Integration Outcomes of Privately Sponsored Refugees in Canada

Lisa Kaida
Associate Professor
Department of Sociology, McMaster University

McMaster University | CONTINUING EDUCATION
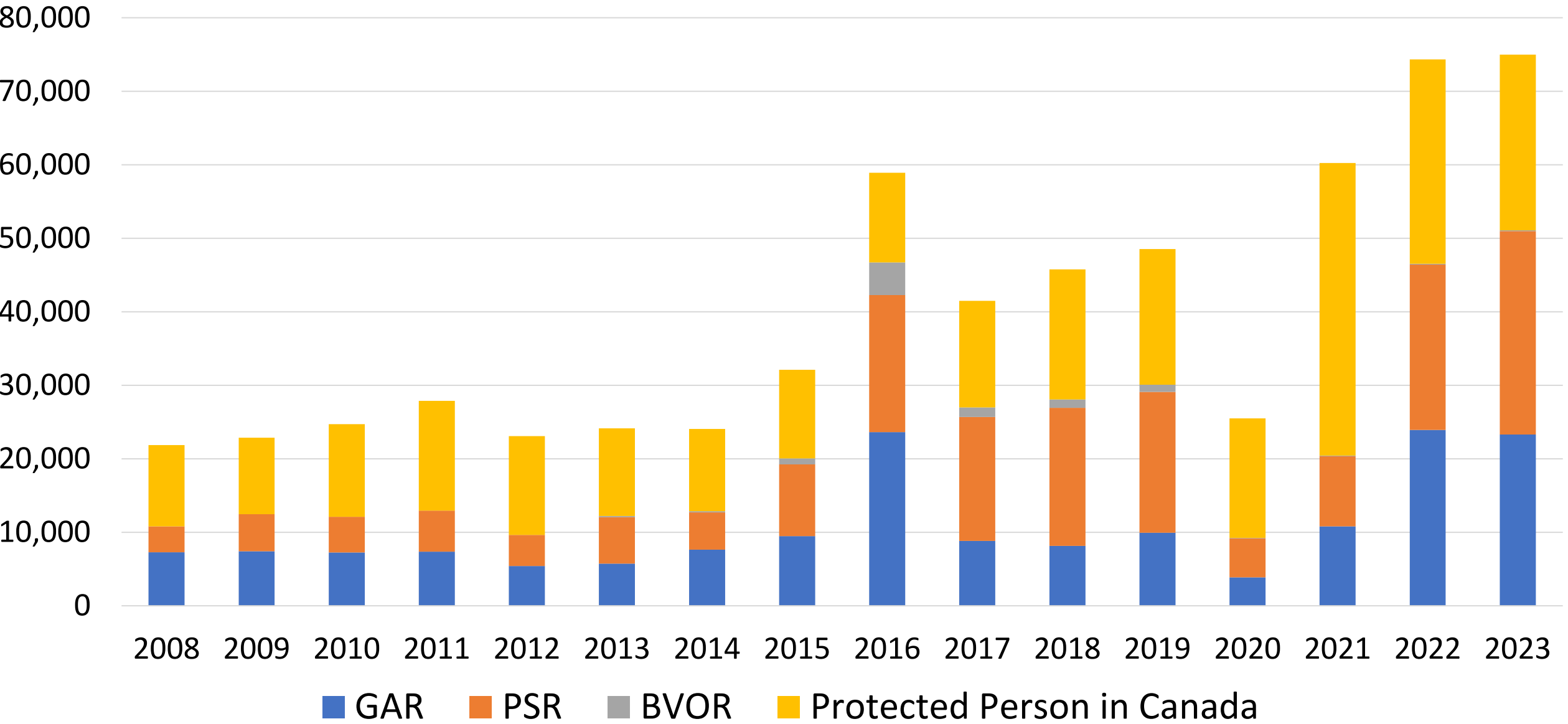
Refugee resettlement programs in Canada

