

# Choosing Philadelphia:

## Attracting and Retaining Immigrant Newcomers

June 18, 2014

# Today's Conversation

## **Context:**

- Philadelphia landscape
- Broader national talent attraction & retention and “immigrant welcoming” landscape

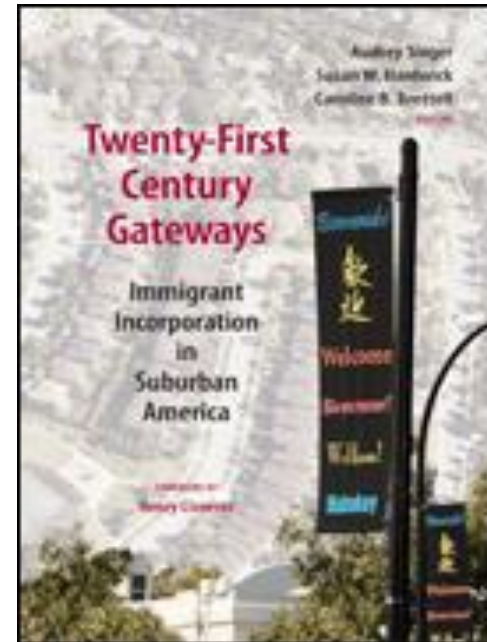
## **Research:**

- Who we surveyed
- What we found

*...and a few implications*

# The Local Picture

- Philadelphia is a “Re-Emerging Gateway” for immigrants
- More than **500,000** immigrants in the region; more than **170,000** in the city
- Local immigration is notable for its racial/ethnic diversity, and for the high levels of college education (**38%** of immigrants vs. **32%** of US-born adults)



# How We Got Here

Philadelphia Public School

## thenotebook

An Independent Voice for Parents, Educators, Students, and Friends of Philadelphia Public Schools

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Focus on Immigrant Students Fall 2008 Vol. 16, No. 1

