

REPRODUCTIVE COERCION strategies used in INTIMATE AND FAMILY SETTINGS

THE EXPERIENCE of the women who have experienced them

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[Online, Learning Network & Knowledge Hub Webinar]

At the invitation of the Centre for Research and Education on Violence Against Women and Children at the University of Western Ontario (UWO)

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**L'Université de l'Outaouais
et des Laurentides**

*With the collaboration of S. Lévesque (UQAM) and
M.-M. Cousineau (UofM)*

Context

LABORATOIRE DE
RECHERCHE



SUR LA SANTÉ REPRODUCTIVE
ET LES VIOLENCES



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- Co-investigators: Marie-Marthe Cousineau (UofM), Simon Lapierre (uOttawa), Mylène Fernet (UQAM)
- Coordinator: Catherine Rousseau (uOttawa)
- Partners: Institut national de santé publique du Québec; Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances; Planned Parenthood Ontario
- **Thesis Directorate: M-M. Cousineau (UofM) & Sylvie Lévesque (UQAM)**
- University affiliations: UofM & UQO



Fédération du Québec
pour le planning des naissances

Institut national
de santé publique
Québec



SAS - FEMMES

Collectif de recherches et d'actions
pour la **sécurité**, l'**autonomie**
et la **santé** de toutes les **femmes**

FONDATION
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TRUDEAU
FOUNDATION



Bourses d'études
supérieures du Canada

Vanier

Canada Graduate
Scholarships



Planned
Parenthood
Ottawa

CRSH SSHRC
Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council



Recherches Appliquées et
Interdisciplinaires sur les Violences
intimes, familiales et structurelles



What are we talking about?

Form of Gender-Based Violence

Intentional Control Strategies

Deprivation of liberty

Exploit

Limit

Destroy

Reproductive
potential

What we know...

Definition(s)

Prevalence and estimates

Correlations

Risk factors

Consequences

Resistance

What remains to be explored...

Experiences in Quebec and Canada

Experiences of people from minority groups

Using various strategies together and attempting to form alliances

Modulating according to different marital, family, social contexts

Research problem and question

Old phenomenon with a new term

Scientific, social and political relevance

Awareness and prevention

What strategies does a spouse, family member or in-law use to take control of a person's reproductive potential?

Theoretical and methodological framework

Conceptual framework

Social
appropriation



Reproductive
potential



Coercive control

Feminist epistemologies and perspectives

Methodological framework and operationalization

Thesis inclusion criteria

- Person who may become pregnant
- 18+ years old
- Intentional reproductive coercion
- Marital or family context

Recruitment - May 2021 to March 2023

- Multiple strategies (@, posters, web, video, radio, workshops)
+ allied network

Appel à participation

Est-ce que l'un de vos partenaires ou une (des) personne(s) de votre entourage vous a déjà...

Empêché d'utiliser une méthode de contraception correctement (p. ex. en brisant le condom, en jetant les pilules/patches/anneaux, en vous empêchant d'acheter la contraception)?

Mis de la **pression ou menacé pour que vous deveniez enceinte**, alors que vous ne le vouliez pas?

Mis de la **pression ou forcé à mettre fin à une grossesse ou à la poursuivre**, alors que vous ne le souhaitiez pas?

Pour être admissible, vous devez...	Procédure...
✔ Être âgé-e entre 18 et 55 ans	✔ Entrevue individuelle (1h-1h30)
✔ Parler français ou anglais	✔ Compensation financière (30\$)
✔ Être une personne pouvant devenir enceinte	✔ Confidentialité assurée

Vous avez vécu l'une ou plusieurs de ces situations (ou une situation similaire) et vous souhaitez partager votre expérience?

Contactez-nous :
@ : enjeuxcontraceptifs@gmail.com
Tél. : (514) 987-3000 poste 5816

Cette étude est approuvée par le Comité institutionnel d'éthique à la recherche avec des êtres humains de l'UQAM

LABORATOIRE DE RECHERCHE SUR LA SANTÉ REPRODUCTIVE ET LES VIOLENCES

UQAM

SSHRC CRSH

Methodological framework and operationalization

Ethics

- Institutional ethics certifications (UQAM, UofM)
- Ethics Training (Tri-Council)
- Information and consent form
- Reflective practice

Collection

- Semi-directed interviews, recorded on digital audio media
- Socio-demographic and supplementary information forms
- Resources

Methodological framework and operationalization

Processing and Analysis

- Full transcription and anonymization
- Multiple analysis: vertical and horizontal, codification, thematization, case study, ideal types and matrices
- Research notes, research books, team exchanges, interraters

Knowledge Transfer and Retrieval

- Laboratory work, thesis by article
- Infographics and other popularization tools
- Conferences and workshops

Outcomes

Who are the participants?

