

Metro Detroit's Foreign-Born Populations

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Metro Detroit’s Foreign-Born Population	01
Metro Detroit's Foreign Born Map	12
Maps of Top 10 Immigrant Groups by Country of Birth	13
Conclusion	23

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank the staff at Global Detroit and Data Driven Detroit for their editorial handiwork, as well as coaching to take this massive amount of data and turn it into what I hope will be a very usable format.

About Global Detroit

Global Detroit is an effort to revitalize southeast Michigan's economy by pursuing strategies that strengthen Detroit's connections to the world and make the region more attractive and welcoming to immigrants, internationals, and foreign trade and investment as a means to produce jobs and regional economic growth. Originally funded by the New Economy Initiative of Southeast Michigan, the Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce, and the Skillman Foundation, a comprehensive Global Detroit study was released in May 2010 that documented the positive impacts that immigrants have on the regional economy and identified eleven strategic initiatives to revitalize the regional economy. To date, the Global Detroit Initiative has helped launch over a half dozen distinct initiatives in southeast Michigan to make the region more welcoming and to capitalize on the economic opportunity that our international population and connections bring.

Global Detroit's work has served as the foundation for Michigan Governor Rick Snyder's Global Michigan work. Global Detroit also has played a pivotal role in helping to launch a Global Great Lakes Network including similar efforts from Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Dayton, Columbus, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Lansing, and Global Michigan.

About John Cruz

John Cruz joined Global Detroit in November 2012 as an immigration research and data analysis intern with the task of compiling the data and maps that would later make up this report. He is a 2012 graduate of Wayne State University's Masters of Urban Planning program, with a concentration in economic development. His extensive masters essay research focused on Transit Oriented Economic Development for cities in the United States known as the "Rust Belt". While at Wayne State University, he was an active member of the Wayne State Student Urban Planners and worked two years on the Michigan Association of Planning's Annual Student Conference, serving as host committee chairman for the March 2012 conference hosted by Wayne State University. His background in computer systems and databases from years of working as an eCommerce and Wordpress developer made this project of mapping immigrant data a natural fit. He is also a semi-professional photographer, and has done work with CBS and the Detroit Revitalization Fellowship Program.

About Kurt Metzger

Kurt Metzger is founder and director of Data Driven Detroit (D3). Born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio, Kurt moved permanently to the Detroit area in 1975 when he began full-time employment with the U.S. Census Bureau. After 15 years with the Bureau he went to the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University. After another 15 year stint he moved on to the United Way in Detroit as Research Director. Three years there and Kurt was selected by the Skillman and Kresge foundations in October 2008 to develop and direct a new foundation-funded regional data indicators system - Data Driven Detroit (D3). In this capacity, Kurt and a small staff that has evolved into a fifteen-person team with a variety of backgrounds, including urban planning, demographics, sociology, geographic information systems (gis), public health, education, web development and graphic design, who reach out to data developers in the government, nonprofit and private sectors to explain the importance of making their data publicly available and to offer them a system that will facilitate the process. D3's mission is to provide accessible, high-quality information and analysis to drive informed decision-making. We interact with a wide range of clients to produce tailored web tools, reports, maps, and other products. Our work falls into five major categories: Data Collection, Data Visualization, Data Analysis, Data Accessibility and Data-Driven Outcomes. Working with the true belief that information is power, D3 is dedicated to assisting residents and community groups throughout Detroit and the region understand and utilize data to advocate for themselves.

Metro Detroit’s Foreign-born Population

Foreign-born Origins¹

Metro Detroit is home to Foreign-born immigrants from all continents, except Antarctica. In total, there are more than 100 nations who are individually represented in the data, with the remainder being represented by the regional and continental totals.

Meet Greater Detroit’s Foreign-born

The Detroit area is home to approximately 397,000 immigrants living in all four counties. Oakland and Wayne are home to the vast majority, with Macomb and Washtenaw being home to less than 90,000 each.

Macomb	Oakland	Washtenaw	Wayne
82,801	133,341	38,831	142,213

When we compare the numbers for continents side by side, we see that 51% of Metro Detroit’s immigrants are from Asia, 26% are from Europe, 12% are from Latin America and 6% are from Canada and the remainder of North America. Africa and Oceania account for less than 5% each, respectively.

Europe	Latin America	Asia	Africa	Oceania	Other North America
103,178	52,902	201,254	14,378	977	24,497

The average age of our Foreign-born residents is 42 years, slightly higher than the age of the native-born residents at 37. They are split within the margin of error for gender disparity, so males and females are equally represented.

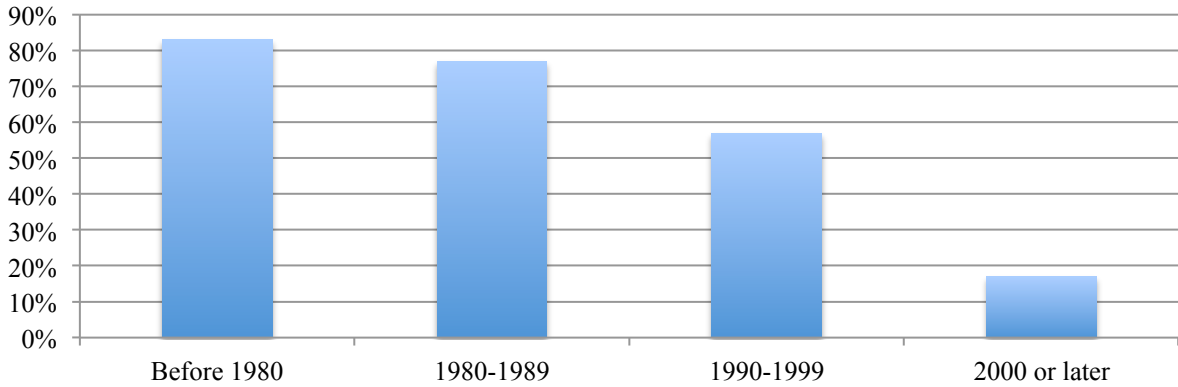
Two thirds of Foreign-born own their own homes, suggesting that the majority of these immigrants plan on making Detroit their long-term, if not permanent home. This is supported by the fact that 52% of them have become naturalized citizens, a number that increases with the length of stay in the United States.

Over 90 percent have access to a vehicle. While vehicle ownership is often seen as a symbol of economic status, the Detroit area’s sprawling suburbs, lack of public transit options and home as America’s automobile manufacturing capital have created an

¹ Data for this section comes from the 2011 American Community Survey 5 Year Estimates (S0503, S0505, S0506, B05004, B05005, B05006, B05007, B06003, B05010, B05011, B27020, B12005, B01003, DP02), the 2011 American Community Survey 3 Year Estimates (S0504) and The 2010 United States Census (SF1).

environment where owning a car is almost a necessity. The 90 percent share does not vary significantly for the individual immigrant groups.

Figure 1. **Percent of Foreign-born who attained citizenship by Year of Entry**

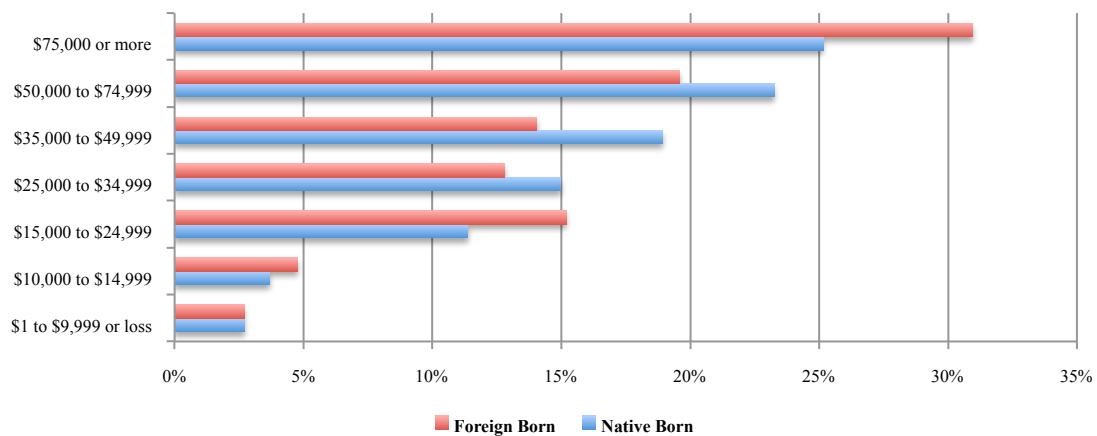


The fact that more than 75 percent of immigrants who arrived prior to 1990 had attained citizenship when measured over the 2007-11 period, demonstrates a very strong desire for those who take up residency in the United States to become permanent, tax-paying citizens with full legal and voting rights. It is reasonable to assume that in the following decades, those who arrived after 1990 will have levels near 80% as well.