Theme articles

### A plan in the works to make Philly immigrant-friendly

by Paul Socolar

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COMMENTS (0) PRINT



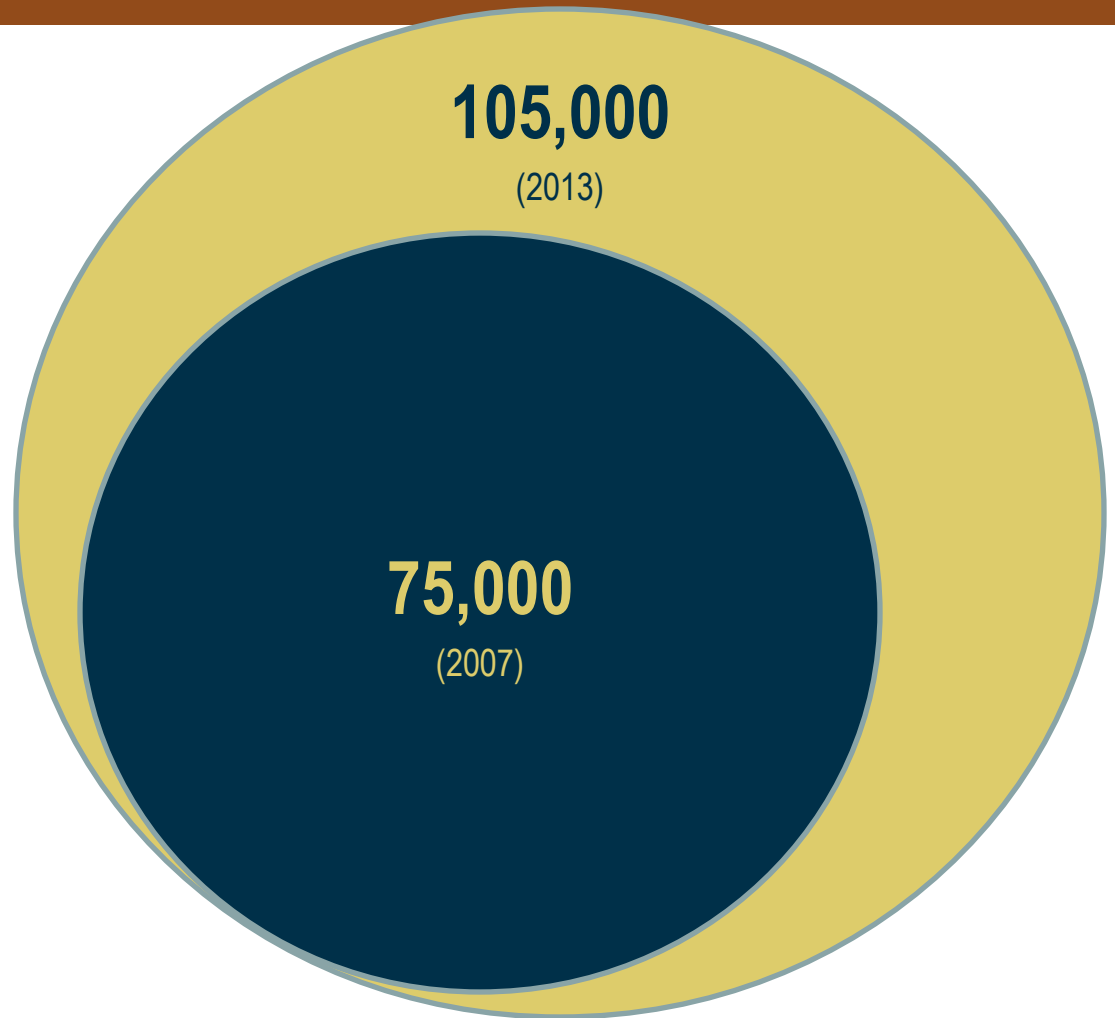
Photo: Harvey Finkle

**2008:** Mayor Michael A. Nutter pledges to increase city's population by **75,000** people, in part by attracting immigrants

**2011:** Census figures show city's population on the rise for the first time in more than 50 years

# The Picture Today

**2013:** City's population has grown by a net of approximately **105,000** people since Nutter's vow



# Without Immigrants, No Net Growth in City

“Immigrant Surge: Why Area Grew”

*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

March 13, 2011

“Among its peer regions, metropolitan Philadelphia has the largest and fastest growing immigrant population.”

*Brookings Institution, Recent Immigration to Philadelphia:  
Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Gateway. (2008)*

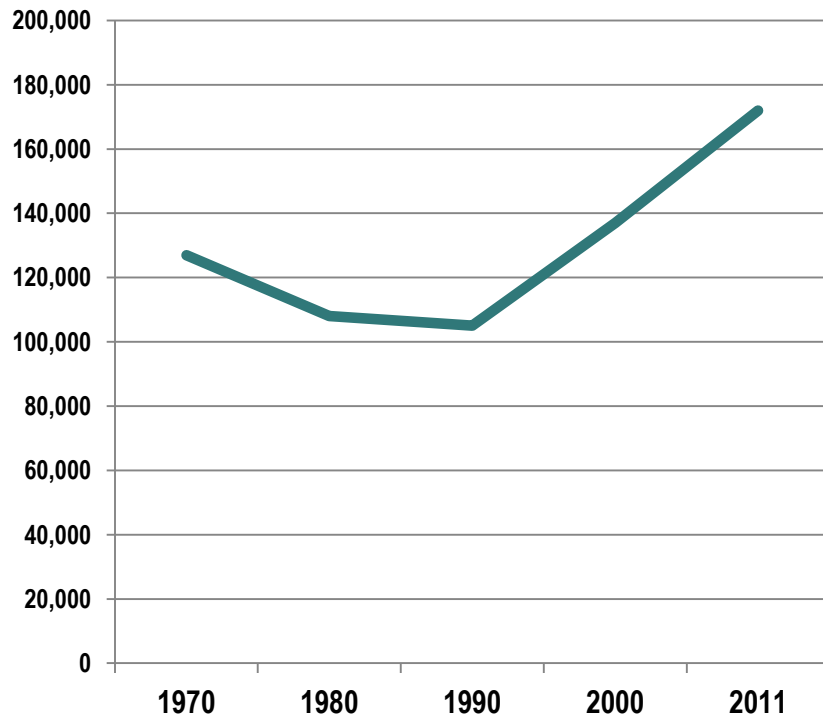


“This is Not a Misprint:  
Philadelphia’s Population is Up”

