



SURVEY STUDY ON HONG KONG RESIDENTS RECENTLY ARRIVED IN CANADA

SECOND REPORT

(August 10, 2023)

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The influx of a new wave of Hong Kong residents to Canada has been a noticeable phenomenon in Vancouver, Toronto and a few other cities in Canada. In the last two years, the University of British Columbia (UBC) School of Social Work received many applications from social workers in Hong Kong who wanted to pursue our Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Indeed, several of our research team members are from the current cohort of six MSW students from Hong Kong. Their stories echo the stories of many Hong Kong residents newly arrived in Canada. While being grateful to have the opportunity to be in Canada, many of these newly arrived Hong Kong residents, including those Canadian citizens who re-returned to Canada after residing in Hong Kong for a long period of time, have faced many challenges in their settlement and integration process. However, these stories are very often told and shared only through social media within the Hong Kong immigrant community.

Out of our obligation as social work professionals and academic curiosity as applied social researchers, my colleagues, students and I decided to conduct a survey study to fill the knowledge gap of the settlement and integration conditions of this group of newcomers to Canada. We believe that if our country has decided to open the door to welcome this group of newcomers, our government and the society at large should know their challenges and support them to have a smooth process to settle and integrate in the Canadian society.

To study this group of newcomers who reside across the country was not easy. How to reach them and gain their trust can be very difficult. My team is very grateful to the support of many individuals who trusted and helped us to promote and disseminate the information of this survey in the early stages. We sincerely thank all our respondents for taking part in the survey, particularly those who helped forward the survey link and encourage their friends and families to participate. We also would like to thank Dr. Mooly Wong for her generous feedback to the survey design and data analysis.

While grateful to the supports of many organizations and groups that have helped us through the process, we particularly would like to thank Vancouver Hong Kong Forum Society and Community Family Services of Ontario, particularly Dr. Anna V. Wong, its Executive Director, for promoting our survey through their networks and connections. They are also our community partners helping us to disseminate the results of this survey. Meanwhile, our sibling unit, UBC Hong Kong Studies Initiative, has been instrumental in this study; many participants of this survey have been its keen supporters.

In June, we released the First Report of this study. Many media, particularly those in the Hong Kong Chinese community, reported our findings. We would like to thank their interest in this study and help in spreading our findings to their viewers, audiences and readers. We sincerely hope that this Second Report will further help the public, the government and other community stakeholders to have a better understanding of the Hong Kong residents who have chosen to settle in, integrate with and contribute to the Canadian society.

Miu Chung Yan, Ph.D.

Executive Summary

In the First Report of this study, we outlined the general settlement and integration experience and conditions of all the 660 respondents without distinguishing their status in Canada. With different entry documents, we can roughly classify our respondents into five different groups. The first two groups were those who came to Canada via the Lifeboat Scheme; they can be study permit holders (the Stream A) (n=182), or open work permit holders (Stream B) (n=251). The third group were those who returned from Hong Kong to Canada with a Canadian passport (n=107). The fourth group were those who arrived with a permanent resident card/permit as economic or family class immigrants (n=63). Not included in the analysis, due to their small sample size and disparate pathways to enter Canada, are refugee, tourist, close work permit holders and others (n=57)

Respondents of the four groups are similar in many aspects of their settlement and integration experience and conditions. A majority of respondents of each group are at a productive age, prepared for their return/arrival to Canada. While experiencing many difficulties in the settlement process and having supports mainly through informal networks and information online, they consistently showed a strong effort in expanding their social connections and participating on civic life in Canada and a positive perspective of their relationship with Canada. Despite these similarities, there are some differences among them which are largely due to the Canadian immigration policies and their status temporary vs. permanent, in Canada.

1. In terms of their demographic profile, respondents of the Open Work Permit group (OWPG) tend to be younger than other groups, with 78.1% between 19 to 39 years old, while those who returned with a Canadian Passport (CPG) tend to be older with a higher proportion (52.4%) over 49 years old. Respondents of the Study Permit group (SPG) have a higher proportion (60%) of young parents between 30 to 49 years old, of whom 41.5% have at least one child. In terms of income, there are higher percentage of respondents of the CPG and Permanent Resident Group (PRG) made more than the Canadian average while the annual income of SPG respondents tends to have an annual income lower than the ones of their counterparts of the other three groups.

2. Respondents of all groups searched for information about Canadian health care, housing and the labour market before coming to Canada. However, the SPG has the highest percentage (36.3%) of respondents who indicated they did not search information about the Canadian health care system before they arrived. This may be because their health benefits were covered in their fees for education. The SPG and CPG also have the highest proportion who did not searching for labour market information in their preparation. This may be that respondents of the former group were in school, their counterparts of the latter group, who are generally older, might consider retirement. All groups have a high percentage of respondents who strongly agreed or agreed that they saved enough money for three months' expense prior to their return/arrival and had enough to cover the monthly expenses for them and their family for now.

3. In terms of settlement conditions, the SPG and OWPG have a higher percentage of respondents indicating challenges that are related to their being new to the country/city. For instance, more respondents of the SPG and OWPG reported the challenge of "Don't know where to get health care" (47.3% and 41.8% respectively) and "language problems" (37.4% and 30.7%

respectively) as challenges in accessing health care service. In terms of finding housing, respondents of these two groups also have a high proportion indicating “Don’t have a reference or credit rating” (SPG 50.0% and OWPG 56.6% and “not familiar with the city or town” (46.7 and 43.8%) as major challenges in settlement.

4. Regardless of their status in Canada, most respondents (78.8%, n=517) reported that they searched for jobs after their return/arrival. Compared to their counterparts of the other two groups, more respondents within the CPG (40.8% vs. 31.6%) and PRG (51.1% vs. 37.8%) strongly agreed or agreed than strongly disagreed or disagreed that it was easy for them to find the first job. Meanwhile, when compared to the OWPG, more respondents of all the other three groups, OWPG (38.1% vs. 42.4%), CPG (34.2% vs. 31.6%), and PRG (42.2% vs. 40.0%), tend to strongly disagree or disagree rather than strongly agree or agree that their current position matched with their educational qualification. When asked about the challenges in job searches, respondents of the CPG have the lowest proportion reporting “lack of work experience in Canada” (63.2%) and “lack of social network” (42.1%), the two top challenges among all groups.

5. Respondents of all groups strongly agree or agree that their experience of living in Canada has met their expectation. However, they have still had many stressors in their settlement process. The top two stressors across all groups are employment conditions and financial conditions which are interrelated. Respondents of each group also have their own stressors which are more or less related to their status. The SPG has the highest percentage of respondents indicating “loneliness” (25.8%) and “adjustment to school and homework” (22.0%) as a stressor while over one-quarter (27.5%) of OWPG respondents, the highest among all groups, indicated “language barrier”. Despite their connection and previous experience of living in Canada, over a quarter of CPG respondents (26.2%), the highest among all groups, still indicated “adaptation to Canadian society” as a stressor. This may indicate that many of them have been outside of Canada for a fairly long time. For the PRG, it has the highest percentage of respondents with “concern for family members abroad” (23.8%) and “education of children” (15.9%) as stressors.

6. While most respondents have family outside Canada, the SPG (26.4%) and OWPG (23.1%) have the lowest percentage of having family in Canada. This may indicate a weak support network in Canada. Almost all respondents made new friends after returning/arriving Canada; with a large proportion of their new friends also from Hong Kong. Among all groups, there is strong agreement or agreement that it is important to make friends with people who are not from Hong Kong. Yet, more respondents of the SPG (47.3%) and OPWG (51.8%) compared to the CPG (32.7%) and the PPG (38.4%) strongly agree or agree that it is difficult to do so. In terms of preference of friends from Hong Kong, the agreement among respondents of all groups were split. More respondents of all group strongly disagreed or disagreed than strongly agreed or agreed that cultural differences matter in their friendship while consistently across all four groups, respondents strongly agree or agree that they felt more comfortable to be in a social context where people speak their mother tongue. Among them, the SPG has the highest percentage (74.7%) in strong agreement or agreement with this and the CPG has the lowest (55.1%).

7. Many respondents have taken part in some civil organizations/activities, yet these were mostly confined within the Hongkonger community including Hongkonger social/cultural/activist groups and Hongkonger chat groups via different social platforms. Among all groups, the OWPG seems to be the relatively less active group. It has the lowest percentage (51%) of respondents taking part in local sports/cultural/religious organizations as well as in groups of school/civic/community organizations (16.1%).

8. Respondents of all groups have very few who felt discrimination in different social settings. The CPG (47.7%) and the PRG (42.9) have the highest percentage of respondents reported never feeling discriminated against. Among those who experienced discrimination, a large number reported language accent (36.1%, n=238) followed by race or skin colour (29.8%, n=197) as the reason why they were discriminated against. Generally, respondents of all groups have a very positive perspective of their relationship with Canada. While the CPR (79.4%) and PRG (76.2%) have a significantly higher percentage of respondents than those of the SPG (47.8%) and OWPG (45.4%) reporting very often or often reading news about Canada, a great majority of respondents across all groups strongly agreed or agreed that it is important that they are informed of issues of Canadian society. As Canadian citizens, respondents of the CPG have the highest proportion strongly agreed or agreed that “I feel like belong in Canada”. However, even being new and as temporary residents, 34% and 27% of their respondents of the SPG and OWPG respectively also strongly agreed or agreed with this statement.

9. Indeed, across all groups, a high percentage of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they can contribute to the Canadian society and they desire to stay in Canada for good. However, less than half of respondents including the CPG, strongly agreed or agreed that they are important to Canadian society. Finally, respondents’ status in Canada seems to have an impact on how they identified themselves. While across all groups respondents overwhelmingly identified themselves as Hongkonger, 89.7% of respondents of CPG strongly agreed or agreed that they identified themselves as Canadian, followed by the PRG (42.9%). Only 14.8% of respondents of SPG and 12.0% of the OWPG shared this sentiment but given their temporary status and being in Canada only for a short period, these percentages can be considered as significant indication of their aspiration for their future in Canada.

10. Based on these results, we offer the following recommendations:

- a. The Canadian government should consider capitalizing on the potential of Hong Kong residents by extending the Stream B pathway beyond 2026 and expediting the permanent resident application process of Hong Kong residents who came through the Lifeboat Scheme and who claimed asylum in Canada.
- b. With the revision of the Stream B pathway, more young couples with children may come to Canada through this pathway. Their needs for formal services will be greater and government should consider providing measures to prevent them falling into the stressful pitfall of settlement.
- c. To ensure a smooth re-settlement process, Immigration, Refugee, Citizenship Canada (IRCC) should open up the settlement services for recently arrived Hong Kong residents

including those who come through the Lifeboat Scheme and those Canadian citizens who returned to Canada.

- d. For those who came to Canada via Stream A pathway, we cannot only rely on their educational institution to take care of them. Since many of them have come with their family, the government should open the settlement service for them.
- e. For Canadian citizens in Hong Kong who want to return to Canada, the Canadian Consulate in Hong Kong should provide support to facilitate their return. For those who left Canada for over 10 years, they should be eligible for settlement services after they return to Canada.
- f. Civic and community organizations should work with groups within the Hong Kong immigrant community to provide services that can help newly arrived Hong Kong residents to better integrate in the community.

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Background

Canada has been one of the most popular country to which Hong Kong residents emigrate. The last massive influx of immigrants from Hong Kong to Canada in the 1990s was triggered by the political instability caused by Hong Kong's transition back to the People's Republic of China. Three decades later, Hong Kong has experienced a political turmoil and instability which have driven hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong residents to emigrate. A new wave of Hong Kong residents moving to Canada has emerged.

Since the mid-2020, there has been a steady increase in permanent residents from Hong Kong. From 2015 to 2022, the Immigration, Refugee, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has noted a total of 13,730 permanent residents from Hong Kong. Meanwhile, to support the movement, the Canadian government announced the creation of the Permanent Residence Pathways for Hong Kong Residents, commonly known as the "lifeboat scheme" on November 12, 2020. The policy took effect on June 1, 2021. Two streams, Stream A (In-Canada Graduates) and Stream B (Canadian Work Experience), were created for Hong Kong residents to come to Canada¹. Up to the end of 2022, 46,970 Hong Kong residents arrived Canada through these two streams².

Meanwhile, it has been reported that about 300,000 Canadian citizens have been residing in Hong Kong, most of who were originally from Hong Kong. Since the mid-2010s, there has been a noticeable number of this group of Canadians returning to Canada³ (Wong & Yan, 2023). However, the current tracking system at the Canadian border does not keep track of their return. Taking a conservative estimate, if 20% of this group of Canadian citizens have returned to Canada, the Hong Kong immigrant community may have roughly 60,000 renewed members since mid-2010s. This does not take into account families with non-Canadian spouses and children of Canadians born outside of Canada. Together, there are possibly over 120,000 Hong Kong residents, including returning Canadian citizens, have returned to or arrived in Canada since 2015.

So far, public and scholarly attention to this new wave of Hong Kong residents to Canada has been scant. To reach this population which is spread across Canada in different cities, we conducted an online survey from December 19, 2022 to February 28, 2023. Without a population frame, we adopted a convenience sampling strategy by reaching out to different online chat/message groups via various information and communication technology (ICT) platforms, mainly Facebook, WhatsApp, Signal and Telegram. A snowballing process was also adopted by

¹ Details of the policy, please refer to <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/immigrate-canada/hong-kong-residents-permanent-residence.html>.

² These numbers are based on: a) Canada – Study permit holders with a valid permit on December 31st by country of citizenship, 2000 – 2022; b) Canada – International Mobility Program work permit holders by country of citizenship and year in which permit(s) became effective, January 2015 - March 2023; and c) Canada - Admissions of Permanent Residents by Country of Citizenship, January 2015 - March 2023. They are available on <https://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/f7e5498e-0ad8-4417-85c9-9b8aff9b9eda>.

³ Kennedy Chi Bin Wong, and Miu Chung Yan. "Leaving the Homeland Again for My Family's Future: Post-return Migration among Hong Kong Canadians." *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, no. 24 (2023): 467–86. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-022-00955-0>.

encouraging respondents to forward the survey information and weblink to their friends and families who also met the sampling criteria: a) resided in Hong Kong consecutively for over five years in the 10 years prior to their recent return/move to Canada; b) returned to or arrived in Canada on or after January 1, 2015; c) lived in Canada consecutively for over six months at the time when they responded to the survey; d) are currently living in Canada; and e) 19 or over years old. A total of 1,053 people attempted the survey, however, 185 did not meet the eligibility criteria. Among the 868 who met all the sampling criteria, 660 (76%) completed the survey. Data were analyzed by using SPSS Statistics 25.

We have published the preliminary results of the survey on June 12, 2023. In the first report, we described the general profile of the 660 respondents, who completed our survey, and their settlement and integration conditions. These respondents had returned to or arrived in Canada with different entry documents which define their status, challenges and access to resource in their settlement and integration in Canada. For details of the general profile, please to refer to the First Report at <https://socialwork.ubc.ca/news/survey-study-on-hong-kong-residents-recently-arrived-in-canada/>.

