



Women's Studies Research Centre
The University of Hong Kong



ENGENDERING A BUZZ

September-December 2019 Issue

Dear WSRC members and friends,

Welcome to the fourth issue of the WSRC Occasional Newsletter, **ENGENDERING A BUZZ**. We are very grateful to all of you for your wonderful feedback and encouragement on the Newsletter and the Centre's work. We are glad you have found it a useful and insightful resource. We rely on and are grateful for your continued readership, support and generosity.

Our first issue of the new academic year 2019-2020 features highlights of WSRC's recent events and activities, research and community engagement, including the launch of our **research on unconscious bias in Hong Kong and Asia, the first such study of its kind in the region**. We also share **reflections on recent events in Hong Kong from gender and diversity perspectives, penned by WSRC members and friends**, in the hopes of initiating conversations around the issues which are not often highlighted in the current political movement.

As always, if you are leading any initiatives or research at HKU related to gender, diversity, inclusion and equality, whether it is an upcoming event, research project or publication which you think may be of interest to our subscribers, we would be delighted to hear from you and start a conversation on how we could feature your work in this space. This applies to students and staff! Please drop us a line at [womensrc\(at\)hku\(dot\)hk](mailto:womensrc(at)hku(dot)hk).

**Puja Kapai, Associate Professor of Law,
Convenor, Women's Studies Research Centre**

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WSRC Convenor awarded American Chamber of Commerce Women of Influence Professional of the Year Award 2019

12 November 2019

Congratulations to WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai, who was awarded the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham) Women of Influence (WoI) Professional of the Year Award 2019! The WoI Conference is one of the most established women's symposiums in the Asia Pacific region. The theme of the Conference this year is on perseverance, risk-taking, and leadership from outside the confines of the corporate world. In keeping with the theme, the awards conferred accolades on individuals and organisations that 'made exceptional achievements' and demonstrated 'a steadfast commitment to supporting female leadership in business.'

When presenting the Award, Abbi DeLessio, Co-Chair of the WoI Judging Committee and Senior Consultant at Triangle Associates, said that, "In making their decision, the judges noted Puja's commitment to going beyond leaning in and dedicating her expertise to pushing boundaries and breaking through traditional barriers. Her journey that continues to inspire many, her students and women in minority communities...her work is so well-aligned with what is happening globally." DeLessio shared that one judge said, "Puja's work is gaining traction not only in Hong Kong but she is poised to make a huge difference. Her work is timely, relevant and important and will have a lasting impact."

You can read Puja's acceptance speech [here](#). Visit AmCham's [WoI page](#) for more details about the conference.



2019 WoI Awardees. Photo from AmCham.



Photo Credit: Jason Petrulis

WSRC Event Highlights

WSRC Seminar on *Sexual Harassment in Higher Education and the Workplace* (with Centre for Comparative and Public Law and Human Rights Hub at HKU)

27 September 2019

We had the honour of hosting Kate Jenkins, Australia's Sex Discrimination Commissioner at our first seminar of the year, entitled 'Sexual Harassment in Higher Education and the Workplace'. Held on Friday, 27 September, the session garnered a full house attendance from across sectors, including higher education, the corporate sector, and civil society. Chairman of the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) Mr Ricky Chu, faculty-based equal opportunity advisors and head of the HKU Equal Opportunities Unit were among the audience.

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai opened the seminar with an overview of sexual harassment in higher education and various industries in Hong Kong, drawing on surveys commissioned by the EOC, which most recently published, *Break the Silence: Territory-wide Study on Sexual Harassment of University Students in Hong Kong*. Commissioner Kate Jenkins shared her extensive experience in the field and presented valuable insights from her anti-sexual harassment work. In particular, she spoke about ongoing initiatives in the higher education context in Australia as well as emergent research in relation to workplace sexual harassment, highlighting, in particular, the significance of collaboration with diverse stakeholders to achieve change.

Her presentation was followed by an interactive Q&A session with scholars, students, policy researchers, and other members of the community in the audience. The discussion touched on core issues such as university protocols against sexual harassment in the course of student researchers' fieldwork and the role of sex and sexuality education in addressing sexual harassment. Kate exchanged ideas and shared learnings in relation to the National Inquiry into Sexual Harassment in Australian Workplaces and the University Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment project.



On the Horizon: WSRC Gender & Diversity Writing Workshop

In the last academic year, WSRC officially launched its Gender & Diversity Writing Workshops and hosted three, week-long Workshops where academics from different Faculties worked on their gender and diversity-related research in a welcoming space stocked with collegial tips on writing and publication, coffee and snacks. Throughout the week, participants tracked their progress on a specially designed research map, shared their goals, progress, and key milestones while exchanging best practices and advice for overcoming challenges in their work. These Workshops have received extremely positive responses from participants, who reported making much progress in their writing. The Workshop provided a space for mutual accountability towards writing and publishing goals and motivation to continue research and push past writing blocks. This process has contributed to concrete outputs, including publications. Convenor Puja Kapai published her [research on unconscious bias](#), while Dr Jessica Valdez (School of English) used the space to complete work on her forthcoming book on nineteenth-century novels and the social working of news, [Plotting the News in the Victorian Novel](#) (Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

WSRC is excited to be expanding the supportive network formed during these Workshops. The next Gender & Diversity Workshops will be hosted by WSRC during the **weeks of 9th December** and **16th December**. If you are HKU Faculty who is doing research related to gender and diversity and would like to sign up, please indicate your interest by emailing Urania Chiu at [uchiu\(at\)hku\(dot\)hk](mailto:uchiu(at)hku(dot)hk). In order to facilitate the sharing of work and create the necessary environment for accountability, we encourage you to sign up only if you can attend most of the week and are able to limit absent periods.

