

# **The Impact of Registered Indian Status on Education, Employment, and Mobility**

by

Drake Thomas Rushford  
Bachelor of Arts (Honours), University of Manitoba, 2019

An Extended Essay Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS  
in the Department of Economics

We accept this extended essay as conforming  
to the required standard



---

Dr. Rob Gillezeau, co-Supervisor (Department of Economics)



---

Dr. Maggie Jones, co-Supervisor (Department of Economics)

© Drake Thomas Rushford, 2021  
University of Victoria

All rights reserved. This extended essay may not be reproduced in whole or in part, by photocopy or other means, without the permission of the author.

## **Abstract**

For decades, the eligibility for Indian Status outlined in the *Indian Act* of Canada systematically discriminated against Indigenous women and their children. These inequitable policies created an artificial division within the Indigenous population and excluded thousands of Indigenous people from the rights, services, and cultural inclusion associated with Status. Some of these discriminatory criteria were repealed in 1985, through Bill C-31, which caused a 20% increase in the Status population within five years. I use this quasi-natural experiment in a difference-in-differences cohort analysis to analyze the effect of gaining Status. I examine the effect of Status on educational attainment, employment, and the likelihood of moving to an Indigenous community. I find that the acquisition of Status improves educational attainment and has a positive impact on employment and residence on a reserve.

## Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	3
2. Historical Background.....	5
2.1. The Indian Act and Status Eligibility.....	5
2.2. The Rights and Benefits of Status.....	7
3. Literature Review.....	8
4. Theoretical Framework.....	10
5. Data.....	12
6. Empirical Methodology.....	14
7. Results.....	18
7.1. Educational Attainment.....	18
7.2. Labour Force.....	22
7.3. Mobility.....	24
5. Conclusion.....	25
6. References.....	27
APPENDIX A: Tables.....	30
APPENDIX B: Figures.....	36

# 1 Introduction

Throughout much of its history, the Crown has held jurisdiction over First Nations people and their lands. Although this authority is grounded in the *Constitution Act* of 1867, it is the *Indian Act* which regulates many of the government's interactions with First Nations. The *Indian Act* has been amended several times since it was first consolidated from existing legislation in 1876, however, it has consistently been the primary document for determining Indian Status. In 2016, there were more than 820,000 individuals registered as Status Indians under the Act (Statistics Canada, 2018), but many individuals who hold Status today would not have been eligible for Status in previous years. Prior to 1985, women disproportionately had their Status revoked due to criteria within the *Indian Act* that discriminated on the basis of sex. Specifically, women that married non-Status individuals had their Status as well as their children's Status revoked. This prevented thousands of Indigenous women and their children from accessing the rights and benefits associated with Status including post-secondary supports, tax exemptions, non-insured health coverage, and the right to live in an Indigenous community.

In June 1985, the federal government eliminated some restrictions on Status eligibility through Bill C-31 which permitted over 70,000 additional people to gain Status by 1990 (Furi and Wherret, 2003). This paper uses Bill C-31's implementation to investigate the causal impact of a Registered Status designation on educational attainment, employment, and mobility. I use the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples' Survey (APS) public-use file in a difference-in-differences cohort analysis which compares changes in outcomes between individuals that would have made key economic decisions before becoming eligible for Status with people that became eligible for Status after those key decisions needed to be made. I find that Status has a positive effect on educational attainment, labour force participation, and mobility. Specifically, Status increases the likelihood

of an individual completing high school by 6.3 to 10.5 percentage points and this effect is followed by males completing community college at a higher rate. Furthermore, I find that Status increases labour force participation by 2.8 to 5 percentage points, most of which is driven by gains among women. Status also increases the likelihood of living on a reserve by 4.6 to 5.1 percentage points. There are two potential mechanisms behind this result; first, the direct effect of federal recognition which includes post-secondary subsidies and on-reserve tax exemptions; second, the social effect of cultural inclusion and community supports.

The results of this paper are relevant today for several reasons. First, this paper provides the first causal estimates of how Status and the accompanying rights, services, and cultural identity affect the registered population in Canada. Given that previous literature has demonstrated a substantial earnings gap for Indigenous people (George and Kuhn, 1994; Pendakur and Pendakur, 2011; Feir, 2013; Lamb, 2013), it is important to understand how existing systems influence observable labour market outcomes such as employment, education, and mobility. Prior work has also shown that the Status population is responsive to changes in post-secondary funding (Jones, 2020) and that educational attainment improves labour market outcomes for these individuals (Drost, 1994; Hossain and Lamb, 2012; Lamb, 2013); however, these papers only consider differences within the Status population or changes to the services available to them rather than the system as a whole. By examining the comprehensive effect of obtaining Status, this paper improves our understanding of how the existing services, rights, and cultural effects of Status interact with one another and impact labour market outcomes.

Second, since 1985 there have been additional changes to Status eligibility through Bills C-3 and S-3 in 2011 and 2017, respectively. These Bills eliminated some of the residual discriminatory elements within the *Indian Act* such as a “second generation cutoff” for Status

which remained in place following the 1985 amendments (Hurley and Simeone, 2010; Kielland and Tiedemann, 2017). Like Bill C-31, these changes to Status eligibility have permitted thousands of Indigenous people to gain Status and the results of this paper could provide insight into the impact of acquiring Status for these newly eligible individuals.

Additionally, the Canadian Supreme Court ruled in 2016 that Métis and non-Status Indians (NSI) are “*Indians*” under the Constitution (Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 2016). This decision means that the federal government is now responsible for providing services such as education and health care to these groups (Vowel, 2016). The ruling also gives these groups the power to negotiate with the Crown over those services, their rights, and their governance. Subsequently, the Métis Nations in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Ontario signed Self-Government Agreements with the Crown in 2019 (Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada, 2019). The results of this paper could foreshadow the impact of allocating rights and services comparable to those of Status to these traditionally excluded groups.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows; first, a brief section on the *Indian Act* and the historical determinants of Status; second, a review of the related economic literature; third, an overview of the theoretical predictions based on the rights of Status and its cultural context; fourth, a description of the 1991 APS and the empirical methodology used in this analysis; and finally, a breakdown of the results and implications.

## **2 Historical Background**

### **2.1 The Indian Act and Status Eligibility**

The Crown first enacted legislation defining Indian Status in 1850. Notably, this early definition was broad and included any individual of Indigenous birth or blood. In 1868, the definition was amended and began classifying Status based on male lineage, reflecting Eurocentric

gender roles of the time. Specifically, Status women that married non-Status men and any of their children lost their Status, meanwhile, this was not the case for Status men. This bias against Indigenous women was further cemented in 1876 when existing legislation was consolidated into the *Indian Act*. The *Indian Act* defined Status as:

*“First. Any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band;*

*Secondly. Any child of such person;*

*Thirdly. Any woman who is or was lawfully married to such person.”*(The Indian Act, 1876)

Additionally, the Act stipulated that any Indigenous person who earned a university, law, or medicine degree was automatically enfranchised and therefore relinquished their Status, effectively severing the Status population from higher education.

The next major changes to the *Indian Act* came in 1951 with the establishment of a centralized list of every person with Status called the Indian Register. Along with the creation of this register, the new legislation introduced the “double-mother clause” which deemed individuals ineligible for Status if their mother and paternal grandmother were ineligible prior to their marriages and stripped non-Status Indigenous people of all band rights. Before this, anyone who lost Status was still entitled to band membership and the associated rights and services, which included the right to live on a First Nations’ lands. As such, this move deepened the preexisting discriminatory elements of the Act by further severing Indigenous women from their communities and culture (Cannon, 2006).

The 1951 changes to the *Indian Act* sparked decades of pushback from Indigenous women. These women mobilized politically and legally to challenge the Status eligibility criteria, most notably in *Lovelace v Canada*. In 1981, the United Nations Human Rights Committee determined

that under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, Sandra Lovelace’s right to the enjoyment of her culture was violated as she was prevented from returning to her reserve after losing Status through marriage (Sandra Lovelace v. Canada, 1981; Day, 2018). Subsequently, the federal government committed to eliminating the sex discriminatory provisions within the *Indian Act*. The resulting legislation, Bill C-31, *An Act to Amend the Indian Act* was enacted in June 1985 with three goals; first, remove all sex discrimination from the Act; second, restore Status and band rights to those that had lost them; and third, grant Indian Bands autonomy over their membership (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1991). To address the first goal, Bill C-31 ensured that Status women who married non-Status individuals no longer lost their Status and that parental marriage no longer impacted the Status of children. That said, Bill C-31 also introduced a “second generation cutoff” which prevented the children of two successive out-marrying generations from holding Status.

Bill C-31 allowed individuals that had lost Status or were born ineligible to voluntarily apply to have their Status restored or granted, consequently, the Status population grew considerably in the years that followed. By 1990, the Status population had increased by 19%, and this rapid growth continued through the early 1990s. However, by 2000 most of the Bill C-31 induced growth had evaporated as only 2% of new registrations were attributable to the application process that year.

## **2.2 The Rights and Benefits of Status**

Although Status does provide some additional rights, the population has also been the target of many infringements to their basic human rights. Throughout Canada’s history it has subjugated the Indigenous people, and often the Status population specifically, to the residential school system and forced relocations (Feir, 2016). They have also faced restrictions on their

mobility, language, culture, and self-governance (Furi and Wherret, 2003; Akee and Feir, 2018). These actions have caused lasting harm to the Status population.

