

5

Reporting Métis in Urban Centres on the 1996 Census

Lorna Jantzen

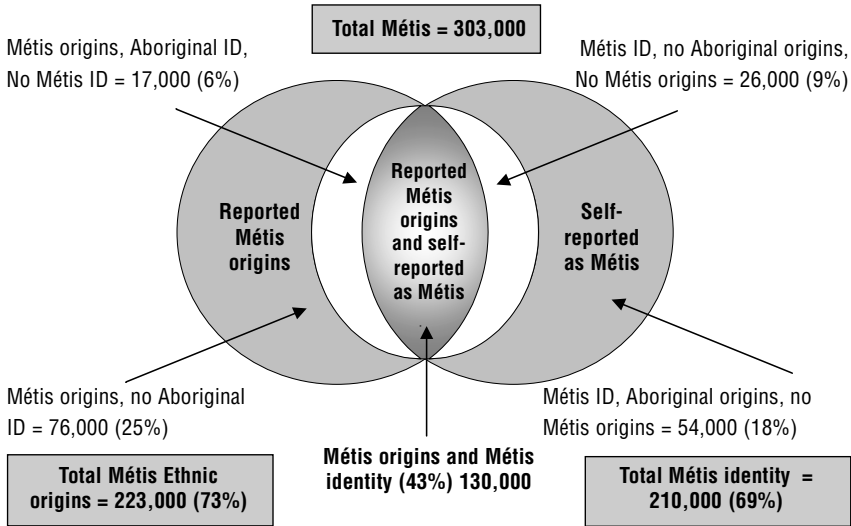
Introduction

The number of people reporting Métis origins on the Census has increased dramatically over the last twenty years, as has the number of people that self-identified as Métis over the last decade. A majority of people reporting Métis origins or identity live in Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) or Census Agglomerations (CAs),¹ but the circumstances of their well-being remain relatively unexplored. How are Métis faring relative to the non-Aboriginal? Do people reporting Métis reside in particular geographic communities? Are those people, who have only recently reported either Métis origins or identity, socioeconomically different from the non-Aboriginal population? Do urban Métis perceive barriers to their participation, both in non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal communities? These are examples of some of the questions that need to be answered if we are to have a more complete understanding of how this urban population is faring.

As a starting point, the Census provides benchmarks through the Aboriginal identity and ethnic origin questions. As shown in Diagram 1, the identity and origin numbers appear comparable. However, when cross-tabulated, only 43% reported both Métis identity and Métis origin on the 1996 Census. The term Métis implies mixing, which is reflected in the many different ways that Métis is reported on the Census. This paper examines 1996 Census data to consider whether or not combining origin and identity results would help researchers achieve higher counts at the Census Tract (CT)² level, thereby providing a more complete understanding of Canada's urban Métis population.³ The first section will present a brief historical overview of Métis in Canada. The second section will provide an overview of the census concepts where Métis is reported, and consider reporting patterns and geographic distribution. The third section will look at what happens when these two concepts are combined, and whether (or not) this can enrich our understanding of urban Métis. This paper will illustrate that there are many different ways in which people report Métis on the census,

and will highlight that the concept of Métis remains fluid. For this reason it will be suggested that definitions of Métis should remain broad so that more detailed research of these communities can reflect the urban Métis reality.

Diagram 1: People who reported Métis on the 1996 Census (20% sample)



Total Métis Origins: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “Métis and Others,” or a “Multiple Aboriginal Response” to Question 17 (Ethnic Origin) on the 1996 Census. “Multiple Aboriginal Response” was included as 97% of combinations include a Métis response.

Total Métis Identity: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “North American Indian and Métis,” “Métis and Inuit” or “North American Indian and Inuit and Métis” to Question 18 (Aboriginal Identity) on the 1996 Census.

Defining Métis

The concept of Métis comes from the word *mestizo*, which means a person of mixed ancestry, and usually refers to people of European and Aboriginal origins (Canadian Oxford Dictionary). Patrick Douaud, from Canadian Ethnology Services at the National Museum of Man (1985), takes us back to the 1600s and 1700s when there was a lot of interaction between Indians and Whites in the St. Lawrence and Upper Great Lakes regions. In his historical overview of the Canadian Métis, Douaud states:

The Métis as a distinctive ethnic group are now largely a western phenomenon, but they were born out of a long period of interaction between Indians and Whites in the St. Lawrence and Upper Great Lakes regions. Trading communities were also found on the

periphery of the Great Lakes, as far south as Cahokia, and most of their inhabitants were of mixed race. However, the aggressive colonialization of the American Middle-West in the first half of the 19th century forced those half-breeds to take refuge among Indian tribes or in the Red River area, more rarely to merge with American whites. The Métis—mostly Indian and French Canadian, but Highland Scot, English and Yankees as well—survived as a separate group mainly north of the international border. (Douaud 1985, 7–8)

In 1885, under the leadership of Louis Reil and Gabriel Dumond, local Métis inhabitants defended their right to the land and to self-government in what become known as the North West Rebellion. However, the defeat of the Métis—similar to their defeat at Red River (1869–70)—resulted in several thousand Métis suffering the consequences of displacement and demoralization (Peterson and Brown 1985, 4). Today, the descendants of the Red River Métis have been represented by organizations such as the Métis National Council, which defines Métis as representing a distinct indigenous nation with its heartland in western Canada.

Other studies have illustrated that during the nineteenth century mixed marriages were occurring between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples across Canada. The degree to which this mixing occurred is difficult to discern. In the case of Quebec, for instance, biologist Jacques Rousseau has suggested that 40% of French-Canadians could find at least one Amerindian in their family tree (Dickason 1985, 19). However, an important question remains: Why was Red River so different from other regions in Canada? Dickason identifies how the French government viewed intermarriage as a means to populate French nationals in Canada. This was indicated in Article 17 of the Charter for the Company of New France:

The Savages who will be led to the faith and to profess it will be considered natural Frenchmen, and like them, will be able to come and live in France when they wish to, and there acquire property, with rights of inheritance and bequest, just as if they had been born Frenchmen, without being required to make any declaration or to become naturalized. (Dickason 1995, 22)

It seems that many regions either assimilated or did not recognize mixed marriages and their offspring, hence it is difficult to know how large the Métis population could possibly be if the definition of Métis remains broad.

The question of terminology and when to apply Métis or métis has also become an issue. Francophones have, up until the 1960s, applied the term métis to refer to the offspring of Indian and white parentage, but more specifically to the French and Cree-speaking descendants of the Red River Métis.

The word *métis* was rarely applied, on an individual basis, to persons of English-Indian or non-French and Indian ancestry, nor was it generally extended in its collective usage to mixed populations outside western Canada or to those with heartlands, the term was rarely used by English speakers before the 1960s. (Peterson and Brown 1985, 5)

However, by the 1970s the situation had changed; the term *Métis* had expanded and was regularly applied in English to those people who had Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal origins, even though these individuals had no lineage to Red River. Peterson and Brown assert that this terminology transition confuses an historically based political and ethnic identity with the genetic attributes of individuals, regardless of their ethnic or cultural identities. The *Métis National Council (MNC)* has outlined its position on this issue of semantics:

Written with a small “m” *métis* is a racial term for anyone of mixed Indian and European ancestry. Written with a capital “M” *Métis* is a socio-cultural or political term for those originally of mixed ancestry who evolved into a distinct indigenous people during a certain historical period in a certain region in Canada. (*Métis National Council* 1984, 6)

The MNC have stated that *Métis* form a “distinct indigenous nation with a history, culture, and homeland in western Canada, who were dispossessed by the Canadian government from 1870 onward” (ibid.).

The definition of who is and who is not *Métis* is still very much at issue. As the rights of *Métis* are discussed in the media, among parliamentarians, in the courts, and by Canadians in general; as the place of Louis Riel in Canada’s history is publicly reconsidered; as more people feel comfortable expressing or recognizing their aboriginality, so the number of people reporting both an Aboriginal identity and/or origin grows. The Census does not attempt to clarify whether or not someone is reporting as *métis* or *Métis*. However, it is clear that today more people are reporting either one of these terms on the Census. This chapter refers to “*Métis*” since that is how Statistics Canada releases the Census data. However, it should be kept in mind that the numbers represent both definitions, and more than likely some people have reported *Métis* as a distinct socioeconomic group while others have reported *Métis* as an indication of their mixed ancestry.

