Transnationalism, Citizenship and Sense of Belonging among Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants in Canada

by

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Abstract

Previous research has looked into the life experiences of middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, while the unique experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants have not been analyzed in detail. This research aims to fill the gap by focusing on the transnational linkages, concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging among elderly Hong Kong immigrants. It analyzes their multigenerational transnational family arrangements and experiences of racism. Through questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews with thirty-five elderly Hong Kong immigrants residing in Vancouver at the time of data collection, it is shown that they engage in transnationalism to satisfy emotional needs instead of for economic reasons; they hold a high rate of dual citizenship and have a strong sense of belonging and commitment to Canada despite limited citizenship participation and language barriers; and they do not perceive encountering serious racism in their daily lives in Canada despite language and educational constraints. Being mostly grandparents and not in the workplace, their multigenerational transnational family arrangements also impact on their sense of belonging and overall immigration experience. This research acts as one of the first steps to further exposing the unique experiences of elderly immigrants in Canada.
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Chapter I Introduction

This research aims at revealing transnationalism, concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging at their particular stage of the life course among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. It shows the transnational linkages and sense of belonging of the participants in relation to their multigenerational family arrangements and experiences of racism. In other words, it examines how multigenerational family arrangements and experiences of racism shape the transnational behaviour and sense of belonging of elderly Hong Kong immigrants. Under these overarching aims, this research specifically seeks to answer the following questions: 1) Whether elderly Hong Kong immigrants maintain transnational linkages with Hong Kong in the same ways and with the same frequency as middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants; 2) Whether elderly Hong Kong immigrants have a high sense of belonging to Canada and a high level of citizenship practice; 3) What are the unique experiences of racism among the elderly participants in multicultural Vancouver; 4) How do the elderly interpret their overall satisfaction with the immigration experience; and 5) What are the impacts of being “elderly” in a particular “generation” on the experiences among the participants. As we shall see in the literature review and other places in this thesis, previous research efforts have been geared towards middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants either residing in Canada or having moved back to Hong Kong; however, the experiences of the elderly are seemingly not receiving enough spotlight. In order to fill the knowledge gap, this research is targeted at elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver, an internationally acclaimed city for immigration and multiculturalism. The research findings will have implications for public
policies stretching from multiculturalism to the more specific elderly social benefits system.

Places and Contexts

Any geographical research involving human participants has to take into consideration the place and context and its influence on the life experiences of the participants. Borrowing concepts from humanism, people can only be understood by getting a grasp of the place in which they are situated (Ley 2006; Entrikin and Tepple 2006). Researchers are obliged to show sensitivity towards, respect for, and empathy with the people and places being studied (Rodaway 2006). People are constantly bombarded heavily or influenced gently by the political, social, physical and economical environment of the places in which they reside.

Vancouver possesses a set of unique characteristics that shape the daily experiences of the elderly, the most important is being a world class city with a large Hong Kong Chinese population (over 300,000) of all age groups (Edgington, Goldberg et al. 2003). A large number of Hong Kong Chinese moved into Canada between late 1980s and early 1990s in an effort to locate an outpost to oversee the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to mainland China following a hundred years of British colonial rule. After 1997, the number of Hong Kong Chinese immigrants entering Canada dropped precipitously and has gradually been replaced by immigrants from mainland China (Li 2005). In recent years, the recovering Hong Kong economy and the booming Chinese economy have pulled a significant number of younger immigrants back to Hong Kong to seek job opportunities (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). The impacts of return migration of younger
generations on the elderly are still relatively unclear. Besides a large number of Hong Kong Chinese, the cityscape of Vancouver in many ways resembles Hong Kong. These attributes have profound influences on the overall immigration experience among Hong Kong elderly immigrants. *Place does matter.* At the end of this research, we shall be able to visualize the connections between Vancouver and the contemporary life world of elderly Hong Kong immigrants.

**Outline of thesis**

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I is a general introduction of the research that lays out the research questions and describes Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver. Chapter II looks at previous literature on transnationalism, citizenship, racism, family arrangements and needs of elderly Chinese immigrants in Canada. From the literature review, we shall be able to come to terms with the significance of the questions asked in this research. Chapter III delineates the methodologies employed in the research, notably the data collection processes such as questionnaire surveys and interviews, research preparations and data analysis procedures. A short account of the impact of my own positionality within the research and of ethics guidelines is also included. Chapters IV and V are mutually supportive: Chapter IV presents quantitative results derived from the questionnaire surveys in tables alongside data collected in a previous research project on middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants. The themes of the tables are: social characteristics, immigration history, economic status, transnational ties, transnational behaviours and civic participation of Hong Kong immigrants. Chapter V continues from Chapter IV and presents qualitative findings from the interview transcripts. The five themes depicted from the transcripts are: transnational activities across the Pacific Rim,
citizenship and citizenship practice (sense of belonging, and language and citizenship practice), experiences of racism, overall immigration experience, and multigenerational transnational family arrangements. The qualitative data in Chapter V complement the quantitative findings in Chapter IV and both chapters constitute a more complete picture of the immigration experience among the elderly participants; nevertheless, there are always knowledge gaps to fill in any research. Chapter VI discusses the directions for future research either on Hong Kong immigrants or on immigrants in general, followed by a comprehensive summary including the background, theories, research questions, and research findings of the whole project titled “Transnationalism, citizenship and sense of belonging among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada.”

Before we analyze the collected data, it is imperative to understand the theoretical foundations of and previous research on transnationalism, citizenship, experiences of racism, family arrangements and elderly needs of Chinese immigrants in Canada. The next chapter will review these topics one by one.
Chapter II Literature Review

Hong Kong immigration to Canada represented the single largest group of immigrants between the 1980s and 1990s. Although immigration from Hong Kong and the south of China has been considerable for more than a century and a half, over the past two decades, Hong Kong immigrants have increased their level of immigration while simultaneously establishing transnational linkages between Canada and Hong Kong. The experiences of middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants are addressed in a number of research projects; however, the life experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants deserve more attention. In particular, research should bring to the fore the transnational activities, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism among the elderly. In this chapter, the discussion will begin with a brief account of the changing immigration policies that have been facilitating an increasing number of visible minority immigrants coming to Canada; then it will elucidate the concepts of citizenship and identity. The next part will establish the interrelationships between transnationalism, citizenship and racism. Based on these ideas, the following section will discuss the transnational family arrangements of middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada; and the last part will focus on the specific needs of Chinese elderly in Canada and previous research about elderly Hong Kong immigrants regarding transnationalism through the life course.

Canadian Immigration Policies from 1950s to the Present
Canadian immigration policies are intimately linked to the increasing number of visible minorities and their transnational practices across national borders, and are essential to comprehend the present ethnocultural situation in Canada. Prior to the end of the Second World War, the majority of immigrants to Canada originated from Europe (Li 2003). During the 1960s, the federal government introduced the “points system” to evaluate prospective immigrants based on a set of criteria on the basis of the applicants’ demographic characteristics and accrued human capital (Hiebert 2000). The points system, coupled with a dramatic increase in annual targets of immigrants from 100,000 to over 200,000 in the mid-1980s (Hiebert 2000), and from 250,000 to almost 300,000 in recent years (Hiebert 2002), have altered the demographic composition of immigrants. Predominant incomers have switched from European countries before the 1970s to the current trend of Asian and African immigrants. The emergence of visible minorities in Canada is also closely related to the loosening of immigration restrictions since 1967. New immigrants can be classified into three categories, immigrants for family reunion, business immigrants and independent skilled professionals (Li 2003); business immigrants constitute many of the transnational “astronaut fathers” that will be discussed in later sections but the largest number of Hong Kong immigrants have been in the independent and family classes.

Transnationalism

Transnationalism is a very common practice among Hong Kong immigrants in Canada and has captured the attention of academics, policymakers and business operators alike since the 1990s. To offer a fundamental interpretation, transnationalism refers to “an
ongoing series of cross-border movements in which immigrants foster interlinked economic, political, social and cultural ties in more than one nation” (Johnston, Gregory et al. 2000, p.853). Immigrants draw on resources from both the destination country and home country to serve their best economic interests. Within academia, there is an increasing number of studies directed to transnationalism of communities, citizenship, capital flows, government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Vertovec 1999). Within the context of Canada, the extent and intensity of transnational activities on both sides of the Pacific Rim have been underpinned by the ambitious immigration policies. Predicated on the Canadian immigration policy to attract foreign capital through the Business Immigration Program (BIP), a considerable number of immigrants from Asian countries are wealthy and thus carry a substantial amount of investment capital (Ley 2003). Most of these immigrants come from South Korea, Taiwan and Hong Kong, and they weave strong transnational business ties between Canada and their homeland. In other words, transnational activities have forged social spaces that may be physically embedded in specific locations but perceptually linked to the political, economic and societal aspects of the social system beyond the local physical boundary.

Studies of transnationalism in the past two decades place a strong emphasis on the economic front. For example, researchers have disentangled the logic underlying the burgeoning “export education” business among Korean immigrants in Vancouver and co-ethnics in Korea (Hiebert and Kwak 2004; Kwak 2004); the increasing property values brought about by millionaire Hong Kong migrants in the Greater Vancouver area (Li 1994; Ley 1995); and the establishment of one of the world’s leading banks, the Hong Kong Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) in Canada and its consequences for local
financial development (Edgington, Goldberg et al. 2003). In recent years, studies of transnationalism have extended to the social and cultural aspects such as the close ties among family members in Canada and overseas, the sense of national identity and other areas related to citizenship and family arrangements across national borders (Waters 2003; Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006). It is with the backdrop of deepening transnationalism that we shift our focus to one of Canada’s largest immigrant groups, Hong Kong immigrants.

Profile of Hong Kong Immigrants

During the 1980s and 1990s, hundreds of thousands of Hong Kong immigrants entered Canada through the business immigration program, skilled worker immigration category and for family reunion. According to Statistics Canada, Hong Kong immigrants constituted the largest source of immigrants between 1990 and 1997 (Chow 2007). The reasons for the mass exodus have been contested over the years. Some researchers assert that Hong Kong immigrants before 1997 were “reluctant exiles” (Skeldon 1994), exposing their hidden sacrifice to have abandoned property, family and friends, and social status in Hong Kong to obtain Canadian citizenship in face of the uncertain political and economic future with the handover of Hong Kong back to Communist China in 1997 (Ley and Kobayashi 2005). Other scholars claim that Hong Kong immigrants strategically engage in transnational practices to advance family welfare regardless of the political atmosphere in Hong Kong (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). Despite conflicting propositions to account for the Hong Kong exodus, an undeniable phenomenon is that neoliberal restructuring in Canada has facilitated the Business Immigration Program,
which appealed especially to the newly arising middle- to upper-class Hong Kong immigrants in the real estate and equity industries to migrate to Canada (Li 2005).

Another significant characteristic of Hong Kong immigrants is their high naturalization rate with minimal years of residency in Canada (Bloemraad 2006). Compared to their US counterparts, Hong Kong immigrants in Canada exhibit a desire to procure Canadian citizenship in the shortest time possible. Researchers have proposed explanations for the naturalization gap, such as state policies and citizenship laws in Canada that encourage citizenship acquisition, varying group traits between Hong Kong immigrants in Canada and the United States, and characteristics of individual migrants. Regardless of the reasons for prompt citizenship acquisition, the propensity for naturalization, especially for dual citizenship, is intimately linked to the transnational practices and concepts of citizenship of Hong Kong immigrants, and these will be the foci of the following discussion.

Citizenship and Identity

Citizenship and identity are indispensable aspects shaping the transnational experiences, sense of belonging and experiences of racism among Hong Kong immigrants. The fundamental definition of citizenship in western liberal democracies includes four dimensions: legal status, rights, identity and participation (Bloemraad 2000). It is both an array of rights and duties in the civil, political and social domains on one hand, and a set of cultural and economic practices on the other hand (Isin and Wood 1999). It could be defined as “what draws a body of citizens together into a coherent and stably organized political community, and keeps that allegiance durable" (Beiner 1995). It is assumed that
identity is subsumed within citizenship in which citizenship is a legal status and identity concerns the social and cultural aspects of residents’ being in a nation-state (Isin and Wood 1999). As such, citizenship is a status while identity is a part of citizenship that allows for formation of groups for legal entitlements (Isin and Wood 1999). Identity also enhances attachment to a community (Bloemraad 2000). Referring to the four dimensions, citizenship is a universal concept encompassing the legal status and rights while identity is a particular aspect under it that includes recognition and participation. Another way to define citizenship is to differentiate between “legal citizenship” and “citizenship practice.” “Legal citizenship” refers to possession of a nationality and a passport, while “citizenship practice” is inseparable from participation, which means citizens engage actively with their communities, including such things as voting and volunteering work, in order to have a stake in societal development.

In Canada, multicultural citizenship is a unique phenomenon governing the legal status, rights and identity of Canadian citizens. In line with the Multicultural Act to support and preserve different cultures of its citizens, multicultural citizenship grants the rights and duties associated with formal Canadian citizenship within a multicultural framework. It proactively promotes and protects cultural expressions of ethnocultural groups in public and in private (Faist 2000). It is supposed to simultaneously give legal citizenship status and satisfy cultural identity for a citizenship. Immigrant-welcoming countries such as Canada employ citizenship as a means to link individuals to the larger socio-political community (Bloemraad 2000). In principle, the link includes both legitimate access to legal rights and achievement of an identity and participation in Canada; however, to many Hong Kong immigrants, Canadian citizenship does provide legal status as citizens, access to resources and duties to fulfill; what it does not entail is a
proper sense of cultural and economic *identity* to allow a sense of attachment to Canada. While the nation-state cannot provide a citizenship that both grants legal rights and satisfies a desire for a complete identity and fuller participation in Canadian society, a large number of Hong Kong immigrants turn to another form of citizenship to satisfy the craving for an identity—transnational citizenship.

**Transnational Citizenship**

Transnational citizenship occurs in the way in which transnationalism transcends the nation-states and forges new transnational social spaces so that citizenship surpasses the limits of national borders (Bloemraad 2000). It differs from conventional citizenship in which it is a form of participatory citizenship, in which the formation of an identity underscores its significance. Citizens engage in transnational economic activity, social involvement and political engagement through an international network for citizenship practice (Bloemraad 2000). As opposed to multicultural citizenship, transnational citizenship is the *only* kind of citizenship derived from the immigrants themselves instead of granted by the nation-states.

In Canada, many immigrants engage in transnationalism as a result of dual citizenship. It is essential to notice the cause and effect of this transnational citizenship.

**Transnationalism as a Result of Dual Citizenship**

For many immigrants, dual citizenship grants the rights for formal citizenship while transnationalism serves as a form of participatory citizenship. This arrangement can
be seen as a form of transnational citizenship. Statistics show that Hong Kong immigrants in Canada hold an extremely high rate of dual citizenship (Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006). They engage in a wide range of transnational behaviours stemming from the dual identities of Canadians and Hong Kongese; for example, dual citizens have more social contacts with family, relatives and friends in Hong Kong; are more informed of Hong Kong news and current affairs; and pay closer attention to Hong Kong music and popular culture. They are also more likely to participate in Canadian branches of Hong Kong associations to connect with co-ethnics in Canada. In general, dual citizens who are engaged in transnational practices exhibit higher human capital in terms of knowledge, educational attainment and job skills (Bloemraad 2004). Immigrants embrace dual citizenship for a variety of reasons; however, previous research shows that less wealthy, nonwhite immigrants secure dual citizenship and get involved in transnationalism as a means to avert the economic and social marginalization in the host country (Bloemraad 2004). Hong Kong immigrants in Canada tend to be from the middle- to upper-class; however, challenges they face in the Canadian labour market prompt the acquisition of dual citizenship to facilitate transnational activities.

Although critics of dual citizenship assert that it might impede attachment to the receiving country and debase citizenship to a face value of a passport (Faist 2000), observations of Hong Kong immigrants in Canada prove it otherwise. Here, the interrelationship has to be outlined clearly: a large number of Hong Kong immigrants applied for dual citizenship as the rights for Canadian citizenship; with dual citizenship, they are more inclined to engage in transnational contacts and connections with Hong Kong; these transnational behaviours allow for establishment of an identity within the
geographical context of Canada. As a result, although dual citizenship is a form of formal citizenship in itself, it indirectly promotes a sense of belonging and attachment to Canada.

The previous discussion has outlined how dual citizenship underpins transnationalism, which in turn promotes an identity formation and thus completes the missing part of a Canadian citizenship among Hong Kong Chinese immigrants. It also broaches the question of whether transnationalism is a “convenience” or a “commitment” to be discussed later in this chapter.

Transnationalism and Racism

Transnational linkage is not only a form of participatory citizenship in itself; it is also a corollary of experiences of racism among Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. For example, transnational economic activities are adopted by middle-aged business operators and skilled workers to avert the devaluation of foreign credentials and intense competition within the ethnic enclave economy (Faist 2000; Bloemraad 2004; Greve and Salaff 2005). The younger generation also uses the acquisition of dual citizenship and transnationalism as a tactic to further advance their economic interests in the face of racism in the Canadian workplace (Tran, Kustee et al. 2005; Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006). It is noted that both middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants employ transnationalism to downplay racism in the labour market; however, the interrelationship between transnationalism and experiences of racism among elderly Hong Kong immigrants is largely unknown. Elderly immigrants are very likely uninvolved in the Canadian job market; thus experiences of racism do not happen in the workplace and transnational linkages stemming from career-related racist incidents are unsupported. This
leaves an important question to ask in this research: how are experiences of racism linked to transnational activities and concepts of citizenship among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada?

Transnational Citizenship and Racism

In the process of filling the gap of citizenship participation through transnational activities, Hong Kong immigrants might be perpetuating racism unknowingly. “Without general knowledge of racism, individuals cannot comprehend the meaning of racism in their lives” (Essed 1991, p.77). To be more specific, individuals have to possess both general knowledge and situational knowledge of racism in order to interpret everyday racism in their daily lives. There are both formal and informal channels to assist with understanding racism. The formal channel entails the mass media, the education system and literature, whereas the informal channels include family, friends and colleagues (Essed 1991, p.88). Hong Kong Chinese immigrants who live in ethnic enclaves or are heavily involved in transnational ethnic businesses have limited access to the general knowledge and real-life situations of racism through either formal or informal channels. This argument is especially true among elderly Hong Kong immigrants. As introduced in Chapter I, many of them have low educational levels, limited English language proficiency and live predominantly in neighbourhoods with a large Chinese ethnic population. They do not go through the Canadian education system where discussion of racism occurs, or watch TV programs that cover up-to-date situations regarding racism. They do not acquire general knowledge and understand up-to-date situations of racism in Canada, nor do they have many interactions with the mainstream society. They might have developed a sense of identity through transnational activities with people from the
same ethnocultural background; however, this arrangement simultaneously perpetuates racism in which ethnocultural interaction is minimized. In short, some Hong Kong immigrants opt to compensate for a lack of participation from Canadian citizenship by being heavily involved in transnational activities with co-ethnics.

Transnational Linkages of Hong Kong Immigrants in Canada

Hong Kong immigrants maintain transnational linkages across the Pacific Rim in a multitude of ways. Interestingly, although previous research has documented distinct impacts of transnational family arrangements on individual family members (Waters 2002), the experiences and arrangements of elderly Hong Kong immigrants have not received enough attention. For different family members, transnationalism fulfills different needs of citizenship and identity. Now, we will review transnational practices of the age groups of “astronaut dads,” “lone mothers” and “satellite kids” respectively.

Astronaut Families

Evidenced in many East Asian immigrant receiving countries including Canada, Australia and New Zealand is the phenomenon of “astronaut dad” (Chow 2007). The term refers to the physical absence of the fathers in the immigrant families who go back to the origin countries to pursue economic goals or further their career interests (Waters 2002). In Vancouver and Toronto, this transnational arrangement is particularly common within Hong Kong, Taiwanese and South Korean families. The logic behind this arrangement rests upon lacklustre business performance, deskilling of overseas professional credentials and intense business competition within ethnic enclaves among entrepreneur immigrants.
Many business immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea are from the middle- to upper-class that carry substantial financial capital and higher educational qualifications; however, these immigrants invariably encounter difficulties in securing a job comparable to their educational attainment and professional training. Researchers have termed such devaluation of foreign credentials as “brain abuse” which literally means abusing the knowledge and know-how that immigrants have accrued before entering Canada (Bauder 2003); or “brain wash,” in which the knowledge, skills and know-how of highly qualified immigrants are “watered down” (Godin 2008). To support the family in Canada, many of these immigrants who possess high human capital are relegated to take up lower income jobs such as taxi drivers or servers in restaurants. Hong Kong immigrants are drawn into the same de-skilling whirlpool attributed to language barriers, lack of Canadian working experience and education (Bauder 2003). Confronted with dismal earnings and limited upward mobility in the Canadian labour market, many Hong Kong male immigrants have returned to their countries of origin to carry on businesses or professional careers left off before emigration (Waters 2002). They are generally labeled as “astronaut dads,” who literally “fly” across Canada and Asia on a regular basis without a permanent home. Better economic outcomes in the country of origin justify the transnational “astronaut” arrangement of the male heads of traditional Chinese family, wherein heteronormative gender roles are still surprisingly rigid in spite of high level of westernization and economic advancement in the last two decades (Man 2004; Kobayashi and Preston 2007). As expected, transnational “astronaut” family arrangements result in inevitable impacts to the family, and researchers have been particularly eager to reveal the corollary impacts on the wives and children being left behind in Canada.
It is notable that “astronaut dads” employ transnationalism to satisfy economic needs that cannot be realized in the Canadian labour market and business environment; they also forge transnational linkages between Canada and Hong Kong in order to avoid racism in the Canadian workplace. In other words, they utilize transnationalism for economic participation to fill the void of a Canadian formal citizenship that provides legal status and rights but is devoid of identity and participation.

Lone Wives and Satellite Kids

Mothers and children left behind in an “astronaut family” in Canada are confronted with daily emotional distress and practical dysfunction, which leads to them being coined “lone wives” and “satellite kids” with a tinge of sarcastic connotation.

“Lone wives” refers to mothers who immigrate to Canada with their husbands and remain in Canada to look after the house and the children while their husbands become “astronauts” and pursue economic opportunities back in Hong Kong (Waters 2002). The “lone mother phenomenon” is largely ascribed to patriarchy and Confucianism in the Chinese culture. Many of these female migrants used to have a stable job and satisfying life in Hong Kong; however, they agreed to immigrate to Canada following their husbands’ intention and in the hope that their children would benefit from the high quality Canadian education system (Man 2004). Upon arrival in Canada, they were reluctantly pushed into unemployment, underemployment or low-paid contingent jobs such as cleaners in restaurants or factory workers in places far from their homes. In many cases, these wives applied as dependent applicants with their husbands, which reflect the patriarchal nature of the immigration system and accreditation system. Unwilling to
situate personal interests over family obligations, a large number of these wives give up employment and become full-time housewives to look after their children and to smooth the path for their husbands’ “astronaut” arrangements. This “gendered division of household labour” (Man 2004) accentuates gender positioning in immigration and family arrangements in traditional Chinese families. Without their husbands for practical and emotional support, these “lone wives” are afflicted with a sense of isolation, hopelessness and boredom. In some cases, physical distance leads to extra-marital affairs of their overseas husbands, which break up the family eventually. In a nutshell, researchers have summarized the experiences of “lone wives” in transnational “astronaut” families as female oppression in Chinese families (Waters 2002, p.129) and complicated challenges over gender, race, ethnicity, class and citizenship (Man 2004, p.135).

