



# The promise of community sponsorship: Lessons, limits, and questions from the Canadian PSR program

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*“Every country’s circumstances are different but we believe this is a good model which is exportable to other countries”*

---John McCallum, 2016

(with Filippo Grandi and George Soros at the UN, Sept 2016)

# **CANADIAN REFUGEE ADMISSIONS AND SUPPORT**

## **Resettlement**

### **In-land claims (refugee claimants)**

**Resettled refugees are entitled to a minimum of one year financial and settlement support**

- For some vulnerable people, can get 18 months or 2 years

**Programs differ on who provides the support:**

- Government Assisted Refugees (GARs)
- Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)
- Blended Visa Office Referred (BVORs)

# PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP IN CANADA

## Sponsors

- Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) (66%)
  - Incorporated organization
    - Constituent groups (CGs) authorized to sponsor on their behalf
- Community Sponsors (3%)
  - Any organization in the community where the person will settle
- Groups of Five (G5)\* (31%)
  - Five or more private citizens over the age of 18

**Historically, faith-based organizations saw resettlement as a way to meet humanitarian goals, including family reunification**

**Historically, the government saw resettlement as a way of filling gaps in the workforce**

**Private sponsorship is in **addition** to those the government commits to resettling**

# WHO IS YOUR SPONSOR?

Private sponsors can **name** who they want to settle

- Prior to Operation Syria, it is estimated that 90% to 95% of private sponsorships were family reunifications
- In our sample of 2000 Syrian refugees, over 80% of privately sponsored had family in Canada
- Out of approximately 40,000 Syrian arrivals in Operation Syria, fewer than 10% were Blended Visa Office Referred (BVORs)

**Most of what we know about private sponsorship is based on people sponsored by family or to join family**

# OTHER DIFFERENCES

## PSRs are:

- More highly educated
  - Especially in the Syrian cohort
- More likely to speak English
  - Especially in the Syrian cohort

## GARs are:

- Displaced for a longer period of time
  - in our Syrian sample
- Selected for vulnerability
  - Disability, chronic disease, large families, single parent families

# SPONSORSHIP BY GOVERNMENT VERSUS FAMILY OR COMMUNITY

	Gov't (n=860)	Family (n=767)	Comm (n=269)
Mean age (in Year 1)	35.8	41.1	38.7
Have 4 or more children (%)	<b>29.9</b>	2.7	12.0
Education (%)			
Low (up to 6 years)	41.0	<b>11.0</b>	24.5
Moderate (7 to 12 years)	46.5	42.6	43.1
Specialized (trade/college)	5.9	16.8	10.8
High (university)	<b>6.5</b>	29.6	21.6
Always need interpreter Year 2	<b>33.9</b>	20.1	20.2
Length of displacement (months)	38.2	<b>17.6</b>	30.0
Muslim religion (%)	<b>96.5</b>	18.8	53.5

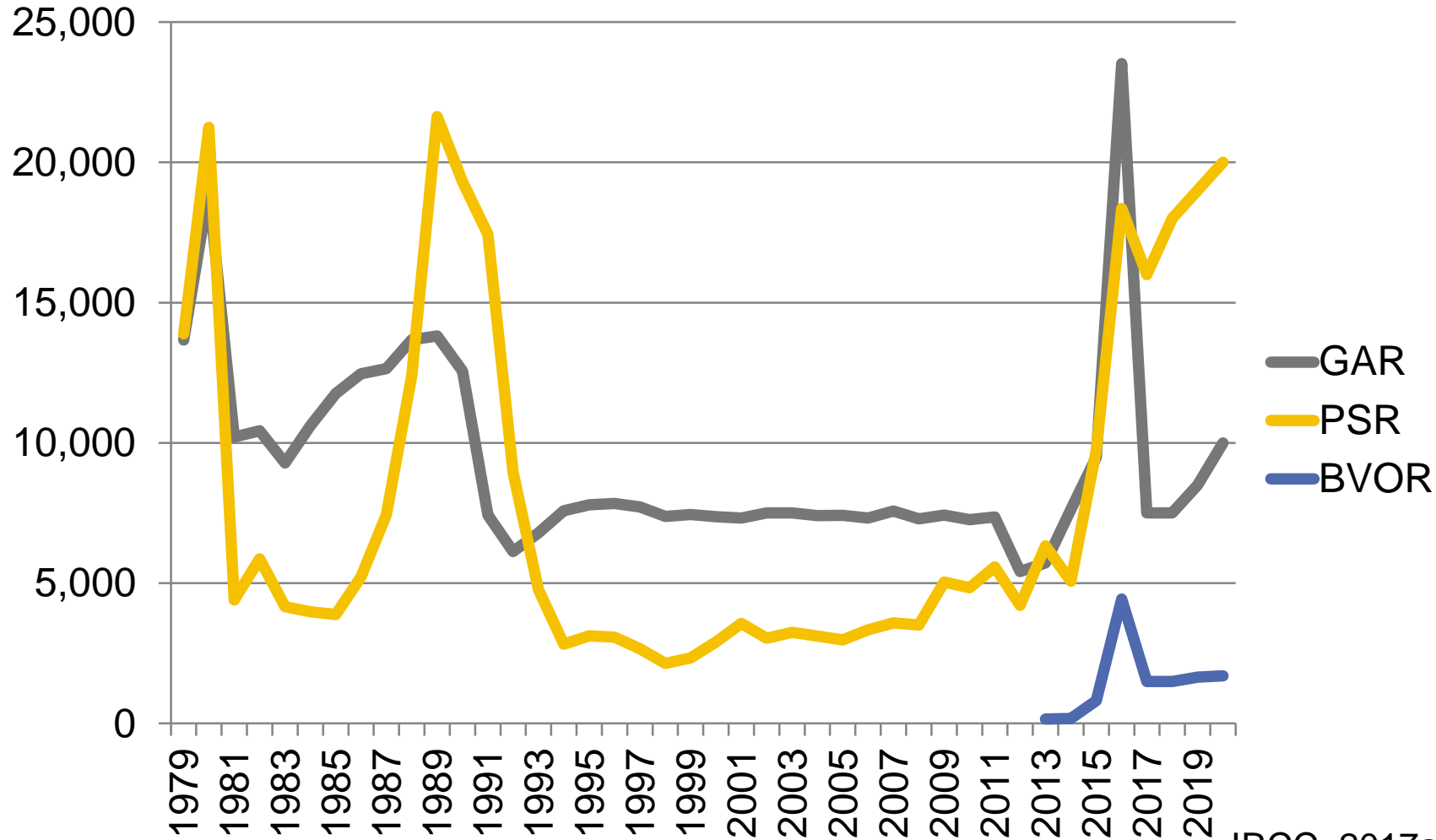
# WHAT ARE THE (POTENTIAL) ADVANTAGES OF PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP?