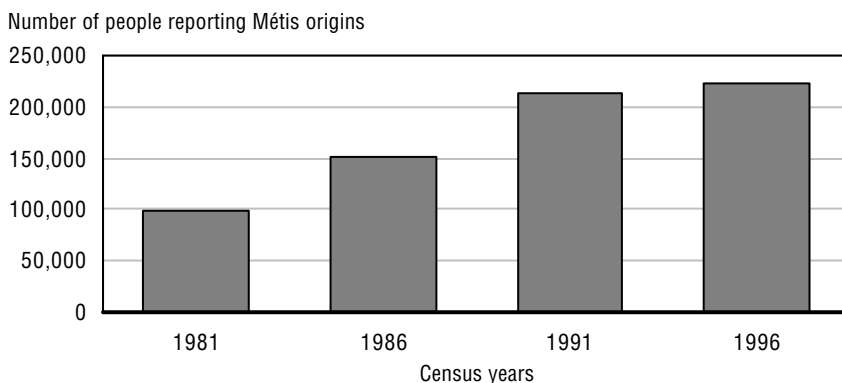
The Census Concepts

Ethnic Origin

There has been an origin question on the Canadian Census since 1887, with the exception of 1981. However, this information has not been collected uniformly over time, making historical comparison difficult and questionable. Prior to the 1981 Census, the Ethnic Origin question asked people only about their paternal ancestral origins, and thereby did not always capture peoples' Métis origins. This changed on the 1981 Census when information was requested on origins of both paternal and maternal ancestors, and when multiple responses were accepted. As outlined by Kralt: "Many Métis or non-status Indians are likely to indicate both Métis and European ancestry. In order to provide an accurate count of Métis and other Native peoples, which is the major purpose of the question, it is necessary to accept multiple entries" (1990, 38). With these changes to the Census questionnaire, one had a starting point from which to conduct research on people reporting Métis origins. However, since 1981, the question has changed significantly with a move from check-off box responses (1981, 1986 and 1991) to a write-in question with space for multiple responses and a list of examples (1996 Census). With these changes to the question in mind, it is clear that reporting Métis on the ethnic origin question does not always equate with lineage back to the original Red River community.

As shown in Chart 1, the number of people reporting Métis origins has increased from 98,300 in 1981 to almost 223,000 in 1996. This increase can be attributed, in part, to births, but also to ethnic mobility, the fluidity of defining who is Métis, and the many different ways in which Métis origins can be reported.

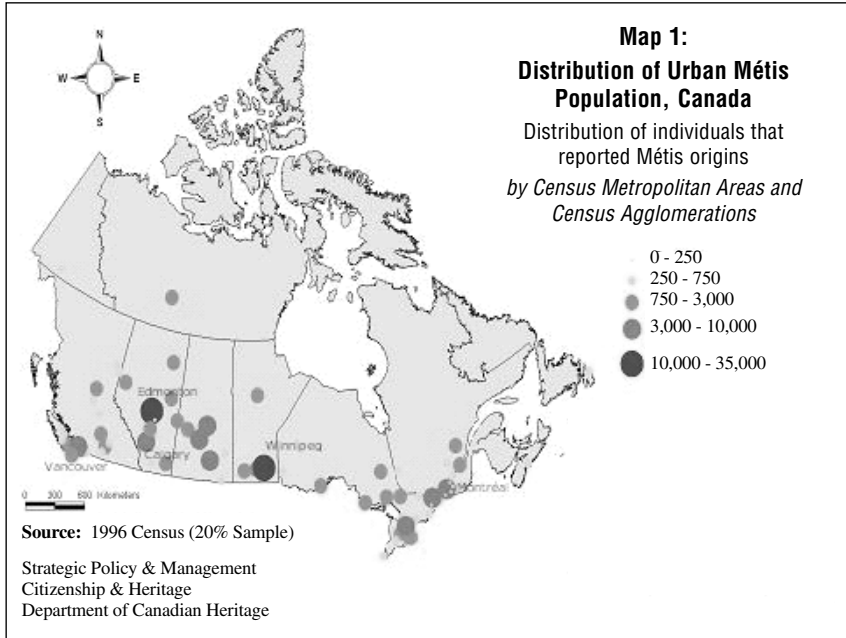
Chart 1: People reporting Métis origins, 1981 to 1996 Census



Given that the concept of Métis means mixed, people reporting Métis origins often report multiple origins. On the 1996 Census, 77% of people reporting Métis origins reported it as a multiple response compared to 55% of people reporting North American Indian origins, and 33% of people reporting Inuit origins. Of those Métis origins who reported multiple responses, 26% reported two responses, 24% reported three responses, and 27% reported four or more responses to the ethnic origin question. Sixty seven percent of people that reported Métis origins reported it in combination with Canadian, British and/or French origins. Trying to derive this population using the ethnic origin data is difficult since people could report in a variety of ways. For example, as the question asks a person to list their different ethnic origins, people could either report Cree, French, and Irish, or they could report a single Métis response to represent their mixed background, or they could report Métis in combination with a number of other origins. Many different scenarios can be used to construct the Métis population using the origin variable. However, it should also be noted that different reporting patterns may reflect socio-economic differences in this population. Those who report Métis as a single response compared to Métis as a multiple response may have different socio-economic outcomes.

The ethnic origin results highlight the fact that although the Prairie provinces hold over 50% of the Métis origin population, people reporting Métis are found in all regions of Canada. In 1996, Manitoba and Alberta both had over 20% of the Métis origin population, while Saskatchewan and Ontario each had 15%. At the Census Sub-division (CSD)⁴ level all regions of the country—except the Northern Territories—have a Census Sub-division that ranks in the top twenty.

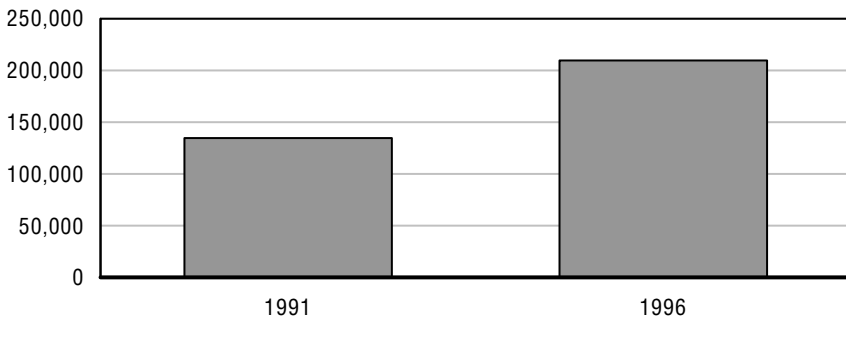
The 1996 Census highlighted that approximately 67% of people reporting Métis origins resided in CMAs or CAs. The top five CMAs for the Métis origin population were Winnipeg (18%), Edmonton (10%), Vancouver (7%), Calgary (5%), and Montreal (4.5%), again highlighting the fact that this population is spread across the country (Map 1).



Aboriginal Self-Identification

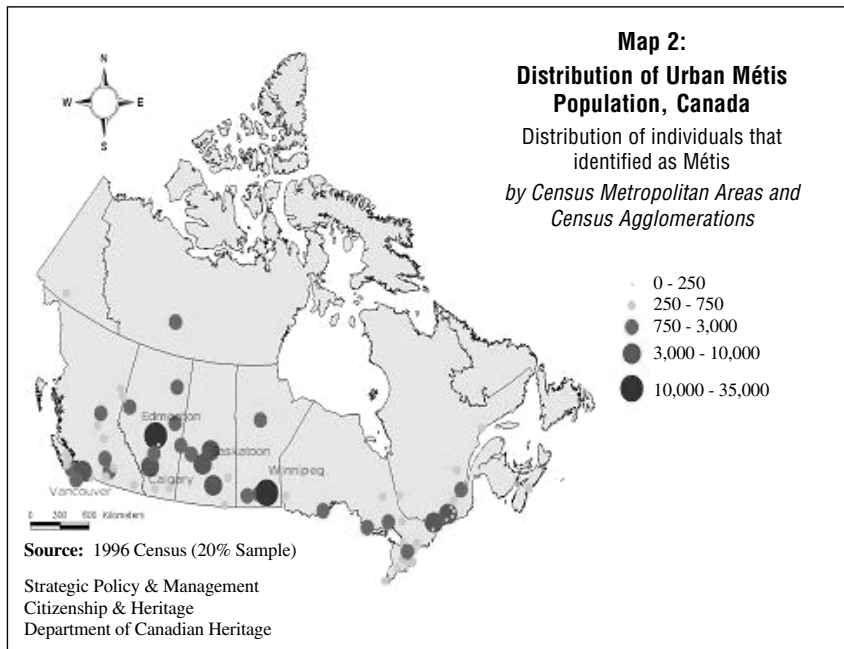
On the 1996 Census, a new question on Aboriginal self-identity was introduced that helped researchers hone in on those people who reported themselves as Aboriginal. The Census question was similar to one posed on the 1991 post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey (Chart 2). Although comparison of the results of these two surveys is questionable, especially since the questions were not exactly the same and the Census is based on proxy responses, these are the only benchmarks currently available.

Chart 2: People reporting Métis identity, 1991 Aboriginal peoples' survey and 1996 Census



The Métis self-identification at the Census Sub-division level illustrates that this population is more Prairie-centric with only six of the top twenty CSDs located listed outside Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. The Prairie provinces were the top three, containing 63% of the Métis identity population: Alberta had 24%, Manitoba had 22%, and Saskatchewan had 17% of the total Métis identity population.