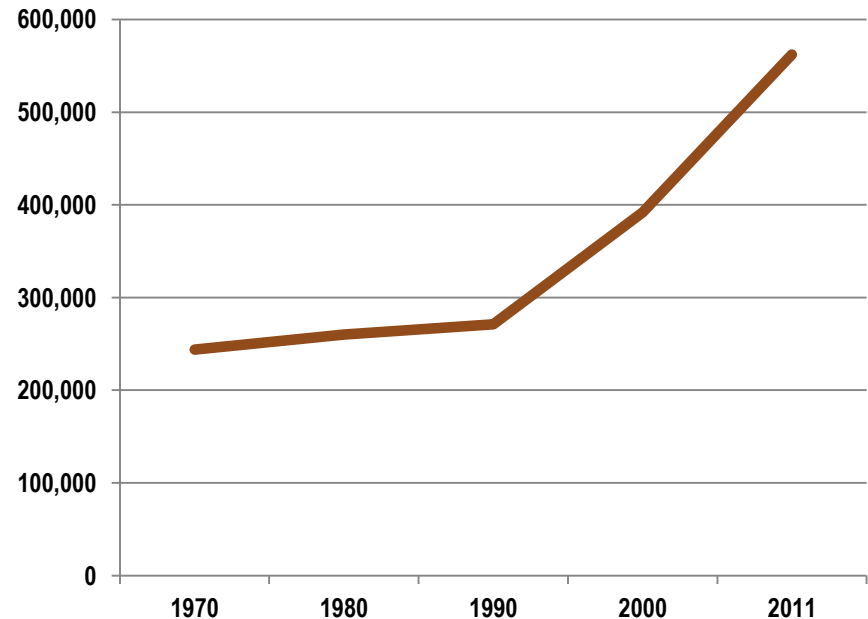
March 10, 2011

# Over Time, Increasing Immigration in City & Metro Area

## City of Philadelphia Immigration Growth



## Greater Phila Metro Area Immigration Growth



Source: US Census Bureau.

# In the Past Few Years....



ST. LOUIS MOSAIC PROJECT





# ...Yet There is Little Data to Support These Efforts

**Thus, we embarked on this survey, which encompassed:**



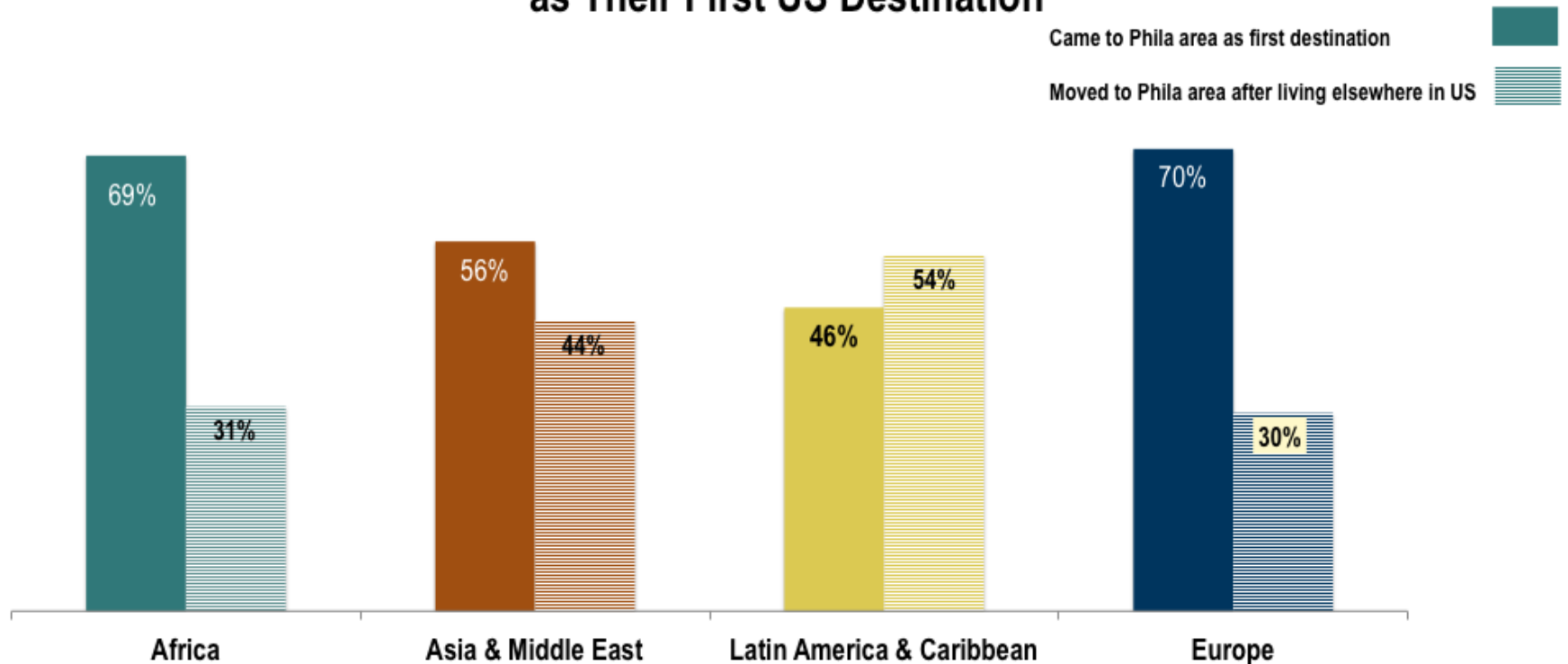
- 364 respondents
- 74 countries of origin (and Puerto Rico)
- Mix of in-person & phone interviews;  
online surveys