Economics and Income

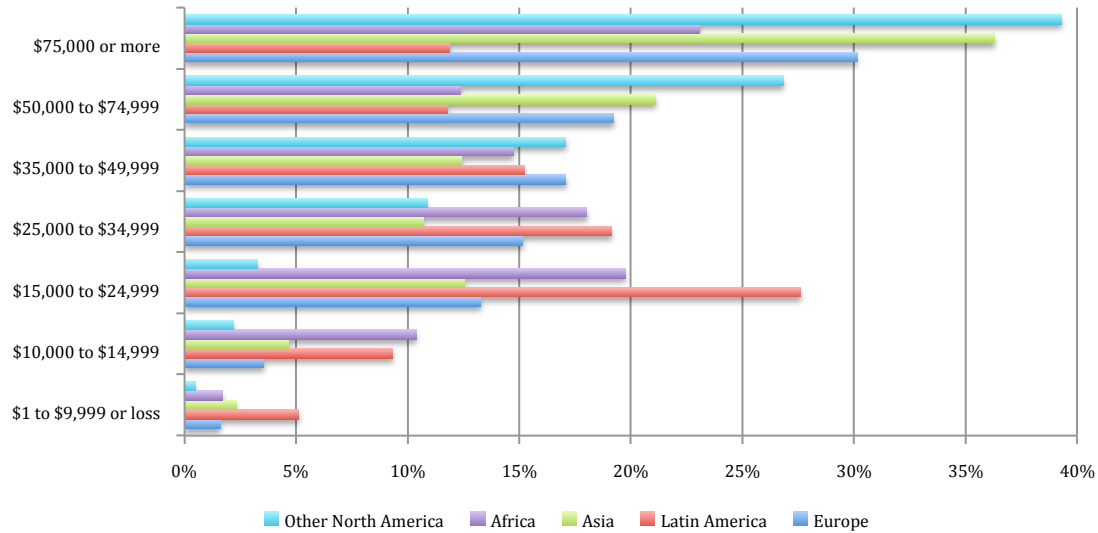
Metropolitan Detroit’s Foreign-born have an average income of \$61,582 for males and \$41,271 for females. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of what immigrants take home each year on an individual basis, compared to that of the native-born. While over a third of immigrants make over \$75,000 per year, the majority make under \$50,000, with a small percentage making less than \$10,000 per year. The native-born trend higher in the middle-income categories, between \$25,000 and \$75,000, and lower at the extremes.

Figure 2. **Earnings in the Past 12 months for foreign and Native-Born Residents**



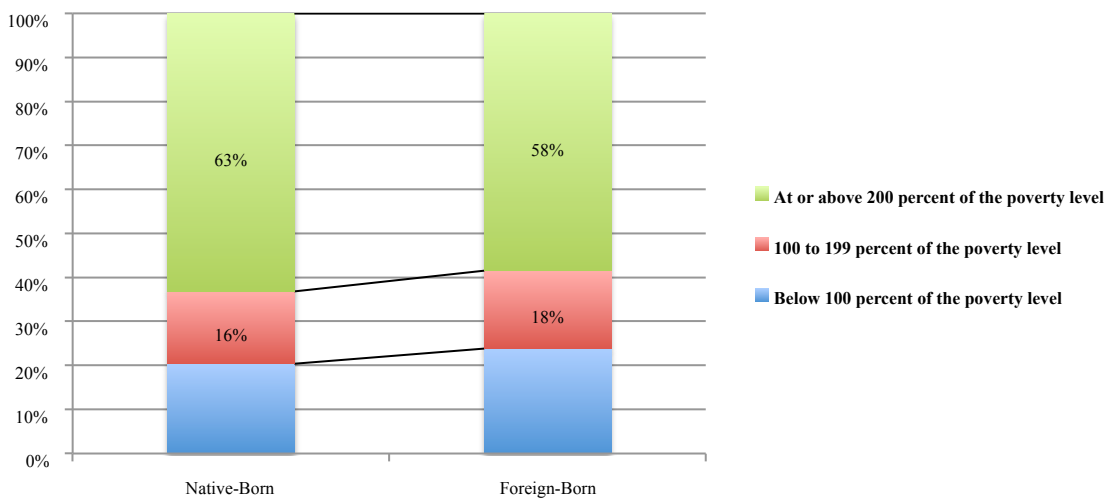
By comparing the continents side-by-side, we see that the averages do not tell a complete story. The past year’s earnings groups vary, sometimes greatly, when the regions of Foreign-born origin are compared (data for Oceania is unavailable).

Figure 3. Earnings of the Foreign-born by Region



Analysis of income in Figure 4 shows the poverty numbers for the region’s native-born population for comparative purposes. In general, the foreign-born are four percent more likely to earn incomes below the poverty line. However the differences at all three compared levels of income are never greater than five percent, showing that foreign and native-born residents have similar incomes in relation to the federal poverty line.

Figure 4. Income As a Share of Poverty for Native and Foreign-born Residents

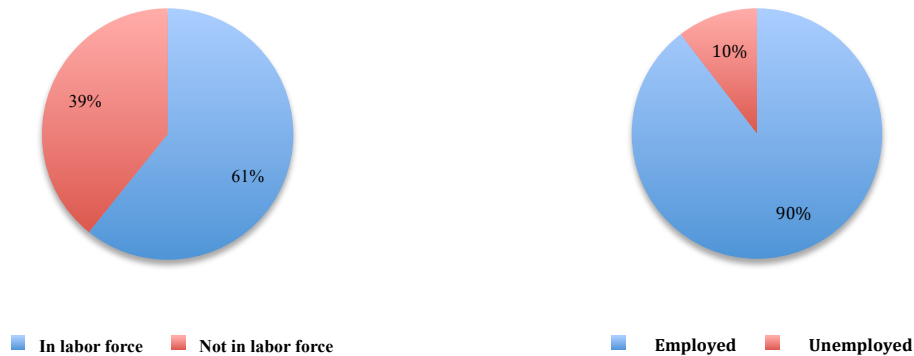


This table shows the difference in poverty levels between the continental groups (data for Oceania is unavailable).

	Europe	Latin America	Asia	Africa	Other North America
<100% of Poverty	9.4%	25.9%	19.1%	14.1%	6.4%
100 – 199% of Poverty	19.0%	28.3%	15.1%	22.0%	10.7%
200% or more of Poverty	71.6%	45.8%	65.8%	63.9%	82.9%

The majority of immigrants is in the labor force and is either working or actively seeking work. Their share of unemployment is similar to that of native-born residents.²

Figure 5. Labor Force Status of Foreign and Native-Born Residents³



As can be seen in Figure 5, a slightly higher share of native-born Americans (63 percent) is in the labor force, while the Foreign-born have a higher employment rate, 90 vs. 84 percent.

Of those immigrants in the labor force, 87 percent are private wage and salary workers while 5.4 percent are self-employed. Only 7 percent work in local, state or federal government positions. These numbers are typical of what we would see for native-born members of the work force as well.

² While Michigan’s unemployment numbers fluctuate month to month, there does not appear to be a difference between native-born and Foreign-born unemployment numbers that is highly significant. As of May 2013, unemployment in Michigan was 8.4%.

³ Unemployment percentage taken from the 61% of Foreign-born who are in the labor force.

Industry	Percentage
Private wage and salary workers	87%
Government workers	7%
Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business	5%
Unpaid family workers	< 1%

The method used by the Census Bureau to group occupations in large categories makes it impossible to detail out the specific occupations filled by the Foreign-born. Such categorization results in grouping artists and businessmen in the same category. Nevertheless, it is still clear that our Foreign-born residents are clustered more heavily in the white-collar occupations.

Occupation	Foreign-born	Native-Born
Management, business, science, and arts occupations	45%	28%
Service occupations	17%	19%
Sales and office occupations	21%	22%
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	6%	14%
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	11%	16%

The following table of employment by industry gives us a much more specific picture as to the economic sectors in which the Foreign-born population works, and how that compares with the native-born.