As highlighted in the Executive Summary of the first report, these Hong Kong residents, who arrived Canada in this new wave of influx, are high functioning and have great potential and strong commitment to contribute to Canadian society. Their profile aligns very well with the expected characteristics of potential immigrants that the Canadian immigration policy has long targeted. However, their settlement and integration conditions are not without challenges. Only a small group of them (9.5%), who came in Canada with a permanent resident status, are eligible for federally funded settlement service. So far, most of them can only rely on their own skills and informal networks to resolve the many difficulties in the settlement process.

In this second report, we examine the settlement and integration conditions of four major subgroups of respondents based on their entry documents. The first two groups, Open Work Permit (n=182) and Study Permit (n=251), are respondents who came to Canada under the temporary public policy. The third group (n=107) are those who came to Canada with a Canadian passport. In the literature they are understood as post-return migrants who are assumed to have a certain level of understanding of and connections in Canada. The fourth group (n=63) includes those who came to Canada as permanent residents. Not included in the analysis are refugee and refugee claimants, tourists, close work permit holders and others (n=57) due to their small sample size and disparate pathways to enter Canada.

Using their entry documents for classification reflects not only how they entered Canada but also their access to public resources. Due to its strong preference for selecting economically productive immigrants, this policy has also shaped the demographic profile of our respondents who returned or arrived in Canada by using different entry documents. Indeed, a great majority of our respondents are structurally excluded from the formal settlement service funded by IRCC which are only for permanent residents who have arrived in Canada for five or less years. Under this policy, not only those, who came in with an open work permit (Stream A) and a study permit (Stream B), not eligible. those returning with a Canadian passport are also excluded despite the fact that they need supports for their re-settlement in Canada, as a previous study indicates (Wong & Yan, 2023).

In this report, to reflect the highly selective nature of Canadian immigration policies we first provide a comparative description of the demographic profile of the four groups of respondents. Then we report on the similarities and differences among these groups in their settlement and integration processes. In the third section, we provide a brief summary of each group. We end this report with some policy and service recommendations.

Profile of the Four Groups

The pattern of distribution of respondents in terms of their currently residing city, age, gender and place of birth across all the subgroups are very similar. Generally speaking, as indicated in our previous report, in each group, most respondents are currently residing in Vancouver; relatively young (50 or younger), female and born in Hong Kong. However, as shown in Table 1, there are some noticeable differences among these groups which reflect the uniqueness of each group.

Study Permit Group (SPG) (n=182)

Respondents of this group mainly came to Canada through Stream A of the Lifeboat Scheme. They entered Canada with a study permit. While most of them (61.5%) are residing in Vancouver (61.5%), close to 10%, the highest among all groups, also reside outside the three major cities (Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver) where most Hong Kong immigrants tend to settle. It may reflect their choice of settlement was determined by the school that accepted them. This group has the highest percentage (64.8%) of female respondents. Interestingly, while close to 93% of the respondents are younger than 50 years old, 60% of them are between 30 to 49 years old. Among them 41.5% have one or more children. In other words, many respondents in this group are young parents who may have graduated from their post-secondary studies for a few years. A great majority (88.5%) of respondents in this group were born in Hong Kong. In terms of education, 90% have a bachelor and above degree and 73.6% rated their English proficiency at advanced and proficient levels. Yet in terms of income, the SPG have the highest percentage of respondents (66.8%) earning income lower than \$24,001 when compared to other groups.

Open Work Permit Group (OWPG) (n=251)

Respondents of this group came to Canada through Stream B (Canadian work experience) of the Lifeboat Scheme. They entered Canada with an open work permit. Close to 60% of the respondents in this group resided in Vancouver and 31.5% in Toronto. Similar to the SPG, 62.2% of the respondents self-identified as female and 88.8% were born in Hong Kong. This group also has the highest percentage (11.2%) of respondents who were born in Mainland China. The age of respondents in this group are the youngest with 44.6% between 19 to 29 years old and 31.5% between 30 to 39. They have the lowest percentage (23.1%) in terms of having children. Although 93.9% respondents report having a bachelor or above degree, only 61.4% rated their English proficiency at advanced or proficient levels. Forty and one-half percent of them reported

an annual income between \$36,001⁴ to \$60,000⁵ and over a quarter (26.7%) made more than the Canadian average.

Canadian Passport Group (CPG) (n=107)

Respondents of this group entered Canada with their Canadian passport. This indicates that they are either born or naturalized Canadian citizens who returned to and resided in Hong Kong consecutively for over five years in the 10 years prior to their recent return to Canada. They are sometimes also called post-returnees. Like respondents of other groups, a great majority (90.7%) of respondents in this group were born in Hong Kong while close to 8% were born in Canada. This group also has the highest percentage (69.2%) of respondents residing in Vancouver. The proportion of male (46.7%) and female (53.3%) respondents of this group is relatively closer than other groups. Over half (56.1%) of them has at least one child. It has the highest percentage (52.4%) of respondents at an age over 49. A great majority (86.4%) have a degree at Bachelor or above levels. In terms of English proficiency, 76.6% of respondents rated advanced or proficient level, which is the highest among all groups. Over 60% of the respondents in this group reported an annual income over \$36,001 and 30% made more than the Canadian average.

Permanent Resident Group (PRG) (n=63)

This group of respondents came to Canada through the regular programs, such as Express Entry, Family Sponsorship, and Provincial Nominees. They entered Canada with a permanent resident card/permit. Out of the 63 PRG respondents, 20 came into Canada as economic class immigrants and 43 as family class. Unlike respondents of the other three groups, they are eligible for the settlement programs funded by IRCC. While over half (54%) reported residing in Vancouver, this group has the highest percentage of respondents residing in Toronto (36.5%). They also have an equal split in terms of gender (49.2% vs. 49.2%). When compared with other groups, this group has the highest percentage (46.0%) of respondents at an age between 40 to 49 years old. Meanwhile, one third of them (33.3%) are over 50 years old. Close to 70% have at least one child. Although not significantly different from other groups, this group has the lowest percentage (85%) with a bachelor or above degree and 60.3% rating their English proficiency at advanced or proficient levels. However, in terms of income, 40% of respondents, the highest among all groups, were making more than the Canadian average income.

⁴ This is the closest to the annual income (\$32,552) of a full time (40 hours) position with the minimum pay (\$15.65) in BC in 2022.

⁵ This is the closest to the Canadian average income, \$61,119.24, in 2022. Source: <https://www.jobillico.com/blog/en/the-average-canadian-salary-in-2022/>.

Table 1: Demographic Profile

| | Study permit (n=182) | Open Work Permit (n=251) | Canadian Passport (n=107) | Permanent Resident (n=63) | Total (n=660)⁶ |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| City Currently Residing | | | | | |
| Vancouver | 61.5% | 57.8% | 69.2% | 54.0% | 59.5% |
| Toronto | 25.8% | 31.5% | 28.0% | 36.5% | 30.0% |
| Calgary | 2.7% | 3.6% | 1.9% | 1.6% | 2.6% |
| Others | 9.9% | 7.2% | 0.9% | 7.9% | 7.9% |
| Age | | | | | |
| 19 - 29 years old | 32.4% | 44.6% | 10.3% | 1.6% | 28.4% |
| 30 - 39 years old | 30.2% | 31.5% | 11.2% | 19.0% | 26.6% |
| 40 - 49 years old | 30.2% | 17.9% | 26.2% | 46.0% | 27.2% |
| 50-59 years old | 6.0% | 5.2% | 31.8% | 23.8% | 12.9% |
| 60 years and older | 1.1% | 0.8% | 20.6% | 9.5% | 5.0% |
| Gender | | | | | |
| Male | 34.1% | 36.3% | 46.7% | 49.2% | 38.5% |
| Female | 64.8% | 62.2% | 53.3% | 49.2% | 60.1% |
| Non-binary | 0.5% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.2% |
| Prefer not to say | 0.5% | 1.6% | 0.0% | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| Place of Birth | | | | | |
| Hong Kong | 88.5% | 88.8% | 90.7% | 93.7% | 89.1% |
| Canada | 0.0% | 0.0% | 7.5% | 0.0% | 1.2% |
| Mainland China | 8.8% | 11.2% | 1.9% | 4.8% | 8.5% |
| Other countries | 2.7% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.6% | 1.2% |
| No. of Children | | | | | |
| 0 | 58.8% | 76.5% | 43.0% | 31.1% | 58.4% |
| 1 | 19.2% | 11.6% | 21.5% | 26.2% | 17.8% |
| 2 | 17.6% | 11.2% | 29.9% | 39.3% | 21.0% |

⁶ This includes the 57 respondents who chose entry documents as refugees, tourist visa, other work permit, others and one who did not specify.

| | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 3 | 4.4% | 0.4% | 4.7% | 3.3% | 2.4% |
| 4 and more | 0.0% | 0.4% | 0.9% | 0.0% | 0.3% |
| Highest Education Level | | | | | |
| Secondary school | 1.7% | 0.8% | 4.9% | 5.0% | 2.3% |
| Trade/vocational school certificate | 0.0% | 2.0% | 1.9% | 0.0% | 1.1% |
| High school diploma | 4.4% | 0.8% | 3.9% | 1.7% | 3.3% |
| Associate degree or polytechnic diploma | 3.9% | 2.4% | 2.9% | 8.3% | 3.6% |
| Bachelor's degree or equivalent | 43.9% | 53.9% | 48.5% | 40.0% | 47.3% |
| Master's degree or equivalent | 40.0% | 33.9% | 25.2% | 41.7% | 35.5% |
| Professional degree | 3.3% | 4.9% | 7.8% | 1.7% | 4.2% |
| Ph.D. or equivalent | 2.8% | 1.2% | 4.9% | 1.7% | 2.8% |
| English Proficiency | | | | | |
| Beginner | 1.1% | 1.6% | 0.9% | 3.2% | 1.5% |
| Elementary | 3.3% | 2.4% | 2.8% | 1.6% | 3.2% |
| Intermediate | 22.0% | 34.7% | 19.6% | 34.9% | 28.5% |
| Advance | 46.2% | 44.6% | 32.7% | 27.0% | 40.4% |
| Proficient | 27.5% | 16.7% | 43.9% | 33.3% | 26.4% |
| Annual Income | | | | | |
| Less than \$12,000 | 56.9% | 13.0% | 16.3% | 23.3% | 28.1% |
| \$12,001 – 24,000 | 10.9% | 8.5% | 11.2% | 8.3% | 9.1% |
| \$24,001 – 36,000 | 3.4% | 11.3% | 12.2% | 8.3% | 9.0% |
| \$36,001 – 48,000 | 8.6% | 22.3% | 16.3% | 11.7% | 16.1% |
| \$48,001 – 60,000 | 4.0% | 18.2% | 14.3% | 8.3% | 12.5% |
| \$60,001 – 84,000 | 7.5% | 17.8% | 7.1% | 18.3% | 12.3% |
| \$84,001 – 96,000 | 2.3% | 5.3% | 7.1% | 5.0% | 4.6% |
| Above \$96,000 | 6.3% | 3.6% | 15.3% | 16.7% | 8.4% |

In sum, despite the similarities among respondents of these four groups, they differ in some ways which reflected the nature of their status in Canada in relation to the Canadian immigration policies. The age difference between respondents of the Study Permit and the OWPGs may very likely be caused by the original design of the Lifeboat Scheme which only issued open work permits, i.e., Stream B, to people who had graduated from a post-graduate program within five years before application. For those who did not meet this criterion, their choices to come to Canada were through either a) the regular immigration programs, e.g., Express Entry, or b) Stream A. This may explain why respondents of the SPG group are older and more of them have at least one child than their OWPG counterparts.

Due to the point system, respondents of the PRG, particularly those economic class immigrants, are required to have certain years of work experience after their post-secondary studies. Therefore, their ages also tend to fall between the range of 30 to 59 years old, an age range that is supposed to be active in the labour market. Financially, they have the highest proportion making more than the Canadian average income. Many also have entered with their family to Canada. That may be why they have the highest percentage of having at least one child. The CPG is the least known group due to the lack of formal statistical information of their return. However, learning from our respondents, they tend to be older, have at least one child and are more confident in their English proficiency. With these profiles in mind, we examine the similarities and differences in the settlement and integration conditions of these four groups.

Pre-Migration Preparation

In the survey, we asked how our respondents prepared for their return/arrival in Canada in terms of financial resources and information search. Overall, most respondents strongly agreed or agreed (hereafter s/agreed) that they have both enough savings for at least three months in Canada and enough financial resources to meet monthly expenses at the time when they participated in the survey (Figure 1). However, with the lowest annual income, the SPG has the highest percentage (20.9%) of respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed (hereafter s/disagreed) that they have sufficient financial resources for their monthly expenses (Figure 2). Meanwhile close to 20% of respondents of the CPG also s/disagreed with this even though as a group they have higher incomes on average than the SPG (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Pre-arrival Savings

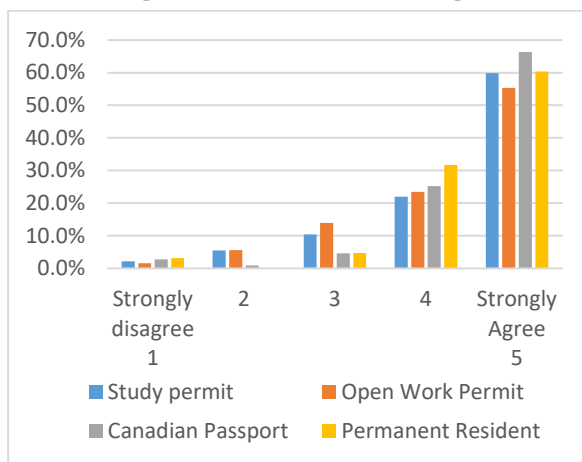
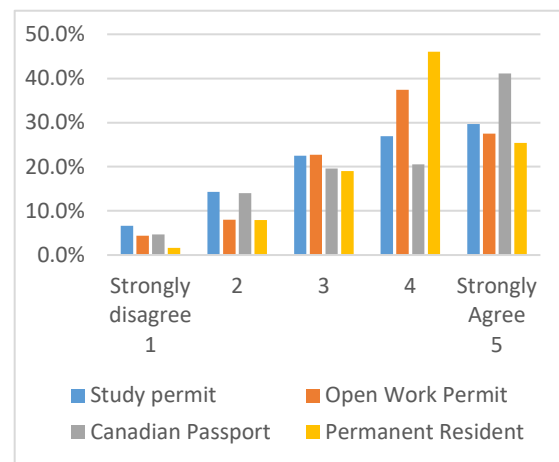


Figure 2: Financial Resources for Monthly Expenses



Most respondents of all groups searched for information about Canadian housing and the labour market before they returned/arrived in Canada. However less than 50% of respondents of all groups s/agreed that they searched information on the Canadian health care system and benefits before their return/arrival (Figure 3). Among them, the SPG has the highest percentage (36.3%) of disagreement. This may be because their health benefits were covered in their fees of education. In terms of housing (Figure 4), which has been notoriously expensive in Vancouver

Figure 3: Health Care Information

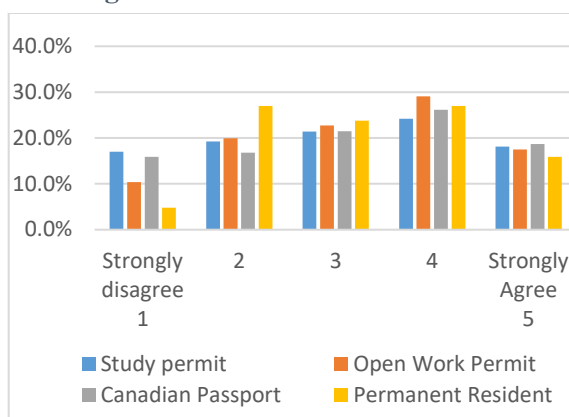
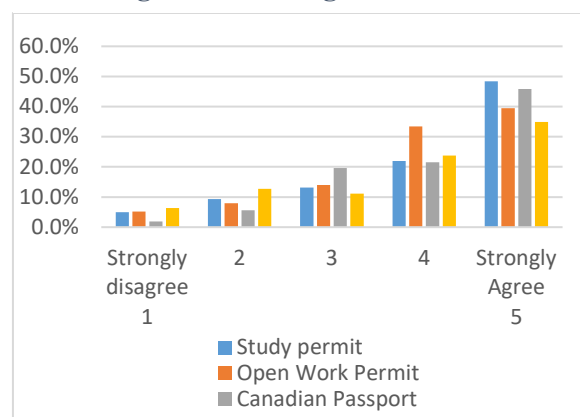


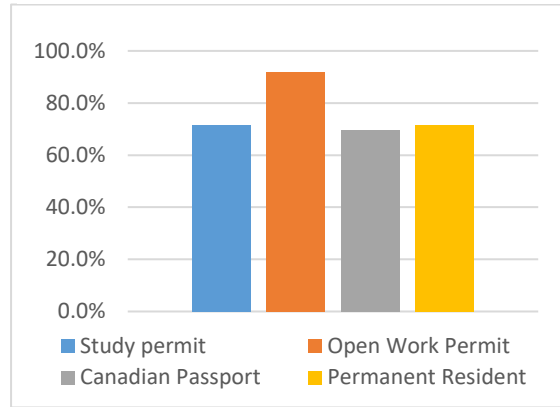
Figure 4: Housing Information



and Toronto, a high percentage of respondents of the SPG (70.3%) and OWPG (72.9%) s/agreed that they searched information before their arrival. Instead, the PRG has the lowest percentage in agreement (58.7%), followed by the CPG (67.3%).