WSRC Research

Doing Equality Consciously: Understanding Unconscious Bias and Its Role and Implications in the Achievement of Equality in Hong Kong and Asia'

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai launched research findings from her study, *Doing Equality Consciously: Understanding Unconscious Bias and Its Role and Implications in the Achievement of Equality in Hong Kong and Asia* on 11 November 2019. The Project was funded by the Hong Kong Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) and supported by the WSRC and the Centre for Comparative and Public Law at HKU. Dr Elizabeth LaCouture, Director of the Gender Studies Programme and WSRC Board member, chaired the research launch, which was followed by a lively Q&A session with the audience. Audience members included colleagues from the EOC, the corporate sector, including human resource personnel, consultants and coaches working on Diversity and Inclusion, as well as students.



The prevalence and impact of unconscious bias has been widely documented in studies across different disciplines and fields, including in educational, corporate, healthcare, and legal sectors. Drawing together literature on unconscious bias, social identity theory, and intersectionality and using the data from primary research carried out with participants from different sectors in Hong Kong, this study is the first of its kind in Asia to provide insights into the nature of unconscious bias in the particular context of Hong Kong and as well as the effectiveness of interventions in different settings to address such biases. The study recruited a total of 112 participants from secondary schools, universities, and the corporate sector and used an adapted, paper-based version of the [Harvard-based non-profit Project Implicit's](#) implicit association test (IAT) to assess participants' unconscious biases, focusing in particular on gender-based (Gender-Career and Gender-Science) and racial (Chinese-South Asian and Hong Kong-Mainland) biases. An intervention was also designed to test its effects on

participants' bias levels to assess any changes to determine which biases are susceptible to mitigation and what sort of interventions work to mitigate biases.

The study presented clear evidence of implicit biases in relation to racial and gender stereotypes across different groups of participants, with racial biases manifesting more strongly than gender-based biases. It was found that intervention was effective in reducing bias levels significantly in relation to gender-based biases but not racial biases, reflecting that racial biases are more entrenched and require more complex approaches to mitigate their effects. Significantly, the study also found that social group networks and their exposure to various groups who are often the targets of bias, could impact the effectiveness of interventions. For example, it was found that strong networks with South Asians advance bias reduction in Gender-Science and Gender-Career whereas networks with Mainlanders seem detrimental in terms of bias reduction in Gender-Career. It was also found that strong working relationships with Caucasians reinforce racial biases against South Asians. Therefore, while intervention tools have the potential to reduce unconscious bias, they must be well-tailored to different groups and contexts and carefully fine-tuned for different types and manifestations of biases. The findings further showed that a failure to run effective post-IAT interventions may have negative effects on bias levels and might even strengthen pre-existing biases.

The research report makes a number of key recommendations to address unconscious bias and its detrimental impact in relation to race and gender in Hong Kong. The recommendations include: (1) institutionalising unconscious bias training in governmental, educational, corporate, health, civil society, legal, and social welfare organisations; (2) developing strategies for early childhood intervention to prevent the acquisition and entrenchment of harmful stereotypes; (3) integrating unconscious bias research into law and policy and associated decision-making; (4) calling on the Equal Opportunities Commission to issue guidelines and codes of practice in relation to addressing unconscious bias in various domains as part of its anti-discrimination mandate; and (5) mandating data collection and disaggregation across different sectors. This study is part of a larger project on Unconscious Bias, staging the first phase of a long-term endeavour to develop a better understanding of unconscious bias and tailoring effective intervention strategies to address it in Hong Kong and in Asia more broadly.

Access the full report and executive summaries of the research on our website [here](#).

WSRC Convenor and Board Members Invited to Present and Share Expertise around the Globe

Puja Kapai at the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues 2019

27-29 November 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Minority Rights, Dr Fernand de Varennes, to present her research at the United Nations Forum on Minority Issues 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland. As part of the proceedings chaired by Anastasia Crickley, former Chair of the UN Committee on the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and Astrid Thors, former OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, Puja shared her work on the issue of minority language learning and its impact and implications for women and girls in attaining equal access to quality education in diverse societies. Puja highlighted research-based data which demonstrates the indispensability of drawing on an intersectional framework to understand the impact of language education policies on minority women and girls in terms of girls' access to education, keeping girls in schools for longer and their prospects for academic achievements on par with others.

She argued that such an intersectional lens brings into focus not only minority status but also, the impact of other interlocking factors of disadvantage such as linguistic minority status, poverty, disability, and discrimination based on gender, religion and culture which impact diverse groups of women and girls in distinct ways. Without such a complex approach towards considering the unique matrices which inform their underlying circumstances and the constraints they impose on minority groups, the role of these multiple and intersecting disadvantages remains invisible and therefore, unaddressed. "We cannot fix what we cannot see," reiterated Puja in her concluding remarks, urging that such an intersectional framework be adopted to identify missing girls in education and to more effectively address the contributing factors which lead to their exclusion, high drop-out rates, or sub-par performance at school. Research shows that teaching young girls in their mother tongue language has a multifaceted impact on improving access to education and performance, with the potential to alter the life trajectories of minority women and girls in relation to marriage, childbirth, health and poverty. These outcomes go on to have multiplier effects on future generations of offspring. However, this is not to take a utilitarian approach to instrumentalise the role of women in improving the lives of others. It is imperative to recognise that creating enabling conditions for the empowerment of all girls and women through equal access to education is a matter of fundamental human rights. Puja's speech can be viewed on [UN Web TV](#).



‘Supporting Ethnic Minority Women in Hong Kong’ Workshop

25 November 2019

Puja shared expertise and insights from her work with ethnic minority women who experience domestic violence in Hong Kong based on her research and her role as a Legal Lead with The Zubin Foundation’s Call Mira hotline for ethnic minorities. Speaking alongside other Legal Leads, including Senior Counsel Gladys Li and Barrister-at-Law, Kay Chan, Puja shared the critical importance of understanding the underlying contextual factors which determine the decision-making constraints and concerns ethnic minority victims of domestic violence face. Oftentimes, legal representatives or social workers have lamented that the women fail to follow through on advice offered and tend not to know what is best for them. However, Puja

emphasised the critical importance of recognising that the client is the ‘expert’ on her own circumstances. She also has rights, and as a client, is the decision-maker who will provide instructions for the lawyer to act on. What she needs from those supporting her is choices that resonate and have meaning given her context.