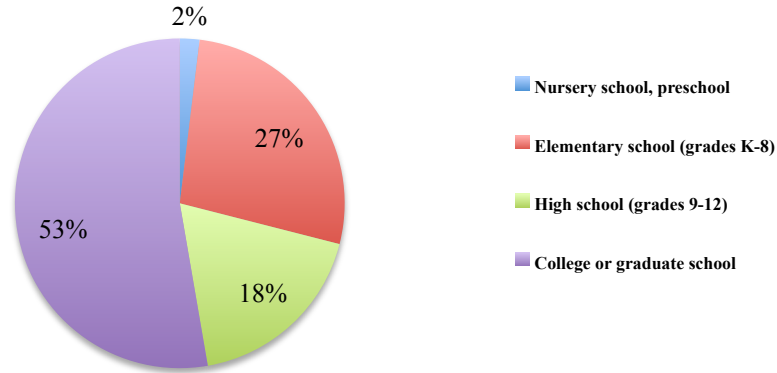
Industry	Foreign-born	Native-Born
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	< 1%	6%
Construction	4 %	7%
Manufacturing	17%	9%
Wholesale trade	2%	7%
Retail trade	11%	8%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	3%	7%
Information	2%	7%
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	4%	7%
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	11%	8%
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	28%	12%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services	10%	8%
Other services (except public administration)	5%	7%
Public administration	2%	7%

The data illustrate that the Foreign-born population has a great deal of skills to offer the local economy – dominating in the professional, health care and education services areas. In addition, it is clear that Foreign-born workers cover the gamut of industries, thus combating the popular notion that low skilled immigrants only end up in manufacturing and construction and high-skilled immigrants are only working in STEM fields.

Education

The Census Bureau gives us two education measures for residents. The first is that of school enrollment of the current grade level being attended by the population aged three and over. The second is that of educational attainment, which reports out the level of education that has been completed by residents aged 25 or older.

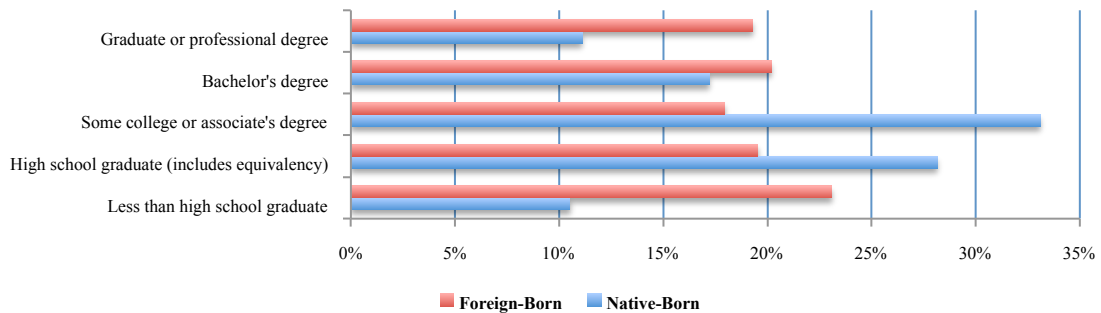
Figure 6. **School Enrollment For Foreign-born Residents 3 Years of Age and Older**



While the native-born population exceeded the immigrant population in nursery school enrollment (6 vs. 2 percent), 43% elementary enrollment (43 vs. 27 percent), and high school (22 vs. 18 percent), immigrants far exceeded them in college or graduate school enrollment (53 vs. 29 percent).

Over 50% of immigrants who are going to school are going to a college or graduate school. It should be no surprise that 40% of immigrants have a bachelors or graduate degree.

Figure 7. **Educational Attainment of Native and Foreign-born Residents 25 Years of Age and Older**

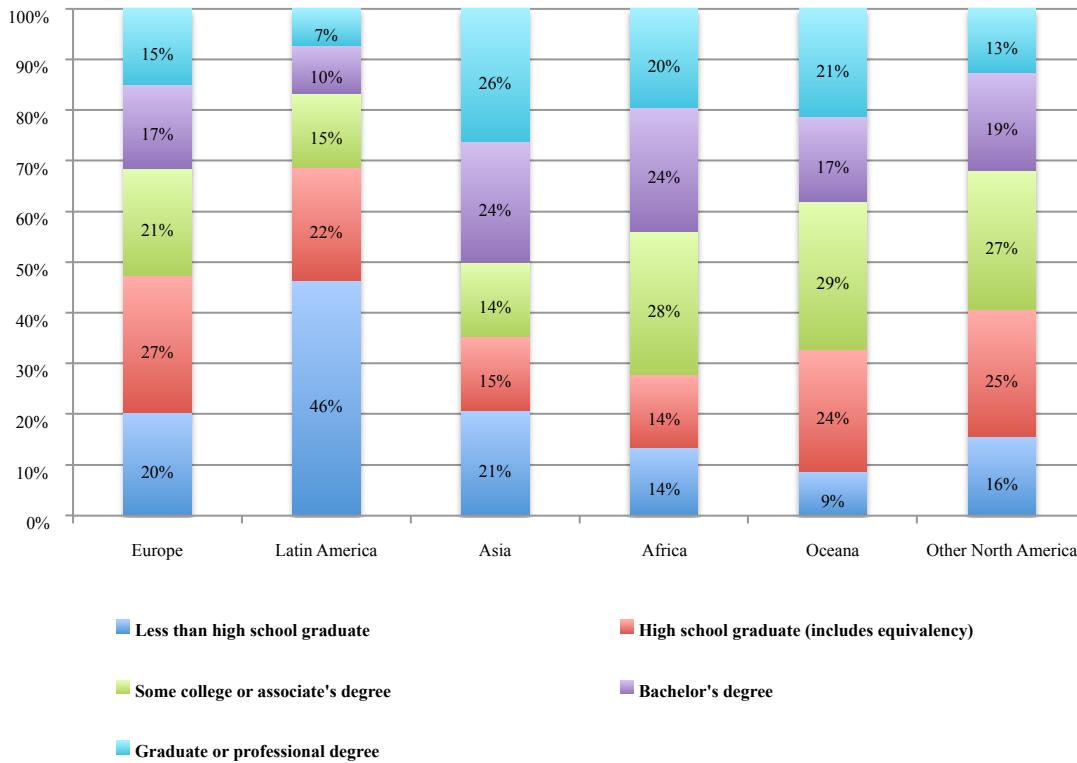


The data show that close to 60% have at least attempted higher education, while close to 25% have not attended a high school through graduation or received a GED by the time they are 25.

The native-born population educational attainment levels include 11% who possess less than high school education levels, 28% being high school graduates, 33% having some college / an associate's degree, 17% having a bachelor's degree, and 11% having a graduate or professional degree.

Figure 8 shows the difference in educational attainment of the various immigrant groups.

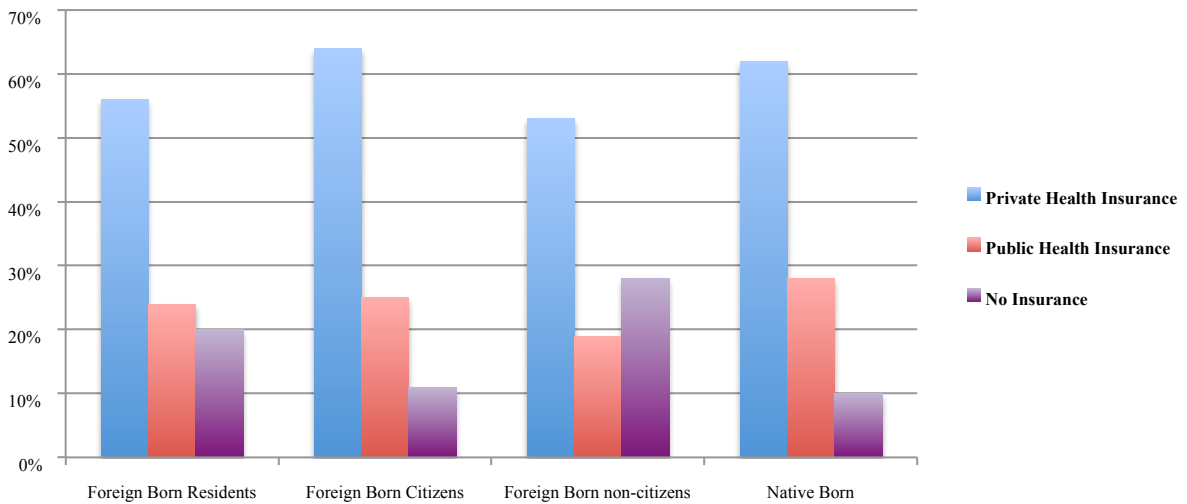
Figure 8. Educational Attainment of Foreign-born Residents by Region



Healthcare

When we compare the healthcare coverage of the Foreign-born and native-born residents, we see slightly higher rates of private health insurance for the native born. Immigrants are twice as likely to be uninsured and somewhat less likely to use public health insurance.

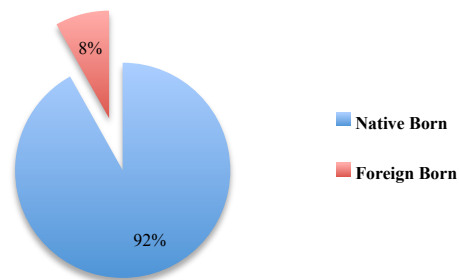
Figure 9. **Health Insurance Coverage for Foreign and Native-Born Residents**



There is a disparity among the Foreign-born in that those who are not citizens have an uninsured rate close to 30 percent. This equates to a significant number of uninsured, and is the only population group in which the number of uninsured is greater than those who utilize the public healthcare system.

