

HUSBAND-TO-WIFE SEXUAL COERCION IN CROSS-BORDER MARRIAGE (CBM)

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Key implications

1. Sexual coercion is more prevalent in CBM than local marriage.
2. Men in CBM are often socially disadvantaged and want to seek for more power in the relationship.
3. The higher prevalence of sexual coercion is closely related to the asymmetrical power relations among the CBM couples.



Background

In 2016, about 35% of registered marriages in Hong Kong involved a partner from mainland China. However, CBM involving mainland Chinese women and Hong Kong men are often stigmatized in local public discourse. To further comprehend the well-being of these couples, we investigated the roles of household power structure and the husband's power motive in husband-to-wife sexual coercion in CBM in Hong Kong.

Research method

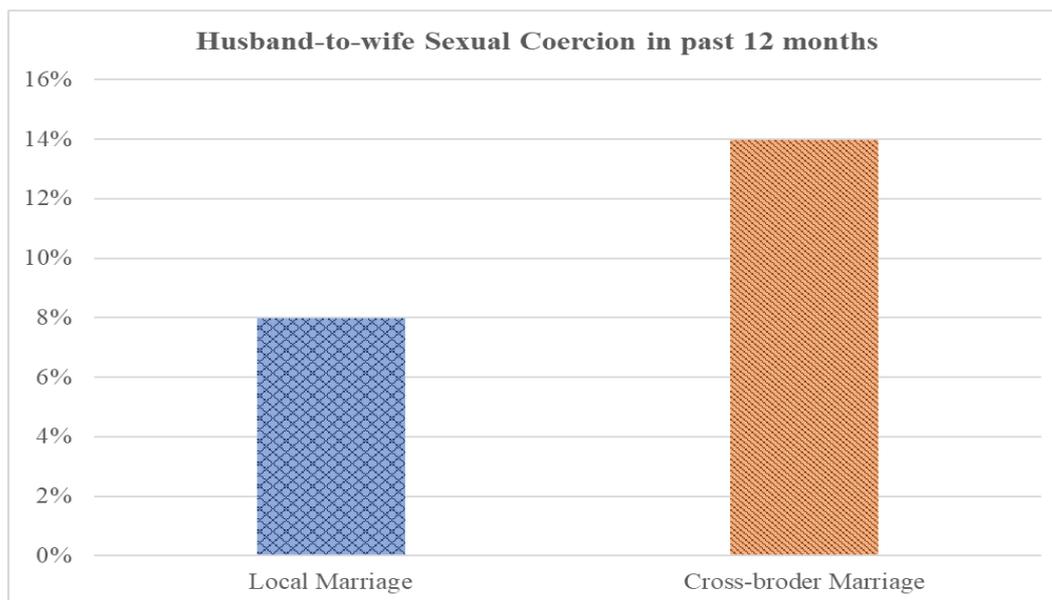
We analyzed data from a representative household survey conducted in a northwestern district of Hong Kong in 2007. The eligible respondents were married men and women in the sampled households. For sensitive questions, including the experience of sexual coercion, the respondents were given a self-administered questionnaire. In total, 871 couples (1,742 married men and women) completed the face-to-face interviews and the self-administered questionnaires. Multivariate statistical analyses were performed.

Key findings

In our sample, 11% of the married couples experienced husband-to-wife sexual coercion. Women in CBM have a significantly higher risk of being victimized (14%), as compared to women in local marriages (8%).

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Our data shows that cross-border married couples are less likely to make joint decisions. Husbands in cross-border marriages have significantly more say in the relationship than the husbands in local marriages. The husbands in cross-border marriages are more likely to want more decision power in the relationship. The higher prevalence rate of sexual coercion for CBM could be fully explained by the asymmetrical power arrangements at home and the husband's higher power motive in CBM. Once we take the effects of the asymmetrical power relations and husbands' power motive into account, there is no more significant difference on the prevalence rate of sexual coercion between the two types of marriage.



Significance of findings for practice and policy

Our study contributes by focusing on the husband's role in determining the well-being of female marriage migrants. We call for attention to the socio-economic background of the men marrying female migrants and the negative labels applied to them and their migrant wives. Intervention programs should focus not only on female marriage migrants but also their husbands. Only helping the female migrants to integrate into society does not completely solve their problems. Helping the female migrants to become more financially independent without addressing their husband's power motive may instead trigger for more aggressive acts at home. More services are needed to help men in CBM reconcile with the stress that come from the negative stereotypes imposed on them as well.

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

Cheung, A. K. L. & Chiu, T. Y. (forthcoming). Husband-to-wife sexual coercion in cross-border marriage: A relationship power perspective. *Current Sociology*.

REQUEST FOR MORE DETAILS

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