
NEWSLETTER

Method Presentation in 300 Words by Saoussane Ghali

Interviews



The process of interviews in sociology is a long-term endeavour. Carrying out the actual interview is not the only element. Before even starting, researchers have to build on their knowledge and aim to create an interview guide that will orient them during the interview. They also have to find ways to look for interviewees, which often requires them to be creative. And

even after all these steps, much work is left to do, transcribing, coding, analysing, knowing not to take everything at face value... However, the real challenge is to be able to make people comfortable enough and trusting to share their stories and experiences. Furthermore, the crucial qualities that researchers should carry are being a good listener and being a good observer. By being a good listener, I mean not listening only to the words, but how things are being said, following the interviewee's narrative to be able to draw on it to ask more relevant and focused questions. Being a good observer is to be able to also look at the surroundings (if the interview is being carried at the interviewee's home for example) and the interviewee's gestures and behaviours to contextualise the narrative. Researchers need to be multi-focused.

But what distinguishes it, along with other qualitative methods, from other approaches is what I call the *discovery effect* brought by even the most mundane things. This is actually the unexpected findings that might appear during the interview and that can, in some cases, even change the direction of the research. This is really what I love about qualitative methods in general and what makes me excited about them.

PUBLICATIONS

- Lai, Yingtong and Aijia Li. 2019. "Migrant workers in a global city: the case of contemporary Hong Kong." *Asian Education and Development Studies*. ([see the article](#))

Social Issues

by LAI Yingtong¹

Migrant domestic workers (MDWs) are recognized as an increasingly significant presence of their recipient societies, including Hong Kong. With the help of MDWs, their local employers, especially mothers with young children, are able to be released from household chores and care burdens at a low cost and join the labor force. However, despite their contributions to households and economies of the host societies, situated at the low end of the labor market and trapped in the migration status, MDWs may face stringent working conditions, work long hours for very low wages, suffer discrimination and even abuse and have few rights.



International Labour Organization estimates that today there are at least 11 million MDWs worldwide, and the demand is increasing with the ageing of the population and the lack of institutional care². The increasingly large number of MDWs, who are mostly female and come from less wealthy countries to meet the care deficits in advanced economies, has been attracting scholars' attention. Studies have identified the causes of the migration of this group and illustrated how the movement is driven by the unequal development among different countries and wage differentials embedded in the global capitalism. Some research looked closely at the migration process and documented how different agents such as the governments of both the sending and receiving countries and the recruitment agencies contributed the disadvantageous position of these female migrants and affected their integration. Other studies focused on the employment relationship between MDWs and their employers and have found that the informality of the domestic work and the intersections of class, gender, ethnicity and migrancy may result in a hierarchical relationship which makes MDWs vulnerable to exploitation and even abuse. Issues such as transnational mothering and social protection of this group have also been examined by scholars.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

✓ Conference submission deadline:

- 2020 ICSA Conference in Oxford, The United Kingdom. Paper submission opens on February 10th, 2020. ([see more informations](#))

✓ Job ads:

- Research Assistant Professor/Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Sociology and Social Policy, Lingnan University. Deadline: February 15th, 2020. ([see the ad](#))

✓ Call for papers:

- Special Issue of Social Indicators Research (SSCI): "Comparative Perspectives on Social Indicators". Deadline: February 15th, 2020. ([see more informations](#))

¹ Photo: Winson Wong, SCMP (<https://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2158705/hong-kongs-domestic-helpers-reveal-hunger-horror-stories>)

² International Labour Organization. 2020. 'Domestic Workers'. Retrieved Jan 20, 2020 (<https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/care-economy/domestic-workers/lang--en/index.htm>).