth rate for white women age 15-19 in the city in 1990 was among the lowest in the nation.

School dropout rates for whites age 16-19 in the city and county in 1990 were among the lowest in the nation.

Property and violent crime rates in the city in 1995 were among the lowest in the nation.

THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEMS

Lack of races other than blacks and whites, lack of Hispanics, and lack of recent international immigrants suggest that this urban area has one of the least diversified populations in the U.S.

Black and white residential segregation in Pittsburgh in 1990 was among the highest in the nation.

Racial disparities in homeownership for persons under and over age 65 in the city and county in 1990 were among the worst in the nation.

Racial disparities in homeowner costs relative to household income for persons under age 60 in the city in 1990 were among the worst in the nation.

Rental costs relative to household income for whites under age 60 in the city in 1990 were among the highest in the nation.

Rates for black female-headed families with children and black children not living with two parents in the city and county in 1990 were the highest or nearly the highest in the nation.

College degree rates for whites and blacks age 25-59 in the city and county in 1990 were lower than in most other large cities and counties.

The rate for whites age 25-59 without a high school degree in the city in 1990 was among the highest in the nation.

Employment and income conditions for whites and blacks and racial disparities in conditions in the city and county in 1990 were among the worst in the nation.

The murder rate in the city in 1995 was substantially higher than one would expect given the city's low overall rates for violent and property crimes.

Black infant death rates in the city and county in 1991 were among the worst in the nation.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Population Change: The population change measures provide a mixed picture of the attractiveness of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County as places to live. On the negative side, during the first half of the 1990s total population loss was high, while international in-migration was low. On the positive side, rates of total population loss in the city and county thus far in the 1990s were about half those in the 1980s, and migration out of the county slowed over the last 15 years.

Pittsburgh's population decline of 2.8 percent from 1990 to 1994 was ninth worst among large cities. The county's decline of 2 percent from

1990 to 1995 was fifth worst among large counties. The local declines were due to average domestic out-migration, low international immigration, and by inference low natural population growth.

The city lost 1.3 percent and the county lost 0.8 percent per year in the 1980s, while the city lost 0.7 percent and the county lost 0.4 percent per year thus far in the 1990s.

Allegheny County, from 1990 to 1995, lost 3.1 percent of its population due to net domestic out-migration, which was about average among large counties.

Net domestic migration out of Allegheny County slowed from 15,000 per year in the early 1980s to 7,000 per year in the early 1990s.

With only 0.4 percent net international immigration from 1990 to 1995, Allegheny County was tied with three other large counties for the lowest rate.

Housing: Homeownership in the city and county was high for whites and low for blacks, and blacks more often paid a high percentage of income for homeowner costs. Many whites under age 60 in the city but few whites and blacks age 60 and over in the city and county paid a high share of income for rental costs. Public housing and black-white residential segregation rates were high in the city.

Fifty-four percent of white households but only 29 percent of black households under age 65 in the city in 1990 were homeowners. The disparity was sixth worst among large cities.

Sixty-eight percent of white households but only 34 percent of black households under age 65 in the county in 1990 were homeowners. The disparity was 11th worst.

Sixty-eight percent of white households but only 48 percent of black households age 65 and over in the city in 1990 were homeowners. The disparity was sixth worst.

Seventy-four percent of white households but only 52 percent of black households age 65 and over in the county in 1990 were homeowners. The disparity was the 11th worst.

Homeowner costs were more than 30 percent of income for 26 percent of black but only 16 percent of white homeowners under age 60 in the city in 1990. The disparity was tenth worst.

Forty-four percent of Pittsburgh's white rental households under age 60 paid more than 30 percent of income for housing costs in 1990. The rate was fourth worst among large cities.

About 50 percent of the city and county's white and black rental households age 60 and over paid more than 30 percent of income for housing costs in 1990. The city and county rates were slightly better than those of the typical large city and county.

Pittsburgh had the third highest percentage of public housing out of total rental housing in 1993 among 41 of the largest cities for which data are available. Nearly 11 percent of all rental units are owned by the Housing Authority.

Pittsburgh had the tenth highest level of racial housing segregation in 1990 among the 49 largest cities (excluding Honolulu). About 76 percent of black or white residents would have to move to achieve an equal percentage of blacks among census tracts in Pittsburgh. Segregation reduces everyone's quality of life by contributing to racial bias as well as family, housing, employment, income, education, health, and public safety problems.

Pittsburgh had average homelessness in 1990: 211 homeless persons per 100,000 population.

Families: Rates for white and black female-headed families with children and for children not living with two parents greatly increased in the city and county over the last 30 years, and black rates in 1990 were the highest or nearly the highest in the U.S. White teenage birth rates were low in the city.

If 1980s trends continued into the 1990s, then 75 percent of the black and 21 percent of the white families with children in the city and 67 percent of the black and 16 percent of the white families with children in the county were female-headed in 1996.

If 1980s trends continued into the 1990s, then 15 percent of the black and 71 percent of the white children in the city and 22 percent of the black and 78 percent of the white children in the county were living with two parents in 1996.

