

## **A Tale of Two Cities: Holyoke, Massachusetts and Hazleton, Pennsylvania**

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Through the waves of immigration to America along with their assimilation or acculturation, newcomers have always demonstrated accomplishments and positive causations as well as controversy and negative reactions among some in America. Regardless of the immigration wave examined, the above statement has been a persistent evaluation. One need only review the comments of Ben Franklin toward the immigrant Germans or the treatment of the Irish immigrants of the 1840's and 1850's in America as miners in the coal fields of the Northeast or life in Boston and New York to witness the discrimination and ill-treatment of early waves of immigrants (Jensen 2002). Southern and Eastern European immigrants from Italy, Poland, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire also witnessed the discrimination of the "non-English" speaking immigrant in American life (Schrag 2010)

The new wave of immigration between from the 1960's to the present which include a majority of Hispanic immigrants is no different. Many of the same comments made by Americans (especially those of nativist ideology) voiced in past historical times, continue to raise their head in today's society in areas where newcomers are most prevalent. The fear of lost jobs, the rise of slums, the increase in crime all once again have become a part of the anti-immigrant rhetoric. Couple these comments with the additional accusations of illegal vs. legal immigration today, and one finds strong controversy rearing its head in many communities with rising Hispanic populations in towns from the American border to far off towns unaccustomed to ethnic change since the 1920's. (Schrag 2010)

Here also there was broad precedence in the economic and social turmoil arising in the new industrial, urban America at the turn of the twentieth century. The descriptions of Mexicans taking jobs away from American workers, renting houses meant for small families, crowding them with 12 or 14 people and jamming up their driveways with junk cars, echoed the rhetoric of 1900 about inferior people brought in as scabs, crowding tenements, bringing disease, crime and anarchy, now become terrorism, who would endanger the nation and lower living standards to what the progressive Sociologist Edward A. Ross a century ago would have called their own "pigsty mode of life." (Schrag 2010)

Before pursuing an investigation of two cities with similar issues of rapidly rising newcomer population and facing complex social and economic issues, some terms used in this paper need to be defined. First, newcomers as used in this paper represent a Hispanic/Latino population. While immigrants of Eastern Europe and other areas of the world continued to come to the U.S., the greatest majority of the wave in past 40 years have been of Hispanic background.

Second Hispanic is a term developed by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1970 census to represent approximately 23 nationalities of Spanish speaking background. Hispanic when used in this paper is used as a general term to denote all 23 nationalities. Most importantly, each Spanish-speaking group should be noted by the country of origin as so often used when referring to those of European or Asian descent. Third, undocumented is the term utilized by this author to describe any individual living in an American community who has entered to country without proper papers, visas, green cards or any other form of legal allowance into the U.S.

Fourth, assimilation of immigrants into the American culture should be considered a blending of components from a minority culture into a majority's culture, thus evolving the majority culture. This function truly creates a melting pot of American culture and an acceptance of specific new ingredients that add richness to American life. Last, acculturation should be considered defined as a minority culture rejecting the components of its past culture on behalf of the accepting those of the majority culture.

This caused the minority culture to be lost by the immigrant over time or a product of multiculturalism to be promoted in which separate cultures existed with little blending as in the melting pot.

This author has spent many years (approximately 10) studying and learning about the issues newcomers face living and working in a small Northeast Pennsylvania town, Hazleton, Pennsylvania. Hazleton's population throughout its history has changed in ethnic background as have many communities across the U.S. with the various waves of immigration. As in many communities, older groups rose up the social and economic ladder as new immigrants came as unskilled labor, took the low-paying and worked to improve conditions for son and daughters and more often for grandsons and granddaughters. The so-called "American Dream" was always a part of what helped immigrants accept their poor existence, but work to improve it.

Hazleton as with many of the communities in Pennsylvania and other states did not witness a change in racial make-up in a similar manner as they did ethnic diversity. With the new wave of immigration from the 1960's to the present, Hazleton and many communities faced a new type of diversity in race, language, and culture that they were no accustomed to and in many ways ill-prepared with which to deal. Many communities and individuals who for years claimed to be tolerant in diversity, when actually confronted with true diversity seem to fall short of real acceptance.

This paper makes the comparison of two cities that have a similar historical background but share unique differences today. The histories of Holyoke, Massachusetts and Hazleton, Pennsylvania have a natural tie to one another when one looks at their past. Both were created for specific purposes by men of wealth in the early 1800s both shared a common rise in growth patterns and common declines in the 1900s as the time for their need became expendable.

