View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by HKU Scholars Hub

The HKU Scholars Hub The University of Hong Kong 香港大學學術庫

Title	A Tale Of Two Societies: The Doing Of Qualitative Comparative Research In Hong Kong And Britain
Author(s)	Jackson, SF; Ho, PSY
Citation	Methodological Innovations, 2017, v. 10 n. 1, p. 1-12
Issued Date	2017
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10722/248539
Rights	Methodological Innovations. Copyright © Sage Publications Ltd.; This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License.

Check for updates

Original Article

Methodological Innovations
2017, Vol. 10(2) 1–12
© The Author(s) 2017
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/2059799117703117
journals.sagepub.com/home/mio
SAGE

A tale of two societies: The doing of qualitative comparative research in Hong Kong and Britain

Stevi Jackson[1], Petula Sik Ying Ho[2] and Jin Nye Na[3]

Abstract

This article explores the challenges and opportunities for methodological innovation arising from an exploratory, cross-national, qualitative study of women's lives in Hong Kong and Britain. We begin by briefly outlining the aims of our study and its original research design, based on life history interviews with young adult women and their mothers in each location. We then turn to a discussion of how this was modified as we recruited participants and conducted the interviews, including the use of vignettes. We aim to be transparent about some of the problems of implementing a symmetrical approach to generating qualitative data in very different socio-cultural settings compounded by the practical difficulties of geographical distance between team members. We argue for a flexible approach that takes account of local cultural sensibilities rather than trying to follow rigidly identical procedures, recognising also that, in any qualitative research team, there will be differences in approach that affect the data produced. We highlight some of the insights yielded by the problems we encountered and, in particular, an accidental innovation that occurred through an ad hoc decision to conduct focus groups with the young women, which we call 'cross-cultural data feedback'. This innovation involved our participants in contributing to cross-cultural comparison and also brought taken-for-granted assumptions in each setting into sharp relief, as well as sensitising us to issues that proved important in analysing our data. This leads us to raise issues of interpreting and analysing data from differing socio-cultural locations and translating between cultures. We conclude with some recommendations including the potential for the future development of our method of cross-cultural data feedback.

Keywords

Qualitative methods, comparative qualitative research, cross-national collaboration, vignette, translation

Introduction

This article reports on some of the challenges and benefits of international collaboration in conducting comparative qualitative research, drawing on our experience of working together on a small exploratory study of two generations of women in Britain and Hong Kong. Cross-national collaborative research is now common in Europe, a product of European funding, but it is far rarer to find qualitative, cross-cultural studies of societies that are geographically and culturally more distant from each other. Moreover, texts dealing with cross-cultural qualitative fieldwork are generally based on the premise of a researcher from one culture (usually from rich countries or the global north) working in 'other' cultures (Cleary, 2013; Liamputtong, 2010) and therefore focus on issues of cultural knowledge and sensitivity. Where collaboration is mentioned, it is generally in terms of outsiders working with local communities or local researchers (Cleary, 2013). Our study was not of this kind. We worked as an equal partnership between two principal investigators, one Hong Kong Chinese (Sik Ying Ho) and the other White British (Stevi Jackson) and with the intention of comparing the lives

[1]Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, York, UK
[2]Department of Social Work & Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong
[3]Abertay University, Dundee, UK

Corresponding author:
Petula Sik Ying Ho, Department of Social Work & Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong, Pokfulam Road, Hong Kong.
Email: psyho@hku.hk

Creative Commons Non Commercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License (http://www.creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed as specified on the SAGE and Open Access pages (https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/open-access-at-sage).

of Hong Kong Chinese and White British women, the majority ethnicities in the two locations.[1]

As Ryan-Flood and Gill (2010) note, research 'inevitably presents dilemmas, challenges and choices, which are not always explicated in writing up' (p. 2), when the messiness and unpredictability of the process is often glossed over. Yet, this very unpredictability can also, as we will show, create opportunities for methodological innovation as well as unanticipated insights into the lives of those we research. In this article, we seek to make transparent some of the problems and opportunities arising from working together as cross-national collaborators, following the reflexive practice now characteristic of feminist research (Letherby, 2003; Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010). After briefly introducing the aims of our project, we will discuss the methods we used, focusing on the ways in which the differing socio-economic and cultural contexts in which we worked affected the recruitment of participants and the conduct of in-depth interviews and focus groups. We highlight a methodological innovation we developed by chance and deployed in the focus groups, 'cross-cultural data feedback'. This method, we argue, has the virtue of bringing cultural similarities and differences into sharp relief as well as enabling participants themselves to be actively engaged in making cross-cultural comparisons. It also has the potential to be further developed in new research contexts. We also address some of the issues involved in analysing our data, making sense of it in the light of linguistic and cultural differences and in relation to conditions of life in the two locations.

In the beginning: conceptualising and planning our collaboration

Our study was framed as an exploration of the impact of social change on women's personal lives and relationships, funded by an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Hong Kong bilateral award.[2] The impetus for this study was, in part, a product of the rare opportunity afforded by this bilateral scheme to apply for funding for cross-national research. But we were not just opportunistic, we also had a genuine intellectual interest in refocusing academic debates beyond the parochially Western. While small in scale, we set out to address major sociological issues; in particular, we sought to challenge the Eurocentrism of debates on intimacy and modernity.

Mainstream sociological propositions on the transformation of intimacy (Giddens, 1992) and the process of individualization (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002) have come under extensive criticism in terms of their assumptions about gender, sexuality and family relationships and the evidence base for their propositions (e.g. Heaphy, 2007; Jamieson, 1999; Smart, 2007). These critiques, however, have largely remained focused on Western contexts; Jamieson's (2011) conceptualisation of practices of intimacy is a notable – and welcome – exception. More generally, the theorisation of modernity has been marked by its Western bias, and attempts to remedy this have been found wanting (see Bhambra, 2007, 2014). Even those Asian scholars who have challenged universalising characterisations of modernity, such as Yan (2009) and Chang (2010) have tended to take as given much of the Western sociological narrative of the origins of modernity (Jackson, 2015). While seeking to unsettle Eurocentrism, our project was, paradoxically, developed as a response to debates that are Eurocentric in origin. This is perhaps inevitable if the aim is to bring the terms of these debates into question.

