The same-sex marriage laws in Taiwan

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I. Motivation

Same-sex marriage (also known as gay marriage) is marriage between two people who have same biological sex. The legalization of same-sex marriage or the possibility to perform a same-sex marriage sometimes equals marriage equality. Therefore, the approval of same-sex marriage is seen as an important mark of democracy. Marriage is one of the significant aspects of human life. If we can’t even decide who we want to live with, Taiwan can’t be regarded as a democracy.

The “Taiwan domestic partner task force” had filed a petition about the legitimacy of gay marriage to the Legislature Yuan on October 25 2013. But until now, the law of gay marriage hasn’t been formulated in Taiwan; the petition was still on first reading.

Sensational news was announced on 23 April 2013. The news was, the law about same-sex marriage was adopted in France. The law grants same-sex couples who have the nationality of France, including foreigners that have title deeds or residence in France, the legal right to get married. It also allows the recognition in France of same-sex couples’ marriages abroad before the law was declared.

The reason why I want to do a research about why the same-sex marriage laws cannot be passed in Taiwan is that I want to know why the assembly of France grants their people the right of gay marriage, but Taiwan doesn’t. Do this means the people in France have more rights than Taiwan people?

II. Research questions

A. How do university and senior high school students in Taipei think about same-sex marriage?

B. How does religion influence the Taiwanese’s views on same-sex marriage?

III. Thesis

Professor Yang Hui-nan, a famous scholar who researches Buddhism, and now teaches in National Taiwan University, investigates the affirmative action of Buddhist who is also a gay.
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Professor Yang wrote: “Buddha treats all human beings equally, and people do good works in the whole word. But how do gay Buddhists face their own religion? Does being a gay go against the commandment of Buddhism? Does the commandment of Buddhism implicit discrimination against gay?”

Professor Yang first observed that certain gay rights movements is associated with political and social motion. He pointed out that in 1987 the martial law was lifted as a watershed in the gay rights movement. After the lifting of martial law, people possessed more freedom of speech and social movements. Social movements are more developed. His current research is about the website, which is about gay Buddhists. The name of the website is “童梵精舍梵志園”. In the website, those who have the same properties talk to each other and vent their emotions. He found some difficulties and hardships from them in this site.

The biggest difficulty that is mentioned is so far Buddhism hasn’t accepted homosexuality. The modern society accept homosexual gradually but Buddhism still hold antipathy to it. Buddhism even refuses to recognize gay Buddhists as a Buddhists. This makes them feel intimidated because they are not be accept by their religion. They are also afraid that their family and friends would feel reluctant to accept them. Therefore, they are afraid of “coming out”.

The disapprove of Buddhism to homosexual affects Taiwan's marriage rights movement and gay rights movements deeply.

IV. Research method

A. Polls

I design a questionnaire and take a poll among 30 students from Chung-Chih University and Jing-mei Girls’ high school respectively. What I want to know is how these two kinds of student think about same-sex marriage. How many of them approve of same-sex marriage? Is there any difference in opinions between these two kinds of students? Do they know what happened in France?

B. Religions

I read Professor Yang’s thesis and find how the main religion in Taiwan, Buddhism
The same-sex marriage laws in Taiwan has effect on same-sex marriage.

V. Conclusion

A. Polls

Students who approve of same-sex marriage

Students who disapprove of same-sex marriage

About 60% of senior high school students approve and 40% disapprove while 83% of university students approve and 17% disapprove.

From the chart, we can find that the number of university students who support same-sex marriage is more than that of senior high school students. What are the factors that contribute to the differences? Here are my explanations:

(1) University students have met different kinds of people in university, and they can enjoy more freedom in university.

Because university students have met different kinds of people in university, they can accept same-sex marriage more easily than high school students.

(2) The university students are concerned about current affairs, while many high school students
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don’t really know the same-sex marriage is announced legal in France.

About 80% of university students know the news in France while 50% of senior high school students know that news.

And why did the students disapprove of same-sex marriage? There are many different reasons. Some of them say there are some more important issues that they need to care first; others say that if Taiwan passes the law of same sex marriage, the crude birth rate will be lower and lower.

B. Religions

Religions do affect people a lot. From professor Yang’s proposal, we can find gay Buddhists are usually afraid of “coming out” because Buddhism didn’t approve gays. Some of them are even attacked by others because of their sexual orientation. If they can’t even “come out” to the society, how can they fight for the right of getting married with who they love?

Why did France pass the law but Taiwan hasn’t? I think it’s because of the people in the country. Although there are many people fighting for marriage equality in Taiwan, but it isn’t enough. The government also plays a big role. The government in Taiwan doesn’t care much about marriage equality, but same-sex marriage is a very important issue in the parliament of France.

From the poll and thesis study, I realize that the road to same-sex marriage is full of obstacles in Taiwan. The legalization of same-sex marriage is related to marriage equality, and marriage equality should be seen as a human right. If Taiwan wants to become a real democracy, we should pass the law of same-sex marriage.

VI. References

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Appendix-

Questionnaire about same-sex marriage

You are □ a university student
   □ a senior high school student

Do you approve of passing the law of same-sex marriage?
□ Yes,
   because________________________________________________________________
□ No,
   because________________________________________________________________

BBC news 23 April 2013 Last updated at 20:47

France has become the 14th country to approve a law allowing gay marriage.
The bill, which also legalizes adoption by same-sex couples, was passed by 321
votes to 225 in the French parliament.
The decision follows a divisive public debate with some of the biggest protests seen
in France in recent years.
Hundreds of opponents of the measure rallied outside the National Assembly
building in central Paris as the result was announced.
The leader of the most high-profile group opposing same-sex marriage vowed to
continue the fight.

Do you know France has already passed the law of same-sex marriage before reading this news
(on the questionnaire)?
□ Yes □ No

Do you usually take the initiative to care about events of same-sex marriage?
□ Yes □ No

The “Taiwan domestic partner task force” had filed a petition about the legitimacy of gay
marriage to the legislature On 25 October 2013. But until now, the law of gay marriage hasn’t
been formulated in Taiwan; the petition was still on first reading.
What do you think is the reason?