The legal distinction of Status does provide rights and services that are not allotted to other Indigenous groups. These include non-insured health coverage, traditional hunting and fishing rights, on-reserve tax exemptions, and on-reserve subsidies for housing and social assistance (Furi and Wherret, 2003). Furthermore, holding band membership in addition to Status can also provide access to band monies, reserve lands, and treaty payments (Rice, 2018). At the time when Bill C-31 was passed, those with Status were also eligible for comprehensive post-secondary supports which covered tuition, housing, supplies, and other living expenses (Jones, 2020).

### **3 Literature Review**

Rice (2018) studies the same 1985 amendments to the *Indian Act*. He uses the 1981 and 1991 census to estimate the aggregate post-secondary effect of Bill C-31 on the Status and non-Status Indian (NSI) population and finds a positive effect. He does restrict part of his analysis to Indigenous women who married non-Status men as these individuals were specifically targeted by Bill C-31, but this is unlikely to isolate the causal effect of Status. This paper uses individuals who directly gained Status through Bill C-31 as the treatment group and compares their outcomes with NSIs in order to isolate its effect. Furthermore, this paper continues to build on the work of Rice (2018) by also considering how the acquisition of Status impacts high school completion and the likelihood of living on a reserve.

Jones (2020) analyzes cutbacks to post-secondary funding for Status and Inuit students in 1989. She finds that these cutbacks reduced the likelihood of completing community college by 2.5 percentage points for males and 3.4 percentage points for females. She also notes a substantial reduction in the likelihood of high school graduation on reserves. In the long-term, Jones finds

that the cutbacks increased the likelihood of relying on government transfers and decreased the likelihood of being employed.

The gender discriminatory aspects of the pre-1985 *Indian Act* limited access to Status and expedited the assimilation of Indigenous people (Morden, 2016). Therefore, by analyzing the effect of restoring Status we also gain insight into consequences of removing it. As such, this paper contributes to the literature on the consequences of compulsory assimilation policies. The economic literature on this topic is limited; the most notable paper is Feir (2016) which details the long-term implications of residential schools. Feir finds that attendance at the average residential school was linked to improved high school graduation rates, reduced reliance on government transfers, and a higher likelihood of employment, however, these results do not hold for abusive schools. Furthermore, individuals who attended residential schools tended to be less connected to Indigenous culture as evident by their greater likelihood of living off-reserve, diminished probability of partaking in traditional activities, and lower likelihood of speaking an Indigenous language at home.

Kuhn and Sweetman (2000) examine the determinants of Indigenous assimilation in Canada and liken the experience to that of unwilling immigrants. They find reserve residence and marriage to non-Indigenous people to be major factors in economic assimilation. Notably, their analysis does not consider any assimilatory policies such as residential schools or restrictions on Status and mobility. It is also important to note that economic assimilation does tend to coincide with a loss of cultural connectedness as observed by Feir (2016). This translates to a loss of traditional human capital such as knowledge of Indigenous languages and practices. Given that many Indigenous women lost Status through marriage and were prevented from living on reserves, it is likely that the individuals that gained Status through Bill C-31 faced greater assimilatory

pressures than those that maintained their Status. As such, the pre-1985 Status eligibility likely imposed a real cost on traditional knowledge, excluding thousands of Indigenous people from their culture. Unfortunately, the methodology used in this paper is unable to tease-out the legacy of those pressures, however, they are still important to consider when interpreting differences between the Status and non-Status populations.

This work also contributes to the literature on taxation-induced migration and Indigenous mobility. Specifically, Status permits people to live on tax exempt lands and earn tax-exempt income on reserves. Previous literature has indicated that young, highly educated individuals are particularly sensitive to income-tax disparities (Liebig, Puhani, Sousa-Poza, 2007), however, this has not yet been demonstrated on *Indian* reserves. Furthermore, Clatworthy and Norris (2007) find that reserves provided Aboriginal people with more stable social supports than those available in urban areas. As such, both tax exemptions and social supports may have been factors in Cooke and Penney's (2019) analysis which finds that reservations gained from *Status Indian* migration between 2006 and 2011.

#### **4 Theoretical Framework**

This section discusses the potential mechanisms through which Status could influence economic outcomes. These mechanisms can broadly be separated into two categories; first, the direct effects of federal recognition which include post-secondary supports and tax incentives, and second, the social effects of cultural inclusion and community supports which coincide with Status.

The direct mechanism through which Status could influence educational attainment is the post-secondary subsidies available to those with Status. Simply put, along with the acquisition of Status, individuals become eligible for certain supports to pursue post-secondary education and this translates to a decrease in the perceived cost of pursuing higher education. Following the

human capital model established by Becker (1964), this should increase the likelihood of post-secondary attendance. The mirror of this effect has been shown empirically by Jones (2020) who finds that cutbacks to Indigenous post-secondary funding caused a decrease in post-secondary completion.

In addition to her post-secondary findings, Jones (2020) finds that in certain regions high school completion also declined because of the cuts to post-secondary funding. She hypothesizes that high school could be viewed as a pathway to post-secondary education, so when the cost of post-secondary increases, the incentive to finish high school decreases. This logic could be applied to the situation studied in this paper. If high school is perceived as a pathway to post-secondary education, and the expected cost of post-secondary education decreases, then high school completion could increase as more people decide to pursue higher studies.

The mechanisms which could drive the effect of Status on employment and mobility outcomes are slightly more complicated. Although Status does entitle individuals to certain tax exemptions, these are generally restricted to income earned on a reserve. As such, there is no direct incentive from holding Status to enter the labour force, however, those living off-reserve may be incentivized to work on one. Therefore, off-reserve changes to employment would likely be because of the unobservable social factors that come from holding Status.

The separation of the Indigenous population into those with and without Status isolated people from their culture through an artificial ethnocentric division (Hankard, 2014). This divide has led to the exclusion of non-Status individuals from First Nations communities and traditional practices (Cannon, 2006; Hankard, 2014). Indigenous people without Status are regularly considered to be non-*Indians* by the federal and provincial government, band councils, and other Indigenous people (Day, 2018; Hankard, 2014). These conditions could produce a significant cost

on an individual's emotional well-being, and by extension, their economic well-being. Given that Status and band membership provide a feeling of belonging to a community (Clatworthy, 2007), it is reasonable to think that its acquisition could improve emotional and economic well-being which could manifest as higher educational attainment or better labour market outcomes. Furthermore, many community-level or band-provided supports are only available to those with Status. As such, the acquisition of Status would make these services accessible which could alleviate barriers to education or labour force participation. Unfortunately, it is not possible to statistically differentiate between gains to well-being and the accessibility of community-level supports without more comprehensive data. As such, the summation of these two effects is henceforth referred to as the social effect of Status.

## **5 Data**

The data source for this project is the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey (APS) public-use file. The goal of the APS is to outline the state of the Indigenous population in Canada, and it accomplishes this by collecting data on Indigenous ancestry and identity as well as economic, social, and health outcomes. The 1991 APS also includes information on Registration Status, specifically whether an individual obtained Status through Bill C-31. This feature makes the 1991 APS ideal for my analysis, however, the public-use file does have limitations. Specifically, the data are aggregated and group many continuous variables into categories. For example, instead of providing an individual's age, the public use file groups people into seven categories: Age 15-19, Age 20-24, Age 25-29, Age 30-39, Age 40-49, Age 50-54, and Age 65+. Similarly, employment income is also grouped into different categories. While not ideal, this data structure does still allow for analysis.

Table I displays summary statistics between C-31 registrants and NSIs. The treatment group consists of individuals that acquired Status through Bill C-31 and are henceforth referred to as C-31. The control group is composed of individuals that identify as “North American Indian” (NAI) but are not registered under the *Indian Act* and are henceforth referred to as NSI. Apart from employment income which reports the average income group, all statistics are the proportion of the column population with that characteristic. The right-side column reports the difference-in-means test for the sample proportions. The variable high school graduate is the proportion of the population that has at least a high school degree whereas the variable high school only reports the proportion whose highest degree is high school, this distinction is carried throughout the remainder of the paper.

Comparing the C-31 registrants to the NSI group reveals that C-31 registrants are less likely to have graduated high school, completed post-secondary, be employed, or live in a CMA but more likely to be a member of an Indian Band, live on a reserve, or use an Indigenous language at home. Another notable observation is that women make up a larger share of the C-31 population and that they are more likely to have had any children. This reflects the gender-discriminatory elements of the pre-1985 *Indian Act*.

Tables II & III report cohort summary statistics between the C-31 and NSI groups for educational attainment, labour force Status, and mobility. The pre- and post-1985 age cohorts were selected based on whether an individual’s decisions were made before or after the 1985 reforms. For example, an individual that is 25-29 years old in 1991 would have been 19-23 years old when Bill C-31 took effect. This individual likely would have already graduated high school or started post-secondary education, as a result, the amendments are less likely to have impacted their decisions. This would not be the case for an individual that was 20-24 or 15-19 years old in

1991 as these individuals would have been 9-18 years old in 1985. People in these younger cohorts were more likely to have had their educational outcomes impacted by the acquisition of Status. Similar logic can be applied to labour market outcomes whereby individuals who were 20-29 in 1991 (14-23 in 1985) were more likely to have their labour market decisions impacted by Status than the 30–39-year-olds (24-33 in 1985) that would have already established their labour market preferences prior to the implementation of Bill C-31. The validity of the cohorts in the employment and mobility regressions is dependent on the assumption that younger individuals are more flexible in their labour market decision making than their older counterparts.

