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Immigrant rights as an exercise in urban branding: the case of Philadelphia (2008-2015)

Hilary Sanders

Introduction

The idea that there is a link between economic prosperity and tolerance of immigrants has become a popular one in North America, largely thanks to the writings and consultancy of the highly mediatized professor of public policy Richard Florida, who observes a strong correlation between places that are “open” to minorities and those that experience sustained economic growth (2002)¹. As Goonewardena and Kipfer (2005) have pointed out, this liberal cosmopolitan perspective is part of the “dominant North American discourse of ‘progressive’ urbanism”. In the United States, it informs a world-view shared by city policymakers in large left-leaning cities such as Chicago, New York, and San Francisco, which have declared themselves “sanctuary” cities for the undocumented and whose local governments celebrate the cultural contributions of immigrants in public events (Mitnik and Halpern-Finnerty 2010). In smaller cities in the “Rust Belt”, such as Cleveland and Detroit, municipal leaders hopeful about the regenerative effects of immigration have established programs dedicated to assisting integration and encouraging immigrant entrepreneurship (Desiderio 2014, Tobocman 2014). As we shall see, the formation of inter-city networks that allow for the horizontal diffusion of information and strategies, as well as city governments’ own public communications campaigns, have been instrumental in circulating these policy models throughout the United States.

How has this belief in the benefits of immigration affected policymaking in Philadelphia, the United States’ 5th largest city and, throughout much of the second half of the 20th century, a classic example of a decaying, distressed urban core in demographic decline?

¹ After the initial success of the national bestseller *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), Florida published five more books on urban development that continued to popularize the notion that cities should create environments that appeal to target groups such as gay men and artists in order to achieve prosperity. Richard Florida also became a senior correspondent for *The Atlantic* magazine in 2011 and founded the webmagazine and social media newsfeed CityLab in 2014. The Creative Class Group, the advisory firm he created with his wife, has promoted his theories through its work with dozens of chambers of commerce, boards of trade, development corporations, and consortiums such as the League of California Cities or the National League of Cities (a network representing 1600 U.S. municipalities). However, despite Florida’s academic focus on cities, the firm’s clients in the United States include only five municipal governments: those of Miami, Florida; Newark, New Jersey; Austin and El Paso, Texas; and Seattle, Washington. The bulk of the firm’s consulting work has been conducted with corporations such as Goldman Sachs, Google, and Microsoft; media groups such as the BBC, *The Economist*, and the *New York Times*; and universities, including the London School of Economics, Princeton, and MIT (www.creativeclass.com).

Although the city, long the country's most industrialized urban area, was once the primary port of arrival for immigration to the United States, it lost this role to New York City during the 19th century and never fully recovered its status as a destination for immigrants². The city did attract a steady flow of domestic migration, in particular of African-Americans from the South, many of whom found employment in steel manufacturing and the shipyards. This prevalence of internal migrants is a characteristic that contributes to its identity as a "second city", existing in the shadow of a more prosperous and international "global" city (Hodos 2011, Sassen 1991). The city's population loss began in 1950, part of a nationwide trend of deindustrialization and "white flight" from urban centers. As inner-city neighborhoods became increasingly undesirable, they also became increasingly African-American : by 1980, whereas the racial composition of the suburbs of Philadelphia was over 90% white, within the city limits it was 37,5% black and 57% white³. The white population decreased in proportion to African-Americans and other minorities for the next thirty years, as white residents continued to shun the city center. At the turn of the century, Philadelphia had lost over 20% of its residents from its peak five decades before. In contrast, New York City, faced with similar dynamics, could attribute the totality of its population growth from 1980 onward to immigration, as outflows of residents were replaced by even greater inflows of foreign-born migrants.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Philadelphia experienced a rapid increase in its foreign-born population, leading it to be classified as a "re-emerging immigrant gateway" by the Brookings Institute (Singer et al 2008). By 2010, the share of the foreign born rose to 12 per cent of the city's total population, which had begun to increase, for the first time in over fifty years (U.S. Census 2011). This shift in the pace of immigration was due in part to family reunification based on earlier arrivals of refugees from Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, Philadelphia's vacant space in the urban core having made it a popular site for refugee resettlement programs, as well as to the relocation of immigrants seeking more affordable living costs than those available in New York. The economic basis for this increased immigration can largely be attributed to Philadelphia's specialization in hospitals and

