



# **FORCED Marriage and “Honour” Related Violence**

*A Canadian Prospective*

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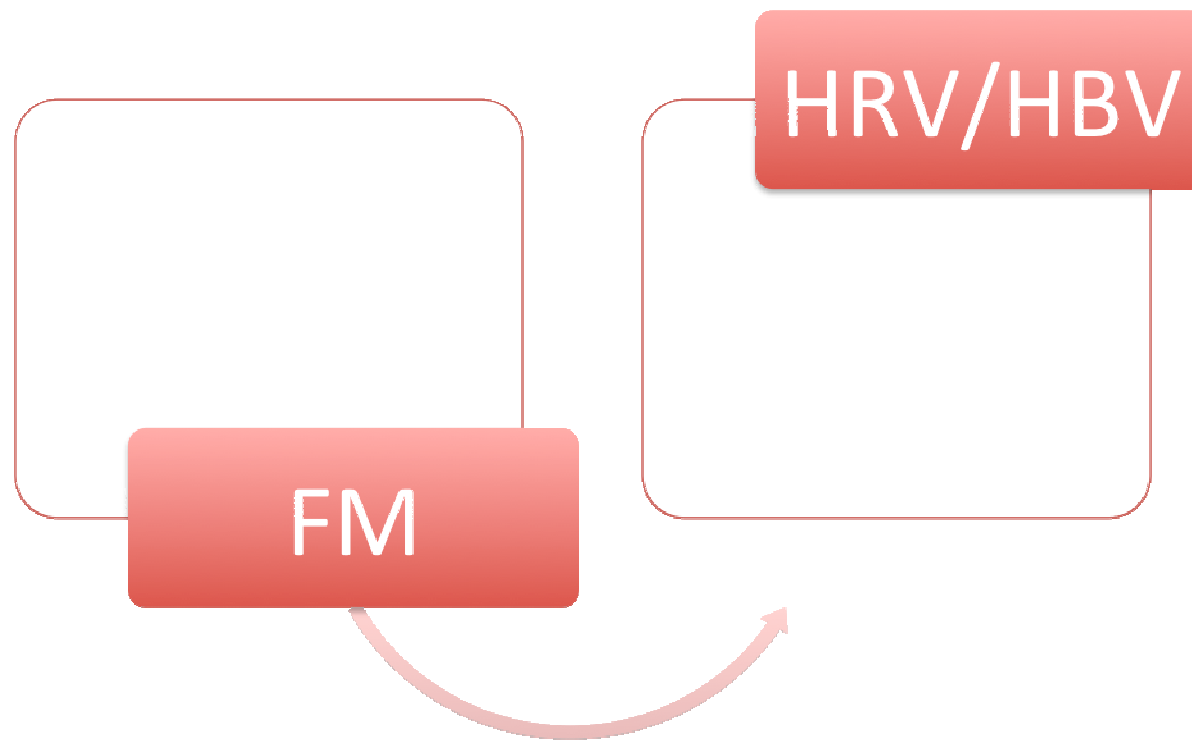
- The South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario is a community legal clinic funded by Legal Aid Ontario (LAO).
- We provide poverty law legal advice, representation, public legal education, community development and law reform work for the low-income South Asian community in the Greater Toronto Area.

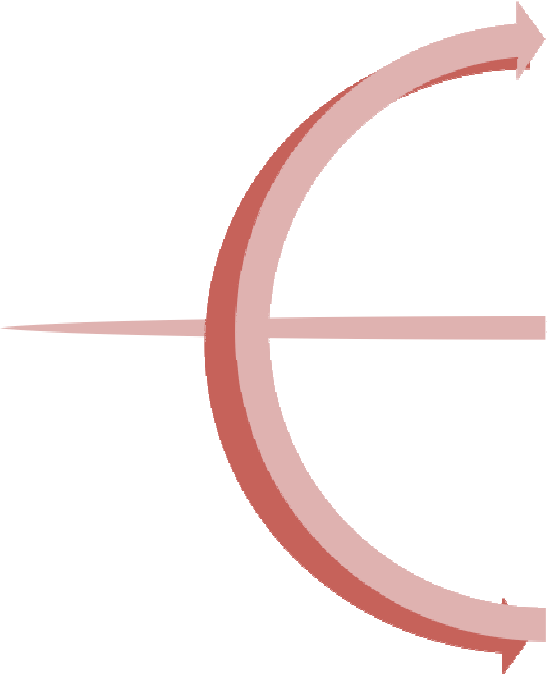
*“Violence against women (VAW) is a citizenship issue that fundamentally affects a woman’s bodily integrity and personhood, as well as her right to dignity, security and freedom from discrimination.*

