

## Public Policy Research Funding Scheme

### 公共政策研究資助計劃

Project Number :

項目編號 :

2019.A4.054.19A

Project Title :

項目名稱 :

Education as Soft Power: Hong Kong-trained Non-local University Students' Connections and Their Career Plan in Hong Kong  
教育軟實力：在香港受教育非本地大學生的香港聯繫及其事業發展計劃

Principal Investigator :

首席研究員 :

Dr ZHENG Wan Tai, Victor  
鄭宏泰博士

Institution/Think Tank :

院校 / 智庫 :

The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
香港中文大學

Project Duration (Month):

推行期 (月) :

12

Funding (HK\$) :

總金額 (HK\$) :

495,559.00

This research report is uploaded onto the website of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) for public reference. The views expressed in this report are those of the Research Team of this project and do not represent the views of PICO and/or the Assessment Panel. PICO and/or the Assessment Panel do not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this report.

Please observe the “Intellectual Property Rights & Use of Project Data” as stipulated in the Guidance Notes of the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme.

A suitable acknowledgement of the funding from PICO should be included in any publication/publicity arising from the work done on a research project funded in whole or in part by PICO.

The English version shall prevail whenever there is any discrepancy between the English and Chinese versions.

此研究報告已上載至政策創新與統籌辦事處（創新辦）網站，供公眾查閱。報告內所表達的意見純屬本項目研究團隊的意見，並不代表創新辦及／或評審委員會的意見。創新辦及／或評審委員會不保證報告所載的資料準確無誤。

請遵守公共政策研究資助計劃申請須知內關於「知識產權及項目數據的使用」的規定。

接受創新辦全數或部分資助的研究項目如因研究工作須出版任何刊物／作任何宣傳，均須在其中加入適當鳴謝，註明獲創新辦資助。

中英文版本如有任何歧異，概以英文版本為準。

# Education as Soft Power:

Hong Kong-trained Non-local University Students'  
Connections and Their Career Plan in Hong Kong

教育軟實力：

在香港受教育非本地大學生的香港聯繫  
及其事業發展計劃

## Final Report

Submitted to

Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

( Project Number : 2019.A4.054.19A )

31 May 2020



香港中文大學香港亞太研究所  
Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
Abstract.....	4
Layman Summary on Policy Implications and Recommendations .....	5
行政摘要.....	10
摘要 .....	10
政策含義及建議摘要 .....	11
Research Team Members .....	15
Acknowledgement.....	16
List of Figures and Tables.....	18
1. Introduction.....	21
Non-local Students in Hong Kong.....	21
Higher Education as Soft Power.....	23
Non-local Students as Network Builders and New Migrants .....	25
Hong Kong and the “Belt and Road Initiative” .....	26
2. Research Objectives and Methods .....	28
Research Objectives.....	28
Research Questions.....	29
Research Methods.....	30
3. Experience in Hong Kong .....	36
Hong Kong Education Evaluation .....	36
Reasons for Studying in Hong Kong .....	40
Daily Life in Hong Kong .....	58
Communication with Locals.....	63
Summary.....	75
4. Image of Hong Kong and Mainland China .....	76
Measuring Soft Power .....	76
Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China .....	111
Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China.....	114
Summary.....	125

## Table of Contents

5. Career Plan after Graduation.....	126
Career Plan.....	126
Those Who Plan to Pursue Further Study.....	129
Those Who Plan to Work .....	134
“Belt and Road Initiative” .....	148
Summary.....	152
6. Conclusion and Policy Implication and Recommendation .....	153
Key Points.....	153
Policy Implication and Recommendation.....	155
Appendix 1: Online Survey Questionnaire .....	164
Appendix 2: In-depth Interview Framework.....	172
Appendix 3: Background of Interviewees.....	174
Appendix 4: Details of the Public Dissemination Held .....	178
References .....	179

## Executive Summary

### Abstract

Could Hong Kong improve its soft power through welcoming non-local students for education? The answer to this query may have policy implications well beyond education.

Hong Kong has long maintained a reputation for quality higher education and has witnessed a steady influx of non-local students over the past several decades. However, exactly how open and “international” this sector should be remains understudied. Many argue that priority should be given to local over non-local students in UGC funding, while some criticize the authorities’ preference towards mainland Chinese over other non-local students. This research does not intend to find the optimal resource distribution among local and non-local students in Hong Kong, but rather to empirically explore the necessity and rationale of the policy concerned.

Developed Western countries tend to welcome, or even proactively recruit, international students. The rationale behind this friendly policy is not merely increasing university revenue, but also includes their needs for population restructuring, economic repositioning, and spreading cultural influence. It is in fact part of their strategy to project their “soft power”, in the eyes of Joseph Nye who coined the term in 1990. Unlike hard power, based primarily on one’s military and economic might, strength in soft power lies in unconscious ideological affinity, common values, and cultural attraction. Education, in that sense, may be an effective platform in nurturing such affinity.

The national “Go Global” strategy, as well as the recent “Belt and Road Initiative”, emphasize the necessity of China’s further integration with the world. Hong Kong has historically functioned as a hub which connects China to other parts of the world via socio-economic networking. Strong soft power enables Hong Kong to more effectively play a connecting role. Based on this context, and from the perspective of soft power, we aim to examine if the education experience of Hong Kong-trained non-local university students—regardless of their ethnic backgrounds—could in fact strengthen Hong Kong’s soft power on them. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches would be adopted in the investigation, including a questionnaire survey, in-depth interviews, and a comprehensive secondary-source and literature analysis. The research results are hoped to offer empirical support for relating policy formulation and implementation.

## **Layman Summary on Policy Implications and Recommendations**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 It is a salient phenomenon that every year a large number of local students study abroad, and a large number of non-local students study in Hong Kong.
- 1.2 International higher education could bring far more intangible advantages than it currently does, not only to students themselves, but also to host countries by strengthening their soft power.
- 1.3 China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” entails the HKSAR government rethinking its role and opportunity in national development. Hong Kong’s education sector can potentially be a great source of soft power, which could supplement China’s regional and global out-reach efforts.

### **2. Research Objectives and Methods**

- 2.1 Two research questions led the research:
  - (1) Could Hong Kong improve its soft power through providing tertiary education to non-local students?
  - (2) Do non-local students in Hong Kong think their foreign study experience can facilitate their future careers?
- 2.2 Both qualitative and quantitative methods were adopted in the project.
  - (1) An online survey. An online structured survey was conducted from September 2019 to January 2020. The target population of the online survey was non-local university students, both undergraduates and postgraduates, of eight UGC-funded universities. The survey had a total of 575 respondents, of which 193 respondents were from non-Mainland countries and 382 respondents were from Mainland China.
  - (2) In-depth interviews. A series of semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted from November 2019 to April 2020. The interviewees were selected from those who participated in the online survey. In total there were 31 non-local university student interviewees; 10 from Mainland China, 11 from Asia, and 10 from the rest of the world.

- (3) Secondary data. Secondary data, including official statistics, reports, interviews, data from public media and university publications, as well as personal writing of non-local university students, were used for reference.

### **3. Experience in Hong Kong**

- 3.1 Both non-Mainland (7.33 points) and Mainland (7.38 points) respondents had positive feelings towards their current programme of study. Although they thought that obtaining a degree in Hong Kong was less competitive than in the United States or United Kingdom, they felt they benefited from the experiences and opportunities they had in Hong Kong.
- 3.2 For non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, “high-quality education” was the most important reason to come to Hong Kong for university education. 59.1% of non-Mainland and 67.5% of Mainland respondents selected it as the most or the second most important reason.
- 3.3 The respondents were generally satisfied with their daily life in Hong Kong because Hong Kong is a very international and modern city that tolerates different cultures. However, respondents faced some problems in their daily lives, such as living in small accommodation and high living costs.
- 3.4 Non-Mainland respondents (6.79 points) better evaluated their daily life in Hong Kong than Mainland respondents (5.58 points).
- 3.5 Most of the respondents who were not from Mainland China or Taiwan had very limited Chinese skills. 51.4% of them said they were unable to listen, speak or read Chinese.
- 3.6 Most Taiwanese respondents had a basic or higher Cantonese level. Only 25.0% of Taiwanese respondents said that they were unable to listen to or speak Cantonese. Mainland respondents had poorer Cantonese than Taiwanese respondents. 42.7% of Mainland respondents said they were unable to listen or speak Cantonese.
- 3.7 Many non-Mainland respondents had built up close friendships with local Hong Kong people. 54.9% of non-Mainland respondents said they had at least one local close friend, but 38.5% of Mainland respondents had at least one local close friend in Hong Kong.
- 3.8 Respondents with better Chinese or Cantonese skills were more likely to have at least one local close friend.

3.9 Most respondents, especially Mainland respondents, used local media. 54.4% of non-Mainland and 63.1% of Mainland respondents sometimes used local media.

#### **4. Image of Hong Kong and Mainland China**

4.1 The research employed a measurement of soft power proposed by Jhee and Lee (2011), which measures the individual’s perception toward a society on two distinctive evaluative dimensions: affective and normative.

4.2 The affective dimension corresponds to emotional attraction from a society, and involves attitudes towards its: 1) political system, 2) economy, 3) education and science, and 4) culture.

4.3 The score of Hong Kong’s affective dimension index was quite high (non-Mainland: 6.88 points; Mainland: 6.82 points). The affective soft power of the Mainland China was average to the non-Mainland respondents (5.93 points) while it was perceived as strong by Mainland respondents (7.42 points).

4.4 The normative dimension relates to a society’s legitimacy, and involves attitudes towards: 1) the observation of international norms and 2) its contributions to the resolution of international problems.

4.5 The normative soft power of Hong Kong was average to non-Mainland respondents (5.98 points) and quite strong to Mainland respondents (6.77 points). The normative soft power of Mainland China was weak to non-Mainland respondents (3.71 points), but strong to Mainland respondents (7.98 points).

4.6 Overall, Hong Kong’s soft power was perceived by the respondents to be quite strong. The respective scores of Hong Kong’s soft power index of non-Mainland and the Mainland respondents were 6.28 and 6.82 points. Non-Mainland respondent’s attitude towards Mainland China’s overall soft power was average (4.86 points), while Mainland respondents perceived the overall soft power of Mainland China as strong (7.73 points).

4.7 Non-Mainland respondent’s overall feeling towards Hong Kong was good (7.40 points), higher than Mainland respondent’s score (6.30 points).

4.8 The overall feeling towards Mainland China of the non-Mainland students was average (5.23 points). Mainland respondents had a good feeling towards Mainland China (7.76 points).



- 4.9 The image of Hong Kong perceived by non-Mainland respondents had improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 48.2% of them answered “better than before”. The image of Hong Kong perceived by the Mainland respondents had not improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 50.8 % of them answered “poorer than before”.
- 4.10 However, interviewees expressed concern about the future of Hong Kong. They felt that the major advantage and competitive characteristic of Hong Kong was its mixed culture, which was different from other Mainland Chinese cities, but they felt this would disappear in the future.
- 4.11 Overall, the feeling towards Mainland China of non-Mainland respondents had not improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 51.3 % of them answered “no change”. The image of Mainland China perceived by Mainland respondents had improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 63.9% of them answered “better than before”.

## **5. Career Plan after Graduation**

- 5.1 The respondents of this study always had some idea about their career development after graduation in Hong Kong. When our survey asked their plans for after graduation only 16.6% of non-Mainland and 19.6% of Mainland respondents answered “undecided”.
- 5.2 The findings showed that Hong Kong was an attractive destination for further study for both non-Mainland (32.7%) and Mainland respondents (37.5%), second to the U.S.
- 5.3 Most respondents who planned to work after graduation had a clear idea about their destination for work. Only 4.7% of non-Mainland and 1.0% of Mainland respondents answered “undecided” (Table 5.7).
- 5.4 The top destination for work was Hong Kong for non-Mainland respondents (64.3%). Hong Kong was the second choice of destination for work for Mainland respondents (31.0%). The interviewees expressed they would like to stay and work in Hong Kong because of good salaries and opportunities.
- 5.5 Although the “Belt and Road Initiative” is a major policy proposed by the Central Government, 10.2% of Mainland respondents said that they had not heard of it before, while 89.8% had heard about it. In contrast, 67.9% of non-Mainland respondents had heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and 32.1% had not.

- 5.6 Interviewees from “Belt and Road Initiative” countries expressed positive attitudes towards the initiative, which improved their image of Mainland China. But some of them said that they had no clear idea about the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and did not know its impacts on their life.
- 5.7 Those from Mainland China had limited interest in “Belt and Road Initiative” countries, although they may know more about the “Belt and Road Initiative” itself.

## **6. Conclusion and Policy Implication and Recommendation**

- 6.1 The findings suggest that Hong Kong’s perceived soft power of non-Mainland respondents could be strengthened by providing tertiary education to them. Non-Mainland respondents perceived Hong Kong’s soft power to be quite strong, and this strengthened further as they studied in Hong Kong.
- 6.2 The respondents agreed that experiences in Hong Kong could facilitate their future careers because Hong Kong is an international city with a mixed culture, and which provides high-level education. Furthermore, there are many opportunities for students to learn about other countries and cultures. However, the students would not like to stay in Hong Kong in long the term.
- 6.3 Soft power is based on an attractive image to foreign people. In order to build up Hong Kong’s soft power and facilitate development of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, it is necessary to attract students from other countries to study in Hong Kong. This will improve the perceived image of Hong Kong, and encourage the visiting students to participate in the “Belt and Road Initiative”. Hence, our policy recommendations focus on non-Mainland students in three aspects:
- (1) Improving quality of life for students in Hong Kong.
  - (2) Attracting international talent to study and work in Hong Kong.
  - (3) Encourage international students to participate in and contribute to “Belt and Road Initiative”.

## 報告摘要

### 摘要

過去香港一直歡迎外籍學生來港求學，能否從中增強軟實力？這些答案的政策含意其實遠逾教育本身。

香港高等教育向負盛譽，境外學子赴港升學不輟。惟該領域到底應國際化到何程度時有爭議。本研究不擬探究資源如何在本地與外地學生間分配，而僅探討相關政策的必要性及理據。

西方發達國家多歡迎並積極招攬國際學生。這不僅著眼於教育收益，還包括重組人口、重新經濟定位和擴張文化影響力等。究其實，在 Joseph Nye 眼中，這是軟實力戰略一環。有別於軍事及經濟硬實力，軟實力源於眾人不自覺意識形態親切感、共同價值觀及文化吸引力，教育有助於養成這類親切感。

中國走出去及一帶一路倡議強調了它與世界進一步交融之必要，強大的軟實力是香港能否在當中扮演重要角色的關鍵，我們兼用定量和定性的方法，包括網上問卷調查、深入訪談和次級數據，亟盼檢視本地教育能否加強香港對非本地大學生的軟實力？研究結果望能為相關施政提供佐證。

## 政策含義及建議摘要

### 1. 研究背景

- 1.1 近年愈來愈多本地學生出外留學，同時不少外地學生來港升學。
- 1.2 高等教育國際化不單有利於學生本身，同時能夠增強提供教育的地方的軟實力。
- 1.3 中國近年提出「一帶一路」政策，香港藉此反思在國家發展策略中的角色。香港高等教育優勢可以是軟實力戰略一環，有助國家走去世界。

### 2. 研究目的和方法

#### 2.1 兩個主要研究問題：

- (1) 香港能否透過提供高等教育給非本地學生來增強軟實力？
- (2) 在港留學是否有助非本地學生的未來事業發展？

#### 2.2 本研究兼用定量和定性的方法：

- (1) 網上問卷調查：在 2019 年 9 月至 2020 年 1 月進行網上問卷調查，對象是八間教資會資助大學的非本地學生（包括本科生和研究生），成功訪問 575 人，當中 193 人是非內地學生，382 人是內地學生。
- (2) 深入訪談：在 2019 年 11 月至 2020 年 4 月成功訪問 31 名完成網上問卷調查的非本地學生，當中 10 名是內地生、11 名是亞洲學生和 10 名是其他地方學生。
- (3) 次級數據：本研究同時參考次級數據包括官方數據、大眾媒體和大學資料等。

### 3. 在港留學經驗

- 3.1 非內地（7.33 分）和內地（7.38 分）受訪者對修讀課程評價正面。雖然他們認為香港課程競爭力不及英美，但是他們的確得益於在港留學獲取的實際經驗和機會。
- 3.2 59.1% 非內地和 67.5% 內地受訪者認為香港高等教育質素高是來港留學的最重要或第二重要的原因。
- 3.3 受訪者大致滿意在香港的生活，因為他們覺得香港是一個現代化的國際都市，包容不同的文化。不過，他們覺得香港居住空間太小和物價過高。
- 3.4 非內地受訪者（6.79 分）較內地受訪者（5.58 分）滿意在香港的生活。

- 3.5 大多數來自非內地或台灣的受訪者不太認識中文，51.4% 表示不能聽、寫和說中文。
- 3.6 多數台灣受訪者有一定程度的廣東話能力，當中只有 25.0%不能聽和說廣東話。但是，內地受訪者廣東話能力較差，42.7% 內地受訪者不能聽和說廣東話。
- 3.7 不少非內地受訪者能夠與本地學生成為好友，54.9% 非內地受訪者表示他們有本地好友，但是只有 38.5% 內地受訪者能夠與本地學生成為好友。
- 3.8 中文或廣東話能力較好的受訪者較易能夠與本地學生成為好友。
- 3.9 多數受訪者尤其內地受訪者瀏覽本地傳媒，54.4% 非內地和 63.1% 內地受訪者有時瀏覽本地傳媒。

#### 4. 對香港和內地的印象

- 4.1 本研究根據 Jhee and Lee (2011) 研究測量軟實力。這方法將軟實力分為情感和規範兩方面。
- 4.2 情感性軟實力指一個社會在 1) 政治制度、2) 經濟、3) 教育和科學，以及 4) 文化等四方面對他人的吸引力。
- 4.3 香港情感性軟實力指數得分頗高（非內地：6.88 分；內地：6.82 分）。另一方面，非內地受訪者對內地的情感性軟實力評分普通（5.93 分），而內地受訪者則評分甚高（7.42 分）。
- 4.4 規範性軟實力指一個社會在他人眼中的正當性，這分為他人對該社會 1) 遵守國際規範和 2) 解決國際問題的貢獻共兩方面的看法。
- 4.5 非內地受訪者（5.98 分）對香港規範性軟實力評分普通，而內地受訪者則評分頗高（6.77 分）。非內地受訪者對內地規範性軟實力評分頗低（3.71 分），而內地受訪者則評分甚高（7.98 分）。
- 4.6 受訪者對香港整體軟實力評分頗高，非內地和內地受訪者的評分是 6.28 和 6.82 分。非內地受訪者對內地整體軟實力評分普通（4.86 分），而內地受訪者則評分甚高（7.73 分）。
- 4.7 非內地受訪者對香港印象甚佳（7.40 分），較內地受訪者高分（6.30 分）。
- 4.8 非內地受訪者對內地印象一般（5.23 分），而內地受訪者對內地印象甚佳（7.76 分）。

- 4.9 非內地受訪者對香港印象來港後有所改善，48.2% 回答「較以前好」。內地受訪者對香港印象來港後沒有改善，50.8% 回答「較以前差」。
- 4.10 但是，受訪者表示擔心香港的未來，他們認為香港最大優勢是其中西混合的文化，這是其他內地城市沒有的，只是他們覺得這種特點會漸漸消失。
- 4.11 非內地受訪者對內地印象來港後穩定，51.3% 回答「沒有改變」。而內地受訪者對內地印象來港後有所改善，63.9% 回答「較以前好」。

## 5. 畢業後的計劃

- 5.1 受訪者對畢業後事業發展有一定的計劃，只有 16.6% 非內地和 19.6% 內地受訪者表示「未決定」畢業後的發展。
- 5.2 香港是非內地（32.7%）和內地受訪者（37.5%）熱門的升學地點，僅次於美國。
- 5.3 多數打算畢業後工作的受訪者已決定在何處工作，只有 4.7% 非內地和 1.0% 內地受訪者未決定是否留港，或是去其他地方。
- 5.4 香港是非內地受訪者首選工作地點（64.3%），而內地受訪者認為香港是次選工作地點（31.0%）。受訪者打算留港工作是因為香港人工較高和多機會。
- 5.5 雖然「一帶一路」是國家的重要政策，但是 10.2% 內地受訪者沒有聽聞相關政策，有聽聞過的有 89.8%。而 67.9% 非內地受訪者表示曾聽聞「一帶一路」，沒有聽聞過的有 32.1%。
- 5.6 受訪者對「一帶一路」看法正面，但是不少人表示不太認識這政策，並不知道對他們生活有什麼影響。
- 5.7 雖然內地受訪者較瞭解「一帶一路」，但是對其興趣不大。

## 6. 總結與政策建議

- 6.1 研究發現香港能夠透過提供高等教育提升非內地受訪者對香港的軟實力。非內地受訪者對香港軟實力評分頗高，同時表示來港後對香港印象更有所改善。
- 6.2 因為香港是一個現代化的國際城市，具有多元文化，提供高質素的教育，讓留學生有機會瞭解不同國家，所以受訪者同意在港留學經驗有助他們的事業發展，但是他們不打算長期留港發展。
- 6.3 一個社會的軟實力是建基於外國人對其的印象。為了增強香港軟實力和促進「一帶一路」政策，需要吸引更多外國人才來港升學，並且讓他們對香港的看法更正

面，而且鼓勵他們參與「一帶一路」發展。因此，政策建議專注非內地留學生的三方面：

- (1) 改善他們在港留學生活
- (2) 吸引更多外國人才來港升學及發展
- (3) 鼓勵非內地留學生參與「一帶一路」發展

## Research Team Members

Principal Investigator	
Dr Zheng, Wan-tai Victor	Associate Director (Executive), Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Co-Investigators	
Professor Wong, Siu-lun	Emeritus Professor, Department of Sociology, The University of Hong Kong
Professor, Fung Anthony Ying-him	Co-Director, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Dr Wong, Kevin Tze-wai	Research Associate, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Dr Guo, Hua	Research Associate, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong



## Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge the Public Policy Research Funding Scheme (2019.A4.054.19A) provided by Policy Innovation and Coordination Office, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

We also wish to thank the help provided by the following persons and institutions (in alphabetical order):

<b>The Chinese University of Hong Kong</b>
Office of Student Affairs;
<b>City University of Hong Kong</b>
Global Engagement Office;
<b>The Education University of Hong Kong</b>
Professor Lui, Tai-lok, JP Vice President (Research and Development) Chair Professor of Hong Kong Studies Director of the Academy of Hong Kong Studies Acting Director of the Centre for Governance and Citizenship Director of the Centre for Greater China Studies;
Professor Chiu, Wing-kai Stephen Associate Dean (International Engagement), Faculty of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Acting Head / Chair Professor , Department of Social Sciences;
Global Affairs Office;
Student Affairs Office;
<b>Hong Kong Baptist University</b>
Campus Life & Support Section, Office of Student Affairs;
International Office;
<b>The Hong Kong Polytechnic University</b>
Non-local Student Services Team, Office of Student Development;
<b>The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology</b>
Professor Chow, King-lau Acting Dean of Students Director of Interdisciplinary Programs Office;
Dean of Students’ Office;

<b>Lingnan University</b>
<p>Professor Mok, Ka-ho Joshua  Vice-President; Lam Man Tsan Chair Professor of Comparative Policy;</p>
<p>Student Services Centre;</p>
<p>Lingnan University Overseas Undergraduate Admissions;</p>
<b>The University of Hong Kong</b>
<p>Professor Holliday, Ian Michael  Vice-President and Pro-Vice-Chancellor;</p>
<p>Professor Bacon-Shone, John  Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences,  Director of the Social Sciences Research Centre;</p>
<p>Dr Leung, Eugenie  Dean of Student Affairs, Centre of Development and Resources for Students;</p>
<p>Centre for Development and Resources for Students;</p>

## List of Figures and Tables

### Figures

3.1	Evaluation on Current Programme of Study .....	36
3.2	Evaluation on Current Programme of Study by Social Background Factors .....	38
3.3	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: High-quality Education (%).....	43
3.4	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: Hong Kong is an International City (%) .....	45
3.5	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: Good Career Opportunities (%).....	47
3.6	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: Low Cost of Study Compared to Advanced Countries (%).....	49
3.7	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: Financial Support (%).....	51
3.8	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: Proximity of the Location (%) .....	53
3.9	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: English is the Medium of Instruction (%) .....	55
3.10	Evaluation on Daily Life in Hong Kong.....	58
3.11	Evaluation on Daily Life by Social Background Factors .....	60
3.12	Chinese Level (%) .....	63
3.13	Chinese Level by Social Background Factors (%).....	64
3.14	Cantonese Level (%).....	65
3.15	Cantonese Level of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) .....	66
3.16	Local Close Friend(s) (%) .....	67
3.17	Local Close Friend(s) by Social Background Factors (%) .....	68
3.18	Local Close Friend(s) by Language Skill (%) .....	71
3.19	Use of Local Media (%) .....	72
3.20	Use of Local Media by Social Background Factors (%) .....	73
3.21	Use of Local Media by Language Skill (%) .....	74
4.1	Rating of Political System .....	78

4.2	Rating of Political System by Social Background Factors .....	79
4.3	Rating of Economy .....	81
4.4	Rating of Economy by Social Background Factors.....	83
4.5	Rating of Education and Science .....	86
4.6	Rating of Education and Science by Social Background Factors.....	87
4.7	Rating of Culture .....	90
4.8	Rating of Culture by Social Background Factors .....	91
4.9	Affective Dimension Index.....	93
4.10	Affective Dimension Index by Social Background Factors .....	94
4.11	Rating of Observation of International Norm.....	96
4.12	Rating of Observation of International Norm by Social Background Factors .....	98
4.13	Rating of Contribution to Resolution of International Problems.....	101
4.14	Rating of Contribution to Resolution of International Problems by Social Background Factors .....	103
4.15	Normative Dimension Index.....	104
4.16	Normative Dimension Index by Social Background Factors .....	106
4.17	Soft Power Index .....	108
4.18	Soft Power Index by Social Background Factors .....	109
4.19	Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China .....	111
4.20	Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China by Social Background Factors .....	113
4.21	Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China (%).....	115
4.22	Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong by Social Background Factors (%) .....	116
4.23	Change in Feeling towards Mainland China by Social Background Factors (%) .....	117
4.24	Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong by Education and Life Experience in Hong Kong (%).....	119
4.25	Change in Feeling towards Mainland China by Education and Life Experience in Hong Kong (%).....	120
5.1	Career Plan after Graduation (%) .....	126
5.2	Career Plan after Graduation by Social Background Factors (%) .....	128
5.3	Heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” (%).....	148
5.4	Heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” by Social Background Factors (%).....	149

## Tables

1.1	Non-local Students Enrolment by Level of Study and Place of Origin from 2010–11 to 2018–19.....	22
2.1	Social Background of the Respondents of the Online Survey.....	32
2.2	Social Background of the Interviewees of the In-depth Interview .....	35
3.1	Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong (%).....	40
5.1	Destination of Further Study (%) .....	129
5.2	Destination of Further Study of Non-Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) .....	131
5.3	Destination of Further Study of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) .....	132
5.4	Target Industries of the Work (%).....	134
5.5	Target Industries of the Work of Non-Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) .....	136
5.6	Target Industries of the Work of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) .....	138
5.7	Destination of Work (%) .....	140
5.8	Destination of Work by Social Background Factors (%) .....	142

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Hong Kong has long maintained a reputation for quality higher education and has witnessed a steady influx of non-local students over several decades.
- 1.2 However, exactly how open and “international” this sector should be remains understudied. Many argue that priority should be given to locals over non-locals in UGC funding, while some criticize the authorities’ preference towards Mainland Chinese over other non-local students. This research does not intend to find the optimal resource distribution among local and non-local students in Hong Kong, but rather aims to empirically explore the necessity and rationale of higher education as soft power for the concerned policy.

### Non-local Students in Hong Kong

- 1.3 It is a salient phenomenon that a large number of local students study aboard, and many non-local students study in Hong Kong every year. Official data further indicates that the number of non-local students studying in Hong Kong has risen significantly in recent years.
- 1.4 Table 1.1 shows the number of non-local students enrolled in various undergraduate and postgraduate degrees from 2010 to 2018. It is clear that not only has the number of non-local students in undergraduate degree programmes greatly increased, but the proportion in research postgraduate degrees has also jumped considerably.
- 1.5 Although there is an argument that students who study aboard forge a lifelong connection with the host society, serving as a bridge between the host and home societies, little empirical support is available, especially for East-meets-West societies like Hong Kong. Therefore, it is important to obtain such data to fill the academic gap.

Table 1.1 Non-local Students Enrolment by Level of Study and Place of Origin  
from 2010–11 to 2018–19\*

Academic Year	Undergraduates			Taught Postgraduates			Research Postgraduates		
	Main-land	Other Places in Asia	The Rest of the World	Main-land	Other Places in Asia	The Rest of the World	Main-land	Other Places in Asia	The Rest of the World
2010–11	4,638	721	239	43	12	10	4,041	216	149
2011–12	4,583	1,057	274	55	17	15	4,299	280	188
2012–13	6,315	1,750	334	62	19	13	4,586	335	246
2013–14	6,521	2,096	325	86	14	11	4,767	385	305
2014–15	6,630	2,416	328	69	15	11	4,909	400	371
2015–16	6,712	2,692	305	52	14	9	5,112	424	392
2016–17	6,847	3,192	317	54	8	1	5,131	503	415
2017-18	6,911	3,599	331	71	10	2	5,117	575	433
2018-19	6,933	4,300	368	90	9	3	5,299	618	440

Source: University Grants Committee, 2020.

\* *Figures only show UGC-funded undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, excluding self-financed degrees because data is unavailable.*

## Higher Education as Soft Power

- 1.6 “Soft power” as a term and concept was first developed by Joseph S. Nye in 1990, immediately following the end of the Cold War. From the perspective of America, the sole superpower in the 1990s, Nye suggested that soft power could be “a second, more attractive way of exercising power than traditional means” (1990:166). Instead of coercion, a state may achieve its preferred outcomes “because other states want to follow it or have agreed to a situation that produces such effects” (1990:166). Soft power is associated with intangible resources such as culture, ideology, and institutions. Soft power is therefore in contrast with hard power; ordering others to do what the state wants.
- 1.7 As far as higher education is concerned, Nye highlighted the significant role that academic and scientific exchanges have played in enhancing American soft power. For instance, 110 American colleges and universities participated in student and faculty exchanges with their counterparts in the Soviet Union since the 1950s, this was together with other elite exchange programmes that saw some 50,000 Soviet Union citizens visiting the U.S. between 1958 and 1988. Amongst them were writers, journalists, officials, musicians, dancers, athletes, and academics. Nye eloquently argues that the ideological influence of such exchanges contributed to the eventual fall of the Soviet Union (Nye, 2004:45–46).
- 1.8 Developed Western countries, such as the U.S., Canada, and Australia, seem to be highly aware of the correlation between soft power and higher education. Australia, for instance, launched and led the “Colombo Plan” from 1950 to 1967 that awarded university scholarships to Commonwealth students from South and Southeast Asia. Official reports note that some Colombo scholarship recipients became leaders in and beyond Australia (Strategy Policy and Research in Education Limited, 2009; Byrne and Hall, 2013).
- 1.9 Altbach and Peterson (2015) conducted a detailed analysis on the great success of the U.S. in making higher education a projection of its soft power. Apart from benefitting financially from international students’ “indirect subsidization” to universities concerned, Altbach and Peterson argue that the locals could definitely learn something through their everyday contacts and exchanges with international students.
- 1.10 Recent empirical studies in the West have also overwhelmingly vindicated the merits of an open higher education system, which go beyond tangible advantages to intangible benefits, such as the enduring alumnus effects and professional networks facilitating



research and trade (Throsby, 1998; Oxford Economics, 2007; Strategy Policy and Research in Education Limited, 2009; Roslyn Kunin and Associates, Inc., 2012; DAAD, 2013; Mellors-Bourne et al., 2013; Murat, 2014).

- 1.11 Other findings indicate that international students who have exposure to a new culture could have the significant positive effect of cultural tolerance (Brown, 2009). Specifically, they could be socialized to become cultural bridges linking the host and home countries, or mediators between cultures, and therefore, could become major contributors to a reduction in world conflict (Bochner, 1986). More importantly, international higher education could forge universal core values and cosmopolitan identities, which in turn could further enhance global solidarity and cultural exchange (Rizvi, 2005; Gill, 2010).
- 1.12 In short, international higher education could bring far more intangible advantages, not only to students themselves, but to the host and home countries as well. Therefore, more thorough empirical research in this area is badly needed.

## **Non-local Students as Network Builders and New Migrants**

1.13 As shown in table 1.1, the enrolment of non-local students in the various UGC-funded undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Hong Kong has been steadily rising over the past decade.

1.14 Non-local university students may choose to return home, to stay in Hong Kong, or to continue their studies/careers in other countries upon graduation. From the perspective of Hong Kong, which is preferable? We would like to argue that as long as the policy mechanism is right, they could contribute in all three circumstances. If one chooses to return to his/her home country, a person may act as a network builder and promote mutual understanding between Hong Kong and the home country.

If a person chooses to stay in Hong Kong, he/she may be welcomed as a qualified new migrant, as the government has claimed that it intends to build human capital “with a more proactive policy and targeted approach to attract more talent from overseas and the Mainland” (SCPP, 2013:10). And finally, if one chooses to move to Mainland China, with Hong Kong-trained expertise and knowledge, it may suit the cause of the “Belt and Road Initiative” even better. But what is the reality, particularly concerning students’ true feelings and personal experiences?

1.15 To date, few have carried out a survey on this group of people. The graduate employment surveys conducted by universities (e.g. HKU and CUHK) are usually too general for the purpose of policy references. It is therefore a valuable research gap to fill.

## Hong Kong and the “Belt and Road Initiative”

1.16 The “Belt and Road Initiative” refers to the “Silk Road Economic Belt” and “21st Century Maritime Silk Road”. A grand strategy, unveiled by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013, which aims to promote economic cooperation among countries along the proposed Belt and Road routes. Broadly speaking, it aims to connect the whole world, but in the initial stage it aims to connect Asia, Europe, and Africa along five routes:

- (1) Linking China to Europe through Central Asia and Russia;
- (2) Connecting China with the Middle East through Central Asia;
- (3) Bringing together China and Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the Indian Ocean;
- (4) Using Chinese coastal ports to link China with Europe through the South China Sea and Indian Ocean; and
- (5) Connecting China with the South Pacific Ocean through the South China Sea (HKTDC, 2016).

1.17 Since this initiative is an unprecedented and innovative endeavour for promoting regional and international all-round cooperation and mutual development, better grasping the chances and meeting the challenges are not without difficulties (鄭宏泰, 2016).

1.18 It is obvious that of the five geographical regions aforementioned (Southeast Asia/South Asia/Central and Western Asia/the Middle East and Africa/Central and Eastern Europe), Southeast Asia has the strongest historical, social, and financial connections with Hong Kong. ASEAN countries may therefore be prioritized as the main focus for Hong Kong in facilitating the “Belt and Road Initiative” effectively and efficiently. At present, ASEAN is Hong Kong’s second largest trade partner of Hong Kong. As a bloc with the third largest population in the world, it also enjoys an impressive pace of economic development.

1.19 The 2014 official statistics show that ASEAN’s population of 622 million was behind only China and India, while remaining larger than the EU. The most remarkable fact of its population is that more than a half are under 30 years old. In economic progress, ASEAN achieved a 76% increase in its GDP per capita between 2007 and 2014 (ASEAN Secretariat, 2015:1).

1.20 In fact, the HKSAR government is currently taking proactive steps to engage ASEAN and consolidate itself as a gateway between China and ASEAN. There is also an ongoing effort to conclude a free trade agreement with ASEAN, and the government is paying special attention to Indonesia, the largest economy in the bloc. It swiftly established a Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Jakarta, and since 2016 has offered scholarships to Indonesian students (Education Bureau, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, 2019). However, its more ambitious proposal to spend HK\$1 billion on Belt and Road scholarships failed to pass the Legislative Council because of strong scepticism (Fung, 2016). This event alerted the government to the reality that local residents may bear rather negative perceptions against the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and that few could actually see the opportunity offered by this initiative.

1.21 China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” entails the HKSAR government rethinking its role and opportunity in national development. Hong Kong is undoubtedly well-established and influential in financial, professional, and business sectors, yet little attention has been paid to its education sector as a potential source of soft power. That could in fact supplement China’s regional and global out-reach efforts.

## 2. Research Objectives and Methods

- 2.1 Developed Western countries tend to welcome or even proactively recruit international students. The rationale behind this friendly policy is not merely gaining revenue, but rather their needs for population restructuring, economic repositioning, and the spread of cultural influence.
- 2.2 It is in fact part of their strategy to project their “soft power”, in the eyes of Joseph Nye, who coined the term in 1990. Unlike hard power, based primarily on one’s military and economic might, the strength of soft power lies in unconscious ideological affinity, common values, and cultural attractions. Education, in that sense, may be an effective platform in nurturing such affinity.
- 2.3 The Chinese national “Go Global” strategy, as well as the recent “Belt and Road Initiative”, emphasize the necessity of China’s further integration with the world. Hong Kong has historically functioned as a hub which connects China and other parts of the world via socio-economic networking. Strong soft power would allow Hong Kong to play its role in the process more efficiently.

### Research Objectives

- 2.4 To collect data on the study experiences of non-local university students in Hong Kong, as well as their general perceptions of Hong Kong, especially in higher education.
- 2.5 To explore the relations between Hong Kong and the career plan of HK-trained non-local university students.
- 2.6 To offer recommendations for the improvement of policies related to international students in general and to students of Belt and Road Initiative countries in particular.

## Research Questions

- 2.3 Based on this context, and from the perspective of soft power, we aim to examine if the education experience of Hong Kong-trained non-local university students—regardless of their ethnic backgrounds—could in fact strengthen Hong Kong’s soft power on them.
- 2.4 Hong Kong—and to a certain extent Mainland China—may benefit from the career advancement of these non-local university students, regardless of their ethnicity. They may contribute to the strengthening of existing networks in the region, or contribute to the building of new networks. These networks may also facilitate the implementation of the “Belt and Road Initiative” in the region. This study also aims to explore Hong Kong-trained non-local students’ connection with Hong Kong and their career plans.
- 2.5 Two research questions were raised:
- (1) Could Hong Kong improve its soft power from providing tertiary education to non-local students?
  - (2) Do non-local students in Hong Kong think their foreign study experience can facilitate their future careers?
- 2.6 To answer these two questions, we have to know:
- (1) Why non-local students chose to study in Hong Kong;
  - (2) What these students’ background is;
  - (3) How these students evaluate the Hong Kong education system;
  - (4) Whether their perception of Hong Kong improves after their study in Hong Kong;
  - (5) To what extent their affinity with Hong Kong increases after their study in Hong Kong;
  - (6) Whether they plan to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation;
  - (7) Which industry they plan to work in regardless of whether they stay in Hong Kong;
  - (8) Whether they would like to promote Hong Kong after returning to their home countries;
  - (9) Whether they plan to take part in the “Belt and Road Initiative” after graduation.

## Research Methods

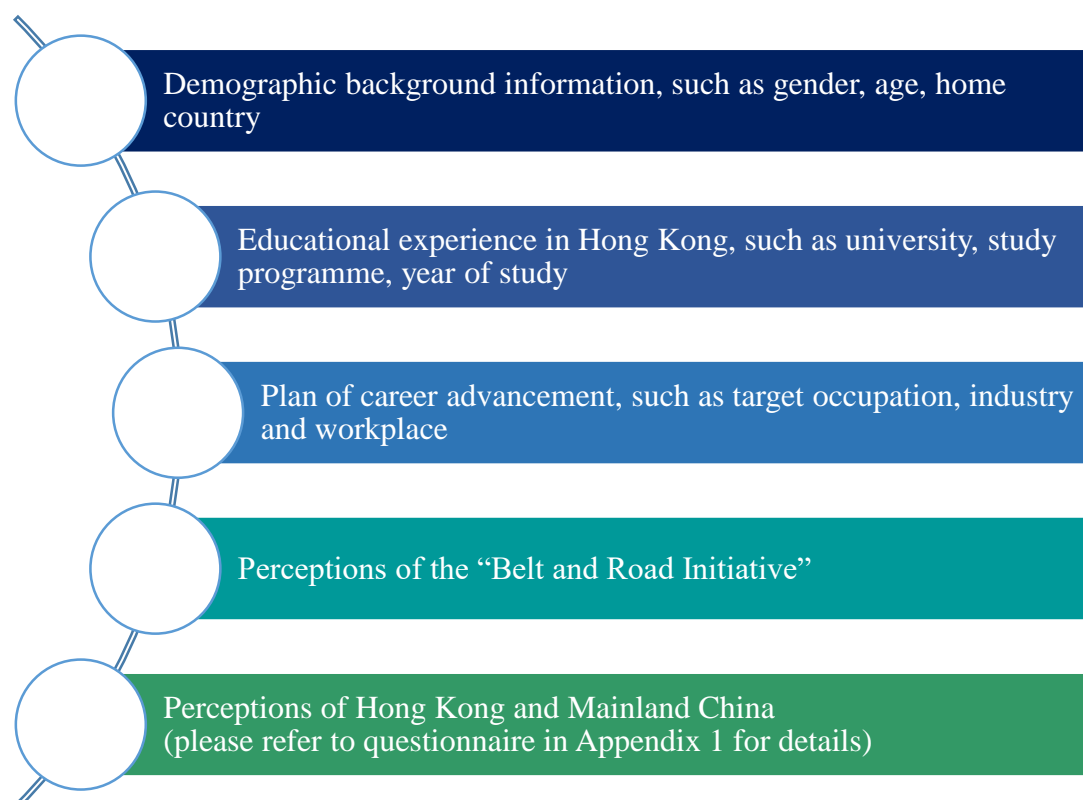
2.7 Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were adopted in the research.

### Online survey

2.8 An online structured questionnaire survey was conducted from September 2019 to January 2020. This collected general information about non-local students’ (undergraduates and postgraduates) background, reasons for studying in Hong Kong, their study experience in Hong Kong, previous connections with Hong Kong, their perception of Hong Kong, attitudes towards the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and their career advancement plans.

2.9 The target population of our online-survey was non-local university students, both undergraduates and postgraduates, of eight UGC-funded universities. Without further sub-selection, an e-mail was sent to them with the help of the admissions unit, relevant non-local students units, and faculties of the universities.

2.10 A closed-end questionnaire of the survey included the following major groups of factors:



2.11 The survey had a total of 575 respondents in which 193 respondents were non-Mainland students, and 382 respondents were Mainland students. Table 2.1 shows the background of the respondents.

2.12 As the research aimed to examine the effect of higher education experience on soft power of Hong Kong and Mainland China, and the effect may be different between non-Mainland and Mainland students. To this end, non-Mainland and Mainland students are separately discussed in the following chapters.



