

Marriage-based Migration and Human Rights Education: Where Does Canada Stand?

Noorfarah Merali

University of Alberta

noorfarah.merali@ualberta.ca

Abstract

Immigration for marriage is one of the most prevalent forms of population movement from developing to developed nations, particularly for women (Ghosh, 2009). As an industrialized nation with an international reputation for embracing diversity and pluralism, Canada is a country where many individuals from the developing world aspire to establish their family lives. Approximately 30 percent of newcomers arriving in Canada annually are family members sponsored by Canadian citizens or permanent residents, with the majority of them being spouses from abroad (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). Since the foreign countries from which female marriage migrants have arrived often have different systems of governance and human rights records, the responsibility has been placed on the federal government to educate newcomers about their rights as migrants and their basic human rights (Global Commission on International Migration, 2005). Since Canada's family sponsorship policy holds male sponsors of immigrant brides directly responsible for facilitating women's integration and upholding their rights, the government has an equal obligation to educate sponsors about each party's rights in the sponsorship relationship. This chapter describes the method and results of a content analysis of government issued information for sponsors and sponsored persons and its human rights coverage. It outlines implications for rights-based education targeting both newcomers and their hosts/sponsors in marriage-based immigration cases.

Introduction

Families are the building blocks of society, making marriage a highly valued social institution in every part of the world. Bachrach, Hindin, and Thompson (2000) define marriage as a legally and socially recognized union that entails sexual, economic, and social rights and obligations for the partners, with the expectation of a lifelong relationship. United Nations (2000) data on world marriage patterns suggests that besides being legally and socially sanctioned, marriage is a normative act across all cultures and countries. On average, across the 199 countries included in their data on marriage trends, 90 percent of males and females of marriageable age reported having been married or being currently married, whereas only 10 percent had never married (United Nations).

Globalization has increased opportunities for family life by making it possible to marry and unite with one's spouse across international borders (Cote, Kerisit, & Cote, 2001; Ghosh, 2009; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Rossiter, 2005). A recent report commissioned by the United Nations Human Development Program identified marriage-based migration as one of the most prevalent forms of population movement from developing to developed nations,

particularly for women (Ghosh, 2009). For example, the report found that marriage-based resettlement accounted for approximately 90 percent of emigration of India's female residents (Ghosh, 2009). The possibility of marriage to individuals settled in Western industrialized nations offers improved social and economic opportunities in the process of establishing family life. Recognizing the family as the cornerstone of society, national immigration policies in the majority of Western nations include provisions for family unification across different countries (Ghosh, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002).

Marriage-Based Migration to Canada

As one of the world's key immigrant-receiving industrialized nations and a country that is internationally recognized for its multicultural policy valuing diversity and pluralism (Berry, 2001), Canada is a place where many individuals from developing countries want to build their family lives. National immigration statistics suggest that 28 percent of immigrants arriving in Canada annually are family members of Canadian citizens or permanent residents (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2007). Approximately 45 percent of family members sponsored to come to Canada by Canadian citizens or permanent residents are spouses joining their partners after marriage in a foreign nation. A striking 57 percent of sponsored family members entering Canada are coming from developing nations in the Asia/Pacific region, with the South Asian countries of India and Pakistan being among their top source countries. In the year 2007, individuals from the Asia/Pacific region accounted for 37, 564 family class immigrants out of a total of 66, 230 newcomers in this immigration category (Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

When a Canadian male marries a woman who is a foreign national, the marriage ceremony usually takes place in the foreign country. Subsequently, the Canadian marriage partner initiates a sponsorship application on behalf of his spouse living abroad to allow them to be united in Canada (Cote et al., 2001; Raj & Silverman, 2002). In order to be eligible to sponsor a wife, the Canadian spouse must provide documentation supporting his citizenship or status as a permanent resident. He must also provide financial statements, such as copies of bank account balances and paychecks, to demonstrate his ability to financially support his wife for a period of three years after her arrival. Financial capability to sponsor is based on having an income and savings level that would enable the couple to live significantly above the national poverty line. The husband signs a contract with the national government taking full responsibility for the sponsored bride's basic needs (including food, shelter, health and dental care). This contract also holds the sponsor responsible for taking care of the woman's integration needs (training in English/French as a second language, social programs, etc.) for this three year period (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002).

