

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

March 2013

The World in Atlanta: An Analysis of the Foreign-Born Population in Metro Atlanta

Approximately 300,000 new residents who were born abroad moved to metro Atlanta during the 2000s, which represents one of the largest growth rates among the nation's 20 most populous metro areas. There are now more than 700,000 residents of metro Atlanta who were born in a different country, or about 14 percent of the population. More than half of those were born in Latin America, with another 29 percent born in Asia¹.

This *Regional Snapshot* explores data from the Census Bureau's latest American Community Survey and finds that while metro Atlanta still has among the lowest percentages of foreign-born population among large metros, it is making up ground quickly. It also finds that those neighborhoods that had the largest growth rates in the foreign-born population are not so different from other neighborhoods in the region.

FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION INCREASES 69 PERCENT, SECOND HIGHEST AMONG LARGE METROS

Approximately 14 (13.5) percent of metro Atlanta's population was born in a different country, which compared to the 20 most populous metro areas, is relatively low. (It ranks 14th). In terms of change over the decade of the 2000s, however, metro Atlanta ranks second in percentage change (69 percent), behind only Baltimore.

In 2000, 10 percent of metro Atlanta's population was foreign-born. As mentioned earlier, 13.5 percent of the region's population is foreign-born. Thus, in terms of change in overall share of foreign-born, metro Atlanta ranks fifth, with an increase of 3.5 percentage-points. Washington D.C. had the largest percentage-point increase at 4.5 percent. (See Table 1).

Table 1 – Foreign-Born Population, 2000-2010

Location	2000			2010			Change	
	Total Pop	Foreign Born	Percent of Foreign Born	Total Pop	Foreign Born	Percent of Foreign Born	Percent Change in Foreign Born	Percentage-Point Change in Share of Foreign Born
Atlanta	4,247,981	424,519	10.0%	5,288,302	716,434	13.5%	68.8%	3.5
Baltimore	2,552,994	146,128	5.7%	2,714,183	251,260	9.3%	71.9%	3.6
Boston	4,391,344	602,062	13.7%	4,560,689	767,845	16.8%	27.5%	3.1
Chicago	9,098,316	1,464,121	16.1%	9,474,211	1,669,752	17.6%	14.0%	1.5
Dallas	5,161,544	782,995	15.2%	6,402,922	1,123,191	17.5%	43.4%	2.3
Detroit	4,452,557	337,059	7.6%	4,291,843	367,371	8.6%	9.0%	1.0
Houston	4,715,407	898,221	19.0%	5,977,092	1,331,684	22.3%	48.3%	3.3
Los Angeles	12,365,627	4,299,343	34.8%	12,849,383	4,408,398	34.3%	2.5%	-0.5
Miami	5,007,564	1,755,004	35.0%	5,582,351	2,167,215	38.8%	23.5%	3.8
Minneapolis	2,968,806	210,344	7.1%	3,286,195	312,483	9.5%	48.6%	2.4
New York	18,323,002	4,846,322	26.4%	18,919,983	5,447,131	28.8%	12.4%	2.4
Philadelphia	5,687,147	391,829	6.9%	5,971,483	569,464	9.5%	45.3%	2.6
Phoenix	3,251,876	457,483	14.1%	4,211,213	607,580	14.4%	32.8%	0.3
Riverside	3,254,821	612,359	18.8%	4,245,773	932,571	22.0%	52.3%	3.2
San Diego	2,813,833	606,254	21.5%	3,105,989	728,384	23.5%	20.1%	2.0
San Francisco	4,123,740	1,127,963	27.4%	4,345,320	1,303,159	30.0%	15.5%	2.6
Seattle	3,043,878	383,824	12.6%	3,449,059	578,402	16.8%	50.7%	4.2
St. Louis	2,698,687	81,546	3.0%	2,815,168	126,513	4.5%	55.1%	1.5
Tampa	2,395,997	233,907	9.8%	2,789,116	353,904	12.7%	51.3%	2.9
Washington	4,796,183	829,310	17.3%	5,610,082	1,223,159	21.8%	47.5%	4.5