² Situated on the Atlantic seaboard between New England and the original Southern colonies, Philadelphia was the nation's first capital (1790-1800) and one of the three principal commercial ports in the early decades of the republic, along with New York and Boston. It has remained among the five most populous metropolitan areas since.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census (1980, 1990, 2000, 2010)

universities⁴ : two of the ten occupations most frequently held by the foreign born are registered nurse and postsecondary instructor (Singer et al 2008). Indeed, while New York has an immigrant population that is relatively evenly distributed among occupations of different skill levels, Philadelphia is characterized by a more highly skilled pool of immigrant workers (Hall et al 2011). The primary countries of origin of the foreign-born (India, China, Vietnam, Ukraine, and the Dominican Republic) reflect the immigrant population's ties to sources of highly skilled labor, as well as to refugee flows.

This chapter seeks to show how the city government of Philadelphia demonstrated support for and attempted to encourage immigration, and what impact was expected from this political position; its aim is to interrogate the manner in which openness to immigration and diversity contribute to larger strategies of urban development. The analysis is based on a study of municipal policy documents and public communication relating to immigration, focusing on the administration of Mayor Michael Nutter (2008-2015), as well as on interviews conducted in 2010-2011 with policymakers and community stakeholders. By tracing the emergence of discourse on the on-going or anticipated internationalization of Philadelphia's population and economy, we hope to demonstrate the intersecting and multi-layered motivations leading to the adoption of policies supporting immigrants' rights as city residents.