"Holyoke holds the distinction of being the first planned industrial community in the nation in 1847, merchant investors began construction of dam and canal systems along the Connecticut River. With this construction came elaborate complex of Mills and workers' housing which evolved into the city of today. (Ten Minute Media 2014)". Originally named for Elizur Holyoke who first explored the area in 1650, the village of Holyoke was first settled in 1745 and incorporated in 1850 (ePodunk 2007). From 1849 on, over 25 paper mills sprung up in the Holyoke, Massachusetts area and utilize the power of the Connecticut River, the town's dam and the waterpower provided by the canal systems constructed by the Town's industrialists (Lotspeich 2009). The city's population continued to rise from the 5000 living there in 1862 approximately 60,000 living there in 1920 (Lotspeich 2009). Because of its importance in the papermaking industry and the profits made by the industrialists who own them, Holyoke became known as the world capital of papermaking. This industry as well as incoming textile mills allowed Holyoke the ability to claim more millionaires per capita than any other city in the United States (Lotspeich 2009).

As in many other industrial towns, and the mining towns of northeastern Pennsylvania, company owners were well adept at stopping the unionization of workers. Often times skilled paper workers found the ability to unionize more easily because of their skills, however many low-paid and unskilled workers especially in the textile mills found it very difficult and dangerous to attempt any unionization until the 1930s (Lotspeich 2009).

As waterpower and the type of manufacturing that was to play an important part in Holyoke Massachusetts' growth was replaced by new industries and new fuel resources, the city in the 1900s began to fall onto hard times. The city needed to reinvent itself, reestablish new industrial centers and prepare for growth later in 1900s with the new immigration wave that would eventually represent half of its population. (Ten Minute Media 2014).

This new immigrant wave was made up mostly of Puerto Rican immigrants from approximately 1962 to the present time. "New communities were established in Springfield and Holyoke Massachusetts as Puerto Rican migrants moved north in search of employment in seasonal agriculture and blue-collar industries and more affordable housing than was available in New York" (Springfield Technical Community College 2009).

Over time the Puerto Rican community in Holyoke, Massachusetts became nearly an approximate 50% of the city's population and an integral part of the community. Celebrations, festivals, and other activities appeared year-round to celebrate the diversity of the community and especially its new Hispanic heritage. One need only view the city calendar of events to identify a multitude of activities celebrating its diverse population (Springfield Technical Community College 2009).

Holyoke, Massachusetts, with its young and vibrant mayor and city government seem to have overcome many of the difficulties communities who find a rapid change in ethnic background face as "cultural shock". This is not to say that this city is without its problems and its growing pains.

It continues to face many of the challenges that any community of its nature must overcome. Much more of the statistics and its attempts to overcome these obstacles will be put forth as this paper continues. Needless to say the city and its Hispanic population seem to have established an infrastructure that is capable of blending traditional or old time resident and newcomer into a viable working force prepared to take on the challenges of the growing community.

Established nearly at the same time, 1836, Hazleton, Pennsylvania was established as a coal mining town. This was to become the fuel resource that would replace the waterpower so important to the mills found in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Hazleton was established by coal barons, Ariel Pardee, George B. Markel, and Eckley B. Cox, to serve as the hub of coal operations throughout the middle Anthracite coal fields. In its prime time, Hazleton surpassed a population of 40,000 and was the center of business banking commerce and professionals servicing the needs of Lower Luzern County, Carbon County, and Schuylkill County.

But like its counterpart in Massachusetts, as time passed and new fuel resources replaced coal as the energy source for the Industrial Revolution and modern times, Hazleton declined in importance, business and population. Between the 1940s and 1960s Hazleton, Pennsylvania witnessed a dramatic decline in population and a rapid rise in unemployment. Not until the development of new industrial parks under the leadership of community volunteers and a non-profit economic development corporation by the title CAN DO did the community begin to rise from its decline with numerous small factories and industries\*. The city witnessed a new economic surge and growth including approximately 150 small but important factories and industries.

With a brief summary of the history of the two communities presented in this paper basic facts about the towns are necessary for investigation. Some preliminary numbers useful in depicting Holyoke Massachusetts today suggest the city of approximately 39,000 people struggling with the new economic conditions of the times. It is seeking new businesses and opportunities to revitalize the community and its changing population. Holyoke Massachusetts has seen an influx of Hispanic, Puerto Rican growth since the 1980s. Today, it has the largest Puerto Rican population per capita of any city in the United States (Onboard Informatics 2013). Several vital statistics that can be compared with the city of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, regarding social and economic conditions author is comparing include the following:

Median resident age – 35  
Approximately 48% white/ 45% Hispanic  
Education – 74.1% - High School Education or higher  
An steady but high crime rate - 559.4/100,000  
(2000) 574.1/100,000 (2012)  
Unemployment – currently 12.8%  
Most common occupation – manufacturing  
(Onboard Informatics 2013)

While many of the characteristics between Holyoke and Hazleton show strong similarities economically, there are some strong and significant differences between the two communities. Four such areas to investigate our governmental functions, economic conditions currently, public school systems, and most importantly the Hispanic population that makes up the newcomers of the two cities.