Table 2.1 Social Background of the Respondents of the Online Survey

	Non-Mainland students	Mainland students
Gender (%)		
Male	56.5	35.1
Female	41.5	63.9
Other	2.1	1.0
(n)	(193)	(382)
Age (Mean)	23.75	23.06
(n)	(193)	(381)
University (%)		
The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	39.9	67.5
City University of Hong Kong (CityU)	9.3	0.0
The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)	0.0	0.8
Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)	6.2	0.0
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)	4.1	0.3
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)	31.6	29.8
Lingnan University (LU)	0.0	0.8
The University of Hong Kong (HKU)	8.8	0.8
(n)	(193)	(382)
Programme of study (%)		
Undergraduate programme	51.8	21.5
Postgraduate programme	48.2	78.5
(n)	(193)	(382)
Major field of study (%)		
Architecture and Construction Engineering	3.1	1.6
Business and Commercial Studies	27.5	19.1
Education	1.0	4.2
Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology	27.5	17.5
Humanities, Anthropology, Arts, or Language	3.1	7.1
Law	2.1	2.9
Medical and Health-related Studies	3.1	6.0
Sciences (including Computer Studies)	23.3	18.1
Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)	8.8	23.6
Double Degree, please specify:	0.5	0.0
(n)	(193)	(382)

Table 2.1 Social Background of the Respondents of the Online Survey (continued)

	Non-Mainland students	Mainland students
Length of living in Hong Kong (%)		
Less than 1 year	54.9	60.1
1 year — less than 4 years	37.8	29.7
4 years — less than 7 years	6.2	8.9
7 years or more	1.0	1.3
(n)	(193)	(381)
Home society (%)		
Asia (excluding Mainland)	66.8	-
Europe	19.7	-
North America	4.1	-
Central & South America	3.6	-
Oceania	2.1	-
Africa	3.6	-
Mainland	-	100.0
(n)	(193)	(382)
Subjective class in home country (%)		
Lower class	0.0	0.8
Lower-middle class	8.3	20.7
Middle class	49.7	60.9
Upper-middle class	36.8	15.0
Upper class	5.2	2.6
(n)	(193)	(381)
Father's education (%)		
Primary or below	4.8	4.9
Secondary	17.5	26.7
Tertiary	76.7	68.2
Others	1.1	0.3
(n)	(189)	(371)

## **In-depth Interview**

- 2.13 In addition to quantitative methods, in-depth interviews were employed to supplement the survey. Using an open structure for the in-depth interview was most suitable for investigating why the students decided to study in Hong Kong, and how their perception of Hong Kong and the “Belt and Road Initiative” developed during their time in Hong Kong. The flexible structure used allowed the participants to develop their individual points of view, so that the researchers could explore new insights.
- 2.14 A series of in-depth interviews were conducted from November 2019 to April 2020. The interviews investigated non-local students’ (undergraduates and postgraduates) background, reasons for studying in Hong Kong, their study experience in Hong Kong, previous connections with Hong Kong, their perception of Hong Kong, attitudes towards the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and their plans for career advancement.
- 2.15 Each in-depth interview was conducted according to a semi-structured interview guide designed by the lead researchers (please refer to framework in Appendix 2 for details). Confidentiality of responses was observed to enable interviewees to speak freely and frankly.
- 2.16 The interviewees were selected from those who responded to the online survey. In total, 31 non-local university students were interviewed, 10 from Mainland China, 11 from other places in Asia than Mainland China, and 10 people from the rest of the world. Table 2.2 shows the background of the interviewees.

## **Secondary Data**

- 2.17 Secondary data, including official statistics, reports/interviews/data from public media and university publications, as well as personal writings of non-local university students were used for reference.

Table 2.2 Social Background of the Interviewees of the In-depth Interview

	Non-Mainland students	Mainland students
Gender		
Male	61.9	40.0
Female	38.1	60.0
University		
The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)	33.3	50.0
City University of Hong Kong (CityU)	9.5	0.0
The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)	0.0	10.0
Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)	4.8	0.0
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)	14.3	0.0
The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)	38.1	40.0
Lingnan University (LU)	0.0	0.0
The University of Hong Kong (HKU)	0.0	0.0
Programme of study		
Undergraduate programme	33.3	30.0
Postgraduate programme	66.7	70.0
Major field of study		
Architecture and Construction Engineering	9.5	0.0
Business and Commercial Studies	4.8	10.0
Education	0.0	10.0
Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology	47.6	20.0
Humanities, Anthropology, Arts, or Language	0.0	20.0
Law	0.0	0.0
Medical and Health-related Studies	0.0	20.0
Sciences (including Computer Studies)	19.0	20.0
Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)	19.0	0.0
Double Degree, please specify:	0.0	0.0
Length of living in Hong Kong		
Less than 1 year	9.5	0.0
1 year — less than 4 years	66.7	50.0
4 years — less than 7 years	23.8	40.0
7 years or more	0.0	10.0
(n)	(21)	(10)

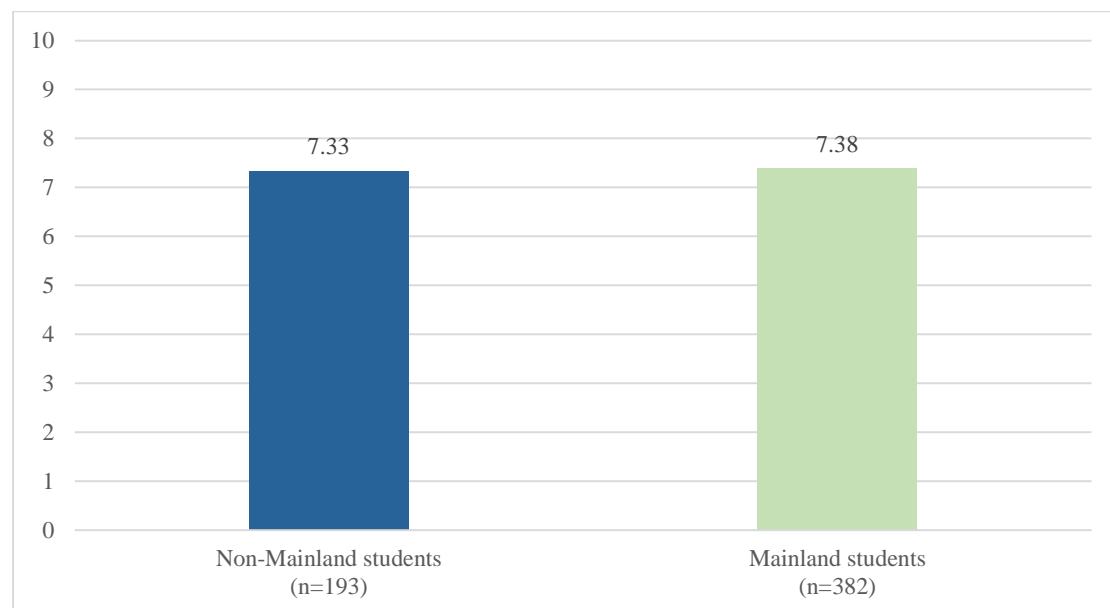
### 3. Experience in Hong Kong

- 3.1 Experience in a host country could socialize non-local students to become mediators between cultures, which in turn could encourage cultural exchange and strengthen the soft power of the host country.
- 3.2 The analysis on the relationship between education and soft power begins with the education and life experience of non-local students in Hong Kong.

#### Hong Kong Education Evaluation

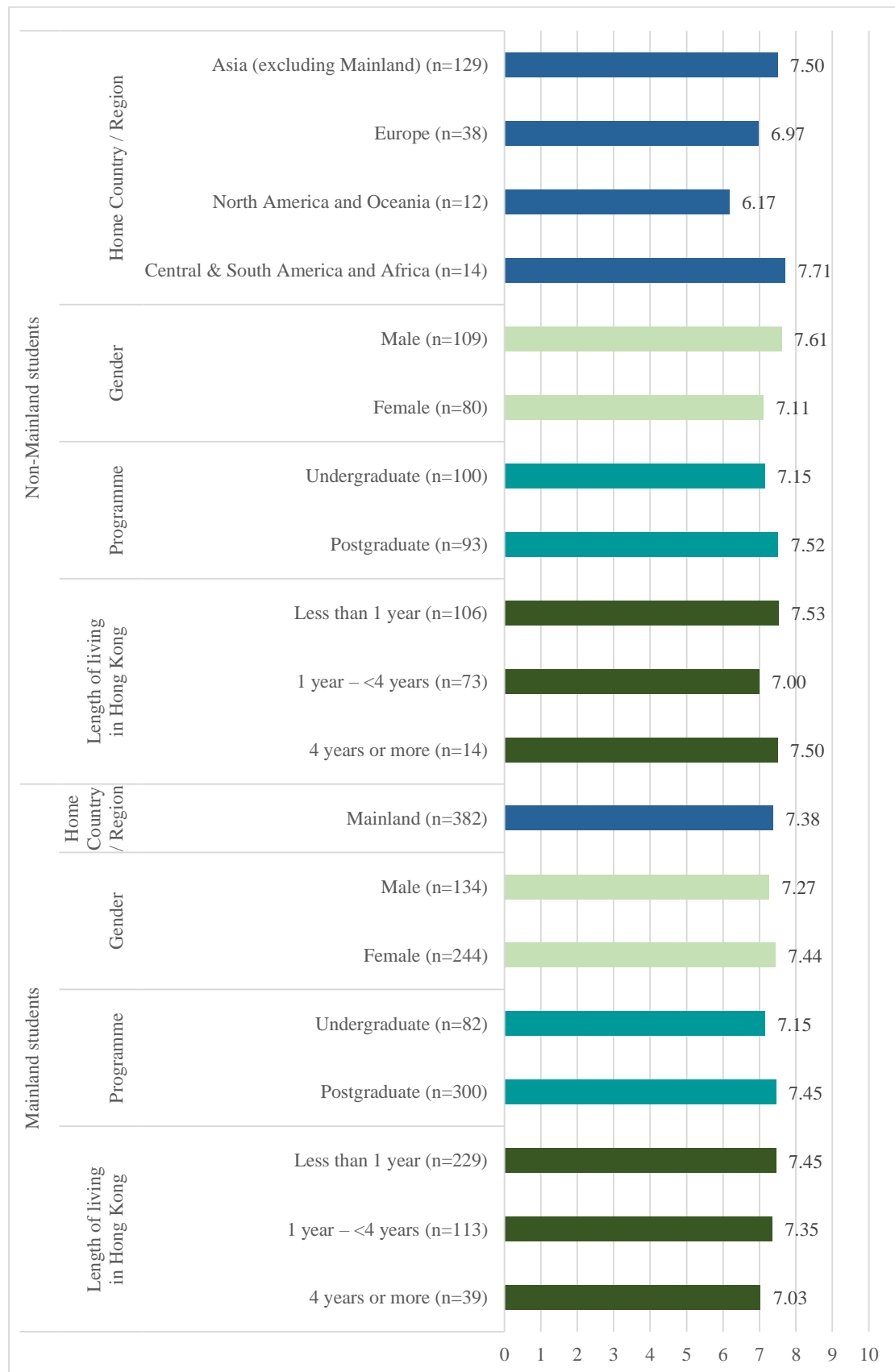
- 3.3 Respondents to the online survey were asked to rate their feeling towards their current programme of study on an 11-point scale (0 = extremely bad; 10 = extremely good).
- 3.4 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents had positive feeling towards their current programme of study. The evaluation on the current programme of study was 7.33 points from non-Mainland respondents, and 7.38 points from Mainland respondents (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Evaluation on Current Programme of Study



3.5 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (7.71 points), Asia (7.50 points), and the Mainland (7.38 points) had higher evaluation of their current programme of study than those from Europe (6.97 points), North America, and Oceania (6.17 points) (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Evaluation on Current Programme of Study by Social Background Factors



- 3.6 Amongst both non-Mainland and Mainland students, there were no clear differences in the evaluation of the current programme of study among different genders, programmes, or durations living in Hong Kong (Figure 3.2).
- 3.7 Interviewees responded that the programmes in Hong Kong were professional, and some of them helped the students to get professional licenses not only in Hong Kong, but also in other countries, such as the United Kingdom.
- 3.8 Although they thought that obtaining a degree in Hong Kong was less competitive than that of the United States or United Kingdom, they benefited from actual experience and opportunities they got while studying in Hong Kong.

It is challenging definitely and that's a good thing, because otherwise I would have not find myself challenged enough to basically strive for something better. Because you're only as good as your opponent and so **here the competition is really good and I find myself intellectually challenged. I need to do better and I can do better.**

Interview A05 (Male, Pakistan)

Studying in HK, I have chance to meet with a lot of people from different countries and industries. This helps me to **expand my social and career network**.....Furthermore, the **studying and working environment in here are very professional** that makes me become more competitive. I'm trained professionally to become a professional employee.

Interview A10 (Female, Vietnam)

My adviser gave me my project and then after a month of reading about it, I said this project is not really the best. Can I change these and that? He said yes. So I changed a lot of things in the process. He gave me a lot of freedom. **I have a freedom to get things I want.**

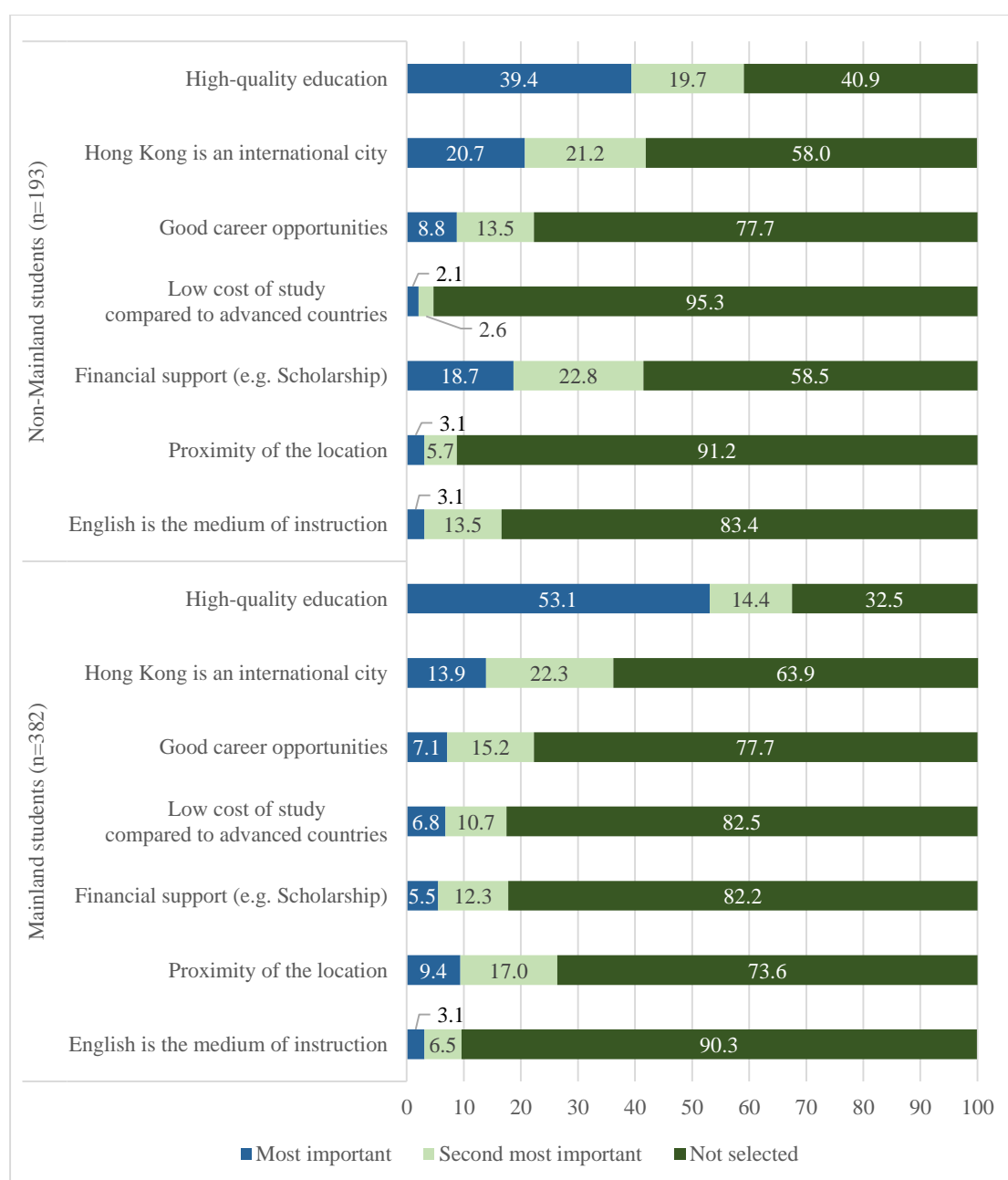
Interviewee N07 (Female, Serbia)



### Reasons for Studying in Hong Kong

3.9 The survey asked respondents to choose their two most important reasons to go to Hong Kong for their university education. Seven options, including “high-quality education”, “Hong Kong is an international city”, “good career opportunities”, “low cost of study compared to advanced countries”, “financial support (e.g. scholarship)”, “proximity of the location”, and “English is the medium of instruction” were presented (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1. Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong (%)



- 3.10 For non-Mainland respondents, “high-quality education” was the most important reason to come to Hong Kong for university education. 59.1% of non-Mainland respondents selected it as the most important (39.4%) or the second most important (19.7%) reason.
- 3.11 “Hong Kong is an international city” and “financial support” were also important reasons for non-Mainland respondents. 41.9% of them selected “Hong Kong is an international city” as the most important (20.7%) or the second most important (21.2%) reason, while 41.5% selected “financial support” as the most important (18.7%) or the second most important (22.8%) reason.
- 3.12 “Good career opportunities” was a less important reason for non-Mainland respondents. 22.3% of them selected it as the most important (8.8%) or the second most important (13.5%) reason.
- 3.13 Less than 20% of non-Mainland respondents selected the other three options as the most important or the second most important reason.
- 3.14 For Mainland respondents, “high-quality education” was the most important reason to come to Hong Kong for university education. 67.5% of non-Mainland respondents selected it as the most important (53.1%) or the second most important (14.4%) reason. This proportion was higher than that of non-Mainland respondents, although both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents chose “high-quality education” as the most important reason.
- 3.15 Like non-Mainland respondents, Mainland respondents also agreed that “Hong Kong is an international city” was an important reason to go to Hong Kong. 36.2% of them selected it as the most important (13.9%) or the second most important (22.3%) reason.
- 3.16 “Good career opportunities” was a less important reason for Mainland respondents too. 22.3% of them selected it as the most important (7.1%) or the second most important (15.2%) reason.
- 3.17 However, “financial support” was less important to Mainland respondents than non-Mainland respondents. 17.8% of Mainland respondents selected “financial

support” as the most important (5.5%) or the second most important (12.3%) reason.

3.18 “Proximity of the location” was more important to Mainland respondents than non-Mainland respondents. 26.4% of Mainland respondents selected it as the most important (9.4%) or the second most important (17.0%) reason.

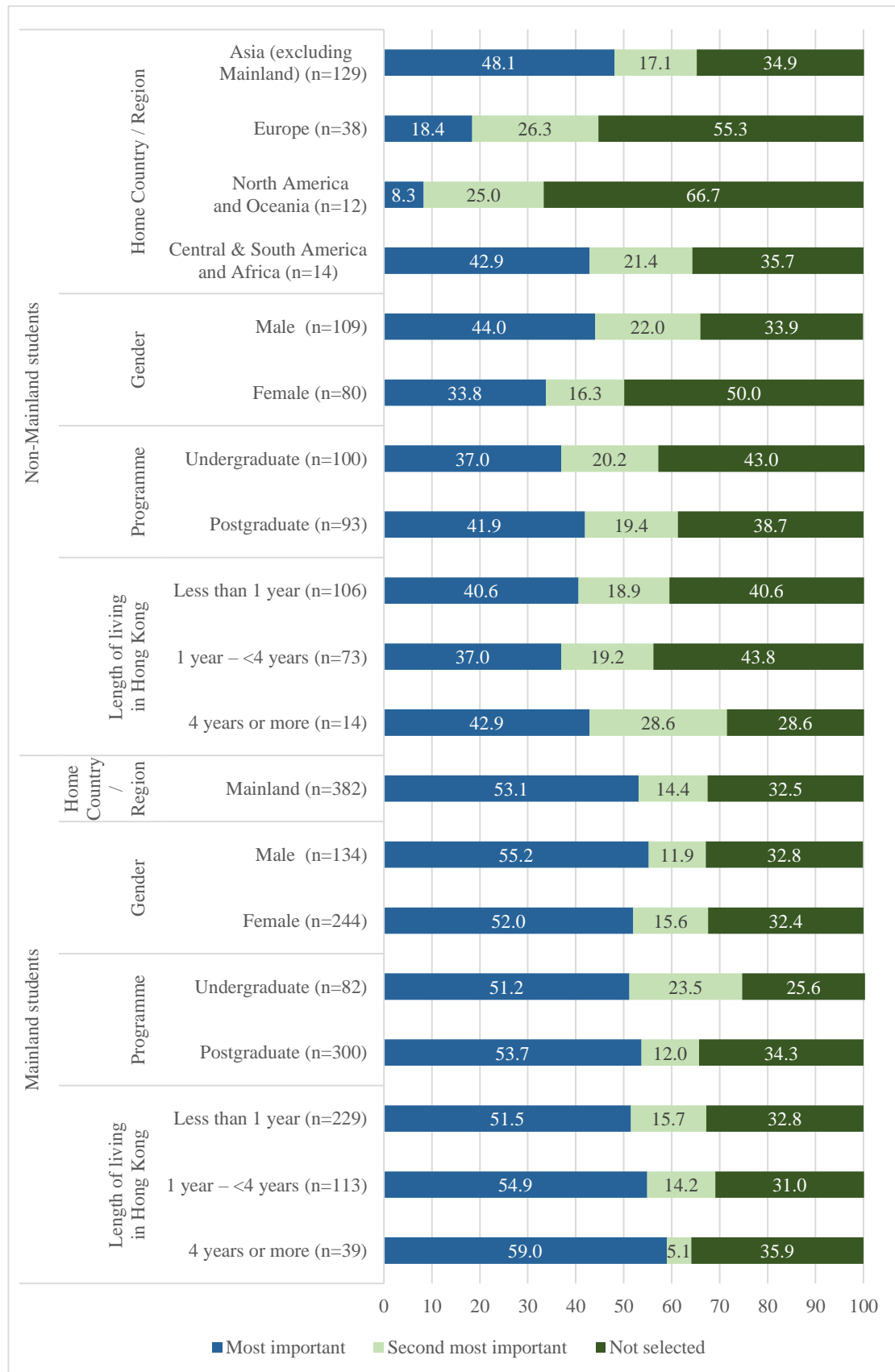
3.19 Less than 20% of Mainland respondents selected the other two options as the most important or the second most important reason.

3.20 Respondents with different social backgrounds had different reasons for studying in Hong Kong.

3.21 “High-quality education” was a less important reason for those from North America and Oceania (33.3%) and Europe (44.7%) than those from Central & South America and Africa (64.3%), Asia (65.2%), and the Mainland (67.5%) (Figure 3.3).

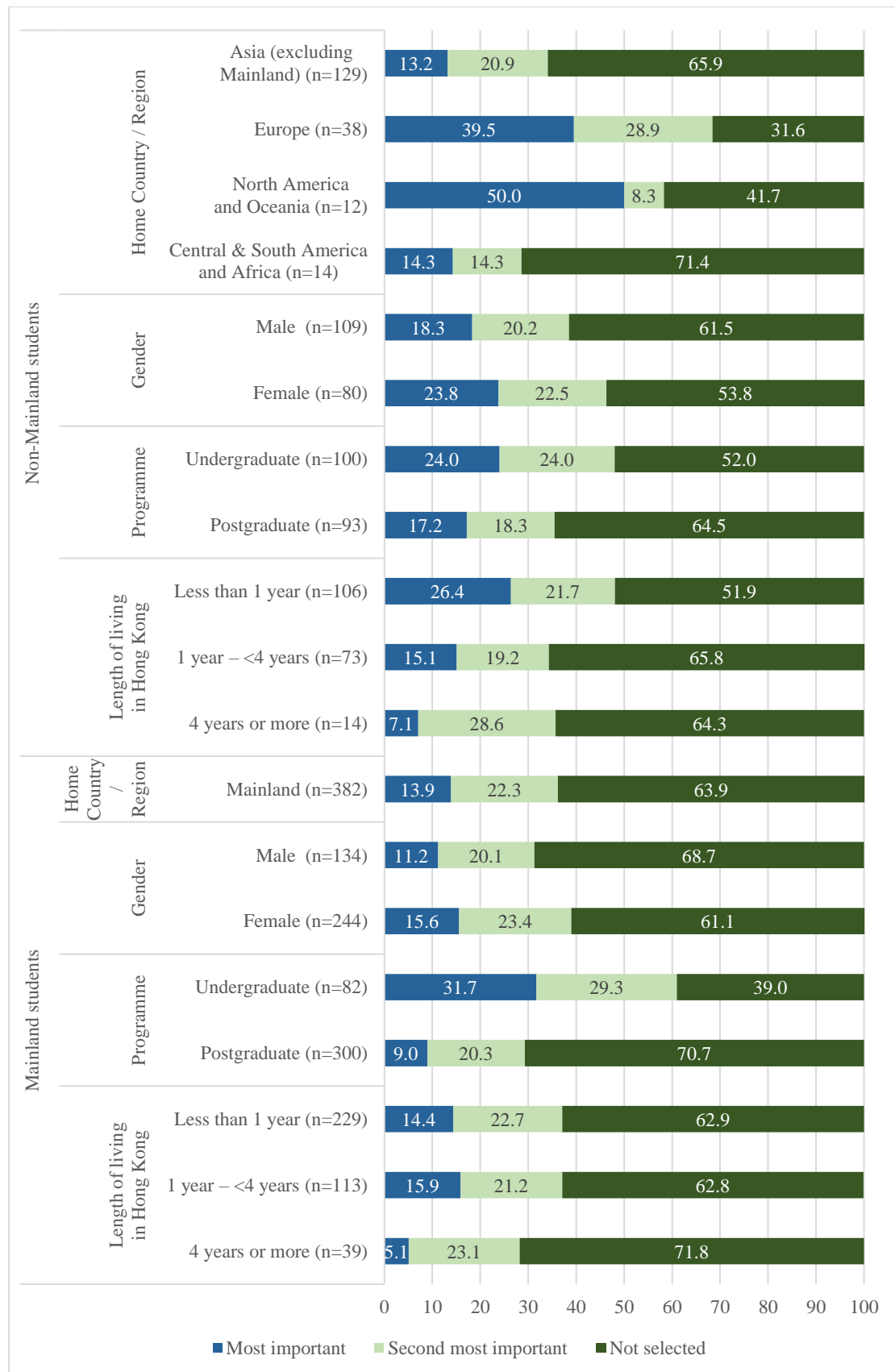
3.22 More male non-Mainland respondents (66.0%) selected “high-quality education” as an important reason than female ones (50.1%) (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong: High-quality Education (%)



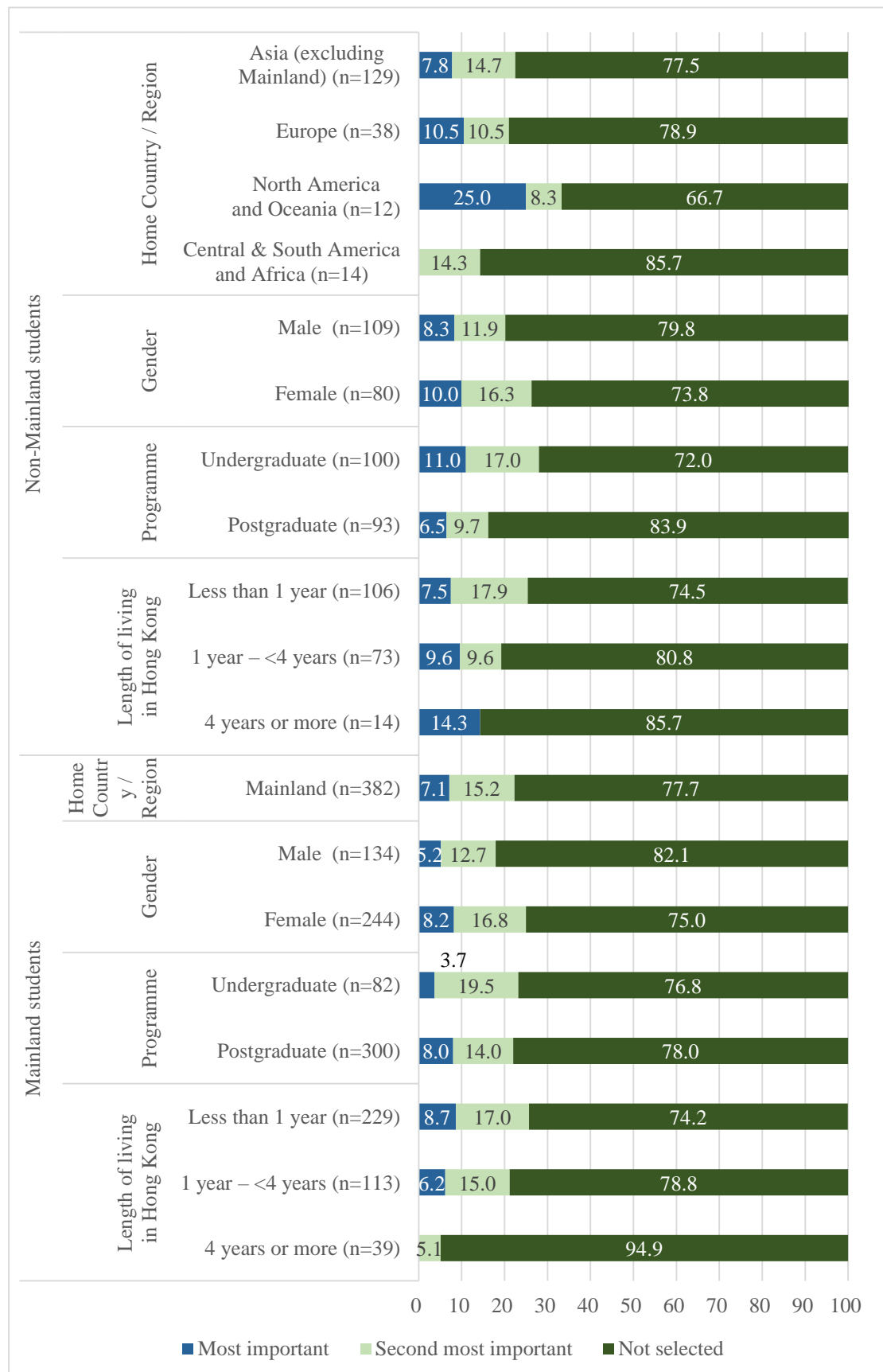
- 3.23 “Hong Kong is an international city” was a more important reason for those from Europe (68.4%) and North America and Oceania (58.3%) than those from the Mainland (36.2%), Asia (34.1%), and Central & South America and Africa (28.6%) (Figure 3.4).
- 3.24 More undergraduate respondents (Non-Mainland: 48.0%; Mainland: 61.0%) selected “Hong Kong is an international city” as an important reason than postgraduate respondents (Non-Mainland: 35.5%; Mainland: 29.3%) (Figure 3.4).
- 3.25 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year (Non-Mainland: 48.1%; Mainland: 37.1%) were more likely to select “Hong Kong is an international city” as an important reason, than those who lived longer (Figure 3.4).

Figure 3.4 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
Hong Kong is an International City (%)



- 3.26 “Good career opportunities” was a more important reason for respondents from North America and Oceania (33.3%) than those from Europe (21.0%), Asia (22.5%), the Mainland (22.3%), and Central & South America and Africa (14.3%) (Figure 3.5).
- 3.27 More undergraduate non-Mainland respondents (28.0%) selected “good career opportunities” as an important reason than postgraduate non-Mainland respondents (16.2%) (Figure 3.5).
- 3.28 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time were more likely to select “good career opportunities” as an important reason (Figure 3.5).

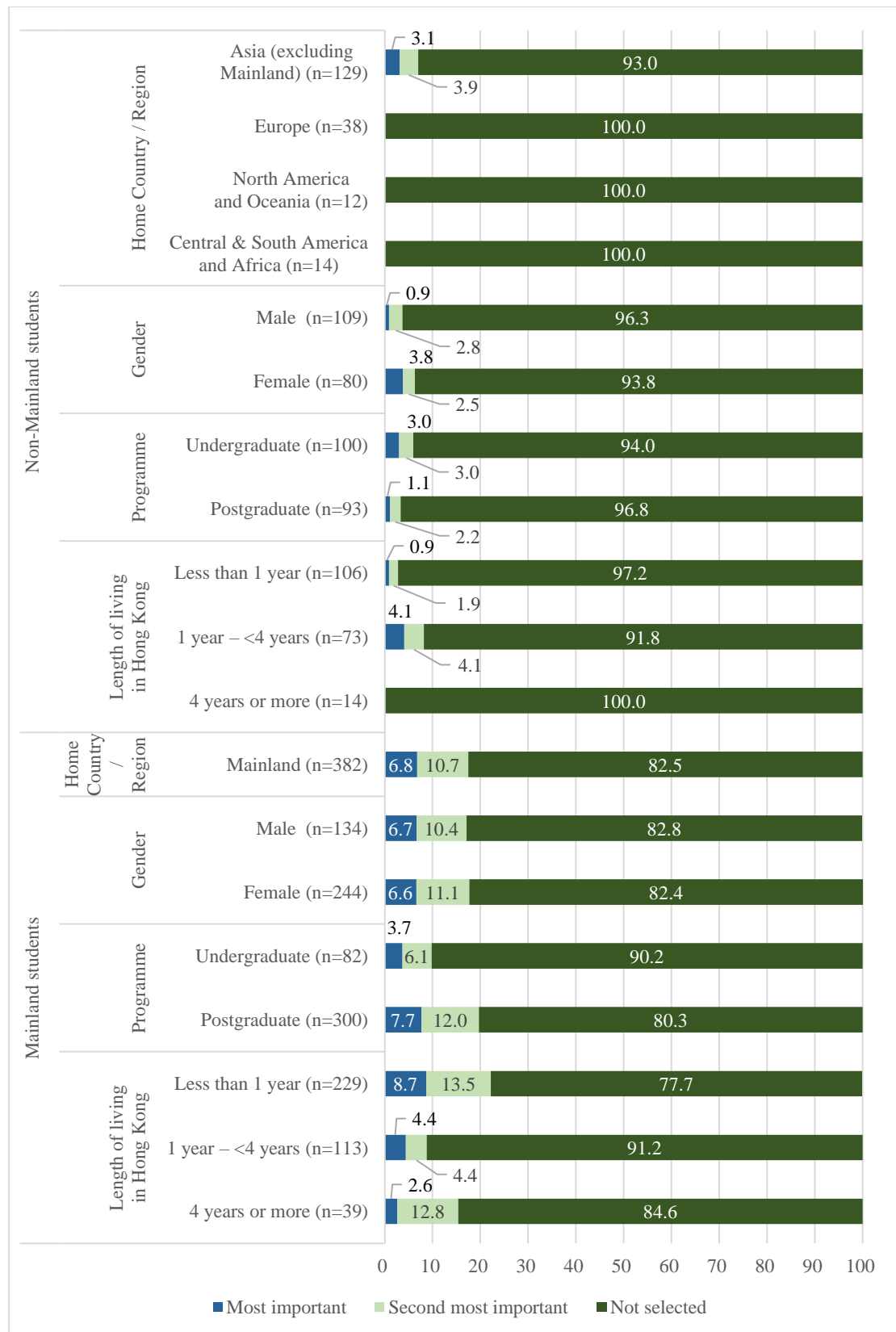
Figure 3.5 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
Good Career Opportunities (%)





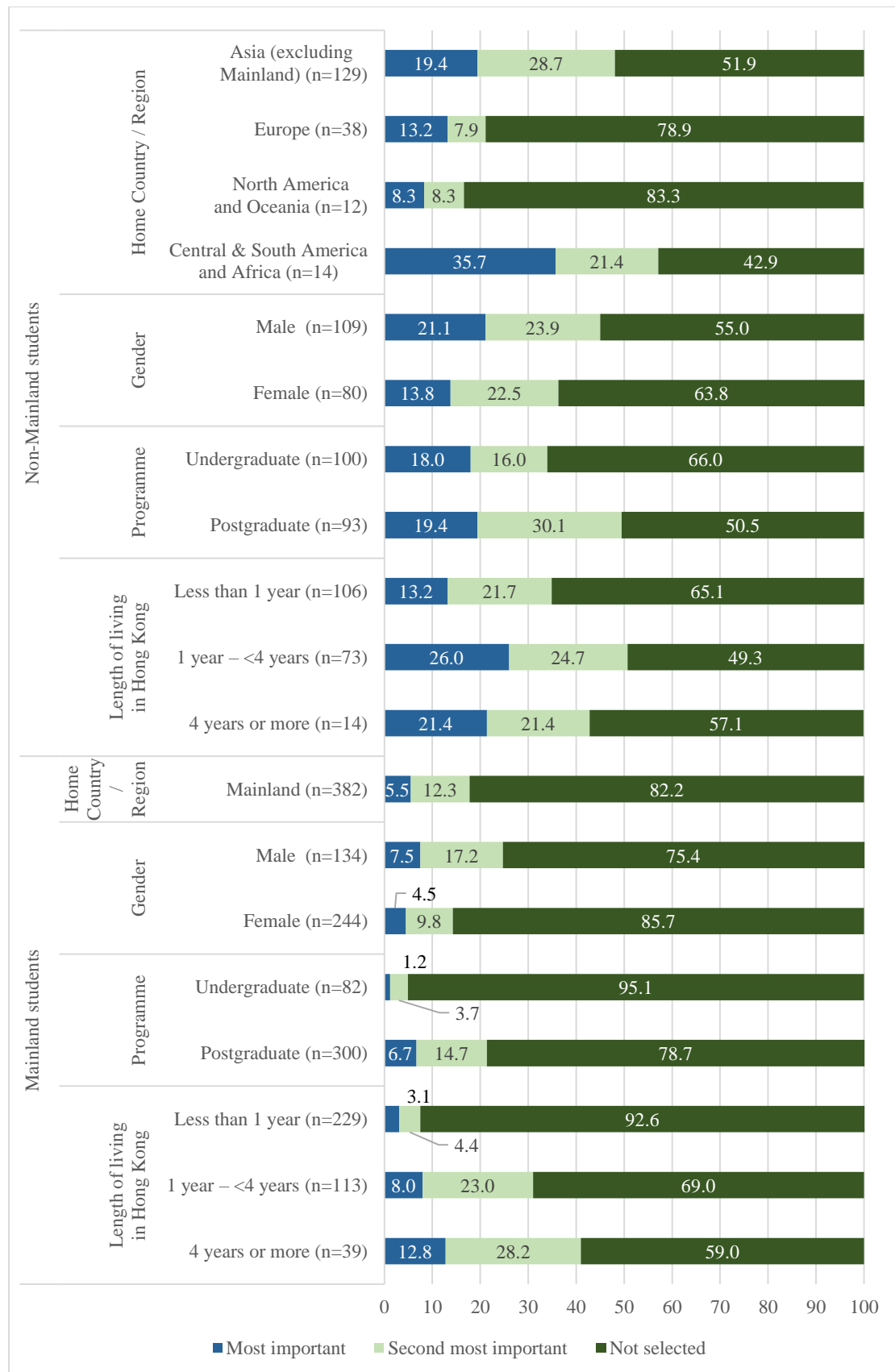
3.29 More postgraduate Mainland respondents (19.7%) selected “low cost of study compared to advanced countries” as an important reason than undergraduate Mainland respondents (9.8%) (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
Low Cost of Study Compared to Advanced Countries (%)



- 3.30 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (57.1%) and Asia (48.1%) were more likely to select “financial support” as an important reason than those from Europe (21.1%), the Mainland (17.8%), and North America and Oceania (16.6%) (Figure 3.7).
- 3.31 More male Mainland respondents (24.7%) selected “financial support” as an important reason than female Mainland respondents (14.3%) (Figure 3.7).
- 3.32 “Financial support” was a more important reason for postgraduate respondents (Non-Mainland: 49.5%; Mainland: 21.4%) than undergraduate respondents (Non-Mainland: 34.0%; Mainland: 4.9%) (Figure 3.7).
- 3.33 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year were less likely to select “financial support” as important reason than respondents who lived in for a longer time (Figure 3.7).

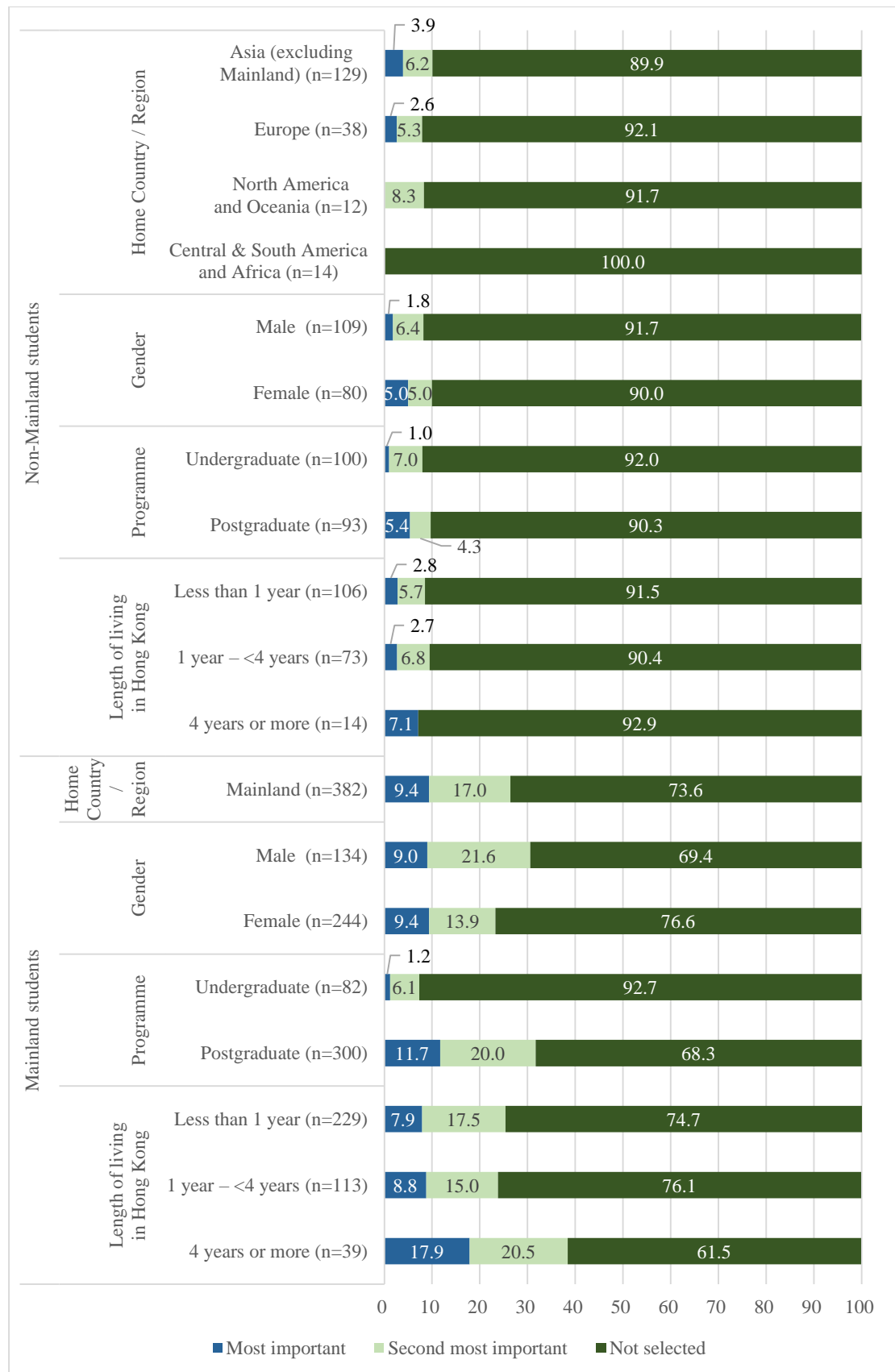
Figure 3.7 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
Financial Support (%)



3.34 “Proximity of the location” was a more important reason for postgraduate Mainland respondents (31.7%) than undergraduate Mainland respondents (7.3%) (Figure 3.8).

