

Methodological Issues Confronting Non-Chinese Researchers in Chinese Societies

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This presentation deals with some fundamental methodological and ethical issues confronting Non-Chinese researchers undertaking research in Hong Kong Chinese society. Among other things, it considers the following: sampling issues; problems pertaining to data collection; and the challenges of data interpretation. While the issues are by no means unique to Hong Kong, there are a number of matters related to outsider research that require special attention in the Hong Kong Chinese context, even when the researchers may be acquainted with both the context and the participants. Understanding the context of research, including the socio-cultural context of which the research participants are a part, leads to an enhanced understanding of the issues at hand. The presenters argue that sensitivity and flexibility needs to be built into the research design in order to arrive at reliable, valid and truthful findings. They also contend that Western models of research designs may fail to hold up in a culture that is guided by the principals of Confucious philosophy thus suggesting a strong case for re-conceptualising specified key notions.

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