Hong Kong and the United Kingdom may seem strange sites for comparison as one is a nation and the other is a Special Administrative Region of China,[3] and neither can be considered representative of their geographical region (Europe or East Asia). Although this particular comparative case may be very specific, the historical relationship between the United Kingdom and Hong Kong, as coloniser and colonised, makes it of particular interest. Both are now part of the rich, post-industrial global North, but British colonialism has left its mark. The particular niche Hong Kong occupied in the British Empire was associated with a neglect of the local population.[4] Up to the 1970s, Hong Kong was characterised by 'third world' levels of poverty and, while it is now richer than the United Kingdom in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) per capita, the policies of both the colonial and current administrations have resulted in a lack of welfare provision and a huge gulf between the rich and poor (Goodstadt, 2013), forcing its inhabitants into self-reliance in a climate of economic uncertainty. This has had consequences for gendered divisions of labour and practices of intimacy (see, for example, Lee, 2003). We saw a comparison between women's lives in these two contexts as offering us an opportunity to think about the gendered consequences of social change in terms of the intersections between local and global inequalities.

While addressing major sociological issues, the funding available meant that our study would have to be modest in its scope.[5] We planned at the outset to interview 12 pairs of young adult women and their mothers in each of the two locations (48 individuals), using the two generations of women as a proxy for change over time, and subsequently conducted focus groups with some of the young women. From the beginning, we recognised the importance of a symmetrical approach to avoid taking one location as the baseline against which the other was assessed – in particular treating Britain as the norm and Hong Kong as 'other'. We therefore planned to pose the same research questions and use the same research instruments in both contexts while being sensitive to the particularities of local social conditions and cultural practices. To maximise the comparability of our samples, we defined the characteristics of our desired participants to ensure as good a match as possible between the British and Hong Kong women to be interviewed. We sought young women who were adult but below the average age of

marriage in both locations and set the age limits as between 20 and 26 years. Since we were interested in exploring issues raised by debates around transformations of intimacy and individualisation, we decided to recruit young women with university level education, those who would have a greater degree of choice in their styles of life than the less educationally privileged. We assumed that their mothers would have more diverse backgrounds. Finally, because of the complexity of comparing two locations and two generations, we agreed that each sample should be culturally homogenous, recruiting from the majority ethnic group in each place: Chinese, Cantonese speaking-speaking Hong Kong women and White British women.

The interview guide we prepared at the outset was developed by the two principal investigators (PIs) in face-to-face meetings. It followed a life history format to lead participants through the stages of their lives from childhood into adulthood and, for the older women, marriage and parenthood, with a focus on interpersonal relationships. We planned to phrase questions to elicit narrative responses, encouraging women to tell us about their lives and experiences, but we also built in a series of prompts to ensure we covered similar ground if information we wanted did not emerge spontaneously, for example, asking about who lived with them at a given time or about relationships with particular others. Towards the end of the interviews, we added a few more direct questions to explore women's understanding of the social changes they had lived through and also deployed vignettes to explore issues that might be difficult to address by other means. The guide was designed, as is usual in qualitative research, to be flexible enabling us to adapt to women's specific circumstances and to vary questions in response to issues they raised, some of which we expected to be culturally specific.

In designing both the guide and specific prompts, we were, of course, aware that the flexibility of qualitative interviewing means that no two interviews follow exactly the same path, that interviews are interactional events and what goes on within them depends on a variety of situational elements. This potential variability is increased in collaborative research where more than one person is interviewing since each researcher's conversational style is likely to affect their interaction with participants. Additional issues arise in a study such as ours, where different members of the team were conducting interviews thousands of miles apart in different languages and different socio-cultural settings. There is a delicate balance to be achieved in trying to ensure comparability of data while being sensitive to issues of eliciting it where differing cultural sensibilities are at stake. The cost and practicality of travelling between Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, and therefore the limited opportunities we had for face-to-face meetings, exacerbated the challenges that geographical distance posed. Once fieldwork began, we were effectively working in parallel in recruiting and interviewing participants. While we kept in contact and discussed progress through electronic media as we went along, each team lacked detailed knowledge of the ways in which local conditions were affecting the research practices of the other. These factors did not become apparent to us until the full team met face-to-face 6 months into the fieldwork and about halfway through the interviewing, which was also when the first focus group was held.[6]

Parallel fieldwork, divergent practices: recruitment and the conduct of interviewing

Since we were recruiting a purposive sample with specific age and educational requirements, and needed both the daughters and mothers to agree to take part, finding participants was not straightforward.[7] We were eventually able to interview 14 young Hong Kong women and 12 of their mothers and 13 young British women and 12 of their mothers (51 individuals in total). The additional young women were those whose mothers had originally agreed to be interviewed but who subsequently dropped out, meaning that we had to seek additional participants to meet our target of 12 mother–daughter pairs in each location. We employed two recruitment strategies: advertising for participants with the appropriate characteristics and seeking them through our personal networks.[8] The way this was accomplished differed in the two locations and impacted on the process of interviewing and, consequently, the data generated.

In Britain, most participants were recruited through advertising in two university towns, one in Northern England and one in the South. Personal networks – referrals from colleagues – resulted in the recruitment of four of the pairs. We had expected that most of the first contacts would be with the young women who would then approach their mothers; in the event, as many mothers as daughters were our first point of contact. In Hong Kong, on the other hand, all participants were recruited through personal networks. There were good cultural reasons for this: in East Asian societies, recruiting through personal networks works far better than any other method. It fits 'somewhat more naturally with Confucian mores and expectations than attempting to recruit unknown individuals who lie outside networks' (Park and Lunt, 2015: n.p.). It is thus difficult to induce people to participate in qualitative research and to build rapport unless they are introduced through a known and trusted intermediary; in Chinese societies, this is related to the importance of personal connections, *guanxi* (see, for example, Liu, 2007). A few of the families were already known to Sik Ying. Other potential participants were recruited through introductions to young women from graduate students and staff in Hong Kong Universities. Once the young women agreed to be interviewed, they approached their mothers who then met Sik Ying in a social context to gain the degree of trust necessary for the interview to proceed.

In the British case, even where personal contacts had been used, the interviewer was unknown to the participants.

The personal contacts were made through Stevi's networks, while most of the interviews were conducted by Jin Nye. The British women, once recruited, were quite happy to spend a few hours discussing their lives with a total stranger, which is not unusual in interviewing in Western contexts. For Sik Ying, on the other hand, it was necessary to devote considerable time to building relationships with the older women; she spent extended periods interviewing them and often became involved in their lives. The British interviews, however, were generally concluded within 2 hours and did not lead to ongoing relationships with participants. Because of these differences, Jin Nye was able to keep more closely to the agreed 'script' of the interview guide than was possible for Sik Ying.

