

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Adjusted homicide rankings put Raleigh farther up list

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CORRECTION

A story in the City & State section Wednesday about homicide rates for different areas of the country incorrectly stated the geographic areas from which the crime data was collected and compared. The data was collected from cities having populations greater than 250,000 in 2000.

N.C. RANKINGS

2005/ 2006:

RALEIGH'S HOMICIDE RATE:

50 (32*)/ 53 (47*)

CHARLOTTE'S HOMICIDE RATE:

28 (4*) / 31 (25*)

* adjusted homicide rate

Homicide rankings released for 65 metropolitan areas Tuesday tell two stories for many of the cities surveyed.

The rankings in the study -- done for the Improving Crime Data project, which is funded by the National Institute of Justice -- take into account factors that make areas more or less vulnerable to crime.

In 2006, the Raleigh metropolitan area ranked 50th among 65 metropolitan areas for homicides per 100,000 people. When the area's rate was adjusted by the study, metropolitan Raleigh ranked 47th. According to the formula used to calculate the adjusted total, the actual homicide rate was slightly higher than what would be expected for an area with Raleigh's socioeconomic factors.

Crime numbers -- combined with variables such as the level of social and economic disadvantage, population growth since 2000 and the divorce rate -- give residents a better idea of the likelihood that crime will take place, said Robert Friedmann, a professor in the Department of Criminal Justice at Georgia State University.

Friedmann, along with criminologists Richard Rosenfeld and Alfred Blumstein, applied their statistical model that adjusts each city's homicide figures for such factors. Friedmann said their formula produces a more meaningful comparison of city homicide levels.

"It's a more fair way to compare these cities," he said.

Several metropolitan areas changed rank dramatically when adjusted. Unadjusted, Detroit leads the list. Its adjusted rate drops it to No. 21.

Anaheim, Calif., is No. 63 on the unadjusted rankings list. Adjusted, it is No. 37.

"Anaheim shouldn't produce as much crime as it is," Friedmann said.

On the other hand, Atlanta went from No. 11 to No. 50 on the adjusted list, meaning that when all variables are counted, the rate of crime is far less than would be expected, given the socioeconomic factors in that area.

The only other North Carolina metro area on the list is Charlotte. The area's unadjusted rank is 31; its adjusted ranking is 25.

The study includes all but two cities with populations greater than 250,000 in 2000. Data were not available for Wichita, Kan., and New Orleans. The cities in the study make up about 17 percent of the nation's population, but they accounted for 39 percent of homicides nationwide in 2005.

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