***Not statistically representative, but wide-ranging***

# Selected Findings

## A Majority of Respondents Chose Philadelphia Region as Their First US Destination

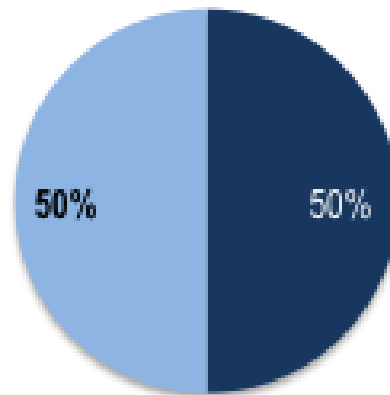
N=331



# There Were Differences by Age



**While Half of Older Respondents Selected Philadelphia as Their First US Destination...**

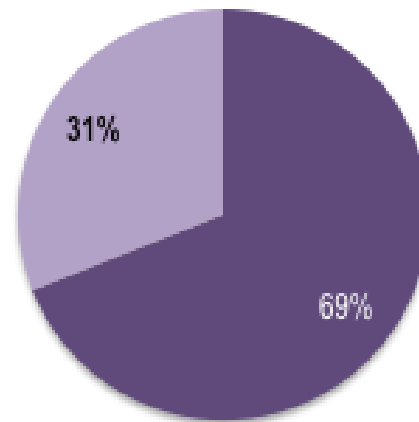


■ Phila Area  
■ Somewhere Else

N=215



## ...Two-Thirds of Millennials Chose Philadelphia as Their First US Destination

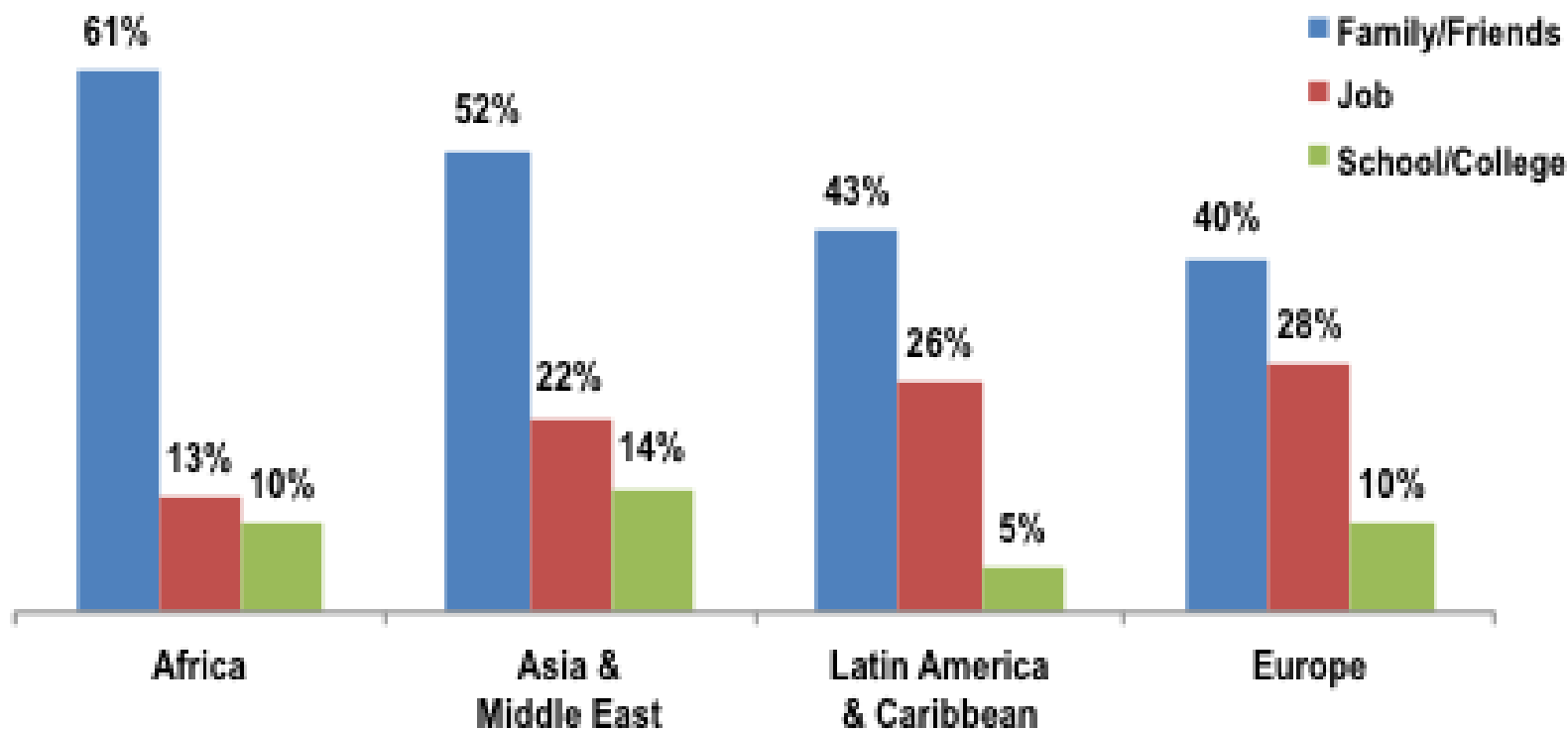


■ Phila Area ■ Somewhere Else

N=98