With 28% of native-born citizens and 24% of Foreign-born residents using the public health care available to them, you could be lead to believe that there is a fairly even split between the two as far as who burdens the system more. However, due to the fact that there are much more native than Foreign-born residents in the Detroit area, the public healthcare burden rests overwhelmingly on the native-born, with over 90% of public healthcare customers being non-immigrants.

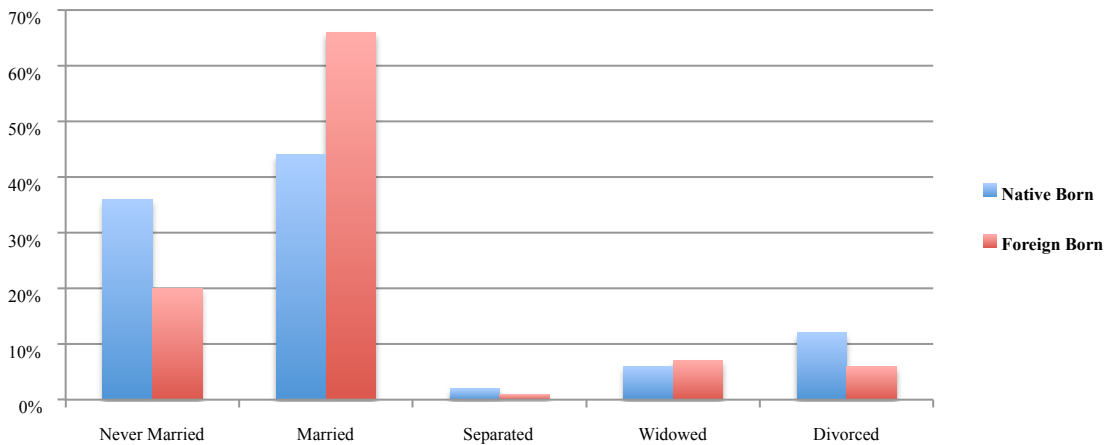
Figure 10. **Residents With Public Health Insurance**



Family and Language

Over 70% of immigrant families live in a married-couple family household. This includes elderly residents who live with a married child, or adult children who live with married parents. Immigrants are much more likely to be married than native-born residents and half as likely to be divorced (See Figure 11).

Figure 11. **Marital Status of Foreign and Native-Born Residents**



The average household size for Metro Detroit’s Foreign-born is 2.9 people, while the average family size is 3.45. This table shows the difference between the continents.

	Europe	Latin America	Asia	Africa	Oceania	Other North America
Avg. Household size	2.5	3.6	3.3	3.0	2.9	2.1
Avg. Family size	3.1	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.2	2.9

Nearly a quarter of Foreign-born households speak only English at home, which can likely be attributed to those who arrived from English-speaking countries (such as England, Canada, Australia, etc.), as well as those who have been in the country so long that they no longer practice their mother tongue. Therefore, nearly 77 percent of all Foreign-born households have at least one member who speaks another language. That is enough to qualify as a “bi-lingual” household. Of those who live in a bi-lingual household, 53% feel that they speak English very well, and 47% feel that they speak English less than very well. The accuracy of this assessment cannot be judged as this is a truly subjective response from the person completing the questionnaire.

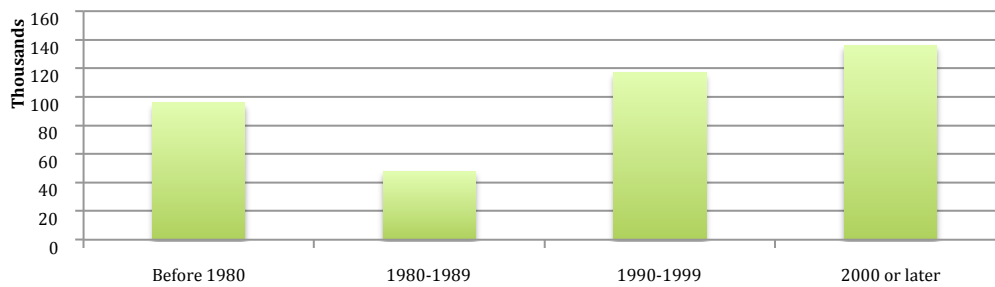
This following table shows the difference in perceived language ability based on region of origin of the respondents.

	Europe	Latin America	Asia	Africa	Oceania	Other North America
English only	26%	13%	8%	26%	47%	85%
Language other than English	74%	87%	92%	74%	53%	15%
English Language ability of those who speak a language other than English:						
Less than "very well"	47%	64%	48%	34%	0%	16%
Well	53%	36%	52%	66%	100%	84%

Arrival to the United States

The majority of Metropolitan Detroit immigrants arrived in the United States between 1990 and today. The Census breaks up the data into four time periods: pre-1980s, the 1980s, the 1990s, and post-2000.

Figure 12. Foreign-born Year of Entry to the United States



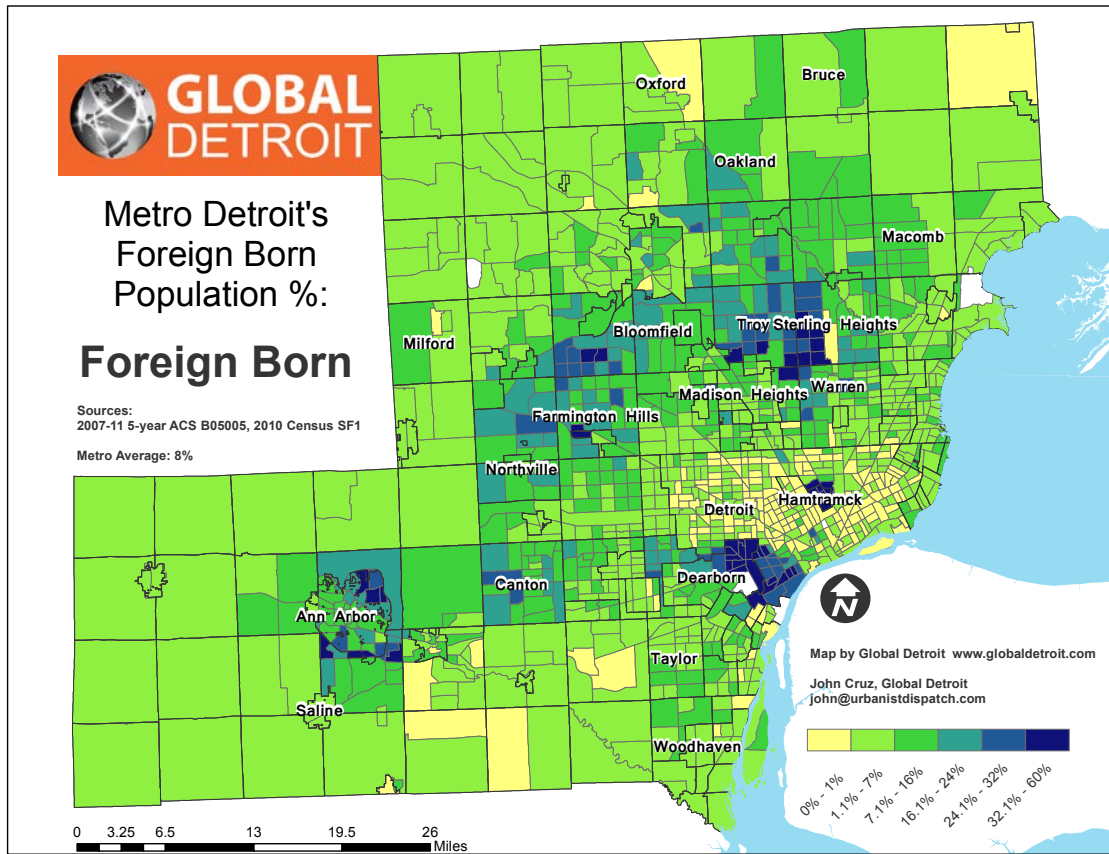
Where Metro Detroit’s Foreign-born residents live?

Detroit’s Foreign-born residents are spread across the four county area in urban, suburban, and rural areas. The heaviest clustering can be found in very specific areas, such as southwest Detroit, Hamtramck (and surrounding Detroit census tracts), Ann Arbor, Troy, West Bloomfield, Sterling Heights, Canton, Novi, Dearborn, and Farmington Hills. These communities tend to contain both the highest numbers and highest percentages of immigrants.

The concentration of immigrants varies a great deal across the metropolitan Detroit landscape. An analysis at the census tract level allows us to clearly see the patterns of settlement.

Map 1 shows the share of Foreign-born population within each census tract across the four counties.

