# Negotiating Openness Under Authoritarian Risk: Feminist Open Data Sharing in Hong Kong

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**Abstract:** Open data has become increasingly common in Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM) in recent years, but its promise falters when the "data" are people's stories, such as interview transcripts, field notes, oral histories, diaries, and images, which are typical of qualitative work in such disciplines as cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. In this article, we reconsider open data sharing in politically precarious and authoritarian settings and explore the ways in which feminist and CARE-influenced approaches to data sharing can be operationalized in these regions. Grounded in two Hong Kong–based projects on asexual and aromantic (A-spec) community narratives and interviews around the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill (Anti-ELAB) movement, we combine conceptual argument and autobiographical reflection to trace the tension between visibility and vulnerability, as well as between verification and the duty to protect. Rather than treating openness as a one-size-fits-all mandate, we recast it as negotiated, relational, and community governed. Engaging with existing scholarship in feminist and critical data studies, we propose steps to operationalize these feminist principles of open data sharing. This approach keeps interpretive integrity with those who lived the experiences, resists extractive reuse, and still enables learning and accountability. Set against Global South conditions, the article offers a practical, care-centered template for qualitative open data sharing that remains workable under political precarity and authoritarian constraint.

**Keywords:** open data sharing, feminist methodologies, ethics of care, community-based research, CARE principles

https://doi.org/10.3998/jep.7839

## 1. Introduction

In 2021, UNESCO published a report titled "UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science," emphasizing the significance of open science in the contemporary globalized world. Observing the impact of large-scale global crises like COVID-19, there is an urgent need to facilitate the sharing of scientific knowledge, data, and information (UNESCO 2021, 3). This aligns with the broader theme of knowledge commons, which "seeks to resist these enclosures by challenging the grounds of exclusion as being illegitimate from a human flourishing point of view" (DeSouza 2023). Consequently, sharing research data has become an emerging norm across academia.

Indeed, advocacy for open data can be traced back to the 1950s when the World Data Center system was established. The 1980s saw the growing open access practices in natural science in the United States, Europe, and the Soviet Union; by the 1990s, it had become an international movement (Mauthner and Parry 2013, 50). In the new millennium, China established the Scientific Data Sharing Program in 2002. Subsequently, Western countries, including Canada, the United States, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, and Slovenia, introduced similar open data policies facilitated by higher education institutions, state authorities, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (Uhlir and Schröder 2007; Bishop and Kuula-Luumi 2017). In 2007, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published "Principles and Guidelines for Access to Research Data from Public Funding," further promoting transnational open data sharing across Europe.

While discussions on open data predominantly focus on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Medicine (STEMM), there is a growing interest within Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS). Examples include Qualibank in the United Kingdom and the Qualitative Data Repository at Syracuse University in the United States (Corti and Fielding 2016). However, directly applying existing STEMM-derived practices and principles of data sharing to HSS may pose problems. In scientific disciplines, open data is narrowly defined as data "that can be used, studied, and modified *without restriction*, and which can be copied and redistributed in modified or unmodified form either *without restriction*, or with restrictions only to ensure that further recipients can also do these things" (Murray-Rust 2008; italics added). This concept is based on Robert Merton's ideas of scientific ethos, including universalism and communality (Christensen et al. 2019, 13–22). However, an excessive emphasis on "without restriction" overlooks the importance of protecting research participants through confidentiality, reflecting an "ethics of care."

Indeed, there has been literature discussing the challenges of sharing sensitive qualitative data as exemplified by feminist scholars (Westbury et al. 2022). We acknowledge the diversity of data in HSS and agree with the advocacy for openness regarding less-sensitive data, including statistical summaries, documentation of data collection methods, and codebooks (van der Zee and Reich 2018). This article's focus, however, is on data sharing of highly sensitive data in an authoritarian and politically precarious setting. They may include interview transcripts, personal photos, and diaries containing personal narratives, particularly in cultural studies, sociology, and anthropology. Hence, we will explore the ways in which feminist and CARE-influenced approaches to data sharing can be operationalized in these regions.

We are particularly interested in data sharing under the politically precarious and authoritarian conditions in Hong Kong. Since the enactment of a national security law (NSL) in June 2020, Hong Kong's political and civic environment has undergone significant change. The law criminalizes offenses defined in broad terms and carrying severe penalties, such as secession, subversion, terrorism, and collusion with "foreign forces." In 2024, an additional national security framework was introduced under Article 23 of the Basic Law through the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, which further extends the range of activities subject to national security provisions.[1] In light of these evolving conditions, it is timely to consider, from a theoretical and ethical perspective, how the principles of data sharing might be practiced responsibly within research conducted in "sensitive" contexts. We believe that the case of Hong Kong provides a unique perspective in the discussion on data sharing practices, supplementing existing discussions by suggesting operational practices of data sharing in politically precarious and authoritarian conditions.

In this article, we will reflect on two research studies carried out by the authors on the 2019 Anti-Extradition Bill (Anti-ELAB) movement and the asexual community in Hong Kong. Through paralleling these two distinct experiences, we challenge a dependence solely on the prevailing FAIR principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) and consider a productive way to approach questions of data sharing via a conversation between data sharing expectations, the CARE principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics), and a feminist ethics of care.

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[1] The influences of the NSL are far-reaching. Many analysts and international commentaries have observed that the city's landscape has become increasingly regulated, with narrower spaces for public discussion and collective organization (US Congressional-Executive Commission on China 2021; Freedom House 2023). A wide range of associations, including advocacy networks, professional unions, and charitable or humanitarian bodies, have faced enhanced scrutiny regarding funding sources and compliance with registration procedures. Opportunities for civil action have gradually diminished as freedom of expression and assembly has come under tighter administrative oversight (Chan and Mak 2021; Kobayashi et al. 2021; Hung 2020; Madson 2022; Kwak 2024; Ortmann 2024; Mok 2021). Media organizations and civil groups have experienced growing institutional and legal pressures, with some outlets and organizations ceasing operations or restructuring in response (Zhuo 2021). As a result, the diversity of civic participation has been reduced, and public discourse has become more cautious. The broad scope and flexible interpretation of the law have contributed to a more centralized governance framework, with discernible implications across multiple sectors, including the legal system (Lin and Fei 2023; Lam 2021; Zhu 2021), education (Vickers and Morris 2022; Vickers 2024), and even academia (Silver 2020; Baehr 2022; Human Rights Watch 2024).