According to the 1996 Census, approximately 134,000 (64%) of the Métis identity population resided in CMAs and CAs in Canada. The top five cities in 1996 were: Winnipeg (19%), Edmonton (13%), Vancouver (7%), Calgary (5%), and Saskatoon (4.5%). All of these cities—except Vancouver—are Prairie cities, indicating again that urban Métis identity population in the 1996 Census was centred in the Prairie region (Map 2).



Comparing Concepts

Most researchers would apply either identity or origin data since the two questions are conceptually different. A survey of federal government and national Aboriginal organizations, which was commissioned by the Aboriginal Information Management Committee (AIMC), highlighted that working with Aboriginal clients did not mean that all national and federal organizations applied the same definition for Aboriginal peoples. Organizations with Aboriginal clients usually applied a definition that reflected their mandate and their client base (Siggner et al. 2002). Using

Census data and the AIMC's survey, Siggner et al. illustrate how the Aboriginal population is "needs based," and those with origins—particularly those that have origins and do not self-identify—are "rights based" (2002, 34). However, ethnic mobility may also be a factor. If with each Census people that reported only Métis origins on one Census begin to self-identify on the next, then the concept of "needs based" will be brought into question. By focusing on only one side of this Métis equation, the analysis is not forward looking and overlooks an important segment of this population.

The above raises an interesting socioeconomic debate: how are the Métis doing compared to the Canadian mainstream? When looking at some of the economic indicators provided by the Census these categories seem to naturally divide into two subgroups—Métis Single Response versus the multiple-response Métis, who will be referred to as Métis and Other. The Métis Single Response is the core population that seem to be consistently economically disadvantaged compared to those that reported Métis in combination with other non-Aboriginal origins. Overall, in the 1996 Census, the Métis Single Response sub-population had substantially lower proportions of their population that reported high school and university as their highest level of education, and had higher unemployment rates and lower average individual incomes (Charts 3, 4 and 5).

The sub-population that reported Métis and Other did not seem to be experiencing this same level of economic hardship. However, compared to the non-Aboriginal population, they were not as well educated, and despite having higher labour force participation, they also had higher unemployment rates and lower average incomes. While the gap is not as wide as that between Métis reporting an identity and those not reporting an identity, the existence of any gap should be a cause for question.

Chart 3: Percentage reporting high school and university completion as their highest level of education in Canada, 1996 Census

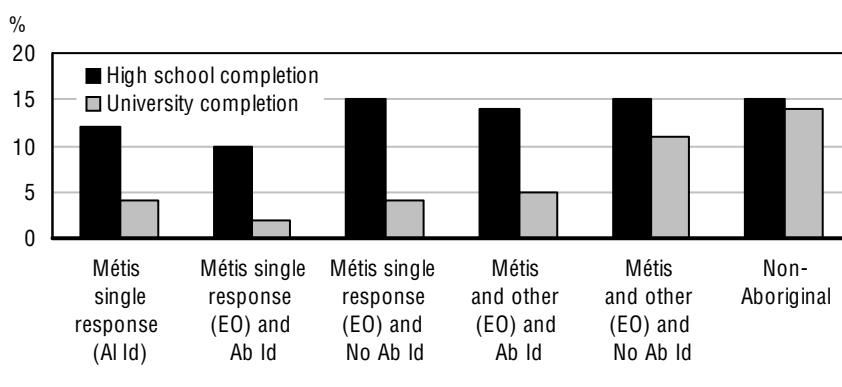


Chart 4: Unemployment and labour force participation rates in Canada, 1996 Census

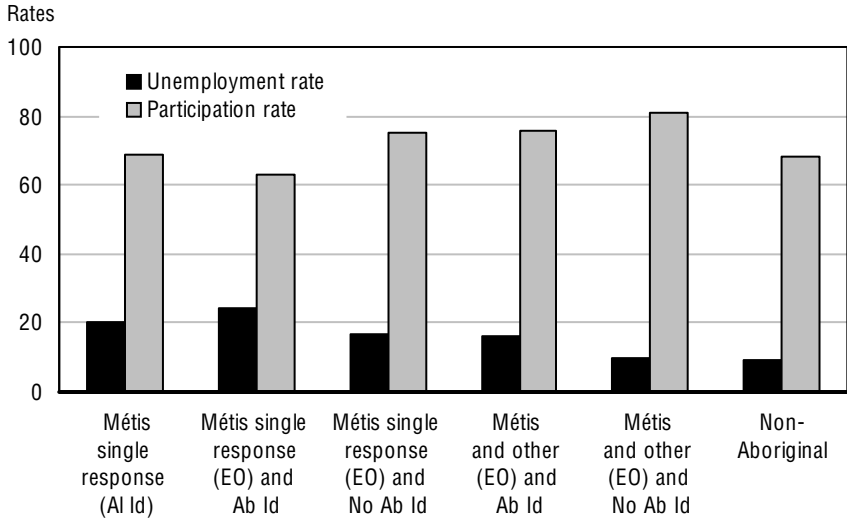
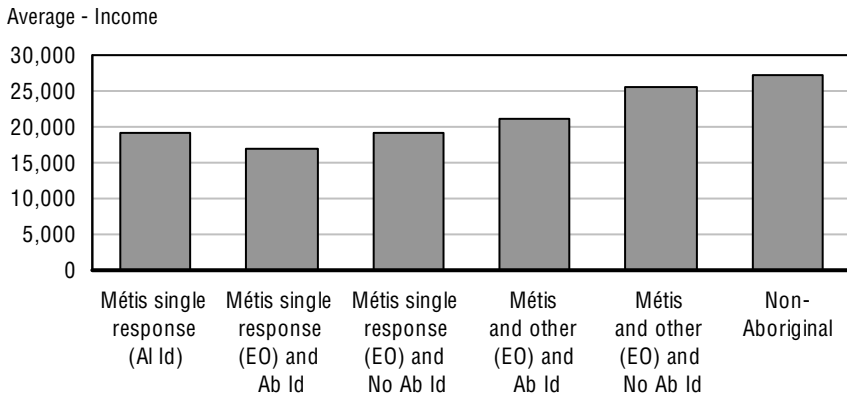


Chart 5: Average individual income, Canada, 1996 Census



Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

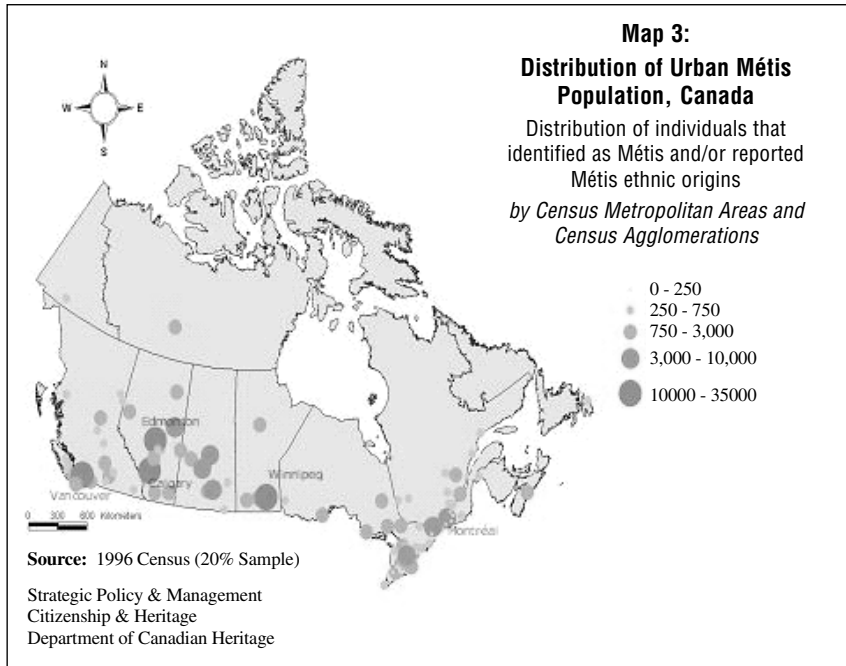
Finally, when comparing the Métis identity and origin populations it should be noted that there are geographic differences. The origin population is more widespread (Map 1), while the identity population is centred in the Prairies (Map 2). Even though their distribution is different, the top four CMAs remain the same, providing us with four cases in which to examine what happens when we apply a total Métis number. If the resulting residential patterns show some overlap between ethnic origin and Aboriginal identity, this will allow for an investigation as to whether or not these two sub-populations could be combined.

Total Métis: Combining Origin and Identity

The case of Métis reporting on the Census in Canada is unique, and it is only because of this uniqueness that data from these two different concepts—ethnic origin and Métis identity—can be melded into a total Métis count. A total Métis count will allow researchers to account for all people that reported Métis on the Census, and can provide a concept with which to work towards a more complete understanding of Métis in urban centres.