Map 1. Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit



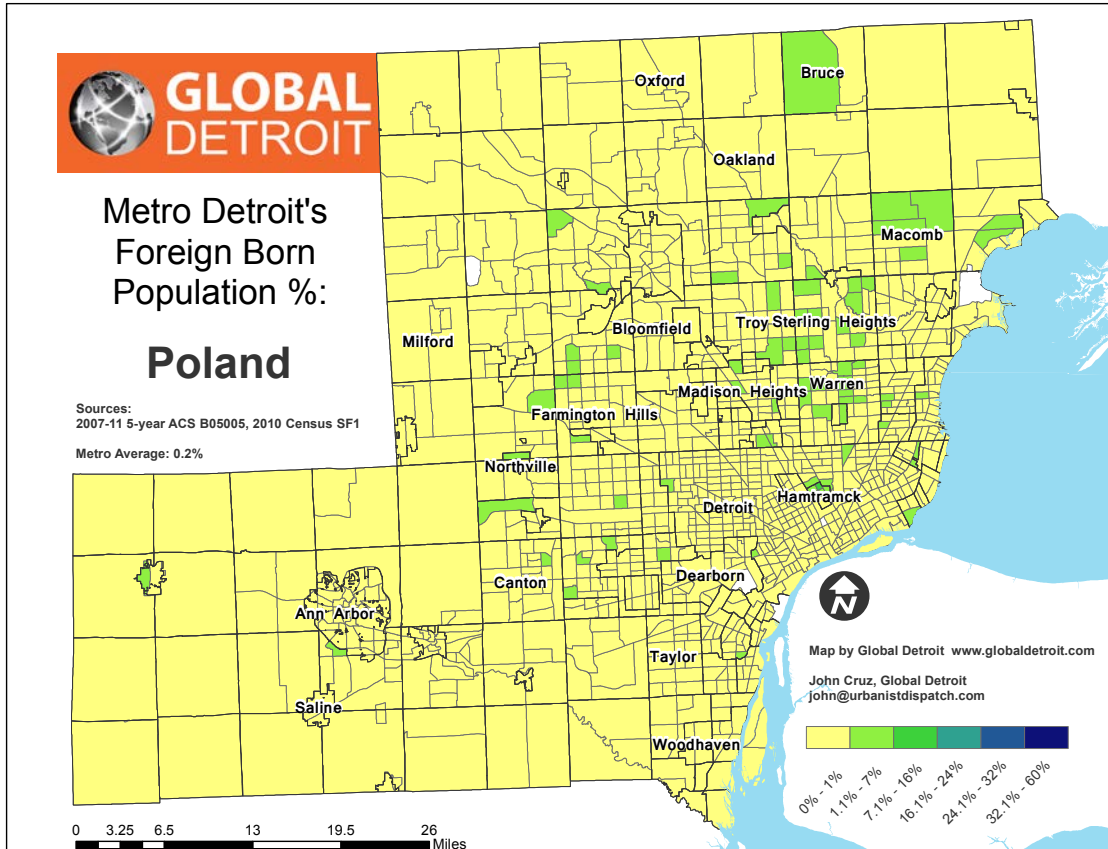
The most obvious feature, aside from the clustering, is the lack of immigrants within the city of Detroit. The majority of Detroit’s census tracts contain less than 2% of Foreign-born residents. While the Detroit area has many healthy immigrant communities, the city itself has three distinct areas where immigrants reside: southwest Detroit’s predominantly Latin-American neighborhood, Southwest Detroit’s Middle Eastern neighborhoods which border Dearborn, and the Middle Eastern and Bangladeshi neighborhoods which are to the east of Hamtramck. We also can see small pockets of heavy immigrant settlement in midtown Detroit, home of Wayne State University, and an area on the north side of the city near Seven Mile Road and Woodward, which has long been home to Chaldeans and others from immigrants from the Middle East.

When talking about overall population patterns, demographers have often compared Detroit to a doughnut, where the population has left the core and moved to the suburbs. This pattern has begun to shift somewhat with the renewed development along the Woodward Corridor and Downtown. In the case of immigrant settlement, we do not see an immigration doughnut, but more of an “immigrant belt” that starts in Ann Arbor and heads north and east to Sterling Heights, with pockets in southwest Detroit and Hamtramck

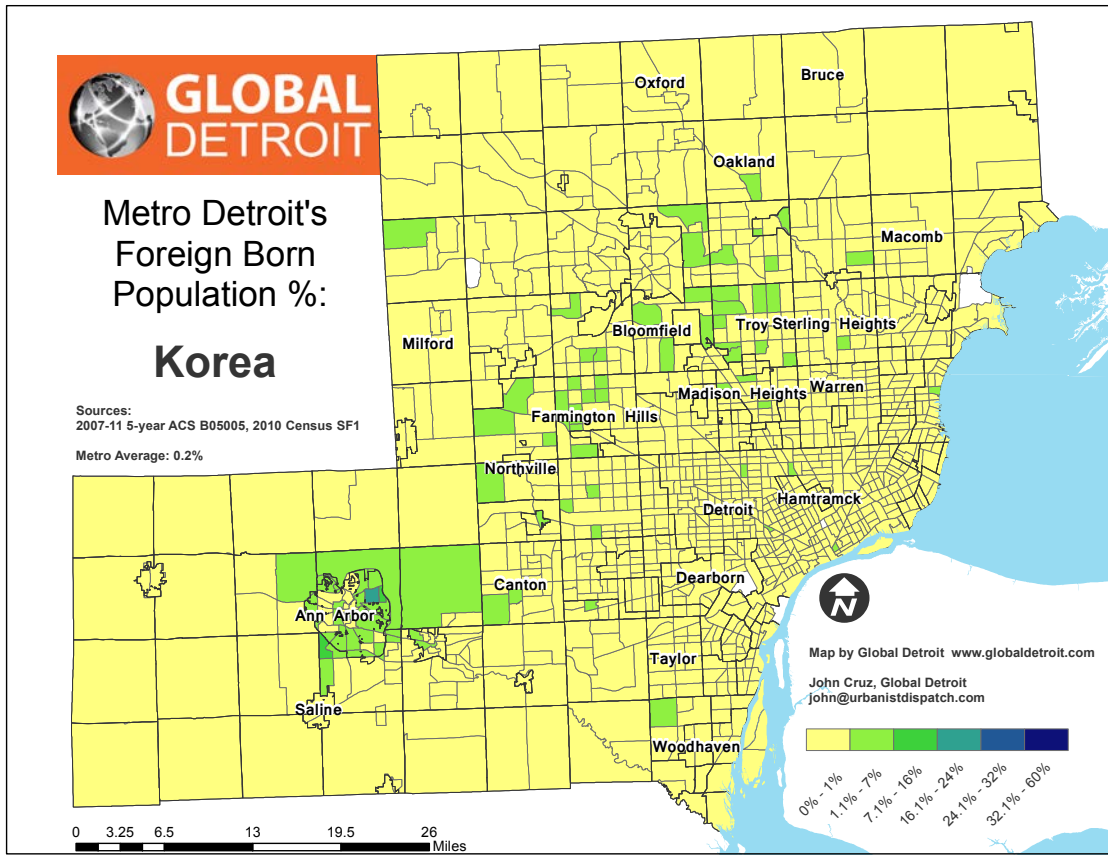
Top 10 Immigrant Groups by Country of Birth

The following set of maps illustrates the residential patterns of the 10 largest immigrant groups in ascending order.

