

# The Star-Ledger/**Eagleton-Rutgers Poll**

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## NEW JERSEY GENERATIONS Part 6: RACIAL DIVERSITY by Patrick Murray with Sharon Pinnelas

This is the final installment of a special series of reports on *New Jersey Generations*, a joint project of the Eagleton Institute of Politics and Edward J. Bloustein School of Rutgers University, and the *Star-Ledger* of Newark. The series looks at generational differences in the political, social, and cultural life of the state. Stories will run in the paper and will be released on *The Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* website concurrently. A chronology can be found on the background information page at the end of this report. The four generations we refer to are DotNets (18-27), GenerationX (28-39), Baby Boomers (40-58), and Matures (59+). Thumbnail sketches of each generation can also be found on the background information page as well.

### *Younger New Jerseyans More Positive Towards Immigration*

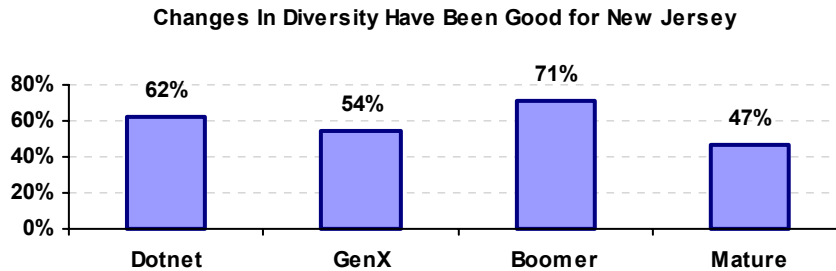
New Jersey is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse states in the country, and that diversity continues to grow by leaps and bounds. How do residents of different age groups feel about these changes in the Garden State? A recent *Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll* found that the youngest generation of adults are the most positive towards immigrants. But when asked about racial diversity in general, attitudes appear to skip a generation. DotNets and their parent generation, the Baby Boomers, are more likely than those in Generation X or the Mature generation to have favorable opinions towards diversity overall.

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### *New Jersey Generations and Race*

Most New Jersey residents feel that recent changes in the racial and ethnic composition of the state have been good for New Jersey. Fully 60 percent say this has been a good thing compared to 27 percent who characterize it as a bad thing for the state. Boomers (71%) and Dotnets (62%) are somewhat more likely than GenXers (54%) and Matures (47%) to feel that increased diversity has been a positive experience.



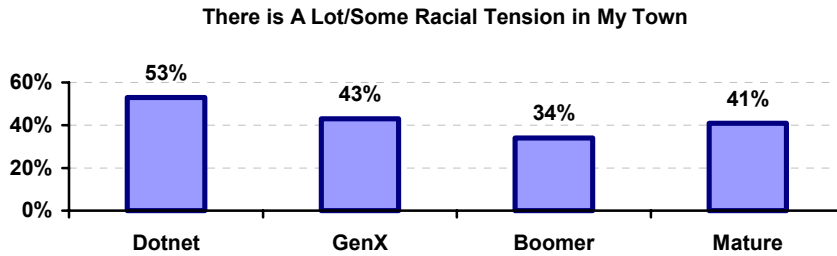
Similarly, Dotnets (61%) and Boomers (54%) are more likely than GenXers (42%) and Matures (43%) to feel that it is better when people of different racial and ethnic groups live, go to school, and work closely with each other rather than have more segregated experiences.

The “generational skip” from Dotnet to Boomers in favorable attitudes does not directly correspond to the amount of diversity in each generation. More than 1-in-3 Dotnets (41%) and GenXers (34%) say they have a non-Caucasian background compared to fewer than 1-in-5 Boomers (19%) and Matures (15%).

“While Dotnets and GenXers have similar levels of diversity in their generational cohorts, it seems to be the Dotnets who have really grown up surrounded by classmates and friends of many different cultures,” remarked Patrick Murray, acting director of the poll. “It is possible that this may have lead to more positive personal experiences with diversity among the Dotnets, and that these experiences may also extend to their Baby Boomer parents.”