Holyoke Massachusetts operates on a city budget of approximately \$120 million per year. Within the budget however, is included funding for much more elaborate city services for example the size of the city police force (118 member force compared to a 38 member force in Hazleton), additional city services, and the addition of a public school system (Neighborhood Scout 2014). While the population of the city of Holyoke is only slightly larger by 9000 more than found in Hazleton, the crime rate per thousand or 100,000 for violent and property crimes in Holyoke was much greater. Violent and property crimes in Holyoke measured 72.43 per 1000 residents. On a rating of 100 equaling the safest community and zero equaling most dangerous, Holyoke Massachusetts scored a 2 by [neighborhoodscout.com](http://neighborhoodscout.com). This certainly provides sufficient justification for police force of 118 as recorded by the city budget (Neighborhood Scout 2014). This is not to imply in any way a single group of individuals beat ethnic or racial are responsible for crime within the city. What is seen however, in these numbers is a community facing economic hard times and less than adequate opportunities for adequate wages and quality of life. Communities across this country that have witnessed economic decline and the so-called brain drain of our times have witnessed similar problems in crime and quality of life.

Holyoke's economic difficulties can also be identified in its public school system. In the city's 11 public schools 5896 students are educated in grades K-12. Make-up of the school population includes 18.8% white, 3.3% black, and 77% Hispanic (Neighborhood Scout 2014). Within the school district, 82.4% of the students are identified as economically disadvantaged, as compared to 34.2% statewide (Neighborhood Scout 2014). This gives clear reason why the graduation rate within the school district was quite low, with 49.5% of students graduated in 2011 and rising only to 52.8% in 2012. The statewide graduation rate of 84.7% (Goonan 3013).

Unlike Holyoke Massachusetts however, Hazleton did not witness a growth in Hispanic population until late 1990's and 2000's. Residents from New York City and northern New Jersey began to find the peaceful and slower pace of life within this city inviting. Between the year 2000 and 2010 the city realized a Hispanic population growth of nearly 15,000 families and individuals. Unlike Holyoke Massachusetts the population trend in Hazleton was made up mostly of Dominican newcomers. The lack of leadership amongst newcomers and infrastructure available to assist in the resettlement of these individuals continued to plague the city of Hazleton in a much different manner than seen in Holyoke.

Both cities have experienced a great deal of demographic change in recent history. Both have adjusted to the change in very different manners. The demographic change each witnessed in the past few decades has been caused by an influx of Hispanic newcomers.

It is the contention of this author that the simple use of the term Hispanic as a monolithic group or term is an inappropriate manner in viewing any change and effect a group may have on a community. Important differences can be learned by comparing the ethnic backgrounds of population to towns with similar backgrounds but approaches to diversity, acceptance and the willingness for acceptance must be addressed as well. The towns of Hazleton and Holyoke present such a similar comparison.

The city of Hazleton, Pennsylvania sits in the middle Anthracite coal fields of Northeast, Pennsylvania. It is a low income community by Pennsylvania standards, exhibiting a median household income of \$30,492 compared to a state average of \$51,230 (Onboard Informatics 2014). Additional important information used to describe the city would include:

Median resident age – 37.6

Approximately 50% white/ 50% Hispanic

Education – 76% - High School Education

A dramatically increasing crime rate 163.1/100,000  
(2000) 306.3/100,000 (2012)

Unemployment – currently 12.8%

Most common occupation – manufacturing

(Onboard Informatics 2014)

The government functions of Hazleton are much more limited in scope. Possessing a Strong Mayor-Council Optional Plan according to the Pennsylvania State Constitution and Act 62 (Governor's Center for Local Government Services 2003) (Refer to Option Plan B of Act 62 Home Rule and Options Plan Act). Under this option plan, the city of Hazleton operates with an annual budget of approximately \$9 million dollars a year to furnish services of police, fire, code and health, along with permitting, recreation and other minor services (Yanuzzi 2013). With such a limited budget the city provides police protection with 38 full-time police officers and fire protection through 18 paid fire drivers and volunteer fire fighters. Pennsylvania law provides for local school districts to finance public education, with the Greater Hazleton Area School district spending approximately \$124 million dollars a year on educational expenses. (Hazleton Area School District 2014). When city finances and public education are combined, the two communities spend a similar amount with the city of Hazleton spending approximately \$14 million more specifically in the area of public education.