1) **Government-assisted refugees (GAR):** Referred by UNHCR or other agencies. Supported by Canadian government with initial resettlement services and income support for up to one year
2) **Privately sponsored refugees (PSR):** Sponsored by individuals, community, or organization
3) **Blended Visa Office-Referred (BVOR):** Refugees referred by UNHCR or other agencies and identified by Canadian visa officers based on specific criteria

(IRCC 2016)

Privately Sponsored Refugees (PSRs)

- Started in 1978
- Refugees can be sponsored by:
  - Group of Five
  - Community Sponsor
  - Sponsorship Agreement Holder (e.g. religious, ethnic org)
- Provide financial & social support for up to 12 months after arrival

Number of resettled refugee & protected person in Canada, 2008-2023

Legend: GAR (blue), PSR (orange), BVOR (grey), Protected Person in Canada (yellow)
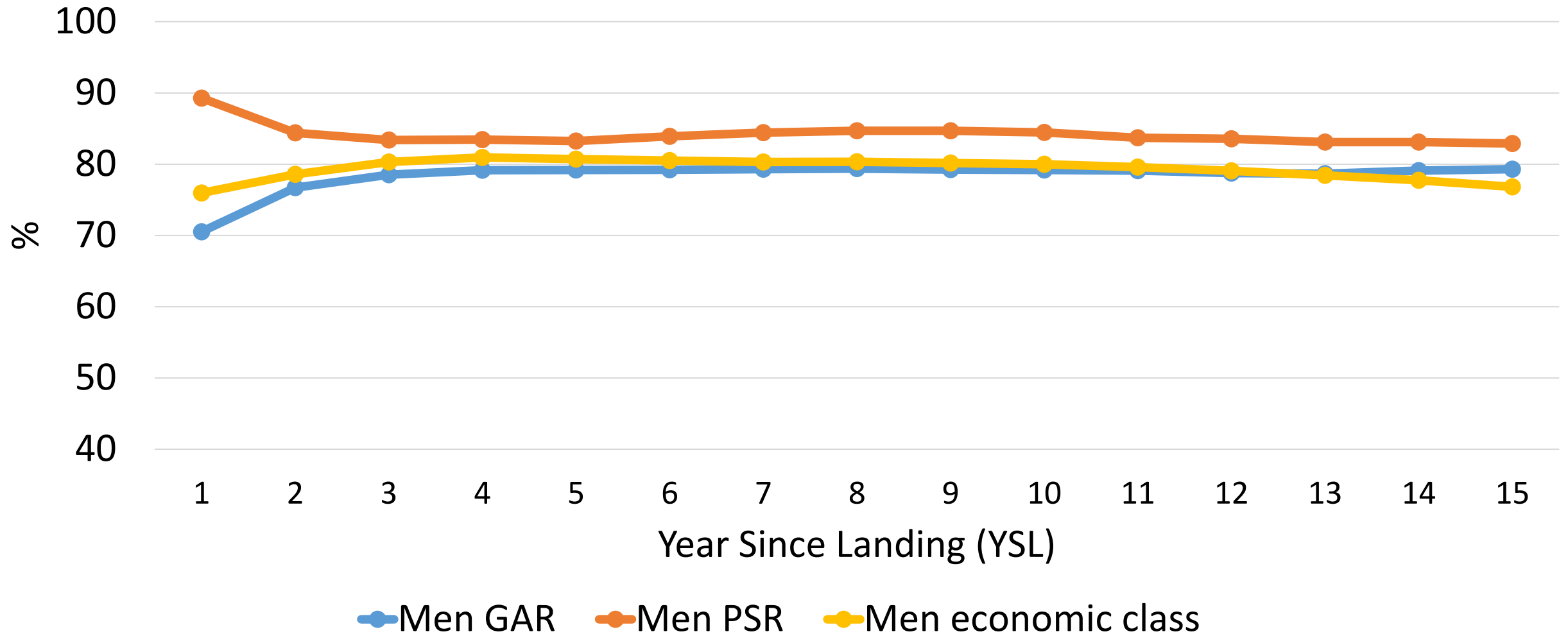
Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB)