Table II indicates that C-31 registrants were unconditionally less likely to have graduated high school or completed any post-secondary education compared to the NSI population in the pre-1985 cohort. Focusing on the highest degree attained for the pre-1985 cohorts, C-31 registrants are underrepresented at all degree-levels except for trades and apprenticeships. Meanwhile, most of these unconditional differences diminish or disappear entirely in the post-1985 cohorts. Table III indicates that C-31 registrants in the pre-1985 cohort were less likely to be in the labour force or employed and more likely to live on a reserve compared to the NSI cohort. These unconditional labour force differences decline slightly in the post-1985 cohorts, meanwhile the difference for reserve residence increases.

## **6 Empirical Methodology**

The principal empirical methodology this paper utilizes to measure the effect of Indian Status is a difference-in-differences (DID) framework that compares cohorts of individuals whose primary decisions were made either before or after the 1985 amendments to the *Indian Act*. Let  $y_{ijt}$  denote an education or labour market outcome of interest for individual  $i$  in group  $j$  from cohort  $t$  and consider the following linear probability model:

$$y_{ijt} = \alpha_1 + \alpha_2 \text{after}_t * s_{ij} + \alpha_3 \text{after}_t + \alpha_4 s_{ij} + \mathbf{Z}_{ijt} \boldsymbol{\delta} + \mathbf{G}_{ijt} \boldsymbol{\theta} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (1)$$

where,  $\text{after}_t$  equals 1 if individual  $i$  belongs to the post-1985 cohort and  $s_{ij}$  equals 1 if the individual gained Status through Bill C-31. The coefficient of interest is  $\alpha_2$  which measures the differential change in the proportion of the population whose educational attainment or labour market outcome is  $y$ .  $\mathbf{Z}_{ijt}$  is a matrix of observable characteristics for individual  $i$  such as band membership, sex, marital status, and age group. Similarly,  $\mathbf{G}_{ijt}$  is a matrix of geographic controls which include indicators for living in a top-8 CMA, region fixed effects, and region-urban fixed effects.  $\varepsilon_{ijt}$  is a disturbance term which captures all other determinants of  $y$  for individual  $i$ . In this specification,  $y_{ijt}$  may indicate high school graduation, post-secondary completion, highest degree attained, labour force participation, employment, or residence on a reserve.

The causal interpretation of this specification relies on several assumptions. Namely, the validity of the control group as a reasonable counterfactual for the treatment group, parallel trends between the control and treatment groups in the absence of treatment, lack of anticipation effects, and no confounding policy changes. The inclusion of individual characteristics can dilute some of the concern regarding the first assumption, however, the aggregate nature of the public-use APS prevents the inclusion of many individual level controls. That said, matrix  $\mathbf{Z}_{ijt}$  does include the controls which are available in the data.

As for the assumption of parallel trends, I test for pre-treatment trends between groups through the following event study estimation:

$$y_{ijt} = \alpha_1 + \sum_{t=-2, t \neq -1}^2 \gamma_t \text{age}_t * s_{ij} + \mathbf{Z}_{ijt} \boldsymbol{\delta} + \mathbf{G}_{ijt} \boldsymbol{\theta} + \varepsilon_{ijt} \quad (2)$$

where  $\text{age}_t$  is a set of age group dummies. The interaction  $\text{age}_t * s_{ij}$ , and the associated coefficients  $\gamma_t$  capture any pre- or post-trend differences between groups by age group. If the

parallel trends assumption holds, we would expect  $\gamma_{-2}$  and  $\gamma_{-1}$  to be statistically indistinguishable from zero as that would suggest there is no measurable differences in pre-treatment trends between C-31 registrants and the NSI group. Furthermore, the event study approach has the added benefit of providing insight into when the impact of the policy began to materialize. Given that Bill C-31 required individuals to opt-in to Status, it is possible that decisions made closer to the policy's implementation were less likely to be impacted by the change than decisions made in the years following. I will test for this by examining the trend between  $\gamma_1$  and  $\gamma_2$ . Additionally, to further address both the parallel trends assumption and the effect timing, I run equation (1) on a reduced sample to focus on the age cohorts that straddle the policy's implementation date. Although the smaller sample does reduce statistical power, it also concentrates the analysis on the cohorts most analogous to one another and thus reduce the likelihood of divergent pre-trends.

The years leading up to the passage of Bill C-31 were riddled with pressure from Indigenous women to abolish the discriminatory policies within the *Indian Act*. Therefore, it is possible that individuals could have anticipated changes to the eligibility for Status. The typical solution to this problem would be to select a new start-date for the policy that coincides with when individuals may have anticipated the change and compare the estimates to those in the original specification. However, the age group limitations of the public-use APS make changing the start-date impossible. As such, anticipatory effects may bias my results. Specifically, if someone in the pre-treatment cohort anticipated obtaining Status sometime after they would graduate high school, they may have been more likely to finish high school before obtaining Status to take advantage of post-secondary supports after obtaining Status, biasing downwards the difference-in-differences estimate of the impact of Status on high school graduation. Similar logic implies that

post-secondary attainment and residence on a reservation may also be biased downward, however, labour force participation and employment are less likely to be impacted by anticipatory bias.

The final assumption required in the difference-in-differences methodology is the absence of confounding policy changes. There are two potential confounding policies. First, in addition to the changes to Status, Bill C-31 also granted First Nations autonomy over their membership lists, this made it possible for someone to have Status and not be a member of a Band. That said, the inclusion of a dummy equal to 1 if an individual is a member of an Indian band should account for any bias introduced by this concurrent policy. The second potentially confounding policy change is the post-secondary funding cuts noted by Jones (2020). These cutbacks drastically reduced the post-secondary supports for those with Status which would diminish the incentive to pursue post-secondary and potentially bias my results downwards. However, given that Bill C-31 took effect in 1985 and the funding cutbacks were in 1989, it is unlikely that they would have a major impact on my results since only a fraction of the youngest age group would be affected. Furthermore, the aforementioned reduced-sample specifications also address this issue by removing the youngest age group from the sample.

Another potential issue regarding this analysis is the possibility of individuals self-selecting into Status. For example, if higher educated people were more likely to apply for Status, then the estimates could be biased upwards. That said, it is reasonable to assume that more educated individuals would be more likely to apply for Status at any age, therefore this issue is mitigated through the difference-in-differences framework so long as the parallel trends assumption holds. Additionally, the actual increase in the population of individuals with Status following Bill C-31 was far greater than what was expected (Furi and Wherret, 2003). This implies

that the acquisition of Status was relatively costless. Thus, it is unlikely that self-selection would play a major role in my results, so any bias is likely minimal.

## **7 Results**

### **7.1 Educational Attainment**

Figure I displays the coefficient estimates for the educational attainment event studies. All the coefficients for the pre-treatment age groups are insignificant at the 5% significance level which suggests that the parallel trends assumption holds. That said, the p-value for the earliest age group in the high school graduate event study is 0.051, however, since the pre-trend appears to be negative, it is unlikely that the positive treatment effect is due to the trend. Another observation from the education event studies is the timing of the treatment effect, specifically in the two high school, aggregate post-secondary, and the community college graphs. In each of those event studies, the age group just after the policy's implementation display no measurable effect, however, the youngest cohorts indicate a positive effect of Status. This suggests that the impact of the policy did not manifest immediately, which makes sense given that individuals were required to opt-in to obtain Status and that education requires some planning.

Panel A of Table IV reports the regression results for completing at least high school and Panel B reports the regression results for completing any post-secondary. Apart from the dependent variable, the specifications are identical across panels A and B with Panel C reporting the controls included in each specification. Specification (1) includes basic controls for residence in a top-8 CMA, sex, marital Status, and band membership in addition to region and age group fixed effects. These results suggest that Status improves high school graduation by just under 7 percentage points at conventional significance levels but has no measurable impact on post-secondary completion. Specification (2) incorporates region-urban fixed effects to account for any

impact of living in a provincial urban area that is constant over time. The coefficient in the high school regression is robust to the incorporation of these fixed effects and increases slightly to 7.13 percentage points. This suggests that the estimate in specification (1) is suppressed by the higher proportion of C-31 registrants that live in non-urban areas. Specification (3) adds a dummy variable equal to one if an individual lives on a reserve. Although the acquisition of Status may impact a person's decision to live on a reservation (as reported in Table VII), the chronically lower educational attainment on reserves makes this an important variable to incorporate (Lamb, 2013). The impact on high school completion is again robust to the inclusion of this additional control, however, the coefficient in the post-secondary regression remains insignificant.

Specifications (A1) through (A3) suggest that the effect of Status on high school graduation could be as high as 7.36 percentage points, however, if the control group tends to complete high school at an older age than the treatment group, then the estimate would be biased upwards. To address this, specification (4) includes a dummy variable which is equal to one if an individual has either gone back to finish high school or has taken adult upgrading for high school equivalency. This control accounts for the impact of "going back to school" at an older age. Notably, the high school equivalency variable does not necessarily mean that an individual has obtained a high school degree, rather just that they have attempted to go back and do so. After high school equivalency is accounted for, the coefficient in the high school regression decreases to 6.31 percentage points but is still significant at conventional levels.