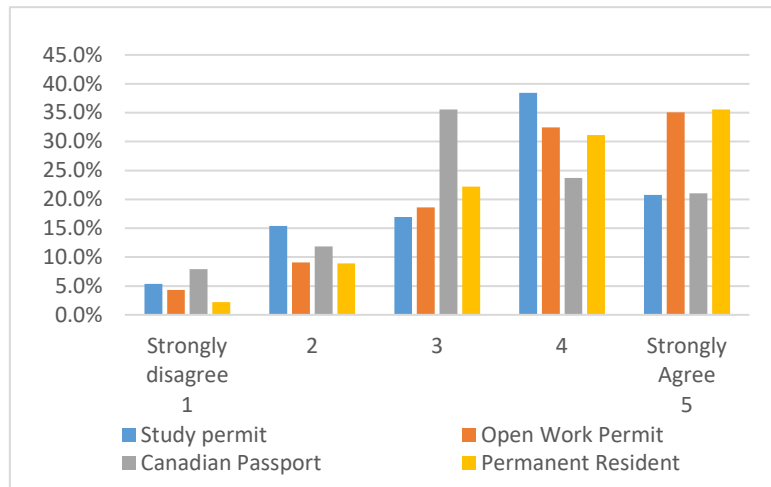
Regardless the document that they used to enter Canada, a great majority of (78%, n=517) of respondents reported that they have tried to find a job after their return/arrival in Canada. Figure 5 indicates that among all the groups, the OWPG has the highest percentage engaged in a job search. Canadian immigration policy allows international students to work up to 40 hours per week. Thus, the SPG also has 71.4% of respondents reported that they searched for work after they arrived in Canada. The PRG (71.4%) shares a similar percentage. The CPG, which includes over 20% respondents at the age of 60 or above, has a slightly lower percentage (69.7%) of respondents reporting to be searching for jobs.

Figure 5: Job Search after Arrival



For those who did search for jobs after returning/arriving in Canada, there are some noticeable variations among respondents from different groups in terms of their pre-arrival preparation for job searches in Canada. While most groups have a high percentage of respondents who s/agreed that they searched for labour market information prior to their return/arrival, both the SPG (20.8%) and CPG (19.7%) groups have the highest proportion of respondents strongly disagreeing or disagreeing. Meanwhile, the CPG group also has the highest proportion (35.5%) who reported a neutral position, i.e., rating 3 in the five-point rating scale, when asked if they agreed with the statement that “Before arriving in Canada, I searched for and received information about the Canadian labour market.” It seems that over half of the post-returnee respondents might not have decided to look for work in Canada prior to their return.

Figure 6: Labour Market Information



Settlement Conditions

In the survey we examined the settlement conditions from four different life domains: health care, housing, employment, and education which includes post-secondary education and kindergarten to grade 12 (K-12). Among all the respondents, 39% (n=258) reported that they enrolled in post-secondary education. Since 70% (n=181) of those enrolled in post-secondary education were SPG respondents, the sample size of other groups is small (Figure 7). Similarly, a total of 215 respondents reported having children enrolled in K-12 (Figure 8). The size of each group is also small. Due to the small sample size, we decided not to further breakdown the information of each group. In this section, we focus on their settlement conditions in health care, housing and employment.

Figure 7: Enrolled in Post-Graduate Studies

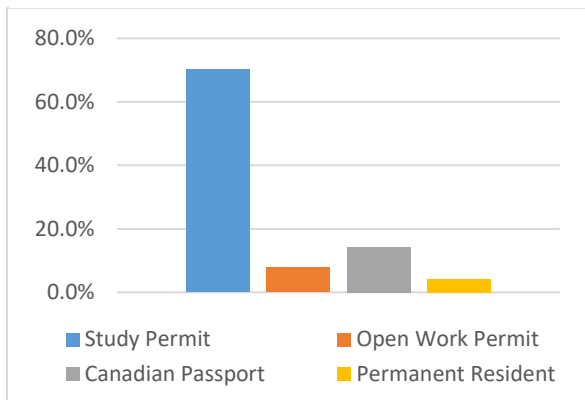
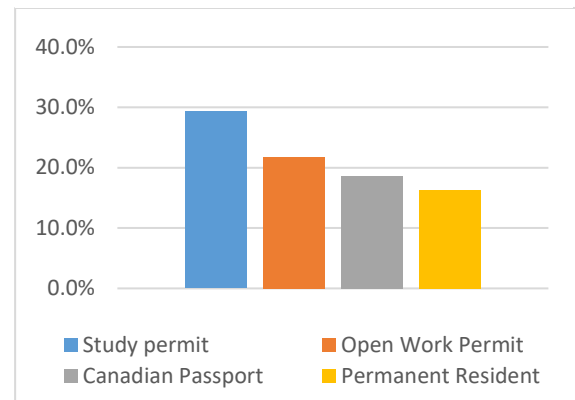


Figure 8: Children Enrolled in K-12

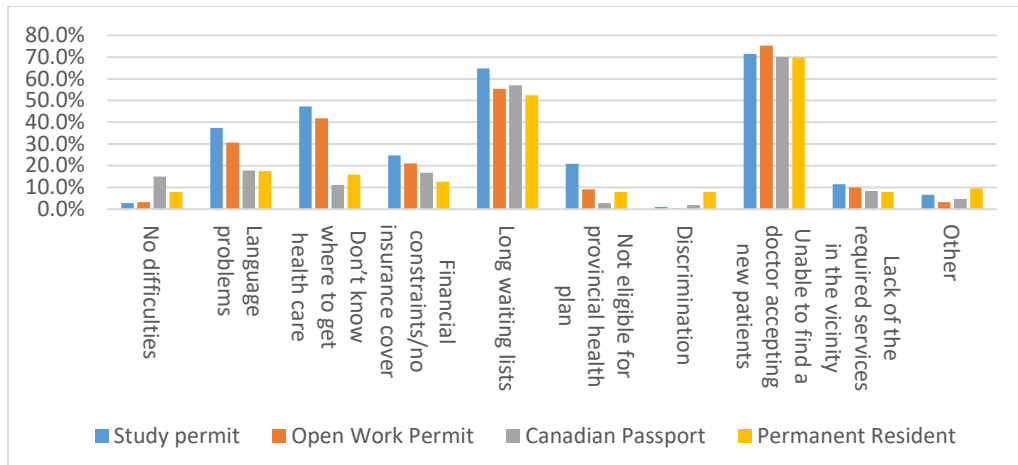


Health and Settlement

As reported above, less half of the respondents s/agreed that they searched for information about Canadian health care services and system prior to their return/arrival to Canada. As suggested by the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian health care system has been described as in crisis particularly during and after COVID-19⁷. It is not surprising to see respondents facing many challenges in accessing health care. As shown in Figure 9, all groups reported “unable to find a doctor” and “long waiting list” as the two major challenges. Meanwhile, respondents of SPG and OWPG have a significantly higher percentage of respondents reporting the challenge of “Don’t know where to get health care” (47.3% and 41.8%) and “language problems“ (37.4% and 30.7%). Twenty percent of SPG respondents indicated “not eligible for provincial health plan” as a challenge while, as full-time post-secondary students, their health care plan was supposedly covered by their school in their tuitions.

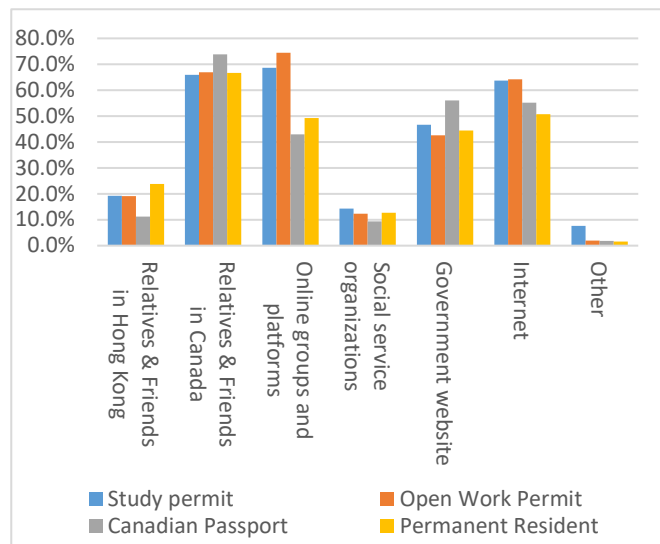
⁷ See <https://www.cma.ca/news/canadas-health-care-crisis-what-we-need-now>.

Figure 9: Difficulties in Health Care



When seeking information for health care services, respondents of all groups turned to different information sources including relatives and friends in Canada, online groups and platforms, internet and government websites (Figure 10). However, compared to the CPG and PRG, respondents of SPG (68.7%) and OWPG (74.5%) have a higher percentage reporting they were seeking information through online groups and platforms. The CPG has a slightly higher percentage in terms of seeking information from relatives and friends in Canada (73.8%) and government websites (56.1%). This may reflect their established connections in and knowledge of Canada.

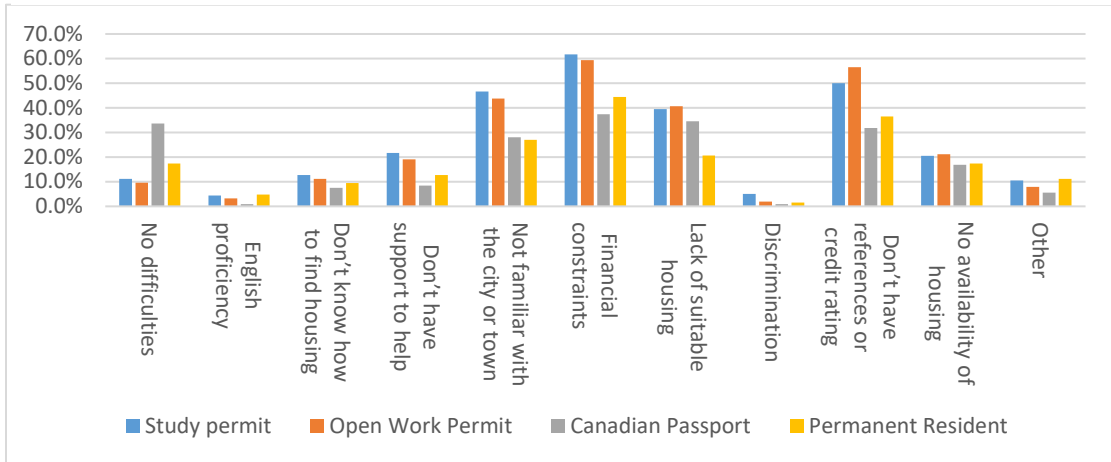
Figure 10: Sources of Health Information



Housing and Settlement

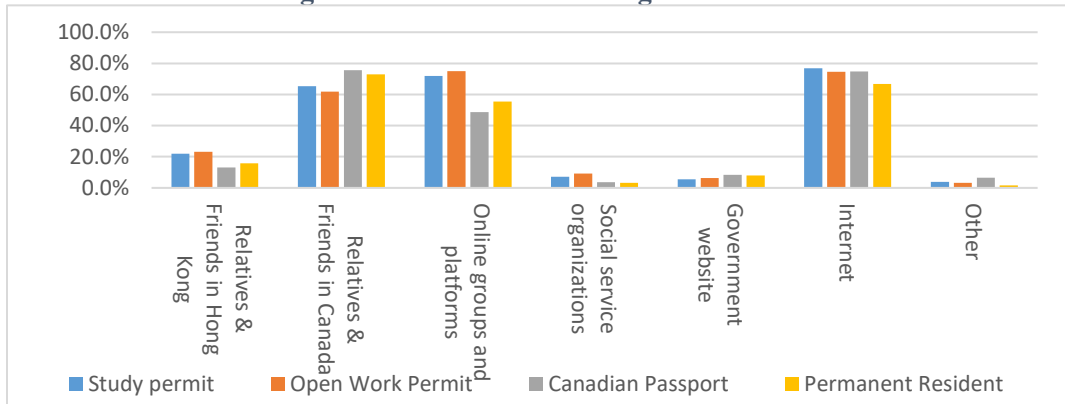
Despite the fact that many respondents sought information about the Canadian housing market prior to their return and arrival, seeking affordable and appropriate housing is still difficult. The top four difficulties reported by the respondents across all groups are “financial constraints”, “don’t have a reference or credit rating”, “not familiar with the city” and “lack of suitable housing”. As shown in Figure 11, comparing with their counterparts of the other two groups, a higher percentage of respondents from the SPG and OWPG was noted in almost all the difficulties listed in the survey. It may not be a surprise to see that one-third (33.6%) the CPG has the highest percentage of respondents reported having “no difficulties”. In other words, in terms of finding appropriate and affordable housing, being new and with a temporary status, the respondents of SPG and OWPG may be in a more disadvantaged position.

Figure 11: Difficulties in Housing



When asked from where they got information about Canadian housing, internet, relatives and friends in Canada, and online groups and platforms were the most popular sources among respondents of all groups (Figure 12). However, taking a closer look, these four groups are different in certain ways. While a slightly higher percentage of respondents of CPG (75.7%) and PRG (73.0%) turned more to relatives and friends in Canada, a great majority of respondents of SPG (72.0%) and OWPG (74.9%) have used online groups and platforms. It may reflect that the first two groups may have more local connections (Figure 20). Whereas, the latter two groups are more connected with the many newly established online chat groups which are explored below.