We propose that open data sharing may help marginalized communities, specifically in politically precarious or authoritarian contexts. However, visibility usually comes with risks and surveillance. Hence, issues of authorship of knowledge, positionality of researchers, and agency of the research participants have to be considered seriously.

Drawing from our experiences researching social movements and the asexual community in Hong Kong, we argue that open data can enhance the visibility of marginalized communities. Through opening raw data, participants can directly "speak their stories," rather than merely serving instrumental roles in academic writing. However, we must remain aware of the tension between visibility and precarity, as greater visibility might lead to increased vulnerability and potential attacks. Thus, we explore how open data sharing can balance visibility with considerations of precarity and information justice, especially crucial for marginalized groups in authoritarian contexts where openness may pose significant legal and social risks. Ultimately, we question whether open data sharing is primarily tailored to the Global North and whether implementing such practices is impractical in the Global South, where ongoing political struggles complicate their feasibility. Balancing these considerations is a critical question for all researchers.

The subsequent sections will first situate open data sharing within a feminist ethics of care. We will then reflect on our research experiences with the asexual community and social movements in Hong Kong. Finally, we suggest steps to operationalize feminist and CARE-informed approaches to data sharing in politically precarious and authoritarian contexts, encouraging researchers to reflect critically on their positionality during the openness process.

## 2. Open Data from a Feminist and Decolonial Perspective

Following Natasha Mauthner et al. (1998), this article treats qualitative social science data as materials produced with and among people. Materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, audio, images, and diaries are context-dependent, whereas their meanings are co-constructed. As Mauthner et al. argue, even rich contextual background information cannot substitute for the biographical, social, and temporal conditions under which the accounts are produced. Because meaning in qualitative work is relational and historically situated, archiving alone cannot make a dataset whole or reparable for new theory building. Hence, treating archived interviews or field notes as free-standing facts risks a naively realist stance that sidelines reflexivity. Emma Gilby et al. (2022, 7) similarly remind us that data are "collected rather than generated." They are organized and recontextualized to advance cultural conversations and explained as part of the analytic process. These insights, encouraging respect for the researched community, show why data sharing should be governed by differentiated access controls rather than by undifferentiated release.

While the educational promise of openness is well documented (Uhlir and Schröder 2007; Bishop and Kuula-Luumi 2017), these claims alone are too coarse for qualitative contexts because they presume data are detachable objects. In this article, we narrow the focus from open data in general to potentially more restricted forms of data sharing, defined as making research data available to others for verification and secondary analysis (DuBois et al. 2023). Often, the principle of open data is operationalized through tiered or controlled access based on how sensitive the data are, with requests reviewed, users signing data use agreements, access sometimes provided in secure settings, and reuse limited to approved purposes without redistribution (UK Data Service, n.d.; ICPSR, n.d.).

Open data discourse is not uniform; open data discourse is heterogeneous rather than monolithic. Qualitative researchers, nonetheless, warn us that collapsing these differences into a single ideal of “letting the data speak” risks a naive technological determinism.[2] Stefania Milan and Emiliano Treré (2019) sharpen this point by urging us to move beyond data universalism. When discussing data from the Global South, researchers should treat “Souths” as plural and thus foreground decolonial thinking and recenter agency in data practices and activism, ultimately cultivating alternative data imaginaries oriented to epistemic justice. Reading against this backdrop, information justice becomes less a distributive problem and more a question of which infrastructures we build, where, and for whom.

This leads to an infrastructural and ethical reframing of “access.” If openness is plural, then literacy must extend beyond reading files to reading infrastructures. Jonathan Gray et al. (2018) define data infrastructure literacy as the capacity to account for, critique, and intervene in the socio-technical systems through which data are produced and circulated. Infrastructures are relational ensembles, so sharing is an intervention in infrastructure, not merely a transfer. This infrastructural lens reframes “access” as a set of decisions shaped by community agreements, within which tiered or controlled access finds its place.

Ethically, a consent form alone is not sufficient. Annette Markham et al. (2018) argue that ethics constitutes an ongoing and situated practice throughout the entire data life cycle, encompassing collection, curation, access, and reuse and guided by the principles of contextual integrity, deflationary perspective, and an ethics of care as practice (Nissenbaum 2011; Luka and Millette 2018). This approach aligns with Carolyn Ellis’s (2007, 4) relational ethics, which she describes as a requirement posed to

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[2] Jeffrey Alan Johnson (2014) has already warned that open data systems embed social privilege, magnify uneven user capabilities, and normalize particular disciplinary functions.

researchers “to act from our hearts and minds, acknowledge our interpersonal bonds to others, and take responsibility for actions and their consequences.” The notion of participatory and community-based research proposed by Katherine Tamminen et al. (2021) is also relevant here.[3] They state that consent should be meaningful, ongoing, and reversible, with opportunities for participant review and redaction as risks change. It also clarifies why the common insinuation that refusal to share signals poor quality is untenable in politically sensitive settings (Wicherts et al. 2011), where “neutrality” can mask normative commitments (Harding 2004).

Evidence from qualitative practice reinforces governance over blanket mandates. Indeed, what qualitative researchers themselves report underscores the need for governance rather than blanket mandates. Alex Broom et al.’s (2009) findings show that many fieldworkers view qualitative inquiry as relational, context bound, even “artistic” and fear that archiving secondary-analysis-ready files distorts the craft. The way through this impasse is not to discard sharing but to govern it. Particularly for digital traces and vulnerable groups like LGBTQIA+ communities, a feminist ethic of care to prioritize safety, dignity, and careful de-/re-identification is advocated (Dieterle 2021).

Feminist and Indigenous contributions offer operational governance tools that align with this safety and dignity-first approach. The “Feminist Data Manifest-No” (Cifor et al. 2019) centers equity, accountability, accessibility, Indigenous sovereignty, disability justice, and community control. It recognizes “refusal” as ethically legitimate where harms outweigh benefits and reframes data as a relationship rather than a market product. Within this framework, Indigenous data sovereignty shifts from treating Indigenous peoples as a “population” to recognizing peoples with authority to govern data about their lands and lifeways (Kukutai and Taylor 2016). Inspired by feminist and Indigenous principles, Stephanie Carroll et al. (2020) developed the CARE principles to complement the existing FAIR principles by centering the repository rules of collective benefit and authority to control. Together, these literatures justify tiered access and conditional reuse that honors community decisions.

