



Are Intentions to Immigrate to Canada Changing in the Face of COVID-19?

A WES Survey of Prospective Immigrants to Canada
World Education Services | June 2020

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Part I:

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

World Education Services (WES) is a designated provider of credential evaluations required by the Canadian government for applicants to Express Entry economic immigration programs. As such, WES interacts with many thousands of prospective newcomers to Canada every week.

In April 2020, the global reach of the COVID-19 pandemic became clear. To understand the virus's potential impact on prospective immigrants, WES conducted a survey of applicants for a WES Educational Credential Assessment. Our intent was to understand how COVID-19 was affecting the immigration intentions of prospective immigrants to Canada. We obtained valid responses from 4,615 individuals.

Key Findings

COVID-19 has not affected the level of interest of the majority of prospective immigrants to Canada.

The majority of respondents (57%) say that COVID-19 does not impact their interest in immigrating. Only 5% would be less interested. A plurality (42%) say it is unlikely that they will delay immigration to Canada because of COVID-19.

COVID-19-related economic concerns make many more interested in immigrating to Canada.

While prospective immigrants expect COVID-19 to negatively affect economic conditions and the availability of jobs in their occupation or sector both in their home country and in Canada, more expect their home country to be negatively affected. For a significant percentage (38%), a contracting economy at home would make them more interested in immigrating to Canada. Among respondents from several countries (the Philippines, China, and Nigeria), more than half of prospective immigrants are, in fact, more interested in immigrating as a result of the pandemic.

Many others may pause their immigration plans.

Thirty-five percent of respondents say they are considering delaying immigration to Canada. Among those considering a delay, the top factors are the risk of contracting COVID-19 during travel (45%), travel restrictions (44%), a potential recession in Canada (43%), and fewer jobs in their occupation or sector in Canada (42%).

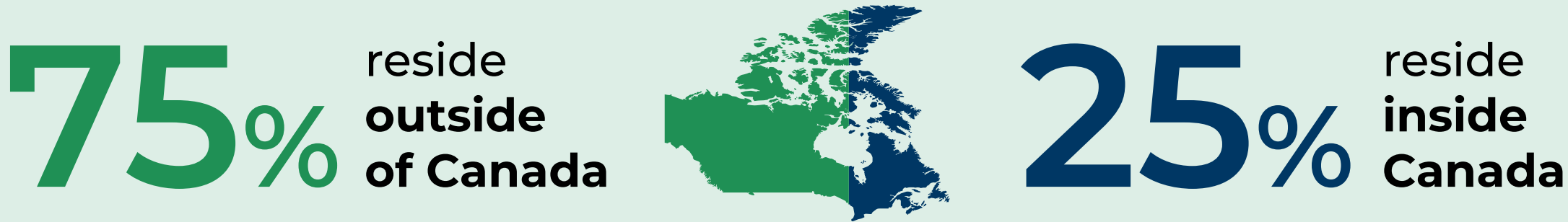


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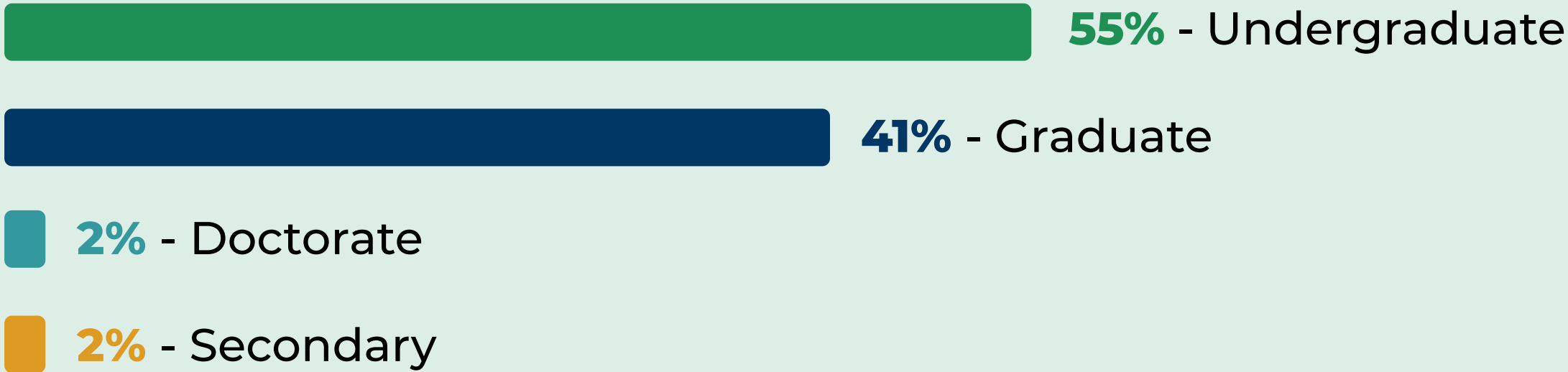
Profile of Respondents

Snapshot of WES Canada Applicants

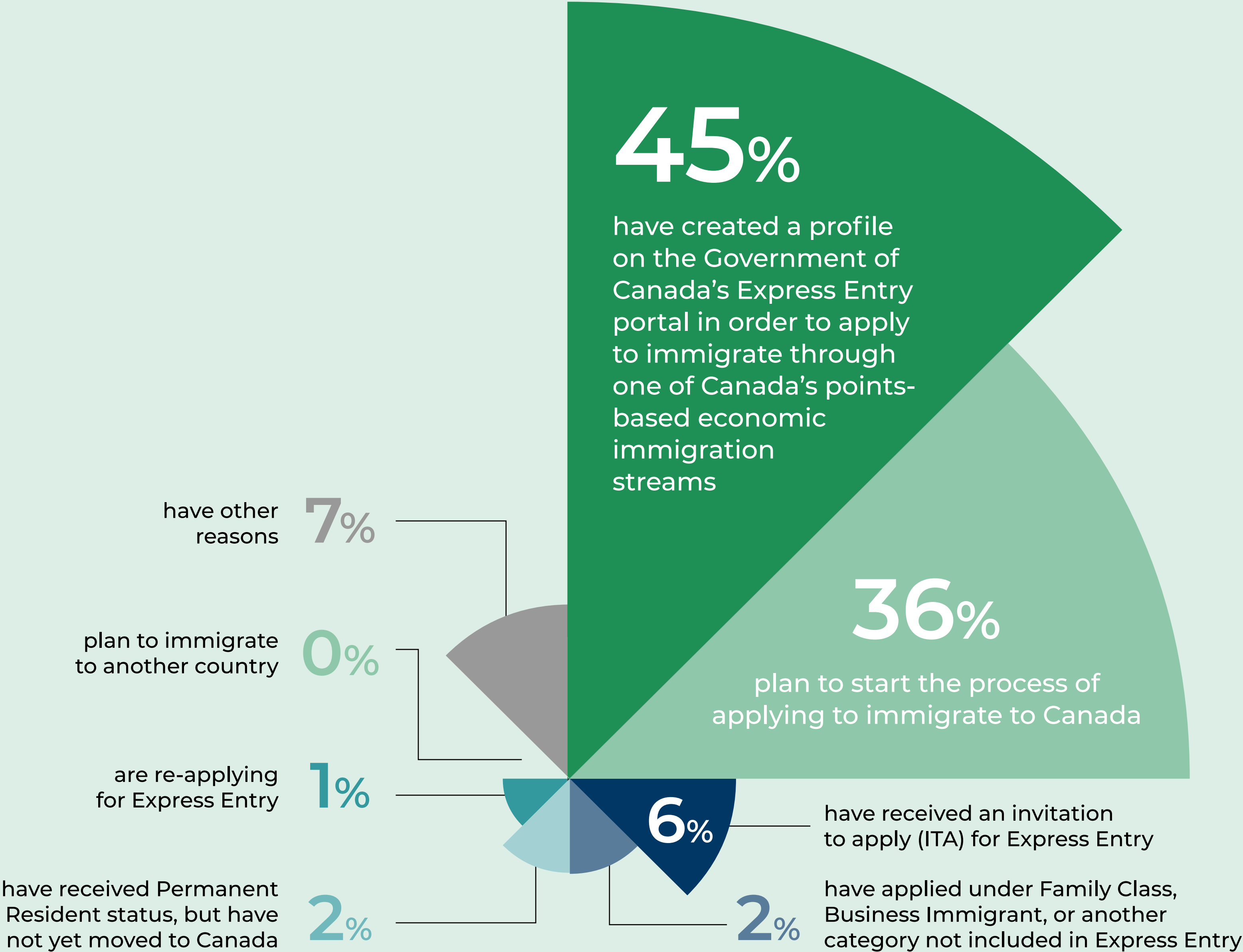
Most WES applicants are in the pre-arrival phase and are obtaining a credential evaluation for the purpose of immigrating to Canada. More than 40 percent hold a graduate degree or higher.



