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Project Title: Gender, Intimacy and Modernity, East and West: An exploratory comparative study

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The aim of this study is to explore and compare the consequences of recent rapid social change for women's intimate and family lives in East Asia (primarily Hong Kong) and the west (primarily the UK), focusing on how women themselves make sense of these transformations.

The degree to which recent changes in gender relations and intimate life are symptomatic of increasing individualisation has been much debated among western sociologists. These debates, however have focused almost exclusively on western societies.

This study brings the modern societies of East Asia, exemplified by Hong Kong, into the frame. It will take account of global trends (eg the increasing participation of women in the labour market, later marriage and low fertility) but also consider how local historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts affect the ways in which modern social change is experienced and understood. Both Asian and western sociological literature will be reviewed to inform a comparative qualitative study based on life-history interviews with pairs of mothers and daughters in both the UK and Hong Kong, investigating how they see the changes that have occurred in the lives of themselves and each other, in particular in relation to intimate and familial relationships.