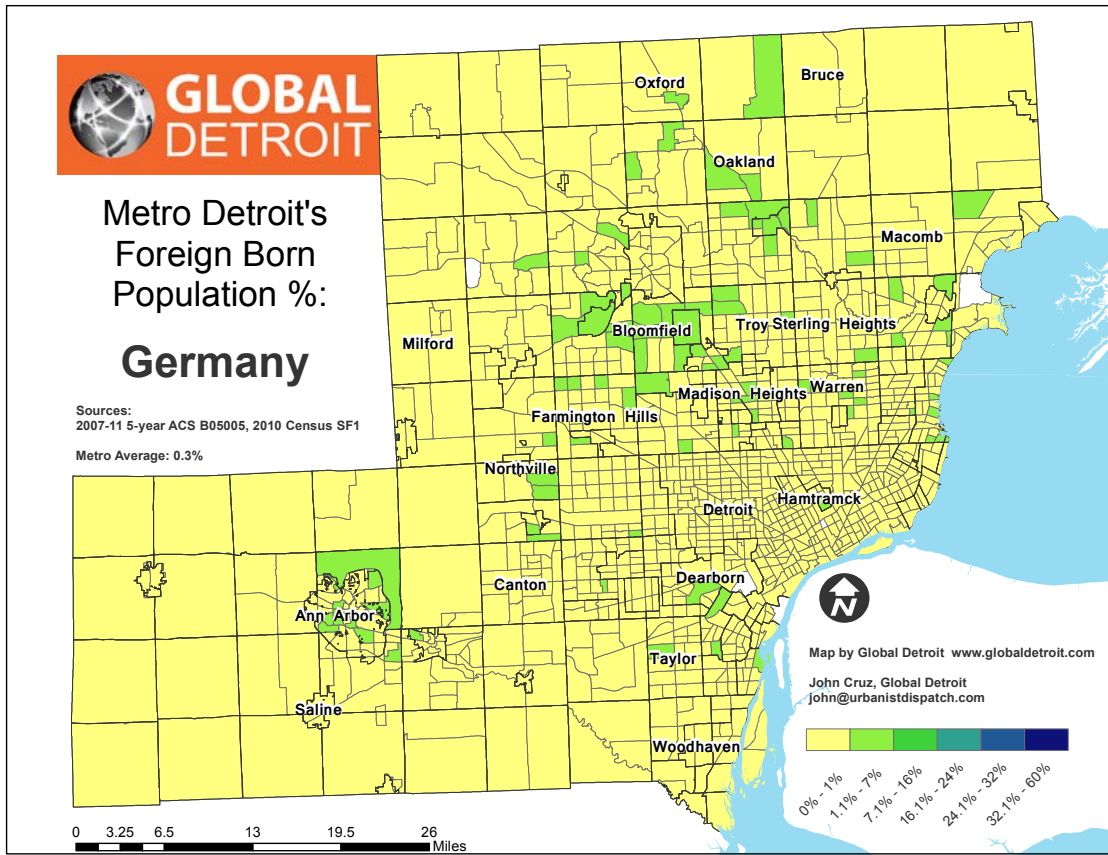
Map 2. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Poland**
With approximately 11,000 people, they are Metro Detroit's 10th most populous immigrant group.



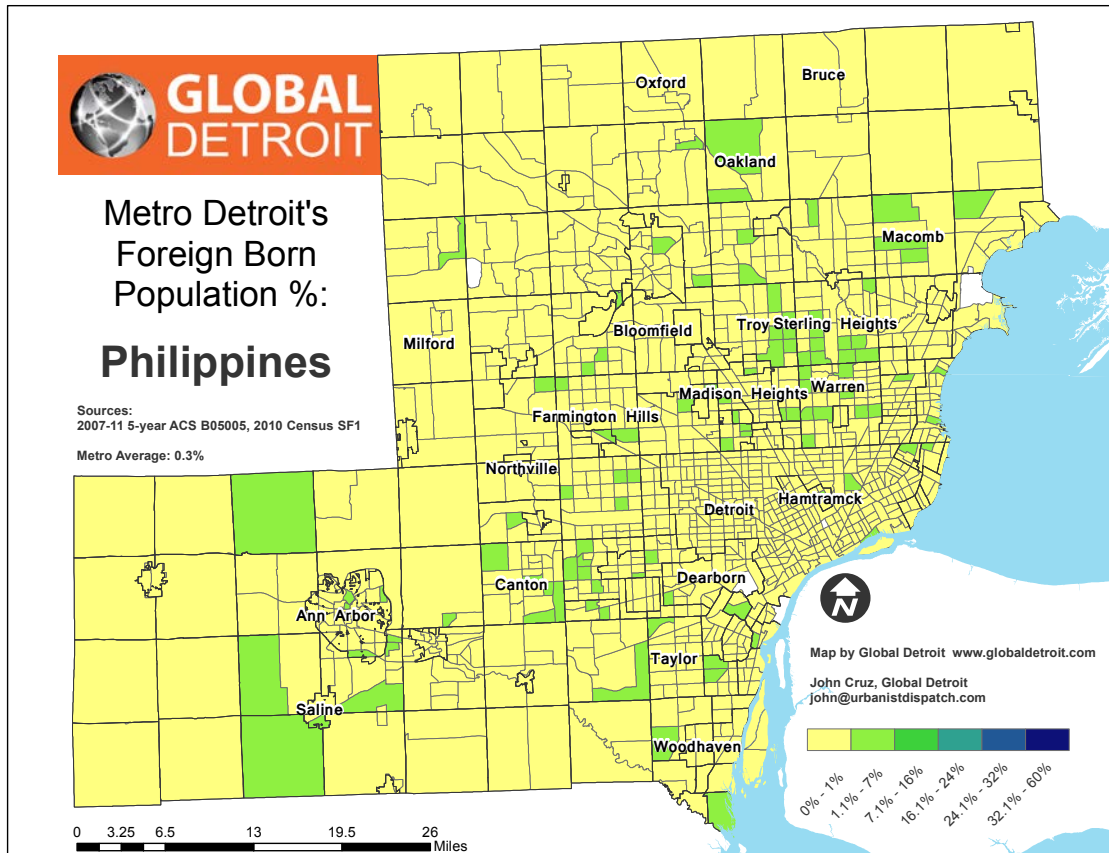
Map 3. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Korea**
With approximately 11,200 people, they are Metro Detroit's 9th most populous immigrant group.



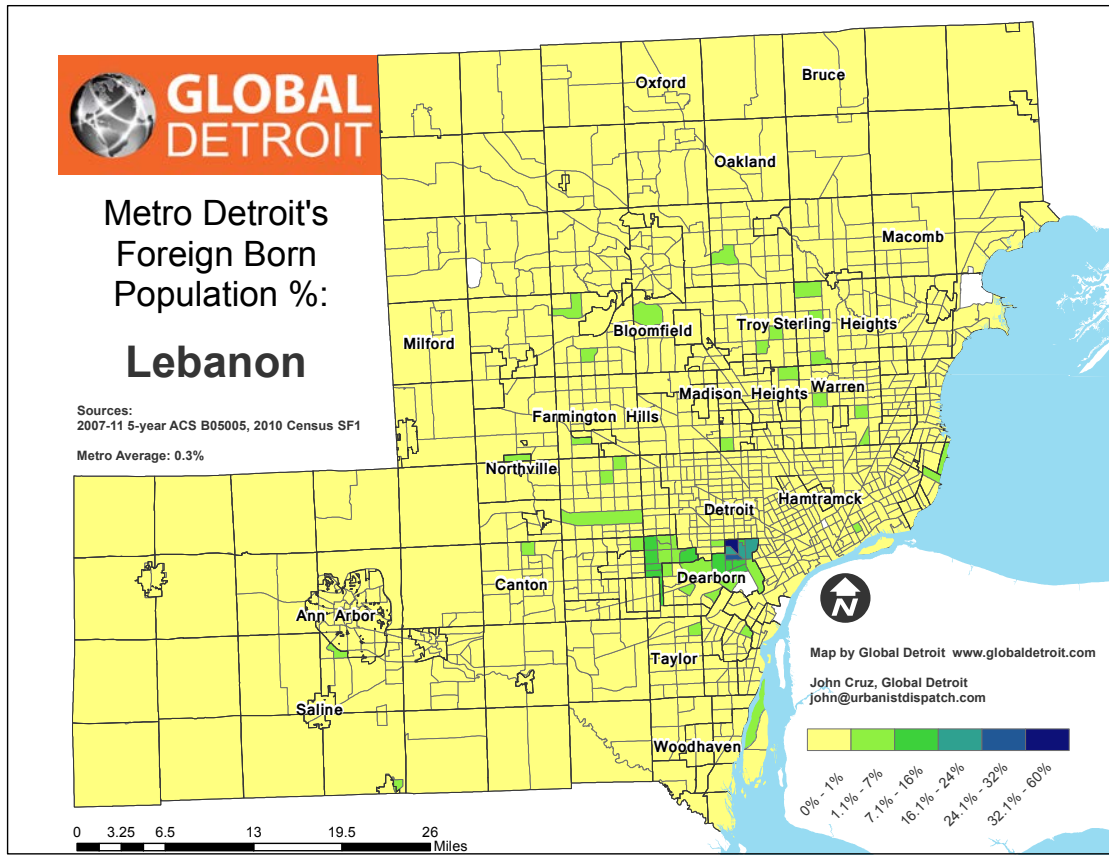
Map 4. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Germany**
With approximately 11,600 people, they are Metro Detroit's 8th most populous immigrant group.