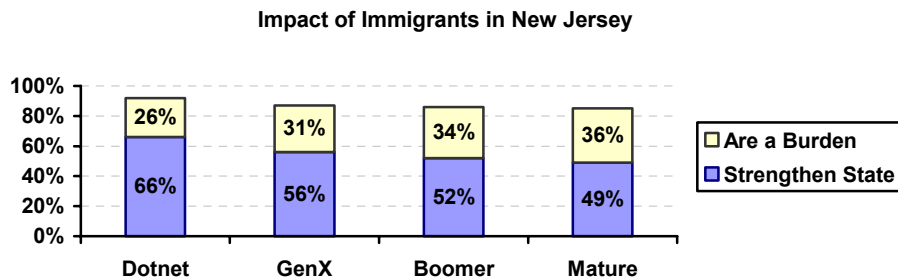
Not surprisingly, Dotnets are the most likely to say they feel “very comfortable” interacting with people of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. Fully 84 percent of the youngest New Jersey generation says this. The percentage who feel very comfortable with people of different races drops slowly but steadily among older generations – to 79 percent of GenXers, 75 percent of Boomers, and 70 percent of Matures.

While Dotnets and Boomers share favorable attitudes toward racial diversity, they diverge on whether there is a lot of racial or ethnic tension in their own hometown. Dotnets – at 53 percent – are most likely to say there is at least some such tension in their town, while Boomers are the least likely to feel this way (34%). GenXers (43%) and Matures (41%) fall between these two extremes in this opinion.



***New Jersey Generations and Immigration***

The poll also asked about the impact of immigration and found that the youngest generation clearly feels the most positive toward this group. Unlike opinions on race, there is no “generational skip.” Overall, most New Jersey adults (54%) feel that immigrants strengthen the Garden State because of their hard work and talents while 33 percent feel that immigrants are a burden because they take jobs, housing and health care. Dotnets – at 66 percent – are most likely to feel that immigrants are an asset to the Garden State. They are followed by GenXers (56%), Boomers (52%) and Matures (49%) in this belief.



One particular strength noted by many New Jerseyans are immigrants’ contributions to the lifestyle of the state. Overall, 56 percent of residents feel that the variety of restaurants available in the Garden State is better because of immigrants. Forty-three percent say the same about arts and cultural offerings in the state.

In both cases, Dotnets lead the way in this opinion – 63 percent say that restaurant choices have improved because of immigrants and 57 percent say the same about the arts. GenXers and Boomers follow close behind on these opinions – 57 percent of GenX and 58 percent of Boomers say restaurants are better and 47 percent of GenX and 42 percent of Boomers say the arts are better because of immigrants. Matures are least likely to feel that immigrants have improved these two areas – 48 percent for variety of restaurants and 32 percent for arts and culture.

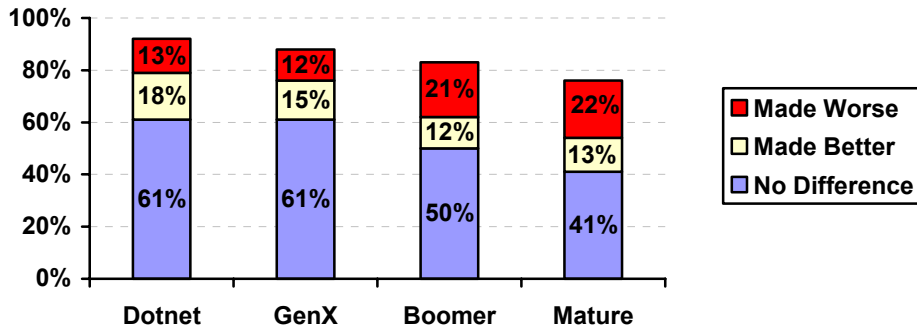
However, there are other areas where opinion on the impact of immigration is more ambivalent. When asked what change immigrants have had on taxes and crime, New Jerseyans are more likely to say that these new residents have made these issues worse rather than better. For state taxes, 30 percent of all adults say immigrants have had a negative impact compared to only 6 percent who say their impact has been positive. However, another 46 percent feel that immigration has had no effect on state taxes.