“Satellite kids,” on the other hand, refers to the children who stay in Canada in transnational “astronaut” families (Waters 2002). Previous research has enumerated the family strategies and concepts of citizenship among Hong Kong adolescent immigrants in Canada. As discussed earlier, one reason families immigrate to Canada is to favour children’s acquisition of North American educational credentials to be used in future careers in Hong Kong (Waters 2005; Waters 2006; Waters 2006; Waters 2007). Through education in universities in Canada, children accumulate the much-coveted cultural capital (Bourdieu 1986), including social ties and network of friends, in an attempt to improve accessibility to top jobs in the business fields in Hong Kong after graduation (Waters 2006). This strategy allows the Hong Kong middle- to upper-class to “reproduce” their class status through foreign education (Waters 2005), and culminates in an emerging class termed “transnational capitalist class” (TNCC) of overseas educated workers in
Hong Kong. On the surface, immigration to Canada benefits children profoundly in “astronaut” families; however, “satellite kids” often meet challenges while adapting to a Canadian lifestyle and have a conflicted sense of belonging. Most “satellite kids” have to transit from the Hong Kong education system to the Canadian education system and to deal with life changes in a new environment. They might not be equipped to handle practical daily hassles and emotional turmoil that unexpectedly come to the surface (Chow 2007). Coupled with high expectations from parents, intergenerational conflicts, psychological adjustments and cultural shock, they may face a hard time acculturating to Canada.

A conclusion from past research is that “satellite kids” are exempt from using transnationalism to fulfill the need for an identity to complete the four dimensions of citizenship. It is posited that sense of belonging to a new place warrants positive feelings and ease of adaptation among young immigrants (Chow 2007). As “satellite kids” spend more time in Canada, friendships build up and acculturation to the Canadian school system occurs. Together with minimal racial discrimination experience and a satisfying academic performance, a strong sense of belonging to Canadian society can be gradually built up. Once children are fully integrated into society, most notably through the education system, they feel an enhanced sense of belonging. In other words, some young Hong Kong immigrants have access to a full package of Canadian citizenship: legal status, rights, identity and participation. Despite this finding, other research has discovered that all people of Asian background encounter racism; however, the experiences are different between Canadian-born Chinese and immigrant youth, and the above conclusion does not differentiate the two groups.
Unexpectedly, transnational experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants and the factors affecting their concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging to Canada have not been sufficiently researched. Situated in a particular generation within the family, a lot of elderly Hong Kong immigrants act as caregivers for their grandchildren; others are separated from their children who have become “astronauts” and are working in Hong Kong. Many of them are dependent upon their children to care for daily necessities, but now that their children are not close by, they might experience inconvenience in their daily lives. An important question is: how are their particular generation and situation within the family affecting their transnational behaviours, experiences of racism and concepts of Canadian citizenship? What makes elderly Hong Kong immigrants satisfied and feel a sense of belonging to Canada? There exists some research that touches upon these questions in a general account of “transnationalism through the life course.”

Transnationalism through the Life Course

Complementary to an earlier notion that return migration is the completion of the migration process (Ley and Kobayashi 2005), researchers have employed transnationalism to explain the never-ending nature of migration and cross-border activities. Among Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, migration decisions are found to coincide with life course transitions around the education, career and retirement phases (Kobayashi and Preston 2007).

Life course changes among immigrants are never independent of opportunities and threats of both the destination society and home country. Evident in the “astronaut” family arrangements, many Hong Kong immigrants come to Canada as a family. In their
middle age, husbands return to Asia for economic reasons and to escape non-recognition of foreign credentials and devaluation of skills and experiences obtained overseas; wives remain in Canada to look after the new house or apartment, care for children with the aim to further advance the interests of the family; and children take the opportunities to accumulate valuable North American educational credentials in the hope to apply hard skills and cultural capital in the business battleground in Hong Kong when they graduate (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). According to market research, the University of British Columbia (UBC) in Vancouver has become a brand-name overseas university in Hong Kong. Many university graduates in Canada choose to return to the Hong Kong job market since their educational credentials are highly valued and career prospects in Hong Kong are remarkably more promising than the Canadian labour market. It is not until the “astronaut fathers” and “satellite kids” retire from the Hong Kong job market that they contemplate the option of moving back to Canada; however, it is of particular interest in this paper that we look at how elderly immigrants transit through the life course.

The reasons for Hong Kong elderly to immigrate to Canada are drastically different from the younger generations. Unlike younger immigrants, most elderly immigrants enter Canada for family reunion with children already residing in Canada, or they come directly for retirement. Economic considerations, family closeness and educational pursuits do not account for transnational practices of the elderly cohort (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). These elderly articulated the reasons to stay in Canada because of a combination of factors that stretch from a more comfortable lifestyle, habitable weather and ownership of property in Canada. On the other hand, the elderly also highly value transnational linkages with Hong Kong because of deep-seated
emotional ties, and eagerness to be familiar with Hong Kong current affairs to generate conversation topics with other Hong Kong elderly co-ethnics in Canada. In all these research findings, most of the elderly interviewed come from the middle- to upper-class; consequently, experiences of lower- to lower-middle class elderly immigrants are excluded from the discussion. It leaves us some research questions to ask: In what ways and for what purposes do Hong Kong elderly immigrants maintain transnational linkages with Hong Kong? How do they define and perceive concepts of citizenship in Canada at a later stage in life? Before going into these aspects, there exists a body of research on the specific needs of Chinese elderly in Canada.

Elderly Chinese Immigrants in Canada

Previous work on older Chinese immigrants in Canada mostly focuses on physical health, mental health and family arrangements. Concerning physical health, researchers have looked at a variety of topics including accessibility and utilization of family physicians among Chinese immigrants (Wang 2007; Wang, Rosenberg et al. 2008); the relationships between cultural variables such as degree of filial piety and country of origin and the requirements of caregiving to Chinese elderly (Lai 2007); Chinese culture and health status of immigrants (Lai, Tsang et al. 2007); use of alternative medicine by Chinese immigrants (Lai and Chappell 2007); and health care service use by Chinese seniors (Chappell and Lai 1998). Concerning mental health, previous work has focused on the interrelationships between sense of identity, social support and gambling behaviour among older Chinese (Lai 2006); and a specific mental health care model for Chinese
elderly called the Hong Fook model (Lo and Lee 1993). These findings are highly relevant to the health status of Chinese immigrants in Canada.

Besides health, there is also research revealing the living arrangements and quality of life among elderly Chinese Canadians. Recent work has shown the pattern of homeleaving and returning among young adults in Chinese households (Mitchell, Wister et al. 2004). More pertinent to the focus of this research project is previous work on older Chinese residing in Vancouver and Victoria showing that living arrangements of the entire family is not a major determinant of life satisfaction for the elderly; married elderly couples who are not living with their children are more satisfied than those who are (Gee 2000). This finding sheds some light on the research questions in this project; the aim of this research is to find out the transnational activities and sense of belonging through the experiences of racism and family arrangements of elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada; if family arrangements do not impact on their life satisfaction, perhaps they could affect other aspects such as transnational behaviour and sense of belonging. These areas have not been addressed previously, and in order to answer these questions, we should first come to terms with the ideas of transnational activities, experiences of racism and meanings of citizenship among elderly Chinese immigrants.

Transnational Activities

“Astronaut fathers,” “lone wives” and “satellite kids” each have their own life trajectory to follow and concerns with respect to life stage transitions that determine their transnational behaviours (Kobayashi and Preston 2007); however, the elderly group is underresearched, and conclusions of their immigration experiences have been derived
from a select group of interview participants in the middle- to upper-class. Transnational experience of elderly from a lower socio-economic status who primarily come under the category of family reunion is valuable knowledge in which it contrasts or complements existing research findings. In particular, this research aims to unveil the frequency, mode and purpose of transnational linkages of Hong Kong elderly immigrants from a relatively lower socio-economic background currently residing in Vancouver. It is equally worthwhile to find out whether the elderly have taken on a transnational citizenship to establish a better sense of identity in Canada.

Experiences of Racism

This research question aims to reveal distinct experiences of racism facing Hong Kong elderly immigrants and compare their accounts with the experiences articulated by middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. It is widely acknowledged that middle-aged and young adult Hong Kong immigrants face racial discrimination in the job seeking process (Ley and Kobayashi 2005), resulting in return migration of working age immigrants to seek employment opportunities in Hong Kong. Aspects of racism experienced by Hong Kong immigrants other than in the workplace are not fully investigated, especially those towards the elderly who spend a long time in the local milieu in which their English proficiency might hinder effective communication with English-speaking Canadians.

Among the three forms of racism postulated by researchers, this research pays closest attention to individual racism. The first type of racism is termed individual racism and refers to “the attitude, belief, or opinion that one’s own racial group has superior
values, customs and norms and other racial groups possess inferior traits and attributes” (Henry, Tator et al. 2000, p.53). This type of racism could be exemplified by everyday racism, wherein in many small ways people of colour experience racism from the dominant white group such as glances and body movement (Henry, Tator et al. 2000, p.55). The second type and third type of racism, respectively systemic racism and cultural racism, are related to broader institutional systems and cultural depictions of certain groups (Henry, Tator et al. 2000), which may not bear equally significant consequences as everyday racism to the elderly who have already retired from the job market. On top of that, it is arguably impossible to measure subtle forms of racism such as everyday racism, since it is inherently difficult to quantify racist attitudes and sentiments. Everyday racism is painfully felt by the victims but remains largely subconscious in the minds of the perpetrators. Statistical measurement of racism proves effective in certain situations such as hiring procedures or representation of visible minority members in organizations; however, it excludes personal characteristics in the process of quantifying racist behaviour (Simon 2005). It is with the difficulty of measuring feelings and attitudes of racism that this research focuses on the self-perceived experiences of everyday racism among Hong Kong elderly immigrants.

Racial tensions between ethnic Chinese immigrants and long-time white residents have its root dated back to the 1980s. The “monster house” controversy in Richmond, Vancouver had generated heated debate and considerable media hype; local white residents accused newly arriving Chinese immigrants of building monolithic houses that are grossly out of scale and incompatible with the western emphasis on delicacy and modesty (Rose 2001). And Chinese immigrants rebuked white local residents on the
grounds of racism and anti-immigration sentiment. Although similar publicity of racist incidents has seemingly subsided in recent years, racial tensions between Chinese and white Canadian groups may resurface through smaller, less palpable means. Research has found out that concentration of co-ethnics in particular neighbourhoods might enhance the perception of racial discrimination encountered on a daily basis (Magee, Fong et al. 2008). And it brings back the research question: surrounded by hundreds of thousands of Chinese co-ethnics, how do Hong Kong elderly immigrants in Vancouver perceive experiences of racism? Does the perception change throughout the course of immigration? Equally important, do experiences of racism affect the way Hong Kong elderly engage in transnational activities, interpret Canadian citizenship and sense of belonging?

**Meanings of Citizenship**

An important question that has yet to be explored resolves around concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging of elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. Previously, researchers have drawn opposing conclusions that on one hand, transnationalism “dilutes” a sense of belonging to Canadian society by way of intricate familial, economic and social ties with immigrants’ places of origin (Faist 2000). For example, “astronaut” family arrangements is an epitome of the strategy employed by East Asian immigrants, in which they adopt a noncommittal attitude towards Canadian citizenship; however, this “instrumental citizenship syndrome” (Preston, Kobayashi et al. 2006) is later counter-argued as being overemphasized and mistaken to be the real intentions of East Asian immigrants. Acculturation in a “host” country is bound to
subconsciously occur, in turn, a sense of belonging to Canada is heightened as immigrants become more involved and integrated in mainstream society (Waters 2003).

Besides, dual citizenship has added much argument to discovering whether Canadian citizenship leads to commitment or is simply a convenient system to exploit (Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006). Unexpectedly, dual citizenship and transnationalism have ironically deepened Hong Kong immigrants’ sense of belonging to and civic participation in Canada. Canadian citizenship is both for “convenience,” as in ease of foreign travel holding a Canadian passport and procurement of North American educational credentials among younger generations, and for “commitment,” as reflected in the longing for becoming part of Canadian society and reducing racism against Chinese, and appreciation of Canada’s national ideology and international reputation.

To fully understand the deeper meanings of citizenship, it is pivotal to grasp the differentiations of “citizenship” and “citizenship practice” (Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006). “Citizenship” aligns with a formal definition of citizenship, and refers to possession of nationality and a passport. On the other hand, “citizenship practice” is inseparable from participation, which means citizens are obliged to engage in local politics such as voting and volunteering work that have a stake in societal development. The distinctions between “citizenship” and “citizenship practice” resemble the differences between “citizenship” and “identity.” Citizenship is an overarching term depicting the legal status, rights and identity within a nation-state; while citizenship practice and identity refer to the recognition and participation within the nation-state where citizens hold a formal citizenship. Applying the distinctions between “citizenship” and “citizenship practice” to Hong Kong immigrants, it is observable that some are inclined to
obtain “citizenship” while others have a disposition to assume “participatory civic citizenship.” For example, “astronaut fathers” are known to obtain Canadian citizenship for convenience of travelling abroad for business purposes. Lack of physical presence in Canada engenders skepticism on their readiness to participate in Canadian society; however, “lone wives” and “satellite kids” are based in Canada and spend a considerable amount of time in this country, interact with other local residents and are involved in the local education system. They tend to demonstrate a higher sense of belonging and have accrued the requisite social capital to navigate through Canadian society (Waters 2002; Waters 2003). Simply put, they have taken up “participatory citizenship.”

The variations of “citizenship” and “citizenship practice” have generated some interesting questions to ask regarding Hong Kong elderly immigrants. Studies of citizenship have proposed that individuals invariably identify themselves as belonging to the places they were born or grew up, instead of the current locale they are inhabiting (Howard 1998). And when long-time white Canadians are prompted to describe the image of a typical Canadian, the response delineates a “blue-eyed, white-skinned person of Anglo-Saxon origin” (Howard 1998). On top of these, it has been demonstrated that social and cultural changes in places of origin significantly influence the way immigrants perceive their citizenship and sense of belonging (Preston, Kobayashi et al. 2006). On the backdrop of these contradictions and conflicting viewpoints, it leaves us wondering: how do elderly Hong Kong immigrants conceive Canadian citizenship and sense of belonging? Are they inclined to value “citizenship” or “citizenship practice”? Are they capable of fully integrating into society, or are perpetually segregated at the fringe of society as
outsiders? More importantly, do the elderly participate in transnational citizenship to re-establish an identity in the face of racism in Canada?

Conclusion

Transnationalism, citizenship and racism are intimately related aspects. The changing priorities of the Canadian immigration system have assisted the entrance of immigrants of non-European origins into Canada. Among them, Hong Kong immigrants constituted a heavy portion between the 1980s and 1990s. The vast majority of Hong Kong immigrants have procured Canadian citizenship at the earliest possible date; however, formal citizenship grants legal status, rights and duties without providing a deeper sense of identity and participation for the new members. Middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants have concocted ways to fill in the missing identity for a citizenship by transnational “astronaut” family arrangements. The strategy can be seen as a transnational citizenship in which they employ transnationalism to compensate for an identity nowhere to be found in the formal Canadian citizenship. It is also a response to experiences of racism in the Canadian labour market. In this research, transnational linkages, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism among elderly Hong Kong immigrants are the focuses. In particular, it intends to unfold how the participants engage in transnational activities and how they perceive Canadian citizenship and sense of belonging; these two aspects are analyzed through the lens of their multigenerational family arrangements and experiences of racism in Canada.
Chapter III Methodology

This chapter delineates the methodology employed in the whole research project from idea formulation to conducting fieldwork to data analysis and final data presentation. It deals first with my unique background and characteristics, termed positionality (Crang 2003; England 2006), in facilitating the progress of the research, then explains the detailed research design with the justifications of each method employed. The contents in the research design section are organized sequentially from the inception of the project in May, 2008 to data analysis and report preparation that continued into December, 2008. The remainder of the chapter is divided into three sections: 1) positionality and reflexivity, 2) research ethics and morality, 3) research design: preparation of research project, obtaining a sample of participants; conducting research in Vancouver, and data analysis.

Positionality and Reflexivity

Borrowing the concept of positionality and reflexivity from feminist geography (Crang 2003; England 2006), which I regard as absolutely necessary in any geographical research dealing with the human world, researchers have the obligation to keep an eye on how different people view the same things differently and self-consciously scrutinize one’s self as a researcher (England 2006). Everyone is affected by one’s situated knowledge in one way or another (Haraway 1988) and in this research, my background as an international student from Hong Kong brings a range of benefits to the research progress. As expected, the elderly immigrants might have tackled cultural shock, language barriers and separation from loved ones in Hong Kong associated with
immigration. I could readily understand, comprehend and even visualize the experiences of the elderly in Vancouver. My position as a Hong Kong local easily allowed me to build rapport with the elderly, as reflected in the length and depth of the response provided during the interview sessions. This observation is particularly significant for questions on experiences of racism and sense of belonging to Canada. The participants used Chinese slang and cultural ideas to corroborate their decisions or to elaborate on deeper feelings. Those slang expressions are highly “exclusive” for non-Chinese to understand because they involve both the Chinese language and abstruse Chinese cultural logics as back-up. Even though it takes some time to translate those Chinese slang expressions into comprehensible English phrases that retain the essence, it is worthwhile because those expressions speak the minds of the participants, who are largely monolingual in Cantonese and speak no English at all.

In addition, my Hong Kong background also earned the complete support of the Chinese organization SUCCESS in Vancouver. SUCCESS has been providing services to Chinese immigrants in Vancouver, including those from Hong Kong, Taiwan and mainland China, for more than a quarter of a century. Its mandate is to ease the integration process of Chinese immigrants and its services cater for immigrants of all age groups from all walks of life (S.U.C.C.E.S.S. 2008). On various occasions, the executives and staff members of SUCCESS either implicitly or explicitly stated their willingness to work with me because of our similar cultural background. They not only arranged advertising and promotion time in various elderly classes, but also invited me to participate in other functions for participant recruitment.
Despite the advantages, there are also some potential researcher biases from my positionality. During data collection, I might be unconsciously agreeing with the opinions of the elderly participants because of a similar cultural background and shared normative assumptions. My response to the participants’ answers in the interviews might reinforce their inherent biases. During data analysis, I might extract themes from the interview transcripts to fulfil my expectations based on my personal experiences in Canada. These problems are minimized by using a rigorous coding system during data analysis.

**Ethics, Morality and Geographical Research**

Power relations are an inherent aspect of any research in human geography involving human participants. According to the *Dictionary of Human Geography*, the term “power” characterises inter-personal and inter-group relationships, and manifests itself in any one of three forms as an inscribed capacity, a resource or as strategies (Johnston, Gregory et al. 2000). To bring this abstract definition of *power* down to earth, the unequal positions of the researcher and the researched can result in unethical research and biased findings. On the one hand, the researchers are situated in a more powerful position having access to resources and institutional support from the academy or collaborating organizations. On the other hand, the researched are invariably placed in a less powerful position in which the researchers rob their knowledge of the world and use it to compose research reports. It is a known fact that geographers are deeply concerned about human rights issues, and are trained to dedicate research efforts to ensuring a better world. As David Smith puts it, geographical research is committed to secure a more equal and just society (Smith 2000). Unfortunately, high hopes do not always materialize into
concrete efforts, and the “politics of practising human geography” remain a part of conducting geographical research (Cloke, Cook et al. 2004). Geographers claim to have stepped aside of the historicity and geography of the research subjects (Pile 1991), but this notion is problematic in the way in which it glosses over the unavoidable personal politics of geographical practice and the politics within the research practice itself.

The personal politics of geographical practice originate from the identities, emotions and values of the researchers that shape the ways the research is perceived, determine the research methodologies and direct the research outcomes. No matter how aware the researchers are of these controversies, they are simply incapable of discarding their unique mindset of right and wrong, good and bad in carrying out the research. Objectivity is impossible in geographical research because it is in itself a politicized activity in which who are going to be researched, what questions are asked and how the research findings are to be used are pre-determined in a web of power relations. Unbalanced relations grant authority to the researcher and suppress the researched simultaneously.

In this research project on elderly Hong Kong immigrants, I am aware of the power relations involved. Being a graduate student affiliated to Queen’s University bestows on me the personal political power to access financial resources, institutional support and knowledge on previous research on Hong Kong immigrants. It inevitably positions me as a more powerful researcher vis-à-vis the less powerful research participants. Second, since the research is approved and supported by Queen’s University, the research process is largely a political practice in which the researcher and collaborating organizations are at an advantage over the research participants. It is
exemplified by the eagerness of the Chinese organization SUCCESS to assist with the project because of the reputation of Queen’s University. All these being said, I have attempted to minimize the unequal power relations between myself and the participants by employing a set of ethical human geographical research methods. The methods are mostly incorporated into the questionnaire surveys and interviews while the researcher and the researched have face-to-face contacts. It broadly includes five priorities: informed consent to indicate that the researched fully understand the purpose, procedure and end product of the research and voluntarily agree to participate; privacy to ensure confidentiality of the information given and identities of the researched; avoidance of harm to prevent physical or emotional discomfort to the researched during the process; avoidance of exploitation by using the participants while giving nothing in return; and sensitivity to cultural difference and gender to stay cognizant of the dynamics of patriarchy and colonial power relations faced by the participants (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995; Cloke, Cooke et al. 2000). During each interviewing session, participants were provided with a combined letter of information and consent form to be acquainted with the purpose and methodologies of the research, and contact information in case discomfort arises during or after the interviews. Also, the questionnaire surveys and the interview schedule follow strictly the aforementioned five ethical research principles. The General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at Queen’s University has stringent requirements to protect the interests of research participants and its ethics protocol is generally in line with my five ethics principles. These endeavours help to reduce the unequal power relations and augment benefits to both the researcher and the researched.
Research Design

This research on elderly Hong Kong immigrants is an extension of a previous large-scale research on Hong Kong immigrants in Canada funded by the Canadian government and administered by professors from Queen’s University in Kingston, York University in Toronto and the University of British Columbia (UBC). That research analyzed the experiences of Hong Kong immigrants in Canada in areas of transnational behaviour, trends of return migration, and experiences of racism. The professors and research assistants interviewed a large number of Hong Kong immigrants residing in Vancouver and Toronto as well as return migrants in Hong Kong through the assistance of the Geography Department in the University of Hong Kong. The research has produced plentiful findings regarding the above-mentioned themes among middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants, but thorough analysis of the experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants is absent. This research aims to fill the gap by conducting in-depth interviews with elderly participants currently living in the metropolitan Vancouver region. The results have implications on multiculturalism, immigration policies and anti-racism initiatives in Canada.

Preparation

Most of the preparation regarding the fieldwork of the research was done in May, 2008. In order to collect data from elderly Hong Kong immigrants to answer the questions for this research, I decided to utilize both questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews. From previous research on “Transnationalism of Hong Kong immigrants through the life course” conducted by my supervisor Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie
Preston from York University (Kobayashi and Preston 2007), a set of questionnaires was used to elicit quantitative data from the participants in Vancouver, Toronto, Kingston and Hong Kong. It is logical and advantageous to my research that I retain most of the questions on the questionnaire when designing my own questionnaires for the elderly participants (Appendix A). The results collected can be juxtaposed with the responses given by middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants from the previous research for comparison and contrast. Regarding qualitative data, I decided to interview the elderly in sessions lasting between thirty and forty-five minutes based on an interview schedule (Appendix C). The sequence of the questions progressed from easy, simple accounts of immigration history at the beginning to more complex interpretation of attitudes and comments with respect to transnational sentiments, sense of belonging to Canada and subtle experiences of racism in Vancouver. The interview guide acts to regulate the general flow of the interviews; however, participants retain the latitude to discuss at length any experiences they find pertinent or to raise any concerns that cross their mind during the interviews.