Once the application is approved and the foreign wife receives a visa number, she is able to immigrate to Canada to be with her husband. In the first three years after her arrival, the wife has no independent access to resources and is not eligible to receive social assistance. The only exception is if the woman encounters domestic violence and files a police report. In this instance, a breakdown of sponsorship occurs, and the woman becomes eligible for government financial support. Unlike immigrants who come to Canada independently, sponsored women are not connected to any immigration agencies or social supports apart from their husbands (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002). It is assumed that their husbands' support will facilitate their gradual self-support and integration with respect to learning English or French, seeking employment, building social networks, and adapting to the ways of the host society. In Canada,

once a sponsorship application is approved, the woman is granted the opportunity to become a permanent resident upon her own initiation of a permanent residence application (Citizenship and Immigration Canada).

Importance of Rights-Based Education for Marriage Migrants & Their Sponsors

The foreign countries from which female marriage migrants have immigrated often have different official languages than Canadian society, as well as divergent legal systems, human rights records, health care systems, transportation systems, and social mores. For example, India was one of the last countries in the world to ratify and adopt the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Violence Against Women (Mathur, 2004), and social norms in specific regions led some women to succumb to abuse, although the country has experienced many social uprisings to improve women's status (Mathur). Women transitioning into a new relationship in Canada may not fully understand their basic human rights or integration rights and how these rights will be protected in the new host society. Since the exercise and protection of their rights occurs within the context of a sponsorship relationship or government-regulated marriage, they may also have a limited knowledge of how their resettlement situation as family-sponsored immigrants relates to their status and welfare in Canada. Similarly, female marriage migrants may not know how to navigate the host society in terms of accessing language training, employment, public transportation, and health care, or forging new social connections. Several researchers have emphasized the need to educate female marriage migrants about their basic human rights, integration rights, and available community resources in the host society to empower them to make successful cultural and marital transitions (Cote et al., 2001; MacPherson, 2004; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Rossiter, 2005). Rights-based education for this group has also been viewed as a critical vehicle for enhancing their recognition of and response to human rights abuses (Cote et al.; MacPherson; Merali; Raj & Silverman; Rossiter).

The Global Commission on International Migration (2005) put forward a number of recommendations for immigrant-receiving countries, which included a strong focus on migrant rights and human rights. Several of the key recommendations of the Commission, which was assembled upon the instigation of the United Nations Secretary-General, related to the obligation of host governments to directly inform migrants of their rights and status in the host society. This obligation includes providing information about how migrant rights (such as the right to integration) and basic human rights (such as the right to material sustenance and the right to personal safety) will be protected and upheld. Furthermore, the United Nations' branding of 1994 as the International Year of the Family led to the explication of the basic human rights of individuals within marital and family relationships, and to increased attention being paid to their protection and preservation (Levesque, 2001). Examples of such rights include the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom from domestic violence (Levesque).

While education directed towards immigrants is obviously important, an emphasis only on the education of newcomers has a major shortcoming: Canada's multiculturalism policy conveys a stance of mutual accommodation; just as immigrants are expected to learn about and adapt to Canadian ways, both Canada's residents and institutions are expected to learn about, adapt to, and support the integration of newcomers (Berry, 2001, 2006). Since Canada's family sponsorship policy holds male sponsors of immigrant brides directly responsible for facilitating

the women's integration and upholding the women's human rights, the government has an equal obligation to educate sponsors about each party's rights in the context of sponsorship relationships.

Existing research on female marriage migrants has identified various misunderstandings of their rights as sponsored persons and the rights their husbands have over them. In a number of studies, women have reported that their husbands have been the third parties communicating misinformation about sponsorship to them, due to women's limited English proficiency and the absence of other supports (Cote et al., 2001; Husaini, 2001; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Shirwadkar, 2004). Examples of specific types of misunderstandings include believing that: (a) they can be deported by their sponsors, (b) their sponsors can cut off financial support or control their interactions with other family members or other Canadians, (c) they do not have the right to seek language training or employment in Canada, and (d) they have no way out of the marriage in abusive situations (Cote et al.; Husaini; Merali; Raj & Silverman; Shirwadkar).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was twofold: (a) to assess what types of general information about sponsorship, sponsor's rights, and sponsored person's rights the Canadian government has made publicly available for people attempting to seek information about sponsorship, and (b) to evaluate how much of the content of available information focuses on migrant rights versus on other categories of information, such as eligibility for family class sponsorship. The findings of this research were expected to identify gaps and to inform directions for human rights education in the context of marriage-based immigration.