# What Brought Newcomers Here?

**Immigrants From All Parts of the World Have the Same Top 3 Reasons for Moving to Philadelphia**

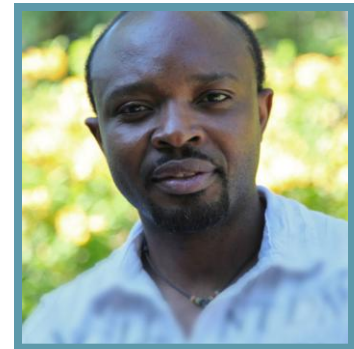


# Why Philadelphia Felt Welcoming...

***“I feel welcome here [because] I [got] a job in less than a month”***

***“There were so many other minorities – it felt like a place of immigrants”***

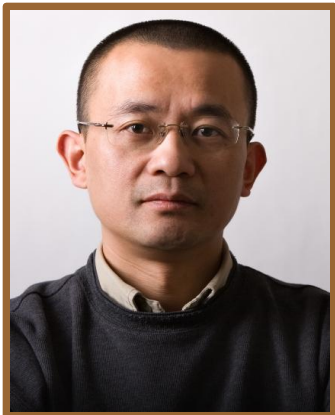
*South Philadelphia resident*



***“I had my husband to welcome me”***

## ...Or Unwelcoming

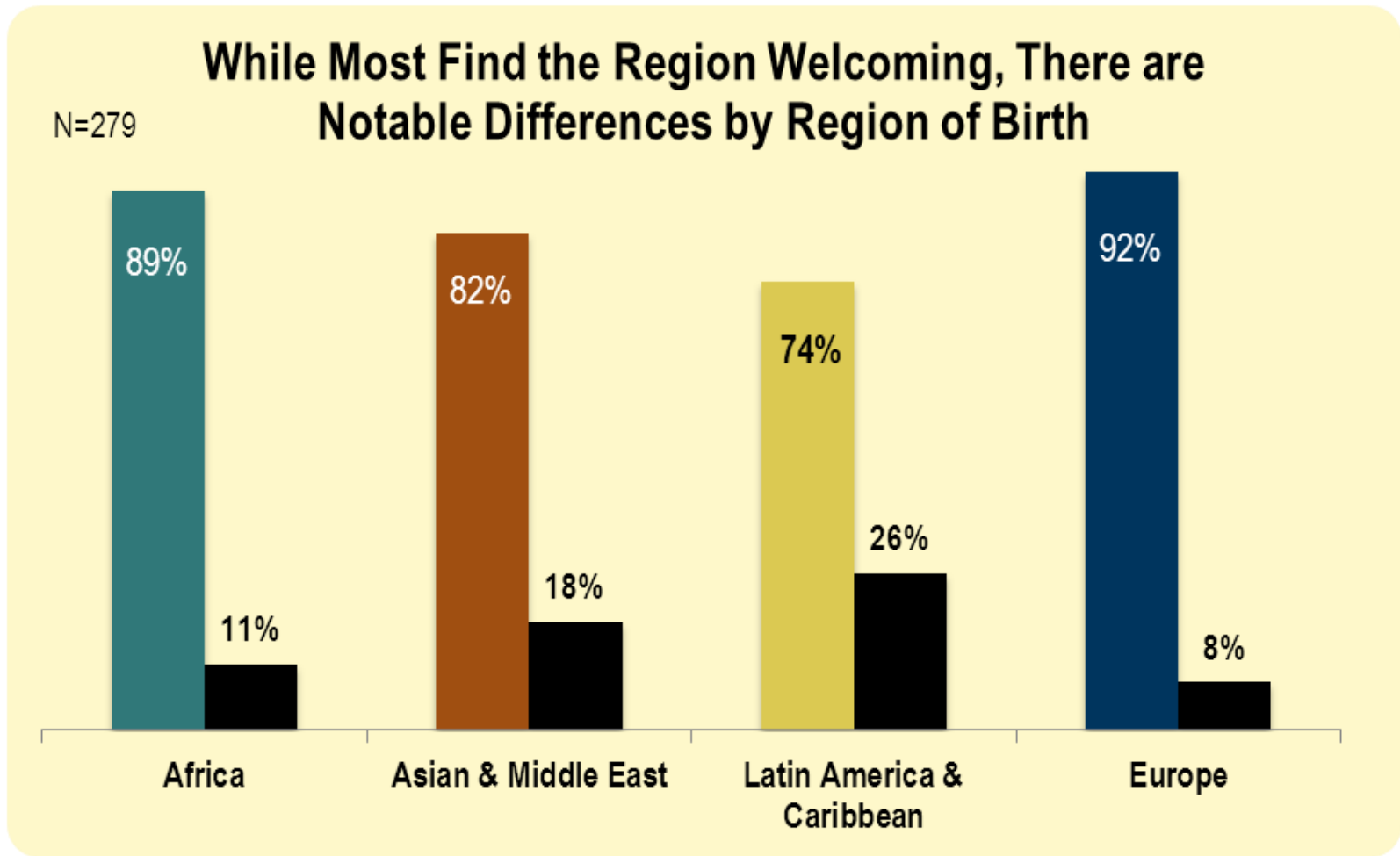
***“There was nothing culturally common between us and the neighborhood we lived in”***



