Gender, Resources, and Wife Abuse in Hong Kong

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Abstract
Wife abuse is the most common form of violence against women. Using original couple data collected from 871 families in a New Town in Hong Kong, this study examines the interplay between gender role attitudes of husband and resource disparities between husband and wife on wife abuse. Our findings show that compared with women from families where men were the sole providers, women from dual earner families who earned more than their husbands had a greater risk of violence, while women who earned less than their husbands had a lower risk of violence. The risk of violence against women who earned more than their husbands were further exacerbated if their husbands held conservative gender role attitudes. These findings suggest that while economic contributions of women are valued by their husbands, these women must stay within the boundaries of the dominant gender norm, i.e. they should not be earning more than their husbands. Underlying these findings is incongruence between the rapidly changing positioning of women in the labor market and the dominant gender norm in Hong Kong society, and the risk this incongruence may pose to women.

Introduction

Physical violence perpetrated by the husband on the wife is a major form of gender-based violence and a global public health concern. Abused women have been found to suffer serious physical and mental health problems, including chronic pain, hypertension and post-trauma stress disorder (Campbell 2002).

Wife abuse is so common in most societies that the risk for women to suffer violence by an intimate partner is even higher than the risk from any other forms of violent crimes (Gelles & Straus 1988). The rate of prevalence of intimate partner violence around the globe varies from 15% to 71% (Garcia-Moreno et al. 2006). China is not an exception. A cross-sectional nationally representative survey carried out from 1999 to 2000 showed that about 34% of women in China had been physically assaulted by their current intimate male partners (Parish et al. 2004). In Hong Kong, previous surveys show that about 10% of married women in Hong Kong had suffered physical violence by an intimate partner in the past year (Tang 1999a; and about 15.1% of married or cohabited women had been either physically or sexually assaulted by their male partners in their lifetime (Chan 2005).

Among all the possible causes of wife abuse, conservative gender role attitudes have long been argued to be the fundamental causes of wife abuse (Dobash and Dobash 1979, Yllo 1993). In their now classic study, Dobash and Dobash (1979), for instance, argued that traditional gender ideology that stipulates a subordinate and dependent position for women in family has provided motives for men to control their wives and legitimates violence as a means to control women. Empirical studies find that traditional gender role attitudes held by husbands are associated with wife abuse (Smith 1990). In addition to gender role attitudes, resource disparities between women and their male partners have also been found to be associated with violence (McCloskey 1996; Anderson 1997; Kaukinen 2004). However, gender role attitudes and resource disparities do not impact violence independently; they rather interact to shape violent outcomes. Atkinson and his colleagues (2005) proposed a gendered resource theory and tested it using data from the US. They found that the probability of wife abuse sharply increases only when wives earn more than husbands, in the presence of husbands holding traditional gender role attitudes. In contrast, earning more than their husbands is not a risk factor for women who are married to men with egalitarian gender role attitudes.

Is resource disparities between husband and wife related to the risk of wife abuse in the Chinese context? Is the relation between resource disparities and wife abuse affected by husband's gender role attitudes? In this paper, we test the applicability of the gendered resource theory in Hong Kong. Hong Kong provides an optimal setting for this research. On the one hand, economic
modernization in Hong Kong has not entirely changed traditional Chinese cultural norms that privilege men and disadvantage women. On the other hand, increased educational opportunities for, and concomitantly increased labor market participation of, women, mean that the patterns of resource distribution in the family have been rapidly changing, and have departed from the traditional model of a male provider and a female home-maker. Not only working wives have become more common, the income gap between men and women has also been steadily narrowing over the past few decades (Census and Statistics Department 2010). The stagnation of changes in gender norms and the rapid changes in proportions of resources generated by male and female partners in the family have created incongruence that may impact marital dynamics and incidences of violence. We test the gendered resource theory by using original data of 871 families from a survey conducted in 2007.

Theoretical Perspectives

The gendered resource theory has its roots in two theoretical perspectives. It extracts an important element from the feminist perspective that emphasizes impacts of traditional cultural norms and male dominance on the risk of wife abuse (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Bograd and Yllo 1988; Yllo and Strauss 1990). The resource part of the theory is a variant of the relative resource theory that highlights the risk of abuse for status reversed couples (Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang 2005). The theory in essence proposes an interaction effect between husband’s gender role attitudes and resource disparities between husband and wife on violence.

