

# Navigating Belonging: Exploring settlement for South Asians in Hong Kong through narratives and participatory photography

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# Navigating belonging for South Asians in Hong Kong

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## **Identity**

O'Connor 2018a, b; Ng et al. 2019; Chen and Yip 2015

## **Language use and learning**

Dhaliwal & Cariola 2021; Gao 2018; Lai et al. 2015; Gu et al. 2019; Lui 2011

## **Media and online representation**

Jackson & Nesterova 2017; Lai & Tai 2021

## **Language-based minoritisation in education policy**

Bhowmik et al. 2018; Gu & Patkin 2013; Fang 2019; Li 2017

## **Racial discrimination; its challenge and agency**

Crabtree & Wong 2013; Bhowmik & Kennedy 2016; Perez-Milans & Soto 2016



# Navigating Belonging

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***Navigating Belonging: Exploring Settlement for South Asians in Hong Kong through Narratives and Participatory Photography*** (2022-2024) (Hong Kong Research Grants Council General Research Fund).

- (1) How does belonging emerge in and through narrative and photography?
- (2) How can we develop innovative approaches to researching belonging?
- (3) How can our understandings of belonging be used to inform policies, practices and debate on social integration?

# Outline

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## Approach and Methodology

- Participants and setting

## Emergent themes

- Engaging with belonging through photography
- A translanguaging space of belonging
- Narratives of (non-) belonging
- Ethics and collaborative research

## Stakeholder and public engagement

- Nexus: The Belonging Research Network

# Approach and methodology

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Linguistic ethnography (Rampton et al 2004 etc)

Visual ethnography (Pink 2013)

Collaborative ethnography (e.g. Hackett et al 2017)

Narrative research (De Fina & Georgakopoulou 2012)

Photovoice (Wang & Burris 1997) & Digital storytelling (e.g. Robin 2008)

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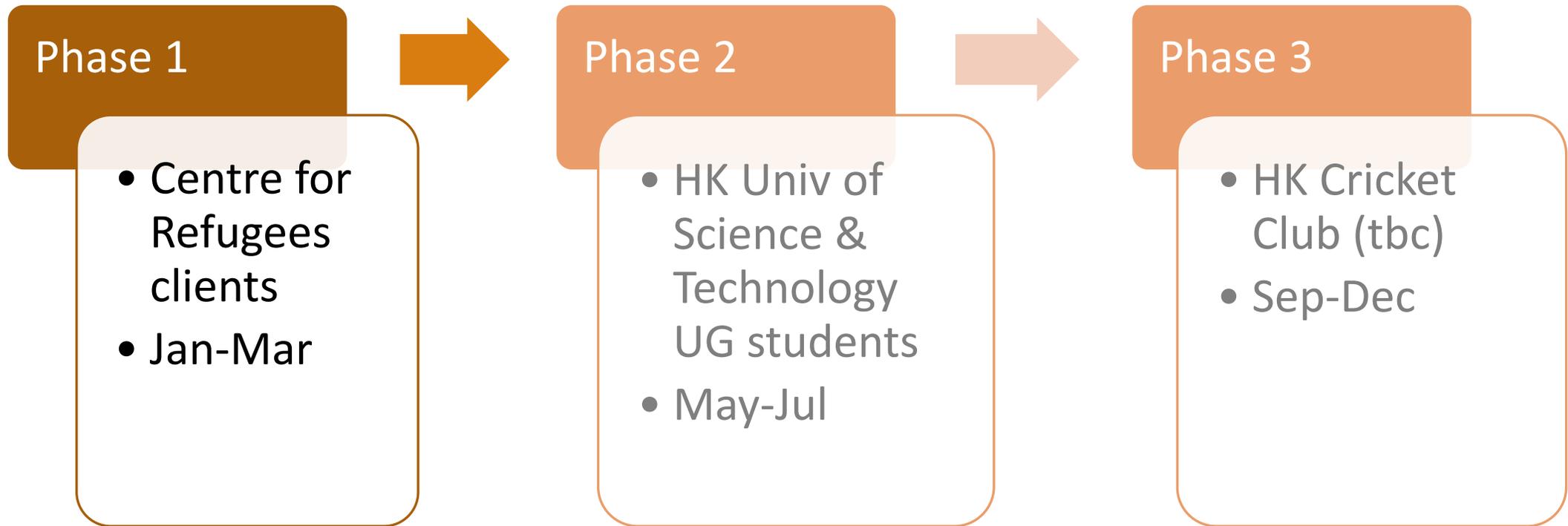
Translation and Translanguaging: Investigating Linguistic and Cultural Transformations in Superdiverse Wards in Four UK Cities (TLang) (2014-2018) (AHRC).