## For resettlement:

- Increases numbers who can be resettled
- Can be responsive to under-recognized groups and individuals
- Distributes newcomers across Canada

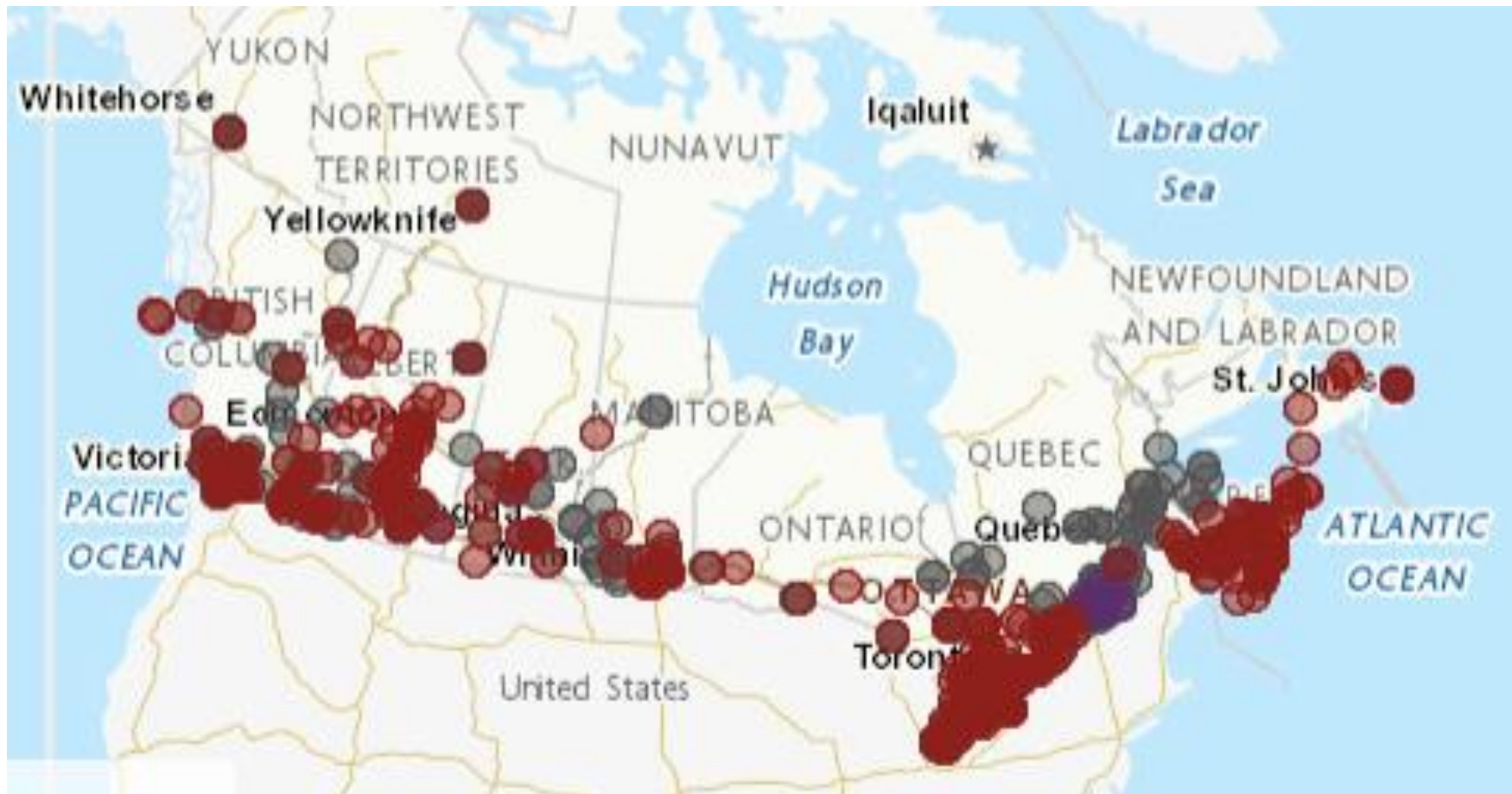


# INCREASED NUMBERS AND RESPONSIVENESS RESETTLED REFUGEE ADMISSIONS SINCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP (ACTUAL AND TARGETED NUMBERS)



IRCC, 2017a; 2017b

# DISTRIBUTE REFUGEES WIDELY? SPONSORING COMMUNITIES FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES



● Community sponsors

● Government sponsors

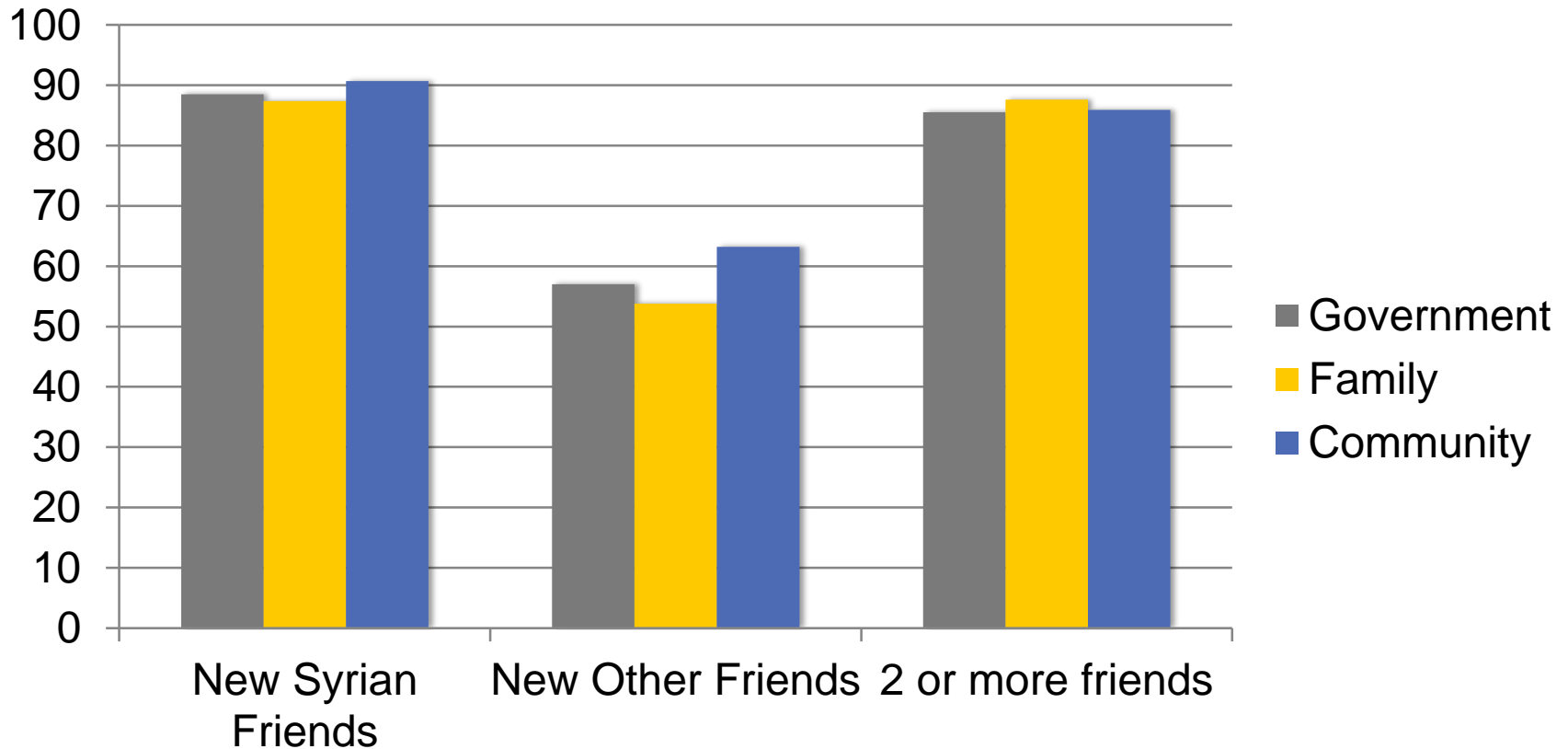
# WHAT ARE THE (POTENTIAL) ADVANTAGES OF PRIVATE SPONSORSHIP?