Feminists contend that the patriarchal system is the root cause of wife-beating (Dobash and Dobash 1979; Yllo 1993). In particular, traditional gender role attitudes that emphasize male dominance and female subordination are considered one of the most important components of the patriarchal system. Many family-related issues, such as division of household labor, quality and stability of marital life, and conflicts are also found to be significantly influenced by gender role attitudes (Davis and Greenstein 2009). Gender role attitudes are also used to explain wife abuse in both aggregate and individual-level analyses in the literature. In the aggregate-level analysis, scholars hypothesize that the prevalence rate of wife’s physical abuse is related to the aggregated level of gender role attitudes held by the people in the group. Yllo and Strauss (1990), for instance, found that those states in the US where traditional gender role ideology prevailed had higher rates of husband-to-wife physical violence than those with a more egalitarian gender ideology. However, the problem of aggregate-level analysis is that it cannot explain why some men are more likely to beat their wives, compared to other men under the same cultural context. This line of aggregate-level argument has been criticized for its ecological fallacy, since not all men, but only some men, beat their wives in patriarchal society (Dutton 1994).

To explain within-context variations, individual-level analysis of the feminist theory has been conducted. Using data from a clinical sample comprising 109 in-depth interviews, Dobash and Dobash (1979) found that wife abuse is strongly related to husbands’ gender role expectations. When wives cannot live up to their husbands’ expectations, husband-to-wife physical violence is used by men as a way to control their wives to behave in ways they wanted. Other studies have, however, provided inconsistent support to the argument that men with traditional gender role attitudes are more likely to act aggressively against their intimate female partners, compared to men who are relatively more egalitarian (Smith 1990; Yllo 1993). Some studies found significant effects of husbands’ gender role attitudes on wife assaults and husband-to-wife injurious aggression in the US (Salar and Baldwin 2002; Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang 2005), Canada (Smith 1990) and South Africa (Jewkes 2002). The effect of gender role attitudes on wife abuse was found to be insignificant in Russia (Cubbins and Vunoy 2005). In a meta-analytic review, Sugarman and Frankel (1996) found only limited support linking wife-beating to husbands’ gender role attitudes. In a survey with a clinical sample of abused women in Hong Kong, Chan (2004) did not find any significant relationships between types and severity of violence and abusers’ attitudes towards women.

These inconsistencies may in part be a result of the use of analytical strategies. Although traditional husbands may be more sensitive to wives’ transgression of gender roles, gender role attitude itself may not be a sufficient condition that increases violence. To put it another way, husband’s traditional gender role attitudes may interact with husband and wife’s resource dynamics to shape violence. A closer look at studies that have found no significant relationships between husbands’ gender role attitudes and violence outcomes show that some of these studies did not include wives’ income and employment status in their
models (for example, see Smith 1990). Without formally specifying women’s circumstances, this analytical strategy has indeed implicitly assumed that all wives are similar, and, thus, the effects of gender role attitudes are the same for all husbands. This implicit assumption, however, contradicts the interpretation that violence is used by men to discipline their wives when their dominant status in family is challenged and is under threat; for instance, when resources of husband and wife contradict the cultural model of the husband being the provider and wife the homemaker.

Resource Disparities and Husband-to-wife Physical Violence

The pioneering work of Blood and Wolfe (1960) and Goode (1971) related marital relations with resources in family. Subsequent studies on resource and violence have argued that the impact of resource on violence is intrinsically gendered, in the sense that it is not the absolute resource of husband or wife that matters, but the pattern of resource distribution between men and women and its consistency with gender norm expectations (McCloskey 1996). For instance, a status reversal situation where wives contribute more resources than husbands to the family is seen as a high risk context that may prompt husbands to use violence to reclaim supremacy. Macmillan and Gartner (1999) found that wives’ employment status interacted with husbands’ employment status to affect the risk of violence. Wives are in greater risk when they are employed and their husbands are no: employed. Similar findings supporting the relative resource theory have been reported in other studies examining differences in education and income levels of husbands and wives (Anderson 1997; Haj-Yahia 2000; Fox et al. 2002).

Similarly incorporating a gender dimension, resource dependency theory, however, predicts an opposite relationship between resource and wife abuse. This theory argues that women’s lack of resources, indicated by employment status, income level and presence of a young child, increases tolerance of abuse (Bornstein 2006; and is a risk factor for triggering abuse (Gibson-Davis et al. 2005). In an early qualitative research, Gelles (1976) found that the lack of resources kept women in abusive relationships. This finding was later confirmed by a quantitative study with a nationally representative sample, which showed that wives’ economic dependency on men kept them in severely abusive marriages (Kalmuss and Strauss 1982). Wives’ economic dependency is found to be related to the lower likelihood of their terminating the relationship (Wolfford, Mihalic and Menard 1994) and higher likelihood of returning to their abusive partners after a period of separation (Rusbult and Martz 1995). This perspective suggests that wives who have fewer resources are more likely to be abused because they are more likely to tolerate violent relationships. In a review article, Vyas and Watts (2009) found some, but inconclusive, support for the protective effects of women’s economic independency in developing countries, from the past literature.