Migration and Home (2016) (AHRC/Connected Communities Utopias).

Migration and Settlement (2016-2017) (University of Leeds LSSI/ESRC).

# Participants and setting

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Centre for Refugees,  
Chungking Mansions,  
Nathan Road, Kowloon

# Photovoice and digital storytelling

Photovoice Workshops  
led by Christine Vicera



Digital Storytelling  
Workshops led by  
Michelle Pang



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# Engaging with belonging through photography

Arts practice provides an important space for critical reflection, 'offering a public site for the abstracted discussion of contentious issues' (Stupples & Teaiwa 2016:11), for example the issue of what it is to belong.



# Photowalk

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## JAMES' FIELDNOTES, WORKSHOP 3

12.58 We have uploaded our photos to the Padlet, and end the session by talking about it.

A, talking about her photos, comparing HK with home (Pakistan). Inevitable comparisons? She makes these spontaneously. More or less everything she says, it seems, prompts her to compare HK with 'my country'.

**Rosy took a photo of a waterfall in the park, and tells us of being at the same place 28 years ago, when she accompanied her husband to HK on a business trip. She took a photo there at the very same place with her son who was 3 years old at the time.**

## CHRISTINE'S FIELDNOTES, WORKSHOP 3

*Photowalk*

Teaching them the photolock on the phone + lighting

- As we were walking to Kowloon Park, we noticed how Sam Bhai opened up a new store. A and D stopped by to see the pani puri stall.

- Suggestion that we do our next photowalk at CKM

- A agreed saying that there are things at CKM reminds us of home

- Rosy says she'd rather not think about Sri Lanka, home is where she is now. Home was painful for her, the kidnapping, the torture

**R's photo of the waterfall and her story about her visiting Hong Kong with her son and husband in the 1980s**



R: and one is very important one this one this this waterfall I remember for 28 years back (.) when I my son [was

J: [really really

R: yeah when my son elder son three years so we will come back to the Hong Kong to visit

J: yeah

R: then that time same place I took the photo I have with me next time I will bring in show to you

J: tell us more about the first time you saw this pho- this waterfall

R: waterfall really my son very loudly and he said mom I want take photo come come then yeah he's very young and small yeah three years old (.) that time

J: was this when you first arrived in Hong Kong

R: no no my son yeah 28 years back when my son was three years old so my husband take us visiting to Hong Kong

J: so you visited

R: [yes

[...]

R: **visiting I went many times (xxx) yeah Singapore Malaysia Thailand India and China Hong Kong so er that time I carry with my son also because he's alone three years old so my husband always used to bring me and my son together when he was doing business**

J: so he was working and you were with your son just to be tourists in Hong Kong

R: yes because my son er order goods from China you know there so many material and er textile we have shop also in [home country] so that time my son want to purch-

[...]

R: so he's ask me to okay let's go together three of us then visit Hong Kong and go China and

J: and did you like it when you [visit it

R: [yeah yeah really

J: yeah

R: **I I thought safe that's that's ri- that's the reason I  
came back to again**

J: and that's why you came here

R: yeah came

J: you what you thought of [Hong Kong as a place to come

R: [yeah yeah yeah

J: when you left [home country]

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## JAMES' FIELDNOTES, WORKSHOP 4

Today's atmosphere in the workshop is very friendly, familiar. **Rosy brought in photos of her family in HK from 25 years ago**, when she came as a tourist/accompanying her husband on a business trip. She took photos of her little son, then aged three, in Kowloon Park. Last week, we took photos in precisely the same place, 25 years later. The photos she showed us were old, battered, water-damaged...