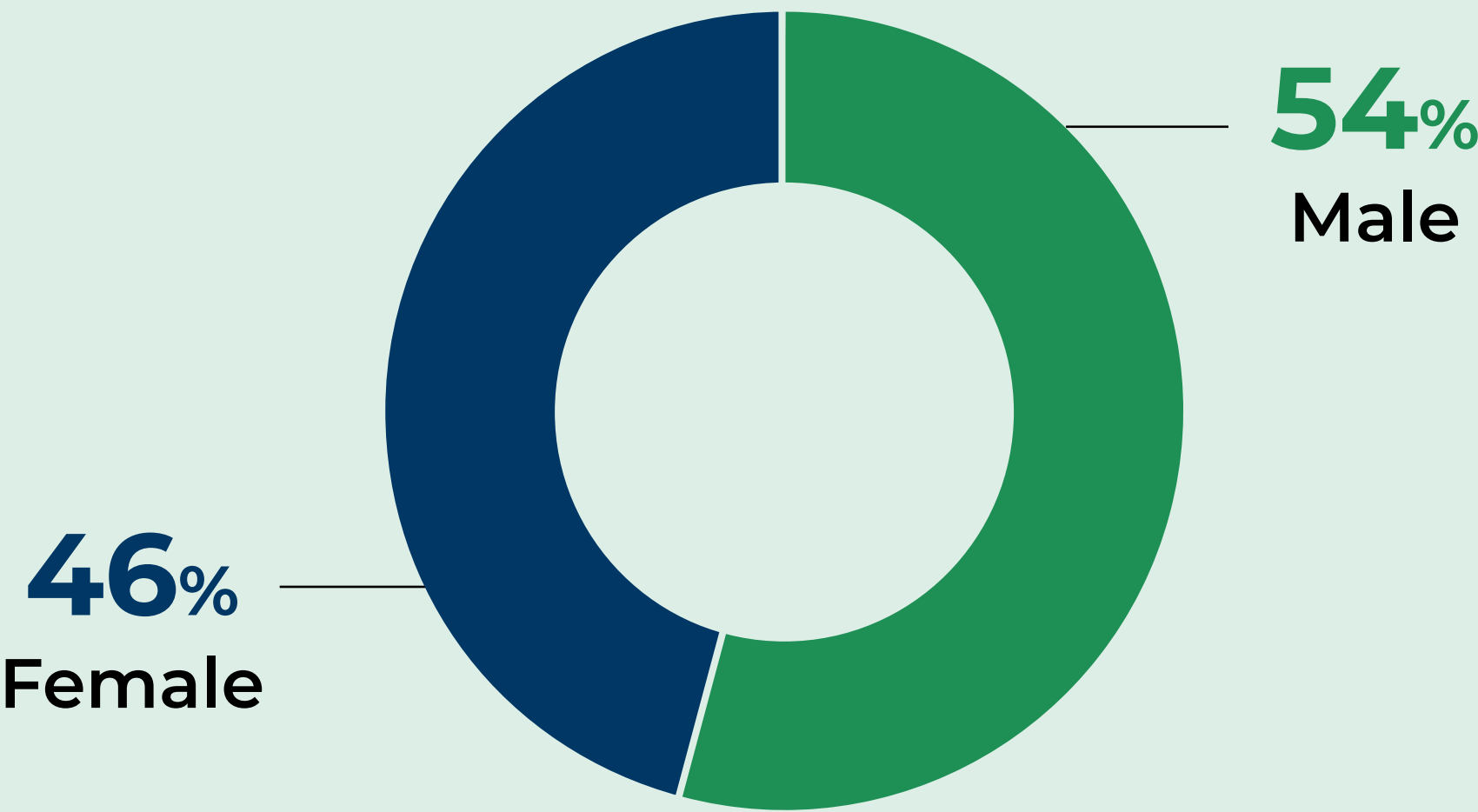
Highest Level of Education



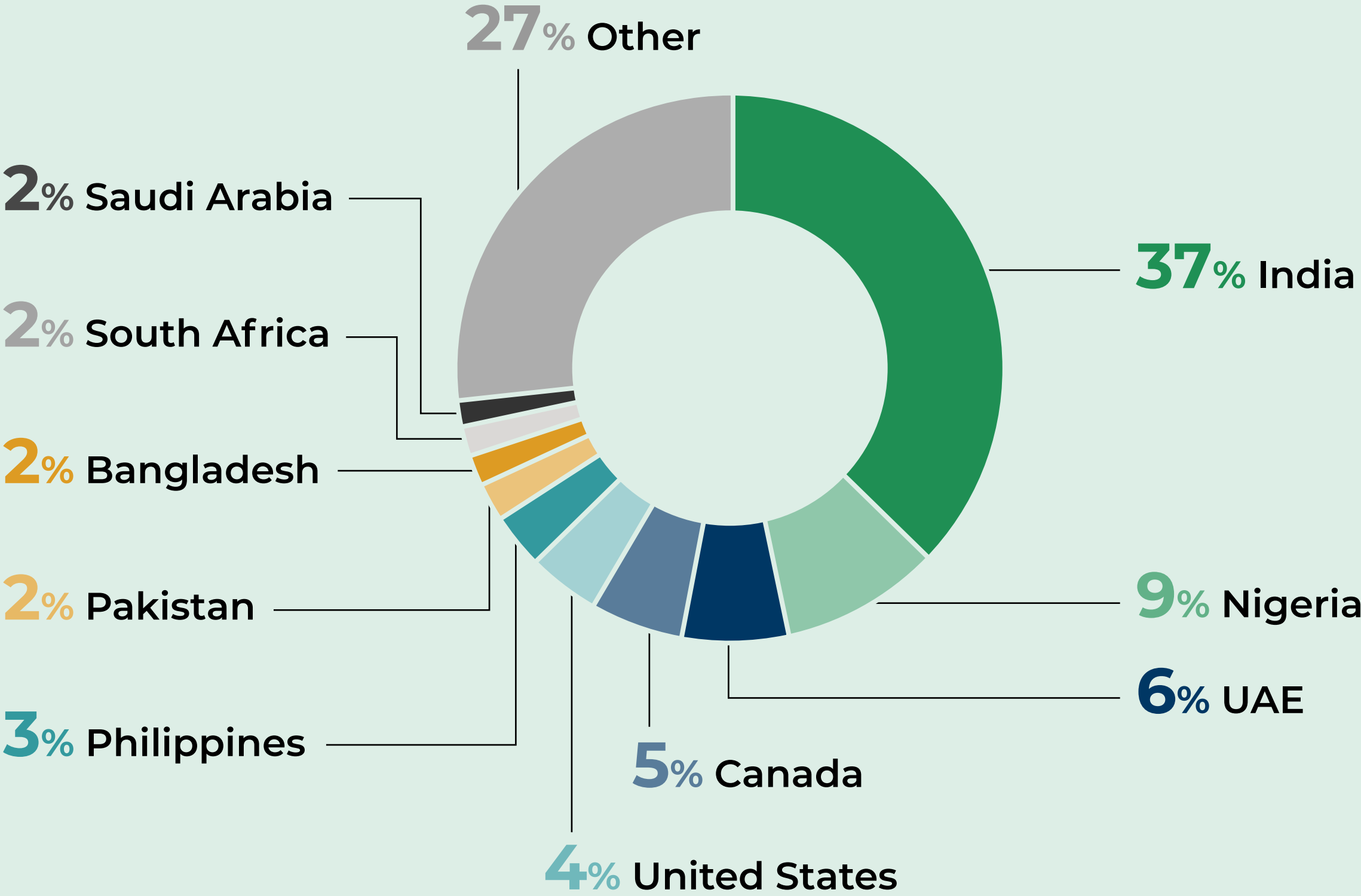
Stage of Immigration



Gender of Respondents



Top 10 Countries of Residence at Time of WES Application



Note: Country of residence data are drawn from linked WES data and reflect country of residence at time of application, not at time of survey completion. All respondents were asked: Are you currently residing in Canada: yes/no. Only those who responded no are included in this report. n for all question=4,615; “Not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis.

Sector of Employment

Main sectors in which respondents are employed or were most recently employed.