-Korteweg, Anna C.; Abji, Salin; Barnoff, Lisa; Mattoo, Deepa. “Citizenship, Culture, and Violence Against Women: Social Service Provision in the South Asian Communities of the GTA. CERIS Research Report. March 2013.

The complex patterns of violence that South Asian women confront are obscured by terms that exoticize violence, like “honour killing.” Yet, these terms elicit quite divergent responses from professionals, ranging from a **strategic use** of such terms to gain access to resources, to an **outright rejection** of these terms in favour of generic designators of violence.

-Korteweg, Anna C.; Abji, Salin; Barnoff, Lisa; Mattoo, Deepa. “Citizenship, Culture, and Violence Against Women: Social Service Provision in the South Asian Communities of the GTA. CERIS Research Report. March 2013.





In forced marriage  
& “HRV” is that  
violence is justified  
by stating that  
boundaries have  
been or perceived  
to have been  
crossed.

“A forced marriage is a form of violence and an abuse of human rights. It is a practice in which a marriage takes place without the free consent of the individuals getting married. Forced marriage can happen to anyone; of any gender, of any age.” -

SALCO/NAAFM



Both men and women of all ages and cultural, religious and socio-economic background experience FM.

-SALCO/NAAFM





FM and arranged marriage are often mistakenly conflated. Arranged marriage has the full, free, and informed consent of both parties who are getting married, while FM lacks that same consent.

# Forced Marriage and Human Trafficking



In case of a FM incident it may Involve a single or multiple perpetrator trafficking a victim domestically or internationally.

# FORCED MARRIAGE: LEGISLATION IN CANADA



- So far the issue of forced marriage has not yet been formally addressed in Canada.
- There are various provisions in family law, immigration law, and criminal law identify scenarios related to potential consequences of marriage without consent.
- Canada is also a signatory to several international consensus documents and treaties related to FM.

# FORCED MARRIAGE (FM)



*Beginning a dialogue around the issue of forced/  
non-consensual marriages in order to:*

*Prevent Coercion*

*Promote Safety, and*

*Build Community Accountability*

- **Since 2005**
- **FM Project Advisory Committee – 2007**
- **International Symposium - 2008**
- **Network of Agencies Against Forced Marriages (NAAFM) and Service Providers training tool kit - 2010**
- **National Conference and Survey leading to a policy recommendations – 2012/ 2013.**