# A translanguaging space of belonging

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In the multilingual and multimodal environment of the workshops, we can relate this to Li Wei's understanding of a translanguaging space:

*a space for the act of translanguaging as well as a space created through translanguaging*

(Li Wei 2011:1223; see also Bradley et al 2018; Bradley and Simpson 2019; 2020; Simpson & Bradley forthcoming)

\* My belongings are the **culture, festivals and rituals** at our country, India.

\* **festivals** → Diwali: festival of light

- \* Candles, Diyas
- \* fireworks
- \* Sweets/Food

Description/notes:

- \* Candles
- \* fireworks



\* **festivals** → Holi: festival of colors

- \* balloons
- \* putting color at each other
- \* Speciality - Gujiya



Diya



fireworks



Gujiya

Description/notes:

- \* Bollywood song ⇒ Rang Barse-Sisik
- \* pics of colors on different thalis and putting on face of each other.



\* **Culture**:- Clean the house before Diwali, visit the relatives, gifts exchange with neighbours and dear ones.

-: Make sweets of different kind at Holi and Diwali.

\* **Rituals**:- Pray on the festival days, respect the elders, prepare the different dishes - sweet.

BELONGING

# My STORY

## RELIGION & EQUALITY

**A DAUGHTER, A MOTHER, A WIFE**  
**A WOMAN, A MUSLIM WOMAN**  
**AN AHMADI MUSLIM WOMAN**

Description/notes:  
 **My FATHER**  
 Murabi Habib  
 Ahmad

**MY CHILDHOOD:**

I have not been an obedient child but now I realised after being a mother that what I was taught, stopped, or was told really really matters and it builds the person who you become as adult. (I learned to be a morning person)

Description/notes:  
 **Raised up as a muslim woman**  
 But had never be differentiated between my brother I became strong and independent woman.

*My childhood, my youth was always a happy and strong life. A person's brought up comes the way he/she have been treated and taught.*

Growing up and realizing that culture have taken over religion perspective of women. Culture have put women in a cage and destroyed her inner power and confidence.

Description/notes:  
 **Islam have given rights to women 1500 years ago.**  
 -> right to inheritance  
 -> right to work, education and every other aspects of life.

*I am trying to find ways and I can we stop openly teaching my kids their religion their road.*

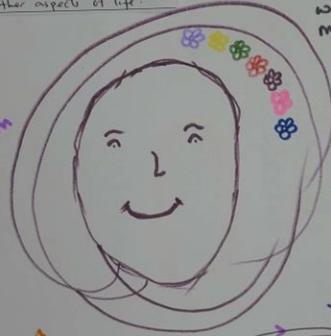
**"MY FUTURE"**

-> Give talks, debate, what is like being an Ahmadi muslim woman

-> The Equality / Justice for woman.

**stand with woman !!**

**NOW**  
 Now I am here in HK, runned away from religious persecution.  
 -> Dont call yourself a muslim  
 -> Dont worship / pray as muslim does.  
 -> Dont Call your prayer place Mosque.



**EIGHTH 8 years in HK**

-> Still waiting, still healing, trying to accept, fight for safety and acceptance.

Description/notes:  
 Because you are not physical tortured you cannot be accepted. or change your religion !!!

**LET'S ALL COME / STAND TOGETHER !!! FOR PEACE**

Description/notes:  
 अमरि मोग  
 (अमरि मोग) अमरि मोग

रिम रिम का रिडिज  $\pm$  चैनल - गिट  
 | मोग / गिट री। डी।  
 मरीट अमरि गति डाम डी महीमर

मैकरीक  
 (मिग मीक)  
 उग डिग डीक डीक  
 मोग मरी डी।  
 डीक मोग डी- मरीक उगरे  
 डीक मोग डी-