- Immigration data (from IRCC)
  - Permanent residents (1980-present)
  - Non-permanent residents (1980-present)
- Tax data (from CRA)
  - T1 family file (T1FF)

- Coverage: Immigrants who filed taxes at least once since 1982

IMDB - Advantages

- "Census" of immigrants who landed since 1980

- Longitudinal data (1982-2020)

- Detailed landing characteristics (e.g. admission category, intended occupation)

- Detailed post-migration economic characteristics (e.g. employment income, social assistance income, low-income status)

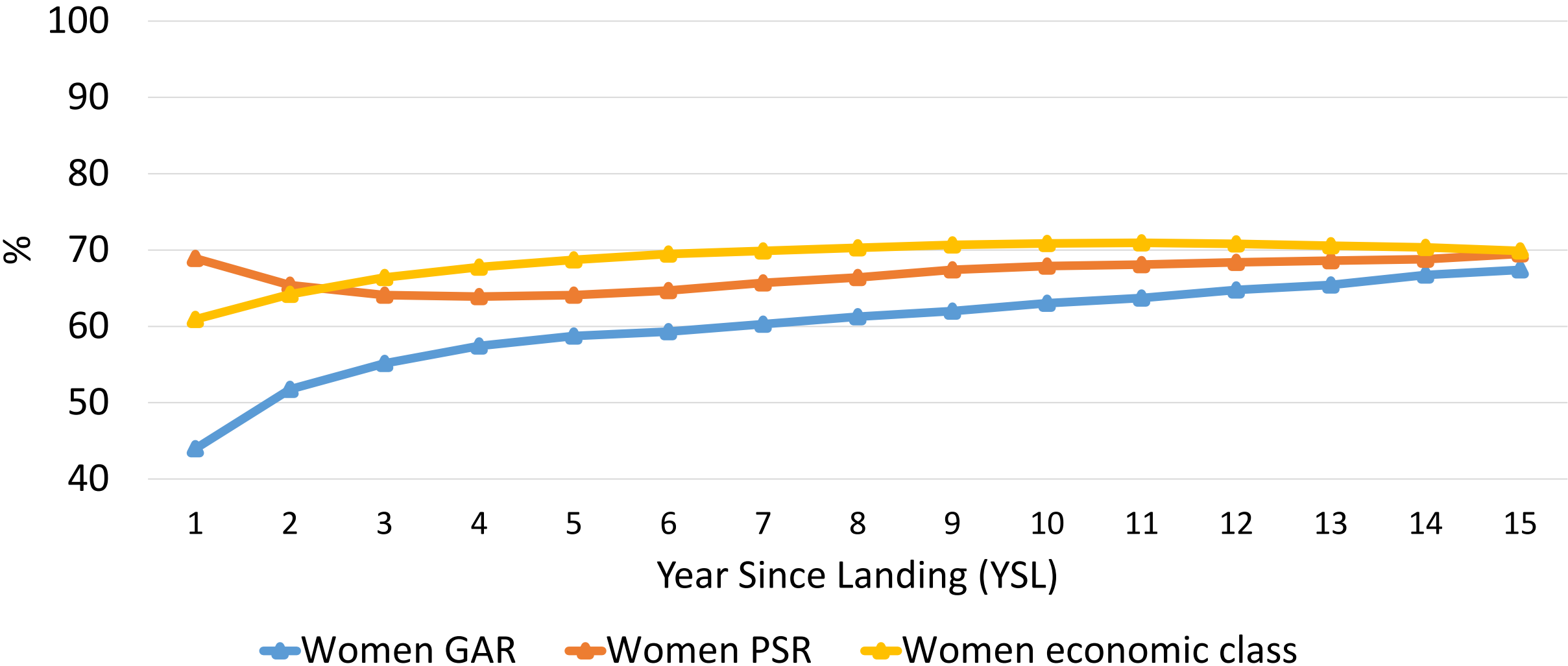# PSRs' employment rates are notably high in year 1