Source: Brookings analysis of American Community Survey and 2000 Census data

¹ Source: 2011 American Community Survey

APPROXIMATELY ONE-QUARTER OF GWINNETT'S POPULATION WAS BORN ABROAD

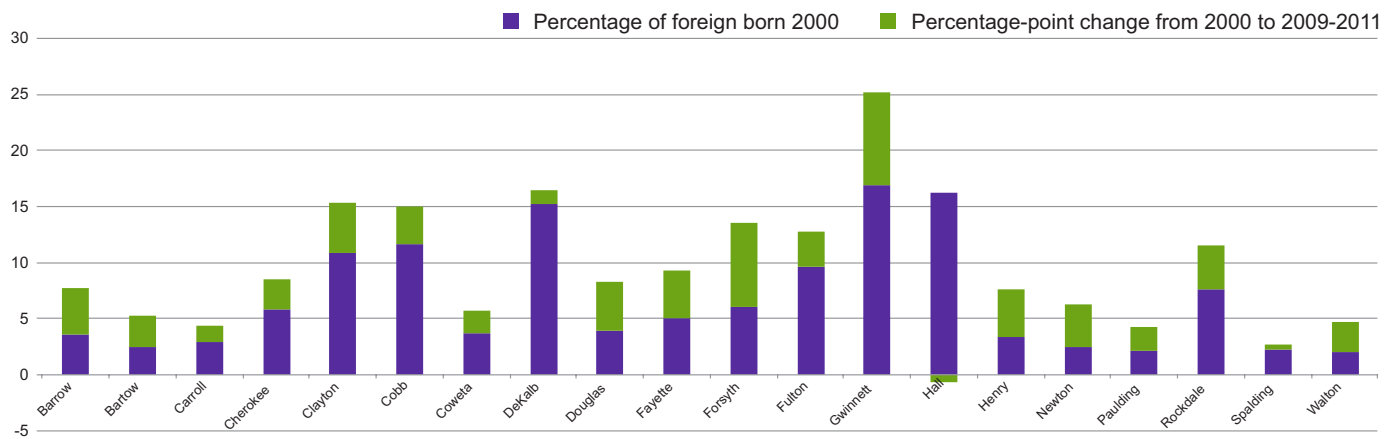
Within the Atlanta region, the percent of the foreign-born population varies widely from county to county, as seen in Chart 1, with a high of 25 percent in Gwinnett County to a low of 2.7 percent in Spalding. DeKalb County has the second highest percentage of foreign-born with 16.5 percent, followed by Hall (15.6 percent), Clayton (15.3 percent) and Forsyth (13.5 percent).

Chart 1 also shows the percentage-point change in the foreign-born population since 2000. Not surprisingly, Gwinnett's 8.6 percentage-point increase led the region. Gwinnett was a relatively diverse place in 2000, as it also had the largest percentage of foreign-born population (16.9 percent) of any county in the region. But of the three counties which had at least 15 percent of foreign-born population, (DeKalb and Hall were the other two), only Gwinnett's foreign population continued to grow. Hall's share of foreign-born declined slightly.

Forsyth experienced a 7.5 percentage-point increase in foreign-born population, the second largest in the region, followed by Clayton and Douglas (+4.4 percentage-points).