Description/notes:  
 डीक रिम -  
 रिम रिम  
 मरीक मरीक मरीक

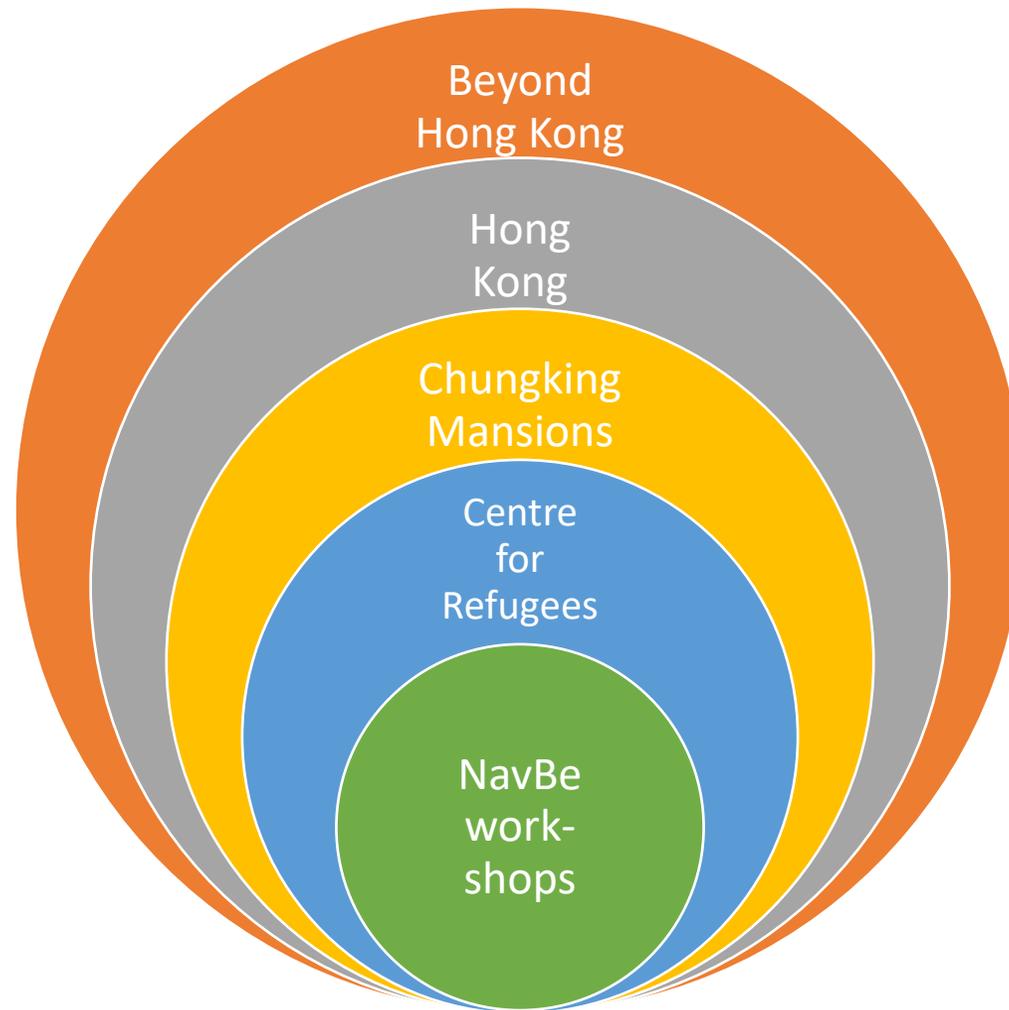


रिडि मरीक -  
 P डीक रिम रिम  
 मरीक डीक मरीक डीक  
 मरीक मरीक डीक  
 मरीक मरीक डीक  
 (मरीक डी)

Description/notes:  
 रिम रिम डी मीक  
 उगरे।

मरीक  
 मरीक  
 मरीक

# Narratives of (non-)belonging



A: when you are starting to pull yourself- pull yourself er  
to what you want to do and then you see **oh my god I'm  
refugee I cannot because I don't have Hong Kong ID** (.)  
time step back (.) not forward

C: oh

A: because it's it is you don't lost that you are not  
refugee just your identity (.) you lost your your  
encouragement you're your thoughts

C: yeah

A: what being you so then then I feel so:: sad (.) I go I  
go ho::me and I think that oh:: I (.) because then li- I  
try to contact with my other friends who who join the gym  
or other (.) **so they said they apply with the passport  
copy or something like that so my passport has expired so  
so I feel that no way there is no way** because m- because  
many years I also f- er er searching for for erm study or  
some courses like I I I am interested but there is no [hh]  
so er:: so that's why I'm no I'm just waiting I I still  
have hope I in the future I will do