In the previous specifications, the pre-treatment cohort consisted of 25- to 39-year-olds while the post-treatment age group was 15-24. Such a large pre-treatment cohort does risk violating the parallel trends assumption as the older C-31 age groups likely contain more individuals that lost Status through marriage whereas the younger cohorts are likely the children

of those that lost Status. As such, specifications (5) and (6) focus the analysis on the age groups that surround the policy's implementation. Specification (5) reduces the pre-treatment cohort to ages 25-29. As a result, the high school coefficient increases to 10.5 percentage points and the post-secondary coefficient of 9.07 percentage points gains significance at the 10% level. Further reducing the sample to focus on the post-treatment cohort ages 20-24 is reported in specification (6). Notably, the high school coefficient becomes indistinguishable from zero, as does the post-secondary coefficient. Taken together, specifications (A5) and (A6) provide further evidence that the effect of the policy change on those that acquired Status was not immediate and that younger cohorts were more impacted by the acquisition of Status as it relates to the likelihood that they completed at least high school.

Given the gender discriminatory elements of the pre-1985 *Indian Act* and the subsequent overrepresentation of women in the in the C-31 group, specifications (7) through (9) address sex disparities in the treatment effect. Separating the sample into males and females results in the coefficients losing significance in the high school regressions but they do remain positive at 4.6 percentage points for men and about 7.6 percentage points for women. Meanwhile, I find that Status increases male post-secondary attainment by over 9 percentage points with seemingly no effect on women.

Table V reports the effect of obtaining Status on various levels of educational attainment. Specification (1) is equivalent to specification (4) in Table IV, meanwhile, specifications (2) through (4) address sex disparities in the effect of Status and are equivalent to specifications (7) through (9) in Table IV. I find that the effect of Status on obtaining only a high school degree is 12.7 percentage points higher for women than men with the total effect for women in the pooled regression being approximately 8 percentage points and significant at the 10% level. Additionally,

I find that Status has no effect on trades and a weak effect on male university completion of about 2 percentage points. That said, it does improve male community college completion by 4.89 percentage points. On the other hand, women with Status are 6.19 percentage points less likely to complete community college compared to men with their total effect in the pooled regression being insignificant.

Overall, I find that the acquisition of Status improves an individual's likelihood of obtaining at least a high school degree with suggestive evidence that it has a positive impact on post-secondary attainment. Specifically, Status improves high school completion by approximately 6.31 percentage points. Given that the pre-1985 high school graduation rate for the C-31 group was 49.9%, the effect of Status translates to an increase of approximately 12.6 percent. Furthermore, I find that male community college completion improves by about 5 percentage points. One potential mechanism behind this increase is the post-secondary supports that were available at the time. This explanation aligns with Jones (2020) who found that following cuts to post-secondary funding there was a decline of 2.9 percentage points in community college graduation. Additionally, this improvement in community college completion is accompanied by a negative, albeit insignificant, coefficient for males with only a high school degree of about 4 percentage points. Given that the coefficient for males in each of the other degree-type regressions is positive and insignificant, the increase in male community college completion is likely a substitution away from a high school degree or lower to a community college degree.

Moreover, I also find suggestive evidence that Status improves female educational attainment through an increase of approximately 8 percentage point for those with only a high school degree. Given that I find no coinciding impact on female post-secondary attainment, this is likely not the result a substitution away from higher education. Instead, it appears that women

are shifting from having no degree to having a high school degree. Furthermore, since Status does not provide any direct incentives for completing high school and that there is a distinct lack of female post-secondary improvement, this suggests that the increase in high school graduation is driven by the social effect of obtaining Status. In other words, women who obtained Status may have been more connected to their community and culture or received better social, economic, or cultural community-level supports as a result of their acquisition. All of which may have reduced barriers or provided greater incentives to completing high school. Notably, these findings differ from those reported by Rice (2018) who found that Bill C-31 improved the post-secondary attainment of Indigenous women by 4 to 7 percentage points. That said, Rice's sample focused on the total North American Indian population without differentiating between C-31 registrants which could explain the differing results.

## **7.2 Labour Force**

Figures II and III display the coefficient estimates from running the event study, equation (2), on labour force participation and employment, respectively. The participation event study does indicate that the parallel trends assumption may be violated for the oldest age group of 40–49-year-olds, however, the employment regression does not appear to violate this assumption. This could be due to the composition of the older C-31 age group including significantly more individuals that grew-up with Status but lost it through marriage. Therefore, the participation regressions that include this age group should be interpreted with caution. Another observation from the event study is the gradual increase in the coefficients' magnitude in the participation graph within the post-treatment cohort. This was also apparent in the education regressions and suggests that the delay from having to apply for Status resulted in younger ages being more affected by its acquisition.

Table VI displays the coefficient estimates from running equation (1) on labour force participation and employment in Panels A and B, respectively. Like Table IV, the specifications across panels are identical, however, the residence on a reserve dummy is included in all the specifications. I find that the acquisition of Status has no measurable effect on the likelihood of being employed, however, I find suggestive evidence that, once children and education are accounted for, it does improve labour force participation. Specifications (5) through (9) focus the analysis on the ages directly surrounding the policy's implementation. Specification (5) indicates that Status increased labour force participation by 4.96 percentage points, and this effect appears to be driven by the youngest age group and women. The treatment cohort in specification (5) is ages 20-29, but reducing the sample in specification (6) to only include treatment ages 25-29 results in the effect becoming insignificant. This combined with the event study suggest that there was a delay between the implementation of Bill C-31 and its effect manifesting among the treatment group.

Furthermore, specifications (7) through (9) separate the effect of Status by sex. I find no significant impact for men; however, I do find that Status improves female labour force participation by approximately 9 percentage points. This effect is present in specification (8) which limits the sample to only women and is still present and significant in the pooled specification at the 5% level. It is unlikely that this effect on labour force participation is the result of on-reserve tax exemptions since I find the effect to be driven by women rather than the whole population. Instead, the underlying mechanism is likely again the social effect of Status. Specifically, communities may provide better job-search supports or childcare for those with Status which could reduce barriers to participation.

### 7.3 Mobility

Figure IV displays the event study coefficients for estimating equation (2) on reserve residence and it indicates that the parallel trends assumption is supported. Although none of the post-treatment age groups have a statistically significant coefficient, the event study does indicate that there may be a pre-trend given that the oldest age group's coefficient is negative. As such, the results of these regressions should be interpreted with caution. Furthermore, Figure IV indicates that the timing for the effect of obtaining Status on reserve residence was more immediate than was the case in the education and labour force analyses. Table VII reports the coefficient estimates from running equation (1) on reserve residence. The treatment cohort in these regressions were chosen to best capture new entrants into the labour force, the assumption being that older ages would have already established themselves in their community and labour market prior to Bill C-31's implementation and thus less likely to drastically change their behaviour.

I find that the acquisition of Status increases the likelihood that an individual will live on a reservation by between 4.6 and 5.05 percentage points. Notably, these results are robust after focusing the sample on the age groups surrounding the policy's implementation. This suggests that, unlike its effect on education and labour force participation, there was little delay between when Bill C-31 was passed and individuals deciding to live on a reserve. This could be because of an immediate spike of individuals returning to reservations after they were previously prevented. Since women unwillingly lost their Status if they married someone without Status, they may have been particularly inclined to return to their reserve once their Status was restored. Under this hypothesis, the primary mechanism behind living on a reserve would be the social effect of Status where individuals are moving to live closer to their families or culture. Specifications (4) through (6) indicate that the effect is present for both men and women which suggests that some of the

measured effect may be driven by the tax exemptions available for income earned on a reserve. Ultimately, both the social effect and tax exemptions likely make-up part of the effect, however, the public-use APS does not make it possible to disentangle them.

## **8 Conclusion**

This paper analyzes the impact of Indian Status on educational attainment, employment, and mobility by exploiting a change to the eligibility criteria for Status in a difference-in-differences cohort analysis. I find that Status increases the likelihood of obtaining at least a high school degree by 6.3 to 10.5 percentage points. This improvement in educational attainment is driven by male community college completion and female high school graduation. Furthermore, I find that Status also increases labour force participation by 2.85 to 4.96 percentage points, with women being the driving force behind these gains. Additionally, the acquisition of Status increases the likelihood of living on a reserve by 4.6 to 5.05 percentage points. Although the gains in community college completion are likely due to the post-secondary supports provided to those with Status, the increases to female high school completion and the labour force participation appear to be driven by the social effect of Status which includes community-level supports and improvements in cultural well-being. Similarly, the mechanisms behind reserve residence are likely the social effect and the tax exemptions for on-reserve earnings.

Status as a legal concept has created an artificial divide within Canada's Indigenous population of who is and is not "*Indian*." This has excluded many Indigenous people from the rights of Status and from full inclusion within Indigenous communities. Bill C-31 was an attempt to address the disproportionate exclusion of women from Status and my findings suggest that their educational attainment and labour force participation increased as a result. Subsequent amendments to the *Indian Act* through Bills C-3 and S-3 have further expanded Status eligibility

and a recent Supreme Court ruling determined that Métis and NSIs are “*Indians*” under Canada’s Constitution. My results suggest that the acquisition of Status, or the allocation of comparable rights and services to these traditionally excluded groups, could improve some labour market and educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the further extension of Status could cause bureaucratic challenges in the allocation of benefits. For instance, following the implementation of Bill C-31, the Status population increased by 61.4% by 1995 (Furi and Wherret, 2003). This dramatic rise likely contributed to the federal government’s decision to cutback post-secondary funding for Indigenous students in 1989. As previously noted, Jones (2020) finds that these funding cutbacks resulted in lower educational attainment and worse labour market outcomes for Indigenous people. This indicates that if rights and services comparable to those of Status are granted to Métis and NSI, then governments should be prepared to simultaneously increase funding to those programs and services so as to not counter their positive effect.