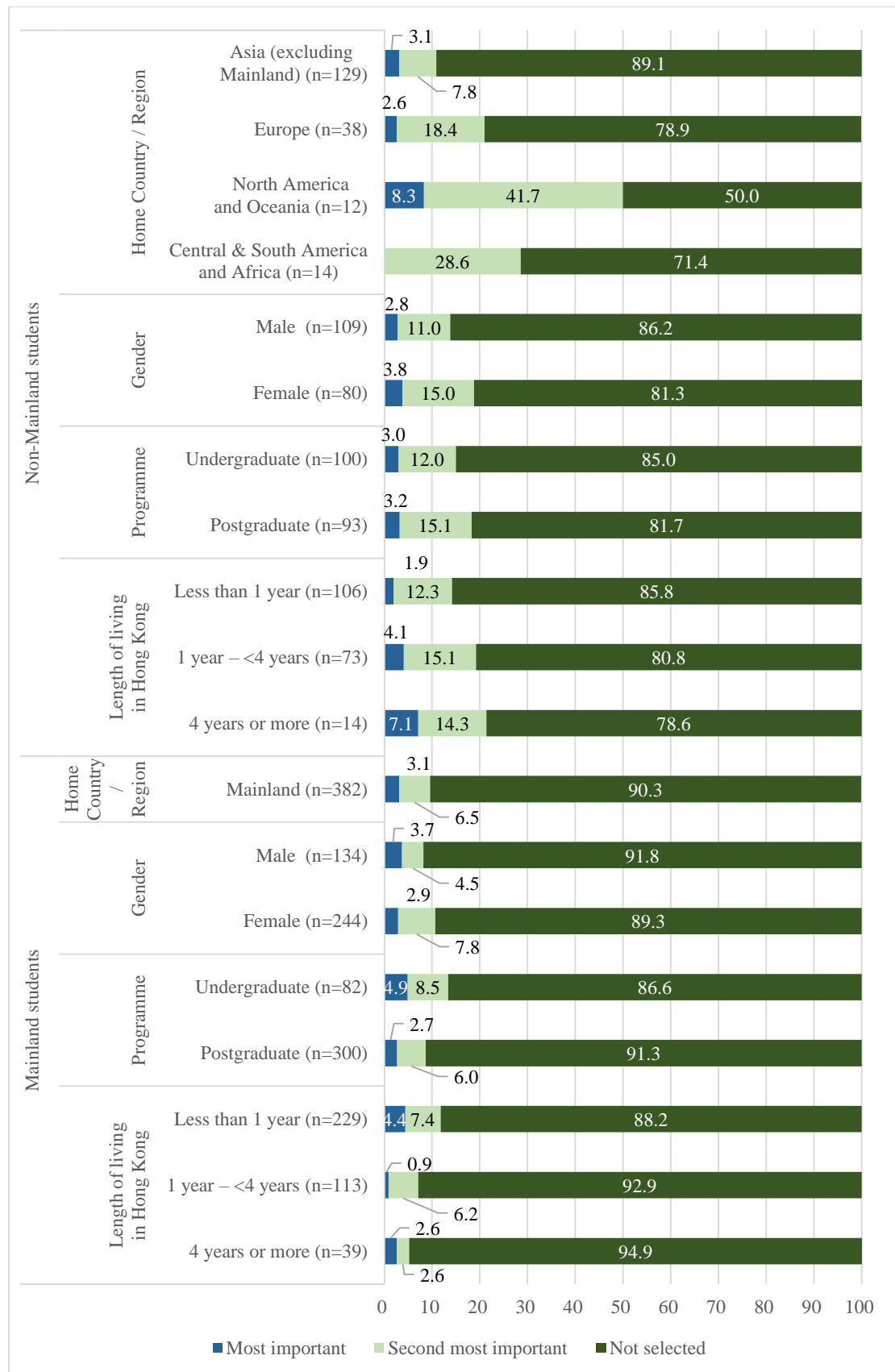
3.35 Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (38.4%) were more likely to select “proximity of the location” as an important reason than Mainland respondents who lived for a shorter time (Figure 3.8).

Figure 3.8 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
Proximity of the Location (%)



3.36 “English is the medium of instruction” was more important reason for those from North America and Oceania (50.0%) than those from Central & South America and Africa (28.6%), Europe (21.0%), Asia (10.9%), and the Mainland (9.6%) (Figure 3.9).

Figure 3.9 Most Important Reasons to Receive University Education in Hong Kong:  
English is the Medium of Instruction (%)





- 3.37 Interviewees further explained that Hong Kong had high-ranking universities for the Asia region. Compared to high-ranking universities in other Asian societies, such as Japan, it was easier for them to adapt to studying in Hong Kong because the programmes in Hong Kong were taught in English.
- 3.38 They also agreed that Singapore was a good option in Asia because its programmes are taught in English. However, Hong Kong’s postgraduate programme provided better scholarships and did not require GRE scores for admissions, so were more attractive to them.
- 3.39 Previous exchange experiences in Hong Kong also encouraged non-local students to pursue further study in Hong Kong.
- 3.40 Students also considered Hong Kong highly because Hong Kong programmes, which are similar to that of the United States, are thought to have very good accreditation, while actually studying in the United States was too expensive.
- 3.41 Family was also a factor when the non-local students considered postgraduate studies in Hong Kong. Some Asian students came to Hong Kong because the location is close to family, and some came because of their family.

One of the reasons to study in Hong Kong is the **studentship**. Sixteen thousand (HKD / monthly) studentship is not bad.....

**My family’s primary concern is the distance**, to be close. They are happy that I came to Hong Kong because the program will only take three to four years but the program in Osaka requires five years in minimum. I visit my family at least once a year and my husband visit me once a year as well.

Interviewee A02 (Female, Bangladesh)

I did want to apply for PhD in Canada or the U.S.. **But I did not have much time in my master’s**. In addition, they require **GRE, GMAT test scores**. I have got IELTS but I haven’t got enough time for GRE and GMAT.....

Interview A07 (Male, Pakistan)

The reason I chose Hong Kong is that I applied for this **HK PhD fellowship**.....

I am married but I don't have kid. My wife is supporting me going do whatever I want to do and fortunate enough **she is also doing PhD in UST now. I told my wife to apply** and when I talked with my professor, and one of the key portions of his product is a modelling of the reflows and that requires someone with the hydraulic background. My wife fits the profile and I told her to apply.

Interview A08 (Male, Nepal)

I applied Hong Kong mainly because **I did that exchange here**. So I know I have friends here. He was also going to start university in the same year so that's why I was actually giving it a try to apply here. If there was no exchange to Hong Kong in my secondary school, I probably wouldn't know about Hong Kong because it's not like there's any advertisement in Germany like studying in Hong Kong.

Interview N01 (Male, Germany)

Both China and Hong Kong have great universities. **In Hong Kong, I can study in English and English is easier for me than Mandarin**. My plan was to pick up top universities so it would be hard for me to do that in China.

Interview N02 (Female, Russia)

Compared to the United States, **Hong Kong's university has more affordable tuition fees, along with a location that makes it ease of access to the Mainland**. Since I look for job opportunities in the Greater China area, HK has been a more desirable choice.

Interview M02 (Male, Mainland China)

## Daily Life in Hong Kong

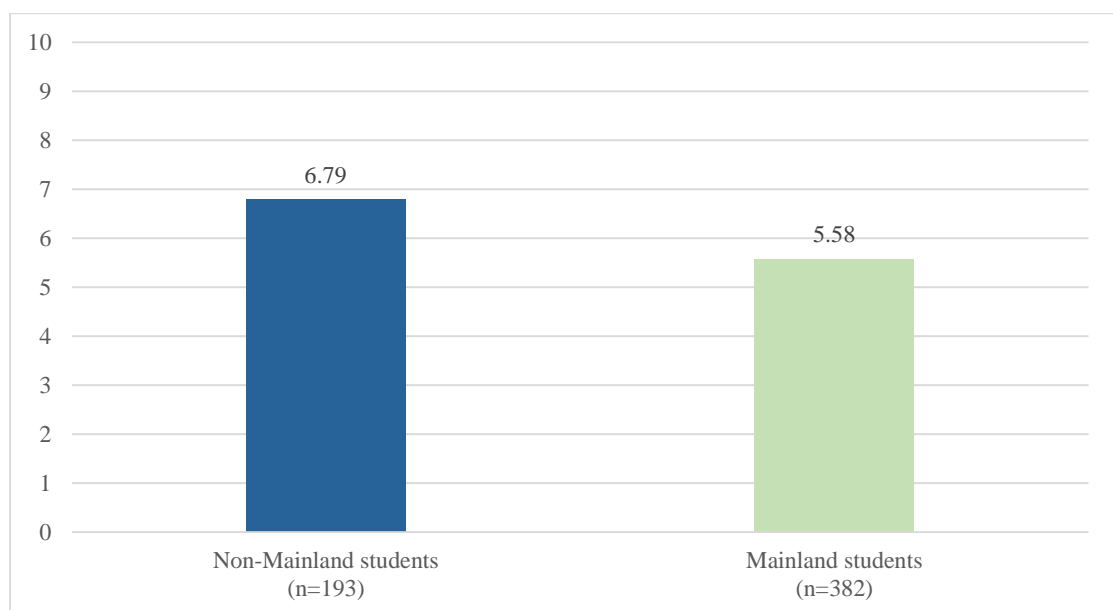
3.42 Apart from university education, non-local student’s daily life in Hong Kong also played an important role in soft power building. Poor daily life experience of the students would be weighed against the benefits of a high-quality education. Positive life experience in Hong Kong can strengthen Hong Kong’s power of attraction.

3.43 Respondents to the online-survey were asked to rate their feelings towards their daily life in Hong Kong, which was measured on an 11-point scale (0 = extremely bad; 10 = extremely good).

3.44 Non-Mainland respondents better evaluated their daily life in Hong Kong than Mainland respondents. The evaluation on daily life was 6.79 points from non-Mainland respondents, while it was 5.58 points from Mainland respondents (Figure 3.10).

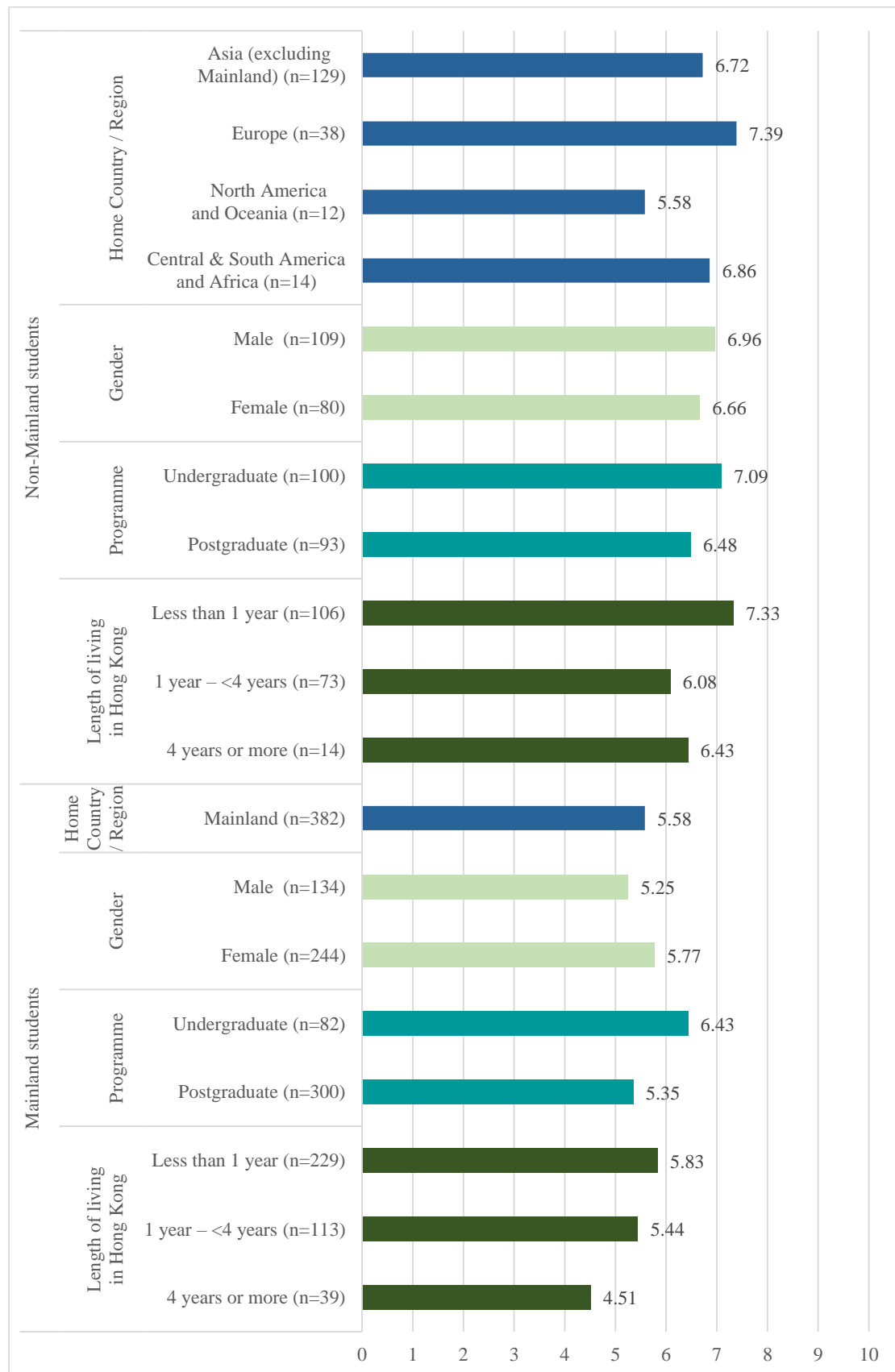
3.45 While the evaluation of daily life, of both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, was poorer than that of their current programme of study, the respondent’s attitudes towards daily life in Hong Kong was neutral.

Figure 3.10 Evaluation on Daily Life in Hong Kong



3.46 Respondents from Europe (7.39 points), North America and Oceania (6.86 points) and Asia (6.72 points) had more a positive attitude towards their daily life in Hong Kong than those from North America and Oceania (5.58 points) and the Mainland (5.58 points) (Figure 3.11).

Figure 3.11 Evaluation on Daily Life by Social Background Factors



- 3.47 Undergraduate Mainland respondents (6.43 points) had a more positive evaluation of their daily life than postgraduate Mainland respondents (5.35 points) (Figure 3.11).
- 3.48 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, those who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year had a higher evaluation of daily life (Non-Mainland: 7.33 points; Mainland: 5.83 points) than those who had lived in Hong Kong for longer (Figure 3.11).
- 3.49 The respondents were generally satisfied with their daily life in Hong Kong because Hong Kong is a very international and modern city that tolerates cultural difference.
- 3.50 However, students faced some problems in their daily life, such as small accommodation and high living costs. Also, it would be easier for them to adapt if they knew some friends who had the same native language, or if they could speak Cantonese.
- 3.51 In addition, some interviewees felt that the activities for non-local students organized by the universities focused on Mainland students, rather than on all international students.

When I came here I realize that Hong Kong is in tune with the U.K. system. **I rarely feel any racism against myself.** I don't think there is anything like that here. I am a Christian and I see the Muslim community is fine and they don't have any problem.

Interviewee N04 (Male, Ghana)

**The community of Iranians is very small in Hong Kong** and CU has few Iranian students. Social activities are rare for Iranians in CU. U.S. has a large number of Iranians and it is easy to have a community there. I cannot understand Mandarin or Cantonese. It is also hard for me to establish connection with local people.

Interviewee A01 (Male, Iran)

My biggest trouble here is **not able to live with my daughter. I cannot find day-care for my daughter.**

Interviewee A02 (Female, Bangladesh)

I am really thankful for **those people who are always helping me here from central Asian countries not only those from Kazakhstan** because of some central Asian countries all of us can speak in Russian. So they always like to help me to get used to here and they are kind like part (members) of my family.

Interviewee A03 (Female, Kazakhstan)

Well I didn't expect **the accommodation to be so small**, because I had heard about the accommodations being small but I didn't expect it to be that small. Other than that it was good.....**I can have accommodation for couples but not with the children.** I had a daughter when I was just about to start university. So I had no other option but to find off-campus residence.

Interviewee A05 (Male, Pakistan)

But the problem is **we don't know about these (non-local students) activities. It's for the Mainland students.** They have their own society, but for us it's kind of rare species. The university didn't really do a good job.

Interviewee N07 (Female, Serbia)

## Communication with Locals

3.52 If respondents are more integrated with Hong Kong society during their study, they are expected to be more likely to play a bridging role between their home society and Hong Kong society, after returning home.

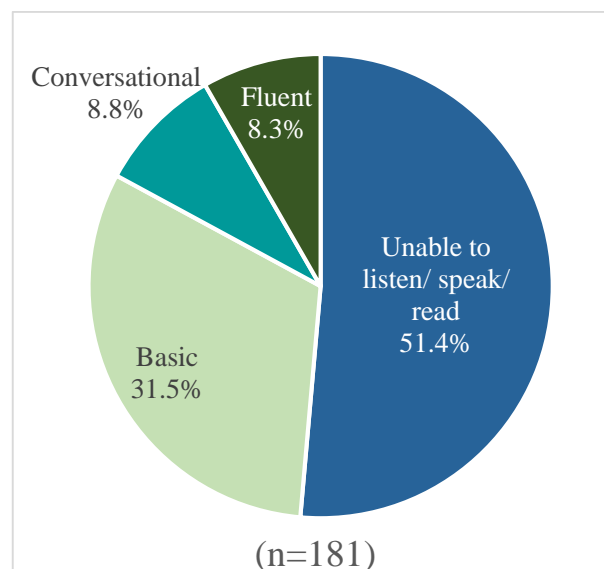
### Language Skill

3.53 Language skills play an important role in determining the extent of social integration (Bislev, 2017:99). It is easier for non-local students to be integrated with Hong Kong society if they have a high level of Chinese or Cantonese.

3.54 The online survey asked respondents who were not come from Mainland China or Taiwan to describe/self-evaluate their Chinese level.

3.55 Most of the respondents who did not come from Mainland China or Taiwan had very limited Chinese ability. 51.4% of them said they were unable to listen, speak or read Chinese. 31.5% answered they had a basic level of Chinese, while 8.8% and 8.3% described their level as “conversational“ and “fluent”, respectively (Figure 3.12).

Figure 3.12 Chinese Level (%)



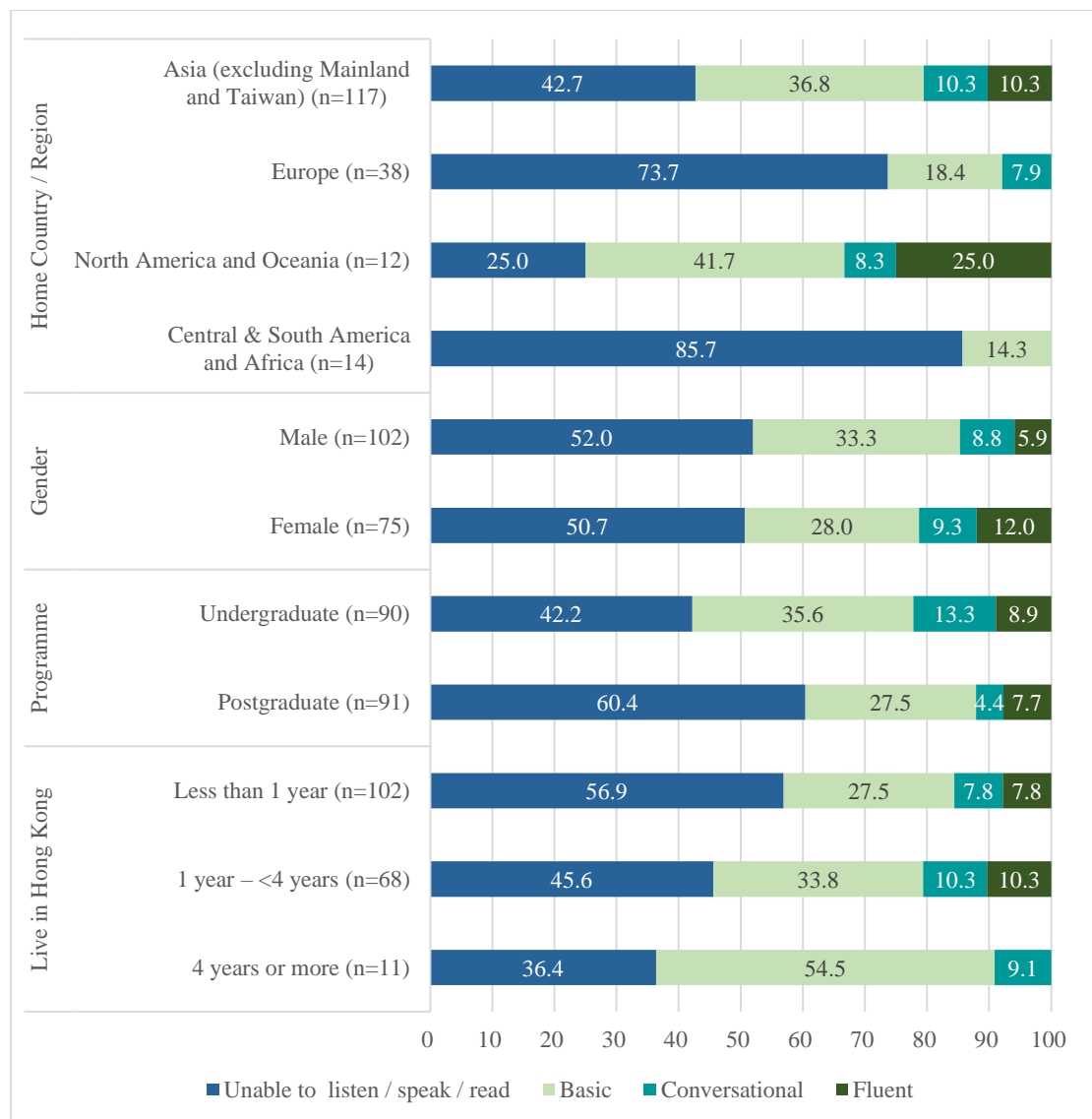


3.56 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (85.7%) and Europe (73.7%) were more likely to say that they were unable to listen, speak or read Chinese than those from Asia (42.7%) and North America and Oceania (25.0%) (Figure 3.13).

3.57 Postgraduate respondents (60.4%) were also more likely to describe that they were unable to listen, speak or read Chinese than undergraduate respondents (42.2%) (Figure 3.13).

3.58 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time were less likely to be unable to listen, speak or read Chinese (Figure 3.13).

Figure 3.13 Chinese Level by Social Background Factors (%)

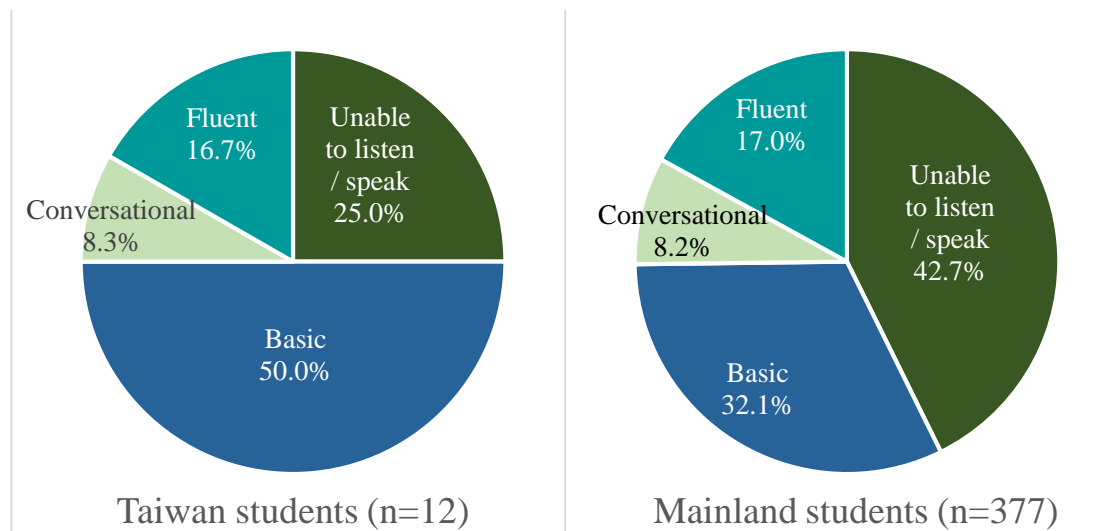


3.59 The online survey asked respondents from Mainland China or Taiwan and to describe their Cantonese level.

3.60 Most Taiwanese respondents had a basic or higher level of Cantonese. Only 25.0% of respondents from Taiwan said that they were unable to listen to or speak Cantonese (Figure 3.14).

3.61 However, Mainland respondents had poorer Cantonese skills than Taiwanese respondents. 42.7% of Mainland respondents said they were unable to listen to or speak Cantonese (Figure 3.14).

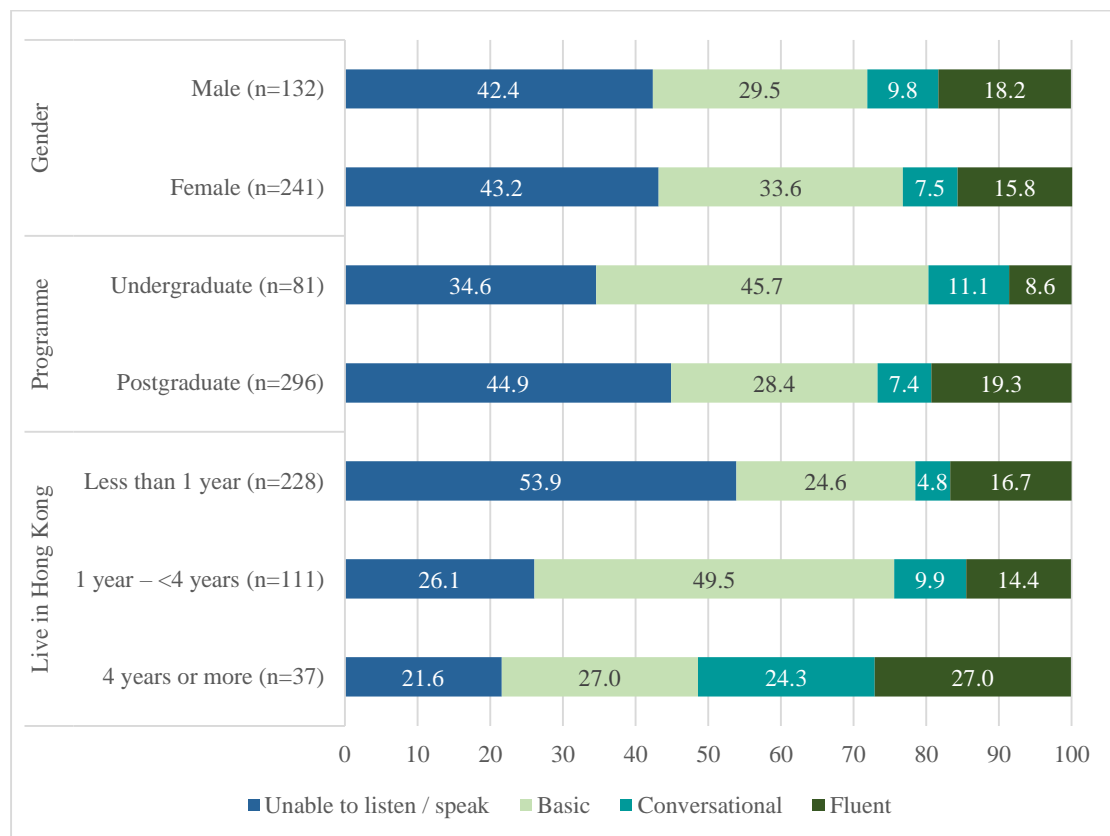
Figure 3.14 Cantonese Level (%)



3.62 Although more postgraduate Mainland respondents (44.9%) said they were unable to listen to, or speak Cantonese, they were more likely to have a fluent level of Cantonese than undergraduate respondents (19.3%) (Figure 3.15).

3.63 Mainland respondents who had lived in Hong Kong for a longer time were more likely to have a basic-or-above level of Cantonese (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.15 Cantonese Level of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%)



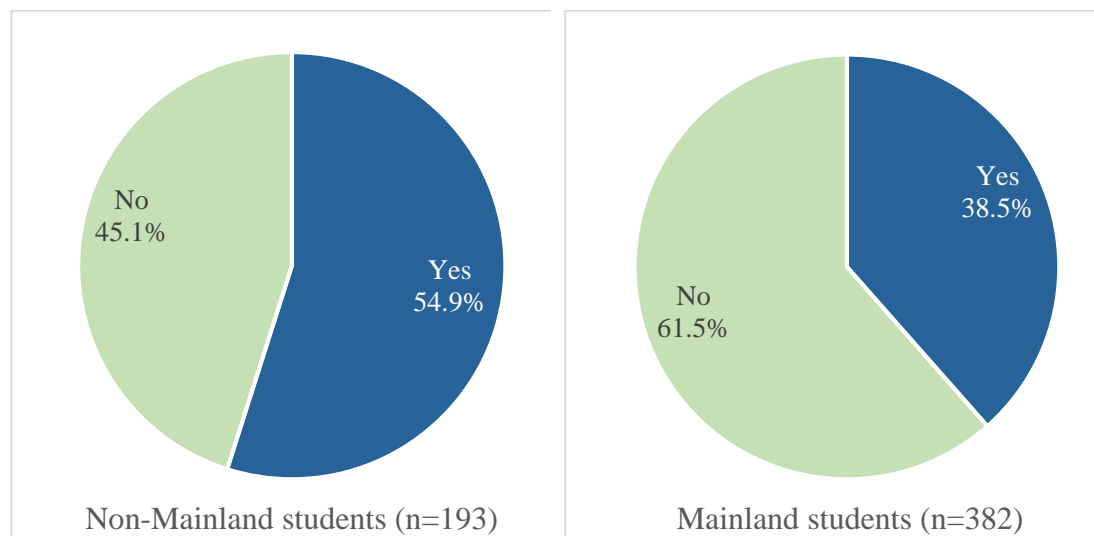
### Local Friends

3.64 Having close local friends is an indicator of non-local student’s social integration with the host society. Non-local students build up their personal network in the host society by making close local friends during their study.

3.65 Respondents to the online survey were asked whether they had any close local friends in Hong Kong. Many of the non-Mainland respondents had built up close friendships with local Hong Kong people. 54.9% of non-Mainland respondents said they had at least one local close friend (Figure 3.15).

3.66 Compared with non-Mainland respondents, less Mainland respondents had a close friendship with a local Hong Kong person, although they share similar language and culture with locals. 38.5% of them said that they had at least one local close friend in Hong Kong (Figure 3.15).

Figure 3.16 Local Close Friend(s) (%)



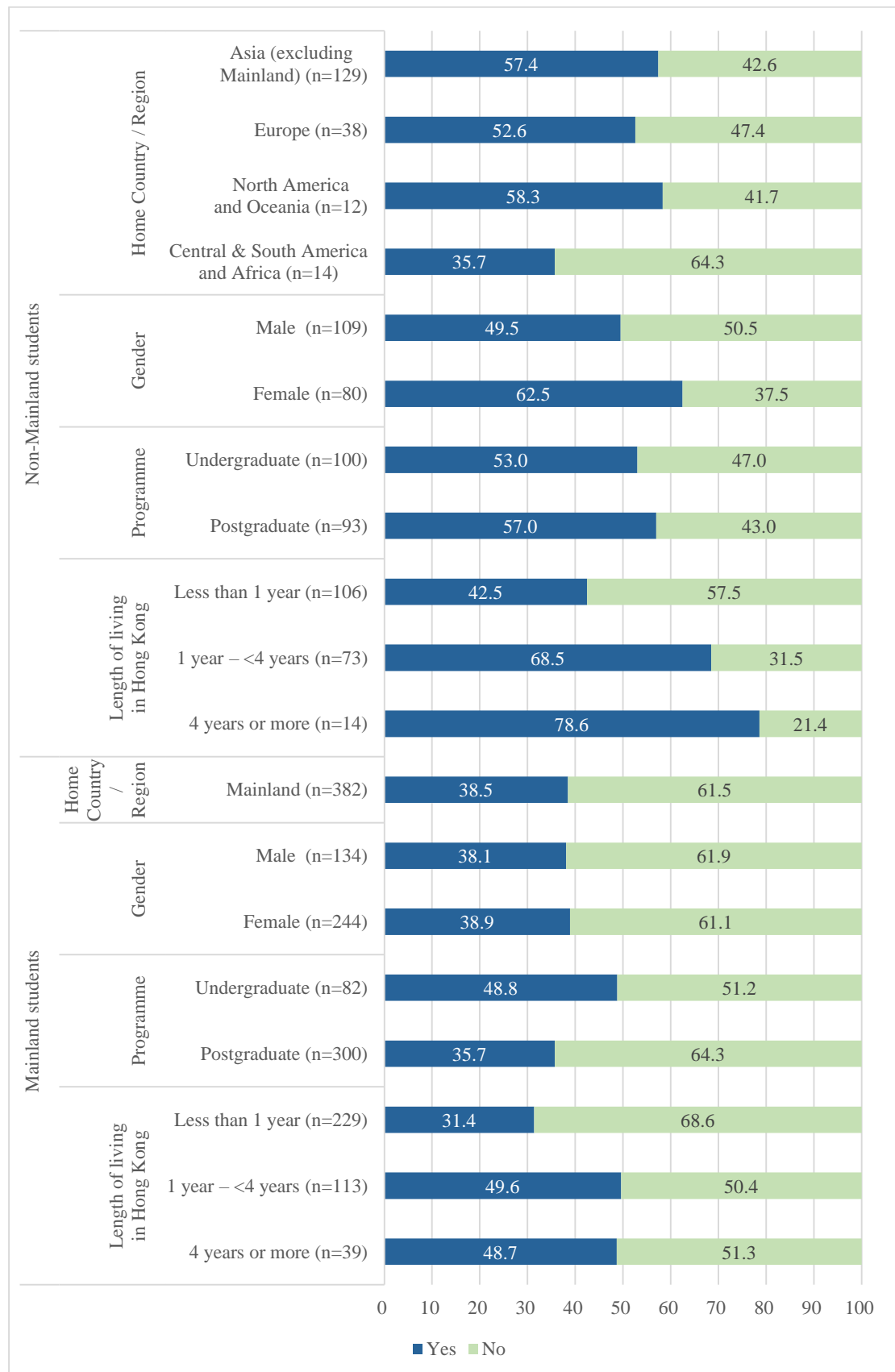
3.67 Respondents from North America and Oceania (58.3%), Asia (57.4%) and Europe (52.6%) were more likely to have at least one local close friend than those from Central & South America and Africa (35.7%) and the Mainland (38.5%) (Figure 3.17).

3.68 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for one year or more were more likely to have at least one local close friend than those who lived for less than one year (Non-Mainland: 42.5%; Mainland: 31.4%) (Figure 3.17).

3.69 Female non-Mainland respondents (62.5%) were more likely to have at least one local close friend than male ones (49.5%) (Figure 3.17).

3.70 Undergraduate Mainland respondents (48.8%) were more likely to have at least one local close friend than postgraduate Mainland respondents (35.7%) (Figure 3.17).

Figure 3.17 Local Close Friend(s) by Social Background Factors (%)



- 3.71 Interviewees shared that it was easier for them to make local friends when they lived in the same hall/dorm as local students. They thought that the English level of local students was quite high, and that they could communicate with local students in English, making friends with them.
- 3.72 Apart from local people, interviewees made many close friends with students from different countries.
- 3.73 Although there are increasing divisions in political views between the Mainland and Hong Kong, Mainland students had have many close local friends who hold opposite opinions on some political issues.

**I have more local friends because last year I lived in Ming Wah.** It's just a small community. I was the only international students and one exchange student last year. They really like a small community. **We always sat chatting in the kitchen even though I was the only international student speaking English. And they taught me some Cantonese words, playing Mahjong. It is like entering some local culture.**

Interviewee A03 (Female, Kazakhstan)

**I made some international friends in Hong Kong,** including Indonesian, Cambodian, Dutch, Chinese, Indian, Filipinos, and Nepalese. We're closed enough to hang out often together and even go picnic in islands.

Interviewee A10 (Female, Vietnam)

**I think Hong Kong people are very open to speaking in English,** so when they talk to you, they are happy speaking English. They usually feel confident especially you know of course if they had similar education like if they've been to university, of course they speak great English, but then it's hard to go into their friendship group.

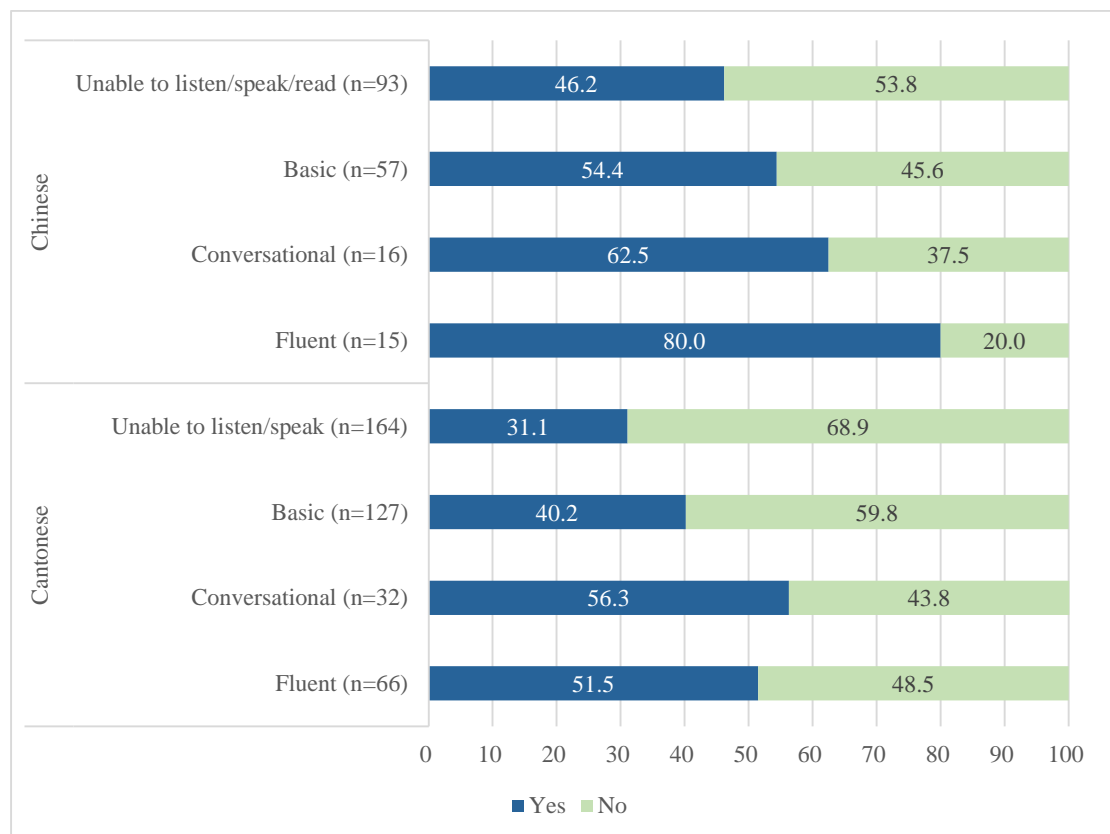
Interviewee N05 (Female, Ireland)

**Hong Kong is multicultural and is tolerant. I have some closed local friends too that we can talk anything without holding back.** They are local and sometimes they just hold directly opposite opinions against me in most of the political issues between HK and Mainland. We often get together after study/work and we discuss those issues during our meals. At the end **we fail to convince each other every time but we still keep gathering every now and then. I think this could be an appropriate example for the real “democracy” that I often hear from HK people or Western people.**

Interviewee M03 (Male, Mainland China)

3.74 The online survey findings support the results of the interviews, that language skill is correlated with making close local friends. For respondents not from the Mainland and Taiwan, those with better Chinese skills were more likely to have at least one local close friend. For those from the Mainland or Taiwan, those with better Cantonese skills were more likely to have at least one local close friend (Figure 3.18).

Figure 3.18 Local Close Friend(s) by Language Skill (%)



I can easily talk with him but I cannot say we are very close. As to the others, **I don't have close friendship because some speak Chinese**. Of course, I don't blame them but that is way of life and language. I think it may be my limitation in terms of getting close contact with local people or maybe I could not get many opportunities.

Interviewee N09 (Male, Ethiopia)

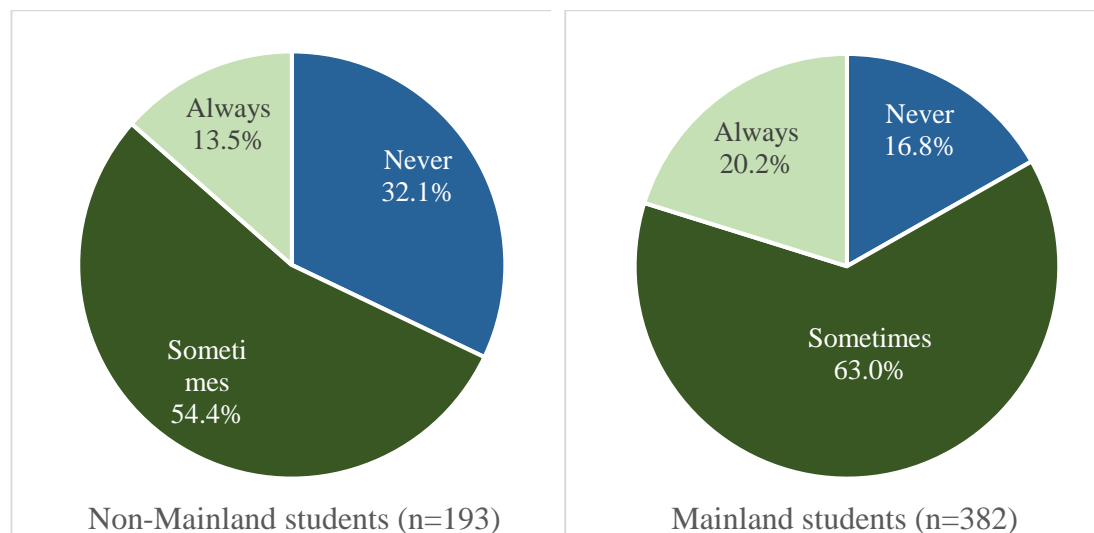


## Local Media

3.75 Apart from communicating with local people, use of local media always helps newcomers to learn the political system and social norms of the host society (Dalisay, 2012; Ju, Jia, and Shoham, 2012; Yang et al., 2004).