Without a more compassionate, rigorous and culturally responsive approach to determining the possible next steps to secure their clients’ interests, legal counsel representing this group would be manifestly unprepared to assist in access to justice for this group of vulnerable minority women. Puja shared examples of how legal representation gone wrong can have dire consequences for women reaching out. Ethnic minority victims often turn to the law when the violence is particularly egregious and has been endured over a long period. They need to be carefully guided and empowered to make decisions that are culturally, morally and socially consistent with their interests. Puja emphasised the importance of recognising that vulnerability does not equate to weakness. However, it does denote vulnerabilities in terms of the power and forces (cultural, legal, religious or social) which are fundamentally out of the control of minority women. She ended her presentation with a call on those contemplating representing this group of clients pro bono, for which there is a dire need, to ensure they have the patience, temperament and work ethic to do the necessary due diligence to ensure their clients are represented fully and capably.

Peace for Hong Kong Summit

20 December 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited to attend the ‘Peace for Hong Kong Summit’, organised by the Hong Kong Committee for Children’s Rights to discuss how to move forward in the current political movement and understand how to work towards Peace. The Summit sought to engage voices from across diverse sectors working with and advocating for the rights of children. Puja shared her views on the importance of inclusive dialogue without preconditions and the need to co-create and map out the objectives to be achieved in stages instead of expecting an agreed document after an initial meeting such as the Summit.

‘Ways Forward: Let’s Talk and Listen’ Forum

16 November 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited to present her work on dialogue and design (‘Diversity by Design: Cultivating Understanding and Legitimacy in Dialogue Processes’) with leading experts in peacebuilding and dialogue, including Clem McCartney, Hannes Siebert, Michael Alar, and Thomas Fann at ‘Ways Forward: Let’s Talk and Listen’, an event co-organised by The Forward Alliance. The forum engaged 500 members of the public, 39 facilitators, and 9 local and international expert speakers, with participants engaging in table-based group work to test and apply ideas presented on how to develop capacities for dialogue in contexts involving conflict. Puja’s presentation at the forum can be viewed [here](#).

‘What is “Female”?’ panel at the Hong Kong Literary Festival

3 November 2019

WSRC Board member and Director of the Gender Studies Programme, Dr Elizabeth LaCouture moderated the panel, ‘What is “Female”?’ at the Hong Kong International Literary Festival, speaking with Theresia Enzensberger (author of *Blueprint*) and Shelley Wood (author of *The Quintland Sisters*) about modern feminism and its redefinition. Read more about the panel [here](#).

‘The culture of silence and the culture of violence in the Hong Kong Protests’ and ‘Where is feminism in the Hong Kong protests?’

4 & 6 November 2019

WSRC Board Member Professor Petula Ho gave two presentations at the University of York in November relating to the anti-extradition bill protests. In ‘The culture of silence and the culture of violence in Hong Kong protests’, Petula spoke alongside Sui-Ting Kong (University of Durham) and Daniel Conway (University of Westminster), discussing the gendered and personal impact of political participation on women, analysing observations and experiences gathered around violence against women in the protests. In ‘Where is feminism in the Hong Kong Protests? Gender, diversity and the struggle for democracy’, Petula discussed the role of feminist critique in the current movement.

HKU-KCL Strategic Partnership Fund Collaboration Project on Substance Abuse in the context of Intimate Partner Violence

17 October 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai and Board Member Professor Karen Joe Laidler organised and participated in a virtual conference with scholars of various disciplinary backgrounds at overseas universities including King’s College London, University of Leeds, and Singapore Institute of Technology in furtherance of the HKU Vice-President (Global)’s Global Partnership Seed Funding which supported the collaboration under the HKU-KCL Strategic Partnership Fund. They shared recent research and emerging practices in the field in relation to the role and influence of substance abuse in intimate partner violence (IPV) and how IPV interventions are informed by an understanding of the nexus between IPV and substance abuse. The exchange discussed the potential for interdisciplinary approaches to drawing on current knowledges in relation to substance abuse in the context of IPV and its implications for both perpetrators and victims. The joint project aims to examine the prospects of applying the capabilities framework designed and tested in the United Kingdom in the context of Asia.

Hong Kong French Chamber of Commerce Gender Balance Committee: Unconscious Bias Workshop

16 October 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai shared findings from her study, *Doing Equality Consciously: Understanding Unconscious Bias and Its Role and Implications in the Achievement of Equality in Hong Kong and Asia*, at the French Chamber of Commerce's Gender Balance Committee on a panel with Fern Ngai, CEO of Community Business Hong Kong.

'Towards a Future Without Violence or Harassment' panel at The Women's Foundation's Gender Equality Summit

27 September 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited to speak on a panel entitled, 'Towards a Future Without violence or Harassment', at The Women's Foundation's Gender Equality Summit, alongside Ricky Chu (Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission), Linda Wong (Executive Director of RainLily), and Anita Lam (Head of Employment at Clifford Chance).

On the panel, Puja spoke about the structure of power and privilege underlying the current culture of sexual harassment and the need to convert bystanders into active upstanders who do not perpetuate these structures by enabling or sheltering perpetrators but would instead call them out. She also emphasised the importance of having effective enforcement mechanisms that are actually used to send perpetrators and others a clear message about the propriety of such conduct at work instead of only beautifully worded anti-sexual harassment policies. Further, stereotypes around both victims and perpetrators of sexual violence need to be challenged, for example, myths about how 'perfect victims' should fight off their aggressors, or how the typical 'gentleman' or 'genius' could not be a rapist needed to be challenged and dispensed with. Puja concluded with:

'We need to ready ourselves such that we cultivate a climate in which we are better prepared to listen, be receptive to, and assist those who share their experiences with sexual violence. We need to channel the system towards a better delivery of just outcomes, which lays the blame squarely where it lies.'