The original intention had been to interview mothers and daughters separately. This was entirely feasible in Britain as most daughters had separate residences from their mothers; in the few cases where they lived together, there was sufficient privacy to conduct separate interviews in participants' homes. In Hong Kong, this was rarely possible. In the first place, the young Hong Kong women all lived with their mothers. They could easily be interviewed separately away from their homes, but once mothers were introduced it would have been culturally very difficult, and indeed impolite, to separate them from their daughters to interview them and may have made them uncomfortable. Moreover, Hong Kong apartments are very small, affording little privacy for separate interviews within domestic space. This was only possible in a few cases when a research assistant was able to work with Sik Ying conducting parallel interviews and where it became, in the context, socially appropriate and practically feasible to negotiate separate interviewing. The lack of individual interviews does, of course, raise questions about issues that the older women may have been unwilling to discuss in their daughters' presence and therefore about the comparability of some of our data. Moreover, since these were conversational interviews taking place within domestic space, if daughters were present they became actively involved in their mothers' interviews. There were, however, benefits to this situation, since interactions between mothers and daughters were often revealing. For example, Sik Ying was able to record an altercation between Gabby and her mother, Ms Au,[9] about the reasons for the latter's failure to offer her any information about sex. Ms Au said that she did not find it necessary to discuss sex and contraception with her daughters as she assumed that they would have learned it at schools and through the Internet, but Gabby disagreed:

Gabby: Schools would only teach you about menstruation but nothing deeper for example, premarital sex, I'd want to know more and ask you (mother) about that.

Ms Au: You can always go look up the Internet!

Gabby: Going on Internet is not the same as hearing your thoughts and opinion!

Ms Au: How come such a highly educated person like you would not even go look up these things on the Internet? You should know better!

Such interchanges are very revealing of the dynamics of mother–daughter interaction on potentially difficult issues, but we do not have data of this kind from the British women. A solution to lack of comparability of data that these different interviewing strategies produced might have been to interview British mothers and daughters together, but this was not feasible. Not only were we unaware of this difference in our interviewing practices until we were halfway through the process, but there would have also been practical difficulties in conducting joint interviews in Britain. The British mothers and daughters often lived considerable distances apart, so that Jin Nye was travelling all over England and Wales to conduct interviews. It would therefore have been difficult and expensive to arrange joint interviews, even had we realised what was happening soon enough to change our original plans.

In retrospect, we can see that what was happening was that each set of interviews was proceeding on the basis of local, taken-for-granted practices. As far as each of us was concerned, we were following the agreed interview guide and gathering the data we needed – and we did, despite our differences, produce meaningful data, albeit under different conditions. While we were unaware, for a time, of the extent of the divergence in our approaches to interviewing, we did anticipate from the outset differences in data generation arising from idiosyncrasies in personal interviewing styles and the specificities of local social and cultural contexts. The vignettes we introduced at the end of the interviews were designed, in part, to introduce a degree of standardisation. Even standardised research methods, however, may not work in the same way in two places and this may tell us something about adapting interviewing techniques to differing cultural settings.[10]

Using vignettes

Vignettes, fictional scenarios that usually feature a problem or dilemma facing an imaginary protagonist, have been used in social research since the 1980s. They are designed to draw participants into considering what someone would or should do in the situation depicted. Instead of asking about attitudes or beliefs in the abstract, vignettes supply contextual information in the recognition that 'meanings are social and morality may be situationally specific' (Finch, 1987: 106). They are also useful in asking about sensitive issues, enabling participants to talk about an imaginary person and situation rather than their own lives. This was one reason that we decided to use them to explore issues of unplanned pregnancy and lesbianism, which could be difficult issues for some women, especially those from Hong Kong, to discuss more directly. We kept our vignettes simple, confined to a

single set of circumstances combined with an open question. Our vignettes ran as follows:

> *The unplanned pregnancy vignette*: 'Kate is a single woman in her early 20s. She has a boyfriend and is embarking on a promising career. Kate finds that she is pregnant'.
>
> What are her options and what would you advise her to do?
>
> *The coming out vignette*: 'Claire is a 22 year old lesbian who has never come out to her mother. She decides the time is right to do so because she has fallen in love and wants to introduce her girlfriend to her mother'.
>
> How do you think her mother would feel about this?

We had anticipated that Hong Kong and British women would have different opinions on these issues, which was the case. We have discussed this elsewhere (Jackson and Ho, 2014). What was less expected was a marked difference in *how* each group of women responded. We hoped, and expected, that the open-ended framing of the questions accompanying our vignettes would prompt considerable discussion of the issues they raised. The Hong Kong women, however, gave very brief, cut and dried responses. For example, commenting on the 'unplanned pregnancy' vignette Ms Lee said that if her daughter were pregnant she would encourage marriage: 'if she loves the baby's father there's no point in getting an abortion'. The lesbian vignette prompted similarly minimal and often condemnatory statements. Elsie, for example, said, 'I would want her to have a normal married life rather than an abnormal relationship'. The only Hong Kong woman who gave a fuller account was a mother who had faced just that situation and told of the struggle she had to accept it.[11] The British women, on the other hand, engaged in extended discussions of each scenario in which they weighed up possible alternatives and elaborated on their own views of issues at stake. Here, for example, are extracts from Susan's very lengthy and considered reflections on the unplanned pregnancy vignette:

> Well, her options are to have the baby, to have an abortion, um, to um, if you're having the baby you'd have to consider what childcare arrangements you were going to be making, is the partner committed to a long term relationship with Kate and the baby, those are all factors that have to be taken into account. What sort of rights she has within her career if any, if she's already got maternity rights […] she'd have to talk with her partner and try and establish what his commitment to the baby was, then think about what she really wanted herself because it's a decision that will affect the rest of her life no matter which way she takes it. […] I think you just have to say well, other people that love you will support you whatever decision you make, but only you can make that decision. (Susan, British mother)

