For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC

by

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Abstract

Briefly defined, economic integration is the "gradual process by which new residents become active participants in the economic…affairs of a new homeland" (CCR, 1998). The literature suggests this takes 12-15 years for refugees in Canada (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017). Government assisted refugees often experience worse outcomes than other newcomers during this period. Several studies have investigated the divergence between groups to identify correlates with better outcomes, but few have evaluated practices that may rectify these differences. This paper attempts to fill this gap by evaluating policies for facilitating the integration of government assisted refugees in British Columbia. Three policy options are presented, which focus on labour market entry, income stability, independence, and skill development as foundations for long-term economic integration. As integration is complex and multifaceted, the options are designed to improve government assisted refugees' standing within five years rather than tackle all the challenges to integration refugees face.

Keywords: Government Assisted Refugees; Economic Integration; Employment; Resettlement

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List of Acronyms

BC	British Columbia
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
PSR/s	Privately Sponsored Refugee/s
GAR/s	Government Assisted Refugee/s
BVOR/s	Blended Visa Office-Referred Refugee/s
IRCC	Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada
NGOs	Non-government organizations
SPOs	Service Providing Organizations
RTEP	Refugee Training and Employment Program
RAP	Resettlement Assistance Program
PES	Public Employment Service (Sweden)

Executive Summary

The paper starts with an overview of the refugee system in Canada, highlighting the three different refugee resettlement streams in the country: the government assisted refugees (GARs) stream, the privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) stream, and the blended visa office-referred refugees (BVORs) stream. From January 2015 to September 2017, more than 88,000 refugees were resettled with GARs and PSRs accounting for roughly the same share of that total. However, in British Columbia, nearly twice as many GARs were resettled as PSRs. Overall, GARs accounted for 4,145 of the 7,375 refugees resettled in the province during the period.

The economic outcomes of GARs are compared to those of PSRs. Nationally, I identify worse outcomes for GARs across three indicators: income levels, employment rates, and social assistance rates. I find that GARs significantly lag PSRs during their first five years of residence and that it takes roughly 10 years for them to catch up to PSRs, overall. The outcomes of GARs in British Columbia mirror those of their national counterparts; focusing on cohorts arriving in 2002, 2005, and 2009, I find that less than 70% of each of the cohorts were able to find employment by the end of their fifth year in Canada. Each cohort had incomes of approximately $17,000 by the end of year five as well, which is just half the provincial average. This demonstrates that GARs in the province are not achieving economic integration at the same rates as other refugees.

To understand the slower economic integration of GARs relative to other newcomers, I explore the literature and find two types of explanations. The first is that characteristics common to GARs are correlated with their poor integration. This includes low levels of education, a lack of job-ready skills, and poor English language proficiency. The second is that external barriers hamper their integration. This involves a lack of credential recognition, less access to social and human capital, a job process not suited to their needs, a lack of opportunity, and being encouraged to learn English before searching for a job. Overall, 66% of GARs in BC who are not currently employed say they are actively looking for a job.

A case study of three European countries, Norway, Sweden, and Germany, is used to identify overlapping practices related to timely economic integration. From the case study, I find four overlapping practices. First, all three cases use private sector job

placements. Second, each has supports in place to ensure refugees have access to employment services. This ranges from individualized career plans to leveraging technology to raise service awareness. Third, each has credential recognition measures in place that allow those with lost or destroyed credentials to receive some level of recognition. Fourth, all three countries only have one resettlement stream in place.

Based on these practices, three policy options are generated that focus on improving GARs' outcomes during their first five years in the province. This includes increasing funding for direct-hire job placements, supporting the development and implementation of a settlement app that helps connect GARs to employment services, and expanding the BVORs stream while introducing qualifications passports for GARs. The options are evaluated across five criteria: effectiveness, equity, cost, administrative complexity, and stakeholder acceptance. Effectiveness is given more weight than the other criteria as it touches most directly on economic integration, which is the objective of intervention. The strengths of direct-hire job placements are its effectiveness and strong levels of stakeholder support. The weaknesses are its cost and complexity. Only some GARs each year would benefit from the policy as well, which is also a drawback. Alternatively, the strengths of the settlement app are its low cost, its high level of equity, and the relative ease of implementation. The trade-off is that the app does not perform as well on the effectiveness criterion. Expanding the BVORs stream and introducing qualifications passports for GARs does not perform as well as either of the other options on most of the criteria. In particular, the impact on employment outcomes is uncertain. Based on this evaluation, I recommend increasing the number of direct-hire job placements available to GARs as well as supporting the creation and administration of a settlement app that would help connect them with employment services.

The recommended approach seeks to ensure a greater number of GARs are assisted with their economic integration. Direct-hire job placements provide a valuable opportunity to support these efforts in BC. Together with the implementation of an app that allows GARs to design their own resettlement path and connect with a range of services, this could significantly impact long term employment outcomes for the group. This approach recognizes the individualized nature of integration and provides greater flexibility in ensuring GARs can be agents in their own resettlement.

Chapter 1.   Introduction

Economic integration is a challenge for refugees everywhere. The literature suggests that where refugee unemployment is persistent, it is not driven by a desire to draw benefits from the welfare state but rather a lack of opportunity (Ott, 2013). Policies to address integration range from language training to job placements to restructuring labour policy (Aiyer et al., 2016; Kirkegaard, 2016).

Canada is not immune to these challenges. The literature suggests it takes 12-15 years for refugees to integrate into the Canadian labour market (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017). During this period, government assisted refugees fare worse than other groups. There are several supports aimed at speeding up this process. The most important ones are provided by the Resettlement Assistance Program and Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada's Settlement Program. Nonetheless, impoverishment remains a problem in their initial years of residence (IRCC, 2016d).

While the financial burden of newcomers ranges from $450 to $6,051 per year, it is much higher for government assisted refugees at $9,915 in their first year; these costs are sustained until they achieve self-dependence (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Dhital, 2015; IRCC, 2016d). Fostering integration is needed to reduce the fiscal burden of refugees. More importantly, addressing slow integration is necessary for humanitarian reasons, recognizing our commitment to the group.

Where Canadian studies have examined correlates with better outcomes, they have failed to evaluate specific integration policies. In this paper, I evaluate policies for facilitating the timely economic integration of government assisted refugees (GARs) in British Columbia. I conduct a case study analysis of three European countries, Sweden, Norway, and Germany, to identify practices related to successful integration. A literature review supplemented with expert interviews is used to test the validity of the findings. I then assess the applicability of the findings in BC and use the results to determine policy options. There are two key research objectives: to develop an understanding of how governments can facilitate timely economic integration; and to provide recommendations to reduce the time it takes for refugees to become integrated in BC.

Given the identified shortcomings, three policy options are presented. The first is increasing funding for direct-hire job placements. This is supplemented with multi-year funding arrangements for these programs. The second is supporting the introduction and administration of an app designed to help connect refugees to employment supports. The final option is to increase the size of the blended visa office-referred refugee stream and to introduce 'qualifications passports' for GARs. The options are evaluated and compared using five criteria. Increasing funding levels for direct-hire job placement programs is the recommended course of action. Introducing a settlement app is also recommended.

Chapter 2 in this paper provides an overview of the refugee system in Canada, highlighting the major supports and the magnitude of recent arrivals. Chapter 3 uses Statistics Canada data to explore GARs' outcomes to date. Chapter 4 provides a literature review on challenges to economic integration, focusing on characteristics common to GARs and external factors as barriers. Chapter 5 addresses the policy problem and the key stakeholders. Chapter 6 develops the primary methodology while Chapter 7 undertakes the analysis. The secondary methodology is provided in chapter 8. Chapter 9 details the long and short-term objectives; the system used for evaluating the policies as well as the options themselves are also presented. Chapter 10 handles the policy evaluation. Chapter 11 provides the recommendation and several implementation considerations. Finally, chapter 12 offers a report summary.

Chapter 2.   The Canadian Refugee System

This chapter presents the Canadian refugee system. It includes an outline of Canada's commitment, a description of the resettlement program, an overview of supports, and a discussion of magnitude. There is also a brief comment on recent arrivals in British Columbia (BC).

2.1. Legislation on Refugees

In 1969, Canada acceded to the United Nations (UN) Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, formalizing its commitment to refugees (CCR, n.d). Shortly thereafter, in 1976, the government implemented the Immigration Act, which served as the national framework for refugee protection until it was replaced by the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act in 2002. This is the current legislation governing refugee treatment (Minister of Justice, 2017).

2.2. Types of Resettled Refugees

Refugees arrive to Canada in one of two ways.[1] The first is landing in the country and making an asylum claim, where the validity of each claim is determined by the Immigration and Refugee Board. The second is resettlement from overseas, where refugees are referred to visa officers by either the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a designated referral organization, or a private sponsorship group. Eligible refugees fall into one of two classes. The first class are Convention refugees, as defined under the UN Convention on Refugees; the second class are the Country of Asylum Class, which includes those in refugee-like situations who do not qualify as Convention refugees. Visa officers review the files of those referred to them and select refugees for resettlement. Those selected are issued a Canadian visa and arrive in Canada as permanent residents. There are three resettlement streams that depend on who will sponsor a refugee's resettlement: the privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) stream; the government assisted refugees (GARs) stream; and the blended visa office-referred refugees (BVORs) stream. Next, a description of each stream is given.

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[1] Information from IRCC (2016a) and IRCC (2017a)

First, PSRs may be either Convention refugees or Country of Asylum Class. Their resettlement is facilitated by a private sponsor during their first year of residence or until they can support themselves.[2] There are two ways a sponsor is matched with a PSR. The first is for a sponsor to suggest the name of a refugee to the Resettlement Operations Centre for approval. The second is for Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenships Canada (IRCC) to match a refugee to a sponsor. Once PSRs arrive, sponsors provide care, lodging, settlement assistance, and financial and in-kind support during their first twelve months of residence. PSRs are admitted under the principle of additionality, meaning they are resettled in addition to GARs.

Second, GARs are Convention refugees referred to Canada and supported entirely by the federal government for one year. During this period, supports include accommodation, clothing, food, help finding employment and becoming self-supporting, and settlement assistance. Financial assistance is provided by the federal government while settlement supports are delivered by government funded non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and service providing organizations (SPOs). GARs are typically the most vulnerable displaced persons. To ensure services are accessible, they are resettled in one of 27 communities, each with specialized programs for GARs in place.

Third, BVORs are Convention refugees that the federal government matches with a private sponsor. Initially, they are referred to Canada by the UNHCR and are then redirected into the stream by visa officers. Once resettled, the government provides income support for their first 6 months of residence while the private sponsor provides financial support for the next six months. The sponsor also provides settlement support for their initial year of residence. This stream was introduced in 2013.

2.3. Domestic Supports for Refugees

Until the 1970s, resettlement was primarily a provincial responsibility with program expenditures dependent on their willingness to spend (Papp-Zubrits, 1980). The federal government expanded its role by introducing several integration and settlement programs throughout the 1970s (IRCC, 2016d). These programs were consolidated into IRCC's Settlement Program in 2008, which is the main support

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[2] See Appendix A for different types of sponsors

structure for all immigrants (IRCC, 2016d). The Settlement Program is federally funded; per the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the design, delivery, and administration of settlement and integration services may be devolved to provincial governments in a bilateral agreement (Minister of Justice, 2017). Since 2014, the federal government has had the responsibility for these aspects of the Settlement Program in BC (Dickson et.al., 2013).[3] Services are delivered by SPOs, such as non-profits, NGOs, and educational institutions, that liaise directly with the federal government (IRCC, 2016a).

2.3.1. Federal supports available to all refugees

The Settlement Program provides five services to all newcomers for their first three years of residence (IRCC, 2016d). The first is information and orientation services (CIC, 2014). The second is literacy and language training, including the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada program (IRCC, 2017d). The third is employment support including job search orientations, employer connections, and skill development (CIC, 2014). The fourth type is community connections. This includes community bridging programs, cross-cultural interaction activities, and connections to public institutions (CIC, 2014). The fifth type includes services such as onsite childcare, crisis counselling, and transportation (IRCC, 2016d).

The federal government has also taken steps to formalize the provision of greater community level support; as part of the Settlement Program, the Community Partnership Settlement Plan was implemented in 2016 (Government of Canada, 2016a). The plan builds on frameworks such as Local Immigration Partnerships and the Immigrant Employment Council, which aim to leverage multi-stakeholder arrangements to improve outcomes (IRCC, n.d.).

2.3.2. Provincial supports available to all refugees

Refugees may also access a range of provincial supports. This includes several supports aimed at offsetting living costs such as the Child Care Subsidy, healthcare through the Medical Services Plan with fees waived for the first year, the Basic Family

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[3] BC was responsible until the Canada-BC Immigration Agreement was canceled on April 1, 2014

Bonus, and the Early Childhood Tax Benefit.[4] Other supports focus more directly on economic integration, including several employment services such as short-term job readiness and skill development programs, and employment programs (i.e. WorkBC and Immigrant Employment Council of BC). In response to the refugee influx, the province has provided $1 million for both the Canada-BC Job Grant, which provides training and job placements, and the Refugee Readiness Fund. This finances program expansion and has been used to establish five regional refugee readiness teams as well as the Refugee Readiness Hub: a website for service providers and individuals assisting with integration. There are also industry partnerships that provide support. MOSAIC and the BC Alliance for Manufacturing offer the Refugee Training and Employment Program: a two-month program with a guaranteed job placement and ongoing support.

2.3.3. Supports for GARs

The Resettlement Assistance Program is for GARs and provides supports for their first year of residence (IRCC, 2016d). Services are delivered by federally funded service providing organizations (IRCC, 2016a). In BC, there are seven designated service providers (IRCC, 2016b).

The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) has two components: immediate and essential services, and income support (IRCC, 2016a). GARs may access several services as soon as they arrive including: reception services at the airport, temporary accommodations and help finding permanent accommodations, life skills training, financial information, and referrals to public services (IRCC, 2016d). These services are available for their first six weeks in Canada (IRCC, 2016a). Income support is provided for one year or until GARs achieve self-sufficiency, whichever comes first, and consists of a one-time start up allowance and monthly support based on provincial social insurance rates (IRCC, 2016d). Adults receiving supports are expected to actively pursue self-sufficiency, meaning they should be enrolled in language or job training programs, be seeking employment, or be employed (CIC, 2015). Once their support period expires (12 months after arrival), GARs transition to Settlement Program services. Those needing income support may move to provincial income assistance.