Method

Data Collection

The information to be analyzed in this study was obtained through three primary channels: (a) a basic search of the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) Website to identify documents that sponsors or sponsored persons may access, (b) visits to local Citizenship and Immigration Canada offices to collect brochures or pamphlets related to sponsorship, and (c) calls to the CIC Hotline Telemessage Service to obtain information related to sponsoring a relative from outside of Canada and to inquire about one's status in Canada as a sponsored person. These three sources of information yielded 27 documents for analysis: 25 web-based documents, a few of which were also available in the form of printed brochures in CIC offices, and 2 transcribed Telemessage Hotline responses directly addressing questions about sponsorship. All of the sources of information analyzed in the present study are listed in the Appendix. The documents included all publicly available information on sponsorship, such as the Application to Sponsor and Undertaking, the Sponsorship Agreement, the Sponsor's Guide, the Immigrants' Guide, the Sponsored Spouse/Partner Questionnaire, the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act of 2002 (IRPA; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002), and Fact Sheet 15: Family Class Immigration.

Data Analysis Strategy

Kerlinger (1973) defined content analysis as “a method of studying and analyzing communications in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner to determine the relative emphasis or frequency of various areas of content coverage or to measure target variables” (p. 525). A wide range of available materials can be examined through content analysis, including electronic documents, newspaper articles or periodicals, brochures, preexisting survey databases, employment or school records, immigration case descriptions, and transcriptions of verbal communications. Therefore, the content analysis method is well suited for the purpose of this study.

The first step in the content analysis process is to delineate the general topic area that communication content will be analyzed for (Kerlinger, 1973). In this study, the topic area was “information related to sponsorship”. The second step in content analysis involves determining the unit of analysis, be it the word, phrase, sentence, or theme (Kerlinger). The unit of analysis for the assessment of the content in all of the materials obtained related to sponsorship in this study was the phrase or sentence. This unit of analysis was chosen because it is the smallest unit that could convey meaningful information about sponsorship or personal rights to a reader of an electronic document or brochure or to the recipient of a verbal communication (e.g., a CIC Telemessage Hotline Response). The third step in content analysis is to choose the method of quantification (or way of assigning numbers to content) that is most relevant to the study, be it conducting frequency counts, ranking information, or rating information (Kerlinger). Both frequency counts of sentences and phrases covering various categories of information about sponsorship and ranking of main areas of topic coverage related to sponsorship were used as the main strategies of quantification in this study, as described below.

A three-part data analysis strategy was employed in the content analysis. The first part of the analysis involved carefully examining all phrases and sentences in each individual document to identify the types of information they conveyed. Each area of content coverage within a document (such as eligibility to become a sponsor or sponsor rights) was assigned a label reflecting the category of information it contained, and direct quotes of phrases or sentences from the document that fell into that specific category were excerpted from the document to illustrate that content area. A frequency count of the number of times any phrase or sentence in a given document mentioned or referred to information in a specific content category was conducted.

The second part of the content analysis involved examining common emerging content categories and their related frequency counts across all the web-based and non-web based documents included in the study. This step focused on the smallest or most specific content categories. For example, several specific content categories emerged across documents that addressed different aspects of the sponsorship application process: These included Application Fees, Application Processing Time, Application Evaluation, Rejected Sponsorship Applications, and Right to Appeal for example. In this step, all of these were treated as separate categories of information, and an average frequency of mentioning each separate content category was calculated across documents, along with the standard deviation. The number and percentage of the 27 sponsorship related documents that addressed each content category was also tabulated. This step yielded 30 separate categories of information ranging from the Application Information mentioned above to Eligibility to Become a Sponsor, to Spousal Relationships of Convenience, to Sponsored Persons’ Right to Personal Safety from Abuse.

The third part of the content analysis involved grouping the various categories of content coverage that emerged across the sponsorship-related documents into higher order categories or key content domains under which some of the more specific categories identified in part two could be subsumed. The frequency counts of phrases and sentences that mentioned information in the specific categories that formed these broader key content domains were summed and the average number of times that the content domain was mentioned across the documents analyzed was obtained. The number and percentage of the different sponsorship related documents that addressed the domain was also calculated. The emerging key content domains were subsequently ranked, with those that were mentioned in the greatest percentage of documents at the greatest frequencies listed first, and those that were mentioned in the smallest percentage of documents at the lowest frequencies listed last. This final part of the content analysis led to the identification of 5 key content domains across all documents analyzed in the study.