Generally, the British responses would be seen as producing 'richer' data and the brevity of the Hong Kong responses would be seen as disappointing. These differences, however, might be telling us something. We do not think that vignettes are inappropriate to Asian contexts as others have used them successfully on a range of issues (e.g. Kojima, 2013; Liu, 2007). It could be that this reticence on issues concerning sexuality is particular to Hong Kong women but this is unlikely as they did discuss some related moral issues both in interviews and the focus group we conducted with the young women (see Jackson and Ho, 2014).[12] The difference could also be simply a chance effect of different interviewing styles. The vignettes were presented verbally in the course of the interviews rather than being written on cards. The issue of how they should be rendered in Cantonese was not discussed in advance, so it is possible that translation issues may have exacerbated any difference in approaches to interviewing. It was only when we came to analysing our data that we gave translation the attention it deserved.[13]

Having discussed these issues among ourselves, and taking account of what our data has revealed about the lives of our two samples, the most plausible explanation for the differing responses to the vignettes is what we have elsewhere identified as the pragmatism of Hong Kong women, arising from the material conditions of their lives (Jackson et al., 2013). In the case of the unplanned pregnancy, the issue was cut and dried to them because the options are limited and these limitations are related to the wider social context. The British women, however, were able to engage in lengthy considered weighing up of possibilities because there *are* more choices realistically open to young British women in Britain than in Hong Kong. In the case of an unplanned pregnancy, for example, British women have better employment rights, there is a greater acceptance of single motherhood and cohabitation as well as more social support for single mothers. In Hong Kong, the only realistic choices are to marry or have an abortion. For the Hong Kong women we interviewed, there was simply nothing else to be said. Responses to the coming out scenario may also reflect pragmatic attitudes since life for lesbians and gay men is much tougher in Hong Kong than the United Kingdom (Kong, 2011; Tang, 2013) and those lives remain largely hidden from the majority of the population. Thus, not only would Hong Kong women, particularly the mothers, see departure from the heterosexual norm as extremely difficult to deal with and threatening to the material well-being of families, but they had few experience of known lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people to draw on in responding to the scenario with which they were presented. The only exception was the one Hong Kong with an acknowledged lesbian daughter.

The situation for the British sample was different. They inhabited a social milieu where sexual diversity had become, in recent decades, much more widely accepted – a trend that some of the British women mentioned in their responses. Many referred to known lesbian and gay relatives, friends and acquaintances. Even the one British mother with very

negative attitudes to lesbianism and homosexuality, Patricia, was able to draw on personal experiences of a gay cousin and a friend with a lesbian daughter to modify her initial response. Whereas she began by saying that the mother would be 'utterly devastated' by finding that her daughter was a lesbian, she moved on to imagining her coming to terms with it. Whereas Patricia could refer to knowledge of her own social circle in making sense of the vignette, despite her conservative attitudes, most of the Hong Kong mothers had no such knowledge or experience.

Responses to the 'coming out' vignette differed in another respect. Whereas the Hong Kong women focused only on the issue of coping with a lesbian daughter, many of the British women of both generations noticed a particular (and deliberate) feature of the vignette – the relatively late age of coming out – and tended to see this as problematic, indicating a strained relationship or a prejudiced mother. Some also suggested that the mother would be hurt by the daughter's past failure to confide in her. For example, Lucy, one of the young British women, opened her response to the vignette by saying 'If I was her mother, I'd be really upset that my daughter hadn't felt she could come to me with something that affects her life so much'. Even when the British women did not mention the age at coming out spontaneously, the ways in which they discussed the issue then enabled Jin Nye to follow up with simple questions such as 'how about her age?' This prompted further thoughts on why the daughter had not come out to her mother earlier. The responses given by the Hong Kong women, on the other hand, worked to close off further discussion, making it difficult for Sik Ying to probe further without disrupting the rapport she had devoted so much time to fostering. This shutting down of the topic may reflect the concern about 'face' (*mianzi*) and family reputation, which are still of paramount importance in Hong Kong. Closing off options (in relation to both vignettes) could thus have been a way of showing disapproval or possibly fear of confronting the possibility of ever having to deal with such a situation. Crucially, the differing ways women dealt with the vignettes, we suggest, may reveal something about the social context of their lives.

Cross-cultural data feedback: the focus group experience

The interviews were initially expected to be our only means of generating data and it was only when we were halfway through the interviews that we decided to conduct two focus groups with the young women, one in each location. The first of these took place during a 6-day research team meeting in Hong Kong. Sik Ying had organised this in advance of the Stevi's and Jin Nye's arrival, thinking that it would be useful for the British researchers to have a first-hand 'feel' for the lives of Hong Kong women. Unlike the Hong Kong interviews, which were conducted in Cantonese, the focus group discussion took place in English – in which all the young women, typically for those who are University educated, were fluent. All three of us were present. Participants included the young Hong Kong women who had already been interviewed and a few we planned to interview later. Some of them brought friends along, which resulted in a rather larger group than had been anticipated but led to the generation of interesting new data.

In keeping with our commitment to operationalising symmetrical methods in the two locations, we subsequently conducted a similar focus group in Britain. Like the Hong Kong focus group, the British one involved some of the daughters from the sample and a few other young women of similar ages and backgrounds – but for different reasons. In Britain, this occurred because of the impracticability of bringing together a geographically dispersed group, and we therefore invited the young women local to us and recruited additional members.

In the focus groups, we experimented with a new technique, which proved to be very fruitful: discussing some of our emergent findings, illustrated with data, from the other location, enabling Hong Kong women to comment on British women's accounts and vice versa. We are calling this, for want of a better term 'cross-cultural data feedback'. This came about almost by chance. Stevi and Jin Nye had brought transcripts of the British interviews with them to Hong Kong and we all thought it would be interesting to have the young Hong Kong women comment on some of the accounts of their British contemporaries. Having done this successfully in Hong Kong, we then made data from the Hong Kong focus group available to the British one. The effect of this process was to involve our participants in the process of making cross-cultural comparisons. Not only did it provoke lively discussion and interesting insights into perceptions of cultural differences and similarities, but it also brought into the open everyday assumptions about 'the way things are' in each setting that would otherwise not have been made explicit and issues that might not otherwise have emerged.[14] It also alerted us to subjects we might explore more fully in the interviews we had yet to conduct. Two of the issues thus brought into sharp relief were modes of disciplining children and the regulation and monitoring of young women's sexual conduct.