## For integration:

- Engages civic society so
  - More positive intergroup relationships
  - More positive attitudes through increased feelings of control
  - Better integration outcomes by increasing newcomers' social capital

# INCREASED SOCIAL CAPITAL?

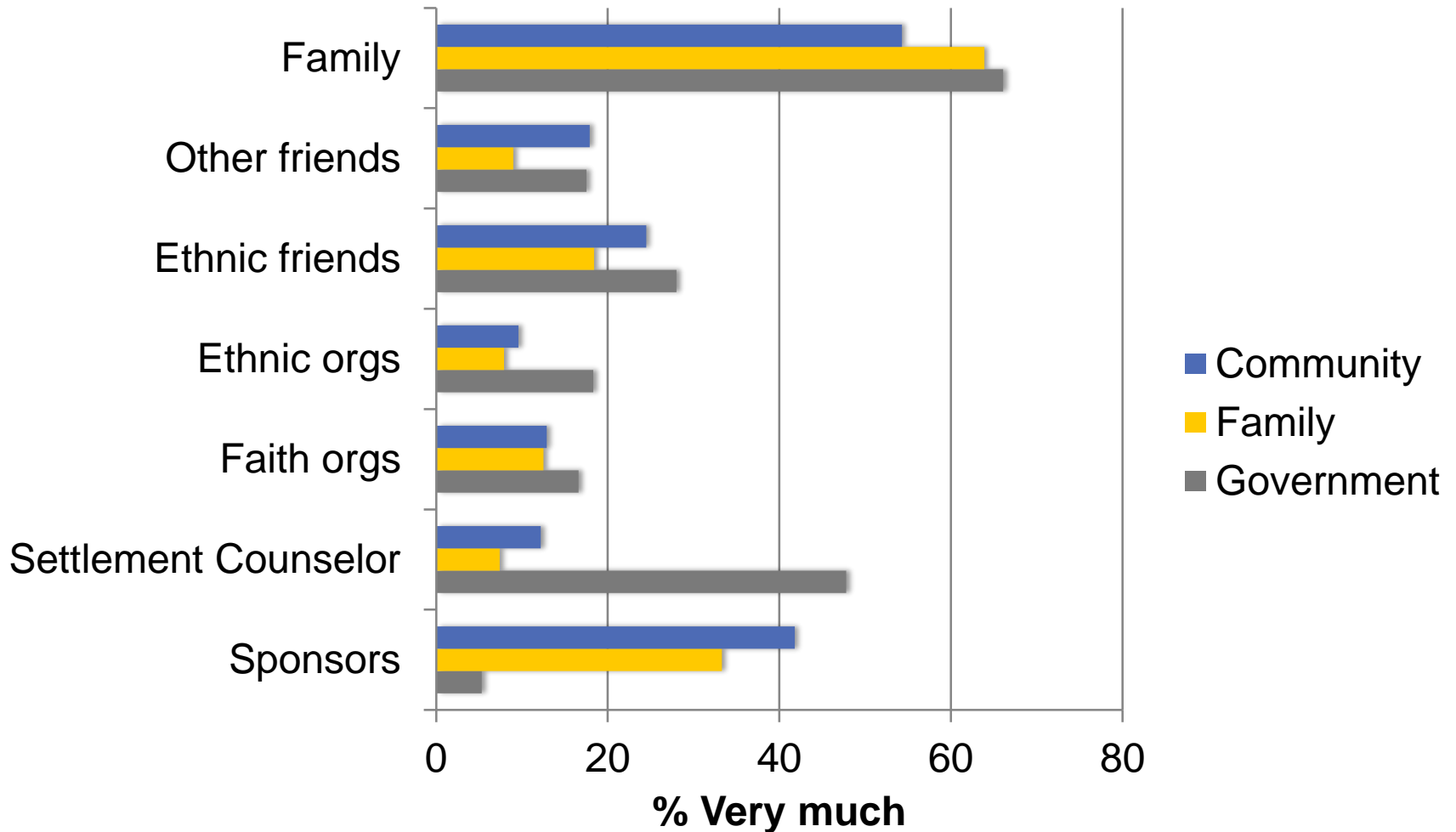
## NUMBER OF NEW FRIENDS



More new other friends if: younger, in Canada longer, don't need interpreter, Community rather than Government sponsored, if male and if Muslim

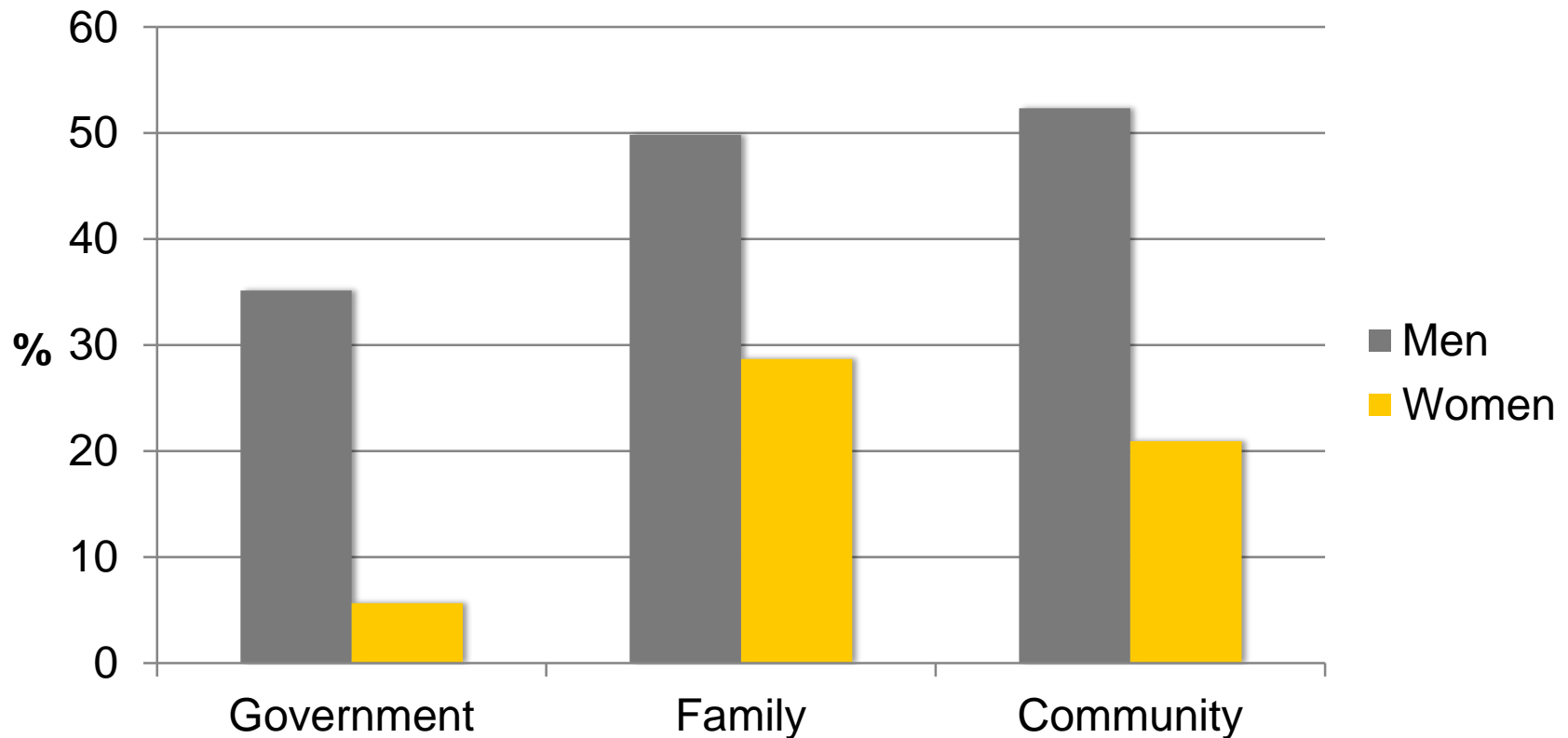
# HOW MUCH DO REFUGEES RELY ON THEIR SPONSORS?