3.76 The online survey asked respondents how frequently they used local media, such as reading local newspapers or watching local television programmes. Most of them, especially Mainland respondents used local media. 54.4% of non-Mainland and 63.0% of Mainland respondents sometimes used local media, while only 13.5% and 20.2% of them, respectively, always used it (Figure 3.19).

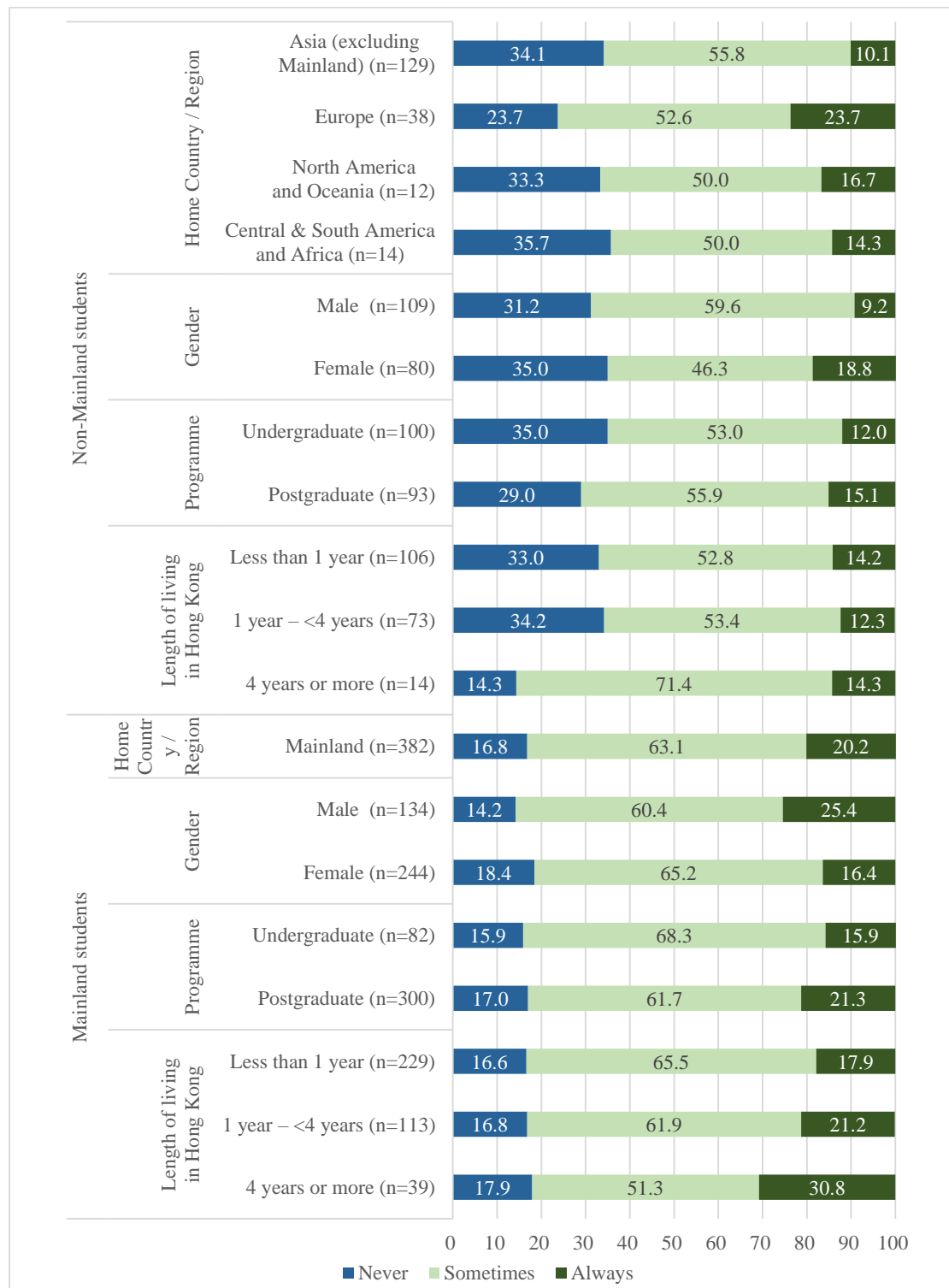
Figure 3.19 Use of Local Media (%)



3.77 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (35.7%), Asia (34.1%) and North America and Oceania (33.3%) were less likely to use local media than those from Europe (23.7%) and the Mainland (16.8%) (Figure 3.20).

3.78 Respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four years or more used local media more frequently than those who lived for less than four years (Figure 3.20).

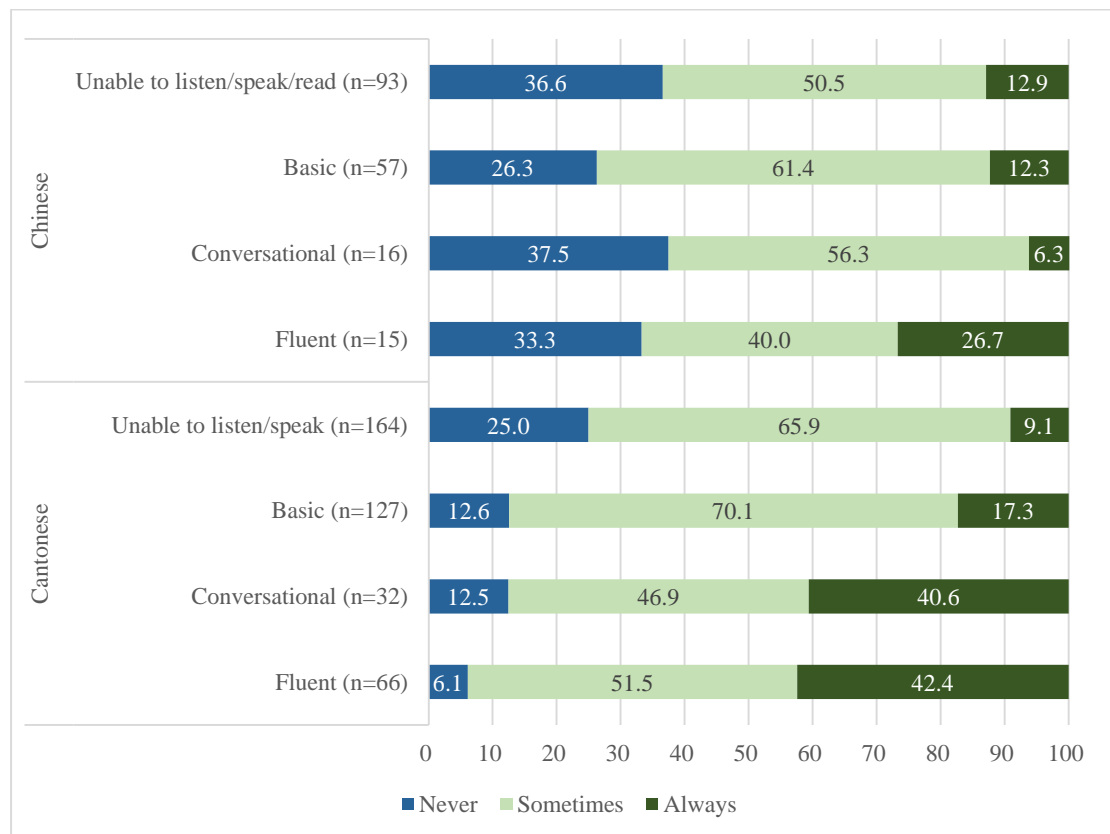
Figure 3.20 Use of Local Media by Social Background Factors (%)



3.79 More than 60% of respondents not from the Mainland or Taiwan, who were unable to listen, speak or read Chinese, sometimes or always used local media (Figure 3.21). This may be because there English local media is provided in Hong Kong.

3.80 Although respondents from the Mainland or Taiwan know Chinese, their Cantonese skill still correlates with their use of local media. Those with better Chinese skills use local media more frequently (Figure 3.21).

Figure 3.21 Use of Local Media by Language Skill (%)



## Summary

3.81 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents appreciated Hong Kong’s university education, while their attitudes towards daily life in Hong Kong was neutral.

3.82 In terms of social integration, more than 50% of non-Mainland respondents had made close friendships with local people, while a smaller proportion of Mainland respondents had close local friends. On the other hand, most respondents, especially Mainland respondents, showed habits of using local media.

## 4. Image of Hong Kong and Mainland China

4.1 Soft power is the ability of a society to shape the preferences of others based on its attractive image (Nye, 2008). To study education as resource for soft power of Hong Kong and Mainland China, this chapter investigates how non-local students perceive these societies.

### Measuring Soft Power

4.2 The research employed a measurement of soft power proposed by Jhee and Lee (2011), which measures the individual’s perception toward the society on two evaluative dimensions, namely affective and normative.

4.3 The affective dimension of soft power corresponds to the emotional attraction emanating from a society. It involves attitudes towards: 1) political system, 2) economy, 3) education and science, and 4) culture.

4.4 The normative dimension is related to a society’s legitimacy. It involves attitudes towards: 1) the observation of international norms, 2) its contribution to resolution of international problems.

4.5 In the online survey, at least one question was used to measure the student’s attitude towards each sub-dimension. Respondents were asked to rate their feeling towards a number of statements which describe the societies on an 11-point scale (0 = not at all; 10 = extremely well). A higher mark in a relevant statement indicates a more positive image in the relevant sub-dimension of the society.

4.6 The soft power index score, an 11-point scale (0 = very weak; 10 = very strong), was calculated by taking the average of the affective and normative dimensions’ index scores. The calculation is represented in the following equation:

$$SPI = \sum_i \left\{ \frac{D_i}{2} \right\},$$

where SPI refers to the soft power index score,  $D_i$  refers to dimension index score of the  $i^{\text{th}}$  dimension.

4.7 The dimension index scores, on 11-point scales (0 = very weak; 10 = very strong), were calculated by taking the average of their sub-dimension index scores. The calculation is represented in the following equation:

$$D_i = \sum_j \left\{ \frac{S_j}{n_j} \right\},$$

where  $S_j$  refers to  $j^{\text{th}}$  sub-dimension index score under their respective dimension, and  $n_j$  refers to the number of sub-dimensions under the dimension.

4.8 The sub-dimension index scores, on 11-point scales (0 = very weak; 10 = very strong), were calculated by taking the average of their questions. The calculation is represented in the following equation:

$$S_j = \sum_k \left\{ \frac{Q_k}{n_k} \right\},$$

where  $Q_k$  refers to question score of the  $j^{\text{th}}$  sub-dimension and  $n_k$  refers to the number of questions under the sub-dimension.

## Affective Dimension

### Political System

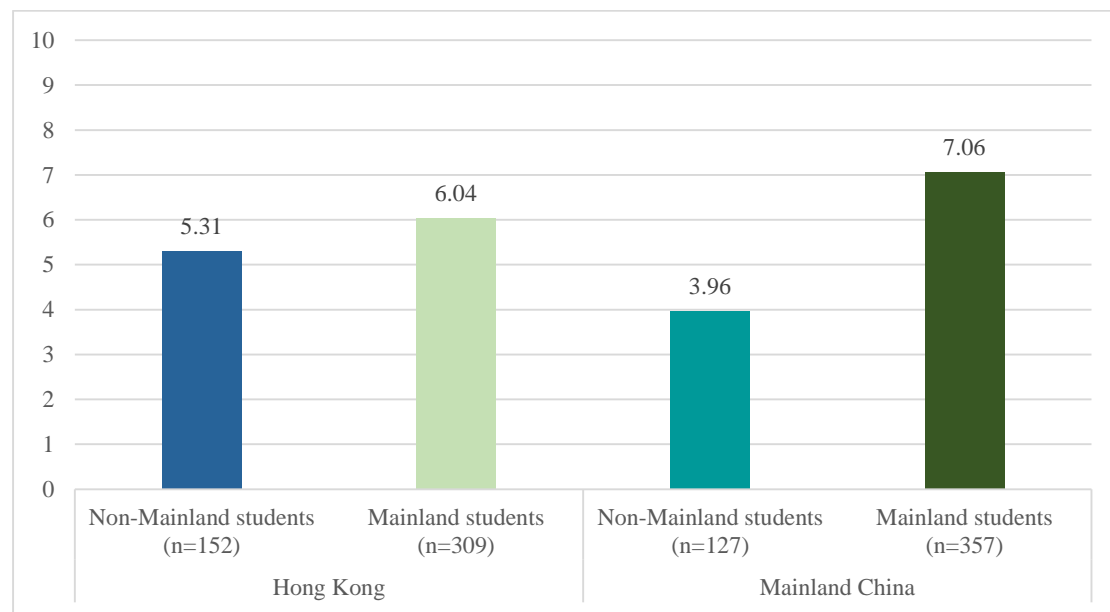
4.9 Responsible government of the society was expected to promote its attraction. Hence, respondents were asked to rate their attitude towards a statement that the society had a political system that serves the needs of its people.

4.10 The image of Hong Kong’s political system was average to the respondents. The rating of non-Mainland and the Mainland respondents were 5.31 and 6.04 points (Figure 4.1).

4.11 Non-Mainland respondents had poor perception of the political system of the Mainland. Mainland’s soft power on the non-Mainland respondents was weaker in term of political system than Hong Kong’s. Their rating of Mainland’s political system was 3.96 points (Figure 4.1).

4.12 The political system of the Mainland China was well rated by the Mainland respondents. It was 7.06 points, higher than their rating of Hong Kong’s political system (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Rating of Political System



4.13 Respondents from North America and Oceania (3.80 points) had poor perception of the political system of Hong Kong than those from Europe (4.82 points), Central & South America and Africa (5.08 points), Asia (5.67 points), and the Mainland (6.04 points) (Figure 4.2).

4.14 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluation on the political system of Hong Kong among respondents with different gender and programme (Figure 4.2).

4.15 Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four years or above (5.06 points) had poor perception of the political system of Hong Kong than those who lived for less than one years (6.25 points) (Figure 4.2)

4.16 Respondents from North America and Oceania (5.11 points) had better perception of the political system of Mainland China than those from Asia (4.03 points), Central & South America and Africa (4.00 points) and Europe (3.41 points) (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2 Rating of Political System by Social Background Factors\*

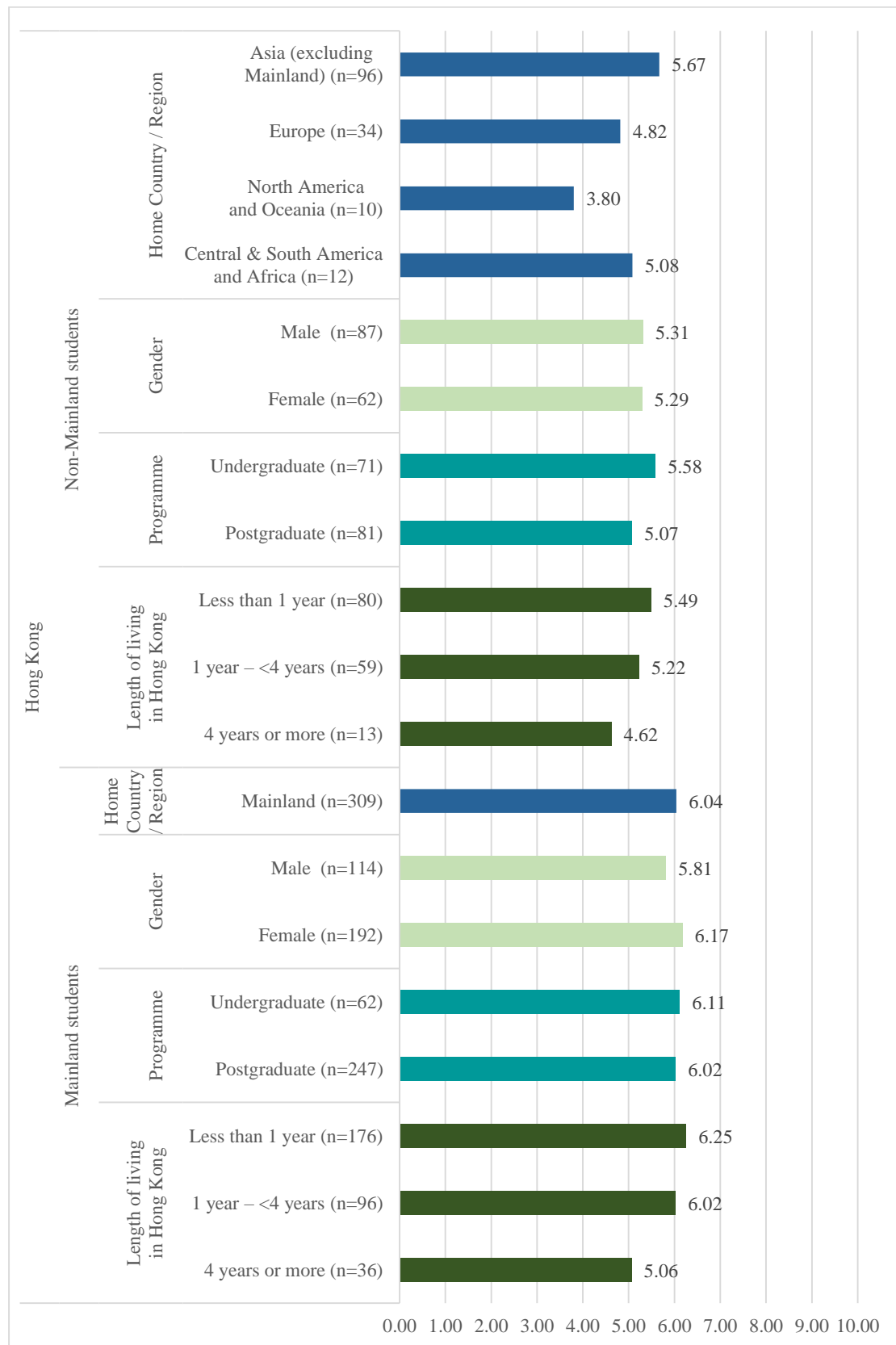
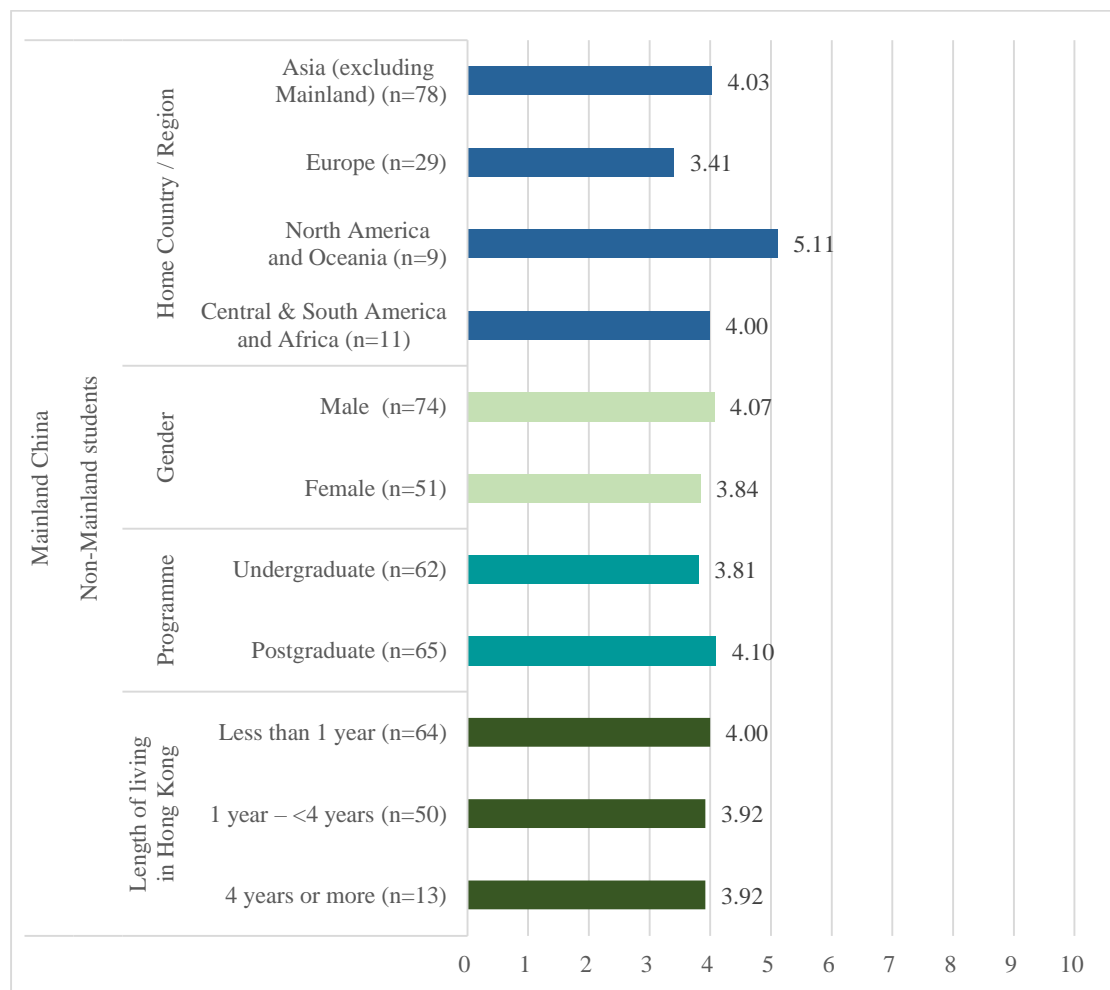




Figure 4.2 Rating of Political System by Social Background Factors\* (continued)



\* Mainland respondents were excluded from analysis on social background differences in the Mainland’s soft power image. The following analysis on social background differences in the Mainland’s image followed the same practice.

4.17 Of non-Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluation of their current programme of study among respondents of different genders, programmes or length of living in Hong Kong (Figure 4.2).

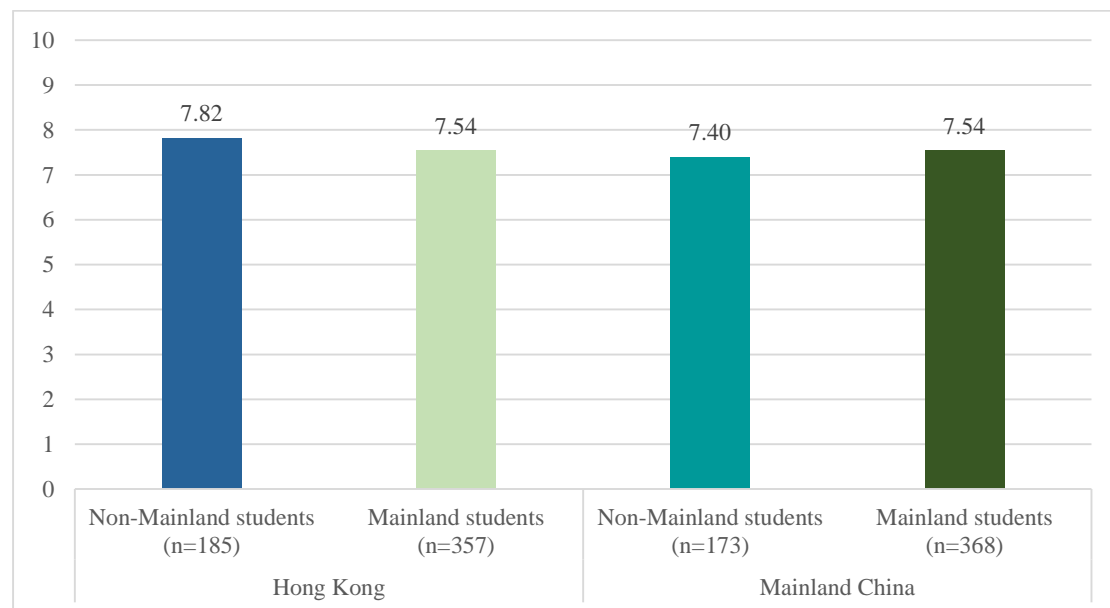
## Economy

4.18 A competitive economy was expected to promote a society’s image. Hence, respondents were asked to rate their attitude towards a statement that the society had an internationally competitive economy.

4.19 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents had good evaluations of Hong Kong’s economy. Their ratings were 7.82 and 7.54 points (Figure 4.3), respectively.

4.20 Non-Mainland respondents shared similar perceptions of the competitiveness of Mainland China’s economy as Mainland respondents. Their ratings were 7.40 and 7.54 points, respectively. Both had good perceptions about the Mainland’s economy (Figure 4.3).

Figure 4.3 Rating of Economy



4.21 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (8.57 points) had a better perception of Hong Kong’s economy than those from Asia (7.82 points), Europe (7.68 points), the Mainland (7.54 points), and North America and Oceania (7.36 points) (Figure 4.4).

4.22 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluating Hong Kong’s economy among respondents of different gender, programme and length of living in Hong Kong (Figure 4.4).

- 4.23 Respondents from North America and Oceania (8.36 points) and Central & South America and Africa (8.23 points) had a better perception of the Mainland’s economy than those from Europe (7.47 points) and Asia (7.19 points) (Figure 4.4).
- 4.24 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four years or more (5.71 points) had a poorer perception of Mainland China’s economy than those who lived in Hong Kong for less than four years (Figure 4.4)
- 4.25 There was no clear difference in evaluation of Mainland China’s economy among non-Mainland respondents of different gender or programme (Figure 4.4).

Figure 4.4 Rating of Economy by Social Background Factors

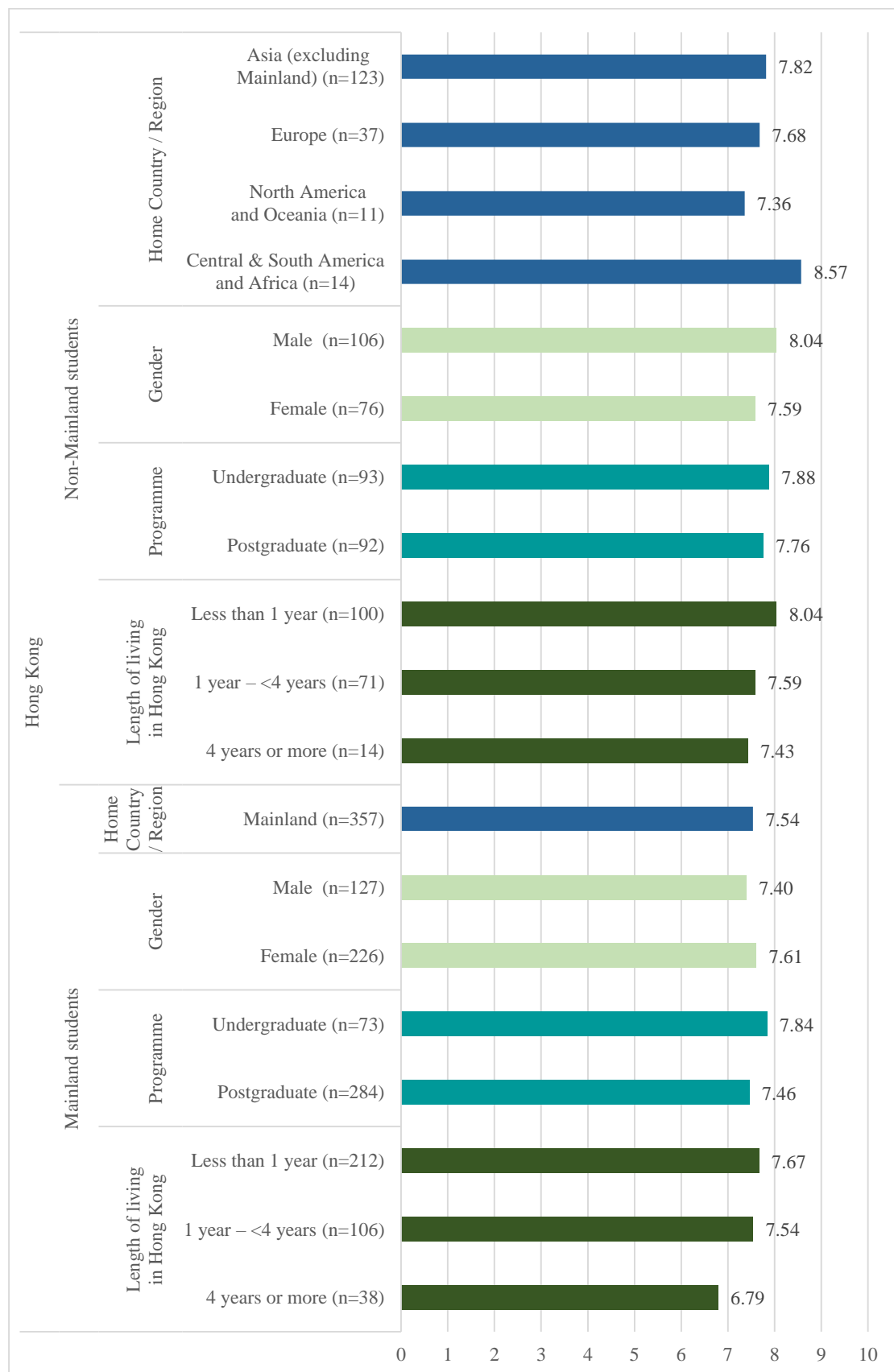
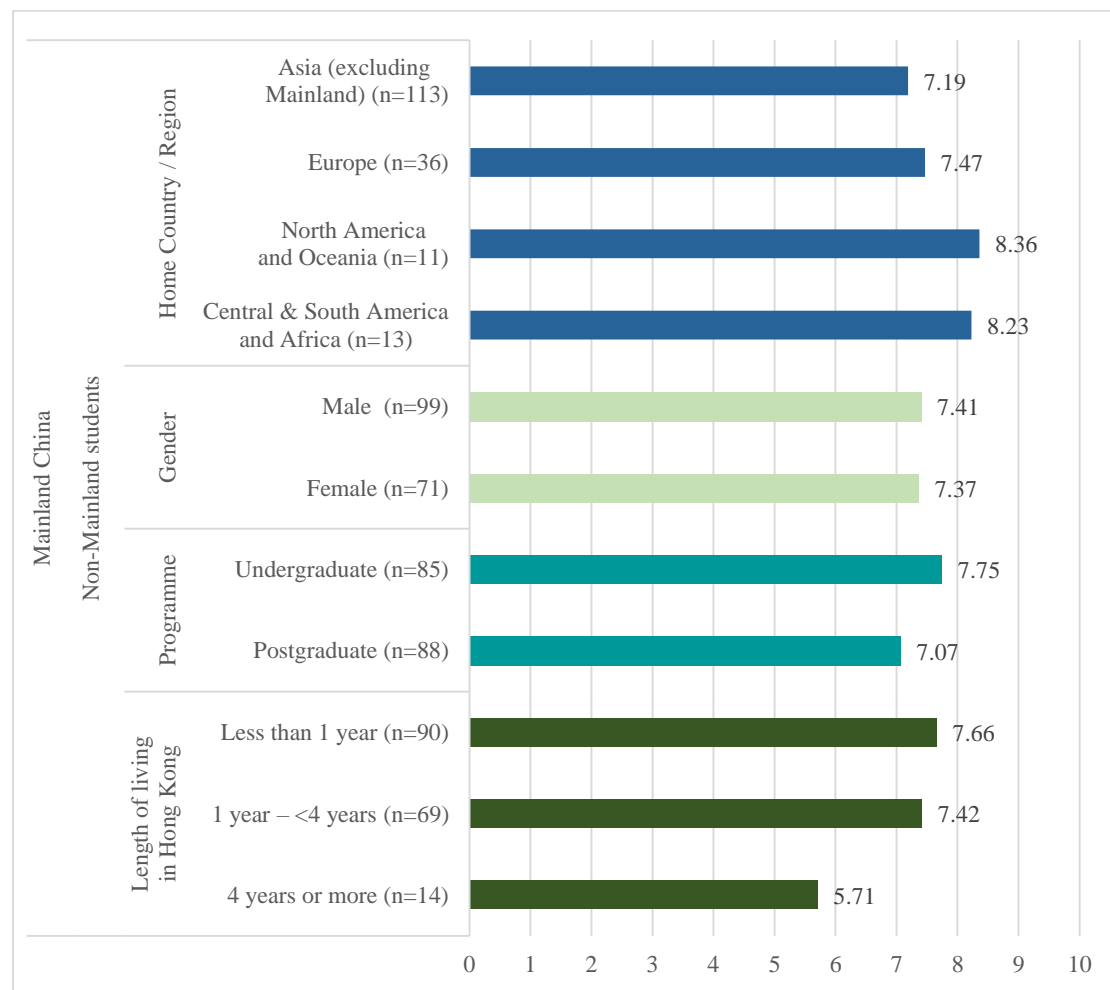


Figure 4.4 Rating of Economy by Social Background Factors (continued)



### Education and Science

4.26 Perceptions about each society’s education and science was measured in terms of three aspects: 1) education level of its population, 2) quality of its universities, and 3) level of its science and technology.

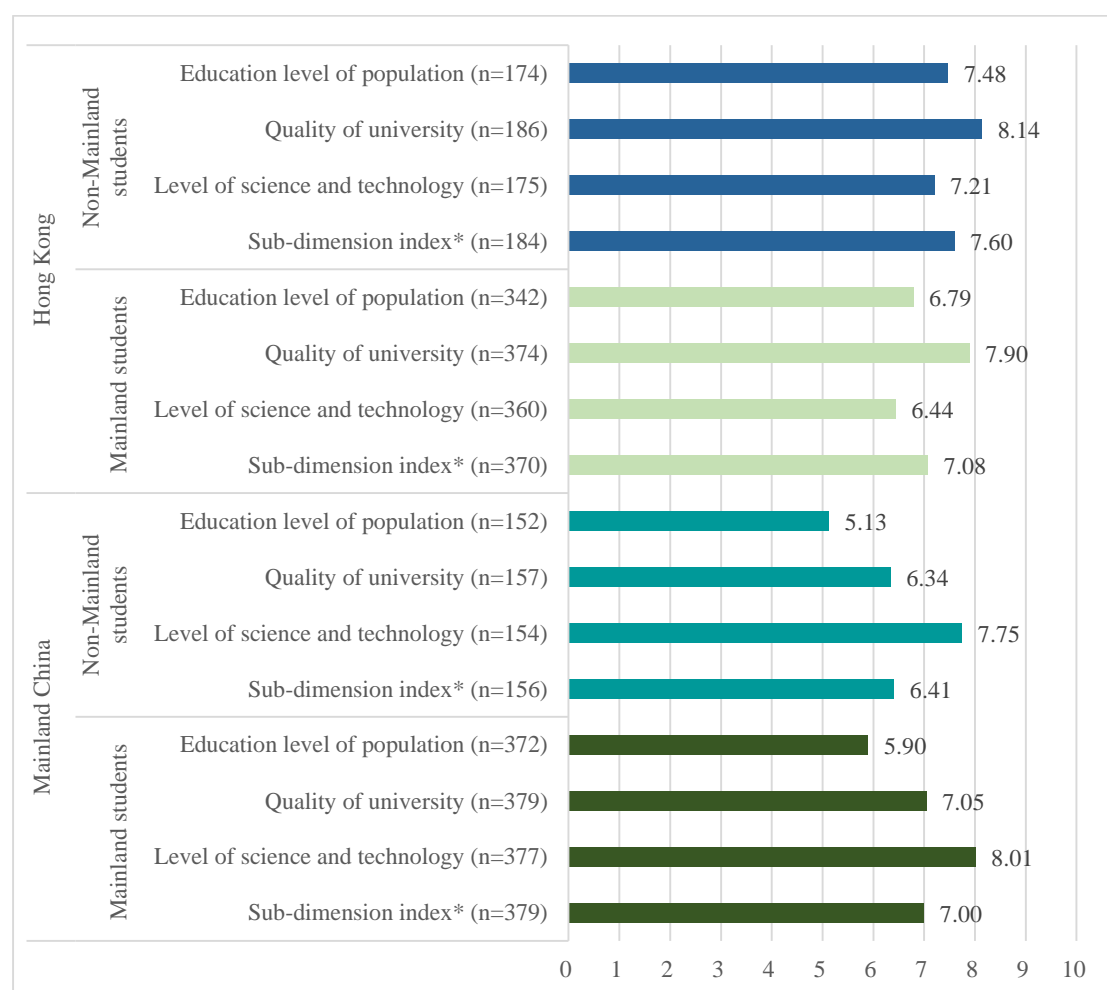
4.27 High-level education, high-quality universities and advanced science and technology of a society were expected to promote a society’s perceived quality of education and science.

4.28 For three aspects: 1) education level of its population, 2) quality of its universities, and 3) level of its science and technology, respondents were asked to rate their feeling towards the following statements which describe Hong Kong and the Mainland: 1) “The society has a highly educated population”, 2) “The society has

high-quality universities”, and 3) “The society possesses advanced science and technology”.

- 4.29 The image of Hong Kong’s education and science was rated good by the respondents. The education and science index of non-Mainland and the Mainland respondents were 7.60 and 7.08 points respectively. Among three aspects, the rating of university quality (Non-Mainland: 8.14 points; Mainland: 7.90 points) was higher, while that of level of science and technology (Non-Mainland: 7.21 points; Mainland: 6.44 points) was the lowest rated (Figure 4.5).
- 4.30 Non-Mainland respondents perceived that Mainland China’s level of education and science was lower than Hong Kong’s; the education and science index was 6.41 points. Although Mainland China’s level of science and technology (7.75 points) was perceived to be slightly higher than Hong Kong’s, the education level of its population (5.13 points) and quality of its universities (6.34 points) were lower (Figure 4.5).
- 4.31 Mainland respondents also perceived that Mainland China’s education of population (5.90 points) and university quality (7.05 points) were lower than Hong Kong’s, but its level of science and technology (8.01 points) was higher than Hong Kong’s (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5 Rating of Education and Science\*



\* Respondents whose answer was invalid in two questions of this sub-dimension or more were excluded.

4.32 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (6.89 points) gave a slightly lower score of Hong Kong’s education and science (Figure 4.6).

4.33 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluation on Hong Kong’s education and science among respondents of different gender, programme and duration living in Hong Kong (Figure 4.6).

4.34 There was no clear difference in rating of Mainland China’s education and science among non-Mainland respondents from different regions (Figure 4.6).