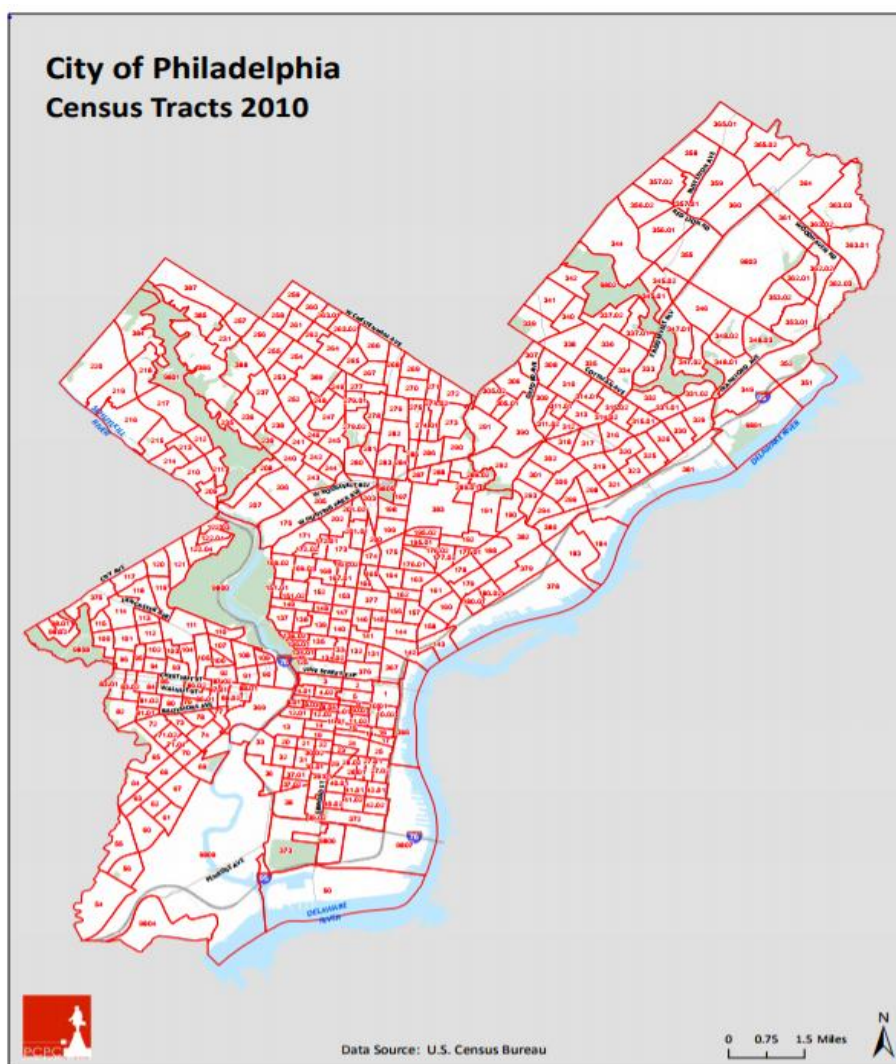
1. Becoming an international city

When Michael Nutter, a Democrat and the city's third African-American mayor, took office in 2008, the beneficial effects of immigration were already visible to his administration, and seemed to offer a means to achieving key objectives. Not only was increasing the urban population part of the Philadelphia Strategic Plan adopted at the beginning of his first term; a larger tax base could also help the city face an on-going fiscal crisis, aggravated by the onset of the Great Recession. Furthermore, immigrants had already contributed to rehabilitating and improving the desirability of centrally located neighborhoods. South Philadelphia, in particular, a former immigrant gateway for the Italian community, experienced a large influx of Asian and Mexican immigrants, making it, with Chinatown, the area with the highest number of foreign-born residents in central Philadelphia (Singer et al 2008 : 14)⁵. The arrival of these immigrants precluded and accompanied a process of gentrification in the

⁴ According to Jerome Hodos, "second cities" compensate for their lack of centrality in finance and corporate management by specializing in niche sectors in research and culture that give them international visibility and allow them to participate in globalization at their level (2011).

⁵ While 4 residential tracts in South Philadelphia were over 20% foreign born in 2000, and 7 were between 10 and 20% foreign born, only 2 in neighborhoods north of the center were more than 10% foreign born.

neighborhood : of 15 census tracts city-wide that gentrified from 2000 to 2014 (out of a total of 372), 5 were in South Philadelphia (Pew 2016 : 8)⁶. This change cannot be attributed to proximity to the center alone, as neighborhoods to the north, equidistant from the center but predominantly African-American, have not undergone gentrification, but rather have witnessed a decrease in average income levels. Indeed, the endemic poverty that has marked Philadelphia for decades has only deepened and been slightly displaced to less central neighborhoods. City-wide, nearly half of census tracts saw declines in income levels during the same period, and the median income of the city declined by 10%, from \$43,659 to \$37,460 (Pew 2016 : 38).



Source : Philadelphia City Planning Commission⁷

⁶ Census tracts, defined by the United States Census Bureau as “small, relatively permanent statistical subdivisions of a county or equivalent entity”, contain an average population of 4000 inhabitants (www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_ct.html).

⁷ <http://www.phila.gov/CityPlanning/resources/Pages/Maps.aspx>

In this context of economic distress, immigrants were also bringing increased business activity to the neighborhoods where they settled: in Philadelphia, 11% of the foreign-born population was self-employed in 2006, compared to 8% in the native-born population (Hall et al 2011). Studies have shown that immigrants are more entrepreneurial than their native counterparts in the United States as a whole, as in the majority of developed countries, and this disparity has increased in the past decade (Desiderio 2011). Not only do new businesses improve the appearance of commercial real estate, increase land values, and create tax revenue for the city; the ethnic neighborhoods that immigrant entrepreneurs often help to create and maintain can also become shopping and culinary destinations in and of themselves. Immigration thus seemed to offer solutions to an array of urban problems, requiring little or no public expenditure.

On the local and national level, Mayor Nutter clearly communicated his positive outlook on immigration. In particular, he lamented the missed opportunities for the city as thousands of foreign graduates from the region's universities left the United States each year for lack of a legal option to remain. His position took form in 2010 through his participation in the founding of the Partnership for a New American Economy, a think tank and coalition of over 500 mayors and business leaders advocating for Comprehensive Immigration Reform, which he continues to co-chair along with Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York and media mogul Rupert Murdoch. The Partnership unites mayors of cities of varying sizes, many with socially progressive political agendas, with the CEOs of companies such as Time Warner, Microsoft, Facebook, Goldman Sachs and JP Morgan Chase in a forum designed to promote the economic case for increased legal immigration to the federal government and in traditional and social media outlets, largely through publishing studies documenting the contributions of immigrants to the United States economy. Focused on the demands of the labor market but largely silent on the question of the legal and social rights of noncitizens, much less of the undocumented, the coalition clearly corresponds to the ideology of "Free market expansionists", as classified by Daniel Tichenor in his model of the politics of alien admissions and rights (2002 : 36-38). The think tank's policy proposals include increasing the number of H-1B visas for highly qualified immigrants, automatically giving permanent residency to foreign PhD students in science and technology, creating a new visa for foreign entrepreneurs, and increasing the number of foreign guest worker visas. The Center for Responsive Politics reports that the Partnership for a New American Economy employs a staff

of eight lobbyists and has spent approximately \$200,000 on lobbying per year since 2012⁸. However, these efforts were not ultimately successful during the Obama presidency; absent federal reforms to increase the pool of immigrant workers and residents nationwide, city leaders hoping to attract and retain migrants thus found themselves in competition with their counterparts in other metropolitan areas.