These reconsiderations of data sharing as necessarily situated and ethically contingent suggest their commonality with many aspects of feminist methodologies. We do not point to a unified notion of feminist methodologies; instead, it is important to clarify that feminism should be understood as “a perspective not a method” (Reinharz and

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[3] Patricia Maguire (1987, 52–54) observes that even ostensibly gender-neutral participatory research often remains androcentric, characterized by male-centered language and uncritical assumptions that the benefits of projects designed around men’s experiences will naturally extend to women. In practice, women are frequently excluded from full participation, denied equal access to project benefits, and overlooked in the formulation of research agendas and discussions of gender-specific concerns. Similarly, Michelle Fine (1994, 72) warns that participatory approaches can inadvertently reproduce “othering” of participants in relation to researchers, or along axes of sexuality, ethnicity, and class, if power and positionality are left unexamined.

Davidman 1992, 240).[4] It is neither monolithic nor homogeneous but rather a continually evolving approach that demands ongoing reflection on the validity of research as both process and knowledge production (Gatenby and Humphries 2000, 90). Feminist methodologies examine how knowledge about social life is produced and whether it reflects the lived realities of marginalized subjects within androcentric methodological traditions that obscure gendered structures of experience. It interrogates who is authorized to know, what constitutes valid knowledge, and how epistemic practices are bound to the ontological relationship between knowing and being (Landman 2006, 431). Although this article emphasizes a critical lens guided by feminist methodologies, we feel these approaches are relevant to a wide range of research contexts. Thus, we draw on the concept of "feminism for the 99%" (Arruzza et al. 2019), suggesting feminist methodologies can apply broadly across various fields and research topics, offering insights to reflect on established research processes, ethics, and norms.

Multiple feminist scholars, particularly those working with Indigenous and ethnocultural communities, have emphasized standpoint approaches that recognize how marginalized social positions generate distinct epistemic insights by exposing structural power relations obscured from dominant perspectives.[5] These approaches call for rigorous positional reflexivity to both amplify marginalized voices and sustain methodological integrity within feminist inquiry.[6] Building on this, relational methodology has been advanced as one of the process-centered frameworks that foregrounds culturally sensitive and ethically accountable researcher-participant relationships, situating these relationships at the core of feminist methodological development (Allen et al. 2021, 178).

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4. Feminist scholars since the 1980s have challenged dominant Western moral traditions for neglecting the interests and experiences of marginalized gender groups, particularly women. These traditions, they argue, deny women moral agency and devalue "feminine" values and knowledges (Jaggar 1992, 363–64). Alongside these critiques, feminist scholarship on racism and ethnocentrism has brought attention to positionality and relationality in the production of knowledge.
5. Standpoint theory treats reflexivity and accountability as epistemic obligations and exposes the ruling relations naturalized by dominant perspectives (Hartsock 1983; Harding 1991; Smith 1987). Later, the discussion was picked up by feminist scholars, including Donna Haraway and Patricia Hill Collins. Donna Haraway's seminal essay "Situated Knowledges" (1988) contests the notion of neutral, detached objectivity, proposing instead partial perspectives that acknowledge the situatedness of the knower within complex relational dynamics. Haraway's framework insists that all knowledge is embodied, contextual, and shaped by the entangled relations among subjects, technologies, and environments. In a similar vein, Collins reclaims Black feminist intellectual traditions by investigating their thematic content, interpretive frameworks, epistemological approaches, and significance for empowerment, with the aim to reveal the specific political contexts confronting African American women as a group (1990, 17).
6. Foundational contributions to feminist standpoint theory include the works of Nancy Hartsock (1983), Marilyn Frye (1983), Sandra Harding (1986), Patricia Hill Collins (1990), and bell hooks (2000), who collectively highlight the epistemic value of marginalized perspectives and the intersectional entanglement of power and knowledge. Developments in critical race theory (Collins 1990; Crenshaw 1991), postcolonial feminism (Mohanty 1984; Spivak [1988] 2003), and Indigenous feminism (Simpson 2014; L. T. Smith 1999) also extend concerns by interrogating questions of voice, positionality, and epistemic authority that remain central to the grounding of feminist methodology. For relevant discussion, see Allen et al. (2021).

The ethics of care thus emerged as a pivotal concept in this reorientation toward relationality. In her landmark work *In a Different Voice* (1982), Carol Gilligan critiques traditional justice-based ethical theories grounded in rules, rights, and universality that are often associated with patriarchal moral reasoning. She traces instead the development of an "ethic of care" that values context, interdependence, relationships, and responsibilities toward concrete others.[7] Virginia Held (2006, 43) encapsulates the ethics of care as the ways in which we build relations of care, concern, and mutual responsiveness to need across personal and social contexts, offering a means to evaluate human relationships and to envision more ethical forms of society.[8] Feminist researchers have incorporated the ethics of care into research methodologies, emphasizing the dynamic and situated responsibilities that emerge between researcher and researched. For instance, Joan Tronto's (1993) political theory of care identifies key dimensions of care, including attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness, as central to both political and research ethics. A caring researcher, according to this framework, must remain attentive to participants' needs, take responsibility for mitigating harm, exercise competence in ethical protocols, and remain responsive to feedback and dynamics in the field. Similarly, Rosalind Edwards and Melanie Mauthner (2012) argue that feminist research ethics requires attention to the "specificity of lived experience" and the co-creation of research encounters that position research subjects as active agents and knowers.[9] In this sense, an ethics of care in feminist research extends beyond gender-related topics. It operates as a foundational ethical guideline for all qualitative inquiry involving human subjects. It helps researchers avoid the re-inscription of dominant discourses and maintain reflexive accountability that keeps voice, agency, and context at the center of ethical research practice.[10] Hence, feminist methodologies reveal that the discourse of open

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[7] Carol Gilligan (1982, xix) highlights the importance of voicing women's experiences and connections in shifting moral inquiry from the pursuit of detached objectivity to a responsive engagement grounded in care. Building on this perspective, Nel Noddings (1984) introduces "natural caring" as ethical action rooted in genuine affection and personal bonds, while Sara Ruddick (1989) extends this discussion through her notion of "maternal thinking," demonstrating how everyday mothering practices cultivate cognitive and ethical capacities, such as attentiveness and patience, that traditional ethics has long overlooked.

[8] As Held (2006, 9) notes, some theorists have expressed reservations about the term "care" in designating this moral approach, proposing alternatives such as "the ethic of love" or "relational ethics." Yet the discourse continually returns to "care" as the most satisfactory term available, as the notion of care retains two key advantages: it foregrounds the labor and practice of caring for others and resists the tendency toward abstract, idealized conceptions of morality. Following this reasoning, we adopt "ethics of care" to emphasize both the value and the lived practice of care in ethical and social relations.

