

# POLICY *Brief*

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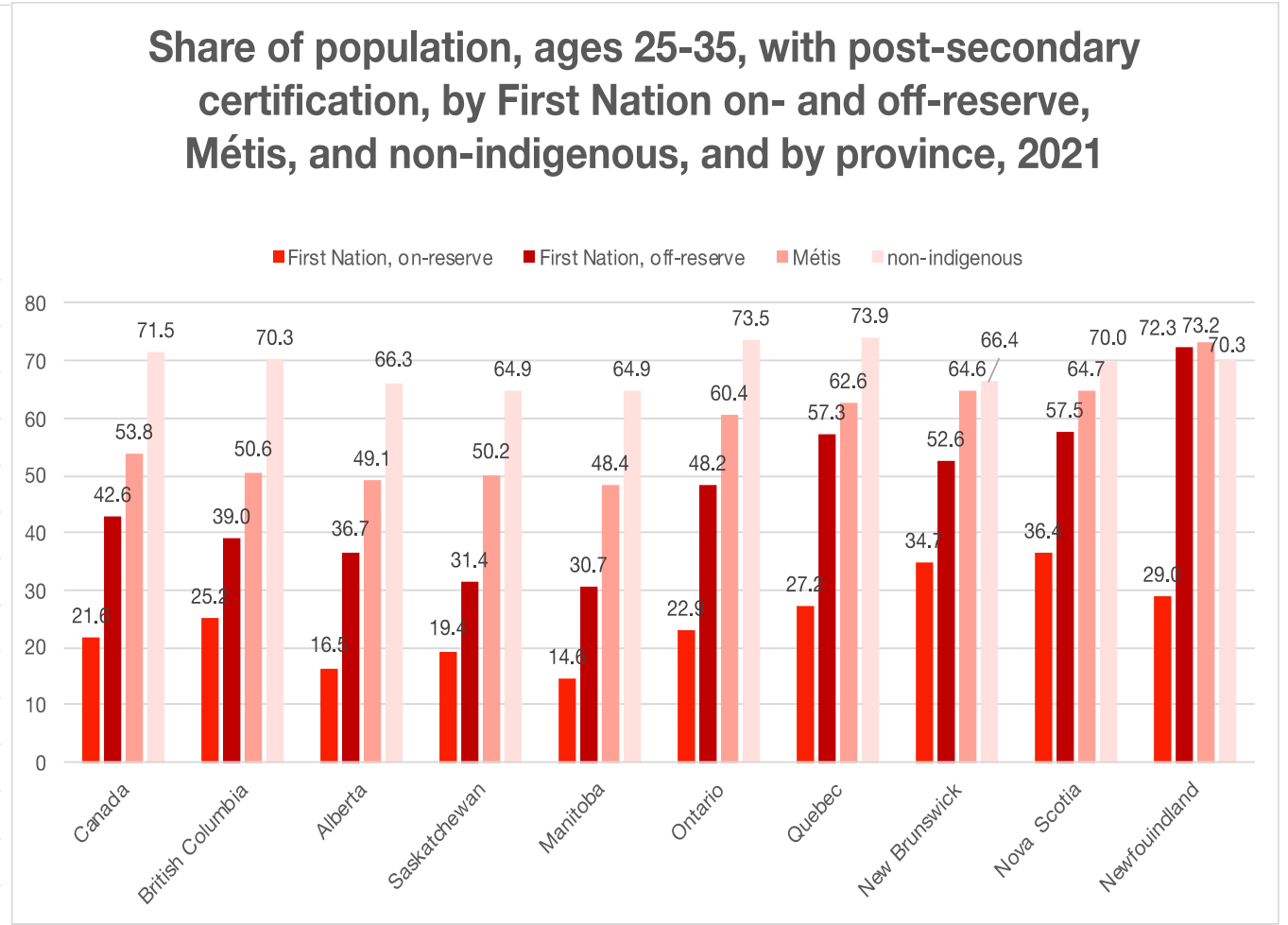
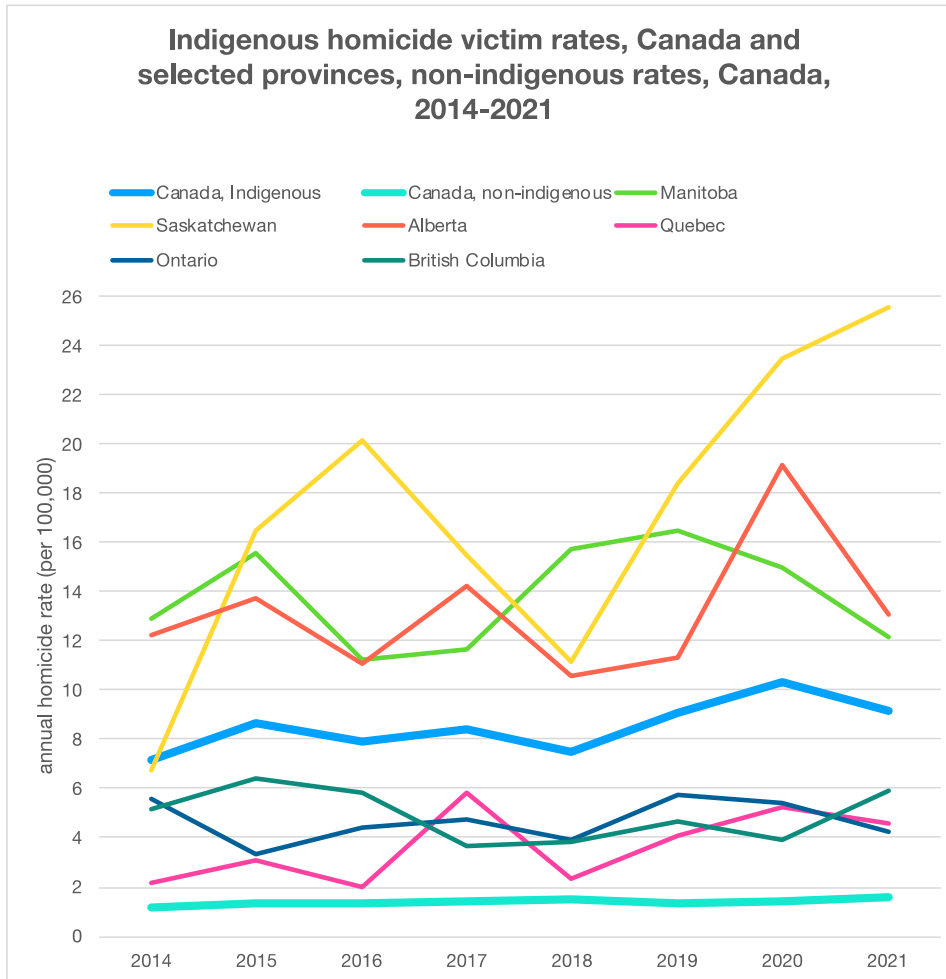
## **Low Indigenous Employment and “Deaths of Despair” in the Canadian Prairies**

By: John Richards, Professor of Public Policy, Simon Fraser University, April 4, 2023

# Context

- Indigenous homicide victim rates in non-Prairie provinces are two to three times that of non-Indigenous people
- In the Prairie provinces, Indigenous homicide victim rates are three times higher than Indigenous rates in BC, ON, QC.
- Indigenous homicide victims are a quarter of all homicides in Canada, a dramatic over-representation relative to the Indigenous share of the population.
- Education attainment levels, and employment levels for Indigenous people lag those of the non-Indigenous population. The lag is largest in Prairie provinces.

# The Prairie Provinces as Outliers



# Considerations

- Whether defined by race, ethnicity, or class, in all communities an important dimension explaining social pathologies, such as homicide and suicide, is low employment
- Given high correlation among the factors, higher education increases probability of employment, which improves family income.
- It is unlikely median earnings in First Nation communities can ever converge on the non-Indigenous statistics without major improvements in First Nation education levels.

# Discussion

- What factors result in the Prairie Provinces having much higher social pathologies among Indigenous people?
- How significant an issue is Indigenous education, both on- and off-reserve?
- What are the key policy measures to address the challenge?
- How can federal, provincial and First Nations government work together to raise Indigenous education and employment levels?