# **The Forced/Non-Consensual Marriage Survey**

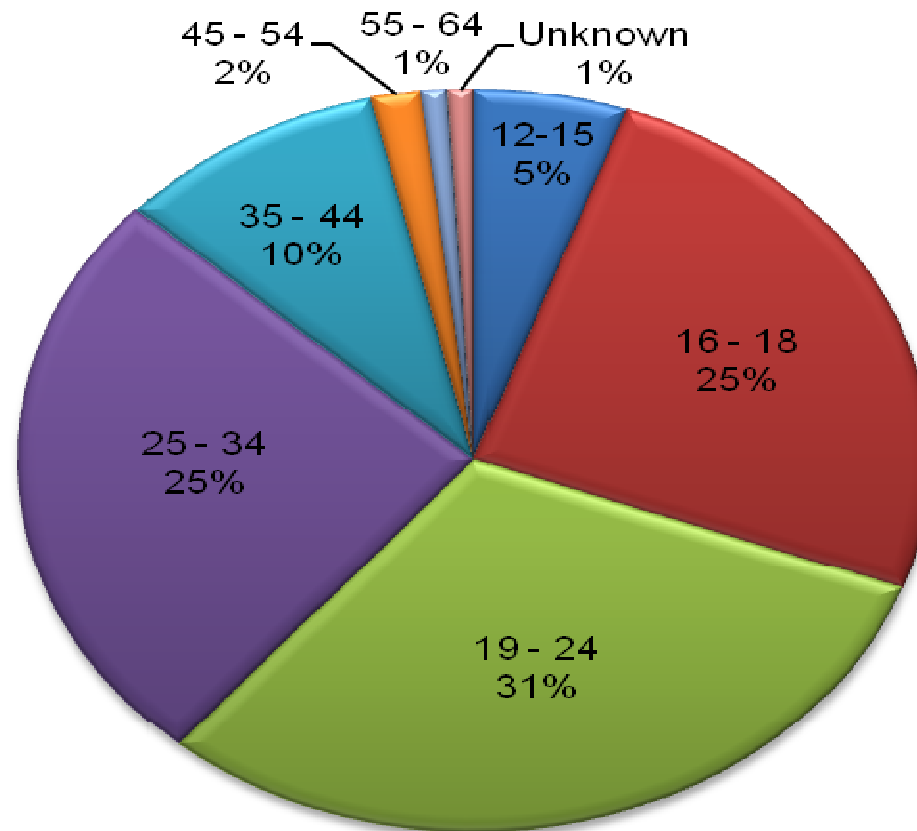


- The Forced/Non-Consensual Marriage Survey was developed by the Forced Marriage Project at SALCO with the aim to gain a better understanding of the incidence of FM in Ontario.
- The needs of individuals dealing with FM situations and the existing gaps in resources that hinder the service providers' abilities to assist the client.

## Gender of Individuals Facing Forced Marriage

Gender	Number of Cases
Female	202
Male	13
Other (transgender)	3
Unknown	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>219</b>