According to the General Research Ethics Board (GREB) at Queen’s University, any research involving human participants must have the contents approved before execution of the project (GREB 2008). Queen’s University has a reputation for upholding stringent requirements to protect research participants’ physical safety and emotional integrity. For this research on elderly Hong Kong immigrants, the GREB approved most of the materials presented, except that they requested a shorter version of the questionnaire to prevent obtaining overly sensitive and private information from the elderly. In addition, since the interview guide involves questions intended to solicit narration of racist incidents during the course of immigration, precautionary procedures to
deal with possible emotional distress had to be carefully described in the application proposal. The shorter version of the questionnaire limits the chances to compare and contrast the experiences and attitudes between middle-aged and elderly immigrants; nonetheless, it is still comprehensive enough to address the issues regarding transnational behaviour, sense of belonging, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism. It took approximately four weeks to put together the research application proposal and another five weeks for the GREB to issue the formal letter of approval after three rounds of minor amendment to the proposal.

Regarding the choice of location to conduct the research, despite a larger number of Hong Kong immigrants in Toronto and its proximity to Queen’s University, Vancouver was chosen because of a well-known Chinese organization SUCCESS that helped to facilitate data collection. SUCCESS was also an excellent medium for participant referral because of its wide range of services catering to the elderly Chinese. SUCCESS is the largest Chinese organization in Vancouver with high regard within the Chinese community. One of its mandates is to facilitate integration into Vancouver by offering counselling, job referral services and learning opportunities for Chinese immigrants from Hong Kong, mainland China and Taiwan (S.U.C.C.E.S.S. 2008). There are branches of SUCCESS in various parts of Vancouver, and the headquarters is located on West Pender Street in Chinatown. To seek assistance from SUCCESS, I contacted the Director of Public Relations, Shirley Leung, and the Chief Executive, Tung Chan, by email and by letter with Queen’s letterhead. They promptly agreed to help with participant recruitment and to offer the interview room in the main office in the West
Pender headquarters. This research would not be possible without the full support of SUCCESS.

Conducting Research in Vancouver

This section outlines the processes of fieldwork and preliminary data treatment from May to August, 2008 in Vancouver. With the support of SUCCESS, a total of thirty-five elderly Hong Kong immigrants were interviewed between the end of May and early July. Before the commencement of the interviews, SUCCESS allowed me to advertise and promote the research project and simultaneously recruit participants in the English classes, computer classes and weekly table tennis practice exclusively for the elderly. I also attended two special events in May and June organized by SUCCESS to promote the research. One function was a charity banquet held in a Chinese restaurant in Richmond to raise money for the victims of the Sichuan earthquake; the other was a biannual birthday party for the elderly members, also held in Richmond. Interested participants signed up on a paper with their names and contact information. I then followed up by calling individual participants and setting a definite time for the interview. Although the recruited participants lived in different municipalities in Greater Vancouver, all of them came to the head office for the interview because SUCCESS offered a designated interview room for research purposes. In rare cases where the interview room was occupied by staff members for meetings, I conducted the interviews in vacant classrooms above the staff office. The interviews comprised two parts: the first being filling out the questionnaire surveys and the second being a tape-recorded discussion based on the interview guide. Owing to the generally poor English standards of the elderly participants, Cantonese was
the language of the interviews despite time-consuming translation and transcribing work prior to and after. Using the first language of the elderly participants also built rapport and comfort in narrating more personal and sensitive stories than using a non-native language.

The interviews were either one-on-one or in groups of two to three with the consent of each participant. As part of the requirement of the GREB at Queen’s University, before starting the session I went over the combined letter of information and consent form with each participant. The letter of information elaborates on the purposes of conducting the research, confidentiality of the identity of participants and channels to direct queries and file complaints if emotional discomfort should arise during or after the interviews (Appendix D). After agreeing on the terms and conditions, the participants signed two copies of the same consent form, indicating that they voluntarily joined the research project and agreed to provide information for completing the research. The participants kept one copy of the consent form for their own reference while I kept the other copy for Queen’s University. In order to save time, at the beginning of each interview, I asked the questions on the questionnaire surveys and marked the answers given by the participant. Immediately following the questionnaire surveys was an open discussion with an emphasis on eliciting the rationale of transnational behaviour, concepts of citizenship and perceptions of racism facing the elderly participants. All thirty-five participants in this research agreed in the consent form that the interview conversations be tape-recorded by a digital tape recorder for future transcription and reference after the interviews. Occasionally, participants strayed away from the topics at hand and talked about life experiences that were not closely related to addressing the research questions. In such cases, I politely but firmly interrupted them and brought up questions laid out in the interview guide. Each interview lasted for about thirty to forty-five minutes, but some
were significantly shorter because of the laconic speech style of some participants. Interviews lasting thirty to forty-five minutes were appropriate and strongly recommended by the representative from SUCCESS. The elderly participants had a shorter concentration period than younger people in general. During the interviews, it was observed that the participants were getting tired and the response became more brief after thirty minutes of in-depth interview. Nonetheless, I structured the interviews to ask the most important questions at the beginning to ensure that the collected data answer the research questions. The last interview occurred in early July and the whole data collection process from participant recruitment to finishing the last interview lasted for about a month and a half, thanks to the generous help from SUCCESS.

Thirty-five participants may seem to be a small number to back up the research findings; but this number is the most I could interview within the hectic time frame and schedule of activities for the elderly in SUCCESS. Every year, SUCCESS designates July and August as the “summer vacation” for the elderly. During these two months, there is only a limited number of English classes, computer classes, gatherings and recreational activities for the elderly. The classes are not occupied to the full capacity because a significant number of elderly Hong Kong immigrants choose to visit Hong Kong in July or August when their family members in Hong Kong have more available time to spend with them. As a result, I attempted to schedule most of the interviews once the GREB approved my research proposal in mid-June. In the following three weeks from mid-June to early July, I successfully interviewed thirty-five elderly participants. The last interview was finished on 4 July and coincided with the last classes before the beginning of the “summer vacation.” After that date, most elderly did not go back to SUCCESS until the
commencement of the new “school year” in September. Thirty-five in-depth interviews are sufficient because the participants recounted excellent stories and expressed genuine feelings about the immigration experience. As mentioned before, all thirty-five participants signed up to participate in the research voluntarily, and since there was a lag time of a few days between the scheduling of the interviews and the actual interview date, most participants had sufficient time to ponder over the immigration experience and generate some thoughts before the sessions. Even though the elderly were not allowed to read the interview schedule at any point during the research, I explained briefly the research purposes and gave some examples of topics to be discussed when I advertised the project in classes and at the activities for the elderly; therefore, most of the participants gave very useful information highly relevant to the research questions. They were also very willing to speak of their experiences. In general, the interview period ran smoothly and the elderly were extremely forthcoming.

After each interview session, the recording on the digital recorder was transferred and stored in the computer utilizing a software program called Express Dictate. The program stores all the interview recordings and has a built-in platform for easier transcription, whereby transcribers can simultaneously listen to the recording and type the transcriptions on the same screen within Express Dictate. In the remainder of the summer from early July to late August, I transcribed all recordings from Cantonese to English using Express Dictate, and saved the transcriptions by exporting the files from Express Dictate to Microsoft Word. My supervisor Audrey Kobayashi and I were the only persons who had access to the completed questionnaires, interview recordings and transcripts to
Since SUCCESS offers services tailored to immigrants with few survival skills, the majority of the thirty-five participants recruited in this research originate from a lower socio-economic status with minimal educational credentials and financial capital. As a result, the response gathered might be biased towards the experiences of less privileged immigrants, whereas experiences of wealthy elderly were not uncovered. This leaves a gap to be filled by further research; nonetheless, the data on middle-aged and young adult Hong Kong immigrants for comparison in Chapter IV were also collected through the help of SUCCESS. There might be a bias leaning towards immigrants from a lower socio-economic status, but at least the bias is similar. Also, life experiences of less wealthy immigrants certainly are essential pieces of the immigration mosaic to be addressed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of the questionnaires and interview transcripts comprises two major categories and utilizes two analytical software programs. The quantitative results come predominantly from the questionnaire surveys and the qualitative results are based entirely on the interview transcripts. For the quantitative results, I created an SPSS file to store responses of each question into the file (Dometrius 1992; George and Mallery 2000). Sorting and coding of the data in the SPSS file for this research on the elderly largely follow the coding methods used in a previous research on transnationalism of middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants. The similarity in coding methods allows for running the same tests on data from both groups for comparison and contrast. As we shall
see in Chapter IV, cross tabulation and simple tabulation are employed to compose sophisticated tables for analysis. In previous research on younger Hong Kong immigrants, six unpublished tables are particularly informative and comprehensive in delineating the essential attributes of the research participants. Consequently, in this research on elderly Hong Kong immigrants, six analogous tables are drawn in order to compare the attributes, characteristics and behaviour of the elderly to their younger counterparts. The tables cover social characteristics, immigration history, economic status, transnational ties, transnational behaviour and civic participation (Tables in Chapter IV). Since it is more efficient to develop cross tabulation of two variables using the SPSS software, each of the row variables on the left of the table is cross tabulated against the column variable independently, and the results are combined into more detailed tables by manually entering the data and at times with simple manual calculations to fill in data gaps. In general, the tables are effective in manifesting the tendency, distribution and gender variance for each row variable to the left. The tables not only exhibit some important behavioural characteristics of elderly Hong Kong immigrants, but also shed light on picking the major themes under investigation in the qualitative analysis on the interview transcripts in Chapter V.

Regarding the qualitative data, an analytical software program NVIVO was the pivotal tool for storing, sorting and coding major themes pertaining to the research questions. All interview transcripts were imported into NVIVO, and it facilitated extracting and denoting recurring or important themes from the data into assorted nodes. The interview transcripts were screened for three rounds before significant themes emerged, and my supervisor, Audrey Kobayashi, oversaw the coding procedures and made suggestions to ensure the trustworthiness of each round of coding. NVIVO
enhances objectivity in depicting nodes because it allows systematic sorting of interview transcripts into relevant themes. A preliminary screening of the raw interview transcripts yielded a wide variety of topics including not exhaustively the following: citizenship, comparing Canada and Hong Kong, connection to Hong Kong, experience in Canada, immigration experience, multiculturalism, racial discrimination and retirement planning. Since quantitative analysis from the questionnaire surveys revealed some unique traits and behaviour of the elderly immigrants, the second round of screening narrowed down the above-mentioned topics to a smaller number of nodes. The nodes included: connection to Hong Kong (family, younger generations), citizenship (sense of belonging), racial discrimination (public transportation, whites, within Chinese), reasons to stay in Canada and retirement planning (welfare, grave site). The key words in brackets represent sub-topics subsumed within the more general topic immediately preceding the brackets. Bearing in mind the research themes—transnational linkages and behaviour, sense of belonging, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism in Canada—the final round of data screening allowed most insightful and representative quotes to be discussed and incorporated into the major findings in Chapter V. To enhance objectivity and relevance in depicting themes, only quotes discussed by more than three participants and considered pertinent to the research questions will appear in Chapter V. In general, there are one to two major findings under each research theme. Some of these themes are straightforward and address the research questions directly, while others are somewhat unexpected but repeated by different participants in supporting their own viewpoints. A few recurring themes include how Chinese discriminate against Chinese in Vancouver, high sense of belonging to Canada because of the practical financial value of Canadian citizenship, and
preparation for retirement by purchasing an ideal grave site. Some themes are amusing yet telling of the overall immigration experience of the elderly.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative research methodologies has its own justifications. In this research on the elderly, the quantitative data in the tables serve to expose some behavioural traits of the elderly in statistical terms. In themselves, the results are representative of the thirty-five participants and lead to some research conclusions; however, they also set the directions for generating themes for further probing in the interview transcripts. In other words, although we can see behavioural traits and basic attitudes of the elderly participants in the quantitative tables, we still need to go one step further and dig into the interview transcripts to qualitatively expose the attitudes and rationale behind those observed trends. Quantitative and qualitative approaches invariably complement each other and effectively increase the credibility of the research findings. As a result, this research adopts the two methods in Chapters IV and V respectively to arrive at more convincing research findings.

The results of the research will be presented in the following two chapters: *Chapter IV—Results* presents six tables of the information obtained from the questionnaire surveys in this research against six modified unpublished tables from a previous research on middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). The tables also reveal directions for further exploration on the interview transcripts. *Chapter V—Discussion* follows up on Chapter IV by delving into the causes accounting for the observed characteristics and behaviour in the questionnaire surveys. It presents findings from the interviews to answer the research questions.
Justifications of Research Design

Each research utilizes a specific set of methods, and researchers should be able to justify the employment of certain methods over the others. In this research, a questionnaire survey, individual or small group interviews, and analytical software programs such as SPSS and NVIVO have their unique importance. The questionnaire survey is intended to collect quantifiable data that allow an understanding of the demographic characteristics of the participants. An equally important reason to employ the questionnaire is to compare the results with similar data collected from younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. Although some questions had been modified or erased to meet with the requirements of the GREB at Queen’s University, the essential questions remain and the quantifiable questionnaire data are very effective in delineating the similarities and differences between different age cohorts, as well as laying the foundations for further analysis using the interview transcripts. Individual or small group interviews have the advantages of creating a comfortable environment for participants to voice their opinions and concerns. In one-on-one settings, participants are free to talk about personal and sensitive topics in the enclosed interview room since confidentiality is ensured. Regarding data analysis, SPSS is used because of its well-known tabulation and statistical testing functions designed for social sciences research. After creating a file by sorting the questionnaire data into appropriate categories, SPSS offers the functions of simple tabulation and cross tabulation, which are the primary statistical methods needed for composing the tables in Chapter IV. Lastly, NVIVO is an excellent software program for organizing and analyzing qualitative data, especially interview transcripts. It has the
functions of coding and noding, and in this research, NVIVO helps to pick out the principal recurring themes from the transcripts to answer the research questions. Objectivity is retained by using it to analyze qualitative data.

Table 3.1 Timeline of the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Timeline of research project “Transnationalism, Citizenship and Sense of Belonging among Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants in Canada”</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Preparation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Putting together research proposal</td>
<td>Late April to mid-May, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaborating with SUCCESS</td>
<td>Mid-May to end of July, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conducting research in Vancouver</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotion and recruitment of participants</td>
<td>Late May to early June, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing participants</td>
<td>June to early July, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcribing interview recordings from Cantonese to English</td>
<td>Late June to end of August, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quantitative analysis on questionnaire data using SPSS</td>
<td>September to December, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualitative analysis on interview transcripts using NVIVO</td>
<td>September to December, 2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Report Writing</strong></td>
<td>September, 2008 to February, 2009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Elderly Samples**

Nine of the participants are male and the remaining twenty-six are female. This is a typical sex ratio in research that utilizes interviews or focus groups. The youngest participant is 51 and the oldest is 88 years old. Since SUCCESS offers elderly classes for anyone older than 50 years old, there are three recruited participants in their fifties; however, the majority of the participants are older than sixty as reflected by a mean age of 68. Six participants are within the age range from fifty to sixty, fifteen are between sixty-one and seventy, and the remaining fourteen are older than seventy-one. The number of children of the participants varies from not having children (two participants) to having as many as five children (three participants). The largest number have two children (eleven participants or 31.4 percent), and the ages of their oldest children cover a
range from as young as fifteen to as old as 60, with a modal age of 50 (six participants).

Regarding length of residence in Canada, five participants immigrated to Canada in the 1970s, five in the 1980s, and the remaining twenty-five came during the 1990s.

Educational credentials of the participants are not high, with thirteen participants having lower than high school qualifications, twelve having high school education, and ten having received university education. With most of the participants in their later years in life and possessing relatively lower educational credentials, there might be inherent biases in this sample; for example, language barriers might influence the way they perceive experiences of racism; not being active in the workplace might affect their financial sources and thus physical transnational behaviours; mostly associating with Chinese co-ethnics might distance them from the mainstream society. These inherent biases in the sample are unavoidable and are discussed in Chapter V. For a brief profile of the elderly participants, see Table 3.2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Profile of the Elderly Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex ratio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age range of oldest child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modal age of oldest child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year of immigration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational level (obtained in Hong Kong)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-less than high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-university</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3.1
Research methodology
Chapter IV Results

This chapter looks into the background, characteristics and self-reported transnational behaviour and citizenship participation among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver. The quantitative data in this section come entirely from the questionnaires that participants filled out at the beginning of the interviews. Data are arranged systematically in tables for easier comprehension and comparison with previous research on younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. All the tables pertain to the key themes in this research: transnational ties and behaviour, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism in Canada. In order to compare results from the elderly cohort to younger cohorts, the set of tables from this research are juxtaposed against a set of similar unpublished tables from a previous research on “transnationalism through the life course” (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). In general, six meaningful categories of characteristics of elderly Hong Kong immigrants arise from the questionnaire; they are social characteristics, immigration history, economic status, transnational ties, transnational behaviour and civic participation. In the remainder of this chapter, I analyze these characteristics of the elderly Hong Kong immigrants one by one. Before we move on, it is imperative to bear in mind that the data in this research are based on a relatively small sample that does not necessarily represent the entire Hong Kong original population. Also, both the previous study on middle-aged and young adult Hong Kong immigrants and this research on the elderly were carried out among participants recruited through SUCCESS. Both samples may be biased to people who use the services of SUCCESS, but at least the bias is similar and data from both research are worthy of comparison.
Social Characteristics of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants

The social characteristics refer to educational attainment, marital status, citizenship status and country of origin of the elderly Hong Kong immigrants. It is necessary to come to grips with the participants’ social characteristics in order to understand the logic and rationale of their transnational behaviour, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism discussed in the next chapter.

In terms of educational attainment of the elderly participants, the majority have not obtained a post-secondary degree (Table 4.1a). Seven out of nine male participants (78%) and eighteen out of twenty-six female participants (69.2%) obtained high school education or lower level of vocational training. On the other hand, college degree holders among this elderly cohort comprise two male participants (22.2%) and eight female participants (30.7%). Surprisingly, this result is contrary to previous observations that Chinese females in this age group usually possess less educational credentials than males because of a patriarchal society (Waters 2002); however, the small sample size may account for the variation. The educational attainment of the elderly participants is also linked to their economic status because a higher educational level usually leads to a higher income. In other words, it is logical to assume that a large percentage of the participants in this research come from a relatively lower socio-economic background because the majority do not hold a university degree.

Table 4.1a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Characteristics of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below High School</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comparing the data from the elderly to data of younger Hong Kong immigrants in Canada from earlier research (Table 4.1b), it is readily observable that middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants are generally better educated, with 54.6 percent having received at least some post-secondary education. The data from the teenage and young adult age groups are even more impressive, with 82.1 percent receiving post-secondary education or beyond. It is clear that younger Hong Kong immigrants received more education than older immigrants irrespective of immigration year or sequence, thus fulfilling one of the major reasons for emigration on the part of families who seek educational opportunities for their children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational Training</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>3.8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training after High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate School Graduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single, never married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single, divorced or separated</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citizenship</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Landed Immigrant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Citizen</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>96.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of Birth</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong, China</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainland China</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>57.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macau, China</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Characteristics of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than High School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School and Some Post-Secondary University</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>28.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced, Separated, or Widowed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizenship</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landed Immigrant</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Citizen</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Citizen</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>73.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asia</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from an unpublished table in a previous research project on Hong Kong immigrants by Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie Preston)

In terms of marital status, both the elderly participants in this research and middle-aged immigrants from the earlier research reveal a high level of *heteronormativity* among Hong Kong persons in general (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). Among the elderly participants, 100 percent had married at some point (Table 4.1a). Among middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants, the situation is slightly less rigid but there still exists an overwhelming tendency to marry (Table 4.1b). 92.2 percent of middle-aged participants had married and only six out of 77 (7.8%) remained single.

In terms of citizenship, the elderly immigrants exhibit a predominant tendency to possess dual citizenship, while dual citizenship among middle-aged and younger Hong
Kong immigrants is relatively uncommon. Eight out of nine male participants (88.9%) and twenty-five out of twenty-six female participants (96.2%) hold dual Canadian and Hong Kong citizenship (Table 4.1a). Looking at the younger cohorts, only 15.7 percent of middle-aged participants and 17.2 percent of teenage and young adult participants maintained dual citizenship (Table 4.1b). Previous research has delved into the meanings and significance of dual citizenship to Hong Kong Chinese in Canada (Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006), and the relative low procurement rate of dual citizenship among middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants could be explained by a multitude of factors such as length of residence and practical benefits of holding both Canadian and Hong Kong citizenship; nonetheless, the exceptionally high level of dual citizenship among the elderly raises a noteworthy query. Lastly, with regard to country of birth, the participants demonstrate a higher tendency to be born outside of Hong Kong, with 66.7% male participants and 69.1% female participants (Table 4.1a), compared to a lower tendency among the middle-aged and teenage and young adult participants to be born outside of Hong Kong, with 37.9% middle-aged participants and 26.1% teenage and young adult participants (Table 4.1b). On top of that, in-depth interviews with the elderly participants show that regardless of their place of birth, all of them resided in Hong Kong before immigrating to Canada, and self-identified as Hong Kongnese before emigration. Consequently, the country of birth of the elderly participants does not play a critical role in shaping their transnational behaviour, concepts of citizenship and experiences of racism in Canada.

Immigration History of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants
Immigration history of the immigrants refers to their period of immigration, immigration companionship, immigration class and reasons for immigration. All of these shed important light on the transnational ties forged by the participants and their perception of experiences of racism in Vancouver over the years of immigration.

The majority of the elderly immigrants moved to Canada in the 1990s prior to the handover of Hong Kong back to China, while a large number of middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants also immigrated to Canada before 1997. In order to expose potential differences in the ways the elderly interpret their life experiences in Canada, it is beneficial to group them into those who immigrated in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s respectively. Most elderly participants in this research immigrated to Canada in the 1990s before the 1997 sovereignty switch (Table 4.2a). Six out of nine male participants (66.6%) and sixteen out of twenty-six female participants (61.4%) came to Canada between 1991 and 1997. Similarly, the majority of middle-aged and younger participants immigrated to Canada between 1992 and 1996 (Table 4.2b). Researchers have proposed various reasons to explain the transnational behaviour of middle-aged “astronauts” and young college graduates from Hong Kong (Ley and Kobayashi 2005; Waters 2002; Waters 2003; Waters 2005; Waters 2006; Waters 2006; Waters 2007; Kobayashi and Preston 2007), thus this research will not account for the relationship between year of immigration and transnational behaviour other than the elderly participants.

Table 4.2a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration History of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1980</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980 to 1990</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data from both the elderly participants and from the middle-aged and younger cohorts point to the fact that immigration to Canada has been primarily family-based.

Among the elderly, all male participants moved to Canada either with their spouses or with their whole immediate family, depending on whether they had children at the time of immigration (Table 4.2a). For female elderly immigrants, twenty out of twenty-six (76.9%) indicated immigration with their spouses, children or the whole family. This observation is readily understandable since many elderly immigrated to Canada as dependent immigrants with the purpose of family reunion, as demonstrated in the next category “Immigration Class.” Likewise, the majority of middle-aged participants immigrated either with their spouses or the whole family, standing at 65 out of 73 (89.1%); while the teenage and young adult group mostly immigrated with their parents as a family unit, with 53 out of 60 participants (88.3%) (Table 4.2b).
### Table 4.2b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immigration History of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to 1986</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1991</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992-1996</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post 1996</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrated With</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>88.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and Others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration Reason**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Business</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Other includes retired, not specified, and born in Canada and returned

**Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were accepted

(Adapted from an unpublished table in a previous research project on Hong Kong immigrants by Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie Preston)

Closely related to immigration companionship is immigration class. Immigration class refers to the immigration status in the application. Among the elderly participants in this research, a large number entered Canada as dependent immigrants to reunite with family members, predominantly children who were already in Canada. The number stands at six out of nine male participants (66.7%) and thirteen out of twenty-six female participants (50%) (Table 4.2a). A smaller number of elderly immigrants entered Canada
through the Business Immigration Program (BIP) as business operators or investors, with
two out of nine male participants (22.2%) and six out of twenty-six female participants
(23.1%) (Table 4.2a). Among the middle-aged and teenage and young adult cohorts,
immigration class is varied and it is difficult to generate a revealing pattern to explain
their motives for immigration (Table 4.2b). They might have come as independent skilled
immigrants, for family reunification, as refugees or for other non-specified reasons. Since
this research aims to expose the experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants, the
complicated situations of the younger cohorts will not be addressed; however, an
important fact to bear in mind is that immigration companionship and immigration class
are closely-related and influential factors in revealing transnational linkages and a sense
of belonging to Canada among the elderly, as we shall see in Chapter V under theme five
on multigenerational transnational family arrangements.