***“People here talk down to immigrants. Especially if they have an accent”***

***“People are rude in big cities”***

# An Uneven Welcome





# Next Stop: More Newcomers?

***Respondents overwhelmingly (86%) recommend Philadelphia...but some provide very Philadelphian explanations.***

***“Yes, but I've never been anywhere else in the US”***

***"Philadelphia is good, but there are better places out there"***

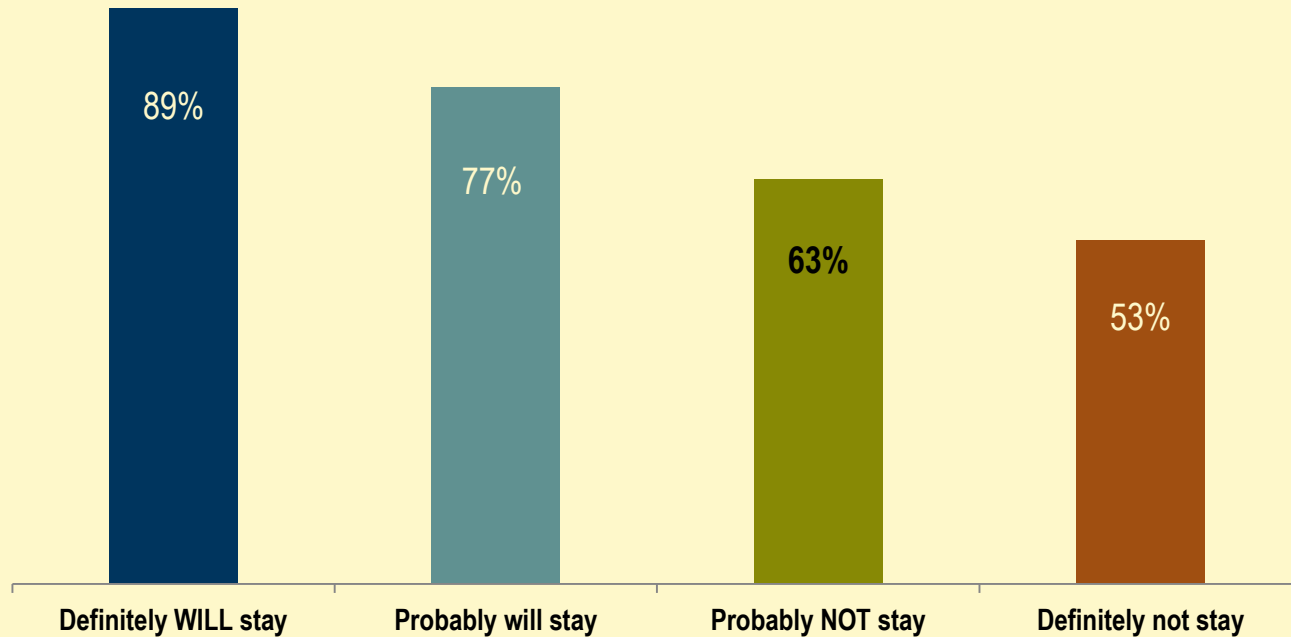


***“I would recommend Philadelphia if you are strong and have patience with the people”***

# It's No Surprise

## People Who Felt Welcomed Initially More Likely to Say They Will Stay in the Region Long-Term

*(Chart shows % who felt welcomed initially)*

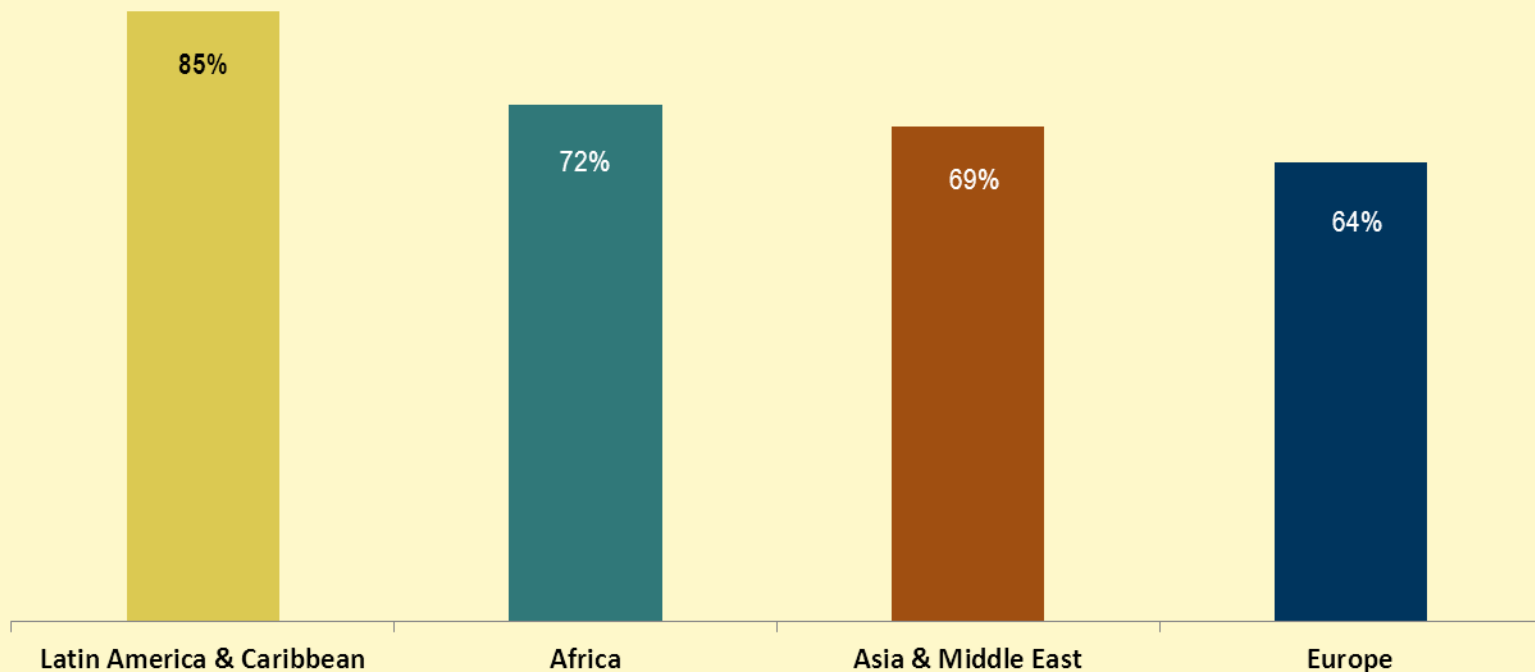


# Key Finding: Did You Get a Job?



***Tangible Outcomes Are More Important than “Welcoming” Feeling***

## Latin American and Caribbean Respondents Most Likely to Say One Can Get a "Good Job" in Phila Region



# Immigrants Who Thrive Here...

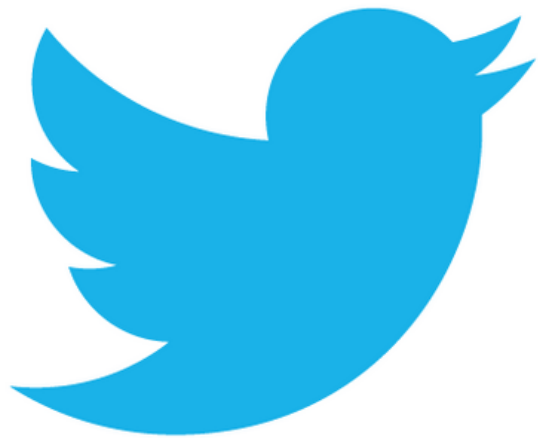
