

ABSTRACT (150 words)

The conventional wisdom assumes that educational hypogamy—women marry down in education—tends to be uncommon in China. However, the demographic, social, and economic social forces in the past three decades may alter people's marital practices. Using data from China Migrants Dynamic Survey, this paper examines the trend in educational hypogamy among migrants between 1980 and 2015. Preliminary results find that there is a rising trends in educational hypogamy among migrants in China. Though hypergamy is still the dominant marriage among educational intermarriages, educational hypogamy is getting more prevalent over time. We also focus on the mechanisms causing rising migrants' educational hypogamy, for example the decreasing availability of educated men, the changing gendered returns to education, and the changing contexts for migrants.

Internal Migration and Marriage in China: The Rising Educational Hypogamy

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INTRODUCTION

The conventional wisdom assumes that educational hypogamy—women marry down in education—tends to be uncommon in China. This is because female educational homogamy and hypergamy, where husband's educational level equals or surpasses that of the wife, are shared social expectations and practices in China (Annte. The rising labor market insecurity for women since the economic reform may also encourage Chinese women to marry up to secure better status within the private sphere (Qian and Qian 2014). Moreover, men are traditionally more advantaged than women to get access to education and achieve higher educational attainment in China, making better-educated men abundantly available on the marriage market. Whereas, the rise in female educational attainment and the closing gender gap in education (Yeung 2013) may challenge the predominance of conventional union types. Empirical research shows that the reversal of gender gap in education in the West in recent decades has resulted in rising trends in education hypogamy and acceptance to relationship dominated by female, indicating more egalitarian gender roles within the family (Esteve et al. 2016; Bavel, Schwartz, and Esteve 2018). The massive rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migration in China may also complicate the marriage practice by reshaping the marriage market. Existing literature on migration and marriage ignore the complex interaction among migration, the narrowing gender gap in education, and marriage, assuming marriage occurs naturally among migrants in the conventional way. Thus, the goals of the paper are to examine how the marital behavior of migrants has been reshaped by demographic, social, and economic changes in China. The paper will focus on the prevalence of educational hypogamy among migrants in China, explore the causes of this rising proportion of marriages in which wife has more education than the husband, and discuss the change and continuity of gender roles in the intimate sphere under high economic inequality and great social and geographic mobility.

The current paper examines the changes in educational hypogamy among rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migrants between 1980 and 2015. How the educational hypogamy among migrants has changed during this period with rising rural-to-urban and urban-to-urban migration, increasing economic inequality, and narrowing gender gap in education? We also examine the effects of various social, demographic, and economic forces on rising educational hypogamy among the migrants. Under the strong norms of female hypergamy in China, we examined whether closing gender gaps in education have contributed to the increasing tendency that migrant women marry down in education. Specifically, does the decreasing availability of educated men explain the rise in educational hypogamous marriage? Additionally, will the changing gendered returns to education play a role in driving hypogamous marriage? Lastly, we are interested to know whether any contextual factors (Theunis et al. 2017) will influence people's marital behavior. Will migrants'

residential context affect whom they marry? If migrants migrate from a socially conservative village or city to a socially diverse place, will this contextual change influence their marital behavior?

DATA & MEASUREMENT

We use data from the 2012-2015 China Migrants Dynamic Survey (CMDS) to investigate educational hypogamy among migrants. Our analysis sample is composed of couples that both married between age 15 and age 38, born after 1960, and whose first marriage occurred after 1980. We only examine couples who married between 1980 and 2015 because before the mid-1980s, the migration from rural areas to urban cities were restricted. We use 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2015 data because the information for couples is complete regardless of current residential status. The survey records couple's crucial demographic information including year of first marriage, time of first migration, highest educational level, and other demographic information, even if couples live separately due to migration. Among these first married couples, at least one of them is migrant at the time of the survey. After dropping missing values for important variables, we yield an analysis sample with 544,558 couples.

The first analysis we did was to examine the changes in educational hypogamous couples among all educationally intermarried couples over marriage cohorts. Education is grouped into four categories, which are elementary school, or less, junior high school, senior high school, college or more. Marriage cohorts are categorized by the year of first marriage of the respondents. We have also examined the dominant hypogamous marriage type. In the next step, we will merge Chinese census data to the current analysis to measure the availability of educated men and contextual factors. We will also add the data from China Health and Nutrition Survey to the current sample to examine the effect of economic returns on rising hypogamy.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Preliminary results show that educational hypogamy is rising over time. Though it is not the dominant pattern among intermarried couples, the percentage of hypogamous couples increases from 18 percent out of educational intermarried couples to 39 percent out of educational intermarried couples. We also find that the dominant hypogamous marriages are between wives with a senior high school education and husbands with a junior high school education. The hypogamous marriage concentrate at the lower level of education of the couples.

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