Sector source: Canada North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)





Part III:

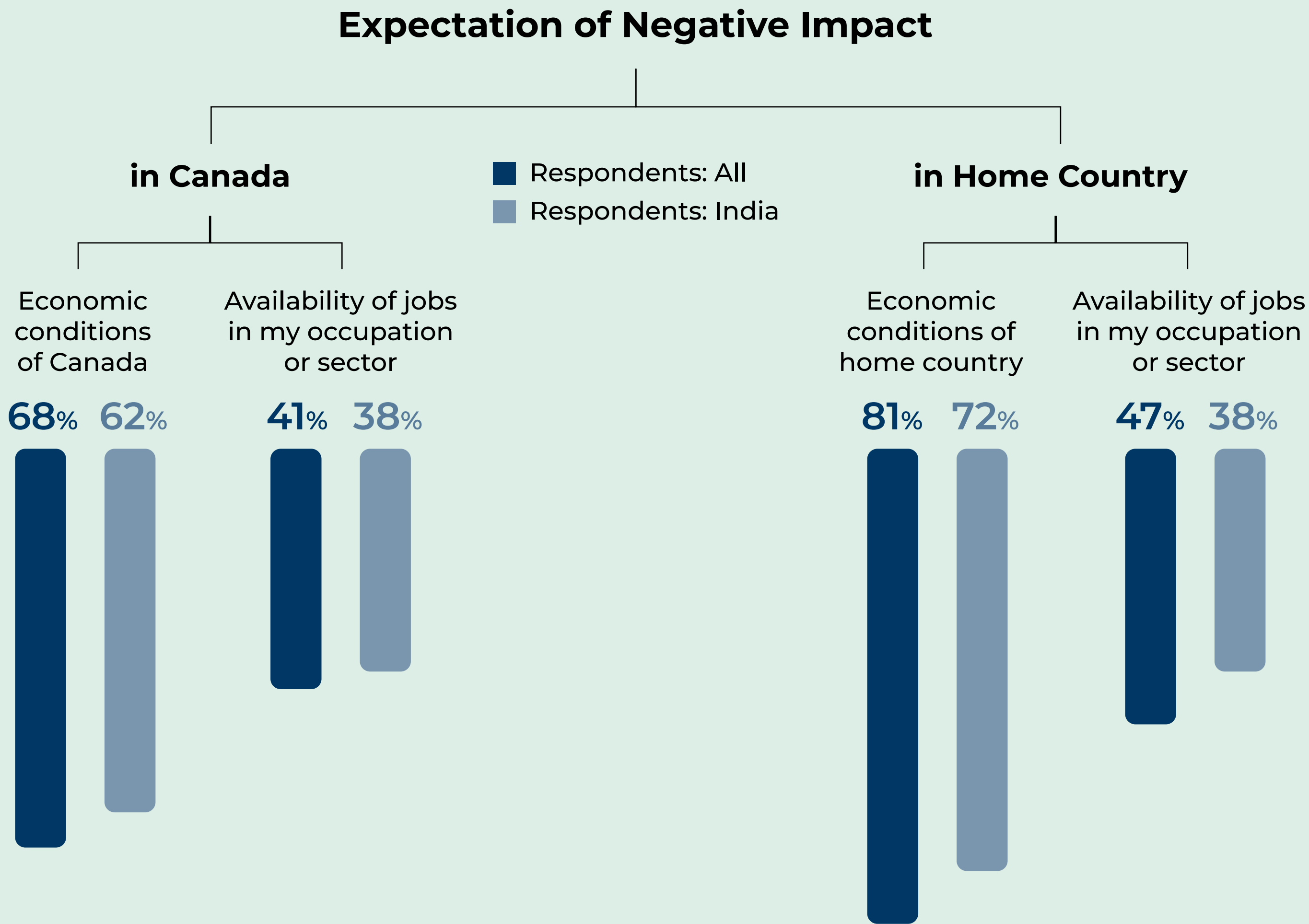
Results

Part III: Results

Expectations About the Economic Impact of COVID-19

More Respondents Expect a Negative Impact in Their Home Country Than in Canada

Respondents who reside in India, the largest source of economic immigrants to Canada through the Express Entry program, had somewhat less negative expectations of the economic impact on both Canada and their home country. However, an equal percentage expected a negative impact on jobs in their sector or occupation in India and in Canada.



