

# 4

## Métis Educational Attainment

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### Introduction

Education is considered an essential tool for securing a good job and building financial security (Penney 2008). To the Aboriginal population, achieving higher levels of post-secondary education can provide increased opportunities for employment (Hull 2004). And, once Aboriginal individuals complete post-secondary education, research has indicated that they can enjoy similar labour market outcomes as their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

The objective of this chapter is to examine educational attainment of the Métis ethnic identity population. The first part of this chapter will look at the recent data from the 2006 Census to examine educational attainment of the Métis population. The second part will explore cross-sectional trends in university attainment by analyzing the changes in the proportion of the Métis population that completed a university certificate or degree from 1996 to 2006. In both parts, we will compare the Métis ethnic identity group with non-Aboriginal Canadians. The following section outlines the data source and some of the methodological challenges faced in this study.

### Source of Data and Definitions

#### *Data*

The Census is considered to be the primary source of data on the educational attainment of Aboriginal people in Canada, including the Métis ethnic identity group. In this study, we rely on the 2006 Census data to provide an up-to-date educational profile of the Métis population, while the cross-sectional trends in university attainment will be assessed using Census data from 1996, 2001, and 2006. The indicators of educational attainment presented in this study are based on data from the custom tabulations prepared for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC).

Assessment of educational attainment of Métis people poses several methodological problems related to the identification of the Métis population in the Census data and to the inconsistencies in measurement of educational attainment over time. Both of these challenges are discussed in further detail below.

### ***Métis Population***

Statistics Canada has modified and adjusted census questions that measure ethnic and cultural affiliation of Canadians. Since the 1996 Census, Statistics Canada has been asking a question on Aboriginal identity that allows respondents to self-identify themselves with one or more of the three Aboriginal groups in Canada: First Nations (North American Indian), Métis, and Inuit. Respondents are able to choose more than one identity and, as a consequence, may have multiple Aboriginal or mixed identity affiliation. The primary disadvantage to the use of the Aboriginal identity concept as a measurement tool for ethnic and cultural affiliation is that the Census did not collect information on self-reported Aboriginal identity before 1996, making it impossible to do any time-trend analysis that would include pre-1996 data (Penney 2008).

The results presented in this study are based on the Métis who reported a single Aboriginal identity. Thus, individuals who reported Métis identity in combination with another Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal identity are excluded. Even though this adjustment has the potential to slightly impact the study population, it has been adopted by most researchers (Penney 2008). Non-Aboriginal Canadians, the reference group, is comprised of individuals who did not report belonging to any of the three Aboriginal ethnic identity groups.

As Guimond (2003) has pointed out, the Aboriginal population has increased much more rapidly than that of other Canadians over the last few decades. Some of this increase in population can be explained through higher fertility rates. However, it is clear that a substantial portion of this demographic growth cannot be explained by births, deaths, migration or quality of data. Guimond (2003) points out that the residual growth can only be explained utilizing the concept of “ethnic mobility,” a phenomenon by which individuals and families experience changes in their ethnic affiliation.

With the increased urbanization and intermarriage Canada has experienced in the past four decades, there has been a rapid growth in the number of children of mixed ethnocultural backgrounds. Once they are adults, these children may “choose” their ethnic affiliation, and such a choice may vary depending on the circumstances. The choice to self-identify with a particular Aboriginal group is effected by many things, not the least of which are social issues and their media coverage, both contributing to restoring Aboriginal people’s pride. Moreover, higher court decisions over the past two decades have drawn many people with mixed ancestries to self-identify as Aboriginal. The Métis, given their mixed roots, have been the primary recipient of this ethnic drift. These changes in ethnic affiliation had and will continue to have an important impact on the measurement and monitoring of educational and other socio-economic outcomes of the Métis over time.

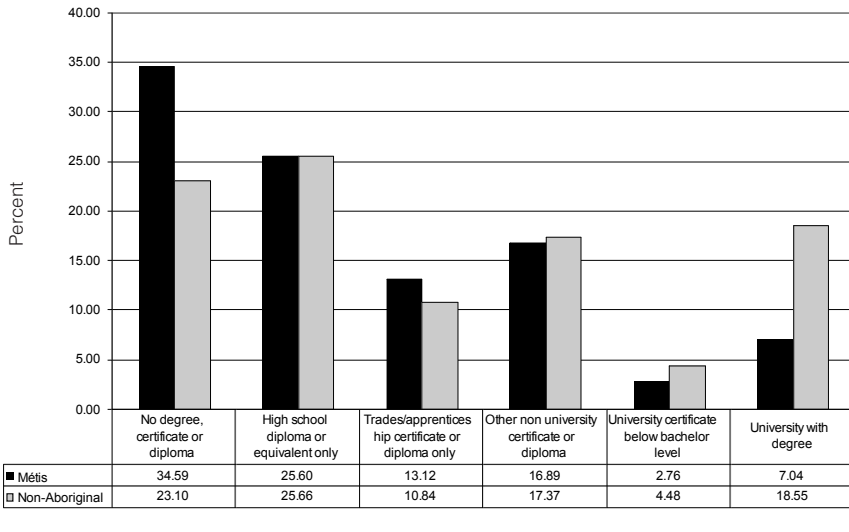
**Table 4.1: Highest Degree or Credential, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada 2006**

Highest Degree of Credential	Métis	Non-Aboriginal
No degree, certificate, or diploma	34.59	23.10
High school diploma or higher	65.41	76.90
High school diploma or equivalent only	25.60	25.66
Post-secondary certificate or degree	39.81	51.24
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	30.01	28.21
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	13.12	10.84
Other non-university certificate or diploma	16.89	17.37
University	9.80	23.03
University certificate below bachelor level	2.76	4.48
With degree	7.04	18.55
Bachelor's degree	5.90	14.38
Master's degree	0.98	3.47
Earned doctorate	0.16	0.71