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[4] Information from Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training (2016b) and Welcome BC (2017)

2.4. Magnitude of Resettled Refugees

From 2005 to 2014, refugees made up between 9 to 14% of all permanent resident admissions in Canada per year. During the same period, GARs accounted for the greatest share of refugees with 70,315 resettled (IRCC, 2016d). For the other two categories, PSRs and BVORs, 43,920 and 330 were resettled in the same time frame (IRCC, 2016d). The influx of Syrian refugees has changed these trends with an increase in the share of PSRs. From January 2015 to September 2017, PSRs made up the greatest share of resettled refugees followed closely by GARs (see Figure 1).
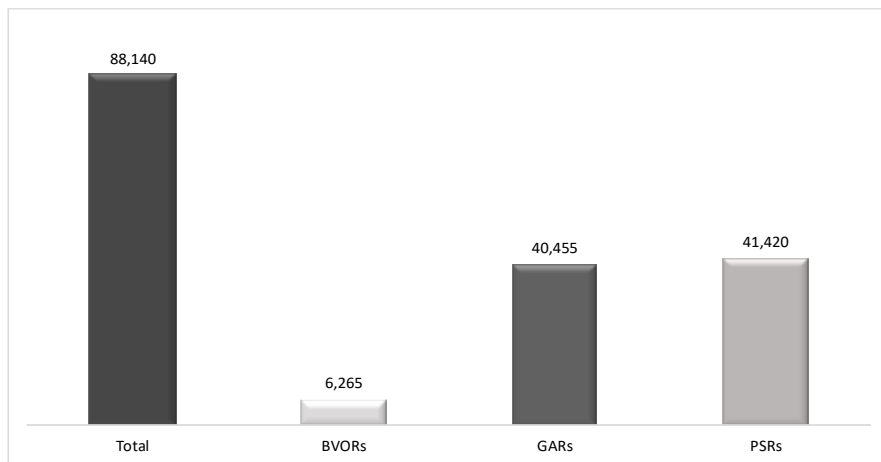
Figure 1.   Refugees resettled in Canada, January 2015 – September 2017
Source: IRCC (2017e)

However, the number of GARs resettled in BC during the period was almost twice that of PSRs (see Figure 2).
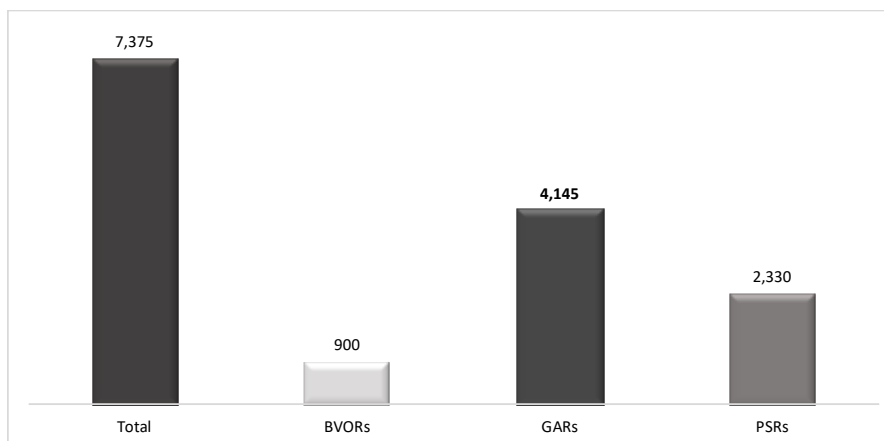
Figure 2.   Refugees resettled in BC, January 2015 – September 2017
Source: IRCC (2017e)

Resettlement was concentrated in only a few areas with a plurality of all groups destined for the Lower Mainland (see Table 1).

Table 1.   Resettlement by CMA, BC, January 2015 – September 2017

CMA	BVORs	GARs	PSRs	Total
Vancouver	270	3,590	1,930	5,790
Victoria	100	380	120	600
Abbotsford-Mission	70	80	15	160
Kelowna	50	25	20	110
Nanaimo	30	60	35	110
Other	375	0	260	600
Total	900	4,145	2,330	7,375

Source: IRCC (2017e)

Of the 4,145 GARs resettled, 87% were resettled in Vancouver. This accounts for the location of RAP service providers, which are concentrated in the Lower Mainland. The BC government has set an annual resettlement target of approximately 1,200 GARs beginning in 2018 (ISS of BC, 2018).

2.5. Profile of Recent Arrivals (GARs) in BC

Preliminary data of refugees resettled between January 2015 and June 2017 provides an overview of recent GARs in BC.[5] Including those with no formal education, 86% have secondary education or less; although this is in part explained by the share of children, only 53% are dependents, suggesting a substantial incidence of working age refugees with little education. This is reinforced by low skills levels among those over the age of fifteen, 72% of whom are classified as new workers. Finally, 80% speak neither English nor French. Service uptake is also reported. Information and orientation services were the most used support, with 96% of users accessing the service at least once. Needs assessments and referrals were also heavily used (82%) as well as community connections (57%). Only 10% used an employment service, which could reflect access and awareness issues.

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[5] Information from IRCC (2017f)

Chapter 3. The Integration of GARs in Canada

This chapter evaluates the economic integration of GARs in Canada and in BC. Briefly defined, economic integration is the "gradual process by which new residents become active participants in the economic…affairs of a new homeland" (CCR, 1998). This takes between 12 and 15 years for refugees in Canada (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017). In the short term, successful integration involves employment and independence; in the long term, it includes career advancement, income parity, and working in a field of prior employment (CCR, 1998; Ott, 2013).

3.1. Integration Outcomes for GARs in Canada

To understand the effectiveness of economic integration with respect to GARs, it is useful to compare their short and long-term outcomes to PSRs'. This method is used extensively in the literature and has revealed stark differences (DeVoretz et. al., 2004; Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017). Using Statistics Canada data, I employ it to consider how GARs fare in Canada. Outcomes for all immigrants are also included to understand how refugees fare compared to other newcomers more generally.

3.1.1. Employment rates

First, employment rates are given to provide context on the average time it takes GARs to enter the labour market. Ideally, year one serves as a transition whereby RAP assistance facilitates integration; however, 79% of GARs do not find employment prior to the end of their support period, significantly higher than the 34% of PSRs (IRCC, 2016a). This is a problem as RAP income supports are inadequate for meeting essential needs (IRCC, 2016a). Moreover, difficulty finding employment persists. After two years, only 47% of GARs report employment compared to 69% of PSRs while after five years, 58% and 69% respectively do (IRCC, 2016d; IRCC, 2016a). Figure 3 shows how employment rates differ between GARs and PSRs who landed in 2009 over their first five years of residence as well as how both perform relative to other newcomers.[6]

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[6] The 2009 cohort is the most recent cohort with five years of residence and data available
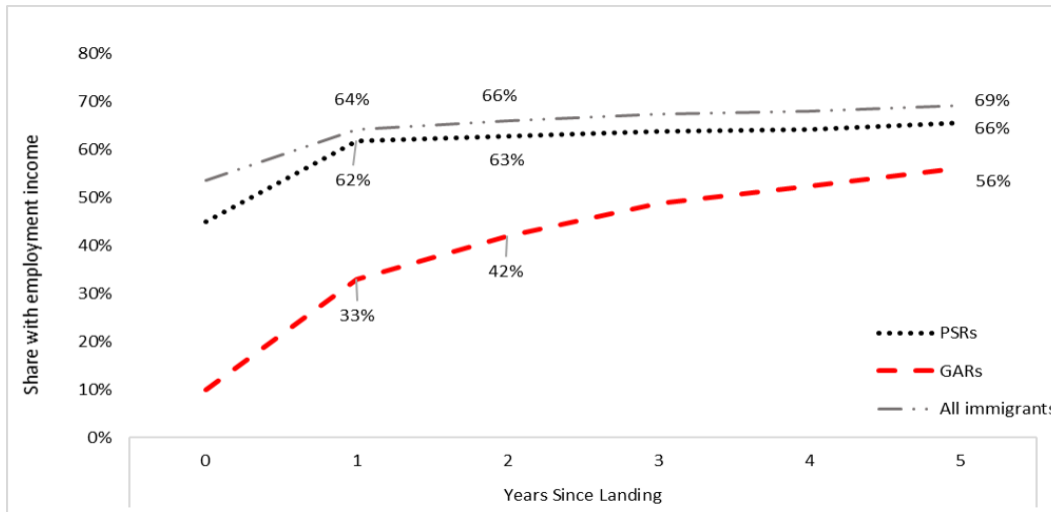
Figure 3.   Share reporting employment income, GARs vs. PSRs, 2009 cohorts
Source: Statistics Canada (2014a)

This demonstrates that for those who arrived in 2009, there is a 10% difference in employment rates after five years, which is consistent with other IRCC findings. PSRs also more closely resemble other immigrants during the period.

3.1.2. Income

Second, income trends illustrate how GARs fare once employed. Past research demonstrates that GARs consistently have lower incomes than PSRs (IRCC, 2016a). Figure 4 illustrates how income differs for their first five years of residence.
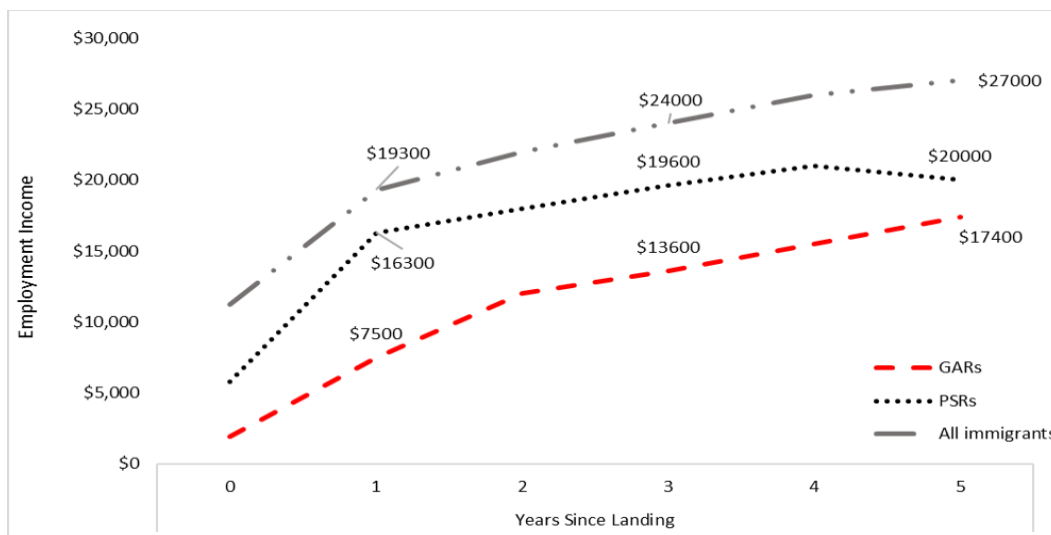
Figure 4.   Median employment income, GARs vs. PSRs, 2009 cohorts
Source: Statistics Canada (2014a)

For the 2009 cohort, the earnings gap increases significantly during the first year of residence, reaching roughly $9,000 relative to PSRs and $12,000 relative to all newcomers. After four years, earnings begin to converge more quickly. However, Wilkinson and Garcea (2017) find that GARs have the lowest incomes, $18,000, of any immigrant class five years after arrival, and, $6,000 dollars less than PSRs, suggesting that the gap is sustained for a longer period. This is evident in Figure 5, which shows earnings for those arriving between 2002 and 2012.
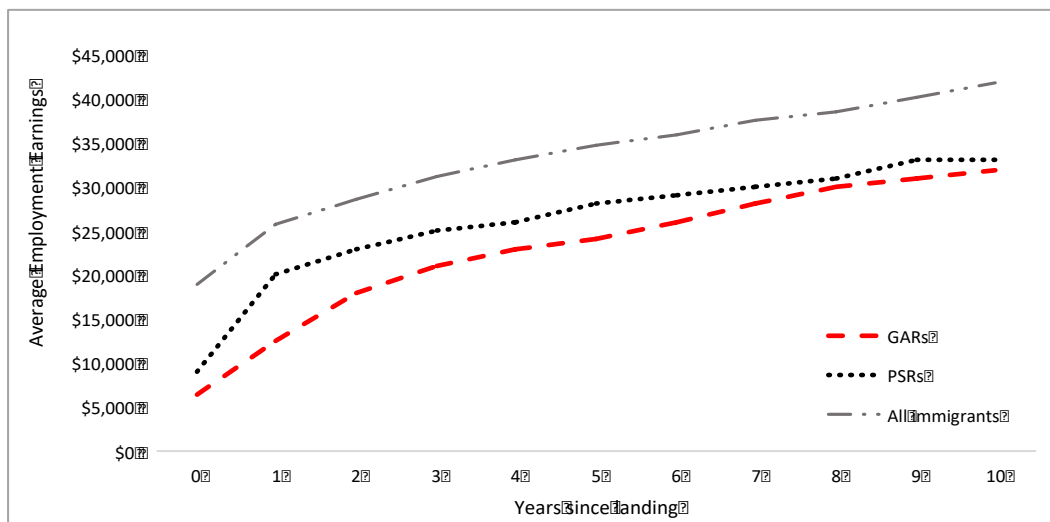
Figure 5.   Average employment earnings, GARs vs. PSRs, 2002 – 2012
Source: IRCC (2016a); Statistics Canada (2014a)

Since the enactment of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, the convergence in earnings has slowed. While GARs used to catch up to PSRs after 6 years, it now takes 10 years for them to reach a comparable income, though both groups lag other immigrants during the period (IRCC, 2011; IRCC, 2016a).