4.35 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (5.49 points) had a poorer perception of Mainland China’s education and science than those who lived for less than four years (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Rating of Education and Science by Social Background Factors

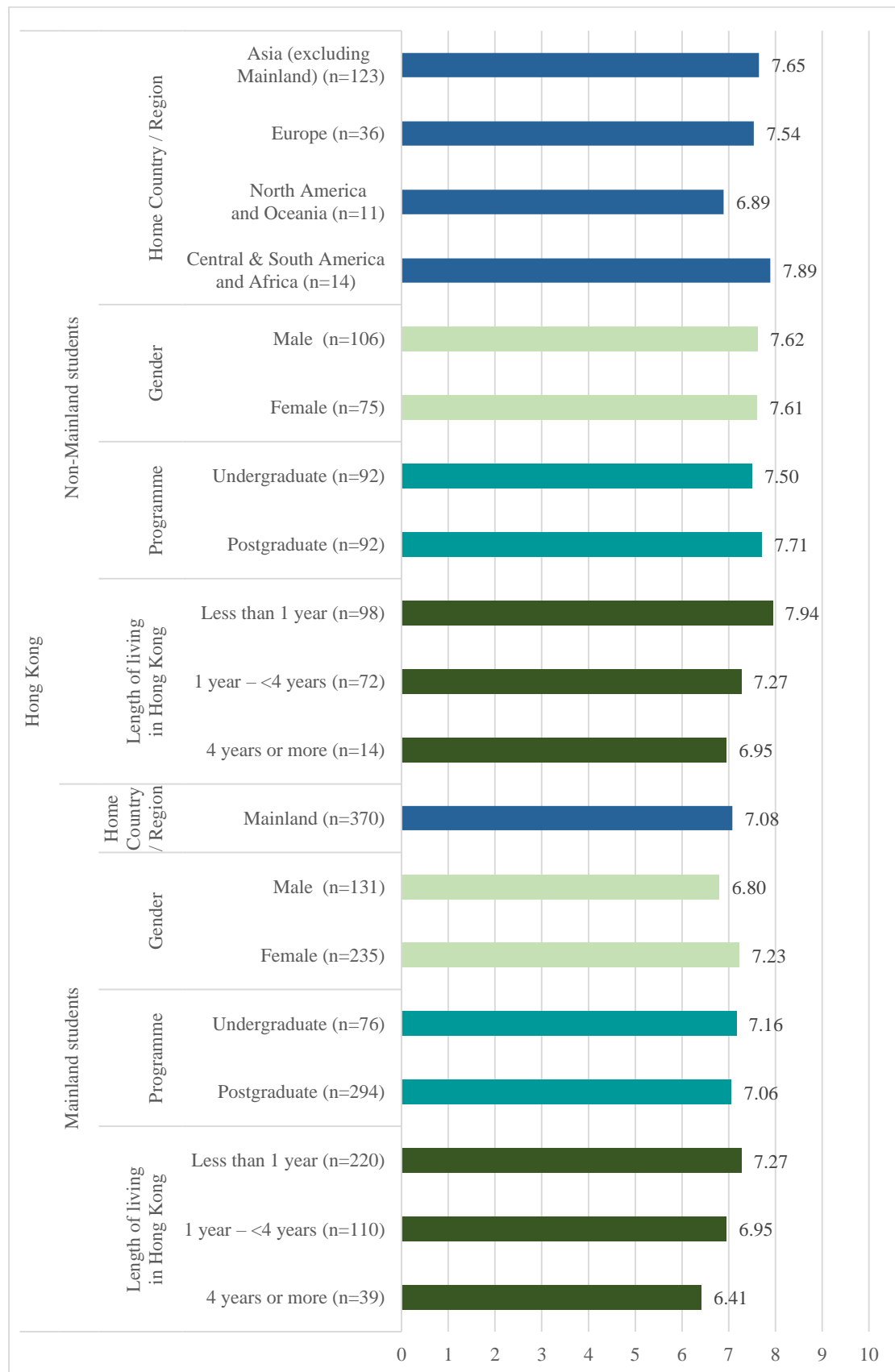
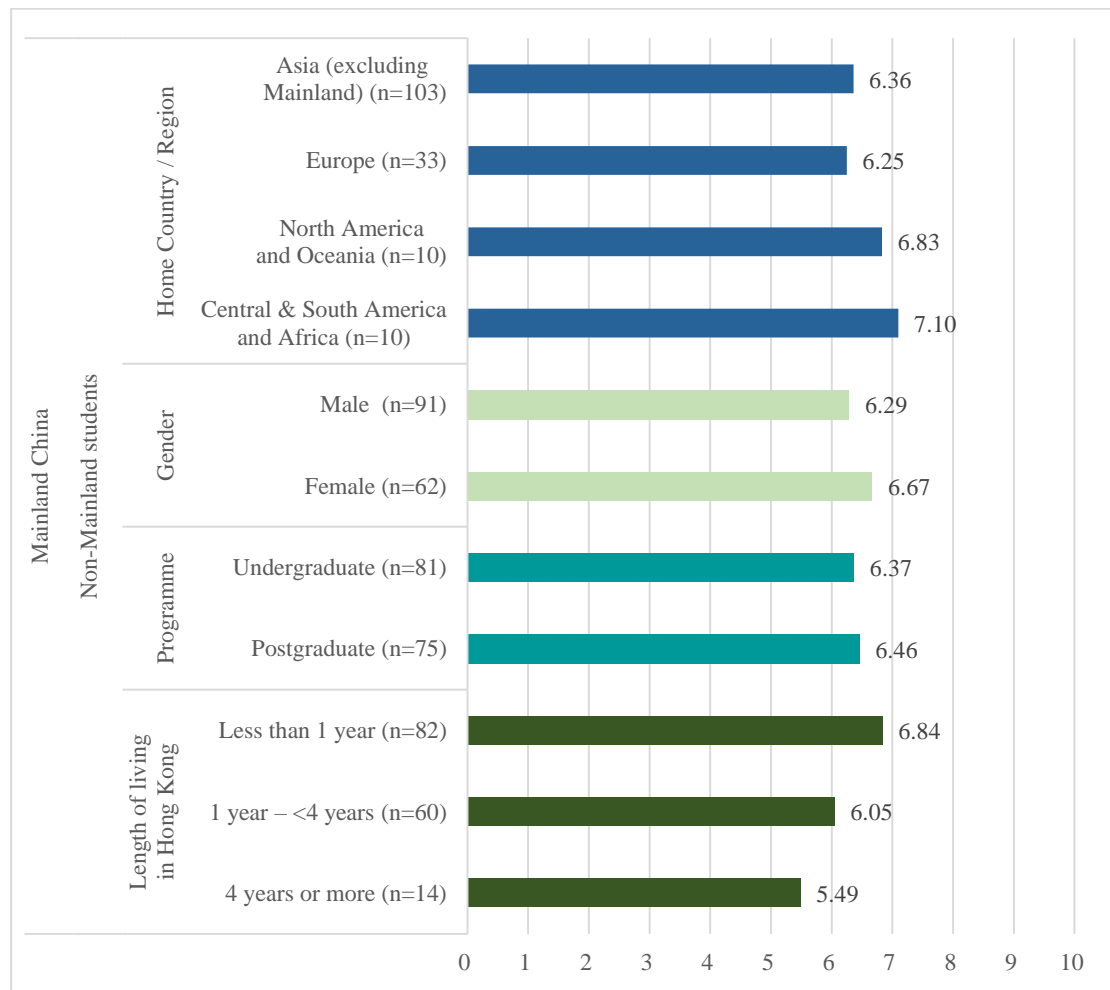




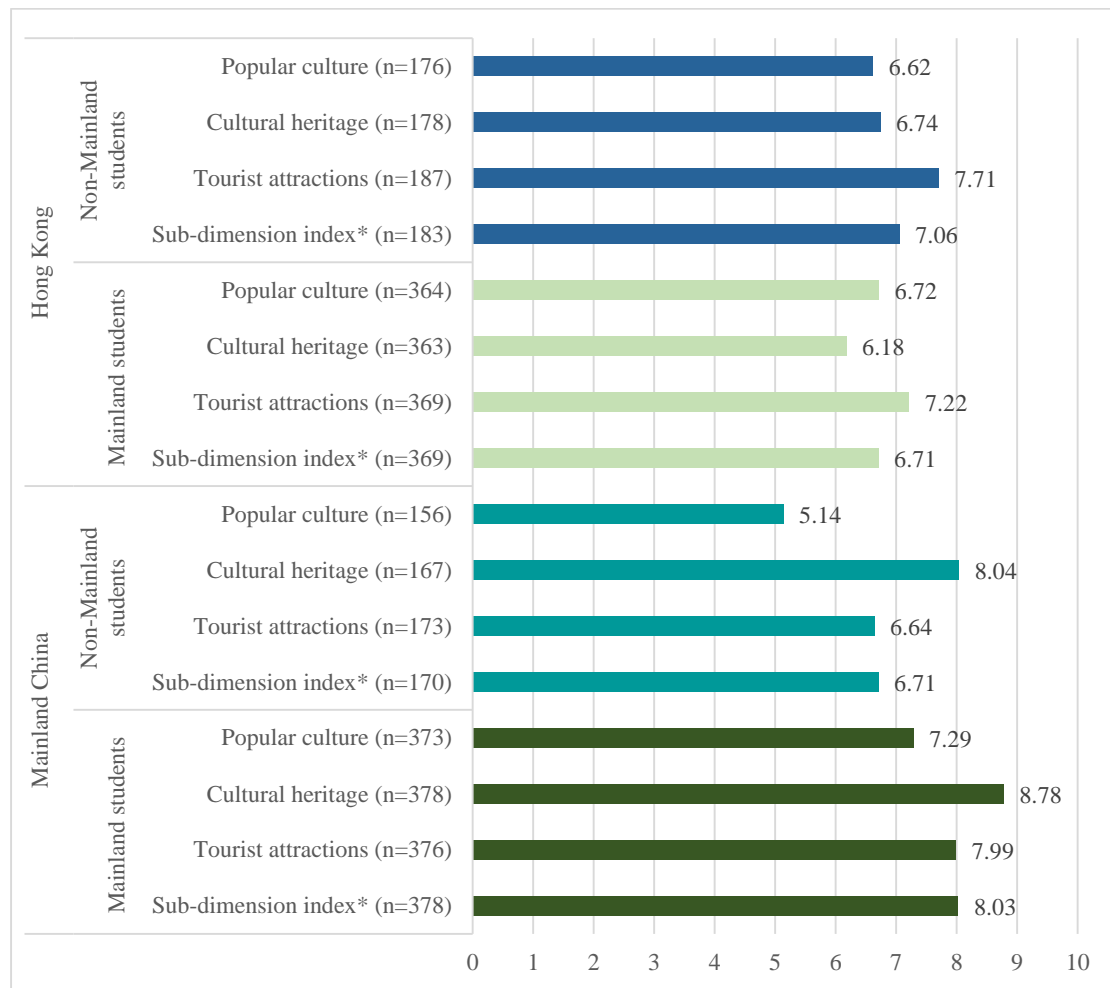
Figure 4.6 Rating of Education and Science by Social Background Factors



## Culture

- 4.36 Cultural richness or distinctiveness is the last important resource of affective soft power. A society with: 1) appealing popular culture, 2) rich cultural heritage, and 3) many tourist attractions would be perceived as richer cultures.
- 4.37 These three elements of cultural richness were measured by asking respondents to rate their feeling towards the following statements about Hong Kong or the Mainland: 1) “The society has an appealing popular culture”; 2) “The society has a rich cultural heritage”, and 3) “The society is an attractive destination for international tourism”.
- 4.38 The perceived cultural richness of Hong Kong was quite positive to the respondents. The culture index of non-Mainland and the Mainland respondents were 7.06 and 6.71 points, respectively. Among three aspects, the rating of tourist attractions (Non-Mainland: 7.71 points; Mainland: 7.22 points) was the highest (Figure 4.7).
- 4.39 Non-Mainland respondents also perceived that Mainland China’s cultural richness was quite good (6.71 points). Although the rating of cultural heritage (8.04 points) was higher than Hong Kong’s (6.74 points), popular culture (5.14 points) and tourist attractions (6.64 points) were rated lower than Hong Kong (Popular culture: 6.62 points; Tourist attractions: 7.71 points) (Figure 4.7).
- 4.40 On the other hand, Mainland respondents perceived Mainland China’s culture highly. The culture index was 8.03 points. Their ratings of popular culture (7.29 points) and tourist attractions (7.99 points) were higher than the non-Mainland respondent’s ratings (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7 Rating of Culture



\* Respondents whose answer was invalid in two questions of this sub-dimension or more were excluded.

4.41 Respondents from North America and Oceania (6.15 points) perceived Hong Kong’s cultural richness the lowest (Figure 4.8).

4.42 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (Non-Mainland: 6.14 points; Mainland: 5.66 points) had a poorer perception of Hong Kong’s cultural richness than those who had lived in Hong Kong for less than four years (Figure 4.8).

4.43 There was no clear difference in rating of the Mainland’s cultural richness among non-Mainland respondents from different regions (Figure 4.8).

4.44 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (5.57 points) had a poorer perception of Mainland China’s cultural richness than those who had lived in Hong Kong for less than four years (Figure 4.8).

4.45 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluating the culture richness of Hong Kong and the Mainland China among respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Rating of Culture by Social Background Factors

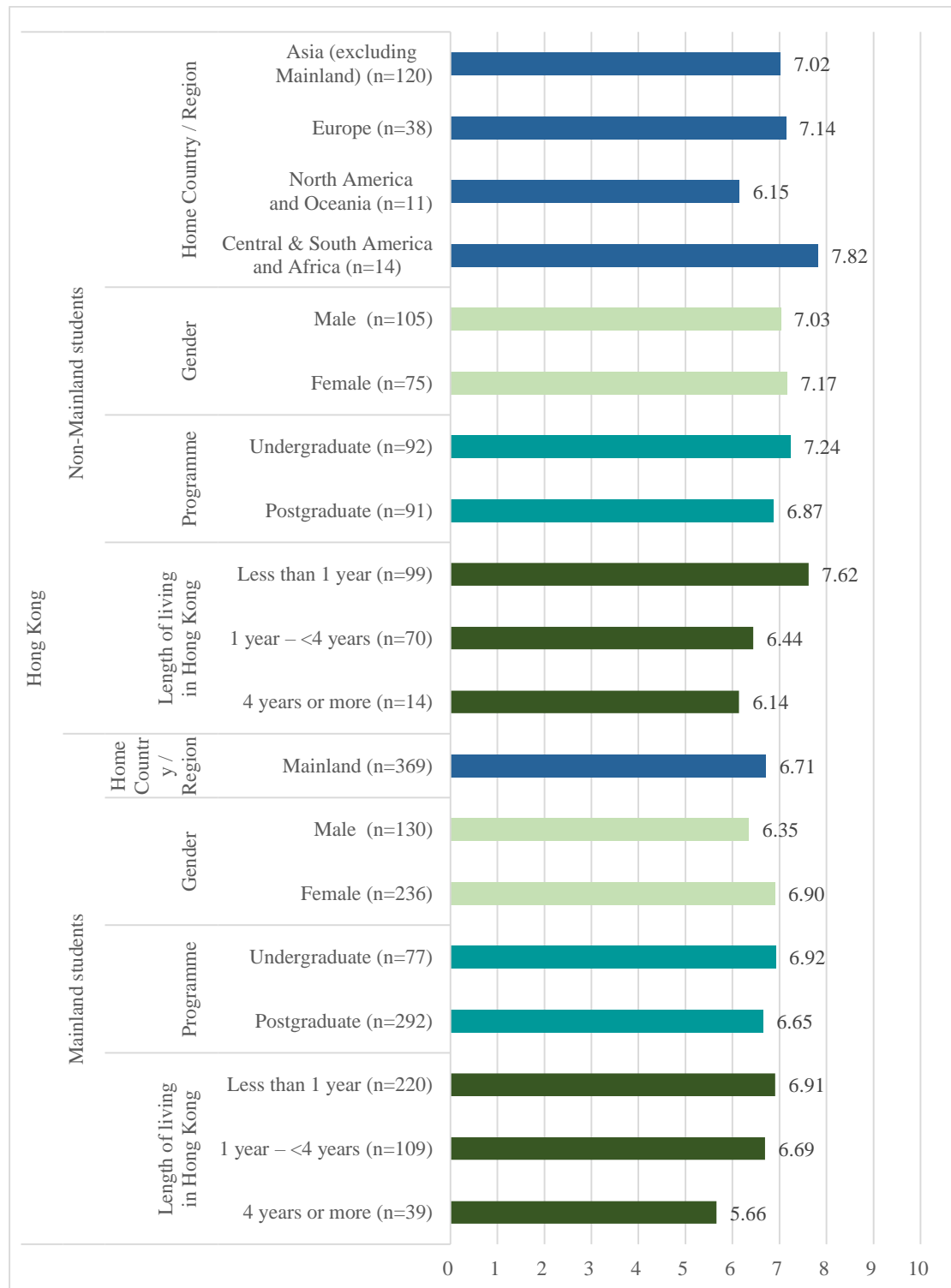
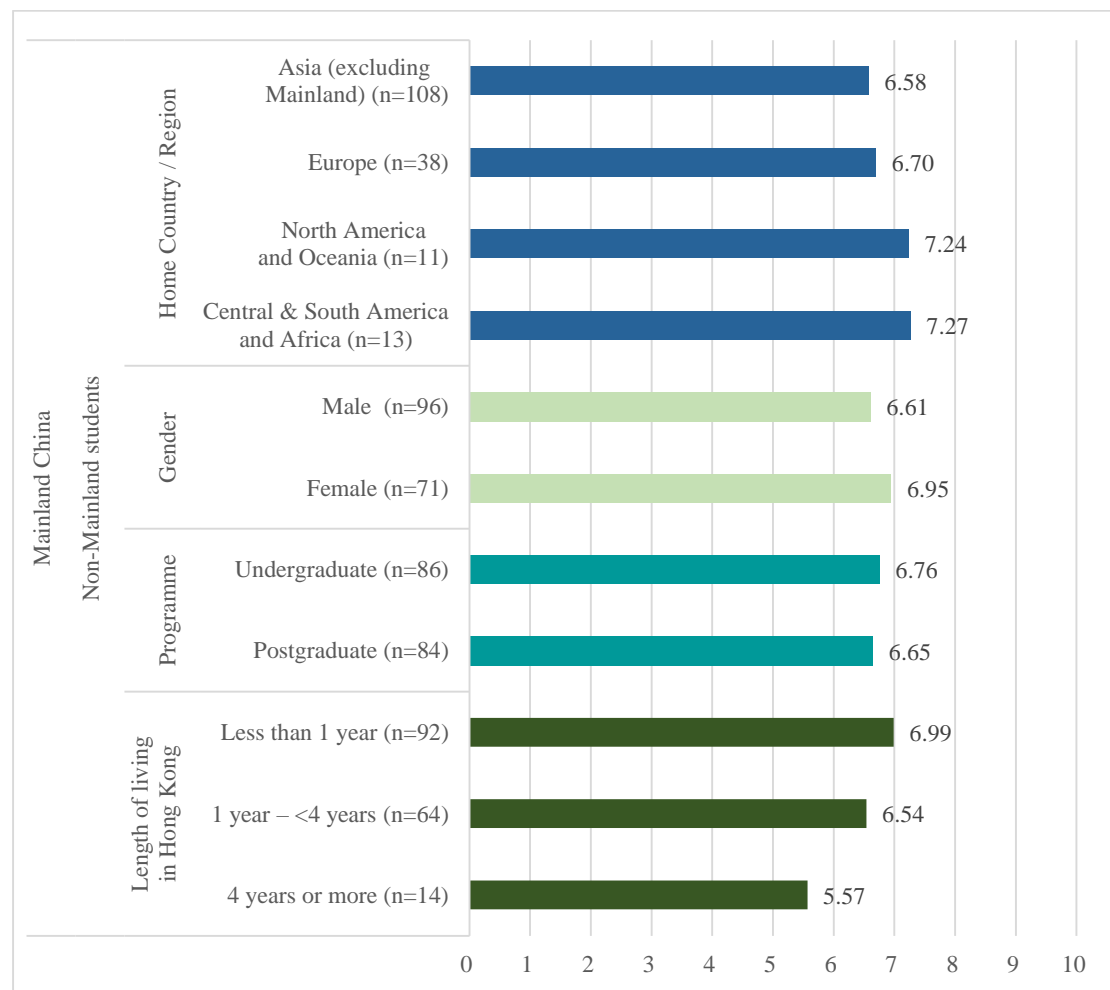


Figure 4.8 Rating of Culture by Social Background Factors (continued)



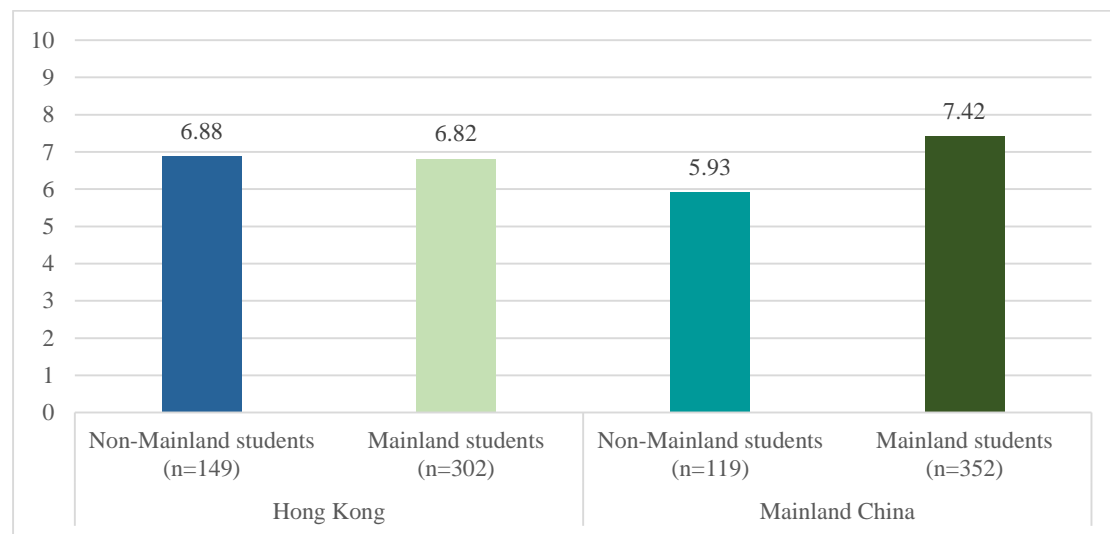
### Affective dimension index

4.46 Hong Kong’s affective dimension index was quite high. The index scores of non-Mainland and Mainland respondents were 6.88 and 6.82 points (Figure 4.9), respectively. This indicates that the affective soft power of Hong Kong was quite strong to both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents.

4.47 The affective soft power of Mainland China was average to the non-Mainland respondents. Their Mainland affective dimension index was 5.93 points (Figure 4.9).

4.48 The affective soft power of Mainland China was strongly felt by the Mainland respondents. Their Mainland affective dimension index was 7.42 points (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Affective Dimension Index



\* Respondents who had missing values in any affective sub-dimension index were excluded.

4.49 Respondents from North America and Oceania (6.05 points) had lower Hong Kong’s affective dimension index scores than those from the Mainland (6.82 points), Europe (6.85 points), Asia (6.92 points), and Central & South America and Africa (7.31 points) (Figure 4.10).

4.50 There was no clear difference in Hong Kong’s affective dimension index among both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.10).

4.51 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (Non-Mainland: 6.29 points; Mainland: 5.87 points) had lower Hong Kong affective dimension index scores than those who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year (Non-Mainland: 7.19 points; Mainland: 7.05 points) (Figure 4.10).

4.52 For non-Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in affective dimension index scores of Mainland China among respondents of different genders or programmes (Figure 4.10).

4.53 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (5.02 points) had a lower affective dimension index score of Mainland China than those who lived in Hong Kong for less than four years (Figure 4.10).

Figure 4.10 Affective Dimension Index by Social Background Factors

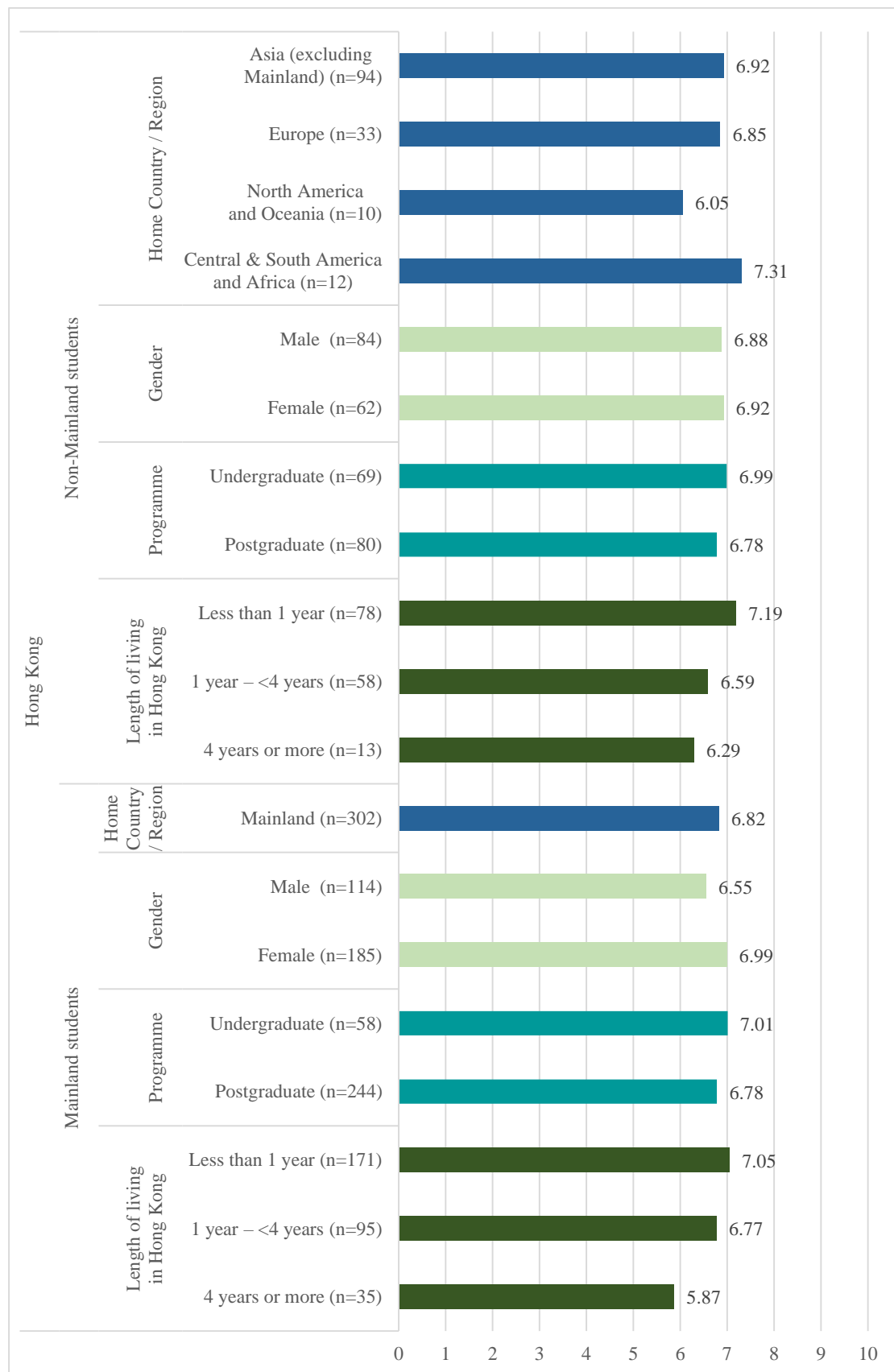
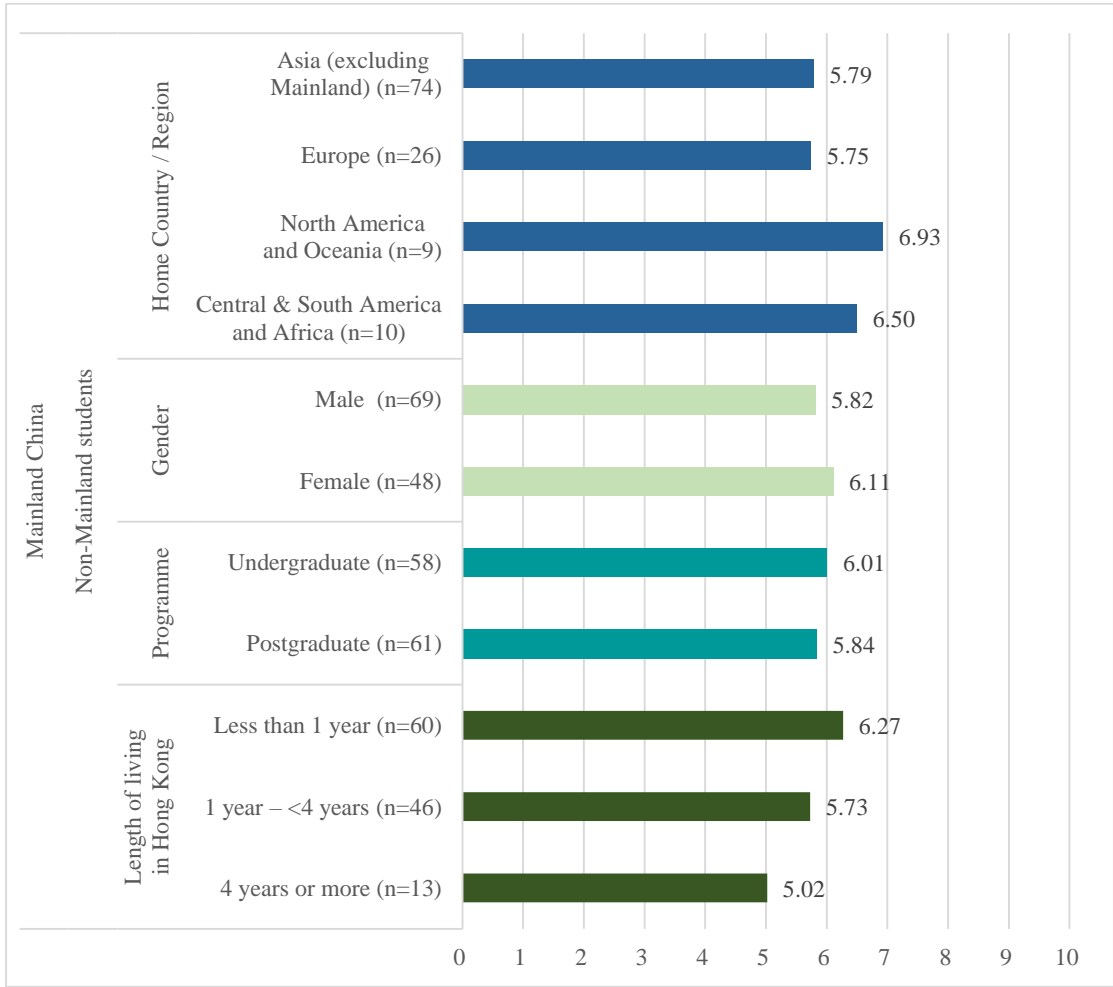


Figure 4.10 Affective Dimension Index by Social Background Factors (continued)





## Normative Dimension

### Observation of International Norm

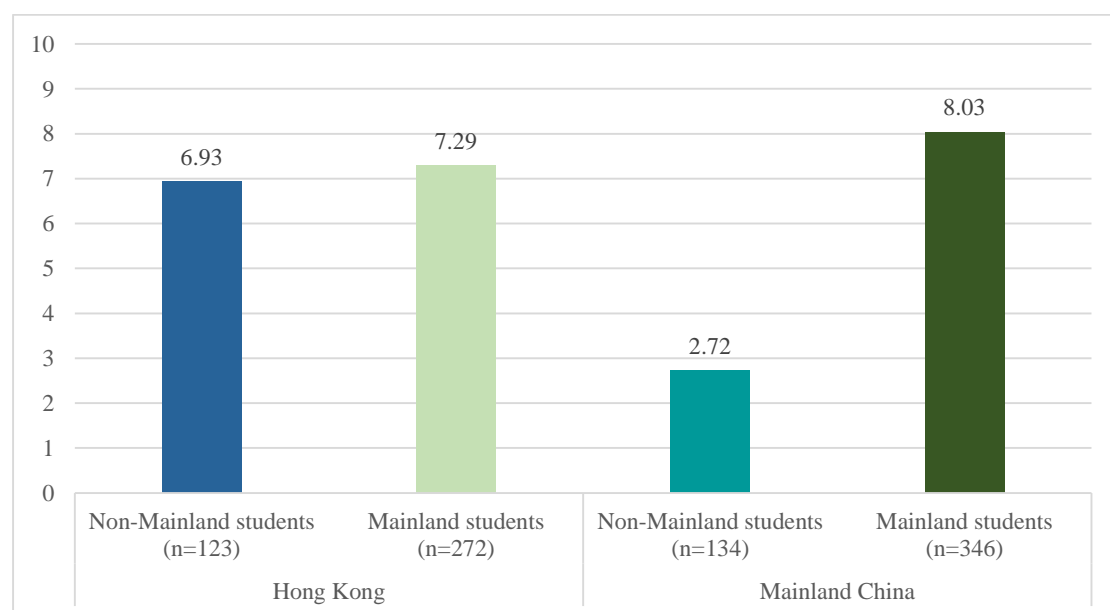
4.54 Respecting the sovereignty of other countries is a key international norm. As such, respect for sovereignty was selected as an indicator of observation of international norms. Respondents were asked to rate their attitude towards a statement that the society respects the sovereignty of other Asian countries.

4.55 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents perceived that Hong Kong observed the international norm. Their rating of Hong Kong respecting the sovereignty of other Asian countries was high. Their scores were 6.93 and 7.29 points (Figure 4.11).

4.56 Non-Mainland respondents had poor perceptions of the Mainland China observing the international norm. Their rating of respecting the sovereignty of other Asian countries was 2.72 points (Figure 4.11).

4.57 The observation of the international norm by Mainland China was well rated by the Mainland respondents. It was 8.03 points, higher than their rating of Hong Kong (Figure 4.11).

Figure 4.11 Rating of Observation of International Norm



- 4.58 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (7.89 points) gave the highest mark to Hong Kong in the observation of international norms dimension (Figure 4.12).
- 4.59 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year (Non-Mainland: 7.40 points; Mainland: 7.66 points) had better perceptions of Hong Kong observing the international norm than those who lived for one year or more (Figure 4.12)
- 4.60 For both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluating the observation of international norms of Hong Kong among respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.12).
- 4.61 There was no clear difference in ratings of Mainland China’s observation of international norm among non-Mainland respondents from different regions (Figure 4.12).
- 4.62 For non-Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluating the observation of international norms of Mainland China among respondents of different genders, programmes or lengths of living in Hong Kong (Figure 4.12).

Figure 4.12 Rating of Observation of International Norm by Social Background Factors

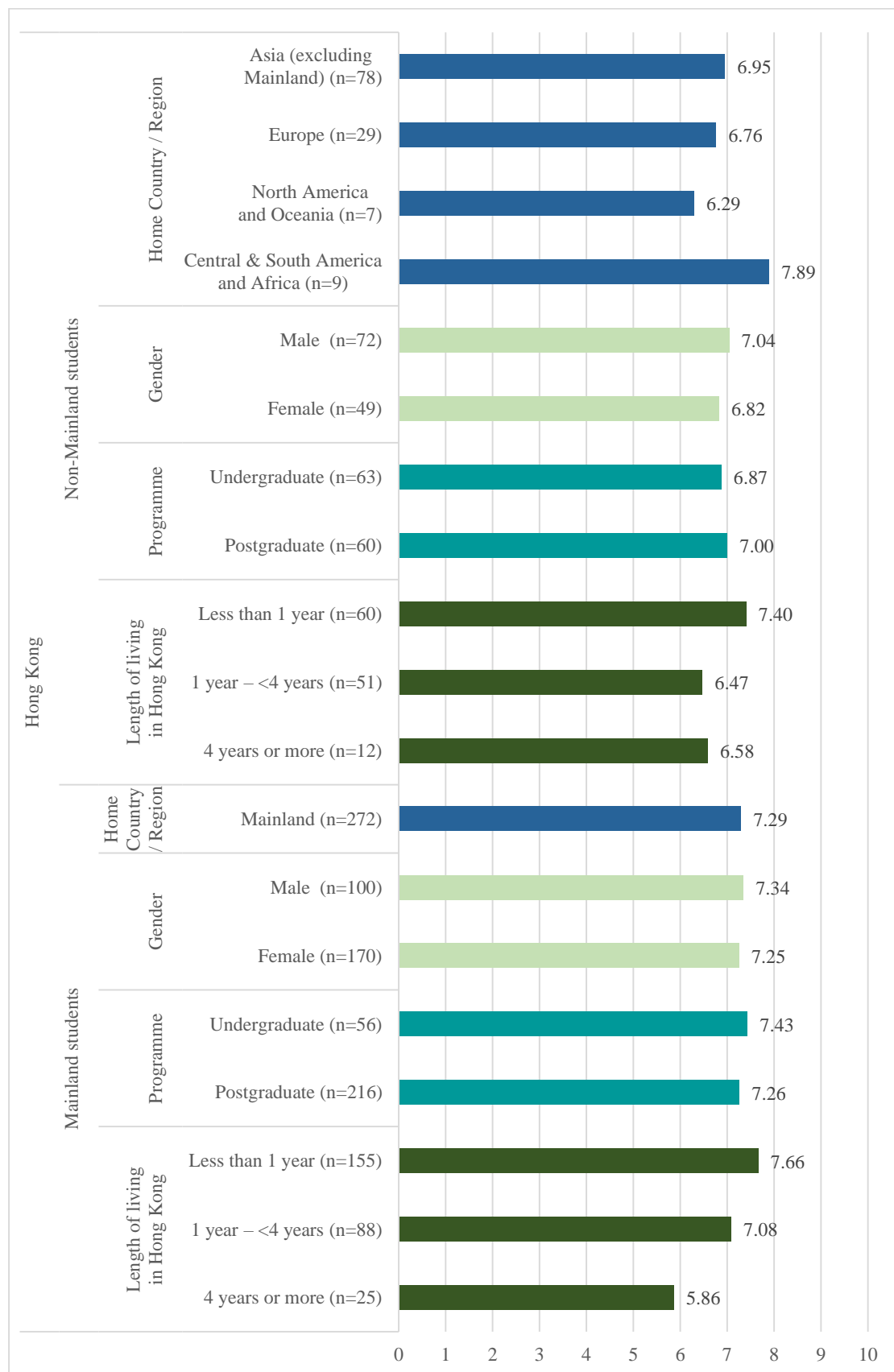
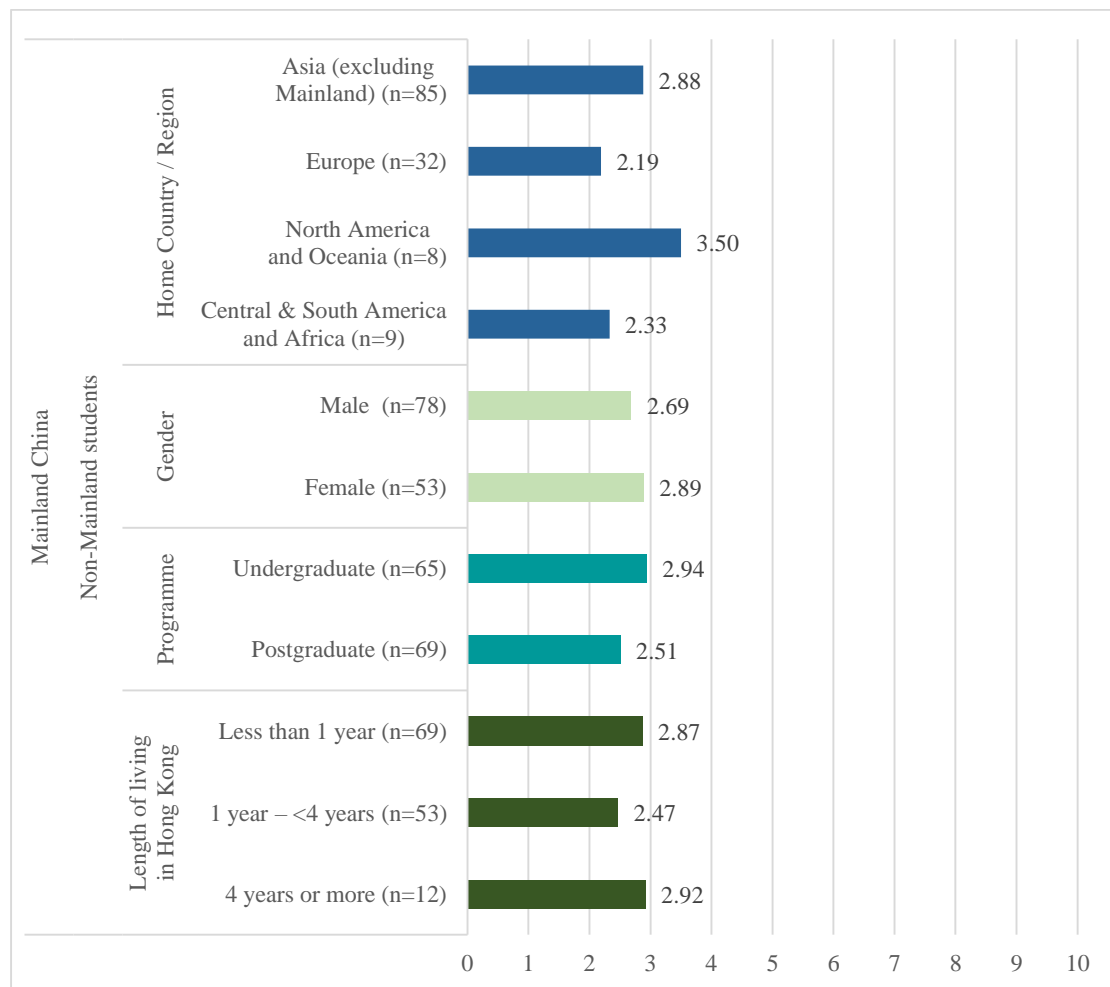


Figure 4.12 Rating of Observation of International Norm by Social Background Factors (continued)



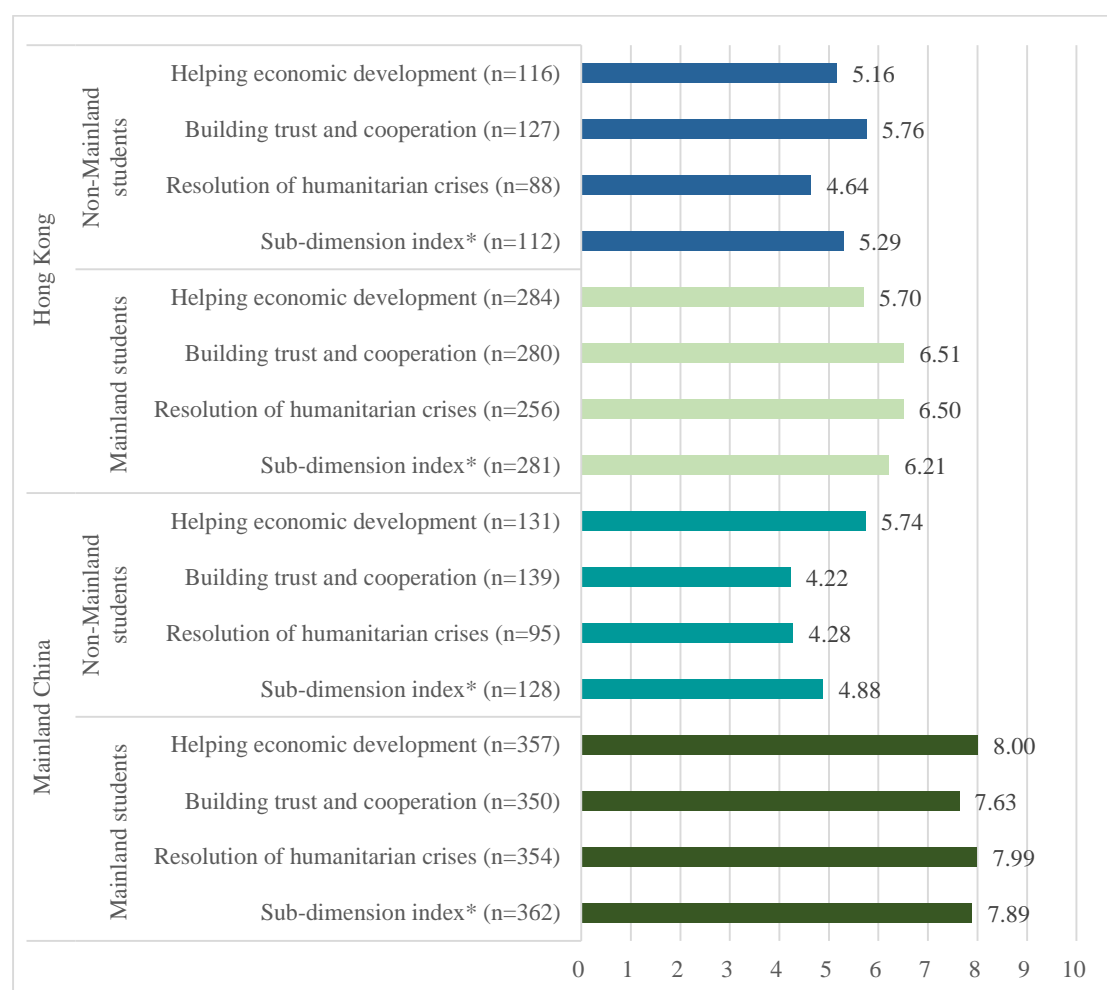
### Contribution to Resolution of International Problems

4.63 A society’s contribution to the resolution of international problems is evaluated based on its: 1) helping economic development, 2) building trust and cooperation, and 3) resolution of humanitarian crises.

4.64 These three elements of contribution to the resolution of international problems were measured by asking respondents to rate their feeling towards the following statements which describe Hong Kong or the Mainland: 1) “The society helps other Asian countries to develop their economies”; 2) “The society builds trust and cooperation among Asian countries”; 3) “The society provides assistance in the event of humanitarian crises (e.g. natural disasters) in Asia.”

- 4.65 The respondents would give a higher mark if they perceive the society has a higher contribution to the resolution of international problems.
- 4.66 The perceived contribution to the resolution of international problems of Hong Kong was average to the respondents. The index of non-Mainland and the Mainland respondents was 5.29 and 6.21 points, respectively. Among three aspects, the rating of building trust and cooperation (Non-Mainland: 5.76 points; Mainland: 6.51 points) was the highest, while resolution of humanitarian crises (4.64 points) was poorest for non-Mainland respondents and helping economic development (5.70 points) was poorest for Mainland respondents (Figure 4.13).
- 4.67 Non-Mainland respondents also perceived that Mainland China’s contribution to resolving international problems was average (4.88 points). The rating of helping economic development (5.74 points) was higher than Hong Kong’s, but the rating of building trust (4.22 points) and cooperation and resolution of humanitarian crises (4.28 points) was poorer (Figure 4.13).
- 4.68 On the other hand, Mainland respondents perceived that Mainland China’s contribution to the resolution of international problems was high. The index was 7.89 points (Figure 4.13).