### ***Education Variables in Census***

Before the 2006 Census, Statistics Canada was fairly consistent in collecting data on educational attainment. The question regarding “highest level of schooling” allowed individuals to choose one of the following categories: (1) Less than grade 9, (2) Incomplete high school, (3) High school certificate, (4) Incomplete post-secondary, (5) Completed trades, (6) Completed college, and (7) Completed university. Since this hierarchical variable had serious shortcomings, for the 2006 Census, Statistics Canada changed the educational attainment indicator to actually record the educational credential attained. The question regarding “highest degree, certificate, or diploma” now includes the following categories: (1) No degree, certificate, or diploma, (2) High school diploma or equivalent only, (3) Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma only, (4) Other non-university certificate or diploma, (5) University certificate below bachelor level, and (6) University degree (including certificate above bachelor level). As a result of these changes, methodological problems exist due to inconsistencies in the measurement of educational attainment. The only category that is comparable across time is the “Completed university degree” category. As a consequence, our examination of cross-sectional trends in Métis educational attainment is limited to the analysis of changes in the proportion of Métis that completed a university certificate or degree from 1996 to 2006.

**Figure 4.1: Highest Degree or Credential, Métis Identity Population and the Reference Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**



## Results

### *Educational Attainment in 2006*

This section provides an overview of educational attainment among the Métis single identity population based on the recent data from the 2006 Census. Specifically, it examines the relationships between education attainment and gender, age, and geographic location.

#### *Highest Degree or Credential in 2006.*

**Table 4.1** and **Figure 4.1** present the highest degree or credential attained by Métis and by non-Aboriginal individuals. **Table 4.1** displays a more detailed educational profile for each population by showing percentages for all categories and sub-categories of educational outcomes, from failing to attain a high school diploma to earning a university certificate or degree. **Figure 4.1** presents a subset of these results, focusing on the main educational indicators. Census data indicate that in 2006 individuals who reported Métis identity were less successful in earning a certificate, diploma (including a high school or equivalent diploma), or degree, as compared to non-Aboriginal individuals. As displayed in **Table 4.1**, only 65.4% of Métis obtained a high school diploma or any post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, as compared to 76.9% of non-Aboriginals. It should also be noted that the levels of high school completion for non-Aboriginals in younger age groups is close to 90%. The overall numbers are pulled down by the large group of persons over 55 years old (see **Table 4.3**).

**Table 4.2: Degree or Credential by Sex, Métis Identity Population and the Reference Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**

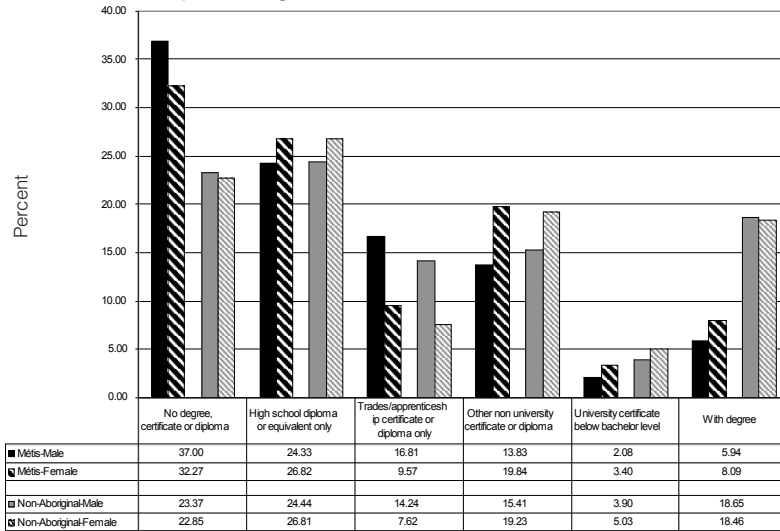
Highest Degree or Credential	Métis		Non-Aboriginal	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
No degree, certificate, or diploma	37.00	32.27	23.37	22.85
High school diploma or higher	63.00	67.73	76.63	77.15
High school diploma or equivalent only	24.33	26.82	24.44	26.81
Post-secondary certificate or degree	38.68	40.90	52.19	50.34
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	30.65	29.40	29.64	26.85
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	16.81	9.57	14.24	7.62
Other non-university certificate or diploma	13.83	19.84	15.41	19.23
University	8.03	11.50	22.55	23.49
University certificate below bachelor level	2.08	3.40	3.90	5.03
With degree	5.94	8.09	18.65	18.46
Bachelor's degree	4.70	7.06	13.83	14.89
Master's degree	1.04	0.91	3.82	3.13
Earned doctorate	0.21	0.12	1.00	0.43

The disparity in educational attainment between Métis and non-Aboriginal individuals is quite pronounced when considering post-secondary educational outcomes. Overall, in 2006 more non-Aboriginal individuals (51.2%) reported earning any post-secondary certificates, diplomas, or degrees, as compared to only 39.8% of Métis individuals. On the positive side, a slightly higher percentage of Métis individuals earned a post-secondary certificate or diploma below the university level than did non-Aboriginals (30% and 28.2% respectively). In particular, when considering non-university educational attainment, the Métis were more likely to earn trades/apprenticeship certificates or diplomas (13.23%) than non-Aboriginals (10.8%) who instead were more likely to obtain other non-university post-secondary credentials. Despite achieving equivalence in the area of non-university post-secondary education, the Métis were much less likely to obtain university level education. The percentage of non-Aboriginal individuals that attended university (with or without a degree) is much higher than the percentage of Métis individuals by a factor of 13.2% (23% versus 9.8%). The gap between the Métis and non-Aboriginal populations is the most pronounced when considering the proportion of individuals who graduate from university with a degree; only 7% of Métis reported having graduated with a degree, as compared to 18.5% of non-Aboriginals. Thus, the low rates of university completions observed in the Métis population are a major contributor to the overall gap in post-secondary educational outcomes between the two identity groups.