A strong theme that had emerged in the Hong Kong interview data was the use of severe and systematic physical punishment to discipline children. This was not an issue that had featured much in our British interviews. When it was mentioned at all, by either mothers or daughters, it was to refer to the slapping of children as a very occasional, exceptional and regrettable occurrence. In the Hong Kong focus group, the issue of punishment was raised again. The consensus among the young Hong Kong women was that subjecting children to beatings was widespread and acceptable provided the punishment was just and delivered in the context of love. Angela, for example, told us that she was regularly beaten with a feather duster, with her mother counting down 'ten, nine …', but saying all the time 'I love you'.[15] Angela felt that this was excessive – she would beat her own child 'but five times

would be enough'. Donna also saw this as a necessary part of child-rearing:

> Although what I learnt at school [from her psychology degree] teaches me that we should not physically punish the child, I still think that it is necessary as the child needs to be afraid of the parents to a certain extent. You can't spoil them too much! (Donna)

When we shared this with the British group, only one participant mentioned physical punishment, and all agreed that control through guilt was a more common and effective parental strategy:

Carla: … but like the disappointment thing, that, 'I'm very disappointed in you', that was used a lot … just anyone telling you they're disappointed is horrible
All: yeah
Emily: a positive thing as well, like my parents as well as doing the whole disappointment thing and stuff they just sort of show you examples of good behaviour as well like, oh look at such, so she's really well behaved, so you'd know what was expected, what you emulate as well as what you shouldn't do, you'd have examples or like stories in which, you know, the kid was really well behaved and got reward or something like that, you kind of got it engraved in you that way as well, it's good to behave in this way, and if you behave in this way then we'd be very disappointed
Stevi: so that disappointed really gets to you
Carla: mm, yeah it's horrible
Alexis: still does now, if someone, if my dad says I'm really disappointed, even now you feel really guilty, kind of let you down

Further exploration of this issue in both sets of interviews confirmed that this was a marked difference between our two samples. This should not, however, be taken to mean that guilt and shame were unimportant in the disciplining of Hong Kong children – rather that they worked in conjunction with corporal punishment, which could itself be experienced as shaming.

Another major difference, on which we have reported elsewhere (Jackson and Ho, 2014) was in mothers' management of their daughters' sexual activity. The British mothers, with one exception, accepted that their unmarried daughters were sexually active and had been since their teens. The Hong Kong mothers, on the other hand, assiduously policed their daughters' conduct and constantly admonished them against pre-marital virginity loss. This issue provoked lengthy and lively discussions in the Hong Kong focus group, which were then used as stimulus material for the young British women – who were surprised and indeed shocked that mothers could be so intrusive and that daughters could accept such restrictions. What became evident here, which was nowhere made explicit in the interviews, was how taken for granted it is that young British women, from their teens onwards, will be heterosexually active. It is not that the British mothers and daughters did not mention parental regulation of sexuality – they did – but it was largely in terms of mothers talking about keeping their daughters safe (from unwanted pregnancy and coercive sex). This was in keeping with the expectation that young women would and did engage in a variety of sexual practices.

One aspect of this expectation was that it was common, in the British families, for young women to have boyfriends staying over, and sharing their beds, in the parental home. We were aware that this would be unusual in the Hong Kong context and therefore asked the participants in the Hong Kong focus group to comment on this. We used a data extract from an interview with one of the British participants, Zoe, who complained about an age restriction on her being able to sleep with her boyfriend in the family home, which she had not been allowed to do until she turned 18 years – although her mother had gone with her when she 'went on the pill' a year earlier. The reaction among the Hong Kong women was, universally, that there was no way this would be possible for them even currently, when they are in their twenties (Jackson and Ho, 2014). Using cross-cultural data feedback here also provided an opportunity for cultural misunderstanding. Towards the end of the discussion, the following sequence occurred:

Jacqueline: but what kind of, I mean the background of family, how is it like, this family?
Stevi: um, it's sort of lower middle class, mother's a teacher um, parents were um, quite hippy-ish in their youth, so her mother's a bit sort of alternative, if you like, she's still a bit of an aging hippy I guess, in some ways
Jacqueline: and then the house, they have space for them to sleep together?

Stevi had interpreted the initial question as referring to the attitudes and lifestyle of the family, whereas what Jacqueline was asking was whether they very wealthy to have so much space at their disposal. In Hong Kong, because of the excessively high cost of housing, most people live in very small apartments with limited opportunities for privacy – something we went on to discuss. This interchange, while producing a passing sense of embarrassment at her own cultural insensitivity on Stevi's part (since she was well aware of the housing situation in Hong Kong) also alerted us to something that was to become central to our analysis – the importance of material factors in shaping personal lives and relationships (Jackson and Ho, 2014; Jackson et al., 2013).

Analytical strategies – mapping and discovering differences and similarities

We do not have the space here to discuss in detail our analytic strategies, but wish to highlight a few key points we

consider important in comparative analysis. As is generally the case in qualitative work, analysis is a complex iterative process. We began developing a rough coding frame while we were still interviewing, based both on our research questions and themes emergent from the data – many of which we had not expected. This enabled us to begin to map generational and cross-cultural similarities and differences. Both the coding frame and this mapping underwent continual modification and refinement with deeper exploration of the data. At all stages of this process, consultation between us was essential to ensure that we each understood the other's perspective and were able to provide the context necessary to make sense of the data from the differing locations.[16] In interpreting the data, we consistently paid attention to the wider socio-economic, political and cultural contexts of the women's lives. This is of vital importance in avoiding the dangers of cultural essentialism (Narayan, 1998) and especially of any orientalist assumptions about Chinese culture.

Here, we found Lynn Jamieson's (2011) concept of 'practices of intimacy' particularly useful and has now become central to our ongoing analysis; it has sensitised us to both similarities and differences between Hong Kong and Britain and enabled us to locate accounts of everyday practices in their social context. Jamieson developed this concept, in part, as a possible challenge to methodological nationalism, suggesting that it could be applied cross-culturally. Practices of intimacy, as Jamieson points out, are not necessarily egalitarian. A good example of this is parental disciplining of children, where the concept of practices of intimacy enabled us to see our data on this issue in a new light. While it may seem odd to think of physical punishment as 'intimacy', the Hong Kong context alerted us to the possible legitimacy of doing so; in both societies, parents 'love and punish',[17] albeit in different ways. These may be two sides of the same coin and therefore part of the practice of parent–child intimacy within families. This might broaden ideas of intimacy in terms of what goes in families and how managing children's behaviour relates to overall expectations of family practices and responsibilities.