## HOW MUCH DID YOU RELY ON \_\_\_?



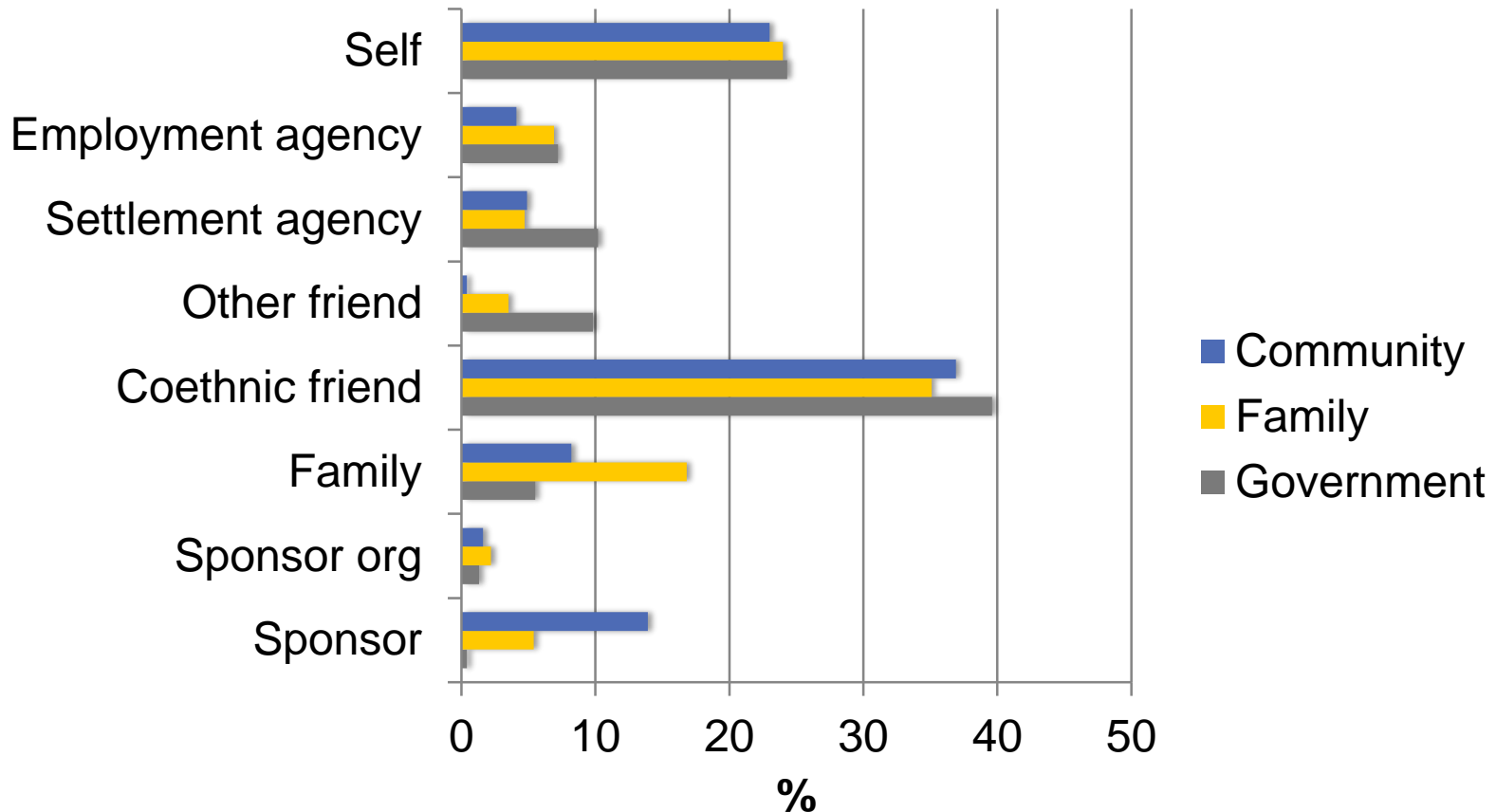
# FASTER INTEGRATION?

## CURRENTLY WORKING (FROM SYRIA.LTH) (IN CANADA BETWEEN 1 AND 3 YEARS)

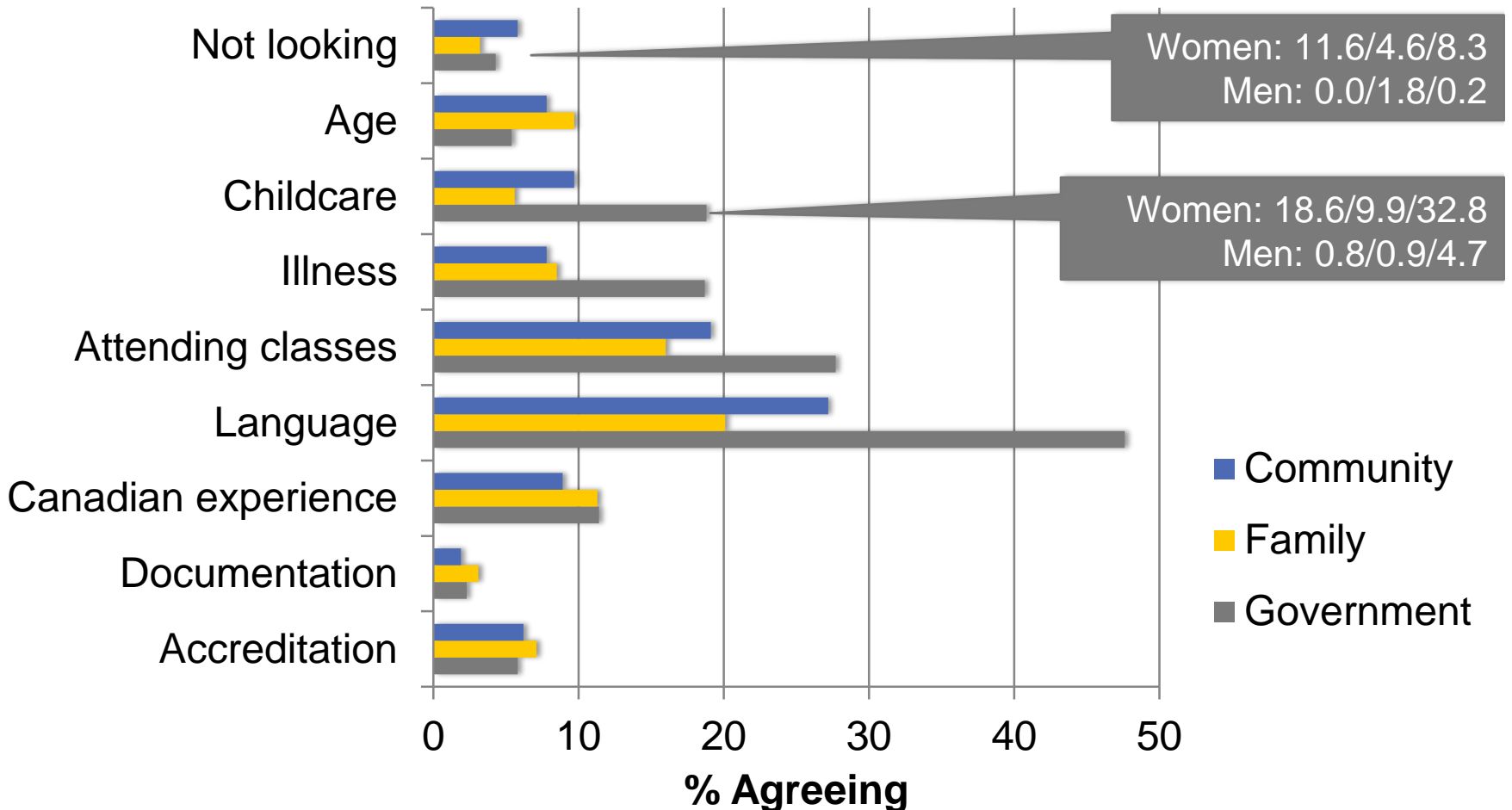


More likely to be employed if: Fewer children under 18, In Canada longer, Younger, Better physical health Year 1, Male, Comm rather than Govt, Moderate rather than high education, In VN or OK

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL CAPITAL: WHO HELPED YOU FIND A JOB (YEAR2)?