#### ***Highest Degree or Credential in 2006 by Sex.***

Table 4.2 and corresponding Figure 4.2 compare the highest degree or credential attained for Métis men and women, also considering non-Aboriginals as the

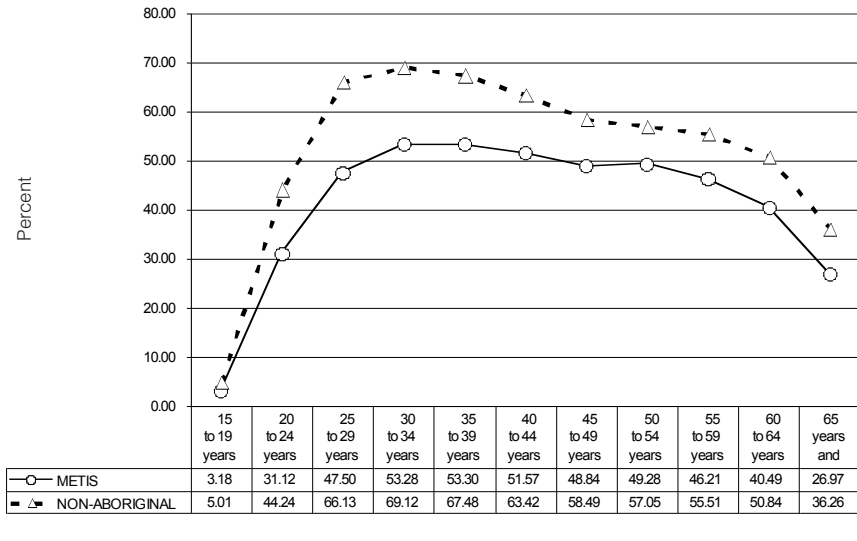
**Figure 4.2: Highest Degree or Credential by Sex, Métis Identity Population and the Reference Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**



reference population. As illustrated in **Figure 4.2**, there were some substantial differences in the attainment of certificates, diplomas, and degrees between Métis men and women. In general, more Métis females attained higher levels of education, as compared to their male counterparts. **Table 4.2** shows that Métis females were more likely than Métis males to earn a certificate, diploma, or degree (67.7% and 63% respectively). In contrast, when considering non-Aboriginals, there was no gender gap as approximately the same percentage of men and women earned certificates, diplomas, and degrees (76.6% and 77.1% respectively).

**Figure 4.2** indicates that, compared to Métis males, Métis females excelled in all categories of post-secondary education, except for trades/apprenticeships. A much higher proportion of Métis women (19.8%) received other non-university certificates or diplomas, as compared to Métis men (13.8%) and they were much more likely (11.5%) to attend university, as compared to Métis males (8.0%). When considering accreditation in trades, the gender gap is reversed, as 16.8% of Métis males reported receiving a trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma, compared to only 9.6% of females with the same ethnic identity. Similar gender gaps and differences in educational outcomes were observed in the non-Aboriginal population with the exception of attainment of university credentials. When analysing statistics related to post-secondary education at the university level, **Figure 4.2** illustrates that substantially more Métis women (8%) reported earning a university degree, as compared to Métis men (5.9%). However, the same gender gap was not observed in the non-Aboriginal population where, in 2006, slightly more males (18.7%) received a university degree than females (18.5%). For Canada in general it is recognized that in earlier generations women were not

**Figure 4.3: Post-secondary Certificate or Degree, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**



encouraged to attend university. This cultural norm has changed dramatically in the last two decades.

#### ***Highest Degree or Credential in 2006 by Age.***

**Figure 4.3** displays the percentages of Métis and non-Aboriginal individuals of the different age groups that attained any post-secondary certification, including trades/apprenticeship certificates or diplomas, non-university certificates and diplomas, as well as university certificates and degrees by various age groups.

**Figure 4.3** illustrates that, looking at the Métis population, 31.12% of individuals in the 20–24 years of age group attained post-secondary certification, as compared to 53.3% of individuals in the 35–39 years of age group—an increase of more than 20%. In fact, the 35–39 years of age group had the highest percentage of individuals that obtained a post-secondary certificate or degree. The proportion of the population with a post-secondary education is the lowest for the older age groups, particularly for those 65 years of age and older (27%). In general, the same relationship between level of educational attainment and age is observed in the non-Aboriginal population; however, as indicated before, the rates of post-secondary education for this population are much higher.

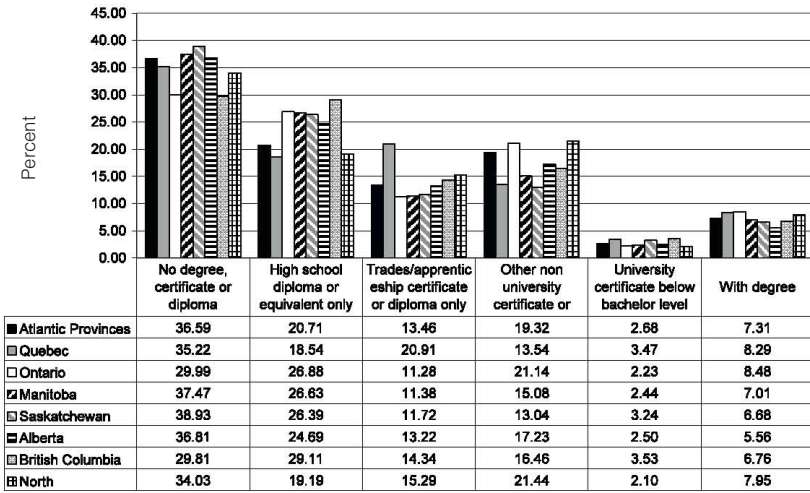
It is important to point out that in the non-Aboriginal population, the highest percentage of individuals with post-secondary education was reported for the 30–34 years of age group (69.1%), compared to 35–39 years of age group in the Métis population. In addition, the gap between the Métis and non-Aboriginal identity populations in the percentage of individuals with a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree is the largest among individuals in the 25–29 years