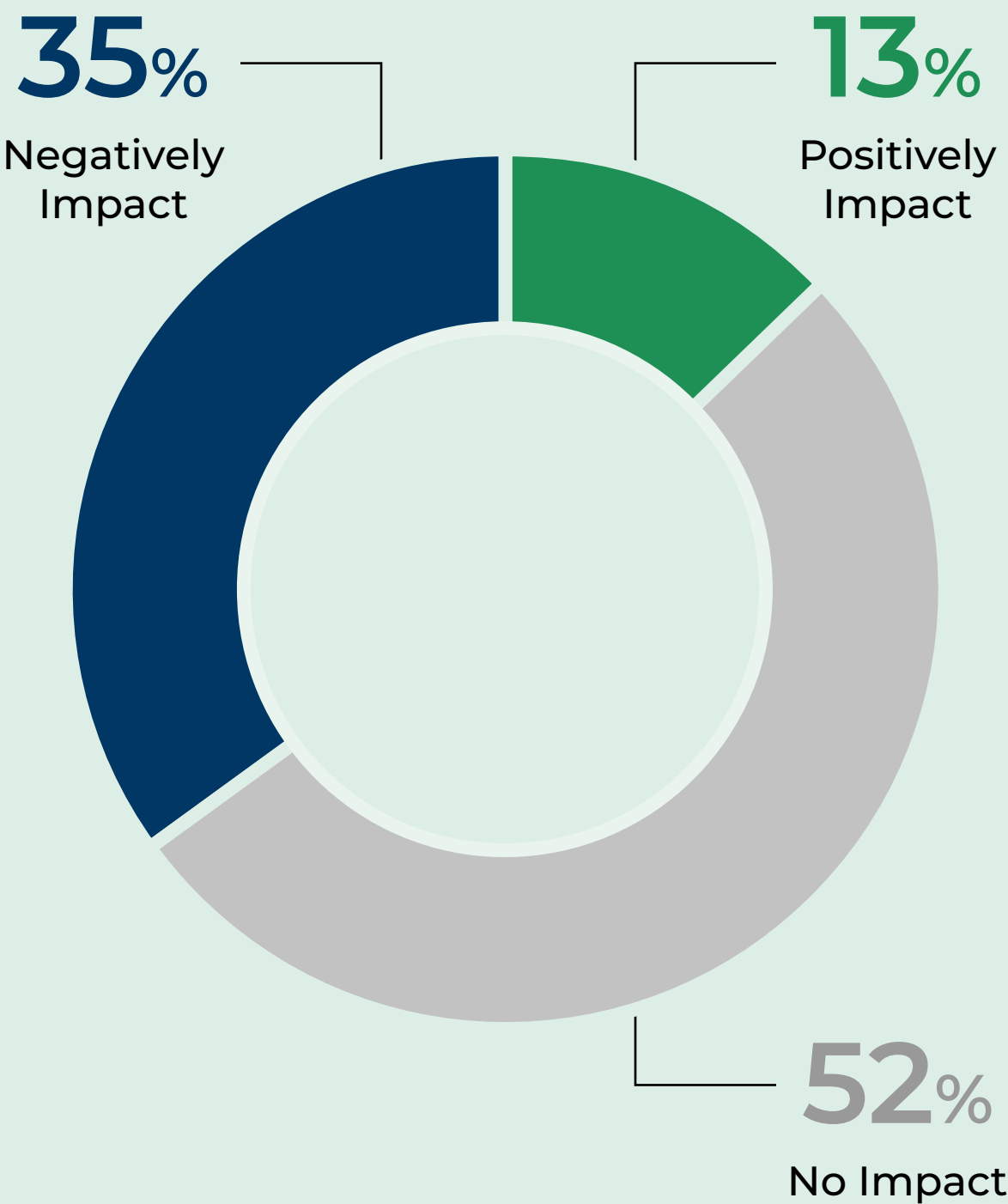
Note: “Positively Impact” combines “Very Positively Impact” and “Positively Impact.” “Negatively Impact” combines “Very Negatively Impact” and “Negatively Impact.” “Not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis.

Most Say Economic Hardship and Ability to Pay Costs of Immigration Will Not Have a Negative Impact or Reduce Interest

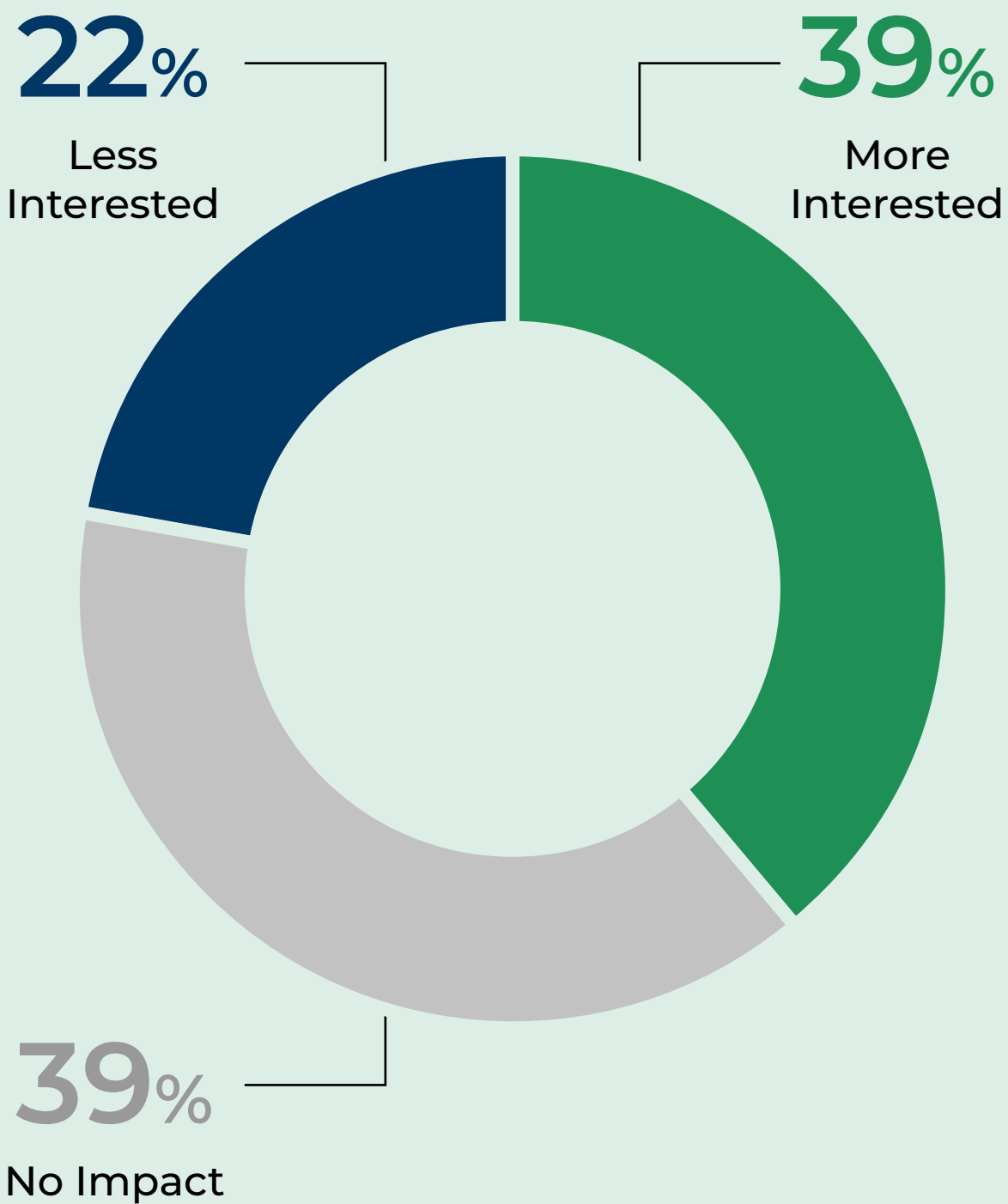
Just over half (52%) of prospective immigrants do not expect COVID-19 to impact their ability to pay for the costs of immigrating to Canada; however, more than a third (35%) do expect it to negatively impact their ability to pay the costs.