# INTEGRATION: LANGUAGE AND INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS: WHY ARE YOU NOT WORKING?

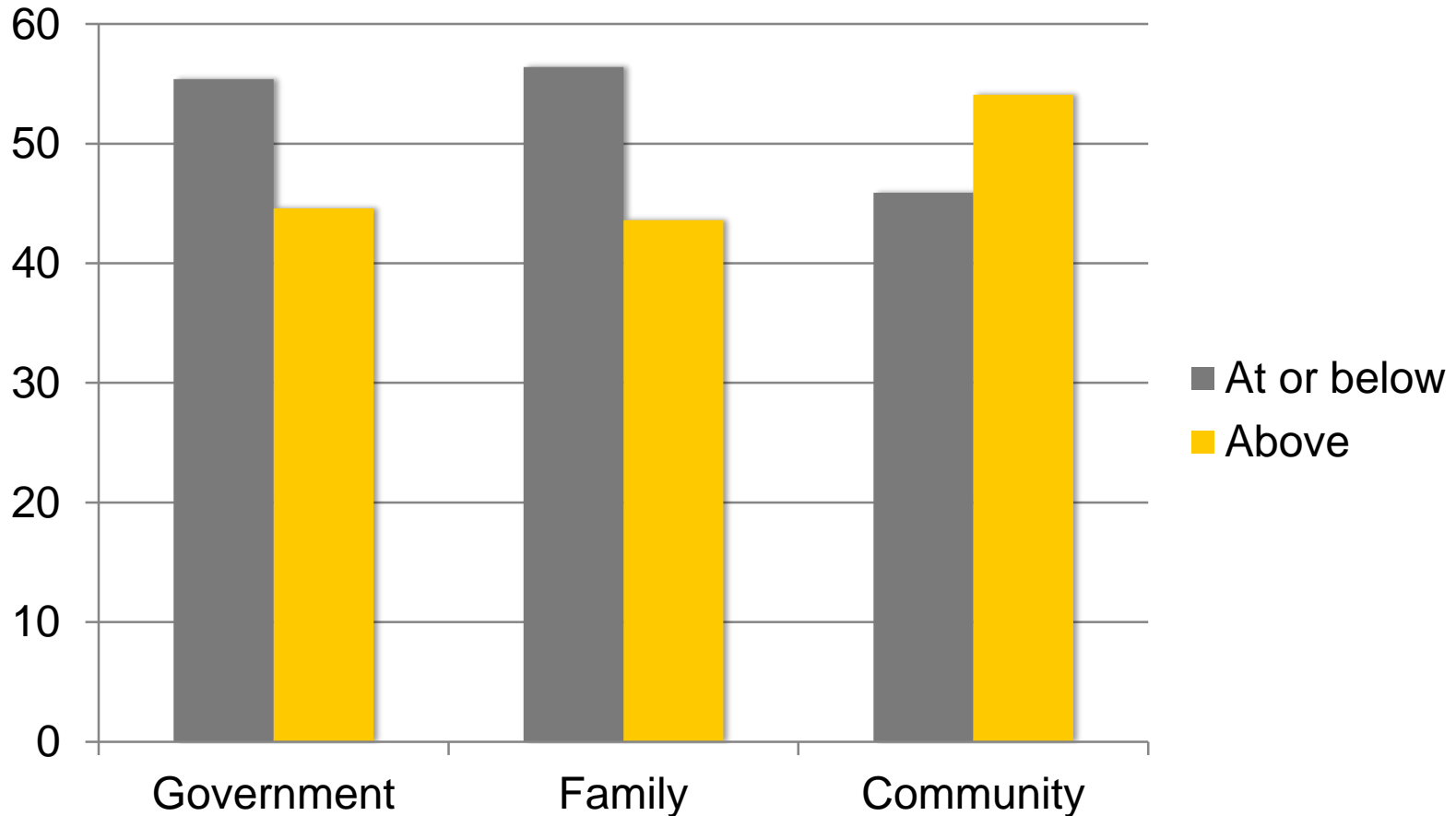


Carter, 2009; Dean & Wilson, 2009; Guo, 2009; The Institute for Competitiveness and Prosperity, 2017; Wilkinson & Garcea, 2017



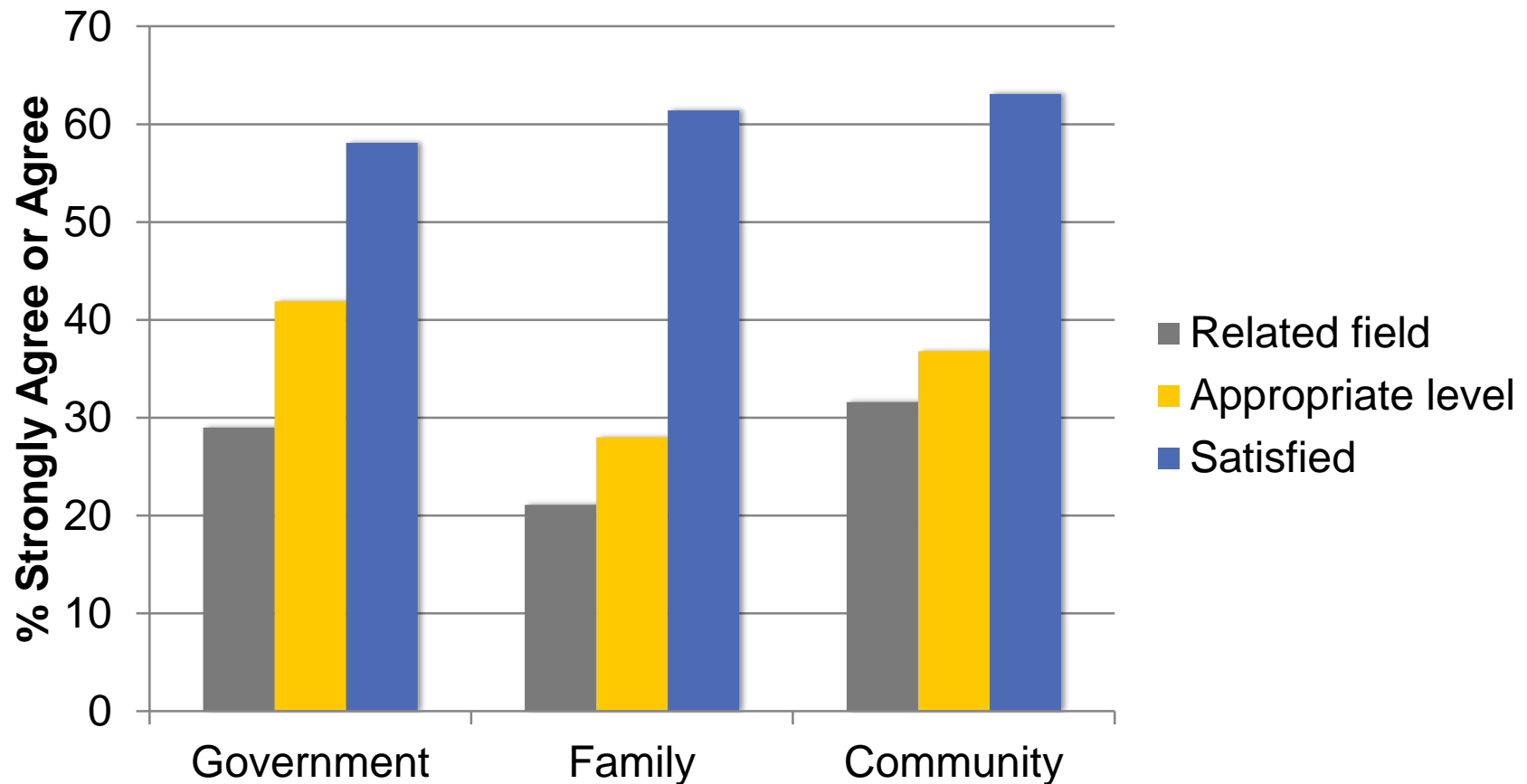
# INTEGRATION: IS IT A GOOD JOB?