3.1.3. Social Assistance Rates

Third, reliance on social assistance is highlighted, drawing attention to GARs' financial dependence. 93% rely on social assistance in their first year of residence; RAP support is classified as social assistance, so this is expected (IRCC, 2016a). However, long-term reliance is persistent. At the two-year point, the incidence of social assistance among GARs is 73.5% compared to 33.5% among PSRs (IRCC, 2016d). It is markedly lower after five years but 41% continue to rely on it compared to 28% of PSRs (IRCC, 2016a). This reliance may be seen in three cohorts arriving in 2002, 2005, and 2009,

with the most recent group more dependent up to five years after arrival, and each of the cohorts far more reliant than the average cohort of PSRs (see Figure 6).[7] [8]
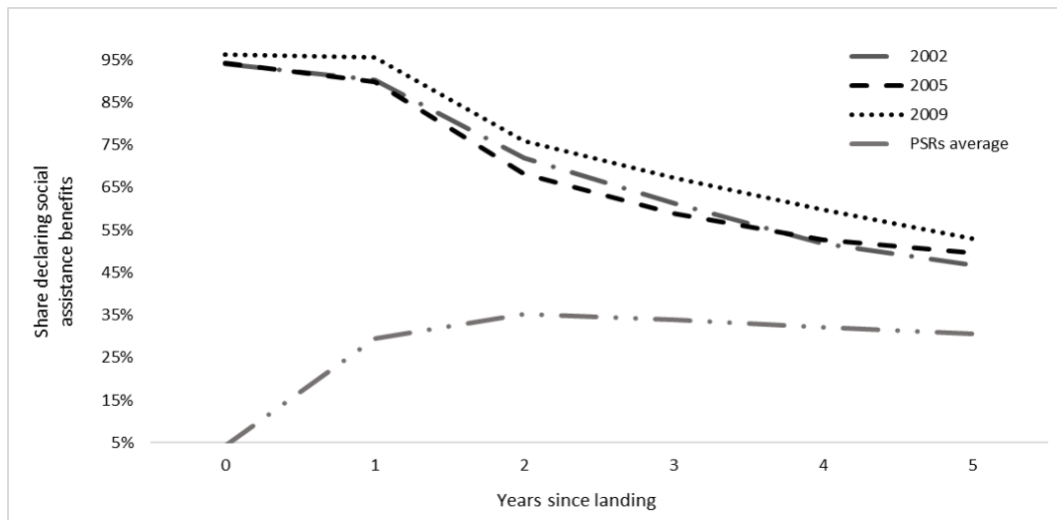
Figure 6.   GARs declaring social assistance, 2002, 2005, 2009 cohorts
Source: Statistics Canada (2014a)

DeVoretz et al. (2004) find that GARs reliant on social assistance have total incomes well below the LICO. One examined cohort had an average total income of only 70% of the LICO, which is a sign of endemic impoverishment. Moreover, 65% use food banks compared to 29% of PSRs, signalling a higher incidence of poverty (IRCC, 2016a).

3.2. Integration Experiences in BC

My focus is on BC, where the economic integration of GARs mirrors the national experience. Regarding employment rates over the first five years of residence for those who arrived in 2002, 2005, and 2009, Figure 7 shows how long it takes for a plurality of GARs to enter the workforce.

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[7] The cohorts are chosen to show outcomes over time

[8] PSRs average refers to the average for the 2002, 2005, 2009 cohorts
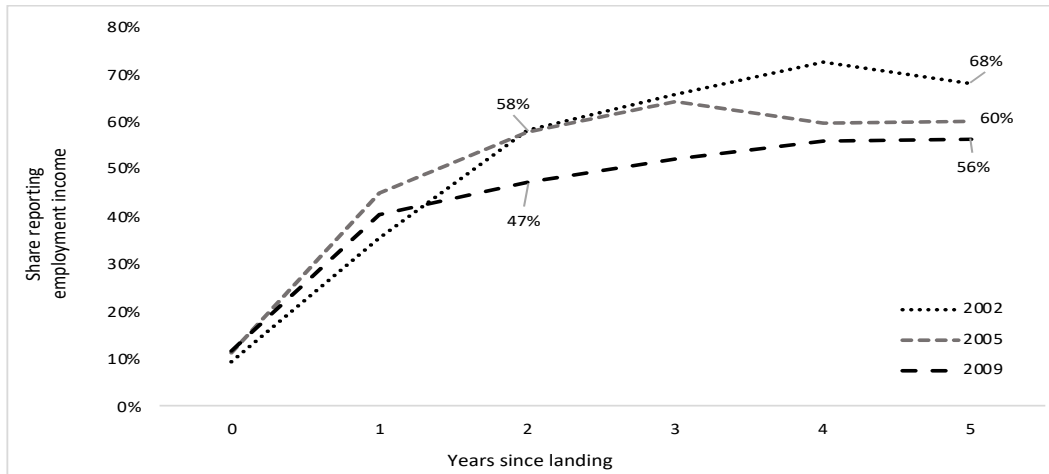
Figure 7. **BC GARs reporting employment income, 2002, 2005, 2009 cohorts**
Source: Statistics Canada (2014b)

After five years, less than 70% of each of the cohorts found employment. More recently, a survey of GARs in Vancouver found that only 17% obtain employment nearly one year after resettlement (ISS of BC, 2016). Another survey found that 84% are not working while 66% are actively looking for work (ISS of BC, 2017).

Employed GARs from the same cohorts also have low earnings. Their median income is roughly $17,000 after five years, which is just half the provincial average (Figure 8).
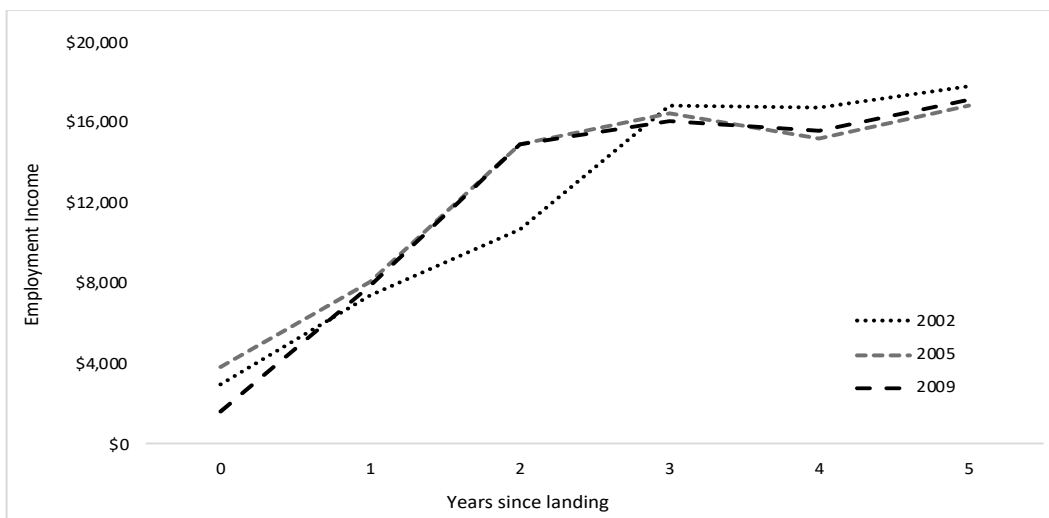
Figure 8. **Median employment income, BC GARs, 2002, 2005, 2009 cohorts**
Source: Statistics Canada (2014b)

As seen in Figure 8, each cohort had incomes of roughly $8,000 after 1 year of residence. This helps explain why the primary concern of many surveyed GARs is income security, especially as RAP support comes to an end (ISS of BC, 2017).

Finally, reliance on social assistance is the highest early on for GARs due to the inclusion of RAP income support. However, for the 2009 cohort, reliance continues for a longer period (see Figure 9).
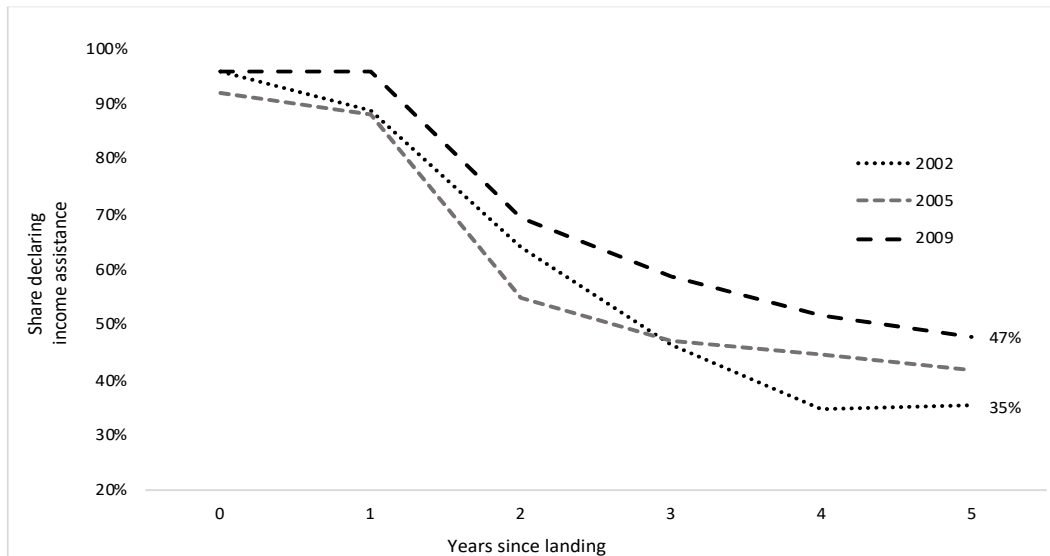
Figure 9.   BC GARs declaring social Assistance, 2002, 2005, 2009 cohorts
Source: Statistics Canada (2014b)

The 2009 cohort also had higher rates of social assistance for their first five years of residence. By the end of that period, nearly half were still reliant on social assistance. The fact that two thirds (66%) of recent GARs report using foodbanks suggests a continued reliance on assistance programs (ISS of BC, 2016).

In summary, there is ample evidence proving that the economic integration of GARs is slower than that of other refugees in Canada and in BC. This is true for employment, income, and reliance on social assistance. I focus on how to reduce the length of time it takes for GARs to achieve independence and to reach comparable employment rates and income levels as other refugees.

Chapter 4.   Barriers to Economic Integration

This chapter provides a survey of the literature with an emphasis on barriers to economic integration that can be applied to GARs in BC. This is supplemented with insights from expert interviews. I discuss the effect of characteristics common to GARs, noting that demographic factors and pre-resettlement history are key determinants of economic integration (Ott, 2013; OECD, 2016; Phythian et al., 2009). Following this, there is an assessment of external factors, which some posit influence outcomes (Ott, 2013; Aiyer, 2016). The chapter concentrates on Canadian research but considers broad thematic findings as well. Although the goal is to shed light on GARs in BC, a broader scan allows for a better understanding of the challenges they face.

Although integration has many aspects, the focus on the economic sphere reflects the relationship between economic participation and long-term well-being. The concentration on timeliness acknowledges how early intervention affects long term outcomes (OECD, 2016). Aiyer et. al. (2016) find that timely integration reduces the risk of social exclusion while Omar (2013) finds that refugee unemployment is associated with a loss of status and independence. Slow economic integration also has financial implications, especially among GARs who impose a large fiscal burden until self-dependence (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2014; Dhital, 2015; IRCC, 2016).

4.1. Characteristics of GARs

Under Article 17 of the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Canada is obliged to provide access to wage earning employment to refugees (Goodwin-Gill, 2008). However, entering and thriving in the labour market has become more difficult for GARs over time, partly due to policy change. Prior to the introduction of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, priority was given to GARs with higher likelihoods of economic participation, which meant they had higher skill levels and more education. This has since changed with the emphasis now on vulnerability (IRCC, 2016a).

The literature points to poor language skills as a common barrier to economic integration (Aiyer et al., 2016; DeVortez et. al., 2004; Wilkison & Garcia, 2017). This holds in Canada and was identified in the National Settlement Outcomes Survey (2013) as a key challenge to integration among unemployed newcomers. As found by Wilkinson

and Garcia (2017), it also helps explain the lackluster integration of GARs relative to PSRs. The Longitudinal Immigrant Database indicates that 76% of GARs speak neither French nor English upon arrival compared to 60% of PSRs (IRCC, 2016d). IRCC (2016a) also finds that many GARs with referrals to language classes are unable to access them before their RAP support ends. Even if they do begin classes, vocational training is not offered until level 5 (Dempsey et. al., 2009). Greater access is critical, especially in BC, where waitlists are longer than anywhere else in Canada. GARs in the province repeatedly identify a lack of language skills as an employment barrier (ISS of BC, 2016). ISS of BC (2016) finds that 81% of GARs in Vancouver speak little to no English; however, 51% of those not taking language training are on a waitlist.

A related driver of economic integration is education (Phythian et. al, 2009; OECD 2016). Hiebert (2002) finds that education at time of arrival is the most important factor influencing GARs' incomes. Its importance is reinforced by Wilkinson and Garcia (2017) who find that refugees with higher education levels, especially if part of it takes place in Canada, find employment and ultimately achieve self-dependence more quickly. Other research suggests that education is a key factor for the group's income stability (Dhital, 2015). It is also pertinent to consider education's indirect impact. Yu et al. (2007) emphasize that those with less formal schooling will face challenges learning a new language, which some consider a prerequisite for employment in Canada. Additionally, low education levels are intimately linked with low skill levels; the literature suggests that refugees are more likely than other immigrants to arrive without job-ready skills (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017). These findings help explain recent outcomes as GARs are more likely than other refugees to have few years of schooling. Of those who arrived between 2010 and 2014, 61% had nine or fewer years of education (IRCC, 2016a).[9]

Pre-migration trauma has been cited as a driver of unemployment among GARs, especially as they are more likely than other refugees to suffer with their mental health (Dhital, 2015; ISS of BC, 2017; IRCC, 2011; IRCC, 2016a). In BC, those surveyed report that their mental health limits their ability to seek and gain employment (ISS of BC, 2017; ISS of BC, 2016). However, GARs are twice as likely as PSRs to require referrals to specialized health services overall but are less likely to receive them (IRCC, 2016a).