According to the 1996 Census, approximately 303,000 (Diagram 1) people reported Métis on the Census, and 64% of this population resided in CMAs and CAs (Map 3). The remainder of this chapter will apply the “Total Métis” concept to the top four Métis CMAs—Winnipeg (17%), Edmonton (11%), Vancouver (7%) and Calgary (6%)—to see if it can provide further insights into the geographic and socioeconomic situation of Métis in cities, and provide a base for future research on Métis in urban centres (35).

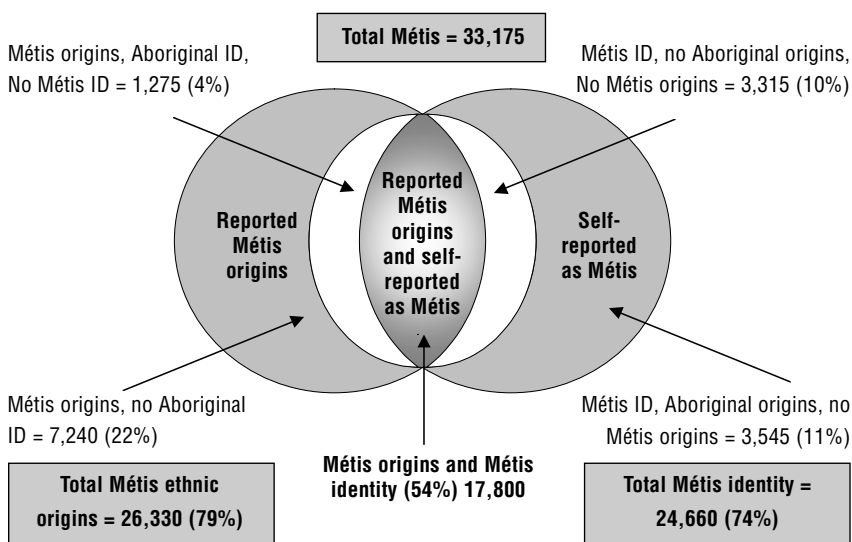
A geographic overview of people reporting Métis on the Census will help us to understand whether these people are divided by their socioeconomic status or whether they reside in the same geographic area. A 250-person cut-off at the CT level will be applied—a cut-off that Statistics Canada often applies when deciding whether a geographic unit has a sufficient population to apply socioeconomic indicators. Below this point, Statistic Canada has suggested that the numbers become too small and the results should be questioned.⁵ If people are living in similar regions within a particular CMA, this may indicate numerous different scenarios; two of which are that people are moving to this region of the city due to discrimination in the form of housing and labour force (Olson and Kobayashi 1993), or that people move to these areas because of the perceived benefits of close proximity, for example, similar values, norms and ethnic identity (Balakrishnan and Hou 1999). This section will focus on whether Métis in each city have different socioeconomic outcomes, and whether they are residing in the same CTs—despite socioeconomic differences within the Métis sub-populations.



Winnipeg

Of all Canadian cities, Winnipeg has the largest Métis population with 26,330 people reporting Métis origins, 24,660 people reporting Métis identity, and 33,175 reporting Métis as either their ethnic origin and/or their identity. Winnipeg also has the largest proportion of the Métis population that reported Métis origins and identity; conversely Winnipeg has a relatively low proportion of people reporting Métis identity with either no Aboriginal origins or no Métis origins (Diagram 2).

Diagram 2: People who reported Métis in Winnipeg on the 1996 Census (20% sample)



Total Métis Origins: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “Métis and Others,” or a “Multiple Aboriginal Response” to Question 17 (Ethnic Origin) on the 1996 Census. “Multiple Aboriginal Response” was included as 97% of combinations include a Métis response.

Total Métis Identity: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “North American Indian and Métis,” “Métis and Inuit” or “North American Indian and Inuit and Métis” to Question 18 (Aboriginal Identity) on the 1996 Census.

For highest level of schooling completed, when compared to the non-Aboriginal population, the proportion of people reporting Métis and Other was higher for “high school graduation” and lower for “university degree” (Chart 6). For labour force characteristics, the Métis and Other sub-population had a higher participation rate and lower unemployment rates, yet their average income levels were lower than the non-Aboriginal population. This lower average income may be due to the lower education levels, but this statement requires further investigation of why education levels are lower and whether this is a factor pushing average income below the non-Aboriginal population’s level.

For the sub-population that reported Métis Single Response, the economic situation was worse than that of the Métis and Other sub-population and the non-Aboriginal population. The proportion of people that reported high school or university as their highest level of education was lower for the Aboriginal identity portion of the Métis Single Response sub-population, while average individual income was lower whether they

reported an Aboriginal identity or not. The unemployment rate for the Métis Single Response-Aboriginal Identity portions was higher than for the non-Aboriginal population and Métis and Other sub-population, while for the Métis Single Response with no Métis origins it was above the non-Aboriginal population and relatively similar to the Métis and Other category. The population reporting a Métis Single Response (EO) had the lowest labour force participation rate. In sum, of the reporting categories compared here, reporting a Métis Single Response in combination with an Aboriginal Identity seems to rank the lowest socioeconomically (Charts 6, 7 and 8).

Chart 6: Percentage reporting high school and university completion as their highest level of education in Winnipeg CMA, 1996 Census

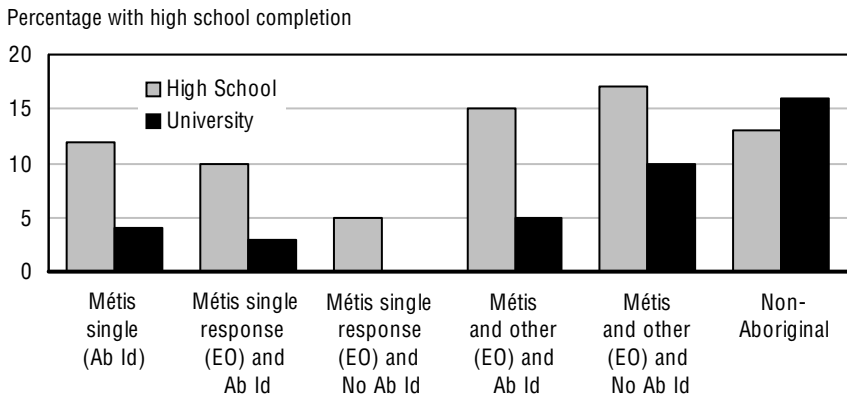


Chart 7: Unemployment and labour force participation rates in Winnipeg CMA, 1996 Census

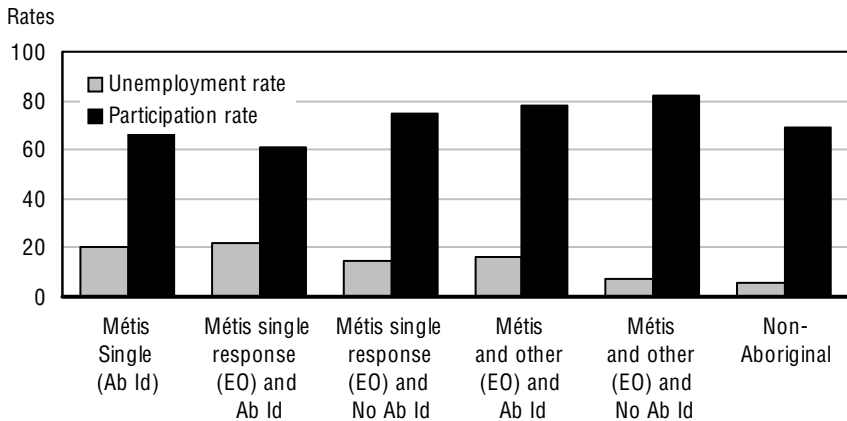
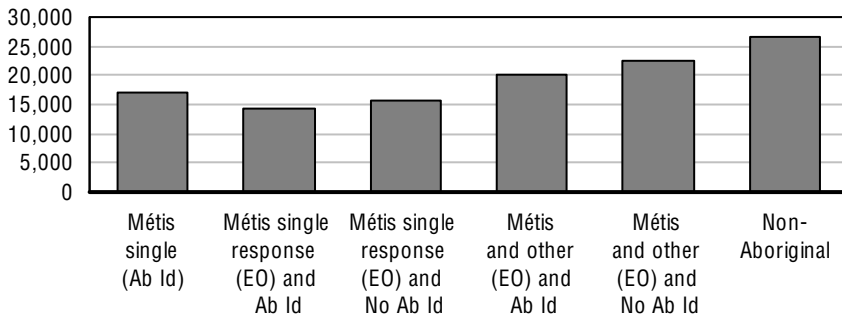


