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PUBLIC POLICIES FOR RESETTLED REFUGEES IN CANADA

TESINA

QUE PARA OBTENER EL TÍTULO DE
LICENCIADA EN CIENCIA POLÍTICA Y RELACIONES INTERNACIONALES

PRESENTA

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Abbreviations

GAR.....Government-assisted refugees

PSRPrivate sponsorship of refugees

UNHCRUnited Nations High Commission for Refugees

1951 Convention..... Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees

Abstract

This dissertation compares integration outcomes for refugees resettled in Canada through the Government-assisted and Private-sponsored resettlement programs. Using data from the 2016 Canadian Census, I measured the economic, political, and social dimensions of integration for refugees resettled in Canada from 1980 to 2016. Even though integration results for all refugees tend to converge in the long-run, when separated into different periods, data shows that privately-sponsored refugees integrate faster than government-assisted refugees. Since both groups are subjected to similar contextual factors, the variation in refugee integration outcomes can be accounted for by the differences in the policy design behind the two resettlement programs. In particular, I argue that the integration differences between refugees resettled through the Government-assisted and Private-sponsored programs are attributable to the extent to which each program promotes social connections between refugees and their host communities. This study hopes to emphasize the need to take into account social engagement in the design of public policies for refugee and migrant integration.

1. Introduction

Unprecedented levels of forced migration resulting from conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War have produced record numbers of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2018). Most of these refugees will remain in refugee camps before being able to resettle in a new community. Refugee camps are meant to be a short-term solution. However, an increasing number of refugees inhabit the camps for months, years or even decades at a time. The people living in refugee camps are subjected to all kinds of challenges including, in many cases, abuses from organized crime and armed groups. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), along with other non-profit organizations, is responsible for the management and funding of the refugee camps, but it faces many challenges in securing the quickly growing refugee population.

One of the practical solutions to the humanitarian challenges faced by the refugee population is resettlement. Resettlement consists in relocating refugee families and individuals in host countries away from the regions affected by conflict and integrating them into new communities. This option is offered to a limited number of refugees by a handful of host countries enrolled in the *UNHCR's Resettlement Programme*. In 2018, only about 100,000—out of the more than 25 million refugees that the UNHCR accounted for—were resettled (UNHCR, 2018). The small number of resettled refugees is due mostly to the nature of the resettlement program: “no country is legally obliged to resettle refugees and accepting refugees is a demonstration of generosity on the part of governments.” (UNHCR, 2018) In this sense, there are few incentives for more countries to become part of the *Resettlement Programme* or increase the number of refugees they receive.

Resettled refugees experience a higher quality of life compared to those that remain in refugee camps because they are exposed to less violence and given access to services to meet their everyday needs: well-equipped sanitary facilities, education, job training and health services (Banning-Love, 2017). Second only to the US, Canada receives a great number of refugees; in 2017 it was host to more than 25% of all refugees resettled during 2017 (Connor and Krogstad, 2018). Canada has a resettlement program like no other in the world. Additional to the traditional government-assisted refugees (GAR) resettled in Canada, many refugees are resettled through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) government program, considered the gold standard for refugee resettlement (Doherty, 2018). This private sponsorship program

implemented by the Canadian government has shown positive results for receiving more refugees on the 40 years of its implementation. For this reason, civil society organizations in other countries—such as the UK and Australia—have begun pushing for the implementation of similar programs (Dohert, 2018; Sponsor Refugees, 2018).

However, the challenges of being a refugee do not end once refugees are admitted for resettlement in a host country. Possibly, the hardest part of resettlement, for both refugees and host communities, is the integration process. Even when the resettlement process is performed under very similar conditions, the integration experience for refugees proves to be diverse. For example, according to the 2016 Canadian Census, in the period between 2011 and 2016, while 22% of government assisted refugees in the labour force were unemployed, only 18% of private sponsored refugees were actively seeking jobs (Statistics Canada, 2016). Here I seek to answer the question: *Why does the integration of resettled refugees vary even under very similar contextual conditions?* Some studies have found refugee characteristics and contextual factors affect the integration of refugee groups. Since most refugees in Canada live in a similar context, the variance between the results of refugees admitted through the PSR and the GAR program show that differences in integration cannot be attributed *only* to contextual factors. My argument builds on previous literature and argues that *if public policies for resettlement promote social engagement of the incoming population with their receiving community, they will have a more effective integration process even after controlling for all the factors known to affect the process*¹. By analysing the two comparable group cases created by the different resettlement modalities in the Canadian migration system, I hope to shed some light on the importance of social engagement of refugees with their new community.

Other studies (Montgomery, 1996; Neuwirth & Clark, 1981; Woon, 1986) conducted in the 1980s and 1990s have previously considered the integration differences between privately-sponsored and government-assisted refugees and reported that sponsorship had no effect on integration (Beiser, 2003). However, those studies only looked at the results of refugees resettled between 1980 and 1990. Here I will consider the results of refugees resettled in Canada from

¹ Literature on refugee integration has found that contextual social, political and economic factors along with the influx volume of refugees affects the way refugees integrate to their new communities. However, government-assisted refugees and private-sponsored refugees are expected to integrate within the same territory in similar time periods and are therefore subjected to the same social, political and economic context.

1980 to 2016 and compare the integration results between the PSR and GAR resettlement programs.

Going forward, this study will be divided into six sections. The first explores previous research and relevant literature on resettled refugee integration. The second and third sections describe the hypothesis and methodology used. The fourth and fifth sections present and discuss the findings of this study. Finally, the sixth section addresses the implications of including social engagement in the design and implementation of public policies for refugee resettlement.

2. Literature Review

The 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees* (1951 Convention), ratified by 145 state parties (UNHCR, 2018), governs the criteria under which a person or a group of people are to be considered refugees and who are, therefore, entitled to the rights and protection afforded under the 1951 Convention (UNHCR, 2014: 75). According to the 1951 Convention, a refugee is:

a person who... owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or unwilling to return to it. (1951 Convention, Art. 1)

In addition to the definition established in the 1951 Convention, the UNHCR's definition of refugees extends to "persons who are affected by the indiscriminate effects of armed conflict or other 'man-made disasters'" (UNHCR, 2014: 80).

The definition of refugees serves as a legal framework for state parties of the 1951 Convention, who assume specific obligations towards the refugee population. Among their obligations, state parties must follow established procedures for identifying refugees and award them protection (UNHCR, 2014: 75).

The UNHCR recognizes that once a person becomes a refugee, they are likely to remain displaced for a long time, many even decades (UNHCR, 2018). One of the first responses for people fleeing unfolding crises are refugee camps. The camps and other informal dwellings are only intended as "temporary accommodation for people who have been forced to flee their homes because of violence and persecution" (UNHCR, 2018), therefore, durable solutions are an essential element of international protection for refugees (UNHCR, 2014: 28). The UNHCR recognizes three types of durable solutions for protecting refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement.

As a durable solution that focuses on refugee protection, the UNHCR values resettlement for three specific functions. First, it is a solution that provides protection and meets the specific needs of refugees further than they could be met in the country where they originally sought refuge. Second, resettlement can be a long-term solution for larger groups of refugees. And

finally, this solution allows states to share responsibility for protecting refugees as an expression of international solidarity and alleviates problems impacting the countries of first asylum (UNHCR, 2014: 45).

