

Ethnic diversity and immigration

Overview

Look down the street in most neighbourhoods in Canada and you might see people from all over the world. You may share a class or an office with someone from South America, play sports with someone from Africa, Europe or Asia, or you and your family may be one of the 6.2 million foreign-born people who call Canada home.

On the 2006 Census, people reported more than 200 different ethnic origins. The percentage who reported having more than one ethnic origin rose to 41%, up from 36% a decade earlier in 1996.

The ethnic origins of Canada's population reflect immigration patterns. However, the concept of ethnic origin can also be fluid: how individuals perceive their roots can change with the amount of time spent in Canada, awareness of their family background, or the social context at the time of the census.

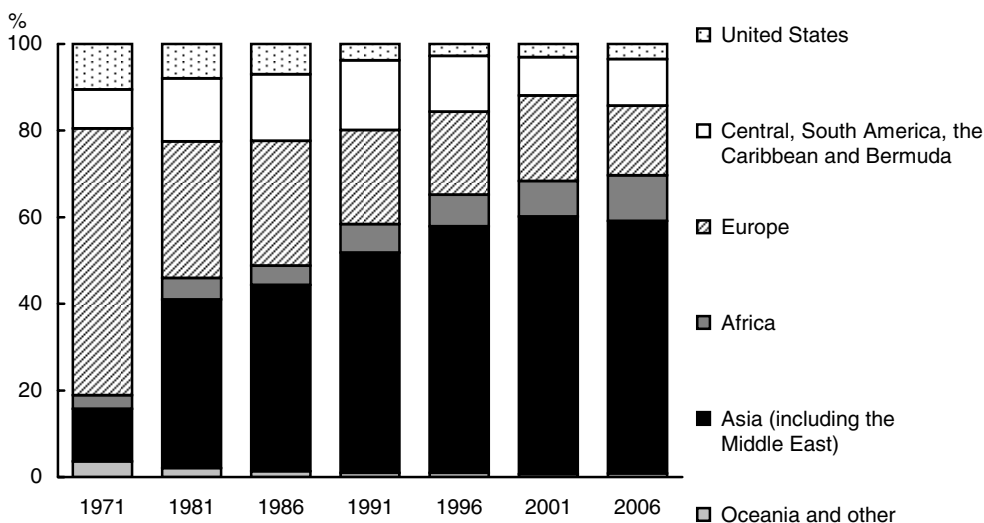
As well, people may marry or form unions with people from other ethnic groups, which increases the complexity of gathering ethnic data.

Canadian ethnicity

On the 1996 Census form, 'Canadian' was added to the list of examples of ethnic origins for the first time. By 2006, one out of three—10.1 million people—reported Canadian as either their only ethnic origin or in combination with another ethnic origin. The majority (91%) of the population aged 15 and older who reported a Canadian origin were born in Canada and had both parents born inside Canada.

After Canadian, the ethnic origins that people most frequently reported were English, Irish, French, Scottish, German, Italian, Chinese, North American Indian, Ukrainian and Dutch.

Chart 13.1
Recent immigrants to Canada, by region of origin



Notes: 'Recent immigrants' refers to landed immigrants who arrived in Canada within five years prior to a given census. 'Other' includes Greenland, St Pierre and Miquelon, the category 'other country', as well as a small number of immigrants born in Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 1971 to 2006.

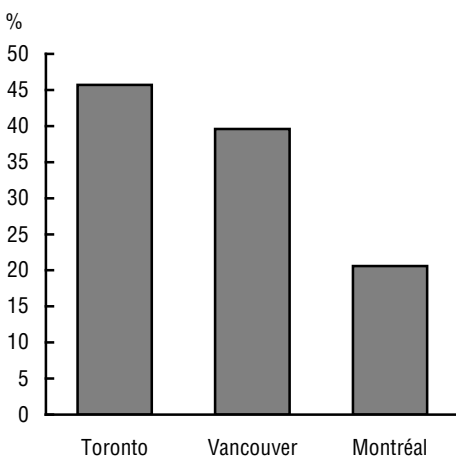
In 2006, 20% of Canada's population was foreign-born, the highest proportion since 1931. Canada's proportion was lower than Australia, at 22%, but higher than the United States, at 13%. In the city of Toronto, one in two residents was born outside Canada. In the city of Montréal, one in three was foreign-born. In Richmond, British Columbia, it was three out of five residents.

