

2006 Census of Canada

Ethnic Origin & Visible Minorities Release

April 2, 2008

Introduction

“Ethnic Origin and Visible Minorities” is the seventh of eight releases from the 2006 Census of Canada, taken on May 16, 2006. Highlights of this release for Alberta and Canada are presented in the following report.

Over 200 Ethnic Origins in the Nation

Ethnic origin (ethnic ancestry) refers to the ethnic or cultural origins of the respondent’s ancestors. In 2006, more than 200 different ethnic origins (including Aboriginal peoples) were reported by Canada’s 31.2 million population. The top five frequently counted ethnic origins in the nation were: Canadian, English, French, Scottish, and Irish.

In Alberta, English was the most frequently recorded ancestry in 2006, followed by German, Canadian, Scottish and Irish (Table 1). Nearly half (48.8%) of all Albertans (3,290,350) reported some European heritage. The largest European origins in Alberta were German, Ukrainian, Scandinavian, Dutch and Polish.

TABLE 1: ETHNIC ORIGINS IN ALBERTA, 2006*

Ethnic Origin	Total Responses	% of total Population
English	885,825	27.2
German	679,705	20.9
Canadian	667,405	20.5
Scottish	661,265	20.3
Irish	539,160	16.6
French	388,210	11.9
Ukrainian	332,180	10.2
Dutch (Netherlands)	172,910	5.3
Polish	170,935	5.2
North American Indian	169,355	5.2

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada

* “Total responses” is the total of single and multiple responses, therefore persons who reported multiple ethnic origins are counted more than once in this table, as they are included in the multiple responses for each origin they reported.

According to the 2006 Census, 12% of Alberta’s total population reported some French origin. The vast majority (89%) of those who reported French origin also identified other ancestral roots. In 2006, a total of 255,885 Albertans reported some Aboriginal ancestry (169,355 North American Indian, 83,235 Métis, and 3,295 Inuit). About 57% of individuals in Alberta identifying North American Indian ancestry also cited other ancestral roots, as did 80% of those reporting Métis origin.

Visible Minorities: 1 in 6 Canadians

The 2006 Census enumerated 5,068,100 visible minorities (non-Caucasian or non-white in race) in Canada. This represented 16.2% of the total Canadian population, up from 13.4% in 2001. Between 2001 and 2006, Canada’s visible minorities increased by 27.2%, five times faster than the 5.4% growth in the total population. The fast growth of the visible minority group was largely due to the high proportion of visible minorities among recent immigrants. In 2006, about 454,200 Albertans identified themselves as visible minorities. This accounted for 13.9% of Alberta’s total population, compared to 11.2% in 2001. The three largest visible minority groups in Alberta were Chinese (26.5%), South Asian (22.8%), and Filipino (11.2%).

Visible minorities liked large urban centers. Almost all (95.9%) visible minorities lived in Canada’s 33 census metropolitan areas in 2006. As shown in Table 2, Calgary (22.2%) ranked fourth and Edmonton (17.1%) fifth, in their proportion of visible minorities among the census metropolitan areas.

TABLE 2: VISIBLE MINORITY POPULATION, 2006

CMA	Visible Minority Population	% of CMA Population	Rank
Toronto	2,174,065	42.9%	1
Vancouver	875,300	41.7%	2
Abbotsford	35,715	22.8%	3
Calgary	237,890	22.2%	4
Edmonton	175,295	17.1%	5

Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census of Canada

Mixed-Race Unions on the Rise

In 2006, Canada had 289,400 mixed unions (marriages and common law unions involving a visible minority person with a non-visible minority person or a person from a different race), up 33.1% since 2001. The mixed union population was still a small group. It represented only 3.9% of all unions in Canada.

In Alberta, 32,435 mixed-race relationships were reported in the census, an increase of 37.3% since 2001. The mixed unions accounted for 4.2% of all unions in Alberta. Among the province’s interracial relationships, 28,420 (88%) couples had one partner belong to visible minorities. The remaining 4,015 mixed-race unions were formed by individuals of two different visible minority groups.