

投稿類別：英文寫作類

篇名：

**The Liberty to Love: Homosexual Marriage**

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## I. Introduction

### I.1 Background

With social values changing in the current era, other forms of family are gradually developing in Taiwan, and the composition of families is no longer based on marriage and consanguinity. It is based on deep friendship, common habits, beliefs, experiences of life, and so forth. These families live together, look after each other, encourage each other, and view each other as a source of dependence. Same-sex marriage has hence become a new trend worldwide; it has generated revolutionary changes in the laws of many nations as well.

### I.2 Motivation

With growing importance of human rights, several countries have developed an open mentality towards homosexual marriage. In fact, homosexuals and bisexuals are just the same as all heterosexuals — they have the inclination to love, but just a different group of people. The rise of same-sex marriage awareness has impacted the standing of certain traditional values in Taiwan, and global media has affirmed that Taiwan could possibly be the first nation in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage (CNN, 2016). In light of this social standing, the legalization of the same-sex marriage bill in Taiwan should be brought to the table for discussion. To this end, we collected information to uncover reasons behind the lack of a same-sex marriage bill in Taiwan, and from here we intend to strive for the right of homosexuality and bisexuality.

### I.3 Research Questions

Q1. Why have people today become more accepting of homosexuality?

Q2. What are some social reasons that account for the lack of a same-sex marriage bill in Taiwan (as of March 2017?)

Q3. Is religion a reason why same-sex marriage has not been legalized in Taiwan, and if so, why?

Q4. What are some different views between the younger and older generations concerning the issue of same-sex marriage?

### I.4 Methods

As like any other type of research, we began our study by conducting an extensive literature

review on homosexual marriage in Taiwan and other parts of the globe. Using Internet resources as well as online and paper questionnaires, we intended to uncover what the general public opines about the issue of homosexual marriage. After receiving the results of these questionnaires, we organized them into charts and drew analyses. Eventually, we quoted participants' orientations to analyze the value of same-sex marriage of the present society.

#### I.4.1 Participants

To understand how ideas on homosexual marriage differed on a cross-generation basis, we issued 810 copies of questionnaires to teenagers, middle-aged individuals and old-aged individuals. We likewise recorded interviews that included questions about their opinions on same-sex marriage as well as the legalization of it.

#### I.4.2 Instrument

Besides employing questionnaires to discover answers for our research questions, we also collected participants' ideas on some projected problems of same-sex marriage in Taiwan. We compared the information we gathered and discussed those questions through examining data from the Ministry of Interior Affairs. From there, we analyzed and quoted theories to state our stance.

#### I.4.3 Interview

We interviewed 10 people, whom consisted of 5 teenagers and 5 adults. This participant group allowed us to test the ideas of homosexual marriage on a cross-generation basis. We eventually transcribed the interviews we had with 3 adults and 1 teenager (as seen in the appendix) as typical examples of social attitudes.

## II Thesis

### II.1. Same-sex marriage

Same-sex marriage consists of two individuals with the same sexual orientation forming a family (Lahey, Alderson, 2004). Currently, no country in Asia permits same-sex marriage by laws, whereas most North America countries have passed legislation to the bill for the formation of families.

It is believed that the same-sex laws have varied by jurisdiction. Based on jurisdiction, the marriage laws can be changed variously and constitute guarantee that everyone are equal before the laws (Brandes, Weidman, 1997). Same-sex marriage is not only a political and social issue, but also

a religious one. The dispute constantly was brought to the table because homosexual individuals believe that they should be allowed to get married, so as do heterosexual couples (Olson, Cadge, & Harrison, 2006).

Past perspectives of anthropological research indicated little support for the homosexual relationships across cultures. Either civilization or viable social orders need to depend on exclusively heterosexual institution. With time elapsing, the anthropological research supports the conclusion which not only can make a variety of family forms but also can contribute to stable humane societies now.

A person who called Yu Mei-nu, a Democratic Progressive Party legislator in Taiwan, has expressed to support the marriage amendment as an increasing number of legislators agree with that amendment. The first female president Ing-Wen Tsai likewise announced that she encourages and supports diverse families. So, the Cable News Network (CNN) had prognosticated that Taiwan would become the first country to legalize same-sex marriage in Asia if the Civil Code is agreed to be changed.