As mentioned before, resettlement is a process in which refugees are selected and taken from the state of refuge to a third country that has agreed to receive the refugees with a permanent status of residence. This process is coordinated through *the UNHCR Resettlement Programme*, of which only a few states are part. However, the process goes beyond the relocation of refugees. Resettlement states are obligated to facilitate the integration of the refugees they receive (UNHCR, 2013: 5).

Integration refers to the process of becoming a member of the community in which one is living, in other words, it is the process by which refugees develop a sense of belonging. Refugee integration is a multidimensional process; it can be social, political, cultural and economic (Hovil, 2014; Bloemraad, 2006; UNHCR, 2013: 8). Integration may be achieved on various levels, on different dimensions, at separate times. For example, a refugee might integrate economically by entering the labour force sooner than integrating culturally and politically by learning the official language and becoming a citizen. Since several factors affect the dimensions of integration in distinct ways, integration can be measured in numerous ways and from different perspectives. Therefore, integration is a contextual phenomenon that depends on cultural, social and economic environments (UNHCR, 2013: 8).

Lucy Hovil (2014: 489) describes two types of integration: *de jure* and *de facto*. To begin with, *de jure* integration can be defined as the “formal process of obtaining a new citizenship”. This part of the integration process can, many times, serve as a gateway for obtaining political rights such as being able to vote. In comparison to other migrant groups, resettled refugees may have greater access to this formal kind of integration, as they enter their host country with a permanent resident visa and are often encouraged to acquire the citizenship of the host country—furthermore, some policies even require refugees to become citizens to be eligible for certain benefits (Ager and Strang, 2008: 176).

In contrast, Hovil (2014: 489) defines *de facto* integration as an informal process in which refugee groups “negotiate belonging in the locality in which they are living”. For many refugees integrating into communities of first asylum, *de facto* integration is often temporary

and, many times, considered illegal—because, in many countries, refugees are not recognized as such and are considered irregular migrants. This demonstrates that integration is a process destined to happen regardless of the actions taken by the host government. It is important to underscore that, while full integration of refugees is desired—that is, that there be no appreciable differences between the refugees and the non-migrant population (Bloemraad, 2017)—the integration process is exclusively personal and carried out by the refugees themselves. The role of the public, private, and community sectors is to ensure that the best conditions exist so that refugees can integrate as quickly and efficiently as possible (UNHCR, 2013: 9). However, it is important to underscore that *de jure* or formal integration does not guarantee the social, cultural or economic inclusion of refugees into a new community. For this reason, both *de jure* and *de facto* indicators of integration need to be taken into account in order to understand the integration phenomena as a whole.

Integration theory indicates that there are a number of factors that affect the way resettled refugees can integrate into a new community. Kunz (1981) identified three sets of factors that will determine the integration of refugees: home-related factors, displacement-related factors and host-related factors. The interaction between the three sets of factors will determine the integration of an individual. The first set of factors refers to the way refugees relate themselves to their country of origin. The second set takes into consideration the process that led the refugees to flee their country of origin and the transitional period before resettlement. Finally, the third set of factors are the host-related factors. Kunz divides the last set in three subsections: cultural compatibility, population policies of host countries, and the social receptiveness of the receiving community.

From the host country's perspective, the first two sets of factors established by Kunz are very difficult to control. Host countries can try to control these factors by screening potential resettled refugees before their arrival. Most countries of resettlement often include extensive tests and interviews to the already complex refugee application process to ensure that the resettled refugees will be fit for their integration in the host communities. However, such tests are lengthy, and this practice shows diverse integration results once the refugees arrive at the host country (UNHCR, 2014: 299-382; Bathke, 2015).

Kunz sees the factors that make up the set of host-related factors—cultural compatibility, population policies and social receptiveness—as given and difficult to change. However, in contrast to the first two sets, the third set of factors depends mainly on the policies of the host country. By theoretically describing these set of factors as given and unchangeable, Kunz inherently denies that the integration process can be improved. The integration process, then, has been studied only from a constricted view of contextual factors.

Notwithstanding Kunz’s contextual arguments, empirical evidence—such as the differences found between similar refugee groups in Canada—exhibits that refugee integration varies even when contextual conditions remain constant. The inability to explain the integration variance within similar contexts reveals a gap within the integration literature. Therefore, the question worth asking is: *Why does the integration of resettled refugees vary even under very similar contextual conditions?* This study argues that, while contextual and cultural factors do constrain the integration process at first, the policies implemented to integrate refugees can have an impact that is just as, or more, significant than these factors.

This section has set the conceptual framework under which the discussion of this study will take place. Resettled refugees live under specific conditions that determine their ability to integrate. The effective integration of refugees in host countries has positive effects for both the refugees and the receiving countries (Jacobsen, 2002; Butler, 2002). Therefore, studying what determines the effective integration of resettled refugees has important implications for public policy and the well-being of this population.

The next section will further analyse existing literature that has attempted to shed light on what determines effective integration. First, I will analyse theories that have focused on the role of contextual factors. Second, I will focus on theories that point to public policies as the determinants of the different results of refugee integration.

a. Contextual Factors Theory

Some authors attribute the variance in integration of refugees to the volume of refugee intake of a country over a determined period. Michael Lanphier (1983), for example, believes that the resettlement activities are produced by two main dimensions: the volume of refugees received, and the adaptation emphasis awarded by the host state. Lanphier argues that influx volume of refugees constrains the quantity and quality of services that can be provided to the

incoming refugees. At the same time, the adaptation emphasis—whether it is economic or cultural—of the host state will determine the way these limited resources will be allocated. According to the author, these two dimensions result in four possible combinations of government action, which will, in turn, determine the outcome of refugee integration.

Another possible explanation for the variation in the refugee integration is the political economy context of the host countries. It is thought that the variation in the political economy of the receiving communities can shape the integration process for migrants (Alba and Forner, 2015). Essentially, the political economy impacts the receptiveness of the host community, which consequently influences the attitudes of the residents towards the newcomers. Political economy will also have an impact on the way resources for the incoming population are allocated.

Lastly, some authors believe that integration is determined by cultural differences between the refugees and the host community. As mentioned in the previous section, Kunz (1981) includes cultural compatibility and social receptiveness as factors that influence and possibly determine the integration of resettled refugees in the host countries. Out of these host-related factors, Kunz recognizes the cultural compatibility as being the most influential on the satisfactory resettlement of refugees (ibid: 46). For Kunz, these factors are constants that will shape the way refugees will be able to begin to integrate even before they arrive at their host country. In other words, if refugees are too different from the members of the host communities, or if the members of the host communities are too closed off to themselves, the integration process will not be successful.

The theory of refugee integration is dominated by explanations that hold external factors as determinants of the way refugees integrate into host communities. These theories have a pessimistic take on the integration since they do not allow for a broad margin of action for the host government and communities to assist in the integration process. In cases like Canada, even when controlling for these factors, there is still strong variation of refugee integration across host communities. In other words, host-related factors are not enough to account for the variation of refugee integration. I do not argue against established findings that show that factors such as the number of refugees, the political economy context, and cultural differences impact the way refugees integrate into new communities. However, I contend that by creating public policies

that involve the host community the natural restrictions set by these factors can be managed, creating favourable integration environments.

b. Public Policies

The literature on refugee integration has paid little attention to the effect of the integration policies in the integration process, and even less to the social aspect of these public policies. Public policies on resettlement have the ability to control contextual factors that may impact the environment in which the integration process will take place. By focusing solely on the contextual factors that impact refugee integration, rather than on the integration policies themselves, we take agency away from the receiving country by assuming that what determines effective integration cannot be controlled through assimilation programs.