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[9] 48% for PSRs and 54% for BVORs

4.2. External Factors

Past research emphasizes that refugees often face significant external barriers to entering the labour market (Ott, 2013). Internationally, studies draw attention to the relationship between access to social capital and community assets to successful integration, explaining that these resources are employment drivers (Ott, 2013). In Canada, PSRs are more likely to have this access due to their connection with a personal sponsor. In an interview, Julie Kamal, a volunteer coordinator who works with refugees, explained that PSRs have teams who help them find suitable employment while GARs rarely receive similar support. This helps explain why two-thirds of recently arrived GARs say finding a job is their greatest challenge (IRCC, 2016c). Similar findings are reflected in past research. DeVoretz et. al. (2004) find that opportunity and private sponsorship are positively related to employment outcomes, arguing that the bi-modal performance of different refugees highlights the importance of sponsorship in facilitating timely integration. This is congruent with several studies that attribute the difference in outcomes to the fact that GARs have less access to social capital (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017; Dhital, 2015; DeVoretz et. al., 2004).

Aiyer et. al. (2016) find that welfare traps are a common barrier to integration. In Canada, this could help explain the delayed labour market entry of GARs as they face a claw back under the additional income incentive threshold; RAP recipients may earn up to 50% of their total monthly support before any claw back on benefits. After that, all benefits are reduced on a dollar by dollar basis (CIC, 2015). This has led some to suggest that supports delay employment (Wilkinson & Garcea, 2017). More explicitly, GARs report being encouraged to enrol in language training or education while receiving RAP support instead of attempting to find a job (IRCC, 2016a). In an interview, Etab Saad, Manager of Employment Services at MOSAIC, explained that GARs are usually encouraged by volunteers to learn English before finding employment. This can prolong the integration process, especially given language class wait times (Wilkinson, in Grant, 2016). PSRs on the other hand may become self-reliant more quickly by necessity as they are pushed in to the labour market soon after arrival (Hyndman, 2011). Saad explained that this is driven by sponsors' understanding of the connection between employment, settlement, and language acquisition; GARs on the other hand receive less support in terms of understanding the connection between employment and integration.

Kim and Farthing-Nichol (2017) suggest employers may hesitate to hire refugees because of training costs and related burdens. Their work also highlights the various steps of the job search that make securing employment difficult. This includes things such as interviewing in English, presenting a resume, and demonstrating job-ready skills. These barriers are exacerbated by a lack of awareness and/or access to available employment supports, reflected in the fact that few GARs report using them (section 2.5). Additionally, informal networks have played a significant role in connecting GARs to services. In an interview, Saleem Spindari, Manager of Refugee Settlement Support Projects at MOSAIC, explained that the refugee community is very connected, meaning they tend to refer each other to programs. This has both positive and negative impacts. On one hand, personal networks make connections with supports that have proven effective for participants. Alternatively, Julie Kamal argued that this can lead to an overreliance on other GARs for information, which may in turn drive them away from available services. Furthermore, where supports are available, they are often not complemented with job opportunities (Kim and Farthing-Nichol, 2017).

A lack of experience and credential recognition may also contribute to GARs' poor economic performance as found for other newcomers (Kelly et. al., 2014). This is especially true for those with experience in a self-regulated profession, which set their own rules on who can work in the profession; this includes not having to assess or consider foreign credentials (Wilkinson, 2017). Studies show that refugees have the lowest levels of recognition among all Canadian immigrants (Zikic et. al., 2010; Elgersma, 2012). A Statistics Canada report finds that after four years, only 11% of refugees receive credential recognition and 14% receive work experience recognition, compared to 38% and 51% for skilled workers, and 19% and 31% for family class migrants (Houle & Yssaad, 2010). This results in a substantial share working in a position where they are overqualified; a recent study shows that this is the case for 64% of refugees, which is the highest among any newcomer group (Wilkinson et.al., 2016). Such mismatches are aggravated by the fact that GARs' credentials may have been lost or destroyed (Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017).

In short, there is plenty of literature proving that both characteristics common to GARs and external factors are contributing to their slow economic integration. This confirms my choice of focus on the specific problems GARs coming to Canada and residing in BC face.

Chapter 5.   Policy Problem and Stakeholders

My policy problem is: too many government assisted refugees do not achieve timely economic integration in BC. Recent surveys indicate that only one-in-five find employment after their first year of residence (ISS of BC, 2016). In addition, as shown in section 3.2, less than 70% found employment after 5 years and the most recent cohort performed the worst on this measure. GARs are also shown to have significantly lower employment incomes and a higher reliance on social assistance than other newcomers. Not only should the economic integration of GARs be addressed for humanitarian reasons, but the slow process puts a strain on social services; relatedly, the longer they remain out of the workforce, the more resources necessary to keep them out of poverty.

The most important stakeholders are service providing organizations and employers. As the front-line workers, SPOs are expected to have insights into the initial challenges faced by GARs. This includes non-profits such as DiverseCity, Mosaic, and SUCCESS. These organizations provide a range of services to refugees and have each engaged with the province and the federal government on joint integration initiatives. The same may be said of job finding agencies and employment programs like WorkBC. Employers also have a vested interest in the integration of GARs. Given that the goal is ultimately employment, employers need to be aware of policies aimed at helping GARs enter the workforce; they thus have a role in informing policy. In terms of RAP supports, the seven service providers responsible for their provision are also stakeholders (Government of Canada "Find Help to Adjust," 2016).[10]

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[10] See Appendix A for a list of RAP providing SPOs in BC

Chapter 6.   Analytical Methodology

The primary methodology is a multiple case study analysis, which is used to identify practices for timely economic integration. A secondary methodology is then used to confirm the results. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 8.

I employ a case study method as the approach is recognized as pertinent when dealing with an explanatory inquiry (Yin, 2012). Here, I evaluate three countries to identify overlapping practices associated with timely economic integration. Yin (2012) explains that the protocol for a systematic case study is to establish a set of questions to guide information extraction. The analysis focuses on programs aimed at stimulating labour market participation among resettled refugees in a reasonable time frame. The research objective is: to develop an understanding of how cases facilitate the timely economic integration of refugees and promote long-term labour market attachment. Library research and a jurisdictional scan are used to gather information for each case.

6.1. Case Study Selection

Three European countries are chosen to identify policies related to the timely economic integration of refugees: Sweden, Norway, and Germany.[11] They are selected based on their reputation for implementing robust, targeted integration polices and for following best practices in the area as confirmed in recent cross-jurisdictional reports (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016; OECD, 2016). One measure that points to the countries' dedication to integrating newcomers is their rankings on the migration component of the Commitment to Development Index (Center for Global Development, 2017).[12] This indicator accounts for a country's promotion of international mobility, integration policies, and receptiveness to migrants. Germany and Sweden rank 1st and 2nd on this measure while Norway ranks 5th (Center for Global Development, 2017).[13] Table 2 provides an overview of how each one compares to BC.

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[11] An overview of each countries' resettlement program is provided in Appendix B

[12] The Index ranks countries' commitment to policies that help people in poorer countries. Migration is one of six indicators used to calculate scores

[13] Luxembourg and New Zealand are 3rd and 4th; however, neither has a strong refugee record

Table 2.   Overview of Cases

	B.C.	Sweden	Germany	Norway
UNHCR Refugees resettled (2016)	1911	1890	1240	3290
Responsibility for integration	Federal, province after 1st year	Shared, National & municipal	Local authorities	Municipalities
Responsibility for employment	No explicit responsibility	Public Employment Service	Federal Employment Agency	Municipal actors
Resettlement Program	Since 1978	Since 1950	Since 2012	Since 1970

Sources: ISS of BC (2018); UNHCR (2016); Eurostat (n.d.)

The number of refugees resettled in BC is comparable to each case country. Integration and resettlement is primarily a federal responsibility in Canada while local and municipal actors have more responsibility in Sweden, Germany, and Norway. Employment for refugees is a national responsibility in Germany and Sweden while it is the responsibility of municipalities in Norway. In Canada, no actor has the explicit responsibility for refugee employment, although provincial employment programs often fill this role. Each country also has a national resettlement program. Canada, Sweden, and Norway have had resettlement programs for an extended period while Germany's program is relatively new. In each of the cases, the government works extensively with civil society to facilitate economic integration. The established practices and multi-stakeholder arrangements in each country provide a useful lens for comparison.

6.2. Evaluation Framework

There are four dimensions in the evaluation framework as supported by illustrations in section 4.1 and 4.2: direct employment support, skill development, social capital, and program structure. Direct employment support is expected to be an important aspect of economic integration, given the relationship between opportunity and economic outcomes. Skill development is included as a dimension because of the low education, language, and job-ready skill levels of refugees that scholars point to in explaining poor outcomes. Social capital is a critical consideration as some argue the differences between GARs and PSRs are driven by the latter's contact with personal sponsors. This suggests social capital is a driver of economic integration. Program structure is a dimension as various aspects of Canada's resettlement program are

unique to the country while studies cite structural factors as a reason for delayed entry in to the labour force (Hyndman, 2011; Wilkinson & Garcia, 2017).

The characteristics of each dimension are primarily based on three sources. The first source is the literature review. The second source is the Migrant Integration Policy Index, which provides indicators for the strength of a country's integration policies (Bilgili et. al., 2015). The third source is a comprehensive handbook of best practices for fostering the economic participation of newcomers (CCR, 1998). The questions used for the measurement of each characteristic were adapted from the Migrant Integration Policy Index Questionnaire (MIPEX, 2014) and from the OECD (2016) booklet on best practices for the integration of refugees. Most of the questions are dichotomous, meaning the answer is either yes or no. Yes, indicates that the country or the level of government responsible for integration has a formal program or strategy for the given measure. No, indicates that there is no formalized program or strategy for the given measure. The framework is seen in Table 3 below.

Table 3.   Evaluation Framework

Dimension	Characteristic	Measure
Direct employment support	Public sector employment	Are there public sector job placements for refugees?
	Private sector employment	Are there direct incentives to hire refugees?
		Are there private sector job placements for refugees?
	Access to employment services	Is specialized support provided to help refugees access employment services?
	Credential recognition	Are there supports in place to help refugees have their credentials recognized/assessed, even if records have been lost/destroyed?
Skill development	Job-ready skill development	Are there job-ready skill development opportunities targeted to refugees?
	Language training	Is there vocational (vs. generic) language training for refugees?
	Education upgrading	Are there state measures to increase refugee's education levels?
Social capital	Personal supports	Do integration policies connect refugees with personal supports?
Program structure	Different streams	Does the country have more than one resettlement stream?
	Resettlement criteria	Does selection include an assessment of integration potential?
	Dispersal policy	What are the criteria for determining resettlement location?
	Devolved/Centralized	What type of model is used for integration (devolved vs. centralized)?
	Individual integration	Does the country have personalized integration plans?
	Delayed employment	Does the program encourage working soon after resettlement?

6.3. Limitations

Although descriptive data for refugees in Canada is accessible through Statistics Canada, finding similar information from each of the cases is more difficult, especially as publicly accessible databases are often not available in English. Likewise, the reports, evaluations, and resettlement program briefs investigated are primarily retrieved from English sources. This restricts the breadth of research. Canada's resettlement program is unique, which limits the direct comparability of policies; however, the government is heavily involved in resettlement in each case. This makes GARs comparable to refugees in each of the three cases. The ability to recruit interview participants was a limitation. This was especially challenging given time constraints and the limited availability of potential participants. Finally, the data for the number of refugees in different countries and the number participating in programs is reliant on government targets and

commitments, meaning some may differ from actual figures once they are available. This is particularly challenging for this topic, given that tracking data is continuously updated.

Chapter 7. Case Study Analysis

The analysis is done for each dimension characteristic across the chosen cases. A summary of the major findings is presented in Table 4 at the end of this chapter. This allows for the identification of overlapping integration practices.

7.1. Direct Employment Support

This section explores how each country performs in terms of the direct employment support characteristics of the evaluation framework. The results of the chosen points are summarized in Table 4 in the first four rows.

7.1.1. Public sector employment

Germany and Sweden both use the public sector to provide employment for refugees. In the former the government has funded 10,000 placements per year in the Federal Volunteer Service for refugees; participants receive a monthly means-tested support while gaining work experience and developing language skills (OECD, 2017). Although not traditional employment, the German government considers the scheme to be an introduction to the labour market. In Sweden, refugees are offered public sector placements through the Step-in program (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). Newcomers are placed in subsidized public sector positions with the expectation that they are also undergoing language training. The analysis did not uncover designated public sector employment opportunities for refugees in Norway.

7.1.2. Private sector employment

There are several incentive schemes in Norway encouraging employers to hire refugees. In Oslo, the project "Boost Refugees" supports new entrepreneurs who pledge to hire refugees by providing support and financial assistance during a five-month accelerated incubator program (Apolitical, 2017). The program is also available to refugees who want to start businesses themselves, opening opportunities for self-employment.[14] More generally, financial incentives like wage subsidies are offered to

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[14] Two of the five start-ups supported in 2016 are run by refugees (Apolitical, 2017)

actors in high demand industries willing to hire refugees, allowing fast access to the labour market for those with job-ready skills (Duell et. al., 2009; EPES, 2016). Sweden also has a number of similar practices. Through the Step-in program, refugees are offered subsidized positions in the private sector (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). The government then covers up to 80% of wage costs for 2 years on the condition that refugees attend language training (OECD, 2016). Moreover, Swedish employers may access publicly funded upskilling through programs like "Apprenticeships for new arrivals" and "the applied basic year", which decreases the cost of employing refugees (OECD, 2014; 2016). In summary, while Norway and Sweden provide direct incentives to private sector employers to encourage them to hire refugees, Germany does not.