**Table 4.3: Highest Degree or Credential by Age, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**

	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
<b>Highest Degree or Credential</b>											
No degree, certificate, or diploma	72.80	25.38	20.76	19.79	22.52	24.77	27.22	28.57	33.87	44.79	60.14
High school diploma or higher	27.20	74.62	79.23	80.21	77.46	75.22	72.76	71.43	66.11	55.21	39.86
High school diploma or equivalent only	24.02	43.50	31.73	26.95	24.18	23.67	23.92	22.15	19.90	14.73	12.92
Post-secondary certificate or degree	3.18	31.12	47.50	53.28	53.30	51.57	48.84	49.28	46.21	40.49	26.97
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	2.96	22.78	33.03	38.35	40.09	41.25	38.13	37.12	34.19	31.29	21.21
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	1.61	7.68	11.67	14.16	15.65	18.25	17.18	18.24	17.98	17.91	13.19
Other non-university certificate or diploma	1.36	15.10	21.36	24.19	24.45	23.00	20.94	18.89	16.21	13.38	8.01
University	0.22	8.35	14.45	14.93	13.19	10.32	10.73	12.16	12.02	9.20	5.73
University certificate below bachelor level	0.16	2.23	2.98	2.97	3.64	3.34	3.46	4.05	3.63	2.83	2.30
With degree	0.06	6.11	11.47	11.96	9.54	6.95	7.24	8.09	8.39	6.33	3.46
Bachelor's degree	0.06	6.00	10.48	10.42	8.30	5.53	5.95	6.06	6.17	4.02	2.45
Master's degree	0.00	0.05	0.93	1.24	1.03	1.30	1.16	1.78	1.84	1.87	0.83
Earned doctorate	0.00	0.05	0.07	0.30	0.20	0.10	0.13	0.26	0.37	0.48	0.13
<b>Métis</b>											
No degree, certificate, or diploma	64.33	12.55	10.21	9.79	10.75	12.84	15.48	16.28	19.31	26.47	42.26
High school diploma or higher	35.67	87.45	89.79	90.21	89.26	87.16	84.52	83.72	80.69	73.53	57.74
High school diploma or equivalent only	30.66	43.21	23.66	21.09	21.77	23.74	26.03	26.67	25.18	22.69	21.48
Post-secondary certificate or degree	5.01	44.24	66.13	69.12	67.48	63.42	58.49	57.05	55.51	50.84	36.26
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	4.40	27.06	32.89	33.63	34.17	35.48	33.70	31.72	30.06	28.22	21.84
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	1.56	7.38	10.22	10.53	11.84	13.28	13.25	12.90	13.03	13.11	10.91
Other non-university certificate or diploma	2.85	19.68	22.67	23.10	22.33	22.21	20.44	18.82	17.03	15.12	10.93
University	0.61	17.19	33.24	35.49	33.31	27.94	24.80	25.32	25.45	22.61	14.42
University certificate below bachelor level	0.43	3.89	4.51	4.73	4.99	4.94	4.86	5.11	5.57	5.73	4.50
With degree	0.17	13.30	28.73	30.76	28.32	23.00	19.94	20.22	19.88	16.88	9.92
Bachelor's degree	0.17	12.73	24.40	24.36	22.05	17.51	14.99	14.99	14.46	11.67	7.05
Master's degree	0.00	0.51	4.06	5.64	5.36	4.55	4.10	4.35	4.47	4.02	2.04
Earned doctorate	0.00	0.06	0.27	0.76	0.91	0.94	0.84	0.87	0.94	1.19	0.83
<b>Non-Aboriginal</b>											



**Figure 4.4: Highest Degree or Credential by Region of Canada, Métis Identity Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**



of age group (18.6%). The gap then decreases to 14.2% for individuals in the 35–39 years of age group. These statistics indicate that a large proportion of Métis students continue to pursue post-secondary education into their late 30's, This likely reflects a trend that Métis students are moving through the school system at a slower rate than non-Aboriginal students and/or are coming to want more education later in life.

Finally, **Table 4.3** presents highest degree or credential attained by Métis and non-Aboriginal individuals belonging to different age groups. This table shows a more detailed educational profile for each population and for each age group by displaying percentages for all categories and sub-categories of educational outcomes. However, these statistics are not discussed in this chapter.

#### ***Highest Degree or Credential in 2006 by Geographic Location***

Geography affects educational attainment because it reflects such factors as regional and local differences in educational systems and the labour market. Literature also suggests that proximity to colleges and universities has an effect on levels of educational attainment (Hull, 2004). The present study examines geographic location in several ways. First, differences among provinces or regions are explored. In this analysis, the four Atlantic Provinces have been grouped and are indicated as such, and Nunavut, the Northwest Territories, and Yukon Territory have also been combined and are listed as Northern Canada Region. Second, it looks at differences in levels of educational attainment in four areas of residence: urban Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), urban non-CMA, rural, and on-reserve.

**Table 4.4** and **Figure 4.4** illustrate the differences in educational attainment for the Métis living in different provinces and regions of Canada. In 2006, “only”