In the 1980s and in the 1990s, the novelty of the PSR program in Canada led to several studies that investigated the effect that sponsorship had on refugee integration (Montgomery, 1996; Neuwirth & Clark, 1981; Woon, 1986). However, these studies could only look at short- and medium-term results of sponsorship. As mentioned by Beiser (2003), “[c]omparative studies of the long-term successes and failures of government—and privately sponsored refugees are urgently needed”. In this study, I wish to address the gap in the literature on refugee integration by comparing the results of government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees in the short-, medium- and long term, and by studying the factors that impact the integration process from within public policies for the admission and assimilation of resettled refugees. More specifically, I plan to study the way these policies can promote the creation of social capital through social engagement.

The literature distinguishes between social capital and social networks (Cheung and Phillimore, 2014). On one hand, social networks refer to how frequently contact is made with friends, family and other organizations. On the other hand, social capital refers to the gains from help and resources received through social networks. Social engagement, or the social networks of refugees with their host community, has been scarcely studied. Literature on the social capital of refugees exists but focuses on the networks that refugees have with members of their own ethnic community, the *diaspora effect*. For example, Mamgain and Collins (2003) found that ties that refugees have with their ethnic community made it possible for some refugees to obtain resources to integrate into the labour market. This was particularly true for refugees that sought

to open businesses since they were able to raise interest-free loans through friends and family within this community (Mamgain and Collins, 2003: 139). Other studies have also found a positive relation between the ethnic social networks and the integration process of refugees and migrants (Green et al., 2011; Takeda, 2000; Allen, 2009).

This study does not deny the positive impact that ethnic networks have on refugee newcomers. Rather, its purpose is to shed light on other social networks that refugees can greatly benefit from: networks with their host communities, which go beyond any ethnic or national ties with their country of origin. The impact of these broader social networks can be just as, if not more, important than ethnic networks since they do not depend on the number of migrants from a similar background in the resettlement location. Furthermore, native-born members of the community often have more resources that refugees could benefit from—as compared to foreign-born individuals with which they share the same country of origin, such as a bigger social network, and more exposure to the host language and culture. Social engagement with the native host community can thus result in a faster and more rounded integration process, essentially, creating a sense of belonging for the refugee population.

3. Hypothesis

Previous literature has established that refugee integration variation is a consequence of external factors such as influx volume of refugees (Lanphier, 1983), political economy conditions (Alba & Forner, 2015) and cultural differences between refugees and their receiving communities (Kunz, 1981). I do not deny the findings of previous literature regarding which factors affect refugee integration, rather, this study aims to shed light on the role that integration policies play in driving these factors. Particularly, I sustain that the design of integration policies can have a deep effect on the integration experience of refugees. Governments looking to integrate refugees may not be able to control the contextual factors that will affect the refugee integration process but, through public policies, they do have the capacity of helping refugees face those contextual factors with better resources. By promoting social engagement of refugees with their host community through public policies, government will give refugees access to the resources they need to integrate effectively.

In other words, the hypothesis of this study is that *if public policies promote social engagement of refugees with their receiving community, refugees will have a more effective integration process*. Integration policies that promote connections between refugees and other members of the host community can potentially allow refugees to overcome barriers sooner and more effectively than refugees that are not actively encouraged to interact with the receiving countries society. Consequently, social engagement can be seen as a resource on itself and a gateway to access other resources that resettled refugees can use to relieve the effect of contextual factors that would otherwise work against their integration. For example, language barriers are often unavoidable for newly arrived refugee families.

In this study, I set out to prove this argument by testing four empirical implications (Ei) that take into consideration the diverse types of integration within the framework of two different public policies for resettlement, one that inherently favours active community engagement and one that does not.

Ei1: *If integration policies involve the community in the integration process, refugees will have a lower unemployment rate.*

Ei2: *If integration policies involve the community in the integration process, refugees will have higher income.*

Ei3: *If integration policies involve the community in the integration process, refugees will be more likely to become citizens.*

Ei4: *If integration policies involve the community in the integration process, refugees will be more likely to speak the official languages.*

4. Methodology

Canada has built a strong international reputation as a country that receives a considerable number of refugees. In the wake of the refugee crisis resulting from the Syrian civil war, the Canadian Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, made an international commitment to receive 25,000 Syrian refugees in 2016. That number rose to 40,000 in the same year (Endicott, 2017).

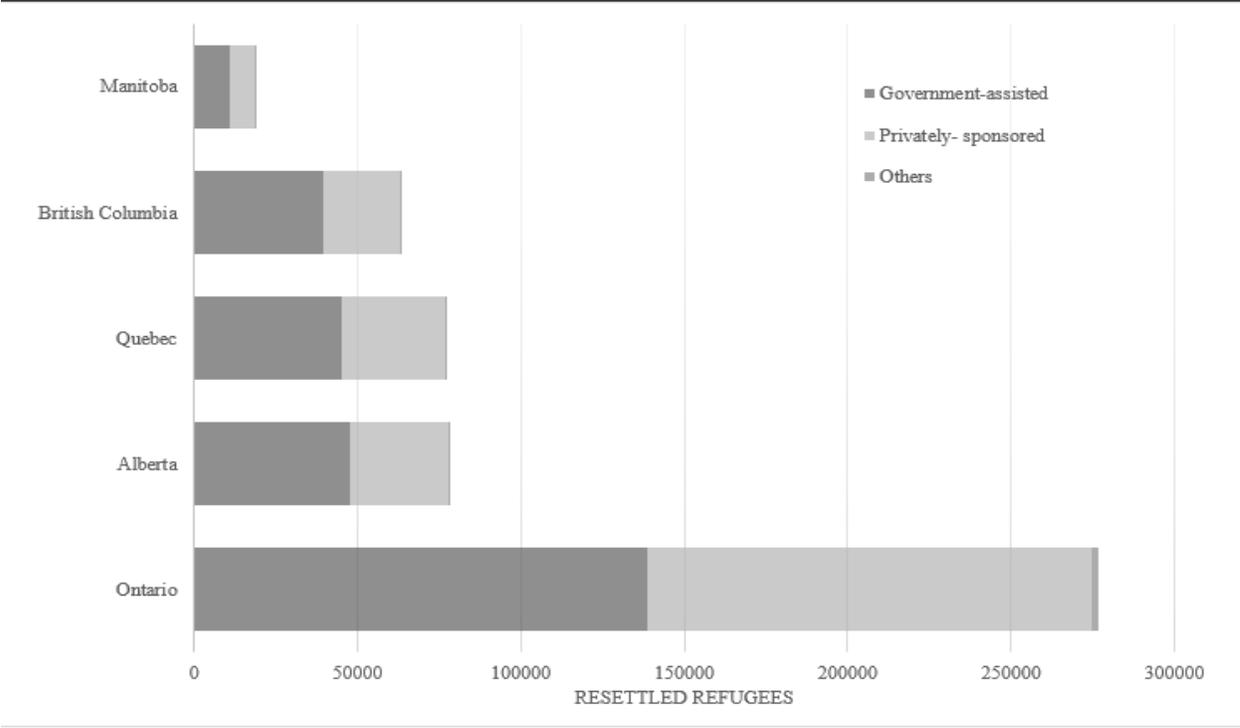
Canada also has a resettlement program like no other in the world. In 1969 the Canadian government made it easier for refugees to apply for admission by signing the UN Convention on Refugees. However, in the 70s, civil society groups wanted the government to admit more refugees than the quota of government-assisted refugees allowed. The constant pressure through the lobbying of these groups—churches, civil rights committees and ethnic organizations—led to the creation of a new Immigration Act in 1976. In this new act the government designed the privately-sponsored program for admission of refugees (Abella, 1993: 92-93). Individuals admitted through the privately-sponsored government program are matched with a group of sponsors that covers the refugee's expenses for their first year in Canada.