## IS HOURLY WAGE ABOVE MINIMUM?



Higher if in Canada longer. Comm marginally higher than Family; men higher than women; OK and VN highest

# INTEGRATION: IS IT A GOOD JOB? IS WORK COMMENSURATE WITH QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE?



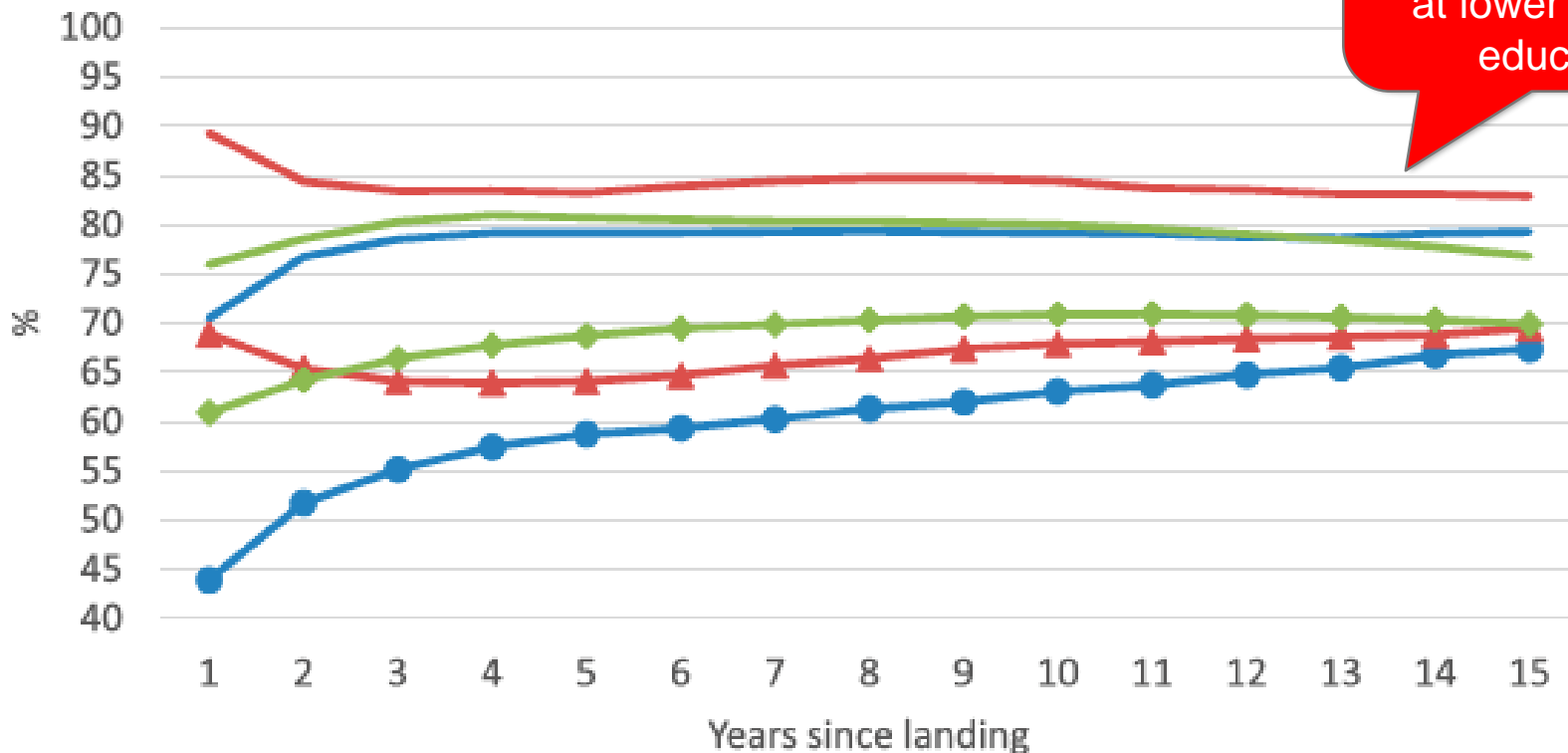
Related field if low or specialized education (trade/college)

Appropriate if in Canada longer, displacement longer, low education, Comm

More satisfied If better mental health Year 1; Govt less satisfied than Comm

# INTEGRATION: WHAT ABOUT LONG TERM OUTCOMES?

## EMPLOYMENT SINCE LANDING BY MIGRATION STATUS



— GAR men      — PSR men      — Econ Immig men  
—○ GAR women      —△ PSR women      —◆ Econ Immig women

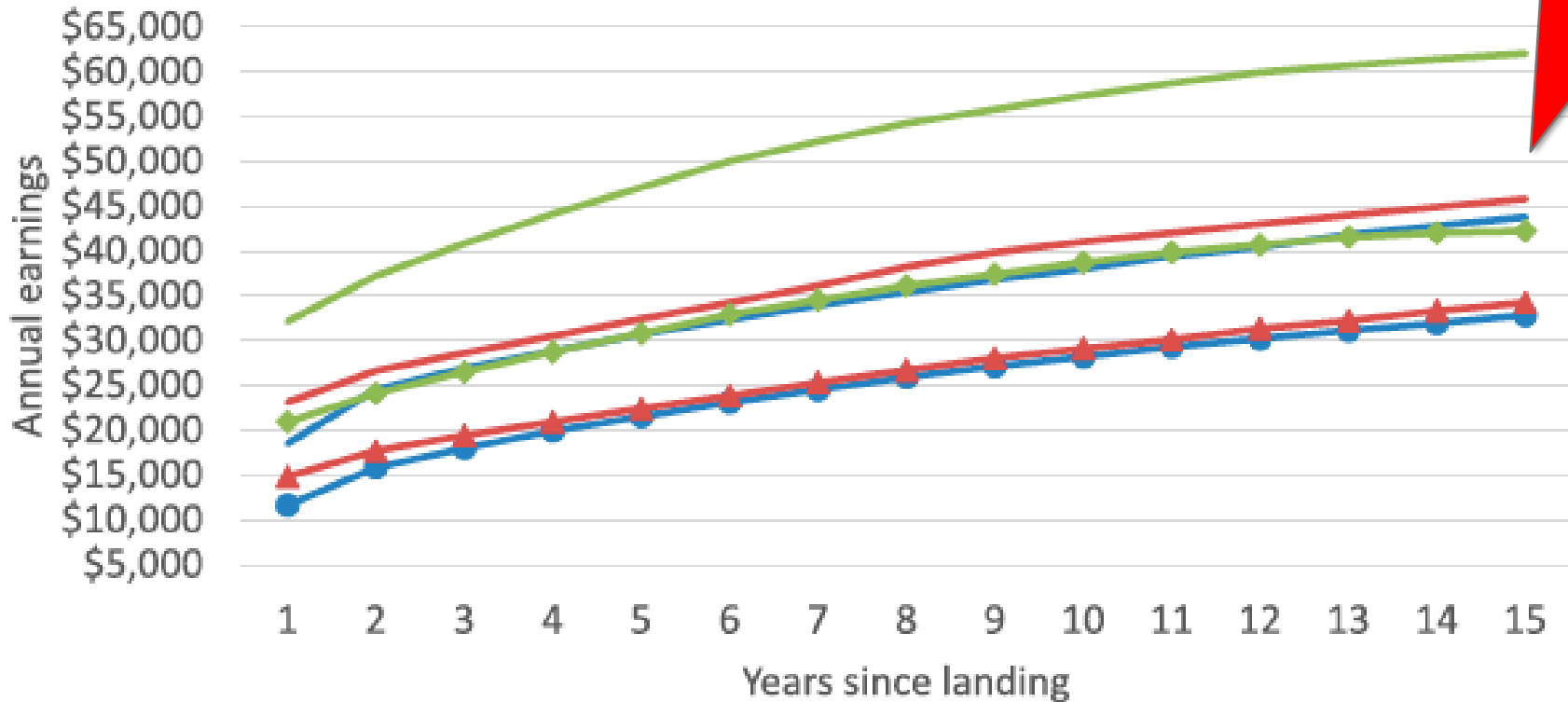
Very little effect of initial language knowledge

