1-1-2015

Immigrant Communities of Philadelphia: Spatial Patterns and Revitalization

Jake Riley
University of Pennsylvania, rjake@sas.upenn.edu

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. http://repository.upenn.edu/socialsciencestudio_maps/1
For more information, please contact repository@pobox.upenn.edu.
Here, I plotted the change of the foreign-born (y-axis) against the change of the native born population (x-axis). Tracts to the right of the vertical line, where the native-born have increased, are ones that are often assumed when discussing revitalization: the native born population increases (yellow box, 20 tracts) or where both the native- and foreign-born population increases (green box, 51 tracts). What is interesting, however, is that, while those 51 tracts (green box) do have an increase in their foreign born population, there are 143 other tracts where only the foreign-born population has grown. The Italian Market is one such area. This chart is disaggregated on page 21.

This is important because it adds complexity to the dominant narrative that cities become revitalized through a process of gentrification where richer white people or members of “the creative class” revitalize cities by moving into and investing in poorer, minority neighborhoods. Given that most of the population growth has been from the foreign born population, this narrative does not explain revitalization in a way that acknowledges immigrant communities. This analysis, then, is perhaps a starting point for further research that can look at the dynamics between foreign born residents and the revitalization of urban areas.