Employment rates, men aged 20-54, 1980-2009 arrivals

Legend: Men GAR, Men PSR, Men economic class

(Kaida, Hou, and Stick 2020)

Women PSRs maintain higher employment rates than GAR counterparts throughout first 15 years
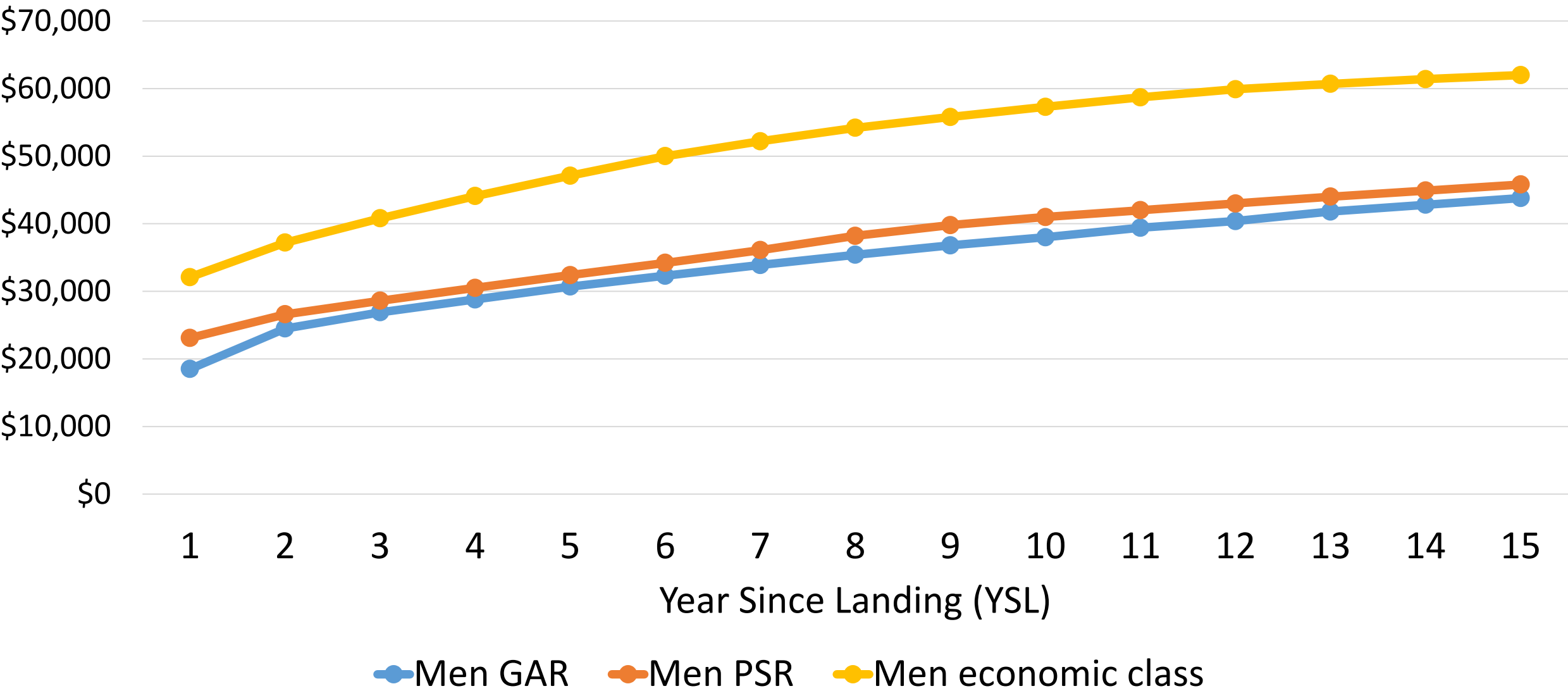
Employment rates, women aged 20-54, 1980-2009 arrivals