Figure 12: Sources of Housing Information



Employment and Settlement

The majority of respondents (78.8%, n=517) looked for jobs after their arrival. Yet, taking a closer look, respondents within each group seem to have different opinion in their job search experience in Canada. In terms of agreement of easiness in getting their first job in Canada, opinions among all groups are quite split (Figure 13). However, the gap between s/disagreement and s/agreement within the SPG (38.5% vs. 40.0%) and OWPG (41.6% vs. 37.7%) is relatively small when compared to either the CPG (40.8% vs. 31.6%) or PRG (51.1% vs. 37.8%). Most respondents s/disagreed that it was easy to find work, except the SPG. This may be because the respondents of the SPG tended to focus more on schooling and were relatively less selective in their job search. Instead, respondents of CPG and PRG tend to have a higher expectation of success in job searches because of their age and immigration requirements. Respondents of the OWPG have a more urgent need to find a job that can help them to accumulate local work hours for their application of permanent residency. Meanwhile, except the OWPG, more respondents of all the other three groups, OWPG (38.1% vs. 42.4%), CPG (34.2% vs. 31.6%), and PRG (42.2% vs. 40.0%), tend to s/disagree rather than s/agree that their current position matched with their educational qualification (Figure 14). This may relate to their previous work experience which causes their dissatisfaction in terms of qualification matching.

Figure 13: Easiness of Getting First Job

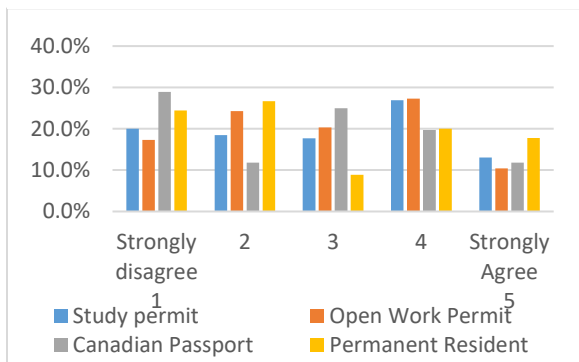
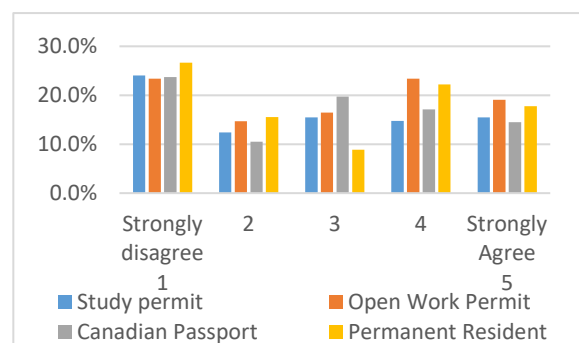
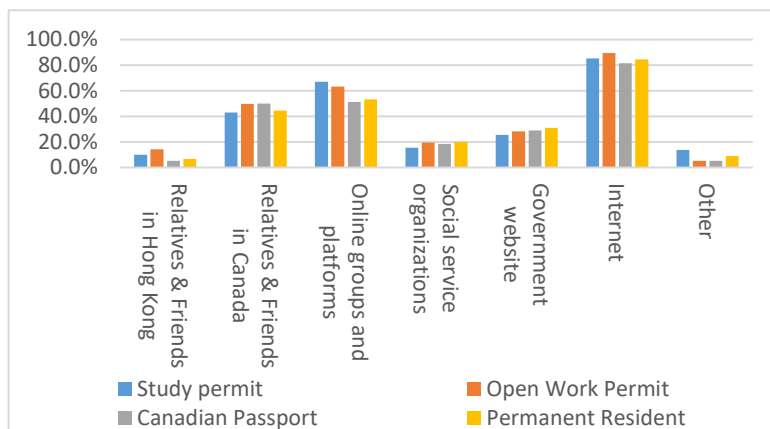


Figure 14: Educational Qualification Matched



In terms of source of information about the Canadian labour market, all groups used similar sources which are mainly the internet, online groups and platforms, and relatives and friends in Canada (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Source of Job Information

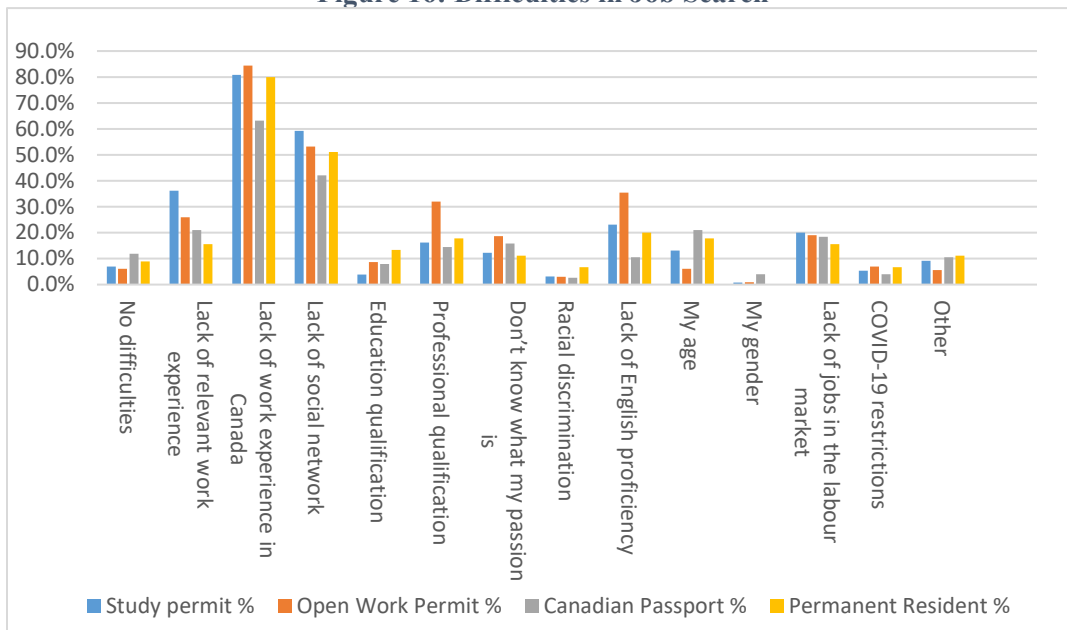


These three sources of information are very similar to what they used for accessing health care and finding housing. But in the case of job search, relatives and friends in Canada is less commonly used than the other two. Meanwhile, more respondents across all four groups have used government websites

and social service organizations. Consistently, both SPG (66.9%) and OWPG (63.2%) respondents have a higher percentage using online groups and platforms.

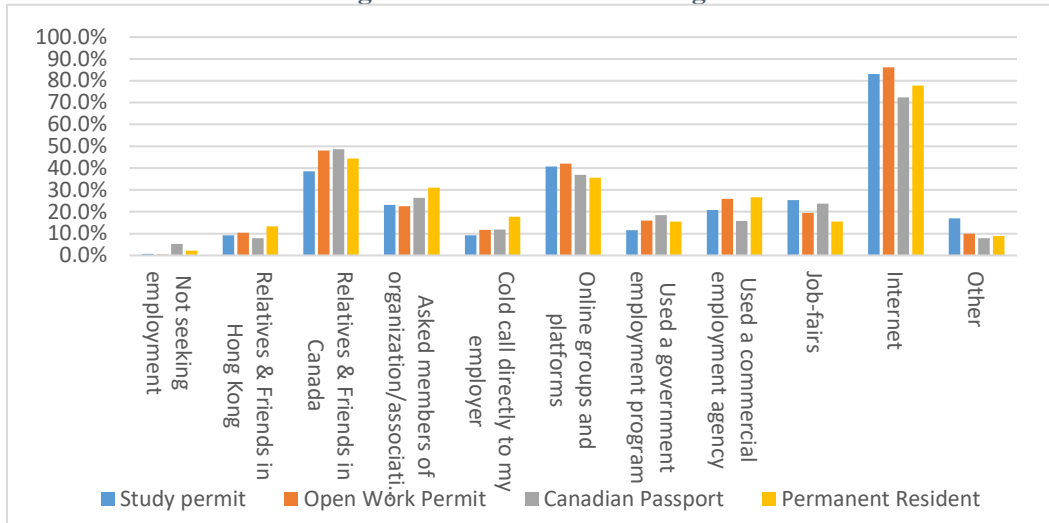
The Canadian labour market has been notoriously difficult for newcomers particularly during the COVID 19 period. Our respondents reported different types of difficulties in job search (Figure 16). The two major ones are “lack of work experience in Canada” and “lack of social network”. Among all four groups, the CPG consistently has a lower percentage in all the listed difficulties. This may reflect their connection and previous experience in Canada before they returned to Hong Kong. When comparing with other groups, the OWPG respondents have a higher percentage in terms of “lack of work experience in Canada” (84.4%), “professional qualification” (32.0%), and “lack of English proficiency” (35.5%). Interestingly, in terms of “lack of relevant work experience” as a difficulty, the SPG (36.2%) tops the list.

Figure 16: Difficulties in Job Search



To overcome these challenges, respondents of all groups have tried different job search strategies (Figure 17). Use of the internet has topped the list across all groups and is followed by “relatives and friends in Canada” and “online groups and platforms”. Relatively speaking the SPG and OWPG have more respondents using the internet (83.1% and 86.1% respectively) and “online groups and platforms” (40.8% and 42.0%) when compared to their counterparts of CPG and PRG. The SPG has a relatively lower percentage (38.5%) of respondents turning to “relatives and friends in Canada”. Meanwhile, the PRG has 31.1% sought help from members of organization/association, the highest among all groups. Except PRG (15.6%), about or over one-fifth of respondents within the other three groups did attend job fairs. Seeking help from commercial employment agencies was a strategy used by about or over 20% respondents of all groups except those in the CPG (15.8%).

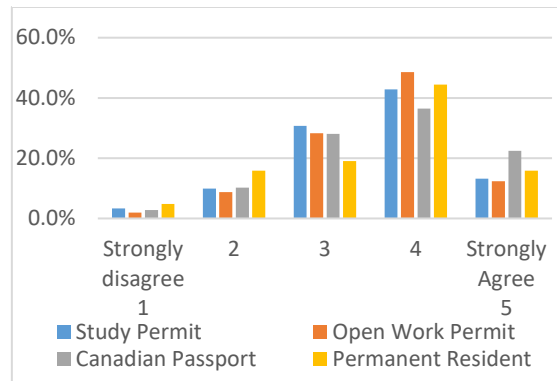
Figure 17: Job Search Strategies



General Settlement Conditions

Despite the fact that a majority of respondents s/agreed that their experience of living in Canada has met their expectation (Figure 18), their settlement process has still been stressful. As reflected in Figure 19, among all the possible life domains that may cause stress to our respondents, “financial condition” has topped the list across all groups. As reported earlier most respondents brought savings when returning/arriving in Canada. However, many had also reported making a low annual income which may cause them to worry if they will have enough to sustain their and their family’s expenses in the long run. Indeed, employment condition, which has a huge effect on their income, is the second major stressors for most groups except the CPG. Next to the financial stressors are “finding adequate and affordable housing” and “access to health care”. However, due to their unique status in Canada, each group has experienced some different stressors during their settlement.

Figure 18: Experience Met Expectation



SPG: This group has the highest percentage of respondents indicating “loneliness” (25.8%) and “adjustment to school and homework” (22.0%) as a stressor. Meanwhile among all groups, this group has the lowest percentage (19.8%) of respondents choosing “adaptation to Canadian society”. Both may be related to the fact that most of them were still at school. With a limited social life outside school, they were likely occupied by school work.

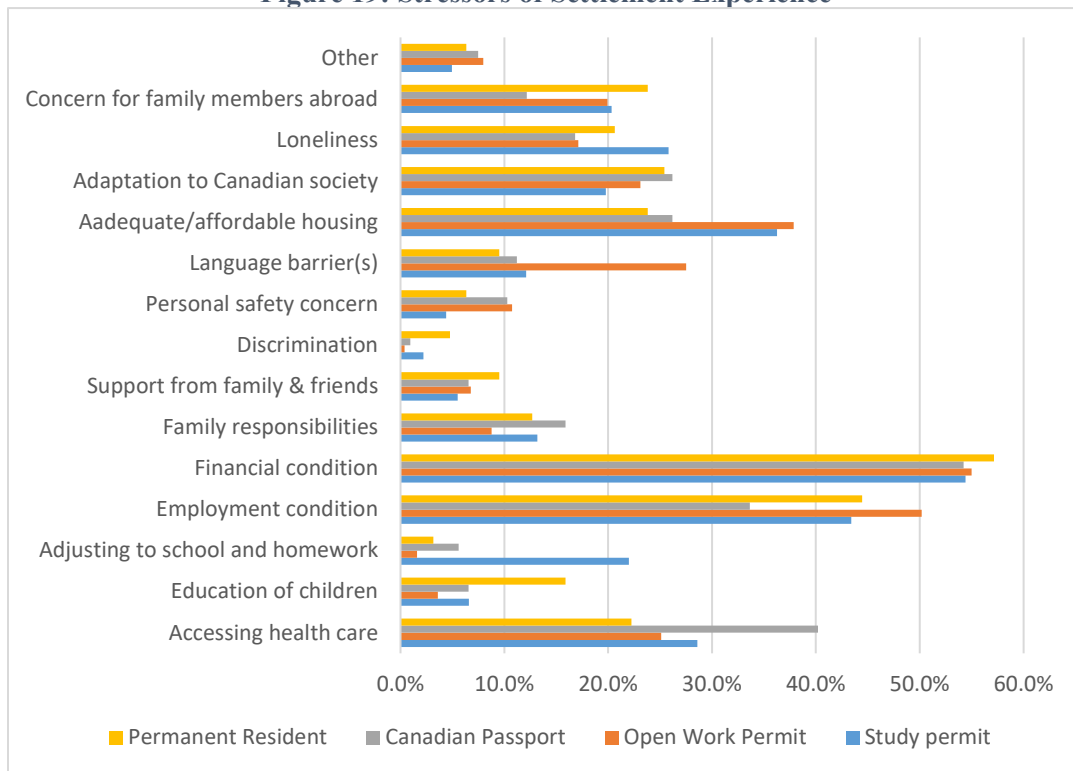
OWPG: Over one-quarter (27.5%) of respondents, the highest among all groups, indicated “language barrier” as a stressor ranked even higher than accessing health care service. This may be because most of the respondents were required to be in the mainstream job market which has a higher requirement of English proficiency with expectation for using local accent and slang. In

addition, “adaptation to Canadian society” and “concern for family members abroad” were stressors to 23.1% and 19.9% of OWPG respondents respectively. Meanwhile respondents in this group tend to be younger and without children. It may explain why this group also has the lowest percentage (8.8%) of respondents reported “family responsibilities” as a stressor.

