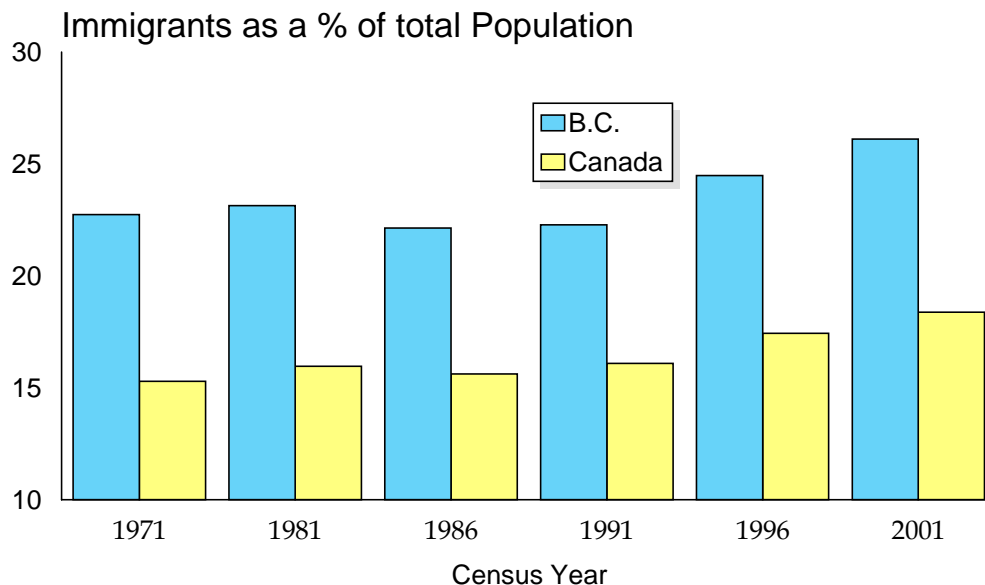


2001 Census Fast Facts: B.C. Immigrant Population

In 2001, more than a quarter of the British Columbia population were born outside Canada. Amongst all provinces and territories, B.C. had the second largest immigrant population.



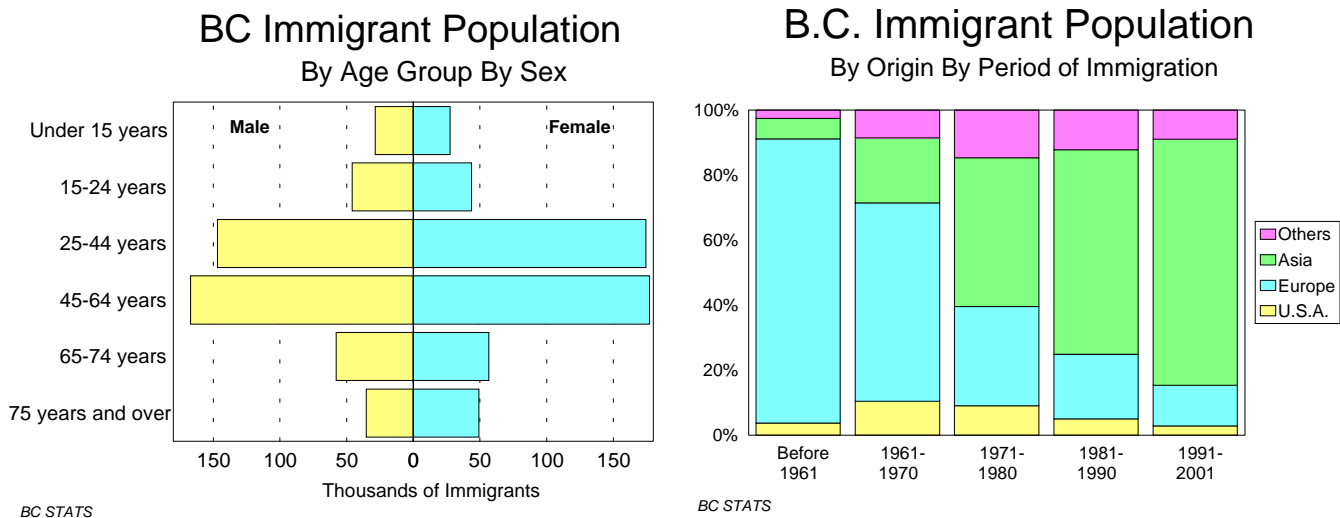
BC Stats

Immigrant population refers to people who were foreign born and have been permitted by immigration authorities to live in Canada permanently. The immigrant population in British Columbia has increased significantly over the past two decades due to the recent high inflow of immigrants to the province. In 2001 there were 1,009,820 immigrants living in British Columbia, accounting for 26.1% of the total population in the province. Over the period 1996-2001, the immigrant population has grown by 11.8% from 903,190 immigrants in 1996. The immigrant population was growing much faster than the Canadian born counterpart in the province. The overall population growth in B.C. was only at 4.9% over the 1996-2001 period.

The majority of the B.C. immigrant population in 2001 have been living in Canada for more than 20 years. Dividing the immigrant population by the time of immigration indicates that nearly one-third of the immigrants arrived Canada prior to 1981, and about 20 per cent came as recent immigrants since 1991. A higher proportion of the early immigrants came from Europe and the United States, whereas most of the immigrants who arrived in the last two decades were from Asia. European immigrants made up 34.9% of the immigrant population in B.C., of which 75.8% had been in

Canada prior to 1980. On the other hand, Asian immigrants accounted for half of the B.C. immigrant population and 77.3% came to Canada after 1980. Most European immigrants were born in the United Kingdom or Germany, while most Asian immigrants came from Mainland China, Hong Kong or India.

The majority of immigrants were in their middle ages at time of the 2001 Census. Immigrants aged 25 to 64 represented about two-thirds of the immigrant population in the province, and those who were 65 years or older accounted for 19.7% of the whole immigrant population. There were slightly more women than men in the immigrant population. Female immigrants out-numbered their male counterpart by about three per cent.



Approximately one in every ten immigrants could not speak, write or understand English. Since the majority of immigrants who arrived in the last two decades were from non-English speaking Asian countries, a relatively higher proportion of the recent immigrants possessed no English language ability at the time of the Census. Immigrants who had been in Canada for a longer time tended to have better English language proficiency because a higher proportion of the established immigrants were from English speaking countries or had learned English after living in Canada for a longer time. The most common mother tongues spoken by the non-English speaking immigrants were Cantonese, Mandarin, Punjabi, Tagalog, Korean and Farsi.

Most immigrants live in the Lower Mainland. In 2001, nearly three in every four immigrants in B.C. lived the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area, where immigrants represented more than 37% of the population. This trend is expected to continue as a majority of recent immigrants chose to live in the Lower Mainland. Statistics have shown that new immigrants, especially those from Asia, tend to settle initially in Lower Mainland communities. For example, more than 70 per cent of the Asian immigrants who arrived in B.C. in 2001 reported Vancouver as their intended destination. Some immigrants who have been living in Canada for a longer period of time would gradually move away to live outside the Lower Mainland area.