'SHEroes of Science' Conference

25 September 2019

Dr Caroline Dingle, WSRC Board Member and founder of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) at HKU, was invited to speak on a panel at the 'SHEroes of Science' Conference, organised by the French International School as part of their Women in Science project. More details about the project can be found [here](#).

Closing the Gap: Report of the Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities

September 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was appointed as a member of The Equal Opportunities Commission's Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities, and contributed to the publication of its second report, *Closing the Gap*, in September 2019. The report was shared with the Education Bureau and submitted to the Chief Executive as part of her public consultation in relation to the Policy Address. Read the full report [here](#).

Policy Address Public Consultation Session for Ethnic Minorities

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited to the Policy Address Public Consultation on Ethnic Minorities chaired by the Chief Secretary to share her expertise and recommendations in relation to issues pertaining to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. Puja's contributions focused on the continued lack of access to mainstream schools for ethnic minority children, emphasising the intractable challenges faced at the interview and admissions stage. Moreover, the current Chinese as a Second Language Learning Framework had not demonstrated improvements in relation to the Chinese language acquisition and outcomes for ethnic minority children. This required dedicated, longitudinal study but also, the release of interim findings as well as the outcomes of the evaluation of the Learning Framework. Teachers' stereotypes and racial biases pertaining to ethnic minority communities as well as continued gaps in terms of home-school partnerships with ethnic minority parents due to language differences continue to signify some of the main challenges that are yet to be systematically tackled through effective de-biasing and teacher training.

The Worldwide #MeToo Movement: A Conference on Global Resistance to Sexual Harassment and Violence

14 May, 2019

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai was invited to present her work on the #MeToo movement in Hong Kong at 'The Worldwide #MeToo Movement: A Conference on Global Resistance to Sexual Harassment and Violence' at UC Berkeley in May 2019. Puja shared developments in relation to Hong Kong's #metoo journey and spoke specifically to the contextual factors which have shaped the direction and impact of the movement here. The Conference was attended by 150 attorneys in the Greater Bay area while speakers from around the world met to share their research and brainstorm how to move forward towards greater accountability in relation to widespread sexual harassment. Catherine MacKinnon delivered one of the three Keynote Speeches over the course of the two days. Purna Sen, UN Women's Director of Policy Division, Executive Coordinator and Spokesperson on Addressing Sexual Harassment and Other Forms of Discrimination and Saru Jayaraman, attorney, co-founder of Restaurant Opportunities Centers United and author of 'Behind the Kitchen Door' presented the other two Keynote Speeches. More details about the conference can be found [here](#).

Women in STEM

Congratulations to Dr Caroline Dingle, WSRC Board Member and founder of Women in Science and Engineering (WISE) at HKU, who was awarded a prestigious research grant for the following project earlier this year!

- Developing a forensic toolkit to aid in the conservation of the Helmeted Hornbill *Rhinoplax vigil* (National Geographic Species Recovery Grant)

In the news

WSRC Convenor Puja Kapai has been interviewed and quoted in various news reports by international and local media on the protests:

['Peacemakers offer dialogue expertise to Hong Kong' *Blue Skies China* \(16 November 2019\)](#)

['Hong Kong protests: Unrest brings new group together to find ways to help city heal' *South China Morning Post* \(10 November 2019\)](#)

['Hong Kong's Minorities Face Racism from Police and Protestors' *Foreign Policy* \(7 November 2019\)](#)

['Hong Kong's fight for independence' *International Bar Association* \(14 October 2019\)](#)

['Beijing weighing use of force in Hong Kong: HK law professor' *ABS-CBN News* \(14 August 2019\)](#)

['How Hong Kong ethnic minority families divided by extradition protest movement found a form of unity in stand against government' *South China Morning Post* \(3 August 2019\)](#)

['Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam apologies over handling of extradition bill' *ABC News* \(17 June 2019\)](#)

['Incidents in Hong Kong represent a "steady creep" by Beijing into human rights guarantees: Puja Kapai' *ABC News* \(10 June 2019\)](#)

Publications by WSRC Members

Elizabeth LaCouture, ‘Translating Domesticity in Chinese History and Historiography’

WSRC Board member and Director of the Genders Studies Programme Dr Elizabeth LaCouture’s article, ‘Translating Domesticity in Chinese History and Historiography’, was recently published in vol.124 of [The American Historical Review](#).

This article examines knowledge about “domesticity” in China in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and argues against the naturalization of Euro-American historiographical frameworks around “domesticity.” “Domesticity” was not a Chinese concept: although Confucianism had long connected the household to the state through ideology and prescriptive practices, Anglo-American ideas about “domesticity” were translated into Chinese first by way of Japan in the late nineteenth century, and second by way of American missionary educators in the twentieth century. “Domesticity” did not translate easily into Chinese, however; neither the ideology nor its pedagogical practices ever became popular in China. The history of translating “domesticity” into Chinese thus reveals that Euro-American historiographical terms that were once thought to be universal map poorly onto other places and suggests that we need more inclusive frames for comparative gender history.

Ting Guo, ‘Politics of Love: Love as a religious and political discourse in modern China through the lens of political leaders’

Dr Ting Guo’s (WSRC member and Adjunct Assistant Professor in Gender Studies) article, ‘Politics of Love: Love as a religious and political discourse in modern China through the lens of political leaders’, was recently published in [Critical Research on Religion](#).