Pittsburgh's rate of white teenage women (age 15-19) giving birth in 1990 (about 3%) was the third lowest among the 50 largest cities. Pittsburgh's black teenage birth rate (about 14%), although average among large cities, was nearly five times the white rate.

Education: College degrees among whites and blacks age 25-59, high school degrees among whites age 25-59, and school dropout rates for whites age 16-19 were low in the city and county in 1990.

Thirty percent of Pittsburgh's whites age 25-59 and 11 percent of blacks had completed college in 1990. The medians for all 50 large cities were about 33 and 13 percent.

Thirty percent of the county's whites age 25-59 and 13 percent of blacks had completed college in 1990. The medians for all 50 large counties were about 33 and 15 percent.

Thirteen percent of the city's whites age 25-59 had not completed high school in 1990, which was the 14th highest rate among large cities. The black rate of 23% was about average.

Pittsburgh's school dropout rate among white teens age 16-19 was only 6 percent in 1990, which ranked fifth lowest among the 50 largest cities. Pittsburgh's black dropout rate of 14 percent, while about average for the 50 largest cities, was more than twice the white rate.

Five percent of whites age 16-19 in Allegheny County in 1990 were school dropouts, which ranked sixth lowest among the 50 largest counties. The dropout rate among blacks age 16-19 in Allegheny County of 12 percent, while about average for the 50 largest counties, was more than twice the white rate in Allegheny County.

Employment and Income: Whites and blacks in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County had some of the worst economic conditions in 1990 compared to that of other large cities and counties.

Pittsburgh's black male teenage unemployment rate in 1990 (49%) ranked fourth worst among large cities. The county's rate (44%) ranked fourth worst among large counties. White rates in the city and county (17% and 15%), while only one-third as high as black rates, were worse than average compared to rates in other large cities and counties.

About 40 percent of black female youth in the labor force but only 10 percent of white female youth were unemployed in 1990 in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County. The black rates were among the worst in the U.S., while the white rates were better than average.

Unemployment rates among both white and black men age 25-54 and racial disparities in rates in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County in 1990 were among the highest in the U.S. Black rates in the city and county (20% and 17%) were about three times white rates (7% and 5%).

Unemployment rates among black women age 25-54 and racial disparities in rates in the city and county in 1990 were among the highest in the U.S. Black rates in the city and county (14% and 12%) were more than three times white rates (4.4% and 3.7%).

The city and county's black per capita income was only half that of whites in 1989. This ratio was typical of racial inequality in large cities and counties.

The city and county's poverty rates for white and black children in

1989 and racial disparities in rates were among the worst in the U.S. The poverty rate among black children in Pittsburgh was more than three times the white rate (57% vs. 17%) while in Allegheny County it was about five times the rate (50% vs. 11%).

The city and county's poverty rates for white and black non-elderly adults in 1989 and racial disparities in rates were among the worst in the U.S. The poverty rate among black non-elderly adults in Pittsburgh was more than two times the white rate (35% vs. 14%) and in Allegheny County was four times the rate (30% vs. 8%).

Pittsburgh's poverty rates for white and black elderly adults in 1989 and racial disparities in rates were about average for large cities. However, the poverty rate among black elderly adults in Pittsburgh was about 2.5 times the white rate (28% vs. 11%).

The county's poverty rates for white and black elderly adults in 1989 and racial disparities in rates were somewhat higher than average for large counties. The county's poverty rate among black elderly adults was about three times the white rate (26% vs. 9%).

Public Safety: Property and violent crime rates declined in the city and county in recent years. Pittsburgh's rates continue to be among the lowest in the U.S., although the city's murder rate is higher than one would expect.

Pittsburgh's 5,128 property crimes per 100,000 population in 1995 ranked fifth lowest among 44 large cities for which data are available.

Pittsburgh's 975 violent crimes per 100,000 population in 1995 ranked tenth lowest among 44 large cities for which data are available.

Pittsburgh's murder rate declined from 1993-1995 but remains above levels of the 1980s. The city's rate of 16 per 100,000 population in 1995 was about average among large cities.

Public Health: White infant death rates steadily declined in the city and county over the last 15 years and most recently in 1991 ranked about average among large cities and counties. Black rates have shown no such improvement and rank among the worst in the U.S. White and nonwhite death rates from cancer declined in the city and county in recent years, white rates from heart disease declined but nonwhite rates have not, and white and nonwhite rates from HIV infection have slowly increased.

Black infant death rates in the city and county in 1991 (2.3% and 2.2%) were about three times white rates (.8% and .7%). The black rates ranked ninth and third worst, respectively, while the white rates were about average.

White age-adjusted death rates from cancer and heart disease in the city and county are higher than U.S. averages while nonwhite rates are about the same as national averages.

Pittsburgh's white age-adjusted death rate from HIV infection in 1994 was about the same as the U.S. average while the county's rate was substantially lower than the national average. The city and county nonwhite rates have been lower than U.S. averages.