Kaukinen (2004) combined status reversal and economic dependency perspectives in the status compatibility theory, to suggest that unemployed women with unemployed husbands would face the greatest risk of abuse. Marital dependency and status reversal are both associated with high risk of wife abuse while women in status parity relationships would be at the lowest risk. This approach is echoed by Choi and Ting (2008) who attempt to explain wife-beating in South Africa with their imbalance theory.

Some of the above theories draw upon the feminist argument that men took traditional gender role ideology as reference and used physical action to maintain their supremacy. While the feminist perspective was borrowed to interpret their findings, gender role ideology was not a variable in the framework (for example, Anderson 1997; Kaukinen 2004). Only with very few exceptions, husbands’ gender role attitudes are included in their models. Traditional gender ideology is assumed to be a context that influences all men evenly. However, not all men are holding the same type of gender role attitude. Some men are more inclined to agree with the traditional gender role ideology than others. The absence of gender role attitudes as a variable in the resource model implies its explanation simply assumes that the effects of resource disparities, status reversal and economic dependency on the risk of abuse by all men are of the same magnitude. That is, even the most egalitarian men will also beat their wives if their wives have taken up nontraditional economic roles.

Gendered Resource Theory as a Variant of Relative Resource Theory

In sum, studies on the effects of men’s gender role attitudes on violence without taking into consideration women’s relative resources carry the assumption that
all wives pose the same challenge to their husbands' dominant role in the family. Meanwhile, studies on the impact of relative resources on violence without taking into account men's gender role attitudes assume that all men will react to challenges to their role in the same manner. Recognizing this problem, Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005) proposed a conditional hypothesis that only when the husband holds traditional gender role attitudes, resource disparities that put women at an advantage or disadvantage will become a significant risk factor for husband-to-wife physical violence. With US data, they found that wives who earn substantially more than their husbands and had husbands holding traditional gender role attitudes were at the greatest risk of being beaten. However, relative income level was treated as a continuous variable in their model and employment level was not included in the analysis. By doing so, they assumed that women in status parity relationships were at higher risk than women who were financially dependent on their husbands. Also, the effects of employment status were absent in the model. This strong assumption implies that the effect of income parity among employed husbands and wives is exactly the same as the effect of income parity when both are unemployed. This strong assumption may be wrong since previous research on resource theory had already indicated that employment status is also a strong indicator of symbolic resources (Macmillan and Gartner 1999). Men are traditionally viewed as primary breadwinners of the family. Seeing unemployment as a challenge to their masculinity, they may use violence to (re)validate their masculinity. Therefore, we have good reason to assume that income parity is not enough to capture the effect of employment. Different from Atkinson’s study, we do not hypothesize a linear effect of relative income on wife-beating. Instead, we adopt status compatibility theory (Kaukinen 2004; Choi and Ting 2008) which assumes that resource parity is less risky than resource disparities.

There are only limited past studies that have tested the conditional hypothesis derived from the gendered resource theory. While Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005) found a significant interaction effect in their model, using data from the US, Cubbin and Vannoy (2005) did not find any significant interaction effect in their model using Russian data. Although there was theoretical discussion suggesting that feminist and status inconsistency theories could be applied to the Chinese population (Yick 2001), no previous research to date has examined this conditional hypothesis suggested by the gendered resource theory in any Chinese context. The present study aims to test the gendered resource theory in a Chinese society. It is hypothesized that the effects of husbands' gender role attitudes and resources disparities between husband and wife interact to affect the risk of husband-to-wife physical violence.

**The Case of Hong Kong**

Hong Kong provides an appropriate setting to test gendered resource theory. As a result of Hong Kong's rapid economic growth over the past several decades, women as a whole have gained comparatively more educational and career opportunities. In 1986, women only constituted 31.2% of all university degree holders in the population. By 2009, 48.2% of all university degree holders in the population were women (Census and Statistics Department 2010). In 1986, women only constituted about 36.5% of the total labor force, but the figure has already risen to 46.6% by 2009. In particular, labor force participation rate for ever married women has risen from 39.1% in 1986 to 46.8% in 2009 (Census and Statistics Department 2010). In tandem with these macro trends has been the increase in economic contribution of women to the family. By 2001, nearly half of Hong Kong’s families were dual earner households (Census and Statistics Department 2002). The income gap between men and women has been steadily narrowing too. Although income gaps between men and women in unskilled labor and blue-collar occupation have remained relatively significant, men and women in managerial positions and professional occupations are paid more or less the same by 2009 (Census and Statistics Department 2010).