CPG: Most respondents of this group are supposed to have lived in Canada for a certain period of time. They may have families and friends in the city where they resettled. Thus, it may be why when compared to other groups, this group has the lowest percentage (12.1%) of respondents reporting “concern for family members abroad” as a stressor. It may also explain why only 26.2% and 11.2% of them indicated respectively finding “adequate/affordable housing” and “language barriers” as stressor. However, despite their connection and previous experience of living in Canada, over one-fourth of them (26.2%), the highest among all groups, still indicated “adaptation to Canadian society” as a stressor. This may indicate that many of them have been outside of Canada for a fairly long time.

PRG: This group has the highest percentage of respondents, when compared with other groups, reporting “concern for family members abroad” (23.8%) and “education of children” (15.9%) as stressors. Meanwhile, they have also had the second highest percentage of respondents indicated “adaptation to Canadian society” (25.4%) and loneliness (20.6%) as stressors. These may be explained by the “immediate family” bias of the Canadian regular immigration programs. In most cases, permanent residents came to Canada only with their own spouse and young children, while leaving their extended family behind at their home country.

Figure 19: Stressors of Settlement Experience



Integration Conditions

We examined the integration conditions from several dimensions including their family connections, friendship network and attitudes, participation in civic organizations, perceived relationship with Canada, and identity. As indicated in the previous report, respondents of this survey have kept close contacts with family and friends, actively made new friends, and been highly positive about their perspective of Canadian society while their participation in civic activities and social circle have tended to be within the Hong Kong immigrant community. Although this pattern is quite consistent among the four groups, variations are still notable.

Family Connection

As Figure 19 shown, other than the CPG, at least 20% of the other three groups reported that “concern of family abroad” is one of the main stressors of settlement. This is reflected in the percentage of respondents reporting having family outside Canada (Figure 20). In all groups, a high percentage of respondents have family outside Canada. When comparing the four groups, both SPG (94.5%) and OWPG (92.8%) have a higher percentage of respondents reporting family outside Canada than those of the CPG (82.2%) and PRG (87.3%). However, in terms of having family in Canada, the CPG (59.8%) and PRG (49.2%) have a higher proportion than the SPG (26.4%) and OWPG (23.1%). This may imply that compared to the other two groups, respondents of the SPG and OWPG may have less familial support in Canada. Also, unlike respondents of CPG and PRG, their decision to come to Canada was not based on their family network in Canada. It might be a rush decision triggered by the Lifeboat Scheme. Regardless of these differences, respondents of all groups have kept a relatively frequent contact with family in (Figure 21) rather than outside Canada (Figure 22). This may be because of the long distances separating them from their family.

Figure 20: Family in and outside Canada

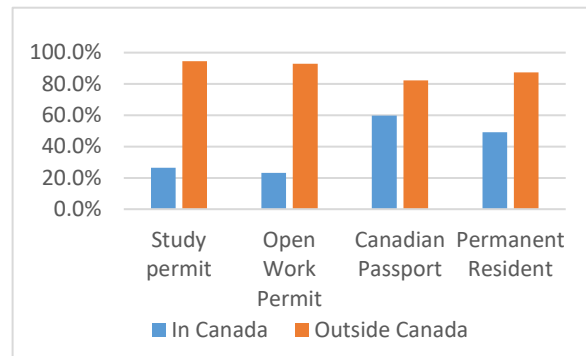


Figure 21: Contact Family in Canada

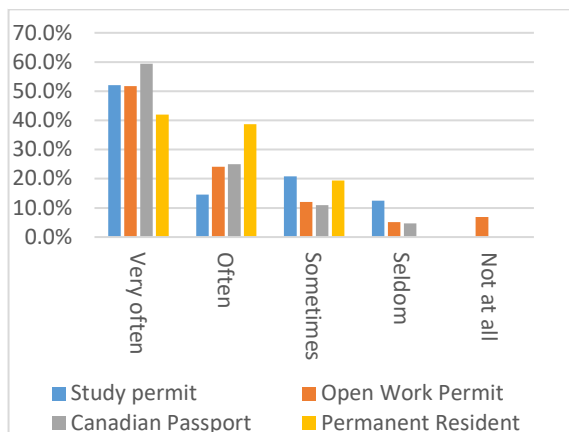
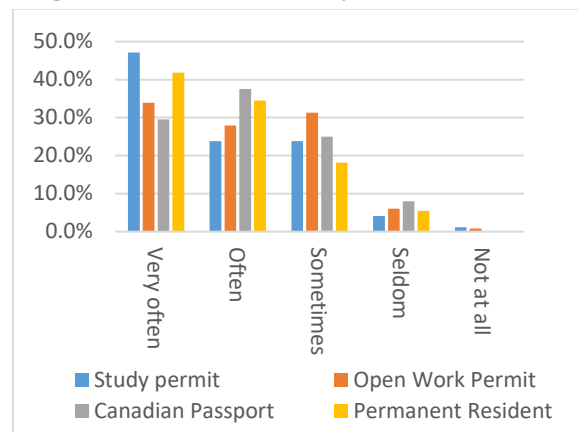


Figure 22: Contact Family Outside Canada



Friendship

Indicated in Figure 23, almost all respondents have made some new friends after returning or arriving Canada. Most of their new friends also came from Hong Kong (Figure 24). Figure 25 shows that except the CPG (40.8%), over half of respondents of the SPG (52.2%), OWP (52.6%) and PRG (54.7%) reported their contact with these new friends at the very often and often levels. This may be because respondents of these groups tend to have less family in Canada. Their friends have become a major part of their social life and supports.

Figure 23: Made New Friends

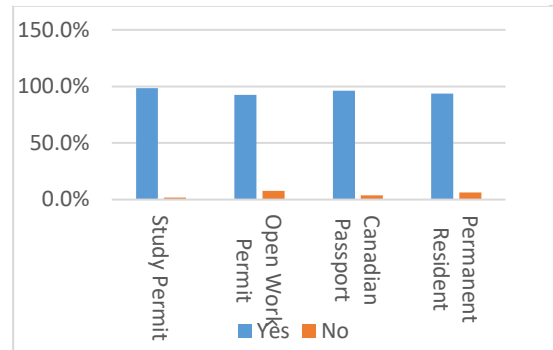


Figure 24: New Friends from Hong Kong

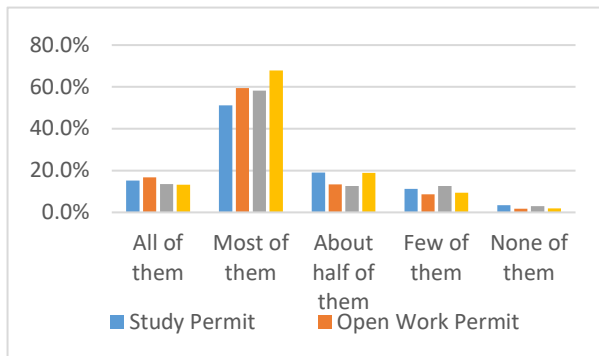
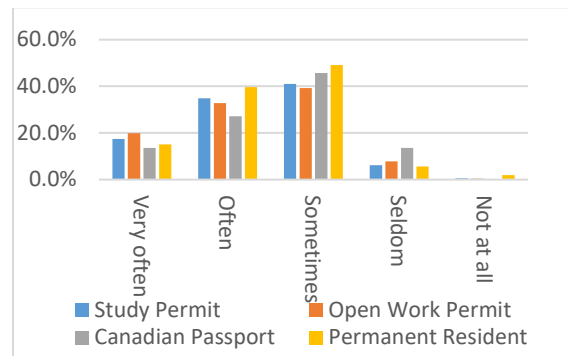


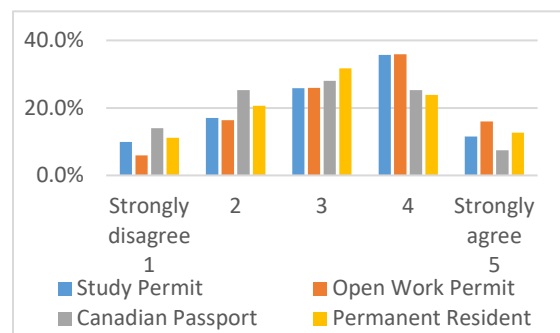
Figure 25: Contact with New Friends



Given the size of population of Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, particularly in Vancouver and Toronto, our respondents have more opportunities to make friends with people who are also from Hong Kong. However, it is important to know their preference of making friends in Canada. Among the four groups, some preferences seem to be noticeably different.

In terms of making friends who are not from Hong Kong, more respondents of the SPG (47.3%) and OPWG (51.8%) than the CPG (32.7%) and the PPG (38.4%) s/agreed that it is difficult (Figure 26). On the other hand, across all groups, respondents' preference of having friends from Hong Kong are split. While across all groups, one third of respondents did not have specific preference by checking "3" on the five-point rating scale, the rests are split in their preference (Figure 27). Except SPG which has 9.9% more respondents in s/agreement with this preference, there are more respondents of all the other three groups were in s/disagreement. This is particularly obvious in OWPG with 9.2% more respondents in s/disagreement than s/agreement.

Figure 26: Difficult Making Friend not from Hong Kong



Despite this different preference, Figure 28 shows that a great majority (over 60%) of respondents across all groups s/agreed that it is important to make friends who are not from Hong Kong.

Figure 27: Prefer Friends from Hong Kong

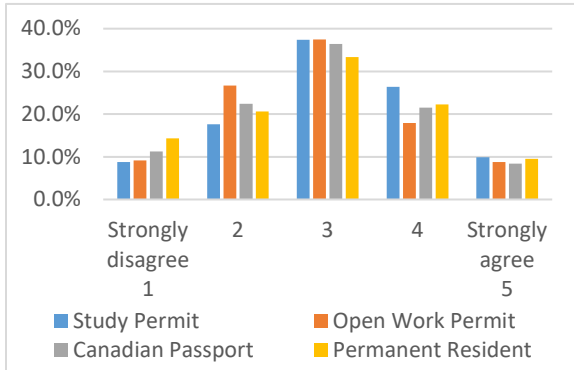
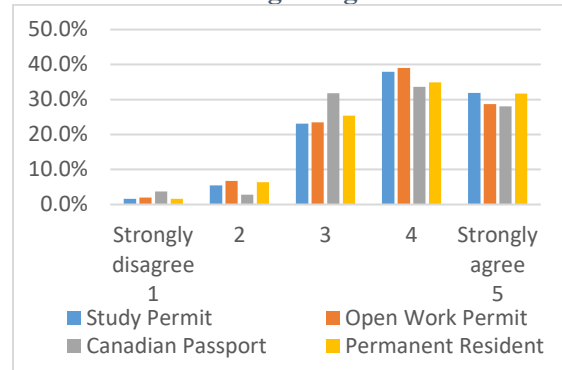


Figure 28: Importance of Friends not from Hong Kong



Meanwhile, across all four groups, there are more respondents who s/disagreed than s/agreed with the statement, “Cultural differences prevent me from interacting with people who are not from Hong Kong” (Figure 29). This is particularly clear among respondents of the OWPG and the CPG which have a two-digit difference in percentage between those who s/disagreed (43.0% and 45.8%) and s/agreed (29.9% and 27.1%) with this statement.

Figure 29: Cultural Difference Matter

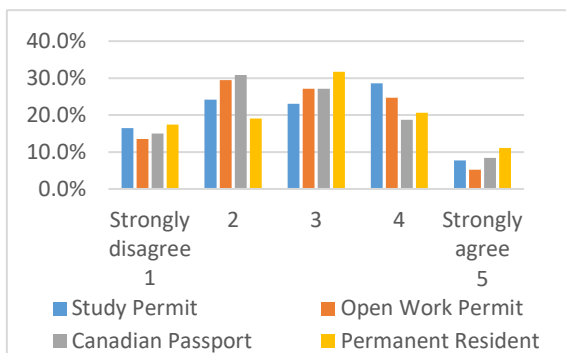
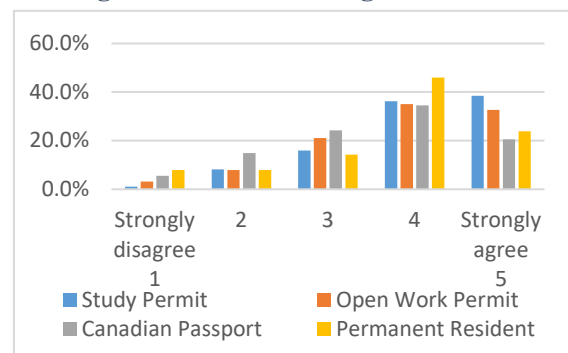


Figure 30: Mother Tongue Context



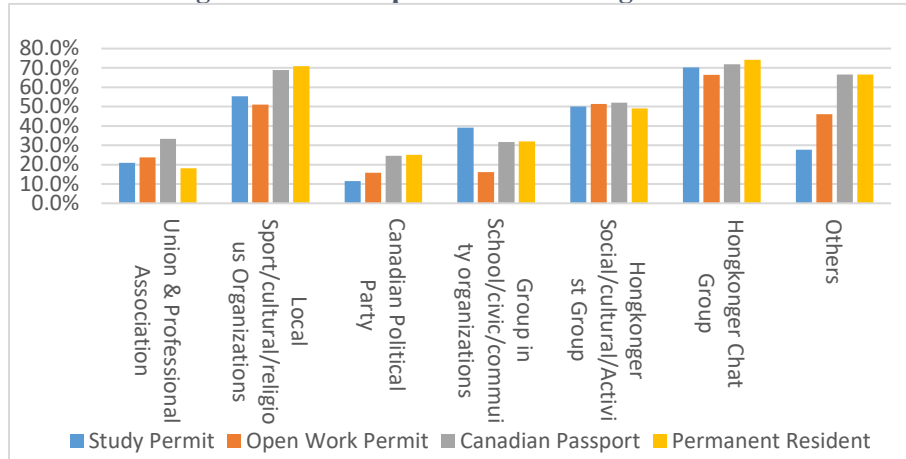
On the other hand, across all groups the respondents have overwhelmingly s/agreed that they feel more comfortable to be in a social context where people speak my mother tongue (Figure 30). Among them, the SPG has the highest percentage (74.7%) in s/agreement with this and the CPG has the lowest (55.1%). While more respondents of the latter group tend to rate their English proficiency at a higher level, the answer of the former group may be a result of their lack of exposure in mother tongue at school.

Civil Engagement

As an indicator for social integration, participation in civic organizations and activities are important. Since most respondents, particularly those who came under the Lifeboat Scheme, have not been long in Canada, we take “sometimes” as a basic indicator of their participation in civic engagement. Only about 20% of respondents of all groups have participated in union or professional association, Canadian political party, and groups in school/civic/community

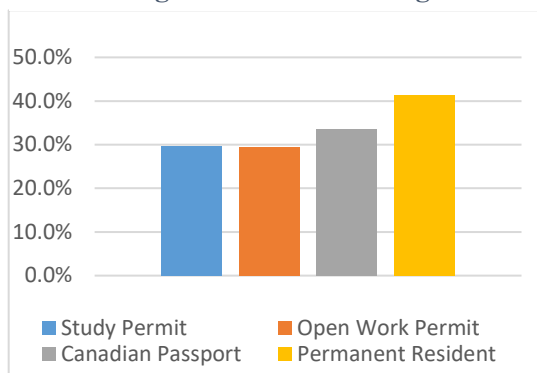
organizations. The only exception is the CPG group with 33.3% of respondents reporting that they have participated in union and professional associations which may reflect that more of them have secured a stable job with union protection.