## Age of Individuals Facing Forced Marriage Situations

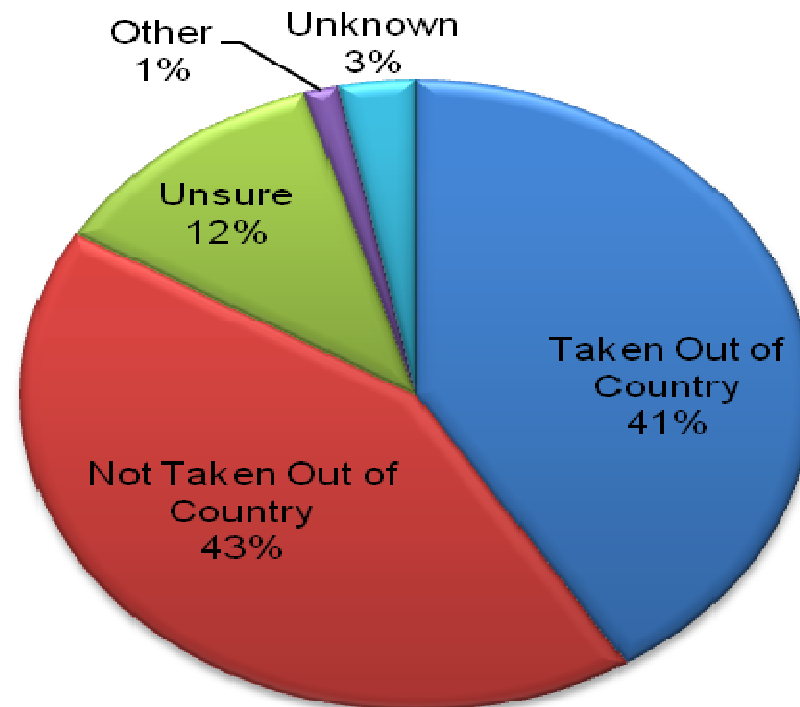




