

The meanings and experiences of varied migration statuses along the 'edugration' pathway

Anne-Cécile Delaisse & Suzanne Huot

Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy

University of British Columbia

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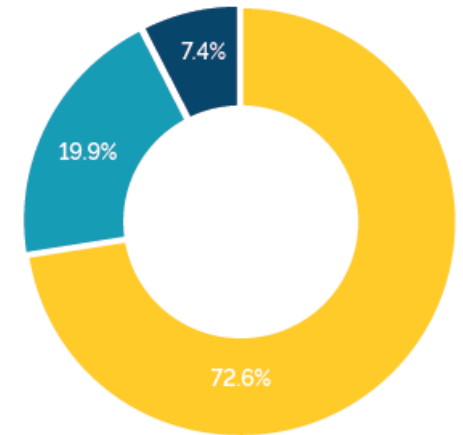
Canada's 'edu-gration' system (Brunner, 2021)



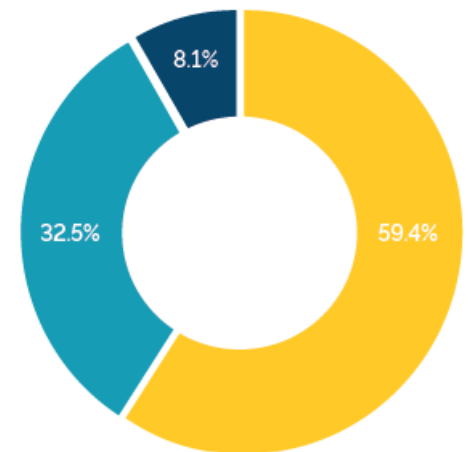
Obtaining permanent residency vs. wanting to reside permanently in Canada

- International students may **obtain PR to “keep the doors open”** rather than because they firmly intend to stay in Canada (Netierman et al., 2022, p. 50)
- ‘Permanent residency’ is a **constructed category that grants rights** not available to temporary residents (Rajkumar et al., 2012; Ellermann & Goenaga, 2019)

Plan to Apply for a Post-Graduate Work Permit



Plan to Apply for Permanent Resident Status



Yes Unsure No

Research question

Regardless of their intention to stay in Canada, how do Vietnamese international students & graduates perceive & navigate various migration statuses along the edugration pathway?

Methodology

- Drawing from a broader ethnography on highly-skilled Vietnamese migrants' return to Vietnam
- Interviews conducted with
 - **10 international students in Vancouver**
 - **5 graduates in Vancouver**
 - **6 graduates who had returned to Vietnam**

Participants' demographic data (n=21)	
Gender	12 women / 9 men
Age	19 to 35 years old (average = 25.47)
Type of program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 17 undergraduate programs• 4 graduate program
Migration status at the time of the interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 12 student permit• 2 PGWP• 5 PR• 2 citizens

Findings

Permanent residency as:

1. the culmination of substantial time & financial investments
2. access to the Canadian welfare system & mobility rights
3. validation of successful migration

1. Permanent residency as the culmination of substantial time and financial investments

- **Commitment to completion:** Once the decision to migrate has been made, participants can feel committed to complete the 'edugration' pathway, even when faced with challenges, because they see it as a commitment they must fulfill
- **Sense of finality:** The considerable investment of time and financial resources in the migration process creates a profound sense of finality, compelling individuals to persevere
- **Inherent value:** The value of PR is reinforced by the substantial investments made, making it a highly significant goal for participants

My original target was to be here, to be Canadian. So **I need to study and then graduate and then find a job and then apply for PR** but because I'm not confident in my English ability, so I tried to extend my study length to 4 years so I could become be confident in my English. The COVID made me change my program from two year to four year so it means that I need to have more money to finance my extra two year. So I need to spend more time on working, rather than focus on studying English. So let's say my English speaking skills is kind of bad because I didn't focus on it much I was focusing on working to have money to finance for my study.

(Student 9)

Participant: I think the most challenging time for me was when I already started working in that company [that was going to sponsor her for PR], on my way to applying for permanent residency, at that time my dad got really sick, and then I struggled because I wanted to come back [...] I didn't know if I should go back and just forgo everything [in Canada] [...] but I think I was pretty sure I would still not go back, because whenever I think **what my dad would want me to do, his goal has always been for me to get a permanent residency**

[...] Definitely a moment of success is when I got my permanent residency, yeah that was like

Researcher: more than the citizenship?

Participant: [yes because] the citizenship I knew I was going to get it, I just need to wait, I just need to wait a couple years [...] **[PR] it seemed like I had to work for it** [...] I have to say that time like I really didn't do anything, like I didn't take care of my home, **I really didn't do anything except for just work, and work to get the PR** (Returnee 5)

2. Permanent residency or citizenship as access to the Canadian welfare system & mobility rights

- **Mobility rights and 'global citizenship'**: PR and citizenship offer valuable mobility rights not available to Vietnamese passport holders, which are particularly sought-after by highly-skilled cosmopolitan individuals
- **Stability and rights in Canada**: PR or citizenship status provide participants with a sense of stability and grant access to essential rights in Canada, including healthcare and social services
- **Opportunities for Children**: Citizenship can be transmitted to one's children and give them access to (educational) opportunities later on

Participant: Back then **[when I graduated]** I already **know that I do plan to go back to Vietnam eventually.**

[...]