Cultural norms concerning gender have, however, lagged behind these structural changes. A household survey of Hong Kong Chinese aged 16 or above found that Hong Kong people were still "very stereotypic regarding gender relationships" (Fung and Ma 2000: 67). Lee (2000) found that most people in Hong Kong thought that "family suffers when women have full time job." In 2008, only 38% of all respondents surveyed in a representative study accepted woman working outside while man staying at home to take care of the family (Chow and Lum, 2008). When society still upholds traditional gender role attitudes, the progress that women are making in the labor market poses a challenge to family dynamics in Hong Kong. As the number of traditional male-
as-sole-provider families declines, the issue of who should contribute what and how much inevitably emerges to create tensions in contemporary Hong Kong families (Choi and Ting 2009). Against this background, it is timely to examine how the changing role of women in the family may have affected spousal violence and relationships under different resource conditions in Hong Kong.

Research Method

Data for this study came from a household survey conducted in Hong Kong in 2007. The survey consisted of face-to-face interviews with a probability sample of 871 couples. A list of sampled addresses was drawn from the frame of living quarters obtained from the Census and Statistics Department of Hong Kong. Both members of each family, having a dyadic intimate relationship, at each sampled address, were interviewed. If more than one couple lived in a sampled address, only one of the couples would be randomly selected for interview. The response rate of the survey was 71.1%. Of the 871 couples that were interviewed, non-married couples and cases with missing data were excluded. Some 40 cases were excluded due to at least one missing value for independent variables and one case was excluded due to missing value for the dependent variable. This yielded a final sample of 828 couples for our analysis. No statistically significant differences were found between included and excluded cases on the variables (not reported here).

Since spousal violence is a sensitive subject associated with social stigma and biases, and involves safety of victims, ethical and safety procedures, as set out by the World Health Organization (World Health Organization 2001), were revised for local use in the data collection process. The survey was strategically divided into two parts: an interviewer-administered questionnaire and a self-administered questionnaire. All sensitive questions, including those on spousal violence, were covered in the self-administered questionnaire. Husbands and wives were interviewed separately (at different times) and on a one-to-one basis. After completing the interviewer-administered questionnaire, each of them was given a self-administered questionnaire to complete, which was then placed into a sealed envelope in front of the respondent to ensure confidentiality.

Husband-to-wife physical violence, the dependent variable in this study, is measured by the translated (into Chinese) version of the Revised Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2) (For original English version, see Straus et al. 1996). Fifteen items on assault and injury subscales from the CTS2 were used in this study to measure physical violence, including 'threw something at', 'twisted', 'pushed/ shoved', 'grabbed', 'slapped', 'used a knife or gun', 'punched or hit', 'choked', 'slammed', 'beat up', 'burned or scalded', 'kicked', 'beaten', 'burnt/ causing small cut' and 'injuries that needed medical attention and hospitalization'. Both respondents were asked to report if they had been perpetrated to or had been victimized by, their spouse in a manner that could be described with any of the above items, in the preceding one year. They were asked to report the frequency of such acts in the previous year. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the 15-item scale is 0.90, which shows high internal consistency. Since our focus is prevalence rather than frequency or severity of violence, we combine frequency for each of the 15 items into one dichotomous measure, with '1' indicating either the husband having reported perpetrating of violence against wife or wife having reported being victimized, and '0' indicating otherwise.

Independent variables

Resource disparities: Employment status and income level are taken as indicators of resource status (parity or disparity) in this study. Both male and female respondents were asked whether they had worked for income within seven days prior to the interview. Respondents' personal income level is encoded into a ten-category variable ('0' is coded for 'no personal income'; '9' is coded for 'above HK$40,000 per month'). Income difference between husband and wife is obtained by subtracting wife's personal income level from husband's personal income level. If the wife's or the husband's income is higher by more than one category (0-9), we define it as earning 'substantively more' than the spouse. If the difference is one category or less, they are defined as having income parity.

The sample was divided into six unordered categories on the basis of employment status and personal income level: 'Only husband employed', 'both employed with husband earning substantively more', 'both employed with income parity', 'both employed with wife earning substantively more', 'only wife employed', and 'both unemployed'. We then created dummy variables for each category. 'Only husband employed' is taken as the reference category in the regression analysis. We do not treat relative income level as a continuous variable
as Atkinson, Greenstein and Lang (2005) did because we assume the effect may not be linear.