Results

Table 1 at the end of this chapter displays the results of part two and three of the content analysis. The table lists the key content domains covered in the sponsorship related documents in order of their relative emphasis and lists the specific subcategories of sponsorship related information subsumed within each content domain. The table also provides information about the number and percentage of sponsorship documents that mentioned information about each content domain and its subcategories. The table includes the average number of times specific types of information were mentioned across the documents, as well as the standard deviation and range of mentioning various topic areas.

The 5 key content domains addressed across the 27 sponsorship related documents analyzed in this study were labeled: (a) Sponsorship Relationship & Individual Rights, (b) Sponsorship Application Information, (c) Sponsorship Eligibility, (d) Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, and (e) Relationship/Marriage History & Authenticity. A more detailed description of each content domain is provided below.

Sponsorship Relationship and Individual Rights

Fifteen (55.55%) of the 27 documents analyzed in this study addressed information related to the Sponsorship Relationship or Individual Rights of sponsors or sponsored persons. On average, information in this content domain was mentioned approximately 10 times per document ($SD = 2.60$), with some documents not mentioning it, and others mentioning it up to 38 times. This content domain was further subdivided into 2 categories labeled: (i) Sponsor Rights and Obligations and (ii) Sponsored Person's Rights and Limitations.

Sponsor Rights and Obligations were mentioned in 11 (40.74%) of the sponsorship related documents, with an average of 4 sentences addressing this content area. Several topics related to Sponsor Rights and Obligations were mentioned across the documents, as is shown in the topic breakdown under this subcategory in Table 1. It is important to note that among these topic areas, the only specific right attributed to sponsors in the documents analyzed was the "Right to Cancel Sponsorship", which was mentioned in only a single document, Part 1: The Sponsor's Guide. The description of this right in the document specifically stated "If you change your mind about sponsoring your spouse, common-law partner, conjugal partner or dependent children, you must write a letter to the government before they are issued permanent resident

visas”. The document countered this right in other sentences and phrases, stating: “The undertaking is an unconditional promise of support. For example, the granting of Canadian citizenship, divorce, separation, or relationship breakdown or moving to another province does not cancel the undertaking”. It is possible that the contrasting messages about this right and its application may leave sponsors with some confusion or misunderstandings. Apart from the right to cancel sponsorship, sentences and phrases in the sponsorship related documents that pertained specifically to sponsors tended to emphasize their obligations to the sponsored person as indicated by the following topic areas: Duration of Sponsorship Commitment, Sponsor Obligations to Sponsored Person (financial, social, health care), Unconditional Nature of Sponsor’s Obligations, and Sponsor Default of Undertaking and Consequences. The percentage of documents covering these topics and the frequencies that they were mentioned are listed in Table 1.

The second subcategory under Sponsorship Relationship & Individual Rights was labeled Sponsored Person’s Rights and Limitations. This subcategory of information was addressed in one third of the sponsorship related documents (9 documents) in an average of 5 sentences or phrases. As is clear from the subtopics under this category, the specific right of sponsored persons that was mentioned in many of the documents (from 11 to 16% of documents) was the Right to Apply for Permanent Resident Status, and related Rights and Obligations of Permanent Residents or Criteria for Maintaining Permanent Resident Status. The specific documents that addressed this key right and related issues were: Fact Sheet 15: Family Class Immigration, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Part I, Change in Sponsorship of Spouses and Common-Law Partners from Within Canada – Frequently Asked Questions, Part 2: The Immigrant’s Guide, Fact Sheet 7: Residency Obligations for Permanent Residents, Fact Sheet: Rights and Responsibilities, The Sponsorship Agreement, and CIC Telemessage response related to sponsored persons’ status in Canada. For example, the Frequently Asked Questions document available on the CIC website specifies that “The new spousal policy sets out that most spouses and common-law partners in a genuine relationship with a Canadian citizen or permanent resident, regardless of status, are able to apply for permanent resident status while remaining in Canada”. Also, the Sponsorship Agreement has a small caption at the bottom of the page stating: “Sponsors cannot remove the sponsored person from Canada”. It is important to note that although various aspects of the right to permanent residence was mentioned in a number of documents, it was mentioned at very low frequencies, with only an average of 0.88 to 1.64 phrases or sentences in a document bringing it up.

Another right of sponsored persons that came up in the documents was the Right to Personal Safety from Abuse, which was also mentioned at a very low frequency (an average of .05 times per document with a range from only 0 –2 times). This right only came up in 2 out of 27 documents (7.41%): The Sponsorship Agreement and the CIC Gender Based Analysis Chart explaining amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The Sponsorship Agreement states in very small letters near the end of the form “Sponsored persons who are being abused should seek safety from their sponsors even if this means applying for social assistance benefits”.