Figure 4.13 Rating of Contribution to Resolution of International Problems



\* Respondents whose answer was invalid in two questions of this sub-dimension or more were excluded.

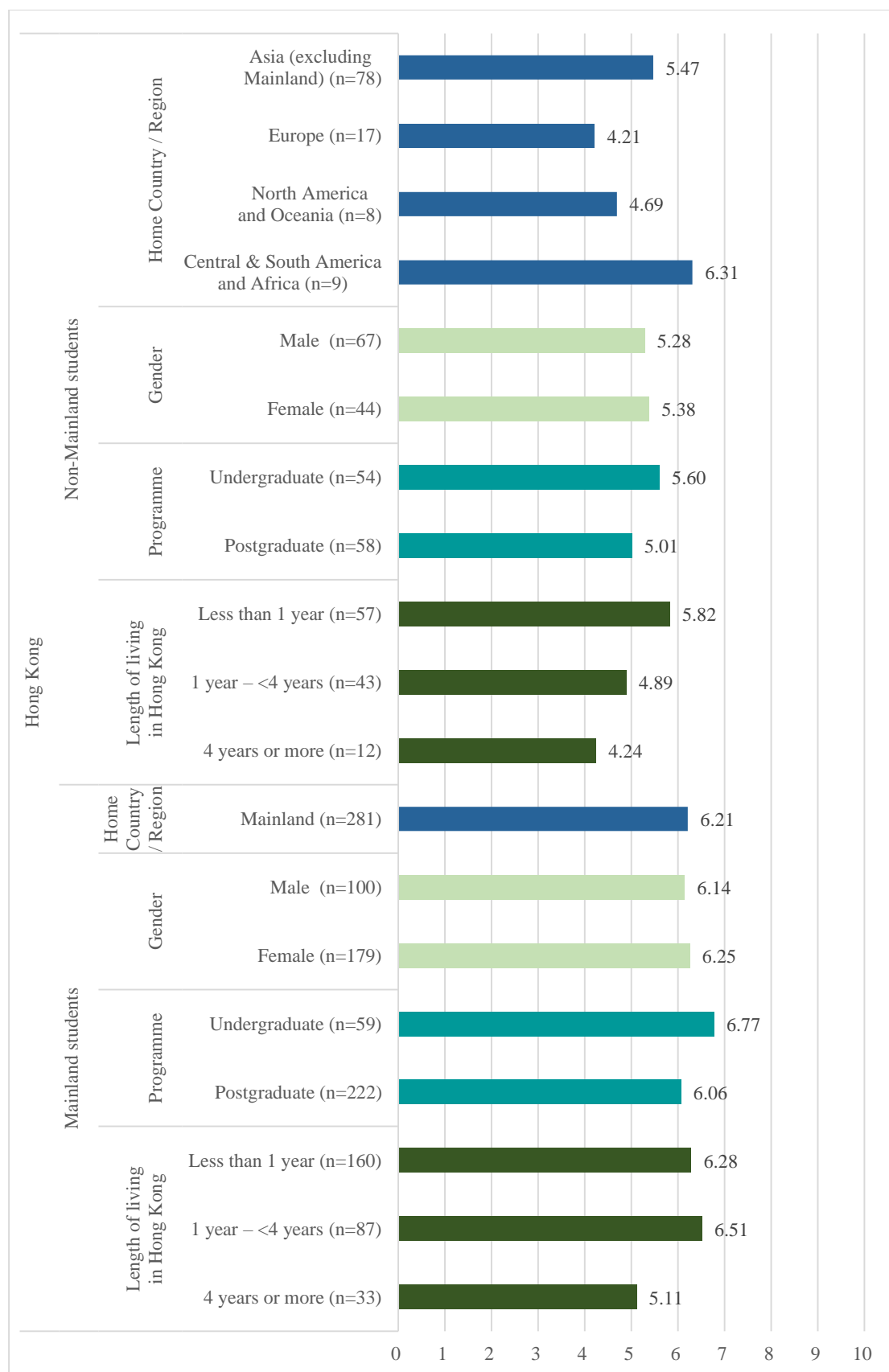
4.69 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (6.31 points) gave the highest mark to Hong Kong in the contribution to resolution of international problems dimension (Figure 4.14).

4.70 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (Non-Mainland: 4.24 points; Mainland: 5.11 points) had poorer evaluations of Hong Kong’s contribution to the resolution of international problems than those who lived for less than four years (Figure 4.14).

4.71 There was no clear difference in evaluations of Hong Kong’s contribution to the resolution of international problems among non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders or programmes (Figure 4.14).

- 4.72 Respondents from North America and Oceania (7.02 points) gave the highest mark to Hong Kong in the contribution to resolution of international problems dimension (Figure 4.14).
- 4.73 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (3.22 points) had poorer evaluations of Hong Kong’s contribution to the resolution of international problems than those who lived for less than four years (Figure 4.14).
- 4.74 For non-Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in evaluations of the contribution to resolution of international problems of the Mainland China among respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.14).

Figure 4.14 Rating of Contribution to Resolution of International Problems by Social Background Factors





### Normative dimension index

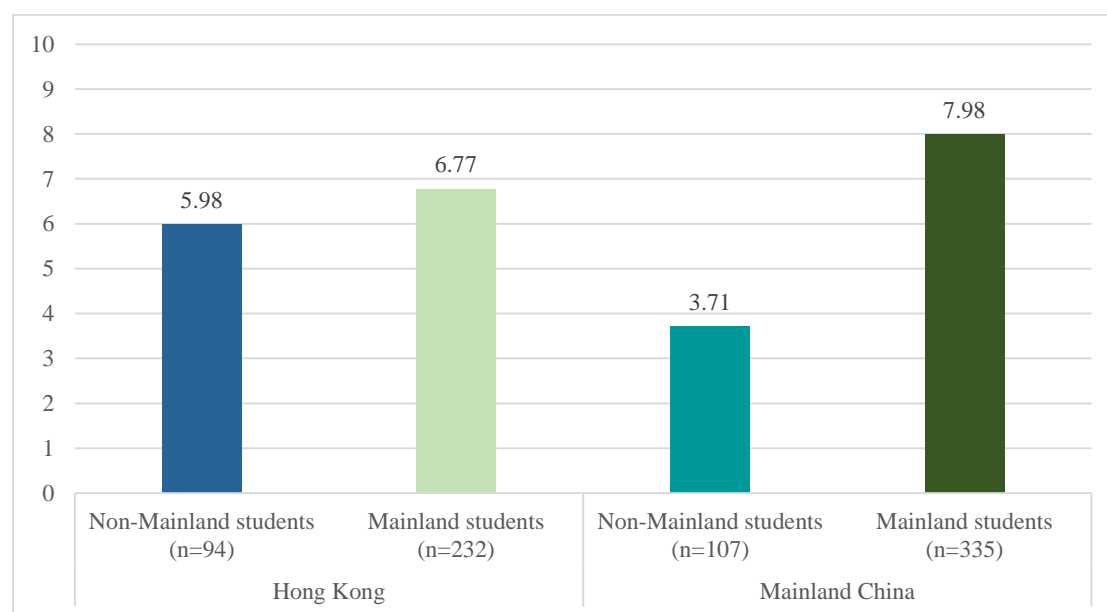
4.75 The normative soft power of Hong Kong to non-Mainland respondents was average. Their score of Hong Kong’s normative dimension index was 5.98 points (Figure 4.15).

4.76 Hong Kong’s index score, of the Mainland respondents, was 6.77 points (Figure 4.15). This indicates that the normative soft power of Hong Kong was quite strong to Mainland respondents.

4.77 The normative soft power of Mainland China was weak to the non-Mainland respondents. Their score of the Mainland’s normative dimension index was 3.71 points (Figure 4.15).

4.78 The normative soft power of Mainland China was perceived as strong by the Mainland respondents. Their score of the Mainland’s normative dimension index was 7.98 points (Figure 4.15).

Figure 4.15 Normative Dimension Index



\* Respondents who had missing values in any normative sub-dimension index were excluded.

- 4.79 Respondents from Europe (5.09 points) and North America and Oceania (5.38 points) had lower scores of Hong Kong’s normative dimension index than those from the Asia (6.17 points), Mainland (6.77 points), and Central & South America and Africa (6.77 points) (Figure 4.16).
- 4.80 There was no clear difference in Hong Kong’s normative dimension index among both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.16).
- 4.81 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (Non-Mainland: 5.29 points; Mainland: 5.49 points) had lower scores of Hong Kong’s normative dimension index than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.16).
- 4.82 For non-Mainland respondents, there was no clear difference in the normative dimension index of Mainland China among respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.16).
- 4.83 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four or more years (2.34 points) had a lower affective dimension index score of Mainland China than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.16).

Figure 4.16 Normative Dimension Index by Social Background Factors

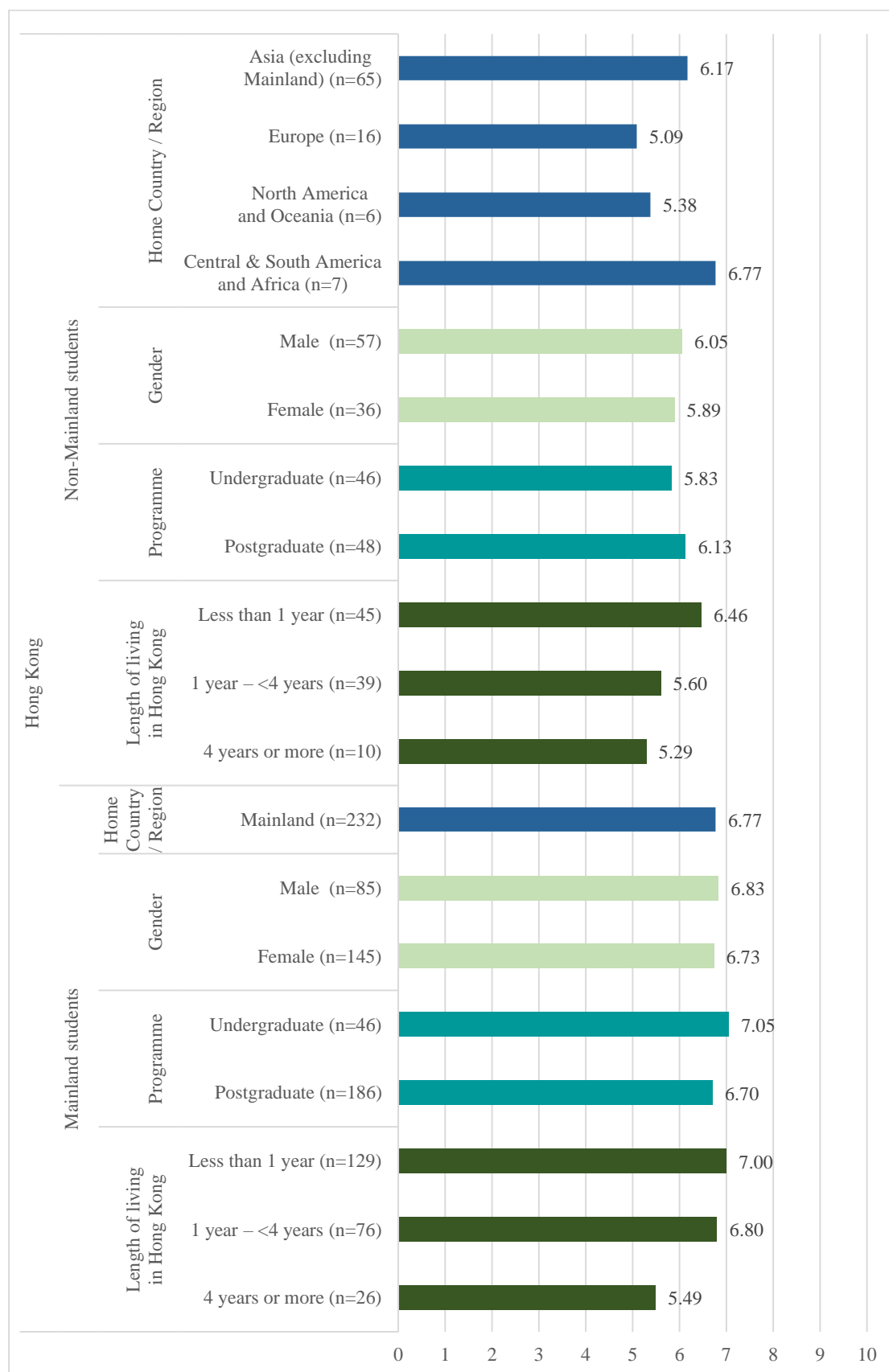
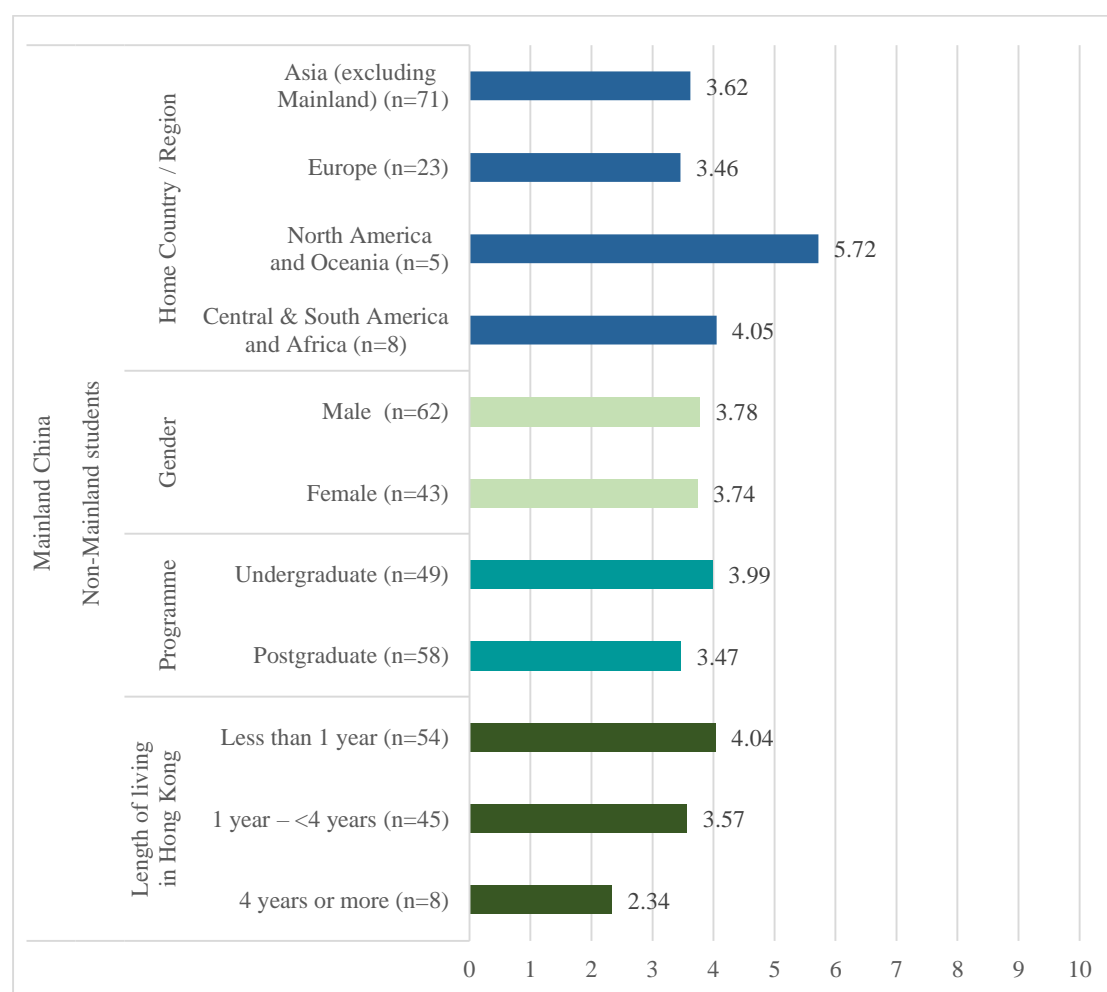


Figure 4.16 Normative Dimension Index by Social Background Factors (continued)



### Soft Power Index

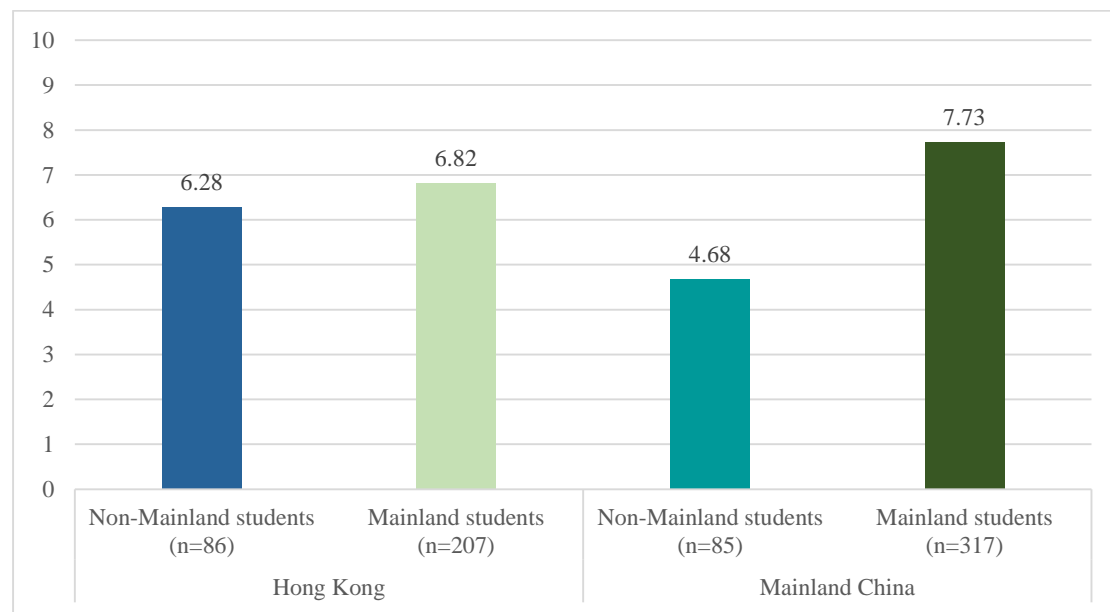
4.84 Overall soft power of Hong Kong was perceived by the respondents as quite strong.

The scores of Hong Kong’s soft power index of non-Mainland and Mainland respondents were 6.28 and 6.82 points, respectively (Figure 4.17).

4.85 Non-Mainland respondent’s attitude towards Mainland China’s overall soft power was average. Their score of the Mainland’s soft power index score was 4.68 points (Figure 4.17).

4.86 The Mainland respondents perceived the overall soft power of Mainland China to be strong. Their index score of the Mainland was 7.73 points (Figure 4.17).

Figure 4.17 Soft Power Index



\* Respondents who had missing value in either affective or normative dimension index were excluded.

4.87 Respondents from North America and Oceania (5.45 points) and Europe (5.67 points) gave lower scores of Hong Kong’s soft power index than those from Asia (6.43 points), the Mainland (6.82 points), and Central & South America and Africa (6.92 points) (Figure 4.18).

4.88 There was no clear difference in Hong Kong’s soft power index among non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders and programmes (Figure 4.18).

4.89 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time gave lower scores of Hong Kong’s soft power index than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.18).

4.90 Respondents from North America and Oceania (6.62 points) gave the highest score of the Mainland China’s soft power index (Figure 4.18).

4.91 Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time gave lower scores of Mainland China’s soft power index than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.18).

4.92 There was no clear difference in Mainland China’s soft power index among Mainland respondents of different genders or programmes (Figure 4.18).

Figure 4.18 Soft Power Index by Social Background Factors

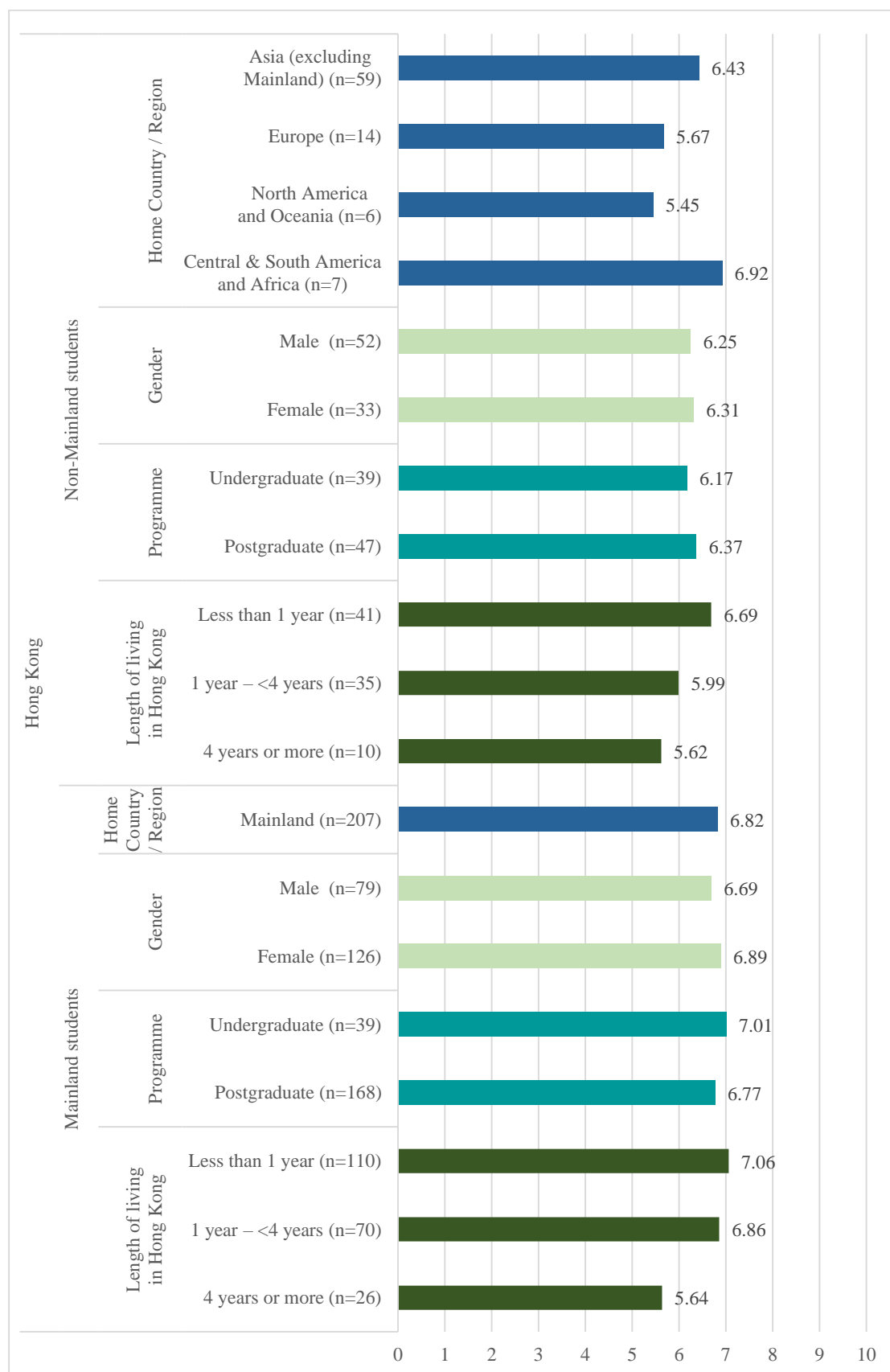
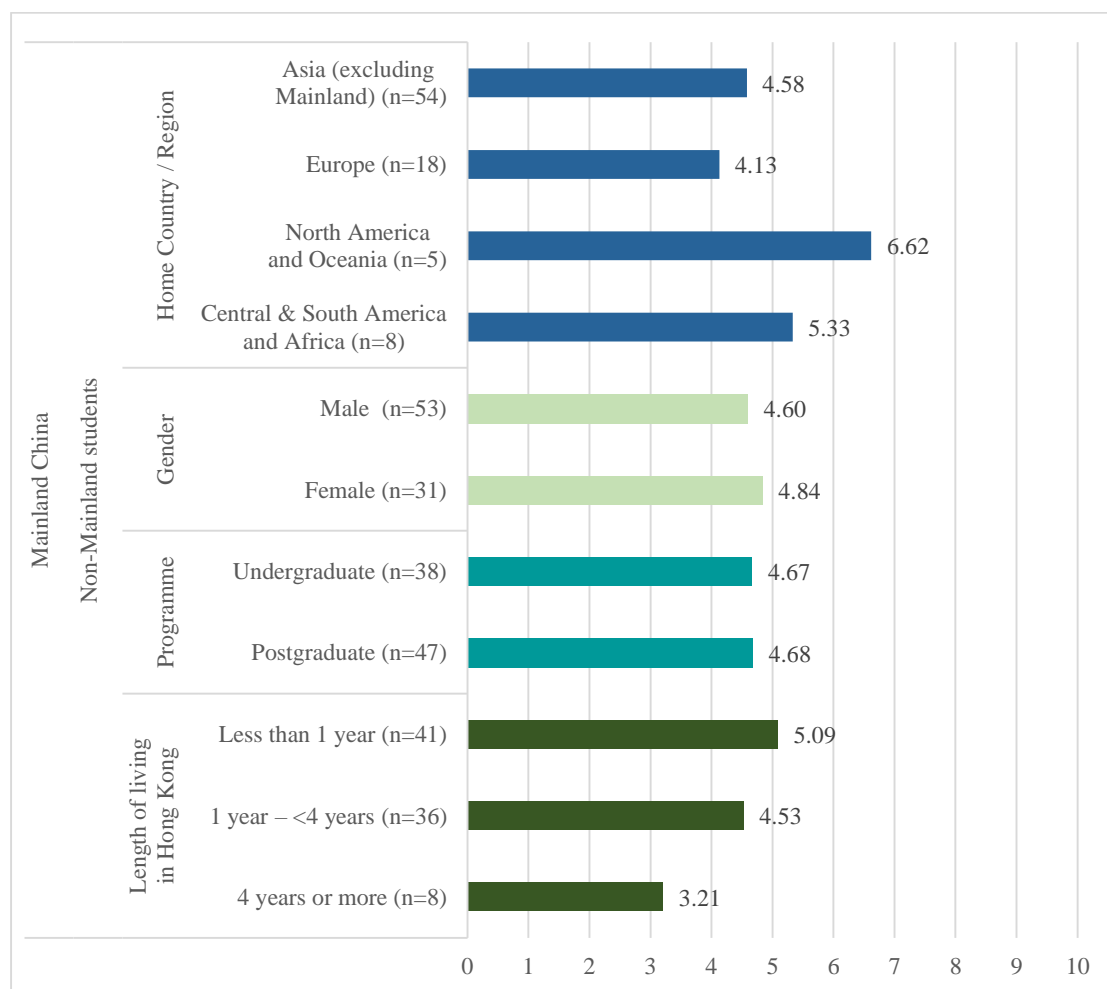


Figure 4.18 Soft Power Index by Social Background Factors (continued)



## Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China

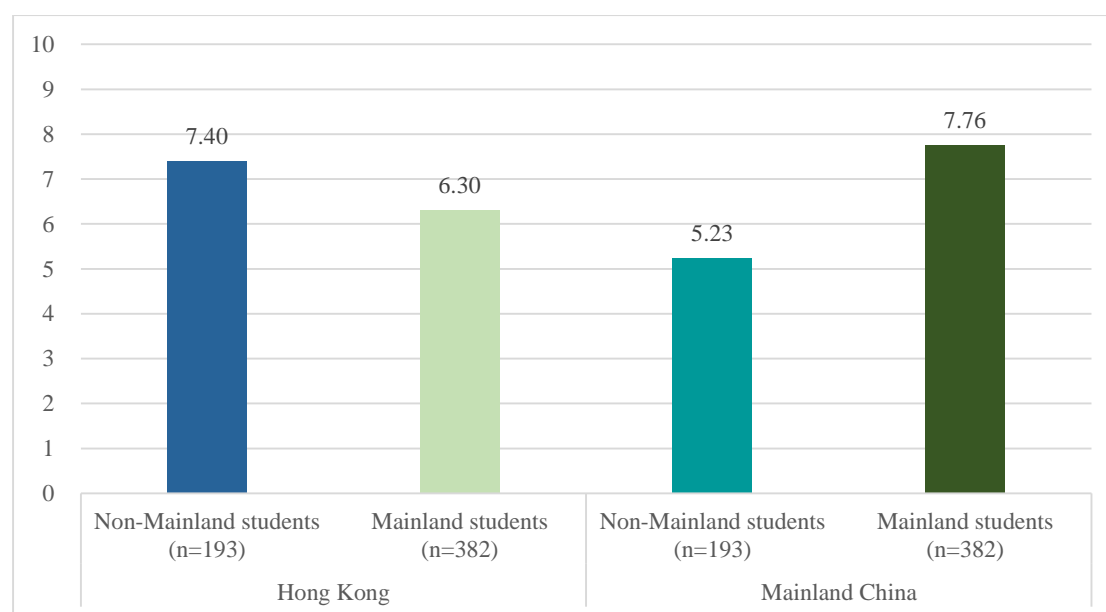
4.93 Apart from the soft power index, the non-local student’s attitudes towards Hong Kong and the Mainland China were measured by asking the respondent’s overall feeling towards the two societies on an 11-point scale (0 = extremely bad; 10 = extremely good).

4.94 The non-Mainland respondent’s overall feeling towards Hong Kong was good. Their score was 7.40 points, higher than the Mainland respondent’s score (6.30 points). The feeling of the Mainland respondents towards Hong Kong was average (Figure 4.19).

4.95 Overall feeling towards Mainland China of the non-Mainland students was average. Their score was 5.23 points (Figure 4.19).

4.96 The Mainland respondents had good feelings towards Mainland China. Their score was 7.76 points (Figure 4.19).

Figure 4.19 Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China

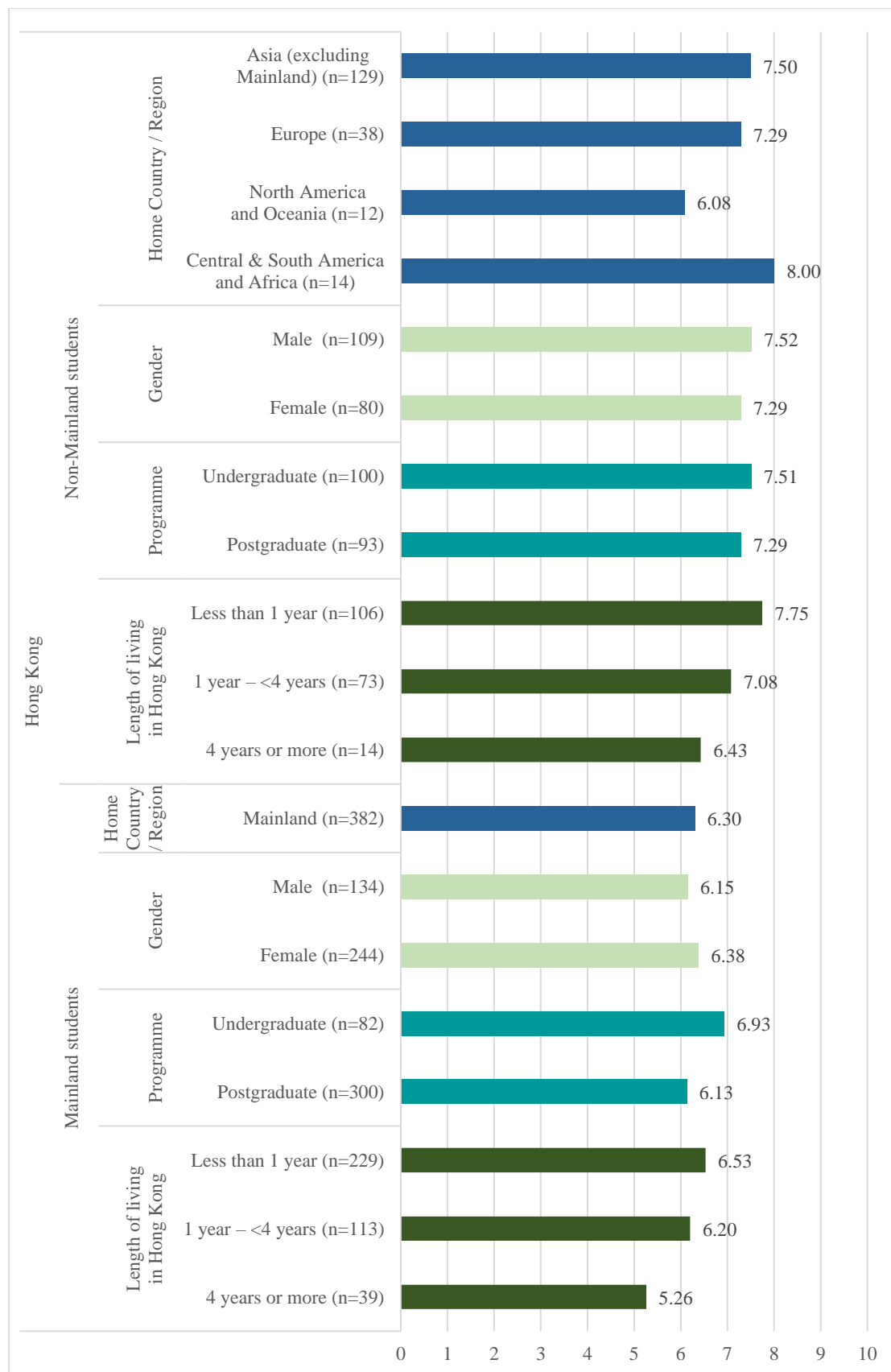


4.97 Respondents from Europe (7.29 points), Asia (7.50 points) and Central & South America and Africa (8.00 points) had a better feeling towards Hong Kong than those from the Mainland (6.30 points) and North America and Oceania (6.08 points) (Figure 4.20).



- 4.98 There was no clear difference in the overall feeling towards Hong Kong among non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders or programmes (Figure 4.20).
- 4.99 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for longer had poorer feeling towards Hong Kong than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.20).
- 4.100 Respondents from Europe (4.66 points) and Asia (5.23 points) had poorer feeling towards Mainland China than those from North America and Oceania (6.00 points) and Central & South America and Africa (6.08 points) (Figure 4.20).
- 4.101 There was no clear difference in the overall feeling towards Mainland China among non-Mainland respondents of different genders or programmes (Figure 4.20).
- 4.102 The non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for longer had poorer feelings towards Mainland China than those who had lived for a shorter time (Figure 4.20).

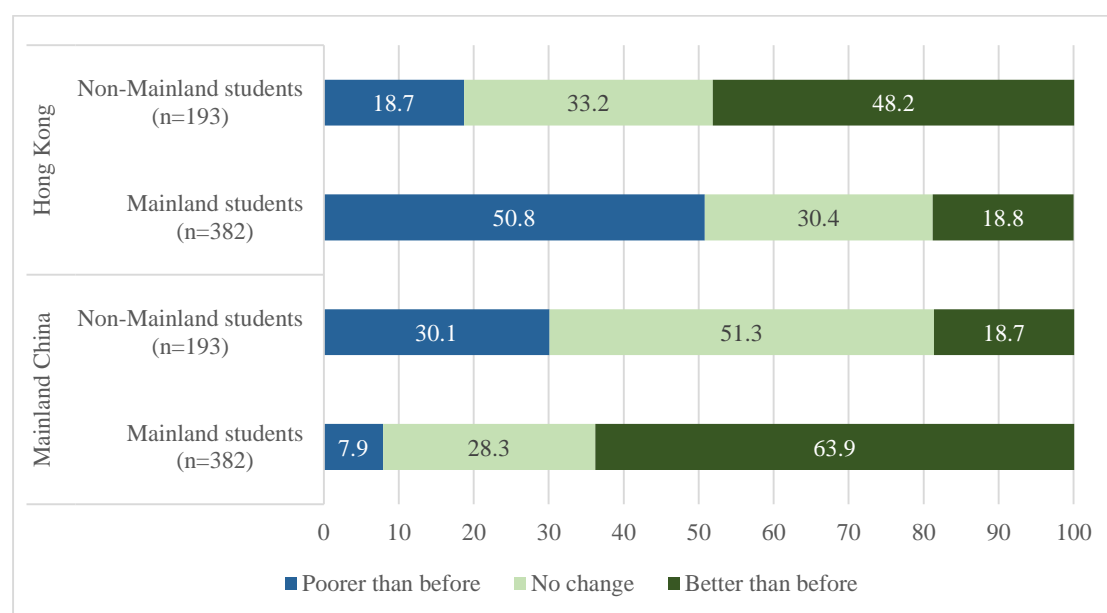
Figure 4.20 Overall Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China by Social Background Factors



## **Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China**

- 4.103 In order to measure whether the soft power of the two societies over non-local students had been strengthened by their personal experience in Hong Kong, the non-local respondents were asked to answer any change in their feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China after coming to Hong Kong.
- 4.104 The image of Hong Kong perceived by non-Mainland respondents had improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 48.2 % of them answered “better than before”, while 33.2% answered “no change” and 18.7% selected “poorer than before” (Figure 4.21).
- 4.105 The image of Hong Kong perceived by Mainland respondents had not improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 50.8 % of them answered “poorer than before”, while 30.4% answered “no change” and 18.8% selected “better than before” (Figure 4.21).
- 4.106 Overall feeling towards Mainland China of non-Mainland respondents did not improve once they studied in Hong Kong. 51.3 % of them answered “no change” and 30.1% answered “poorer than before” while only 18.7% selected “better than before” (Figure 4.21).
- 4.107 The image of Mainland China perceived by Mainland respondents had improved since they studied in Hong Kong. 63.9 % of them answered “better than before”, while 28.3% answered “no change” and 7.9% selected “poorer than before” (Figure 4.21).

Figure 4.21 Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong and Mainland China (%)



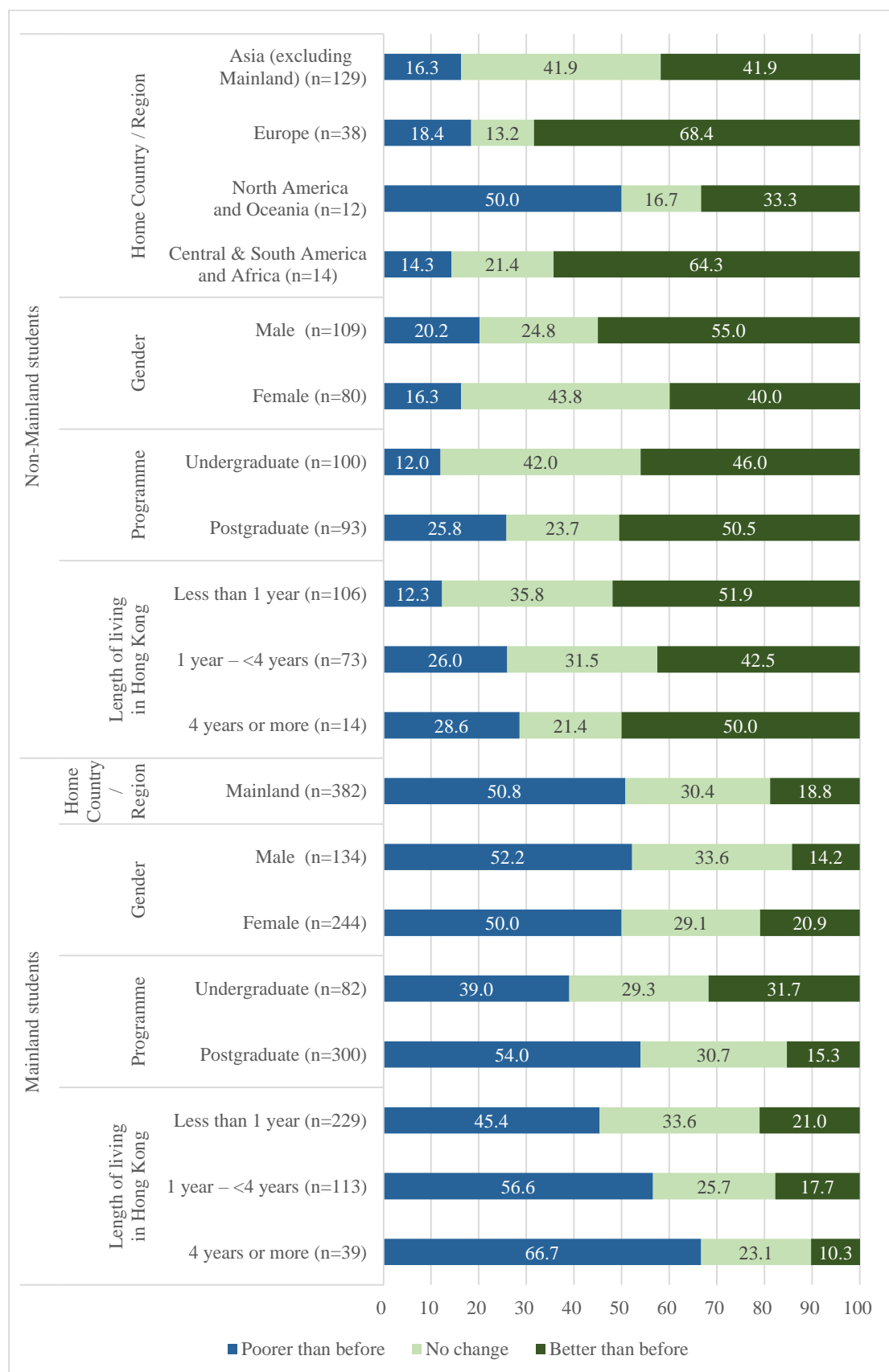
4.108 Respondents from Europe (68.4%), Central & South America and Africa (64.3%), and Asia (41.9%) were more likely to think their image of Hong Kong was “better than before”, while those from the Mainland (50.8%) and North America and Oceania (50.0%) were more likely to think their image of Hong Kong was “poorer than before” (Figure 4.22).

4.109 Male non-Mainland respondents (55.0%) were more likely to think their image of Hong Kong was “better than before” than female ones (40.0%), while there was no gender difference among Mainland respondents (Figure 4.22).

4.110 Postgraduate non-Mainland (25.8%) and Mainland respondents (54.0%) were more likely to think that their image of Hong Kong was “poorer than before” than undergraduate non-Mainland (12.0%) and Mainland respondents (39.0%) (Figure 4.22).

4.111 Both non-Mainland (12.3%) and Mainland respondents (45.4%) who lived in Hong Kong for less than one year were less likely to think that their image of Hong Kong was “poorer than before” than those who had lived for a longer time (Figure 4.22).