The differences between British and Hong Kong child-rearing practices should not, we would argue, be analysed as simply cultural, but as also a product of the socio-economic conditions of mothers' lives and their daughters' anticipated futures. There are parallels between the differences we found in our Hong Kong and British samples and the class differences in mothers' regulation of daughters' behaviour identified by Walkerdine and Lucy (1989). The strictness of girls' upbringing in Hong Kong should be seen in terms of their mothers preparing them to enter a highly competitive educational and working environment in a fiercely capitalist economy with almost nothing by way of a welfare state. The mothers themselves had grown up in the colonial era when conditions were even worse and life was a struggle for survival; often, their own education had been sacrificed so that they could contribute to the family economy (cf. Salaff, 1995). They therefore imposed rigid boundaries on their daughters' conduct to ensure the latter's future success. The British mothers, having grown up with the establishment of the welfare state and benefitted from the expansion of educational opportunities, could more often afford to be, in one woman's words, 'relaxed' in their approach to rearing their daughters. Although they were concerned about the uncertainties of the future for their daughters, they did not push them to succeed in the same way as the Hong Kong mothers did (see Jackson et al., 2013).

We make these points here to underline how, in a variety of ways, the material socio-economic contexts of life have been woven into the analysis of our data, including taking account of the intertwined histories of Hong Kong and the United Kingdom and the lasting legacies of colonialism and how these histories have influenced practices of intimacy. This does not mean that cultural differences are irrelevant, merely that cultural traditions should not be understood in isolation as definitive of how a given population behaves. One significant aspect of culture that had major consequences for our research is language.

The issue of language further complicated the analytic process given that the interviews were conducted in the native language of participants and that, while Sik Ying is fluent in English, Stevi does not speak Cantonese or read Chinese. It is vitally important, however, that transcription and data analysis are conducted in the original language. Language matters, as there are often not direct translations of culturally specific terms so that translating our Chinese transcripts into English prior to analysis would have risked not only a loss of nuance but also possible distortion of meaning. Even those who are bilingual can find modes of expression delimited by the language they are speaking at any given time. In one of our examples of physical punishment, Angela's story involved her translating her mother's words as 'I love you'. These words served as a 'free translation' and make perfect sense to an Anglophone audience, but, as a Cantonese speaker would immediately recognise, are unlikely to be a literal translation. The word 'love' in Cantonese (and also in Putonghua/Mandarin) is '*ai*' but is rarely used in a familial context among Hong Kong people as it is too strong a word. It is more likely that Angela's mother used the common phrase '*ngo ho sek nei*', which would translate as 'I really care about you' – this would have been a rather long-winded expression to use in English and her choice of translation was thus a practical one, capturing a degree of conceptual equivalence (Birbili, 2000), but losing some of the cultural specificity.

Because we did not wish the subtleties of our participants' words to be lost in translation, we did not work with translations of the Cantonese interviews. Instead, the Hong Kong team provided the British team with summaries of the interviews. We then analysed the two data sets separately but to

our common, and continually evolving, coding frame, constantly returning to the data and discussing it with each other as we developed our analysis. It is only when we wish to quote a participant that we then translate their words. When we do this, we find ourselves having to make a choice, like Angela, between a literal and freer translation, finding a compromise that conveys a degree of conceptual equivalence. Even where the literal meaning is directly translatable, a literal translation can be baffling to a speaker of another language. An example is provided by the way we dealt with a Hong Kong mother, Ellen, talking about her daughter's intention to buy her parents an apartment and expressing belief in her daughter's ability to do so. Having said this she commented, in literal translation 'we should not look down on our children'. While 'look down on' is an expression used in both Cantonese and English, to Stevi this sounded odd applied to a person's children. In the initial published version (Jackson et al., 2013), we settled on 'underestimate' as a conceptual equivalent, capturing what Ellen meant but perhaps, in the process, losing some of the cultural specificity. We are still arguing about this!

In other circumstances, the literal meaning actually helps in arriving at an appropriate translation. Chinese is grammatically very different from European languages and is written in characters, each one of which represents a concept (which can also of course be spoken). One way of proceeding, particularly with difficult to translate passages of transcript, is to think what each character denotes and connotes. We found it useful to work together with the Chinese transcripts, with Sik Ying providing first a rough translation of the gist of the passage but then focusing down on the meaning of each character and discussing the translation between us – thus taking advantage of Sik Ying's native understanding of Cantonese and Stevi's more in-depth understanding of how varying possible translations are likely to be understood by English speakers. These issues of translation continue to be discussed between us as we carry out further analysis on and writing from our data.

Conclusion

Interviews and focus groups can never provide a transparent window into people's lives; they are products of interaction that have occurred at a particular time and place, and the resultant data are co-produced by researchers and participants within those spatial and temporal limits. The significance of this in relation to the project we have been discussing has become particularly clear to us because of events that occurred in Hong Kong after we had completed our empirical work. If we were doing this research now, after the Umbrella Movement[18] occupations and its subsequent repercussion on Hong Kong residents, where political divisions and polarisation are often manifested within families, especially between generations, we would doubtless have elicited different stories.[19]

This was exploratory research based on small samples, but we have learned great deal from it, not simply about women's lives in different places but also how to do research of this kind. Research is rarely 'a straightforward, clinical, easily manageable process' but 'inevitably presents numerous challenges' (Ryan-Flood and Gill, 2010: 2). Cross-national collaboration is even more challenging than research conducted in a single location. It is clear, however, that the difficulties and challenges we encountered were not merely hurdles to be overcome, or differences in research practice to be ironed out, but that they actually tell us something about practices of intimacy in different socio-cultural contexts. In particular, our experience indicates that while standardisation of research practices might be seen as essential to producing comparable data, it might also lead to a flattening out of meaning and context, and therefore the loss of important insights. In working collaboratively, there must be room for researchers to modify their practices in response to local conditions and cultural sensitivities and also to experiment and innovate – above all to be flexible and not to insist on applying western research protocols to settings where they are inappropriate.