Immigrants and settlement

The 2006 Census reported that 1.1 million recent immigrants came to Canada from January 1, 2001 to May 16, 2006. Canada's largest group of recent immigrants were from Asia (including the Middle East), accounting for 58% of immigrants in 2006. Europe, in second place, accounted for 16%, compared with 61% in the 1971 Census. Central and South America and the Caribbean accounted for 11%, while 11% came from Africa.

At the turn of the 20th century, many immigrants, particularly Europeans, came to Canada for good farmland. Today's immigrants tend to move to the large cities.

Chart 13.2
Foreign-born population, selected CMAs, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11-008-XIE.

Table 13.a
Distribution of immigrants in selected CMAs, 2006

	Total population	Total immigrant population ¹	Recent immigrants ²
	%		
Montréal	11.5	12.0	14.9
Toronto	16.2	37.5	40.4
Vancouver	6.7	13.4	13.7

1. Defined in the 2006 Census as people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada.
2. Immigrants who came to Canada between January 1, 2001 and May 16, 2006.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population 2006.

Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal account for 34% of Canada's total population, but these three census metropolitan areas (CMAs) attracted 69% of all recent immigrants to Canada. Calgary is home to 5% of recent arrivals; 3% call Ottawa–Gatineau home; and 3% chose Edmonton.

The reasons why newcomers choose to settle in Canada's three largest CMAs varies, according to the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC). The most cited reason for settling in Toronto, Montréal or Vancouver is to join social support networks of family and friends. Among newcomers in Toronto, the second-most cited reason is the job prospects. Among newcomers in Montréal, it is language, while those who settle in Vancouver cite the climate.

Some immigrants do move to smaller centres. After their first year of permanent residence, immigrants who settle in small towns or in rural communities earned a 4% higher average income in 2005 than Canadian-born residents in the same areas. Immigrants who settled in rural areas or small towns had a median income of \$19,500, compared with \$16,800 for those in larger urban areas.

In the LSIC, recent immigrants were asked about the most important reason for settling permanently in Canada. The most prevalent

responses were the quality of life (32%), the desire to be close to family and friends (20%), the future prospects for their family in Canada (18%) and the peaceful nature of the country (9%).

Canada's generational makeup

In the 2006 Census, 61% of respondents aged 15 and older were at least third-generation Canadian; that is, they were born in Canada and both their parents were also born in Canada.

Another 16% of the population was second generation; that is, one or both of their parents was born in another country. The largest proportion, 54%, report European origins, either alone or in combination with other origins. Large numbers of immigrants arrived in Canada from European countries in the early part of the 20th century.

The most commonly reported European origins are German (13%), Italian (11%), Dutch (6%) and Ukrainian (5%). Another 41% of second-generation Canadians report

origins in the British Isles (Cornish, English, Irish, Manx, Scottish, Welsh and others.)

First-generation people accounted for 24% of Canada's population aged 15 and older in the 2006 Census. First generation means they were born in another country. The countries reflect Canada's most recent source countries for immigrants. In this group, 24% report East Asian or Southeast Asian origins, either alone or in combination with another origin.

People of European origins make up slightly over one-third (34%) of the first generation population. The leading groups are Italian, comprising 6.0% of all the first generation population, followed by German (5.8%), Polish (3.5%) and Portuguese (3.2%).

An additional 14% of the first generation aged 15 and over report British Isles origins, either alone or with other origins.

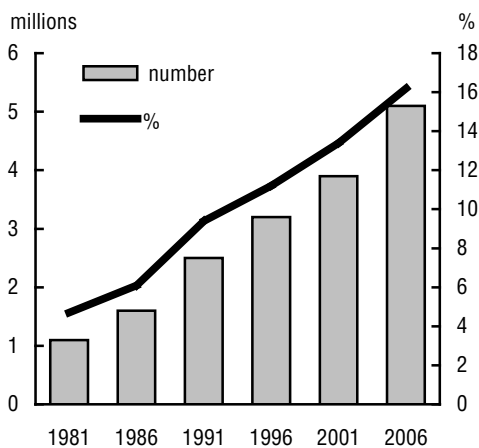
Mixed unions on the rise

Mixed unions made up 3.9% of all unions in Canada in 2006, up from 3.1% in 2001 and 2.6% in 1991. Among all couples, 3.3% were people in unions involving a visible minority person and a non-visible minority person. In contrast, mixed unions involving couples of two different visible minority groups accounted for 0.6% of all couples in Canada in 2006.