U: so well um life is still on um just like the sea it sometimes high and low tides (.) right now we're going to immigration cases we are going through challenges with housing and education um kids are growing older (.) spaces are getting smaller um no vacations no (xxx) **eight years in Hong Kong and still you're in the same situation the same living condition has have been** so that is I am working on those ones

R: because I am er facing problem about my case giving (xxx) every time (xxx) but they asked me but not satisfied argument fighting because keeping focusing talenting to my case it will be success otherwise cannot (.) so:: (.) that's what I got success so **I am happy and my children are (.) have good life in Hong Kong so really I am very satisfied for everything about my life** (.) thank you

R: yeah this is the one happening in Hong  
Kong government where's the money come from  
(.) **that's what government paying to us** (.)  
**finding lawyer** (.) that is the truth

A: then we came here in Hong Kong and first time I eat er chapati again at er [xxx's] home and she give us you know like like a **I just take a one er piece of roti and I am crying** [hh]

# Ethics and our collaborative research

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Coloniality persists in the near-universal acceptance of the legitimacy of the nation state.

The cruelty of the bordering practices involved in migration where people are forced to be on the move.

The dynamics of bordering operate at an individual and very human level for people for whom belonging is neither “no more” nor “not yet”, for those for whom the politics of asylum is a daily and embodied concern.

*Decolonization is a process which engages with imperialism and colonialism at multiple levels. For researchers, one of those levels is concerned with having a more critical understanding of the underlying assumptions, motivations and values which inform research practices.*

(Linda Tuhiwai Smith 2013: 20)

# Engagement: Stakeholders, academic colleagues, the public ...

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(1) How does belonging emerge in and through narrative and photography?

(2) How can we develop innovative approaches to researching belonging?

**(3) How can our understandings of belonging be used to inform policies, practices and debate on social integration?**



{ we are: nexus }

who we are, what we do, and what we stand for

<https://nexusbrn.hkust.edu.hk/>



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Nexus: The Belonging Research Network

A nexus of research, thoughts & expressions on belonging in HK | #communityarts #research

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03.18 | EatonHK

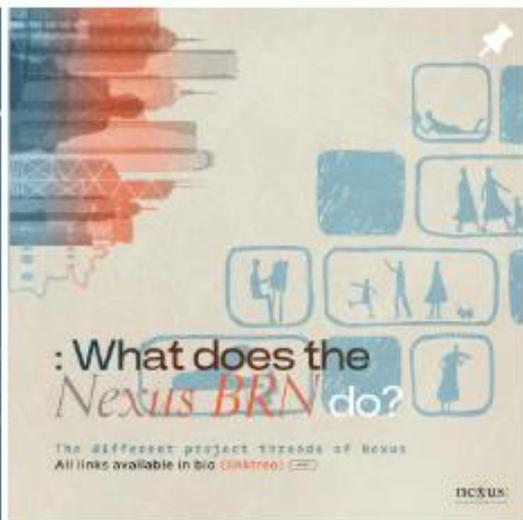
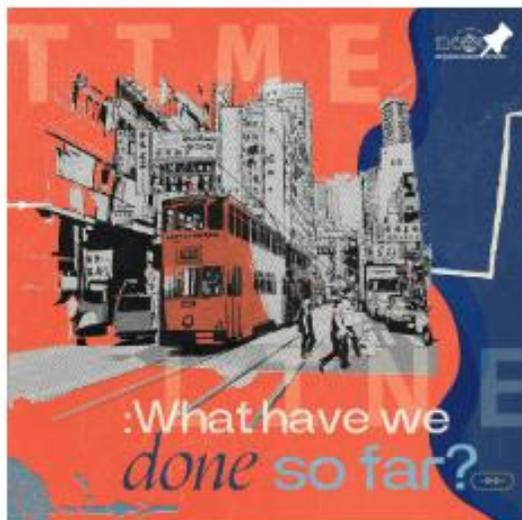


📅 Events 🏆

@nexus.brn

📄 POSTS

👤 TAGGED



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Thank you!

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<https://nexusbrn.hkust.edu.hk/>



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