[9] Dorothy Smith explains the "ethics of caring" as three interrelated dimensions: an emphasis on individual uniqueness, the appropriateness of emotions in dialogues, and the capacity for empathy (Naples 1996, 88). Ultimately, the ethics of care would "break down power differentials and experiential differences between the researcher and the researched" (Naples 1996, 101).

[10] hooks (2000, 65) articulates a "love ethic," with genuine love defined as a praxis grounded in "care, commitment, trust, respect, responsibility, and knowledge." Crucially, it is "an act of will," meaning both an intention and action enacted toward self and others (105–6). For hooks, caring is inseparable from fighting systems of oppression. It is realized through transformative practices, including liberatory pedagogy, critical dialogue, and mutual accountability (hooks 1994, 148;

data sharing must shift from universalizing transparency to situated, relational, and community-driven openness.

The geopolitical stakes identified earlier in this article reveal a gap in how the application of this continuum of ethical approaches to qualitative data sharing can be operationalized in the context of precarious or authoritarian settings. Based on the literature reviewed in this section, we will reflect on our research experience in Hong Kong and consider open data sharing within the ethics of care in order to aid the formulation of practical recommendations for researchers.

## 3. Social Movement Research

One of our co-authors, Lucas Wong, conducted research on the Anti-ELAB movement in Hong Kong between 2020 and 2021.[11] The primary research question explored the connections between previous social movements (the Umbrella Movement in 2014 and the Mong Kok Incident in 2016) and the Anti-ELAB movement. Through 13 focus group interviews involving young adults of 18 to 35 years old, who were key supporters of Hong Kong's localist movement over the last decade, the project examined protesters' perceptions of Edward Leung, a young activist, and his localist advocacy. The focus particularly centered on the affective responses to the documentary *Lost in the Fumes*. Research participants were asked to evaluate the relationship between their acts and their perception of political figures, and thus their responses may include personal accounts of their acts during the movement. Since the NSL took effect in mid-2020, these accounts have become highly sensitive and could expose research participants to legal risks they did not foresee when interviewed before the law's implementation.

In Hong Kong, the promise of confidentiality in qualitative research sits in a structural tension with lawful powers that may compel disclosure of research data to state authorities (including both the police and the courts). The Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (PDPO) contains a "legal proceedings" exemption that removes the usual

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hooks 2003, 60; Brosi and hooks 2012, 80). These practices reposition care as both an ethical and political intervention. They also align with Collins's call (1990) for dialogic knowledge production, where the exchange between scholar and subject generates relational knowledge and political capacities capable of subverting patriarchal and racial orders. hooks's insistence on reflexivity, reciprocity, and inclusion of all voices places participatory engagement at the heart of feminist methodology. It becomes a means of redistributing power, fostering agency, and enabling the co-production of knowledge throughout the research process from design to data collection, interpretation, and dissemination.

[11] Social movements are sustained campaigns of claim-making using repeated performances supported by networks and solidarities (Tilly 2004; Tarrow 2011). In Hong Kong, "localism" prioritizes local identity and autonomy vis-à-vis People's Republic of China (PRC) integration, associated with key figures such as Edward Leung and his political party, Hong Kong Indigenous (Veg 2017; Kwong 2016). The 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill (ELAB) proposed rendition to mainland China, catalyzing mass protests that expressed concerns over erosion of the rule of law, later broadened into public accountability demands after the bill's suspension (F. L. F. Lee 2025).

purpose-limitation barrier when the use or disclosure of personal data is required or authorized by law or by a court order. This exemption does not itself create a power to compel; compulsion flows from specific legal instruments (e.g., a sealed court order, subpoena, production order) and procedural rules. But once such authority exists, PDPO no longer blocks the use/disclosure for that purpose.

Following ethical research protocols, all interview data have been deleted after research publication. However, given the increasingly homogeneous political discourse and suppression of dissent in Hong Kong, a theoretical reflection on the suitability of making interview transcripts openly accessible becomes both timely and urgent. Doing so could allow local citizens to better understand young protesters' motivations, potentially fostering deliberative discussions across political divides. This section highlights three main questions that inform a feminist data share approach.

### *3.1 Who Is the Author?*

A central tension in feminist research concerns authorship and data ownership. Margaret Westbury et al. (2022) note that qualitative researchers hesitate to share data due to their sensitive nature and because data is often considered not theirs to share. This concern is particularly relevant to Lucas Wong's research involving Hong Kong social movement participants. The narratives gathered during the research were deeply personal narratives embedded within Hong Kong's turbulent political context. They offer more than factual accounts. Rather, they are embodied narratives from the situated perspectives of the social movement participants who share their narratives for broader visibility, validation, and valorization of their struggles. Although grounded theory allowed researchers to analyze these experiences (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006; Bhavnani and Talcott 2012), a significant distinction remains between the analysis and the lived stories, making the researcher an "insider-outsider" of the protest community (Collins 1986).

From this perspective, opening data aligns with feminist relational principles as it signals the message that data belongs to the community. Decolonial feminist practices highlight authorship as relational and reciprocal, challenging modernist notions of individual authorship (Snelting and Weinmayr 2024). These principles underline the ethical complexity of openly sharing qualitative data, especially narratives intertwined with personal trauma and sensitive histories. Feminist critiques also point out that prioritizing theoretical writing over oral narratives creates academic hierarchies, marginalizing accessible knowledge produced by disadvantaged groups (hooks 1991). The participants did more than share data; they engaged in narrative resistance, shaping collective subjectivities. Open sharing of their stories must therefore respect the inherent relationality and mutual construction of authorial identities inherent in feminist practice. Properly negotiated, open data sharing can amplify increasingly silenced voices and validate "folk knowledge" within academic discourses.

### *3.2 Who Gets to Be Heard?*

Another critical tension involves the notion of research objectivity versus active participation in social movements. Open data principles, developed within positivist frameworks, assume researcher impartiality (Hesse-Biber et al. 2004). Gary Fine (1993, 286; cited in Naples 1996, 87) counters this, arguing that "objectivity is an illusion—an illusion snuggled in the comforting blanket of positivism—that the world is ultimately knowable and secure." Feminist methodologies instead advocate for situated knowledges, acknowledging researchers' embeddedness within political and social contexts.