The two admission modalities for refugees—government-assisted and private-sponsored refugees—have been in place for 40 years (Doherty, 2018). The refugees admitted through either modality are asked to meet the same requirements and go through the same medical exams and security screenings (CIC, 2018). To be accepted into the government-assisted modality, refugees must be referred by the UNHCR or another referral organization for resettlement (CIC, 2016). The private-sponsored refugees also need to be referred by the UNHCR or another referral organization but may also be referred by the sponsored groups or organization if they are already registered as refugees by the UNHCR (CIC, 2011; 10). The differences between the two refugee resettlement modalities appear once the refugees arrive in Canada and are welcomed either by government officials and volunteers or by their sponsor family or group. These two modalities have created two distinct groups of resettled refugees living in similar contextual conditions but with varying results when it comes to integration.

The maximized control of variables by having two very similar groups within the same country—therefore subjected to very similar social and economic contexts—makes for a good case to study. Since both types of resettlement are implemented at the same time within the same

national territory, the effectiveness of these two resettlement policies can be isolated from other external factors known to impact the integration process. By focusing on the Canadian case of refugee integration, I hope to identify some best practices that can potentially improve the integration process for refugees in other countries and make public policy recommendations for countries looking to increase their refugee intake.

GRAPH 1: Distribution of resettled refugees by resettlement program and province/territory



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

In Canada 96.4% of refugees have been resettled in the five most populated provinces: Ontario, Alberta, Quebec, British Columbia and Manitoba (Canadian Census, 2016). In these provinces, the distribution between government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees is fairly even. On average, 55% of the refugees resettled in each of these provinces is government-sponsored and 45% is privately-sponsored (see Graph1). Additionally, since the majority of refugees are resettled in cities urban areas of these provinces (Government of Canada, 2017), the integration results are comparable across the country.

This case study will be conducted through descriptive data analysis utilizing the *Canadian Census of 2016* to compare results between the two separate groups of resettled

refugees in Canada. External factors that impact refugee integration will be controlled to isolate the effect of social engagement with the community. By dividing the analysis of the refugee integration indicators by specific time periods or resettlement (1980-1990, 1991-2000, 2001-2010, 2011-2016), I can control for the influx volume of refugees, status of the political economy and cultural differences because most of the resettled refugees in each period have a similar background. For example, most of the refugees that arrived between 1980 and 1990 were south-east Asian refugees from Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (Hyndman et al., 2017).

The UNHCR recognizes the integration process to be a “gradual” process (UNHCR, 2013), for this reason, I expect the integration of both government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees to converge in time. In other words, I expect that the refugees resettled 30 or more years ago will have more similar results regardless of what program they were resettled through. On the contrary, I expect the effect of the different public policies to be more obvious within the groups that have been resettled most recently (between 2011 and 2016).

The UNHCR acknowledges that integration is a “multifaceted process with interrelated legal, socio-economic and cultural dimensions” (UNHCR, 2013), consequently the dependant variable—refugee integration—will be measured taking these three dimensions into account. However, it is important to point out that empirically these dimensions are not neatly divided, in consequence, different measurements of integration may encompass more than one dimension.

First, this study will focus on economic integration. Economic integration is one aspect of ensuring international protection, durable solutions, and responsibility sharing for refugee crises (Ott, 2013). While economic integration should not be thought of as *the goal* of resettlement programs, scholars agree that it is one of the most important aspects of the integration process for refugees (Endicott, 2017). In addition, the economic aspect of integration may be prioritized by governments to minimize the costs of refugee assimilation (Ott, 2013). Economic integration has many dimensions. However, here I will only use two distinct measurements: the unemployment rate and the average income of refugees.

Secondly, I will also measure integration by the number of refugees that obtain Canadian citizenship. Naturalization measures the legal dimension of integration—the formal or *de jure* dimension of integration—. This is a particularly important aspect of integration since resettled

refugees enter Canada with a permanent resident visa that allows them to participate in most social and welfare programs like a Canadian citizen would, still, many opt to obtain the Canadian citizenship (Bloemraad, 2006). In this context, legal integration measured by citizenship might also give us some insight into the social or cultural dimension of integration. In other words, it might indicate which refugees have a higher sense of belonging to their new community.

Finally, integration will be measured by the language acquisition of refugees, which touches upon the cultural dimension of integration. Most forced migrants arrive at their resettlement community without any knowledge of the official languages; thus language barriers hinder the ability of refugees to integrate effectively into their new community. Language acquisition can thus be an indicator of integration in as far as isolation decreases and social integration opportunities rise with knowledge of the language spoken by the broader community (Robila, 2018: 3).

The independent variable—involvement of the community in the integration process—will be measured through the comparison of the results in each integration dimension between two distinct groups of refugees. The first group consists of the government-assisted refugees, this group is the one under the traditional resettlement process. Government-assisted refugees receive funds directly from the government to cover their basic needs during an initial period to assist in their resettlement (CIC, 2018). The second group consists of privately-sponsored refugees. This group of refugees is sponsored by a group of individuals that agree to provide the sponsored refugee with care, housing, and assistance through the resettlement and integration process (CIC, 2018). This second modality of refugee resettlement in Canada engages the receiving community to the incoming refugees and makes them partly responsible for their integration.

This measurement of social engagement through the different integration dimensions is merely a *proxy* for the community involvement in the integration process of refugees. There is no reason to believe that government-assisted refugees are completely isolated from their receiving communities. In fact, that is simply not true. Government-assisted refugees are met by volunteer groups and non-governmental organizations that aid the refugees with their settlement. However, the experience between government-assisted and privately-sponsored

refugees is fundamentally different. Private sponsors are entirely responsible for the refugee families they take in during their first year in the country. This means that private sponsors are responsible for accommodating refugees and helping them get settled into the country. Sponsors often receive the refugees within a family home, enroll the children into school, find jobs for the refugees, take them to their family doctor, and so forth.

Government-assisted refugees also receive access to education and health services, as well as job orientation. However, privately-sponsored refugees obtain this orientation from the sponsors who accompany them through the whole integration process, rather than from different volunteers and government workers whom they most likely do not get to know very well. As a result of policy design, private-sponsored refugees have more contact with their community through their sponsors and, therefore, may develop a deeper social connection with their community than government-assisted refugees.