The comparative educational figures demonstrate a decidedly different school population with but in many areas, similar results. The Hazleton School district educates approximately 10,301 students per year in 10 schools. The student breakdown includes 64.7% White, 2.2% Black, and 32.3% Hispanic. It school population is largely made up of an economic disadvantaged students as well, especially within the city students. Overall the district identified 63.4% economically disadvantaged (Onboard Informatics 2014). While slightly less than the statewide average of 88%, the Hazleton Area High School possesses a graduation rate of 86% (Public School Report 2013).

Many more figures describe the city of Hazleton, Pennsylvania, in a similar manner to Holyoke. These preliminary numbers offer a glimpse at a city which also faces low income, poor training, high unemployment, and a rising crime problem. According to other data from Federal Authorities, the city of Hazleton has become one of many links in the drug movement from Mexico cartels to large cities such as New York and Philadelphia (Jr. 2011).

While the similarities of the two communities are very important to take note of in the study of demographic change, the particular investigation of assimilation and acculturation of different Hispanic communities is extremely important to take note. Hispanic is not a monolithic group each and every community within the 23 nationalities that make up the term Hispanic or Latino need to be recognized for their similarities of most importantly for the differences that they bring to any community in which they settle. This is not to say that one ethnic group in any way is better than another, but it is extremely important to take note of the cultural differences, needs, and possible infrastructure that a community needs to provide to help allow a peaceful blending and cooperative effort to occur.

Even the term by which these newcomers over the past few decades have been described created confusion. "...those involved in legal, education, healthcare or government want to know which "official" terms they should be using. They have heard of other terms like Chicano, Mejicano, Boricua, La Raza, Neoriqueno and many other labels to refer to Latin Americans (Brink 2007).

The term Hispanic as used in the USA, was coined by the U.S. Census Bureau in the 1970s to describe people of Spanish-speaking origin. It is not a term that originated from within the culture. Primarily people who have been born and educated in the USA use Hispanic. They are accustomed to the term by education or by family custom. Latin American nationals, recent immigrants to this country, will not self-identify as Hispanic (Brink 2007).

On the other hand the term Latino poses its own problems identifying newcomers:

Latino most often refers to people of Latin American descent, as distinct from Spanish descent (people from Spain). We hear this term used frequently in South America to describe people on the continent as a whole.... Latino is more tied to national origin and not to language. Latino is more likely to be used by first or second-generation Latin Americans who have closer cultural ties to Latin America than to the USA (Brink 2007).

As has been stated in previous parts of this paper most individuals of ethnic groups prefer to be identified by their national origin rather than a general term. Most individuals do not address themselves as European or South American. But as stated above, each ethnic groups views the issues of assimilation and acculturation in different manners.

...As occurs with all immigrant groups to the USA, people feel more American and less ethnic with each successive generation. First generation Latinos are much more likely to use the name of their country of origin (68%) than are second-generation Latinos (38%). So, first generation immigrants prefer to be called Colombian or Mexican, but their children and grandchildren may prefer other terms (Brink 2007).

With old waves of immigration, such as those of the 1829 to 1860, and a great wave of southern and Eastern European immigrants from 1880 to 1920, acculturation or becoming as American as possible as soon as possible appears to be the norm. While no one term assimilation or acculturation perfectly defines what has happened with any wave of immigration, many sociologists would suggest an Americanization process occurred in the waves of 1820 to 1920. Especially amongst first-generation immigrants certainly language and customs were important, but their desire to become American citizens, learn rudimentary English, and work to achieve the American dream for their children fit an acculturation process more than a clinging to one's old heritage. Quickly families began to identify as American citizens and families first and their ethnic heritage second (O'Brien 2007).

In today's wave of immigration, the ethnic group in discussion accounts for much more of this Americanization whether it be through a slower process of assimilation or a faster process of acculturation versus pluralism (placing American citizenship and identity second) to one's ethnic heritage. Studies on such subjects can help greatly in the understanding of creating community unity or divisiveness among cities which have seen tremendous influx of newcomers. This is true both of Holyoke, Massachusetts and Hazleton, Pennsylvania as well. While both claim very large "Hispanic" communities in their presence, they differ greatly in ethnic identity. Holyoke Massachusetts possesses a newcomer population predominantly of Puerto Rican, and therefore American citizens already, Hazleton Pennsylvania contains a strong dominant Dominican population in the city.