Reflecting on his experience, one of our co-authors, Lucas Wong, believes that his positionality as a researcher actively involved in Hong Kong's democracy movements significantly influenced his research ethics and practices. Activist scholarship blurs distinctions between activism and scholarship, promoting research models accountable to progressive social movements (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2009). Activist researchers' embodied identities shape their interactions with participants and influence their emotional and political commitments (Kelly et al. 2017). These commitments must ethically remain integral to the research process. Given the political precarity under Hong Kong's NSL, this research required heightened ethical vigilance. Participants sharing experiences openly were exposed to significant legal and social risks. The blurred boundary between researcher and activist underscores feminist critiques of positivist objectivity, highlighting it as both unrealistic and ethically problematic. At least, as a feminist researcher, Lucas Wong believes that he has to protect the safety of his research participants. And personal involvement at this level provides a different understanding of the research ethics of objectivity. In authoritarian contexts, open data sharing might inadvertently increase these risks, particularly when data are exploited by state authorities against participants.

The tensions surrounding visibility challenge the notion that open data sharing inherently benefits marginalized groups in the Global South. Although Uhlir and Schröder (2007, OD43) suggest open research paradigms primarily benefit developing regions, this viewpoint often neglects severe political and social constraints typical in authoritarian contexts. Visibility alone does not necessarily dismantle underlying power structures dictating what can and cannot be seen, as Hammonds (1994) points out; rather, it can increase vulnerability. While open data sharing can educate and amplify marginalized voices, it poses considerable risks in politically precarious contexts, particularly within authoritarian regimes in the Global South. Consequently, while open data sharing seeks transparency and democratization, it may unintentionally reinforce power imbalances when applied uncritically in politically sensitive contexts. Ethical obligation as a researcher is therefore to minimize participant risks.

Here, a tension emerges: Making situated, activist narratives open promises visibility and accountability, but in Hong Kong, it can heighten exposure and enable state reuse of data, colliding with a duty of care to minimize harm and protect participants.

### *3.3 Protecting Whom and from Whom?*

This legal-ethical tension is sharpened by Hong Kong's NSL and its Article 43, stating that the authorities may "requir[e] a person, who is suspected, on reasonable grounds, of having in possession information or material relevant to investigation, to answer questions and furnish such information or produce such material." In practice, this creates a compulsory pathway to handing over data, notwithstanding prior confidentiality assurances in consent forms. This is why many Hong Kong university consent templates include "confidentiality except where required by law/access by ethics or regulatory authorities," standard wording that signals real exposure if national security powers are invoked.[12] This legal architecture produces a practical dilemma for researchers: They ethically commit to protect participants, yet the law recognizes circumstances in which identifiable data may have to be produced to courts or regulators.

At Hong Kong universities, consent templates and ethics guidance often gloss over the concrete legal risks of state access to research data. Participants are rarely told, plainly and upfront, that police or courts can lawfully compel disclosure (Human Research Ethics Committee, n.d.). Otherwise, it would be framed as "except where required by law." Crucially, in the contemporary enforcement climate, these "standard" phrases entail real risk to participants and sometimes researchers. After the NSL came into force, enforcement actions have included searches and device seizures in politically sensitive contexts. The 2020 police raid on the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (HKPORI) illustrated how organizational data can be rapidly drawn into investigations, heightening risks of re-identification or secondary harms if sensitive material is

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[12] Courts in Western jurisdictions may seek research data as well. In Canada's L'Affaire Maillé, a Québec judge initially ordered a PhD researcher to disclose confidential interviews but, following academic interventions, reversed the order (Castonguay 2017). The case shows courts do not routinely compel academic data and that researchers can successfully contest overbroad demands. By contrast, in Hong Kong, once disclosure is required or authorized by law or court order, purpose limits fall away, and the NSL empowers police to require individuals to furnish information or produce material, making compulsion likelier despite "standard" consent language.

linked back to individuals (J. Lee 2025). In such an environment, even ethically careful qualitative archives may become vectors of exposure if lawful access is asserted. All these incidents and concerns make "data" a sensitive concept in Hong Kong and embed open data sharing with uncertainties—how to negotiate an ethical way of open data sharing is more difficult as research participants may worry how the state authorities may use the data beyond their willingness.

Moreover, keeping the data alone may put the researchers themselves in a dangerous position. Under the NSL, individuals have to hand over data and information deemed national security related to the authorities upon request. For example, in 2021, the Hong Kong Alliance, a civil organization known for organizing the annual Tiananmen vigil, was asked to surrender information about its members and activities under an NSL investigation. The Alliance's leaders, including barrister Chow Hang-tung, refused and were subsequently jailed (Ho 2024). This makes researchers more precarious than ever, and they find it more difficult to balance their personal risks and the ethical commitment to the research participants and the academic community.

In authoritarian regimes such as Hong Kong, increased visibility through open data may intensify rather than alleviate precarity of both the researchers and the researched. Therefore, the researchers must critically examine whose interests are served with openly available data. Feminist methodologies' relational ethics compel careful consideration of openness practices, particularly where participation could marginalize the most vulnerable who fear exposure. Thus, implementing open data in qualitative research in authoritarian contexts becomes ethically complex, requiring researchers to carefully navigate power differentials, ethical sensitivities, and reflexivity. In the following sections, we will explore how reflexivity could be adopted in the CARE principles to extend cares and protections to the researchers themselves.

Taken together, these conditions create a tension that feminist ethics of care cannot ignore. Openness promises transparency, verification, and visibility; yet PDPO's legal proceedings route and consent form carve-outs mean that, under compulsion, identifiable materials may be disclosed precisely when participants are most vulnerable. The task is not to reject openness, but to redesign it for Hong Kong, which we will further discuss in section 5 of this article.

## 4. Asexual Community Research

The research of another co-author of this article, Yumi Wong, explores the lived experiences of asexual and aromantic (A-spec) individuals in Hong Kong. Through collecting personal narratives of touch, affect, and everyday relational practices, the project examines how socio-cultural ideologies surrounding sex and romance work to marginalize and constrain the bodies and relational capacities of those who do not experience sexual or romantic attraction. Using a community-based narrative approach, the research is grounded in semi-structured interviews with A-spec individuals. These conversations cover participants' journeys of identity, experiences of intimacy, and visions for future relationality. Given the sensitive content including personal and potentially traumatic experiences, participant protection is of central ethical priority. Participants give informed consent, and all data are anonymized and stored separately from personal identifiers on encrypted devices. Sensitive details are shared only with double-confirmed permission, and unprocessed data are deleted after the consent period ends. The study also considers the potential value of creating an open archive of A-spec narratives. Diverse representation across the spectrum is essential not only for increasing A-spec visibility but also as an expression of community agency to foster awareness and support social change. While open data offers possibilities for amplifying marginalized voices and democratizing knowledge production, it also raises complex ethical and practical challenges. In the context of this project, four major areas of tension are identified.