Mayor Nutter assembled in 2008 the International Philadelphia Working Group, a committee intended to develop strategies to encourage skilled migration and assist immigrant integration. Revealingly, the group of thirty actors from the public, private, and non-profit sectors was also given the mission to “improve the international profile of the city and its role in the world economy”, to “elevate its status as an international destination point”, and to make the city “more accessible to world markets” (Office of the Managing Director 2008 : 4). The recommendations, which demonstrate a project to reposition the city as a more prominent actor in processes of globalization, echoed a previous report by the Pennsylvania Economy League, a think tank that advised city government in 2000 to encourage universities to recruit larger numbers of foreign students and to expand the number of international destinations offered by Philadelphia’s airport. As Judith Goode points out in her analysis of a “campaign for new immigrants” subsequently launched by municipal leaders in 2001, efforts to simultaneously boost immigration and “make Philadelphia a world-class city” dated to the mid-1990s (2011 : 151). These priorities are signs that globalization was understood to be a process in which the “winners” are those places that succeed in establishing themselves as centers of accumulation of capital, but also of migrants, tourists, and investors (Smith 2002). In this competition between cities, the presence of migrant workers could thus be seen as an indicator of the city’s integration into a globalized economy, but also a determining factor.

2. “Immigrant-friendly” urban policy

The Nutter administration, unable to distribute visas to prospective migrants, could, however, draw from policies in place in New York, San Francisco, and other socially progressive municipalities to make Philadelphia a more “welcoming” city to foreigners, primarily by making municipal government easier to approach and navigate. These measures intended to improve access to city services for foreign-born residents facing challenges pertaining to language, legal status, and lack of information. Policy models and guidance were available through institutions such as the Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Affairs in New York

⁸ <https://www.opensecrets.org/orgs/summary.php?id=D000064951>

City or the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs in San Francisco, where confidentiality (or “sanctuary”) and language access policies had been in place for years, if not decades. These are the oldest and largest offices dedicated to immigrant integration and the protection of immigrant rights among the 28 cities nation-wide with similar programs (de Graauw 2015). They offer a highly visible source of information and expertise, as they maintain well-documented websites and their staff frequently participate in events organized by universities or non-profit groups focusing on public policy and immigrant rights. Furthermore, Nutter’s involvement in the Partnership for a New American Economy, as well as his presidency of the United States Conference of Mayors from 2012 to 2013⁹, increased his contact with Mayor Ed Lee of San Francisco and dozens of other mayors active in promoting immigration to their city.

In an effort to facilitate communication between immigrant communities and “street-level bureaucrats” (Lipsky 1980) responsible for intake within city agencies, a language access policy was immediately adopted when Nutter came into office in 2008 (Executive Order 9-08). It mandated that all city agencies develop a plan to improve the delivery of services to “Limited English Proficient” residents, by creating protocols to offer translated documents or interpretation when necessary. In practice, this policy not only encouraged municipal agencies to offer better customer service to foreign-born residents struggling with a language barrier; it allowed many residents to communicate with accuracy and precision in critical situations, for example in hospitals or the court system, instead of relying on family members and risking misunderstandings with serious medical or legal consequences.

Although language access policies are designed to protect immigrants’ rights to public services, the implementation of Nutter’s executive order made it clear that Philadelphia’s increasing linguistic diversity was seen as a strategic asset. The opening of the text itself states that “the City’s growing language minority population has played an important role in the improvement of the City’s economic, civic and cultural life”. Tellingly, the city’s first priority in the execution of the language access policy was to improve interactions between the foreign born and the staff of the municipal regulatory agency, Licenses and Inspections, where entrepreneurs obtain the permits to run their businesses legally. The management of this agency oversaw the distribution of materials to identify the language spoken by immigrant customers, the training of their employees to use a call-in interpretation service,

⁹ The United States Conference of Mayors, a non-partisan consortium of 1,408 cities with populations of at least 30,000 inhabitants, convenes at an annual 4-day conference (<https://www.usmayors.org/the-conference/about/>).

and the creation of posters informing customers of the availability of free interpretation. This focus on assisting immigrant entrepreneurs was seconded by the creation in 2010 of an initiative by the Office of Business Services to assist this population directly, by sending municipal employees with linguistic and cultural competencies into immigrant business districts to help resolve conflicts involving health and zoning laws, such as the commercial use of residential properties and the respect of trash disposal regulations.