Researcher: why do you want PR?

Participant: I think I mean like 'cause if you want citizenship [...] You need to be [a permanent resident] and then the reason why I want to get citizenship - **a Canadian passport has more benefit compared to Vietnamese passport**

(Graduate 2)

[having PR would allow me to] have more time for myself because **I keep thinking “I need to worry, I need to worry, I need to get this, I need to get that, I need to pay for this, I need to pay for that”** of course after PR I still have to think all of that but in a lesser way because [...] I have the time I have all the time that I can get. (Graduate 11)

After graduation I should take the English test so that when I receive the diploma, I will have the English test ready to apply to PR. So **those are the items that I thought would help me have a better quality of life and secure a better position** in a country that is so far away and so foreign to my country of origin (Graduate 3)

3. Permanent residency or citizenship as validation of successful migration

- **Major milestone:** Obtaining PR is regarded as a significant benchmark akin to professional career achievements.
- **Validation of the right path in Canada:** PR is seen as validation that individuals are on the right path in Canada. It signifies approval and a sense of validation for their choices and efforts in the country.
- **Citizenship as a marker of success in Vietnam:** Canadian citizenship represents an important marker of success in Canada, which can serve as tangible proof that returning to Vietnam was a deliberate and successful choice, rather than a consequence of failure or expulsion from Canada.

Getting the permanent residence in Canada that's sort of like **a milestone** right? I set out to do like up to this point and like **at this point I'm still on track** (Graduate 13)

My mom was the one who always pushed me to study and then to get a job that gets me qualified for my PR, and I think **it is just a natural way, like if I do the right things in Canada** [...] everybody they want to finish university and get a job, they try for PR and then they get citizenship, it is just natural, everyone is doing that (Returnee 7)

Researcher: I talked to a couple of people who came back from Canada or France and they told me that, sometimes people have this perception that, if you came back from those countries it is because something went wrong in those countries [...] are you facing those kind of perceptions?

Participant: no **because I have citizenship** [laugh], **it's a status**, it shows them the status [...] **I have the option to live anywhere, but I chose this [Vietnam]** because I like this, not because I got kicked out, and the fact that I was working there right before this too, so like I can be there by myself

(Returnee 4)

Discussion

- **Understanding the complex motivations for PR:** When gauging individuals' desire to stay in Canada, it is crucial to recognize that the pursuit of PR is influenced by a multitude of factors. Therefore, equating the desire for PR with the desire to remain in Canada oversimplifies the intricate motivations driving this pursuit (Netierman et al., 2022)
- **PR as a 'promotion' in international students' migration 'careers':** PR is a critical milestone in individuals' migration journeys, symbolizing progress, validation, and belonging in Canada; and most importantly granting rights not accessible to international students (Robertson, 2013)
- **PR as a social construction and mobility marker:** This study contributes to the reflective shift in migration studies by asserting that PR is more than just permission to reside in Canada. It is a social construct that can signify social and physical mobility, extending beyond mere legal status.

References

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Resources



- Anne-Cécile Delaisse (PhD Candidate) – delaisse.ac@gmail.com
- Suzanne Huot, PhD (supervisor)

- Publications:
- Delaisse, A.-C., & Zhang, G. (2023). *International Students' Cultural Engagement through (De-)Constructing Distance* (Working Paper Series). University of British Columbia - Centre for Migration Studies.

- Upcoming:
- Delaisse, A.-C., & Barber, T. (In press). Navigating a Post-Colonial, Capitalist and Neoliberal World: A Comparison of Vietnamese International Students' and Migrant Workers' Mobilities. In N. Nguyen (Ed.), *Routledge Handbook of the Vietnamese Diaspora*.
- Cervantes-Marcías, M., & Delaisse, A.-C. (Under review). Temporal Trajectories: A Comparative Analysis of Mexican and Vietnamese Students' Strategies in the Canadian Edugration System. *Journal of International Students*.
- Delaisse, A.-C., Barber, T., & Huot, S. (Under review). A Critical Examination of International Education Mobility Regimes: Comparative Insights from Vietnamese Students in Canada, France, and the United Kingdom. *Journal of Comparative & International Higher Education*.

We're welcoming record numbers of international students. Here's how they got caught up in the housing crisis

International students are particularly vulnerable to housing and affordability issues, experts say

Vanessa Balintec · CBC News · Posted: Aug 28, 2023 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: September 10



EDUCATION

Fake admission letters given to some international students at N.B. university

By Alex Cooke · Global News Posted October 3, 2023 3:01 pm

Integrity of immigration system at risk as international student numbers balloon, minister says

Marc Miller says Canada will host around 900,000 international students this year

Christian Paas-Lang · CBC News · Posted: Aug 27, 2023 4:00 AM EDT | Last Updated: August 31



GTA

A Brampton food bank is banning international students. Here's why

A viral photo shared online of a sign at the Ste. Louis Outreach Centre of Peel food bank in Brampton that read, "NO international students!!"

By Andy Takagi Staff Reporter

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 3 min to read