Figure 31: Participation in Civic Organizations



Comparatively speaking, more respondents across all groups reported a higher level of engagement with local sports/cultural/religious organizations. Among all groups, the OWPG tends to have the lowest percentage (51%) of respondents taking part in these organizations as

Figure 32: Volunteering



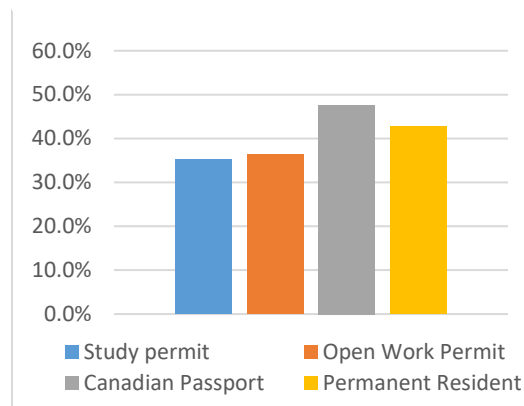
well as in groups of school/civic/community organizations (16.1%). This may be related to their self-rated lower level of English proficiency which may deter them from engaging with others in English. Respondents of this survey seems to have a more active participation in groups and activities within the Hong Kong immigrant community. Among all groups, half of their respondents have sometimes to very often participated in Hongkonger social/cultural/activist groups and nearly 70% in Hongkonger chat groups via different social platforms, which as reported earlier, are also a major

source of information for their settlement experience. Other than participating in civic organizations and activities, many respondents, particularly of the PRG, have also started volunteering in an organization or group (Figure 32).

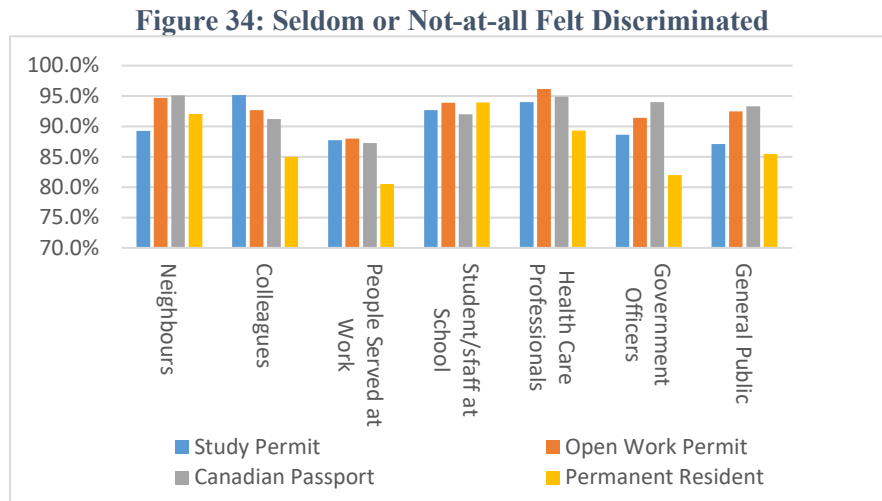
Perceptions Related to Canadian Society

To understand social integration, the subjective perception of newcomers to the host society is critical. Feeling being discriminated is an important “barrier” that weakens newcomer’s identification with the host society (Leszczensky et al., 2020).

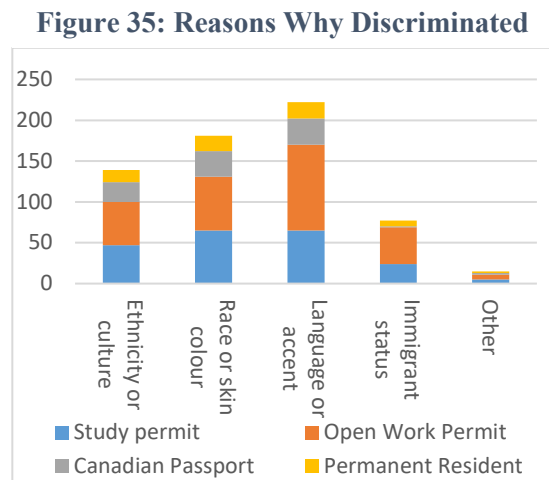
Figure 33: Never Felt Discriminated



Recently since the outbreak of COVID-19, anti-Asian discrimination has become a noticeable social issue. However, this seems not be a problem to the great majority of our respondents across all the four groups. As shown in Figure 3 over 40% of respondents in both CPG and PRG reported that they never felt discriminated while only 35.2% of SPG and 36.3% of OWPG said so. Figure 33 also shows the high percentages (80% or above) of respondents who reported “seldom” or “not at all” felt being discriminated by people in different social settings.



Among all those who have felt discriminated, language or accent is identified as the key reason (36.1%, n=238) of why they were discriminated against. Next are race or skin colour (29.8%, n=197), ethnicity and culture (22.4%, n=148), and immigrant status (12.9%, n=85). Among all the four groups, the CPG and PRG have the highest percentage of respondents reporting “never felt discriminated”. Thus, it is understandable that respondents of the SPG and the OWPG, which have a relatively lower percentage of reporting “never felt discriminated”, have highest number of respondents identifying these reasons, particularly their immigrant status, that led to their discrimination.



Consistent with the low percentage of respondents that “felt discriminated” is the positive perspective of their relationship with the Canadian society among respondents of all groups. A great majority of respondents across all groups s/agreed that it is important that they are informed of issues of Canadian society (Figure 36). All groups have a high percentage (ranging from OWPG’s 70.5% to CPG’s 81.3%) of respondents who tend to read news about Hong Kong more often than news about Canada (Figure 37). Among them, the CPR (79.4%) and PRG (76.2%) have a significantly higher percentage of respondents than those of the SPG (47.8%) and OWPG (45.4%) reporting v/often reading news about Canada.

Figure 36: Being informed on Issues of Canadian Society

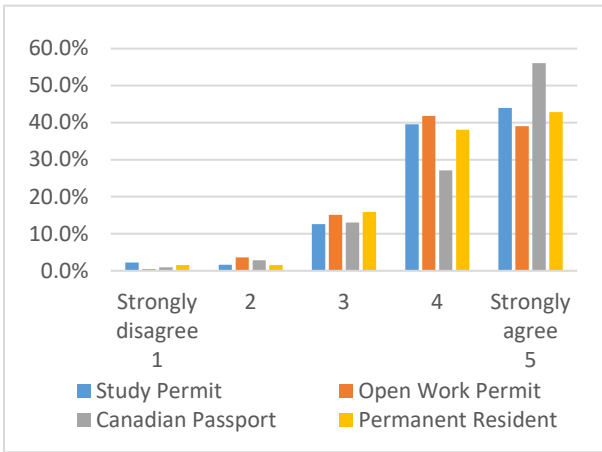
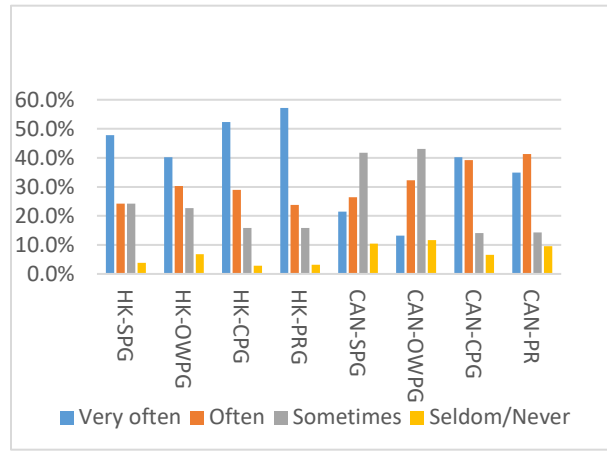


Figure 37: Reading News about Hong Kong and Canada



Perhaps because of their legal status in Canada, the CPG has the highest percentage (63%) of respondents s/agreed that the statement that “I feel like belong in Canada”, followed by the PRG (43%) (Figure 38). Meanwhile, there are 34% and 27% of their respondents of the SPG and OWPG respectively s/agreed with this statement. These are significant indicators for the social integration condition of the SPG and OWPG given the fact that most of the respondents of the SPG and OWPG were still in a temporary status and have not been in Canada for long.

Different from their sense of belonging to Canada, a great majority (ranging from SPG’s 74.2% to CPG’s 80.4%) of respondents across all groups s/agreed that they can contribute to the Canadian society (Figure 39). Nonetheless, when asked if they agree with the statement that “I believe I am important to Canadian society”, their answers seem not so sure (Figure 40). Even among respondents of the CPG and PRG, only 47.7% and 46% s/agreed with this statement. Respondents of the OWPG recorded the lowest percentage (31.9%) among all groups. This may reflect their frustration in the job market condition and outcome.

Figure 38: Belonging to Canada

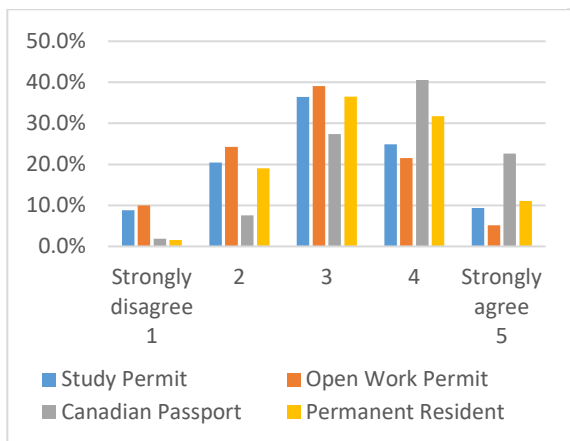
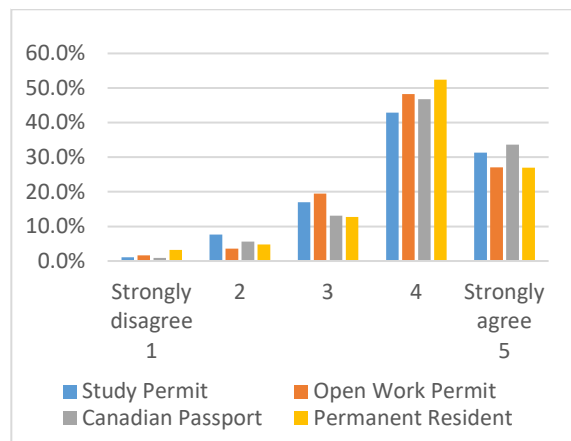


Figure 39: Contribute to Canadian Society



Despite this hesitation, respondents of all groups have indicated a strong desire to stay in Canada (Figure 41). Indeed, reflected in Table 2 which reports the change in the document that they used

to return/enter Canada and the document that they currently hold, it is reasonable to guess that a few respondents SPG and OWPG have successfully converted their status to permanent resident status after they arrived Canada.

Figure 40: Important in Canadian Society

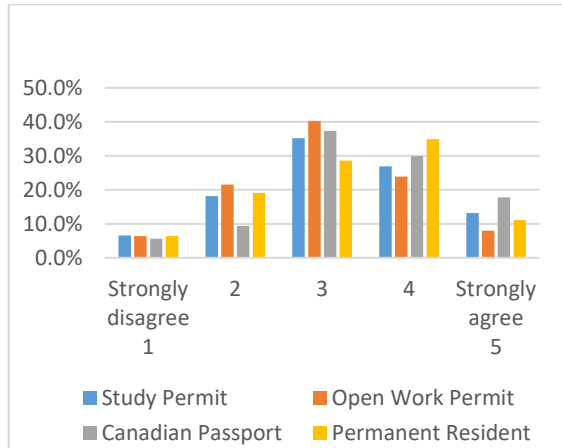


Figure 41: Desire to Stay in Canada for Good

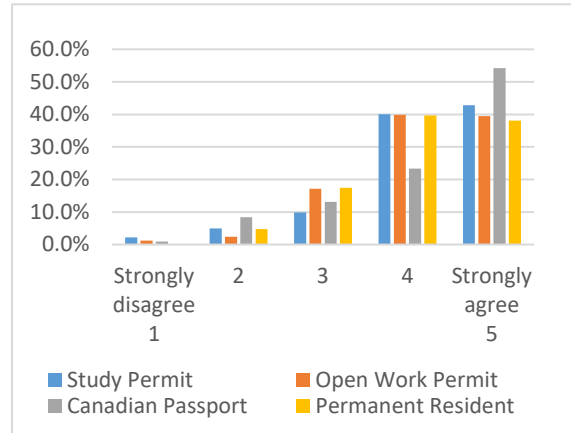


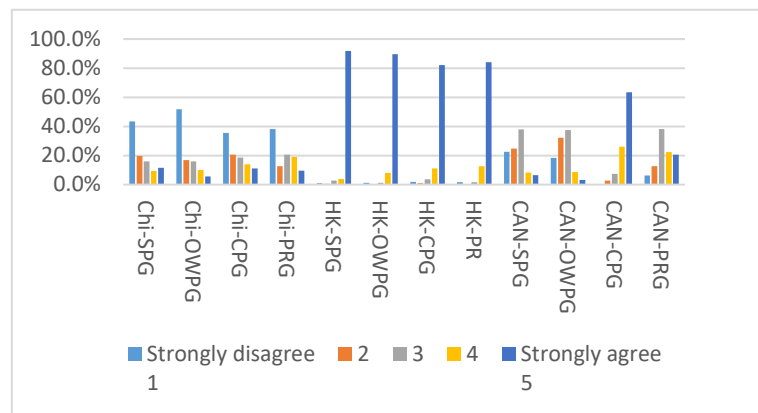
Table 2: Change in Document

| | Entry | Current | C - E |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---------|-------|
| Study Permit | 128 | 102 | -26 |
| Open Work Permit | 176 | 173 | -3 |
| Permanent Resident (Economic class) | 12 | 44 | 32 |
| Permanent Resident (Family class) | 29 | 36 | 7 |
| Canadian Passport | 70 | 74 | 4 |

Finally, in terms of their identities, Figure 42 shows that each group has close to or above 95% respondents identifying themselves as Hongkonger and a much lower percentage of respondents identifying as Chinese among all groups. While about a quarter of the respondents of CPG (25.2%) and PRG (28.6%) s/agreed with their identity as Chinese, only 20.9% of respondents of the SPG and 15.5% of OWPG concurred with them. In terms of their identity as Canadian, it is understandable that the

CPG has the highest percentage (89.7%) of s/agreement, followed by the PRG (42.9%). Given their temporary status and being in Canada only for a short period, there are still 14.8% and 12.0% of respondents of the SPG and OWPG s/agreeing that they identify themselves as Canadian.

Figure 42: Identities



Observations by Groups

After summarizing the differences and similarities among the four different groups in terms of their settlement and integration conditions, in this section, we provide a synopsis of the uniqueness of each of these four groups. Generally speaking, each group shares many similarities with other groups and their similarities which are also consistent to what we described in the First Report. Based on that, in the conclusion section, we offer some recommendations for policies and programs that can support them to have a more smooth and successful settlement and integration in Canada.