- $n=18 / N=33$
- Born in Quebec ($n=9$), Africa ($n=4$), the Americas (excluding Canada) ($n=3$), South Asia ($n=2$)
- Canadian citizens ($n=13$), temporary residents ($n=2$), permanent resident ($n=1$), refugee ($n=1$), non-status ($n=1$)*

** Several had a more precarious migration situation at the time of reproductive coercion
Coercion in country of origin only ($n=1$)
in country of origin and in Canada ($n=6$)
only in Canada ($n=2$)*

Who are the participants?

- White ($n=9$), racialized ($n=5$), Black ($n=4$), Indigenous (outside Canada) ($n=2$)
- Atheists ($n=9$), Muslim ($n=4$), Spiritual ($n=2$), Catholic ($n=1$), Buddhist ($n=1$), Jewish ($n=1$), Sikh ($n=1$)
- Speak French ($n=15$) or English ($n=3$)
- Ages 25-45



$n=5$



$n=7$



$n=4$



$n=2$

** 13 femmes ont eu au moins un enfant avec un conjoint auteur de coercition reproductive*

Who are the participants?

Gender identity	<i>n</i>
Woman	17
Non-binary/agender	1

Economic situation	<i>n</i>
Well off	2
Sufficient income	8
Inadequate income	4
Poverty situation	4

Sexual orientation	<i>n</i>
Heterosexual	12
Bisexual	3
Pansexual	2
Questioning	1

Health problems	<i>n</i>
Mental	5
Physical	3
Gynecological	4
Neurodivergent	2
Using	3

Who are the participants?

Relationship with reproductive coercion : 1 to 16 years

were married ($n=9$)

lived with their spouse ($n=14$)

lived with the family [in-laws] during the relationship ($n=4$)

Who are the perpetrators?

1 Spouse

*n = 10**

* 7 women born in Quebec
3 immigrant women

2 Spouse AND family [in-laws]

*n = 6***

** 2 women born in Quebec
4 immigrant women

3 Family [in-laws]

*n = 2****

*** 2 immigrant women

Spouse as perpetrator (*n=16*)

Family [in-laws] as perpetrator (*n=8*)

Objectives of Coercive Strategies

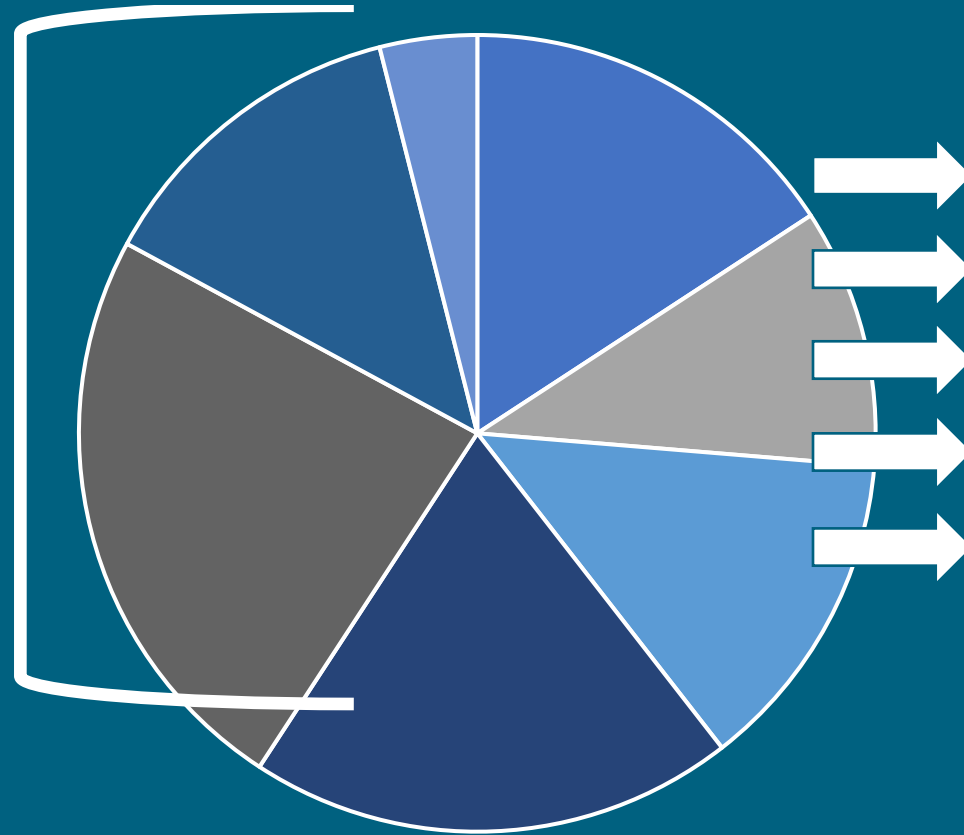
Exploiting reproductive potential ($n=15$)