## References

- Akee, R. & Feir, D. (2018). First people lost: determining the state of status first nations mortality in Canada using administrative data. *Canadian Journal of Economics*. 52(2), 490-525. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1111/caje.12387>
- Becker, G.S. (1964). *Human Capital* (3 ed.). The University of Chicago Press.
- Cannon, M. J. (2006). An act to amend the Indian act (1985) and the accommodation of sex discriminatory policy. *Canadian Review of Social Policy*, (56), 40-71. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/scholarly-journals/act-amend-indian-1985-accommodation-sex/docview/222299007/se-2?accountid=14846>
- Clatworthy, S. (2007). Indian registration, membership, and population change in First Nations communities. *Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi)*. 94. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/aprci/94>
- Clatworthy, S. and Norris, M. J. (2007). Aboriginal mobility and migration: trends, recent patterns, and implications:1971–2001. *Aboriginal Policy Research Consortium International (APRCi)*. 103. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/aprci/103>
- Cooke, M., & Penney, C. (2019). Indigenous migration in Canada, 2006–2011. *Canadian Studies in Population*, 46(2), 121-143. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42650-019-00011-w>
- Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada. (2019, June 27). *Historic self-government agreements signed with the Métis Nation of Alberta, the Métis Nation of Ontario and the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan* [News release]. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/crown-indigenous-relations-northern-affairs/news/2019/06/historic-self-government-agreements-signed-with-the-metis-nation-of-alberta-the-metis-nation-of-ontario-and-the-metis-nation-saskatchewan.html>
- Daniels v. Canada (Indian Affairs and Northern Development), 2016 SCC 12, [2016] 1 S.C.R. 99, (2016) 1 S.C.R. 99
- Day, S. (2018). Equal status for Indigenous women--sometime, not now: the Indian Act and Bill S-3. *Canadian Woman Studies*, 33(1-2), 174+. <https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A581366527/CPI?u=uvictoria&sid=CPI&xid=00eb936a>
- Drost, H. (1994). Schooling, vocational training and unemployment: the case of Canadian Aboriginals. *Canadian Public Policy*, 20(1), 52-65. doi:10.2307/3551835
- Feir, D. (2016). The long-term effects of forcible assimilation policy: The case of Indian boarding schools. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 49(2), 433 – 480.

- Feir, D. (2013). Size, structure, and change: exploring the sources of Aboriginal earnings gaps in 1995 and 2005. *Canadian Public Policy* 39(2), 309-334. <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/511901>.
- Furi, M. and Wherrett, J. (2003). Indian status and band membership issues. *Parliamentary Research Branch*, Retrieved from <http://www.skeetchestn.ca/files/events/indian-status-and-membership-issues-parliamentary-paper.pdf>
- George, P. and P. Kuhn. (1994). The Size and Structure of Native-White Wage Differentials in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Economics*, 27 (1), 20-42.
- Hankard, M. (2014). The Indian status card as regulator of traditional healer access. *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 34(1), 73 – 85.
- Hossain, B. and Lamb, L. (2012). The impact of human and social capital on Aboriginal employment income in Canada. *Economic Papers*, 31(4), 440 – 450.
- Hurley, M. C. and Simeone, T. (2010). *Legislative Summary of Bill C-3*. Publication No. 40-3-C3-E. Retrieved from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service: [http://publications.gc.ca.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/bdp-lop/ls/403-c3-1-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/collections/collection_2010/bdp-lop/ls/403-c3-1-eng.pdf)
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada. (1991). *The Indian Act past and present: a manual on registration and entitlement legislation*. Ottawa: Registration and Band Lists Branch. Retrieved from [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2018/aanc-inac/R32-110-1991.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2018/aanc-inac/R32-110-1991.pdf)
- Jones, M. E. C. (2020). Student aid and the distribution of educational attainment. Working paper. Retrieved from [https://maggieecjones.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/jones\\_studentaid.pdf](https://maggieecjones.files.wordpress.com/2020/07/jones_studentaid.pdf)
- Kielland, N. and Tiedemann, M. (2017). *Legislative Summary of Bill S-3*. Publication No. 42-1-S3-E. Retrieved from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service: [http://publications.gc.ca.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/collections/collection\\_2017/bdp-lop/ls/YM32-3-421-S3-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/collections/collection_2017/bdp-lop/ls/YM32-3-421-S3-eng.pdf)
- Kuhn, P. and Sweetman, A. (2002). Aboriginals as unwilling immigrants: contact, assimilation and labour market outcomes. *Journal of Population Economics*, 15(2), 331-355. DOI: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1007/s001480100083>
- Lamb, D. (2013). Earnings inequality among Aboriginal groups in Canada. *Journal of Labor Research*, 34, 224 – 240. DOI: 10.1007/s12122-013-9158-0
- Lamb, D. (2014). Aboriginal early school leavers on- and off-reserve: An empirical analysis. *Canadian Public Policy*, 40(2), 156-165. <https://doi.org/10.3138/cpp.2012-060>

- Liebig, T., Puhani, P. A., & Sousa-Poza, A. (2007). taxation and internal migration—evidence from the swiss census using community-level variation in income tax rates. *Journal of Regional Science*, 47(4), 807-836. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9787.2007.00529.x>
- Morden, M. (2016). Theorizing the resilience of the Indian Act. *Canadian public administration*. DOI: 10.1111/capa.12162
- Pendakur, K. and Pendakur, R. (2011). Aboriginal income disparity in Canada. *Canadian Public Policy*, 37(1), 61 – 83. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/cpp.2011.0007>
- Reitz, J.G., and Sklar, S.M. (1997). Culture, race, and the economic assimilation of immigrants. *Sociological Forum*, 12, 233–277. <https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.uvic.ca/10.1023/A:1024649916361>
- Rice, D. (2018). Three essays in development economics: First Nation economic development. *University of Ottawa: Department of Economics*. Retrieved from [https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/37633/3/Rice\\_Derek\\_2018\\_thesis.pdf](https://ruor.uottawa.ca/bitstream/10393/37633/3/Rice_Derek_2018_thesis.pdf)
- Sandra Lovelace v. Canada, Communication No. R.6/24, U.N. Doc. Supp. No. 40 (A/36/40) at 166 (1981). <http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/undocs/session36/6-24.htm>
- Statistics Canada. (2018). *Canada [Country] (table). Aboriginal Population Profile. 2016 Census*. Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-510-X2016001. Ottawa. Released July 18, 2018. <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/abpopprof/index.cfm?Lang=E> (accessed April 14, 2021).
- The Indian Act (1876). Retrieved from the Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Affairs Canada website: [https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/1876c18\\_1100100010253\\_eng.pdf](https://www.aadnc-aandc.gc.ca/DAM/DAM-INTER-HQ/STAGING/texte-text/1876c18_1100100010253_eng.pdf)
- Villarreal, A., and Tamborini, C. (2018). Immigrants’ economic assimilation: evidence from longitudinal earnings records. *American Sociological Review*, 83(4), 686-715. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48588565>
- Vowel, C. (2016, April 16). What a landmark ruling means – and doesn’t – for Métis, non-status Indians. *CBC News*. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/indigenous/landmark-supreme-court-decision-metis-non-status-indians-1.3537419>

## Appendix A: Tables

Table I: Summary Statistics by Status Group

	C-31	NSI	Difference
<b>Education Outcomes</b>			
High School Graduate	0.3816 (0.0078)	0.5014 (0.0107)	0.11985*** (0.01278)
Post-Secondary Graduate	0.2065 (0.0065)	0.2932 (0.0097)	0.08670*** (0.01111)
No Degree	0.6184 (0.0078)	0.4986 (0.0107)	-0.11985*** (0.01278)
High School only	0.1751 (0.0061)	0.2082 (0.0087)	0.03315*** (0.01017)
Trades/Apprenticeship	0.1061 (0.0050)	0.1176 (0.0069)	0.01149 (0.00816)
Community College	0.0821 (0.0044)	0.1249 (0.0071)	0.04273*** (0.00780)
Bachelor or above	0.0182 (0.0022)	0.0507 (0.0047)	0.03248*** (0.00458)
Pursued High School Equiv.	0.1837 (0.0063)	0.1571 (0.0079)	-0.02666*** (0.00990)
<b>Labour Market Outcomes</b>			
Employment Income	1.7047 (0.0300)	2.225 (0.0426)	0.52028*** (0.04985)
Labour Force Participant	0.5929 (0.0079)	0.6742 (0.0098)	0.08126*** (0.01237)
Employed	0.4398 (0.0080)	0.5524 (0.0104)	0.11263*** (0.01276)
<b>Demographics</b>			
Band Member	0.8115 (0.0061)	0.0742 (0.0053)	-0.73730*** (0.00844)
Lives on a Reserve	0.2092 (0.0063)	0.0223 (0.0030)	-0.18684*** (0.00793)
Lives in an Urban Area	0.5620 (0.0077)	0.6893 (0.0094)	0.12720*** (0.01195)
Lives in a CMA	0.2322 (0.0065)	0.2931 (0.0092)	0.06092*** (0.01084)
Uses Aboriginal Language at Home	0.3070 (0.0072)	0.0924 (0.0059)	-0.21460*** (0.00984)
Has had any Children	0.433 (0.0077)	0.3682 (0.0098)	-0.06476*** (0.01220)
Female	0.5825 (0.0076)	0.5375 (0.0101)	-0.04498*** (0.01229)
<b>Observations</b>	4,167	2,425	