Sponsored person’s Right to Employment/Eligibility for a Work Permit was mentioned in 1 (3.70%) of the documents, the CIC transcribed telemessage response: “After you send in your application for permanent residence in Canada, you will be contacted by mail within 90 days. At that time, you will be able to apply for a work permit. Permanent residents of Canada have the right to live, study, and work in Canada”.

The documents analyzed also covered sponsored persons' Right to Access Help in the Local Community through an on-line resource directory (1 document; 3.70%). In terms of limitations, 4 documents (14.81%) included sentences or phrases specifying the Expectation of Self-Sufficiency/Limited Settlement Service Availability for Sponsored Persons.

Sponsorship Application Information

The content domain that was of the second highest frequency of coverage in this study was labeled: Sponsorship Application Information. Information related to the sponsorship application process was covered in close to half of the documents analyzed (13 documents; 48.15%), and was mentioned an average of 34.64 ($SD = 9.71$) times per document. The various topic areas covered under application information are self-explanatory, and are listed in Table 1. They refer to issues such as Application Forms, Application Evaluation, and the Right to Appeal the sponsorship adjudication process.

Sponsorship Eligibility

The third key content domain that emerged among the analyzed documents was labeled: Sponsorship Eligibility, and was addressed in 9 (33.33%) of the documents, an average of approximately 14 times per document ($SD=11.79$). Information on Eligibility to Become a Sponsor was mentioned in 9 different documents including: Change in Sponsorship of Spouses and Common-Law Partners from Within Canada, Sponsorship Evaluation, Fact Sheet 15: Family Class Immigration, CIC Gender Based Analysis Chart, Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, Part I, Part 1: The Sponsor's Guide, Part 2: The Immigrant's Guide, Spouses, Common-Law Partners, and Conjugal Partners, and Schedule 1: Background Declaration. An example statement addressing this topic is "If your spouse is of the opposite sex and your marriage took place outside Canada, the marriage must be valid both under the laws of the jurisdiction where it took place and under Canadian law. Then you can sponsor your spouse to come to Canada" (Part 1: The Sponsor's Guide). This content domain also addressed Inadmissibility Criteria for sponsorship, for example, through the statement "The sponsorship bar for offenses under the Criminal Code that involve bodily harm, an attempt or the threat of bodily harm against family members, places sanctions against such violence" (Gender Based Analysis, Regulations Amending Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations). In addition to this document, inadmissibility criteria were addressed in the Sponsorship Evaluation, Application to Sponsor and Undertaking, The Sponsor's Guide, and the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (total of 5 documents; 18.52%).

Protection Act and Relationship/Marriage History and Authenticity

The fourth and fifth content domains emerging from this part of the study were labeled: Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and Relationship/Marriage History and Authenticity, respectively. Information on the Immigrant and Refugee Protection Act was only mentioned in 3 of the 27 documents (11.11%) at an average of 1.32 ($SD = 2.70$) times. As shown in Table 1, the type of information covered related to the objectives and application of the act and recent amendments. Information related to the Relationship/Marriage History and Authenticity domain only came up in 2 out of the 27 documents (7.41%), and was mentioned an average of 5 times

across documents ($SD = 3.30$). As Table 1 shows, the subcategories of information under this domain mainly focused on an assessment of the couple's contact and relationship prior to and following the marriage, their living arrangements, and proof of a genuine relationship rather than a relationship of convenience. These content areas are self-explanatory.

Discussion

This study examined the content of information the Canadian government makes publicly available to sponsors and sponsored persons in family immigration situations (specifically marriage migration), paying particular attention to coverage of human rights and migrant rights. Overall, the results of this study revealed that there is a much greater emphasis in the content of sponsorship documents on the duration of the sponsorship commitment and sponsorship application and adjudication procedures than on a clear identification of the rights of each party in the sponsorship relationship. This section evaluates the limited coverage of specific rights of sponsors and sponsored persons in the government documents examined in this study against a comprehensive human rights education framework.

Drawing on both international and national human rights statutes, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 1948) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Department of Justice of the Federal Government of Canada, 1982), McPherson (2004) identified four foundational human rights of migrant women in the context of family relationships. As will become evident in considering each of these rights categories, the protection of basic human rights is contingent upon the nature of the relationship between the sponsor and sponsored woman in cases of marriage-based immigration.