Study Permit Group:

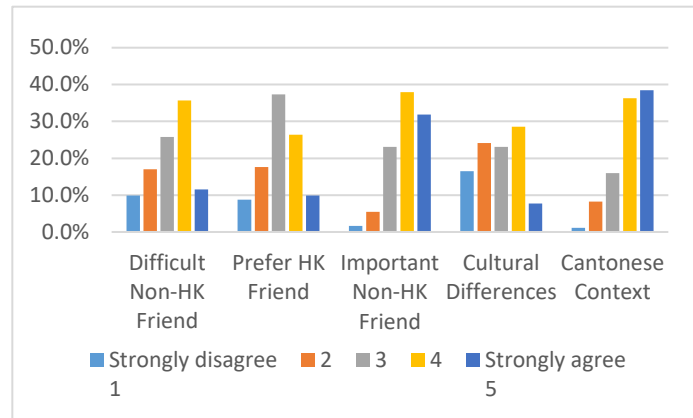
This group has 60% of respondents aged between 30 to 49 years old. Ninety percent of them have a bachelor degree. With 41.5% with at least one child, many of them might have already started or even established their career and family in Hong Kong prior to arriving Canada. It is possible that many respondents in this group decided to apply for Stream A because they graduated from their most recent post-secondary education within five or more years and were not qualified for the original criteria of Stream B of the Lifeboat Scheme, i.e., Open Work Permit. Many of them were financially prepared before arrival. However, 71.4% of respondents did look for employment. As their income level was the lowest among all groups since many were still in school, one-fifth (20.9%) of the respondents of this group, the highest among all groups, s/disagreed that they have enough financial resources for their monthly expenses. Indeed, 61.7% respondents in this group, the highest among all groups, indicated that “financial constraints” is the top challenge when they tried to look for housing.

Since their student status implies that their health insurance was included in their tuition, this group has the highest percentage of respondents who did not search for health care information before their arrival. However, being new to this country has posed real challenges to their settlement. This group has very high percentage of respondents reporting “not know where to get health care” (47.3%) and “not familiar with the city and town” (46.7%) and “don’t have references and credit rating (50.0%) when searching for housing. This group also has the highest percentage (25.8%) of respondents who identified “loneliness” as a stressor of their settlement experience. This may be because it also has the highest percentage (94.5%) of respondents who reported having family outside Canada and have v/often (94.8%) kept contact with them. Only 26.4% of them reported having family in Canada. Also, 22.0% identified “adjustment to school and homework” as a stressor. Many of them may be occupied by school work that limits their social life.

In terms of social connections, almost all respondents (98.3%) of this group have made new friends since arrival and 85.4% reported that half or more these new friends were also from Hong Kong. Half (52.6%) of the respondents tends to keep v/often in contact with these new friends. In terms of their preferences in making friends (Figure 43), being at the school with people from different ethnic background, close to half (47.3%) of the respondents of this group still found it not easy to make friends with people who are not from Hong Kong.

In terms of their friendship preferences, answers of respondents of this group are very similar to their counterparts of other groups particularly in terms of “having friends from Hong Kong”, “importance of having friends who are not from Hong Kong”, and “their perspective of cultural differences impacting their interaction with non-Hongkongers”. It is worth noting that this group has the highest percentage (74.7%) of respondents who s/agreed that they feel more comfortable to be in a social context where people are speaking Cantonese.

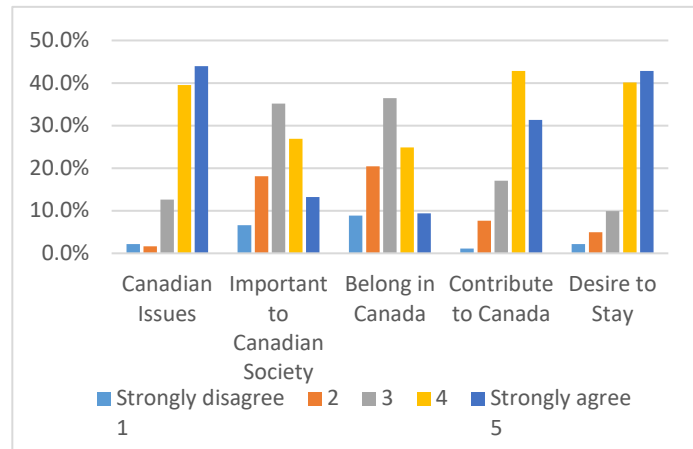
Figure 43: Friendship Preferences (SPG)



Like other groups, this group noted a higher percentage of respondents engaged in Hongkongers’ chat groups and social/cultural/activist groups. As more than 40% of them are students, the highest one among all groups, they also participated in groups in school/civic/community organizations. Close to one third of them (29.7%) also have volunteered their time. Most of them did not felt discriminated against in all settings. Yet, for those who experienced discrimination, 65 of them indicated race or skin colour was the top reason.

Similar to other groups, respondents of this group tend to read news about Hong Kong more often than about Canada. As shown in Figure 44, their perceived relationship with Canada is also generally positive in terms of the importance of being informed of issues of Canadian society, their contributions to Canada and their desires to stay in Canada for good. When they filled out the survey, most were still in a temporary status. However, many already felt that they are important to (40.1%) and felt they belong in Canada (34%). While Hongkonger is the dominant identity among respondents of this group (95.6%), 14.8% also identified themselves as Canadian.

Figure 44: Perceived Relationship with Canada (SPG)



Open Work Permit Group

The OWPG respondents of this survey came in Canada through the original Stream B of the Lifeboat Scheme under which applicants must be graduated from at least a two-year post-secondary diploma within five years when they applied. Therefore, with 44.6% of respondents

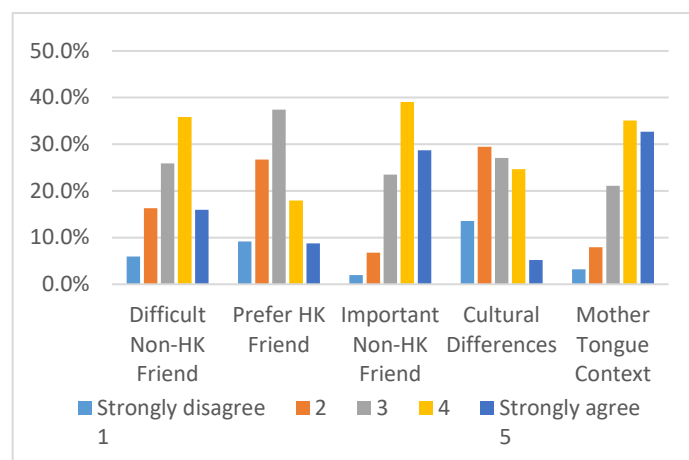
aged between 19 to 29 years old, the respondents of this group are relatively younger than their counterparts in other groups. Meanwhile 23.1% of respondents reported having at least one child. Both may signify that respondents in this group are largely young, single and recently graduated from post-secondary education. Respondents of this group are expected to be active in the labour market. However, their annual income is relatively low, with 32.8% making less than \$36,000 and only 26.7% making more than \$60,000. Almost a quarter of respondents in this group have children. Since they are younger in age, we can suspect they have young children too. This means they need to rely on daycare which is expensive. Some may opt to stay home to care for their kids rather than enter the labour market and have lower annual income.

Perhaps because of their being younger with less work experience, 42.4% of respondents s/agreed that their current job matches their education qualification and only 37.7% s/agreed that it was difficult for them to find the first job. Despite their high qualifications, only 61.4% respondents of this group rated their English proficiency at advance/proficient level. Indeed, this group also has the highest percentage of respondents listed lack of English proficiency as the difficulties in job search and the major stressor of settlement experience.

In terms of other settlement conditions, similar to the SPG, more respondents in this group reported “don’t know where to get health care” (41.8%) and “language problems” (30.7%) as barriers against accessing health care. Being new to Canada, this group has a higher proportion of respondents indicated the challenges of “don’t have references and credit rating (56.6%), the highest among all groups, and “not familiar with the city and town” (43.8%) when searching for housing. As a great majority of respondents (92.8%) still have family members outside Canada, this group also have 19.9% of respondents indicated “concern for family members abroad” as a stressor. Meanwhile only 23.1% reported having family in Canada. This may indicate their lack of familial support in the settlement process. That may explain why more respondents of this group tend to use online chat group and internet as their major source of information during the settlement process.

Only 7.6% respondents reported that they did not make any new friends since arrival. Among all those who have made new friends, they tend to make friend with people from Hong Kong. Over half of them (52.6%) have v/often kept contact with these new friends. In terms of their friendship preferences (Figure 45), similar to other groups, more respondents (67.7%) in this group s/agreed that it is important to make friends with people who are not from Hong Kong but over half (51.8%), the highest among all groups, of them also s/agreed that it is difficult to do so. Less than one-third (29.9%) of them s/agreed that cultural differences are the barrier and only 26.7% agreed that they prefer to make friends who are also from Hong

Figure 45: Friendship Preferences (OWPG)



Kong. Nonetheless, 67.7% s/agreed that they feel more comfortable with social interactions that are within contexts where their mother tongue is spoken.

In terms of participation in civic groups, respondents of this group have the lowest percentage of all groups involved in the survey. Respondents of this group are active in the Hongkonger community with 66.4% reported participating in Hongkongers’ chat group and 51.3% in Hongkongers’ social/cultural/activist group. Perhaps this is because most of them are working. Meanwhile, this may also be related to their self-rated lower level of English proficiency which may deter them from engaging with others in English.

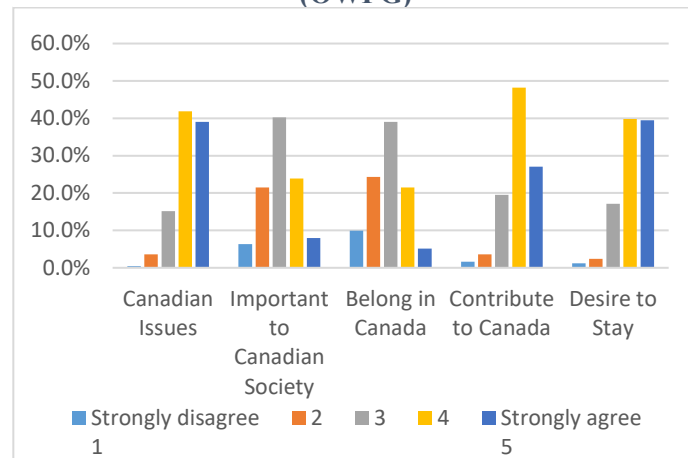
Like other groups, a great majority of respondents in this group have reported that they seldom or not at all felt discrimination in different social settings as listed in the survey. However, similar to the SPG, this group also has a lower percentage (36.3%) of respondents indicated that they never felt discriminated against. To those who felt being discriminated against (n=65), race and language or accent seems are the major reasons.

Respondents of this group tend to read news about Hong Kong (70.5%) v/often in comparison to news about Canada (45.4%). However, the percentage of respondents is high in terms of their perceived importance of being informed of Canadian issues (80.9%) (Figure 46). This group also recorded the lowest percentage of

respondents who s/agreed that they felt like they belong in Canada (27%) and that they are important in the Canadian society (31.9%). These low percentages may reflect that OWPG respondents may have experienced more frustrations in the settlement process, which has led to a relatively weaker perception of their relationship with Canada.

However, on a positive note, a great majority of them still s/agreed that they can contribute to the Canadian society (75.3%) and that they have the desire to stay in Canada for good (79.3%).

Figure 46: Perceived Relationship with Canada (OWPG)



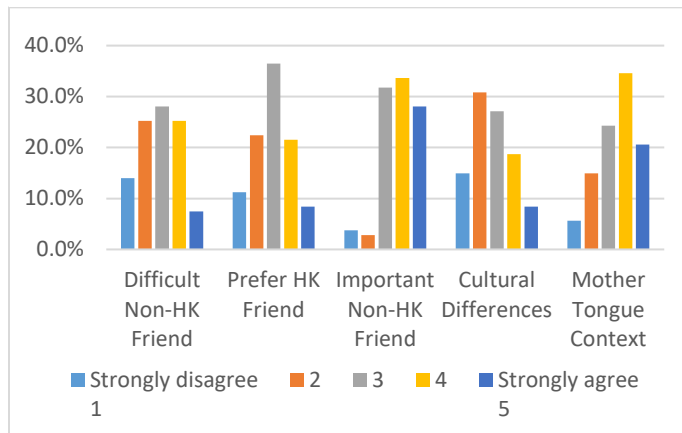
Canadian Passport Group

This is the most uncertain group in terms of the size of population. If the estimation of 300,000 Canadians residing in Hong Kong is correct and if we assume a low percentage, 20%, has returned to Canada, over 60,000 of them may have returned to Canada since 2015. This is not a small size when comparing with the number of Hong Kong residents arriving Canada through other pathways. The profile of the CPG indicate that it has the highest proportion of respondents who are over 49 years old and half of them have at least one child. Economically with their Canadian connection, the annual income of this group fare second to the PRG group. Over 60% of respondents reported an annual income over \$36,000 and only 29.4% over \$60,000. With 20.6% of them aged 60 and over, many of them may be retired or not be active in the labour

market. Indeed, less than 70%, the lowest among all group, of the respondents reported they searched for a job after they returned.

Given their citizen status, we may assume that most respondents of this group are supposed to have lived experience and familial social connections which can help them during the

Figure 47: Friendship Preference (CPG)



(re)settlement process. Generally speaking, one-third of respondents of this group reported no difficulty in accessing health care and finding housing. Like their counterpart of other groups, many respondents of this group have encountered similar challenges in these three life domains but consistently with a lower percentage in all difficulties listed on the survey. When seeking information and help in these three domains, most used the internet. When finding housing (75.7%) and accessing health services (73.8%), they had the

highest percentage in seeking help from relatives and friends in Canada. But in terms of searching for jobs, only 50.0% used this source. On the other hand, this group has also the lowest percentage of using online groups and platforms finding information and help in health care (43.0%), housing (48.6%) and employment (51.3%). Like other groups, use of the internet has been the second most leveraged source of information in all domains.

Respondents of this group do not seem to fair better in the labour market. Although only 11.8% reported no difficulty when trying to obtain employment, the rest are not all happy about their labour market experience. While 31.6% respondents s/agreed it is easy to find their first job after returning to Canada, many others in this group (40.5%) s/disagreed. Similarly, there are more in s/disagreement (34.2%) than s/agreement (31.6%) in terms of the match between their current position and their qualifications. Interestingly, lack of work experience in Canada is ranked the top difficulty in this group. It may be suggested that many did not work in Canada before they returned to Hong Kong. Generally speaking, similar to other groups, financial condition (55.0%) is ranked the stressor of (re)settlement of this group. With one-fifth of respondents aged 60 or above, 40.2%, the highest among all groups, of respondents in this group ranked accessing health care as the second stressor.

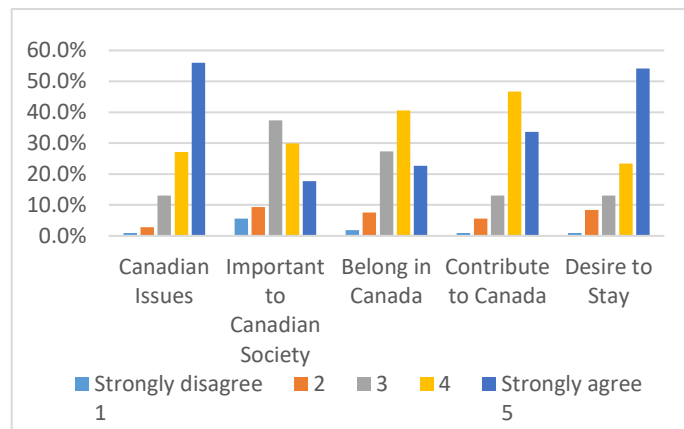
While a high proportion of respondents (82.2%) in this group still have family outside Canada, this group also has the highest percentage (59.8%) reporting having family in Canada. They have maintained relatively close contact with families in (95.3%) and outside (92.0%) Canada. Since their return, a great majority (96.3%) have made new friends, half or more (84.5%) of who were also from Hong Kong. There are 41% of respondents, the lowest among all groups, have v/often contacted these new friends. This may be because of the higher percentage of having family in Canada.