All three countries have private sector job placement schemes. Job placements remove the barriers associated with a job search by connecting people directly with employers. In Norway, this is facilitated through the Jobbsjansen program. It provides subsidies to municipalities to improve the prospects of target groups; many of the ongoing projects use a "place then train" model with project partners (Ramboll, 2014). The municipality of Levanger has a six-step work placement program for low-skilled refugees. Participants gradually move from fully supervised to more autonomous employment (Scholten et. al., 2017). For those facing long term barriers, Norway has opportunities for work permanently adapted to individual needs as well (Scholten et. al., 2017). Germany puts a greater emphasis on employer led initiatives; the government facilitates meetings by engaging employers in reception centers thereby fostering immediate connections, often leading to internships or job placements (EPES, 2016; OECD, 2016). Meanwhile, the Shaping Chances pilot project has combined language training with job placements and internships in the private sector (Rieteg, 2016). There are also opportunities for work placements through the German for Professional Purposes program (BAMF, 2015). Sweden has fast-tracked job placements in industries with labour shortages (OECD, 2016). These schemes partner with employers to provide on-the-job skills assessments, vocational language training, and occupational credentials (OECD, 2016). Job placements are available through the Step-in program as well (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). These are part-time, subsidized positions tied to skill development and language training.

7.1.3. Access to employment services

All three countries offer supports to help refugees connect with employment services. In each case, there is a concerted effort to make this connection soon after resettlement. In Norway, refugees are connected with employment supports and employers while enrolled in a comprehensive introduction program (EPES, 2016). The personalized program is full-time and maps each step participants need to take to find employment. Germany both engages employers in reception centres and sends refugees to employment centres after resettlement (OECD, 2016). An innovative practice in Germany involves a new interactive app, Ankommen. The app provides information about employment services, language training, and the labour market, making support more accessible (BAMF, 2017). In Sweden, the public employment service (PES) provides a two-year, individualized career plan to refugees (Konle-Seidl, 2017). This effectively bypasses the need for them to connect with employment services on their own. Furthermore, the country has a Special Introduction Program, which helps job-ready refugees enter the labour market (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016).

7.1.4. Credential recognition

Although to different degrees and with diverse policy instruments, all three case countries have implemented strategies for credential recognition. Norway does this through its Recognition Procedure for Persons without Verifiable Documentation. This involves a structured interview, an evaluation of available documents, and consultation with country of origin archives if possible (OECD, 2016). Authorities use this to issue 'qualifications passports', which provide a standardized document summarizing education levels, professional qualifications, work experience, and language proficiency (Bollag, 2016; OECD, 2016). This is designed to help refugees seek work, further training, or education, and is valid for three years (Bollag, 2016). When refugees have little documentation in Germany, they may have qualifications appraised on the basis of small samples of their work combined with interviews from experts in given occupational fields through the Prototyping Transfer program or the Perspectives for Refugees program (OECD, 2016; 2017). Additionally, the interactive MySkills tool allows employment offices to identify prior learning and vocational skills (Konle-Seidl, 2017). In Sweden, the PES partners with employers on skills assessments; once completed, participants are offered an occupational certificate and, in many cases, job placements

(OECD, 2016; Konle-Seidel, 2017). Finally, the PES provides a digital mapping of competencies for all refugees (Konle-Seidl, 2017).

7.2. Skill Development

This section explores case's integration practices in terms of skill development. The results of the chosen points are summarized in Table 4 in rows five through seven.

7.2.1. Job-ready skill development

Norway and Sweden have targeted job-ready skill development measures in place. Germany has a program, but it is limited to only a subset of refugees; therefore, it does not receive a yes for this measure in Table 4. In Norway, individually tailored introductory programs offer job-ready skill development (ICMC, 2013). These are targeted to refugees and must be completed within three years to gain permanent residence, effectively ensuring participation (ICMC, 2013). The program partners with private sector actors as well, mitigating any disconnect between the skills developed and employer's needs (EPES, 2016). Moreover, vocational skill development is available through the Jobbsjansen program (Ramboll, 2014). As highlighted in section 7.1.2, this program provides subsidies for municipalities to improve the skills of target groups, with many of the ongoing projects partnering with employers. The program Perspectives for Young Refugees in Germany provides funds for vocational centres to enroll refugees in six-month program for training in several trades (Davis, 2017). This program is designed to prepare refugees under the age of 25 for the country's expansive internship program (Davis, 2017). It therefore serves as a bridge to the mainstream employment mechanism for people in Germany. In Sweden, refugees are offered access to skill development services from the PES for the first two years after arrival, which may be extended based on individual needs (Government of Sweden, 2016; OECD, 2016). This includes personalized career plans with job-ready skill development measures (ICMC, 2013).

7.2.2. Language training

When refugees arrive in Norway, they are assigned to one of three language training tracks based on their needs, work experience, educational background, and language proficiency (OECD, 2016). However, these programs concentrate on generic

language skills and the availability of vocational language training is limited (OECD, 2016). Germany uses several programs to address vocational language development. One example is the German for Professional Purposes program (BAMF, 2015). The program is six months long and combines training with professional skill development (Rieteg, 2016). In addition, the KompAS program combines language training with job support to facilitate economic integration (OECD, 2017). As opposed to generic training, this 6 to 8-month program promotes employment as a reason to develop language skills. In Sweden, municipalities are obliged to provide language training no more than three months after arrival through the Swedish for Immigrants program (Government of Sweden, 2016). This course is compulsory for refugees. In 2009, a vocational training component was added in several municipalities, providing 25 hrs of labour market language training per week (European Resettlement Network, n.d.). In summary, while Sweden and Germany have systematic vocational language training measures, the availability of such services in Norway is limited and fractured (OECD, 2016).

7.2.3. Education upgrading

In both Norway and Germany, specific measures have been taken to encourage refugees to advance their education. No such practices were found in Sweden. In Oslo, the municipality and the University have partnered to find internships for those with at least one degree through the Academic Practice Program. Refugees work with a research team without being enrolled as a student, allowing them to become acquainted with the system, gain experience, and have their competencies assessed (Bollag, 2016). Meanwhile, Germany has introduced the Kiron program, which offers refugees the opportunity to advance their education through an online degree program with free tuition (OECD, 2016). Refugees who participate often move on to other universities.

7.3. Social Capital

This section focuses on social capital with findings summarized in row eight of Table 4. While Norwegian and Swedish practices emphasize connections with personal mentors, German policies do not. Norwegian policy attempts to make this connection soon after resettlement. Through the project Refugee Guide, refugees are brought together with a community volunteer for a 9-month guiding period, which assists with

integration efforts (Stray, n.d.). More generally, the responsibility of municipalities in the integration process is highly conducive to the development of social and human capital (OECD, 2016; Government of Norway, 2016). In the past, Sweden experimented with occupational mentoring. From 2010 to 2012, a pilot project by the National Board for Youth Affairs used mentoring to foster economic integration; participants in the program were matched with mentors based on their experience and qualifications (Mansson & Delander, 2017). Refugees are also provided with an introduction guide (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). Guides are contracted individuals responsible for career guidance, networking, and mentoring during newcomers' first years in Sweden (OECD, 2014).

7.4. Program Structure

This section explores how cases compare in terms of program structure. The results of the chosen points are summarized in the last five rows of Table 4.

7.4.1. Resettlement streams

All three of the countries have one resettlement stream. For Sweden and Germany, this means their admissions each year come solely from UNHCR referred submissions (Government of Sweden, 2016; Government of Germany, 2016). Norway allows for cases to be referred to selection missions by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NGOs, International criminal courts with witness resettlement agreements, and Norwegian PEN. However, once selected, they arrive through the same stream as UNHCR referrals (Government of Norway, 2016).

7.4.2. Resettlement criteria

During selection for the resettlement program, Norway uses an 'integration perspective'. This criterion sees those who "will make the best use of the services for integration" given priority as well as those with experience relevant to the Norwegian labour market (Government of Norway, 2016, p.5). Germany follows a similar approach. As per the country's 2016 resettlement program, "ability to become integrated" is incorporated as a selection criterion (Government of Germany, 2016, p.4). Integration potential is not part of the Swedish selection process (Government of Sweden, 2016).

7.4.3. Dispersal policy

The three countries have dissimilar dispersal policies. In Norway, the dispersal is based on the willingness of municipalities to host them (OECD, 2016). Germany follows the so-called 'Königstein Key' model, where resettlement is quota based, varying by population and tax revenue (OECD, 2016). Sweden on the other hand focuses on employment prospects in determining the dispersal of refugees (OECD, 2016).

7.4.4. Devolved/centralized

Norway has a devolved model with municipalities responsible for refugee integration. Municipalities are however responsible for upholding national standards and exercising best practices (ICMC, 2013). Germany uses a similar approach, with most elements of integration left to local authorities (Government of Germany, 2016). The exception is the entitlement all newcomers have to the national integration course, which is facilitated by different organizations across the country (ICMC, 2013). On the contrary, Sweden has shifted away from a devolved approach toward greater centralization. This is most explicit in its transferring of integration coordination from municipalities to the PES (ICMC, 2013).

7.4.5. Individual integration

Norway and Sweden use personalized integration plans to facilitate integration. In Norway, the plan covers the first 2 to 3 years of residence and is delivered as part of its introduction program (IMDi, 2016). In Sweden, the PES sets up personalized integration plans for refugees' first two years of residence once they are settled (Government of Sweden, 2016). Germany does not have a comparable scheme.

7.4.6. Delayed employment

The analysis finds that Germany and Sweden encourage employment soon after resettlement. Germany does this by linking permanent residency with self-sufficiency (Government of Germany, 2016). In Sweden, this is evident in the transfer of integration coordination to the PES (ICMC, 2013). In Norway, this is less clear. Although the explicit goal of the resettlement program is to foster self-sufficiency as soon as possible, the

introduction program delays employment for at least two years in most cases due to high subsidy rates while participating (Scholten et. al., 2017).

Table 4. **Summary of findings**

Dimension	Characteristic	Norway	Germany	Sweden
Direct Employment Support	Public sector employment	No	Yes	Yes
	Private sector employment	Yes	No	Yes
		Yes	Yes	Yes
	Access to employment services	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Credential recognition	Yes	Yes	Yes
Skill Development	Job-ready skill development	Yes	No	Yes
	Language training	Yes	Yes	No
	Education upgrading	Yes	Yes	No
Social Capital	Personal supports	Yes	No	Yes
Program Structure	Resettlement streams	No	No	No
	Resettlement criteria	Yes	Yes	No
	Dispersal policy	Willingness of municipalities to host	"Königstein Key"	Employment prospects
	Devolved/centralized	Devolved	Devolved	Centralized
	Personalized integration	Yes	No	Yes
	Delayed employment	Discouraged	Encouraged	Encouraged

7.5. Analysis of Key Findings

As identified in Table 4, my analysis discovered four characteristics found in all three cases. First, all three countries use private sector job placements. This typically involves part-time employment tied to language training and skill development. Second, each has supports in place to ensure refugees have access to employment services. This ranges from individualized career plans to leveraging technology to raise service awareness. Third, each has credential recognition measures in place that allow those with lost or destroyed credentials to receive some level of recognition. Fourth, all three countries only have one resettlement stream in place.

With the exception of the resettlement stream characteristic, each of these practices are present in BC; however, the extent, availability, and suitability of each to GARs is limited. Private sector placements are available through the programs outlined in section 2.3.2 but these are rarely targeted to GARs and often focus on job-ready

newcomers. Additionally, few have guaranteed employment at the end of the program. In theory, access to employment services is facilitated by RAP councillors assigned on arrival and through referrals from partnering SPOs. More informally, the resettlement of GARs in the same community helps them share their experiences and connect each other to services. Yet, only 10% report using these services as mentioned in section 2.5, which could signal accessibility and awareness issues. Although there are ad hoc measures in place for credential recognition, there is no formal strategy. Finally, as discussed in section 2.2, the Canadian system has three resettlement streams. These overlapping practices are the subject of further discussion.

Chapter 8.   Secondary Methodology

The validity of the case study findings is now evaluated. Program evaluations and semi-structured interviews are used to assess the effectiveness of the overlapping practices.[15] The four examined practices are private sector job placements, supports for accessing employment services, credential recognition, and focusing on a single resettlement stream.

8.1. Private Sector Job Placements

The effectiveness of job placements is reaffirmed by empirical findings that placements significantly improve employment outcomes in the long-run (Autor & Houseman, 2005). Etab Saad of MOSAIC, said there is room for growth for these programs in BC, noting that, "when we started the Refugee Training and Employment program (RTEP) two years ago… it was the only program in BC that actually offered guaranteed jobs… now, there's only a few others."

Norway's "place then train" models have performed well, relative to national goals. The Jobbsjansen program has a performance standard of 60%. In 2014, 55% of graduates gained employment or went on to education, followed by 64% in 2015, and 68% in 2016 (Skutlaberg et. al., 2017). Evaluations for the Swedish Step-in program suggest 50% of cases have resulted in regular employment (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). This is roughly in line with the success of the Swedish fast-track approach where in just over one year, between 33% to 52% of the 3,540 participants found employment. I was unable to find any evaluations of the job placement programs in Germany. Nonetheless, their importance is underscored by the fact that 34% of surveyed employers that have hired refugees did so through the involvement of the public employment service (OECD, 2017). Participants highlighted the importance of ensuring placements include job opportunities following completion. When used in BC, direct-hire job placements have been effective; MOSAIC's RTEP program has success rates ranging from 85% to 90%.

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[15] Interview procedures and a list of participants are available in Appendix C

8.2. Access to Employment Services

Interview participants noted that case managers assigned at arrival may connect GARs to employment services. However, this is discretionary and contact with case managers may become less frequent overtime. Messaging from those who work with refugees also limits connections with employment services. As expressed by Etab Saad in an interview, "Clients that work directly with volunteers are told that the first thing they need to do is learn English first; in my experience, that does not always help in the long run." Saad argues that "getting settled does not necessarily conflict with…employment". This is common in the examined cases, where connections with employment services are made soon after resettlement. Although no formal assessments of the approaches in the cases were found, data from employment centres in Germany indicates that refugees who access services increase their probability of finding employment by 7.5% compared to non-users (Konle-Seidl, 2017). The Special Introduction Program in Sweden has been successful to date but has only dealt with a small case load of job-ready refugees (Konle-Seidl & Bolits, 2016). Germany's Ankommen App has received international attention as a promising practice; introduced in 2016, the app has over 210,000 downloads and maintains high user rates (Rieteg, 2016; BAMF, 2017). Overall, participants were most enthused by the potential to better leverage technology to connect refugees with employment services.

