

From China to Alberta: Economic and
Social Integration of Recent Chinese
Immigrants in Calgary and Edmonton

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Outline

- Contextual information
- Review of literature
- A questionnaire approach
- Report of findings
- Conclusions and implications



Contextual Information

- Alberta has been successful in attracting skilled immigrants to help ameliorate its labour shortages in a booming oil and gas industry.
- Calgary and Edmonton ranked 4th and 5th in their proportion of visible minorities (22.2% and 17.1%).
- The Chinese are the largest visible minority in Alberta (26.5%).
- Calgary and Edmonton ranked 4th and 5th nationally in receiving Chinese immigrants, behind Toronto, Vancouver and Montréal.
- Canada's immigration policies tend to favour the large, mega-cities. The second- and third-tier immigrant-receiving cities, such as Calgary and Edmonton, require more attention and recognition from researchers and policymakers.



Understanding Integration

- Integration is a fluid term.
- Very often it is treated as a process as well as an outcome; an individual and a group phenomenon; and a change in attitudes as well as behaviours.
- Integration endorses a conformity model in assessing immigrants and a monolithic cultural framework that preaches tolerance in the abstract but remains intolerant towards cultural specificities deemed outside the mainstream (Li, 2003).



Glass Ceiling

- Introduced in the late 1970s as a way of understanding the barriers confronting American women in moving up the corporate hierarchy (Wong & Wong, 2006).
- It is called glass ceiling because one can see through it to a desired management position but cannot go through the impenetrable barrier that it represents (Wong, 2006).
- It was not until the late 1980s that the term was broadened to include issues of racial discrimination in the workplace.
- In recent years, there has been an emerging body of research in Canada and elsewhere applying this concept to analyze immigrants' experience (McCoy & Masuch, 2007; Pendakur & Pendakur, 2007; Wong, 2006; Wong & Wong, 2006).



The Chinese Leaver-Stayer Project

- Examines the underlying forces that influence the “move-stay” decision for Chinese immigrants
- Two stages
 1. Seeks understanding of the integration experience of Chinese immigrants in Canada
 2. The experience of Chinese immigrants who returned “home”
- The Canadian portion of the project involves a matched study in five cities: Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, and Edmonton



Research Questions

- Who are the recent Chinese immigrants to Canada?
- What motivated them to move to Canada?
- How are they adapting to a society that is very different from their own? Have they encountered any difficulties in their integration process? If so, what are they?
- In what areas do they need the most help? Where do they usually go for help? In particular, what suggestions do they have for government organizations concerning what could be done to help them integrate into Canadian society more effectively?



Questionnaire

- I. Basic information
- II. Motivations for immigrating
- III. Integration experience in Canada
- IV. Concluding remarks



I: Basic Information

- Sample: 255 respondents from PR China.
- Place of residence: Calgary - 51.4%; Edmonton - 48.6%
- Gender: 49.4% - male; 50.6% - female
- Age: 82% ranged from 26 to 45, a mean age of 34
- Two largest groups: from Shanghai and Beijing.
- The majority of them are married.
- Immigrant class: 67.5% skilled workers; 18% came under family reunion
- Length of stay: 49.4% resided in Canada for less than three years.
- Citizenship status: 70.2% were landed immigrants; 29.8% Canadian citizens.