Regarding reasons for immigration, most elderly Hong Kong immigrants moved
to Canada for family reunion, while the middle-aged and teenage and young adult cohorts
indicated a wider range of reasons such as for business, educational pursuit or political
concern. Among the elderly, eight out of nine male participants (88.9%) and seventeen
out of twenty-six female participants (65.4%) stated family (reunion) as the primary
reason for immigration (Table 4.2a). This result is in line with their high rate of being
dependent immigrants and immigration experience with spouses or the whole family as
mentioned above.

The data on immigration class and immigration reasons among the elderly raise
unexpected gender patterns: male participants are more likely to immigrate to Canada as
dependent immigrants and for the purpose of family reunion than are female participants.
This result contradicts the patriarchal Chinese family system that defines gender roles.
The qualitative data from the interviews do not offer any insight to this observation, and the pattern might simply arise from a small sample number in this research with a majority of female participants. Gender perspectives regarding the immigration experience are worth more exploration in future research.

Despite the enigma, both elderly participants and younger ones came to Canada for the sake of the family, whether to further advance family benefits such as education or to reunite with family members previously split between continents. Previous research has argued that middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants are keen to exploit international resources through the practice of transnationalism with the ultimate goal of furthering family interests (Waters 2002; Waters 2003); however, elderly Hong Kong immigrants no longer bear much responsibility to provide bread and butter to family members during their later years in life.

Economic Status of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants

The economic status of immigrants refers to employment status and housing. These are essential determinants affecting the immigration experience, lifestyle and perception of citizenship and experiences of racism among immigrants. As we shall see in Chapter V, class status accompanied with education and wealth of immigrants condition the ways elderly Hong Kong immigrants perceive their encounters in Canada.

It is difficult to tell the economic status of both elderly Hong Kong immigrants in this research and middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants from previous research. Eight out of nine elderly male participants (88.9%) and twenty-two out of twenty-six elderly female participants (84.6%) had already retired from the job market (Table 4.3a). It is virtually
impossible to determine their economic standing because there is no background information on their savings and overseas capital. Furthermore, the majority of elderly immigrants are currently living in their own independent houses or apartments, accounting for six out of nine male participants (66.7%) and twenty-one out of twenty-six female participants (80.7%). Likewise, the type of housing reveals little on the economic well-being of the elderly, since a house or an apartment is considered a necessity in Canada, as opposed to the situation in Hong Kong with an extremely high population density in which only millionaires own private houses.

Taking a look at the middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants, it is equally difficult to determine their economic status from the categories of employment status and housing type. Thirty-six out of 74 middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants (48.6%) reported that they were unemployed and not seeking work at the time of the interview, while fourteen out of 74 (18.9%) reported being self-employed (Table 4.3b). These data match perfectly with previous research findings that a large number of immigrants are devalued in the Canadian job market and thus relegated to low-level jobs incompatible with their job skills (Bauder 2003). The self-employed immigrants are most likely business immigrants who are obliged to set up businesses within a certain period of time after entering Canada (Ley 2006). The teenage and young adult immigrants are not yet fully active in the Canadian job market and the data are not discussed. Regarding housing type, again a large number of middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants own a house, totalling forty-five out of 73 (61.6%) (Table 4.3b). As explained earlier, this phenomenon has no reliable indication of their economic well-being.
Table 4.3a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Status of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Full-Time</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Part-Time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Independent Housing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own Apartment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented Private Housing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rented Public Housing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. elderly home)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Household Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $ 20 000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 20 000 - $ 29 999</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 30 000 - $ 49 999</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 50 000 - $ 79 999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ 80 000 and over</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic Status of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Full-Time</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Part-Time</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, Seeking Work</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>38.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed, Not Seeking Work</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Own</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Renter</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living with Others</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household Income</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under $ 20 000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20 000 - $29 999</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30 000 - $49 999</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
While there are many uncertainties in estimating the economic well-being of Hong Kong immigrants, the economic well-being of the elderly participants is reflected by their educational attainment. As proven above, a large percentage of the participants come from a relatively lower socio-economic status and have a lower education level. This is a group that will most likely use the services provided by SUCCESS.

Transnational Ties of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants

Transnational ties refer to social ties, economic ties and other linkages of immigrants to their country of origin. In this research, social ties specifically refer to presence of family members and friends in Hong Kong; economic ties depict business linkages and property ownership in Hong Kong; and other ties refer to linkages to Hong Kong other than the previous two categories (Tables 4.4a & 4.4b). The data come primarily from the questionnaire surveys, and the results will be compared with in-depth interview responses to test the consistency of self-reported data and actual behaviour.

Table 4.4a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnational Ties of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted from an unpublished table in a previous research project on Hong Kong immigrants by Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie Preston)
Both elderly Hong Kong immigrants and middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants have close family, relatives and friends residing in Hong Kong. Among the elderly immigrants, eight out of nine male participants (88.9%) and eighteen out of twenty-six female participants (69.2%) still have immediate family members in Hong Kong (Table 4.4a). The percentages of relatives and friends in Hong Kong are equally high, with 77.8% of male participants and 84.6% of female participants having relatives in Hong Kong; and 77.8% of male participants and 69.2% of female participants having friends in Hong Kong. Among the middle-aged immigrants, a similar pattern is observed. 75.6% of participants reported having immediate family in Hong Kong; 69.6% of participants having extended family in Hong Kong; and 72.1% of participants having friends in Hong Kong (Table 4.4b). Both elderly and middle-aged immigrants still possess close social ties to Hong Kong after immigrating to Canada. In this research, the emphasis is on whether close social ties with Hong Kong affect transnational behaviour and concepts of citizenship among the elderly immigrants. One might doubt that immediate family members include children, siblings, parents and grandchildren, and each category might
have differential influences on the elderly. The questionnaire surveys do not break down
the category of immediate family into its constituent components, but I will revisit this
point and attempt to break it down by poring over the interview transcripts. Deepened
analysis will appear in Chapter V under theme five on multigenerational transnational
family arrangements.

In terms of economic ties, it is logical to conclude that the elderly Hong Kong
participants had almost severed all economic ties with Hong Kong before immigrating to
Canada, while middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants retain multiple economic linkages
with Hong Kong due to a different phase in the life course. Among the elderly, virtually
all respondents demonstrate no property ownership, business ties or work-related travels
to Hong Kong (Table 4.4a). As discussed in preceding sections, most elderly participants
in this research originate from a relatively lower socio-economic status and entered
Canada for the purpose of family reunion. It comes as no surprise that this group has no
economic connections with Hong Kong. Among middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants,
21.5% of participants own property in Hong Kong and 13.9% of participants are running
business in Hong Kong (Table 4.4b). A reasonable explanation for this result is that
middle-aged immigrants are most likely the primary economic providers of the family,
thus economic ties with Hong Kong among this group are the greatest. I will return to this
point qualitatively in Chapter V under theme one on transnational activities.

Table 4.4b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnational Ties of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Ties*</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding other ties to Hong Kong besides social ties and economic ties, the elderly show no such linkages to Hong Kong at all (Table 4.4a). They do not vote in Hong Kong even though a large number of them maintained dual citizenship. On the other hand, middle-aged immigrants exhibit slightly higher propensity to retain other ties to Hong Kong.

Interestingly, three female elderly participants indicated that they have absolutely no connection to Hong Kong at all after immigrating to Canada (Table 4.4a). Although the number of participants who picked this choice is not large, it is worthwhile to further probe the reasons underpinning this aspect of the immigration experience. All three participants talked about having all their immediate family in Vancouver, and that means their children, spouse and perhaps parents excluding siblings and relatives. They do not feel the necessity to relate to Hong Kong because “the family in Vancouver is intact.” An entire section in Chapter V (theme five) will address the location of various family members and its impacts on the experience among the participants. Overall, elderly Hong Kong
Kong immigrants have strong social ties with Hong Kong; aside from that, economic ties and other ties had almost been totally cut off with emigration.

Transnational Behaviour of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants

Transnational behaviour differs from transnational ties, which merely indicate presence of connections to Hong Kong while transnational behaviour denotes actual activities related to Hong Kong or physical presence in Hong Kong. Broadly speaking, transnational behaviour includes consuming Hong Kong media in Canada, maintaining social contacts with Hong Kong through technological means, and actually traveling to Hong Kong. Results in this section show that all elderly participants, middle-aged, and teenage and young adult Hong Kong immigrants engage actively in transnational behaviour through media consumption and social contacts by technological means. Also, middle-aged and teenage and young adult cohorts are equally likely to travel back to Hong Kong compared to the elderly cohort despite varied reasons for the movement.

Elderly Hong Kong immigrants exhibit a very high degree of consuming Hong Kong newspapers, magazines, TV shows, dramas and movies. For male participants, 88.9% read Hong Kong newspapers and magazines, 100% watch Hong Kong TV shows, and 55.5% watch Hong Kong movies (Table 4.5a). For female participants, the percentages are similarly high. 80.8% read Hong Kong newspapers and magazines, 100% watch Hong Kong TV shows, and 65.4% watch Hong Kong movies (Table 4.5a). Middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants are lighter consumers of Hong Kong media; however, the percentages of consumption are still fairly impressive. Among the middle-aged group, 77.2%, 75.9% and 55.7% of participants watch Hong Kong television programs, read Hong Kong newspapers and watch Hong Kong movies respectively.
Among the youngest generation, owing to lower Chinese reading skills, only 7.2% read Hong Kong newspapers; nonetheless, 78.3% and 76.8% still watch Hong Kong television programs and watch Hong Kong movies (Table 4.5b).

Table 4.5a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnational Behaviour of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Newspapers and Magazines</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Radio and/or TV Shows</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong Drama and Movies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Social Contacts</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Contact with Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel to Hong Kong</strong>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than Once Per Year</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once Per Year</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than Once Per Year</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were accepted

Table 4.5b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Transnational Behaviour of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Media</strong>*</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong TV/Radio</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read Hong Kong Newspapers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch Hong Kong Movies</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong ListSrvs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monthly Social Contacts</strong>*</td>
<td>69</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>52.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter to Hong Kong Family</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Travel to Hong Kong</strong>*</td>
<td>67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Least Once a Year</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
With regard to monthly social contacts, elderly Hong Kong immigrants rely extremely heavily on telephone contacts with family in Hong Kong, while middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants exhibit a wider range of contact methods such as telephone, email and letters. Among the elderly, eight out of nine male participants (88.9%) and twenty-five out of twenty-six female participants (96.2%) call family members in Hong Kong by telephone (Table 4.5a). This is probably the most efficient way to maintain contacts especially for a group lacking in computer skills and in some cases writing skills. On the contrary, although middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants show a wider range of contact methods, telephone conversations remain the most frequently used. 83.5% of middle-aged and 84% of teenage and young adult Hong Kong immigrants use the telephone to call family members in Hong Kong (Table 4.5b), while 26.6% of middle-aged and 52.2% of teenage and young adult Hong Kong immigrants communicate with family members in Hong Kong through email (Table 4.5b).

In terms of physical presence in Hong Kong, all the elderly participants, middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants have a similar rate of traveling back to Hong Kong, which contradicts a popular notion that Hong Kong immigrants are “hyper-mobile” transnationals across the Pacific Rim (Waters 2002; Waters 2003; Edgington, Goldberg et al. 2003). Among the participants, the majority travel back to Hong Kong once per year, with 66.7% of male participants and 46.2% of female participants (Table 4.5a). Most of the remaining participants travel back to Hong Kong less than once per year. Among

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Less Than Once a Year</th>
<th>40</th>
<th>58.0</th>
<th>28</th>
<th>35.9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may not sum to 100 because multiple responses were accepted

(Adapted from an unpublished table in a previous research project on Hong Kong immigrants by Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie Preston)
middle-aged and younger generations, the frequency of traveling to Hong Kong is similar, with 46.2% of middle-aged participants and 27.5% of teenage and young adult participants traveling back to Hong Kong about once per year, while the remaining participants travel to Hong Kong less than once per year (Table 4.5b).

This section raises some interesting questions. It is demonstrated that elderly Hong Kong participants engage heavily in transnational behaviour in terms of Hong Kong media consumption and social contacts with Hong Kong family through technological means; however, they are not frequent travelers back to Hong Kong, thus demonstrating a lack of physical presence back there.

Civic Participation of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants

The last section concerns civic participation of elderly Hong Kong participants, which refers to voting behaviour and membership in both Canadian and Hong Kong organizations. The results indicate sense of belonging and citizenship practices among the elderly participants in Canada.

Regarding civic participation in Canada, the most impressive finding is the high rate of voting. Overall, all thirty-five but three participants are Canadian citizens. Six out of nine male participants (66.7%) and twenty-one out of twenty-six female participants (80.8%) indicate that they are eager to vote in Canadian elections (Table 4.6a). When further probed in the in-depth interviews, a number of participants stressed the importance to vote in Canada to assert citizenship practice and to combat racism from the mainstream. I will go into detail in Chapter V under theme two on citizenship and citizenship practice. Among middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants, the obvious tendency to engage in Canadian civic affairs is by donating to Canadian charities. Nineteen out of
79 participants (24.1%) donate to Canadian charities, while only nine out of 79 participants (11.4%) vote in Canadian elections (Table 4.6b). It is impossible to explain these behaviours without face-to-face discussion with the middle-aged participants, and this research cannot achieve this goal; however, a conspicuous result by comparing the participants and middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants is that, like the population in general, the elderly are much more engaged in voting in Canada than are their younger counterparts.

Table 4.6a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic Participation of Elderly Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada*</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote in Canadian Elections</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to Political Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate to Canadian Charities</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate to Hong Kong Associations</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for Hong Kong Associations in Canada</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Hong Kong Organizations in Canada</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Member of Hong Kong Political Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Percentages may not add to 100 because some respondents reported no forms of participation

Table 4.6b

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Civic Participation of Hong Kong Immigrants</th>
<th>Teens and Twenties</th>
<th>Thirties and Forties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada**</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote in Canadian Elections</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to Political Parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate to Political Parties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donate to Canadian Charities</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong**</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding civic participation in Hong Kong, a significant percentage of elderly Hong Kong participants belong to Hong Kong associations in Canada, while middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants are equally likely to belong to Hong Kong associations and also volunteer in these associations. Among the participants, three out of nine male participants (33.3%) and thirteen out of twenty-six female participants (50%) are affiliated with one or more Hong Kong associations in Canada (Table 4.6a). This result may lead to the speculation that Hong Kong elderly are concerned about Hong Kong and the high membership may indicate their sense of belonging to Hong Kong; however, further analysis of their backgrounds reveals that most of these elderly participants join Hong Kong associations in Canada to enrich their social lives. SUCCESS, the organization facilitating participant recruitment and the interviews, is the primary Hong Kong association to which these elderly belong. They make friends, connect with Chinese people and seek services in the Chinese organizations. On top of that, their limited English language skills may have prevented them from engaging in other associations in Canada, engendering a high membership rate in Hong Kong associations. In short, belonging to Hong Kong associations in Canada does not reflect a high sense of belonging to Hong Kong. I will prove this point by showing qualitative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>7 (10.1)</th>
<th>26 (32.9)</th>
<th>37 (46.8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Donate to Hong Kong Associations</td>
<td>8 (10.1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer for Hong Kong Associations</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1.3)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentages may not add to 100 because some respondents reported no forms of participation

(Adapted from an unpublished table in a previous research project on Hong Kong immigrants by Audrey Kobayashi and Valerie Preston)
evidence through quotations in Chapter V under theme two, part b on language and citizenship practice.

On the other hand, middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants also exhibit high membership and volunteerism in Hong Kong associations, notwithstanding their greater facility in the English language. Thirty-seven out of 79 middle-aged participants (46.8%) and twenty-four out of 69 teenage and young adult participants (34.8%) belong to Hong Kong associations, while twenty-six out of 79 middle-aged (32.9%) and forty-one out of 69 teenage and young adult participants (59.4%) volunteer in Hong Kong associations (Table 4.6b). Analogous to donation to Canadian charities, it is unclear why these younger generations engage actively in Hong Kong associations. A variety of reasons can explain the situation, including business purposes, social networking, sense of belonging to Hong Kong and the like. It is not the intention of this research to delve into the behaviours of middle-aged and teenage and young adult cohorts.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have analyzed the general background of the elderly participants in this research, and used the data to compare with middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants from a previous project. The first three categories (social characteristics, immigration history and economic status) expose the general background of the elderly immigrants, and the remaining three categories (transnational ties, transnational behaviour and civic participation) are more closely linked to transnational linkages and citizenship practice of the participants. All of these data are derived from the questionnaire surveys, and then tabulated to compare with results from previous research. There are a number of findings that warrant further exploration. First of all, most of the elderly participants in
this research come from a relatively lower socio-economic background. This might have influences in the ways they perceive the immigration experience, sense of belonging and experiences of racism. Second, a significant number of participants immigrated to Canada for the purposes of family reunion or retirement. This would lead to different interpretations of their life experiences compared to younger generations who are still active in the workplace and who have closer contact with white Canadians. Third, a large percentage of elderly participants have close social ties (i.e. family members, relatives and friends) to Hong Kong; however, they had almost severed all economic ties to Hong Kong before emigration. Besides, they demonstrate very high Hong Kong media consumption and very frequent social contact to family in Hong Kong by telephone. This combination of transnational ties and transnational behaviour might have implications for the concepts of citizenship and perception of experiences of racism in Canada. Fourth, most of the elderly immigrants hold dual citizenship, and they are eager voters in Canadian elections and frequent participants in activities organized by Hong Kong associations. This mixed behaviour should have hinted at an ambiguous sense of belonging to Canada or citizenship practice in Canadian society. Both of these two aspects demand further analysis in the interview outcomes. More importantly, we should be cognizant that answers from the elderly are largely molded by the fact that they are older people in a specific generation in their life course. “Elderly” and “generation” are two concepts I will focus on in the last theme of Chapter V. Also bear in mind that results derived from the earlier study were based on a much bigger sample compared to this research. The similarity of the elderly to younger Hong Kong immigrants actually suggests that the elderly group resembles the larger cohort in many aspects.
With all this background information and quantitative analysis of the questionnaire response, the next chapter will build on these and derive qualitative findings regarding the key themes of this research project: transnational activities, concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, with a focus on the elements of “elderly” and “generation.” The data will be primarily from interviews for the purpose of eliciting deeper accounts of the aforementioned aspects. The discussions will address unanswered queries raised in this chapter.
Chapter V Discussion

This chapter presents research findings by analyzing translations of the in-depth interviews with elderly participants residing in Vancouver. All transcripts of the thirty-five participants have been carefully coded into nodes using the software NVIVO, and main themes are extracted by further breaking down the nodes into more meaningful accounts that fit the research purposes. With regard to the key research areas in this project: transnational activities, concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging of elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada, five key themes emerge from the interview materials. They are respectively transnational activities across the Pacific Rim, citizenship and citizenship practice, experiences of racism, overall immigration experience, and multigenerational transnational family arrangements. Under each theme, subcategories appear by way of recurring accounts from the participants, for instance, citizenship and citizenship practice can be further divided into sense of belonging and language and citizenship practice. In order to prevent subjectivity in depicting the main themes, the analytical software NVIVO is brought into play and I only present recurring accounts discussed by more than three participants. As mentioned in Chapter III, the interview transcripts were coded in three rounds. Each round narrowed down the number of codes and my supervisor, Audrey Kobayashi, oversaw the process and made suggestions on coding conducive to depicting meaningful themes. Quoted responses carry no real names and all quotations relate directly to one or more of the key themes.

Theme One: Transnational Activities Across the Pacific Rim
Findings from the in-depth interviews corroborate those conclusions drawn in the previous chapter. Referring to the tables derived from the questionnaire survey data, it is observed that elderly Hong Kong immigrants preserve close social ties with family members, relatives and friends in Hong Kong. In the meantime, they have almost severed all economic ties before entering Canada (Table 4.4a). Also, elderly immigrants maintain very high contact with Hong Kong media through TV, magazines and Hong Kong family through telephone conversations (Table 4.5a). In the interviews, participants articulated in detail the reasons why they engage in some forms of transnational behaviour but not the others, their motives for being transnationals and their general attitude towards the significance of transnational activities for people like them who are in their later years in life.

In general, unlike “astronaut fathers” and graduating “satellite kids,” economic considerations are not pivotal for the elderly to engage in transnational activities. Instead, they maintain linkages mostly with family members in Hong Kong for the purpose of “emotional transnationalism,” which means that the principal reason to maintain contacts with Hong Kong is to connect with family members, instead of other economic, educational or political pursuits. Some responses also contradict a popular belief that the elderly are always nostalgic about their place of birth, because the participants have already cultivated a strong attachment to Canada. Also, most participants keep transnational linkages to Hong Kong not by physical presence but by technological means such as telephone and sometimes email.

First of all, seven participants articulated the urge to see family members and two participants talked about a desire to visit friends in Hong Kong. These constitute the
essential reasons some participants fly back to Hong Kong from time to time. In the interviews, there was a standard question for each participant intended to elicit responses about their perceived connection to Hong Kong after immigrating to Canada. One participant replied bluntly:

P18: Of course [I am concerned about Hong Kong]; My grandchildren are still in Hong Kong, I call them on the telephone often. ...Yes, I am still concerned about Hong Kong.

Later in the interview conversation, this participant mentioned that her son had also returned to Hong Kong to look for business because he could not perform well as a business operator in Vancouver. As we can see, family ties in Hong Kong promote transnational movement; however, sometimes the elderly are less positive about transnational movements:

P12: [I am] Not too close [to Hong Kong]. Simply because we still have family members in Hong Kong, we might go back to visit them ... indeed I don’t particularly like Hong Kong, because it’s so cramped, the weather is unbearably damp, living condition is not ideal ... and my hobbies are not as materialistic as those shared by Hong Kong people, like shopping, etc.

This account is a typical response shared by a lot of elderly immigrants in the interview discussions and questionnaire survey, and it portrays the predicament that some participants feel obliged to return to Hong Kong to visit family members but are not sincerely fond of the experience. As with virtually all other participants in this research, P12 is retired and has access to the Canadian social benefits system. Transnationalism for economic reasons is not on her agenda since the heavy responsibilities to advance family interests have already been transferred to her children, as reflected in the “astronaut” effects among innumerable middle-aged Hong Kong immigrants. Participants in this
research project did not go into detail to explain their infrequent presence in Hong Kong, whether it being financial constraints or a lack of necessity to return. It might even be more economical for them to remain in Canada to tap into social benefits. True, the elderly seldom talked about transnationalism for economic needs in the interviews, and perhaps it is more than obvious that they are not restricted by money matters anymore; however, their employment and retirement status are related to a sense of belonging and the overall immigration experience, as we shall see in the last part of this chapter.

In other accounts, having friends in Hong Kong becomes the chief motivation for some elderly to visit Hong Kong, as demonstrated in the following dialogue:

Neville: If you look back at your immigration experience, do you miss anything from Hong Kong that Canada doesn’t provide you?

P8: Friends.

Neville: But supposedly you can make new friends here [in Vancouver]?

P8: It’s incomparable. Friends you make after you grow old and those you made when you were young are different. Those long-time friends underwent hardships together; for example, when I gave birth [to my children], I needed someone to look after myself and my family. Caregivers don’t do that ... or when I’m sick ... how to say ... I mean those are true, life-long friends.