## II.2. Homosexuality

Homosexuality, different from bisexuality and heterosexuality, is one of the three main classifications of sexual orientation. It is regarded as a sexual attraction or sexual behavior between people who have the same sex (Eskridge, 1993). It is not only a person's sense of identity, but also it is an indication of a third sex. Although many studies were published by experts in this area, there is still no substantive evidence to prove how homosexuality is shaped (Ahmed, Ryan, 2016).

Today, homosexuality relationships have been admired and identified gradually by the public. Despite some opponents, some positive thoughts are increasing towards the legalizations of homosexual marriage.

## II.3. The problem of homosexuality in Taiwan

According to Cable News Network's report, Taiwan has a bright prospect to legalization same-sex marriage. Many experts analyzed that Taiwan has a considerable amount of homosexual communities and is a progressive country to make an effort to fight for LGBT rights in Asia. The civil code of Taiwan has not passed the legislation for same-sex marriage. However, the government holds a positive attitude towards citizens organizing demonstrations to ask for marriage rights. This is a leap for homosexual people to fight for their human rights.

Today, with liberal Democratic Progressive Party rising up and controlling administrative

rights, the first Taiwan's female president Ing-Wen Tasi, ascend the throne. Her statement "In the face of love, everyone is equal." She said in a Facebook video during the gay pride parade of 2015. "I support marriage equality. Every person should be able to look for love freely, and freely seek their own happiness." She permits the same-sex marriage in Taiwan, and is looking upon the legislation for support.

However, part of the Taiwanese older generation hold opposition against homosexual marriage as they fear the threat it brings to traditional values. Thus, it remains a controversial issue. Besides, it also contains the problems of brief. Notwithstanding there are some opposing voices, the polls in social media in recent years have revealed an increasing support for homosexual marriage, a trend that indicates potential possibilities for the legalization of same-sex marriage in Taiwan.

#### II.4. Data Analysis

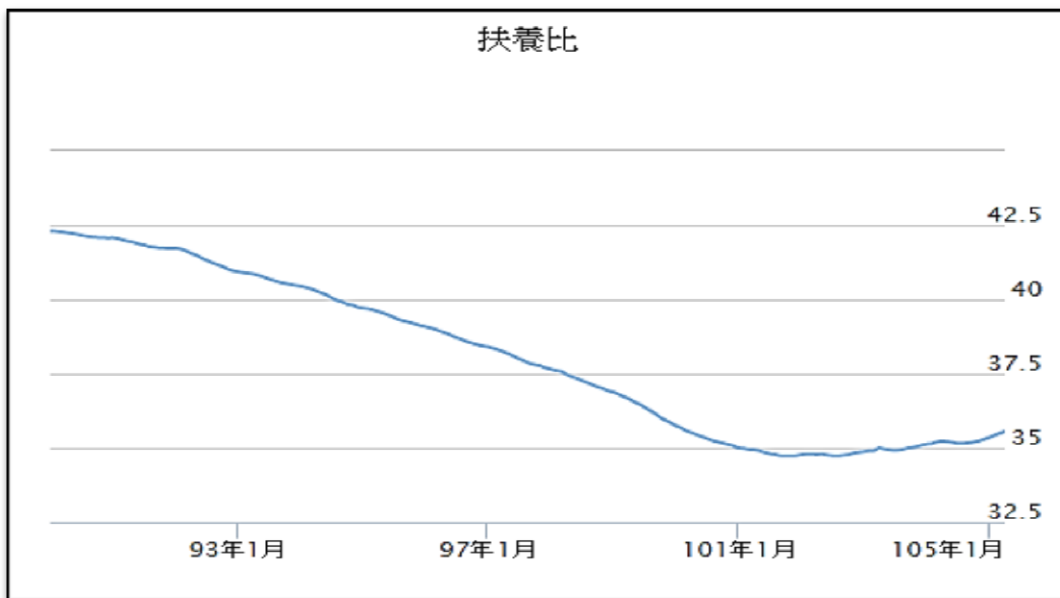


Figure 1: The Line Graph of the Dependency Ratio from the 93<sup>th</sup> and 105<sup>th</sup> Year of the Republic Era

The graph above clearly shows that although the dependence ratio of Taiwan had been declining since the 93<sup>rd</sup> year; since the 101<sup>th</sup> year, it has started to increase once more.