For crime, 21 percent of New Jersey adults feel that crime has worsened because of immigration compared to only 4 percent who feel it has gotten better. However, the vast majority of residents – 62 percent – feel that immigrants have had no effect on the state's crime rate.

Matures – the group who have the least direct contact with recent immigrants – are more likely than the younger three generations to feel that immigrants have made a change for the worse in these two areas. While 35 percent of Matures feel that state taxes have become worse because of immigrants, only 27 to 29 percent of younger adults feel the same. And whereas 28 percent of Matures say that crime has increased because of immigrants, only 17 to 20 percent of younger adults hold a similar view.

New Jersey adults are evenly split on whether immigration has had a positive or negative impact on the quality of local schools in the state. Fourteen percent feel that public education has improved in the state due to immigration and a comparable 18 percent feel it has gotten worse, while 52 percent feel that immigration has made no difference on this issue. Matures (22%) and Boomers (21%) are somewhat more likely than Dotnets (13%) and GenXers (12%) to feel that immigration has led to a decline in educational quality.

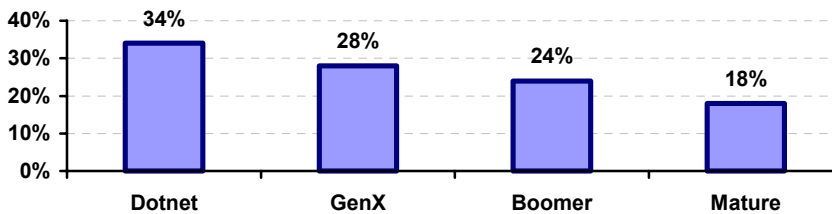
**Impact of Immigrants on Quality of Schools**



The age-related differences in opinions on immigration are not surprising when viewed in light of the amount of interaction adults in each generation have with immigrants. As may be expected, Dotnets (45%) are the most likely to say that there are many immigrants who live in their area. This compares to between 31 and 34 percent of older adults who say the same.

The youngest generation of New Jersey adults are also the most likely to say they have daily interaction with recent immigrants. This includes 34 percent of Dotnets, compared to 28 percent of GenXers, 24 percent of Boomers and 18 percent of Matures. Conversely, Dotnets are the least likely to say that they never encounter recent immigrants in the Garden State, while Matures are the most likely to be isolated from these new residents. Reports of non-contact with recent immigrants ranges from 24 percent of Dotnets, to 32 percent of GenXers, 36 percent of Boomers, and 41 percent of Matures.

**Have Daily Interaction With Recent Immigrants**



The survey also attempted to gauge how accepting New Jerseyans would be of accommodations for immigrants in civic life. Specifically, the poll tested support for having the state’s traffic signs written in both English and Spanish. Most adults (62%) oppose doing this, compared to only 33 percent who favor this proposal. Only among

Dotnets does any generation register majority support for this proposition – 51 support it to 44 percent who are opposed. More than 6-in-10 adults in the other three generations oppose this – 61 percent GenX, 68 percent Boomer and 64 percent Mature.

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## **Background Information on the *New Jersey Generations Study***

### ***The Cast of Characters***

Ours is a story of four New Jersey generations and their attitudes and behaviors across seven areas of political, social and economic life. Here are four primary actors – generations or age cohorts – in the drama.