It was this flexibility and willingness to experiment which led to the development of a useful innovative method – cross-cultural data feedback. We have learnt from the experience of using this method in a rather ad hoc way, as a result of serendipity, and are now beginning to think about the ways in which the process could be improved to benefit our own and others' future cross-cultural research. First, planning it into the research design at the outset would certainly help make it more systematic and effective, with the proviso that it would still be necessary to be open to adapting it along the way as unexpected issues and data emerged. Second, it is particularly helpful to videotape the focus group interaction to pick up non-verbal responses to the shared data and also, potentially, to play it back to groups from other locations. If different languages were in use, the videos could be subtitled. This raises potential practical and ethical difficulties. The practical issues are ones of timing and asymmetry between groups. The first group conducted would not, of course, have another focus group to respond to, but could (as our Hong Kong group did) respond to previously collected interview data. It might then be possible to hold a second round of more symmetrical focus groups in which videos were exchanged between two (or among more) groups. The ethical concerns relate to ensuring consent to being videoed and the video's use with other participants, as well as protecting anonymity. Our third recommendation is that it would be beneficial for researchers from differing locations to all be present at each focus group, both to feed into it and observe. These are ideas with which we are working in developing the future collaborations, but there may be other ways in which this useful method could be further developed and modified by us and other researchers.

Declaration of conflicting interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The project was funded by an ESRC Hong Kong Bilateral award.

Notes

1. We are not concerned with discussing our locations as 'insider' or 'outsider' in the two settings. This issue has been much discussed in the literature, including the important point that these are not stable or mutually exclusive (Letherby, 2003; Liamputtong, 2010).
2. Award number RES-000-22-362. The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Hong Kong Bilateral programme is jointly sponsored by the ESRC and the Hong Kong Research Grants Council.
3. While here we use 'UK' in discussing the relationship between the two territories, elsewhere we deliberately use 'Britain' and 'British' since all the UK interviews were conducted in England and Wales rather than in the United Kingdom as a whole.
4. For more information on the colonial history and its legacy, see Carroll (2005, 2007), Tsang (2004), Chiu and Lui (2009).
5. The British end of the funding was equivalent to an ESRC small grant while the Hong Kong funding was considerably less.
6. The British team consisted of the PI (Stevi) and a postdoctoral researcher (Jin Nye Na) who was employed on the project on a half time basis for 17 months – the maximum affordable within the funding taking account of other expenses. As well as conducting most of the British interviews and co-facilitating both the Hong Kong and British focus groups, Jin Nye was involved with the early stages of analysis and is co-author of this and two other papers. The Hong Kong team at any one time comprised the PI (Sik Ying) and a research assistant. The Hong Kong funding was not sufficient to hire a postdoctoral researcher. Instead, a series of short-term Research Assistants, with undergraduate or masters level education, were employed and were mostly involved in support tasks. Only one of these research assistants (who joined the team towards the end of the interviewing) conducted any interviews.
7. We have discussed the issues raised in this section and the next in greater detail elsewhere (Jackson et al., 2016).
8. These methods of recruitment meant that our participants were self-selecting, especially those who responded to advertisements. Those who volunteered to participate are likely to be a somewhat biased sample, for example, excluding families where there were major conflicts between mothers and daughters or problems they might not wish to discuss with researchers – although we did document some troubled individual and family histories. Some families approached through personal networks did decline our invitation to participate.
9. All names of participants are pseudonyms. In choosing pseudonyms, we followed the form of names used in the interviews. Some of the Hong Kong mothers did not divulge their personal names (though all the British women did) and where this was the case, we have used family names. In some previous publications, we have used the title 'Mrs' but this is not culturally appropriate, hence the usage of 'Ms' here. Chinese women do not change their family name on marriage though they might be referred to as the 'wife of' someone, for example, Wong *tai* or Wong *tai*. We have given the young Chinese women, and the older women who did use personal names, English pseudonyms as it is common practice for Hong Kong women, especially younger women to have both English and Chinese names and to use the former in everyday interaction – all the young women in our sample did.
10. We also tried using 'personal community maps' (Spencer and Pahl, 2006) as a way of capturing both the possible diversity of family forms and personal relationships within our samples and also differences between Hong Kong and British patterns of relatedness – for example, the greater importance accorded to extended family relationships in Hong Kong (see, for example, Koo and Wong, 2009). While this technique worked well with British participants, it proved impossible to use in Hong Kong and was quickly abandoned (see Jackson et al., 2016).
11. There was one other Hong Kong woman with a lesbian daughter, but she did not acknowledge her daughter's sexuality.
12. For more details on the use of vignettes in Asian contexts, see Jackson et al. (2016).
13. Because our interview guide was designed to be flexible, the precise wording of questions was likely to vary from one interview to another. It was therefore not necessary to pay close attention to precise translation – unlike survey research where translation of questions is a critical issue (see Birbili, 2000). We discuss translation issues in more detail later, in the context of data analysis.
14. A film called *Mom Matters* has been made of the Hong Kong focus group, with subtitles in Chinese. The film is available, for use in educational contexts only, from Sik Ying Ho.
15. Angela was, of course, translating her mother's words into English in telling her story. We recognise that the words she chose might not ring true for a Cantonese speaker. See below.
16. By this stage, there were just two of us working on the data, Stevi and Sik Ying, the two PIs.
17. *Love and Punish* is the title of a documentary film made by Sik Ying featuring one of the mother–daughter pairs in our sample. The film can be obtained from her, strictly for use only in educational contexts.
18. The Umbrella Movement was a mass protest in the form of 79 days of occupation between 26 September and 15 December 2014 in three key locations in Hong Kong: Admiralty, Causeway Bay and Mongkok. It was part of a wider, ongoing, struggle for democracy and genuine universal suffrage in Hong Kong and developed from the original 'Occupy Central' campaign against the decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) not to allow a fully democratic election of the Hong Kong Chief Executive in 2017. When the police used tear gas and pepper spray against the demonstrators, they protected themselves with umbrellas – hence the 'Umbrella Movement'.
19. This has become evident from our new study, currently in the pilot phase, of the impact of the umbrella movement and its aftermath on practices of intimacy. We have recorded new strains in familial relationships, but also new forms of solidarity and personal relationships and emerging politicised identities among the younger generation.

References

Beck U and Beck-Gernsheim E (2002) *Individualization: Institutionalized Individualism and Its Social and Political Consequences*. London: SAGE.

Bhambra GK (2007) *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bhambra GK (2014) *Connected Sociologies*. London: Bloomsbury.

Birbili M (2000) Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update Issue 31*. Guildford, UK: Department of Sociology, University of Surrey.

Carroll J (2005) *Edge of Empires: Chinese Elites and British Colonials in Hong Kong*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press.

Carroll J (2007) *A Concise History of Hong Kong*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield.

Chang K (2010) *South Korea under Compressed Modernity*. London: Routledge.

Chiu S and Lui T-l (2009) *Hong Kong: Becoming a Chinese Global City*. London: Routledge.