Kaida, Hou & Stick, 2019

# INTEGRATION: WHAT ABOUT LONG TERM OUTCOMES?

## EMPLOYMENT INCOME SINCE LANDING BY MIGRATION STATUS

PSRs have higher salaries, advantage greater with less education



— GAR men      — PSR men      — Econ Immig men  
—○ GAR women      —△ PSR women      —◆ Econ Immig women

Very little effect of initial language knowledge

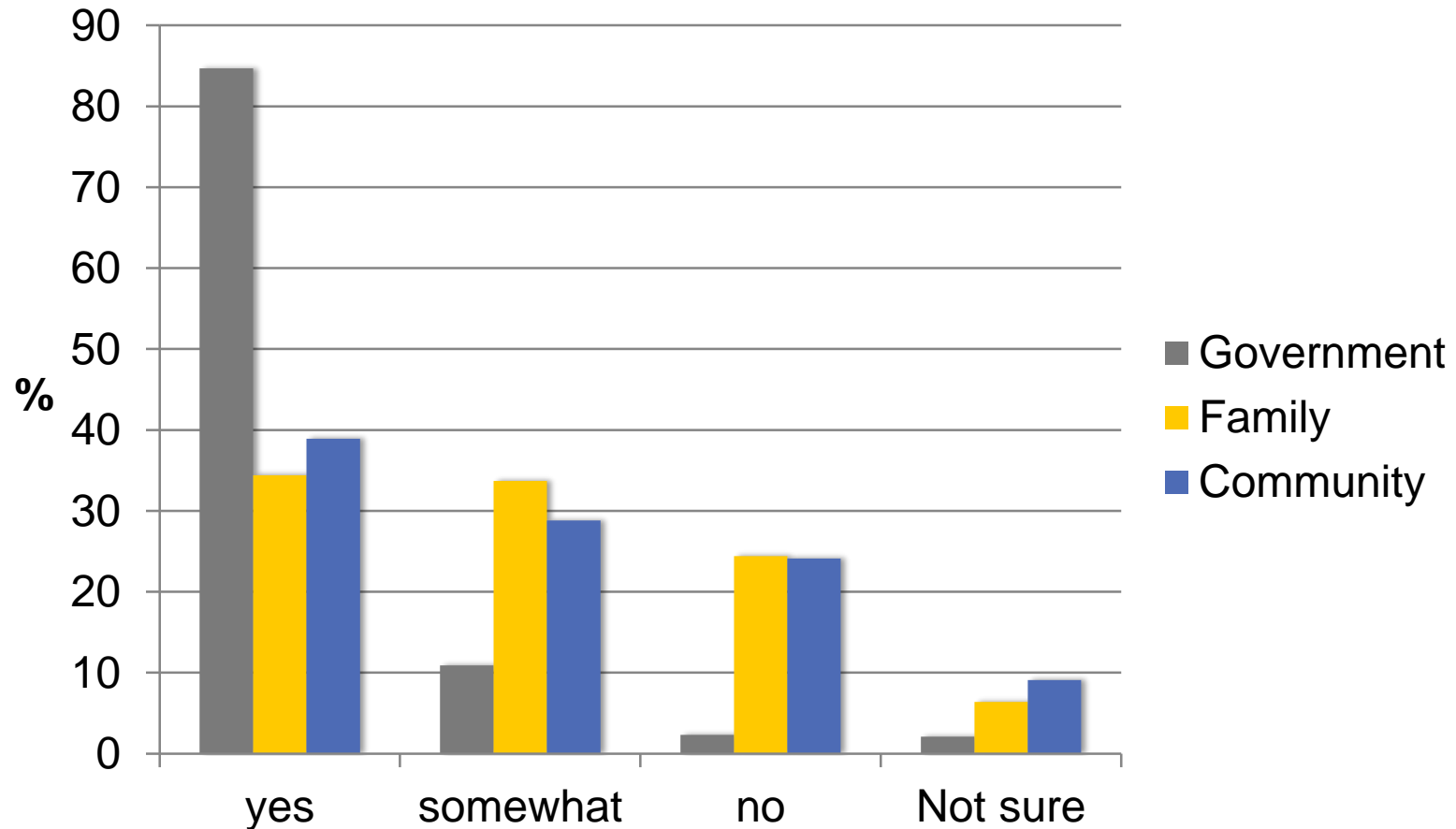
Kaida, et al., 2019

# INTEGRATION: WHAT ABOUT LONG-TERM OUTCOMES?

## UNIVERSITY COMPLETION RATES IN CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

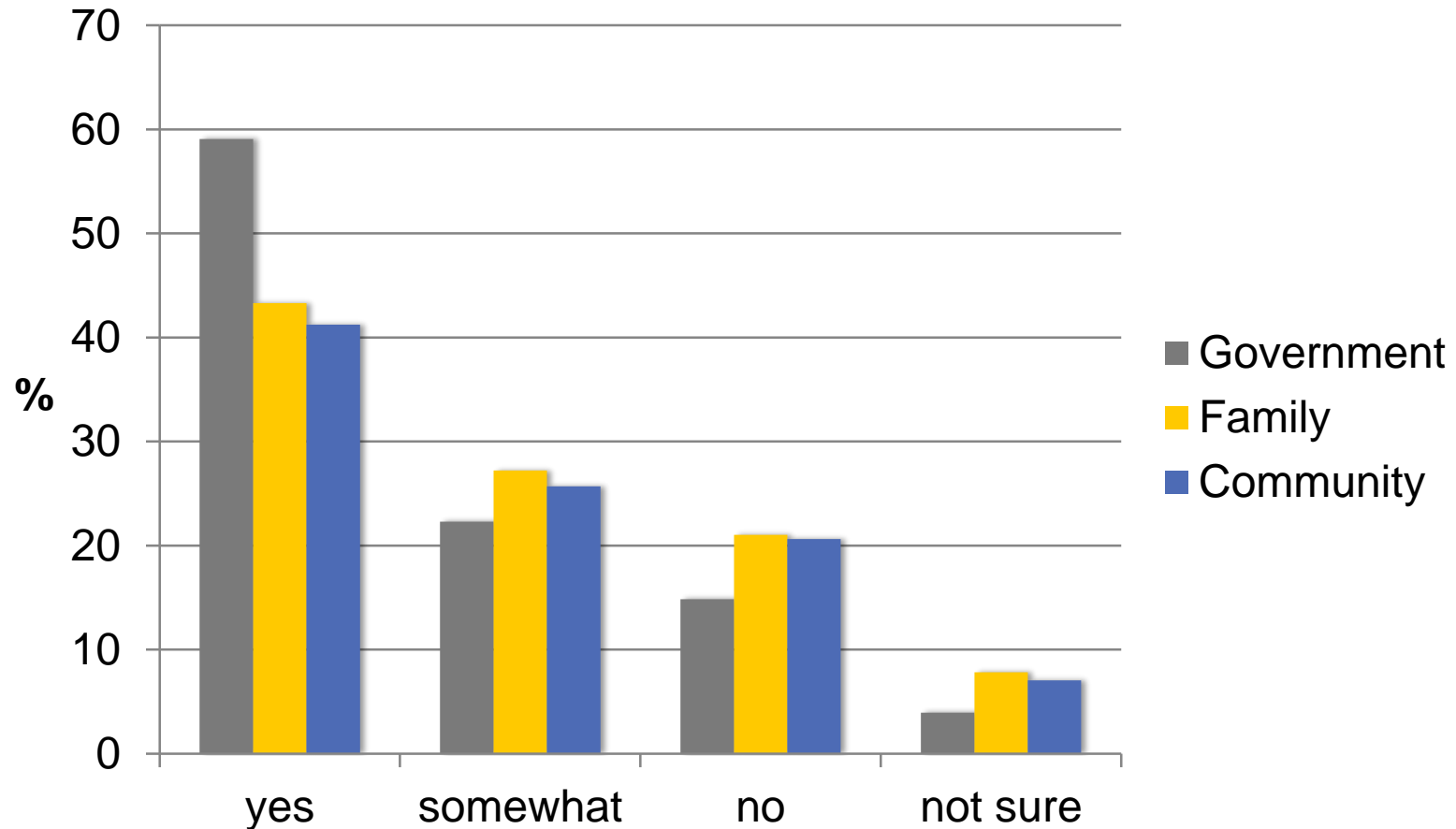
Admission Class of Parents	University Completion Rate	Mean Earnings
Skilled-worker class	49.7	46,400
Business class	58.9	46,700
Family class	21.3	39,200
Government Assisted Refugees	27.6	41,100
Privately Sponsored Refugees	30.3	43,900
Refugees Landed in Canada	27.4	35,400
Third Generation+	24.4	46,100

# HOW WAS THE SPONSORSHIP PERCEIVED? DID YOUR SPONSOR/GOVERNMENT DO WHAT THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO DO IN YEAR 1?



Excluding "not sure"

# DID THEY HAVE CLEAR EXPECTATIONS? DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEIR OBLIGATIONS WERE?



Excluding "not sure"

# WHAT ELSE DO WE KNOW ABOUT SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIPS?

## Sponsorship breakdown

- About 25% of sponsoring organizations noted at least one