Gender role attitudes: Husbands’ gender role attitudes were measured with a six-item scale. Respondents were asked how much they agreed with the following six items related to traditional gender-role expectations: ‘men should pay for women even if they have same income level’, ‘men should work while women should take care of the housework’, ‘women should try harder than men to avoid premarital sex’, ‘it is more difficult to accept women, rather than men, getting drunk’, ‘it is more inappropriate for a woman than a man to use foul language’, ‘Women working as truck drivers is as ridiculous as men knitting sweaters’. For each item, ‘0’ indicates respondents strongly disagree with the statement and ‘4’ indicates the respondents strongly agree with the statement. The items are summed to form the gender role attitude scale with scores ranging from ‘0’ to ‘24’. The higher the score, the more conservative the gender role attitude. The alpha value of the scale is 0.69, indicating an acceptable level of reliability.

Interaction terms: Each of the dummy variables indicating couples’ resource disparities was multiplied by husband’s gender role attitude score for the interaction effect model. The scores for gender role attitude were centered before we produced the interaction terms and estimated our logit model for easier interpretation of the coefficients.

Control Variables

Previous studies have shown that poverty, indicated by low household income level, is a significant risk-factor of intimate partner violence (Fox et al. 2002; Vyas and Watts 2009). Since household income level is related to employment pattern among couples and the focus of this article is on the effects of resource disparities on the risk of physical violence against wives, we need to partial out the effects of absolute resource level, and personal characteristics that potentially confound the effects of employment pattern and gender role attitude on husband-to-wife violence. In this analysis, we have included husbands’ age (measured in years), educational attainment (eight categories) and household income level (ten categories) as control variables.

Statistical Analysis

We used logistic regression of the dichotomous dependent variable to estimate the effects of covariates on the log odds of husband-to-wife physical violence in the preceding year. Two binary logistic regression models were examined. Assuming there was no effect of interaction between resource disparities and gender attitudes, we first estimated an additive model to examine the effects of resource disparities and gender role attitudes. In order to test the conditional hypothesis, a multiplicative-interaction model was then estimated. Interpretation of the interaction effect model is more complicated than the additive model, especially in logistic regression model, because the marginal effect of the independent variable is not linear; it varies with the moderating variable. As recent statistical literature points out, coefficients of constituent terms should not be interpreted as ‘main’ effects directly (Kam and Franzese 2007). Also, we should not look for the significance of the interaction term only, without calculating substantively meaningful marginal effects, because there is a possibility that the marginal effect of the independent variable on dependent variable is significant only for some values of the conditioning variable while the interaction term is insignificant (Brambor, Clark and Golder 2006).

In accord with Kam and Franzese (2007) and Brambor and colleagues (2006), we convert our coefficients into predicted probability to demonstrate substantive meanings of our interaction model, and test for significance of difference of predicted probabilities. We derive the predicted probability by substituting different values into the regression equations, while holding control variables at our sample median. Median is preferable over mean for easier interpretation since some of our control variables are in ordinal scale.

All statistical procedures were performed with STATA version 10. Command Logit and prvalue were used to estimate our logit model and to derive the predicted probability from our interaction model.
Results

Descriptive Analysis and Bivariate Association

Table 1 presents characteristics of couples interviewed in our survey and whether these characteristics have significant associations with one-year prevalence of wife-beating. 10.1% (95% CI: 8.3% - 12.5%) of couples in our sample reported at least one incidence of husband-to-wife physical violence in the preceding one year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables (range)</th>
<th>Tool sample (n=828)</th>
<th>Abused women (n=84; 10.1%)</th>
<th>Non-abused women (n=744; 89.9%)</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (% for category)</td>
<td>Mean (% for category)</td>
<td>Mean (% for category)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment and Income patterns</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, Husband earns more</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, income parity</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, Wife earns more</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only husband employed</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
<td>51.2%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only wife employed</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both not employed</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender attitude</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's attitude about gender (0 to 24)</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>0.045**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other demographic variables</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's age (22 to 84)</td>
<td>40.8</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>47.0</td>
<td>0.0001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's educational attainment (0 to 7)</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.968</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household income level (0 to 9)</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>0.001**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents in our sample generally tended to hold traditional gender role attitudes. The mean score of husbands' gender role attitudes in our sample is 14.4 (Std.Dev.=2.9), which is slightly above the mid-point of the scale. Husbands who used violence against their wives are slightly more traditional than those who did not and the difference is statistically significant (t=-2.01, p<0.05). This bivariate association is consistent with the prediction of the feminist theory.