As part of a larger project, this paper serves as an overview that examines how ‘ai’ 愛 (love) as an affective concept made its way into the Chinese vocabulary, how it gained popularity at specific junctures in modern Chinese history, and the ways in which it has been adapted as a marker of modernity and a political discourse in Republican (1911–49) and Communist China (1949–) in distinct ways.

Ting summarises her article here:

My project makes a fresh contribution in the following aspects. First, I focus on the very term *ai* 愛 (love), rather than expressions of love and emotions in general, for it is the very word *ai* that has been more commonly adopted as a political discourse, including the term *aiguo* 愛國 (patriotism). Second, I take a longer historical perspective (from 1910s to 2010s) and dedicate a large part of my study to the contemporary era, especially post-Mao China and the Xi Jinping administration for its significance in shaping the post-socialist concept of ‘love’. Third, rather than looking at manifestations in literature and sources from Christianity, as previously noted by scholars of interest, I explore the impact from revolutionary radicalism and popular religions on the formation and

employment of *ai* in state propaganda and everyday politics. Furthermore, I study some of the most controversial political figures of our time, including Sun Yat-sen (1866–1925), Mao Zedong (1893–1976), Xi Jinping (1953–), and Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor (1957–), as well as women such as Soong Ching-ling who are not always studied in their own right, rather than male intellectuals and writers only. I also dedicate a chapter to LGBT activism, as the translation of the term homosexuality in modern Chinese bears reappraisal in the political context of love. In addition to Mainland China, I also look at Hong Kong, in particular the rhetoric of parental love with which Chief Executive Carrie Lam responded to the 2019 Hong Kong protests. It has been noted that casting citizens as children and leaders as benevolent parents charged with disciplining them is a distinctively PRC metaphor with Confucian justifications. This project will investigate the origin and historical development of such discourse, and the extent to which it has been applied in contemporary politics with the revival of Confucianism under the Xi Jinping administration.

Taking this approach to love not only furthers the discussions on the role of emotions in the project of Chinese modernity, but also expands the scope from literature and private life to religion, politics, and activism. Understanding discursive appropriations of love in relation to political and popular religions, offers a fresh perspective into the meaning—and most importantly, the politics—of love in modern China.

Urania Chiu, ‘Compulsory treatment in the community in Hong Kong: Implications of the current law and practice on the rights of persons with mental illnesses’

WSRC Research Associate Urania Chiu’s article, ‘Compulsory treatment in the community in Hong Kong: Implications of the current law and practice on the rights of persons with mental illnesses’, was recently published in vol.20 of the [Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law](#). This article is an outcome of primary research she conducted during her LLM in Human Rights studies at HKU.

The article examines the current legal framework and practice of the conditional discharge of mental health patients in Hong Kong from a human rights perspective. Using existing literature and findings from semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted with medical professionals, Urania argues that the current regime lacks adequate safeguards for mental health patients and would most likely infringe patients’ rights to private and family life and to liberty. The article concludes with the suggestion that an evidence-based approach, free of prejudice, is required to determine the purpose of the regime and how it may be best designed for that end.

Urania Chiu, ‘12 Years On: Implications of the Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms in Hong Kong’

Urania’s other article, ‘12 Years On: Implications of the Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms

in Hong Kong', was also recently published, in vol.49 of the [Hong Kong Law Journal](#). The article broadly reviews the Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance and, in particular, addresses concerns about whether reform is required to better protect fundamental rights and freedoms in the 'digital age'.

WSRC Blog: ‘Feminist Fatherhood #2: Seeing Other People’

By Dr Jason Coe (WSRC Board Member & Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, School of Humanities, HKU)

This series of posts for the WSRC explores the possibilities for a feminist take on fatherhood. As a first-time parent, I find myself confronting many difficult questions: am I being patriarchal? Am I doing enough to support my partner? What am I teaching my child about gender, race, class, and politics through our everyday activities? What baggage and biases have I brought with me? Parenting can be an anxiety-ridden landscape, full of dark spots, dead-ends, and second-guessing. And yet, as we grope around in the dark, we the experience transcendent joy of becoming better at it. Getting lost and finding our way, over and over again, turns out to be lots of (exhausting) fun! This blog details that imperfect journey. Read the previous post from the series [here](#).

Feminist Fatherhood #2: Seeing Other People

My personal engagement in feminist practice began with a simple but ground-shifting epiphany: it’s not always about me. In calling myself a feminist, I have come to accept that my biases — especially those pertaining to gender and sexuality — limit my understanding of the world and how I relate with others. Of course, acquiring knowledge begins by acknowledging that we know not, but I only recognized the extent of my personal ignorance through interactions with female friends, family, colleagues, and romantic partners. With great patience and despite my stubbornness, they let me know how I was hurting myself and others without even knowing it. This is the key point: they *let me* know. Instead of leaving me stuck like a frog looking up out of a well, forever wondering why the world does not accord with his limited horizon, they took it upon themselves to share their experiences with me and learn about mine.

For most of my life, I only bothered to know women in the context of dating and courtship. I do have many female friends but because I saw women as objects I sought to achieve, their input only registered in terms of romance and self-validation. What I wanted from women was their romantic and sexual attention, and all I ever really cared to know about them, even some of my closest friends, pertained to learning how to become someone that their friends would want to date.

I wrongly assumed that the surest way to gain respect and acceptance from my masculine peers was to be a “ladies’ man.” Ironically, wanting to be closer to men made me care far too much about being attractive to women — a mindset that led to desperate unhappiness with myself, my circumstances, and what I assumed to be a superficial society that devalued me personally. Becoming the right kind of man, one desired by all women and envied by all men, would solve all my problems. That confining and heteronormative definition of masculine self-worth blinded me to the immaturity of my convictions and how they harmed my mental health.

Even when women did want to date me, I never stopped feeling insecure. I sought validation when they just wanted to love and be loved, and no matter how much they cared for me, nothing could change my conviction that I was inadequate. I never intended to hurt anyone and even considered myself an exceedingly chivalrous “nice guy” who often “finished last,” but I harmed others because I could not get over myself.