The 2006 Census recorded a 33% rise since 2001 in the number of mixed unions (marriage or common-law) involving a visible minority person with either a non-visible minority person or a person of a different visible minority. This was more than five times the increase of 6% for all couples.

The Japanese had the highest proportion of mixed couples. There were 29,700 couples involving at least one Japanese person in the 2006 Census, 75% of these pairings included a non-Japanese partner. The South Asian and Chinese populations were least likely to be involved in a mixed union—13% of all South Asian couples and 17% of all Chinese couples.

Chart 13.3
Number and share of visible minority people



Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 1981 to 2006.

Meeting immigrants' expectations

Each year, some 220,000 people take a huge step and immigrate to Canada. They set down roots, often learning a new language or beginning a new career.

Most are happy with their decision. A survey that studies immigrants aged 15 and older during their first years in Canada found that 84% are positive about their decision to immigrate after four years of living here.

Two-thirds say life here has lived up to their expectations. Those who came as refugees or family-class immigrants are more likely than economic immigrants to be content. One in three of family-class immigrants say their expectations of life in Canada have been consistently exceeded, compared with one in six economic immigrants.

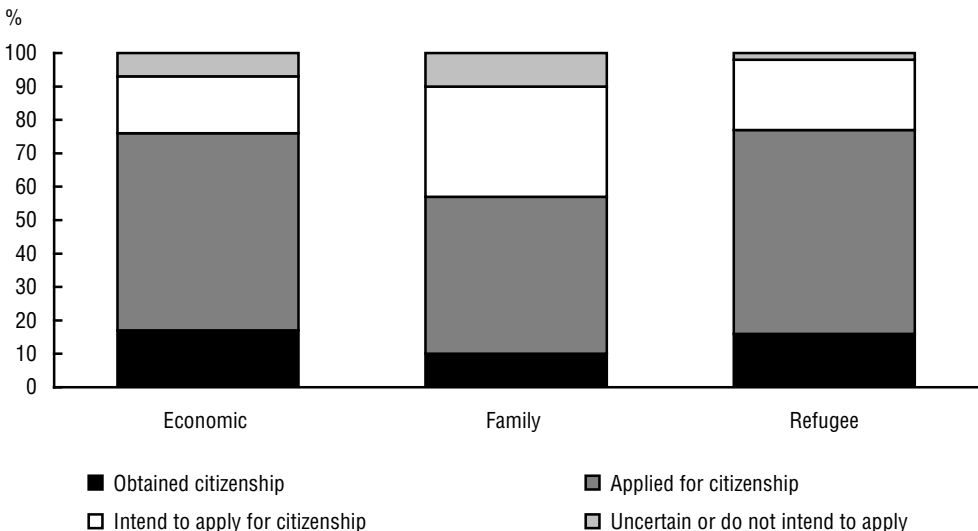
The survey also asked immigrants to identify the greatest difficulties encountered here. Two are cited more than any other: 46% say "finding an adequate job" while 26% say "learning French or English."

Six months after landing, the vast majority (91%) intended to settle here permanently and become citizens. Four years later, 15% of the newcomers had done just that.

According to the 2006 Census, 85% of Canada's foreign-born who were eligible had become Canadian citizens, a slight increase from 84% in 2001. Three percent of the population in 2006 had Canadian citizenship and citizenship in at least one other country. Eighty percent of those who had multiple citizenships were foreign-born. The rest of the multiple citizenship holders (20%) were Canadians by birth who also reported citizenship in another country.

The longer immigrants reside in Canada, the more likely they are to hold Canadian citizenship. Of those who came to Canada before 1961, 94% have Canadian citizenship. Among those who arrived during the 1960s and 1970s, 89% have become citizens. Eighty-four percent of those who arrived in the 1990s are now citizens.

Chart 13.4
Citizenship status of new immigrants four years after arrival in Canada, 2005



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 11-008-XIE.

Educated immigrants face a paradox

Canada has an aging workforce and a low fertility rate, so the government has increasingly turned to highly-educated immigrants to ensure that skilled workers are available. However, these immigrants often encounter a paradox: they are recruited because of their knowledge, but after arriving in Canada, many need to meet re-accreditation requirements and this might be a barrier to fully using their skills.