In terms of their friendship preference (Figure 47), more respondents s/disagreed (39.3%) than s/agreed (32.7%) (lowest among all groups) that it was difficult to make friends people who are not from Hong Kong. While a high proportion (60.7%) of respondents in this group s/agreed that it is important to make friends with non-Hong Kong people, over one-third (31.8%), the highest among all groups, did not have a preference. In terms of preference of making friends who are from Hong Kong, the respondents have a narrow split (33.6% and 29.9%) between s/disagreement and s/agreement. Close to half (45.8%) of respondents s/disagreed that cultural differences are the barrier for them to make friends who are not from Hong Kong. But over half (55.1%) did s/agree that they feel more comfortable to be in a social context where people speak their mother tongue.

One-third (33.6%) of respondents reported that they have volunteered at least once. A majority (68.9%) have participated in local sport, cultural, religious or recreational organizations. Their participation in Hongkonger’s chat group (66.4%) and social/cultural/activist group (52.0%) are more frequent than other local civic groups and organizations. This group also has the highest percentage of respondents reporting “never felt discriminated” (47.7%) and seldom and not at all felt discriminated in all listed social settings.

Although 93.5% of respondents identified themselves as Hong Konger, they are very positive in their perceived relationship with Canada (Figure 48). A great majority s/agreed (83.2%) that it is important to be kept informed of Canadian issues. It also has the highest percentage of respondent readings news about Hong Kong (81.3%) and Canada (79.4%). The percentages of respondents in s/agreement of their Canadian identity (90%) and their potential contribution to Canada (80.4%) are noticeably high. When asked if they felt belonged in Canada (63%) and if they believed they are important to the Canadian society (47.7%), this group also recorded the highest percentage in s/agreement among all groups. But although 77.6% are in s/agreement in terms of staying in Canada for good, it is the lowest percentage among all groups.

Figure 48: Perceived Relationship with Canada (CPG)



Permanent Resident Group

By comparing the document that respondents held when they returned to/arrived in Canada and the document that they current hold, only 4 more respondents reported holding a Canadian passport when they filled out the survey. Meanwhile, globally it is well known that Canada has the highest naturalization. Permanent residents in Canada are required to stay in this country for a minimum of three full years to apply for citizenship. Taking these into consideration, we may reasonably speculate that a majority of respondents of the PRG are relatively new to Canada.

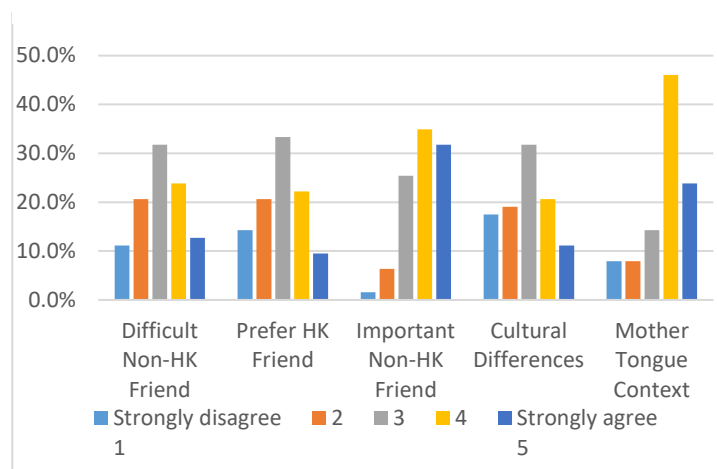
Majority of them (65%) aged 30 to 49 and have at least one child (67.8%). Similar to their counterparts of other groups, a great majority (85.2%) have a bachelor degree or above. However, in terms of self-rated English level, only 60.3% rated advanced or proficient level. This may be due to the highest proportion of respondents who are family class immigrant, the English requirement of whom is less stringent than one for the economic class immigrants. Respondents of this group have the highest percentage (40%) reporting an annual income more than the Canadian average.

Like their counterparts of CPG, this group of respondents experienced fewer difficulties in accessing health care service and finding housing when comparing with those in SPG and OWPG. Unlike the respondents of the other three groups, they are eligible for IRCC funded settlement services, which cover local orientation, social connection building, understanding of social systems and legal rights, language training, employment counselling, mental health and crisis intervention, and much more. However, their use of social service organization to obtain information in health care (12.7%) and housing (3.2%) are not noticeably different from other groups. In terms of job search, this group has the highest proportion (51.1%) of respondents s/disagreed that it was easy for them to get the first job in Canada and their current position matches with their educational qualification (42.2%). The two major difficulties for them to obtain employments are “lack of work experience in Canada” (80.0%) and “lack of social network” (51.1%). One fifth or respondents (20.0%) did look for labour market information from social service organizations. When looking for work, this group has the highest percentage of respondents who turned to “members of organization/association/church” (31.1%) and “commercial employment agency” (26.7%). Financially, although this group has the highest percentage of respondents s/agreed that they have the financial resources to meet monthly expenses now (71.4%) and enough saving for them/their family’s living expenses in Canada for at least three months (92.1%), it also has the highest, albeit slightly, one (57.1%) in terms of identifying financial conditions as the major stressor in settlement.

Although a great majority (87.3%) with family outside Canada, close to half of PRG respondents have, 10% lower than the CPG, reported having family in Canada. They have maintained an active contact with families both in and outside Canada. However, close to a quarter (23.8%), the highest among all groups, of respondents identified “concern for family members abroad” as a stressor of settlement. Similar to other groups, a great majority (93.7%) of respondents in this group reported that they made new friends after arriving Canada most of whom (89.8%) are also from Hong Kong. Close to half (49.2%) of the respondents have v/often contacted these new friends.

This group tends to have a more split preference in friendship (Figure 49). In terms of “difficult in making

Figure 49: Friendship Preference (PRG)

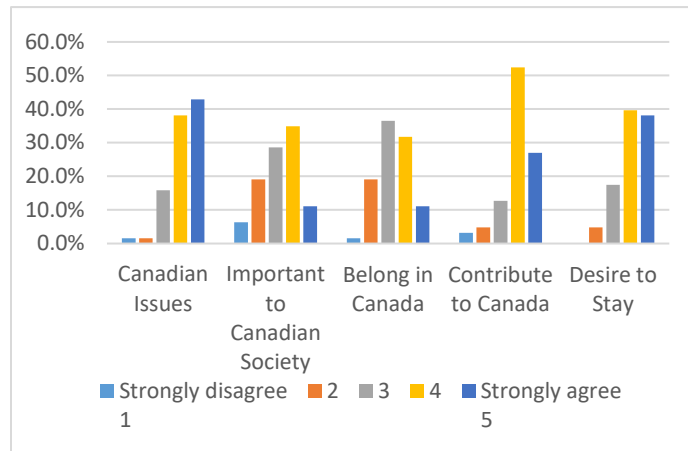


friends who are not from Hong Kong” (31.7% vs 36.5%), “preferring making friends with people from Hong Kong” (34.9% vs. 31.7%) and “cultural difference as a barrier” (36.5% vs 31.7%), about one third of respondents either s/disagreed or s/agreed and with the rest of 30% taking a middle choice. Meanwhile, on one hand, 66.7% s/agreed that it is important to have friends who are not from Hong Kong; on the other, a similar of proportion (69.8%) respondents s/agreed that they felt more comfortable in social interaction in a mother tongue context.

When comparing with their counterparts of our groups, this group records the highest percentage of respondents reporting sometime, often and very often participating in local sports, cultural, religious organizations (70.9%) and lowest in union or professional association (18.2%). While this group has the highest percentage of respondents participating in Hongkonger’s chat groups (74.2%), it has the lowest one in Hongkonger’s social/cultural/activist groups (49.1%). In terms of volunteering, this group has the highest percentage (41.3%) of respondents have sometimes or more frequently volunteered.

Over 80% of respondents in this group reported seldom or not-at-all experienced discrimination in different social settings. Respondents of this group have had positive perceived relationship with Canada with 81.0% s/agreed that it is important for them to be informed of Canadian issue and they can contribute to Canada (79.4%). Close to the CPG counterparts, this group has the second highest percentage of respondents v/often read news about Canada (76.2%) and Hong Kong (81.0%). Close to half of the PRG

Figure 50: Perceived Relationship with Canada (PRG)



respondents also s/agreed that they are important in the Canadian society (46.0%) and they felt belong in Canada (43%). While 96.8% of respondents are with s/agreement of Hongkonger identity, 42.9% of them also s/agreed to identified themselves as Canadian. Although a great majority (77.8%) of them s/agreed that they have the desire to stay in Canada for good, this is the second lowest among all groups.

Conclusion and Recommendations

While preparing this report, the Canadian government has made two changes to the Lifeboat Scheme. On February 6, 2023, IRCC expanded the eligibility for Open Work Permit from a 5-year-fresh post-secondary graduation deadline to a 10-year-fresh deadline. On July 11, 2023, IRCC announced that, starting from August 15, 2023, holders of HKSAR passports and BNO passports who currently have met the 1,560 Canadian work hours requirement on payroll are eligible to apply for permanent residency, regardless of when they last graduated from a post-secondary education. With these two revisions of this temporary public policy, it is anticipated that a wider door will facilitate more Hong Kong residents (including those who are relatively more mature, have more work experience and assets, and probably have established a family) to come to Canada under this open work permit pathway.

As the Canadian government claims, the Lifeboat Scheme was created to recognize Hong Kong residents' contributions to Canada's economy and social-cultural landscape through human capital, while also promoting democratic values⁸. As reflected in the results of this survey, our respondents, including those who returned to and arrived in Canada through different documents, have proven what the Canadian government has already known, i.e., the human resources of Hong Kong residents to Canada have contributed to the Canadian economy and social-cultural landscape. Based on the results of our survey, we make some recommendations for the government to better facilitate the arrival of Hong Kong residents to Canada and supporting them through a smooth settlement and integration.

First, the authors would like to reiterate as suggested in the first report, regardless of how they arrived in Canada, respondents of all these four groups are ideal candidates for Canadian immigration policy. Most of them are at the most productive age, highly educated with advanced or proficient English skills, and with a strong commitment to stay in Canada as active members contributing to the society. The revision of the Stream B pathway is a good step to facilitate more Hong Kong residents to join the Canadian society. To capitalize on the potential of this population, the Canadian government may consider extending these two pathways beyond August 31, 2026. Meanwhile, our results also indicated that having a permanent status is associated with a higher sense of belonging to the Canadian society, we recommend the government speeding up the permanent resident application process of Hong Kong residents who came through the Lifeboat Scheme and the hearing process of those who claimed asylum in Canada.

Second, the revision of the Stream B pathway may change the demography of its potential applicants. Under the current policy, many young couples, who have graduated over five years from their most recent post-secondary education, can only use the Stream A pathway to have a quick exit from Hong Kong to Canada. This may explain why our SPG respondents tend to have a high percentage of respondents who have at least one child. With the new 10-year-fresh deadline, many young couples in Hong Kong, who have children and no family connection in Canada, can now opt for the Stream B pathway. The needs of formal support for this group of

⁸ See Public Policy Consideration: <https://www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/mandate/policies-operational-instructions-agreements/public-policies/hong-kong-residents-permanent-residence.html>.

potential applicants will be even greater than those who have already arrived through this pathway. To prevent them from falling into the stressful pitfall of settlement in a new country, the government should consider offering some measures to support their settlement.

Third, the Canadian government has recently opened the settlement services for Ukrainians and their family members who arrived in Canada through a temporary public policy. This is certainly a helpful measure to support their settlement. However, such measure has not yet been opened to Hong Kong residents who came to Canada under the Lifeboat Scheme. As reflected in the results of this survey, most respondents have relied on informal sources of information during the settlement process. However, information circulated in online chat groups or among relatives and friends are often biased by the personal experience of people who share the information. To minimize the time these newcomers waste in searching proper information, Canadian government may consider opening the settlement services for these Hong Kong residents who also came to Canada with a “temporary” status. After all, the purpose of the temporary public policy is to offer them the opportunity to be “permanent” members of the Canadian society. Opening settlement services to them is a simple and ready-made solution that is of critical importance in welcoming and empowering these newcomers.

Fourth, the profile of SPG indicates that many respondents in this group might choose to use this pathway to come to Canada because they did not meet the previous criteria of Stream B and did not want to wait for the long process of the regular economic class migration application. At least 40% of the respondents came with their immediate family. Their settlement process can be more daunting than those who came alone. Judging from the low percentage of this group in seeking information about the Canadian health care system prior to their arrival, many might have assumed they would get support from their educational institution. The fact is most educational institutions only have limited resources for foreign students particularly those who arrive with family. Therefore, their needs for a regular settlement program are even greater.

Fifth, among all groups, the CPG is the most neglected one in both policy and scholarly discussion. Although in many domains, the CPG respondents have fared better than others in terms of settlement and integration, many have experienced similar challenges as respondents of other groups. This may be due to the possibility that many lived outside of Canada for a long time. Like other newcomers, they have to go through a (re)settlement process. Like those in the SPG and OWPG, CPG respondents, as Canadian citizens, are not eligible for IRCC funded settlement programs. They can only rely on information sources and support when they re-settled back to Canada. Given the political situation in Hong Kong, it is very likely that more Canadian citizens residing in Hong Kong may return to Canada. The Canadian government should consider offering those who left Canada over 10 years regular settlement programs. Meanwhile, some supports to them prior to their return to Canada through the Canadian Consulate in Hong Kong are also needed to facilitate a smooth returning process.

Sixth, although being new to Canada, many of our respondents have shown their eagerness to take part in civic organizations and activities. So far, their civic involvement tends to be confined to groups and activities in the Hongkonger community. Judging from their dilemma in friendship preference they are aware of the needs to expand their cross-ethnic social circle and civic activities. It will take time for these newcomers to step out from their mother-tongue comfort

zone. Civic, community, sport and religious organizations can consider supporting and working with Hongkonger groups and organizations, most of which are limited in resources and run by volunteers, to organize social programs and events that can facilitate their social interaction and connection with people outside the Hongkonger community.

To conclude, while sharing many similarities, respondents of the four major groups, who came to Canada with different immigration documents, have their unique challenges. Many of these challenges are caused by the Canadian immigration policies. As what the Canadian government has long tried to recruit globally through its immigration policy, our respondents are high functioning and eager to contribute to the Canadian labour market and society. Despite the many challenges that they have experienced in the settlement process, they have an unanimously positive perspective of their relationship with Canada. Their willingness and efforts to (re)settle and (re)integrate in Canada are clear. To facilitate their becoming a successful member of our society, our governments and civic organizations need to be more proactive in providing supports to welcome them.