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Good, Bad or Indifferent? What Do Philadelphians Think About Our 500,000+ Immigrant Neighbors?

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Explorer Café: Spring 15

Perceptions and Attitudes of Immigrants in Philly and the US

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SIZE MATTERS!

What do people think is the size of the foreign born population?:

USA 38%

Philly 42%

What are the ACTUAL Numbers?:

USA 12% Foreign Born

Philly 13% Foreign Born

W. I. Thomas, “if a person perceives a situation as real, it is real in its consequences.”

Santa Claus and George Zimmerman

If you think every third person you see is an immigrant how might that shape how you think about immigration policy?

Immigrants and Crime

- “More Immigrants Cause More Crime”
- 73% of Americans think this true
- Immigrants have **lower crime rates** than the native born, cities with a **large proportion of immigrant** populations have seen the **crime rates go down**, and violent crime throughout the nation has dropped significantly at the same time the documented and undocumented population has more than doubled over the last two decades (Rumbaut and Ewing 2007).

If you think the majority of immigrants are criminals how might this shape your views about immigration policy or immigrant communities?

Immigrants and Social Welfare Use

- Percent saying immigrants cost too much because they “over” use social welfare
- 63%
- Contrary to those concerns, immigration to the United States does not pose a long-term burden on U.S. taxpayers. The typical immigrant and his or her descendants **pay more in taxes** than they consume in government services in terms of net present value (Cato Institute 2012)
- According to the New York Times, the chief actuary of the Social Security Administration claims that undocumented workers have contributed close to 10% (\$300 billion) of the Social Security Trust Fund. WHY? They never collect!!!

Immigrants and Jobs

- Percent who Say Immigrants Take Jobs Americans Don't Want
- 51%
- Percent Who Say Immigrants Take Jobs From US Citizens
- 37%
- Although many are concerned that immigrants compete against Americans for jobs, the most recent economic evidence suggests that, on average, **immigrant workers increase the opportunities and incomes of Americans**.... immigrants and U.S.-born workers generally **do not compete for the same jobs**; instead, many immigrants complement the work of U.S. employees and increase their productivity. For example, low-skilled immigrant laborers allow U.S.-born farmers, contractors, and craftsmen to expand agricultural production or to build more homes—thereby expanding employment possibilities and incomes for U.S. workers. Another way in which immigrants help U.S. workers is that businesses adjust to new immigrants by opening stores, restaurants, or production facilities to take advantage of the added supply of workers; more workers translate into more business

Majority of Philadelphians believe immigrants bring NET **BENEFITS** to Philly:

- Can do the dirty work because the native born have other options
- Possess a strong work ethic
- Renovate and reopen vacant retail stores providing good and services to the community
- Inhabiting housing that has been unoccupied averting further decay
- Bolster the city and regions economy