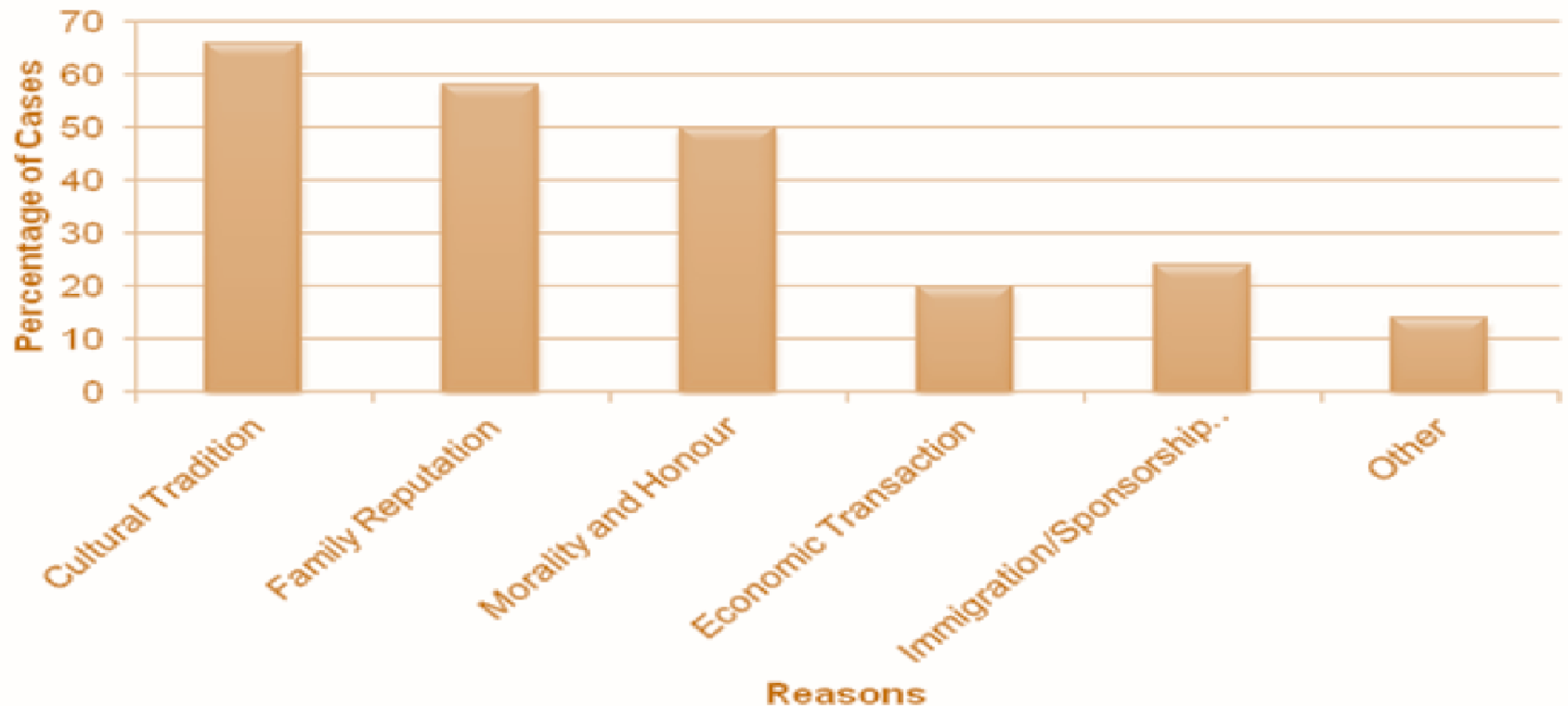
## Length of Time Spent in Canada



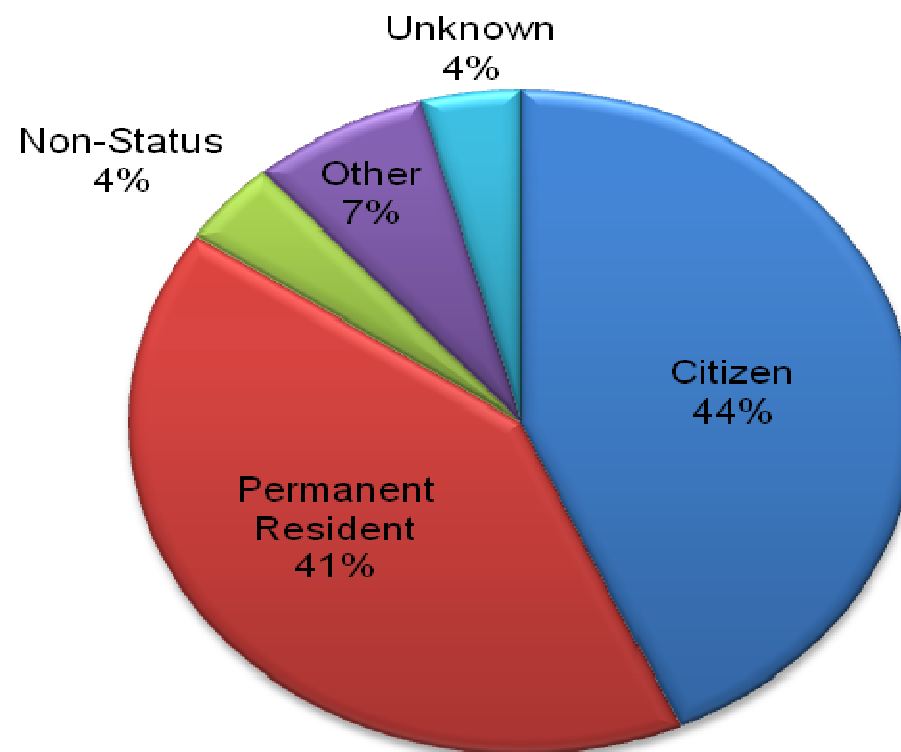