The first basic human right of family members identified by McPherson (2004) is the right to personal security. This right addresses freedom from domestic violence, and therefore intersects with women's human rights (Cook & Cusack, 2005; Guichon, 2005). The fact that sponsored persons in Canada can report a breakdown of sponsorship to local authorities in cases of abuse (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2002) acknowledges that maltreatment is not acceptable. In this study, sponsored persons' right to personal security was found to be addressed in only 2 out of 27 sponsorship documents, and was mentioned in very low frequency, relative to other types of sponsorship information.

The right to material subsistence in terms of food, shelter, health care, and any other requirements to satisfy one's basic needs is the second foundational human right discussed by MacPherson (2004). There are three subcategories of rights in the national and international human rights discourse that this foundational human right covers: (a) economic rights (Texier, 2005), such as having freedom over one's personally earned income; (b) the right to health (Hellsten, 2005); and (c) the right to self-determination (Gilbert, 2005a). The right to material subsistence was not specifically attributed to nor directly communicated to sponsored persons in the government documents reviewed in this study. However, information in these documents addressing obligations of sponsors to provide for sponsored persons' financial, health care, and social needs emphasized sponsors' role in the protection of this right. These sponsor obligations were emphasized in only 30 percent of the publicly available documents on sponsorship analyzed in this study.

The third basic human right discussed by McPherson (2004) is the right to personal freedom. This right addresses family members right to govern their own interpersonal relations with other family members, such as children, and to make independent decisions about

maintaining or preserving family and community ties. It also includes one's freedom to have a family. Therefore, this third broad human right covers two subcategories of rights in the international human rights discourse, including the right to marriage and a family (Probert, 2005) and freedom of association (McBride, 2005). The publicly available information for sponsors and sponsored persons analyzed in this study did not address the right to personal freedom.

The final basic human right of family members identified in McPherson's (2004) framework is the right of recognition as a member of the human community. When applied to marriage migrants in the Canadian context, this right asserts that they should have secure status in the host society and be free from barriers to linguistic, economic, social, and cultural integration into the surrounding community (MacPherson). In relation to the integration process and life in a new country, specific categories of human rights relevant to sponsored women as a category of migrants include: (a) the right to education and employment (Eide, 2005; Wilson, 2005), (b) the right to social and cultural participation (Gilbert, 2005b), and (c) the right of language minorities to have communications essential to their welfare presented in their native language even if their mother tongue is not an official language of the nation (Varenes, 2005).

Eleven to 16 percent of the documents analyzed in this study addressed sponsored persons' right to apply for permanent resident status in Canada, and therefore to obtain secure status. However, the fact that the only right attributed to sponsors in all of the documents analyzed was the right to cancel sponsorship could lead to confusion and miscommunication about this right in the marital relationship. Sponsors only have the right to cancel sponsorship applications before they have been approved by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and until the time the foreign bride receives government permission to migrate. After her arrival in Canada, a sponsor can no longer take any action that will cancel the sponsorship agreement. Since the right to cancel sponsorship was only mentioned in a single document in a few sentences, with contradictory information about the binding nature of the sponsorship agreement, it is plausible that sponsors may misunderstand their powers over sponsored women. Close to one-third of sponsored women entering Canada are not proficient in either of Canada's official languages (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003). Therefore, they may be reliant on their husbands to communicate sponsorship information to them and sponsors' misunderstandings of this right may challenge sponsored women's appreciation of their right to permanent residence. As mentioned earlier, one of the most common misunderstandings sponsored women have been found to report in existing research studies is that their husbands have the power to deport them (Cote et al., 2001; Husaini, 2001; Merali, 2009; Raj & Silverman, 2002; Shirwadkar, 2004).

Sponsored persons rights to education and employment in Canada were only mentioned in a small minority of communications, including the information on eligibility for work permits and the information communicated by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada telemassage hotline emphasizing their right to live, study, and work in the host society. Sponsored persons' recognition as a member of the human community was also addressed by the coverage of their right to access help in the local community through one of the on-line resource directories provided on the Citizenship and Immigration Canada website.

Due to the fact that sponsors are held responsible for facilitating the cultural and social integration of female marriage migrants, the exercise of their rights to social and cultural participation would be contingent upon their husbands' recognition of these rights and the provision of support. Levesque (2001) highlighted the fact that women are often dependent on the more powerful members of the family to negotiate their rights and well-being. The information analyzed in this study on the obligations of sponsors emphasized their role in the

integration of newcomers, but did not provide corresponding education directed at sponsored persons about their right to integrate.