Figure 1: Age Distribution

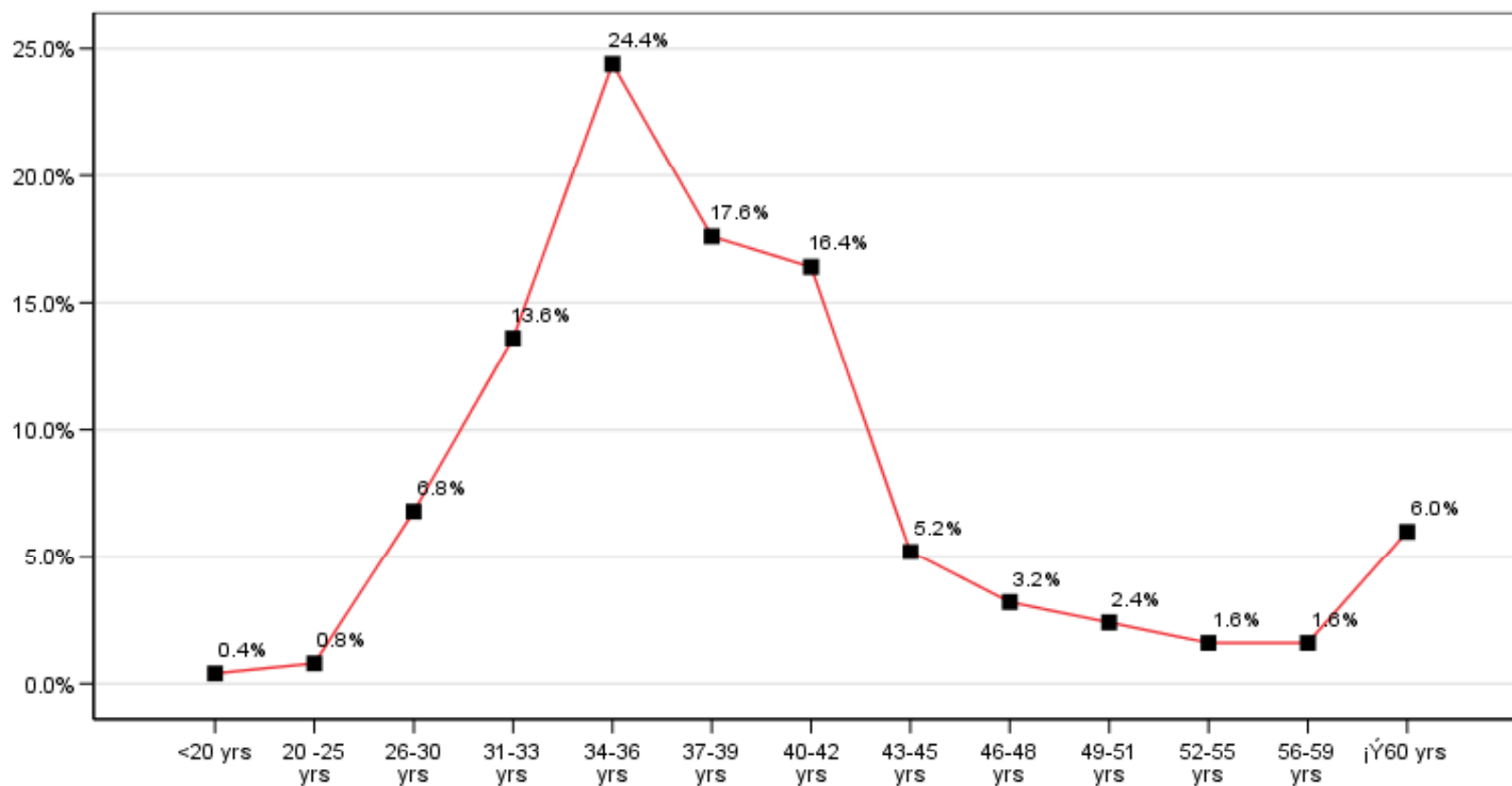


Figure 2: Immigrant Class

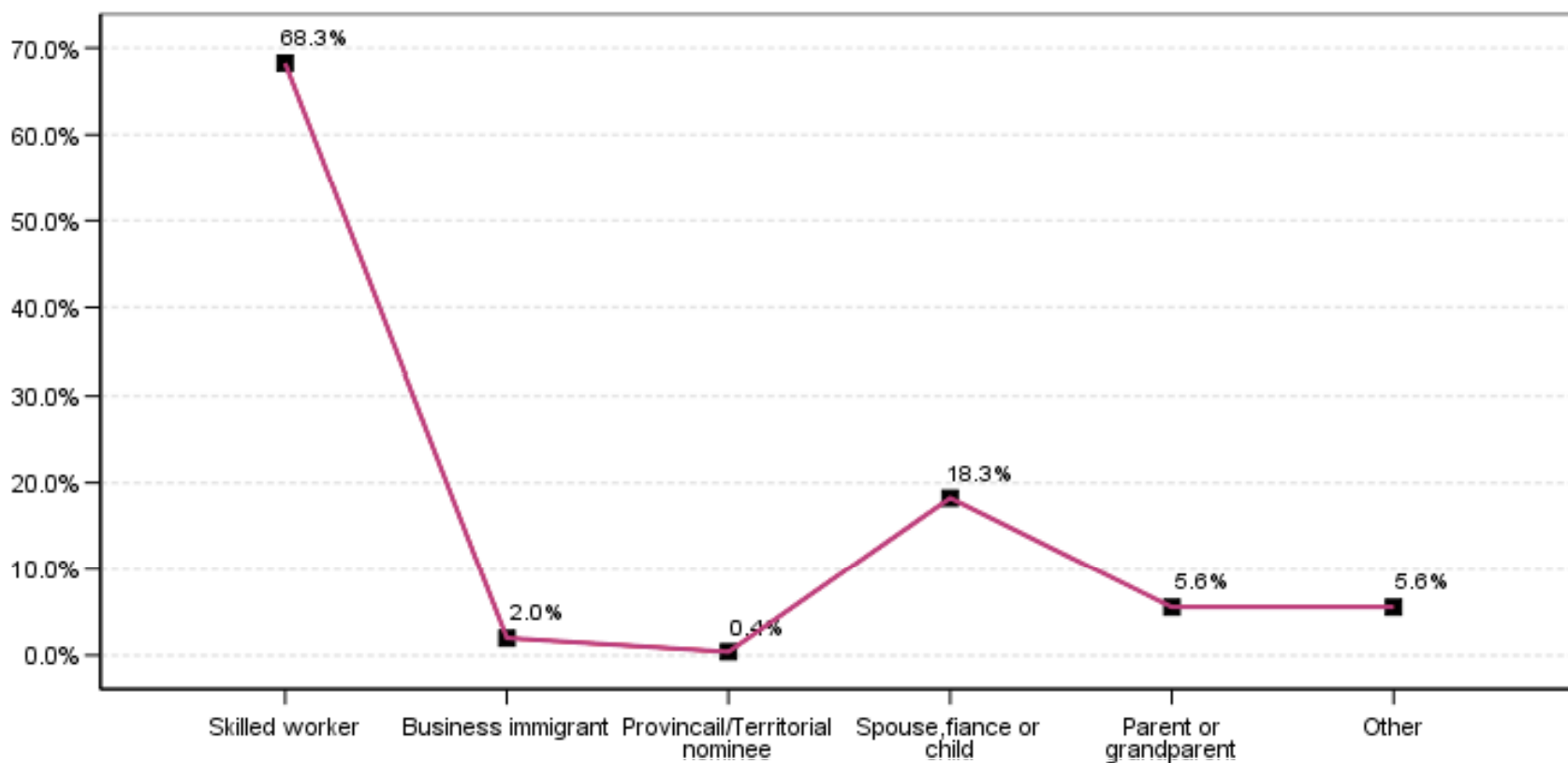
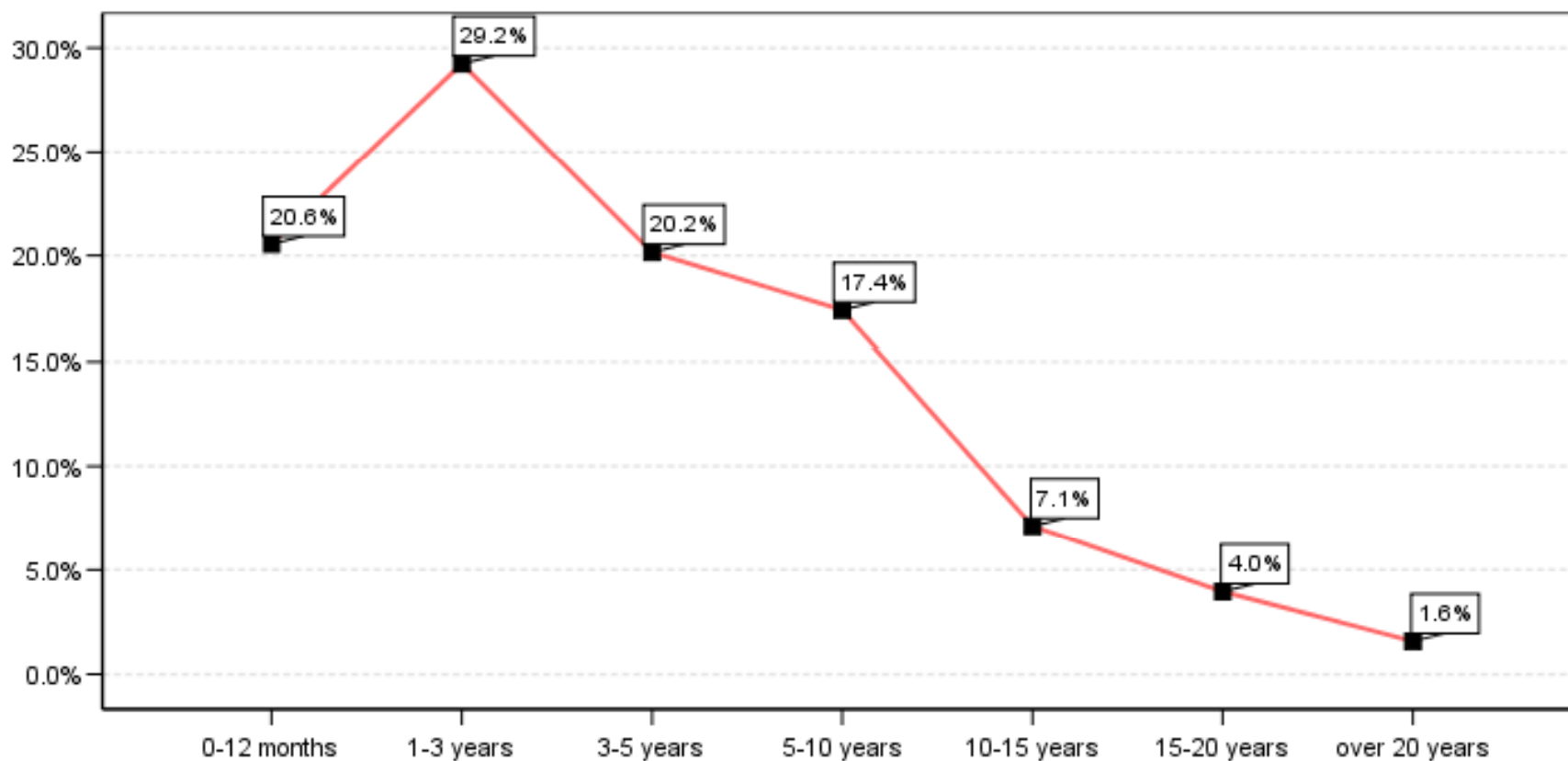


Figure 3: Length of Stay

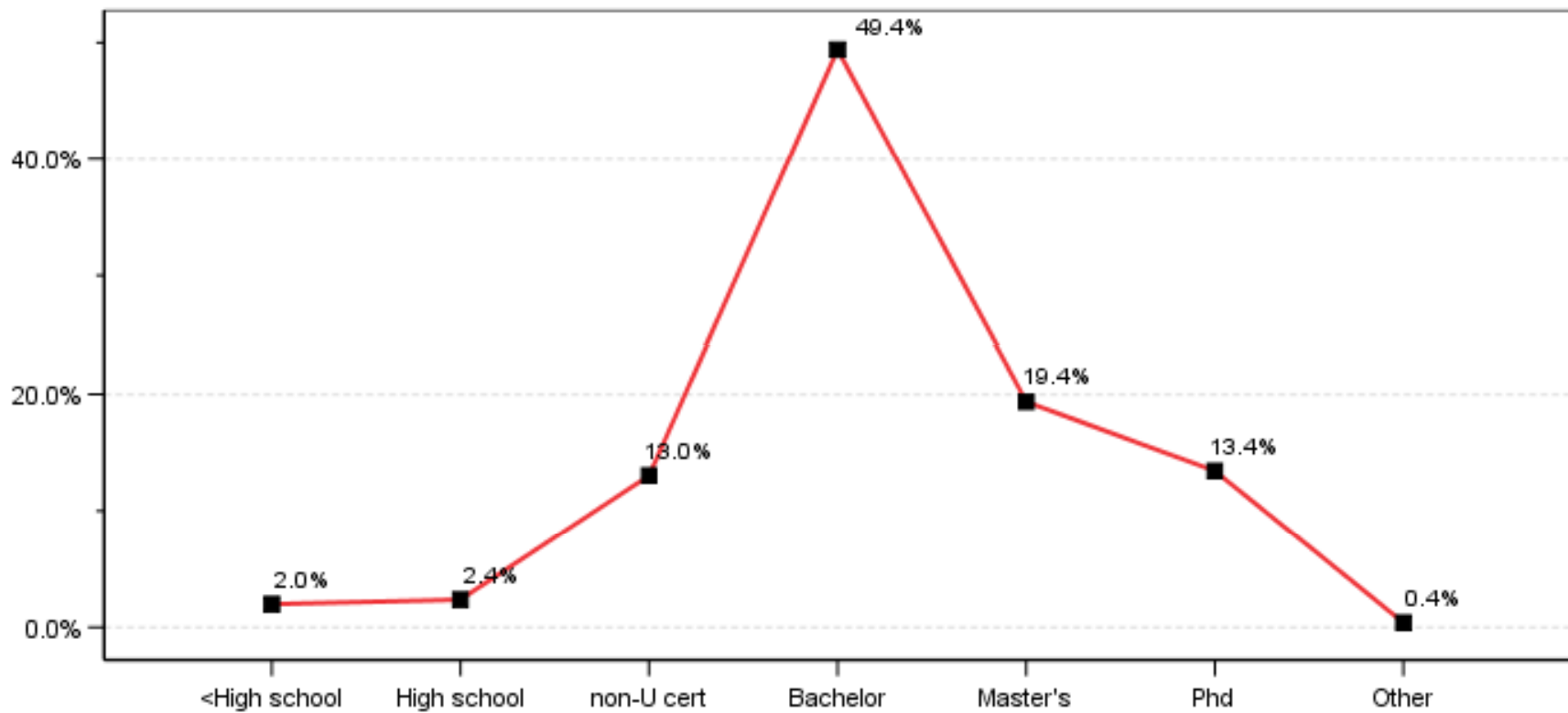




Education Background

- The majority arrived in Canada with a university degree or higher:
 - 49% bachelors
 - 19.2% masters
 - 13.3% doctorates.
- 78.0% received their highest education in mainland China and 16.1% from Canada.
- 54.1% had intermediate or advanced English skills.