- pressure to be a mother ($n=15$)
- forcing full-term pregnancy ($n=11$)
- sabotaging contraceptives ($n=8$)

Limiting reproductive potential ($n=7$)

- forced termination of pregnancy ($n=6$)
- discouraging reproduction ($n=1$)

Forms of violence used



- Physical
- Sexual
- Economic
- Verbal
- Psychological
- Spiritual
- Other form

Typical Strategies

1

Seduce & encourage

2

Exploit & weaken

3

Monitor & invade

4

Sabotage & trap

5

Threaten & attack

1 Seduce & encourage

Youth and lack of experience

Quick marriage

Honeymoon, promises

*I was young [...], so not very experienced in life [laughs], in relationships in general, so I was... easily manipulated at that age
(P30)*

1 Seduce & encourage

Promising a renewed relationship, an ideal family

Promote reproductive potential as the means to a strong filiation/ affiliation

Promoting motherhood and women who are mothers

[...] marital advice was like "[...] in marriage, your big personality will cause problems for you, you have to be submissive, you have to be gentle, you have to be docile and all that! And above all, you need to become a mother quickly. Because being a mom softens women! (P32)

2 Exploit vulnerabilities

Poverty / economic dependency

Isolation

Children

I had so little money at the time, and so few people around me that I was afraid of losing him. [...] That's how I had children against my will (P18)

2 Exploit vulnerabilities

Migration pathways and conditions

*"I paid for immigration!
I paid for you!" (P22)*

Precarious status

Administrative dependency

Isolation and loss of reference points

I think it's being an immigrant women that has an impact, not so much the origins and all of that, but the situation as I was saying about being... being a little vulnerable, because we didn't have social networks [...] (P29)

3 Monitor & invade

Spouse

- Track the ovulation period
- Require doors to stay open
- Check agenda, schedule, work
- Be present during medical appointments
- Limit outings or ask about them in detail

Just before I got pregnant, he was asking me to write it on the calendar.... he asked me "when is your ovulation day?" to track my days on the calendar (P26)

Family / In-laws

- Control "the reproduction chain"
- Supervise and control outings and visits
- Develop a "sentinel" system
- Compare with other women that are also observed

Same three, four days, [...] she says « show me your bed...you have period? you have no period? " (P21)

4 Sabotage & trap

Toss / hide

Pierce / damage

Stealthing / rape

Lie

Criticize / cast doubt

It's like you are trapped (P26)

I didn't have access to contraception anymore, he wouldn't let me. On the pretext that if I take contraceptives, it will not be very good for making milk for the baby, and I should not take pills and breastfeed at the same time. [...] And he refuses to wear a condom [...] (P30)

5 Threaten & attack

Retain resource monopoly

Make and change rules

Showcase his strength

Reiterate the consequences

He was shouting in the house, he was shouting, he was swearing for himself, he was hitting the walls, but.... but... he didn't do it to me [...] but I was experiencing all that violence anyway (P29)

5 Threaten & attack

Portray alternative realities

Contribute to a bad reputation

Share bad omens

Threaten with death

There were death threats, I'm going to kill you, you're carrying my child, you're not going to have a relationship with someone else"...you know, "I'm going to...I'm going to kill you, and I'm going to kill my child if I have to, but you're mine!" (P21)

5 Threaten & attack

Requisition, take over, demand

*I felt like I didn't belong to myself [...] my uterus had fallen into the public domain
(P32)*