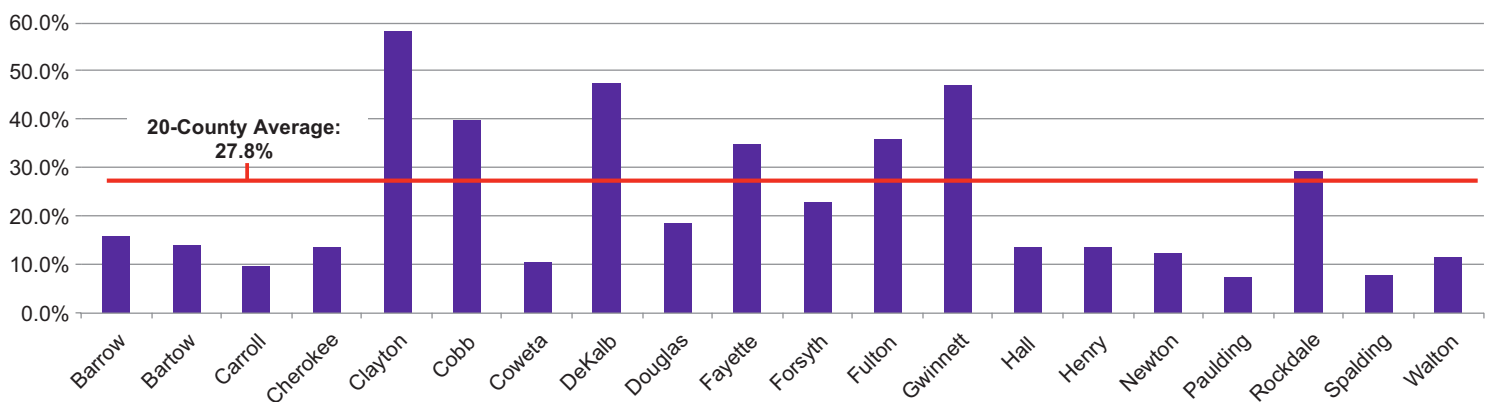
Chart 2 shows how much of each county's overall growth was due to the growth in foreign-born population. Clayton County, for example, added roughly 24,000 people since 2000, about 14,000, were foreign-born. So, about 60 percent of Clayton's overall growth was due to the foreign-born population, the highest percentage in the region. Growth in the foreign-born population accounted for at least 40 percent of overall growth in DeKalb (47.5 percent), Gwinnett (47.1 percent) and Cobb (40 percent), as well.

Chart 1 – Percentage of Foreign-Born & Change Since 2000



Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey and 2000 Census

Chart 2 – Percent of Total Population Added Coming From Foreign-Born



Source: 2009-2011 American Community Survey

Note: To derive figures represented in this chart, we simply divided the total foreign-born population added between 2000 and the 2009-2011 average by the total population added during the same period.

Not So Different...

While there are differences between neighborhoods that experienced high growth in foreign-born population (top 20% for growth) and the rest of the region, there are more similarities than differences.



Housing Type: Percent of Housing that is Single-family, Detached

High-foreign-born-growth neighborhoods **64.3%** vs. **67.6%** Rest of Region



Household Composition: Percent of Husband-Wife Families with Kids

High-foreign-born-growth neighborhoods **27.5%** vs. **21.6%** Rest of Region



Income: Percent of Population in Poverty

High-foreign-born-growth neighborhoods **12.7%** vs. **13.8%** Rest of Region



Transportation: Percent Who Drove Alone To Work

High-foreign-born-growth neighborhoods **77.1%** vs. **77.7%** Rest of Region

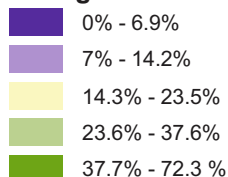


Foreclosures: Number of Foreclosure Filings per Square Mile

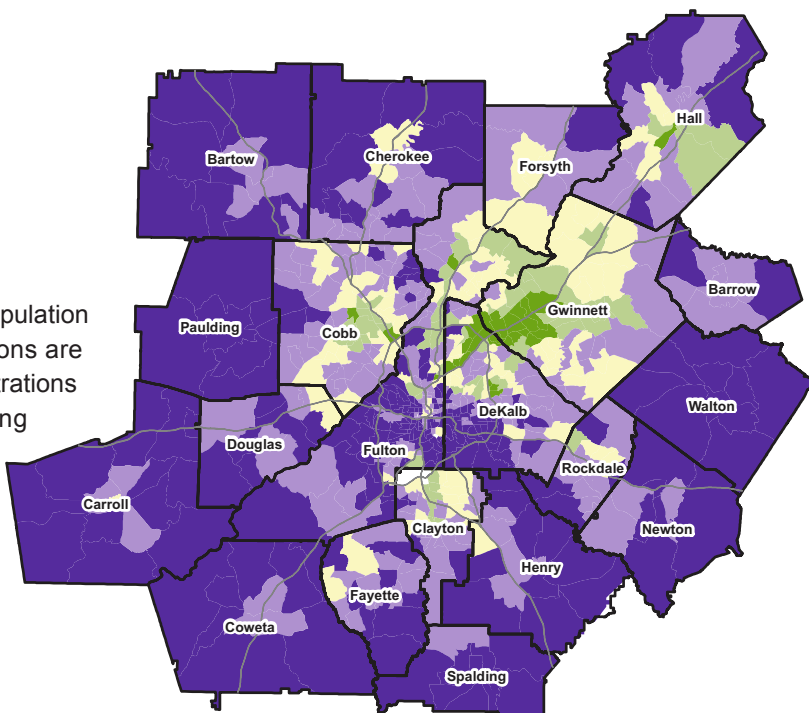
High-foreign-born-growth neighborhoods **29.4** vs. **13.7** Rest of Region

