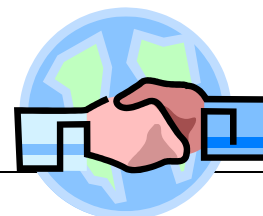


# Mixed Marriages on the Rise



The number of unions involving partners from different ethnic, religious or racial backgrounds represents a small, but growing proportion of the Canadian total, according to a Statistics Canada report.

In its latest social trends report, StatsCan analyzed census data and found an estimated 14.1 million people were living as either a married couple, or as a couple in a common-law union in 2001. Of those, more than 450 000 were in a so-called racially mixed union.

"This was a 35 per cent increase from 1991, more than three times the increase of 10 per cent for all people living in a couple," Statistics Canada said in a statement Tuesday. According to the agency, a principal reason for the increase could be the country's growing cultural diversity.

Whereas visible minorities represented less only one in 20 Canadians in 1981, by 2001 the country's four million visible minorities accounted for more than 13 per cent of the total population. The most common form of mixed-unions involved one member of a visible minority partnered with someone who was not.

According to the StatsCan analysis, Japanese were the most likely visible minority group to marry or live common-law with a non-Japanese person, followed by Latin Americans and Blacks. At the other end of the spectrum, South Asians and Chinese were "among the least likely to form a partnership outside their group."

Though the trend is already growing, the report suggests it could take off as Canadian youth get older. The proportions of mixed-union couples among people aged 20 to 29 is approximately double that of their older counterparts, the agency says.

"People in mixed unions tend to be younger and foreign-born, live in large urban areas and have a higher education," the agency said. Another unique characteristic, the agency noted, is that mixed unions are more likely to take the form of common-law partnerships, rather than marriages.

"This was probably related to age as common-law unions are more prevalent among young people, and visible minorities also have a younger age profile than the overall population."

	2001		1991		Percentage change 1991-2001
	Number	Percentage of all couples	Number	Percentage of all couples	
<b>Toronto census metropolitan area</b>					
All couples	1,070,960	100.0	888,250	100.0	20.6
<b>Total intermarried couples</b>	<b>63,205</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>45,395</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>39.2</b>
Two different visible minority groups	13,805	1.3	8,445	1.0	63.5
One visible minority and one non-visible minority	49,400	4.6	36,950	4.2	33.7