

DOCTORAL THESIS

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

Chan, Ka Ki

Date of Award:
2013

[Link to publication](#)

General rights

Copyright and intellectual property rights for the publications made accessible in HKBU Scholars are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners. In addition to the restrictions prescribed by the Copyright Ordinance of Hong Kong, all users and readers must also observe the following terms of use:

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from HKBU Scholars for the purpose of private study or research
- Users cannot further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- To share publications in HKBU Scholars with others, users are welcome to freely distribute the permanent URL assigned to the publication

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

CHAN Ka Ki

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Principal Supervisor: Prof. CHIU Wai Sang, Sammy

Hong Kong Baptist University

August 2013

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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	I
ABSTRACT.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	IV
Lists of Tables.....	VIII
Introduction.....	1
Chapter 1 Citizenship and Sexuality.....	11
<u>1.1</u> The Ancient Notion of Citizenship.....	12
<u>1.2</u> Modern Notion of Citizenship.....	15
<u>1.3</u> The Rise of Modern Nation.....	16
<u>1.4</u> The Implications of Modern Citizenship.....	19
<u>1.5</u> Marshall’s Theory of Citizenship.....	23
<u>1.6</u> Criticisms on Marshall’s Concept of Citizenship.....	26
<u>1.7</u> The Development of Citizenship in a Global Age.....	30
<u>1.8</u> The Implications of Globalization on Citizenship in Contemporary World.....	35
<u>1.9</u> The Changing Approach of Citizenship under the Effect of Globalization.....	41
<u>1.10</u> The Background of the Emergence of the Notion of Sexual Citizenship.....	45
<u>1.11</u> The Critical Turn to Sexuality.....	48
<u>1.12</u> The Distinction between Sexuality and Gender.....	49
<u>1.13</u> Chapter Summary.....	52
Chapter 2 Sexual Citizenship.....	53
<u>2.1</u> Citizens as Consumers -- Evan’s Analytical Approach of Sexual Citizenship...	55
<u>2.2</u> Institutionalization of Heterosexuality -- Richardson’s Analytical Approach of Sexual Citizenship.....	57
<u>2.2.1</u> The institutionalization of heterosexuality.....	59
<u>2.2.2</u> The idea of male privilege in citizenship.....	60
<u>2.2.3</u> Theorizing sexual rights.....	62
<u>2.2.4</u> Normalization and the sameness approach of sexual citizenship.....	66
<u>2.3</u> Sexual Citizens in the Contemporary Society.....	70
<u>2.4</u> Democratization of relationship.....	71
<u>2.5</u> The emergence of new subjectivities.....	73
<u>2.5.1</u> The development of new narratives or stories about personal life. ...	74
<u>2.5.2</u> Intimate citizenship.....	76

2.5.3	Sexual citizenship as a project of sexual politics.....	77
2.5.4	Geographies of sexual citizenship.....	80
2.6	Chapter Summary	83
Chapter 3	Analytical Framework of the Study	85
3.1	Acts of Citizenship	85
3.2	The Barriers to the Exercise of Rights Claim	93
3.2.1	The effects of institutionalization of heterosexuality.	93
3.2.2	The penetration of the institutionalization of heterosexuality.....	99
3.2.3	The re-conceptualization of the meaning of space that constitutes the separation between the private and the public.	100
3.2.4	The effect of family of origin on the exercise of rights claim.	103
3.2.5	The function of family in structural-functional analysis.	103
3.2.6	Chinese non-heterosexuals in family of origin.	107
3.2.7	The effect of same-sex partnership on the exercise of rights claim..	114
3.3	Chapter Summary	122
Chapter 4	Methodology of the Study	124
4.1	The Importance of Qualitative Research Approach.....	124
4.2	Case Study Research	126
4.3	The Research Objectives	130
4.4	The Significance of the Study.....	131
4.5	Research Design	132
4.5.1	Subject of the study.	132
4.5.2	Sampling method, sampling size and recruitment mechanisms.	133
4.5.3	Sample size.....	135
4.5.4	Sampling method.....	136
4.5.5	Data collection method.	137
4.6	The Profile of Research Sample	138
4.7	Data Analysis	141
4.8	Research Limitations	145
4.9	Chapter Summary	148
Chapter 5	The Substantial Exercise of Rights Claim among Non-heterosexuals	149
5.1	The Meanings of Rights Claim.....	149
5.2	The Scope of the Exercise of Rights Claim	153
5.2.1	Category 1: life and death arrangement.....	154
5.2.2	Category 2: money and property distribution	155
5.2.3	Category 3: help-seeking	156
5.2.4	Category 4: others.....	156
5.3	The Level of Practice	157

5.4	The Overall Status of the Exercises of Rights Claim	159
5.4.1	Participants’ perception on rights claim and some concepts related to citizenship.	162
5.4.2	Normalization.....	162
5.4.3	Civic membership.....	166
5.4.4	Legitimacy.	170
5.4.5	The role of the state.....	175
5.4.6	The welfare provision.	181
5.4.7	The family and closet kin in welfare provision.	186
5.5	Chapter Summary	193
Chapter 6	Social Constraints on the Exercise of Rights Claim of Non-heterosexuals	195
6.1	Institutionalization of Heterosexuality in Hong Kong	195
6.1.1	The privilege ideology of heterosexuality.	196
6.1.2	The negotiating space.	208
6.1.3	Restrictions in physical and social presence.	212
6.1.4	Being verbally assaulted in public places.....	215
6.2	Gender and Heterosexuality	216
6.2.1	Gender stereotypes.	218
6.2.2	Gender-based division of labor.....	223
6.3	The Barriers to the Development of Same-sex partnership	227
6.3.1	Unhappy and traumatic past experiences.	228
6.3.2	The pressure from family of origin.	230
6.3.3	The different sense of love between heterosexual relationship and non-heterosexual relationship.....	234
6.3.4	The prevalence of open relationship	236
6.3.5	Cohabitation.	239
6.3.6	The effect from family of origin on rights claim	242
6.4	Chapter Summary	254
Chapter 7	Strategies for Rights Claim	256
7.1	Strain Theories	256
7.2	Coping Strategies to Social Constraints	260
7.3	The Characteristics of Three Groups of Strategies.....	262
7.3.1	The first group of participants – the active rights claimants.	267
7.3.2	The second group of participants – the alternative claimants.....	280
7.3.3	The third group of participants – the passive non-conformists.	283
7.4	Chapter Summary	288
Conclusion.....		290
Summary of this Study		290

Implications of the Findings to Social Policy in Hong Kong.....	299
The Importance of the Study	311
Research Limitations	313
Further Research.....	314
Appendix I	316
Interview Guide.....	316
References.....	318
CURRICULUM VITAE	339