The language access policy was implemented through an initiative called “Global Philadelphia”, developed within the city government’s Office of the Managing Director. The officials responsible for language access on a city-wide level were also in charge of public relations efforts to promote an image of an international city, through traditional and social media, as well as a yearly cultural festival focusing on immigrant communities¹⁰. In 2013, the Global Philadelphia initiative was replaced by a separate Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs¹¹, which gave greater visibility to the mayor’s pro-immigrant position. With increased staff and resources, this office could interact more effectively with immigrant individuals and communities in need of assistance or of an institutional partner, undertaking, for example, the translation of all city websites into over ninety languages. It could also organize more elaborate public events, such as naturalization ceremonies, showcasing successful examples of immigrant integration. The connection to strategies of urban development remained evident from the stated goals of the office, which include “to maximize immigrants’ skills and contributions in the city’s economy” and even “to leverage immigrants’ unique position to attract foreign investments that will boost the city’s growth”. These objectives match those of the Welcoming Cities and Counties initiative, also launched in 2013, which the Philadelphia office quickly joined¹². The efforts of this network of cities, which provides a venue for municipal leaders to share information and strategies on policies that attract and retain immigrant residents, workers, and entrepreneurs, are based on the idea that “being welcoming leads to prosperity”¹³.

Mayor Nutter also acted to protect immigrants’ access to city services by signing an executive order in 2009 which prohibited city employees from requesting information about legal status, unless the individual was a suspect in a criminal investigation (EO 8-09). This confidentiality, or “sanctuary”, policy was meant to make “all City services (...) available to

¹⁰ Cultural Passport to Philadelphia Week

¹¹ Later to be renamed simply, “Office of Immigrant Affairs”.

¹² As of July 2017, 98 city governments were members of this generously funded organization, supported by the Clinton Global Initiative, among others.

¹³ <https://www.welcomingamerica.org/about/who-we-are>

all of City of Philadelphia residents (...), regardless of the person's citizenship or legal immigration status", by limiting municipal agencies' cooperation with federal authorities enforcing immigration law. It was intended to allow undocumented residents, who are estimated at roughly 50,000, to use the public services to which they were entitled as residents, without fearing that these interactions would lead to deportation (MP1 2013). For immigrant rights organizations, it offered a direct message from the Mayor that could serve to reassure their clients or put pressure on city employees reticent to serve the undocumented. Given the political difficulty of defending the rights of "illegal aliens" while attempting to earn credit for lowering a persistently high crime rate, Mayor Nutter did not, however, communicate extensively on this policy. Although as president of the National Association of Mayors, he vocally denounced the massive deportations observed during Obama's first term as president, he remained subdued in public discussions of local immigration issues. Nonetheless, by joining several dozen other U.S. cities as "sanctuaries" for the undocumented, he could maintain a coherent message of support for this population.

The fact that this executive order was announced the same day as the launching of a municipal campaign to encourage participation in the Census of 2010 is revealing of the way the Nutter administration considered the confidentiality policy as an instrument in achieving goals for the city. In this case, although the policy had no direct link to Census agents working for the federal government, municipal leaders hoped that it would help to persuade undocumented immigrants that public employees generally could be trusted, and would not report their legal status to *Immigration and Customs Enforcement*¹⁴. If successful, such an effect would result in a greater population count collected by the Census, leading to increased funding and congressional representation on the state and federal level. This conception of trust as a resource to be maintained and deployed tactically is applicable elsewhere; by reducing the "chilling effect" of fear of deportation, a confidentiality policy can encourage undocumented immigrants to give testimony to the police as victims and witnesses, thus contributing to public safety by allowing law enforcement to resolve crimes and patrol more effectively¹⁵. The confidentiality of data involving immigration status can also embolden this

¹⁴ ICE is the federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration law.