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses. All variables, except for Employment Income report the proportion of the population with that characteristic. For example, 2.23% of non-Status Indians lived on a reserve in 1991 whereas 20.92% of Bill C-31 registrants lived on a reserve. The Difference column reports the difference in population proportions for the two groups. For example, the difference in the proportion of the populations that are employed between C-31 registrants and NSIs is 11.263 percentage points. Employment Income reports the average income group of respondents. Income Group 1 is Less than \$1,999, and Income Group 2 is \$2,000-\$9,999. The variable "High School only" reports the proportion of the population whose highest degree, certificate, or diploma is a high school degree, whereas the variable "High School Graduate" reports the proportion of the population that has at least a high school degree. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table II: Pre- and Post-1985 Cohort Education Statistics

	Pre-1985			Post-1985		
	NSI	C-31	Difference	NSI	C-31	Difference
<b>General Education</b>						
High School Graduate	0.6246 (0.0166)	0.4990 (0.0133)	0.12561*** (0.02077)	0.3494 (0.0194)	0.3230 (0.0142)	0.02634 (0.02321)
Post-Secondary Graduate	0.3739 (0.0166)	0.2927 (0.0121)	0.08123*** (0.01974)	0.1100 (0.0127)	0.0783 (0.0082)	0.03169** (0.01419)
<b>Highest Degree</b>						
No Degree	0.3754 (0.0166)	0.5010 (0.0133)	-0.12561*** (0.02077)	0.6506 (0.0194)	0.6770 (0.0142)	-0.02634 (0.02321)
High School only	0.2507 (0.0148)	0.2063 (0.0107)	0.04438** (0.01761)	0.2394 (0.0173)	0.2447 (0.0131)	-0.00535 (0.02109)
Trades/Apprenticeship	0.1636 (0.0127)	0.1460 (0.0094)	0.01765 (0.01521)	0.0419 (0.0081)	0.0406 (0.0060)	0.00128 (0.00978)
Community College	0.1635 (0.0127)	0.1187 (0.0086)	0.04482*** (0.01455)	0.0564 (0.0094)	0.0309 (0.0053)	0.02546*** (0.00983)
Bachelor's or above	0.0468 (0.0072)	0.028 (0.0044)	0.01876** (0.00789)	0.0117 (0.0044)	0.0068 (0.0025)	0.00496 (0.00462)
<b>Observations</b>	853	1,421	2,274	606	1,082	1,688
<b>Sample Composition</b>						
Age group in 1991		Age 25 – 39			Age 15-24	
Age group in 1985		Age 19 – 33			Age 9 – 18	

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses. The upper panel reports the proportion of each cohort in each registered group with that characteristic. The lower panel reports the age range for each cohort. For example, 37.39% of the NSI population between the ages of 25 and 39 (pre-1985 cohort) have completed any post-secondary education compared with 29.27% of individuals in the same age group that gained Status through Bill C-31. Meanwhile, 11.00% of the NSI population between the ages of 15 and 24 (post-1985 cohort) have completed any post-secondary education compared to 7.83% of individuals in the same group range that gained Status through Bill C-31. High School Graduate reports the proportion that have at least a high school degree, High School only reports the proportion whose highest degree is a high school. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table III: Pre- and Post-1985 Cohort Labour Force & Mobility Statistics

	Pre-1985			Post-1985		
	NSI	C-31	Difference	NSI	C-31	Difference
<b>Labour Force Outcomes</b>						
Labour Force Participant	0.7897 (0.0130)	0.7117 (0.0117)	0.07798*** (0.01742)	0.7517 (0.0173)	0.7049 (0.0137)	0.04685** (0.02162)
Employed	0.6625 (0.0151)	0.5550 (0.0129)	0.10745*** (0.01958)	0.5928 (0.0196)	0.4979 (0.0150)	0.09489*** (0.02406)
<b>Mobility</b>						
Lives on a Reserve	0.0143 (0.0037)	0.1865 (0.0097)	-0.17226*** (0.01162)	0.0243 (0.0060)	0.2199 (0.0119)	-0.19560*** (0.01542)
<b>Observations</b>						
Labour Force Status	980	1,496	2,476	628	1,109	1,737
Lives on a Reserve	1,024	1,606	2,630	665	1,207	1,872
<b>Sample Composition</b>						
Age group in 1991		Age 30 – 49			Age 20-29	
Age group in 1985		Age 24 – 43			Age 14 – 23	

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses. The upper panel reports the proportion of each cohort in each registered group with that characteristic. The lower panel reports the age range for each cohort. For example, 78.97% of the NSI population between the ages of 30 and 49 (pre-1985 cohort) are in the labour force compared with 71.17% of individuals in the same age group that gained Status through Bill C-31. Meanwhile, 75.17% of the NSI population between the ages of 20 and 29 (post-1985 cohort) are in the labour force compared to 70.49% of individuals in the same group range that gained Status through Bill C-31. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table IV: Effects of Status on High School and Post-secondary Completion

<b>Panel A: High School Graduation</b>									
	Basic (A1)	Urban FE (A2)	Reserve (A3)	HS Equiv. (A4)	AGES 15-29 (A5)	AGES 20-29 (A6)	Sex		
							Males (A7)	Females (A8)	Pooled (A9)
Treatment	0.0694*** (0.0210)	0.0713*** (0.0205)	0.0736*** (0.0185)	0.0631*** (0.0163)	0.105*** (0.0307)	-0.0131 (0.0564)	0.0524 (0.0313)	0.0756 (0.0437)	0.0461 (0.0338)
Treatment x Female									0.0305 (0.0712)
Adj. R	0.150	0.158	0.173	0.204	0.267	0.193	0.205	0.200	0.205
<b>Panel B: Post-secondary Completion</b>									
	Basic (B1)	Urban FE (B2)	Reserve (B3)	HS Equiv. (B4)	AGES 15-29 (B5)	AGES 20-29 (B6)	Sex		
							Males (B7)	Females (B8)	Pooled (B9)
Treatment	0.0331 (0.0309)	0.0339 (0.0312)	0.0349 (0.0311)	0.0388 (0.0401)	0.0907* (0.0425)	0.0463 (0.0635)	0.101*** (0.0174)	-0.00442 (0.0578)	0.0906*** (0.0226)
Treatment x Female									-0.0968* (0.0533)
Adj. R	0.112	0.114	0.118	0.127	0.145	0.0850	0.133	0.130	0.128
<b>Panel C: Specification Information</b>									
Observations	3,962	3,962	3,962	3,859	2,467	1,624	1,735	2,124	3,859
Sample Ages	15-39	15-39	15-39	15-39	15-29	20-29	15-39	15-39	15-39
Region & Age FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region x Urban FE	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Reserve Residence	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
HS Equivalence	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses and clustered at the provincial level. Panel A reports the coefficient estimates for regressions run on high school completion and Panel B reports the coefficient estimates for regressions run on post-secondary completion. Each estimate is interpreted as a percentage point change. Specification 1 includes region and age group fixed effects as well as basic controls for sex, band membership, and residence in a top-8 CMA. Specification 2 incorporates region-urban fixed effects, specification 3 adds a control for living on a reserve, and specification 4 includes a dummy variable equal to 1 if an individual has either gone back to finish high school or taken adult upgrading for high school equivalency. Specification 5 and 6 reduce the sample to focus on age groups closer to the policy's implementation. Specifications 7 and 8 restrict the sample to males and females, respectively, and specification 9 is run on the full sample but separates the effect by sex. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table V: Effects of Status on Educational Attainment

<b>Panel A: High School Only</b>				
	Full Controls (A1)	Sex		Pooled (A4)
		Males (A2)	Females (A3)	
Treatment	0.0244 (0.0390)	-0.0484 (0.0358)	0.0801* (0.0426)	-0.0445 (0.0408)
Treatment x Female				0.127*** (0.0365)
Adj. R	0.0759	0.108	0.0599	0.0771
<b>Panel B: Trades/Apprenticeship</b>				
	Full Controls (B1)	Sex		Pooled (B4)
		Males (B2)	Females (B3)	
Treatment	0.00658 (0.0275)	0.0139 (0.0281)	0.00149 (0.0349)	0.0142 (0.0248)
Treatment x Female				-0.0144 (0.0305)
Adj. R	0.0543	0.0817	0.0412	0.0556
<b>Panel C: Community College</b>				
	Full Controls (C1)	Sex		Pooled (C4)
		Males (C2)	Females (C3)	
Treatment	0.0158 (0.0238)	0.0610** (0.0209)	-0.0146 (0.0341)	0.0489** (0.0218)
Treatment x Female				-0.0619* (0.0330)
Adj. R	0.0628	0.0373	0.0658	0.0660
<b>Panel D: Bachelor's or above</b>				
	Full Controls (D1)	Sex		Pooled (D4)
		Males (D2)	Females (D3)	
Treatment	0.0164 (0.00907)	0.0259 (0.0157)	0.00870 (0.0107)	0.0275* (0.0146)
Treatment x Female				-0.0204 (0.0186)
Adj. R	0.0254	0.0398	0.0179	0.0250
<b>Panel E: Specification Information</b>				
Observations	3,859	1,735	2,124	3,859
Sample Ages	15-39	15-39	15-39	15-39
Region & Age FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region x Urban FE	YES	YES	YES	YES
Reserve Residence	YES	YES	YES	YES
HS Equivalence	YES	YES	YES	YES