**Table 4.4: Highest Degree or Credential by Region of Canada, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**

	Atlantic	Quebec	Ontario	Manitoba	Saskatchewan	Alberta	British Columbia	North
<b>Métis</b>	Highest Degree or Credential							
	No degree, certificate, or diploma	36.59	35.22	29.99	37.47	38.93	36.81	34.03
	High school diploma or higher	63.45	64.78	70.02	62.52	61.08	63.18	65.82
	High school diploma or equivalent only	20.71	18.54	26.88	26.63	26.39	24.69	19.19
	Post-secondary certificate or degree	42.74	46.25	43.13	35.91	34.68	38.50	41.08
	Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	32.78	34.45	32.43	26.47	24.77	30.44	30.80
	Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	13.46	20.91	11.28	11.38	11.72	13.22	14.34
	Other non-university certificate or diploma	19.32	13.54	21.14	15.08	13.04	17.23	16.46
	University	9.96	11.79	10.71	9.43	9.92	8.06	10.29
	University certificate below bachelor level	2.68	3.47	2.23	2.44	3.24	2.50	3.53
	With degree	7.31	8.29	8.48	7.01	6.68	5.56	6.76
	Bachelor's degree	6.38	6.75	6.72	6.29	5.98	4.77	5.23
	Master's degree	0.66	1.34	1.52	0.65	0.58	0.73	1.24
Earned doctorate	0.23	0.22	0.24	0.06	0.12	0.06	0.28	
<b>Non-Aboriginal</b>	No degree, certificate, or diploma	28.83	24.77	21.95	26.38	27.65	22.34	15.33
	High school diploma or higher	71.17	75.23	78.05	73.62	72.35	77.66	84.69
	High school diploma or equivalent only	23.93	22.34	26.82	27.54	27.48	26.47	23.70
	Post-secondary certificate or degree	47.23	52.88	51.23	46.08	44.88	51.20	60.98
	Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	29.37	31.37	26.33	25.43	26.68	28.99	27.55
	Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	11.48	15.27	7.96	9.87	11.47	10.86	10.78
	Other non-university certificate or diploma	17.88	16.10	18.37	15.56	15.22	18.13	16.77
	University	17.87	21.51	24.90	20.65	18.19	22.21	25.39
	University certificate below bachelor level	3.66	4.89	4.16	4.23	4.35	4.09	5.52
	With degree	14.21	16.62	20.74	16.42	13.85	18.12	19.88
	Bachelor's degree	11.16	12.80	15.94	13.48	11.37	14.50	15.22
	Master's degree	2.52	3.17	4.04	2.29	1.92	2.94	3.84
	Earned doctorate	0.52	0.66	0.76	0.65	0.56	0.67	0.81

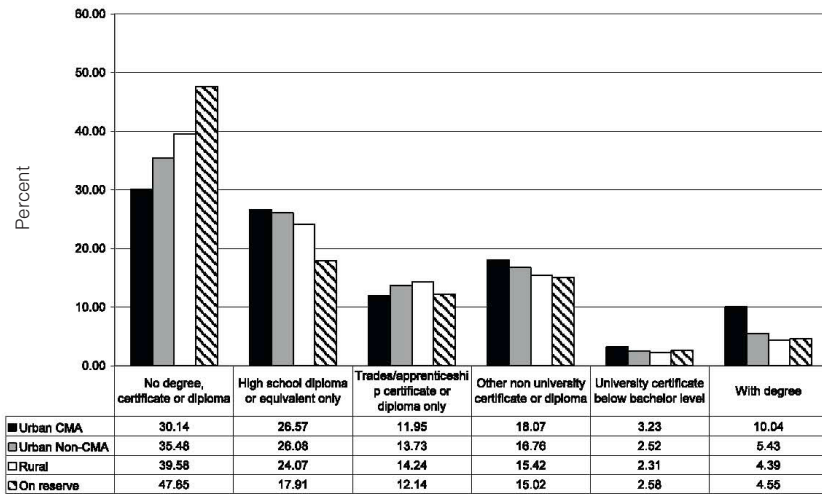
about thirty percent of the Métis in Ontario or British Columbia (30% and 29.8% respectively) did not obtain certificate, diploma, or degree (including high school or equivalent diploma). This figure increases when moving to other regions of Canada and it was the highest for the Métis in Saskatchewan (38.9%). Despite having the lowest proportion of individuals who failed to receive certificates, diplomas and degrees, in “relative terms,” the Métis living in Ontario and British Columbia still lagged non-Aboriginals living in these two provinces as only 22% of non-Aboriginals in Ontario and 19.07% in BC reported having no certificate, diploma, or degree. As a consequence, the gap between the two ethnic identity populations in Ontario (8%) and in British Columbia (10.8%) was still substantial (national average gap was 11.5%). It is important to note that the gap between the two identity groups was the largest in the Northern Canada Region (18.9%); however, this gap is primary due to very high percentage of non-Aboriginals in the Northern Canada reporting to have received certificates, diplomas and degrees. This high number probably reflects the occupational distribution of those non-Aboriginal peoples in the North.

**Table 4.4** indicates that more Métis living in Quebec (46.3%) and in the Northern Canada Region (46.7%) earned a post-secondary certificate, diploma, or degree, as compared to the Métis living in the other provinces, regions, and territories. Manitoba (35.9%) and Saskatchewan (34.7%), on the other hand, reported the lowest percentages. When comparing the Métis to non-Aboriginals, the smallest gap in the rates of obtaining post-secondary credentials was observed in the Atlantic Provinces (4.5%) and in Quebec (6.6%), while the biggest gap was observed in the Northern Canada Region (14.4%).

There were some interesting between-province differences with regard to the prevalence of different types of post-secondary credentials. For example, Quebec and Ontario reported similar rates of non-university post-secondary educational attainment (Quebec, 34.5%; Ontario, 32.4%). However, as many as 20.9% of Métis living in Quebec attained a trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma while the percentage in Ontario was much lower (11.3%). The situation is reversed when considering the percentage of individuals with other non-university certificates or diplomas, as fewer Métis in Quebec (13.5%) reported having a non-university certificate or diploma than Métis living in Ontario (21.1%). Similarly, more Métis living in the Northern Canada Region (21.4%) and the Atlantic Provinces (19.3%) reported having a non-university certificate or diploma, exceeding the national average of 16.9%. These differences may reflect diversities in provincial educational systems.

In 2006, there were no substantial regional differences with regard to university degree attainment. Ontario and Quebec boasted slightly higher levels (8.48% and 8.3% respectively), as compared to the other provinces, regions, and territories of Canada. The gap in attainment of a university degree between the two identity populations was the highest in Northern Canada Region (17.1%) where 8% of Métis reported having a university degree, as compared to 25% of the

**Figure 4.5: Highest Degree or Credential by Area of Residence, Métis Identity Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**



non-Aboriginals. The gap was the smallest in the Atlantic Provinces (6.9%) and Saskatchewan (7.2%); however, these low numbers can be attributed to the relatively low rate of university degree attainment among the non-Aboriginal population in these two provinces.