At the same time, more than a third of respondents (39%) say that personal and/or familial economic hardships would, in fact, make them more interested in immigrating.

Expected Impact of COVID-19 on Ability to Pay for the Costs of Immigrating to Canada



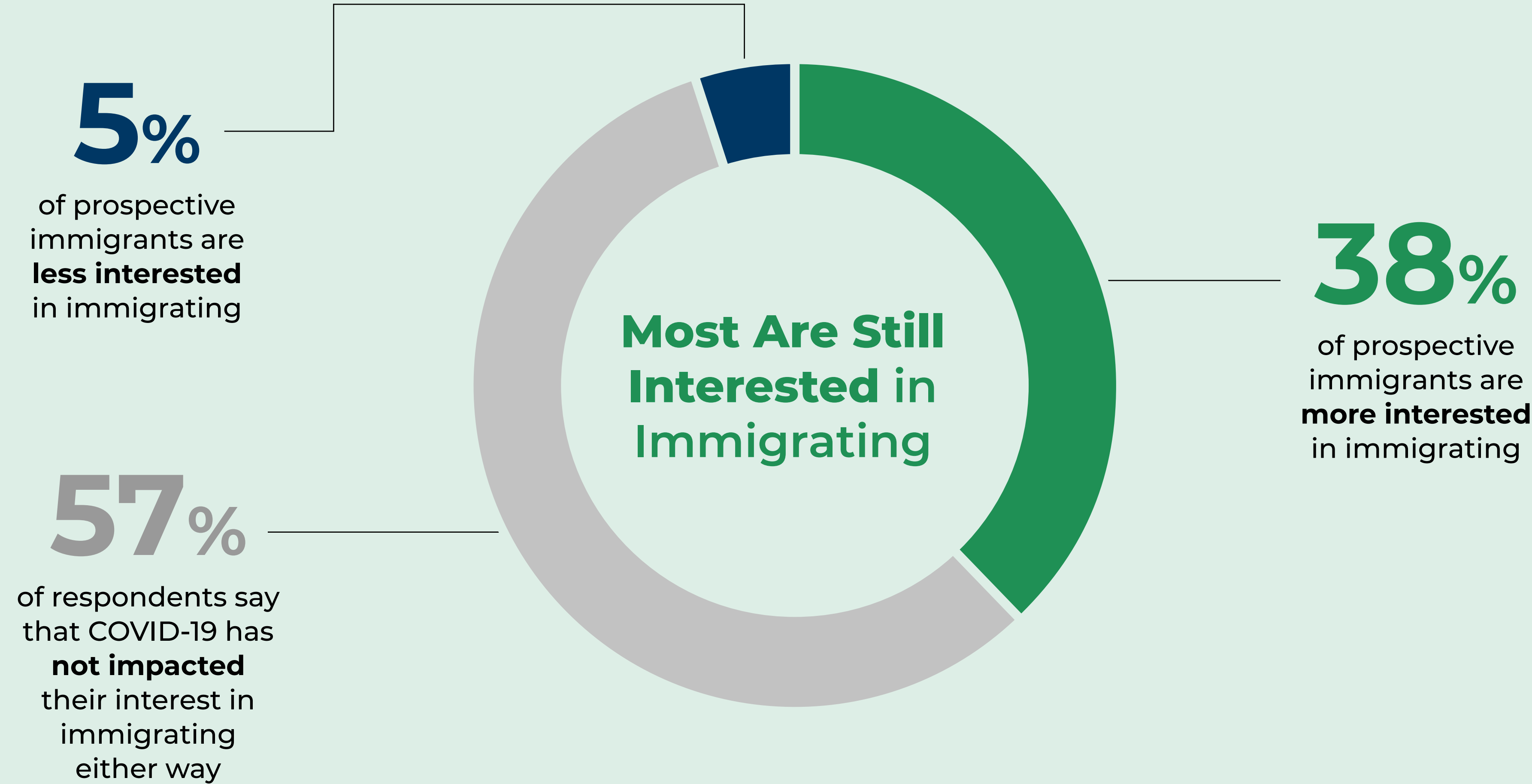
Impact on Interest in Immigrating to Canada Due to Personal and/or Familial Economic Hardship



Note: For a family immigrating from India, a source of a significant proportion of Express Entry applicants, WES estimates that a family of two adults and two children would spend C\$13,400 in direct immigration costs: application fees, medical expenses, language test fees, credential evaluation costs, and the fees of an immigration consultant.