The Puerto Rican population of Holyoke had its origins in the 1960s, however its rapid growth was not witnessed until the 1980s when this population truly began to surge. As noted in many publications, Puerto Rico has a rather unique relationship with the United States in being considered by its people a “free associate state” of the United States, meaning its residents have a closer relationship with the United States than do but the possessions of Guam and the Virgin Islands (Green 2014). Puerto Rico has a very old and rich history as the Spanish port and colony of Spain. It became an American protectorate in December 1898 and gained the ability to have a nonvoting representative in the House of Representatives of the U.S. Congress. Residents of the island from birth have claimed the right of American citizenship. This in itself creates an infrastructure and a connection for immigrants from Puerto Rico making it much easier to travel and to feel a part of the American experience (Green 2014).

Most early Puerto Ricans came to the United States to work in the field of agriculture as migrant workers especially along the East Coast and certainly as far north as Massachusetts. These migrations began early in the 1950s as the labor of poor whites and African Americans became more difficult to obtain. Many agricultural or farmer associations in various states sought out Puerto Ricans to work as migrant workers in the fields. Finding cities like Holyoke inviting to settle down in, more Puerto Rican workers began to stay and find jobs within the local factories and other businesses (Green 2014). More modern conveniences of communications and swifter travel made the ability to stay in touch with family in Puerto Rico much easier or to bring family to the states to start a new life and work. In the 50s and 60s this became known the “revolving door migration”. Harder economic times slow down the process until the 1980s when migration once again began to increase. (Green 2014).

Whether true or not as the migration once again increased Puerto Ricans became associated with several social problems large and small cities alike were facing. Violent crime (especially that associated with drug-related activities), overcrowded living conditions, and increasing unemployment problems, led many old time residents of communities to create a divisiveness between newcomer and traditional resident. “The history of Puerto Rican American assimilation has been one of great success mixed with serious problems. Many Puerto Rican mainlanders hold high paying white-collar jobs. Outside of New York City Puerto Ricans often boast higher college graduation rates and higher per capita incomes than their counterparts in other Latino groups, even when those groups represent a much higher proportion of the local population (Green 2014).

The above observations all seem to fit well in the history of Puerto Rican settlement in the city of Holyoke Massachusetts. In a report of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the investigative panel was given testimony on concerns in areas of health and housing as well as problems in employment and education. Testimony was given on lack of attendance in schools affecting not only education but other problems within the community and an absence of extracurricular activities and medical care within the Puerto Rican community (Commission on Hispanic Affairs 1985).

Since the 1980s much has been done to improve conditions for Puerto Ricans living within Holyoke Massachusetts and between them and other ethnic and racial groups in the city. An infrastructure has been created to help make what has become 47% of the population and an integral part of Holyoke. Today it is seen as much more inclusive than separate from the community as a whole. One can find a Hispanic Chamber of Commerce which has been utilized to help many small Hispanic businesses get started or receive training to better improve the conditions of success and longevity for the business (Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce 2014). Many of its programs and services consist of assisting start-up or young businesses in developing business plans, advertising, computer skills, and methods of procuring loans and financing of business projects (Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce 2014). With assistance like this many fledgling businesses that might otherwise fail are provided a greater chance of success. Since the Latino or Hispanic cultures consider a small family business as much of a legacy to younger generations as well as a means of making a living, such programs assist in the economic well-being of the community and possibly a drive for more education among its youth (Massachusetts Mutual Financial Group 2011). In addition, the increase in Hispanic businesses promote new tax revenues and create wealth for members of that community. Among the type of businesses Puerto Ricans have started in Holyoke, one will find an array of restaurants, beauty salons music shops, clothing shops and many more similar type of small businesses (Springfield Technical Community College 2009).

While the current economic well-being of Holyoke is still questionable with over one third of his residence below the poverty line, improvements in small businesses will generate not only income but additional jobs are part of the formula for revitalization.

The Mayor of Holyoke recently elected to his second two-year term is a gentleman by the name of Alex Morse, a young dynamic individual who is seeking to redevelop the city to its once great fame. The Mayor has taken economic development as his number one priority for the city. He has created several initiatives to help retain and grow the business district of this once great city. He has worked diligently to improve the educational programs of the Holyoke school district especially in its elementary reading programs and its overall state assessment literacy scores. This young 24-year-old Mayor as also placed a new and important emphasis on public safety “launching a mobile community policing unit and a new K-9 unit” (City of Holyoke 2014). While violent crime remains a problem faced by Holyoke, the mayor’s efforts have been effective in reducing the numbers per 100,000. In 2012 the city was able to boast of no homicides being perpetrated within the city (City of Holyoke 2014).