8

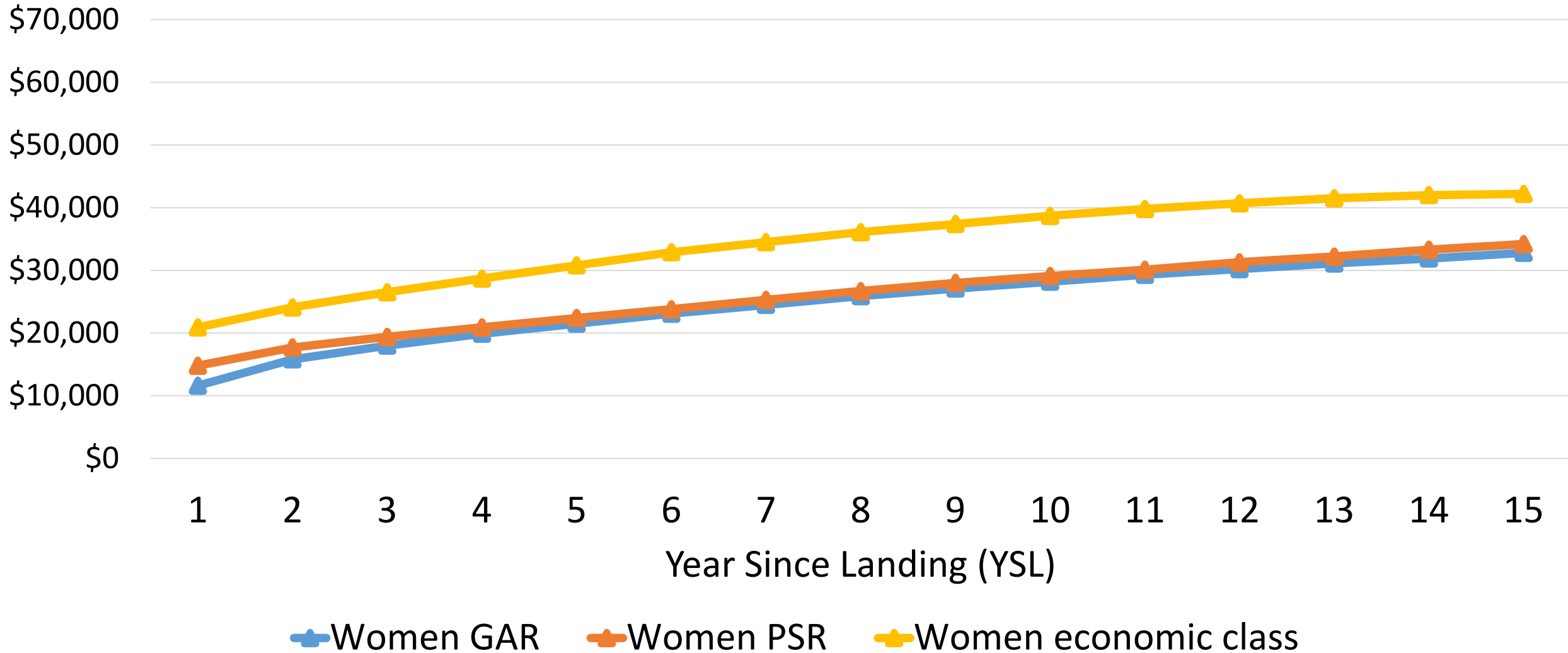# Men PSRs earn higher than GAR counterparts throughout first 15 years