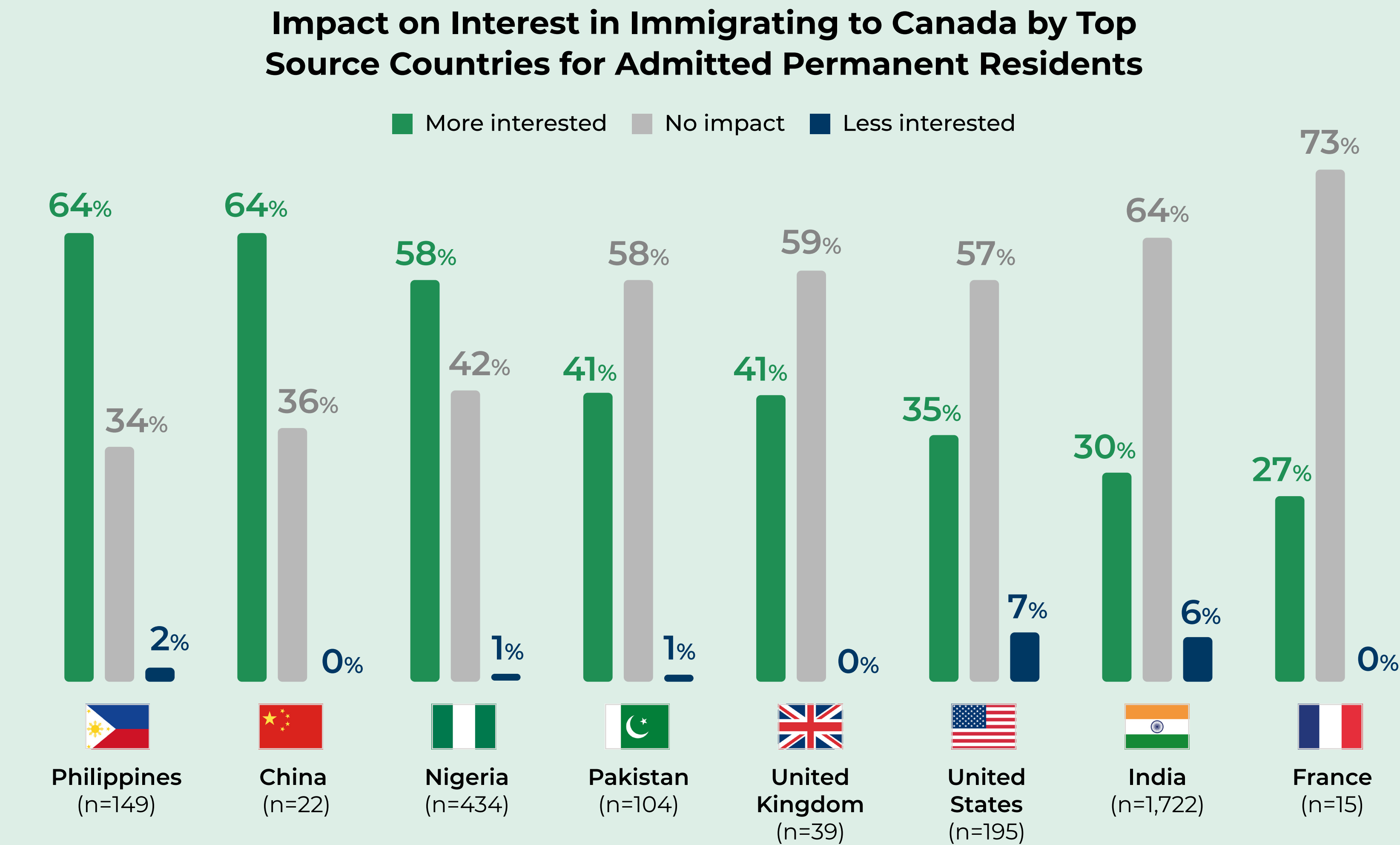
Part III: Results

Effect of Expectations on Interest in Immigrating



Most from Canada's Top Source Countries Are Still Interested in Immigrating

More than half of prospective immigrants from the Philippines, China, and Nigeria are more interested in immigrating to Canada as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

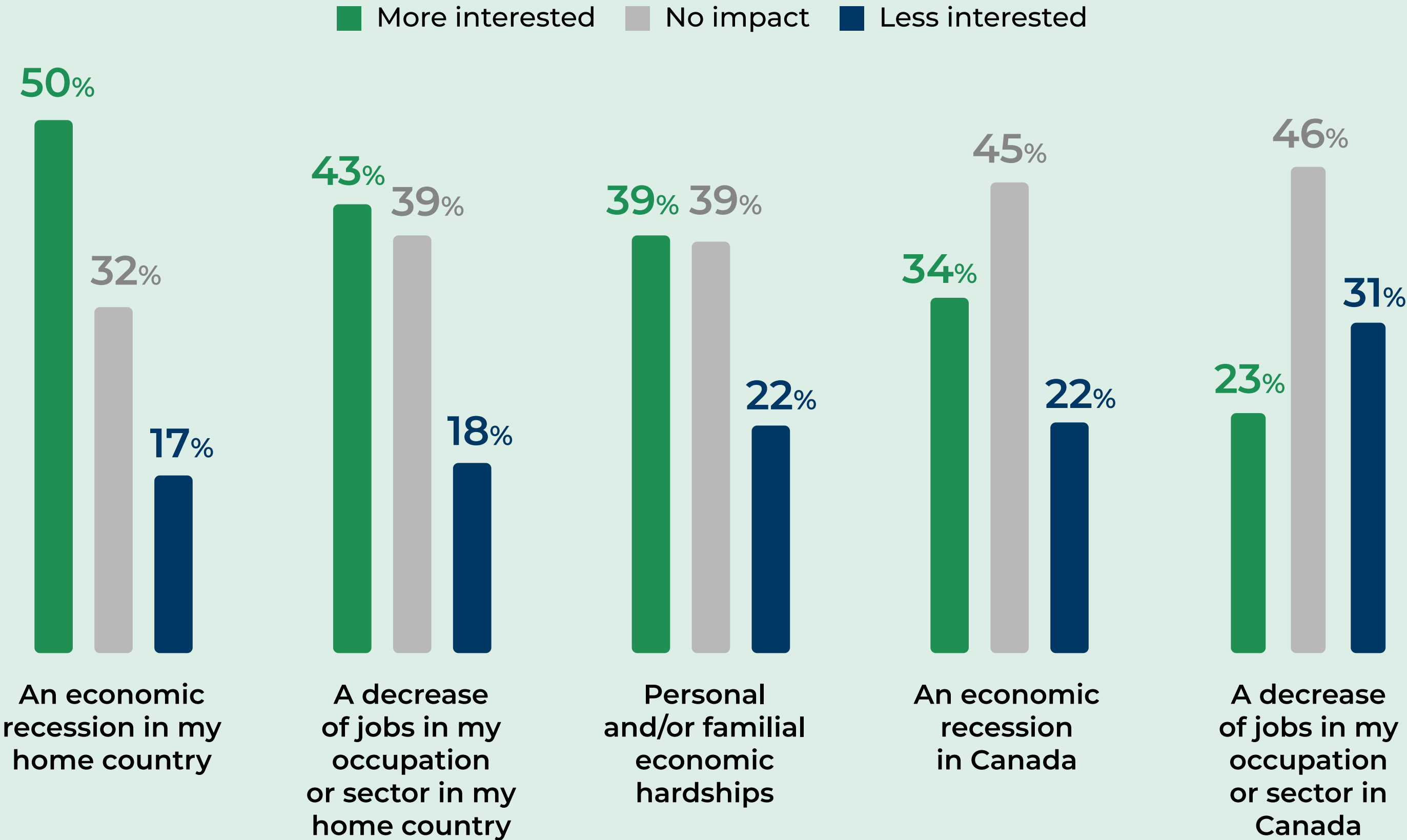


Note: Top source countries in 2018. Syria and Eritrea are also top source countries; however, there were no respondents residing in those countries at time of WES application.