Cleary LM (2013) *Cross-Cultural Research with Integrity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Finch J (1987) Research note: The vignette technique in survey research. *Sociology* 21(1): 105–114.

Goodstadt LF (2013) *Poverty in the Midst of Affluence: How Hong Kong Mismanaged Its Prosperity*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Giddens A (1992) *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love and Eroticism in Modern Societies*. Cambridge: Polity.

Heaphy B (2007) *Late Modernity and Social Change: Reconstructing Social and Personal Life*. London: Routledge.

Jackson S (2015) Modernity/modernities and personal life: Reflections on some theoretical lacunae. *Korean Journal of Sociology* 49(3): 1–20.

Jackson S and Ho PSY (2014) Mothers, daughters and sex: The negotiation of young women's sexuality in Hong Kong and Britain. *Families, Relationships and Societies* 3(3): 387–405.

Jackson S, Ho PSY and Na JN (2013) Reshaping tradition? Women negotiating the boundaries of tradition and modernity in Hong Kong and British families. *Sociological Review* 61(4): 667–688.

Jackson S, Ho PSY and Na JN (2016) Interviewing across cultures: talking to mothers and daughters in Hong Kong and Britain. In: Griffin G (ed.) *Cross-Cultural Interviewing: Feminist Experiences and Reflections*. London: Routledge, pp. 15–30.

Jamieson L (1999) Intimacy transformed? *Sociology* 33(4): 477–494.

Jamieson L (2011) Intimacy as a concept: Explaining social change in the context of globalization or another form of ethnocentrism? *Sociological Research Online* 16(4). Available at: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/4/15.html

Kojima K (2013) *Gender, family and fertility: Why are Japanese women having fewer children?* PhD Thesis, University of York, York.

Kong TSK (2011) *Chinese Male Homosexualities: Memba, Tongzhi and Golden Boy*. London: Routledge.

Koo AC and Wong TWP (2009) Family in flux: Benchmarking family changes in Hong Kong society (Special Issue, 'Doing Families in Hong Kong'). *Social Transformations in Chinese Society* 4: 17–56.

Lee EWY (2003) Introduction: Gender and change in Hong Kong. In: Lee E (ed.) *Gender and Change in Hong Kong: Globalization, Postcolonialism and Chinese Patriarchy*. Vancouver, BC, Canada: University of British Columbia Press, pp. 3–20.

Letherby G (2003) *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Liamputtong P (2010) *Performing Qualitative Cross-Cultural Research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Liu J (2007) *Women and Work in Urban China: Women Workers of the Unlucky Generation*. London: Routledge.

Narayan U (1998) Essence of culture and a sense of history: A feminist critique of cultural essentialism. *Hypatia* 13(2): 86–106.

Park S and Lunt N (2015) Confucianism and qualitative interviewing: Working Seoul to soul. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 16(2): 7. Available at: http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs150274

Ryan-Flood R and Gill R (2010) Introduction. In: Ryan-Flood R and Gill R (eds) *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process: Feminist Reflections*. London: Routledge, pp. 1–11.

Salaff JW (1995) *Working Daughters of Hong Kong: Filial Piety or Power in the Family*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Smart C (2007) *Personal Life*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Spencer L and Pahl R (2006) *Rethinking Friendship: Hidden Solidarities Today*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Tang DT (2013) *Conditional Spaces: Hong Kong Lesbian Desires and Everyday Life*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Tsang S (2004) *A Modern History of Hong Kong*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Walkerdine V and Lucy H (1989) *Democracy in the Kitchen: Regulating Mothers and Socialising Daughters*. London: Virago Press.

Yan Y (2009) *The Individualization of Chinese Society*. Oxford: Berg Publishers.

Author biographies

Stevi Jackson is Professor of Women's Studies at the University of York, UK, Her research interests centre on the sociology of gender, sexuality and intimate relationships. She is the author of a number of books including *Heterosexuality in Question* (1999), co-author, with Sue Scott of *Theorizing Sexuality* (2010) and, with Momin Rahman, *Gender and Sexuality: Sociological Approaches* (2010). She has also co-edited a number of collections including, with Sue Scott, *Gender: A Sociological Reader* 2002) and with Liu Jieyu and Woo Juhyun, *East Asian Sexualities: Intimacy, Modernity and New Sexual Cultures* (2008). She has published numerous articles on sexuality, family relationships and feminist sociological theory. She has recently been working, with Petula Sik Ying Ho (HKU) on cross-cultural studies of intimacy and on the consequences of Hong Kong's political turbulence for personal relationships. She is is co-editor of two new book series, *Sexuality, Gender and Culture in Asia* (with Denise Tang and Olivia Khoo) for Palgrave Macmillan and *Gender and Sociology* (with Sue Scott) for Policy Press.

Professor Ho is at the forefront of gender and sexuality, qualitative research and cross-cultural comparative studies. Her main contributions have been centred on identifying injustice and discrimination, whether hidden or evident, and being unafraid to

produce research that challenges dominant ideas about "the way things are" through new theoretical ideas and innovative research methodologies. Her recent work includes, *Love and Desire in Hong Kong*, co-edited with Ka Tat Tsang. It is published in English and Chinese by Hong Kong University Press and China Social Science Press in 2012. She is also author of *I am Ho Sik Ying, 55 years old* (2013), *Everyday Life in the Age of Resistance* (2015), and co-author of *Umbrella Politics Quartet* (2015). Her research projects include using documentary films to explore the integration of arts and scholarship. They include: 22 Springs: The Invincible (2010); The "Kong-lo" Chronicles and The Umbrella Movement: A Collaborative Focus group Analysis" (2016). Her recent documentary films and research based multi-media theatre "Labouring Women Devised Theatre" (2016) calls for the imagination of new modalities of social action beyond those that are historically recognized or culturally sanctioned as being "political" to include various forms of cultural interventions.

Jin Nye Na is currently a research fellow at the University of Hull. She was educated in South Korea before gaining her PhD from the University Essex in 2009 for a study on the military 'Comfort Women's' movement in Postcolonial South Korea. Since then she has worked as an associate lecturer at the Open University alongside research posts, first with Stevi Jackson and Sik Ying Ho on an ESRC funded project on `Gender, Intimacy and Modernity: East and West'and more recently as the lead researcher on a Comic Relief funded research project, `Mapping Sexually Exploited Young People in Dundee' at the University of Abertay. She has published articles and book chapters from these projects and on post-colonial feminist politics.