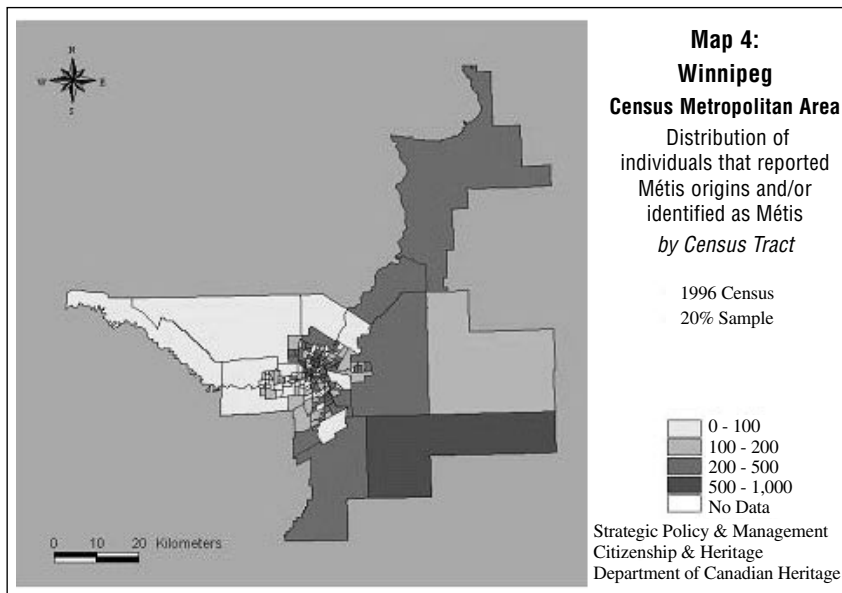
Chart 8: Average individual income, Winnipeg CMA, 1996 Census

Average - Income



In Winnipeg, whether reporting Métis origins or identity, people are socioeconomically behind the non-Aboriginal population. Overall questions should be asked as to why, when looking at these basic economic indicators, people with Métis origins have not integrated into Canada's largest Métis urban centres.

When the total Métis calculation is applied to Winnipeg CTs, there are 50 CTs with over 250 persons reporting Métis, indicating that in these small geographic units, there are Métis from both the identity and origin side of the equation living in the same area. The 50 CTs is higher than the 28 CTs for Métis identity only and the 29 for the Métis origin population.



There were also 9 CTs with over 500 people reporting Métis—6 identity, 3 origin. Finally, Winnipeg is the only city where Métis make up over 20% of the population; on the outskirts of Winnipeg one CT has 22.1% (915 people) of its population reporting Métis on either the origin and/or identity questions on the Census (Map 4). The increased number of CTs that are available when the total Métis count is applied seems to indicate that those people who reported Métis origin and no Métis identity, and Métis identity with no Métis origin, often reside in similar geographic areas in Winnipeg CMA.

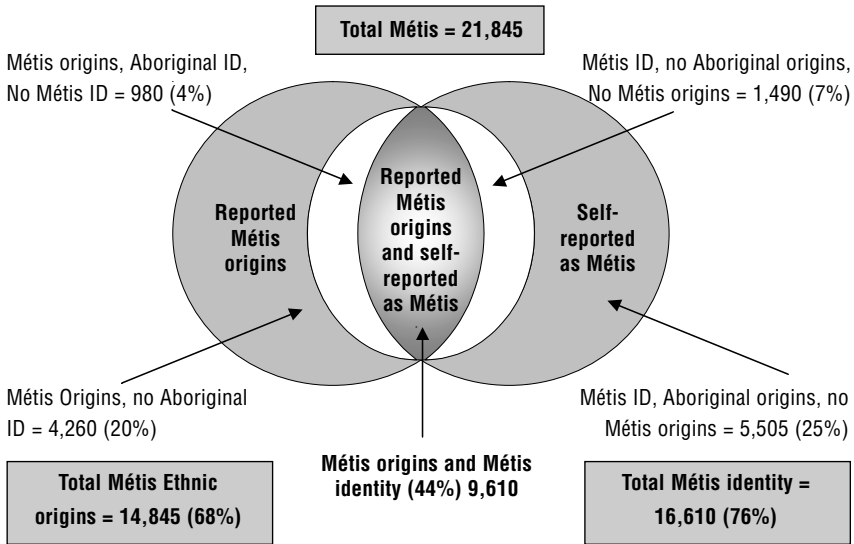
Having a broader range of CTs with a high proportion of Métis provides researchers with a basis from which to conduct future research, whether it is using Census or non-Census data. Winnipeg not only has the largest Métis population, but it also has the highest proportion of people reporting both identity and origin. Even so, applying a total Métis number provides more CTs with adequate numbers to complete future socioeconomic analysis of this population.

Edmonton

In 1996, Edmonton had the second largest Métis population with 16,600 people reporting Métis identity, 14,845 reporting Métis origins, and 21,825 reporting Métis to at least one of these questions. Edmonton was the only city where more people reported Métis identity than Métis origins. This is illustrated by the fact that this CMA had the largest proportion of people reporting a Métis identity with Aboriginal origins but no Métis origins (25%); conversely, it also had the lowest proportion of people that reported a Métis identity with no Aboriginal origins (20%).

In Edmonton, census data illustrates the same pattern found in Winnipeg. When applying basic economic indicators, the situation of people reporting Métis and Other is different from those reporting Métis Single Response origins. Compared to the non-Aboriginal population, people that reported Métis and Other had the same, and in the case of those without an Aboriginal identity, a higher, percentage of people reporting high school as their highest levels of education. However, the same does not apply to university degrees, since the non-Aboriginal population had a higher percentage than people reporting Métis and Other. The Métis and Other sub-population had higher participation rates in the workforce and almost the same unemployment rate as the non-Aboriginal population, yet their average income is lower than the non-Aboriginal population. For the population reporting Métis Single Response, the economic situation appears direr than for those reporting multiple origins. They came out lower for the selected Census economic indicators listed here. The economic situation of these sub-populations is different. However, both are encountering difficulties in the realm of education and income.

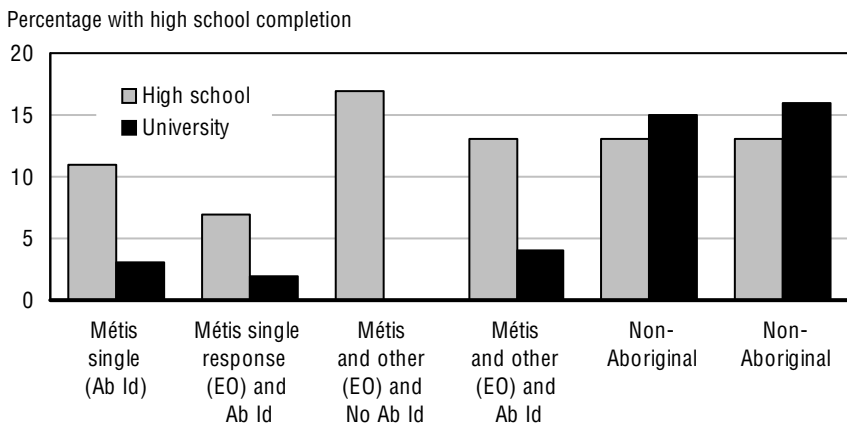
Diagram 3: People who reported Métis in Edmonton on the 1996 Census (20% sample)



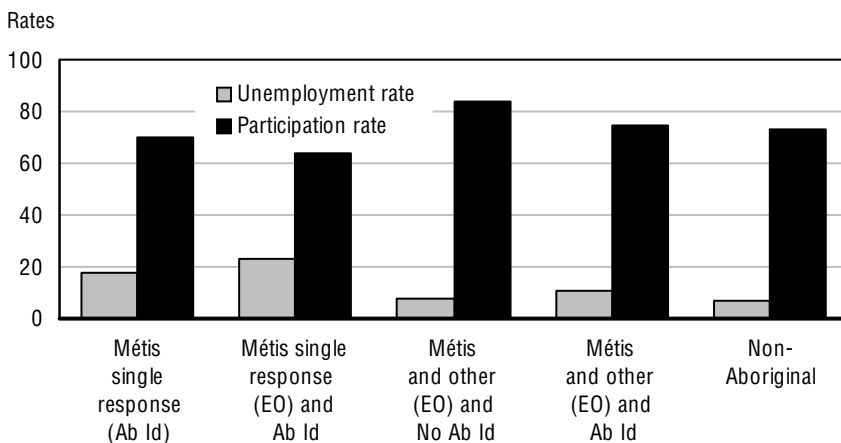
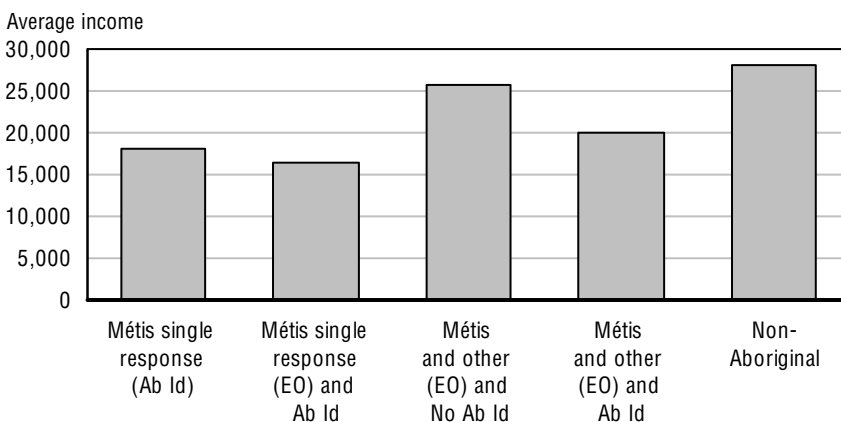
Total Métis Origins: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “Métis and Others,” or a “Multiple Aboriginal Response” to Question 17 (Ethnic Origin) on the 1996 Census. “Multiple Aboriginal Response” was included as 97% of combinations include a Métis response.