8.3. Credential Recognition

As emphasized by Julie Kamal, a refugee volunteer coordinator, recognition should include skills assessments: "It's homing in on those skills because the majority of the time, the people that are coming have skills." This has been part of each case countries' approach. To date, the Norway's qualifications passports have been successful. Whereas the old procedure used to take three to six months and cost $5,500, the passport takes five days at one-tenth of the cost (Bollag, 2016). Businesses have also been receptive as it allows them to identify candidates for semi-skilled positions, even if skills are not 100% verified (Bollag, 2016). Meanwhile, Germany's Perspectives for Refugees program has only helped a fraction of refugees due to low take up; although the goal is to assist 500,000, only 5,000 people have participated (Konle-Seidl, 2017). Nonetheless, it has proved effective with participation increasing the

probability of finding employment by 15.5% (Konle-Seidl, 2017). As for the Prototyping Transfers program, evaluations suggest it is time consuming (Konle-Seidl, 2017). The Swedish and German programs have faced challenges with standardization and limited regulations mandating the recognition of informal qualifications (Konle-Seidl, 2017). European country evaluations also show that assessments rarely lead to formal credentials (Konle-Seidl, 2017). However, respondents noted that even informal recognition can make the hiring process easier. Engaging employers in assessments has also been cited as a promising practice (Konle-Seidl, 2017). Interviewees said this is a good idea but were unsure of employer capacity. Finally, the OECD (2017) finds that there is often a trade-off between rapid skills assessments and in-depth qualification procedures. Each of the interviewees suggested credential recognition/skill recognition is promising but cautioned that it is only part of the problem and may not help all GARs.

8.4. Resettlement Streams

As noted, the three countries do not have several streams for their resettlement programs as is the case in the Canada. The literature points to the multiple streams as a success and an innovate element of the Canadian system (Thomson, 2017). However, the different streams are associated with divergent outcomes. The Canadian system was discussed with interviewees with a focus on whether some structural elements should be reconsidered. Throughout, the design of the GARs stream was cited as an integration barrier, though participants emphasized the importance of helping vulnerable persons. Saleem Spindari said: "Let's leave the humanitarian side…but see how we can support other refugees…so that…we can see an increase to their contribution to the economic community." Another recurring theme was that making GARs look more like PSRs in terms of support could prove helpful. Julie Kamal explained the role of external support in driving employment success, noting that "you have a lot of [PSRs]… that have a team responsible for employment…we know that that isn't always going to be available for GARs." Etab Saad expressed a similar sentiment, noting "the more you have sponsors or a support group helping you access those services the better." Participants noted that this has been the strategy of many organizations working in the sector.

In summary, job placements, using technology to improve access to services, qualifications passports, and program restructuring are found to be promising integration practices. Each of these inform the policy options presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 9.   Policy Objectives, Criteria, and Options

The ultimate goal is reducing the time it takes GARs to become economically integrated. As highlighted in Chapter 3, this takes between 12 and 15 years in Canada. Economic integration is a complex and multifaceted process, but past research finds that early intervention can improve long term outcomes. Thus, I focus on improving GARs' standing in their first five years of residence rather than addressing all the challenges to integration. Five years is used as it is the amount of time other refugees are expected to establish themselves (Government of Canada, 2016b). There are three policy objectives that recognize the role of employment, income stability and independence, and skill development in aiding long term economic integration. The first is to facilitate early labour market entry. Ideally, employment should be before the end of GARs' support period. The second is to foster financial independence; this means transitioning GARs off income assistance faster than has been achieved to date. The third is to increase skill levels to nurture job mobility and generate new employment opportunities. This includes developing both language skills and job-ready skills.

9.1. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria are used to evaluate policy options to identify the best one for improving the short term economic integration of GARs. The focus of the evaluation is on GARs arriving moving forward rather than on those already in BC. This is due to the focus on improving GARs' standing during their first five years of residence, which necessarily precludes those currently resettled in the province. The criteria include: effectiveness, equity, cost, administrative complexity, and stakeholder acceptance. The measures for the criteria have an index between 1 and 3, with 1 the lowest score, 2 the middle, and 3 the highest. As stakeholder acceptance and administrative complexity have two measures, the total criteria score for each will be divided by two to ensure they have the same weight as equity and cost. Effectiveness also has multiple measures; as each of the effectiveness measures correspond to one of the three objectives of intervention, the total is not divided by three. This ensures greater weight is given to the criteria as it most directly considers the impact of the policy on economic integration. Policies are ranked by their performance on each criterion. Scores are tallied, and the highest total indicates the most favourable policy option. A summary of the criteria and measures is in Table 5.

Table 5.   Criteria and Measures Matrix

Criteria	Definition	Measure	Score
Effectiveness			
Employment outcomes	Does the policy directly or indirectly help GARs gain employment?	Type of impact on employment	
		Direct impact and ongoing support	3
		Indirect impact and ongoing support	2
		Indirect impact and one-time support	1
	Impact on incomes at two years after arrival	Estimate using recent cohort income	
		>10% increase	3
		5% – 10% increase	2
		<5% increase	1
	Impact on skill level	Expected impact	
		High impact	3
		Medium impact	2
		Low/no impact	1
Equity			
Helpfulness of the policy for different GARs	Does the policy help all GARs or just some?	Helpful to all and targeted to all	3
		Helpful to some but targeted to all	2
		Helpful/targeted to only a subset	1
Cost			
Provincial budgetary impact	Annual cost of each option to the province	$0 – $500,000	3
		$500,000.01 – $1,500,000	2
		More than $1,500,000	1
Administrative complexity			
Ease of implementation/ administration	Number of actors that need to be engaged in the process	1 actor	3
		2 or 3 actors	2
		4 or more actors	1
	Level of federal involvement needed	Not involved	3
		Somewhat involved	2
		Heavily involved	1
			Total/2 = score
Stakeholder Acceptance			
Support from stakeholders	(i) Would SPOs support the policy?	Expected support/opposition	
		Support	3
		Neutral	2
		Oppose	1
	(ii) Would employers support the policy?	Expected support/opposition	
		Support	3
		Neutral	2
		Oppose	1
			Total/2 = score

9.1.1. Effectiveness

The first criterion is effectiveness. It provides an estimate of the option's performance in terms of employment outcomes with three aspects, corresponding to the three policy objectives. The first is facilitating entry into employment. It is evaluated based on whether the policy directly or indirectly helps GARs find employment. If the policy has a direct impact on employment and provides ongoing support, it receives a 3. If it only indirectly impacts job prospects but provides ongoing support, it receives a 2. If the impact is indirect and support is not ongoing, it receives a 1. Second, it is measured in terms of the impact on incomes; the anticipated increase to incomes two years after arrival is evaluated. Using the most recent cohort with available data (2013), the assessment benchmark is $14,800, which is in line with the incomes observed for the 2005 and 2009 cohorts in section 3.2 (Statistics Canada, 2014b). A 10% increase receives a 3, a 5% – 10% receives a 2, and an increase less than 5% receives a 1. Third, effectiveness is evaluated in terms of the impact on skill levels. This captures the ability of the policy to create stability and job mobility. Both language skills and job-ready skills are considered, accounting for the findings that GARs' characteristics may play a role in poor integration. A significant positive impact is assigned a 3, a medium positive impact a 2, and a low or no impact is assigned a 1.

9.1.2. Equity

The second criterion is equity. Here, I assess whether the policy is helpful to different groups of GARs and the extent to which it is targeted to the group as a whole. If the option has the potential to help all refugees integrate and is targeted to a range of GARs, it receives a 3; if it only helps some but is targeted to a range of GARs it receives a 2, and if it helps only a subset or small group who it is targeted to, it receives a 1.

9.1.3. Cost

The third criterion is cost. This is measured in terms of the provincial budgetary impact or estimated annual cost of the option to the province. Interviewees explained that there is not a strong desire among decision makers to substantially increase the funding for refugee programs. Therefore, I assume a relatively conservative estimate of what would be politically feasible based on past expenditures. Following the influx of

Syrian refugees, the BC government committed $1 million to two different initiatives to prepare the resettlement sector (section 2.3.2). This serves as a proxy for the province's willingness to spend on such programs and provides a middling estimate of acceptable intervention costs. Thus, to receive a 3, the highest score, the policy should cost between $0 and $500,000. A score of 2 costs between $500,000.01 and $1.5 million. Finally, a score of 1 costs more than $1.5 million.

9.1.4. Administrative Complexity

The fourth criterion is administrative complexity. This involves the difficulty of policy administration and implementation and is measured in two ways. First, in terms of the number of actors that need to be engaged in the process. The option gets a 3 if only one actor needs to be engaged in the process, a 2 if two or three must be engaged, and a 1 if four different actors must be engaged. Second, in terms of the federal involvement needed: if it could be implemented without federal involvement, it receives a 3, while some federal involvement receives a 2, and significant involvement receives a 1.

9.1.5. Stakeholder Acceptance

The fifth criterion is stakeholder acceptance. Here, I evaluate the expected levels of support among key stakeholders, which is measured in two ways. The first is the support of the policy among service providers; this is scored in terms of whether it is expected to be supported or opposed. A 3 means it would be supported by SPOs, a 2 means it would be viewed neutrally, and a 1 means it would be opposed. The second is the support among employers. This recognizes the central role they need to play in terms of economic integration and is scored in the same way as the measure for SPOs.

9.2. Policy Options

In this section, three policy options derived from the case study analysis are provided. This includes job placements, an interactive settlement app, and the expansion of the BVORs stream plus qualifications passports for GARs.

9.2.1. Option 1. Direct-hire job placements

The first option is to create additional direct-hire job placements for GARs. In a direct-hire structure, there is an opportunity to stay on with the firm once the program is complete. Past research suggests that this design is most effective in terms of improving long term outcomes. Autor and Houseman (2005) find that they are associated with higher long-run earnings and a greater incidence of employment than experience only structures. Such programs have been effective in the province to date, although there are few options. These cost-sharing programs are financed by the Refugee Fund, which is one of the three streams of the Canada-BC Job Grant.[16] Programs receiving funding in BC involve a partnership between a service provider and an employer to deliver job training and skill development; they receive up to $5,000 for job readiness training and up to $5,000 for job specific training per participant while the employer must contribute one-third of total job specific training costs (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training, 2016a). This option would increase the funding available for direct-hire placements through the Refugee fund, allowing programs to expand as well as encouraging the creation of more. Receiving additional funding should also be contingent on negotiated targets for the number of GARs participating, ensuring it is tied to the group's integration. Challenges also arise with funding uncertainty, which may distract from service provision (Kim and Farthing-Nichol, 2017). Programs are funded based on each proposal, meaning organizations need to reapply when programs end. Referencing MOSAIC's RTEP, a two-week direct-hire job placement, Etab Saad told me that despite the program's past success and the government's interest in rerunning it this year, they have yet to receive funding or indication that funding will be provided. This approach leaves service providers wondering, "is the program going to be extended? We don't know, because [we] have to wait till the program ends to apply for funding again" (Etab Saad interview). Learning from the use of performance-based funding, multi-year agreements could be introduced with programs automatically renewed if they meet negotiated outcome targets (Kim & Farthing-Nichol, 2017). Doing so would allow service providers to plan more effectively and to recruit on an ongoing basis. It would also incentivize quality performance and ensure successful programs receive support.

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[16] The grant is provided under the Canada-BC Job Fund Agreement, which is a federal-provincial agreement that expires in 2020

9.2.2. Option 2. Settlement App

The second policy option is to support the creation and administration of an app that connects newcomers to employment services in BC and supports individualized settlement paths. Notably, the Refugee Readiness Hub already provides a centralized, online source of services; however, it is designed for service providers rather than refugees themselves. Recognizing the potential to leverage technology to make services more accessible, PeaceGeeks, a Vancouver non-profit has used a similar app to connect refugees with humanitarian supports throughout the Middle East (PeaceGeeks, 2016). A Vancouver version, Pathways, is currently being developed using funding from Google's Impact Challenge and service offerings from BC211 (Sheppard, 2017). Pathways will allow users to create a unique profile ensuring they connect with relevant services and can design customized settlement paths. These features allow refugees to exercise agency in their resettlement and to create an integration path that fits their needs but can be modified over time. It will also have a progressive design, which means it can be accessed from desktop computers and mobile devices. The challenge for developers is that there is often a lack of funding for the continuity of such platforms. As expressed by Renee Black in an interview, Executive Director of PeaceGeeks, the "technology component [of service provision] does not [always] fit traditional funding models." This option would provide annual support and funding for the client-centred knowledge base, allowing them to expand operations to the rest of the province, keep service offerings up-to-date, and add features to the app. PeaceGeeks points out that having a managed, up-to-date directory helps immensely (Sheppard, 2016). Services could be provided in several languages, ensuring refugees can access information independently. Pathways is also expected to connect users to English speakers through Skype, allowing it to be used as an employment readiness tool. This option would help refugees seek out services and connect with opportunities without relying on informal networks, resettlement coordinators, and/or references from SPOs.

9.2.3. Option 3. BVORs expansion plus qualifications passports

The third option has two parts, with both a national and provincial component. The first part is to reduce the size of the GARs stream and expand the blended visa office-referred refugees program. The IRCC (2016a) notes that the demand for BVORs has heightened since the introduction of the Syrian refugee initiative, now significantly

outpacing supply. Nonetheless, just 12% of refugees arriving in BC from 2015 to 2017 came through the BVORs stream. This option would increase the annual quota for referrals to the BVORs stream from 1,500 (the 2017 target) to 3,000 while reducing the size of the GARs stream by the same amount (AMSAA, 2017). The intake of BVORs in BC would rise in turn from roughly 200 to 400. Thus, 200 would be GARs each year in BC would now be BVORs. This would save on 6-months' worth of RAP support per refugee; savings could be redirected into employment supports for GARs. The reason for using the BVORs stream rather than expanding the PSRs program is that this allows the federal government to maintain its commitment to UNHCR referrals while still offering sponsors some choice in sponsorship. This middle ground between private and government sponsorship would effectively make a greater portion of prospective GARs look more like PSRs in terms of support. As a result, the outcome gaps explored earlier could be mitigated. The second part is to implement qualifications passports for GARs in the province as a first step toward credential recognition. Resettlement authorities already conduct a thorough skills assessment of GARs to refer them to appropriate services (OECD, 2016). This option would build on this process by further formalizing it and documenting findings with several steps. Adapting from the Norwegian approach, case workers would first examine any existing documents as well as self-reported information from a survey filled by GARs (Malgina & Skjerven, 2016). Based on this evaluation, they would then design a case file used for an interview stage. Here, case workers would conduct a structured interview to validate and/or supplement the findings from the initial evaluation (Malgina & Skjerven, 2016). They would then prepare a report that would be used to issue a standardized statement of job skills, language skills, and previous work experience to GARs (Malgina & Skjerven, 2016). Recipients would receive a document while the data could be stored electronically. This would help GARs find a job in a field of prior employment or seek further training and education. To assist with buy in, assessments could engage employers from different occupations, which would help legitimize evaluations, foster buy in, and potentially create employment opportunities. Passports could be made available free to GARs receiving RAP support, thus providing a targeted support for those most likely to lack formal credentials. They would also allow them to develop their skills while gaining Canadian work experience.