Figure 4: Level of Education





II. Motivations for Immigrating to Canada

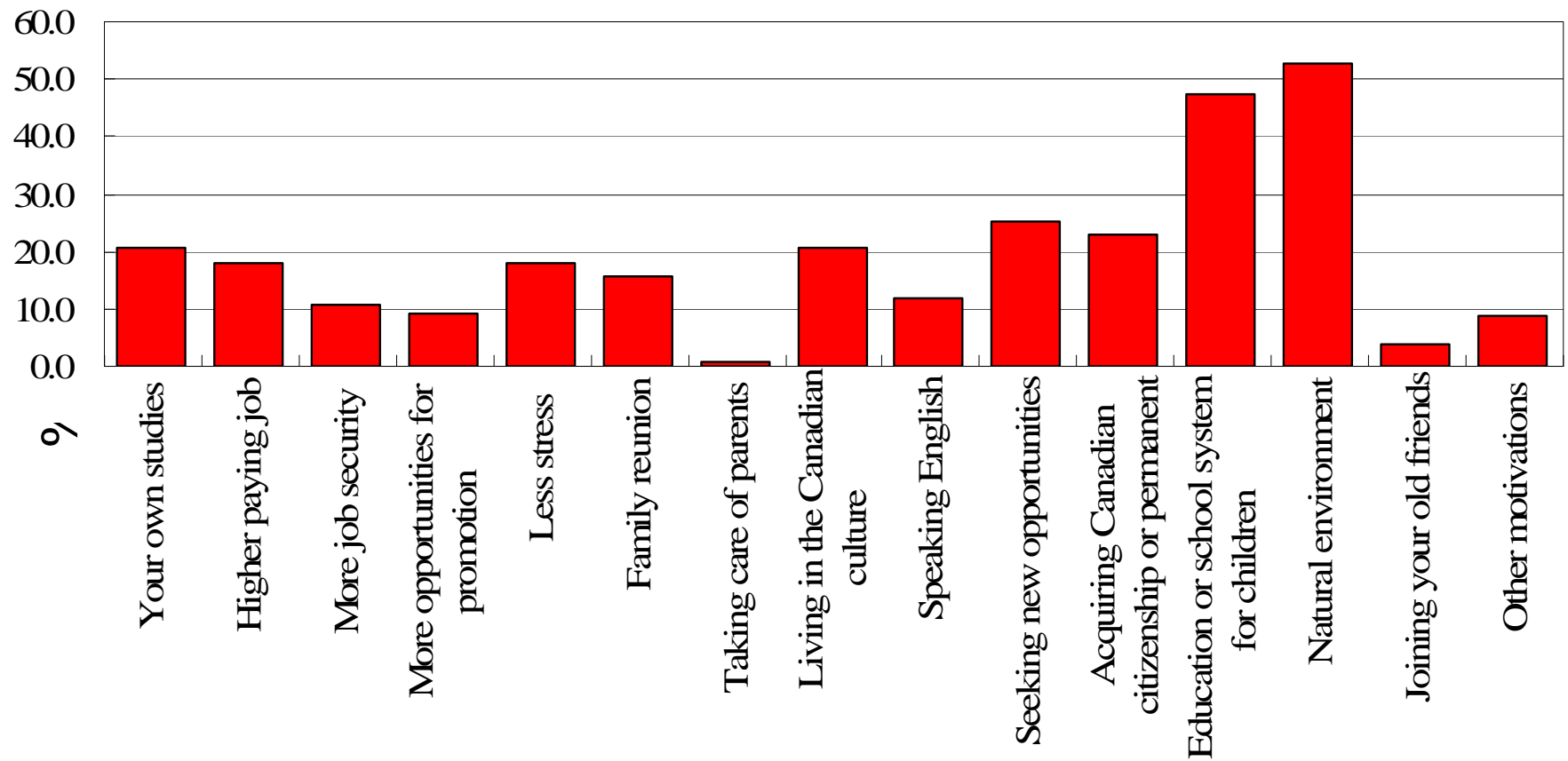
- a. Further Studies
- b. Higher Paying Job
- c. More Job Security
- d. Opportunities for Promotion
- e. Less Stress
- f. Family Reunion
- g. Taking Care of Parents
- h. Living in the Canadian Culture
- i. Speaking English
- j. Seeking New Opportunities
- k. Acquiring Canadian Citizenship or Permanent Residency
- l. Education for the Children
- m. Natural Environment
- n. Joining My Old Friends
- o. Other Motivations



Motivations for Moving to Canada

- Top two motivations for moving to Canada
 - Natural environment (52.5%)
 - Education and school system for children (47.5%)
- Other motivations
 - Seeking new opportunities (25.1%)
 - Acquiring Canadian citizenship or PR (22.7%)

Figure 5: Motivation for Moving to Canada

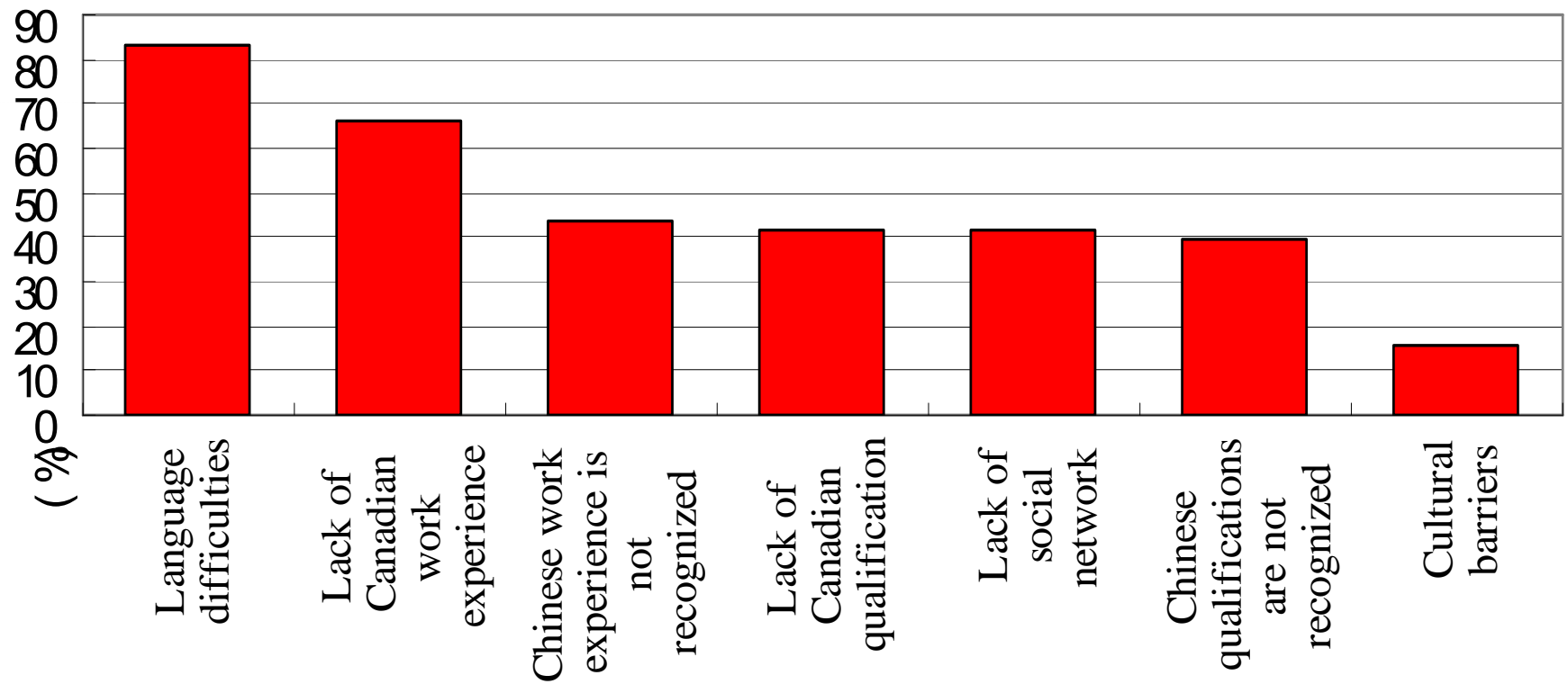




Major Barriers

- 43.5% had achieved their major goals
- Top five major barriers:
 - Language difficulties (83.1%)
 - Lack of Canadian work experience (66.3%)
 - Chinese experience is not recognized (52%)
 - Lack of Canadian qualifications (51%)
 - Lack of social network (50%)

Figure 6: Major Barriers





III: Integration Experience in Canada

- Major difficulties of integrating into Canadian society
- Employment Experiences in Canada
- Social Experience
- Impressions of Canada
- Experience with government and non-government organizations