Total Métis Identity: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “North American Indian and Métis,” “Métis and Inuit” or “North American Indian and Inuit and Métis” to Question 18 (Aboriginal Identity) on the 1996 Census.

Chart 9: Percentage reporting high school and university completion as their highest level of education in Edmonton CMA, 1996 Census

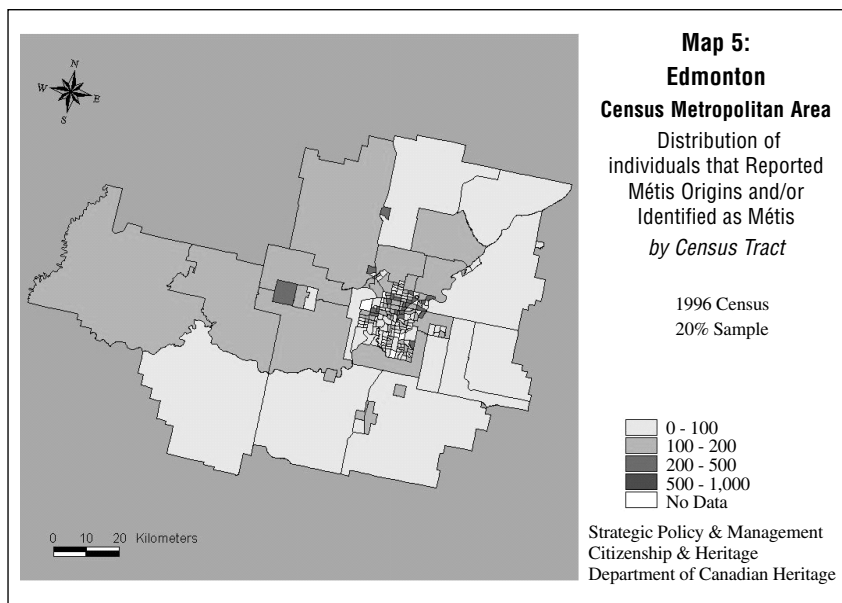


Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

Chart 10: Unemployment and labour force participation rates in Edmonton CMA, 1996 Census**Chart 11: Average individual income, Edmonton CMA, 1996 Census**

Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

The total Métis count can be applied to see if these sub-populations live in similar regions. When applying the total Métis calculation, there is an increase in the number of CTs with over 250 people reporting Métis. There were 8 and 4 CTs for Métis identity and Métis ethnic origin, respectively, with over 250 people reporting Métis. By combining these populations the number increases to 14 CTs, once again indicating that the varied reporting patterns help to increase the size of the population in key CTs. Future studies could probe into the situation of Métis in these CTs.

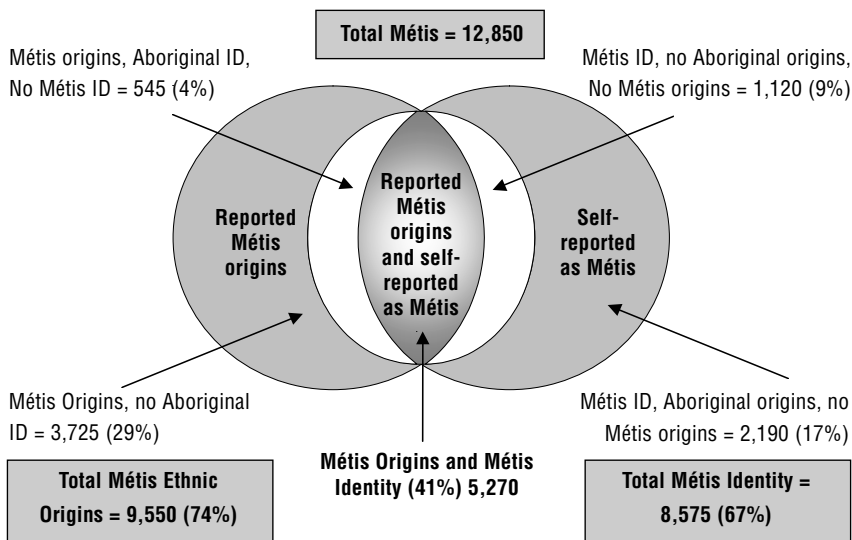


Vancouver

In Vancouver there were 8,580 reporting a Métis identity and 9,550 people reporting Métis origins. When these two populations are counted together, there were 12,855 people that reported Métis on either of these questions. Vancouver CMA had a relatively high proportion of people reporting Métis origins with no Aboriginal identity (29%), and an 8% gap between the proportions of its population reporting origins (74%) compared to identity (67%).

As in the other CMA's above, the Métis and Other category is not faring as well as the non-Aboriginal population, but they do have a higher socio-economic standing than the Métis Single Response sub-population. Compared to the non-Aboriginal population, the Métis and Other sub-population had a higher proportion reporting high school as their highest level of schooling, and a lower percent reporting a university degree as their highest level of schooling. The Métis and Other sub-population had a higher labour force participation rate than the non-Aboriginal population. However, this was countered by a higher unemployment rate and lower average income—especially for those that reported an Aboriginal identity. The Single Response Métis were ranked lower than the non-Aboriginal population and the Métis and Other sub-population for all of the selected economic indicators.

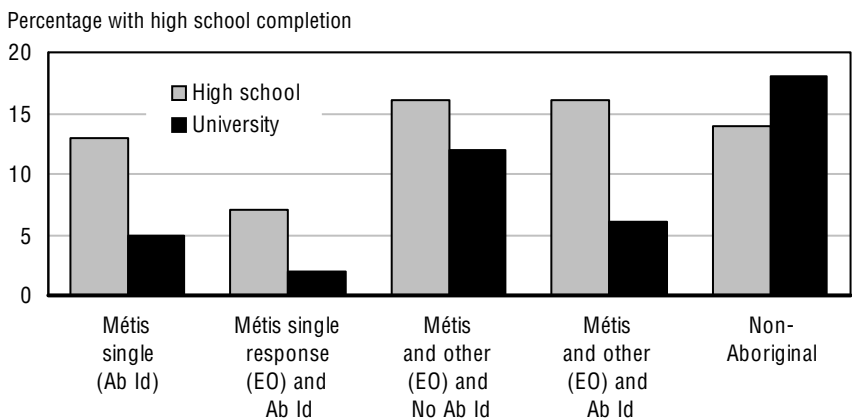
Diagram 4: People who reported Métis in Vancouver on the 1996 Census (20% sample)



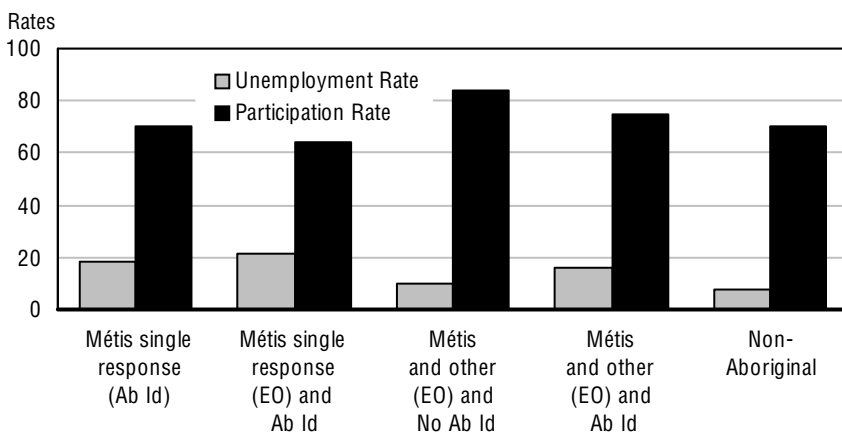
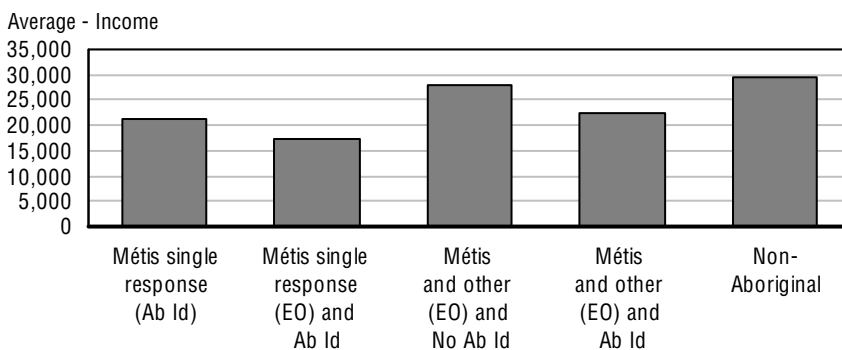
Total Métis Origins: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “Métis and Others,” or a “Multiple Aboriginal Response” to Question 17 (Ethnic Origin) on the 1996 Census. “Multiple Aboriginal Response” was included as 97% of combinations include a Métis response.