Chapter 10.   Evaluation of Policy Options

This section provides the evaluation of the policy options using the criteria in Table 5. Findings are based on the case study as well as insights from literature, similar programs, and interviewees. For the third option, I consider the impact on GARs and BVORs. A written analysis of the options' performance on the five criteria is presented in the coming sub-sections. A summary is given in Table 6 at the end of the chapter.

10.1. Evaluation of Option 1: Direct-hire job placements

In terms of effectiveness, this option performs well. By increasing the level of funding for direct-hire job placement programs from $2 million to $4 million per year, an additional 200 job placements could be available.[17] By ensuring GARs are given these positions, the policy has a direct positive impact on employment. This is reinforced by the success of placements in the province to date; RTEP has transitioned 85% of participants into fulltime employment. At the same time, the impact on incomes could also be significant. Using RTEP wages, the income of participants two years after arrival would be $28,275, which is significantly higher than a 10% increase.[18] As placements include job training, it is also expected to have a significant impact on skill levels. This is reinforced by the opportunity of participants to practice their language skills while gaining work experience. Thus, this option gets a 3 on each effectiveness factor.

As there are only a few industries with arrangements in place, the policy would only be helpful to some GARs willing/wanting to work in the covered sectors. Over time, this could change as more direct-hire programs are developed and a greater share of the labour market is covered. Based on the funding allocated, there are capacity limits as well. This means that only some GARs would benefit each year. Positions would be open to as well as targeted at all GARs. Thus, it receives a 2 on the equity criteria.

The option would have a high cost, corresponding to a score of 1. Up to $2,000,000 is currently allocated to the Refugee Fund annually. A doubling of the

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[17] Based on $5,000 for job specific training and $5,000 for employment readiness per client and $2 million budget for the Refugee Fund (Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Skills Training, 2016a)

[18] Wages range from $11-$18; $14.50 was used for the estimate

government contribution would cost an extra $2,000,000. This could be decreased dependent on the scale of deemed desirable, but a smaller allocation would directly result in less positions, and a smaller impact, overall.

As these programs bring together employers, SPOs, and both levels of government, four different actors must be engaged throughout the process; thus, it receives a 1 on the first administrative complexity measure. Additionally, expanding funding and negotiating multi-year deals would require intergovernmental coordination as programs are funded by a joint government initiative. This necessarily includes at least some federal involvement, meaning the option receives a 2 on this measure.

The option is expected to receive high levels of support from SPOs for two reasons. First, it would allow them to expand current operations and potentially introduce new programs. Second, multi-year funding would provide greater certainty and stability. Past experience suggests employers would also be receptive. Etab Saad indicated that MOSAIC's programs "have employers… ask[ing], 'do you have more people?'" while Spindari told me, "it was not very hard to convince them [to participate] …everywhere you see [a] shortage [of workers]." The option would give employers greater access to training funds and an underutilized labour force.

10.2. Evaluation of Option 2: Settlement App

A settlement app would only indirectly impact GARs' employment prospects. However, the customized settlement paths and the ability to use the app on an ongoing basis would provide ongoing support. Moreover, data from Germany, where a similar app is used, shows that the probability of finding employment increases by 7.5% for those who connect with employment supports compared to those who do not (Brücker, 2016). In Canada, there is a low uptake of these services. A support that facilitates connections could have a moderate impact, especially as 66% of those not working are actively seeking employment. Thus, it receives a 2 on the first effectiveness measure. One weakness is it is not expected to have any meaningful impact on income levels. Interviewees discussed how many of the job opportunities refugees connect with are not full time or are low paying; alone, the option would do little to address this. Therefore, it receives a 1 on this measure. Finally, the interactive feature and the connection it would provide to skills/language training suggest it could have a moderate impact on skill

development. This is reinforced by features that would allow GARs to practice their language skills at home. As this is contingent on the use and effectiveness of these aspects, the option receives a 2.

The policy receives a 3 on the equity criteria as it could be helpful to all GARs. The high number of downloads of a similar app in Germany, 210,000, suggest it would be widely used (BAMF, 2017). This is supported by personalized profiles and a progressive web design, which ensure the app's accessibility. Although needing to own a computer or a phone could be a limitation, various programs provide refugees with refurbished computers, including a partnership between MOSAIC and the Technology for Learning Society.

In terms of cost, the option is expected to have an annual cost under $500,000, which corresponds to a score of 3. Although the upfront costs of designing an app are large, this has already been covered; additional costs would come from administering and updating the app. Renee Black told me that the current project in Metro Vancouver would probably require two people: One halftime employee for maintenance on the technology side and one fulltime employee for community engagement. The costs would come primarily from their compensation.

In terms of the first administrative complexity measure, the option receives a score of 2. It would require coordination between 3 different actors: the provincial government, PeaceGeeks, and BC211. On the second measure, it receives a 3 as there is no need for federal involvement.

Black noted that the app would allow organizations to coordinate services and to refer refugees to the most appropriate resources. However, the app could also see GARs rely less directly on SPOs for referrals as well as forego connecting with some services altogether. Together, these suggest it would be viewed neutrally by SPOs overall, as some may lose clients. As there is no immediate benefit to employers, they are expected to view the option neutrally.

10.3. Evaluation of Option 3: BVORs expansion plus qualifications passports

Both the BVORs program expansion and the qualifications passports would only have an indirect impact on employment. BVORs would receive ongoing support from private sponsors, which past research suggests increases the likelihood of employment. Alternatively, qualifications passports only provide GARs with a one-time support offered at the time when the document is issued. Even though GARs could use the document over time, no support would be in place to help them do so. Overall, the option receives a 1 on this measure. For BVORs, their income is expected to more closely resemble PSRs at two years after arrival; for the most recent cohort, this is $21,000 (Statistics Canada, 2014b). The group would resemble GARs in terms of common characteristics, which the literature suggests impacts income levels. Therefore, a more moderate impact, in the 5% to 10% range, is expected. As for the passports, they could have an impact on incomes if they help GARs enter jobs for which they are qualified. Past studies show that 64% of refugees work in a position where they are overqualified (Wilkinson et.al., 2016). Evidence from Germany shows that those who have foreign credentials recognized experience a 26% increase in wages (Konle-Seidl, 2017). As passports do not offer formal credentials, a comparable impact is unlikely; a more moderate impact is expected. Overall, the option receives a 2. Finally, neither aspect is expected to have a direct impact on skill development; it thus receives a 1 on this measure.

In terms of equity, this option performs poorly for two reasons (a score of 1). First, the quota change necessarily only helps those would be GARs who instead come through the BVORs stream. Second, 72% of recent arrivals in BC are new workers. If this trend continues moving forward, this suggests that only a subset would benefit from robust credential recognition/skills documentation.

Norway's qualifications passports cost approximately $550 per applicant; the operational cost in BC under these conditions would be roughly $660,000 annually.[19] As for the BVORs aspect, savings realized from the reduction of spending on RAP would only be realized by the federal government. Overall, it receives a 2 on this measure.

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[19] Assuming the government's target of 1,200 GARs annually

For the first administrative complexity measure, the qualifications passport aspect would involve three different actors, including: employers, SPOs, and the provincial government (score of 2). The BVORs aspect could be done unilaterally (score of 3). Using the qualifications passports aspect as it is more complex, the option receives a 2 on the first measure. As changing resettlement quotas would be a federal decision, it receives a 1 on the second administrative complexity measure.

A document that provides information on each GAR would reduce the administrative burden on service providers. Likewise, it could make things easier for employers. A 2010 survey found that 45% of employers in non-regulated professions cite challenges associated with assessing credentials, language skills, and work experience as reasons to not hire internationally trained migrants (CIC, 2013). Qualifications passports would make the hiring process easier by removing this assessment burden. It receives a 3 on both stakeholder acceptance measures.

Table 6.   Policy Option Evaluation

Criteria	Option 1: Direct-hire job placements	Option 2: Settlement App	Option 3: BVORs expansion plus qualifications passports
Effectiveness			
Employment outcomes	3	2	1
	3	1	2
	3	2	1
Equity			
Helpfulness for different refugees	2	3	1
Cost			
Budgetary impact	1	3	2
Administrative complexity			
Ease of implementation/ administration	1	2	2
	2	3	1
Total/2	1.5	2.5	1.5
Stakeholder Acceptance			
Support from stakeholders	3	2	3
	3	2	3
Total/2	3	2	3
Total Score	16.5	15.5	11.5

Chapter 11. Recommendation

There are two recommendations. The first is to increase the level of funding provided for direct-hire job placement programs. A doubling of the annual allocation from $2 million to $4 million for the Refugee Fund could have a significant, positive impact on GARs' employment outcomes and would help achieve the three objectives. First, by ensuring a quota of the 200 additional job placements are earmarked for recently arrived GARs each year, the policy could have a direct impact on the number who find employment. Second, the wages offered in existing programs suggest it could have a significant impact on participants' incomes. Finally, the opportunity to gain hands on experience and practice language skills would help longer term integration by fostering skill development. One drawback is it would only help some GARs each year while doing little for the rest of the group's integration. Therefore, the second recommendation is to provide funding and support for a settlement app that helps connect GARs with employment services. This would require relatively minimal funding while providing a powerful tool for increasing service accessibility and awareness. The personalized features would also empower GARs to design a settlement path that works for them, thereby ensuring a greater share are assisted on their path to economic integration.

The implementation of both should be accompanied by a change in messaging among sector workers and the IRCC; the current misnomer that language proficiency must precede employment should be phased out, recognizing that early employment may help in the long run for a significant share of GARs. This does not mean that employment must be the top priority for every GAR; it simply reflects the individualized nature of integration and the fact that some are able and willing to enter the workforce earlier than has been achieved on average to date.

In the long run, the government should adopt multi-year funding arrangements for direct-hire job placement programs that prove successful. This would see programs that meet negotiated performance targets automatically renewed, which would allow SPOs/employers to plan more effectively and recruit on an ongoing basis. During the initial 5-year period of expanded funding, data could be collected to ensure a reasonable baseline is used for performance targets. Collected information should also be used to consider scaling up the annual allocation for direct-hire placements further if the

programs in place prove successful and if program demand is high enough to warrant expansion. This would allow a greater share of GARs to participate, thereby extending the impact of integration efforts.

The government should also use the five-year period to track the impact of the resettlement app on program awareness and uptake. If the app proves successful at connecting GARs to a greater range of services, it could potentially be expanded to other jurisdictions with the assistance of IRCC and other provincial governments. This would allow for a greater degree of information and best practice sharing as well as allow GARs to understand the services available in other regions. Moreover, the government should continue to explore opportunities to leverage technological innovations to improve the outcomes of refugees.

Chapter 12. Conclusion

In this paper, I identified divergent employment outcomes experienced by GARs relative to other newcomers to Canada. After detailing these differences, I explored the literature to better understand why GARs do not achieve economic integration at the same rate as other refugees. I then examined practices related to timely economic integration, identifying four overlapping practices in Germany, Norway, and Sweden. First, in each case, private sector job placements are used to help refugees enter the labour market. Second, each country makes a concerted effort to ensure refugees are connected to employment services soon after arrival. Third, each has credential recognition measures targeted to those with lost or destroyed documentation. Fourth, all three countries only have one resettlement stream. With these observations, I developed three policy options, each borrowing elements of practices in the three case countries, that were then evaluated on their ability to improve the standing of GARs during their first five years in BC. Focusing on this period addresses the importance of early intervention in driving long term outcomes and considers how full integration can be fostered by upfront support. Based on this evaluation, I recommend increasing the number of direct-hire job placements available to GARs as well as supporting the creation and administration of a settlement app that would help connect them with employment services. As found in the case countries, placements are an effective labour market entry tool, especially when program completion is complemented with a job opportunity. Meanwhile, similar to the Ankommen App in Germany, the settlement app would allow refugees to connect with services that fit their needs; the personalized features would also provide GARs with the same opportunity as those in Norway and Sweden to design a customized integration plan.

The resettlement of government assisted refugees is first and foremost a humanitarian mission. Cognizant of this objective, the recommended approach seeks to ensure a greater number of GARs are assisted with their economic integration. Direct-hire job placements provide a valuable opportunity to support these efforts in BC. Where they have been used in the province, they have been highly effective. Not only would the option create employment opportunities, it is highly acceptable to stakeholders. Together with the implementation of an app that allows GARs to design their own resettlement path and connect with a range of services, this could significantly impact long term

employment outcomes for the group. This approach recognizes the individualized nature of integration and provides greater flexibility in ensuring GARs can be agents in their own resettlement. Service providers in the province have already done a remarkable job with the resources available to them. These additions would complement their continued efforts while creating an environment better suited to the long term economic integration of government assisted refugees.

Throughout this paper, I focused on GARs as a group and did not address the within-group demographic differences that could be related to economic integration. There is a dearth of literature examining how such variables affect long term outcomes. Future research should therefore consider how experiences vary dependent on such characteristics. Finally, the recommended options are not an integration panacea. Instead, they focus on employment related aspects of integration soon after resettlement where appropriate. For the most vulnerable GARs, finding a job may not be a priority. This is most prominent among those who have experienced significant pre-migration trauma, those arriving with little education, and those without work experience. Thus, greater attention should be given to ensuring refugees have timely access to supports such as specialized mental health services and language classes. This should be augmented with research into how these aspects affect long term outcomes.