5. Results

a. Unemployment Rate

Research on refugee integration shows that, although most refugees are interested in gaining employment (80-96%), it is more difficult for refugees to find a job than any other migrant group (Cheung & Phillimore, 2014: 521). With respect to Canada, specifically, Endicott mentions that refugees “experience an extremely difficult time entering the labour market upon their arrival to Canada” and explains that unemployment remains a problem for refugees throughout their entire life in Canada (see Table 1) (Endicott, 2017: 16-17).

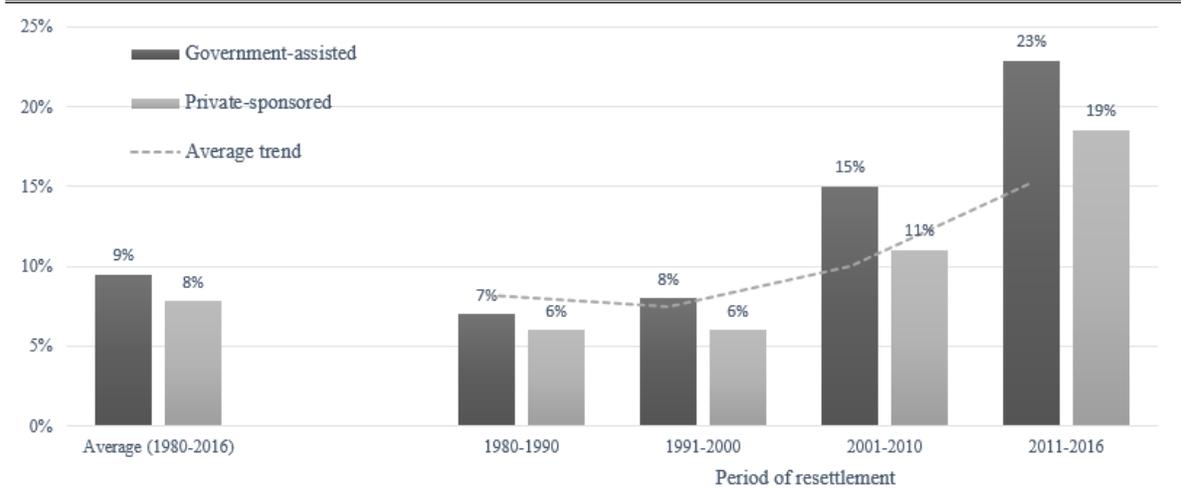
TABLE 1: 2016 unemployment rate of migrants and refugees resettled from 1980 to 2016 (%)

Period of resettlement	Total Migrants	Resettled Refugees
Average from 1980 -2016	8	9
1980-1990	5	6
1991-2000	7	7
2001-2010	9	13
2011-2016	12	20

Data from 2016 Canadian Census.

However, comparing different groups of refugees in Canada, we find slightly more encouraging results for refugees under the PSR program. Data from the Canadian 2016 Census shows that, government-sponsored refugees have an average unemployment rate of 9%, while privately-sponsored refugees have a lower average unemployment rate of 8%. Because the unemployment rate for all refugees converges in the long term, the trend of the two different resettlement programs is accentuated when the data is divided into different periods according to when the refugees were resettled. For instance, for refugees resettled within the period of 1980 to 1990, government-assisted refugees show a 7% unemployment rate whilst private-sponsored group show only 6%. For resettled refugees between 1991 and 2000, the unemployment gap broadens to 8% for government-assisted against 6% for privately-sponsored. Finally, between 2011 and 2016, government-assisted refugees have an unemployment rate of 23% while private-sponsored refugees’ unemployment rate is only of 19%. (Statistics Canada, 2017). Thus, there is a clear gap between government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees that can be appreciated even 30 years after being resettled in Canada (see Graph 2).

GRAPH 2: 2016 unemployment rate for GAR and PSR resettled between 1980 and 2016



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

b. Income

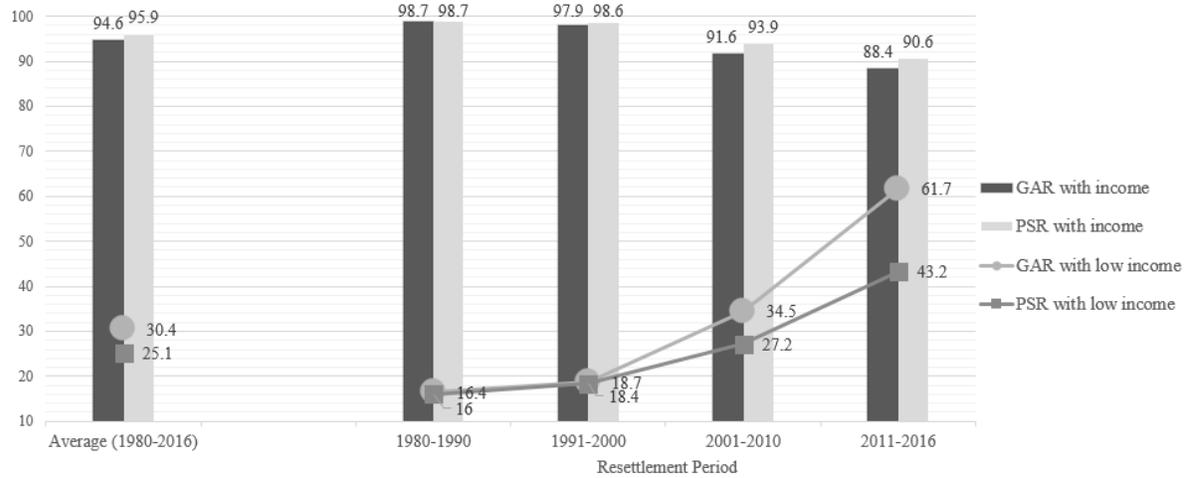
As expected after considering the unemployment rates for both refugee groups, privately-sponsored refugees are also more likely on average to have an income than government-assisted refugees. Resettled refugees are twice as likely to be in low income compared to other migrant groups in the first years after resettlement (see Table 2). However, privately-sponsored refugees are less likely to be in low income than government-assisted refugees (see Graph 3).

TABLE 2: 2016 prevalence of low income for migrants and refugees resettled from 1980 to 2016 (%)

Period of resettlement	Total Migrants	Resettled Refugees
Average from 1980 -2016	14.2	28.5
1980-1990	14.4	16.2
1991-2000	16.7	18.6
2001-2010	18.9	32.1
2011-2016	25.8	53.5

Data from 2016 Canadian Census.