Total Métis Identity: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “North American Indian and Métis,” “Métis and Inuit” or “North American Indian and Inuit and Métis” to Question 18 (Aboriginal Identity) on the 1996 Census.

Chart 12: Percentage reporting high school and university completion as their highest level of education in Vancouver CMA, 1996 Census

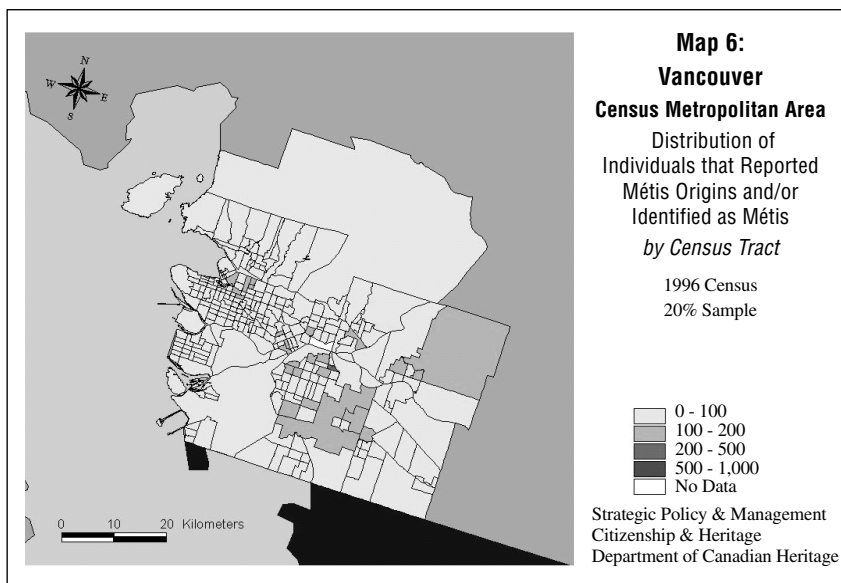


Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

Chart 13: Unemployment and labour force participation rates in Vancouver CMA, 1996 Census**Chart 14: Average individual income, Vancouver CMA, 1996 Census**

Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

No CT in Vancouver had a Métis population over 250 people. In fact the highest CTs had 200 people reporting Métis. This new variable does not introduce any new insights into counting Métis in Vancouver—this may reflect the fact that this larger origin population with no identity are not living in the same neighbourhood as people reporting Métis identity. However, the situation of Métis in Vancouver needs to be addressed, since across the board their unemployment rates and average individual income are lower than the non-Aboriginal population. As in the other CMAs, having a single Métis origin seems to result in a worse socioeconomic situation than for those that reported Métis and Other, while improving for those that did not report an Aboriginal origin.

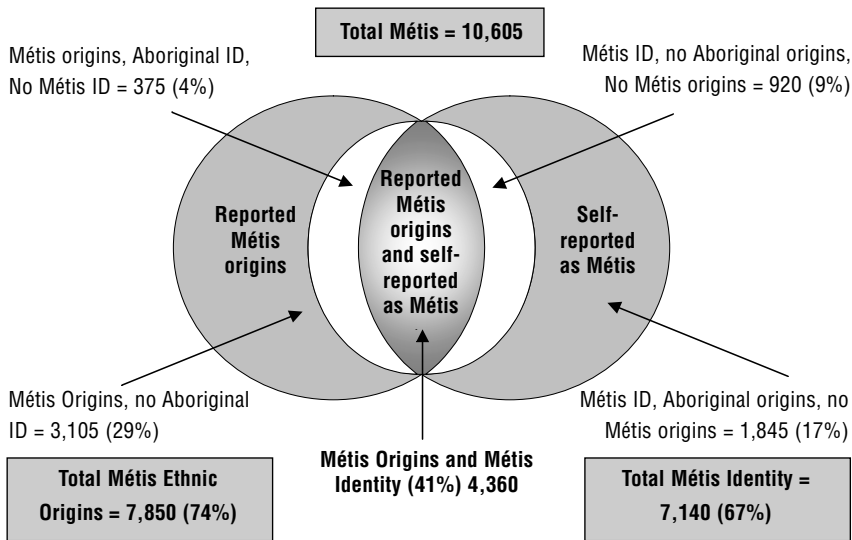


Calgary

In Calgary, 7,135 people reported Métis identity and 7,850 reported Métis origins. When combined, 10,600 people reported Métis on the Census. The distributions of identity and origin populations in Calgary are similar to those of Vancouver with a larger Métis origin population; 29% of the total Métis population reported Métis origins with no Aboriginal identity.

Calgary and Vancouver are also similar in how the different sub-populations are faring socioeconomically. Those that reported Métis and Other are doing well compared to the Métis Single Response sub-population. However, there are differences between those that identify and those that do not, and although the Métis and Other sub-population has higher participation rates and lower unemployment rates, they also have lower income rates. Calgary has the highest proportion of Métis and Other that reported university education. However, this is still lower than the non-Aboriginal population. Based on these basic economic indicators, and in keeping with the patterns seen in other cities, the Métis Single Response sub-population is encountering the toughest economic situation compared to the other selected categories.

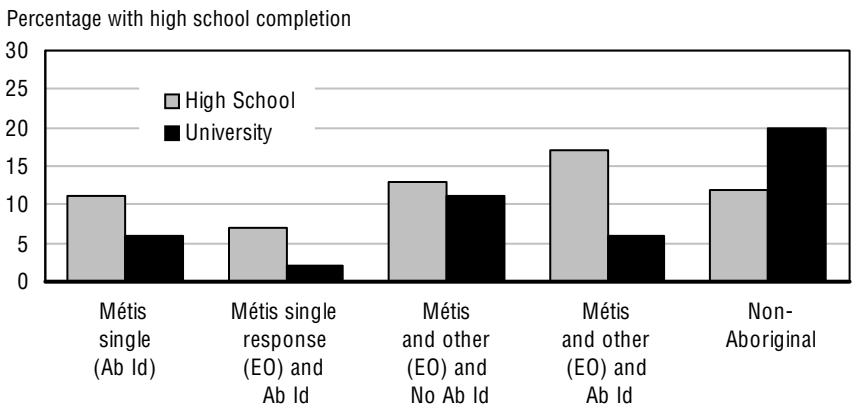
Diagram 5: People who reported Métis in Calgary on the 1996 Census (20% sample)



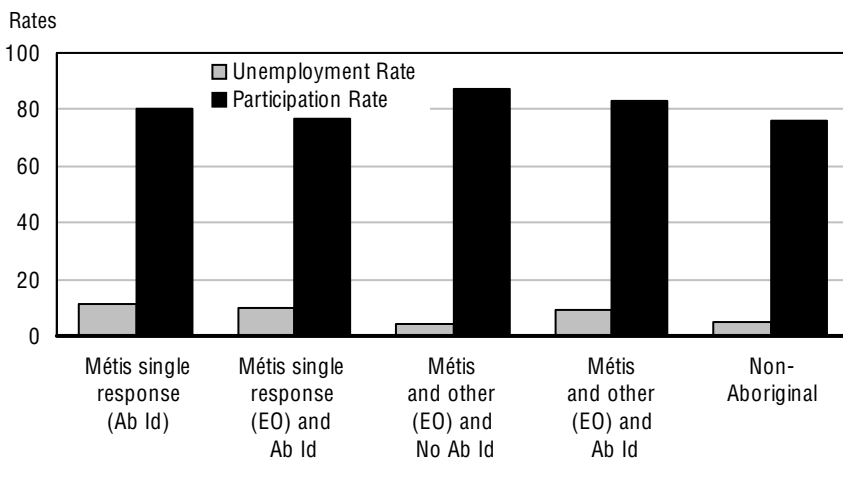
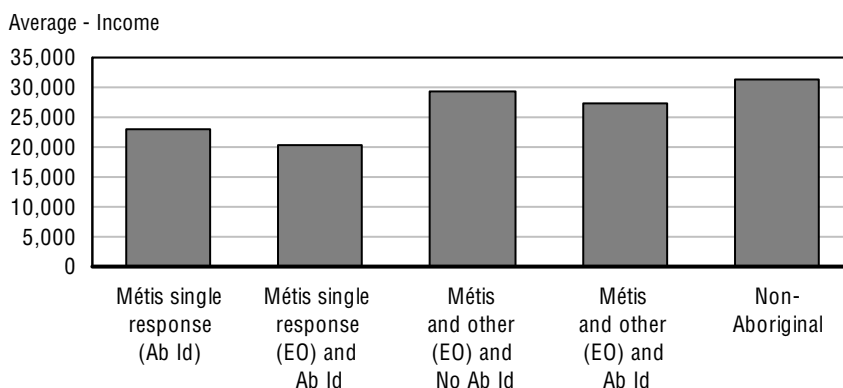
Total Métis Origins: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “Métis and Others,” or a “Multiple Aboriginal Response” to Question 17 (Ethnic Origin) on the 1996 Census. “Multiple Aboriginal Response” was included as 97% of combinations include a Métis response.