The content analysis findings indicated that almost all the available documents related to sponsorship are presented in English in electronic format. These characteristics present a barrier to sponsored women's right to access information about their resettlement situation, since close to one-third of sponsored women entering Canada cannot speak or read and write in English/French (Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2003). Their limited English would also impair their computer literacy. Furthermore, even for those who know some English words in verbal form (i.e., broken English) or written form, the content analysis revealed that information related to their rights as sponsored persons discussed under the framework above was either mentioned in only a small minority of available sponsorship documents, or mentioned in small captions at very low frequencies – such as in only a single sentence. Similarly, information on the rights of sponsors is also limited, with only one right being described (the right to cancel sponsorship).

Introducing Rights-Based Education Sessions for Sponsored Persons & Sponsors

In order to be responsive to the recommendations of the Global Commission on International Migration (2005) for immigrant-receiving countries, there is an urgent need for more appropriate and more extensive rights-based education for both sponsors and sponsored persons in the Canadian context. The education should provide clear and integrated information related to sponsor and sponsored persons' rights in a manner that maximizes accessibility and intelligibility for both newcomers and their hosts.

Drawing on the work of Shirwadkar (2004), rights based education for sponsored women should be pro-active and prepare them for their effective resettlement in Canada. Shirwadkar proposed that such education should occur prior to women's departure from their home countries in the Canadian foreign embassies abroad. She further proposed that rights-based education should be provided verbally in their first languages, and possibly additionally in written form. Implementation in their home countries could facilitate first language transmission/translation of human rights knowledge. The education should cover all of the human rights in McPherson's (2004) framework, and explain how they intersect with the sponsorship commitment in situations of marriage-based migration.

Parallel education sessions for male sponsors should be held in Canada, with a focus on both sponsors' and sponsored persons' rights and limitations in the context of their government regulated marriages. These educational sessions for sponsors should also be held prior to the arrival of their foreign brides in Canada. This time sequence would proactively encourage sponsors to uphold and protect the women's human rights and integration rights after their entry in Canada. If sponsors misunderstand their own rights in relation to those of sponsored women, this may increase female marriage migrants' vulnerability to human rights violations (Raj & Silverman, 2002). Furthermore, as the individuals the government holds solely responsible for facilitating sponsored women's economic, cultural, and social integration after their arrival in Canada, a solid knowledge of each party's rights would prepare sponsors to function as effective integration supports.

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Table 1
Number and Percentage of Documents Covering Various Categories of Sponsorship Information
and Average Frequency of Topic Coverage

Content Domain, Subcategory, or Topic Area	Number of Documents	Percent of Documents	Average Number of Times Mentioned	Standard Deviation	Range
A. SPONSORSHIP RELATIONSHIP & INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS	15	55.55	9.69	2.60	0-38
i) Sponsor Rights & Obligations	11	40.74	4.32	2.36	0-14
1. Right to Cancel Sponsorship	1	3.70	0.48	2.40	0-12
2. Duration of Sponsorship Commitment	4	14.81	1.52	3.06	0-11
3. Sponsor Obligations to Sponsored Person (financial, social, health care, integration)	8	29.63	1.44	3.37	0-14
4. Unconditional Nature of Sponsor Obligations	2	7.41	0.08	0.28	0-1
5. Sponsor Default of Undertaking & Consequences	3	11.11	0.80	2.47	0-11
ii) Sponsored Person's Rights & Limitations	9	33.33	5.37	2.83	0-38
6. Right to Apply for Permanent Resident Status	3	11.11	0.88	4.20	0-21
7. Rights and Obligations of Permanent Residents (to live, study and work in Canada)	5	15.52	1.88	4.93	0-18
8. Criteria for Maintaining Permanent Resident Status	2	7.41	1.64	7.60	0-38
9. Right to Employment and Eligibility for a Work Permit	1	3.70	0.08	0.40	0-2
10. Right to Personal Safety from Abuse	2	7.41	0.05	0.28	0-2
11. Right to Access Help in Local Community	1	3.70	0.48	2.40	0-12
12. Expectation of Self-Sufficiency/Limited Settlement Service Availability for Sponsored Persons	4	14.81	0.36	0.72	0-3
B. SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION INFORMATION	13	48.15	34.64	9.71	0-162
13. Application Instructions/Procedures	4	14.81	11.56	38.27	0-162