The preceding examples reveal that for some Hong Kong elderly in Vancouver, returning to Hong Kong is a means to connect with family and friends to satisfy emotional needs, with no other purposes in mind; however, family and friends are different categories that might impose varying degrees of necessity to engage in transnational activities.

The next finding from the interview transcripts is that career and economic prospects are not valid factors urging elderly Hong Kong immigrants to become
transnationals. As a matter of fact, this finding is in line with an observation presented in Chapter IV that elderly participants had severed almost all economic ties with Hong Kong before coming to Canada in order to reunite with family members or to retire (Table 4.4a). The following example describes the reluctance of some elderly participants to seek job opportunities back in Hong Kong even though it was hard to secure employment in the Canadian job market.

P1: Oh, when we came [to Canada], it was incredibly hard to land a job. Toronto was easier compared to Vancouver, and I also thought about moving to Toronto ... and I didn’t go at the end because my dad loved Vancouver, and I stayed with him in Vancouver.

For the above participant, returning to seek work in Hong Kong was never an option even facing gloomy job opportunities in the Canadian market. Another participant, who used to be a registered nurse in Hong Kong before migration, voiced a similar struggle in the work place:

P6: Yes, I had to take an exam before I could qualify as a registered nurse [in Canada] again. That was why I was really depressed, that hurt me a lot ... I lost my confidence. ... Later a friend of mine informed me of a job opening in a hospital in UBC, I applied and they hired me ... but I was “demoted” to become a nurse A [a practical nurse] ... and all my colleagues looked down on me.

Although these elderly immigrants did not explicitly state the reasons why they struggled through the ordeal and did not choose to seek job opportunities back in Hong Kong, possible explanations can be inferred from their background. For one thing, they came to Canada at a relatively old age close to retirement; career might not be a major concern in their lives compared to middle-aged and younger immigrants. For another
reason, some elderly immigrants conveyed a sense of a “can-do” spirit during the interviews, which means that they preferred breaking the barriers to the Canadian job market to resigning and seeking work back in Hong Kong. There might be a whole range of reasons explaining their reluctance to work in Hong Kong, but the main theme to bear in mind is that transnational activities among the elderly are mostly to satisfy emotional needs as opposed to economic needs.

The third finding is a controversial proposition in which technology might have increased yet simultaneously decreased transnational linkages of elderly immigrants to Hong Kong. As proved by the questionnaire survey in the previous chapter, the elderly participants rely heavily on the telephone to maintain social contact with family members in Hong Kong (Table 4.5a). Ironically, this technology has lowered the needs to physically travel back to Hong Kong to see these family members. It is obscure whether this type of contact deepens transnationalism or loosens the ties to Hong Kong. It is possible that transnationalism is not a zero-sum game, and any types of transnational ties can be classified as transnational activities. All in all, the general idea some participants bring out is best exemplified by the following account:

Neville: Does family separation [between Canada and Hong Kong] disconnect the family and pose negative consequences for family relationships?

P7: Wow ... it’s so convenient now! Using the webcam on the computer, everything can be seen ... very convenient! And also on the phone, there’s not much distance now. [People are] very close.

This conversation explains why elderly immigrants tend not to physically return to Hong Kong but choose to maintain social contacts with family members predominantly by the telephone; however, whether this is a form of deepening transnationalism or the
opposite is subject to debate. In fact, the same doubt exists for the results regarding high Hong Kong media consumption among the elderly as mentioned in Chapter IV. Reading Hong Kong newspapers and watching Hong Kong movies often might be signs of deepening transnationalism. This type of transnationalism nonetheless lessens individual’s desire to actually travel back to Hong Kong. Differentiating the subtlety requires a more nuanced definition of transnationalism that has yet been formulated by academics. We can see some suggestions for further research in Chapter VI.

Lastly, one participant articulated a very interesting comment that is worth some emphasis. Although only one respondent talked about this general attitude towards life when responding to questions related to transnational behaviour, this participant is representative of the entire researched cohort. A number of other participants displayed similar attitudes in other topics such as retirement plans, sense of belonging and citizenship practice. The response is as follows:

P2: Of course I miss Hong Kong. Looking back at those old times, just remember a person said to me, “Auntie, simply keep walking forward, just keep looking forward, don’t look back ... treat yourself nicely.”... [Sometimes I think about] the new apartment in Hong Kong, why did I come here? After immigrating to Canada, will my son-in-law, my daughter and I live harmoniously under the same roof? And then I cried alone again. ... [I’m] not like this anymore, now the Canadian government takes care of us, I feel comfortable and content now.

This quote reveals two important findings. First, being after retirement and in their later years in life, most elderly immigrants take a “laid-back” approach towards life. Transnational linkages are not necessities essential to survival, but rather a bonus to enrich their present life in Canada. Nonetheless, we must not be oblivious to the fact that a participant’s family circumstances inevitably affect how they interpret their life world.
P2 belongs to a group who possesses very low educational attainment. She moved to
Canada as a retired immigrant to reunite with children already in Canada. Therefore, the
above response is permeated with a trace of resignation. Perhaps an upper-middle class to
an upper-class immigrant would hold totally different attitudes towards the immigration
experience, but that cohort is beyond the scope of this research. As also revealed in the
following quote from another participant in the lower education level cohort:

P5: For now, I personally think, “contentment delights you.” I’m really satisfied
about my own situations now. I might not be living a luxurious life, but I’m happy.
Being at this age, what else am I chasing after? Money is no longer an issue; I
only go after health and happiness.

Yes, being 80 years old, having come to Canada for sixteen years, supported by
the Canadian old age security, while having limited literacy before retirement, what else
is P5 chasing after besides health and happiness? Transnationalism is merely to satisfy
emotional needs, not to fatten the purse.

Secondly, as shown in the last part of the above quotation from P2, many elderly
participants are content that the Canadian government is taking care of them through what
they see as generous social benefits. This point has important implications not only on
their transnational behaviour, but also on their interpretation of Canadian citizenship and
sense of belonging, which form the second major theme of this research project to be
delved into forthwith.

Theme Two: Citizenship and Citizenship Practice
Citizenship and sense of belonging among immigrants have always been points of
debate alongside the official doctrine of multiculturalism and intake of immigrants in
Canada. Meaningful findings are usually derived from thorough interviews or focus
groups, and quantitative measurement of the concepts of citizenship does not reflect
genuine attitudes of participants under many circumstances. As seen from the previous
chapter, elderly Hong Kong participants demonstrate an exceptionally high rate of dual
citizenship (Table 4.1a) and voting in Canadian elections (Table 4.6a). In the meantime,
most of them also belong to one or more Hong Kong organization(s) in Canada (Table
4.6a). This section probes further the attitudes and opinions regarding sense of belonging
and citizenship practice among the participants in Vancouver, and is broken down into
two subdivisions: a) sense of belonging, and b) language and citizenship practice.

Sense of Belonging

During the interviews, there was a question asking participants whether they felt
they belong more to Canada or to Hong Kong. Participants could freely state their
opinions and support it with any reasons they desired to bring up. Interestingly, without
any prompt, the elderly participants who self-identified as Canadians expressed recurring
themes revolving around retirement plans, government subsidies and friendly Canadians
as the underpinning reasons to position themselves as Canadians more than as Hong
Kongnese. These accounts reveal more profound meanings of citizenship for the elderly
other than functionally procuring the Canadian passport.

Twenty-one participants stated strongly a propensity to self-identify as Canadians
as opposed to Hong Kongnese, and ten participants identified as Hong Kong citizens even
though they are naturalized Canadians or are holding dual citizenship. Four participants were too ambivalent to decide on their citizenship (Figure 5.1). Among those self-identified as Canadians, one participant summarized the thoughts and explained the tendency as such:

P1: I never thought about going anywhere [after coming to Canada] ... won’t think about that ... at the time of immigration, my siblings were in Canada already. They mentioned the attractions of Canada, as a result, when I came here, I never had the idea of returning to Hong Kong. Equally important, I underwent four years of “immigration imprisonment” until I could went back [to Hong Kong] to visit my parents for a short while ... now my whole immediate family is here.

Figure 5.1 Overall sense of belonging of elderly participants

Although all participants presented a scenario slightly different from one another, this participant captures the idea shared by many others that they largely look forward to becoming Canadian and subsequently stay in Canada for the long term. In addition, the above participant mentioned siblings touting how “good” Canada was, but did not elaborate on the aspects that led to this conclusion. The attractions of Canada were pinpointed by many other participants. When asked about whether they planned to spend
the rest of their lives in Canada, nineteen participants said they definitely would, with the others having mixed attitudes. Children, siblings and family are frequently cited reasons to justify the attachment to Canada, and we shall deepen the analysis by distinguishing different types of family members in the last part of this chapter. The opinion of one participant epitomizes the reasons why many participants cling to Canada deeply:

P11: I probably will [stressed] spend the rest of my life in Canada ... my children are all here, I think I should be here ... and I have been working for many years in Canada without taking anything from the government. Not any money. Some friends said to me, “If you grow old and leave Canada, perhaps you wouldn’t be able to receive any government pension!”

Government pension is a substantial motivation for the elderly to stay in Canada and develop a sense of belonging to the country. The following two accounts reverberate the emphasis on government pension in a light-hearted way:

P7: Yes! I plan to spend the rest of my life in Canada. Where can I go? Where do you think I can go now? The government is paying for me, I wouldn’t go anywhere. ... Ha Ha [laughing with content].

P6: I will also stay in Canada. I retired in March, and just began to receive old age pension ... hee hee hee [laughing uncontrollably] ... my husband always says, “Now if you live longer, you can get more [old age pension] from the government.” I’ve been paying old age pension [to support my retirement] for over 30 years!

Later in the interview, the above participant talked about how her husband “encouraged” her to live longer, so as to obtain more benefits from the government. Despite the joking nature of the comment, it reflects the importance of government pension to fostering a high sense of belonging and attachment to Canada among the elderly. All nineteen participants who stated an intention to stay in Canada forever
touched upon the point of government pensions in slightly varying ways. This result is in line with a previous research on Hong Kong immigrants proving that life course transitions shape transnational behaviour (Kobayashi and Preston 2007). And it goes one step further to verify that life course changes also have influences on immigrants’ sense of belonging to Canada. As for the elderly Hong Kong participants, unlike middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants, being in their later years in life means that it is time to reap the benefits of the hard work they invested in during their working years. Staying in Canada would guarantee a monthly government subsidy, and an increasing duration of time spent in Canada subconsciously lifts their sense of belonging to the country. Regarding the younger generations, obtaining social benefits is absolutely not a compelling reason to feel a sense of belonging to Canada since most of them are still active in the workforce. In other words, a government pension is a unique factor to cultivating an enhanced sense of belonging among the elderly immigrants.

Besides financial benefits from a government pension, four participants made very insightful points about the “emotional comfort” they gained in Canada that elevated their sense of belonging in and fondness for Canada. The following account is a very lively example and an accurate comparison between Canadians and Hong Kongnese:

P1: My son’s [western] friends are nice. Yes, I think I can generate some comparison between Canadians and Hong Kongnese. I immigrated in 1986 and visited Hong Kong in 1990. Wow! I hadn’t gone back in just four years, but when I asked about the prices of the products in a grocery store, I was scolded because I touched the products with my bare hands and asked about the price. I immediately thought to myself, “This [Hong Kong] is not a place for human beings to inhabit.” I perceive that Vancouver or Canada is the best. The difference [between Canadians and Hong Kongnese] is huge.
From a shopping experience back in Hong Kong after spending four years in Canada, this participant felt profoundly that Canadians are nice and easy-going, and this prompted her desire to go back to Canada. In fact, Canadians are acclaimed to be nice and gentle within North America and across the world. This characteristic appeals to some elderly participants to settle in Canada and develop a sense of belonging to the country. Ironically, while some participants are drawn to the Canadian milieu because of friendly Canadians, others are disgruntled about the immigration experience in light of racism from the dominant white population. We shall look into this dilemma in the next theme on racism; however, before moving on to the third theme, two participants also succinctly compared Canadians and Hong Kongnese to justify their higher attachment to Canadian society on the whole. The following account summarizes it all:

P14: At the period when I was still in Hong Kong, human relationships used to be utterly genuine and sincere, just like Canada. We cared for each other, helped each other ... unlike now, from what I see and experience, [Hong Kongnese] care about money more than anything. They don’t care about the others, and they are egocentric. ... I really don’t appreciate this aspect.

From this quote, one can feel the changes of Hong Kong from a caring society to an incredibly materialistic world city paralleled with rapid development and globalization. For outsiders not originating from Hong Kong, the disappointment with Hong Kongnese might be impalpable. For Hong Kong immigrants who witnessed the changes and thus are able to make first-hand comparisons between the two national contexts, overly materialistic Hong Kong serves as a legitimate reason to attach themselves to Canada and develop a new level of belonging to the country.
We have until now seen that a significant number of elderly participants in this research intend to spend the rest of their lives in Canada, and that they have a high sense of belonging to the country on the whole. It is evident that elderly Hong Kong immigrants are not hyper-mobile transnationals between Canada and Asia. Furthermore, the questionnaire surveys show that all thirty-five elderly participants but two possess dual citizenship (Table 4.1a). Previous research has analyzed the practicality of holding dual citizenship among Hong Kong-Chinese Canadians and offered conclusions that dual citizenship is not a “convenience” but a “commitment.” (Preston, Siemiatycki et al. 2006) The elderly participants in this research corroborate this argument and show that even though dual citizenship grants the rights to hold both the Canadian passport and the Hong Kong Identity Card, the Hong Kong identity is merely a means of easier re-entry to Hong Kong and is unrelated to patriotism. For those elderly who hold dual citizenship, physical transnational movement is limited and sense of belonging to Canada is high. In this sense, dual citizenship is both a “convenience” and a “commitment.”

Other than the twenty-one participants who are committed to Canada after immigration, there exist three participants who chose being both Canadian and Hong Kongese simultaneously, ten participants who cling to Hong Kong more than Canada even though they are physically present in Vancouver, and one participant who couldn’t decide where she thinks she belongs (Figure 5.1). The most probable reason for the struggle is nostalgia for Hong Kong. Two participants put their minds clearly in words:

P8: I’m still concerned about Hong Kong ... current affairs, government issues, social milieu, etc. ... Of course I’m concerned about Vancouver and Canada as well because I live here ... but I have emotions towards Hong Kong, emotional ties. You can’t uproot yourself completely all of a sudden. No I can’t ... I can’t ... I still
read Chinese newspapers to keep abreast of the news ... I will love Hong Kong unless Hong Kong doesn’t love me anymore, right? I still miss Hong Kong.

While this participant felt a higher level of attachment to Hong Kong than to Canada because of passion towards Hong Kong that has never been put out, the following participant articulated a similar sentiment:

P9: Actually I miss Hong Kong somehow. ... I was born in Hong Kong, I’m nostalgic towards Hong Kong even though I’m in Canada now. I grew up there and lived there for a long time. ... I can visualize the human relations there, the love from my family ... my heart is still in Hong Kong ... to be honest, I don’t like a foreign place. Vancouver is still exotic to me. ... If time could be reversed, I’d choose to stay in Hong Kong. I have a little regret immigrating here.

It might be this type of nostalgia that prompted some elderly respondents to retain a higher sense of belonging to Hong Kong than to Canada, or that they simply could not decide. Nevertheless, over half of the participants still expressed a high sense of belonging to Canada and planned to stay in Canada until they die. As it seems, nostalgia might not be the sole criterion at play; immediate family members and social benefits might be other determining factors on a sense of belonging among the participants. We shall analyze in greater detail why some elderly participants belong more to Canada while the others belong more to Hong Kong in the last section of this chapter under theme five.

The last finding regarding sense of belonging to Canada among the participants is amusing and concludes this theme effectively. During the interviews, six participants revealed that they had made preparations for their deaths by having purchased a “feng shui” (Chinese geomancy) graveyard in a cemetery in Vancouver. Most of them said this in a light-hearted, flighty manner, as shown in the following account:
Neville: Have you ever considered spending the rest of your life in Vancouver or Canada?

P12: I will. I have already bought the land [graveyard] ... ha ha [laughing cheerfully] ... I don’t mind and I don’t care ... wherever I go, it’s just my body. Even if I die in Hong Kong, people would not pay tribute to my graveyard for more than three generations...

And another participant presented similar sentiments:

P1: Ha, I have even bought a graveyard! Do you think I’m not spending the rest of my life in Vancouver? I bought it in ... 1989 or 1990 ... I have totally laid my roots here.

The above quotes demonstrate the determination of some elderly immigrants to belong to Canada, which matches the general findings under this theme and is indicative of a high sense of belonging to Canada despite holding dual citizenship. Despite this high sense of belonging, the elderly participants have on the other hand indicated restricted citizenship practice in the questionnaire surveys. Most of them are members of Hong Kong associations in Canada but not any other groups, probably because they can function entirely in a Hong Kongnese social context with Cantonese as the medium of communication and thus do not feel alone. This tendency in citizenship practice is highly related to English language ability and is the focus of the remaining part under the theme of citizenship and citizenship practice.

Language and Citizenship Practice

As discussed in the literature review, citizenship and citizenship practice are distinct concepts with respect to the experience of immigrants. Citizenship means formal recognition of the rights and duties of citizens towards a country, as reflected in the
possession of a country’s passport and rights to vote and join political parties. On the other hand, citizenship practice denotes actual civic participation in society such as voting (as opposed to having the right to vote), donating to civil society and volunteering in organizations (Preston, Siemiętycki et al. 2006). The elderly participants in this research have shown in the questionnaire surveys an extremely high rate of naturalization (all thirty-five participants but two), thus significant formal citizenship acquisition; however, a noticeable number of them insinuated to a lack of citizenship practice in Canadian society due to English language difficulty. In fact, only six participants out of thirty-five indicated capability to communicate in simple English in the questionnaire surveys, with the remainder being fluent only in Cantonese. It leads to the query about whether the participants are able to integrate into Canadian society as much as they feel a high sense of belonging to Canada.

During the interviews, the participants were asked a question about whether they had encountered any problems in daily life owing to low English proficiency, and the answers led to some noteworthy results. The most notable one points to a lack of citizenship practice because of limited English proficiency, as summarized in the following quote:

P9: Yes, language problem is huge [stressed]. ... If I didn’t have language barrier, I could perhaps do a lot more in Canada; for example, in SUCCESS, I couldn’t help out with anything in English, but many documents are written in English. ... I also can’t make many friends because of this language barrier; I can only make Chinese friends.

The above participant exemplifies the problem of poor English and lack of citizenship participation in organizations despite a strong intent to engage. Compared to the other participants, P9 is very well-educated with a university degree obtained in Hong
Kong; yet she ironically earned a minimal household income in Canada and in myriad ways felt constrained by her meagre English standards in social functioning. For a few participants who are not even as well-educated as P9, poor English proficiency has lowered their self-esteem and confidence to contribute to Canadian society:

P13: In the first few years after immigrating to Canada, my English standard was not good. I had tremendous difficulty communicating with westerners. As a result, I felt a little ... self-deprecatory. But the story is different in Hong Kong, I can navigate through society using Chinese. ... I am worried about my health in Canada because I can’t communicate with the doctors in English.

The above quote is reinforced by some other participants’ experience in the Canadian workplace. It is obvious that language difficulty is preventing elderly participants from engaging actively in civic affairs despite their commitment to Canadian society. Many elderly participants have figured out ways to deal with the predicament, namely to restrict their activities within Chinese groups and Chinese associations such as SUCCESS. Eleven participants spoke of the coping strategy to dedicate completely to Chinese society or to associate solely with Cantonese- or Mandarin-speaking Chinese people at all times. This can explain why the elderly participants have low citizenship practice in spite of high hopes. The following account is a pointed summary of lack of citizenship practice of elderly Chinese in Vancouver:

Neville: You mentioned that your English is not good, so when you first arrived in Canada, how did you cope with life in general?

P1: Haven’t you seen how many Chinese there are in Vancouver?! Even the factory I used to work at was owned by a Chinese boss. English is just ... a bonus. When I walk outside on the street, perhaps I need to use some English, but that’s enough. ... Of course I don’t have any chances to use English, why do I have to use English?
This participant constantly questioned the interviewer on the necessity to speak good English in a big city like Vancouver that sees a large number of Hong Kong-Chinese. In one way, this attitude to stay completely within the Chinese enclave is somewhat exaggerated; in another way, the above quotation affirms the incapability of many elderly to participate in society because of poor English. Consequently, they are seemingly “isolating” themselves from the mainstream by clinging to Chinese communities and Chinese associations completely, while the fact is that they lack the credentials to whole-heartedly engage in civic affairs of the larger society.

Until now, it appears convincing that the elderly participants obtain formal citizenship but are limited in their citizenship practice to voluntary activities in the Chinese community. Surprisingly, two participants contended that lack of English proficiency did not affect their daily lives or participation in society. It is worth some scope to analyze these opinions:

P5: Well, naturally it’s better for your daily life if you speak good English. But it is not a big deal in Vancouver as long as you know some English. For example, in a western firm, I can use simple English for communication ... and there are too many [sic] Chinese stores in Vancouver, it’s not a problem to speak poor English.

This participant articulated an absence of inconvenience in daily life in Vancouver even with poor English. Apparently, the whole argument makes sense; however, further probing and matching with questionnaire data filled out by this participant reveal that he had not encountered any difficulty in daily life because he shielded himself completely within the Chinese community. Revisiting the point in this part, this participant has absolutely no citizenship practice in Canadian society, and is
oblivious to any opportunities to engage in civic affairs in his place of residence. P5 is a
typical retired immigrant with almost no English proficiency and just a few years of
elementary education. Among the thirty-five participants, all of them operate primarily in
their own Chinese communities. It might be a sampling bias that the services provided by
SUCCESS are targeted at immigrants with a relatively lower socio-economic status and
therefore wealthier immigrants who may have connections with the larger Canadian
society were not recruited in this research. A contentious argument emerges here: whether
participating entirely in Chinese communities in Canada qualifies as citizenship
participation, or one has to contribute to larger Canadian society for the benefits of
everybody in order to claim the title of citizenship practice. To answer this question is
inherently difficult and needs to take account of multiculturalism, immigration and
theories of racism to justify the proposition. It is not the intention of this research to offer
an answer to this question, but future researchers are very likely to come up with more
specific definitions of citizenship and citizenship practice to better address the
experiences and behaviour of immigrants.

To sum up, most elderly Hong Kong immigrant participants have a high sense of
belonging to Canada despite holding dual citizenship, and most of them had obtained
formal citizenship at the earliest possible date; nevertheless, lack of English language
proficiency has prevented them from actively engaging in mainstream civic societies. As
a coping strategy, they “isolate” themselves within Chinese communities such as
SUCCESS and interact solely with other Chinese-speaking residents in Vancouver. In
short, they have claimed citizenship, but are not participating in citizenship.
Closely related to citizenship and citizenship practice are experiences of racism. Over time, there have been racial tensions between the dominant white population and Chinese immigrants in various districts of Vancouver. Some white residents accused Chinese immigrants of being never ready to participate in Canadian society, and Chinese immigrants reproached them as being barbaric racists (Edgington, Goldberg et al. 2003). It is worthwhile to elicit the opinions and experiences of racism among the elderly Hong Kong participants who might have resided in Vancouver for decades or as recent as a few years. In the next section, we shall focus on the experiences of racism among the participants and the implications from the results.

Theme Three: Experiences of Racism

Racial discrimination against Chinese immigrants in Vancouver and Toronto generated heated debate at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s. With much effort from the government and various organizations, discourses of racism have seemingly subsided in recent years. Previously, research on Hong Kong immigrants has analyzed racial discrimination experiences of the middle-aged group as well as younger generations in the workplace. There also exists some research aiming to reveal racial tensions resulting from “monster houses” and the inflated housing markets purportedly resulting from Hong Kong speculators; however, the experiences of racism facing elderly Hong Kong immigrants have apparently been left out of the agenda. The elderly are not actively involved in the Canadian job market, thus are generally believed to encounter less racism in their daily lives. The truth is, they may be facing different forms of racism in settings
other than the workplace. Their experiences have important policy implications for the
Canadian government that proactively promotes multiculturalism and anti-racism.