Most Are Still Interested Despite Worsening Job Prospects

An economic recession (50%) or a decrease in the number of jobs in their occupation or sector (43%) in their home country would make many potential immigrants more interested in immigrating. However, almost a third (31%) reported that a decrease in the number of jobs in their sector/occupation in Canada would make them less interested in immigrating.

To What Degree Would the Following Situations Affect Your Interest in Immigrating to Canada?

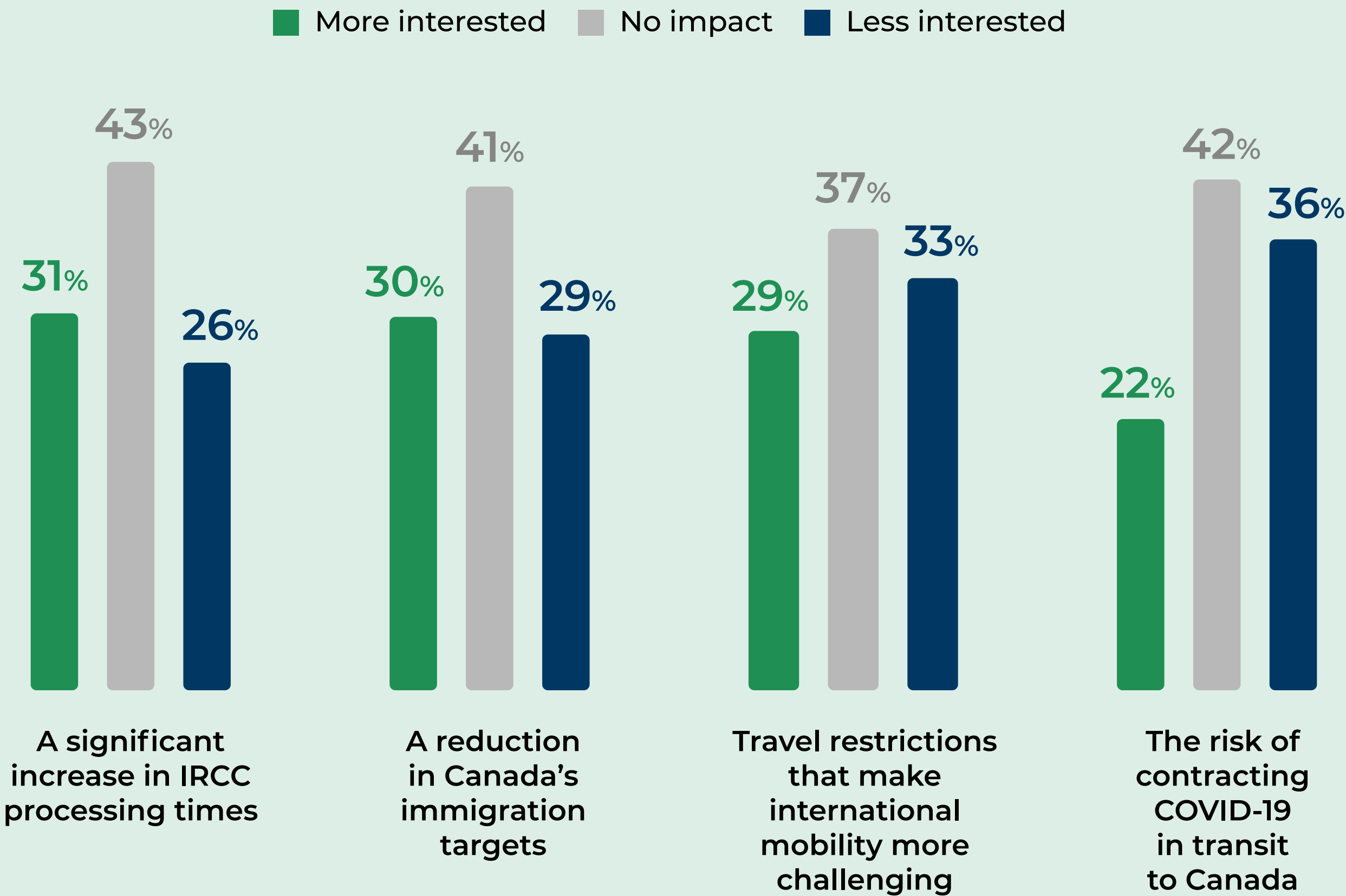


Note: “More Interested” combines “Significantly More Interested” and “Slightly More Interested.” “Less Interested” combines “Significantly Less Interested” and “Slightly Less Interested.” “Not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis. Percentages have been recalculated to reflect this change.

Most Are Still Interested Despite Potential Immigration Obstacles

More than 70% of respondents would still be as interested, or more interested, in immigrating if immigration targets were reduced or processing times increased. Over 60% are more interested or reported no impact on their interest as a result of travel risks or restrictions. However, a third did respond that these factors would make them less interested in immigrating.

To What Degree Would the Following Situations Affect Your Interest in Immigrating to Canada?