Figure 4.22 Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong by Social Background Factors (%)

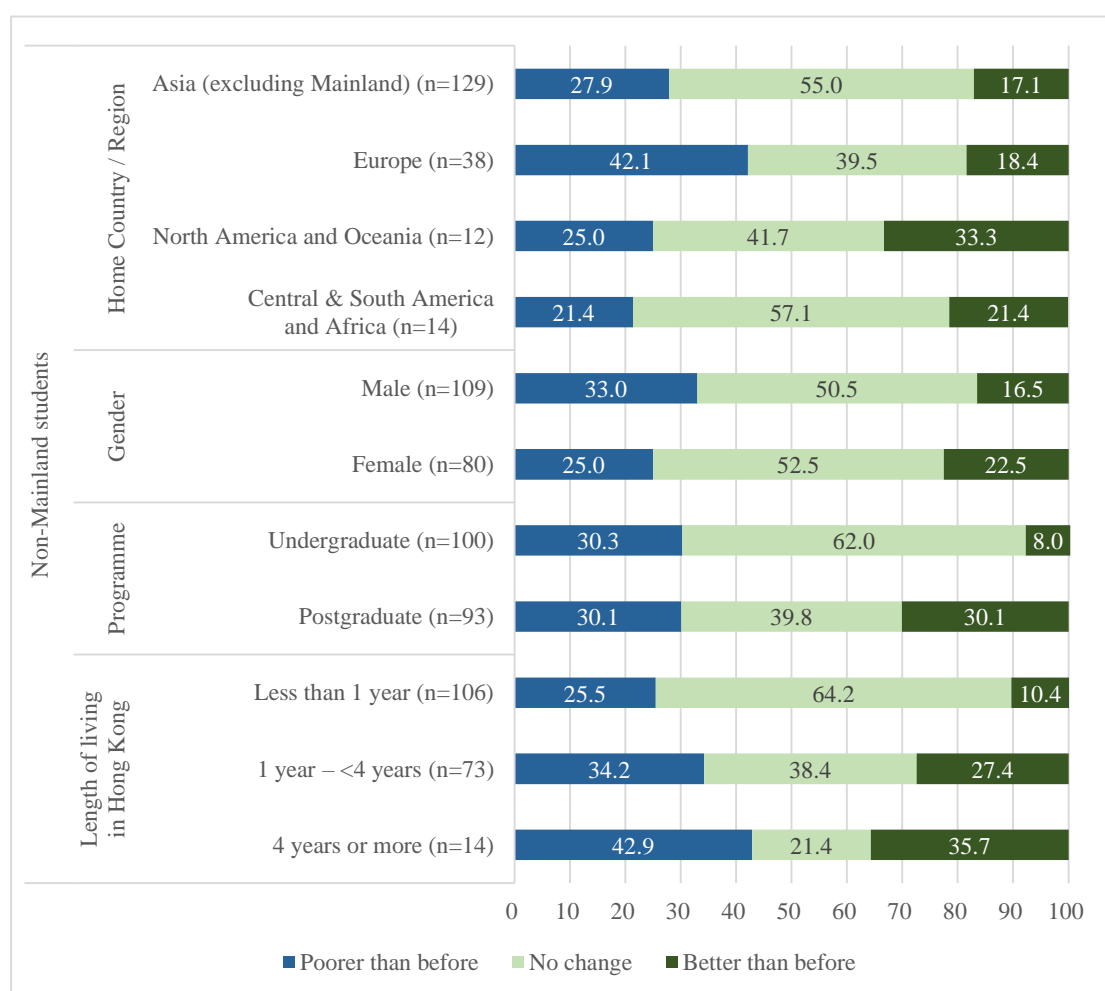


4.113 Respondents from Europe (42.1%) were more likely to think that their image of Mainland China was “poorer than before” (Figure 4.23).

4.114 Undergraduate non-Mainland respondents (62.0%) were more likely to think that there was “no change” in their image of Mainland China than postgraduate non-Mainland respondents (39.8%) (Figure 4.23).

4.115 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time were more likely to think that their image of Mainland China was “poorer than before” (Figure 4.23).

Figure 4.23 Change in Feeling towards Mainland China by Social Background Factors (%)

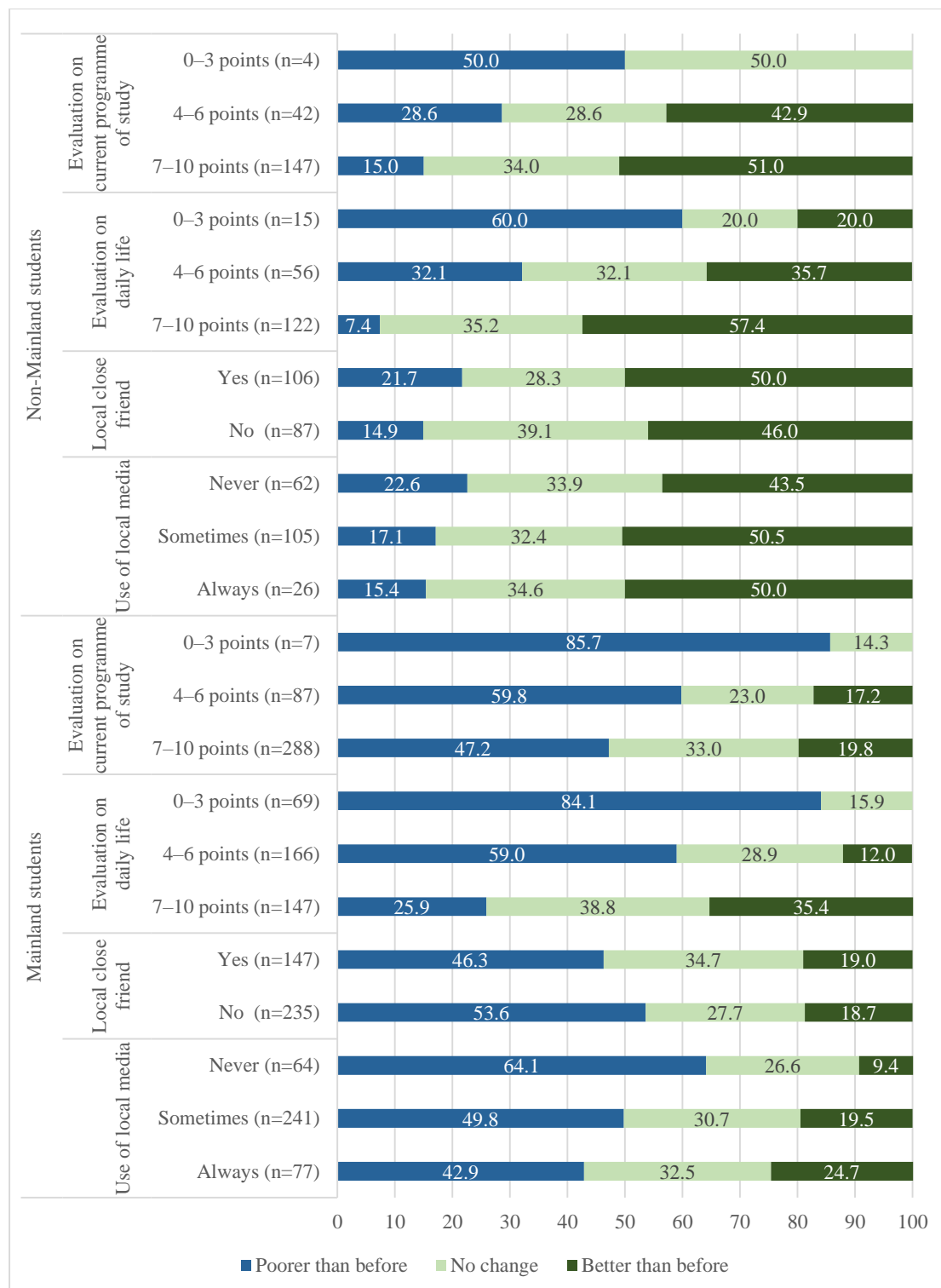


4.116 Figure 4.24 and 4.25 explore the relationship between change in the respondent’s feeling towards Hong Kong or Mainland China and their education and life experience in Hong Kong.

4.117 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents would be more likely to think that their image of Hong Kong is “better than before” if they had more positive attitudes towards their programme of study and daily life in Hong Kong (Figure 4.24).

4.118 Mainland respondents would be more likely to think that their image of Hong Kong is “better than before” if they used local media more frequently (Figure 4.24).

Figure 4.24 Change in Feeling towards Hong Kong by Education and Life Experience in Hong Kong (%)

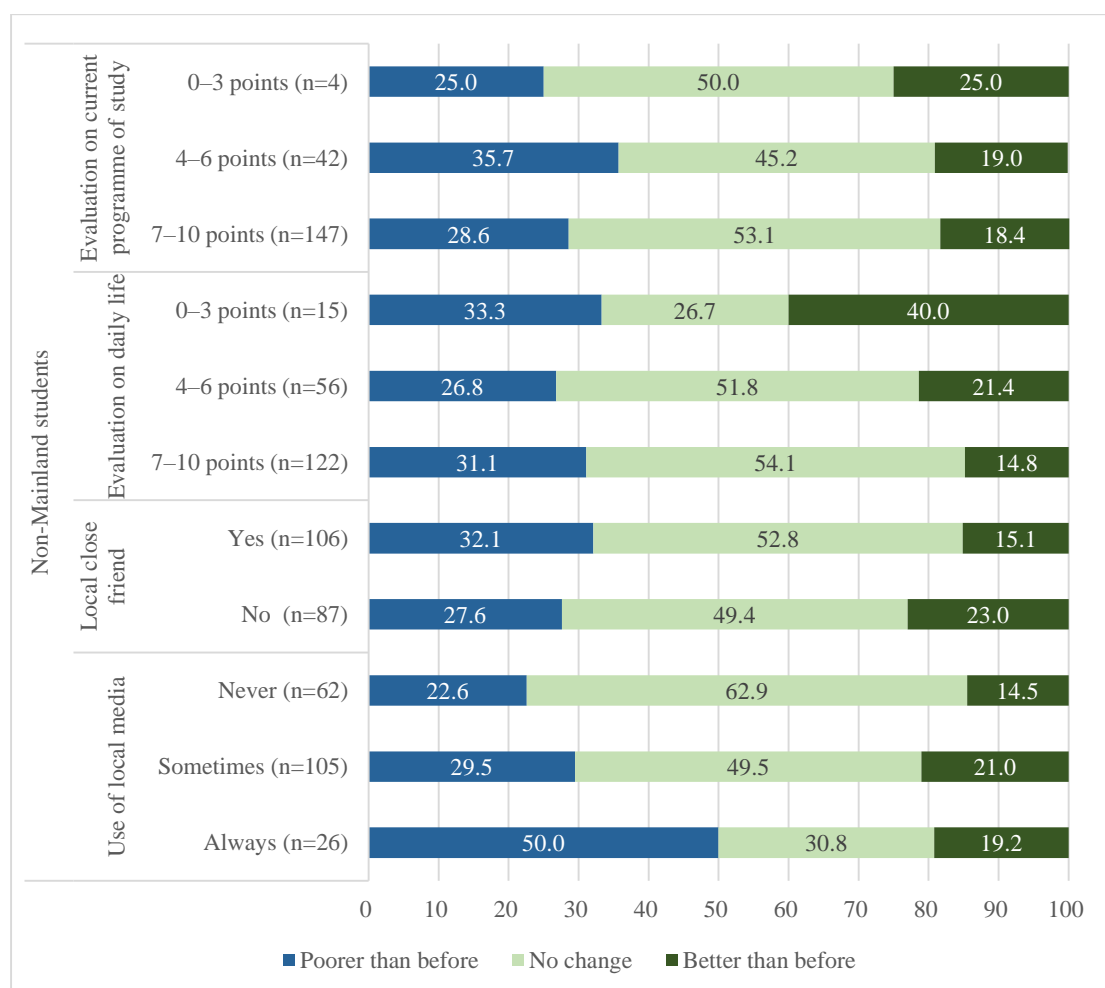


4.119 Non-Mainland respondents were less likely to think their image of Mainland China is “better than before” if they had more positive attitudes towards their daily life in Hong Kong (Figure 4.25).



4.120 Non-Mainland respondents would be more likely to think their image of Hong Kong is “poorer than before” if they used local media more frequently (Figure 4.25).

Figure 4.25 Change in Feeling towards Mainland China by Education and Life Experience in Hong Kong (%)



4.121 In the in-depth interviews, some interviewees said that they had little idea about Hong Kong before their study in Hong Kong, only knowing that Hong Kong was a Special Administrative Region of China. After coming to Hong Kong, their image of Hong Kong changed. They felt that Hong Kong was really a nice place and would like to promote Hong Kong to students of their home countries after this experience. Mainland interviewees also shared positive attitudes towards Hong Kong.

- 4.122 However, some expressed worry about the future of Hong Kong. They felt that the major advantage/competitiveness of Hong Kong was its mixed culture, which was different from other Mainland Chinese cities, and that this would disappear in the future.

My previous assumption is that Hong Kong is always a part of China. **Now I know Hong Kong is different from Mainland China.** Chinese people more keen on their traditions centuries ago, **but for Hong Kongers, they are more open minded comparing to Mainland China.** Now I really can distinct the Mainlanders and the students from Hong Kong because whenever I talk to them. **Mainland students don't speak English so much** but I still want to give them a chance to know me and for me to know them and to be friends, but they will speak to me like one two minutes in English and then returned to speak in Mandarin and just like to have a group of Mainland Chinese students. **But some local students especially like those graduated from international schools they're very open-minded. It's so easy to interact with them to communicate and make friends.** I had not been to Hong Kong before I came here. I didn't have much expectations and thoughts about Hong Kong. When I came here I was like a blank paper.

Interviewee A03 (Female, Kazakhstan)

I think it is really a nice place. I promote Hong Kong to Pakistan students. Culturally, I think it's a pretty good stuff. **There is no restrictions on any religious practices and everything and so I find it really comfortable and that's one of the reasons you know and I really appreciate about Hong Kong.** It's really accepting and really accommodating and so I really appreciate that.

Interviewee A05 (Male, Pakistan)

I think I'm gone more interested in like knowing more Hong Kong people because they have a really wide perspective on a lot of things. **Compared to the Mainland Chinese people including Shanghai people, Hong Kong people here are more open.** They have an opinion on everything.

Interviewee A06 (Male, India)

I heard Hong Kong is an interesting mixture of the East and West, about its British culture heritage, free Internet without firewall..... I appreciate how international Hong Kong is because I didn't speak much of Cantonese. I heavily promoted Hong Kong in Russia.

Interviewee N02 (Female, Russia)

I also learned how to **better understand people's views and behaviours from different cultures and political systems, which made me become more rational when analysing international affairs.**

Interview M01 (Female, Mainland China)

Hong Kong is **a multicultural metropolis with Cantonese origin, and its tertiary education is reputable around the world.** Over time, I just think I generally have positive perception over the city.

Interviewee M02 (Male, Mainland China)

After studying in Hong Kong, I guess I have more knowledge about China. **Before, I thought HK is totally independent from China, and China leaves the city as it is under the British. However, I guess the Chinese Government is gradually turning Hong Kong into another city of China. Sooner or later, China will conquer the city (in terms of politics and economy) and turn it into another city of China.** The problem of Hong Kong is that **Hong Kong people also lay (rely) on Chinese people to develop their economy.** They contradict themselves. I think in the future, the uncertainties in the city will also grow. Hong Kong would never return to its golden days under the British. **It loses its shine to China.**

Interview A10 (Female, Vietnam)

I think the current situation is good in HK for non-local students. **However, I do worry about future policy changes, such as censorship, prioritizing Mandarin over English...etc).**

Interviewee N10 (Female, Canada)

- 4.123 Many non-Mainland students visited the Mainland and had many opportunities to meet Mainland students during their study in Hong Kong. Rapid economic development in the Mainland and good friendships with Mainland students improved images of China.
- 4.124 However, some Mainland students were reluctant to speak in English, making it difficult for non-Mainland students to make friends with them. Poor experiences while on tour to the Mainland also had a negative impact on their image of China.

Now I come here I see how they improve the entrepreneur sectors in Shenzhen and Hong Kong. **And then how they’re trying to integrate the academic research into industry by taking the establishing entrepreneurial companies** and all so that’s something completely new for me. That’s something I had no perception before and I was very impressed about it.

Interviewee A08 (Male, Nepal)

However, when I study in HK, I never have any issues with my Chinese classmates. We get along very well. **So my impression about Chinese people is actually improved a bit due to these nice Chinese friends that I met.**

Interview A10 (Female, Vietnam)

Because many of Mainland PG students here have done their UG in Mainland, **Many are not confident in their English. When there are many Mainland people, they tend to talk in Chinese.**

Interviewee A04 (Female, South Korea)

**My experience to Mainland China was horrible. For the whole day I could not eat anything, because I could not tell them in the restaurant that what kind of food (halal food) I want to eat. I am Muslim and we have food restrictions.....I think Hong Kong is a good place for shopping but you always need to do bargaining in Mainland China. I never felt in Hong Kong that no one is hampering me to practice my religion, to practice my dress code or practice my ritual or practice my food habit. I was never hampered and I was always helped by the people. Especially for the religious people I would suggest them to come to Hong Kong but not to U.S., and not to Mainland China.**

Interview A02 (Female, Bangladesh)

## Summary

- 4.125 Hong Kong’s image was quite good to the non-Mainland respondents, indicating that Hong Kong’s soft power was quite strong to them. Furthermore, their perceived soft power of Hong Kong strengthened after they studied in Hong Kong.
- 4.126 On the other hand, non-Mainland respondents perceived the soft power of Mainland China to be average, and power in the normative dimension was perceived weakly. There was no improvement in their perceived soft power of Mainland China during their study in Hong Kong.
- 4.127 The Mainland respondents also thought that Hong Kong’s soft power was quite strong. However, the image of Hong Kong perceived by Mainland respondents worsened as their years of study in Hong Kong continued.
- 4.128 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a long time tended to perceive a more negative image of Hong Kong, and this image was worse than before arriving or staying a shorter period in Hong Kong.
- 4.129 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a long time tended to perceive a more negative image of Mainland China, and this image was worse than before arriving or staying a shorter period in Hong Kong.
- 4.130 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who had a more positive evaluation on study and daily life in Hong Kong tended to answer that their image of Hong Kong had improved during their study.
- 4.131 However, the image of Mainland China would worsen amongst non-Mainland respondents when they had better evaluations of daily life in Hong Kong.
- 4.132 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who used local media more frequently were more likely to have an improved image Hong Kong since the time they had studied in Hong Kong. However, the image of Mainland China amongst non-Mainland students worsened if they used local media frequently.

## 5. Career Plan after Graduation

5.1 The education experience of non-local students in Hong Kong could not only affect their perception of Hong Kong or Mainland China, but also facilitate their future careers. This chapter discusses the career plan of non-local students in Hong Kong.

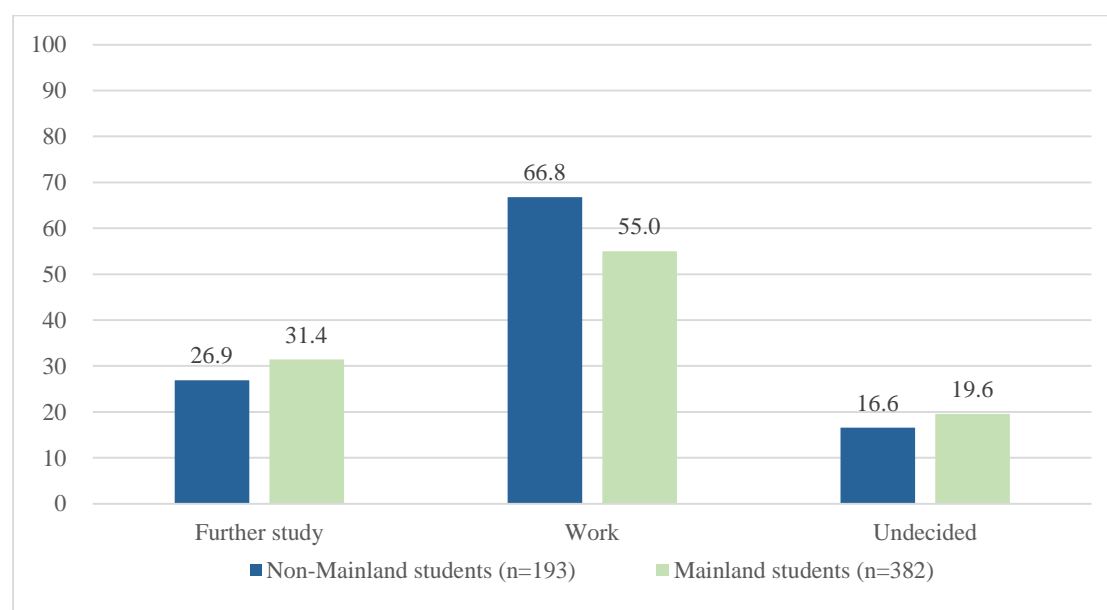
### Career Plan

5.2 The respondents always had some idea about their career development after graduating from their studies in Hong Kong. When our survey asked them their plans after graduation, only 16.6% of non-Mainland and 19.6% of Mainland respondents answered “undecided” (Figure 5.1).

5.3 Non-Mainland respondents were more likely to work (66.8%) after graduation than further their study (26.9%) (Figure 5.1).

5.4 More Mainland respondents would like to work (55.0%) after graduation than pursue further study (31.4%) (Figure 5.1).

Figure 5.1 Career Plan after Graduation (%)

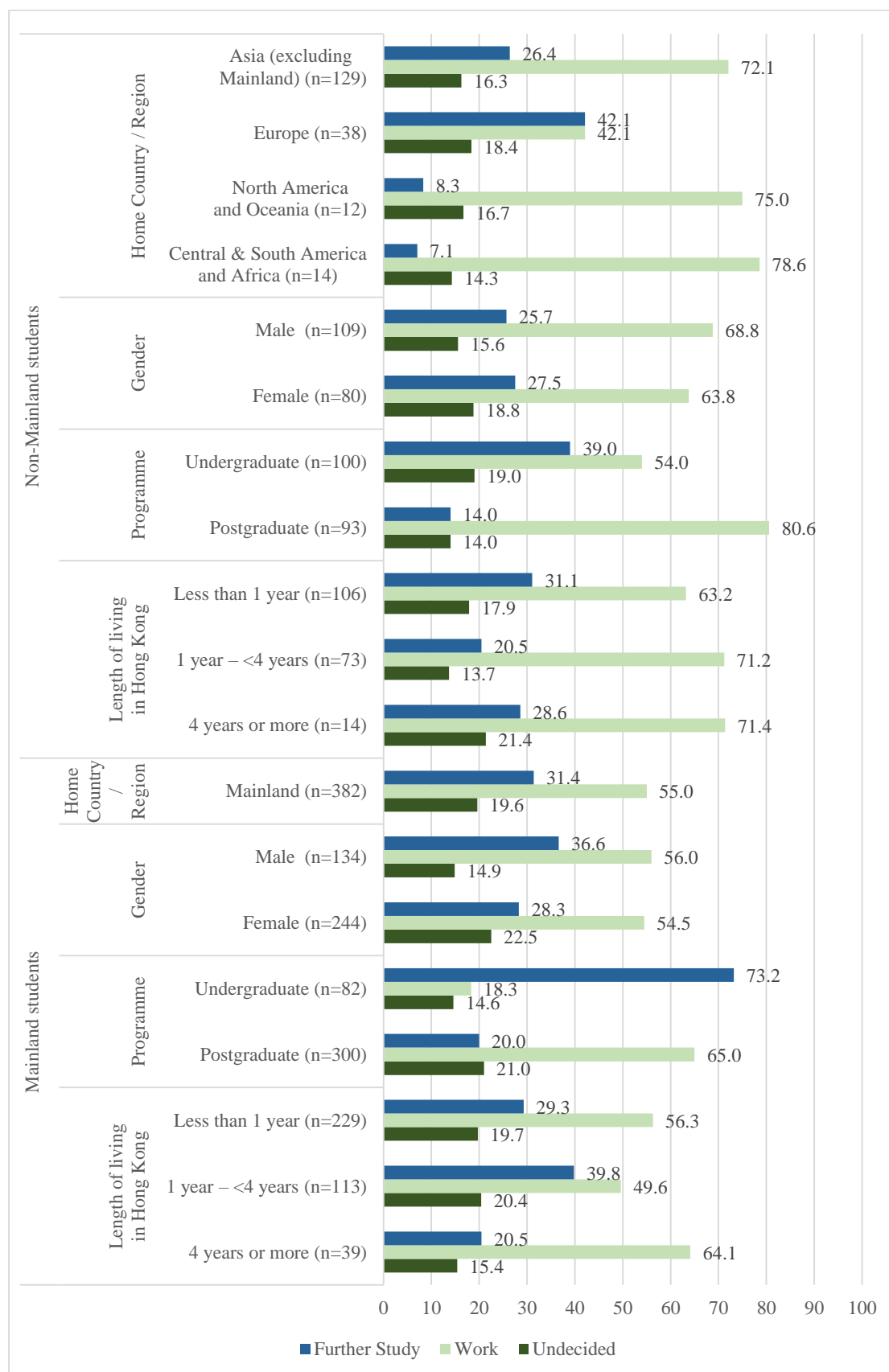


Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

- 5.5 Respondents from Central & South America and Africa (78.6%), North America and Oceania (75.0%), Asia (72.1%) and the Mainland (55.0%) planned to work after graduation, rather than pursue further study (7.1%; 8.3%; 26.4%; 31.4%), while those from Europe did not have a strong preference either way for work (42.1%) or further study (42.1%) (Figure 5.2).
- 5.6 Postgraduate non-Mainland (80.6%) and Mainland respondents (65.0%) were more likely to plan to work after graduation (Figure 5.2).
- 5.7 Most undergraduate Mainland respondents (73.2%) preferred to pursue further study after graduation (Figure 5.2).
- 5.8 Mainland respondents (64.1%) who lived in Hong Kong for more than four years were less likely to prefer pursuing further study after graduation than those who lived for a shorter time (Figure 5.2).
- 5.9 There were no clear gender differences in career plan after graduation of both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents (Figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2 Career Plan after Graduation by Social Background Factors (%)



Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

## Those Who Plan to Pursue Further Study

5.10 Most respondents who planned to pursue further study had a clear idea about their destination for further study. Only 1.9% of non-Mainland and 3.3% of Mainland respondents answered “undecided” (Table 5.1).

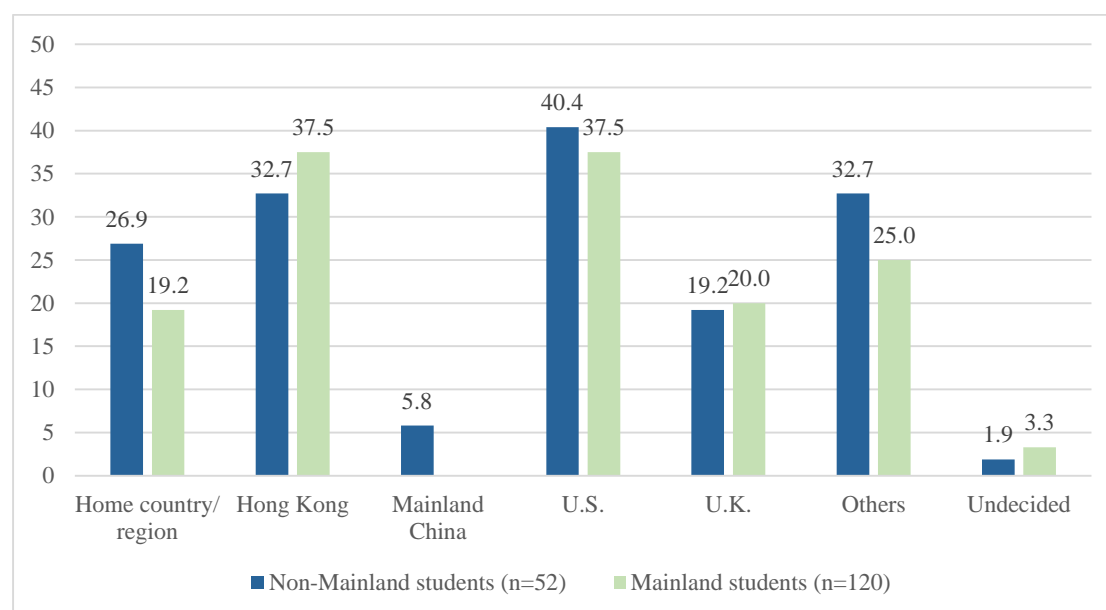
5.11 For non-Mainland respondents, the top three destinations of further study were U.S. (40.4%), Hong Kong (32.7%) and home country (26.9%) (Table 5.1).

5.12 For Mainland respondents, the top three destinations of further study were the U.S. (37.5%), Hong Kong (37.5%) and the U.K. (20.0%) (Table 5.1).

5.13 The findings show that Hong Kong was an attractive destination of further study, while Mainland China was not the first choices of destination of further study for both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents.

5.14 The U.S. was the first choice for non-Mainland and Mainland respondents.

**Table 5.1 Destination of Further Study (%)**



Remarks: Multiple answers allowed.

5.15 Respondents from Asia (41.2%) were more likely to consider Hong Kong to be the destination of further study than other non-Mainland respondents (Table 5.2).

5.16 There was no clear gender difference in considering Hong Kong as the destination of further study for non-Mainland respondents (Table 5.2).

5.17 More postgraduate, non-Mainland respondents (69.2%) expressed they would like to pursue further study in Hong Kong than undergraduate ones (20.5%) (Table 5.2).

5.18 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for one or more years would be more likely to pursue further study in Hong Kong than those who lived for less than one year (Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Destination of Further Study of Non-Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%)

	Home country/ region	Hong Kong	Mainland China	U.S.	U.K.	Others	Undecided	(n)
Home Country / Region								
Asia (excluding Mainland)	11.8	41.2	8.8	44.1	23.5	38.2	2.9	(34)
Europe	56.3	18.8	0.0	31.3	12.5	25.0	0.0	(16)
North America and Oceania	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1)
Central & South America and Africa	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(1)
Gender								
Male	21.4	32.1	3.6	42.9	14.3	39.3	0.0	(28)
Female	31.8	31.8	9.1	36.4	27.3	27.3	4.5	(22)
Programme								
Undergraduate	33.3	20.5	7.7	43.6	17.9	30.8	2.6	(39)
Postgraduate	7.7	69.2	0.0	30.8	23.1	38.5	0.0	(13)
Live in Hong Kong								
Less than 1 year	33.3	24.2	6.1	33.3	21.2	27.3	3.0	(33)
1 year – 4 years	13.3	46.7	6.7	53.3	20.0	40.0	0.0	(15)
4 years or more	25.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	(4)

Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

5.19 The proportion of male Mainland respondents considering Hong Kong as their top destination for further study (40.6%) is slightly higher than the proportion amongst females (34.7%) (Table 5.3).

5.20 More postgraduate non-Mainland respondents (46.7%) expressed they would like to pursue further study in Hong Kong than undergraduate ones (28.8%) (Table 5.3).

5.21 Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for four years or more would be less likely to pursue further study in Hong Kong than those who lived for less than four years, furthermore they would be more likely to pursue further study in the U.S. (Table 5.3).

**Table 5.3 Destination of Further Study of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%)**

	Home country/ region	Hong Kong	U.S.	U.K.	Others	Undecided	(n)
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	22.4	34.7	49.0	10.2	20.4	4.1	(49)
Female	17.4	40.6	30.4	26.1	27.5	2.9	(69)
<b>Programme</b>							
Undergraduate	11.7	28.3	36.7	28.3	30.0	0.0	(60)
Postgraduate	26.7	46.7	38.3	11.7	20.0	6.7	(60)
<b>Live in Hong Kong</b>							
Less than 1 year	17.9	38.8	37.3	19.4	32.8	3.0	(67)
1 year – 4 years	20.0	40.0	31.1	24.4	17.8	4.4	(45)
4 years or more	25.0	12.5	75.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	(8)

Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

5.22 Interviewees explained that they preferred the U.S. because its academic reputation or status was higher than Hong Kong’s, and they would like to learn more in the institutions of other societies with different cultures.

**The U.S. universities are still better perceived** in Iran than universities in Hong Kong. I prefer to pursue a higher degree in the U.S. than in Hong Kong.

Interviewee A01 (Male, Iran)

Hong Kong can definitely be one of my top choices **but I’m still very interested to going somewhere else to know more.**

Interview N02 (Female, Russia)

I am not sure where it would be right now, but I am most likely to leave Hong Kong for at least a few years after my postgraduate studies, mainly because **I would like to learn research in other institutions/cultures.**

Interview N10 (Female, Canada)

## Those Who Plan to Work

### Target Industries

5.23 Both non-Mainland and Mainland respondents who planned to work after graduation had the same first three target industries of work: 1) Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (Non-Mainland 37.2%; Mainland: 31.0%); 2) Education (Non-Mainland 33.3%; Mainland: 26.2%); 3), and Finance and Insurance (Non-Mainland 26.4%; Mainland: 26.2%) (Table 5.4).

**Table 5.4 Target Industries of the Work (%)**

	Non-Mainland students	Mainland students
Accommodation and Food Services	4.7	1.0
Administrative and Support Services (including Business Support Services)	14.0	21.4
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	9.3	8.1
Education	33.3	26.2
Electricity and Gas Supply, and Waste Management (including Treatment and Disposal, Recovery of Materials)	5.4	3.3
Financing and Insurance	26.4	26.2
Human Health and Social Work Services	11.6	9.0
Import/ Export, Wholesale, and Retail Trades	4.7	4.8
Information and Communications (including Publishing, Programming and Broadcasting, and Information Technology Services)	20.9	24.8
Manufacturing (including Food Products, Printing and the Reproduction of Recorded Media, and the Repair and Installation of Machinery and Equipment)	9.3	10.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	37.2	31.0
Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	2.3	0.5
Others	13.2	1.0
Undecided	3.1	5.2
(n)	(129)	(210)

Remarks: Maximum 3 answers allowed

- 5.24 Respondents from different regions had different target industries. Comparatively, respondents from Asia preferred “Finance and Insurance” and “Administrative and Support Services” than those from other regions. Those from Europe preferred “Professional, Scientific and Technical Services”. Those from North America and Oceania preferred “Information and Communications”, “Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services” and “Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation”. Those from Central & South America and Africa preferred “Education” and “Human Health and Social Work Services” (Table 5.5).
- 5.25 Female non-Mainland respondents (21.6%) preferred “Administrative and Support Services” than male ones (9.3%) (Table 5.5).
- 5.26 Postgraduate non-Mainland respondents preferred “Education”, while undergraduate non-Mainland respondents preferred “Administrative and Support Services” (Table 5.5).
- 5.27 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for one or more years were more likely to plan to work in “Education” than those who lived for less than one year (Table 5.5).
- 5.28 Female Mainland respondents preferred “Administrative and Support Services”, while male Mainland respondents preferred “Professional, Scientific and Technical Services” (Table 5.6).
- 5.29 Undergraduate Mainland respondents mostly planned to work in “Finance and Insurance”, while postgraduate Mainland respondents preferred “Education” (Table 5.6).
- 5.30 Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for one or more years were more likely to plan to work in “Professional, Scientific and Technical Services” than those who lived for less than one year (Table 5.6).



Table 5.5 Target Industries of the Work of Non-Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%)

	Accommodation and Food Services	Administrative and Support Services (including Business Support Services)	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Education	Electricity and Gas Supply, and Waste Management (including Treatment and Disposal, Recovery of Materials)	Financing and Insurance	Human Health and Social Work Services	Import/ Export, Wholesale, and Retail Trades
Home Country / Region								
Asia (excluding Mainland)	6.5	18.3	8.6	30.1	5.4	31.2	10.8	5.4
Europe	0.0	0.0	6.3	37.5	12.5	25.0	12.5	6.3
North America and Oceania	0.0	0.0	22.2	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Central & South America and Africa	0.0	9.1	9.1	54.5	0.0	9.1	27.3	0.0
Gender								
Male	2.7	9.3	5.3	36.0	6.7	28.0	9.3	4.0
Female	7.8	21.6	15.7	29.4	3.9	25.5	11.8	5.9
Programme								
Undergraduate	9.3	24.1	11.1	9.3	1.9	48.1	11.1	11.1
Postgraduate	1.3	6.7	8.0	50.7	8.0	10.7	12.0	0.0
Live in Hong Kong								
Less than 1 year	3.0	19.4	11.9	17.9	9.0	29.9	11.9	6.0
1 year – 4 years	7.7	7.7	3.8	50.0	1.9	23.1	11.5	3.8
4 years or more	0.0	10.0	20.0	50.0	0.0	20.0	10.0	0.0

Remarks: Maximum 3 answers allowed

Table 5.5 Target Industries of the Work of Non-Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) (Continued)

	Information and Communications (including Publishing, Programming and Broadcasting, and Information Technology Services)	Manufacturing (including Food Products, Printing and the Reproduction of Recorded Media, and the Repair and Installation Services)	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	Others	Undecided	(n)
<b>Home Country / Region</b>							
Asia (excluding Mainland)	22.6	9.7	36.6	1.1	7.5	4.3	(93)
Europe	12.5	12.5	56.3	0.0	18.8	0.0	(16)
North America and Oceania	44.4	0.0	22.2	22.2	33.3	0.0	(9)
Central & South America and Africa	0.0	9.1	27.3	0.0	36.4	0.0	(11)
<b>Gender</b>							
Male	21.3	12.0	38.7	2.7	16.0	1.3	(75)
Female	19.6	3.9	31.4	2.0	9.8	5.9	(51)
<b>Programme</b>							
Undergraduate	33.3	9.3	22.2	1.9	3.7	7.4	(54)
Postgraduate	12.0	9.3	48.0	2.7	20.0	0.0	(75)
<b>Live in Hong Kong</b>							
Less than 1 year	22.4	10.4	32.8	3.0	11.9	4.5	(67)
1 year – 4 years	17.3	9.6	40.4	1.9	13.5	1.9	(52)
4 years or more	30.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	(10)

Remarks: Maximum 3 answers allowed

Table 5.6 Target Industries of the Work of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%)

	Accommodation and Food Services	Administrative and Support Services (including Business Support Services)	Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	Education	Electricity and Gas Supply, and Waste Management (including Treatment and Disposal, Recovery of Materials)	Financing and Insurance	Human Health and Social Work Services	Import/ Export, Wholesale, and Retail Trades
Gender								
Male	0.0	14.7	2.7	18.7	5.3	21.3	6.7	4.0
Female	1.5	25.6	11.3	30.8	2.3	27.8	10.5	5.3
Programme								
Undergraduate	13.3	20.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	60.0	0.0	20.0
Postgraduate	0.0	21.5	7.7	28.2	3.6	23.6	9.7	3.6
Live in Hong Kong								
Less than 1 year	0.8	27.1	10.1	18.6	3.1	27.1	9.3	6.2
1 year – 4 years	1.8	17.9	5.4	37.5	3.6	25.0	8.9	3.6
4 years or more	0.0	0.0	4.0	40.0	4.0	24.0	8.0	0.0

Remarks: Maximum 3 answers allowed

Table 5.6 Target Industries of the Work of Mainland Respondents by Social Background Factors (%) (Continued)

	Information and Communications (including Publishing, Programming and Broadcasting, and Information Technology Services)	Manufacturing (including Food Products, Printing and the Reproduction of Recorded Media, and the Repair and Installation Services)	Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	Transportation, Storage, Postal and Courier Services	Others	Undecided	(n)
Gender							
Male	28.0	14.7	42.7	1.3	0.0	2.7	(75)
Female	22.6	8.3	24.1	0.0	1.5	6.8	(133)
Programme							
Undergraduate	26.7	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	(15)
Postgraduate	24.6	11.3	31.8	0.5	1.0	5.2	(195)
Live in Hong Kong							
Less than 1 year	25.6	10.9	22.5	0.0	0.8	7.8	(129)
1 year – 4 years	17.9	7.1	44.6	0.0	1.8	1.8	(56)
4 years or more	36.0	16.0	44.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	(25)

Remarks: Maximum 3 answers allowed

## Destination of Work

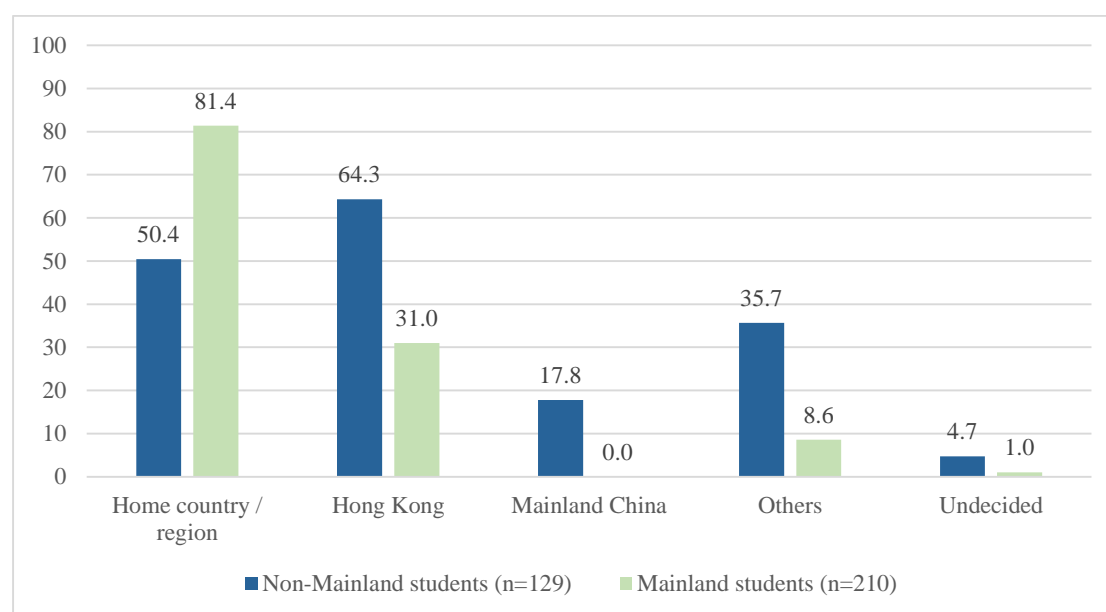
5.31 Most respondents who planned to work after graduation had a clear idea about their destination of work. Only 4.7% of non-Mainland and 1.0% of Mainland respondents answered “undecided” (Table 5.7).

5.32 For non-Mainland respondents, the top destination of work was Hong Kong (64.3%) (Table 5.7).

5.33 Although a small group of non-Mainland respondents (17.8%) would consider Mainland China, 81.4% of the Mainland respondents would go back to the Mainland after graduation (Table 5.7).

5.34 Hong Kong was the second choice of destination for work among Mainland respondents (31.0%) (Table 5.7).

Table 5.7 Destination of Work (%)



Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

5.35 Although many non-Mainland respondents would like to work in Hong Kong, a small number of those from Central & South America and Africa (36.4%) preferred to stay in Hong Kong. Those from North America and Oceania were likely to go back and work in their home country (66.7%) (Table 5.8).

5.36 There were no clear gender differences in the preference to Hong Kong among non-Mainland and Mainland respondents (Table 5.8).

- 5.37 Undergraduate non-Mainland (75.9%) and Mainland respondents (66.7%) would be more likely to prefer to work in Hong Kong than postgraduate ones (non-Mainland: 56.0%; Mainland: 28.2%) (Table 5.8).
- 5.38 Non-Mainland respondents who lived in Hong Kong for a longer time were more likely to plan to work in Hong Kong after graduation (Table 5.8).
- 5.39 There was no clear difference in preference to working in Hong Kong among Mainland respondents who had lived in Hong Kong for different durations (Table 5.8).