There's a difference between wanting to be loved and wanting to be loved by everyone. The former is a basic need and the latter is vanity, but I often confused them. Still do.

I only discarded this myopia after a woman actually did not let me know something about her — a fact I was not to discover until years later. This unnecessarily kind young woman gently rebuffed my romantic advances after some brief flirtations between us, and her polite refusal brought out my deepest insecurities about my own romantic and sexual viability. Convinced that her disinterest signified something about my personal value, I sulked and withdrew from everyone in that social circle. By a strange coincidence, I later found out that during that same time we had our dalliance, a casual acquaintance date raped her.

As was her right, she kept this sensitive information from me. I still don't understand why she even bothered answering my text messages at that time. Yet, in that time of great physical and emotional pain, she worried about my feelings. Perhaps she did so out of kindness, distrust, or (I hope not) maybe even fear that I would not believe her. I will never know. Meanwhile, I had the temerity to obsess with my own wounded ego when instead I could have been her friend. Due to my solipsism, I harmed someone that I claimed to care for deeply. While my initial memories of her had been fixated on rejection and resentment, that sense of juvenile aggrievement evolved into a recognition of my own complicity in her suffering.

Trauma resonates throughout communities like ripples in a pond and secrets affect even those not privy to their contents. I once considered myself this woman's intellectual and spiritual equal, although definitely not in looks, and believed that our commonalities made romance the logical conclusion. In retrospect, I was completely wrong. We were never on equal footing. While I worried about masculine pride, she dealt in secret with the pain and stigma of being raped by someone she trusted.

These revelations reshaped my understanding of myself as a gendered subject. The simple fact is that while sex and romance can be “just for fun” for cis-hetero guys like me, for most others, it can be incredibly dangerous. Sexual violence is a public health epidemic. When we ignore sexual violence or act like it has no bearing on our lives, we perpetuate it. The statistics on rape bear out a sad truth: we all know someone who has been the victim of sexual violence. They may not share that trauma with us, but it still happens. Our ignorance of their suffering merely bespeaks their desire for us not to know, for whatever reason they deem fit.

We are not entitled to other people's stories. Yet, only by learning from others can we escape the veil of our individual horizon. I owe my present happiness to others who shared their stories and perspectives with me, without which I would still be adrift in a sea of self-abnegation. In opening ourselves to learning from others instead of only knowing and navigating the world through our individual experience, we make possible the frog's escape from the well. To do so, we must be prepared to listen, especially when what gets said contradicts what we believe to be true. This starts by making friends, if they're willing, with those who see things differently. This means listening to my partner and our son in order to understand their perspectives.

I identify as a feminist and want to be a feminist father because I want a better way of being in the world that takes others into account — not just as means to my personal ends but as an end in itself. Making space for marginalized voices and being

receptive to their opinions, institutionally as well as in our personal echo chambers, enlightens us all. Being grounded in feminist practice makes possible, but without any guarantee, that I might see other people instead of just myself.

Hong Kong's Summer of Protests 2019: Reflections from WSRC Scholars

In light of the anti-extradition bill protests in Hong Kong, WSRC members have shared their reflections on the events of Summer 2019 and beyond. In sharing them, we hope to spark conversations around the issues from a diversity of perspectives that are not often highlighted in the current political movement.

A Letter to My Son

12 June 2019

By Dr Jason Coe (WSRC Board Member and Assistant Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, HKU)

On the early morning of 12th June, before mass protests broke out in Admiralty, Dr Jason Coe wrote a letter to his son in the wake of the uncertainties that lay ahead. Read the piece on [Cha: An Asian Literary Journal](#).

我和反送中運動的一場愛情 ('My Love Affair with the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement')

7 September 2019

By Professor Petula SY Ho (WSRC Board Member and Professor, Department of Social Work & Social Administration, HKU)

In early September, Professor Petula Ho penned a piece, 我和反送中運動的一場愛情 ('My Love Affair with the Anti-Extradition Bill Movement'), on her own experience in the protests as a woman and feminist and 'queering' the protests. Read the piece on [Stand News](#) (Chinese only).

Where is feminism in the Hong Kong protests? Issues in the context of the anti-extradition movement

19 November 2019

By Professor Petula SY Ho (WSRC Board Member and Professor, Department of Social Work & Social Administration, HKU)

Professor Petula Ho wrote another piece discussing misogyny and the place of feminist critique in the movement. Read it on [GenderIT](#).

Extradition as a “Women’s Issue”: Notes Towards a Feminist Critique of the 2019 Hong Kong Anti-ELAB Protests

By Professor Gina Marchetti (WSRC Board Member, Professor, Department of Comparative Literature, HKU)

In this blog post, Professor Gina Marchetti looks at the anti-extradition bill protests from February to September and the ‘women’s issues’ they raise from a feminist perspective. It was written in September 2019 and is an accurate reflection of the events up until 30 September 2019. The following is an introduction to the full post, which you can read [here](#).

The demonstrations rocking Hong Kong in the summer of 2019 began with the murder of a woman in Taiwan in 2018. Chan Tong-kai, [1] at one time enrolled in Polytechnic University’s Hong Kong Community College, strangled his pregnant girlfriend Poon Hiu-wing in February 2018 during a trip to Taiwan. The Hong Kong authorities arrested Chan after his return to the HKSAR, and Chan continues to be held on a money laundering conviction, since he used Poon’s ATM card after her demise. [2] While in custody, Chan pled guilty to Poon’s murder. [3] In February 2019, the HKSAR government proposed the Fugitive Offenders and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2019 (ELAB) to modify the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance and the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Ordinance. [4] This led to heated debate in the legislature (LegCo), and ongoing mass demonstrations that followed in its wake. Although the bill may or may not have done many things, it would not have accomplished the extradition of Chan to Taiwan, since Taipei would not agree to any piece of Hong Kong legislation that fails to recognize its sovereignty, including the proposed bill. [5] The fact that the PRC allows for the death penalty in murder cases while Hong Kong does not [6] also could be an insurmountable obstacle to extradition in this particular case.