¹⁵ The application of the policy by police officers has proved to be uneven in practice, but the city's position – and thus its public message – has remained consistent in regards to the protection of undocumented residents who are the victims and witnesses of legal infractions. Although a federal program (Secure Communities) implementing automatic information sharing between local law enforcement and federal immigration agents weakened the effectiveness of the policy for several years, this loophole was partially closed in 2014, when Nutter acted to limit the situations under which Philadelphia's corrections system would honor requests by federal authorities to detain immigrants.

population to use medical services preventively and on a more regular basis (to vaccinate children, for example), helping to protect public health.

The city government's strategic approach to protecting immigrant rights appears coherent with the background of Mayor Nutter, a graduate of the prestigious Wharton School of Business and a former investment manager. As the former Director of Multicultural Affairs stated, in reference to the city's programs improving access to public services, "It's not charity – it's in our interest to help them"¹⁶. Public policy is seen as an investment that should offer a return in the form of increased tax revenue and the addition of new "clients" to the city. In the words of the then Managing Director of city government, « If you want a city that continues to die through population loss and job loss, so be it. If you want a city that is prosperous, growing, then we need a city government that serves everyone »¹⁷. However, the Nutter administration's immigration strategy seemed to go beyond attracting immigrants and reaping the associated connectedness with the global economy.

3. Attracting the "creative class"

Philadelphia's pro-immigrant policies clearly have a symbolic function, serving to transform the image of the city into one that is open and supportive of the immigrants who choose to reside there. Indeed, the protection of immigrant rights appeals to a broader public than merely immigrants themselves. Particularly sensitive to this political stance is the "creative class", or "cosmopolitans" : "persons who are highly educated, those in white-collar occupations, those who have lived abroad, and those who reject ethnocentrism – [who] are significantly more likely to believe that immigrants make a favorable contribution to the U.S. than persons without these characteristics" (Haubert and Fussel 2006 : 503). Although stakeholders in the field of immigrant rights can be critical of city government's treatment of immigrants, for non-specialists, the labeling of the city as "immigrant-friendly" and "welcoming" is a reassuring gesture that has not received significant public scrutiny. These members of the "creative class", largely sympathetic to the Mayor's policy, are not only those who are the best prepared to work in the sectors of the economy that benefit most from global trade, but also who accept the most willingly the social changes wrought by globalization, namely increased immigration. They are also the residents that the local government has the greatest interest in attracting and retaining, for their financial capital, consumption and effect on real estate values.

¹⁶ Interview conducted in July 2010

¹⁷ Interview conducted in July 2010

The focus on *diversity* among the positive effects of immigration mentioned by municipal policymakers and stakeholders can be better understood by taking into account this larger audience to the city's message on immigrant rights. Indeed, the executive order on language access begins with the statement that "the City of Philadelphia has been evolving into a regional center of cultural diversity", and the term appears frequently in the Mayor's public discourse on immigration. References to the cultural diversity brought by immigrants are used to justify the claim that this population contributes to "reviving" and "revitalizing" city neighborhoods. Indeed, municipal leaders and employees of the immigrant rights' organizations that work with the city, as well as the young professionals of the "creative class" that city officials hope to attract, have generally all learned to consider diversity a positive quality through exposure to this idea in higher education. In American university settings, diversity policies are not only a way to continue affirmative action policies without using strict quotas; the concept has been integrated into social norms and become a shared value among students and educators (Edelman et al 2001). As a result, a diverse, multicultural city is often the environment that university-educated professionals seek out.

For many members of the "creative class", immigrant neighborhoods offer a sharp and welcome contrast to the identical chains and aseptified public spaces found in white suburban America. From this perspective, ethnic spaces are part of the cultural capital produced by cities; immigrants create zones of "authenticity" that can offer inspiration to artists, and be consumed by a later wave of gentrifiers (Zukin 2010). As Judith Goode points out, this pattern was reproduced in South Philadelphia, where Asian and Mexican markets and restaurants provide opportunities for consumption "that represent 'homeland' to immigrants and 'authentic' ethnic cuisine to the growing population of (often university-affiliated) U.S.-born gentry and cosmopolitans" (Goode 2011 : 162). The protection of the rights of immigrants as legitimate, valued residents of the city thus appears evident to this segment of the population.