**Figure 4.5** displays the highest degree or credential for the Métis identity population by area of residence, which includes four categories: urban Census Metropolitan Areas, urban non-CMA area, rural area, and on-reserve. **Table 4.4** presents a more detailed set of statistics for this relationship, as well as the percentages for the non-Aboriginal population.

In 2006, 30.1% of Métis living in urban CMAs reported having no certificate, diploma, or degree, as compared to 35.5% of Métis living in urban non-CMAs and 39.5% living in rural areas. Close to half of Métis living on-reserve (47.7%) reported having no educational credentials, signifying potential challenges and barriers to attaining post-secondary education.

Census data indicate that the Métis living in highly populated areas (CMAs) attained higher levels of education. For example, 43.3% of the Métis living in urban CMAs reported earning either a post-secondary diploma or degree, as compared to 38.4% of the Métis living in urban non-CMAs, 36.4% living in rural areas, and 34.3% living on reserves. Similarly, the Métis living in urban CMAs were more likely to obtain a university degree (10%), as compared to the Métis living in other areas (urban non-CMA, 5.4%; rural, 4.4%; on reserve, 4.6%). Thus, it appears that the size of a community one lives in is positively related to her or his chances of obtaining a high school diploma or any post-secondary education. A similar trend was observed in the non-Aboriginal population. However, it is inter-

**Table 4.5: Highest Degree or Credential by Area of Residence, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 2006**

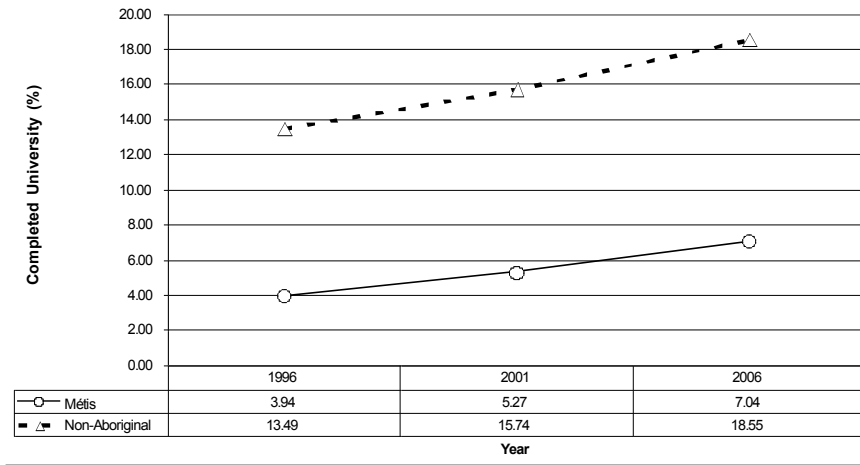
Highest Degree or Credential	Urban CMA	Urban Non-CMA	Rural	On Reserve
	<b>Métis</b>			
No degree, certificate, or diploma	30.14	35.48	39.58	47.65
High school diploma or higher	69.86	64.52	60.42	52.20
High school diploma or equivalent only	26.57	26.08	24.07	17.91
Post-secondary certificate or degree	43.29	38.44	36.36	34.29
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	30.02	30.48	29.66	27.16
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	11.95	13.73	14.24	12.14
Other non-university certificate or diploma	18.07	16.76	15.42	15.02
University	13.27	7.95	6.69	7.13
University certificate below bachelor level	3.23	2.52	2.31	2.58
With degree	10.04	5.43	4.39	4.55
Bachelor's degree	8.22	4.78	3.73	4.10
Master's degree	1.56	0.55	0.57	0.30
Earned doctorate	0.25	0.11	0.09	0.00
	<b>Non-Aboriginal</b>			
No degree, certificate, or diploma	20.14	27.50	29.55	24.10
High school diploma or higher	79.86	72.50	70.45	75.92
High school diploma or equivalent only	25.59	26.47	25.20	26.34
Post-secondary certificate or degree	54.27	46.02	45.25	49.58
Trades/apprenticeship or other non-university	26.54	31.20	31.37	31.99
Trades/apprenticeship certificate or diploma	9.24	13.28	14.24	14.46
Other non-university certificate or diploma	17.31	17.93	17.13	17.56
University	27.73	14.82	13.87	17.54
University certificate below bachelor level	5.05	3.55	3.33	4.24
With degree	22.68	11.27	10.54	13.33
Bachelor's degree	17.34	9.28	8.55	10.61
Master's degree	4.43	1.69	1.66	2.27
Earned doctorate	0.92	0.30	0.33	0.45

esting to note, when assessing the gap between the two identity populations, that the Métis living in urban non-CMAs and in rural areas were comparatively better off than those living in urban CMAs, as the gap between Métis and non-Aboriginals was only 5.8% in urban non-CMAs and 6.2% in rural areas, compared to 12.6% for CMA urban areas.

### ***Change in Completed University—1996–2006***

The second part of this chapter examines cross-sectional trends in completion of a university certificate or degree from 1996 to 2006. As discussed previously, due

**Figure 4.6: Completed University, Métis Identity Population and the Reference Population Aged 15 and Over, Canada, 1996-2006**

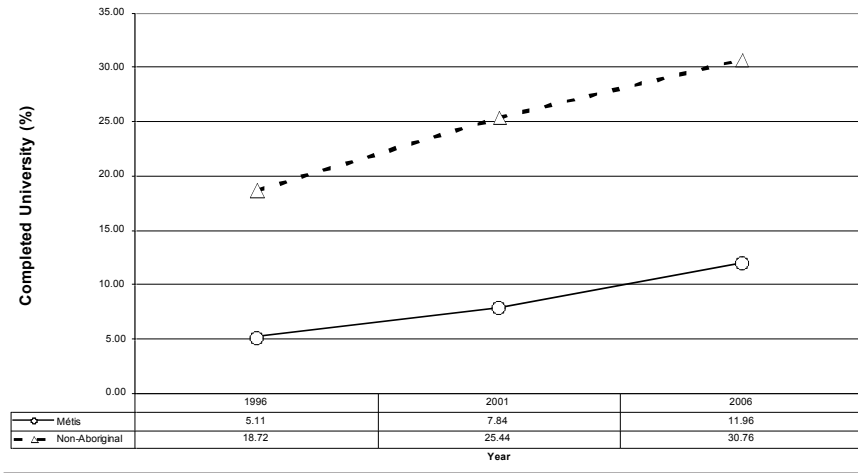


to changes in data collection procedures for education attainment in 2006, the 2006 Census data cannot be directly compared to data collected in 1996 and 2001. The only educational attainment category that remained constant over time is the category measuring the proportion of respondents having completed a university degree. Thus, only data on obtained university degrees at the Bachelor's level and higher can be compared across time. Therefore, we examine data on university degree attainment from 1996 to 2006 for the Métis and non-Aboriginal populations.

