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- 1 Unfortunately, temporal comparisons within this period are complex. Bill C-31 allowed for the reinstatement of “status” to many individuals, particularly women. At the same time, as Guimond (2003) clearly documents, there has been substantial “ethnic drift” which has resulted in many individuals redefining themselves as “Aboriginal” within the census. Higher levels of educational attainment by those reinstated under Bill C-31 and changes in personal definition could account for at least some of the apparent gains in educational attainment within the Aboriginal population.
- 2 There is a steadily growing body of literature on the experience of Aboriginal youth within the school system (Barman, Hebert and McCaskill, 1986; Battiste and Barman, 1995; Graham, 1997; Binda and Calliou, 2001). Most of this literature, however, is based on individual narrative and qualitative research. It indicates that there are some cultural structural barriers for Aboriginal students, including lack of traditional language availability and culturally inappropriate teaching methods. More empirical studies have mixed results. In the US, Ward (1998) tests and finds some support for the hypothesis put forward by Ledlow (1992) that Indians living in traditional communities confront a persistence in traditional culture and native language that impede their development and educational attainment (see also Shields 1995, 1996, and 1997 and Deyle 1992). Other research indicates otherwise. James et al. (1995) argue that the use of traditional language and traditional affiliation has a positive affect or at least has no negative affect (i.e., does not predict an increase in failure).
- 3 Collection for Cycle 2 took place from mid-February to mid-June, 2002. Unfortunately, the results from that survey are not currently available for analysis through the RDC.
- 4 Unlike many of the General Social Surveys, there is no public access to the files through Statistics Canada’s Data Liberation Initiative. We produced a proposal to access the YITS Cycle One (18–20 year olds) through the Research Data Centre (RDC) at the University of Western Ontario. We had originally been led to believe that the second cycle of the YITS (20–22 year olds) would be available through the RDC program. In the end this was not the case. We therefore applied for access to Cycle One (18–20 year olds). This was based on two inter-related factors:
  - 1) Cycle One allows us to assess the school graduation, school leaving (graduation or dropout) as well as early transition to the first job. This allows the greatest interface with the non-Aboriginal populations, a large proportion of which have left high school by the age of 20 years.
  - 2) Cycle Two (20–22 year olds) was going to take considerable time to be made available according to those in charge of the RDC process. We still have no access to this data. The proposal for access to the YITS goes through a process similar to a grant application to the SSHRC. The Statistics Canada personnel responsible for the access to data review the proposal for scholarly significance and ethical issues. They also solicit academic reviews of the proposal to ensure it has merit intellectually and will contribute to general knowledge. They are very restrictive about allowing any exploratory investigations. Our proposal for access was accepted after it was clear to them we had a scholarly interest in looking at the Aboriginal data and we had an informed interest in comparing the patterns to other populations.

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