***...fit the region's ethos:***

- ***Blue collar***
- ***Pragmatic sensibility***
- ***Clear-eyed about challenges***
- ***and fiercely protective of their neighborhoods***

# The Bottom Line



***“People here in Philly talk to you.  
[S]ometimes not politely,  
but they talk.”***



**#ChoosePHL**

**@WelcomingCenter**

**@AmandaWelcoming**

# About the Welcoming Center

*Founded in 2003,  
to date we have served  
more than 12,000 immigrant  
and US-born individuals  
through **education,**  
**employment,** and  
**entrepreneurship** services.*



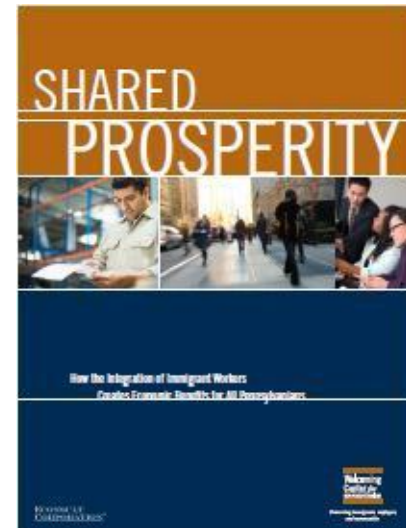
*Connecting immigrants, employers,  
and communities*





# Central Insight in Founding of Welcoming Center: Use an Economic Development Lens

- **Immigrants** are not burdens or victims; they are **assets**.



# WELCOMING CENTER for NEW PENNSYLVANIANS



Welcoming  
Center *for*  
NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

*Connecting immigrants, employers,  
and communities*

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