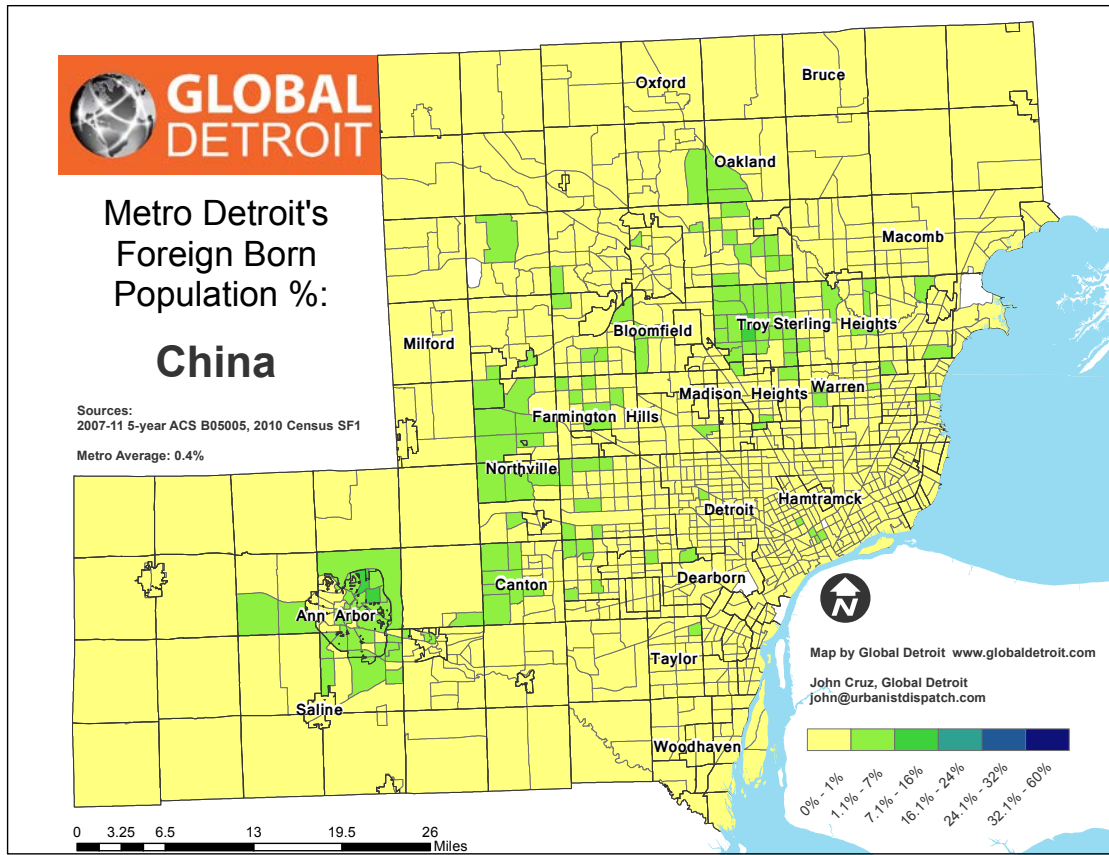
Map 5. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in The Philippines**
With approximately 12,700 people, they are Metro Detroit's 7th most populous immigrant group.



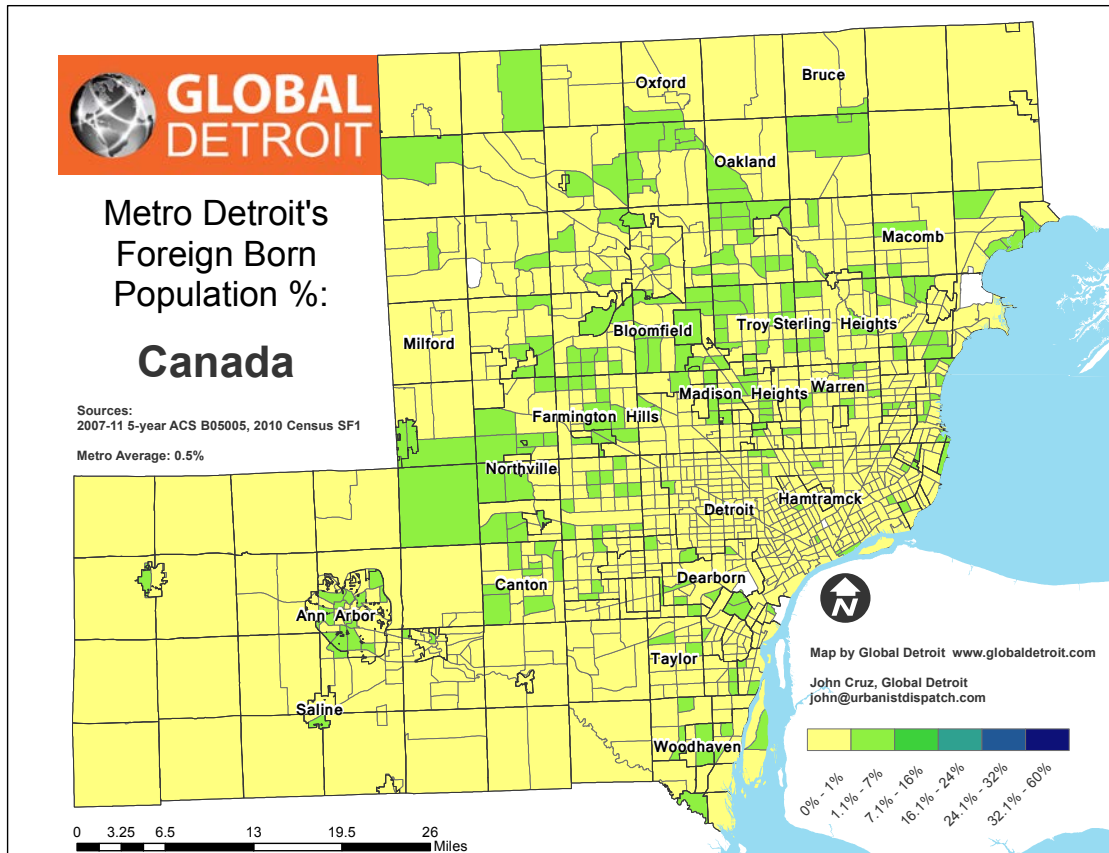
Map 6. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Lebanon**
With approximately 17,800 people, they are Metro Detroit's 6th most populous immigrant group.



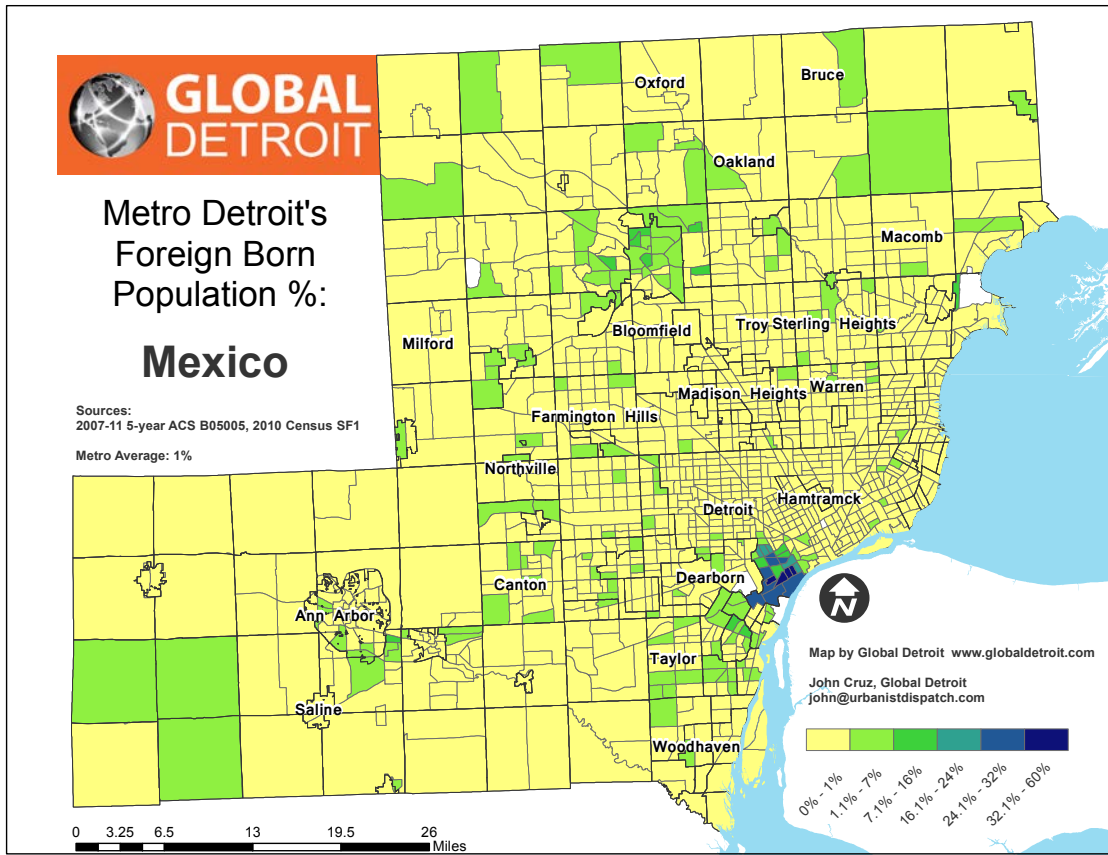
Map 7. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in China**
With approximately 18,000 people, they are Metro Detroit's 5th most populous immigrant group.