## Forced Marriage Clients Taken Out of Country



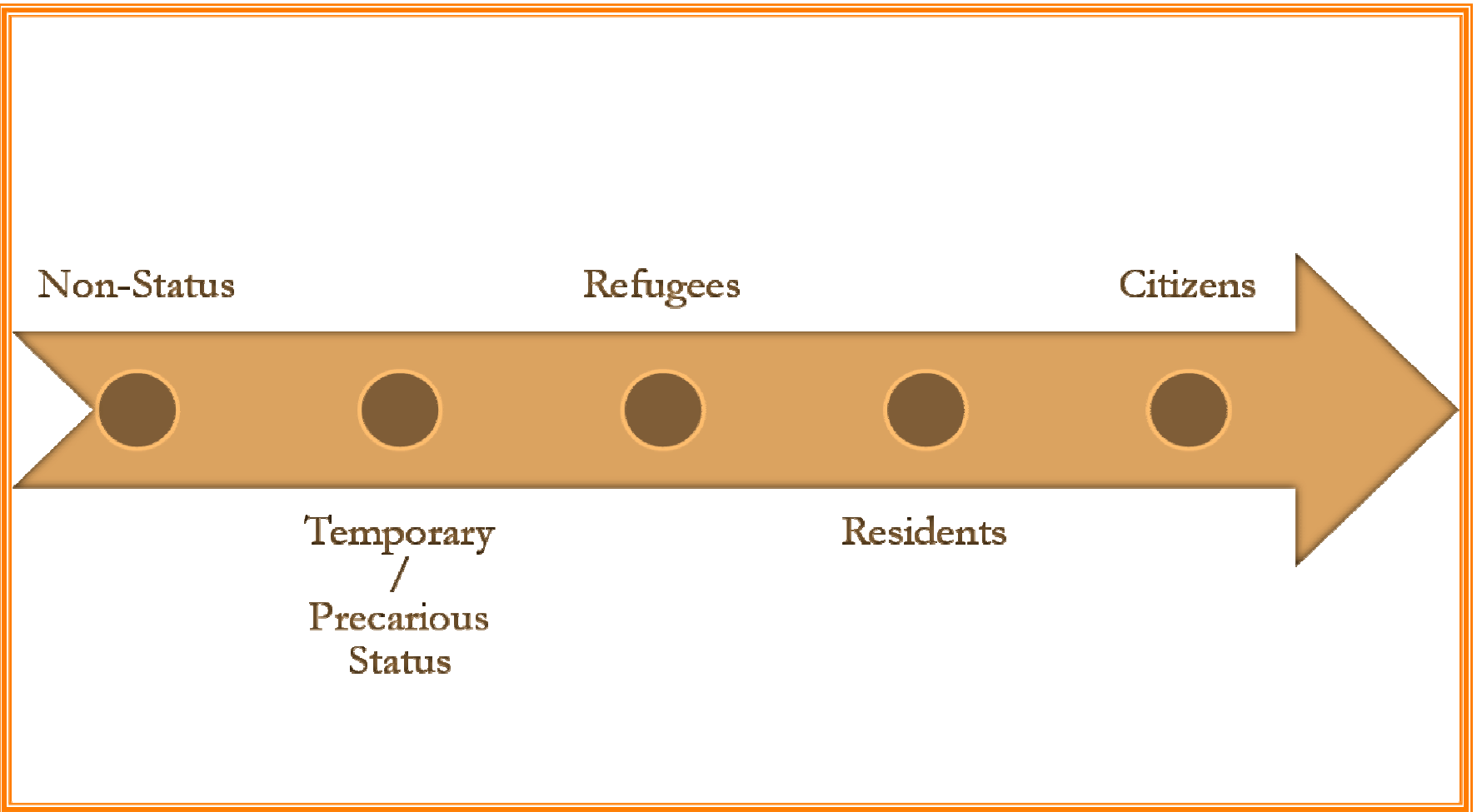
## Reasons Provided for Forced Marriages