Difficulties Facing Integration

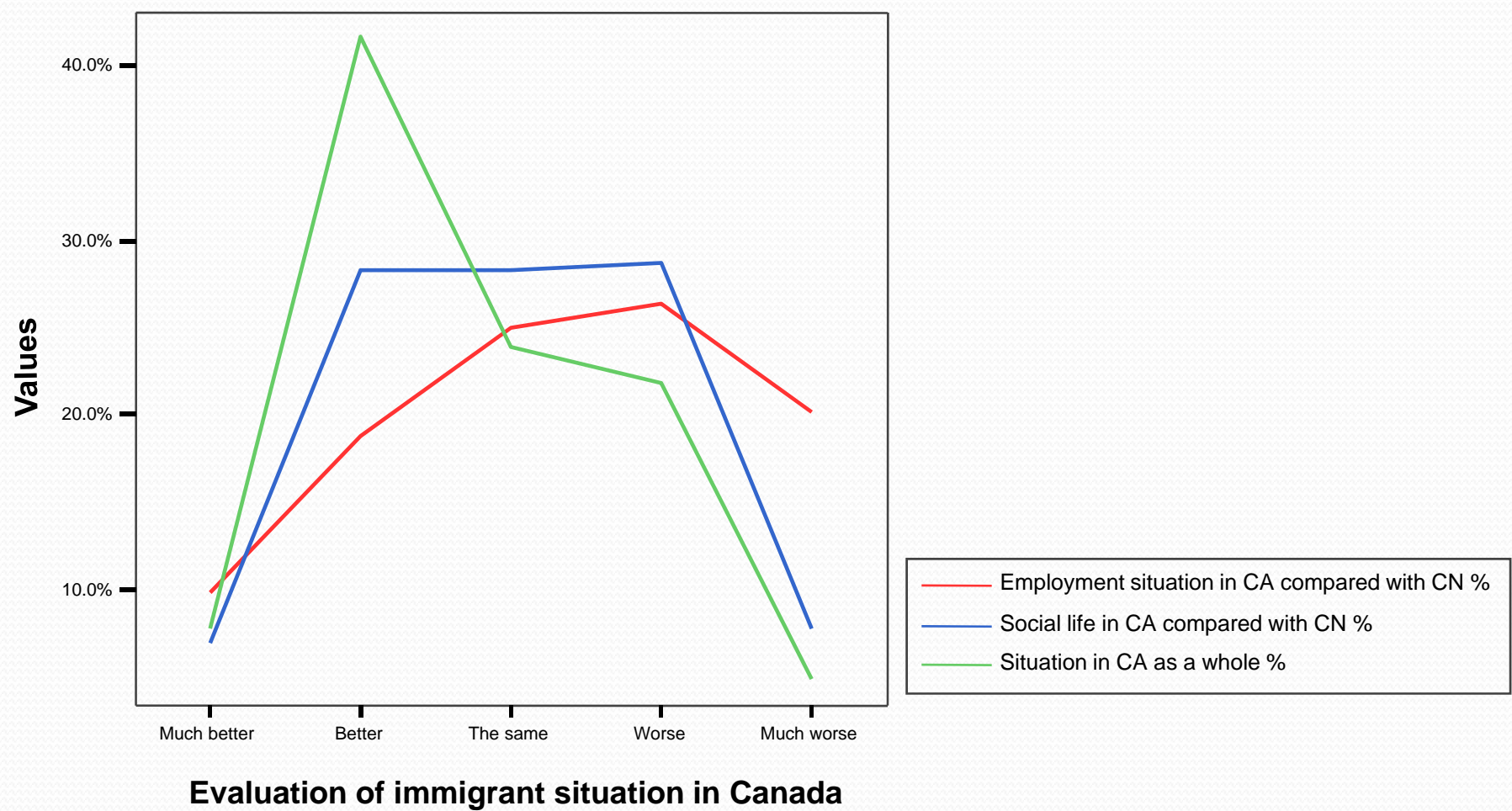
- 70% encountered difficulties in integrating into Canadian society
- Three major difficulties
 - Language (84.0%)
 - Social network (43.4%)
 - Cultural adjustment (41.1%)



Self Evaluation of Immigrant Life

- Employment: 27.6% indicated improvement.
- Social life: only 35.3% felt it's better.
- Overall situation: 49.7% stated better than in China
- Interestingly, 55.9% said they didn't regret for moving to Canada.

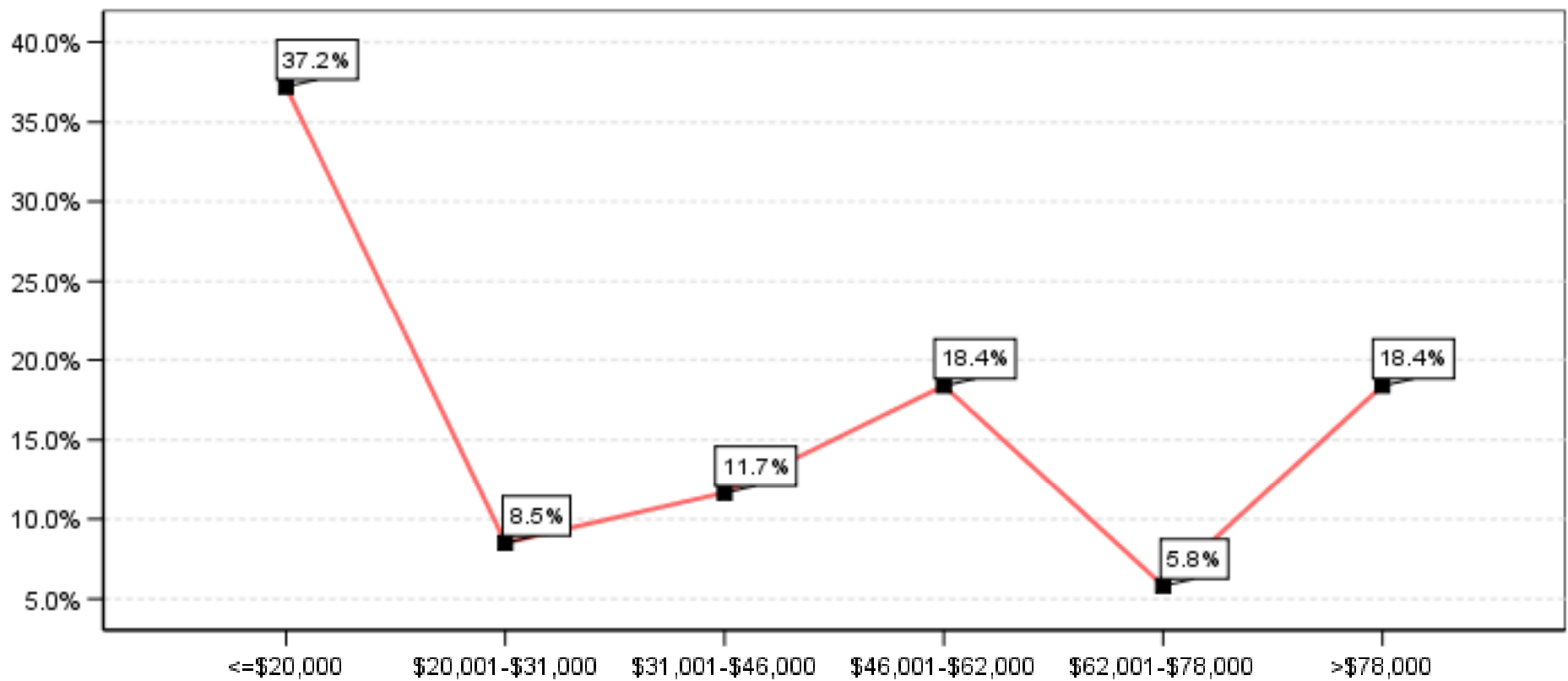
Figure 7: Employment, Social Life & Overall Situation



Occupation Before & After Immigration

	Pre-Immigration	Post- Immigration
Occupations in natural and applied sciences	43.9%	31.9%
Teachers and professors	18.1%	6.1%
Other manager occupation	7.6%	0.9%
Professional occupations in business and finance	7.2%	3.0%
Student	3.8%	11.3%
Labor in processing, manufacturing and utilities	0.8%	17.8%
Unemployed	0.8%	11.3%
Total	82%	82%

Figure 8: Household Income in Canada





Areas That Needed Help

Finding a Job	54.1%
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Finding a Job for Spouse	15.3%
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Enrolling in ESL	13.3%
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Applying for Loans to Buy an Apartment or a House	9.1%
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Applying for Loans to Start Business	7.1%
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II. Two City Comparison: Calgary & Edmonton



Table 2: Two City Comparison

	Calgary	Edmonton
Skilled workers	79.8%	56.1%
Length of stay	3 years (mean)	5 years (mean)
Bachelor	70.7%	53.6%
Ph.D.	6.9%	20.3%
Canadian Ed	14.4%	23.6%