Total Métis Identity: people who reported “Métis Single Responses,” “North American Indian and Métis,” “Métis and Inuit” or “North American Indian and Inuit and Métis” to Question 18 (Aboriginal Identity) on the 1996 Census.

Chart 15: Percentage reporting high school and university completion as their highest level of education in Calgary CMA, 1996 Census

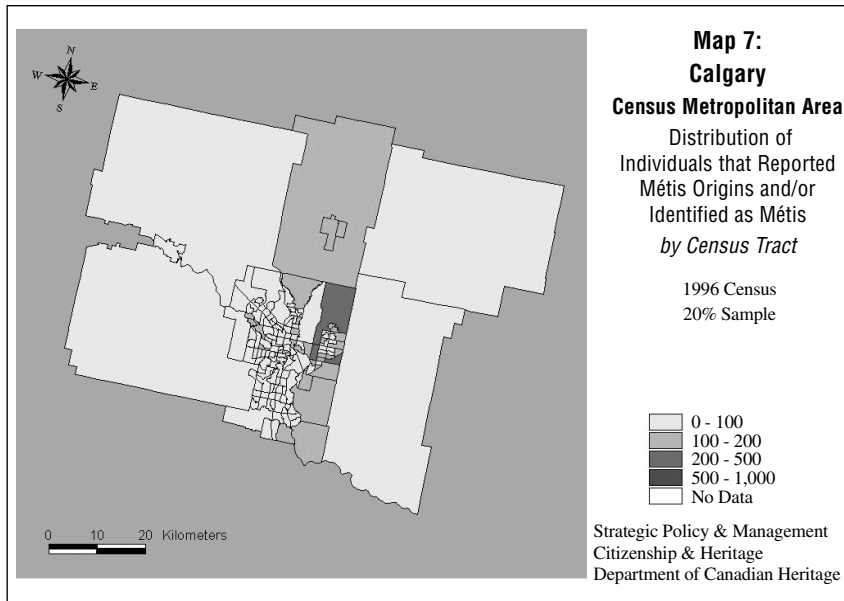


Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions.

Chart 16: Unemployment and labour force participation rates in Calgary CMA, 1996 Census**Chart 17: Average individual income, Calgary CMA, 1996 Census**

Response category for the Census ethnic origin (EO) and Aboriginal identity (AI ID) questions

Calgary, unlike Vancouver, has two central CTs with a total Métis population of over 250 people, something the identity CTs and origin CTs did not provide. In this city, combining the Métis identity and origin populations provides an improved opportunity to understand this population, and further analysis needs to occur within these CTs—or using Census information—so as to provide a more complete understanding of the situation in this rapidly growing centre.



Conclusion

The case of the Métis in urban centres across Canada needs to be more closely examined from a different perspective: a total Métis perspective provides researchers with a more holistic understanding of how this population is integrating into the urban landscape. As has been emphasized above, the case of the Métis is different from any other origin on the Census for three reasons: the definition of Métis is still being discussed in numerous circles, there is a high degree of ethnic mobility, and someone could report as Métis in a variety of ways. For this reason the melding of these two concepts should be considered.

The importance of studying this population in cities has been further supported by the socioeconomic data provided above, as Métis are not faring as well as the non-Aboriginal population—especially those that reported a single Métis origin and an Aboriginal identity. The proposition that the Aboriginal identity population is more “needs based” than the origin population seems to hold up in every CMA, with the exception of those people who reported Métis Single Response with no Aboriginal identity. However, this population is relatively small compared to the other categories.

Reporting a multiple response to the ethnic origin question also seems to result in a higher socioeconomic standing than a single response. More analysis of what the differences are between the single response category and the multiple response category needs to take place in order to get a better

understanding of what these reporting patterns imply. It could be that the Red River descendants are reporting the single response, and the more broad definition of Métis are those people reporting the multiple responses on the ethnic origin question; this requires more probing and is something that the Métis component of the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey could illuminate upon. However, one thing is clear, people are reporting Métis in a number of different ways. These different reporting patterns can have socioeconomic implications, and if ethnic mobility continues, it will be important to monitor whether this socioeconomic scenario is reinforced or if ethnic mobility results in these two sub-populations melding into one. People reporting Métis seem to be encountering socioeconomic barriers. An examination of these barriers needs to occur in order to more fully understand Métis in urban centres.

Finally, it is apparent that in three of the four cities examined here, Métis that self-identify and have Métis origins often reside in the same residential area, thereby helping researchers to understand where residential overlap occurs. When using the combined Métis variable, more socioeconomic and residential segregation analysis can be attained to gain a more complete understanding of what is happening in these areas, and why these people have chosen to reside in the same region of the city. When this new total Métis variable does not produce Census tracts, then this also provides useful information. Despite the fact that, in many cases, the origin and identity populations may not be reporting the same way, and may not have exactly the same socioeconomic standing, they do—in each of these cities—reside in similar neighbourhoods. This is something that needs to be explored more in order to help researchers, community groups, and governments fully understand the circumstances of urban Métis in Canada.

Endnotes

Any of the opinions expressed here are those of the author and do not represent the position of Canadian Heritage. The author would also like to acknowledge the work of Matthew Sheldrake (at the time of the conference he was co-op student from the University of Calgary) who produced some of the graphics and maps. However, the author takes responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies found within this paper.

1. Census Metropolitan Area and Census Agglomeration is formed by one or more adjacent municipalities centred on a large urban area. The census population count of the urban core is at least 10,000 to form a census agglomeration and at least 100,000 to form a census metropolitan area. *1996 Census Dictionary*, 181.
2. Census Tracts are small, relatively stable geographic areas that usually have a population from 2,500 to 8,000. They are located in census metropolitan areas and in census agglomerations with an urban core population of 50,000 or more in the previous census. *2001 Census Dictionary*.
3. The idea for totalling the Aboriginal origin and identity populations emerged from a lively debate at the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey's Implementation Committee on which I was a federal representative. Several of the Aboriginal organizations represented on the committee suggested that combining total origin and identity was a more inclusive and realistic count than one that focused purely on Aboriginal identity.
4. Census subdivision is the general term for municipalities or areas treated as municipal equivalents for statistical purposes.
5. This issue has been discussed by the Aboriginal Peoples' Survey Implementation Committee.

References

- Balakrishnan, T.R., and Hou, F. 1999. *Residential Patterns in Cities*, ed. S. Halli and L. Driedger. Immigrant Canada.
- Barber, K., ed. 1998. *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Dickason, O.P. 1985. "From 'One Nation' in the Northeast to 'New Nation' in the Northwest: A Look at the Emergence of Métis" in *The New Peoples*, ed. J. Peterson and J.S.H. Brown. University of Manitoba Press.
- Douaud, P.C. 1985. *Ethnolinguistic Profile of the Canadian Metis*. National Museum of Man Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service Paper No. 99.
- Kralt, J. 1990. "Ethnic Origins in the Canadian Census, 1871–1986" in *Ethnic Demography: Canadian Immigrant, Racial and Cultural Variation*, ed. S.S. Halli, with F. Travato and L. Driedger. Ottawa: Carleton University Press.
- Metis National Council. 1984. *The Metis Nation*. Ottawa (Fall).
- Olson, S.H., and Kobayashi, A.L. 1993. "The Emerging Ethnocultural Mosaic" in *The Changing Social Geography of Canadian Cities*, ed. L.S. Bourne and D.F. Ley. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Peterson, J., and Brown, J.S.H. 1985. "Métis Origins: Discovery and Interpretation" in *The New Peoples*, ed. J. Peterson and J.S.H. Brown. University of Manitoba Press.
- Siggner, A., Hull, J., Vermaeten, A., Guimond, E., and Jantzen, L. 1992. "Understanding Aboriginal Definitions: Implications for Counts and Socio-Economic Characteristics." Paper presented at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences—Canadian Population Studies.
- Statistics Canada. 1997. *1996 Census Dictionary*. Catalogue no. 92-351-XPE.