More than half of the interviewed couples (54.1%) had husbands as sole income earners. About one-tenth (13.3%) of the interviewed couples were dual earners with husbands earning more than wives. Slightly less than one-fifth (17.9%) of the interviewed couples were dual earner families with income parity. Less than 2% (1.3%) were dual earner families with wives earning more than husbands. Wives were the sole earner in 6.6% of cases. Around ten percent (9.8%) of interviewed couples were both unemployed. Resource disparities are significantly associated with the prevalence of wife-beating (X²= 16.1, p <0.05). Compared with non-abused women, abused women were more likely to be from the following family types: families with women as the sole income earner (6.5% vs. 8.3%), dual earner families with wives earning substantially more than husbands (0.9% vs. 4.8%), and families with husbands and wives both unemployed (9.0% vs. 16.7%). On the other hand, compared with non-abused women, abused women were less likely to be from the following family types: dual earner families with income parity (18.5% vs. 11.9%), families with husbands earning substantially more (10.6% vs. 7.1%), or from families having husbands as sole income earners (54.4% vs. 51.2%).

Mean age of husbands in our sample is 46.8 (Std.Dev.=9.6). Median household income level is between HK$10,000 and HK$14,999 (Mean=5.1; Std.Dev.=1.5) and median education level of interviewed husbands is secondary education (Mean=2.1; Std.Dev.=1.2) Husbands' age (t=1.84, p=0.051) and household income level (t=1.96, p=0.066) were found to be negatively related to husband-to-wife physical violence but the associations are only marginally significant. Husbands' education level is not significantly associated with husband-to-wife physical violence (t=0.04, p=0.97).

Source: the 2007 Survey
Table 2: Logistic Regression analysis for one-year prevalence of physical violence against wives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables and Income Pattern</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th></th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>(S.E. $\beta$)</td>
<td>Exp($\beta$)</td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only husband employed</td>
<td>Ref</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ref</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, Husband earns more</td>
<td>-0.28</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, Income parity</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed, Wife earns more</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>1.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only wife employed</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both not employed</td>
<td>-1.18</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlling Gender role attitudes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband's gender role attitudes</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.04†</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interaction effects

| Gender attitudes X |        |         |         |         |
| Both employed (husband earns more) |         |         |         |         |
| Gender attitudes X | -0.35   | 0.17*   | 0.72    |         |
| Both employed (income parity) |         |         |         |         |
| Gender attitudes X | -0.18   | 0.12    | 0.84    |         |
| Both employed (wife earns more) |         |         |         |         |
| Gender attitudes X | 0.30    | 0.38    | 1.35    |         |
| Both not employed | -0.19   | 0.14    | 0.83    |         |
| Controlling Gender attitudes X |         |         |         |         |
| Only wife employed | 0.02    | 0.14    | 0.98    |         |
| Both not employed |         |         |         |         |

Control variables

|             |        |         |         |         |
| Husband's age | -0.05   | 0.01**  | 0.95    | -0.05   | 0.01**  | 0.95    |
| Husband's education level | 0.01    | 0.11    | 1.01    | 0.02    | 0.11    | 1.02    |
| Household income level | -0.05   | 0.09    | 0.95    | -0.05   | 0.09    | 0.95    |

Consensus | 1.12    | 2.05    | 2.05    | 2.05    |

LR Chi-sq. (df) | 28.32 (9)** | 35.74 (10)** |
Log likelihood | -257.63360 | -253.92640 |

† p<.05   **p<.01   ***p<.001

Notes: $\beta$ coefficients can be interpreted as the degree of changes of the logit of the outcome per one unit change of independent variables. Exp(\$\beta\$) can be interpreted as the degree of changes of the odds ratio, per unit change of independent variables.

Source: the 2007 Survey

Multivariate Analysis

Table 2 presents logistic regression results for both additive and multiplicative interaction models. In Model 1 we assume additive effect of independent variables on the log odds of husband-to-wife physical violence, while husbands' traditional gender role attitudes increase the risk of violence to a marginal significance level only ($p<0.1$). Two types of resource situations significantly increase the risk of husband-to-wife violence. Compared with women from families where only the husband worked, women earning more than their husbands (in dual earner families) were significantly more vulnerable to violence (odds ratio 6.37, $p<0.01$), all else being equal. Likewise, women from families where both husbands and wives were unemployed were also at a higher risk of violence (odds ratio 3.26, $p<0.01$) compared with their counterparts from families where only the husbands worked, other things being equal.

Model 2 added the interaction terms. The coefficients of constituent terms are the effects of independent variables when the moderating variable is conditioned at zero. In Model 2, when the husband's gender role attitude is conditioned at zero (i.e. sample mean, because we have centered the score for gender role attitudes), the effects of resource disparities are similar to Model 1. Compared with the reference category (where only the husband worked), women from dual earner families earning substantially more than their husband (odds ratio 6.88, $p<0.01$) and women from families where both husband and wife were unemployed (odds ratio 3.20, $p<0.05$) were at significantly higher risk of violence. The gender role attitude variable was significant, indicating that among families where only the husband worked, the more traditional the husband's gender role attitude, the higher the risk of husband-to-wife violence (odds ratio 1.16, $p<0.05$).