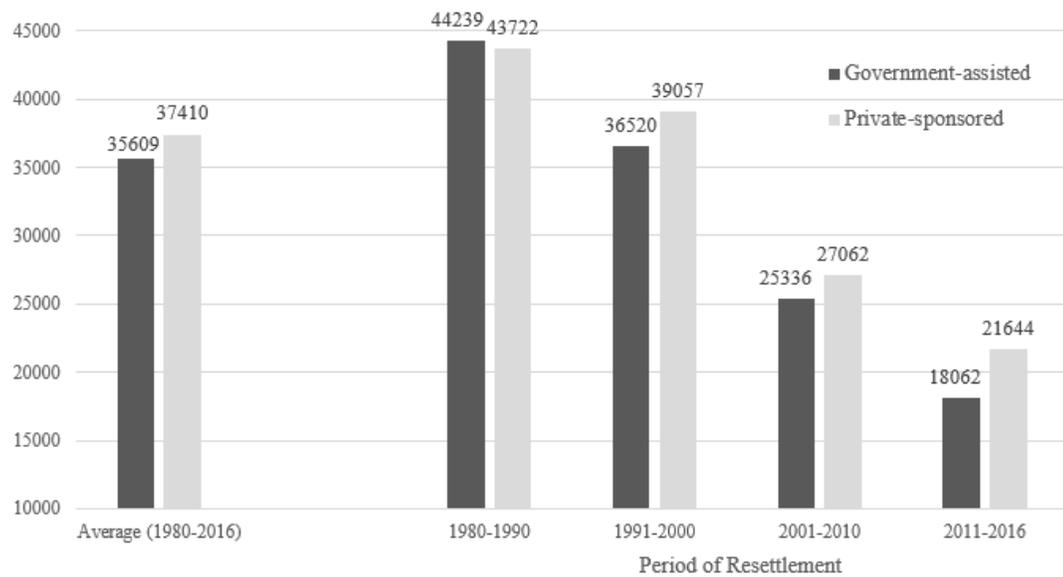
GRAPH 3: % of GAR and PSR with income and in poverty



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

In aggregated values, privately-sponsored refugees have a higher average income (\$37,410) than government assisted refugees (\$35,609). When divided by time periods the same trend follows for all refugees—except those resettled in the government-assisted in the period between 1980 and 1990, who earn an average of \$517 dollars more than privately-sponsored refugees, this is unsurprising because the integration process for all refugees is expected to converge in time and this group has been resettled in Canada the longest. For the refugees resettled after 1990, privately-sponsored refugees earn an average of \$2600 dollars more than government-assisted refugees. The gap between the two modalities of resettled refugees widens even more within the latest group to resettle (2011-2016) where government-assisted refugees earn \$3582 less on average than privately-sponsored refugees (see Graph 4).

GRAPH 4: Average income for GAR vs. PSR (\$)



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

Regarding the industries in which refugees work, a constant difference exists between government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees. Contrary to what may be inferred from the income differences, government-assisted refugees are slightly more likely to find a job in a higher paying industry than privately-sponsored refugees. The Canadian government reports the average earnings per industry: among the higher paying industries are qualified industries such as ‘professional, scientific and technical services’, ‘finance and insurance’ ‘management’ and ‘public administration’. The lower paying industries include ‘retail trade’, ‘accommodation and food services’ and ‘manufacturing’ (Statistics Canada, 2018). Most resettled refugees, regardless of their resettlement program, are concentrated in lower paying industry jobs (see Table 3).

TABLE 3: Employment of refugees per industry (%)

		Government-Assisted	Privately-Sponsored
Total	Lower paying industries	71.68	72.36
	Higher paying Industries	28.32	27.64
1980-1990	Lower paying industries	63.89	63.97
	Higher paying Industries	29.29	28.91
1991-2000	Lower paying industries	62.84	64.17
	Higher paying Industries	28.82	28.52
2001-2010	Lower paying industries	65.79	66.98
	Higher paying Industries	20.37	18.97
2011-2016	Lower paying industries	80.39	82.87
	Higher paying Industries	19.67	17.17

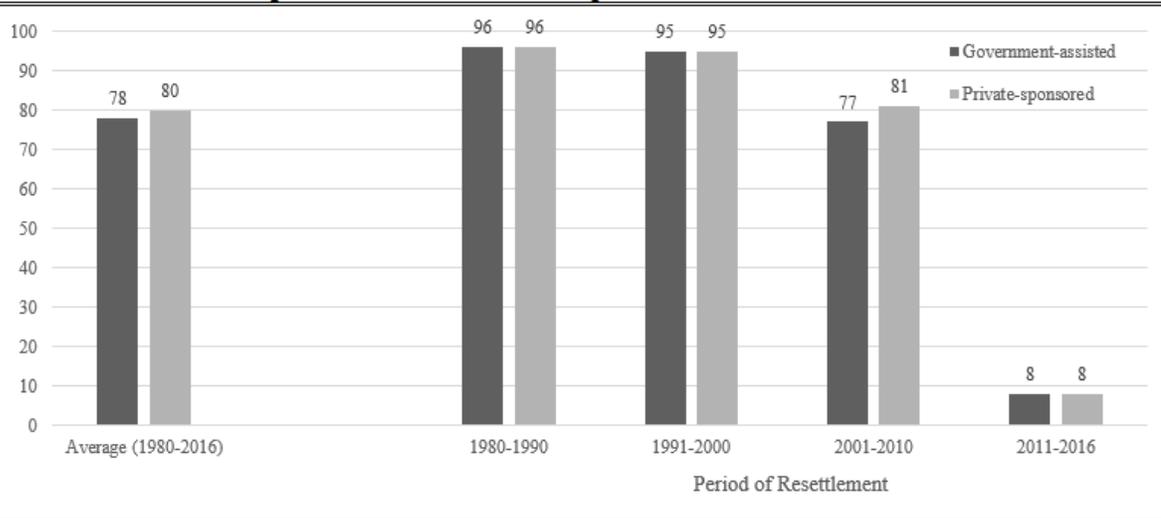
Data from Statistics Canada (2018).

c. Citizenship

As mentioned before, citizenship usually measures a strictly *de jure* dimension of integration by which refugees can gain access to political rights and to welfare benefits. For this reason, citizenship alone cannot be taken as a measuring unit for refugee integration—the sense of belonging to the country. However, as Irene Bloemraad (2006: 672) mentions, Canada does not restrict access to social welfare benefits to non-citizens and citizenship does not play a role in the process to sponsor family members for reunification—as it does in other countries such as the US. In addition to there being very few legal reasons, if any, for refugees to become Canadian citizens, the process to acquire the citizenship is tedious and, for many, difficult. For a refugee to be eligible to become a Canadian citizen he or she must have been living in Canada for at least three years, be up to date with their tax returns (if needed), pass a general knowledge test about Canada and prove they have acquired a level of proficiency in either English or French (CIC, 2019). When being interviewed about why he wanted to become a Canadian citizen, Basel Alzoubi, a Syrian refugee answered: “I will be born again from this life” (Harris, 2018). Thus, in the Canadian case, citizenship *can* provide some insight into refugees’ sense of belonging to their new communities.

Within the data from the 2016 Canadian Census we can see that refugees are more likely to become citizens than average migrants in every resettlement period analysed, except for the period between 2011 and 2016. As expected, citizenship converges in the long term, and is consistently low within all migrant groups in the short term because a period must pass after refugees resettle for them to be eligible to apply for citizenship. However, in the medium term—the resettlement period between 2001 and 2010—the data of the two resettlement programs being analysed demonstrates that privately-sponsored refugees are likely to become citizens sooner than government-assisted refugees. While 81% of privately-sponsored refugees resettled in the 2001-2010 period became citizens by 2016, only 77% of government-assisted refugees had adopted the Canadian citizenship (see Graph 5).