Map 1 – Current Concentrations of the Foreign-Born Population

Concentration of Foreign-Born



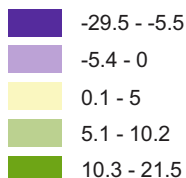
Map 1 shows how hyper-concentrated the foreign-born population is in the Atlanta region as well as how these concentrations are clustered near the Interstates. By far the heaviest concentrations of those born abroad are found in Gwinnett County along the I-85 corridor. That swath actually stretches southwest along I-85 into DeKalb. Other heavy concentrations are located near I-75 in Clayton and Cobb and along the GA 400 corridor through north Fulton.



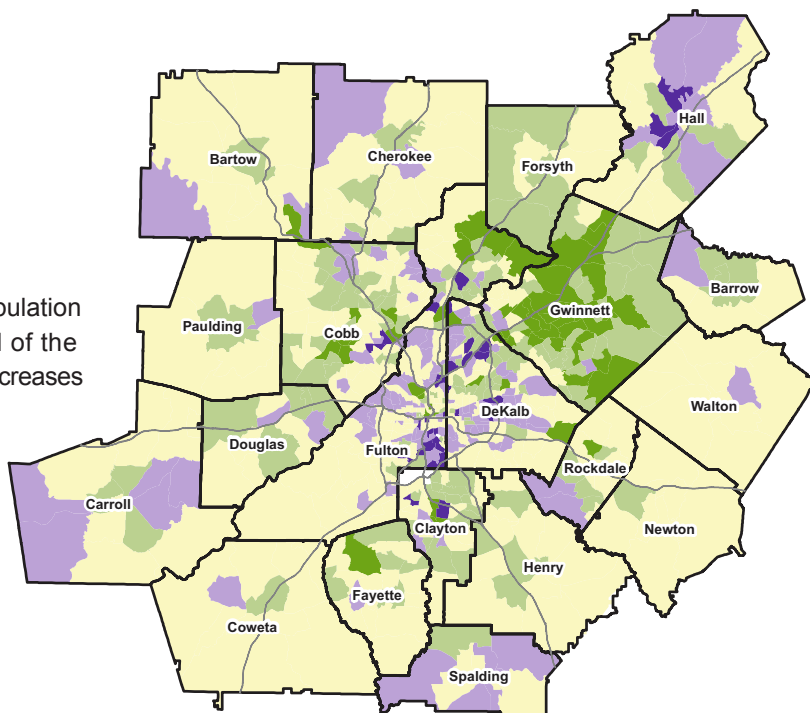
Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey

Map 2 – Percentage-Point Change of Foreign-Born Population

Change: Foreign-Born



Map 2 shows change in the share of the foreign-born population (percentage-point change). Not surprisingly, almost all of the neighborhoods in Gwinnett County experienced dramatic increases in the percentage of foreign-born population. Other big gainers include north Fulton in the Johns Creek area, Cobb County in the Marietta and Powder Springs areas and northern Fayette.



Source: 2007-2011 American Community Survey and 2000 Census

For more information on these issues or to suggest new subjects, please email mcarnathan@atlantaregional.com.

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