In this research, there are a couple of questions intended to guide the elderly
participants to recount any racial discrimination experiences and their general views
towards racial issues in Vancouver. Their response leads to some interesting conclusions,
and quite a few are unexpected and contrary to the experiences of younger generations.
For starters, a noticeable result from the interview transcripts is that a significant number
of elderly participants strongly stated that racism was not an issue they confronted in their
daily lives. In total, eleven participants mentioned that they had never encountered racism
or there was less racism nowadays compared to when they first immigrated to Canada.
The following quotes capture the essence of this feeling:

P15: In terms of race relations, they [whites] don’t discriminate against us, we
don’t discriminate against them; they are even very polite towards us. ... I don’t
know much about freedom of speech...

P16: There is not much racial discrimination here [in Vancouver] ... having
contact with Chinese, speaking Chinese, I mostly speak with Chinese friends. For
western friends, those interactions are shallow, like greeting ... yes, like my
neighbours ... but my English is not good enough for deeper conversations, and I
still try to look for friends who are Chinese...

P2: Never experienced racial discrimination here. We don’t know how to
communicate [with whites]. We don’t have any feelings towards them, except that
older white people are very courteous towards us.

These are typical examples of respondents indicating no or little racial
discrimination in their daily lives in Vancouver. Apparently, racism is no longer a
pressing issue in Vancouver; however, it does not take much effort to realize one
commonality of all the above accounts: most elderly participants have little or no contact
with the white population, and this has obscured the way they understand racial dynamics in their place of residence. More generally, five out of the eleven participants mentioned that they were associating entirely with Chinese and had absolutely no interaction with people from other ethnocultural groups outside of the Chinese community. On the other hand, eleven participants (not the same group from above) talked about an inability to understand racist incidents happening around their lives, even when these happened, because of language barriers. These findings are very informative of the way in which they penetrate the facade of racial harmony in Vancouver and point directly at the almost complete lack of interaction across ethnocultural groups despite prolonged efforts to promote multiculturalism. Simply put, the participants think that there is no racism in Vancouver because their lifestyle does not facilitate interactions across the racial line. With no contact comes no perception of racial discrimination. With these credentials, they are mostly excluded from the mainstream where interactions between ethnocultural groups are an integral part of daily life. Not being equipped with the tools to interpret racial dynamics, especially the linguistic tools, these elderly participants cling completely to the Chinese community and thus reported no experiences of racism throughout their times in Vancouver. It is suggested here that informed interpretations of their life world might be affected by their socio-economic background.

Not every participant indicated no experiences of racism in Vancouver during the interviews. Some participants did vividly describe incidents of racial discrimination at a distinct time period after immigration and at specific locales. Among those accounts, the participants frequently gave examples of racist incidents either at the bus stop or on the bus. As a matter of fact, racial discrimination against visible minorities related to the public transportation system is a very common “legend” that circulates throughout the
country either as anecdotes or in media reports. It has been shown in the literature review that this type of “everyday racism” is inherently difficult to quantify or measure because it involves feelings, attitudes and beliefs. It is only through in-depth interviews or focus groups that this type of hidden racist incidents rises to the surface. It is worthwhile to dig deeper into what actually happened to the participants in this research either at the bus stop or on the bus. The following two accounts epitomize the “bus stop racist phenomenon,” and in these scenarios the drivers are invariably white and the victims are people of colour:

P13: Yes, yes! As Chinese, I have the feeling that we’re discriminated against; for instance, if I see a bus at the bus stop and run to catch it, the [white] bus driver will deliberately shut the door and take off ... but I have also seen the same thing happened to a Caucasian or westerner. The [white] bus driver waited and opened the door! These examples are subtle but painful. ... It happens often, even nowadays!

P4: Racial discrimination incidents? Let me tell you, while I wait at the bus stop, and the [white] bus driver sees that you’re a person of colour, they will intentionally move the bus closer to white passengers in the line and farther away from you. It was like that before and the situation persists until nowadays. ... Also, if I line up with a white woman, I’d always have to let her get on the bus before me, or she would become upset and rude.

The above examples demonstrate possible subtle forms of everyday racism still lingering in Vancouver after decades of advocacy of multiculturalism in Canada; however, anecdotes of racist incidents are not restricted to the bus stop; they also surface on the bus:

P12: I was always scolded on the bus when talking in Chinese or Cantonese. We just ignored the westerners, and they continued to say, “You are in Canada and you have to speak English.” They didn’t understand that learning a new language is very tough ... and when I got home, my husband said, “Next time when this happens to you again, ask them politely if they’d speak French in a place where French is the dominant language used? And they will probably shut up.”
From my personal interactions with the Hong Kong Chinese community in Vancouver, these experiences are vivid and being told and retold in the circle of Chinese. We ought not to jump to the conclusion that racial discrimination remains severe in the 21st century entirely from these anecdotes. There are other aspects to take into account.

One common characteristic of the elderly participants in this research, as repeated in several places already, is that most of them come from a relatively lower socio-economic status with limited English language ability. Racial interaction and cultural understanding require credentials in individuals such as communication tools (language, knowledge of different cultures, etc) as well as motivation to seek out possibilities to foster cross-cultural linkages. With regard to the elderly participants, poor English hinders communication with the white population, a lower socio-economic status reduces the chance to participate in social events where people from different ethnocultural groups gather, and having plenty of readily available Chinese friends in Vancouver puts out the spark to seek non-Chinese friends. These backgrounds raise doubts about the interpretation of everyday racist incidents among the elderly. Do they report racist incidents because of lack of cultural understanding? Or do those experiences either at the bus stop or on the bus reflect the real intentions of white passengers or just “wishful thinking” of people of colour? These questions pin down one of the most controversial aspects of racism studies, i.e. a multitude of racist incidents are painfully felt by the victims but remain largely invisible to the white perpetrators (Henry, Tator et al. 2000).

Consequently, the validity of the reported cases at the bus stop or on the bus is challenged.

Every coin has two sides. The complexity of racist incidents on the bus is enhanced by three elderly participants who presented strong views on how well white passengers treated them on the bus:
P3: In public transportation, they [white people] are very polite towards us. They give seats all the time!

P21: Some [white passengers] are very good, very respectful to us as elderly. They acknowledge you. ... Some [white] drivers are also very polite too! It just depends on the person.

These two elderly participants are also situated in families with a lower socio-economic status and with limited English proficiency; however, their experiences on the bus are different from other participants who felt immense racism in Vancouver. The divergence warrants some doubts about whether the participants are exaggerating experiences of racism due to lack of realistic understanding, while the others are fortunate enough not having encountered racist incidents years after immigrating, or if they cannot or do not want to see racist actions towards them. “It just depends on the person”; this quote sheds important light on the origins of racism. Whether discrimination arises because of individual personality or lies in the broader issue of “race” is subject to a never-ending debate. Rather unexpectedly, four participants dismissed the claims of racism committed by the dominant white population to other ethnocultural groups by narrating stories of Chinese discriminating against Chinese. These accounts further dilute the accusations of racism towards the white population. First, the following quote asserts that discrimination is just “human nature” and is not necessarily related to race:

P2: There will be cases of racism anyhow. Even within Chinese groups who speak the same language and share the same culture, there are such [discriminatory] attitudes. ... For example, many mainland Chinese immigrants are discriminated against by Hong Kong Chinese. Hong Kong Chinese use derogatory terms to address them. They’ve grown oblivious to the fact that both of them are Chinese.
Some participants faced discrimination on the street, while others confronted the trouble in the workplace:

P4: Any racist incidents? Yes, Chinese discriminate against Chinese. When I first moved to Canada, I worked in a garment factory. The boss was nice but the other Chinese workers were jealous of me and together discriminated against me.

These participants all agreed on the fact that discrimination is an integral part of life. When there are differences in class, status or ideas, discrimination ensues. An undertone from these accounts is that there is no need to overplay racism and attribute any discriminatory behaviour to racism. This point sounds valid, at least from the limited evidence garnered during the interviews. No one can yet give a convincing answer to whether racism really exists on the bus, or it is only magnified in the eyes of an ethnocultural minority and then projected outwards. In order to propose a statistically reliable answer, further research should look into comparing racist incidents on the bus from the perspectives of middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants and the perspectives of the elderly. The former cohorts are supposedly better able to understand their life world by possessing higher English language ability; also it would be interesting to compare different perspectives from different age groups to arrive at meaningful interpretations of the ethnic mosaic in Vancouver.

Although it is impossible to propose explanations to account for the experiences of racism among the elderly participants, most notably on the bus or at the bus stop, one participant talked about a strategy employed to preclude misunderstanding between ethnocultural groups. In the following quote, we could sense the role of courtesy and respect in cross-cultural interactions:
Neville: What should we do to facilitate cross-cultural interactions in Vancouver?

P8: Politeness [sharp and firm]. I’m not someone who knows how to talk, whether it’s in English, Cantonese or Mandarin ... ha ha ... human relations are like mirrors, you treat someone nice, as time goes by, that person will return the favour, right? Ha ha ... one needs to plough before one can reap. By being polite, those westerners would think, “the Chinese are not that bad after all, lacking English proficiency is not their fault.” Courtesy is utterly important. If you’re ugly, you can’t do much to change the fact, but people will like you if you’re polite ... and you need to be confident.

This particular account sums it all: with no involvement in the workplace, limited English, and virtually no connection with whites in their daily lives, politeness is a viable way to ensure that people are living harmoniously and to avoid misunderstanding. At first glance, this approach is a win-win solution in which Hong Kong elderly can maintain harmony with whites while keeping their Chinese lifestyle intact; however, politeness does not enhance cross-cultural understanding, worse still, it could be a form of “othering.” In other words, being polite towards people from other ethnocultural groups will lower the chance of conflicts, but it might simultaneously coalesce people within their own social circles and could be arguably a subtle variation of racism in itself.

To conclude all the findings under the theme of racism, a significant number of elderly participants reported no or little racial discrimination happening in Vancouver. Unfortunately, this promising result is dispelled by the fact that most participants originate from a lower socio-economic status with limited English proficiency and involvement in Canadian society. Coupled with diverging accounts of racist incidents on the bus or at the bus stop, it is possible that racism in Vancouver is attributed to misinterpretation and misunderstanding of people’s real intentions rather than actually
existing racism. Courtesy could be the key to shattering misunderstanding, but it could simultaneously be a means to perpetuate cultural othering. All in all, whether racism continues to be a hidden bomb in Vancouver or has improved by way of official policy of multiculturalism is open to question.

Theme Four: Overall Immigration Experience

Towards the end of the interviews, participants were asked to describe their overall immigration experience irrespective of length of residence in Canada. The participants balanced their encounters with respect to transnational behaviour, citizenship and citizenship practice, experiences of racism, and then stated their overall perception of the decision to immigrate to Canada. From the preceding discussions in this chapter, it is not difficult to predict the general response to this question. The majority of elderly participants, twenty-seven out of thirty-five or 77.1%, expressed high to very high satisfaction with regard to the immigration decision and Canadian living; seven could not decide on an answer, and only one was dissatisfied (Figure 5.2). The reasons underpinning the results are readily comprehensible; a large number of the elderly are able to maintain close social ties to family members, relatives and friends in Hong Kong through telephone or email while staying close to their immediate families; most of them feel a high sense of belonging to Canada; and quite a few face purportedly no racial tension in their daily lives. On top of that, an equally large number of participants are being “taken care of” by the social benefits system of the Canadian government. With all these benefits, it is understandable that why some elderly are eager to spend the rest of their lives in Canada.
To be more specific, there appear two major categories of reasons why most participants are satisfied with the overall immigration experience. They are satisfied either because they are living a fulfilling life themselves or their children or grandchildren are savouring a lifestyle they enjoy. For the former group, the following two responses are typical and summarize the delight of Canadian living to the elderly participants:

P16: I’m very satisfied with the immigration experience. Well, how to say, I think living conditions are much better [in Vancouver] than in Hong Kong. The environment is so much nicer. ... In the workplace, I mostly worked in a Chinese factory and there was no communication problem. The welfare system is also good and education for the kids is excellent.

P21: I’m satisfied because I like the environment. I think it’s comfortable here, spacious and the air is good. People are also very nice! What else would I demand?! Everyone seems so happy when they talk to you ... and government support. ... I always wanted to live in a paradise, but coming here is almost like a paradise. ... Canada meets all my ideals.

For an elderly person, happiness is repeatedly stated as the most sought-after pursuit in life. In Canada, there is a nice environment, friendly people, and regular
pension through the support of the government. Also, virtually all participants have family members in Vancouver. It is indeed a dream come true. Besides the fact that the elderly participants themselves are good, a smaller but similarly remarkable number of participants indicated a high level of satisfaction because their children are benefiting from immigration, as exemplified by the following two short accounts:

P1: I’m satisfied with the immigration experience. I wouldn’t say too satisfied since my marriage has flaws. But both of my two children are having good jobs in Canada. ... If they stayed in Hong Kong, I wonder if they would even be smart enough to enter university.

P11: I wouldn’t regret the immigration decision because I brought my children to Canada to receive better education. That was my primary purpose. I don’t care much about myself but I want my children to be good. And they like this place!

To some participants, children and grandchildren’s well-being outweighs their own, since they are already in the later years of their lives. Whatever the reasons, the main point to note is that most elderly participants are either very satisfied or satisfied with the immigration experience, and they regard the immigration decision to be a wise choice, especially after they have settled down in Vancouver over the years. For the seven participants who cannot gauge their satisfaction level and the one participant who is dissatisfied with the immigration experience, there exist a bunch of factors to explain the tendency, most notably separation from children between Hong Kong and Canada. In the next section, we shall group the participants carefully based on their unique attributes in order to pore deeply into the interview transcripts and expose the elements of “elderly” and “generation” that mould the lives of the participants. Some previous points from Chapter IV and this chapter will be revisited at greater length and new insights will be brought to the fore.

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Theme Five: Multigenerational Transnational Family Arrangements

The preceding discussion has depicted general accounts of experiences among the participants; however, the elements of “elderly” and “generation” are highly pertinent to this group of participants and have yet to be explored. In this section, we shall deepen the analysis to elicit observed patterns regarding sense of belonging, overall immigration experience and perception of racism among the elderly participants. The thirty-five participants are grouped according to their backgrounds and attributes. The four categories include i) location of children ii) types of immediate family in Hong Kong iii) sequences of immigration and iv) employment status. All the data in this section come entirely from the interview transcripts.

Location of Children

i. Children in Canada only vs. Children in both Canada and Hong Kong—sense of belonging

It is assumed that location of children unavoidably shapes the sense of belonging to Canada and the overall immigration experience of the participants. As a result, the elderly participants are grouped into children in Canada only and children in both Canada and Hong Kong. The category of children only in Hong Kong does not exist and is therefore left out of the analysis. In total, there are eighteen participants having children only in Canada, nine participants having children both in Canada and Hong Kong, two participants having no children and the remaining six participants having children in Canada and other parts of the world.
With respect to sense of belonging, it is notable that elderly participants having children only in Canada exhibit significantly higher sense of belonging to Canada (Figure 5.3) compared to those having children both in Canada and Hong Kong (Figure 5.4). On the other hand, a higher percentage of participants cannot articulate their sense of belonging if they have children both in Canada and Hong Kong compared to those who have children in Canada only. The following quote summarizes this tendency among participants who use location of children to justify their sense of belonging:

P11: Probably I will spend the rest of my life in Canada. My children are all here in Canada. I’m not sure if I’d get used to lifestyle in Hong Kong again, but I’ll come back to live with my children here. ... Honestly I like both places [Canada and Hong Kong], I still miss Hong Kong somehow, but my children are all here and I’ll live here for the rest of my life. ... I grew up in Hong Kong but I don’t think there’s anything I miss about that place.

This participant constantly offered ambiguous opinions towards her sense of belonging; however, when prompted to pick only one place that she would adhere to and call home, she eventually chose Canada because “all of my children are in Canada.” This quote is a typical response among participants who have children only in Canada, and demonstrates the utmost significance of closeness to children in cultivating a sense of belonging to a place.
ii. Children in Canada only vs. Children in both Canada and Hong Kong—overall immigration experience
With respect to overall immigration experience, the results are somewhat unexpected as they are not fully consistent with the above analysis. As seen in Figure 5.5, participants with children only in Canada show a wide range of opinions towards the overall immigration experience, while those with children in both Canada and Hong Kong are invariably satisfied with the immigration experience (Figure 5.6). This goes against the belief that elderly with children close at hand in Canada would regard the immigration experience more highly than those whose children are in Hong Kong. This observation is an enigma that could not be explained by the interview results and thus awaits further analysis in future studies. The sample of having no children is too small (two participants) to formulate convincing comparisons with the other participants.

Figure 5.5 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants whose children are in Canada only
Types of Immediate Family in Hong Kong

The next point of analysis is whether having children, having no children or having only siblings, friends and relatives in Hong Kong influences the ways in which the participants construe their immigration experience. In summary, there are twelve participants having children in Hong Kong, twenty participants having no children in Hong Kong, two participants not having children at all and one participant who did not indicate whether having children or not. The first part of this section concerns sense of belonging to Canada.

i. Having children vs. no children vs. only siblings, relatives and friends in Hong Kong—sense of belonging
The findings with respect to sense of belonging align closely with conventional beliefs that having children in Hong Kong boosts a sense of belonging to Hong Kong while not having children in Hong Kong lifts a sense of belonging to Canada.

Comparing Figures 5.7, 5.8 and 5.9, it is readily observable that a larger percentage of participants having children in Hong Kong demonstrates a sense of belonging to Hong Kong (Figure 5.7), while a higher percentage of participants not having children in Hong Kong exhibit a sense of belonging to Canada (Figure 5.8). In addition, the results from participants having only siblings, friends and relatives in Hong Kong are particularly revealing. All participants falling under this category articulate a sense of belonging to Canada (Figure 5.9). It nonetheless points to the fact that children is the primary factor determining a sense of belonging as opposed to siblings, relatives and friends. To be more specific, among the immediate family, children outweigh siblings and relatives in influencing a sense of belonging among the elderly participants.

When prompted to identify either as Canadian or Hong Kongnese, the following participant gave a very acute insight:

P18: Of course I’m still concerned about Hong Kong! My children and grandchildren are still in Hong Kong, I often talk to them over the phone. ... When I first immigrated here, it was tough because I couldn’t find a job and there were not many Chinese in Vancouver. I studied hard and learnt some skills, and life improved a little later.

P18 has been in Canada for eighteen years and toiled her way through the career ladder. Despite the hard work, she could only manage to attain a medium household income before retirement. Also a noteworthy point is that she has children, siblings and friends in Hong Kong and also children in Canada. Throughout the interview, she only
linked her sense of belonging to the location of children without ever mentioning the importance of her siblings. It may reveal that children is a determining factor of sense of belonging compared to siblings. An observation that cannot be explained in this account is why P18 feels more committed to Hong Kong even though she has children in both Canada and Hong Kong, and this question asks for more analysis in future research.

While P18 talked about her children and grandchildren, the following participant mentioned relationships with siblings and friends in Hong Kong in amusing terms:

P15: Family members [siblings] and friends in Hong Kong? What kind of substantial contacts do we have being in different continents?! When you see them, we just joke around and laugh together, [there’s] no big deal ... for siblings, once we got married and formed our own families, we began to drift apart. This is normal; every family is like that. ... I don’t really have much contact with my siblings [in Hong Kong] now.

P15 gave an excellent account of how the elderly participants generally approach their relationships with siblings and friends in Hong Kong. He has been in Canada for twenty-one years and was already retired before migration. At this later stage in life, he was the same as the other participants in this research; siblings and friends no longer weigh heavily in their hearts. The members in the immediate family that they are truly concerned about are their children. Other than this small circle, nobody else in the immediate family seems to influence their sense of belonging to and perhaps overall immigration experience in Canada.
Figure 5.7 Sense of belonging of elderly participants having children in Hong Kong

Figure 5.8 Sense of belonging of elderly participants having no children in Hong Kong
ii. Having children vs. no children vs. only siblings, relatives and friends in Hong Kong—overall immigration experience

With regard to overall immigration experience, no observable pattern can be drawn from the data. It is assumed that participants having children in Canada are more satisfied with the overall immigration experience; however, this postulation does not hold among the thirty-five participants. According to Figure 5.10, participants with children in Hong Kong are invariably satisfied with the immigration experience, while Figure 5.11 reveals that those participants having no children in Hong Kong show a wide variety of opinions towards the immigration experience. The results in Figure 5.12 are even more meaningless owing to a very small sample size of two participants. A conclusion from the three figures is whether having children in Hong Kong or not might not be a deciding factor of the overall immigration experience. There could exist other
influential parameters such as employment opportunities, experiences of racism and personal factors.

Figure 5.10 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants having children in Hong Kong

Figure 5.11 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants having no children in Hong Kong
Sequences of Immigration

Another distinguishing attribute of the participants is whether they immigrated to Canada before, after or with their children, provided that their children had or have been in Canada at some point in time. In total, six participants came to Canada before their children, sixteen came after their children for reunion, ten came with their children, two have no children and one participant did not indicate having children or not. Again, the first section looks at sense of belonging of the elderly participants with differing sequences of immigration.

i. Coming to Canada before Children vs. after Children vs. with Children—sense of belonging
Comparing the results demonstrated in Figures 5.13, 5.14 and 5.15, two interesting observations emerge. The first one is that participants who immigrated to Canada before their children, either giving birth to children after coming to Canada or bringing their children from Hong Kong to Canada after they arrived, are uniformly more committed to Canada than to Hong Kong (Figure 5.13). This may not come as a surprise because this group of immigrants have been in Canada for the longest period of time and are most likely to have built their career in Canada before having children. For the following participant who is now retired but has been in Canada for twenty-two years and had worked in Canada for almost two decades:

P1: My heart is not in Hong Kong anymore. I have laid my roots here [in Canada], since I came here I belong here. I never toyed with the idea of returning to Hong Kong and frankly I don’t miss Hong Kong. ... After my son graduated from college in Canada, I disallowed him to look for a job in Hong Kong. Come on! We spent so much effort to come to this wonderland, why should we split up the family and retrace our roots? I asked him then, “You’re Canadian now, when you get old, will you come back here?” He answered, “Yes.” And so I told him he had to stay, a single person cannot belong to two different places, he has to pick a side and stick to it ... and he finally listened to me and stayed, look he’s quite good now!

At first glance, this account might appear a little exaggerated regarding the strong sense of belonging to Canada; however, it exemplifies the rationale among the six participants in this research who immigrated to Canada before their children the way in which initial hardships and years of adjustment had sharpened their loyalty and liking towards this country they now call home. All the other five participants other than P1 expressed similar sentiments but P1 captured the essence and put the thoughts into words. A fact not to be overlooked is that these participants are characterized by financial
independence, relatively higher educational attainment and longer period of immigration compared to those who came to Canada after their children or with their children.

The second notable observation is that a high percentage (60%) of participants who came to Canada with their children as a family indicated a sense of belonging to Hong Kong (Figure 5.15). This observation is interesting yet beyond comprehension from the interview transcripts in this research. This group of elderly immigrant participants most likely immigrated to Canada with their young children while they were in their thirties or forties and stayed thereafter. They may not have spent as much time in Canada compared to those coming before their children, but they have stayed in Canada for long enough to have established their career and laid down roots, especially compared to those who came for reunion after their children came to Canada. The interview materials could not account for the reasons of this tendency, and the question also lays some groundwork for further research.