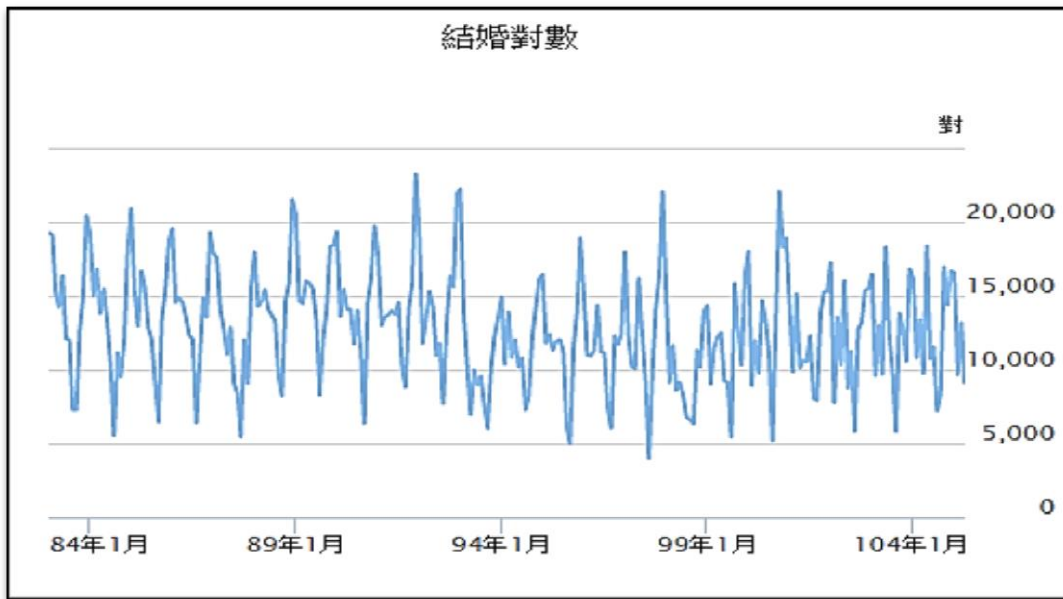


Figure 2: The Line Graph of the Number of Marriages from the 84<sup>th</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Year of the Republic Era

The line graph shows that the number of marriages is unstable every year. However, if we look at this line graph carefully, we can discover it gradually reducing in recent years.

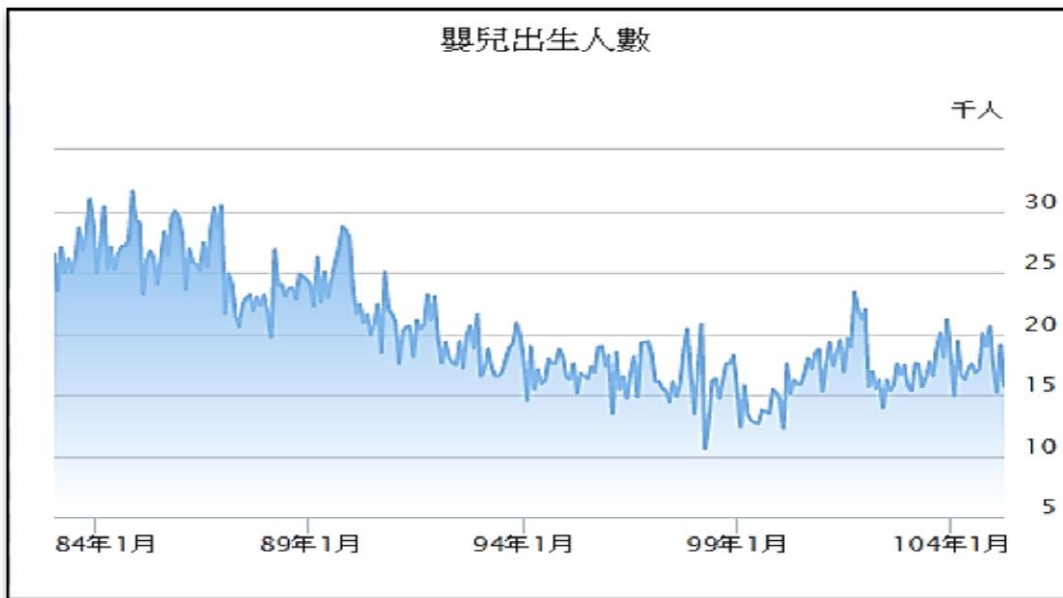


Figure 3: The Line Graph of Birth Rates from the 84<sup>th</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Year of the Republic Era