Form alliances, plot

Denigrate, belittle, neglect, guilt

Deprive, use force, isolate, harass

*He called me... in the middle of the night, in the mornings, every day: "We'll see each other!" and the subject was "Abortion please, abortion! abortion!"
(P24)*

Impact on targeted individuals

Freedom is curtailed

He used me like a tool. To give him a child. He used my body. [...] [he] used me for his own purposes (P23)

Integrity is damaged

Health is affected

I felt like I was swimming at the surface, and then trying all the time to reach a rescue buoy to get me out... I was constantly thinking [...], I was hypervigilant, all the time, weighing the pros and cons (P31)

Identity is weakened

Resistance and breakups

Couple relationship

Family relationships, relationship with children

Belonging, affiliation

It's like this all the time, "If you don't have children and all that, he's going to take a second wife" or "his mother will make him take a second wife" so that she can have his child and all that... because that would mean you can't have a child, so she would have to... he has to have offspring, if you can't make it happen, well... someone else will provide him with offspring"

(P33)

Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion and Conclusion

- Main findings
- Cross-metaphors
 - Reproductive potential as a resource (to be exploited, limited or destroyed)
 - Body and spirit of gender minorities as land to be conquered
 - Coercive campaigns based on an ownership ideology, a surveillance system, an arsenal of control strategies and propaganda
- Avenues for future research
- Avenues for practice

Resources

RESSOURCES D'AIDE Pour prendre soin de soi



Service de consultation téléphonique

Info-Santé et Info-Social (811)

Une infirmière d'Info-Santé ou un.e intervenant.e d'Info-Social donne des conseils, peut répondre à vos questions et vous oriente, au besoin, vers la bonne ressource du réseau de santé et des services sociaux.

Tél.: 811 (24 h / 7 jours)

Site web: <https://santemontreal.qc.ca/population/services/info-sante-et-info-social-8-1-1/>

Services en santé sexuelle et reproductive

Grossesse secours (Montréal)

Offre aux femmes, aux hommes et aux adolescent.e.s l'écoute, le soutien et l'information reliés à la grossesse et tout sujet qui s'y rattache dans un grand respect qu'imposent leur réalité et leurs choix personnels.

Tél.: 514-271-0554 ou 1-877-271-0555 (ouvert la semaine de 9h à 17h)

Site web: <https://www.grossesse-secours.org/>

SOS grossesse (Ville de Québec)

Offre un service d'écoute, d'accueil et d'information, neutre et anonyme, à la femme, à l'adolescente ainsi qu'à toute personne qui vit une situation liée à la grossesse, s'inquiète face à l'éventualité d'une grossesse, se questionne au sujet de la contraception.

Tél.: 418-682-6222 ou 1-877-662-9666 (ouvert 7 jours sur 7, de 9h à 21h)

Site web: <https://www.sosgrossesse.ca/fr>

FQPN - Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances

Offre de l'information et des ressources sur la santé sexuelle et reproductive.

Site web: <https://www.fqpn.qc.ca/>

Services en santé sexuelle et reproductive (suite)

Centre de santé des femmes de Montréal

Organisme communautaire ayant une clinique d'avortement, une clinique de soins de santé gynécologique et offrant de l'information et des références téléphoniques.

Tél.: 514-270-6110

Site web: <http://www.csfmontreal.qc.ca/wp/>

Centre de santé des femmes de l'Outaouais

Offre des services de contraception et d'avortement.

Tél.: 1-819-778-2055

Site web: <http://www.cliniquedesfemmes.com/>

Aide aux victimes de violence conjugale

SOS Violence conjugale

Tél.: 1-800-363-9010 (24 h / 7 jours)

Site web: <http://sosviolenceconjugale.ca>

Violence Info (Ville de Québec)

Tél.: 418-667-8770

Site web: <https://www.violenceinfo.com/>

Aide aux victimes d'agression sexuelle

CALACS - Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel

Tél.: 1-877-717-5252 ou 514-529-5252

Site web: <http://rqcalacs.qc.ca>

Ligne d'écoute téléphonique (sans frais)

Tel-Écoute

Pour les personnes de 18 ans et plus.