### *4.1 Managing Sensitive Data from Vulnerable Communities*

First, data involving vulnerable groups can lead to serious consequences if made publicly accessible, including the possibility of re-identification, exploitation, or political repercussions. As Rebecca Campbell et al. (2019) caution, releasing interview data could pose "significant safety, privacy, and confidentiality risks" for survivors of violence or individuals with stigmatized identities. Isabella Macedo De Lucas et al. (2025) similarly warn that sensitive LGBTQ+ data can be exploited by hostile actors or media. For A-spec individuals, being involuntarily "outed" as asexual or aromantic through a data breach or deductive disclosure can lead to social isolation, family conflict, or emotional distress especially in environments where these identities remain misunderstood or politicized. In this study, participants shared intimate reflections on touch, desire, and trauma that demand careful handling. Some participants expressed concern about re-traumatization if personal stories were ever traced back to them, particularly those who have experienced sexual violence, where trauma and asexuality intersect in complex ways. While some embrace trauma-informed identities, this does not equate to readiness for full public exposure. Public access to such narratives risks secondary harm and may discourage them from sharing in the first place, which in turn limits the depth and authenticity that community-based research seeks to honor.

### *4.2 Rethinking Informed Consent and Anonymity in the Context of Data Reuse*

Second, the drive toward fully open, unrestricted data sharing complicates the ethical foundation of informed consent, as participants are effectively asked to consent in advance to undefined and potentially infinite future uses of their personal data. While participants may agree to specific research use, they cannot always anticipate the long-term circulation or future uses of archived data. As Niamh Moore et al. (2021) note, the standard ethical commitment to destroying sensitive data at a project's end often clashes with open repositories that promote indefinite reuse. This raises concerns over identity shifts and the harm of retrospective exposure. For example, in transgender ethics, referencing pre-transition histories without consent may reinforce outdated identities and cause harm (Spade 2015; Stone 2006). Similarly, A-spec and queer identities are often fluid and context specific. Someone who identified as aromantic, demisexual, and nonbinary at the time of their interview may come to describe themselves differently in the future. Archiving under fixed labels risks misrepresenting evolving subjectivities. In traditional research settings, participants are usually able to define the duration for which their data is retained, with the understanding that it will eventually be deleted. In contrast, open data environments make it difficult to predict how future shifts in identity might render previously shared narratives inappropriate or even harmful if made public.

Likewise, guarantees of anonymity become tenuous in open data research. Studies show anonymized data can be re-identified when cross-linked with other datasets (Wilbanks 2014; Cooky et al. 2018). Even when direct identifiers are removed from transcripts or field notes, combinations of certain identity markers such as gender pronouns (e.g., they/them, ze/zir), sub-identities (e.g., agender, demiromantic, neurodivergent) and demographic specifics can lead to deductive disclosure. This raises serious questions about whether long-standing qualitative ethics can be upheld in open data environments.

### *4.3 Navigating the Epistemological and Political Implications of Secondary Data Use*

This leads to another important concern: the reuse of qualitative data for secondary analysis. Several scholars (Irwin and Winterton 2011; Corti and Fielding 2016) have noted that while secondary analysis can enhance transparency, validate findings, or generate new insights, its application to qualitative research remains highly contested. When working with fluid A-spec identities, context is everything. Accurate interpretation requires not just demographic details but also information about the socio-political context, the terminology used at the time, and any relevant shifts in meaning or usage that shaped how identities were expressed. In identity-based studies, this context is crucial for understanding how sampling criteria were defined. Without it, secondary analysts may inadvertently misclassify or misinterpret participants' identities, unaware that those identities were in flux or deeply contextual. In such cases, open data risks producing static or even misleading representations of queer and A-spec lives.

### *4.4 Addressing Researcher Positionality and Its Influence on Data Sharing*

Relational ethics are also central to qualitative research with marginalized communities, which relies on trust between researcher and participant (DuBois et al. 2018). Studies involving intimate embodiment often elicit deeply personal accounts of emotional lives, bodily perceptions, and social struggles that emerge not only from safe, affirming spaces but also through rapport built with a specific researcher. As both an insider and organizer in the A-spec community, Yumi Wong navigated a dual role of shared identification and ethical responsibility. They were entrusted not just with stories, but with the care needed to handle them responsibly. This meant being continually accountable to the community and to the individuals who shared their lives with the researcher. Throughout the process, they moved between interviews, field observations, and their own situated understanding of the participants. They also regularly sought feedback from them to clarify, refine, and co-create meaning of their experiences. Secondary analysts unfamiliar with the context or absent from these exchanges may misinterpret narratives, and this is particularly concerning when researchers come from more privileged or outsider positions. Uncritical reuse of qualitative data not only risks misrepresentation but also reinforces extractive research practices. When participants lose control over their own narratives, already marginalized voices risk further distortion, erasure, or harm within academic discourse.

All of these tensions—including the redistribution of interpretive authority, the protection of vulnerable participants, the preservation of relational context in secondary analysis, the development of dynamic consent models, and the role of researcher positionality—call for a critical rethinking of care ethics in open data research. And it is through the lens of CARE principles that this article seeks to revisit these questions in the sections that follow.

## 5. Toward a Feminist Approach to Open Data Sharing

These reflections prompt critical consideration of whether an implementation of data sharing under politically precarious and authoritarian conditions requires more cautious reconsideration. Ethical feminist research must remain sensitive to participants' contextual realities, prioritizing relational ethics, participatory agency, and protecting vulnerable populations above open data's universalizing aspirations.

We therefore propose five key questions for researchers concerning feminist open data sharing. They are inspired by scholarship in feminist and critical data studies:

1. How can openness be reimagined as a relational, situated, and accountable practice?
2. How can mutual benefits between researchers and researched communities be ensured?
3. How might open data sharing inadvertently perpetuate inequality or trauma?
4. How should community rights over data ownership and control be respected?
5. Who is entitled to reuse sensitive data and under what ethical conditions?