- **Matures**, born before 1946, are about 1.6 million strong in the state today. Almost all were born before the explosion of the first nuclear weapon. Driven by duty and sculpted by sacrifice, this generation was forged by the experiences of the Depression and World War II, even though many experienced them indirectly through their parents while growing up. What is left in our definition of “Matures” is the last remnant of the WWII generation, along with the following cohort, often called the “Silent Generation,” who took their cues in working hard for a better life and upholding the responsibilities and privileges of citizenship.
- **Baby Boomers**, born between 1946 and 1964 constitute the largest age cohort — about 2.3 million. This group was parented by prosperity, sharing a presumption of entitlement to their world view. Shaping political experiences were the Civil Rights movement, Viet Nam, and Watergate, not to mention rock music, drugs and the sexual revolution. The Boomer cohort has always been big enough to force the culture to adapt to them. For years they have dictated politics and culture by their sheer numbers in a market-driven economy, and policy to the degree they have had a coherent outlook.
- **Generation X**, or GenXers, born between 1964 and 1976 also number about 1.6 million. This group’s formative experiences were framed by familial and financial insecurity. They grew up amidst rising rates of divorce and recession. Where the sexual revolution of the Boomers brought free expression and experimentation, the threat of AIDS brought Xers fear and caution. During adolescence and early adulthood, their political world view was shaped by, well, pretty much nothing. The biggest external disruption was the Persian Gulf War, which ended quickly and without many American casualties, with computer-aimed smart bombs falling on targets like a video arcade game. Described as “slackers,” and scorned for a world view that begins and ends with themselves, even their moniker is about something that never happened.
- **DotNets**, are the new kids in town. Born after 1976, they are the 1 million young adults now between 18 and 27 years of age. They go by many labels — Millennials, Generation NeXt, Generation Y. We call them DotNets because we think one of their defining characteristics will be having come of age along with the Internet. Information has always been virtually costless and universally available to them; technology cheap and easily mastered; community as much a digital place of common interest as a shared physical space. As of now, we know little about DotNets, except that they don’t vote. This is our first look at this cohort in New Jersey.

***The Study Design***

The survey questionnaire was designed by students in Professor Cliff Zukin's graduate class in Survey Research offered at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Policy in the spring, 2004 semester. Zukin was, until recently, director of the Star-Ledger/Eagleton-Rutgers Poll. He was assisted by Patrick Murray, now the Poll's Acting Director. Rob Suls served as the project manager. Other graduate students working on the project were: Lauren Arnold, Marci Berger, Mary Ellen Cook, Tara Cullen, Allison Kopicki, Nick Martyniak, Angie McGuire, Sharon Pinnelas, Regina Podhorn, Rochelle Rudnick and Elizabeth Williamson.

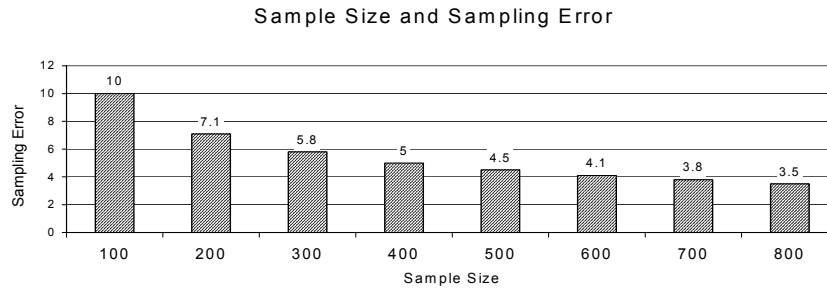
Six general topic areas were identified for study. All data will be released by Eagleton; most will also be the subject of stories in the Star-Ledger. Here is the schedule of releases and stories:

	<i>Content Area</i>	<i>Star-Ledger Story</i>	<i>Eagleton Release</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	Politics and Government	Politically disconnected youth	Politically disconnected youth plus further partisan realignment	8/22
2	Family & Leisure Time	The impact of "women's liberation"	Importance of family; how leisure time is spent	8/23
3	Money & Personal Finance	Materialistic youth	Money and employment concerns	8/24
4	Sex & Relationships	Children out of wedlock	Sexual practices, what's import in a relationship, what children should be taught; views of marriage	8/25
5	Religion & Spirituality	Ghosts, astrology and ESP	Variety of religious & para-normal beliefs and practices	8/26
6	Race & Immigration	<i>n/a</i>	Diversity & tolerance; views of societal change; race relations	8/27

The survey was conducted by telephone with a random sample of 819 New Jersey adults. The sample was stratified to include approximately equal numbers of residents (approximately 200 each) in each of four pre-defined generations, and the final results were weighted to represent the population as a whole. Interviewing took place between March 17 and 31, 2004. The sampling error associated with the generational sample sizes is  $\pm 7$  percentage points. Thus if we found that 50 percent of our *sample* of Baby Boomers agree with a particular statement, we would be pretty confident (95 percent sure) that the true value in the underlying *population* from which the sample was drawn is somewhere between 43 and 57 percent ( $50 \pm 7$ ).