The line graph shows that the birth rate is decreasing at an alarming rate. In January of 1995, there were approximately 30,000 newborns, as compared to January 2015, where there are only 20,000.

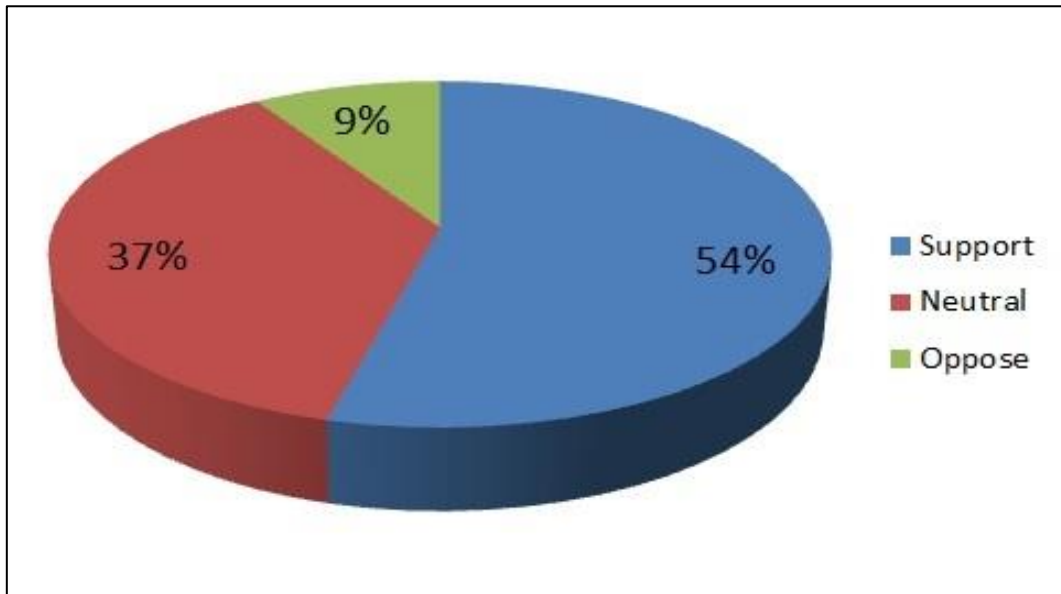


Figure 4: Percentage of Participants (Aged between 13-34)

The pie chart as reflected from our data collection describes that people aged between 13 and 34 have 54% people supporting same-sex marriage, 9% opposing it, and 37% remaining neutral.

