

## MASTER'S THESIS

### The subculture of poverty: a case study of a cage apartment in Hong Kong Cheung, Siu Keung

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**THE SUBCULTURE OF POVERTY:  
A CASE STUDY OF A CAGE APARTMENT IN HONG KONG**

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**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of  
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### Abstract

This is a case study of how the Hong Kong cage dwellers operate as strategic actors in configuring their living path and in articulating their everyday existence. Based on the author's participant observation in a cage apartment from 1994 to 1995, this thesis provides a thick description of the setting and living in this cage apartment. Using Oscar Lewis' notion of "subculture of poverty" and the conceptual tools established in contemporary cultural studies, the author seeks to identify the ways in which the cage dwellers manage to organize their livelihood, and make their everyday life viable and meaningful. It is expected that detailed description of the deeds and deconstruction of the words of the cage dwellers would challenge prevailing stereotyping and stigmatization -- which are superimposed by the dominant discourse -- on the cage dwellers in particular and on all the subaltern groups in general.

## Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Recontextualization of the Notion of Culture of Poverty: A Literature Review	5
The Setting	18
Living in a Cage Apartment: The Collection of Sketches	26
The Social and Economic Characteristics of Cage Apartment	40
The Making Out of Routines: Mr. Kong	49
Living Beyond the "Cage": Old Wong	63
Angry Man, Nice Father/Escapist, Resister: Chou Chai	78
"Caged" in Separately but Living-up Communally: Uncle Kau	90
Conclusions: Reflections on Methodology, Theory and Practice	106
Footnotes	120
Bibliography	123
Vita	128