Some significant interactions were observed between husbands' gender role attitudes and patterns of resource contribution. As discussed earlier, coefficients of interaction terms in the model do not provide all information we look for, and hence we will calculate the effects of a variable by conditioning values of the moderating variable at different levels. Table 3 presents a better picture of how the effects vary when the moderating variable changes its value. The predicted probabilities are derived by solving the regression equation and setting all control variables to sample median.
Table 3: Predicted probabilities of wife-beating by employment patterns and husband’s gender role attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resources disparities</th>
<th>Gender role attitudes conditioned at:</th>
<th>Change in predicted probability from 10th to 90th percentile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10th Percentile</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only husband works</td>
<td>0.0503</td>
<td>0.0664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed</td>
<td>0.1046</td>
<td>0.0530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(husband earns more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed</td>
<td>0.0706</td>
<td>0.0621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(income parity)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both employed</td>
<td>0.1151</td>
<td>0.4572*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(wife earns more)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only wife works</td>
<td>0.1679</td>
<td>0.1464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both not employed</td>
<td>0.1541</td>
<td>0.2300*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *p<.05; a.p <.1; significantly differ from the predicted probability of the reference category (only husband works), at certain level of gender role attitude.
* a.p<.05 b p<.1: change is predicted probability significantly different from zero

Source: the 2007 Survey

By looking across rows, we conditioned husbands’ gender role attitudes at the 10th percentile (score: 11), median (score: 15) and 90th percentile (score: 18) in our sample. For couples having husbands as sole income earners, predicted probability of wife-beating significantly increases by 7.72 percent when husbands’ gender role attitudes increase from 10th percentile to 90th percentile of the sample (p<0.05). For dual earner families with wives earning substantively more, predicted probability of wife-beating increases by 63.29 percent when husbands’ gender role attitudes increase from 10th percentile to 90th percentile of the sample, at marginal significance level (p<0.1). In that sense, effects of a couple’s resource disparity on violence are conditioned by the husband’s gender role attitude. The more traditional the husbands’ gender role attitude, the more vulnerable to violence were women who transgressed the traditional gender norms of resource contribution.

By looking across columns, resources disparities are conditioned. When husbands held conservative gender role attitudes (e.g., at 90th percentile of the gender role attitude scale), women who worked (and so had some means of economic independence) but earned less than their husbands (so conformed to the traditional gender norms) were at significantly lower risk of violence compared with women from the reference category (who did not work and were financially dependent on their working husbands). On the other hand, at this level of husbands’ gender role attitude, women who transgressed gender norms of resource contribution (e.g., who earned substantively more than their working husbands) were particularly vulnerable to violence compared with the reference category. However, even a husband with very conservative gender role attitude dared not hurt his wife if the latter was the sole earner of the family. These results indicated that the effects of gender role attitudes on violence were conditioned by patterns of resource contributions.

Effects of control variables in both additive and interaction models were about the same. Husband’s age was negatively related to the risk of husband-to-wife physical violence. Household income level and husband’s educational attainment were not significantly related to the risk in both models.

Discussion

This paper applies a modified gendered resource theory to contemporary Hong Kong. Our results suggest that relative resources of husband and wife interacted with the gender role attitudes of the husband to shape husband-to-wife violence. First, the findings show that holding husband’s gender role attitudes at the median level, women from dual earner households earning more than their husbands had increased risk of being abused compared with women from traditional male provider households. This risk was further increased if husbands had more traditional gender attitudes (e.g., moving from the median to 90th percentile). This result is not entirely unexpected because by earning more than their husbands, women in these households have transgressed the gender norm.
of male provider and female homemaker, and the norm of male dominance and female subordination that are still prevalent in Hong Kong society. Although expected, the result is alarming in view of the increase in female labor force participation rates in the last three decades, and the rapid increase in educational attainments of women. The number of working women whose incomes exceed their husbands' income (in dual earner households) is expected to increase in the near future. The risk this trend poses to the family in general, and to violent victimization of women in particular, has thus become an important policy issue that needs to be addressed.