One in three people aged 25 to 54 who immigrated here from 2001 to 2006 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared with one in six Canadian-born people in the same age group. One in five recent immigrants had a graduate degree, compared with one in twenty Canadians.

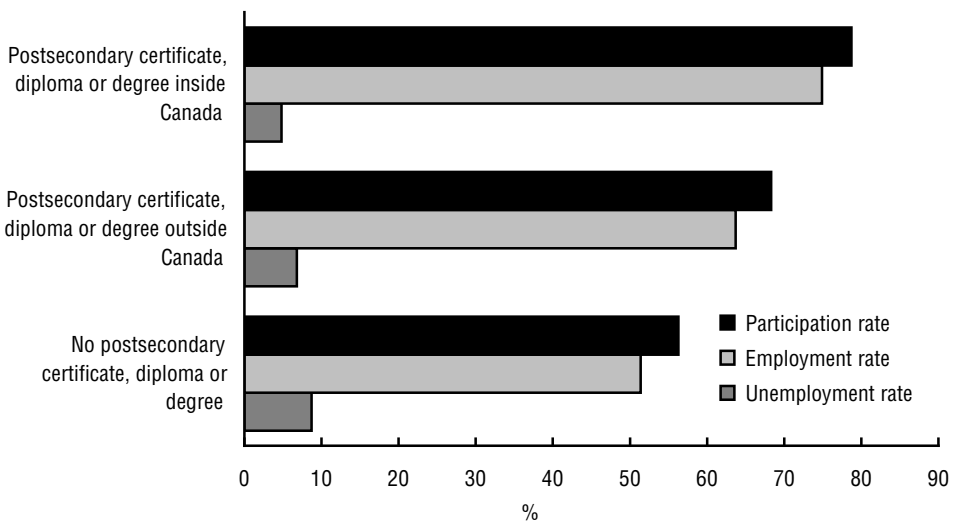
Immigrant engineers are an example of the paradox, since engineering was the most popular field of study among recent degree-holding immigrants: 25% in 2006, compared

with 6% of Canadian-born degree holders. In a study of 34,000 foreign-trained engineers, 26% of those aged 32 to 54 worked here in engineering occupations in 2001, compared with 41% of Canadian-born engineers.

Underemployment—when people cannot find a job in their field—is most common among foreign-trained immigrants born in Southeast Asia and East Asia. Those born in European countries (other than Eastern Europe) or in South Asian countries are the most likely to find work in Canada as engineers.

Important characteristics for professionals seeking Canadian re-accreditation are the educational system in the source country, the length of schooling, the type of education (including the content of professional degrees and the requirements for specialized degrees), as well as the use of French or English in the educational system or other sectors of the economy.

Chart 13.5
Employment rate of immigrants, by highest certificate, diploma or degree, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 97-560-XIE.

Table 13.1 Population, by selected ethnic origins, 2006

	Total responses	Single responses ¹ number	Multiple responses ²
Total population	31,241,030	18,319,580	12,921,445
Canadian	10,066,290	5,748,725	4,317,570
English	6,570,015	1,367,125	5,202,890
French	4,941,210	1,230,535	3,710,675
Scottish	4,719,850	568,515	4,151,340
Irish	4,354,155	491,030	3,863,125
German	3,179,425	670,640	2,508,785
Italian	1,445,335	741,045	704,285
Chinese	1,346,510	1,135,365	211,145
North American Indian	1,253,615	512,150	741,470
Ukrainian	1,209,085	300,590	908,495
Dutch (Netherlands)	1,035,965	303,400	732,560
Polish	984,565	269,375	715,190
East Indian	962,665	780,175	182,495
Russian	500,600	98,245	402,355
Welsh	440,965	27,115	413,855
Filipino	436,190	321,390	114,800
Norwegian	432,515	44,790	387,725
Portuguese	410,850	262,230	148,625
Métis	409,065	77,295	331,770
British Isles, n.i.e. ³	403,915	94,145	309,770
Swedish	334,765	28,445	306,325
Spanish	325,730	67,475	258,255
American	316,350	28,785	287,565
Hungarian (Magyar)	315,510	88,685	226,820
Jewish	315,120	134,045	181,070
Greek	242,685	145,250	97,435
Jamaican	231,110	134,320	96,785
Danish	200,035	33,770	166,265
Austrian	194,255	27,060	167,195