Mayor Morse has done an effective job in working with the Hispanic (Puerto Rican) community as well. The Mayor and his administration has worked effectively with organizations such as La Familia Hispana Inc. to recognize this Hispanic community as an integral part of the city’s entire population. The 2014 four-day festival was the 28<sup>th</sup> annual held in Holyoke. It brought together music, dance, ethnic foods, parades and a variety of activities that showcased the Puerto Rican community but that was enjoyed by the entire city (City of Holyoke 2014). The mayor promoted the festival by saying, “I am grateful to La Familia Hispana Inc. for honoring the distinct contributions of our Latino residents to our civic life (City of Holyoke 2014).

According to City-Data.com, Holyoke, Massachusetts is ranked one of the ten best cities in the U.S. in which Hispanics can live (Man 2013). “The Latinos (Puerto Ricans) benefited from expanded bilingual education programs, political mobilization, and new laws prohibiting discrimination in employment” (Springfield Technical Community College 2009). Holyoke points with pride to its neighborhood associations and educational facilities that serve all its residents traditional as well as newcomers and work for the betterment of the community. The effect of the Puerto Rican community can also be seen in its number of media projects including newspapers, radio stations, and television stations that attract thousands Puerto Ricans in the local area (Springfield Technical Community College 2009).

The city of Holyoke has witnessed over the last three decades in assimilation of Puerto Rican population that would seem to have blended in an effective manner. The Puerto Rican community has provided an effective workforce that has become part of the regrowth of industry, as well as professional and political leaders that work for the city’s improvement as a whole. Unfortunately, Holyoke like many other cities is not without its problems of assimilation. Recently a conflict arose over a city-scape mural project to improve and enhance the aesthetic appearance of some of its alleys and walkways that have come under disrepair. Similar type of projects have been utilized in cities such as Philadelphia to help revitalize rundown areas (City of Philadelphia 2014). A dispute arose over the placement of a license plate type mural created by an artist named David Flores, a Mexican-American artist from Chicago who now resides in Holyoke. Flores depicted a Puerto Rican license plate with the name Holyoke prominently placed in the middle of the painting. Puerto Rican culture suggests that many residents from the island put the name of their hometown on their license plate as a sign of pride for the town. Flores believed that the mural would depict the same thing on a vacant wall in Holyoke. “According to Flores, the piece was meant to pay homage to the city and its strong Puerto Rican presence” (Lopez 2014). A local resident protested the mural in the artist’s right to place it in the location chosen by the mural committee. The local resident protested saying, “... In my opinion it is time to end the we versus them. I believe that this piece would offend non-Hispanics because it was inclusive to one fraction of the city” (Lopez 2014).

This is a common reaction by an element of almost every community who question the “Americanization” of many ethnic and racial groups, most importantly among Hispanic groups of the current immigration wave. While there is no doubt that tension still exists between traditional residence of Holyoke and the Puerto Rican community that makes up nearly half the city’s population, the overall level of acceptance and cooperative effort seems to have worked quite well up to the present. It should be noted that this assimilating process has been taking place for over 30 years. Puerto Rican residents are much more comfortable today with the English language, the American educational system, as well as many other cultural, economic, social and political aspects found in this small Massachusetts city. They have developed and infrastructure and programs that have been successful in allowing the Puerto Rican community to become an integral part of the life in Holyoke Massachusetts.

This has not been the similar case in Hazleton Pennsylvania. While there are many similarities that can be found between the two cities of Holyoke and Hazleton, there are several unique reasons one can discern to explain the greater tensions and problems faced in Hazleton.

One of the major differences that should be considered is the timeframe of Hispanic settlement found in Hazleton. The rapid growth of the Hispanic population, especially of Dominican background, did not really begin until the late 1990's to 2000. In 1980 Hispanic population in Hazleton amounted to 136 individuals making up .05% of the city's population. In 1990 the U.S. Census reported 249 Hispanic individuals in the city of Hazleton making up .1% of the population. By the 2000 census Hispanic population had risen to 1132 individuals accounting for 4.9% of the city's population (Pennsylvania Department of Health 2004). According to the 2010 census the Hispanic population had nearly increased by 1000%, in 2010 numbering 9717, or 38.6% of the city population (Onboard Informatics 2014). Most in the region feel this is an extremely low count of the actual population in the city of Hazleton and therefore place the actual number today closer to approximately 14 to 15,000 meaning approximately 50% of the city. The greatest majority of these newcomers are of Dominican heritage. Northeastern Pennsylvania and especially Luzern County possesses the fastest growth of Dominican population per capita of any county in the United States (Matza 2013).