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parenthesis and clustered at the provincial level. Each estimate is interpreted as a percentage point change. Panel A reports the effect of Status on the likelihood that an individual will only graduate from high school, Panel B reports the effect of Status on trades/apprenticeship completion, Panel C reports the effect for community college completion, and Panel D reports the effect of Status on the completion of a bachelor's degree or higher. Specification 1 includes all geographic and age group controls, and high school equivalency. Specifications 2 and 3 reduce the sample to males and females, respectively, and specification 4 includes the full sample but separates the effect by sex. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table VI: Effect of Status on Labour Force Participation and Employment

<b>Panel A: Labour Force Participation</b>									
	Basic (A1)	Urban FE (A2)	Fertility (A3)	Education (A4)	AGES 20-39 (A5)	AGES 25-39 (A6)	Sex		
							Males (A7)	Females (A8)	Pooled (A9)
Treatment	0.0267 (0.0218)	0.0274 (0.0210)	0.0211 (0.0151)	0.0285* (0.0140)	0.0496*** (0.0143)	0.0283 (0.0195)	-0.0205 (0.0236)	0.0970*** (0.0295)	0.000394 (0.0240)
Treatment x Female									0.0894 (0.0519)
Adj. R	0.0800	0.0805	0.114	0.166	0.178	0.143	0.0988	0.161	0.179
<b>Panel B: Employment</b>									
	Basic (B1)	Urban FE (B2)	Fertility (B3)	Education (B4)	AGES 20-39 (B5)	AGES 25-39 (B6)	Sex		
							Males (B7)	Females (B8)	Pooled (B9)
Treatment	0.0138 (0.0259)	0.0126 (0.0261)	0.00879 (0.0257)	0.00735 (0.0246)	0.0403 (0.0319)	0.0328 (0.0353)	-0.00465 (0.0450)	0.0758 (0.0491)	0.00986 (0.0476)
Treatment x Female									0.0550 (0.0770)
Adj. R	0.0714	0.0708	0.0974	0.167	0.184	0.160	0.171	0.178	0.186
<b>Panel C: Specification Information</b>									
Observations	4,213	4,213	4,187	3,779	2,889	2,134	1,292	1,597	2,889
Sample Ages	20-49	20-49	20-49	20-49	20-39	25-39	20-39	20-39	20-39
Region & Age FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region x Urban FE	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Reserve Residence	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Fertility	NO	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses and clustered at the provincial level. Panel A reports the coefficient estimates for regressions run on labour force participation and Panel B reports the coefficient estimates for regressions run on employment. Each estimate is interpreted as a percentage point change. Specification 1 includes region and age group fixed effects and basic controls for sex, band membership, and residence in a top-8 CMA or on a reserve. Specification 2 incorporates region-urban fixed effects, specification 3 adds a control for having had any children, and specification 4 includes dummies for highest degree attained. Specifications 5 and 6 reduce the sample to focus on age groups closer to the policy's implementation. Specifications 7 and 8 restrict the sample to males and females, respectively, and specification 9 is run on the full sample but separates the effect by sex. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

Table VII: Effect of Status on Reserve Residence

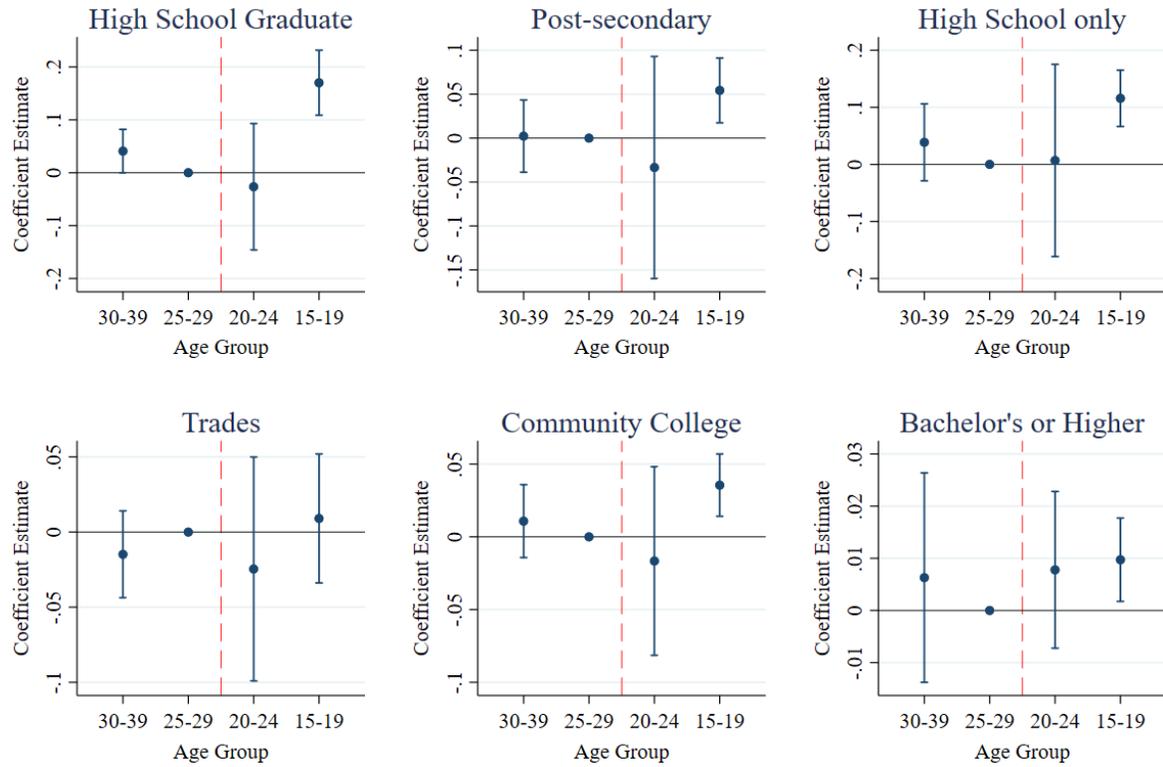
<b>Lives on a Reserve</b>						
	Basic (1)	AGES 20-39 (2)	AGES 25-39 (3)	Sex		
				Males (4)	Females (5)	Pooled (6)
Treatment	0.0505*** (0.0129)	0.0461** (0.0185)	0.0487*** (0.0116)	0.0551** (0.0223)	0.0435*** (0.0136)	0.0516** (0.0187)
Treatment x Female						-0.00435 (0.0182)
Adj. R	0.263	0.272	0.261	0.313	0.219	0.266
<b>Specification Information</b>						
Observations	4,502	3,459	2,529	1,958	2,544	4,502
Sample Ages	20-49	20-39	25-39	20-49	20-49	20-49
Region & Age FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

NOTES: Standard errors are reported in parentheses and clustered at the provincial level. Each estimate is interpreted as a percentage point change. Specification 1 includes region and age group fixed effects, and basic controls for sex, band membership, and speaking an Indigenous language at home. Specifications 2 and 3 reduce the sample to focus on age groups closer to the policy's implementation. Specifications 4 and 5 restrict the sample to males and females, respectively, and specification 6 is run on the full sample but separates the effect by sex. All estimates are weighted by the sample weights included in the public-use file.