This perspective stands in sharp contrast to the reception of pro-immigrant policies among groups with lower socio-economic status. Already in the 1980's, Judith Goode observed a "wariness" towards the new waves of immigration among poor African-American communities (1990). More recently, employees of immigrant rights organizations such as the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians expressed familiarity with long-standing rumors in the African-American community about special grants or loans for immigrants, as well as a general lack of enthusiasm regarding the application of language access policies among civil

servants working in city agencies, an occupational niche dominated by African-Americans¹⁸. However, opposition to pro-immigrant policies was largely ignored by Nutter and his administration, as they had little political incentive to address such views. The anxiety of African-American voters about immigration could be disregarded, as this group is firmly entrenched as the base of the Democratic Party in Philadelphia. Xenophobic discourse was also dismissed as the expression of right-wing Republicans, a constituency that the Democratic Party has no need to accommodate.

The importance of the context of race relations in Philadelphia and in the United States generally cannot be overstated in any discussion about the desirability of immigration; the promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity must be understood in light of the city's historic tensions between whites and African-Americans, including urban riots of the 1960s and battles over school desegregation throughout the 1970s and 80s. Mayor Nutter's statement at an immigrant rights' rally in 2010 that "immigration, for some, (...) has become the new segregation", for example, is revealing of his administration's priorities¹⁹. As a communications strategy, the protection of immigrant rights offers a way to shift focus from a painful history of racial oppression and continuing social inequalities between Philadelphia's African-American neighborhoods and its affluent white suburbs. The concept of diversity – and the demographic change generated by immigrants – can thus act to reassure much of the "creative class" that defines itself as part of the progressive left, explaining much of the appeal of Richard Florida's ideas and making his claims a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Conclusion

Under Mayor Nutter, municipal government in Philadelphia embraced the idea that immigrants could help to rescue the city from its decline throughout much of the 20th century by bringing demographic growth, expanding the tax base, restoring abandoned neighborhoods and bringing increased business activity. In order to accompany and stimulate these phenomena, administrators introduced a range of policies intended to improve relations and communication between immigrant communities and municipal agencies. However, just as federal immigrant and refugee policies have often been constructed in such a way as to conduct public diplomacy and to further geopolitical aims, support for immigrant rights on the local level can also be partly attributed to urban branding and communication strategies. These policies contributed to creating a new more international image for Philadelphia, one

¹⁸ Interviews conducted July 2010.

¹⁹ Speech delivered at People's Park, July 2010.

that could counter its reputation for urban blight and racial segregation by emphasizing the city's growing diversity and its participation in the knowledge industries of medicine, scientific research and higher education that depend on globalized networks of skilled workers, both immigrant and native-born. The message of tolerance and the cosmopolitan outlook inherent to the administration's policies protecting immigrants' rights to city services is appealing to this highly desirable population, who tends to prefer living in cities that offer the ethnic and cultural diversity that large foreign-born populations bring. In this sense, city's efforts to rebrand itself resemble yet another case of emulation of New York, whose leaders successfully conducted the "I Love New York" marketing campaign at the end of the 1970s in order to replace the image of a crime-ridden dystopia with one of a world capital of the arts (Greenberg 2008).

As Americans of all classes tend to prefer highly-skilled immigration to that of low-skilled immigration (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2010), the Nutter administration's choice to focus on the former can also be interpreted as a way to emphasize the consensual, non-threatening effects of a growing foreign-born population. Despite the contribution of immigrant rights policies to utilitarian goals and to the attraction of an internationally-oriented elite, the measures nonetheless offer valuable protection to vulnerable immigrants, in particular the undocumented. Philadelphia and other "sanctuary" cities stand to buffer new attempts in the coming months and years to identify deportable immigrant residents, including those with no serious criminal record²⁰. Indeed, Philadelphia and Pennsylvania are emblematic of the progressive-conservative divide that increasingly separates urban and rural areas in the United States; while the electorate of the city voted for Hillary Clinton at over 80% in November 2016, Donald Trump won the state as a whole by a narrow margin²¹. Yet the city government, through its inability to address the causes of entrenched poverty because of a lack of resources and of political will, could be viewed as reinforcing the dynamics that contributed to the victory of Donald Trump's nationalistic message. Philadelphia's approach to socio-economic inequalities notwithstanding, its pro-immigrant policies provide an inevitable counterpoint in an era of mounting calls for isolationism and restrictions on the free movement of people.

²⁰ As of December 2015, 38 cities and four states formally limited their cooperation with the federal authorities of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (National Immigration Law Center 2015).

²¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/results/pennsylvania>

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