1. Single ethnic origin response: Occurs when a respondent provides one ethnic origin only.

2. Multiple ethnic response: Occurs when a respondent provides two or more ethnic origins.

3. The abbreviation 'n.i.e.' means 'not included elsewhere'.

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 13.2 Visible minority population, by province and territory, 2006

	Canada	Newfoundland and Labrador	Prince Edward Island	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Quebec	Ontario
	number						
Total population	31,241,030	500,605	134,205	903,090	719,650	7,435,900	12,028,895
Total visible minority population	5,068,095	5,720	1,825	37,685	13,345	654,350	2,745,205
Chinese	1,216,565	1,325	255	4,300	2,445	79,825	576,980
South Asian	1,262,865	1,590	135	3,810	1,960	72,850	794,170
Black	783,795	900	645	19,225	4,455	188,070	473,765
Filipino	410,700	305	30	700	530	24,200	203,220
Latin American	304,245	485	215	950	715	89,510	147,135
Southeast Asian	239,935	120	30	815	440	50,460	110,045
Arab	265,550	545	265	4,505	840	109,020	111,405
West Asian	156,695	115	30	780	550	16,115	96,615
Korean	141,890	60	70	800	620	5,310	69,540
Japanese	81,300	140	65	505	165	3,540	28,080
Visible minority, n.i.e. ¹	71,420	75	65	255	155	4,155	56,845
Multiple visible minority	133,120	60	25	1,030	460	11,310	77,405
Not a visible minority	26,172,940	494,890	132,375	865,405	706,305	6,781,550	9,283,690
	Manitoba	Saskatch- ewan	Alberta	British Columbia	Yukon	Northwest Territories	Nunavut
	number						
Total population	1,133,515	953,850	3,256,355	4,074,380	30,195	41,055	29,325
Total visible minority population	109,100	33,895	454,200	1,008,855	1,220	2,265	420
Chinese	13,705	9,505	120,270	407,225	320	315	75
South Asian	16,565	5,130	103,885	262,290	195	210	85
Black	15,660	5,090	47,075	28,315	125	375	100
Filipino	37,785	3,770	51,090	88,075	210	690	80
Latin American	6,275	2,520	27,265	28,960	100	85	20
Southeast Asian	5,670	2,555	28,605	40,690	145	355	10
Arab	2,320	1,710	26,180	8,635	20	90	15
West Asian	1,960	1,020	9,655	29,810	0	40	0
Korean	2,190	735	12,045	50,490	10	15	10
Japanese	2,010	645	11,030	35,060	40	15	10
Visible minority, n.i.e. ¹	1,690	405	3,850	3,880	10	30	10
Multiple visible minority	3,265	810	13,250	25,415	35	40	15
Not a visible minority	1,024,415	919,950	2,802,155	3,065,525	28,975	38,790	28,905

1. The abbreviation 'n.i.e.' means 'not included elsewhere.'

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 13.3 Visible minority population, by selected visible minority groups and census metropolitan areas, 2006