GRAPH 5: % that acquired Canadian citizenship GAR vs. PSR



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

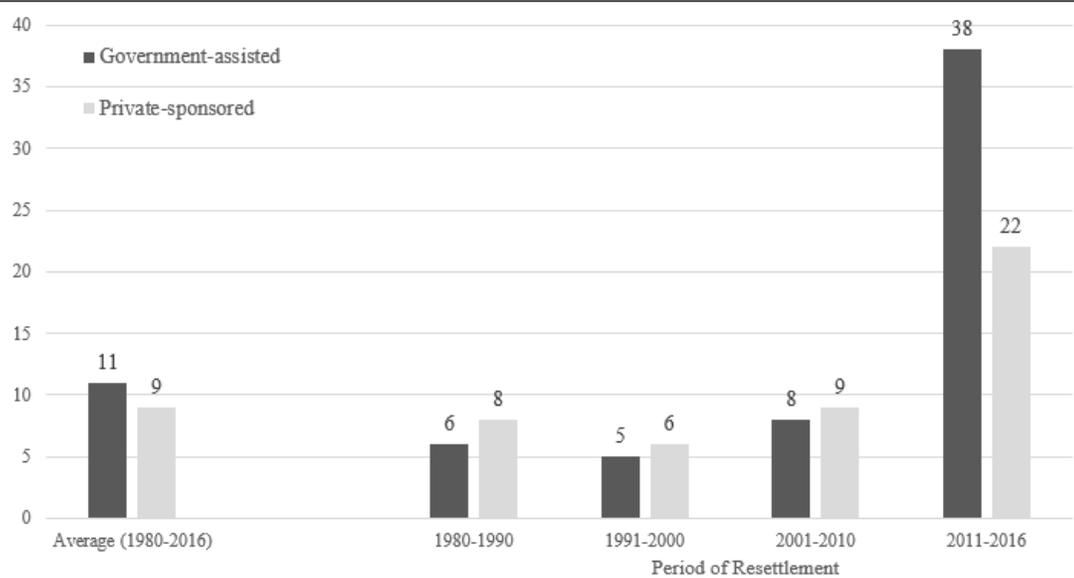
d. Language Acquisition

Language barriers are one of the many obstacles that condition refugees to a low social and economic starting point upon their arrival; their knowledge of an official language opens doors for refugees. For that reason, language acquisition is not just an integration measurement but an enabler of further integration in other dimensions. Knowledge of an official language can decrease isolation of refugees and increase social integration opportunities (Robila, 2018: 3).

The empirical evidence shows that for refugees resettled in the most recent period, from 2011 to 2016, more private-sponsored refugees have knowledge of at least one Canadian official language. While 38% of government-assisted refugees in this period report to have no

knowledge of English or French, only 22% of privately sponsored refugees report not being able to communicate in a Canadian official language. For refugees that have been resettled in Canada for longer, the trend inverted. Government-assisted refugees are 1% less likely to have no knowledge of an official language than privately-sponsored refugees in the remaining resettlement periods studied (see Graph 6).

GRAPH 6: % that does not speak an official Canadian language GAR vs. PSR



Data from 2016 Canadian Census

6. Discussion

The results from the three categories chosen to measure integration partly confirm the hypothesis made in this paper: *if public policies promote social engagement of refugees with their receiving community, refugees will have a more effective integration process.* I will now analyse the results obtained from the data against the empirical implications that I set to prove my hypothesis.

Although refugees resettled through either modality have the right to the same services, the way in which they are given access to the services is different. On the one hand, upon arrival in Canada, government-assisted refugees are met by a government-lead refugee service provider organization (SPO). The staff of these organizations provide refugees assistance such as orientation to access public services, language lessons and job training (Foley, Bose and Grigri, 2018: 3). On the other hand, upon arrival, privately-sponsored refugees are greeted by their sponsors, who are responsible for giving refugees “housing, clothing, food, furniture, employment search assistance, education enrollment, transportation, and emotional support” for the first year of their stay in Canada (ibid.). While the GA integration process is more impersonal, the PSR program promotes long-lasting engagement between refugees and their sponsors. This drastically changes the experience of refugees’ integration.

With this in mind, it is important to underscore that in a strict sense, social engagement cannot be observed directly. However, the implementation differences between the GA and PSR programs regarding the social interactions that refugees have with their host community have allowed me to isolate the social effects of these policies. Due to the design of the policy, members of the host community are directly involved in the integration process of refugees resettled through the PSR program, and thus create social engagement between individuals that would otherwise have little or no contact.

a. Unemployment and Income

As expected, data shows that the unemployment rate of both government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees converges in time. However, the unemployment rate is consistently lower for privately-sponsored refugees compared to government-assisted refugees. Government-assisted refugees find jobs with the assistance of SPOs, job agencies, NGOs and federal employment support programs (Statistics Canada, 2017). In contrast, refugees in the

PSR program have less access to wide-ranged employment campaigns because their sponsors are the ones responsible for helping the refugees with their job search, and yet they have a lower employment rate than the refugees admitted through the GA program.

The unemployment rate may be a result of the interactions that refugees have with the social structures they encounter. In the case of privately-sponsored refugees, the social structure of sponsorship offers them access to social resources that may allow them to find jobs more effectively than government-assisted refugees. Although government-assisted refugees have access to more formal venues for job searching, private sponsors give refugee access to social networks that often result in more concrete employment opportunities.

Another possible explanation would be that privately sponsored refugees are better prepared or trained than government-assisted refugees. After all, privately-sponsored refugees have higher education levels than government-assisted refugees in the most recent period of integration—60% of GA refugees resettled between 2011 and 2016 do not hold a certificate, diploma or degree compared to 40% of PSR refugees (Canadian Census, 2016). However, if that was the case, we would also observe the education gap within the industries that refugees find work in. Nonetheless, the employment differences within higher and lower paying industries for refugees in both resettlement programs is minimal and, in most time periods, government-assisted refugees are more likely to have a job in a qualified industry such as “professional, scientific and technical services”. On the contrary, literature on refugee economic integration has found that most refugees “are concentrated in low skilled work that does not reflect their educational credentials or previous job experience” (Ott, 2017: 18). In other words, previous education of refugees does not account for the unemployment gap between government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees.

Regarding income, as in unemployment rate, privately-sponsored refugees are shown to have higher income than government-assisted refugees. This means that privately-sponsored refugees are not only able to secure jobs but are also likely to have higher paying jobs than government-assisted refugees. In other words, privately-sponsored refugees integrate better economically in the short- and medium-term. Again, as expected, income for both refugee groups eventually converge. Nevertheless, the higher income perceived in the first twenty years of resettlement is bound to grant privately-sponsored refugees a leg-up over government-

assisted refugees. The consistent income gap for a prolonged period can translate into a lower quality of life for government-assisted refugees in the long run. This is proven by the lower prevalence of poverty amongst the refugees resettled through the PSR program.

On terms of the economic dimension of refugee integration, the results of unemployment rate and income confirm this study's hypothesis: public policies that promote social engagement of refugees with their receiving community lead to a more effective integration process.

b. Citizenship

This study's results also confirm the empirical implication regarding citizenship, thus supporting the hypothesis made in this paper: if integration policies involve the community in the integration process, refugees will be more likely to become citizens. Because Canadian law does not require refugees to become citizens to be granted social welfare benefits or start the process of family reunification, in the Canadian case, citizenship transcends the political dimension of integration and provides an insight into the social dimension as well. Refugees that undergo the process to obtain the Canadian Citizenship are likely to have a sense of belonging to Canada.