\*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

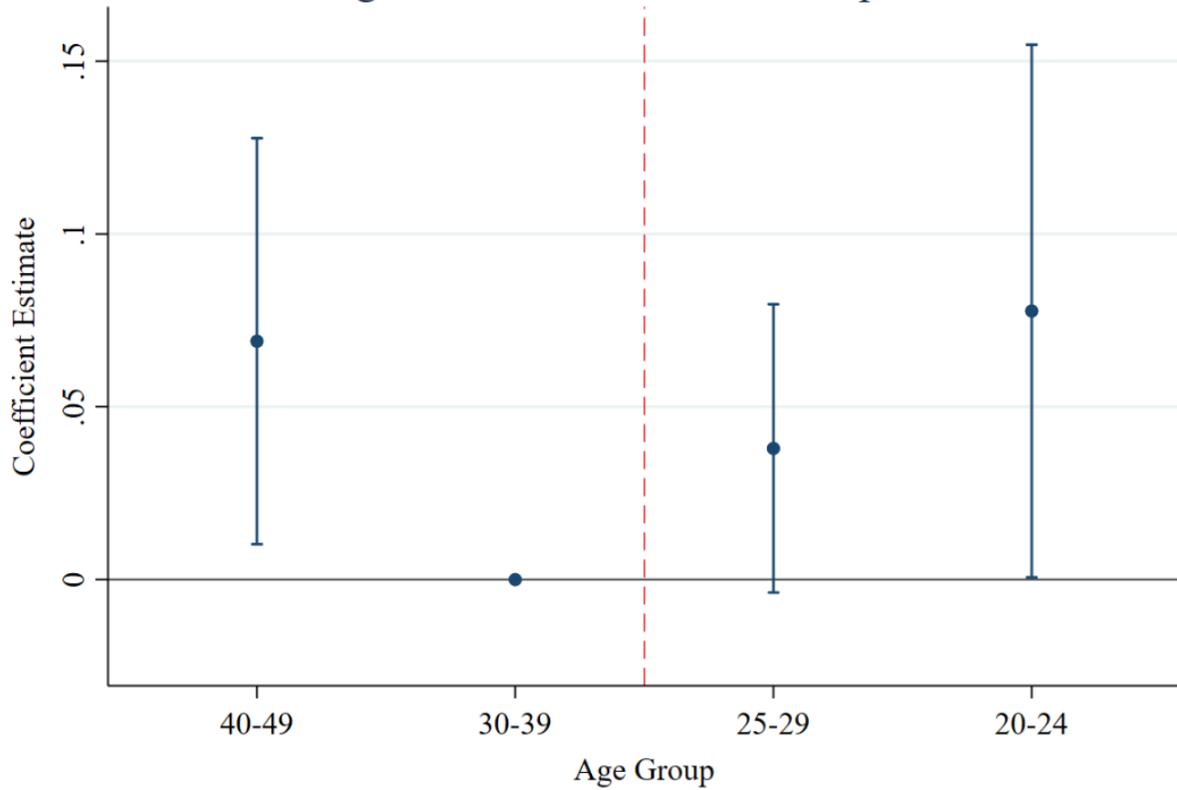
## Appendix B: Figures

### Figure I: Education



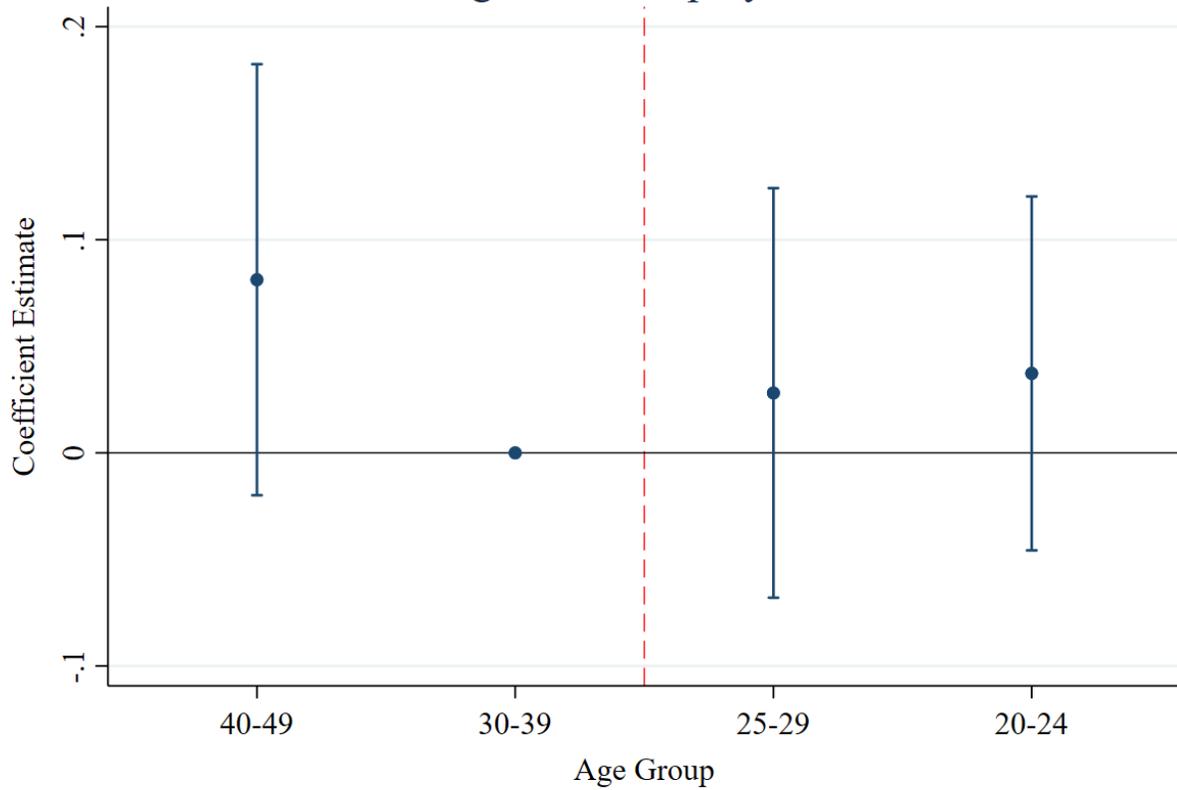
NOTES: The figure plots the estimated coefficients from interacting the treatment variable (obtaining Status through Bill C-31) with age-group dummies for the two age groups before treatment and the two age groups after treatment. The age group just before treatment (25-29) is left out so that all the other coefficients are relative to it. The dependent variables are levels of education and the event-study regressions controls for sex, attempting high school equivalence, residence in a CMA or on a reserve, band membership, age group, and marital status as well as region and region-urban fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals are also included.

Figure II: Labour Force Participation



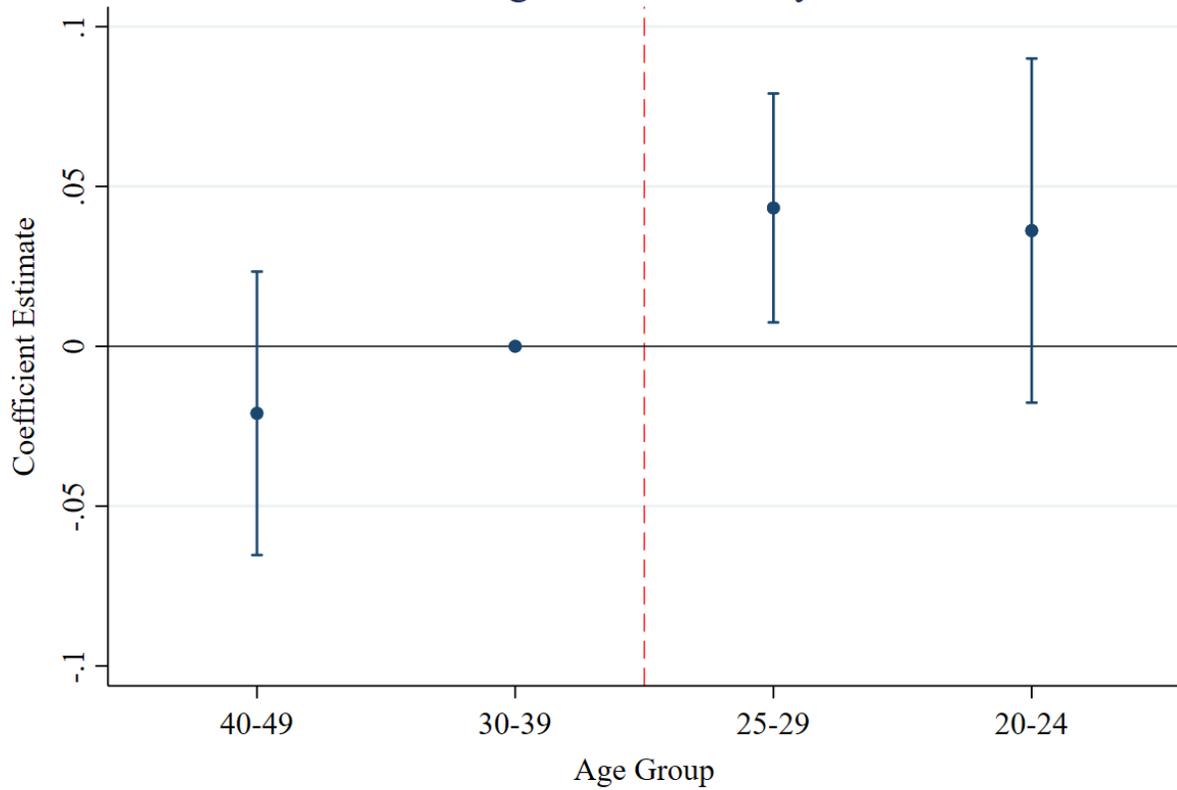
NOTES: The figure plots the estimated coefficients from interacting the treatment variable (obtaining Status through Bill C-31) with age-group dummies for the two age groups before treatment and the two age groups after treatment. The age group just before treatment (30-39) is left out so that all the other coefficients are relative to it. The dependent variable is labour force participation and the event-study regression controls for sex, fertility, residence in a CMA or on a reserve, band membership, age group, education, and marital status as well as region and region-urban fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals are also included.

Figure III: Employment



NOTES: The figure plots the estimated coefficients from interacting the treatment variable (obtaining Status through Bill C-31) with age-group dummies for the two age groups before treatment and the two age groups after treatment. The age group just before treatment (30-39) is left out so that all the other coefficients are relative to it. The dependent variable is employment and the event-study regression controls for sex, fertility, residence in a CMA or on a reserve, band membership, age group, education, and marital status as well as region and region-urban fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals are also included.

Figure IV: Mobility



NOTES: The figure plots the estimated coefficients from interacting the treatment variable (obtaining Status through Bill C-31) with age-group dummies for the two age groups before treatment and the two age groups after treatment. The age group just before treatment (30-39) is left out so that all the other coefficients are relative to it. The dependent variable is residence on a reserve and the event-study regression controls for sex, speaking an Indigenous language at home, band membership, age group, and marital status as well as region fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals are also included.