## Status of Individuals Facing Forced Marriage Situations



# Limitations in access to help



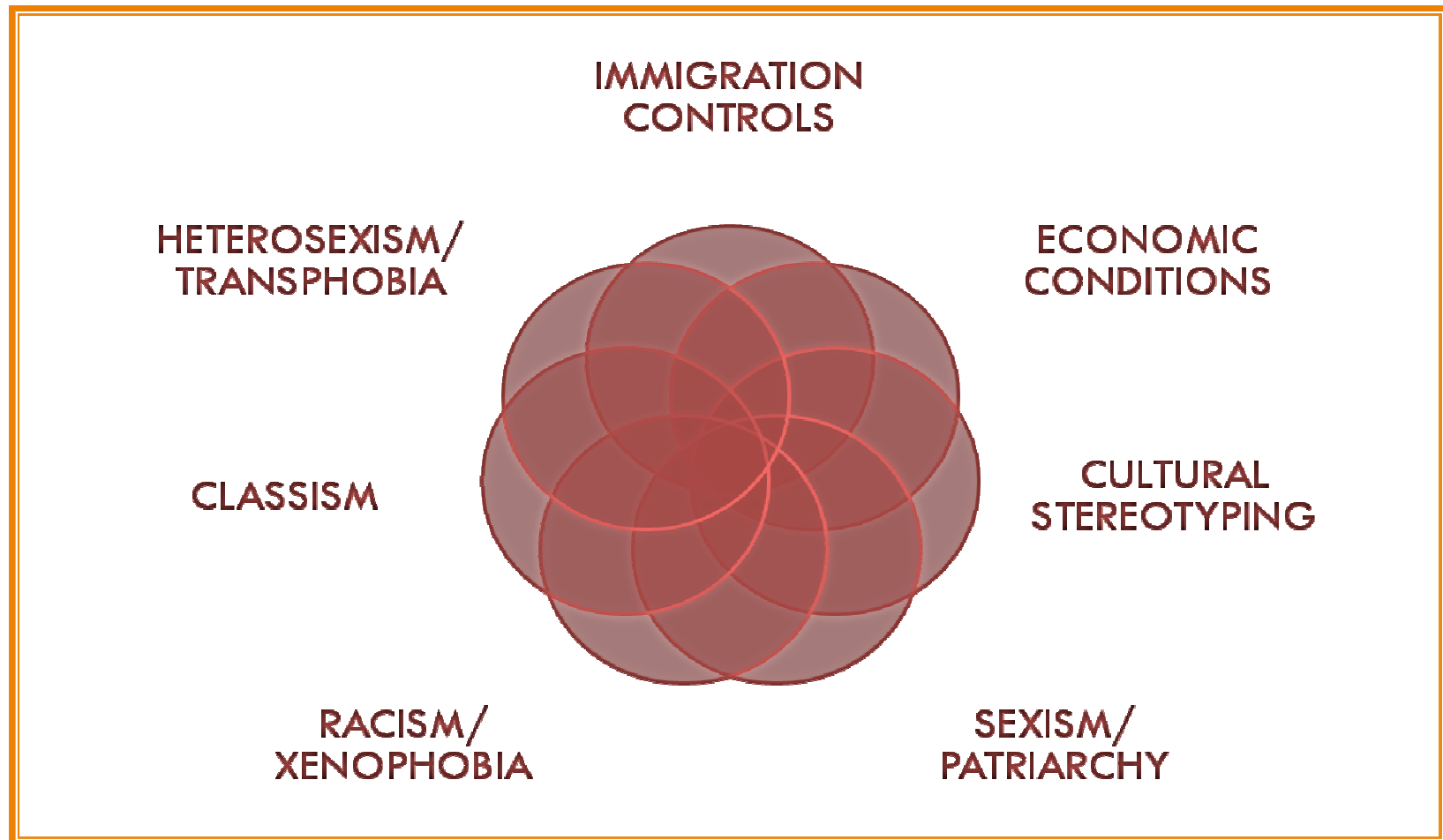
## **Perpetrators**

- From the data collected on perpetrators, it was found that most of the individuals facing FM had more than one perpetrator pressuring them.

## **Violence**

- All the individuals forced into the marriage experience violence. 75% of survey respondents reported “Mental or social pressure” as a form of violence experience by the FM client.

# Contextualising the practice of forced marriage in Canada





# Recommendations

Internationally, several jurisdictions have centralized services and resources for FM victims. Canada can learn from that international example.

- Centralizing FM including a centralized and national education and awareness campaign,
- A multisectoral uniform national training,
- Uniform consular services for FM victims,
- A centralized database of FM resources.

“Professionals argue that mainstream approaches to service provision are often based on dominant cultural understandings of freedom from violence that **do not always “fit” South Asian women’s needs.**”

“Likewise, terms like “honour killing” can **perform their own type of violence** when used in culturally stigmatizing ways. We conclude that a **more nuanced conceptualization of culture** as giving meaning to all forms of violence combined with a structural conceptualization of violence as, what we call, multi-scalar, enables a re-thinking of violence against women in all communities and a deepening of our understanding of women’s full citizenship.”

-Korteweg, Anna C.; Abji, Salin; Barnoff, Lisa; Mattoo, Deepa. “Citizenship, Culture, and Violence Against Women: Social Service Provision in the South Asian Communities of the GTA. CERIS Research Report. March 2013.

# **Addressing Forced Marriage**



- **Taking an anti-racist/ anti-oppressive approach**
- **Institutional commitment to fighting violence/ abuse of human rights**
- **Building public and community accountability**
- **Creating safe spaces that encourage open and inclusive dialogue**
- **Prevention-focused initiatives across communities**
- **Engaging with both youth and parents/ caregivers/family members**
- **Ensuring service to both men and women; of all sexual orientations**

*“FM remains a complex issue in Canada. SALCO’s survey on the incidence of FM have made clear that FM is an issue that exists in Canada, that its impact can be devastating on the life of the FM victim, and that Canada has not done enough to protect victims of FM to date.”*

*-Anis, Maryum; Konanur, Shalini; Mattoo, Deepa; A report on incidence of FM by SALCO (2013).*

# Thank you.