Passage of the bill could, however, put feminist/LGBTQ activists, journalists, publishers, lawyers, entrepreneurs, PRC dissidents from Xinjiang and Tibet, Taiwanese political figures, women involved in religious organizations such as the Falun Gong, NGOs supporting sex workers, domestic laborers, and reproductive rights advocates, among others, at risk of extradition to mainland China. Highly publicized cases of detention and police harassment of feminist activists, including the Feminist Five, Ai Xiaoming, and Ye Haiyan, as well as the detention of Hong Kong’s Causeway Bay booksellers in the PRC fuel the passionate response to ELAB. Over seventy NGOs signed a collective statement on the reasons behind widespread opposition to the bill. The proposed legislation fails to recognize human rights abuses within the justice system of countries to which detainees may be sent, lacks any guarantee of minimum rights comparable to Hong Kong’s standards, and ignores the dangers of removing legislative oversight from the extradition process. International Domestic Workers Association, lala team, New Arrival Women League, PrideLab, Rainbow Action, Association for the Advancement of Feminism, Hong Kong Women Workers’ Association, feature among the signatories. [7]

In an article in the *South China Morning Post*, Raquel Carvalho refers to a survey done by three Hong Kong universities that estimates 46% of the participants in the anti-ELAB protests are female. [8] Carvalho quotes Susanne Choi Yuk-ping (Chinese U, Sociology):

I am not surprised that in this anti-extradition movement we have seen a lot of women taking to the streets, joining the marches, rallies and even [being] at the front line...I think all these experiences will certainly empower women, and make them feel they have a stake in society and that they can make change by directly participating. [9]

The executive leaders of both Hong Kong (Carrie Lam) and Taiwan (Tsai Ing-Wen) are female, and women have been mobilized on all sides of the extradition issue. Popular celebrity Denise Ho, a vocal advocate for LGBTQ rights since coming out as a lesbian in 2012, and billionaire daughter of Stanley Ho, Pansy Ho, who currently chairs the Hong Kong Federation of Women, have addressed the United Nations Human Rights Council. Denise Ho called for the UN to expel the PRC from the HRC in July on the grounds of their human rights violations and interference in Hong Kong’s “two systems” agreement ratified by the Joint Accord and institutionalized through the Basic Law, [10] while Pansy Ho, accompanied by her associate Annie Wu, condemned the anti-ELAB protesters as violating the rights of “ordinary citizens” with reference to mothers and children, in particular, in September. [11] Lawmaker Tanya Chan has also spoken out about the growing “humanitarian crisis” in Hong Kong. [12] However, none of these women addressed the issue of the geopolitics of violence against women and the border between Hong Kong and Taiwan that looms large in this case. Chan claimed he murdered Poon because he became angry when he learned he did not father her unborn child, and the slippage between domestic violence and international law reveals glaring inadequacies in how the world community treats women’s rights. The initial act of violence against a vulnerable woman that set the subsequent events in motion, however, stands as only the first in a long list of issues of concern to feminists that orbit the 2019 anti-ELAB protests.

Even though Carrie Lam withdrew the bill, protests continue calling for amnesty for demonstrators, withdrawal of “riot” charges, investigation of police brutality, the resignation of Carrie Lam, and the revival of legislation leading to election reform. With the shooting of a secondary school student in the chest on October 1, concerns involving the use of excessive force by the authorities have escalated along with calls for Carrie Lam to establish an independent investigation of police actions during the protests. Many complaints against the police specifically mention sexual harassment during arrests and violence against female protesters, journalists, and medics perpetrated by police officers. On August 28, the Hong Kong Women’s Coalition on Equal Opportunities (WOCEO) organized a #ProtestToo rally in Central to draw attention to the extent of police violence and procedural irregularities.

The most well-publicized and controversial case involves an eye injury suffered by a woman (“K”) on the night of August 11 in Tsim Sha Tsui. Photographs of her serious eye injury flooded the Internet, and she quickly became a symbol of police brutality and excessive force. [13] Controversy dogs her story, though, since the pro-establishment press questions her role as a medic in the demonstrations while also taking issue with the claim the police fired the beanbag round that caused the injury. In fact, she filed a law suit to keep her medical records private, and she continues to be a figure of contention as both sides struggle around the issue of violence in the protests. [14] While “K” has inspired drawings, posters, statues, and other works of protest art, the more recent case of Veby Mega Indah, an Indonesian journalist hit in

the eye by a police projectile while covering the demonstrations, points to the vulnerability of female reporters to police violence at the protest sites. [15] On October 1, RTHK pulled its journalists from protest sites after a male reporter sustained an eye injury and a female reporter said, “a riot police officer had pointed a shotgun right at her at the intersection of Queensway and Queens Road East.” [16]

Along with police violence, female journalists and protesters endure death threats, verbal abuse, and online sexual harassment. [17] Petula Ho suffered online vitriol from within the movement when she critiqued some of her fellow protesters’ tactical decisions. [18] Online trolls also target police wives with accusations that they are engaging in “threesomes” while their husbands work overtime on the protest lines. [19] Leaders of predominately female labor organizations have been threatened or outright fired for voicing their political opinions. For example, Rebecca Sy, chairwoman of Hong Kong Dragon Airlines Flight Attendants’ Association, lost her job because of her support of the demonstrations. [20] Migrant domestic workers also feel considerable pressure if they decide to participate in Hong Kong politics. [21] In fact, women from Hong Kong’s ethnic minority communities face particular challenges when they take up their right to participate as political actors in the territory. [22]