- Conflicts over agency, gratitude, and unequal relationships

## Pressure to find employment quickly

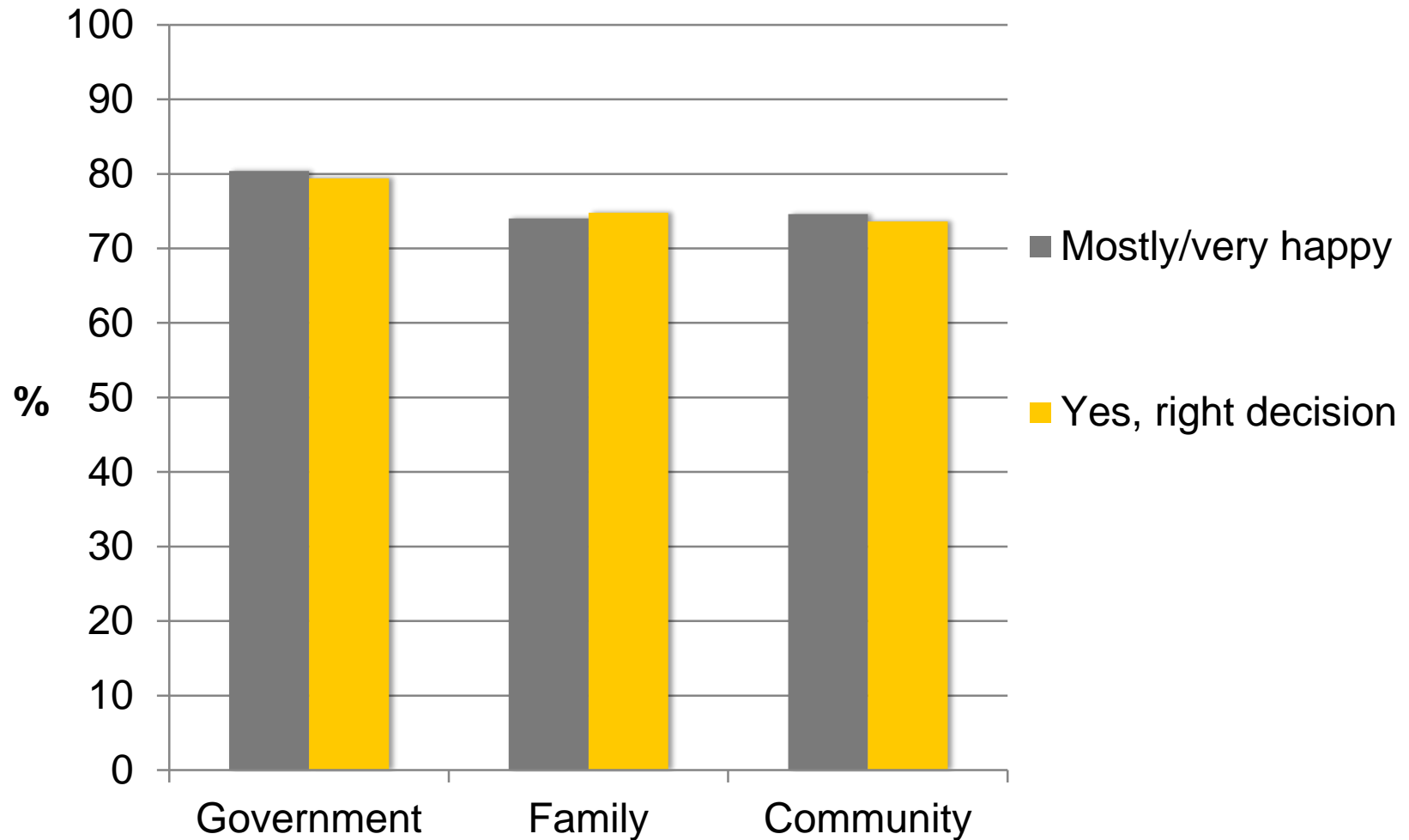
- PSRs seemed to be taking jobs quickly but then leaving those jobs

## People often joined sponsorship groups because someone asked them to

- We seem to be building civic engagement through sponsorship



# OVERALL PERCEPTION OF RESETTLEMENT: WAS COMING TO CANADA THE RIGHT DECISION?



# **SUMMARY**

## **... AND SOME QUESTIONS**

### **Community sponsorship has been successful in Canada**

- May be even more helpful for people with lower levels of education
- May be more helpful when sponsored by strangers than family

### **How do we develop clear guidelines about expectations but maintain the “human” nature of the relationship?**

### **What is the right level of analysis and what time frame?**

- Integration is a long and slow process: how much should we expect and how quickly?
- Integration is perhaps best considered at the level of families rather than individuals



Ahmed Hussen MP is Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship for the Government of Canada. He is also a lawyer. He was National President of the Canadian Somali Congress.



**SYRIAN REFUGEE INTEGRATION & LONG TERM HEALTH  
OUTCOMES IN CANADA (SYRIALTH)**

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