**Figure 4.6** displays changes in university certificate or degree attainment from 1996 to 2006 for the Métis and non-Aboriginal identity populations, 15 years of age and over. For both populations, the proportion of individuals that attained a university degree increased during this time period. For the Métis identity population, the reported rate of obtaining a university certificate or degree nearly doubled between 1996 and 2006, increasing from 3.9% to 7%. Similarly, the proportion of non-Aboriginals that attained a university certificate or degree also increased, from 13.5% in 1996 to 18.6% in 2006. Thus, over the ten-year time period from 1996 to 2006, increases in attainment of university credentials observed in the Métis population were not as substantial as the increases experienced by the non-Aboriginals. As a consequence, the gap between the Métis and non-Aboriginals in achieving a university certificate or degree has increased over that time period, from 9.6% in 1996, to 10.5% in 2001, to 11.5% in 2006.

Another way to examine the underlying trend in educational attainment over time is to assess the nature of change for a younger age group. Educational attainment, including completion of a university certificate or degree, is related to age. In general, younger individuals tend to have higher levels of educational attainment than do older individuals. Specifically, we decided to examine change in the

**Figure 4.7: Completed University, Métis Identity Population and the Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 30–34, Canada, 1996–2006**



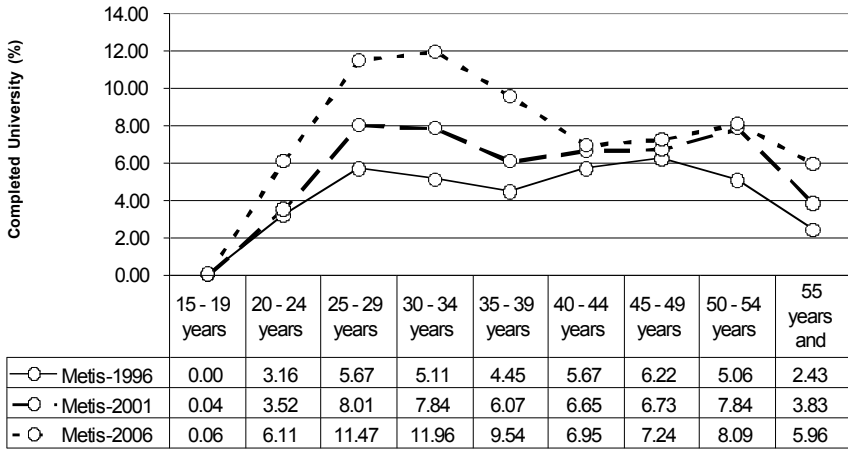
rate of university degree attainment for the 30–34 years of age group. This age group was chosen because they were the most likely to have attained a university certificate or degree.

**Figure 4.7** illustrates that the percentage of the Métis 30–34 years of age that obtained a university certificate or degree more than doubled, from 5.1% in 1996 to 12% in 2006. The rate of university completion also increased among the non-Aboriginal population, from 18.7% in 1996 to 30.8% in 2006. When comparing the gap in university degree attainment between Métis and non-Aboriginals 30–34 years of age (**Figure 4.7**) with the gap between the total population for each group 15 years of age and older (**Figure 4.6**), the gap for the 30–34 year olds is much wider and increases. Specifically, in 1996 the gap was 13.6% while by the year 2006, it increased to 18.8%.

#### ***Change in Completed University by Age Groups***

**Figures 4.8a** and **4.8b** depict the proportion of the population with a university certificate or degree by age group and for the Census periods 1996, 2001, and 2006, separately for each identity group. They indicate substantial increases in the attainment of university certificates and degrees for all age groups and for both identity groups during this ten-year time period. For the non-Aboriginal population, **Figure 4.8b** shows that the younger age groups (25–19 and 30–34 years of age) had consistently the highest proportion of individuals with a university certificate or degree. **Figure 4.8a** illustrates that the distribution of educational attainment by age is slightly different for the Métis population. Specifically, in 1996, the 45–49 years of age group was the group with the highest rate of university completion (6.2%). However, by 2001, young Métis in the 25–29 years of age group represented the group with the highest proportion with a university

**Figure 4.8a: Completed University by Age, Métis Identity Population Aged 30–34, Canada, 1996–2006**



certificate or degree (8%), narrowly outperforming individuals in the 50–54 years of age group (7.8%). In 2006, young Métis in the 25–29 (11.5%) and 30–34 (12%) years of age groups comprised the highest proportions with a university certificate or degree.