	Total population	Visible minority population	South Asian	Chinese	Black	Filipino	Latin American	Arab	Southeast Asian
	number								
St. John's	179,270	3,460	890	990	620	155	320	190	55
Halifax	369,455	27,645	2,900	3,100	13,270	530	690	3,840	655
Moncton	124,055	2,425	350	295	1,035	100	95	165	65
Saint John	120,875	3,805	485	975	1,250	205	210	125	60
Saguenay	149,600	1,280	45	295	330	50	280	195	55
Québec	704,185	16,355	535	1,855	5,080	120	3,150	2,800	1,615
Sherbrooke	183,635	7,000	340	590	1,830	35	2,060	940	410
Trois-Rivières	138,555	2,270	50	210	625	15	540	535	225
Montréal	3,588,520	590,380	70,615	72,010	169,065	23,510	75,400	98,880	44,965
Ottawa-Gatineau	1,117,120	179,295	27,130	32,445	45,060	7,330	10,630	28,195	11,670
Kingston	148,475	8,600	1,785	2,470	1,900	485	1,050	370	330
Peterborough	115,140	3,095	665	730	575	110	255	80	180
Oshawa	328,070	33,700	6,195	3,690	12,605	2,155	1,665	1,135	670
Toronto	5,072,075	2,174,065	684,070	486,325	352,220	171,985	99,290	53,430	70,215
Hamilton	683,450	84,295	19,970	11,660	16,480	4,880	6,760	6,500	6,805
St. Catharines– Niagara	385,035	25,470	3,595	3,600	5,030	2,130	4,205	1,480	2,090
Kitchener	446,495	61,455	16,240	9,150	9,450	1,850	6,805	3,175	6,150
Brantford	122,830	6,715	1,785	695	1,700	655	390	240	580
Guelph	126,085	16,025	3,875	3,110	1,600	1,965	1,070	510	1,600
London	452,575	50,300	6,415	6,545	8,255	1,990	7,920	7,800	4,050
Windsor	320,730	51,200	10,265	7,825	9,490	3,145	2,905	9,975	2,945
Barrie	175,335	10,130	1,900	1,180	2,310	875	1,165	300	530
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	156,400	3,280	580	620	1,100	150	180	115	145
Thunder Bay	121,050	3,275	390	925	450	250	170	50	370
Winnipeg	686,040	102,940	15,290	12,810	14,470	36,935	5,480	2,125	5,340
Regina	192,435	12,605	1,975	3,335	2,170	1,230	955	475	1,260
Saskatoon	230,850	14,870	2,230	4,245	1,900	1,920	1,050	940	1,010
Calgary	1,070,295	237,890	57,700	66,375	21,060	25,565	13,410	11,660	15,750
Edmonton	1,024,825	175,295	40,200	47,195	20,380	19,630	9,210	11,940	11,025
Kelowna	160,560	8,320	2,345	1,470	660	410	525	60	720
Abbotsford	156,640	35,715	25,580	2,245	930	730	1,275	150	1,665
Vancouver	2,097,965	875,295	207,160	381,535	20,670	78,890	22,695	7,430	33,470
Victoria	325,060	33,870	7,210	12,330	2,360	2,760	1,845	500	1,585

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 13.4 Visible minority population, by age group, 2006

	All age groups	0 to 14	15 to 24	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 to 74	75 and older
	number						
Total population	31,241,030	5,576,805	4,207,815	8,781,165	8,600,935	2,255,640	1,818,655
Total visible minority population	5,068,095	1,145,395	785,355	1,674,175	1,094,055	233,060	136,055
Chinese	1,216,565	210,930	186,925	385,525	303,440	76,060	53,680
South Asian	1,262,865	305,220	181,410	424,850	260,975	61,550	28,865
Black	783,795	221,660	130,010	244,805	142,485	29,805	15,030
Filipino	410,700	89,780	53,885	141,225	99,690	16,680	9,435
Latin American	304,245	59,915	51,885	114,620	65,015	8,360	4,450
Southeast Asian	239,935	55,355	38,270	80,410	51,755	8,445	5,700
Arab	265,550	69,650	40,985	96,010	46,560	8,125	4,210
West Asian	156,695	30,840	29,190	54,015	34,560	5,360	2,725
Korean	141,890	27,275	28,945	44,405	32,820	5,745	2,700
Japanese	81,300	14,900	10,290	26,860	17,600	6,005	5,630
Visible minority (not indicated elsewhere)	71,420	14,305	11,375	24,925	16,175	2,960	1,680
Multiple visible minority	133,120	45,550	22,180	36,515	22,975	3,955	1,950
Not a visible minority	26,172,940	4,431,410	3,422,455	7,107,000	7,506,885	2,022,585	1,682,600

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.

Table 13.5 Visible minority groups, generation status in Canada, 2006

	Total generation status	First generation	Second generation	Third generation or more
	number			
Total visible minority population	3,922,700	3,273,070	551,740	97,890
Chinese	1,005,635	850,335	138,520	16,775
South Asian	957,645	820,180	132,190	5,275
Black	562,135	403,955	115,090	43,095
Filipino	320,915	283,560	35,760	1,595
Latin American	244,330	219,440	22,870	2,015
Southeast Asian	184,575	159,285	23,450	1,845
Arab	195,900	173,015	20,300	2,585
West Asian	125,855	120,710	4,580	565
Korean	114,615	104,640	9,190	790
Japanese	66,400	28,715	18,510	19,170
Visible minority (not indicated elsewhere)	57,115	44,965	11,005	1,150
Multiple visible minority	87,565	64,260	20,270	3,035

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Population.