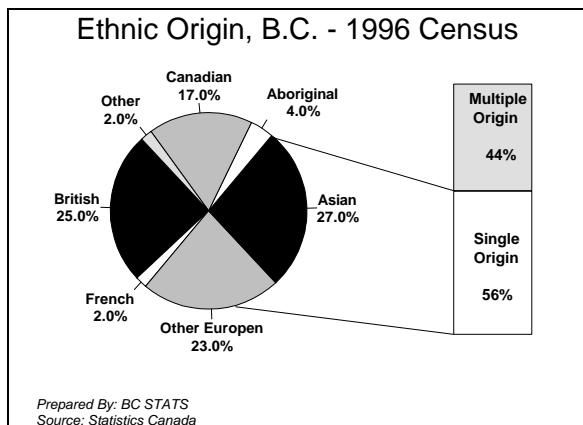


Focus on Ethnicity of BC Population

In 1996, more than one in every four British Columbians who reported having a single ethnic origin belonged to an Asian ethnic group . . .

Ethnic origin, as defined in the Census, refers to the ethnic or cultural group(s) to which an individual's ancestors belonged. It pertains to the ancestral "roots" or origins of the population, and should not be confused with place of birth, citizenship or nationality.

Newly released data from the 1996 Census indicated that 56 per cent of the B.C. population belonged to a single ethnic origin and 44 per cent belonged to more than one ethnic origin (multiple origins). This represented 2,064,200 and 1,625,555 British Columbians, respectively.



While British origin still led the other ethnic groups, representing 25 per cent of the total population who reported a single ethnic origin, the number of persons who reported a single British origin has decreased significantly between the 1991 and the 1996 Census. This was largely a result of the increase in the number of people choosing Canadian as their ethnic origin. This increase was due

mainly to a modification¹ of the 1996 Census form where, for the first time, "Canadian" was included as an example for the different choices of ethnic origin.

This modification encouraged some people to choose Canadian as their ethnic origin in 1996, even though they may have reported a different ethnic origin in past censuses. It is believed that a high percentage of these respondents would have reported British as their ethnic origin in past censuses. In 1991, 812,470 persons living in B.C. reported a single British origin, whereas in 1996 only 515,495 persons did so. On the other hand, there were 357,280 persons (297,960 more than in 1991) who reported a single Canadian origin in the 1996 Census, which represented 17 per cent of all British Columbians who reported a single ethnic origin.

After British and Canadian, Chinese was the next largest ethnic group representing 14 per cent of the B.C. population with a single origin, followed by German and East Indian with six per cent each. Aboriginal origin accounted for four per cent of all the single ethnic group.

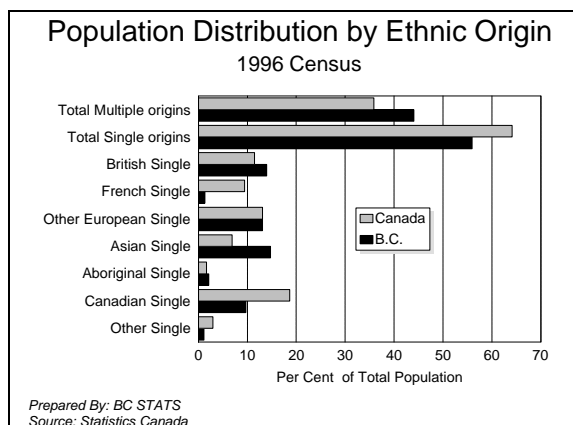
The high inflow of Asian immigrants to B.C. has continued to shift the ethnic mosaic of the province. Large inflows of immigrants from source countries such as Hong Kong, India, China, and the Philippines have resulted in the Asian ethnic group



¹ See Statistics Canada publication Cat. No. 11-001E, Feb 17/98 for a description of the modification.

forming a proportionately larger share of the province's population. In 1991, of those who reported a single ethnic origin, 19 per cent belonged to an Asian ethnic group whereas in 1996 the share had increased to 27 per cent.

Compared to the overall Canadian population distribution by ethnic group, B.C. has a higher proportion of its population who belonged to more than one ethnic origin. Also, B.C. had a higher proportion who reported having a single ethnic origin of British or Asian, and a lower proportion who reported French or Canadian. B.C. had a slightly higher proportion who belonged to the Aboriginal group than the national average.



Top 10 Single Response Ethnic Origins for B.C.									
Ethnic Origin	1996			1991			1986		
	Number	% of Total Pop.	% of Single	Number	% of Total Pop.	% of Single	Number	% of Total Pop.	% of Single
British	515,500	14%	25%	812,470	25%	42%	871,075	31%	49%
Canadian	357,280	10%	17%	30,320	1%	2%	14,640	1%	1%
Chinese	280,585	8%	14%	181,185	6%	9%	112,605	4%	6%
German	130,330	4%	6%	156,635	5%	8%	148,280	5%	8%
East Indian	120,645	3%	6%	89,265	3%	5%	60,045	2%	3%
Aboriginal	76,430	2%	4%	74,420	2%	4%	61,125	2%	3%
Dutch	60,765	2%	3%	66,525	2%	3%	62,945	2%	4%
French	47,910	1%	2%	68,795	2%	4%	68,965	2%	4%
Italian	46,525	1%	2%	49,265	2%	3%	46,755	2%	3%
Ukrainian	40,650	1%	2%	52,760	2%	3%	48,195	2%	3%
Total Single	2,064,200	56%	100%	1,952,855	60%	100%	1,759,810	62%	100%
Total Pop	3,689,755	100%		3,247,505	100%		2,849,585	100%	

Source: Statistics Canada 1986, 1991 & 1996 Censuses