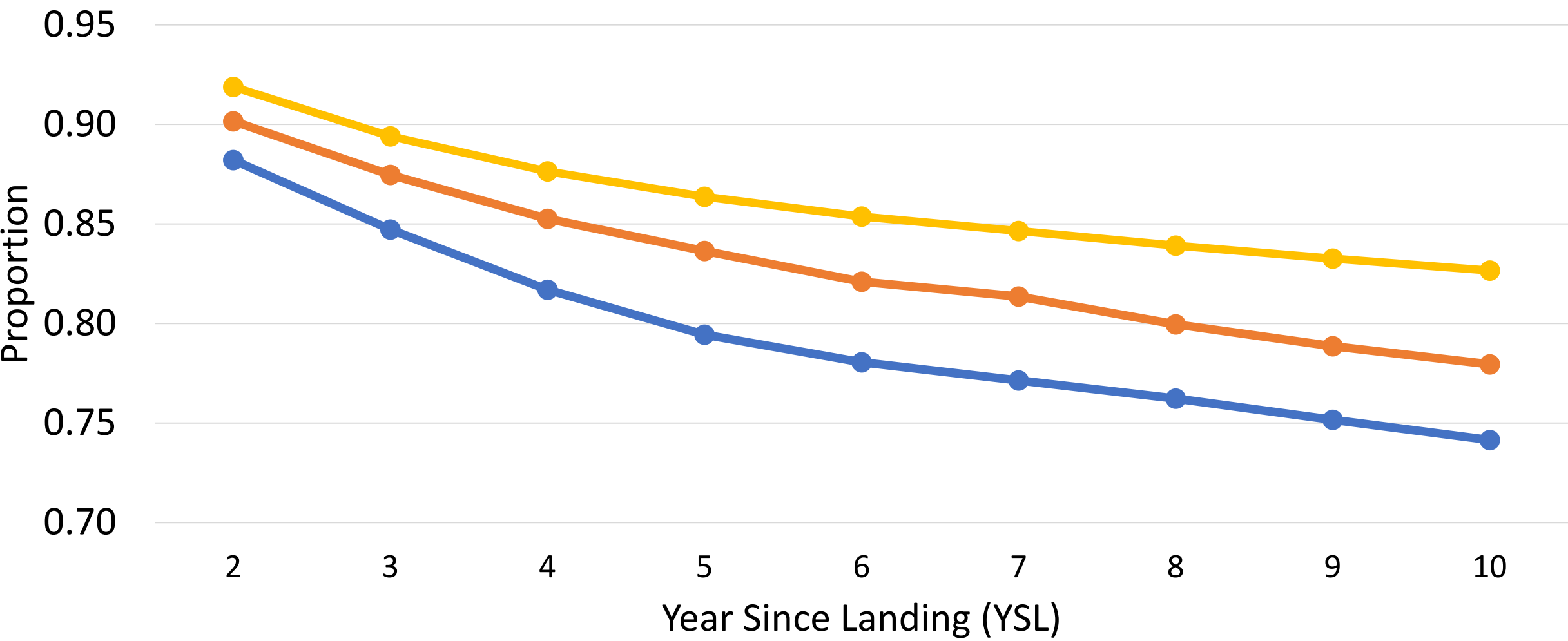Annual earnings, men aged 20-54, 1980-2009 arrivals

Year Since Landing (YSL)

Men GAR   Men PSR   Men economic class

(Kaida, Hou, and Stick 2020)

Women PSRs earn higher than GAR counterparts as well

Annual earnings, women aged 20-54, 1980-2009 arrivals

Legend: Women GAR — Women PSR — Women economic class

X-axis: Year Since Landing (YSL)