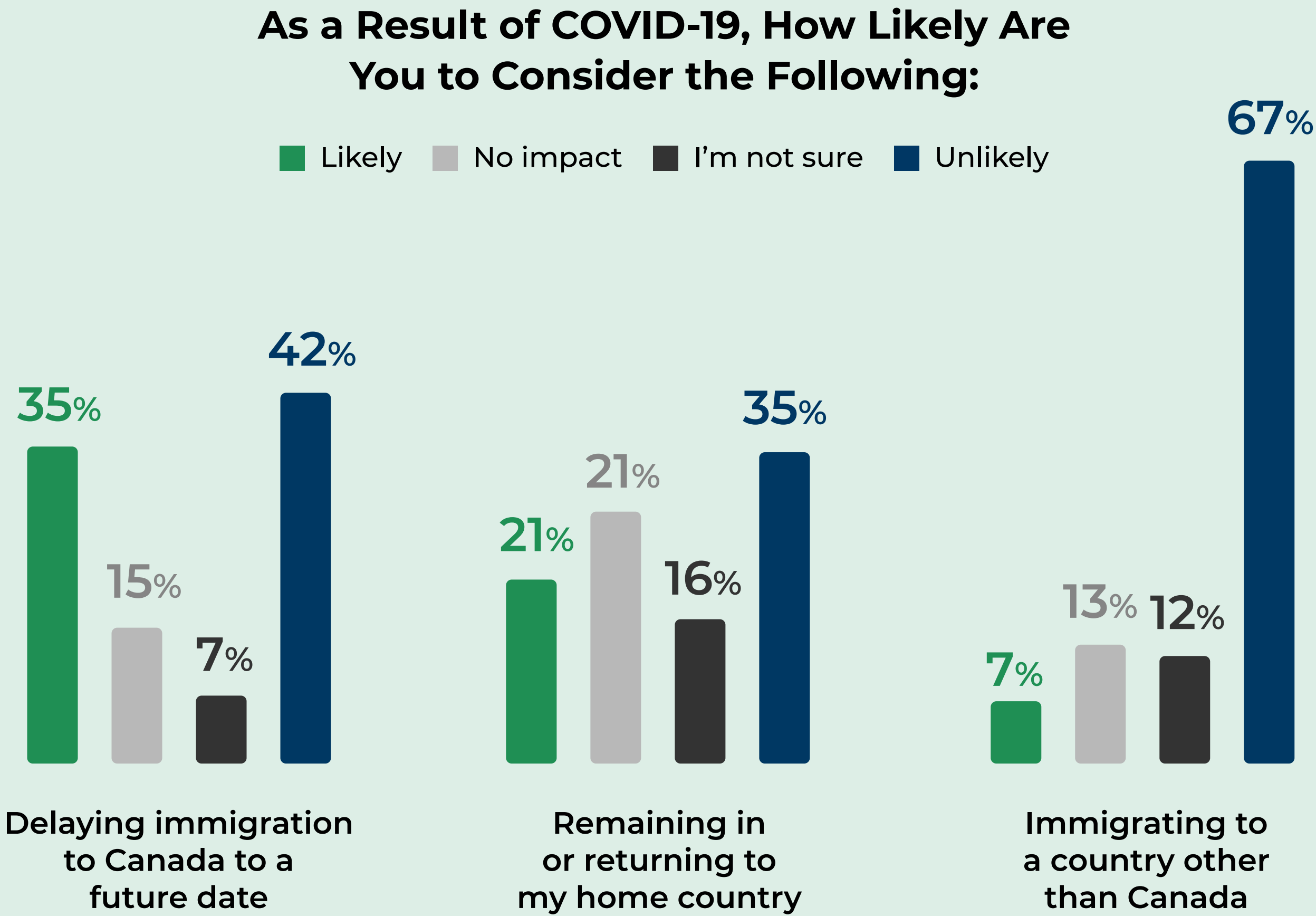


Note: “More Interested” combines “Significantly More Interested” and “Slightly More Interested.” “Less Interested” combines “Significantly Less Interested” and “Slightly Less Interested.” “Not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis. Percentages have been recalculated to reflect this change.

35%

of Prospective Immigrants Are Considering Delaying Immigration to Canada

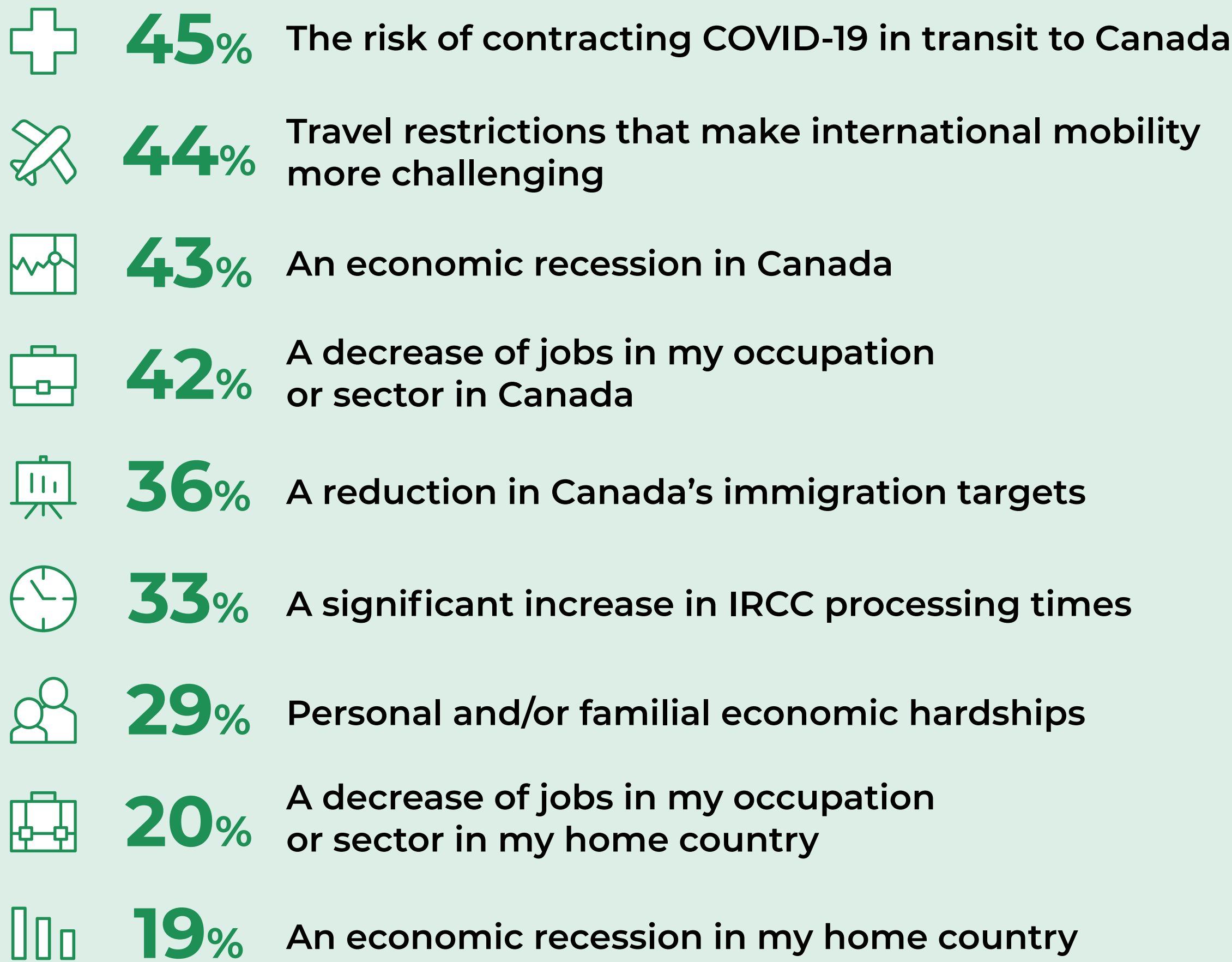
While just over a third of respondents are considering delaying immigration to Canada, only 7% are considering immigration to another country.



Travel Issues and Job Prospects in Canada Are Key Reasons for Considering a Delay

Among the 35% who are considering a delay, the top reasons are risks of travel, travel restrictions, a potential recession in Canada, and a decrease in the number of jobs in their occupation or sector in Canada.

Top Factors for Reduced Interest in Immigrating Among Those Considering a Delay



Note: “Less Interested” combines “Significantly Less Interested” and “Slightly Less Interested.” “Not applicable” responses were excluded from the analysis. Percentages have been recalculated to reflect this change.



Part IV:

Appendix

Survey Metrics

Total survey invitations sent: 62,197

Total responses collected: 6,613

Response rate: 10.6%

***Valid responses:** 4,615

Completion rate: 69.8%

Sampling method: Stratified random sampling

Data collection period: April 15–21, 2020

No incentive offered

Reporting: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding. *Some incomplete but valid responses were included in the analysis.

12 questions

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