In addition to celebrities such as Denise Ho, actresses, models, singers, and other entertainment stars have come out in favor of the anti-ELAB protesters or in support of Carrie Lam, the HKSAR government, and the PRC. Swift backlash followed *Mulan* actress Liu Yifei’s public support for Hong Kong police actions against the anti-ELAB demonstrators, and a call for a *Mulan* boycott of the planned Disney film ensued. [23] Liu remains unapologetic and posted the following retort on Weibo: “If you are not like-minded, then leave.” [24] The trade publication *Variety* reported a flood of Internet activity opposed to the boycott that led several platforms to shutdown PRC-backed accounts. [25]

The ongoing 2019 saga of Hong Kong’s Extradition Bill and the anti-ELAB movement puts women’s leadership (Carrie Lam’s role as Chief Executive, in particular) into the global media spotlight. Tsai Ing-Wen, the President of the Republic of China on Taiwan, has voiced her support for the protesters [26] as well, although she has stopped short of granting political asylum without restriction to them. [27] Carrie Lam and Tsai Ing-wen highlight a leadership model somewhat different from other powerful female heads of state in Asia. Unlike *Benazir Bhutto*, *Corazon Aquino*, *Aung San Suu Kyi*, *Indira Gandhi*, *Park Geun-hye*, and a few others, Lam and Tsai are not daughters or wives of powerful Asia political figures. Lam came up under British colonial rule making the transition to Chinese sovereignty in 1997 in Hong Kong and Tsai saw Taiwan’s transformation from martial law and KMT rule to the ascendancy of her own party, the DPP, in the 21st Century. Born only a few months apart (Lam in 1957 and Tsai in 1956), they both spent time studying outside of Asia, served in the government bureaucracy in various roles, went into politics, and ended up at the top in territories overshadowed by the rise of the PRC as an economic and political force.

However, Tsai and Lam differ in several important respects. Tsai must ultimately answer to voters in Taiwan, while Lam, who won the confidence of 777 out of a little under 1200 members of an election committee, did not have to worry about winning her seat as a result of a popular election based on one-person/one-vote. [28]

To date, universal suffrage remains an issue, and Lam’s authority comes into question at the intersection between gender bias and lack of political legitimacy. All of Hong Kong’s colonial governors were male as well as the first three Chief Executives after the 1997 Handover. The People’s Republic of China run exclusively by the Communist Party has never had a female “chairman.” Ultimately, Lam serves at the pleasure of the rulers in Beijing, and protesters in the street as well as in Hong Kong’s pan-democratic opposition know this very well. Posters of Lam playing Piglet to Xi Jinping’s Pooh Bear lampoon the relationship. However, Lam’s comment that she would resign if she had the choice also casts doubt on her ability to head Hong Kong’s government without interference. [29] She denied offering to resign, but the limitations placed on her ability to serve in an executive capacity remain. Even though she has “killed” the bill, doubts about her ability to govern linger.

Carrie Lam went to Beijing to attend the celebrations for the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China on October 1. On September 30, she took a flight on Air China rather than Hong Kong’s Cathay Pacific, [30] which had fired employees for expressing their political view and recently saw the resignation of its CEO Rupert Hogg as a casualty of the controversy. [31] Her actions may speak louder than any words about the geopolitical fog that surrounds her. However, the media spotlight on Carrie Lam and the role women play in the ongoing political struggle in Hong Kong merit much closer scrutiny.

Taking a feminist approach to Hong Kong’s 2019 Anti-ELAB protests shines a light on the need for gender studies researchers to probe women’s role in the political sphere. Feminist scholars in law, international relations, area studies, criminology, social work, ethnography, psychology, public health, science, economics, labour relations, history, philosophy, media/journalism, popular culture, fan studies, digital technologies, visual art, literature, rhetoric, LGBTQ/sexuality, race, class, migration, education, leadership, and, of course, political science need to accept this challenge [32] and grapple with the difficult task of understanding how feminism can “perfect a democracy” [33] in the HKSAR.

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[3] Holmes Chan, “Hong Kong man at centre of extradition legal row jailed for 29 months, may be out as early as October,” *Hong Kong Free Press*, 29 April, 2019, <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2019/04/29/hong-kong-man-centre-extradition-legal-row-jailed-29-months-may-early-october/>

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[11] “Live: Women representatives report HK situation at UNHRC sessions 把香港的情况如实带进联合国,” *YouTube*, video, 2:06, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLYqRtHTAms>

[12] “Tanya Chan addresses UNHR Council in Geneva,” *RTHK*, 17 Sept, 2019, <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1480933-20190917.htm>

[13] Rachel Genevieve Chia, “This woman has become the new symbol of Hong Kong’s protests – here’s why,” *Business Insider*, 13 August, 2019, <https://www.businessinsider.sg/an-eye-for-an-eye-why-a-woman-with-a-hurt-eye-has-become-the-new-symbol-of-hong-kongs-protests>

[14] Zoe Low and Jasmine Siu, “Woman who suffered eye injury during Hong Kong protest going to court to stop police reading her medical records,” *South China Morning Post*, 11 September, 2019, <https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/politics/article/3026633/woman-who-suffered-eye-injury-during-hong-kong-protest>

[15] Karina M. Tehusijarana, “Indonesian journalist hit by rubber bullet during Hong Kong protests,” *The Jakarta Post*, September 29, 2019, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2019/09/29/indonesian-journalist-hit-by-rubber-bullet-during-hong-kong-protests.html>

[16] “RTHK reporter wounded, English team pull out,” October 1, 2019, <https://news.rthk.hk/rthk/en/component/k2/1483679-20191001.htm>

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Supports Hong Kong Police,” *Newsweek*, August 15, 2019, <https://www.newsweek.com/boycottmulan-trends-after-disney-star-liu-yifei-seemingly-supports-hong-kong-police-1454548>

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