Table 5.8 Destination of Work by Social Background Factors (%)

	Non-Mainland students						Mainland students				
	Home country/ region	Hong Kong	Mainland China	Others	Undecided	(n)	Home country	Hong Kong	Others	Undecided	(n)
<b>Home Country / Region</b>											
Asia (excluding Mainland)	49.5	69.9	15.1	32.3	2.2	(93)	-	-	-	-	-
Europe	50.0	56.3	18.8	37.5	18.8	(16)	-	-	-	-	-
North America and Oceania	66.7	55.6	44.4	33.3	11.1	(9)	-	-	-	-	-
Central & South America and Africa	45.5	36.4	18.2	63.6	0.0	(11)	-	-	-	-	-
Mainland	-	-	-	-	-	-	81.4	31.0	8.6	1.0	(210)
<b>Gender</b>											
Male	41.3	69.3	20.0	40.0	4.0	(75)	82.7	29.3	10.7	1.3	(75)
Female	64.7	60.8	13.7	29.4	5.9	(51)	80.5	31.6	6.8	0.8	(133)
<b>Programme</b>											
Undergraduate	51.9	75.9	20.4	31.5	3.7	(54)	40.0	66.7	13.3	0.0	(15)
Postgraduate	49.3	56.0	16.0	38.7	5.3	(75)	84.6	28.2	8.2	1.0	(195)
<b>Live in Hong Kong</b>											
Less than 1 year	53.7	58.2	19.4	44.8	3.0	(67)	86.8	28.7	3.9	0.0	(129)
1 year – 4 years	46.2	69.2	15.4	25.0	3.8	(52)	71.4	33.9	12.5	3.6	(56)
4 years or more	50.0	80.0	20.0	30.0	20.0	(10)	76.0	36.0	24.0	0.0	(25)

Remarks: Multiple answers allowed

- 5.40 The interviewees said they would like to stay and work in Hong Kong because of the good salary and opportunities.
- 5.41 Although, some interviewees said they would leave Hong Kong and work in other countries because it was too harsh for them to find a job in Hong Kong if they could not speak Cantonese. Furthermore, they expressed the job market was limited to those who had studied engineering or science at university. Moreover, they felt the Hong Kong working environment was not good, expressing concerns around things such as high pressure, heavy workload and long working hours.
- 5.42 The language barrier was also a problem for non-Mainland students wanting to work in Mainland China.



I have decided to stay in Hong Kong to accumulate job experience, which is critical over the long-term period. **Hong Kong has open financial markets, with low taxes and free trade. It has maintained the most prominent financial hub status of Asia for over two decades and still is.**

Interviewee M02 (Male, Mainland China)

Though **job prospect in Hong Kong is good**. I could say it is one of the best place to do financial technology. I know some opportunities in the Science park and Goldman Sachs here, but I have not put too much time on job-seeking. **My wife can hardly find a job here because of language barrier.** Her professor is from the U.S. and has good connections, but **it is still necessary to speak Chinese** if she wants to find a job in Hong Kong. It may not be the case for me. I have not heard foreign students have close interaction with local students.

Interviewee A01 (Male, Iran)

Jobs for mechanical engineers in Hong Kong **are very limited and they're low paid jobs.**

Interviewee A06 (Male, India)

Hong Kong is still better than Japan or Korea but Hong Kong is also a **high workload place, like (you have to take) long working hours.**

Interviewee N01 (Male, Germany)

I have also thought about (finding a job in) Mainland China. But **language will be an issue** I think. Otherwise, I'd like to apply for Mainland China civil companies.

Interviewee N04 (Male, Ghana)

5.43 The Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement broke out in 2019 and became the largest-scale movement since the handover. Although the movement disrupted the daily life of the students on campus or outside at different levels, most interviewees said that it did not change their idea about Hong Kong and did not influence their career plan. They thought that the situation was still peaceful compared with the protests in their home countries and other countries they had visited.

5.44 However, the movement had changed the mind of Mainland interviewees. They planned to leave Hong Kong after completing their studies.

**My life has been hampered because of the movement.** But it has not changed my idea about Hong Kong. I do not think the social movement could have any influence on my career.

Interviewee A02 (Female, Bangladesh)

I didn't know much about the protests and then one of the sides had their workshop to international students what's going on here. What that numbers actually mean? **The citizens have got their right to do it. I got their points. I know why they are doing this. I actually support them.**

Interviewee A03 (Female, Kazakhstan)

**It hasn't really influenced much about how Hong Kong is in general.** If this could be settled quickly, it will basically be better for everyone. But it's not something that hasn't happened before for me. **When I was in Canada, we had protests going on in our university as well and it was much severe than what I have seen here.**

Interviewee A05 (Male, Pakistan)

I had an exchange programme in Paris last semester and got to know a couple of people that are doing master's and they are pretty interesting because they have a very unique perspective, because at that time **they had a protest going on as well, the Yellow Vest protests in Paris.**

Interviewee A06 (Male, India)

**To me it doesn't really change my view** because I am studying in Hong Kong despite what happened in 2014 was actually more interesting to me because how a society work together for a goal in a peaceful way.

Interviewee N01 (Male, Germany)

**I think it is still peaceful.** That’s one of the most important aspect I like. Though clashes, **you did not see any massive shooting like what happen back to some countries in Africa.** The police there easily shot a lot to the protestors. **This never happened in Hong Kong which still maintains a kind of peaceful atmosphere.**

Interviewee N04 (Male, Ghana)

**I did change my perception but I would say the change is in a good way,** because I found the Hong Kong people to be the passive and they don't care about anything. I didn't like this mentality, but then **I saw they actually hold on to certain beliefs and dare to stand for that. Because in my home country and in Europe, it is pretty common if you're disagree with something of your government. You go for protest.** I did protest in my country as well, and France is happening as well. Everywhere is happening.

Interviewee N07 (Female, Serbia)

I haven’t changed my view about Hong Kong. **There is a reason behind people’s violence, especially to what the Hong Kong government is doing. 50 years are given to Hong Kong and half of that has passed. China want to have more control of Hong Kong and they did not think the British spent 100 years to change Hong Kong.**

Interviewee N08 (Male, Italy)

**It does not change my idea but my imagination for the future of Hong Kong.** One is they achieve democracy they want even including independence. I am negative about what they can achieve with this movement. This possible outcome is really unlikely. For me, **it is more desirable if they can achieve a higher level of democracy, which would be perfect. But I don’t think it is going to happen. It could be permanent chaos which is tiring.** Were I young Hongkongnese, I might be with them. But a permanent social movement is not good. You cannot meet your friends; you have to change your plan. To live in a permanent state of social unrest, you would have these problems. **China would tighten its control over Hong Kong. That is concern for my research.** China might control my Gmail what can I do.

Interviewee N03 (Male, Chile)

If the protests go on and the universities keep having problems, **military of the Chinese government might get involved, it could bring in the worst case scenario in Hong Kong. That will be very dangerous.** I would be concerned about that.

Interviewee N06 (Male, France)

I think it influences my view on Hong Kong. **I always know that Hong Kong people are afraid of Beijing Government. But I can't imagine their hatred towards China as a nation is so strong.** My classes and interviews got cancelled. More employees tend to ask me questions about politics after the anti-extradition bill issue happened, which really had an impact on my career. **That's one of reasons for me to consider to study aboard for master degree.**

Interviewee M01 (Female, Mainland China)

There's been **social division between local people and Mainland people or Hong Kong people with Mainland origin.**

Interviewee M02 (Male, Mainland China):

Neither the one from Mainland, nor the one outside Mainland, none of them are unbiased anyway. However, **the life changed in recent years for there is more and more violence involved.** I just want to leave Hong Kong as soon as possible before I get involved passively for any reason.

Interview M03 (Male, Mainland China)

Although I recognize the values shared in the movements and the daily lives, **it doesn't mean the movement has no limitations.** Many people are becoming more exclusive and offensive and even overwhelmed by the confronting anti-China sentiments.

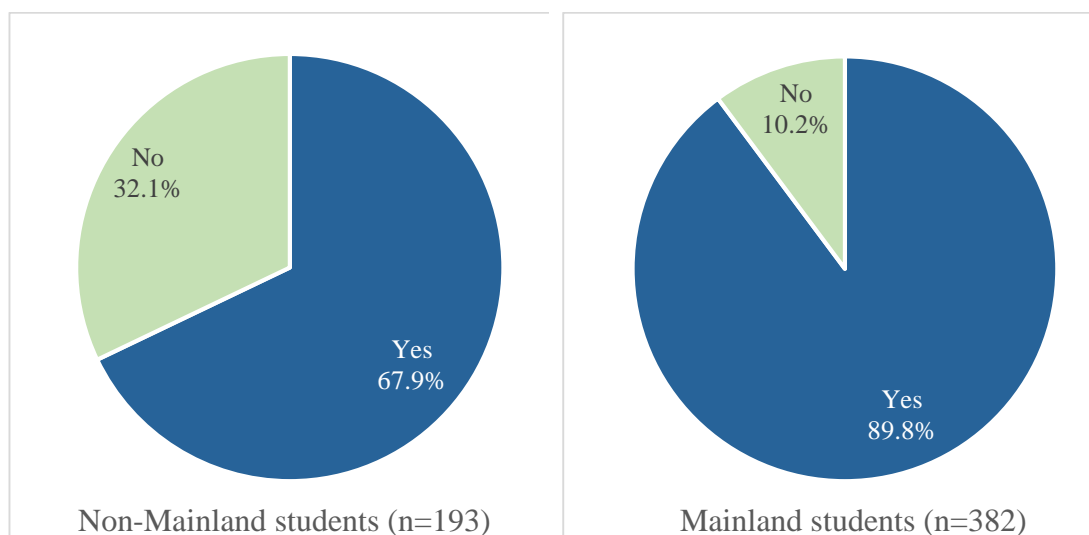
Interview M08 (Male, Mainland China)

### “Belt and Road Initiative”

5.45 Although the “Belt and Road Initiative”, which aims to promote economic cooperation among countries along the proposed Belt and Road routes, was a major policy proposed by the Chinese Central Government, 10.2% of Mainland respondents said that they had not heard about it before, leaving 89.8% who heard about it (Figure 5.3).

5.46 Advantageously, 67.9% of non-Mainland respondents had heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and 32.1% had not (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” (%)

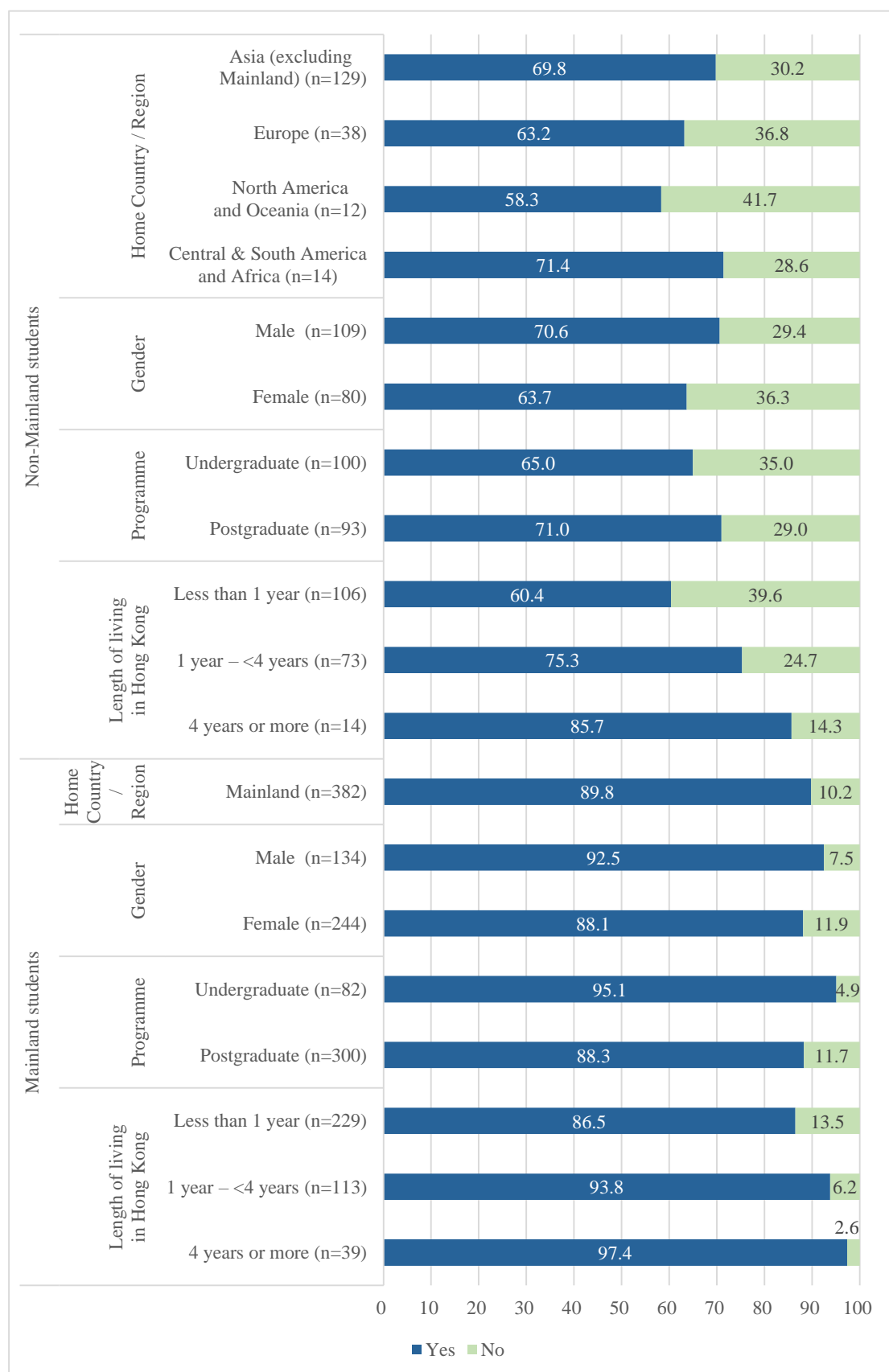


5.47 Respondents from North America and Oceania (58.3%) were more likely to have heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” than other Non-Mainland respondents, although half of Non-Mainland respondents had heard about it before (Figure 5.4).

5.48 There were no clear differences in having heard of the “Belt and Road Initiative” among postgraduate non-Mainland and Mainland respondents of different genders or programmes of study (Figure 5.4)

5.49 Non-Mainland respondents who had lived in Hong Kong for longer were more likely to have heard of the “Belt and Road Initiative” than those who had lived for a shorter time (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” by Social Background Factors (%)



5.50 Interviewees from Belt and Road countries expressed positive attitudes towards the Belt and Road Initiative, which improved their image of China.

5.51 Although some of them said that they did not have a clear idea of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, and did not know its impacts on their life.

5.52 Those from Mainland China showed limited interest in “Belt and Road Initiative” countries, although they knew more about the “Belt and Road Initiative” itself.

Heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” from news. It is a factor especially when my home university has a connection to any participating countries of the “Belt and Road Initiative”. I know they are good places to go. **My perception to China is getting better for example the advancement of technology. The rise of China is changing people’s perspective.**

Interviewee A01 (Male, Iran)

I heard about it and I know the CPEC in Pakistan. **The scholarship for my master’s degree is for the “Belt and Road Initiative”.** Many students in Pakistan want to have the scholarship. I think the “Belt and Road Initiative” is a good opportunity for people in Pakistan.

Interviewee A07 (Male, Pakistan)

It actually was one of the points for me to join Hong Kong as well. So **Nepal is also a part of the Belt and Road countries. The “Belt and Road Initiative” could be a cornerstone for Nepal’s development.**

Interviewee A08 (Male, Nepal)

**China is an emerging power.** Maybe, for business deals or trips I would like to visit China.

Interviewee A11 (Male, Pakistan)

Most of sort of innovation is going to be here, most of the big change is going to happen in Asian and that's going to affect the rest of the world. So I think that's an exciting place to be and I'm not surprised that the Belt and Roads is something that's going to happen, because **I think that's something that came naturally to China like building out this infrastructure there, making the links there, this sort of trying to go and get to the places and link up with the places that Western countries have not been linked with, and sort of create this sort of Asian linkages.**

Interviewee N05 (Female, Ireland)

I think the initiative connects different countries and could provide some opportunities. **I am not sure about the “Belt and Road Initiative” and its influence to my career. I need to know more about it.**

Interview A03 (Female, Kazakhstan)

For the future, I'm not quite sure. I don't really see how the one belt one road will directly affect my life right now. **I don't really have that in mind too that in the future, my future plans will depend on the “Belt and Road Initiative”.**

Interview A06 (Male, India)

**I think it is to increase the Asian interaction, to boost China's political influence in Asian region. If I'd like to go overseas, China would not sponsor me for that. I am not sure about my interest for the Belt and Road Initiative countries.** I only look for countries which have great physics education and lots of research going in the direction I need.

Interview N02 (Female, Russia)

I heard about it but do not know it deeply. **It has nothing with my decision to come to Hong Kong. This initiative could be related to my future plan.** This initiative in two ways could be relevant. **This kind of initiative is always good to find a research agenda so if I will be a researcher in China or in Hong Kong,** I could contribute to the project. If I want to apply for a public policy project, that would be relevant. Because money will be targeted to that. The second **it will increase the connection of China and networks.**

Interviewee N03 (Male, Chile)



Yes I know the “Belt and Road Initiative”, but I can’t figure out the exact countries involved. **I am interested in visit and work, but no plan to study there. I think experience in Hong Kong is certainly a benefit.**

Interviewee M01 (Female, Mainland China)

## Summary

- 5.53 The findings suggest that the study experience of non-local students in Hong Kong can facilitate their future careers. Non-Mainland students would like to pursue further study or work in Hong Kong after graduation. Mainland respondents would also prefer to pursue further study in Hong Kong after graduation, although they would be more likely to go back and work in the Mainland.
- 5.54 Although Hong Kong was an interesting city to non-local students, it may not be a very good place for them to work and live.
- 5.55 Regarding the “Belt and Road Initiative”, interview data indicated that many of them showed positive views and saw it had great potential, though they might not thoroughly know about it. However, they did not mention Hong Kong’s role or what position Hong Kong could play.

Hong Kong could be a good place to study, but for career, **you need to find a community you can live forever.**

Interviewee A01 (Male, Iran)

## 6. Conclusion and Policy Implication and Recommendation

- 6.1 China’s “Belt and Road Initiative” entails the HKSAR government rethinking its role in China’s national development. Hong Kong is undoubtedly powerful and influential in financial, professional, and business sectors, yet little attention has been paid to the education sector as a potential source of soft power.
- 6.2 The research project collected data from a significant number of Hong Kong-trained non-local university students through an online survey and in-depth interviews, and provides empirical evidence on the role of education in shaping soft power.

### Key Points

- 6.3 This research aimed to answer two major research questions. One asks, could Hong Kong improve its soft power through providing tertiary education to non-local students? The other asks, do non-locals students think their Hong Kong study experience can facilitate their future careers?

### Soft Power and Education

- 6.4 The findings suggest that Hong Kong’s perceived soft power by non-Mainland respondents could be strengthened by providing tertiary education to them. Non-Mainland respondents perceived Hong Kong’s soft power to be quite strong, and this was strengthened as they studied in Hong Kong.
- 6.5 Hong Kong could not strengthen Mainland China’s soft power on non-Mainland respondents through providing them with tertiary education. The non-Mainland respondents perceived the soft power of Mainland China was average, and it did not improve while they studied in Hong Kong.

## **Facilitate Future Careers**

- 6.6 The respondents agreed that their experience in Hong Kong could facilitate their future careers because Hong Kong is an international city, has a cosmopolitan culture, provides high-quality education, and has many opportunities for people to understand other countries and cultures.
- 6.7 Non-Mainland students would like to pursue further study or work in Hong Kong after graduation. Mainland respondents would also like to pursue further study in Hong Kong after graduation, although they would be more likely to go back to, and work in, the Mainland. However, both groups would not like to stay in Hong Kong in long term.

## Policy Implication and Recommendation

6.8 Soft power is based on an attractive image to foreign people. In order to build up Hong Kong’s soft power and facilitate development of the “Belt and Road Initiative”, it is necessary to attract students from other countries to study in Hong Kong. This will improve students’ perceived image of Hong Kong, and encourage them to participate in the “Belt and Road Initiative”. Hence, our policy recommendations focus on non-Mainland students.

### Life in Hong Kong



➤ **Improve the Living Standard of Students**

➤ **Help Students Integrate with the Local Community**

---

#### 1. Housing

- Many respondents complained that the cost of housing in Hong Kong was very high, and the number of rooms in student halls provided by universities was too limited. Most of them had to balance rent and convenience, that is, live in a place where rent was affordable, but often these locations are far away from university.
- It would help to reduce life pressure on the students if the government or universities could provide more accommodation near campuses, or provide housing subsidies to rent a private apartment during their study.

#### 2. Arrangement for Students with Different Religions

- International students with diverse cultural backgrounds have different religions. Many religions have lifestyles that may be difficult to follow while living in Hong Kong. For example, Muslim students may want to pray several times every day, according to religious practice. Muslim students complained that it was difficult to find a place to do so in the campus, such as “a clean floor where you can put your carpet”, one interviewee mentioned. Universities could provide a prayer room for students of all religions to use.

- Besides, Muslims cannot eat pork, and only Halal food. Nowadays, although Halal foods are provided in many university canteens, the students said that it would be better if more options were provided.

### 3. Seminar Programme

- The interviewees in the project pointed out that they got much help from the non-local student associations to adapt to life in Hong Kong in their first year of study. These non-local student associations were always set by international students from their home countries. However, many new international students had little information about their home country’s student association. The government could set up a platform for new first year students to access these associations’ contact methods and activities.
- Moreover, the government, universities, or the facilities could cooperate with these student associations to provide seminars, or organize workshops to introduce Hong Kong and provide information to students to live and study in Hong Kong.

### 4. Local Language Class

- International students said they are interested in learning Cantonese and felt that knowing Cantonese helped them to integrate more with the Hong Kong’s local community. Although most Hong Kong students can communicate with international students in English, they would like to communicate in a language that they are more familiar with. It was easier for the international students to build up close friendships with local people if they could speak Cantonese.
- More introductory Cantonese classes should be provided to international students in their first year, and students should be given more incentives to encourage them to learn. With basic knowledge, the students said that they could build up their Cantonese skills day by day. Besides, higher-level Cantonese classes should also be provided for those who have learned Chinese before but cannot speak Cantonese.

## 5. Interaction with Local Students

- The research found that international students would like universities to organise student activities with local students so that they can gain more local friends and integrate into the local community easier. The medium of these activities should be English.
- The government should encourage faculties to organise meetings in first year programmes for local students and international students to introduce and know each other.
- Some interviewees said that it was very helpful to build up friendships with local students if they lived with local students in their student hall. The common activities and life experiences was fertile ground for making close friends.
- The government should enhance the mutual understanding between local people and these students. This includes knowledge about each other’s culture, country, people, and so on. Some students had little knowledge about Hong Kong and Asia and misunderstood that Asian people disliked people from their region.
- Universities could organise more activities through student unions or student interest groups to introduce Hong Kong’s society. The activities should be more relaxed than formal education, and could help people to get to know each other more easily and comfortably.
- The government and universities could organize field trips to villages, mountains and museums to increase knowledge about Hong Kong. The university could also invite famous people to give talks or seminars.

## 6. Family Friendly Environment

- Providing a family friendly environment for research postgraduates with initiatives such as subsidized housing for couples and on-campus day-care centres for children would enhance the on-campus experience of non-local students, particularly post-graduates. Hong Kong may be the second choice for mature students from the Asia-Pacific region. Hong Kong has many advantages to these students, it is much closer to their home country, and offers high quality education. If better supported, mature students could see Hong Kong as a place for their career or as a place to launch a business. A family friendly environment is a strong pull factor for these students, making these initiatives a worthwhile investment. Making universities family friendly is also a Pareto improvement, which has been practiced in developed societies for a long time.

## Study and Work in Hong Kong



- **Attract More Foreign Students to Study in Hong Kong**
  - **Encourage More Foreign Student to Stay and Work in Hong Kong after Graduation**
- 

### 7. Publicity of Hong Kong's Universities

- Hong Kong is well-known as a modern, prosperous, business-friendly and international cosmopolitan city, but studying in Hong Kong is not always a popular choice among university applicants around the world. The interviewees said that there was very little information about Hong Kong's education in their home country.
- To attract international students, the government should improve its outreach by taking a pro-active approach, such as sending representatives to universities or high schools in foreign countries to introduce higher education in Hong Kong. Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices outside the territory could hold more regular activities to promote Hong Kong's higher education. Besides, most official information about Hong Kong's higher education is in English. The government should prepare marketing materials in other language for the students of non-English speaking countries.
- Interviewees reported that they decided to come to Hong Kong to pursue university education because they participated in an exchange programme to Hong Kong during their secondary school study, and so knew more about Hong Kong. This suggests that short-term exchange programmes for secondary students of foreign countries help to attract people to apply for Hong Kong's university programme. To this end, exchange programmes should remain supported, and these students could also be contacted about studying further in Hong Kong.



## 8. Scholarship

- The Hong Kong PhD fellowship was found to be a key attracting factor for international students, especially those from less developed countries. But they complained that its requirement was high and suggested that the government should relax the requirement and set a higher quota for international students.
- The UGC-funded universities provide studentships to all research students. It was the major financial source for international research students. Although it could cover their daily living costs, the tuition fee was also a financial problem. The government should consider providing additional scholarships to waive the tuition fee of those with excellent performance in their studies.
- Comparatively, financial support for those undergraduate international students was less than that of postgraduate ones. The government should consider providing additional region-based scholarships for undergraduate students who come from less developed economies/regions in the world.

## 9. Diversification of Origin of Non-local Students

- One of the major reasons for international students to decide to study abroad was to know different people from all over the world. They selected Hong Kong because they believed Hong Kong was an international city and had international students from many countries. They expected to know not only Hong Kong people and Mainland Chinese, but also those from other places, such as Europe and America in their study in Hong Kong. Hong Kong would be more attractive if there are more diverse international students.

## 10. Industrial Diversification

- Some interviewees said that they were willing to develop their career in Hong Kong, but this was only science and engineering students. They found it was difficult to find a job outside of the finance sector in Hong Kong. Industrial diversification in Hong Kong would attract these students to study and work in Hong Kong.

## 11. Research Project Funding for Research Students

- Research student interviewees agreed that universities in Hong Kong had many top scholars of many different disciplines in the world, but Hong Kong was always the second choice for pursuing PhD study. They felt that they had limited financial support to complete their research and pointed out that their major financial support for research depended highly on their supervisor. They believed that Hong Kong’s PhD programmes would be more attractive if the government provided more financial support for research students to complete the research of their study.

## Participate in the “Belt and Road Initiative”



- **Enhance International Students’ Knowledge about the “Belt and Road Initiative” and China**
  - **Increase Research Interest of International Student in the “Belt and Road Initiative”**
- 

### 12. Travel Opportunities and the “Belt and Road Initiative”

- The interviewees pointed out that travel experience enriched their understanding about China and about the “Belt and Road Initiative”. The government and universities should organize more study trips to the Mainland and Belt and Road countries. The study trips should not only be visiting the enterprises, but also to communicate with local people, to understand how they perceive their society, so that students can learn about it in a more interactive way.

### 13. Publicity in Universities

- The government and universities should organize more seminars and lectures in which the government officials give a talk providing official information about the “Belt and Road Initiative”, so that students can know more about what the “Belt and Road Initiative” is and how it relates to their life and career.

### 14. Chinese Language Class

- Many international students said that the language barrier was a problem to develop their career in the Mainland. More Mandarin and Chinese classes of different levels should be provided so it will be easier for them to visit and know more about China.

#### 15. Funding of Student’s Research Projects about the “Belt and Road Initiative”

- Additional financial support could be provided by the government to international PhD students whose thesis topic is about the “Belt and Road Initiative”. This would not only increase research interest of international student in the “Belt and Road Initiative”, but also encourage their research output to contribute to the development of the “Belt and Road Initiative”. Hence, Hong Kong can become the top research centre about the “Belt and Road Initiative”.

## Appendix 1: Online Survey Questionnaire

### **Non-local University Students Connections and their Career Plan in Hong Kong**

Greetings! The Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies is conducting an online survey to capture non-local university students’ perceptions of Hong Kong and Mainland China, as well as their career plans. Our target respondents are:

1. Non-local students who hold a Student / Dependant’s Visa (or Entry Permit) issued by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; AND
2. Currently enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate programme in a university in Hong Kong that is funded by the University Grants Committee.

The survey will take approximately 20 minutes. You can only take this survey once.

Are you currently a non-local university student enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate programme in a university in Hong Kong that is funded by the University Grants Committee?

1. Yes (go to Q1)
2. No (end message)

End message:

Thank you for your interest to participate in the survey.

We are sorry that our target respondents are non-local university students who are enrolled in an undergraduate or postgraduate programme in a university in Hong Kong that is funded by the University Grants Committee.

Part 1 Education

Q1. Your home country / region:

\_\_\_\_\_

Q2. Which university do you currently study at?

1. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK)
2. City University of Hong Kong (CityU)
3. The Education University of Hong Kong (EdUHK)
4. Hong Kong Baptist University (HKBU)
5. The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU)
6. The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST)
7. Lingnan University (LU)
8. The University of Hong Kong (HKU)

Q3. What is your current major field of study?

1. Architecture and Construction Engineering
2. Business and Commercial Studies
3. Education
4. Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
5. Humanities, Anthropology, Arts, or Language
6. Law
7. Medical and Health-related Studies
8. Sciences (including Computer Studies)
9. Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)
10. Double degree (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)
11. Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Q4. Your current programme of study

1. Undergraduate programme
2. Postgraduate programme
3. Other (please specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

Q5. Please rank the TWO most important reasons to receive a university education in Hong Kong?

(1: Most important; 2: Second most important)

- High-quality education
- Hong Kong is an international city
- Good career opportunities
- Low cost of study compared to advanced countries
- Financial support (e.g. Scholarship)
- Proximity of the location
- English is the medium of instruction
- Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

Please rate your feelings towards the following aspects:

(0 – 10 points: 0 = extremely bad; 10 = extremely good)

Q6a Your current programme of study

Q6b Your daily life in Hong Kong

Part 2 Career

Q7. What is your plan after graduation? (Multiple answers allowed)

1. Further study
2. Work
3. Undecided

(If pursuing further studies is selected in Q7)

Q8. In which country/countries/ region(s) would you like to further your studies after graduation? (Multiple answers allowed)

1. Home country / region
2. Hong Kong
3. Mainland China
4. Other country / countries (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

(If working is selected in Q7)

Q9. In which country/countries/ region(s) would you like to work after graduation?

1. Home country / region
2. Hong Kong
3. Mainland China
4. Other country / countries (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)



(If work is selected in Q7)

Q10. In which industry(industries) would you like to work after graduation? (Multiple choices allowed; Maximum 3 choices)

1. Accommodation and Food Services
2. Administrative and Support Services (including Business Support Services)
3. Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation
4. Education
5. Electricity and Gas Supply, and Waste Management (including Treatment and Disposal, Recovery of Materials)
6. Financing and Insurance
7. Human Health and Social Work Services
8. Import/ Export, Wholesale, and Retail Trades
9. Information and Communications (including Publishing, Programming and Broadcasting, and Information Technology Services)
10. Manufacturing (including Food Products, Printing and the Reproduction of Recorded Media, and the Repair and Installation of Machinery and Equipment)
11. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
12. Transportation, Storage, Postal, and Courier Services
13. Others, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
14. Undecided

Q11. Do you have any local close friend(s) in Hong Kong?

1. Yes
2. No

Q12. How frequently do you use local media such as reading local newspapers or watching local television programmes?

1. Never
2. Sometimes
3. Always

(If Mainland China and Taiwan is not selected in Q1)

Q13a How would you describe your Chinese level?

1. Unable to listen / speak / read
2. Basic
3. Conversational
4. Fluent

(If Mainland China or Taiwan is selected in Q1)

Q13b How would you describe your Cantonese level?

1. Unable to listen / speak
2. Basic
3. Conversational
4. Fluent

Part 3 Perception of Mainland and Hong Kong

How does each of the following statements describe Mainland China and Hong Kong?  
(0–10 points: 0 = not at all; 10 = extremely well; N/A)

Q14.Has a political system that serves the needs of its people

Q15.Has an internationally competitive economy

Q16.Has a highly educated population

Q17.Has high-quality universities

Q18.Possesses advanced science and technology

Q19.Has an appealing popular culture

Q20.Has a rich cultural heritage

Q21.Is an attractive destination for international tourism

Q22.Respects the sovereignty (the power of a country to control its own government)  
of other Asian countries

Q23.Helps other Asian countries to develop their economies

Q24.Builds trust and cooperation among Asian countries

Q25.Provides assistance in the event of humanitarian crises (e.g. natural disaster) in  
Asia.

Q26.Please rate your overall feelings towards Mainland and Hong Kong  
(0–10 points: 0 = extremely bad; 10 = extremely good)

Q27.What are your feelings towards Mainland China after coming to Hong Kong to  
study?

1. Poorer than before
2. No change
3. Better than before

Q28.What are your feelings towards Hong Kong after coming to Hong Kong to study?

1. Poorer than before
2. No change
3. Better than before

Part 4 Perceptions of the “Belt and Road Initiative”

Q29. Have you heard about the “Belt and Road Initiative” before?

1. Yes
2. No

Part 5 Personal information

Q30. Your gender

1. Female
2. Male
3. Other

Q31. Your age

\_\_\_\_\_ years of age

Q32. How long have you been living in Hong Kong in total?

1. Less than 1 year
2. 1 year–less than 4 years
3. 4 years–less than 7 years
4. 7 years or more

Q33. How would you describe your class in your home country / region?

1. Lower class
2. Lower-middle class
3. Middle class
4. Upper-middle class
5. Upper class

Q34. Your father's educational attainment

1. Primary or below
  2. Secondary
  3. Tertiary: Degree programme
  4. Tertiary: Postgraduate
  5. Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_
98. Don't Know

## Appendix 2: In-depth Interview Framework

1. A brief introduction about self: where from, major, year of studying, academic institutes attended before, basic family information (married? having children? any siblings? where parents are living?)
2. The reason for choosing Hong Kong for education; ever compared education in Hong Kong with that of Singapore, Japan, Korea, Taiwan or Mainland China? ever compared with that in North America or European countries?
3. The reason for choosing the academic institute in Hong Kong; ever applied for other local institutes?
4. The reason for choosing the major to study in Hong Kong?
5. Any previous experience or connections with Hong Kong? how they contribute to decision-making?
6. The experiences of studying and life in Hong Kong; any change of perception with time?
7. Evaluation of studying and life in Hong Kong? Any satisfaction or dissatisfaction?
8. Views of family and friends on your studying and life in Hong Kong; their weighting in decision; any suggestions or conflicts? any new friends made in Hong Kong? how close?
9. Plan for career or further education (place, industries); if Hong Kong will be considered in the plan? why or why not? ever considered other places for career in Asia?
10. What are the benefits of experience and education in Hong Kong to career? How competitive is a degree from Hong Kong in the job market that you want to find a job?
11. After the degree, if returning home or not? why or why not? How education in Hong Kong is perceived in your home country?
12. Will promote Hong Kong at home? (opportunities of studying, living, tourism) What can be done to attract talented students from your home country to study in Hong Kong?

13. Knowledge about the “Belt and Road Initiative”? any interest to visit, studying, work or doing business in B&R regions after graduation? Will experience in Hong Kong a benefit for that decision?
14. Any more knowledge about mainland China after studying in Hong Kong? Any change of perception?
15. Does the anti-extradition bill movement influence your life, or view on Hong Kong, and mainland China? Does the movement influence your plan for future career?
16. Suggestions of policy to the government to help non-local students to adapt to life in Hong Kong and to increase knowledge about Hong Kong, mainland China and the “Belt and Road Initiative”.
17. Suggestions to the university to help adaptation of non-local students
18. Other comments on Hong Kong and China

### Appendix 3: Background of Interviewees

No.	Gender	Age	Home society	Programme of study	Field of Study
A01	Male	25	Iran	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A02	Female	35	Bangladesh	Postgraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)
A03	Female	19	Kazakhstan	Undergraduate	Business and Commercial Studies
A04	Female	22	South Korea	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A05	Male	28	Pakistan	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A06	Male	21	India	Undergraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A07	Male	29	Pakistan	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A08	Male	29	Nepal	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
A09	Male	21	Pakistan	Undergraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)

---

A10	Female	32	Vietnam	Postgraduate	Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)
A11	Male	21	Pakistan	Undergraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
N01	Male	22	Germany	Undergraduate	Architecture and Construction Engineering
N02	Female	20	Russia	Undergraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)
N03	Male	30	Chile	Postgraduate	Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)
N04	Male	29	Ghana	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
N05	Female	30	Ireland	Postgraduate	Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)
N06	Male	20	France	Undergraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology

---



---

N07	Female	26	Serbia	Postgraduate	Architecture and Construction Engineering
N08	Male	38	Italy	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
N09	Male	34	Ethiopia	Postgraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)
N10	Female	27	Canada	Postgraduate	Social Sciences (including Economics, Journalism, Social Work, Geography, and Religious Studies)
M01	Female	22	Mainland China	Undergraduate	Business and Commercial Studies
M02	Male	23	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)
M03	Male	28	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Medical and Health-related Studies
M04	Female	19	Mainland China	Undergraduate	Humanities, Anthropology, Arts, or Language
M05	Female	24	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology
M06	Male	24	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Sciences (including Computer Studies)
M07	Female	27	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Education

---

---

M08	Male	21	Mainland China	Undergraduate	Humanities, Anthropology, Arts, or Language
M09	Female	31	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Medical and Health- related Studies
M10	Female	26	Mainland China	Postgraduate	Engineering, Textile, Design, or another Industrial Technology

---

## Appendix 4: Details of the Public Dissemination Held

Based on the survey conducted in this research project, a press release named “Survey Findings on the Perceptions of Non-local University Students towards Hong Kong” was released on 19 May 2020. The concerning research information and contents was uploaded to the website of CUHK Communications and Public Relations Office for the public’s easy access (Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, 2020).

## References

- Altbach, Philip G. and Patti McGill Peterson. 2008. “Higher Education as a Projection of America’s Soft Power,” in Yasushi Watanabe, Yasushi Watanabe, David L McConnell (eds.), *Soft Power Superpowers: Cultural and National Assets of Japan and the United States*, pp. 37–53. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- ASEAN Secretariat. 2015. *A Blueprint for Growth, ASEAN Economic Community 2015: Progress and Key Achievements*. Jakarta: Author.
- Bislev, Ane. 2017. “Student-to-student Diplomacy: Chinese International Students as a Soft-power Tool,” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs*, 46(2):81–109.
- Bochner, Stephen. 1986. “Coping with Unfamiliar Cultures: Adjustment or Culture Learning?” *Australian Journal of Psychology*, 38(3):347–58.
- Brown, Lorraine. 2009. “The Transformative Power of the International Sojourn: An Ethnographic Study of The International Student Experience”, *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3):502–21.
- Byrne, Caitlin, and Rebecca Hall. 2013. “Realising Australia’s international education as public diplomacy,” *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 67(4):419–38.
- DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service). 2013. *Knowledge – Action – Change: Three Alumni Surveys in Review: 25 years of DAAD Postgraduate Courses*. Bonn: Author.
- Dalisay, Francis. 2012. “Media Use and Acculturation of New Immigrants in the United States,” *Communication Research Reports*, 29(2):148–60.
- Education Bureau, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. 2019. “Scholarships” (<https://www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/hong-kong-education/scholarships.php>).
- Fung, Owen. 2016. “Hong Kong Government Won’t Jump Queue on ‘Belt And Road’ Scholarship Funding, Says Carrie Lam,” *South China Morning Post*, 14 June (<http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/1975286/hong-kong-government-wont-jump-queue-belt-and-road>).
- Gill, Scherto. 2010. “The Homecoming: An Investigation into the Effect That Studying Overseas Had on Chinese Postgraduates’ Life and Work on Their Return to China,” *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 40(3):359–76.
- Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies. 2020. “Survey Findings on the Perceptions of Non-local University Students towards Hong Kong,” 19 May ([https://www.cpr.cuhk.edu.hk/en/press\\_detail.php?id=3288&t=survey-findings-on-the-perceptions-of-non-local-university-students-towards-hong-kong-released-by-the-hong-kong-institute-of-asia-pacific-studies-at-cuhk&s=](https://www.cpr.cuhk.edu.hk/en/press_detail.php?id=3288&t=survey-findings-on-the-perceptions-of-non-local-university-students-towards-hong-kong-released-by-the-hong-kong-institute-of-asia-pacific-studies-at-cuhk&s=))
- Jhee, Byong-kuen and Nae-young Lee. 2011. “Measuring Soft Power in East Asia: An Overview of Soft Power in East Asia on Affective and Normative Dimensions,”

- in Sook Jong Lee and Jan Melissen (eds.), *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia*, pp. 51–64. New York : Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ju, Ran, Moyi Jia and Mirit Shoham. 2012. “Online Social Connection: Exploring International Students’ Use of New Media in Their Adaptation Process,” *China Media Research*, 12(2):76–89.
- Kunin, Roslyn and Associates, Inc. 2012. “Economic Impact of International Education in Canada: An Update” ([http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/economic\\_impact\\_en.pdf](http://www.international.gc.ca/education/assets/pdfs/economic_impact_en.pdf)).
- Mellors-Bourne, Robin, Christine Humphrey, Neil Kemp and Steve Woodfield. 2013. “The Wider Benefits of International Higher Education in the UK”. London: BIS research paper number 128, UK Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.
- Murat, Marina. 2014. “Out of Sight, Not Out of Mind: Education Networks and International Trade,” *World Development*, 58(c): 53–66.
- Nye, Joseph S. 1990. “Soft Power,” *Foreign Policy*, 80:153–71.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2004. *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Nye, Joseph S. 2008. “Public Diplomacy and Soft Power,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616(1):94–109.
- Oxford Economics. 2007. *The Economic Impact of London’s International Students*. Oxford, UK: Author.
- Rizvi, Fazal. 2005. “International Education and the Production of Cosmopolitan Identities,” presented at the Transnational Seminar Series, 4 March 2005. Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
- Strategy Policy and Research in Education Limited. 2009. *The Nature of International Education in Australian Universities and Its Benefits*. Hong Kong: Author.
- Throsby, David. 1998. *Financing and Effects of Internationalization in Higher Education: The Economic Costs and Benefits of International Student Flows*. Paris: Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- University Grants Committee. 2020. “Statistics about Our Universities” (<https://cdcf.ugc.edu.hk/cdcf/statEntry.action?language=EN>)
- Yang, Cui, Huaiting Wu, Ma Zhu, G. Brian and Southwell. 2004. “Tuning in to Fit in? Acculturation and Media Use Among Chinese students in the United States,” *Asian Journal of Communication*, 14(1):81–94.
- 鄭宏泰。2016。「從制度創新看香港在推動『一帶一路』建設的強弱機危」，發表於《21世紀海上絲綢之路建設研討會》，2016年9月6–9日。廈門：華僑大學。