Secondly, our findings also suggest another interaction between relative resource pattern and gender ideology: compared with women from traditional households (where the husband is the sole provider), women from dual earner households where the husband earns more had lower risk of violence when the husband held very traditional gender role attitudes. This finding is intriguing, but if viewed from a gender perspective, becomes explainable. Compared with women from traditional households, women in dual earner households have some means of economic independence and they also contribute to the family budget to improve the living standard of the family. However, since they earn less than their husbands, they do not violate the gender norms of male provider and male dominance. Consequently, the traditional husband can claim his gender supremacy, at the same time, he benefits from his wife's labor force participation and earning power. This tentative analysis suggests that women's labor market participation is like a double edged sword: on the one hand, their labor and economic contribution is appreciated, and on the other hand, they have to keep this contribution within the cultural boundaries of female subordination.

Thirdly, our findings suggest that women from households where both husband and wife were unemployed also had an increased risk of being abused by their husbands. This finding echoes studies in Western societies about the intersection between economic deprivation and violence (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz 1980; Greenfield et al. 1998; Tjaden and Thoennes 1998). A closer look at our data revealed that 54.3% of the households where both husband and wife were not working were welfare claimants. The welfare system in Hong Kong is based on the so-called means tested welfare provision (Chau and Yu, 2005). The discourse underlying this system is that welfare is only the last resort, for the needy and for persons who are not able to support themselves. This contrasts with the rights discourse underlying some other welfare systems in the West (Esping-Andersen 1990). Consequently, welfare claimants in Hong Kong are being stigmatized as lazy, incapable and failures. In particular, men who rely on welfare are doubly stigmatized: they have failed as persons, and failed as men. Our in depth interviews (from the same research project, but not mentioned here) with victims of severe violence who came from welfare claimant families show that conflict and violence in these families are often a result of men's feeling of gender identity crisis and the women's challenge to their supremacy.

All in all, our findings draw one policy implication. Structural opportunities for women and the culture of gender equality are important to prevent husband-to-wife violence, and they should be addressed together. Promoting egalitarian gender role attitudes among men can be useful to reduce not only its own direct effect on wife abuse, but also its indirect effect on violence through interacting with resource disparities.

Limitations and Directions for Future Studies

However, this study is not without limitations. Firstly, associations among variables in a cross-sectional survey may not be adequate to draw causal inferences. This is especially true when we consider that husband-to-wife physical violence may potentially limit women's opportunity and ability for employment. Some previous longitudinal research found that domestic violence significantly reduced women's labor force participation (Browne, Salomon and Bassuk 1999; Tolman and Wang 2005). Longitudinal research is recommended for a better estimation of effects of resource disparities and gender role attitudes. Secondly, we do not have a measure for husbands' strategies to control wives, and hence are not able to differentiate intimate terrorism and situational couple violence, which are argued to be two different violent patterns in family (Johnson 1995). Future research to examine if gendered resource theory is relevant to both types of violence is recommended. Lastly, one should not take the point estimates reported in Table 3 as if they are actual probability of wife abuse for certain groups of people. We derive the predicted probabilities only for determining which categories are more significant/ at risk than others. For more precise predictions, a much larger sample size is required. Besides the above limitations, in extant literature there have been attempts to mediate the effects of resource
disparities on wife abuse. For example, the effects of couples' characteristics can be mediated through marital conflict over money, marital quality (Hoffman, Demo and Edwards 1994) or conflict management (DeMaris et al. 2003). In addition, we did not explicate the impact of familial power structure on violence. Jang (1999b) found that power within the household was significantly associated with husband-to-wife physical violence in Hong Kong. Imbalance in resource contribution and power can independently affect the tendency of treating spouses violently (Choi and Ting 2008). Because disparities in resources and power are correlated, it can be argued that power should be included in the model to partial out their net effects. Further studies may examine both resource and power imbalances within family and their relevant intervening mechanisms.

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EMOTIONAL RISK AND ITS MANAGEMENT
AMONG CHINESE FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN MACAU

Catherine Cheng Man Chuen

Abstract
This article contributes to the study on the occupational risks of sex work by looking at the emotional risk of sex selling and its management among female sex workers in Macau. Based on the ethnographic data collected in a guesthouse in Macau between 2007 and 2009, this study argues that although female sex workers are confronted with negative emotional consequences, such as guilt and shame, from their engagement in commercial sex industry, they actively negotiate their sense of well-being through adopting a set of strategies to diffuse these negative emotions. Four strategies are discussed and these include de-emotionalizing sex at work, managing presentation of self, relieving distress through humor, and managing sex work narratives.

Introduction
Understanding risk as a negotiation between individuals and their environment, this study is an attempt to look at the emotional risk faced by female sex workers (hereafter FSWs) and the strategies adopted to shape and manage the negative emotional consequences derived from sex selling in Macau Special Administrative Region, China. Highlighting the response of Chinese FSWs to emotional risk, this study illuminates how they exercise their agency despite living under an oppressive legal and social environment.

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