Figure 5.13 Sense of belonging of elderly participants who came to Canada before their children
Figure 5.14 Sense of belonging of elderly participants who came to Canada after their children

Figure 5.15 Sense of belonging of elderly participants who came to Canada with their children

ii. Coming to Canada before Children vs. after Children vs. with Children—overall immigration experience
With respect to overall immigration experience, the results from the interview transcripts do not show distinct patterns. From Figures 5.16 and 5.17, elderly participants who came to Canada before and after their children exhibit similar levels of satisfaction, with 83 percent being satisfied and very satisfied among those who came before children (Figure 5.16) and 88 percent being satisfied and very satisfied among those who came after children (Figure 5.17). The corresponding participants in each category did not mention anything telling to explain why they feel satisfied with immigration or otherwise. It could be their own financial situation in Canada, their children’s education opportunities or benefits to the entire family that shape their perception of the immigration. This tendency among the participants remains murky and is beyond explanation from the data collected in this research.

![Before Children](image)

Figure 5.16 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants who came to Canada before their children
Figure 5.17 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants who came to Canada after their children

Figure 5.18 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants who came to Canada with their children

Employment Status
The last query looks at whether employment history in Canada shapes a sense of belonging, overall immigration experience and perception of racism among the elderly participants. In summary, twenty participants came to Canada to work before retirement, while the remaining fifteen came directly for retirement. The first section looks at sense of belonging among the elderly participants.

i. Coming to Canada to work before retirement vs. coming directly for retirement—sense of belonging

Regarding sense of belonging, participants who had worked in Canada before retirement generally hold a higher sense of belonging to Canada compared to those who had not worked in Canada before retirement. According to Figure 5.19, 70 percent of participants who had worked in Canada before retirement show a sense of belonging to Canada, while in Figure 5.20, only 47 percent of elderly participants who came directly for retirement are committed to Canada. There are two probable explanations for this phenomenon. First, those participants who had worked in Canada before generally came to Canada at a younger age and subsequently have spent longer periods of time in this country compared to those who came directly for retirement. It is logical to assume that spending more time in a place enhances feelings of attachment. Second, participants who had worked in Canada before retirement generally earned their current status through work and the accompanying integration processes. They had probably toiled through their career establishment and family building in Canada before they retired, thus their sense of belonging to Canada is higher than those who never worked in this country. As the following participant suggested:
P7: Now that I’m retired. You stay here [Canada] longer, you’d think that, “Wow! Canada is so comfortable and convenient, also provides us with welfare. Why should I return to Hong Kong? Why cramp myself back there? Hong Kong is hot and things are complicated and products are expensive. Really! And dirty as well.”

The above participant had moved to Canada thirty-eight years ago and had retired for a couple of years. Although P7 is relatively well-educated as a high school graduate and earned a medium household salary before retirement, she could still vividly recall the struggles an immigrant went through in the job market and in other aspects of life. She is finally entitled to the rights of claiming a pension, and this benefit raises her sense of belonging to Canada to a higher level.

Another less-educated participant exuded a patina of chagrin over the issue of entitlement to a government pension:

P4: They [immigrants who never worked in Canada] haven’t paid a cent of tax in Canada, but they could apply for social benefits. On the other hand, I have worked and lived here for 30 years and I just retired. How come I could only get 70 percent of the retirement fund while the others could get the full package? I worked here for thirty years! It is not fair to me! People came here, did nothing, stayed ten years, and get the benefits ... ha-ha [sarcastically].

This participant belongs to a lower education group, yet when it came to questions of social justice and social benefits, she became unexpectedly articulate and voiced disapproval at the system that privileged immigrants who never contributed to the Canadian economy. In the interview, she expressed a high sense of belonging to Canada despite the difficulties facing her on a daily basis, and her story corroborates the assumption that participation in the Canadian job market over a period of time raises one’s sense of belonging to Canada.
Figure 5.19 Sense of belonging of elderly participants who came to Canada and worked before retirement

Figure 5.20 Sense of belonging of elderly participants who came to Canada directly for retirement

ii. Coming to Canada to work before retirement vs. coming directly for retirement—overall immigration experience
Regarding overall immigration experience, the data in Figures 5.21 and 5.22 are less clear than the previous category of sense of belonging. Overall, 70 percent of participants who had worked in Canada before retirement indicates the immigration experience as either satisfying or very satisfying (Figure 5.21), while a higher percentage (87%) of participants who came directly for retirement indicate either satisfied or very satisfied with the immigration experience (Figure 5.22). From the interview transcripts, there exists a diverse range of possible reasons to account for the similarity between the two groups. Perhaps those who came to Canada directly for retirement are benefiting from the Canadian social benefits system without ever contributing to the local economy and thus sense a tinge of advantage over the others? Perhaps those who had worked in Canada had faced hardships and discrimination in the Canadian labour market that immensely affect the way they perceive immigration? As preceding sections have shown, no obvious observations can be derived for the overall immigration experience of the participants, and the underlying factors leading to the patterns have yet to be dug out.

Figure 5.21 Overall immigration experience of elderly participants who came to Canada and worked before retirement
iii. Coming to Canada to work before retirement vs. coming directly for retirement—perceptions of racism

This last observation is exceptionally pertinent because the greatest amount of racism in Canada actually happens in the workplace. It is worthwhile attempting to relate involvement in the labour market and perceptions of racism among the elderly participants. Analysis of the interview transcripts yields some interesting observations.

For those participants who were previously engaged in the Canadian workforce, eleven percent said there is serious racism in Canada (Figure 5.23), while not even one of those who had never participated in the job market said there is serious racism (Figure 5.24). This point corroborates the notion that racism in Canada occurs mostly in the workplace, as articulately summarized by the following participant:

P6: That [racism] was bad for me. ... That was really [stressed] bad for me! It was just that my English pronunciation is not very accurate, and people picked on me. I couldn’t pass the English oral exam and thus couldn’t be a registered nurse in
Canada. I was really depressed, that hurt me a great deal ... [And] my colleagues all looked down at me, Filipinos are very hard-working, but Indians are very lazy at work, they just can talk. I can’t talk and they picked on me. ... I earned so much less compared to [when I was in] Hong Kong.

The above participant is very well-educated with a graduate degree obtained in Hong Kong, earned a high household income of over $80,000 per year before retirement after having immigrated to Canada more than thirty years earlier. Yet, when discussing about injustice in the workplace, her speech was still replete with indignation over the unfair accreditation system and subtle discrimination over her English standard. As one can imagine, even an immigrant with such high educational level and household income is full of grievances in the Canadian workplace, let alone those who possess less human capital:

P4: Of course there is discrimination [in the workplace]! I was discriminated against. ... Chinese discriminate against Chinese ... oftentimes, the [Chinese] coworkers wouldn’t scold me in my face, but they’d belittle you behind your back, the experience was very disheartening, and I endured all displeasure all along. ... I worked in the same factory for thirty years, and I was always discriminated against at work, like saying I was stingy, poor and sycophantic to the boss.

Compared to P6, P4 was less fortunate in a multitude of ways. Similarly, P4 had immigrated to Canada more than thirty years earlier, but had only received elementary school education in Hong Kong and earned a household income of less than $20,000 per year in Canada before retirement. Throughout the interview, there was a mixed aura of anger and despair in everything coming from her mouth. More importantly, the account indicates that racism frequently happens in the workplace, whether it is whites discriminating against Chinese or Chinese discriminating against other Chinese.
On the other hand, a larger percentage of participants who came for retirement (33%) (Figure 5.24) reported no racism in Canada compared to twenty-one percent.
(Figure 5.23) from those who had worked in Canada. This may again point out that those elderly participants who had never worked in the Canadian labour market do not feel the heavy impacts of racism in Canada.

Looking at the general picture, the data in both Figures 5.23 and 5.24 are disconcerting. A total of 79 percent of the elderly participants who had worked in Canada before retirement (Figure 5.23) and 67 percent who had never worked in Canada (Figure 5.24) perceive the existence of racism or have personally encountered racism in Canada. Despite years and years of promotion of multiculturalism and ethnocultural understanding, what is still lacking in the system to eliminate a sense of exclusion and othering for a group of people who are non-white and non-middle-class? As proposed in an earlier section under theme two in this chapter, the elderly participants might have language barriers and cultural misunderstandings that prevent them from accurately interpreting the incidents happening to or around them, but how is Canada going to accommodate this group of immigrants is the key aspect this whole discussion intends to bring forth. The answers have yet to come out.

To recapitulate the major findings under this last theme, we have learned that location of children is a deciding factor on a sense of belonging among the participants, whereas location of siblings, relatives and friends are of secondary importance. Consequently, having children in Canada enhances a sense of belonging to Canada and having children in Hong Kong boosts a sense of belonging to Hong Kong; however, having children both in Canada and Hong Kong remains a puzzle to be solved. Next, elderly participants coming to Canada before their children are significantly more committed to Canada compared to those who came to reunite with children already in
this country; perhaps because the former made the decision on their own account while the latter made the decision because of others. The experiences of participants coming to Canada with their children cannot be cogently explained from the interview data. Furthermore, elderly participants who came to Canada and worked before retirement are much more committed to Canada than are those who had never worked in the Canadian job market; likewise, participants who were previously engaged in the Canadian workplace reported significantly more racist experiences than those who had never taken up a job in Canada. A disturbing observation lies in the high level of perceived racism among the elderly for both those who had worked in Canada and those who had not. Lastly, it is impossible to account for the conclusions with regard to the overall immigration experience for two reasons: 1) there are no clearly observed patterns no matter how the participants are grouped together and 2) there are too many possible reasons to explain the observations which will deem the explanations implausible and abstract.

Conclusion

To summarize the findings from the interviews, let us revisit the major questions asked in this research. The primary objective of conducting this research is to better understand elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Vancouver in terms of their transnational activities across the Pacific Rim and sense of belonging and concepts of citizenship through their experiences of racism and family arrangements in Canada. Specifically, this research seeks to answer the following questions: 1) Whether elderly Hong Kong immigrants maintain transnational linkages with Hong Kong in the same ways and with
the same frequency as middle-aged and younger Hong Kong immigrants; 2) Whether elderly Hong Kong immigrants have high sense of belonging to Canada and high level of citizenship practice; 3) What are the unique experiences of racism among the elderly participants in multicultural Vancouver; 4) How do the elderly interpret their overall satisfaction with the immigration experience; and 5) What are the impacts of being “elderly” in a particular “generation” on the experiences among the participants. From the in-depth interviews and questionnaire data, each question warrants valid answers.

First, elderly Hong Kong immigrants possess strong social ties by having family, relatives and friends in Hong Kong; however, they had severed all economic ties before immigrating to Canada. Also, the elderly participants demonstrate an exceptionally high level of “technological transnationalism” to Hong Kong by means of Hong Kong media consumption and social contacts by telephone or sometimes email. This type of transnational behaviour has replaced the desire to be physically present in Hong Kong. If transnationalism is not a zero-sum game, the elderly participants have diminished physical transnationalism but simultaneously fostered “technological transnationalism.” Compared to many middle-aged “astronauts” and graduating “satellite kids,” the elderly participants maintain transnational connections solely to satisfy emotional needs instead of to advance their career or to put bread on the table. We shall see suggestions for further research on “emotional transnationalism” in Chapter VI. Transnational ties among elderly Hong Kong immigrants are considered high, although the nature is different from those forged by younger generations.

Next, the Hong Kong elderly participants show a considerably high sense of belonging to Canada despite holding dual citizenship. In fact, dual citizenship does not
water down their commitment to Canadian society; it ironically enhances an attachment to Canada by way of allowing easier connection to Hong Kong. Commitment and convenience are not mutually exclusive. In spite of a high sense of belonging and high procurement of formal citizenship, most elderly immigrants cannot realize citizenship practice because of language barriers. Instead, they mostly engage in Chinese organizations and activities such as those organized by SUCCESS. They do not possess enough credentials to participate in Canadian elections or activities that involve interaction with the English-speaking population; however, they are still largely satisfied with the Canadian citizenship because they feel “taken care of” by the government in terms of a monthly pension. Simply put, they have a high sense of belonging to Canada, high procurement of formal citizenship but low level of citizenship participation; and there is a practical value of Canadian citizenship because they can benefit from the pension system.

The third cluster of findings regarding experiences of racism among the elderly participants is slightly controversial. A portion of participants talked about no or little racial discrimination throughout their years in Vancouver, and a few participants ardently dismissed the notion of racial discrimination by underscoring inborn human nature to discriminate; for instance, even Chinese discriminate against Chinese under certain circumstances. Some participants insisted that they encountered racism either at the bus stop or on the bus, whereas other participants disapproved by mentioning positive cross-cultural experiences on the bus. The controversy might arise from a relatively lower socio-economic status of most participants with limited English ability to accurately interpret life events happening around them. This proposition is in itself
problematic because it touches upon an inherent impossibility of proving “everyday racism.” Some elderly participants adopt the tactic of politeness when interacting with the majority whites, but this could inadvertently lead to cultural othering. All in all, this research reveals the complexity of explaining racist experiences recounted by the elderly participants, and further research should look into convincingly showing if racism actually exists in a multicultural city like Vancouver.

Fourth, almost 80 percent (77.1%) of elderly Hong Kong immigrant participants are satisfied with the immigration experience either because it is fulfilling for themselves or promising for their children or grandchildren. They are personally enjoying a nice environment, relaxing lifestyle and stable monthly government pension, while their younger generations are performing well in the job market or acquiring the much-coveted North American educational credentials. Their overall immigration experience seems genuinely propitious.

Lastly, the research power of “elderly” and “generation” among the participants in this research is brought out in theme five. Deepened analysis reveals that location of children is a determining factor affecting the way the elderly participants perceive their immigration. The participants are more committed to the place where their children are currently residing. Those who immigrated to Canada before having children or before their children came have a much higher sense of belonging to Canada compared to those who immigrated to Canada after their children. In addition, those who had worked in the Canadian job market before retirement are significantly more committed to Canada than are those who had never contributed to the Canadian workforce. The same group of elderly participants who had worked in Canada also reported higher level of
racism than those who never worked in this country. A discouraging finding is the high level of perceived racism among basically all elderly participants whether or not they had worked in Canada before. No convincing patterns could be discovered to address the conclusions regarding the overall immigration experience of the participants.

Looking at the bigger picture, the elderly participants are maintaining satisfying transnational ties with Hong Kong, have a high sense of belonging to Canada, feel looked after by the Canadian government, feel exempt from racism (at least reportedly) in daily life, and are mostly satisfied with the immigration experience. It is convincing to conclude that Vancouver is a good place for elderly Hong Kong immigrants. As quoted previously, one participant likened Vancouver to a paradise. Granted, this paradise is especially appealing to people in their later years in life.
Chapter VI Further Research Directions and Conclusion

Based on the findings in Chapter IV and Chapter V, this chapter recommends some directions for further research in an attempt to more fully explain the life experiences of elderly immigrants and immigrants of all age groups and ethnocultural affiliations. The suggestions revolve around transnational activities, sense of belonging, citizenship practice and experiences of racism in Canada.

First of all, it is shown that most Hong Kong elderly in Vancouver actively engage in “emotional” transnationalism through telephone conversations or sometimes email communications with family members, friends or relatives in Hong Kong. In the meantime, they have slashed the amount of physical and economic transnationalism due to both their use of technology and the fact that they are not active in the labour force. The observation is not controversial; however, this mode of maintaining emotional ties with family overseas might have positive or negative effects on their relationships. It is worth some efforts to discover the strength of the affinity between geographically separated family members who employ “emotional” transnationalism. Emotional geography is a newly emerging field within human geography that is rapidly gathering steam (Davidson, Bondi et al. 2005). Geographers interested in the interrelationship of emotion and geography might be expected to look more closely at the phenomenon of “emotional” transnationalism.

Regarding citizenship and sense of belonging, elderly Hong Kong immigrants have a noticeably high sense of belonging to Canada despite holding dual citizenship. Their attachment to Canada is forged partly by the social benefits system that grants them
a regular amount of monthly pension and other subsidies. From this observation, researchers can endeavour to ask the same research questions to other immigrant groups, no matter from the same or different ethnocultural backgrounds and about the same or varied reasons; the research findings have essential policy implications for Canada’s social benefits and elderly pension systems. Canada may be inadvertently cultivating a sense of belonging among its elderly immigrants by the social benefits system rather than by instilling a sense of “Canadianness” through multiculturalism.

Another recommendation for future research is related to citizenship practice among elderly immigrants. We have seen that in spite of a high sense of belonging to Canada, virtually all elderly Hong Kong immigrants are excluded from participating in Canadian society because of language barriers. A coping strategy is to dedicate all their time to associate with Chinese members in Chinese organizations. They seem to be proactively participating in citizenship; however, this form of citizenship practice might be a manifestation of othering and sequestration within an ethnocultural mosaic such as Vancouver. An ensuing question is: if all members within an ethnocultural group actively engage in activities organized by and intended for the benefits for that particular group, what are the consequences on ethnocultural understanding of the whole city? This might have implications for the overarching ideology of multiculturalism that has been repeatedly debated over the past few decades. To address this enquiry, researchers can probe further immigrants’ perception of the necessity and effectiveness to participate in Canadian society beyond their ethnocultural group. Citizenship, multiculturalism and ethnocultural relations are entwined aspects; possible research topics to fill the knowledge gap abound.
With respect to experiences of racism, the findings in this research point to the paradoxical fact that most elderly Hong Kong immigrants encounter few or no racist incidents in their daily lives. When racism emerges, the most frequent setting is either at the bus stop or on the bus. An interesting question to ask further is whether there is a class effect on the perception and interpretation of racism. In this research, most elderly participants come from a relatively lower socio-economic background with limited English language proficiency. Their narrations reveal that they are not capable of understanding the events happening around them because of language barriers. By comparing racist encounters between immigrants with different socio-economic backgrounds, we can develop a better sense of whether racism does exist or those accounts are just “racism in the eyes of the victims.” Future research should also look into experiences of racism among different age groups in the workplace, where racist incidents are reportedly the most frequent. On the other hand, some Hong Kong elderly reported no racism in Vancouver because the white population are always polite towards them. Bearing in mind that politeness does not equate to inclusion, further research can delve into whether politeness is a form of othering or it actually helps to bridge the gap between ethnocultural groups. Findings of racism research are perpetually subject to debate, and researchers are obliged to exercise sensitivity and tact in carrying out such research and presenting the outcomes.

Lastly, the section of multigenerational transnational family arrangements in Chapter V raises research questions on concepts of citizenship and overall immigration experience of the elderly. When addressing the type of immediate family in Hong Kong, it is unclear how some participants derive their sense of belonging when they have
children both in Hong Kong and in Canada. This is an interesting question to deepen the analysis of the importance of children in sense of belonging among the elderly. On the other hand, there is no distinct pattern accounting for the overall immigration experience of the participants. There might be a host of determinants such as employment opportunities, experiences of racism and personal reasons that influence the perceptions of the experience. Future research should attempt to expose the factors underlining the perceptions among the elderly.

The above-mentioned suggestions for further research are detailed but not exhaustive. There are undoubtedly a myriad of other research topics to fill the existing knowledge gap. Through these efforts, we can have a better understanding of the transnational behaviour, sense of belonging, citizenship and citizenship practice, as well as experiences of racism of immigrants in Canada. The findings will also have policy implications on multiculturalism, citizenship, ethnocultural relations, immigration policies and the social benefits system, to name just a few.

Conclusion

Revisiting the goals for conducting this research, I have reached meaningful conclusions for each research question. I intended to uncover the transnational behaviour, concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada at this stage of the life course by looking at their experiences of racism and multigenerational family arrangements. From the questionnaire surveys and interview transcripts, I have come to findings for the two main themes. First, concerning
transnational behaviour, the findings are: 1) most Hong Kong elderly maintain close transnational ties with family, relatives and friends in Hong Kong through telephone or sometimes email, whereas physical transnationalism by actually visiting Hong Kong is less common; 2) most Hong Kong elderly had severed virtually all economic ties before immigrating to Canada but are retaining close emotional ties (I call it “emotional” transnationalism) with family in Hong Kong.

Concerning concepts of citizenship and sense of belonging, I found that: 3) a significant percentage of elderly Hong Kong participants have a strong sense of belonging to Canada despite holding dual citizenship, thus dual citizenship is both a “convenience” and a “commitment”; 4) virtually all elderly participants have obtained formal Canadian citizenship (i.e. nationality, passport, right to vote, etc) but are limited in their citizenship participation because of low English language proficiency. Consequently, the participants in this study almost exclusively engage in activities organized by Chinese organizations such as SUCCESS. Whether this form of civic participation exemplifies citizenship practice in a multicultural city like Vancouver is open to question.

Third, through the lens of experiences of racism, we know that: 5) most elderly indicated no or few experiences of racism in Vancouver; however, their relatively lower socio-economic status and limited English language proficiency may have obscured the ways they perceive and interpret racist incidents; 6) the participants mentioned a widespread “legend” of racist incidents either at the bus stop or on the bus. This research cannot prove the validity of such claims and further research needs to be done; 7) politeness is cited by a number of elderly participants as a common coping strategy when interacting with the English-speaking population; nonetheless, whether politeness effectively bridges the gap between ethnocultural groups or is in itself a form of othering
needs to be further probed. In general, perceptions of no or low level of racism in Canadian society have helped raise a sense of belonging to Canada among the elderly.

Lastly, conclusions about the participants’ sense of belonging and overall immigration experience are drawn from their multigenerational family arrangements. The findings are: 8) a majority of the elderly participants are satisfied with the overall immigration experience to Canada because they are enjoying their lives in retirement; 9) children is a determining factor in a sense of belonging – presence of children in Canada close by significantly raises a sense of belonging to Canada, whereas siblings, relatives and friends are not as important; 10) elderly participants who immigrated to Canada before their children are more committed to Canada than those who came after their children; and 11) elderly participants who had been engaged in the Canadian job market feel a higher sense of belonging to Canada but more racism than those who never worked in this country. These findings are instrumental in conceiving the experiences of elderly Hong Kong immigrants, and the results serve as guidelines for the experiences of elderly from other ethnocultural backgrounds.

Expectedly, each research has its own limitations that shed light on further research directions. This research is no exception. While further research areas have been outlined previously, it is imperative to acknowledge SUCCESS for its generous help to minimize the logistical, participant recruitment and budgetary limitations of this research. Without the massive network of SUCCESS among Chinese residents in Vancouver, this project would not be possible. SUCCESS is also a wonderful place for the elderly participants to gather, socialize and connect with other co-ethnics. Its presence helps them build a sense of belonging to Canada and minimize the impacts of racism that may arise from English language barriers outside of this Chinese domain. Being mostly
grandparents and not in the workplace, these elderly participants have unique experiences
different from those of younger generations; this research has exposed some parts of their
unique experiences. Regarding methodology, Chapter III has elaborated on and justified
each research method employed, including the questionnaire surveys, individual or small
group interviews, and data analysis utilizing SPSS and NVIVO.