**BACKGROUND MEMO – RELEASE (EP146-6) August 27, 2004**

The latest *Star-Ledger*/Eggleton-Rutgers Poll was conducted by telephone from March 17 to March 31 with a scientifically selected random sample of 819 New Jersey adults. All surveys are subject to sampling error, which is the expected probable difference between interviewing everyone in a population versus a scientific sampling drawn from that population. The sampling error is  $\pm 3.4$  percent for the full sample at a 95 percent confidence interval. Thus if 50 percent of New Jersey residents were found to be less likely to agree with a statement, one would be 95 percent sure that the true figure would be between 46.6 and 53.4 percent ( $50 \pm 3.4$ ) had all New Jersey residents been interviewed, rather than just a sample. Sampling error increases as the sample size decreases, so statements based on various population subgroups, such as separate figures reported for different generational groups, are subject to more error than are statements based on the total sample. The margin of error for any of the four generations is  $\pm 7.1$  percent. The following chart shows the relationship between sample size and sampling error.



Sampling error does not take into account other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording or context effects. The verbatim wording of all questions asked is reproduced in this background memo. The sample has been stratified based on county and the data have been weighted on age and education to insure an accurate proportional representation of the state. The questions referred to in this release are as follows:

“Were you born in the United States, or in another country?” [D11]

	<u>Born in U.S.</u>	<u>Born in another Country</u>	<u>Don't Know/Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>					
--All Adults	87%	12%	1%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>					
--Dot-Net	79	19	2	100	(203)
--Gen X	85	14	1	100	(204)
--Boomer	91	9	--	100	(206)
--Mature	88	12	--	100	(206)



“Are you of Latino or Hispanic origin, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban or some other Spanish background? “Are you white, black or of Asian origin?” [D9/D10 composite]

	<u>White Non-Hispanic</u>	<u>Black Non-Hispanic</u>	<u>Hispanic</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Refused</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>							
<b>--All Adults</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>99%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>							
--Dot-Net	57	14	17	10	2	100	(203)
--Gen X	63	18	10	6	3	100	(204)
--Boomer	80	12	6	1	1	100	(206)
--Mature	83	11	4	--	1	99	(206)

“Overall, do you feel that recent changes that have brought more racial and ethnic diversity to New Jersey is a good thing for the state, or a bad thing?” [IR1]

	<u>Good</u>	<u>Bad</u>	<u>Depends</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>						
<b>--All Adults</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	62	29	4	5	100	(203)
--Gen X	54	31	6	9	100	(204)
--Boomer	71	19	3	7	100	(206)
--Mature	47	34	4	15	100	(206)

“How much racial or ethnic tension do you think there is among people who live in your town or city—a lot, some, just a little or none at all?” [IR2]

	<u>A lot</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>None at all</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>							
<b>--All Adults</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>							
--Dot-Net	21	32	32	14	1	100	(203)
--Gen X	12	31	31	23	3	100	(204)
--Boomer	7	27	42	23	1	100	(206)
--Mature	11	30	30	24	5	100	(206)

“Overall, how comfortable are you interacting with people of different races and ethnic background in New Jersey—say when you go to the shopping or are at a mall. Are you very comfortable, a little comfortable, a little uncomfortable, or very uncomfortable?” [IR3]

	<u>Very Comfortable</u>	<u>Little Comfortable</u>	<u>Little Uncomfortable</u>	<u>Very Uncomfortable</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>								
--All Adults	76%	15%	6%	1%	1%	1%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>								
--Dot-Net	84	13	3	--	1	--	101	(203)
--Gen X	79	14	5	1	1	--	100	(204)
--Boomer	75	14	7	2	2	--	100	(206)
--Mature	70	18	6	1	1	3	99	(206)

“I’m going to read you two pairs of statements. For each one please just tell me whether you agree more with statement A, or statement B. A: It is more important that people of different races and ethnic groups live, go to school and work closely with each other. - **OR** - B: It is not important that people of different races and ethnic groups live, got to school and work closely with each other so long as everyone is treated fairly and has the same opportunities.” [IR4]