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Appendix A. Additional Information on Resettlement

Different types of Sponsors for PSRs

There are four types of groups that may sponsor PSRs: Sponsorship Agreement Holders (incorporated organizations that have signed a formal sponsorship agreement); Constituent Groups (subsidiaries of the former); Groups of Five (five or more Canadian adults); and Community Sponsors (any organization in the resettlement community).

RAP SPOs in British Columbia

The seven Resettlement Assistance Program providing service provider organizations in BC include: Abbotsford Community Services, Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society, Community Airport Newcomer's Network, the Immigrant Services Society of BC, the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria, Kelowna Community Resources, and Vernon & District Immigrant Services Society (Government of Canada "Find Help to Adjust," 2016).

Appendix B. Case Country Resettlement Overviews

Norwegian Resettlement Overview

Each refugee selected for the resettlement program is given a residence and work permit valid for three years prior to arriving in Norway.[20] Before departing, refugees participate in the Cultural Orientation Program facilitated in part by municipalities. With the goal of fostering timely self-reliance, this approach allows them to develop customized integration programs and supports. Municipalities receive an integration subsidy from the state for the first five years after a refugee has been resettled. Within three months of resettlement, refugees are enrolled in an introduction program. They receive integration services for 2 to 3 years, varying based on individual circumstances.

German Resettlement Overview

As there is no explicit legal basis for the program, refugees selected for the resettlement program do not receive refugee status when they arrive in Germany.[21] Instead, they receive a renewable temporary residence permit valid for twelve months to three years. They are also tied to the 'land' they are assigned to by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees so long as they remain on welfare assistance. Upon arrival, most refugees are taken to a reception centre in Friedland for two weeks where they participate in a five-day settlement course before being dispersed. Each refugee is eligible to take a two-year integration course. Those who cannot make themselves understood in German are obliged to participate. In general, they receive largely the same integration support as other migrants for a period of two years.

Swedish Resettlement Overview

Resettled refugees are given a residence permit prior to leaving the country of asylum.[22] Before departing, they participate in a cultural orientation program facilitated by the Swedish Migration Board, the Public Employment Service (PES), and representatives from municipalities where refugees are destined. Municipal participation is voluntary with

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[20] Government of Norway (2016)

[21] ICMC (2013)

[22] ICMC (2013)

those participating receiving a standard grant per refugee for a two-year period as well as a one-off grant. Responsibility for coordinating integration programs was transferred from municipalities to the PES in 2010. Local actors remain responsible for monitoring and supporting integration activities. Refugees generally receive integration support for two years.

Appendix C. Interview Procedure and Participants

I attempted to recruit labour market and immigration specialists, government civil servants, settlement service providers, refugee advocacy organization representatives, and people who volunteer with GARs. Initial contact was made via email or through snowball sampling through professional acquaintances to provide them with the study details and organize the time and date of the interview. A semi-structured interview style with open-ended questions was used to ask participants of their views on the effectiveness of different integration practices and to identify any gaps or missing considerations. Interviews were recorded and transcribed, contingent on participant's consent, which was confirmed at the start of the interview.

The first group of prospective interviewees are labour market and immigration specialists. The inclusion criteria included being a professional working in/researching labour market policy or immigration policy in Canada. The second group are government civil servants; the inclusion criteria are having experience in immigration policy and having experience in or knowledge of settlement services. The third group are SPOs' employees; members of this group should either work in settlement services or have experience in the field. The fourth group are refugee advocacy representatives; these participants are members of a recognized advocacy organization such as the Canadian Council of Refugees. Finally, volunteers are interviewed; I attempted to seek out those with firsthand experience working with GARs and who have a formal relationship with an organization with a mandate to assist refugees with the integration process.

Interview Questions

The interviews were semi-structured. These questions were subject to review following the case study analysis which dictated changes. Additionally, interview participants were asked questions relating to the work of their organizations.

1. Tell me about your experience working with government assisted refugees, including how you got into the field initially.

2. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge facing government assisted refugees? In terms of employment or economic integration, what do you think are the greatest barriers? Are these distinct from the barriers faced by other marginalized groups?

3. What methods have you seen used to help GARs overcome these challenges?

4. Are there existing supports or programs that you feel are doing more harm than good in terms of supporting the economic integration of government assisted refugees? Are there any existing programs or supports that you feel have been particularly helpful in supporting the economic integration of the group?

5. What would you say are the most important characteristics of a successful economic integration framework overall? What about the most important characteristics of those refugees that have found employment?

6. Are there any gaps in services for GARs that you feel would help them integrate into the labour market? Do these services differ from those needed by other refugee groups?

7. In your experience, are GARs aware of the programs and supports available?

8. How do you see the practices of each of the countries being applied in BC?
   a. Norway: practices as identified in the case study
   b. Sweden: practices as identified in the case study
   c. Germany: practices as identified in the case study

9. Are there any difficulties you foresee with applying these practices in Canada?

10. Overall, what impact would you expect the practices to have in BC?

11. Is there anything you think is missing from the given practices that would limit the ability of the policy recommendations to increase the economic integration of GARs?

12. If it were completely up to you, what would you change or improve about the support structure available to refugees? Short, medium, and longer term

Participants

Name	Title	Organization
Etab Saad	Manager of Employment Services	MOSAIC
Saleem Spindari	Manager of Refugee Settlement Support Projects	MOSAIC
Julie Kamal	Refugee Volunteer Coordinator	Edmonton Refugee Volunteers
Renee Black	Executive Director	PeaceGeeks

Appendix D. Information Letter to Interviewees

INFORMATION LETTER: Seeking Expert Participants

Project: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC

Hello,

My name is Lucas Neufeld and I am student in the Master's of Public Policy program at Simon Fraser University. As part of my graduate degree, I am writing a thesis evaluating best practices in three European countries for achieving the timely economic integration of government assisted refugees and assessing the applicability of these practices in BC. The purpose is to understand the barriers to employment refugees face and to provide policy recommendations aimed at connecting government assisted refugees with the BC labour market.

You are being invited to take part in this research as an expert interviewee; taking part is completely up to you and the things you share may be kept confidential upon request.

How is the study done?
If you decided to participate, we can arrange an in-person or a phone interview; the interview would be no longer than 1 hour and will take place in December 2017 or January 2018.

Why should you take part in this study?
This study will assess the practices of three European countries that have been identified in the literature as highly successful in achieving the timely economic integration of refugees; it will then evaluate the potential of adapting these best practices in the BC context as well as estimate their potential impact and effectiveness. During the interview, you will have a chance to share your experiences, expertise, insights, and ideas. Your participation would provide a valuable insight into the intricacies of the problem and possible areas of improvement. Given your expertise, it would also allow for a more thorough assessment of how the practices could be applied in BC and whether they would solve the issues currently faced by government assisted refugees in terms of economic integration.

The study results will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be presented and/or published in academic conferences or journals. The report will be available for you to read in May or June 2017. Your preferences about confidentiality will be respected. I also

plan on potentially giving presentations, and/or writing articles such as newspaper op-eds based on the results. Please note that no remuneration will be offered for participation.

If you are interested in participating, and/or have any questions or concerns please email me at [...]@sfu.ca. Thank you!

Best,
Lucas Neufeld
Graduate Student
School of Public Policy
Simon Fraser University

Appendix E. Interview Consent Form

SFU SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
ENGAGING THE WORLD

CONSENT FORM for Expert Participants

Project: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC
Funding source: SSHRC; Project title: Innovative Approaches to Meaningful
Employment for Refugees in Metro Vancouver; Grant type: CGS-M

You are being invited to take part in this research as an expert interviewee; taking part is completely up to you and the things you share may be kept confidential upon request.

Who is conducting the study?

Principal Investigator: Lucas Neufeld, Master's of Public Policy Student, [...]@sfu.ca
Faculty Supervisor: Dominique Gross, [...]@sfu.ca

I am student of Public Policy at Simon Fraser University. As part of my graduate degree, I am writing a thesis evaluating best practices for achieving the timely integration of government assisted refugees and assessing the applicability of these practices in BC. The purpose is to understand the barriers to employment refugees face and to provide recommendations aimed at connecting government assisted refugees with the BC labour market.

Why should you take part in this study?
This study will assess the practices of three European countries recognized as highly successful in achieving the timely economic integration of refugees; it will then evaluate the potential of adapting these best practices in BC as well as estimate their effectiveness. Thus, the research objectives are: to develop an understanding of how governments can facilitate the timely economic integration of refugees; and to provide policy recommendations to reduce the time it takes for government assisted refugees to find employment in BC. During the interview, you will have a chance to share your experiences, expertise, insights, and ideas. Your participation would provide an insight into the intricacies of the problem and possible areas of improvement. Given your expertise, it would also allow for a thorough assessment of how the practices could be applied and whether they would help alleviate current integration challenges. Your insights will also be used to derive the recommendations that I form in my capstone.

Your participation is completely voluntary
Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may still choose to withdraw at any time I will not be obtaining permission from your organization or institution.

What is the process?
Should you choose to participate in an interview, here is how I will do the study:

1. Contact me at [...]@sfu.ca to indicate interest in participating. We can then set up a time and place for the interview.
2. Review, sign, and return this consent form to me either by email or before the start of the interview in person; if you have not returned the consent form prior to the arranged interview either by email or by giving it to me in person, you may indicate verbal consent at the start of our interview. I will not begin the interview without consent.
3. The interview will last no longer than 1 hr but you may choose to end it at any time; it will take place in December 2017 or January 2018.
4. The interview will be recorded to allow for a focused and engaging conversation, but you have the right to refuse recording. Recordings will be shared with a professional transcriber. Only myself and the professional transcriber will have access to recordings.
5. Shared information will be kept confidential; you may choose to be identified by name in my project or you may choose to be de-identified. De-identified means that identifying information such as your name will be stripped from transcripts and not printed in my capstone. You also have the choice of having your title and organization name used when referencing material from the interview.
6. The audio recording will be deleted one week after final transcripts are received
7. Interview recordings will be stored on a password protected and encrypted USB drive to ensure your confidentiality. The USB drive will be stored in a locked drawer.
8. The information from the interviews will be analyzed and results will be part of the final version of my capstone project
9. If you are directly quoted in the final project, you will be given an opportunity to review/revise or clarify quotes before the capstone is published
10. The interview period and the period where you will have an opportunity to review/revise quotes before the capstone is published (should you be directly quoted in the project) should be the only time you can expect to dedicate to this project; in total, this should take no longer than 1.5 hr

Is there any potential harm from participating?
The topics discussed in the interview will not vary greatly from those you encounter in your job and/or in your volunteer capacity, so the risk in taking part is very low risk. Should there be a question you are not comfortable answering, you can of course skip the question; you may also take a break or leave the interview at any time.

What are the benefits of participating?
Although there are no direct benefits for participating, you will have the opportunity to share your expertise and enrich the discussion of how to better serve government assisted refugees.

How will your privacy be maintained?
You have the choice of whether you will be identified by name in the capstone or to have this information de-identified. If you choose to de-identified, I will remove your name from all documents and use a code name for the transcripts. Should you consent to having the interview recorded, recordings will be kept on an encrypted USB stored in a locked drawer and will be deleted one week after receiving final transcripts. The interview transcripts will be stored electronically on an encrypted and password protected USB in a locked drawer in a locked office room at my apartment for two years following the completion of the project at which time they will be destroyed along with all email communications. Any hard copies of the interview transcripts will be kept in secured and locked drawer and destroyed after two years as well. While it is not considered a confidential medium, if the interview is conducted over the phone, I will make all efforts to ensure privacy is respected.

Re- Contact
If you are quoted, I will contact you for a chance to review/revise any of your comments

Findings and results
The study results will be reported in a graduate thesis and may also be presented and/or published in academic conferences or journals. The report will be available for you to read in May or June 2017. Your preferences about confidentiality will be respected. I also plan on potentially giving presentations, and/or writing articles such as newspaper op-eds based on the project results. Please note that no remuneration will be offered for participation.

Who can you contact if you have any questions or concerns?
If you have any questions about the research or study, please contact either myself at [...]@sfu.ca or my Faculty Supervisor, Dr. Dominique Gross at [...]@sfu.ca.

If you have any concerns about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, you may contact Dr. Jeffrey Toward, Director, Office of Research Ethics [...]@sfu.ca or 778-[...].

Future use of participant data

There are no plans for secondary use of recordings. Your data will be used in the capstone only.

Consent

Taking part in this study is entirely up to you. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part, you may choose to pull out of the study at any time without giving a reason and without any negative consequences. Agreeing to a phone interview will be taken as your tacit consent to participate. I will confirm your consent to participate verbally prior to beginning the interview.

Do you consent to participate in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC? Please check one:
Yes ___ No ___

Do you consent to have audio recorded at the interview? Please check one:
Yes ___ No___

Do you consent to having your name, title, and organization used when referencing your comments and/or direct quotes while participating in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC? Please check one:
Yes ___ No___

In you answered "no" to the above question, do you consent to having your title and organization used when referencing your comments and/or direct quotes while participating in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC? Please check one:
Yes ___ No___

Should you be quoted, do you consent to being re-contacted in order to allow you to review and revise any comments being attributed to you? Please check one:
Yes ___ No___

Name of Participant (Print): _____

Signature of Participant: _____

Date: _____
      YYYY / MM / DD

Appendix F. Phone Consent Script

PHONE INTERVIEWS – VERBAL CONSENT SCRIPT

Hello, my name is Lucas Neufeld. I am a Master's student from SFU. Do you have any questions or concerns about any of the information discussed in our earlier emails or about the project in general? Before we begin, I would like to confirm that you have consented to participate in this study.

Do you consent to participate in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC?

Do you consent to have audio recorded at the interview?

Do you consent to having your name, title, and organization used when referencing your comments and/or direct quotes while participating in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC?

In you answered "no" to the above question, do you consent to having your title and organization used when referencing your comments and/or direct quotes while participating in an interview for the study titled: For Integration to Work: Government Assisted Refugees in BC?