

DOCTORAL THESIS

Is citizenship sexual?: the study of the exercise of citizenship of non-heterosexuals in Hong Kong

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**Is Citizenship Sexual? The Study of the Exercise of Citizenship of
Non-heterosexuals in Hong Kong**

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ABSTRACT

This study is concerned with the exercise of rights claim of non-heterosexuals in Hong Kong. Since there are only few research works which focus on non-heterosexuals' civil rights and how they have been ignored by the mainstream society in Hong Kong, this study is to fill the research gap in the local community. This study is designed as a qualitative research. Case study method has been used. A total of 16 non-heterosexuals were invited to participate in the in-depth interview. The data were drawn from eight female and eight male Chinese non-heterosexuals.

Three themes are revealed in this study. Firstly, this study finds that the privileged ideology of heterosexuality has strongly permeated into Hong Kong society, and constitutes further constraints for non-heterosexuals engaging in the exercise of rights claim. It is found that institutionalization of heterosexuality is located in different aspects of public and private life to strengthen the hierarchical distinction between heterosexuality and non-heterosexuality, and it has created barriers to the exercise of rights claim of non-heterosexuals. Secondly, this study finds that the development of same-sex partnership is full of challenges and involves many complexities and negotiations. These difficulties not only de-stabilize same-sex relationship, but also deter non-heterosexuals from considering, planning or actually taking action in the exercise of rights claim. Thirdly, the impact of family of origin on rights claim are decisive in distinguishing whether non-heterosexuals would consider, plan or take action in rights claim. The impacts refer to the exclusion and ignorance from the family of origin to the sexual orientation and same-sex partnership. It is also found that Chinese non-heterosexuals intend to integrate sexuality into familial relationships rather than to pursue individualized and de-traditionalized family life.

For both theoretical discussion and practice, this study helps to expand the concept of citizenship to sexual dimension in Hong Kong local contexts. Since the notion of sexual citizenship has been mainly developed under western social contexts, this study helps to extend the present discussion and analysis of sexual citizenship beyond ethnocentric limitation. Based on the context of Hong Kong, this study helps to expand the discussion of sexual citizenship across different societies.

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