	<u>Agree “A”</u>	<u>Agree “B”</u>	<u>Both /Neither</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>						
--All Adults	50%	46%	2%	2%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>						
--Dot-Net	61	38	--	--	99	(203)
--Gen X	42	53	3	2	100	(204)
--Boomer	54	42	3	1	100	(206)
--Mature	43	51	3	3	100	(206)

“I’m going to read you two pairs of statements. For each one please just tell me whether you agree more with statement A, or statement B. A: Immigrants today strengthen our state because of their hard work and talents. - **OR** - B. Immigrants today are a burden on our state because they take our jobs, housing and health care.” [IR5]

	<u>Agree “A”</u>	<u>Agree “B”</u>	<u>Both /Neither</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>						
--All Adults	54%	33%	8%	6%	101%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>						
--Dot-Net	66	26	7	1	100	(203)
--Gen X	56	31	5	8	100	(204)
--Boomer	52	34	10	4	100	(206)
--Mature	49	36	7	8	100	(206)

“How many recent immigrants would you say live in your area—many, some, only a few or none?” [IR6]

	<u>Many</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Only a few</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>							
--All Adults	34%	31%	23%	5%	7%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>							
--Dot-Net	45	27	20	4	4	100	(203)
--Gen X	33	33	22	5	8	101	(204)
--Boomer	31	34	26	5	5	101	(206)
--Mature	34	26	24	6	10	100	(206)

“How often do you interact with recent immigrants in your area - on a daily basis, a few times a week, a few times a month, or less than that?” [IR7]

	<u>Daily</u>	<u>Few times a week</u>	<u>Few times a month</u>	<u>Less Often</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>							
--All Adults	25%	24%	15%	34%	2%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>							
--Dot-Net	34	26	16	24	1	101	(203)
--Gen X	28	20	19	32	2	101	(204)
--Boomer	24	28	12	36	1	101	(206)
--Mature	18	21	14	41	6	100	(206)

“Would you favor or oppose having traffic signs in New Jersey being written in both Spanish and English?” [IR9]

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>DK</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>(n)</u>
<b>March 2004</b>					
--All Adults	33%	62%	5%	100%	(819)
<u>Generation</u>					
--Dot-Net	51	44	5	100	(203)
--Gen X	36	61	3	100	(204)
--Boomer	25	68	6	99	(206)
--Mature	29	64	6	99	(206)

“I’m going to read you a list of items that concern the overall quality of life of New Jersey residents. Please indicate whether you think that immigrants have made a change for the better, a change for the worse, or made no difference on each. [RANDOMIZE LIST] (A) The quality of local public school systems; (B) the variety of restaurants; (C) the amount of crime in the state; (D) state taxes; (E) arts and culture in the state.” [IR8]

	<b><u>Better</u></b>	<b><u>Worse</u></b>	<b><u>No Difference</u></b>	<b><u>DK</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>	<b><u>(n)</u></b>
<b>Quality of schools</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>101%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	18	13	61	9	101	(203)
--Gen X	15	12	61	12	100	(204)
--Boomer	12	21	50	17	100	(206)
--Mature	13	22	41	25	101	(206)
<b>Variety of restaurants</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	63	3	32	2	100	(203)
--Gen X	57	4	35	4	100	(204)
--Boomer	58	3	36	3	100	(206)
--Mature	48	4	32	15	99	(206)
<b>Amount of crime</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>13%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	5	17	68	10	100	(203)
--Gen X	4	19	67	11	101	(204)
--Boomer	2	20	65	12	99	(206)
--Mature	6	28	47	19	100	(206)
<b>State Taxes</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	8	27	48	18	101	(203)
--Gen X	8	27	48	17	100	(204)
--Boomer	5	29	52	15	101	(206)
--Mature	5	35	34	26	100	(206)
<b>Arts and culture</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>(819)</b>
<i>Generation</i>						
--Dot-Net	57	4	35	4	100	(203)
--Gen X	47	4	42	7	100	(204)
--Boomer	42	4	46	9	101	(206)
--Mature	32	10	40	18	100	(206)