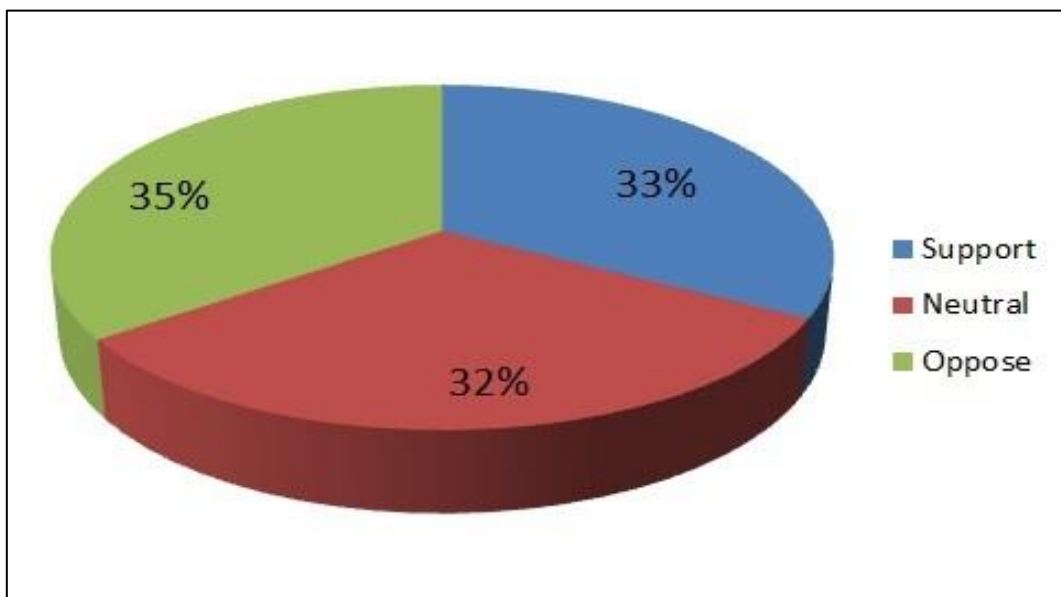


Figure 5: Percentage of participants (Aged over 35 )

The pie chart as reflected from our data collection describes that people aged over 35 years have 33% of people supporting same-sex marriage, 35% opposing it, and 32% remaining neutral.

After Collecting information, analyzing the pie charts and finishing the interviews, we started discussing and dealing with our 4 questions.

## II.5 Analysis of Questions

1. For question 1: why do people today become more accepting of homosexuality? According to the interview, we can find that most people are trying to accept this thought. Media viewings would also imply that quite many individuals are debating on the issue day after day. Additionally, we frequently see celebrities advocating respect for homosexuality through social networking. People in Taiwan have begun to develop open mindsets concerning the issue under the efforts of social demonstrations and the media. Under such, people start to ask themselves a fundamental question—why can heterosexuals get married, and why can't homosexuals?
2. For question 2: why has same-sex marriage not been legalized in Taiwan? From the figures 1, 2 and 3, we can find that the Taiwanese are worried about the nation's decreasing birth rate, dependency ratios and marriage rates as well, however, may be a false alarm from our analysis. To begin with, homosexuals are inherently attracted to their own sex and cannot reproduce. Forcing them to marry and have children would not be an option under these circumstances, regardless of whether the same-sex marriage bills were legalized in Taiwan or not. Additionally, the reasons underlying the aforementioned issues are a result of the nation's finance problems—the young generation does not wish to reproduce as much because of generally low salary. Hence, it would be rash to attribute a projected deterioration in the nation's birth rate, the dependency ratio and marriage rates to the legalization of the same-sex marriage bill.
3. For question 3: Is religion a reason why same-sex marriage has not been legalized in Taiwan, if so, why? For this question, we interviewed some Christians, who quoted the Bible: God created Adam and Eve to imply that a family is constituted by a man and a woman—nothing else. In similar veins, the Bible also emphasizes monogamy.

While these religious ground continue to exist in the mindset of millions, time has changed—as it always have—and religious people also gradually change their thoughts on the same issue. They may have rejected homosexuality in the past; however, they recently start accepting them and they start regarding these thoughts as a part of the new society. According to our interview, although some religious people cannot come to accept homosexual marriage, they imply a will to try to adjust their mindsets and understand that the society is up for a big change on the issue.

4. For question 4: what are some different views between the younger and older generations concerning the issue of same-sex marriage? As the pie chart, you can find that younger and older generations are definitely different. According to the pie charts, we found that most of people aged between 13~34 are more accepting this issue than the people aged over 35. We even discovered that the older generation is more concerning about the problem that we mentioned in the second point. In the light of our interviews, older generation is usually limited



to traditional value. On the contrary, younger generation is not care about it, they think that homosexuality and bisexuality must be carried weight because there are more and more homosexual and bisexual people declare in the Internet, and many international news are also report that. Furthermore, as the generation is changing, there are more and more homosexual and bisexual people appear. Therefore, the younger generation may have a few homosexual and bisexual friends, In the course of times, they think it is a common phenomenon. On the other hand, based on our interview, one of our respondents told us there are actually a small number of homosexual and bisexual people in traditional Taiwan. So in their eyes, it is an abnormal phenomenon.