10

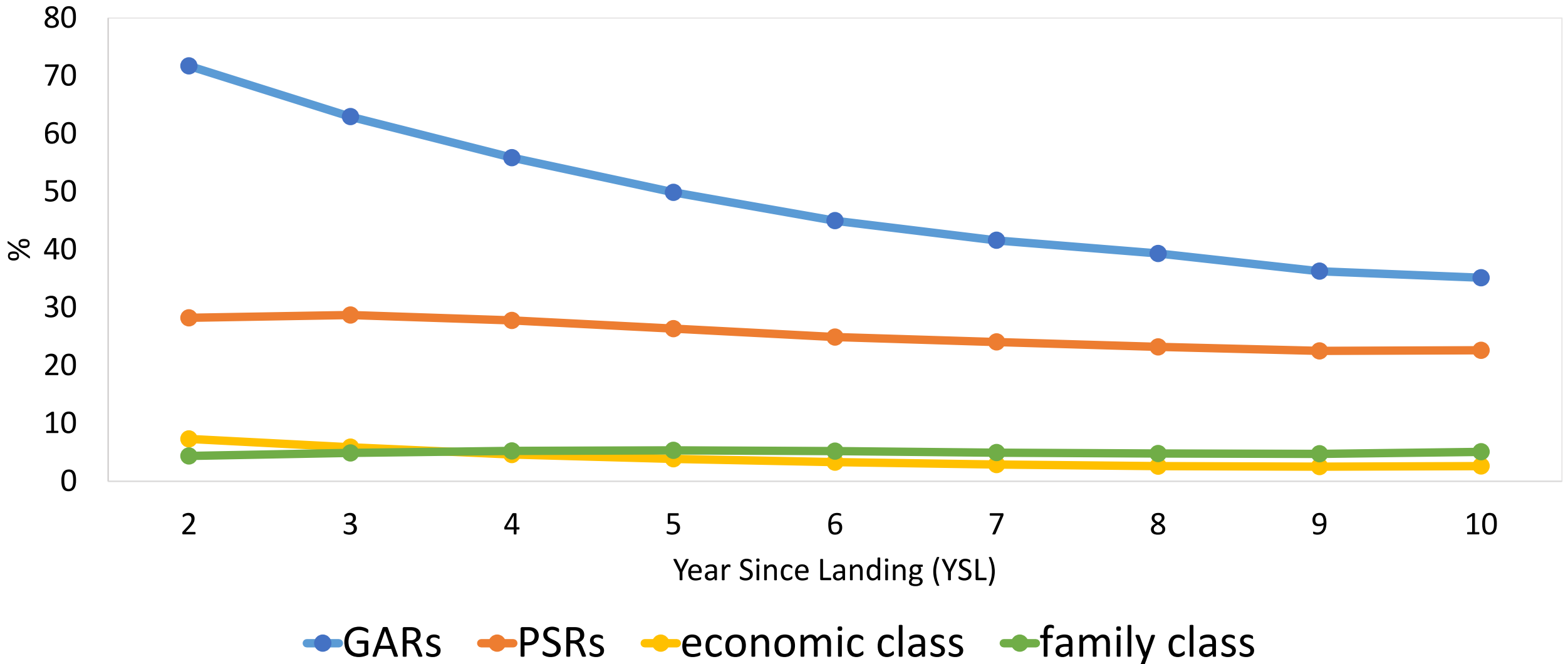**PSRs are less likely to leave initial destination city than GARs**

Proportion of 2000-2014 arrivals aged 20-54 remaining in initial destination city

(Kaida, Hou, and Stick 2020)

GARs   PSRs   economic class

PSRs' use of social assistance is lower than GARs' throughout first 10 years in Canada

% of 2005-2009 arrivals aged 20-54 receiving Social Assistance income
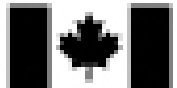

(Kaida, Stick, and Hou 2022) 12

PSRs' more favorable integration outcomes than GARs – why?

- (Observable) pre-/post-migration characteristics (e.g. birth country, age at migration, education, language, employment)
- Pre-/post-migration characteristics unavailable in IMDB (e.g. length of displacement, health, occupation)

- Selectivity
  - GARs: vulnerability criteria (Kaida, Stick, and Hou 2022)
  - PSRs: naming principle (Yousuf 2025)
- Context of reception
  - Social, community support for PSRs

Thank you!

kaidar@mcmaster.ca
www.lisakaida.com