Figure 9: Motivation for Moving to Canada

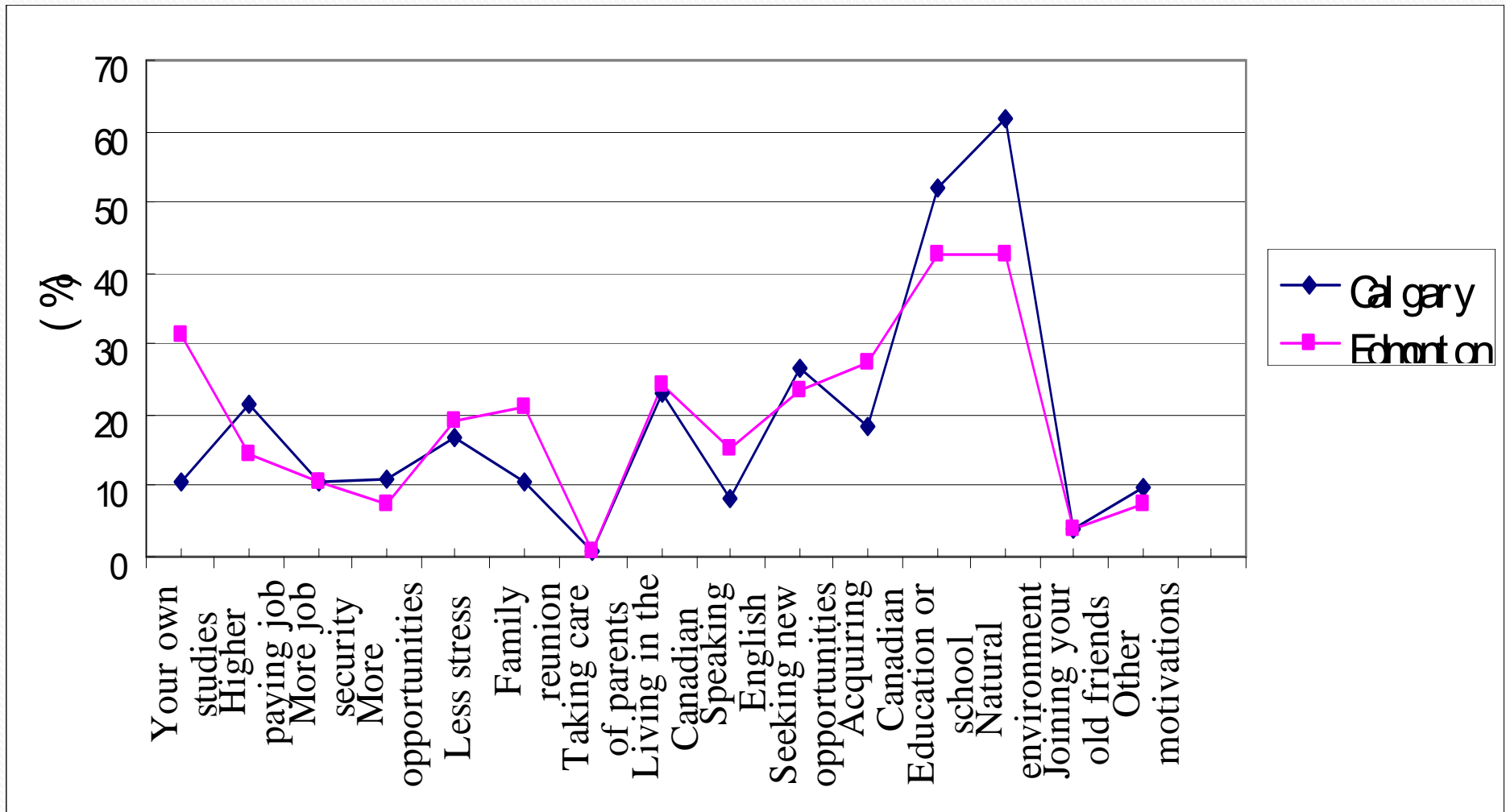


Figure 10: Major Difficulties

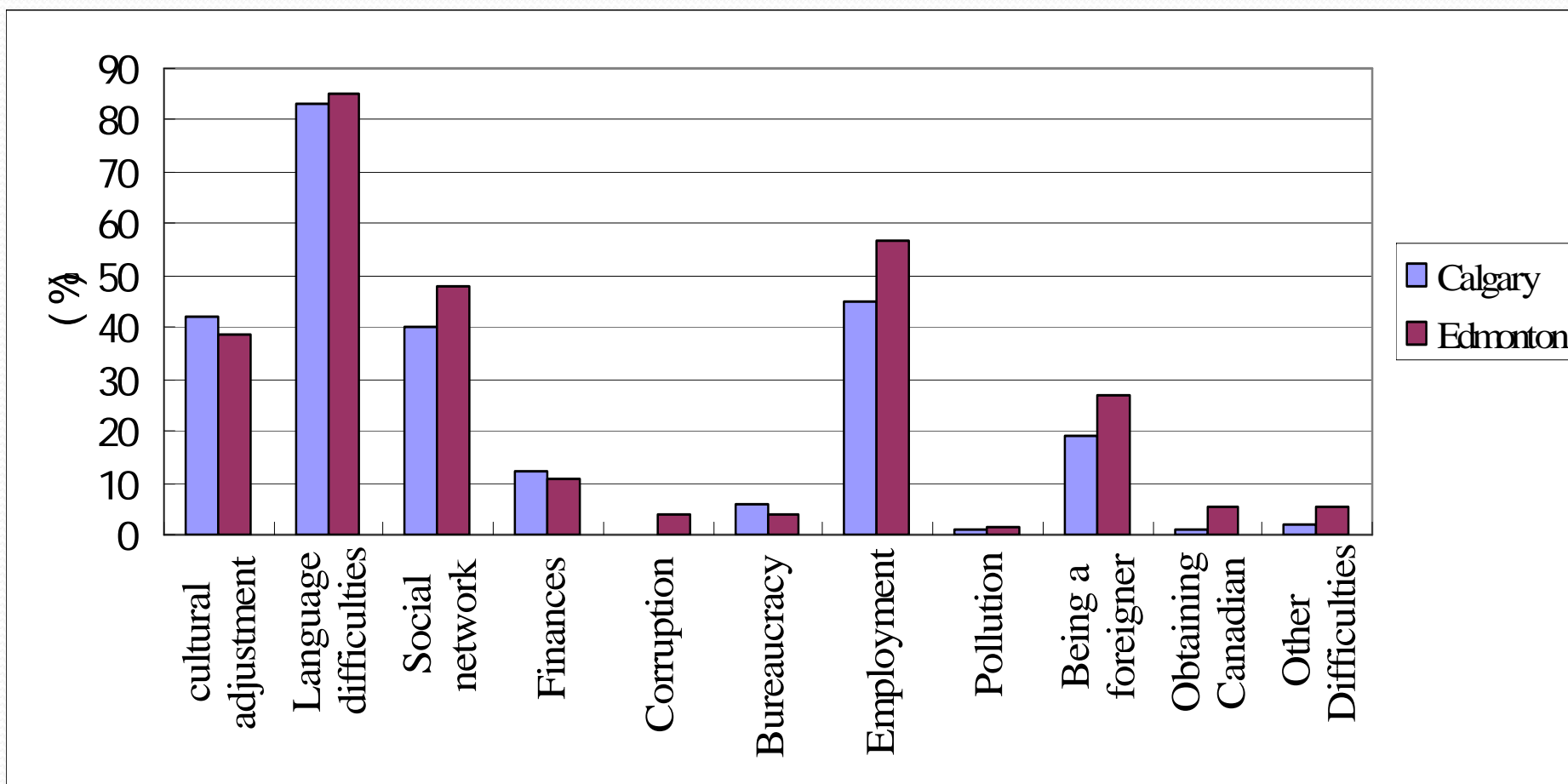
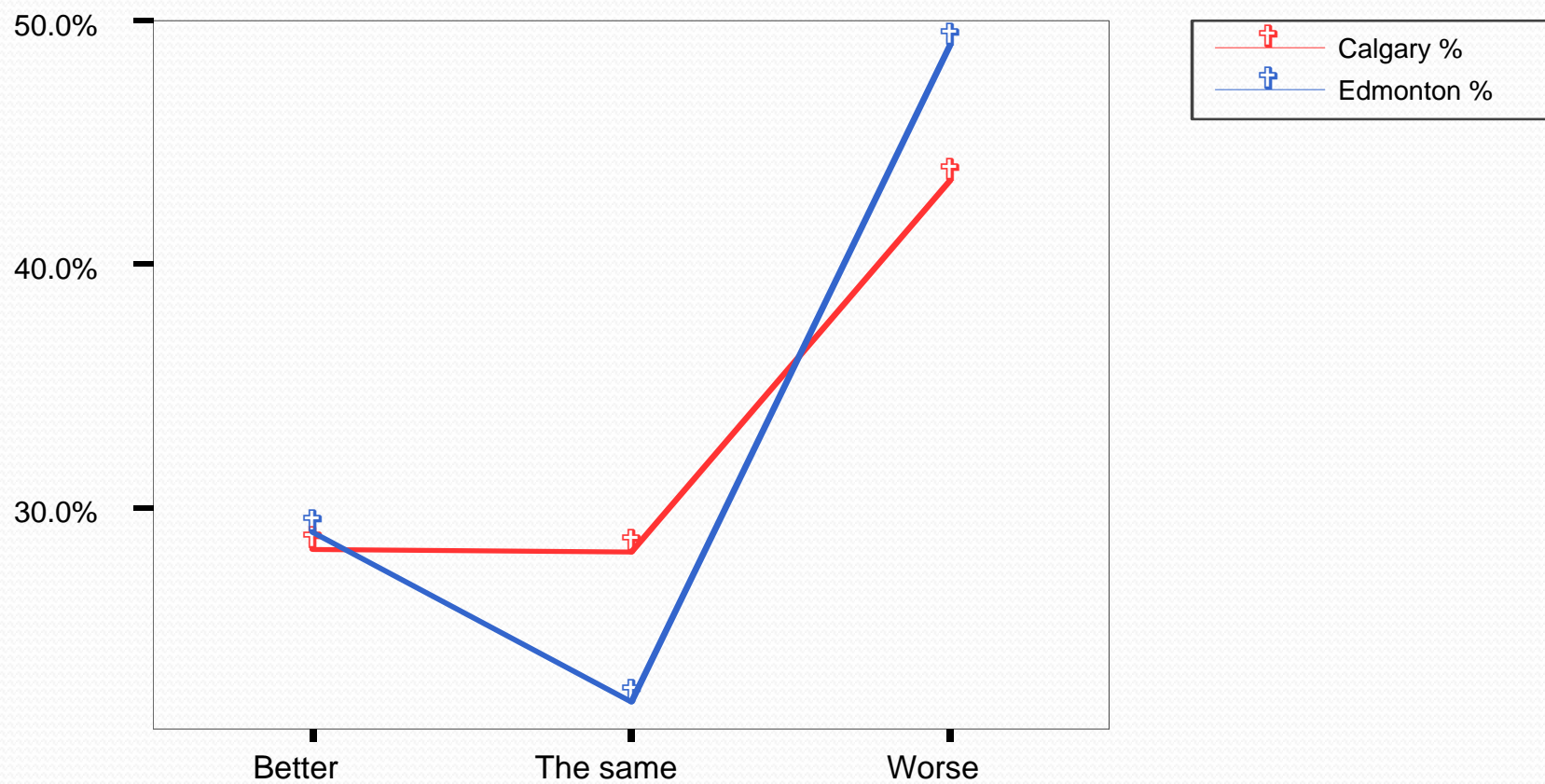