Our recommendations intentionally synthesize prior strands mentioned in section 2 and attempt to reconsider their relevance in politically precarious and authoritarian contexts. In particular, they operationalize (1) Milan and Treré's (2019) call to move beyond data universalism and to treat the "South(s)" as plural and agency-centered; (2) Gray et al.'s (2018) "data infrastructure literacy," which reframes access as participation in, and intervention on, socio-technical infrastructures; (3) "ethics-as-methods" heuristics that treat care and contextual integrity as ongoing practices rather than one-off approvals (Markham et al. 2018); (4) the commitments in the "Feminist Data Manifest-No" (Cifor et al. 2019) to meaningful, revisable consent and community control; and (5) Indigenous data sovereignty logics that foreground authority to control and collective benefit (Kukutai and Taylor 2016). We adapt these into concrete governance moves for qualitative researchers under authoritarian risk, as our Hong Kong cases require.

An ethics of care perspective challenges the false dichotomy that positions "open data sharing" on one side and "privacy/confidentiality" on the other. Instead, it reimagines openness as a relational and situated practice. Echoing what other scholars have called a "radical empathy approach" to data sharing or "care-full data management," we follow De Lucas et al. (2025) in expanding the concept of openness. Openness is not merely about maximizing access; it is also about situationality, relationality, and accountability. It can mean fostering open dialogue about research processes, sharing aggregated insights, or creating platforms where communities retain control over access to their own narratives.

Additionally, we support Carroll et al.'s (2020) CARE principles. Initially focused on Indigenous data, these principles advocate for "Indigenous control over Indigenous data," positioning data practices within Indigenous cultural frameworks for community benefit, thereby decolonizing open science. The CARE principles may apply to diverse datasets other than Indigenous data. Collective benefits—the "C" in CARE—are not abstract public goods that justify sacrificing minority interests; rather, they emerge directly from relationships between researchers and researched communities. Researchers and researched communities should mutually benefit from open data sharing. For instance, how can A-spec or student protesters benefit from open data? While open data discourses often emphasize social benefits broadly, an information justice perspective highlights potential inequalities exacerbated by data openness.

The Collective Conditions for Reuse (CC4r) practice may provide insight into ethical open data reuse. While CC4r licenses generally permit open use, they can impose limitations or specific requirements for certain user groups whose reuse might harm the researched communities (Snelting and Weinmayr 2024, 7–8). For instance, consider how heterosexual men might use queer narratives or how state authorities might exploit student protesters' personal narratives. This approach challenges the unrestricted openness advocated in open science (Murray-Rust 2008). Given the involvement of human subjects, their narratives, and researchers' insider/outsider positions within communities, debates around data openness must consider community roles, past traumas, authorship of knowledge, and rights regarding data openness.

Thus, we advocate six steps for feminist open data sharing, designed to maintain openness as context-sensitive and negotiated, ensuring marginalized communities primarily benefit from research decisions guided by care, empathy, and justice.

1. Seek explicit and situated consent for open data use: Clearly explain to participants whether and how their data may be archived, reused, and circulated; allow them to veto or set conditions for sharing.
2. Establish a community advisory board: Form a representative group from the researched community to guide decisions on data collection, interpretation, archiving, and reuse.
3. Enable participants to review and redact their data: Before archiving, invite participants to review transcripts or materials, edit sensitive parts, decide how they want their narratives labeled, and specify any restrictions.
4. Use standard protective practices like anonymization and data use agreements: Protect identities through technical means but acknowledge that these are not always sufficient without relational ethics.
5. Embed contextual information with datasets and require engagement with it: Alongside the data, include research journals, consent forms, codebooks, and reflexive field notes that explain how the data was collected, consented, and interpreted; require that any secondary analysts read and reflect on this embedded context, including power dynamics and ethical dilemmas, before reuse.
6. Implement tiered access or controlled repositories: When appropriate, limit who can access the data through permission-based systems rather than full public release.

Our six-step workflow translates established principles into actionable procedures for sensitive data sharing under authoritarian risk. First, consent is situated and revisitable in the spirit of the FRIES model mentioned in "Feminist Data Manifest-No" (freely given, reversible, informed, enthusiastic, and specific) and is aligned with people-oriented governance (Cifor et al. 2019; Carroll et al. 2020). When data sharing is considered, researchers must explicitly seek consent and allow participants to veto sharing or specify reuse conditions, thereby rejecting a one-size-fits-all release (DuBois et al. 2018). Second, a community advisory board operationalizes "authority to control" from Indigenous data sovereignty models (Kukutai and Taylor 2016; Carroll et al. 2020) by giving exposed communities binding power over archiving and secondary access so that each data decision advances community rights, collective benefit, and cultural values, in line with Milan and Treré's (2019) recentering of agency. Third, participant review, redaction, and self-labeling enact ethics-as-methods (Markham et al. 2018), enabling contributors to remove high-risk passages, rather than being fixed by external categories.

Fourth, recognizing the limits of technical masking flagged by Mauthner et al. (1998), anonymization is paired with formal data use agreements that condition reuse and exclude foreseeable harmful actors (DuBois et al. 2018), resisting data extractivism while addressing concrete risks.[13] Fifth, context-rich "packets" (field journals, consent pathways, reflexive notes, glossaries) with mandatory engagement apply Gray et al.'s (2018) infrastructural inversion and respond to Mauthner et al.'s (1998) warning that "background" cannot make data whole by transforming context from an optional appendix into an interpretive obligation; including such metadata ethically situates the materials when openness would otherwise abstract them from relations of power. Sixth, tiered access and controlled repositories with conditional licensing implement CARE logics (Carroll et al. 2020) together with CC4r-style constraints and the Global South(s) agenda of anti-universalism (Milan and Treré 2019), so that openness is negotiated relative to power, risk, and vulnerability. This shows that, at times, limiting access, requiring special permissions, and using permissioned tiers can help uphold the spirit of consent as social and political conditions evolve (Campbell et al. 2023).

In our Hong Kong cases, these steps could work as an integrated, care-centered workflow. Recognizing consent as a continuous negotiation, A-spec narrators may choose to tighten or relax data use permissions and update their self-descriptions at multiple points, whether prior to publication, during data dissemination, or even post-release.

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[13] In Couldry and Mejias's (2019) account, data extractivism is the colonial appropriation of everyday life through the continuous capture and commodification of human activity as "data," naturalizing surveillance via platforms and brokers. In our context, we extend it from digital data to research data, pointing to the decontextualized taking and reuse of sensitive qualitative materials.