Content Domain, Subcategory, or Topic Area	Number of Documents	Percent of Documents	Average Number of Times Mentioned	Standard Deviation	Range
14. Specific Application Forms and Fees	5	18.52	3.64	8.40	0-42
15. Additional Documents Required From Sponsor	5	18.52	3.16	13.21	0-66
16. Additional Documents Required from Sponsored Person	9	33.33	7.68	7.09	0-28
17. Application Confidentiality	2	7.41	1.28	4.44	0-17
18. Application Processing Time	3	11.11	1.52	4.84	0-22
19. Consent to Release Information	2	7.41	0.12	0.44	0-2
20. Choice to Use a Representative	2	7.41	2.16	7.62	0-32
21. Application Evaluation	3	11.11	0.88	4.20	0-10
22. Rejected Applications & Right to Appeal	4	14.81	2.64	8.60	0-43
C. SPONSORSHIP ELIGIBILITY	9	33.33	13.76	11.79	0-49
23. Eligibility to Become a Sponsor	9	33.33	9.80	10.59	0-48
24. Inadmissibility Criteria	5	18.52	3.96	12.98	0-49
D. IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEE PROTECTION ACT (IRPA)	3	11.11	1.32	2.70	0-21
25. Objectives and Application of the IRPA	2	7.41	1.08	4.20	0-21
26. Changes to the IRPA	1	3.70	0.24	1.20	0-6
E. RELATIONSHIP/MARRIAGE HISTORY & AUTHENTICITY	2	7.41	4.68	3.30	0-20
27. Relationship History Before Marriage	2	7.41	1.72	4.00	0-20
28. Marriage History	2	7.41	0.76	3.60	0-18
29. Current Living Arrangements/Ongoing Contact	2	7.41	0.92	2.60	0-13
30. False Applications/Relationships of Convenience	2	7.41	1.28	3.00	0-15

APPENDIX

LIST OF SPONSORSHIP RELATED DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN CONTENT ANALYSIS

A. Documents Available on the World Wide Web

1. Sponsoring a Relative or Family Member to Come to Canada
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/sponsor/out.html>
2. Part 1: The Sponsor's Guide
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/guides/3900E.pdf>
3. Part 2: The Immigrant's Guide
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/guides/3999E.pdf>
4. Application to Sponsor and Undertaking
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM1344EA.pdf>
5. Sponsorship Agreement
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM1344EB.pdf>
6. Length of Time You Must Support a Sponsored Relative or Family Member
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/English/sponsor/support.html>
7. Change in Policy: Sponsorship of Spouses and Common-law Partners from within Canada:
Frequently Asked Questions
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/sponsor/faq-spouse.html>
8. Spouses, Common-Law Partners and Conjugal Partners
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/sponsor/familymembers.html>
9. Fact Sheet 15: Family Class Immigration
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/irpa/fs-family.html>
10. Additional Family Information
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5406E.PDF>
11. Sponsored Spouse/Partner Questionnaire
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5490E.PDF>
12. Sponsor Questionnaire
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5540E.PDF>
13. Sponsorship Evaluation
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5481E.PDF>
14. Document Checklist (Sponsor)
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5491E.PDF>
15. Schedule 1: Background/Declaration
http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/imm0008_1e.pdf
16. Use of a Representative
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/IMM5476E.PDF>
17. Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (Part 1)
<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5/64755.html>
18. Regulations Amending the Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations: Gender-Based
Analysis Chart
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/irpa/gender-amend.html>
19. Bill C-11 Immigration and Refugee Protection Act Gender-Based Analysis Chart
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/irpa/c11-gender.html>
20. Application for Permanent Residence in Canada

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/forms/imm0008egen.pdf>

21. Fact Sheet 7: Residency Obligations for Permanent Residents

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/irpa/fs-residents.html>

22. Part 3: Visa Office Specific Instructions (India, Bhutan and Nepal)

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/guides/3904E.PDF>

23. Part 3: Visa Office Specific Instructions (Bangladesh, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, Maldives, Mongolia, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and Taiwan)

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/kits/guides/3907e.pdf>

24. Fact Sheet: Rights and Responsibilities

http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/fact_08e.html

25. Finding Help in Your Community

<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomer/welcome/wel-20e.html>

B. Transcribed CIC Hotline Responses to Questions Relating to Sponsorship

1. Citizenship and Immigration Canada Hotline Telemesssage Service – Topic:
Sponsoring a Relative from Outside of Canada

1-888-242-2100

2. Citizenship and Immigration Canada Hotline Telemesssage Service – Topic:
Applying for Permanent Residence in Canada as a Sponsored Person

1-888-242-2100