Figure 11: Employment Situation



III. Length of Stay



Motivations for Immigrating to Canada

- Top two motivations for those who had stayed in Canada less than 5 years
 - Education for Children
 - Natural Environment
- Top two motivations for those who had stayed for more than 10 years,
 - Family Union
 - Their Own Study.



Table 3: Achieving Goals

< 3 years	22.8%
3-5 years	47.1%
5-10 years	65.9%
> 10 years	94.4%



Need Help?

- The longer they had stayed in Canada, the less help they needed.
- Especially for those who have stayed in Canada for more than 10 years, they reported that they almost needed no help.
- But for those who had stayed in Canada for less than 10 years they still needed help in finding a job.
- Particularly, for respondents who had stayed in Canada for less than 3 years they needed help in finding a job as well as in enrolling in English language class.



IV. Highest Level of Education Received in Canada or China



Canadian Education

For those who received their highest education in Canada:

- 70.7% resided in Edmonton
- 89.8% received their Master or Ph.D. in Canada.
- They had stayed in Canada longer (mean=8 years)
- Most of them held Canadian citizenship (68.3%).
- 70.7% were the principle applicants
- Their income is much higher than people with Chinese education: 34.2% earned more than \$78,000 (vs. 14%)
5.3% earned less than \$20,000 (vs. 45.9%)