I have been aware of my positionality and reflexivity throughout this research
from idea generation, preparations, data collection, data analysis and writing of the final
report. Even though any researcher is situated at a more powerful position vis-à-vis the
researched, I have attempted to portray the elderly participants and their experiences in
the most genuine light that would help bring them justice and more power. From the
principles of humanistic geography, this research, at least in principle, has contributed to
discovering the life world of elderly Hong Kong immigrants who might be encountering
suppression or exclusion by the mainstream. Hopefully the research findings will be used
to build a more just and equal society in which everyone feels comfortable, welcome and
included.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix A

Questionnaire for elderly Hong Kong immigrants (English version)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Year of birth:</td>
<td>2. Country of birth:</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Nationality: (if more than one, list all)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sex: □ male □ female</td>
<td>5. Number of children:</td>
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<td>6. Ages of children:</td>
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<td>7. Highest level of education attained: □ less than high school □ trade or technical school without high school □ technical school beyond high school □ some university □ university degree □ postgraduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Total number of years of formal education:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Year of immigration: (if applicable)</td>
<td>10. Last country in which you lived before coming to Canada:</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Category of immigrant: □ independent □ dependent □ refugee □ investor or entrepreneur □ other ___________</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Current status: □ Landed immigrant □ Citizen of Canada only □ dual citizen of Canada and _________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Marital status: □ single, never married □ single, divorced or separated □ married □ widowed</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. What is the first language that you learned and still understand?</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. What is the main language used in your household?</td>
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<td>16. Languages you:</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) understand __________________ b) speak___________________ c) read___________________ d) write___________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Your main reason for immigrating to Canada was: □ for work or business □ for family reasons □ for education □ political</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. City in which you first lived:</td>
<td>19. City in which you now live:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Check which of the following applies to the circumstances under which you immigrated to Canada:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ I came alone □ I came with my spouse / parents / children / other relatives: specify:</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Question</td>
<td>Options</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. Are you:</td>
<td>□ self employed □ employed full time □ employed part time □ unemployed and seeking work</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>□ not employed and not looking for work □ retired</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. If employed full or part time, what is your current occupation / job? (describe position)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23. Under which of the following categories does your occupation fall?</td>
<td>□ managerial □ professional □ sales □ service □ clerical □ manual (construction or industrial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Do you think that your current job is:</td>
<td>□ below your level of skills and training □ appropriate to your level of skills and training □ above your level of skills and training</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Please describe your current housing status:</td>
<td>□ owner or co-owner of a single family dwelling □ owner or co-owner of a condominium □ renter in the private rental market □ renter in the public or non-profit rental market □ other: specify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. How many people live in your household in the following age groups (including yourself):</td>
<td>Under 15 _______ Age 15-24 _______ Age 25-44 _______ Age 45-64 _______ Age 65 or over ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Why did you choose to live in this neighborhood? (check all that apply)</td>
<td>□ affordability □ close to good schools □ close to friends □ close to relatives □ close to my work □ close to my spouse’s work □ neighborhood has a good reputation □ safety or security □ I like the style of housing □ I did not choose this neighborhood □ good feng shui □ Other: please specify: __________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Do you travel to Hong Kong?</td>
<td>□ never □ less than once a year □ about once a year □ more than once a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. How many times have you travelled to Hong Kong in the past year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. What is the total amount of time you have spent in Hong Kong in the past year?</td>
<td>_______ weeks _______ months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Reasons for visiting Hong Kong: (place a 1 beside the primary reason, a 2 beside the secondary reason, etc., for all that apply)</td>
<td>□ to visit family □ to visit friends □ tourism or recreation □ business □ education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
32. Which of the following describe your activities in Canada? (Check all that apply)

☐ Most of my friends are originally from Hong Kong
☐ I regularly vote in Canadian elections
☐ I belong to a political party
☐ I regularly donate to a political party or candidate
☐ I regularly donate to organizations supporting the Hong Kong or Chinese Canadian community
☐ I regularly donate to charitable organizations (e.g. United Way, medical research, environmental organizations, etc.)
☐ I do volunteer work for associations within the Hong Kong or Chinese Canadian community
☐ I do volunteer work in activities for my children’s school
☐ I do volunteer work in other social/cultural/political organizations. Specify:

☐ I am active in Chinese Canadian cultural activities. Specify:

33. In which of the following groups inside the Hong Kong Chinese or Chinese-Canadian community are you a member? (Specify)

☐ religious organization
☐ groups devoted to cultural activities
☐ martial arts group
☐ a women’s or men’s club
☐ sports team
☐ a political or lobby group (e.g. CCNC)
☐ groups devoted to children’s welfare or activities
☐ charitable organizations
☐ craft or art groups
☐ business or professional association
☐ Other, please specify:

34. How many hours a week do you devote in total to the above organizations? ________________

35. Do you hold office in any of the above organizations? ☐ yes ☐ no If yes, specify:

36. To which of the following groups outside the Hong Kong Chinese or Chinese-Canadian community do you belong? (Specify)

☐ religious organization
☐ groups devoted to cultural activities
<table>
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<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a martial arts group</td>
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<td>a women’s or men’s club</td>
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<td>a sports team</td>
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<td>a political or lobby group (e.g. CCNC)</td>
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<td>groups devoted to children’s welfare or activities</td>
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<td>charitable organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>craft or art groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>business or professional association</td>
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<tr>
<td>trade union</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>a political party</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>human rights organizations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other, please specify:</td>
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</table>

37. How many hours a week do you devote in total to the above organizations? ________________

38. Do you hold office in any of the above organizations?   yes   no  If yes, specify:

39. Which of the following describe your activities in Hong Kong? (Please check all that apply)
   I have members of immediate family in Hong Kong   I have members of extended family in Hong Kong
   My job requires me to travel to Hong Kong   I or my family owns property in Hong Kong
   I or my family runs a business in Hong Kong   I have friends in Hong Kong   I am studying or training in Hong Kong
   I normally vote in Hong Kong elections   I provide financial assistance to family members in Hong Kong
   I am a member of a social or political organization in Hong Kong   I support a political organization or party in Hong Kong
   I have no connection with Hong Kong   I engage in other activities in Hong Kong
   Please specify:

40. If you have family in Hong Kong, how do you stay in touch? (Please check all that apply, and indicate the frequency)
   by telephone _____ times per month   by e-mail _____ times per week   by letter _____ times per month

41. In order to stay informed about events in Hong Kong, I:
   read newspapers or magazines. Specify those you read regularly:

   watch or listen to news programmes on television or radio. Specify channels

   watch Hong Kong television programmes or movies for entertainment

   I keep in touch through e-mail. If you are on any list-servs, please specify:

   Through community organizations (e.g. newsletters, at meetings)

   By attending cultural or religious activities. Please specify:

   Other. Please specify:

42. Annual household income:
   less than $20,000   $20,000 to $29,999   $30,000 to $49,999   $50,000 to $79,999   $80,000 or above
### Appendix B

**Questionnaire for elderly Hong Kong immigrants (Chinese version)**

1. 出生年份: [ ]
2. 出生國家: [ ]
3. 國籍: (如多過一個，請全部列出) [ ]
4. 性別: □男 □女
5. 共有多少名子女: [ ]
6. 子女的年齡: [ ]
7. 最高學歷: □中學以下 □無需中學程度的職業或工業學校 □中學畢業 □中學程度以上的職業或工業學院 □大學肄業 □大學畢業 □研究院畢業
8. 曾接受多少年正式教育: [ ]
9. 於何年移民: [ ]
10. 來加拿大前你居住於哪個國家: [ ]
11. 移民類別: □獨立移民 □附屬移民 □難民 □投資或企業移民 □其他 [ ]
12. 目前身份: □抵步移民 □加拿大公民 □雙重國籍，包括加拿大及 [ ]
13. 婚姻狀況: □單身，從未結婚 □單身，離婚或分居 □已婚 □鰥寡
14. 你最先學習而目前仍然懂得的語言是甚麼？
15. 在你家中主要講哪種語言？
16. 你懂得何種語言？
   a) 聽得懂 [ ]
   b) 講 [ ]
   c) 讀 [ ]
   d) 寫 [ ]
17. 你移民來加的主要原因: □工作或營商 □為家庭 □教育 □政治
18. 來加後你最先住在哪個城市: [ ]
19. 目前住在哪個城市: [ ]
20. 下列哪一項最切合你移民來加時的情況: □我單獨前來 □我與我的配偶/父母/子女/其他親屬 (請列明) [ ] 同前來
21. 你是: □自僱 □全職受僱 □部份時間受僱 □失業及正在求職 □未受僱亦未求職 □退休
22. 如屬全職或部份時間受僱，則目前的職業/工作是甚麼? (請說明職位) [ ]
23. 你的職業屬於下列何種類別？
   □管理階層 □專業 □售貨員 □服務行業 □文員 □工人 (建築或工業)
24. 你認為你目前的工作是：
□低於你的訓練和技能  □恰如你的訓練和技能  □超出你的訓練和技能

25. 請描述你目前的居所狀況：
□擁有或與別人共同擁有一獨立房屋  □只租住私人房屋  □租住公共或非牟利房屋  □其他 (請詳述)

26. 於下列年齡組合中有多少人跟你共住 (包括你自己)：
□十五歲以下 ________  十五至廿四歲 ________  廿五至四十四歲 ________
□四十五歲至六十四歲 ________  六十五歲或以上 ________

27. 你為何選擇居住在這個區域? (請選出全部適用於你的答案)
□負擔得來  □名校區  □鄰近朋友  □鄰近親戚  □鄰近我的工作地點  □這區聲譽良好  □安全  □我喜歡房屋的款式  □並不是我的選擇  □其他 (請詳述)

28. 你有沒有返回香港呢？
□從沒有  □少於一年一次  □大概一年一次  □超過一年一次

29. 過去一年來你一共返回香港多少次？ ______________

30. 過去一年來你在香港一共停留了多少時間？ ___________週 ___________月

31. 你返回香港的原因：(請在最主要的原因旁填 “1”，次要的原因填 “2”，如此類推選出所有適合你的答案)
□探望家人  □探望朋友  □旅遊或娛樂  □營商  □教育  □健康或醫療  □參與宗教或文化活動: (請說明)

32. 下列哪項可以描述你在加拿大的活動？(請選擇所有適合你的情況)
□我大多數朋友都來自香港  □我經常去投票  □我隸屬一個政黨  □我經常捐獻給一個政黨或候選人  □我經常捐獻給那些支持香港或加籍華人社區的機構  □我經常捐獻給慈善機構 (例如，聯合公益金、醫療研究、環保組織等)  □我為香港或加籍華人機構提供義務服務  □我為我子女學校的活動提供義務服務  □我為其他社會/文化/政治機構提供義務服務。請詳細說明：
□我積極參與加籍華人的文化活動。請詳細說明：

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33. You are a member of any of the following Hong Kong-Chinese or Canadian Chinese social groups? (Please give details.)
- □ Religious group
- □ Culture activity group
- □ Martial arts group
- □ Women’s or Men’s club
- □ Sports team
- □ Political or lobbying organization
- □ Children’s welfare or activity group
- □ Charity group
- □ Handicraft or arts group
- □ Chamber or professional group
- □ Other, please specify:

34. How many hours did you spend on the above activities each week? ________

35. Do you have any public office in the above groups? □ Yes □ No If yes, please give details.

36. Are you a member of any of the following social groups outside Hong Kong-Chinese or Canadian Chinese groups? (Please give details.)
- □ Religious group
- □ Culture activity group
- □ Martial arts group
- □ Women’s or Men’s club
- □ Sports team
- □ Political or lobbying organization
- □ Children’s welfare or activity group
- □ Charity group
- □ Handicraft or arts group
- □ Chamber or professional group
- □ Trade union
- □ Party
- □ Human rights organization
- □ Other, please specify:

37. How many hours did you spend on the above activities each week? ________

38. Do you have any public office in the above groups? □ Yes □ No If yes, please give details.

39. Which of the following can describe your activities in Hong Kong? (Please choose all that apply.)
- □ I have direct relatives in Hong Kong
- □ I have family members in Hong Kong
- □ My work requires me to travel to Hong Kong
- □ I or my family own property in Hong Kong
- □ I own a business in Hong Kong
- □ I have friends in Hong Kong
- □ I am writing or receiving training in Hong Kong
- □ I usually vote in Hong Kong elections
- □ I provide financial support to my relatives in Hong Kong
- □ I am a student at a Hong Kong university or training institution
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<tr>
<td>□我是香港一個社會或政治團體的成員</td>
<td>□我支持香港的一個政治團體或政黨</td>
<td>□我與香港沒有任何聯繫</td>
<td>□我參與香港的其他活動 (請詳細說明)</td>
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<td>40. 如果你在香港仍有親屬你如何跟他們聯繫? (請選擇所有適合你的情況並說明頻密程度)</td>
<td>□電話，每月________次 □電郵，每週______次 □信件，每月______封</td>
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<td>41. 為了保持了解香港的事件及新聞，我：</td>
<td>□閱讀報紙及雜誌，請列明你經常閱讀的：</td>
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<td>□收聽或收看電台或電視的新聞節目，請說明頻道</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□觀賞香港電視節目或香港電影作娛樂</td>
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<td></td>
<td>□我透過電郵保持聯繫，如果你有任何網址，請列明：</td>
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<td>□透過社區組織 (例如通訊或會議)</td>
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<td>□透過參與文化或宗教活動，請說明：</td>
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<td>□其他，請說明：</td>
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<td>42. 家庭年收入：</td>
<td>□$20,000 以下 □$20,000 至$29,999 □$30,000 至$49,999 □$50,000 至$79,999 □$80,000 或以上</td>
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供研究用途:

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Appendix C

Interview schedule

Li, Ka Ming (Neville)

Research Topic: Transnationalism of elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada

List of Interview Questions

Section 1 Background of immigration

1.1 When did you immigrate to Canada and why?

1.2 When you first immigrated to Canada, did you
   1.2.1 come alone and study or work or live alone
   1.2.2 come with someone (who)
   1.2.3. come to look for someone (who)
   1.2.4 Other reasons

1.3 How did you look for job(s) when you first came? How have career prospects changed over the years in Canada?

1.4 (If you are married or had been married), how did you meet you spouse?

1.5 How did you share family responsibilities with your spouse? How did you reconcile conflicts between your career and family responsibilities?

1.6 How have these career and family responsibilities changed over the years in Canada?

1.7 What roles do you have in your family now? For example, do you care for grandchildren? Are you responsible for cooking, etc?

1.8 What is your opinion of “astronaut families”?

   (note 1: astronaut families refer to transnational family arrangement that spans across one or more countries. For example, many Hong Kong immigrant families in Canada have their fathers working in Asia, mothers staying in Canada to look after kids and children studying in Canada.)

   (note 2: From a cultural perspective, most Hong Kong immigrants in Canada understand this term and if not, their memory is refreshed after filling out the questionnaire)

1.9 Does “astronaut family” affect family harmony in terms of: (interviewees are encouraged to mention concrete incidents or examples)
1.9.1 father-children relationship?
1.9.2 mother-children relationship?
1.9.3 marriage intimacy?
1.9.4 relationship with extended family members within or outside of Canada?

Section 2 The conditions of your own life

2.1. Why do you choose to live in the neighborhood you are residing in?
   2.1.1 financial reasons
   2.1.2 physical/environmental reasons
   2.1.3 family choice
   2.1.4 community participation
   2.1.5 other reasons

2.2 Do you have adequate access to services with regard to:
   2.2.1 Health care
   2.2.2 Government aid
   2.2.3 entertainment facilities (e.g. parks, elderly centers, etc)
   2.2.4 accessibility facilities (e.g. ramps, elevators, etc)
   2.2.5 others

Section 3 Relationship to Hong Kong

3.1. How would you describe your connections with Hong Kong? Please explain in terms of:
3.1.1 With immediate family members (if in “astronaut” families)

3.1.2 With extended family members currently in Hong Kong

3.1.3. With friends

3.1.4 financial investment or arrangement

3.1.5 politics, political participation and current affairs

3.1.6 entertainment

3.1.7 career or job markets

3.1.8 others

3.2. Are there anything missing in your life in Canada? Does transnationalism address what is missing?

Aspects to consider:

3.2.1 family life

3.2.2 career opportunities

3.2.3 leisure activities

3.2.4 Food

3.2.5 Community participation

3.2.6 Others

3.3 Do you plan to spend the rest of your life in Canada? Please explain why with regard to the following:

3.3.1 preferable lifestyle

3.3.2 family relationship

3.3.3 sense of belonging
3.3.4 community participation
3.3.5 natural environment in Canada
3.3.6 transnational practices as elderly immigrants

Section 4 Relationship with larger Canadian society

4.1 Have you ever experienced discrimination in Canada? If yes, in what ways?
   4.1.1 your job
   4.1.2 social institutions
   4.1.3 from government officials
   4.1.4 from the police
   4.1.5 as a consumer
   4.1.6 others

4.2 How did you deal with the above-mentioned discrimination experiences? And in what ways did those incidents affect your perception of Canada and lifestyle in Canada?

4.3 Do you, and in what ways, have cross-cultural interactions in Canada?
   4.3.1 through children’s schools, colleges or work activities
   4.3.2 through community participation
   4.3.3 through daily interactions (e.g. in restaurants, parks, theatres, etc)
   4.3.4 any other means?

4.4. Are you satisfied with the amount of cross-cultural interaction in Canada? Either yes or no, what else do you think should be or could be done to enhance interactions across ethno-cultural groups?
Section 5 Concluding question

5. On the whole, how would you describe your experiences of immigrating to Canada? Why would you say so?

Possible expected answers:

5.1 happy or pleased
5.2 satisfied
5.3 content
5.4 dissatisfied
5.5 regretful
5.6 nothing special
5.7 not my choice
Appendix D

Combined letter of information and consent form (English version)

Project Title: Transnationalism of elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada

Dear Interview Participant,

Thank you very much for considering participation in an interview to discuss changing concepts of citizenship among elderly immigrants from Hong Kong. The purpose of this research is to understand transnational family arrangements, changing concepts of citizenships and experiences of racism among elderly Hong Kong immigrants in Canada. I will interview 20 to 30 elderly immigrants from Hong Kong currently residing in the Vancouver region during the summer of 2008. In each interview, the interviewee will first fill out a questionnaire to provide background personal particulars, then discuss a list of questions with regard to immigration experiences and life in Canada. I will use Cantonese in the interview to eliminate any language barrier, and will transcribe the discussion from Cantonese to English at a later stage. Your total commitment should not exceed more than three hours, and there will be no follow-up studies. There are no known physical risks to participation in the study. If you ever experience emotional upset during the interview, you can contact counselling service at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. (Tel: 604-270-8233). Because of the long duration of the interviews (2 to 3 hours), I will audiotape the conversation using a tape-recorder. Your comments will contribute to a better understanding of the experience of immigrants from Hong Kong.

The findings of this research will help to complete my master’s thesis for the Geography program at Queen’s University, Ontario, Canada. Queen’s University has strict guidelines for ethical research conduct, which the researcher is bound to follow to ensure that no harm will come to any of the participants. I wish to assure you, therefore, that your participation in this project is strictly voluntary. You will not be identified in any written report without your express written consent. The information gathered during this session will be kept strictly confidential, and will not be used for any purpose other than the objectives of the research project. I do not wish to ask questions that are offensive or unduly invasive, but you may refuse to answer any question with which you do not feel comfortable, and you have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and to have any information about you removed from the study. Only I can match the information collected with the identities of individual participants. My supervisor (Prof. Audrey Kobayashi) can also have access to the data, wherein pseudonyms will replace the
real names of participants to ensure confidentiality. Your confidentiality in publications and reports will be strictly protected. Your name will not be attached to any form of the data that you provide. A pseudonym will replace your name on all data that you provide to protect your identity. I will keep the questionnaires, interview audiotapes and transcribed texts in secured places only accessible to me. According to the guidelines provided by Queen’s University, I will keep the collected data for up to 7 years until 2016, and then it will be destroyed. The research results will be published in academic journals as a reference point for academics, immigration policymakers, and community service providers. There will be no foreseeable secondary uses of the data. There will be no remuneration for participation in the interview.

Thank you very much for your participation in this project. Your contribution is very valuable, and will help to enhance our understanding of circumstances among elderly immigrants. Should you have any concerns, or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the above address, or by email (6KML1@queensu.ca). You may also contact my supervisor Prof. Audrey Kobayashi regarding questions, concerns or complaints about the research procedures (email: kobayasi@queensu.ca). You can also contact the chair of Queen’s General Research Ethics Board (GREB) Dr. Joan Stevenson (Tel: 613-533-6288 email: chair.greb@queensu.ca).

Yours sincerely,

Li Ka Ming (Neville)

Master of Arts Candidate, Dept. of Geography

Queen’s University, Ontario, Canada

________________________________________________________________________

I have read and understand the above information, and agree to participate in this study according to the terms with regard to the expectations and requirements on me, my voluntary participation in the interview and freedom to withdraw at any time, and provisions around confidentiality and anonymity outlined above. I have also had any questions answered to my satisfaction and will keep a copy of this letter for my record.

Name: ___________________
Date: ____________________

Signature: ________________

By initialing the statement(s) below,

________ I am granting permission for the researcher to use a tape recorder.

________ I agree to be interviewed as a couple.

________ I agree to be interviewed in a small group of 2 to 3 persons, including family members, friends or acquaintances.

________ I agree to be interviewed as an individual interviewee.

________ I am granting permission for the researcher to interview me at my house or apartment.
Appendix E

Combined letter of information and consent form (Chinese version)

研究题目：香港长者移民的跨国活动

親愛的受訪者：

非常感謝你考慮參與此訪問，去討論來自香港的長者移民對公民身份概念的轉變。
此研究的目的是更深入了解來自香港的長者移民的跨國家庭安排、公民身份概念的轉變以及種族歧視的經驗。在二零零八年的暑假期間，我將會訪問二十至三十位現正居住在溫哥華的香港長者移民。在每一個訪問中，受訪者會先填寫一份問卷，以提供個人背景資料，然後討論一系列有關移民經驗及加拿大生活的問題。為避免語言障礙，我會用廣東話訪問，其後將討論由廣東話改譯成英語。你所付出的時間不會超過僅此一次三小時，而無須參與任何跟進研究。你的參與不存在任何身體上的風險，如果你在訪問討論中感到情緒不安，你可以聯絡中僑輔導熱線（電話: 604-270-8233）。因訪問時間稍長（二至三小時），我會用錄音帶將對話錄音。你的意見會幫助更充分了解香港移民的經驗。

這項研究的結果將會協助本人完成於加拿大安大略省皇后大學就讀的地理課程的碩士論文。皇后大學訂下嚴格的研究道德守則，研究員必須遵守這些守則，以保障參加者不會受到傷害。我保證你在此研究計劃的參與是絕對自願的。沒有你的書面同意，你的身份不會在報告中顯示出來。在這訪問討論中所得的資料亦絕對保密，只供這研究計劃的用途。我絕不希望問侯令參加者感到不快或受侵犯的問題，但如果你對某些問題感到不安，可以拒絕回答，你亦有權隨時終止參與此研究並取消一切有關你的研究資料。只有我可以配對所收集的資料以及個別參加者的身份，我的指導教授（Prof. Audrey Kobayashi）亦可接觸到所收集的資料，但假名將會取代参加者的真實姓名，以保障私穩。你的身份在出版物及報告中會絕對保密。你的姓名與所提供資料不會有聯繫，你的真實姓名會以假名代替。我會將所收集的問卷，錄音訪問以及改譯文件儲存於只有我可接觸的安全地方。跟據皇后大學的守則，我會將所收集資料儲存七年，直至二零一六年，其後銷毀資料。研究結果將會於學術期刊中刊載，以供學者、移民政策專員及社會服務提供者作參考。所收集的資料不會用於其他研究。受訪者將不會獲得報酬。
非常多謝你參與此研究計劃，你的貢獻非常寶貴，並能促進我們對長者移民的處境的了解。如果你有任何疑問或想索取進一步的資料，請隨時以上列地址聯絡我，或以電郵 (6KML1@queensu.ca) 聯絡本人。如有任何關於研究過程的問題，疑問或投訴，你亦可以電郵聯絡我的指導教授Prof. Audrey Kobayashi (kobayasi@queensu.ca)，你亦可以電郵聯絡皇后大學的研究操守委員會 (GREB) 的主席Dr. Joan Stevenson (電話: 613-533-6288 電郵: chair.greb@queensu.ca)。

此致

李家銘
地理系碩士生
加拿大安大略省皇后大學

我已閱讀而且明白上述資料，並根據上列條文同意參與此項研究。我明白此項研究對我的期望和要求，我自願參與的性質及隨時退出的自由，以及有關私穩和匿名的條款。對於任何問題，我已得到滿意的答案，並會保留此同意書以作記錄。

姓名: __________________

日期: __________________

簽署: __________________

在下面空位簽署,
我同意允許研究員使用錄音機錄音。

我同意與配偶同時被訪問。

我同意參與二至三人的討論小組，包括家人、朋友或相識人士。

我同意單獨接受訪問。

我同意允許研究員於我的房屋或單位訪問我。