### III. Conclusion

The Taiwanese society in the current era is deeply involved in the issue of same-sex marriage. Except for our original questions, we discovered some problem that we found during our studying process. Through our survey and empirical research, we have reached some conclusions as to why the Taiwanese society in the current era has not passed legislations of same-sex marriage.

Our findings suggest that some possible reasons for the legislation to not have passed same-sex marriage laws as of October 2016 are as delineated below:

1. Law Restrictions
2. Religion
3. Traditional Family Values
4. The Lack of Paternal/Maternal Education
5. Sexually-transmitted Diseases

#### III.1 Law Restrictions

According to our survey, government officials believe that the legalization of same-sex marriage would bring several social issues. Many changes would have to be applied to the scripts of laws — the gender terms would have to be modified almost entirely, every law would call for revision, and inheritance laws would have to undergo scrutiny for revision. From our stance, same-sex marriage has become a global trend in the Western society, and it might gradually be legalized in Eastern countries. Facing the circumstances, the government would eventually have to enact new laws concerning inheritance. Based on our idea, the terms of “male” and “female” can be determined by biological characteristics, On the contrary, the terms of “husbands”, “wives”, “fathers” and “mothers” should be revised.

### III.2 Religions

According to our interview, we found that “religions” may be a reason why some oppose same-sex marriage. We have interviewed some Christians, some of them stating that in Biblical terms, “God created Adam and Eve in order to reproduce”. Additionally, because Taiwan is a secular country, the government enacts some laws by some religious terms. Nonetheless, there are a variety of religions in Taiwan, and we believed the thoughts of some religions on homosexuality would not influence the legislation of same-sex marriage.

### III.3 Traditional Family Values

Based on the background of monogamy, the same-sex marriage would violate family ethics. Although some people are opposed to same-sex marriage, we strongly believe that people might gradually accept such a change in social trends; if monogamy was accepted in a previously polygamous society, there could logically be a chance for homosexual marriage to be legalized in the modern East Asia we see today.

Additionally, some people may think that the legalization of same-sex marriage would lead to the decrease of birth rates. Many voices from the older generation state that same-sex marriage would result in a decrease in birth rates and should not be encouraged in society for demographic reasons. While this may seem like a concern, our findings indicate that this does not constitute a real issue. Actually, a small number of homosexuals have existed since the ancient times, and their existence did not result in a considerable decline in birth rates in the past. Additionally, it has to be stated that without a legalization of same-sex marriage laws, homosexual individuals would not live with content. We believe that the government is responsible for maximizing people’s emotional well-being; if the legalization of homosexual marriage could ensure the happiness of a part of the Taiwanese society, the government should be entitled to contemplate the possibilities of legalizing same-sex marriage for the well-being of the society. All humans have a freedom to love and marry, and same-sex marriage is an open-minded ensuring of it.

### III.4 The Lack of Paternal/Maternal Education

In our interviews, we were informed that same-sex marriage may cause for some adopted children to lack either maternal or paternal care. While this may appear as a realistic concern, we argue that many children in our society born to heterosexual parents grow up with only paternal or maternal care. We believe that a child’s education is contingent with the efforts of both parents; if both parents of a homosexual couple are caring of the child’s education, there should not be any concern related to this issue.

### III.5 Sexually-transmitted Diseases

According to our interview, some participants believed that homosexual intercourse would cause venereal diseases. Contradictory to this statement, research voices that homosexual intercourse does not generate higher possibility of sexually-transmitted diseases. In reality, heterosexuals are equally prone to sexual diseases. The transmission of sexual diseases is caused by lack of safe sex rather than homosexual sex. Thereby, we invite the Taiwanese society to rethink about this former stereotype that homosexuals are more prone to sexually-transmitted diseases.

Since ten years ago, homosexuals have often taken part in parades to fight for their own rights. Many counties have also enacted laws to protect the rights of homosexuals. Although same-sex marriage has not yet been legalized in Taiwan, the country has seen many efforts to ensure the rights of the people. As our president Ing-wen Tsai voiced, “I support marriage equality. Every person should be able to look for love freely, and freely seek their own happiness.” Based on this statement, we truly believe that Taiwan will be the first country in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage, and it is our sincere hope that the government would hear our voices and take our ideas into consideration for a better and a more liberal Taiwan.

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