The comparative results show that privately-sponsored refugees are likely to become Canadian citizens sooner than government-assisted refugees. In other words, privately-sponsored refugees are more likely to feel they belong to their new community. The social engagement component of the PSR program is also likely to generate long lasting ties of refugees with their receiving community. As Belinda Ha (2013: 57) found in in-depth interviews, refugees are likely to keep in touch with their sponsors even 30 years after the sponsorship was over. In comparison, Ha found that "government-sponsored did not have any prolonged contact with any government workers after the one-year sponsorship ended" (ibid.).

c. Language Acquisition

Contrary to the hypothesis formulated in this paper, the PSR program does not lead to refugees being more likely to speak an official language. Privately-sponsored refugees are in fact more likely to speak an official language than government-assisted refugees, however, the differences are likely due to knowledge of English or French before their resettlement in Canada. As seen in the other categories, both government-assisted and privately-sponsored refugees tend to converge on their language skills.

Nevertheless, the results for refugees' language acquisition does not contradict this study's hypothesis. Here, language acquisition was used to measure social integration in as far as language skills can reduce social isolation of refugees. However, in the Canadian case, other indicators, such as becoming a Canadian citizen, provide a better idea of refugees' social integration without a previous-knowledge bias.

d. Limitations

The findings of this study have to be seen in light of some limitations. The first is that, due to the lack of information available regarding the referral of refugees, it is impossible to know how many privately-sponsored refugees are sponsored-referred rather than referred through the UNHCR or other refugee organizations. The lack of this information may lead to biased findings. It is unlikely, but if the majority of privately-sponsored refugees are in fact referred by sponsors that they already know, it is possible that the social engagement results stem from previous social networks rather than from the social aspect of the policy design for the PSR program. However, even if that was the case, it would not contradict this study's hypothesis regarding the role of social engagement in the integration process for refugees. Including social engagement onto the design of resettlement and integration policies would still yield positive results for the refugee population.

The second limitation concerns the invisibility of social engagement as a variable. This study relied on proxies in the attempt to observe the direct effect of social engagement in the integration process of refugees. However, the aggregate data here analysed is ill-equipped to measure a variable that is, in many cases, subjective and deeply personal. More experience-based data is urgently needed in order to improve the mensuration of social engagement and its impact on the refugee integration process. Future studies would greatly benefit from data obtained through longitudinal studies of refugees' integration process and more in-depth interviews of refugees, such as the ones conducted by Belinda Ha in her study "The Resettlement Experiences in Canada of Chinese-Vietnamese Refugees after the Vietnam War" (2013).

In the same regard, the data analysed fails to visualize other social effects of the resettlement programs here analysed. Regardless of the findings on the positive outcomes PSR program for refugee integration, this Canadian policy for refugee resettlement is far from perfect. Scholars, such as Doreen Indra (1993), found that the PSR program may set the stage

for highly unequal relationships between refugees and sponsors. On the one hand, she found that sponsors “identified refugees with a class- and media-based image of helplessness”. On the other hand, sponsored refugees have no alternative but to accept the assistance from their sponsors without the possibility to “reciprocate materially on a balanced manner”. Indra suggests that the charitable ideal behind the design of the PSR program ensured a status difference that would mark the relationship of refugees and their sponsors and made some refugees feel “humiliated”. In result, the practice may not be so charitable, rather conditioning refugees to express submission, passivity and dependence. Some refugees may have felt as if they could not express disapproval if they did not agree with actions taken by their sponsors. For example, Beiser (2009; 565) found that sometimes sponsors were insensitive to refugees’ needs and found housing options that they would not be able to afford once the sponsorship was over. Beiser also found that well intended sponsors could sometimes invade their sponsored refugee’s privacy, which created tensions between the refugees and their sponsors.

A possible solution for the issues raised by Indra and Beiser could be the previous establishment of boundaries for sponsor-refugee relations. A written social contract defining each parties’ responsibilities to the other could set expectations and allow “sponsors and refugees to maintain a degree of status equality despite necessarily wide differences in power, privilege and culture” (Indra, 1993; 244).

Even after considering this study’s limitations, the empirical results regarding employment, income, and citizenship are positive. Therefore, when creating public policies for migrant integration, the policy designers should take the social impact of the policy into consideration.

7. Concluding Remarks

The aim of this study has been to shed light on the impact that public policies can have on the integration process of resettled refugees. In particular, I have studied the differences in the integration experience of refugees resettled through a policy that, perhaps inadvertently, promotes social engagement with their host communities and one that does not—the PSR and the GA resettlement programs in Canada. This study found that, measured by economic and political (citizenship) indicators, refugees that were resettled through a program that promotes more social engagement with their host community have better integration results in the short- and medium- run. Faster integration conduces to better economic and social opportunities for refugees in the long run.

It must be recognized that one of the virtues of the PSR program is its low cost in as far as it helps increase the protection space for refugees. For that reason, in countries with well-established welfare systems such as Canada, a private sponsorship program is effective in providing refugees the help that they need without compromising the welfare of the Canadian population. After all, almost half of the resettled refugee population would not be in Canada if it was not for the generous assistance from private sponsors. With this in mind, the Canadian government launched the Global Refugee Sponsorship Initiative in 2016 as a way to ‘export’ the Canadian sponsorship Program model and best practices to other interested states (Hyndman et al, 2016).

However, it is important to underscore that my study is not meant to promote the use of private initiatives to resolve refugee integration needs. Rather, this study has used the GAR and the PSR programs—both part of the government-led policy for refugee resettlement—as a way to isolate the outcomes of social engagement. Thus, there is no need for the Canadian government to focus on private-sponsorship or eliminate government-assistance, neither for other governments to replicate the Canadian model to improve their integration policies for refugees. Preferably, any state looking to improve their refugee integration policies should consider and incorporate social engagement into their resettlement and integration policy design.

Possibly, the key to better integration policies, with a smaller economic burden for sponsors and with more social liberty for refugees, might be the use of joint private and government assistance. Canada has recently incorporated the Blended-Visa program as a resettlement option; refugees resettled through the Blended-Visa program receive economic and social assistance from both the government and a sponsor group. Initiatives like this may lift some of the economic burden from private sponsors while allowing refugees to benefit from the social perks of having a sponsor in their new community. Unfortunately, the Blended-Visa program was only recently launched in 2013, thus, the data from the 2016 Canadian Census used to conduct the present study only accounted for 3,060 refugees resettled through this strategy. For this reason, it is not yet possible to study the results of this new program. Future studies are needed to analyse the integration outcomes of the Blended-Visa and other joint assistance programs.

The findings of this study show that, in order to improve the integration results of refugees, policy designers need to actively take the social aspect of integration into account. Even though the Canadian system is not perfect, it continues to be the gold standard for refugee resettlement and integration, hence, there are valuable lessons that can be learned from their policy experience. Nevertheless, Canada and other states looking to improve refugee and migrant integration into their communities can greatly benefit from policy designs that promote social engagement between the migrant and non-migrant population.

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