Figure 12: Household Income and Origins of Education

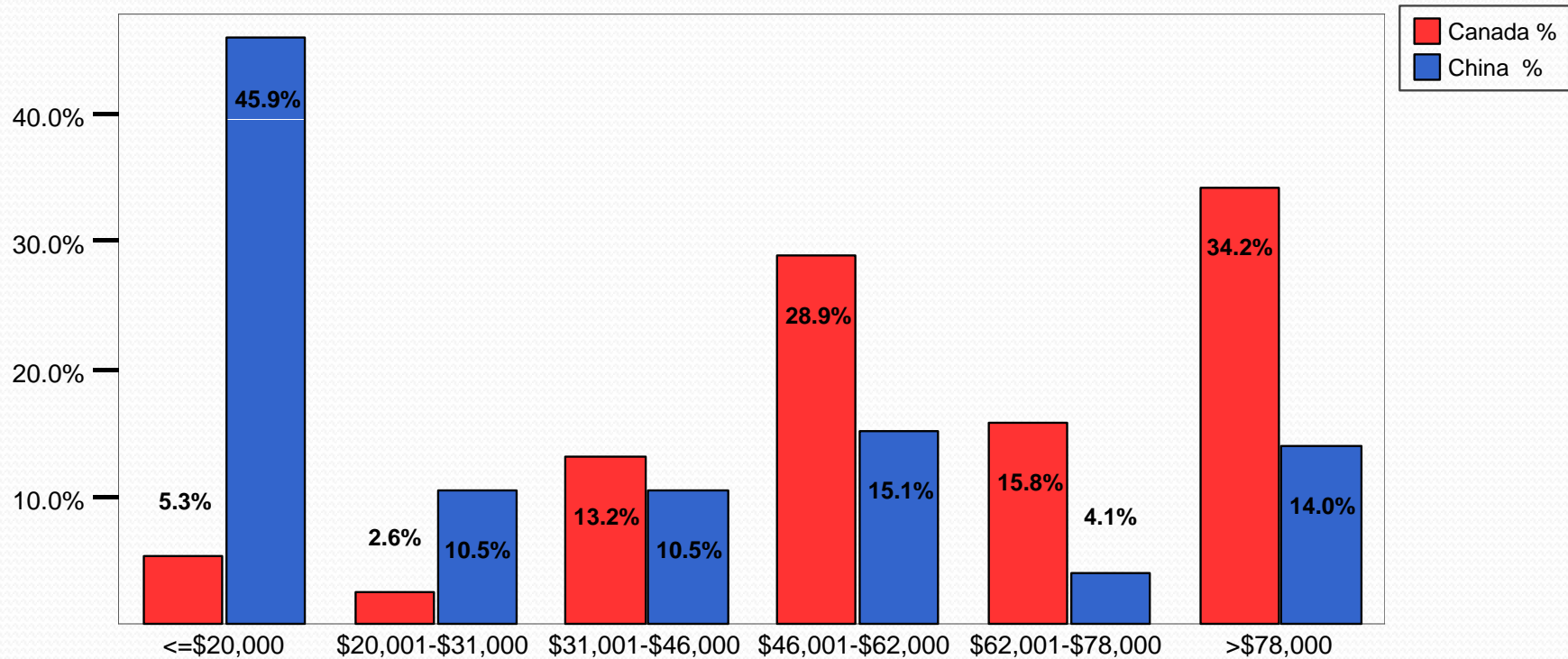


Figure 13: Goal Achievement and Origins of Education

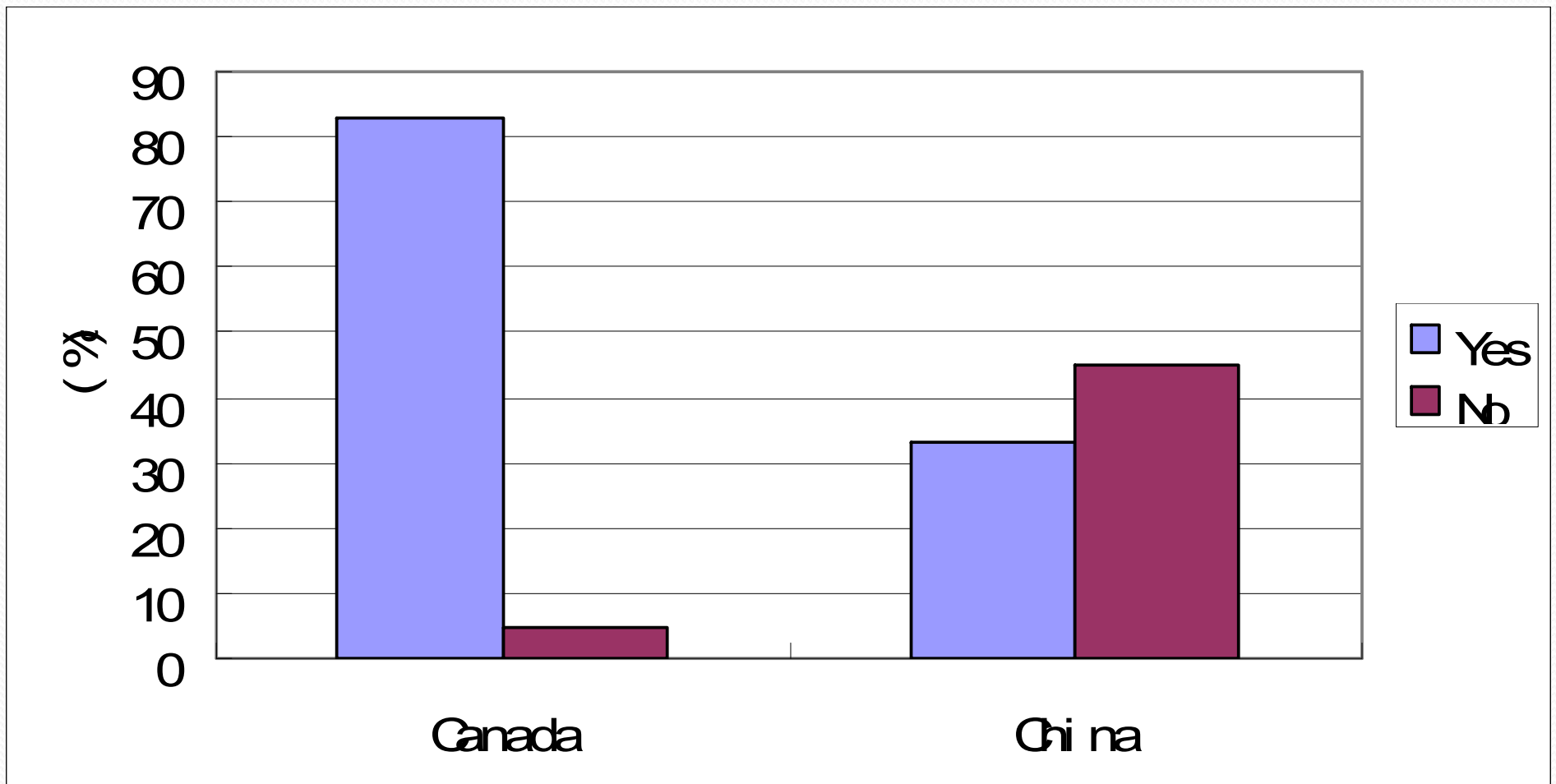


Figure 14: Employment Sit and Origins of Education

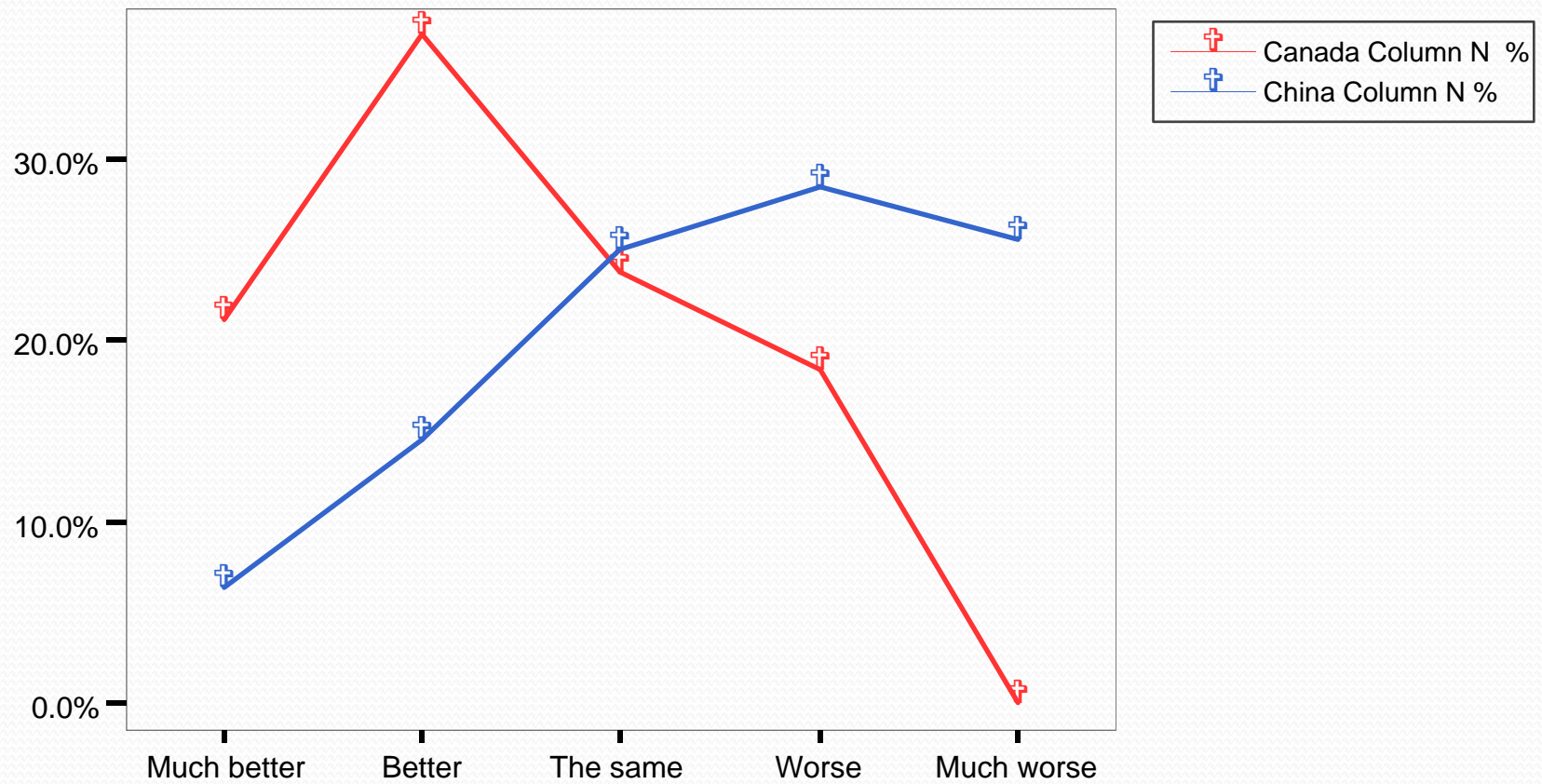


Figure 15: Evaluation of Overall Situation and Origins of Education

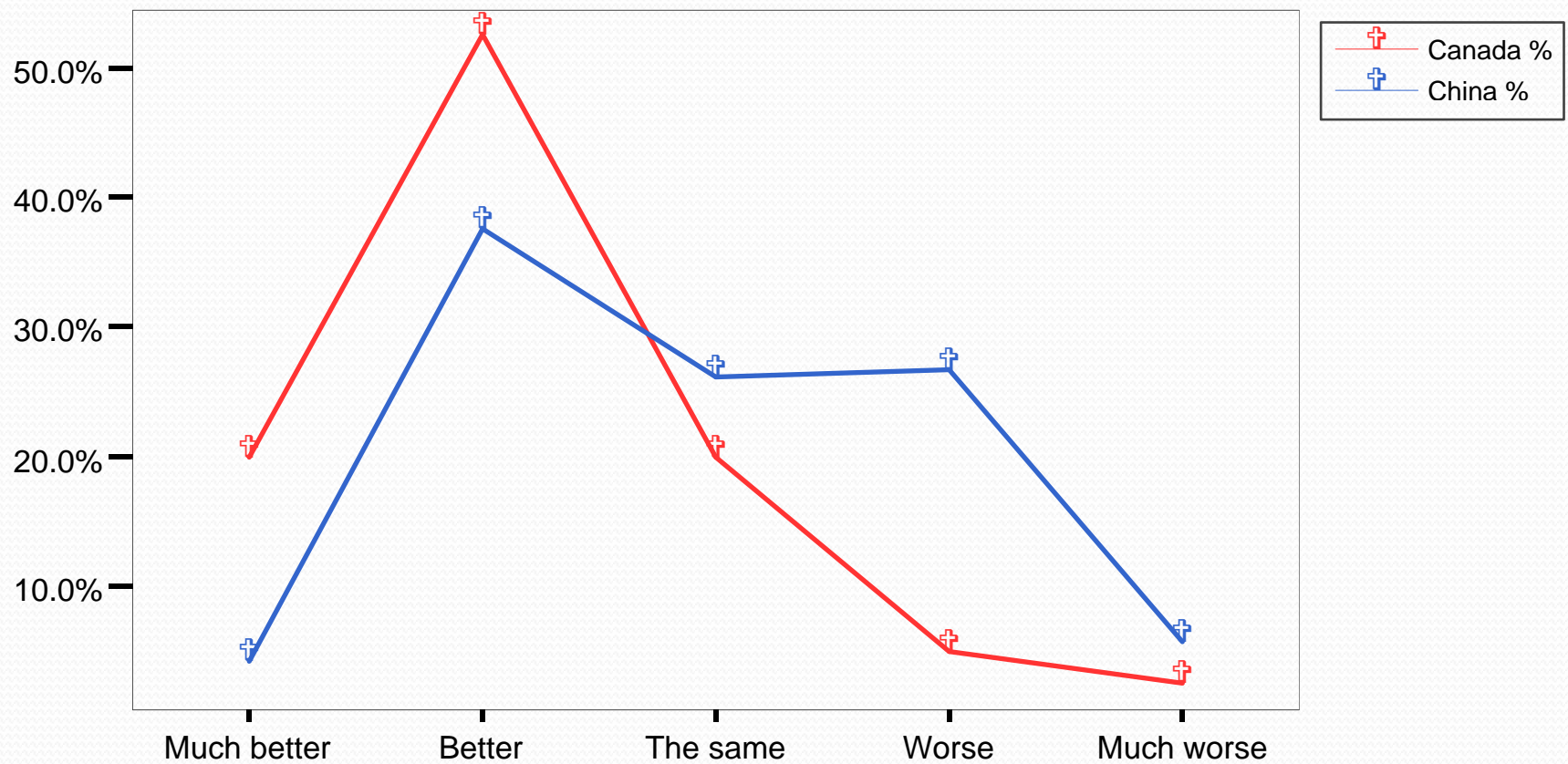


Figure 16: Evaluation of Social Life in Canada and Origins of Education

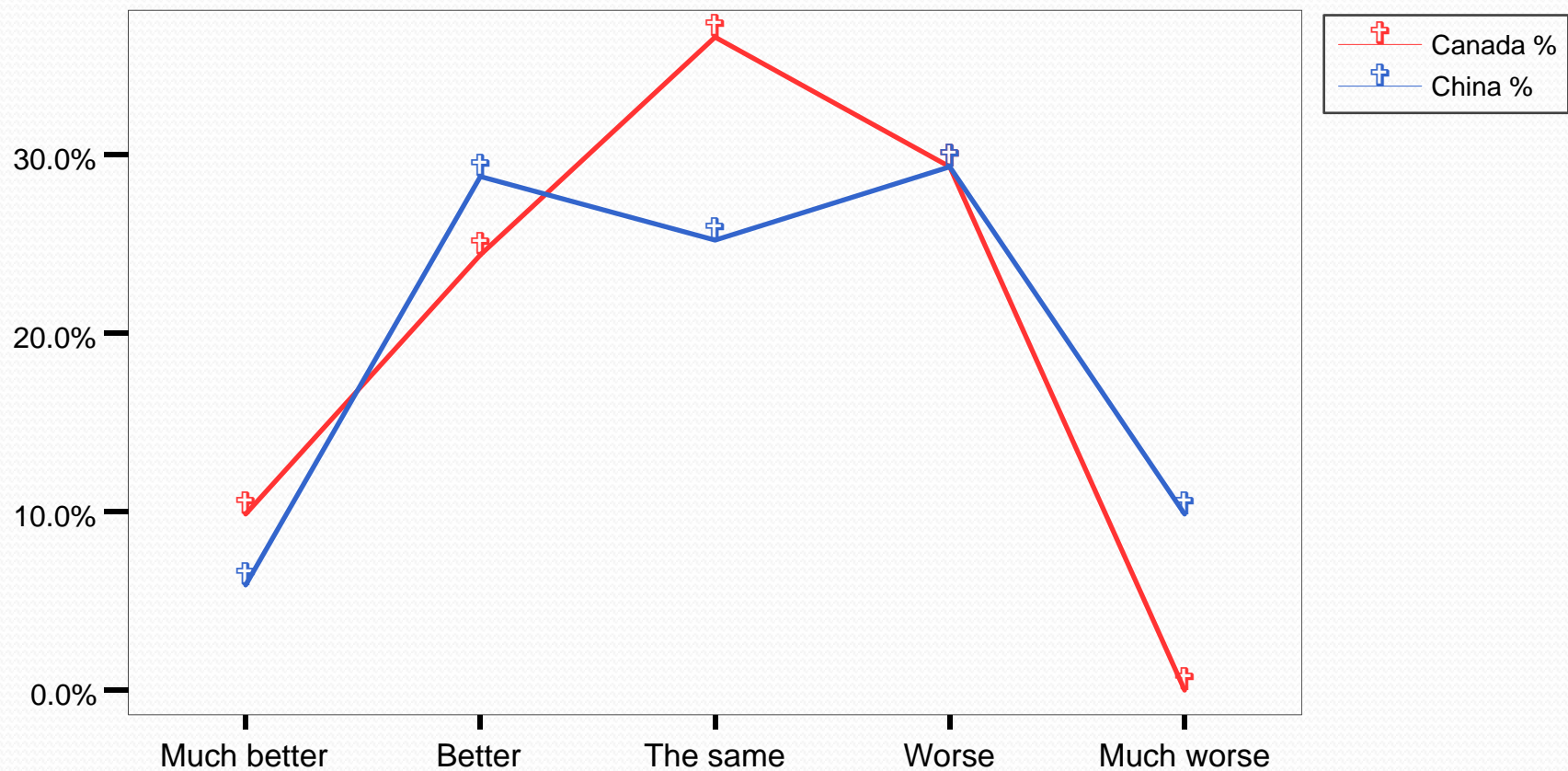
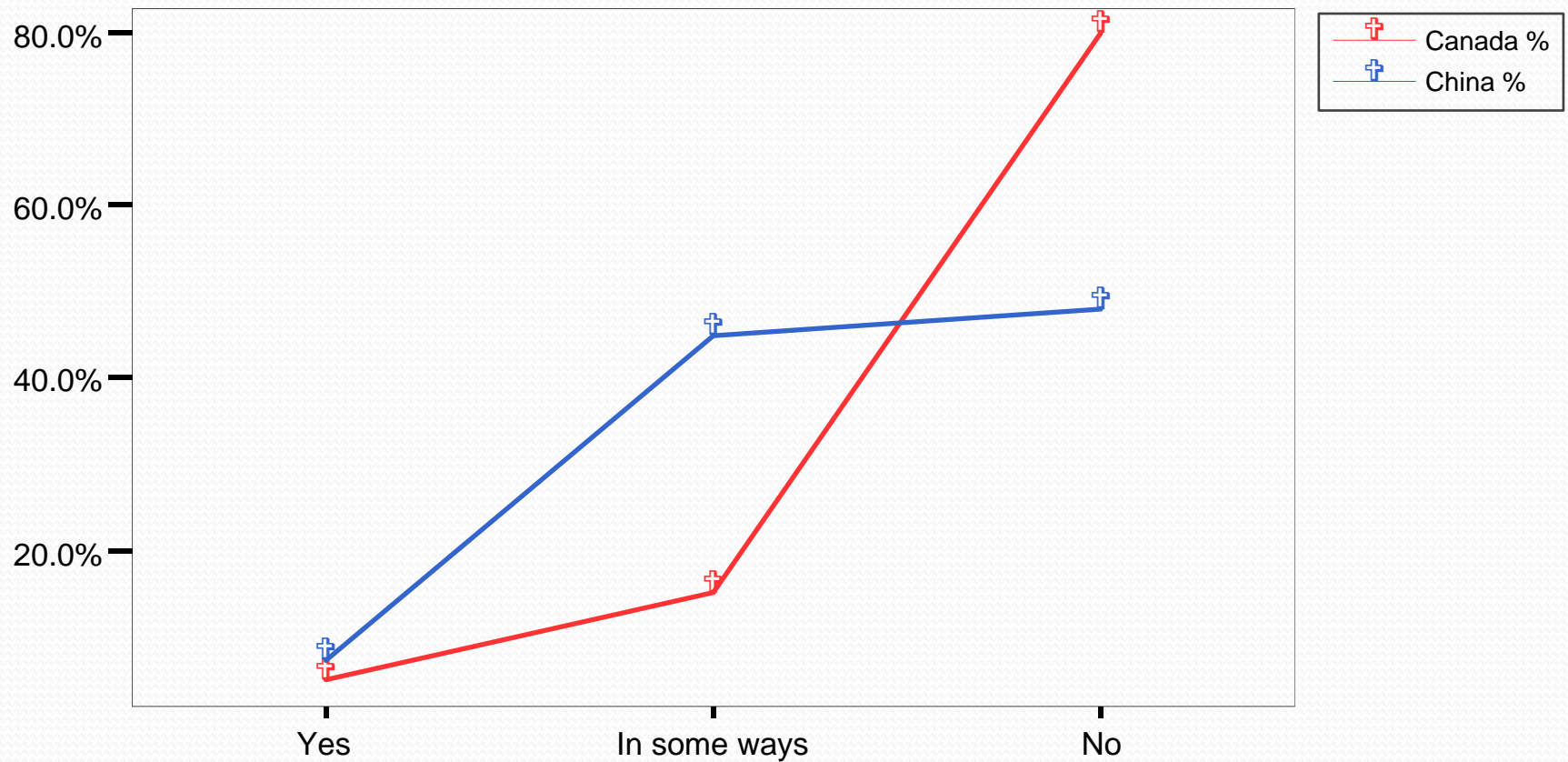


Figure 17: Regret for Moving to Canada and Origins of Education





Conclusion and Implications

- Recent mainland Chinese immigrants constitute a substantially different calibre of immigrants
- They face multiple barriers in their integration into Canadian society.
- Employment and language difficulties are two most frequently cited barriers
- The recent changes pose new challenges to policy-makers and community workers
 - Recognition of foreign credentials
 - Recognition of their prior work experience



The Triple Glass Effect

- The Glass Gate: denies immigrants entrance to guarded professional communities
- The Glass Door: blocks immigrants access to professional employment at high-wage firms
- The Glass Ceiling: prevents immigrants from moving up to management positions
- The Triple Glass Effect: puts up multiple institutional barriers that can cause unemployment and underemployment, poor economic performance, and downward social mobility.



Policy Implications

- What can Canadian and Alberta Government do to help retain this group of immigrants?
- How can we facilitate immigrant's access to the labour market and improve their social mobility?
- What are the policy implications of this research to other immigrants in Canada and Alberta?



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Thank you!