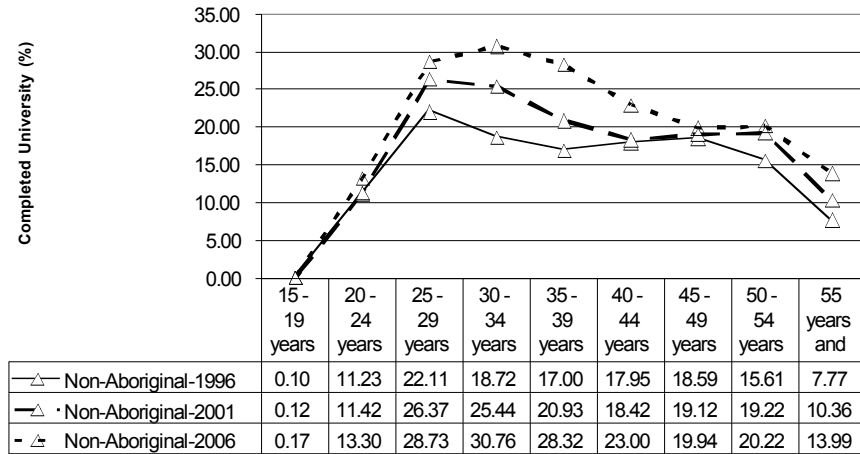
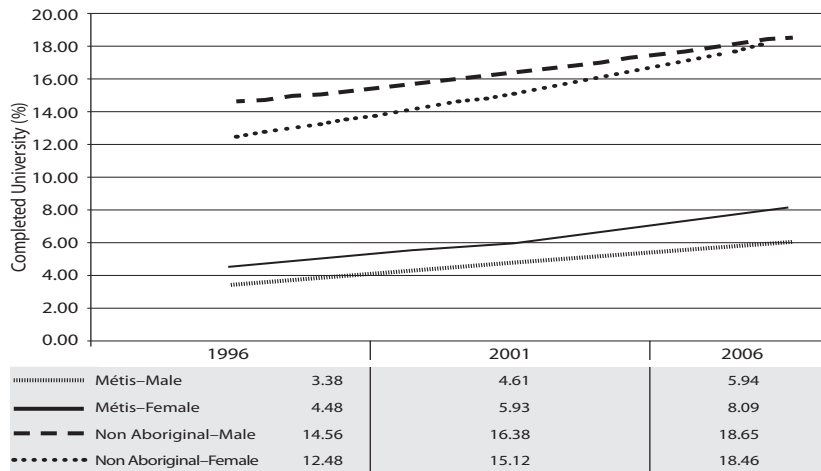
Although the level of university attainment among the Métis is not as high as for the non-Aboriginal population, progress has been achieved over the ten-year time period between 1996 and 2006. For instance, the proportion of the Métis 30–34 years of age that reported having attained a university certificate or degree has increased from 5.1% in 1996, to 7.9% in 2001, to 12% in 2006. The rate of increase in university attainment for the Métis in this age group is higher than the rate of increase for 30–34-year-old non-Aboriginals.

**Change in Completed University by Sex**

**Figure 4.9** depicts change in the proportion of Métis and non-Aboriginal males and females that reported having either a university certificate or degree for the ten-year time period from 1996 to 2006, illustrating that the number of Métis males and females that reported obtaining a university-level education increased from 1996 to 2006. In 1996, 3.4% of Métis males reported having obtained a university certificate or degree. This figure increased to 4.6% in 2001 and to 5.9% in 2006. Many more Métis females completed either a university certificate or degree, with rates increasing from 4.5% in 1996, to 5.9% in 2001, and to 8% in 2006.

Although the proportions of Métis men and women that completed university with a degree or certificate increased during the ten-year time period, so too did the proportions of non-Aboriginal males and females. As a consequence, for females, the gap between Métis and non-Aboriginals increased from 8% in 1996



**Figure 4.8b: Completed University by Age, Non-Aboriginal Population Aged 30–34, Canada, 1996–2006****Figure 4.9: Completed University by Sex, Métis Identity Population and the Reference Population Aged 30–34, Canada, 1996–2006**

to 9.2% in 2001 and to 10.4% in 2006. Similarly, the gap for males increased from 11.2% in 1996 to 11.8% in 2001 and 12.7% in 2006.

**Figure 4.9** also illustrates that, in 1996, within the non-Aboriginal population, men had a higher rate of university completion than women. By 2006, both genders achieved parity; the 2.6% gap from 1996 had almost disappeared. If the same trend continues, non-Aboriginal women should outperform men by the next Census date. In the Métis population, however, women were reporting higher rates of university completions throughout the 1996–2006 period. In fact, the

gender gap in the Métis population has been growing from 1.1% in 1996 to 1.3% in 2001 and to 2.2% in 2006.

## Conclusion

As the data indicates, there is a substantial gap between Métis identity persons and rest of the Canadian population. We can see this gap exists throughout the educational attainment levels with fewer Métis completing high school than other Canadians (65.4% vs 76.9%). Fewer Métis gaining post secondary training (39.8% vs 51%) and substantially lower numbers securing university degrees (7% vs 18.5%). These patterns repeat themselves for both men and women although we see Métis women outperforming Métis men particularly at the higher levels of education (except in trades).

Have the gaps been closing? The short answer is “no.” Although there appears to be a positive movement toward gaining post-secondary trades and apprenticeship training. This would be important to capitalize on from a policy perspective. The gap in high school completion continues to widen and the gap between Métis and non-Aboriginals in achieving a university certificate or degree has increased over the last three census periods, from 9.6% in 1996, to 10.5% in 2001, to 11.5% in 2006.

Those in cities do better than those in rural areas and the largest cities are better than the non-CMA areas. Younger Métis are seeking higher education but at a rate still less than the non-Aboriginal groups. Interestingly, a large proportion of the Métis students continue to pursue post-secondary education into their late thirties. This could mean that that Métis students are moving through the school system at a slower rate than non-Aboriginal students or it may mean they are coming to want more education later in life.

Lastly we see that the Western Prairie provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan, along with the North, represent particularly difficult situations. We see the gap between Métis and others in the major urban CMAs is larger, but across the board the Métis in the CMAs do better than their identity population cohorts in the smaller urban, rural, and northern areas. This may reflect that there is a negative social capital effect (see Chapter 10), or there may be other factors we are not tapping.

Despite the gaps that exist, the Métis have better achievement levels than other Aboriginal identity groups. Particularly they do better than on-reserve First Nations and Inuit. Why? It is clear that the vast majority of Métis utilize the provincial public and private school systems; they do not have developed school systems of their own. As such, the Métis have been able to encourage the provincial systems to include more Aboriginal content in the school systems. It could be that the level of integration with the wider Canadian society is greater for those identifying as Métis than for other Aboriginal groups. This raises many issues about what the way forward may be.

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