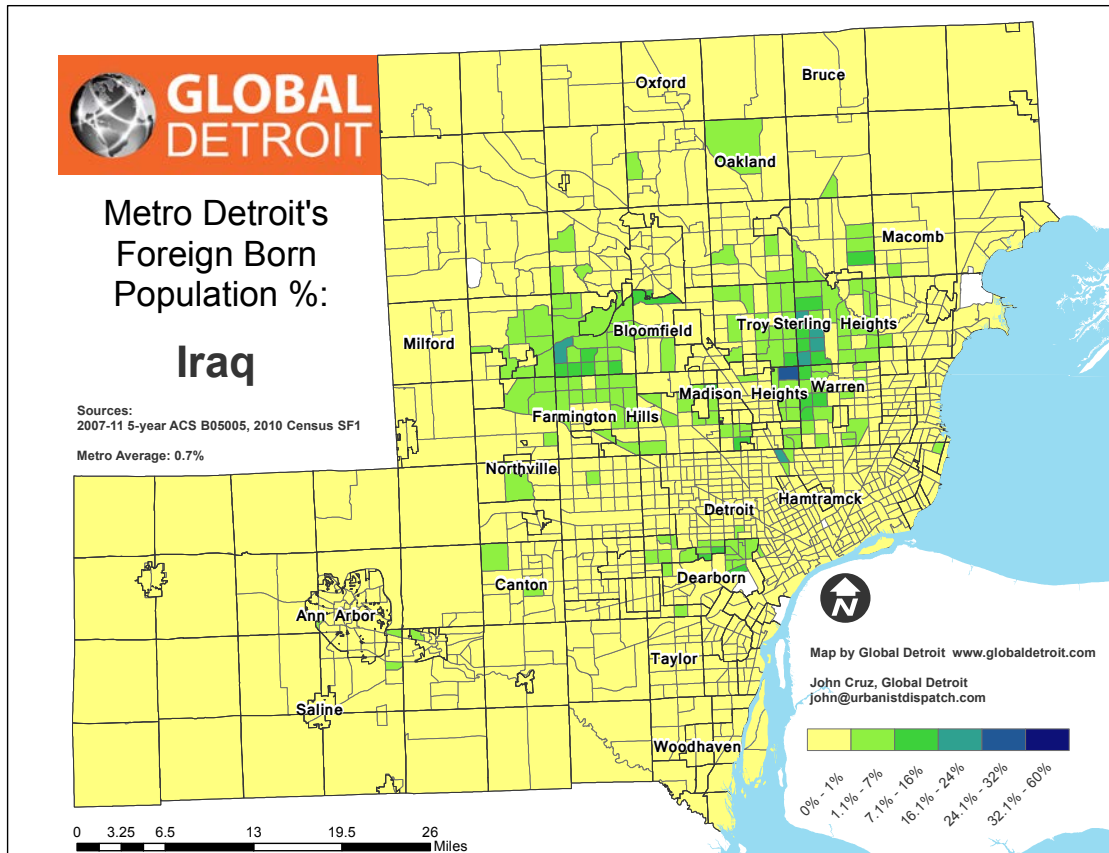
Map 8. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Canada**
With approximately 24,300 people, they are Metro Detroit's 4th most populous immigrant group.



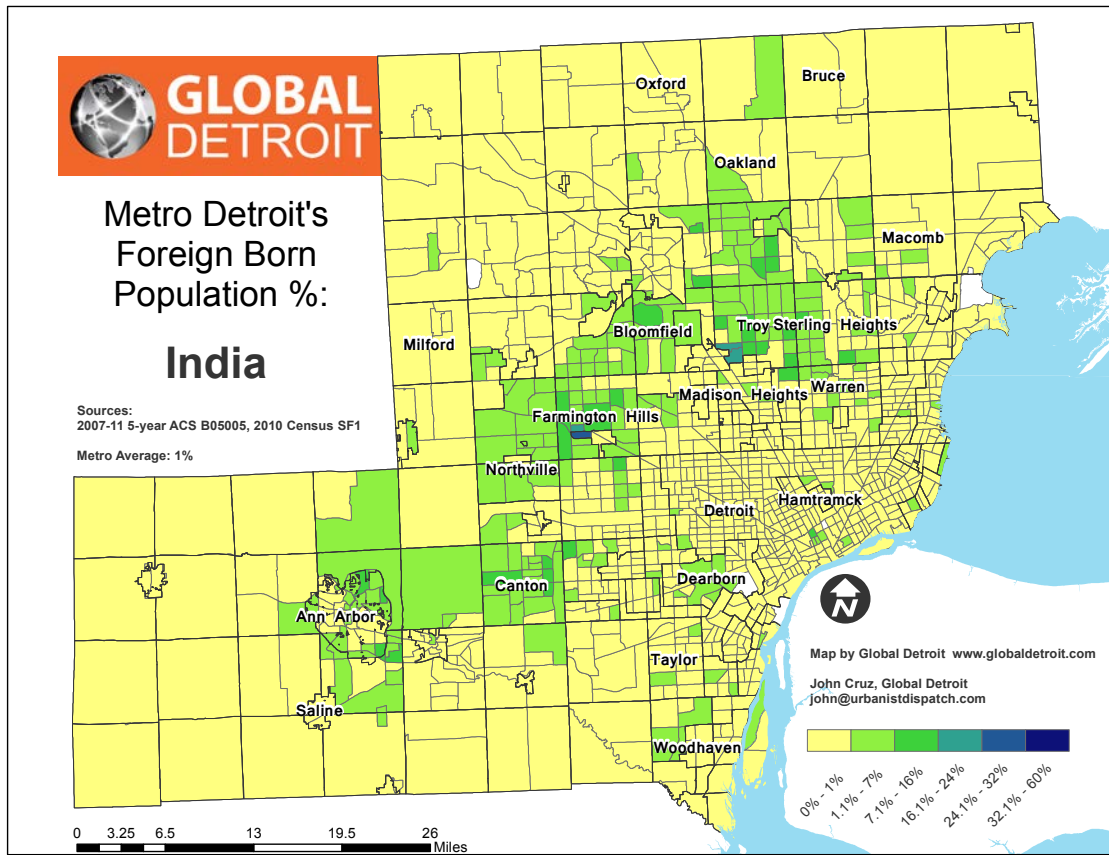
Map 9. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Mexico**
With approximately 34,400 people, they are Metro Detroit's 3rd most populous immigrant group.



Map 10. **Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in Iraq**
With approximately 36,000 people, they are Metro Detroit's 2nd most populous immigrant group.



Map 11. Percentage of Foreign-born Residents in Metro Detroit who were born in India
With approximately 41,000 people, they are Metro Detroit's most populous immigrant group.



Conclusion

The robust community of some 400,000 Foreign-born residents is comprised of representatives from all over the globe who have chosen to make the Detroit region their home. They are your friends and neighbors, your co-workers and the parents you sit next to at piano recitals and high school graduation ceremonies. They not only bring connections to countries throughout the world, they possess a wide variety of skills and apply them across all occupations and industries. In fact, immigrants have created many of the businesses that made our region an economic powerhouse during the last century, and are continuing to create the businesses that will build our future. The influence that immigrants exert in this region is demonstrated by the fact that if you do not have a parent or grandparent who came to this area to seek a better life, you almost certainly know someone who does. The Foreign-born, while comprising only eight percent of the region's population, exert an influence well beyond their numbers.

Metro Detroit has an incredibly diverse immigrant population. Not only are many corners of the globe represented, but also they are represented in an impressive breadth. The top 10 countries of Foreign-born origin represent 55 percent of the total, while the top 20 countries account for 76 percent. This broad base of diverse customs, foods and opinions contributes a wealth of new ideas to Detroit, which help to strengthen our economy and communities.

Metro Detroit is home to immigrant populations in urban, suburban, exurban, and rural areas. From the Latin American immigrants in southwest Washtenaw County to the Asian immigrants in Northern Macomb and all the communities in between, the Foreign-born population comes in all varieties and lives in all communities. Immigrant communities, while concentrated in certain respects, still tend to spread, like the population as a whole, widely throughout the region. While many people picture ethnic enclaves such as "Little Italy" in New York or San Francisco's "Chinatown," Detroit, with few exceptions, tends to reflect the aspect of the "melting pot." The Detroit area certainly has areas that contain a high number of Foreign-born residents, such as Dearborn and Southwest Detroit, where the culture is infused throughout the community. However, in most areas our immigrants tend to be invisible as they blend in with native-born Michiganders.

Our immigrant community is a tremendous economic and social asset as we strive to make Metro Detroit and Michigan more competitive. While we may have a lower Foreign-born population share than other metropolitan areas in the Great Lakes region, we are still talking about 400,000 residents who have chosen this area to live, raise families and build an economic future. This is an extremely potent base to build upon for our future.