Decisions about archiving and reuse are reviewed by a community advisory board that evaluates collective benefit and risk before any secondary analysis proceeds. Prior to deposit, participants read their transcripts and may redact or rephrase passages that carry legal, social, or identifiability risks. Technical protections such as anonymization are paired with explicit data use agreements that specify acceptable purposes and forbid reuse by other hostile actors. While such measures cannot fully prevent state demands for research data, removing direct identifiers and limiting granular indirect identifiers would increase the difficulty for authorities to trace specific participants. Each dataset travels with a required "context packet" (field notes, consent rationales, positionality statements, codebooks, and glossaries), and secondary users must attest that they have engaged with it before analysis. Finally, Anti-ELAB materials are released only through permissioned and tiered access so that public visibility does not become participant vulnerability.

In terms of interpretive authority, if we advocate for open data sharing as a means to democratize knowledge (McLeod and O'Connor 2021), then the primary audience entitled to interpret and benefit from data about marginalized communities should be the communities themselves. Knowledge should not be unilaterally controlled by external researchers or institutions. Authority must be reimagined in ways that empower research subjects and prioritize their rights, voices, and values.

It is equally important to recognize that research subjects are not merely "vulnerable populations" in archives, but knowledgeable, agentic individuals who should guide decisions about their own data. At the 2023 workshop "Being Open About the Unopenable," researchers working with LGBTQIA+ communities, refugees, and survivors of violence emphasized that ethical openness must remain context-dependent and that data governance should be led by community self-determination (De Lucas et al. 2025). Community advisory boards, for example, can help ensure that decisions about data interpretation and reuse are inclusive, reflective, and co-produced with community input. Involving community representatives in early decisions about data handling, post-study archiving, or research design may also help align data practices with participants' comfort and expectations.[14] These collaborative practices not only enhance ethical alignment but also improve anonymization and metadata quality, as participants can flag what they consider sensitive or misrepresentative.

Another crucial concern is how to structure secondary data analysis in a way that preserves the relational context of the original data and avoids extractive practices.

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[14] One of the benefits of the researched community is showcased in trauma-informed research. Some recent studies with trauma survivors have shown that participant-centered archiving, where individuals are informed from the outset that de-identified transcripts will be preserved for others' use, leads to greater trust and support for data sharing (Campbell et al. 2023).

Interestingly, there has been discussion about the lack of contextual information. And some scholars believe that secondary analysis could be carried out even without that contextual information.[15] However, we believe that contextual information is indispensable in secondary analysis, particularly in topics related closely to personal trauma and emotions like personal gender identification and social movement involvement. This is to ensure that the research remains faithful to the research participants and to acknowledge their roles as "co-producers" of that knowledge.

A practical solution is to accompany shared datasets with extensive contextual information, such as research journals, consent forms, codebooks, and reflexive notes alongside the data. Decades of feminist research have documented dilemmas around "power and privilege, and the overall quality of the relationships between researcher and researched" in fieldwork (Miller et al. 2012). Narratives detailing how consent was obtained, the power dynamics at play, and any ethical dilemmas encountered during the research can also be included in repositories. By embedding ethical context into the data, we invite future researchers not only to analyze but also to reflect on whose voices are being amplified and whose might be overlooked in the process of secondary analysis. Anyone reusing the data must engage with the human context and relational labor that gave rise to the numbers or narratives they are working with. This approach helps shift the paradigm: Instead of treating data as static, abstract objects, we begin to understand them as relational products born out of dialogue, trust, and shared responsibility. In doing so, we ensure that the drive for data accessibility does not come at the cost of those whose stories are being told.

## 6. Conclusion

This article has examined the operationalization of data sharing in a politically precarious and authoritarian context. Central to the argument is the critique of positivistic norms of objectivity and unrestricted openness, which often overlook ethical responsibilities, participant protection, and power dynamics, particularly in research involving marginalized communities. Through autobiographical analyses of research experiences within Hong Kong's asexual community and social movements, we highlight the complex interplay of visibility, precarity, and information justice in implementing data sharing. Our key argument is that openness must be reimagined as community

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[15] For example, historian Florence Sutcliffe-Braithwaite reused archived unstructured interview transcripts collected in the early 1980s by two sociologists to analyze emotions, agency, and cultural discourses surrounding prostitution at that time. She writes, "it is still possible to reuse archived sociological data where not all the contextual information is available in the form we might want it" (Sutcliffe-Braithwaite 2016, 2).

governed, context embedded, and contingent, and our contribution is an operationalized care-centered workflow that we demonstrate as both necessary and feasible in Hong Kong's A-spec and Anti-ELAB cases under politically precarious, authoritarian conditions.

Positionality and reflexivity emerge as crucial themes in reconciling these tensions. Autobiographical reflections that acknowledge the researcher's embeddedness within socio-political contexts are fundamental not just as methodological tools but as ethical imperatives. Reflexivity, understood as "a radical consciousness of self in facing the political dimensions of fieldwork and the construction of knowledge" (Nagar 2014, 82), allows researchers to critically interrogate their own power and privilege and navigate the ethical complexities of data sharing. We emphasize a "speaking-with" model, where reflexivity and positionality evolve dynamically, shaped by continuous engagement with participants' voices and lived experiences (Nagar 2014, 83–85). This approach resists the simplistic binaries of the researchers versus the researched, or Global North versus Global South, emphasizing instead situated solidarities that are sensitive to local struggles and global power asymmetries. Consequently, feminist research does not merely critique the discourse of open data sharing but actively proposes alternative frameworks that foreground relational ethics, community authority, and mutual benefit.

The implementation of feminist open data sharing demands nuanced ethical strategies, such as explicit, situated consent; community-led governance; and comprehensive contextual documentation to facilitate responsible reuse. Recognizing the complex, sometimes contradictory nature of visibility, particularly in authoritarian contexts, we advocate a context-sensitive openness that prioritizes the safety and autonomy of marginalized communities. Ultimately, this article underscores the necessity for data sharing to evolve beyond positivist, universalist frameworks. Through rigorous reflexivity and careful attention to positionality, feminist methodologies provide a critical lens that ensures openness serves ethical, relational, and justice-oriented ends, reshaping not only how data is shared but also whose voices are amplified and protected in scholarly and public discourses. Therefore, we invite researchers considering open data to also reflect on their own positionality and their relations with the communities.

## Open Peer Review Reports

Open peer review reports for this article are available at the following location: https://doi.org/10.17613/vtm91-2t748

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