Because of their recent immigration to Hazleton Pennsylvania and dynamic growth over the last 10 years, Dominicans as of yet have been unable to establish an infrastructure and programs designed to more easily help assimilate them into the majority culture of the city. Dominicans face different obstacles than do Puerto Ricans in easily assimilating to the American majority culture. For one thing many Dominicans usually possess a darker complexion or black complexion and are mistakenly identified as African-American. This establishes a very complicated and complex life for many Dominican newcomers. As suggested by Gabriel Escobar in his Washington Post article entitled, *Dominicans face assimilation in Black and White*, "to assimilate or even fit in the Black Latino must adapt not only to White America, but also Black America and Latino America (Escobar 1999). In inner-city of residents whose ancestors arrived nearly 100 years ago in the third great wave of immigration, and against a population that was nearly 100% white, the settlement of a strong Dominican community came as a cultural shock. But differences don't stop there. Dominicans are not American citizens by birth. They bring with them a strong culture and an ability to grassroots organize, but not a heritage that so easily assimilates into the majority American culture. Escobar quotes Dominicans as referring to themselves as 300 percenters, suggesting that they see themselves as 100% Dominican, 100% Dominican-American and 100% American (Escobar 1999). In addition, Roland Roebuck an Afro-Latino wrote to Henry Cisneros president of Univision to criticize the manner in which Dominicans and Black Latinos were portrayed, "... Our people are portrayed in your news novellas and programs as criminal, savage, lazy, slick, sex-driven, violent, superstitious, uneducated, undependable, and untrustworthy" (Escobar 1999).

Unfortunately this became the precise vision that many of Hazleton's traditional residence associated with the newcomers of Dominican background. The population became quite noticeable in the years 2004-2005 as local media outlets focused on covering a vast array of crimes committed by the newcomer Hispanic population. Not only did it identify in the stories every Hispanic or Dominican who committed a crime but it also focused on whether the individual was legal or illegal thus creating a situation of assuming a vast influx of illegal immigrants to the area. Dominicans in Hazleton became identified not only in terms of what Roebuck had criticized, but now also an identity of illegal and thus painting all newcomers with an improper and very wide brush.

The quick surge of Hispanic immigration to Hazleton in the early 2000 along with the style of reporting made with emphasis on criminal activities, the mayor of Hazleton Mr. Lou Barletta and his city Council passed an ordinance in hopes of dealing with the undocumented population in the city. The Illegal Immigration Relief Ordinance (IIRO) was passed in 2006 to punish landlords who rented homes or apartments to undocumented newcomers and fine businesses who hired undocumented workers ( CBSNEWS Correspondent 2006). Mayor Barletta attempted to explain and justify the passage of the ordinance that he had modified from a San Bernardino, California ordinance with the following argument:

When you start seeing serious crimes being committed, very violent crimes being committed and time and time again those involved are illegal aliens, it doesn't take a brain surgeon to figure out that you're experiencing a problem here that you've never had before, nor do you have the resources to deal with it....

The catalyst was to violent crimes involving illegal immigrants of May 10 murder by two Dominican men in a drive-by shooting the Mayor claims that elderly residents are afraid to leave their homes and constituents begged him to do something...



We've arrested an illegal alien for selling crack cocaine on a playground it took two of our detectives five hours to determine who he was. He had five different Social Security cards ( CBSNEWS Correspondent 2006).

This knee-jerk reaction of the mayor and city council created immediate discord between the Hispanic community and the traditional population of the city. Most Hispanic residents were legal, some even agreeing with the mayor and council in attempting to seek physical safety and property protection. Many however became intimidated by the city's lack of sensibility towards all newcomers and their desire as most immigrants have in the past in this small town atmosphere. What had originally been seen as a town which offered better educational programs, was safer, and offered new opportunities now put a target on their back.

... the big change came half a decade back when Latinos -- Puerto Ricans, who are citizens of the United States, and Dominicans -- began driving west on Interstate 80, fleeing the high housing prices and cacophony of inner-city New York, Philadelphia and Providence. They found in Hazleton a city with an industrial base and cheap housing (an old Victorian could be had for \$40,000 five years ago).

Latino-owned markets, restaurants and clothing stores sprang up along Wyoming Street, and property values tripled. Hazleton's population has jumped from 23,000 to 31,000 in the past six years (García 2006).