Tél.: 514-493-4484 (10h à 22h / 7 jours)

Tel-Aide

Tél.: 514-935-1101 (24 h / 7 jours)

Suicide-Action Montréal

Tél.: 514-723-4000 / 1-866-APPELLE (24 h / 7 jours)

Pour rencontrer un.e sexologue ou psychologue

Ordre professionnel des sexologues du Québec

Service de référence pour trouver un.e sexologue en bureau privé dans votre région.

Tél.: 438-386-6777 ou 1-855-386-6777 (ouvert la semaine de 9h à 17h)

Site web: <https://opsq.org>

Clinique de sexologie de l'UQAM

Services sexologiques offerts par les stagiaires en sexologie clinique sous la supervision de sexologues cliniciens.

Tél.: 514-987-3000, poste 4453

Site web: <https://sexologie.uqam.ca/clinique-de-sexologie/>

Ordre des psychologues du Québec

Service de référence pour trouver un.e psychologue en bureau privé dans votre région.

Tél.: 514-738-1881 ou 1-800-363-2644 (ouvert la semaine de 8h30 à 16h30)

Site web: <https://ordrepsy.qc.ca>

Resources

HELP RESOURCES To take care of yourself



Telephone consultation service

Info-Santé and Info-Social (811)

An Info-Santé nurse or an Info-Social worker can give you advice, answer your questions and direct you, if necessary, to the right resource in the health and social services network.

Phone: 811 (24 hours / 7 days)

Website: <https://santemontreal.qc.ca/en/public/support-and-services/info-sante-and-info-social-811/>

Sexual and reproductive health services

Grossesse secours (Montreal)

Offers women, men and teenagers listening, support and information related to pregnancy and any subject related to it in a great respect for their reality and their personal choices.

Phone: 514-271-0554 or 1-877-271-0555 (open weekdays from 9am to 5pm)

Website: <https://www.grossesse-secours.org/>

SOS grossesse (Quebec City)

Offers a listening, reception and information service, neutral and anonymous, to women, teenagers as well as to any person who is experiencing a situation related to pregnancy, is worried about the possibility of a pregnancy, has questions about contraception.

Phone: 418-682-6222 or 1-877-662-9666 (open 7 days a week, from 9am to 9pm)

Website: <https://www.sosgrossesse.ca/fr>

FQPN - Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances

Offers information and resources on sexual and reproductive health.

Website: <https://www.fqpn.qc.ca/>

Sexual and reproductive health services (continued)

Centre de santé des femmes de Montréal

Community organization with an abortion clinic, a gynecological health care clinic and offering information and telephone referrals.

Phone: 514-270-6110

Website: <http://www.csfmontreal.qc.ca/wp/en/>

Centre de santé des femmes de l'Outaouais

Offers contraception and abortion services.

Phone: 1-819-778-2055

Website: <http://www.cliniquedesfemmes.com/>

Help for victims of domestic violence

SOS Violence conjugale

Phone: 1-800-363-9010 (24 hours / 7 days)

Website: <https://sosviolenceconjugale.ca/en>

Violence Info (Quebec City)

Phone: 418-667-8770

Website : <https://www.violenceinfo.com/>

Help for victims of sexual assault

CALACS - Centre d'aide et de lutte contre les agressions à caractère sexuel

Phone: 1-877-717-5252 or 514-529-5252

Website: <http://www.rqcalacs.qc.ca/index-en.php>

Hotline (toll free)

Tel-Ecoute

For people 18 years and older.

Phone: 514-493-4484 (10am to 10pm / 7 days)

Tel-Aide

Phone: 514-935-1101 (24 hours / 7 days)

Suicide-Action Montreal

Phone: 514-723-4000 / 1-866-APPELLE (24 hours / 7 days)

To meet a sexologist or psychologist

Ordre professionnel des sexologues du Québec

Referral service to find a sexologist in a private office in your area.

Phone: 438-386-6777 or 1-855-386-6777 (open weekdays from 9am to 5pm)

Website: <https://opsq.org>

UQAM Sexology Clinic

Sexological services offered by trainees in clinical sexology under the supervision of clinical sexologists.

Phone: 514-987-3000, ext. 4453

Website: <https://sexologie.uqam.ca/clinique-de-sexologie/>

Ordre des psychologues du Québec

Referral service to find a psychologist in private practice in your area.

Phone: 514-738-1881 or 1-800-363-2644 (open weekdays from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm)

Website: <https://ordrepsy.qc.ca>

Contacts

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- <http://www.levesque.uqam.ca>

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