Members of the Hispanic community including a Agapito Lopez, Anna Arias, and especially Amilcar Arroyo, all residents of Hazleton spoke out against the passage of the ordinance. They criticized the action as being too broad and harmful of all Hispanic individuals living in the city and the peacefulness of most new residents (Arroyo 2013).

In late 2006 approximately 10 Hispanic residents of the city of Hazleton along with the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Puerto Rican defense and education Association filed lawsuit against the city of Hazleton over the ordinance. Since that time, the court case entitled *Lozano versus Hazleton* has meandered through the courts. Recently however the Supreme Court of the United States refused to review the court case and therefore allowed the opinion of the third circuit court of the U.S. to stand. While predominantly a victory for the plaintiffs, the actual decision of the third circuit court muddied the water by finding constitutional specific parts of the Hazleton ordinance (American Civil Liberties Union 2014). A closer look at the findings of the court case in the arguments leading up to the decision are too much to be included in this paper. Needless to say, throughout these many years of court battle, tension continued to remain high within the city between old-time resident and newcomer.

There have been success stories found in Hazleton. The development of the Hazleton Integration Project (HIP), sponsored by and partially funded by Mr. Joseph Madden manager of the Tampa Bay Rays helped breath some cooperation in the city. Diversity projects of all different sort have been run through HIP and helped create some unity in the city. Not all participants in the HIP community center are of Hispanic background, but a good deal of the recreational and educational programs found there assisted newcomers in health, language and other such needs (Frantz 2012). (Galski 2014)

Still problems exist and tensions arise between traditional residents and groups of Dominicans who claim to represent the Hispanic community in the city. More recently, Casa Dominica, an organization dedicated to promoting Dominican events and accomplishments in the city asked the city to fly the Dominican flag on a second flagpole in front of City Hall. Since the city had in past times flown the flag of Ireland on St. Patrick's Day, Casa Dominica requested similar consideration for the flag to be flown on February 27, a special day of commemoration within the Dominican community. The Mayor refused and apologized for what he considered a mistake in flying the Irish flag on St. Patrick's Day. He stated that no flags of other nations would be flown on the flagpoles in front of City Hall. Shortly afterwards Casa Dominica filed a grievance against the city with the human rights commission of the state of Pennsylvania (Galski 2014).

The city government, but more importantly the residents of the city itself continue to live and function in a community interested in acceptance and cooperation but finding an inability with which to find that goal. Thus far no individuals within the Hispanic community have stepped forward as true leaders to represent the needs of the Hispanic community and reach out to the city government or the traditional community in an attempt to truly reconcile differences.

Community leaders of economic development, school districts, the Clergy Ministerium and city government cannot effectively appoint someone from the Hispanic community as its leader or leaders. While by research, the Dominican population of other communities has been very effective at establishing grass root organizations to promote its community and become active politically, and as of yet has not happened within the city of Hazleton.

Perhaps the true comparison of Holyoke Massachusetts and Hazleton Pennsylvania rests in a time factor that as of yet has been met. Holyoke Massachusetts has had a population of Puerto Rican Hispanics that have lived there over 30 years. Time has given the newcomers an opportunity to more easily learn the English language and the American culture as well as continuing to enjoy the cultural heritage brought from Puerto Rico. More professionals, economic development program specifically for Hispanics (i.e. – Massachusetts Latino Chamber of Commerce), organizations and especially strong leaders have moved the newcomers of Holyoke in a positive direction of cooperation and a sense of being one community.

Hazleton Pennsylvania on the other hand is still working through its growing pains and acceptance of newcomers who speak quite differently, are people of various skin complexions other than white, and bring with them a much different cultural background. Now the court cases are over as was always going to be the case, traditional residents in newcomers alike must learn to cooperate and live together. Traditional residence hopefully will come to accept more readily coworkers and neighbors who may look slightly different than they, but whose dreams and aspirations are similar to theirs. Newcomers, especially those of Dominican background, over time will lose some of their Spanish language skills as language is not passed down to children, and the younger generation blend in with their white counterparts as has always happened in past immigration waves.

While there are strong differences between Holyoke Massachusetts and Hazleton Pennsylvania, the differences as found in most communities who have seen significant cultural change, time is a great equalizing factor. With help from the above city groups mentioned in Hazleton the community can work to form much better and healthier community. This will not solve their economic problems by itself, nor will it create a Renaissance of the city. Like Holyoke Massachusetts however a united and cooperative community can best be prepared to tackle such problems.

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